



## AAC Publications

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### **Melcyr Shan (5,910m), west face; Stifler's Mom, west face and north ridge**

China, Sichuan, Daxue Shan, Minya Konka Range

Mirko Breckner, Max Dünsser, Dario Haselwarter, Reinhard Hones, Felix Sattleberger, and Uli Steiner, young climbers from the Deutscher Alpenverein (German Alpine Club), and David Göttler as leader, spent October in the Tshiburongi Valley of the northern Minya Konka Range. Base camp was at 4,000m in the main valley below the entrance to the Tshiburongi. An intermediate camp was placed halfway up the glacier at ca 4,600m, and an advanced base toward the head at 4,950m.

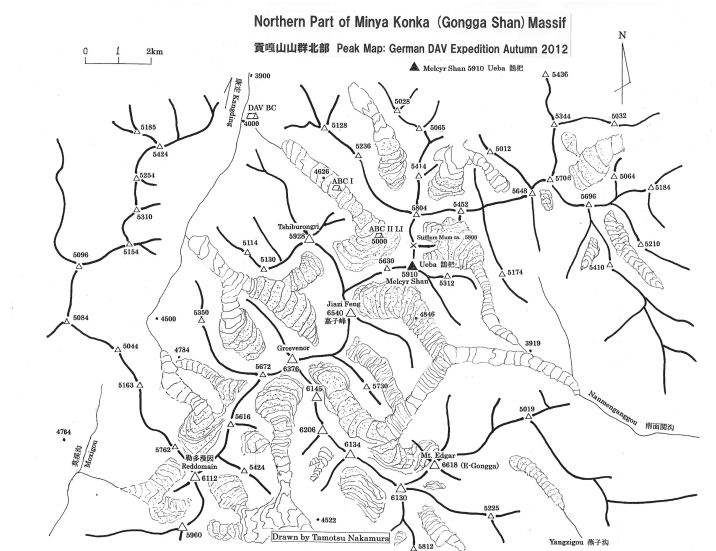
After two weeks in the area, the team was acclimatized, mountain conditions were good, and a forecast sent from Innsbruck predicted several days of dry if windy weather. On October 15, Breckner, Dünsser, Göttler, and Steiner left advanced base and moved up to the ca 5,400m col at the head of the glacier, below the west face of Peak 5,910m. Here, the wind was so strong that tents beneath an overhanging rock wall had to be anchored by Abalakovs and pitons.

At 4 a.m. the following day the tent fabric finally stopped flapping, and just after dawn the team began its ascent of the west face. Above an entry pitch, a 300m snow/ice gully led to a broken area, where they had to traverse right. The terrain now became steeper and the ice thinner. Rock peg belays were left for the rappel descent. The last pitch, led by Göttler in worsening weather, was a tricky rock climb, but at 1 p.m. the team was hoisting Tibetan flags on the 40cm-wide summit. A five-hour rappel descent through snowfall and strong winds led back to camp, where they spent the night before returning to base. The 16-pitch route was named Nubiline (WI4 M5), and the peak was called Ueba (in Chinese) or Melcyr Shan. Later Göttler and Hones climbed a six-pitch variation start, You Happy, We Happy (WI5), but did not continue up the parent route.

On October 22, Breckner, Haselwarter, and Hones reached the summit of the rock tower to the north of Melcyr Shan, after a previous failed attempt by Haselwarter, Hones, and Sattleberger. They called this Stifler's Mom, after the part played by Jennifer Coolidge in the comedy American Pie. The steep west buttress of this summit was attempted in 2009 by a French team (AAJ 2010). The Germans had also thought about this line, but the cold, windy weather put them off. Instead they climbed a long, broad snow couloir to reach the crest of the rocky north ridge, and continued up this to a bivouac at ca 5,650m, the only spot on the narrow crest where they could pitch a small tent. At 10 a.m. all three squeezed onto the summit, and two days later were safely back at base camp. They named their route 1989 Steps Toward Heaven (UIAA VI M6).

From information supplied by **Max Dünsser, David Göttler, and Salman Mitha**, Germany

## Images



Map of the Tshiburongi area.



Looking southeast toward the head of the Tshiburongi Glacier. (1) 1989 Steps Toward Heaven, to the summit of (A) Stifler's Mom. (2) 2009 French attempt on west buttress. (3) You Happy, We Happy. (4) Nubiline, to the summit of (B) Melcyr Shan (5,910m).

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