

Chantyal: Introduction and typological sketch¹

1. Introduction to the Chantyal people

The Chantyal [ts^həntjal] people² are a relatively small ethnic group, numbering no more than 10,000. They can be divided into two groups, the Myagdi Chantyal and the Baglung Chantyal, named for the districts they inhabit within the Dhaulagiri Zone of central Nepal. Until the recent immigration to towns and cities, the interaction between the two groups was, in general, quite limited. The Baglung Chantyal ceased to speak the Chantyal language some time in the 19th century and now know only the national language, Nepali; the majority of the Myagdi Chantyal continue to speak Chantyal in their home villages³. There are approximately 2000 or so who still speak the Chantyal language.

The Chantyal language belongs to the Tamangic group of the Bodish languages, which in turn constitute a branch of the Bodic Division of Tibeto-Burman. The other Tamangic languages are Gurung, Manangba, Narphu, Tamang, and Thakali. A fairly complete listing of the literature on Tamangic languages can be found in the bibliography.

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