



The Hani Ethnic Group

The Hanis lived in the forest for long and worship and protect the silver pheasant birds. So the silver pheasant dance has been the traditional dance of the Hanis. It is said that the silver pheasant bird was the deity bird for guidance and medicine. The terrace fields are the fruit of the Hani agriculture civilization. Composed by these two, the sign symbolizes wisdom, diligence and a bright future.

The population and the environment—The terrace fields in the mountains with cloud and mist

1 439 673 Hanis live in the areas of Red River, Simao and Xishuangbanna in Yunnan Province. In these areas, there are verdant Ailao Mountain, Wuliang Mountain with Lancang River and Red River surging forward restlessly. The Hanis are mainly distributed over the mountain areas of 800 to 2 500 altitudes. Thanks to the pleasant weather with plenty of rains, streams brick around these areas and the mountains are surrounded by cloud and mist.

For generations, the Hanis make a living by planting. In ancient times, they made full use of the natural environment to reclaim terrace fields. In the Chorography of Lin'an written in the Jiaqing period of the Qing Dynasty, there is some description of the Hanis terrace fields. The Hanis planted in the fields "as a stone ladder, with the name terrace". "Rows beyond rows, the terrace fields form a picture-like scene from the distance". On the mountains along side of Red River, the terrace fields of the Hanis wind their ways from the feet of the mountains to the tops. Some of them are even with over a hundred steps. When it is time for irrigation in the autumn, the terrace fields are like magic mirrors shining under the sun.. The international anthropologists call them "Real Sculpture of the Earth".

The ethnic origin—A history of immigration in the forests

The Hanis mainly evolved from the ancient Qiang people. It is said that the Qiang people used to be a nomadic tribe in a distant place called "Numa'amei" in the north. They moved south along forest gradually. That's why they got the name of "people immigrating in the forests". The Yuan Dynasty established a prefecture to rule the Hanis. Since 1949, the Hanis' areas have been granted autonomy—the Honghe Hani-Yi Autonomous Prefecture was established. Meanwhile, the government also set up four autonomous counties, which are ruled by the Hanis or the unions of the Hanis and other peoples.

The Hanis have many names. In the history recorded in Chinese, they used to be called "Kunmingsou" in the Qin and Han periods, "Wuman" in the period of Wei Jing Dynasties and North-South Dynasty, "Heman" in Tang Dynasty, "Wo'man" and "Woni" in Yuan Dynasty, "Woni", "Heni", "Heni". With the founding of the PRC in 1949, it was decided to agree upon the official name of Hani ethnic group.

The subgroups and the language

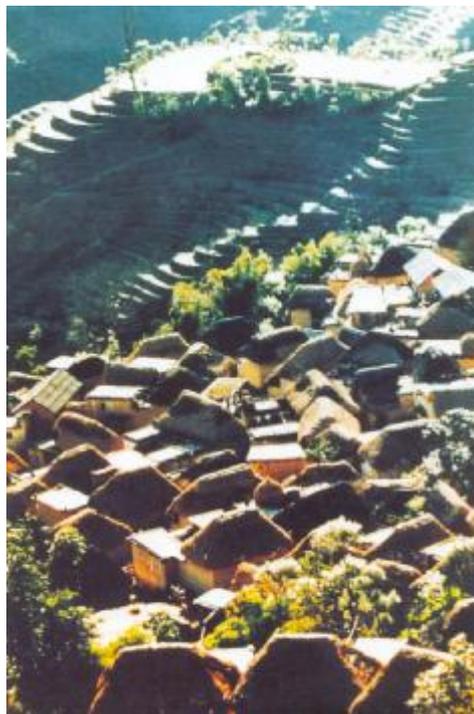
The Hanis' language consists of three dialects and belongs to Yi Branch of the Tibetan-Burmese Language Group of the Chinese-Tibetan Language Family. In some area, they keep records by carving

notches on sticks or tying knots. A script system based on the Roman alphabet was created in 1975.

The Hani village—The mushroom houses in the woods

The Hani people usually build their villages on the slopes of the mountains. Backing the flourish forests, which are viewed as magic forests by the Hanis, the Hani village is facing row upon row of terrace fields. Palms, Bamboos, peach trees and plum trees are planted there. You can find clear and sweet spring wells not far away from the villages. The gate of Hani village is called “Longbamen” in the Hani language. Wooden knives and apotropaions are hung on the gate that is of sacrosanctity.

The patterns of the Hanis' houses include couch straw house, clay house, lime house and tile house. They can also be grouped into single-floor houses or double-floor houses, double-slope houses and four-slope houses. The typical one is four-slope, double-floor and couch straw house with a name “Mushroom House”. With the four-slope roof covered with straw and wood, this kind of houses normally have two stories with the ground floor for keeping livestock and the upper floor serving as the living area for the family. It is cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The houses line up in good order on the slope of the mountains, which are like big mushrooms if you look at them from afar.



The patterns of the Hanis' houses include couch straw house, clay house, lime house and tile house. They can also be grouped into single-floor houses or double-floor houses, double-slope houses and four-slope houses. The typical one is four-slope, double-floor and couch straw house with a name “Mushroom House”. With the four-slope roof covered with straw and wood, this kind of houses normally have two stories with the ground floor for keeping livestock and the upper floor serving as the living area for the family. It is cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The houses line up in good order on the slope of the mountains, which are like big mushrooms if you look at them from afar.



The costumes and ornaments—The color black favored

The Hani people prefer clothing made of homespun black cloth. Men often wear short jacket buttoned down on the front or short blouses with buttons on the right side. The trousers of the men are long and loose, usually in dark colors. Women are normally with long hair. They wear short blouses with buttons on the right side. The buttons are made of silver or bands of cloth. Women in Xishuangbanna and the Lancang area wear jackets buttoned on the right side, short skirt, leggings and caps decorated with silver ornaments. Women in the areas of the Mo River, Yuan River and Jiangchen wear tube shaped or long pleated skirts. Some of them wear long trousers with embroidered waist belts and girdles. They like to wear silver ornaments such as bracelets, earrings, eardrops, chaplets and necklaces etc. Some of the ornaments are made of shells, feathers, teeth of tigers, bones of beast, etc.

The dietetic customs—The steamed rice, sticky rice pies, Baiwang and strong tea

Steamed rice, pies of sticky rice, Baiwang and strong tea are the most special food of the Hanis. Here is how the steamed rice is cooked: After dipping the rice in the water for some time, steam it to be half-done. Then add water and mix the rice with water and steam it till it is well done. With a sweet smell,

the rice is soft and tasty. Sticky Rice Pie is made of steamed sticky rice. The sticky rice is dipped in water for some time before they are steamed. After being pounded with a pestle in the mortar, they are wrapped in the leaves of banana as round pies. Baiwang is the mixture of fresh blood of pigs and sheep with many other seasonings. Called “Duosheng”, Baiwang has delicious spice taste with bright colors. The strong tea is made as follows: Tea is baked to yellow in a galipot before being cooked in clean water. The tea has a full aroma. You will refresh yourself after drinking it.

The unique marriage customs—Abaduo

Like most of the peoples who share the same origin of the Di and Qiang people, the Hanis have a tradition that a son’s name begins with the last one or two words of his father’s name in order to keep the family line going. Likewise, they obey the role of “No marriage between same surnames”. The Hanis make their choices of lover by themselves. The courtship is in groups in a bright day in autumn, winter or in the early spring. They will choose “Head of girls” and “Head of boys” to take charge of this kinds of activities. Every village has a wide “Niuran”, that is, a place for dating. If the number of those attending is large, there will be a great dating party, with wine and songs. Couples of young men and women sing songs to each other while drinking wine. These songs can not only express their feelings but also show their talents and wits.

The festivals—The October Day and Kuzhazha

The Hanis take October as the first month in a year. The October Year comes on the first tiger day (or dragon day) in the tenth lunar month. The new Year’s celebration usually lasts for 6 days. The most special activity during the festival is “Banquet in the center of the main street”. The banquet is hosted in turn by each village. In the afternoon, good wine and dishes from all the families are served on the tables that line up along the street in the village. With one table from a family, the banquet line is several dozen meters long. The more guests go to the table of a family, the more popular the family is.



The June Festival, also called “Kuzhazha” festival, is held around June 24th according to Chinese lunar calendar, and lasts for three to six days. In “Moqiu Square”, a public entertainment place, people offer sacrifices to drive the gods of murrain away, safeguarding the people and their livestock and reassuring the harvest of corn. During the festival, people will entertain themselves by holding activities such as singing and dancing, playing the turn-swing, wrestling etc.

The simple customs—Cattle relatives

Rice is harvested once in the Hani mountainous areas bordering the habitation of the Dai people. Yet in the bank area of the Dais, they plant rice twice a year. A family of the Hanis and a family of the Dais often build a relation called “Cattle Relatives”. As a sharing property of these two families, cattle is raised and

put to use in turn between them. In the busy season of bank areas in the spring, cattle is raised and used by the Dai family. When it is time for mountainous areas to plant in the summer, the cattle is returned to the Hani family. When winter comes, there is no green grass or leaves in the mountainous areas. So the cattle will come back to the Dai family. If the cattle reproduces or is slaughtered, the incomes is shared by the two families.

The rich resources—Capital of Tin and Pu'er Tea

The Hanis inhabiting areas teem with tin and tin ware. The city of Gejiu, which is the capital of Red River Prefecture, is called “Capital of Tin”. Mojiang River area is with abundant purple rice. Growing on the Southern bank of the Red River are aniseeds and peppers. The area near Ailao Mountain is an ideal place to collect rare medicinal herbs such as antlers, Sanqi, Chinese goldthread.

The Hanis' have a long tea-planting history. With an age of over 1 000 years, the three “Kings of Tea trees” are all in the hometown of the Hanis. There are over thirty kinds of tea trees planted by the Hanis. Among them is “the Hani Tea”, named following the name of the people. The people from different ethnic groups produce “Pu'er Tea”, and the Hanis are the major people. The tea was taken to the middle of China before the Tang Dynasty. It became popular in the royal family and salable both at home and abroad as a good gift.