

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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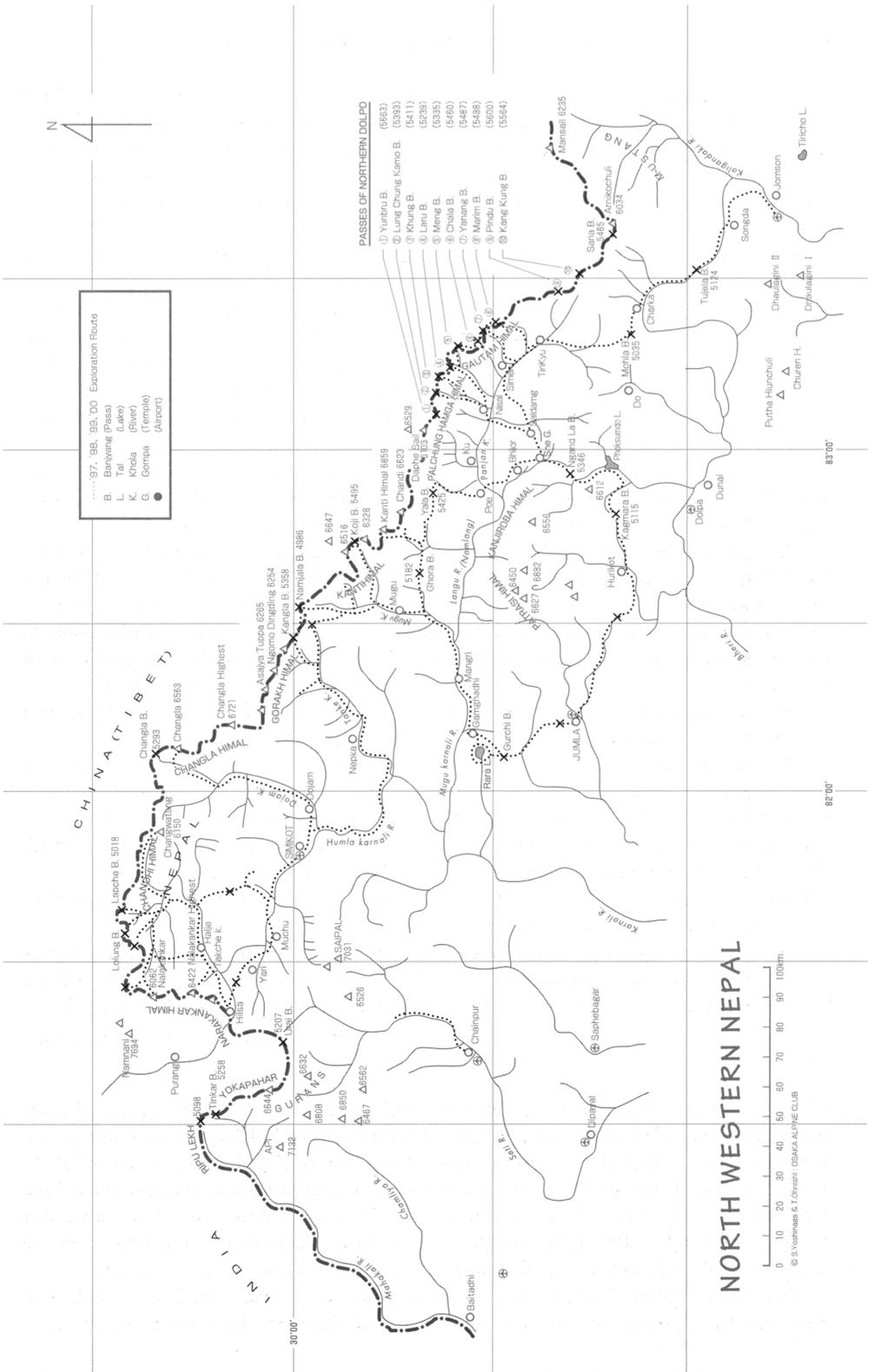
*Changwatang and Nalakankar, First Ascents, and Exploration of the Chandi, Nalakankar and Takphu Himal.* We were granted climbing permission for Nalakankar, but ours was the first expedition to the peak since 1963. Why? In the revised Climbing Regulations of 1989, Nalakankar is ranked in the "A" group, 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



