



AAC Publications

Sky Pilot, East Face, Certified Tantric Shaman

California, Kings Canyon National Park

In July, Tad McCrea and I made the long trek up the East Lake Trail, aiming for the east face of Sky Pilot (ca 12,960'), just south of Longley Pass. After hiking 17 miles from Road's End, we camped at Lake Reflection and set off early the next morning to find the seldom-used trail toward Longley Pass. Skirting the lake on its right side, we followed occasional cairns for three miles until we reached a talus field below the east face of Sky Pilot.

We began at the lowest point on the face and climbed a moderate slab to reach cracks, which led to a right-facing corner system. I started the second pitch with 20m of steep 5.10 and pulled a 5.11- bulge, but got stopped by a loose flake caked in grass. Although I was only 5m below an easier ramp, I opted to lower down and retreat instead of spending time cleaning.

The following day we hiked a bit farther up and right along the base of the east face to access the left-leaning ramp, which brought us to just above my high point from the day before. We climbed the obvious right-facing corner system for two pitches and continued up cracks and systems on the face for five more pitches. Overall the rock was really high quality. As far as we know, the east face had never been climbed. We called the route Certified Tantric Shaman (1,000', IV 5.10+).

For future parties wanting to repeat the route, cleaning and completing our original start would make for the most logical and direct line and would be an incredible addition to the climb.

– Whitney Clark

Images



The east face of Sky Pilot (ca 12,960'), just south of Longley Pass in Kings Canyon National Park. Whitney Clark and Tad McCrea made the first documented ascent of this face via Certified Tantric Shaman (1,000', IV 5.10+). The left line at the start marks their first attempt, ending at a loose flake one and a half pitches up. They completed the route the next day by starting on a ramp farther right.



Whitney Clark starting up low-angle slabs on pitch one of Certified Tantric Shaman (1,000', IV 5.10+), the first known route up the east face of Sky Pilot.



Whitney Clark climbing a beautiful finger crack halfway up the east face of Sky Pilot (12,960') during the first ascent of Certified Tantric Shaman (1,000', IV 5.10+).



Whitney Clark starting up the steep second pitch on the east face of Sky Pilot before getting turned around after 20 meters by a large, loose flake. She and Tad McCrea returned the next day and traversed in just above their previous high point to continue the route to the top.

Article Details

Author	Whitney Clark
Publication	AAJ
Volume	61
Issue	93
Page	0
Copyright Date	2019
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions