



Tibetan

PHRASEBOOK & DICTIONARY



Over
10 Million
Phrasebooks
Sold



Tibetan

PHRASEBOOK & DICTIONARY

Acknowledgments

Associate Publisher Mina Patria

Associate Product Director Angela Tinson

Product Editor Elizabeth Jones

Series Designer James Hardy

Language Writer Sandup Tsering

Cover Image Researcher Naomi Parker

Thanks

Samantha Forge, Larissa Frost, Carol Jackson, Chris Love,
Wayne Murphy

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

5th Edition – Feb 2014

ISBN 978 1 74321 183 0

Text © Lonely Planet 2014

Cover Image Tibetan Buddhist pilgrims at Tagong Monastery,
Sichuan Province, China, Tom Salyer/Alamy ©

Printed in China 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contact lonelyplanet.com/contact

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trade marks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: www.lonelyplanet.com/ip

Although the authors and Lonely Planet try to make the information as accurate as possible, we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by anyone using this book.

Paper in this book is certified against the Forest Stewardship Council™ standards. FSC™ promotes environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.



acknowledgments

about the author

Sandup Tsering is a Tibetan Buddhist Scholar, interpreter and language teacher, and was born in Purang in Western Tibet. As a result of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, his parents fled to India, where they live in a refugee settlement. Sandup moved to Australia in 1984. He has a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Buddhism and was the President of the Tibetan Community of Victoria for five years from 1993 until 1998.

from the author

My special thanks goes to Ven Thupten Donyo and Kelsang Dhondup for their assistance with typing Tibetan script, and my wife and children for their support. I would also like to thank Alo Bhuti, Sonam Dolkar and Lobsang Dhargye for their help and input.

from the publisher

Scaling the heights of the *Tibetan phrasebook* was no small task. Sally Steward, Peter D'Onghia and Quentin Frayne arranged all necessary permits and Emma Koch helped with initial preparations. Editor Sophie Putman came on board to organise equipment and supplies, while proofer Adrienne Costanzo lent her keen eye to ensure all went as planned. Experienced trekkers Karina Coates, Karin Vidstrup Monk and Rachel Williams joined the party and offered support across the most challenging terrain. Jim Jenkin served as a guide along the entire trail, Ben Handicott proved a dependable porter and Annelies Mertens guaranteed no-one was lost for words. Hunor Csutoros provided the trusty map, while Meg Worby contributed to navigation plans with her clever contents. Fabrice Rocher coordinated the final ascent and designers Belinda Campbell, Patrick Marris, Yuki Yoshi Kamimura and David Kemp ensured it went without a hitch. Yuki Yoshi's talented illustrations of the Tibetan people, flora and fauna, inspired us all. The result: a euphoric summit celebration with **châng** all round.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION9

How to Use	Abbreviations	10
this Phrasebook.....	Legend.....	11

PRONUNCIATION13

Transliteration.....	13	The Tibetan Writing System...	15
Vowels	13	Tones.....	18
Consonants	14	Stress	18

GRAMMAR19

Word Order	19	To Be	28
Articles	19	To Have	29
Grammatical Terms	20	Modals.....	29
Nouns.....	21	Key Verbs	30
Demonstratives	22	Questions.....	32
Adjectives	22	Negatives	34
Pronouns.....	24	Conveying 'Yes' & 'No'	35
Possessives	25	Postpositions.....	35
Verbs	26	Conjunctions	36

MEETING PEOPLE.....37

You Should Know	37	Cultural Differences	47
Greetings & Goodbyes.....	38	Age.....	48
Civilities	39	Occupations	48
Forms of Address.....	41	Feelings	51
Body Language.....	41	Breaking the	
First Encounters.....	43	Language Barrier	52
Making Conversation.....	43	Staying in Touch	53
Nationalities	46		

GETTING AROUND55

Finding Your Way	55	Bus	60
Taxi.....	57	Car.....	61
Buying Tickets.....	58	Bicycle.....	63
Air	59		

ACCOMMODATION.....65

Finding Accommodation	65	Complaints.....	70
Booking Ahead	66	Checking Out.....	72
Checking In.....	66	Renting.....	73
Requests & Queries	68		

AROUND TOWN75

Looking For	75	Sightseeing.....	82
At the Bank.....	76	Visiting Temples.....	86
At the Post Office	77	Paperwork.....	89
Telecommunications	79		

FAMILY.....91

Questions.....	91	Talking with Parents.....	94
Replies	92	Talking with Children	95
Family.....	93		

INTERESTS.....97

Common Interests.....	97	Talking about Travelling.....	99
Art	99	Going Out.....	101

TREKKING107

Getting Information	107	Seasons.....	115
On the Path.....	110	Geographical Terms	116
Camping.....	113	Fauna	117
Weather	114	Flora & Agriculture.....	119

SHOPPING121

Looking For	121	Toiletries.....	129
Making a Purchase	122	For the Baby.....	130
Bargaining	124	Stationery & Publications ..	130
Souvenirs	124	Music.....	132
Essential Groceries.....	125	Photography.....	132
Clothing	126	Smoking.....	133
Colours	127	Weights & Measures	134
Materials	128	Sizes & Comparisons	134

FOOD135

Through the Day.....	135	At the Market.....	143
Breakfast.....	135	Meat & Poultry	144
Snacks	136	Fruit & Nuts	144
Vegetarian & Special Meals.....	137	Vegetables	145
Eating Out.....	137	Grains & Pulses	145
Typical Dishes.....	140	Spices & Condiments	146
Self-Catering	142	Drinks	146
		In the Bar	147

HEALTH.....149

At the Doctor	149	Parts of the Body.....	158
Ailments	151	At the Chemist.....	160
Women's Health	155	At the Dentist	162
Special Health Needs.....	157		

SPECIFIC NEEDS.....163

Disabled Travellers	163	On Business	165
Travelling with the Family ..	164	Pilgrimage & Religion.....	166

TIME, DATES & FESTIVALS169

Telling the Time	169	Future	172
Days of the Week.....	170	During the Day	173
Months.....	170	Useful Words.....	173
Dates	171	Festivals & Holidays	174
Present	171	New Year	176
Past.....	172	Birthdays	177
		Weddings.....	178

NUMBERS & AMOUNTS179

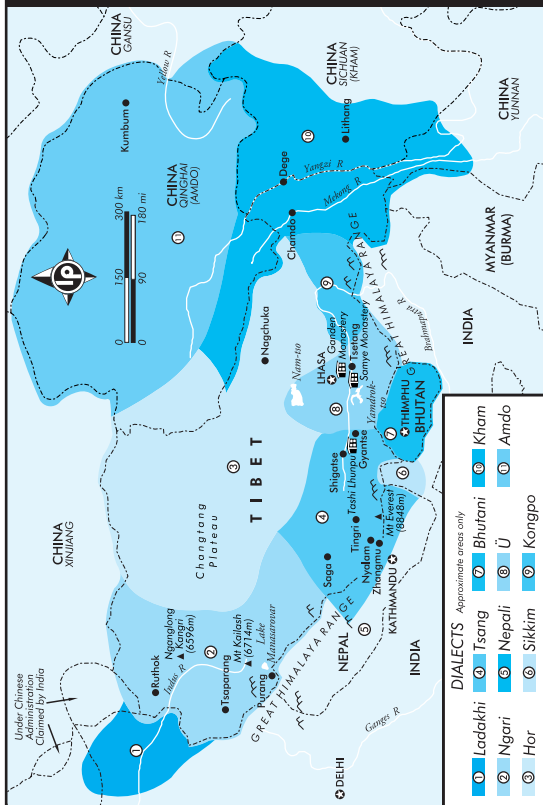
Cardinal Numbers.....	179	Fractions	181
Ordinal Numbers	180	Useful Amounts	181

EMERGENCIES183

General	183	Health.....	188
Police	184		

ENGLISH – TIBETAN DICTIONARY.....189**INDEX245****SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL.....251**

TIBETAN



Tibetan belongs to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group of the Sino-Tibetan language family, with Burmese its closest relative. It's spoken by over six million people, mainly in Tibet, but also in neighbouring Nepal, India and Bhutan, and used by Mongolians to study Buddhism.

There are many different Tibetan dialects and, due to differences in pronunciation and vocabulary, it can be difficult for people from different regions to understand one another. The main provinces, U-tsang, Amdo and Kham – all of which have been renamed by China – have their own dialects (and sub-dialects). Other Tibetan dialects can be found in bordering countries. However, greater social interaction among Tibetans from various regions in recent times has led to the development of a standard Tibetan language. In contrast to any of the traditional dialects, it's much closer to classical Tibetan and is also the focus of this book.

Written Tibetan was devised in the 7th century AD by Thumi Sambhota, the minister of the famous Tibetan ruler, King Songtsen Gampo. He was one of 15 scholars sent to India by the king to compile Tibetan scripts so that Buddhist literature could be translated into Tibetan. Under the guidance of his main Indian teachers, Brahmin Lipikara and Devavidyasinha, Sambhota learned a number of classical Indian languages. He developed the Tibetan language based on the Sanskrit characters of the Devanagari script (used for many Indian languages). He also compiled grammar texts which are still the primary source for studying Tibetan grammar today.

Since its introduction, the writing system has barely changed, although the spoken language has evolved considerably. As a result, written and spoken Tibetan are quite different.

Speaking Tibetan is the key to understanding the unique culture, lifestyle and history of the country. This phrasebook will help you communicate with Tibetans and enrich your experience in Tibet.