

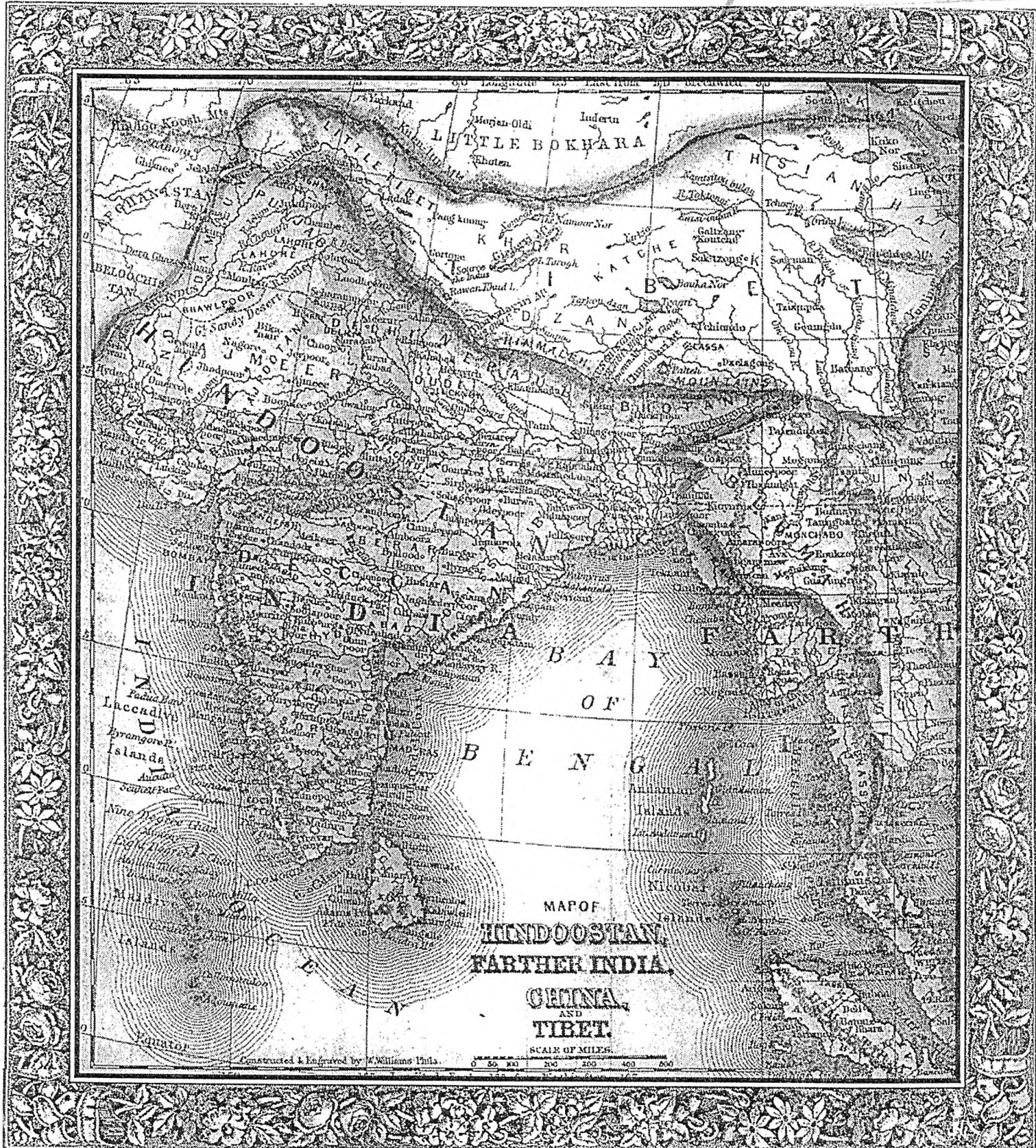
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1998 BRITISH DISTAGHIL SAR NORTH FACE EXPEDITION

MOUNT
EVEREST
F.C. 1860



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1998 DISTAGHIL SAR EXPEDITION REPORT

SUMMARY

The objective of the expedition was to make the first ascent of the North Face of Distaghil Sar (7885m), which had never been attempted before.

The approach to the face was via the long and heavily crevassed Malangutti glacier. In 1997 I made a reconnaissance of the lower reaches of the glacier and determined that a route to the face appeared a possibility; unfortunately further exploration revealed the glacier to be extremely dangerous and impenetrable.

The team's attempts to by-pass the glacier proved futile and reluctantly they were forced to abandon the expedition without reaching the North Face.

EXPEDITION MEMBERS

- 1). Andrew Collins
- 2). Jonathan Pratt

Pakistan Staff

Ghulam Ali..... (Agent)
Ifan el-Huq..... (Liaison Officer)
Quadrat Ali..... (Sirdar)
Ghulam Hussain... (Cook)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our sponsors without whom a small expedition such as ours would be infeasible.

The expedition gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from:

THE MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

THE SPORTS COUNCIL

LYON EQUIPMENT

The expedition would also like to thank the following for donations, equipment loans, and assistance:

CRAGHOPPERS
IDM ELECTRONICS
TERRA NOVA
RICHARD VLAMNYCK
JONATHAN WAKEFIELD

DISTAGHIL SAR (7888M)

Distaghil Sar is the 21st highest mountain in the world, and is the highest peak in the West Karakoram. It is situated in the barren Shimshal valley of northern Pakistan's Hunza region, close to the Chinese border.

There have been only two ascents of Distaghil Sar, both from the South side. The first ascent of the mountain was in 1960 by an Austrian team via the South Face. The second ascent, by the same route, was in 1989 by a Spanish team.

REPORT

The expedition met in Islamabad on June 19th 1998 with Jonathan coming overland from Kathmandu and Andy from London. All the bureaucratic formalities were completed in just 4 hours on our first day, and on the 24th we set off for Gilgit.

WALK IN

We hired 22 porters at the end of the jeep road and on the 28th June, hiked to the spring of Ziarat. The following day Jonathan and Andy accompanied our Sirdar, Quadrat Ali, on a reconnaissance of the lower part of the Malangutti glacier and concluded it was possible for the porters to traverse it, and position Base Camp about 5 hours closer to the mountain than originally planned. Base Camp was established the next day at 4200m.

THE CLIMB

On July 1st we climbed along the glacier for about 4 hours, but were then stopped by a myriad of impassable crevasses and seracs. We were surprised at how active and dangerous the glacier was.

Attempts to by-pass the Malangutti glacier

Realising that a route up the middle of the glacier was impossible, we attempted to climb a rock gulley to the west and by-pass the difficult section of the glacier. However; the gulley proved difficult and was raked by rock fall; moreover, the descent back to the glacier was impractical.

We then tried to make a bigger loop around the glacier by climbing over Corner Peak (5600m) on the west and descend back down to the glacier further along, at around 4600m. Unfortunately, after climbing the peak, the terrain on the far side forced us to descend to the same point as the gulley we had explored previously.

Further attempts on the east side of the Malangutti glacier

We then explored a difficult route crossing the Malangutti glacier to the east side, by-passing the glacier's difficult section and returning back to the middle of the glacier. Our first attempt at this succeeded in finding a tortuous, but possible, route across the glacier and around the impassable section. This rather desperate line showed itself to be the only possible way to cross the glacier.

On the 8th July we retraced this route and camped on the east side of the Malangutti glacier. We were surprised though at the amount of change that had occurred to the route: both at the speed the crevasses were widening and the number of seracs that had collapsed.

From our camp we made good progress for a few hours but then ran into an incredibly dangerous area of falling seracs and wide crevasses. This area extended not just from one side of the glacier to the other but also a considerable distance towards the North Face (several kilometres). Any forward progress was completely barred and we were in a very dangerous situation on the glacier. Reluctantly we abandoned the expedition.

THE TREK OUT

Andy and Jonathan hike over the snow covered pass north of the Shimshal Weisshorn to reach Shimshal village from Base Camp. We believe we were the first people to cross this pass. However; it was quite technical at the top and the bottom was raked by constant rockfall which had us fearing for our lives. This pass was extremely dangerous and we regretted having attempted it.

