

Language

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The two principal languages of Tibet are Tibetan and (Mandarin) Chinese. The importance of Chinese is an unfortunate reality in Tibet, and all Tibetans undertaking higher studies do so in Chinese. In urban Tibet (the countryside is another matter) almost all Tibetans speak Chinese. Nevertheless, even if you have studied or picked up some Chinese in China, it's worth trying to get a few phrases of Tibetan together. It will be much appreciated by the Tibetans you encounter on your travels.

Linguistically, Chinese and Tibetan have very little in common. They use different sentence structures, and the tonal element is far less crucial in Tibetan than in Chinese. Also, unlike the dialects of China, Tibetan has never used Chinese characters for its written language.

TIBETAN

Tibetan is a member of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages, and is spoken in Tibet and within exiled communities of Tibetans. Lhasa dialect, the standard form of Tibetan, employs a system of rising and falling tones, but the differences are subtle and meaning is made clear by context. Beginners need not worry about them.

Like Chinese, Tibetan has no articles (a, the) and doesn't use plurals. Here the similarity ends, however. Tibetan differs from European and Chinese languages, as it has a subject-object-verb sentence structure. Thus, where in English we would say 'I see John' (subject-verb-object), in Tibetan the sentence is *nga John thong gi duk*, ('I John see', subject-object-verb). In another marked difference from Chinese, Tibetan has tenses and conjugates its verbs with particles. There's also a fairly complicated system of prepositions (words like 'in' and 'on').

If all this makes Tibetan sound extremely difficult to pick up on the road, don't fret; providing you relax a little, it's fairly easy to get together a basic repertoire of phrases that will win you friends and help to get things done. For information on language courses, see p316. Lonely Planet's *Tibetan Phrasebook*, which includes sections on trekking, visiting temples and handicrafts, is also recommended.

THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE

The Tibetan script was developed during the reign of Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. It was founded on Indian models and comprises 30 basic letters including the vowel 'a', and four extra vowel signs for 'e', 'i', 'o' and 'u'. Each letter can be written in three different styles, depending on the context in which a text is to be used. This 7th-century Tibetan script was based on the language spoken in Tibet at the time, and spellings have never been revised since. As a result of significant changes in spoken Tibetan over the last 12 centuries, written

TIBETAN TREKKING ESSENTIALS

How many hours to ...?

... བར་དུ་ ཚུ་ཚོ་དྲན་ གཞི་དཔེ་ལོ་རྒྱུ་གི་རེད།
... bahtu chutsö kâtsay gogiray

I want to rent a (yak/horse).

ང་ གཡལ་གཤམ་/རྟ་གཅིག་གྲུ་དགོས་ཡིད།
nga (yák/ta)-chig lagöyö

I need a porter.

ང་ རྩོམ་ལུང་མཁན་གཅིག་དགོས།
nga dohbo khukhen-chig gö

I need a guide.

ང་ ལམ་རྒྱུ་མ་ཕྱིད་མཁན་གཅིག་དགོས།
nga lámgyü chaykhen-chig gö

How much does it cost per day?

ཉི་ཅུ་མ་ རེ་རེ་ལྷན་ཆ་ གཞི་དཔེ་རེད།
nyima rayrayla laja kâtsay ray?

Which way to ...?

... འགྲོ་ཡག་གི་ལམ་གཤམ་གི་རེད།
... dohyagi lámga kagiray?

Is this the trail to ...?

འདྲི་ ... འགྲོ་ཡག་གི་ལམ་གཤམ་གི་རེད།
di ... dohyagi lámga rebay?

What is the next village on the trail?

ལམ་གཤམ་དེ་ནས་ཕྱི་རྒྱུ་ན་དང་ལོ་ལུང་ལ་གཤམ་གི་རྒྱུ་རེད།
lámga tenay chin-na dângpo loongpa karay lebkiray?

I have altitude sickness.

ང་ལ་དུག་ན་གིས།
nga ládu nagí

I must get to low ground as quickly as possible.

ང་མ་དམར་ལ་མར་གང་མཐོ་གསལ་མཐོ་གསལ་འཕྲོད་དགོས། གྱི་འདུག།
nga sa mahsa gâng gyokgyok joh gokidu

Slowly, slowly!

Let's go!

sleeping bag

tent

road/trail

mountain

cave

pass

river

valley

lake

hot spring

north

south

east

west

གཡེ་གཡེ། kalee kalee
ད་འགྲོ། ta doh
ཉལ་ལུག། nye-koog
ལུང་ gur
ལམ་ lam
རི་ ri
བྲག་ཕུག། dâgphuk
ཡ་ la
གཙང་པོ་ tsângpo
ལུང་གཤོང་ loong shong
མཚོ་ tso
ཚུ་ཚོན་ chu-tsen
བྱང་ châng
ལྷོ་ lho
ཤར་ shâr
རྩེ་ noob

oo as in 'soon'
ö similar to the 'u' in 'put'
u as in 'rude'
ü similar to the 'u' in 'flute'

Consonants

With the exception of the examples listed below, Tibetan consonants should be pronounced as in English. Where a consonant is followed by an h, it means that the consonant is aspirated (accompanied by a puff of air). An English example of this might be 'kettle', where the 'k' is aspirated and the 't' is non-aspirated. The distinction is fairly important, but in simple Tibetan the context should make it clear what you are talking about.

ky as the 'kie' in 'Kiev'
ng as the 'ng' in 'sing'
r like a slightly trilled 'r'
ts as the 'ts' in 'bits'

ACCOMMODATION

Where's a ...? ... གཡམར་ཡོད་རེད། ... kabâh yöray?
guesthouse མཐོན་ཁང་ dhön khâng
hotel འགྲུག་ཁང་ drü-khâng

HEALTH & EMERGENCIES

Help!

རོགས་གནང་དང། rog nângda!

Fire!

མི་འབར་གྱིས། may bahgi!

Thief!

རྒྱུ་མ་འདུག། kuma du!

Go away!

ཕར་རྒྱུགས། phah gyuk!

I'm ill.

ང་ན་གི་འདུག། nga nagidu

It's an emergency.

ཇི་དྲག་པོ་རེད། za dâgpo ray!

Call a doctor!

ཤེས་ཚིག་སྐད་གཏོང་དང། âmchi kay tongda!

Call the police!

སྐོར་ལུང་བསྐྱད་གཏོང་དང། korsoong-wa kay tongda!

I'm lost.

ང་ལམ་གཤམ་བརྒྱུགས་ཤག། nga lámga lasha

Where are the toilets?

གསལ་རྩོད་གཡམར་ཡོད་རེད། sângchö kabâh yöray?

hospital ལྷན་ཁང་ menkhâng
diarrhoea ལྷོད་ཞོག་བཤམ་པ་ drôko shewa
fever ཚེ་བ་ tsawa

Do you have a room available?

khâng mi yöbay?
ཁང་མིག་ཡོད་པས།

How much is it for one night?

tsen chik la katsö ray?
མཚོན་གཅིག་ལ་གཞི་དཔེ་རེད།

I'd like to stay with a Tibetan family.

nga böpay mi-tsâng nyâmdo dendö yö
ང་འོད་པའི་མི་ཚོར་མཉམ་དུ་བསྐྱད་འདོད་ཡིད།

I need some hot water.

ngala chu tsapo gö
ང་ལ་ཚུ་ཚོ་པོ་དགོས།

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello. བཀའ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལོགས། tashi dele
Goodbye. གཡེ་ལེ་ཕེབས། kalee pay
(when staying)
Goodbye. གཡེ་ལེ་བརྒྱུགས། kalee shu
(when leaving)
Thank you. ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཚེ། tujay chay
Sorry. དྲོགོངས་དུག། gonda
I want ... ང་ལ་ ... དགོས། nga la ... gö
good ཡག་པོ། yâg-po

What's your name?

kerâng gi tsenla kare ray?
ཁྱེད་རང་གི་མཚན་ལ་གཤམ་གི་རེད།

My name is ... – and yours?

ngai ming-la ... sa, a-ni kerâng-gi tsenla kare ray?
ངའི་མིང་ལ་ ... ཟ། ཡ་ནེ། ཁྱེད་རང་གི་མཚན་ལ་གཤམ་གི་རེད།

Is it OK to take a photo?

par gyâbna digiy-rebay?
ཕར་བརྒྱུ་བ་ན་འགྲིག་གི་རེད་པས།

Where are you from?

kerâng loong-pa ka-ne yin?
ཁྱེད་རང་ལུང་པ་གཤམ་གི་རྒྱུ།

I'm from ... nga ... ne yin ང་ ... ལྷས་ཡིན།
Australia autaliya ཨོ་ཏཱ་ལི་ཡ་
Canada canada ཁྲི་ན་ཏཱ་
New Zealand shinshilen ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷན་ཏཱ་
UK injee loongpa དབྱིན་ཇི་ལུང་པ་
USA amerika ཡམ་མི་རི་ཀ་

Yes & No

There are no words in Tibetan that are the direct equivalents of English 'yes' and 'no'. Although it won't always be correct, you'll be understood if you use la ong for 'yes' and la men for 'no'.

DIRECTIONS

Where is the ...?

... གཡམར་ཡོད་རེད།
... kabâh yö ray?

I'm looking for ...

... གཡམར་ཡོད་མིང་མིག་བརྒྱ་གི་ཡིད།
... ka-bâh yö-may mik tagiyö

right གཡལས་པ་ yeba
left གཡའོན་པ་ yönba
straight ahead འདར་རྒྱལ་ shar gya

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?

དབྱིན་ཇི་སྐད་ཤེས་གྱི་ཡོད་པས།
injeeke shing gi yö pe?

Do you speak English?

ཁྱེད་རང་དབྱིན་ཇི་སྐད་ཤེས་གྱི་ཡོད་པས།
kayrâng injikay shing-gi yöbay

I don't understand.

ཉ་གོ་མ་སོང།
ha ko masong

I understand.

ཉ་གོ་སོང།
ha kosong

NUMBERS

1 གཅིག་ chik
2 གཉིས་ nyi
3 གསུམ་ soom

4	ཤི	shi
5	ངག	nga
6	དུག	doog
7	དུན	dün
8	ཡེ	gye
9	གུ	gu
10	ཅུ	chu
11	ཅུ་ཅིག	chu chik
12	ཅུ་ཡི	chu nyi
13	ཅུ་ལྷུ་མ་	chok sum
14	ཅུ་ཤི	chu shi
15	ཅོ་ངག	chö nga
16	ཅུ་དུག	chu dug
17	ཅུ་དུན	chu dun
18	ཅོབ་ཡེ	chob gye
19	ཅུ་གུ	chu gu
20	ཉི་ཤུ	nyi shu
21	ཉི་ཤུ་ཅིག	nyi shu tsa chik
30	སུམ་ཅུ	soom chu
40	ཤིབ་ཅུ	shib chu
50	ངག་ཅུ	nga chu
60	དུག་ཅུ	doog chu
70	དུན་ཅུ	dün chu
80	ཡེ་ཅུ	gye chu
90	གུ་ཅུ	goob chu
100	གུ	gya
1000	ཅིག་ཅུ་	chik tong

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...

ང ... ཉོ་འདོད་ཡོད། nga ... nyondo yö

How much is it?

མོང་ག་ཚོད་རེད། gong katsö ray?

It's expensive.

མོང་ཚོན་པོ་རེད་ཤས། gong chenpo resha

I don't like it.

ཡོང་འགྲོ་མ་ཚོང་། loh doh masong

I'll take it.

དེ་ཉོ་གྱི་ཡིན། te nyogi yin

TIME & DATES

What's the time?

ཚུ་ཚོད་ག་ཚོད་རེད། chutsö katsö ray?

... hour ... minute

ཚུ་ཚོད་ ... ཟླ་མ་ ... chutsö ... karma ...

When?	ག་དུས་	kadü?
now	ད་ལྟ་	tända
today	དེ་རིང་	tering
tomorrow	མང་ཉིན་	sängnyi
yesterday	ཁ་སང་	kaysa
morning	ཚོག་ཚུན་	shogay
afternoon	ཉིན་དགུང་རྒྱབ་ལ་	nyin goong gyab la
evening/night	དགོང་དགུང་	gongta

SIGNS – TIBETAN

ཉེན་ག་	nyen-ga	Danger
འཇོལ་ས་	zü-sa	Entrance
དོན་ས་	dönsa	Exit
ཁ་བཀག་	kah kag	Stop
མོ་ཅུ་	go-chay	Open
ཚོག་འགྲུབ་	go-gyáb	Closed
པར་བརྒྱབ་མི་ཚོས་ག་	pah gyáb michok	No Photographs
མ་མག་འབེན་མི་ཚོས་ག་	thama ten michok	No Smoking
གསང་ཚུལ་	säng chö	Toilets

TRANSPORT

I want to go to ...

ང ... ལ་འགྲོ་འདོད་ཡོད།

nga ... la drandö yö

Can I get there on foot?

ཕ་གི་ར་གོ་མ་ལ་བརྒྱབ་ནས་སློབས་ལུབ་ཀྱི་རེད་པས།
phagay gomba gyábnay leb thoobki rebay?

Where is the bus going?

མོང་འདི་ག་ལ་འགྲོ་གི་རེད།
mota-di kabáh dohgi ray

Is this bus going to (Ganden Monastery)?

མོང་འདི་(དགའ་ལ་ལྷན་དགོན་པ་)འགྲོ་གི་རེད་པས།
mota di (ganden gomba) dohgi rebay?

What time do we leave?

ང་ཚོ་ཚུ་ཚོད་ག་ཚོད་ལ་འགྲོ་གི་ཡིན།
ngatso chutsö katsö dohgi yin?

What time do we arrive?

ང་ཚོ་ཚུ་ཚོད་ག་ཚོད་ལ་སློབ་གི་རེད།
ngatso chutsö katsö lepgi ray?

Where can I hire a bicycle?

རྒྱུ་རྒྱ་རི་ལ་གྲུ་ས་ག་ལ་པར་ཡོད་རེད།
kanggari lahsa kabah yo ray?

How much per day?

ཉིན་མ་གཅིག་གི་ལ་གོང་ག་ཚོད་རེད།
nyima chik-la gong katsö ray?

What time is the ... bus?

མོང་འདི་ ... ཚུ་ཚོད་ག་ཚོད་ལ་འགྲོ་གི་རེད།
mota ... chutsö katsay dohgi ray?

next	ཇེ་མ་མེད་	jema-te
first	དང་པོ་དེ་	tängpo-te
last	མ་བཟུང་མ་མེད་	thama-te

airport	ག་ན་མ་ལང་	nam-täng
bicycle	རྒྱུ་རྒྱ་རི་ལ་	käng gari
bus	ལྷི་ལྷི་དྲུང་རང་ས་འཁོར་/ མོང་འདི་	chichö längho/ mota
pack animals	ཁ་ལ་སོ་མས་ཅན་/ ཁ་ལ་མ་	kel semchen/ kelma
porter	དོཔ་ཁུར་མཁན་	dohpo khukhen
yak	ག་ལམ་ག་	yak

MANDARIN

Travellers going from China into Tibet or from Tibet onwards into China are well advised to pick up a Chinese phrasebook such as Lonely Planet's *Mandarin Phrasebook*. It should help you through most of your travel needs, in both Tibet and China.

PRONUNCIATION

The dialects of China are tonal, which means that variations in vocal pitch within words are used to determine their meaning. When learning Mandarin Chinese, the standard example given to demonstrate the principle of its four tones is *ma*:

- high tone: *mā* – ‘mother’
- rising tone: *má* – ‘hemp’ or ‘numb’
- falling-rising tone: *mǎ* – ‘horse’
- falling tone: *mà* – ‘scold’ or ‘swear’

Pinyin

The standard form of Romanisation for Mandarin adopted by China is known as Pinyin. It means literally ‘spell the sounds’, and once you get used to the idiosyncrasies of its spellings it is an accurate way of representing the sounds of Mandarin. The pronunciation of Pinyin spellings are by no means obvious to speakers of European languages, however, and need to be memorised. There’s no way of knowing, for example, that a Pinyin *x* is pronounced like an English ‘s’ or that *zh* is pronounced like a ‘j’.

Vowels

Pronunciation of Mandarin vowels can be fairly tricky for English speakers. In some instances they change depending on the consonant that precedes them, and in others they’re sounds that aren’t used in English.

The following examples of vowel sounds follow standard British pronunciation.

a	as in ‘father’
ai	as in ‘aisle’
ao	as the ‘ow’ in ‘cow’
e	as in ‘her’
ei	as in ‘rein’
i	as in ‘police’ when preceded by j, q, x or y
i	as in ‘fir’ when preceded by other consonants

ian	as in ‘yen’
iao	as in the exclamation ‘yow!’
ie	as in ‘pier’
o	as in ‘or’
ou	as the ‘oa’ in ‘boat’
u	as in ‘flute’ after j, q, x or y
u	as in ‘rude’ when preceded by other consonants
ü	as the ‘u’ in ‘flute’
ui	as the word ‘way’
uo	as the word ‘war’

Consonants

Many Mandarin consonants are pronounced differently from their English equivalents. Some pairs of consonants have the same pronunciation as each other (eg **q** and **c** sound the same), but the sound of the following vowel changes depending on which is used. Thus **ci** is pronounced ‘tser’, while **qi** is pronounced ‘tsee’. There are three such pairs of consonants in Pinyin: **c/q, j/z,** and **s/x**.

c	as the ‘ts’ in ‘bits’
ch	as the ‘ch’ in ‘church’
j	as the ‘ds’ in ‘suds’
h	as the guttural ‘ch’ in Scottish <i>loch</i>
q	as the ‘ts’ in ‘bits’
r	between an English ‘r’ and the ‘s’ in ‘pleasure’
s	as in ‘sock’
sh	as in ‘shack’
x	as the ‘s’ in ‘sock’
z	as the ‘ds’ in ‘suds’
zh	as the ‘j’ in ‘judge’

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...

<i>Wòyào zhǎo ...</i>	我要找...
guesthouse	
<i>bīnguǎn</i>	宾馆
hotel	
<i>lǚguǎn</i>	旅馆

Do you have a room available?

Nimen yǒu fángjiān ma
你们有房间吗?

May I see the room?

Wǒ néng kànkan fángjiān ma
我能看看房间吗?

Where's the bathroom?

Yùshì zài nǎr?
浴室在哪儿?

Where's the toilet?

Cèsuǒ zài nǎr?
厕所在哪儿?

How much is it ...?

... duōshǎo qián? ... 多少钱?
per night
měitiān wǎnshàng 每天晚上
per person
měigerén 每个人

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello. Nín hǎo. 您好
Goodbye. Zàijiàn. 再见
Please. Qǐng. 请
Thank you. Xièxie. 谢谢
Many thanks. Duōxiè. 多谢
You're welcome. Búkèqì. 不客气
Excuse me, ... Qǐng wèn, ... 请问, ...

Yes & No

There are no words in Mandarin that specifically mean 'yes' and 'no' when used in isolation. When asked a question the verb is repeated to indicate the affirmative. A response in the negative is formed by using the word 不 *bù* (meaning 'no') before the verb. When *bù* (falling tone) occurs before another word with a falling tone, it becomes *bú* (ie with a rising tone).

Are you going to Shanghai?

Nǐ qù shànghǎi ma? 你去上海吗?

Yes.
Qù. (go) 去
No.
Bú qù. (no go) 不去

No.
Méi yǒu. (don't have) 没有
No.
Búshì. (not so) 不是

DIRECTIONS

Where is (the) ...?
... zài nǎr? ... 在哪儿?

Go straight ahead.
Yízhí zǒu. 一直走

Turn left.
Zuǒ zhuǎn. 左转

Turn right.
Yòu zhuǎn. 右转

at the next corner
zài xià yíqe guǎijiǎo 在下一个拐角

EMERGENCIES

Help!
Jiùmíng a! 救命啊!

There's been an accident!
Chūshìle! 出事了!

I'm lost.
Wǒ mílùle. 我迷路了

Go away!
Zǒu kāi! 走开!

Leave me alone!
Bié fán wǒ! 别烦我!

Could you help me please?
Nǐ néng bunéng bāng wǒ ge máng?
你能不能帮我个忙?

Call ...!
Qǐng jiào ...! 请叫...!

a doctor
yīshēng 医生
the police
jǐngchá 警察

at the traffic lights

zài hónglǜdēng 在红绿灯

Could you show me (on the map)?

Nǐ néng bunéng (zài dìtú shàng) zhǐ gěi wǒ kàn?
你能不能(在地图上)指给我看?

behind
hòubianr 后边儿
in front of
qiánbianr 前边儿
near
jìn 近
far
yuǎn 远
opposite
duìmiàn 对面儿

HEALTH

I'm sick.
Wǒ bìngle.
我病了

It hurts here.
Zhèr tēng.
这儿疼

Is there a doctor here who speaks English?

Zhèr yǒu huì jiǎng yīngyǔ de dàifū ma?
这儿有会讲英语的大夫吗?

I'm ...
Wǒ yǒu ... 我有...

asthmatic
xiàochuānbìng 哮喘病
diabetic
tángniǎobìng 糖尿病
epileptic
diānxiánbìng 癫痫病

I'm allergic to ...

Wǒ duì ... guòmǐn. 我对... 过敏

antibiotics
kàngjūnsù 抗菌素

aspirin
āsīpīlín 阿司匹林

bee stings
mífēng zhēcì 蜜蜂蜇刺

nuts.
guǒrén 果仁

penicillin
qīngmésù 青霉素

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak English?**

Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?
你会说英语吗?

Does anyone here speak English?

Zhèr yǒu rén huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?
这儿有人会说英语吗?

I understand.

Wǒ tīngdedǒng.
我听得懂

I don't understand.

Wǒ tīngbudǒng.
我听不懂

NUMBERS

0	líng	零
1	yī, yāo	一, 幺
2	èr, liǎng	二, 两
3	sān	三
4	sì	四
5	wǔ	五
6	liù	六
7	qī	七
8	bā	八
9	jiǔ	九
10	shí	十
11	shíyī	十一
12	shí'èr	十二
20	èrshí	二十
21	èrshíyī	二十一
22	èrshíèr	二十二
30	sānshí	三十
40	sìshí	四十
50	wǔshí	五十
60	liùshí	六十
70	qīshí	七十
80	bāshí	八十
90	jiǔshí	九十
100	yībǎi	一百
1000	yìqiān	一千

SIGNS – MANDARIN

入口	Rùkǒu	Entrance
出口	Chūkǒu	Exit
问讯处	Wènxūnchù	Information
开	Kāi	Open
关	Guān	Closed
禁止	Jìnzhǐ	Prohibited
有空房	Yǒu Kòngfáng	Rooms Available
客满	Kèmǎn	No Vacancies
警察局	Jǐngchájú	Police Station
厕所	Cèsuǒ	Toilets
男	Nán	Men
女	Nǚ	Women

PAPERWORK

name	xìngmíng	姓名
nationality	guójí	国籍
date of birth	chūshēng rìqī	出生日期
place of birth	chūshēng dìdiǎn	出生地点
sex (gender)	xìngbié	性别
passport	hùzhào	护照
visa	qiānzhèng	签证
visa extension	yǎncháng	延长签证

Public Security Bureau (PSB)	gōng'ānjú	公安局
Foreign Affairs Branch	wàishìkè	外事科

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...
Wǒ xiǎng mǎi ... 我想买...

How much is it?
Duōshǎo qián? 多少钱?

I don't like it.
Wǒ bù xǐhuan. 我不喜欢

That's too expensive.
Tài guile. 太贵了

I'll take it.
Wǒ jiù mǎi zhèige. 我就买这个

TIME & DATES

What's the time?
Jǐ diǎn? 几点?

... hour ... minute(s)
... diǎn ... fēn ... 点...分

When?	Shénme shíhòu?	什么时候?
now	xiànzài	现在
today	jīntiān	今天
tomorrow	míngtiān	明天
yesterday	zuótiān	昨天

TRANSPORT

I want to go to ...

Wǒ yào qù ...

我要去...

I'd like to hire a bicycle.

Wǒ yào zū yíliàng zìxíngchē.

我要租一辆自行车

What time does ... leave/arrive?

... jǐdiǎn kāi/dào?

... 几点开/到?

intercity bus/coach

chángtú qìchē

长途汽车

microbus taxi

miànbāochē, miàndī

面包车, 面的

the plane

fēijī

飞机

When's the ... bus?

... bānchē shénme shíhòu lái?

... 班车什么时候来?

first

tóu

头

last

mò

末

next

xià

下

I'd like a ...

Wǒ yào yíge ...

我要一个...

one way ticket

dānchéng piào

单程票

return ticket

láihuí piào

来回票



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Tibetan Phrasebook, Mandarin Phrasebook

Glossary

For ease of reference, this glossary is divided into two sections. The first section, 'Who's Who', provides succinct descriptions of some of the deities, historical figures and other people mentioned in this book. The second section covers general terms used. Non-English terms are always given in Tibetan, unless otherwise indicated. (S) denotes Sanskrit, (M) denotes Mandarin.

WHO'S WHO

Many of the terms in this section are of Sanskrit origin. Generally, the main entries are the Tibetan terms. An exception is Sakyamuni (Sakya Thukpa), in which case the Sanskrit 'Sakyamuni' is commonly used in Tibet. For more information on who's who in Tibet, see the Tibetan Buddhism chapter.

Akshobhya – see *Mikyöba*

Amitabha – see *Öpagme*

Amitayus – see *Tsepame*

Atisha – see *Jowo-je*

Avalokiteshvara – see *Chenresig*

Bhrikuti – the Nepali consort of King Songtsen Gampo
Büton Rinchen Drup – compiler of the Tibetan Buddhist canon; established a sub-school of Tibetan Buddhism, based in Shalu Monastery

Chana Dorje (*Sanskrit: Vajrapani*) – the wrathful Bodhisattva of Energy whose name means 'thunderbolt in hand'

Chenresig (*Sanskrit: Avalokiteshvara*) – an embodiment of compassionate bodhisattvahood and the patron saint of Tibet; the Dalai Lamas are considered to be manifestations of this deity

Chögyel (*Sanskrit: Dharmaraja*) – Gelugpa protector deity; blue, with the head of a bull

Chökyong (*Sanskrit: Lokapalas*) – the Four Guardian Kings

Citipati – dancing skeletons, often seen in protector chapels

Dalai Lama – spiritual heads of the Gelugpa order, ruled over Tibet from 1642 until 1959; the term is an honorific title that means 'ocean of wisdom' and was bestowed by the Mongolian Altyn Khan; believed to be the manifestation of Chenresig (Avalokiteshvara); the present (14th) Dalai Lama resides in Dharamsala, India

Dharmaraja – see *Chögyel*

Dorje Chang (*Sanskrit: Vajradhara*) – one of the five Dhyani buddhas, recognisable by his crossed arms holding a bell and thunderbolt

Dorje Drolo – wrathful form of Guru Rinpoche, seated on a tiger

Dorje Jigje (*Sanskrit: Yamantaka*) – a meditational deity who comes in various aspects; the Red and Black aspects are probably the most common

Dorje Lekpa – Dzogchen deity, recognisable by his round green hat and goat mount

Dorje Semba (*Sanskrit: Vajrasattva*) – Buddha of purification

Dorje Shugden – controversial protector deity outlawed by the Dalai Lama

Dröлма (*Sanskrit: Tara*) – a female meditational deity who is a manifestation of the enlightened mind of all buddhas; she is sometimes referred to as the mother of all buddhas, and has many aspects, but is most often seen as Green Tara or as Drölkar (White Tara)

Dromtönpa – 11th-century disciple of Jowo-je (*Atisha*) who founded the Kadampa order and Reting Monastery
Dusum Sangye – Trinity of the Past, Present and Future Buddhas

Ekajati – see *Tsechigma*

Gesar – a legendary king and also the name of an epic concerning his fabulous exploits; the king's empire is known as Ling, and thus the stories, which are usually sung and told by professional bards, are known as the *Stories of Ling*

Gompo Gur – a form of Nagpo Chenpo (Mahakala) and protector of the Sakyapa school

Guru Rinpoche – credited with having suppressed demons and other malevolent forces in order to introduce Buddhism into Tibet during the 8th century; in the Nyingmapa order he is revered as the Second Buddha

Hayagriva – see *Tamdrin*

Jamchen Chöde – disciple of Tsongkhapa and founder of Sera Monastery; also known as Sakyas Yeshe

Jampa (*Sanskrit: Maitreya*) – the Buddha of Loving Kindness; also the Future Buddha, the fifth of the 1000 buddhas who will descend to earth (Sakyamuni or Sakya Thukpa was the fourth)

Jampelyang (*Sanskrit: Manjushri*) – the Bodhisattva of Insight; usually depicted holding a sword, which symbolises discriminative awareness, in one hand, and a

book, which symbolises his mastery of all knowledge, in the other

Jamyang Chöje – founder of Drepung Monastery

Je Rinpoche – see *Tsongkhapa*

Jowo-je (*Sanskrit*: Atisha) – 11th-century Buddhist scholar from contemporary Bengal whose arrival in Tibet at the invitation of the king of Guge was a catalyst for the revival of Buddhism on the high plateau

Jowo Sakyamuni – the most revered image of Sakyamuni (Sakya Thukpa) in Tibet, it depicts the Historical Buddha at the age of 12 and is kept in the Jokhang in Lhasa

Karmapa – a lineage (17 so far) of spiritual leaders of the Karma Kagyupa; also known as the Black Hats

Khenlop Chösüm – Trinity of Guru Rinpoche, Trisong Detsen and Shantarakshita, found at Samye Monastery

Kunga Gyaltzen – see *Sakya Pandita*

Langdharma – the 9th-century Tibetan king accused of having persecuted Buddhists

Lokapalas – see *Chökyong*

Longchen Rabjampa – (1308–63) *Nyingmapa* and *Dzogchen* teacher and writer, revered as a manifestation of Jampelyang; also known as Longchenpa

Machik Labdronma – (1031–1129) female yogini connected to Shugsheb Nunnery

Maitreya – see *Jampa*

Mahakala – Sanskrit name for Nagpo Chenpo

Manjushri – see *Jampelyang*

Marpa – 11th-century ascetic whose disciple, Milarepa, founded the Kagyupa order

Mikyöba (*Sanskrit*: Akshobhya) – the Buddha of the State of Perfected Consciousness, or Perfect Cognition; literally ‘unchanging’, ‘the immutable one’

Milarepa – (1040–1123) disciple of Marpa and founder of the Kagyupa order; renowned for his songs

Nagpo Chenpo – The Great Black One, wrathful manifestation of Chenresig that carries echoes of the Indian god Shiva; see *Mahakala*

Namgyelma – three-faced, eight-armed female deity and one of the three deities of longevity

Name (*Sanskrit*: Vairocana) – Buddha of Enlightened Consciousness, generally white; also a renowned Tibetan translator

Namtöse (*Sanskrit*: Vaishravana) – the Guardian of the North, one of the Lokapalas or Four Guardian Kings

Nechung – protector deity of Tibet and the Dalai Lamas; manifested in the State Oracle, who is traditionally installed at Nechung Monastery

Nyenchen Tanglha – mountain spirit and protector deity that has its roots in Bön

Nyentri Tsenpo – legendary first king of Tibet

Öpagme (*Sanskrit*: Amitabha) – the Buddha of Perfected Perception; literally ‘infinite light’

Palden Lhamo (*Sanskrit*: Shri Devi) – special protector of Lhasa, the Dalai Lama and the Gelugpa order; the female counterpart of Nagpo Chenpo (*Mahakala*)

Panchen Lama – literally ‘guru and great teacher’; the lineage is associated with Tashilhunpo Monastery, Shigatse, and goes back to the 17th century; the Panchen Lama is a manifestation of Öpagme (*Amitabha*)

Peihar – oracle and protector of the Buddhist state, depicted with six arms, wearing a round hat and riding a snow lion

Rahulla – *Dzogchen* deity with nine heads, eyes all over his body, a mouth in his belly and the lower half of a serpent (coiled on the dead body of ego)

Ralpachen – 9th-century king whose assassination marked the end of the Yarlung Valley dynasty

Rigsum Gonpo – trinity of bodhisattvas consisting of Chenresig (*Avalokiteshvara*), Jampelyang (*Manjushri*) and Chana Dorje (*Vajrapani*)

Rinchen Zangpo – (958–1055) The Great Translator, who travelled to India for 17 years and established monasteries across Ladakh, Spiti and Western Tibet

Sakya Pandita (S) – literally ‘scholar from Sakya’; former abbot of Sakya Monastery who established the priest-patron system with the Mongols; also known as Kunga Gyaltzen

Sakyamuni (S) – literally ‘sage of Sakya’; the founder of Buddhism, the Historical Buddha; known in Tibetan as Sakya Thukpa; see also *Siddhartha Gautama* and *buddha*

Sakya Thukpa – see *Sakyamuni*

Samvara – a wrathful multi-armed deity and manifestation of Sakyamuni (*Demchok* in Tibetan)

Shantarakshita – Indian scholar of the 8th century and first abbot of Samye Monastery; Kende Shewa in Tibetan

Shenrab – founder of the Bön faith

Shiromo – Bönpo deity, the equivalent of Sakyamuni

Shri Devi – see *Palden Lhamo*

Siddhartha Gautama (S) – the personal name of the Historical Buddha; see also *Sakyamuni* (Sakya Thukpa)

Songtsen Gampo – the 7th-century king associated with the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet

Tamdrin (*Sanskrit*: Hayagriva) – literally ‘horse necked’; a wrathful meditational deity and manifestation of Chenresig, usually associated with the *Nyingmapa* order

Tangtong Gyelpo – (1385–1464) Tibetan yogi, treasure finder (*terton*), bridge builder, medic and developer of Tibetan opera; often depicted holding a chain link in his hands

Tara – see *Drölma*

Tenzin Gyatso – the 14th and current Dalai Lama

Terdak Lingpa – founder of Mindroling Monastery

Trisong Detsen – 8th-century Tibetan king; founder of Samye Monastery

Tsechigma (*Sanskrit*: Ekajati) – protectress with one eye, one tooth and one breast, associated with the *Dzogchen* movement

Tsepame (*Sanskrit*: Amitayus) – a meditational deity associated with longevity; literally ‘limitless life’; often featured in a trinity with *Drölma* (*Tara*) and *Namgyelma* (*Vijaya*)

Tseringma – protector goddess of Mt Everest, depicted riding a snow lion

Tsongkhapa – 14th-century founder of the Gelugpa order and Ganden Monastery, also known as ‘Je Rinpoche’

Vairocana – see *Name*

Vaishravana – see *Namtöse*

Vajradhara – see *Dorje Chang*

Vajrapani – see *Chana Dorje*

Vajrasattva – see *Dorje Semba*

Vijaya – Sanskrit name for *Namgyelma*

Wencheng – Chinese wife of King Songtsen Gampo; called Wencheng Konjo in Tibetan

Yama (S) – Lord of Death, who resides in sky burial sites

Yamantaka – see *Dorje Jigje*

Yeshe Tsoygel – female consort of Guru Rinpoche and one-time wife of King Trisong Detsen

GENERAL TERMS

Amdo – a traditional province of Tibet, now Qinghai province

AMS – acute mountain sickness; often referred to as altitude sickness

ani – Tibetan for ‘nun’, as in ‘*ani gompa*’ (nunnery)

arhat (S) – literally ‘worthy one’; a person who has achieved nirvana; the Tibetan term is ‘*neten*’

Bardo – as detailed in ‘The Tibetan Book of the Dead’, this term refers to the intermediate stages between death and rebirth

Barkhor – an intermediate circumambulation circuit, or *kora*, but most often specifically the intermediate circuit around the Jokhang temple of Lhasa

binguan (M) – guesthouse or hotel

Black Hat – strictly speaking, this refers to the black hat embellished with gold that was presented to the second Karmapa of the Karma Kagyupa order of Tsurphu Monastery by a Mongol prince, and worn ceremoniously by all subsequent incarnations of the Karmapa; by extension the black hat represents the Karma Kagyupa order

Bö – Tibetans’ name for their own land, sometimes written ‘Bod’ or ‘Po’

Bodhgaya – the place in contemporary Bihar, India, where Sakyamuni, the Historical Buddha, attained enlightenment

bodhisattva (S) – literally ‘enlightenment hero’; the bodhisattva chooses not to take the step to nirvana, being motivated to stay within the Wheel of Life by compassion for all sentient beings

Bön – the indigenous religion of Tibet and the Himalayan borderlands; in its ancient form its main components were royal burial rites, the cult of indigenous deities and magical practices; in the 11th century, Bön was systematised along Buddhist lines and it is this form that survives today

Bönpo – a practitioner of Bön

buddha (S) – literally ‘awakened one’; a being who through spiritual training has broken free of all illusion and karmic consequences and is ‘enlightened’; most often specifically the Historical Buddha, Sakyamuni

Büton – suborder of Tibetan Buddhism based on the teachings of Büton Rinchen Drup, the 14th-century compiler of the major Buddhist texts; associated with Shalu Monastery, near Shigatse

CAAC – Civil Aviation Authority of China

chakje – handprint of a deity or a religious figure made in rock

chaktsal – ritual prostration

chaktsal gang – prostration point

cham – a ritual dance carried out by monks and lamas, usually at festivals; all participants except the central lama are masked

chang – Tibetan barley beer

Changtang – vast plains of north Tibet extending into Xinjiang and Qinghai; the world’s largest and highest plateau

chö – see *dharma*

chömay – butter lamp

chörten – Tibetan for stupa; usually used as reliquary for the cremated remains of important lamas

chu – river, stream, brook etc

chuba – long-sleeved sheepskin cloak

CITS – China International Travel Service

CTS – China Travel Service

cun (M) – village; ‘*tsun*’ in Tibetan

dakini – see *khandroma*

dharma (S) – ‘*chö*’ in Tibetan, and sometimes translated as ‘law’, this very broad term covers the truths expounded by Sakyamuni, the Buddhist teachings, the Buddhist path, and the Buddhist goal of nirvana; in effect it is the ‘law’ that must be understood, followed and achieved in order for one to be a Buddhist

doring – stele; carved obelisk commemorating a historic event or edict

dorje – literally ‘diamond’ or ‘thunderbolt’; a metaphor for the indestructible, indivisible nature of buddhahood; also a Tantric hand-held sceptre symbolising ‘skilful means’

drokpa – nomad

drubkhang – meditation chamber

dukhang – assembly hall
dukkha (S) – suffering, the essential condition of all life
dungkhar – conch shell
dürtro – sky-burial site
dzo – domesticated cross between a bull and a female yak
Dzogchen – the Great Perfection teachings associated with the Nyingmapa order
dzong – fort

Eightfold Path – one of the Four Noble Truths taught by Sakyamuni; the path that must be taken to achieve enlightenment and liberation from the Wheel of Life

FIT office – Family (or Foreign) and Independent Traveller office

Four Noble Truths – as stated in the first speech given by Sakyamuni after he achieved enlightenment, the Four Noble Truths are: the truth that all life is suffering; the truth that suffering originates in desire; the truth that desire may be extinguished; and the truth that there is a path to this end

Ganden (S) – the pure land of Jampa (Maitreya), and the seat of the Gelugpa order; '*Tushita*' in Tibetan
garuda – mythological bird associated with Hinduism; in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism it is seen as a wrathful force that transforms malevolent influences; '*khyung*' in Sanskrit
gau – an amulet or 'portable shrine' worn around the neck, containing the image of an important spiritual figure, usually the Dalai Lama

Gelugpa – major order of Tibetan Buddhism, associated with the Dalai Lamas, the Panchen Lamas and Drepung, Sera, Ganden and Tashilhunpo Monasteries; founded by Tsongkhapa in the 14th century and sometimes known as the Yellow Hats

geshe – title awarded on completion of the highest level of study (something like a doctorate) that monks may undertake after completing their full indoctrinal vows; usually associated with the Gelugpa order

gompa – monastery

gönkhang – protector chapel

Guge – a 9th-century kingdom of western Tibet

guru (S) – spiritual teacher; literally 'heavy'; the Tibetan equivalent is lama

Hinayana (S) – also called Theravada, this is a major school of Buddhism that follows the original teachings of the Historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, and places less importance on the compassionate bodhisattva ideal and more on individual enlightenment; see also *Mahayana*

Jokhang – situated in Lhasa, this is the most sacred and one of the most ancient of Tibet's temples; also known as the Tsughakhang

Kadampa – order of Tibetan Buddhism based on the teachings of the Indian scholar Atisha (Jowo-je); the school was a major influence on the Gelugpa order

Kagyupa – order of Tibetan Buddhism that traces its lineage back through Milarepa and Marpa and eventually to the Indian mahasiddhas; divided into numerous suborders, the most famous of which is the Karma Kagyupa, or the Karmapa; also known as Kagyud
kangtsang – monastic residential quarters

Kangyur – the Tibetan Buddhist canon; its complement is the Tengyur

karma (S) – action and its consequences, the psychic 'imprint' that action leaves on the mind and that continues into further rebirths; the term is found in both Hinduism and Buddhism, and may be likened to the law of cause and effect

Karma Kagyupa – suborder of the Kagyupa order, established by Gampopa and Dusum Khyenpa in the 12th century; represented by the Black Hat

Kashag – the cabinet of the Gelugpa lamaist government

kathak – prayer scarf; used as a ritual offering or as a gift

Kham – traditional eastern Tibetan province; much of it is now part of western Sichuan and northwestern Yunnan

Khampa – a person from Kham

khandroma (*Sanskrit*: dakini) – literally 'sky dancer' or 'sky walker'; a flying angel-like astral being that communicates between the worlds of Buddhas, man and demons

Khangjung – Land of Snows

khenpo – abbot

kora – ritual circumambulation circuit; pilgrimage circuit

kumbum – literally '100,000 images', this is a chörten that contains statuary and paintings; the most famous in Tibet is the Gyantse Kumbum in Tsang

la – mountain pass

lama – literally 'unsurpassed'; Tibetan equivalent of guru; a title bestowed on monks of particularly high spiritual attainment

lamaism – term used by early Western writers on the subject of Tibet to describe Tibetan Buddhism; also used by the Chinese in the term '*lamajiao*', literally 'lama religion'

lamrim – the stages on the path to enlightenment; a graduated approach to enlightenment as expounded by Tsongkhapa; associated with the Gelugpa order

lapse – a cairn

lha – life spirit; it may also be present in inanimate objects such as lakes, mountains and trees

lhakhang – chapel

ling – Tibetan term meaning 'royal', usually associated with lesser, outlying temples

lingkhor – an outer pilgrimage circuit; famously, the outer pilgrimage of Lhasa

Losar – Tibetan New Year

lu (M) – road; see also *naga*

mahasiddha – literally 'of great spiritual accomplishment'; a Tantric practitioner who has reached a high level of awareness; there are 84 famous mahasiddhas; the Tibetan term is '*drubchen*'

Mahayana (S) – the other major school of Buddhism along with Hinayana; this school emphasises compassion and the altruism of the bodhisattva who remains on the Wheel of Life for the sake of all sentient beings

mandala – a circular representation of the three-dimensional world of a meditational deity; used as a meditation device; the Tibetan term is '*kyilkhor*'

mani – prayer

mani lhakhang – small chapel housing a single large prayer wheel

mani stone – a stone with the mantra '*om mani padme hum*' ('hail to the jewel in the lotus') carved on it

mani wall – a wall made with mani stones

mantra (S) – literally 'protection of the mind'; one of the Tantric devices used to achieve identity with a meditational deity and break through the world of illusion; a series of syllables recited as the pure sound made by an enlightened being

meditational deity – a deified manifestation of the enlightened mind with which, according to Tantric ritual, the adept seeks union and thus experience of enlightenment

momo – Tibetan dumpling

Mönlam – a major Lhasa festival established by Tsongkhapa

Mt Meru – the sacred mountain at the centre of the universe; also known as Sumeru

naga (S) – water spirits that may take the form of serpents or semi-humans; the latter can be seen in images of the *naga* kings; the Tibetan term is '*lu*'

nangkhor – inner circumambulation circuit, usually within the interior of a temple or monastic assembly hall, and taking in various chapels en route

neten – see *arhat*

Newari – the people of the Nepali Buddhist kingdoms in the Kathmandu Valley

Ngorpa – subschool of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism founded by Ngorchen Kunga Sangpo and based at Ngor Monastery in Tsang

