

Location: Approximately 4,000 Meng are located in Shuangjiang County in Yunnan Province's Honghe Prefecture. The precise location of the Meng within the county is uncertain. One source simply locates the Meng as "south of Dali."¹ The Honghe (Red) River "meanders across the prefecture from northwest to southwest. Of the prefecture's 3.35 million inhabitants, 52.7% are minority people."² In addition to the different Hani groups, Honghe is also home to the Yi, Miao, Dai, Zhuang, Yao, Hui, Bouyei, and Lahu.

Identity: The Meng are one of many distinct Hani groups in the region. Little is known of them because Honghe is a tightly controlled area which foreigners have only recently been allowed to enter. In mission literature the Meng have usually been listed as *Menghua*. *Hua* means "speech" in Chinese and refers to the name of the language rather than to the people. Note that the Meng are not the same as the Mongolian nationality, who call themselves *Meng Zu* in Chinese.

Language: The Meng language is a member of the Akha branch of the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. Tibeto-Burman contains more than 1,000 languages spoken across Asia.

History: The Meng were originally part of a large race who are the ancestors of today's Hani and Akha peoples. The various Hani groups place great importance on being able to recite their genealogies. Research into the

historical relationship between the Hani tribes found that they share an identical genealogical record for the first 20 to 22 generations. After that time the groups broke off and became separate peoples. Significantly, the timing coincides with the Mongol invasion of Yunnan and the destruction of the Nanzhao Kingdom in AD 1252.³

Customs: Due to the horrific practice of female infanticide, the various Hani groups contained 126.5 men to every 100 women in 1987.⁴ This imbalance is the worst of any minority in China. Among the Meng, the last syllable of the father's name is used to start the names of his children.⁵ Many of the inhabitants of Honghe are employed in tin mines. "Both banks of the Honghe River abound luxuriantly in natural resources. This area is particularly important for the output of nonferrous metals.... The yield of tin ranks the first in the country. Because of this, Gejiu is known as the Capital of Tin."⁶

Religion: The majority of Meng are polytheists. For countless generations they have followed this primitive



Dwayne Graybill

religion. In rice-growing areas the Thunder god and the wind ghost are the principal deities worshiped by the Meng.

Christianity: There is thought to be a small number of Christians among the Meng — the result of outreach by the neighboring Biyo and Kado. H. A. Baker, an independent Pentecostal evangelist, traveled extensively in the area throughout the 1930s and 1940s. "In spite of being short of funds,... Baker, with his traveling bag on his back and a long stick in his hand, continued his preaching as usual. He slept wherever he was able to find a place and ate whatever he could get hold of; both the [minorities] and he himself almost forgot his national identity."⁷



Population in China:
 3,668 (1995)
 4,090 (2000)
 5,020 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 200

Overview of the Meng

Countries: China
Pronunciation: "Mung"
Other Names: Menghua, Mehua, Menghwa, Mengwa
Population Source: 3,668 (1995 GEM); Out of a total Hani population of 1,253,852 (1990 census)
Location: S *Yunnan*: Honghe Prefecture: Shuangjiang County
Status: Officially included under Hani

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Southern Lolo, Akha
Dialects: 0
Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Christianity
Christians: 200
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
CHRISTAL Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: MJB00

