THE D'EANG OF CHINA

The chanting of the monks in the temple reached a climax. Kan joined the row of Buddhist novice monks who had taken their vows. His head shaven, the young **De'ang** boy had donned on robes and carried an alms bowl. Kan sighed, at the thought of the next few months being spent in the monastery away from his village. He would be bored stiff. Still, his ordination as a monk is a rite of passage for every **De'ang** male. Failure to do so would make his family the target of idle chatter and gossip. Furthermore, his ordination would improve his parents' chances of securing a good reincarnation upon their deaths. Kan knew that like the majority of **De'ang** novice monks, he would re-enter secular life after the stipulated period as a monk ends.

China's **De'ang** people (population: 24,900) comprise three subgroups, namely the Pale, Shwe and Rumai who live in Yunnan Province in China's south. These three subgroups speak distinct dialects and have distinct traditional costumes as well. Also known as the **Palaung** people, the name 'De'ang' is derived from their self-name for their people, 'Ta-ang' which means the 'Rock People'.

The **De'ang** are predominantly Theravada Buddhists, though there is much of animistic practices intermixed with their Buddhism. Few have heard the Gospel; fewer still (possibly 0.05%) profess to be followers of Christ.

- Pray for the **De'ang** to have divine, God-ordained opportunities to hear the Gospel.
- Pray that the hearts of both men and women may be softened and open to receive the Gospel.
- Pray for young **De'ang** people such as Kan who follow the religious traditions out of obligation more than conviction. May these young people encounter the reality of Jesus in their lives.