

*P 20,970, Kiar Nalla, Kishtwar Himal.* Our expedition made the first ascent of P 20,970, previously unclimbed and unnamed, during September and October. The mountain is the highest of several unclimbed peaks on the north side of the Kiar Nalla. We met with many frustrations in the early part of the expedition, such as a six-day wait before porters became available in one village and finding it necessary to construct a Tyrolean traverse across a raging torrent between Base Camp and Advanced Base. The summit was reached on October 7 by Roy May, solo, after his companions on the summit bid, Roger Thurrow and Peter Macdonald turned back because of a harrowing slab avalanche close to the top. Meanwhile six other members were attempting Sickie Moon (21,570 feet), only once previously ascended by a 26-man Indian Army expedition. We chose a new route on the northwest (Sarbal Glacier) face. The final summit push was made between October 8 and 10 by Martin Bennett, Bill Hodgson, Robin Andrews and me, supported by Arthur Grout and Peter Thompson. Rock difficulties of severe standard and ice pitches up to Scottish grade IV meant slow progress. On the third day we reached 19,000 feet where the rock-and-ice rib abuts the west ridge. Although we were above the major difficulties, with a lot of ground to cover, worsening weather and little food and fuel, a retreat was inevitable.

STUART HEPBURN, *Carlisle Mountaineering Club, England*

*Barnaj II, South Peak.* An eight-man Japanese expedition led by Nobuyoshi Kubo had permission to climb Barnaj I. After getting to Base Camp at 13,125 feet in the Barnaji Nala on May 22, they gave up the idea of climbing Barnaj I because of three dangerous hanging glaciers. They worked out a route on the glacier under the west face of Barnaj II (20,637 feet), hoping to traverse the ridge from Barnaj II to Barnaj I. However the liaison officer forbade them to go ahead with the traverse, saying the permission was only for Barnaj I. They established Camps I, II and III at 15,425, 17,225 and 18,875 feet on May 26, June 2 and 11 respectively. All members and the liaison officer climbed P 6150 (20,177 feet) and P 6170 (20,243 feet) on June 13 and 14. Although the liaison officer reported to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation that they had climbed Barnaj I, the maps show the latter peak to be west of Barnaj II. The peaks they climbed were south of Barnaj II and slightly short of its summit.

*Barnaj II Attempt.* We attempted Barnaj II (20,800 feet), an unclimbed mountain in the Padar region of Jammu-Kashmir, close to the Ladakh border. Between August 29 and September 2 Jim Curran, Geoff Smith and I moved by mule from Kishtwar to Machail (c. 9900 feet). Smith and I then travelled about 40 miles round-trip to explore the eastern approach to Barnaj II via the 16,500-foot Hagshu La, a pass into Ladakh.

We reached the pass on September 4 in good weather, where we saw Barnaj II still several miles distant. The eastern approach was unlikely to be easy with porters and we risked being snowed in beyond the pass. Deep snow is not unusual in late September. Thus we plumped for the west approach and returned to Machail by September 5. The expedition, which also included Amargeet Singh Chabbewal, John Escott, Geoff Tier, Rick Walters and Bob Toogood, was now fully assembled. We set off up the Barnaji Nala on September 7. Smith and I went on, reached the glacier snout in the rain after a six-hour walk and explored both banks of the glacier to find a good Base Camp site. Base Camp was established at 14,500 feet on September 8. Atrocious weather delayed ferrying loads there. A clearing on September 12 allowed six of us to break trail up the glacier to Camp I and dump gear on a snow plateau above, but we were driven down by another three-day storm. On September 16 another clearing allowed us to reopen the path to Camp I. In the next two days we crossed the plateau, climbed an avalanche-swept couloir and fixed rope to its top at 18,000 feet. In even worse weather on the 20th Smith, Tier, Curran and I set up Camp II at 18,600 feet just under the south ridge of the foresummit. Bob Walters and John Excott had to leave because of ill health. We tried to climb the ridge on the 21st but were defeated by a severe storm at ten A.M. The next day Smith and Tier made a bold effort in the blizzard, climbed to the ridge and up to 19,300 feet. On the 23rd and 24th there was no easing of the bad weather and with dangerous masses of snow accumulating, we retreated.

PAUL NUNN, *Alpine Club*

*Gharol, Kishtwar Himal.* Members of a 20-man team from the Signals Regiment of the Northern Indian Command led by Major A. Roy scaled this peak (19,888 feet) in the Kishtwar region on October 8.

KAMAL K. GUHA, *Himalayan Club*

*Peaks in Ladakh and Kashmir.* During July Geoff Cohen and I enjoyed a 10-day walk through the remote Wadvan valley. (The Wadvan flows into the Chenab near Kishtwar. Leaving the roadhead at Gaoran, we crossed the Margan Pass over to the Wadvan. Three days' walk took us up to the glacier snout of one of the headwaters of the Wadvan, the Kanital. We crossed the snout, descended for a mile and climbed an attractive peak at the northeast head of a side glacier whose stream flowed into the north side of the Kanital. On the 1:250,000 map, the peak appears to be P 19,330. On July 21 Rob Collister joined us in Srinagar. We crossed the Zoji La by bus and took a truck from Kargil to Panicker in the Surn valley. It took four days to trek to the Pensi La, between the Surn and Zanskar. At the Pensi La (14,500 feet) we shouldered