



Population in China:
 12,000 (1987)
 16,520 (2000)
 21,300 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Puman

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Poo-mun"

Other Names:

U, P'uman, Wa-la, Phuman

Population Source:

12,000 (1987 D. Bradley);
 3,000 (1988 J.-O. Svantesson);
 Out of a total Bulang population
 of 82,280 (1990 census)

Location: *S Yunnan:* Shuangjiang
 and Mengla counties, and in
 several scattered communities
 throughout southern Yunnan

Status: Officially included
 under Bulang

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

Dialects: 0

Religion:
 Theravada Buddhism, Animism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

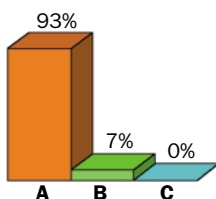
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: UUU00

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



Paul Hattaway

Location: A 1988 source lists 3,000
 speakers of the Puman language,¹ which is
 also called *U*. Another source lists a much
 higher population of 12,000 Puman.² The
 majority live west of the Lancang (Turbulent)
 River in Shuangjiang County in southern
 Yunnan Province. Several small Puman
 communities are scattered throughout other
 parts of southern Yunnan. Outside China,
 the Lancang River is known as the *Mekong*.
 The Mekong is the life-source for millions of
 people in Laos, Myanmar, Thailand,
 Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Identity: The Puman have been included as
 part of the Bulang nationality in China,
 although one linguist notes that they are
 "not very closely related."³ The Puman are
 not the same as the Hu, who live in the
 same general vicinity and speak a similar
 language.

Language: The Puman speak a language
 belonging to Palaungic branch of the Mon-
 Khmer linguistic family. It is related to Wa
 and De'ang.

History: The Puman are part of the great
 Mon-Khmer race of Asia. Over the
 centuries, the Mon-Khmer splintered into
 numerous groups and today are spread as
 far as India's Nicobar Islands and
 Indonesia.

Customs: Traditionally the
 Puman cast lots every year
 before a statue of Buddha to
 determine where they should
 farm. Puman women adorn
 themselves with colorful head
 scarfs, often decorated with
 pieces of silver in the shape of
 shells or fish. This has baffled
 experts since their region is
 located far from the coast.⁴

Religion: The Puman are
 devoted members of the
 Theravada sect of Buddhism. In
 southwest China the Buddhists
 have many stories regarding the
 coming of a Savior, a blessed
 one who fits the description of
 Jesus Christ in many respects.
 Missionary William Clifton
 Dodd, who traveled extensively
 throughout the region in the
 1930s, was intrigued to learn of
 some of the characteristics of
 this Theravada Buddhist

messiah: "His coming is to be preceded by
 a falling away from the practice of religion,
 morality, and righteousness. His forerunner
 shall level every mountain, exalt every
 valley, make crooked places straight, and
 rough places smooth.... Only the pure in
 heart and life shall be able to see him. But
 those who see are to be delivered from the
 thralldom of rebirth. He is to be recognized
 by his pierced hand. And his religion shall
 be introduced from the south [Christianity
 came into southern Yunnan from Thailand],
 by a man with a white face and a long
 beard [a description that fits both Donald
 McGilvary and Dr. Wilson — the first
 missionaries to bring the gospel to
 Xishuangbanna]."⁵

Christianity: Despite their belief in a Savior,
 most Puman have yet to hear about Jesus
 Christ. Locked away in remote mountains
 and deep forests, few Christians have ever
 endeavored to take the gospel to them.
 There are no Scriptures available in a script
 the Puman can easily comprehend. Robert
 Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to
 China, stated, "This Bible is the one thing
 that can burn gates of brass and penetrate
 walls of rock.... I can secretly translate
 and circulate this Book, with the confidence
 that its divine message will operate with
 divine power."⁶