

GUILIN 桂林

For centuries the scenery of Guilin has captured the imagination of people around the world. Artists have traveled far to paint the limestone karst formations located all around the city and its surrounding areas. Thousands of tourists visit Guilin every year, although the dense smog that has sprung up in recent years disappoints some travelers. For the more relaxed and equally spectacular sights of Yangshuo, just 90 km away by bus.

50,000 inhabitants of Guilin are Han Chinese, but there are also communities of minority people in the city as well, including more than 3,000 Zhuang, 11,000 Hui Muslims, more than Yao and 1,000 members of the Dong nationality. These groups are found in much larger numbers in the surrounding Guilin. Many of the Han Chinese living in Guilin speak a language called Pinghua, which appears to be a hybrid of Chinese and Zhuang.

Because of the great ethnic variety in the region, Guilin is a strategic gateway city for ministry to numerous ethnic people groups. With more than 16,000 people permanently settling in Guilin every year, the population of the city is rising quickly and is expected to reach one million by the year 2010.

Population:
561,371 (1990)
754,400 (2000)
1,013,800 (2010)

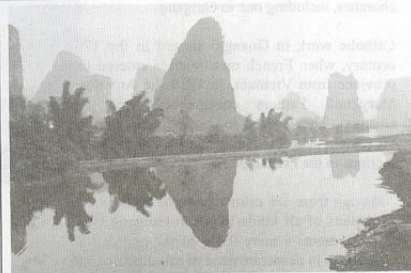
Province:
Guangxi

Major Ethnic Groups:
Han 92.9%
Zhuang 3.2%
Hui 2.0%
Yao 1.1%

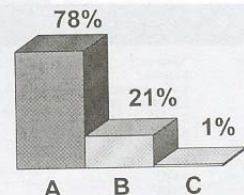
Christians:
4,000 (0.5%)

Guilin has a long and colorful history. Founded in the year 111 BC, Guilin (then called *Shi'an*) was first established as a Chinese military foothold among the wild tribal peoples in the south of the country. With the construction of the Ling Canal, Guilin became an important transportation and trading link between the Pearl and Yangtze River systems. Today, the Li River flows through the middle of the city. Banyan Lake and Fir Lake are two of the features that make Guilin beautiful. There are numerous peaks that people can climb for a view of the city.

Guilin was the provincial capital of



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

Guangxi for centuries until it was replaced by Nanning in 1914. Guilin was a Communist stronghold during the Chinese Civil War between the Communists and Kuomintang.

R. H. Graves, a Baptist, was the first Protestant missionary to work in Guangxi. He arrived in 1862, but encountered great hostility to the Gospel by the people of the province, who were proud to have resisted the advance of Christianity up to that point. In the latter part of the 19th century the China Inland Mission and the Christian & Missionary Alliance worked in Guangxi, the latter group aiming to plant a church in every county of the province.

A 1922 missions report (Stauffer, *The Christian Occupation of China*, p.151) lamented the lack of work in Guangxi: "If we draw a line across the map just west of Kuei-lin [Guilin] in the north and Nanning in the south, we will find that...by far the greater half of the province has, as yet, no established Christian work. In these neglected regions there are 58 cities, 700 market towns, and over 17,000 villages, all teeming with human lives for whom no effort whatever is being put forth. The great majority of the inhabitants of these unoccupied sections are aborigines [minorities]."

Because of its reputation as a tourist center, many foreigners incorrectly assume there must be a thriving church in Guilin. In fact, there is only one government-sanctioned Three Self Church in the city, and one "open" Catholic Church. A small number of unregistered house churches also meet in secret. In total, only about 4,000 residents of Guilin profess Christianity, which is approximately only one out of every 200 inhabitants.

No more than a handful of foreign Christians live in Guilin, which remains one of the most strategically unreached cities in China.



Home for next year's Spring Festival feast—a scene from the Guilin marketplace.

Pray for Guilin

- 1 Many people travel to look at the sights of Guilin, but God is more interested in the precious souls of the city's 750,000 inhabitants. Pray they would soon hear the Gospel.
- 2 Pray the strongholds of materialism, Buddhism and ancestor worship would not interfere with the advance of God's Kingdom among the people of Guilin.
- 3 Pray God would use the church in Guilin to reach out to the numerous unreached people groups in surrounding areas.

Overview of Guilin

Pronunciation	"Gway-lin"
Old Spelling	Kue-lin
Location	Guangxi Zhuang Aut. Region, southwest China
Population	561,371 (1990 census)
Males	291,101 (51.85%)
Females	270,270 (48.15%)
Households	139,226
Average household	4.03 people
Divorced people	4,566
% of population	0.81%
Centurions (1990)	4 people aged 100 or more
Immigrants to City	16,142 per year
From same province	11,836 (73.3%)
From other provinces	4,297 (26.6%)

Employed people	316,590 (56.3% of total population)
Main Industries	Industrial 33.0%; Agriculture 23%; Professional 14.5%
Educational Attainment	University 4.2%; High School 55.9%; Primary School 29.9% (highest level attended)
Population under 15	22.4%
Adult Literacy	90% (men 96%; women 83%)
Major Nationalities	Han 521,944; Zhuang 18,093; Hui 11,068; Yao 6,260; Dong 1,000; Others (25 groups) 3,006
Christians	4,000 (0.5%)