



## AAC Publications

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### **Laurel Mountain, east face, Hai'nanu**

California, High Sierra

**In local Paiute legend, a young boy named Hai'nanu disrespected Tuvaimawiye'e (what we now call Convict Lake) and challenged its power. The lake swelled up and chased Hai'nanu high into the mountains. After climbing to the top of the highest peaks, Hai'nanu was just barely able to escape by jumping through a hole in the sky.**

Over July 21–26, Kristoffer Wickstrom and I established a new route on the previously unclimbed “Sevehah Cliff,” a prominent collection of cliffs and spires between the Northeast Gully and the Pinner Couloir, on the east face of Laurel Mountain (11,812'). Hai'nanu (7 pitches, 5.10 A2+) follows weaknesses up the right side of the main wall of the Sevehah Cliff and then a long ridge to the summit.

Laurel Mountain is one of the most accessible big mountains in the Sierra. After only two miles of largely flat trail walking, Kristoffer and I detoured toward a 400' apron of easy scrambling, which leads to the base of the Sevehah Cliff. Our route began in a right-facing corner, where there is a distinct junction of black and white rock.

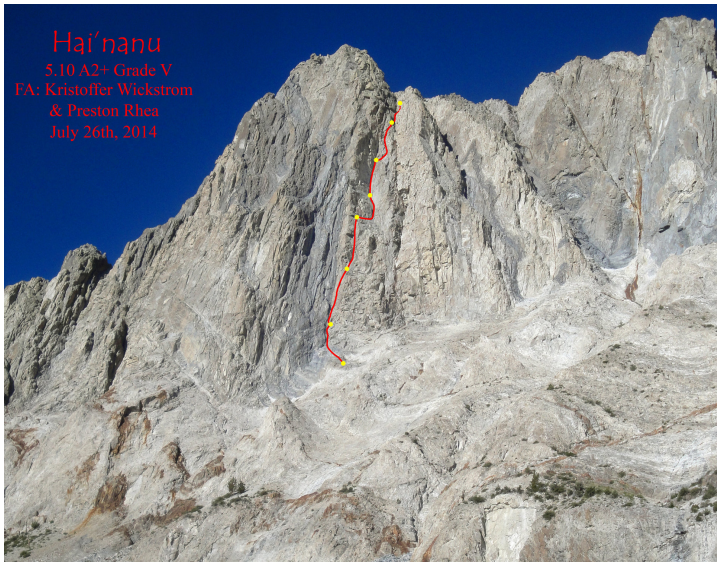
Kristoffer led the first pitch and found moderate but hard-to-protect climbing up to a sloping ledge. The second pitch leaves the dihedral and climbs an obvious crack to the right. The rest of the climb continues in the same fashion: follow a dihedral until there's a natural jog right into another crack. Kristoffer rope-soloed pitch five, which turned out to be the aid crux of the route and involved thin nailing with beaks in a large corner easily visible from the valley below. Above this pitch, we climbed two moderate, right-trending pitches up a gully to reach a large notch and the top of the wall proper.

Once on the crest of the east ridge, nearly 3,000' of easy terrain (mostly Class III with some harder steps) leads to the summit. Along the way we passed five very loose but easy towers we dubbed the Pillars of Jenga. From Laurel's summit, the most appropriate descent would be to fly off, jumping through a hole in the sky.

Despite Mt. Laurel's reputation for loose rock, we found the most technical climbing on our route to be fairly solid. In total, we spent four days fixing to the top of pitch five (returning to the ground each night), and on the fifth day we tossed our lines from the top of the wall to make the final push to the summit (gathering our gear afterward). We climbed the main wall in seven pitches before mostly simul-climbing the east ridge. We placed three anchor bolts on the route (one each at the top of pitches one, four, and five).

– Preston Rhea

## Images



A photo topo of Hai'nanu (7 pitches, 5.10 A2+), on the "Sevehah Cliff" of Mt. Laurel's east face.



Kristoffer Wickstrom leading on Hai'nanu (7 pitches, 5.10 A2+).



Kristoffer Wickstrom leading on Hai'nanu (7 pitches, 5.10 A2+). Preston Rhea



A full view of Hai'nanu (7 pitches, 5.10 A2+) and the east ridge leading to the summit of Mt. Laurel.

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