



## AAC Publications

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### **Bor Dobo Glacier, Peak 5,143m, Northwest Face**

Kyrgyzstan, Pamir

**Having a spare week at the end of August between expeditions, James Monypenny, Heather Swift, and I made a quick exploratory hit in the mountains close to the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.** Two days previously, James and I had driven over the Kyzyl-Art Pass (ca 4,280m) from Tajikistan and scoped a few possibilities east of the main road, near the Kyrgyz border checkpoint at Bor Dobo. As we were on a tight schedule, the most sensible option was to get a taxi from Osh to just south of the checkpoint, and then hike up the valley to the southeast and onto the Bor Dobo Glacier. Vladimir Kommissarov (ITMC owner and mountain guide) said there had been very few expeditions to this area east of Pik Lenin, and that most peaks remained unclimbed. Although in 2015 ISM held its annual Kyrgyz new-routing trip in a glacier system slightly to the west, we believe the Bor Dobo Glacier has seen very little, if any, activity.

Carrying all our loads in one shuttle saved a lot of time but made the 800m gain to a base camp at ca 4,300m pretty brutal. An acclimatization and rest day recharged us. The following day all three of us climbed the prominent, icy northwest face of Pik 5,143m (Russian map; 39°28'15"N, 73°19'19"E, Google Earth), which overlooked our camp. It was quite foreshortened and turned out to be much bigger than we anticipated. Multiple bergschrunds were passed with some devious route finding from James, and seemingly never-ending ice slopes followed. The angle was relatively sustained at 55–60°, with slightly steeper sections at the bottom and top of the face. Fortunately the ice was in reasonable condition and took screws well enough for us to move together most of the time.

We topped out on the west ridge 50m shy of the final chossy rock pillar. I decided to avoid the death choss and waited at a small col at the end of the snow. Heather continued to traverse for one more pitch before belaying James onto the summit. As there was very little solid rock and no possibility of a belay or rappel anchor, she didn't follow and James downclimbed, declaring the experience to be "one of the most terrifying things I've ever done." We descended the face in 18 full-length rappels from Abalakovs, the final one just clearing the bergschrund as a blizzard built from the west. The face that we had guessed would be about 300m was actually more like 1,100m. The blizzard kept us tent-bound for the next three days, after which Heather and I, taking advantage of a brief clearing, climbed the much shorter north face of Pik 4,875m (ca 50° with bomber névé), situated on the main ridge to the west. Sadly, the weather closed again so we were unable to reach the summit. Indeed, the visibility was so bad that we have no idea how much of the west ridge we had left to climb.

We walked down to Bor Dobo that afternoon, and border guards plied us with vodka and tomato chasers before we started our cramped hitch back to Sari-Tash.

Emily Ward, France

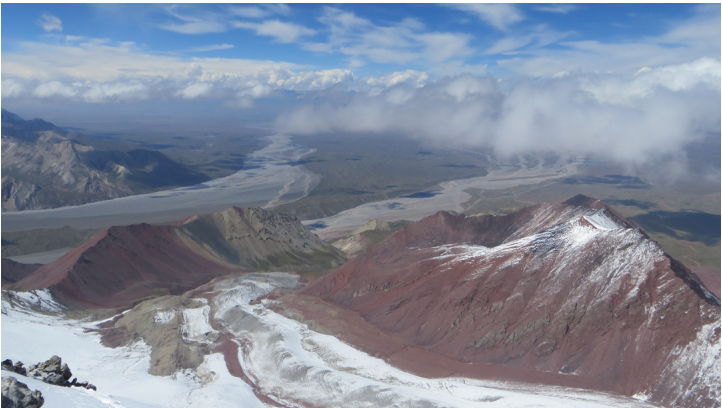
## Images



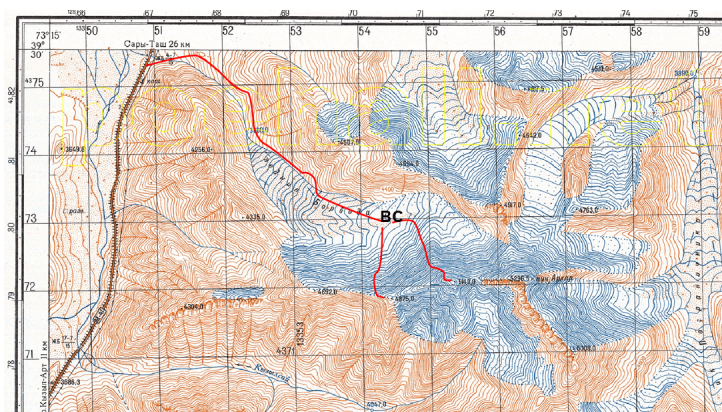
On the northwest face of Pik 5,143m during the first ascent.



Line of Ascent



Looking northwest over the Bor Dobo Glacier to the Pamir Highway and Bor Dobo checkpoint (east of and alongside the wide right-hand river basin).



Russian map of the Bor Dobo Glacier, with approach and ascent routes.



Unclimbed Pik 5,297m seen from the northwest face of Pik 5,143m to the west.

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