

HIROO YONEZAWA

## First Ascent of the Central Pillar north of Baihaizi

The Central Pillar 5,380 m (GPS) ranges south of Potala Shan 5,428 m, east of Eagle Rock Peak ca. 5,300 m and west of Wargrusei ca. 5,300 m. They surround Baihaizi (White Lake) at 4,600 m to southeast. We tentatively call these peaks as “Baihaizi three mountains”. The Central Pillar soars about 100 m higher than Eagle Rock and Wargrusei. See the map.

### Climbing record of the Central Pillar

Expedition period: June 28 – August 24

Members: Naoki Ohuchi, Hiroo Yonezawa, Koji Sano, Yousuke Yamazaki

On July 30 Ohuchi and I set up a base camp near-by a beautiful blue lake, Baihaizi, at 4,600 m and after two days rest trial climbing started on August 2. Approach to the wall to climb took more time than estimated. We first ascended moraine and then three pitches on snow bed to the red-brown colored face which led to a starting point of climbing the wall.

Ohuchi led climbing of the lower part of the wall negotiating narrow cracks and overhung using artificial aids and deposited loads on the upper terrace. Yonezawa carried loads. August 3 was a rest day. Climbing was resumed on August 4. After two bivouacs we reached a ridge between the Central Pillar and Wargrusei, where the trial climbing ended. We once descended to a lower village.

We returned to Baihaizi and again set up a base camp there on August 13. All of four members gathered. We climbed six pitches to the highest point of the trial climbing and deposited loads there on August 15. August 16 was a rest day.

On August 17 we continued climbing in two parties. First pitches 1 – 6 were led by Ohuchi, pitches 7 – 11 were led by Yonezawa and pitch 12 was led by Ohuchi. After pitch 12 we bivouacked. On August 18 Yamazaki led pitches 13 and 14. Yonezawa led pitch 15 and the last pitch was led by Sano. We finally reach a small peak just left of 15m rock tower like an obelisk and completed the first ascent of the Central Pillar at 12:10 on August 18.

### Route summary

Wall height to climb: 510 m, Climbing distance: 565 m, 17 pitches, Grade: A1, VI+

Pitch 1 – 40 m, couloirs with screes to red-brown face

Pitch 2 – 20 m, A1, VI +, crack then overhung to terrace

Pitch 3 – 20 m, A0, V +, face climbing from terrace to terrace

Pitch 4 – 20 m, A0, VI –, face/hollow rock to stable terrace (1 st bivouac at trial climb)

Pitch 5 – 20 m, V+, face to small terrace

Pitch 6 – 45 m, IV+, II, III, face then traverse (2 nd bivouac at trail climb)

Pitch 7 – 45 m, A1, V, face, overhung, hollow part, unstable belay

Pitch 8 – 45 m, Hollow face to band, then to screes

Pitch 9 – 25 m, IV, Hollow-unstable face

Pitch 10 – 50 m, V –, Hollow face to band, then to terrace

Pitch 11 – 35 m, V, 20 m crack, 15 m face to terrace

Pitch 12 – 50 m, V –, face / crack / face to terrace, bivouac spot

Pitch 13 – 50 m, VI –, face to crack

Pitch 14 – 50 m, VI, face, crack, chimney, col then face

Pitch 15 – 50 m, A1, VI +, crack, below overhung then hollow part

Pitch 16 – 20 m, IV –, band, screens to terrace

Pitch 17 – 30 m, IV –, vertical hollow face, crack, face to the summit 5,380 m (GPS)

(See the detail map of Article “Ascents in the Shuagqiaogou”)

