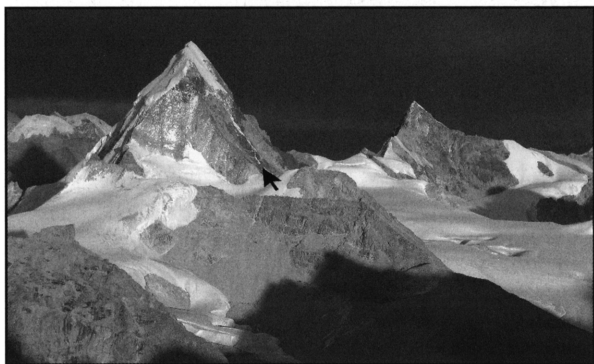


Tibet

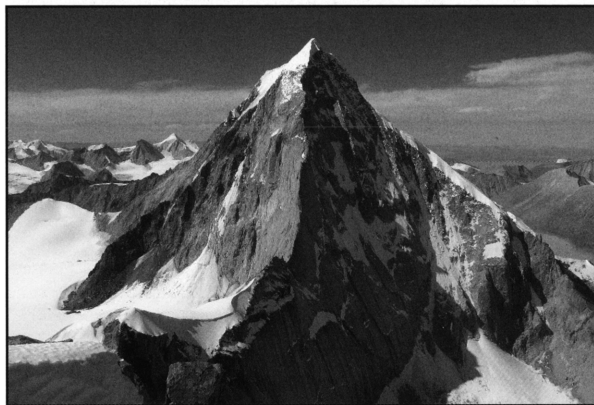
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NYANCHEN TANGLHA WEST

Langbu Qu (valley), five ascents. In late autumn 2009, Yan Dongdong from China joined Guy McKinnon (New Zealand) and me for a three-man attempt on attractive 6,000+m summits accessed from the Langbu Qu, the third valley system west of Nyanchen Tanglha Main (7,162m). At the time



Sir Duk (left) and Chorten Garpo seen from the summit of Pt. 6,382m to the west. The arrow marks the snow couloir, which was climbed by the 2009 team directly to the upper slopes and summit; they descended the left skyline. The 2000 team, with the mountains in much snowier condition, climbed the ridge to the right. On Chorten Garpo the 2000 team climbed the right skyline ridge, then descended part of the left skyline before heading down the West Face: the 2009 team climbed slopes behind the right skyline, up and down. *Bruce Normand*

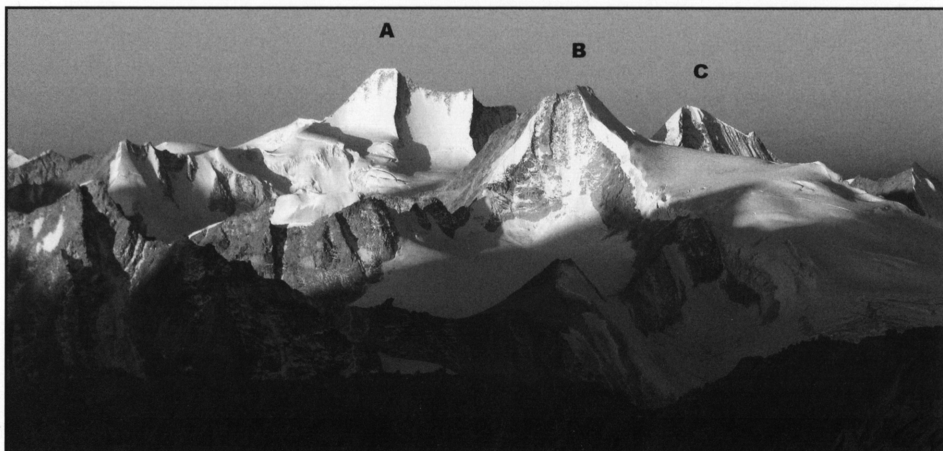


Another view of Sir Duk, this time from Chorten Garpo to the south-east. *Bruce Normand*

we were unaware of previous visits to this group of peaks, despite their ready accessibility. The mountains lie just north of the largest village in the area, Yangbajain, on the old northern Lhasa to Shigatse road. Subsequently we found that a small team of Austrians had climbed from the same valley in 2000.

From October 27–November 9 we summited five peaks. Four of these presented only moderate difficulties with 40–50° snow climbing in parts; the fifth, and also the highest in the group, was rather more serious and required a rope, the placement of gear, and two rappels during the descent. Our summits (heights taken from the Mi Desheng map, or by altimeter) were Pt. 6,382m and Pt. 6,286m at the head of the valley, Pt. 6,120m (altimeter reading) above the west bank, Pt. 6,380m (altimeter) above the east bank of the valley, and to its north-west, Pt. 6,614m.

In September 2000, Austrians Erich Gatt, Christian Haas, and Hans-Jorg Pfaundler climbed three peaks here in much snowier conditions than we found. Above the east bank of the valley, and from southeast to northwest:



Looking west-northwest at (A) Pt. 6,516m (unclimbed), (B) Pt. 6,382m, and (C) possibly Pt. 6,263m (unclimbed) on Mi Desheng Chinese Map. The route to 6,382m followed the obvious broad snow plateau on the right and then up the steep summit slope in shadow. *Bruce Normand*

Pt. 6,256m (GPS), which they named Yarlung Ri; Pt. 6,415m (GPS but the same summit as our Pt. 6,380m), which they named Chorten Garpo (Tibetan for White Pagoda); and Pt. 6,614m, named Sir Duk (Golden Dragon). Our ascents of Chorten Garpo and Sir Duk differed from those made in 2000. On Chorten Garpo the Austrians climbed the south ridge and then descended the northwest ridge and west face; we climbed the southeast face up and down. On Sir Duk the Austrians climbed the south ridge, moving left towards its top and finishing up the northwest ridge; we climbed the south-southwest face direct and descended via the northwest ridge.

The immediate region still contains many apparently unclimbed peaks in the low- to mid-6000m height range. The most appealing would seem to be the shapely Pt. 6,516m, which would be accessed most readily from the next valley west of the Langbu Qu.

BRUCE NORMAND, *Beijing, China*



Pt. 6,120m from the east. The 2009 ascent followed snow slopes on left, then took the gentle south ridge to summit. *Bruce Normand*



Pt. 6,286m (right) seen from southeast. The Chinese-Kiwi-Scottish trio first tried the pointed rocky peak to the left from behind the south-facing rock ridge but failed due to snow overlaying slabs. They then moved right and climbed the long east ridge (right skyline) of 6,286m. From the summit they climbed directly down the ice slope facing the camera. *Bruce Normand*