



Sato Peak/Sharphu IV, East-southeast Ridge to Sato Pyramid

Nepal, Ohmi Kangri Himal

The initial objective for Silvia Loreggian and me was unclimbed Sharphu III (6,220m). However, a few days before departure, our agency in Nepal informed us it had just noticed that the height of the mountain was listed erroneously in the permit database as 6,885m. At that altitude the permit price was too expensive for us, so we opted for another objective, Sato Peak (6,164m), as designated by the Ministry of Tourism. [Over the years, the naming of the peaks in the Sharphu group has caused confusion. Sharphu IV, the fourth-highest and southernmost peak within the Sharphu group, is designated as Sato Peak by the Ministry. However, in 1962, a Japanese expedition climbed a 5,788m summit much further north (south of Nupchu) and gave that peak the name Sato.]

Research with satellite photos and maps led us to conclude the best approach would be from the east. With the help of two yaks, we followed the standard Kangchenjunga north-side trek as far as the entrance to the Kumbhakarna Glacier, just before reaching Kambachen. Here, we moved west up the Naphinda (Namphaba) Valley. Many years ago, our yak man had been up this valley and remembered a small stream close to the area where we envisaged placing base camp. There were no paths, and some steep slopes of landslide debris were taxing for the yaks. [This valley was visited previously, in 2017, by a Spanish expedition.]

Sato Peak was clearly visible from base camp. We placed an advanced base at 5,300m, just below the glacier. Our initial plan was to try the north face, but it held no trace of ice or névé, only unconsolidated snow. Instead, we opted for the east-southeast ridge.

Silvia Loreggian at advanced base. Behind is Sharphu I (6,433m), although the lower part of the mountain is concealed by Sharphu VI (6,158m) in front. Photo by Stefano Ragazzo

On October 31 we left advanced base at around 4:30 a.m., keeping to the left and icier side of the glacier. We reached the foot of the ridge and after a few attempts found the best place to start. Even in the steepest sections the snow didn't allow easy climbing, and we tried to follow rockier sections, even if the rock quality was poor.

After a six-hour climb of the ridge, we arrived on the foresummit or east top (6,100m). The main peak was little more than 100m distant, but we would first need to descend then zigzag between seracs to reach the final ridge. Snow conditions were still bad, so we concluded our route on the foresummit, which we called Sato Pyramid. We reversed the line of ascent by a combination of downclimbing and rappelling, reaching the glacier in last light. We named the new route Kalypso (600m, UIAA V M4), after a nymph in Homer's book, *The Odyssey*, which we read at base camp. We also felt like prisoners of love: not for the nymph, but for the mountains that continue to motivate us to create new projects.

— Stefano Ragazzo, Italy

Images



Kalypso on the east-southeast ridge of Sato Pyramid, the east top of Sato Peak/Sharphu IV.



Silvia Loreggian on the last section of the east-southeast ridge of Sato Pyramid. (A) Drohmo (6,881m). (B) Pathibara Chuli (7,140m). (C) Kirat Chuli (7,362m). (D) Nepal Peak (7,177m). (E) Gimmigela Chuli (7,350m). (F) Kangchenjunga (8,586m). (G) Jannu (7,711m).



Silvia Loreggian on the lower section of the east-southeast ridge of Sato Pyramid. Below is an unnamed glacier, and behind lie the peaks south of Jannu.



Stefano Ragazzo on Kalypso, east-southeast ridge of Sato Pyramid.



Stefano Ragazzo on the east-southeast ridge of Sato Pyramid.



Base Camp in the Naphinda Valley with (A) Merra (6,334m), (B) Kangbachen (7,902m), (C) Jannu (7,711m), (D) Sobithongie (6,652m), (E) Pholi (6,645m), and (F) Kyabura (6,332m).



Silvia Loreggian at advanced base. Behind is Sharphu I (6,433m), although the lower part of the mountain is concealed by Sharphu VI (6,158m) in front.

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