

SIGUNIANG

Lara Shan (Peak 5,700m), first ascent, American Standard. Chad Kellogg and I were to make our second attempt on Mt. Siguniang (6,250m) in April. After reaching base camp at just under 12,000' in the Changping Valley, we decided on an unnamed, unclimbed 5,700m peak for our acclimatization climb. Our friend Jay Janousek joined us for this ascent. We spent three days approaching our high camp at 15,200', hiking up into a narrow hanging valley due west of the peak. These were relatively short days as we adjusted to the altitude. After another day of unsettled weather, we started the final ascent early in the morning on April 18. A 700-foot narrow snow couloir beside a jumbled glacier icefall provided a perfect keyhole to reach the main face. From here we navigated an easy but steep glacier, with several hanging seracs threatening various parts of the route (hence the name of the route: American Standard is a brand of toilet, and you'd better be careful or you might get flushed). Several steep-but-short ice steps provided fun cruxes. After topping out on the main headwall at just under 18,000', we followed a large plateau, with one major crevasse problem, to the summit pyramid. This consisted of a little more slogging and two pitches of glacial ice. We reached the summit in the early afternoon on April 18, a perfectly clear and windless day. So clear, in fact, that we could just make out Gongga Shan (7,556m, the highest peak in Western Sichuan) in the far distance. We started our descent and made 12 full 60m rappels, plus much downclimbing, and reached our camp just as the sun was setting.

After our descent, a few days of unsettled weather allowed us to rest and prepare for our bid on Siguniang, but we learned that Chad's wife Lara died in the Alaska Range. Chad departed immediately, and our expedition ended. We suggest the name Lara Shan for the 5,700m previously untrodden summit, after our good friend Lara Karena Kellogg.

Chad and I thank the American Alpine Club for presenting us with the McNeill-Nott Award for our attempt on Siguniang.

JOSEPH PURYEAR, AAC

Notes on logistics for climbers. Climbing permits for Sichuan Province are relatively easy to acquire. Contrary to previous reports, no one has ever been declined a permit. Certain parties just refused to pay the fee and hence were "denied." The climbing fee for peaks under 7,000m is \$700, payable only in US dollars (this includes Mt. Siguniang). The permit process takes approximately 30 minutes and is easily accomplished in person at the Sichuan Mountaineering Association in downtown Chengdu, with no prior notice necessary. Once in Rilong, the small village that is the jump-off point for the Qionglai Mountains, there are a few more additional fees. Because the mountains are within the Four Girls Mountains Nature Reserve, there is an entrance fee and a per-day camping fee. The entrance fee was 70 Yuan (about 9 USD), and the camping fee was 12 Yuan (about 1.60 USD) per person, per day. There is a separate permit for low-elevation rock and ice climbing that costs around 30 USD. This permit can be obtained in Rilong.

Chengdu is a full-service city, and it is easy to purchase most of your food here at a number of large grocery and multi-department stores. There are several gear shops where you can purchase camping gear, but climbing gear is limited. In Rilong there are shops where you can buy enough food for a shorter trip, but expect the selection to be limited. Transportation from