

**JARJINJABO AREA, NEW ROUTES**

OVER 14 DAYS in July and August, Marcos Costa, Liu Yunqing, Zhoulei, and, for part of the time, Dawei (a 5.14 climber from Yangshuo) climbed eight routes, opened seven new lines, and summited four different peaks. Routes included Jarjinjabo's fourth peak (5,087m) via Hail Party (a five-pitch approach of 5.10, followed by a hike up a gully and then eight pitches up to 5.11b). This route lies above Rim Route (AAJ 2014). They also climbed Zhoulei's Gift (ca 280m, 8 pitches, 5.12b) directly above the monastery, following a superb corner high on the route.

— INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MARCOS COSTA, CHINA

**GONGKALA SHAN, KAWARANI I, NORTH FACE**

WE WERE ATTRACTED to the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Region by Tom Nakamura's map depicting "Sichuan's most outstanding unclimbed peaks." One of these was Kawarani I (5,992m). From the road head near Garze town, to the northern side, we walked for two days through occasional deep snow to gain a camp below the north face. On February 20 we climbed the face, up and down in a single day, moving unroped on 45–50° snow the entire way.

*Editor's note: In 2005 British mountaineers attempted to gain access to the southern side of the Kawarani peaks, but after establishing an advanced camp at 4,800m, they were told to leave by a group of monks from the lower village. In 2007 a second British party failed to gain permission due to religious celebrations. In 2011 Japanese were granted a permit, but on arrival in China discovered this had been rescinded.* 

