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**Location:** Approximately 1.2 million Khampa Tibetans speak the Eastern Khampa language. They inhabit a vast area but are primarily concentrated in western Sichuan Province as far east as Kangding, a large portion of eastern Tibet, and parts of southern Qinghai Province. The Eastern Khampa town of Litang lies 4,700 meters (15,400 ft.) above sea level. Chamdo is another important town — at an altitude of 3,200 meters (10,500 ft.). The Chamdo Monastery was built in 1473 and now houses 2,500 monks. Other main towns include Bayi, where a massive textile and carpet factory employs 1,300 workers, and Batang, which is 2,700 meters (8,856 ft.) above sea level.

**Identity:** The Khampa have a fearsome reputation as the most hostile and violent of Tibetans. “Tall and well-built men, fearless and open of countenance, they resemble Apache Indians,

with plaited hair hanging from each side of well-modeled heads.”<sup>1</sup>

**Language:** The Eastern Khampa language is by far the largest of the Khampa varieties. It is reported to have eight dialects<sup>2</sup> and 80% lexical similarity with Central Tibetan.<sup>3</sup>

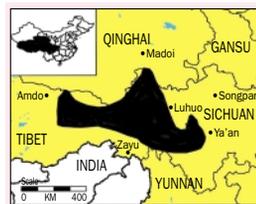
**History:** The Khampa have a long history of conflict with the Chinese, who annexed most of Kham Province to Sichuan in 1720. “No Chinese dares to enter the territory for fear of being murdered.”<sup>4</sup> Military clashes between the two groups occurred in 1918, 1928, and 1932. In 1950 the Chinese captured the town of Chamdo without firing a shot. The Khampa fled in terror when the Chinese set off a huge fireworks display on the outskirts of the town. In late 1955 the Chinese authorities ordered the monks of Litang Monastery to produce an inventory for

tax assessment. The monks refused to oblige. In February 1956, the Chinese laid siege to the monastery which was defended by several thousand monks and farmers. Litang and surrounding areas were bombed by Chinese aircraft. In 1959 the Khampa in Lhasa organized a revolt against Chinese rule. “The fighting lasted three days with the Tibetans caught up in a religious fervor, not caring whether they lived or died.”<sup>5</sup>

**Customs:** Sexual immorality among the Khampa is considered normal behavior. A 1950s survey “found the rate of venereal diseases was 40% in peasant areas and 50.7% in pasture areas.”<sup>6</sup>

**Religion:** The Khampa, like all Tibetan groups, are devout followers of Buddhism.

**Christianity:** Catholic work among the Khampa commenced in the mid-1800s. The Catholic mission at Batang Township was demolished in 1873 and 1905 — after two priests had been killed and converts who would not deny their faith were shot.<sup>7</sup> By 1924 the mission numbered 2 bishops, 15 French missionaries, and 4,800 baptized converts of whom “about two-fifths were Tibetans.”<sup>8</sup> Today there are 200 Khampa Catholics near Kangding and some near Batang and Yajiang.<sup>9</sup> Protestant work among the Khampa commenced in 1897. The missionaries ran hospitals, schools, and orphanages, but saw little fruit. By 1922 the Protestant station at Batang had won ten converts.<sup>10</sup>



**Population in China:**  
 956,700 (1987)  
 1,245,200 (2000)  
 1,534,100 (2010)  
**Location:**  
 Sichuan, Tibet, Qinghai  
**Religion:** Tibetan Buddhism  
**Christians:** 400

## Overview of the Eastern Khampa

**Countries:** China, India, Nepal  
**Pronunciation:** “Kum-ba”  
**Other Names:** Kham, Khams, Khams-Yal, Khams-Bhotia, Kam, Khamba, Kang, Konka, Konkaling  
**Population Source:**  
 956,700 (1987 LAC);  
 Out of a total Tibetan population of 4,593,330 (1990 census);  
 Also in India and Nepal

**Location:** *W Sichuan:* Garze Prefecture; *E Tibet;* *S Qinghai*

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Tibetan

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Tibetan, Northern Tibetan

**Dialects (8):** Dege, Karmdzes, Chamdo, Braggyab, Nyingkhri, Batang, Nyagchu, and an unknown dialect

**Religion:** Tibetan Buddhism, Bon, Christianity

**Christians:** 400

**Scripture:** Tibetan Bible 1948; New Testament 1885; Portions 1862

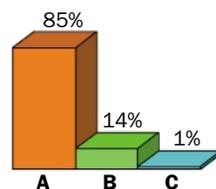
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:**  
 Kham #02508; Khamba #00796

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** KHG01

### 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