



A GUIDE TO THE
TAI DAM PEOPLE

Tai Dam folklore says that the Tai Dam were one of three people groups that came down from heaven or survived a massive flood inside a gigantic gourd. They originated in China but moved to Vietnam long ago and consider northwestern Vietnam to be the homeland of the Tai Dam. Because of war in the 20th century many of the Tai Dam were scattered after fleeing their homeland. Many resettled in southern Vietnam, in Laos or in refugee camps in Thailand before going to the West.

The Tai Dam are scattered in 6 countries: Vietnam (825,000) mostly northwest; Southwest China (44,000); Laos (27,000); Thailand (800), mostly northeast; United States (4,200) – Des Moines, Iowa; France (1,100).



Traditionally, they live in long houses on stilts where men and women had separate entrances.



They celebrate the Lunar New Year, similar to the Chinese and Vietnamese. They gather together as family, have a feast, and play their traditional games.



Most Tai Dam still live in rural areas and are typically farmers, mainly growing rice but also other crops such as corn or coffee.



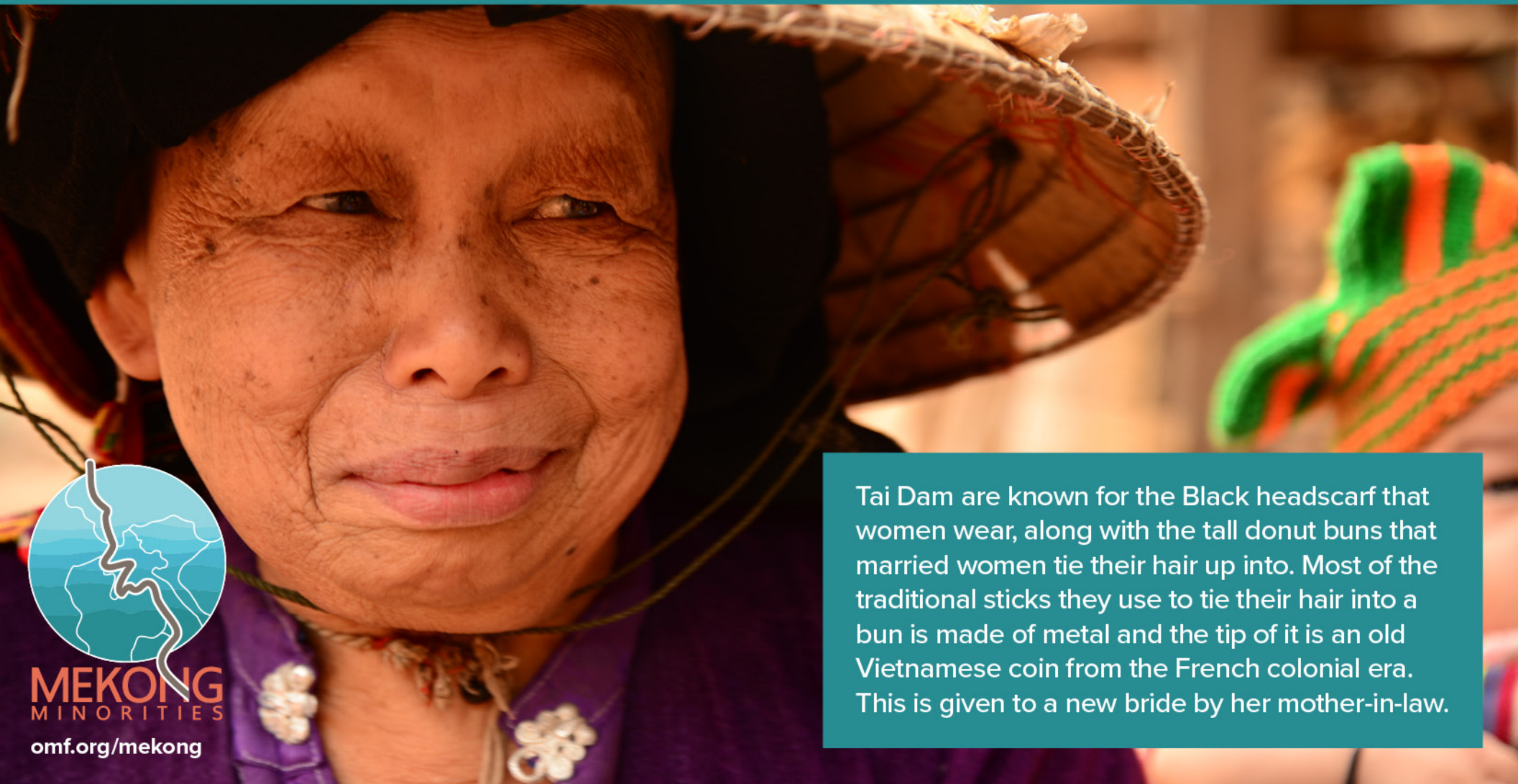
Religion: Animism; spirit worship, spirit/witch doctors; ancestral worship.



Christianity: Overall percentage - 0.14%. In recent years, many have been exposed to the Gospel story.



Tai Dam language: Written in 3 writing systems (Vietnamese alphabet, Lao script and traditional Tai Dam script).



Tai Dam are known for the Black headscarf that women wear, along with the tall donut buns that married women tie their hair up into. Most of the traditional sticks they use to tie their hair into a bun is made of metal and the tip of it is an old Vietnamese coin from the French colonial era. This is given to a new bride by her mother-in-law.