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Peru Andes–Acuan (Akwan) Massif or Cordillera de Rosco

Translated by Doris Walter

The northernmost mountain massif of the Cordillera Blanca, in the Peruvian Andes, is given various names according to different publications: Cordillera de Huarica (sic), Cordillera de Conchucos, Cordillera Norte, Pallasca Area in Northern Ancash, era Pacra Cordillera de Rosco or Rosko.

In his guide book *Yuraq Janka*, John Ricker states that: «The current name for the mountain massif has been in use at least since 1929 government surveys published as part of the Hoja Corongo (7c). Others (Sievers 1914, Schlagentweit 1911) claim that the range is more properly known as the Cordillera de Conchucos.»

BRIEF GEOGRAPHIC TERMINOLOGICAL DISTINCTION

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE TERMS CORDILLERA, MOUNTAIN MASSIF, MOUNTAIN GROUP, SUMMIT AND PEAK. FOR GEOGRAPHIC CONVENIENCE, THE PERUVIAN CORDILLERA BLANCA IS DIVIDED INTO DIFFERENT MASSIFS. THE MASSIFS GENERALLY NAMED AFTER THEIR HIGHEST SNOW-CLAD MOUNTAIN (OR NEVADO). FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHAMPARA MASSIF, THE SANTA CRUZ MASSIF, THE HUANDUY MASSIF, ETC. EACH MASSIF IS DIVIDED INTO MOUNTAIN GROUPS AROUND A SUMMIT. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE CONSIDERS THAT SANTA CRUZ MASSIF CONTAINS FIVE GROUPS: THE QUITARAJU-ALPAMAYO, THE PUCAHIRCA, THE TAULLIRAJU, THE PUCARAJU AND THE SANTA CRUZ GROUP. THE SUMMIT OF A MOUNTAIN IS ALWAYS THE MAIN PEAK, THAT IS THE HIGHEST. THE SUMMIT OF THE PUCAHIRCA GROUP (6,046 M) IS NEVADO PUCAHIRCA NORTE I. EACH SUMMIT MAY HAVE SEVERAL PROMINENT PEAKS – SUCH AS PUCAHIRCA SUR (6,039 M), PUCAHIRCA CENTRAL (6,014 M) AND PUCAHIRCA NORTE II (CA. 6,025 M) –, OTHER SECONDARY SUMMITS – PUCAHIRCA NORTE III (5,919 M), LOCATED ON THE NW RIDGE OF NORTE II –, MINOR PEAKS – P.5,858 M, ON THE NW RIDGE OF PUCAHIRCA NORTE III – AND FORESUMMITS,

Cordillera de Conchucos or Acuan Range?

On July 8, 2012 I went to this range with Consuelo Amorós. Our friend Doris Walter had visited the area two weeks before with Magno Camones, a veteran mountain guide from Huaraz, Edwin Jamanka, a porter, and William Gamarra, a muleteer from Cusca. Doris, an anthropologist with a

¹ The correct word is Huarica (and not Huarica); comunidad de la provincia de Corongo.

² The term summit may be relative to the area mentioned here. The summit of Nevado Alpamayo is 5,947 m high, its northern foresummit is a shoulder not prominent enough to be considered a peak. The summit of the Santa Cruz range (6,259 m) is Nevado Santa Cruz Grande. The summit of the Cordillera Blanca is Nevado Huascarán Sur, at 6,768 m.

³ Less important high points before a summit.

passion for climbing in the Andes as well as for the Quechua language, besides climbing the main glaciated peak – for the second time after 17 or 18 years –, also investigated, amongst other things, the Places names in the area. Her valuable findings and public relations greatly facilitated our arrival in Cusca and our approach to the base camp at Laguna Akwan or Acuán (in Spanish spelling). In Ichiro Yoshizawa's fieldnotes on the 1965 Japanese expedition published in *The American Alpine Journal* (AAJ) 1966, pages 167 – 168, this lake was given the name «Akhuancchocha».

All of the nevados of «Rosco» are included in the Hoja Pallasca 17 – h of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN) del Perú, and the District of Conchucos is located in the Province of Pallasca. Nevertheless, these nevados are closer to the Municipality of Cusca (in the Province of Corongo) than that of Conchucos. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Cusca do not know of a mountain named «Rosko». They name the highest ice-covered mountain «Acuán», as well as the lake located at the foot of the western side of the mountain. We are referring to the same mountain that was climbed and named Rosco Grande by the Sophia Alpine Club expedition of Jochi University on 7 September 1965.

Following Doris' investigations, the word Rosco apparently comes from «Rusgu», «Rusgu» o «Rusgo», which according to one informant is the name of a lake on the eastern side of the range. Others, however, informed her that Rusgu Grande is the name of a corral, situated in an area which belongs to the Comunidad campesina de Huarirca. It is quite probable that Rosco or Rosko is a corruption of the word Rusgo, which has no known meaning and is derived from llajuash or Quechua of Corongo.

UPON CONSULTING MAPS OF NORTHERN PERU, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE MILITARY CARTOGRAPHERS NAMED THE SMALL CORDILLERA, OR LARGE MOUNTAIN MASSIF, AFTER LAKE LOCATED TO THE NORTHWEST OF THE MAIN SUMMIT AND TO THE SOUTHWEST OF P CA 5000M OR EASTERN PEAK OF CUELLO CONDOR. THE LAKE CORRESPONDS TO «LAGO NUMERO 34» ON THE MAPA ÍNDICE DE LAGUNAS DE LAS CORDILLERAS ROSCO Y PELAGATOS (F. H-MIL-004-04) 1:100.000. THIS MAP, PRINTED BY ELECTROPERU (HUARAZ, 1975), WAS «PREPARED» IN THE SECCION DE TOPOGRAFIA Y DIBUJO DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS BASICOS DE LAGUNAS, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ALCIDES AMES MARQUEZ.

The later *Inventario de glaciares del Perú*, published by Hidrandina (Huaraz, 1988) and also coordinated by Ames, reduced Rosco's geographic category: «For the purpose of inventory, we have included in the Cordillera Blanca the nevados of Pelagatos and the Rosko group, due to the fact that their glacial areas are too small to be considered independant units such as cordilleras».

Cordillera is a geographic term which is often used incorrectly by local people. Perhaps for this reason the Sketch Map of the Cordillera Norte published in Sangaku, 1966 (vol 61), p.155, shows as the «Cordillera Yanacocha» what in reality is the ridgeline of Flerorumi, which runs parallel to the west of the ridgeline of Nevado Acuán or Rosco.

⁴ The Province of Pallasca is adjacent and north of the Province of Corongo.

⁵ P ca 5,000 m*, to the east of Cuello Cóndor, was given the name Nevado Tanikawa (5,240 m) in the *Revista Peruana de Andinismo y Glaciología* (RPAG) nº 7, as well as in a sketch drawn up by César Morales Arnao, and published in the Peruvian Times (Lima, Perú) in 1965.

⁶ The small Pelagatos group is located to the northeast of the Acuán or Rosco range.

MOST OF THE LAKE NAMES SITUATED BELOW THE EASTERN FLANK OF FLERORUMI AND ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF NEVADO ACUAN, REGISTERED ON MAPS, ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE NAMES USED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CUSCA. THE LOCALS INDICATED TO DORIS THAT THESE LAKES ARE CALLED RUTU, WINCHUS, ACUAN, PATO COLORADO HEMBRA AND PATO COLORADO MACHO. FABIAN DOMINGUEZ VEGA, FROM CUSCA, WHO KNOWS THE RIO «QEROBAMBA» VALLEY VERY WELL, ASSURES THAT THESE NAMES ARE CORRECT.

ASCENTS IN THE ACUAN OR ROSKO RANGE

THE MEMBERS OF THE 1965 JAPANESE EXPEDITION, LED BY ATSUMI HOSONO, INCLUDED MOTOYOSHI SATOI, YOSHIHIKO TAKAYAMA, YASUFUSA YOKOCHI, SHUZO KINOSHITA AND THE PORTER PABLO MORALES. THEY REACHED FIVE UNCLIMBED PEAKS IN THE RANGE:

- NEVADO CUELLO CONDOR (5,072 M) CLIMBED BY TAKAYAMA AND YOKOCHI ON 10 SEPTEMBER 1965
- P ca. 5,000 m to the east of Cuello Cóndor climbed by Morales and Satoi on 10 September 1965
- P ca. 4,990 m to the south of the eastern summit of Cuello Cóndor reached by ¿Takayama and Yokochi? on 9 September 1965
- Nevado Rosco Grande (ca. 5,188 m) climbed by Hosono, Kinoshita, Takayama and Yokochi on 7 September 1965
- P ca. 5,000 m to the north of Nevado Rosco Grande climbed by ¿Hosono and Kinoshita? on 9 September 1965

Apart from these Japanese ascents, few climbs have been registered in publications dealing with the mountains and glacial peaks of the Acuan range. Besides paleontologist Otto Schlagentweit's ascent (*Deutsche Alpenzeitung*, 1911, XI, J. 4) of an unlocated summit, Julio César Sotelo, a mountaineer from Huaraz, believes that an Italian expedition visited the area and reached the summit of Acuan, although he does not remember names or dates. The Peruvian mountain guide Jorge Martel also climbed the mountain. Magno Camones and Doris Walter climbed twice: their second ascent took place in June 2012, but they do not remember the date of their first climb; it was probably in 1994.

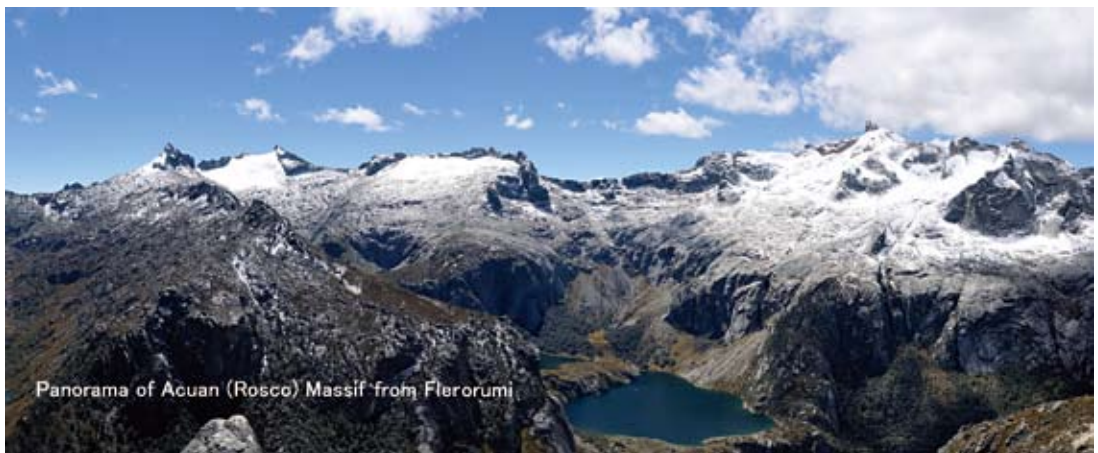
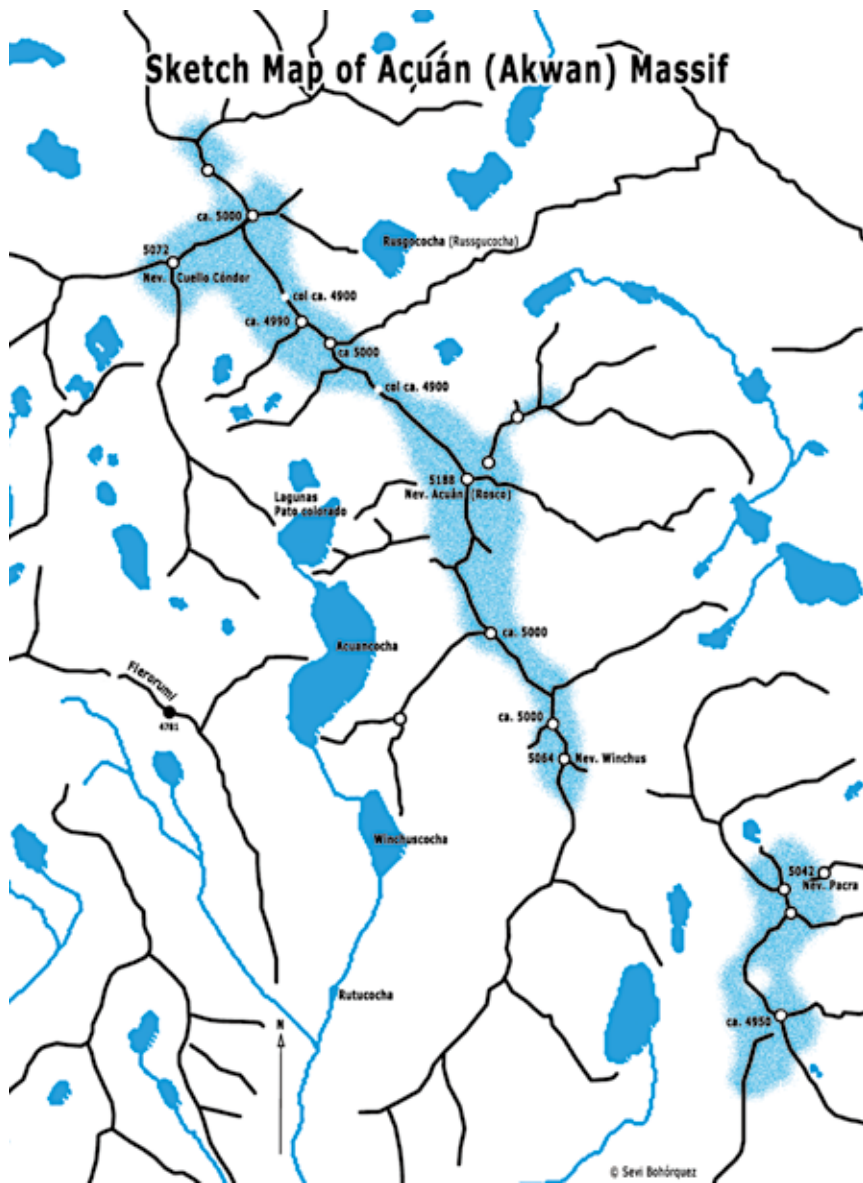
⁷ Flerorumi is a rocky peak with a large cairn, next to two stone windbreaks.

⁸ Rutu is the first small lake (which is practically dried up from May to October) that one encounters on the trail leading from Cusca to laguna Winchus.

⁹ According to RPAG n°7, 1964 – 1965, pp.45-46, the expedition members included Atsumi Hosono, Motoyoshi Sato, Yoshiro Takayama, Shuzo Kinoshita, Yasufusa Yocochi and Segeyuki Okajima. The tourist expert Kenji Nakamura accompanied them in Peru as a translator.

¹⁰ The heights of these peaks are given by Ricker in his guide book *Yuraq Janka*.

¹¹ Document translated and personal communication from Evelio Echevarría.





Acuan



Nev. Cuello Condor



Acuan-Querobamba River

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Neil Armstrong considered his first step on the moon to be a lesser achievement than the first ascent of Mount Everest. Celebrating the 60th anniversary this year it is a good time to reflect on the opportunities enjoyed by Hillary and Tenzing.

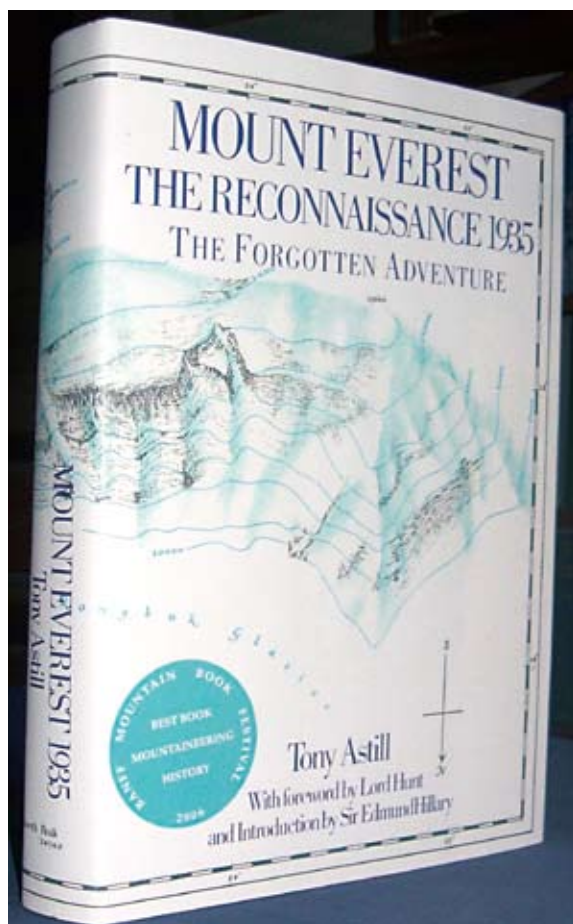
Tenzing's chance came in 1935 when Tilman hired 15 porters at the Planters Club in Darjeeling for the Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition, but two being later rejected left the way clear for replacements. Eric Shipton wrote 'but there was one Tibetan lad of 19, a newcomer with an infectious smile. His name was Tensing Norkay. Dan Bryant, the tough and skilful New Zealand ice climber in the team described him 'Most obliging, willing and helpful in camp, he is a delightful chap with a keen sense of humour. He is one of the first porters I would take were I going on another expedition. He will make an excellent climber with a little more experience. Dan's own charm had it's own effect on Shipton – 'Dan's presence went a long way to making that trip. We all loved him'.

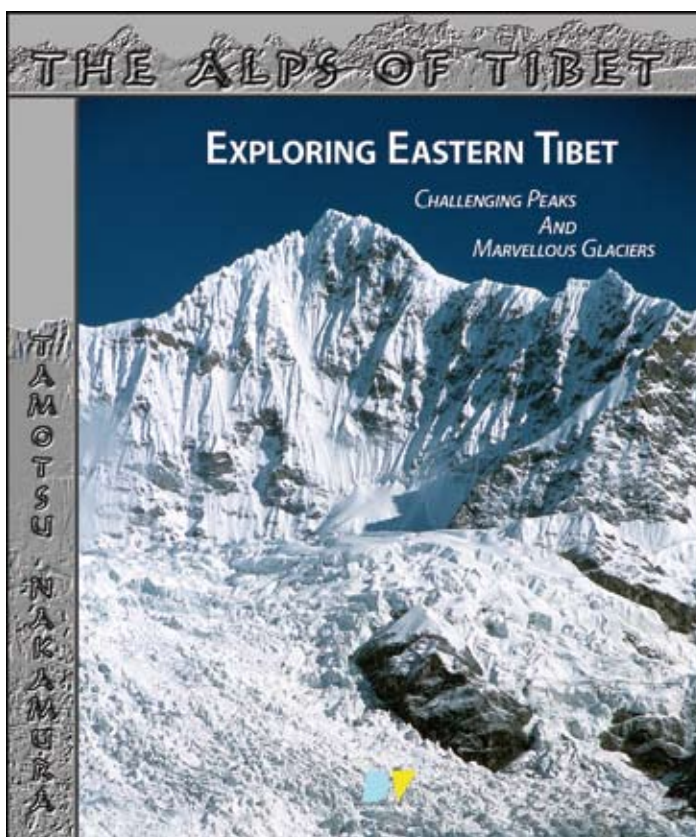
In 1951 a 4 man New Zealand Himalayan Expedition was climbing in the Garhwal Himalaya. Riddiford and Cotter were original members. Lowe had been invited to join and he in turn suggested Hillary, who was climbing in the Bernese Oberland, writing to him offering a place, as others were not able to go. Lucky for Hillary that he had met Lowe!

As leader of the 1951 Reconnaissance Shipton, fondly remembering Bryant, had sent a telegram to the N.Z. base in Rhaniket. 'Invite any two of you to join my party if you can get own permission enter Nepal, bringing own food and supplies.' 'The chance of a lifetime' as Lowe put it, but which two? Hillary was one and became the next New Zealand mountaineer to impress Shipton, in so doing booking his ticket to Everest, where he would join up with Tenzing to climb the highest mountain in the world.

'Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance 1935. The Forgotten Adventure' by Tony Astill (published privately) awarded Best Book Mountaineering History at the Banff Mountain Festival 2006. Some copies still available £30 + post

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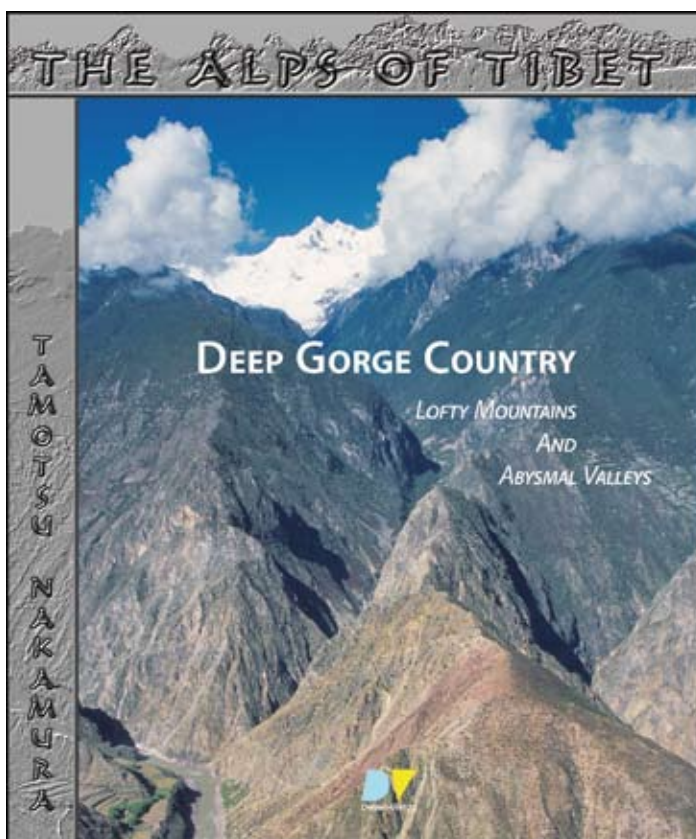
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