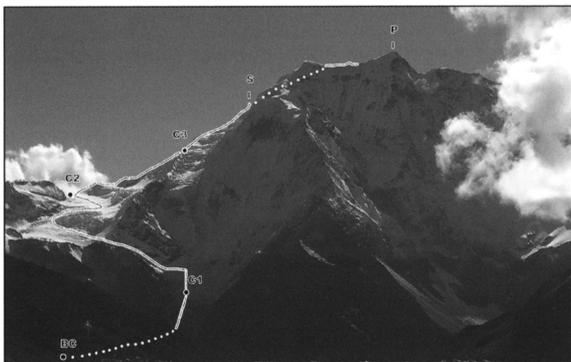


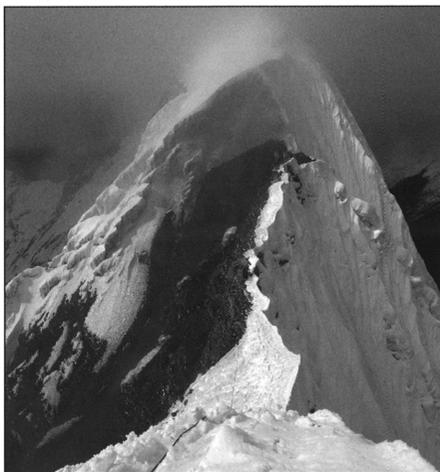
onto the permitted list in 2003 [as was 6,504m Panpoche II, on the ridge southeast of the main summit]. We left Kathmandu on August 24 and established base camp on September 2 on a grassy terrace beside the Sonam Glacier, at 4,350m. On the 11th we made Camp 1 on the glacier at 4,600m and on the 14th Camp 2 at 5,600m, on the col at the foot of the north ridge of Samdo. This ridge forms the border with Tibet. On the 20th all six of us left Camp 2 at 4:15 a.m. and plowed through knee-deep snow on the crest of the ridge to reach the summit of Samdo at 10:20 a.m.

The following day we moved our top camp farther up the north ridge, to 5,900m, and on the 28th made an attempt on Panpoche I. We again left camp at 4:15 a.m., climbed to the top of Samdo, but then continued southwest on a knife-edge ridge and descended 10m on the crest to reach the start of the main arête leading to Panpoche I. The next 200m were unstable rock and snow, and we could place neither rock pitons nor snow stakes. Realizing that if the ridge collapsed, we would not survive, we gave up at an altitude of 6,500m, 400m distant from the summit.

YUSUKE KURAMOTO, *Japanese Alpine Club*



(S) Samdo and (P) Panpoche I from west. (BC) base camp hidden by foreground hill. (C1) and (C2) camps used for ascent of Samdo. (C3) site of top camp for attempt on Panpoche I. Route between Samdo and summit ridge of Panpoche not visible. *Yusuke Kuramoto*



On crumbling summit ridge of Panpoche I. Climbers turned back at this point. *Yusuke Kuramoto*

## LANGTANG HIMAL

*Langtang Lirung (7,227m), solo attempt and tragedy.* No one knows what caused the death of Tomaz Humar on the south face of Langtang Lirung. On November 7 the 40-year-old Slovenian started up a wide couloir leading leftward and then diagonally up toward the south ridge. He bivouacked on the ridge at 6,100m. The forecast predicted strong winds. On the 9th he radioed to his base camp cook, "I'm here at 6,300m and not possible. I come down." Later that day he spoke again to his cook, who understood Humar to say that he had broken his leg and back. Before this second call he had talked with his girlfriend in Slovenia by satellite phone, saying, "I've had an accident. I'm dying." Finally, the next morning, he spoke once more to the cook and simply said, "This is my last call." He then either switched off the radio or the con-

nection was lost. He was not heard from again.

The alarm was sounded but helicopter searches failed to locate Humar, as did a strong Sherpa team, who fixed ropes toward the point Humar had described as his location (first arriving on the south ridge at a point higher than Humar reported in his first radio message). Contacts in Slovenia mustered the services of the Air Zermatt Rescue, members of which arrived in Kathmandu on the 13th. The following day the Swiss flew with a Nepalese helicopter to Langtang, and co-pilot Robert Andenmatten located Humar at ca 5,600m on the southwest face, lower and much farther left than expected, in an area of steep rocky terrain. Zermatt guide Simon Anthamatten was lowered on a 25m static line and prepared Humar's body for evacuation. It was airlifted from the mountain and brought to base camp, literally frozen stiff.

Anthamatten thinks that Humar climbed an easy couloir on the left side of the southeast face, then moved onto the southwest face, continuing up below the crest of the south ridge. A camera in his pocket showed an extremely steep wide couloir, looking both up and down. Due to the frozen condition of his body, it was impossible to tell whether he had broken any bones, and the Nepalese doctors who perform autopsies said they were incapable of examining such a body. His clothing, camera, and other gadgets in his pockets were undamaged. His Slovenian doctor and good friend, Anda Perdan, who had come to Nepal with the Swiss, speculated that he had managed to descend several hundred meters to the point where he was found and then froze to death, though this seems less plausible given the nature of the terrain. Humar's body was cremated in Kathmandu and his ashes scattered over the Langtang Lirung base camp site.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *AAC Honorary Member, Nepal*. LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*

## ROLWALING HIMAL

*Gaurishankar (7,135m), southwest face, attempt.* From December 23, 2008, to January 8, 2009, a six-member Korean expedition, led by Kang Sung-woo, attempted a new route on the southwest face of Gaurishankar. They planned to follow a line to the right of the 1984 American-Nepalese route (Wayne Culbreth—Ang Kami Sherpa), which itself is an upper-rightward variant to the original American-Nepalese route climbed in 1979 by John Roskelly and Dorje Sherpa. The Koreans accessed the bowl beneath the face by a gully between the Via Neithardt and the foot of the southwest ridge but gave up at 5,400m. They note that the Tseringma Glacier below the face has almost completely melted. Despite around 25 attempts, Gaurishankar has only been climbed three times, the last in January 1986—the only winter ascent—by Korean Choi Han-jo and Ang Kami Sherpa, repeating Ang Kami's own 1984 route.

PETER JENSEN-CHOI, *Corean Alpine Club*

*Lunag Massif, nomenclature.* A massif of high peaks, which forms the Nepal-Tibet border southwest of the Nangpa La, is generally unnamed on maps, although one of the northerly summits, 6,781m, is sometimes referred to as Jobo Rinjang (also Ribjang or Rabzang) and on the outdated HGM-MT map was marked with an altitude of 6,666m. In 2002 it was brought onto the permitted list of mountaineering peaks by the Nepalese government. Given that the nearest village and the glacier on the south side of the group are both named Lunag, it seems sensible to refer to the peaks as the Lunag Massif. In 2004 Stéphane Schaffter asked the Minis-