



# The Top 31

## Unengaged Unreached People Groups of East Asia Vol.2





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Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

# 1 A CHE people of China



Tucked away in the remote mountains of central Yunnan Province are the A Che (Ah-chuh), one of the least evangelized people groups in the world.

This group of 46,000 is considered part of the larger Yi minority by the Chinese government, but they are a distinct people group with their own language, customs and traditions. The women wear headdresses and embroidered aprons of bright colors over shirts and pants that mark them as belonging to the A Che ethnic group.

Celebrations with singing and dancing provide these farmers with a respite from the hard work of their daily lives. One of the A Che's most important festivals is the Open Street Festival, held on the eighth day of the first month according to the lunar calendar. They also celebrate a Dragon Worship Festival, honoring the dragon god they believe is responsible for rainfall and drought.

Like many minority groups in China, the A Che are animists who see spirits as all-powerful beings that must be appeased to avoid bad things happening. It is said that the A Che used to believe they were close to one they perceived to be a creator god, but over time their ability to communicate with the god was lost. They desperately need to know about the sacrifice Jesus paid for them so they can know the true Creator.

## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the hearts of believers will be so stirred by the spiritual desperation of these people that they will be willing to go and make disciples among the A Che.*
- *Pray the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of the A Che to kindle a longing to know their Creator and Savior.*
- *Pray that a clear Gospel presentation will be made available in the A Che language, and churches will be planted in this area where there have never been churches before.*

China is home to more than 400 unreached people groups (UPGs). Cut off from the Gospel by barriers of geography, language, customs, religion and government, millions of people live their entire lives without ever hearing that Jesus loves them and died to set them free.

About 180 of these UPGs are called unengaged unreached people groups (UUPGs) because no Christian work exists among them. They desperately need Christ. Who will pray for them? Who will brave the barriers to share the Good News?

Jesus said, "And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14 (NKJV). Will you be a part of ushering in Christ's Kingdom among the last unreached peoples of the earth?

To learn more about how you can be involved in reaching the unreached peoples represented in this second volume of the "Top 31 UUPGs of East Asia," contact [finishingthetask@pobox.com](mailto:finishingthetask@pobox.com).



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# AOKA

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Aoka people, who have been influenced by other people groups, will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, find their identity in Him and influence others for Him.*
- *Pray for recordings and broadcasts to be developed in the Aoka language so all of them can hear and understand the Good News of Jesus.*
- *The Aoka people have strong beliefs in demons and evil spirits. Pray that they will come to know the one true God who has power over all creation.*

More than 300,000 Aoka (Aow-kah) people live in southeast China, mainly in Hunan province. The history behind this people group is unknown. Their language seems to be a variation of Mandarin Chinese, but they wear traditional Miao clothes. Although anthropologists debate how to classify these people and their language, God uniquely created the Aoka and He knows their deepest need.

Traditionally, Aoka believe there was a ladder connecting heaven and earth, but at some point the ladder was broken and people can no longer access heaven. Today they mainly practice animism, worshipping animate and inanimate objects around them. There is no need to convince them a spirit world exists; they already believe in demons and evil spirits.

Most Aoka are illiterate. Many speak a form of Mandarin, but few, if any, can read and understand Chinese translations of the Bible. As with many other unreached people, this presents a formidable challenge in establishing self-sufficient churches. One of the few evangelistic tools available to help reach the Aoka is the JESUS film, which is available in their native language.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

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# BAI YI

(KUA-NSI)  
people of China



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

About 6,500 Bai Yi, also known as Kua-nsi (Kua-um-seu), live in northwestern Yunnan Province in one of the least reached areas of the world.

They are called “Bai Yi” or “white clothed” by Chinese speakers because the men wear white jackets. They are sometimes confused with the “Bai Yi” or “White Yi” who were former slaves of the Nosu of Sichuan. Older men still wear white jackets, and most other men also wear them on special occasions such as weddings. Women wear blue tail coats with distinctive hats similar to the traditional peaked and winged Dutch caps worn in Volendam, a village in the Netherlands.

The Bai Yi migrated from the north more than 150 years ago. They are subsistence farmers living in a mountainous area bordering a tributary that flows into the Yangtze River. Some herd goats and cattle; others produce honey. Their villages are surrounded by pine forests filled with wild boar and musk deer. At weddings and funerals, the Bai Yi play musical instruments including the suona, similar to an oboe.

Many Bai Yi women over age 40 do not speak Chinese, and there is no Bible in their language. Today, better roads give the Bai Yi easier access to nearby towns where Han and other minorities live. Some younger people have migrated to work in large factories, returning home during Chinese New Year.

The Bai Yi are animists who consult shamans whenever they have health problems or personal conflicts. With a high suicide rate, the Bai Yi desperately need the life and love only Jesus can give.

## Prayer Starters

- *Pray for God to make a way for the Word to be translated into the Bai Yi language and for audio recordings to be made available.*
- *Pray that the Bai Yi will come under conviction of sin and will hunger to know Christ as their Savior.*
- *Pray that Christ will transform each generation of Bai Yi by His Word and Spirit.*

# BAIMA

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray God will raise up believers to take the Good News to the Baima people.*
- *Pray the Baima will hunger for truth, turn away from their false gods, and come to know and revere the one true Almighty God.*
- *Pray that churches will be planted in Baima villages and that through them the Gospel will spread to more villages until all the Baima have a chance to know and worship Jesus.*

No Christian activity has ever been recorded among the 17,800 Baima (Bye-mah) people who live in the remote mountains of southeastern Gansu Province and northwestern Sichuan Province.

The Chinese view them as part of the Tibetan minority, but their cultural identity differs from the Tibetans in history, clothing, traditions and language. Their name in Chinese literally means “white horse.” Within their own language they simply call themselves Bai. They pass on their history and language orally and have no written script, although they use a type of hieroglyphics in their ancient religious ceremonies.

The Baima people take marriage seriously, stressing fidelity and viewing divorce as a disgrace. Married women wear special hats made from goatskin and chicken feathers, and sport fishbone necklaces around their necks.

The Baima people practice a mix of nature worship and idol worship separate from Tibetan Buddhism and have no temples or monks as Tibetans do. The tombs of their dead are covered with flags, which they believe will guide departed souls into heaven. Two of their most important gods are the mountain god and the white horse god. They also consider the rooster a protective god, because long ago a rooster awakened the people of a Baima village in time for them to protect themselves from an enemy attack.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

# BAONUO (BAIKU)

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Baiku will long for the Lord, so that when the Good News is brought in, they will receive Christ with open hearts.*
- *Pray God will raise up believers with a vision to share the Gospel with the Baiku in a way they can easily understand.*
- *Pray the Bible will be translated into their language, and multiplying churches will be planted in their villages until every Baiku has a chance to know Jesus.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Isolated by their remote location on the border of southern Guizhou Province and northern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, most of the 32,000 Baonuo (Bow-nwo) have never heard of eternal life through Christ. According to legend, they once were cannibals, eating the corpses of their dead. But when they wanted to eat one little boy's mother, he begged them to stop. Since then, they have killed bulls to eat at funerals instead.

Ethnically, the Baonuo belong to the Yao minority, but they speak a Hmongic (Miao) language categorized as one of about 11 Bunu languages or dialects. Baonuo speakers, however, cannot understand those who speak other Bunu and Yao languages.

The Baonuo are commonly known as the Baiku or White Pants Yao. Legends say a neighboring tribal chief sent troops to wipe out the Baiku, who were driven up into the mountains and trapped. When an old man showed the people a path down the cliff to safety, the Baiku king slapped his knees in joy, leaving bloody prints on his torn pants. He died from his battle wounds. To remember his heroic fight to protect his people, Baiku men wear white pants cut off at the knees, with red stripes sewn on to resemble handprints.

Occasionally, tourists visit the Baiku because of their interesting customs and ingenuity with batik (wax-dying). It is reported that a small number of Baiku believe in Christ, and some Gospel recordings exist in their language. But the majority of Baiku remain in darkness, worshipping their ancestors and appeasing evil spirits.



# BEI

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Bei will long for the security available through salvation in Jesus Christ and will open their hearts to receive Him.*
- *Pray that local Han Christians and other minority believers in the surrounding area will boldly share the Gospel with the Bei.*
- *Pray that the praises of the Almighty God will soon be lifted up in the mountains of Yunnan through the singing and worship of the Bei people, as He saves them and plants churches among them in every village.*

The 26,000 Bei (Bay) people of northern Yunnan Province live in fear of evil spirits, unaware of the One who died to set them free.

This unreached people group is closely related to the neighboring Bai minority. In fact, their language is similar, but the Bei assert their ethnic difference from the Bai through their distinctive clothing. Bei women wear red-and-blue sleeveless jackets, accompanied by blue-and-white headdresses.

The Bei live near the tourist city of Lijiang and are known for their singing and dancing. They celebrate various festivals throughout the year, including the Torch Festival to usher in a good harvest and health for all Bei people.

Like many minority groups in China, the Bei have experienced some acculturation to the local Han Chinese culture. Many of the younger generation aspire to move from the countryside to cities and view learning Mandarin Chinese as an essential part of that process. As a result, many younger Bei have abandoned the cultural and religious beliefs of their elders.

Most Bei practice a mixture of Buddhism and Taoism. They are willing to try whatever religious practice they think will help them get ahead in society. But they don't yet know about the King of Kings who longs to adopt them as His own.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

# BUNU

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that God will direct the paths of Christians as they locate the Bunu people of southwest China. Pray that those Christians will be persistent and bold as they share the Gospel among the Bunu.*
- *Pray for God to give the Bunu hunger for Him and dissatisfaction with the gods and spirits they worship. Pray He will soon establish the first Bunu church.*
- *Pray that all the Bunu will hear the Gospel clearly in their own heart languages and receive Christ with open arms.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

No known church exists among the more than 400,000 Bunu (Boo-noo) who inhabit Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces. Isolation is their greatest barrier to the Gospel because many have retreated to land no one else wants, making it difficult for evangelists to find them.

Made up of 11 mutually unintelligible linguistic groups, mostly dialects of Hmong (Miao), the Bunu have been difficult to classify ethnically, even among themselves, and have been placed under the larger Yao (Mien) minority. The name Bunu simply means “us people” and isn't necessarily a name they would use to identify themselves.

One distinct feature of Bunu culture is their matriarchal society. Bunu women are the legal property holders and have the freedom to divorce and remarry as they see fit.

Traditional Bunu legend tells both a creation story and a flood story. They worship Pan Hu as a created being who himself then created the heavens and the earth. Later during a worldwide flood, their legends say, the only two Bunu who survived repopulated the whole earth.

They are polytheists and animists who worship many gods and spirits, while also adhering to Taoism and ancestor worship. Mired in false belief and cut off from the Good News, less than 100 Bunu are believed to be professing Christians.

## CENTRAL MASHAN MIAO

people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray God will raise up believers who will take the Gospel to the isolated villages of the Central Mashan Miao.*
- *Pray God will give the Central Mashan Miao a hunger for His Word, so that when the Good News comes to them, they will receive it with open hearts.*
- *Pray God will make a way for Scripture to be translated into the Central Mashan Miao language and made available to them in audible form.*

The 105,000 Central Mashan Miao (Mah-shahn Meow) comprise one of the poorest unreached peoples in China. Some must walk several hours just to find water, and others don't have enough clothes to keep warm during the harsh winters. But their spiritual state is even poorer than their physical one, for few Central Mashan Miao have ever heard the Good News

Farming the tough terrain of Ziyun, Wangmo and Luodian counties in south central Guizhou Province, the Central Mashan Miao live among several other minorities in the area, including Buyi and differing Miao groups.

But their language, one of four Mashan Miao languages in the Western Hmongic language group of the Miao, is unique. The difficult terrain has isolated their villages from the Gospel for centuries. Until recent years, good roads were not available, and the Mashan Miao often had to walk several days over the mountains to get from their village to a neighboring town.

Like all Miao, the Central Mashan Miao people love to sing and tell stories. They are animists who believe evil spirits must be appeased. The demon of the well, for example, might make someone sick after drinking the water there, and certain rituals must be performed to restore the sick person. The Central Mashan Miao desperately need to know the God whose love can set them free.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

## CENTRAL YONGBEI ZHUANG

people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Central Yongbei Zhuang will thirst for God, and He will plant churches that plant churches until all the Central Yongbei Zhuang have a chance to know Christ.*
- *Pray God will reveal Himself to new believers, strengthening them to endure and remain bold in the face of opposition from their community.*
- *Pray that the available translated Scriptures will get into the hands and hearts of the Central Yongbei Zhuang people.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Just outside Nanning city, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 690,000 Central Yongbei Zhuang (Yohng-bay Jwahng) wander in spiritual darkness. The beauty of the lush, green mountains and winding rivers where they live stands in stark contrast to the reality of their spiritual poverty without Christ.

With a population of more than 17 million, the Zhuang are China's largest minority people group. They speak several languages, but China has recognized the language of the Central Yongbei Zhuang as the standard form of Zhuang. Its Romanized script is printed alongside Mandarin on China's currency, and government buildings use written Zhuang on their signs. Most Zhuang do not write in their language, but they speak it daily, especially with their family and closest friends.

