

The little-known Kyerung people live on both sides of the Tibet-Nepal border, not far from Mt Everest. The Global Evangelization Movement estimated a 1995 figure of 6,113 speakers of Kyerung in southern Tibet,¹ along the China-Nepal border. An additional 4,300 Kyerung live in Nepal, especially in the villages of Rasua Gari, Birdim, Thangjet, Syabru and Syabrubensi. These villages

for military assistance when an invading Gurkha army from Nepal was besieging them. After this, Chinese influence in Tibet increased greatly. The states of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal splintered and became separate political units.

The Kyerung, like all Tibetan ethnic groups, zealously follow Tibetan Buddhism. They gleefully celebrate all the traditional Tibetan

festivals and consider the Dalai Lama their supreme spiritual leader. The remote Kyerung in Tibet often ask visitors if they have any pictures of the Dalai Lama that they can give them. There are no known Christian



Nancy Sturrock

are located in the Rasuwa District of the Bagmati Zone in Nepal's Langtang Region. There are also 'large concentrations [of Kyerung] in Kathmandu',² the capital city of Nepal.

The Kyerung are considered Tibetans in both China and Nepal; however, they speak their own language, which is unintelligible with other Tibetan languages. The Kyerung make up a significant portion of the 60,000 or more 'Tibetans' in Nepal.

The Kyerung language is part of the Bodic branch of the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. It is reported to share 68 per cent lexical similarity with Dolpo, Lhomi and Loba; 65 per cent lexical similarity with Central Tibetan; 63 per cent with Helambu Sherpa and 60 per cent with Jirel³—all languages spoken in this part of the Himalayan Range.

The 7th and 8th centuries saw rapid growth in the Tibetan empire. Tibet's rule extended into Kashmir, China, Turkestan, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal and northern Burma. In 1788 the Tibetans turned to the Chinese

believers among the Kyerung in either Tibet or Nepal. In recent years Christian ministries such as Every Home for Christ have launched large-scale projects to systematically evangelize Nepal. As a result some Kyerung have heard the gospel, but few have understood the heart of the message. This group requires long-term workers who are willing to live among the Kyerung and patiently and lovingly present the gospel to them in deed and in word. Faithful workers like William E Simpson, an American missionary to eastern Tibet who was martyred in 1932, are needed. Simpson summarized his life when he wrote, 'Are not all the trials, the loneliness, the heartache, the weariness and pain, the cold and fatigue of the long road, the darkness and discouragements, and all the bereavements, temptations and testings, deemed not worthy to be compared with the joy of witnessing to this "glad tidings of great joy"?''



Population:

11,100 (2000)
13,700 (2010)
16,900 (2020)

Countries: China, Nepal
Buddhism: Tibetan

Christians: none known

Overview of the Kyerung

Other Names: Kyirong, Gyirong

Population Sources:

6,113 in China (1995, Global Evangelization Movement)
4,300 in Nepal (2002, Joshua Project II)

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tibetan, Central

Dialects: 0

Professing Buddhists: 100%

Practising Buddhists: 80%

Christians: 0%

Scripture: none

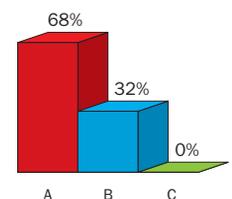
Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: none

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: KGY

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians
C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity