# CHINA

## TIBET / NYANCHEN TANGLHA WEST

### BADA RI ATTEMPT; TA RI, SOUTHWEST RIDGE

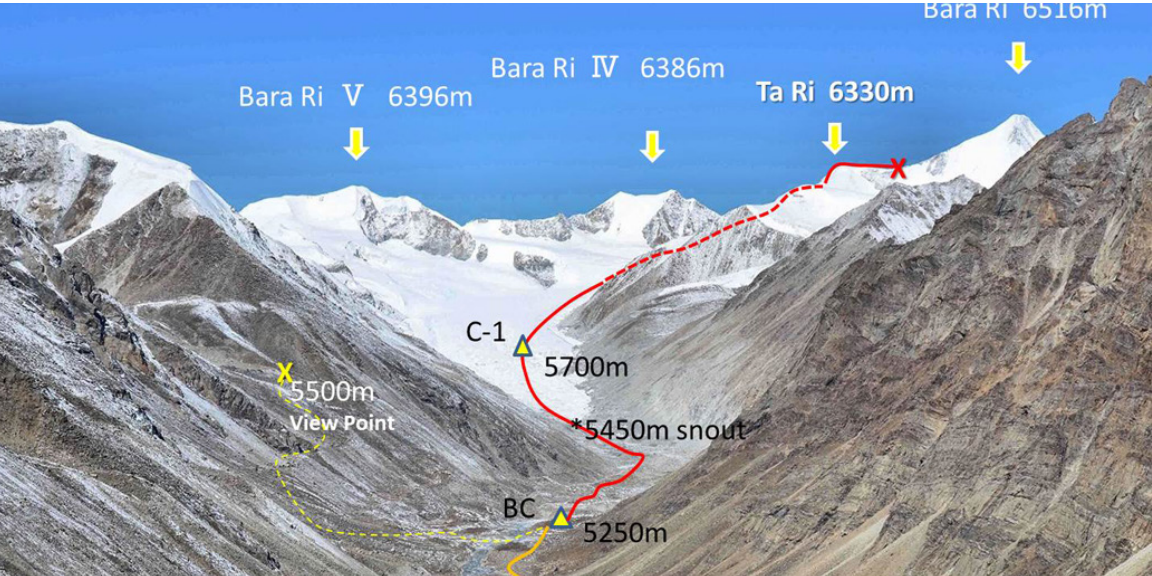
Bada Ri (6,516m) is the last unclimbed mountain over 6,500m in the western Nyanchen Tanglha (Nyainqentanglha). It lies in the middle of the range, northwest of Yanbajain, and is hidden by other peaks. Our expedition to attempt this peak, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Kobe University Alpine Club, was jointly organized between Kobe University and the Chinese University of Geosciences, Wuhan. It is believed that no climbers had entered the Bada Qu valley prior to us.

We established base camp at 5,250m, close to the confluence of the two glaciers in the Bada Qu. On October 27, after three days of reconnaissance and ferrying loads to a high camp at 5,700m on the West Bada Glacier, six members made a summit attempt. We first reached the southwest ridge of Bada Ri by a steep ice slope, on which we fixed some rope. We then continued up to the shoulder peak (6,330m GPS). The ridge ahead dropped 20m to a col and then rose in a sharp, snow-covered, rocky ridge to the summit. Three climbers tried to climb this ridge, but as the weather had been dry, there was insufficient snow cover on the very loose rock, both on the crest and flanks, so the team retreated.

The name Bada Ri comes from Tibetan Pa and Ta, which mean boar and tiger or snow leopard. Pa Ta translates into Chinese Pinyin as Bada. While Ri means mountain, the Tibetans call a snow and ice peak Kangri, so in our opinion this mountain is better named Pata Kangri. Back in base camp local people named our shoulder peak Ta Ri (later ratified by Chinese authorities). Ours was the only expedition to Tibet during the autumn, the CTMA having canceled all others after the Nepal earthquake.

— TATSUO (TIM) INOUE, *JAPAN*

[Below] (A) Bada Ri V (6,396m). (B) Bada Ri IV (6,386m). (C) Ta Ri (6,330m), showing the Japanese route. (D) Bada Ri (6,516m). *Tatsuo Inoue*



The new route on the north face of Chola II. The X marks the vicinity of the notch where Kyle Dempster was injured during the first attempt. During both ascents, the team rappelled the hidden gully descending left from this point. The 1997 Fowler route took the serac-laden face in left profile. *Bruce Normand*

## SICHUAN / CHOLA SHAN

### CHOLA II, NORTH FACE

Marcos Costa (Brazil), Kyle Dempster (USA), and I traveled to Sichuan and Yunnan in February in search of more first ascents and new routes above 6,000m in the alpine country of the eastern Himalayan uplift. After an abortive effort to access the north side of the Siguniang Range via the Bipeng Valley, which fell afoul of the park authorities, we continued to the far northwest of Sichuan, where the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Region poses few official barriers to alpine activity in the Chola, Shaluli, and Gongkala ranges.

Our target was the north face of Chola II (6,119m), which is accessible directly from 4,000m on the paved road between Ganzi and Dege, and is reached by a hike up a drainage that contained an amazingly continuous 4km frozen river. While Chola I (6,168m) is often ascended by climbing schools and guided parties, Chola II is thought to have been climbed only once, by Charlie Fowler, solo, in May 1997. Fowler's route took the northeast face from the main Chola Glacier; formerly a 50° snow slope, it was now a serac-threatened and dangerous face, unsuitable as a descent route.

Our first attempt on the north face coincided with a passing weather front, bringing high winds and light snow to accompany the bitterly cold temperatures of the Tibetan winter (down to below than -20°C). We moved quickly on the easiest slopes we could find, stopping to belay only as we approached the summit ridge, where Kyle became dangerously chilled at a notch

around 6,000m. As Marcos moved above him, Kyle was hit in the jaw by rockfall, causing an impact and injury serious enough for us to call a retreat. We rappelled a deep gully below the summit, crossing through the icefall low on the face to regain our high camp, and marched out the same day for rest and recovery in Ganzi.

Although all of us had numbness in our toes from the low temperatures, none of us was to be deterred, least of all Kyle. Returning to our high camp two days later, we retraced our steps below the upper northwest ridge, and then traversed into the true north face, where Kyle led two absorbing mixed pitches to put us on the summit of Chola II. The face is ca 800m, and all but five pitches were climbed unroped.

— **BRUCE NORMAND**, *CHINA*

[Above] Ed Hamman on typical mixed terrain during the first attempt on the north face of Asura Peak. *Paul Manson*

## SICHUAN / GANGGA RANGE

### ASURA PEAK, NORTH FACE

In late October, Paul Manson (Scotland), Norihide Yamagishi (Japan), and I (Australia) made the first ascent of the summit at the junction of the western and central massifs of the Gangga Range. It lies at the head of the Niyada Qu river valley, and we named it Asura Peak (31.473447°N, 99.910003°E). Maps give it an altitude of 5,207m, which we were unable to verify. This was the first official ascent of any of the 40 or so peaks in the range above 5,000m; one unauthorized ascent was made in 2013 (AAJ 2014).

Once we left the road at 4,200m, without porters or electronic communication devices, we were self-contained for nine days. A three-day approach took us to a cold yet ideally sited camp below the 400m north face of the mountain we eventually called Asura. Nearby peaks and passes afforded good views of the face and chances to acclimate.

On our first attempt we took a direct line up the center of the face, where we found good snow to 70°, thin ice, and rock of varying quality. There was an obvious ice line, but we found it too thin, and instead climbed increasingly difficult mixed terrain beside it. We eventually retreated after Yamagishi took two 6m falls on an overhanging pitch at ca 4,900m and lost an ice tool. Similar long lines cover the face and have great potential.

Our second attempt took a meandering line that linked two tiers of exposed snowfields via pitches of Scottish 5 mixed. These led into the obvious couloir that bisects the face. After

[Above] **Looking north from Asura Peak into the unexplored lower Niyada Qu valley and the highest peaks of the Gangga Range. From left to right: Peak 5,154m, Gangga II (5,582m), Gangga III (5,525m), and Gangga I (5,688m), all unclimbed.** *Paul Manson*

several steep snow pitches in the couloir, we arrived below an overhanging, corniced notch, surrounded by towers and dangerously loose rock; this was ca 60m below what we assumed to be the summit. We retreated down the couloir and returned to camp 13 hours after setting out.

A rest day allowed more discerning reconnaissance and confirmed the true summit would best be reached by crossing the central couloir and making a rising traverse across a series of snowfields at the base of the headwall. Several centimeters of snow fell that night, but the sky had partially cleared by midmorning. With the pressure of an unpredictable weather window, we simul-climbed to the couloir, reaching it in late morning, and then continued to simul-climb across the upper snow and mixed sections. A short, corniced ridge was followed by a traverse to the summit, which we gained at 12:30 p.m. An encroaching cloud base gave only 15 minutes to take photos of the previously unseen southern reaches of the range, as well as the southern aspects of the highest peaks and multiple alpine objectives. We reversed the route to the central couloir, where we used our previous rappel line to descend. The route gave ca 700m of climbing and was Scottish V M5 70° snow.

