


**Population in China:**

400 (1990)

510 (2000)

660 (2010)

**Location:**

Fujian, Beijing, Shanghai

**Religion:** Polytheism

**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Paiwan

**Countries:** Taiwan, China

**Pronunciation:** "Pie-wohn"

**Other Names:** Paiuan, Payowan, Li-li-sha, Samobi, Samohai, Saprek, Tamari, Kadas, Kale-whan, Kapiangan, Katausan, Butanglu, Stimul

**Population Source:**

400 (1990 AMO);

Out of a total Gaoshan population of 2,909 (1990 census);

81,000 in Taiwan

(1993 P. Johnstone)

**Location:** *S Fujian:* In and around Zhangzhou City; Some Paiwan live in *Beijing* and *Shanghai* municipalities.

**Status:**

Officially included under Gaoshan

**Language:**

Austronesian, Formosan, Paiwanic

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:**

Polytheism, Ancestor Worship

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** New Testament 1973; Portions 1959; Not available in China

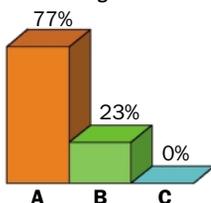
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:**

Paiwan #01993

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** PWN00

**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:** Several hundred members of the Paiwan tribe live in and around the city of Zhangzhou in the southern part of Fujian Province. The great majority of Paiwan, 81,000, are located in southern Taiwan.

**Identity:** The Paiwan are one of three tribes, along with the Ami and Bunun, who were combined to form the official Gaoshan nationality in China. The name *Gaoshan* means "high mountain" in Chinese and is not the name of a specific ethnic group or language. The Paiwan believe they originated from an egg. Their legends say the sun laid two eggs that were hatched by a green snake.

**Language:** The Paiwan language is a member of the Formosan branch of the Austronesian language family. Although it is related to Ami and Bunun, speakers of the different languages usually have difficulty understanding each other and must revert to Chinese to communicate.

**History:** In the past the Paiwan had a fearsome reputation as head-hunters. When Paiwan warriors returned home from a head-hunting foray, "the women would gather together in front of the courtyard to welcome their heroes and would sing songs of triumph. The heads of their enemies were then hung on stone pillars in front of which were displayed wine and offerings. The sacrificial rite started, and the soul of the dead was duly consoled by the sorcerer. A tuft of hair was removed from the skull and solemnly put in a basket which was used for divination."<sup>1</sup> During the civil

war, between 1946 and 1949, many Paiwan men were forcibly enlisted in the Kuomintang forces. When the war ended, some of the Paiwan remained behind in China and formed their own communities.<sup>2</sup>

**Customs:** Unlike other tribes in Taiwan, Paiwan society is divided into classes with a hereditary aristocracy. The Paiwan are not allowed to marry outside their tribe. On the day of their "five-yearly rite," "all marriage-seeking Paiwan men try to cut down as many trees as possible and offer the firewood thus procured to the family of the girl they want to woo."<sup>3</sup>

**Religion:** Traditionally the Paiwan have been polytheists. Their wooden carvings included images of human heads, snakes, deer, and geometric designs. In Taiwan, the Bataul branch of the Paiwan tribe holds a major sacrifice — called *maleveq* — every five years

to invite the spirits of their ancestors to come and bless them.

**Christianity:** Christianity first came to the Paiwan people in the seventeenth century, when Taiwan was occupied by the Dutch. More than 5,000 tribesmen became Christians after only ten years, but all of them were massacred in 1661 when Cheng Gong Zheng liberated Taiwan. The missionaries were either killed or driven away, and the churches were destroyed.<sup>4</sup> Thousands of Paiwan people in Taiwan came to Christ in the late 1940s and 1950s. Whole villages embraced the good news and appropriated Christ's pardon and offer of salvation. Today the Presbyterian church in Taiwan claims 14,900 Paiwan members, meeting in 96 congregations.<sup>5</sup> The New Testament has been translated into Paiwan but is not available in Mainland China.



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