



Titti Soldati

Location: Approximately 1,200 Nocte people live in and around the small settlement of Pangsau in western Myanmar’s Lahe Township in the Sagaing Region. The nearby Pangsau Pass is the main border crossing between Myanmar and the northeast Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, where 38,355 Nocte people lived according to the 2011 Indian census. Other Nocte communities are located in the states of Assam and Nagaland. Many tribes have migrated to India across the Pangsau Pass, while others have found the trip too difficult and have remained at the base of the mountain in what has become a migratory choke point. As a result, Lahe is now home to dozens of small tribes.

Identity: The term Nocte, which was coined only in the 1950s, is derived from two words: *noc* (“village”) and *te* (“people”). Identifying the Nocte in Myanmar is a convoluted exercise. To start, many people don’t believe the Nocte exist outside of India, but a small community does live on the eastern side of the border. Others say the Olo Nagas are a subgroup of the Nocte, but

we have profiled them separately in this book. The status of the Nocte in India is also complex. They faced pressure from both the Naga and Tangshang (Tangsa) factions to come under their respective banners, but the Nocte insisted they were neither Naga nor Tangshang and applied for recognition as a distinct Scheduled Tribe, which was granted in 2021. In Myanmar the Nocte have agreed to be part of the Tangshang tribal collective, although they retain a distinct culture and language that differs from other Tangshang varieties.

Language: The Nocte language has at least three tones and is divided into two dialects. It is part of the Boro-Garo branch of Tibeto-Burman along with six other languages in western Myanmar. The authoritative *Ethnologue* notes that in India, “Tutsa, Wancho, Laju, and Lamlak are considered ethnic subgroups of Nocte, although the Tutsa consider themselves unrelated.”¹ Nocte does not appear to be closely related to any other language and shares only a 50% mutual intelligibility with Wancho, a group that outsiders often associate with the Nocte.

History: The Nocte trace their ancestry to a union “between the daughter of a sky god and a spirit on the earth. The first man born was named Nocte, and his descendants according to local tradition were the Ahoms. They migrated from Myanmar across the Patkai hills to find land suitable for cultivation.”² Head-hunting blighted Nocte communities for centuries, with thousands of deaths keeping the population low.

Customs: The Nocte area is mountainous and covered with dense forests containing abundant wildlife, and Nocte men have long relied on hunting and fishing to feed their families. Nocte women traditionally like to wear elaborate necklaces and beads, but there are differences in dress among the various dialect groups, suggesting they may have separate origins. This would explain why British records of the Nocte listed them under several different names.

Religion: Although most Nocte people are professing Christians, the tribe contains more traditional animists than most other tribes in the area. In the past the Nocte believed that “all cosmic power was known as *Jauban* and worshiped. After death, the spirit of a mighty chief becomes an eagle. Other deities are worshipped as well. Offerings of food and water are given to the gods to appease them.”³ It is believed that approximately two-thirds of Nocte people in Myanmar today are Christians and one-third are animists. In India, the 2011 census found that 63.2% of Nocte people identified as followers of Jesus.

Christianity: Although the American Baptist missionary Miles Bronson first lived among the Nocte in India in 1840, the Gospel took generations to take hold as the Nocte refused to abandon their traditional religion. Although most Nocte families today profess Christ, many appear to have a superficial faith. The Nocte New Testament was published in 2010 using the Roman orthography, and the full Bible was recently completed.



OVERVIEW

Population: 1,200 in Myanmar (2026 Asia Harvest)

Other Countries: 39,000 in India

Other Names: Bordari, Bordoria, Borduria, Jaipuria, Kolagongia, Mohongia, Namsangia, Nocte Naga, Nocte Tangshang, Nokte, Nukte, Panidori, Panidoria, Paniduria

Location: Sagaing Region: Lahe Township in the Naga Self-Administered Zone

Language: Naga, Nocte [njb]

Dialects: 2

Scripture: Bible 2020
New Testament 2010

Jesus film: None

Global Recordings: Naga Nocte #21235

People ID: 17791

