

BRITISH QIONGLAI SHAN 2006

QIONGLAI SHAN – SICHUAN PROVINCE – CHINA

MEF REFERENCE 06/30



EXPEDITION REPORT

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The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree that all or part of it may be copied for the purposes of private research.

Cover Picture: (Top Left) Dorsal Peak. (Top Right) Felix summiting Ding Ding. (Bottom Left) Setting off from ABC to attempt Peak 5260m. (Bottom Right) Ding Ding. (Centre) The team.

Objectives

- Ascent of Camel Peak East (5484m)
- Conduct reconnaissance of unclimbed peaks for future expeditions
- First ascent of peak 5609m

Summary

In March 2006 a three man British team undertook an Alpine style expedition to the Qionglai Shan in Sichuan Province, China. They aimed to climb Camel Peak East as an acclimatisation peak and make the first ascent of peak 5609m to the South of Celestial Peak. Bad weather and regular avalanche activity diverted them from their original objective. However, they made the first ascent of Dorsal Peak (5050m) PD+, the first recorded ascent of Ding Ding Peak (5202m) AD as well as further exploration of the upper Chang Ping Valley. An attempt on peak 5260m was forced to retreat at c.5000m due to a rapid deterioration in the weather leading to heavy snowfall.

Note: All peak heights in this final report are based on the enclosed sketch map of the Siguniang Range by Tomatsu Nakamura.

Acknowledgements

This expedition would like to sincerely thank the following people and organisations for their support which made this expedition possible:

Financial Assistance

The Mount Everest Foundation and The British Mountaineering Council (UK Sport).

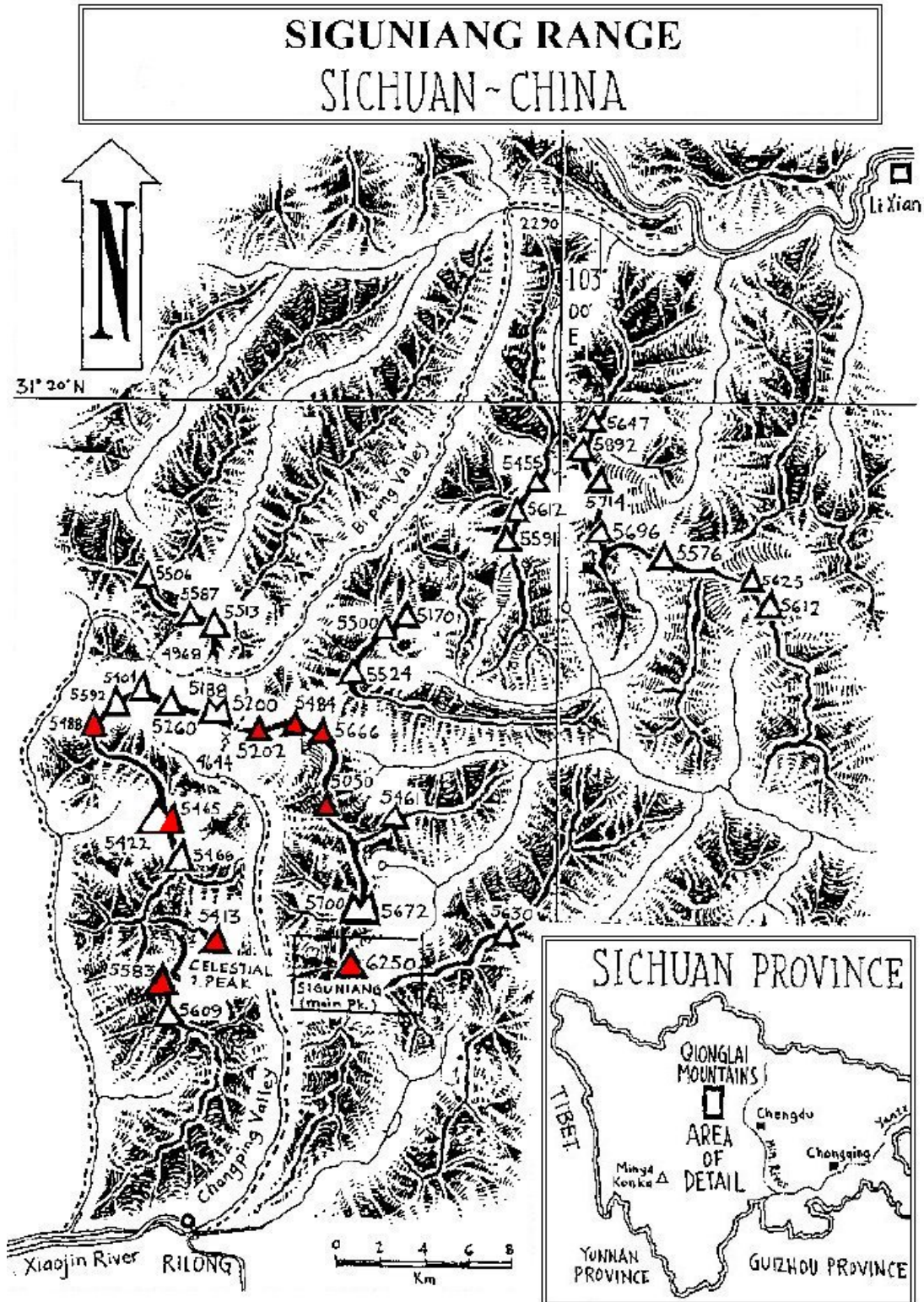
Information

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Area Map by Tomatsu Nakamura



This map has been updated with recent accents. Red peaks have been summited.

Area Background

The Qionglai Shan is mainly known for Siguniang which is its highest mountain at 6250m and has become a popular Chinese tourist destination as visitors attempt to capture this spectacular fang of rock and ice on film. It became well known in climbing circles in 2002 after Mick Fowler's and Paul Ramsden's route on the north face was awarded the US 'Golden Piton' and the French 'Piolet d'Hor'. It was Mick Fowler's Siguniang lecture at the Alpine Club's 'East of the Himalaya' symposium in 2005 and subsequent advice that was the inspiration for organising an expedition to this area.

Prior to Mick Fowler's expedition Siguniang had had three ascents by two Japanese expeditions and Charlie Fowler (US). Charlie Fowler had also carried out ascents of Camel Peak (5484m), Yangmantai (5666m) and peak 5583m to the South West of Celestial Peak. A US expedition successfully climbed Celestial Peak (5413m) in 1983.



The rising sun illuminates the eastern face of Siguniang on 10th March.

After Mick Fowler's expedition there were a number of British expeditions to the area with a variety of objectives ranging from Alpine style ascents to big wall climbing. Their expedition summaries are available from the database on the MEF website (www.mef.org.uk).

2002 Great Walls of China MEF REF: 02/11 – Mike Turner

2004 British Qionglai: MEF REF: 04/05 – Tom Chamberlain

2004 Big Wall of China MEF REF: 04/51 – John and Anne Arran

There was also a Slovenian expedition by Andrej and Tania Gromovsek in 2003 which successfully climbed Tan Shan (4953m – to the west of Celestial Peak and not marked on Tomatsu Nakamura's map) and Putala Shan (5488m). Further information on their expedition is available in the Japanese Alpine News: May 2004. A US expedition in 2005 led by Chad Kellogg successfully climbed Mt Daogou (5465m) (see www.chadkellogg.com).

Expedition Members

- Jez Thornley: 30, British, Warfare Officer Royal Navy.
- Felix Hoddinott: 30, British, Statistician.
- Ian Gibb: 30, British, Teacher.
- Lion: 24, Chinese, Interpreter/Guide.



Looking forward to a pint and a hot shower after 16 days in the same clothes. The expedition members from left to right: Lion, Felix, Jez, Ian. Ding Ding is just visible in the background.

Jez, Felix and Ian all had extensive rock climbing experience up to E1 in the UK and Europe and Alpine routes up to Difficile. Both Jez and Ian had done Scottish winter climbs up to grade IV and ice climbing in the Alps to WI4. While Jez had expedition experience from organising two University and Royal Geographical Society supported research expeditions to Nepal and Africa Felix was the only member of the team with climbing experience in the

Greater Ranges. He had led a four man expedition to Nepal summiting three Kumbu trekking peaks including Island Peak (6189m) in 2004 and reaching the high point of 5900m on an organised expedition to Jogin, Garhwal Himalaya, India (6465m) in 2000.

Lion had been the interpreter on Mick Fowler's expedition in 2002. He soon proved to be an invaluable asset to our team of climbers who spoke no Chinese. A climber himself and having acted as the interpreter/guide for several other Western climbing expeditions, Lion understood exactly what we required whether it was purchasing food and climbing equipment in Chengdu or arranging the fees in the National Park. Although young, he was easy to get along with and became a real member of the team at base camp.

We would definitely advise hiring an interpreter if none of your party speak Chinese. Purchasing supplies, negotiating internal transport and park fees would be an interesting challenge in English, and prices were often considerably cheaper when purchases were made by a local.

