

CHORO

More than 18,000 people belonging to the Choro tribe live in southern Vietnam. The highest concentration of Choro live in the Xuan Loc and Chau Thanh districts of Dong Nai Province, while smaller numbers live in Song Be and Binh Thuan provinces, just north of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly called Saigon).

The Choro are not the same group as the Churu, despite the similarity of their names. The name *Choro* simply means 'mountain-dweller' in many Mon-Khmer languages.

In recent decades many Choro have been gradually assimilated to Vietnamese language and culture, particularly those living in more urban areas. Many Choro children are no

longer being taught to speak their mother-tongue—which is related to the Ma and Stieng languages. Only between 25-50% of Choro adults are reportedly able to read.

Choro men usually go around without a shirt in the summer, and wear a blanket when the cooler months arrive. Choro women are easily identifiable by the cane baskets they always carry around on their backs. They also like to adorn themselves with necklaces and bracelets made from silver or copper.

Like other animistic groups in Vietnam, Choro husbands must live in their wife's house for several years after marriage. The marriage is not fully considered official until after the

birth of the first child. After several years the man is allowed to take his wife back to live in his own village.

The Choro observe an elaborate set of funeral and burial customs. The coffin is fashioned from a hollowed-out tree trunk. For three days after the funeral, the family of the deceased drop rice on the ground at each meal. They believe this will feed the ghost of the dead person, which is thought to linger behind in the house for a time.

Six days after the death the ritual of "opening the grave" takes place. It is at this time that the grieving relatives and friends must say their final good-byes to the deceased, although presents of food and water continue to be offered to the dead for a period of 100 days.

Because the oldest son is required to perform most of the ancestral rites, it is imperative for the Choro to give birth to male children. A woman without a son is considered a disgrace. In the past the husband was free to take a concubine if his wife was unable to produce a son. This was usually done only with the consent of the wife, who often selected the concubine for her husband.



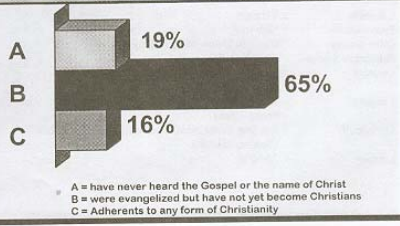
Population:
15,022 (1989)
18,650 (2000)
22,700 (2010)

Language:
Mon-Khmer

Religion:
Animism

Christians:
2,800

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



The primary religious adherence among the Choro could accurately be described as animism. In their world-view, the universe is a hierarchy of spirits. They are careful to follow centuries-old animistic rituals and sacrifices. If they don't they feel they will fall out of harmony with the universe around them. This can lead to widespread poverty, disease, famine and natural disasters.

When someone falls ill the Choro believe it is the result of the spirits being offended by the sick person or his family. Shamans are called in to determine where the problem lies and no expense is spared in making things right. Often a sick person believes he is suffering because his soul has wandered away from his body. The shaman helps "call back" the soul into the body by correcting whatever offense occurred in the first place.

Some of the principal deities appeased by the Choro include the spirit of the forest and the spirit of the rice harvest. The overseer of these sacrifices is called the *kuang nom tom bri*. They believe the rice that is planted actually has a soul, so after the planting of the harvest the entire population comes out to worship this spirit and to pray for an abundant harvest.

The Choro love their traditional music. At festivals men and women sing songs back and forth to each other with alternating lines. Choro instruments include gongs and stringed bamboo guitars.

Christianity has taken a hold among some Choro communities. There are around 2,800 people who profess to follow Christ. Missionaries first translated books of the Bible into Choro in 1966, and the New Testament was completed in 1982. FEBC produce Gospel radio broadcasts in the Choro language for 30 minutes per week.



Pray for the Choro

- 1 Ask the Lord of Lords to strengthen the Choro believers, and for the Holy Spirit to motivate them to reach out to those who are lost in their own ethnic group.
- 2 Pray the Choro would be a mission-minded church, and would have a burden to take the Gospel to other tribes and even across the border into Cambodia.
- 3 Pray there would be numerous Choro among the redeemed around the throne of the Lamb in heaven.

Overview of the Choro

Countries	: Vietnam	Subgroups	: 0
Pronunciation	: "Job-roh"	Religion	: Animism, Christianity, Shamanism, Ancestor Worship
Other Names	: Chau-ro, Do-ro, Moj, Thuong, Chrau	Christians	: 2,800
Population Source	: 15,022 (1989 census)	Scripture	: New Testament 1982; Portions 1966 NT, OT stories and hymnals are available
Location	: Dong Nai: Xuan Loc and Chau Thanh districts; Song Be, Binh Thuan	Jesus film	: none
Language	: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Bahnaric, South Bahnaric, Stieng-Chrau	Gospel Recordings	: Chrau Jro #03333; Chrau TT #00729
Dialects (9)	: Jro, Dor, Prang, Mro, Voqtwaq, Vajiang, Chalah, Chalum, Tamain	Christian Radio	: available (FEBC)
Literacy	: 25-50%		: 30 minutes per week
		ROPAL code	: CHR00