THE EXPLORATION OF THE HINDU KUSH

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(Six illustrations: nos. 39–44)

GENERAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE RANGE

The huge range of the Hindu Kush extends right across the whole of Afghanistan. It is nearly 1300 km. in length but not all of it is of interest to mountaineers.

The Hindu Kush originates at the head of the Taghdumbash Pamir, where two ranges—the Mustagh and Sarikol—join, at a point between the Wakhjir (4923 m.) and Kilik (4755 m.) Passes. From here the Hindu Kush forms in its entire length the watershed between the Oxus and Indus basins and runs in a direction a little south of west. From this point also, for about 300 km., the main ridge is the international boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Between the Dorah (4554 m.) and Mandal (4663 m.) Passes, the boundary lies along a subsidiary ridge and the main chain runs entirely in Afghanistan. After a further 300 km. the latter divides into two parallel ranges which successively bear different names. The southern range is first called Kuh-e-Baba (highest peak Shah-e-Foladi, 5143 m.), and later Band-e-Duakhan (highest peak 3753 m.), then Band-e-Baian (highest peak 3699 m.) and finally Kasa Murkh (highest peak 3525 m.).

The northern range is at first known as the Kuh-e-Hissar (highest peak 4231 m.) and then Band-e-Baba (highest peak 3746 m.) and lastly Safed Kuh (highest peak 3084 m.). These ranges, gradually diminishing in altitude, ultimately form the low hills extending to Herat which are called by the Afghans Siah Babuk and are known in European literature as the Paropamisus Mountains, the last link between the ancient (Greek) name of the whole Hindu Kush and the present day.

But this is the Hindu Kush in a broader sense. The Afghans as well as European geographical literature also distinguish the Hindu Kush proper in a stricter sense.

The old traditional division introduced by the British in the nineteenth century divided the Hindu Kush into Eastern and Western. The Shibar Pass (2987 m.) was the western end of the Hindu Kush proper and the Dorah Pass divided the two parts. It seems that the only reason for this division was the fact that the Dorah Pass was the most westerly pass connecting British India and the countries lying north of the Hindu Kush.
HINDU KUSH: KUH-E-UPARISINA (6210 M.), KUH-E-SPARTAKIADA (5005 M.) AND KUH-E-ARIANA (5980 M.) FROM THE NORTH.

(No. 42)
HINDU KUSH: View from the ridge of Languta Barfi (c. 7000 m.) towards Kishmi Khan (c. 7200 m.) and M 2.

(No. 39)
The Afghans consider that the Hindu Kush proper lies between the Pamirs and the Dandan-e-Shikkan, a pass situated in the vicinity of the Shibar Pass. The Khavak Pass (3548 m.), on the other hand, divides the Hindu Kush into Eastern and Western. It must be said here that the glaciated part of the Hindu Kush lies between the Pamirs and the region of the Khavak Pass.

Only the Hindu Kush proper (and excluding the area west of the Khavak Pass) has an alpine character. The length of this ‘alpine’ portion of the chain is c. 500 km. The numerous ranges stretching westwards are in most cases little but huge heaps of debris.

Finally, one finds in European literature yet another division: into Eastern, Central, and Western Hindu Kush. According to this division the Eastern Hindu Kush rises between the Pamirs and the Anjuman Pass (4225 m.), the Central between the Anjuman Pass and the western confines of the whole group around the Dandan-e-Shikkan Pass. All the ranges lying west, the Paropamisus included, belong to the Western Hindu Kush.

The subsidiary ranges spread from the main ridge for several hundred kilometres. It is not yet determined how far northwards or southwards these mountains belong to the Hindu Kush. As most divisions of the mountains are conventional ones, I think it is premature to try to determine them precisely. We must leave this problem to the people who live in these mountains, i.e. the Afghans and Pakistanis.

That section of the Hindu Kush between the Taghdumbash Pamir and the Baroghil Pass (3797 m.), in length about 120 km., consists of rather rounded dome-shaped mountains. Although there are glaciers it is, on the whole, a flat undulating ridge without any distinct peaks. The average height of the summits is c. 5500 m. and there are many passes, some rising as high as 5300 m. The northern valleys descending into the high upper parts of Wakhan are short but the southern valleys are much more interesting. They are longer and deeper and surrounded by craggy peaks.

About thirty-five kilometres to the east of the Baroghil Pass a side range breaks off from the main ridge towards the south-east. This side range soon turns west and runs for some eighty kilometres parallel to the main ridge. Its peaks are higher than those on the main ridge, sometimes rising to over 6500 m. The rivers Ishkoman and Karumbar here form the eastern boundary of the Hindu Kush; the mountains rising on the other side of these rivers belong to the Karakoram. The range continues in a south-westerly direction and is then known as the Hindu Raj. Its last section forms the boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

An easterly off-shoot of this range penetrates into the rugged countries
of Swat and Kohistan. Falak Sar (5918 m.) is believed to be the highest peak of this Swat-Kohistan Hindu Kush.

In the Chitral part of the Hindu Kush there rises a prominent peak known as Buni Zom (6551 m.), often mentioned in mountaineering literature.

That portion of the Hindu Kush main ridge between the Baroghil and Khatinza (4880 m.) Passes contains the highest mountains. The northern valleys are here still rather short. On average they do not exceed twenty-five kilometres. The mountains lying on the southern part of the main ridge, i.e. in Chitral, are much more complex. Besides the long main valleys they have many deep and winding side valleys, some of them several kilometres in length.

Here, on side ridges in Pakistani Chitral, rise lofty, ice-covered peaks including the highest of the whole Hindu Kush, Tirich Mir (7700 m.), and the third and fourth highest, Istor-o-Nal (7398 m.) and Saraghrrar (7349 m.). Only Noshaq (7492 m.), the second highest peak, stands on the main ridge although its highest point lies in Chitral, about 500 m. from the main crest. The summit is connected with the main ridge by a fairly wide icy plateau. This junction on the main crest, which might be called Noshaq's Shoulder, is the highest point of Afghanistan. There are several peaks in this part of the range exceeding 7000 m. in height.

In the next portion of the Hindu Kush, i.e. between the Khatinza Pass and the meeting place of the ridges where the Afghan-Pakistan frontier deviates from the main crest, the peaks are lower and do not exceed 6000 m.

But, as in most parts of the chain, higher peaks here rise in the branch ranges. A large mountain group separated by the Munjan Pass (c.4000 m.) lies west of the main crest. Kuh-e-Bandaka,1 or Kuh-e-Bandakor (6660 m.), is its highest peak. On its side ridges other six-thousanders tower above the deep ravines.

Further along the main crest is higher. The highest peak of this portion, which lies entirely in Afghanistan, is Kuh-e-Mondi (6248 m.) and there are also other six-thousanders.

Here the main ridge divides Nuristan, the former Afghan Kafiristan, from the Munjan and Anjuman Valleys of the Afghan province of Badakshan. On one of the ridges south of the Anjuman Pass rises Mir Samir (6059 m.). Between the Anjuman and Khavak Passes another fairly big mountain massif branches off, the Khoja Muhammad,2 with Kuh-e-Piv (5796 m.) as its highest peak.

1 Kuh or koh, depending on local pronunciation, means mountain in Persian and Tajik.
2 The author follows here the spelling of Professor Mohammed Ali of Kabul University. In part of European literature these mountains are known as Qwaja Muhammad.
West of the Khavak Pass the peaks again diminish in altitude. Although still over 4500 m. they lose their alpine character. They are picturesque but are too rotten and crumbling to be attractive to alpinists. The name of the mountains—the Hindu Kush—which has probably existed for ages, was first recorded by Ibn Batuta, the Arabian traveller who crossed the range in c. A.D. 1333. According to him the name of Hindu Kush derives from the Persian (and Tajik) the Hindu-Killer. This explanation is not very convincing but it is still very popular even today in Afghanistan, especially among the common people.

There is no doubt that Hindu means Indians or Indian but it seems that Kush is rather a corruption of the Persian kuh—mountain or mountains. Obviously these mountains were Indian Mountains for the people from beyond them, i.e. from the north, who were of alien origin.

**TRAVELLERS AND SURVEYORS**

The first Europeans appeared in the Hindu Kush more than two thousand years ago. They were of the army of Alexander who probably crossed the Khavak Pass in 328 B.C. For many years Hellenic culture then prevailed at the foot of the Hindu Kush.

Marco Polo wandered from Faizabad along the Warduj river and later through the Wakhan Valley en route to China in 1273.

In modern times, however, European exploration of the Hindu Kush only begins in the nineteenth century. The first explorers were British. William Moorcroft went in disguise from Kabul to Bokhara and a little later, in 1832, he was followed by Captain Alexander Burnes and James Gerard. In 1838 Lieutenant John Wood crossed the Hindu Kush and reached the sources of the Amu Daria (Oxus) and was the first European to reach the shores of Zor Kul in the Pamirs; he named it Lake Victoria.

Soon the first Afghan War (1838-42) broke out. After the war further penetration of the Hindu Kush by the British was impossible. The country was therefore explored by Indian surveyors, known as ‘pundits’. In 1868 Mirza Shuja reached the Amu Daria and discovered Lake Chakmak in the Pamirs. Haider Shah in 1870 travelled through Chitral from Peshawar to Faizabad and later surveyed his route from Kabul to Bokhara. In 1873 Abdul Subhan was working near the Amu Daria and in the following year Ata Muhammad went from Chitral to Yarkand.

During the second Afghan War (1878-80) the British commenced to survey Afghanistan and so the Hindu Kush also. Experienced surveyors were attached to the four columns attacking the country. The British did not, however, conquer the whole country and they did not cross the Hindu Kush.

The work of the surveyors was not easy. They often worked under fire. A dry report of the Survey of India for 1878-79 says: ‘Captain
HINDU KUSH
REFERENCE

International boundary
Road
Town or village
River or stream
Peak
Pass
Range
Glacier

1) Kilik Pass 4755m 2) Nakhjir Pass 4923m
3) Khatinza Pass 4880m 4) Darah Pass 4564m
5) Anjuman Pass 4225m 6) Chahardar Pass 4234m
Showers unhappily slain by Kakars . . . Captain E. W. Samuels, after narrowly escaping from the enemy’s artillery fire while surveying . . . fell a victim to fever on 21st December, Captain Woodthorpe had a marvellously narrow escape when a volley was fired at him and his sketch book was considerably damaged. Captain Leach’s work was cut short by a severe wound received in action with the Shinwaris in which, however, his gallantry won him the Victoria Cross. His place was filled by Captain Charles Strahan who fixed several peaks in the Hindu Kush and Kafiristan. Mr. Scott and his small escort were attacked by a strong party of Mohmands and a hand-to-hand fight ensued in which he displayed great gallantry thereby probably saving his whole party from destruction. Later on Mr. Scott successfully ascended to the summit of the Sikaram peak of the Safid Koh (15,620 ft. high), whence he determined the position of several distant peaks, including a very prominent peak to the north, which he describes as "a pyramid standing far above the heads of all the surrounding peaks of the Hindu Kush".3 This pyramid was most probably Mir Samir (6059 m.).

The officers of the Survey of India also ascended Takht-e-Turkoman (4699 m.) the highest peak of Paghman, a southern spur of the Hindu Kush rising west of Kabul. Only a few easy peaks in the Hindu Kush proper, at its western end in the environs of the Ak Robat Pass (3126 m., about fifty kilometres west of the Shibar Pass), served them as trigonometrical stations. The vast spaces of the country, and above all the huge section of the Hindu Kush situated in Afghanistan had not been properly surveyed. Only a few peaks, well visible from a great distance, were fixed and the rest were plotted on the maps with data supplied by the pundits. The Afghan Hindu Kush thus remained unmapped until recent times. Even the course of the main range on the published maps is approximate only and no account is taken of all the side ranges invisible from the few surveying stations.

After the second Afghan War the frontiers of Afghanistan were closed and Europeans were not allowed to enter the country apart from a few on government service. The frontiers of Afghanistan were opened only in the twenties of this century. Only a few chance travellers or scientists managed to penetrate into the deep, long valleys of the Hindu Kush and bring back some fragmentary information.

While the surveyors attached to the British Army were surveying the peaks of the Afghan Hindu Kush, Major (later Colonel) H. C. B. Tanner, of the Survey of India, with a party was fixing the peaks in the Trans Indus area and Gilgit neighbourhood. From the road between Gilgit and Chitralt he determined, in 1879, a few peaks far away on the watershed.4

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The calculations showed that there were three peaks exceeding 24,000 ft. (7315 m.). These three peaks soon appeared on the maps with the following names: Tirach Mir, 25,426 ft., Mt. Nushau, 24,606 ft., and Mt. Sad Ishtragh, 24,171 ft. The surveyors, however, failed to determine exactly the course of the main range. Tanner assumed that Sad Ishtragh, today named Saraghrar, lay on the main ridge. The survey carried out later showed that it is situated on a southern off-shoot about seven kilometres from the main ridge. This error still exists on many maps and in many atlases.

Colonel Tanner was uncertain about his survey, especially as the heights were observed from only two stations which were 25–35 miles away from the main ridge. For this reason he did not like at first to claim more than 25,400 ft. for Tirich Mir, and this altitude he introduced into some of the first published maps.

By the end of the nineteenth century Russia was approaching the Pamirs. Russian officers then started to explore the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush. Captain Grombczewski (known in British literature as Grombchevsky), a Pole in Russian service, explored Wakhan and in 1888 crossed the Kilik Pass (4755 m.) and reached Baltit in Hunza from the north. In 1889, looking for a passage from Wakhan to Chitral he ascended the Khudarghurt Pass (its Kirghiz name is Sukhsuravat) situated on the main ridge east of the Baroughil Pass. In 1891 Colonel Yanof, with the surveyor N. A. Benderski, climbed to the Saksa Ravat Pass (5211 m.) between Wakhan and Yasin; this pass was also known as Tash Kupriuk, Bay Qara, and Qara Bort.

In course of time that part of the Hindu Kush lying in British India was surveyed. The main range and the adjacent part of the mountains was resurveyed by a Survey of India party in 1928–29 under Brigadier C. G. Lewis. The triangulation was based on the geodetic triangulation which was carried through Gilgit to link up India with the Russian Pamirs in 1913. Much greater accuracy was now possible. The heights obtained for the highest peaks of the Hindu Kush were now as follows; Tirich Mir, 25,263 ft. (7700 m.), Noshak, 24,581 ft. (7492 m.), Istor-o-Nal, 24,271 ft. (7398 m.), and Saraghrar, 24,110 ft. (7349 m.).

These heights were published officially on the half-inch scale map of the Survey of India in 1931. But these maps were issued ‘for official use only’ and not many people knew of their existence. At the same time the Survey of India started to publish maps with the altitudes of these peaks slightly reduced—Tirich Mir 25,230 ft., Noshak 24,556 ft., Istor-o-Nal 24,242 ft. and Saraghrar 24,080 ft. Just to make things more confusing the Geographical Section of the General Staff in London is even now publishing maps with Tanner’s heights.

There is great confusion in geographical literature, therefore, today.

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5 G.J., no. 5, May, 1895, p. 426.
It repeats according to these two most authoritative sources two sets of wrong heights!

Later, maps of the Afghan Hindu Kush began to appear. In 1957 the Afghan Ministry of Mining and Industry made a contract with the American Fairchilds Company for the taking of aerial photographs and, working from these, brought out maps of the country. The scale of these maps was from 1:500,000 to 1:50,000, according to requirements.

In January, 1958, the same Ministry made a similar contract with the Soviet Technoexport for the northern part of Afghanistan. The terms fixed for these contracts were three and four years respectively. By these arrangements the mapping of the Wakhan Hindu Kush fell to the Technoexport and of the remainder of the mountains to the Fairchilds Company.

Some of the aerial photographs were ready in 1960. It was then possible for some expeditions to copy these photographs in the Ministry of Mining and Industry. Later maps of some mountain areas appeared on a scale of 1:50,000 but they are not for sale and do not cover all sections of the frontier.

Mountaineering History

Actual mountaineering in the Hindu Kush began not long ago. It is sufficient to say that the first peak on the main ridge was conquered only in 1959.

The priority in this activity belongs to the British officers stationed in the North-West Frontier Province and especially to the surveyors. Major Biddulph, the first European who saw Tirich Mir, Colonel Tanner who first fixed the peaks rising in Chitral, Colonel Schomberg and Brigadier Cockerill are the people who cleared the way for mountaineers. They explored nearly all the valleys and climbed many passes including those situated on the main ridge.

The surveyors working in Chitral in 1928–29 tried to climb peaks higher than 6000 m. in order to obtain good surveying stations. Which station could be better than the summit of Tirich Mir? Surely the climbing of Tirich Mir was an attraction for these young and sport-minded people from the mountaineering point of view, and maybe the eagerness for a good surveying point was only an excuse. Burn, Cadell, and Wilson attacked this peak in 1929, but exhaustion compelled them to withdraw from a height of about 6000 m.

In the same year surveyors attempted to climb the third peak of the Hindu Kush, Istor-o-Nal. They were led by Captain Culverwell,
a member of the Himalayan Club with alpine experience. The rest of the party consisted of Major Dutton, Captain Coldstream, and Lieutenant Burn. They attacked from the Upper Tirich glacier, but this attempt also failed. Captain Culverwell with a Chitrali porter reached about 6400 m.; bad weather stopped further progress.9

The Chitrali people called by the name of Tirich Mir not only the highest peak of the Hindu Kush but also the present Istor-o-Nal. On the old nineteenth-century maps both these peaks have the same name. In 1929 Lieutenant Burn christened the third peak of these mountains Istor-o-Nal, meaning a horse-shoe. Lieutenant Burn did not give up attempting first ascents as long as he worked with the Survey of India; in 1932 he was killed by an avalanche on Panj tarni in Kashmir.10

In 1935 there were two more attempts to climb Istor-o-Nal and Tirich Mir. Lieutenant Hunt and Captain J. Lawder attacked Istor-o-Nal in August. Lawder reached about 6800 m. but Hunt and two Chitrali porters came within some 200 m. of the top. The soft snow exhausted them so much that they had to descend.11

About three weeks later the Germans came to the foot of Tirich Mir. On August 29 a huge party set out from the Owir glacier consisting of Herren Herrlich, Roemer, Rosenstiel, Scheibe, and Kerstan with twenty-seven porters and two cooks. It was not really a mountaineering expedition but a scientific one. Having reached about 5900 m. Rosenstiel caught pneumonia and they all returned.

In 1938 J. R. G. Finch planned to ascend Tirich Mir.12 His companion could not go with him because of his military duties so he went with porters only. It was, however, too big a task for a single mountaineer and he had to return.

The highest peak of the Hindu Kush was indeed gaining the attention of mountaineers and there were quite a few attempts to climb Tirich Mir.13 The last attempt before the war took place in 1939. Miles Smeaton with his wife, Hugh Millar and Richard Orgill with some Sherpas started to climb this peak from the Owir glacier. It was the first and last time that Sherpas were climbing in the Hindu Kush. The party followed Finch's route on the South ridge and reached a pinnacle at 6700 m.; they had not sufficient rope to go down on the other side and so returned to the Base Camp. There they learned of the Second World War and descended to the plains.14

None of the Hindu Kush peaks was climbed before the war, at least none of the higher peaks. But such a huge mountain range could not remain long unvisited by mountaineers. Already, in 1940, Mankial Peak (5715 m.), in Swat Kohistan, had been climbed by Holdsworth's

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9 H. J. 2. 68. 10 A. J. 44. 350. 11 A. J. 48. 118.
party. In 1950 a Norwegian expedition led by Professor Arne Naess climbed Tirich Mir. Istor-o-Nal was conquered in 1955 by the Americans Joseph Murphy and Thomas A. Mutch. Climbing activity also began in the Afghan Hindu Kush. The first serious attempt at mountaineering in that country was made by two Englishmen, Hugh Carless and Eric G. Newby in 1956. They attacked Mir Samir (6059 m.), called also by the natives Mir Simir or Simirdar. They came from Kabul to the Panjshir Valley in July and reached a height of 5800 m. They were not properly equipped and had to return.

In 1957 the New Zealanders W. K. A. Berry and C. H. Tyndale-Biscoe accomplished the first ascents of Falak Sar (5918 m.), believed to be the highest peak of the Swat-Kohistan Hindu Kush, and of Buni Zom (6551 m.) in Chitral.

After an unlucky attempt on Saraghrar (7349 m.) by the British Oxford Chitral Expedition in 1958, which ended with the death of P. S. Nelson, this peak was conquered by an Italian expedition under the leadership of Professor Fosco Maraini from Rome, in 1959.

In the same year a small German expedition came to Afghanistan. It consisted of Harald Biller and his wife with two companions. They climbed two peaks near the Khavak Pass, Dasht Ribat (c. 5300 m.), and Galamastan (c. 5400 m.) They ascended Mir Samir on July 24, the first ascent of a great peak in Afghanistan. The climb was difficult—V grade. The rock was very weathered, as everywhere in this part of the Hindu Kush. They also climbed three unnamed peaks in the neighbourhood of the Anjuman Pass. The peaks climbed by this expedition were the first to be climbed on the main ridge of the Hindu Kush.

The charm of unmapped and unexplored mountains attracted the attention of more and more mountaineers. In 1960 there were four expeditions in Afghanistan, British, Polish, German and Japanese.

The Japanese of the Academic Alpine Club of Kyoto under the leadership of Professor Sakato were the first to visit the Wakhan Hindu Kush. They were also the first to climb Noshaq (7492 m.), the second highest peak of the Hindu Kush. They were followed by the Poles under Boleslaw Chwaściński who repeated the ascent ten days later and also climbed three other peaks in the vicinity of Noshaq, Asp-e-Safed (c. 6450 m.), Rakh-e-Daros (c. 5695 m.), and Khorpusht-e-Jahi (5698 m.).

In 1960 an expedition of the Ladies Alpine Club went to the Afghan Hindu Kush. It consisted of Joyce Dunsheath and Eleanor Baillie.
Their aim was Mir Samir. They established a Base Camp in the upper part of the Banjshir Valley and there climbed one of a pair of peaks which they named Twin Peaks. They later tried to climb Mir Samir but without success. They ascended, however, two smaller peaks (4270 m. and 4570 m.) in the vicinity of the Anjuman Pass.

The German Hindukusch-Kundfahrt of 1960 was organised by Berliners. The members of the expedition were Wolfgang von Hansemann, Dietrich Hasse, Siegbert Heine and Hannes Winkler. Their intention was to climb a peak situated in Afghanistan west of the Dorah Pass and marked on the maps as 6248 m. They did not receive permission to go there but found another much more interesting aim. They were told by a Swiss geologist working in Afghanistan about a lofty and unknown peak rising in the area of the Munjan Pass. This peak was called Koh-e-Bandakor, or Koh-e-Bandaka. They reached the Anjuman Pass from Kabul and from it saw this lofty, heavily glaciated peak in the far distance. There was no doubt about its identity. But how to reach it? In Afghanistan foreigners must have permission to wander when they do not follow a beaten track. The mountaineers sent the interpreter to the other side of the Anjuman Pass to the local hakim. After three days he returned, shouting from afar 'the way is clear'.

They entered the Sakhi Valley and established a Base Camp at 3960 m. They were not well acclimatised and all the time had troubles with the porters. However, three porters accompanied them to a height of 5400 m. where a camp was pitched. The weather deteriorated and in the morning the mountains were covered with thirty centimetres of fresh snow. The climbers went further and pitched a higher camp. The night was cold, c. —20° C. The next day they had to turn back at about 6000 m. Lack of acclimatisation and exhaustion compelled them to return to the Base Camp. They had frozen toes and rested for five days recovering from their frost-bite. The party returned to the attack and this time all four reached the top. On September 22 they stood on the summit. The altimeter showed 6660 m.

They then moved to the Paghar Valley, a side valley of the big Anjuman Valley, from where they climbed six peaks over 5000 m. in height.

At the other end of the Hindu Kush James Mills ascended in December, 1960, Khan Shai (ca. 5700 m.) in Swat-Kohistan.25

The Munjan Valley area was again visited in 1961. Two German expeditions came here. One of them was organised by the Bremen section of the D.A.V. and was led by Josef Ruf. This party came to Kabul, went along the Panjshir Valley, crossed the Anjuman Pass and entered the Khrebek Valley in the vicinity of the Munjan Pass. Here they established their Base Camp and after pitching two higher camps

25 A.J. 67. 42.
climbed on August 17 the highest peak of the district—Kuh-e-Khrebek (c.6250 m.). From the same valley they also climbed three smaller peaks and returned to Kabul by their outward route.

