

Intrepid Travel Language Guides

Nepali Language Guide Script

Rinzin: I am Rinzin, we did not meet earlier. You are Scott?

Scott: Um, yeah Hi - sorry about that, I know you tried to meet everyone! And yes, I'm Scott.

Rinzin: That's ok, we have a long bus ride so we have plenty of time to talk about the project.

Scott: Do the villagers at Phalunga speak any English?

Rinzin: Some speak a little English, the Principal of the school and one or two others.

Scott: Can you teach me a little bit of Nepali so I can try to talk with them?

Rinzin: The villagers will really appreciate this. Although you will find that when you are working together you will get along without any language! What would you like to know?

Scott: Ok, well I think we should start with the basics like Hello and Goodbye

Rinzin: Namaste is the Nepali way of saying hello and good morning - it is a blessing and sometimes people will bring their hands under their chin in a small nod.

Scott: Namaste - this is a kind of Hindi blessing right?

Rinzin: Yes, that is right. For good night we say Shubha Raatri

Scott: Shubha Raatri

Rinzin: Very good - raamro is Nepali for good

Scott: Raamro! Can you tell me some more about the village?

Rinzin: Yes, of course. Phalunga Khola is near the Tibetan border. It is very isolated, and very peaceful, there is no electricity, nothing modern at all. It is a very traditional Nepali village. I'm not sure that any other foreigners have been there before. It is a 60k walk from the road and we will have to trek for five days to get there.

Scott: Wow! Five days... bloody hell that really is remote!

Rinzin: You should be careful about swearing in front of the villagers, most Nepali people don't swear and consider it very bad to do so.

Scott: Ok, sorry about that - force of habit for an Aussie I'm afraid! I guess I'm also a bit worried that we won't get all the work on the project finished in time.

Rinzin: Yes, we have three days to paint the school building inside and out including all the windows, we've got to do repairs in all the rooms and there is a large retaining wall that has to be fixed or during the next monsoon it will fall down. If we work hard I'm sure we can get it all done. How did you find out about this kind of holiday?

Scott: I watched a World Nomads documentary called Positive Footprints about Community Project travel and it inspired me to get involved! Another language question - how do I ask a persons name?

Rinzin: This is Tapaii Ko naam ke ho?

Scott: Tapaii ko naam ke ho?

Rinzin: But it is common to call people brother or sister or mother or father for older people. This is a sign of respect. Brother is "Dai"

Scott: Dai

Rinzin: Sister is Bahini

Scott: Bahini

Rinzin: Mother is Aama and Father is Baba

Scott: Aama Baba so I would use this for older people? Could I also say Uncle?

Rinzin: yes, this is Mama and aunty is Maiju

Scott: Mama Maiju. How do I say My name is Scott

Rinzin: Mero naam Scott ho

Scott: Mero naam Scott ho

Rinzin: Yes - very good Ramro

Scott: Ok, what about I'm from Australia

Rinzin: This is Ma Australia Bata

Scott: Ma Australia Bata, What about please, thank you and excuse me

Rinzin: The locals will like this - please is Kripaya, thank you is Dhanyabad and excuse me is Maaf Paun

Scott: Kripaya, Dhanyabad and Maaf Paun Now, what else do I need to know about

local customs - swearing is out, what else should I avoid?

Rinzin: This is a good question, if you are invited to eat with the locals make sure you only eat with your right hand, you will find that the Villagers will mainly eat with their hands.

Scott: Eat with the right hand - just like India.

Rinzin: Also, locals will always offer to share food - but you should never offer a local something from your own plate or something you have already taken a bite from this is considered very unclean.

Scott: Right, so unlike the Chinese you won't eat from the same plate?

Rinzin: That is right - but sharing food is a very important part of our culture. Also, we are going to be visiting very traditional villages and most people will not have seen a Westerner before. Please be mindful of what you wear - try not to go bare-chested and try to wear long pants.

Scott: Ok, Fair Enough. Do the Villagers know much about us?

Rinzin: Only that a group of Westerners will be coming to help them repair their school, they know how many of you there are but not much else at this point. It is very difficult to communicate with the village.

