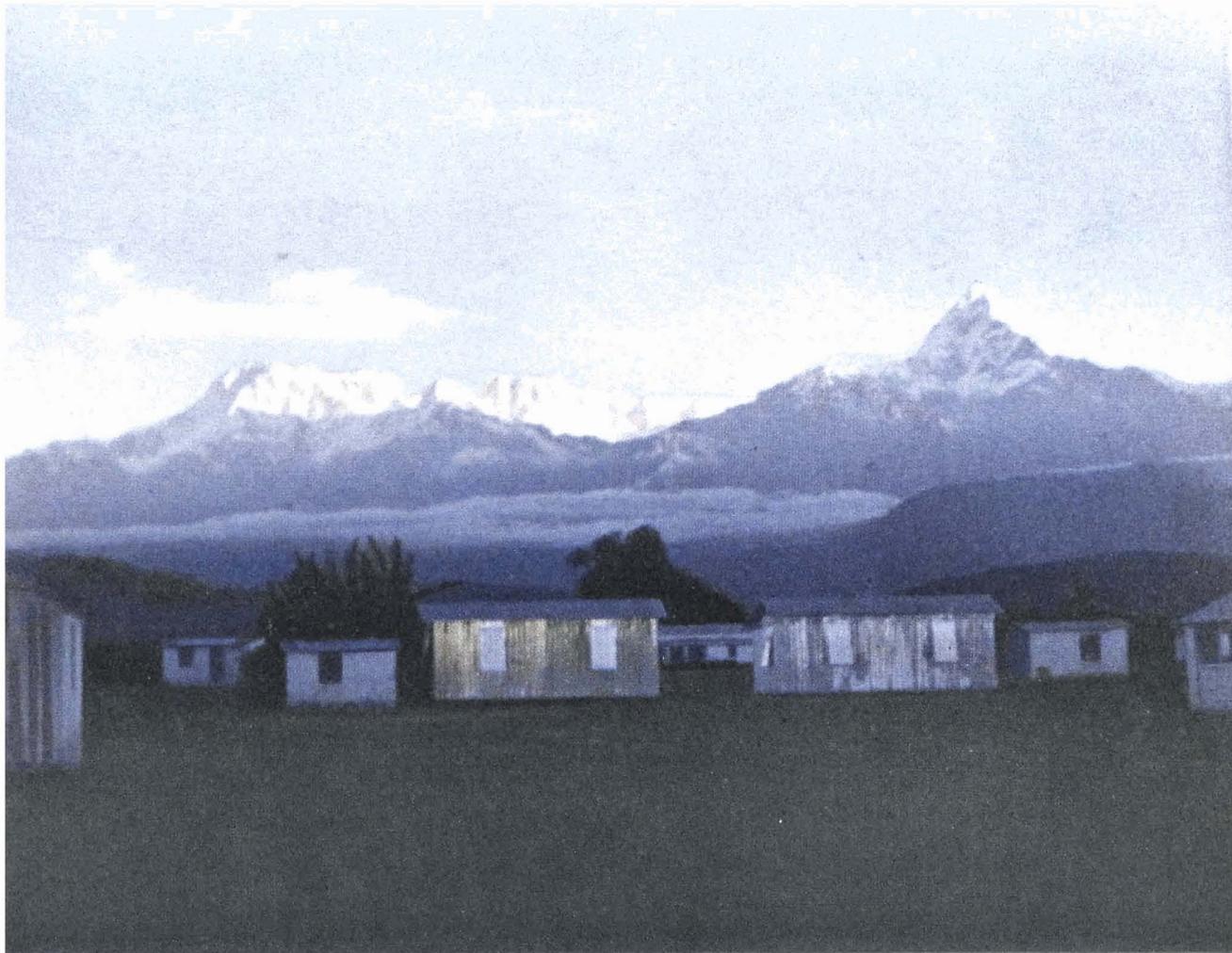


ANNAPURNA TO DHAULAGIRI

# **ANNAPURNA To DHAULAGIRI**



*Annapurna Himal from Pokhara, with profiles of South Peak (23,683 ft), Annapurna I (26,545 ft), Machhapuchhre (22,942 ft) and Annapurna III (24,787 ft). Pokhara town (2,997 ft) is 20,000 feet lower and 18 miles south of Machhapuchhre.*

# **ANNAPURNA TO DHAULAGIRI**

## **A Decade Of Mountaineering In Nepal Himalaya 1950—1960**

by

**HARKA GURUNG,**

*Published by.*

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## FOREWORD

I have read with great pleasure Dr. Harka Gurung's stimulating little book. By unfolding, with both scientific accuracy and a deep sense of personal involvement, the great story of man's conquest of some of the most sublime of the Himalayan peaks in broad but deft outlines, Dr. Gurung satisfies our reason as much as he titillates our imagination. A man of the hills, his innate love of the mountains is transparent.

Dr. Gurung has sought to project Nepal both within and outside the country by a descriptive reference to various Himalayan expeditions undertaken between the years 1950-60. These expeditions are a measure of the profound interest that the world community in general and the mountaineering community in particular has taken in the Himalayas and, through them, in Nepal.

Nepal is a country the identity of which is deeply enshrined in the mountains. The Himalayas sustain us and inspire us in different ways. The endurance of the Sherpas is well-known all the world over. If our people in the hills play and work in the lap of these mountains, our people in the terai derive their spiritual and cultural sustenance from them. To the world outside, the Himalayas have served as the most effective expression of our identity and character. Indeed, though silent, they are the most eloquent of our spokesmen in so far as they create world-wide interest in us, generate good will for us and introduce us vividly to the world community.

While congratulating my friend Dr. Gurung on his fine work, may I commend the book to all those interested in the Himalayas and in Nepal.

Kaldhara,  
Kathmandu.  
9. 9. 1968

Y. N. KHANAL  
Secretary,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HMG.



## P R E F A C E

This chronological survey of mountaineering in Nepal Himalaya, prodigal with over two hundred peaks above 20,000 feet, makes no pretensions of exhausting a prolific decade. Though more than a hundred expeditions visited Nepal during the period 1950-1960, only those have been treated whose reports are available in published form. The length of description does not reflect the relative importance of expeditions: the story of the ascent of Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) that has been told in sixteen books and retold in over eighteen languages, occupies here less space than the Sagarmatha reconnaissance of 1951.

The list of peaks of over 23,000 feet is a tentative catalogue and further refinement will depend on the progress of mapping of Nepal Himalaya. The listed peaks can be located on the accompanying map according to their numerical order.

In the appendix also appear some ruminations on the Snowman whose place in alpine literature seems to be something more than peripheral. The lighter vein treatment of the complex subject is no reflection of the writer's skepticism on the topic.

The basic research material for the book was collected at the libraries of Royal Geographical Society and The Alpine Club, London. Further reference was also made at the libraries of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, Edinburgh, and the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, Zurich.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

The French climbers at Tukche made a great decision on 14th May 1950 when they chose Annapurna (26,545 feet and succeeded in climbing the first Eight Thousander<sup>1</sup> in history. Dhaulagiri (26,795 feet), their alternative peak, was to ascertain her might for another decade defying seven attempts. These two peaks, sheared twenty-one miles apart by the Kali-Gandaki river, provide definite chronological watersheds in the climbing history of Nepal Himalaya. If the Annapurna adventure of 1950 was "a decisive turning-point in Himalayan history",<sup>2</sup> then the 1960 "ascent of Dhaulagiri represents the end of an era in the history of Himalayan mountaineering".<sup>3</sup>

Years of extraordinary climbing activity are sandwiched between the conquest of these two giants. It was during this period that four of the highest summits of the world were climbed in successive years: Sagarmatha in 1953, K-2 (Chogori) in 1954, Kangchenjunga in 1955, and Lhotse in 1956. During 1950-1960, just over a hundred expeditions visited Nepal and apart from exploring the main mountain groups, managed to bag about 121 peaks of over 17,000 feet in height.

#### A. SCOPE

The present study attempts to record the activities and achievements of about ninety reconnaissance and climbing expeditions in Nepal during the decade. The method employed for the

---

1 Peaks of over 8,000 meters or 26,247 feet are known as Eight Thousanders. Similarly, peaks over 7,000 metres or 22,966 feet are called Seven Thousanders.

2 Lucien Devies, in the preface to *Makalu* by Jean Franco, Paris, 1955.

3 H. S. Mueller, in the preface to *The Mountain World 1960-1961*, Zurich, 1961.

survey is basically chronological, though regional approach is evident in the few cases where there were more than one expedition to a mountain in a single year. Each year is given a chapter and all sectional narratives are provided with appropriate references. For the sake of orientation, the pioneer activities of the year 1949 are described in the present chapter.

## B. THE INITIATION

As late as the mid-twentieth century, the refulgent peaks of Nepal were rare things only to be seen and sighed from afar and never trodden upon. Though there were negotiations for a British expedition on Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) in 1908, a French expedition on Makalu in 1934, and a Swiss expedition on Dhaulagiri in 1949, these did not materialize and all the earlier expeditions on Sagarmatha approached the mountain through Tibet.

Exploration of Nepal Himalaya truly started in 1949. That year an American expedition led by Ripley visited Rekcha (West Nepal) and Chainpur (East Nepal) and though this expedition was concerned primarily with ornithology, it heralded the future influx of expeditions into unexplored Nepal. The same year, Swiss geologist Heim made an aerial flight over Dhaulagiri which proved a precursor to the future Swiss entanglement with that peak.

### *Reference*

S. Dillon Ripley: *Search for the Spiny Babbler: an Adventure in Nepal*. Boston, 1952.

Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research: *The Firs Ten Years*. Zurich, 1951, pp. 27-28.

## C. FIRST CLIMBERS

In 1949, the Swiss who had been earlier refused permission to attempt Dhaulagiri, entered north-east Nepal by way of Darjeeling. The team was led by Sutter-Lohner and they explored Ramtang glacier, Kangbachen Peak (25,925 feet) and the triangle of Drohmo (22,991 ft.), Jongsang Peak (24,518 ft.), and Nupchu (23,058ft) on the Nepal-Tibet-Sikkim border. They found Drohmo and Nupchu unclimbable but Rene Dittert led a successful climb on Pyramid Peak (23,369 ft) that had defied the previous British



II. LANGTANG LIRUNG ( 23,771 ft. ), known locally as Kangchen Ledrub is a dominating peak  
directly north of Kathmandu.  
(Sketch : Harka Gurung)



(1936) and Swiss-German (1939) attempts. They also climbed Tang Kongma (c. 20,5000 ft), an outlier of Drahmo as well as Dzanye Peak (22,010ft) before they returned to Darjeeling on the ninety-ninth day of their expedition.

*Reference*

Rene Dittert: *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 16 (1950-1951), pp. 25-37.

C. LANGTANG AND GANESH HIMAL

In the summer of 1949, H.W. Tilman who had led the 1938 Everest expedition, visited Nepal with a small British team of climbers and scientists. They explored Langtang and Ganesh Himal on either side of the Trisuli river and in the 'unsurveyed' Langtang area their survey indicated that the upper Langtang valley system extended far beyond the limits marked on the maps. They also reconnoitred the possible approaches to Langtang Lirung (23,771 ft) from the south and east.

In course of the exploration of Chilime Khola, west of Trisuli river, they made an easy climb of Paldor (19,451 ft), the most southerly point of Ganesh Himal. Then they recrossed Trisuli to make two unsuccessful attempts on the Fluted Peak (20,986 ft).

*Reference*

Peter Lloyd: *Geographical Journal*, vol. 116 (1950), pp. 172-82.

H.W. Tilman: *Nepal Himalaya*. Cambridge, 1952. pp. 1-101.



## CHAPTER TWO

1950

### ANNAPURNA, THE ADVENT

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## Chapter Two

### 1950: ANNAPURNA, THE ADVENT

The present chronology actually commences in the year 1950 when a major peak was first attempted and climbed through Nepal. The French expedition had permission to attempt Dhaulagiri or Annapurna on either side of the Kali-Gandaki river. There was also a British attempt this summer on Annapurna IV and in autumn the south side of Sagarmatha was reconnoitred for the first time by an American-British team.

#### A. ANNAPURNA I

Nine French climbers led by Maurice Herzog reached Tukche on 21 April 1950, the vantage-point for climbing Dhaulagiri (26,795 ft) or Annapurna (26,545 ft) both of whose approaches were then unknown. They reconnoitred both sides of the Kali-Gandaki for three weeks and finally settled on Annapurna I. Herzog states that "Dhaulagiri offered some possibilities of success but even the Tibetan Lama advised us not to consider it but to try the other (Annapurna)".<sup>1</sup> Some more time was lost in preliminary deliberations but once the objective was set, they were so determined as even "to crawl" there. After exploring the route up the Miristi Khola gorge they established Base Camp near the snout of the north Annapurna glacier. Two valuable days were wasted on the north-east spur and they had to retrace back. The Base Camp was shifted higher and progress made across the upper part of the glacier along Camp I (16,750 ft) and Camp II (19,350 ft).

The third camp was pitched on a crevasse at 22,650 feet and the next camp (23,500 ft) on the lip of the 'Sickle'. The last camp

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<sup>1</sup> M. Herzog: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 58 (1951), p. 159.

was dug-out at a height of 24,600 feet as they could ill-afford another high camp in their race against the monsoon. Maurice Herzog and Louis Lachenal spent a stormy night at this camp but aided with a fine morning next day (June 3), they managed to reach the summit at 2 P.M. after eight hour's climb. The descent was made difficult by the worsening weather. Lachenal fell into a crevasse, Gaston Rebuffat and Lionel Terray were snow-blinded, Herzog and Lachenal were badly frost-bitten, and Aila and Ang Tsering III (Pansy) escaped disaster from an avalanche sweep. Herzog confesses in his book, a classic in alpine literature, that all these mishaps made "a story of a terrible adventure which we survived only by what still seems to me an incredible series of miracles".<sup>2</sup> The expedition was remarkable for combining exploration, reconnaissance and assault into a determination of a team to do or die. And what they achieved was the ascent of the first peak above 8,000 metres in history.

#### Reference

Maurice Herzog: *Annapurna: Conquest of the First 8,000 metre Peak*. London, 1952.

### B. ANNAPURNA IV

Tilman who had been to Langtang in 1949 was back in Nepal the following summer leading a British team of prospective 'Everesters' to Annapurna Himal. They marched for a fortnight from Kathmandu to Thonje in Marsyangdi valley and had first a look at the north-west side of Manaslu (26,760 ft). Then they went to Manangbhot from where they made three attempts on Annapurna IV (24,688 ft) and fell short of 600 feet in their last attempt. This, Tilman disarmingly admits as a "failure accounted for only by the mere prosaic reason of inability to reach the top". The expedition spent its final phases reconnoitring the upper Naur Khola, western approaches to Manaslu via Dudh Khola, and Himalchuli from the Barah-pokhari Lekh.

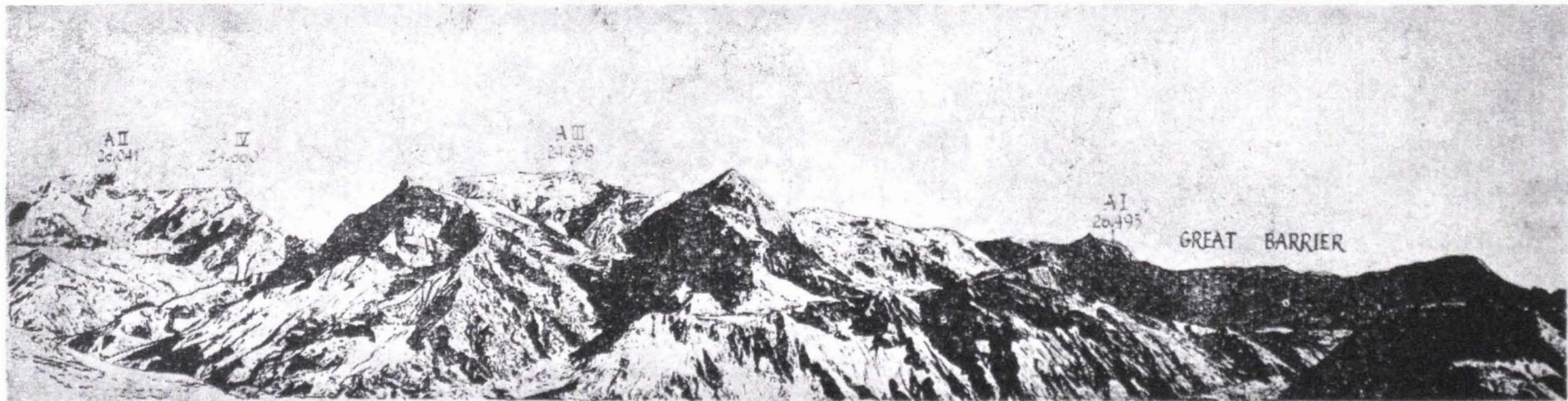
#### Reference

H. W. Tilman: *Nepal Himalaya*. Cambridge, 1952, pp. 103-210.

H. W. Tilman: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 58 (1951), pp. 101-10.

---

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Herzog, *Annapurna*, London (1952), p. 11.



III. ANNAPURNA HIMAL FROM NORTH. The panorama extends for 28 miles and the gentle north dip slope of the range makes a sharp contrast with the steep south face in Plate. I. (Sketch: S. Ward)



## C. SAGARMATHA, SOUTH

This year's climbing season closes with the opening of Nepal side of Sagarmatha (Mount Everest). In the autumn, Oscar Houston's Anglo-American party arrived at Namche Bazar and made a brief reconnaissance of the southern approaches to Sagarmatha. They stayed in the Khumbu area for forty days during which Tilman and Charles Houston made an inconclusive assessment of the route up the Western Cwm. Charles Houston was more optimistic of an autumn attempt on Sagarmatha peak. The fourth member of the party, A. Bakewell, made three trips up the Kosi valley for triangulation sights.

### *Reference*

C. S. Houston: *Appalachia*, vol. 28 (1951), pp. 497-508.

H. W. Tilman: *Nepal Hmalaya*. Cambridge, 1952. pp. 210-41.



## CHAPTER THREE

1951

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## Chapter Three

### 1951: YEAR OF RECONNAISSANCE

None of this year's expeditions were major ones though the reconnaissance team to Sagarmatha was a well-organised affair. This was a lull before the bigger events to follow.

#### A. TO SAGARMATHA

In the spring a Frenchman K. Becker-Larsen, made a clandestine attempt on Sagarmatha from the Tibetan side but first having approached the mountain from the south across Nepal. He left Darjeeling on March 31 and reached Namche Bazar by way of Sandakphu, Taplejung, Chainpur and Dingla. Then he crossed over the Nangpa La (19,050 ft) to Ketrak and Rongphu in Tibet. On May 7, he was in Camp III on the north face of Sagarmatha and his solo attempt ended inevitably on the North Col (22,990 ft) similar to that of his two unorthodox predecessors Maurice Wilson<sup>1</sup> 1934 and Earl Denman<sup>2</sup> in 1947. He blames his lot of 'shabby' Sherpas for his failure without realizing that his fanaticism was foreign to these simple folk.

#### Reference

Marcel Kurz, *Chronique Himalayenne*, Zurich, 1959. pp.172-76.

#### B. SAGARMATHA RECONNAISSANCE

In the summer, Eric Shipton led a British reconnaissance team to the south of Sagarmatha. They set-up their Base Camp at

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<sup>1</sup> Denis Roberts: *I'll Climb Mount Everest Alone: The Story of Maurice Wilson*. London, 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Earl Denman: *Alone to Everest*. London, 1954.

about 18,000 feet just south of Pumo Ri and "could see right up to the head of the Western Cwm, the whole of the west face of Lhotse, the South Col and the slopes leading to it".<sup>1</sup> To Shipton, this view must have been a sharp reminder of the Snowdon horse-shoe<sup>2</sup> as seen from Moel Siabod: Mallory had applied a Welsh nomenclature to this remote Himalayan Valley most aptly. With their binoculars they could also follow the north route by which all previous attempts to climb the mountain had been made. More revealing was the fact that the floor of the Cwm was only 3,300 feet below the South Col (26,200 ft) and not a real depression as expected and there seemed a route possible straight up the Lhotse face. After this optimistic glance, the party got down to examine their observations at close quarters which entailed negotiating the 2,000-foot high ice-fall.

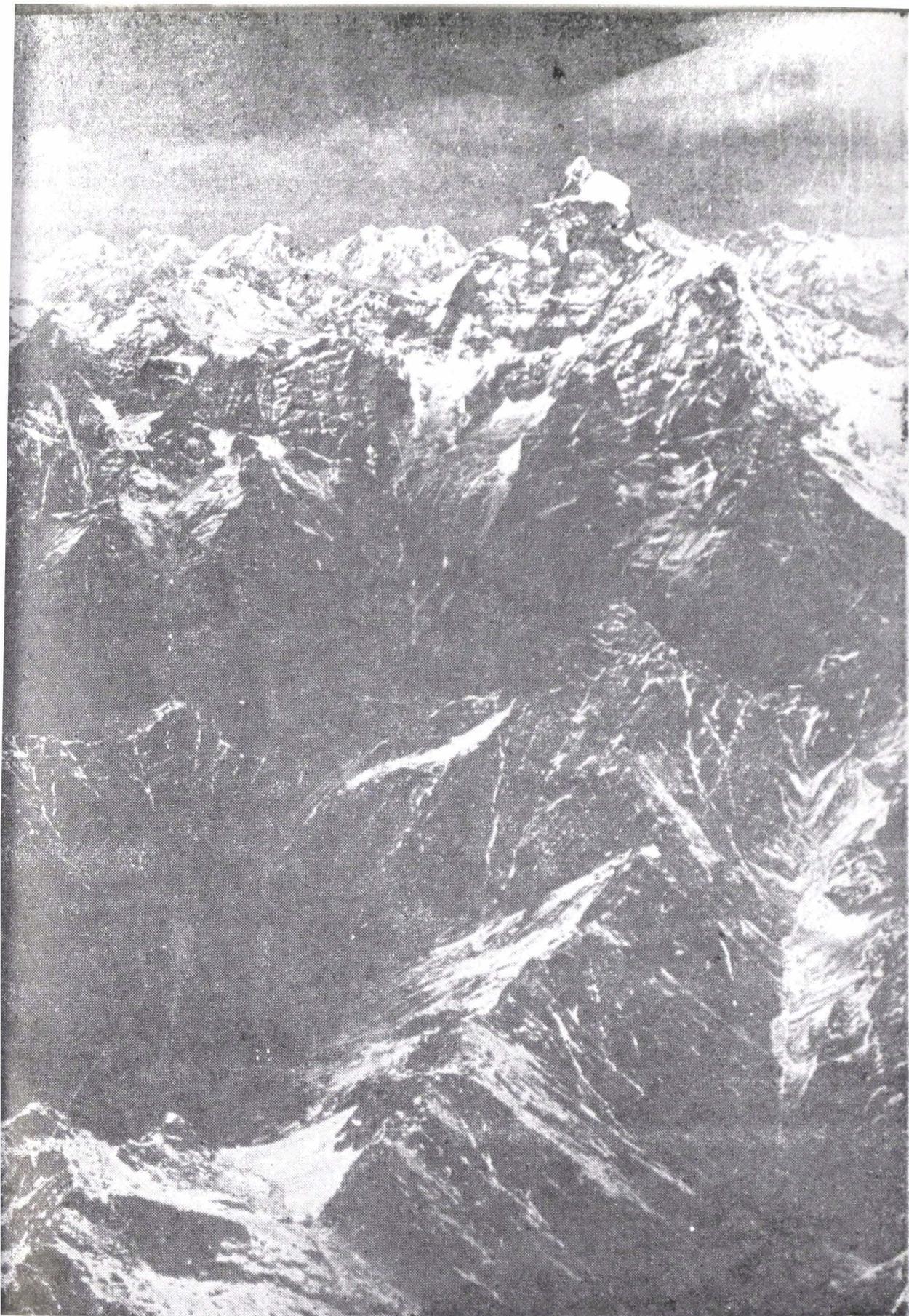
Their first attempt across numerous avalanches and crevasses brought them 25- feet short of the crest of the ice-cliff. A respite of a fortnight was given during which it was hoped that the snow conditions would improve. This gave Shipton an opportunity for further exploration and with Hillary they vainly tried to cross over to Kangshung glacier, east of Sagarmatha. Then they made a detour of Imja glacier, Hongu basin and Nuptse glacier crossing three saddles of over 20,000 feet. The other party camped at Changri-Nup glacier, west of Khumbu, and discovered Guanara glacier during their attempt to reach Nup La (19,400 ft.). Unable to cross Nup La they descended a col above Chola glacier to Ngojumbu glacier.

The next assault on the Ice-fall was started on October 29, so that each member could examine the situation for himself. This time snow conditions were not as bad and aided with Tom Bourdillon's energetic step-cutting the party reached the lip of the West Cwm. What they saw in front of them was as formidable as the climbing of the Ice fall had been. Vast crevasses split across the glacier and it seemed impossible to avoid rock-falls from the enclosing walls for long periods. However, the only possible route had been found. On the return journey, they explored Nangpa La and Gaurisankar (23,442 ft), north-west and north ridge of Cho Oyu (26,750 ft), Rolwaling Valley, Menlung La, and christened a local

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<sup>1</sup> E. E. Shipton: *The Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition*, London. (1951), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> The group of Grib Goch (3,023 ft), Griby Ddisql (3,493 ft), Y Wyddfa (3,560 ft) and Y Lliwedd (2,947 ft) in North Wales.



IV. GAURISHANKAR (23442) is a  
Conspicuous peak of Rolwaling Himal. Aerial view from south-west.

(Photo: Harka Gurung)



granite peak (23,560 ft) 'Menlung Tse'. It was during these jaunts that Eric Shipton came across the freshest Yeti foot-prints ever recorded.

*Reference*

E. E. Shipton: *The Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition*. London, 1951.

C. YALUNG GLACIER

During the autumn a young Swiss, George Frey, entered the south side of Kangchenjunga (28,208 ft), He visited Yalung glacier, Ratong La (17,050 ft), Kabur (15,782 ft) and Gocha La (16,200 ft). Frey succeeded in recording some close -up pictures of the dangerous Yalung flank of Kangchenjunga. He was accompanied by Gilmour Lewis during the earlier part of the journey. Then Lewis proceeded east of Ratong La with Tenzing Norkay, Ang Dawa and Phu Tharke. Frey made an attempt to climb Koptang Peak (20,185 ft) where he slipped and fell 1,400 feet to his tragic death on October 29.

*Reference*

G. O. Dyhrenfurth: *Berg der Welt*, vol. 7(1952), pp. 145-54; 275-76.



## CHAPTER FOUR

1952

### APPROACHING SAGARMATHA

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## *Chapter Four*

### 1952: APPROACHING SAGARMATHA

This year there were two Swiss attempts on Sagarmatha, one in early summer and another in autumn. One British team came to Cho Oyu mainly for acclimatization purposes for the following year's Sagarmatha attempt while another British party visited the the adjacent Rolwaling valley. The Japanese also entered the arena of climbing in Nepal Himalaya with an advance party to look at Manaslu.

#### *A SWISS ATTEMPT ON SAGARMATHA*

The Swiss Mount Everest expedition for 1941 did not materialize and their later endeavour for a joint Anglo-Swiss attempt on Sagarmatha met the same fate. Their 1952 opportunity therefore was to be an all-out effort and this they launched in two successive phases.

The Spring team led by E. Wyss-Dunant arrived Kathmandu on March 26 and reached Namche Bazar after a long approach march of sixteen days. They established their Base Camp close to the tongue of Khumbu glacier at a height of 16,570 feet and Camp I (17, 225 ft) at the base of the Ice-fall. Progress was difficult beyond the cliff for the first intruders to the upper Khumbu glacier. Sagarmatha seemed to have its legions conspiring against them—sea of seracs, transverse crevasses, avalanches, stone-falls. After the struggle, hostile impediments such as the 'Suicide Passage', 'Great Crevasse', and the 'Geneva Spur' became something personal to be cherished. That they were capable of shuttling two-and-half tons of goods and equipment for three weeks against such heavy odds without mishap was itself creditable.

The perilous crossing of the Ice-fall as far as Camp V (22,600 ft) was followed by an equally exhausting ascent to the South Col (26,200). The whole climbing party under Rene Dittert assembled at Camp V on May 14 and it was not until May 26 that they could reach the South Col in their fourth attempt. The intervening 3,250 feet had cost them twelve back-breaking days and Sagarmatha peak still lay far. Rene Aubert, Raymond Lambert, Leon Flory, Tenzing Norkay, Pasang Phutar, Da Namgyal, and Phu Tharke were the first to reach the South Col and it took them two hours to erect three tents. The assault teams of Lambert with Tenzing and Aubert with Flory left the Col on May 27. The later team turned back from about 27,560 feet at which height Lambert and Tenzing spent a dreadful night. Next morning they started the final assault at six o' clock but going was slow and bad weather caught up with them and it began to snow. They turned back after five-and-half hours' of laborious ascend having reached about a height of 28,250 feet.

The second assault team consisting of Dittert, Jean-Jacques Asper, Gabriel Chevalley, Ernest Hofstetter, and Andre Roch climbed to the South Col on the following day. They spent three days and three nights on the Col but the wind never relaxed. On June 1, they returned to Camp V that had sheltered them for almost three weeks. They left the mountain with sombre thoughts for the autumn expedition.

## B. SAGARMATHA AGAIN

The Swiss returned to attempt Sagarmatha in the autumn and this time the expedition was led by Gabriel Chevalley. Base Camp was set close to the Ice-fall and Camp IV (21,162 ft) on the glacier floor of the Western Cwm was reinforced as a support Base. Camp V at 22,310 feet was sited lower than during the Spring attempt. They found that the way to the South Col presented a completely new prospect at this time of the year. The approach across the 'Geneva Spur' was sheet-ice and lengthy rope hand-rails had to be fixed across it. While a dumping ground was the only halt between Camp V and the Col in the previous attempt, this time two intermediate camps at 23,300 feet and 24,250 feet had to be set-up on the Lhotse glacier.

On October 31, a heavy ice-fall killed one Sherpa, injured four more and demoralised the others. The South Col was reached



V. SAGARMATHA (EVEREST) GROUP. The west-facing amphitheatre of Sagarmatha (29,028 ft.), Lhotse (27,890 ft.), and Nuptse (25,850 ft.) enclosing the Khumbu Glacier. (Sketch: Harka Gurung)



as late as November 19 and when Lambert's assault party started up the south-east ridge to establish the ninth camp, they were expecting no surprises. Terrible gales and fierce winter cold forced them to turn back from 26,500 feet, and two days later they were back in the Base Camp. Sagarmatha had forced another retreat.

#### *Reference*

G. Chevalley, R. Dittert, and R. Lambert. *Forerunners to Everest*. London, 1954.

### C. CHO OYU

The British expedition to Cho Oyu (26,750 ft) was primarily to train climbers and test equipment for the following year's Sagarmatha expedition. Led by Eric Shipton, nine British climbers arrived Namche Bazar on the day the first Swiss expedition pushed on to Thyangboche. They were in Bhote-Kosi valley the following week and reconnoitred Cho Oyu from Lunak (17,094 ft) and found their favoured north-west ridge unclimbable. Then they established a light camp on the west face of Cho Oyu at about 21,000 feet which Edmund Hillary, George Lowe, Charles Evans, Tom Bourdillon, Alfred Gregory, and Campbell Secord occupied on May 1. They were confronted by a huge ice barrier after progressing 1,500 feet above this camping site. They were forced to turn back as the supply at their disposal was limited. The expedition then split-up into three groups for exploration farther afield. Before their return they had climbed eleven peaks ranging from 20,000 feet to 22,000 spread over Menlung, Rolwaling, Imja, Hongu, and Barun basins.

#### *Reference*

E.E. Shipton: *Geographical Journal*, vol. 119 (1953), pp. 129-39.

### D. ROLWALING HIMAL

Another British expedition of four Scottish climbers visited East Nepal during the autumn. Led by Tom MacKinnon the team left Kathmandu on September 26 for the Rolwaling valley west of Cho Oyu and directly south of Gaurisankar (23,442 ft). They first explored a glacier south of their Base Camp at Nangaon and also climbed three peaks of 18,000 feet to 20,000 feet in height. Mackin-

non, Mingma, and Dawa Tenzing also climbed a fine peak of 22,000 feet. They reached Namche Bazar by crossing over Tesi Lapcha (19,100 ft) from the west and which Hillary had crossed the other way the previous year. Later, they camped at Phalung Karpo, north-east of Namche, and climbed another 19,000 feet high peak.

#### *Reference*

Tom Weir: *East of Kathmandu*. Edinburgh, 1955.

### *E. MANASLU RECONNAISSANCE*

The first six Japanese climbers led by K. Imanishi arrived Nepal in autumn 1952 to reconnoitre Manaslu (26,760 ft). They first made an attempt to climb Annapurna IV (24,688 ft) following the route taken by Tilman's team in 1950. Before crossing over the Larke Bhanjyang (17,105 ft) to upper Buri-Gandaki valley, they climbed Chulu (20,336ft) just north of Manang. They reached Manaslu region on November 9 and made their Base Camp at Sama on the eastern end of the Manaslu glacier. They made a close examination of the north-eastern face of the mountain and were convinced that the Sama side offered a better prospect than the south face. They returned Kathmandu on December 15 by way of Buri-Gandaki river.

