
Population in China:

3,000 (1987)

3,580 (2000)

4,100 (2010)

Location: Tibet

Religion: Shamanism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Bogar Lhoba

Countries: China, India

Pronunciation: "Low-bar-Bo-gah"

Other Names: Lhoba: Boga'er, Boga'er, Bengi-Boga'er, Bokar

Population Source:

3,000 (1987 LAC);

Only 2,312 Lhoba were counted in the 1990 census;

3,375 in India (1981 census)

Location: SE Tibet: Lhunze and Mainling counties, south of the Yaluzangjiang River

Status:

Officially included under Lhoba

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibetan-Burman, Baric, Mirish

Dialects (2):

Upper Bogar, Lower Bogar

Religion: Shamanism, Animism, Tibetan Buddhism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

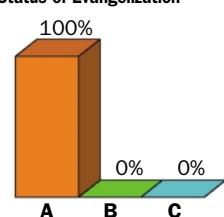
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: LH000

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


Dwayne Graybill

Location: Approximately 3,500 speakers of the Bogar language inhabit a sparsely populated area of southeast Tibet. They live south of the Yaluzang (Yarlung Zangbo) River in the two large counties of Lhunze and Mainling. Medog Prefecture is the size of Holland, yet contains just 9,000 people.¹ It is closed for most of the year due to snow and landslides. One study remarks that "an unknown number of Bogar can also be found on the south slope of the eastern section of the Himalayan ranges."² The 1981 census of India listed 3,375 *Bokar* living in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Identity: The Bogar form part of the official Lhoba nationality in China. In the 1990 census, only 2,312 Lhoba were counted. A 1987 study, however, reported 3,000 speakers of Bogar and 7,000 speakers of Yidu Lhoba. Some publications have incorrectly reported a population of 200,000 Lhoba in Tibet.³ The name *Lhoba* means "southerners" in the Tibetan language. The Lhoba are not the same group as the *Lopa* (Mustang) Tibetans of Nepal.

Language: The Bogar language is distinct from Yidu Lhoba and Adi. Speakers of each

language are unable to communicate with each other. Bogar Lhoba is a member of the Mirish branch of Tibeto-Burman.⁴

History: Until the 1950s the Bogar were frequently bullied and oppressed by the Tibetans. The Bogar were not allowed to intermarry with other nationalities and were not allowed to leave their area without the permission of the Tibetans.⁵ In August 1965, the State Council of China officially recognized the Lhoba as a distinct minority group. The first satellite TV dish was installed in Medog Prefecture in 1989, linking this remote area with the rest of China.

Customs: Few peoples in the world are as isolated as the Bogar. The barefooted tribesmen are skilled hunters and fishermen. The forests they inhabit still contain many

Bengali tigers and 40 species of other rare protected animals.⁶ There are two classes among the Bogar: *maide* and *nieba*. The *maide* class are free to keep slaves and hold authority in the society. The word *nieba* means "those who are not allowed to lift their heads casually."⁷ They are slaves who have no rights.

Religion: Most Bogar are worshipers of evil spirits. When they become sick, they believe they are being afflicted by demons. A shaman is summoned to heal the sick person by calling the soul back to the body. Every Bogar village has an altar where sacrifices and divination take place. The most common form of telling the future is to study the lines of a rooster's liver. Sometimes dozens or even hundreds of roosters will be killed in order to secure a favorable decision.⁸

Christianity: The Bogar of Tibet are a completely unevangelized people. They presently have no access to the gospel. Their area is effectively sealed off from the rest of the world by geographic, political, and religious barriers.