

Tamang, Eastern Gorkha



Population:

4,750 (2000)
5,900 (2010)
7,300 (2020)

Countries: Nepal

Buddhism: Tibetan

Christians: 300

A linguist in 1992 estimated that there were between 3,000 and 4,000 Eastern Gorkha Tamang people living in north-central Nepal.¹ This group, which is different from the four other Tamang groups on the basis that they speak a separate language, inhabits villages south and east of the small township of Jagat, in the north Gorkha District of Gandaki Zone. The Eastern Gorkha Tamang's location is beautiful, with pristine forests clinging to the mountain slopes. Their villages are located at altitudes ranging from 600 to 1,800 metres (approximately 2,000 to 5,900 ft.) above sea level. Tamang houses are clustered at one place to make up a dense village within which

The most popular musical instrument of the Tamang is the *dampfu*, 'a circular structure about 1½ feet in diameter and covered on one side with a goat skin, stretched by means of a bamboo spike shooting inwards at the center. . . . The *dhampu* is considered an important and compulsory item in the lives and activities of the Tamangs, from birth, through life, till death. . . . According to the Tamang belief, a man named Wang Dorjee went into the jungle to hunt. He is supposed to have killed a *ghoral* (wild mountain goat) and skinned it. . . . He cut a branch of a *koiralo* tree and made a ring with the wood. Then he stretched the goat's skin over this wooden frame and fastened

there are constructed many cobble-stone paths for movement. Most of these houses consist of stone walls, thatched or wooden planked roofs held down by stones. The doors and windows are extremely small. Normally these are single storied houses with single roofs, where the bedding is rolled up in one corner, and livestock like the goats, chickens, sheep, etc. are kept in another corner. The hearth is located at the center of the floor.²



Gospel Recordings Nepal

it to the edges with bamboo nails. Then he beat on the skin and heard the emergence of a soft sound. Wang spread the word of his invention and popularized the instrument.⁴

Most Eastern Gorkha Tamang people are followers of Tibetan Buddhism, although some of those living at lower altitudes have come under the influence of Hinduism. One source notes, 'Tamangs follow the Nyingmapa sect of Buddhism whereby the practicing lamas are permitted to lead a family life; marriage among such families has created a class of upper stratum distinct from the ordinary peasants.'⁵

In recent years a significant number of Eastern Gorkha Tamang have put their trust in Christ. Pastor Prem Tamang of Gorkha said, 'Ours is a New Testament church. We read what the Bible says and we implement it. The church is built on the scriptures and our daily walk with God.'⁶

Overview of the Eastern Gorkha Tamang

Other Names: Murmi, Nishung, Lama, Tamanglama

Population Sources:

3,000 to 4,000 in Nepal (2000, B Grimes [1992 figure])

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tamangic

Dialects: 2 (Kasigaon, Kerounja)

Professing Buddhists: 80%

Practising Buddhists: 55%

Christians: 6%

Scripture: none

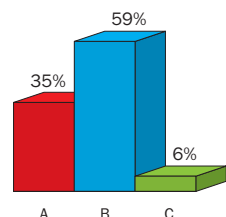
Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: none

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: TGE

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

The language of the Eastern Gorkha Tamang is part of the Tamangic branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. It reportedly contains 76 per cent to 77 per cent lexical similarity with Northwestern Tamang; 77 per cent to 79 per cent with Western Tamang; 70 per cent to 73 per cent with Southwestern Tamang; and 63 per cent to 73 per cent with Eastern Tamang.³ This Tamang group is interesting in that the people actually refer to themselves as Gurung, and not as Tamang, even though their language is very different from any Gurung varieties and has been proven to be Tamangic.