



AAC Publications

Asperity Mountain, Southwest Face, Happy Trio

Canada, British Columbia, Coast Mountains, Waddington Range

While I was taking my ACMG apprentice alpine guide exam, Craig McGee, one of my instructors, told me about the Waddington Range. "It's amazing," he explained. "Like Chamonix, but ten times as big. Also, there is still a lot of potential for first ascents." I immediately decided to go.

Noboru Kikuchi, Toshiyuki Yamada, and I flew in to Rainy Knob and set up base camp on April 30. Due to the warm and fairly dry conditions in May this year, we decided to attempt a south-facing wall.

While scouting around the Tiedemann group, we found ourselves staring up at Asperity's massive southwest face. It's so big it hurts your neck just to try to see the top! It also appeared there was still major potential for new routes.

At 4 a.m. on May 5 we left camp, following the Asperity Couloir (leading to the Asperity-Tiedemann col) until we moved up a snow gully to the right, with about 200m of WI3. From here, we were slowed by route-finding and the weight of our ice kit as we picked our way up into good, mostly dry rock.

Just before sunset, we stood below what appeared to be the crux of the route, a perfect, left-facing corner crack that went on for 60m. It looked like Indian Creek's Incredible Hand Crack! We debated whether to continue or bivy—we did not have many number 2 cams, and there was ice throughout the crack. It was also getting cold.

Eventually, we decided to keep going. Our hands and feet went numb as Yamada took the rack and started up the long corner. In spite of some serious runouts, he made it through the pitch (which ended up being about 5.10a). Above the corner, we joined him on an icy ledge and established a small bivy site around midnight.

The next day, perfect weather and amazing cracks (and some snow sections) led us to a knife-edge ridge at the headwall. The climbing was awesome, if a bit spicy. We made it to the summit around 4 p.m. and then descended to the Asperity Couloir, arriving in darkness. The descent mostly entailed downclimbing; we made only one rappel over big crevasses.

We weren't certain we had done a new route until we returned to civilization and emailed Don Serl, the Waddington guidebook author. He explained that Nick Elson and Tony McLane made the first ascent of the southwest face in 2010 (AAJ 2011), but that our line was indeed new. [The Japanese route starts near the 2010 route but stays to the left in the first half and then to the right in the upper section.] We established our route without bolts and called the line Happy Trio (950m, ED- 5.10a WI3).

Takeshi Tani, Canada

Images



Takeshi Tani high on Happy Trio, Asperity Mountain.



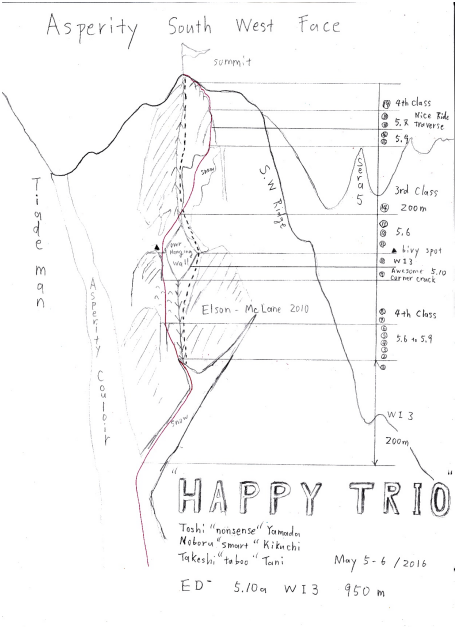
Basecamp at Rainy Knob in the Waddington Range.



Toshiyuki Yamada on Asperity's summit ridge.



Toshiyuki Yamada climbs the 5.10 corner crack on Asperity, belayed by Noboru Kikuchi.



Topo of Happy Trio, Asperity Mountain.



Asperity Mountain, showing the new route Happy Trio, from May 2016, in red. (1) Asperity Couloir–Northwest Ridge (Beckey-King-Magoun-Matthews, 1947). (2) Southeast Ridge (Heselden-Richardson, 1997). (3) Southwest Face (Elson-McLane, 2010). Also shown: Serra 5 and Serra 4.

Article Details

Author	Takeshi Tani
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions