

TWO IS COMPANY

Explorations and Climbs in the Mana Gad

HARISH KAPADIA

IT IS SAID that two is company. So it was. Monesh Devjani and myself spent a month in the Mana gad valley, climbing peaks, reaching a new col and enjoying ourselves. We were supported by Pasang Bodh and Yograj Buruwa. But then, who says four is a crowd, specially in a huge valley unvisited for 51 years.

Two was always company in this valley. It was in the early forties that Heinrich Harrer escaped from a British internment camp with the Italian General Marchese. They finally reached Nelang in the Jadh ganga valley before being caught. Harrer escaped again with Hans Kopp and met another twosome Peter Aufschneider and Bruno Treipel. Going across Jamuna and Algar valleys and over Nag Tibba they again managed to reach Nelang. Finally in two groups they crossed into Tibet across Tsang Chok la (5240 m) on 17 May 1944. Harrer's *Seven Years In Tibet* journey had begun here secretly.¹

Even in 1990 perhaps the same access problems continues.

The reason for this lack of attention by mountaineers to this region has nothing to do with natural barriers. The big obstacle is the 'Inner-Line' permits which we obtained by tackling the babus big and small!

So wrote the civil servant R.D. Bhattacharji during his visit to Jadh ganga in 1985.²

It is interesting to note this particular form of difficulty. To obtain the coveted permits one has to deal with various 'initials'. First apply to 'I.M.F.' (The Indian Mountaineering Foundation) months in advance. They in turn will get clearance from 'M.H.A.' (Ministry of Home Affairs) both at Centre and U.P. State, and from 'M.O.D.' (Ministry of Defence). All this reaches 'D.M.' (District Magistrate) whose 'J.A.' (Judicial Assistant) forwards it to 'S.D.M.' (Sub-divisional Magistrate). He sends it to 'L.I.' (Local Intelligence

1. *Seven Years In Tibet* by Heinrich Harrer Pp. 3 to 34.

2. H.J. Vol. 42, p. 49.

Office) whose boss 'S.P.' (Superintendent of Police) has to endorse it. So it goes on.

'None of your papers are here.'

The 'J.A.' was telling us coolly. Being battle-scarred of many such 'I.L.B.s' (Inner Line Battles), I sent out select telegrams and went off on a four-day trek to Gaumukh to acclimatize.

'D.M. has the discretion to issue permits under section so and so....' was the non-committal clearance received. The clerk was stubborn.

'The area is well defended, no one can be allowed there.'

'Why have you "defended" the area, for yaks and goats? At least we Indians who have all the papers, should be allowed to enjoy it,' we put forward.

It went on and on. Finally the young sympathetic D.M. put the issue beyond doubt.

'They want me to use my discretion, so I will use it. You two will go.'

Things then moved fast, the clerks were woken up to move papers and we had the permit in our hand. The secret, as always, is not to lose heart and pursue the bureaucrats till they cannot refuse.

It was on 17 May 1990, 46 years to the day after Harrer, that we left Bhaironghati (3400 m) having solved the access problem differently. We had 8 porters to see us through to BC and were accompanied by Z. Mistry and A. Popat for the first three days. A deep chasm is cut by Jadh ganga here while merging with Bhagirathi. The earlier path on the right bank was now nothing but wooden steps hammered into rock walls rising high above Jadh ganga. Now a motorable road (23 km) reaches Nelang (3650 m).

Nelang and Jadhgang were the only two villages in this vast valley. Now both are evacuated for the last 30 years and people resettled near Harsil, just behind the ex-private Wilson's bungalow.

Both Garhwal and Tibet have exercised traditional claims from time to time over the Nelang area which follows the Jadh ganga north-east of Harsil. Each country used to place boundary pillars on its frontiers, and these were periodically uprooted. The physiography of this region becomes increasingly Tibetan where the Himalayan crest-zone in northern Garhwal gradually gives way to the subsidiary Zaskar range bordering Tibet.³

3. *Himalayan Odyssey* by Trevor Braham, p. 82.

To maintain a status-quo the people who used the village paid a house-tax to Tehri Garhwal and stock-tax to Tibet.

Now the entire valley is without any local settlement and the places of past glory are barren. At Naga (3640 m) 7 km ahead from Nelang, Jadh ganga meets Nilapani gad coming in from the east. The valley to the north of Naga leads up the Jadh ganga to Thaga la (5030 m) and Tsang Chok la (5240 m). In few easy stages via Dosindhu, Sonam, Tirpani, Pulamsumda one can follow Heinrich Harrer's route.

We proceeded along the Nilapani gad to Nilapani camp (3860 m). We had to cross the fast flowing Nilapani gad to go east along the Mana gad. It looked scary.

'No problem, you can jump across without wetting your shoes,' an army Major told us with a thumbs up sign. We looked in disbelief at this baldish Major with a hint of pot-belly. We scratched our brains at this, others called it a difficult crossing. Next morning Monesh surreptitiously suggested to the Major to show us the crossing.

'No problem.' He came along and stood at the edge of the fast flowing nala staring in for a long time. After a little while we were feeling cynical when he gave a thumbs up sign and quietly jumped to the rock in the middle.

'He is now trapped,' Monesh whispered. But another thumbs up sign and he leaped across clearly.

'No problem, come along.' Monesh and myself looked at each other, quietly held on to the rope Major had fixed and crossed the water wet till waist and shivering. To top it, the Major jumped back and was gone in a flash with his thumbs up. The area *is* well defended with officers like him!

The area we had just entered, along the Mana gad, was last visited by J.B. Auden in 1939.⁴ Even in 1939 Nelang people did not seem to ascend the Nilapani — Mana gad beyond this crossing. We went up 8 km on the right bank, crossed the Mana gad and made our BC at 4200 m on an alpine meadow. Now we were to be alone.

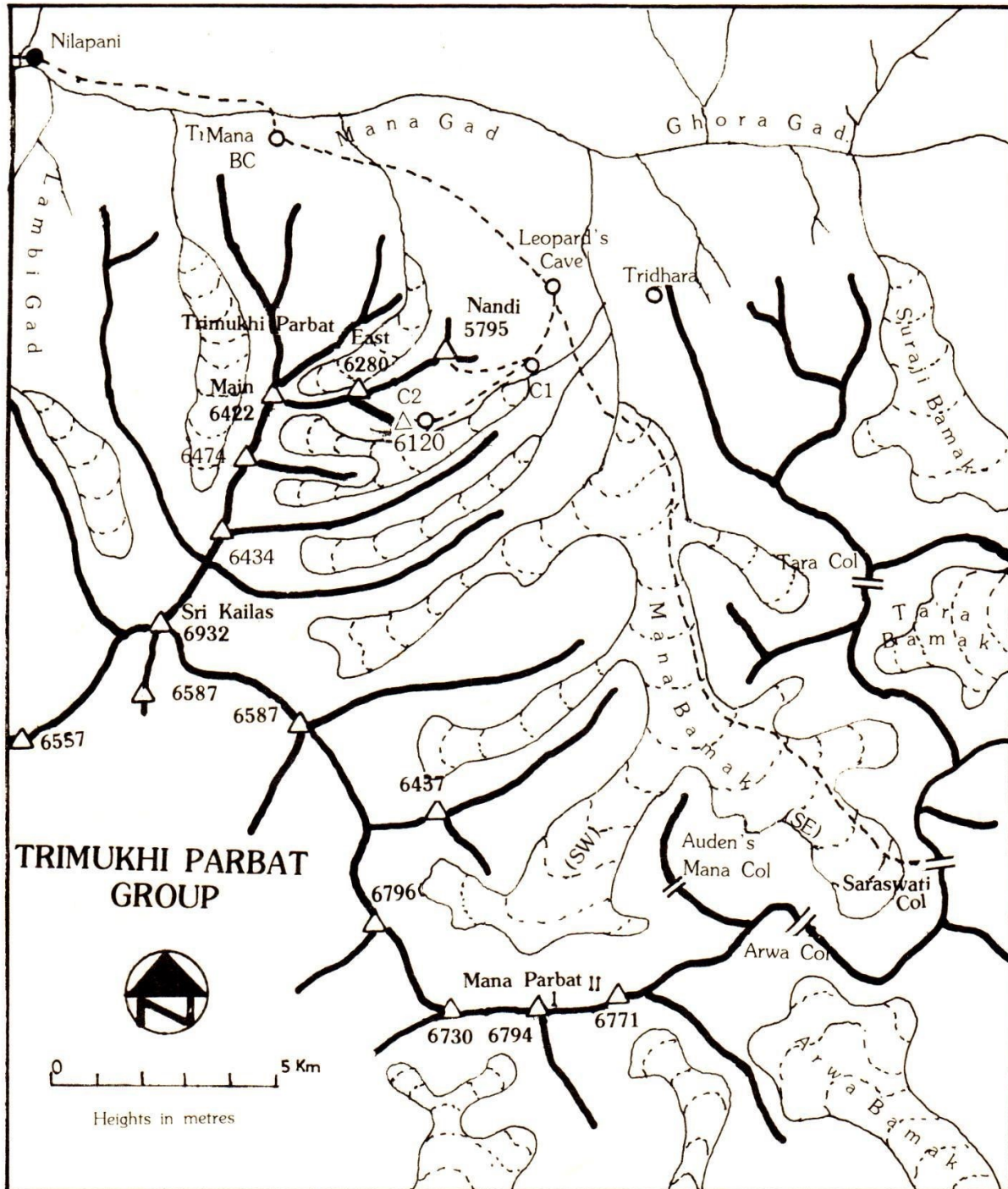
From Nilapani we turned eastward up the Mana gad. Old moraines, oxidized and crumbling like rotten slag heaps, flanked the oppressive gorge, and we arrived with relief at the top of one of the glacial steps formed during the pleistocene Ice Age, camping in the rain at 14,800 feet just west of Tridhara.⁵

This was J.B. Auden with Juin Singh on 12 June 1939. We were the next party on 21 June 1990, now establishing our camp south of

4. See note at the end of the article.

5. H.J. Vol. XII p. 21, 'A Season's work in the Central Himalaya,' by J.B. Auden.

Tridhara little ahead after the turning. Tridhara, as the name suggests was the junction of three nalas : Mana gad from the south, Suraji gad from the southeast and Ghora gad from the east. It was a wonderful feeling. An entire valley to ourselves, lovely meadows with a hint of Tibetan borderland terrain and profusion of peaks unobserved for years.



We were immediately introduced to the 'inhabitants' of the valley. Plenty of bharals were seen very curiously observing us, as if we were

the endangered species. Bear tracks and footprints were spread all over. In fact as we travelled up and down the valley making fresh footprints everyday, another track was seen next to ours, that of bears as it is their habit, to 'smell us' out. But the best of all were the footprints of snow leopards in various sizes and in profusion. Many were seen in the valley in general and our expert Pasang confirmed it. Monesh and I had delightful discussions about these footprints: whose it is, what would be age of the animal, it went in which direction and what size it must be. Finally it always ended in a selfish deadlock; to determine whether the bear had followed his route or mine!

Our ABC (4560 m) was next to a huge outcrop of rocks with many holes, terraces and walls in it. Many leopard tracks were seen leading into it. We promptly named our ABC as the 'Leopard's Cave.'

'Why not try to capture a leopard cub', youthful exuberance of Monesh propounded.

'I can keep it warm in my sleeping bag for few days, like Auden.'

He was referring to Auden having found a wolf cub here. He had kept it with him warm in sleeping bag for the duration of the trip. I did not want *that* sort of twosome company in my tent.

'Have you thought of what the mother will do to you?'

'Hum. let's see.'

With Pasang he left for exploring the Leopard's Cave. It had narrow entrances, caves and terraces. Fearing an attack by the scared animal they climbed in from above. There were remains of the kills at many places like fur and bones. The droppings confirmed the nature of the occupants, who must have left for the higher grounds.

Above our camp we came across two huge survey cairns. These were certainly very old and built up with great labour. T. Kinney of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India has been recorded to have surveyed the valley. Upto 1875 very little was known about the valley here. It is T. Kinney's report in 1879 which brought to light many aspects of this valley including its tracks, peaks, passes, people and the legends.⁶

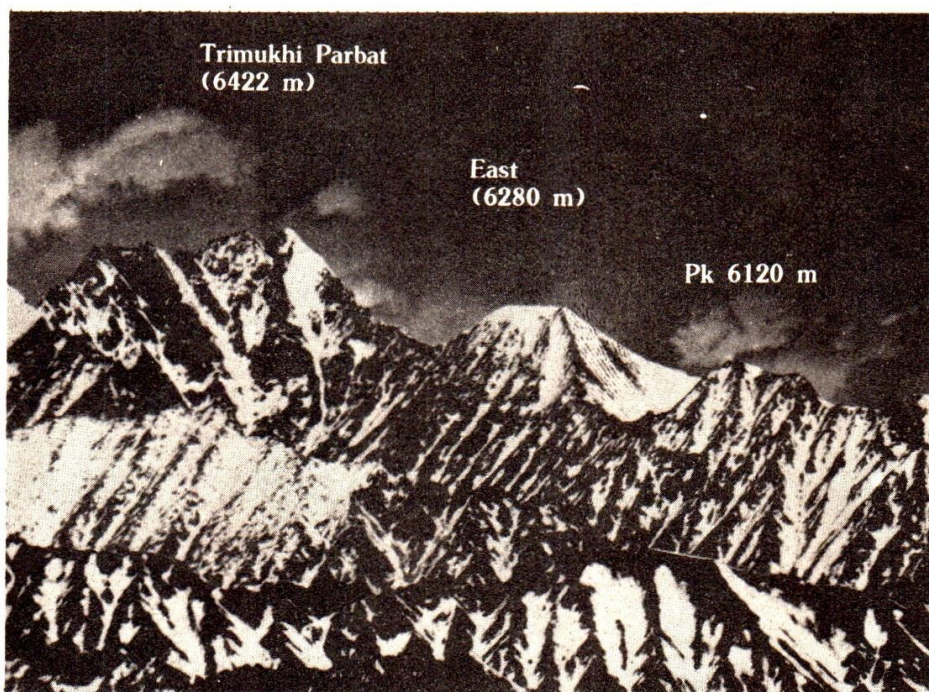
Later, though few outsiders and many local traders and villagers travelled over the passes of Jadh ganga none visited the Mana gad.

