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## IN THE LAND OF ARGANS

### *Explorations in the Paradise – Shayad*

HARISH KAPADIA

**O**FTEN, IT IS JUST BY CHANCE that one comes across a new area, untouched by visitors or not under scrutiny. While compiling a list of peaks in the East Karakoram from maps, I came upon a name, Arganglas, and it showed a large group of unclimbed mountains in the area. I was curious. Through my limited knowledge of Ladakhi language, I knew that 'glas' meant 'a grazing ground'. But what was 'Argan'?

Arghan, a hybrid class, resulting from the intra marriage of foreign Asiatics with Ladakhi women; they are largely employed as mule and pony drivers on the various routes leading to and from Leh. (many fold).<sup>1</sup>

Argans or Arghons<sup>2</sup> is a tribe which has been in existence in Leh, for generations now. Many caravans of Central Asian traders camped in Ladakh during the hey days of the trade. Similarly, many Kashmiri Muslim traders came with caravans to exchange goods with these traders. Many of these Muslim traders interacted with the Buddhist population of Ladakh and married locally. The children of such families were called the Argans, literally meaning a 'foreigner'. Their tribe prospered as they were from trading families. Janet Rizvi in her books, covering the 'oral history' of Ladakh, gives interesting details about the Argan families.

In Leh – admittedly the most cosmopolitan place in Ladakh – there is a long tradition of inter marriage dating right back to the days of the caravan trade when its bazaar was a home to a colony for the foreign merchants; marriages between such merchants and local Buddhist girls are the basis of such existence, the Arghon community. It is quite common for a

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1. *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, Government of India, p. 172.

2. The name is written as Argan (Arganglas) on Survey of India maps, Rizvi prefers Arghons and some Ladakhis called them Arghan.

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*Fold-outs 5-6, Panorama 4*

*Photos 32 to 42*

particular Muslim or a Buddhist of a good family to have relatives belonging to the other community; while among the Christian converts of only a 100 years standing and in a decided minority, it is universal. Fewer Muslim girls than Buddhist girls marry outside their religion; this is probably one of the effects of polyandry which in the past would have encouraged some of the presumed surplus of Buddhist women to seek husbands of other faiths, at the same time discouraging Muslim girls from marrying Buddhists. The Leh Arghon community on the whole enjoyed a position of wealth and status which again would tend to keep the girls from marrying outside.<sup>3</sup>

Today, many from the Muslim community of Ladakh are descendents either of immigrants, or from marriages contracted by local women with Muslim merchants of Kashmir and Yarkand settled in Leh. The influence that this community of Sunni Muslim, had in Ladakh was completely out of proportion to their fairly small numbers. In all other matters, except religion, they lived in a way not different from that of the majority Buddhist population of Ladakh.

It all had to do with trade. The costly and rare Pashmina wool was initially traded on behalf of the rulers of Ladakh, the Gyalpos. The Gyalpos appointed agents, known as 'Kha-tsong', who were all Arghons. By ancient customs the privileged traders arrived from Gartok and Rudok to buy wool and interacted with the Arghons, who exclusively controlled the wool trade of Changthang in Ladakh under the 'Treaty of Tingmosgang'.<sup>4</sup> All this was to change only after Ladakh was conquered by the forces of a Dogra General, Zorawar Singh (representing Maharaja Gulab Singh). But before that, this rich community was well established and part of Ladakh's social scene.

The Arghon community of Leh pride themselves even now on their descent from foreign merchants who settled there during the great days of caravan trade. They came from Srinagar, and from the great trading cities of Central Asia – Yarkand, Khotan

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3. *Ladakh Crossroads of High Asia*, by Janet Rizvi. (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996), p. 214.

4. The treaty of Tingmosgang (1684) brought to an end a war to which Ladakh, as result of its intervention in a quarrel between Tibet and Bhutan was invaded by Tibetan forces. After a three year siege of the fortress of Basgo, and on appeals by Ladakhi kings, the Governor of Kashmir settled the treaty but the Ladakhis had to mortgage to Kashmir the only product of real value in Ladakh, the Pashmina wool. The Kashmir rulers after the treaty had a monopoly in purchasing this rare wool. The Kashmiris appointed select Arghons to run the trade on their behalf. *Trans-Himalayan Caravans* p.53-54, by Janet Rizvi. (Oxford University Press, July 1999).

and Kashgar. 19<sup>th</sup> century writers on Ladakh show a properly straight – list approval of the willingness of Ladakhi women to enter into unions with these settlers; today we would be more tolerant, particularly in view of the presumed imbalance between the numbers of men and women consequent on the system of polyandry. In any case, it seems to show an admirable lack of sectarian spirit, in the part of the girls themselves, and presumably their families too, certainly, the Arghons are today amongst the most influential and respectable citizens of Leh, and possibly the best looking too.<sup>5</sup>

In the houses or, more accessible to the visitors, in the antique shops of the bazaar, may be found copper jars, plates and cooking pots of exquisite workmanship, and other artifacts in the great tradition of Islamic design, which have surely arrived there as a part of the baggage of some caravan from Srinagar or Yarkand.

The Arghons also played a leading role in the trans-Himalayan trade between Leh and Kashgar across the Karakoram Pass. The trade was carried on for years and all the goods were ferried across high and dangerous passes on mules. To help the caravans a community of Kiraiyakash was demarcated. (They were called thus from the Urdu word 'Kirai'; meaning fee, fare, hire.) This community have been a feature of the trade caravans ever since trade was carried on across the Karakoram. They moulded well as pony-men, professional porters and reliable helpers all over Asia. They were both Ladakhis and Yarkandis and many of them were the Arghons of Leh in later decades. These Kiraiyakash were hardy men, almost immune to hardship of travel on the mountain trails and during severe winters of Ladakh and Central Asia.

Between 1870 and 1930, they served many exploratory and scientific expeditions, like that of Sir Francis Younghusband and Dr. Tom Longstaff. There are rich tributes to the Arghons in the published accounts of their travels. Some of them, like Shukar Ali and Mohammed Isa were legends during their times.

Dr. Tom Longstaff, the intrepid explorer, pays tribute to one of the most well known Arghons of his times:

Rasool Gulwan, our caravan leader was a great character. He had travelled through Tibet with Littledale, and with Robert Barrett, Phelps and Church and was rated very high by all of them. He was of the breed called Arghan, of a Yarkandi father by a Ladakhi mother. Inheriting the best characteristics of both the races, he was absolutely honest; he never took bribes nor offered them.<sup>6</sup>

5. Ibid. Rizvi, p. 131.

6. *This My Voyage*, by Tom Longstaff. (John Murray, London, 1950).

Gulam Rasool Galwan was among the pony-men taken on by Lord Dunmore to Pamirs in 1890. This was a four-month expedition for which he was paid Rs. 10 per month. He served a host of other explorers' and travellers; Younghusband, Longstaff, Phelps, Church, Wellby and Littledale. In 1914 he was appointed as the caravan leader (a very prestigious post) of the big Italian scientific expedition of Filippo de Filippi, which explored the Rimo glacier systems and spent several months in the area.

His claim to fame came from an earlier expedition with the British Joint Commissioner in 1899. He was part of the team, which reconnoitered possible routes through the Changchenmo valley going east from the Shyok river. With the Sahibs, he explored a large unknown river valley little to its north and this valley now bears his name, 'the Galwan valley'. This is a rare instance of a major geographical feature being given the name of a native explorer who put it on a western map — a true tribute to the Arghons.<sup>7</sup> In 1962, the Chinese troops surrounded the Indian army posts in this very Galwan valley and the first shots were fired here to start the Indo-China war. Rasool Galwan finished his career as an Aksakal of Leh, a title for rich and powerful contractor.

Galwan had picked up English from his associations with the Sahibs. Encouraged by one of his employers, an American called Robert Barrett, he wrote his autobiography, *Servants of Sahibs*.<sup>8</sup> The book gives a lively insight to life on the caravan, towns and areas during those days and about the explorers and their habits.

It was not known why this particular valley, where we were proceeding, was named as Arganglas. It was probably demarcated for their use. As we walked up the Arganglas valley, I asked our muleteer, 'Why is this valley called Arganglas? Who were Argans?'

He simply shrugged his shoulders and said, 'I don't know.' But there was a hint of a smile and I knew that he knew more than he was ready to admit. After further inquiries, he narrated the stories about the Argans. This was a standard reaction of many Ladakhis when I inquired about the Argans. People in the staunch Buddhist Nubra valley today were reluctant to admit that they and their forefathers had inter-marriages with Muslims and that the valley we were approaching belonged to the Argans. This bias has been particularly strengthened after the recent conflicts in the nearby

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7. Apart from the Pundit explorers the native explorers have received far less recognition in the survey of the higher ranges. The native travellers certainly knew most of the routes before these were incorporated in 'western maps'.

8. *Servant of Sahibs*, by Gulwan Rasool, written with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Barrett. (Heffer, Cambridge, 1923, reprinted in 1989).



Siachen glacier, and the troubles in Kashmir, both against the forces of Muslim Pakistan.

The Arganglas valley has large number of glaciers and peaks which are untouched. I could not locate a single photograph, which showed the peaks in these valleys in a close-up. The only point from where this range can be clearly observed is Khardung la. We had long discussions trying to sort out who's who or which is which peak seen in the vast panorama. This was perhaps the largest cluster of unclimbed and unknown peaks in the Karakoram. The great bend of the Shyok protected the valley from three sides and in the north were the Saser Kangri peaks making an approach from there most difficult.

Often, when going to such unknown and unvisited areas, I have wondered, why does one gets attracted to an exploration or an area which is not visited before... almost like an Arghon who had come to such a distant land to discover a way of life? I found an answer in a couplet by the Indian Urdu poet Kaifi Azmi:

Main dhundhta hun jise  
woh jahān nahi milta  
Nai zameen naya  
āsmān nahi milta

(I do not find the new world that I am looking for; I do not find new earth and new sky that I desire)

The expedition members gathered in Mumbai on 19th August 2001, travelled by train to New Delhi and reached Leh by air. After acclimatising in Leh, we travelled by road across Khardung la, the highest motorable road in the world, to the Nubra valley. Standing on the Khardung la we had our first and only glimpse of the Arganglas area peaks. There were Saser Kangri peaks seen on the left and a large cluster of peaks on the right.

'That rounded peak could be Argan Kangri', Chris said

'But what about that sharp peak on the right?'

'I will bet you a thousand rupees, that it is the peak on the right which is Argan Kangri.'

It went on and on and we never had an agreement. It reminded me of similar discussions with Chris on our previous expeditions, and that I had lost three bets with him in the past.

As we descended from Khardung la, Jim was explaining the basic rules of the game of cricket to Mark Richey. I listened with amazement, as this

was the first time I was with someone who did not know any rules of cricket! In the cricket crazy sub-continent and with exposure to television, even the Ladakhis knew something about it. It was quite possible to see a lama hitting a shot, and taking off for a run, holding his gown! But, of course, both the Marks, Richey and Wilford, knew a lot about many other things and they were some of the leading mountaineers from the US apart from being wonderful human beings.

