



Paul Hattaway

Location: Several thousand members of the Hdzanggur tribe inhabit a remote part of southeast Qinghai Province. They are primarily located in the Ger Zhung Valley around the Radja Monastery, northeast of Dawu on the banks of the Yellow River. Hdzanggur territory starts at the banks of the Yellow River and extends for several days' journey by foot or horse to the west. There are few roads in this hidden part of the world.

Identity: The Hdzanggur are one of the main tribes of Golog Tibetans. The name *Golog* means "those with heads on backwards," in reference to their rebellious nature. The Hdzanggur have a reputation for being robbers and murderers. They are heavily armed and practically independent from Chinese rule. One of the first outsiders to visit the

Hdzanggur was the intrepid Joseph Rock in 1929. He wrote, "I crossed over... to see what these almost unknown and wild people were like. Though very suspicious of us, they showed the greatest curiosity about our appearance and clothing.... They formed a circle about me, feeling my clothes. My pockets in particular amused them.... They followed me about, shaking their heads in bewilderment."¹

Language: The Hdzanggur speak a variety of Golog Tibetan, which is part of the larger Amdo Tibetan linguistic group. Few are able to read and write either Tibetan or Chinese.

History: For centuries the Hdzanggur have been cut off from contact with the rest of the world. To this day, they are without telephones,

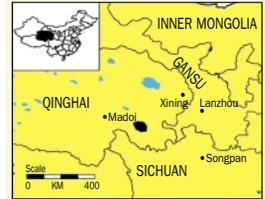
electricity, and a postal system. There are virtually no roads in their region. This primitive tribe practices crude forms of medicine, little changed for centuries. Rock reported, "I did manage to photograph one wild fellow.... His abdomen was covered with straight scars, made when he had held burning rags against his body to cure his stomach ache. These scars were so evenly placed that they looked like tattoo marks. Others had scars on wrists and hands, marks of fiery ordeals to cure rheumatism."²

Customs: Today there are boats available to ferry passengers across the Yellow River and, near the main towns, bridges now exist. But 70 years ago, the Hdzanggur were renowned for their unique method of crossing the river. "Here a ferry of inflated goatskins supporting a raft of poles was in operation. These skins soon went flat. After each trip the Tibetans had to blow up each skin — excellent exercise for the lungs. As many as 12 people would ride on one of these flimsy rafts."³

Religion: The Hdzanggur are fervent Tibetan Buddhists. They also worship a selection of fierce mountain deities. Several Western Buddhists are presently studying at Radja Monastery.

Christianity: The gospel of Jesus Christ has never penetrated this geographically, politically, and spiritually isolated part of the world. There has never been a known Hdzanggur believer. Unknown to Christendom,

the Hdzanggur have perished in their sin for centuries without the slightest cry for help being heard from their midst.



Population in China:
 4,000 (1996)
 4,370 (2000)
 5,380 (2010)
Location: Qinghai
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Hdzanggur

Countries: China
Pronunciation: "H-zung-gur"
Other Names:
Population Source:
 4,000 (1996 AMO);
 Out of a total Tibetan population of 4,593,330 (1990 census)
Location: *SE Qinghai:* West of the Yellow River in the Golog Tibetan Prefecture
Status:
 Officially included under Tibetan
Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Tibetan, Northern Tibetan
Dialects: 0
Religion:
 Tibetan Buddhism, Polytheism
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: None

