


Population in China:

18,200 (1999)

18,650 (2000)

23,400 (2010)

Location: Yunnan

Religion: Polytheism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Mengwu

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Mung-woo"

Other Names: Meng

Population Source:

 18,200 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: SE Yunnan: Funing
 (8,000), Guangan (7,000),
 Xichou (2,000), and Malipo
 (1,200) counties

Status:

Officially included under Yi

Language: Sino-Tibetan,
 Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo,
 Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi,
 Southeastern Yi

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism,
 Shamanism, Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

Location: A total of 18,650 Mengwu people live in the southeastern part of Yunnan Province in southern China. They are found living in valleys and on the mountainsides along the common borders of Xichou, Malipo, Guangan, and Funing counties. Approximately 8,000 are in Funing, 7,000 in Guangan, 2,000 in Xichou, and 1,200 in Malipo.

Identity: Although they possess their own ethnicity, customs, and language, the Mengwu have been officially included under the Yi nationality by the Chinese authorities. The Mengwu also simply call themselves *Meng*.

Customs: The Mengwu observe many interesting ceremonies and festivals. Between the seventh and ninth days of the fourth lunar month they engage in a festival called *Dagongjie*, which celebrates their victory in an ancient battle. The Mengwu say their ancestors beat their adversaries by using golden bamboo in battle. Both Mengwu men and women wear white shirts. The women "have red and black bands around their wrist cuffs and circular black hats with white and black plaid material on top. In the back the women's headdress flow into long red and silver tassels accompanied by a braid of hair."¹



Jamin Pelkey

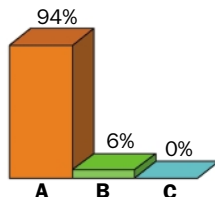
Religion: The Mengwu are polytheists. They worship the creation rather than the Creator. Every year, on the 14th day of the eighth lunar month, the Mengwu get up in the small hours of the morning to worship the stars. The entire ceremony is presided over by a *bimo* (shaman) and the whole Mengwu population attends. "A white goat is prepared to be sacrificed by first sprinkling some clean water on its head to see whether or not the animal will shake off the water. If it does, this is regarded as a good omen. The sacrificial site is surrounded by *caoguo*, jingang pear, mulberry, and pine branches. It is said that the way an experienced bimo thrusts in these branches makes a sort of astrolabe, which denotes the relative positions of the stars being worshipped. The Mengwu burn sticks of incense and the goat is slaughtered. They hold a

very similar ceremony to send off the soul of the deceased to be reunited with its ancestors in the afterlife."²

Language: The Mengwu language has never been studied in depth, but it is believed to be part of the Southeastern Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Chinese sources state that all the Yi languages in Wenshan Prefecture are Southeastern Yi varieties.

History: The Mengwu claim that they originated near today's Kunming City. Many centuries ago they migrated south to their present location. Since then they have lived alongside the Han Chinese and other ethnic minorities.

Christianity: There are no known Christians among the Mengwu, though it is possible that there are a handful who believe because of the influence of Han Chinese and Hmong Christians in the area. The Mengwu are unknown to the world of missions. They have never before appeared on any unreached peoples or ethnolinguistic lists of China. Consequently, they have never been targeted for Christian outreach.

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