



Rangtik Tokpo: Chakdor Ri, Jamyang Ri, and Other Ascents

India, Zaskar

Anastasija Davidova and I visited the valley of Rangtik Tokpo in 2016 (AAJ 2017), and I decided to return in 2017 with Matjaz Dusic and Tomaz Zerovnik. This valley and surrounding areas to the south of the Doda River are infrequently visited by mountaineers. Summits rise to around 6,400m, but in terms of scale, the ridges and faces are more like those of the Alps, and there is great potential for first ascents at all grades. Approaches from villages along the Kargil-Padum road are not long; most mountains can be reached in one day. We established a base camp in the Rangtik valley at 4,926m (33°28'30"N, 76°45'13"E). From here we made three first ascents.

In recent times mountaineers have made few known visits to this valley. In 2008 Spanish climbed Shawa Kangri (5,728m) via the route Rolling Stones (AAJ 2010). In 2012 the Japanese explorer Kimikazu Sakamoto, and friends, visited the neighboring Haptal Valley and produced a good sketch map of the area, including the Rangtik peaks, but they didn't visit the Rangtik Valley. In 2016 Anastasija and I made the first ascent of Remalaye West (6,266m), but it was obvious the east summit was higher.

Matjaz, Tomaz, and I decided to make the east (main) top of Remalaye (H5 on the Sakamoto map) our acclimatization climb. We left base camp on July 21 and, following our 2016 route, climbed to 5,900m, where we bivouacked. Next day we continued toward the west summit until we reached around 6,000m, where we headed right over good ledges to reach a prominent couloir on the southeast face leading directly toward the summit. We reached the east ridge just below the top via a section of M5+, which we realized later could have been avoided. The main summit was 6,278m and our route D+. We descended to our bivouac with a few rappels, spent a second night there, and went down to base camp on the 23rd.

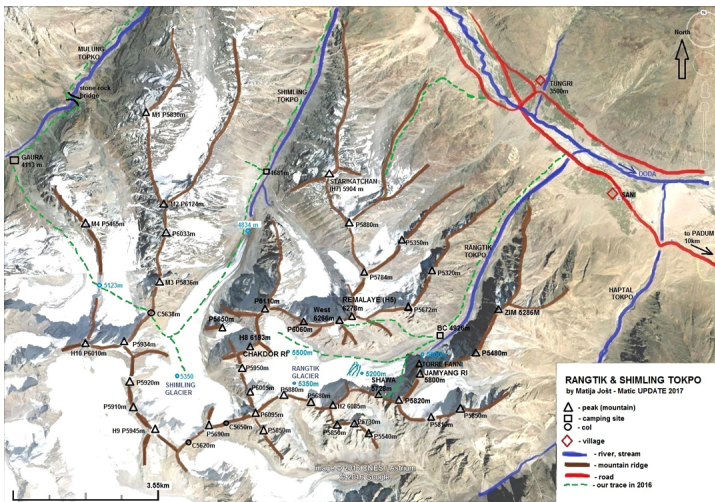
According to locals, the handsome peak at the head of the valley is called Chakdor Ri (6,193m, H8 on the Sakamoto map). Although hidden from the main Zaskar Valley, it is clearly visible from Cerro Kishtwar. After spending a night at a camp on the upper glacier at 5,400m, the next morning, July 31, we started up a 55° snow/ice ramp that seemed to give logical access to the southeast ridge. After 100m we abandoned ice gear and continued in rock shoes. That day we reached a bivouac at 5,850m, having spent an enjoyable time climbing warm granite to UIAA V+.

Next day we continued up the right side of the ridge on good granite with difficulties from V+ to VII-, using nuts, cams, and a few pitons. Later in the day, we moved to the sunny left side of the ridge, and finally reached the summit from the north. At that point a small electrical storm moved in, and within 10 minutes it was snowing. We didn't hang around, and after seven rappels were back at our bivouac. The following day, through a little rain and snow, we made it back to base camp. We named the route Treasure of Zaskar (750m, ED+ VII- 55°). The entire route was led free—no jumaring, fixed ropes, or bolts. We all climbed the entire route free, and there was no jumaring, fixed ropes, or bolts, though we left five pitons in place. The summit ridge is horizontal and sharp but easy to climb. Given the weather conditions, we are not completely sure we stood on the highest point. Jamyang Ri is the rock spire visible from the Padum road, and guards the entrance to the upper Rangtik Tokpo. In 2016 locals told us it was called Phobrang. However, there is already a Phobrang in the nearby Haptal Tokpo, so this year they suggested a new name, Jamyang Ri (5,800m).

On August 5 all three of us carried gear to the base of the west face, though only Matjaz and I would attempt the climb. We started up dusty cracks and chimneys with large jammed blocks to reach the start of a rightward traverse. This turned out to be two full 60m pitches, as we couldn't find any direct continuation. Higher, the rock became cleaner but sometimes far from perfect. We reached the southwest ridge and climbed delicate "boulder problems" on the exposed crest to gain the summit. The climbing had been consistently V to VII-, and we felt the 650m route warranted an overall grade of ED. We named it Cunka. We rappelled a direct line down the west face to the start of the traverse, then continued down the lower section of our route, arriving in base camp at 10 p.m. We used only nuts and cams, and both of us climbed each pitch free.

Matija Jost, Slovenia

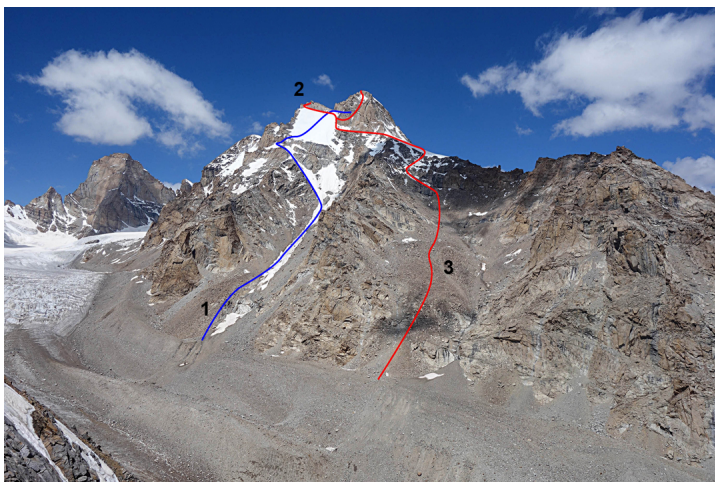
Images



Map of the Rangtik Tokpo and surrounding region, visited by Austrian and Slovenian expeditions in 2017.



Jamyang Ri (5,800m) from the west. (1) Inshallah, Maybe to the top of (TF), Torre Fanni (ca 5,600m, 2017, Austrian). (2) Cunka (2017, Slovenian). (3) Dust-From Dusk till Dawn (2017, Austrian).



Remalaye (H5, 6,278m) from the east-southeast. (1) Southeast face to main summit (2017, Austrian). (2) West summit via south slopes and east ridge (2016, Slovenian). (3) Main summit via south slopes

and east ridge (2017, Slovenian). In background left is Chakdor Ri (H8, 6,193m).



View from Remalaye to the southeast over the Gompa and Chhogo tokpos to (A) T16 (6,431m, unclimbed), (B) T16 south (climbed in 2016 by the southwest face Supercouloir), and (C) T13 (6,436m, attempted in 2016 by the northwest ridge, facing the camera). In the foreground is Jamlang Ri.



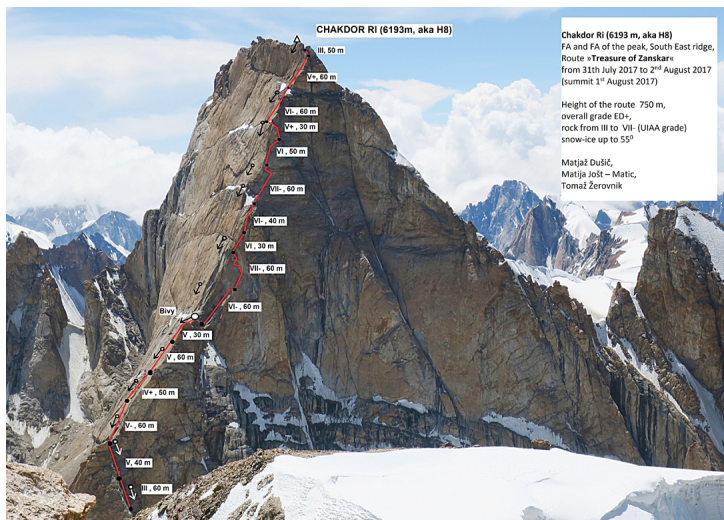
Tomaz Zerovnik going for the “through route” below the chockstone to reach the east ridge of Remalaye just below the summit.



Matjaz Dusic and Tomaz Zerovnik on the lower section of Treasure of Zanskar, southeast ridge of Chakdor Ri.



Matjaz Dusic on the upper part of Treasure of Zanskar, southeast ridge of Chakdor Ri.



Treasure of Zanskar on the southeast ridge of Chakdor Ri, as seen from Remalaye.



Matjaz Dusic on the upper pillar of Treasure of Zanskar, southeast ridge of Chakdor Ri.



Matjaz Dusic on pitch 11 (60m, VI+) of Cunka, west face of Jamlang Ri.



Matic Jost on excellent granite, high on the west face of Jamlang Ri.

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