



AAC Publications

Mustang Ascents and Exploration

Nepal, Mustang Himal

Northwest of Lo Manthang, the Mustang Himal previously was forbidden to both climbers and trekkers. The opening of new peaks in 2014 by the Ministry of Tourism radically changed this situation, and there are now beautiful climbs to be done in a spectacular environment of ice and desert. The track connecting Jomson with Lo Manthang greatly facilitates access to these peaks, close to the border with Tibet.

There are four authorized summits, and being below 6,500m they do not require a liaison officer: Mansail (a.k.a. Manshail, 6,242m, according to Official Border Map; 6,235m on the HMG-Finn map); Mansail South (6,251m; 6,248m); Mustang Himal (6,195m, both maps); and Ghyun Himal (6,099m; 6,110m). The finest summit in the group, well visible from Lo Manthang, is Dong Mar (6,337m, climbed in 1953 by Herbert Tichy). It's very likely that many of the small summits close to Lo have already been climbed. [Mansail and Mustang Himal were climbed in autumn of 2014.]

In the spring we crossed the Mustang Himal by a fine route, partially trekking and partially mountaineering, with a few easy peaks thrown in. It deserves to become classic. The most northerly of three main valleys flowing east, then southeast, to Lo Manthang leads to the Mansail peaks on the Tibetan border. We trekked to this valley, and from a camp at 5,600m that we dubbed Mansail Base Camp, climbed a peak to the north and on the ridge east-southeast of Mansail, which we named Pema Himal (6,168m, HMG-Finn). We stopped 10m below its highest point, a collection of large granite blocks.

We then traveled east to the frontier and over the Nyamdo La, close to Windmilles Peak (6,250m), then turned south, crossing icefields east of the border, to reach the Col du Replat, which lies between the Ame Pal Chuli East (6,176m) and the higher Ame Pal Chuli West (6,229m). (Ame Pal is the name of the first great king of Lo.) We climbed the easy eastern peak. Descending south, we reached the head of the southern main valley and from there climbed another border peak: Dhane Himal (6,125m). While most of the group descended the main valley, Sonia Baillif, Jean-Paul Charpentier, Jangbu Sherpa, and I made a detour, climbing over a nice peak that we named Jangbu Himal (6,167m), on the south side of the valley, before rejoining the group at Samdrub Ling.

This area is still little known to climbers and there are many goals, but a visit requires patience, much diplomacy, and an understanding of local life. The villagers of Nyamdo and Thingar are quite reluctant to see foreigners in their mountains, and will prohibit access until harvest time. It is necessary to include them in your organization as much as possible, and for the time being not plan to visit the area until the beginning of October. For more information go to www.paulogrobel.com/mustang-himal-2014-cr.

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Images



Mansail from the east. A Japanese team climbed the ice slopes at right and the rock ridge facing the camera in 2014.



The unclimbed granite spine of Mansail South in Mustang Himal.



Crossing the icefield east of the border, heading for the Col du Replat, the broad, high saddle between the two high peaks in this picture. The snow dome on the left, Ame Pal Chuli East, was climbed in 2014. The higher, rocky top to the right, the west summit (on the border), remains virgin. Note the Utah-like "Castleton Tower" in the distance.



Seen from the north, Ame Pal Chuli East (6,176m) is on the left, separated from the higher Ame Pal Chuli West by Col du Replat. The east summit was climbed, and the col crossed, in spring 2014.

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