



**Population in China:**  
 4,000 (1991)  
 5,040 (2000)  
 6,500 (2010)  
**Location:** Hunan  
**Religion:** Animism  
**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Mozhihei

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** "Moh-jerr-hay"

**Other Names:**  
 Southern Tuchia, Southern Tujia

**Population Source:**  
 4,000 (1991 EDCL);  
 Out of a total Tujia population of  
 5,704,223 (1990 census)

**Location:** *W Hunan:* Tanxi District  
 of Luxi County

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Tujia

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan,  
 Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo,  
 Lolo, Unclassified

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Animism, No Religion,  
 Ancestor Worship, Polytheism,  
 Daoism, Shamanism

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** None

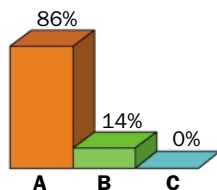
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** TJS00

### 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 5,000 speakers of the Mozhihei language live in the Tanxi District of Luxi County, in the western part of Hunan Province.<sup>1</sup> The mountainous region — close to the juncture of Hunan, Sichuan, and Guizhou provinces — is largely inhabited by Miao people. Tanxi lies on the northern bank of the Wushui River, which serves as a tributary of the Yuanjiang River.

**Identity:** Although they are considered part of the Tujia nationality, the Mozhihei speak a very different language from other Tujia people. *Tujia* is the historical Chinese name for this group. The Southern Tujia call themselves *Mozhihei*, while the Northern Tujia speakers use the autonym *Bizika*. The two Tujia groups have separate customs, names, and languages.

**Language:** According to Chinese linguist Chen Kang, out of a basic list of 600 words, the Northern and Southern Tujia languages shared only about 40% cognate vocabulary.<sup>2</sup> Mozhihei has four tones, structured similarly to the tones in Mandarin. It has many loanwords from Hunesese (Xiang) Chinese and Ghao-Xong. The Mozhihei have never possessed their own orthography. Today most use the Chinese script.

**History:** Han Chinese peasants migrated into western Hunan in the early twelfth century, bringing with them modern tools and farming expertise. Some Mozhihei youth joined the Communist Long March after it passed through their area in 1935. Some traveled all the way to northern China and fought against the Japanese.

**Customs:** The Mozhihei have a rich repertoire of traditional songs and dances. "The Hand Waving Dance, with its seventy ritual gestures that represent war, hunting, farming and other aspects of life, is popular at the New Year's festival."<sup>3</sup> The Mozhihei grow a variety of crops including wet rice, wheat, maize, and sweet potatoes. Cash crops include beets, cotton, and tea. Mozhihei men are proficient hunters,



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trappers, and fishermen.<sup>4</sup> From the time a Mozhihei girl is 10 or 11 years old, she begins practicing how to cry sufficiently for her future wedding, to show the wedding guests how much she will miss her parents. "How well she cries is considered a test of her abilities as well as her integrity. So, a girl who does not perform well enough in crying will probably be looked down upon."<sup>5</sup>

**Religion:** The beliefs of the Mozhihei are a mixture of shamanism, Daoism, ancestral worship, and ancient beliefs involving ghosts and evil spirits. Many of

the Mozhihei who have moved to urban areas for work or education now consider themselves atheists.

**Christianity:** There are no known believers among the Mozhihei. For centuries they have lived and died without any knowledge of the Savior of the world. Few missionaries have ever braved the remote mountains of western Hunan, leaving it one of the most unevangelized areas in China today. The nearest Christian community is probably the 2,000 believers, mainly Han, in Danjiang County in neighboring eastern Sichuan Province.<sup>6</sup> The Mozhihei have no Scriptures in their mother tongue, and no Christian workers are specifically known to be targeting them for Christ.