

CELESTINE AND GYPSUM FROM A LOCALITY NEAR SHURAB, TAJIKISTAN

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1. Geographic Location of Shurab, Tajikistan.

**Specimines from Victor A. Slyotov
collection, self mined during
1974–1980.**

2. General View of Shurab, Tajikistan.
Photo: Alexander A. Evseev.



Shurab is a small mining town (now a settlement) in the Isfara district of the Sogd (former Leninabad) Oblast, north Tajikistan, at the juncture of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

It arose out of the Soviet industrialization. In the 1960s–1980s Shurab was a small but very comfortable and lively town, and a rather developed industrial and cultural center of the Leninabad Oblast. Here, two coal mines and a mechanical plant were in operation; 10 megatons per year of brown coal were produced.

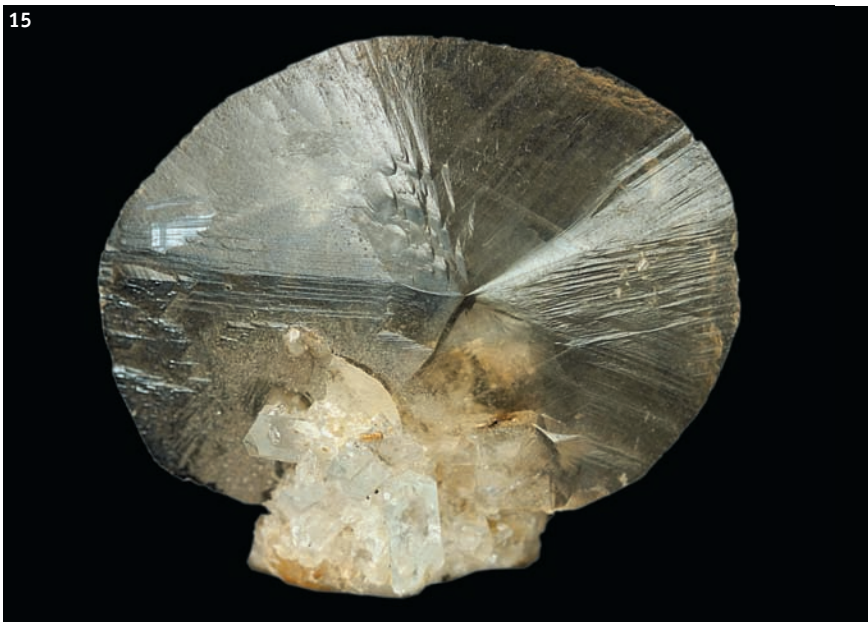
A mine of 500 m deep was the deepest coal mine in Tajikistan. The predominantly Russian-language population of Shurab was approximately 15,000.

After the collapse of the USSR the coal mines were closed and people left the town.

These days, Shurab is a ghost town with slightly more than 500 inhabitants. There is no work here, electricity is disrupted, water is brought every other day, houses are empty and are gradually falling down.

The name Shurab is translated from Tajik as "*salt water*" because the water in local springs is salty owing to high mineral content. The region around Shurab is very scenic with multicolored mountains, ridges, and cliffs. Clay, loam, shale, limestone, gypsum, and outcropping coal beds supply a rainbow. The young mountains

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15. **Gypsum** "biconical" crystal (3 x 2 x 1 cm). Bilateral growth cone, from septaria.
Photo: Pavel A. Martynov.

16. Lenticular **gypsum** crystal (2 x 1.8 x 0.5 cm) shaped with autonomous growth cones. On long-prismatic **celestine** crystals partly included during growth.
Photo: Pavel A. Martynov.

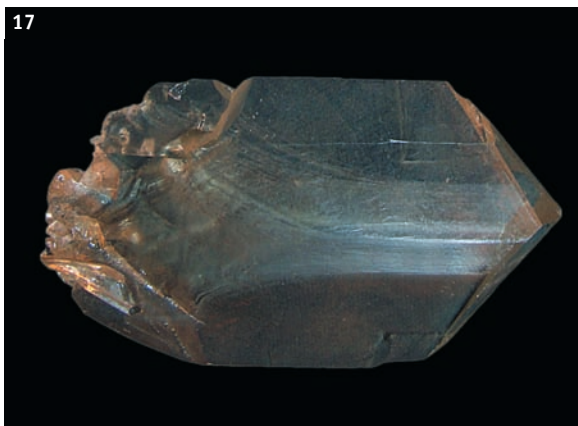
17. **Gypsum** flattened twin. 7.0 cm.
Photo: Victor A. Slyotov.

18. **Gypsum** flattened twins developed from "biconical" crystal (left) overgrowing **celestine**. Specimen: 4.5 cm.
Photo: Timofey V. Pashko.

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