



AAC Publications

Pogolha (Jang Tsang Go), Northeast Face and East Ridge

Tibet, Nyanchen Tanglha West

In September, Domen Kastelic (Slovenia), Marcus Palm (Sweden), and I traveled to Tibet to attempt two peaks in the Qungmo Kangri group at the western end of Nyanchen Tanglha West. We believed both to be unclimbed. Delayed permits had us first spend one week acclimatizing in the Siguniang area before flying to Lhasa. On September 13 we established base camp northwest of the Suge La (Xoggu La, 5,430m) in the Pagolam Valley, east of Qungmo Kangri. We were accompanied by our guide Nima and cook Lhakpa.

After some acclimatization and reconnaissance trips, we trekked to the base of the northeast face of Peak 6,328m (29°56'45.97"N, 90°4'55.53"E), erroneously named Tangmonja on the Chinese Mi Dsheng and Polish Jerzy Wala maps (see editor's note below). This mountain rises above the glacier named Pagolha on the Dsheng map.

Although the forecast promised four days of good weather, it continued to snow throughout the night and the next morning. (Contrary to my previous experience in Tibet, uncertain forecasts and bad weather were to be regular occurrences throughout the trip.) We started climbing in less than ideal weather, first following a series of gullies with bad ice, where we had to fight heavy spindrift. When the face opened up, we followed easier ground to the east ridge and moved onto the east face, where we bivouacked a few hundred meters below the summit. By next morning the skies had cleared, and we summited in the early afternoon on September 20. After an hour on top we descended via the north face, rappelling and downclimbing. We estimate the length of the climb to be 700m and the difficulties as AI4 M5. A local nomad in the valley referred to the mountain as Jang Tsang Go, which roughly translates as "the mountain in the wolf valley."

At base camp we packed our things to relocate to another valley at the far western end of the group, where we planned to attempt unclimbed Tanmonjen (a.k.a. Jamo Gangar, 6,373m). After driving over the Suge La we experienced more problems with our permit and ended up spending the night in a small mountain village. Unexpectedly, we walked by a bar where five young Tibetans were engaged in traditional dance. They invited us to join and we spent the night dancing Tibetan disco with our new friends. The next day we were allowed to continue our journey. Our satellite images were not up to date, and we discovered that a road was being constructed past our mountain. From a base camp at 4,600m, we were able to ride borrowed motorcycles to the foot of the peak at 5,350m, reducing the approach from one or two days to one hour. Unfortunately, the weather remained very bad and we could not get a proper view of our objective.

The area of our second base camp was inhabited by three friendly and helpful families. While the bad weather persisted, one of the families invited us to stay in their house. They seemed to enjoy our company, and the feeling was mutual. We spent the remainder of our time in the area playing with their children and enjoying local cuisine. However, with a forecast of constant rain, the expedition was terminated three days early on September 26. Editor's note: Tragically, a little over a month after the 2016 ascent, Domen Kastelic was killed in an avalanche above the Monzino Hut in the Mont Blanc Massif.

Olov Isaksson, Sweden

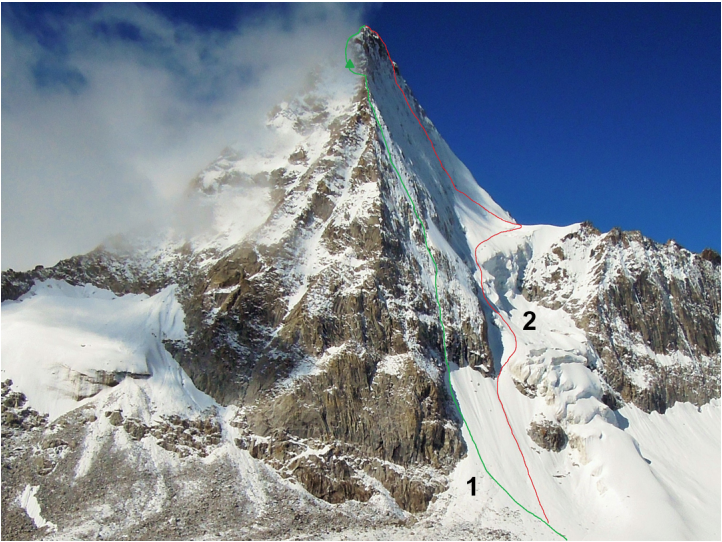
Editor's note and clarification of nomenclature in AAJ 2012: In 1997 a small British party led by John

Town visited the Qom Qu Valley and identified mountains that appeared on the Mi Deshing map (the Polish cartographer Jerzy Wala has also adopted Deshing's convention for his mapping) and in the book **Immortal Mountains of the Snow Kingdom**. They were the first non-Chinese climbers to visit this valley. Local people informed them that the names on the map were wrong: They said the peak labeled 6,328m was in fact Pogolha, and that Tangmonja was the 6,194m peak to the south, unnamed on the map. The photo labeled Tangmonja in **Immortal Mountains** refers to Peak 6,194m, which would seem to confirm the locals' attribution. In 1999, Town returned and attempted the southwest ridge of Tangmonja (6,194m). His expedition was unsuccessful in this goal; however, they did climb a rocky peak of about 6,025m on the ridge south of Tangmonja, which they named Machag (**AAJ 2000**).

