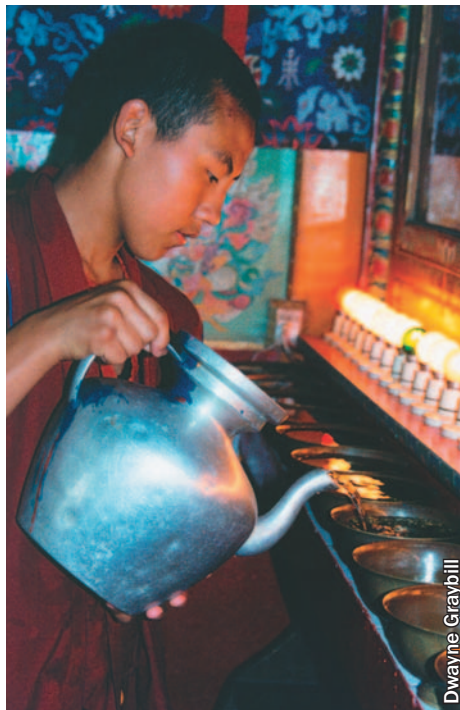


The small Kagate tribe is divided between the South Asian nations of Nepal and India. In 1974, the linguists Monika Hoehlig and Maria Hari visited the Kagate and estimated their population at about one thousand.¹ In the years since, the number of Kagate people in Nepal is estimated to have grown to approximately 1,500. They reportedly live 'in the mountains between the Likhu and Khimti rivers in the northeastern part of Ramechhap district, wedged in between Solokumbu and Dolakha districts'.² Another source says that



Dwayne Graybill

the Nepal Kagate inhabit 'Janakpur Zone, Ramechhap District, on one of the ridges of Likhu Khola'.³ The Kagate in Nepal live at an altitude of approximately 3,000 metres (9,840 ft.) above sea level. A similar number of Kagate live in India, having migrated there from Nepal. They are found in the North and East districts of Sikkim—the former independent nation that was annexed and incorporated into India in 1975. A

few Kagate are also located in the Alubari area of Darjeeling District in West Bengal.

Although this group is widely known by the name Kagate, their self-name is *Syuuba*. Other groups have given them the name Kagate because of their traditional occupation of making paper from a plant called the *kagaj* that grows in the hilly areas of Nepal.⁴

The Kagate language is part of the Tibeto-Burman family. It is closely related to Helambu Sherpa, although it differs 'by using less the honorific system in verbs. People can talk about most common topics in Nepali. . . . Kagate is used at home and to other Kagate'.⁵

Women are hard workers and have a

prominent role in Kagate society. They are 'required to collect fuel and fodder, when necessary, and render physical labor in the agricultural process, but are not engaged in plowing or cutting big trees, etc. Women also have a role in animal husbandry, and bring potable water from the spring. Women also have roles in ritual and religious spheres. Some of them take active part in politics too. With a major role in family management, they control the family expenditure'.⁶

Almost all Kagate people are followers of Tibetan Buddhism. Until recently, each family was required to send at least one son to the Buddhist monastery to be trained as a monk. Although this is no longer a binding law, most families continue the practice as they believe it brings honour and good fortune to the family. After a person dies, lamas come to perform complicated

cleansing rituals for 49 days. 'They burn 108 *chimis* (lamps) at a time, every day, during this period. . . . The lama reads out their religious scriptures. They prepare the *cho* (different fruits offered to the Buddha) and the *torma* (a preparation made of rice, wheat and fruits) for votive offering; and after the rituals distribute these among all the relatives, neighbors and friends. The lama gets some money and a *khada* (scarf) and some food. Generally, a group of six to eight lamas perform all these rituals'.⁷

Most Kagate people have never heard the gospel, although a very small Christian community is believed to exist among them in Nepal. Portions of the Bible were translated into Kagate in 1977.



Population:

2,570 (2000)

3,100 (2010)

3,630 (2020)

Countries: Nepal, India

Buddhism: Tibetan

Christians: 20

Overview of the Kagate

Other Names: Kagati, Yolmo, Shuba, Shyuba, Syuba, Syuuba, Kagate Bhoite, Kagatey

Population Sources:

1,000 in Nepal (1976, M Hoehlig and A Hari)

1,000 in India (2000, P Hattaway)

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

Dialects: 0

Professing Buddhists: 98%

Practising Buddhists: 90%

Christians: 0.8%

Scripture: Portions 1977

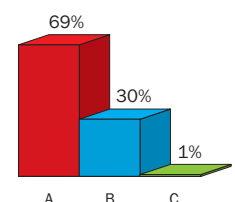
Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: Kagate

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: SYW

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