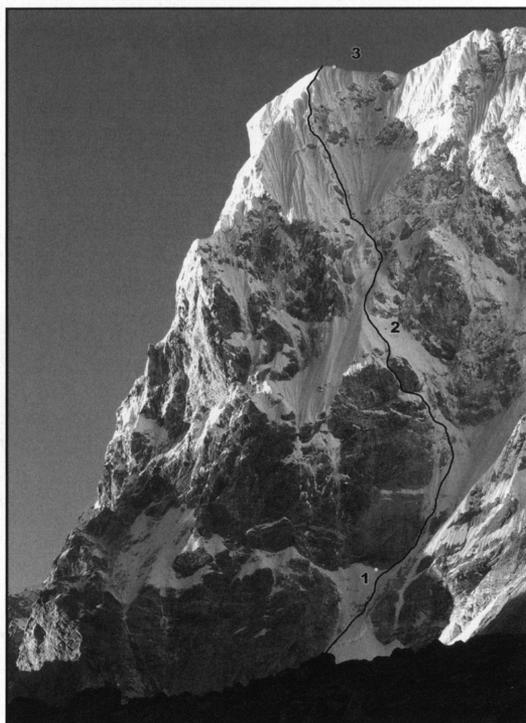


## ROLWALING HIMAL

Peak 5,777m; Jobo LeCoultre (6,478m) northeast face to southeast ridge; Lunag I southeast top, southeast face, *Close the Door*. After a flight to Lukla and a seven-day trek, including a rest day in Thame, a four-man team established base camp south of the Lunag Group at 5,200m, close to the Lunag Glacier. The site was superb, on grass, with running water and a nice collection of boulders. From here they made their first acclimatization climb together with their sirdar, for whom it proved a novel experience. This was a north-south traverse of Peak 5,777m, south of the Lunag Glacier, climbed in 2009 by Stéphane Schaffter's Switzerland-France-Nepal-Pakistan expedition (*AAJ 2010*). Several days later the four set out to complete their acclimatization with an attempt on Jobo LeCoultre (6,478m), a peak on the frontier ridge southwest of the Lunags and claimed to have been summited by the Schaffter expedition. The northeast face was in much drier condition than when climbed by the Swiss team, and the four followed the main couloir parallel to, but well left of, the 2009 route. On the first day they climbed 500m, predominately over snow, to reach a fine bivouac site at 5,800m. The next day 400m of gully and steep mixed climbing led to the southeast ridge, up which they progressed to below a small "top" at ca 6,200m, immediately before the notch reached by the Swiss team. They made no attempt to turn this top, as they carried no

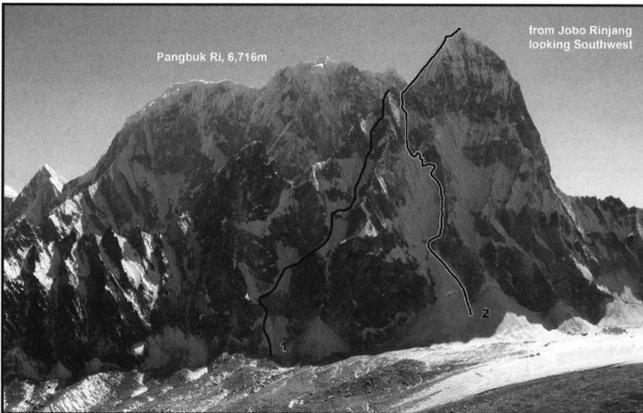


Lunag I southeast top. *Close the Door* with bivouac sites marked, the last a few meters below the summit.

suitable equipment for the route beyond, which looked really hard with huge mushrooms. Instead, they rappelled and returned to base camp. The 800m of climbing to this point was graded III/4+.

Poor weather then confined them to base camp. This was not a bad thing, as due to the previous warm fine weather, the mixed sections on their main objective—the southeast face of unclimbed Lunag I—had become very dry. After one aborted attempt they received a forecast promising a week of fine weather, so set off for a light and fast ascent. At mid-day they crossed the rimaye, and after climbing 200m found a relatively protected campsite at 5,800m. The next morning they climbed a few hundred meters before stopped by heat and forced to shelter beneath an overhang. As the temperature began to fall they climbed a steep pitch of F5 in a corner that avoided an easier but objectively dangerous option. Shortly before nightfall they arrived at their second bivouac site (6,200m). This took one hour to excavate but was nicely protected by a roof.

After a good night they climbed a series of fine pitches up a goulotte, which got them through the narrows in the middle of the face. Finally they reached the upper flutes, where good ice gave way



Looking southwest from Jobo Rinjang at Jobo LeCoultre. (1) 2010 attempt, which stopped on the southeast ridge at ca 6,200m. (2) 2009 line claimed by French-Nepali-Swiss team (summit reached by Carrad, Haeni, Schaffter, and Vallot). Joe Puryear



Starting the mixed section on day two of Close the Door.

to unstable snow. Here the climbing, though not hard, was precarious and difficult to protect. Night fell with no suitable bivouac spot in sight, so the four kept going, reaching the top of the face and a distinct summit of over 6,800m (likely ca 6,830m) on the ridge connecting Lunag I (6,895m) to Jobo Rinjang (6,778m). A strong southwesterly froze their faces as they descended a few meters north and dug tent platforms for the night.

They had hoped from this point to traverse northwest to the slightly higher main summit. Too tired the next day, they opted to descend immediately, downclimbing and making 22 rappels along the ascent route to the glacier. They named the line Close the Door (1,200m, IV/5 F5).

LINDSAY GRIFFIN,  
*Mountain INFO*

*Takargo (6,771m), first official ascent.* Over three days in early March, Americans David Gottlieb and Joe Puryear made the first official ascent of Takargo. They climbed a gully on the right side of the east face to reach a large glacier shelf, traversed this left, and then climbed seven ice pitches to the south summit, before following the ridge north to the main top (1,000m, TD). This long-time climbing partnership was separated last autumn during an October attempt on the South Face of Labuche Kang in Tibet, when Puryear fell unroped through a cornice. Puryear's obituary is in the In Memoriam section, and his story about the Takargo climb is a feature article, both in this Journal.

#### MAHALANGUR HIMAL KHUMBU SECTION

*Pharilapcha (6,017m), north face, Korean Route.* Hwang Gi-yong, Shin Dong-seok, and I started climbing a new line on the left side of the north face at 1 a.m. on December 13 [the prominent spur immediately left of the 2008 Polish route, Independence Day. See *AAJ 2009*]. We had hoped to find the way by moonlight, but when we reached 5,000m at 2:30 a.m., it was simply too dark, and