



**Population in China:**  
 1,700 (1990)  
 2,190 (2000)  
 2,820 (2010)  
**Location:** Inner Mongolia  
**Religion:** Shamanism  
**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Yakut

**Countries:** Russia, China

**Pronunciation:** "Yah-kut"

**Other Names:** Sakha, Ewenki:  
 Yakut, Ewenki: Aologuya

**Population Source:**  
 1,700 (1990 AMO);  
 Out of a total Ewenki population of 26,315 (1990 census);  
 328,000 in Russia (1979 census)

**Location:**  
 NE Inner Mongolia: Ergun Banner

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Ewenki

**Language:** Altaic, Tungus,  
 Northern Tungus, Ewenki

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Shamanism

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** Portions 1858

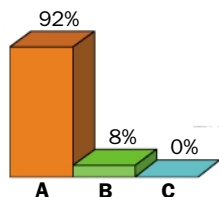
**Jesus film:** Available

**Gospel Recordings:**  
 Yakut #04451

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** UKT00

### 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



Mitjae Conner

**Location:** A 1990 report listed more than 1,700 Yakut living in China.<sup>1</sup> They were originally part of the large group of more than 400,000 Yakut living in the Yakutia region near the Arctic Ocean in Russia. In China the Yakut are the most northern Ewenki group. They inhabit dense forests in the Ergun Banner of Inner Mongolia.

**Identity:** Although the Yakut have officially been included as part of the Ewenki nationality in China, they have their own language and customs. They identify themselves as "Yakut" to outsiders.

**Language:** Because they arrived in China only about 100 years ago, the Yakut language has not varied greatly from the Yakut spoken in Siberia. The elderly Yakut in China still speak a little Russian. Today most members of this tribe under the age of 40 can speak and read Chinese.

Although their language has been officially labeled the *Aologuya* dialect of Ewenki in China, the Yakut cannot understand any of the other Ewenki languages. In fact, their language is more intelligible with Oroqen.<sup>2</sup> In Russia where they have their own newspapers, books, television, radio programs, and universities, the Yakut use the Cyrillic script.

**History:** In the late 1800s a small Yakut group migrated from far inside the Yakutia region of Siberia, stopping first in the Buriat region before finally proceeding into China. They are the ancestors of today's Yakut in China.

**Customs:** The Yakut live uncomplicated, seminomadic lives, tending reindeer and dwelling in simple tents. Alcohol abuse is rampant among the Yakut of China. In fact, it is so prevalent that the number of murders, early deaths, and suicides attributable to alcohol abuse may seriously jeopardize the future of this small group. Around the world the Yakut are renowned for their strong, hardy, massive Yakut draft horses from Siberia.

**Religion:** The Yakut are shamanists. In the late 1800s anthropologist Waldemar Jochelson vividly described a Yakut religious ceremony: "A shaman has come to heal a sick woman, whose soul has been captured by evil spirits. He has put himself into a trance by inhaling tobacco, dancing, and beating his drum. Now his soul will travel to the spirit world and do battle in order to retrieve the woman's soul and thus restore her. His assistant holds the shaman by a chain so that if he gets lost or trapped in the spirit world he can be pulled back. Some of the flat iron pendants on the shaman's robe represent bird feathers, which allow the shaman's soul to fly.... As the shaman dances, the noise made by these pieces and by the copper bells and rattles on the robe, as well as the sound of his drum and singing, help summon the spirits."<sup>3</sup>

**Christianity:** Although the Yakut in Russia were evangelized by Russian Orthodox missionaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, few experienced a living faith in Christ. There are no known believers among the Yakut in China. In 1996 four evangelists traveled to the Yakut in China, taking with them a gospel recording of Bible stories in the Yakut language from Russia. The recipients were overjoyed to hear their own language.<sup>4</sup>