

# Biodata

**Phunjo Lama**  
**Goodwill Ambassador of Nepal**  
**39 years old**

- **Nepalese Mountaineer and the record hold climber**
- **Fastest women to scale Mt. Everest- Guinness book world record holder**
- **Climbed Cho-Oyu without supplemental oxygen**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Female Long-Line sling Helicopter Rescuer in Nepal**



## Highlights

- **In 2024 Spring**, Lama reached the summit of **Mt. Everest in 14 hours and 31 minutes**, surpassing the previous record held by Ada Tsang Yin-hung of Hong Kong.
- In 2018, Lama first gained recognition with the fastest ascent of Mount Everest from the Nepal side by a female, summiting in 39 hours and 6 minutes.
- long-line sling rescuer, trained in the Swiss Alps and in the Nepalese Himalayas.
- Phunjo Lama is a first woman and a mother to summit Mt. Everest from Tsum Valley and Manaslu region.
- She climbed Mt. Everest in 2018. She also climbed Mt. Cho Oyu solo without oxygen, Mt. Manaslu, Amdablam, Lobuche and Mt. Denali (USA).

Phunjo was born in Chhokangpaaro village and raised in Tsum in an extended family of twelve.

Tsum is a remote Himalayan valley that borders Nepal & Tibet. She spent most of her childhood in the rugged mountains with her grandfather Me Norbu herding yaks, dris (female yaks) and dzo (hybrid between yak and cow). Later she studied in Kathmandu mainly learning English and Nepali language. Her mother tongue is Tsum ke (Sino-Tibetan). She speaks fluent English. She has visited Switzerland, Germany, Slovenia, France, USA, Austria, Australia, Thailand, Singapore, India and Tibet Autonomous Region of China. She likes to guide a bigger group mainly interested in climbing peaks in and around Tsum and Manaslu region. She has also climbed **Mt. Everest, Mt. Manaslu, Amadablam, Lobuche** and worked in many expeditions of unexplored peaks in the Himalaya and around the world.

Phunjo Lama embodies the strength of the mountains. She has climbed over the last five years. She is also a first Nepali woman long-line sling rescuer, trained in the Swiss Alps and in the Nepalese Himalayas. Phunjo Lama is a first woman and a mother to summit Mt. Everest from Tsum Valley and Manaslu region. She climbed Mt. Everest in 2018. **She also climbed Mt. Cho Oyu solo without oxygen**, Mt. Manaslu, Amdablam, Lobuche and Mt. Denali in her ongoing mountaineering career that has started in 2015 to take a deeper and wider look in the mountaineering tourism. As a result, she is also becoming a source of inspiration to many talented yet unemployed young girls to turn the adventure tourism into a basis for survival and just a new

way of life. For that she sees there is dire lack of training in safety especially among girls. She believes that “Mountains are much safer place to survive than in the chaotic cities such as Kathmandu and New York.” During off-trekking season, no wonder she is mostly seen in the climbing walls of Kathmandu.

Nepali climber Phunjo Jhangmu Lama has set a new world record for the fastest ascent of Mount Everest by a female climber.

Lama reached the summit in 14 hours and 31 minutes, surpassing the previous record held by Ada Tsang Yin-hung of Hong Kong.

Tsang Yin-hung climbed Everest in 25 hours and 50 minutes, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

The overall fastest ascent record is held by Sherpa guide Lakpa Gelu, who climbed the peak in 10 hours and 56 minutes.

In 2018, Lama first gained recognition with the fastest ascent of Mount Everest from the Nepal side by a female, summiting in 39 hours and 6 minutes.

However, her record was broken in May 2021 by Tsang Yin-hung, who completed her climb 14 hours faster.

### **Daredevil mountaineer is equal parts fierce adventurer and loving mother.**

But, beyond her public image of a professional mountain guide and long-line sling rescuer, to witness her in a personal, intimate space, was an eye-opening experience. Having followed her for a month, it became evident this fierce adventurer had no qualms switching between daredevil mountaineer to loving mother.

Being welcomed into someone’s personal space pays testament to the presumptuous fashion in which we judge people--while Phunjo seems to take on the mountains with military precision, she emanates warmth and love at home. She is a testament to not judging a someone on public persona or face value.

### **Story of Phunjo;**

Nepali mountaineer sits her 12-year-old daughter down every time she leaves for an expedition and tells her she might not make it back alive

Lama came to worldwide attention in 2018 when she became the fastest woman to scale the Himalayan peak in 39 hours and six minutes. Her record was broken in 2021 by Ada Tsang Yin-hung, 45, from Hong Kong who climbed the peak in 25 hours and 50 minutes.

This year, Lama reclaimed the record. This win is important to her because she says her goal is to tell more women that **“anything is possible”**.

he was two when she lost her mother. Her trips to the mountains with her grandfather and a yak is an enduring memory from her childhood.

“Mountain is my home,” she says.

“Yeah, the mountain is my home,” she repeats herself after a brief pause.

Lama has trained in the Swiss Alps and Nepal’s Himalayas. She is the first female helicopter longline rescuer in Nepal and has been awarded the Tenzing-Hillary Award by her country.

But Lama is nonchalant about her accomplishments and fame. She is aware of the risk of mountaineering. so there’s a small ritual she follows every time she leaves home for a mountaineering expedition.

She is a single parent to her 12-year-old daughter. Before every climb, Lama sits her down and tells her that she might not come back from the mountains alive.

“I always encouraged her to be confident and independent,” she tells me. “I told her that if something happened to me on the mountain, she shouldn’t be sad because I was doing something I loved. She understands this and is ready for whatever comes, whether I come back or not.”

“She’s like my friend, you know. We share everything and she supports me.”

Last year was the deadliest for Everest climbers, with at least 18 dying on the mountain. This season, at least five people have died and three are missing and presumed dead.

Nepal’s government has faced criticism for issuing too many permits to climbers, leading to overcrowding on the mountain.

Lama believes climbers attempting to summit Mt. Everest need to have some experience. As guides, we are very happy about the number of people coming to our mountains. However, climbers need proper experience and training, and they must choose the right company and leader,” she says.

“Climbers need to have extensive experience and come with respect for the mountain. Otherwise, nature will kill any time.”

In the face of the climate crisis melting the Himalayan glaciers and overcrowding , choking routes up the world’s highest peak, Nepal is reportedly reviewing the need to shift the base camp elsewhere.

Lama says the amount of snow has decreased significantly compared to her childhood. “I feel very sad about this.”