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Abi, West Face, New Route

China, Sichuan / Qionglai Shan – Siguniang National Park

The west face of Abi in the northwest Siguniang Range. (1) Chen-Hua-Tong Route (2019). (2) Shivering (Yan-Zhao, 2010).

Until 2019 there was only one route on the west face of Abi (5,694m): Shivering (5.7 M3 AI2, Li-Yan-Zhao, 2010). Chen Chujun, Hua Feng, and Tong Haijun planned to open a second route to its left.

On September 12 they established camp above the Jiesigou (valley) at 4,500m. It rained next day, but on the 14th they were able to make a reconnaissance, climbing increasingly steep, smooth rock (up to 5.7) to reach the foot of the hanging glacier. Throughout this section, the huge serac walls of the face loomed directly above. [Since the two ascents of Shivering, in 2010 and '11, the structure of the hanging glacier has changed substantially.] The three scoped a direct line up the left side of the glacier and then descended to camp.

Next day they established a bivouac on a flat gravel slope at 4,900m and then, starting at around 4 a.m. on the 16th, simul-climbed 100m of loose rock to reach the start of the glacier, which provided the first crux. The ice here was separated from the rock beneath, with water flowing between the two. Hua Feng led this pitch, which finished with a couple of meters of 95° ice at the top. Above, the terrain was AI3. After two pitches of AI2, followed by a more or less horizontal section, they encountered a 60–70° ice step. Above this, steep mixed with rotten rock (difficult to protect, with only one or two runners per pitch) led to the summit.

They arrived on the highest point at 3:30 p.m. in poor visibility, their GPS recording 5,687m. The three then downclimbed and rappelled the face, arriving back at their bivouac at 9 p.m. The ascent took 12 hours, the descent five hours, and the 800m route, climbed mostly in poor weather and mist, was graded AD+ 5.8 AI3+ M4 60°.

– Xia Zhongming, Germany

Images



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