



Population:

1,310 (2000)
1,700 (2010)
2,090 (2020)

Countries: China

Buddhism: Theravada

Christians: none known

Overview of the Manmet

Other Names: Manmi, Manmit, Man Met

Population Sources:

900 in China (1984, J-O Svantesson)¹

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

Dialects: 0

Professing Buddhists: 70%

Practising Buddhists: 30%

Christians: 0%

Scripture: none

Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: none

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: MML

More than 1,300 members of the Manmet people group live in five villages in the mountains north-east of Jinghong ('City of Dawn')—the capital of Xishuangbanna Prefecture in Yunnan Province, China. 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 China.

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 neighbouring Han Chinese and the Lu people.

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 Buddhist temples are able to read the Lu script.

In the 12th century AD, a number of different tribes united with the Tai to establish the *Jinglong Golden Hall Kingdom*. The Nanzhao Kingdom, centred 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 fragmented and evolved into the dozens of ethnic communities that 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 is one group today that may owe its existence to this tumultuous period of history.

The Manmet are experts at tilling their sharply angled fields, which seem to cling to the sides of the mountains. They use every available patch of land near their villages 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 an 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.

Most Manmet adhere to a mixture of animism and Theravada Buddhism, which is the prevalent religion in the area. Around Jinghong there are numerous

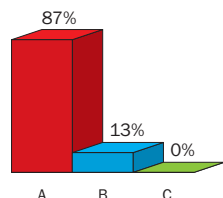
temples, which are the focal points for each community's social life as well as places for practising religious rituals.

Presbyterian missionaries in Jinghong established Christian churches, hospitals and schools 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.'² 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 know the name of Jesus Christ.



International Mission Board

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians
C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity