

**Location:** A 1984 *National Geographic* article listed a population for the Ge of 70,000.<sup>1</sup> The majority are located in the mountains surrounding Chong'an Township in the central part of Guizhou Province. The largest single community of Ge is in Fengxiang (Maple Fragrance) Village, which contains more than 400 households. Small numbers of Ge are located in several villages southwest of the city of Kaili and in the southern part of Hunan Province.

**Identity:** The Ge have been counted as part of the large Miao minority group in China — a classification that infuriates them. They believe themselves to be a completely separate people. The Ge wear a unique costume and speak a language unintelligible with that of surrounding communities. They call themselves *Ge Mong*. The Hmu call them *Gedou*; the Xi call them *Gewu*; and the Mulao Jia call them *Gedu*. One unconfirmed report indicated the Ge were granted official status as a minority in 1993.<sup>2</sup>

**Language:** The Ge language — which has six tones — is a member of the Western Hmongic branch, similar to some Miao varieties spoken in Yunnan.<sup>3</sup> In 1933 missionary M. H. Hutton “reduced the Ge language to writing, using the same spelling principles as for Hmu.”<sup>4</sup> A Ge Christian hymn book and catechism were published in 1937; however, one report says the books “were probably never sent to the Ge area.”<sup>5</sup> Hutton’s

script is not used among the Ge today.

**History:** There are two theories surrounding the origins of the Ge people. Legend has it that many centuries ago a high-ranking Han soldier fell in love with a beautiful Miao girl and desired to marry her. This was an unheard-of disgrace at the time and cost the official his title and position. The couple were forced to move away and live apart from both the Han and Miao. Over time, their descendants formed into the Ge people. The second theory, which is perhaps more realistic, is that the Ge are the remnants of a Western Miao group who originally inhabited an area farther to the west.<sup>6</sup>

**Customs:** The Ge women’s costume is designed to resemble a general’s uniform, in remembrance of their progenitor. The Ge are highly skilled makers of batik.

**Religion:** The Ge practice polytheism and animism. Ancestral altars are also found in most of their homes.

**Christianity:** China Inland Mission’s M. H. Hutton was the only known missionary among the Ge prior to 1949. In a 1935 article he reported, “the best and cheering news of all to us is, one of these new baptized



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believers is a Keh Deo [Ge] tribesman. It reminds me of the nine years of prayer and work to get an entrance into that tribe and the one soul — now there are six men and I hear their wives and families are interested in the Gospel too.”<sup>7</sup> In 1936 Hutton described visiting a Ge Christian service,<sup>8</sup> and in 1937 he reported three Ge families had become Christians.<sup>9</sup> Tragically the Ge Christians ceased to believe once the missionaries were expelled from China. One Ge observer explained, “They believed in the missionaries and not in Jesus.”<sup>10</sup> Today there are about 100 Ge Christians in the Chong’an area.



**Population in China:**  
 70,000 (1984)  
 102,500 (2000)  
 132,200 (2010)  
**Location:** Guizhou, Hunan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** 100

## Overview of the Ge

**Countries:** China  
**Pronunciation:** “Guh”  
**Other Names:** Ge Jia, Getou, Gedong, Keh Deo, Gedou, Gedou Miao, Huadou (Flowery Root), Keh-teo Miao, Chonganjiang Miao, Hmong: Chonganjiang, Gedang, River Gelao, Flower Gelao, Flower Dou Miao, Gedu, Gewu, Gedoudiu  
**Population Source:** 70,000 (1984 Wong How-Man); Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)  
**Location:** *Guizhou:* Fengtang, Chongxin, and Chongren districts of Huangping County; Longchang, Gouchang, Ganba, Longshan, and

Bibo districts of Kaili County; *S Hunan*  
**Status:** Officially included under Miao  
**Language:** Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Western Hmongic  
**Dialects:** 0  
**Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Daoism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity  
**Christians:** 100  
**Scripture:** Portions 1937  
**Jesus film:** None  
**Gospel Recordings:** Miao: Chang Jiao #04949  
**Christian Broadcasting:** None  
**ROPAL code:** HMJ00

