



## AAC Publications

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### **Lunag Group; Peak 5,777m, Awesome Show, Great Job!; Peak 5,855m, north face couloir, second ascent; Peak 6,478m, northeast face, attempt** Nepal, Rolwaling Himal

Chris Wright and I read about the Lunag Massif in a feature article by Joe Puryear in AAJ 2010. Thanks to his and David Gottlieb's photographs, we found several exciting possibilities: Our objectives would be Little Lunag (6,492m), Lunag III (6,795m), and Lunag IV (6,781m). However, as we approached our base camp in November, it became obvious that the lines we had identified were not in condition, and were not looking to be so anytime soon. Only the high peaks and northern aspects had acceptable alpine climbing conditions. We received similar information from Chad Kellogg, who was returning from his solo attempt on Lunag I and a solo second ascent of Jobo Rinjang. After hearing Chad's account of "combat zone" rockfall on southern exposures, we turned our focus to the shaded north and northeast faces nearby: Peak 5,777m, Peak 5,855m, and Peak 6,478m.

As a warm-up and acclimatization route we headed for the north face couloir of Peak 5,777m, situated directly south of our base camp near the Lunag Glacier. The peak was climbed in 2009 by Schaffter's party (AAJ 2010) and again in 2010 by French climbers, who made a north-south traverse (AAJ 2011). Our chosen line followed a steep ice smear that led to much easier ne?ve? and mixed ground. We named the route Awesome Show, Great Job! (350m, WI4 M3).

As Chris struggled with a chest infection, I headed out to a neighboring peak located west of Peak 5,777m, and labeled 5,855m on the Schneider map. I'd received information from David Gottlieb that a 600m ice chimney led up the north face, and a Swiss team had completed its first ascent a few weeks prior, rating it AI4. The route was obvious when standing beneath the face, and I made the second ascent, and first free solo.

We had heard of a possible ascent of Peak 6,478m (referred to by Schaffter as Jobo LeCoultre, see AAJ 2010). Given this information, we decided to choose a line on the northeast face to the right of their route, climbing more directly toward the summit. Initial snow slopes gave way to 60m of WI3 before easing. Soon the face steepened significantly and the snow thinned, leaving a veneer of sugar snow over hard, old alpine ice. After moving together most of the day, we roped up for seven pitches of ice that led to a bivouac below the headwall at ca 6,150m. Unfortunately, frozen toes that did not rewarm overnight forced us to descend next morning, short of establishing a new route on the peak.

This expedition was made possible by the Copp-Dash Inspire Award. Additional thanks goes to David Gottlieb for his beta and support throughout.

Geoff Unger, AAC

Editor's note: Two other expeditions climbed in the Lunag Range last autumn. Ste?phane Schaffter and a Swiss team were back to attempt the southeast ridge of Jobo Rinjang (6,778m). Schaffter first attempted this line in 2009, fixing ropes to 6,000m (AAJ 2010). In 2012 his team found the terrain too stone-swept and dangerous to attempt after the dry summer/autumn. They also made an attempt on the northeast side of Peak 6,478m, but were thwarted by poor snow conditions; details of the exact line are lacking. Afterward, members of the Swiss team (Mathieu Campergue, Xavier Carrard, Jerome Gottofrey, Philippe Mailhot, and Pierre Morand) climbed the north face of what they refer to as Sengjya North (5,757m; 5,855m Schneider map). They climbed a prominent couloir left of center on November 1,

naming it Et Vous Croyez les Femmes (600m, 10 pitches to the ridge, D+ 85°). This is the route that Geoff Unger repeated. He descended east from the summit, as most likely did the Swiss.

Also in the area were David Gottlieb and Chad Kellogg, who planned to attempt unclimbed Lunag I (6,895m). However, Gottlieb was ill and unable to take part in any climbing. Kellogg made an unsuccessful solo attempt, retreating in the face of serious objective dangers. He then made a remarkable second ascent of Jobo Rinjang via the south face, for much of the way following the same route climbed in 2009 by Gottlieb and Joe Puryear. Kellogg climbed the face in a little under eight hours, then descended to his advanced base on the glacier in a round trip of 13 hour 22 minutes.

## Images



Northeast face of Peak 6,478m. (1) French attempt in 2010, the northeast face to southeast ridge. (2) The line claimed to have been climbed by a French-Nepali-Swiss team in 2009. (3) Unger-Wright attempt. Their bivouac was at the high point.

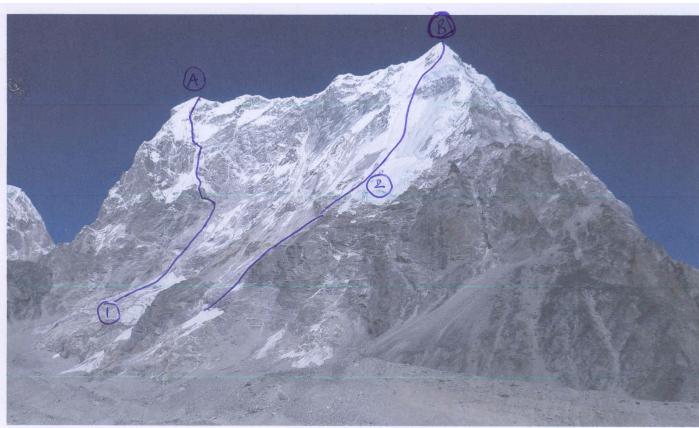


The north face of Sengjya North showing the Swiss route, *Et Vous Croyez les Femmes*, repeated shortly afterward, solo, by Geoff Unger.





Peak 5,777m with the line of Awesome Show, Great Job! The Americans descended east along the left skyline (scramble), and there was evidence that parties had climbed the right skyline and descended the same way as the Americans. Geoff Unger/Chris Wright



The south side of the Lunag Group in dry conditions. (A) Lunag I. (B) Jobo Rinjang. (1) Close the Door (1,200m) to the southeast top of Lunag I (French, 2010). (2) South face, Gottlieb-Puryear line (1,700m, 2009).



Lunag I and Jobo Rinjang.

## Article Details

Author	Geoff Unger
Publication	AAJ
Volume	55
Issue	87
Page	331
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions