

THE GURUNG OF NEPAL

The solemn singing of the men singers was accompanied by a rather monotonous beating of drums and cymbals. Sidarth watched closely as his younger sister, Bharati and another girl, dressed in traditional dresses, jewellery and crown-like headgears danced in slow, trancelike steps with closed eyes. Both girls were performing the *Sati Ghanto*, a trance-dance performed during the *Ghanto Nach* Festival. The dance had begun in the morning and continued till the evening. Sidarth drew his breath as the girls started swaying and eventually lost consciousness. The young **Gurung** man was immensely relieved when the girls were successfully revived and continued their trance dancing. It is believed that when a dancer could not be revived, she would become sick and may even die. Despite being risky and spiritually challenging, a dancer like Bharati still believed that it would bring much spiritual blessings.

Nepal's **Gurung** people (population: 513,000) comprise two subgroups, the **Western Gurung** and **Eastern Gurung**. Their languages are similar, but there are enough differences to make communication between them difficult. Also, the **Eastern Gurung** people are mainly farmers, while the **Western Gurung** gravitate towards military service. Many of them served as Gurkha soldiers for the British Army in various parts of the world. Many **Gurung** villages are mired in poverty. They are admired for their bravery, honesty, hospitality and strong work ethic.

One thing that both **Gurung** subgroups share is that they are mainly Vajrayana (Tibetan Buddhists), yet those who live in the lowlands are more likely to be Hindu. While some (2.5%) have turned to Christ, resistance towards the Gospel remains. Portions of Scripture have been translated but are largely disused due to a lack of interest.

- Pray for a massive people movement to Christ and a hunger for God's Word among the **Gurung** people.
- Pray for openness to the spiritual blessings found in Christ.
- Pray that **Gurung** Christians will receive the training, wisdom and protection they need to be equipped servants to lead many to the Lord.

This is a series of useful prayer profile compilations to pray for people groups collated from various online sources. Please click on the links below for more info: <https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>, <http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>