

# Angku



**Population:**

20,300 (2000)  
24,000 (2010)  
28,500 (2020)

**Countries:** Myanmar, China, Laos, possibly Thailand

**Buddhism:** Theravada

**Christians:** none known

## Overview of the Angku

**Other Names:** Kiorr, Con, K'ala

**Population Sources:**

10,000 in Myanmar (2000, P Hattaway)  
6,113 in China (1995, Global Evangelization Movement)  
2,359 Kiorr in Laos (1985, F Proschan)  
possibly also in Thailand

**Language:** Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic-Khmuic, Palaungic, Western Palaungic, Angkuic

**Dialects:** 4 (Angku, Kiorr, Amok, Pou Ma)

**Professing Buddhists:** 95%

**Practising Buddhists:** 65%

**Christians:** 0%

**Scripture:** none

**Jesus film:** none

**Gospel Recordings:** none

**Christian Broadcasting:** none

**ROPAL code:** ANG

More than 20,000 Angku people live near the common borders of the three nations of Myanmar, China and Laos. The majority live in Shan State of northern Myanmar, while in China they inhabit six villages in southern Yunnan Province.<sup>1</sup> Linguist Frank Proschan listed a 1985 population of 2,359 Angku in Laos, where they are also known as the Kiorr.<sup>2</sup> Unspecified smaller numbers of Angku people may also live in Thailand.

today.<sup>5</sup> Ethno-historian James Olson, who calls the Angku in China by the name K'ala, further explains, 'More than two thousand years ago, Han expansion reached K'ala [Angku] country. By the Tang dynasty of the seventh and eighth centuries, [Angku people] had begun to distinguish themselves ethnically from surrounding peoples, acquiring a sense of group identity based on language and religion. During the centuries of the Tang dynasty, they

found themselves under the political domination of the Nanzhao Kingdom. The Dai Kingdom controlled them during the Song dynasty from the tenth to thirteenth centuries.'<sup>6</sup>

Angku women are fond of chewing betel nut, which blackens their teeth and gums. Stained teeth are considered a mark of beauty among Angku women. Since the betel juice only stains temporarily, some women use black dye to artificially stain their teeth.

The Angku, like their Bulang counterparts, are staunch followers of Theravada Buddhism. Angku life revolves around the local temple. Traditionally all Angku boys become novice monks and live in the temple until they are 12 years old. The

Angku obey the three tenets of Buddhism: practising self-discipline, teaching and discussing doctrine. Buddhist temples are found in most Angku villages.

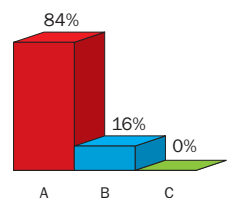
Few Angku have ever been exposed to the gospel. Their villages are away from the mainstream of travellers; therefore, it takes a specific effort to make contact with the Angku. So far, the few Christian workers who have laboured in the region have preferred to target the larger minority groups, leaving the Angku without any witness or church. The nearest Christian community to the Angku are the approximately 1,500 Tai Lu and Han Chinese Christians living in Jinghong. There are no Scriptures or ministry tools available in the Angku language.



The Angku in China are located on the western banks of the Lancang (Mekong) River in Xishuangbanna Prefecture of Yunnan Province. In China the government has officially counted the Angku as members of the Bulang nationality, but the Angku language is not mutually intelligible with Bulang and in fact is more 'closely related to De'ang [Palaung] . . . which is spoken in Yunnan and Myanmar'.<sup>3</sup> There are four Angku dialects, some of which may also qualify as distinct languages.<sup>4</sup>

The Angku, in addition to the Wa, Bulang and De'ang minorities, were originally part of a large Austro-Asiatic group that occupied much of Yunnan before the Dai and Yi people arrived. 'They were driven out of their habitats by the invaders, dispersed and split into the isolated groups they are

## 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