

ridge to reach the summit. Heart of Cow (4,942m) became for a moment “our” peak and we realised looking at the descent why it had not been climbed before.

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ANNE ARRAN, *United Kingdom*

Qionglai Shan, Nuixim Shan, northwest side, attempt. Shaluli Shan, Jarjinjabo Massif: Spank Peak (ca 17,500'), south face, attempt; Jarjinjabo, south ridge. Andy Bourne, Misty Tyler, Anitra Accetturo, and I traveled to western Sichuan Province, China on September 20. Our goal was to explore and attempt as many objectives as possible in the Qionglai Range, and later in the Jarjinjabo Massif.

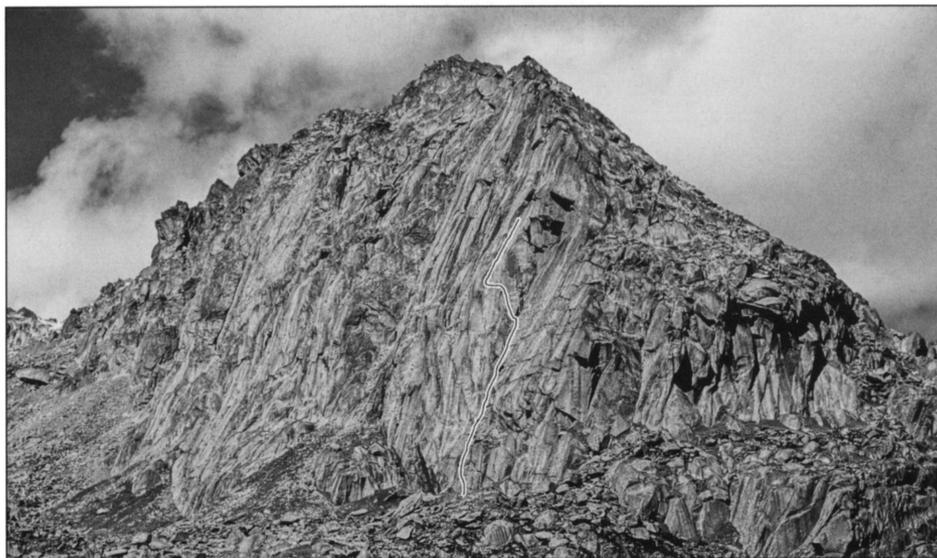
We first went to the town of Rilong, in the Qionglai Range. We attempted to hike up into the Changping Gou to check out options there, but were disenchanted with the approach and our time constraints, not to mention we did not even get a chance to see the peaks through the clouds and rain. Next we drove into the Shuanqiao Gou, which is the next valley to the west of the Changping, to scope options, and faced with a decision on which valley to basecamp in, we decided to stay in the Shuanqiao. Camping next to the locals' roadside food and wares stands, we were treated very cordially, and were able to “eat out” for meals the days we spent in camp. The weather here at this time of year was abysmal. Rain and/or snow every night but one, yet clearing partially every afternoon. This weather pattern resulted in lots of acclimatization hikes and photographing peaks. One attempt was made on the northwest side of Nuixim Shan by Andy, Misty, and Anitra; it ended about 300 feet shy of the summit due to fresh snow and cold temperatures. The monsoon did not seem to end this year, but supposedly this is the time to come.

After returning to Chengdu and regrouping, we went to the Jarjinjabo Massif on the western edge of Sichuan Province. On October 16 we hired a jeep driver in Litang to take us to Zhopu Gomba, on the northern shore of Zhopu Lake. We basecamped upvalley from the gomba and made an attempt on Spank Peak (ca 17,500'). Spank Peak is located on the north side of the Jarjinjabo Massif about two miles up the drainage to the east of the Massif. Andy and I climbed four pitches up the south face, but were turned back as the dihedral pinched out to a bottoming seam. Still, climbing beautiful new ground up to about 5.10b was exhilarating. On October 26 Misty and I as one team and Andy and Anitra as another did two climbs up the east aspect of Jarjinjabo south ridge directly above the Gomba. Our climb topped out on the ridge after about 1,200' of climbing in a beautiful dihedral up to about 5.8. After 800' or so, Andy and Anitra's climb ended in bushwacking and lichen slabs to just below the peak we dubbed “The Asterisk” (a sub peak of Jarjinjabo).

The cold, short days during the month of November kept us from attempting anything higher than 17,000ft. in the Jarjinjabo Massif. Earlier is better. We then parted ways and went to Thailand to sport climb and Yunnan Province to sightsee. A bit of vacation is needed after seven weeks in China.

ERIK JOHNSON, AAC

Daxuetang-feng (5,364m), second ascent, new route. Daxuetang-feng is a well-known mountain visible from the road from Chengdu to Balang Pass (south of Rilong and the Siguiniang mas-



Spank Peak, scene of the spanking. *Erik Johnson*

sif). More than 10 Chinese teams have tried to climb this peak. On the 8th of October, five Japanese and one Chinese members of our joint party summited Daxuetang-feng. However, a pennant on the summit established that a Beijing mountaineering team had already reached it. Much to our disappointment, this proved that we were the second party to reach it. However, our route ascended the center of a glacier at a slope of more than 70°, and it will possibly become the standard route for this mountain. Therefore, we consider our climb very meaningful.

The team members of the China-Japan Joint Party: Japanese members from the Hakusan (Matto) Fuuro Mountaineering Club: joint team leader Rentaro Nishijima, assistant team leader Akira Hoshiba, climbing chief Masanori Kawamura, and members Yasunori Tanaka, Toshiaki Tamai, Sachiyo Manizaki, Shigeru Yasuda, and Takashi Suzuki. Chinese members: team leader Li Qing, members He Qin and Feng Yilong, and support staff Gao Yi, Qin Znenglin, and Tang Ping.

Ascent of Daxuetang-feng (October 1-11): We hire 35 porters for a total of 49 members, including 8 Japanese and 6 Chinese. Leaving Dengsheng in fog, we make our way to Yeniugou, a valley beneath Dengsheng, cross a bridge and go along the left bank of a river flowing from Daxuetang-feng. A mossy path continues through a forest of conifers, rhododendrons, and bamboo where pandas likely live. After walking more than six hours, we reach Baishuitaizi Plateau (3,600m). The steepness of the place does not justify its designation as a "Plateau." Further up, we see that the north face of Daxuetang-feng is unclimbable due to loose rocks. We then climb along a valley from Ganhaizi, go around to the right where the east face of Daxuetang-feng becomes visible, and establish Base Camp at Heihaizi (4,700m).

The team decides on the ice wall route right in front of BC. The lower part of the ice wall is shaped like the bottom of a funnel. Two pitches are fixed, but snow begins to fall heavily in the afternoon, so we decide to cancel tomorrow's route operation. It snows all the next day. Route operation resumes on October 6 despite new snow accumulation of about 30cm. The fresh snow appears to be holding down falling rocks. Four members extend the route another two pitches from the previous spot. The porters who carried up the last of our loads shout with

joy to see the top member of the operation team appearing from behind a rock after passing a difficult crux. The members return 200m short of the top.

October 7: Through binoculars, Suzuki can be seen standing only with the toe points of his crampons stuck into the ice wall, with almost the entire soles of his boots visible to us at BC. We see him inserting ice screws with one hand. This is quite a risky climb at high altitude and lack of oxygen. We hold our collective breaths as we fear he may not withstand the fatigue in his calves, or the toe points may not hold. We feel a sense of relief as his wheezing voice reaches BC by radio: "Belay removed. Climb on." At about 13:00, the three members of the operation team can be seen from BC standing on the plateau after climbing the 400m ice wall with a slope of 70°. They report by radio: "There are two peaks. We can't tell which is higher. We have time, so we'll climb the right peak today, and climb the left one tomorrow. The left one may need a lot of rope fixing."

The right peak is probably the pyramid-shaped peak seen from Balang Pass, and the left peak is the trapezoid-shaped, snow-capped one peeking on its left. In appearance and on the map, both peaks seem to be 5,364m. The team names the right peak Peak I, the left Peak II, and another peak, which is described as 5,354m on the map (hidden by Peak II) is called Peak III. Peak III is presumed to be the glaciated peak on the right side of Peak I, as seen from Balang Pass.

October 8: The advance team aims for Peak I and proceeds beside the walls of the crevasses and glacier. As the ground is relatively flat, no fixed rope is used. At the head of the glacier a gully 20m long, 1.5m wide, and 70° leads to a col. From there, a narrow 60° ridge of loose rocks crumbles easily with each step, making it impossible to hammer pitons to fix ropes. The Chinese member, He Qin, retires, saying, "It's crazy." At 09:36, Tanaka and Kawamura reach the summit, followed by Suzuki and the Chinese team leader, Li. The summit is only one square meter in size, so all of them cannot stand together. However, it commands a spectacular 360° view. Siguniang-shan and the Ganzi mountains can be seen. They find a relatively new pennant of a Chinese team with "Beijing" printed on it. Nishijima and Hoshiba come up after a while.

As I take in the scene while descending to the col from the summit, I have mixed emotions as the joint team leader. Looking up, I can see the massif snow-capped, trapezoidal Peak II on the left. It may be unclimbed, but there is no time for us to reach it. Satisfied with the second ascent of Peak I by a new route, we descend.

The team left behind a fixed rope in the gully after cutting close to 15m to be used for descent. Also left behind were two pitons on top of the ice wall. By using the 100m rope on those pitons, all the other pitons and ropes were recovered. Although not perfect, the team endeavored to leave the mountain as clean as possible.

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