



Population in China:

- 2,000 (1993)
- 2,400 (2000)
- 3,100 (2010)

Location:

Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia

Religion: Shamanism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Olot

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Ooh-lut"

Other Names: Manchurian Ölot, Heilongjiang Ölot, Mannai Ölot, Öiët, Oold, Oleut, Elyut, Eleuth

Population Source: Less than 2,000 (1993 J. Janhunen); Out of a total Mongol population of 4,806,849 (1990 census)

Location: *Heilongjiang:* On the eastern bank of the lower Nonni River within Fuyu County; *Inner Mongolia:* Another group lives in the Imin region of Hulunbuir.

Status: Officially included under Mongolian

Language: Altaic, Mongolian, Eastern Mongolian

Dialects: 0

Religion: Shamanism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

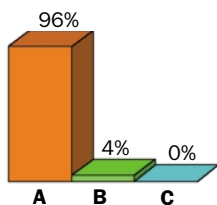
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: KGZ04

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: "Less than 2,000" Olot were counted in a 1993 study.³ The Olot inhabit the eastern bank of the Nonni River within Fuyu County in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

Another group of Olot live in the Imin region of Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia, but they have been unable to speak their language since the early 1900s.²

Identity: Although officially included as part of the Mongol nationality by the Chinese authorities, the Olot consider themselves to be a separate ethnic group. They speak a tribal dialect of Oirat that is unintelligible with the languages of all other surrounding communities. Oirat is the language spoken by most Mongols in northwest China on the opposite side of the country. In Xinjiang the Torgut, Olot, Korbet, and Hoshut peoples are known as the "Four Tribes of Oirat."³

Language: The Olot language is rapidly dying out. One linguist reported that the use of the Olot language has been extinct in Inner Mongolia since the start of the twentieth century, and that it is also headed toward extinction in Heilongjiang "due to assimilation by Chinese."⁴ Although it is still spoken by about 1,000 people, the youngest speakers of Olot today are in their 20s, and the language is no longer being taught to children. Many Olot can also speak the neighboring Daur language. The Olot language itself at one time served as a second language for the Khakas people in Heilongjiang.⁵

History: In 1758 the Qing Dynasty rulers of China conquered Jungaria in today's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Jungaria was an area controlled by Oirat tribal chiefs who proved to be a thorn in the side of the Manchu emperors.⁶ The Manchu government transferred a group of Olot to Manchuria, where they were split up and sent to the two locations they still inhabit today. One group was placed in Nonni and the other in Imin in Inner Mongolia. The Imin group gradually lost the use of their mother tongue, having been "influenced by the local Mongolic languages and dialects."⁷

Customs: The national drink of Mongolians across China is a fermented mare's milk called *airag* or *kumiss*. Made the same way today as it has been, for centuries, the milk is hung in a goatskin bag and

stirred with a wooden stick until it sours. The Olot have been isolated from other Mongolian groups for such a long period that their culture today appears more similar to the cultures of the Daur and Han Chinese than to that of the Mongolians.

Religion: The majority of Olot are shamanists. Tibetan Buddhism has not gained a foothold among them as it has among most other Mongol groups. Each Olot village has a shaman who mediates between the spirit world and the community. The shamans were persecuted during the 1960s but have reappeared in the 1980s and 1990s.

Christianity: No Olot are known to have ever believed in Christ, although a strong Daur church has emerged in recent years and may be able to take the gospel to the neighboring Olot. For the time being the Olot remains an untouched people group.



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