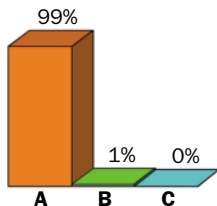


Population in China:
 1,467 (1995)
 1,680 (2000)
 2,160 (2010)
Location: Tibet
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Bunan

Countries: India, China
Pronunciation: "Boo-nun"
Other Names:
 Gahri, Lahuli of Bunan, Ghara
Population Source:
 1,467 (1995 GEM);
 Also in India;
 2,000 in all countries
 (1972 E. Nida)
Location: *W Tibet:* Border with Jammu and Kashmir, India
Status: Unidentified
Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Bodic, Bodish, Himalayish, Kanauri
Dialects: 0
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None known
Scripture: Portions 1911
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings:
 Lahouli: Bunan #02424
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: BFU00

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



Paul Hattaway

Location: The Global Evangelization Movement listed a 1995 figure of 1,467 Bunan in China.¹ *The Ethnologue* cites a 1972 source (Eugene Nida), stating that a total of 2,000 Bunan live in both India and China.² The Bunan inhabit an extremely remote and desolate area of western Tibet along the China-India border. In India, the Bunan live in the lower Bhaga Valley in the northern part of the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh. Another source places the Bunan "on the border of western Tibet and Punjab, India."³ Western Tibet is separated from Xinjiang to the north by the imposing Kunlun Mountains, and in the south Himalayan peaks rise over 7,000 meters (23,000 ft.) above sea level.

Identity: The Bunan are a little-known people group. They are not mentioned in Chinese literature, so it is uncertain how they are officially classified. They may have been included in the Tibetan nationality because of linguistic and religious similarities. The area of China where they live is so remote that it is possible they were not counted at all in the Chinese census.

Language: The Bunan language is a part of the Kanauri arm of the so-called *Himalayish* branch. It is one of a number of different languages located in the linguistically

diverse western Himalayan region. Bunan is related to Lahuli Tinan, also spoken in western Tibet. Bunan and Lahuli Tinan share 37% lexical similarity. Bunan is also reported to have up to 34% lexical similarity with varieties of Central Tibetan and 24% with Lhasa Tibetan.⁴ In northern India, Bunan is related to the Thebor, Kanam, Lipa, Sumtsu, and Sungham languages.

History: Numerous small ethnolinguistic peoples live along the Tibetan border with India and Nepal in very sparsely populated locations. China and India had several armed border clashes in the 1950s and 1960s. China has since claimed thousands of square miles of territory from India, including the area inhabited by the Bunan.

Customs: Bunan culture has been heavily influenced by their devotion to Tibetan Buddhism. Their lives are a long struggle against harsh winters. Because very little fruit or vegetables can grow in the Bunan region, their diet is comprised almost entirely of meat, fat, and yak yogurt.

Religion: Many Bunan make annual pilgrimages to Lake Manasarovar and Mt. Kailas — two holy Buddhist sites in western Tibet. The Bunan are trapped in an endless cycle of doing good works, a vain bid to ensure a better reincarnation in the next life.

Christianity: The Bunan's isolated homeland is so remote that few outsiders have ever traveled there. The Indian government, who also claim the territory inhabited by the Bunan, did not find out that the Chinese had built a road there until two years after it was completed.⁵ The Bunan in India had parts of the Bible translated into their language by missionaries in 1911, but these have been out of print since 1923. Currently the Christians located closest to the Bunan are the small number of Moravian believers found among the Ladakhi people of northern India.