



The unclimbed Urdok Hills, sub-7000m peaks at the confluence of Urdok Glacier and the Shaksgam River. DAN MAZUR

of rubbish. During our 48-day expedition, we had encountered a few shepherd families and no other tourists. In fact, the mountaineering authorities told us that during the last two years, ours had been the only climbing expedition permitted to enter the Chinese Karakoram.

On October 10, at the end of the 100-kilometer camel trek out, while visiting Korul, a village of the seasonally-nomadic Kyrgyz people, a seven-year-old shepherd boy was hit by a flying piece of rock shrapnel thrown from a road builder's dynamite blast. Our expedition doctors Andrew Hilton, Mike Sinclair and Rob Allen amputated his shattered foot and nursed him through the night. We then transported him, his sister, and parents in our vehicles to the nearest hospital, where we pooled our resources to pay for an operation that his family would have been unable to afford. It was the first time any of them had ever ridden in a motor vehicle, or been to the nearest city. As a result of this mishap, we met with local government officials, and are currently joining together to create a health care system that will begin to fill the void for these people, who currently have nothing.

Finally, between October 15 and 27, we crossed Xinjiang Province and the nation of Tibet by rail, plane, and road with 300 kilograms of equipment, hosted along the way by regional mountaineering clubs. We were welcomed warmly, and were able to conduct extensive mountaineering research into high-altitude mountains in and around the Tibetan Plateau. As a result, we are planning expeditions and further explorations in Tibet and Xinjiang for the upcoming climbing season.

DAN MAZUR

Mt. Kongur; Attempt. Our group this year tried to climb Mt. Kongur (7719m) in the Kashgar Range. The extremely bad weather did not allow us to even approach the summit tower. The

route (Bonington, 1981) is very long and indirect. We dug our last snow cave at 6800 meters. Due to avalanche-prone slopes (snow fell every day) and lack of visibility, we turned back.

OTTO CHKHETIANI, *Russia*

Yunnan Province, Various Ascents. In April, I traveled to northwest Yunnan province and made my way to the town of Dechin by public bus. From April 25-27, I recced the approach to Baima Shan, an unclimbed peak of around 5500 meters on the west side of the road between Zhongdian and Dechin. On the 28th, I climbed a small unnamed and unmarked 5300-meter peak on the east side of the road. I began climbing from my camp at around 4000 meters and reached the summit after three-and-a-half hours via the west ridge. Temperatures were -15°C on the summit at sunrise. I had great views over Sichuan and toward Tibet. The climbing was characterized by moderate snow and ice slopes plus two large gendarmes of rotten and loose rock that I was forced to climb over. I climbed by headlamp as there was no moon. The weather during my stay tended to be clear in the morning, hot in the afternoon, then stormy at night. Snow cover at this time of year was considerable, blocking the road from Zhongdian until mid-April, though I saw no signs of avalanches.

I returned to Lijiang, again by public bus. Then, on May 3-4, I approached Yulongxueshan, also known as Jade Dragon Snow Mountain (5590m), reaching 4200 meters on the south side. Bad weather and lack of food led me to descend and return to Lijiang.

DAMIEN GILDEA, *Australia*

SICHUAN

LOTUS FLOWERS MOUNTAIN RANGE

Peak 5704m, First Ascent. The 5704-meter main peak of the Lotus Flowers mountain range (a.k.a. Zharha Latse, Mt. Haitze) lies to the north of the Minya-Konka mountain area in Sichuan, China. It is about 20 kilometers north of Kangding and 350 kilometers west of Chengdu. The Japan Workers' Alpine Federation Trans-Mountain Expedition 1998 ascended this unclimbed peak via the southwest face in September and October. We were Hitoshi Yamaoka (leader), Yoshio Kondo, and Yoshitake Shirai. We reached Base Camp (3900m), a one-day walk from the nearest small village of Sutunba, on September 17. Though it was small, the glacier began at more than 5000 meters. Camp I was placed at 4900 meters on the moraine near the southwest face on September 23. It was easy walking from BC to CI. We made CII at 5400 meters on an unstable snow ridge on September 28 after climbing the southwest face in 15 50-meter pitches. The route followed the edge of the couloir and entailed snow, ice, and rotten rock between the south peak and the couloir itself (UIAA II-IV). On September 30, Yamaoka and Shirai climbed the mixed face of the main peak in nine 50-meter pitches, encountering unstable rock and snow (III-IV). Rainy weather had continued for 11 days after our arrival at BC. Fortunately, around the time we reached the summit, we had fine days. On October 6, Kondo and Shirai made the second ascent. Near here and in the north of Mt. Siguniang in Sichuan, there are some sharp peaks suitable for rock climbing.

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