

**Population in China:**

4,630 (1991)

5,970 (2000)

7,700 (2010)

Location: Yunnan**Religion:** Buddhism**Christians:** None Known**Overview of the Shwe De'ang****Countries:** Myanmar, China**Pronunciation:** "Deh-ung-Shway"**Other Names:** Palaung Shwe, Golden Palaung, Shwe**Population Source:**4,630 (1991 *EDCL*);

Out of a total De'ang population

of 15,462 (1990 census);

150,000 in Myanmar

(1996 B. Grimes – 1982 figure)

Location: *W Yunnan:* Zhenkang and Baoshan counties**Status:**

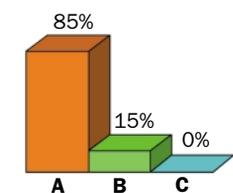
Officially included under De'ang

Language: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Eastern Palaungic, Palaung**Dialects:** 0**Religion:**

Theravada Buddhism, Animism

Christians: None known**Scripture:** None**Jesus film:** None**Gospel Recordings:**

Palaung #01179

Christian Broadcasting: None**ROPAL code:** SWE00**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 1991 report stated that 30%, or approximately 4,600 people, out of the total population of the De'ang nationality in China speak the Shwe De'ang language.¹ Their villages are located in parts of Zhenkang and Baoshan counties, in the western part of Yunnan Province near China's border with Myanmar. In addition, more than 150,000 Shwe De'ang live in a widely dispersed area of Shan State in northern Myanmar.² The exact population of groups in Myanmar is difficult to estimate. The most recent census was conducted by the British in the 1930s.

Identity: The Shwe De'ang language is officially labeled the *Liang* dialect of De'ang in China. The Chinese do not use the same terms as linguists but refer to the different groups of De'ang as the Red, Black, White, and Flowery De'ang. It is uncertain how these names match the four De'ang languages. In Myanmar, they are known as the *Shwe Palaung*. Their self-name is *De'ang*, which means "rock."

Language: Shwe De'ang is a distinct language. Speakers do share a measure of intelligibility with Pale and Riang, but it is

very different from the Rumai language. Shwe has two tones and in some places in Myanmar, three. Most Shwe De'ang can also speak Chinese and Tai Mao.

History: The De'ang believe they were once brothers with the Karen of Myanmar. The two tribes went out hunting with the intent of sharing their food with each other. The Karen caught an elephant, and a huge feast was held for all to enjoy as much meat as they could eat. The De'ang, however, could only manage to catch a porcupine. They skinned it and cooked the small amount of meat for the Karen to eat. The Karen did not mind, as they thought the De'ang had only been able to catch a small animal. But when they finished their meal, they saw the large pile of needles and claimed the De'ang had only given them a small portion of their meat. The two groups have been separated ever since that time, but even today the De'ang long to be reconciled with their Karen

brothers. Some De'ang homes in Myanmar have an opening on one side, signifying that the Karen are welcome to return to live with them.³

Customs: In the past the De'ang were great hunters, but today most earn their living by growing tea or bamboo.

Religion: Among the De'ang, "two schools of Theravada Buddhism are followed, the Burmese and the Yuan or Shan forms. Daily life is thought to be face to face with the actions of spirits. Ordinary people make a variety of offerings to placate them. Illness is attributed to the actions of evil spirits and the services of a diviner/medical practitioner serves to identify and counteract the proper spirit."⁴

Christianity: There are no known Christians among the Shwe De'ang in China. A tiny percentage of the more than 150,000 in Myanmar have accepted Christ, but they live scattered across a wide area. On the rare occasion of a Shwe De'ang's becoming a Christian, the new believer is usually persecuted and driven from the village.