

Nepal: Intensive Tibetan Language

Language Pledge

“By signing this Language Pledge, I agree to use Tibetan (and/or Nepali) as my only language of communication at the Yantra house, in my homestay, and on excursions during the entirety of the program. I understand that failure to comply with this Pledge may result in my expulsion from the program without credit or refund.”

Name _____

Date _____

Frequently asked questions about the Language Pledge:

What is the Language Pledge?

All students who participate in this intensive language course agree to abide by the Language Pledge, a formal commitment to speak, listen, read, and write the language of study as the only means of communication where appropriate throughout this program. The pledge is the foundation of our intensive, experiential language learning on this program.

Why are students required to take the Pledge?

The Pledge helps students to focus their energies on the acquisition of language skills and to internalize the patterns of communication and cultural perspective associated with the target language. The Language Pledge plays a major role in the success of the program, both as a symbol of commitment and as an essential part of the language learning process. It ensures that the vocabulary and structures gained in class are "put in motion" right away so they are acquired, used, and not forgotten.

Are students at all language levels required to take the language pledge?

Yes. All students will have completed, at minimum, our program's *beginning language* course and possess basic communicative skills in the language. Our program's language classes have structures built in to enable all students to meet the challenge of living and studying in a Tibetan (and/or Nepali) language environment. In emergency situations students can speak with their teachers in English. Also, our program director and our staff are always available for consultations in English.

When is the Language Pledge waived?

Students are not expected to speak in Tibetan (and/or Nepali) when they are faced with an emergency, when conversing with a member of the government administration, when speaking with a health care professional, and on those occasions when it is absolutely necessary to use English or another language. When in doubt, please consult the director or coordinator of our program. Most important is adherence to the spirit of the Pledge and each student's sincere effort to use Tibetan (and/or Nepali) as exclusively as possible during the program.

I am on a committee that is working on a project and linked by e-mail. Am I breaking the Pledge if I write e-mail in English to complete this work?

Again, we ask that you keep the spirit of the Pledge in mind. If such work is necessary and will not conflict with your coursework and your participation as a member of our program, then it is acceptable to uphold your professional commitments. If the work would take up a significant amount of your discretionary time and attention, it would be better for you to consider attending our language program later, when you will not be bound by such prior commitments. You should take the Language Pledge only when you are ready and able to make a good-faith effort to abide by it.

May I call my family?

We know that it is important for students to maintain contact with their families and encourage all students to maintain contact with family members during the entirety of the program. During the language pledge period, we ask that you plan your time carefully and maintain focus on the program and thus schedule limited times during the week to communicate with family. As always, we request that family members schedule visits after the conclusion of the program.

I have a friend in another school, and once in a while we have a conversation in the language of her school, which I also speak. Is that a violation of the Pledge? After all, I am not speaking English.

Yes, it is a violation of the Language Pledge. The use of any language other than Tibetan (and/or Nepali) is a violation of the Pledge.

May I attend religious services in a language other than Tibetan (and/or Nepali)?

Yes.

May I read the newspaper or magazines in a language other than Tibetan (and/or Nepali)?

Any use of a language other than the one being studied is a violation of the Pledge. Use of a language includes listening, reading, writing, as well as speaking. Please remember that the Pledge is NOT simply a rule against using English; it applies to ALL languages other than the one (and/or Nepali) that you came here to study.

May I watch television or online media?

You are welcome to watch TV and other media programs in Tibetan (and/or Nepali). Doing so in any other language during the program violates the Pledge.

When does the Pledge end? Last exam, last program day?

Usually, the Pledge ends on the last day of program when everyone in the group meets for the final farewell. The program director will provide clear instructions during the program, but you may be surprised to find that by the end of the program you only want to speak in the program language until the final farewell at the airport.