



AAC Publications

Eagle Rock (ca 5,300m), southwest face, Invisible Hand and Invisible Hand Sit Start; Peak 5,180m, west face, Speed Indeed

China, Sichuan, Qionglai Shan, Siguniang National Park

Eagle Rock (ca 5,300m), southwest face, Invisible Hand and Invisible Hand Sit Start; Peak 5,180m, west face, Speed Indeed. Although from Rio de Janeiro, I've been living in China for the last six years, doing my best to develop various aspects of climbing. I'd focused mainly on sport climbing, but in 2013 concentrated more on alpine routes. In September I visited the Shuangqiao Valley for the fifth time, keen to climb Eagle Rock, having seen the face while ice climbing in the valley the previous winter.

I established base camp by Baihaizi Lake and on September 13 started up the west-southwest face, solo, reaching the top at 6:45 p.m. Around 70 percent of the route consisted of perfect hand cracks, with the rest divided evenly among finger cracks, offwidths, and normal alpine face climbing with loose rock. I bivouacked about 25m away from what I thought was the summit block of Eagle Rock. The wind was very strong, and, unable to sleep, I boiled water and stayed in my bivy sack until late morning.

At 10 a.m. on the 14th I began the 60+m of vertical gain and ca 200m of ridge traverse to the true summit block of Eagle Rock. Reaching it, I started my descent immediately, but could not find the rappel anchors from the Chinese party that had climbed the south face three weeks earlier. I managed to descend this face with a 50m rope, making 13 rappels and downclimbing almost two-thirds of the wall. I named my ascent Invisible Hand (650m, 5.10+).

Prior to this, I had tried a "sit start" version on the southwest face, well to the right. The wall here is ca 300m high and slightly overhanging. Unfortunately, it was completely wet after 12 consecutive days of rain. I decided to start anyway, planning to aid-climb in capsule style. It took me all day to climb 45m, and the next day the crack needed multiple No. 4 Camalots. I left a fixed rope and decided to think about it later. Back down in the valley, I met Pat Goodman and Matt McCormick, who kindly helped me out with bigger gear (ultimately, I was only able to finish the route due to this). [Goodman and McCormick made unsuccessful attempts on three separate lines on the west face of Seerdengpu (5,592m).]

On October 7 I returned with my roommate, who doesn't really climb. In the meantime a line to the left of my "sit start", Hagoroamo, had been climbed by Japanese Keita Kanehara and Kenji Onodara. I taught my friend how to use ascenders and gave him a real workout, jumaring at 4,300m. He belayed me for pitches 3-5; I aid-soloed 1,2, and 6. We took four days to complete the route, after I'd spent a total of three days fixing the first 100m. Invisible Hand Sit Start is 330m, 5.12- A2+.

Climbing in the valley with Kanehara and Onodara, I learned that Peak 5,180m was still unclimbed. I'd become enamored with this mountain, which lies due east of Baihaizi Lake. Temperatures were now dropping and I had ice gear with me. On October 12, when the weather improved, I left the tent at 5:30 a.m. and took 40 minutes to reach the bottom of the west face. I gained the summit at 8:30 a.m. and was back at the tent by 10 a.m., before the sun had hit the wall. This was fortunate: Between 11:30 a.m. and noon I witnessed the largest rockfall I've seen in this valley, when two- to three-meter-high boulders cascaded down the ramp I'd not long ago descended. Speed is indeed safety in the mountains. I named the route Speed Indeed (580m, 5.8 M3 70°).

Images



Eagle Rock from the south. (1) Invisible Hand. (2) I Hate Camping. (3) 353 Years Old Dreaming.



The upper section of Invisible Hand on Eagle Rock.



The ca 350m lower southwest wall of Eagle Rock. (1) Hagoroamo. (2) Invisible Hand Sit Start.



Speed Ineeded on the west face of Peak 5,180m.

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