

not unfavourably on its possibilities, but we abandoned it owing to the apparent danger of ice avalanches sweeping the traverse. The weather in September, 1965 was exceptionally fine. This facilitated the fly in, which would have been difficult, if not impossible, under true monsoon conditions. The flights were completed by September 7 and Base was established at 13,000 feet by the 12th. The party generally followed the 1962 route. Camps were established at 15,500 feet (Glacier Base), at 17,600 feet (Camp I) and at 19,000 feet (Camp II and Advanced Base). From the latter it was decided to attempt to reach the south ridge, which seen from the air seemed to present few difficulties, by climbing the ice shoulder on the southwest flank of the summit pyramid. Since October 6, however, there had been a deterioration in the weather, with cloudy days, afternoon snowfalls and high winds; snow conditions on the steeper slopes were difficult, tedious and dangerous. Camp III at the foot of the buttress was established at 20,400 feet on October 12 and 14. In an attempt to climb higher on the 15th, the snow conditions were bad and soon after leaving camp, two Sherpas were carried down by a large windslab avalanche, fortunately without injury. It seemed to Sims, who was directing operations, that the whole of the steeper parts of the west side were dangerous under prevailing conditions. At this time most members and Sherpas were at Camp III, which was well stocked. Given good snow conditions, the party was well placed for a successful ascent. I can not agree with some of the party, apparently misled by the foreshortened appearance from Camp III of slopes leading to the south ridge, that the ascent under good conditions would offer few technical difficulties. Unfortunately the alternate, traverse route was not even examined, and everyone returned to Camp II on October 16. On the 17th and 18th ascents were made of Ghustung Himal (21,200 feet), first climbed by our 1962 expedition. A heavy snowfall began on the afternoon of the 18th and the party had a hard time fighting its way down to the safety of Glacier Base on the 20th and 21st. The decision of October 15 to abandon the attempt may have been premature, but subsequent heavy snowfalls, which consolidate slowly on west and north slopes in the autumn, ensured that the final result would have been the same. We reached Pokhara on November 11. The weather during the last week of the march out remained brilliantly and ironically fine.

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Bhutan

Exploration of the Sources of the Punakha River. An interesting article on little-explored Bhutan appears in the June, 1965 *Alpine Journal*. Michael

Ward and F. S. Jackson explored the upper reaches of the Punakha River and the Bhutan Himal which it drains. They made the ascent of a high rock peak, which they called Peak St. George, which lies in the Rodofu group.

India

Kulu. An Army Mountaineering Association party in Kulu was beset by last-minute political difficulties, which are becoming a sad but familiar feature of climbing in India. As a result we had to reduce the size of the party and change objectives from unclimbed 21,000-foot peaks of the upper Parbati valley to the well-trodden Malana and Tos *nullabs* (valley). Access proved arduous because of the late snowfall on three passes and the mutinous behavior of Tibetan refugee porters we unwisely employed on May 16 for the march to Base Camp in the Malana *nullab*. On May 29 Robert Langford, Wangyal, Zangbo and I made the first ascent of Ramchukor Peak (17,025 feet) in the east containing wall of the Ali Ratni Tibba East Glacier. We climbed it via the glacier, easy névés and the splendid snow arête of the north ridge. Later C. J. Henty, with Palgaon and Zangbo, climbed the northernmost peak of the group, P 16,800 feet. In the *Himalayan Journal*, 1933, page 83, A.P.F. Hamilton refers to the Sara Umga Pass, which once carried the ancient trade route from Ladakh to Rampur-Bashahr in the Sutlej valley, as being now unused, not less than 16,000 feet high and probably difficult. We reached it on June 3. It was hard to scale the steep north bank of the deeply entrenched west stream of the Tos Glacier to enter the pass from the south, but conditions would alter radically in the post-monsoon season when the pass probably opened each year for a brief period. Its height by aneroid barometer was 16,025 feet. This is possibly the first crossing of the Sara Umga La by mountaineers. Later we made camp for six days on the *Chota Shigri Glacier* leading north to Phuti Runi on the true left bank of the Chandra river in Lahul (not the *Bara Shigri* as suggested by Hamilton). From the pass, Langford, Zangbo, Wangyal and I reconnoitered on June 9 the approaches from the south to P 21,165 feet (Papsura) and its northwesterly outlier, P 20,300, both prominent unclimbed peaks in the northern end of the Kulu-Bara Shigri divide. We climbed the northernmost of two tributary glaciers, which, though steeper, was less exposed to the ice which fell from the upper shelf of their common névé. The reconnaissance camp was on an 18,013-foot col, overlooking a glacial cwm which drains first north and then west into the lower *Chota Shigri Glacier* and is surrounded on three sides by precipitous walls. This cwm