



AAC Publications

Shuangqiao Valley, Peak 5,467m, Peak 5,184m, Daogou East

China, Qionglai Mountains, Siguniang National Park

From September 11–October 5, I visited the Shuangqiao with 33-year-old Marcos Costa, a Brazilian living for the last seven years in China. Marcos is undoubtedly the driving force in the current explosion of new route development in the country, from the sport climbs at Getu to trad climbing at Liming and incredible ice and alpine climbing throughout Sichuan.

Our main objective was the still unclimbed “Great Wall of China,” the 900m west face of Seerdengpu (5,592m). Within days of our arrival we were ca 300m up this wall, taking a solid beating from the constant rockfall that curses this beautiful peak. After some close calls we bailed—this was my sixth attempt, on as many different routes, over the course of three separate trips, to try to tame this beast.

We switched focus to unclimbed Peak 5,467m, directly to the south. After 10 hours of climbing we reached the summit by what we believe to be the first ascent of the long and complex southeast ridge: Moo Moo Ridge (1,000m, 5.10+ R).

We then hiked into the wonderful sub-valley named Dagou, home to an impressive collection of jagged peaks and walls, including the northwest faces of Daogou East and West, as well as recently climbed Dayantianwo (5,240m, AAJ 2014) and Peak 5,180m. We were interested in unclimbed stuff, and two substantial features stood out: Peaks 5,120m and 5,184m. In the valley we met four French climbers who were heading up to attempt the impressive east face of 5,120m, on which they subsequently succeeded.

Marcos and I set out for the southwest face of Peak 5,184m. A recent snowstorm had deposited an uncomfortable amount of white on the rock, but we persevered through hours of screaming barfies and established a “fun” 300m 5.11, the Scream, to the summit of this previously virgin peak. From here, Daogou East and West dominated the skyline, and we knew where we were going next. But before that we spent a few days cragging on an impressive 200m overhanging orange wall that stood just to the west. No doubt this would have routes all over it if it weren’t so hard to get to.

With just under a week before my flight home, Marcos and I headed up the sub-valley of Xiaogou for a look at the south faces of both Daogous and Chibu. We were immediately drawn to a brilliant granite pillar on the south face of Daogou East (5,462m). We climbed through squalls of snow and sleet, shivering our way up incredible cracks and good granite. The best pitch was perhaps the last: a 40m 5.11 thin-hands splitter. So much fun! We found no anchors or signs of a previous ascent, and our subsequent research determined that the earthquake of 2008, which killed approximately 69,000 people and permanently scarred every peak in the park, had lowered the previously recorded 5,466m summit and almost completely erased the original route on the south face by Chad Kellogg, Joe Puryear, and Stoney Richards (2005). We dubbed our route South Pillar (700m, 5.11+); our ascent was **only the second recorded of this peak.** [The 2012 ascent of the northwest face, reported in AAJ 2013, was actually on a completely different mountain: Peak 5,383m on the southern rim of the Xiaogou Valley, east of Tan Shan. This unnamed summit was likely unclimbed before the 2012 French ascent.]

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Images



Daogou East (left) and West from the summit of Peak 5,184m. The distant pointed peak left of Daogou East is Pomiu.



Pat Goodman climbing unprotected 5.8 during the first ascent of Moo Moo Ridge on Peak 5,467m.



Pat Goodman following pitch eight on the south pillar of Daogou East.



Seen from the east, Moo Moo Ridge on Peak 5,467m.



The Scream on the southwest face of Peak 5,184m.



The south face of Daogou East showing the two established lines: (1) South Pillar (2014) and (2) South Face–Salvage Op (2005, 650m, 5.10d). The face has suffered earthquake damage since this photo was taken in 2005.

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