

overhanging a 55°, 300m ice slope with protruding rocks. To the left loomed Vostochnaya Pobeda, which frequently avalanches, covering the glacier with snow dust and ice debris.

From the upper reaches of Southern Inyl'chek, we continued across a pass (5,300m) between Peak Druzhba and Peak Richarda Zorge. We decided to name the pass after the outstanding Russian and Kazak alpinist Valerii Krishchaty, who in 1990 made an unprecedented traverse from Peak Vazha Pshavela—crossing Peak Pobeda, Peak Voennykh Topografov, and the Meridional Ridge—to the Vostochnyi (Eastern) Schater.

A huge cornice overhung east of the col, so we decided to descend the north end of the ridge, where an 800m long, 40° to 55° ice slope led to a small plateau that ended at an ice-fall. We finished the descent by sidestepping the ice-fall by going through a 700-meter ice couloir, then onto the Tugabed'chi Glacier. As far as we know, we were the first people to visit this glacier, which is very different from the Inyl'chek area and the Chon-Teren. The air was much drier, and the glaciers were covered with seracs.

To the northeast, we saw an unknown, yellowish 6,000m peak, which was part of the eastern extension of the Tengri-Tag range. We headed onto the first southern tributary, under the southern slope of Peak 6,342. The satellite photos had not been able to foretell the difficulties we encountered there: and very complex ice-fall, which took two very tense days to get through. Then we spent the next 24 hours in a blizzard!

At our final pass, Tugabel'chi (5,200m), we had to descend 350 meters of vertical granite to get out of the cirque (the map showed only ice slopes, and the satellite photographs were no help). At the same time, we had to deal with avalanches from Peak 6,342.

Finally, on our long march out on the Kichi-Teren glacier, then through woods at 3,200m, we encountered a group of surprised Kirghiz locals, who had never seen Europeans before.

OTTO CHKHETIANI, RUSSIA (*translated by Henry Pickford*)

SICHUAN

Minya Konka, eighth ascent and new route on nearby Eva Shan. If you love sunny places, Sichuan isn't the area of your dreams. The climbers of French High Mountain Military Group went there last autumn to climb Minya Konka (or Gongga Shan 7,556m). They spent one month at base camp (4,400m) as there were only 4 days of good weather during which reach the summit. We didn't acclimatize well and there was really a lot of fresh snow. Only two days after arriving at base camp, most of the climbers had already climbed one of the two acclimatisation peaks: Gomba (5,605m) or Nochma (5,575m). Laurent did a paragliding flight from the summit of Nochma. But the day after this, came the snow. They stayed above us for 10 days. We could only walk around base camp. Our main activities were to dig a path into the snow, eating, sleeping, reading, and playing cards, all significant expeditionary skills. Nevertheless, Greg and Manu climbed a gully on Eva Shan 5,705m (Eva is Greg's daughter) Plate-forme (800m, D+).

We gave up our first project, which had been to climb a new route on the southwest ridge of Minya Konka. On October 6th, six climbers returned to and slept at the high point reached earlier, 5,700m. The day after, they climbed into deep snow to 6,300m and put camp 3 behind the "hump." From the top of the "hump," at 6,400m, we rappelled. The third day, at 3:00 a.m., Philippe, Thomas, the two Laurents, François, and Antoine left camp. Four of us had to stop around 7,000m because we were poorly acclimatized. Laurent M. climbed up to 7,400m carry-

ing his paraglider, but he couldn't fly. Antoine reached the top at 10 a.m. Two days later, the snow came back. Nobody could try again. On October 15th, we were trekking back to the monastery. Only eight expeditions have reached that summit from two ridges (northwest and northeast), for a total of 20 climbers since 1932. The main difficulties are situated after 7,100m with 45°/50° slopes.

Team members were: Jérôme Blaise (Doctor), Laurent Carrier, Antoine De Choudens, Thomas Faucheur, Laurent Miston, Grégory Muffat-Joly, Emmanuel Pellissier, Philippe Renard, François Savary. (See "Minya Konka" in AAJ 2002 for the story of the first ascent—Ed.)

ANTOINE DE CHOUDEN, *French High Mountain Military Group (GMHM)*

Siguniang, first ascent of north face. Taking 6 days, Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden made the first ascent of the north face of Siguniang, in April, 2002. Then, they made a two-day descent of the unclimbed north ridge. Most of days they endured snow, but they were rewarded with a glorious, clear summit day. Difficulties ranged from grade VI rock to poor quality, nearly vertical ice (Scottish VI). The ice choked dike was 750m long, with several long vertical pitches and two overhanging sections. The climb was made using only natural protection; bolts were not carried. See the "Siguniang" lead article earlier in this Journal.

Jarjinjabo Mountains, Kham Region, various first ascents. In October Peter Athans, Robert Mackinlay, Hilaree Nelson, Jared Ogden, Kasha Rigby, and Mark Synott made various first ascents on the Zhopu Spires and the first ascent of the northern Jarjinjabo Massif. See the "Jarjinjabo" lead article earlier in this Journal for an account.

Dangchezhengla (5,833m), first ascent. Two climbers from the Hengduan Mountains Club (HMC)—Kyoaki Miyagawa and Junta Murayama—made the first ascent of this beautiful, hidden snow peak, reaching a foggy summit at noon on June 17. Dangchezhengla is in the Shaluli Shan Range, about 12km northeast of Batang, near the Tibetan border.

Our team—myself, Kimikazu Sakamoto (leader, 62), Kyoaki Miyagawa (61), Shojiro Tanaka (61), and Junta Murayama (35)—originally applied to the Mountaineering Association of Sichuan (MAS) for permission to climb three peaks: Dangchezhengla (6,060m), Central Peak (6,033m), and West Peak (5,833m). But the MAS named our expedition the "2002 Japan Yangmolong Expedition," and we received a permit for Mt. Yangmolong (not Dangchezhengla). Our "Letter of Invitation" from the China Mountain Association (CMA) also said Yangmolong, so to avoid confusion we decided to call the 6,060m peak Yangmolong.

But after we entered the area, we talked to 30 villagers in Zhongba who go up to the high pastures with their yaks and gather caterpillar fungus for Chinese traditional medicine. They told us that the 5,833m peak, which is visible from their village along the Ichu River, is called Dangchezhengla—and they call the 6,033m peak Makara, and the 6,060m peak is Bongonzhong. They said that Yangmolong is not the name of a mountain, but is the name of a pasture about 2km south of Bongonzhong. In the end, the MAS gave Miyagawa and Murayama climbing certificates for Dangchezhengla.

Our team departed from Chengdu on May 28, arriving in two cars at Batang on May 30 (via Kangding and Yajiang). The village chief of Dongba arranged for 16 horses and yaks, and 6 horsemen from Zhongba. We went to Zhongba (3,835m) and stayed for three nights to