

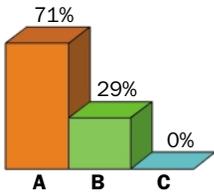


Population in China:
 150 (1996)
 167 (2000)
 215 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Animism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Asho Chin

- Countries:** Myanmar, Bangladesh, China
- Pronunciation:** "Chin-Ah-sho"
- Other Names:** Ashu, Shoa, Kyang, Sho, Qin, Khyang, Khyeng
- Population Source:** 150 (1996 AMO); 10,000 in Myanmar (1991 United Bible Societies); 1,422 in Bangladesh (1981 census)
- Location:** *W Yunnan*
- Status:** Unidentified
- Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Baric, Kuki-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern Kuki-Chin, Sho
- Dialects:** 0
- Religion:** Animism
- Christians:** None known
- Scripture:** New Testament 1954; Portions 1921
- Jesus film:** None
- Gospel Recordings:** Asho Chin #00401
- Christian Broadcasting:** Available in Myanmar (FEBC)
- ROPAL code:** CSH00

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: Between 100 and 200 Asho Chin people live in western Yunnan Province near the China-Myanmar border. One publication states, "There are probably less than 100 in China."¹ Apparently there is some confusion as to whether the Asho Chin are located in China at all. The 1992 *Ethnologue* listed the Asho Chin as being in China, but the 1996 edition states they are not.² The Asho Chin who live in Myanmar, however, are aware that they have members of their group living in China.³ Furthermore, missionary John Kuhn, in his 1945 survey of Yunnan, lists the Asho Chin under the name *Ashu* and places them in "Chiangcheng."⁴ More than 10,000 Asho Chin are located along the lowlands of the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar, in addition to 1,422 living in Bangladesh.

Identity: The Asho Chin are part of the great Chin race of Myanmar and India. There are approximately 1.4 million Chin,⁵ speaking 19 distinct languages and more than 40 dialects. It is not known in what nationality, if any, the Asho Chin of China have been included by the authorities.

Language: Asho Chin is a member of the Tibeto-Burman language family and is most closely related to Siangbaung Chin. It has no traditional script, although a Romanized script was used by missionaries to translate the Asho Chin Bible.

History: Chin history goes back to the dawn of time. "The Chins have a story of the Tower of Babel to account for the various clans that inhabit the range

of hills... and traditions of a deluge are found everywhere."⁶ In the past, whole communities of Asho Chin in Myanmar were decimated by malaria. Why this group of Asho Chin migrated from their Myanmar homeland to faraway China is not known.

Customs: The Asho Chin have many customs involving courtship and marriage. "All the marriageable girls have their own rooms where young men come courting at night. If a girl gets pregnant, the parents allow them to marry.... If the girl's family agrees, they may demand five or six pigs or a couple of cows as a dowry."⁷

Religion: Most Asho Chin are animists even though many of the other Chin groups in Myanmar have embraced Christianity. "The

people are afraid of evil spirits and of the spirits of their dead ancestors. In order to appease the angry spirits, they offer sacrifices of cows, pigs, buffaloes, goats, dogs or chickens."⁸

Christianity: The status of Christianity among the Asho Chin in China is unknown. In Myanmar they were a completely untouched people group until native evangelists visited them in 1987: "The tribe was isolated from others — accessible only by dugout canoes, since there was not even a footpath or road to their villages.... During the time the missionaries taught.... 76 people invited Jesus into their lives."⁹ Gospel radio broadcasts are available in the Asho Chin language, but they are aimed at Myanmar and are probably not received in China.



Paul Hattaway