

Location: Approximately 30,000 Ban Yao live in southwest China. The Ban Yao are the smallest of the three Yao groups (totaling 154,700) located in Yunnan Province.¹ The Ban Yao live in the extreme southeastern arm of Yunnan and in adjacent areas of southwest Guangxi. They are noted for living at the top of verdant mountains throughout the area. Being a people who stubbornly keep to themselves and resist all pressure to change, they do not often appear in the market towns on the plain.

Identity: The Ban Yao are officially considered part of the large Yao minority group. Although they recognize historical kinship with the Yao peoples, the Ban Yao now have their own customs, dress, and language. They are unable to use their own language to communicate with other Yao groups in Yunnan, and must speak Chinese to communicate.

Language: Little research has been conducted into the Ban Yao language to see how it relates to other members of the Hmong-Mien linguistic family. The Ban Yao live in scattered communities, and so dialect variation is likely.

History: Military campaigns were waged by the Chinese during the Hong Wu (1368–1398) and the Jia Qing (1522–1566) periods of the Ming Dynasty, causing the Ban Yao to migrate to their present location. The campaigns were often launched because the Yao refused to pay taxes.

They claimed that they were once granted Imperial privilege to avoid taxes from generation to generation, a fact clearly enshrined in their special document, *The King Ping's Charter, or The Register for Crossing the Mountains*.

Customs: Until recently, a young Ban Yao man wishing to take a wife had to pay a price for her. Betrothal was therefore little more than a negotiation of the bride-price. The price was divided into three different levels, 72, 60, and 48 ounces of silver, depending on the beauty and health of the young woman.² The young woman's parents kept their daughter until the price had been paid in full, in case the young man might refuse to pay after having "received the goods." Some Ban Yao share communal family homes with many of their relatives. The oldest living male is considered the head of the household.

Religion: The Ban Yao are primarily worshipers of nature and the spirits that they believe control it. They believe demons dwell inside large



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mountains, and the fate of people's lives is linked to whether the spirits are pleased with them or not.

Christianity: There are no known Christians among the Ban Yao, although about 20% are aware of the gospel through the witness of the small number of Hmong and Han believers who live in Funing County. Evangelization of the Ban Yao is difficult because of their isolation and independent mind-set. They are relatively closed to change; decisions are made at a community level, not individually. No Scriptures exist for the Ban Yao because they do not possess a written language. The Ban Yao have lived and died for centuries without knowledge of Christ.



Population in China:

25,000 (1996)
27,900 (2000)
36,000 (2010)

Location: Yunnan, Guangxi

Religion: Animism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Ban Yao

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Bahn-Yaow"

Other Names: Ban, Ban Mien

Population Source:
25,000 (1996 AMO);
Out of a total Yao population of
2,134,013 (1990 census)

Location:
SE Yunnan: Funing County;
SW Guangxi: Napo County

Status:

Officially included under Yao

Language: Hmong-Mien, Mienic

Dialects: 0

Religion: Animism, Polytheism,
Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

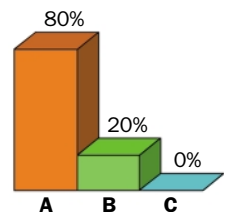
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity