



## Yipengfeng and Erpingfeng, First Ascents

China, Sichuan, Tatsienlu Massif

**During the first modern survey of the Tatsienlu Massif, led by Arnold Heim in the 1930s, nine major peaks were named.** Prior to 2023, seven had been summited, leaving only Yipingfeng (5,800m, 30°1'3.73"N, 102°2'27.81"E) and neighboring Erpingfeng (5,880m) at the north end of the range. Yipingfeng and Erpingfeng simply mean "first peak" and "second peak." According to the Chinese military map, Erpingfeng is named Bijia Shan—a bijia is a traditional stationery item that holds the Chinese brush and is often shaped like a mountain skyline.

Liu Yang, Xia Pei, and I traveled to Kangding city at the end of September, aiming to make first ascents of both Yipingfeng and Erpingfeng. We established base camp alongside a beautiful alpine lake at about 4,200m. From there, we concluded that the west face of E

Erpingfeng was threatened by seracs, so we decided to climb Yipingfeng first, then traverse the ridge to Erpingfeng.

On October 1, we hiked to the base of Yipingfeng's west face, where we spent some time searching for a feasible route. The face was either too steep or too dangerous; a detour to the north face might be the only chance. The only knowledge we had of this side of the mountain was a blurry picture that showed less than half the face.

After a sleepless bivouac, where we were nearly hit by rockfall, we crossed a 5,300m col on the northwest ridge, then descended the far side to a small glacier at 5,150m. From here, we tried to traverse to the center of the face. Blocked by cliffs, we were forced to turn back and climb rock nearer to the northwest ridge.

After another sleepless bivouac at 5,420m, we traversed left across the north face to the right edge of the overhanging seracs below the summit. A steep snow and ice gully next to the seracs brought us to the northwest ridge and the summit.

Descending Yipingfeng's south ridge was a real challenge. After three hours, we still could not see the col below, so we made our third bivouac, at around 5,600m on the ridge. That night we slept far better.

On the 4th, we continued down the ridge via rappelling and traversing along the crest, with boulder-problem steps. We arrived at the col around noon. The wind was now so strong that one of our rappel ropes blew over the far side of the col and got stuck—we retrieved only half of it. On the plus side, the cold wind had firmed up the snow on Erpingfeng's north ridge, allowing us to climb 300m to its summit in less than an hour.

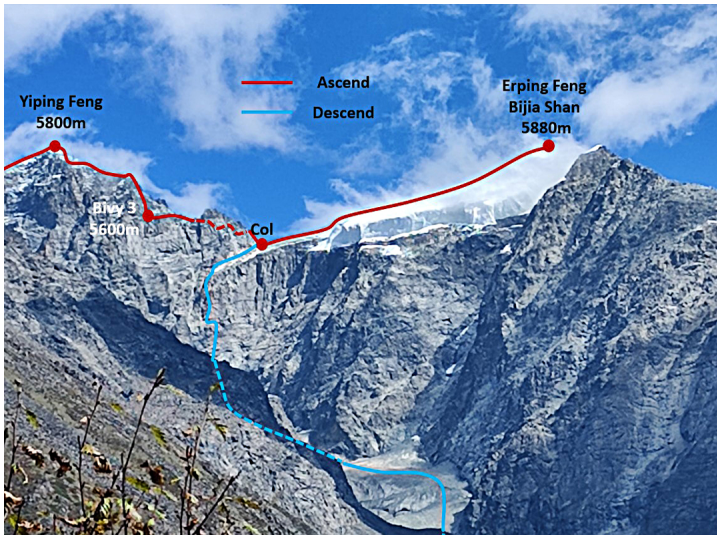
Quickly regaining the col, we began to rappel the west face. We tried rappelling with our intact 50m rope, but needed more length. Adding the second rope meant we each had to pass the knot. Pei was hit by rockfall and was fortunate to survive. We finally touched down on the glacier at 10 p.m.

We reached Kangding on the 5th, just before the arrival of heavy rain. What luck! We named our ascent One Last Piece of the Puzzle (total of 1,300m, TD+ 5.9 R AI3 55° snow). Now all nine major

peaks of the massif have been climbed.

– **He Lang, China**

## Images



Yipingfeng (left) and Erpingfeng from the west, with the 2023 ascent (red) and descent (blue) marked.



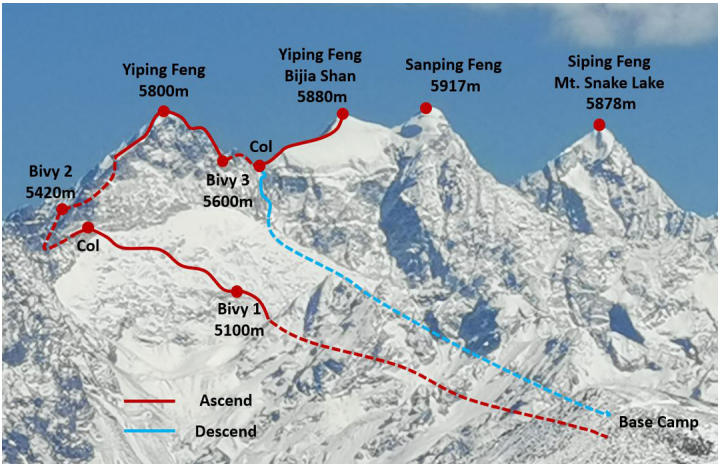
Erpingfeng, as seen from Yipinfeng, with the north ridge facing the camera. Behind is the snowy Sanpingfeng (a.k.a. Shehaizi Shan or Szepingfeng, ca 5,910m).



The route from the west to the col on the northwest ridge of Yipingfeng.



The south ridge of Yipingfeng and line of descent (and bivouac) seen from the north ridge of Erpingfeng.



A distant view of the northern section of the Tatsienlu main ridge, with the 2023 route to Yipingfeng and Erpingfeng. Sipingfeng (5,898m), at far right, is also known as Shehaizi Shan or Szepingfeng. This picture was taken when there was far more snow in the range than during the 2023 ascent.





Downclimbing the south ridge of Yipingfeng.



Descending the south ridge of Yipingfeng with Erpingfeng behind.



The line followed on the north face and northwest ridge of Yipingfeng. This photo is taken in a different season, with much more snow than during the October 2023 ascent. Unfortunately, the climbers only obtained this photo after the ascent—it would have helped greatly with route-finding at the time.

## Article Details

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