

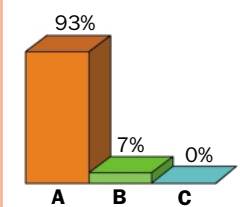


Population in China:
 2,000 (1999)
 2,050 (2000)
 2,650 (2010)
Location: Guizhou
Religion: Animism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Diao

- Countries:** China
- Pronunciation:** "Dee-ow"
- Other Names:** Diaozu, Diaoren
- Population Source:**
 2,000 (1999 AMO);
 Out of a total Dong population of
 2,514,014 (1990 census)
- Location:** SE Guizhou
- Status:** Officially included under
 Dong since 1985; Previously
 included in a list of *Undetermined
 Minorities*
- Language:** Unidentified
- Dialects:** 0
- Religion:** Animism, Ancestor
 Worship, Daoism
- Christians:** None known
- Scripture:** None
- Jesus film:** None
- Gospel Recordings:** None
- Christian Broadcasting:** None
- ROPAL code:** None

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: More than 2,000 members of the Diao ethnic group live in an unspecified location in the southeastern part of Guizhou Province in southern China. All that is known of the location of the Diao is that they live among the Dong people.¹ The Dong in Guizhou are concentrated in Rongjiang, Congjiang, and Liping counties. The whole of southeast Guizhou is mountainous with abundant rainfall.

Identity: The Diao applied for recognition as a distinct minority group in the 1950s, but their application, along with 90% of the more than 400 groups who applied, was rejected. The official classification of the Diao remained in limbo for more than 30 years. In the 1982 census they were included in a list of *Undetermined Minorities*. After scholars visited them to further investigate their application, the Diao were incorporated into the official Dong nationality in 1985.² There appears to have been an official push in the mid-1980s to "tie up the loose ends" of the many minority groups that remained unclassified. Although some groups such as the Diao were assigned to official nationalities, they still regard themselves as distinct from the other people in the group they now find themselves part of. Surrounding peoples in Guizhou continue to call this group *Diao* or *Diaozu*, which means "Diao nationality."

Language: Little is known about the language of the Diao. It is possible that they are either a Chinese-speaking group who have lost the use of their original Dong tongue; or they may

have originally been a Han Chinese group who absorbed many aspects of Dong culture and language after having lived alongside the Dong for many centuries. Further research is needed to clarify the situation among the Diao.

History: After the Mongolians took control of China in the thirteenth century, great ethnic upheavals took place in southern China as people groups moved about in all directions seeking to avoid the fierce Mongol armies. At this time many of the small people groups in Guizhou, possibly including the Diao, formed separate identities.

Customs: Among minority peoples in Guizhou, the making of her traditional dress continues to play an important part in a woman's life. Each tribe's dress has its own background story which reflect that group's

customs, history, and beliefs. Cultural identity is therefore maintained by the making and wearing of the garments.

Religion: The Diao are animists. They worship the spirit of the bull, which they believe to possess supernatural strength. The Diao participate in the annual Dong bullfights. Some elements of ancestor worship and Daoism are also present among the Diao.

Christianity: It is not known if Christianity has made any impact among the Diao people, but the large Dong nationality among whom they live has received little exposure to the gospel throughout their history. It can safely be assumed that most Diao have no comprehension of the name of Jesus Christ.



Paul Hattaway