Ngari – ancient name for the province of western Tibet; later incorporated into Ütsang

nirvana (S) – literally 'beyond sorrow'; an end to desire and suffering, and an end to the cycle of rebirth

Norbulingka – the summer palace of the Dalai Lamas in Lhasa

Nyingmapa – the earliest order of Tibetan Buddhism, based largely on the Buddhism brought to Tibet by Guru Rinpoche

'*om mani padme hum*' – this mantra means 'hail to the jewel in the lotus' and is associated with Chenresig, patron deity of Tibet

oracle – in Tibetan Buddhism an oracle serves as a medium for protective deities, as in the State Oracle of Nechung Monastery near Drepung, Lhasa; the State Oracle was consulted on all important matters of state

Pandita – a title conferred on great scholars of Buddhism, as in Sakya Pandita

parikrama – the Hindu equivalent of a kora

PLA – People's Liberation Army (Chinese army)

PRC – People's Republic of China

protector deities – deities who can manifest themselves in either male or female forms and serve to protect Buddhist teachings and followers; they may be either wrathful aspects of enlightened beings or worldly powers who have been tamed by *Tantric* masters; the Tibetan term is '*chojung*'

PSB – Public Security Bureau; the Chinese term is '*gong'anju*'

puk – cave

pure lands – otherworldly realms that are the domains of buddhas; realms completely free of suffering, and in the popular Buddhist imagination are probably something like the Christian heaven

Qiang – proto-Tibetan tribes that troubled the borders of the Chinese empire

Qomolangma – Tibetan name for Mt Everest as transliterated by the Chinese; also spelt 'Chomolangma'

Qu (M) – administrative district

rangjung – self-manifesting or self-arising; for example, a rock spire could be a *rangjung* chörten

rebirth – a condition of the Wheel of Life; all beings experience limitless rebirths until they achieve enlightenment

regent – a representative of an incarnate lama who presides over a monastic community during the lama's minority; regents came to play an important political role in the Gelugpa lamaist government

ri – mountain

Rinpoche – literally 'high in esteem', a title bestowed on highly revered lamas; such lamas are usually incarnate but this is not a requirement

ritrö – hermitage

RMB – acronym for Renminbi or 'people's money', the currency of China

rogyapas – the 'body breakers' who prepare bodies for sky burial

sadhu – an Indian ascetic who has renounced all attachments

Saga Dawa – festival held at the full moon of the fourth lunar month to celebrate the enlightenment of Sakyamuni

Sakyapa – Tibetan Buddhist order associated with Sakya Monastery and founded in the 11th century; also known as the Red Hats

samsara (S) – ‘*kyor dumi*’ in Tibetan; the cycle of birth, death and rebirth

Samye – the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, founded by King Trisong Detsen in the 8th century

sang – incense

sangha (S) – community of Buddhist monks or nuns

sangkang – pot-bellied incense burners

Sanskrit – ancient language of India, a classical mode of expression with the status that Latin had in earlier Western society

self-arising – thought to have been created naturally (ie not by humans); often applied to rock carvings; see also *rangjung*

serdung – golden funeral stupa

shabje – footprint of a deity or a religious figure made in rock that has become a sacred icon

Shambhala – the mythical great northern paradise, believed to be near the Kunlun mountains

Shangshung – ancient kingdom of western Tibet and place of origin of the Bön faith

shedra – Buddhist college

sky burial – funerary practice of chopping up the corpses of the dead in designated high places (*dirtro*) and leaving them for the birds

spirit trap – collection of coloured threads wrapped around a wooden frame, used to trap evil spirits

stupa – see *chörtén*

sutra (S) – Buddhist scriptures that record the teachings of the Historical Buddha, Sakyamuni

Tantra – scriptures and oral lineages associated with Tantric Buddhism

Tantric – of Tantric Buddhism, a movement combining mysticism with Buddhist scripture

TAR – Tibetan Autonomous Region

tarchok – string of prayer flags

Tengyur – a Tibetan Buddhist canonical text of collected commentaries on the teachings of Sakyamuni

terma – ‘discovered’ or ‘revealed’ teachings; teachings that have been hidden until the world is ready to receive them; one of the most famous *termas* is *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*

terton – discoverer of *terma*, sometimes referred to as a ‘treasure finder’

thamzing (M) – ‘struggle sessions’, a misconceived Chinese tool for changing the ideological orientation of individuals; ultimately a coercive tool that encouraged deceit under the threat of torture

thangka – a Tibetan religious painting usually framed by a silk brocade

Theravada – see *Hinayana*

thugpa – traditional Tibetan noodle dish

torana – halo-like garland that surrounds Buddhist statues

torma – offerings of sculptured *tsampa*

trapa – Tibetan for ‘monk’

tratsang – monastic college

Tripa – the post of abbot at Ganden Monastery; head of the Gelugpa order

trulku – incarnate lama, sometimes inaccurately called a ‘Living Buddha’ by the Chinese

tsampa – roasted-barley flour, traditional staple of the Tibetan people

tsangkhang – inner chapel

tsangpo – large river

tsatsa – stamped clay religious icons

tsenyi lhakhang – debating hall

tso – ‘lake’

tsogchen – cathedral or great chapel, also an assembly hall

tsuglhakhang – literally ‘grand temple’, but often specifically the Jokhang of Lhasa

TTB – Tibetan Tourism Bureau

Ütsang – the area comprising the provinces of Ü and Tsang, also incorporating Ngari, or western Tibet; effectively central Tibet, the political, historical and agricultural heartland of Tibet

Vajrayana (S) – literally the ‘diamond vehicle’, a branch of Mahayana Buddhism that finds a more direct route to bodhisattvahood through identification with meditational deities; vajrayana is the Sanskrit term for the form of Buddhism found in Tibet, known in the West as tantrism

Wheel of Life – this term refers to the cyclical nature of existence and the six realms where rebirth take place; often depicted in monasteries

xian (M) – country town

xiang (M) – village

yabyum – Tantric sexual union, symbolising the mental union of female insight and male compassion; fierce deities are often depicted in yabyum with their consorts

yidam – see *meditational deity*; may also have the function of being a personal protector deity that looks over an individual or family

yogin – an adept of Tibetan Buddhist techniques for achieving a union with the fundamental nature of reality (‘yoga’ in Sanskrit); the techniques include meditation and identification with a meditational deity

yuan (M) – unit of Chinese currency

zhaodaisuo (M) – guesthouse, usually a basic hostel

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