



AAC Publications

Tuyuk-su area, various ascents

Kazakhstan, Tien Shan, Zalisky Ala-Tau

The Zalisky Ala-Tau has many peaks, the highest being Talgar (4,973m), with many established routes. But most climbers bypass the Tuyuk-su valley, despite its proximity to Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan. The Tuyuk-su is just above the Shymbulak ski resort, and the peaks can be reached in an hour's drive from the city center and one to three hours of walking.

On July 22, 2012, Alexander Chechulin and I took a new way up the left flank of Utchitel Peak's south side, by a narrow bastion that looked more difficult than it was (Russian 3?). After four steep pitches on solid rock (French 4b–5b), we entered a couloir for 200m to reach the ridge, which we followed for 250m to the summit of Utchitel (4,045m). That same afternoon we climbed another new route on the right side of Utchitel's south face (Russian 2B), with rock pitches up to 5a.

Five days later, Vitaly Komarov and I climbed a steep route up the west side of Maria Peak (3,750m). Five pitches (4b–5c) led to a ridge that we followed for 300m to the top. In rainy weather, it made for an interesting route (Russian 3B). On July 31, in better weather, Dastan Abdrakhmanov and I climb the left side of the same peak's south face (Russian 4A). After three long pitches (5b–6b), we joined the west ridge route that I had climbed a few days earlier and followed this to the top.

In mid-September, Sergey Kadola, Nikita Simonov, and I walked into a separate valley to attempt a new route on Ushbinka (ca 4,030m). This mountain is located in the eastern part of the Tuyuk-su area, above the valley of the Left Talgar River. It is part of the long ridge extending eastward from Nursultan (4,330m, a.k.a. Komsomol). The south side of Ushbinka was still completely unknown, despite 80 years of alpinism in these mountains. Some years ago I observed the huge buttresses on this face and got the desire to explore them.

We spent one day hiking with heavy backpacks to the moraine of the Aristova Glacier. That evening we climbed a 30-meter pitch to test the rock and found it to be poor, with sharp, broken blocks. At sunrise we started our ascent from the lowest point of bastion. Miraculously, the rock was mostly solid after the start. By the most logical line, we climbed 14 long pitches (5a–6b) to the summit ridge, and reached the top late at night. We bivouacked three pitches below the summit and finished the descent in the morning. This route (590m, Russian 5A) is now one of the most interesting in Tuyuk-su.

The area around the Aristova Glacier looks like a "new paradise," with unclimbed rock and ice lines waiting for explorers. Good luck!

Denis Urubko, Kazakhstan

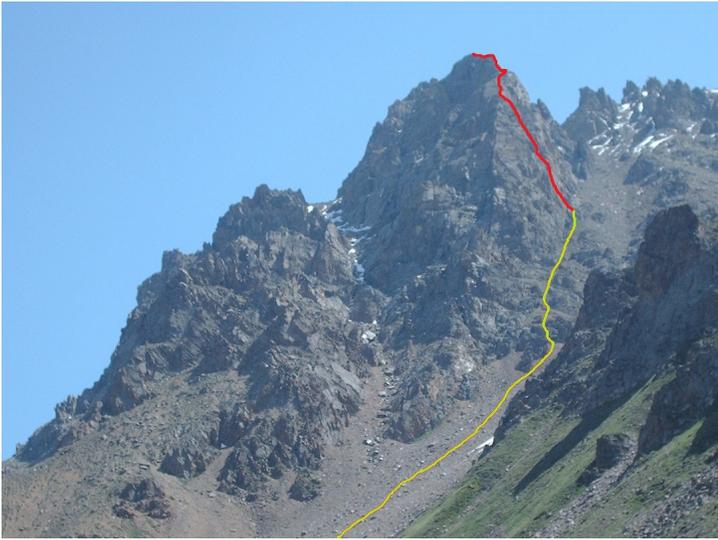
Images



View from the east toward (A) Nursultan (4,330m) and (B) Ushbinka (4,030m). (1) South ridge from Komsomol Pass (Russian 2B). (2) Traverse from snow plateau (4B). (3) North ridge (3B). (4) Kadolasimonov-Urubko route (2013, 590m, 5A). Arrow marks their descent. The northwest face (3B) is on the far side of Nursultan.



Southwest face (3B) on Maria Peak (3,750m).



South face route (4A) on Maria Peak.



Right side of south face (2B) on Utchitel Peak.



Left flank of south face (3A) on Utchitel Peak.



Rocky bastion on the south face of Maria Peak.



Foreshortened view of the southeast buttress of Ushbinka (4,030m) from the Aristova Glacier.



Middle of the southeast face of Ushbinka.

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