Ours was a close-knit team. Sir Chris Bonington, an old friend, was always full of emotions, stories of his past exploits and, of course, busy with technology, a fine blend of a legendary person. The Americans, Mark Richey and Mark Wilford, were the first good friends we had made from that continent. Young Jim Lowther, expert of Greenland climbing and a farmer was busy with narrating stories of foot and mouth disease. On the Indian side, our group ranged from a Civil Engineer, Cyrus Shroff, a CA, Divyesh Muni, a Naval Officer, Satya Dam and our affable liaison officer, Capt. Lingwal. We had many stories to exchange; played bridge and shared jokes. Thus while climbing in an exploratory area, we also made new friends.

Kaifi Azmi, the bard, in the second stanza of the same poem narrated above, says that even if we find a new area or a paradise, we are not satisfied as we are looking for company;

Nayi zameen naya āsman  
bhi mil jaye  
Naye basar ka kahin kuchh  
nishan nahin milta

(Even if we find new earth and sky, we do not find any marks of new people)

In our team, we had possibly found that too. We have memories of a very happy, well-knit team, proving that international expeditions need not necessarily mean endless squabbles, flag-waving and chest-thumping displays. We jelled together from the day the international team landed in Mumbai. We were partying from that day until the day we said our farewells. And yes, in between, we did get to climb a few mountains.

After obtaining necessary permissions from the army, we started our three-day trek to the base camp near Tirit village on 28th August 2001. We had 35 mules and a team of 12 permanent staff. The three day trail led us across Chamba la (3890 m / 12,760 ft), Wasekhar (3950 m / 12,960 ft) and Phonglas (4620 m / 15,160 ft) to a base camp at the foot of the Phunangama glacier (4800 m / 15,750 ft). We set up camp on a dry lake bed, which was to be our home for the next month. After ferrying loads,

two Advanced Bases were set up by 6th September. AB1 was at the junction of the Nono glacier and the Phunangma glacier at 5300 m / 17,390 ft. AB2 was on the latter glacier nearer to peaks at 5450 m / 17,880 ft. Both camps were well stocked and various smaller teams used these camps to attempt and climb different peaks.

Once at base camp, we spent a few days acclimatising further and building our further camps. These days were full of fun. We had a bridge session going all the time and lively discussions between Americans, Indians and Englishmen with several Ladakhi, Kumauni and Sherpa stories thrown in. The team was blending to perfection and we knew that if nothing else, at least this would be a most enjoyable expedition and we would go back as good friends.

In between all the brouhaha, Chris was teasing the world with technology. He had a laptop, a satellite phone and all the paraphernalia required for sending e-mails and using the Internet. We were receiving e-mails and talking on satellite phone often, while his son Rupert from England was updating his site ([www.bonington.com](http://www.bonington.com)) on a regular basis. The Argan valley was now conquered by a different set of foreigners and much advanced technology, more innovative than the earlier traders would have ever dreamt of.

During the early part of the expedition we were accompanied by two friends; Suman Dubey, the restless, brilliant editor from Delhi and Dr. Burjor Banaji, a leading eye surgeon from Mumbai. His bulk matched his sense of humour and mental strength to walk. They blended so much with the expedition, that we were ready to drag, Burjor up to a summit or two. They just wanted to enjoy walking in an unexplored area.

Both were a study in contrast. Suman would take-off like a hare and reach the camp much before anyone else. He will then guide Burjor through a walkie-talkie through the day from inside his tent, almost like a game being played out. Many times Burjor would be heard shouting that he had landed in a stream on the wrong side! The final call came in the evening.

'Where do I go from here, Suman?'

'Where are you?'

'Next to a big rock'. That could be anywhere in Ladakh!

'Take the slope going up and then descend to the camp', Suman expertly guided him again from inside his tent. That would take Burjor anywhere in Ladakh.

'I am standing next to your tent, you \*\*\*\*', Burjor retorted sitting down next to the tent!

We were two days into our walk in the valley. Our mule train was proceeding slowly through some inhospitable terrain. We set up camp on a patch of lovely green grass amidst barren mountains. The contrast was simply marvellous. A river nearby, a green grazing ground, the pure air of Ladakh and a brilliant setting sun.

‘This is what they call Paradise, isn’t it, Burjor?’.

He looked into the distance with a steely gaze, as he always does when looking into eye of his patients, and replied, *Shayad*, (Perhaps), and that became our constant refrain.

### **Climbs in the Phunangma and Nono Glaciers**

After establishing AB1 and AB2, we divided ourselves into smaller teams and operated as small independent parties from there on.

The first to succumb to our efforts was Konto la (5920 m / 19,422 ft). This was a col between Karpo Kangri (6540 m / 21,460 ft) and Pk. 6640 m at the eastern head of the Phunangma glacier. It was reached by Bonington-Lowther on 7th September after a long walk along the moraine ridge. They also investigated the route to our future Camp 1 at the foot of Argan Kangri. They also climbed a couple of hundred metres towards a high col to their south.

Two shapely peaks, Abale (6360 m / 20,865 ft) and Amale (6312 m / 20,708 ft) were situated on a side glacier, which we named Nono glacier. After an initial recce, Camp1 was set up 5960 m / 19,560 ft. Muni, Shroff and Samgyal made the first ascent of Abale Peak on 9th September by climbing it via the west face. It was a climb through deep and soft snow as the weather was not particularly stable during this time.

