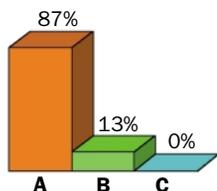


Population in China:
 12,840 (1993)
 14,920 (2000)
 18,390 (2010)
Location: Tibet
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Groma

Countries: India, China
Pronunciation: "Gro-mah"
Other Names: Tromowa, Chomo Tibetan, Chomo, Gromo, Tomo, Zhuomu Tibetan, Chuo-mu Tibetan, Chumbi Tibetan
Population Source: 12,840 (1996 B. Grimes – 1993 figure); 14,000 in India (1995 Joshua Project)
Location: *S Tibet:* Chomo (Yadong) County in Xigaze Prefecture
Status: Probably officially included under Tibetan
Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Tibetan, Southern Tibetan
Dialects (4): Upper Groma, Lower Groma, Spiti, Tomo
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism, Animism
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: GRO00

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity

Location: The *Ethnologue* cites a 1993 source stating that there are 12,840 speakers of Groma living in southern Tibet,¹ in the Chambi Valley between Bhutan and the former independent nation of Sikkim — now a state of India. The Chambi Valley is in the middle of the mighty Himalayan range. *Himalaya* means “abode of snow.” A French Catholic missionary to Tibet, Monsieur L’Abbé Desgondins, graphically described the region: “Take a piece of paper in your hand. Crumple it up and then open your hand and let it fall out! Nothing is flat — all you have is high points and low depressions — the steep, inaccessible, rugged mountains and the deep valleys.”² An additional 14,000 Groma are reported to be living on the Indian side of the border.³

Identity: Little is known about the Groma. Most anthropological and linguistic sources do not mention them. It is probable that the Groma have been counted as part of the Tibetan nationality in China and may be culturally and ethnically indistinguishable from other Tibetans in the region. The Chinese authorities have included many distinct language groups under the Tibetan nationality, based primarily on their adherence to Tibetan Buddhism.

Language: The Groma language is a member of the Southern Tibetan language branch. It has two dialects, Upper and Lower Groma, with two others, Spiti and Tomo, listed as “possible dialects or related languages.”⁴

History: The cornerstone of emerging Tibetan civilization was the Yarlung Valley area, about 80 kilometers (49 mi.) southeast of Lhasa. There, according to tradition, the union of a monkey and a she-devil created the Tibetan race. Around AD 600, the warrior-king Namri Gampo began the work of unifying the clans of Tibet. It was his son, Songtsen Gampo, who consolidated the empire and established Tibet as a military power to be reckoned with. Sikkim was nominally independent — although always under Indian influence — until it was annexed in 1975 and integrated into India. The Bhots from Tibet began entering Sikkim in the thirteenth century. The Nepalese did not come until the nineteenth century, but now they make up 75% of Sikkim’s population.⁵

Customs: The Groma lead typical Tibetan lives. They herd yaks, sheep, and

goats. Groma women do most of the work. The men often spend their days drinking and gambling with their friends.

Religion: Tibetan Tantric Buddhism dominates the Groma. Pilgrimages to holy sites (such as Mt. Kailas) are often undertaken by devoted pilgrims.

Christianity: There are no known Christians today among the Groma. The little mission work that *has* targeted the area invariably resulted in severe persecution. “Converts did not easily forget the Christian convert who was sewn into a fresh yak skin by merciless shaman priests and placed in the broiling sun until the contraction of the skin squeezed the life out of his frame.”⁶ In 1997 neighboring Sikkim counted 250 churches, but almost all the believers were ethnic Nepalis. The north district where the Groma live is completely unreachable.⁷



Paul Hattaway