

CHURU

More than 13,000 members of the Churu minority group live in the Don Duang, Duc Trong and Di Linh districts of Lam Dong Province and the An Son and Duc Linh districts of Binh Thuan Province. In a peculiar anomaly, there is also a small Mon-Khmer speaking subgroup of the Churu who live in an extremely isolated mountainous area. Their language is opposed to most of the Churu who speak a Malayo-Polynesian language. The inclusion of this small group was probably a classification of convenience for the authorities, who ignored the fact the Mon-Khmer group are ethno-linguistically distinct.

In the past the Churu were part of the Cham kingdom. For unknown reasons this group splintered off the main

Cham population centuries ago and moved into the mountains. They were given the name *Cru* ('earth nibbling people') by the local inhabitants.

The Churu raise water buffaloes, oxen, pigs, horses and chickens. Buffaloes are especially numerous because they are raised to be sacrificed in religious ceremonies, as well as for food. Buffaloes are also used as currency when the Churu trade with the Koho and Raglai. The principle crops of the Churu include rice, corn, sweet potato, beans, pumpkins and several other kinds of vegetables.

Until the last 20 years the Churu lived in a matriarchal society where the oldest daughter was the leader.

Today matriarchal practices are found only in the most remote villages, where all relationships are initiated by the women.

After the wedding, the bride lives for about two weeks with the family of her new husband. After this time a ceremony is held to welcome the young man into his wife's family where they remain from that point on.

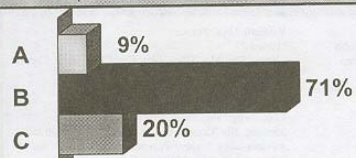
The two most powerful figures in Churu society are the village chief and the village shaman. Although the Churu also worship their ancestors, they do not have ancestral altars in their homes. Instruments such as gongs, jars, drums, elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns are used by the shamans in their ceremonies and have spiritual significance.

There are around 2,600 Christians among the main body of Churu (i.e. those who speak a Malayo-Polynesian language). They were first targeted by missionaries working with the Christian & Missionary Alliance in the 1950s. Today they have the Biblical books of Mark, Acts, the Joseph story and Luke 15 available in their language. The subgroup of Churu who speak a Mon-Khmer language, on the other hand, had reportedly never



Population:	10,746 (1989) 13,350 (2000) 16,300 (2010)
Language:	Malayo-Polynesian
Religion:	Shamanism
Christians:	2,600

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = Adherents to any form of Christianity

received the Gospel until 1996. According to a report by *Asian Minorities Outreach*, they heard the Gospel for the first time in extraordinary circumstances...

"The Churu...are very difficult to reach because of the many witchdoctors and alcoholics. They live hidden away in large mountains in southern Vietnam. To get to the Churu we walked for several days. Many wild animals and leeches also live in this area of Vietnam. Leeches covered our legs and arms whenever we walked through a river or stream.

The hill-tribes eat some very bad food. They often leave fish out in the open for weeks until they are riddled with maggots. They then serve them as a delicacy. It was difficult for us to eat but if we didn't accept it the tribes would be insulted and would reject our message.

The witchdoctors among the Churu have a lot of demonic power. All the village people live in fear of them...When we finally arrived in the Churu village many people crowded around us to listen to what we had to say... The Churu had never received the Gospel before. Their villages are so remote that missionaries were never able to get to them before foreigners were kicked out of Vietnam in 1975.

After we started sharing the Gospel the witchdoctor stirred the people up against our message. We told the people not to listen to him. The main symbol of the witch-doctor's spiritual authority was a huge wild pig's tooth which he wore on a chain around his neck. The tooth is passed from one generation to another as a sign of authority. The witch-doctor came to us and said, "If your God can make this tooth catch on fire then we will believe in Him, but if it does not we will kill you all right here!"

As you can imagine we prayed very fervently and cried out to the Lord. Hundreds of Churu gathered around us to see what would happen. After praying for some time, suddenly the pig's tooth burst into flames by itself! The whole village saw it and were amazed. After that many believed the message of Jesus Christ. Today we have a church of more than 300 people among the Churu."



Pray for the Churu

- 1 Praise God for His concern for the Churu people, and for performing great miracles in order to help them see the Truth of the Gospel.
- 2 Pray the Churu would be an out-looking church, and would be willing to travel far and wide to spread the Gospel among many unreached people groups.
- 3 Pray more of the Scriptures would soon be available in the Churu language, so the church can gain a solid foundation to their faith.

Overview of the Churu

Countries	: Vietnam, USA, France	Dialects (2)	: Rai, Noong
Pronunciation	: "Joo-roo"	Literacy	: 25-50%
Other Names	: Cho-ru, Kru, Moi, Chru, Chu, Cru, Chrau Hruu, Caddle Loang, Seyu	Subgroups	: 0
Population Source	: 10,746 (1989 census) a few in USA and France	Religion	: Shamanism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity, Animism
Location	: Lam Dong/Don Duang, Duc Trong and Di Linh districts; Bin Thuan: An Son and Duc Linh districts	Christians	: 2,600
Language	: Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Western Malayo-Polynesian, Sundic, Malayic, Achinese-Chamic, Chamic, South, Coastal, Cham-Chru. A subgroup of the Churu speak a Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer language.	Scripture	: Portions 1955; work in progress Mark, Acts, Joseph story and Luke 15 are available
		Jesus film	: none
		Gospel Recordings	: Chru #00758
		Christian Radio	: available (FEBC) 15 minutes per week
		ROPAL code	: CJEOO