The Traunstein section of the D.A.V. organised the other expedition; it was a party of five young friends without any official leader. They went from Kabul to Faizabad and later followed the course of the Kokcha River. On August 22 Base Camp was established at 3700 m. in the valley of the Darra-e-Deh Ambi, a side valley of the Munjan Valley. They thoroughly explored this valley ascending seven peaks between 5450 m. and 5800 m. on the main ridge of the Hindu Kush. They then moved to the next valley northwards, the Shakhran Valley. During the first days of September they conquered Kuh-e-Markhekh (6060 m.) and Shah-e-Kabud (c.6100 m.) as well as five 5000-ers on the main ridge.

In 1962 the Bamberger Hindukusch-Kundfahrt, led by S. Ziegler, came to the upper part of the Munjan Valley. In July they conquered Kuh-e-Mondi (6248 m.) and the nearby Kuh-e-Jjumi (6020 m.); the former is among the few peaks shown on the international maps. The expedition also climbed several five-thousanders south of the Veran Pass (c.4600 m.), i.e. in Nuristan.

The Rosenheimer Hindukusch-Kundfahrt, 1962, explored the upper part of the Anjuman Valley. W. Kaesweber, B. Sinnesbichler, and A. Stadler ascended thirteen five-thousand metre peaks rising above the Kyriagu Valley and its side valleys, Katatara, Kalodak, Kashau, and Chabtera. Among the peaks climbed was Point 5953 m. on the main ridge near the Rangul Pass.

In Wakhan the second Polish Expedition under the leadership of Dr. S. Zierhoffer was busy.26 The Poles climbed Kuh-e-Nadir Shah (7125 m.) and Kuh-e-Tez (7015 m.) and several five and six-thousanders. In the autumn (1962) an Austrian expedition led by S. Kutschera also came to Wakhan, but it was only a reconnaissance expedition. They reconnoitred Kishmi Khan (c.7200 m.).

The next year, 1963, Wakhan was almost overcrowded by expeditions. First S. Kutschera came again at the head of the Österreichische Hindukusch Expedition der Montanistischen Hochschule Leoben. They conquered Kishmi Khan ascending it by the North face and West ridge. Kutschera and W. Pongratz stood on the top on July 27, and the next day the ascent was repeated by A. Maier and R. Weiss. The expedition also climbed two virgin six-thousanders in the same area.27

A Swiss party came too, led by Max Eiselin. On September 4 they ascended Urgend (7038 m.). A few days previously they had climbed Shahdar (6550 m.) and Urup (5650 m.).

The expedition ‘Oxus 1963’ of the Rome section of the C.A.I., led by

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26 A.J. 68. 121. 27 H.J. 25. 154.
The Noshag (7492 m.) group and Kuh-e-Mandaras (6631 m.), from the summit crest of Kishmi Khan (c. 7200 m.).

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C. A. Pinelli, went further east. They reconnoitred the virgin area round Lunkho (6872 m.) and on September 7 climbed Baba Tangi (6513 m.), a peak situated still further east.

In the Qazi Deh Valley two Austrian expeditions were at work, the Steirische Hindukusch Expedition, led by G. Gruber, and the Oberösterreichische Hindukusch-Kundfahrt led by H. Pilz. One of these expeditions lost its luggage, so they joined forces and on August 21 made the third ascent of Noshaq by way of Noshaq’s Shoulder (c.7350 m.). They also climbed the East Peak of Noshaq (7480 m.). After these ascents the Styrian expedition left the Hindu Kush but the other party climbed Khorpusht-e-Jahi (5698 m.), second ascent, and on August 30 conquered Gunbaz-e-Safed (c.6800 m.).

In Chitral another Austrian expedition, from Salzburg, and led by Marcus Schmuck, was moving towards the main ridge of the Hindu Kush, and operated in the area of the Hurusko-ku glacier. On September 20 the members of this expedition climbed Kuh-e-Shoghordok (c.6700 m.), situated on the main ridge about a kilometre west of Kuh-e-Tez. They afterwards went further along the ridge to Kuh-e-Shayoz (6856 m.). It was the first expedition to attack the main ridge of this part of the Hindu Kush from the south.

The Poles came to Wakhan in 1963 too. It was the third Polish expedition to the Hindu Kush, organised by the Lodz section of the Polish Mountaineering Club and led by A. Wilczkowski. This party made the third and fourth ascents of Kishmi Khan (c.7200 m.), being the first to climb it from the Shakhaur Valley. They also climbed Languta Barfi (c.7000 m.) and two 6000-ers. Their ambitious attack on Shakhaur (7116 m.) by its icy North face failed on account of the late season (beginning of October).

The Munjan and Anjuman Valleys also saw some expeditions. The Garmisch-Partenkirchen expedition repeated in July the ascent of Kuh-e-Bandaka (6660 m.) and climbed also its virgin North peak (c.6400 m.) and a neighbouring peak, Kuh-e-Bandaka Sakhi (c.6200 m.). A Stuttgart party led by R. Reiser was working in the Bologron Valley, an eastern side valley of the Anjuman Valley, in the second half of August and climbed as many as twenty-two 5000-ers.

The year 1963 also saw the first penetration by Europeans of the as yet completely unknown Khoja Muhammad range. The range was explored by a party from the Akademischen Sektion München of the D.A.V. led by A. von Hillebrand. The area appeared to be very interesting from the mountaineering point of view, the glaciers filling valleys surrounded by lofty peaks whose average height exceeded 5500 m. The highest peak of this group is Kuh-e-Piv (5796 m.). The expedition climbed forty-two peaks, including Kuh-e-Piv.

Photo by courtesy of Marian Bala, Krakow

SHAKHAUR (7116 m.) FROM THE NORTH.

(No. 44)
The discovery that there are still mountains unexplored and at the same time comparatively easy of access ensured that the rush towards the Hindu Kush did not diminish but grew greater every year.

Another expedition from Munich, led by E. Haase, went to the Khoja Muhammad in 1964 and was active in the north-eastern part of the range. From the Rakhuy and Ushnu Valleys they ascended seventeen peaks, fourteen of which exceeded 5000 m. On August 12 E. Rinkl and W. Straass of this expedition were murdered on a reconnaissance by casual porters in the Seyab Valley, the north-western corner of the Rakhuy Valley.

The Kempten-Münchener Hindukusch-Kundfahrt, led by B. Diepolder, climbed a peak of 5180 m. in the Pagar Valley and several other five-thousanders in the most southern part of the Munjan Valley. They later crossed the Kantivio Pass (c. 4500 m.) to the Pech Valley in Nuristan.

J. Ruf led a party from the Bremen section of the D.A.V. to the region of the Sanglich Valley south of Zebak, east of the Bandakor group and north of Kuh-e-Khrebek (6250 m.). They came via Faizabad and explored several side valleys, ascending seventeen peaks, most of them over 5000 m., rising above the Makh, Agram, and Nuksan Valleys. Professor Matsui led a Japanese expedition from Nagoya University to the same area and later his party ascended a minor peak in the Kuh-e-Bandaka group.

The Wakhan and Chitral Hindu Kush were also visited, though only one party was able to go to Wakhan. The Afghan Government began to refuse permits for visits to this area, but a German expedition led by D. von Dobeneck conquered three summits of Langar Peak (7050 m.) between July 5 and 8 and later moved eastwards. Bad weather having prevented them from attacking any other bigger peaks they climbed Kuh-e-Bay Qara (5426 m.) on July 30.

The Norwegians came again to the Hindu Kush. Professor Arne Naess, the leader of the 1959 expedition which conquered Tirich Mir, led the party to the foot of the same peak. In spite of a severe snowstorm which lasted five days the expedition climbed the East Peak of Tirich Mir (7692 m.) by its South Wall, Ralph Hoibak and Anders Opdal reaching the top on July 25, 1964. The expedition also climbed eight other peaks of 5000–6000 m., of which seven were first ascents.

The Steirische Expedition, led by G. Gruber, attacked the main ridge of the Hindu Kush from Chitral. On August 17 they ascended Shakhaur (7116 m.) which falls towards the north with an icy precipitous wall but offers better possibilities from the south. Two days later the Austrians climbed Udren Zom (7131 m.) situated on a nearby side ridge and made the third ascent of Kuh-e-Nadir Shah by a new route from the east. On August 22 the ascent of Udren Zom was repeated.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{39} A.J. 70, 120.
HINDU KUSH: Koh-e-Piv, 5796 m., (left) and Kolla-e-München, 5738 m., two of the highest peaks of the Khoja Muhammad range, seen from the north.
The Swat-Kohistan Hindu Kush were also visited in 1964. The Cambridge Chitral Expedition (Lieutenant H. Day, leader, J. F. S. Peck, Lieutenant M. R. Samuel, R. J. Isherwood) explored the area of the Siri Dara glacier. Seven peaks were climbed, including Mankial. The heights of the other peaks varied between 5000 and 6000 m. The other expedition in this area was that of the Italian Alpine Club led by Professor C. A. Pinelli. They explored the western and north-western parts of Upper Swat. This was a real expedition of discovery. The valleys shown on the maps did not exist and the existing valleys were not shown on the maps. Seven difficult five-thousanders were climbed on the Chitral frontier. The assault on the magnificent Miangul Sar (c. 5900 m.) failed owing to bad weather but a height of c. 5600 m. was reached.

In 1965 the Hindu Kush was again full of expeditions. Not only were new areas explored but in some parts peaks already ascended were climbed again.

Once again only a single expedition got permission to enter Wakhan. This was the first Czechoslovak expedition to the Hindu Kush, led by V. Šedivý. They were accompanied by two Afghans and operated south of Khandut and Qala Panja in the Ishmurch Valley running north from the Anoshah Pass. They climbed the highest peak in this area, Kuh-e-Hevad (6849 m.), and also ascended six other 6000-ers and ten 5000-ers.

Several expeditions went to Chitral. Here too the offensive on the last remaining virgin seven-thousanders was going at full speed ahead.

An Austrian expedition led by Kurt Diemberger was busy close to Tirich Mir. In August they climbed both peaks of Ghul Lasht Zom (6665 m. and 6611 m.) and Tortona Peak (c. 6100 m.). Before ending their expedition in September they scaled the highest peak (7056 m.) of the Northern group of Tirich Mir by its snow and ice covered granite North buttress. They named this peak Tirich Mir Nord. The climbing was very difficult, IV+, and the ascent lasted nine days.

Somewhat later two other Austrian parties came to the same area, those of the Salzburg section of the O.A.V. (leader Marcus Schmuck) and the Meran section of the A.V.S. led by D. Drescher, the aim of the latter party being Tirich Mir Nord. The members of this last expedition having heard from their porters that another party was operating there joined forces with their Salzburg friends and they climbed together. Darban Zom (7219 m.), the northernmost peak of the Noshaq group, was climbed on September 12 by Schmuck and Uli Kössler. The assaults were several times repelled by fresh snow and avalanches but at last the peak had to yield. The other members of this joint expedition ascended Q6 and M9, peaks on the jagged main ridge of the Hindu Kush between Kuh-e-Mandaras (6631 m.) and the point at which the ridge

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31 *A.J.* 70, 205.  
32 *A.J.* 71, 61.
KUH-E-MANDARAS (6631 m.) FROM THE WEST.

(No. 41)
turns to run southwards along the Qazi Deh Valley. The peak 6330 m. on a side ridge separating the Atrak glacier from its northern off-shoot was also climbed.

An expedition formed of members of the Munich section of the D.A.V. went to the Gordoghan glacier in the Buni Zom area. This was led by H. Schürer and in July climbed Buni Zom II (6120 m.) and Gordoghan Zom (6210 m.). In the same area another Austrian expedition led by G. Gruber was at work on the Khorabohrt glacier and in August climbed Buni Zom North (6338 m.) and Khorabohrt Zom (5800 m.).

Mountaineers of the German Chitral Expedition (S. Rausch leader) also went to Swat-Kohistan in 1965. In July they climbed Falak Sar (5918 m.), Central Peak (5334 m.; Siri Dara) and some other peaks.

An Italian party led by C. A. Pinelli explored the Hindu Raj. They reached the Baroghil Pass (3797 m.) from Chitral and climbed several peaks of which Windok (6126 m.) and Teramo Zom (6050 m.) were the most interesting.

But even more expeditions went to Afghanistan, the majority of them to the Munjan-Koh-e-Bandaka area. One of them, the Eisenerzer Hindukuschfahrt led by J. Seitner, made the third ascent of Kuh-e-Bandaka and also climbed some other peaks in this group, Kuh-e-Bandaka Tawika (c. 6130 m.), Kuh-e-Bandaka Uris (c. 6010 m.) and Kuh-e-Akher Sakhi (c. 5170 m.).

A ‘Deutschen Naturfreunde’ party with M. Keierleber as leader visited the Parshiu Valley in July, a side valley of the Munjan Valley. They came to their destination along the Kokcha River. Peaks 6121 m. and 6010 m. as well as fourteen other peaks over 5000 m. high were climbed.

R. Varvelli took an Italian expedition which also used the Kokcha River as its approach route. The Italians made the fourth ascent of Kuh-e-Bandaka by its unclimbed North face and were also the first to reach Point 6192 m. on the Kuh-e-Bandaka spur, which they named Punta Torino, and a col (5920 m.) in the same group.

A Japanese party went to the Khaur Valley and a German expedition from Rosenheim was operating in the Mir Samir area. The British, led by J. Wedderburn, were in the Bashgul Valley and climbed Kuh-e-Khrebek (6250 m.) by a new route as well as many other peaks. Americans were busy in the Pech Valley in Nuristan.33

Mountaineers from Munich were again in the Khoja Muhammad range. They explored the southern part of this mountain group, until recently quite unknown.

There were also other expeditions. The Afghan Hindu Kush, the great Anjuman and Munjan Valleys with their numerous side valleys,
the Kuh-e-Bandaka group, and even the deep valleys of Nuristan, or the
Khoja Muhammad, as well as the greater part of Wakhan, are no longer
a virgin ground untouched by explorer and mountaineer. The peaks
which five years ago were not even marked on the maps today have
already been climbed several times; they have even been climbed from
different sides.

A similar situation, although to a lesser degree, exists in Chitral.
There also nearly all the peaks, and all the highest ones, have already
been climbed, some of them several times.

There are some parts of the Hindu Kush, by no means small, still
unexplored but judging by the rapidity of the exploration which has
taken place during the last few years even these parts, alas!, will soon
yield to man.