

HANI

The 1989 Vietnam census listed a population of 12,489 Hani people. They live in the Muong Te District in Lai Chau Province and the Bat Xat district in Lao Cai Province, in the northwest of the country. More than 1.2 million members of the Hani nationality live in China, where they are divided into more than a dozen distinct tribes and subgroups.

In Vietnam the Hani groups include the Akha, Lami, and Hani proper. The Hani migrated into Vietnam from Yunnan at different stages. Those now living in Lai Chau arrived about 300 years ago, while those in Lao Cai moved from China only 150 years ago. This has resulted in varying customs and traditions among the different Hani groups.

The Hani claim to be descended from frog's eyes. Most scholars believe they originated in Tibet, and moved down to southern China many centuries ago. Hani legends state their ancestors lived in 1,000 homes on a plain far to the north of their present location.

Among the Hani it is extremely important to be able to recite their genealogy right back to the progenitor of their race, Sm Mi O. The genealogy now contains more than 60 generations. Long recitations are handed down from parents to children, so they may be able to remember all the names of their ancestors.

Anthropologists have examined the genealogies of the various Hani groups. They found that all the groups

shared an identical family tree for the first 20 to 22 generations. After that time the Hani splintered into separate tribes. Significantly, the timing coincides with the Mongol invasion of Yunnan and the destruction of the Nanzhao Kingdom in 1252 AD.¹⁴

The Hani have a legend of a lost book. They claim they once had their own script, which was written on buffalo skin by the Creator God. On a long journey the Hani got hungry and ate the book, and ever since have been without a written script.¹⁵

The dress of Hani women is one of the most striking in all of South Asia. They traditionally wear heavily decorated headdresses embedded with tassels, beaten silver, fur and beads. The women only remove the headdress for cleaning or washing their hair.

In Hani legend a skygod named Abo-Momi sent a buffalo to the earth to teach man that grass and trees must be planted to enable crops to grow everywhere else. If man would do this they would be able to eat every second day. Unfortunately the buffalo had a poor memory and told them the crops must be planted. He also told them to

let the grass and trees grow everywhere else. If they would do that, the buffalo said, they would be able to eat twice every day. Man obeyed the buffalo's message but found their lives didn't improve at all. When the buffalo returned to the sky, Abo-Momi was displeased and sent the buffalo back to the earth to help the Hani cultivate the soil. The water buffalo is still revered today among the Hani. When a Hani man dies his buffalo is slaughtered and buried with him, so the beast can guide him to the next world.

Among the Lami subgroup, a festival called the Long Dragon Banquet is held on the 3rd and 4th days of the 12th lunar month every year. Tables, dishes, trays and wine cups are placed in a pattern to resemble the scales of the dragon. Each household is required to prepare "a table of fifteen to twenty dishes of delicacies comprising of food they grudge eating at ordinary times, that is, birds, beasts and aquatic produce. No ingredients such as carrots or cabbage are to be used... Festival leaders among the Lami are selected after they have been approved by the deities. Chickens are slaughtered and their liver patterns are studied to determine who should take up the sacred posts. During the festival, the leaders must sleep on one side of their body and abstain from sexual intercourse and from eating meat. For one month prior to the festival they must separate themselves from all people, including their own families."¹⁶



Pray for the Hani

- 1 Pray the various subgroups of the Hani in Vietnam would soon hear the Gospel in a way that they can make an intelligent decision to accept or reject Christ.
- 2 Ask God to raise up world-wide prayer and ministry concern for the Hani people in Southeast Asia. Pray Christians from many nations would obey God's call to take the Gospel to the Hani.
- 3 Pray the Hani would be renown as a Christian people who have been liberated from death to the Life of God.



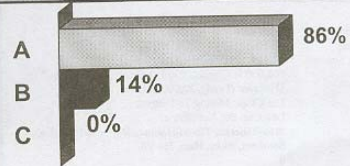
Population:
12,489 (1989)
15,500 (2000)
18,900 (2010)

Language:
Sino-Tibetan

Religion:
Polytheism

Christians:
none known

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = Adherents to any form of Christianity

Overview of the Hani

Countries : China, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam
Pronunciation : "Hah-nee"
Other Names : Ha Nhi, Ha Nhi Gia, U Ni, Xa Uni, Haw
Population Source : 12,489 (1989 census)
500,000 in China (1990 J.O.Svantesson); 180,000 in Myanmar (1994); 30,000 in Laos (1994)
Location : Lai Chau: Muong Te District;
Lao Cai: Bat Xat District
Language : Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo,
Southern, Akha, Hani, Ha-Ya
Dialects : 0

Subgroups (3) : Co Cho, La Mi, Hani Den (Black Hani)
Religion : Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship
Christians : none known
Scripture : none
Jesus film : none
Gospel Recordings : Hani #04698
Christian Radio : none
ROPAL code : HNT00