



AAC Publications

Sizdh Valley, Rakhsh (4,570m)

Tajikistan, Pamir

In August, Peter Anderson, Jim Donini, Bo White, and I traveled to the Pamir Mountains in southeastern Tajikistan to teach wilderness medicine, climbing, and guiding basics to a group of local students from the Pamir Alpine Club, and to attempt new routes on alpine rock around Khorog. The trip was made possible by financial support from the Aga Khan Foundation and logistics support from the University of Central Asia.

During a free day with good weather, Anderson and I established a 350m rock climb on the east ridge of a previously unclimbed peak at the top of the Sizdh Valley (a tributary drainage of the Gunt River). The peak came to be called Rakhsh (4,570m), which is the name of the stallion of Rostam, a hero of the Persian epic tale Shahnameh. Other significant features in the area had previously been climbed and named after the Shahnameh by White and Donini (AAJ 2012).

Our route, dubbed Rhinoceros Ridge, consisted of about half a dozen pitches of belayed climbing (up to 5.8) with lots of simul-climbing on gneiss. The route stayed right on the crest, passing a significant gendarme ("The Rhino Horn") on the north side, and ended with hand and finger cracks to a knife-edged summit. We descended to the north by a 60m rappel, 300m of downclimbing, and a final 30m rappel from a bollard to reach the talus.

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Images



Rakhsh (4,570m) in the Sizdh Valley. The Rhinoceros Ridge (east ridge) follows the right skyline past the prominent horn. The peak behind is ca 4,600m.

Article Details

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| Author | Corey LaForge |
| Publication | AAJ |
| Volume | 88 |
| Issue | 56 |
| Page | 276 |
| Copyright Date | 2014 |
| Article Type | Climbs and expeditions |