

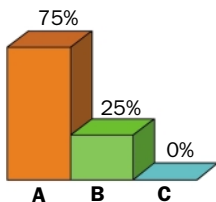


**Population in China:**  
 3,000 (1996)  
 3,350 (2000)  
 4,300 (2010)  
**Location:** Yunnan  
**Religion:** Animism  
**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Bugan

**Countries:** China  
**Pronunciation:** "Boo-gun"  
**Other Names:**  
 Pukan, Hualo, Huazu  
**Population Source:**  
 3,000 (1996 J. Edmonson)  
**Location:** SE Yunnan: Southern Guangnan and northern Xichou counties; 7 villages: Laowalong, Xinwalong, Jiuping, Shibeipo, Xinzhai, Manlong, and Nala  
**Status:** Unidentified  
**Language:** Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Unclassified  
**Dialects:** 0  
**Religion:** Animism, Ancestor Worship, No Religion  
**Christians:** None known  
**Scripture:** None  
**Jesus film:** None  
**Gospel Recordings:** None  
**Christian Broadcasting:** None  
**ROPAL code:** BBH00

### 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

**Location:** More than 3,000 members of the Bugan people group are located in seven villages in the southern part of Guangnan and the northern part of Xichou counties. These counties are in the southeast part of Yunnan Province close to the provincial border with Guangxi and the international border with Vietnam. Four of the seven villages are inhabited solely by Bugan people, while the three other villages are shared with the Han Chinese. Other peoples in the verdant mountain region include the Bunu, Miao, Yao, Southern Zhuang, and Yi nationalities.

**Identity:** The Bugan were completely unknown until 1996, when Chinese linguist Li Jinfang first documented their existence.<sup>1</sup> It is not known under what minority group, if any, the government categorizes them. The Bugan speak a Mon-Khmer language, but no other source mentions any other Mon-Khmer groups in the southeastern arm of Yunnan.

**Language:** There are six tones in the Bugan language, but its branch affiliation has yet to be specifically determined within the Mon-Khmer linguistic family. There are no dialect variations reported among the seven Bugan villages.

**History:** There are many Mon-Khmer languages spoken in China and across Southeast Asia, but the Bugan find themselves alone as a Mon-Khmer people in southeast Yunnan. In the distant past, the various Mon-Khmer groups

were part of one large Austro-Asiatic group which was "driven out of their habitats by invaders, dispersed and split into the isolated groups they are today."<sup>2</sup>

**Customs:** The Bugan live in agriculture-based communities along the rivers and streams in southern China. Most are engaged in rice cultivation. They take full advantage of the land by constructing rice fields that appear to hang from the sides of the mountain slopes. Bugan women and girls spend much time learning to embroider and to make their unique dress, although in recent years many women in the area have begun to wear factory-produced imitations.

**Religion:** The Bugan do not consider themselves religious, but traces of animism and ancestor worship are prominent in their everyday activities. The Bugan celebrate the Han Chinese festivals, especially

the annual Chinese New Year and Spring festivals.

**Christianity:** There are no known Christian believers among the Bugan, even though small numbers of churches can be found among some of their neighbors. In nearby Guangxi many missionaries labored sacrificially in the past. One committed and love-filled worker was Eleanor Chestnut, a missionary-doctor from Iowa, who often performed free surgery for people in her bathroom. One operation involved the amputation of a coolie's leg. An observer noted, "The surgery was successful, except that the flaps of the skin did not grow together.... Someone noticed that Dr. Chestnut was limping. When asked why, she responded, 'Oh, it's nothing'.... The doctor had taken skin from her own leg for an immediate transplant to the one the nurses called 'a good-for-nothing coolie'."<sup>3</sup>



Dwayne Graybill