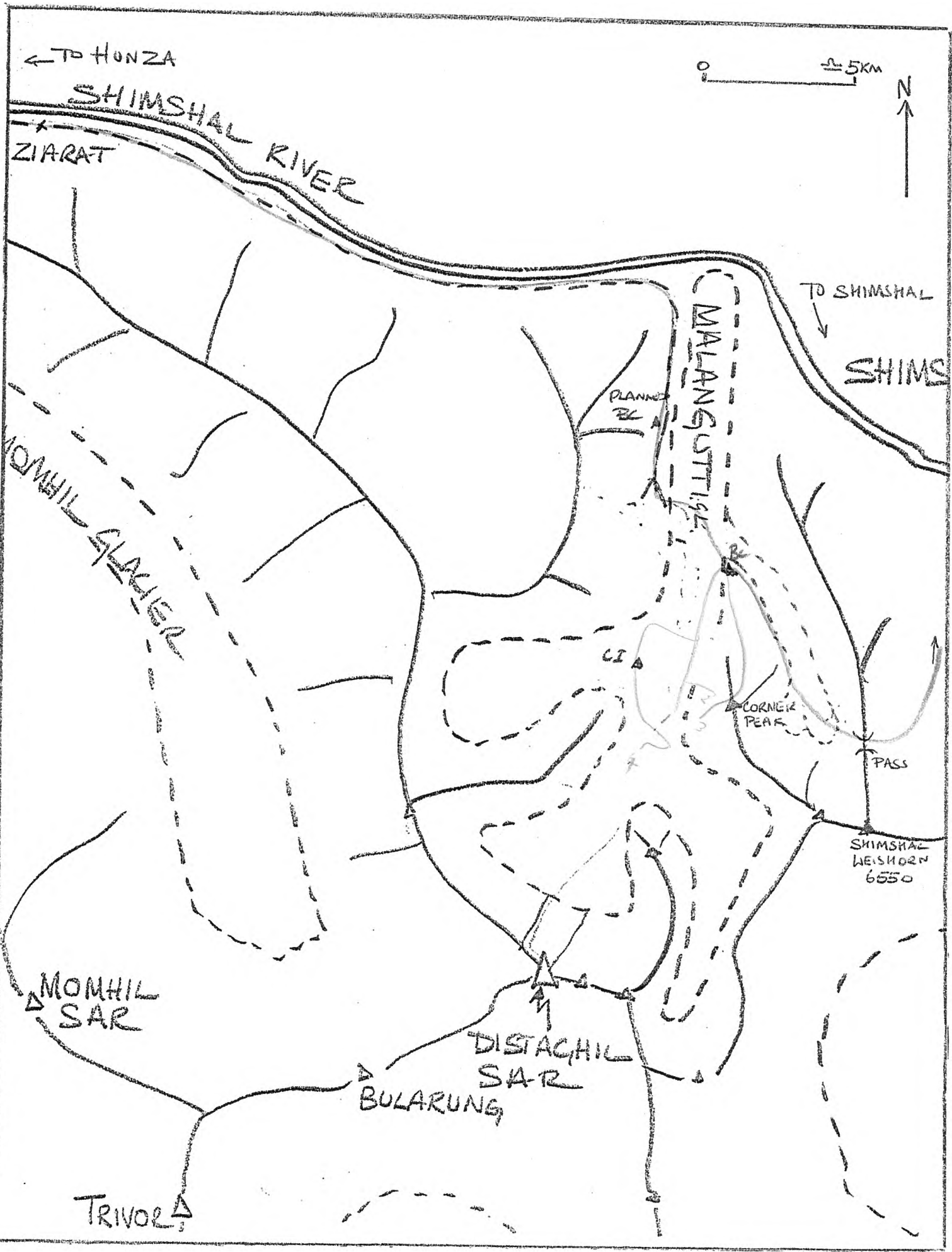
We returned with 11 porters from Shimshal to retrieve Base Camp via our original route. We gave all our food and a considerable quantity of rope and supplies to the villagers.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Very few people have visited this area so there was minimal disturbance to the environment. We collected our human waste in plastic bags and took it to the small settlement of Malangutti at the foot of the glacier where we deposited it at the toilet there. All our other rubbish we took back to Islamabad.

CONCLUSION

The North Face of Distaghil Sar looks like a very attractive climb, but there is only one possible approach route and that is via the Malangutti glacier. Unfortunately, this glacier is totally impassable. We exposed ourselves to considerable danger and yet still had a very long way to go to reach the face. We also tried all the possible ways of by-passing the glacier and these too proved both dangerous and impractical. In short there is no feasible way to reach the Face.



EXPEDITION TIMETABLE

June 19 Arrive in Islamabad
 20-23 Islamabad
 24 Bus to Gilgit
 25-27 Gilgit
 28 Trek to Ziarat
 29 Recce Malangutti glacier
 30 Establish Base Camp
July 1 Climb on Malangutti glacier
 2 Recce gulley to side of glacier
 3 Rest day
 4 Climb to 1st camp on Corner Peak
 5 Climb Corner Peak
 6 Recce far side of Malangutti glacier
 7 Rest day
 8 Establish Camp 1
 9 Reach high point on Malangutti glacier
 10 Abandon expedition
 11 Climbers climb over Weissshorn pass to Shimshal
 12 Trek to Malangutti
 13 Base Camp dismantled
 14 Trek to Passu
 15 Bus to Gilgit
 16 Bus to Islamabad
 17-20 Islamabad
 21 Final Briefing

EXPEDITION BUDGET

COSTS

TRAVEL	£1,006
FOOD	£218
EQUIPMENT	£568
PERMITS & AGENT	£3,080
LIAISON OFFICER	£847
LABOUR	£894
INSURANCE	£528
MISC	£370
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	£7,510

INCOME

PERSONAL	
CONTRIBUTIONS.....	£4,510
MEF GRANT	£1,000
BMC &	
SPORT COUNCIL AWARD.....	£1,750
LYON EQUIPMENT AWARD....	£250

	£3,000
	=====
	£7,510