

SEDANG

The Sedang minority group numbered just less than 100,000 people according to the 1989 Vietnam census. By the year 2000 their population is expected to exceed 120,000. More than 4,000 *Halang* (a Sedang subgroup) and 400 Sedang live across the border in Attapeu Province, Laos. The Sedang may also be located in Cambodia.

The Sedang in Vietnam (where their name is officially spelt *Xo-Dang*) predominantly live in Kon Tum Province. Scattered groups inhabit the mountainous areas of Quang Nai, Quang Nam and Binh Dinh provinces.

The Sedang minority includes six different tribes or subgroups who speak at least three distinct languages. Of these, only the *Mo Nam* cultivate

rice in submerged fields. The other groups are "slash-and-burn" agriculturists. To break up the soil, the *Mo Nam* do not use tools or instruments, but simply let humans and water buffaloes trample it. After the soil is broken up, the dirt is softened by water and planting is commenced. The *Todrah* subgroup, who inhabit about 50 villages, are well-known for their production of iron tools and weapons. They also produce a kind of leather bellows.

In the past, the population of the Sedang was larger than it is today. They suffered greatly from inter-village and inter-tribal warfare. Today all Sedang adults are still organized into military units. Their homes are surrounded by hedges and barriers that

contain hidden traps, stakes and spears. Unmarried men often go about with weapons, always ready to fight if the need arises.

The Sedang population was decimated by war against the Siamese from Thailand. Until this century the Sedang saw it as a great honor to capture prisoners of war and sacrifice them to the spirits. Later the Siamese and the Sedang were motivated by economic purposes. They captured each other so that they could sell their prisoners as slaves. As a result of these bloody conflicts, hundreds of Sedang villages that were recorded in history no longer exist. Thousands of families were wiped out.

The Sedang claim to have originated in a place far north of their present location, perhaps in China.

The names of Sedang people are determined by the sex of the child. All girls are given the prefix *Y* (e.g. *Y-Hong*), while all boy's names start with *A*.

A communal house is located in the middle of each Sedang village. All social activities revolve around it. On its roof are two sharp objects that

resemble large sails or axe-heads. Animal horns are also placed on the corners of the roofs. The communal houses are built entirely with the wood of trees that grow in the area. No nails or wire are used in their construction.

Marriage is simple among the Sedang. After the wedding the couple lives alternately with the wife's family and then the husband's family for equal lengths of time.

The Sedang language is part of the Mon-Khmer family. It is most closely related to Hre.

The majority of Sedang are animists. Their religious sacrifices coincide with the start and the end of the harvest season. They also revere and sacrifice to "Mother Rice" in a bid to procure an abundant harvest.

Some of the Sedang claim to have a legend of a great flood long ago that destroyed the earth's inhabitants. Only one brother and sister survived. They say that the Creator God caused the flood because He was upset at the increase of wickedness and debauchery among humans.

Today most Sedang do not know this Supreme Being. The exact status of Christianity among the Sedang is uncertain. It is believed there are currently several thousand Catholic believers and few Protestants among them.

Translators have produced the Gospel of Mark, Luke 15, the story of Noah and a booklet on the Life of Christ in the Sedang language. *Far East Broadcasting* airs weekly 30-minute Gospel broadcasts in Sedang.

The level of Christianity among the Sedang is much lower than most of the other Mon-Khmer speaking minorities in southern or central Vietnam. Their history of violence and suspicion of outsiders has contributed to their lack of responsiveness.



Pray for the Sedang

- 1 Pray against the spirit of violence, conflict and hatred that has plagued the Sedang for centuries. Pray the Sedang would be willing to open their hearts up to the Prince of Peace.
- 2 Pray the Sedang church would grow spiritually and numerically. Ask God to make them a mission-minded church that would have a burden to take the Gospel to many unreached people groups.
- 3 Ask God to glorify His Name among all six subgroups of the Sedang.



Population:
96,766 (1989)
120,200 (2000)
146,600 (2010)

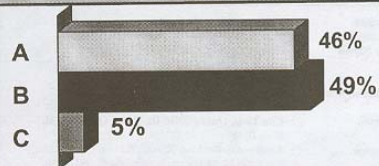
Language:
Mon-Khmer

Religion:
Animism

Christians:
5,000

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 Sedang

Countries	: Vietnam, Laos, possibly Cambodia	Literacy	: 25-50%
Pronunciation	: "Sh-dang"	Subgroups (6)	: Xo-teng, Mo Nam, Todra, Halang, Chau, Ta'Tre
Other Names	: Hđang, Kmrang, Con-lan, Bri-la, Hđang, Hoteang, Roteang, Rotea, Xo-Dang, Hotea, Xa Dang, Cadong, Tang, Sakau, Xa Cau	Religion	: Animism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity
Population Source	: 96,766 (1989 census); 4,400 in Laos (1992), possibly also in Cambodia	Christians	: 5,000
Location	: Kon Tum, Quang Nam-Da Nang, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh	Scripture	: Sedang Portions: Mark, Luke 15, Noah story and the Life of Christ are available; Halang Portions 1970: Genesis, Mark, John, Acts, Romans and hymnals are available
Language	: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Eastern Mon-Khmer, Bahnaric, North Bahnaric, West, Sedang-Todrah, Sedang	Jesus film	: none
Dialects (5)	: Central Sedang, Greater Sedang, Dak Sut Sedang, Kotua Sedang, Kon Hring Sedang	Gospel Recordings	: Sedang #00789; Halang #01140
		Christian Radio	: available in Sedang (FEBC) - 30 minutes per week; available in Halang (FEBC) - 15 minutes per week
		ROPAL code	: SED00 (Sedang); HAL00 (Halang); HLD00 (Halang Doan)