


**Population in China:**

3,000 (1990)  
3,450 (2000)  
4,000 (2010)

**Location:** Yunnan

**Religion:** Ancestor Worship

**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Buyang

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** “Boo-yung”

**Other Names:** Burong, Punung, Bunong, Punong, Pulung

**Population Source:**

2,000 to 3,000 (1990 Liang Min);  
Out of a total Zhuang population of 15,489,630 (1990 census)

**Location:** SE Yunnan: Wenshan, Guangnan, and Funing counties

**Status:**

Officially included under Zhuang

**Language:** Daic, Kadai, Bu-Rong

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Ancestor Worship, Animism, Polytheism

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** None

**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** BYU00



Paul Hattaway

speak Yerong. The Buyang language has six tones and is classified as part of the Kadai family of languages. It is reported to have 38% lexical similarity with Pubiao, 34% with Lati, and 32% with Northern Zhuang.<sup>4</sup> The Buyang do not have a written script.

**History:** This small tribe speak a language exhibiting influences from many different groups, making it difficult to trace their historical roots. It is known that the Buyang are recent arrivals to their present location. One writer notes, “Due to historical reasons... the Bunong [Buyang] have moved to different places and had different titles but still kept the same characteristics (the same language, customs and traditions).”<sup>5</sup>

**Customs:** The Buyang practice wet-rice agriculture on terraced

**Location:** Approximately 3,500 Buyang are spread across a number of different locations in the Wenshan Zhuang-Miao Autonomous Prefecture in the extreme southeast part of Yunnan. The majority live in Funing County, with 300 in Langjia village, 200 in Maguan, 200 in Ecun, 180 in Lagan, 50 near Nongna, 20 at Damen, and 30 to 40 in Jinglong Township. There are also “scattered settlements” in Guangnan County farther to the northwest.<sup>1</sup>

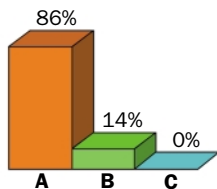
**Identity:** The Buyang are officially part of China’s largest official minority — the Zhuang. As one anthropologist notes, “After 1953 the Buyang were incorporated into the Zhuang.”<sup>2</sup> Buyang, however, is a distinct language and is not intelligible with other forms of Zhuang. The Buyang are known by a number of different names. One visitor in the early 1920s stated, “We slept in a village of Tai people, which the Chinese call *Punong*, or *Punung*, or *Pulung*. We heard them called all three of these pretty names.”<sup>3</sup>

**Language:** Buyang is only spoken within their communities. Being a multilingual people, the Buyang speak Mandarin to outsiders. Most Buyang between the ages of 15 and 50 are also able to speak Southern Zhuang. About half can also

hillsides. Other crops include sugarcane, tung oil, and tea. Chinese geckos are also caught and used in traditional Chinese medicine to help people regain vitality.

**Religion:** The Buyang worship their ancestors, carefully observing rituals that have been designed to ensure that their forefathers are taken care of in the next life. Food is placed in front of altars along with pictures of deceased family members, so the spirits of the dead will not go hungry. The Buyang also burn large amounts of paper money, believing the practice will break any hold of poverty that may have ensnared the dead.

**Christianity:** Ancestor worship has trapped the Buyang in spiritual bondage, keeping them from accepting any social or religious change. Few Buyang have any awareness of the gospel or the Person of Jesus Christ. All Buyang homes have ancestral altars mounted on the wall of the main room. In the mid-1990s a large revival took place among the Hmong Daw farther south as a result of gospel radio broadcasts in the Miao language, but few Buyang have any contact with the Hmong Daw. No Scriptures or recordings have ever been translated for the Buyang.

**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