hours from the vehicle. The best months are September and October, but rain or snow is normal. In winter there are nice waterfalls for climbing.

Boris Ćujic, Croatia

Editor’s note: very recent information suggests that the south face of Shuangqiao may have been climbed in 2000 by Italians Gianluca Belin and Diego Stefani (850m: 6c and A1). They refer to the summit as Wong Shan.

CHENGDU REGION

Daxuetang (5,364m), first ascent. Daxuetang lies almost due south of Siguniang and is the highest peak within the boundaries of Chengdu city. It borders Wolong Giant Panda Nature Preserve, and we approached and climbed the mountain from that side. From Chengdu the Sichuan-Tibetan Highway leads through Wolong (the Giant Panda Research Center) toward Xiaojin and Siguniang. The trailhead is at Dengsheng (2,730m), right before the road starts switchbacking up toward the Balang Pass.

Daxuetang has several peaks, and the topography is confusing. Two are fairly close in height. In Spring 2002 Liu Jian, a newspaper reporter from Chengdu, claimed to have made the first ascent. However, it turned out that he summited Daxuetang’s northernmost peak (Pk. 2), which is about 10m lower than the main peak, immediately to the south. In October 2003 a joint Japanese-Chinese team climbed the mountain, also thinking they were making the first ascent. However, they reached the same summit as Liu Jian.

The Goretex-Arête Alpine Instruction Center First Ascents team comprising Chen Cheng (Chengdu), Ma Yihua (Chengdu, leader), Su Rongqin (Fujian), Tselantou (Heishui County), and Zhang Jian (Chongqing) left Chengdu on May 21. From Dengsheng they walked up the Yeliu Valley and camped below the Baishuitai waterfall at 3,600m. On the 23rd they established base camp at 4,700m. Their route then followed the “Bowling Alley” on the northeast face of Daxuetang to Camp 1 at 5,250m. On the 27th Ma Yihua summited Pk. 2. But then two large rocks hit the tent at Camp 1, and the team retreated to Chengdu for a replacement.

On June 1 they again left Chengdu, to attempt the main summit. They followed the same route to Camp 1 but then traversed around the left side of a small pinnacle to reach a knife-edge ridge connecting Pk. 2 with the main summit. All five Chinese climbers followed the ridgeline southeast for 200m and reached the summit dome late in the afternoon. Due to the late hour they bivouacked on top before descending the following day.

Jon Otto