



AAC Publications

Shadzud Valley: Exploration and Ascents

Tajikistan, Pamir, Rushan Range

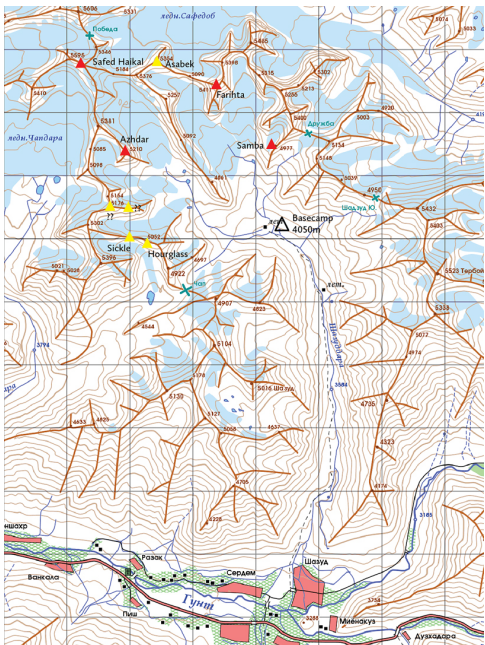
During the summer of 2010, a series of violent acts against foreigners in northern Afghanistan led our team to explore an area of the Rushan Range in Tajikistan instead of the Hindu Kush. We drove from Dushanbe to Khorog, from which I hoped we could reach the glaciers in a single day. We were successful, but it wasn't easy.

We made base camp at the highest green meadow in the Shadzud Valley, and during two weeks in September our team made a number of first ascents, enjoying the stable climate, moderate scale of the peaks, the variety of rock, snow, and ice features, and the sheer expanse of undocumented mountains. The most abundant climbing is on moderate ice faces (north aspects) that ramp from glacier valley to summit ridge. There also are "goulotte" routes that follow veins of ice through steeper rock faces. We made around 10 climbs, five of these being significant summits; we named the highest peak we climbed Asabek (5,354m map height, Michael Reid, Andrew Stokes-Rees, and Sam Williams, September 22).

Visible to the west of base camp was a peak we called Hourglass (5,022m map height) for its striking ice feature. This was climbed relatively easily by David Gladwin (solo). We also climbed a peak to the northwest, a striking feature we called the Sickle (TD, 65° and short mixed sections, Matthew Freear, Michael Reid, Andrew Stokes-Rees, and James Yip). [Download the complete expedition report.]

– Andrew Stokes-Rees, U.K.

Images



Map of the Shadzud Valley showing the 2010 ascents (yellow) and climbs by a 2016 German expedition (red).



Looking at peaks west of base camp: (H) Hourglass (5,005m), climbed by its funnel-shaped east face ice couloir at D (300m, 60°), and (S) Sickie (5,052m), climbed by the north face visible in this picture.



The north face of Sickie (TD, 70°).



Descending the summit snow dome of Sickle.



The south face of Asabek, with Peak 5,376m to the left and Farihta on the right.

Article Details

Author	Andrew Stokes-Rees
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	275
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions