



AAC Publications

Saula, First Ascent via Southwest Ridge

Nepal, Manaslu Himal

Seen during the descent from Pankar Himal in 2018 is the route followed on the first ascent of Saula, which reaches the col between this peak and Saula South to the right. Photo by Tatsuro Sugimoto

In 2018, I was a member of the Japanese Himalayan Camp expedition that made the first ascent of Pankar Himal (6,264m, AAJ 2019), a peak on the Nepal-Tibet border just west of then unclimbed Saula (6,235m, 28°36'49.77"N, 84°45'14.97"E, opened in 2014). On April 19, 2022, Shingenobu Akihiro and I set off from Kathmandu to attempt the first ascent of Saula.

On the 23rd we reached the village of Sho (ca 3,000m) via the Buri Gandaki, rested the next day, and on the 25th established Camp 1 at 4,362m, approximately in the same location that we'd used in 2018. The following day we made a temporary camp at 5,160m, but then decided to return to Sho, as the forecast was bad for three days.

We returned to Camp 1 on May 1 and the next day shifted our gear from the temporary camp to Camp 2 at 5,439m, approximately the same place as our Camp 3 for Pankar Himal in 2018. From here, at 3:30 a.m. on the 3rd, we set off for the summit, reaching the plateau between Pankar Himal and Saula via the same route we had taken four years previously. We then moved east, passing below the west-southwest face of Saula, to reach the col between Saula and Saula South (6,199m). From there we followed Saula's southwest ridge. The last 60m involved WI2 climbing. We reached the summit at 3 p.m.

We returned to our high camp and the next day descended directly to Sho, from which we continued our trek on the classic Manaslu circuit.

— Diajo Saito, Japan

Images



The glacier approach to Saula. The 2022 route finished up the southwest ridge (falling directly toward the camera) that divides light from shadow.



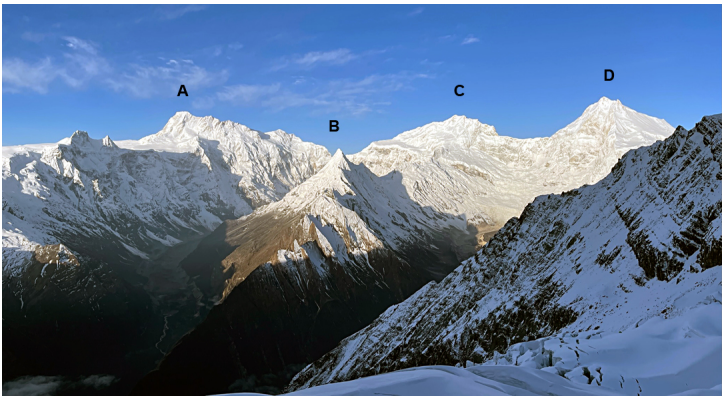
Seen during the descent from Pankar Himal in 2018 is the route followed on the first ascent of Saula, which reaches the col between this peak and Saula South to the right.



Part of the Japanese expedition on the summit of Pankar Himal in 2018. (A) Saula (6,235m). (B) Saula South (6,199m). (C) Peak 6,224m. Behind lie Chamar and the big peaks of the Ganesh Range.



Looking up the southwest ridge to the summit of Saula. The route finished on the blue ice step visible just below the top.



Looking southwest from the approach to Saula: (A) Himalchuli (7,893m), (B) Simnang HIMAL (6,251m), (C) Ngadi Chuli (7,871m), and (D) Manaslu (8,163m).



Looking southwest from the approach to Saula. In cloud is the main summit of Himalchuli (7,893m, first climbed in 1960). To the left is a small but high summit: Lidanda (Rana Peak or Himalchuli Northeast, 6,693m, first climbed in 1970 from the south). The only ascent to date of Himalchuli via this northern aspect was made by Ukrainians in 2007. They climbed more or less the long northeast ridge, outflanking Lidanda on the left.

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