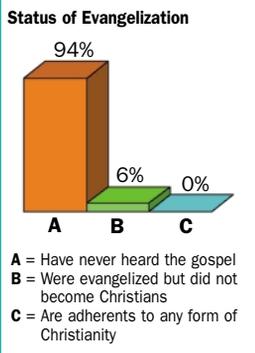




Population in China:
 1,600 (1993)
 1,920 (2000)
 2,480 (2010)
Location: Inner Mongolia
Religion: Shamanism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Khamnigan Mongols

Countries: China, Russia, Mongolia
Pronunciation: "Khahm-nee-gahn"
Other Names: Khamnigan, Kamnigan, Xamnigan, Hamunikan
Population Source: 1,600 (1993 J. Janhunen); Out of a total Mongol population of 4,806,849 (1990 census); Also in Russia, and Mongolia
Location: NE Inner Mongolia: Chen Baehrü Banner of Hulunbuir League
Status: Officially included under Mongolian
Language: Altaic, Mongolian, Eastern Mongolian
Dialects: 2
Religion: Shamanism, Animism
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: None



Location: The Khamnigan Mongols are scattered across Siberia, Mongolia, and the Chen Baehrü Banner of the Hulunbuir League in China's Inner Mongolia. All of these locations are in the Onin-Argun region of the Trans Baikal. A 1993 study listed 1,600 Khamnigan Mongols in China.

Identity: Although they are officially considered part of the Mongolian nationality, the small number of Khamnigan Mongols speak their own distinct language and have major cultural differences with other Mongolian groups. The Khamnigan Mongols have also never embraced Tibetan Buddhism.

Language: A 1993 study found 1,500 of the 1,600 Khamnigan Mongols were able to speak their language, described as "an archaic branch of northern Mongol."¹ Khamnigan children are still being taught to speak the language. Most Khamnigan Mongols are also able to speak the language of the neighboring Tungus Ewenki. Linguist Jahu Janhunen comments, "Although vigorous for the moment, the survival of Khamnigan Mongol in the long run is threatened by the increasing influx of Han Chinese settlers; both Chinese and Standard Mongolian are also present via the networks of radio and television as well as in the form of printed material."² Assimilation may have already occurred in Russia and Mongolia where the language is described as "possibly extinct."³ In China the Khamnigan Mongol language consists of two

dialects which show a mixture of influences from the Tungus Ewenki language.⁴

History: Little is known of the historical background of the Khamnigan Mongols. Their past has been intertwined with the Ewenki people for centuries. They have traded and intermarried with them for many generations. Today the two groups share many similar cultural traits.

Customs: *Khurund* is a milk curd thickened in the sun until it dries into a hard, gray cheese. In the days of Genghis Khan a warrior would mix a lump of *khurund* with water and put it into his saddlebag. "By their motion in riding," wrote Marco Polo, "the contents are violently shaken, and a thin porridge is produced upon which they make their dinner."⁵

Religion: Unlike most other Mongol groups, the Khamnigan Mongols have never adhered to Tibetan Buddhism. Their primary religion is shamanism. They worship the elements of nature, not unlike the Mongols at the time of Genghis Khan.

Christianity: One missionary visiting the Khamnigan Mongols in 1995 revealed that there are no known Christians or churches among them. Some may have heard the gospel through the witness of the Ewenki, who number more than 100 Eastern Orthodox believers in China. Most Khamnigan Mongols in China, however, remain completely ignorant of the person of Jesus Christ. No Scriptures or audio gospel recordings have been translated into the unique Khamnigan Mongol language.



Paul Hattaway