

CHUT

More than 2,400 members of the Chut minority group were counted in the 1989 Vietnam census. They inhabit two districts—Minh Hoa and Tuyen Hoa—in Quang Binh Province.

In reality, the official Chut minority are an artificial classification, created by the government in 1954. They combined seven small tribes, who speak at least four distinct languages, including *Arem*, *May*, *Ruc* and *Sach*.

The name *Chut* is a generic term which simply means 'mountain' or 'rocky-cliff'. Each group lives in a separate area defined by agreed-upon markers such as trees, rivers and streams. The members of one tribe were careful not to encroach onto the territory of their neighbors for fear of provoking

warfare. A few years ago a species of deer was discovered for the very first time by biologists in the Chut region.

The Chut are called *Xa La Vang* ('Yellow-Leaf People') by local people because they used to build temporary shelters made of banana leaves, and moved on when the leaves had yellowed and withered. The name *Ruc* means 'those who eat sago-palm flour', *May* means 'beggar' and *Arem* 'cave dwellers'.

The seven Chut tribes are very primitive. Only recently did they begin to live in houses. In the past they preferred to move around deep within the forests, dwelling in caves, trees, or temporary shacks. The *Ruc* and *Arem* were the last groups to start building

houses in the 1960s.

According to a government report on the Chut, however, they may be heading back to their former lifestyles... "Their population numbers are falling alarmingly, and their agriculture is on the point of disappearing. Certain members of their group are returning to live in caves. Their misery is at such a point that often a young man has nothing but a blunt knife to offer his in-law's family at his wedding."⁸

The *Sach* are primarily engaged in agriculture. They grow rice, corn, vegetables, beans and tobacco. Most of the other tribes rely on hunting, fishing and gathering food from the forest. Chut women are experts at finding edible roots, snails, vegetables and mushrooms on the forest floor. Chut men hunt small game using traps and crossbows with poisoned arrows. Dogs are also used to track animals during large-scale hunting expeditions.

Because the Chut do not know how to grow or weave cotton, they engage in trade with the Vietnamese for clothing. They also buy copper pots, axes and knives. In the summer Chut men wear only a simple loin-cloth, but



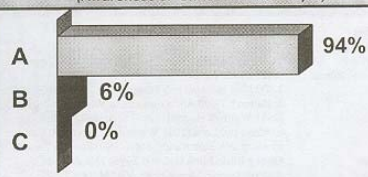
Population:
2,427 (1989)
3,010 (2000)
3,670 (2010)

Language:
Mon-Khmer

Religion:
Animism

Christians:
none known

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

in the winter they cover their torso with a *kche*—a poncho made from tree bark that is beaten into thin strips and sewn together.

When a Chut dies, the corpse is kept inside the house for three days. Mourners present offerings of food to the soul of the deceased. After three days the corpse is placed in a grave, which is filled with soil until a mound of dirt remains above ground.

The Chut tribes share a common belief in a Creator God. They take great care to recite their legends to future generations in stories and folk-songs called *ka-tum* and *ka-lenh*.

After a Chut woman gives birth she is required to live with her baby in a hut outside the house for two or three months. Only after going through complicated purification rites is she allowed to re-enter her home.

If someone is bitten by a tiger, bear or snake the Chut believe them to be cursed. They are not allowed to return to their village for two or three months. The person must live deep within the forest for this time and cannot be visited by friends or relatives.

Ancestor worship is not practiced in each home, as is the case with many tribes, but is only observed in the home of the village chief. The Chut also believe in a hierarchy of spirits, of which the spirits of the earth, humans, animals and the forest are considered the most powerful.

There are no known Christians among any of the Chut tribes in either Vietnam or Laos. Their extremely remote location, coupled with their introverted mind-set and close-knit communities, has proved a near impenetrable barrier to those few Christians who have taken the Gospel to them.



Pray for the Chut

- 1 Ask the Lord to raise up awareness and concern for the plight of the seven Chut tribes. Pray Christians would receive a call from God to reach out and plant churches among them.
- 2 Ask the Holy Spirit to put a desire in the Chut to search for the True God.
- 3 Pray the Name of Jesus Christ would be glorified among the Chut, that they might honor and worship the Creator of their souls.

Overview of the Chut

Countries : Vietnam, Laos
Pronunciation : "Choot"
Other Names : Tu Vang, Pa Leng, Keo, Cha Cui, Xa La Vang, Arem
Population Source : 2,427 (1989 census)
1,500 May speakers in Vietnam and Laos (1981 Wurm & Hattori); 1,000 Arem speakers in Vietnam and Laos (1981 Wurm & Hattori); 1,000 Sach speakers in Vietnam and Laos (1981 Wurm & Hattori); 500 Ruc speakers in Vietnam and Laos (1981 Wurm & Hattori)
Location : Quang Binh, Minh Hoa and Tuyen Hoa districts
Language : Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Viet-Muong, Chut

Dialects (4) : Arem, May, Ruc, Sach
Subgroups (7) : Arem, May, Sach, Ruc, Ma Lieng, Xolang, Umo
Religion : Animism, Ancestor Worship, Shamanism
Christians : none known
Scripture : none
Jesus film : none
Gospel Recordings : none
Christian Radio : none
ROPAL code : AEM00 (Arem); MVZ00 (May); RUL00 (Ruc); SCB00 (Sach)