

# TIANSHUI 天水

Tianshui City, located in the southern part of Gansu Province, is home to approximately 1.4 million people. Tianshui, which means 'heavenly water' or 'heavenly river' is situated along the Wei River. The city is divided into two administrative units of comparable size by the Chinese authorities. The Qincheng District contains about 716,000 inhabitants, while the Beidao District has 680,700 residents. Beidao contains the Tianshui Railway station and is about 20 km (12 miles) east of the main city area, Qincheng.

Both these figures include a great number of rural communities. The total population of the Tianshui City area by itself is much smaller than 1.4 million. More than 70% of workers in Tianshui are employed in the agricultural sector. Tianshui has somewhat of a reputation as a poor, backward city. Most of its inhabitants are simple peasant farmers who are family-orientated and not too interested in technological advancements. According to figures from the 1990 census, a staggering 91% of adult women in Tianshui are either illiterate or semi-literate. Just 9% of women can read and write adequately.

The ethnic composition of Tianshui is mostly Han Chinese. The city also houses 12,500 Hui Muslims and 1,500 Manchu, plus a smattering of smaller minority

**Population:**  
1,039,750 (1990)  
1,397,300 (2000)  
1,877,800 (2010)

**Province:**  
Gansu

## Major Ethnic Groups:

**Han** 98.6%  
**Hui** 1.2%  
**Manchu** 0.1%  
**Mongol** 0.1%

**Christians:**  
11,000 (0.7%)

groups. The city had a much larger percentage of Hui Muslims in the past, but their numbers were severely depleted during the Hui Rebellions of 1864-75. Thousands of Hui were butchered in attacks by Chinese troops, while thousands more fled to escape the carnage.

In ancient times, Tianshui was an important stop on the Silk Road between Xian and Lanzhou. During the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) the area was known as Guixian. Throughout history, Tianshui has been an important transportation center and a vital strategic location as protection to Xian, for centuries the capital of China. Numerous wars have taken place for control of the Wei River Valley. The Tibetans were victorious from 763 to 845 AD, and went all the way to Xian to sack the city. The Tanguts and the Jurchen vied for control in the 12th century, followed by the Mongols from 1215 to 1368. The complex history of Tianshui is reflected in the city's construction. The ruins of five separate walled cities have been excavated.

Many foreign and Chinese tourists come to Tianshui because of the famous Majishan grottoes, situated 25 km (15 miles) south of the city. Starting in the mid-fifth century, Tianshui was on the main route by which Buddhism entered China from India. Maji Mountain

apparently is shaped like a corn rick, hence its name Majishan (Corn Rick Mountain).

At Majishan, many of the 194 caves are still being renovated. There is one huge statue of Buddha. Visitors often stand on a platform above the idol's head and throw coins down. Legend says that if a coin stays on Buddha's head, the person who threw it has a good heart.

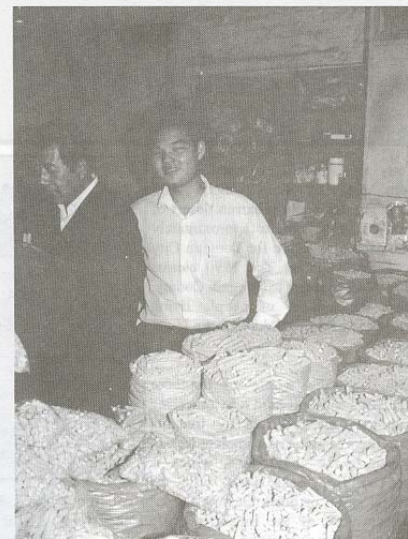
The Buddhist artifacts at Majishan are considered one of China's four great Buddhist sites. The caves date back to the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534 AD). Devastating earthquakes in 1920 and 1932 destroyed many of the caves and sculptures, but a number are still on display today. It may be a good location for prayer and intercession teams to travel to. One wonders how China might have been different if Christianity had entered China before Buddhism.

In the 1920's, churches in China were faced with anti-Christian patriotism. The Anti-Christian Movement from 1922-27 dealt heavy blows to churches across the nation. At the same time, the Jesus Family was started by Jing Dianying. They commenced work in Tianshui, taking over a church building previously owned by the China



The Jesus Family church in Tianshui, Gansu.

Inland Mission. The Jesus Family, Christian & Missionary Alliance and others labored in southern Gansu prior to 1949. Today there is a Christian community of more than 10,000 in Tianshui, which amounts to less than one percent of the city's total population of 1.4 million.



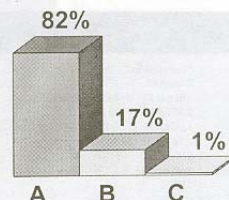
A scene from the spice market in Tianshui, southern Gansu Province. Tianshui is located on the ancient Silk Road, down which Islam, Buddhism and Christianity have entered China.

## Pray for Tianshui

- 1 Pray for an increase of believers in Tianshui City. Pray God would not allow the people of the city to perish without receiving a Gospel witness.
- 2 In prayer, battle with the principalities and powers that have kept the people of Tianshui bound and separated from the Gospel for centuries.
- 3 Pray Tianshui would be a place from where the church reaches into the numerous surrounding Tibetan, Hui and minority areas.



## 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

## Overview of Tianshui

Pronunciation : "Teeshui-shway"  
Old Spelling : T'ien-shui  
Location : Gansu Province, northwest China  
Population : 1,039,750 (1990 census)  
Males : 539,661 (51.90%)  
Females : 500,089 (48.10%)  
Households : 219,929  
Average household : 4.73 people  
Divorced people : 4,180  
% of population : 0.40%  
Centurions (1990) : 2 people aged 100 or more  
Immigrants to City : 5,092 per year  
From same province : 3,762 (73.9%)  
From other provinces : 1,329 (26.1%)

Employed people : 571,769 (55.0% of total population)  
Main Industries : Agriculture 72.9%; Industrial 13.5%; Professional 5.7%  
Educational : University: 0.5 %  
Attainment : High School: 32.9%  
(highest level) Primary School: 38.5%  
Never attended any level of school: 28.1%  
Population under 15 : 28.3%  
Adult Literacy : 69% (men 80%, women 58%)  
Major Nationalities : Han 1,025,349  
Hui 12,351  
Manchu 1,498  
Mongol 127  
Tibetan 103  
Others (19 groups): 322  
Christians : 11,000 (0.7%)