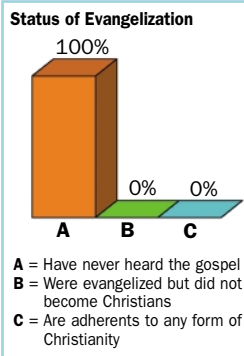


Population in China:
 7,000 (1987)
 8,350 (2000)
 9,600 (2010)
Location: Tibet
Religion: Shamanism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Yidu Lhoba

Countries: China, India, possibly Bhutan
Pronunciation: "Low-bah-E-doo"
Other Names: Lhoba; Yidu, Yidu, Idu
Population Source: 7,000 (1987 LAC); Only 2,312 Lhoba were counted in the 1990 census; 8,569 in India (1981 census); Possibly also in Bhutan
Location: SE Tibet: Lhunze and Mainling counties
Status: Officially included under Lhoba
Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Baric, Mirish
Literacy: 31%
Dialects: 0
Religion: Shamanism, Animism, Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: LON00



Location: The extremely isolated Danba River valley and the surrounding mountain slopes in southeast Tibet are home to more than 8,000 Yidu Lhoba. This sparsely populated region borders northern India. More than 8,500 Idu live in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Some reports have incorrectly stated that there are 200,000 Lhoba living in northern India.¹

Identity: Yidu is a distinct language that differs from Bogar Lhoba, which is spoken by members of the same minority group farther to the east of the Yidu. The Yidu have been combined with the Bogar and Adi to form the official Lhoba nationality in Tibet. However, the Chinese government's 1990 census findings of only 2,312 Lhoba do not match the figures of independent linguists and researchers who report a minimum of 10,000 Lhoba in China.

Language: The exact classification of the Yidu language is uncertain. Linguist Ning Yu has placed it in the Tibeto-Burman family, but the Chinese have not yet assigned it an affiliation.² Some scholars believe the two Lhoba languages are related to Jingpo.³

History: Until recently the Lhoba were a virtually unknown and extremely primitive people. Because they have no written script, the Lhoba have no record of where they originated. In the past they tied strings around their wrists or notched marks in wood to remind them of important things they needed to do.

Customs: Most Lhoba marriages take place sometime within the full moon days of September to December. "On that day... the bride and groom take a sip from their own bowls first and then exchange the bowls and keep on drinking.... On the second day after the wedding, friends and relatives of the groom will present a gift which they consider the best of all gifts — rat meat. Rat meat is, for the Lhobas, the best dish a host can offer his guests."⁴

Religion: For thousands of years the Lhoba have handed down oral traditions about the genesis of the world. Their beliefs form the Lhoba worldview. They say in the beginning the sky was empty, and only the sun, moon, and stars could be seen. The earth was bare, and only the mountains, rivers, and rocks existed. "Maidong (the sky) and Shijin (the earth) sat

together trying to break the absolute tranquillity that embodied the world. They decided to get married and soon after the earth was pregnant. Their first child, before birth, dissipated into a pool of blood. The blood then changed into rain and nourished the various forms of life on earth. Later on, the earth gave birth to another child who became the ancestor of the Lhoba nationality."⁵ To please their Tibetan neighbors, many Yidu Lhoba outwardly adhere to Tibetan Buddhism, but in reality they practice shamanism and spirit appeasement.

Christianity: The Yidu Lhoba have no awareness of the name of Jesus Christ. There are a few churches in Assam, northern India, among the related Adi people, but no Christians are known to have crossed into the Yidu Lhoba part of Tibet with the gospel.



Dwayne Graybill