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Location: More than 30,000 people in the northern part of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region speak the E (pronounced “Erh”) language. Another study lists a figure of 50,000 E speakers in China.¹ The E inhabit 19 villages in both Rongshui and Luocheng counties. Rongshui is an autonomous county of the Miao people, and Luocheng is an autonomous county of the Mulao nationality. The main population center of the E is in the town of Yongle. The region contains an abundance of beautiful karst hills and rock formations nestled among lush green pastures.

Identity: Although they have been classified as part of the large Zhuang nationality, the E cannot speak Zhuang. The Chinese call them *Wuse*, a derogatory name meaning “five colors.” E is this group’s autonomy.

Language: Although few people are aware of the existence of the E people, there has been extensive research conducted into their language.² The E speak a Central Tai language which contains characteristics of five neighboring languages: Zhuang, Mulao, Dong, Pinghua Chinese, and Guiliuhua (a variety of Southwestern Mandarin).³ For this reason the neighboring Chinese call their language *Wusehua* (Five-colored Speech). One linguist states, “Some consider it to be basically a variety of Zhuang that has been heavily influenced by other languages.”⁴ A vocabulary list of 2,000 E words showed 85% of these were Chinese cognates.⁵ Many E are also bilingual in the Tuguai dialect of Cantonese.

History: The north central part of Guangxi has long

been a crossroads for many different races. Interaction between Han Chinese and minority people has resulted in the intermixing of ethnic groups such as the Mulao, Maonan, and Zhuang. These groups have many Chinese customs and linguistic influences. On the other hand, the Pinghua Chinese reveal many ethnolinguistic traits of minority groups.

Customs: The E celebrate the traditional Chinese festivals, the most important of which are the Spring Festival and the Chinese New Year.

Religion: Most E are animists, with many aspects of ancestor worship and traditional Chinese religions mixed into their rituals.

Christianity: There are no known Christian fellowships or believers among the 19 E villages in northern Guangxi. The E still await the arrival of the gospel for the first time. Whitfield Guinness, a missionary-doctor who served in China until his death in 1927, summarized the condition of the lost tribes and individuals among whom he worked: “Men and women are toiling without a Bible, without a Sunday, without a prayer, without songs of praise. They have rulers without justice and righteousness; homes without peace; marriage without sanctity; young men and women without ideals and enthusiasm; little children without purity, without innocence; mothers without wisdom or self-control; poverty without relief or sympathy; sickness without skillful help or tender care; sorrow and crime without a remedy; and

worst of all, death without Christ.”⁶



Population in China:

30,000 (1992)

34,700 (2000)

41,500 (2010)

Location: Guangxi

Religion: Animism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the E

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Erh”

Other Names:

Kjang E, Wuse, Wusehua

Population Source:

30,000 (1992 J.Edmondson);

Out of a total Zhuang population of 15,489,630 (1990 census)

Location: N Guangxi: Rongshui Miao County and Yongle Township; and 19 villages to the border area of Luocheng County

Status:

Officially included under Zhuang

Language: Daic, Tai, Central Tai

Dialects: 0

Religion: Animism, Polytheism, No Religion, Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

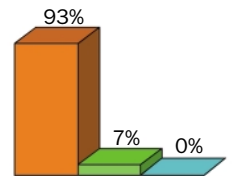
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: EEE00

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity