



Population in China:

150,000 (1995)
170,500 (2000)
217,300 (2010)

Location: Yunnan, Sichuan

Religion: Animism

Christians: 2,000

Overview of the Hongjin Tai

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Hong-jin-Tie"

Other Names: Hongjin Dai, Tai Hongjin, Huagongji Dai, Flowerly Rooster Dai, Yongren Tai

Population Source: 150,000 (1995 Luo Meizhen); Out of a total Dai population of 1,025,128 (1990 census)

Location: *N Yunnan:* Scattered communities in Honghe, Jinshajiang, Yuanjiang, Xinping, Maguan, and Wuding counties; *S Sichuan:* Huili and Dukou counties

Status: Officially included under Dai

Language: Daic, Tai, Southwestern Tai

Dialects: 0

Religion: Animism, Polytheism, Theravada Buddhism, No Religion, Christianity

Christians: 2,000

Scripture: None

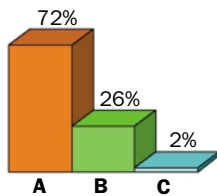
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: Dai: Wuding #04854

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: TIZOO

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

Location: In 1995 Chinese linguist Luo Meizhen described the Hongjin Tai language for the first time.¹ He numbered 150,000 speakers, scattered in small communities across southwest China, from the southern part of Sichuan Province down to the China-Vietnam border. The Hongjin Tai have migrated along the Honghe and Yangtze river systems. By 1952, the established households of Hongjin Tai in Wuding County of northern Yunnan Province numbered 2,706.²

Identity: The Hongjin Tai are also known in the Wuding area as the *Hua Gongji* (Flowerly Rooster) Tai. The description of Hongjin Tai seems to be a broad one and may be a generic description of those Tai groups in China who do not fit into one of the recognized classifications.

Language: The farther north one goes, the less vigorous the Hongjin Tai language (which belongs to the Southwestern Tai language group) is used. Most Hongjin Tai are illiterate.

History: The golden era of the Tai (Dai) nationality in China began in 1340 when the Tai chief, Sifeka, established an independent kingdom in Luchuan (present-day Dehong).³ The kingdom lasted for 100 years, until it was attacked by Ming Dynasty troops from 1441 to 1448. An army of 150,000 soldiers was mobilized from all over China to attack the Tai Kingdom and bring it to its knees.⁴ To this day the Tai have never again had their own homeland in China. Numerous Tai fled the

warfare and scattered throughout southern China — they are the ancestors of today's Hongjin Tai. Those living along the Yangtze River in northern Yunnan are described as "a hidden pocket of 10,000 Tais who long ago moved far away from their southwest homeland."⁵

Customs: Many of the Hongjin Tai have assimilated to Chinese culture. Few now wear any traditional clothing, and many of their children cannot speak the language.

Religion: Various Hongjin Tai groups practice different religions depending upon their location. These include animism, polytheism, and Theravada Buddhism.

Christianity: There are approximately 1,000 Hongjin Tai Christians in the Luquan area of northern Yunnan. The China Inland Mission commenced work among them in the early 1900s. In

the 1980s "the Lipo used Mandarin Chinese to bring the Gospel to the Hua Gongji ('Flowerly Rooster') tribe.... So many hundreds of Tais have come to the Lord... this year they have dedicated their first church."⁶ The Hongjin Tai living in the southern part of Sichuan Province were visited in 1914 by William Dodd, a missionary working in northern Thailand. Seventeen Hongjin Tai families soon became Christians. Dodd taught them to read the Northern Thai script, enabling them to read the Bible.⁷ It is not known if they still use this script — which is practically extinct in Thailand. Dodd reported, "Three families from the same village destroyed their idols and put away all traces of demon worship, accepted Christ and came for study faithfully. There are but thirty families in the village and twenty of them are now Christian."⁸



Pauli Hattaway