

Location: The Min Nan language — also called *Hokkien* — is spoken by approximately 30 million people along China's eastern and southern coasts. The majority of Min Nan speakers live in Fujian Province where they inhabit 53 cities and counties. Others are located in Guangdong, Hong Kong, Zhejiang, and Jiangxi.

Identity: The Min Nan, or Southern Min, are the largest Min language group. During the tenth century, the northern part of the Kingdom of Min in Fujian split off to form the Kingdom of Yin. The line between the Min Nan and Min Bei languages today very closely follows the border between those two kingdoms.

Language: The Min Nan language is divided into several related elements. Linguists have traditionally separated the Amoy and Shantou (previously called *Swatow*) dialects as distinct languages. Hainanese is also related to Min Nan. Amoy and Taiwanese are easily intelligible with each other, while Shantou and Amoy "have very difficult intelligibility."¹

History: *The Sui Dynasty (AD 589–618):* The Sui Dynasty lasted only 29 years but paved the way for the institutions and laws used by following dynasties. The Tuoba Emperor Yang Jian was known as the *Cultivated Emperor* because of the land reforms undertaken during his reign. It is during his rule that the Grand Canal was constructed — an engineering feat of staggering proportions. Three disastrous military

defeats in northern Korea, which cost massive amounts of money and lives, hastened the collapse of Sui rule.

Customs: For the Chinese, having *guanxi* "connections" is very important. Favors are given between willing parties and reciprocated in times of mutual need.

Religion: The Chinese have historically treated Christianity with suspicion. In 1724 Emperor Yungcheng told Jesuit missionaries, "You wish to make the Chinese Christians, and this is what your law demands, I know it very well. But what in that case would become of us? The subjects of your kings! The Christians whom you make recognize no authority but you; in times of trouble they listen to no other voice. I know well enough that there is nothing to fear at present; but when your ships shall be coming by thousands and tens of thousands, then, indeed, we may have some disturbances."²

Christianity: A large Christian community existed in Zaitun (now



Paul Hattaway

Quanzhou City) in the early 1300s. A Franciscan cathedral was constructed from gifts received from an Armenian woman living in the city.³ Bishop Andrew of Zaitun wrote in 1326, "We are able to preach freely and unmolested.... Of idolaters a very large number are baptized, but having been baptized they do not walk straight in the path of Christianity."⁴ There are more than one million Min Nan believers in China today. In 1933 the Bible was translated into Min Nan. In 1986, 50,000 hymnals were printed, using the characteristic Amoy script, and distributed.⁵



Population in China:
26,265,000 (1984)
31,728,100 (2000)
35,852,800 (2010)
Location: Fujian, Guangdong, Hong Kong, Zhejiang, Jiangxi
Religion: No Religion
Christians: 1,200,000

Overview of the Min Nan

Countries: China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand⁶
Pronunciation: "Min-Nahn"
Other Names: Min Nan, Southern Min, Amoy, Hokkien, Hoklo
Population Source: 25,725,000 (1992 B. Grimes – 1984 figure);⁷ 14,177,800 in Taiwan; 1,948,581 in Malaysia; 1,170,000 in Singapore; 1,081,920 in Thailand; 700,000 in Indonesia; 493,500 in Philippines; 10,000 in Brunei
Location: S Fujian; N Guangdong; Hong Kong; S Zhejiang; S Jiangxi

Status: Officially included under Han Chinese

Language: Chinese, Min Nan

Dialects (8): Fujian, Chaoshan, Hainanese, Zhejiang, Pingyang, Yuhuan, Tongtuo, Taishun

Religion: No Religion, Daoism, Buddhism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity

Christians: 1,200,000

Scripture: Bible 1933; New Testament 1896; Portions 1875

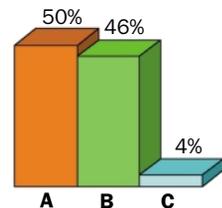
Jesus film: Available

Gospel Recordings: Amoy #00185

Christian Broadcasting: Available in Amoy, Swatow (FEBC, TWR)

ROPAL code: CFR00

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity