



AAC Publications

Zvezdnyy, Northeast Face, New Route

Russia, Siberia, Sayan Mountains, Ergaki Massif

The northeast face of Zvezdnyy. (1) Kosinusoyda (2015, 5B). (2) Temereva (2013, 6A). (3) Hvostenko (2001, 6A). (4) Balezin (1997, 5B). (5) Balezin (2001, 5B). (6) Zhigalov (2019, 6A). Photo by: Alexander Zhigalov

In early December 2015, Nicolay Matyushin and Alexander Zhigalov climbed a new route, in full winter conditions, on the northeast face of Zvezdnyy (2,265m, 52°49'45.88"N, 93°24'53.73"E) in the Ergaki massif of the Western Sayan (AAJ 2016). Zhigalov returned with Timofey Ivanov in October 2019 to add a fifth line to the face, to the right of the 1997 Balezin Route. This was to be part of an ongoing Winter Walls of Ergaki project, where each year Zhigalov and friends would try to climb a big new route in the Ergaki region during winter (here defined by them as October 1–May 30).

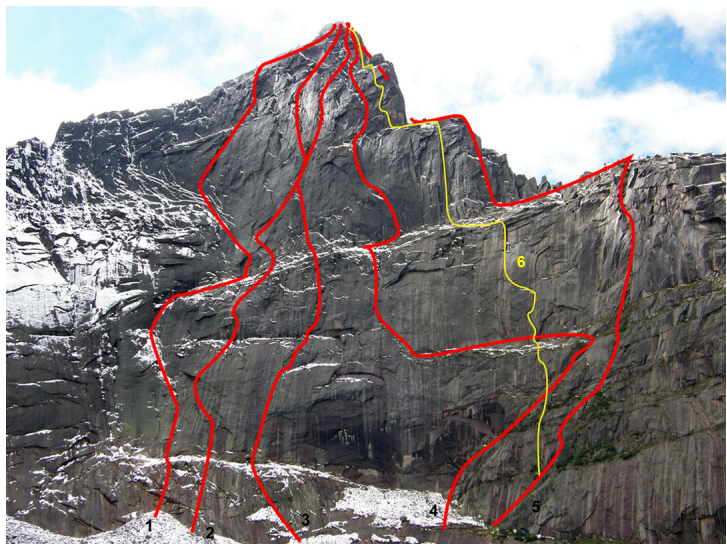
In the autumn of 2019, the area was blessed with unusually warm weather, which meant they did not need the anticipated snowshoes to reach the face, and abandoned the avalanche shovel at the first camp. It took two days to approach the wall with heavy packs. Alarmingly, they saw many bear tracks: Bears should be hibernating at this time of year, but the temperature simply wasn't low enough.

The pair began their climb at 7:45 a.m. on October 11 and reached the summit at 11:20 a.m. on the 14th. The wind was relatively light, the weather clear, and the temperature around -7°C. The total climbing time was 32 hours. This route is perhaps the last logical line on the wall without recourse to extensive drilling. Unfortunately, there were several blank sections where they were forced to drill a total of 15 bathooks and placed two 8mm bolts. The difficulties were mainly A2 and A3, and all nights were spent in a tent on convenient ledges.

The pair descended the 2013 Temerev Route, reinforcing the anchors so this line now provides a secure direct descent down the wall (rappels 55–60m). The overall grade of the 590m new route (26 pitches, 955m of climbing) was 6A.

– Information provided by **Anna Piunova**, Mountain.ru, Russia

Images



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Looking down the northeast face of Zvezdny during the first ascent of the Ivanov-Zhigalov route in October 2019.



On the first ascent of the 2019 Ivanov-Zhigalov route on the northeast face of Zvezdny.

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