



## AAC Publications

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### **Lungaretse, south face, Colombian Direct (not to summit)**

Asia, Nepal, Mahalangur Himal, Khumbu Section

On November 4, Camilo Lopez and I climbed a direct line on the south face of Lungaretse, a peak immediately north of Kyajo Ri that people on the west side of the mountain refer to as Umjo-tse (Lake Peak).

We accessed the peak via Marlung (Marulung, 4,150m), a small village north of Thame in the Bhote Kosi valley, which we reached after a four-day walk from Lukla. We set up high camp at 4,800m above Marlung in order to acclimatize and scope lines on surrounding peaks. Prior to our arrival, two meters of snow had fallen in the cirque below the west face of Kyajo Ri, giving full winter conditions, but the weather had turned stable, with clear, cold mornings and thick cloud coming up valley from Thame in the afternoons.

We spotted an aesthetic, steep couloir on the south face of Lungaretse and attempted it from our high camp, only to realize we had misjudged the length. After ca 700m of climbing we were forced to retreat due to extreme cold and short daylight hours.

After a short recovery in Marlung, we discussed the idea of placing a higher camp and decided to give the peak another go. On November 2 we regained our first high camp, and on the following day moved everything up to ca 5,200m. It was extremely cold, and we fought hard to keep fingers and toes warm. On the 4th, after strenuous work to reach the base of the couloir, we simul-climbed the initial 65° snow and then pitched 90° AI4 steps and mixed terrain. After ca 500m the couloir led onto a snowfield below the summit block. We reached a saddle between the main summit and a sub-peak to the left, with only a moderately angled slope leading to the former. However, due to the intense cold we had already decided we could not remain on the mountain at night. We descended from this point, making around 10 rappels plus downclimbing. We returned to camp in a whiteout, barely finding the tent. We have called the line Colombian Direct (ca 1,200m of climbing from high camp, TD AI4 90°). We saw no trace of previous passage on this mountain, which has no documented ascent.

We are very fortunate to have explored this hidden Himalayan area, which is often passed up for the larger, more popular, peaks. We saw nobody for days. We took no communication technology while in the mountains, and made the entire expedition supported only by two porters from Lukla to Marlung, and by the hospitality of Dati and Pasang Sherpa, owners of the Marlung Tea House.

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## Images



Colombian Direct on the south face of Lungaretsse. Unclimbed west face of Kyajo Ri to the right



Anna Pfaff in the upper couloir of Colombian Direct

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