

PADDLING THE FRONTIER



Guide to Pakistan's Whitewater

by
Wickliffe W. Walker

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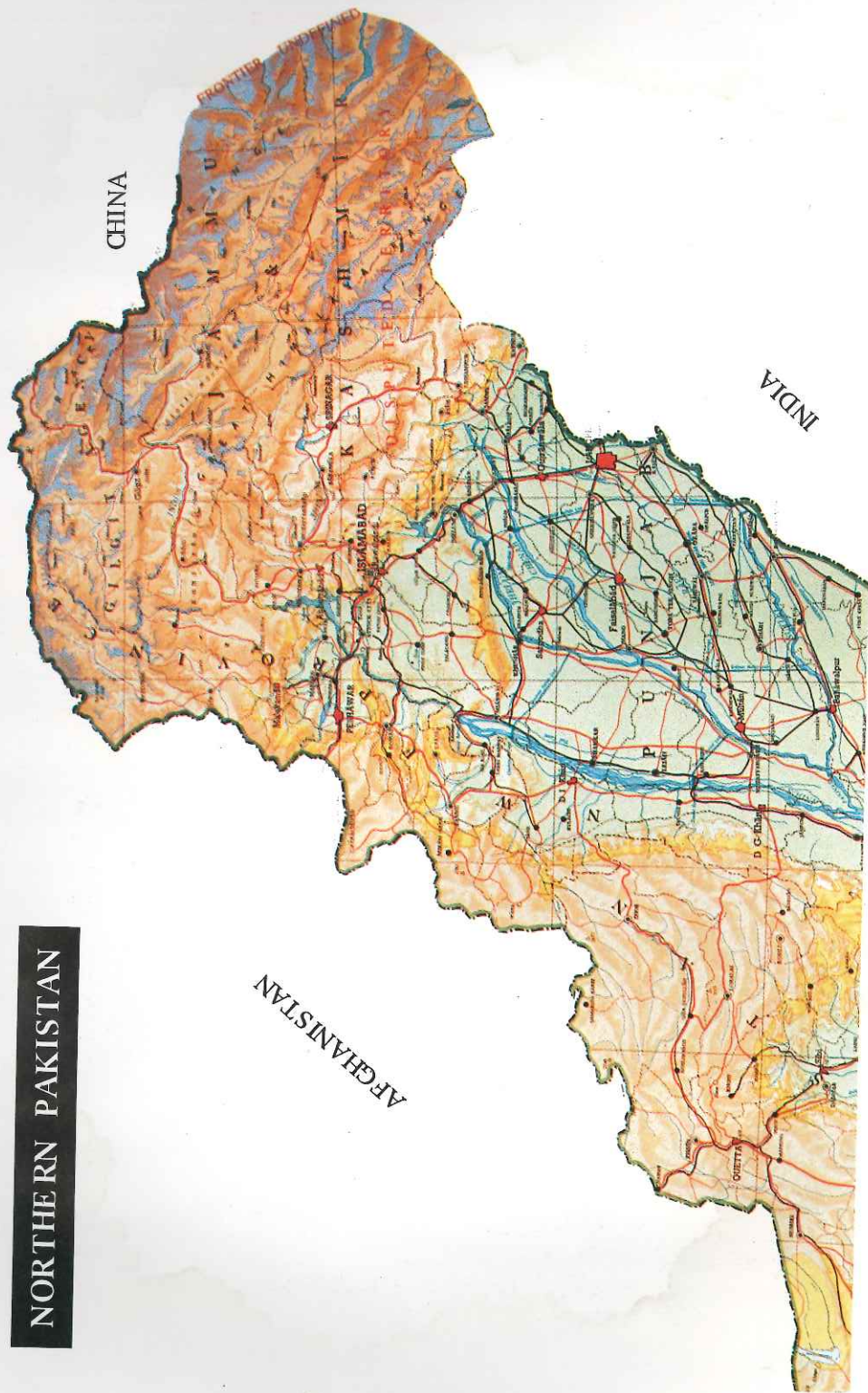


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FOREWORD
THE ULTIMATE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Challenging and exhilarating, stimulating and rewarding, serene and fulfilling, adventure tourism in Pakistan is a unique travel experience. One can follow in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, bicycle the Silk Route of Marco Polo to China, and trek the trails blazed by Conway, Goodwin-Austin and Young-husband. Or, explore the ruins of the mighty Indus Civilization, re-learn the teaching of Gautma Buddha, and discover the living warmth of Islam.

Yet to know that all this is available, to find out the details of what there is to do, where to do it, and when, is as daunting a task as climbing one of Pakistan's 8000+ meter peaks. Regretably, information on adventure tourism — or cultural and historical tourism — in Pakistan is sorely lacking, and where available, poorly disseminated. Plentiful, detailed, and easily accessible information on tourism in Pakistan is urgently needed.

To this end, Travel Walji's has decided to undertake the monumental task of sponsoring pamphlets on the various adventures one can experience in Pakistan. The first of these is this guide to kayaking some of our glorious rivers, written by a truly adventurous soul—Wickliffe Walker. Wick has singlehandedly explored many of the routes described, and his unwavering enthusiasm for Pakistan's whitewater allows us to share these wonderful experiences with a broad audience; we are both convinced that once sampled, Pakistan's adventure product will lure one back, time and time again.

Indeed, adventure travel to Pakistan — the ultimate travel experience — is not only to discover breathtaking vistas, revel in the beauty of nature, and test one's endurance, but to meet and share with a people whose warmth and openness assures one to be amongst old friends.

As Pakistan's tourism pioneers, Travel Walji's is honoured to be able to play its part in the exploration of the great expanse of this beautiful country.

IQBAL WALJI
President
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Please forward comments, corrections, and trip reports for future revision of this guide to:

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INTRODUCTION

The fabulous knot of mountains where the Western Himalaya run into the Karakorams, the Pamirs, the Hindu Kush and the Pir Panjal, has more rivers, climbs, treks, history, politics and warfare than could ever be encompassed in a single book. This pamphlet is intended to do no more than whet the appetite, and perhaps to allow trip planning with some advance feel for boating conditions on one of whitewater sport's most exciting frontiers. There are still many hundreds of kilometers of first descents left in Pakistan.

Even the rivers described have only been run, on average, once each. First impressions are notoriously imprecise, and in the Himalaya, water levels vary tremendously throughout the year. The river beds also change annually, not only from flooding as in other regions, but from mountain uplift, for these are still-growing ranges.

To my own impressions of several rivers, I have added reports on rivers in Chitral by Jim Burnham and Reg Lake, and on rivers in the Northern Areas by Andy Embick. These are excellent paddlers for whom I have the greatest respect. Nevertheless, comparing the subjective assessments of an Alaskan with a large, highly skilled and well equipped expedition, two Californians winging it wherever their jeep can get them, and a retired racer rambling around solo in a C-1, is bound to create diversity in the descriptions. Readers will have to apply due caution.

In general, I have omitted rivers not actually run, even those scouted by map, car and foot. Actual paddling always reveals surprises, and a false implication that a stretch has been

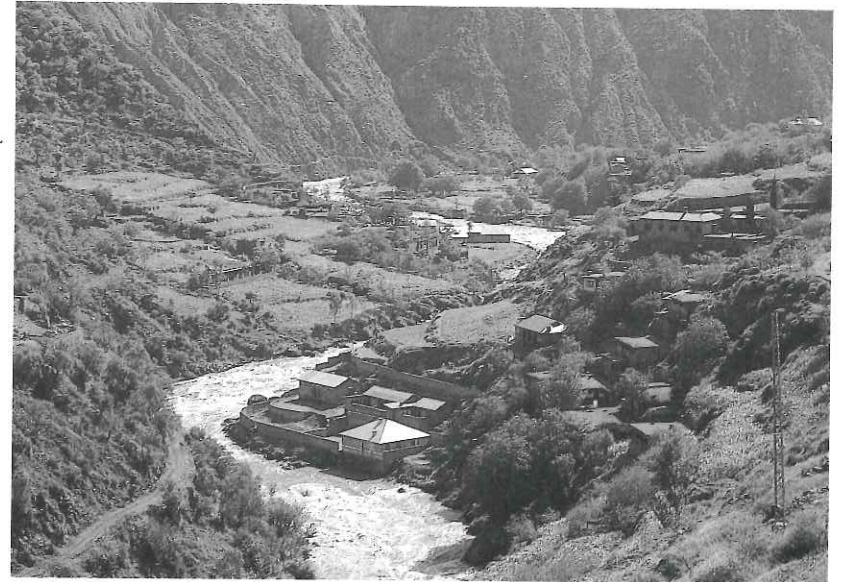
successfully run could be dangerous. In the few cases where I felt an unrun portion should be included, I hope its status is clear from the text.

Part of the fascination of whitewater sport is that it is a young and rapidly developing discipline, in technique and number of participants as well as geographic spread. If this beautiful, stark and challenging region lives up to its potential in whitewater as it is doing in climbing and trekking, then this first attempt to organize what is known about its rivers will need revision within a year or two, if not within months. New runs will be quickly explored, and subsequent runs will add to the knowledge of listed runs, with better appreciation for conditions at various water levels. Nevertheless, expansion in the sport requires a start point and a sharing of experiences. There are limitless experiences waiting in the Western Himalaya.

Wick Walker

Islamabad, November 1988

THE HIMALAYA



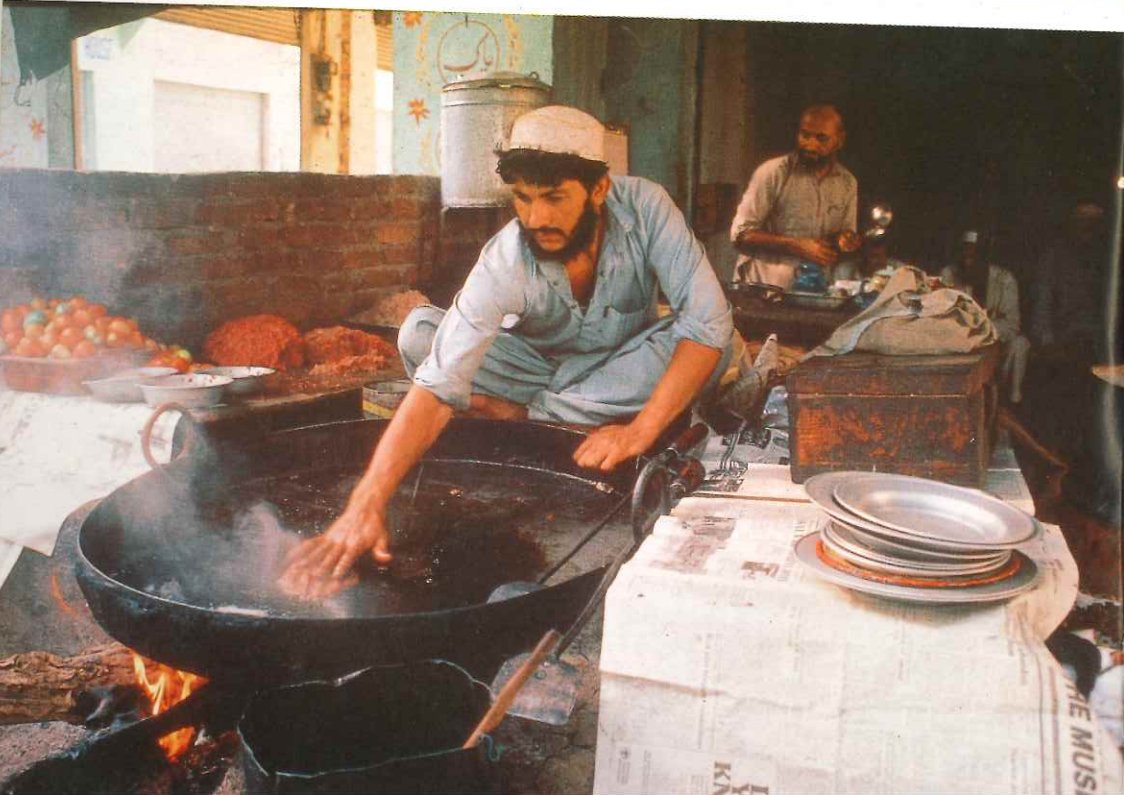
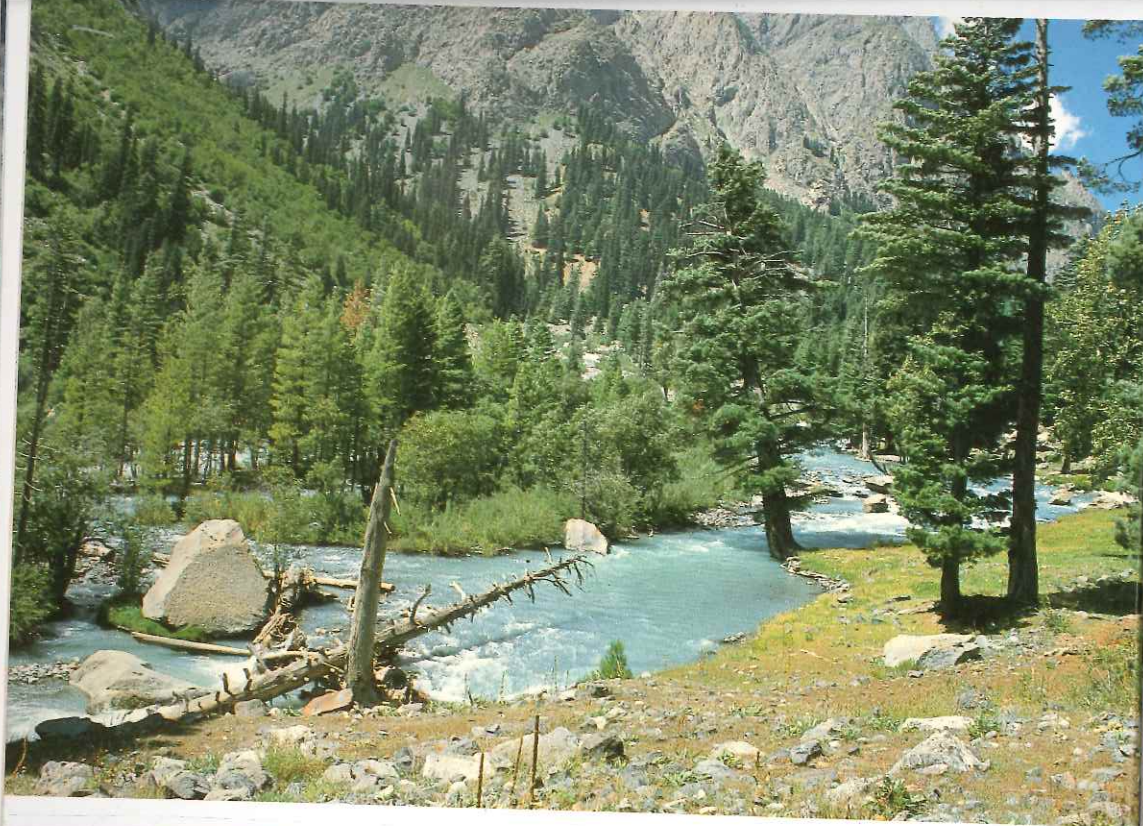
Kunbar River, Kaghan Valley — Picture By Walker



Kishanganga River, Azad Kashmir – Picture By Walker

- Page 9:** Kaghan's beautiful brooks and streams are a trout fisherman's paradise.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 10 Upper:** The Ushu river courses through spectacular scenery in Upper Swat valley.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 10 Lower:** Grilling sausage for breakfast, Dir District, North West Frontier Province.
Picture by: Wickliffe Walker
- Page 11 Upper:** The mighty Indus River, below the legendary Attock Fort.
Picture by: Wickliffe Walker
- Page 11 Lower:** Afghan rug merchant, Islamabad's Juma Bazaar.
Picture by: Wickliffe Walker
- Page 12:** Lalazar, in the upper Kaghan valley, abounds with flower filled slopes, home to varied species of butterflies.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan





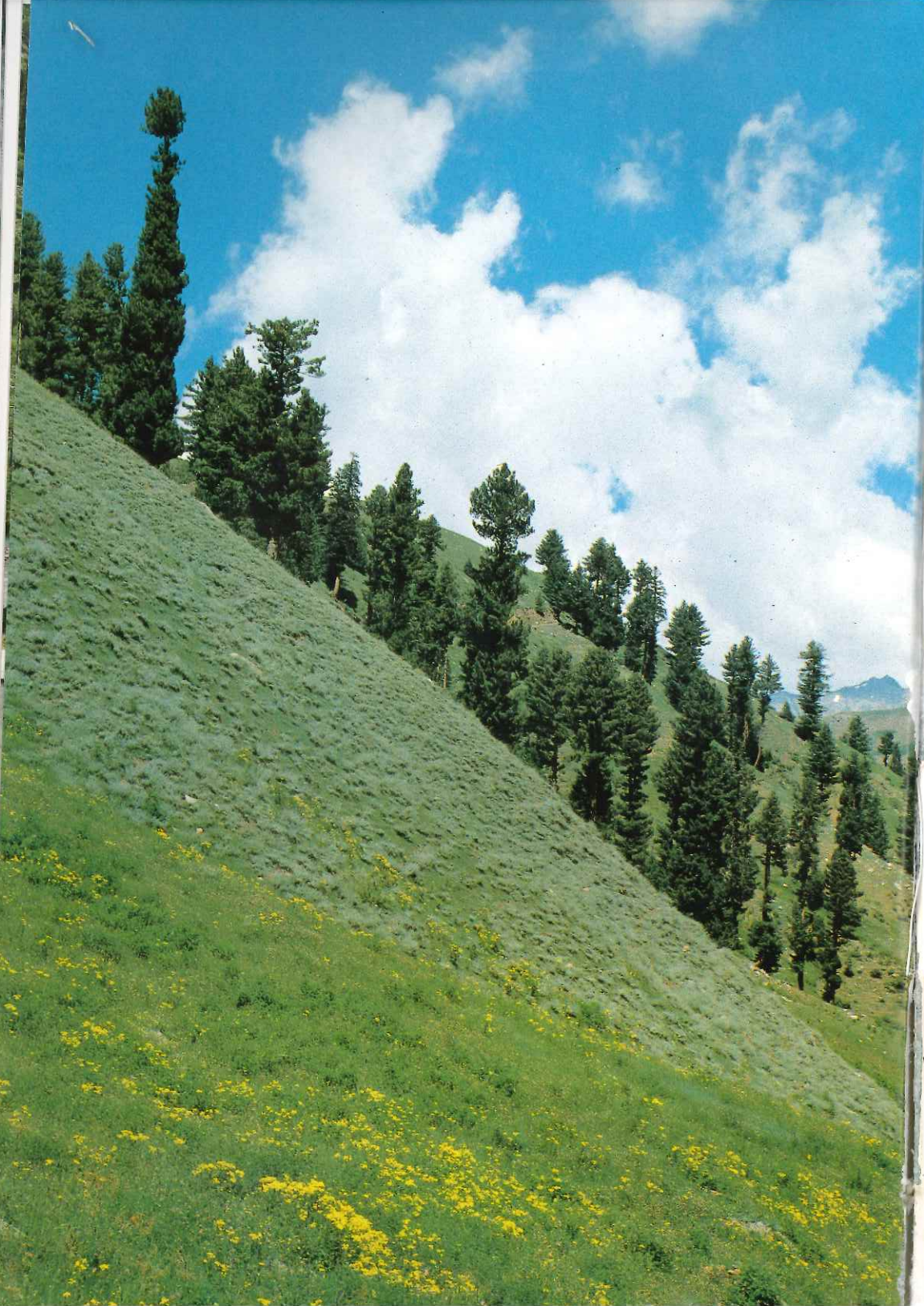
INDUS RIVER

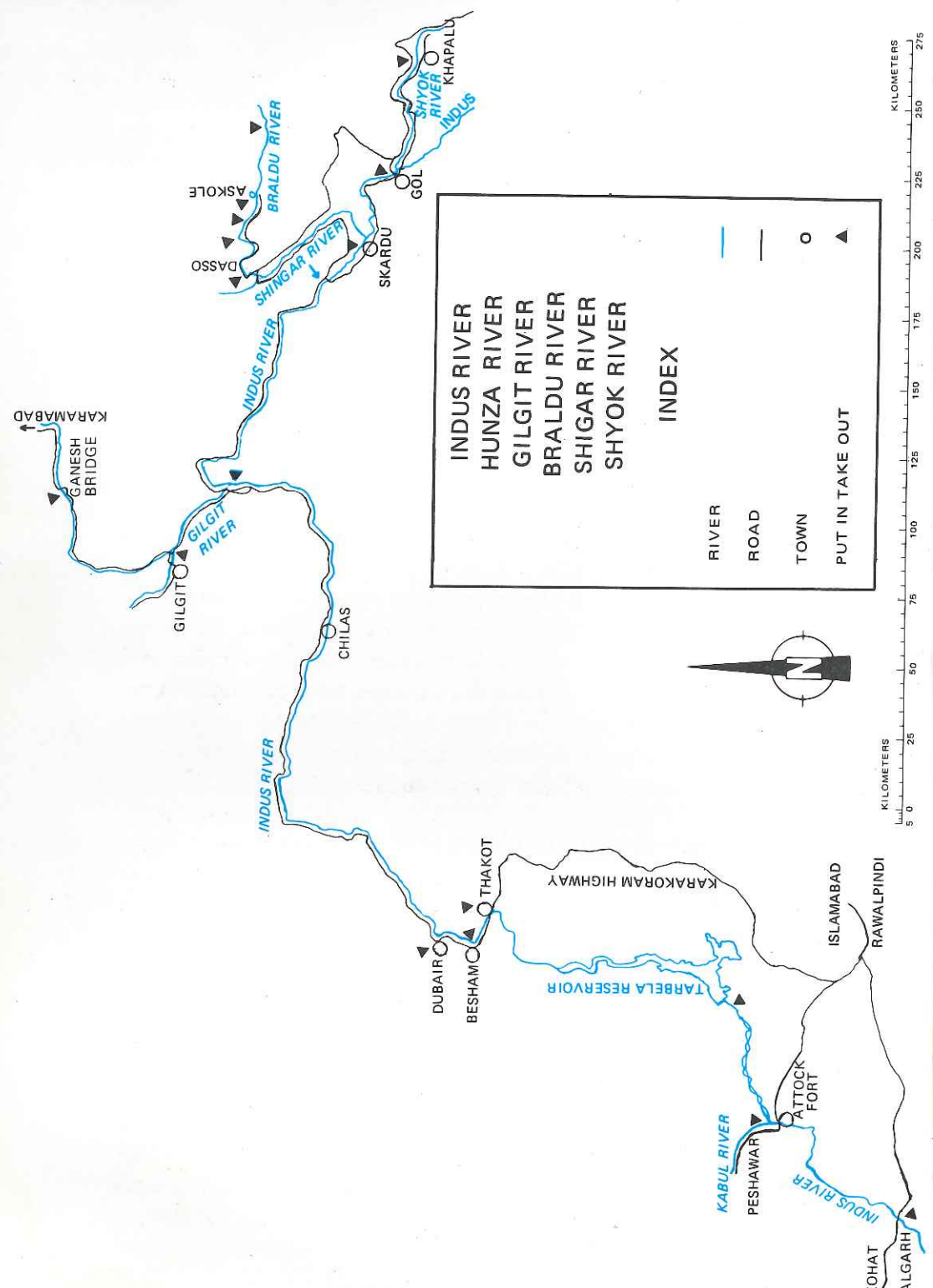
In the summer of 1956, film maker Lowell Thomas and pioneer Colorado rafters, Bus and Don Hatch attempted to raft the Indus River from Skardu to Rakhiot Bridge. After three decades of exponential growth in whitewater sport, the Rondu Gorges have still not been successfully run. The Indus is one of the great rivers of the world, a supreme (and dangerous) challenge on par with climbing K-2, Nanga Parbat or Pakistan's other mighty peaks.

The Indus rises in that mysterious region of western Tibet, where, from origins within a few miles of each other, the Brahmaputra flows east to envelope Bhutan and Sikkim before plunging through the Himalayas to the sea, while the Indus flows west in similar fashion in a huge crescent between the western Himalaya and the Hindu Kush. Together they encircle the Indian subcontinent in an embrace thousands of miles in length.

Coursing through Tibet and Ladakh, the Indus enters Baltistan to dominate Pakistan. It absorbs tributaries carrying every drop of water that falls in the country. The larger tributaries (Kabul, Jhelum, Sutlej) drain portions of neighboring Afghanistan and India as well.

It is easy to see why the mighty Indus attracted early interest from whitewater explorers, despite the daunting scale and magnitude of the river, and the high price in human lives. Perhaps the first casualties were two Englishmen who reportedly drowned boating near Skardu in the early 1950's. A few years later, the Lowell Thomas expedition lost one member. And expedition leader Mike Jones was lost on the tributary Braldu in 1978. With improved skills and equipment, and better knowledge of the





river, subsequent expeditions have been more successful, although the challenge remains.

Gol to Skardu – 33 Kilometers – Class V

Like all of the Indus, this is huge water. By the end of May, when run by Andy Embick, it was already 100,000 cfs. Fast flowing, primarily without distinct rapids but containing huge holes and explosion waves, it is in the summer months primarily a survival run. Midway through is one truly enormous rapid on an abrupt 180 degree left turn, which is fortunately sneakable on the extreme left. It was this “warm-up” which convinced the Lowell Thomas expedition not to go downstream into the Rondu Gorges, undoubtedly a wise decision. In October, the flow here is a more reasonable 20,000 cfs, but the water remains powerful and the one big rapid is still difficult.

Skardu to Gilgit Confluence – 150 kilometers – Class VI

These are the infamous Rondu Gorges, attempted by Richard Bangs in 1979 but not completed. See Bangs (Appendix 1) for description.

Gilgit Confluence to Dubair – 260 kilometers – Class V (VI)

The first part of this run, from the Gilgit confluence to Rakhiot Bridge, was first attempted by the Lowell Thomas expedition, and it was probably the huge rapids of the Rakhiot Gorge, just before the bridge, that caused the death of Jimmy Parker. Reportedly, a Czech rafting expedition first completed the full run in the mid-seventies, and in 1979 John Yost led a successful raft descent. See Yost (Appendix 1) for description.

Dubair to Besham – 15 kilometers – Class IV–V

Dubair is a classic Kohistan village, clinging in layers to the steep slopes where a side stream tumbles noisily into the Indus. Huge boulders in the middle of the bazaar, in spaces shops should, and used to, occupy, testify to a 1987 rock-slide. A bustling throng of (male) shoppers, children, dogs

and Suzuki mini-vans completely block the "Highway". Put-in is just upriver from the village, where a steep trail zig zags downhill to a cluster of houses and the landing for a raft ferry.

The rapids are relatively open, but shockingly powerful, class IV and V even at low levels. All major rapids deserve a scout. The shorelines are fortunately all huge boulder piles, without cliffs or other dangerous restrictions to scouting or carrying. The character of the river here is drop-pool, with long, flat, but quick stretches between the rapids.

Take-out in the town of Besham is at a road bridge in town, or at the PTDC Motel just downstream. The motel offers the advantage of a convenient base, plus a friendly staff willing to help out in any way.

Besham Motel to Thakot — 24 kilometers — Class IV (V)

In this, the last portion accessible by road before the river dives south for its final thirty miles to the huge Tarbela Reservoir, most of the rapids are open wave trains, with powerful waves and huge holes. Anticipation is a must, as the huge river does not allow much chance to eddy out or cross just before the rapids.

One larger and steeper rapid is about three miles into the run, just downstream from a large white obelisk commemorating Pakistani-Chinese cooperation in building the Karakoram Highway. This one is well worth a look from the left side.

The Indus valley here is spectacular — relatively wide, but surrounded on all sides by impressive mountain slopes. The river creates frequent wide and remarkably white sand beaches. This is one of the great rivers of the world, and a run not to be missed.

Thakot Bridge to Manjakot — 67 kilometers — off limits

Just after Thakot Bridge the Karakoram Highway leaves

the Indus to climb over the Black Hills, and for almost 70 kilometers the Indus flows southward through wilderness. The first roadhead is on the right shore of Tarbela Reservoir at Manjakot. Otherwise tempting, this stretch is (as of 1988) unapproachable because the whole region south of Thakot is tribal territory, beyond the writ of Pakistani law or protection.

While the Pathan tribes have extremely strong traditions of hospitality, to the point where an invited guest will be defended to the death, they are also extremely jealous of trespass, and for centuries they have made a hobby and business of kidnapping Englishmen for ransom. And, as in the wilder reaches of the nineteenth century American West, a very unsavory population migrates from the more settled towns and villages into the territories, beyond reach of the law. Sitting ducks and paddlers have too much in common for this run.

Tarbela Dam to Attock Fort — 50 kilometers — Class I

Tarbela Dam is the largest earthen dam in the world, and worth a look even for those who do not admire dams. Set at the very edge of the Himalayan foothills, it marks a change in the character of the mighty Indus. From a put-in just upstream of the village of Ghazi, on river left, the flow braids through multiple channels across a temporary plain. Flow is quick but even, with fast riffles and Class I wave trains between hundreds of gravel bar islands.

(*Note:* Quicksand is observable on a few of these islands; foot exploration should be done cautiously.)

Fish hawks ride motionless on the afternoon upstream wind, white egrets stalk the deserted islands, and hundreds of swallows skim the river's surface for bugs. Villagers tie truck innertubes in the middle to form boat-shaped floats, and lie on them to hand paddle across the flow, gathering firewood and fishing. The run is a scenic taste of the rural Punjab, for open or closed boats. Runnable year-round, it is probably best in periods of medium to high water. Takeout can be either on river left immediately before the Attock Fort bridge, or in

the village on river right just after it.

Attock Fort to Khushalgarh — 78 kilometers — flat water

Attock Fort was built in 1580-81 by the Moghul Emperor Akbar, commanding the dramatic point where the Indus meets the mighty Kabul River flowing from Afghanistan. The combined flow here leaves the high plains and is confined to a narrow canyon for 160 kilometers to Kalabagh. Today, with the Tarbela Reservoir on the Indus acting as a settling pool, the deep green flow of the Indus meets the brown, silt-laden water of the Kabul, and the two flow in parallel stripes beneath the high, redstone walls of the fort. A fitting start for a long and dramatic, although flat water, run.

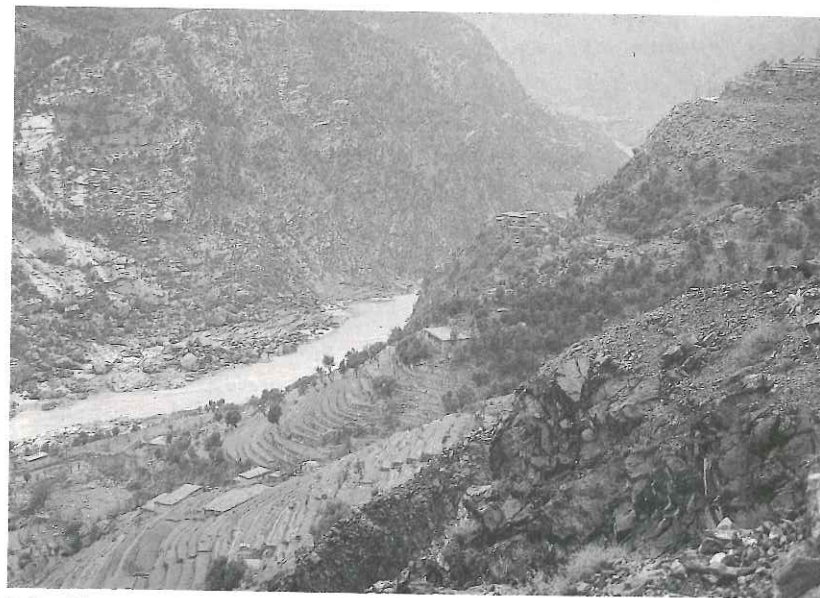
Put-in is on the right side of the Kabul River, just upstream from the fort where the Grand Trunk Road meets the river bank. In summer, the water is extraordinarily fast, forming huge boils and whirlpools, and piling up five or more feet on the upstream side of rocks and bridge piers. While there are no actual rapids, the run is exhilarating, and there are plenty of places where choosing the right route is essential.

The scenery on this run is barren, rocky and desolate, the terrain normally associated with the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan and nearby Afghanistan. Small isolated villages appear intermittently along the bluffs and are well worth a tourist stop. They are all surrounded with at least a rudimentary perimeter wall, often with watch towers on the corners, reflecting the fact that in this region the fortress is far from obsolete. The boundry line of tribal territory comes as close as ten miles to the river, but the inhabitants are friendly and hospitable.

Half way through the run, a low (3500 feet) range of rocky mountains cuts across the course of the Indus, creating a small wilderness and constricting the river even more than before. Still there are no rapids, and after a few miles of dramatic pulsing water, the river resumes its fast, even flow. This is one run well

adapted to camping half way through, with inviting little beaches and plenty of open area away from population.

Take out after 78 kilometers is on river left, where a set of stone steps lead up beneath the combined road and railroad bridge spanning the Indus at Khushalgarh. Although not done by the author, it appears that the trip could be almost doubled by continuing downriver to another roadhead at Kalabagh.



Indus River, seen from the Karakoram Highway — Picture By Walker

TRUCKSTOP

Random colored neon tubes hang from trees, glinting off the ornate trim and bright paint of a dozen lumbering Bedford trucks. Filigreed pot metal trim envelopes the cabs and extends yards above the bodies. Doors are elaborately carved, and every inch of surface is lovingly painted with flowers, landscapes, jet aircraft, busty but demurely clad women, lions and tigers. The appearance, at least in daylight, is obviously the driver's responsibility, and joy. . . whether or not the lights work, on the other hand, seems left to Allah.

You will not meet many westerners there, but, as in the United States, in Pakistan the truckstop can be an integral part of paddling. A place for carbo loading after a day on the river, and a break from marathon driving. In both countries the saying is that to find really great food one must find the place with the most trucks parked outside. The Grand Trunk Road, between Lahore and Rawalpindi, is a classic route to test this saying.

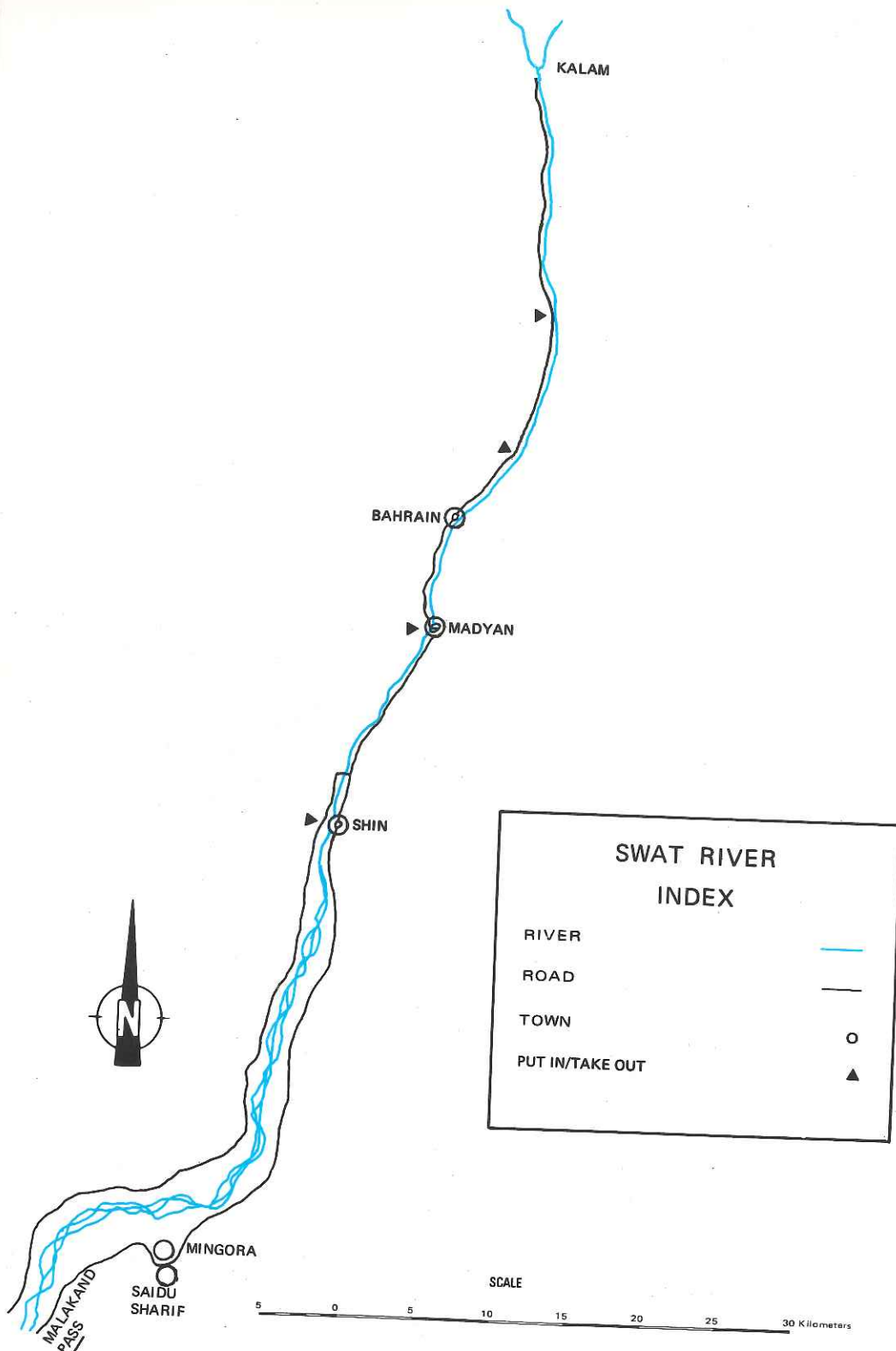
The charpoy is the ubiquitous furniture of South Asia. It is a wooden bedframe, tightly strung with rope and used as bench or bed. Fifteen or twenty such beds sit around the flat ground between the trees, interspersed with small wooden tables. The difference between stopping for dinner and checking into the motel for the night is the issue of a scruffy blanket from a pile in the corner of the kitchen.

The cook, along with two chickens hanging from a rafter, presides over the dining arrangements. Over low gas flames

(this establishment being modern; dried buffalo and camel dung is more traditional), tin pots bubble with a beef curry concoction, dhal (a spicy corn mush), and a curry and dumpling specialty of the house. An old man, assistant cook, keeps up a constant flow of chapaties (flat round bread cakes, similar to a flour tortilla or pita bread) from an iron topped oven.

Eating utensils are absent. Custom is to tear a chunk off the chapati, and to use that to scoop up a portion of food. Unlimited cups of tea arrive at the table, and a tin pitcher with cold, tempting, and lethal, water.

At the end of the meal, after everyone has eaten all he possibly can, the proprietor collects the equivalent of a dollar per person. And retreats into the kitchen, with a smirk that indicates he really took the farangis this time.



SWAT RIVER

“Who or why, or which, or what,
Is the Akhond of Swat?
Is he tall or short, or dark or fair?
Does he sit on a stool or a sofa or chair, or squat,
The Akond of Swat?
Is he wise or foolish, young or old? etc. etc.”

Edward Lear

Swat was an independent kingdom as late as 1969; it remains an unspoiled treasure with rich history, spectacular scenery and splendid whitewater. Invaded by Alexander in 327 BC, center for the development of Tantric Buddhism from the 2nd century BC to the 9th century AD, Swat was subsequently influenced, but unconquered, by Moghuls, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and British (including Winston Churchill, who wrote up a battle in the lower valley for the London Daily Telegraph). The Swatis probably will take paddlers in stride.

Swat is easily divided into distinct upper and lower halves. The lower, bounded by the Malakand Pass and Swat Canal Tunnel on the south, is a broad, flat bottomed valley bordered by steep barren hills, in which the wide braided river meanders among some of the lushest fields in Pakistan. This region contains all the rich Buddhist archaeological sites and the twin cities of Mingora/Saidu Sharif. For almost fifty miles the broad, shallow Swat River flows over shallow gravel bars, usually swift but seldom more than class I-II. Scouted but not run by the author, major portions of this section may have been rafted by a French film crew. Certainly it is an exotic and scenic route for the open or closed boat cruiser.

The upper half of the valley, also known as Kohistan, changes character completely, with snow capped peaks looming over the narrow mountain valley. Villages cling to the slopes, while the narrow road closely tracks the Swat River. Administratively and culturally, the southern limit of Kohistan is the village of Bahrain, which is, not by accident, also the northern limit of Buddhist influence. For the whitewater paddler, though, the natural dividing line appears to be at the village of Shin, about 23 kilometers downstream. From this point upstream, the narrow green river becomes serious whitewater. Gradients for the most part are regular, with class III-IV rapids interspersed with more difficult drops for many miles.

Upper Swat – 10 kilometers – Class IV

The narrow and frequently washed out road hugs the right bank of the river above Bahrain, and put-in possibilities are unlimited. From a point about 15 kilometers upstream from Bahrain, the river is small and technical at lower levels. Class III and IV rapids predominate, with scouting frequently necessary. The drop is continuous enough to indicate higher levels could be intimidating. About 9 kilometers from Bahrain, just above one of the occasional cantilevered footbridges, is a series somewhat steeper and tighter than the norm. It warrants a scout and perhaps a carry. The next four kilometers, to another footbridge exactly 5 kilometers from Bahrain, were not run by the author; they appear steep but feasible.