Two days later, another team of Dam, Capt. Lingwal and Wangchuk occupied the same camp and climbed Amale Peak which is little to the north of the first peak. They had clear views from the summit. Both were first ascents of these peaks.

From the day we arrived at BC, below the Phunangma glacier, Mark Wilford and Mark Richey were captivated by the obvious and direct line on peak 6218’s north face, which we later named Yamandaka. They made the first ascent of this peak and descended by the Shingskam Topko.<sup>9</sup>

Their climb and their delayed return gave us plenty of scares. After a few days, when they were delayed, we had discussions about where to start looking for them. It was out of question for anyone to climb on their

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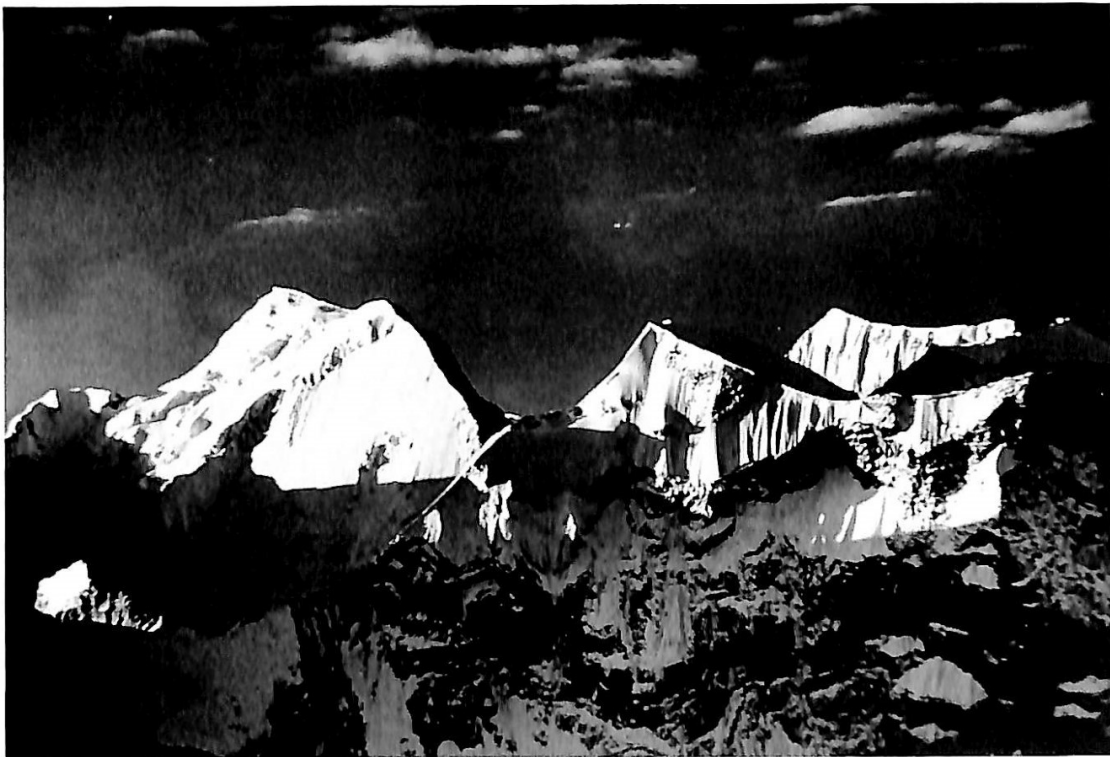
9. For details of their climb see article ‘Barbarossa’, by Mark Richey in this volume.



*Article 13*

(Divyesh Muni)

32. Climbing on Arganglas glacier. Peaks of Lung Tung glacier in background.



*Article 13*

(Divyesh Muni)

33. Unclimbed peaks of Lung Tung glacier.

route but after watching them for the first three days on the route through binoculars, we had completely lost them, which added to our anxiety. Moreover, while they were away on the route, the 11th September tragedy occurred and listening to that on the radio had a catalytic effect on our psyche. I suggested the only 'Indian' way I knew of – to build a temple for their safety. We did just that and Chris with humility and a prayer on his lips, consecrated it. We also sent one Nepali porter, Bhakta, to run down to the roadhead at Khalsar to see if they had exited from the south, the other side from us.

After invoking the celestial care and exhausting human efforts, Chris and myself with Capt. Lingwal moved down to the base camp intending to alert the army for a helicopter search. That evening, Bhakta arrived back to the base camp. He had covered the entire three-day march up and down, each in a day. When he reached the roadhead he inquired with the army sentries near a bridge. They had seen no one. He decided to stay in a small hut looking towards the Shingskam nala. By late night he saw two dim torch lights moving down. He caught up with the Marks near the bridge next morning. Having never met and not able to speak each other's language, they nevertheless established communication through a passing tourist. Bhakta ran up to the base camp with the news. I wouldn't have believed him, had he not carried a small note from the Marks.

### **Argan Kangri (6789 m)**

With the Marks now safe and resting in the Nubra valley, we started on our next climbs. One team was to attempt Argan Kangri (6789 m). This is the highest peak on the glacier and was one of the prime aims of the expedition. However bad weather and poor snow conditions did not allow an attempt on this peak till towards the last days of the expedition.

On 20th September Jim Lowther, Divyesh Muni, Cyrus Shroff, Samgyal Sherpa and Bonington waded through knee-deep snow up the Central Arganglas Glacier to Argan Kangri. The snow had not consolidated since the storm and the risk of avalanche on the huge snow slope leading to the summit appeared too dangerous to be justifiable. They, therefore, decided to return to advance base where they found the two Marks who had arrived to join the team after a good rest.

### **Explorations in the Rassa and Yah Glaciers**

In the meantime Dam and myself, with three porters, formed an independent team and left to explore these two glaciers in the area. They had no history of visitors and contained many peaks. We made camp in the Rassa glacier and from here we attempted Thugu Peak (6158 m /



20,203 ft). As we climbed higher, unsettled rocks with deep fresh snow caused problems. There was no place to camp and we had to return from 5800 m / 19,030 ft, but not before we photographed most of the peaks of the glacier. We spent the next two days exploring the upper reaches of five branches of the unknown Rassa glaciers.

Next, we traversed to west to enter the Yah glacier, which is near the shapely peak of Nya Kangri (6480 m / 21,260 ft). The glacier was full of rocky debris and no water was available except near the snout. We camped at the snout and proceeded along the glacier the next day. Water melt from the glacial snow disappeared within a kilometre from the snout and straight reached the Argan nala in the valley going underground. This was a known phenomenon in Ladakhi valleys but a trap for unsuspecting parties like ours. Covering ground on soft snow and across a crevasse, we camped at the foot of the pass at the northwestern head of the Yah glacier. We reached the steep pass, Yah la (5770 m / 18,930 ft), on 23rd September but it was not possible to descend on the other side towards the Sumur Lungpa as intended. Our party retraced the route back to the Arganglas valley to join the main team the next day.

Satya and myself were alone in the Rassa and Yah valleys and it was a rewarding experience. All around were unclimbed peaks and unexplored glaciers. We could only have a small glimpse. We could see bharrals and ibexes, not much concerned about our presence and birds and marmots. I was amazed to see some wool on rocks surrounding a small pond. Some sheeps wanting a scratch in the hot weather had rubbed themselves against these rocks leaving their rare pashmina wool behind. On one evening, I sat near a lake, which was frozen with a layer of ice. A thought passed my mind: could someone as bulky as Burjor walk on this frozen lake? Or could any living thing walk on this? It seemed as impossible as walking on water. Soon enough, a bird flew in and after a number of rounds around the lake, moved on the frozen ice. I do not know what the bird was looking for, but it was certainly busy picking up something on that ice and walking comfortably. Well if not a human, at least I saw a bird dancing on that thin ice.

The 11th September maelstrom that shook the world seemed to have set off cataclysms in nature too. Fierce storms erupted and the snow never really melted away. It was time to go home from a paradise for climbers.

As we returned, I remembered Suman and Burjor. They had left us after a week at base camp. On the last night, as Burjor and I were snoring peacefully in the tent, we were rudely awakened by loud singing of western

classical notes from the next tent. It was Suman, with a headphone on his ears practicing loudly the bass part of a Schubert Mass.

‘Hey Suman, it is 4 o’clock in the morning’. Burjor gave an equally loud and irritated shout.

Suman did not hear and continued with his notes. The shout was repeated. From the next tent Suman cheekily replied,

‘This is a part of Paradise, Burjor’.

Burjor slowly groaned and turning in his sleeping bag, he murmured, *Shayad*, (Perhaps). We all came out of our tents to enjoy a wonderful sunrise.

### Nomenclature

Climbing in an unexplored area there is always confusion about names of peaks, passes and glaciers. In the Arganglas valley except the Phunangma and Rassa glaciers, no other names appeared on the map. Hence in accordance with the guidelines from Survey of India for naming, we have suggested the following new names in consultations with local Ladakhis.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Arganglas	Grazing ground of the Argans (or Arghons)
Phunangma	Phu – upper, Nangma- interior pastures. Upper Interior Pastures
Rassa	Place for animals
Argan Kangri	Kangri- peak. Highest peak of the Argan area
Yamandaka	A Buddhist God with 32 hands and fearsome looks to keep away the devil.
Meme	Grandfather
Abale	Father
Amale	Mother
Thugu	Small child
Nono	Child
Yah	A phenomenon where water disappears underground.
Konto	Deep (between two peaks)
Nya Kangri	Nya- fish, Kangri – peak. Peak looking like a fish
Karpo Kangri	Karpo-white. Steep white peak.

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SUMMARY**Peaks**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name and height</i>	<i>Date climbed / attempted</i>	<i>Summiteers</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Abale Peak (6360 m / 20,865 ft)	9 September 2001	Divyesh Muni, Cyrus Shroff and Sherpa Samgyal	First ascent, from Camp 1 on the Nono glacier following the west face.
2.	Amale Peak (6312 m / 20,708 ft)	11 September 2001	Capt. Lingwal, Lt. Cdr. S. Dam and Sherpa Wangchuk	First ascent, from Camp 1 on the Nono glacier following the southwest ridge.
3.	Yamandaka (6218 m / 20,400 ft)	13 September 2001	Mark Richey and Mark Wilford	First ascent. Climbed a near vertical steep line on the north face in alpine style. They named the route as 'Barbarossa'. They descended to the south completing a traverse.
4.	Argan Kangri (6789 m / 22,273 ft)	20-23 September 2001	Sir Chris Bonington, Jim Lowther, Divyesh Muni, Cyrus Shroff and Sherpa Samgyal.	The highest peak on the glacier was investigated till 6200 m. Soft and unconsolidated snow conditions made it too difficult to climb.
5.	Thugu Peak (6158 m / 20,203 ft)	19 September 2001	Harish Kapadia and Lt Cdr. S. Dam	The team followed the southwest ridge till 5800 m. Steep rocks and snow stopped the attempt.

