

# Ghale, Southern

In 1975, the Japanese linguist Yoshio Nishi estimated a population of 12,000 Southern Ghale people in Nepal. They live in the Gorkha District of the Gandaki Zone, especially in the hills south of Macha Khola. The main centres of the Southern Ghale are considered to be the towns of Barpak and Mandre. The Southern Ghale live at a lower altitude than the other Ghale groups, and consequently they have been exposed to more outside cultural and religious influences. Southern Ghale villages are situated between just 600 and 1,800 metres (1,970 to 5,900 ft.) above sea level. Presuming the Southern Ghale population has grown at the national average rate, in 2000 their population was estimated to have surpassed 19,000, and by 2010 they would number 23,700 people. Culturally the Ghale are considered part of the Gurung ethnicity, but their languages are very different. The Southern Ghale language has three dialects, which are quite different and only share between 75 per cent and 78 per cent lexical similarity with each other.<sup>1</sup>

The Ghale are different from the Gurung in that they 'consider themselves superior in the Gurung tribal structure. . . . The Ghale, or Kile are traditionally a clan of chieftains by birth. The term *kile* emerges from *Khile* (an old Gurung word) which means something equivalent to master or king.'<sup>2</sup> The Ghale will intermarry with the Gurung on occasion, 'but only those of patrician status. Ethnic Gurungs who take up residence in the Ghale area east of the Darondi become Ghale speakers, while Ghale settling west of the Darondi become Gurung speakers.'<sup>3</sup>

Southern Ghale culture has come under strong pressure

from Hindu groups over the last century. As a result, many Ghale ceremonies are now linked to Hindu rituals. One such custom is called '*pud-pude*, the celebratory reception of the first-born male child in the family. Another is *ghatu*, a dance drama performed by virgin girls in spring. The performance is done under trance and the story relates to Pasaram, a one-time king of Gorkha.'<sup>4</sup>

The traditional dress of Ghale men consists of a short shirt tied across the front, 'and a short skirt of several yards of white cotton material wrapped around the waist and held by a wide belt. . . . Women have not cast off their traditional costume, despite their own contact with the outside. . . . They almost always wear a cotton or velveteen blouse tied at the front and a sari skirt of printed material, usually of a dark reddish colour. Their ornaments include gold and coral necklaces, which represent the wealth of their husbands, and gold ear and nose rings given to them at the time of marriage. Their ears and noses are pierced when they are small girls. Like almost all women of Nepal, they delight in coloured bangles.'<sup>5</sup>

The Southern Ghale religion is a fusion of three elements. 'They mix Hinduism, Buddhism and animism, worshipping and trying to placate a host of evil spirits.'<sup>6</sup> There are a small number of Christians among them. The Southern Ghale New Testament was printed in 1992, and theirs remains the only Ghale language with Scripture.



Julian Hawken



**Population:**  
19,100 (2000)  
23,700 (2010)  
29,300 (2020)  
**Countries:** Nepal  
**Buddhism:** Tibetan  
**Christians:** 300

## Overview of the Southern Ghale

**Other Names:** Bhotte, Bhotte Ghale, Ghale, Bote Ghale, Bote, Lila, Bhingi, Galle, Galle Gurung, Ghale Gurung

**Population Sources:**  
12,000 in Nepal (1975, Y Nishi)

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tamangic

**Dialects:** 3 (Barpak, Kyaura, Laprak)

**Professing Buddhists:** 50%

**Practising Buddhists:** 20%

**Christians:** 1.6%

**Scripture:** New Testament 1992

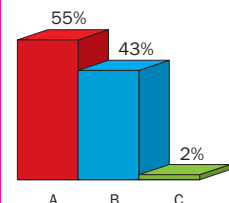
**Jesus film:** none

**Gospel Recordings:** Ghale, Ghale: Southern

**Christian Broadcasting:** none

**ROPAL code:** GHE

## Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel  
B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians  
C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity