

Kampuchea Krom



Population	250,000
Major Religion	Buddhism
Language	Khmer
Percent Christian	Less than 1 %
Bible Translation	Yes



Who are the Kampuchea Krom?

Kampuchea Krom or Khmer Krom translates literally as ‘lower Cambodians.’ They are descendants of the original Khmer inhabitants of what is now southern South Vietnam. The Khmer controlled the region until the early 1600s.

Today there are at least 8 million Khmer in Vietnam, although accurate figures are difficult to obtain. The Vietnamese government attempts to minimize the importance of the rural Khmer population by drastically lowering the numbers. More and more young Kampuchea Krom are becoming integrated into Vietnamese society as national schools teach only in Vietnamese. Khmer temple schools provide the only opportunities for learning to read and write the Khmer language. Even with these factors, there are still millions of Kampuchea Krom who conduct their daily lives using the Khmer language.

There are at least 250,000 Kampuchea Krom who have migrated from Vietnam and now live within the borders of Cambodia. Because of linguistic, political and social factors they are distinct in many ways from the wider Khmer population in Cambodia.

What are their lives like?

Typically, the Kampuchea Krom in Vietnam are rural people who live in villages outside of the main cities. Daily life consists of subsistence farming and agriculture. Opportunities for advancement in society are limited and difficult to obtain because of Vietnamese control. Many young men seek education and opportunities as monks in the Buddhist temples.

What do they believe?

The main religion of the Kampuchea Krom is Theravada Buddhism. There are over 560 Khmer Buddhist temples in Vietnam. Kampuchea Krom beliefs do not include a concept of a living God. The goal of their religious devotion and rituals is to obtain merit that might somehow enable them to escape the cycle of reincarnation and achieve Nirvana, a state or place of nothingness.

Theravada Buddhism is the public veneer of Kampuchea Krom religion, but animistic belief in the spirit world may have more of a hold on their daily lives. The Kampuchea Krom keep an altar outside their homes where they offer food and incense to the spirit world on a daily basis. Their actions are driven by the fear that these spirits can cause them harm if not appeased. Fortune tellers are regularly consulted at times of trouble or desire because of their perceived links to the spirit world.

What are their needs?

The Kampuchea Krom have had very little opportunity to hear about Jesus, and for the most part they are extremely poor. The vast majority have never heard the Gospel, and many have never heard of Jesus. There are only a few thousand Christians among this vast people group. The fields are white unto harvest, and those who are hearing are also showing a hunger to know and understand more.

Pray for the Christians that they may get nourishment for their souls and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to their neighbors and friends. Pray that there may be a spreading fire among them that spreads from village to village which results in groups that multiply spontaneously.