



## Nun and Other Ski Descents

India, Zaskar

**In May 2017, French skiers Tiphaine Duperier and Boris Langenstein made a very productive visit to the Nun-Kun region.** The pair took a jeep from Kargil to Parkachik, where snow still blocked the road, and walked to the village of Tangol at 3,350m. From here they climbed a 5,550m peak to the west of the approach valley to Nun (probable first ascent) and skied the 1,200m north face.

On May 14, Duperier and Langenstein used the normal approach route to Nun base camp, beneath an icefall below the plateau west of the mountain. Ascending the icefall, the pair turned right and to the summit of a 5,900m peak that overlooks the normal site of camp 1 for Nun, then skied the north face and returned to Tangol.

On the 18th, the pair packed food for a week and headed south up the Parkachik Glacier, which almost reaches the road at this point. On the true right of the glacier, they spied an attractive peak of 6,050m. From a campsite below its northwest face, they climbed 1,800m to the top, then skied a slightly different line to avoid some 55° mixed terrain they'd climbed in the upper half. They then continued along the upper Parkachik Glacier, on its true left bank, aiming to reach the large plateau west of Nun and eventually the foot of Nun's long north ridge.

On May 24, the two headed up the northwest face, just right of the north ridge, covering the first 200m on skis and then switching to crampons, before encountering waist-deep snow. Pushing on, the pair reached the upper northwest ridge, then climbed two pitches through a rock band before hitting the summit ridge at 7,050m. After nine hours of nonstop climbing, they reached the 7,135m summit, with clouds gathering. Soon after beginning their ski descent, in order to avoid the rock band they'd ascended, they dropped over a 55° step and then roped up for a 200m traverse to rejoin their ascent track. Snow conditions were good, the angle around 45°, but visibility was now very poor, so they were relieved when the weather cleared at 6,200m and, after barely two hours of descent, they regained their tent.

The first ski descent of Nun was made by the legendary Swiss extreme skier Sylvain Saudan on June 26, 1977, after an unsuccessful attempt in 1976. These expeditions were part of his buildup to make the first ski descent of an 8,000m peak, which he did on Gasherbrum 1 (8,080m) in 1982.

– Damien Gildea, with information from Tiphaine Duperier, France

## Images



Tiphaine Duperier skiing on the 1,200-meter north face of Peak 5,550m in the Nun-Kun region.



Descending Peak 5,550m. Nun (right) and Kun are the highest peaks in the background.



Tiphaine Duperier and Boris Langenstein on top of Peak 6,050m. In back are Kun (left) and Nun (7,135m), seen from the north. Less than a week later, the two skied the northwest face of Nun.



The Nun-Kun massif and nearby mountains, seen from the northwest, showing the approaches and peaks skied by Tiphaine Duperier and Boris Langenstein in May 2017.

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