

Gulia, approached via the village of Sumdo and the Ribil Phu Valley. They established base camp at 5,200m and a higher camp at 5,900m. From there they followed the west ridge to the top to make the second ascent of the peak.

Kula was first climbed in 1997 by Tsuneo Suzuki's Japanese team, which also approached via the Ribil Phu to the small glacier north of the mountain. The Japanese first climbed the glacier toward the summit, but as it seemed avalanche prone, they headed for the west ridge. They reached the crest and followed brittle rock (fixing a short amount of rope) to reach a final ice slope, which eased in angle to the summit. It took six hours from Camp 2 at 5,800m to the top. The Indians may have followed this route or made a minor variant by climbing the ridge more directly.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

HIMACHAL PRADESH

LAHAUL

Pangi Valley, Shib Shankar. A five-member Japanese expedition, led by Shoji Sakamoto, applied to the IMF for a permit to climb Shib Shankar (a.k.a. Sersank), a 6,000m peak immediately south of 5,239m Sersank Pass at the head of the Lugai Nala (valley). This pass links the Darlang Nala in Kishtwar to the Pangi valley but has become difficult to cross due to a complex icefall on the east side. Shib Shankar, which lies north of 6,142m Shivu, the main peak in the Pangi region, was attempted in 2007 via the northwest ridge by a British party (*AAJ 2008*). However, the IMF told the Japanese, "There's no mountain called Shib Shankar on our map." A permit was issued for an unnamed peak of 5,525m, but the IMF added, "If you find this Shib Shankar, you're free to climb it." On July 11, the expedition established base camp at 4,160m below the west flank of the mountain. Two days later members established an advanced base at 4,360m on the right bank of the glacier, and then on the 18th, Camp 1 at 5,050m on a rock ridge on the west face. On the following day Hidetaka Iizuka, Kazuo Kozu, and Reiko Maruyama, with three high altitude porters—Gisidhas (Ganu), Kamlesh Kumar (Lagu), and Vilendes Singh (Bill)—continued above the rock ridge to the crest of the southwest ridge, which they followed to the summit. They didn't reach the highest point but stopped 40m below the final rock outcrop in respect for the religious concerns of the local people. They recorded a height of 6,011m (GPS) and estimate that the true summit is ca 6,050m

TSUNEMICHI IKEDA, *for the Japanese Alpine News*

MIYAR VALLEY

Overview, history, and naming. The Miyar, north of the Chenab River at Udaipur, has evolved into one of the most popular Himalayan destinations for alpine rock climbers. Serious exploration first started here 40 years ago, and three main high peaks, Menthosa (6,444m), Phabrang (6,172m) and Gangstang (6,162m), have received sporadic attention. However, it wasn't until the early 1990s that a group of Italian rock climbers, encouraged by reports from previous trekkers, began to develop the excellent alpine climbing, particularly fine granite rock routes on sub-6,000m towers in the valleys that flow west into the Miyar just below the glacier snout. Italian pioneers named a few of these valleys, and these were used in older reports. Several years ago a British expedition discovered local names, which are used below. To avoid confusion, the four main valleys on the east side of the Miyar are now named, from north to south, Jangpar