

Looking southwest from Jobo Rinjang at Jobo LeCoultré. (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

we had to wait until 6:30 a.m. before continuing. At first the terrain was mixed, but at ca 5,200m we had to climb an eight-meter overhanging crack followed by 10m of unprotected slab, for which we took off crampons. Above, we gained the lip of a protected snowfield and settled down to bivouac for the night at 5,367m.

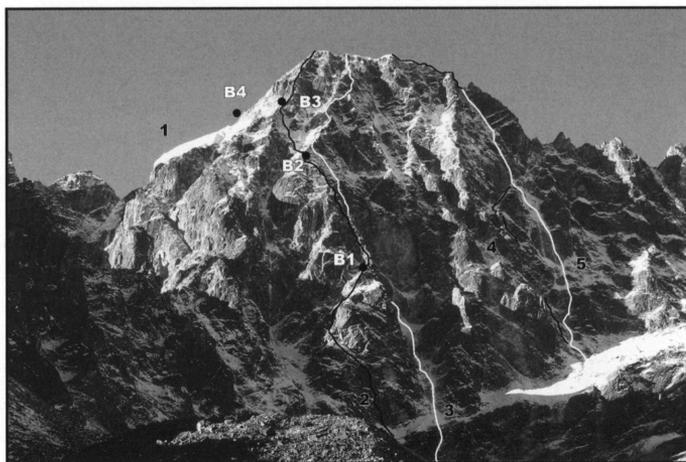
On the 14th we climbed moderate sections of rock and snow (5.7–5.9 and 65–85°). Toward the end,

rockfall became prevalent, and we stopped to bivouac at 2:30 p.m. The following day Hwang, who was in the lead, showed signs of slight fatigue, though at this stage we didn't realize there was a problem. There was ice and mixed terrain to 85°, but placing screws was almost impossible; we resorted to protecting ourselves with rock features protruding from the snow, and snow bollards.

On the 16th, after a bivouac at 5,863m, I took over the lead in order to speed things up. At ca 5,900m, after climbing through mixed ground at 60°, we came to a steep 25m crack. We left our sacks at the base and carried only cameras. Although the crack was merely 5.9, it was loose, and we had to climb it carefully, making sure the rope didn't snag on precariously balanced rock. Above, we experienced dangerous rock fall, but climbed the intervening ground to the summit of Pharilapcha East without too much effort [the east summit is almost as high as the main or west top]. We took summit shots with Everest in the distance. Hwang was elated, showing no visible signs of distress. We descended to our sacks and then traversed to the east ridge, which we downclimbed to 5,735m, where we bivouacked. Although Hwang had not felt right since day two, when he started to suffer stomach pains, his condition had not deteriorated. Neither had he complained of any major discomfort. We simply had no idea that there was something seriously wrong.

The following morning, in the initial stages of our rappel descent, Hwang suddenly collapsed and died. Shin Dong-seok and I continued down, arriving at Machermo in the Gokyo Valley at 5 p.m. Four days later, with help from Sherpas, we retrieved Hwang's body and transported it to Kathmandu for cremation. (Hwang was with me on the successful 1997 Gasherbrum IV west face expedition and had recently made a special trip to Seoul to suggest we made a pure alpine-style ascent together.)

We named the line the Korean Route. There were 1,200m of climbing, in which no pegs or bolts were placed. We rated it VI 5.9 A3 M5 WI5+. We climbed in alpine style and left only slings and carabiners during our descent.



North Face of Pharilapcha. (1) East Ridge (Bremond- Constant-Degonon-Thomas, 2006). (2) Korean Route with bivouac sites marked. (3) Independence Day (Krol- Sokolowski-Wojcik, 2008). (4) Japanese Variant (Ichimura-Nakagawa, 2007). (5) Bonfire of the Vanities (Constant- Mercader, 2003). Yoo Hak-jae