

Bhagdar or Devi

By John Whitcomb (*Ophryisia*)

Rating: Difficult

Best time to go: Year round

Length: 1day or more

Distance: 27 km

Altitude: 2440 m

Description:

Devi is easily recognised by its pyramidal shape. It lies to the left of Nag Tibba on the same ridge. The south face and peak are quite grey

The easiest and most direct route is by going to the Aglar River via Childers (see hike) and then straight up for 1700 meters. It is recommended that the hike from the Aglar River to Devi and back be done in one day or more.

The major landmark to look for at the Aglar River is a small wooden bridge. Once across the Aglar, the path leads through irrigated rice paddies and up into a narrow valley which eventually broadens out to a large open valley. Once one reaches this open valley, a prominent village called Gherh can be seen. Water cannot be obtained beyond this village. The surrounding area is well cultivated and populated. The architecture of the village and the hill people with their enormous quantities of gold jewellery are very interesting.

Above the village one immediately enters into grasslands. One should follow any discernible path directly up the centre of the valley until one is past the area of cactus and into rock and grasslands. From here, because of the difficult grade, the route followed should be up to the ridge on the left. Along this ridge one merely has to continue until the pyramid seen above is reached. In this vicinity there is a definite road which can be followed.

Partridge and pheasant abound along the grass slopes, and *ghoral* are occasionally seen, although much less so in recent years. There is a great variety of wild flowers and small shrubs. There are no trees at present but an extensive reforestation project is underway with many small trees planted.

By following the path one soon comes to the base of the actual peak, from where it is only a ten-minute climb to the top. On the summit there is a heavy cover of rhododendron and moru oak. In the midst of the grove are an ancient temple and a site for offering goats--hence the name Devi. The temple is interesting in that it is covered with ancient coins pounded flat by pilgrims.

A large variety of birds and animals frequent the summit, as the place is rarely visited. The trek is difficult, more so than the distance might suggest and should be attempted only if one is in fairly good condition.