..... 97, 98, 99, 00 Exploration Route

B. Banyang (Pass)  
 L. Tal (Lake)  
 K. Khola (River)  
 G. Gompa (Temple)  
 ● (Airport)



- PASSES OF NORTHERN DOLPO**
- ① Yumbu B. (6633)
  - ② Lung Chung Kamo B. (5393)
  - ③ Khung B. (5411)
  - ④ Laru B. (5238)
  - ⑤ Meng B. (5335)
  - ⑥ Chala B. (5460)
  - ⑦ Yanang B. (5487)
  - ⑧ Marim B. (5488)
  - ⑨ Pindu B. (5600)
  - ⑩ Kang Kung B. (5954)

# NORTH WESTERN NEPAL



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(Taisolu Khola), and, on June 26, established base camp at the frozen Taisolu Lake (5400m) on the divide between Taisolu Khola and Ning Khola. Ning Khola is one of the sources of the Dojam Khola of the Changla Himal, which had been explored by our expedition two years before. The next day, we placed a high camp at 5738 meters on the way to a peak called Changwatang (6150m, 30° 19' 35" N, 81° 53' 17" E). Starting from our high camp early the next morning, we stood on the top of this charming snow peak at noon.

Though the weather was unstable, from the summit we were able to identify the highest peaks of the Chandhi Himal: Kananu Pukari (6256m, 30° 20' 32" N, 82° 00' 27" E) and Changla (6563m, 30° 18' 11" N, 82° 07' 44" E) far to the east. To the north and northwest, along the Taisolu Khola, there are several border peaks exceeding 6000 meters, but the alpine nature of the peaks of the southern group that surround the Ling Khola (which remains completely unexplored) made them seem rather preferable to those of the northern divide between Nepal and Tibet.

We crossed the border passes of Lapche La (5018m), Lolung La (4953m), and a 4953-meter unnamed pass, enjoying fantastic views of Manasarowar Lake and Mt. Kailas to the north and north-northwest in the distance. Repeatedly crossing the cold waters of the Saja Khola, we advanced to the west along Gya Khola to establish our base camp for Nalakankar at 5250 meters in the upper stream of a mostly dried up lake. We could see the gigantic east face of Naimona'nyi (a.k.a. Gurla Mandhata, 7694m) before us. From here, an easy one-and-a-half days' walk brings one over Nalakankar Bhangjyang (5514m) to Manasarowar Lake.

Climbing the Nalakankar (6062m, 30° 21' 27" N, 81° 23' 58" E) for which we had received permission was quite easy but confusing. On July 6, while some of the reconnaissance party was finding a route to the south col, they unexpectedly found themselves on the summit, without having used climbing boots or any other climbing gear. The summit ridge was almost free from snow and very easy. The next day, with a climbing friend and two Sherpas, I enjoyed a direct route of the icy east face of a peak to the south. We began to call this the official Nalakankar. In fact, this South Peak (6024m, 30° 21' 15" N, 81° 24' 20" E) is a neighboring peak that lies 0.7 kilometers southeast of the Nalakankar for which we had received permission. It is covered with more snow and ice. The remaining members of the expedition, slightly climbing dotards all, enthusiastically joined in the first ascent of the peak via its north ridge.

After the climbs in the Nalakankar group, we turned our attentions farther south to the Takphu Himal, the highest peak of which (30° 15' 05" N, 81° 23' 31" E) is 6422 meters. For ten days, we made a reconnaissance of this peak, but an attempt was prevented by the huge ice cliffs of the hanging glaciers. We crossed the Gya Khola at a confluence of its southern fork, and climbed up to a high, vast plateau with three beautiful lakes. Although our long trek at over 5000 meters was comfortable and very pleasant, the grand view we had expected of the entire Takphu Himal was unfortunately hidden by a thick cloud cover. We crossed a pass at the eastern foot of Til Kang (6369m, 30° 16' 27" N, 81° 24' 16" E), then descended to Halji, the largest village of the Limi Valley. We enjoyed a couple of days in Halji, as well as in Jang and Til, two other Tibetan villages of the Limi Valley. These villages are unexpectedly modernized: we were astonished when we were invited into the clean rooms of their houses and welcomed with tea and some pieces of chocolate! However, we were impressed enough by their traditional Buddhist faith, their rather aristocratic appearance, and their high manner.

At Simikot, our eight-week-long journey around the far northwestern part of Nepal came to an end.