

Suzhou

苏州

Although Suzhou City contains approximately 1.1 million people, the larger Suzhou Prefecture is home to almost six million inhabitants.

While more than 99% of the city's residents belong to Han Chinese ethnic group, it is interesting that Suzhou also has more than 4,200 members of the Miao minority group, even though the Miao are located far to the southwest in Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangxi and Hunan provinces. It is not known when or why so many Miao migrated to Suzhou.

Suzhou, known as the 'Garden City' is one of the most famous historical cities in China. Visitors can still stroll along cobblestone lanes and through elaborate gardens.

Suzhou dates back to 514 BC, when a command by Emperor He Lu of the Wu State led to the construction of the Great City of He Lu, which measured 23.5 km (14.5 miles) in circumference. It became the capital of the Wu State until its overthrow in 481 BC. Over the centuries Suzhou has also been known as Gusu and Wuxian.

Suzhou leaped to national prominence thanks to the construction of the Grand Canal during the Sui Dynasty (589 - 618 AD). It suddenly found itself situated on major trading routes and flourished as an economic and cultural center. Grain

Population:
882,677 (1990)
1,107,903 (2000)
1,390,600 (2010)

Province:
Jiangsu

Major Ethnic Groups:

Han 99.1%
Miao 0.5%
Hui 0.3%
Manchu 0.1%

Christians:
80,000 (7.2%)

ships could now travel from Suzhou all the way to Beijing far to the north, and the city became home to numerous merchants and artisans. Its charming layout gave birth to a famous Chinese saying, "In heaven there is paradise, on earth Suzhou and Hangzhou."

By the 14th century Suzhou was the capital of the silk trade and was approximately the same geographic size as today. Its majestic city wall had six impregnable gateways, and the streets were crisscrossed by 20 different canals.

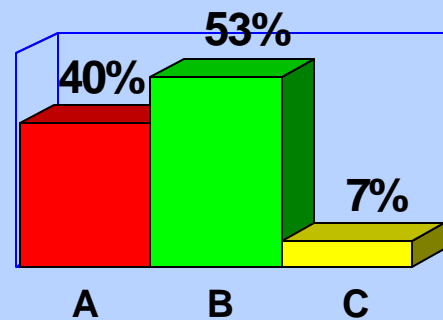
Suzhou was almost completely destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion of 1860, but was soon rebuilt. It was occupied by the Japanese during World War II, and then by the Kuomintang during the Chinese Civil War.

Many ancient Buddhist and Daoist temples and pagodas can be found in Suzhou, testament to the city's long religious history. Some of the better known are the Cold Mountain Temple (Hanshan Si), constructed during the reign of Emperor Tianjian (502-519 AD), the North Temple which stands nine stories high, the Daoist Temple of Mystery (Xuanmiaoguan) built in the 3rd century, and the West Garden Temple (Xiyuan Si).

Suzhou first came to worldwide attention after Marco Polo visited in 1276. He commented on the



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 = Adherants to any form of Christianity



splendour of the city: “Suju [Suzhou] is a very great and noble city.... The city has a circuit of some 60 miles; it has merchants of great wealth and an incalculable number of people. And you must know that in this city there are 6,000 bridges, all of stone, and so lofty that a galley, or even two galleys at once, could pass underneath one of them.” In a nearby city Polo found, “two churches of Nestorian Christians.... The Great Kaan sent a Baron of his whose name was Mar Sarghis, a Nestorian Christain, to be governor of this city for three years. During the three years he abode there he caused these two Christian churches to be built.” (*The Travels of Marco Polo*, Yule-Cordier Edition, Vol.2, p.177-82).

Although Suzhou today has far more Christian presence than any other city profiled in this book, it has been included because of its strategic potential. Suzhou is being built by the government into China’s high-tech capital. Thousands of the nation’s brightest hand-picked young men and women attend university here. They are being specially groomed to be the leaders and decision makers of the country in the next generation. It is therefore essential for the Body of Christ to make a large impact on the people of Suzhou, as doing so will impact all of China.

Pray for Suzhou

- 1** Pray the next generation of China’s leaders will find Christ and give their lives for His glory and honor.
- 2** Ask God to bless and empower the Church in Suzhou to reach the lost.
- 3** Pray powerful revival would break out in the universities of Suzhou.

Overview of Suzhou (based on 1990 census)

Pronunciation : “Soo-joe”
Old Spelling : Suchow, Suchou, Suju
Location : SE Jiangsu Province, eastern China
Population : 882,677 (1990 census)
Males : 455,698 (51.63%)
Females : 426,979 (48.37%)
Households : 259,683
Average Household : 3.4 people
Divorced People : 6,332
% divorced of Population : 0.72
Centurions (1990) : 2 people aged 100 or more
Immigrants to City : 84,557
From same province : 60,469 (71.5%)
From other provinces : 24,044 (28.5%)

Employed People : 546,536 (61.9% of total population)
Main Industries : Industrial 57.6%, Professional 13.8%
Education (highest level attended): University: 8.6%
 High School: 53.5%
 Primary school: 25.1%
 Never attended any school: 12.8%
Population under 15: 149,412 (16.9%)
Adult Illiteracy : 13.3% (men 6.5%; women 20.6%)
Major Nationalities : Han 875,631
 Miao 4,220
 Hui 2,318
 Manchu 175
 Others 333 (25 groups)
Christians (2003) : 80,000 (7.2%)