

SHINGEIK ZOM— THE SMOKING MOUNTAIN

BY IRIS TRÜBSWETTER

(One illustration: no. 28)

OUR aim was the first ascent of Point 7291 m. on the ridge running eastwards from Noshaq in the eastern Hindu Kush¹. We chose the route used by Marcus Schmuck in 1965 when climbing Darband Zom (Pt. 7220 m.).²

At 4500 m. we found a site for our Base Camp in the northern ablation valley of the Darband glacier. There was enough room for all the tents. When the weather was fine it was a lovely situation, with the little stream and the flowers. Marching up from Shagrom with our porters to that place took us three days.

The porters could only carry the equipment required for Camps 1 and 2 for half a day further up the glacier because we could not equip them properly for the high altitude and did not want them to stop a night up there. So we had to carry these heavy loads ourselves for another three hours up to the head of the valley, where we pitched a small tent, our Camp 1. We had not gained much in height, only 700 m., but it was an enormous distance to our Base Camp.

Below the North face of Noshag, among the crevasses of a huge ice-fall, we put up our smallest tent, Camp 2 at 5900 m. The weather had been bad ever since our arrival in the Udren valley. It snowed every afternoon; we had to labour up in deep snow and on our return often found that our track had vanished under a big avalanche. Thomas had done most of the work, breaking the trail and carrying the loads, but he had done too much and as a result of his exertions fell a victim to altitude sickness. We waited a day in Camp 1 in the hope that he would recover, but we were disappointed and he had to descend to Base.

On July 12, 1966, Konrad and I left Camp 2 for the final assault. We were by now fairly well acclimatised. We knew we could not get to the top and back again to camp in one day but we did not want to carry another camp farther up. Though we dreaded a bivouac at that height,

¹ The members of the expedition were: Thomas Trübswetter (leader), his wife Iris, and Konrad Holch, who formed the climbing party; Dr. Klaus Haserodt, geographer; Dr. Wilhelm Kick, glaciologist, and his assistant Ernst H. Nagel.

² This is the usual Persian spelling but the form 'Darban' is also employed. See map, *A. J.* 71. 64.



Expedition photo]

VIEW SOUTH-WEST TO WEST, TAKEN FROM 5000 M. ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE DARBAND GLACIER. LEFT TO RIGHT:
PT. 6593 M. (UNCLIMBED); SHINGEIK ZOM, 7291 M.; DARBAND ZOM, 7220 M.

(No. 28)

we preferred it to carrying the heavy loads which another camp would involve.

The snow was knee deep. The way up the ice-fall was easy but never dull. We made good progress and reached the upper terrace (6900 m.) at noon. The weather started to deteriorate, big clouds gathering below us. Now we turned east, walking below the North face of Noshaq, which seemed much nearer and more inviting to us than the far-away Pt. 7291 m., which we still could not even see. After several hours we reached the great plateau that stretches between Darband Zom in the north-west and the ridge from Noshaq to Shingeik Zom, which rises at the south-east end of the plateau, separated from it by two huge crevasses. On this day we just reached the lower crevasse and bivouacked at its eastern end. It was quite refreshing, the temperature in the morning being $-23^{\circ}\text{C}.$!

Thanks to the height of nearly 7000 m. we lost much of our energy during the night. Nevertheless, we managed to cross the two crevasses next morning and crawled up the steep ice-face and afterwards along the East ridge leading to the summit. At one o'clock in the afternoon of July 13 we were standing on the top. Unfortunately the usual afternoon bad weather had reached the top before us and the long expected view of Istor-o-Nal was not obtained.

The return was long and troublesome. Night fell as we descended into the ice-fall. We soon lost our old tracks and had to bivouac a second time, as we only met with crevasses wherever we turned. Next morning things went better and by seven o'clock we had reached Camp 2.

Happy, we crouched in our little tent and after a good sleep and a sumptuous dinner we had to decide on a name for the newly climbed Pt. 7291 m. Since it always had a mighty plume of snow whenever we looked at it from our Base Camp, our porters had suggested the name of 'Smoking Mountain'—Shingeik Zom—a Chitrali name. We think it is a good one.

There is still some confusion about the names in that region, though Schomberg had earlier used the correct ones.³ The quarter inch map calls the main valley of the Tirich river, 'Tirich valley', though in reality it is the Atrak, or Atak, valley, while it calls the Udren and Darband valleys 'Atrak', a name which is not applied to that valley by the local inhabitants. For them, the lower part of the valley and the glacier coming down from Udren Zom is 'Udren', and the upper part, running from west to east, is the Darband glacier.

³ See *A.J.* 48. 302 sqq.