



Seen from the northwest across the Shuangqiao Valley: the unclimbed Pt 5,592m (a.k.a. Barbarian Peak; left) and Putala Shan (5,428m). (1) Jiayou (north face) (850m, 18 pitches, 5.8 A3+, Yamanoi, 2005, not to summit). (2) Dalai Lama (west face) (800m, 22 pitches, VIII-, Grmovsek-Grmovsek, 2003). *Andrej Grmovsek*

ascent and descent of the north face of Gyachung Kang—Ed.]. Even compared to the big walls of places like Yosemite, the face on Putala seemed most attractive. In fact, I noticed many beautiful crack lines extending up to the crest. Although I made my final attempt after carefully evaluating my physical condition and cold weather equipment, the climb was as difficult as expected.

On June 25 we established base camp in a beautiful meadow at an altitude of 3,700m. My wife Taeko Yamanoi supported me as base camp manager, with a cook

and an interpreter. On the 27th I carried equipment and provisions to the bottom of the wall, at approximately 4,500m, then spent a week fixing rope on the first 300m, in weather as bad as on my last attempt. Progress was difficult due to continuous rain and snow. As I chose a route following a large corner, ice fell on me frequently.

On July 13 I began in earnest my capsule-style attempt with a portaledge. The rock, especially on the lower part of the route, is solid granite, but as I climbed higher expanding flakes slowed my progress to about one pitch a day. Ice coating the rock prevented free climbing, so I was forced to use aid. Shortly after beginning, I got slight frostbite on my hands and feet, which are now my Achilles heel after my accident in 2002. Both my down jacket and sleeping bag were soaked, so my extremities were unable to recover, and as I was unable to sleep, I also began to suffer from exhaustion. To make matters worse, the sun never reached the face, and the snow and ice sticking to the upper part of the wall made the climb very stressful. However, on the 19th, the seventh day of my climb, I topped out on the crest at an altitude of 5,350m. I needed two more days to rappel the route and return to base camp.

Summary: first ascent of Putala Shan north face (not to summit) via Jiayou (Chinese for “come on” or “do your best”); 850m, 18 pitches, 5.8 A3+.

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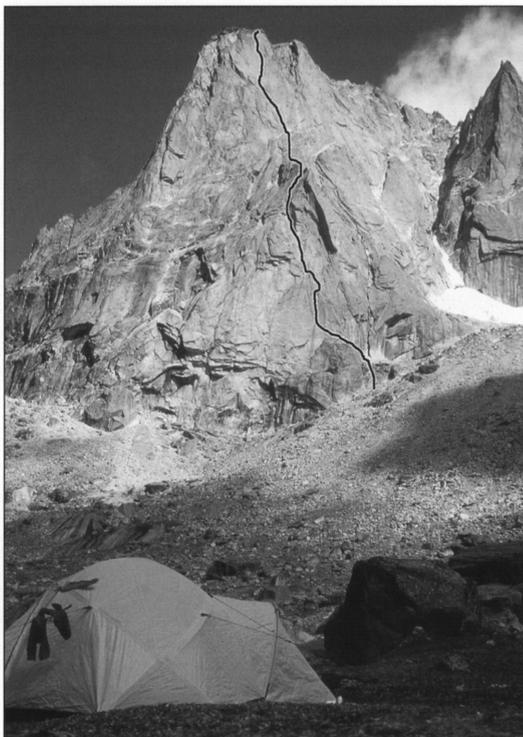
*Eagle Rock Peak, first ascent.* A man wearing a leather jacket with a bloody knife in his hands stands by the roadside, digging inside the body of a slaughtered yak. We realized we were in China.

Christof Looser, Martin Ruggli, and I started out for the now-famous Quonglai mountains, 280km east of Chengdu, on September 25. Our goal was to establish a new route on one of the rock peaks north of Siguniang. Our information came from Tamotsu Nakamura.

After reconnaissance we set up base camp in the Shuangqiao Valley (Double Bridge Valley) at an altitude of ca. 3,500m. Recently a (horrible) road has been built into this valley to bring hundreds of Chinese tourists from one scenic spot to the next. The tourists stick pretty much to the road, leaving the rest of the valley quiet.

After a few days we discovered the beautiful, interesting, south face of Eagle Rock Peak (ca. 5,300m) south of Putala Shan. The summit looks like an eagle's beak and can be seen from the valley floor, but the south face is hidden.

Sichuan does not seem to be a place for those who like stable weather, and we had to deal with a mix of snow, rain, and clouds, with only a few spells of sunshine. During changable weather we set up high camp at 4,500m and ferried everything we needed. We had five 60m ropes: two twins and three singles. Due to continuing poor weather we fixed the first 240m (eight pitches). After 12 days (five days ferrying loads, three days fixing, and four days of bad weather) we set off for the big push. On the first day we juggled our ropes and climbed to the top of pitch 13, where we could fit a small tent. The next day we fixed three 60m ropes on the head-wall. On the day after, October 14, we reached the previously virgin summit in evening light and returned to the tent, before starting our descent the



The south face of Eagle Rock (the ca. 5,300m South Summit of Putala Shan), showing the first ascent route, I Hate Camping (700m, 7a A3; Dürr-Looser-Ruggli, 2005). Lukas Dürr

following morning. In all, we spent seven days on the wall. Our route, which we named I Hate Camping, is about 700m long, 21 pitches, with difficulties up to 7a and A3. We placed a total of 13 bolts. The east side of Shuangqiao Valley sports many rocky peaks with big granite walls. There is great potential for future climbs, but many faces are slabby and lacking in features. As far as we are aware we were the only climbers in the valley during our time there in October.

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*Editor's note: Eagle Rock Peak is the south summit of Putala Shan. The latter has three summits. The highest (5,428m) is the most northerly and was climbed in 2003 by Andrej and Tanja Grmovsek (see AAJ 2004, pp. 420-2).*

*Shuangqiao Gou, first ascents of "Pakla Shan," "Shuangqiao Peak," and the northwest face of Tan Shan. The Croatian Mountaineering Federation, to celebrate its 130th anniversary, organized a small expedition to Siguniang National Park. There were four of us: Darko Berljak as leader, Dubravko Markovic as doctor, and two climbers, Ivica Matković from Split and I, Boris Čujić, from Zagreb. Our trip lasted from September 13 to October 15. After reaching Rilong by bus, we took a ride into the Shuangqiao Gou (Two Bridges Valley), where we set up base camp. We then chose to climb in a smaller valley, a three-hour walk away. It was the valley where Slovenians*