

Kucong

More than 80,000 Kucong people live scattered around the world. Despite their relatively small population, the Kucong are located in six different countries. The majority (approximately 40,000) live in remote areas of Mojiang, Xinping and Mengla counties of Yunnan Province in south-west China.¹ An additional number of Kucong live in Thailand. There has been a small number of Kucong villages in Thailand for almost a century, but in recent years many Kucong from Laos have found their way to refugee camps along the Thai-Laos border. More than 10,000 Kucong live in Myanmar, near Kengtung City in Shan State, while an additional 5,000 are in north-west Vietnam, located on the banks of the Son Da (Black) River, just west of the town of Muong Te in Lai Chau Province.² Approximately 3,000 Kucong live in at least 16 villages of north-west Laos (Luang Namtha³ and Bokeo provinces). Finally, more than six hundred Kucong have migrated to the United States where they predominantly live in the Visalia, California area.

The Kucong are commonly called Yellow Lahu, yet their language and history are significantly different from those of the other Lahu tribes in Asia. Between the 14th and 19th centuries

the Lahu in China took strong leadership in their wars of resistance against their Han and Tai oppressors. 'Not until an irretrievable defeat in 1799 did they begin to collapse. This defeat caused the Lahu to flee into the mountains; from that point on they fragmented as a people. The Black Lahu claim to



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be pure Lahu and express contempt for the Kucong for having surrendered to the Qing army. Since that time the Kucong have been hated and oppressed by all other Lahu.⁴

In China the Kucong lived in dire poverty and isolation for centuries. Due to disease and attacks by wild animals,

a third of their population died in just a three-year period between 1947 and 1949.⁵ It is primarily because of their struggles that the Kucong have spread out over five countries in Asia as they searched for a better life.

The Kucong are primarily Theravada Buddhists, in contrast to the other Lahu who are either animists or Christians. They also maintain a strong animistic belief system alongside their Buddhist faith.

In the past, Christianity was not able to spread from the Lahu to the Kucong because of the many prejudices between the two groups. Consequently, today there are fewer believers among the Kucong than there are among the Lahu.⁶ In Myanmar the Kucong first received the gospel from missionary William Young in 1903. 'By May 1905, Young had baptized 1,623 converts, from both the [Kucong] and Lahu.'⁷ H A Baker—the great Pentecostal missionary—left a spiritual legacy at a Kucong village called *Stony Stockade* along a remote mountain ridge in Mojiang County, China. 'The whole village of 29 households were converted after

hearing Baker's fiery preaching, and they have earnestly adhered to the faith until this day. Right up to the present, the old inhabitants still enjoy very much recounting to visitors, vividly and nostalgically, anecdotes of "Ben Mooshi" (Pastor Baker).⁸



Population:

79,900 (2000)
88,500 (2010)
98,300 (2020)

Countries: China, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, USA, possibly Vietnam

Buddhism: Theravada

Christians: 1,500

Overview of the Kucong

Other Names: Lahu Shi, Yellow Lahu, Kutsung, Shi, Kui, Kwi, Lahu Xi, Kui Sung, Mousseur Luang, Kuy Soung, Lahu Aga, Lahu Adaw-aga, Lahu Shi Bakeo, Kur, Musseh Kwi, Khutsho, Ne Thu, La Hu Si

Population Sources:

40,400 in China (2000, P Hattaway)⁹
20,000 in Thailand (2000, B Grimes [1998 figure])
10,000 in Myanmar (2000, B Grimes [1998 figure])
5,000 in Vietnam (2000, B Grimes [1998 figure])
2,880 in Laos (1999, Asian Minorities Outreach [1995 figure])¹⁰

600 in USA (1991, J Matisoff)¹¹

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Loloish, Southern, Akha, Lahu

Dialects: 0

Professing Buddhists: 55%

Practising Buddhists: 25%

Christians: 1.8%

Scripture: work in progress

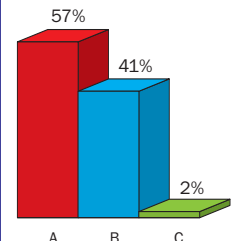
Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: Yellow Lahu

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: KDS

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians
C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity