

of the Central Rimo Glacier, setting up four camps as far as the foot of Col Italia. En route were seen "Lake Dainelli" and the snout of the North Rimo Glacier (the international boundary). After a day of bad weather, Col Italia was reached on August 23 by Harish Kapadia, Kaivan Mistry, Huzefa Electricwala, and Sherpas Pemba Tsering and Karma. The Col is a seven-by-seven-kilometer plateau, and the expedition members were able to overlook the legendary "Raider's Cols 1 and 2" toward the Shaksgam Pass.

They returned to Camp I on August 25. On the 26th, the Sherpas Huzefa, Nima, and Karma made the first ascent of Migpa (5935m) and obtained a view of both the glaciers. The expedition returned by the same route to Sasoma on September 2 and to Leh on September 4.

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NEPAL

Nepal, Bureaucratic Developments. The Nepal Mountaineering Association has recommended that 15 new peaks be opened for climbing. Approval has been obtained from several ministries, but the Home Affairs Office is still holding the matter under consideration. Also, endorsement by national clubs for climbing in Nepal is no longer required.

WESTERN NEPAL

UPPER DOLPO

Gautam Himal and Palchung Hamga Himal, Exploration, Previously Unreported. One goal of our 1999 journey to Dolpo was to reveal the topographical detail of the border range, now called the Gautam Himal, including research of all the passes of northern Dolpo. The Gautam Himal is demarcated from Sana La Bhangjyang (5465m), which is very close to and west of Arnikochuli (6034m) in the Mustang Himal, northwest to Laru Bhangjyang (5239m). The border peaks are almost all nameless and by and large do not exceed 6000 meters. The main goal of our expedition was to explore the Palchung Hamga Himal Range, which is defined as running from Laru Bhanjyang to the northwesternmost point of Dolpo, Peak 6263m (29° 41' 20" N, 82° 49' 40" E).

The Palchung Hamga Himal Range had rarely been explored and almost all the peaks in the range are unknown. The most prominent and highest peak of the range, Daphe Shail or Palchung Hamga (29° 40' 20" N, 83° 00' 32" E), is given an altitude of 6103 meters on the recent Nepalese maps, but this figure is considered to be too low. Daphe Shail can be seen from most places on mountain ridges or inner passes in the western Dolpo. In the western part of the Palchung Hamga Himal, most of the peaks exceed 6000 meters in altitude.

The next mountain chain toward the west on the border is the Kanti Himal group, the highest peak of which is 6859 meters. This range was explored twice by Osaka Alpine Club expeditions in 1997 and 1998 (see the Japanese Alpine Club journal *Sangaku*, Vol. 94, 1999).

By June 11, 1999, we had entered into Upper Dolpo by way of Jomsom, Tuje La, Chharka, Moh La, and Tinkyu. We planned to ascend all passes on the border successively, but, in the end, we left our footprints on a total of seven out of the 11 passes in three weeks. A rocky unnamed peak (6024m, 29° 39' 37" N, 83° 08' 31" E), located to the east of Lung

Chung Kamo Bhangjyan (5393m, 29° 37' 15" N, 83° 07' 47" E) in the eastern part of the Palchung Hanga Himal, was climbed to get a panoramic view from the summit. Three well-known eastern passes were omitted from the program and the westernmost unknown pass on the border, which is scarcely known even among the locals, was abandoned because of the difficulty of access from the south. However, this pass is considered the most desirable access from the east to Daphe Shail.

Here I have to mention something about the correct topography of the Palchung Hanga Himal. Although Daphe Shail and other high peaks of the Palchung Hanga Himal do lie on the border of Nepal and Tibet, the highest peak of the group, Peak 6529m, is located about 1.2 kilometers north on the ridge extending into Tibet, and is clearly outside the border. From most of the inhabited highlands of western Dolpo, Peak 6529m and Daphe Shail overlap and are seen as a single predominant peak. I could distinguish them clearly, however, by glancing from three directions, east (Lung Chung Kamo Bhangjyang), south (the passes near Shey) and southwest (on the way to Yala La).

On July 2, exhausted and nearly starving, we descended to Nisal from the border area and finished the first stage of our activity. The entire expedition gathered at Shey Gompa, and, on July 14, the main party started their return trek to Jumla, arriving there on July 24.

The remaining members of the group began a reconnaissance of the border range from Poe to Mugu, going along the south side of the Kanti Himal. North of Panjang Khola, and three days north from Shey Gompa, one finds Poe, the innermost small village of Dolpo. From Poe, a poor track leads to the Mugu district. We climbed up along Swachha Khola to the snout of the glacier that flows down from one of the peaks of the border range. We crossed Yala La (5425m, 29° 39' 10" N, 83° 49' 40" E) on July 19. At the top of the pass, new peaks on the border attracted us. One of the peaks (6455m, 29° 41' 23" N, 83° 52' 25" E) had been climbed by a German-Austrian expedition in 1993 (see *AAJ* 1994, p. 227).

The highest of this group (6505m, 29° 41' 23" N, 83° 53' 10" E) lies 1.7 kilometers east of the Germans and Austrians' 6455-meter peak. There are five or six peaks (including those in Tibet) of 6200 to 6500 meters in this group, with abundant snow and glaciers on both sides of the border. Apart from the one mentioned above, none of the peaks have been attempted. These peaks were sketched in 1907 by Sven Hedin from the north (*Southern Tibet*, "Panorama from camp 193," p. 252) and can be seen from Paryan on the motor road between Lhasa and Puran along the Tsangpo River.

From Yala La, we suddenly entered the world of green forests and bushes, extremely different from the scenery we were used to in Dolpo. Traversing westward on the south side of Kanti Himal, we reached Ghora La (5182m), then ran down into the jungle along Chhang Khola.

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Changwatang and Nalakankar, First Ascents, and Exploration of the Chandi, Nalakankar and Takphu Himal. We were granted climbing permission for Nalakankar, but ours was the first expedition to the peak since 1963. Why? In the revised Climbing Regulations of 1989, Nalakankar is ranked in the "A" group, which means that an expedition must involve at least three Nepalese. Other factors that have dissuaded climbers for nearly four decades are that Nalakankar's height (6062m) is extremely low; such a remote objective entails excessive cost; and Nalakankar's name, which, though it sounds nice, means "human skeleton."

Three climbing friends and I started our trek toward Nalakankar from Simikot on June 4. We began by approaching eastward from Takche Karka along its northeastern tributary