— **ED HANNAM**, *JAPAN*

## DECHOK PHODRANG, AUSTRO-SPANISH CLASSIC AND DECHOK DIRECT

Inspired by the published work of Japanese mountaineer Tamotsu Nakamura, an Austro-Spanish expedition visited the eastern Gangga Massif in the autumn. The expedition comprised mountaineers Gerald Boess, Judith Fall, and Paul Neil, filmmakers Lothar Hofer and Martin Sochor, and Spanish guides Martin and Simon Elias. Even though it was a guided trip, it was a team effort, as the three Austrian mountaineers organized the entire expedition, based on their previous visit to the area. They identified a peak in the middle of the eastern Gangga, east of the Zhuoda Qu valley and Ganbai Road, which local monks called Dechok


[Above] **Dechok Phodrang from the east-northeast. (1) Dechok Direct to the main summit. (2) Austro-Spanish Classic to the north summit.** ***Simon Elias Collection***

Phodrang (Palace of Happiness). This, the main peak of the eastern Gangga, has two summits, and in wintry conditions, with temperatures down to -15°C, the team managed to climb both tops by separate routes.

The group approached via the Zhuoda Qu and then a short tributary valley that branched off southeast. On November 4, after a night in high camp beneath a protective rock wall at 4,740m, where the climbers experienced an earthquake that shook the region, all except Socher followed a traversing line across and then up the east-northeast face to reach the virgin north summit, which they measured at 5,550m. They named the route Austrian-Spanish Classic (800m, D+).

Four days later the same team set off for the main summit. There had been heavy snow the previous night, and they struggled for 12 hours, sometimes breaking trail up to their hips. After climbing a couloir on the left side of the east-northeast face, and then forcing a route through a gully alongside a serac barrier, they followed a ridge to the summit, measured at 5,632m (31.45275°N, 99.99795°E). The route was named Dechok Direct (1,000m, D+).

**– LINDSAY GRIFFIN,** ***FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY*** **SIMON ELIAS,** ***SPAIN***

## SICHUAN / DAXUE SHAN – MINYA KONKA RANGE

### NYAMBO KONKA, SOUTHEAST FACE AND NORTHEAST RIDGE

On October 28, Koreans Kang Jong-jin, Kim Dong-jin, and Kim Young-yong made the first ascent of Nyambo Konka (6,114m). The nine-member expedition, led by Gang Sung-khu, approached via the Bawang Valley to the south of the mountain. They climbed the southeast flank to reach the crest of the northeast ridge, at the 5,596m low point between Nyambo Konka and Peak 6,124m. The ridge above, sharp at first, merges into the broad, glaciated northeast face, which the three summiters followed to the rounded top, arriving at 6 p.m.

Mark Jenkins and Ross Lynn (USA) attempted this side of the mountain in 2005 but

failed to reach the northeast ridge. Another attempt, via the central south ridge, was also abandoned. Jenkins returned in 2009 as part of a four-person team and attempted a similar route to the Koreans, but found the northeast ridge too corniced and crevassed to continue safely (*AAJ 2010*).

— LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *WITH INFORMATION FROM* TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *JAPAN*

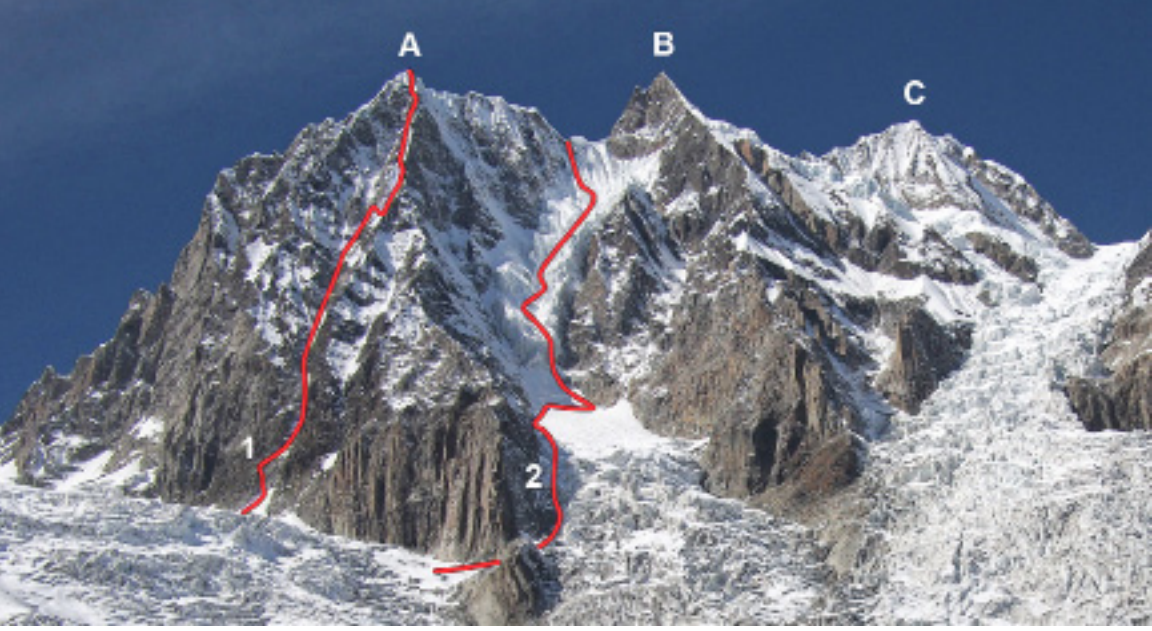
## LONG SHAN, WEST FLANK AND SOUTH RIDGE ATTEMPT; PEAK 6,124M, NORTHEAST RIDGE

Garrett Bradley, Marcos Costa, Kyle Dempster, and I headed to the Minya Konka Range for our final mountaineering quest of the winter season: one of the unclimbed peaks to the south of 7,556m Minya Konka. In 2014, Marcos, Garrett, and I had found the southern approach to these peaks and climbed Peak ca 6440m, the western sub-peak of Peak 6,468m. In February we retraced this approach, climbing to the top of the basin west of Long Shan (6,684m) and digging a solid campsite to withstand the extreme winds. As Marcos went down with a stomach bug, Garrett, Kyle, and I made a reconnaissance of Long Shan by climbing the summit to the west of our camp, denoted on the accepted maps of the range as Peak 6,124m. Despite clouds and high winds, we were given views of the south and west faces of the imposing Minya Konka, its approach glacier system, and the summit of Nyambo Konka (6,114m) to the southwest, climbed later in the year by a Korean team (*see report above*).

The next day dawned clear, so Kyle and I made a bid on Long Shan, climbing a hanging glacier system with two vertical bergschrunds. Above, long ice slopes brought us to a shoulder on the south ridge at ca 6,500m. However, the ridge to the summit, still several hundred meters distant, turned into soft, corniced snow, steeply fluted down the eastern (Hailuoguo) side, and with vertical rock on the western side. With night approaching, the cloud deck falling, and the ever-present winter winds rising, we were forced to retreat.

— BRUCE NORMAND, *CHINA*

[Below] Looking west from San Lian Southeast. (A) Nyambo Konka (6,114m). (B) Col 5,596m. The 2015 Korean expedition climbed the rocky southeast face of Nyambo Konka to Col 5,596m, and then continued southwest up the snow arête and broad, glaciated face to the summit. (C) Peak 6,124m southwest summit. (D) Peak 6,124m, climbed in 2015 by the northeast ridge (right skyline). *Rafal Zajac*




[Above] Chu Shan (a.k.a. the San Lian group) from the east. (A) San Lian Southeast. (B) San Lian Central. (C) San Lian Main. (1) Hard Camping, 2015. (2) Descent route. *Rafal Zajac*

## CHU SHAN, SAN LIAN SOUTHEAST, EAST FACE, HARD CAMPING

On November 10, after four days of climbing, Marcin Rutkowski, Wojciech Ryczer, and I completed the first ascent of San Lian Southeast (ca 6,250m), one of the three Chu Shan summits to the south of Minya Konka.

We arrived in Chengdu in mid-October, and the next day took the bus to Moxi at the entrance to Hailuogou National Park. On the 19th we took the park bus up the valley, and then a cable car to ca 3,500m. With porters unable to take our loads to the desired altitude, we spent the next few days establishing base camp and ferrying our equipment and food to the rim of the glacier (ca 4,400m) that flows east from the San Lian peaks. We then found a relatively safe route across this glacier to the foot (ca 5,260m) of the east face of San Lian Southeast.

On November 6, Wojciech led the first pitch (M7) and fixed a rope. Next day we jugged this and started up thin, aerated, sun-bleached ice, some sections of which were WI5 R. After dusk we veered left and made one rappel in order to find a place for the night. It took a lot of time and effort to construct a platform big enough for the tent.

