



AAC Publications

Jiongmodazhi, First Ascent, via Northwest Face

China, Tibet, Nyanchen Tanglha East

The northwest face of Jiongmodazhi (6,590m) and the line of the first ascent in September 2024. Photo: Tong Haijun/Wang Yongpeng

Less than a month after climbing Chuchepo (see report here), Tong Haijun and Wang Yongpeng returned to the area in September 2024 to attempt the first ascent of Jiongmodazhi (6,590m, 30°17'36.74"N, 93°46'50.55"E).

Jiongmodazhi lies 35 kilometers north-northwest of Basong Lake, at the head of the western branch of the Lamayalung Valley. It was noted in *AAJ* 2007, where a photograph was published, but no known attempts had been made.

Tong and Wang approached via the Niwu Valley, Yiga village (3,900m), and the Biyong Glacier to the north. To say the glacial approach was difficult would be an understatement.

On September 7, from a cow shed at 4,300 meters, they descended to the glacier and followed it for three hours to reach the foot of an 800-meter-wide icefall, surrounded by steep cliffs. If they were unable to find a way through this icefall, the trip would end there and then. Eventually they discovered a 100-meter-high, powder-fine scree slope, which led to woods and a meadow at 5,000 meters, where they camped. The terrain in the woods was very steep and felt akin to climbing a 5.9 rock route. It took them more than two hours to gain less than 200 meters of altitude. The climbers also felt they were now in an almost inaccessible situation should any rescue be needed.

On the 8th, they continued along the left side of the glacier, negotiating a scree slope to reach icy slopes leading to the top of the icefall. Roped together and bypassing numerous crevasses, they reached their second camp at 5,855 meters.

The next morning, they left at 3 a.m. The visibility was poor, and it began to snow heavily. They alternated trail-breaking to the foot of the northwest face, left of the fall-line from the summit.

Crossing the bergschrund, Tong led a five-meter vertical ice wall followed by deep snow. Wang led both the second and third pitches, slanting right toward a rocky area. Above this, they began simul-climbing with intermediate protection. Higher, the two pitched a 20-meter vertical section with no protection.

When dawn broke, an ice block the size of two sofas collapsed from a serac barrier less than 50 meters away. They continued, climbing the right side of another serac barrier, when suddenly the mist cleared and they saw the main summit over to the right. This clearing was fortunate, as otherwise they would have continued up left to a false summit.

Reaching the top at 11 a.m., they had a 20-minute rest and then began descending their route, using Abalakov anchors. Tong and Wang were back at their first camp by 5 p.m. and reached Yiga the following day.

Their 800-meter route up the northwest face was graded D+ M3 AI3 75°.

—Xia Zhongming, Germany

Images



The upper two thirds of the northwest face of Jiongmudazhi (6,590m), climbed in September 2024.



The northwest face of Jiongmudazhi (6,590m) and the line of the first ascent in September 2024.



Wang Yongpeng on the upper northwest face of Jiongmudazhi.

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