



The great and crappy north ridge of Shingu Charpa (5,600m). The American attempt (Davis-McCray-Offenbacher-Warren, 2001) went up the line on the right and bailed down the left line. The Austrian-Slovenian attempt (Mair-Mayr-Skok-Skok, 2004) gained the ridge up the left line, but did not ascend further. The Canadian attempt (Edgar-Geisler, 2004) climbed the right-hand line and continued to its highpoint. The original Korean route climbed the obvious couloir to its top, then angled left up the rock/mixed wall to the summit. Photo and route info from *Chris Geisler*

*Shingu Charpa (Great Tower, 5,600m, north ridge attempt.* Dave Edgar and I traveled to the Nangma Valley this past summer with our eyes set on the impressive unclimbed north ridge of Shingu (Shjingu) Charpa, east of the small village of Kande. The north ridge is an amazing visual feature. However, its rock quality and vegetated nature detracted significantly from our experience, as it did for others who attempted it this year. Nonetheless we made three attempts, each time hoping to take two to three days roundtrip, which allowed us to dispense with sleeping gear other than a tiny tarp and an insulated jacket each. Our first attempt had us almost to the American highpoint (Nils Davis, Brian McCray, Todd Offenbacher, and Brenton Warren, 2001) in one day. Without a bolt kit, I was forced to rappel 60 meters off of a single purple TCU during our descent after a cold snowy night. The cracks were most often shallow and almost always packed with hard dirt. This meant that even featureless sections might have the odd tuft of grass poking out of a tiny seam. It was only a matter of time before the tufts would rip out under our feet, but they helped us continue on.

The weather during our stay was generally poor, and during the sessions of good weather one of us was usually too sick to get out of bed. We did manage to make some headway despite our poor luck. We made better time during our second attempt, reaching the American highpoint

with an hour and a half of daylight to spare. Despite making variations to avoid some dicey places on our first go, I still got to jumar a rope weighted directly off of Dave's waist. With descent info from our US friends, we headed off the left side, and were able to safely return to camp in the dark, faster than down the ridge itself. The following day it poured rain.

Finally we had run out of time and we needed to make a last attempt before catching our plane home. The weather had not quite settled, but we thought it was worth a try. Now familiar with the opening terrain up to 10a, we left camp at midnight, climbing a few hours in the dark. We made great time despite climbing through a light blizzard, and headed into new terrain. Unfortunately the blizzard picked up, so we hunkered down beneath a large boulder, burrowing a tight space for two. A small meal and some intimate snuggling got us through the night. Thankful for our 20 minutes of sleep, we struggled out of our barricade the following morning and headed upward again. Several pitches further we found ourselves on a small ledge, looking up at another 3,000 feet, having already climbed approximately 22 60-meter pitches. We decided to head down. We were in no state to continue the pitches with no protection and unsubstantial belays. We returned to camp safely and headed out of the valley a couple of days later.

The Nangma is a very beautiful valley, and we recommend making a visit, however we found the rock to be mostly uncondusive to free climbing, though it does seem to support prolonged aid climbing projects. We were disappointed with Shingu Charpa's ridge, given our expectations of a long, quality rock climb. It is certainly a stiff challenge that won't give in easily. Best of luck to those who are still inspired!

We are thankful for the generous support of Mountain Equipment Coop, who assisted us both financially and with gear. They were willing to stand behind us even though attempting this long steep ridge in a lightweight style might mean returning empty handed. We are also thankful for the Mugs Stump Award and Helly Hansen-ACC Mountain Adventure Award, as these also made our trip possible.

CHRIS GEISLER, *Vancouver, Canada*