#### *Reference*

K. Imanishi; *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 18 (1954), pp. 176-77.

## CHAPTER FIVE

1953

### END OF AN EPIC

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## Chapter Five

### 1953: END OF AN EPIC

It was both a busy and historic year. More than a dozen expeditions large and small visited Nepal Himalaya and above all Sagarmatha was finally climbed. In early spring, B.R. Goodfellow and Frank Yates explored the southern approaches of Annapurna Himal from Bharbhure in Seti valley and Siklis in Madi valley<sup>1</sup>. In the east, John Kempe and Gilmour Lewis, surveying the upper Yalung glacier in early summer, suggested the ascent of Kangchenjunga from that side to be more feasible.<sup>2</sup> In extreme West Nepal, W. H. Murray and John Tyson reconnoitred the northern approaches of Api (23,399 ft) from the Mahakali river and its tributary Tinkar Khola without discovering a feasible route.<sup>3</sup> They however identified August Gansser's Chisel Peak<sup>4</sup> as Nampa (22,162 ft.). In central Nepal, a New Zealand party visited Sringi (Yangra) Himal where M. Bishop and Sherpa Namgyal made the first ascent of Chamar (23,545ft.)<sup>5</sup> During the summer, the British on Sagarmatha, the Swiss on Dhaulagiri, and the Japanese on Manaslu made simultaneous major assaults.

#### A. SAGARMATHA CLIMBED

The British Mount Everest expedition of 1953 was a sentimental journey of sensational value.<sup>6</sup> The British had approached

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<sup>1</sup> B. R. Goodfellow; *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 18 (1954), pp. 81-86.

<sup>2</sup> John Kempe: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 59 (1953), pp. 316-22.

<sup>3</sup> John Tyson: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 59 (1954), pp. 421-27.

<sup>4</sup> A. Heim & A. Gansser: *The Throne of the Gods*. Zurich, 1939.

<sup>5</sup> A. R. Roberts: *Himalayan Holiday*. Auckland, 1954.

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Izzard: *Innocent on Everest*. London, 1954; and John Morris: *Coronation Everest*. London, 1958.



## B. DHAULAGIRI

The day Hillary and Tenzing were making history on Sagarmatha, Bernard Lauterburg and his Swiss team were at their fourth camp (19,700 ft) and wondering at the north face of Dhaulagiri (26,795 ft). Later, starting from Camp V at 2 A. M. their 12-hour labourious climb was blocked by a vertical wall of limestone and they were forced to call retreat at about 25,300 feet. They however made a reconnaissance of the north-east col and the south col of Dhaulagiri in two groups before leaving the mountain. Andre Roch, after their failure, recommended dynamiting as a possible means of tackling the steep battlement of Dhaulagiri.

### *Reference*

Andre Roch; *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 18 (1954), pp. 118-123.

## C. MANASLU

The Japanese expedition on Manaslu (26,760 ft.) was also unsuccessful. They occupied the Base Camp (12,625 ft.) along the north bank of Manaslu glacier on April 10. Camp IV was set on the Naike saddle (18,400 ft.) after a week's acclimatization and this camp was connected with the Base Camp by telephone cable. They reached north col after four days in Camp VII (21,650 ft.) and four assaults were made on the summit. In their last attempt they reached a height of 25,400 feet after five hours climb and as the summit seemed still far off, further attempt was abandoned. According to their climbing leader M. Takagi, they had been let down by lack of climbing experience in the Himalaya.

### *Reference*

M. Takagi; *The Mountain World*, Zurich, 1954, pp. 63-70.

## D. ANNAPURNA IV

The French ascent of Annapurna I had rightly revealed 'other Annapurnas'. Goodfellow's spring exploration of the south side of the Annapurna range was followed by a Japanese expedition to Annapurna IV (24,688 ft.) in the fall. T. Imanishi led a party up the Madi Khola as far as a day's journey beyond Siklis village.

Their bid to climb Annapurna IV from the south was foiled by luxuriant valley jungle at first and then by a 1,000-foot rock wall a week later. They then chose a completely new approach by moving north to Manangbhot along the upper Marsyangdi Valley. They set their Base Camp at 14,750 feet and went up the route taken by H.W. Tilman in 1950 and K. Imanishi in 1952. They finally reached a height of 23,625 feet on the main ridge following five high camps. But a strong storm forced them to retreat on November 4.

#### *Reference*

M. Kurz; *Chronique Himalayenne*. Zurich, 1959, pp. 285-88.

### *E. PUMO RI*

Two expeditions attempted Pumo Ri (23,442 ft) during the autumn. The Creagh Dhu expedition was supposed to climb Sagarmatha during the post -monsoon period in case the summer British expedition led by Hunt failed. But their performance on Pumo Ri fell far short of any Sagarmatha contender. H. MacInnes and J. Cunningham went up a ridge facing the Khumbu Ice-fall and camped on a rock promontory at an altitude of 20,500 feet. They were turned back by intermittent avalanches after two days below 22,000 feet. Later, climbing the rocky peak Pingers (c.19,000 ft.) above Phalong Karpo in Lobujya Khola was to involve them a whole day.

The Scottish attempt was soon followed by an Indian expedition. The Indians camped on the western bank of Khumbu glacier and assault was immediately launched along a rocky ridge of Pumo Ri. While other members of the party retreated, the two Gandhi brothers camped at a height of 20,000 feet. However, they too could not progress much farther the next day. They found Pumo Ri unclimbable from the south and concluded that the only possibility of climbing the peak was from the eastern saddle connecting it with Lingtren (21,972 ft.).

#### *Reference*

H. MacInnes; *Alpine Journal*, vol. 60(1955), pp. 58-61.

N. Parekh; *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 18(1954), pp. 150-56.

## F. THE RAMBLERS

J. O. M. Roberts, Charles Evans, and Herbert Tichy opened up new vistas by exploring remote areas of Nepal Himalaya. Roberts, after helping the transportation of oxygen equipment to the British Everest expedition, visited Hongu and Inukhu valleys and made a first ascent of Mera Peak (21,120 ft). Evans accompanied by Dawa Tenzing surveyed Guanara glacier and Chola Khola and also climbed Kang Cho (19,870ft). Tichy had the longest itinerary; with four Sherpas he made a long trek from Kathmandu to Pithoragarh. En route he visited Manangbhot, Mustangbhot, Rara Lake in Jumla, and reconnoitred Patrasi Himal (21742 ft.), Jagdula Lekh (20951) and Saipal (23,080 ft). Tichy's team also managed to climb Thorungse Dong Mar (20,240 ft), 'Pasang Peak' (19954) ft), 'White Peak' (19660 ft), Dui Tal Chuli (20,507 ft) in course of their extended tour.

### *Reference*

- J. O. M. Roberts; *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 18(1954) ,pp. 59-64.  
Charles Evans; *On Climbing*. London, 1956, pp. 176-84  
H.Tichy; *Land der nomenlosen Berge*. Wien, 1954.



## CHAPTER SIX

1954

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## Chapter Six

### 1954: CHO OYU CLIMBED

This year the mountains of extreme north-west Nepal, Saipal and Api, were explored by three parties. In the more familiar grounds of Central and East Nepal, increasing climbing pressure was evident from the visits of two expeditions on Cho Oyu, and three on Makalu.

#### A. APPLIED MOUNTAINEERING

The busy climbing season started with a team that came to look for the Abominable Snowman which involved considerable exploration of Khumbu region. Between February and May, Ralph Izzard's Yeti hunting expedition crossed ten high passes and climbed eight peaks of over 18,000 feet including Kangsho Shar (19,950 ft), Pokalde (19,050 ft), Hongu South Peak (20,013ft), and twice visited the highest Indian camp on Pumo Ri.

#### Reference

J.A. Jackson in *Abominable Snowman Adventure* by Ralph Izzard. London, 1955, pp. 267-70; *More than Mountains*, London, 1955.

#### B. MAKALU ! MAKALU !

Makalu (27790 ft.) was the centre of activity for an American, a New Zealander and a French expedition this year. The ten-member Californian expedition led by William Siri went up the Arun river and then into Barun valley to make an attempt on Makalu. With their Base Camp at 15,500 feet, two reconnaissance teams examined the north and north-east ridge and the east face of the mountain. Their first attempt on April 1, along the South-east ridge was repulsed at 22,000 feet by a violent storm. Bad

weather continued unabated when they made their second assault a fortnight later. In the final attempt W. Long and W. Unsoeld and three Sherpas reached as high as the arete at (23,130 ft) after crossing the saddle in thick mist and storm. Prospect ahead did not seem bad but the monsoon had set-in by then and they were forced to retreat. There was no pre-monsoon lull this year.

About the same time, the New Zealanders led by Edmund Hillary attacked the north saddle of Makalu. They received much assistance from the nearby Californians which included four doctors among them, during McFarlane's fall into a crevasse and Hillary's ill-health. Much depleted by sickness, the expedition aimed at Makalu II (25,066ft). They gained upto 23,000 feet along the north face following five camps on route. They then made first ascents of Pethangtse (22,080 ft) on the Nepal-Tibet border, Baruntse (23,688 ft), and a 22,000 feet satellite of Makalu. In all they bagged nineteen peaks of above 20,000 feet and mapped Barun, Iswa, Chhoyang, Hongu, and Imja valleys.

The French arrived in the Makalu region in the autumn for reconnaissance work. They reached the north col of Makalu I after setting four intermediate camps. Violent gusts of wind made further progress impossible. However, they were satisfied with their route for a future attempt. It was during this trip that a promising liaison officer, Dilli Bahadur Varma, died of a short illness. Following this survey, Makalu II, better known as Kangshungtse (25,066 ft) was climbed by Jean Franco, Lionel Terray Gyaltzen and Norbu. Chomo Loenzo (25,640) in Hibet was also climbed by Terray and Couzy.

#### *Reference*

W. Dunmire and W. Unsoeld: *American Alpine Journal*, vol. 9 (1955), pp. 7-24.

Edmund Hillary: *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, vol. 16 (1955), pp. 5-53.

Jean Franco: *La Montagne*, Paris, 1955, pp. 4-19.

### C. GANESH HIMAL

This year's Japanese expedition to Manaslu led by Y. Hotta had a hostile reception from the Sama villagers. The Japanese had been frequenting Sama ever since 1952 and the people attributed

the previous winter's landslide to the defilement of their mountain deity by the foreigners from beyond the seas. Following this shamanistic interlude, the Japanese had to change over to Ganesh Himal (24,299ft) on the other side of Buri-Gandaki river. They established their Base Camp (13,616 ft) beside Torogompa glacier and camps I (16,240 ft) and II (18,374 ft) in the foot-steps of the previous year's New Zealand expedition. They found the slope facing Tibet too difficult and neither could they find a feasible route from Torogompa glacier side. However, Camp III at 20,178 feet was set up ten days later and finding no suitable camping site higher up they turned back below 21,000 feet. Later, the expedition split into three groups and visited Chhuling Khola, Rupina La (15,532 ft) and Gosainkund.

#### *Reference*

J. Muraki: *The Mountain World*. Zurich, 1955, pp. 129-32.

### D. BAUDHA

A British expedition visited the southern spur of Himalchuli range in the summer. Showell Styles and his three companions found Baudha (21,890 ft) impregnable from the south as its southern aspect was well-guarded by the 'Battlement Ridge'. They then crossed over the Rupina La (15,532 ft) across the Shelf glacier to tackle the mountain from the north-east. Their seventh camp was set up near the junction of two glaciers of Himalchuli at 12,500 feet and the assault was led alternately by Derry and Gyaltsen attempting to cover 9,390 feet in a single day. They had however covered only 500 feet after two hours' climb and Gyaltsen's refrain for "Many men, many camps, many fixed ropes", was too late to be of any avail. The descent was not difficult though and on May 29 they abandoned further attempts on the mountain.

#### *Reference*

Showell Styles: *The Moated Mountain*. London, 1955.

### E. DHAULAGIRI

The first Argentinian climbers to Nepal led by Francisco Ibanez chose Dhaulagiri and followed the route taken by the Swiss expedition the previous year as far as Camp IV at 19,700 feet.

Their fifth camp (16,400 ft) was hung-up in a precipice and a platform had to be blasted off by dynamite to make room for their sixth camp at 23,600 feet above the 'Pear'. The seventh camp was carried to a height of 25,000 feet and the assault party of Gerhard Watzl, Alfredo, Magnani, Pasang and Ang Nyima had to bivouac at 26,250 feet on the main ridge. In the morning the weather got worse and retreat was called with the bitter realization of Dhaulagiri summit (26,795 feet) being so near yet so far. Most climbers were severely frost-bitten and the team leader Francisco Ibanez later died in a Kathmandu hospital. Otherwise, this antipodal team from the Andes had fared better in their first Himalayan venture.

In the autumn J. O. M. Roberts and G. Lorimer with three Sherpas made a round trip of the Dhaulagiri massif. It was during this journey that James Roberts and Ang Nyima made a first ascent of Putha Hiunchuli (23,774 feet). They also had a close look at the possibility of Dhaulagiri II (25,429 ft) and Dhaulagiri III (25,312 ft).

#### *Reference*

T. Crombie: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 60 (1955), pp. 383-84.

J. O. M. Roberts: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 60 (1955), pp. 248-56.

### F. YALUNG AND TALUNG

The British reconnaissance of Yalung glacier to find a route for climbing Kangchenjunga (28,208 ft) was resumed during the summer by John Kempe's party including Charles Evans. They made several attempts to reach the 'Shelf' at about a height of 24,000 feet. They reported that the upper ice-fall above the snow basin was easier than the lower one. Then Talung Peak (24,111 ft) was attempted once again without success.

#### *Reference*

John Kempe: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 59 (1954), pp. 428-31.

### G. CHO OYU INTERLUDE

Cho Oyu (26,750 ft) was this autumn a scene of struggle between two expeditions. In fact the eccentric encounter between the Austrian Herbert Tichy and the Swiss Raymond Lambert at the former's Base Camp (19,000 ft) was matched only by Pasang's

marathon race from Marlung (13,615 ft) to the summit of Cho Oyu.

Originally, the Franco-Swiss expedition of Lambert and Madame Claude Kogan was scheduled for Gaurisankar (23,442 ft) and Menlungtse (23,560 ft) massifs. They found on closer examination the south, east and north ridges of Gaurisankar invulnerable and they settled for Cho Oyu. They reached Chhule across the Menlung La (19,000 ft) and arrived the base of Cho Oyu after crossing over the Nangpa La (19,050 ft).

The Austrians were about this time recuperating at their first camp after their first unsuccessful bid on Cho Oyu. They had been repulsed from Camp IV (23,000 ft) with frost-bite. When the Franco-Swiss expedition turned up on their heels, a deal had to be made by which the Austrians were to have the first go. The Everest chronicler W.H. Murray calls this intrusion by Lambert's expedition a "deliberate gate-crashing". However, this episode seemed to have added further stimulus to Tichy's party which intended to show what small expeditions could do.

During their second assault the Austrian party was cave-bound for three days and nights at Camp III by snow storms. Pasang Dawa Lama joined them here after his three-day climb of over 13,000 feet with fresh vigour and supply. Then making a very early start on October 19 from Camp IV, Tichy, Sepp Joechler, and Pasang reached the summit about three hours past noon. With this success, a major Himalayan peak had been climbed by a minor expedition.

Bad weather had set in two days later when the Franco-Swiss began the assault on west face of Cho Oyu. They established their fourth camp at a height of 23,460 feet below summit. On October 28 an icy gale prevented their progress beyond 25,260 feet. This height, however, earned Madame Claude Kogan the record altitude for woman climbers.

#### *Reference*

Herbert Tichy: *Cho Oyu: By Favour of Gods*. Wien, 1957.

Raymond Lambert and Claude Kogan: *White Fury: Gaurisankar and Cho Oyu*. London, 1956.

### H. NORTH-WEST NEPAL

An Austrian expedition led by Rudolf Jonas attempted to climb Saipal (23,080 ft) in the summer. They went up the Seti

river as far as Talkot and followed Tichy's 1953 route into the Ghat Khola. Then they progressed in eight stages from the south-west along the Saipal glacier, and the last camp was established on the western spur of Saipal. However, the expedition came to a premature close with the sudden death of Karl Reiss from pneumonia at 21,000 feet. They then climbed the subsidiary peaks of 'Shieferpitze' (c. 19,190 ft) in the west and 'Matterhorn' (17,875 ft) in the east.

The Italian expedition in the neighbouring Api (23,399 ft) was even more tragic. Piero Ghiglione, a veteran of 71, was leading a light expedition to try to climb Api from the south. They turned for the north face after ten days of fruitless reconnaissance. On the way in, R. Bignami fell down a foot-bridge and his body was never recovered. After establishing their Base Camp at 13,000 feet, they reconnoitred the West Api glacier and an attempt was made on the summit along the main glacier. The final assault was led by J. Barenghi and G. Rosenkrantz and they were followed by Piero Ghiglione and Gyaltzen above Camp III (20,180 ft). On June 15 weather worsened and Ghiglione trailed behind. Rosenkrantz was unable to continue farther up and died of exhaustion two days later in spite of Gyaltzen's best services. And Barenghi who proceeded alone to the summit never returned. As to the problem of the ascent, Marcel Kurz concludes "that he (Barenghi) climbed the true summit of Api is possible but not certain".<sup>1</sup>

The third expedition to north-west Nepal this year was that of Oxford University in the autumn led by H. Harrington. The four-member party reached Dhuli on their third day after leaving Chainpur. They were able to climb 'Rakshya' (22,000 ft), one 20,000 feet high rock peak above the Urai Langna (19,400 ft) and an attempt made on an unnamed peak (21,500 ft) was unsuccessful.

### Reference

Rudolf Jonas: *Ho Pasang: Osterreichische Bergsteiger in West Nepal*. Wien, 1955.

P. Ghiglione: *Eroismo Tragedia sul Monte Api*. Milano, 1954.

I. Davidson: *Himalayan Journal* vol. 19 (1956), pp. 142-46.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Mountain World*, Zurich, 1955, p. 128.



VII. API (23,399 ft. ), the highest peak of Byas-rishi Himal in extreme north-west Nepal. (Sketch: Harka Gurung)



## CHAPTER SEVEN

1955

### KANGCHENJUNGA AND MAKALU

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## Chapter Seven

### 1955: KANGCHENJUNGA AND MAKALU

This year the third and fifth highest peaks of the world Kangchenjunga and Makalu respectively were climbed within a difference of ten days. Also, Annapurna IV succumbed to the fourth attempt while Dhaulagiri remained invincible. Lhotse was attempted for the first time.

#### A. SMALL EXPEDITIONS

The third attempt on Dhaulagiri (26,795 ft) was made by a team of six Germans and four Swiss climbers. Though the expedition was led by the famous climber M. Meier, they could not struggle long against the inclemencies of the Dhaulagiri weather. They retreated from a much lower altitude than the previous Swiss and Argentinian expeditions. (Max Eiselin who led the successful ascent of 1960 attributes their failure to organizational difficulties).

In autumn, Norman Hardie stayed two months in Khumjung after his Kangchenjunga climb. He made several excursions up the Bhote-Kosi, Chola, Dudh-Kosi and Inukhu Khola. During their survey on the Inukhu watershed, A. J. Macdonald and Aila climbed two fine peaks of about 19,000 feet height after failing to climb Mera Peak (21,120 ft).

#### Reference

G. O. Dyhrenfurth: *Der Dritte Pol*. Munchen, 1960, p. 142.

Norman Hardie: *In Highest Nepal*. London, 1957.

#### B. ANNAPURNA IV

A four-member German expedition made a circuit of the Annapurna Himal during their seven-month rambling in Central

Nepal. They inaugurated their peak-bagging season by climbing the elusive Annapurna IV (24,688 ft) on May 30 for the first time. In climbing it, they made straight for the summit from Camp III involving an ascent of about 3,500 feet without any intermediate camp. Before leaving Manangbhot, they also climbed Pisang Peak (20,057 ft), the rock-needle 'Naurhorn' (17,887 ft), Kang Guru (22,997 ft) and repeated the Japanese climb of Chulu (20,336 ft).

Then they moved to Mustangbhot across the Thorung La (17,770 ft) and climbed three peaks of Damodar Himal, Dam Kang (20,013 ft), Yulo Kang (20,998 ft), Kang Juri (19,030 ft). In October they approached Annapurna IV from the south and found the route unpromising. The idea of attempting the main peak (22,921 ft) of Lamjung Himal was abandoned owing to bad weather conditions.

#### *Reference*

Henz Steinmetz: *Vier im Himalaya*. Stuttgart, 1957.

### C. HIMALCHULI AND MANASLU

An All-Kenya party came to climb Himalchuli (25,895 ft) in early summer. They left Kathmandu on April 1 and reached the last settlement, Usta, a fortnight later. Their Base Camp at about 16,000 feet was sited half-an-hour short of Meme Pokhari. Arthur Firman slipped over a boulder and was fatally injured before they could launch their attack on the main ridge. Further attempt on the mountain was abandoned and the ill-fated expedition came to the conclusion that the south-west side of the mountain was an impossible route.

In the post-monsoon period, the Japanese Alpine Club sent three members under Kohara to negotiate with the Sama villagers about the possibility of a major assault on Manaslu (26,760 ft) the following year. They were successful in pacifying the villagers and also made a precise reconnaissance of the route up to the plateau on the mountain.

#### *Reference*

J. Howard: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 61 (1956), pp. 38-44.  
Japanese Alpine Club: *Manaslu 1954-56*. Tokyo, 1958.



VIII. MAKALU (27,807 ft.), flanked by Baruntse (23,688 ft.) and Chamlang (24,012 ft.). The granite bump left of Makalu is Kangshungtse (25,130 ft.). (Photo : J. O. M. Roberts)



## D. SUCCESS ON MAKALU

The French association with Makalu (27,790 ft) dates back to 1934 when they had been first permitted and later cancelled to climb the mountain. Their 1955 Makalu Expedition was the follow-up of their previous year's successful reconnaissance. After leaving Base Camp on April 23, oxygen was used both on the march and in camp above 23,000 feet. Six days later, Camp V was located beyond the col and weather remained fine. The first summit party of Jean Couzy and Lionel Terray established a subsidiary camp at about 25,583 feet and on May 15, 'trode upon the fragile cone of snow forming the summit of Makalu'. The ascent was repeated the following two days during which all the nine members of the assault party reached the summit! This French conquest of Makalu has been described as a perfect piece of job. Nothing dramatic had happened to the expedition except that the fifth highest mountain had been climbed without incident. But as acknowledged by the team leader Jean Franco fifty years of Himalayanism explain the ascent of Makalu. He credits the mountaineers that ever preceded them thus: "Their example had been our good fortune, their suffering our debt and our first thought of gratitude".

### *Reference*

Jean Franco: *Makalu, The Happy Mountain*. Paris, 1955.

## E. KANGCHENJUNGA AT LAST

The Kangchenjunga range on the Nepal-Sikkim frontier had been one of the most accessible of all the Himalayan giants. Yet the peak (28,208 ft) had remained a challenge in spite of fifty years of reconnaissance by numerous expeditions. In 1931 an Austro-Bavarian expedition had even reached about 25,250 feet.

The British expedition to Kangchenjunga led by Charles Evans had the limited objective of reaching the 'Great Shelf' at about 24,000 feet. The strong reconnaissance force was however later switched into a successful assault party. They approached the mountain from the Yalung glacier side. Norman Hardie, George Band, Charles Evans, and John Jackson had a tough time negotiating Kempe's 'Rock Butress' before establishing the Base Camp at 18,100 feet. After setting camps I (19,700 ft), II (20,400 ft), and

III (21,800 ft), Evans and Hardie found a way above the upper Ice-fall and established the fourth camp at 23,500 feet. They had achieved a record height on Kangchenjunga by setting the fifth camp at 25,300 feet. The climbers were held back at Camp IV for two days by strong blizzards. But the day dawned bright on May 22. The advance party struck a high camp (26,900 ft) on a steep slope where George Band and Joe Brown slept overnight for the final go. Next morning (May 25) they started on a perfect day and only obstacle on their way to the summit was a 20-foot rock wall which was no problem to a team that included Joe Brown, one of the finest British rock-climbers. They were at a respectable distance of about 20 feet from the summit by three in the afternoon. With due regard to the Sikkimese 'mountain god' the actual summit of Kangchenjunga was left untrampled. Next day, Norman Hardie and Tony Streather repeated the ascent. For the British, it was an apt epilogue to their previous year's Everest success.

#### *Reference*

Charles Evans: *Kangchenjunga, the Untrampled Peak*. London, 1956.

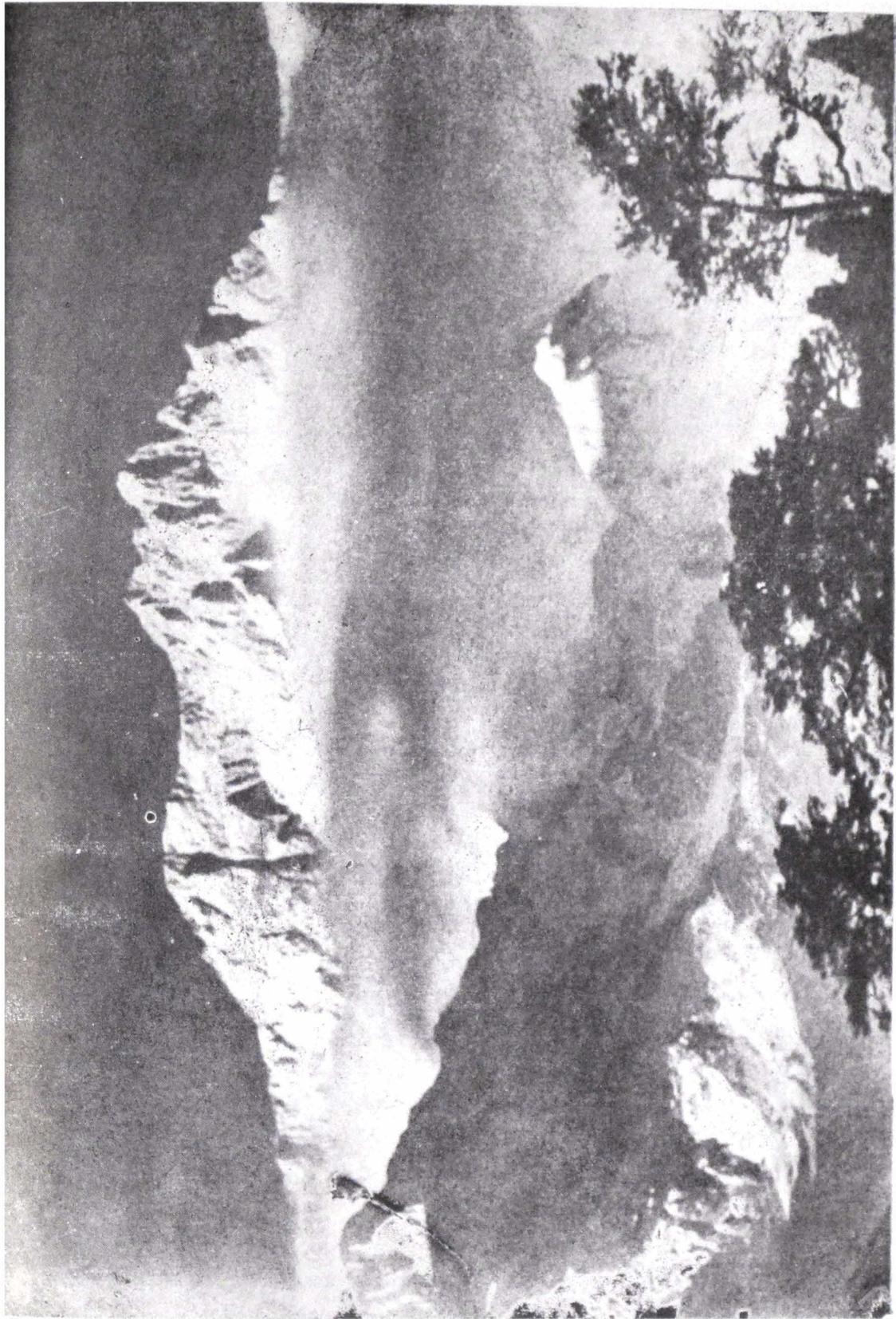
### F. GANESH AND LANGTANG HIMAL

In May, two Swiss climbers Raymond Lambert and Jules Detry visited Langtang Himal with four Sherpas and climbed the peak 'White Dome' (22,410 ft).

The same autumn Raymond Lambert led a Franco-Swiss team to climb Ganesh (24,299 ft) west of Langtang. The seven climbers and seven Sherpas followed the Chilime Khola and set their Base Camp on the right bank of Sangje glacier. Pierre Vittoz fell ill at Camp I and had to be brought to Kathmandu. Four climbers advanced in stormy weather and they had to dig out caves for the second and third camps on the south face of the mountain. While Paul Gendre had to stay back, the other three climbers Lambert, Gauchat, and Madame Claude Kogan succeeded in reaching the summit just after noon with great effort. During the easier descent, young Gauchat slipped in the thick fog and lost his life. His body was recovered next morning on October 28 and buried near the Base Camp.

#### *Reference*

Raymond Lambert: *Die Alpen*, 1956, pp. 104-12.



IX. KANGCHENJUNGA (28,208 ft. ) massif from south (Photob :G. O. Dyhrenfurth's "Der Dritte Pol")



## G. DHAULAGIRI ASSERTS ITSELF

The second Argentinian expedition to Dhaulagiri (26,795 ft), led this time by E. Huerta, followed more or less the previous year's route. They fared worse than in their 1954 attempt when they had reached the highest point on the 'Pear' route. This time their highest camp was sited at a height of 24,930 feet and two assaults were made to the summit during May. Both were unsuccessful and the monsoon onslaught prevented any further attempt. Relics of their labours were encountered later by the 1958 Swiss expedition at about 25,000 feet.

### *Reference*

G.O. Dyhrenfurth: *Der Dritte Pol*. Munchen, 1960, p. 142.

## H. LHOTSE

In autumn Norman Dyhrenfurth led an International Expedition on Lhotse (27,890 ft). In the field they met Lionel Terray and Guido Magnone of the French Makalu expedition and later Norman Hardie of the Kangchenjunga expedition, reminding one that the Everest environ was no longer a secluded area.

The expedition's first attempt to penetrate the Khumbu ice-fall was made in slushy snow and they managed to pitch Camp II (c. 21,500 ft.) at the old site of the previous Swiss and British Camp IV. Their own Camp IV was placed slightly higher to the left of the British Camp VII at about 24,500 feet. On October 10, the first assault team reached about 25,500 feet. During the second assault five days later, Ernst Senn's determination to reach the summit was foiled by the failure of oxygen set at 26,600 feet and he was forced to turn back after four lonely nights in Camp V. After this Lhotse attempt, minor peaks such as the south summit of Lobujya Peak and the peaks of Lhenjo and Kangtega IV were climbed. Norman Dyhrenfurth who also accompanied the unsuccessful Swiss Everest Expedition of autumn 1952 concluded after this failure on Lhotse that the "Fall was out of question for the biggest Eight Thousanders".

### *Reference*

N.G. Dyhrenfurth; *American Alpine Journal*, vol. 10(1956), pp. 7-20.

## I. ROLWALING HIMAL

The Merseyside Himalayan expedition to Rolwaling reached Beding on March 25 and later shifted their Base Camp to Nangaon. They first repeated the ascent of two peaks climbed by the Scottish climbers in 1952. Next they moved over to Tolam Bau glacier where they had to progress against periodic snow-storms and managed to climb eight minor peaks in twelve days in this region. They also climbed Parchamo (20,730ft.) south of Tesi Lapcha (19,100 ft.) that had been attempted by the British Cho Oyu team of 1962. During may they visited Menlung basin and Ripimu valley in separate groups and further climbs were made of Pangbuk (21,750 ft.), Chegigo (20,670 ft.), Dapladangdigo (20,015 ft), and Panaio Toupa (21,850ft).

### Reference

Alfred Gregory: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 61(1956), pp. 54-59.

## J. JUGAL HIMAL

The first All-Women expediton arrived Nepal in early summer mainly for exploratory work in Jugal Himal area. The Scottish women climbers traversed two glaciers and climbed an unnamed 22,000 feet peak, and also christened another peak (21,982 ft) after their Sherpa Gyaltzen.

### Reference

Monica Jackson and Elizabeth Stark: *Tents in the Clouds*. London, 1956.

## K. CLIMBERS AND PRISONERS

During autumn five Welsh climbers visited north-west Nepal for an exploratory survey of the Api-Nampa-Saipal group. They climbed over the Urai Langna pass (19,482 ft) for a final reconnaissance towards Jungjung Khola to the north. Here Sidney Wignall's party including the liaison officer Damedar Suwal was surprised by a Chinese patrol. Two years earlier, Tyson working in the same area had reported unusual military activity in the adjoining Tibetan region. While Monica Jackson could write of their Jugal Himal trip: "It is a perfect natural frontier and we sat in Nepal and

dangled our legs into Tibet feeling comfortably virtuous”, the Welsh climbers were less fortunate. They were arrested by the Chinese patrol as spies and imprisoned in Taklakot for two months.

*Reference*

Sidney Wignall:*Prisoners in Red Tibet*. London, 1957.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

1956

### THE GRAND DOUBLE

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## Chapter Eight

### 1956 : THE GRAND DOUBLE

This was an unusually lean year. Though expeditions were fewer, the Japanese success on Manaslu after five years and the success of one Swiss expedition on Sagarmatha and Lhotse were remarkable achievements. Among the minor parties this year, mention may be made of J.O.M. Roberts' reconnaissance of Machhapuchhre for the following year's attempt, and G. Hampson's Canadian expedition to Langtang Himal.

#### A. MANASLU, COMMITMENT FULFILLED

The third Japanese expedition to Manaslu (26,760 ft) was in fact their fifth annual visit since 1952. The 12-member strong team led by Yuko Maki left Kathmandu in March and reached their Base Camp in good condition. Camp IV was set just below the North Col at 21,480 feet and they had great difficulty in establishing Camp VI above the 'Snow Apron'. The final assault on the summit was made on May 9 that dawned into a fine and windless morning. Imanishi and Gyaltzen making the first assault team set off at eight in the morning and worked up a sharp snow-ridge by cutting steps in turn. The last lap involved the use of pitons and the granite-limestone peak of Manaslu was reached just after the noon. Two days later, the second assault party of K. Kato and M. Higeta repeated the ascent. Success on Manaslu this year was mainly due to the rapid development of the final attack, whereas in the previous year nine intermediate camps were strung all the way up the Base Camp.

#### Reference

Yuko Maki and K. Imanishi; *Himalayan Journal*, vol 20 (1957), pp. 11-25.

## B. LHOTSE AND SAGARMATHA

The Swiss conquest of Lhotse and Sagarmatha in one expedition has been hailed as the greatest feat of peak-bagging in mountaineering history. It will remain so until some expedition does the hat-trick of climbing the horse-shoe of Sagarmatha-Lhotse-Nuptse. The Swiss expedition led by Albert Eggler reached Namche Bazar in March and establishing Base Camp on the Khumbu glacier on April 6, they negotiated the Ice-fall by May as planned. Camp VI was set south of the 'Geneva Spur' at about 26,240 feet and Camp V at 24,600 feet was chosen as their vantage-point for the attack on the summits of Lhotse and Sagarmatha.

The assault on Lhotse (27,890 ft.) was launched on May 14. Ernst Reiss and Fritz Luchsinger traversed the 40-degree steep Lhotse couloir, a gully connecting the Lhotse glacier with the summit, occasionally in knee-deep snow beyond the sixth camp. They had to belay along the steep neve near the summit which they reached at 3 P. M. on May 18. They returned to camp VI after 12-hours' hard descent from the Lhotse summit and rejoined others in Camp V only the next day.

Two days later, the South Col became active for the assault on Sagarmatha. Ernst Schmied roused the Sherpas with much difficulty to proceed up the east ridge for setting Camp VII and this was duly established on a small trough. E. Schmied and Juerg Marmet, after spending a troubled night in Camp VII, started soon after eight in the morning for the summit. The weather improved and even became warm about 11 A.M. and they reached the South summit (28,722 ft) an hour later. They did not have much difficulty in tackling the 50-foot high chimney on the ridge connecting it with the summit where they reached in time. They stayed on the summit for twenty minutes surveying the surrounding country. When next day, Adolf Reist and von Gunten repeated the ascent three pairs of climbers had stepped on the Sagarmatha summit within three years: as if the giant had lost its sting.

### *Reference*

Albert Eggler: *The Everest-Lhotse Adventure*. Liverpool, 1957.



*Manaslu (26,760 ft) from Barahpokhari Lekh. The main peak appears as a pyramid flanked by 'Fungi' (17,970 ft) on the left and Peak 29 or 'Dakura' (24,652 ft) on the right.*



## CHAPTER NINE

1957

### OTHER ANNAPURNAS

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## Chapter Nine

### 1957: OTHER ANNAPURNAS

There were three small expeditions, all British, to different peaks of Annapurna Himal. Another British expedition to Jugal Himal met a serious accident when three members were killed by an avalanche. Then there was the first French reconnaissance team to explore the possibilities of climbing Jannu (25,294 ft), a prominent peak six miles west of Kangchenjunga.

#### A. MACHHAPUCHHRE

Machhapuchhre (22,942 ft) is a southern outlier of Annapurna Himal, an impressive peak that should remain as tempting a trade-mark as the Matterhorn even when other higher peaks have been weaned away from publicity.

A small British expedition under J. O. M. Roberts left Pokhara in April to attempt Machhapuchhre for the first time. The Base Camp (13,000 ft) was established at the head of Modi Khola and reconnaissance involved the setting up of Camps I (16,000 ft.) and II (18,000 ft) on the western flank of the north ridge. On May 2, while Roberts rescued Roger Chorley, a poliomyelitis patient, to Pokhara, Wilfrid Noyce, Charles Wylie and David Cox started for the north col at 19,500 feet. The three climbers set Camp III (20,000 ft) perched on an ice bulge of the serrated north ridge. This main ridge was crossed at the 'Nick' and for Camp IV was used a little snowfield (20,400 ft) on the Seti side.

The upper glacier across the rock butress was not reached till June 1. Noyce and Cox succeeded in reaching the glacier shelf during the second assault after roping down 300-feet in two hours. That afternoon, camp was set early at about 21,000 feet. The final

climb started early next morning about 3 A.M. and they reached the high shelf at 22,000 feet after four hours. They were still 150-feet short of the tip of the 'Fish's Tail' after eight hours' hard climb. Noyce observes that this last fifty yards would have involved "two to three hours of work, perhaps rope-fixing".<sup>1</sup> They then turned back to the shelter of their camp as it had started snowing. Moreover, it was a hard fact that the remaining stretch though a mere fifty yards, made a 60-degree angle demanding an Alpine endeavour in a Himalayan back-drop. Therefore whatever excuse the climbers may put forth,<sup>2</sup> it certainly was not the Ghandrung gods supplicating !

#### *Reference*

Wilfrid Noyce: *Climbing the Fish's Tail*. London, 1958.

### B. ANNAPURNA II AND ANNAPURNA IV

A smaller British party comprising of Charles Evans and D. P. Davis came to Manang in April to climb Annapurna II (26,041 ft). On May 1, they occupied Camp III (21,500 ft) and three days later moved on to Camp IV at 23,000 feet. From here they instead climbed Annapurna IV (24,688 ft.) in three hours.

They then returned to the Base Camp (15,500 ft.) and waited a week for the weather to break. They were back in Camp IV on May 15 and the next day the two climbers advanced with three Sherpas along the eastern shoulder of Annapurna IV towards Annapurna II. After struggling about quarter of a mile they were convinced that their progress was too slow in unsettled weather. They were later forced to return groping through a blizzard.

#### *Reference*

Charles Evans: *Alpine Journal*, vol. 62 (1957), pp. 173-74.

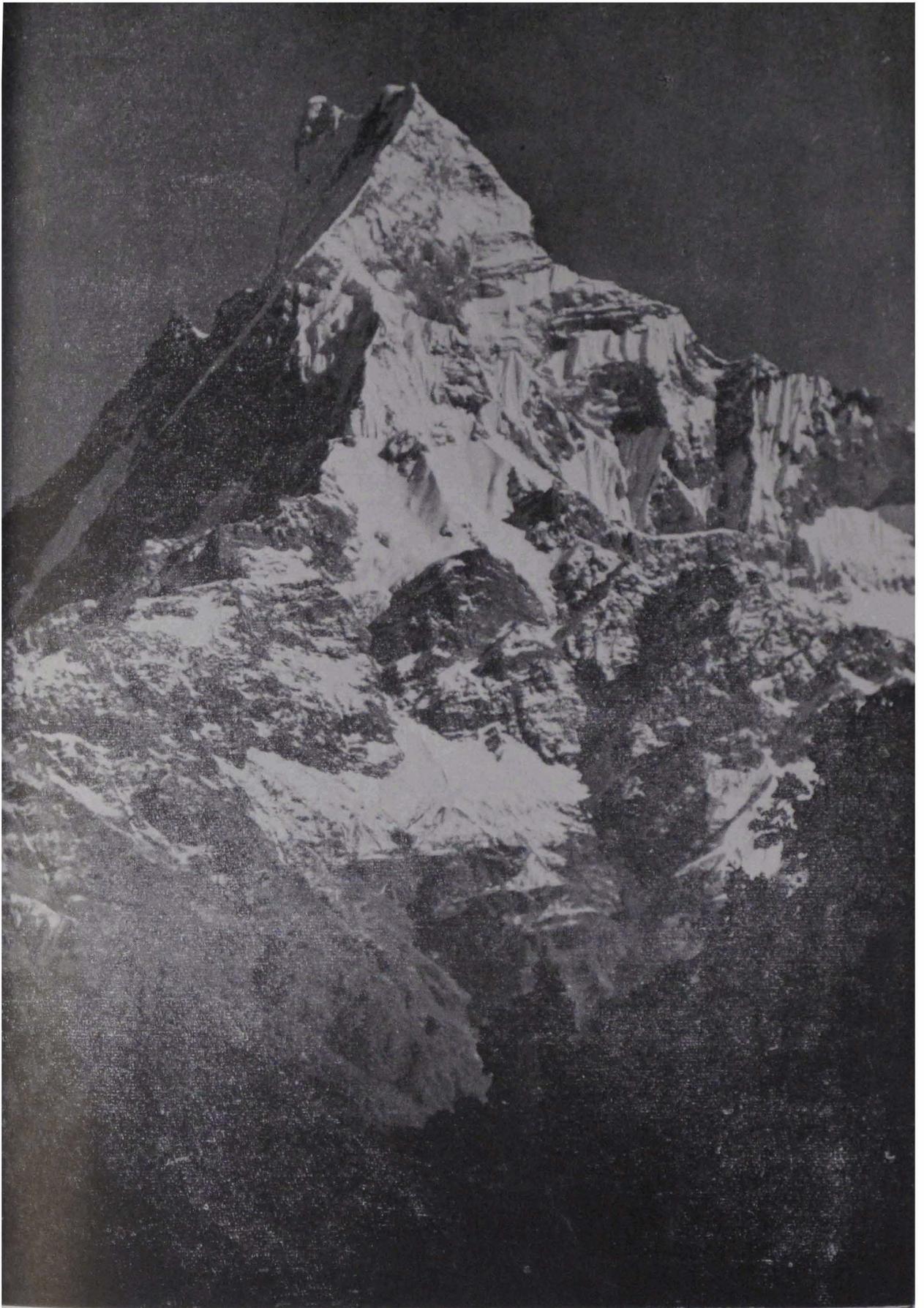
### C. LAMJUNG HIMAL

Gordon Jones visited the south side of Lamjung Himal during the autumn. Leaving Pokhara on September 18, he reached the highland village of Siklis (7,300 ft) in upper Madi Valley. He

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<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid Noyce: *The Mountain World* 1958/59, Zurich, 1959, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Wylie: *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 20 (1957), p. 61.



XI. *MACHHAPUCHHRE* (22,942 ft.) or the 'Fish Tail' from south-west.  
(Photo: J.O.M. Roberts)



## CHAPTER TEN

1958

### SHERPAS ON CHO OYU

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went as far as Namun Bhanjyang, a 18,976 feet high saddle, at the eastern section of Annapurna Himal. He had a close look at the south face of Point 22,921 and found Torju on the eastern end of Lamjung Himal an ideal rest-camp. He returned to Pokhara a fortnight later passing Antighar village on the way.

*Reference*

Gordon Jones; *Himalayan Journal*, vol.22(1959-60). p. 118-19.

**D. JUGAL HIMAL**

A group of Yorkshire climbers led by Crosby Fox visited the Jugal Himal area during the summer aiming to climb the main peak (23,240 ft) of the Jugal group and Phurbi Chyachu (21,844 ft). It was during the attempt on the 'Big White Peak' (23,240 ft) that on April 30, an avalanche swept three climbers to their death. Crosby Fox, Mingma Tenzing, and Lakpa Norbu were the victims of this accident while George Spencely who was also in the rope escaped with slight injuries.

*Reference*

W. J. Anderson: *Mountain Craft*, no. 38 (1958) pp. 2-7.

**E. APPROACHING JANNU**

The monsoon had not abated when a small French party including Guido Magnone, Jean Bouvier and Pierre Leroux left Darjeeling in late September to reconnoitre Jannu (25,294 ft). After occupying the Base Camp at Tseram (12,140 ft) on October 1, they spent the first week on the Yalung glacier. They found the east face of Jannu practically unapproachable. Then, shifting their Base Camp to Khunza (ca. 10,825 ft) they explored Yamatari glacier only to find that the south-west face of the mountain was equally guarded by cascading ice-falls. They moved north to Kangbachen (13,720 ft) four days later to examine the northern route along the Jannu glacier. Here too there was a barrier of succession of hanging glaciers and convinced vertical walls extending right from the 'Eagle Peak' to Kangbachen Peak (25,925 ft). Added to this difficult approach was the summit itself whose northern aspect presented a vertical face of over 8,000 feet. The expedition rated the Yamatari approach as the sole possibility of ascent.

*Reference*

Guido Magnone: *Himalayan Journal*, vol 21(1958), pp. 40-45.



## CHAPTER TEN

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## Chapter Ten

### 1958: SHERPAS ON CHO OYU

The Swiss made their third attempt on Dhaulagiri and a Japanese expedition visited Mukut Himal, north of Dhulagiri this year. Then following their 1956 success on Manaslu another Japanese team came to reconnoitre the adjacent Himalchuli peak. Ama Dablam was attempted for the first time by a British -Italian expedition and Cho Oyu was reascended by an Indian expedition. A British climber P.J. Wallace made a solo attempt on Annapurna IV (24,688 ft) only to be turned away by avalanches.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. RETURN TO DHAULAGIRI

The third Swiss attempt on Dhaulagiri (26,795 ft) led by Werner Stauble was launched in May. Their Base Camp was established on April 10 on the Myagdi glacier and their proceedings up to Camp IV went according to plan. Then the week following May 8, bad weather set-in. D. Hecker and M. Eiselin had to prop their tents on woobly aluminium struts for the fifth camp. Still another camp was needed for the final assault and ropes had to be fixed along the east ridge. But with raging storm and heavy snow-fall, they could not proceed farther than 25,000 fet. Ten days later they had a narrow escape from a snow avalanche. On June 1, they left the mountain that had defied six expeditions in eight years.

#### *Reference*

K. Winterhalter: *Der letzte Achttausender*. Berne, 1959.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, London, August 3, 3, 1957; March 7, 1958.

## B. MUKUT HIMAL

During summer, Jiro Kawakita led an eight-member Japanese team to Mukut Himal. They left Pokhara on July 11 and reached Chharka (14,030 ft) by way of the upper Kali-Gandaki valley. They climbed four minor peaks including one above 20,000 feet, the highest east of Mu La (18,700 ft).

Later, four climbers tried to reach Kanjiroba Himal by way of the Langu valley. They were unable to negotiate the deep gorges and steep slopes guardin gthe north-eastern side of the mountain. After visiting Phijor and Phopa villages in Dolpo, they returned to Tukche on November 1.

## C. HIMALCHULI RECONNAISSANCE

Another Japanese team of I. Kanesaka and S. Ishizaka visited Central Nepal to reconnoitre Himalchuli (25,895. ft). They had first to overcome the objection of the Lidanda and Namru villagers on religous grounds but the Namru villagers relented later and the Advance Base Camp (13,616 ft) was set up in the Shurung valley. Then Camp I was placed on a col (16,733 ft) and Camp II on the east ridge of Himalchuli at 18,865 feet. They completed the reconnaissance up to the base of a steep gendarme (20,505 ft) on the east ridge, the ridge itself being wide and gentle. The main problem, they concluded, was the transportation of provision across the gendarme and climbing of a precipice leading to north-east shoulder of the final peak.

### Reference

I. Kanesaka: *Sangaku*, vol 54 (1960), pp. 2-4; pp. 49-75.

## D. JUGAL AND LANGTANG HIMAL

The year's third Japanese group to visit Nepal was a party of four amateur climbers. Leaving Kathmandu on April 17, they set up their Base Camp at 13,500 in the neighbourhood of Jugal Himal. They visited the Dorje Lakpa glacier to attempt the 'Big White Peak' (23,238 ft) which they found too difficult. Then they turned to Phurbi Chyachu (21,844 ft) by way of the Phurbi Chyachu glacier and spent six days of bad weather in Camp III (16,000 ft).



*Dhaulagiri Himal, West, from Phagune Dhuri (13,300 ft) showing  
Putha Hiunchuli (23,774 ft) and Churen Himal (24,184 ft).*



The highest point they reached was 18,000 feet on the frontier ridge.

Next they moved westwards to Langtang Himal after tackling the Panch Pokhari ridge and were in Tarke-gyang in Helmu four days later. They found that the altitude of Ganja La was only about 16,805 feet and not 18,450 feet as shown in the Survey of India map. They returned Kathmandu after two months by way of the Trisuli valley.

#### *Reference*

F. Kyuya: *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 22 (1959-60), pp. 103-12.

### *E. CHO OYU*

The Indian Expedition to Cho Oyu (26,750 ft) was the loftiest Indian attempt so far in Himalayan climbing. The expedition led by Keki Bunshah was later joined by the leading Indian climber Nandu Jayal. Jayal hurried to catch-up the advance party in Camp I and being ill-acclimatized died of pneumonia at the Base Camp shortly afterwards. The assault was continued on May 9 under the leadership of Pasang Dawa Lama who had climbed Cho Oyu in 1954 with Herbert Tichy. When a week later Pasang Dawa Lama and Sonam Gyaltzen stood on the summit of Cho Oyu, it had been the first exclusive Sherpa apex on a major Himalayan peak.

#### *Reference*

Himalayan Club: *Newsletter* 15. 1958.

### *F. AMA DABLAM*

Ama Dablam (22,494 ft) is an impressive peak on the left bank of Imja Khola. It was first spotted by the Houston Expedition of 1950 and visited by the British Mount Everest Expedition of 1953. The British-Italian expedition to Ama Dablam this autumn was led by Alfred Grevory and also included Piero Ghiglione, a veteran of 76. Their Base Camp was set at 16,000 feet and two additional camps were needed to help them attain 20,000 feet along the southwest ridge. Above this altitude, the mountain presented an unclimbable stretch of steep rock and ice. After their failure to reach the summit, they examined the various sides of the mountain for

the following year's Spring expedition. They also reconnoitred Lhotse Shar (27,504 ft) and climbed a minor peak of 20,300 feet in the neighbourhood.

*Reference*

Piero Ghiglione: *Journal of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research*. (Zurich), vol. 2 (1959), pp. 233-235.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1959

### YEAR OF DISASTERS

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## Chapter Eleven

### 1959: YEAR OF DISASTERS

This was a disastrous year accounting for eight deaths in the mountains. And none of the expedition to the eight major peaks was successful. Among the minor expeditions two were specifically for hunting the Yeti. The Daily Maily Yeti Expedition led by Noel Barber roamed the Solu-Khumbu area for signs and remains attributed to the Abominable Snowman.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese expedition for the same purpose based themselves at a height of 11,486 feet and scourged Khumbu, Langmoche Khola, Lobujya Khola, Dudh Pokhari and Lhenjo areas for fifty days.<sup>2</sup> The Yeti remained as elusive as ever.

#### A. DHAULAGIRI HIMAL

There were two expeditions this year to Dhaulagiri Himal, an Austrian team to climb Dhaulagiri I (26,795 ft) and a Japanese team to reconnoitre Dhaulagiri II (25,429 ft). The Austrian expedition led by Fritz Moravec came in the summer and made their Base Camp (14,700 ft) beside the Myagdi glacier. Many of the previous expeditions had failed on the 'Pear Route' whereas technically the north-east route seemed more favourable. The Austrians decided for the north-east arete route and the reconnaissance camp was converted into the first stage of assault. In the following weeks, subsequent camps were set-up, Camp II at 18,700 feet and Camp III at 20,000 feet. The fourth camp was being set-up at 21,300 feet when tragedy befell the expedition. Heinrich Roiss, deputy leader of the expedition, fell into a deep crevasse and was killed. Twenty

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<sup>1</sup> Noel Barber: *The Flight of Dalai Lama*. London, 1960.

<sup>2</sup> F. Yamasaki; *Sangaku*, vol. 55 (1961), pp. 15-16; pp. 118-42.

days later, Hans Ratay and three Sherpas had a narrow escape when the entrance of their Camp IV was covered by an avalanche. When finally they managed to pitch Camp V (23,000 ft) on a small platform and Camp VI (24,200 ft) along the ridge, the expedition was behind schedule. Karl Prein and Pasang Dawa Lama made three attempts on the summit and each time they were turned back by terrible blizzards. Its proverbial bad weather had helped Dhaulagiri hold its ground once more.

#### Reference

Fritz Moravec: *The Mountain World 1960-1961*, Zurich, 1961, pp. 126-30.

The Keio University Expedition started from Pokhara on September 21 and spent over a month examining the approaches to Dhaulagiri II (25,429 ft) from all directions except the south. They climbed Kangrewa (ca. 18,000 ft) from Tukche to survey the eastern face of the mountain. They could find no possible route of reaching the western side of the Inner glacier and neither could they cross over the Churen Khola. The expedition was unable to suggest any practicable route to the summit of Dhaulagiri II. On the way back through Manangbhot and Thonje, they reconnoitred Himalchuli (25,895 ft) and were optimistic of its west face.

#### Reference

K. Kato: *Sangaku*, vol 55 (1961), pp. 4-9; pp.33-52.

## B. HIMALCHULI

A Japanese climbing party led by J. Muraki arrived Namru on April 5 to make an attempt on Himalchuli (25,895 ft). Transportation was done in three stages and during the third stage Nyima Tenzing died of heart weakness inspite of the tending with oxygen inhalation.<sup>1</sup> The assault route chosen was along the east ridge as taken by Kanosaka's reconnaissance expedition of the previous year. On May 11, the climbers occupied Camp V (22,317 ft) at the base of the main summit. Terrible snow-storms were usual every afternoon. On May 21, S. Ishizaka and Y. Matsuda

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<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, the obituary notice in the *Sangaku* (vol. 54, 1960, p. 172) to Nyima was probably the first obituary to a Sherpa or native in any foreign alpine journal. The nearest to it was that on the death of the head Lama of Rongphu monastery by Hugh Ruttledge in the *Alpine Journal* (vol. 58, 1951/1952, pp. 530-531)



*Himalchuli from Barahpokhari Lekh. The main summit (25,895 ft) is to the right of the central (24,738 ft) and western (24,184 ft) summits.*



started from the final camp at 23,302 feet for the summit but they found there was still much ground to be covered and the attempt was abandoned. On May 22 they started the evacuation of Camp V in earnest because of the worsening weather.

*Reference*

J. Muraki: *Sangaku*, vol. 55 (1961), pp. 1-3; pp. 4-32.

### C. MOUNTAINS OF DOLPO

Five young Americans visited the mountains north of Dhaulagiri in the autumn and their objective was general exploration rather than specific climbing. They trekked to the eastern fringe of Kanjiroba Himal in the latter half of September. They climbed 'Tekochen Peak' (ca. 18,300 ft), Ama Tsumen (ca. 18,300 ft) and another peak (ca. 18,800 ft) north of Tekochen La. In Mukut Himal (21,780 ft) they made the first ascent of 'Tongu Peak' (ca. 20,000 ft) and their only serious climb on Hangde Peak (22,829 ft.) was thwarted by a steep cornice and strong storms.

*Reference*

J. S. Humphreys: *American Alpine Journal*, vol. 12 (1961), pp. 249-62.

### D. LANGTANG LIRUNG

A group of Iida University students led by T. Yamada arrived Langtang Himal during the autumn. The Japanese arrived at Kyangin-gyang in Langtang valley to climb Langtang Lirung (23,771 ft), the highest point in the Langtang group. After setting up their Base Camp at the head of the Lirung glacier, they tried a route along the south-east side. The attempt was unsuccessful and after their failure on Langtang Lirung, they diverted their resources towards Sabal Chome another peak about 22,000 feet high. Three camps at the heights of 16,410 feet, 17,722 feet, and 19,035 feet enabled two climbers and two Sherpas to reach the summit on October 25. They recorded the altitude of the summit to be about 21,990 feet.

*Reference*

T. Yamada: *Sangaku*, vol. 55 (1961), pp. 12-13; pp. 70-94.

## E. ENCOUNTER WITH BRIGANDS

Three members of the Fukuoka University Expedition led by H. Kato reached Beding on September 28 and Menlung Pokhari (15,753 ft) to reconnoitre Gaurisankar (23,442 ft). Between October 14 and October 25, they surveyed the various possible routes to the summit. The northern ridge was found to be so sharp that no camping seemed possible. Their later attempt to climb Menlungtse (23,560 ft) met with failure owing to its knife-edged ridges and frequent snow-falls. Pangbuk (21,760 ft), first climbed by T.D. Bourdillon and R.L.B. Colledge in 1952, was also attempted and Oishi reached up to a height of 20,020 feet. It was during this expedition that nine Tibetan brigands descended at the climbers' Base Camp near Hadengi La (17,885 ft) and exerted cash from them. Thus depleted of finance, the Japanese abandoned their plan of reconnoitring Gyachung Kang (25,990 ft) and returned to Khumjung by way of Tesi Lapcha (19,100 ft).

### Reference

H. Kato: *Sangaku*, vol. 55 (1961), pp. 13-14; pp. 95-117.

## F. CHO OYU TRAGEDY

Madame Claude Kogan who had reached within 1,300 feet of the summit of Cho Oyu in 1954, led an International Expedition of twelve women to Cho Oyu in autumn 1959. They established their Base Camp at 19,000 feet and the second camp at 22,250 feet at the base of a 300-foot ice-wall. Progress went smoothly as far as Camp III (22,317 ft) though later two climbers had to be sent down to the Base Camp because of high altitude sickness. On October 1, Claude Kogan, Claudine van der Stratten and Ang Norbu went up to establish Camp IV at 23,000 feet. The following day, Sherpa Tungsang and Sardar Wangdi were swept by avalanche while on way to Camp IV. Tungsang was killed and Wangdi escaped with severe frost-bite. Then there followed a week of relentless blizzard sometimes approaching a speed of 100 miles per hour. While the fate of those in the high camp was unknown, others in the lower camps could move out of their camp only after the weather had calmed down on October 10. Later they found Camp IV completely destroyed and no trace of the two women climbers and their Sherpas. This had been of one the worst disasters in the Himalayas.

### Reference

*The Times*, London, October 4, and October 9, 1959.

## G. AMA DABLAM AGAIN

The British expedition to Ama Dablam (22,494 ft) led by Emlyn Jones earlier in the summer had its own tragic tale. The last glimpse of Harris and Fraser struggling up the mountain but never to return was to many a sharp reminder of the fate of Mallory and Irvine on Sagarmatha in 1924.

Shortly after setting their Base Camp at 16,500 feet, Emlyn Jones and M.J. Harris made a reconnaissance of the lower part of the north-east spur. Wyn Harris and G.J. Fraser tackled a steep 400-foot rock buttress and then ropes were fixed and a sixty-foot rope ladder installed to transport loads to Camp I (17,850 ft) above the buttress. Camp II (19,200 ft) was placed on a small platform cut out of the ice and occupied on May, 5. Two days later the third camp at 19,850 feet was pitched at the foot of the 45-degree vertical section. Harris and Fraser forming the assault team left the third camp at 19,850 feet was pitched at the foot of the 45-degree over the ice ridge. The pair was seen once at about 21,500 feet on May 20. They were last seen the following day at about 8.30 A.M. working up the ice tower and the others down at Camp IV hoped the two would attain the summit. About mid-day, the mountain was covered with cloud and there was no more sign of the two climbers. When the two failed to return after five days of waiting they were presumed to be dead. Whether they ever reached the summit still remains a mystery though the expedition leader gives them the benefit of doubt.

### *Reference*

E. A. Wrangham: *Climbers Club Journal*, vol. 13 (1960), pp. 5-19.

## H. ATTEMPT ON JANNU

The French followed up their 1957 reconnaissance of Jannu (25,294 ft) with a strong climbing team this summer. To start with, they escaped a disaster on April 15 when their original route was swept away by an enormous avalanche. This led them to settle for a more southerly route. On May 10, Lionel Terray roped with Jean Bouvier, and Rene Desmaison with Pierre Leroux started the assault from Camp V at 22,368 feet. They reached the crest of a 23,951 feet high ridge about noon and finding the summit

far, they retired after dumping their provisions at this point. The following day Guido Magnone and Robert Paragot resumed the assault early at 9 A.M. from the highest camp. But the summit still deluded them and the highest point reached by the expedition was 24,280 feet.

*Reference*

Jean Franco: *La Montagne*, October 1959, pp. 108-21.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1960

**THE FIGHT FOR SAGARMATHA**

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## *Chapter Twelve*

### 1960: THE FIGHT FOR SAGARMATHA

It was indeed a year of series of successes. Six major peaks, Sagarmatha, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna II, Himalchuli and Api were climbed, four of them for the first time. The ascent of Dhaulagiri, the last of the world's ten highest mountains to remain unclimbed, came as a climax to a decade of efforts since 1950. Then there were the Chinese and Indian climbers scrambling up the north and south side of Sagarmatha. There was also one modest French expedition led by R. Sandoz that visited Rolwaling Himal in the autumn to attempt Chobu Tse (21,870 ft.). The attempt was later abandoned because of dangerous conditions on the mountain.

#### *A. DHAULAGIRI AT LAST*

The decade's eighth expedition to Dhaulagiri led by Max Eiselin was international in composition and Swiss in conception.. One novelty of this expedition was the use of a light aircraft in order to eliminate the long approach march for transporting materials to the mountain base. The purists may have no regard for the "Yeti" (Pilatus Porter) plane but it served the expedition well before crashing on Dapa col (17,060 ft.) .

On March 28 'Acclimatization Camp' was established on Dapa col and a week later the proposed north-east spur route was reconnoitred from the Advance Base (18,880 ft). The first high altitude camp was set at 21,620 feet and Camp II (23,130 ft) above the ice-wall on the spur. After setting Camp IV at 24,300 feet on May 4, the assault team of Ernst Forrer, Albin Schelbert, and Kurt Diemberger started for the summit. They were turned back by

bad weather. Six days later Bivouac Camp was established at a height of 25,600 feet where six climbers spent a sleepless night.

However, May 13 dawned bright and after 4½ hours of tramping over a sharp snow arete and another bouldery ridge, Albin Schelbert, Kurt Diemberger, Ernst Forrer, Peter Diener, Nawang Dorje and Nyima Dorje stood on the summit of Dhaulagiri for the first time. Their altimeter recorded the height of the summit to be 26,975 feet, thus superseding Cho Oyu (26,750 ft.) as the sixth highest mountain in the world. After the first assault team had returned to the north-east col, the ascent was repeated ten days later by Hugh Weber and Michel Vaucher covering 2,700 feet in a single day. Diemberger also climbed 'Dapa Peak' (19,620 ft) before the expedition left the mountain.

### *Reference*

Max Eiselin: *The Ascent of Dhaulagiri*. Zurich, 1961.

## B. ANNAPURNA II

The British-Indian-Nepalese Services' Expedition to Annapurna II (26,041ft) was led by J. O. M. Roberts a frequent visitor to Nepal Himalaya. The climbers left the acclimatisation camp (11,000 ft) near the mouth of Sabcho Valley on April 13 for their Base Camp (14,500 ft) below Annapurna IV. After two weeks of plodding by two carrying parties, Richard Grant and C.J.S. Bonnington established Camp III at 21,000 feet on top of the 'Dome'. The advance party managed to reach up to a height of 22,600 feet before returning down to Sabcho Valley to wait for a better weather.

The assault was resumed on May 7 and Camp III was reoccupied four days later. Beyond this, the fourth camp was pitched directly below Annapurna IV and the fifth camp (23,850 ft) on the shoulder connecting Annapurna IV with Annapurna II. The sixth camp on a narrow corniced ridge was actually 200 feet lower than the fifth camp. Then anticipating bad weather, Grant and Bonnington with seven Sherpas returned to Camp V after establishing Camp VI. The following day dawned promising and Grant and Bonnington and Ang Nyima advanced for the final assault on the summit. The summit was reached after traversing a series of bumps by rope-fixing and some severe rock-climbing was also involved. Urkien and Mingma also made an unauthorised ascent of Annapurna IV (24,688 ft) the next day and the ascent was later



*Annapurna Himal, East, from Siklis. Annapurna II (26,041 ft) to the left and to the right Lamjung Himal (22,910 ft) descending abruptly to Madi Khola 17,000 feet below.*



repeated by Crawshaw, Prabhakar, Ward and Tashi direct from Camp IV at 22,600 feet. These were the third and fourth ascents of Annapurna IV peak.

#### *Reference*

Richard Grant: *Annapurna II*. London, 1961.

### C. API ASCENDED

The Doshisha University team from Japan visited the extreme north-western Nepal to make an attempt on Api (23,399 ft). Entering Nepal at Garbyang they followed the route taken by Piero Ghigliione's tragic expedition of 1954. The establishment of Base Camp at 11,500 feet in Api Khola and the pitching of two higher camps at 14,750 feet and 17,400 feet respectively did not take much time. But the setting up of the third camp at 19,900 feet was a hard job of three days and which entailed fixing-up of a 100-foot rope. The final camp at 21,555 feet was occupied on May 9, and the following day K. Hirabayashi and Gyaltsen Norbu left the high camp in fair weather. They started early morning at 6 A. M. and reached the corniced summit six hours later. The following day the expedition leader Tsuda and Terasaka repeated the successful ascent.

