

Language

CONTENTS

Studying Nepali	398
Pronunciation	398
Accommodation	399
Conversation & Essentials	399
Emergencies	399
Health	399
Language Difficulties	400
Numbers	400
Shopping & Services	400
Time & Dates	401
Transport	401
Trekking	401

Nepali is closely related to Hindi, and both languages belong to the Indo-European family. It's quite easy to get by with English in Nepal; most of the people visitors will have to deal with in the Kathmandu Valley and in Pokhara will speak some English. Along the main trekking trails, particularly the Annapurna Circuit, English is also widely understood.

Nonetheless, it's interesting to learn at least a little Nepali and it's quite an easy language to pick up. For a more comprehensive language guide, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Nepali Phrasebook*, which includes Nepali script throughout.

Although Nepali is the national language and is used as a lingua franca (linking language) between all the country's ethnic groups, there are many other languages spoken. The Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, for example, speak Newari; other languages are spoken by the Tamangs, Sherpas, Rais, Limbus, Magars, Gurungs and other groups. In the Terai, bordering India, Hindi and Maithili, another Indian language of this region, are often spoken (see the table on this page for a breakdown of first languages spoken in Nepal).

Even if you learn no other Nepali, there is one word every visitor soon picks up – *namaste* (pronounced 'na-ma-stay'). Strictly translated it means 'I salute the god in you', but it's used as an everyday greeting that

LANGUAGES OF NEPAL

Language	% of Total Population
Nepali	50.3
Maithili	11.9
Bhojpur	7.5
Tharu	5.4
Tamang	4.9
Newari	3.4
Rai	2.4
Magar	2.3
Abadhi	2.0
Limbu	1.4
Gurung	1.2
Sherpa	0.7
Other	8.6

encompasses everything from 'Hello' to 'How are you?' and even 'See you again soon'. It should be accompanied with the hands held in a prayer-like position, the Nepali gesture equivalent to Westerners shaking hands.

STUDYING NEPALI

Peace Corps and other aid workers pick up a working knowledge of the language very quickly and there are language courses available that will enable you to get by with just four to eight weeks of intensive study. See Courses (p357) for details. In books, the best source for the serious language student is *Teach Yourself Nepali* by Michael Hutt and Abhi Sabedi, which concentrates on both written and spoken Nepali.

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

a	as the 'u' in 'hut'
ā	as the 'ar' in 'garden' (no 'r' sound)
e	as the 'e' in 'best' but longer
i	as the 'i' in 'sister' but longer
o	as the 'o' in 'sold'
u	as the 'u' in 'put'
ai	as the 'i' in 'mine'
au	as the 'ow' in 'cow'

Consonants

Most Nepali consonants are quite similar to their English counterparts. The exceptions

are the so-called retroflex consonants and the aspirated consonants. Retroflex sounds are made by curling the tongue tip back to touch the roof of the mouth as you make the sound; they are indicated in this guide by an underdot, eg **ṭ**, *Kaṭhmanḍu*.

Aspirated consonants are sounded more forcefully than they would be in English and are made with a short puff of air; they are indicated in this guide by h after the consonant, eg **kh**, *khānuhos* (please). You should ensure that you don't confuse the Nepali aspirated combinations **ph** and **th** with their English counterparts in words such as 'phone', 'this' and 'thin'. In Nepali, **ph** is pronounced as the 'p' in 'pit', and **th** is pronounced as the 't' in 'time'.

Both retroflex and aspirated consonants are best learned by having a native speaker demonstrate them for you. You could start with *Kaṭhmanḍu*, which contains both retroflex and aspirated consonants.

ACCOMMODATION

Where is a ...?	... <i>kahā chha?</i>
guesthouse	<i>pāhuna ghar</i>
hotel	<i>hoṭel</i>
camp site	<i>shivir</i>
lodge	<i>laj</i>

What is the address?

thegānā ke ho?

Please write down the address.

thegānā lekhnuhos

Can I get a place to stay here?

yahā bās paunchha?

May I look at the room?

kothā herna sakchhu?

How much is it per night?

ek rātko, kati paisā ho?

Does it include breakfast?

bihānako khāna samet ho?

room	<i>kothā</i>
clean	<i>safā</i>
dirty	<i>mailo</i>
fan	<i>pankhā</i>
hot water	<i>tāto pāni</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello/Goodbye.	<i>namaste</i>
How are you?	<i>tapāilai kasto chha?</i>
Excuse me.	<i>hājir</i>
Please (give me).	<i>dinuhos</i>

Please (you have).
Thank you.

khānuhos
dhanyabad

Unlike in the West, verbal expressions of thanks are not the cultural norm in Nepal. Although neglecting to say 'Thank you' may make you feel a little uncomfortable, it is rarely necessary in a simple commercial transaction; foreigners going round saying *dhanyabad* all the time sounds distinctly odd to Nepalis.

I	<i>ma</i>
Yes. (I have)	<i>chā</i>
No. (I don't have)	<i>chhaina</i>
OK.	<i>theekcha</i>
Where?	<i>kahā?</i>
here	<i>yahā</i>
there	<i>tyahā</i>
good/pretty	<i>ramro</i>
I don't need it.	<i>malai chahina</i>
I don't have it.	<i>ma sanga chhaina</i>
Wait a minute.	<i>ek chhin parkhanos</i>

EMERGENCIES

Help!	<i>guhār!</i>
It's an emergency!	<i>āpaṭ paryo!</i>
There's been an accident!	<i>durghaṭanā bhayo!</i>
Please call a doctor.	<i>dāktarlai bolāu-nuhos</i>
Where is the (public) toilet?	<i>shauchālaya kahā chha?</i>
I'm lost.	<i>ma harāye</i>

HEALTH

Where can I find a good doctor?	<i>rāmro dāktar kaha pāincha?</i>
Where is the nearest hospital?	<i>yahā aspatāl kahā chha?</i>
I don't feel well.	<i>malāi sancho chhaina</i>
I have diarrhoea.	<i>dishā lāgyo</i>
I have altitude sickness.	<i>lekh lāgyo</i>
I have a fever.	<i>joro āyo</i>
I'm having trouble breathing.	<i>sās pherna sakdina</i>
medicine	<i>ausadhi</i>
pharmacy	<i>ausadhi pasal</i>
I have ...	<i>malāi ... lāgyo</i>
asthma	<i>damko byathā</i>
diabetes	<i>madhu meha</i>
epilepsy	<i>chāre rog</i>

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?	<i>tapāi angreji bolna saknu hunchha?</i>
I only speak a little Nepali.	<i>ma ali nepāli bolchhu</i>
I understand.	<i>ma bujhchu</i>
I don't understand.	<i>maile bujhina</i>
Please say it again.	<i>pheri bhānuhos</i>
Please speak more slowly.	<i>tapāi bistārai bolnuhos</i>

NUMBERS

0	<i>sun-ya</i>	शून्य
1	<i>ek</i>	एक
2	<i>dui</i>	दुइ
3	<i>tin</i>	तीन
4	<i>chār</i>	चार
5	<i>panch</i>	पाँच
6	<i>chha</i>	छ
7	<i>sāt</i>	सात
8	<i>āṭh</i>	आठ
9	<i>nau</i>	नौ
10	<i>das</i>	दस
11	<i>eghāra</i>	एघार
12	<i>bā-hra</i>	बाह्र
13	<i>te-hra</i>	तेह्र
14	<i>chau-dha</i>	चौध
15	<i>pan-dhra</i>	पन्ध्र
16	<i>so-hra</i>	सोह्र
17	<i>satra</i>	सत्र
18	<i>a-thāra</i>	अठार
19	<i>un-nais</i>	उन्नाईस
20	<i>bis</i>	बीस
21	<i>ek kais</i>	एककाईस
22	<i>bais</i>	बाईस
23	<i>teis</i>	तेईस
24	<i>chau bis</i>	चौबीस
25	<i>pach-chis</i>	पच्चीस
26	<i>chhab-bis</i>	छब्बीस
27	<i>sat-tais</i>	सत्ताईस
28	<i>aṭ-thais</i>	अट्ठाईस
29	<i>u-nan-tis</i>	उनन्तीस
30	<i>tis</i>	तीस
40	<i>chālīs</i>	चालीस
50	<i>pachās</i>	पचास
60	<i>sā-ṭhi</i>	साठी
70	<i>sat-tari</i>	सत्तर
80	<i>a-si</i>	असी
90	<i>nab-be</i>	नब्बे
100	<i>ek say</i>	एक सय
1,000	<i>ek hajār</i>	एक हजार
10,000	<i>das hajār</i>	दस हजार
100,000	<i>ek lākh</i>	एक लाख
200,000	<i>dui lākh</i>	दुइ लाख
1,000,000	<i>das lākh</i>	दस लाख

SHOPPING & SERVICES

Where is the market?	<i>bazār kata parchha?</i>
What is it made of?	<i>kele baneko?</i>
How much?	<i>kati?</i>
That's enough.	<i>pugyo</i>
I like this.	<i>malai yo ramro lagyo</i>
I don't like this.	<i>malai yo ramro lagena</i>

money	<i>paisa</i>
cheap	<i>sasto</i>
expensive	<i>mahango</i>
less	<i>kam</i>
more	<i>badhi</i>
little bit	<i>alikai</i>

bank	<i>baink</i>
... embassy	<i>... rājādūtavas</i>
museum	<i>samgrāhālaya</i>
police	<i>prahari</i>
post office	<i>post afis</i>
stamp	<i>tika</i>
envelope	<i>kham</i>
tourist office	<i>turist afis</i>

What time does it open/close?	<i>kati baje kholchha/banda garchha?</i>
I want to change some money.	<i>paisā sātnu manlāgchha</i>

SIGNS

खुला	Open
बन्द	Closed
प्रवेश	Entrance
निकास	Exit
प्रवेश निषेध	No Entry
धूम्रपान मनाही छ	No Smoking
मनाही/निषेध	Prohibited
शाचालय	Toilets
तातो	Hot
चिसो	Cold
खतरा	Danger
रोक्नुहोस	Stop
वाटो बन्द	Road Closed

Internet

Is there a local Internet cafe?	<i>ya-hā intarnet kyah-phe chha?</i>
I'd like to get Internet access.	<i>ma-lai intarnet cha-hi-ya</i>
I'd like to check my email.	<i>imel chek gar-nu-par-ya</i>
I'd like to send an email.	<i>imel pa-thau-nu-par-ya</i>

TIME & DATES

What time is it?	<i>kati bajyo?</i>
It's one o'clock.	<i>ek bajyo</i>
minute	<i>minet</i>
hour	<i>ghantā</i>
day	<i>din</i>
today	<i>āja</i>
yesterday	<i>hijo</i>
tomorrow	<i>bholi</i>
now	<i>ahile</i>
week	<i>haptā</i>
month	<i>mahinā</i>

What day is it today?	<i>āja ke bār?</i>
Today is ...	<i>āja ... ho</i>

Monday	<i>som bār</i>
Tuesday	<i>mangal bār</i>
Wednesday	<i>budh bār</i>
Thursday	<i>bihi bār</i>
Friday	<i>sukra bār</i>
Saturday	<i>sani bār</i>
Sunday	<i>āita bār</i>

TRANSPORT

bus	<i>bus</i>
taxi	<i>taxi</i>
boat	<i>nāu</i>
ticket	<i>tikaṭ</i>

How can I get to ...?	<i>... kolāgi kati paisā lāgchha?</i>
Is it far from here?	<i>yahābata ke tādā chha?</i>
Can I walk there?	<i>hiḍera jāna sakinchhu?</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Nepali Phrasebook

I want to go to ...	<i>ma ... jānchhu</i>
Where does this bus go?	<i>yo bus kahā jānchha?</i>
How much is it to go to ...?	<i>... kati parchha?</i>
I want a one-way/return ticket.	<i>jāne/jāne-āune tikaṭ dinuho.</i>
Does your taxi have a meter?	<i>tapāi ko taxi mā meter chha?</i>

TREKKING

Which way is ...?	<i>... jāne bato kata parchha?</i>
Is there a village nearby?	<i>najikai gaun parchha?</i>
How many hours/days to ...?	<i>... kati ghanṭā/din?</i>
Where is the porter?	<i>bhariya kata gayo?</i>
I want to sleep.	<i>malai sutna man lagyo</i>
I'm cold.	<i>malai jado lagyo</i>
Please give me (water).	<i>malai (pani) dinuho</i>

way/trail	<i>sāno bāṭo</i>
bridge	<i>pul</i>
downhill	<i>orālo</i>
uphill	<i>ukālo</i>
left	<i>bāyā</i>
right	<i>dāyā</i>
cold	<i>jāḍo</i>
teahouse	<i>bhatti</i>

Glossary

Beware of the different methods of transliterating Nepali and the other languages spoken in Nepal. There are many and varied ways of spelling Nepali words. In particular the letters ‘b’ and ‘v’ are often interchangeable.

ACAP – Annapurna Conservation Area Project
Aditya – ancient *Vedic* sun god, also known as Surya
Agni – ancient *Vedic* god of the hearth and fire
Agnipura – Buddhist symbol for fire
AMS – acute mountain sickness, also known as altitude sickness
Ananda – the Buddha’s chief disciple
Annapurna – the goddess of abundance and an incarnation of *Mahadevi*
arna – water buffalo
Ashoka – Indian Buddhist emperor who spread Buddhism throughout the subcontinent
Asha Matrikas – the eight multi-armed mother goddesses
ausi – new moon
Avalokiteshvara – as *Gautama Buddha* is the Buddha of our era, so *Avalokiteshvara* is the *Bodhisattva* of our era
avatar – incarnation of a deity living on Earth

bagh chal – traditional Nepali game
bahal – Buddhist monastery, usually two storeys high and built around a courtyard
bahil – simpler version of a *bahal*
bajra – see *vajra*
ban – forest or jungle
bandar – langur monkeys
bandh – strike; see also *julus* and *chakka jam*
betel – mildly intoxicating concoction of areca nut and lime, which is wrapped in betel leaf and chewed
Bhadrakali – Tantric goddess who is also a consort of *Bhairab*
Bhagavad Gita – *Krishna*’s lessons to Arjuna, part of the *Mahabharata*
Bhagwati – A form of *Durga*, and thus a form of the goddess *Parvati*
Bhairab – the ‘terrific’ or fearsome Tantric form of *Shiva* with 64 manifestations
bhalu – sloth bears
bhanjyang – mountain pass
bhatti – teahouse or village inn
Bhimsen – one of the Pandava brothers, from the *Mahabharata*, seen as a god of tradesmen
bhojanalaya – basic Nepali restaurant or canteen

Bhote – high-altitude desert valleys north of the Himalaya bordering Tibet; Nepali term for a Tibetan
bodhi tree – a pipal tree under which the Buddha was sitting when he attained enlightenment, also known as ‘bo tree’
Bodhisattva – a near-Buddha who renounces the opportunity to attain *nirvana* in order to aid humankind
Bön – the pre-Buddhist animist religion of Tibet
Brahma – the creator god in the Hindu triad which includes *Vishnu* and *Shiva*
Brahmin – the highest Hindu caste, said to originate from *Brahma*’s head
Buddha – ‘Awakened One’; the originator of Buddhism; also regarded by Hindus as the ninth incarnation of *Vishnu*

chaitya – small *stupa*, which usually contains a *mantra* rather than a Buddhist relic
chakka jam – literally ‘jam the wheels’, in which all vehicles stay off the street during a strike; see also *bandh* and *julus*
chakra – *Vishnu*’s disclike weapon, one of the four symbols he holds
Chandra – moon god
charas – hashish
chautara – stone platforms around trees, which serve as shady places for porters to rest
Chhetri – the second caste of Nepali Hindus, said to originate from *Brahma*’s arms
chirag – ceremonial oil lamp
chituwa – leopards
Chomolangma – see *Qomolangma*
chörten – Tibetan Buddhist *stupa*
chowk – (pronounced ‘choke’) historically a courtyard or marketplace; these days used more to refer to an intersection or crossroads

daal – lentil soup; the main source of protein in the Nepali diet
daal bhaat tarkari – staple meal of Hindu Nepalis, consisting of lentil soup, rice and curried vegetables
Dalai Lama – spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhist people
danda – hill
Dattatreya – deity who is thought of as a combination of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*
deval – temple
Devanagari – Sanskrit Nepali script
Devi – the short form of *Mahadevi*, the *shakti* to *Shiva*
dhaka – hand-woven cotton cloth
dharamsala – resthouse for pilgrims
dharma – Buddhist teachings

dhoka – door or gate
Dhyani Buddha – the original *Adi Buddha* created five *Dhyani Buddhas*, who in turn create the universe of each human era
doko – basket carried by porters
doonga – boat
dorje – see *vajra*
durbar – palace
Durga – fearsome manifestation of *Parvati*, *Shiva*’s consort
dyochhen – a form of temple enshrining Tantric deities
dzopkyo – male cross between a *yak* and a cow; also *zopkiok*
dzum – female offspring of a *yak* and a cow; also *zhum*

ek – Nepali number one; a symbol of the unity of all life

freaks – 1960s term for young hippie travellers, from the overland era

gaagri – water ewer
gaida – rhinoceros
gaine – itinerant musician
ganas – *Shiva*’s companions
Ganesh – son of *Shiva* and *Parvati*, instantly recognisable by his elephant head
Ganga – goddess of the Ganges
ganja – marijuana
Garuda – the man-bird *vehicle* of *Vishnu*
Gautama Buddha – the Buddha of our era
Gelugpa – one of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism
ghanta – Tantric bell; the female equivalent of the *vajra*
ghat – steps beside a river; a ‘burning ghat’ is used for cremations
ghee – clarified butter
gompa – Tibetan Buddhist monastery
gopi – cowherd girl, companions of *Krishna*
gufa – cave
Gurkhas – Nepali soldiers who have long formed a part of the British army; the name comes from the region of Gorkha
Gurkhali – British army name for the Nepali language
Gunung – western hill people from around Gorkha and Pokhara

haat bajar – weekly bazaar
Hanuman – monkey god
harmika – square base on top of a *stupa*’s dome, upon which the eyes of the Buddha are painted
hathi – elephant
himal – range or massif with permanent snow
hiti – water conduit or tank with waterspouts
hookah – water pipe for smoking
howdah – riding platform for elephant passengers

incarnation – a particular life form; the form mortals assume is determined by *karma*
Indra – king of the *Vedic gods*; god of rain

Jagannath – *Krishna* as Lord of the Universe
Jambhala – god of wealth; look for his money bag and his attendant mongoose
janai – sacred thread, which high-caste Hindu men wear looped over their left shoulder
jatra – festival
jayanti – birthday
jhankri – faith healers who perform in a trance while beating drums
Jogini – mystical goddesses, counterparts to the 64 manifestations of *Bhairab*
jukha – leech
julus – a procession or demonstration; see also *bandh* and *chakka jam*

Kali – the most terrifying manifestation of *Parvati*
Kalki – *Vishnu*’s 10th and as yet unseen incarnation during which he will come riding a white horse and wielding a sword to destroy the world
Kalpa – day in the age of *Brahma*
Kam Dev – *Shiva*’s companion
Kamasutra – ancient Hindu text on erotic pleasures
karma – Buddhist and Hindu law of cause and effect, which continues from one life to another
Kartikkaya – god of war and son of *Shiva*, his *vehicle* is the cock or peacock; also known as Kumar or Skanda
Kaukala – *Shiva* in his fearsome aspect; he carries a trident with *Vishnu*’s gatekeeper’s skeleton impaled upon it
KEEP – Kathmandu Environmental Education Project
Khas – Hindu hill people
khat – see *palanquin*
khata – Tibetan prayer scarf, presented to honoured guest or Buddhist *lama*
khola – stream or tributary
khukuri – traditional curved knife of the *Gurkhas*
kinkinimali – temple wind bells
kosi – river
kot – fort
Krishna – fun-loving eighth incarnation of *Vishnu*
Kumari – living goddess, a peaceful incarnation of *Kali*
kunda – water tank fed by springs
kutis – pilgrim hostels

la – mountain pass
lama – Tibetan Buddhist monk or priest
lathi – bamboo staves used by police during a protest
lingam – phallic symbol signifying *Shiva*’s creative powers
machan – a lookout tower used to view wildlife
Machhendranath – patron god of the Kathmandu Valley and an incarnation of *Avalokiteshvara*

Mahabharata – one of the major Hindu epics
Mahadeva – literally 'Great God'; Shiva
Mahadevi – literally 'Great Goddess', sometimes known as *Devi*; the *shakti* to *Shiva*
Mahayana – the 'greater-vehicle' of Buddhism; a later adaptation of the teaching which lays emphasis on the *Bodhisattva* ideal
mahseer – game fish of the Terai rivers
makara – mythical crocodile-like beast
Malla – royal dynasty of the Kathmandu Valley responsible for most of the important temples and palaces of the valley towns
mandala – geometrical and astrological representation of the path to enlightenment
mandir – temple
mani – stone carved with the Tibetan Buddhist chant *om mani padme hum*
Manjushri – Buddhist *Bodhisattva*
mantra – prayer formula or chant
Mara – Buddhist god of death; has three eyes and holds the *wheel of life*
math – Hindu priest's house
mela – country fair
misthan bhandar – Indian-style sweet house and snack bar
naga – serpent deity
Nagpura – Buddhist symbol for water
nak – female *yak*
namaste – traditional Hindu greeting (hello or goodbye), with the hands brought together at chest or head level, as a sign of respect
Nandi – *Shiva's* vehicle, the bull
Narayan – *Vishnu* as the sleeping figure on the cosmic ocean; from his navel *Brahma* appeared and went on to create the universe
Narsingha – man-lion incarnation of *Vishnu*
Newari – people of the Kathmandu Valley
nirvana – ultimate peace and cessation of rebirth (Buddhism)
om mani padme hum – sacred Buddhist *mantra*, which means 'hail to the jewel in the lotus'

padma – lotus flower
Padmapani – literally 'Lotus in Hand'; a manifestation of *Avalokiteshvara*
pagoda – multi-storeyed Nepali temple, whose design was exported across Asia
palanquin – portable covered bed usually shouldered by four men; also called a *khat*
Parvati – *Shiva's* consort
pashmina – goat wool blanket or shawl
Pashupati – *Shiva* as Lord of the Animals
path – small raised platform to shelter pilgrims

phanta – grass plains
pipal tree – see *bodhi tree*
pith – open shrine for a Tantric goddess
pokhari – large water tank, or small lake
prasad – food offering
prayer flag – square of cloth printed with a mantra and hung in a string as a prayer offering
prayer wheel – cylindrical wheel inscribed with a Buddhist prayer or *mantra* that is 'said' when the wheel spins
Prithvi – *Vedic* earth goddess
puja – religious offering or prayer
pujari – priest
puri – town
purnima – full moon

Qomolangma – Tibetan name for Mt Everest; literally 'Mother Goddess of the World' (also spelt Chomolangma)

rajpath – road or highway, literally 'king's road'
raksha bandhan – yellow thread worn on the wrist that is said to bring good fortune
Ramayana – Hindu epic
Rana – a line hereditary prime ministers who ruled Nepal from 1841 to 1951
rath – temple chariot in which the idol is conveyed in processions
Red Hats – name given collectively to adherents of the Nyingmapa, Kargyupa and Sakyapa schools of Tibetan Buddhism
rudraksha – dried seeds worn in necklaces by *sadhus*

SAARC – South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; includes India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
sadhu – wandering Hindu holy man
sagar – large sacred ponds
Sagarmatha – Nepali name for Mt Everest
sal – tree of the lower Himalayan foothills
saligram – a black ammonite fossil of a Jurassic-period sea creature which is also a symbol of *Shiva*
sankha – conch shell, one of *Vishnu's* four symbols
Saraswati – goddess of learning and creative arts, and consort of *Brahma*. She carries a lutelike instrument
seto – white
Shaivite – follower of *Shiva*
shakti – dynamic female element in male/female relationships; also a goddess
Sherpa – Buddhist hill people of Tibetan ancestry famed for work with mountaineering expeditions; with a lower case 's' means trek leader
Sherpani – female *Sherpa*
shikhara – Indian-style temple with tall conicoblike spire
Shitala Mai – ogress who became a protector of children
Shiva – the most powerful Hindu god, the creator and destroyer

sindur – red vermilion dust and mustard oil mixture used for offerings
sirdar – leader/organiser of a trekking party
sun – gold, or golden
STOL – short take off and landing aircraft used on mountain airstrips
stupa – bell-shaped Buddhist religious structure, originally designed to hold the relics of the *Buddha*
Sudra – the lowest Nepali caste, said to originate from *Brahma's* feet
sundhara – fountain with golden spout

tabla – hand drum
tahr – wild mountain goat
tal – lake
Taleju Bhawani – Nepali goddess, an aspect of *Mahadevi* and the family deity of the *Malla* kings of the Kathmandu Valley
Tantric Buddhism – form of Buddhism that evolved in Tibet during the 10th to 15th centuries
tappu – island
Tara – White Tara is the consort of the *Dhyani Buddha* Vairocana; Green Tara is associated with Amoghasiddhi
teahouse trek – independent trekking between village inns (ie no camping)
tempo – three-wheeled, automated minivan commonly used in Nepal
Thakali – people of the Kali Gandaki Valley who specialise in running hotels
thali – literally a plate with compartments for different dishes; an all-you-can-eat set meal
thangka – Tibetan religious painting
third eye – symbolic eye on Buddha figures, used to indicate the Buddha's all-seeing wisdom and perception
thugpa – Tibetan noodle soup
tika – red sandalwood-paste spot marked on the forehead, particularly for religious occasions
tole – street or quarter of a town; sometimes used to refer to a square
tonga – horse carriage
topi – traditional Nepali cap
torana – carved pediment above temple doors
Tribhuvan – the king who in 1951 ended the *Rana* period and Nepal's long seclusion
trisol – trident weapon symbol of *Shiva*

tumpline – leather or cloth strip worn across the forehead or chest of a porter to support a load carried on the back
tunal – carved temple strut
tundikhel – parade ground

Uma Maheshwar – *Shiva* and *Parvati* in a pose where *Shiva* sits cross-legged and *Parvati* sits on his thigh and leans against him
Upanishads – ancient Vedic scripts, the last part of the *Vedas*
urna – the bump on the forehead of a *Buddha* or *Bodhisattva*

vahana – a god's animal mount or vehicle
Vaishnavite – follower of *Vishnu*
Vaisya – caste of merchants and farmers, said to originate from *Brahma's* thighs
vajra – the 'thunderbolt' symbol of Buddhist power in Nepal; *darje* in Tibetan
Vajra Jogini – a Tantric goddess, *shakti* to a *Bhairab*
Vasudhara – the wife of *Jambhala*, the god of wealth; she rides a chariot drawn by a pig
Vedas – ancient orthodox Hindu scriptures
Vedic gods – ancient Hindu gods described in the *Vedas*
vehicle – the animal with which a Hindu god is associated
vihara – Buddhist religious buildings and pilgrim accommodation
Vishnu – the preserver, one of the three main Hindu gods

wheel of life – representation of how humans are chained by desire to a life of suffering

yab-yum – Tibetan term for Tantric sexual union
yak – main Nepali beast of burden, a form of cattle found above 3000m
yaksha – attendant deity or nymph
Yama – *Vedic* god of death; his messenger is the crow
Yellow Hats – name sometimes given to adherents of the *Gelugpa* school of Tibetan Buddhism
yeti – abominable snowman
yogi – yoga master
yoni – female sexual symbol, equivalent of a *lingam*
zamindar – absentee landlord and/or moneylender

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