



Midge Conner

Location: Approximately 150,000 Daur live in northeastern China. Most are concentrated on both sides of the Nenjiang River in the Morindawa Banner of Inner Mongolia, as well as in several counties in the western part of Heilongjiang Province.¹ A significant number of Daur also live in Russia. A Daur chief named Gantimur led 300 of his people to Russia in 1666.² Until this century, their homeland was known to the Russians as *Dauria*. By 1882 Gantimur's descendants in Russia numbered 10,489, most of whom had converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity.³

Identity: The Daur are one of the 55 official minority groups in China. In the past they were a larger and more influential group than today. In 1928 there were as many as 300,000 Daur in China.⁴ Their numbers have dwindled this century mainly as a result of war, disease,

and assimilation to Mongolian or Chinese culture and language.

Language: Most Daur can still speak their language, which has been described as “an aberrant, and in some respects, archaic branch of northern Mongolian.”⁵ The exceptions are the Daur living in Aihui and Hulan counties who switched to speaking Chinese in the 1930s.⁶

History: The Daur were first mentioned in Chinese records in AD 620. They are thought to be the “remnants of the Chinese garrison left by the Tan tai-tszui (618–626).”⁷ A portion of this garrison were committed to fox hunting and were called *dahuli* (those who hunt foxes).⁸ The Daur fought against Tsarist Russia and also opposed Japan from 1937 to 1945.

Customs: Daur society is divided into a hierarchical structure. Each group of

people with the same family name (*hala*) live in the same group of three or four villages. Each hala is then comprised of several clans (*mokon*) who live in the same village. On his wedding day, a Daur bridegroom must fetch his bride at sunrise and make a present of wine, meat, and pastry to everyone he meets on the way — whether he knows them or not. After the ceremony the Daur enjoy an afternoon of horse races. The sport of field hockey may have been invented by the Daur. They are first mentioned as playing hockey in the *History of the Liao Dynasty* (916–1125).⁹

Religion: For centuries each Daur clan has depended upon shamans. No wedding, burial, long journey, or any other important event was attempted without first consulting the shaman. He, in turn, contacted the spirit realm and announced, for a fee, whether an event should take place or not. Some of the Daur who live alongside Mongolians have embraced Tibetan Buddhism.

Christianity: Until recently the Daur in China were a completely unreachable people with no knowledge of the gospel. In the early 1990s missionaries showed the *Jesus* film in Mandarin to the Daur. In a short time, more than 1,000 Daur became Christians. The *Jesus* film is now available in the Daur language. In 1997 the new Daur church faced persecution from the authorities, but the believers stood firm in their faith. The Daur Christians are actively involved in evangelism and have a deep burden to see

their whole ethnic group come to Christ.



Population in China:

116,000 (1990)
149,600 (2000)
193,000 (2010)

Location:

Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia

Religion: Shamanism

Christians: 1,000

Overview of the Daur

Countries: China, Russia

Pronunciation: “Dao-urh”

Other Names: Dagur, Dagour, Dawar, Dawo'er, Tahur, Thauerh, Daghur, Dahur, Daor

Population Source:

121,357 (1990 census);¹⁰
94,014 (1982 census);
63,394 (1964 census);
Also in Russia

Location: *W Heilongjiang:* Qiqihar

(21,748), Fuyu (5,932);
Longjiang, Nehe, Nenjiang and
Aihu counties;

E Inner Mongolia: Morindawa
(26,289), Ewenki (13,929),
Elenchun (6,369) counties;
Also Zhalantun City (4,810)

Status:

An official minority of China

Language: Altaic, Mongolian,
Eastern Mongolian, Daur

Literacy: 81%

Dialects (3):

Bataxan, Hailar, Qiqihar

Religion: Shamanism, Animism,
Tibetan Buddhism, Christianity,
No Religion

Christians: 1,000

Scripture: None

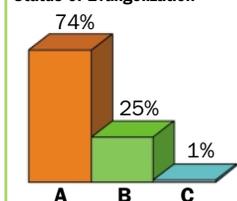
Jesus film: Available

Gospel Recordings: Daur #04776

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: DTA00

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