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Location: Between 1,000 and 2,000 Boloji people live in and around the village of Xiao Heshui, to the west of Songpan in northern Sichuan Province. Smaller numbers live scattered along the Min River as far south as Wenchuan. One early missionary wrote, "In Weizhou [now Wenchuan] most of the people are either Qiang or a mixed race, though there are some... Bolotsze [Boloji] as well."¹ Another source states, "At Songpan one road goes westward through the Po-lo-tzu [Boloji] country, one goes northward through the grasslands, and one turns eastward through northern Sichuan."²

Identity: The Boloji may have become a distinct ethnic group as the result of marriage between Tibetans and Qiang people. They were first described by Scottish missionary Thomas

Torrance in the 1930s. The Boloji have been counted as part of either the Tibetan or Qiang nationalities by the Chinese authorities. This classification has caused the Boloji to be hidden to outsiders. Even among the Boloji themselves there is a growing tendency to identify themselves as Tibetans. Within a generation or two there may be no remembrance of their distinct ethnic origins.

Language: Little is known about the Boloji language which may belong to the Qiangic branch of Tibeto-Burman. Most Boloji men and children are also fluent in Chinese, but many Boloji women have never been to school and only know their mother tongue.

History: Until the 1960s the Boloji were renowned for their plundering of other villages. Being a mix of

Tibetans and Qiang, the Boloji were known to have a wild, violent streak. They became the scourge even of other Tibetan communities living in the area. The Boloji raided communities on horseback, carrying away anything they liked and killing if they so desired. Today they lead a far more peaceable existence, tending to crops and livestock in the green hills of northern Sichuan.

Customs: Boloji families engage in a wide variety of occupations, which include herding of yaks, sheep, and goats, engaging in agricultural production, and trading with the Tibetans and Han Chinese. Villages in the remote area are watered by fast-flowing rivers. Ricketty bridges made of wooden boards and chains are flung across the rivers.

Religion: Tibetan Buddhism has never taken a grip among the Boloji to the extent that it has among other Tibetan groups. Most are polytheistic animists who try to keep peace with the vindictive spirits they believe control their lives.

Christianity: The Boloji are virtually untouched by the gospel. There are believed to be just a handful of Han and Qiang Christians in Songpan, the result of pre-1949 missionary efforts. In 1919 there were 543 foreign missionaries working in Sichuan Province,³ but few ever labored in this remote area in the north of the province. The Church Missionary Society did commence work in Songpan in the 1920s, but no known outreach has ever been conducted to the wild Boloji people. As a result, the

Boloji today are unreached and unevangelized.



Population in China:
 2,000 (1998)
 2,110 (2000)
 2,720 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Boloji

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Boh-luo-tzi"

Other Names:

Bolotse, Bolotsze, Po-lo-tzu

Population Source:

1,000 to 2,000 (1998 AMO)

Location: *N Sichuan:* Xiao Heshui village west of Songpan; A few are scattered as far south as Wenchuan Township

Status: Probably officially included under either Tibetan or Qiang

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Unclassified (possibly Qiangic)

Dialects: 0

Religion:

Polytheism, Tibetan Buddhism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

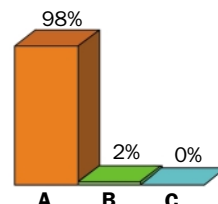
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity