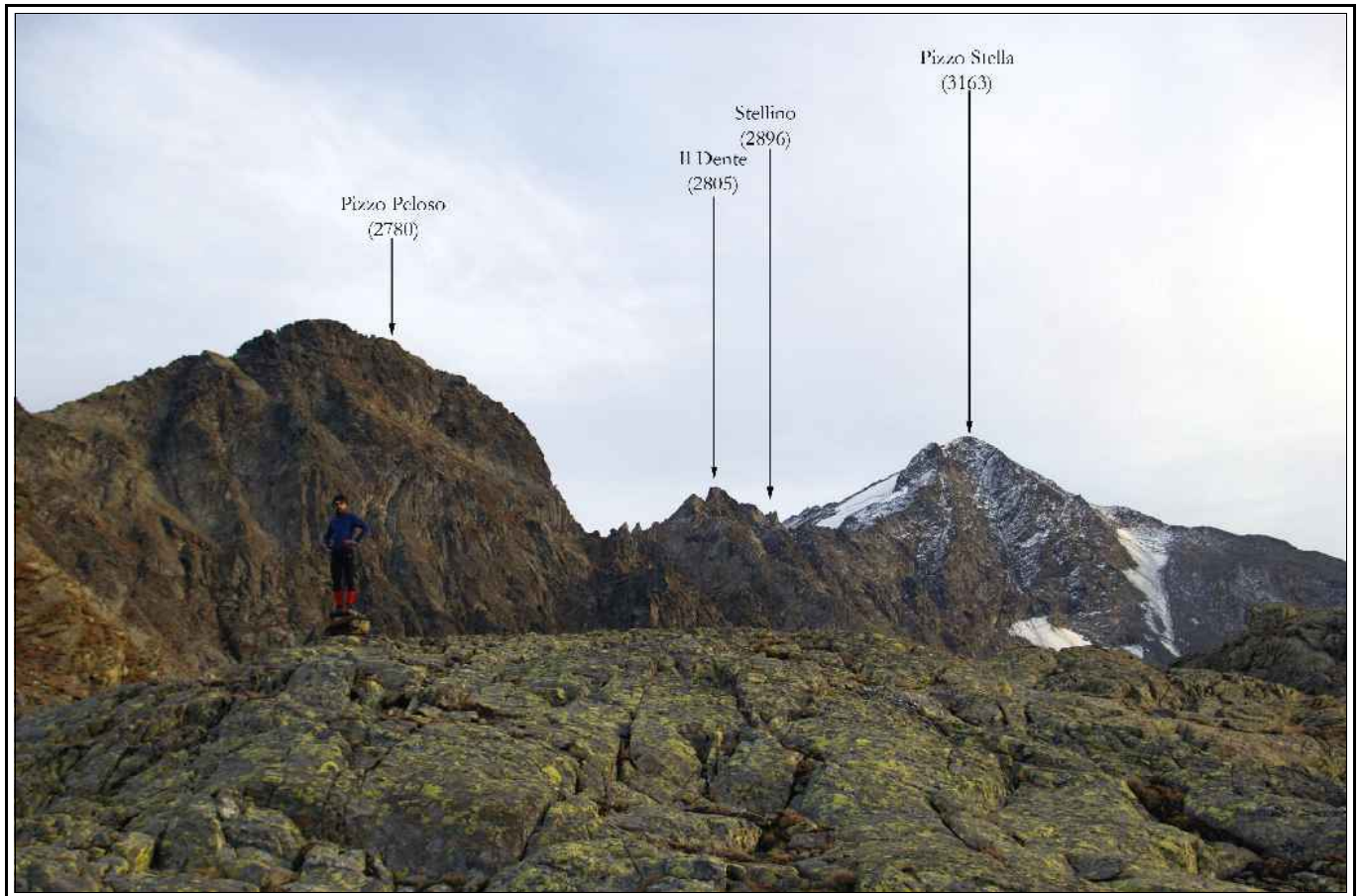


14 ottobre 2006

## *Pizzo Stella (m 3163) e Pizzo Peloso (m 2780)*



*14<sup>th</sup> october 2006. Top of Angeloga valley seen from lago Caldera.*

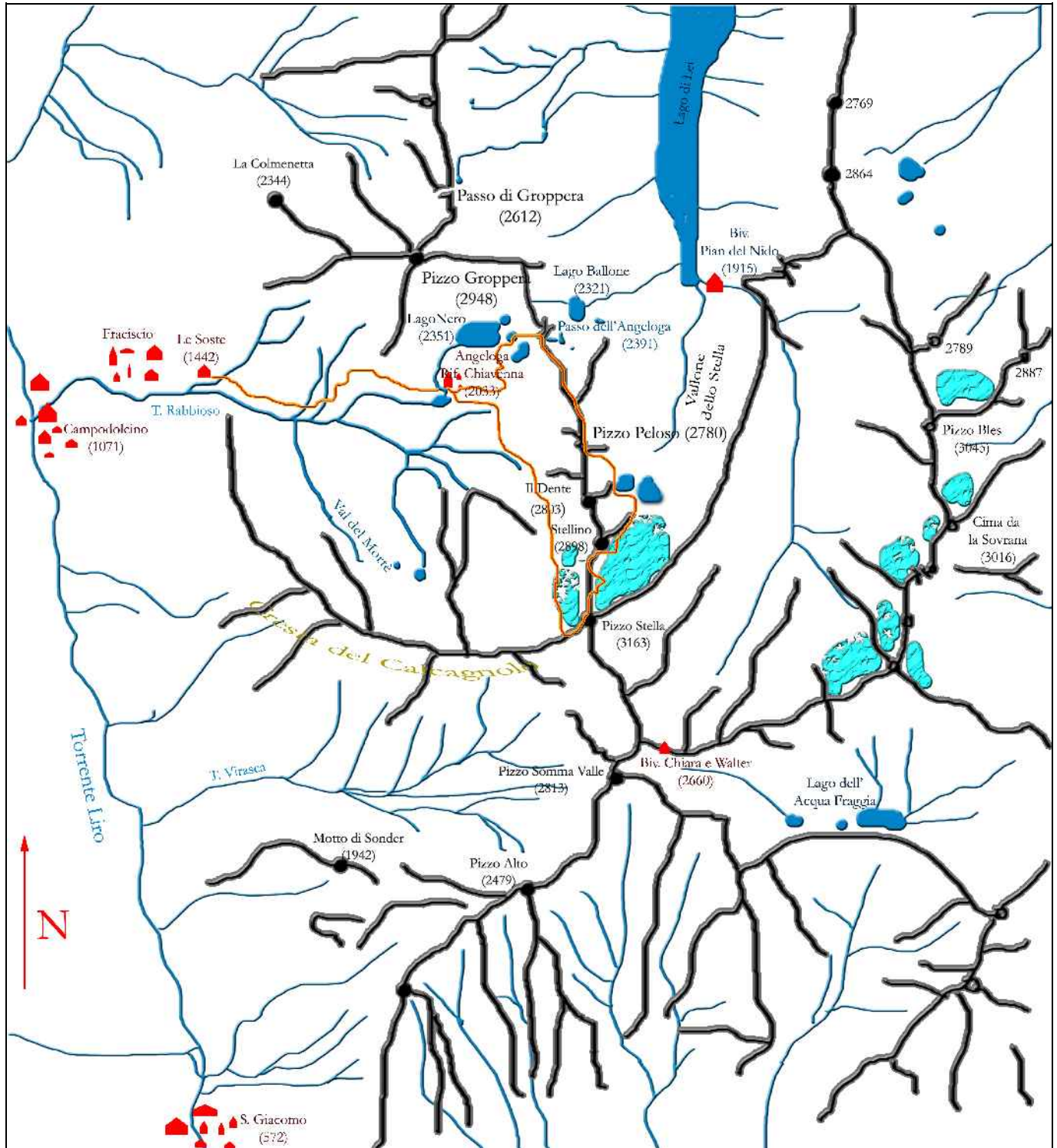
<b>Start</b>	Soste (m 1442)
<b>How to reach the place</b>	From Chiavenna take the SS 36 road to Passo dello Spluga (north direction). Right after San Giacomo Filippo and Prestone (11 km) you arrive to Campodolcino. Turn right and drive on a very steep road for 4 km to Fraciscio (1341 m). Leave the car in Soste (1440 m).
<b>Path</b>	Le Soste (m 1440) - Angeloga (m 2044) - Pizzo Stella (m 3163) – Ghiacciaio Ponciagna - Pizzo Peloso (m 2780) - Lago Nero e Lago Caldera (m 2351) - Angeloga - Fraciscio
<b>Tempo di percorrenza previsto</b> Estimated trip time	8 hours for the entire trip
<b>Required equipment</b>	Climbing boots, ice axe, crampons, rope, sling, glacier clothes.
<b>Difficulty</b>	4+
<b>Professional guide opinion (ideal conditions)</b>	<b>PD</b> = climb characterized by difficulty up to the 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade. Very steep stretches on the glacier.
<b>Overall balance</b>	

## Itinerary

We arrive to Fraciscio when it is already dark, so we decide to have dinner and a good sleep in Soste, inside a small shelter made of firs and birches.

The night goes by quietly. Neither cold, nor wind. This is very strange, since it is nearly November.

We wake up much earlier than the sun and, after having placed the tents inside the car, we start walking on the dirt path (E) that stretches along the Rabbiosa torrent. Still staying on the hydrographical right, after about a kilometre, the road turns into a muletrack, and then it changes



*direction leaving the riverbed.*

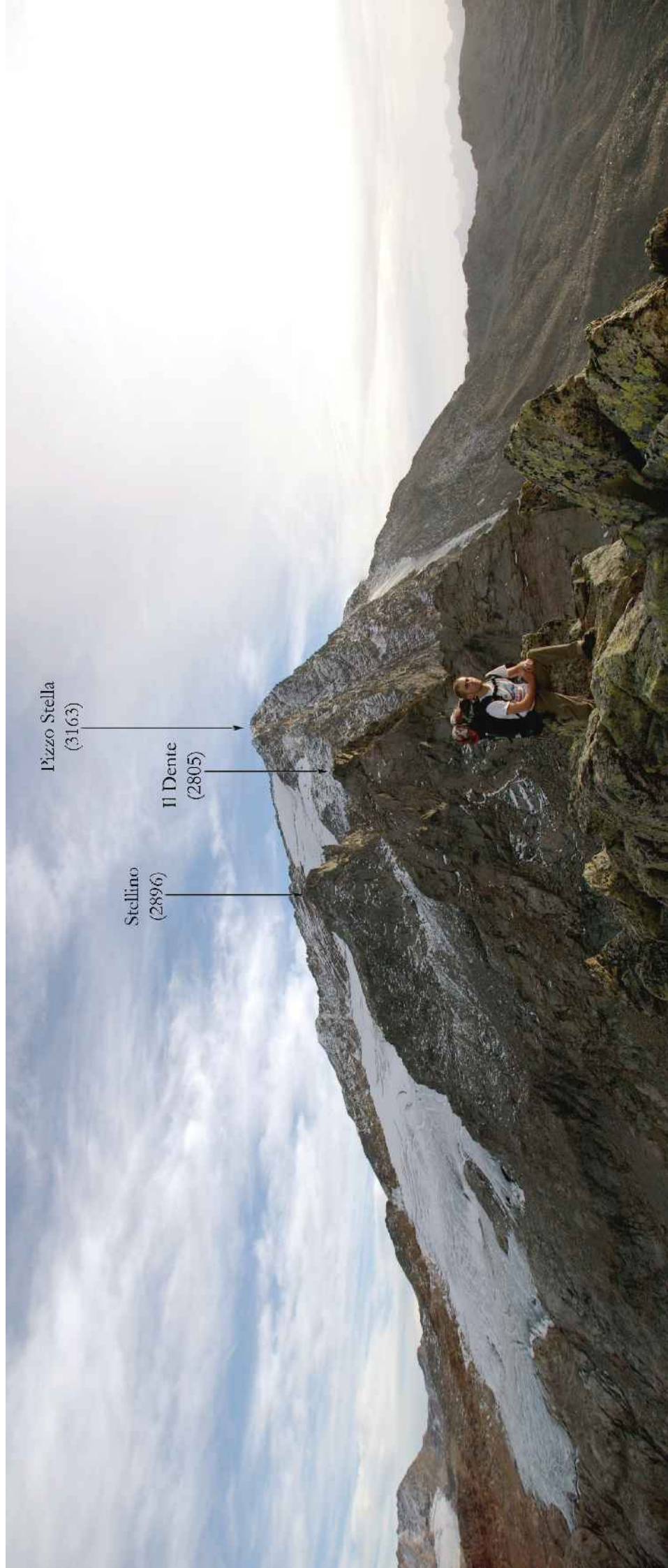
*A tightly coiled path goes up on the northern side of the valley and it leads us to a rocky area. We cross it on a comfortable ledge heading for E and, after a quick stretch on some wet stones, we pop out in the calm plain of Angeloga. We outflank on the left the grassy support on which the Monumento ai Partigiani is built, a war memorial to all those Partisans that were killed here in April '45 fighting the Camice Nere.*

*Here it is the Rifugio Chiavenna (2044 m, 1 hour), curtain of a little nice village. Angeloga is the echo of an alpine tradition that is irremediably lost now a days. We dive into judgments and dissertations on the small refuges. Some have been nicely renovated, others suffer from a modernity that does not suit this place. Let's hope a four roadway street has not been planned, yet!*

*There is no sign of the sun, yet. An annoying wind is blowing, rippling the leaden water of the lake. In the distance the tips get brighter, but the Stella's side keeps hiding in the shadow. We cross toward SSE. We walk along the lake, then we gain height on some morain ridges.*



*Lago d'Angeloga.*



*Pizzo Stella ("Star Peak") e Pizzoni d'Angeloga ("Great Peaks of Angeloga") from Pizzo Peloso ("Hairy Pea").*

*Everything is signalled, nonetheless obvious. The height turns everything in rock and ice. We cross the wide catchment basin, now full of debris, in the past cradle of the Morteè glacier. The glacier is subsiding quickly and, as it had been anticipated by the 1990 glacier census, it was divided into two different parts: the poor central flake, fed by the big channel O, and a modest S shaped tongue, covered in part by small stones.*



*Steel cross of Pizzo Stella is good for gym exercises.*



*N crest of Stella with Pizzoni d'Angeloga (Stellino and Dente), pizzo Peloso and Lei lake.*

Having passed two uncomfortable rocky slopes, we reach the occidental ridge of the Stella, also known as "Cresta del Calcagnolo". (time 2:30).

Following the watershed (E, then N) we scramble up the muddy soil that leads to the cross on the tip (Pizzo Stella, m 3163, 1 hour)

A nice rose of the tips, placed next to the steel cross, allow us to identify the most important mountains such as the Orobic, the Retiche and the Lepontine, and also some distant 4000. The N ridge of the Stella is sharp and furrowed with deep cuts and barren pinnacles: the Stellino, the Dente, the Pizzo Peloso, then a long blue stripe: the Lei lake. The snow on the highest altitudes emphasizes the autumn colours, still banished beyond the broad-leaved line. One pm has far gone. We are four liards below the cross of the tip.

There are other three people next to us. A German guy sets a big tripod up, then he takes out his ultra-compact camera, nearly invisible if compared to the tripod. He takes some pictures of himself with the self-timer function. It's a very funny situation, we laugh our head off at him.

Since sunset comes very early in November, we hurry up and, having said goodbye to Gioia and Nicola that will go back on the way followed before, we head for the N ridge. Equipped with no crampons you would keep on sliding on the thin ice layer that covers the rocks, but with crampons on you would slide on the rocks, because of the little amount of snow that covers them. What shall we do?

We stay on the ridge till the first tower then, when it gets too steep, we dash off into the couloir on the right and, surrounded by the noise of the stones rolling behind us, we get to the Ponciagna glacier, about one hundred meters below the tip. The glacier is very steep, specially in its central part. We face it equipped with crampons and prudence, keeping ourselves close to the rocks on the left, then, having gone round the first tower, we approach some greedy crevasses. On the ridge again, we go down just a few meters looking for warm rocks, then we head for the difficult SO side of the Stellino, a daring red and friable rocky tooth.

Time is carelessly passing by while we straggle because of the bad condition of the path. From the base of the SO edge of the Stellino we get into a difficult small channel covered with stones that leads us to the S side of the Stellino. Rocks, landslides and dust. We are on the glacier again, slight slopes heading NE.



A crack between rocks and Ponciagna glacier is our way down.



*Lei lake seen from the schrund of Ponciagna glacier.*

*At the next jump the ice tongue disappears revealing steep and smooth rocky gaps.*

*We leave the ice plain on the right in order to find a way through the dungeon of sheer terraces.*

*We get close to the glacier tongue and, having entered a deep groove between rocks and ice, we go down for other twenty meters till we reach a first plain.*

*A level knoll one hundred meters long, then precipice again. A dungeon made up of sheer terraces. What a waste of time! Then, finally, we get to the two turbid lakes at the glacier's feet (2470 m, time 2:30). What funny colors, so close and at the same time with two so different tonalities of green. Guess what is happening to the water? The Lei lake, where these small lakes pour in, has a blue color so brilliant and pure that it seems to have no relation so ever with the other lakes. The Dente stands out at the top left (O), after, moving clockwise, a sharp and indented ridge, a grassy cut (Colle Brasca, 2678 m) and the highest rocks of Pizzo Peloso. We make out the cross up to the light.*

*We head horizontally for NNO and we reach the base of the steep flow where Colle Brasca culminates. We climb it with lots of effort, then, always standing on the watershed between the Angeloga and the Vallone dello Stella, we climb on rocks and grass. Some passages are a bit exposed (III+). Maybe there are different ways, but we definitely don't have time to find out. We arrive at Pizzo Peloso at 17 (m 2780, time 1:30).*

*Crouching down below the skimpy cross on the tip (two boards crossing), we steel some warm coming from the last sunbeams. All around us, there is only the alpine serenity that precedes sunset. Angeloga is covered by a light film of shadow while a sinister fog is embracing everything. It seems the wind wants to emulate the shepherds shouting at their animals at dusk. And still, this is not*



*happening any more, up here.*

*It's half past five, the descent begins. At first the ridge is exposed and not easy, but, fortunately, reaching the Angeloga passage turns out being a formality (m 2391, time 1:10).*

*Then the signalled path makes our descending easy and, after a last look at the Angeloga (time 0:45), we start running to the car without even turning the head-lights on (Le Soste, time 1:10). Fearing our friends are worried for us, we rush to the Panda...*

*Instead, our friends had decided to follow a new and difficult path from the Cresta del Calcagnolo down to the Val del Mortèè, thinking that going back on the same path made before would have been far less original. This path gets confused once it reaches Le Soste.*

*It's night, we are worried about our friends, how knows where they are. Will they be torn to pieces by chamois?*

*More than an hour goes by and, fortunately, we see the weak light of their electric torches flashing in the riverbed of Rabbiosa. "There they are!"*

*Gioia and Nicola are talking about musk, lichens, and "maloss" (small and annoying bushes). They tell us that some spirites, as funny as kind, had invited them in their cave for a cup of tea. They hadn't noticed it was getting dark. That is why they were late.*

*"We definitely did not get lost!"*



*All together on the top of Pizzo Stella.*