

Shigri Glacier, Labul. The all-woman Abinger expedition, under the leadership of Mrs. Joyce Dunsheath, and composed also of the Misses Delaney, Gregory, and Reid, spent the second half of May and June 1956 at the head of the Chandra valley on Shigri Glacier, above which they climbed six peaks between 19,000 and 20,000 feet.

Fifth Ascent of Trisul, Garhwal, and ascents in Labul. The Bavarian brothers, Adolf and Fritz Hieber, and the Bombay lawyer, Keki Bunshah, with Sherpa Gyalzen Minchung (H. C. No. 163) and his brother Wangdi, were active in the mountains just south of the Rishi Nala in June 1956. After two unsuccessful attempts, Bunshah and Gyalzen reached the top of Trisul, 23,360 feet, on June 12. Five days later the Hiebers and both Sherpas repeated the ascent. With the Englishman John Albiston, they attempted 22,490-foot Mrigthuni on the southern rim of the Nanda Devi basin. Bunshah and the Hiebers attempted Bethartholi's northeast ridge, Fritz Hieber and Gyalzen reaching the south peak, 20,729 feet, of this 20,840-foot mountain. Bad weather drove the party off Devistan, 21,500 feet, after they had reached about 19,500 feet on the west face.

In the same region Gurdial Singh's expedition to Mrigthuni was brought to a tragic end when N. Chuckerbutty died from illness July 14.

After the beginning of the monsoon, the Hiebers and Albiston visited Lahul, where they climbed what they describe as the main peak of the Kulti valley, 19,791 feet, and six mountains over 16,400 feet.

Saser Kangri. Saser Kangri, 25,170 feet, lies on the eastern end of the Karakoram, north of Leh. This was unsuccessfully attempted by an expedition early in the summer of 1956. The group from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was under the leadership of Major Narendra J. Jayal. The west face of the mountain appeared too dangerous and the approaches to the eastern side were impossible, apparently because of high water or glaciers and difficult high passes.

Pakistan

First ascent of the Mustagh Tower, Northwest Arête. Under the leadership of John M. Hartog, the British Baltoro Expedition 1956 made the first ascent of Mustagh Tower, 23,860 feet. The other members of the party were Ian G. McNaught-Davis, Joe Brown, Dr. T. W. Patey. Liaison officer was Captain Riaz Mohammad, of the Pakistan Engineers. Four Hunza porters were recruited for high altitude work and were flown over from Gilgit, but were dismissed at Urdokas, 13,310 feet, as they were unwilling to work. The best four of the Baltis were promoted to high altitude porters and did splendidly.

Base Camp was installed at 14,050 feet, May 28, on Mustagh Glacier a mile and a half from its junction with Baltoro Glacier. Camps I, 15,850 feet, and II, 17,500 feet, were established in the first half of June on Chagarau Glacier, whose lower séracs were avoided by climbing the moraine to the north. Where this petered out into steep rock slabs, swept with avalanches and stonefall, a route was found among séracs and up the icefall, here less steep. Between camps I and II the glacier is much crevassed. Camp III was at 20,850 feet, on the actual west col of Mustagh Tower, at the top of a very steep ice wall, 1,900 feet high, sometimes swept by stonefall. This ice wall south of the col was the first major difficulty; it was ascended as directly as possible to the rocky cliff below the col, up which an 80-foot open chimney led directly to the camp. The top thousand feet of this section of the route was equipped with fixed rope so that porters and laden climbers could ascend and descend in maximum security, even in poor weather. The col was first reached June 16, but only occupied from June 30, when three tents, fuel, and food for 65 man-days, and other gear had arrived. Water was available here in a pool under some ice. Camp IV was placed at 21,125 feet on the crest of the west ridge. The great rise between Camps III and IV is the hardest part of the route, comparable, had it been 10,000 feet lower, with the great climbs on the Brenva face of Mont Blanc. The south face of the mountain is overhanging rock; the north face consists of snow, ice, and hanging glaciers. The boundary of these two faces offered a route which though very exposed and "mixed," was finally climbed on the third day it was attempted. It took time to clear the iced rocks and fix the ropes with which the route was equipped. Without this safeguard, it would have been unjustifiable. Just below the top of this section there is a 100-foot high cliff running right across the ridge. Brown turned this, traversing out on the south face, around a sensational corner. Above Camp III, the party formed two ropes of two. This pure rock-climbing on the final cliff was done "free," but to avoid it on the descent, a fixed rope (single strand nylon line) was thrown down the cliff for an abseil. Over 1000 feet of fixed rope were placed in this section, all in one length tied together and fastened to pegs at 50-foot intervals.

Above Camp IV, the route lay on the north face, avoiding overhanging rocks of the south face (which stretch for some distance across the arête) by a couloir, three feet of powder snow lying non-adherently on ice. After 200 feet of this dangerous treadmill, the way lay up more open snow and ice to the here stabler rocks of the south face (equivalent to alpine grade

III) for three ropes' lengths. The final major difficulty to be ascended is a leaf of rock between the summits, only ten feet high, but alpine grade V. Here the exposure was 8000 feet to the north and 6000 feet to the south. Another 150 horizontal feet of a very acute-angled snow arête led to the top. A piton was inserted at the top of the rock leaf to act as a belay, and to fix an abseil on the descent. Both ropes had to bivouac on the way down, above Camp IV. John Hartog's toes were frostbitten. The summits (West, 23,850, and East, 23,860 feet) were reached on the 6th and 7th of July, each rope supporting the other. All the climbing members of the party got up. The four high altitude porters and the liaison officer did not go above Camp III. Weather followed the alpine pattern. Fifty percent of the days were bad. Three rock pinnacles, between 19,000 and 20,000 feet, behind Base Camp were ascended by some of the members of our party.

JOHN M. HARTOG, *Alpine Club*

Second ascent of the Mustagh Tower, Eastern Arête. While the British were attacking the Mustagh Tower from one side, a strong French party under Guido Magnone was on another, consisting of André Contamine, Paul Keller, Robert Paragot, and Dr. Francois Florence, with Captain Ali Usman as Pakistani liaison officer. The French ascended the Young-husband Glacier which descends from the north into the Baltoro. Base Camp was established at 14,750 feet June 12. After reconnoitering the western fork of the glacier to a col at 18,400 feet, they saw that the north ridge was utterly impossible. They attacked the eastern branch of the glacier, which was difficult but possible. Camp I was at 16,750 feet, above a ropeway that was installed on the rocks to bypass a steep icefall. Camp II was higher on the glacier, at 17,700 feet. Here the attack on the mountain itself lay up a rock- and ice-spur to Camp III at 19,700 feet. Four hundred meters of fixed ropes were used in this section. Camp IV was at 20,675 feet, at the base of the summit pyramid. It took the climbers two days to work out a route from their high camp up the 800 feet to the summit ridge. It was then, just before a two-day snowstorm, that they had the disheartening sight of the British climbers on the summit. Fixed ropes allowed them to regain the summit ridge July 11 in only $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours, but difficulties were so great, especially on two great rock towers, that by 4 P.M., they had only reached the base of the final tower. There, at about 23,000 feet, they bivouacked. They felt that the last part of the climb was less difficult, but deep snow, which was in danger of avalanching, made it arduous. They reached the summit at 1 P.M. July 12, and finished their descent to Camp IV in the dark.