

*News*, Vol. 1, October 2001). But now that a permit for Shimokangri was granted to the Korean party, perhaps other peaks on the Tibet-Bhutan border will become available for climbing (the Himalayan Association of Japan has already sent in an application for Tongshanjiabu, 7,207m).

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

*Mt. Everest, north face snowboarding attempt.* Marc ("Marco") Siffredi, the well known 23-year-old French professional snowboarder from Chamonix, came to Mt. Everest this autumn to snowboard down two couloirs on the mountain's north side. This was to be his second descent by snowboard; his first was achieved in May last year, when he made Everest's first complete snowboard descent. His route then took him down the Great Couloir (or Norton Couloir). Now he wanted to descend a different northern route, the Hornbein and "Japanese" couloirs.

As usual, very few expeditions attempted to scale Everest this autumn. Of the five who came from France, Canada, Brazil, Japan and South Korea, only Siffredi and his three strong Sherpas were successful in reaching its 8,850m-high (29,035') summit. The Sherpas survived, but Siffredi did not.

Siffredi, Panuru Sherpa, Phurba Tashi Sherpa and Da Tenzing Sherpa arrived at the top at 2:00 p.m. Nepalese time on September 8 via the standard North Col-north ridge route. They had used artificial oxygen slogging through chest-deep snow and consumed a total of 22 bottles of it in their final push to the summit from camp 2's relatively low altitude of 7,700m (25,260') in order to keep warm. The weather at the top was fine, but Siffredi had to wait for clouds below him to disperse.

One hour later, with weather and snow conditions perfect, Siffredi launched himself for a descent that he had expected would take him just one hour to the foot of the mountain at 5,800m (19,030'), where he had pitched a camp below the Japanese Couloir. At the same time his Sherpas began their own descent on foot by the route they had ascended and reached advance base camp at 6,400m (21,000') at 10:00 p.m. that night, unaware of what had happened to Siffredi.

What had happened was that he had disappeared. With binoculars from advance base camp, he was seen starting his descent. His track in the snow was clearly visible to 8,600m (28,215'), but no trace whatsoever of him, his snowboard, or his track was visible anywhere beyond that point. One would immediately guess that he might have plunged into a crevasse, but there are no crevasses where his trail ended. No one knows what became of him. He simply vanished.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *Nepal*

*Mt. Everest, snowboard descents from 2001.* On May 22, 2001 I reached the summit of Mt. Everest without the help of artificial oxygen or Sherpas. As a talisman I carried a specially designed snowboard of Duotone with me and got to the very top at 3:20 (Chinese time). Half an hour later I was able to carve the first tracks in the snows below the summit.

The snow-conditions were grippy, but very hard. No powder—no fun. My plan was to ride the Norton Couloir. However, due to having no advisor via radio from the North Col at 7,050m, and feeling tired after climbing eight hours from the last camp at 8,200m, I decided not to follow my original plan. I stopped my ride below the third step at 8,650m and carried the board until 7,600m, from where I continued to descend. Shortly before ABC the ride had to be

stopped because of lack of snow. My descent lasted two days. One night was spent at 8,200m.

My expedition was very successful—6 climbers out of 10 reached the summit of Mt. Everest. We followed a very unusual concept. We acclimatised in a different mountain area, north of Lhasa. In the Nyanchen Thanglha range we all climbed the Central Summit (7,117m)—myself, of course, with my snowboard. After that I realised the first ascent of the South-east Peak of Nyanchen Thanglha (7,080m), together with my father. Then we had three rest days in Lhasa, followed by our quick ascent of Everest, in 14 days.

Our route over the north ridge was quite delicate in higher parts. Exposed traverses on rock bands like window-rims had to be accomplished at 8,500m, as well as two nearly vertical rock faces of 30m in the fifth grade. Mt. Everest is the second 8,000m mountain that I have snowboarded. In 1999 I rode Cho Oyu (8,201m).

The day after I summited, Marco Siffredi made the first complete snowboard descent of Everest. Supported by a radio from the North Col to describe the conditions, a Sherpa carrying his snowboard to the top, and by the use of bottled oxygen, he rode the entire Norton Couloir and continued to my low point.



Stefan Gatt riding past 7,000m under Chang La, the North Col of Everest, during his 2001 descent. Erich Gatt

STEFAN GATT, *Austria*

*Pumori north ridge.* A new route was successfully forged on the Tibetan side of Everest's 7,161m (23,494') neighbor Pumori. The noted Swiss mountaineer, Erhard Loretan, led a group of nine members, all but one also Swiss, in the first attempt of its north ridge. They made their base and advance base camps at the sites of the corresponding camps for climbs on the north side of Everest and then moved west into the Pumori Glacier to pitch their first high camp here at 5,700m (18,700'). They had to climb their long, steep ridge with care, Loretan said, up a section of loose rock followed by another of powder snow. The expedition gained the summit in two parties. The first, Loretan and a Swiss member, went to the top on May 7 from their second high camp at 6,050m (19,850'), which was on the ridge itself. The next party of four more Swiss set up another camp on the ridge at 6,700m (22,000') on the 9th and summited the following day with Loretan, who had come up to their high camp early the same morning to go with them.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *Nepal*