



## AAC Publications

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### **Lobuche East, Southwest Pillar, Le Quatuor à Cordes; Arakam Tse, East Face (Not to Summit), Pray for Porters**

Nepal, Mahalangur Himal – Khumbu Section

**In October, Antonin Cecchini, Laurent Thévenot, Aurélien Vaissière, and I arrived in the Khumbu for a month's climbing. We made base camp at Dzongla (4,800m) and from there acclimatized by trekking, bouldering, and spending five days climbing up and down the normal route on Lobuche East (summit on the 16th).** Our main objective was the north face of Cholatse, but conditions were far too dry, and while searching for an alternative we saw the tremendous rock pillar, 1,100m high, leading straight to the summit of Lobuche East.

We placed a high camp at the lake below the start of the pillar at 5,000m, one hour above Dzongla, and started climbing on October 22. It took two big days—the first of 12 hours and the second of 16—to reach the summit. We bivouacked close to the top of the large detached rock tower (ca 5,650m) below the final headwall.

Reaching the summit at 6 p.m. on the 23rd, we spent one and a half hours traversing the ridge to the foresummit, and then four hours descending the normal route (southeast ridge) to Dzongla, where we arrived around midnight. We named the route **Le Quatuor à Cordes (1,100m, 6b A2 M4 80°)**. [This team approached via the right flank of the pillar, initially using the same line as Eric Brand (USA) and Pemba Norbu Sherpa in 1991. They then climbed up the left flank of the prominent rock tower to its summit, dropped into the gap beyond, and slanted across the headwall to climb the right edge close to the seracs. On the second day, during a section of aid, they found a bolt. It's likely this originates from the 1995 Spanish ascent (6b+ with one pitch of aid, Miguel-Miranda-Sanchez), and that on the headwall the Spanish and French routes sometimes share common ground.]

After this ascent I saw a possible ice line on the east flank of nearby Arakam Tse (5,904m). On the 26th, Laurent and I went to take a look and were surprised to discover a line of ice hidden behind a massive pillar. After 600m of scrambling up loose ground, we started up the interesting part of the route and climbed several pitches of M5 and ice up to WI5 to reach the col south of Arakam Tse. We called our 500m line (around seven belayed pitches) **Pray for Porters**. [In 2013 a Spanish team climbed Tatopani (1,000m, VI/5+ M5+), a route that ascended much of this couloir before branching right up the northwest face to reach the summit (AAJ 2014). We rappelled the route and returned to Dzongla the same day.

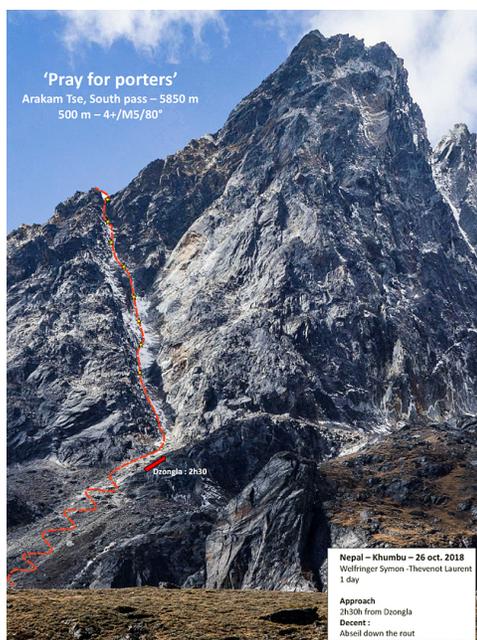
This journey was our first experience in Nepal. We had a great time meeting awesome people and discovering one of the most beautiful mountain regions on the planet. We need to come back as soon as possible.

– **Symon Welfringer**, France, with further information from Rodolphe Popier, Himalayan Database, France

## Images



The southwest pillar of Lobuche East, seen from the normal route, with the line of Le Quatuor à Cordes.



The east side of Arakam Tse and line of Pray for Porters. The route reached the col south of Arakam Tse without continuing toward the summit.



Laurent Thévenot on the first ascent of Pray for Porters, east face of Arakam Tse.



Laurent Thévenot on the first ascent of Pray for Porters, east face of Arakam Tse.



Laurent Thévenot on the headwall of the southwest pillar of Lobuche East.



Climbing toward the top of the detached rock tower and bivouac site on the southwest pillar of Lobuche East. Behind is the prow climbed in 1991 by Eric Brand and Pemba Norbu Sherpa.



Mixed climbing alongside the seracs by the southwest pillar of Lobuche East.



The southwest pillar of Lobuche East (6,090m), showing (1) Hiding in Plain Sight (2017), probably similar to the 1995 Spanish route; (2) 2018 French route, Le Quatuor à Cordes. (3) 1991 American-

Nepalese Route. The normal route up the southeast ridge follows the right skyline, though most parties stop at the foresummit (first confirmed ascent in 1984 by American-Nepalese team, though possibly Japanese in 1979).

## Article Details

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