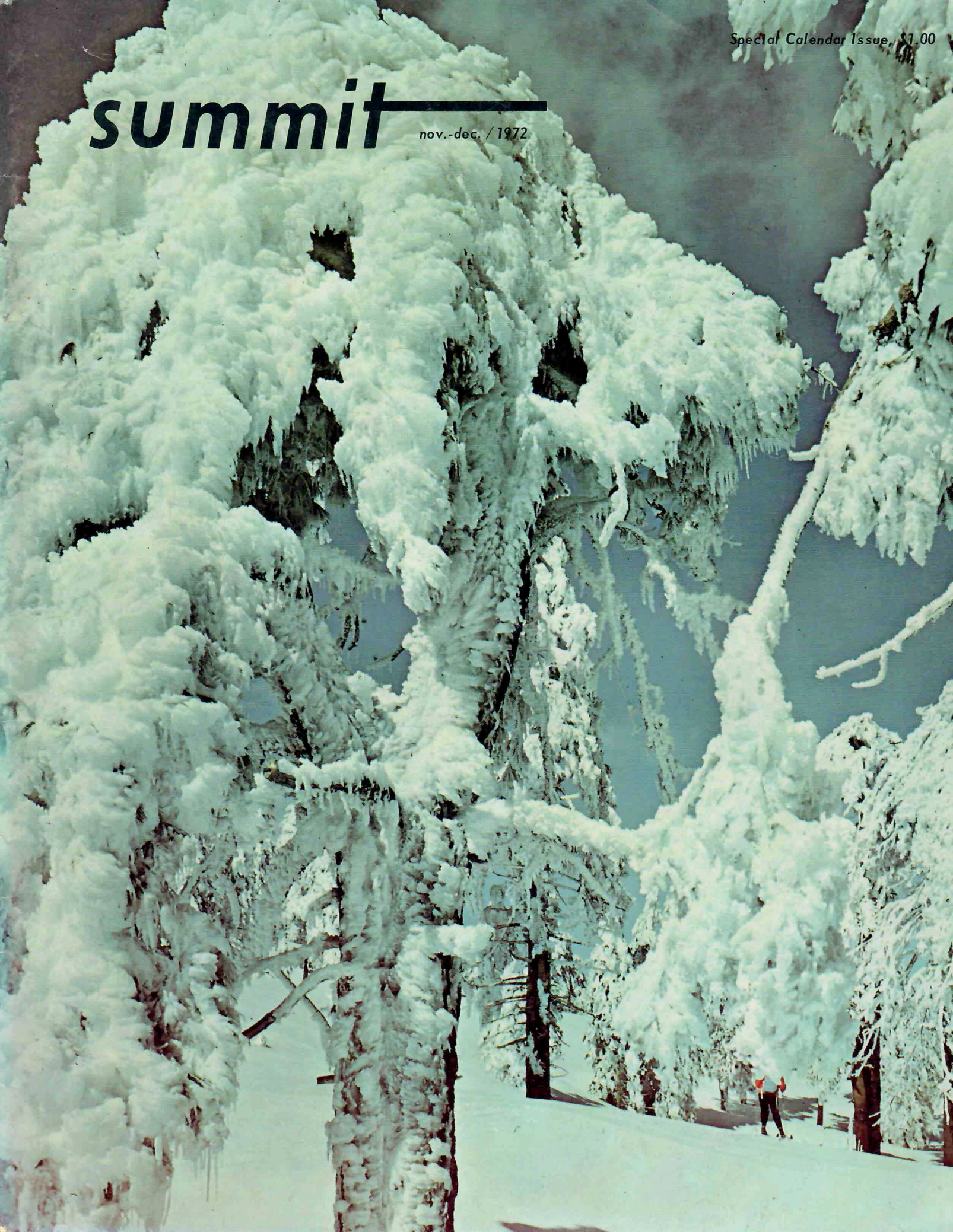


Special Calendar Issue, \$1.00

# summit

nov.-dec. / 1972



# ASCENT OF TULIYAN: *An*

*"Tuliyán Peak, a 15,900-foot mountain, near Phalgám, Kashmír, was climbed for the first time by a party of four Kashmírís and four Americans."*

— *Hindustani Times*, June 3, 1972

Dear S.,

Yes, that's us. Famous at last. And the strain was certainly not too great — the climbing strain, that is. The first ascent of Tuliyán Peak was very enjoyable though the accoutrements of this climb were unique for us Americans.

Master Chandra, a veteran Kashmírí climber who had been on K2 with Weissner, first told us about Tuliyán: "A beautiful, easily accessible peak that has been unsuccessfully attempted many times." The problem was a difficult icefall, so he thought the peak could be climbed early in the season.

The four of us did this climb with Mohammed Ashraf, the secretary of the Jammu and Kashmír Mountaineering and Hiking Club and three Kashmírí graduates of India's first ski and mountaineering guide school. After their four years of instruction, the Kashmírís insisted upon taking care of all the details of the trip, and this they certainly did.

After a sunny week or so in Srinigar spent waiting for the end of hypothetical rainstorms predicted by the Kashmírís, we finally left May 29 with an incredible mountain of gear. "What could all this be?" we wondered.

"Just the essential supplies."

There were five tents, numerous heavy pots and pans, enough ropes and hardware to climb the Eiger and, finally, food. Our rations for the four-day trip included 44 lbs. of rice, 9 lbs. of ghee, 20 lbs. of potatoes, 15 lbs. of onions, 5 lbs. of salt, 5 lbs. of bones, a seemingly infinite quantity of very hot peppers, and 8 small candy bars. As Tuliyán Lake was an 8-mile walk, and the peak was a one-day climb from the lake, this seemed like a somewhat generous quantity. Imagine eating 11 pounds of rice covered with 1½ pounds of salt and 2 pounds of grease each day.

Taking buses may be quite a problem in Asia. Typical conversation:

"When does the bus for Phalgám leave?"

"Anytime."

"Does the first bus leave in the morning or in the afternoon?"

"Yes."

## *unusual experience in Kashmir* By Arlene Blum

"At what time does the first bus leave?"

"The first bus is at 7:00 a.m."

"When are the other buses?"

"At 10:00 and 12:00 a.m."

"Are there buses in the afternoon?"

"There is a bus at 4:00 p.m."

"When is the last bus?"

"The last bus is at 2:00 p.m."

"How many buses leave each day?"

"One or two."

"We want to catch the 7:00 bus tomorrow morning. Can we buy tickets?"

"Certainly, you can buy them tomorrow when the ticket office opens."

"What time is that?"

"The ticket office will open at 8:00 a.m."

We managed to take a mailbus to Phalgam, the town nearest to Tuliyan Peak. The Tourist Officer there greeted Ashraf and I warmly. "Ah, you want to leave tomorrow. Finding horses is a difficult business, but I will arrange it. I'm at your disposal, and will do anything that I can to help you." Then he shook our hand cordially, got in his car, and drove to Srinigar for several days leaving us rather confused about what to do next.

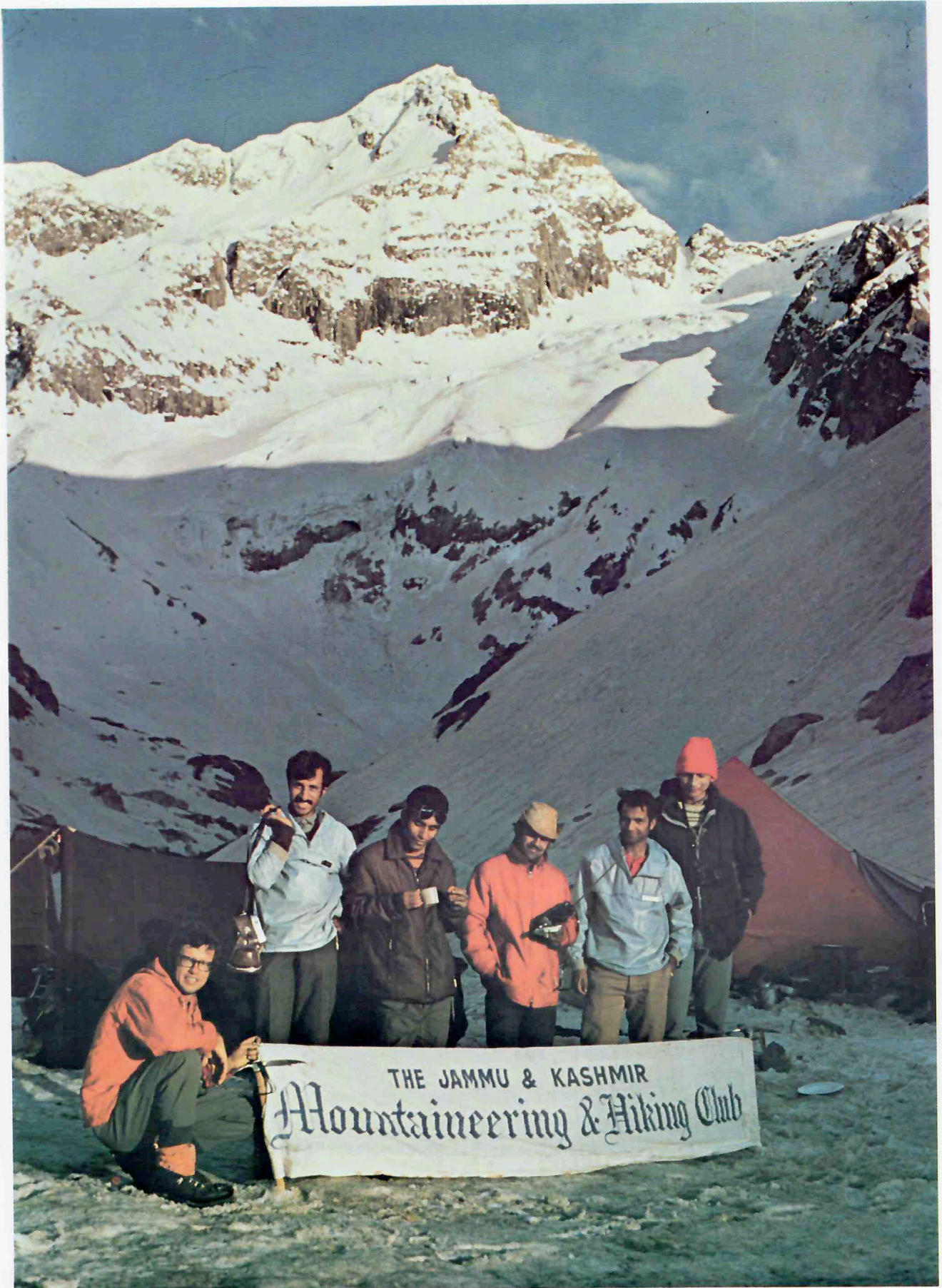
Ashraf's cousin eventually found us some horses and a cheap hotel room. The hotel's garbage was thrown over the balcony and devoured by roving dogs and cows. Even newspapers were gobbled up with relish.

After a late start, our caravan of 8 climbers, 5 horses, and 3 horsemen set off laden with enough gear to tackle a Himalayan giant. On the trail at last. Ten minutes later we stopped for 20 minutes to wait for the horses. And so it went, 10 minutes of walking, 20 of waiting. After 4 hours of erratic progress, we reached Tuliyan Meadow (10,500 feet). The lake from which we would climb was one hour above. Since it would require several trips to move our 800 pounds of supplies to high camp, we decided to spend the night at the meadow.

It was there we got our introduction to the local staple food known euphemistically as mutton curry, a blend of equal parts of rice, grease, and fiery peppers with occasional bones to improve the texture. One of these bones later claimed Joel's front tooth when he bit down too vigorously.

After several hours of "lunch," 5 climbers, some of them rather hungry, and 3 horsemen set out

*to page 18, please*





*An early start for the summit. Tuliyan bathed in the morning sun.  
Three Kashmiris preparing lunch, an affair which took several hours.*



# Tuliyan Peak

from page 15

with heavy loads for high camp. They returned with news that Tuliyan was a beautiful peak with a good route up the steep west ridge. Dinner was ready in 3 hours. A surprise — bones and rice.

Vijay, Master Chandra's son, said Tuliyan was one of the few peaks in the Vale of Kashmir that this father had not succeeded in climbing, and he hoped his son would be able to climb it. No reason why he should not unless we all got bogged down in ghee.

After a four-hour breakfast, the 11 of us shouldered heavy packs for the hour walk to Tuliyan Lake (12,500 foot). The rest of the day was devoted to food preparation. An amazing day! We spent 4 hours on breakfast, 3½ on lunch, 6 on dinner, one hiking, and were still very hungry.

Hoping to find good snow conditions, we arose at 3:00 a.m. and went out into the cold to say good morning to our companions. Groans emanated from their tents. "Good, they're up." Breakfast was soon ready and taken out to them. Shiver. They weren't up yet. We finished eating, and began to wait and shiver and shiver and wait. At long last, as we started up, we began to realize why Tuliyan Peak had not been climbed before.

Fortunately for us, Joel and I got the lead in a rope of two. The others followed in two ropes of three. We zigzagged up and across the icefall which was little problem after last year's heavy snowfall.

At 8:00, we reached the steep ridge leaving one thousand feet to the summit cornice. Not a cloud marred the deep even blue of the high altitude sky or the fine view of the enormous Nanga Parbat massif. Turning a gendarme, we started up a knife-edge ridge with seventy-degree slopes falling away on either side. The ridge itself was fairly steep but usually provided the security of something to hold onto. Walking across horizontal parts of the knife-edge ridge was much more

insecure than climbing the occasional vertical steps. The rock was sound, the granulated snow covering it was not.

Joel spent half an hour hacking his way through the final 10-foot overhanging cornice and yelled happily from the top. The elegant pyramids of Nun Kun (23,410 feet) dominated the view. Our world was sunny and very clear with icy mountains as far as we could see in every direction. And finally, there was a candy bar allotted to each of us for the summit — our first palatable food in days.

"And where are the candy bars?"

"Oh, they've been left at the meadow along with other non-essential items." Having carried 40 pounds of rice and potatoes to the lake, I was dubious.

After several hours of sunning and picture taking, Dave led down the north ridge, as all the snow had been kicked off the ridge we'd just ascended.

Yesterday, we had brought 18 manloads of supplies to Tuliyan Lake, and now we had to carry most of them back down again. Our packs bulging with potatoes and onions, we staggered down to the meadow through the acres of delicate wildflowers so characteristic of the Kashmir Himal.

Our climb of Tuliyan Peak could easily be repeated as a two- or three-day trip from Phalgam. We actually spent about fourteen hours climbing up or down during the ten days or so devoted to this trip. The climbing itself was enjoyable, but even more interesting were the insights we obtained into cultural differences between climbers and the various ways in which mountains can be climbed.

I wonder what Afganistan has in store for us.

Sincerely,  
Arlene