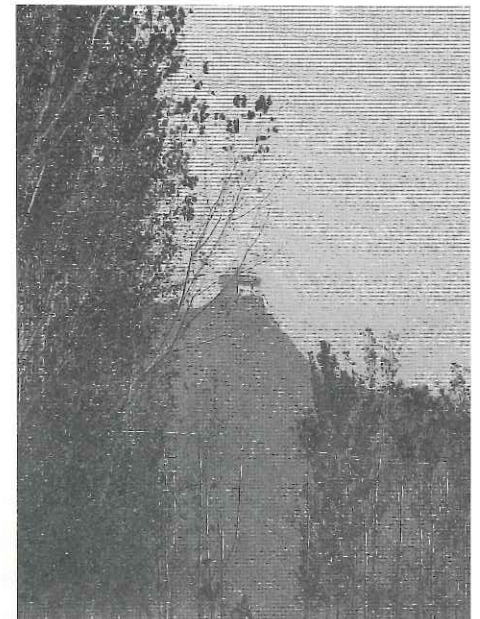
Bahrain to Madyan – 13 kilometers – Class III-IV(V)

From the takeout of the previous section, a footbridge 5 kilometers upstream from Bahrain, the rapids continue to be small and technical, with clean chutes, beautiful green water and distinct eddies. Immediately behind the village of Bahrain the river slides between sheer rock walls about thirty feet high on both sides, and an eight or ten foot ledge forms a serious class V (or more) that is somewhat difficult to scout. The carry begins on the left and proceeds over a footbridge directly into the town. Return to the water is on the right at the downstream

end of town. The remaining ten kilometers to the town of Madyan are delightful class III and IV, without significant danger spots.

Madyan to Shin – 17 kilometers – Class III (IV)

From the town of Madyan, the Swat takes on a more open character, the valley wider and the rapids less technical. The majority of this run is class II-III, but very continuous and interesting. The scenery here is of villages and farms on both sides, with footbridges and frequent spectators. The road crosses the Swat in Madyan and tracks down the left bank. In many ways the scenery is more spectacular on this run, with more of the high mountains visible from the less constricted valley. About two kilometers above Shin, where a side road crosses the river from the village of Fatehpur, there is a mini-canyon with a delightful class IV. Just beyond, the river opens up to its lower-river character, and any takeout opportunity can be taken. The side road from Fatehpur proceeds downstream on the river right just a short walk from the river.



Churchill Picket, defended by Winston as a young officer, on the road to Swat – Picture By Walker

BORDER CROSSING

Raja Mohammad Yousaf is a good cop. He casually picks up the commuter cup from my dash, sniffs, and exclaims "Oh, tea. I though perhaps it was wine." His voice is joking, but his eyes leave doubt about his humor. Muslim Pakistan is a dry country, and the issue is more than a traffic violation for "driving while intoxicated".

With twenty-five years on the force, Yousaf is Police Constable Incharge at the long, creaky bridge over the Jhelum River at Kohala, which leads from the Punjab into Kashmir. He is slightly heavy-set, distinguished looking with white, thinning hair and neat, white mustache, and absolutely firm that I will not enter Kashmir without a permit. The boat on top of my Land Cruiser first attracted his attention, of course, and he asks unusually sophisticated questions about it. Do you wear a life jacket? How do you protect yourself from the cold water? Once you go downstream how do you return to your car? And why, did you say, do you have neither a permit nor a passport?

Every question is asked at least twice, yet Inspector Yousaf does not seem a bit forgetful. A compilation of magazine extracts about whitewater expeditions elsewhere is devoured with flattering interest, and, spotting my notebook of write-ups and photos about other Pakistani rivers, he quickly requests (demands) a look.

Eventually the printed word, or something, takes its toll, and after interminable cups of sweet, milky tea a yet higher official shows up in response to a telephone summons. I have been adjudicated strange, but evidently nothing worse. A one-time pass is granted, a promise given never, ever to kayak in forbidden territory without proper written authority. And the wonders of Azad Kashmir are mine.

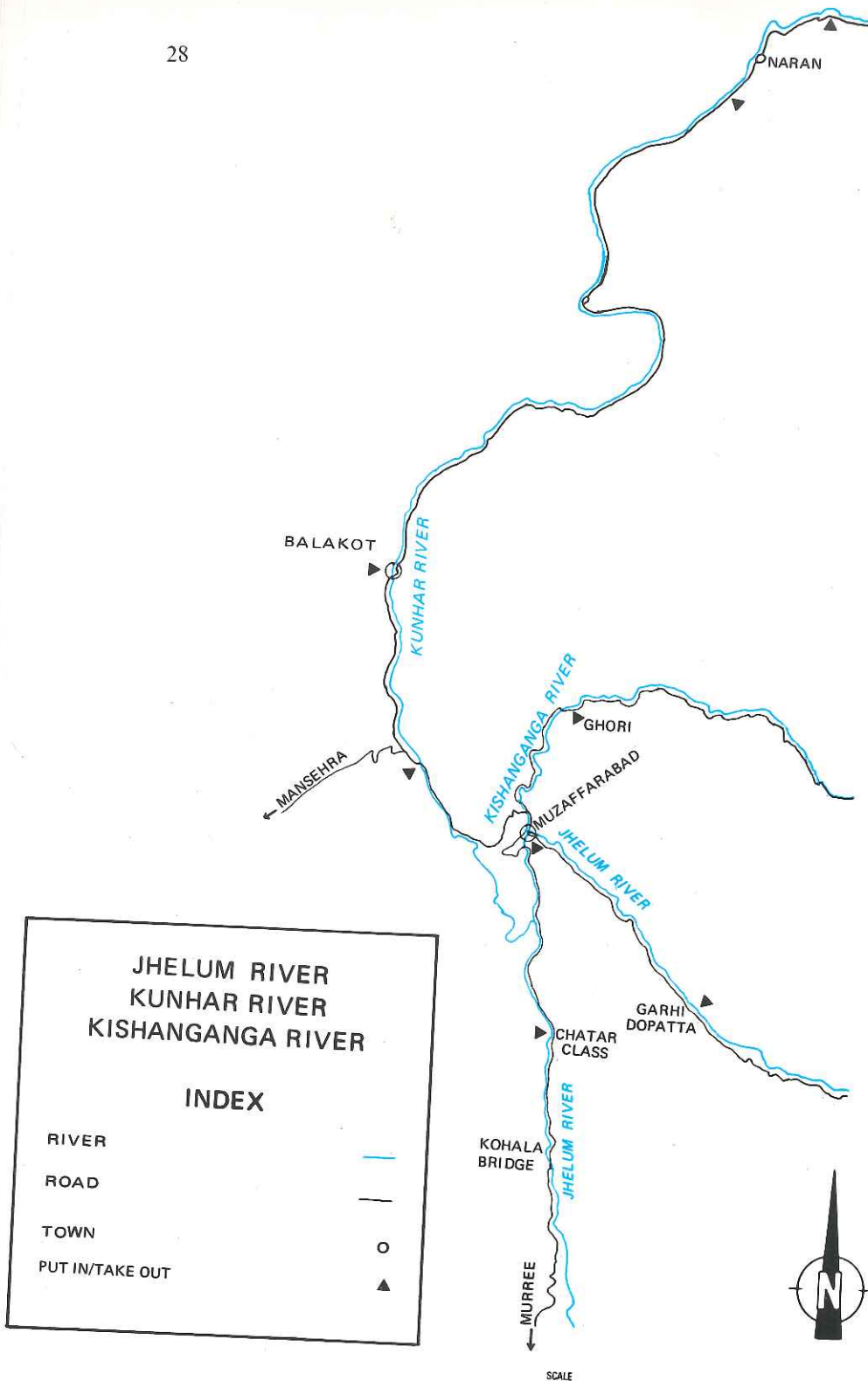
JHELUM RIVER

Punjab means "land of five rivers", referring to the Indus itself and its four major tributaries, which together form the breadbasket of South Asia. The Jhelum River is the northernmost of the four, the closest to Islamabad, and the heart of renowned Kashmir, on both the Indian and Pakistani sides of the border. It flows in a huge loop past the famous old city of Sirinigar, now in Indian territory, northwest around the high Pir Panjal Range, then south within Pakistan, where its valley forms the Kashmir-Punjab boundary.

After more than 240 kilometers of spectacular gorges, the Jhelum is dammed at Mangla to form the huge (and scenic) Mangla Reservoir. Its subsequent course through the Punjab plains to the Indus is of more historical than whitewater interest.

Upstream from Muzaffarabad, the Jhelum is a medium-sized, swift mountain stream. After the Kishanganga (Neelum) and Kunhar tributaries join in rapid succession, it becomes a deep and powerful major river, similar to the Indus in its power, and slightly ominous, silt-grey hue. Gradient is not steep, but frequent rapids are powerful, even in winter low water periods, and in summer the whole gorge becomes a boiling, pushy cauldron. There is a gauging station on the right downstream from the Kohala Bridge.

All of Kashmir province requires travel permits, obtainable in Islamabad. No unofficial travel at all is allowed within ten kilometers of the cease-fire line, where Indian troops face off against the Pakistani Army under the watchful gaze of a United Nations peacekeeping force.



**JHELUM RIVER
KUNHAR RIVER
KISHANGANGA RIVER**

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RIVER	
ROAD	
TOWN	
PUT IN/TAKE OUT	

A good base for explorations is the Hotel Al-Abbas in Muzaffarabad, whose owner Syed Ejaz Hussain Kazmi is fluent in English and will happily expedite all arrangements.

Garhi Dopatta to Muzaffarabad – 20 kilometers – Class III-IV

The last 20 kilometers of the Jhelum before Muzaffarabad are mostly open and uncomplicated. The road tracks not far above river left, and the put-in is on river right by the side road crossing the river by an iron bridge at Garhi Dopatta. For 12-14 kilometers, the rapids are boulder and gravel choked wave trains, class II and III at low levels.

About 6 kilometers upstream from Muzaffarabad, Subri Lake is a stretch of flat water dammed up behind a major landslide. In addition to an Anglers' Hut Rest House, the lake features a long and very trashy exit rapid, at least class IV, and more at higher levels. The rest of the run to the Kishanganga confluence is unremarkable; for some reason the wave trains on the bottom portion seem more powerful, although still easily visible and with direct routes.

Muzaffarabad to Chatar Class Bridge – 22 kilometers – Class II–III (IV)

From the confluence of the Jhelum and the Kishanganga (Neelum), the Jhelum takes on the character of a major river. Silty and pushy even in low water periods, it flows with constant speed and power around a dramatic oxbow in Muzaffarabad and on between massive brown, terraced mountain sides.

The rapids are largely class II and III gravel bars. Immediately below the Kunhar confluence, a lone class IV keeps one alert. A convenient takeout is accessible on river left at Chatar Class, where a new bridge spans a side stream. A powerful wave train here is class IV– but is easily run from right to left.

KUNHAR RIVER

For over 160 kilometers, the Kunhar River is continuous whitewater. From Class I up, it is a dazzling and exhilarating variety. Most has never been run, some never will be. None of it is flat, or warm. From the 4067 meter Babusar Pass within sight of Nanga Parbat, it flows down the unspoiled Kaghan Valley to the ancient market town of Muzaffarabad near the Kunhar's confluence with the Jhelum River. An historic caravan route from Kashmir to Chilas and the Trans-Himalaya, it is now a roadway, although superseded by the Karakoram Highway as a route northward.

Untainted by industry, the narrow valley is lush with corn, potatoes and fruit trees, while huge pines on the upper slopes support an active lumbering trade. The southern flanks of the Greater Himalayan Range (the Hazara) belie the barren and harsh image of much of the western end of the range. The only, minor, drawback is that the steep sides of the valley hide views of the higher nearby peaks, only rarely allowing vistas of Himalayan proportions.

A variety of trekking trails are available, particularly from the upper end of the valley. And the Kunhar has been famous for its trout since the British first stocked it with Browns and Rainbows. Lake Saiful Muluk is a short side trip from Naran; above 10,000 feet, it is said to be haunted by local fairies.

Naran — 11 kilometers — Class II-IV (VI)

From six kilometers above Naran to the village itself, the river is at its quietest, swift flowing with class I and II riffles caused by gravel bars, the channel braided and twisting. At the town the gradient abruptly plunges, creating first III, then IV

rapids, continuous and no place for swimming. Just before the second footbridge is a certain scout and probable carry, depending on water level. Just as suddenly the river settles again for another two kilometers of class II, the last for 100 kilometers.

A wire cable and bosun's chair (part of a logging operation) mark the abrupt change to very severe water, with two major drops (not necessarily runnable) within a half kilometer, followed by gradually tapering rapids of absolutely continuous class III-IV for another kilometer and a half. The river then enters a short but distinctly class VI canyon, precluding all but the most serious expeditions.

Balakot to Muzaffarabad Road — 16 kilometers — Class III

Balakot is the largest village in the Kaghan Valley; it marks a transition to more open hillsides and lesser gradients. The sixteen kilometer run from Balakot to the bridge at the junction of the Kaghan Valley road and the main Mansehra-Muzaffarabad road, is nevertheless a scenic and pleasant class III run. River-wide, wave-train type rapids follow one after another for the entire length. Holes are powerful but easy to avoid, and the river is constantly fast, even where braided around gravel bar islands. The run goes quickly, without scouting or danger points, under footbridges, past herdsmen with their goats, schoolchildren running down to the water's edge on seeing approaching boats.

Muzaffarabad Road to Jhelum River — 22 kilometers — Class III-V

The last stretch of the Kunhar River proves whitewater's Second Law: the toughest spots are never visible from the road. The first few kilometers, from the takeout of the previous section, parallel the Muzaffarabad road and continue the open class II character. Soon, however, the river dives to the right, away from the road, and enters a series of little gorges of increasing difficulty. Vertically bedded slates and shales form bare rock walls, nearly vertical for 50 to 100 feet on both sides of the river.

The first half of the run is visible from the boat and not difficult, with primarily class III drops (at low January water).

The second half is steeper, more complex and pushier. Even at low water the drops are class IV-V, difficult to see and in many cases virtually impossible to carry. The green water has the powerful boils and aeriated appearance characteristic of deep, narrow gorges. Fortunately, the two most difficult places can be carried. Where the river takes a dramatic, tight right oxbow, scout or carry on the left, without going too far downstream to exit left. The second serious drop is a major landslide, with chalky scars visible high on the right wall. The carry is also on the left.

Because of the steep walls this run is to be approached with caution at all times. The Kunhar emerges into the wide, fast Jhelum River 9 kilometers below Muzaffarabad.

KISHANGANGA RIVER

Like its Northwest Frontier Province sister the Kunhar, the Kashmiri Kishanganga (also called the Neelum) River is a major tributary of the Jhelum and a gem of a whitewater stream in a scenic alpine valley. Rising at 17,000 feet on the flanks of Mount Nanga Parbat, the river drains a 2800 square mile catchment and drops to 2300 feet along its 250 kilometer course to Muzaffarabad. Its greatest flow, as with other rivers in the region, is in the June to August period, with snowmelt contributing more than the August rainy period. The primary gauge is located on the right below the suspension bridge in Muzaffarabad.

Sadly, the Kishanganga is touched by the modern, troubled world. The cease-fire line between Indian and Pakistani forces touches the river half way along its course and travel is not allowed upstream of the bridge at Noseri, 40 kilometers from Muzaffarabad. To that point, however, the road is in excellent shape, and little used because of the political blockage. One

interesting feature of this valley is the indigenous wooden, three-storey house, reminiscent of Swiss Alpine style construction.

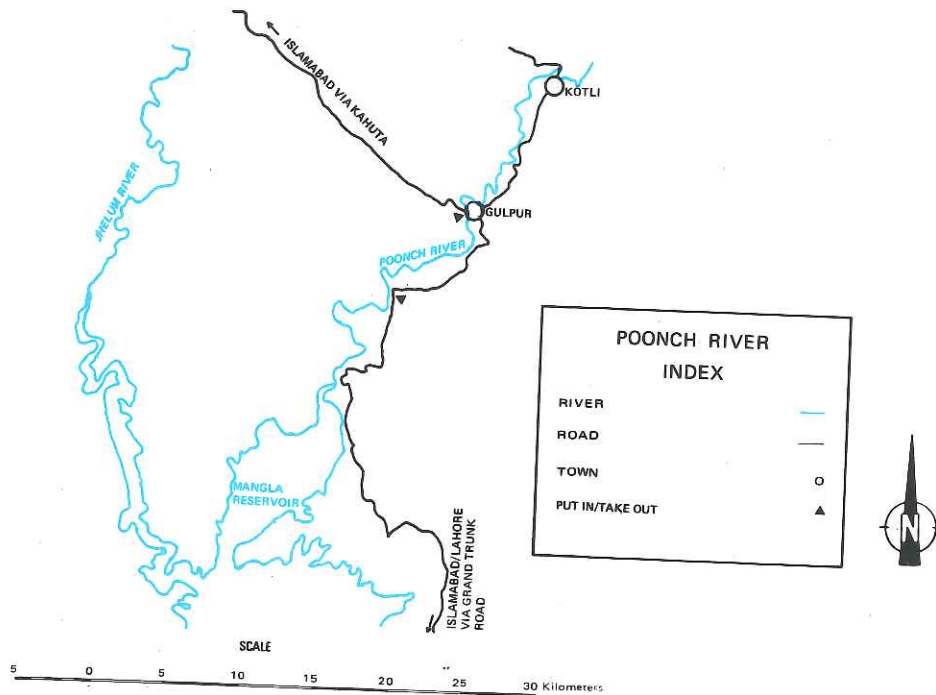
Ghori to Muzaffarabad — 13 kilometers — Class II-III

The last stretch of the Kishanganga, from a Bailey Bridge at Ghori (Khor) to the city, is a delightful scenic run without significant danger spots. The first several kilometers flow between steep hillsides, with the road several hundred feet above the right bank. Rapids are wide open wave trains, occasionally piling into rock walls, but unobstructed. The water is powerful even at the low winter level described; higher levels will be pushy but will remain open.

Gradually the hillsides open and habitations appear lower on the slopes. The last three kilometers of the run are "urban paddling" at its most fascinating. The Red Fort on the left bank entering town was built about 1550 by Chukk rulers, in vain defense against the Moghuls. Despite flood damage it is an impressive site and worth a side trip. Downstream from the fort the river winds behind the town, allowing a surreptitious glimpse of life and laundry invisible to most tourists. A logical takeout is immediately behind the Hotel Al-Abbas before the Jhelum confluence.

POONCH RIVER

The Poonch is the third major tributary of the Jhelum. Like the Jhelum itself and the Kishanganga, the Poonch rises in Indian Kashmir and crosses the cease-fire line. Flowing through the southern, more pastoral regions of Kashmir (Poonch, Kotli and Mirpur), it enters the huge Mangla Reservoir at the edge of the Punjab plain. Considerably shorter and smaller than the Kunhar or the Kishanganga, and located in smaller mountains, the Poonch exceeds them both in scenic beauty. Deep green pools, dramatic cliffs, side streams cascading over waterfalls, and exotic wildlife all characterize this beautiful stream.



Gulpur to Mangla Reservoir – 18 kilometers – Class II (III)

In midwinter, the Poonch is tiny. Scenic, exciting, but only class II in difficulty throughout its second half. From a put-in on the right just above the roadbridge by Gulpur, the river flows through one of the most beautiful canyons in Pakistan. Vertical, bare rock cliffs alternate with forested slopes, as the road tracks along river left 500 to 1000 feet above the river bed. Packs of small grey monkeys are sometimes visible on the cliffs, while old wooden rowboats are positioned in the pools to ferry herdsmen across.

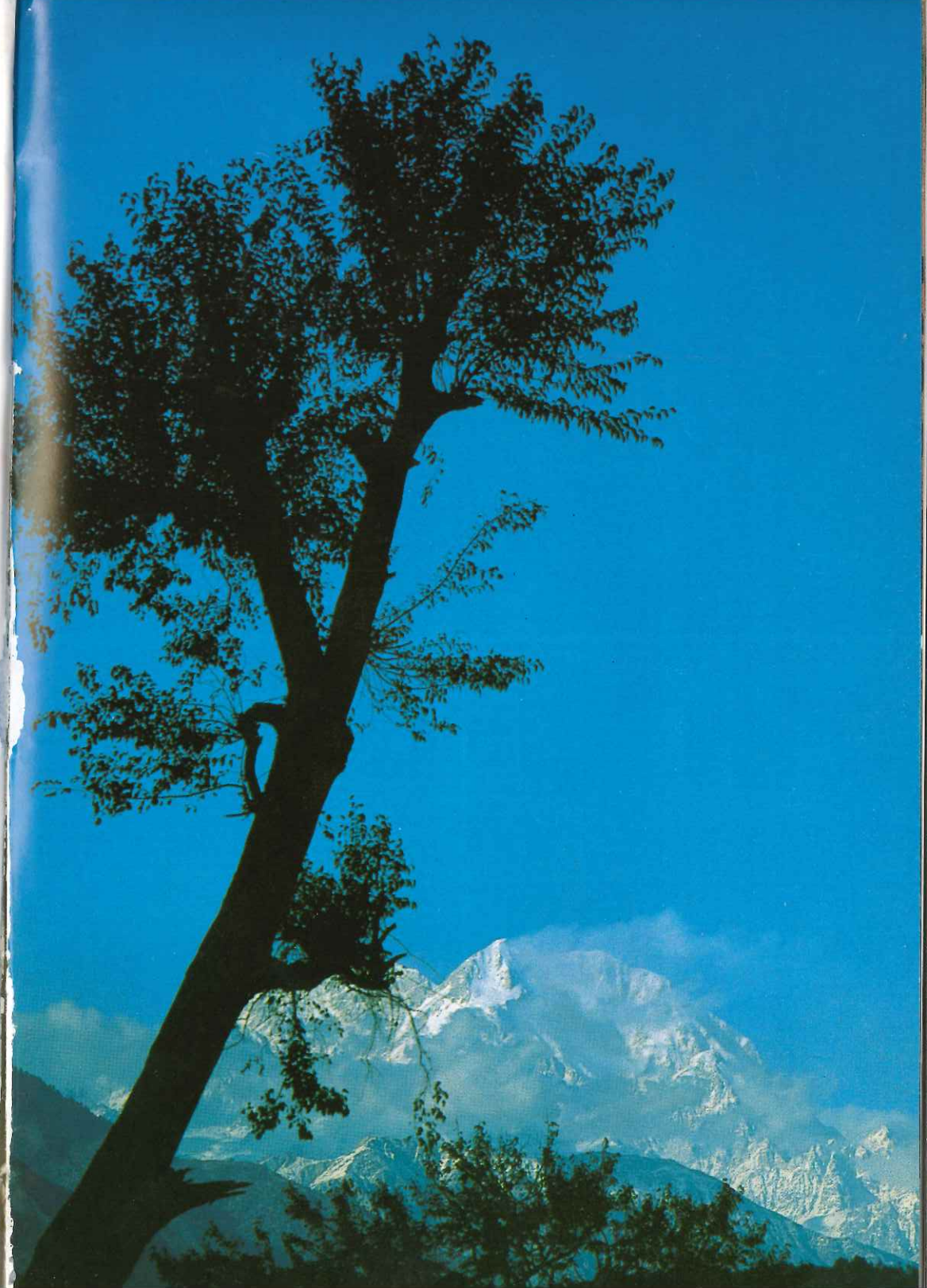
At one spot the river scribes a dramatic oxbow around a knife-edge ridge of hard, intrusive rock. There is one class III drop, but no danger points. This will be an inviting run at higher levels as well. A take-out is possible at the 18 kilometer point, at a fisherman's trail, or one can continue several more (unrun) kilometers to a roadbridge where the Poonch flows into Mangla Reservoir.

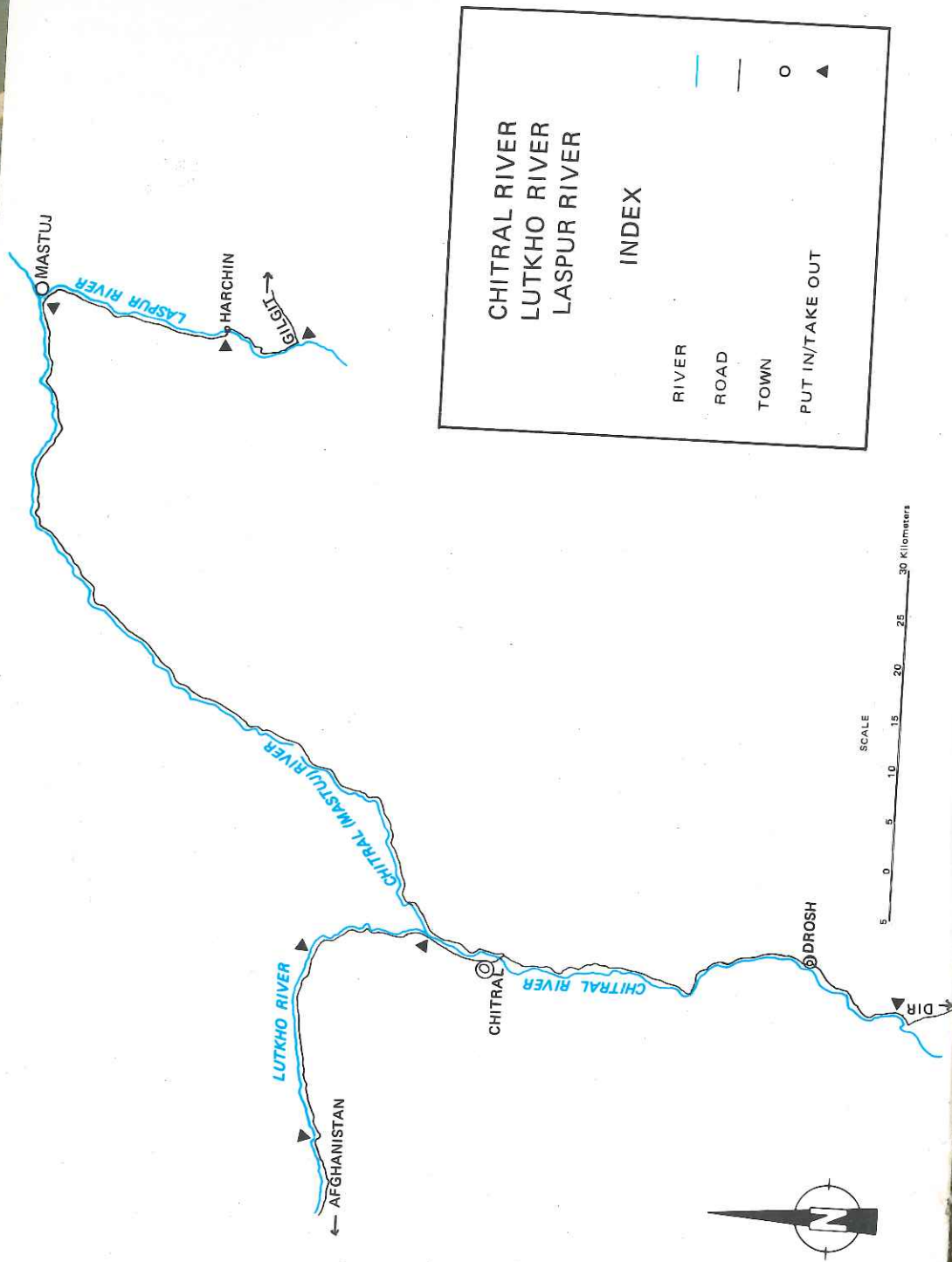
THE HINDU KUSH



Picture By Walker

- Page 37:** Tirichmir (7708 m), the highest peak in the Hindu Kush range, haughtily overlooks the Chitral valley.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 38:** Primitive ferry boats are still the primary means of bridging Phander Lake.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 38 Lower Left:** A perplexed Chitrali tries to understand the wild Afghani-style Buzkashi.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 38 Lower Right:** A fiery Afghani Buzkashi player awaits the starting whistle.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 39 Upper:** Buzkashi, a wild game of Mongol times, is still played in its original form in Chitral and Gojal.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 39, Lower:** The Kafir Kalash, a pagan tribe inhabiting secluded valleys in Chitral, are believed to be descendants of Alexander the Great's army.
Pictures by: Qaiser Khan





CHITRAL RIVER

The snowfields of Tirichmir (25,230 feet) gleam in full view over the fort on the bank of the Chitral River in the middle of the capital city. Here in 1895 Surgeon Major Robertson and 400 British soldiers were besieged for 48 days by anglophobic residents of Chitral and Dir. Fears of a second Khartoum reached all the way back to England, and only a forced march by British reinforcements over the mountains from Gilgit broke the impasse. Modern visitors, by contrast, find friendly inhabitants, comfortable hotels and splendid rivers. This, the northwestern corner of Pakistan, is in many ways the most scenic, varied and paddable of the high mountain regions.

In addition to paddling and trekking, Chitral is of interest as the birthplace of polo, a center of Afghan refugee activity, and home of the last remaining Kafir Kalash, or "Black Kafirs". This unusual tribe, assumed to be Indo European in origin, still hold to traditional ways of living and to a religion that is a mixture of ancestor and fire worship. This is Kipling's Kafiristan, from "The Man Who Would Be King".

The Chitral River properly begins six kilometers north of the town of Chitral, at the confluence of two primary tributaries. The Mastuj River flows down from the northeast, from the high pass into the upper Gilgit River system. The Lutkho descends from the northwest, from the passes leading into Afghanistan. Their confluence forms a major river set in a wide, fertile valley, flowing south and west, eventually to cross the border into Afghanistan. Joining the Kabul River at historic Jalalabad, it reemerges into Pakistan to meet the Indus at Attock Fort. As with the Indus and the Jhelum, flows are measured in thousands of cubic feet per second.

Although observations here were made at medium levels in September and October, the Chitral, with its moderate gradient and open valley, is probably suitable over a wide range of water levels. At higher summer flows the rapids will certainly become pushy and require caution. Another seasonal consideration, opposite to that of most rivers in this guide, is that the passes close road access to the whole Chitral Valley for the winter months, making access with boats difficult. The river itself is only at about 1500 meters elevation, and regular air service is maintained, so winter paddling would not be totally precluded if boats were prepositioned or collapsible for air travel.

All the river segments described for the Chitral and its tributaries are from first runs by Jim Burnham and Reg Lake in October, 1987.

Lutkho Confluence to Mirkhani – 56 kilometers – Class II-IV

For most of its course through the rich Chitral Valley, the river is wide and open, braided through sand and gravel islands with class II riffles to break the monotony. Periodically, however, brief stretches of bedrock constrict the channel, and the approximately 10,000 cfs river instantly transforms to powerful exploding waves and boils. Not technical, it nevertheless deserves respect depending on level. A good highway follows the left bank, allowing easy access and view, until it splits off to ascend the 10,500 foot Lawarai Pass to Dir and Swat, while the river flows on into Afghanistan.

LUTKHO RIVER

The Lutkho valley arcs northwest from Chitral to the Afghan frontier. It is a scenic, stark chasm of barren red rock walls and precipitous scree slopes, punctuated by incredibly green oases in occasional spots of bottomland. Rice and corn crops are watered by intricate irrigation systems, on terraces walled off by generations. A hard land fitting to the large Afghan refugee population

which now shares living space with their native brothers.

The Lutkho is very small, very technical, very much a trout stream. It is a high water run for those times when the large rivers are swollen and pushy. It was first run in October and has also been scouted in early September. In both cases there was barely enough water. A good dirt road follows the right bank along the river's length, not too far above the waterline, facilitating scouting and running this beautiful small river. At the upper end of the valley, at the village of Garamchasma, are natural hot springs, complete with the usual legends of curative powers.

Murdan Bridge to Shoghot Fort – 18 kilometers – Class III-IV

The river has been run from farther upstream, but an iron bridge where the road crosses from river left to right makes a good landmark and a logical start point. Even here the river is tiny, 200-400 cfs, and very technical. Gradient is regular, with almost no letup but not intimidating. There are a few low footbridges requiring caution; exact locations probably vary from flood to flood. At Shoghot, the river braids its way through sandbars at the only large riverbottom in the valley. A suspension bridge crosses from the road to the village on river left, and on the right the ruins of a fort testify to the fact that this is a route, albeit a minor one, from Afghanistan.

Shoghot Fort to Chitral River – 18 kilometers – Class III-IV

Immediately below the suspension bridge at Shoghot, the river narrows and drops through an unusually long and boulder-choked rapid of several hundred meters. This requires at least a scout; at most levels it will probably be a carry. The rest of the run to the Chitral, however, is a delightful, continuous slalom. Slightly larger and pushier than the upper run, the drops are also somewhat more distinct, although never really drop-pool. Takeout can be any convenient spot near the road, or one can continue down the much larger, and greyer, Chitral River six kilometers to Chitral.

LASPUR RIVER

The Laspur is a major tributary of the Mastuj River (or upper Chitral), gathering its headwaters from both the 12,200 foot (3,658 meter) Shandur Pass leading to the Gilgit system, and the 15,800 foot (4,816 meter) Kachikani Pass to Swat. For 34 kilometers, a jeep road from Gilgit to Chitral parallels this beautiful, remote and challenging high mountain river. At over 8,500 feet (2590 meters), this run is probably accessible only in the autumn, after the monsoon and before winter closes off the high passes.

Shandur Pass Road to Harchin – 13 kilometers – Class IV

Milky green, cold glacial water, and absolutely continuous rapids characterize this classic run. Most of this portion can be boat scouted, and there are no particular danger spots. The nearby road offers access and a measure of security, although, as with any continuous whitewater, there is considerable exposure in case of a swim.

Harchin to Mastuj Confluence – 21 kilometers – Class V

The last segment of the Laspur remains continuous and becomes somewhat more difficult, with care and scouting required. All of it has been run, but not without incident, and only at one particular October water level.



A Soviet helicopter makes its way from Afghanistan to the scrap markets of Pakistan – Picture By Walker

TRAVELER

"I have absolutely no idea what will happen today, or where I will wind up tonight. That's what I love about this."

Margarita Dovert

Margarita Dovert, of Glen Echo, Maryland, is seventy-seven years old, white-haired and fit, and embarrassing. She makes me feel like the perfect gringo tourist, with my big red jeep, boat on top, cameras and bags of dry clothes and junk food. Margarita, in Pakistani clothing (which she describes as like wearing a nightgown over your pajamas) and with a single beat-up suitcase, is making her way from Gilgit, gateway to the Karakoram, to Peshawar, on the Afghan frontier and center for the guerilla war against the Russians. She travels exclusively on the "Flying Coaches", fantastically decorated busses that ply from town to town throughout Pakistan, stopping at every hamlet where their brakes work.

We meet over breakfast in a lodge at Miandam, 6000 feet up in the hills of Swat. A retired geographer from American University, she now rambles the areas she once studied. Retirement income is supplemented by occasional magazine articles about obscure development projects for obscure journals. Margarita explains that she would not have minded going to Europe like everyone else, but at her age she could not talk any of her friends into going to ski the Dolomites.

As we coast down the hill, in my decadent Jeep, to deposit her at the first bus stop on the main Swat road, I gently bring up the fact that her destination, Peshawar, is one of the roughest towns I have ever seen. The traditional gateway to the Khyber Pass, its bazaars have been famous smugglers' hangouts for centuries. Today, guns, drugs and Russian refrigerators are

common currency; long-bearded Pathan tribesmen from both sides of the border stalk the narrow alleys; bombs explode at more than one per week.

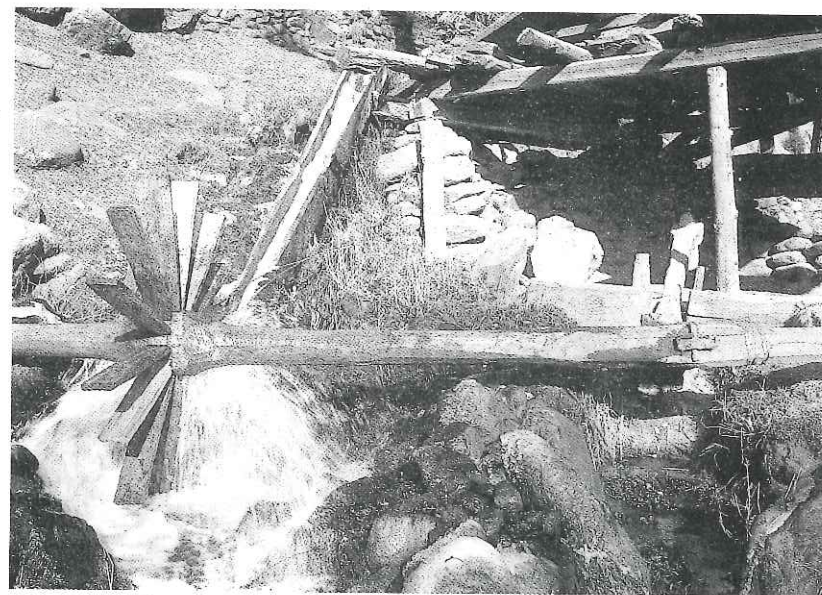
Margarita acknowledges that she has heard much the same before, leaving me with the impression that the wild-west atmosphere may be exactly why she is going there. She points out that there are a great many places she, as an inoffensive little old lady, can go that I never could. And she states that she doubts it will be rougher than North Yemen, across which she hitchhiked last year. I keep the rest of my advice to myself.



Picture By Walker

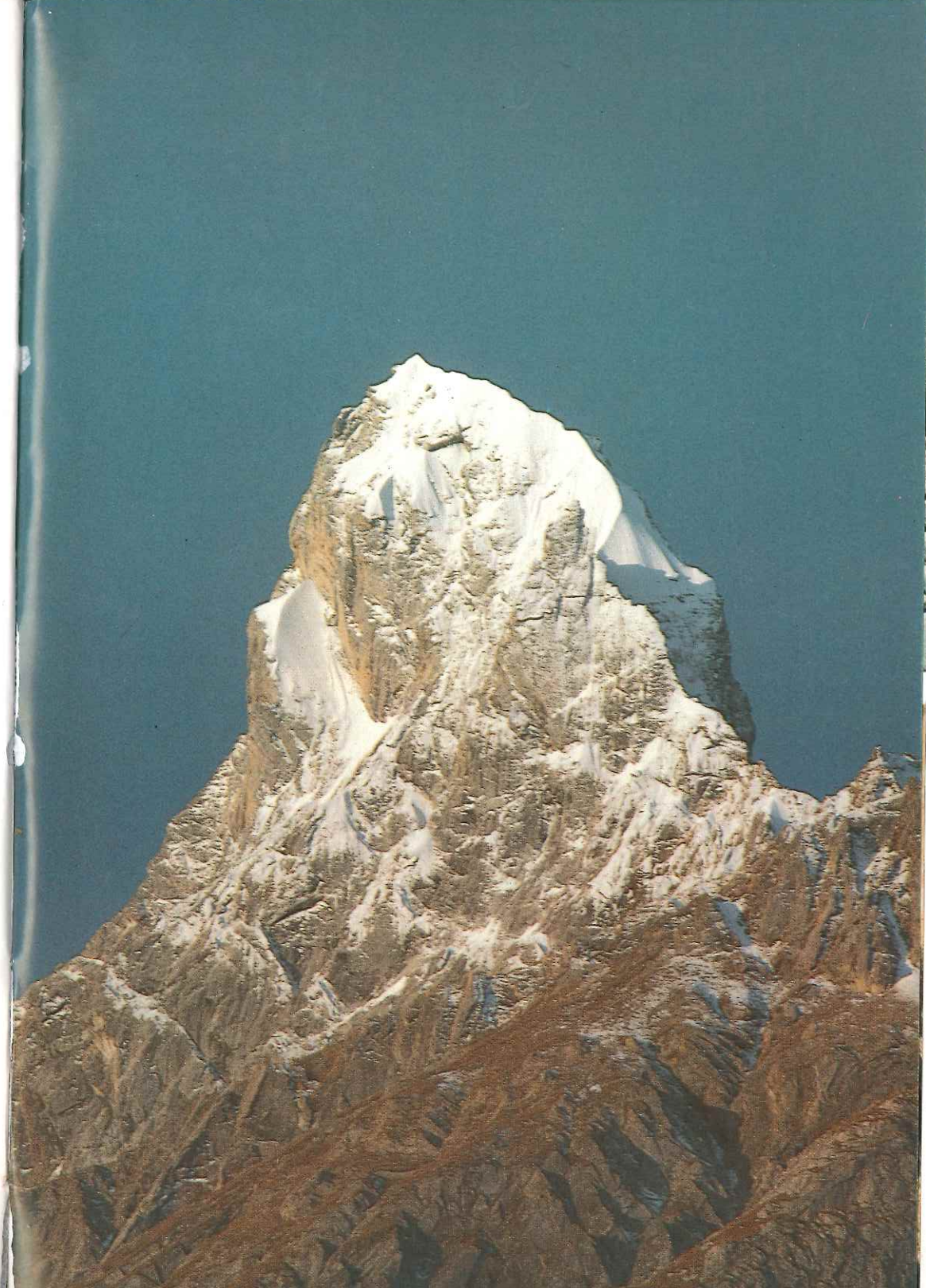
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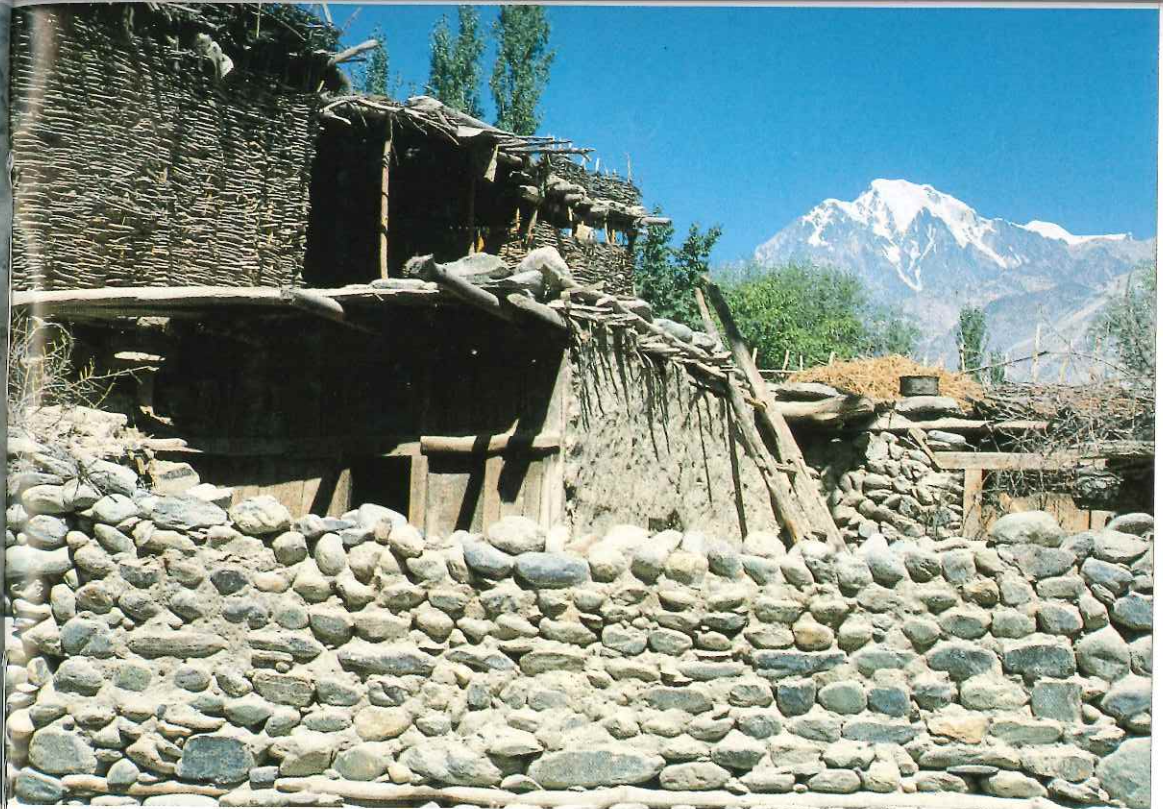
THE KARAKORAM

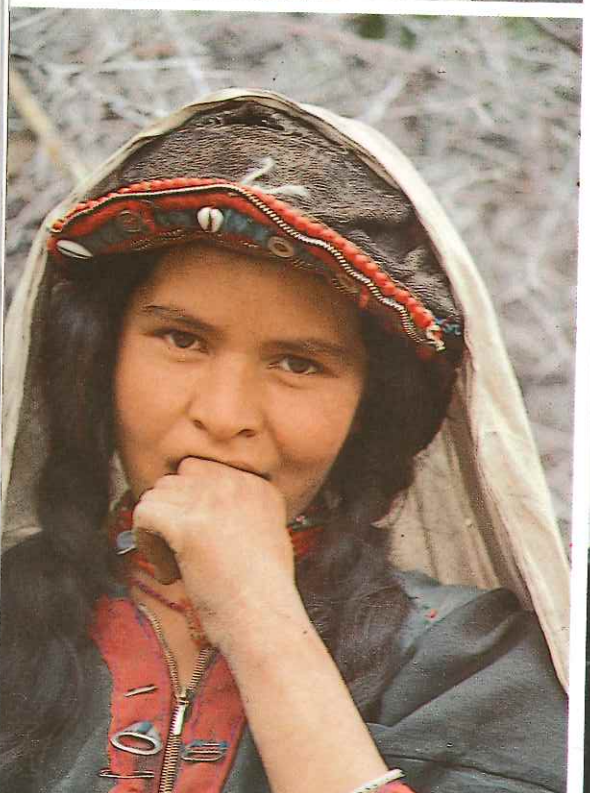
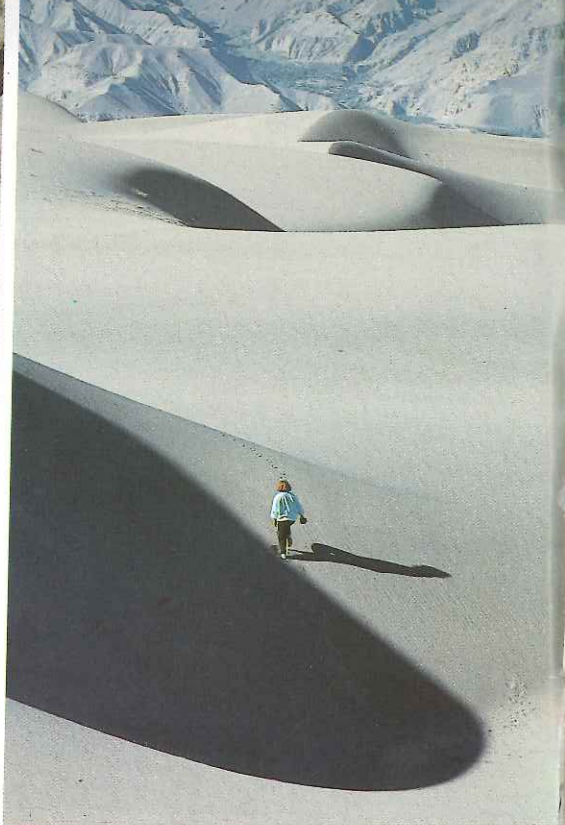
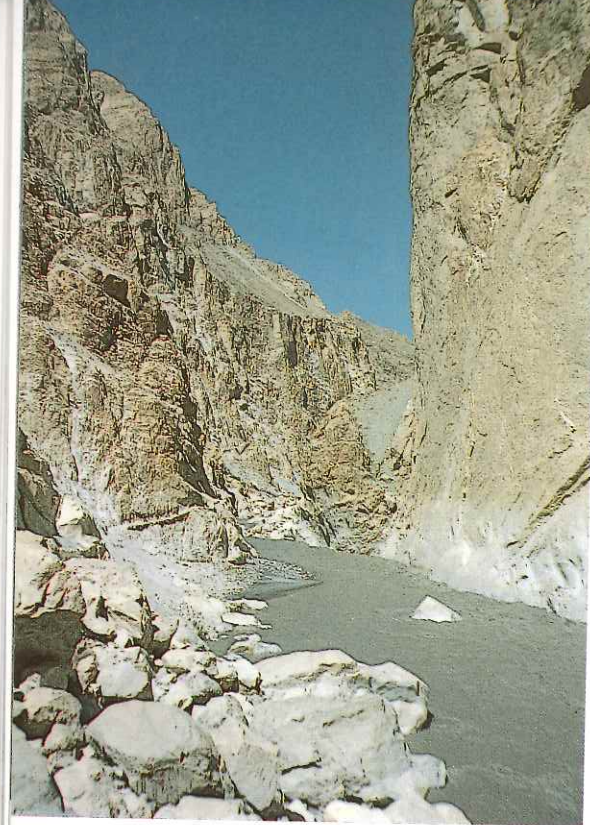


Picture By Walker

- Page 49:** Bakhordas peak (5810 m) stands guard at the junction of the Braldu and Dumurdo rivers near Askole.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 50, Upper:** Porter crossing the Dumurdo River using a cable bridge on the way to K-2 Base Camp.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 50, Lower:** A warm camp fire after a strenuous day.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 51, Upper:** Shigar valley in Baltistan, where the village architecture resembles that of Ladakh.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 51, Lower:** Bringing home pine cuttings, the Swati way.
Picture by: Wickliffe Walker
- Page 52, Upper Left:** The Shimshal River flows swiftly through granite gorges near Jur village in upper Hunza.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 52, Lower Left:** A shy Balti girl from Askole, Baltistan.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 52, Upper Right:** Undulating sand dunes in Skardu, Baltistan are in stark contrast to the mighty Karakoram peaks.
Picture by: Qaiser Khan
- Page 52, Lower Right:** A Balti porter from Chakpo, Baltistan.
Picture Qaiser Khan







BRALDU RIVER

Known to generations of climbers from the trek in to the Baltoro Glacier between K-2 and Masherbrum, the Braldu was one of the first whitewater rivers attempted in Pakistan — by Mike Jones in his fatal 1978 attempt. It is still one of the most difficult: remote, technical class V-VI, locked within vertical canyon walls, and highly weather dependent.

The Braldu is fed by the largest complex of mountain glaciers in the world. From the moment the spring melt begins in May, its narrow gorge is filled with completely unrunnable thousands of cfs. It can only be reasonably approached during the off season.

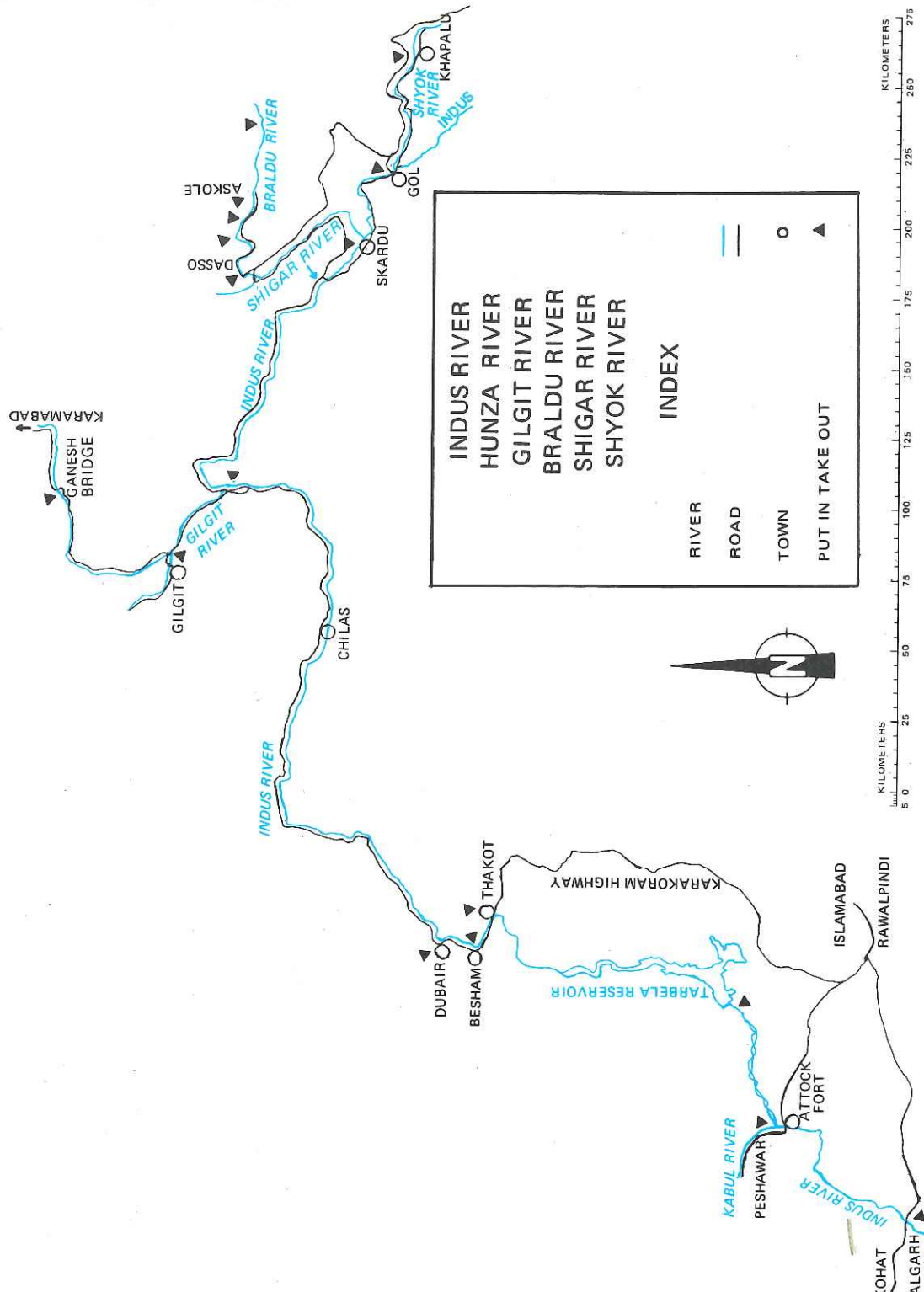
The following descriptions of the Braldu, Shigar and Shyok Rivers are from Andy Embick's reports of his highly successful 1984 expedition with Kathy Blau, Rob Leser, Bob McDougall and Bo Shelby.

Baltoro Glacier to Askole — 35 kilometers — Class II-IV

From the snout of the Baltoro Glacier at 11,225 feet, the upper Braldu is high, occasionally technical, but neither as restricted nor as big as the lower part of the river. Often braided, occasionally narrowing to very technical boulder piles, the river at one point disappears under a landslide, necessitating a carry. Only a footpath leads above Askole, so this run requires porters to the put-in. While the 35 kilometers have been done in one day, two is probably more practical at this altitude.

Askole to Chongo — 7 kilometers — Class V

Just above the village of Askole, the Biafo Glacier feeds the Braldu, doubling the volume and marking the beginning



of a narrow, granite walled canyon. This is the start of the serious expedition paddling, and while this portion is neither as long nor as intense as the next, it is definitely technical class V.

A new road provides access as far upstream as Askole, but the narrow gorge is still difficult to approach or exit.

Chongo to Chokpo – 15 kilometers – Class V-VI

This is the crux of the Braldu: difficult rapids and sculptured granite walls at times sixty or more feet deep, so narrow and vertical one can almost jump across the top. The half-light in the narrow portions gives a cavern-like atmosphere, and dramatic boils pulse even in the calmest stretches. This has been run at both 1000 cfs and at a probable near limit of 3500 cfs.

Chokpo to Dasso – 18 kilometers – Class IV-V

9000 feet in the air, up to class V in difficulty and glacial water, this is nonetheless the runout after the Braldu Gorge. It deserves due care, of course, if not a special effort not to let down and get in trouble after the most difficult part is over, as has happened so often on both rivers and mountains.

SHIGAR RIVER

Dasso to Skardu – 70 kilometers – Class III

Nine kilometers below Dasso, on the Braldu, the Basha River joins from the right, and the combined flow forms the Shigar River, flowing into the Indus at Skardu. The river is braided around sand and gravel bars, but at high snowmelt levels it moves quickly. Huge surfing waves form over “sand-waves” on the river bottom. The valley is wide and rich with agriculture wherever irrigation is possible. The ferry across the Indus to take out at Skardu is strenuous.

SHYOK RIVER

Khapalu to Gol — 60 kilometers — Class III-IV

The Shyok as it meets the Indus River is a huge river in its own right, the largest tributary of the upper Indus. It is paralleled by roads on both sides of its wide lower valley, and for most of the first ten kilometers it is wide and relatively flat. By late May, however, it is swollen by snowmelt to many thousands of cfs, and its power warrants respect. Most of the second half of the run is big-water class IV, and four carries may be required.

HUNZA RIVER

Before the 1970's when the combined efforts of the Chinese and Pakistani governments produced the Karakoram Highway, one of the most dramatic engineering feats in the modern world, the Hunza Valley was among the remotest regions on earth. Early travelers journeying above Gilgit to the capital, Karimabad, reported a foot and mule path cantilevered out from the cliff face on logs sunk into cracks in the rock, hundreds of feet above the river.

Perhaps because of its inaccessible, almost legendary reputation, Hunza became one of the regions, along with certain areas of the high Andes and Tibet, where the inhabitants were rumored to live for hundreds of years. In fact, a healthy lifestyle emphasizing, by necessity, steep aerobic climbs everywhere they go, and a diet in which fruits and grains predominate, does produce a remarkably fit and long-lived population.

Ganesh Bridge to Gilgit — 80 kilometers — Class V

The last portion of the river, before it meets the Gilgit

and thence the Indus, has a uniform 30 foot per mile gradient. By June, when run by Embick and Shelby, its flow was up to 30,000 cfs, the holes and explosion waves assuming dangerous size. Sneaking is possible but even that requires efforts to avoid being funneled to the center by diagonal waves leading from the shore. Ten to 15 portages are required, and 2 days are best allocated for this run.

Typical of this region, the big Hunza Valley is barren and rocky, extremely hot at low elevations, dominated by wind blown dust in the air and silty rock flour in the water. It is a land of huge scales, with peaks like 25,550 foot Rakaposhi hanging over the powerful rivers. It is challenging and awe-inspiring, but no one would call it inviting or embracing, as are many of the rivers of Kashmir and other parts of the Himalaya.

GILGIT RIVER

Gilgit to Indus Confluence — 44 kilometers — Class III-IV

The lower Gilgit was first rafted by the Lowell Thomas expedition, after the Indus itself proved to be too much. The lowermost stretch is milder than either the Indus or the Hunza. There are still large holes and waves, but they are more readily avoidable. Views of Nanga Parbat are spectacular.

FLASH FLOOD

River Gods are no more tolerant than their more conventional brethren. Scraping my boat down the shallow gravel bars on the wide, braided Siran River, I welcomed the first, pounding thunderstorm. The cool rain felt good in Pakistan's summer heat, and the little side streams that began pumping red and brown into the clear main stream promised to speed up a twenty-six mile day.

Two hours later, thunderheads still chased each other along the ridgelines of the Black Mountains east of the Indus River. I stood 100 feet up a canyon wall on river left, looking almost straight down at an unrunnable rapid and explaining the nuances of whitewater sport to an animated group of villagers. The one English speaker was adamant: "We cannot allow you to continue. It is too dangerous! And it becomes worse! And you do not have a permit. We cannot allow you to kill yourself without a permit! You must return to the village."

As I reasonably countered each of his arguments with descriptions of what whitewater boats can do, the precautions we take, and the lack of laws requiring permits, I mentally did an inventory:

— I was boating on rapidly rising water, a circumstance that had previously gotten me into more trouble than I could stand on two other continents.

— I was paddling solo — in the Himalayan foothills. The nearest other whitewater boater was almost certainly in Kathmandu.

— I was paddling a river far from the roads where I had been able to scout, and invariably rivers save their ambushes for spots hidden from sight.

— My friend in the turban was absolutely right.

But some lessons we seem to relearn year after year. As I put in below the drop I had been scouting and ran down the next few hundred yards, the by now chocolate brown water gave off a powerful scent of earth, like digging in a garden, and splashes in the face were gritty between the teeth. Powerful boils kicked the boat around even in the eddies, and what had appeared to be clean wave trains from 100 feet above concealed frightening recirculating holes. I noticed one such almost too late, jamming the boat hard to the left and just managing to cut through the corner. I got out with considerable relief on the left shore to carry around an unrunnable vertical drop, six or eight feet high with boulders piled at its base blocking all possibility of navigation.

The carry was not much better than its alternative, and as I caught my breath on a ledge seventy feet above the river, I tried to calculate my options. Immediately below this drop the water became easier, for the short distance that could be seen. But then the river entered another steep-walled canyon, whether for yards or miles could not be determined from my vantage point. Everything hinged on whether the water was still rising or beginning to fall. If the former, going on was suicidal.

My contemplation of the canyon downstream was suddenly interrupted by a deepening pitch to the river's sound. Directly below me, the opaque brown flood was covered by hundreds of logs, of all sizes from sticks to tree trunks. From as far upstream as I could see, they formed an endless chain, tumbling over the falls below and disappearing in the backwash, eventually to

reappear and reform their chain downstream. Obviously something had broken loose above, and as I watched the water level could be seen to rise. Within minutes the steep falls below were transformed into a huge pulsating wave, still carpeted by the seemingly endless supply of wood.

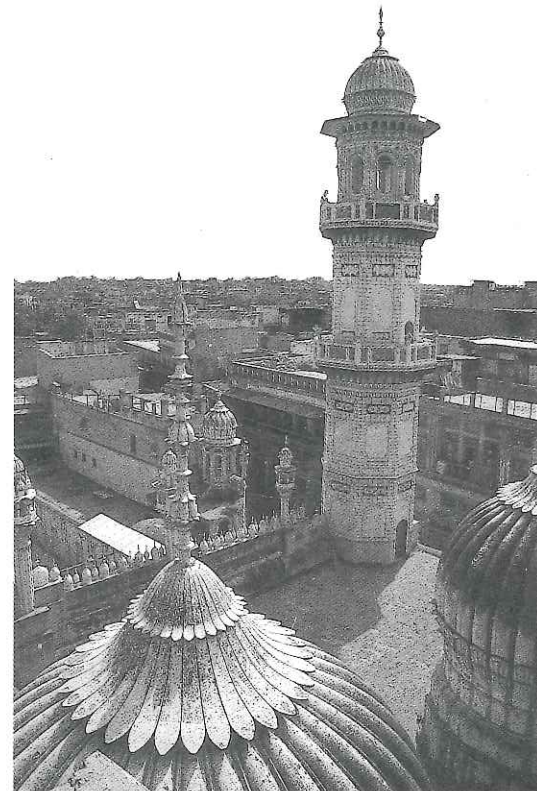
With a palpable sense of relief, I realized that I no longer had a decision to make. The paddling day was over, including the risks. The walking day was about to start.

When it is called trekking or backpacking, and it involves 40 pound backpacks, it is called a sport and many pay money to do it. When it involves a 40 pound boat, there is no name suitable for family reading. Fortunately, within minutes of cresting the ridgeline I encountered a villager, who evinced only minor surprise at my sudden appearance and who insisted on helping to carry the boat. A short game of charades soon established that I wanted no part of the flooded river, and that a Suzuki truck would be nice.

My new found friend quickly hoisted the boat and hustled down the trail, directly away from any road shown on my map, and directly toward tribal territory. I followed along behind, carrying my paddle and wondering whether my wife would actually sell her new horse to pay a ransom. However, after a half hour we did emerge on a paved road, whereupon my panting companion reverted to civilization and demanded 500 rupees (about 30 dollars) for carrying the boat, union wages by any standards. Being less the rookie than I perhaps appeared, I emptied my pockets to reveal only 100 rupees in my possession. My guide cheerfully bowed to the inevitable and returned back toward the river, leaving me to one of the more unusual shuttle runs.

POSTSCRIPT: News reports the following day revealed the toll on the Siran River that day to be one hotel, two shops, three bridges, three water mills, and, sadly, eight persons.

APPENDICES



Skyline of Peshawar, North West Frontier Province
Picture By Walker



Spinning goat hair into yarn — Picture By Walker

APPENDIX 1 RESOURCES

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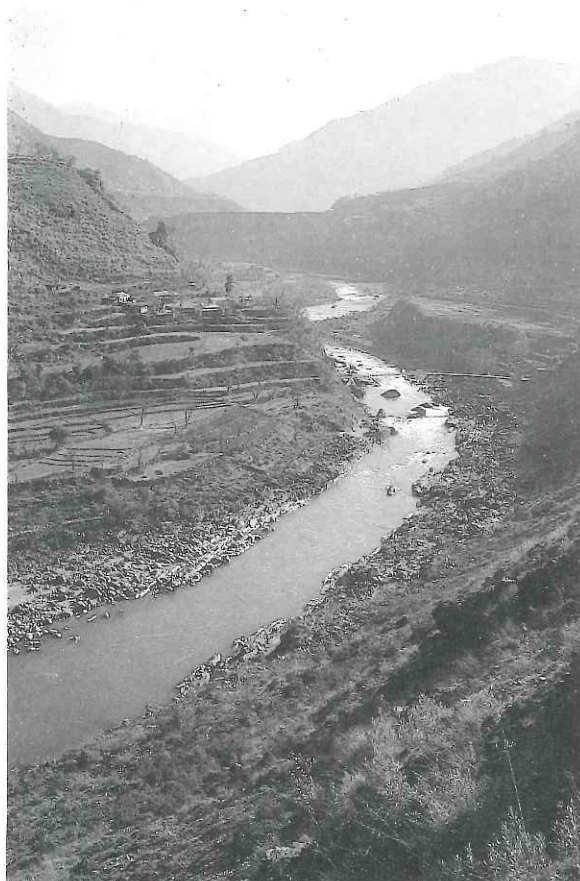
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*Jhelum River,
Azad Kashmir
Picture By Walker*

APPENDIX 2 CLIMATE

Strange as it may seem to European and North American whitewater sportspersons, the limiting factors on rivers in Pakistan are often too much water and too much warmth. Paddling there could be generally described as a reverse season sport, best and most varied in fall, winter and very early spring. And because Pakistan is located in the northern hemisphere (at about the latitude of Sicily or New Mexico) it is well suited for the growing number of paddlers seeking new winter paddling experiences.

SEASONAL AVERAGES, ISLAMABAD (LOW ALTITUDE)

Seasons	Months	Temperatures		Rainfall
		Min	Max	
Winter	Nov-Jan	2 C	24 C	23 cm (9 ")
Spring	Feb-Apr	5 C	30 C	
Summer	May-Sep	24 C	42 C	69 cm (27")
Autumn	Oct	10 C	24 C	

Three factors affect specific conditions: season, monsoon, and altitude. Winter months bring beautiful, warm sunny days and cool evenings, what would be called Indian Summer in much of the United States. Rivers are low and clear, with predictable levels. Spring and fall are transition seasons, with the temperatures still pleasant and with sunny day after sunny day. Rivers in the fall are slowly dropping from summer spates. Spring is more volatile, with the predominately snow-fed rivers locked in ice until suddenly the melting temperatures reach the critical level and the rush to drain the mountains begins for another year. The

long summer, from May until early September, brings significantly higher temperatures, both day and night. Travel becomes less comfortable, and, more importantly, the snowmelt that is the primary determinant of river levels reaches huge proportions.

Rainfall ranks just behind snowmelt in feeding the rivers: The July-August monsoon, while only a fraction of the monsoon that affects most of the Indian subcontinent, provides most of the annual rainfall. Its effect is greatest on the southern slopes of the mountains, in Kashmir and the Himalaya; in the Karakoram and Hindu Kush the monsoon becomes almost negligible. A minor winter rainy season provides occasional showers and ensures that winter paddling does not become too dry.

Altitude plays its predictable role in adjusting temperatures and conditions. Six or eight thousand feet can transform the oppressive summer heat of the plains. However, most runnable rivers are located at 10,000 feet and less, often much less, so that the severe conditions described by climbers and high-altitude trekkers seldom apply.

APPENDIX 3 PERMITS AND REGULATIONS

Pakistan is an odd mixture of "wild west", where a person goes where he will and does what he has nerve for, and bureaucratic state, where paperwork is king and permits are required in multiple copies for the most ordinary actions. Paddling is new enough so that there are no regulations specifically about river travel. Nevertheless, boaters must conform to the general rules for tourists, plus a sort of common sense adaptation of the trekking and climbing regulations. An experienced outfitter, or at minimum a bilingual driver, can help cut through the confusion of both regulatory requirements and religious and cultural imperatives.

Central areas of the country tend to be unrestricted, while both borders, Afghan and Indian, are sensitive and controlled:

- Tribal areas of the North West Frontier cannot be entered without coordination with the local authorities.

- Chitral welcomes visitors, but all foreigners must register with the police (downtown Chitral City) upon arrival. After registration, permits for travel to different areas must be obtained from the Deputy Commissioner's Office. (Altogether allow a couple of hours for these formalities. There is a small fee for permits into the Kalash areas).

- Swat registers foreigners as they enter and exit, but no permits are required.

- Kashmir requires permits issued in advance for all travel by foreigners. Contact Kashmir House in Islamabad or write to the

Azad Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Department, Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir, Pakistan. In no case is travel allowed within 10 kilometers (6 miles) of the ceasefire line between the Pakistani and Indian armies.

Trekking and climbing regulations throughout the country require permits for travel in designated restricted areas (Chitral, Gilgit, and Skardu) and in all cases for travel above 6000 meters. For climbs and trekking above 6000 meters, advance permits and assignment of a government liaison officer are required. While river travel falls far below these altitude limits, permits are still required within the designated restricted areas. In cases of major expeditions, conforming to the same procedures as climbing parties, including arranging (and paying) for a liaison officer, can head off numerous problems, particularly if porters are required. Again, an experienced outfitter can help cut through the red tape.

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