



AAC Publications

Tulainyo Tower, Kind Line

California, Eastern Sierra

Tulainyo Tower (12,800'+) first came into my consciousness a few years back while I was in a masochistic phase of my life. [Tulainyo is the first prominent tower along the ridgeline south of Mt. Carl Heller (13,211').] I was searching out all of the classic offwidth climbs in the Sierra and learned of Tulainyo's East Face Direct (Green-Stronge, 1973, freed in 1992; see AAJ 1993). Only a few friends ever ventured up the arduous George Creek drainage to the cirque below the face, and the ones who did fortified the mystique and beauty of the area in my mind. A wildfire in the area stymied my one attempt to climb there, further increasing the mystery and appeal.

In the summer of 2019, a plan finally started to come together for a trip to Tulainyo. Ryan Evans had cached food and a rack up George Creek after an aborted climb, and I got an invitation to join him for my long-awaited trip up the drainage. Unfortunately, when we hiked up George Creek on July 20, we discovered that the bear canister containing our food for the trip had been smashed open and all of our food was gone! Fortunately, I had hiked up with six snack bars and a package of instant mashed potatoes. Although it was better than nothing, it was not quite enough for two people for two days. Armed with optimism and a small fishing pole, we caught trout to supplement our mashed potato dinner for the upcoming climb.

We awoke on Sunday, July 21 with a full day ahead of us: attempting a first ascent, hiking back to the car, and driving back to Truckee so Ryan could be at work on Monday morning. Due to our limited time, we planned to climb one of the easier looking lines on Tulainyo Tower, but when we hiked up to the base of the cliffs, our excitement got the best of us and we decided to follow our stoke up the steep corners of golden granite on the left side of the tower, well to the left of the East Face Direct.

We began the route on the left corner of the buttress where the snow meets the rock and aimed for a big ledge about 200' higher. We encountered a rappel anchor about 100' from the snow, comprised of two nuts and some fresh purple cord, but beyond this there were no signs of human activity. From the large ledge we climbed up and right on discontinuous 5.10 cracks, belaying on good ledges for a couple pitches, until we were able to gain the large golden dihedral just right of the prow. Much to our surprise, the climbing up the dihedral was moderate—in the 5.9 range—with lots of features around a four-inch crack that seemed to go on forever. Several incredible pitches up the dihedral led to the top of the formation and a realized dream several years in the making.

We named the route Kind Line (900', IV 5.10-) due to the incredibly giving nature of the climb. Jams, jugs, knobs, and gear placements always seemed to appear right where you wanted them. The rock was a little crumbly in places, but the incredible position and fun climbing make this route one of my all-time favorites in the Sierra.

– Damien Nicodemi

Images



Damien Nicodemi leading the splitter corner that defined the upper portion of Kind Line (900', IV 5.10-), a new route he and Ryan Evans climbed on Tulainyo Tower in July 2019.



Damien Nicodemi linking splitter yet discontinuous cracks partway up Tulainyo Tower during the first ascent of Kind Line (900', IV 5.10-).



Damien Nicodemi about to trade steep snow for dry splitter granite en route to making the first ascent of Kind Line (900', IV 5.10-) on Tulainyo Tower. The route follows the prominent clean corner to the top of the peak.



Ryan Evans following the clean and moderate upper corner of Kind Line (900', IV 5.10-) on Tulainyo Tower during the route's first ascent in July 2019.



Ryan Evans approaching Tulainyo Tower in the early-morning light. The line of his and Damien Nicodemi's new route, Kind Line (900', IV 5.10-), is shown. The East Face Direct (1973) and original East Face (1972) routes ascend the face to the right.

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