



## **Dolma Kang, Southeast Face, Partial New Route and First Alpine-style Ascent**

Nepal, Rolwaling Himal

**From a base in the village of Na (4,183m), Elvira Mayol, Pep Roig, Tomeu Rubí, and I acclimatized by exploring the surrounding area and climbing a few low hills, and then attempted Ramdung (5,930m).** Tomeu and I reached the summit, Elvira and Pep around 5,500m. During this time we looked for an interesting mountain that we could climb via a new or little repeated route, and eventually settled on Dolma Kang (formerly Tseringma, 6,332m).

On April 30, we all hiked up the Jomol Gol Chu valley from Beding (3,693m) in poor weather. Pep and Tomeu established a camp close to the bottom of the face at 4,940m (27°55.7610'N, 86°21.7498'E), where they found tent platforms and a wooden sign dated 2017, presumably from the expedition that climbed nearby Peak 5,840m that year (AAJ 2019). We returned to Beding and then, on the 2nd, all four of us reached the camp, making the approach in six hours. The terrain was delicate, with two short sections requiring the rope.

At 4:30 a.m. on May 3, Pep and Tomeu left camp and climbed a long snow gully on the southeast face of Dolma Kang to a bivouac 1,000m higher on the south ridge. The snow (60–65°) was in poor condition, and the gully featured several vertical, rotten ice sections (maximum WI4), the longest 60m. The last 300m to the ridge involved steep mixed terrain, difficult to protect.

Next morning, they set off at 5:30 and climbed the remaining 400m to the summit in 6.5 hours. The terrain was technical and again difficult to protect, with isolated sections of M5. They also came across old fixed ropes on the ridge, the first around 200m below the top.

The two decided to descend the east-northeast ridge [climbed once previously, in 2008, by Peter Anzenberger and David Goettler], at first on the north flank through glaciated slopes full of crevasses and seracs (one rappel). Navigation was difficult due to cloud cover, but they eventually continued down the crest of the ridge to 5,900m. It was 4 p.m. They had hoped to descend all the way to camp, but as the visibility was no more than 15–20m, it was safer to stop for the night.

Setting off at 5 a.m. the following morning, they first made a rappel on the south flank, then downclimbed 200m, and finally made a full 60m rappel, some of it free, to reach the glacier. From there they descended easily, regaining camp at noon. That same day we all walked down to Beding in 3.5 hours.

— Cati Lladó, Spain

**Historical Notes on Dolma Kang's Southeast Face:** This face had previously been climbed by four teams as a means of gaining access to the southeast ridge of Gaurishankar. Patrick Cullinan's Australian expedition was the first, in April 1980, reaching the big couloir at over half-height by slanting up from the left. They continued to make the first ascent of Dolma Kang but then retreated.

In autumn of 1980, the face was climbed by a large Japanese expedition, which summited Dolma Kang then pushed a little further along the southeast ridge of Gaurishankar. Their line up the southeast face of Dolma Kang is unknown. Much of the team returned in 1984, and after regaining the summit of Dolma

Kang, they continued up the ridge to reach Gauri (7,010m), the south summit of Gaurishankar.

An attempt was made by a British team in 1995, but they only got as far as the top of Dolma Kang. The British found the ascent of the southeast face "testing." It was steep, there were no good campsites, and the weather was consistently poor. Most of the route above 5,700–5,800m followed a ridge that was loaded with loose rubble, causing issues with rockfall. It also featured old rope and rock pegs, confirming they were on an existing line.

All of these expeditions used fixed ropes, making Roig and Rubi's ascent of the southeast face the first in alpine style.

## Images



The last pitch on the southeast face of Dolma Kang before reaching the south ridge.



The southeast face of Dolma Kang. (1) The 1980 Australian route. (The route taken on the lower face is unknown.) The first camp is marked; three more were made before the summit was reached. (2) The 2022 route and bivouac on the south ridge. (3) The 2022 descent of the east ridge. The exact routes followed by other teams in the 1980s and '90s are not known.



On the south ridge of Dolma Kang, immediately before reaching the first bivouac.





Starting the rightward traverse across the southeast face of Dolma Kang from the bivouac on the south ridge in early May 2022.



Finishing the penultimate pitch on the south ridge of Dolma Kang in May 2022. Old fixed ropes are visible.



The last rappel to get off the east ridge during the Spanish climbers' descent from Dolma Kang in May 2022.



Climbing the snow couloir on the southeast face of Dolma Kang, just before the longest of the steep rotten ice sections, in May 2022.

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