#### *Reference*

Y. Tsuda: *American Alpine Journal*, vol. 12(1961), pp. 274-80.

### D. SUCCESS ON HIMALCHULI

The third Japanese expedition to Nepal this year made the third attempt on Himalchuli (25,895 ft) in three years. The Keio University team led by J. Yamada, instead of following the north-east ridge of the two previous expeditions, settled for the south-east ridge along the Barah-pokhari Lekh. Their Base Camp was established on a high spur of the 'Sickle Ridge' at a height of 13,780 feet. After setting Camp I at 17,000 feet, the second camp was being established on the first step of the ridge (18,900 ft) when an accident killed one Sherpa and injured another. Camp III was set on the second step (20,700 ft) on May 7 and two weeks later they progressed up Camp IV (21,650 ft) and Camp V (23,000 ft). The final camp was located on the col between the west peak (24,184 ft)

and the main peak (25,895 ft). On May 24, Tanabe and Harada left this last camp at 5 A. M. and ascended the summit before noon. Miyashita and Nakazawa starting for the summit next day took exactly the same time to repeat the ascent.

#### *Reference*

J. Yamada; *American Alpine Journal*, vol. 12 (1961), pp. 275-77

### *E. GANESH HIMAL*

P. J. Wallace left Kathmandu on April 26 with two Sherpas to attempt Ganesh Peak (24,299 ft). The summit of the peak he was attempting was not exactly the same as that had been climbed by Raymond Lambert, Claude Kogan and Gauchet in 1955 when the latter was killed in an accident. After reaching the Base Camp on May 7, a preliminary examination above Sangje glacier revealed the impossibility of reaching the south-west ridge. Therefore, the south-east ridge was chosen and Camp I(16,500 ft.) placed near Gauchet's grave. Progress above Camp II(18,700 ft) was made through a dangerous couloir, at the end of which the assault camp was hung in an ice cavern. They were forced to retire to the Base Camp for a week by bad weather.

During the second assault, they camped on a ledge (21,300ft) along the ridge. On May 31, they were able to reach the eastern summit inspite of a gusty morning. Then they beat a hasty retreat down the couloir and finally left the mountain on June 2.

#### *Reference*

P.J. Wallace: *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 22(1959-1960), pp. 113-17.

### *F. JUGAL HIMAL*

Hisayaki Ito led a Japanese team on Jugal Himal in summer, their object being a peak of 23,240 feet and named the 'Big White Peak' by the Scottish Women Expedition of 1955. The same peak had cost three lives to the Yorkshire Climbers in 1957. The Japanese occupied their Base Camp (14,100 ft) on April 18. Their route lay along the Phurbi Chyachu glacier on which they established two camps. However, bad weather compelled them to abandon their attempt early. As a consolation they managed to chimb a 22,929 feet



XIV. *DHAULAGIRI* (26795 ft.) from south-east.

(Photo: J.O.M. Roberst)



high peak just close to the 'Big White Peak' from their fourth camp on May 7. They named it 'Madiya' owing to its central location.

### Reference

Hiyasaki Ito: *American Alpine Journal*, vol. 12(1961), pp. 280-81.

## G. MEN, MOUNTAINS AND POLITICS

'The fight for Everest' as implied by E. F. Norton<sup>1</sup> was the struggle between man and mountain and not between rival parties of men for a mountain. But this year, India and China, both new nations in climbing tradition, would not rest short of Sagarmatha (Mount Everest). And the irony was aptly put by an editorial; "Surely, to those who look down upon the earth's surface from the august and timeless mountain peaks, the quarrels of power politics should seem unreal"<sup>2</sup> The simultaneous attempt on Sagarmatha by Indians on the south face and the Chinese on the north face, made a sharp contrast in their climbing attitude too. While the leader of the Indian expedition decried 'reckless mountaineering' by observing that "no success on a mountain or peak is worth the life or limb of a man",<sup>3</sup> the Chinese expedition claimed that their only determination not to give up brought the final success.

The Indian expedition led by Gyan Singh reached Namche Bazar on March 31. Two weeks later they were in Khumbu glacier, one party establishing Camp III at 21,200 feet as the advance base and the other party proceeding to Camp IV (22,400 ft) on April 19. The slow progress across the Lhotse face was led mostly by the Sherpas. On April 28, Da Namgyal established Camp V at about 24,000 feet and he was joined later by C. P. Vohra and A. K. Choudhury. A. B. Jungalwala and seven Sherpas reached the South Col (26200 ft) on May 9 and returned to Camp V the same day. A week's respite was forced on them after May 14 by bad weather. On May 22 the first assault party left Camp III and reached Camp VII at 27,600 feet two days later. The final assault on May 25 was led by Nawang Gombu and the frozen mask-valves of N. Kumar and Sonam Gyatso had to be rectified on the march. On the south-east ridge of Sagarmatha the wind was strong and visibility almost

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1 E. F. Norton; *The Fight for Everest*. London, 1925.

2 *The Times*, London, May 28, 1960.

3 Gyan Singh (Brig.); *Alpine Journal*, vol. 66 (1961), p. 27.

nil. They realized that it was too risky to proceed beyond 28,300 feet and managed to return to the South Col with great difficulty at about 7 P. M. Bad weather continued and the second assault party never started from the South Col. On May 29, all were back at the Base Camp (18,000 ft) for the retreat.

### *Reference*

Gayn Singh: *Lure of Everest*. New Delhi, 1961.

The Chinese expedition occupied their Base Camp at 16,894 feet beside Ronphu glacier on March 19, and the advance party opened the way up to Camp III (21,120 ft) working against snow storms. On March 27 the assault team reached the third camp. The route to the North Col (23,113 ft) was reconnoitred by a scout team of six who were forced to bivouac temporarily at 21,780 feet due to bad weather. The first acclimatization period between March 25 and 31 involved camping near the 'Ice Chimney' (22,605 ft) above which they had to climb ten hours in severe snow conditions. In course of their second acclimatisation, April 6 to 14, they reached the North Col and fully reconnoitred their route up to 26,247 feet.

They were detained two days in a camp at 24,400 feet after leaving the North Col on April 29, and were again temporarily blocked by a rock-wall at about 26,605 feet the next day. By May 3, however, they had reached a height of 28,055 feet, and finally tackled the 'Second Step' (28,303 ft) with great difficulty. Four climbers left their highest camp, at 28,050 feet, on May 24 for the summit assault. It took them three hours to negotiate the 'Second Step' and one of the members, Liu Lien-man trailed behind. The others continued the climb through the night though their oxygen ran-out at the last lap. In the pre-dawn of May 25, the three climbers Wang Fu-Chou, Chin Yin-hua, and Kombu reached the summit after a hard climb of nineteen hours. They became the first climbers to ascend Sagarmatha from the northern route. They were back in the Base Camp on May 30 to rejoin the other members of the expeditions.

The Chinese claim of climbing the summit of Sagarmatha has been much debated and dissected. It is generally agreed that the Chinese have not conclusively proved it but neither has any one completely disproved their assertion. The Chinese climbers are reported to have left an effigy of Mao on the summit, but it is too presumptuous to expect that "the discovery of Mr. Mao's effigy on

the summit could be decisive evidence"<sup>4</sup> of their success; the fact being that the summit of Sagarmatha, one of the most-exposed points on the earth, could hardly preserve any thing left over there. It is equally misleading to assume that since the Indian climbers had bad weather in the south, the Chinese in the north should fair no better. Time and again, experienced climbers have remarked on the marked difference in weather conditions between the north and south side of the Himalayas. All said, B.R. Goodfellow's<sup>5</sup> discussion of the Chinese claim seems one of the most convincing.

*Reference*

S. Chan-Chun; *Alpine Journal*, vol. 56 (1961), pp. 28-41

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<sup>4</sup> T. S. Blakeney; *Alpine Journal*, vol. 66 (1961), pp1 36-41.

<sup>5</sup> B. R. Goodfellow; *Alpine Journal*, vol. 66 (1961), pp. 313-15.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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## Chapter Thirteen

### CONCLUSION

During the decade 1950-1960, Nepal Himalaya became a great centre of alpine activity. The unusual popularity of this area was due to two factors; here was a virgin territory preserved so till 1949 by the country's closed-door policy, and here were congregated most of the highest peaks including eight of the world's fourteen Eight Thousanders. <sup>1</sup>

#### A. EXPEDITIONS

Successive seasons brought more climbers to Nepal and fresh alpine exploits. Some sixteen countries as antipodal as Argentina and Japan or as close as India and China contributed over a hundred large and small expeditions. The number of expeditions by nationalities were as follows: British (32), Japan (16) Swiss (10), French (7), American (5), Austrian (4), German (4), Indian (3), New Zealander (3), Argentinian (2), Canadian (1), Chinese (1), Kenyan (1), and International (5).

Sometimes, mountaineering in this new field of activity was no more a non-competitive climbing undertaken solely for its majesty and beauty but a matter of national prestige. It might appear a convention yet a fact that particular nations, were tied-up with individual peaks; the British on Sagarmatha, the

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<sup>1</sup> Of the fourteen Eight Thousander peaks—*Sagarmatha (Mount Everest)* 29,028 feet, *K-2 (Chogori)* 28, 253 feet, *Kangchenjunga* 28,208 feet, *Lhotse* 27,890 feet, *Makalu* 27,807 feet, *Dhaulagiri* 26,795 feet, *Mar:aslu* 26,760 feet, *Cho Oyu* 26,750 feet, Nanga Parbat 26,660 feet, *Annapurna* 26,545 feet, Hidden Peak (Gasherbrum I) 26,470 feet, Broad Peak 26,400 feet, Gasherbrum II 26,360 feet, *Sisha Pangma (Gosainthan)* 26,291 feet, eight (italicized) are in Nepal Himalaya.

Japanese on Manaslu, the Swiss on Dhaulagiri, and the French on Jannu.

### B. PEAKS CLIMBED

This intensity of activity had results equally impressive, At least four-score peaks of above 20,000 feet were climbed for the first time and many re-climbed. Of these, eight peaks were of Eight Thousander rank and eleven peaks of Seven Thousander rank and the four major peaks—Sagarmatha, Cho Oyu, Annapurna IV, and Ganesh Peak—were climbed more than once. The cumulative results of the reconnaissance, attempt, and ascent of peaks of over 17,000 feet is summarized below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Reconnoitred</i>	<i>Attempted</i>	<i>Climbed</i>	<i>Total</i>
1950	4	1	1	6
1951	2	2	—	4
1952	1	4	17	22
1953	5	5	10	20
1954	5	10	36	51
1955	3	6	34	43
1956	2	—	34	36
1957	2	5	1	8
1958	4	5	3	12
1959	3	8	6	17
1960	—	4	10	14
<i>Total</i>	31	50	152	233

### C. CLIMBING SEASON

About ninety per cent of successful ascents were made during the early summer months. The only exception was the disastrous year of 1959 when all summer expeditions failed and the autumn accounted for the two minor summits of 'Tongu Peak' (ca. 20,000 feet) and Sabal Chome (ca. 21, 990 feet). Of the thirty-two successful ascents (including re-ascents) of peaks above 23,000 feet, twenty-seven were accomplished during the period May-June. And all the Eight Thousanders, with the singular exception



XVI. KANJIROBA ( 22,583 ft. ), the highest peak between Bheri river and Mugu Karnali river.  
( Sketch ; Harka Gurung )



of Cho Oyu, were climbed between May 9 and June 3. On the basis of these statistics, the pre-monsoon lull fluctuating between late May and early June seems to be the best period for climbing in the high Himalayas.

#### D. CASUALTIES

The total climbing casualty in Nepal Himalaya during the whole decade was twenty-two deaths and thirteen injuries. The worst year was 1959 when eight climbers died in the mountains that summer. Even this exceptional year pales away into insignificance when compared to accident rates elsewhere. For the corresponding period (summer 1959) <sup>2</sup> a meticulous alpine journal *Les Alpes* reported 77 deaths out of 123 accidents in the Swiss mountains. Seventy-four of these accidents took place in the high Alps resulting in the loss of forty-five lives. And this was not an exceptional year either. According to *Les Alpes* again, 68 people were killed in the Swiss mountains in the summer of 1958.

Climbing casualties in Nepal therefore have been low indeed. Only one explanation can be offered for this low accident rate: Mountaineering in the Himalayas has remained the preserve of the few chosen experts, unlike the Scottish Highlands or Bernese Oberland swarming with novice climbers.

#### E. PROSPECT

That big mountains could be climbed by small expeditions was long believed by some <sup>3</sup> and definitely proved by the Austrians on Cho Oyu. Large expeditions were in many cases sustained by the attraction of prominent virgin peaks on which to plant the numerous national flags ! The feverish peak-bagging during 1950-1960 period has changed the situation and large expeditions floating on values other than pure alpinism can now yield only diminishing returns. Instead, smaller and lighter expeditions will be on the

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<sup>2</sup> In the Scottish Highlands, there were 30 accidents involving eight deaths between March and December 1959 alone. See *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, vol. XXVII (1960), pp. 78-81.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Shipton: *Upon That Mountain*, London, 1945, pp. 147-170; *Climbers, Club Journal*, pp. 4-9. and H. W. Tilman; *Mount Everest 1938*. Cambridge, 1938, "Appendix".

increase and continue to swamp the Himalayas progressively. Solo attempts on high mountains like those of Wilson or Denman or Becker-Larsen may be too eccentric, but one-man expeditions to lesser heights after the fashion of Roberts or Wallace will evidently become popular.

The earlier part of the decade saw Nepal Himalaya emerging from the same stage as the Alps did under the exploits of the Victorian nobility<sup>4</sup> but at a much faster pace. In the history of mountaineering in Nepal, the Pioneer Age has definitely passed. In fact within a single decade most of the mountain groups have been explored and their major summits climbed. Mere primacy in height will no longer be the deciding factor for the planning of expeditions. The next phase will be the climbing of satellite summits or trying alternative routes on the main summits. Luckily, the maze of lesser heights in the Himalayas are numerous enough to engage the ingenuity of climbers for quite sometime to come.

One might desist, though reluctantly, from defining the climbing period 1950-1960 as the Golden Age of Himalayan mountaineering for lack of *time* perspective. What however seems clear is the fact that the decade under discussion has been a unique one.

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<sup>4</sup> Arnold Lunn; *A Century of Mountaineering*, Zurich, 1957.



*Jagdula Lekh (20,951 ft) flanked by Patrasi Himal (21,742 ft) and Kagmara Lekh, (19,710 ft) from Chakhure Pass (13,590 ft).*



## **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

<b>A. Books and Articles</b>	<b>93</b>
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## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The exploration and climbing in Nepal Himalaya has contributed to a concomitant growth of literature on the Himalayas. Three works remain outstanding among this vast accumulation: Mason's *Abode of Snow* in English, Kurz's *Chronique Himalayenne* in French, and Dyhrenfurth's *Der Dritte Pol* in German. The basic source materials for the present study have been incorporated in the main text and these include 38 books and 62 selected items from various journals. Other works of general interests are listed below.

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## **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX A

### ASPECTS OF THE SNOWMAN\*

#### FACT AND FICTION

Does the Snowman, however abominable or amiable, exist? Mountaineers are grateful to Mallery for having said regarding climbing, "Because it is there". Unfortunately, no Snowman (Yeti) believer has justified the situation so affirmatively and neither have non-believers categorically committed, "Because it is not there". To begin with, it is not the existence of the Yeti that is in question, however, but that of its image. Ever since Waddell (1899) reported the trail of "the hairy wild man" from Donkya La, the debate has remained unabated. "Nowadays", sighs Gerald Durrell, "to say you believe that in some parts of the world there be quite large animals unknown to science is tantamount to admitting that you are weak-minded". Scalps, skins, hairs, and droppings accredited to the Yeti have been discredited one by one. The few first hand evidences available are submerged in a maze of myth, magic, imagination and superstition.

Yet the Himalayans are not to be despised for their belief nurtured by geography and preserved by tradition. Within the compass of 1,500 miles of the Himalayas are extensive areas that are still remote and inaccessible. These are not empty deserts to the inhabitants on the fringes as they are elsewhere. In the Scottish Highlands, the bland hills look bleak and millions of years old and it is impossible to think they preserve anything novel. Even the Loch Ness monster is supposed to be prehistoric! But one can conjure up anything to happen in the refulgent youth of the Himalayas. Alternated with innumerable forbidding peaks are the deep valleys each

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\* Reprinted from *GE*, Edinburgh University Geographical society Magazine, No. 11, April, 1962.

with its own secret. If there were no mountains, men would create them: like the Pyramids in the featureless Sahara. If there were mountains, men would adorn them with life.

