

Successful first ascents on virgin summits in the “Alps of Tibet”



The mountain ranges of East Tibet, part of Sichuan province, China, were described by the legendary Japanese explorer Tomatsu Nakamura as the “Alps of Tibet” and are considered as one of the last frontiers of mountaineering. Inspired by his work an Austrian-Spanish expedition, organized by Gerald Boess, Judith Fall and Paul Niel, left for three weeks to explore and climb in Western Sichuan, precisely the eastern ranges of the Gangga massif. There they discovered the main mountain to be a large snow and ice peak, named “Dechok Phodrang” by local monks, meaning “Palace of the highest bliss”.

In cold and clear winter conditions, with temperatures reaching as low as -15 C° , the team, led by Simon and Martin Elias, managed to open two new routes on the Northwest face and climb its two main summits:

On Nov. 4th 2015, following a night in high camp located in a large rock cave the rope teams braved a local earthquake to climb a great snow and ice route that traverses the whole face to reach the rocky north summit, being measured at 5550m (1).

Four days later, the climbers headed for the main summit. Despite overnight snow fall, they ploughed for almost twelve hours through knee and hip deep snow up a couloir, climbed a large serac fall and stood eventually on the 5632m peak (2).

Austrian filmmakers Lothar Hofer and Martin Sochor were part of the expedition - a documentary about the ascent and exploration is due to be published in first half 2016.

The team expresses gratitude to their supporters: Bergans of Norway and Manner; Tomatsu Nakamura; Jiyue Zhang and Alex Tang from Earth Expeditions and all the friendly and welcoming people of East Tibet.

(1) "Austrian-Spanish Classic" D+ (800m)

North Summit, Dechok phodrang (5550m)

GPS: 31.45241N/ 99.99883E

FA: 4.11.2015: G. Boess, M. Elias, S. Elias, J. Fall, L. Hofer, P. Niel

Start of the route at high camp 4740m

(2) “Dechok Direct” D+ (1000m)

Central Summit, Dechok phodrang (5632m)

GPS: 31.449167N/ 99.997778E

FA: 8.11.2015: G. Boess, M. Elias, S. Elias, J. Fall, L. Hofer, P. Niel

Start of the route at bottom of the mountain: 4610m

Expedition Members:

Gerald Boess

Martin Elias

Simon Elias

Judith Fall

Lothar Hofer

Paul Niel

Martin Sochor

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