



AAC Publications

Ice Climbing in Gilgit-Baltistan

Pakistan, Karakoram

David Graells leads the second pitch of Shoma Chan (175m, WI4+) north of Hushe. Photo: Rafa Vadillo Collection

Following reports about ice climbs that friends and I developed in the Nubra Valley in India (see AAJ 2024), we received a message from Karim Hushevi of the Discover Karakoram agency, inviting us to explore the possibilities for winter ice climbing in Pakistan. A group of us decided to travel there in early February of 2024, not only to climb but also to provide some training for local guides, so they might continue to develop icefall climbing themselves.

Jesus Almarza, David Graell, Pere Montasell, Joan Picola, Juampi Sabbione, Javi Sánchez, Jordi Vigatà, and I had only 15 days available for our winter holidays. Our road trip from Islamabad offered surprises in the form of several landslides, which delayed our planned visit to Hushe village. Instead, we went first to Karimabad, where we did one roadside ice climb and learned about possible climbs in the upper Hunza Valley, but were not authorized to travel there. (See note below about prior climbs in the Hunza region.)

Once in Hushe, we stayed at a house arranged by Karakoram mountaineering legend Rozi Ali and his son Karim, where we put mattresses on the floor of two rooms and a cook prepared meals for us. He met us on our return from the climbs every evening, and we had long discussions about his climbs with Reinhold Messner, Chris Bonington, Doug Scott and other legends.

We completed four climbs in the valley north of Hushe village: Shoma Chan (175m, WI4+), Wasoq Left (250m, WI3+), Wasoq Right (300m of easy ice followed by 120m of WI4+), and Lower Tisar (75m, WI4+). There are larger and more difficult icefalls in the valleys around Hushe, somewhat farther from the village, but the logistics are more complex because they would require camping.

It was a very rewarding experience, not only for the climbs but also for the opportunity to arrange a training day for local guides, some of whom have made ascents of 8,000m mountains. We had the collaboration of the CAMP brand from Italy, which provided ice tools and crampons, which delivered to the local guides, so that they continue their evolution in this type of climbing. [Discover Karakoram began offering guided ice climbing in the Hushe Valley in early 2025.]

—Rafa Vadillo, Spain

Ice Climbing in Hunza District: In December 2018, Giovanni Trambaiolo (Italy) teamed up with Pakistani climbers Javed Ali and Naveed Iqbal and completed a number of probable new ice routes within 25 to 45 minutes' drive from Karimabad in Hunza District. The routes were climbed in the Nagar Valley, southwest of Karimabad, and near Attabad Lake. They also climbed a waterfall near Shimshal village. The biggest of these routes, Happy New Year Falls, near Phakker village, was climbed in 12 pitches (up to WI4+) by Ali and Trambaiolo. A mini-guide to the 2018 climbs can be downloaded [here](#).

Images



David Graells leads the second pitch of Shoma Chan (175m, WI4+) north of Hushe.



Spanish climbers approaching the Tisar falls near Hushe village. The lower tier was climbed in February 2024.



Map of climbs completed by a Spanish group in February 2024.



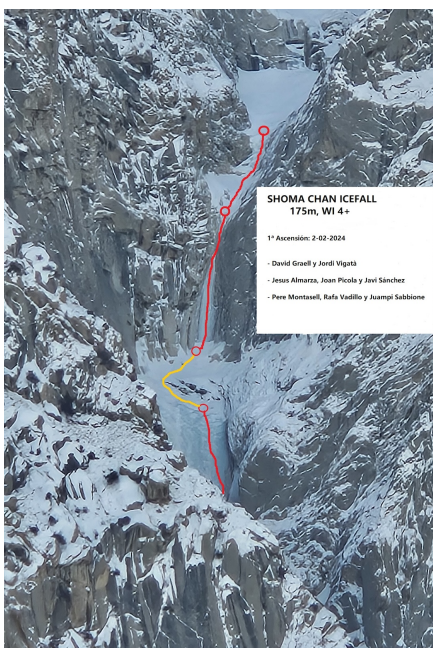
Topo for Lower Tisar, north of Hushe.



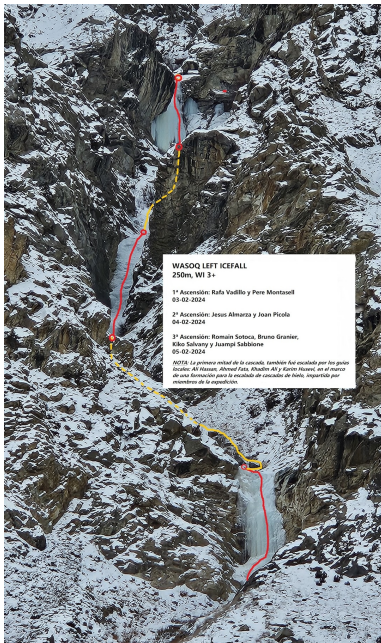
First pitch of Shoma Chan, north of Hushe village.



Rafa Vadillo instructs local climbing guides near Hushe village.



The line of Shoma Chan, north of Hushe.



The line of Wasoq Left, near Hushe village.



The line of Wasoq Right, near Hushe village.

Article Details

Author	Rafa Vadillo
Publication	AAJ
Volume	66
Issue	99
Page	257
Copyright Date	2025
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions