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Location: More than two million Koreans live in the northeastern part of China, especially in the provinces of Jilin, Heilongjiang, and Liaoning. Unofficial sources state there are at least three million Koreans in China.¹ More than 74 million Koreans are found worldwide.

Identity: The Koreans are an official minority nationality in China. They are “a completely unassimilated people who speak and write their own language, operate schools... and maintain the society and culture of their homeland.”²

Language: Most linguists consider Korean to be a language isolate, while others place it as a member of the Altaic family. “Korean does not have tones like Chinese, but certain words have different meanings depending on whether they are pronounced high and

short, or low and long.”³ The speech of the Koreans in China is more similar to the North Korean dialect than South Korean. In addition, their language contains some Chinese loanwords.

History: Koreans have long played an important role in Chinese history. A famous Korean general named Kao Hsien-chih was sent by the Imperial Court to fight the marauding Tibetan armies in AD 741.⁴ The Sui Dynasty (AD 589–618) fell soon after three disastrous and costly military campaigns in North Korea.⁵ The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) also fell, partly because the country was bankrupt as a result of the massive cost of defending Korea from the Japanese.⁶ The first wave of Chinese migrants arrived in China in the late 1600s. Sizable numbers arrived later after a severe famine in North Korea in 1869.⁷ “When Koreans first arrived in China, they worked for

Chinese landlords who furnished them with seed and all supplies. As this tended to throw the Koreans into debt, many of them frequently moved.”⁸

Customs: The Koreans — known as *Chaoxian* in China — boast the highest education rate of any of China’s minorities: 43 out of 1,000 attend university.⁹ Their rate was twice as high as the national average and close to the 1979 USA level (46 out of 1,000 people).

Religion: Most Koreans in China today are atheists. In addition, there are a sizable number of Mahayana Buddhists and Christians among them.

Christianity: It is not recorded if Nestorian missionaries penetrated as far as Korean territory during their time in China from the seventh to the fourteenth century, but in 1927 archaeologists excavated a tomb near the present Korea-China border. “They found the remains of seven bodies and at the head of each a clay cross... they were able to date the grave at between 998 and 1006 by Chinese coins of the Song Dynasty left with the bodies.”¹⁰

Today there are estimated to be 600,000 Korean Christians in China,¹¹ although a 1992 source listed only 122,000.¹² Many Korean Bibles have been smuggled into China from abroad in recent years, in addition to the 189,487 printed by the government-sanctioned Amity Press.¹³ Many of these Bibles have been carried across the border into North Korea.



Population in China:

- 1,920,597 (1990)
- 2,130,000 (2000)
- 2,362,000 (2010)

Location: Jilin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Inner Mongolia, Beijing

Religion: No Religion
Christians: 600,000

Overview of the Koreans

Countries: South Korea, North Korea, China, USA, Japan¹⁴

Pronunciation: “Chao-shee-ahn”

Other Names: Chaoxian

Population Source:

- 1,920,597 (1990 census);
- 1,766,439 (1982 census);¹⁵
- 44.8 million in South Korea;
- 25.5 million in North Korea;
- 800,000 in USA; 720,000 in Japan;
- 183,000 in Uzbekistan;
- 107,000 in Russia¹⁶;

Location: Jilin;¹⁷ Heilongjiang; Liaoning; Inner Mongolia; Beijing; Hebei; Tianjin; Shanghai

Status:

An official minority of China

Language: Korean

Literacy: 89%

Dialects: 0

Religion: No Religion, Christianity, Buddhism

Christians: 600,000

Scripture: Bible 1911; New Testament 1887; Portions 1882

Jesus film: Available

Gospel Recordings:

- Korean #00103
- Korean: Northern China #04856

Christian Broadcasting:

Available (TWR)

ROPAL code: KKN00

