



thesoulride | Project 2007

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till the top of Shishapangma at 8023 m
with our own forces, without
supplementary oxygen.
- **Snowboard down,**
from the top, if possible along a direct
and pure line inside the "Hinks Couloir" or
trought the legendary "Couloir Chamoux",
one of the most challenging line of
extreme skiing of the world.
- **Reporting,**
all the action from the mountain thanks to
the web, with text, photos and videos.

This project is **one step in to the future of extreme snowboarding**, to follow and to share live trough the web thank's to satellite communication technology.

This is a presentation of the plan of **Emilio Previtali** divided in five parts plan; [Enjoy]

The Challenge

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"Just the thought about something unknown, the idea to entering inside it, needs a lot of courage, iron balls and a body able to support them."

Carlos Castaneda, Tensegrità

The Line

The **North Side of Shishapangma**, with a vertical drop of 3000 metres, is great. The very last section of the climb it looks like a 4 kilometres huge white face, over 1000 meters high, with three main lines climbed for the first time from the most creative and consistent climbers of our age.

The Couloir Chamoux, accomplished climbing up from Benoit Chamoux and the team "Esprit d'Equipe" during the year 1990, is a fantastic line of the north side of the mountain. Dropping immediately under the top, the Couloir Chamoux is falling on the perpendicular line just below the Middle Top. **The snowboard descent from the summit of Shishapangma it's the main objective of this plan, and possibly through this legendary line;** the descent is really steep, and there's a 55°degrees inclined face, with an impressive continuity.

In the middle of the face, on the right side, there's the "**Couloir Hinkes**", a diagonal wide couloir with a vertical drop of 1000 metres. It's a 45°degrees inclination slope climbed in 1993 by Alan Hinkes, the first and unique English climber who got the summit of all the 14 mountains 8000m high. This couloir has also partially skied down from the middle top during the American expedition, guided by Mark Newcomb (2005). In 1999 climber Alex Lowe lost his life in one avalanche at the bottom of the couloir.

On the right face of the mountain, there is the "**Couloir Lafaille**", a partial line climbed by the French alpinist, dead the last year on Malaku. His climb joined the west ridge of the face up to the Middle Top, joining with the bold Kukuczka line.

On the left side, over the north-ridge there is the **Classic Chinese route**, climbed the first time in 1954, the perfect way-up to the summit. This line is still not snowboarded or skied integrally from the Summit until now.

The descent line "Couloir Chamoux" is possible. Emilio Previtali in his attempt during autumn 2005 snowboarded the last section, dropping in to the couloir at 7500 meters coming from the Chinese Route on the ridge. He snowboarded just the final part of the couloir.

"One of the surest way that drives you to the true future -..because we know there is also a false future- is that one who goes in the same direction of your fear."

Milorad Pavic, Chazari Dictionary.

The line is aesthetically perfect, logical and it could be rode with snowboard or skis, dropping in to the couloir coming from the Central Summit of Shishapangma, after being arrived to the top following the normal way up.

The main difficulties are a mix of situations connected with alpinism further on 8000m (for example the long exposure to the "thin air" at that height and the changeability of snow and weather conditions) and about extreme skiing (slope inclination, line, exposure).

The aesthetic purity of the plan and the lines is comprehensible for everyone watching the mountain forehead; the slope is characterized by technical contents of absolute level, with a steep line to 50-55° degrees never skied before and the magical context of 8000m mountains. In function of the conditions of the mountain at the moment of the attempt, once caught up the top, it will be possible to opt for the legendary snowboard descent along the Couloir Chamoux, trough the Couloir Hinkes or snowboard down the not easy way-up, along classic climb following the classic Chinese route.

Today, noone of the three lines has been still integrally covered in snowboard from the top. Nobody snowboarded integrally Shishapangma from the top trough the North Face until now.

The Mountain

Shishapangma means "snow mountain over the pastures". The main summit is 8027 metres high and is the only 8000m mountain entirely localized in Tibetan territory. It's "only" the 13^o mountain of the earth, but with its steep and continues sides, with its elegant lines and its crests, it has become in short one of preferred lands of game of the stronger and creatives mountain climbers of all the planet. Some between strongest Himalayan men in circulation have left their "signature" on the walls of the mountain, than for its geographic and orographic characteristics can be defined a laboratory of the "fast & light" climbing that it watches to the future.

Shishapangma seems to be the field of perfect game for the mountaineering in high modern quota, and during several ages on the sides of this mountain they have been looked at a lot of climbs with different styles and methods of vanguard that have oriented the tendency of the modern Himalayan mountaineering. We can try to understand it in some stages of the sport and exploration history of this mountain:

- **1964**: a Chinese national expedition went up to the top of the mountain. Last "conquered" 8000m mountain.
- **1980**: Sixteen year later German team climb the mountain for the 2nd time. At time Everest count 112 climb to the top.
- **1983**: English crew with Roger Baxter Jones, Alex Mc Intre, and Doug Scott got to the top of the mountain for the first time following the south side. This is one of the military stone in the evolution of the Alpine Style in the Himalayas.
- **1987**: Jerzy Kukuczka opens one new way along the west crest. He partially ski in the descent.
- **1990**: Benoit Chamoux opens the direct line "Esprit d'Equipe" along the north side with a fast and technical climb of the face.
- **1995**: Erhard Loretan with Jean Troillet covers in only 12 hours the classic route from North, opening the ultra-fast style in the Himalayas.
- **2002**: Marco Siffredi tries for the first time the descent of Shishapangma in snowboard. Couloir Chamoux was in his mind, but after the summit he can "only" snowboard down from 7500m along the classic chinese route.
- **2004**: JC Lafaille realizes (from the South) the first solitary climb in winter conditions on a 8000m mountain.
- **2005**: Few days later Simone Moro and Piotr Morawski realize the first true winter climb of the mountain.
- **2005**: Mark Newcomb and an American team realize the partial descent with skis of the Couloir Hinkes.

In spite of her reputation of a "not difficult" 8000m, the climbs to the true top of the mountain are not so many, defended from an exposed and difficult crest to cover on the rope at 8000m. The greater part of the climbers concludes the own climb on the Middle Top, the place of connection with the Couloir Chamoux that after 16 years from its opening remains in attended of a repetition in climb and that it never has been really tried in descent.

"The true travel of discovery does not consist in trying new lands, but in the possession of new eyes."

Marcel Proust.

The riders

To create a team with one European rider and one North American rider, could join the forces and obtain the maximum result in terms of visibility and contacts with media. Moreover, the idea to join the experiences of everyone in adventures like this one offers the possibility to optimize every effort during the snowboard descent, that it's and it will remain the main sport objective and the priority of communication of all the project.

- **Emilio Previtali** is 39, he lives in Bergamo, Italy. At the moment he is one of a few climbers to have used snowboard further on 8000m. He had experience with the snowboard into the thin in Pik Lenin expedition (year 2000 - 7234m, first solitary and integral descent along a new way on the North Side), on Cho Oyu (year 1997 and 2002 - 8202m high and 6° higher mountain of the world). He snowboarded as first a new line on Cho Oyu on the North-West face on the same pillar of the The Polish Route. The line climbed and snowboarded was 50° steep, 700m long, starting from 7200m. On Shishapangma (year 2005 - 8023m) he climbed up to 7600 m carrying his own snowboard and he came down in snowboard long the Chinese way, in just 45' minutes from 7600m to 5300m.

About the experience in snowboard, we must remember also his extreme descents on the Alps, in South America, North America, Alaska and the participation to two editions of the Red Bull X-treme in Verbier (the only Italian man invited ever), to the King of The Hill in Alaska, and the victory of the No Fear Challenge Europe in 1999. Emilio is a Snowboard National Instructor and snowboard Teacher. He is a freelance journalist and Chief Editor of FREE.rider, the only Italian magazine dedicated to freeriding. In february 2007 he rapresented Italy as athlete and demonstrator for the 2007 Interski.

More on www.emilioprevitali.com/press_area and www.thenorthface.com/eu/athletes/athletes-EP.html

- **Kris Erickson** frequently jokes about being the invisible man, because there are very few photos of him carving turns into a 13,000-foot peak. That's not because he is taking the easy way down a slope after a tough climb; it's because he is the unseen guy, on the chin-scraping slope, behind the camera lens.

For 10 years, Kris Erickson has brought his camera to the highest points, coldest reaches, and most untouched folds of the planet's geography. What's more, he is not merely a shutterbug who stands idle to the side of any expedition. Instead, he tackles the same challenging mountaineering projects as the world's other top-flight climbers, often combining his abilities to ascend difficult mountains with a love and passion for true mountain-sliding descents. This is called "glisse alpinism" and, when combined with a remote photoshoot, it is Erickson's idea of nirvana.

Erickson's commitment to his photography, climbing, and glisse alpinism has spurred him to make the driving force of his images the difficult ascents and descents he's made around the world. His romantic vision for exploration of the final frontiers and his photojournalism documenting these far-flung adventures has blended with his traditional style and ethics in climbing and skiing to capture a rare and wild side of history. With an exuberant smile and free-flowing conversational style, Erickson reflects on where he has been, where he has going, and his home base.

More on www.kristoffererickson.com and www.thenorthface.com/eu/athletes/athletes-KE.html

"Our brains must work together. It's necessary to be in front of the machine. We travel to 300 nodes and the brain must go to 400. In order to dare to the maximum, your mind it must establish a feeling with companion and the machine."

Dimitri Marzaioli,

Pilot and Captain of the Italian Flight Team

"Frecce Tricolori".

Communication

The plan of communication connected to the expedition has **three main guided lines and three different times of development:**

- During the event > Internet

Thanks to the digital technology and the satellite communication will be possible to follow the expedition on live through the web. The team will constantly be in communication with all those people which wish to share the actions, the emotions, the videos, the images and the report of the expedition. As already happened with amazing results in the course of the past expeditions, an web-site will offer the possibility for all the visitors to receive reports from the mountain, to approach to multimedia contents like audio, photos and videos available also in podcasting. Through the GoogleEarth technology it will be possible to localize the team position on the mountain and to see the maps and the satellite photos of the zone. Moreover a wireless connection directed with a national radio-network will offer the possibility to follow day after day the expedition.

- During and shortly after > PR and Press

During the expedition the mountain climbers will produce some photographic material and video in digital format. The digital material will be video and photo in high resolution, and they will be immediately available for the press upon request. Will be possible to download video clips in podcasting more or less weekly from the web site. Thanks to the transmission technology given to high speed via satellite R-Bgan and Thuraya Bgan, all the materials will be to disposition from the Base Camp to the photo-audio-video press also in high resolution for media use.

- After the event > Video and Slide Show

The return after the expedition, when the possibility to offer photo and video in real times is finished, we will continue with the post-production, using the produced materials for the realization of a video with the story of the expedition. All the produced material will go to integrate Emilio Previtali and John Griber's multivision programs. The project will continue with the publication on reviews.

The originality of the plan and its absolute technical value will generate attention among many sectors of the press, not only the mountain field.

"Today I am a man without body. But the mind, inside this invisible body, has been affiliated. It could run into green forests and be stopped on the waves of the calm seas. It could arrive within dreams that they don't have anything to envy to other men's truth. It can invent and feel things that others will not be able to feel".

Ambrogio Fogar, disabled explorer.

The project

The plan is born from the accumulated experiences during other expeditions all over the world.

The priorities of the plan are:

- Creation and organization of the team in function of the descent in snowboard from the mountain and of the realization of a plan of communication during the event.

- Use of specific materials and strategies studied and tested in the course of previous expeditions, for the realization of the snowboard descent and for the plan of communication, too.

- Creation of a team able to understand and to share the plan without reserves of the priorities who will remain "come down in snowboard from the top" and creation of photographic and video material.

In the plan the mountain climbers will have the collaboration and the support of other climbers, which will have the task to collaborate to the phase of the preparation of the climb and the Camps; moreover, they have also the objective of being a logistic support to the team during the descent in snowboard. The task could be done in perfect style if we will work together with some sherpas, friends known in the previous expeditions and motivated to the team goal's. The harmony and respect with them is one of the key of this project.

During the climb and the descent oxygen will not be used.

The attempt will be done in autumn, between mid september and october.

"We learnt to modify and to reduce our equipment for the travel, and we understood that our real well-being and our practical efficiency grew in directed proportion to the simplicity and appearing lack of necessary objects".

Flisha Ken, Diary 1853-1855.