

*Bhrikuti Sail and Lugula Range, history and confusion.* Bhrikuti Sail is one of many summits of a similar height in the Lugula Range, situated on a long ridge that runs approximately west-northwest from Lugula itself and ending with the various 6,300m summits of the Kumlun Himal. This area of Nepal was opened to climbers in 1982, and that year Karuo Kikuchi gained a permit for a joint Japanese-Nepalese expedition to Bhrikuti. A reconnaissance convinced the Japanese that an approach from Manang in the south was unfeasible, so they took a much longer approach, coming in from the west and establishing base camp to the north of the range close to the Damodar Kunda, a collection of small lakes that form a noted pilgrimage site. While finding that the maps were completely wrong, they placed two camps on what they deemed to be Bhrikuti and summited via the west ridge.

From then until 2002, at least seven expeditions claimed to have summited Bhrikuti from the north, though several were not convinced that their Bhrikuti was the same as others'. They also realized that all available maps were wrong about basic locations, such as Damodar Kunda. In the late 1990s the launch of the HGM-Finn maps kept up the confusion, despite being the most up-to-date survey of the country's mountainous regions and the standard cartographic reference to the Nepal Himalaya. Bhrikuti Sail is now officially designated on the ridge west of Lugula, but Damodar Kunda is still inaccurately marked 9km north of its true location. Referencing mountains to these lakes has continued to cause confusion, leading Australian and Spanish parties to climb an unnamed peak in 2003 by mistake, instead of a 6,110m peak named Gaugiri on the Tibetan border farther north.

In 2005 Paolo Grobel's French expedition became likely the first to approach Bhrikuti from the south via Phu. Grobel later concluded that his ascent was the first of Bhrikuti, a claim supported by Abbotts from the recent British-Australian expedition. Now that Abbotts has been on both sides of the Bhrikuti-Lugula range, he can see that it would be easy to attempt the wrong summit from the Damodar Kunda.

So how many ascents has the enigmatic Bhrikuti Sail received? The general feeling is that most parties coming from the north attempted the wrong peak. If true, this turns the Lugula Range into one of the most mysterious in Nepal, with nobody completely certain about what has, or has not, been climbed.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*

*Bhrikuti base camp rubbish.* On arrival at base camp the British-Australian expedition was dismayed to find copious amounts of rubbish strewn around this pristine area. They collected a 25kg compressed-gas bottle and about nine porter-loads of trash, including 10 empty Coleman gas cartridges, empty tins, packaging, white sacks, and general debris, with food labels and magazines in Japanese. As they were traversing the Damodar Range, they were able to send only two porters back with rubbish. The rest they sacked up cached at base camp. It later became apparent that the trash could only have come from the 10-member Mountain Federation of Kanagawa party from Japan, led by Tatsumine Makino, that made the first ascent of Chako (6,704m) in 2007 (AAJ 2008) and used the base camp.

On leaving base camp the Japanese, in accordance with the rules, burned burnables, buried biodegradable food scraps, and packed up the rest of the garbage, which they took down to Phu using porters hired for the purpose. They obtained a signed chit from the headman in Phu to confirm their garbage disposal and collected their environmental bond on return to Kathmadu. However, the Japanese had also sold a considerable amount of material to locals at