

The majority of the more than 13 million Manchu are concentrated in China's north-eastern provinces of Liaoning,¹ Jilin and Heilongjiang—all of which were formerly part of Manchuria. For centuries the Manchu separated themselves from the Chinese and even erected a wooden stockade to keep them out.² In 1859 the Chinese were finally allowed to migrate into Manchuria. They entered in such massive numbers that today the Manchu are a minority in their homeland. Small numbers of Manchu may also live in Siberia and North Korea.³

Manchu are found in every province of China, and in no less than 2,092 of China's 2,369 counties and municipalities.⁴

Although they are considered China's second largest minority group, most Manchu today are indistinguishable from the Han Chinese. As one historian notes, 'The Manchus' political and military successes . . . were purchased at the expense of losing their ethnic identity. Long before the Qing Dynasty collapsed in 1911,

most Manchus had ceased to be Manchus ethnically, linguistically, and culturally.⁵ The Manchu language is nearly extinct. Various studies have listed 'less than 20',⁶ '70',⁷ and '1,000'⁸ speakers of Manchu remaining among the entire ethnic group.⁹ Manchu speakers are located in a few villages in Heilongjiang—Sanjiazi Village in Fuyu County and Dawujia Village in Aihui County. Most of the Manchu speakers use Mandarin as their first language and speak Manchu 'with a pronounced Chinese accent'.¹⁰ Manchu was the only Tungus language to possess a script, but this too is now obsolete.¹¹

Although the name *Manchu* was first used in the early 1600s, their descendants date

back 3,000 years to the Suzhen tribe.¹² In 1644, the Manchu broke through the Great Wall and established the Qing Dynasty that ruled China for 267 years.

Before most Manchu were assimilated, they were known as shamanists who also worshiped their ancestors. Some aspects of these practices remain, but today most Manchu are considered nonreligious. One source lists 9.9 per cent of the Manchu as Mahayana Buddhists.¹³ North-east China has had less Buddhist influence throughout

history than most other parts of China, yet the Manchu warrant inclusion in this book because 1.6 million of them profess to believing in Buddhism—though few go to temples or observe any regular Buddhist ceremonies.

The Catholics began work in Manchuria in 1620. By 1922 they numbered 56,000

converts,¹⁴ most of whom were Han Chinese. Protestant work among the Manchu began in 1869. A revival swept through Manchuria in the early 1900s. A blind evangelist, Chang Sen, won hundreds of converts to Christ. 'Missionaries followed after him, baptizing converts and organizing churches.'¹⁵ In the first half of the 20th century many Manchu Christians suffered severe persecution and torture, especially between 1931 and 1945 when north-east China was annexed by Japan and renamed *Manchukuo*. Today there are at least 22,000 scattered Manchu believers. Many have come to Christ during the great Heilongjiang revival of the 1990s.¹⁶



Population:
12,666,700 (2000)
16,340,100 (2010)
20,131,100 (2020)
Countries: China, possibly Russia, North Korea
Buddhism: Mahayana
Christians: 22,000

Overview of the Manchu

Other Names: Man, Manchou, Manju

Population Sources:

9,821,180 in China (1990 census)¹⁷

possibly also in Russia, North Korea

Language: Altaic, Tungus, Southern, Southwest

Dialects: 0

Professing Buddhists: 9.9%

Practising Buddhists: 3%

Christians: 0.2%

Scripture: New Testament 1835; Portions 1822 (obsolete script)

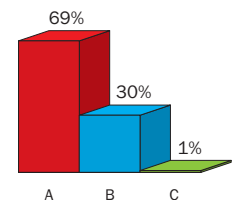
Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: none

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: MJF

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians
C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity