

A 1992 source listed 3,200 Nubri people living in the Gandaki Zone of central Nepal.<sup>1</sup> They inhabit villages in the North Gorkha District, near the Nepal border with China, 'along the upper reaches of the Buri Gandaki River, west of and including Prok village, between Himal Chuli and Manaslu Himal on the west, and Ganesh Himal on the east. The local people view Sama as the regional center.'<sup>2</sup> The Nubri villages are situated on mountain slopes up to 4,000 metres (13,120 ft.) above sea level. Some of the more isolated villages take days to reach by foot. The area inhabited by the Nubri is part of the 'roof of the world'. The spectacular Himal Chuli stands at 7,892 metres (25,886 ft.), the Ganesh Himal at 7,406 metres (24,292 ft.), but the mighty Manaslu tops them both at 8,162 metres (26,771 ft.).

Another source says that the Nubri are 'concentrated in and around Larkye, in the valley through which the headwaters of the Bhalu Khola or "bear river" flow. The Bhalu Khola, a tributary of the Budhi Gandaki, is said to be known in the local Tibetan dialect as the Nupri, whence the name of the people.'<sup>3</sup>

Despite the searing peaks of the world's highest mountain range, the Nubri area still receives the monsoon rains from the Indian plains. 'As a consequence the landscape is lush and green, and the fields support

good harvests of corn in addition to the staple grains.'<sup>4</sup> Many Nubri men and women are traders who walk vast distances into other areas of Gorkha District as well as across the



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border into Tibet. They take grain and merchandise from Nepal and trade it with Tibetans for wool and salt. The Gandaki and Siar valleys serve as two important trade routes into Tibet. The town of Larke (or Larkye) is situated on the Tibetan border.

The Nubri language is part of the Central Tibetan branch of Tibeto-Burman. Despite the small population

of this group, the Nubri speak four dialects. The dialect spoken in Prok is the most different from the others, and Nubri people from outlying areas sometimes have difficulty communicating with the Nubri who live in Prok. Linguistic surveys show that Nubri shares 67 per cent lexical similarity with Dolpo, 65 per cent with Loba, 59 per cent to 64 per cent with the Central Tibetan spoken in Lhasa, 55 per cent with Sherpa, and only 14 per cent to 31 per cent with Kutang Ghale, who share the north Gorkha District with the Nubri.<sup>5</sup>

Tibetan Buddhism is the religion of all Nubri. It shapes the identity of the people, who say, 'To be Nubri is to be Buddhist.' There is an interesting story relating to the Pung-gyen monastery on the east slopes of the Manaslu Himal. In the winter of 1953 the monastery was destroyed and all its inhabitants killed by an avalanche, soon after an unsuccessful attempt to scale the peak by a team of Japanese mountaineers. 'Immediately the local people concluded that the mountain god had become angry at them for allowing foreigners to trespass upon the holy sanctuary and had hurled the avalanche down in his fury. The following year the Japanese returned but were not given passage to the slopes, and it was not until 1956 that they finally succeeded in conquering Manaslu, at the same time contributing a large sum of money toward the building of a new Pung-gyen gomba.'<sup>6</sup>



**Population:**  
3,800 (2000)  
4,700 (2010)  
5,800 (2020)  
**Countries:** Nepal  
**Buddhism:** Tibetan  
**Christians:** none known

## Overview of the Nubri

**Other Names:** Nubripa, Nubriiba, Larke, Kutang Bhotia, Larkye, Nupri, Larkye Bhot, Larkye Tibetans, Nupra, Nupraba

**Population Sources:**  
3,200 in Nepal (2000, B Grimes [1992 figure])

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tibetan, Central

**Dialects:** 4 (Sama, Lho, Namrung, Prok)

**Professing Buddhists:** 100%

**Practising Buddhists:** 65%

**Christians:** 0%

**Scripture:** none

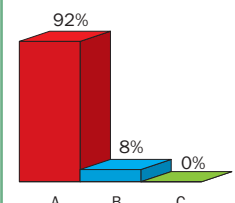
**Jesus film:** none

**Gospel Recordings:** Nubri

**Christian Broadcasting:** none

**ROPAL code:** KTE

## Status of Evangelization



**A** = Have never heard the gospel  
**B** = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians  
**C** = Are adherents to some form of Christianity