

# Notes 1972 Asia

Robert Lawford

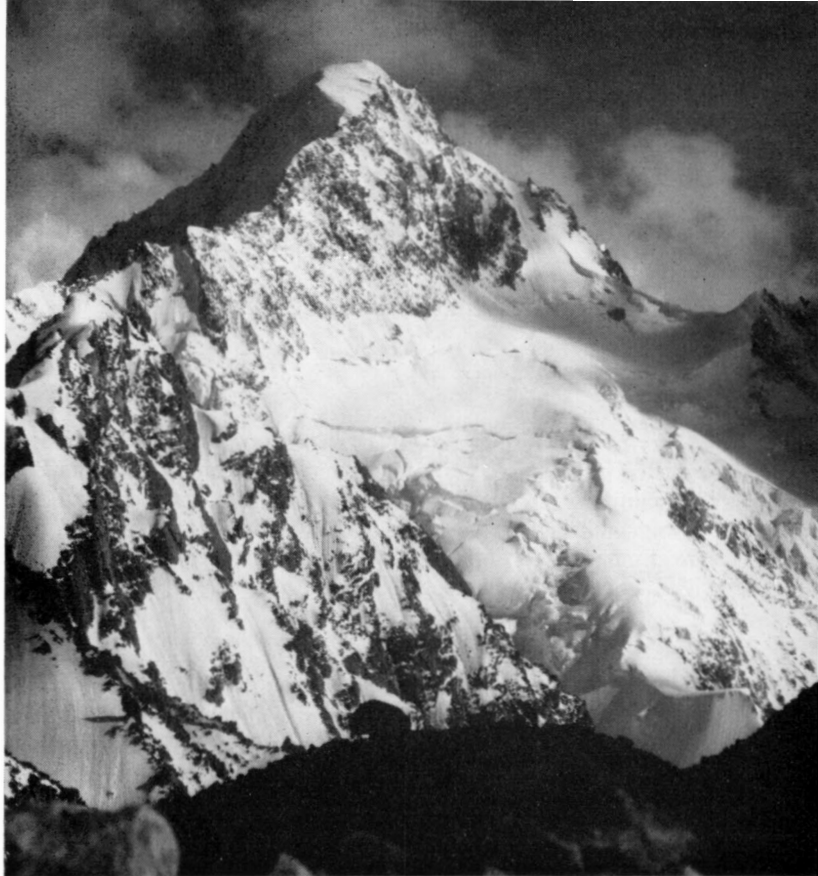
## Hindu Kush

When the 1971 review was written details were not available of the Sixth Polish Expedition under the leadership of S. Biel. Out of the total party of 26, 19 were climbers and between them they climbed some 50 peaks, the majority of them being first ascents. They were divided into two groups and climbed from late August till mid October. There are no major 7000-m peaks on their long list of climbs—mostly peaks between 5000 and 6000 m in fairly accessible areas that would be ideally suitable to small parties with only limited means. Jerzy Wala was on the expedition and he has since updated his Hindu Kush map with all the summits systematically numbered. The Wala numbers are being used increasingly, as they are an ideal way of identifying peaks in this complicated mountain region. The area maps produced after the 1971 expedition have been published in *Österreichische Alpenzeitung* 1386 (Dec. 1972). They first visited the Salang area, which is due N of Kabul on the road to Doshi. This is an excellent rock climbing region with peaks ranging from 4000 to 4700 m. Polish expeditions have now climbed most of the peaks along both sides of the Khenjan valley. There are some 60 numbered summits, which have been given the prefix S.

Besides climbing from the Sast, Esan and Qazi Deh valleys, they also explored the Koh-e-Zebak group which is a seldom visited area to the w of the High Hindu Kush. Wala has 120 peaks numbered on his latest map, the highest being 5860 m. The area is somewhat overshadowed by Noshag on the other side of the Qazi Deh. Finally the Poles climbed 6 peaks at the E end of the Wakhan Range on the N side of the Abe Panj. No climbing had been undertaken in this area, Koh-e-Wakhan, until early in 1971 when a Japanese party climbed one peak (6020 m), followed by an Italian party which climbed 3 of the highest peaks. The highest (6288 m) was named Koh-e-Pamir.

During 1972 there were restrictions on climbing from the Pakistan side, and so all the climbing activity was in Afghanistan. There are details of only 13 expeditions compared with 34 the previous year.

**Central Hindu Kush** The Japanese concentrated their 4 expeditions in the area N of the Anjuman. Koh-e-Bandakâ (6767 m) and Koh-e-Safed (6001 m) were both climbed by new routes on their s ridges. A party visited the Razer valley and climbed several peaks between 5500 and 6000 m. Another group climbed 2 peaks in the seldom visited Khuwaja Muhammad Range. The 6-member British Inter-Universities Expedition had their Base Camp in the Shkurigal valley and climbed 30 peaks over 5000 m; 23 were first ascents. The highest virgin summit was P. 5850.



97 *Lunkho* Photo: Swiss Hindu Kush Expedition

**Wakhan** The European expeditions all climbed in the Wakhan between Qazi Deh and Ishmurgh valley. A German expedition led by L. Heiss climbed Noshag West (7250 m) and several other peaks. Urgend (7038 m) was climbed twice by a Swiss party, leader A. Strickler. A Polish expedition led by R. Koziol climbed 5 virgin peaks in the Salang area before moving on to the Bala and Urgend valleys. Koh-e-Tez (7015 m) was climbed for the second time by a new route from the N. This peak was climbed originally by the Poles in 1962. They also made the second and third ascents of Akher Chioh (7020 m) by new routes from the N and W. T. Trübswetter led a German expedition which had its Base Camp in the Bala valley and made 4 first ascents. The highest peak climbed was P. 6130 m on the N ridge of Urgend. Two members of the expedition did not return from a climb, and it is understood that they lost their lives in an avalanche. A 6-man Italian party with its Base Camp in the Jurm valley made 8 first ascents of peaks between 5300 and 6000 m.

The Ishmurgh valley was the location of the Swiss Base Camp. The party was led by W. Giger and they made 4 first ascents of peaks between 6000 and 6500 m. They also climbed Koh-e-Hevad (6849 m).

**Kaghan valley** A party consisting of Mr and Mrs W. Stefan, Mr and Mrs N. Norris, T. H. Braham and F. Höflin climbed Siran I (5031 m), Siran II (5013 m) and Mahli ka Parbat (5290 m) (see p 185).

## **Karakoram**

There seem to have been no expeditions during 1972.

## **Kashmir**

While there were no expeditions during 1972, 2 important ascents in 1971 should be recorded. A Japanese party made the first ascent of Chongra Peak (6830 m). They climbed it by the E ridge and descended by the NE ridge. Their Base Camp was established on the Sachen Glacier. Nun (7135 m) and Kun (7087 m) were climbed by a young Indian expedition under the leadership of Flt Lt K. P. Venugopal.

## **Kulu—Lahul**

In 1971 an Indian Air Force 10-member team made the second ascent of Papsura (6451 m), which was first climbed by a British team in 1967 (see *AJ* 73 158). During 1972 there were several expeditions in the Kulu area. An Indian party climbed Lion (6126 m) and Central (6285 m). They were both second ascents, having been climbed in 1961 by British parties. A 7-man expedition from the University of Aston which could not get permission to climb in Kishtwar was allowed to attempt Parbati South (6127 m). They reached about 6000 m before illness coupled with the high degree of technical difficulty forced them to withdraw. The leader was J. D. Prosser.

A Japanese party climbed Indrasan (6221 m). This was the third ascent of the peak.

Two overseas expeditions were allowed into Lahul. A British party led by Tony Smythe attempted Mulkila (6517 m) (see p 179). A Japanese party made the first ascent of Phabrang (6172 m) by the w ridge during September. They also climbed Shiga I (5800 m) and Shiga II (5840 m).

## **Garhwal**

With the whole of this fine mountain area virtually closed to the outside world for the last 15 years, climbing is of academic interest only. Indian climbers are active every year and in 1971 they made several first ascents, including Rajramba (6537 m), Kagbhusund (5855 m), Jogin II (6345 m), Sumeru Parbat (6330 m) and Srikanta (6133 m).

In 1972 poor pre-monsoon weather upset several expeditions but at least one first ascent was made, that of Bhagirathi IV (5486 m).

## Nepal

The number of expeditions to Nepal showed a marked decrease, when compared with 1971, from 29 to 18. Most of the difference is accounted for by the reduction in the number of Japanese expeditions.