In 2011, Olov Isaksson and Magnus Kastengren, also approaching via the Qom Qu, climbed Peak 6,194m via the southwest ridge and made an attempt on Pogolha (6,328m) from the south. On that occasion, when the pair asked nomads in this valley for the names of the mountains, they referred to Pogolha as Dhungri, so the two called Peak 6,194m Dhungri II (**AAJ 2012**). The Swedish pair discovered a sling on this summit; it is known that there were climbing parties in this valley in 2010 and 2011, though it is not known what they achieved.

Expedition in Tibet from Marcus Palm on Vimeo.

Images



Pogolha/Jang Tsang Go (6,328m) from the northeast. (1) Slovenian-Swedish Route (2016). (2) Descent of the north face.



Base camp in the Pagolam Valley with Pogolha/Jang Tsang Go (6,328m) in the background.



Domen Kastelic climbing steep snow and ice in the middle section of the northeast face of Pogolha/Jang Tsang Go (6,328m).



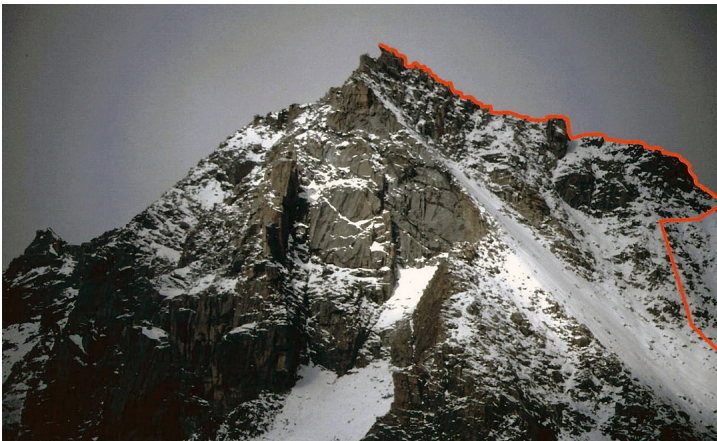
Olov Isaksson on steep mixed ground on the initial part of the northeast face of Pogolha/Jang Tsang Go (6,328m).



Tangmonja (6,194m) and the route of the 2011 ascent up the southwest ridge. The Swedish climbers discovered a relatively new rappel sling on the summit, but its origins are not known. (H) marks the high point of the 1999 attempt. The south face of Pogolha (a.k.a. Jang Tsang Go or Dhungri, 6,328m) is visible behind.



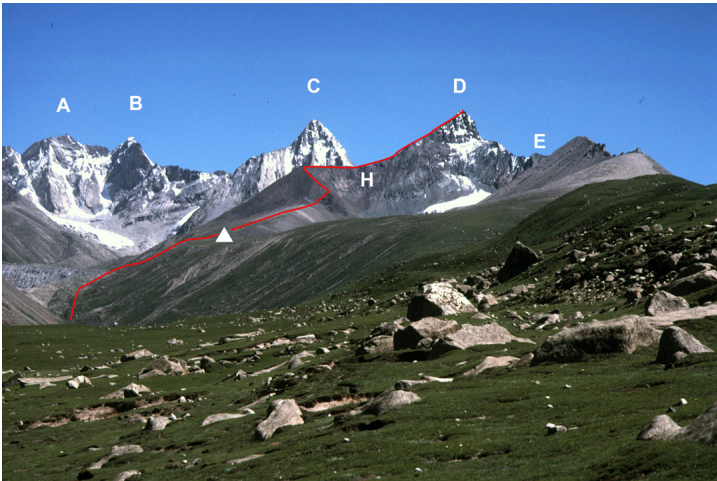
The lower section of the northeast face of Pogolha/Jang Tsang Go (6,328m).



Machag (ca 6,025m), showing the route climbed in 1996 for the first ascent.



The view south from Pogolha over the lower north summit (snowy peak) of Tangmonja and on to the rocky south (main) summit. The rocky southwest ridge ascended in 2011 drops from the main summit to the right. Pagolam Valley is on the left.



Looking up the Qom Qu Valley. (A) Gangrarow III. (B) Gangrarow IV. (C) Pogalha. (D) Tangmonja. (E) Machag (almost hidden). Marked is the 2011 Swedish route on Tangmonja. H marks the high point of the 1999 British attempt from their high camp (shown).



Unclimbed Tanmonjen (a.k.a. Jamo Gangar, 6,373m) from the south.

Article Details

Author	Olov Isaksson
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions