



AAC Publications

Jiazi, West Face, Rebirth

China, Sichuan, Daxue Shan

On November 3, Tong Zhanghao and Wang Yongpeng completed a new route toward the left side of the west face of Jiazi (6,540m). They had both tried the route in 2022 but retreated from 5,600m.

Earlier, while climbing nearby Xiao Gongga (Little Konka, 5,928m), they noticed Jiazi had three tops along its summit ridge. Intrigued by this, they investigated reports on the various ascents of Jiazi and found there were two small tops toward the north end of the summit ridge, above the left end of its west face, that had never been reached. This led to their 2022 attempt on the face, left of the Chinese lines Judgment and Liberal Dance and the 1982 American route.

In 2023, the team arrived in October but had to wait nine days below the face in bad weather before they could start climbing at 6 a.m. on November 1. They immediately found very steep mixed ground, with rock that was often loose.

That first day they reached 5,850m on the large snow/ice field that characterizes the central part of this face. After working for 40 minutes, they managed to excavate a platform 40cm wide for an uncomfortable bivouac, hanging from the ropes while being frequently covered by drifting snow. In this half-seated position, they quickly became wet, and Wang adopted the unusual strategy of sleeping in a kneeling position with his butt in the air, in order to minimize his body's contact with the wet snow.

Next morning, they didn't set off until 10 a.m. That day was mostly alpine ice with just a few sections of mixed. At 6,200m they were able to clear a long platform below a rocky barrier for a bivouac. As there was no spindrift that night, they slept well.

Starting to melt water at 5 a.m., they were away by 7 a.m., slanting up right over alpine ice and through the last rock barrier to the final icefield. The climbers' extremities were now sore from the cold and continuous ice climbing.

They reached the summit ridge at a little after 1:30 p.m., only to find that the entire north-south ridge of Jiazi was composed of unstable snow mushrooms. They were gingerly positioned on a large mushroom that formed one of the north summits and were so concerned about getting down that they forgot to take a summit selfie. [Editor's Note: The ascent described here finished on a top of approximately 6,460m near the far north end of Jiazi's long summit ridge. This appears to be farther north than Jiazi's highest point, which generally has been called the north summit; the peak's highest point is actually the southerly of two adjacent tops separated by a difficult saddle.]

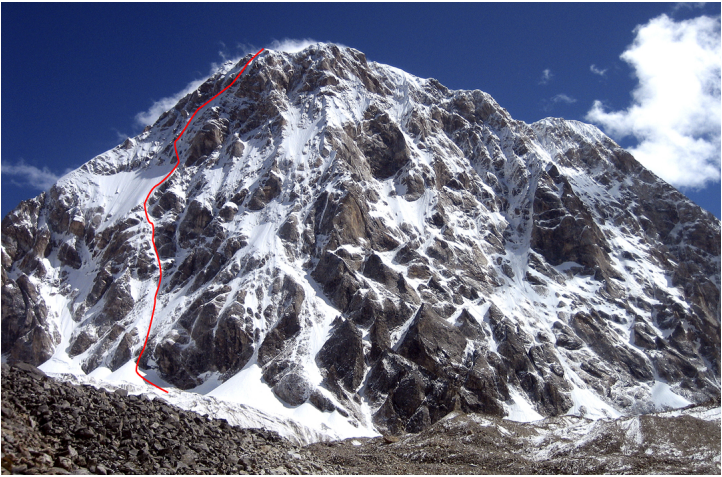
It took seven hours to make 26 rappels down the route. Back in town, sleeping in a hotel, everything seemed so novel and beautiful they felt they had been reborn. The two therefore decided to name their route Rebirth (1,400m, TD+ AI4 M6 70° snow).

The pair was supported by the Chinese equipment manufacturer and retailer Kailas through its China Unclimbed Peaks Plan. This project was launched in 2006, in part to establish a "complete mountain

database,” and through 2023 the project had supported the ascents of 51 new routes and previously unclimbed peaks.

– **Lindsay Griffin, with information from Tong Zhanghao and Zhu Leibo, China**

Images



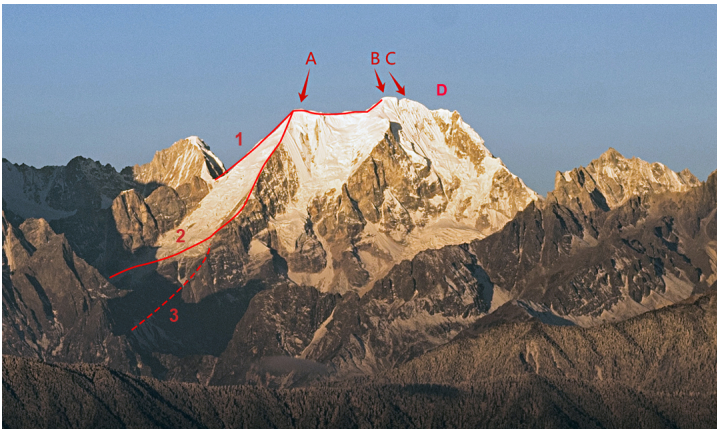
Rebirth, the 2023 Chinese route on the left side of the west face of Jiazi. The left skyline is the northwest ridge, attempted to 6,100m in 1981. For other routes on the face, see AAJs 2023 and 2012.



The left side of the west face of Jiazi seen from Riuche Gongga. (1) The top section of the northeast ridge attempted in 1981 to 6,200m. (2) The northwest ridge attempted in 1981 to 6,100m. (3) Rebirth (2023). (4) The very approximate line of the 1982 American route.



Rebirth, the 2023 Chinese new route on the left side of the west face of Jiazi.



A view of Jiazi taken from the east at an altitude of 3,500m. The pyramid on the left is Mt. Grosvenor. (A) South top (ca 6,400m). This photo shows the north summit as having two tops (B) and (C); the highest (B) was reached by the Americans in 1982 via the long south ridge (1). A point 40m from (B) on the summit ridge was reached during the same expedition by two other members who climbed the west face and, due to difficult cornicing and a dropped rucksack, descended directly down the east ridge. (D) is the ca 6,460m top reached in 2023 via the line Rebirth on the west face. (2) The White Line (1,600m, 85°, Faletti-Franchini, 2017). (3) The 750m couloir in the lower section of the east-southeast ridge, climbed in 2004 approximately to the point where it meets (2).



High on the west face of Jiazi during the ascent of Rebirth.



During the first ascent of Rebirth on the west face of Jiazi.



A steep chimney on Rebirth, west face of Jiazi.

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