On the 8th we regained our line, and after a number of ice and mixed pitches, together with a little traversing and one 30m rightward rappel, established ourselves in a steep snow gully. There, we found a ledge big enough for all three of us to sit, so we eagerly chose to stop and settle for the night. Next day we followed the steepening gully to an even steeper rocky arête capped with loose snow. This gave us a hard time: dry-tool bouldering at 6,000m while carrying a pack. The rock was crumbling, and the snow offered little more than psychological protection. At one point we decided to abandon the crest for the flanks (M5), but this took so long that we were forced to bivouac again. At around 11 p.m., Wojciech accidentally dropped his sleeping bag, but luckily the temperature was tolerable and there was no wind.

On November 10 we regained the arête via a pitch of M6 and climbed several exposed pitches to the corniced summit ridge. The views were stunning as we quickly traversed north

over the top and down to the col between the southeast and central (6,350m) summits. We then rappelled the east-northeast face, mainly from Abalakovs, and at 1 a.m. reached a large snowfield on the glacier between the southeast and central summits. We began walking down, but in a steeper, crevassed area I took a 15m free fall into a crevasse. Held on the rope, I managed to jug to safety and we decided to make another tent bivouac.

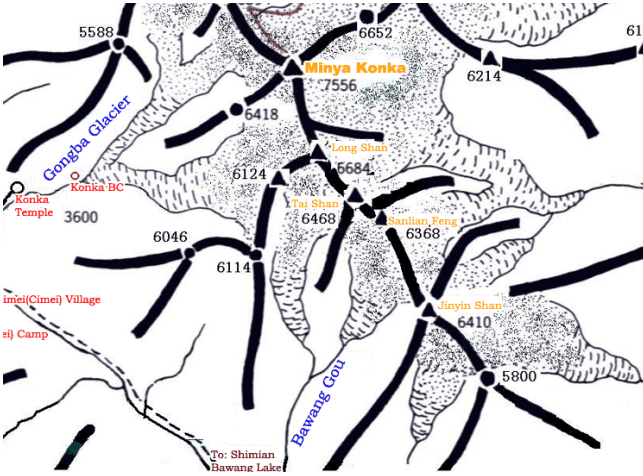
[Above] Marcin Rutkowski on the main ridge, with rocky San Lian Central just behind and pointed Peak 6,468m to the left. Long Shan (6,684m) is in the background. *Rafal Zajac*

On the 11th we continued the descent, rappelling between seracs and ice pillars bordering the foot of the east face of San Lian Southeast, until we finally reached a safe section of the glacier and regained the base of our climb that evening. Over the next two days we descended to base camp, and by the 18th were home in Poland. We felt we had managed a beautiful route on a virgin summit and named it Hard Camping (1,000m, 1,450m of climbing, ED2 M7 WI5 R).

Until now, confusing nomenclature (*see editor's note below*) has meant the three summits of the San Lian group have been assigned the altitudes 6,368m (southeast peak), 6,468m (central peak), and 6,684m (northwest peak). On returning home, and in consultation with Grzegorz Glazek, Tamotsu Nakamura, and Bruce Normand, we reassessed the heights of the three San Lian peaks to, respectively, ca 6,250m, ca 6,350m, and 6,368m. We thank the Kukuczka Foundation and the Polish Mountaineering Association for grant aid.

— RAFAL "WALDORF" ZAJAC, *POLAND*

*Editor's note: Recent climbing activity on the peaks constituting the watershed ridge running south from Minya Konka has given rise to some confusion over their nomenclature. The earliest names published in the West date from 1929–1931, when this range was visited by the Swiss geologist Arnold Heim, who at the time was a professor at the Sun*




[Map] Peaks to the south of Minya Konka (Gongga Shan): (A) TK TK. (B) TK TK TK. (C) TK TK TK TK. (D) TTK TK TK TK TK.

*Yat-Sen University in China. In 1930 he was accompanied by Eduard Imhof, a Swiss cartographer, who surveyed the area, made a map, measured the height of Minya Konka, and confirmed the existence of its three principal glaciers.*

*The most prominent feature visible from the gateway Hailuogou Glacier is the last high peak at the southern end of the ridge, Peak 6,410m. Heim and Imhof gave this mountain the name Mt. Tai (Tai Shan), after Tai Chi–Chao, a member of the university team who accompanied the expedition and, from an organizational perspective, made it possible. This peak has appeared on recent sketch maps with the Chinese name Jinyin Shan (Gold-Silver Mountain).*

*The other prominent feature when viewed from the lower Hailuogou is a three-peaked mountain, Peak 6,368m, which Heim and Imhof designated Mt. Chu, after Chu Chia-Hua, another university member who accompanied the expedition. This mountain has become known on local Chinese maps as San Lian Feng (Three Connecting Peaks). Additional confusion has been caused by the attribution of the name Mt. Chu (Chu Shan) to surveyed points farther north on the watershed ridge, including Peaks 6,468m and even 6,684m, although these are difficult or impossible to see from the Hailuogou valley.*

*The 1981 Swiss expedition that made the first ascent of Tai Shan followed the convention of Heim and Imhof, and, if one maintains this nomenclature, then the summits on the main ridge, from south to north, should be referred to as Tai Shan (6,410m), Chu Shan (San Lian Southeast, San Lian Central, San Lian Main (6,368m), Peak 6,468m, Peak 6,460m (western top of Peak 6,468m), Long Shan (Dragon Mountain, 6,684m), and Minya Konka (7,556m). Point 6,858m, close to Minya Konka and sometimes misidentified as Long Shan, has no prominence and cannot be considered a separate top.*

## SICHUAN / QIONGLAI SHAN – SIGUNIANG NATIONAL PARK

### ABI, NORTHEAST FACE

During the approach to Huang Guan Feng (Crown Peak) in 2014 (AAJ 2015), I saw a striking ice line on the northeast face of Abi (5,694m). In late January, Enzo Oddo (France) was around and psyched to make an alpine ascent, and I felt this would be a perfect target for us.

We started from the head of the Shuangqiao Valley at 11 a.m., and by 4 p.m. we were threading through deep snow below the face. We pitched the tent and had time to check out the first couple of pitches, which were technical mixed. By 5 the next morning we were climbing. Enzo climbed the first two mixed pitches in the dark, after which one more mixed pitch led to a snowfield. Above, 300m of simul-climbing brought us to the crux ice and mixed pitches. We managed these quickly, arrived at an amphitheater, and then climbed a couple more technical mixed pitches to the summit ridge, where we found a nice ledge on which to bivouac. Next morning we reached the summit, descended to our tent, and continued to the valley floor. The route is one of the most complete, technical, and beautiful I have done in this area.

**– MARCOS COSTA, *CHINA***

### SEERDENGPU, WEST FACE, ATTEMPT

In January, Marcos Costa (China) and Enzo Oddo (France) attempted the 900m west face of Seerdengpu (5,592m) via the same gully line that Costa had tried with American Pat Goodman in October 2014 (*AAJ 2015*), retreating because of melting ice and loose rock. This time, Costa

[Photo] Marcos Costa on steep ice during the first ascent of the north-east face of Abi. *Enzo Oddo*

found the gully to be in excellent condition, with a couple of overhanging mixed sections, but the pitch above was deemed too dangerous to continue, because of loose rock.

— LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *WITH INFORMATION FROM* MARCOS COSTA, *CHINA*

### SHUANGQIAO VALLEY, EAGLE PEAK (CA 5,300M), SOUTHWEST FACE, GOLDEN EAGLE; NEW DRY-TOOLING ROUTES.

My main goal for the 2014-'15 winter was to complete the Great Wall of China Project, a link-up of the three most iconic peaks of the Shuangqiao Valley. This would involve making the first ascent of Queen's Peak (Nuwang Shan, 5,404m), the second ascent of Seerdengpu (5,592m), and then finishing on Putala Shan (Potala, 5,428m), before descending to Baihaizi Lake. Visiting Frenchman Enzo Oddo and I were not expecting the cold to be so severe. After difficult climbing in a deep, narrow couloir, we reached the col on Queen's Peak's northeast ridge but then retreated, both of us nearly frostbitten. This plan remains in the forefront of my mind.

Eagle Peak has one of the most striking granite walls in the Shuangqiao Valley: completely overhanging for 300m, covered in beautiful golden streaks, and in sun almost all day—a perfect winter big-wall location. Enzo and I took six days to complete a line to the left of my own route Invisible Hand Sit Start (AAJ 2014), sleeping in a portaledge. Most pitches were A2+ to A3+, and the cracks were grassy, making progress slow. The last pitch had 15 beak, Pecker, and micro-nut placements in a row. We named the route Golden Eagle (300m, A3+)

Enzo and I also opened about 25 new pitches of mixed climbing or dry tooling in the Shuangqiao. The two areas on which we mostly focused were Xianxiandong, a new area developed specifically for the Kailash Dry Tooling event, and the Bar, the next cliff up-valley. Grades range from M3 to M11/12.

— MARCOS COSTA, *CHINA*

[Left] Dave Anderson on pitch five (5.9 R) of Secret Moon Cake, southeast face of Eagle Peak East. *Szu-ting Yi*

### EAGLE PEAK EAST, SECRET MOON CAKE

I first saw Eagle Peak East (5,300m) in the fall of 2013, after completing the first ascent of Dayantianwo in the Shuangqiao Valley (AAJ 2014). While enjoying the spectacular view from the summit, my wife, Szu-ting Yi, and I noticed a large shark's tooth spire just to the north. We later learned this mountain was part of the Eagle Rock group, a prominent trio of rock


[Above] **Eagle Peak East from the south. (1) Kyousai (2007). (2) Secret Moon Cake (2015).** *Dave Anderson*

towers that rise above Baihaizi Lake.

Eagle Peak East had only one published ascent, in August 2007, by a Japanese team that followed the lower-angled southwest face. Toshio Hirayama, Keiichi Nagatomo, Naoki Ouchi (also spelled Ohuchi), Kazuko Ouchi, and Yoshiaki Senoh also referred to the peak as Wagrusei (Warglesei in AAJ 2015). They completed their 680m route, Kyousai, in 16 pitches at 5.10c A1.

On September 12 we returned to the Shuangqiao Valley and established a base camp at the foot of Eagle Peak East. The weather was unsettled—we experienced rain and snow almost every day. We initially attempted a route up the south face following a central chimney and crack system. The line turned out to be the main drainage for the upper section of the peak, which made for challenging, wet climbing. In addition, we found numerous bolts and pitons on the first two pitches from an unknown attempt.

Not wanting to follow someone else's route in a waterspout, we rappelled and looked for other options. We eventually settled on a route up the southeast face, fixed four ropes, and waited for a break in the weather. On September 23 we jugged our ropes and continued up sparsely protected steep slabs. At a large ledge system we traversed to the east ridge and followed featured granite to the summit. We rappelled our route, arriving back at base camp after 18 hours of effort. No bolts or pins were placed during the ascent or descent. We called the route Secret Moon Cake (760m 5.10 R), after the delicious pastries people in China enjoy during the mid-autumn festival.

**— DAVE ANDERSON, *USA***

# KAWAGEBO RANGE: FIRST SUMMIT SUCCESS

## BY BRUCE NORMAND

In February, after making the first ascent of Chola II in northwestern Sichuan (*see report earlier in this section*) Marcos Costa, Kyle Dempster, and I headed to the Kawagebo Range, following up on a reconnaissance that Marcos and I had made in 2014. This range, also referred to as Meili Xueshan or Kang Karpo, lies in the far northwest corner of Yunnan province, forming the border the Tibet Autonomous Region, and is most famous for the beautifully fluted, triangular peak of Mianzimu (6,054m).

This area's highest summit, unclimbed Kawagebo (6,740m), is the second-most sacred mountain in the pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism, after Kailas, and in 1991 was the scene of an infamous episode in the history of mountaineering and Sino-Tibetan relations. The Chinese authorities granted climbing permission to a joint Chinese-Japanese expedition, over the strenuous objections of the Tibetan community. The matter was resolved only when an avalanche took the lives of all 17 of the members, and the peak has been closed for the past 15 years.

Hidden far to the north end of the chain is the second-highest peak, Cogar Lapka (6,509m, attempted twice by Americans, AAJs 1993 and 1994). Joined by Garrett Bradley (USA), we began our approach from 2,100m, near the Mekong River—not for nothing is this known as the Deep Gorge Country. We spent our first morning in discussion with the villagers and local police at the last settlement, where Garrett's excellent Mandarin and skillful diplomacy saw us through. We then hiked steep and little-used trails through thick, mixed forests of bamboo and conifers, camping for the first night by the river. On the second day we moved above treeline, crossing summer yak pastures and unused settlements, and sleeping high on a small, icy glacier.

The third day of approach involved soloing up loose snow and ice gullies to 50°, with significant stonefall threat, to gain a 5,500m col between Nairi Denka (6,379m) to the southeast and a mountain I'll call Peak 6,260m (estimate from Google Earth) to the north. From there we gained a further 200m by climbing north along the ridge toward Peak 6,260m, but then had to downclimb and rappel 150m to the glacier below the east face of Cogar Lapka, finally placing a camp at ca 5,650m.

The following morning was clear. We moved rapidly to climb the northern edge of the glacier basin to the col between Peak 6,260m and Cogar Lapka, with a view to climbing the upper east ridge. (None of the possible east face routes were remotely safe.) Getting to this ca 6,050m col required climbing ice to 60°, and we were greeted on top by howling winds and a descending whiteout, which drove us back to camp.

The next morning was again clear, but since Garrett was too tired and Kyle was too tired of the constant objective dangers, only Marcos and I left camp. We regained our high point and continued up the minor cornices and occasional crevasses of the east ridge. The dramatic views to Peak 6,260m and over the Kawagebo Range soon were blotted out by incoming clouds, which denied us the hoped-for views into southeastern Tibet.

The terrain pushed us to the north side of the ridge and into deeper snow, where Marcos opted to cross a bergschrund with an extremely athletic move through an overhanging ice bulge, and was then left trying to haul my sorry carcass up this feature while anchored only by his legs sunk into the snow (causing him to contemplate the value of the belay knife). This turned out to be the last difficulty, beyond which a final slog up a low-angle ridge brought us to the summit crest, which we mapped out by braille in the whiteout, recording 6,516m by GPS. To our knowledge this is the first summit climbed in the entire Kawagebo Range.

The descent was uneventful, a snow stake taking the teeth out of the overhanging bulge. The storm abated above the col, giving us evening views of Peak 6,260m, and night fell as we were V-threading down the ice face below the col in renewed snowfall. Kyle and Garrett shone some light to guide us in. The next morning was wildly windy as we climbed back out of the glacier basin and went down the stonefall-threatened face to the glacier. We slept that night in the yak pastures at 4,000m, walked out the next day, and thawed out with a few days of spring-like rock climbing in the valley floors.

*Summary: First ascent of Cogar Lakpa (6,516m), second-highest peak of the Kawagebo Range in northwestern Yunnan Province, by the upper east ridge, Marcos Costa and Bruce Normand, February 2015.*

[Left] **Bruce Normand battles the wind on the upper east ridge of Cogar Lapka, with the summit almost in sight.** ***Marcos Costa*** [Right] **Unclimbed Peak 6,260m , seen from the east ridge of Cogar Lapka.** ***Marcos Costa***

## YUNNAN

### JIDEGE SHAN EXPLORATION

The Indian climber Anindya Mukherjee explored a group of peaks northeast of Yulong Xueshan (a.k.a. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, 5,596m) and Haba Xueshan (5,396m), which he called Jidege Shan after a small village of this name below the western side of the southern end of the range. In mid-April, Mukherjee climbed two small peaks (coordinates in online report) and photographed unclimbed rocky summits of the group (ca 4,000–4,500m).

— LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *WITH INFORMATION FROM* ANINDYA MUKHERJEE, *INDIA*

## SHAANXI PROVINCE / QIN MOUNTAINS

### HUA SHAN SOUTH PEAK, SOUTH FACE, HIGH TIDE OR LOW TIDE

In October, Gu Chizhi, Wei Guangguang, Wang Zhiming, and I established a new route on the south face of Landing Goose Summit, high point of the south peak of Hua Shan, left of the 2014 route Never Give Up (*AAJ 2015*). We expected clear, dry days, but in fact encountered several unexpected early winter storms during our 13-day capsule-style ascent.

On October 24, after we'd fixed rope on the first two pitches, the first rainstorm arrived and we hid in a cave 20m above the ground until the 27th, when the weather finally cleared. That day we climbed 160m, ending at midnight. Next day it was drizzling and we took a rest day. Progress over the following two days was slow due to wide cracks and heavy vegetation. Just after we established our second portaledge camp on the 30th, it began to snow. This lasted 24 hours and we had a cold and wet Halloween. On November 2 we reached a headwall where the crack system we had been following stopped. We began aid climbing and had to make a few pendulums to connect cracks. That night the wind howled and punched our portaledges, preventing anyone from getting any sleep. Fortunately, once the sun rose the wind died down, and beautiful granite cracks made us forget our fatigue.

More bad weather was coming, but on the 4th, after some slow chimney climbing, the angle of the face diminished. After fighting heavy vegetation for another four pitches, we reached the top in the dark and rain. We all felt a bit weightless back on solid ground. Rain quickly turned to snow, and it was not until three days later that we could retrieve all our gear. We named the route High Tide or Low Tide (690m, 18 pitches, VI 5.11 C2), due to the rain, snow, and wind we endured on the wall.

— GRIFF, *CHINA*

### HUA SHAN SOUTH PEAK, CLIMB LIKE YOU ARE DYING

In July, He Chuan soloed a new route on the south side of Hua Shan's South Peak. He spent eight days on the route, which he called Climb Like You Are Dying (580m, 20 pitches, VI 5.10+ R A3). In 2014, He Chuan and Zhu Xiaofei climbed the first route up the south face of Landing Goose Summit on South Peak: Never Give Up (600m, VI 5.10+ R C2+, *AAJ 2015*). [*The online versions of these Hua Shan reports has a new photo showing all three routes on the south face.*]

— DOUGALD MACDONALD