

XINH MUN

With a population of 10,890 in the 1989 Vietnam census, the Xinh Mun minority are located immediately on the Vietnam-Laos border in Son La and Lai Chau provinces. More than 2,000 speakers of the Xinh Mun language also live in northern Laos.

The name *Xinh Mun* was given to this minority by the Vietnamese. The people call themselves *Xa, Puoc* or *Pua*. The name of this group should not be confused with *Kim Mun, Gem Mun* or *Mun*, which are names sometimes used by the Yao. The Xinh Mun speak a Mon-Khmer language, while the Yao language is part of the Hmong-Mien family. Xinh Mun is linguistically related to Khang and Khmu.

Xinh Mun communities are often intermingled with people from the Black Thai or Muong minorities. The Xinh Mun women also wear clothing and headdresses similar to the Black Thai. They wear a short vest that has a row of silver buttons carefully made in the shape of butterfly wings.

Three generations of the same family living under the one roof is common among the Xinh Mun. Their homes are separated into two main sections. One section called the *plang* is reserved for single men or guests of the family. It also contains the altar for worshipping spirits. The second part, called the *xia* is the main section where the family sleeps, cooks and eats.

The two main family names among

the Xinh Mun are *Vi* and *Lo*. Each lineage shares a certain animal that is sacred to them. The people of that name are not allowed to kill or touch the taboo animal as long as they live. The *de de* bird is considered sacred by all branches of the Xinh Mun.

Xinh Mun society is divided into a hierarchy. Hamlet chiefs, called *quan xip*, are appointed by nobles called *phia tao*. These titles were first given by the Thai people when they oppressed the smaller ethnic groups in the area prior to the 1940s. After the end of the tyrannical Thai rule, some of the wealthy Xinh Mun families saw an opportunity to continue to exploit the poor people and set themselves up in the same positions that had been vacated by the Thai.

Some Xinh Mun people live in absolutely dire poverty. They are called *Xa La Yang* ('Yellow Leaf People') because they live in temporary shelters of banana leaves and move on when the leaves have yellowed and withered. This custom is identical to some of the subgroups of the Chut minority, and also the 'Yellow-Leaf people' of Thailand and Laos—even though these groups are not directly related to each other.



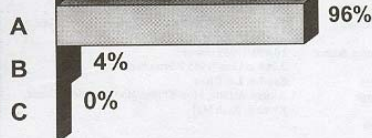
Population:
10,890 (1989)
13,500 (2000)
16,500 (2010)

Language:
Mon-Khmer

Religion:
Animism

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

Xinh Mun women are in the habit of chewing betel-nut, which stains their teeth black. The Xinh Mun also love to eat food that is very spicy. They drink alcohol through a long pipe from a large jar.

After two young people are married, they move into the home of the bride's family. They stay there for several years until the couple has children, at which time they are allowed to move into their own home. If the couple do not produce a son, however, they must remain permanently in the home of the bride.

Xinh Mun women give birth in a squatting position beside the fireplace in their homes. The umbilical cord is placed in a bamboo container and hung on the branch of a large tree in the forest. When the baby is one year old a shaman is summoned to name the baby. These days Thai names are generally used. If the baby suffers from a lot of sickness, a ceremony is held and a new name is given.

When a Xinh Mun person dies, rifle-shots are fired into the air to announce the sad news. A boy from the family of the deceased then throws three stones on to the ancestral altar. They believe this symbolizes the anger the 'spirit of the house' has at having lost one of its occupants. The body is left in the house for up to a week before it is buried. In the warmer months the stench from the corpse becomes unbearable and the burial is conducted sooner. The body is covered with fragrant leaves before being put into the coffin. Money is placed in the mouth of the corpse and the person's thumbs and big toes are tied together. Offerings of food, water and tobacco are made at every family meal.

All Xinh Mun are animists. Few have ever heard of Jesus Christ. Their remote geographical location and small, close-knit communities have ensured their complete isolation from Christianity.



Pray for the Xinh Mun

- Two thousand years after Jesus Christ died for their sins, the Good News has yet to reach the ears of the hidden Xinh Mun people of Vietnam. Pray the Gospel would soon be presented to them.
- Being a small people group in the midst of millions of unsaved people, the Xinh Mun have been overlooked. Pray God would raise up laborers to specifically target them with the Gospel.
- Thank God that His Word has promised there will be people from every tribe, language and ethnic group in heaven.

Overview of the Xinh Mun

Countries: Vietnam, Laos
Pronunciation: "Shin-Moon"
Other Names: Xa, Puoc, Pua, Kha Puoc, Puhoc, Puok, Xinh Mui, Xin Mui, Sing Mun, Ksing Mui
Population Source: 10,890 (1989 census); 2,164 in Laos (1985 F-Proshan)
Location: Son La, Lai Chau
Language: Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Khmuic, Xinh Mui
Dialects: 0

Subgroups (2): Da, Nghet
Religion: Animism, Polytheism, Ancestor Worship, Shamahism
Christians: none known
Scripture: none
Jesus film: none
Gospel Recordings: none
Christian Radio: none
ROPAL code: PU000