A highland boy's highway code is to run downhill when chased by the Yeti. For, if it is a 'he', the crest-hair will fall over his eyes, and if a 'she', her long, pendant breasts (supposed to be carried on the shoulders) would encumber her movement, and while the Snowman is thus fumbling, our junior Sherpa or Gurkha is safe down in the Valley. In actual fact, confesses Dr. Hagen, not a single soul has ever actually seen a Yeti so far. If one follows up the story of the Sherpas seriously, if one cross-examines the story-teller, his answer is always, "No, I have not seen the Yeti myself: it was my cousin's father, and he lives on the other side of the mountains, and he died two years ago". This does not necessarily mean that all Yeti stories are native figments as George Orwell would generalize, "That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough in a distance, but nearer you get to the event, the vaguer it becomes". Even on logical ground a simple Himalayan might ask: if there can be wild goat (ghoral), wild sheep (naur), wild dog (bwanso), wild horse (kyang), then why not the wild man (Yeti) ? It is equally naive of the scientist to assume that these people cannot identify monkeys. The Himalayans in fact appreciate the affinity between man and monkeys and have been calling monkeys 'mon Oncle' long before Darwin was born.

## SEARCH AND RESEARCH

Either a distinguished research worker introduces his subject or an unusual subject advertizes the researcher. The Yeti is a subject ideally sensational and we pity the American scholar surveying the nine million rhesus monkeys (equal to Nepal's total *Homo sapiens* !) in Uttar Pradesh. When the Yeti is finally scientifically classified into zoology or anthropology, all the journalistic zeal for it will melt away. As long as science poaches on publicity, be it so.

Most of the Yeti footprints have been met casually, by Waddell (1898), Howard-Bury (1921), Kaulback (1934), Tilman (1937 and 1938), Hunt (1937), Shipton (1951), and Wyss-Dunant (1952). The Daily Mail Expedition (1954), specifically in search of the elusive Yeti, came back only with more footprints. The American Expedition of Tom Slick (1957) was equally unrewarding and

a Japanese Expedition spent a fruitless winter in 1960 waiting to capture a shivering Yeti. Nor were the Czechoslovakians in Mongolia (1958) and the Russians in the Pamirs the same year any more successful. The second Soviet Expedition (1960) came to a similar conclusion as the Hillary Himalayan Expedition of 1961, that the 'Snowman' existed only in local legends. But their leader Professor Stanyukock's valedictory remarks are most sentimental:

Farewell, you fascinating riddle. Farewell,  
inscrutable Snowman, ruler of the heights  
and snows. A pity, a thousand pities that thou  
art not to be found. What, not all ?  
Perhaps thou art yet to be found in the  
remotest mountains of Nepal. Perhaps !

What has confounded the Yeti investigation is his nebulous character. He has many names to justify his adherents: Metoh-Kangmi, Mi-tre, Mi-go, Mirka, Shupka, Thloh-Mung, all refer to the same elusive image. The focus for the search is also widely diffused. Originally a native of the Eastern Himalayas, the Yeti has been allegedly reported from Karakoram, Garhwal, Burma and Borneo. The latest dossier, *The Snowman and Company*, even imposes upon him such distant cousins as the Tibetan *Dremon*, the Mongolian *Alma*, and British Columbian *Sasquatch*.

The dictum that suspended judgement is the greatest triumph of intellectual discipline is fully ignored when it comes to explaining mysterious footprints in the snow. Expert speculations on the footprint's authorship have been so prolific and diverse that any sensible Yeti (he would not play hide-and-seek if he had no sense of humour) must be prone to plantigrade more cautiously in order to further confound his pursuers. Extreme sceptics attribute the prints to rolling boulders, 'blob' tracks, or snow-sandals. Some suggest apes, gorillas or langur monkeys. Others think of snow leopards, loping wolves, giant pandas, Tibetan outlaws, Hindu ascetics, and bears (not one but of three species). The advocate who pleaded for the Yeti, "if fingerprints can hang a man, I see no reason why footprints should not establish the existence of a particular kind of man", must envy the inimitable palaeontologists.

And all the time, the myth multiplies. One asks of the credentials of the Yeti: "Anthropology or Zoology?" Another queries; "Is the Yeti a biped or quadruped ?" While most of the scientists

reject the supposition of an unknown zoological specimen daring to escape their classification, those more hopeful think of the Yeti in terms of a 'missing link'. One of the latter laments, "It is difficult not to be exasperated when all the pieces of evidence run away as soon as the experts arrive on the scene". Another scientist, relying on embryological evidence, believes in some sort of a giant primate, perhaps akin to the Pleistocene Gigantopithecus. Even classificatory names have been appended to the already long list of Yeti nomenclature. Tilman suggests *Homo niveus odiosus*, and Heuvelmans prefers *Dinanthropoides nivalis* or the 'terrible anthropoid of the snows'.

### ATTRACTION AND DISTRACTION

Climbing or exploring in the Himalayas is like booking seats in a theatre but sitting on the top is one's own business. In a single year there were eleven applications to climb Dhaulagiri. Each magnitude of peaks has its price fixed and the fee for a Yeti expedition tops all with about Rs. 5,000. As long as the Yeti helps being scarce, the underdeveloped Himalayan countries are assured of this foreign aid in royalty without strings attached. The search for the Yeti has also contributed greatly to the geographical exploration in regions where explorers claim to have made the first footprints and at the same time chiding the survey of India for inaccurate maps !

Himalayan travellers have found the Yeti to be their Achilles' heel causing distraction in camp and during the climb. Climbers need not read *The Hound of Baskervilles* to be convinced when alone in the flapping tent of the Yeti's eerie whistle down the wind. Leaving apart the high-altitude Sherpas, the natives believe that the Sahibs are also scared of the Yeti; otherwise, why should they be carrying such lethal weapons such as ice-axes and crampons? Neither is a surveyor wielding a theodolite on a remote ridge much safer. While taking bearings, he has only to imagine a Yeti's grisly tackle from behind his shoulder, and we are led to suspect that the oscillating height of Chomolungma from 29,002 feet to 29,141 feet and 29,080 feet to 29,028 feet was not due to the heaving Himalayas but rather due to the proclivity of the shaking surveyors !

### CONCLUSION

Most Yeti investigation suffer from generalization. If the creature is to be found, it should be pinned down to a place instead

of debating on its ubiquitousness from Alaska to Borneo. The attempt of unsuccessful expeditions to seal Yeti's fate is being unrealistic. Failure to find thing does not necessarily deny its existence. Neither does Smythe's Garhwali bear or the fake Khumjung scalp invalidate each and all of the Yeti 'facts' elsewhere.

It is presumptuous to hope that the Yeti will contribute extensively to zoology, zoo-psychology, anthropology and the theory of evolution. This will be the more heart-breaking if the end of the trail reveals a hibernating *Ursus arctos isabellinus* or a snoring *Semnopithecus entellus Dufresne*.

On the subject, it is healthy to be open-minded. For the opening of a closed mind causes more embarrassment than the closing of an open one.

Finally, things that persist may or may not exist.

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## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF NEPAL HIMALAYA PEAKS OF OVER 23,000 FEET (7,010 METERS)

Nepal Himalaya comprises of more than two hundred summits of above 20,000 feet. The present list includes only those known summits that exceed 23,000 feet in height. The individual summits have been grouped (by proximity to a main peak) into 48 order numbers and these can be located in the accompanying map. The maze of peaks in Kangchenjunga area are grouped into three sections: (a) the central Kangchenjunga massif, (b) north of the North Col, and (c) south of Langpo Pass.

In identifying the secondary summits, emphasis has been on directional orientation in relation to the main peak rather than numerical profussion.

The height of Eight Thousander peaks are adopted from Bolinder and Dyhrenfurth's list (*The Mountain World, 1964-65*, pp. 196-199) and those for Khumbu Himal are after the *Khumbu Himal* map published by Forschungsunternehmen Nepal Himalaya, 1965. The heights of the peaks marked with an asterik are according to the new *One Inch* maps by the survey of India.

The subsidiary spot-heights along the northern border are derived from the atlas of *Sino-Nepal Boundary Agreement, 1961*.

—Harka Gurung



## PEAKS OF OVER 23,000 FEET (7,010 METRES)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Locution</i>	<i>Climbed (Expedition)</i>
1.	Sagarmatha (Mount Everest)	29028 (8848)	Khumbu Himal	1953 (British)
	Sagarmatha, South Peak	28722 (8754)	"	"
2.	Kangchenjunga I	28208 (8598)	Kangchenjunga Himal	1955 (British)
	Kangchenjunga, South Peak	27803 (8474)	"	—
	Kangchenjunga, West Peak	ca. 27625 (8420)	"	—
3.	Lhotse I	27890 (8501)	Khumbu Himal	1956 (Swiss)
	Lhotse 'Intermediate'	27592 (8410)	"	—
	Lhotse Shar	27504 (8383)	"	—
	Lhotse, West Peak I	25272 (7703)	"	—
	Lhotse, West Peak II	24833 (7569)	"	—
4.	Makalu I	27807 (8475)	Kumbhakarna Himal	1955 (French)
	Makalu, South Peak	26280 (8010)	"	1954 (French)
*5.	Dhaulagiri I	26795 (8137)	Dhaulagiri Himal	1960 (Swiss)
6.	Manaslu	26760 (8156)	Gorkha Himal	1956 (Japanese)
	Manaslu, East Peak	25902 (7895)	"	—
	Manaslu, North Peak	23471 (7154)	"	—
7.	Cho Oyu	26750 (8153)	Khumbu Himal Himal	1954 (Austrian)
8.	Cho Oyu, North Peak	24836 (7570)	"	1965 (Japanese)
*8.	Annapurna I	26545 (8090)	Annapurna Himal	1950 (Franch)
	*Annapurna, "Fang"	25809 (7647)	"	—
9.	Annapurna II	26041 (7937)	"	1960 (British-India-Nepal Service's)
10.	Gyachungkang I	25990 (7922)	Khumbu Himal	1964 (Japanese)
	Gyachungkang II	23080 (7035)	"	—
11.	Kangbachen Peak	25925 (7902)	Kangchenjunga Himal	—

*12. Himalchuli, East Peak	25895 (7892)	Gorkha Himal	1960 (Japanese)
*Himalchuli, Central Peak	24738 (7563)	"	—
*Himalchuli, West Peak	24184 (7394)	"	—
13. Nuptse I	25850 (7879)	Khumbu Himal	1961 (British)
Nuptse, East Peak	25640 (7815)	"	—
Nuptse, West Peak I	25574 (7795)	"	—
Nuptse, West Peak II	25410 (7745)	"	—
14. Ngojumbu Ri, West Peak	25611 (7806)	"	—
Ngojumbu Ri, Central Peak	25084 (7646)	"	—
Ngojumbu Ri, East Peak	24968 (7610)	"	—
15. Dhaulagiri II	25429 (7715)	Dhaulagiri Himal	—
16. Jannu	25294 (7710)	Kangchenjunga Himal	1962 (French)
Jannu, North Peak	24711 (7532)	"	—
*17. Dhaulagiri III	25312 (7703)	Dhaulagiri Himal	—
* Dhaulagiri IV	25133 (7682)	Dhaulagiri	—
18. Kangshungatse (Makalu II)	25066 (7640)	Kumbhakarana Himal	1954 (French)
*19. Dhaulagiri V	24992 (7617)	Dhaulagiri Himal	—
20. Peak 38	24900 (7589)	Khumbu Himal	—
Peak 38, East Peak	24613 (7502)	"	—
*21. Annapurna III	24787 (7556)	Annapurna Himal	1961 (Indian)
22. Annapurna IV	24688 (7525)	"	1955 (German)
*23. Peak 29	24652 (7514)	Gorkha Himal	—
*24. Glacier Dome	24556 (7484)	Annapurna Himal	1964 (Japanese)
* Glacier Dome, West Peak	23191 (7069)	"	—
25. Jongsang Peak	24518 (7473)	Kangchenjunga Himal	1930
Dome	24416 (7442)	"	(International) 1930
*26. Gangapurna	24457 (7455)	Annapurna Himal	(International) 1965 (German)
27. Ganesh Peak	24299 (7406)	Ganesh Himal	1955
Pabil	23300 (7102)	"	(Franco-Swiss) —
*28. Churen Himal, East Peak	24184 (7371)	Dhaulagiri Himal	—
* Churen Himal, West Peak	24184 (7371)	"	—
29. Tent Peak	24164 (7365)	Kangchenjunga Himal	1939 (German)
The Twins	24117 (7350)	Kangchenjunga Himal	"
Nepal Peak	23443 (7145)	"	1930
The Pyramid	23369 (7123)	"	(International) 1949 (Swiss)
30. Nganpai Gosum, West Peak	24121 (7352)	Khumbu Himal	—
Nganpai Gosum, Central			

Peak	23937 (7296)	"	—
Nganpai Gosu, East Peak	23327 (7110)	"	—
31. Talung Peak	24111 (7349)	Kangchenjunga Himal	1964 (German)
Kabru	24076 (7338)	Kangchenjunga Himal	1935 (British)
32. Chamlang	24012 (7319)	Khumbu Himal	1962 (Japanese)
*33. Dhaulagiri VI	24002 (7316)	Dhaulagiri Himal	—
*34. Putha Hiunchuli	23774 (7247)	"	1954 (British)
35. Langtang Lirung	23771 (7246)	Langtang Himal	—
36. Baruntse	23688 (7220)	Kumbhakarna Himal	1954 (New Zealander)
*37. Moditse (Annapurna South Peak)	23683 (7219)	Annapurna Himal	1964 (Japanese)
38. Menlungtse	23560 (7181)	Rolwaling Himal	—
39. Chamar	23545 (7177)	Yangra Himal	1953 (New Zealanders)
*40. Gurja Peak	23599 (7193)	Dhaulagiri Himal	—
41. Gaurishankar	23442 (7145)	Rolwaling Himal	—
42. Pumo Ri	23442 (7145)	Khumbu Himal	1962 (German)
*43. Nilgiri, East Peak	23405 (7134)	Annapurna Himal	—
* Nilgiri, West Peak	23166 (7055)	"	1962 (Dutch)
44. Api	23399 (7132)	Byasrishi Himal	1060 (Japanese)
45. Himlung (Ratna Chuli)	23380 (7126)	Peri Himal	—
*46. Loenpo Gang (Big White Peak)	23238 (7083)	Jugal Himal	1963 (Japanese)
47. Saipal	23080 (7035)	Saipal Himal	1963 (Japanese)
48. Nupchu	23058 (7028)	Janak Himal	1962 (Japanese)



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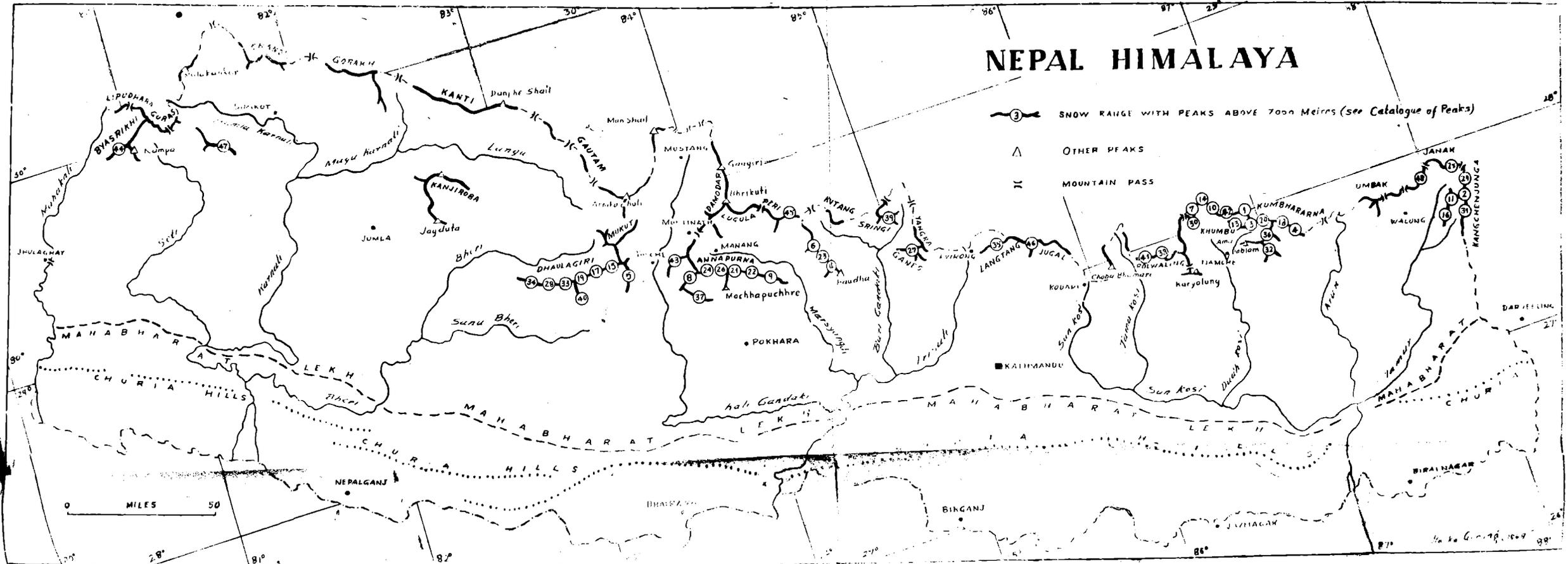
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