



AAC Publications

Jidege Shan Exploration

China, Yunnan

I had always felt a fascination for northwest Yunnan, the region at the eastern end of the Himalaya where three great rivers flow close by and parallel to each other. The American climber Mike Dobie, who lives in China, suggested I check out the smaller peaks that lie northeast of Yulong Xueshan (a.k.a. Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, 5,596m) and Haba Xueshan (5,396m). "There is a stand-alone, ca 4,500m peak that would actually be quite an adventure to get to," he said. I plugged in the coordinates Mike gave me (27°34'34.92"N, 100°18'37.75"E) and noticed more of a small range than a stand-alone peak, running north to south. A tiny village below the western aspect of the southern end of the range is named Jidege (pronounced "Che Te Ke"), so I propose referring to this group as the Jidege Shan.

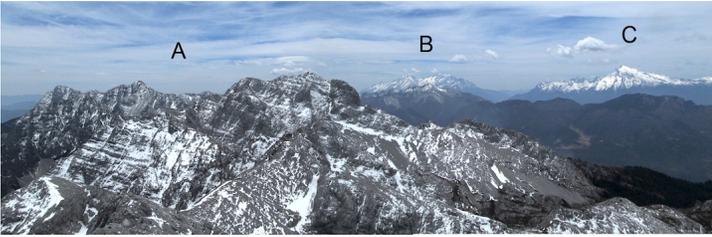
I arrived in Lijiang and soon found that the curious names of the villages on my Google Earth image were either incorrect or unrecognizable. With some difficulty Li Shifu (my interpreter) and I reached Shanggaohan village. A two-hour walk then took us to Jidege (3,577m), where I was told I was the first foreigner to visit.

On April 15 and 16 we explored part of the Jidege Shan. On the first day we hiked north with the main range to our east, then reached a pass and climbed a small peak to its south (4,247m, 27°32'58.70"N, 100°18'14.28"E). This was located on a spur running southwest from the main ridge, and it provided a good opportunity to photograph the unclimbed peaks of the Jidege Shan. The next day we regained the pass and crossed it west to a small valley. Traversing the valley we reached a col on the main ridge, and then a second col farther north via a moderate to steep hike up scree. The weather was deteriorating, and I decided to climb the rocky summit immediately east of the pass, which I reached in 30 minutes (4,420m, 27°33'23.23"N, 100°18'50.13"E). From the top there was fine panorama: Yulong Xueshan and Haba Xueshan to the south (in between the two lies the deep Tiger Leaping Gorge); the ranges above Deqen and Shangri-La to the west; and to the north and east the mountains of Sichuan. Returning to the col we continued north to another small pass, where it was obvious we had gained the northern end of the range.

A sense of satisfaction engulfed me. The quest that began on my computer screen several months earlier was over—it was time to head back.

Anindya Mukherjee, India

Images



Looking south at (A) Jidege Shan, (B) Yulong Xueshan, and (C) Haba Xueshan.



Unclimbed rock tower on the Jidege Ridge.

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