

# HONGHU 洪湖

The city of Honghu, home to 1.1 million people, is located in the south of Hubei Province in central China. *Hubei* means 'North of the Lake'. There are numerous lakes in the province, of which the Honghu Lake is one of the largest. The Chinese often call Hubei the "Province of One Thousand Lakes." In fact, there are more than 600 lakes in Hubei covering an area of over 3,000 sq. km (1,170 sq. miles). Honghu City takes its name from Honghu Lake, which stretches far into nearby Hunan Province across the border. At least 130 species of freshwater fish live in Hubei's waters, of which several species of carp are the most economically important.

**Population:**  
822,516 (1990)  
1,105,300 (2000)  
1,485,500 (2010)

**Province:**  
Hubei

#### Major Ethnic Groups:

**Han** 99.3%  
**Hui** 0.5%  
**Mongol** 0.1%  
**Dong** 0.1%

**Christians:**  
4,000 (0.4%)

flooded, causing misery to millions of people who live along its banks. In 1998, the worst flood for at least 50 years badly affected the people of Honghu. Thousands were forced to leave their homes and untold tons of grain was lost to the rampaging waters. At Jiayu, further down river, thousands of houses and many old churches along the riverside were destroyed when the dam collapsed.

The overwhelming majority of people living in Honghu are Han Chinese. Hubei people are often given the uncomplimentary nickname of "Nine-Headed Birds" by people in other parts of China. The nine-

Although the 1990 census placed the population of Honghu at close to one million, this figure seems to include a fairly-large tract of land along the western bank of the Yangtze. The population of the city area itself may be substantially lower, possibly only around 200,000. Physically, Hubei Province is made up of an irregularly-shaped basin surrounded on three sides by mountains. The Yangtze and other rivers have given Hubei an abundance of hydroelectric power.

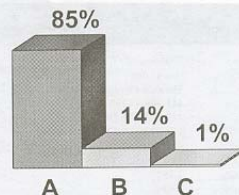
*Honghu* means 'Flooding Lake'. The city is flanked by the Honghu Lake to the west and the mighty Yangtze River on the eastern side. For centuries the Yangtze has



Thousands of families in Honghu earn their income by fishing.



#### 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

headed bird is a legendary creature that is said to be aggressive and difficult to kill.

The only significant minority community in the city are the Hui Muslims. Although they number only about 4,000, they are clearly visible because of their distinct style of dress. They also have their own restaurants, only serving food allowed by Islamic law.

The 1990 census revealed some interesting facts about the residents of Honghu City. More than 73% were employed in the agricultural sector, a classification that includes fishing. Just 36% of adults in the city had ever attended school past primary level, while 20% had no formal education whatsoever. In 1990, just 641 people in Honghu had ever received a university education, an extremely low figure amounting to one person in the city out of every 1,300. There is also a large disparity between literacy levels for males and females. While 91% of men are able to read and write, the corresponding figure for women was only 62%. Of these, most were deemed to be "semi-literate" only. Only 23% of women in Honghu fell into the category of being "adequately literate".

Protestant missionary work in Hubei Province commenced in 1861 when Griffith John of the London Missionary Society, accompanied by Rev. R. Wilson, rented premises in the central part of the province. One year later, workers with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, under the leadership of Rev. J. Cox, moved to the same area. By the early 1920's, Hubei contained 16 different denominations and missionary societies. The Gospel never took root in Hubei as it did in other parts of China, however. Today there are believed to be only about 4,000 believers in Honghu City and the surrounding areas, evenly split between Catholics and Protestants. Most people in Honghu are waiting to hear the Gospel for the first time.



The Chinese in Hubei Province are renowned for being aggressive and stubborn people. Only about 0.4% of the people in Honghu City have bowed their knee to Jesus Christ.

#### Pray for Honghu

- 1 Honghu experienced a horrific flood in 1998 when the banks of the Yangtze River burst. Pray the Glory of God would flood the hearts of people in Honghu City.
- 2 Pray the tens of millions of people living along the banks of the Yangtze would hear the Gospel for the first time and enter into intimate relationship with their Creator.
- 3 Ask God to reach the fishermen of Honghu and make them fishers of men, just as he did with Peter 2,000 years ago.

#### Overview of Honghu

Pronunciation	"Hong-hoo"	Employed people	485,926 (59.1% of total population)
Old Spelling	Hong-hu	Main Industries	Agriculture 72.7%, Industrial 11.9%, Commerce 6.5%
Location	Hubei Province, central China	Educational	University: 0.1%
Population	822,516 (1990 census)	Attainment	High School: 35.9%
Males	420,650 (51.14%)	(highest level)	Primary School: 43.9%
Females	401,866 (48.86%)	attended	Never attended any level of school: 20.1%
Households	195,641	Population under 15	29.9%
Average household	4.20 people	Adult Literacy	77% (men 91%; women 62%)
Divorced people	1,611	Major Nationalities	Han 817,966
% of population	0.19%	Hai	3,919
Centurions (1990)	0 people aged 100 or more	Mongol	209
Immigrants to City	2,198 per year	Dong	193
From same province	1,242 (56.5%)	Tujia	103
From other provinces	955 (43.5%)	Others (10 groups):	126
		Christians	4,000 (0.4%)