



Population in China:

50,000 (1998)
52,900 (2000)
68,200 (2010)

Location: Yunnan, Sichuan

Religion: Polytheism

Christians: 600

Overview of the Hmong Bua

Countries: China, Vietnam

Pronunciation: "Hmong-Booah"

Other Names: Black Hmong, Black Miao, Hei Miao, Hmong Dlo, Hmong Si

Population Source:

50,000 (1998 M. Johnson);
Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census);
20,000 in Vietnam (1998 M. Johnson)

Location: *SE Yunnan:* Jinping, Pingbian, and Hekou counties; A few have recently migrated to Xishuangbanna Prefecture; *NE Yunnan:* Weixin and Zhenxiang counties; *S Sichuan:* A few in Xuyong County; Also in Vietnam

Status:
Officially included under Miao

Language: Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Western Hmongic, Farwestern Hmong, Hua Miao, Black Miao

Dialects: 0

Religion:
Polytheism, Animism, Christianity

Christians: 600

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None



Dwayne Graybill

Location: A 1998 study listed a population of 50,000 Hmong Bua in China.¹ They live in two widely separated areas in Yunnan Province: Weixin and Zhenxiang counties in northeastern Yunnan (and Xuyong County in neighboring Sichuan Province); and Jinping County (especially Laomeng Township) in southeastern Yunnan. A few also live on the east bank of the Honghe River in Pingbian and Hekou counties. Some Hmong Bua recently migrated to Xishuangbanna Prefecture in southwest Yunnan. In addition, 20,000 speakers of the Hmong Bua language live in Lai Chau, Vietnam.

Identity: The Hmong Bua are a separate ethnic group, with a common identity, within the Miao nationality. The Hmong Bua in Jinping and Vietnam call themselves *Hmong Dlo* or *Hmong Bua*, meaning "black Hmong." In Weixin the autonym used is *Hmong Si*. It is important to note that this group is not related to the large Hmu group in Guizhou, who were also called *Black Miao* by missionaries in the past. Linguist Michael Johnson notes, "In the Weixin-Xuyong area the Hmong Si are ethnically closely tied with the Hmong Leng, another Northern Hua dialect."²

Language: Although the Hmong Bua language is mutually intelligible with other Hua Miao varieties in southern China, Johnson notes, "The varieties in this subgroup are phonologically the most conservative within the Hua Miao group in that they preserve a number of initial consonant contrasts that have been lost in all other Hua Miao dialects and yet are also amongst the most innovative in that they have developed a ninth tone."³

History: The Hmong Bua now living in southern Yunnan and Vietnam arrived in the region about 200 years ago. In contrast, the Hmong Bua in the northeastern Yunnan-Sichuan area first arrived there in 1573.⁴ After several generations of separation from their homeland, the Hmong Bua developed their own identity. Today most of

the various Miao subgroups in China do not acknowledge kinship with each other, even if they speak the same language.

Customs: Hmong Bua women's clothing features a black shirt, similar to the Hmong Leng, with embroidery on the cuffs. "The skirt is also dark... with oblique squares of cloth sewn to it. Women often use a small waist apron as a head covering."⁵

Religion: The majority of Hmong Bua are animists. In recent years the Hmong Bua in Jinping may have benefited from the Christian "radio revival" among the neighboring Hmong Daw, who speak a similar language.⁶

Christianity: As many as 20,000 of the neighboring Hmong Daw people have turned to Christ in southern Yunnan since 1994, due to gospel radio broadcasts produced by the Far East Broadcasting Company. The Hmong Bua are able to understand most of the Hmong Daw language and have probably been affected also. Many Hmong Bua could potentially use the Hmong Daw and Hmong Njua Scriptures, but very few are literate.

