

Himalayan Peaks of Nepal

(8,000 meters and above)



Nepal has the largest share of the highest peaks in the world. Of the fourteen peaks over 8,000m known as the eight-thousanders, eight of them lie in the Nepal Himalaya. These include the highest mountain in the world, Mt. Everest (8,848m) and the third highest, Mt Kanchenjunga (8,586m). Attempts were made on Mt. Everest since the 1920s, but it was only in 1953 that the peak was successfully climbed. The 1950s became known as the Golden Decade of climbing as most of the eight-thousanders were conquered within the ten years. Annapurna (8,091m) was the first among them to be climbed, in 1950. The other eight-thousanders are Lhotse (8,516m), Makalu (8,463m), Cho Oyu (8,201m), Dhaulagiri (8,167m) and Manaslu (8,163m).

Mt. Everest

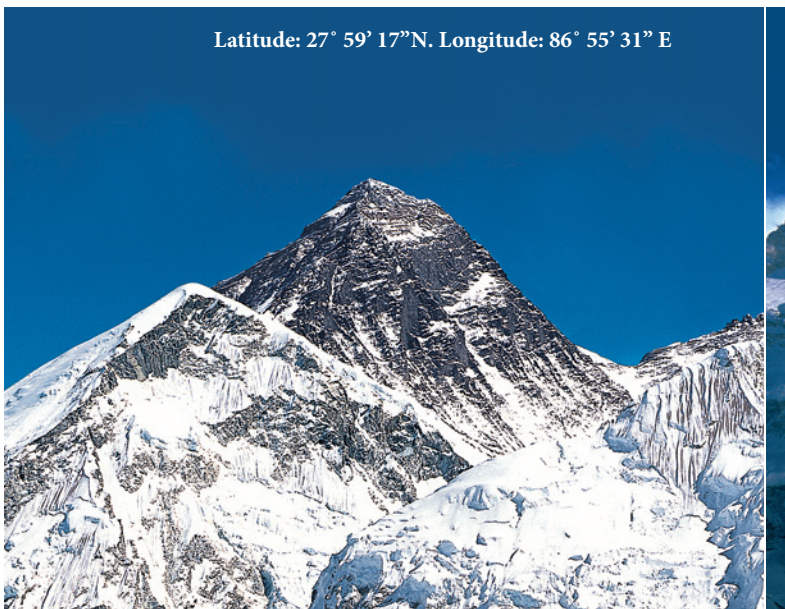
(8,848m Sagarmatha in Nepali)

The highest mountain in the world

Mt. Everest was first climbed on 29th May 1953 by Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay of Nepal. This British Expedition was led by John Hunt. The first expedition on Everest was led by Lt. Colonel Charles Howard-Bury in 1921. The early attempts were made from the Tibetan side as Nepal was closed to outsiders until 1950. Since 1953, more than a thousand people have climbed Everest and among them Apa Sherpa has summited twenty times. The most commonly used route up the mountain is the South-east Ridge.

Reinhold Messner and Peter Habelar were the first to climb to the summit without the aid of bottled oxygen and Messner went on to become the first to accomplish a solo climb. He was also the first to climb all the fourteen eight-thousanders, a feat emulated by many today.

Latitude: 27° 59' 17"N. Longitude: 86° 55' 31" E



Kanchenjunga

(8,586m)

The third highest mountain in the world

Once mistakenly thought to be the highest mountain in the world, Kanchenjunga is in fact the third highest and has five prominent peaks which it is named after. Kanchenjunga in Sikkimese means “Five treasures of the Great Snows”. Located in far Eastern Nepal, the other side of the mountain lies in Sikkim, India. The five peaks are Kanchenjunga main (8,586m), Yalung Kang (8,505m), Kanchenjunga West (8,420m) and the Twin Peaks (both 8,476m). The mountain lies 128km east of Everest.

Although plans were afoot to climb Kanchenjunga as early as 1882, it was only in 1905 that the first attempt was made. Alister Crowley was the first to make his way up the Yalung glacier. A British expedition led by Charlie Evans finally succeeded in 1955. On 25th May of that year, two Britons, George Band and Joe Brown reached the summit. However, they stopped five vertical feet below the summit as the peak is considered sacred by the Sikkimese. Ang Phurba Sherpa became the first Nepali to climb the peak on 14th May 1980.

Latitude: 27° 42' 09"N. Longitude: 88° 09' 25"E



Lhotse

(8,516m)

The Fourth highest mountain in the world

The Lhotse peak is often overlooked as its neighbor Everest steals all the limelight. Nevertheless, at 8,516m, it is the fourth highest mountain in the world. The Lhotse Middle (East) is 8,414m while Lhotse Shar is 8,383m. The famous mountaineer Norman Dyhrenfurth made an unsuccessful attempt on the mountain in 1955 accompanied by two Austrians. The following year a Swiss team comprising Ernst Reiss and Fritz Luchsinger made it to the summit on 18th May 1956. They were part of the Swiss Mount Everest/Lhotse Expedition. On 12th May, two Austrians, Zepp Maier and Rolf Walter summited Lhotse Shar while Lhotse Middle remained unclimbed until forty-five years later, Russian climbers, Eugeny Vinogradsky, Segei Timofeev, Alexei Bolotov and Petr Kuznetsov finally conquered it.

Many climbers attempting to climb Everest, go up the Lhotse for acclimatization and the normal route to the highest peak starts up the Lhotse before veering off towards the true destination. The first Nepali to climb Lhotse was Urkien Tshering Sherpa who summited on 8th May 1977.

Latitude : 27° 57' 45"N. Longitude: 86° 56' 03"E



Makalu

(8,463m)

The fifth highest mountain in the world

Like Everest and Lhotse, the fifth highest mountain, Makalu lies in the Khumbu region of North-eastern Nepal. It has two subsidiary peaks: Kangchungtse or Makalu II (7,678m) is north-northwest of the main summit while Chomo Lonzo, the other peak, lies north of it. On 15th May 1955, Lionel Terray and Jean Couzy, members of a French expedition led by Jean Franco reached the summit of Makalu. The following day, Franco, G. Magnone and Sherpa Gyaltsen Norbu also summited. The North face and the north-east ridge via which they climbed became the standard route for climbers who came after them.

Over the following years, mountaineers climbed over the south-east ridge, the West Pillar route. Makalu is considered one of the toughest mountains to climb. Although many sherpas climbed the mountain in the 1950s, they were Indian nationals and it was only on 1st May 1978, that Ang Chepal Sherpa became the first Nepali citizen to summit the peak.

Latitude: 27° 53' 23" N. Longitude: 87° 05' 20" E



Cho Oyu

(8,201m)

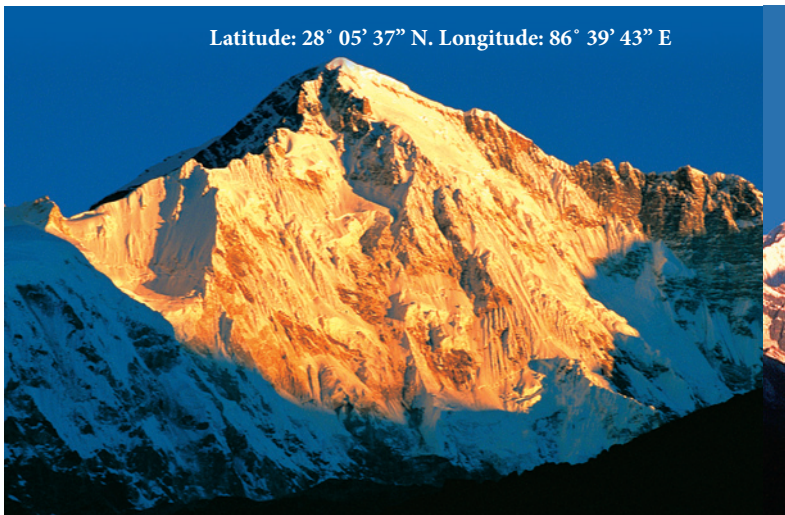
The sixth highest mountain in the world

Cho Oyu (meaning “Turquoise Goddess” in the Tibetan language) lies 20 km west of Everest and forms the boundary wall between Nepal and China. The first attempt on this mountain was made by an expedition led by the great Eric Shipton and included mountaineers who would one day become very famous: Edmund Hillary, George Lowe, Charles Evans and Tom Bourdilon. They only made it up to 6,650m before turning back.

It was the Austrians, Herbert Tichy and Joseph Jochler accompanied by Pasang Dawa Lama who made the first successful ascent on 19th October 1954, via the north-west ridge. This was the Golden Decade of mountaineering when most of the eight-thousanders were climbed. The successful expedition on Cho Oyu had been triggered by a casual remark made by Pasang Dawa to Tichy the previous year, while climbing another peak: “Next year, Cho Oyu?”

It was often the mountaineers themselves who came up with measurements of mountains that decided the height of many of the peaks in the Himalaya. Thus it was Dyhrenfurth and Shipton who measured Cho Oyu which led to declaring this peak as the sixth highest in the world. Ang Phuri Sherpa became the first Nepali national to summit Cho Oyu on 29th April 1987.

Latitude: 28° 05' 37" N. Longitude: 86° 39' 43" E



Dhaulagiri

(8,167m)

The seventh highest mountain in the world

The Dhaulagiri also known as “The White Mountain” is quite easily recognized because of its unique, mound shape when seen from treks that leave from Pokhara. Lying in the north-west of Pokhara, this peak first attracted the French expedition that came to Nepal in 1950. Led by Maurice Herzog, the mountaineers looked up at this formidable peak and decided it was impossible to climb and turned their attention to Annapurna I, which they subsequently climbed. It was the discovery of Dhaulagiri’s height in 1809 that brought to light the fact that the Himalayan range of mountains was higher than the Andes in South America. At the time, the Europeans assumed Dhaulagiri was the highest mountain in the world.

Numerous attempts were made at climbing this peak in the 1950s, but none were successful. Argentineans, Swiss and German climbers were competing with each other to reach the summit first. Finally on 13th May 1960, a Swiss Expedition led by Max Eiselin succeeded and put six climbers on the summit. Among them was Kurt Diemberger.

This was the 13th eight-thousander to be climbed; there were 13 members on the expedition and they summited on the 13th. Nawang Dorjee who was part of the expedition became the first Nepali to climb Dhaulagiri.

Latitude: 28° 41’ 46” N. Longitude: 83° 29’ 43” E



Manaslu

(8,163m)

The eighth highest mountain in the world

Manaslu lies 64 km east of Annapurna, between Gorkha and Manang districts in northern Nepal. Of all the fourteen eight-thousanders, twelve were first summited by climbers from the west while two were conquered by Asians. The fact that the peak was first climbed by a Japanese Expedition has made it one of the most popular mountains among Japanese mountaineers. It all began with a Japanese Manaslu Reconnaissance Expedition in 1952. This was followed by Japanese expeditions in 1953 and 1954 but the latter was unable to approach the mountain following opposition from the inhabitants of Samu village along the route.

The expeditions went up the river Budi Gandaki's course to reach the mountain. With the intervention of the Nepalese Government, the Samu villagers eventually relented and allowed the mountaineers to proceed. The next Japanese expedition which arrived in 1956 was led by sixty-two-year-old Yuko Maki, a seasoned climber. This team of climbers met with success on 9th May 1956 when Toshio Imanishi and Sherpa sirdar Gyalsten Norbu made it to the summit. They were followed by other members of the expedition with Kichiro Kato and Minoru Higeta reaching the top two days later. This happened to be the first Asian expedition to conquer an eight-thousander. Since then, many Japanese climbers have followed in their footsteps. The first Nepali national to climb Manaslu was Urkien Tshering Sherpa who summited on 22nd April 1973.

Latitude: 28° 32' 58" N. Longitude: 84° 33' 43" E

