

NUNG

More than 800,000 Nung people live in two parts of Vietnam. The main concentration live in the northern provinces of Cao Bang and Lang Son. A relatively small number of Nung live in southern Vietnam. They migrated there at various stages during the last 130 years.

More than 100,000 Nung are also found in adjacent areas of southern China. However, because they are included as part of the huge Zhuang nationality in China, it is difficult to distinguish Nung from other Zhuang groups. Small refugee communities of Nung live in several western countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia and England. In the U.S. they live in California, Delaware, Iowa, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

The Nung have a reputation as the best horticulturists in Vietnam. They grow fruit trees such as tangerines and persimmons, as well as corn, canary-seed, peanuts, vegetables and sweet potatoes.

Each Nung home is surrounded by a small fence or hedge. In the yard the Nung raise pigs, chickens, ducks and geese. Many families have constructed ponds in which they breed fish, eels and shrimp.

The Nung traditionally wear indigo vests that are dyed dark blue. Women like to wear a large number of necklaces, bracelets and other jewelry made of silver, copper or sea shells.

Although they do not like to hunt or

fish, the Nung greatly desire tiger, monkey, deer and mountain-goat bones, which they can sell for large profits to the Chinese or Vietnamese, who use these items in traditional medicine.

The Nung have been in Vietnam for a very long time. In China the Nung tribe suffered a massive military defeat in 1053. The General, Nung Chih Cao, and his descendants fled to Guangning in southern China. Later, during the Mongol reign of the 13th century, "a number of tribes pushed into Vietnam and Laos, such as the Tho and later the Nung."³⁵

In the 1860s the Nung in Vietnam sided with Sioung, a self-proclaimed Miao king. Sioung's armies raided gold from Buddhist temples and seized large tracts of land from other people.

The Nung speak a Central Tai language very closely related to Southern Zhuang and Tay. When a Presbyterian missionary from northern Thailand, Rev. J. H. Freeman, traveled through northern Vietnam in the early 1900s he found the Nung tone and pronunciation were "quite close to Lu [although] a large admixture of Cantonese and Mandarin

difficulty in making them understand me."³⁶

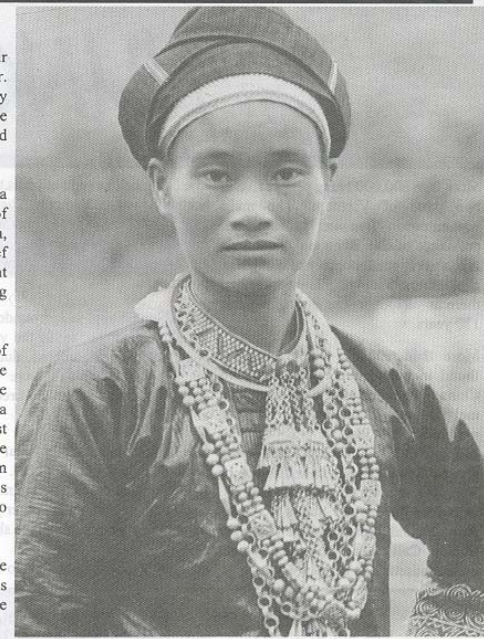
The Nung have a deep-rooted sense of their ethnic identity and a great loyalty to each other. In many ways they have retained their ethnicity much better than their neighbors, the Tay. The Nung are considered a little more primitive and clannish than the Tay.

The religious world-view of the Nung is a complicated matter. There are elements of Buddhism, ancestor worship, animism, Daoism, Confucianism and shamanism in their belief system. Added to this, many of the current generation of Nung youth, especially those living in rural areas, are atheists.

Shamanism has traditionally been the religion of the Nung. More than 30 shaman priests still serve their communities in northern Vietnam. The ancestral altar is placed in the Nung's home in a location considered the most sacred place. Just above it is an altar to Buddha. The Nung believe they can pray to Buddha for protection from natural disasters and sickness. A third altar is placed outside the Nung's homes, dedicated to *Kwan Yin*, the spirit of the earth.

The Nung are perhaps the most unreached people group in Vietnam. A mere 50 known Christians exist among a population approaching one million.

Several books of the Bible were translated into Nung by missionaries Janice Saul and Nancy Freiberger between 1963 and 1966. After 17 years of silence, the translators were encouraged when they received letters from the Nung in Vietnam, "telling of answers to prayer, of recent Nung converts and of the growth of the church."³⁷ Gospel recordings are available in the Nung language. The Far East Broadcasting Company's Gospel radio programs have enabled some Nung to hear the Gospel.



Pray for the Nung

- 1 Pray against the spiritual forces of Shamanism, Buddhism, ancestor worship and spirit-appeasement that have trapped the Nung in spiritual darkness for centuries.
- 2 Ask God to start a movement among the Nung that will result in strong, evangelizing, indigenous Nung churches throughout all the areas of Vietnam where they live.
- 3 Pray there would be numerous Nung among the redeemed around the throne of the Lamb in heaven.



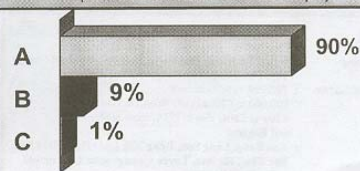
Population:
705,709 (1989)
876,500 (2000)
1,069,300 (2010)

Language:
Tai

Religion:
Shamanism

Christians:
50

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = adherents to any form of Christianity

Overview of the Nung

Countries	: Vietnam, China, Laos, USA, Canada, Australia, England	Literacy	: 50-75%
Pronunciation	: "Noong"	Subgroups (11)	: Nung Khen Lai, Nung Giang, Nung An, Nung Inh, Nung Loi, Nung Phan Xinh, Nung Chao, Nung Qui Rin, Nung Xuong, Nung Din, Nung Tung Slin
Other Names	: Nong, Tai Nung, Thai Nung, Bunong, Highland Nung, Tay, Thai Nung, Tay Nung	Religion	: Shamanism, Polytheism, Animism, Christianity
Population Source	: 705,709 (1989 census); 100,000 in China (1981 Warm & Hattori); a few in Laos; also in USA, Canada, Australia and England	Christians	: 50
Location	: Cao Bang, Lang Son, Dong Nai, Lam Dong, Dac Lac, Bac Thai, Ha Bac, Tayen Quang; some have moved to Ho Chi Minh City	Scripture	: Portions 1971; work in progress OT stories, Mark, Acts, 1 John and NT stories are available
Language	: Dale, Tai, Central	Jesus film	: none
Dialects (9)	: Xuong, Giang, Nung An, Nung Phan Slinh, Nung Chao, Nung Loi, Nung Quy Rin, Khen Lai, Nung Inh	Gospel Recordings	: Thai Nung #03327
		Christian Radio	: available (FEBC) 30 minutes per week
		ROPAL code	: NUT00