

	API HIMAL This 7,132m peak is located in Api Nampa Conservation Area of Nepal. The glacial valley at its base is a rich source of the valuable ‘caterpillar fungus’ (<i>Ophiocordyceps sinensis</i>).
	CHHYA NAGAJUNG CAVE This cave has been a retreat for Buddhist meditators for centuries
	HALJI GUMBA The Halji Rinchenling Gumba, among the oldest in Nepal, was established in the 11th century AD in Limi valley, Humla
	KHAPTAD TEMPLE This temple was established by the Hindu ascetic Khaptad Baba in the 1980s. Khaptad Baba was influential in establishing the Khaptad National Park in 1984. The park is in the Western Nepal.
	MELAULI BHAGWATI TEMPLE This temple is located in Baitadi district and is infamous for its associations with the erstwhile ‘Deuki tradition’, in which young girls were given to the temple as life-long offerings.
	MUCHU GUMBA The Tungal Chhyojyong monastery in Humla dates back to the 15 th century. It is associated with the spiritual leader Shiva Lodro Rinpoche.
	OM PARVAT This 6,191m peak is notable for a natural ridgeline on its western face which resembles the sacred Hindu symbol for ‘Om’.
	TRIPURA SUNDARI TEMPLE Located in Baitadi district of Nepal, the temple is a popular pilgrimage site. It is dedicated to the Goddess Durga.
	YALBANG GUMBA Yalbang Gumba is the largest monastery in Humla. At present, the 2nd Pema Riksal Rinpoche presides over the monastery.
	RALING GUMBA This temple is located at an altitude of 4000 asl, at the foot of the sacred mountain Chelmo Kang in Nepal. It is sacred to both Lama Buddhist and Khas Hindu communities in Humla.

Did you know?

Around one million people from several ethnic backgrounds live in the KSL. The Drokpa, Han, Hoi Muslim, and Uighur people are native to KSL China; the Pahadi Hindu, Van Rajji, Johari, and Rang communities live in KSL India; and the Pahadi or Khas Hindu, Humli Khampa, Rang, and Lama communities in KSL Nepal.

Four major rivers in Asia – Indus, Sutlej, Karnali, and Brahmaputra originate from KSL

The landscape has both dry and hot regions as well as areas with permanent snow and ice cover

The KSL is populated by about 100 different species of mammals, nearly 500 different birds, over 50 kinds of reptiles and amphibians. Rare and endangered species like the snow leopard, the Himalayan griffon vulture, the Himalayan musk deer, the Himalayan black bear, and the Himalayan brown bear live here.

Several medicinal plants and NTFPs are harvested from, including ‘caterpillar fungus’ (yartsa gunbu).

While in the KSL, visitors can go on a pilgrimage or participate in culture and heritage treks. They may also embark on glacier expeditions or engage in some angling, paragliding, and parasailing, or canoeing and river rafting.



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ICIMOD

The Kailash Sacred Landscape

Illustrated map



A pilgrimage and tourism destination that transcends the boundaries

To the average person, Mt. Kailash is a 6,714m high mountain made of black meta-sedimentary rock located in a remote windswept corner of the Tibetan Plateau. To people of Bon, Jain, Hindu, and Buddhist faiths, however, it is an important centre of worship, the axis mundi around which the whole world revolves.

This unusually symmetrical mountain is surrounded on most sides by trough shaped valleys that create a natural circumambulation route referred to as the Kailash kora. The route starts and ends at the settlement of Darchen (4,670 asl) and stretches over 56 km, with the Drolma La pass (5,650m) being its highest point. Buddhist monasteries, sky burial sites, rocks imprinted with sacred inscriptions, magnificent cliff faces, mountains, and streams lie along the route.

Every year, thousands of pilgrims and trekkers from South Asia, East Asia, and other parts of the world journey to Pulan County in China’s Tibet Autonomous Region to visit the Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL). The landscape transcends borders – contiguous regions in China, India, and Nepal are part of KSL, and brings people from different faiths together.

About the Kailash Sacred Landscape

Located within the remote southwestern portion of the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China, adjacent to the far-western region of Nepal, and the northeastern flank of Uttarakhand State in nothern India, the Kailash Sacred Landscape is spread over an area of about 31,000 km² and represents a diverse, multi-cultural, and fragile landscape. Four major rivers originate from the landscape – Indus, Sutlej, Karnali, and Bramhaputra providing water services to millions of people living downstream.

The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is a transboundary collaborative programme between China, India, and Nepal that has evolved through a participatory, iterative process among various local and national research and development institutions within these countries. The programme aims to achieve long-term conservation of ecosystems, habitats, and biodiversity while encouraging sustainable development, enhancing the resilience of communities in the landscape, and safeguarding the cultural linkages between local populations.

About the illustrative map

The illustrated KSL map has been developed to cartographically represent the uniqueness of the KSL. The map pictorially represents the region’s fauna, its mountains, pilgrimage sites, cultural sites and various human settlements and communities that are indigenous to the region.

The map is produced by ICIMOD and the artwork has been prpared by cartoonist & illustrator, Rohan Chakravarty <http://www.greenhumour.com/>

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Further reading

- Guidelines for Travelling Responsibly in the Kailash Sacred Landscape (2014)

<http://lib.icimod.org/record/29960>

- Communication Booklet for Yak and Horse Transportation Team in the Kailash Sacred Landscape (2016)
<http://lib.icimod.org/record/32574>

- Folk Gods, Stories from Kailash, Tise, and Kang Rinpoche (2017)









<http://lib.icimod.org/record/32800>









- Shared Sacred Landscapes: Stories from Mount Kailas, Tise & Kang Rinpoche (2017)


<http://lib.icimod.org/record/32574>

Freely available to download at <http://lib.icimod.org/record/33725>

Cultural sites in the Kailash Sacred Landscape

	MT. KAILASH This 6,714m peak is located in the Gandise range in Tibet (China), close to the borders with both India and Nepal. Doing the arduous 53 km ‘kora’ or ‘paikrama’ (circumambulation) of Mt. Kailash is considered an extremely meritorious activity among Buddhists, Bonpos, Hindus, and Jains.
	LAKE MANASAROVAR This freshwater lake at 4,590 asl is a highly revered pilgrimage site for Buddhists, Hindus, Bonpos, Jains, and animist communities’ from all over the world. Known as Mapham Yumtso to the Tibetans.
	CHHIU GUMBA This monastery is located on the northwestern shores of Lake Manasarovar.
	RAKSHAS TAL This lake at 4,595 asl lies west of Lake Manasarovar. Unlike Lake Manasarovar, Rakshas Tal is believed to possess demonic energies. A small non-perennial stream called ‘Ganga Chhu’ sometimes carries the overflow from Lake Manasarovar to Rakshas Tal.
	GURLA MANDHATA Considered the abode of the goddess ‘Menmo Nanyi’, this gently sloping 7,694 m peak lies in Pulan county.
	GAURIKUND Gaurikund is a pond located at an altitude of 5,500 asl. Its waters are considered holy by Hindus, Buddhists, Bonpos, and Jains.
	MILAREPA'S ROCK This geometrically shaped rock lies close to Zutrulphuk Gumba on the Kailash ‘kora’ route
	TRUGO GUMBA This monastery is located along the southern shores of Lake Manasarovar
	YAM DWAAR The southern face of Mt. Kailash is visible from this small structure on a clear day. Hindus and Buddhists perform rituals here.

	ZUTULPHUK GUMBA This monastery is located to the south-east of Mt. Kailash. It is associated with Buddhist and Bon mystics.
	BUGYAL ‘Bugyals’ are high-altitude meadows and pastures, often either sacred, or managed under customary institutions by the Shauka tribes.
	GARBYANG This village is rich in architecture and was once the centre of Indo-Tibetan trade. For the past several decades, the village has been sinking towards the Mahakali river bed.
	HAAT KALIKA TEMPLE Haat Kalika is a ‘shakti-peeth’ site, believed to have been established in the 8th century A.D.
	JAGESHWAR TEMPLE This temple is a ‘jyotirlinga’ site, with a group of 124 large and small stone temples dating from the 9th to the 13th centuries AD.
	NANDA DEVI At 7,816m, Nanda Devi is the second highest mountain in India. It is sacred to certain Hindu sects, and hosts the ‘Nanda Devi Raj Jat’ pilgrimage every 12 years.
	NARAYAN ASHRAM The ashram, notable for its architecture was established in 1936. It is named after Narayan Swami.
	NINGLASAINI TEMPLE This temple is dedicated to the wrathful aspect of the Mother Goddess Durga. The temple is a site for ritual animal sacrifice. This temple is in Baitadi district of western region in Nepal.
	PATAL BHUVANESHWAR This cave complex has several stalactites and stalagmites. These natural formations are revered by Hindus as manifestations of gods and goddesses.

	ADI KAILASH This 5,945m peak, located on the Indo-Nepal border, can be seen as a minor mirror image of Mt. Kailash in Tibet.
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KAILASH

SACRED LANDSCAPE

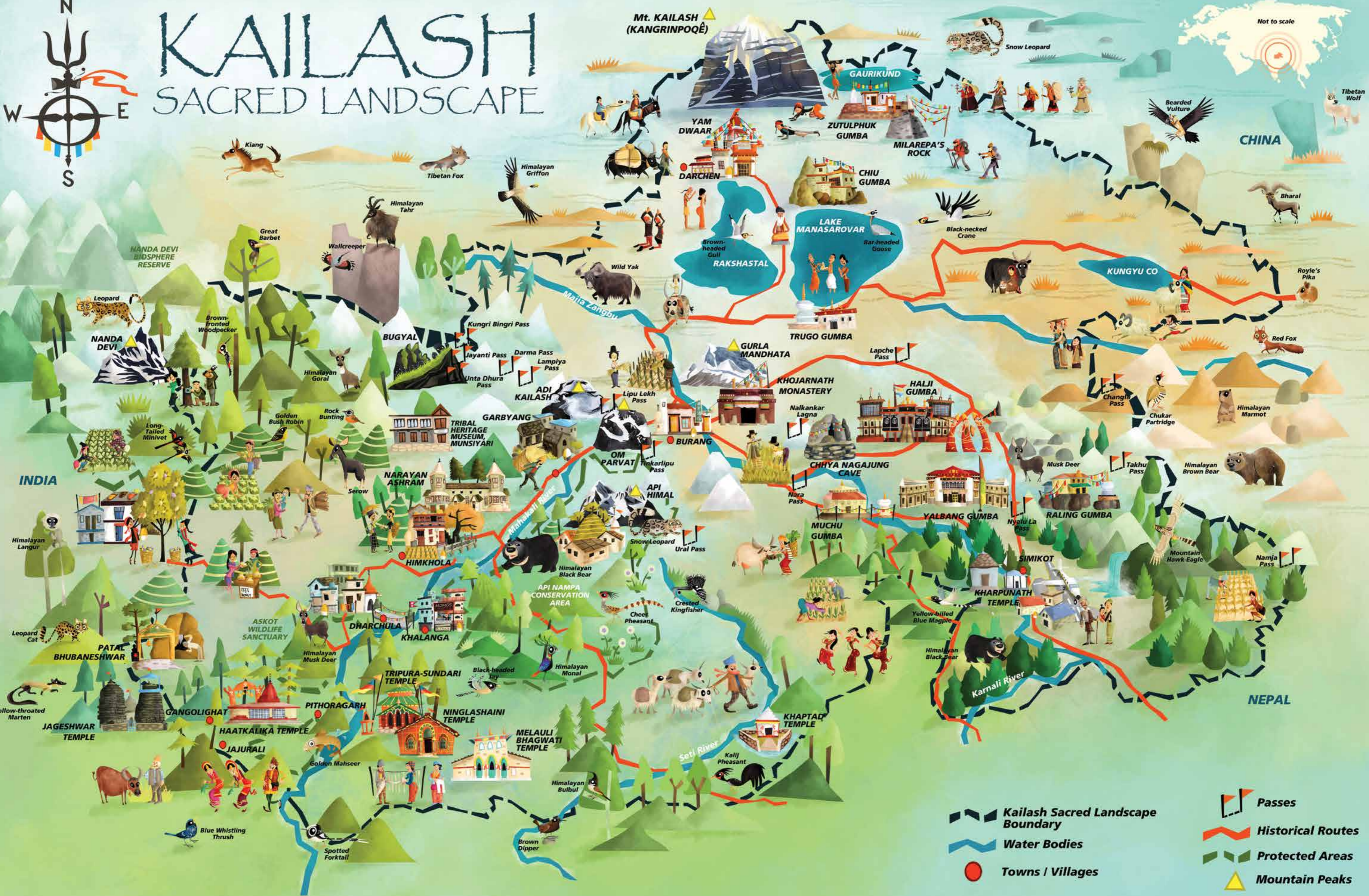
Mt. KAILASH
(KANGRINPOQÊ)

Not to scale

CHINA

INDIA

NEPAL



- Kailash Sacred Landscape Boundary
- Historical Routes
- Water Bodies
- Towns / Villages
- Protected Areas
- Mountain Peaks
- Passes