

# REPORT

## MANASLU EXPEDITION (8163 m) Track NE (traditional)



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## Expedition passport

<i>Mountain range, peak, height</i>	Nepal, Himalaya, Gorkha region, Manaslu, 8163m
<i>Category</i>	High mountain
<i>Name of the route, orientation</i>	Northeast, traditional, repeated
<i>Route difficulty grade</i>	ED2
<i>Date</i>	August 29, 2011 – October 8, 2011
<i>Team members</i>	<i>Latvia</i> Kristīne Kravcova, Voldemārs Sprūžs (as part of international expedition)  <i>Australia</i> Paul Howard  <i>France</i> Pierre Godof  <i>Germany</i> Herbert Hellmuth  <i>Japan</i> Makoto Fujikawa, Noboru Kudo, Rumiko Saito, Yoshiki Sakai  <i>Nepal</i> Manunora Rai  <i>Russia</i> Sergey Baranov  <i>South Africa</i> Jaco Van Gass  <i>United Kingdom</i> Francis Atkinson, Christopher Gwilt, Andrew Hawkins, Martin Hewitt, Karl Hinett, Daniel Majid, David Wiseman, Henry Chaplin, David Craven  <i>USA</i> Ken Sauls, Wallace Chambers
<i>Leader of the expedition</i>	Russell Brice, Himalayan Experience

## Description of the route

### *Height difference*

Approach – 920 m, (Samagon village, 3780m – Base camp, 4700 m)

During expedition – 3463 m, (peak, 8163m – Base camp, 4700 m)

### *Most difficult stages of the route*

Camp I, 5500 m – Camp II, 6300 m  
Camp II, 6300 m – Camp III, 6700 m  
Camp III, 6700 m – Camp IV, 7400 m  
Camp IV, 7400 m – Peak 8163 m

## Description of the expedition

The expedition begins with a helicopter flight from Kathmandu directly to Samagon (3780 m), a small village set in a valley directly below Manaslu. We spend 3 days camping and doing acclimatization walks (4100 m – 4400 m) into the adjacent side valleys.

The trek to **Base Camp (4700m)** leads up steep paths passing through rhododendron trees. Leaving a glacial lake on the left hand side, the route runs on the slope and ridge of the cliffs, then further passing hanging glaciers and rugged icefalls in the distance on the left hand side. Base camp is situated in a sheltered hollow in a comfortable position on a rock. It is protected from strong winds, but because of its particular location is susceptible to daily precipitation as the valley cloud condenses at this altitude. Rain was common during the afternoons and on the last days of September there was a snowfall.

Having spent a few days in the Base Camp we depart on **the first acclimatization trip to Camp I (5500 m)**. The path continues as before on a rocky ridge of the cliff along the glacier, however, upon the arrival to the edge of the glacier (approx. 5000 m) we attach crampons. When potentially dangerous crevasses and steeper slopes have to be crossed, we use fixed ropes. Camp I is situated on a comfortable col that is generated by a series of cliffs from Northern and North-western sides, on East there is a steep drop. We spend approximately three hours on the way, one hour in the Camp and then return to Base Camp.

We make **the second acclimatization trip** to Camp I and spend three nights there. As part of the trip we also climb to 5800 m height. When going up more than Camp I we experience steeper slopes, technically more difficult crossing of icefalls and crevasses, hence having to use fixed ropes.

We spend in total four nights outside the Base camp when going on **the third acclimatization trip to Camp II (6300 m)**.

Upon the departure from Camp I, the track leads around the rocks and up to a glacier. We continue the route by passing underneath a massive icefall therefore gaining a steep snow slope. Sometimes the steepness of the slope is up to 60-70°, moreover, there is a lot of crevasses so for almost half of the time we use fixed ropes, once even ladders in order to get across a wide crevasse.

Camp II is situated on a sheltered hollow that is produced by the series of ice cliffs. We spend about 6 hours on this difficult path where the average steepness of the slope is 40-50°.

During this acclimatization we also ascend to **Camp III (6700 m)** which is located on a vast snow slope, right before a col. The track is easier and takes about 3 hours from Camp II. It first travels through a series of snow shelves before ascending to a steeper snow slope and then reaching the Camp which provides spectacular views of the surrounding peaks.

During a drizzle, the group departs for **the peak** September 23, 2011. Having arrived to Camp I we note the continuous snowfall that (in contrary to weather forecast) continues throughout the night as well as the next day. In the evening we are forced to return to Base camp which has also received heavy snowfall while we were away. "Group I" who departed for the peak one day before us and had already reached Camp II when snowfall started, returned to Base camp on September 25, 2011. The depth of the snow reached 1m at some points therefore covering our track and ropes.

We spend the next few days not knowing if the weather is going to change and whether there will be another chance for an attempt to ascent. However, eventually we receive good news – the weather will be good to reach the peak around 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October.



This time as "Group I" (previously "Group II") we begin the second **attempt to ascend the peak on September 30, 2011.**

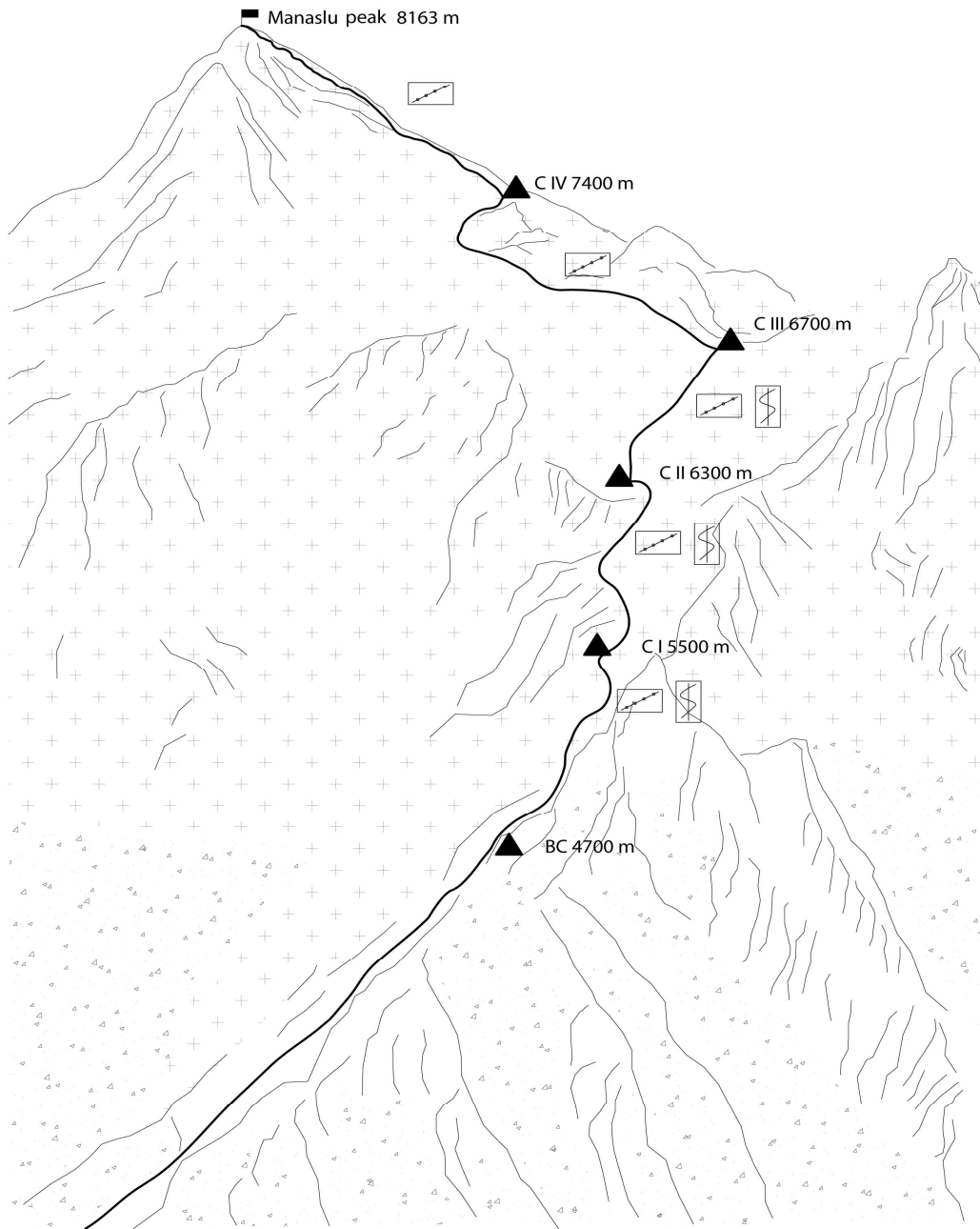
Having completed the route to Camp III in three days, we continue the route by climbing the steeper North-eastern slopes. It passes through a series of short ice bulges to reach the upper snow slope, which leads to a traverse to **Camp IV (7400 m)**. On this difficult route we spend approximately five hours climbing slopes of steepness of 40-50°, using oxygen and half of the time being secured with fixed ropes.

We can finally clearly see the peak Manaslu from Camp IV (due to the specificity of the route it was not always visible to us). Using oxygen, we depart for **the peak on an early morning around 5.30 am on October 4, 2011.** Before getting to the foot of the peak, we spend approximately four hours climbing up steep snow slopes. Sometimes, however, we need to cross steeper (approx. 60°) parts of the route which altogether lead us to a snow shoulder 100 m before the peak. From here the sharp and steep cliff of the peak is at the end of a path on a ridge. We use fixed ropes for the steepest parts of the track along the way as well as for the final 100 m ascent and **reach the peak just before 10 am.** The weather is good and the peak is cover in deep snow.

The descent is fairly easy and we reach Camp II in about five hours. We spend the night there before continuing **to Base camp and arriving on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011.**

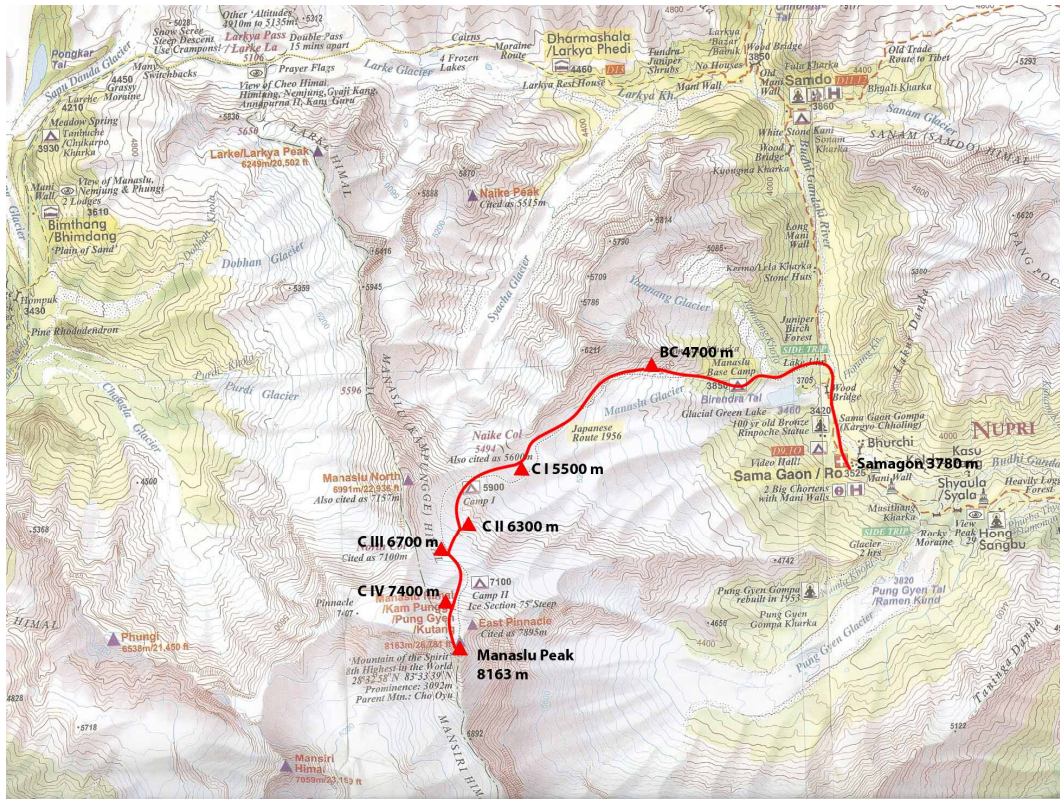
Having spent a few days at the Base camp, on the early morning of October 8, 2011, we go down to Samagon village from where we take a helicopter flight and arrive to Kathmandu at noon.

## Scheme of the route



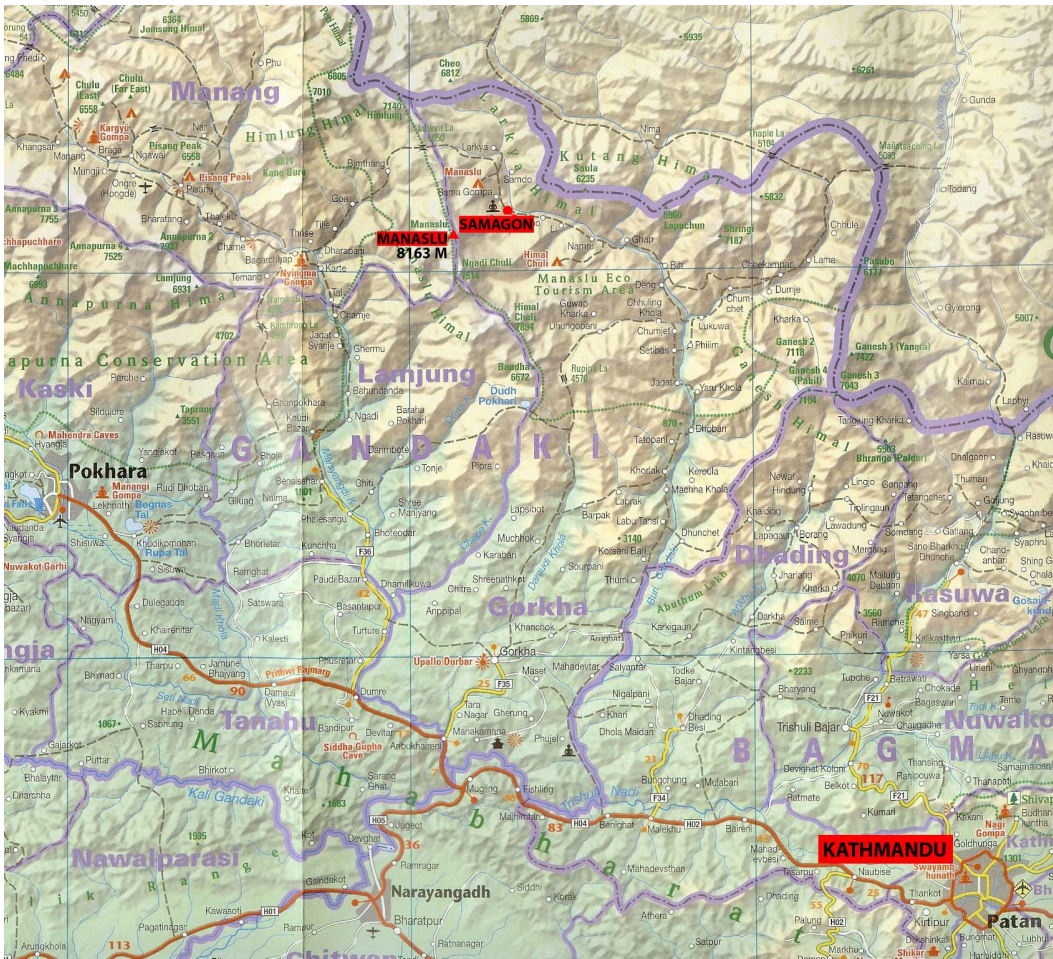
No.	Stage	Height difference	Steepness of slope	Characteristics	Date
1	BC – C I	800 m	30° (periodically 40°-50°)	Rocks, snow, ice	30.09.11
2	C I – C II	800 m	40°- 45° (periodically 60°-70°)	Snow, ice	01.10.11
3	C II – C III	400 m	30°- 40° (periodically 50°)	Snow	02.10.11
4	C III – C IV	700 m	40°- 50° (periodically 60°)	Snow, ice	03.10.11
5	C IV – Peak	763 m	40°- 50° (periodically 60°)	Snow, ice	04.10.11
6	Peak – C II	1863 m	30°- 50° (periodically 60°)	Snow, ice	04.10.11
7	C II - BC	1600 m	30°- 45° (periodically 60°-70°)	Rocks, snow, ice	05.10.11

# Map of the route





Map of the region





## Pictures

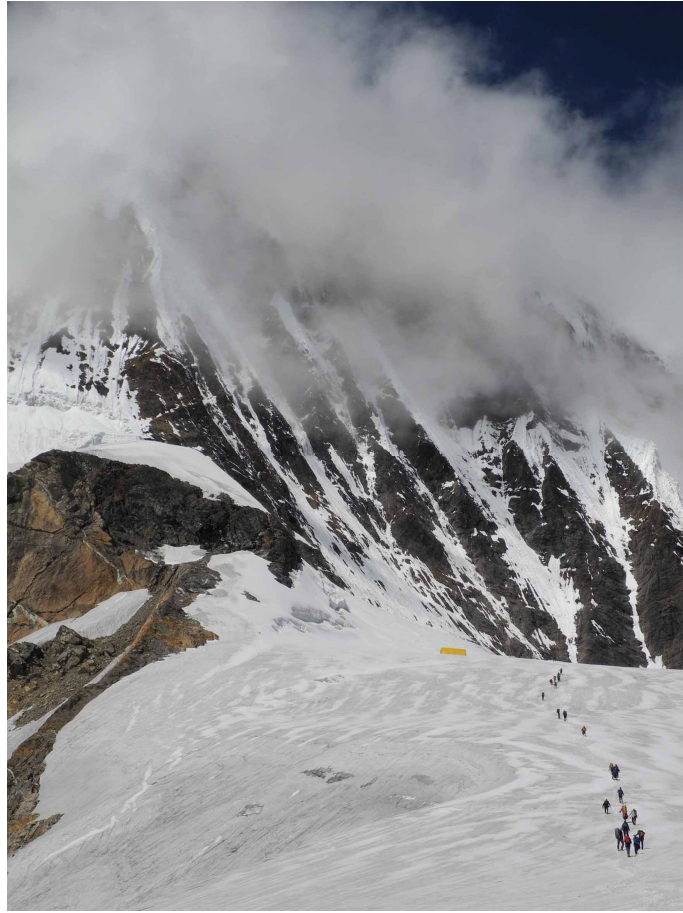
Base camp





Stage BC – C I





Kristīne Kravcova



Stage C I – C II



C I









Kristīne Kravcova



Kristīne Kravcova and Voldemārs Sprūzs







Kristīne Kravcova



Kristīne Kravcova

Stage C II – C III



Kristine Kravcova





Kristine Kravcova







Stage C III – C IV



Stage C IV – Peak







Kristine Kravcova



**Peak**



Kristīne Kravcova and Voldemārs Sprūzs



Kristīne Kravcova





Kristīne Kravcova and Voldemārs Sprūžs



Kristīne Kravcova, Voldemārs Sprūžs and Urken