



**Population in China:**

6,113 (1995)  
6,820 (2000)  
8,400 (2010)

**Location:** Tibet

**Religion:** Tibetan Buddhism

**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Kyerung

**Countries:** Nepal, China

**Pronunciation:** "Geeh-rong"

**Other Names:** Kyirong, Gyirong

**Population Source:**

6,113 (1995 GEM);  
Out of a total Tibetan population of 4,593,330 (1990 census);  
Also in Nepal

**Location:** S Tibet: Along Nepal-China border near Mt. Everest

**Status:** Officially included under Tibetan

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Tibetan

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Tibetan Buddhism

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** None

**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** KGY00



Paul Hattaway

**Location:** A 1995 figure placed 6,113 speakers of the Tibetan Kyerung language living in southern Tibet,<sup>1</sup> along Nepal's northern border with China. The majority of Kyerung live in Nepal, especially in the villages of Rasua Gari, Birdim, Thangjet, Syabru and Syabrubensi. These villages are located in the Rasuwa District of the Bagmati Zone in Nepal's Langtang region. There are also "large concentrations [of Kyerung] in Kathmandu,"<sup>2</sup> the capital city of Nepal.

**Identity:** The Kyerung are ethnic Tibetans and have been officially counted as part of the Tibetan nationality in China; however, they speak their own language, unintelligible with other Tibetan varieties. The Kyerung make up a significant portion of the 60,000 or more Tibetans in Nepal. The Kyerung are not the same as the Jiarong people of Sichuan Province, although when pronounced in Tibetan the two names sound similar.

**Language:** Kyerung is a part of the Bodic branch of the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. It is reported to share 65% lexical similarity with Central Tibetan. Kyerung has 68% lexical similarity with Lhomi and 57% with Sherpa<sup>3</sup> — all spoken in southern Tibet.

**History:** The seventh and eighth centuries saw a rapid increase in the Tibetan empire. Tibet's rule extended into Kashmir, China, Turkestan, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, and northern Burma. In 1788 the Tibetans turned to the Chinese for military assistance when they were being besieged by an invading Gurkha army from Nepal. After this, Chinese influence in Tibet increased greatly. The states of Sikkim, Bhutan, and Nepal splintered and became separate political units. By the mid-1800s Manchu power in China was waning; and when the Gurkhas again invaded Tibet in 1856 the Chinese did not help. The Nepalese extracted annual tribute from the Tibetans. By the end of 1959 an estimated 20,000 Tibetans had fled across the border into Nepal and India. Today the number of Tibetans in exile has grown to approximately 200,000. They are scattered in communities in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Taiwan, in the mountains of Switzerland, in the

United States, Norway, Australia, France, and England.

**Customs:** The Kyerung are willing to accept other people's beliefs. They have a greeting, *Tashiteleg*, which means "I recognize the divine qualities in you." Traditionally a man can marry two sisters, or several brothers may share the same wife (although this is now only practiced in remote communities).

**Religion:** The Kyerung, like all Tibetan ethnic groups, zealously follow Tibetan Buddhism.

**Christianity:** There are no known Christian believers among the Kyerung in either Tibet or Nepal. Faithful workers are needed like William E. Simpson, an American missionary to Tibet, who was martyred in 1932. Simpson summarized his life when he wrote, "Are not all the trials, the loneliness, the heartache, the weariness and pain, the cold and fatigue of the long road, the darkness and discouragements, and all the bereavements, temptations and testings, deemed not worthy to be compared with the joy of witnessing to this 'glad tidings of great joy'?"

