



AAC Publications

Yad Sar and Peak 5,855m

Pakistan, Karakoram, Ghujerab Mountains

In August 2017, four friends traveled to the Shimshal Valley to look for unclimbed peaks. Steve Carratt, George Cave, Clay Conlon, and I had previous expedition experience, but due to work commitments could only afford three weeks away. This was a risky plan, as the team would only spend a week at base camp and would be living above 4,400m after four days. With the help of a fifth team member, local guide Karim Hayat, whom George had met in Yosemite on an AAC International Climbers' Meet, we found a number of unclimbed mountains between 5,800m and 6,000m, easily accessible from the Gunj-e Dur glacial system (sometimes written as Ganj-e Dur or Ganj Dur).

We took three days to walk from Shimshal to a base camp in the Gunj-e-Tang river valley, arriving on August 31. After three days of acclimatizing, advanced base camps were established below the First East and Second East Gunj-e Dur glaciers, from which two climbs were made.

From a 5,000m camp below the First East Gunj-e Dur Glacier, Karim, George, and I attempted the southeast face of Peak 6,200m (Polish Wala map). Unfortunately, George had to descend from 5,500m due to altitude illness. Karim and I carried on to the summit ridge. This ridge is multi-topped, similar to the various summits along the summit crest of the Grandes Jorasses. We arrived at about the midpoint on the ridge and climbed to the nearest summit, which we named Yad Sar (Remembrance Peak) and measured at 6,015m (36.60809°N, 75.58147°E).

To the west, along the crest, rose another summit (Point 6,150m on both Russian and Polish maps), which didn't seem to be any higher than ours. To the east, about 200m distant, was the highest peak on the ridge. It appeared around 80m higher than us and was deemed unreachable given the current snowpack. Our ascent route to Yad Sar, named Half Way House (900m, Scottish II/III), followed a wide, easy 300m gully in the center of the face to a more difficult hanging glacier about 500m high. We climbed this route on September 5 and descended the same day, with eight rappels from Abalakovs and some downclimbing, returning to the tent after a 19-hour day.

Meanwhile, Clay and Steve had turned their attentions to an unclimbed peak of 5,855m (36.54698°N, 75.64537°E) in the Second East Gunj-e Dur Glacier, which they summited on September 4. The pair climbed the west ridge (1,000m above camp, PD) in seven hours. The climbing was mostly easy but also very loose, with a thin layer of snow over rock and scree. They crossed the summit and descended the northwest flank and glacier, regaining the tent shortly before nightfall. [This appears to be the same mountain as the 5,836m peak attempted by Japanese from the Shujerab Glacier to the east in 2002. They reached a point 15m below the top and called the peak Halshamas Sar.]

In a country with a reputation in the West for terrorism and kidnapping, the team felt safe and relaxed throughout the entire visit. The Karakoram Highway seemed extremely secure. The approach trek toward Shimshal Pass was stunning and a highlight of the expedition. Travel in this hospitable country is highly recommended. We would like to thank the Austrian Alpine Club, British Mountaineering Council, Mount Everest Foundation, Alpine Club Fund, and Karabiner Club for financial support of this expedition.

Ross Davidson, Alpine Club, U.K.

Images



Looking southwest from Yad Sar as dawn breaks over the Hispar Muztagh. The high peak illuminated left is Kunyang Chhish (7,852m), while the broad massif in the center is Distaghil Sar (7,885m).



Karim Hayat climbs the final slopes of the southeast face of Yad Sar to gain the summit ridge.



Sunrise on a collection of unclimbed peaks above the First Gunj-e Dur Glacier. These peaks are below 6,000m, with some great-looking faces.



Ross Davidson and Karim Hayat, dwarfed by a hanging glacier, at around midheight on the southeast face of Yad Sar.



Peak 5,855m above the Second East Gunj-e Dur Glacier, showing the route followed up the west ridge (right) on the first ascent and (hidden) the descent of the northwest flank.



Yad Sar above the First East Gunj-e Dur Glacier and the route Half Way House on the southeast face. The highest point along the ridge is to the right (east).



Looking east from the vicinity of Yad Sar to the top of unclimbed 6,200m, the highest point on a multi-topped ridge.

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