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Danga II

Expedition Report



1626

10/10/2000



View from ridge above Lhonak from where Chris saw that the peak he had thought was Danga was in fact 6194 (the one on the right) whilst Danga 6359m is the steeper peak on the left.

Summary **6359**

The objective of the expedition was a mountain above Lhonak in the Kangchenjunga region, which was recommended by Julian Freeman Atwood and identified as an unclimbed peak of ~~3659~~ metres called Danga. Doug Scott was also most helpful in providing maps and pictures of the area.

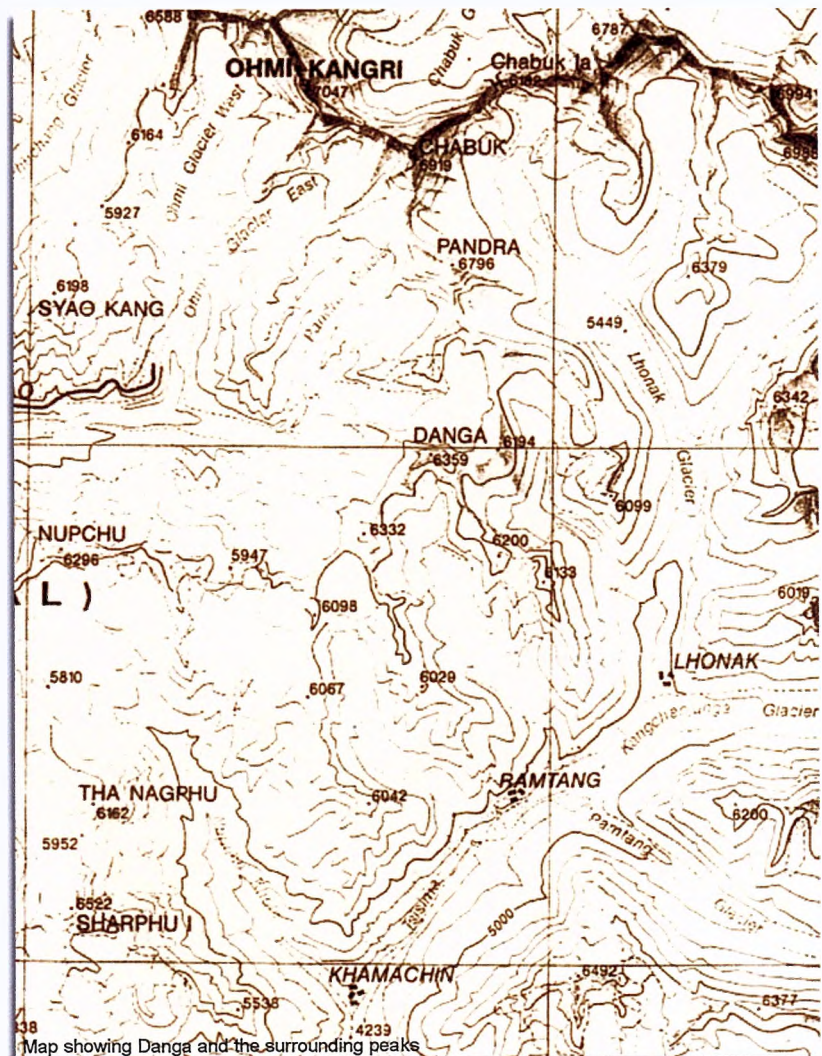
On arrival at Lhonak and having carried out a reconnaissance, the team realised that a steep peak to the left and behind their chosen objective was the true Danga. This was confirmed by careful observation of the map (Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, 1:100,000 using photography taken during US Space Lab mission in 1989). From our observation this section of the map is fairly accurate.

The team decided to stick with their original objective, as chosen from photographs, as being more suited to the experience of the group.

Danga II (6194m) was climbed by Chris Bonington, Daniel Bonington, Gerald Bonington, James Bonington and Furtenjee Sherpa on 4 May, 2000.

Calendar of Events

- April 17 Team fly to Biritnagar
- 18 Team fly to Suketar and walk down to Phurumbu – 1460m
- 19 Reach Chirwa, 1240m
- 20 Reach Sekathum, 1660m
- 21 Reach Amjilosa 2430m
- 22 Reach Kyap La 2630m
- 23 Reach Ghunsa 3795m
- 24 Rest as Ghunsa – rain all day
- 25 Reach Kambachen 3960m
- 26 Reach Ramtang 4370m– Chris, Daniel, Rupert Bennett and Furtenjee set out early and make recce up side valley to look at back of Danga. It clouds in so that it is difficult to get clear views but they see enough to ascertain there is not an easy approach from this direction. Rupert Bennett suffers from acute nausea that later develops into pleurisy
- 27 Reach Lhonak 4785m and establish a pleasant but windy base camp – excellent rock climbing if you have the energy.
- 28 Chris climbs hill to East of Lhonak, gets good views of Danga and realises that the chosen objective is not the true Danga, is also concerned by the possible danger of the approach up glacier head wall. Furtenjee with Himal, one of our cook boys, walk up valley leading towards Danga and report reasonable though tiring route.
- 29 Chris, Daniel, Gerald. James and Furtenjee walk up Danga valley to the site of advance base at foot of glacier head wall and confirm there is a safe looking route through the glacier and on up the summit ridge of Danga II. The approach to advance base was up a three hundred metre high moraine into a glaciated valley, initially easily up a flat firm snow base and then over an obstacle course of boulders to where it bifurcated. An easy slope led to a safe site for advance base on a rock shelf.
- 30 Rest day at base. Gerald and James walk up Lhonak Valley



May 1 Rest day

- 2 Snows all day – stay at base
- 3 Chris, Daniel, Gerald and James with Furtenjee move to advance base. It was decided to replace Rupert with James for the summit push, since James had been going well and had taken part in the recce to advance base. Rupert, Dave and Jude move up to Pangpema 4940m.
- 4 The climbing team set out at 03.30 climbing unroped for three hundred metres up the centre of the glacier, which was lightly dusted with snow to show the crevasses. They then roped up on a single rope to cross the more heavily covered upper glacier, cutting across to its western side to pass back rightwards below a rocky headwall to reach the upper slopes at around 0630.

Easy snow slopes with the occasional crevasse led up to the crest of the col between Danga 1 and II. There is a broad basin and undulating ridges leading to Pandra, giving a possible approach to this mountain as well. Danga I could be climbed from a camp on the Col.

A broad crevasse with a fragile snow bridge led to what we thought was the summit – a huge fin of ice on the crest of the ridge. The true summit was just beyond this and reached at around one o'clock. The team spent an hour on the summit and returned to advance base by four thirty that afternoon. This was the only totally clear day of the trip!!

Rupert climbs peak above Pangpema. Dave and Jude go some way up it.

- 5 Return to Base
- 6 Walk to Ghunsa
- 7 Rest at Ghunsa
- 8 Wonderful walk and views through Rhododendron Forest to camp sight below Sinion La.
- 9 Walk over series of high passes to Tseram 3980m
- 10 Walk over Lasiya Bhaniyang into Omje Khola in heavy rain – a hard day.
- 11 Walk to Yamphudin 1990m
- 12 Walk to Phumphedanda
- 13 Walk to pass above Khesewa
- 14 Walk to Tambewa
- 15 Walk to Suketar
- 16 Wait at Suketar
- 17 Wait at Suketar
- 18 After plane cancellation take bus from Taplejung to drive through night to Biritnagar
- 19 Back in Kathmandu

Conclusion

The Danga massif is quite complex with considerable potential for first ascents. Danga itself is an elegant pointed peak which could be climbed comfortably in the day from a camp on the Col between it and .6194 (Danga II). There are three interesting and jagged peaks all over 6000 metres on the ridge stretching to the south of Danga, the northern most of which could be reached with some difficulty from the col to the immediate south of Danga.

Pandra (6796m) to the north of Danga is an attractive looking peak and probably has a reasonable though long approach from the west by the Yangma Khola and the Pandra Glacier. It's aspect from the east seems very steep.



On top of Danga II with Danga in the background. From left to right - Furtenjee, James, Chris, Gerald and Daniel

The Team

Climbers

Sir Christian Bonington CBE, Expedition Leader. (65) has climbed extensively in Nepal over the years.

Gerald Bonington (48) Chris's brother is a senior executive working for Norsk Hydro and has climbed extensively in the United Kingdom and the Alps. He climbs regularly with Chris and went with him to Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa in 1990

Daniel Bonington, (32) Chris's eldest son, works in Paddy Pallin's, Australia's biggest out door retailer, and works in conservation in urban bushland around Sydney. He lives in Sidney and also climbed Kilimanjaro with Chris.

Dr. Rupert Bennett (32) is Chris's GP, a keen climber who is medical officer of the Penrith Mountain Rescue Team and is Medical Director of the Cherry Tree Children's Trust whose main activity is in Nepal. He has worked on their project to build a hospital in the Langtang Valley.

Furtenjee Sherpa (50) was a climbing instructor with the Nepalese army and has been on numerous expeditions.

Trekkers

Judith Bonington (30), Daniel's wife and a keen trekker, works for Sony Australia.

David Hummerston (28), Judith's brother, a carer based on Sidney, Australia

James Bonington (22), Gerald's son, is studying English and German law at Liverpool University.

Sponsor / Supplier

Berghaus

All clothing, rucsacs, walking shoes and boots

Suppliers

Apple

PowerBook G3

Bolle

Glasses and goggles

Burton McCall

Gabel – ski sticks

Victorinox – knives and Swiss tools

Sigg – water bottles

Coleman

Stoves and pans

Fairlight Quality Meats

Springbok - Biltong / Beef Jerky

First Ascent

MSR – mugs, spoons and windshields

Cascade Designs – Therm-a-rests and seats

Garmin

ETrex Personal Navigator

Lyon Equipment

Charlet – ice axes and crampons

Petzl – harnesses, hard hats and head torches

Beal – climbing ropes

Outdoor Agencies

PUR - Water Purifiers

Paddy Pallin

Sleeping Bags

Scarpa

Alpha Plastic Boots

Suunto

Vector, Altimeter and compass wrist watch

Terranova

Light weight tents

Flights

Qatar Airways

The expedition support was provided by Himalaya Expeditions Inc.

Ram was Sirdar

Pemba was expedition cook

Acknowledgements

We should like to thank everyone who gave us their generous support.

Grants.

Mount Everest Foundation

British Mountaineering Council

See the story with pics and video on-line @ www.bonington.com

**DANGA EXPEDITION
FINAL ACCOUNTS**

INCOME

MEF	£ 1000.00
BMC	£ 950.00
PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS	£ 6524.41
TOTAL	£ 8474.41

EXPENDITURE

Facility fee to Himalayan Adventure for 4 climbers - \$8000	£ 5405.40
Payment to Furtenjee Sherpa - \$1000	£ 675.67
Bonuses to all staff - \$2000	£ 1351.34
Food	£ 197.00
SOS Air freight	£ 145.00
Admin in UK	£ 200.00
Incidental expenses in Nepal	£ 500.00
TOTAL	£ 8474.41

I have not included the costs or contributions made by my daughter in law, her brother and my nephew who came in with us just for the walk - though James ended up climbing the mountain after Rupert Bennett dropped out of the climbing team.