

The south face of the main peak of Daogou (5,466m), east of the Shuangqiao Valley, Siguniang National Park. The line followed on the first ascent, Salvage Op (650m, 5.10d), is marked. *Joe Puryear*

final block, where I had to chimney up a one-meter-wide gap, nearly 20m out from my last piece, and mantel onto the sloping summit edge.” This lead was testament to the climbing skill Joe has developed in the Alaska Range.

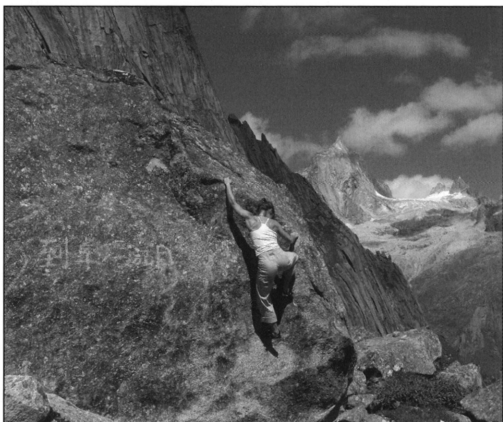
We stood on the 5,466m summit before dusk, concerned that Joe had frost-nipped his toes. Stoney set the anchors as we rappelled 17 pitches to the base of the route, which we named Salvage Op (650m, 5.10d). We left only single pitons and stoppers on the descent.

CHAD KELLOGG, AAC

*Changping Valley, first ascents of Chiwen, “The Little Prince,” and Chibu. On September 11 Katy Holm, Aidan Oloman, and I left Vancouver for Rilong, a growing mountain town and access point for the Siguniang Shan National Reserve. From there we made reconnaissance hikes in the Changping and Shuangquao valleys. In the latter the walls are steep, with interesting architecture: fluted ridges and featured faces. However, it rained throughout our trip, and the granite looked slick, mossy, and unappealing. In contrast, our walk through the Changping was bright and sunny. We found an easily accessible*

On the cloudy morning of October 13 we hiked to the base, keeping right of a south-facing buttress. At ca. 4,700m we reached the head of a small, talus-filled cirque and began to climb a prominent drainage, where we found a direct line up the south face. The route began with a deep 5cm-8cm hand crack, but then the terrain eased, and we soloed low-to-mid-fifth class rock for the next few hundred meters, until the headwall steepened. The granite was excellent and on the headwall gave sustained 5.10 climbing above 5,000m. The crux was the summit block.

Joe describes the final pitch: “Unsure of which block was the actual summit, I led a difficult pitch on the east side, only to find that I had gone the wrong way. I rappelled back to a ramp and climbed around to the other side, where I found a horrifying series of ice-filled off-widths and chimneys. A 5.10d off-width over a bomb-bay chimney led to another chimney, with an overhanging chockstone. The mental crux came at the



Aidan Oloman bouldering in the valley below Chibu (5,466m), Siguniang National Park. *Katherine Fraser*

hanging valley ringed by unclimbed granite peaks. It was an easy decision.

Back in Rilong we located Mr. Mah. He is a local horse packer, who has served multiple climbing teams; his trophies are fleeces and hats from past expeditions. Mr. Mah is a bargaining tactician who uses the language barrier to his advantage. He upsized us to four horses, yet he was fair, reliable, and entertaining. He dropped our gear by the river below our valley (two drainages north of Celestial Peak and the last main side valley to the west of the Changping before it starts its big bend to the west), and we carried loads up to a high camp.

We waited through four rainy days before attempting Chiwen (5,250m) on the south side of the valley. We climbed 10 long pitches in poor weather to the summit; some were 4th class (400m, 5.9). We attempted a 5,006m peak northwest of Chiwen, on the ridge towards Chibu. We first called the peak The Little Guy, but after he thwarted us three times we upgraded him to The Little Prince. We then bivouacked below Chibu (5,466m), the aesthetic prize of the valley. In a long day we climbed 14 pitches of sustained 5.9-5.10+, linking the steep gendarmes up the left side of the east face. The granite was good, and cracks were continuous. We descended our route in the dark. After waiting out a snow storm we finally summited The Little Prince (300m, 5.10+). We left the valley in slashing rain. In the 16 days we spent there we did not see anyone else.

The weather was poor to fair. It rained almost every second night, but when the sun does come out it dries the rock quickly. From local reports it seems that October is colder but has more consistent high pressure.

There is not a lot of unclimbed technical alpine rock left in the Changping, which is the more popular of the two parallel valleys for Chinese hikers and trekkers. However, a more thorough investigation of the Shuangqiao is warranted, a valley that has the advantage of being accessible by bus.

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KATHERINE FRASER, *Canada*

*Editor's note: Aidan Oloman was killed by an avalanche in interior British Columbia in January 2006.*



The east face of Chibu (5,466m), showing the line of the first ascent by Canadians Katherine Fraser, Katy Holm, and Aidan Oloman. The climb gave 14 pitches on good granite to 5.10+. *Katherine Fraser*

*Putala Shan (5,428m), north face, solo.* The north face of Putala Shan is an impressive big wall, which I have tried twice. I have not attempted the same mountain twice since 1990, when I made my last winter solo attempt on Fitz Roy in Patagonia. My first attempt on Putala did not go well. I hoped success would be the sign of my comeback, and I wanted to prove to myself that I was not finished as a climber.

I first saw Putala Shan in the autumn of 2003. I was trekking as part of my rehabilitation a year after my accident in Gyachung Kang. [In 2002 Yamanoi lost a total of five fingers on both hands and all of the toes on his right foot as a result of bad weather during an alpine-style