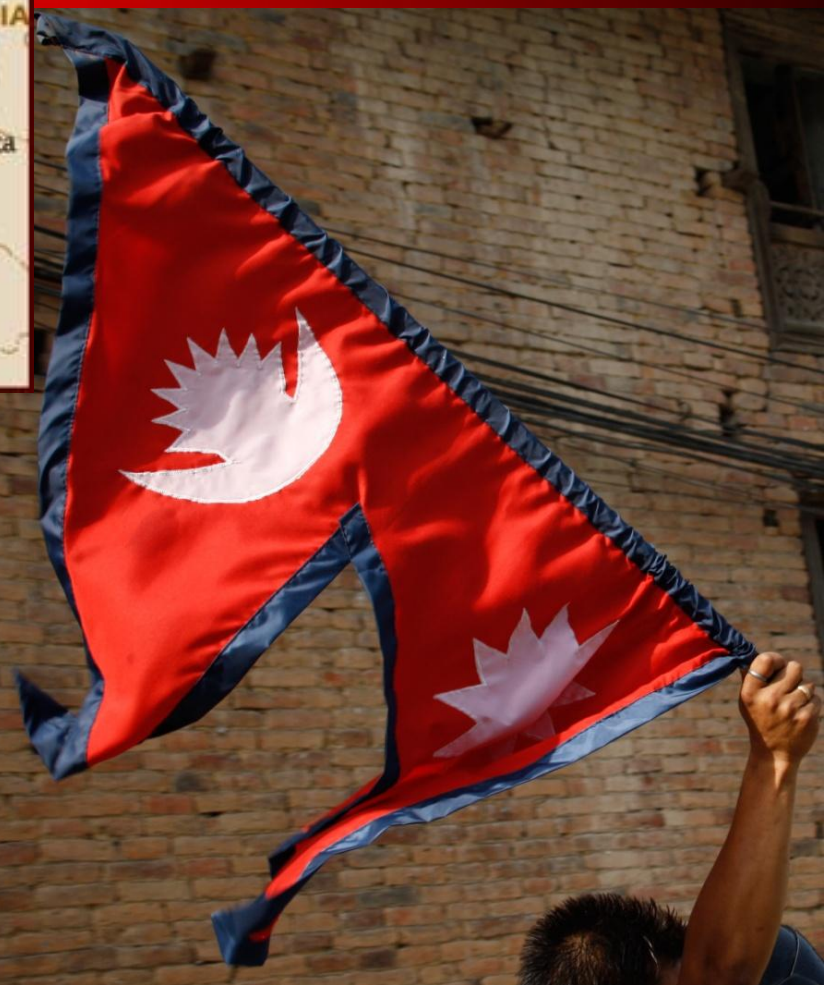


NEPAL



Nepal



By Beth Steadman

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Location

- Nepal is a completely landlocked country located on the continent of Asia.
- Nepal is also known more formally as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.
- The capital of Nepal is Kathmandu.



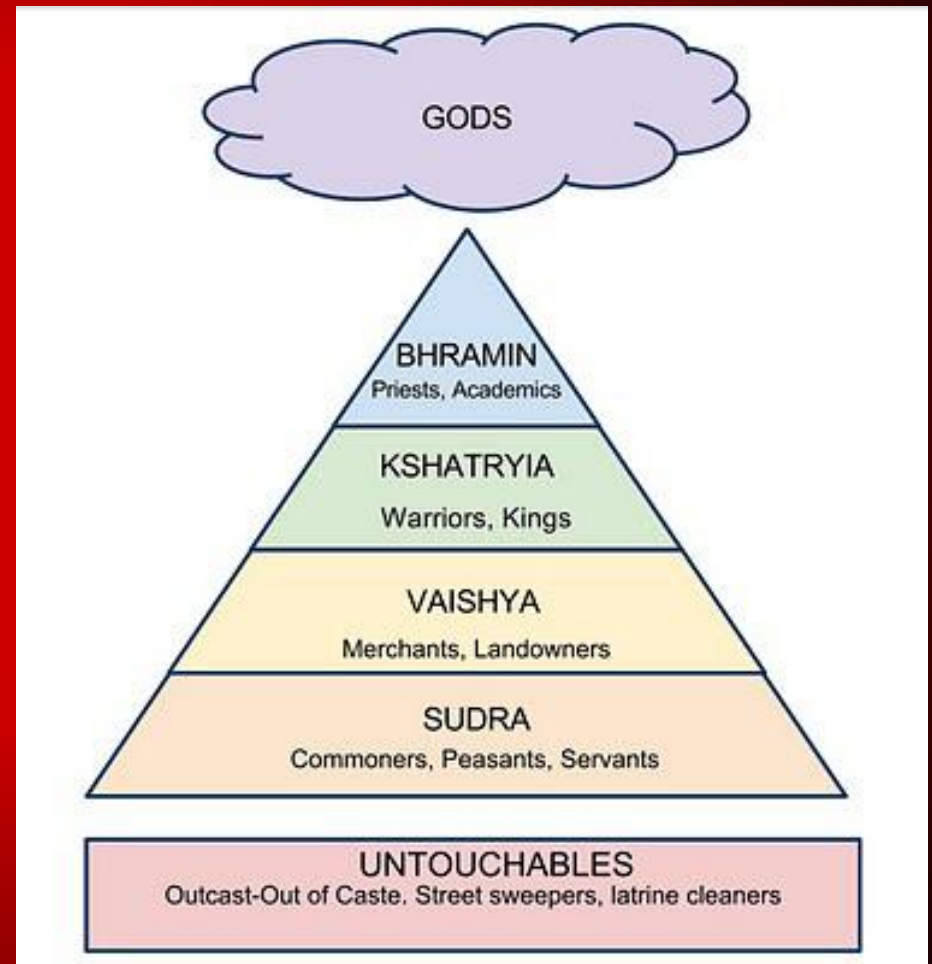
Population



- The population (number of people) of Nepal is currently about 30,986,975 people.
- In words that is thirty million, nine hundred eighty-six thousand, nine hundred seventy-five people.
- The current population of the United States is roughly 310,000,000 people.
- About one million people live in the capital city of Kathmandu.
- Roughly half of the population lived in the Terai.
- Nepal is also home to a large population of Indians and Tibetans.

The Caste System

- Life throughout Nepal is ruled by the caste system.
- This system separates people into different groups according to the social class they are born into.
- People are unable to move to a higher caste or marry outside of their own caste.
- Often times, a person's caste determines what craft they will learn or what job they will have.
- Higher-caste Hindus will not eat food touched by those outside their caste or religion because it is considered impure.



Geography

- The country of Nepal is about the same size as the country of Bangladesh or the state of Wisconsin.
- Nepal is a landlocked country bordered by China and Tibet in the north and India in the south.
- Northern Nepal is home to the Himalayas, which include some of the highest mountain peaks in the world.
- The middle hills region covers half of the country, including the capital city of Kathmandu. These hills are marked by steep terraces, carved into the sides of them by people who grow food and make their homes there.
- In southern Nepal is the Terai, the only flat area in the country. The majority of the crops grown in the country can be found in this humid, subtropical jungle-covered area.



Climate



- Nepal experiences varied differences in climate based upon location in the country.
- Northern Nepal typically has cool summers and harsh winters. Many mountain peaks stay covered in snow year round.
- Southern Nepal is home to a much more subtropical climate.
- During summer months, monsoons from the Indian Ocean bring plentiful rainfall to the sub-Himalayan regions.

Famous Landmarks

- Mount Everest (tallest mountain in the world)
- Lumbini (Maya Devi temple and its Sacred Garden – known as the birthplace of the Shakyamuni Buddha)
- Chitwan National Park

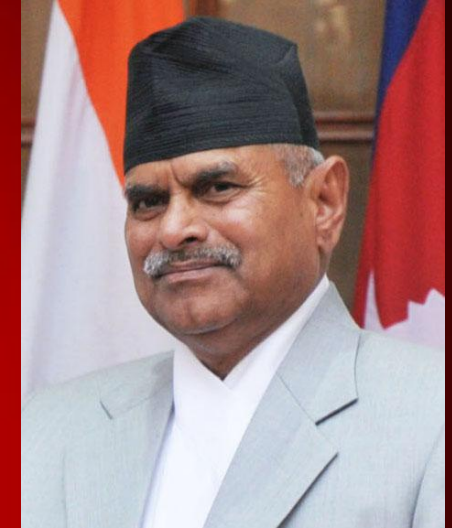
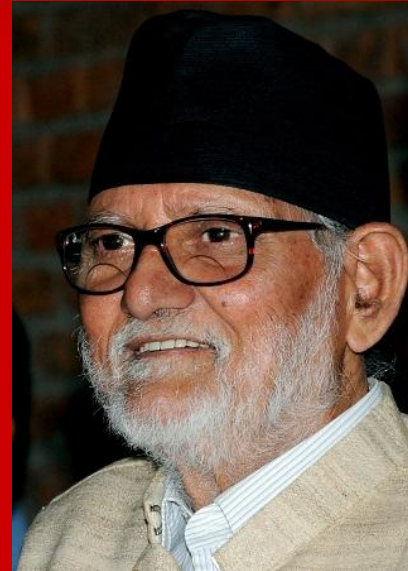


Language

- The official language of Nepal is Nepali (similar to Hindi). However, most people choose to speak their individual ethnic group's native language.
- The use of this language is influenced by the caste system. This means that people use more formal, respectful words when speaking to someone from a higher caste and less formal phrases when talking to someone from a lower caste.
- In the Terai region, Hindi is more commonly spoken.
- In northern regions of Nepal, several Tibetan dialects are common.
- English is a common language used in cities and at private schools and universities, as well as in business transactions.

Government

- Head of State: ***President Ram Baran Yadav***
- Head of Government: ***Prime Minister Sushil Koirala***
- For a long time, Nepal was a monarchy (run by a king).
- Now, the head of state is a president. The president's role is mainly ceremonial.
- The prime minister of the country and the Council of Ministers lead the central government of the country.
- The lawmaking body, the Constituent Assembly, is made up of 601 members.
- The government recently adopted a temporary constitution in 2007 that allows for freedom of religion, press, and other basic rights.



Traditional Clothing



Money and Economy

- The currency of Nepal is the Nepalese rupee.
- Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world.
- Many people in Nepal do not have jobs, and corruption is a major problem within the government. This means that people often must offer government officials money or other goods in order to get things like electricity, jobs, etc.



Schools

- In Nepal, education is free. However, the government does not have enough money to spend on building school and paying teachers. For this reasons, most schools are located in the cities.
- Children who live in the countryside often have to walk many miles to get to school.
- Schools many times are very crowded and sometimes do not even have electricity.
- Textbooks are very expensive and rare, so students must memorize their lessons.
- Most Nepali girls leave school around age 12 to either help at home and take care of their siblings or to get married since marriage is more important for girls than education.
- The Nepali government is currently working to use funding from other countries to help improve the education systems in the country.



Life in Nepal



- Life in Nepal is normally not easy.
- Often times, sons are preferred to daughters because traditionally sons work and help to bring money to the family, stay with their parents to help take care of them in their older age, and carry on the family name.
- Children in Nepal are often expected to help take care of their younger siblings, and help grow and harvest crops.
- Many young children are made to work jobs to help their families get by financially.
- When not in school or working, children do their homework, play with friends, sing, dance, and attend local festivals with friends and family members. Very few families own technology such as televisions or computers.

Sports and Games

- With such a poor economy, Nepalis often enjoy sports and games that are not very elaborate and that do not require much money or equipment.
- Volleyball
- Cricket (similar to baseball)
- Soccer
- Kite flying
- ***Dhandi-biu*** (popular children's game where kids hit a seed with a stick and try to hit it twice more before it falls)



Common Foods



- In Nepal, people eat two full meals each day and a snack in the afternoon.
- In many homes, men and guests are served first, children next, and women last.
- Many high-caste people are vegetarian or eat no meat but goat meat. Muslims do not eat pork and Hindus do not eat beef.
- Rice and potatoes are served during most meals
- **Dal bhat** – white rice and lentil soup
- Curried vegetables
- **Achar** – pickled vegetables
- Fruits are eaten as snacks or desserts
- **Roti** – a kind of flatbread made from wheat, barley, or corn that is ground into flour and then bakes
- **Momo** – steamed or fried dumplings stuffed with chicken, meat, or vegetables served with various dipping sauces

Holidays

- In Nepal the calendar, called *Bikram Samvat*, is based on the different phases of the moon. For this reason, New Year is celebrated in mid-April rather than January.
- *Dashain* – celebrates the triumph of good over evil; time of giving gifts, family gatherings, feasts, and rituals performed for the Goddess of Victory; two weeks in September/October
- *Tihar* (Festival of Lights) – a three-day festival in October or November; rows of lights are lit on all buildings to honor the Goddess of Wealth; people go caroling



Other Interesting Facts



- Nepal is the only national flag in the world that is not a quadrilateral (a flag having four straight sides).
- Nepal is home to Mount Everest – the tallest mountain peak in the world.
- In Nepal, cows are considered sacred. People should not point a foot at them or touch them out of respect.
- The legendary Yeti (an ape-like creature similar to Bigfoot) is said to inhabit the Himalayan region of Nepal.

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