**Passes and Cols**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name and height</i>	<i>Date climbed / attempted</i>	<i>Summiteers</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Konto La (5920 m / 19,422 ft)	7 September 2001	Sir Chris Bonington and Jim Lowther	A deep col at the head of the Phunangma glacier and at the foot of Karpo Kangri. A small cairn was erected at the pass.

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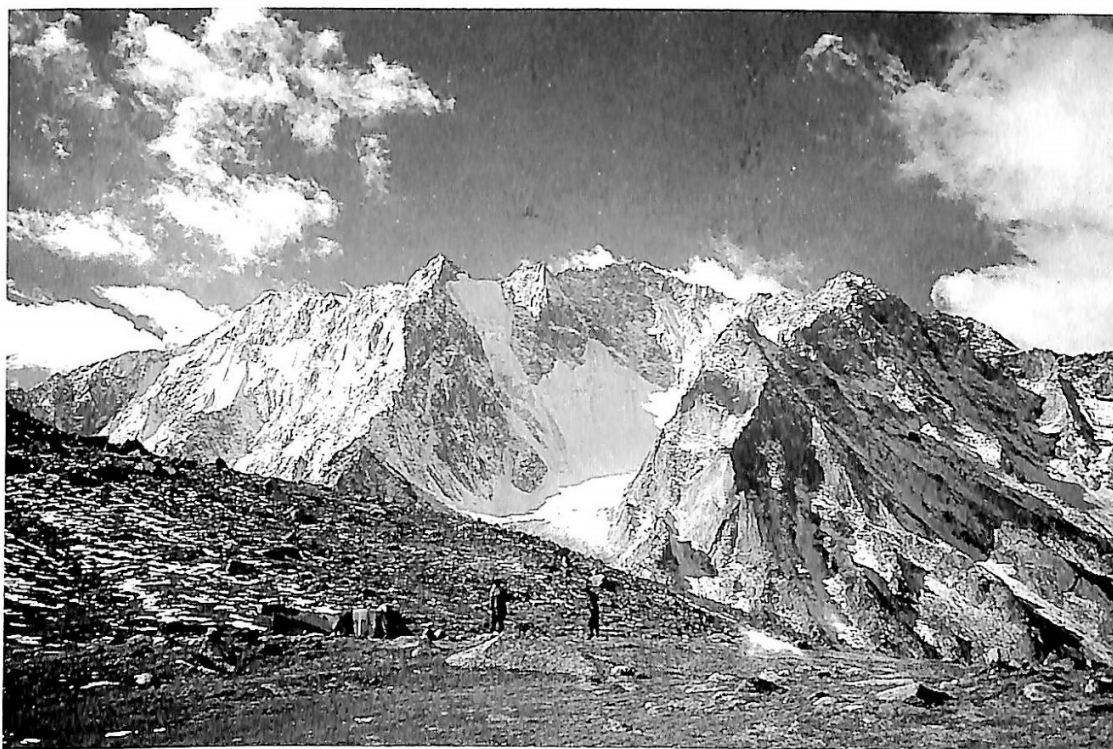
<i>No.</i>	<i>Name and height</i>	<i>Date climbed / attempted</i>	<i>Summiteers</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Konto La (5920 m / 19,422 ft)	7 September 2001	Sir Chris Bonington and Jim Lowther	A deep col at the head of the Phunangma glacier and at the foot of Karpo Kangri. A small cairn was erected at the pass.



*Article 13*

(Divyesh Muni)

37. Upper Phunangma glacier: From left: Argan Kangri I, II, Konto la and Karpo Kangri.

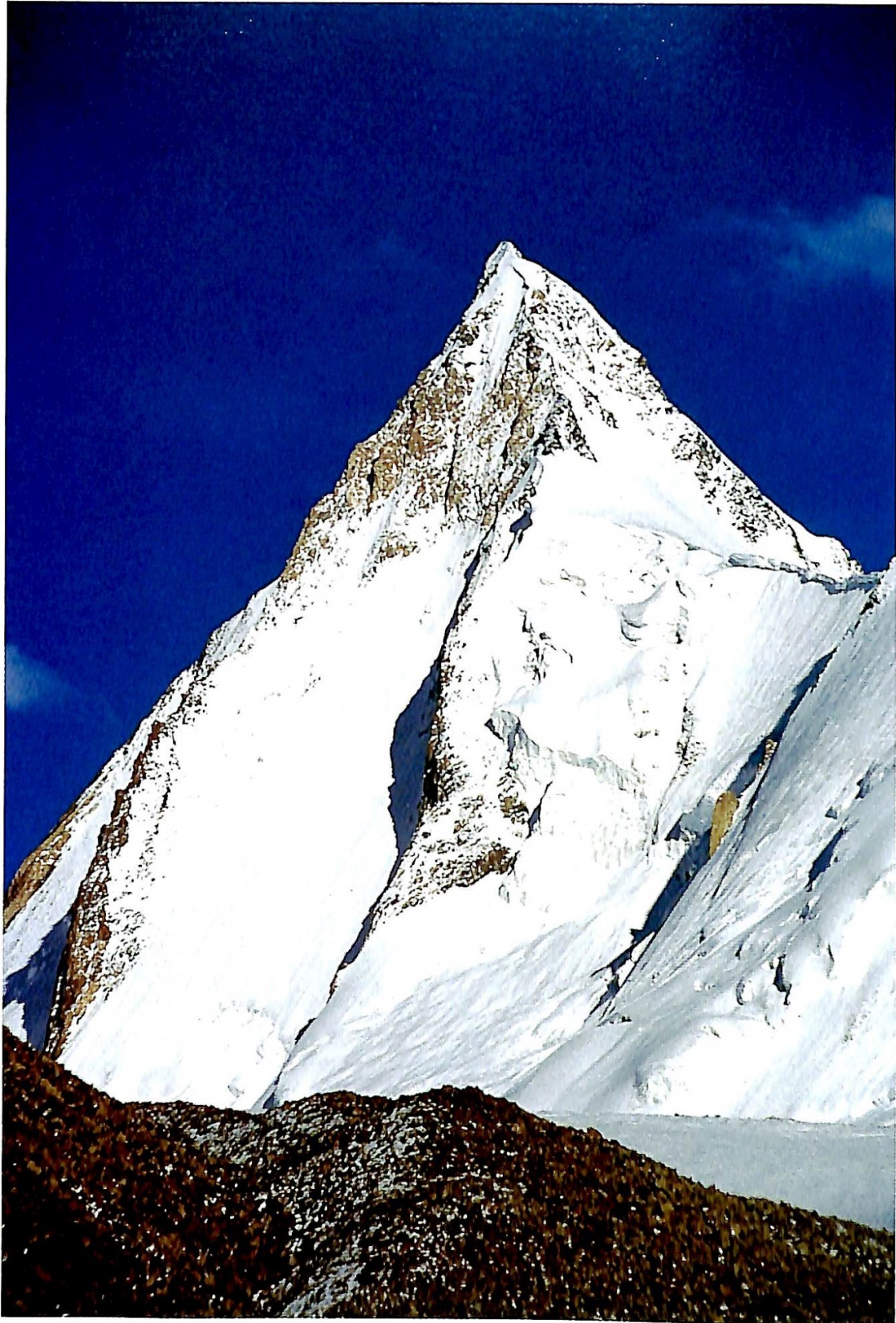


*Article 13*

(Harish Kapadia)

38. Unclimbed rock walls in Arganglas valley.

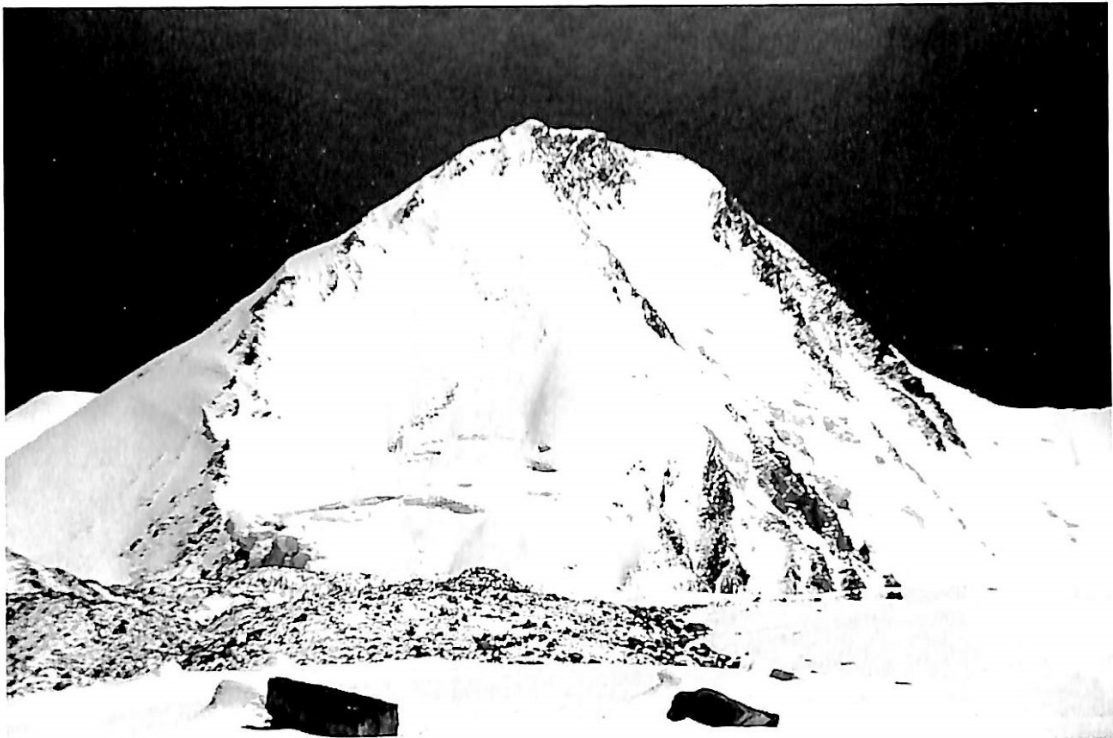




*Article 14*

(Mark Richey)

39. Karpogangri (6540 m)



*Article 13*

(Divyesh Muni)

41. Argan Kangri (6789 m).



*Article 13*

(Divyesh Muni)

42. Final slopes to Argan Kangri.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name and height</i>	<i>Date climbed / attempted</i>	<i>Summiteers</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
2.	Yah La (5770 m /	23 September 2001 18,930 ft)	Harish Kapadia, Lt Cdr. S. Dam with Naresh, Chamu Sinh and Sunder Sinh.	An unvisited pass at the head of the Yah glacier was reached.
3.	South Col 5800 m / 19,028 ft)	8 September 2001	Sir Chris Bonington and Jim Lowther	A high col west of Peak 6041, attempted from AB2. Poor ice conditions stopped the climbers early.

Glaciers explored: Phunangma, Nono, Argan, Rassa and Yah glaciers.

### Members:

1. Sir Chris Bonington (Joint Leader)
2. Harish Kapadia (Joint Leader)
3. Jim Lowther
4. Divyesh Muni
5. Cyrus Shroff
6. Mike Richey
7. Mike Wilford
8. Lt. Cdr. Satyabarata Dam (Indian Navy)
9. Liaison Officer: Capt Vrijendra Lingwal (Ladakh Scouts)

**Period:** 19 August to 30 September 2001

### References:

1. *Ladakh Crossroads of High Asia*, by Janet Rizvi. (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996).
2. *Trans-Himalayan Caravans*, by Janet Rizvi. (Oxford University Press, July 1999).
3. *This My Voyage*, by Tom Longstaff. (John Murray, London, 1950).
4. *Servant of Sahibs*, by Gulwan Rasool, written with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Barrett. (Heffer, Cambridge, 1923, reprint in 1989).

**Note:** I am grateful to Ms. Janet Rizvi for permission to use quotes and information from her two books mentioned above, which are a major references on Ladakh.





*Article 14*

31. Barbarossa, route of first ascent on Yamandaka peak.

(Mark Richey)



*Article 13*

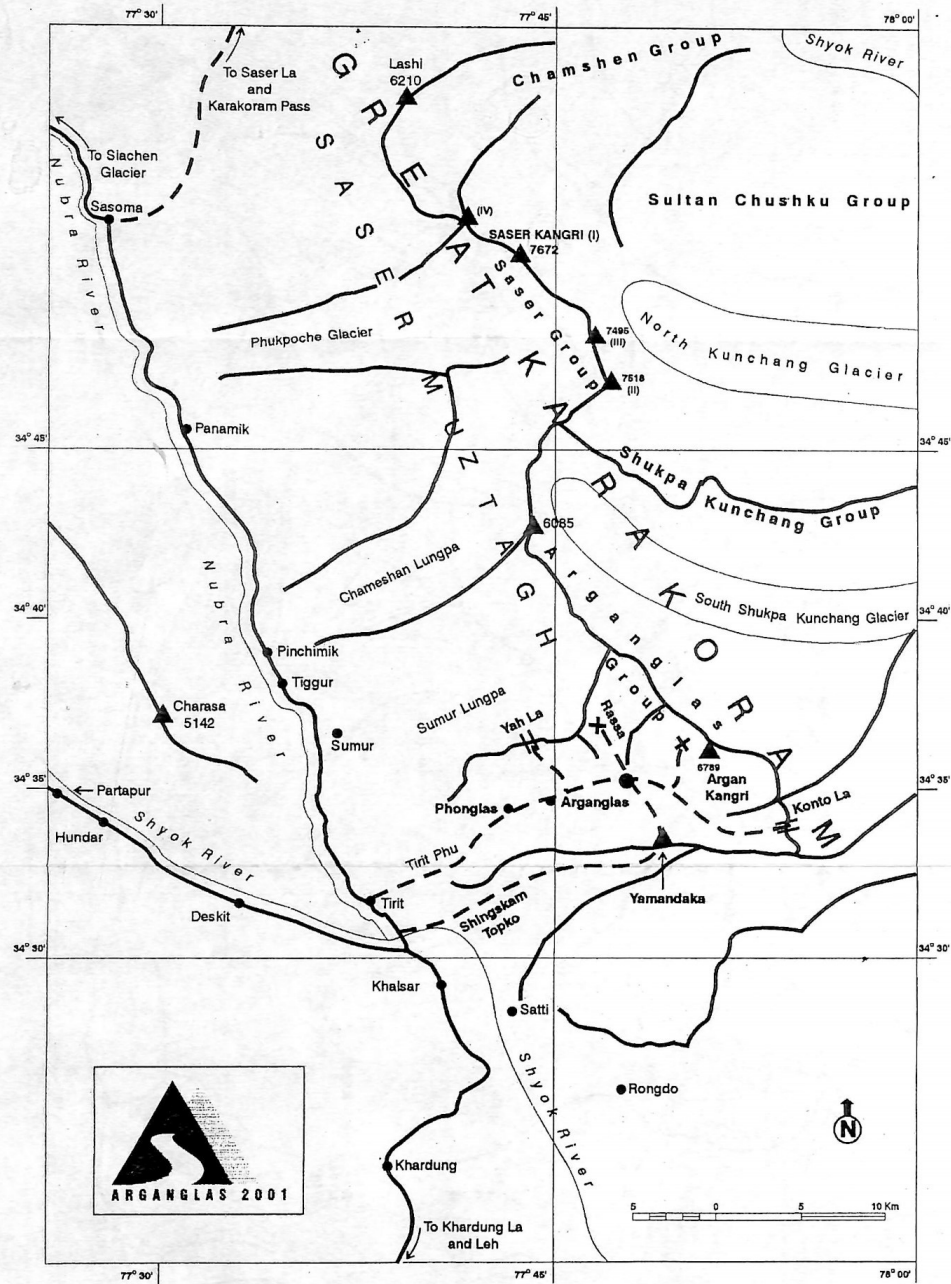
(Harish Kapadia)

40. Phunangma glacier, Arganglas area. Yamandaka on right.











*Article 14*

36. Peaks on head of Phunangma glacier: Karpo Kangri (right), Konto la in centre and peak Argan Kangri III.

(Mark Richey)