



Population:
 388,900 (2000)
 481,500 (2010)
 596,100 (2020)
Countries: Nepal
Buddhism: Tibetan
Christians: 30,000

Overview of the Western Tamang

Other Names: Murmi, Nishung, Lama, Tamanglama

Population Sources:

186,408 to 320,350 in Nepal (2000, B Grimes [based on 1991 census])

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

Dialects: 2 (Trisuli, Rasuwa)

Professing Buddhists: 65%

Practising Buddhists: 35%

Christians: 7.7%

Scripture: New Testament 1990

Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: Tamang: Western

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: TDG

After the 1991 Nepal census results were examined, researchers gave a very broad population range of between 186,408 and 320,350 Western Tamang people living in central Nepal.¹ They are concentrated in the Bagmati Zone, as well as into the eastern part of the Gandaki Zone (Gorkha District) and on the plains in Nayayani Zone. Nuwakot, Rasuwa and Dhading are three districts with significant numbers of Western Tamang.

edibles like rice, curry and pulses are placed all around the corpse. . . . The last rites for the corpse are preferentially done on a hilltop rather than on the river banks and burials are fewer than cremations. While the corpse is being consumed by flames, the lama sits nearby continually reading the sacred scriptures. While this is going on, the lamas are offered food brought along with the funeral procession. This they consume while reading the sacred



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books and the corpse is burning. This is customary and not considered dishonorable.¹³

Since the 1980s, thousands of Western Tamang people have become Christians. In 1990, the Western Tamang became the only Tamang group to have the New Testament translated into their language.

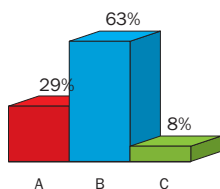
God is working in many miraculous ways to reach this group. One evangelist named D B Tamang recalls how his mother become ill, and his father, the animistic priest,

For approximately 1,000 years, the Tamang have professed Buddhism. 'There are Buddhist temples in every sizeable village. The gods and the religious paintings in the temples are all in the Sherpa style; the religious texts are all in the Tibetan script.'²

When a Tamang person dies, an unusual custom is observed. 'If the deceased is a rich person, then it is customary to light 108 oil lamps (clarified butter lamps) surrounding the corpse. The moment death claims the person, the body is raised so that the waist and knees can be bent and the whole person kept in the lotus posture, by placing the corpse in a large copper or earthenware pot or any other such large vessel. . . . Rich persons use *ghyu* and oil poured into the vessel to immerse half the body, while the poorer folks use water. Until the lama communicates the auspicious time for the removal of the corpse, various

prayed to his gods for her healing. 'He sacrificed several goats and chickens, but her health continued to deteriorate. Soon they ran out of chickens and goats and while the priest went to a nearby village to buy more animals for sacrifice, the mother died. In his grief Tamang went to the Buddhist lama and pleaded with him to restore his mother's life. The lama visited the house and chanted prayers for several hours, but to no avail. Having no other recourse at a time like this, Tamang decided to call a group of Christians from a nearby village. . . . God raised Tamang's dead mother back to life. Seeing the miracle, Tamang went into the house and brought out all the family idols and burned them saying he had no use for them now. That day he and his family, along with 20 households totaling more than 160 people, accepted the Lord.'⁴

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