

became restless and walked up to Camp 1. The route followed small, skinny couloirs. I placed camp in a large boulder field on the north side of the west-southwest ridge. The following day the entire team made the trip to Camp 1.

On the 26th Chen Cheng, Su Rongqin, Ma Yihua, and I, all guides working with the Arête Alpine Instruction Center in Chengdu, climbed to Camp 2 at 5,010m. The route followed the north face of the west ridge. When we reached the crest, the wind was howling, blowing directly from the south. We made camp on the leeward side, and Su Rongqin descended to base camp that evening.

A two-day storm had deposited a thick layer of unconsolidated snow on the primarily rocky ridge above, where initially the solid-granite crest was stepped, a horizontal section generally being followed by a steep rock face. Wind and blowing snow plagued our entire ascent, and the route proved very time-consuming. Two sections involved sack-hauling, while a few others required the leader to climb without a pack, then rappel and jumar back up with his sack.

We spent the night of the 27th in a half-erected tent on a small ledge at 5,250m. The next day we only managed to climb 147 vertical meters. The following morning we avoided the crest by a snow slope on the right, but when forced back to the ridge, were surprised to find it changed in character: narrower, steeper, and composed of large unstable blocks. Progress on less-steep sections often involved gingerly crawling along the crest, while the vertical parts involved climbing difficult rock in boots and crampons. One small section required easy aid.

We sited the last camp at a little over 5,500m, but by the afternoon of the following day, with obviously looser rock above, we realized we were not going to make the summit by the ridge. At 6 p.m., a little more than 200 vertical meters below the summit, we decided to rappel into the gully on the left. The gully would not only provide a campsite for the night, but hopefully we could downclimb it to a point where it met other couloirs, one of which we might be able to follow directly to the summit ridge.

We did not make a conscious decision to abandon our route that evening, but once we'd started rappelling, we kept going down. We descended for 15 hours through the night, enduring a storm with erratic, bitter cold winds and whipping spindrift, and finally reaching base camp at 9 a.m. on the 31st. Concentration during the descent was so great that at 10:47 p.m. an earthquake measuring 4.2 on the Richter Scale, with an epicenter just 20km away, occurred unnoticed. We rated the climb to our high point Alpine TD 5.10 A0. Despite a number of attempts to date, Yala remains unclimbed.

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QONGLAI SHAN

SIGUNIANG NATIONAL PARK

Jiang Jun Feng, Bipeng Valley, first ascent. Chris Chitty, Pat Goodman, Ari Menitove and I were to travel to the Qionglai Range to explore and make first ascents in the Shuangqiao Valley. However, during planning before we left for China, we heard about an adjacent valley called the Bipeng, which had only become easily accessible two years ago, because of a new road. This valley lies north of the Shuangqiao and just across a ridge from our primary objectives, but is

approached from the other side of the range. This area was written up in *AAJ 2005* by Jon Otto, who gave us what information we had. When we got to China in mid-September, we met Jon and saw more photos of this valley. With the prospect of at least 10 unclimbed 5000+m rock peaks, we deemed it worthy and went there first.

We arrived at the trailhead in one day from Chengdu and stayed at a local hostel/guesthouse. The weather was good the next day, and we were impressed with the valley and its offerings. We located a decent camp along the trail going up and over into the Changping Valley, right below one of the more striking peaks (Jiang Jun Feng, 5,202m) and a promising-looking wall of granite spires. The weather was good for two or three days, allowing us to acclimatize and make a reconnaissance. The northeast face of 5,202m was the obvious big objective for us, but as we prepared to begin a route, bad weather set in. For the next five or six days, rain, snow, and fog kept us in our tents or under the boulder we used as a cooking shelter.

When the weather began to clear on September 28, Pat and I made a quick unroped ascent of 5,202m, via the ca. 900m northwest buttress, a low-angle fin of rock just left of a giant talus field. We carried a rope and some gear but never even put on our climbing shoes. Most of the terrain was scrambling, but a few steps required climbing up to about 5.7. We climbed to the west summit, which we believe to be the tallest point on the massif. As it turned out, this was also the best day's weather of the trip.

Ari and Chris began a route on the northeast face. They came across a fair bit of loose rock and incipient features, interspersed with sections of good 5.10-5.11. They were climbing with no bolt kit and only a few pins. Ultimately they would have needed more of an aid rack to continue. As the weather window was again starting to close, they came down after five pitches. That same day Pat and I explored the wall of granite above camp and adjacent to Jiang Jun Feng. To our amazement this wall was made up of beautiful compact granite, covered with splitter cracks. Unfortunately, the cracks were completely filled with dirt and grass. Cleaning even one pitch would have taken hours. We did find a few clean cracks on a detached pillar at the base of the wall and installed anchors above three very good lines. Pat climbed the first splitter offwidth to place anchors, and we intended to return the next day to finish the other two, but we had neither time nor weather for cleaning the walls above. Bad weather set in, and we spent the rest of the trip toiling in the squalor of our tents or the cooking cave. This expedition was supported by the AAC Lyman Spitzer Grant and Cascade Designs. Thanks to both for their generous assistance.

TOMMY CHANDLER

Editor's note: Tom Nakamura was probably the first foreigner to travel and photograph the Bipeng Valley. In 1998 he crossed from the Bipeng to the Changping via the 4,644m pass one kilometer west of Jiang Jun Feng. In AAJ 2005, p. 423, we reported an ascent of both Camel Peaks by Tom Chamberlain et al (first climbed by Charlie Fowler in 1994) as Pts. 5,202m and 5,484m. In fact 5,484m is a double summited peak (the Camel Peaks) with both tops roughly the same height. On the 1:50,000 Chinese People's Liberation Army Map, Pt. 5,484m is West Camel Peak.

"The Angry Wife," first ascent, via north ridge (Raindog Arête); Daogou, first ascent, via south face (Salvage Op). In early September Jay Janousek, Joe Puryear, Stoney Richards, Paul Saddler, and I left Seattle for the Qionglai Mountains, with our main objective a new route on Siguniang (6,250m). After establishing ourselves in the Changping valley we climbed the west summit