



Abi, South Face and Southeast Ridge, Breakthrough

China, Sichuan / Qionglai Shan / Siguniang National Park

Abi from the southeast. (1) West face and southwest ridge (Shivering, Li-Yan-Zhao, 2010). (2) Breakthrough (Wang-Xiang, 2019). (3) Graduation Exam (Liu, 2014). On the original ascent of Abi, in 2004, French climbers continued up this large snow couloir to the southeast ridge, then moved onto the east face. (4) Southeast ridge direct (700m, D+ M5, as graded by a 2012 Chinese-French team but climbed previously).

At 5 a.m. on October 12, Wang Yongpeng and Xiang Shuxiang set out from their base camp at 4,680m in the upper Shuangqiao Valley for the south face of Abi (5,694m, 31°15'32.25"N, 102°45'29.81"E). It took them 1.5 hours to cross the glacier and reach the foot of the face at 4,850m, where they started climbing left of Graduation Exam (5.9 M4 AI2+ 50°, Liu Zhixiong, AAJ 2015).

The mountain was in very snowy condition, and the first 240m were mostly loose rock covered by fresh snow. It was hard to find protection and belays, and the maximum difficulties were M5. The next 150m gave steep mixed climbing up a stepped rock wall. Above this, another 240m of slightly steeper climbing led to the southeast ridge. This section was exposed and near the limit of their ability. They had wanted to climb a more direct route toward the summit, but were forced by the difficult terrain to veer right.

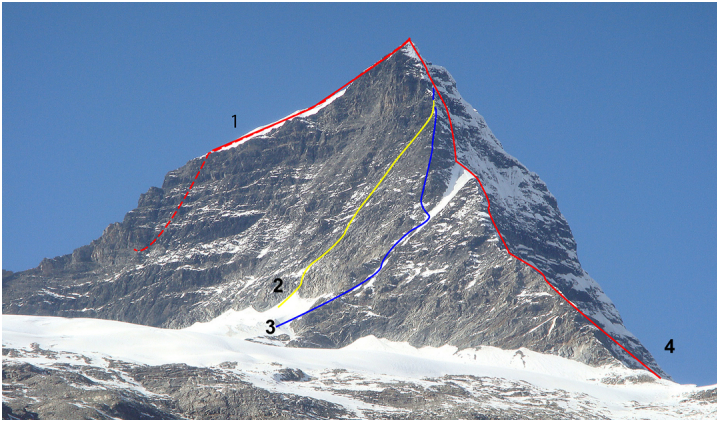
A final 220m of climbing along the ridge led to the summit—almost. This section also was exposed, though overall not particularly difficult, and they moved together in deteriorating weather until reaching a steep corner. This was compact and wet, and they saw no possibility of getting up it. They traversed right and came upon a second corner with a few pegs from previous ascents. Although equally compact, this corner system was cleaner. Xiang led it but somehow lost a crampon in the process. At the top of the corner, the summit was only one rope length higher.

The two continued in a full-scale blizzard to a final rock wall, about 10m below the summit. Now frozen, they decided not to climb this final step and began a rappel descent, parallel to but west of their line of ascent. They reached the glacier at 1 a.m.

The 850m line (700m of new climbing, D 70°) was named Breakthrough.

– Xia Zhongming, Germany

Images



Abi from the southeast. (1) West face and southwest ridge (Shivering, 5.7 M3 AI2, Li-Yan-Zhao, 2010). (2) Breakthrough (Wang-Xiang, 2019). (3) Graduation Exam (Liu, 2014). On the original ascent of Abi, in 2004, French climbers continued up this large snow couloir to the southeast ridge, then moved onto the east face. (4) Southeast ridge direct (700m, D+ M5, as graded by a 2012 Chinese-French team but climbed previously).

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