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Recent Mountaineering Developments in Parts of Tibet

China, Tibet

In recent years, a number of young Chinese alpinists, having learned their craft in Sichuan and put up new routes in their home mountains, are extending their vision to the less explored regions of Tibet. Because of the development of extensive infrastructure in Tibet, many of its mountains are now easily accessible to Chinese climbers.

Unlike expeditions in Nepal and Pakistan, where a team of porters might carry large amounts of equipment to a base camp, the overall experience in some parts of Tibet is more akin to climbing in the Alps, with roads now extending almost to the foot of the mountains. Chinese teams will drive to a mountain, walk a couple of hours to a campsite near the start of their route, and the next day begin an ascent or an acclimatization climb. On occasions, one or two supporters will assist by bringing down tents and equipment from the camp.

After an ascent, the group can drive to the nearest town and recover comfortably there, while waiting for the next weather window. The result of these developments has been a surge of technical climbs in Tibet over the last couple of years, as seen in the 2025 and 2026 AAJs.

All of these recent ascents have been completed by Chinese climbers. At present, the chance of non-Chinese getting permission to climb in most of these ranges is virtually nil.

—Xia Zhongming, Luxembourg

Images

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