



## AAC Publications

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### **Sami Sar (Peak 6,032m), North Ridge**

Pakistan, Karakoram, Ghujerab Mountains, Karun Koh Subgroup

**COVID-19 appeared to settle down during November, and Takuya Mitoro and I decided to go climbing overseas.** It would be our first trip for at least two years. With the summer season in the Karakoram already passed, we opted to try some winter ascents in the Karun Koh area.

Every time I attempted my dream mountain, Shispare (7,611m, climbed in 2017 on my fourth attempt; see AAJ 2018), I had gazed north at Karun Koh (variously 7,164m or 6,977m). To be honest, I had not gone there because most of the peaks in that area were below 7,000m. However, given the strong winds and cold temperature of the winter months, this lower area seemed the best place to restart our Karakoram exploration.

Researching the area more extensively, I discovered that Japanese climbers had twice attempted a 6,000m peak about 4km north of Karun Koh, in 2015 and 2016. Peak 6,032m (Peak 243 or Maqbul Sar on Jerzy Wala's sketch map of the Karun Koh Mountains) is at 36°38'55.58"N, 75°04'03.66"E. During the second attempt, Sami Ullah Khan, a climber from Pakistan, had lost his life.

Takuya and I left Japan on December 3 and trekked up the Unakin-i-Gur Valley to a base camp at the end of the tongue of the Unakin Glacier at around 4,200m. Although it was still outside the calendar winter, the temperature was already below -20°C. Over the next two days, we acclimatized by climbing the peak to 5,500m, then sat out a spell of bad weather at base camp. The fresh chicken and vegetables that we'd brought were more frozen than if they'd been stored in a freezer.

On the 16th we left camp with three days of food and fuel. We followed the route of the previous Japanese teams and made Camp 1 not far below the north ridge. Next day, after a cold night, we started our summit push at 5 a.m. We reached the ridge at 5,800m as sunrise dyed the surrounding peaks red. The final, steeper slope had 20cm of snow lying on ice so dense it was impossible to place an ice screw with one hand. We climbed this in seven pitches, with the temperature below -30°C. Being careful on the final corniced ridge, we reached the top at 12:45 p.m. We descended the same day, but unfortunately some frostbite injuries sustained during the climb prevented a subsequent attempt on Karun Koh.

We would like to dedicate this peak to Sami Ullah Khan, who remains on its flanks. We propose that the mountain be named Sami Sar, and hope this will be accepted in the hearts of all those involved with this peak. Jerzy Wala plans to adopt the new name on his map of this part of the Karun Koh Mountains.

— **Kazuya Hiraide, supplied by Shingo Fukuda/Ishii Sports, with additional help from Kaoru Wada, Japan**

**Earlier Attempts on Peak 6,032m:** Sami Sar (Peak 6,032m) was first attempted in 2015 by Japanese climbers Wataru Takasaki and Shintaro Yamamoto, along with the Pakistani guide Sami Ullah Khan. They climbed to around 5,600m on the north ridge before deciding they lacked the equipment to reach the summit. A year later, Takasaki returned with Ullah Khan and another local climber. On June 15, as Takasaki and Ullah Khan were moving unroped up the north ridge, a cornice collapsed and Ullah Khan

(36) fell to his death. A full report can be read [here](#).

## Images



Kazuya Hiraide (left) and Takuya Mitoro on December 17, 2021, just below the summit cornice of Sami Sar (Peak 6,032m).



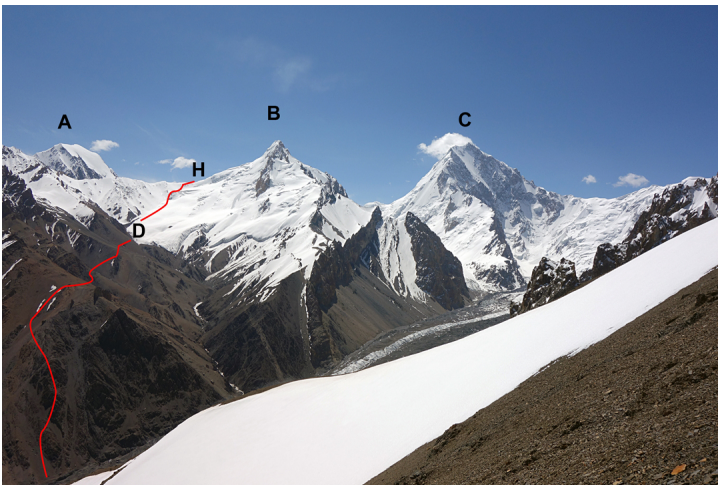
The Japanese route to Camp 1 and continuation up the north ridge of Sami Sar (Peak 6,032m).



Seen from the Unakin-i-Gir Valley are Sami Sar (left; last section of the north ridge visible left of the summit) and Karun Koh. The first and only ascent of Karun Koh (1984) reached the top by the last section of the right-hand (west-southwest) ridge.



Approaching the final seven-pitch ice slope of the north ridge leading to the summit of Sami Sar (Peak 6,032m).



A) Mario Sar (6,210m), climbed in 2019 by a Polish team. (B) Sami Sar (6,032m). (C) Karun Koh (7,164m/6,977m). The 2016 Japanese attempt, showing Camp 1 (C) and the high point (H), scene of an accident that killed Sami Ullah Khan. The 2021 expedition started from the valley to the right of the 2016 attempt, joined that route, and continued to the summit from a higher Camp 1.

## Article Details

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