


Population in China:

900 (1984)
1,310 (2000)
1,700 (2010)

Location: Yunnan

Religion: Buddhism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Manmet

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Mahn-met"

Other Names: Manmi, Manmit, Man Met

Population Source:

900 (1984 J.-O. Svantesson)

Location: SW Yunnan: The Manmet live in five communities in the mountainous areas near Jinghong County in Xishuangbanna Dai Prefecture.

Status: Counted in census as an *Undetermined Minority*

Language: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Western Palaungic, Angkuic

Dialects: 0

Religion: Theravada Buddhism, Animism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

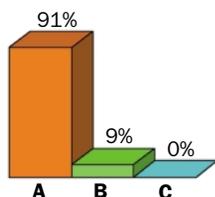
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: MML00

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: More than 1,300 members of the Manmet people group live in five villages in the mountains northeast of Jinghong (City of Dawn) — the capital of Xishuangbanna Prefecture in southwest Yunnan Province. Although the Manmet are close to China's borders with the nations of Laos and Myanmar, no communities of Manmet are known to exist outside of China.

Identity: The Manmet were counted separately in the 1982 Chinese census and then combined into a large group of *Undetermined Minorities*. In the 1950s the Manmet applied to the central government in a bid to be recognized as a distinct minority group, but their application was rejected. Today the Manmet are looked down upon by both the neighboring Han Chinese and the Tai Lu people.

Language: The Manmet speak a distinct tonal language within the Angkuic branch of the Mon-Khmer linguistic family. Some Manmet men who have spent time as monks in a Buddhist temple are able to read the Tai Lu script.

History: In the twelfth century AD, a number of different tribes united with the Tai to establish the *Jinglong Golden Hall Kingdom*. The Nanzhao Kingdom, centered at Dali in central Yunnan, was overthrown by the advancing Mongol hordes of Kublai Khan in AD 1253. Thousands of minority people fled from the savage Mongols. Those who survived settled into the dozens of ethnic communities which sprang

up in southern Yunnan. It was also at this time that the great Mon-Khmer race began to split into smaller, more distinct political units. The Manmet are one group today who owe their existence to this tumultuous period of history.

Customs: The Manmet are experts at tilling their sharply angled fields which seem to cling to the sides of the mountains. Every available patch of land near their villages is used for food production. They grow rice, corn, sugarcane, bananas, and various kinds of vegetables. They also raise chickens, water buffaloes, and pigs. Most Manmet women stay at home, but some earn income by selling produce at the Jinghong market. In recent years many Manmet youth have moved to the cities in search of education and work.

Religion: Most Manmet adhere to a mixture of

animism and Theravada Buddhism, which is the prevalent religion in the Xishuangbanna region. Around Jinghong there are numerous temples, which serve as the focal point of each community's social life as well as a place for practising religious rituals.

Christianity: Christian churches, hospitals, and schools were established by Presbyterian missionaries in Jinghong during the 1930s and 1940s. "The people readily received the Gospel, but for many, it was very difficult to renounce sin; for them their faith was nominal.... During the Cultural Revolution [1966–1976]... many leaders of the church were killed."¹ Although missionaries were active in the Jinghong area, the shy Manmet escaped their attention. Few Manmet people today have any awareness of the gospel or the name of Jesus Christ.



Paul Hattaway