At the present time (1939) the Nelang people do not seem to ascend the Chunganmu (*Nilapani*) — Mana Gad beyond about 5 miles. My men live some months of every year at Nelang and none of them had ever been up the Mana

6. *The Himalayan Gazetteer* by E.T. Atkinson, Vol. III, p. 338.

(except one with the recent survey parties) or knew of the Muling pass ever having been used.⁷ (*Italics mine*)

From 24 May two porters started ferrying the luggage and two of us recceing the upper reaches. As we went up along the Mana gad, a large valley opened up. On the southwest many small valleys were leading to the various peaks of Trimukhi Parbat range. We had to climb almost to the entrance of three valleys to determine the exact routes and valley we wanted to enter. The full area was a complicated maze of valleys and sub-valleys. As we were too close to the mountains we could not see Trimukhi Parbat and all its peaks. Finally having determined the correct valley to enter, we established C1 (5100 m) and decided to climb a peak 5795 m marked prominently on the map to our northeast.



Trimukhi Parbat, southeast approaches from upper Mana gad. (Harish Kapadia)

This we did on the 28th, all four of us together. Leaving at 7 a.m., we were at the top in four hours of gentle climbing. But the vista it opened up and the knowledge about the valley it gave us was enough to satisfy us. We could see across to Sarup Choti (6100 m), the Tibetan plains, Tsang Chok la (5240 m) and all the northern passes. In the south was twin Mana Parbat (6794 m and 6771 m) and far in the distance were the Raktavarna valley peaks. In the southeast stretched the Mana gad with all its side valleys. All the surrounding peaks of

7. J.B. Auden in H.J. Vol. XII, p. 21.

Mana gad would be a future alpinist's delight, particularly the north faces of Mana Parbat peaks and the northeast face of Sri Kailash (6932 m).

Trimukhi Parbat (6422 m) stood proudly tall to the southwest of us. It was a sharp ice-pinnacle-like in shape. The possible approach could be via its eastern col which had to be reached via a long detour from the 'Trimukhi glacier's' southern bifurcation. Both, the duration of the approach and the technical difficulties of the final sections ruled out an attempt by us. To the east of Trimukhi Parbat was a good shapely separate peak of Trimukhi Parbat East (6280 m). It was straight up the valley by the northern branch of the glacier. Its steep gradients looked possible for us. We spent a delightful hour in excellent weather on the peak 5795 m which we named 'Nandi'.

Fortified with the knowledge of the area we finalised our plans for the final week in the valley. First it was to be a quick climb on Trimukhi Parbat East (6280 m). Accordingly on the 29th Monesh and Pasang were settled at C2 (5720 m) at the eastern foot of the couloir leading to its SE col. On 30 May leaving at 6 a.m., they first went up the gentle couloir to climb an ever steepening snow slope above. The final sections leading little above the southeastern col were almost 60° steep. The southeast ridge was reached at 9 a.m. Then it was straightforward climb of 130 m to the summit, which was reached at 9.45 a.m. The first peak ever to be climbed in the Mana gad valley was ours! They enjoyed and photographed the view all around and left in half an hour. Now it was slippery terrain over wet ice-snow conditions. But using a combination of roped descent, glissades and slipping they were back to C2 in an hour where Yograj and myself had come up again to take them to the Leopard's Cave.

While in the valley, Auden had tried to open a new pass between the Mana gad and Arwa valleys.

From the new survey map 53 N/NW it seemed that there might be a passable col, about 20,300 feet in height, from the head of the south-west branch of the Mana glacier leading over to the Arwa glacier.

He tried to reach this col but at the top found himself between the two branches of the Mana glacier. But from this col he observed:

There is an easy col of 19,500 feet at the east end of the south-east branch of the Mana glacier, 4 miles to the east of which is Saraswati valley. We could have crossed that col, descended the Saraswati to the Arwa valley and reached Gangotri by the Kalindi Bamak, but as I was obliged to be at Gangotri on the 20th June in case of recall to duty elsewhere, we could not attempt this route.

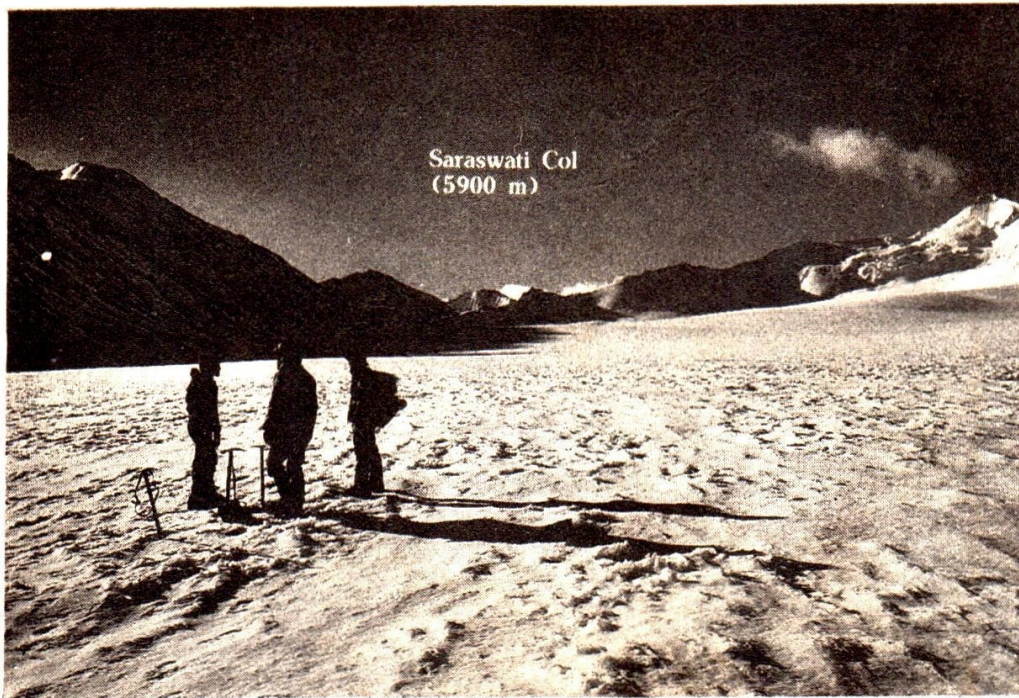


The valley leading to 'Tara Col'.

