

Population in China:

500 (1998)
520 (2000)
670 (2010)

Location: Xinjiang

Religion: Islam

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Nubra

Countries: India, China

Pronunciation: “Noo-bra”

Other Names: Nubran

Population Source:

500 (1998 AMO);
Also in India

Location: SW Xinjiang: Near the town of Tielongtan

Status: Unidentified; Possibly included under Uygur or Kirgiz

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Tibetan, Western Tibetan, Ladakhi

Dialects: 0

Religion: Sunni Islam

Christians: None known

Scripture:

Portions 1904 (Ladakhi)

Jesus film: Available

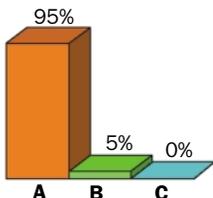
Gospel Recordings:

Ladakhi #00902

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

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: Several hundred Nubra people live in the southwest corner of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, near the juncture of Xinjiang, Tibet, Pakistan, and the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The majority of Nubra live in India where they are considered a dialect group of the Ladakhi. The Nubra in India live in the Nubra Valley north of the town of Leh.

Identity: Historically, the Nubra were part of the Ladakhi race. Although the Ladakhi are primarily Tibetan Buddhist, most Nubra have converted to the Sunni sect of Islam. The Nubra do not appear in Chinese literature, so it is uncertain how they have been officially classified by the authorities. Local researchers in Xinjiang, however, are aware of the presence of this unique tribe who identify themselves as *Nubra* or *Nubran* to outsiders.

Language: Linguists consider the Nubra language a dialect of Ladakhi. Traders from the two groups have little trouble communicating with each other. Most literate Nubra in India use the Urdu script, and many are bilingual in Kashmiri, the *lingua franca* of the area. The Nubra language is Tibetan related, although it now contains many Arabic loanwords due to the influence of Islam.

History: For centuries Nubra merchants have lived along the trade routes of the Old Silk Roads, which ran east into Tibet and north to Xinjiang and Central Asia. Tribes and bandits from the Ladakh region frequently raided areas inside today’s

China, including the Gug tribe who drove the Keriya people deep into the Taklimakan Desert before retreating back to their mountain hideouts.¹

Customs: The Nubra experienced a complete cultural transformation when they converted from Tibetan Buddhism (with all its idols, demons, ghosts, and spirit appeasement) to Islam — which abhors idolatry and strictly opposes the worship of any deity other than Allah. The customs of the Nubra reflect their Islamic beliefs. Many Nubra also herd yaks, goats, and sheep.

Religion: The Nubra live near their fellow Muslims: the Uygur, Kazak, Tajik, and Kirgiz. Although they speak the Ladakhi language, the major religious differences between the Muslim Nubra and the Buddhist Ladakhis have caused the Nubra to develop a separate ethnicity.

Christianity: There are no known Christians among the Nubra either in China or India. Although there are about 120 Moravian believers among the Ladakhis in India, the church has not grown at all since 1922 when they numbered 158 believers.² In recent years an Indian mission, the Cooperative Outreach of India, has commenced medical and evangelistic work among the Nubra in India. After one of their trips they reported, “After having crossed the highest motorable road in the world one reaches the Nubra Valley... We had 20 cataract surgeries and over 750 patients who came from far flung areas near the borders.”³ Because of the tense political situation, little has been done to help the Nubra living within China’s borders. The Nubra remain unreached and unevangelized.



Dwayne Graybill