

**Location:** In 1993 the 21,500 Biao Mien were located in southern China.<sup>1</sup> Lush mountains and rushing waterfalls throughout Ruyuan County in northern Guangdong Province decorate the home of the Biao Mien. Geographically, they are one of the closest minority groups to the cities of Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Numerous other Yao, or Mien, groups are scattered throughout Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand, but the Biao Mien language is only spoken in China.

**Identity:** Although the Biao Mien are part of the large Yao nationality in China, they speak their own distinct language which is not understood by other Yao groups. This Profile deals only with the Biao Mien language group in northern Guangdong Province. Another group in neighboring Guangxi Province, also called *Biao Mien*, has been included in this book under their alternate name, *Biao-Jiao Mien*.

**Language:** Various linguists have classified the Yao languages of China in different ways. Pan Chengqian describes Biao Mien as one of four main Yao languages in China.<sup>2</sup> The *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Chinese Linguistics* lists Biao Mien as a dialect of a larger Biao-Jiao Mien group.<sup>3</sup> The *Ethnologue* lists Biao Mien and Biao-Jiao Mien as separate languages.<sup>4</sup> There are 36 consonants in Biao Mien, compared to as few as 18 in other Yao languages.<sup>5</sup>

**History:** For many centuries, the Biao Mien and other Yao groups have been

skilled hunters. The famous Chinese poet Du Fu (712–770) noted that, “the Moyaos shoot wild geese with bows made from mulberry trees.”<sup>6</sup> Biao Mien hunters trek for days at a time into the hills and river valleys to track wild pigs, oxen, and deer. In some locations these animals have been hunted to near extinction, and a growing number of Biao Mien have become farmers. Rice cultivation is assisted by the region’s abundant rainfall.

**Customs:** The Biao Mien practice a festival known as *fangniuchulan* (let the cattle out of the stable). For three days every year, starting with the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first lunar month, young Biao Mien men and women sing ballads to each other on hill slopes or under trees in order to select their prospective spouses. Young couples who have caught each other’s eye sing romantic ballads to each other.

**Religion:** The Biao Mien adhere to a mixture of religious elements. Daoist, animist, Buddhist, and polytheistic influences can be clearly seen in their rituals. Many of the younger

generation of Biao Mien now consider themselves nonreligious and do not participate in any of their parents’ rituals.

**Christianity:** There are only a handful of known Christians among the Biao Mien today. Minimal past mission activity in the region has resulted in very little awareness of the gospel among the Biao Mien today. There is an emerging church among the neighboring Zaomin, but they have not yet conducted outreach to the other groups in the mountains of northern Guangdong Province.



Paul Hattaway



**Population in China:**  
 21,500 (1993)  
 25,800 (2000)  
 33,300 (2010)  
**Location:** Guangdong  
**Religion:** Daoism  
**Christians:** 20

## Overview of the Biao Mien

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** “Bee-aow-Mee-en”

**Other Names:** Biaomin, Jiaogongmian, Biao Mon, Biaoman, Chao Kong Men

**Population Source:** 21,500 (1996 B. Grimes – 1993 figure); Out of a total Yao population of 2,134,013 (1990 census)

**Location:**  
*N Guangdong:* Ruyuan County

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Yao

**Language:**  
 Hmong-Mien, Mienic, Mian-Jin

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Daoism, Animism, Polytheism, Buddhism

**Christians:** 20

**Scripture:** None

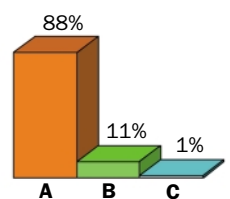
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** BMT00; BJE02

## 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