

Base Camp was at 13,500 feet and Camps I and II were at 18,300 and 21,500 feet.

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*Himalayan Winter Climbing.* The strongest winds generally come from the west and south. Route selection should consider this because jet-stream winds can stop movement altogether. The height of the mountain is more critical in winter because winds are worst above 21,000 feet. [See also Dr. West's article in this issue which explains that in winter there is less barometric pressure and therefore less oxygen.—*Editor.*] Routes passing through or near cols are much more windy and can funnel winds onto slopes which would normally be considered to be in the lee. When the wind direction changes from southwest to north, there is often one day of good, calm weather, but northerly winds never seem to last for many days. Although occasional snowstorms can occur in early December, they are rarely heavy and the first three weeks of December are normally the best for climbing. However, if there is an early snowstorm, it can hinder (and put up the price of) getting to Base Camp. November weather is normally sunny and dry and the Nepalese government does not seem to mind expeditions preparing Camp I (the higher the better) before December 1, provided no one occupies it, and even this may depend on the liaison officer, who may be looking forward to the New Year in Kathmandu. When hiring porters to go to Base Camp, beware the Tihar Festival around the beginning of November. It is like trying to coax a Westerner to work at Christmas. Because expeditions are better completed by December 24, there is little time to acclimatize on the mountain and previous acclimatization is advisable, possibly on a nearby trekking peak. When getting porters for the return trip, consider that a heavy snowfall might trap the expedition behind a high pass, such as on Makalu. Snow caves are best as camps on the mountain. Only very strong tents will resist the winds above 21,000 feet; living in them is worse than miserable. One-piece down suits are the best outer clothing in very windy conditions. The short cold days of winter seem to make climbing more tiring than at other times of the year. Since Christmas is when people like to be with their families, climbers have to be very highly motivated. Climbing Sherpas dislike high winds and are better below the windy zones. Frostbite may lead to amputation and so they are hesitant to commit themselves to long days in the cold.

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*Manaslu, Winter Ascent and Tragedy, 1984.* Our expedition consisted of Maciej Berbeka, Marek Danielak, Ryszard Gajewski, Stanisław Jaworski, Andrzej Machnik, Zbigniew Młynarczyk, Andrzej Osika, Maciej Pawlikowski, Bogusław Probulski, Włodzimierz Stoiński and me as leader. We planned to make a winter ascent of the Messner route from the south. Our approach via the Marsyandi and Dona Khola valleys took eight days. We reached Base Camp at