Finance

Expenditure

Flights	1224
BMC Insurance	600
Map	70
Visas	110
Satellite Phone	355
Park Fees	95
Bus	40
Accommodation	100
Food/Gas	200
Horses & Horseman	350
Lion (Interpreter/Guide)	1000
Misc.	150
TOTAL	4294

Income

Mount Everest Foundation	850
British Mountaineering Council (UK Sport)	750
Royal Navy Royal Marines Mountaineering Club	100
Personal Contributions	2594
TOTAL	4294



(left) The newest member of the Ma family. (Centre) Mr Ma's brother. (Right) A typical Sichuan village.

Administration & Logistics

Permits and Requirements

We received varying advice from previous expeditions ranging from the need to have a permit and a liaison officer for any climbing over 5000m to all permits being unnecessary. It seems in practice a permit from the Sichuan Mountaineering Authority (SMA) is only required for climbing Siguniang. For other peaks you must pay the Siguniang National Park fees. These consist of a daily rate per person and tent and a 'fire' deposit. Our unofficial guide Lion efficiently arranged these fees at the park gate since no prior booking was required.

Travel

There were no direct flights to Chengdu from the UK therefore an internal flight was also required. By far the cheapest flight, at almost half the price of the nearest competitor, was a combined ticket from China Eastern Airlines changing at Shanghai. There were some nightmare stories on the internet concerning this airline's customer service. However, apart from a half hour delay at Heathrow where we never received an explanation (well not in English!), everything went very smoothly.

From Chengdu it is possible to hire a private bus to Rilong which would be faster and more comfortable than the standard bum numbing seven hour public bus journey that we enjoyed.

From Rilong it was about a 10 hour walk in through the Changping Valley to our chosen base camp (c.3700m) next to the river near the path up to the pass to the Bipung Valley.



Cooling the breaks after a long and bumpy decent.

Luggage Allowance

Our China Eastern Airlines ticket had a 30kg luggage allowance. However, it was not clear whether this included the internal flight. We had also heard nightmare stories about expeditions being charged extortionate excess baggage allowance for internal flights. This could have proved problematic since we averaged 27kg each. Luckily for us the only baggage confrontation we had was when we tried taking a metre long picture and glass frame back to London as hand luggage. Fortunately the rather bureaucratic 'luggage guard' changed for lunch at midday so we got through check in at approximately 1205.

Accommodation

Due to our midnight arrival in Chengdu we booked a room in Sam's Guest House in advance over the internet. The quiet, ensuite room proved comfortable enough. On the return journey we stayed in the backpacker style hostel called 'The Loft' where the owner was a friend of Lion. If you enjoy staying in traveller hostel accommodation and western comforts such as hot chocolate, lattes and hot showers then the Loft is the place to be, if not stay at Sam's.



Mr Ma's place. His shop and restaurant on the ground floor and the climber's bunkhouse above.

In Rilong we took Mick Fowler's advice and stayed at Mr Ma's Guest House by the road entering the Siguniang National Park. Here we were treated as guests of the family, given a tour of the local area while acclimatising and generally made very welcome. This included being given copious amounts of delicious food and Grandma Ma offering to have her grandson urinate on Felix's cut finger in order to disinfect it.

Horses and Horseman

There are numerous horses in Rilong used to carry tourists up to Siguniang so they can take a picture. We hired five horses and three men from Mr Ma to take all our supplies in (three horses and 2 men on the way back). The negotiation over the price of the horses was a rather protracted and expensive affair. This concerned us since Mike Turner's 2002 expedition had given poor feedback on Mrs Ma's horse negotiation. However,



*(Above) The horses waiting patiently at Rilong.
(Below) Entering the upper Changping Valley.*

once agreed Mr Ma proved to be a man of his word and did everything asked of him and more.

Mr Ma's limit for a single animal was 50kg, and negotiations could perhaps have been eased by a having spring balance to accurately measure this. It is also perhaps fair to say that 50kg is not a lot compared to the weight of the average Chinese tourist.



Food

We did not bring any food from the UK (Actually, Ian sneaked in some chocolate contraband contrary to agreed expedition policy. He was forgiven when to our surprise he produced them on day five of noodles at base camp...there was much rejoicing).



Ian putting his scouting skills to good use while preparing the first fresh meat in 2 weeks. Baby yak tastes goood!

There was again much rejoicing when Lion returned from Rilong with yak sausages. Morale went through the roof when a young yak was killed by two yak herders (it had already been fatally gored by an adult yak's horn) and we were able to have a massive yak BBQ, although Ian's scouting prowess on fire starting was significantly tested at an altitude of 3700m.

Any food that you require can be bought in the large Western style Carrefour supermarkets in Chengdu. Western food like ham, cheese, Nutella, pasta and Mars bars can all be purchased there albeit at a premium price. We made two significant culinary errors. The first one was taking Peter Cliff's light plus light equals heavy philosophy one step too far by deciding to take chopsticks instead of the heavier knives and forks. The novelty of eating like the locals soon wore off, and spoons proved useless for noodles! The second error was thinking that we could live on noodles nearly everyday. We soon learnt that we require meat and fat to remain cheerful on such a long trip.

Fuel

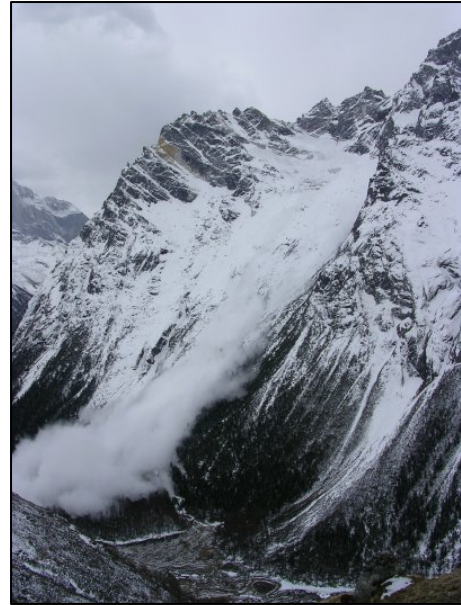
We brought two MSR Whisperlite stoves and a MSR Pocket Rocket to China. The Whisperlites were used at base camp and ran on petrol bought in Rilong. At the bivis we used the Pocket Rocket stove which ran on Korean made gas canisters. These were bought in Chengdu at about £1.50 each and remained reliable at our highest bivi of 4600m.

Jez about to perform a miracle with a packet of noodles and a cuppa-soup.



Hardware

Ropes: 2 x 8.5mm 50m
Axes: 4 x Predator 2 x Black Diamond Rage
Crampons: 3 x Black Diamond Sabre Tooth
8 x extenders
5 x ice screws
Abalakov threader
1/2/3 Friends
7/9 Hex
1 set Nuts
30m 6mm tat
10 x maillons
11 x locking karabinas
3 x Karabina
6 x slings
2 x snow stakes
3 x belay devices



One of the numerous large avalanches that made us re-assess our objectives.

Clothing

There was no significant difference in the clothing that we brought compared to that worn for summer Alpine conditions. We chose to wear leather boots rather than plastics.

Miscellaneous Equipment

The Garmin Etrex GPS proved to be an invaluable asset to mark bivouac sites, reconnaissance routes and to determine altitude since we were without an accurate large scale map. Interestingly, we experienced very good GPS satellite coverage over China (up to eight satellites for a single fix).

The Motorola T5422 handheld radios provided coverage in excess of 5km due to the absence of radio interference (the operating instructions detail a 3km coverage). This allowed us to sometimes stay in contact with Lion at base camp and with each other when we split up into reconnaissance teams.

We erroneously bought some particularly cheap electric cigarette lighters which were very unreliable at base camp (3700m) and useless at higher altitudes. This led to Lion being sent to Rilong in search of flint lighters and matches.

Waterfree antiseptic soap was very useful at high camps for maintaining hygiene in the absence of running water, and for inserting contact lenses.



Felix washing his socks at base camp.

Base Camp

At base camp we had one large Eurohike dome tent and a Terra Nova Quasar. Lion provided his own dome tent. The bivis varied between putting all three of us in the Quasar or using individual bivi bags.

All of the team used down sleeping bags, which worked well in spite of the very wet climate (all bags had pertex shells) and beckoned strongly at the end of long wet days. Despite the fact

RAB decided against offering any expedition discounted equipment Jez bought a Summit 800 sleeping bag and slept soundly all trip.



Base camp beneath the north face of Siguniang.



Many hours were spent filtering water. I knew it was worth bringing those ice axes along!

We probably underestimated the difference in temperature between sun and shadow, and put our tents close to the river under the west wall of the valley. This kept us in shadow till late in the morning. A sunnier aspect would have eased fast morning getaways.

The water appeared relatively clean this high in the valley. We chose to iodine and filter all drinking water. This may well have been over cautious, but all members of the team remained broadly healthy throughout, other than some over indulgence by Jez on the lard sausages.

Yak Attack

The biggest unforeseen problem for the expedition was the number of yaks grazing in the Changping Valley. They were addicted to our waste food, spilt cooking water and the salt in our urine. This led to the yaks wandering dangerously close to the tents and devouring anything with food attached to it, including the foil reflectors from both Whisperlite stoves.

Yaks were extremely bold and could not be shooed away so western principles had to quickly give way to local methods and we kept piles of stones to drive them off. Frequently there was a herd of dozens of yaks only a few meters from the tents while cooking.



Old Crooked Horn, the boldest yak of them all.



Wonder which one ate our stove?

All unsealed meat and cheese had to be hung in trees, waste food had to be collected up and deposited far away from the camp and all urination had to be in a set place over 100m from the camp. It is for this reason we would advise against any teams not having a member of the team who remains at camp guarding the tents and food. There were yak herders occasionally wandering up and down the valley so any unattended camp might be at risk.

Rescue

Naturally, there was no official mountain rescue in the area. However, we did have a satellite phone at base camp allowing Lion to be able to contact Mr Ma in Rilong. He could then organise a team with horses to evacuate an injured climber back to Rilong. In Rilong there were limited medical facilities but a car could be hired to take a casualty to the nearest hospital approximately two hours drive. Unfortunately, the hired satellite phone was organised in a rush and there must be more competitive deals than the one we got. Furthermore, the coverage was rather intermittent leading to calls being cut off. That all said there was not a single illness or accident all trip.



Felix trying to get the satellite phone to work.

Maps

We had two sketch maps of the area by Tomatsu Nakamura obtained through Tom Chamberlain and Lindsay Griffin. A 1:100,000 Russian map was also purchased over the internet for £70. Nakamura's map proved remarkably accurate for identifying specific peaks and their heights while the Russian map provided an overview of the Changping Valley's topography.

Weather

In our MEF interview Lindsay Griffin quite correctly identified that the weather would be our biggest challenge. Analysing previous expedition reports and climate information it does appear that the end of March is a good time to go for Alpine style climbing.

We got a stable period of 8 days sunshine which lasted from our walk in to the ascent of Ding Ding (5202m). However, before that there had been unseasonal heavy snow down to Rilong creating dangerous avalanche conditions. On the first few days of our reconnaissance trips we saw regular avalanches, particularly on north facing slopes. After our Ding Ding ascent on 6th April it



An early morning winter wonderland that would disappear by mid-day.

snowed 8 inches at base camp overnight and there was some snow every day after. The weather could also change unbelievably quickly, even for a mountainous area. Without a forecast and working only from the sky we found it could turn from clear blue conditions to a full hail storm in just half an hour.

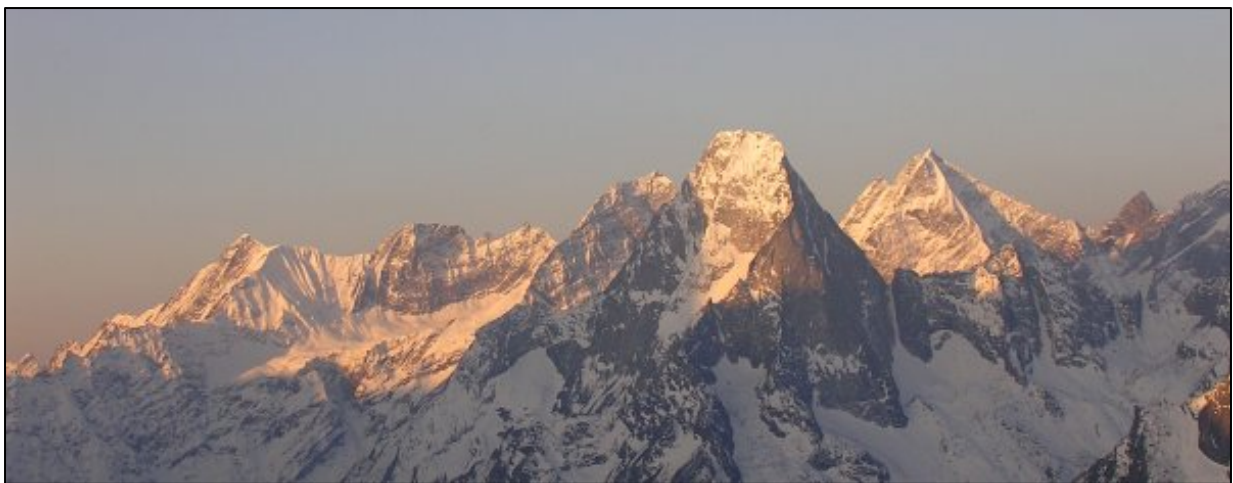
The one positive was that snow tended to clear from the valley before mid-day even after a heavy dump. Any team coming to this area must be prepared for bad weather.



Strong winds batter Siguniang.

Diary

Day	Date	Event	Weather at base camp
1	25 March	Depart London	
2	26	Arrive Chengdu	
3	27	Supplies purchased in Chengdu	
4	28	Bus Chengdu to Rilong	Overcast and rain
5	29	Acclimatisation in Rilong	Sunny spells, rain pm
6	30	Walk in Rilong to Basecamp (3700m)	Sunny spells, rain pm
7	31	Acclimatisation and reconnaissance	Overcast, sunny pm
8	1 April	Bipung Pass (4644m)	Overcast
9	2	Walk in to Bivi (4200m)	Clear and sunny
10	3	Ascent of Dorsal Peak (5050m)	Sunny, storm late pm
11	4	Rest day	Clear and sunny
12	5	Walk in to Bivi (4300m)	Clear and sunny
13	6	Ascent of Ding Ding Peak (5202m)	Clear and sunny
14	7	Rest Day	Heavy snow - 8 inches!
15	8	Reconnaissance	Snow and rain pm
16	9	Rest Day	Hail am and rain pm
17	10	Reconnaissance	Snow and rain pm
18	11	Walk in to Bivi (4600m)	Snow and rain
19	12	Attempt Peak 5260m	Heavy snow pm
20	13	Walk out Basecamp to Rilong	Snow and rain pm
21	14	Bus Rilong to Chengdu	
22	15	Chengdu	
23	16	Chengdu	
24	17	Chengdu to London	



The first rays of sun on the heart- stoppingly beautiful 5413m Celestial Peak (10th Match 2006)

Climbing Report

Dorsal Peak (5050m)



NW Ridge – PD+

A relatively simple but strenuous snow plod up snow covered bolder slopes leading to an independent peak consisting of a ridge running approximately NW/SE. This was ascended directly to the NW end, followed by an enjoyable ridge traverse to the summit situated towards the SE.

This peak was clearly visible as an independent and realistic objective with low avalanche danger from the top of the valley. We spotted it from around 4100m on our reconnaissance on the 31st March. The pass marked at 4940 made it a seemingly accessible objective.

On 2nd April we ascended to the pass with minimal kit, including bivi bags and a single stove. There was no real path, but we ascended Yak tracks and steep forested slopes to a hanging valley. At the far end of a flattening in the valley we found a bivi site under a cliff at c4200m. Melt water was available here.



D'ya think it'll snow tonight?

We made a cold start before dawn. Initially we followed the line of a stream, before ascending a steep slope. Even in the frozen morning conditions the snow remained soft and progress was hampered by regularly falling chest deep into hidden crevices between boulders.



A glorious sunrise helped us up to the base of the independent peak. A steep climb, only made challenging by the altitude, led us on to the NW end of the ridge. The ridge posed more technical challenges than originally expected, with some fun, delicate traverses. After about 30 minutes of excellent rock, covered in powder snow, we reached the clear summit which was a pleasingly small pointed peak.

There were no signs of a previous ascent and we felt confident that our 6mm tat at the summit was the first sign of human presence on the mountain.

From the summit it is clear there is a second achievable objective, possibly just under 5000m, to the south on the far side of the marked pass on the Russian map (although there was no sign of a path). Here the west ridge again seemed a pleasant objective with the promise of an unclimbed peak.

We descended via our ascent route, and started to cross the bowl toward the above mentioned peak. By this time of day the sun drenched snow was impassibly soft, and having got close enough to see the feasible ascent route we descended intending to return the next day.

At the bivi site we had our first taste of the speed of change of the weather. A storm rapidly approached and after deciding against sitting it out in bivi bags we descended the frustrating slopes to the valley.

(1) Jez leading up to the start of the ridge. (2) Ian placing a finger on the summit. (3) Ian again leaving our mark on the summit block. (4) Felix returning along the tricky NW ridge.



(Above) Our route up Dorsal Peak.

(Below) Possible easy first ascent available via the long West ridge. However the peak is possibly under 5000m.



Ding Ding Peak (5202m)



SW Ridge – AD

The ridge runs broadly E/W from the Bipung Pass, narrowing as it nears the summit. The initial gendarmes were circumnavigated by traversing on the south side of the ridge through a notch in a subsidiary ridge running N/S, and following a couloir onto the summit ridge. The snow and rock ridge was traversed over a series of false summits with steadily increasing difficulty to a final steep step leading to the summit previously marked by a small cairn.



Much credit goes to Jez for this comfortable nights sleep. Cheers Mate!



This peak could clearly be seen from base camp, and its continued presence, and lack of objective danger, soon made it an attractive prospect as our second summit.

We took more equipment for this ascent, including the TeraNova tent and sufficient supplies for a prolonged assault. We ascended the steep path to flat sheltered area below the Bipung pass at around 4400m. Here we dug a pit for the tent to shelter it from possible storms.



The following morning saw fair weather, so we left the tent before dawn. We ascended the pass to 100m below its summit then traversed across boulder slopes to the right to an obvious notch in the ridge which bounds the col to the east.

On the far side of this ridge we quickly found an indistinct couloir leading up towards the summit ridge. We followed this through a rock band to an awkward step onto the ridge where amazing views in both directions could be seen.



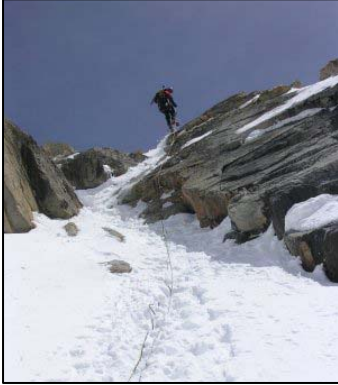
At this point we were pleased to see that we had passed behind the distinctive gendarme which appeared to guard access to the ridge when seen from base camp.



Without an accurate map, or knowledge of the summit height, the ridge proved to contain a frustrating series of false summits. However, the climbing was enjoyable and became steadily more technical. A technical step down to an exposed traverse led to the final challenge. Here steep and exposed snow smothered rock led to a fairytale summit where the party was more than a little disappointed to encounter a small but unmistakable cairn.



(1) Felix and Ian in the couloir. (2) Felix leading over the rock band. (3) Jez admiring the view on the summit ridge. Behind is Siguniang, Celestial Peak and the road head village of Rilong. (4) Felix, boldly going where man has unfortunately been before, about to discover a most unwelcome cairn. (5) Jez rightly celebrates what he hopes is a first British ascent!



Ian ab's back into the couloir.

Upon hearing Felix's expletives that met his discovery Jez and Ian, who yet to reach the summit, were somewhat concerned that a more standard climbing disaster had occurred. They were soon informed that the cause of Felix's distress was a small but perfectly formed cairn.

Somewhat disheartened we descended the same route using abseils for the steeper sections. Back at the bivi the sky was beginning to darken so we decamped and raced the clouds back to base camp.



Our route towards the summit of Ding Ding from the pass. The true summit is out of view.

Peak 5260m



South Flank & West Ridge – AD?

The ascent of the South flank appeared to be technically feasible at a similar grade to Ding Ding. A high point of c.5000m was reached before a rapid deterioration in the weather with heavy snowfall forced retreat.



The party made a number of reconnaissance trips up the valley, both along the valley floor and along the flank of the mountains to the north. Significant avalanche activity was a continuous factor.



The valley contains a reasonable path for the first hour from our base camp. After this point there is a vague yak track until above a steeping in the valley with some rapids, generally much time is spent rhododendron bashing and views of the mountains are curtailed.

(Above left) Debating a retreat whilst sheltering from the weather and listening to Peak 5592 (Pictured left the day before) and its neighbours avalanching around us. (Main Picture) Leaving advance base camp the next day for our attempt on Peak 5260 ahead.



On the 11th of April, after a period of continuously unsettled weather we followed the route we had by now found to be the least horticultural to a large bolder near the top of the valley. Here the hail and snow reappeared and we spent some time sheltering under a large boulder, listening to avalanches.



We had seen a steep but feasible ascent up the side of the mountain, and followed this line. The ascent was as ever covered in bushes, but lines of scree gave access to a waterfall through a rock band which we ascended onto steep snow slopes above. Steadily worsening weather forced us to make a camp as soon as we found a wide enough area to level a platform at c4600m. Melt water was found after a 15 minute descent.



We were using yet another equipment combination, using a Eurohike fly sheet and biv bags, which proved surprisingly spacious and warm after sealing the fly sheet with a snow wall.



Cloud met us as we looked out at 4am, but 2 hours later we found ourselves in an inversion and made an attempt.



We crossed the ever present boulders through large bowl, before ascending a wide couloir towards a rock shoulder of our intended objective. The slope steeped to the extent were rope was required, but before the completion of the first pitch clouds and snow arrived forcing us to retreat from a height of c5000m.

(1) Our Eurohike flysheet dug in at c4600m. (2) Jez and Felix enjoying a cupful of noodles. (3) We wake up to a stunning view the next morning. (4) The cloud rises as we quickly kit up. Peaks 5488 and 5592 (unclimbed) are visible in the background. (5) the decision is taken to retreat at c5000m as snow begins to fall.

The route looked feasible, it appeared that continuing over a rock band would have gained access to the shoulder followed by a snow ridge and the final assault on the summit, perhaps 2 hours away.

Snow continued to fall throughout our descent and into the night. Upon reaching the bivi we rapidly dismantled it and followed our route to the valley, abseiling the waterfall section.



*(Above) The heavy one goes first! Ian abseiling back over the waterfall in heavy snowfall.
(Below) Our route up Peak 5260 from advance base camp.*



Useful Addresses

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(1) Mr Ma and Lion. (2) The beautiful Celestial Peak. (3) The first beer in 2 and a half weeks going straight to our heads in Rilong bar. (4) A celebratory meal organised by Lion, with the Ma family and the mayor of the valley.

Climbing Potential

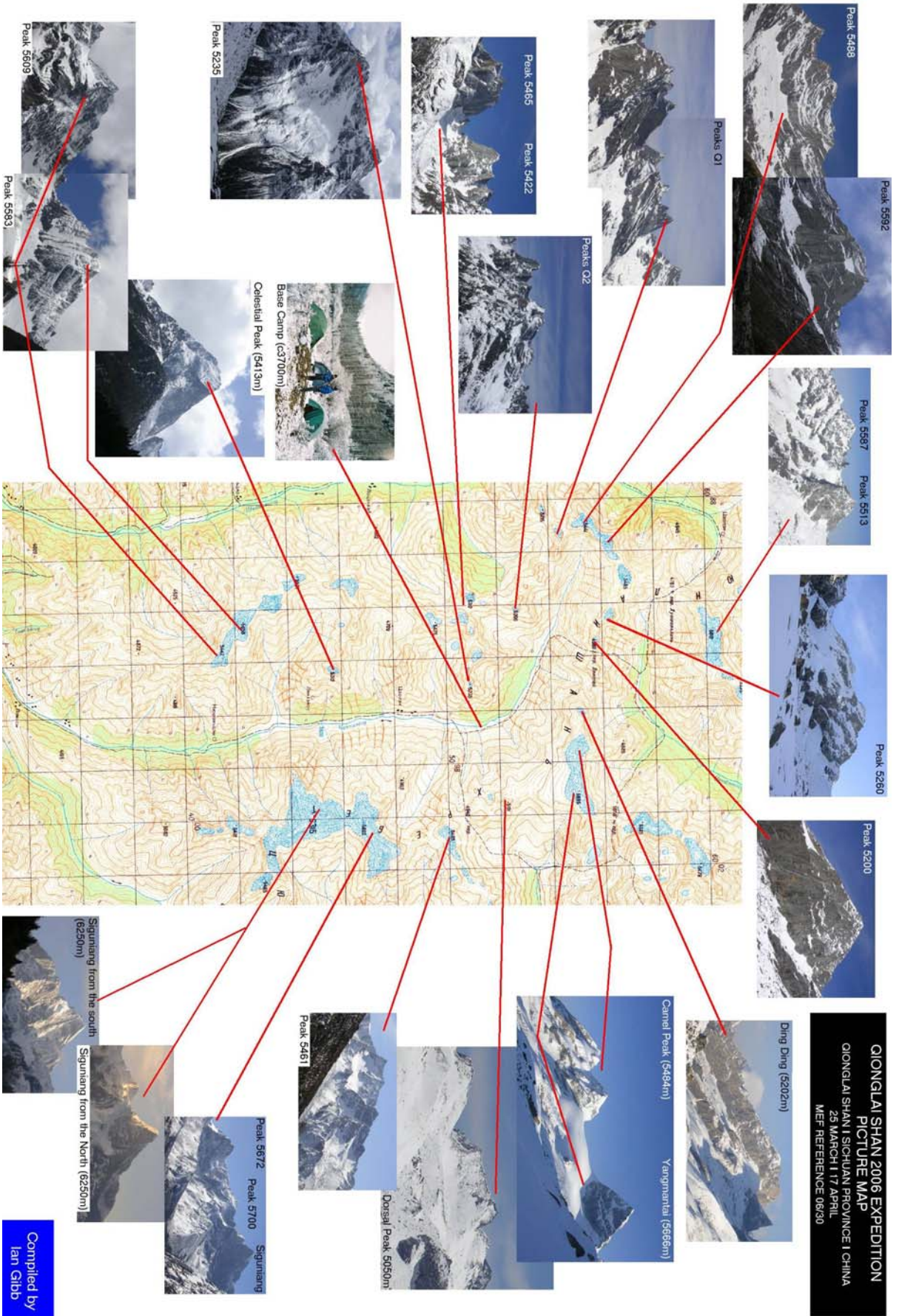
This accessible and attractive area still has many unclimbed peaks over 5000m. However, any prospective team must be prepared for bad weather. We believe the little undocumented climbing done by Chinese teams has followed the more accessible and easier lines. Speaking to Lion the extra difficulty of accessing the Bipung Valley to the North has almost certainly ensured that its climbing is largely unexplored. However, other than the peaks we climbed and Camel Peak we saw very few straight forward ascents within the AD grade since much of the topography is made up of rocky spires.