Scott: Well, some more Nepali then - how about I don't understand and Please speak slowly

Rinzin: I don't understand is Mailei Bujhina

Scott: Mailei Bujhina

Rinzin: Please speak slowly is Bistara Bol Nus Ne

Scott: Bistara Bol Nus Ne, Can you tell me how to say Where is and Which way to...

Rinzin: Where is Kanha

Scott: Kanha

Rinzin: which way to Kata Bata

Scott: Ok, now these next things are really for when we get back to Kathmandu, I know I won't be needing any of them in the village... what about How much is it?

Rinzin: Ah yes, this is good - you should bargain at the markets - you say Kati Parcha

Scott: Kati Parcha and what about Too Expensive

Rinzin: This is Dherai Mahango

Scott: Dherai Mahango Though I've heard that a cut throat shave at the local barber in Kathmandu is only about 50c Aussie - so I'm not sure I'll be using this phrase much! What about I like this?

Rinzin: Yes, you will need a nice shave and hot shower after the project - you won't get one when we are there! I like this is Malai Mana Parcha

Scott: Malai Mana Parcha and I don't like this?

Rinzin: This is Malai Mana Pardaine

Scott: Malai Mana Pardaine

Rinzin: Very good - also I forgot to tell you not to shake hands with women, it is considered rude for a man to touch a woman. And don't point, this is also rude - use a flat hand if you need to point to something.

Scott: I suspect there will be lots of this happening in the village with my very limited Nepali! Can you tell me how to say Have you a room?

Rinzin: This is good to know, although there are no Tea Houses on the way to the Village, we will be camping each night. Our porters will help with carrying the camping gear as well as all the building materials we need.

Scott: So we are literally carrying everything in?

Rinzin: That is right - the Village will have some tools but mostly we take everything we need with us including materials for the project, our food and all our own camping gear.

Scott: It's quite an operation isn't it?!

Rinzin: Yes, it is why the villagers are so grateful for our help. Most of the villages we work with do not get any government support so they cannot afford the materials that are needed for even small repairs.

Scott: Have you done many community projects?

Rinzin: This is my fifth one. Each time the villagers don't know what to expect from the foreigners but by the end so much has been achieved they are very happy. On my last project one of the villagers told our group that although they were only there for a short time the village will remember them every day by seeing the work they did. It was very nice.

Scott: That's really nice.

Rinzin: Come on - back to our lesson, what else would you like to know?

Scott: Ah, ok - how about today, tomorrow, yesterday and now?

Rinzin: Today is Aaja

Scott: Aaja

Rinzin: Tomorrow is Bholi

Scott: Bholi

Rinzin: Yesterday is Hijo

Scott: Hijo

Rinzin: Now is Aahilei

Scott: Aahilei. How about counting - this might come in useful in the village - how do I count to ten?

Rinzin: Ek, Dui, Teen, Char, Paanch, Che, Saat, Aatha, Nau, Dash

Scott: Ek, Dui, Teen, Char, Paanch, Che, Saat, Aatha, Nau, Dash. What about bus and taxi?

Rinzin: Bus

Scott: Bus

Rinzin: taxi is Taxi

Scott: And is there another name for Rickshaw?

Rinzin: Yes, we call these Dhelagada and they can be a quick way to get around

Scott: Dhelagada Ok, I think I've taken up enough of your time with this little language lesson, just a few last words in case I get in trouble - what about police, hospital and doctor!

Rinzin: None of these are in the village we are going to and I'm sure you won't need them! But when we get back... police is Police

Scott: Police

Rinzin: Hospital is Aaspatal

Scott: Aaspatal

Rinzin: Doctor is Doctor

Scott: Doctor. Rinzin, you've been a champion - thanks for the lesson, I'm sure I'll be bugging you over the next week to practise while we walk!

Rinzin: No worries Scott - maybe you can teach me some Aussie words over a few beers on our trek, we will be having the local brew that is made from rice or millet!

Scott: Sounds pretty good to me, you're on!