

KOHO

More than 100,000 individuals belonging to the Kobo minority group inhabit several provinces in southern Vietnam. The majority live on the Di Linh Plateau in Lam Dong Province.

The Kobo (officially spelt *Co-Ho*) are a combination of six different tribes or ethnic subgroups. Among them, the *Xre* (or *Sre*) are the largest. Others include the *Chil*, *Nop*, *Co-don*, *To-ring* and *Lat*. Each group has slightly different customs, lifestyles and dialects.

Kobo houses are constructed on stilts and can be up to 30 meters (100 feet) long. Several generations of the same family are often found under the one roof. The walls of the house are made of bamboo and the roof of thatch.

The *Xre* tribe now engage in rice-cultivation using irrigated fields. The other Kobo tribes have lagged behind in their development and still practice slash-and-burn agriculture. The people arrive in a new location, burn off the land including the trees and bushes, and plant their seeds. This method produces only one annual harvest and leaves the soil fallow after only two years. It usually takes another ten years before the soil has recovered enough to produce another harvest.

The Kobo make up for what they lack in agriculture by being skilled horticulturists. They grow jack-fruit, banana and papaya. Some Kobo villages produce coffee, silk and mulberries.

The *Chil* subgroup lives in small groups on the side of mountains. They have a matrilineal society where families are arranged according to their female ancestors.

The Kobo possess a rich collection of folk stories, legends, poems and songs. Often they will gather around the fire and listen to elderly Kobo tell stories explaining their myths and legends about the past struggles of the Kobo and their migrations from far-off lands. In recent generations many Kobo have converted to Christianity. Today Bible stories are often told by elderly Kobo, who want the youth of their race to know the God that their parents did not have the chance to follow.

When a young Kobo woman has found the man she wants to spend the rest of her life with, she tells her parents and they arrange a meeting with the boy's parents. A copper bracelet and a glass necklace are offered to the boy's family. If they are accepted the wedding can go ahead. After the wedding the new husband goes to live with his wife's family. Any children born to the couple take the family name of their mother. If the wife should die at a young age, her



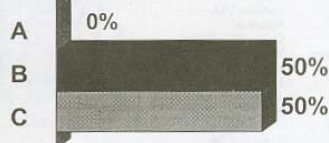
Population:
92,190 (1989)
114,500 (2000)
139,700 (2010)

Language:
Mon-Khmer

Religion:
Christianity

Christians:
57,000

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

younger sister must take her place both as wife and mother. The exchange is immediate and the husband does not even need to wait until the mourning period has ended to be with his new wife.

The Kobo bury their dead in large graves located deep in the forests. The dead members of the same family are usually buried in a common grave.

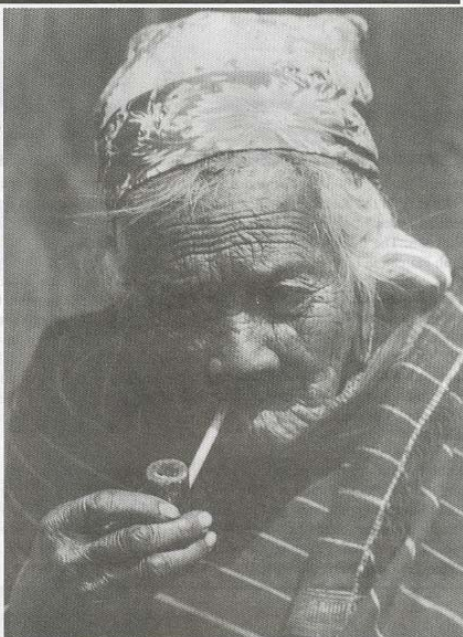
Although today more than half of the Kobo population is Christian, this was not the case prior to the start of missionary work among them in the 1940s.

The Kobo were animists, worshipping forces of nature and various good and evil spirits. They have always believed there was a Creator God of the universe. This belief expedited their conversion to Christianity. Many Kobo believed this new religion was the fulfillment of what they already believed.

Those Kobo who do not adhere to Christianity worship the sun, moon, mountains, rivers and trees. Water buffaloes are sacrificed to ensure peace and harmony with these spirits.

In 1998 the Kobo churches claimed to have a combined membership of 57,000 people, an increase of 7,000 from the previous year. Generally speaking, the Kobo living in more urban areas have embraced the Gospel faster and more steadfastly than the Kobo living in the mountains. Many of the latter who claim to be Christians have combined their new faith with animistic rituals. Although about half of the Kobo are not Christians, the entire group has been thoroughly evangelized.

The New Testament has been available in the Kobo language since 1967. Parts of the Old Testament have been completed and printed separately as each became available.



Pray for the Kobo

- 1 Thank God for the people movement to Christ experienced by the Kobo. Praise Him that they already believed in a Creator God and were easily persuaded that they should follow Him.
- 2 Pray the Kobo would not be inward-looking in their faith, but would have the vision and motivation to take the Gospel to other tribes not as blessed as they are.
- 3 Pray the entire Kobo Bible would soon be available, so that the believers may be fully grounded and steadfast in their faith.

Overview of the Kobo

Countries: Vietnam, USA
Pronunciation: "Koh-hoh"
Other Names: Co-Ho, K'ho, Kohor
Population Source: 92,190 (1989 census), also in USA
Location: Lam Dong, Ninh Thuan, Khanh Hoa, Binh Thuan
Language: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Eastern Mon-Khmer, Bahnaric, South Bahnaric, Sre-Mnong, Sre
Dialects (12): Chil, Tring, Sre, Kalop, Sop, Laya, Rion, Nop, Tala, Koda, Pro, Lac
Literacy: 50-75%

Subgroups (6): Xre, Nop, Co-don, Chil, To-ring, Lat
Religion: Christianity, Animism
Christians: 53,700
Scripture: New Testament 1967; Portions 1950; NT, Genesis, Job, Psalms, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Joshua, Judges, Ruth and hymnals are available
Jesus film: none
Gospel Recordings: Kobo #00330; Kobo: Cil #00735; Kobo: Lac #00730; Kobo: Tring #00736
Christian Radio: available (FEBC)
Literacy: 30 minutes per week
ROPAL code: KPM00