



AAC Publications

South Howser Tower, Northeast Face, It Is What It Is

Canada, Purcell Mountains, Bugaboos

In mid-October, Toshiyuki Yamada and I climbed a new route on the northeast face of South Howser Tower. The best and worst things of attempting a new line are the unknowns. I constantly ask myself: Should we move on? Would I be able to find a spot for protection or even an anchor? However, cleaning snow or ice out of the cracks and finding a good place for my tools or gear requires creativity—the fun part of climbing that always excites me.

After three hours of approach, Toshiyuki and I reached the Kain Hut on October 14. I was thrilled to try alpine climbing in the Bugaboos in October, as the winter climbing season in Japan runs December to March. I was fascinated first by the Big Hose (Krakauer, solo, AAJ 1979), and then by an obvious ice line on the left side of the wall. After climbing the Big Hose, we left our gear at the base and returned to the Kain Hut.

Early on October 16 we left the hut and retraced our steps to South Howser. After finding a line through the bergschrund, we climbed a 60m chimney (M4+). This was followed by a shorter ice pitch. Above the ice, I placed a few Tricams and nuts and brought Toshiyuki up. We were underneath the crux. The ice was bad and thin, and we figured we'd have poor protection for the next 10m. We spent 30 minutes deciding if we should continue. Eventually, Toshiyuki moved upward, trying to find the best way into the right-facing corner above. After finding some protection he reached a snowy ledge. Above the crux, we climbed 60m of M5 terrain to the summit snow slope. Only one more pitch of easy climbing remained. On the summit we enjoyed soaking in the sun.

We named the route It Is What It Is (320m, D+ M5 WI4 R). The upper portion of our climb shares terrain with Ethereal (AAJ 2015), and the climb took 14 hours round-trip from the Kain Hut.

– Takeshi Tani, Japan

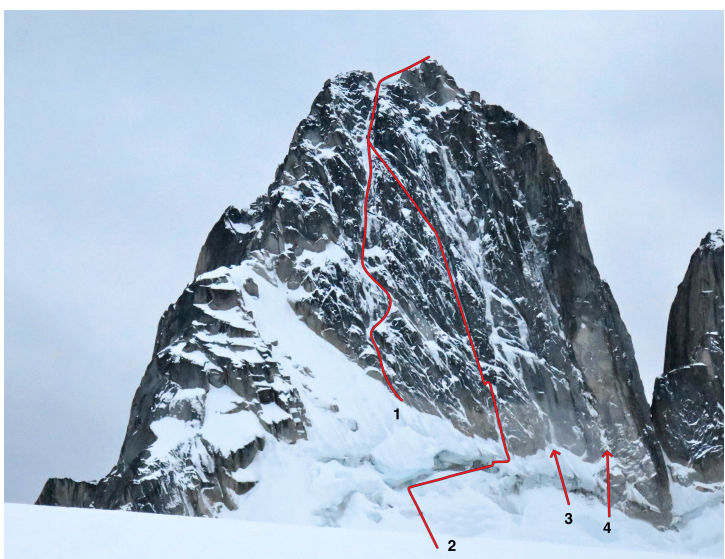
Images



Toshiyuki Yamada heading into the upper crux on It Is What It Is.



Toshiyuki Yamada following the fifth pitch on It Is What It Is.



The northeast face of South Howser Tower showing winter routes. (1) It Is What It Is (320m, D+ M5 WI4 R, Tani-Yamada 2015). (2) Ethereal (1,000', D+ WI4 M6 R, McAllister-Olson, 2014). (3) Perma Grin (1,000', TD- M5 WI4, Isaac-Semple-Webster, 2002). (4) Big Hose (1,000', D+ 5.8 WI3, Krakauer, solo,

1978).



Toshiyuki Yamada heading up the Big Hose.

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