

West Kweichow Mission (1927–1945)

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The West Kweichow Mission () originated in 1927 when a reorganization of territory took place involving the Kweichow (later Guizhou) Province. Church leaders redrew the boundaries of the West Kweichow Mission to span portions of Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan Provinces That is, the mission now included the part of Guizhou Province west of Zunyi and Guiyang plus the northeast portion of neighboring Yunnan Province and the land south of the Yangtze River in Sichuan Province. The

headquarters were located in the south of the newly-formed territory at Pichieh (Bijie). The new administrative organization represented a further development in mission advance in central China, extending southwest into East Sichuan and Guizhou Provinces on the road to Yunnan Province in the extreme south.

In 1926 a Chinese evangelist, Ho Ai Deng (Hè Aidūn), had entered Guizhou Province from Hunan Province via the city of Chongping. Despite threats against his life, he persevered and organized three Sabbath Schools? Because the territory was mountainous and difficult to access and supply, the following year church administration thought best to divide Guizhou Province into two missions, both a part of the West China Union



Pastor Ho with his wife and their child and his mother (seated).

Photo courtesy of Barry Mahorney.

Mission. They appointed Ho Ai Deng as director of the West Kweichow Mission.³

A dedicated evangelist, Ho Ai Deng had eighty baptized members in his territory by the end of 1927. The number increased to 152 in 1928 and 200 by September 1929. The Sabbath School membership was 326.⁴ His congregations comprised Nosu (Tibetan-Burmese heritage) and Miao people.⁵ The 1931 end-of-year report told of 359 members in two organized churches.⁶ Further years demonstrated continuing advances: December 1932 listed 441 members in five churches,⁷ May 1935 recorded 578 members,⁸ December 1936 628 members⁹ and by December 1938 the total was 899 members.¹⁰ It was said that the 1937 annual West Kweichow meeting “was one of the largest ever held in China” by the Seventh-day Adventist church up to that time, there being more than three hundred in attendance.¹¹

Most of the evangelism took place in small villages with religious services held in members’ homes. In good weather they met outdoors.¹² Poverty was prevalent in the communities and in the mission itself. The training school at headquarters, with an enrolment of 46, offered a good example of the dire conditions. For years classes convened in a few small rooms in an old building. The dormitory facilities were damp and dark. In 1938 a Thirteenth Sabbath offering provided better conditions.¹³ In the same year ten students completed their elementary education and advanced to the nearest academy, all wanting to join the mission team after their graduation.¹⁴

Mission staff remained resolute in spite of difficulties on every hand. At one stage the director had to flee Pichieh because communist forces seized his mission headquarters. He escaped to the northern portion of his territory and conducted public meetings. There he baptized 39 converts while soldiers were trashing his home and office, burning his furniture, doors, windows, and partitions for fuel.¹⁵

Communicating reports to church officials during the Second World War years petered out, but when the borders reopened in 1945, returning expatriates discovered that in West Kweichow five churches were still conducting regular services and the total baptized membership had risen to 926.¹⁶ In view of the fact that road and travel conditions had vastly improved, administration voted to combine West Kweichow Mission with the smaller East Kweichow Mission (membership 258).¹⁷ Ho Ai Deng, who had led the West Kweichow Mission during its earliest years, became director of the combined Kweichow Mission, and Guiyang became his headquarters for the entire territory.¹⁸

Directors of the West Kweichow Mission

Ho Ai Deng (Hè Aidūn) 1927-1935; Djang Djen Chiang (Zhāng Zhènqiáng) 1935-1939; Li Wan Chuen (L Wànquán) 1939-1945.

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NOTES

1. "West Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C; Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1932), 154, 155.
2. Ho Ai Dong, "West Kweichow Mission," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1929, 4.
3. "West Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1928), 188.
4. Ho Ai Deng, "West Kweichow Mission," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1929, 4.
5. "West China Union," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, August/September 1929, 9.
6. "Statistical Report," *China Division Reporter*, January 1932, 5.
7. "Statistical Report," *China Division Reporter*, June 1933, 9.

8. George L. Wilkinson, "Biennial Session, West China Union, Chungking, May 10-18, 1935," *China Division Reporter*, July 1935, 5, 6.
9. "Statistical Report," *China Division Reporter*, May 1937, 10.
10. "Statistical Report," *China Division Reporter*, July 15, 1939, 11.
11. George L. Wilkinson, "West China Union Report," *China Division Reporter*, February 1938, 7, 8.
12. Marvin E. Loewen, "The West China Union," *China Division Reporter*, December 1, 1940, 2, 3.
13. Chang Djeng Chiang, "Report of the West Kweichow Mission for 1935, 1936," *China Division Reporter*, May 1937, 18; Djen Djao-jung, "Condition and Needs of Our Training School at Kweichow," *China Division Reporter*, September 1938, 5.
14. D. P. Yang, "Training Institute at Pichieh," *China Division Reporter*, September 1, 1939, 5.
15. George L. Wilkinson, "West China Union Report for 1936," *China Division Reporter*, June/July 1937, 19-20.
16. "West Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 99-100.
17. "East Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 99.
18. "Kweichow Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 103.

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