



Paul Hattaway

Location: The Zhuang are the largest minority group in China. With more than 17 million people, their population is approximately the same as the population of Australia. More than 11 million people speak Northern Zhuang. The majority are located in the central and western parts of Guangxi in southern China. Others are scattered throughout 15 of the other 29 provinces in China, including one small Zhuang enclave in distant Shaanxi Province.¹

Identity: The name *Zhuang* “seems to be a cover term, officially including any and all Tai speakers who live in Guangxi and eastern Yunnan.”² Most Zhuang are assimilated to Chinese language and culture and consider themselves to be Han people. “Of 152 clans examined in one district of Guangxi Province, not one claimed to be non-Han. Many are reported to be so

anxious to be Chinese they have falsified genealogical records in order to find a suitable Han ancestor.”³

Language: Zhuang has two orthographies: a Roman script introduced in 1986 and a script which uses Chinese characters to mirror the sound of Zhuang words.⁴ Northern Zhuang is basically the same language as Bouyei.⁵ Although the Chinese list only seven Northern Zhuang dialects, other sources state that there are more than fifty.⁶ One worker in the area says, “Almost every Zhuang village has its own little village language.... Zhuang from one village may not understand Zhuangs who live 25 miles from them.... After greeting each other in their respective dialects of Zhuang, they do their business in Cantonese or Mandarin.”⁷

History: During the Ming Dynasty (1388–1644) the

Zhuang revolted 218 times against Chinese rule.⁸ In the middle of the sixteenth century the Zhuang formed an army and beat back the invading Japanese pirates who had landed along the Guangxi coastline.

Customs: Today most Zhuang are culturally indistinguishable from the local Han Chinese. The Zhuang were not even considered a separate nationality in the past; they were counted as Han Chinese in the 1938 census.⁹ Very few Zhuang wear their traditional clothing on a daily basis, although many do still wear it during festivals.

Religion: Most Northern Zhuang in the countryside worship their ancestors, while the majority of those who live in urban areas are atheists.

Christianity: In 1991 there were a reported 30,000 Zhuang Christians meeting in more than 250 house fellowships in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.¹⁰ Gospel radio broadcasts, gospel audio recordings, and the *Jesus* film are available in the Northern Zhuang language. These tools are allowing large numbers of Zhuang to be exposed to the gospel for the first time in their history. More Zhuang have believed in Christ since 1990 than in the previous 130 years of mission outreach.¹¹ Han Chinese house-church movements from several provinces have sent evangelists to work among the Zhuang. There is a great need for the Bible to be translated into Northern Zhuang.



Population in China:

10,000,000 (1992)

11,568,000 (2000)

13,835,000 (2010)

Location: Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Guangdong, Hebei

Religion: Ancestor Worship

Christians: 40,000

Overview of the Northern Zhuang

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Zhoo-ung”

Other Names: Chwang, Chuang, Tai Chuang, Wuming, T’u, Cangva, Vah Cuengh, Bou-Tsuung, Bou-Shuung

Population Source:

10,000,000 (1992 J. Edmonson);

 Out of a total Zhuang population of 15,489,630 (1990 census)¹²

Location: *Guangxi; Yunnan; Guizhou; Guangdong; Hunan; Hebei; Fujian; Jiangxi; Beijing; Henan; Tianjin; Shandong; Shaanxi; Zhejiang; Anhui; Shanghai*

Status:

Officially included under Zhuang

Language: Daic, Tai, Northern Tai

Dialects (+):

Hongshuihe (2,738,000),

Yongbei (1,562,000),

Guibe (1,299,000),

Liujiang (1,271,000),

Guibian (828,000),

Youjiang (732,000), Quibe

Religion: Ancestor Worship,

No Religion, Christianity

Christians: 40,000

Scripture: None

Jesus film: Available

Gospel Recordings:

Zhuang: Northern #04978

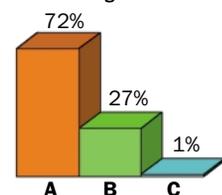
Zhuang: Luo Cheng #04980

Christian Broadcasting:

Available (FEBIC)

ROPAL code: CCX00

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