

tion in order to protect a couple of short, 45-50° bulges. We encountered weak, sugary snow on two of these bulges, triggering a small slab avalanche (about 15cm deep) on one of them.

The ridge leads to a plateau a couple of hundred meters long at around 6550 meters. Geladaintong's sharp summit rises from the southeast end of this plateau with one short pitch of steep snow leading to the peak. We summited around 1 p.m., and returned to CII around 4:30 in the afternoon, descending all the way back to base camp the following day.

MARK NEWCOMB, *unaffiliated*

SICHUAN PROVINCE

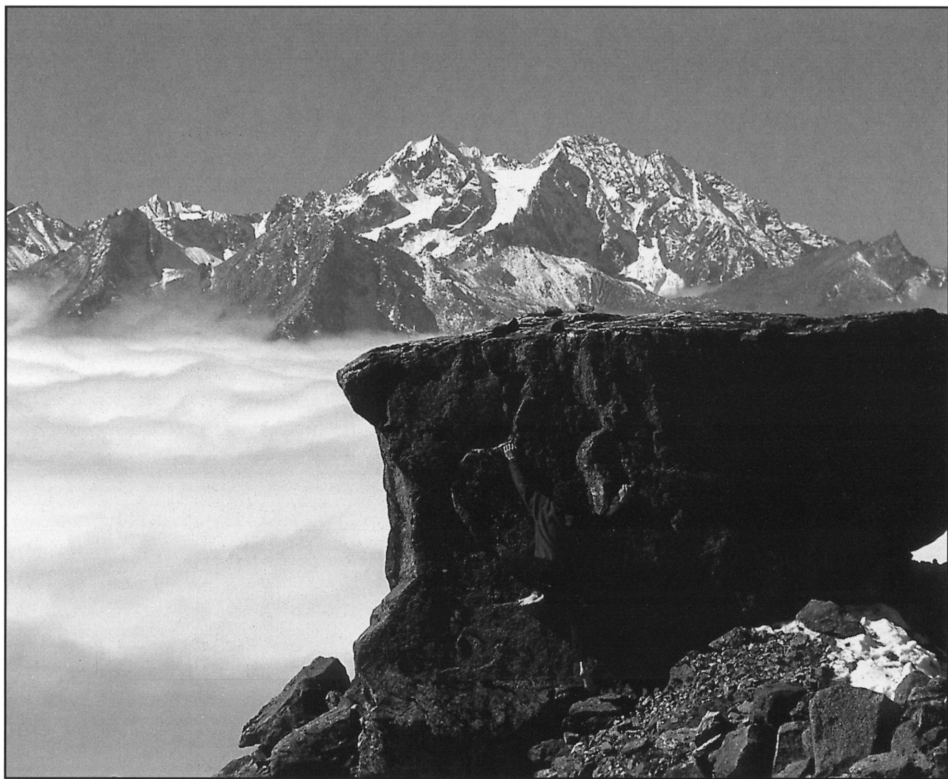
DAXUE SHAN

Daxue Shan Range, Various Ascents. During the month of October, 1996, Fred Beckey led an expedition to the Daxue Shan range of central Sichuan Province in the People's Republic of China. The marketing people at Ross Labs agreed to support the trip financially as Fred offered his services as spokesman for their nutritional drink Ensure. The climbing team included John Chilton, Jia Condon, and Rich Prohaska, all from Whistler, B.C., Mark Carter from New Zealand and Steve Must from Seattle. Three mountains were summited for the first time in an area north-northeast of Gongga Shan known as the Lamo-she range. The three peaks extend north from the mountain known as Lamo-she (the Goddess Peak, 6070m), which was first climbed in 1993 by Grey Thompson and Jon Turk (see *AAJ* 1994, pp. 269-70). The compact range of mountains all hover around 6000.

Fred had extensively reconnoitered the surrounding terrain during the 1993 trip. This eased most of our logistical problems. With the assistance of our Chinese liaison Shao and Jing Jing, a few Tibetan horsemen and their team of horses, we established an initial base camp at 13,500 feet in a valley below two of our objectives and only a day's hike from the nearest village. We arrived at a high camp around 16,000 feet, and woke to a few inches of snow. This gave us another day to acclimatize and it turned out to be the only inclement weather we were to encounter up high. Although the valleys were consistently lost in a lake of clouds and damp drizzling rain or snow, the skies were clear and sunny above 14,000 or 15,000 feet. Fred had problems with the altitude and returned to base camp after two sleepless nights. The rest of us set off to explore the glacier and continued on to the top of the smaller peak. Carter and I went up the corniced north ridge as the clouds climbed out of the east to meet us. A few steep sections made the rest of the deep stepping interesting. We reached the summit and found the three Whistler climbers waiting patiently and getting cold. They had opted to climb a steep face that led to the gentle west ridge. We all descended the north ridge. The local name for this mountain is Snake Lake Peak (5760m).

The next day, the Whistler trio were eager to launch an assault on the towering and unnamed summit, just to the left, or north, of Snake Lake Peak. Carter and I were feeling the altitude and exhaustion from the previous day's work and retreated early. The others continued on and reached a rock band that required 5th-class climbing. They fixed a few ropes and returned to high camp. Meanwhile, Carter and I had returned to base camp. Rich, John and Jia completed the climb the next day via the northwest ridge during a technical and strenuous 14 hours and called the peak Wu Shan, "Misty Mountain" (5987m).

Our support team congratulated us all with ample supplies of *py jiu* (Pabst Blue Ribbon), *bai jiu* (rice whiskey) and fresh yak meat. While most of us struggled to recover from the poisonous beverages the next day, our smiling Tibetan horse team efficiently saddled the horses and we moved camp to the next valley to our north. I learned their secret as they passed



Steve Must bouldering at CII in the Daxue Shan. JIA CONDON

around another bottle of whiskey during the trek. It seemed to aid them in verbally directing the horses as we heard their hoots and howls resonant through the mists.

Our second base camp beheld an excellent view of our next objective, San Ping Fong (6010m). From here we carried everything up to two higher camps in one push. The high camp, also around 16,000 feet, included a spectacular tent sight on an enormous boulder with an amazingly flat surface perched high above the rubble and talus. From here, while Fred remained at high camp, the five of us climbed the north ridge by gaining the glacier, maneuvering crevasses, negotiating the steep ice at the col and tramping our way across a broad summit plateau. We were calling it Slog Ping Fong by the end of the climb. San Ping Fong means "Peak Number Three" in Mandarin. There are two peaks to the north, which were named Yi Ping Fong ("Peak One") and Er Ping Fong ("Peak Two"); Wu Shan, just south, was designated Sze Ping Fong ("Peak Four"). These uninspired names were given by the assiduous German explorer Edward Imhof, who surveyed these mountains in the 1930s. I found an excellent map of the region at the (Seattle) Mountaineers library. I believe that it is from Imhof's work, although its source and date of origin are unknown. It is labeled Minyag Gangkar, which could be German for Minya Konka (Gongga Shan). From this survey, the elevation of San Ping Fong and Sze Ping Fong are listed at 6010 meters and 5987 meters respectively.

Fred was bent on accomplishing as much as possible after working so hard to get to the Daxue Shan range. Much to his chagrin, we left peaks One and Two unclimbed. Before we could call together the horses and leave the cold, damp mists of She He Dz valley, he tried to

get a consensus from the group to remain in the area and explore another elusive unclimbed mountain in the vicinity of Kangding. After over-riding his veto, we were all soon soaking in hot springs at the village, crashing a Tibetan wedding, and boarding a bus the next day bound for Chengdu. Meanwhile, Fred remained in Kangding with Jing Jing, determined to find a viable approach to the peak. We eventually met up in Chengdu and gradually retraced our journey home.

The support from the Zhang brothers, who operate Sichuan Adventure Travel in Chengdu and with whom Fred had worked in the past, was excellent.

STEVE MUST

SICHUAN

CHOLA SHAN

Chola Shan I and Chola Shan II, Ascents, and Gurla Mandhata, Attempt. It was reported that in late summer and early fall, Charlie Fowler visited China and Tibet, making a solo second ascent of Chola Shan I (6168m) and a first ascent, also solo, of Chola Shan II (6119m) via its southeast ridge. Later, he turned his efforts to Gurla Mandhata (7728m) near the Nepalese-Indian border, where he set out to guide Soren Peters and Quinn Simons, two young climbers from Santa Fe. The trio began with first ascents of two 6900-meter peaks in the area. Thus acclimitized, they began up Gurla Mandhata, reaching a bivouac one pitch below the west ridge on their third day on the mountain. Peters and Simons had led much of the climbing to this point, but Simons seemed exhausted, forcing the team to take a rest day. A storm blew up, pinning them down another day, then collapsing their tent. Simons frostbit his hands while helping to dig it out, then developed signs of pulmonary edema. On day six, they began down. They were roped up and glissading a 50° slope when one person slipped. With his frostbitten hands, Simons was unable to self-arrest, precipitating a 1,500-foot fall that took the party over a 50-foot cliff and landed them, miraculously, in deep, soft snow. Fowler had a badly sprained his leg, but the others had suffered no injuries. It took a day to get to the glacier, where Peters and Simons went to base camp for help. The camp cook, Kwang Tamang, returned for Fowler 24 hours later. Fowler lost the tips of four toes, Simons lost portions of both hands and feet, and Peters likely will lose fingers and toes. (*Climbing* 176)

UIAA International Camp, Various Ascents. On September 7, all 23 members of the Third UIAA International Mountaineering Camp from ten different countries arrived in Chengdu in the province of Sichuan in China after a long journey via Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai or Bangkok. The staff, international as well, consisted of: UIAGM Mountain Guide Robbie Fenlon from Ireland, Co-leader and UIAGM Mountain Guide Jorg Wilz from Germany and Dutch Leader and UIAGM Mountain Guide Edward Bekker, who lives in Chamonix and is a member of the UIAA Expeditions Commission. Wilz and Bekker also guided and organized the highly succesful camp to Hushe Valley in Pakistan in 1993. The expedition doctor was Dr. Eckart von Delft from South Africa. After spending one day in Chengdu to buy food for base camp and general organizing, we left Chengdu and traveled for four days by bus to Maniganggo near the Tibetan border. Traveling with us were the Chinese officials from the Sichuan Mountaineering Association, which is affiliated with the Chinese Mountaineering Association. There were, amongst others, Mr. Jiang Yi, Executive General Secretary and Mr. Luo, our interpreter and Vice General Secretary. The liaison officer was Mr. Mong. Also travelling along were the cooks Mr. Dzu and Mr. Ten. The organization of hotels and food was immaculate. Also to be mentioned