Reconnaissance Pictures

We have used our research to update the climbed peaks marked on Tomatsu Nakamura's map (Page 4). To aid the planning of any future expeditions the following pages contain:

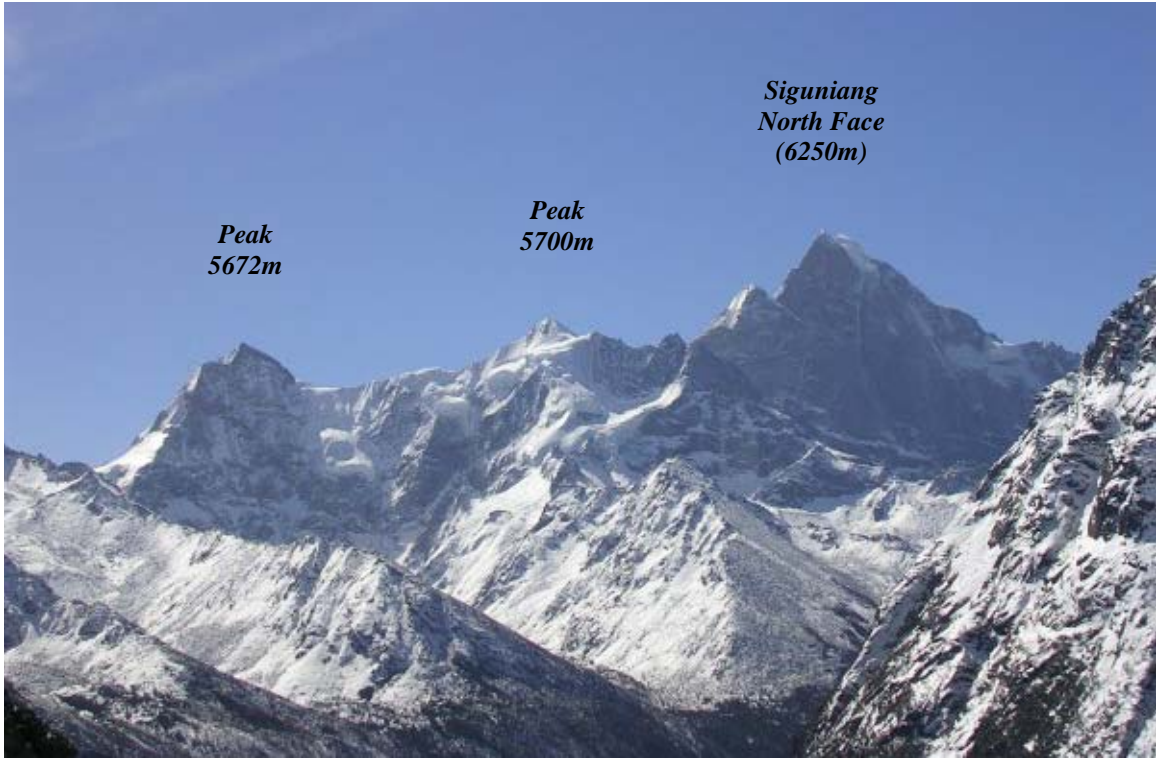
- A picture map containing labelled photos of many potential peaks and showing where they are located in the valley. This map is available on disc and can be blown up to A3 and above without losing definition (Page 29).
- Additional labelled photos of significant peaks in the valley (Page 30).
- Twelve labelled photos that can be connected to create a 360° panorama of the area from the summit of Dorsal Peak (Page 40).
- Six labelled photos that can be connected to create a 180° panorama of the area from the summit of Ding Ding (Page 46).

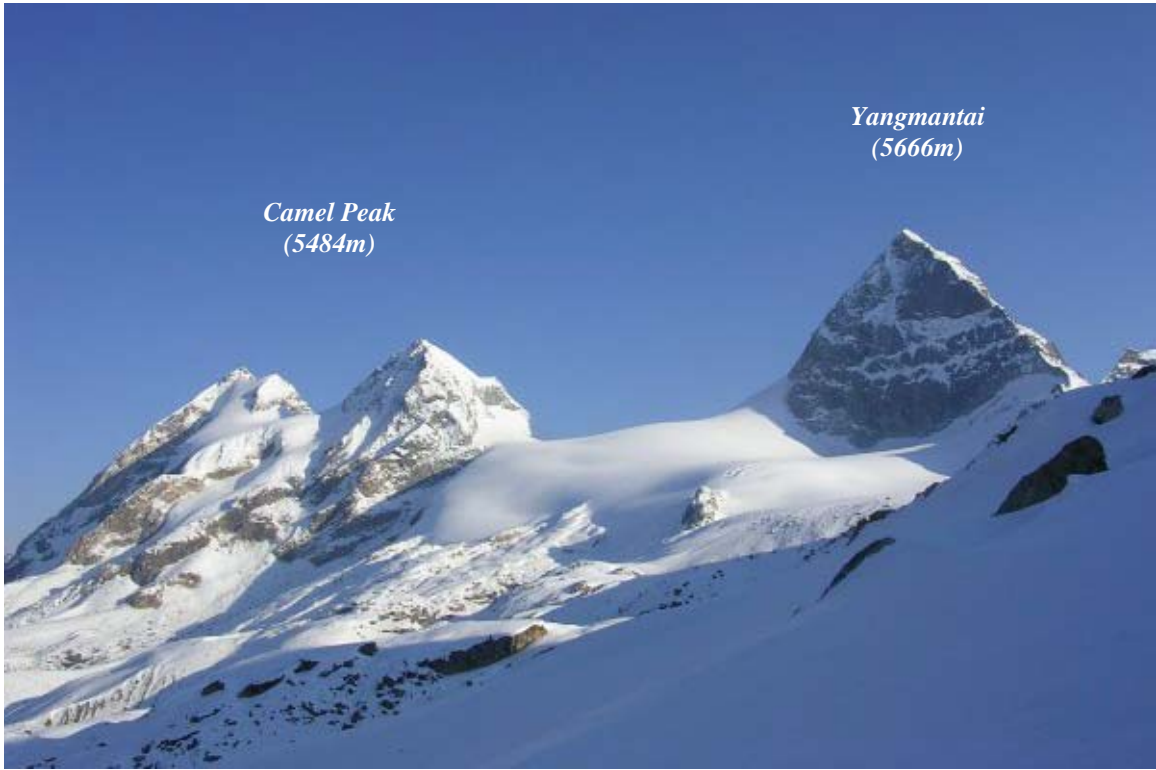
We also hope to make our report and pictures available at www.FHoddinott.com.



Compiled by
Ian Gibb

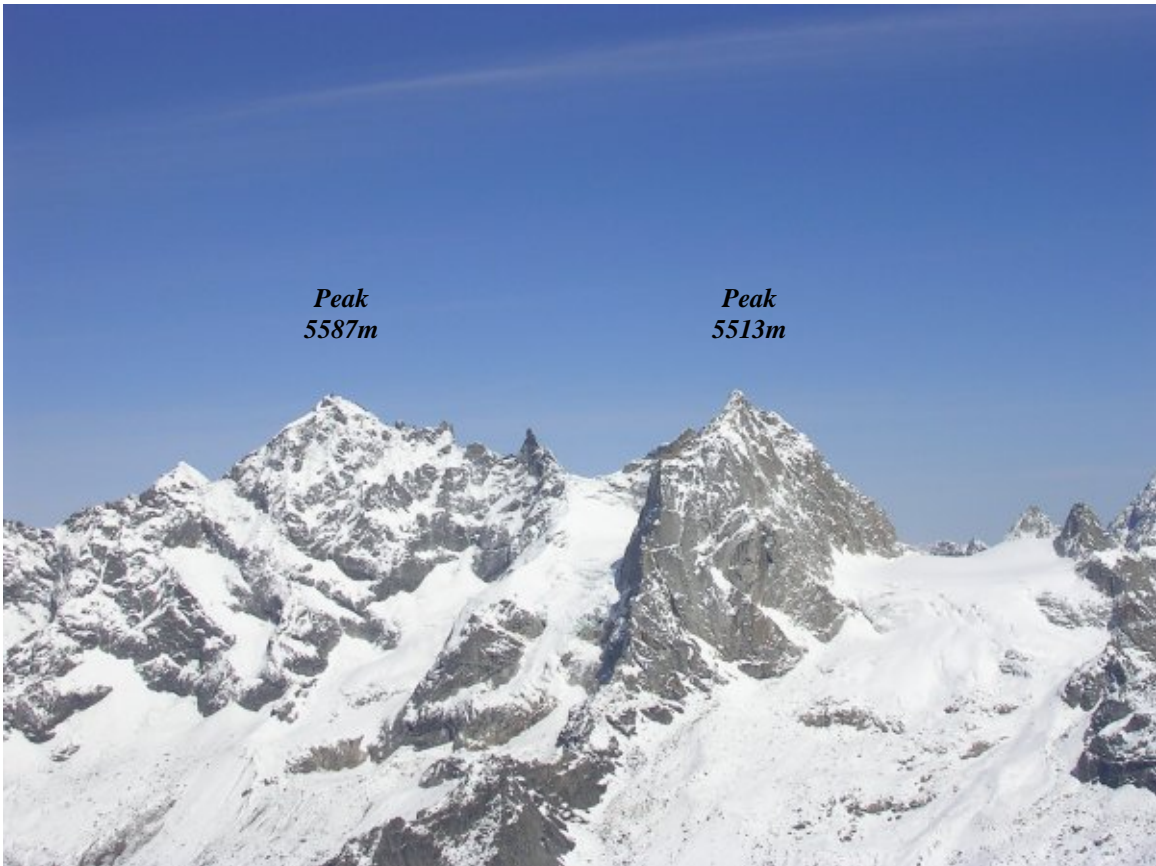






*Camel Peak
(5484m)*

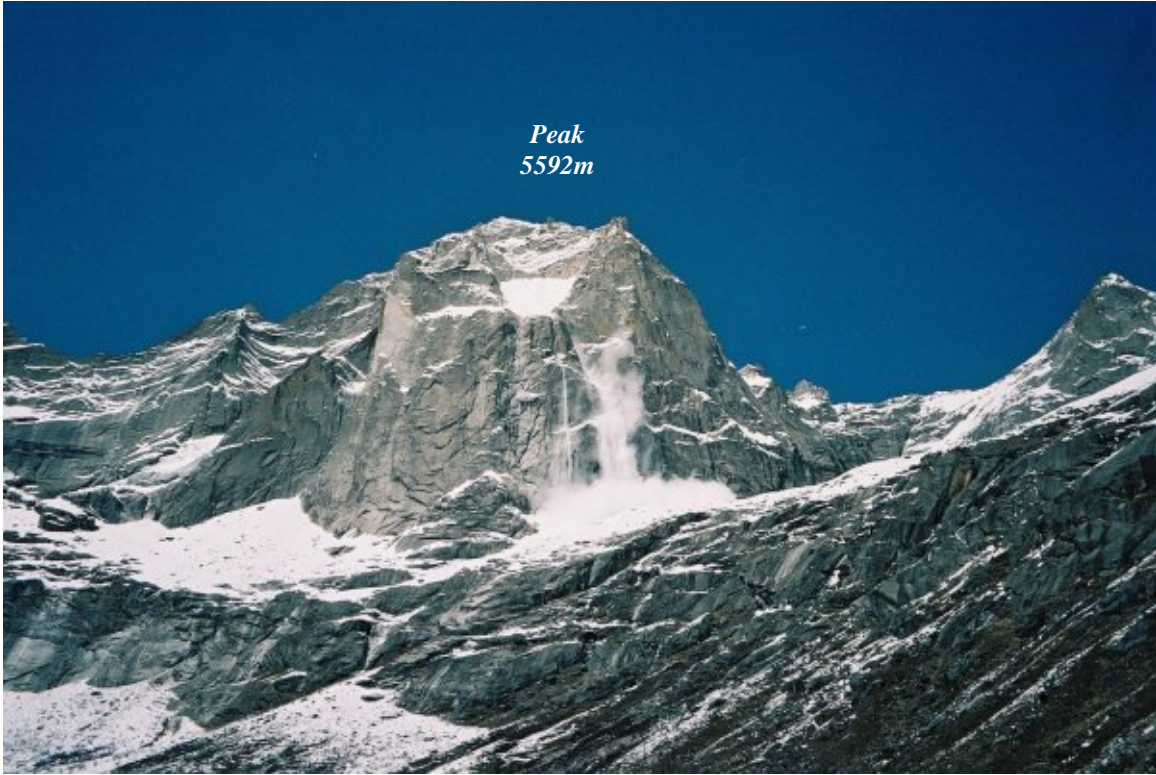
*Yangmantai
(5666m)*



*Peak
5587m*

*Peak
5513m*

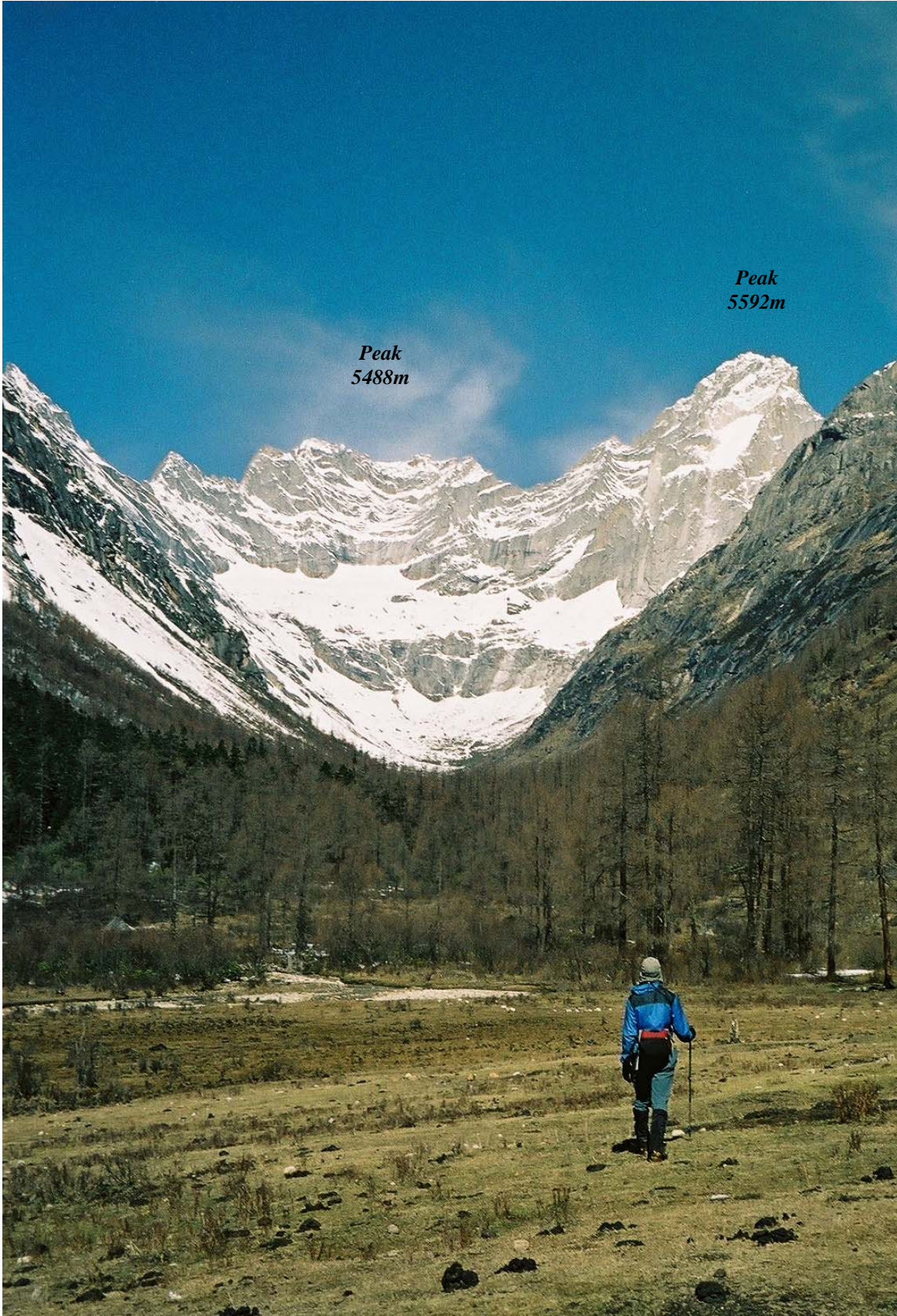




