

Macheng

麻城

Macheng is an isolated and impoverished city located in the hilly northeastern part of Hubei Province in central China. It is situated near the juncture of Hubei, Anhui and Henan provinces, surrounded by farming areas and mountains that seem to always be covered with rain and mist. Poisonous snakes, scorpions and leeches are found in abundance in the countryside. The literal meaning of Macheng (“Coarse or Pitted City”) seems to fit in with the hard life-styles of many of its residents.

Macheng City is home to almost 1.2 million people, of which practically all are ethnic Han Chinese. In fact, the city contains a total of just 80 individuals belonging to minority nationalities at the time of the 1990 census, making Macheng the city in China with the highest proportion of Han Chinese residents. To be precise, 99.9906% of the city’s population were Han Chinese in 1990.

Macheng is not widely known in China, despite its large population. One of the main reasons people in other parts of China have heard of the city has made Macheng the object of disgust in the eyes of some. Probably the most “famous” person from Macheng was Wang Yuanlu. He was originally a peasant who fled Macheng during a

Population:
 1,062,888 (1990)
 1,162,793 (2000)
 1,272,100 (2010)

Province:
 Hubei

Major Ethnic Groups:

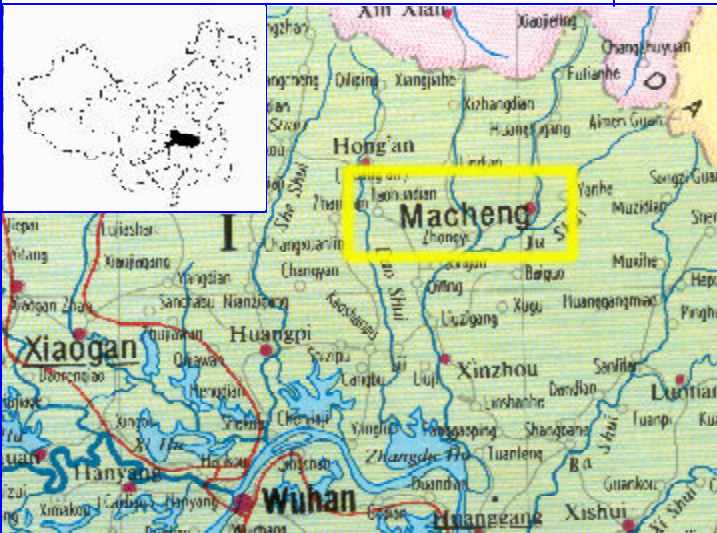
Han 99.7%
 Miao 0.1%
 Hui 0.1%
 Manchu 0.1%

Christians:
 13,000 (1.1%)

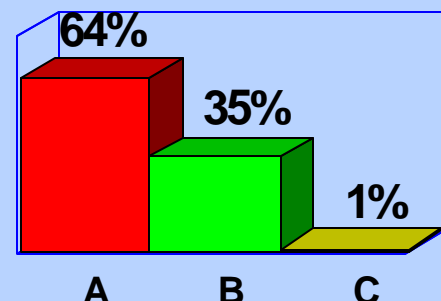
famine in the late 1800s. He arrived in Gansu Province where he became a Daoist monk. Later he became the abbot of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, controlling the largest treasure-house of antiquities of China’s history. Wang is despised for his part in pilfering the caves of their most valuable treasures. For the equivalent of a few hundred dollars Wang allowed British explorer Aurel Stein to take away 24 large tea chests containing 13,300 ancient paintings and manuscripts relating to the history, geography, religion, economy, politics, language, literature, art, science and technology of China. Most of

this priceless collection ended up in the British Museum in London, while Stein sold other items to various institutions around the world. Today, Chinese historians need to swallow their pride and rent microfilm copies of these relics from Western museums in order to view them. One Chinese publication colorfully sums up Wang’s role in history: “We have every reason to pour our rage on him... The most forceful outpouring of our wrath would not begin to bear the full gravity of those cultural debts.”

Macheng has also gained fame throughout history for the production of different unique strands of rice, including the *changyaogeng* a fragrant late-maturing rice with a delicious taste, and *jianzi* long-stalk rice.



Status of Evangelization
 (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the Name of Christ
 B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
 C = Adherents to any form of Christianity



The first efforts to take the Gospel to Macheng took place in 1892 when the Swedish Missionary Society sent workers into the area. They were met with a very hostile reception by the locals, who drove them out. The following Spring the Swedish missionaries were brutally murdered and the work came to a sudden halt. Five years elapsed before another missionary gained access to Macheng. Almost a quarter of a century later, in 1922, Macheng contained just 106 baptized Christians meeting in four churches.

Macheng has proved indifferent to the advance of the Gospel over the years. There are registered and house churches in the city today, but most people remain completely unaware of the Gospel. Evangelists from house churches in neighboring southern Henan and Anhui provinces have been active in Macheng during the past decade, with moderate success. Many have faced harsh opposition from local authorities, and some of the Henan evangelists have been beaten and imprisoned for their efforts.

Currently there are believed to be about 13,000 Christians of all descriptions in Macheng. This number amounts to just one percent of the city's population. Macheng remains a large, neglected city with little viable witness for the Son of God.

Pray for Macheng

- 1** Pray against the spiritual blindness and violence that keeps Macheng from believing in Jesus Christ.
- 2** Pray the Macheng Christians would forsake all to follow Jesus.
- 3** Ask the Lord to save hundreds of thousands of people in Macheng City.

Overview of Macheng (based on 1990 census)

Pronunciation	: "Ma-cheng"	Employed People	: 632,222 (59.5% of total population)
Old Spelling	:	Main Industries	: Agriculture 88.6%, Industrial 4.6%
Location	: northeast Hubei Province, central China	Education (highest level attended):	University: 1.1% High School: 29.0% Primary school: 40.0% Never attended any school: 29.9%
Population	: 1,062,888 (1990 census)	Population under 15:	311,241 (29.3%)
Males	: 549,437 (51.69%)	Adult Illiteracy	: 34.2% (men 19.9%; women 49.4%)
Females	: 513,437 (48.31%)	Major Nationalities	: Han 1,062,788 Miao 21 Hui 13 Manchu 11 Others 35 (8 groups)
Households	: 249,698	Christians (2003)	: 13,000 (1.1%)
Average Household	: 4.3 people		
Divorced People	: 3,865		
% divorced of Population:	0.36		
Centurions (1990)	: 0 people aged 100 or more		
Immigrants to City	: 4,767		
From same province:	3,394 (71.2%)		
From other provinces:	1,373 (28.8%)		