



AAC Publications

Chomochior Valley: White Sapphire, South Ridge; Manasuna, West-southwest Face; Lahara, South Face

India, Kishtwar Himalaya

We arrived in Dehli on July 6 and after a road trip of nearly five days reached the small town of Gulabgarh, the last section traveling along one of the most dangerous roads in the world, the “Kishtwar Killer.” We then trekked for four days via Machail and the Darlang Nullah to the entrance of the Chomochior Valley, where we established base camp on a rock-strewn, grassy field at 3,900m. Our Swiss team comprised Mazal Chevallier (leader), Vincent Haller, Jonas Jurt, Christelle Marceau, Johan Martin, Axel Meyrat, and us.

On July 27, from a camp at 5,200m, we summited White Sapphire, a summit climbed once before, from the opposite side. We first climbed an east-facing couloir for 300m to reach the crest of the south ridge. Then 50° snow and ice slopes and two steeper mixed pitches brought us to the final ridge and summit. [The south ridge was partially descended by Denis Burdet and Stephan Siegrist (Switzerland) after their first ascent from the west. The 2011 team measured an altitude of 6,040m for the main summit, while the 2015 team quotes ca 5,820m for the same summit, but also commented on the difficulty of obtaining accurate altitude measurements in this region.] **The route was graded TD.**

We then split into two teams, the first planning to try an unclimbed peak of ca 6,100m (the next major peak on the ridge north of Kishtwar Kailash). This team established a camp on the moraine at 4,300m and then climbed a west-facing side glacier, beginning with a steep section exposed to objective danger. This was followed by less steep, ice-covered rock to a camp at 4,920m below an icefall with impressive seracs. Next day this ice slope (70°) was climbed in six pitches to reach the glacier plateau above, where a third camp was made. A 60° slope led to a broad 5,500m shoulder below the west-southwest face of the peak, leaving plenty of time to rest and study the face above.

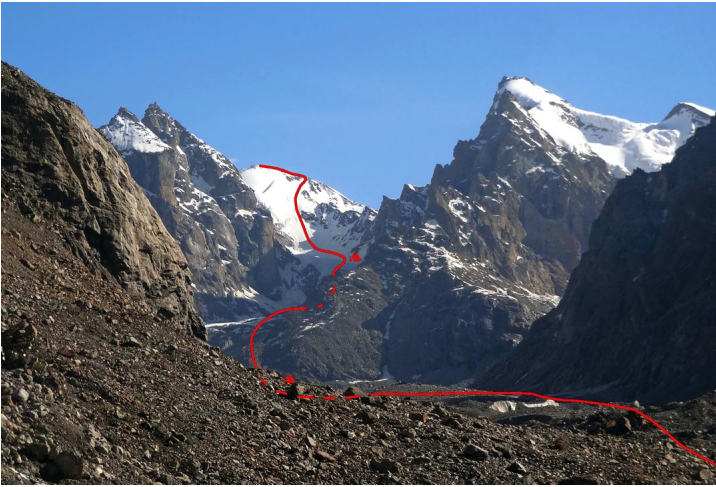
The following day, August 6, the team climbed the snowy face and then a snow/ice gully (60–70°), in surprisingly clear weather, to a final rocky section leading to the summit. The route was rappelled to top camp, and the next day base camp was regained, again after numerous rappels. The peak was named Manasuna (“Monsoon” in Hindi; 33°20′35.28″N, 76°38′6.30″E) in memory of the mostly wet weather experienced during the ascent. The grade was TD and the elevation measured at 5,965m, although we have no confidence in the accuracy.

Meanwhile, the other team made an exhausting walk over unstable moraine farther up the Chomochior Glacier, camping where a smaller glacier came in from the right. A short day then took them over more moraine slopes and through a serac band to a glacial plateau at 5,200m, below Peak ca 5,700m. On the 6th they climbed this summit, christened Lahara (“Wave,” 33°24′7.02″N, 76°38′11.56″E). They climbed the right side of the south face at PD (including 100m of 50–60° ice and a final snow ridge).

Before leaving the valley we made an attempt on Rohini Sikhar (5,990m, climbed once, by a Scottish team in 1989, via the southwest face, AAJ 1990), but a big stonefall on our planned route put an end to this idea. We used the remaining few days bolting several nice sport routes on a good granite crag close to base camp, an occupation that, in comparison with previous activities, we found quite relaxing. For more detailed information, please contact the expedition leader: maz_chevallier@hotmail.com.

Regis Meyrat and **Martin Luther**, Switzerland

Images



Lahara and route of ascent from the Chomochior Glacier to the south.



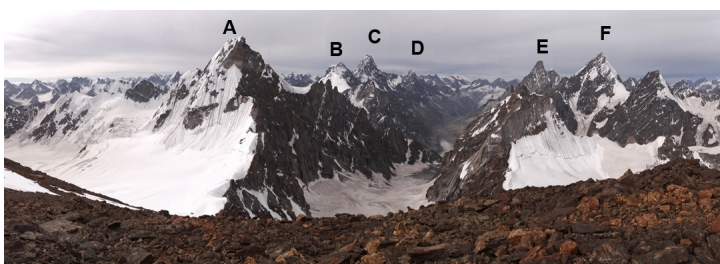
High on the west-southwest face of Manasuna. The top camp is just visible as a small speck in the middle of the snow shoulder below.



The rocky section below the summit of Manasuna. The top camp is just visible as a small speck in the middle of the snow shoulder below.



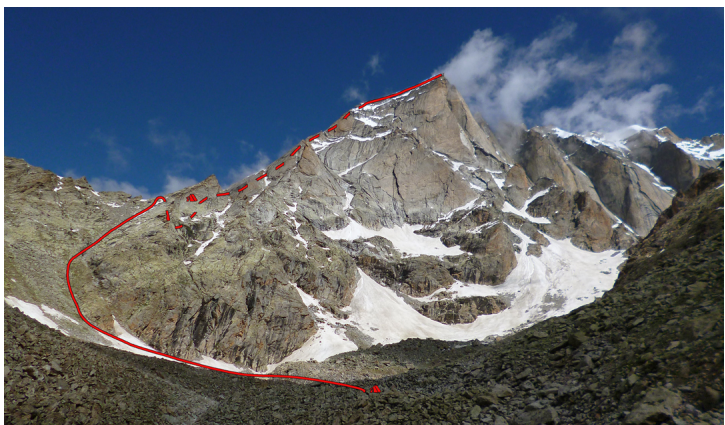
Manasuna from the west-southwest with the line of the first ascent. Kishtwar Kailash is just off picture to the right.



Looking south from Lahara. (A) Unnamed, unclimbed summit. (B) Manasuna. (C) Kishtwar Kailash. (D) Rohini Sikhar. (E) Cerro Kishtwar. (F) Chomochior.



High on the south ridge of White Sapphire. Below is a hanging side glacier above the Chomochior Valley.



The south ridge of White Sapphire.

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