



AAC Publications

Beu-Tse, West Face and Northwest Ridge

China, Tibet, Nyanchen Tanglha West

In 2010 the late alpinist Yan Dongdong explored the southwestern end of the Nyachen Tanglha, where he made the first ascent of a peak named Dongxung (ca 6,100m), a few kilometers to the south of the town of Yangbajain (AAJ 2011). He wrote that he hoped climbers would try other mountains in this area; they were a gift to everyone.

On October 4, 2020, Gong Heqing, Sun Wang, Wei Libin, and Zhang Chaodong, inspired by Yan's writing and having chosen a mountain south of Dongxung that they thought was unclimbed, drove two hours from Lhasa on the west side of the range and immediately started toward the mountain. A large and chaotic west-facing glacier descended from the summit. Although climbing would be faster on the steep gravel ridge to the left, there was no water nor a camping spot below the upper snow basin at around 5,800m. They opted to climb the rock ridge right of the glacier, closer to the lower icefall. After a couple of pitches of glacier-polished 5.7 they found this impractical, so moved left onto the glacier and camped at 5,360m. Next day they climbed the steep glacier/icefall to a second camp at 5,650m. To this point they had found difficulties up to AI3+.

On the 6th they found the way above threatened by falling rock and ice, so they cut up onto the left-hand ridge in order to bypass it. The day was exhausting and they only ascended 200m, making a third camp at 5,850m. On the 7th they continued higher on the gravel ridge before descending a 30° ice slope to reach the upper glacier. From here they climbed steeply to the northwest ridge and then followed it, as it became sharper, to a point they estimated to be 20m or so below the summit. They were unable to make any belay or protection in the snow, and decided it was too dangerous to continue up the last short section to the summit cone. The GPS displayed a height of 6,206m.

They returned to Camp 3, reaching it at 8 p.m., and next day regained and then descended the gravel ridge all the way to the base of the mountain. They were back in Lhasa that evening. As this was a decade after Yan's ascent in the region, they named the route to their high point 10 Years.

The Chinese party referred to the mountain as Ba-Ci-Pu and assumed they were making a first ascent. In fact, the mountain has been known as Beu-tse (which sounds quite similar to the Chinese Ba-Ci-Pu), with a map height of 6,247m, and was climbed in 2003 by the British team of Derek Buckle, Alasdair Scott, Martin Scott, and John Town (AAJ 2004). This expedition operated from the next valley north, climbing a steepening northwest face (70° at the top) to reach the northwest ridge, which they followed to the summit, stopping around six meters below the heavily corniced top. They estimated the summit altitude to be 6,270m.

— Xia Zhongming, Germany

Images



The first rock pitch on the right side of the icefall, west face of Beu-tse.



Climbing in the icefall between camps 1 and 2 on the ascent of the west face of Beu-tse.



The route on the upper west glacier and northwest ridge of Beu-tse. The blue lines mark the descent route, the team splitting into two parties to reascend to the gravel ridge.

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