

Location: Approximately 11,000 speakers of Geman Deng live on the tablelands on both sides of the lower reaches of the Zayu River within Zayu County, in southeastern Tibet. Plenty of rainfall and natural resources provide ideal conditions for their communities. The beautiful Zayu Valley, south of Mount Demula on the Hengduan Range, lies a mere 800 to 1,000 meters (2,600–3,280 ft.) above sea level. “There are vast expanses of woods on the slopes and in the valley itself bananas, water melons and apples grow in profusion together with rice.”¹

Identity: The Geman Deng have not been included as part of any nationality by the Chinese authorities. Instead, they were included in a list of *Undetermined Minorities* which contained 881,838 people at the time of the 1990 census. Neighboring groups may call the Geman Deng *Ah-man*.

Language: Geman Deng — which has four tones and four dialects — is a distinct language from Darang Deng. The difference in language has resulted from the two groups living apart for many centuries. The Deng do not have their own script.

History: Chinese state television has produced a documentary on the Deng, who claim to have lived in their corner of Tibet since the beginning of time. The Deng’s recent history has been one of oppression by the Tibetans. Formerly, the Deng were not even allowed to leave their area without

permission from the Tibetan lamas.

Customs: Deng people with the same name or blood ties live and work together in their villages. Most of the work is done by the Deng women. The women have a striking appearance, including a “silver hair band with engraved flowers over thick hair worn loosely on front of the top of their head. They are fond of big cylinder-shaped earrings with whorl patterns. Their clothes are richly decorated with agate, coral and jade ornaments as well as elaborate boxes of silver or gold in which they keep a copy of the Buddhist scripture. If a woman wears long strips of silver coins on the front of her blouse, she is from a wealthy family and has higher status than other women in the family.”²

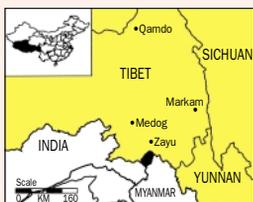
Religion: The Deng fear a variety of ghosts and demons. They believe they are able to temporarily calm the anger of these spirits and so, at appointed times, offer sacrifices of chickens and animals. This killing of valuable livestock has resulted in the Deng being trapped in dire poverty. Deng

families often go into heavy debt to pay for the services of a shaman.

Christianity: This group is one of the most difficult peoples in all of China to penetrate with the gospel. Their communities are only accessible by boat or on foot. The Deng have no Scriptures in their language, which does not have its own script. A handful of Geman Deng in Myanmar have been evangelized by the strong Rawang church, but so far there are very few or no believers among them. Most Geman Deng in Tibet are without a witness.



Paul Hattaway



Population in China:

8,000 (1987)
11,000 (2000)
14,200 (2010)

Location: Tibet

Religion: Polytheism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Geman Deng

Countries: China, India, Myanmar

Pronunciation: “Ah-mun-Dung”

Other Names: Kuman, Kuman Deng, Kaman, Ah-man

Population Source: 8,000 (1987 LAC); Also in India (Assam) and Myanmar

Location: SE Tibet: The Geman Deng speakers live on the tablelands either side of the lower reaches of the Zayu River, in Zayu County.

Status: Counted in the census as an *Undetermined Minority*

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Unclassified

Dialects: 4

Religion: Polytheism, Tibetan Buddhism, Animism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

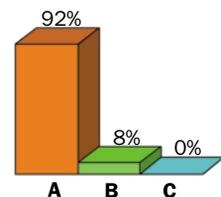
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: GEN00

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