

## Stanford Alpine Club Journals

### MOUNT REWOT REVOOH

#### -Our First 8,000 (cm)-

In the fall of 1951 our attention was drawn to the possibility of a first ascent of the spire. Several parties had done exploratory work previous to this time, but none had actually been able to attain the summit. Several times they were forced to return late at night by a highly dangerous, exposed rappel of the West Face, leaving only their footprints to the ravages of the mountain storms. One party actually reached the rock shelter within one lead of the summit, but time and circumstance prevented further progress.

Two members of our party set forth early one Wednesday morning to reconnoiter a route through the talus to the base of the climb. The rain was severe, but nonetheless they crept steadily toward the goal, attacking from the East. Unfortunately they were stopped by a sheer wall blocking the narrow passage-like canyon along which they were moving. They returned to the base camp, deciding to concentrate their efforts on the more conventional West Face route.

The following morning, the third member of the party joined one from the previous day's attempt, and they tried to establish a suitable route to the base of the climb. This morning too was a rainy one, and after many false leads and several encounters with savage Indians of the area, they again met failure, this time blocked by an unsurmountable chockstone at the very base of the great upward leading chimney. After carefully studying the obstruction, they returned to base camp.

We carefully consulted our equipment to see if by means of the most modern climbing techniques we could find the key to the climb. We selected an unusual array of "hardware" and set forth once again to have at the chockstone. Friday morning our attempts were successful for we placed the crucial piton and gained the chockstone, and a well-marked route to the first great terrace. We speculated now on the summit pitch, carefully studying the structure of the mountain to fix in our minds the work which lay ahead. Weeks of previous observation from distant points were now to be tested in one quick assault.

We rested our minds and bodies for a day; then we set out early Sunday morning, burdened with the necessary equipment to complete an ascent in one day. We dropped into the long narrow canyon that lead up to the chockstone. Quickly gaining this barrier, we found our way up to the first terrace. Our progress was stopped by a smooth flake, but a long traverse along the terrace to the

west brought us to the base of a tall chimney on the South Face. The exposure and debris-covered nature of the terrace forced us to hug the wall during the entire traverse. We rapidly ascended the tortuous chimney to find ourselves on a broad ledge at the base of an enclosed, winding chimney that lead to the platform beneath the great overhang of the peak. Some difficulty was met getting into the chimney, but one member was able to grasp the crucial hold which opened the door to our success. We eagerly clambered up the narrow crevice to the broad platform. The overhang was surmounted by a ladder-like log leading straight up to a small cave beneath the summit pitch. Removal of block brought us to this crucial pitch. With the bright light in our eyes and the cry of wild mountain birds in our ears, we checked our equipment for the final pitch. One member edged out onto a narrow, precipitous ledge to become the so called “dead man.” After tying him securely in place, the second man carefully belayed the leader as he climbed to the shoulders of his clinging comrade. From a delicate *rétablissement*, he lunged for a secure hold and edged up to the safety of the summit knob. Only one member made the final pitch, as time was short and—there was hardly room for one.

From this highest point all prominent features of the surrounding country could be seen. Such glories are known only to a mountaineer. Our first eight thousand

had been won. But little attention was paid to the magnificent view, for we had time only to raise the banner and return.

The leader dropped quickly to his noble comrade below who had been clinging for forty-five minutes in the cold mountain winds. The two rapidly returned to the security of the belay position and prepared to make the descent of the overhang. At that moment, a terrifying sound echoed from the mountain. What city-dweller has awakened to the scream of sirens and not felt his blood chill at the dreaded sound? Only he can imagine how we felt then. We frantically descended the overhang, dropping much of our gear down the cliffs in our haste. Would we escape the dangerous mountain? Hurriedly descending to the broad ledge at the base of the enclosed chimney, we found the area peaceful and serene; not a sound was to be heard. We quickly gathered our belongings and descended to the great terrace. Down on the lowlands we could see the savages prowling about, looking for intruders into the region of their sacred mountain. We eluded them and dropped into the safety of the narrow canyon, where we were enveloped by the steaming heat of the coming day. We hurriedly made our way through the winding canyon and emerged into the somnambulus of the early morn. The complete climb had taken over four hours, but our efforts were well rewarded, for the following day our pennant could be seen waving

proudly in the mountain breezes.