



Kimshung, first ascent, via east couloir and south-southeast ridge

Nepal, Langtang Himal

François Cazzanelli on the south-southeast ridge of Kimshung, with Langtang Lirung behind. Photo by Damiano Levati

Lukas Waldner and I arrived in Kathmandu on October 5, and after one night there continued by jeep on flooded roads to Syabrubesi (ca 1,600m). On that same day we trekked east up the Langtang Valley to around 2,300 meters. The next day, we arranged with our porters to meet us in two days at Kyanjin Gompa (3,850m), after which we set off for Langtang village (3,400m), where we spent the night. We arrived in Kyanjin Gompa in late morning the next day and spent the afternoon resting. Lukas had caught a cold during the flight and was enthusiastically spreading his sniffles.

After two days of acclimatizing and some rest for Lukas, who had caught a cold during the flight, we visited an Italian team in their base camp, about 300 meters above our lodge at Kyanjin Gompa. Our goals were the same: the first ascent of Kimshung (a.k.a. Tsangbu Ri, 6,781m), a peak with no easy route to the summit. One of the Italians, François Cazzanelli, was here for his fourth attempt on the mountain, and Giuseppe Vidoni was on his second attempt. Over a plate of pasta, we agreed to acclimatize separately.

On October 12, Lukas and I camped at 5,000 meters and the next day reached the summit of Yala Peak (5,520m), staying for one hour before returning to our lodge. Deciding we should acclimatize further on the Kimshung Glacier after a day's rest, we left heavily loaded, which caused consternation as we passed the Italian base camp. With questions answered and fears eased, we continued upward, reaching the foot of the glacier at around 5,500 meters and camping there.

The next morning, we ascended the glacier on a hot day, followed by the Italians Cazzanelli and Vidoni. They told us they were doing a training day and continued to the head of the glacier. We followed more slowly, camped for the night, then started back down, leaving our tent and sleeping bags at the glacier's foot.

At noon we reached the Italian base camp, where, despite being welcomed with a beer, we could feel some tension in the air. François announced that their weather guru had said next Monday, three days away, would be the best day to summit. Although the Italians were happy to climb alongside us, they wanted to maintain two separate teams. We agreed and decided to return to our lodge for some rest. We consulted with our own meteorologist, who confirmed that Monday the 20th would be a perfect summit day. We didn't want to miss the weather window, so our planned two or three days of rest became one.

We regained our tent on October 19 and shortly were joined by the two Italians. Lukas and I left at 2:45 the next morning. François and Giuseppe caught us, and we all crossed the glacier by headlamp, reaching the bergschrund (ca 6,100m) below the east face at 6 a.m. We planned to climb the same couloir to the south-southeast ridge that François, Giuseppe, and two others had used in an attempt on Kimshung the year before (AAJ 2025). Lukas and I led. Shortly, any previous tension between the two parties vanished. We were all having a blast and simply enjoying being there.

Conditions were good and the day warm, though the engaging climbing was sometimes difficult to protect. A steep mixed section led to the summit ridge about 300 meters below the top, where we let the Italians pass. The broad ridge was steep, with 60° sugary snow, and the parties moved together

with François breaking trail and placing a few, poor snow stakes. We reached the summit at around 12:30 p.m.

After enjoying the excellent view, which stretched from Xixabangma to Makalu, we headed down. For the first 300 meters to the notch where we had gained the south-southeast ridge, we downclimbed unroped with full concentration. François and I then led the rappels, setting up anchors. We reached the bergschrund after around 13 rappels and from there, with autopilot engaged, descended the glacier to our tents.

After packing up, we all continued to the Italian base camp, arriving at 7 p.m. to a plate of pasta and a summit cake. Lukas and I then descended to our lodge, exhausted. We named the route Destiny (ca 680m, TD M5 AI4 60° snow). [Editor's Note: This was François Cazzanelli's fourth attempt to climb Kimshung: The first, in 2015, stopped before reaching the mountain due to the catastrophic earthquake of that year.]

—Benjamin Zoerer, Austria

Images



The east face of Kimshung and the route of the first ascent via the couloir and south-southeast ridge.



François Cazzanelli on the broad snow slopes of the south-southeast ridge of Kimshung, with part of the east face of Langtang Lirung (7,227m) behind.



Partway up the east face of Kimshung, a little after dawn on October 20, 2025. The route climbed the ice and mixed couloir directly above to gain the south-southeast ridge.



In the middle of the east face of Kimshung. The climbers approached up the full length of the Kimshung Glacier below. The pointed summit in shadow is Dragpoche (6,575m).



An aerial view of the Austrian and Italian climbers in the couloir of the east face of Kimshung.



The climbers, with François Cazzanelli in the lead, starting up the steep sugary snow that forms the south-southeast ridge of Kimshung. In the background is Peak 6,837m (left, in Tibet) and Langtang Ri (7,205m). The distant peak across the Tibetan Plateau is Tsangla Ri (6,495m).



Kimshung from the south at sunset. The first ascensionists climbed from the Kimshung Glacier on the right, but François Cazzanelli's second of four attempts on the mountain had been via the southwest face to the left. Part of Langtang Lirung's east face is visible on the far left.

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