



AAC Publications

Seerdengpu, West Face, Wild Child

China, Sichuan, Qionglai Shan, Siguniang National Park

In 2015, when I first saw Seerdengpu (5,592m) from the west, I never thought that one day I would stand on the summit. The ca 850m west face was one of the great unclimbed walls of Siguniang National Park and had been attempted many times, notably by American Pat Goodman. In 2013, with Matt McCormick, he made unsuccessful attempts on three different lines, then later another attempt with Marcus Costa, and another, more toward the southwest, with David Sharratt. Costa made another attempt with Enzo Oddo. The face had also been tried by Russian, Australian, Polish, and Chinese teams. Loose terrain and objective danger appear to have been a common problem.

Until 2024, Seerdengpu had only one ascent. In 2010, Dylan Johnson and Chad Kellogg (both USA) climbed the northeast ridge. Prior to their ascent, four parties had attempted the north face.

I first tried the west face in August 2021 but chose a poor line and retreated after 80m. In 2022, I changed to the previously attempted line on the right side of the wall (the line attempted by Costa and Goodman, as well as the Russian and Chinese teams). I retreated after 350m. Over three weeks in July 2023, I only reached 200m up the same line. I returned in August 2024.

Unable to get an official permit, I had to work alone, as porters did not dare provide service. [Because of this, the author is using an alias.] I entered the valley several times as a tourist, each time carrying a 40-liter bag. In the end, I ferried a total of 75kg of equipment from the road in Shuangqiao Valley to my base camp at 4,500m.

After the initial 170m of the face, which is 5.7, the route enters a gully. It is always wet. Some previous attempts had failed due to the volume of water, and in 2015 Costa and Oddo tried this route in January, finding the gully nicely frozen but the rock above dangerously loose. They retreated from the Russian high point. I kept mostly in the bed of the narrow gully, which was wet and loose, but easier (5.8 C1+). I made my first portaledge camp at the top of the gully at around 5,100m.

On the first day above the portaledge, I climbed 80m at 5.9 C1+. When I rappelled to the ledge that evening, I found two holes in the fly, one of them large. A small bag on the ledge had also been hit and damaged. The next day, I climbed up left on loose but easy rock (5.6), found a site for my next camp, and spent all the following day moving my equipment to Camp 2 (5,250m).

On August 24, I aided a horizontal crack and took the only fall of the route. I retreated and took a different line, a corner with a thin crack that evolved into a chimney. It was a brilliant 60m pitch at 5.9+ C2. (I suspect it would go free at 5.11 or 5.11+.) Above this, I traversed left using all my 70m rope, then went back to the portaledge for the night. I found it difficult to sleep due to the cold, and perhaps the excitement of being close to the top.

On the 25th, I regained my high point and continued up at 5.8 C1+. That day I dropped an ascender, a Camalot, and a sling. I realized that I was losing concentration and needed to be more careful. That night, I didn't get to sleep until 3 a.m. I was sick and cold. I left Camp 2 again at 8 a.m. on August 26—a total of 27 days since I first started ferrying loads from the road. I reached my high point at 11 a.m. and climbed for a further 150m to the top of the face. From there I walked 200m over ice and boulders to reach the highest point of the mountain, at 2:55 p.m., for its second ascent.

Unfortunately, just 50m before reaching the summit, a loose boulder fell onto my left foot and broke a toe. As I started back down, it began to rain. Four hours of rappelling through rain and sleet took me back to the portaledge. My foot was painful and didn't look good, so I decided I should get off the mountain the next day and called friends to let them know.

On the 27th, I threw some gear and the portaledge off the wall and rappelled from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., reaching base camp that day. A few days later I was in a Beijing hospital, having an operation on my toe. My friends later collected my gear from base camp.

I named the route Wild Child. It has around 1,200m of climbing up to 5.9+ C2. I did not carry a bolt kit, but there are five bolts in the initial gully, all installed by a 2014 Chinese team for rappel anchors. Higher, there is one bolt at Camp 1, thought to have been installed by the Russian team.

— **Ma Fang, China**

Images



The upper west face of Seerdengpu and the line of Wild Child.



Wild Child, the first route up the west face of Seerdengpu (5,592m).

Article Details

Author	Ma Fang
Publication	AAJ
Volume	66
Issue	99
Page	343
Copyright Date	2025
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions