


Population in China:

1,000 (1995)
1,070 (2000)
1,230 (2010)

Location: Tibet

Religion: Shamanism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Adi

Countries: India, China

Pronunciation: “Ah-dee”

Other Names:

Miri, Abor, Arbor, Abor-Miri

Population Source:

1,000 (1995 AMO);
482,489 in India, consisting of
122,489 Adi (1981 census) and
360,000 Miri (1989 USCWM)

Location: *SW Tibet:* Along the border with Arunachal Pradesh, India

Status: Probably officially included under Lhoba

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Baric, Mirish

Dialects (2): Adi, Miri

Religion: Shamanism, Tibetan Buddhism, Polytheism

Christians: None known

Scripture: New Testament 1988; Portions 1932

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings:

Available in 4 dialects: Adi #04147; Adi Gallong #02409; Adi Padam #02410; Adi Padam-Miri #02251

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: ADIOO



Dwayne Graybill

Location: The great majority of Adi live in India, with 482,000 occupying the north hills of the Assam Valley between Bhutan and the Burili River. Approximately 300,000 Adi live on Majuli Island — the world’s largest river island — which lies in the mighty Brahmaputra River. There are no more than 1,000 Adi inside China, although some publications have claimed as many as 61,000 live there.¹ Living in remote valleys near the juncture of India, Bhutan, and Tibet, the Adi experience less severe winters than people living on the Tibetan Plateau. The Adi inhabit a beautiful, forested region which abounds with mountain strawberries, hemp, irises, azaleas and rhododendrons. Medog County still contains many Bengali tigers as well as 40 species of other rare, protected animals.²

Identity: The Adi do not appear in Chinese government publications. It is likely that they have been officially counted as part of the Lhoba nationality, who have a similar language and live in the same region. In India, *Adi* is a general name given for a collection of as many as 15 tribes or subgroups, including the Ramo, Bokar, Bori, and Shimong.³

Language: The Adi language is part of the Baric branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. Most sources list Adi and Miri as two

dialects of the same language, while other scholars describe them as two distinct, mutually unintelligible languages.⁴

History: After the Communist takeover of Tibet in the 1950s, the Indian military went on full alert. In the following decades, several border skirmishes between the two giant nations took place, particularly at the opposite ends of the Himalayan Range. Those Adi who are now located in China did not migrate there, but found themselves technically in Tibet as the result of the redrawing of international boundaries after these conflicts. The Adi are perhaps the most remote people in China, with no roads at all in the region.

Customs: Expression by dance is an important part of the Adi culture. Religious and war

dances use aggressive movements to relate the violent history of the Adi against other tribes in northeast India.⁵ Adi women are renowned throughout northern India as expert weavers.

Religion: The Adi in Tibet are an isolated people who follow an ancient form of shamanism. Acting as mediums between the Adi and the spirit world, shamans often fall into demonic trances while communicating with the spirits. In India, some Adi have converted to Hinduism. Some Adi in Tibet outwardly adhere to Tibetan Buddhism more to please their aggressive Tibetan neighbors than from sincere, heartfelt conviction.

Christianity: There are reports of existing churches among the Adi in India, largely due to the work of the Baptist General Conference. Locked in by massive mountains, few Adi in China have ever heard the gospel. Adi territory is rugged and off-limits to foreigners: It is inaccessible from the Chinese side. The Adi in both India and China remain an unreached people in desperate need of attention from the global Body of Christ. The conversion of the Adi would likely impact dozens of smaller, related peoples throughout this ethnically diverse area.

Status of Evangelization

