



## AAC Publications

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### **Rangtik Tokpo, Shawa Kangri, northwest face, Less is More**

India, Zaskar Region, Kishtwar Range

Shawa Kangri (5,728m) with the line of Less Is More on the northwest face. Photo by Matteo De Zaiacomo

**This year didn't start well.** I fractured two cervical vertebrae in an ice climbing accident, and doctors were not optimistic about a speedy recovery. However, after four months in "prison" with a neck brace, I was told I could begin physiotherapy, and my mood finally began to improve with my first climbs. I had no plans for the summer, but I was convinced by Chiara Gusmeroli and Matteo De Zaiacomo to accompany them to India. The next day, I quit my job and bought a plane ticket.

We left Italy in mid-August and quickly reached the Rangtik Tokpo during a good weather window. On the 21st, even though we were not yet well acclimatized, Chiara and I repeated Rolling Stones (V+, Pellisa-Ricart, 2008) on the northeast face of Shawa Kangri (33°27'46"N, 76°44'07"E). Our morale soared: Six days previously we had been in Italy, and now we had reached 5,728 meters.

We returned to Shawa Kangri two days later with Matteo and climbed a new route on the northwest face. Less Is More (500m, VIII) was a beautiful route climbed on trad gear. It had amazing granite and followed flakes, corners, and slabby sections with "interesting" protection.

Morale was now sky-high and the team well-oiled for the upcoming weeks of climbing. However, back in base camp, it snowed for the next ten days. We played cards and built snowmen.

A little before the storm passed, I was buried in my tent under a meter of snow, and the cooks fled to town for three days. On their return, the sun began to shine but the valley was covered in very deep snow (one and half meters fell at base camp). Our previous objectives were no longer feasible, but Lam Thuk Khamzang on the northwest face of Little Jamyang Ri (ca 5,600m), a very steep route climbed in 2023 by Hannes Niederwolfsgruber and Stefan Plank (AAJ 2024), was steep enough that it was largely snow free. The climbing was exciting and continuously challenging, but we were forced to give up 100 meters below the summit due to intense cold and the arrival of another storm.

This time bad weather lasted only a few days, and while waiting for new snow to melt, we climbed a short wall near base camp by a route we named Cuochi in Fuga (VIII A1) in honor of our cooks and their daring escape to the valley.

Two days before the porters were due to arrive to initiate our trip home, we attempted Remalaye (6,278m, 33°28'51.48"N, 76°43'41.22"E), the highest peak in the valley, by its unclimbed east face. We spent a day wading to 5,900 meters below the beautiful granite pillar on the short upper face, and the next day climbed mixed terrain to pure rock. Unfortunately, the quality of the granite was not good, and it was steeper than we had imagined. At 6,123 meters, we had to accept we would never make the summit and reach base camp the same day. As we had no way of contacting our agent to delay the porters' arrival, we began rappelling.

It was an incredible trip, one that I have dreamed of since I was a child, and my first experience outside of Europe. I couldn't have asked for anything better. Maybe just a little less snow...but that'll be for next time.

—Davide Nesa, Italy

## Images



Matteo De Zaiacomo on the first ascent of Less is More on Shawa Kangri.



Shawa Kangri (5,728m) with the line of Less Is More on the northwest face. Rolling Stones (2008) ascends the northeast face, to the left, and the prow between the two faces was attempted in 2023.



Chiara Gusmeroli on the route Lam Thuk Kamzang on Little Jamyang Ri.



Matteo De Zaiacommo during an attempt on the unclimbed east face of Remalaye.



The upper rock pillar on the east face of Remalaye, reached along the flanks of the broken east ridge. The rock—whose quality was disappointing—was climbed to a point 150 meters below the summit.

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