*Peak
5592m*



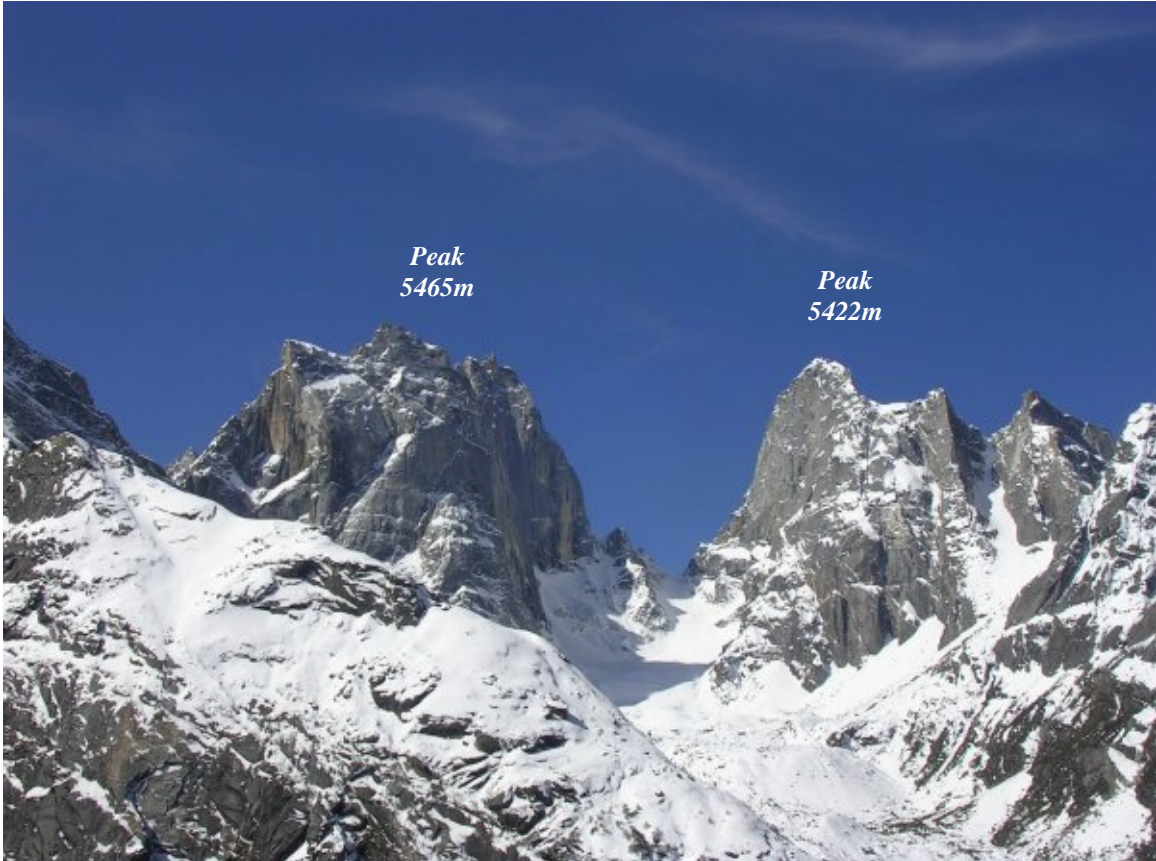
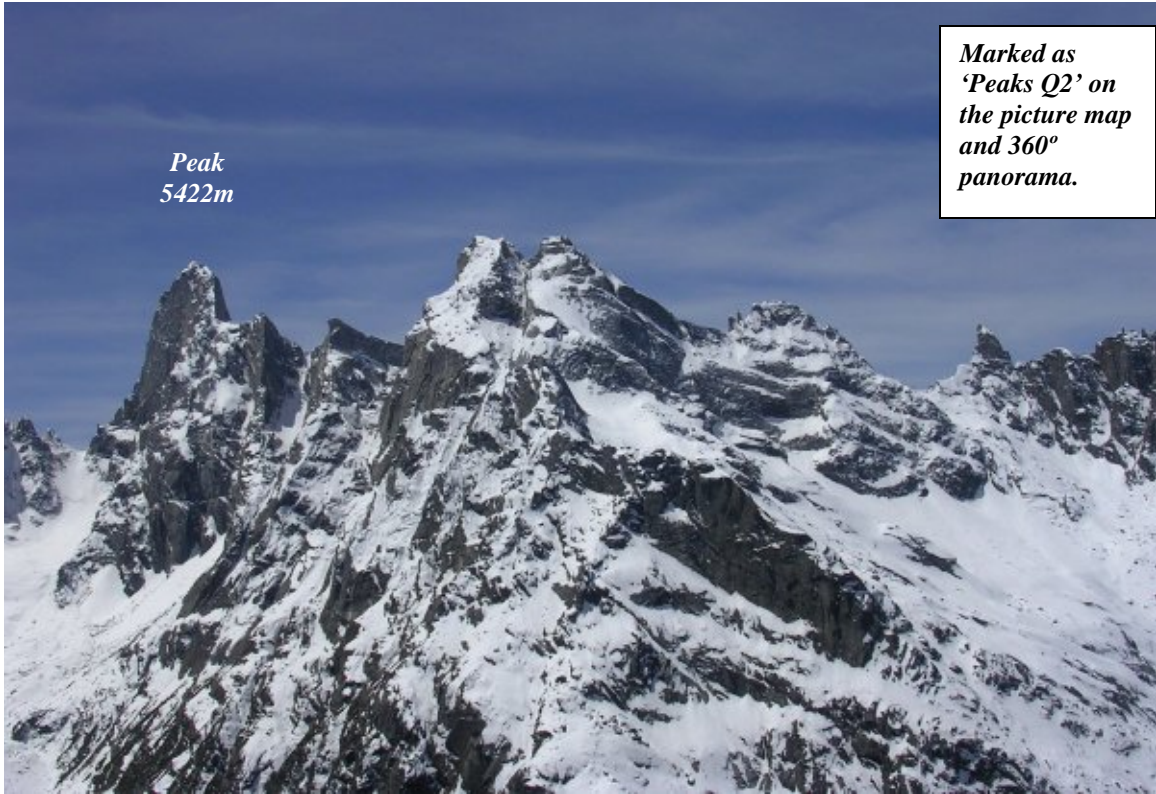
*Peak
5488m*





This group of peaks are marked as 'Peaks Q1' on picture map and 360° panorama.