— MARCOS COSTA AND BRUCE NORMAND, CHINA

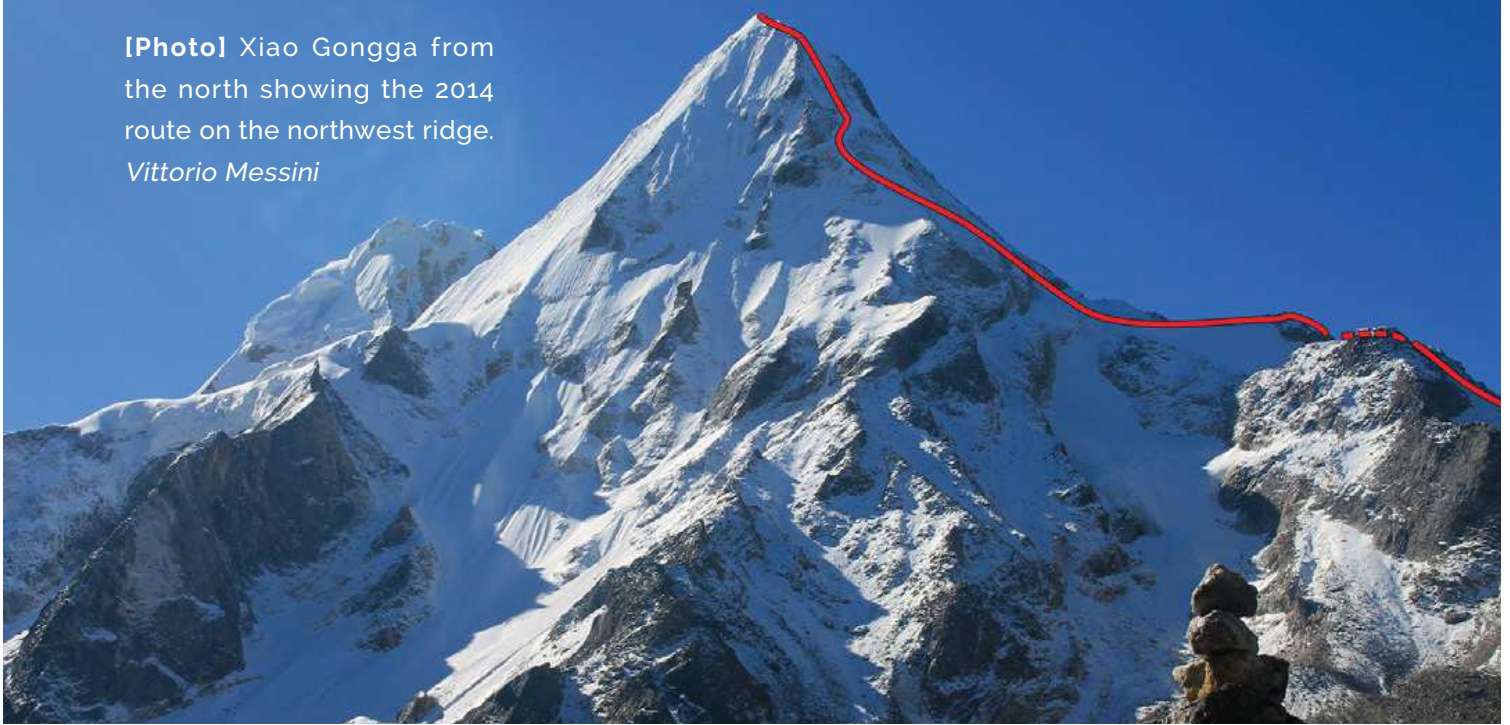
**DAXUE SHAN**

— MARCOS COSTA AND BRUCE NORMAND, CHINA

**XIAO GONGGA, NORTHWEST RIDGE;  
TYROL SHAN, WEST FACE AND SOUTH RIDGE**

WHEN SIMON GIETL was climbing with the DAV expedition squad in the Dolomites during the summer of 2013, he learned about their trip to the Minya Konka (Gongga Shan) range the

[Photo] Xiao Gongga from the north showing the 2014 route on the northwest ridge. Vittorio Messini



previous year, during which they did the first ascents of two peaks (AAJ 2013). Simon enlisted two other Tyrolean climbers, Daniel Tavernini and me, and one year later, on October 6, we flew from Munich. The journey to Chengdu, onward to Kangding, and then a final trek with 14 mules, a cook, and liaison officer to a base camp at 4,000m went without a hitch.

On October 17 we established advanced base at 4,600m below the north flank of Xiao Gongga (5,928m, a.k.a. Little Konka, Ruiche Gongga, or Tshiburongi). We set off early next morning for the northwest ridge, climbing unroped for the first one and half hours. Three short pitches then led to a little plateau, above which the snow was quite deep. The slope above eventually steepened to 60°. A final mixed section on the crest deposited us on the summit at 1 p.m. The 1,300m route was graded 60° M5, and on it we passed three belay stations. [*It is not clear from whom these might have originated—known ascents and attempts have chosen other lines. See AAJ 2012.*]

We now turned to our main target, the steep, west-facing rock buttress leading to the summit of Stifler's Mom, first attempted by French climbers in 2009 (AAJ 2010). The 2012 DAV team had also considered this buttress but instead climbed the peak (and later named it) via a broad snow gully to the left and then the crest of the rocky north ridge (1989 Steps Toward Heaven, AAJ 2013).

We shifted high camp to the head of the Tshiburongi Valley, at 4,950m, after which there was an overnight snowfall of 20cm. We climbed four pitches up a line to the right of the French attempt, but freezing conditions, which were far too cold for rock shoes, forced us to abandon the attempt.

Instead, we turned to the unclimbed summit between Stifler's Mom and Melcyr Shan. We started up the line You Happy, We Happy (Gottler-Hones, 2012, WI5), a variant start to Nubiline, the first route up Melcyr Shan. The crux of this section was thin, hollow, and only mitigated by a couple of cams in the side wall. Above, we moved up 50–60° snow to gain the col between the unnamed peak and Melcyr Shan. The 40m rock climb to the summit was in the sun, with no wind, and on beautiful granite. Daniel took the lead and climbed to the top at UIAA VI-. We named the summit Tyrol Shan (ca 5,860m). We rappelled the 700m route and returned to base camp, where later we established a few rock routes on an east-facing crag 30 minutes' walk from the tents. The majority of these were one pitch and some only top-roped; Mortadella, by Simon, went at 7c. 