

# Some Commonly Used Words of Chepang

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## Abstract

*This paper presents some words of the Chepang language used in Chitwan district. The words collected in this paper were gathered from Shaktikhor VDC. Chepangs from various surroundings like Gorkha, Dhading, and Makawanpur have migrated and lived in Shaktikhor in recent times so the words have been collected from the area. Collected words were gathered by asking questions to the participants who speak Chepang language in their daily life. The words were recorded before being presented in script by using roman script. Collected words are presented in two columns: Chepangs and English.*

*Key Terms: Chepangs, Multilingual, Tibeto-Burman Family*

## Introduction

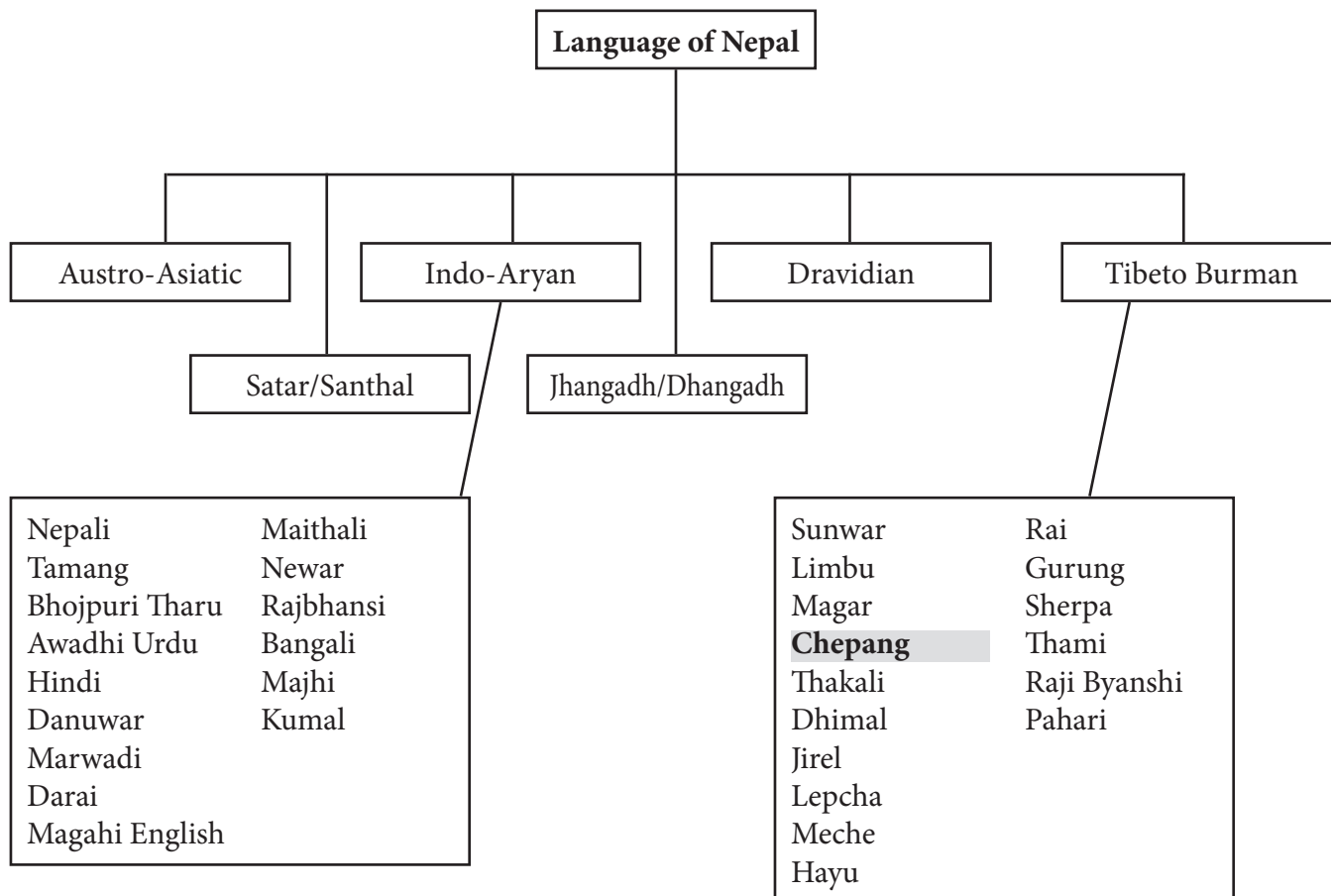
The word 'Chepang' refers to one of the indigenous nationalities of Nepal, living mainly in central mid hill of Nepal. Chepangs have their own language which is different from other languages. The language is known as Chepang language; however, Byuju has given the name "Khamchi" or "Khamji". In the course of my field research I have not found such separate name of Chepang language in Chitwan. Ross Caughley (2000) clarifies the terms as, "The language is known as Chepang to other Nepali but is called 'cyo? Bang' by the people themselves"(1). He argues on the name and says, "A folk etymology of the name refers to an origin myth in which their first ancestors emerged from cracks in rocks (bang meaning rock plus Cyo? meaning 'tip' of or by an extension of basic meaning recent generation of a lineages"(1). In recent time, inside and out of the community, the language spoken by Chepang is known as Chepang language.

