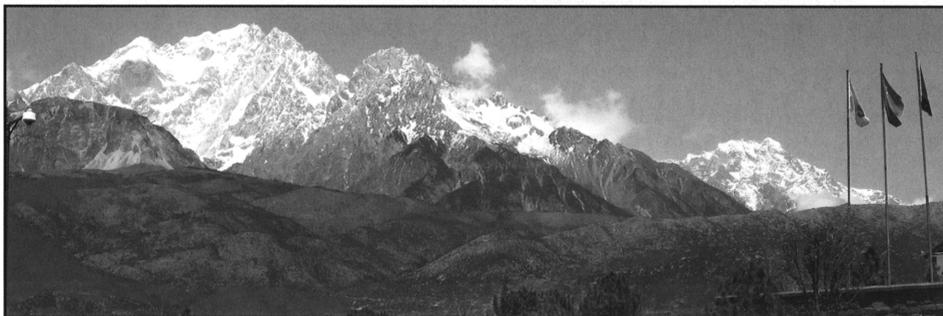


Yulong Xueshan from south-southeast. Smaug just visible in top left corner. Shanzidou is large mountain in middle. Predominantly rocky summits on right lie on east ridge of Shanzidou. *Mike Dobie*



Northern sector of Yulong Xueshan from the southeast seen from 3,000m on road north of Lijiang. Impressive snowy peak on left is Shanzidou (Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, 5,596m). Mountain on far right is Peak 5,321m. *Mike Dobie*

MIKE DOBIE, *China*

Smaug (ca 5,000m). On December 17, 2010 Darryl Kralovic and I climbed a previously unnamed peak in the Yulong Xueshan, the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain area of Lijiang county. The Yulong Xueshan massif has around 14 significant peaks over 5,000m, nearly all of which are thought to be unclimbed.

Chinese advertise that the main summit, Shanzidou (5,596m) has never been climbed, and we were told by national park authorities that it is illegal to attempt it. For this reason we focused our sights on other objectives. [Editor's note: The main summit has had one known ascent. After attempts by a New Zealand team in the 1930s, by a Japanese expedition in 1984, by Chris Jones and five other Americans, who in 1985 reached a col at the start of the north ridge, and by Eric Perlman and six other Americans, who in 1986 got within 150 vertical meters of the top via the north ridge, it was finally climbed in 1987 by Phil Peralta-Ramos and Perlman, who took a short cut to the ridge through avalanche-prone gullies and 5.7 rock climbing in crampons, before following the meter-wide crest of unconsolidated snow to the summit.]

The range is oriented north-south, and our peak is the farthest south. We do not know if the summit has a Chinese name, but we gave it the English name *Smaug* to go along with the dragon theme. We carried no GPS and cannot give an altitude. However, based on information gathered from Google maps, we feel the height is ca 5,000m [Editor's note: It is probably Peak 5,004m on a sketch map of the range.]

We first reached the small village of Yuhu (Jade Water), where we bought tickets for 120 RMB each to enter the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Park. We then headed up through the village



Smaug Peak, showing line of first ascent. Photo taken in dry conditions during a previous reconnaissance; at time of first ascent, snow covered scree-filled cwm. *Mike Dobie*

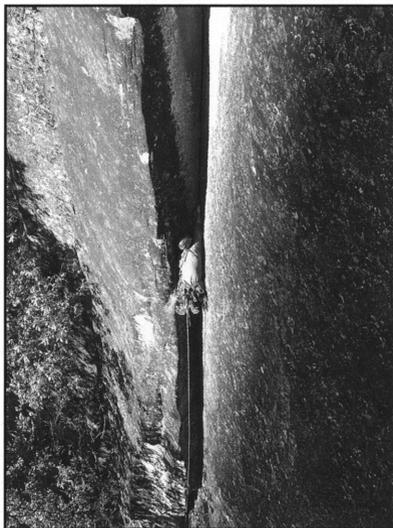
to a prominent horse trail/road, toward woods on the southeastern slope of the mountain. One trail seemed most obvious, and we passed a few horse stalls (used for tourism) and buildings. We went off-trail at 3,350m and headed straight up grassy slopes to an alpine basin, where we established base camp at 4,235m in a cirque below the summit.

The following morning we climbed snow-covered scree to a gully facing southeast. After entering the gully we headed up left, reaching more gully systems leading to the summit (south) ridge. We met high winds and a developing storm as we ascended a 4th class block at the top. Our route, on which we found no evidence of previous passage, gave snow and ice climbing to 50° and class 3 and 4 rock steps. We downclimbed our ascent route. From the top it looked as though there might be other gully systems giving access to the summits farther north, between us and Shanzidou.

MIKE DOBIE, China

LOAJUNSHAN NATIONAL PARK,

Rock climbing. Austin and Laoiju Stringham have opened a sandstone trad climbing area in northwest Yunnan Province. Accessed through the town of Liming (2,100m), two and a half hours drive west of the major city Lijiang, the sandstone walls lie within Loajunshan National Park in the Three Gorges scenic region. The pair worked



Eben Farnworth on first ascent of Dancing with Dragons (FFA by Darryl Kralovic, 5.10d), Lisu East Buttress. *Darryl Kralovic*