



Population in China:
 4,873 (1990)
 5,970 (2000)
 7,320 (2010)
Location: Xinjiang
Religion: Islam
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Tatar

Countries: Russia and all former Soviet republics, Turkey, Romania, USA, Bulgaria, China, Afghanistan

Pronunciation: "Tah-tar"

Other Names:
 Tartar, Tata'er, Dada, Dadan

Population Source:
 4,873 (1990 census);
 4,127 (1982 census);¹
 5,522,000 in Russia (1993);
 468,000 in Uzbekistan (1993);
 328,000 in Kazakstan (1993);
 87,000 in Ukraine (1993);
 72,000 in Tajikistan (1993);
 70,000 in Kyrgyzstan (1993)²

Location: *N Xinjiang:* Tacheng, Urumqi, and Yining cities

Status:
 An official minority of China

Language: Altaic, Turkic, Western Turkic, Uralian

Literacy: 86%

Dialects (1): Nogai

Religion: Sunni Islam

Christians: None known

Scripture: New Testament 1989; Portions 1864; Not available in China

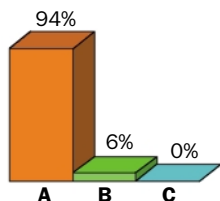
Jesus film:
 Available in Kazan Tatar

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting:
 Available in Kazan Tatar

ROPAL code: TTR00

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: Less than 6,000 members of the Tatar nationality live hidden away in tiny communities in the far northwestern corner of China. The majority live in the cities of Tacheng, Urumqi, and Yining in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The term *Tatar* is widely used throughout the nations of the former Soviet Union and Central Asia. More than seven million Tatar live in 20 different

countries: the majority are spread throughout Russia, from Moscow to Eastern Siberia. Others are located in nations as diverse as Turkey, Afghanistan, Romania, and Finland. Approximately 10,000 Tatar also live in New York and San Francisco in the United States.

Identity: The Tatar are the fourth smallest of China's 55 officially recognized minorities. The name *Tatar* appears to have originated during the Mongol Empire of the thirteenth century. As the Mongol hordes pillaged their way across Asia, the terrified Europeans called them "The People from Hell." The Latin word for hell is *Tatarus*.

Language: Only about 1,000 of the Tatar in China are able to speak their language,³ which is a member of the Turkic family. It is now mainly spoken by middle-aged and elderly people and is only taught to children in "pure" Tatar households.⁴ It may be the same as Kazan Tatar in Russia. Although they possess no written language of their own, most Tatars in China use the Uygur or Kazak scripts.

History: The Tatar were known in China in the eighth century as *Dadan*. In the ensuing centuries after the collapse of the Mongol Empire, it seems to have been a favorable practice for various tribes to call themselves *Tatar*. Because of this, there are many Tatar throughout Russia and Central Asia who should be viewed as separate ethnolinguistic groups.

Customs: When a Tatar dies, relatives wrap the body in a white cloth and place a knife or rock on it. The corpse is then placed on a platform and removed from the house, head first.⁵ Tatar wedding ceremonies are usually held at the bride's home. The newly married couple drink sweet water from the same cup, to show they will remain a devoted couple to the end of their lives.⁶ The bridegroom often lives in his father's home for a time after the marriage, and some do not live with their wife until their first baby is born. Forty days

after the birth of a child, the baby is bathed. The water for the bath is fetched from 40 places, representing as many good wishes for the baby's growth.⁷

Religion: The Tatars in China are Muslims of the Sunni sect. They worship in mosques along with Uygur and Kazak people.

Christianity: Percy Mather was the first missionary to reach out to the Tatar in China in 1914. "He sang at their festivals, and lived a similar life to them, and helped their sick.... He spent much time in the city of Chuguchak ('the land of flies') and his name was widely regarded among Russian, Tatar, Chinese and Mongolian sections of the city."⁸ Although the Tatar in other lands have the New Testament and evangelistic material available in their language, they are not understood by the Tatar in China. There are no known believers among them.



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