The physical features of Chepang are no different from other indigenous people of Nepal. As Ganesh Man Gurung (1995) states they "have flat and short nose, round face, dark and brown complexion, then and medium ears, dark eyes and prominent eye brows" (6). In the same way Chepang languages is similar to the other Tibeto-Burman languages like Tamang and Bhujel.

Nepal is a multilingual nation where more than 120 languages are still in existence. National Census Report (2011) shows 123 languages. It opens up challenging, theoretical and methodological issues for linguistic research in Nepal. One of such possibility in Nepal is the Chepang language. It is genetically, affiliated to the Tibeto-Burman family. The categorized figure is given below:

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Source: Bradley (2002)

There are a large number of native speakers of the Chepang in several districts of Nepal. CBS Report (2011) showed 68399 population of Chepang in Nepal whereas 48096(0.18%) speak Chepang language as mother tongue. The report again shows 21536 populations of Chepangs have spoken their language in Chitwan. The paper is concentrated on Chitwan because in Chitwan district Chepangs are migrated from its surrounding area, Makawanpur, Gorkha and Dhading district. National population census (2011) showed that Chepang language speakers are found in ten different districts of Nepal. The following table shows the district wise Chepang mother tongue speakers in Nepal

**Table -1 District-wise Chepang language speakers in Nepal**

Districts	Total Chepang language speakers	Males	Females
Kathmandu	160	81	79
Dhading	8449	4253	4196
Makawanpur	16036	8147	8736
Parsa	17	10	7
Chitwan	21536	10888	10648

Gorkha	1628	777	985
Lamjung	57	33	24
Tanahun	163	83	80
Gulmi	19	17	2
Nawalparasi	31	10	21
Total	48096		

Source: CBS Report (2011)

Before few decades Chepangs were in majority in the northern and eastern parts of Chitwan district. In recent years, migration of hill's people dominated Chepang population. National population census (2011) shows more than 36 languages are in existence in Chitwan; however, majority of the population (406,782) speak Nepali language as mother tongue and only few people speak other languages. Among them Chepang language is fourth in position. There are found Chepang speakers in all municipalities and VDCs of Chitwan. The following table shows the mother tongue speakers of Chitwan

**Table -2 Population of Chitwan According to Mother Tongue Speakers**

Languages	Total	Males	Females
Nepali	406,782	193,605	213,177
Tharu	58,913	27,436	31,477
Tamang	28,541	13,945	14,596
Chepang	21,536	10,888	10,648
Gurung	16,389	7,435	8,954
Bhojpuri	9,668	6,439	3,229
Magar	9,321	4,276	5,045
Newari	9,174	4,397	4,777
Darai	6,625	3,108	3,517
Maithili	3,572	2,190	1,382
Hindi	2,790	1,799	991
Bote	2,012	955	1,057
Urdu	960	608	352
Rai	524	296	228
Kumal	302	152	150
Kham	285	132	153
Rajsthani	214	114	100
Bangla	204	151	53
H Yolmo/Yholmo	182	92	90
Ghale	173	76	97
Thakali	145	62	83
Limbu	139	64	75

Bhujel	125	63	62
Sunuwar	98	69	29
Sign Language	83	44	39
Danuwar	81	46	35
Doteli	73	32	41
Sherpa	64	38	26
Majhi	56	40	16
Avadhi	39	25	14
Bajjika	35	29	6
Thami	31	26	5
Dura	30	13	17
Yakkha	26	16	10
Santhali	21	14	7
Punjabi	19	9	10
Chinese	19	16	3
Nachhiring	16	9	7
Chhantyal	12	3	9
Others	226	128	98
Not Reported	479	247	232

Source: CBS Report (2011)

Chitwan districts is known as traditional homeland of the Chepangs because majority of the Chepangs are still living in the area. According to the myth of Lohari and Kushari, it is declared that ancestors of the Chepangs originated in the banks of Narayani rivers. The myth goes as:

The Chepangs are the offspring of Sita's son *Lahari* or *Lava* who is famous in the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. During the exile of Sita, she had to stay in the cottage of a hermit named *Balmiki* near the Narayani River. Sita gave birth to a son named *Lohari*. One day she saw some monkeys playing with their babies. The scene was very moving. She too took her baby to the river to show the monkeys playing and entertaining with each other. But she forgot to inform about it to *Balkimi*. The *rishi* became restless as he did not find the baby in the cradle. He thought that Sita will be angry. Therefore, he created a new baby out of the 'Kush Grass' and the baby exactly looked like Lava. But as Sita was back she got surprised to see another baby in the cradle. Rishi explained the events. Chepangs widely believe that they are the descendants of Lohari, the first son of Sita (Adhkari, 3).

Because of the present situation of Chepangs and their physical features as well as social and cultural situation is different from the myth and creates debate on its mythical existence. Ramchandra is son of Hindu king Dasaratha. Physical structure and language of Chepangs are similar to other Tibeto Barman community like Tamang and Rai, not with the Hindu tribes. However, it can be justified that they have more than thousand

years contact with Mongolian people and now they appear like Mongol people.

While collecting data from the field I visited Chepang settlement mainly in Shaktikor, and gathered some of the typical words that they highly use in their day to day life. Observation, interview questions and audio record were used to collect data from the field; however, I have not used phonetic transcription of the words. I put the word simply in Roman script.

**Map of Study Area**



*Source : Adhkari (2009)*

### **Chepang Language and its Order of Alphabet**

Ross Caughley presented Chepang language and its' alphabet in the following manner:

a    á I                      u    e    o . ?  
k    g    ŋ    c    j    t    d    n    p    b    m    y    r    l  
w    s    h

*Source: Caughley (2000)*

### **Some Words of the Chapnag**

Ross C. Caughley (1939- ) is the first linguist who has studied on Chepang since century. He collected Chepang words from a village of Makawanpur and prepared a single dictionary in 1971. He collected around 7000 words including all forms of word used by the Chepangs during the time. Caughley's collection is used while translating the holy Bible into Chepang. In my collection, I only present frequently used words in the study area by the Chepangs.

### **Pronouns**

<b>Chepang</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
NGA	YOU	BLUNT

NGA KO	OUR	CASUAL
NGA SAYAPA	YOU	POLITE/HON. FORM
or		
NGA SAA ( HAJURKO)	YOU	
NANKO	YOUR	
NGA	I	
NANGA	YOU	
NGI	WE	
NONKO	YOUR	
NGAKA	MY	
DUTANG	HONOR	
NGIKO	OUR	

### Verbs

The following suffixes are attached to the end of verbs to show level of familiarity or respect.

aa	Waang =	please come	Polite/Hon.
We	krd =	Go:	Casual
yii	Sayo =	Died	(Blunt)

### Nouns

The following prefixes are attached to the end of noun to show level of or respect.

O AApa → Hello father

ai Ama → Hello mother

Sapaya Baje(Sapaya) → Respectfully hello Baje

#### Polite form

Lokomanta → respectful way of addressing a senior person

The following suffixes are used at the end of nouns to show the level of respect or formally.

Ju → Vana+Ju = Venaju → brother-in-law

#### For respect

Kai → Mama + Kai = Mamakai → Maternal uncle

#### For casual

Sayapa + Mama = Sayapamama → Respect form

### Some words to use for relatives

CHEPANG	ENGLISH
AAPA	FATHER
ANNYO	ELDER SISTER
MUMOCHO	WIFE
BHAU	HUSBAND

CHO	SON
<b>Some words indicating fruits and vegetables</b>	
BELAUTI	GUAVA
YOSHI	SURAUIA HEPALENIS
LOSAI	BANANA

TANKI SAG	BAUHINEA
LAK	AIR POTATO
TAKSAI	MANGO
SORKA	CITRON
LYAU	LAUGUNA
PASS	CUSH CUSH
GOY	YAM
GU	TARO ROOT
LA	VINE
KU	THRON
PAAK	PAT
NINGALO	HIMALAYAN BAMBOO
RING	BAMBOO
RAKSI	SAL TREE
KOS	SUGARCANE
NELAU	STING
<b>Some words refer to materials</b>	
TI	WATER
MAI	FIRE
BANG	STONE
CHHA	SALT
KYAN	CURRY
<b>Some words refer to animals and bird</b>	
SWYA	COW
SARPA	SNAKE
MHE	TAIL
NGAMAI	FISH
WA	BIRD/ CHICKEN
RI	VULTURE
REK	RAT
YIN	BAT
KUY	DOG
BANG	FROG
PYAK	PIG
MUSHA	MUSHROOM
KUT	WORMS
<b>Other casually used words</b>	
RANG	STONEY LAND
NALO	NOT
LAM	WAY
THAPA	STOP
LOKAMANTA	RELATIVES

KAJO	ONE
NIJO	TWO
SUMJO	THREE
SANGA	TWELVE
GAM	OPEN PLACE
LMPU	CAVE
KIM	HOUSE
BANG-LEM	STONES
KIM-LEM	HOUSE
RONG	HORN
NEKLI	NASAL DISCHARGE
AAM	COOKED RICE
KAI	TOO
KANTI	FROM
KUSHI	WITH
GESA	PLAY
NATO	ENOUGH
MUNA	IS
WAHO	GONE
KANTI BAICHI	PLEASE LOOK
KHADUK	DOOR
BESAMNA	WILL GIVE
RYONKAYO	HUNGER
KAIJA	PAST
GATANGA	WHERE
CHHICHHA	NEXT TOMORROW
PAINANGA	RETURN
PETI	WELL-MANNER
VIRANGA	SLIDE
TONA	FALL DOWN
OKE	COCK
TAN	PHELLOS
MIKA	EYE
DOME	LEG
KURT	HAND
NEH	NOSE
MOTANGA	MOUTH
NGAMACHUL	KNEE
MAYANGA	HAIR
NAI	CLOTH
TEN	TODAY
SYA	MEAT

MECHHA	GOAT
ELONGA	SIT
MSAUPA	SIT (POLITE)
DA	WHAT
YO	YESTERDAY
PAYA	COME
DUTO	RED
BANGTO	WHITE
GALTO	BLACK
YU	MOUSE
THOM	BEAR
SINGA	FIREWOOD
SYYO	DEAD
THOR	OX
TUCHIN	VGGINA

JA	TIGER
VAYAKA	PIG
VARANGA	NAME OF PLACE
HATTIBANG	NAME OF PLACE
KASHBANG	NAME OF PLACE
GARAICHHANGA	NAME OF PERSON
SIYO	BAHUN CHETRI
GHAITO	SOIL POT
SYAN	TAMANG
BYAL	NEWAR
NO	EAR
KE	HOOK
PAN	BED
KHALTI	SMALL POCKET
TAA	BEAT

### Conclusion

Due to modernization, globalization and contract of other languages speakers, Chepangs are going to forget their words and new words are used to address new objects they use in daily life. There was found no separate script of Chepang language. It existed only in oral form so that most of the words used by Chepangs are influenced by various languages though they used it as their own languages. I only projected the words what they told me at the time of interview. However, some words they used in daily life are similar to Tamang, Nepali and other languages.

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### Personal Interview

Bir Bahadur Chepang, Shaktikhor  
 Padam Chepang, Shaktikhor  
 Sano Kanchha Chepang , Shaktikhor

Minu Chepang, Shaktikhor  
 Ram Bahadur Chepang, Shaktikhor