*Peak
5488m*





**Celestial Peak
(North Face)
5413m**



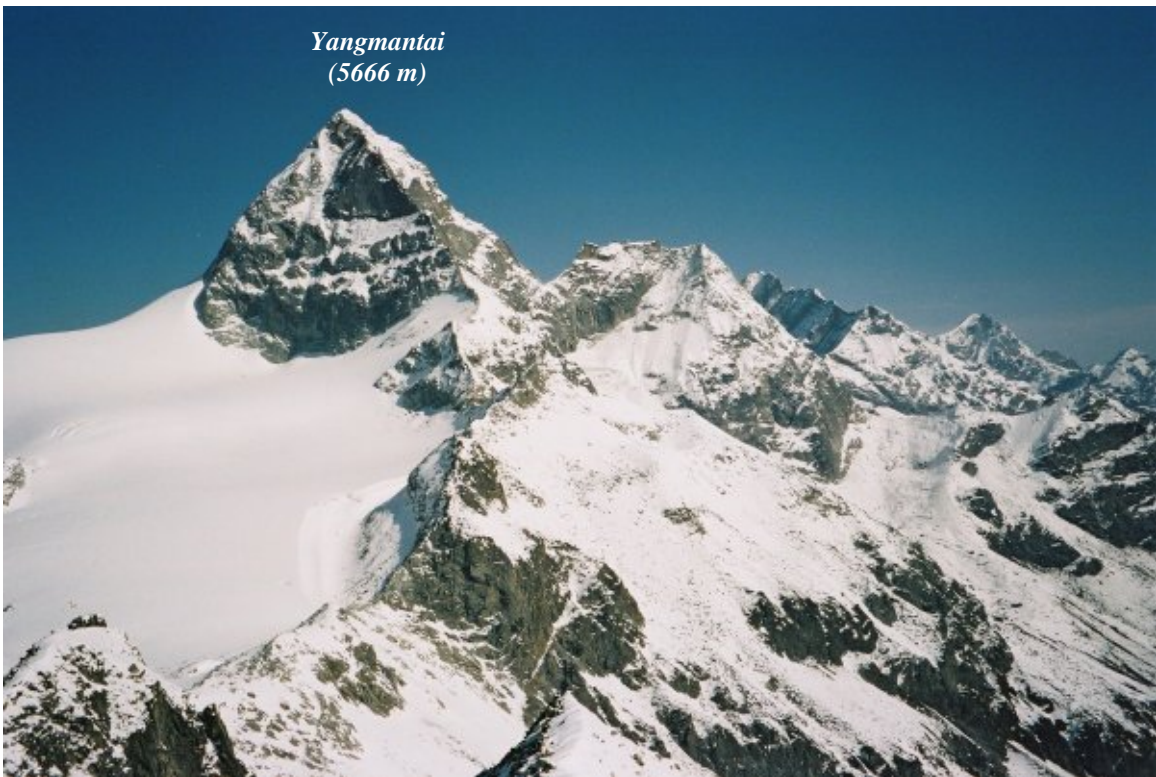
**Celestial Peak
(South Face)
5413m**

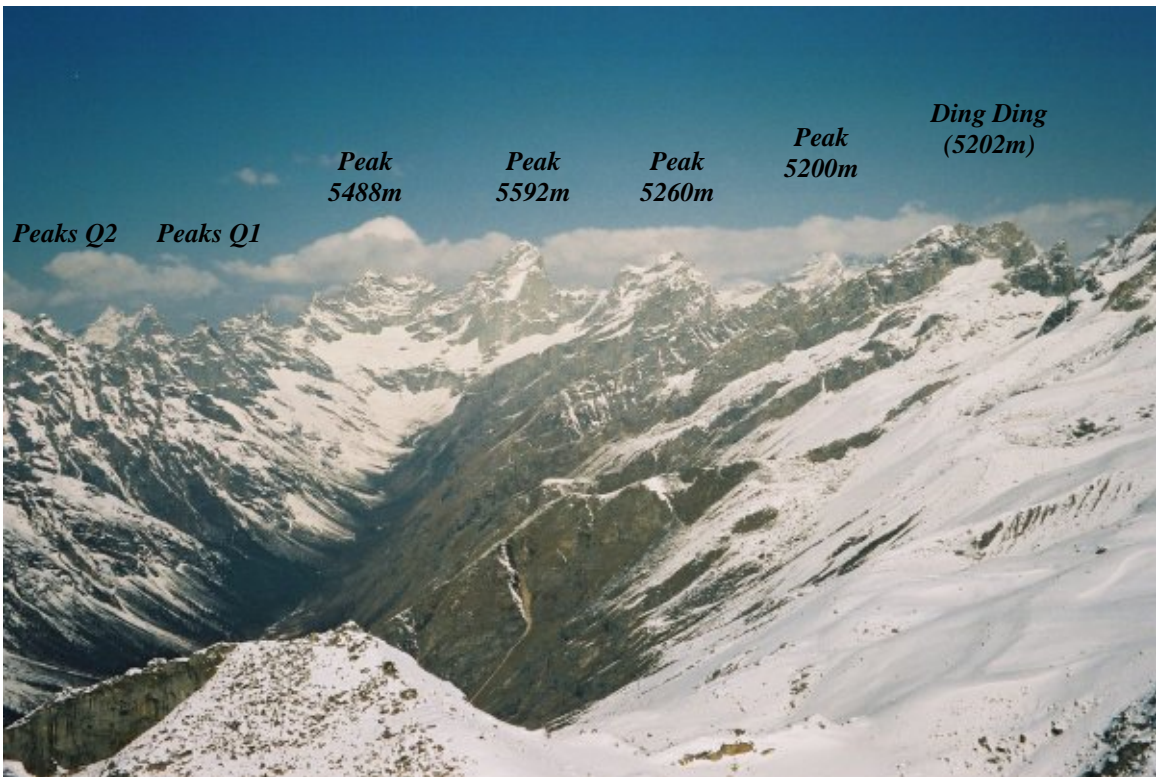
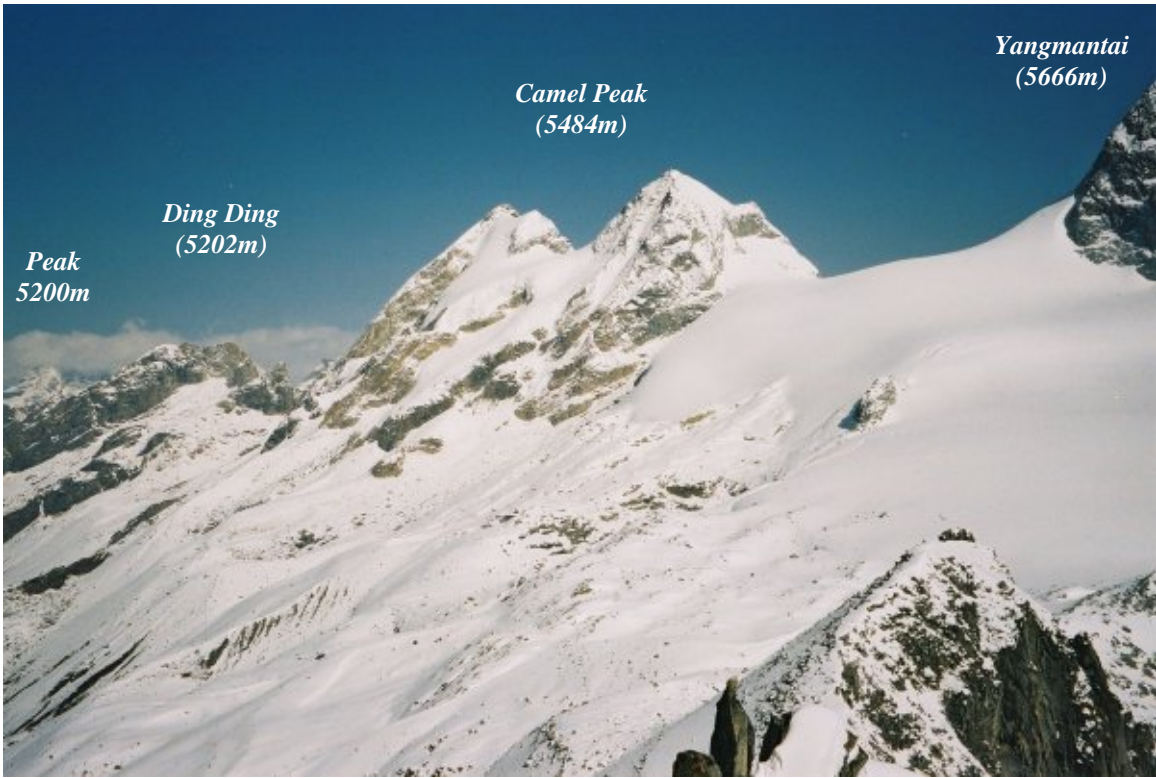


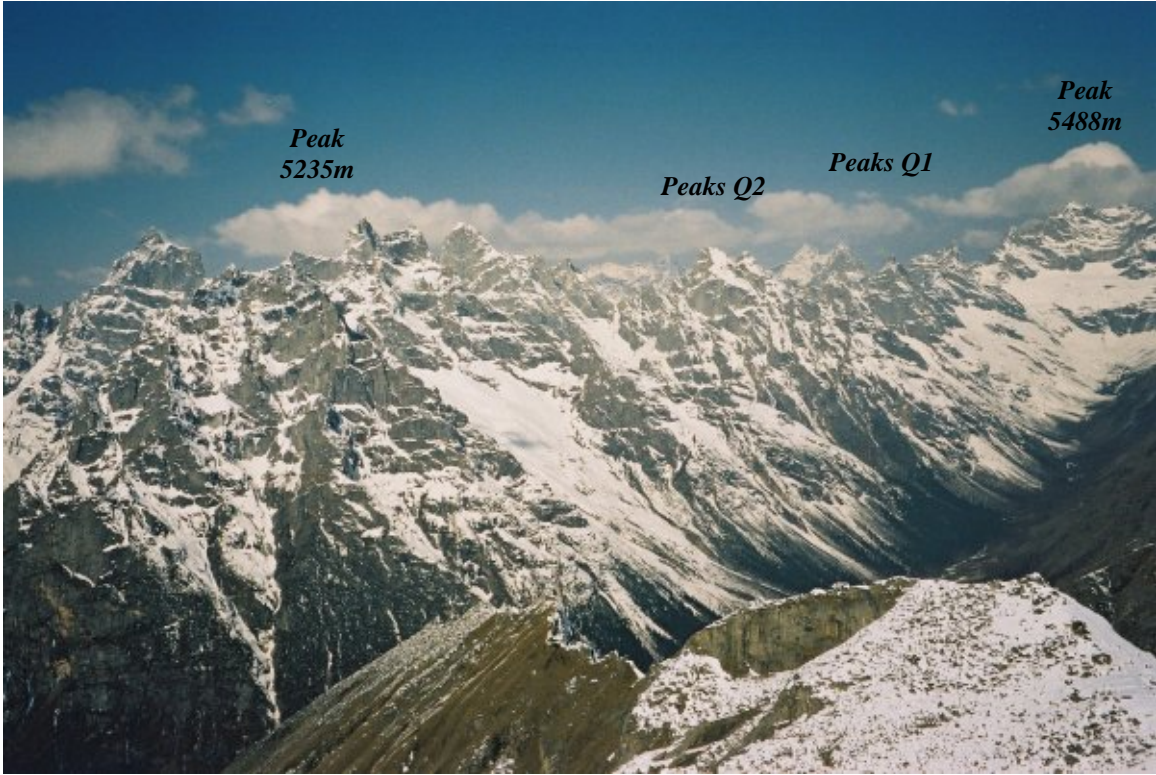
The Following 12 photos can be connected (*anti-clockwise from first to last*) to form a 360° panorama of the area from the summit of Dorsal Peak (5050m).













The Following 6 photos can be connected (*anti-clockwise from first to last*) to form a 180° panorama of the area from the summit of Ding Ding (5202m).