The weather generally was not unreasonable but the number of accidents was, once again, at a tragic level. No less than 20 people died on these 18 expeditions. The mortality rate amongst the high-altitude Sherpas is most serious. There is now a growing tendency for them to earn their living with trekking parties, which is comparatively safe and almost as rewarding. The accidents seem to point quite clearly to lack of experience or knowledge of the high mountains.

The airlifting of stores and equipment from Kathmandu is becoming increasingly popular. During the pre-monsoon period not a single expedition left the capital with its familiar long string of porters.

**N.W. area** A Japanese expedition made the first ascent of Nampa (6755 m) by a route on the s face leading to the s ridge. This is roughly the same route as used by the British in 1970 which got so close to success. The summit was reached by Kimura and Takahashi on 5 May, after a bivouac on the ridge. While abseiling during the descent, Takahashi slipped and was killed.

**Patrasi Himal** Kangde Hiunchuli (c 6600 m) was climbed from the sw by a Japanese party. This was the second ascent, it having been climbed originally in 1963.

**Manaslu** (8156 m) was climbed by an Austrian expedition led by Wolfgang Nairz. A new route following the sw ridge on to the s face was attacked and the summit reached by R. Messner, climbing solo on 25 April. Severe snowstorms on the 25 and 26 April resulted in the death of 2 other members. This was the third ascent; each time it has been climbed by a new route.

The second South Korean expedition ended in total disaster when on the 10 and 11 April avalanches killed 4 Koreans, one Japanese and 10 Sherpas. This is the worst series of accidents ever to befall an expedition in Nepal. They had reached a height of about 7000 m on the original E face route.

**Dhaulagiri group** Dhaul IV (7661m) was attempted twice by Japanese expeditions. The pre-monsoon attempt was abandoned after a member fell ill and died at Camp IV, 6200 m. The post-monsoon team approached from the w and found the ridge too long. They did, however, climb Dhaul VI (7268 m) and Junction Pk. (7108 m). There have now been 6 attempts on Dhaul IV, but it remains unclimbed. There is of course doubt as to the result in 1969 when the summit party did not return.

Two Japanese expeditions climbed Putha Hiunchuli (7246 m) by the s spur. These were the second and third ascents; it was climbed originally by a small British party.

Gurja Himal (7193 m) was climbed by 2 different routes by the French Lyonsaise expedition led by Dr Pierre Buttin. This was the second ascent, it having been climbed originally in 1969.

**Annapurna group** There was only one expedition during the whole of 1972, when a Japanese team attempted Annapurna S (Modi Peak) (7218 m) by the E ridge. En route they climbed the Central Peak (7150 m) which is to the N of the main summit.

**Everest group** Since the Japanese first attempted the sw face of Everest (8848 m) in 1969 all eyes have been on it. Four expeditions have followed but without success. The pre-monsoon European expedition got most of the Press headlines but for the wrong reasons. Squabbles amongst the members culminated in the pull-out of the 3 British members. Relation with the Sherpas was poor, and insufficiency of supplies sent the leader Dr Herrligkoffer scurrying back to Germany for more on 2 occasions. Despite all these problems they did reach a height of 8350 m, which is almost as high as Whillans and Haston reached in 1971 by a slightly different right-hand traverse above Camp VI.

The post-monsoon British Expedition led by Chris Bonington was abandoned on 14 November when extreme cold and high winds made climbing of the Yellow Band impossible. A height of about 8300 m was reached by Haston and MacInnes. The evacuation from the mountain was marred by the unfortunate death of Tony Tigh in the ice-fall. He was not an expedition member but was helping out at Base Camp.

Pumori (7145 m) was climbed for the second time by the French Sovogarde expedition led by Pallet-Villard. They forced a new route up the s face, whereas it was climbed originally by the E ridge. Four members reached the summit on 3 November, and 3 members with a Sherpa climbed it the following day.

Makalu (8481 m) An expedition from Yugoslavia got within 400 m of the summit after pioneering a route on the s face.

In conclusion, the writer would like to acknowledge the great assistance that is provided by the Club's overseas correspondents, particularly Dr A. Diemberger, Mike Cheney, Ichiro Yoshizawa, Jagdish Nanvati and Kamal Guha, without whose continued help this summary and the Club's records would be very sparse.