(Harish Kapadia)

We decided to reach this 'Saraswati Col' (5900 m) mentioned by Auden. Accordingly all four of us left with our camp travelling up the valley to the south along the Mana gad, along many prominent bear tracks. We crossed to the right bank and climbed up moraine outcrops, all the time turning to the east. It was a wonderful feeling noticing new valleys and recording them. At first we passed the Sri Kailash Bamak leading to the northeast face of Sri Kailash and then a huge amphitheatre of the southwest branch of Mana glacier leading to the formidable Mana Parbat peaks. Between the two branches of the Mana glacier the col reached by Auden could be seen. Little ahead a steep snow slope led to the 'Arwa Col' (6100 m) on the shoulder of the peak 6294 m. This is the col Auden actually intended to reach and which would lead to the Arwa valley. On our southeast was the valley which led to the 'Tara Col' (6000 m) which would descend the Tara Bamak in the east in the Saraswati valley. Camping at the entrance of this valley (4900 m - 6 km) and next day on the southeast branch of the Mana bamak (5500 m - 6 km) we could see the 'Saraswati Col' (5900 m) as the prominent notch between the two peaks, 6190 m and 6020 m. On 4 June our long plod towards the col began at 5 a.m. The flat glacier, firm snow, changing vistas and excited companions gave us a feeling of exhilaration. We could feel perhaps, what drew the early explorers to the mountains. No wonder at the col (and even later) we both could exclaim this as the finest experience.

The col, reached at 10 a.m., was a wonderful place. Entire Mana gad and Jadh ganga valley were seen in a different perspective. On



Approaching 'Saraswati Col'

(Harish Kapadia)

the southeast rose Kamet (7756 m) Mana (7272 m), Gupt Khal (5760 m) and a gentle route descended to the Saraswati valley. But the unforgettable view was that of the Mana pass (5608 m) in the northeast. We could look across the pass where people had travelled across for a century and wars have been fought. Grey brown hills across in Tibet in the north were clearly seen. Balbala (6416 m) climbed by Andre Roch in 1947 rose above the Mana pass. The intellectual satisfaction of this discovery and the view matched the physical labour and isolation. We could have easily descended to the Saraswati valley but the 'discretion of the permit' did not include that. How a piece of paper (and the consequences that may follow) could stop an exploration!

This col could be used as a pass between the Mana gad (Jadh ganga) valley and the Saraswati valley (Badrinath) which are otherwise very far away placed by road approaches. As far as we could confirm with the locals and the army, the existence of such a col was heard of but no one had yet reached or seen it.

Generally Monesh and I were a perfect foil for each other as a twosome. He always suggested a wild enthusiastic scheme and I exercised caution. Thus we usually arrived at the perfect decision. Now I failed and gave into his suggestion to reach the Leopard's Cave straight from the Saraswati Col on the same day. This made us slog in the mid-afternoon sun on the soggy snowfield at first. Then having wound up the camps we had to walk on the dirty moraine up and down with heavy loads on hungry stomachs. It was like the famous movie (on

the Eiger) 'The Mana Sanction. Porters barely managed to reach the camp by 7 p.m. Following them hungry and tired we were often caught in the flooded side torrents. The track seemed to stretch itself, as it always does when you are tired. Finally we were about to spend a night in the open with the cold wind when Pasang with a friendly torchlight guided us across the last torrent to the camp. In 18 hours we had gone up and down 24 km of high altitude ground. Like the movie, our trip had ended creating its own special climax.

We left the valley to its rightful inhabitants and in four quick days reached Uttarkashi on 8 June 1990. We visited Mahidanda, high up on the hills, 18 km from Uttarkashi, where our hosts the Indo-Tibetan Border Police had set up headquarters. Surrounded by pine forest it had a view matching their hospitality. Talking of leopards, the commandant narrated an interesting story. In winter their truck had to carry water from a far away stream where the driver found a leopard cub. He brought the cub along to the camp. As the night fell, the leopard-mother started howling around the camp. For the next two days and nights she did not stop, even with firing in the air by the sentries. Everyone in the camp was kept on tenter-hooks and trapped inside by the fears of the leopard's attack. The leopard won her cub back safely and then only the camp could heave a sigh of relief.

Remembering our idea at the Leopard's Cave, I was looking aghast at Monesh, who little sheepishly, was looking the other way. A cub in the company of two would have been certainly out of place.

THE JADH GANGA VALLEY

Many have seen the rushing waters of the Jadh ganga meeting the Bhagirathi at Bhaironghati bridge. The valley lying to its northeast is the large valley of Jadh ganga and of its many tributaries.

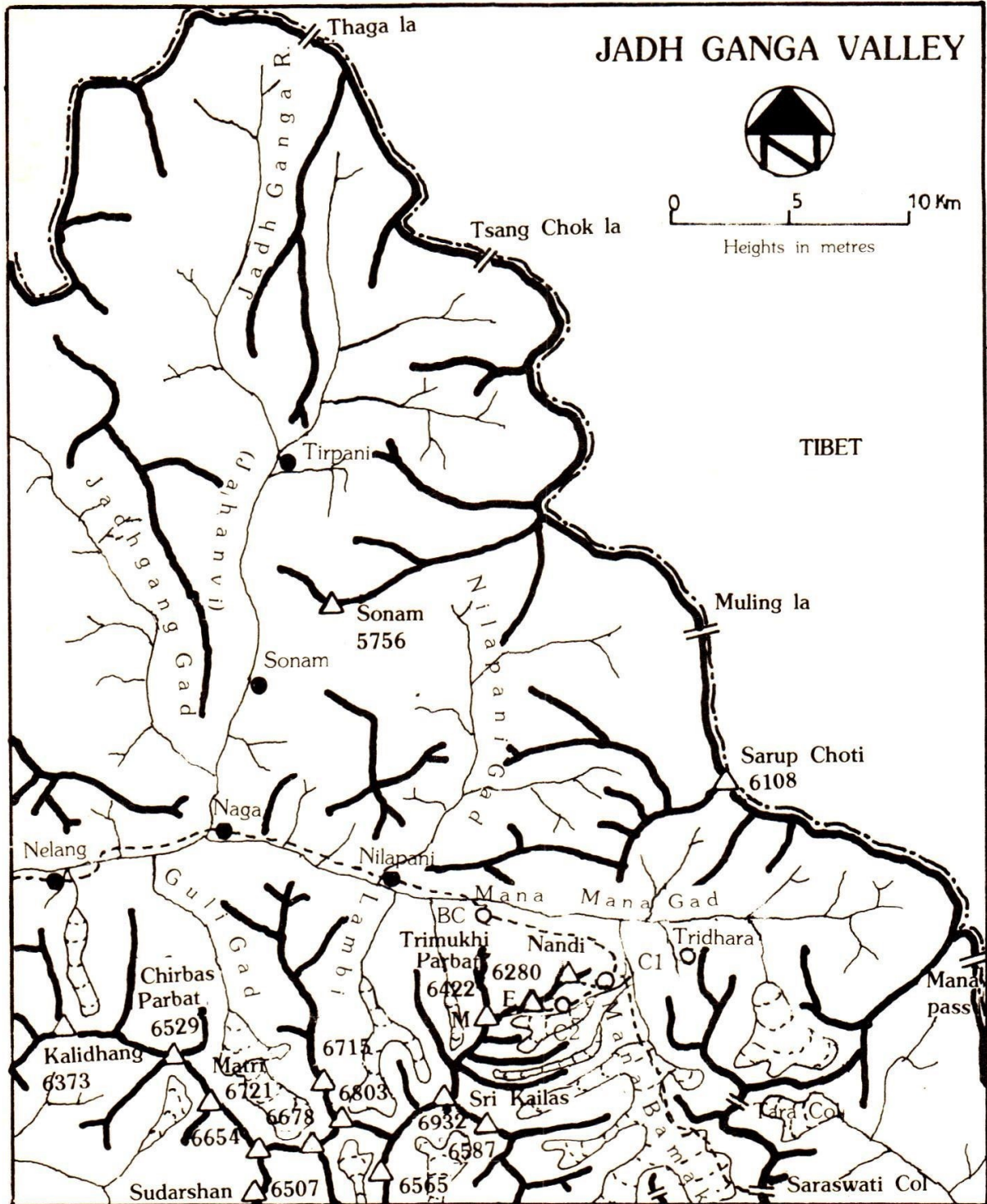
As one goes up the valley after 18 km at Dhumku, Chor gad (nala) drains the valley of the same name from the borders of Kinnaur and Tibet (NNW). 5 km above Dhumku is Nelang.

Nelang is one of the two villages in the valley, both now deserted. It housed the Jadh people giving name to the valley. The area upto the village were claimed by the Chinese. Jadhs, like the Bhotias; were traders with Tibet.

The highest-lying villages in Garhwal, along the Tibetan border, are inhabited in the summer months by a semi-nomadic tribe called Jadhs or, farther to the east, Bhotias. These people are typical frontier product, mixed racially and in tradition, who make the best of two worlds in any border dispute. The Tibetan half predominates in the Jadhs, however, six days out of seven they are Buddhists and, when not wearing European cast-offs purchased while they are wintering on the edge of the Indian

plain, they clothe themselves in Tibetan style. In summer they pasture their flocks and ponies in the uplands, or cross into Tibet to barter Indian produce for a consignment of salt or borax.

(*Peaks and Lamas* by Marco Pallis, p. 25)



The trade was in cotton goods, metals, sugar, oil seeds going to Tibet in exchange with salt, wool, borax, to the value of about Rs. 62,000 in 1882 (which would be a considerable amount today).

Little ahead of Nelang, at Naga, is the confluence of Nilapani gad and Jadh ganga. Up north from here at Dosindhu, Jadhang and Jadh ganga meet. On Jadhang gad was the village of the same name. The original name of Jadh ganga is Jahanvi with an interesting legend narrated in the ancient Indian text of *Puranas*. King Jahnu was disturbed by the whole place being overflowed by waters of Ganga. He drank up Ganga in anger which, by intercession of the gods was restored as his daughter; hence the river is called the Jahanvi. Jahnu's wife was Kaveri, who by his curse became the river Kaveri, which flows south of Madras in South India. Thus both mother and daughter are rivers. The connection between Jadh ganga valley and Madras can be baffling like many ancient tales!

Further north the river thins out and the valley is distinctly Tibetan in character. The caravans traditionally met south of the passes at Mandi (bazar) for the exchange of goods. Some Indian caravans would go across to Toling or even to Gartok. Only the Jadhhs were allowed to cross into Tibet.

12 km to the east from Naga at Nilapani, the Nilapani gad turns northwards leading to Muling la (5822 m) a much less frequented and formidable pass. Towards the east from Nilapani is Mana gad which was rarely ascended.

Mountaineering and exploration :

Of the early explorers Griesbach surveyed the area between 1879-1883. T. Kinney of S.O.I. gathered most of the knowledge about the valleys. Of the many early travellers on the trade route were J.B. Frazer (1815), Hodgson and Herbert (1817).

In the recent years H. Harrer (1944), J.B. Auden (1939) and Lt. J.F.S. Ottley (1939) are recorded to have been in the valley. After 1962, the Indian forces are permanently stationed in the valley in the north.

Mountaineering : The climbers were very few.

- 1974 Kalidhang (6373 m) : 'Dutagar' team from Bengal (Asit Moitra) attempted the peak. (HCNL 30, p. 24)
- 1985 Chirbas Parbat (6529 m) : attempted by a team from Delhi (R.D. Bhattacharji). (H.J. Vol. 42, p. 49 and HCNL 39, p. 18).
- 1986 Chirbas Parbat (6529 m) : first ascent by a team from 'The Kangchenjunga Foundation,' Calcutta (Indernath Mukherjee). (H.J. Vol. 44, p. 84 and HCNL 40, p.15).
- 1990 Trimukhi Parbat East (6280 m) : first ascent, and Saraswati Col (5900 m), team from 'The Mountaineers', Bombay (Harish Kapadia and Monesh Devjani). (H.J. Vol. 47 and HCNL 44, p. 22).

NOMENCLATURE

The names that we came across in the valley have traditional meanings.

Jadh ganga: The river of the Jadh people who were the earlier inhabitants here and traded with Tibet.

Nilapani: The river of blue water. According to Auden, Tibetans called it 'Chunganmu'.

Tridhara: Meeting place of three nalas.

Trimukhi Parbat: Mountain of three faces. A colloquial name for Shiva.

'Nandi': The bull Shiva rides. He generally faces all the temples of Shiva. In this case it faces Trimukhi Parbat.

Saraswati: The goddess of learning. The col of the same name leads to a discovery and the Saraswati valley.

Tara: Star, or Goddess Tara of the Tibetans.

Lambi gad: Long gad.

Sarup Choti: Peak with beauty.

Dosindhu: Meeting of two-rivers, here Jadh ganga (Jahanvi) and Jadhang.

Chor gad: Thief's gad, after a tale that this valley had secret routes to sneak into Kinnaur and Tibet.

Kalidhang: Black massif, which it is, rising above Nelang.

Chirbas: Place of 'Chir' trees. This peak rises above it.

Sri Kailash: Abode of Shiva.

Arwa: Peak looking like a horse. In Sanskrit literal meaning of Arwa' is 'horse.'

Mana: The one which is worthy of respect (high). In *Oxford English Dictionary*, Mana: power, authority, prestige.

Jahanvi: River named after a royal daughter.

Nelang (or Nilang): Place of blue stones.

Naga: A place of difficulties (or after a rare snake-worshipping tribe Naga traced in the Garhwal).

Tirpani: Three waters (meeting of three nalas).

General references: *The Himalayan Gazetteer* by Edwin T. Atkinson (1882) and *A Gazetteer of Garhwal Himalaya* by H. G. Walton. (1910)

SUMMARY

The expedition to the Mana gad valley (east of Jadh ganga) turning south of Tridhara. This valley has not been entered or recorded since the visit of J.B. Auden (1939). This is one of the easternmost valleys, draining Mana bamak, Sri Kailash bamak, and Trimukhi bamak.

The following peaks were climbed : (both first ascents) :

	Peak/height	Summiters	Date
1.	Trimukhi Parbat East (6280 m)	Monesh Devjani Pasang Bodh	30 May 1990
2.	'Nandi' (5795 m) (NE of Trimukhi Parbat)	Harish Kapadia Monesh Devjani Pasang Bodh Yograj Buruwa	28 May 1990
	Col Reached : 'Saraswati Col' (5900 m)	Harish Kapadia Monesh Devjani Pasang Bodh Yograj Buruwa	4 June 1990

This high col at the head of the southeast branch of Mana bamak, is situated on the Mana dhar. It descends gently to the Saraswati valley to little south of the Mana pass and would lead to Badrinath. J.B. Auden had mentioned the possibility of its existence while observing it from a high col between the two branches of Mana bamak. It is for the first time that this col over a high mountain divide was explored and reached by this party.

Other cols observed and recorded :

'Arwa Col' (6100 m) : Between Mana (southeast) glacier and Arwa glacier.

'Tara Col' (6000 m) : Between the western and the eastern valleys of the Tara Bamak near the Mana pass.

'Mana Col' (6100 m) : Reached by J.B. Auden in 1939, between the southeast and the southwest branches of the Mana Bamaks.

Period: 4 May 1990 to 14 June 1990.

Members: Harish Kapadia and Monesh Devjani with Pasang Bodh and Yograj Buruwa.

Sponsored by: The Mountaineers, Bombay.

Dr J. B. Auden

Dr J. B. Auden was the elder brother of the poet W.H. Auden. There were three brothers with John Auden being the middle one. He joined the Geological Survey of India and had travelled widely in many parts of the Himalaya and the Karakoram.

As per the records in the *Himalayan Journals*, he made several journeys in course of his work or otherwise. In July 1933 Auden with

Captain C.E.C. Gregory completed the survey of the Biafo glacier in Baltistan (H.J. Vol. VI, p. 67). Then in 1934 he was in Nepal to study the effects of the great earthquake which caused a havoc in Bihar-Nepal on 15 January 1934. With D. N. Wadia, Dr J. A. Dunn and A.M.N. Ghosh, he traversed large areas of Nepal and published an authentic record. (H.J. Vol. VII, p. 76).

In October 1935 he was in the Gangotri area of Garhwal with Dr D. G. Macdonald and three Sherpas. He explored the then unknown area. Here in 1939 he crossed a pass at the head of the Rudugaira valley to the Bhilangana valley in the south. This is now known as 'Auden's Col' and is not often repeated. He also explored the Jadh ganga, Mana gad and the Lamkhaga valleys. (H.J. Vol. VIII, p. 96 and Vol. XII, p. 17).

In a letter to me (3 July 1990) he mentioned about this crossing 51 years ago.

This Col was crossed in 1939, by myself and two porters from Harsil hamlet, at the termination of two months travelling light, with tents weighing three kilograms.

I had been living rather primitively, and was anxious to make a short cut across the range, thereby saving several days. The north side of this Col was relatively easy-going, but the south side presented some difficulties in crossing the pinnacled ice.

Auden's most well-known trip was to the Shaksgam valley in 1937. This was in the company of Eric Shipton, H.W. Tilman and M.A. Spender, brother of another famous poet. Shipton makes a full reference to their journey in his autobiography while Auden recorded the geological results of the trip (H.J. Vol. X, p. 40).

Dr Auden was an Original Member of Mountain Club of India (1927) which founded the Himalayan Club. He served on the Club's Committee in 1936 and 1944, was Vice-President from 1950 to 1953. He was the Hon. Assistant Editor of *The Himalayan Journal* for 9 years (1936-1944) and was an Honorary Member of Club.

Dr Auden concluding his letter to me wrote:

It is now thirty years since I retired from the Geological Survey of India, and I miss India very much.

It would be a great pleasure to meet you, should you come to London.

How I wish London was as near as Jadh ganga valley from India!

Dr John Bicknell Auden, aged 87, passed away peacefully at London on 21 January 1991. It was an honour to have corresponded with him and be advised by him to the Mana gad in the last year of his life.*

* See 'In Memoriam' in the present issue.



3. Trimukhi Parbat East (6280 m) — route of first ascent.
Main peak Trimukhi Parbat (6422 m) on the right and unnamed peak (c. 6431 m) on left.
Article 6

(Harish Kapadia)

S

SW

MANA PARBAT

Pk 6580 m

Pk 6580 m

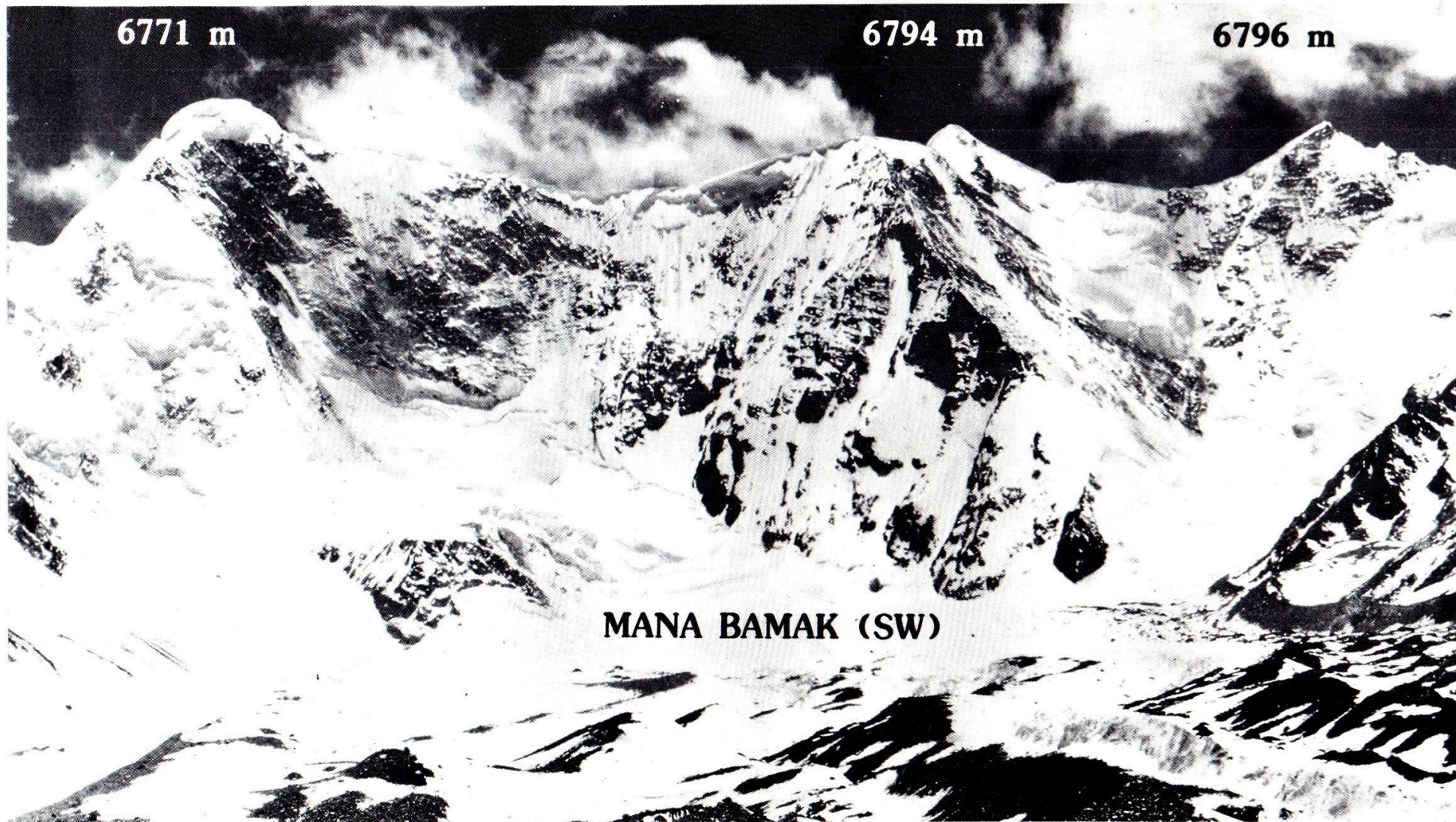
6794 m 6796 m



4. View from slopes of 'Nandi' (5795 m).

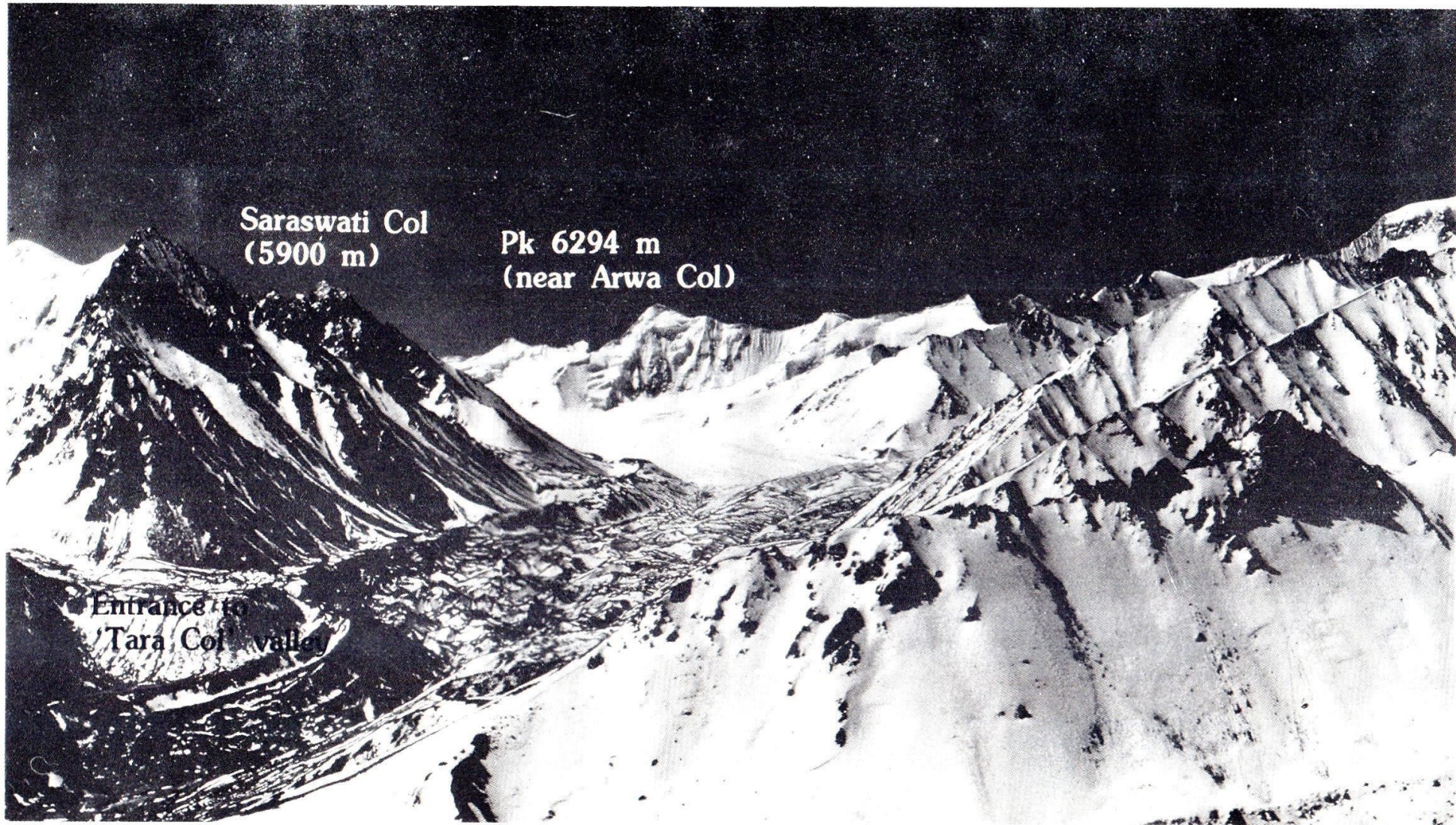
Article 6

(Harish Kapadia)



MANA BAMAK (SW)

5. The northeast faces of Mana Parbat peaks.
Article 6 (Harish Kapadia)



6. The upper Mana gad valley: 'Tara Col' on extreme left and 'Saraswati Col' in centre.

Article 6

(Harish Kapadia)

WSW

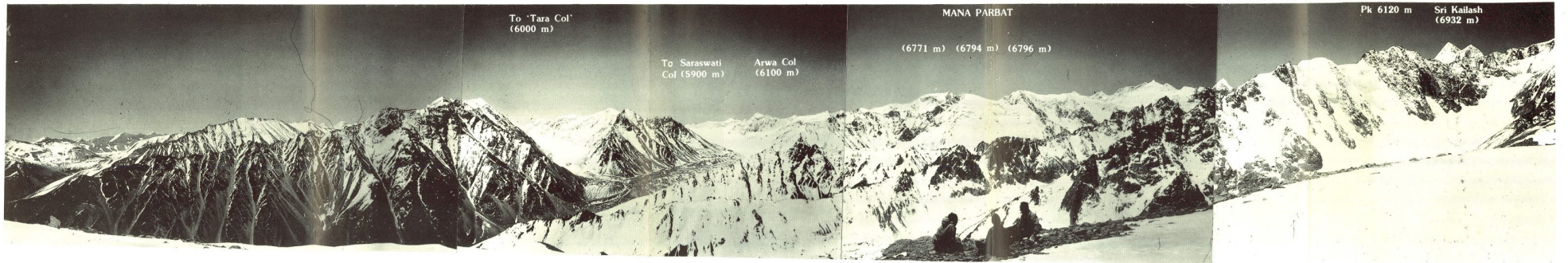
PANORAMA A - B View from the summit of 'Nandi' (5795 m), Mana gad valley. (Harish Kapadia) Article 6

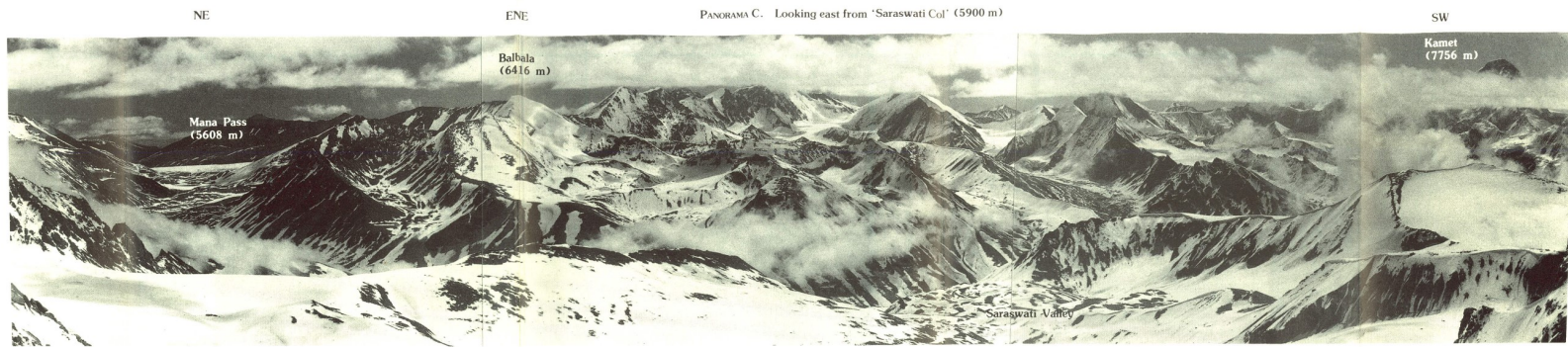
N



S

SW



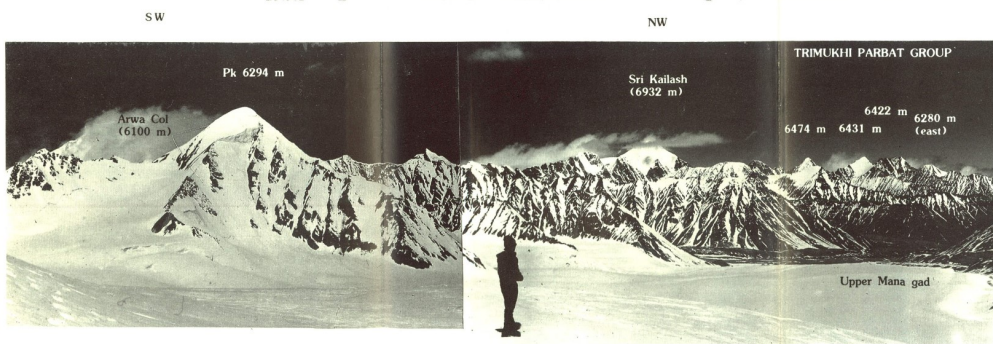


PANORAMA C. Looking east from 'Saraswati Col' (5900 m)

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(Harish Kapadia)

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PANORAMA D. Looking towards Mana gad valley from 'Saraswati Col' (5900 m).



PANORAMA E. The western wall of Mana gad valley.

SW

PANORAMA F. Approaching Tridhara in Mana gad valley. (Harish Kapadia)

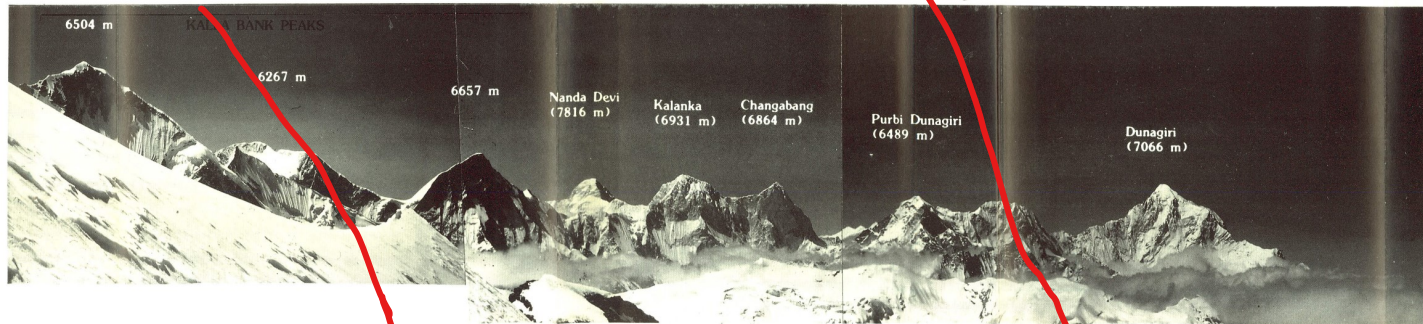
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PANORAMA G. View from southeast ridge of Lampak I at 6000 m. (A. C. Shelat) Page 10