The Central Yongbei Zhuang culture is steeped in animistic spirit worship, and nearly every home prominently displays a spirit altar. The traditional system requires them to make regular offerings in front of this and other altars. The people invite shamans to lead major events, especially funerals. Getting the Gospel to every person will require boldness and much labor.

Some Christians exist among the Yongbei Zhuang today, but comprise only about 0.033 percent of the total population. Translation work has begun in their language, but the vast majority of this unreached people group has never heard about Christ.



# DIGAO

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Digao will be freed from their spiritual bondage and fear of evil spirits through a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that Christians from the area or across the world will travel to Digao villages to share the Good News of the perfect Lamb who shed His blood on their behalf.*
- *Pray for churches to be planted among the Digao and for those churches to grow and multiply.*

**D**igao (Dee-gow) is just one of many names used for the 29,000 Phula-speaking people who have yet to hear of God's grace and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Considered by the Chinese government to be part of the Yi minority, the Digao call themselves Hlepho Phowa. Some other common names for this central Yunnan minority group are Phula, Daizhan, Puwa and Polua.

The Digao are farmers, many of whom live in mixed villages with Han Chinese or other minority peoples. As a result, many Digao have grown up unable to speak their native language, although the middle-aged or elderly still speak Phula. Yet in some remote Digao villages, children speak Phula at home and do not learn Chinese until they begin elementary school.

In the past, the entrances to Digao villages were marked with carved images of birds, the sun or the moon. Under all these, a wooden guardian eagle blessed by the local shaman was portrayed.

Today the Digao continue to live in fear of evil spirits and the elderly still consult a shaman regarding spiritual matters. They often offer blood sacrifices of chickens, as well as fruit or other food, to the spirits. Ancestor worship is common among the Digao of all ages; they hold various ceremonies throughout the year to honor their forefathers.

The Digao desperately need the love of Christ to set them free.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

**“M**en and women are toiling without a Bible, without a Sunday, without a prayer, without songs of praise. They have rulers without justice and righteousness; homes without peace; marriage without sanctity; young men and women without ideals and enthusiasm; little children without purity, without innocence; mothers without wisdom or self control; poverty without relief or sympathy; sickness without skillful help or tender care; sorrow and crime without a remedy; and worst of all, death without Christ.”

This quote by Whitfield Guinness, a missionary doctor to China in the early 20th century, sums up the 36,000 E (Uh) people of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region who, many years later, still have not been exposed to the Gospel in a lasting way.

With no known Christians among them, the E are the very definition of an unreached people group. They live in a mere 19 villages in northern Guangxi, a location long known as a “melting pot” of cultures and belief systems. But despite being surrounded by Miao and Mulao groups, the E have shown little interest in assimilating other cultures or religions.

They are generally animists and polytheists who also worship their ancestors, although some worship nothing at all. With no Bible in their language, no JESUS film, no radio broadcasts or audio recordings, the E greatly need to hear the Good News in their own heart language.

# E

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray God will raise up Christians willing to live among the E people and learn their language for the sake of the Gospel.*
- *Pray God will create a connection to the Gospel within the E culture so that when the Good News is preached to them, they will know that it is true, turn to Jesus and be saved.*
- *Pray for the E who live in surrounding cultures to be exposed to the Gospel and then take it back home.*



# 12 EASTERN GHAO-XONG (XIANGXI) MIAO people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray God will raise up believers to share the Good News with the Eastern Ghao-xong in a way they can easily understand.*
- *Pray God will open a bridge between the Eastern Ghao-xong and the Gospel, so that when they hear the Good News they will recognize it as true.*
- *Pray God will soften the hearts of the Eastern Ghao-xong with a hunger for Him.*

The Miao number more than 12 million spread over five provinces in China and several other countries. Several of their language groups and tribes have Christians among them, but at the farthest northeastern corner of their populations live about 120,000 Eastern Ghao-xong Miao (Gow-shohng) who have yet to hear the name of Jesus.

Found in parts of Luxi, Jishou, Guzhang and Longshan Counties in northwestern Hunan Province, the Eastern Ghao-xong Miao have built their villages high upon the mountains, isolated from the Xiang (Hunanese) Chinese who live nearby.

The Ghao-xong are farmers who grow crops such as rice and mulberries; some raise silk-worms. They love to spin, weave, embroider and make colorful paper cuts. But as far back as the 10th century, they were fierce fighters, defending themselves against marauding forces. Through hundreds of years of heavy oppression, the Ghao-xong have maintained their cultural identity. They are animists who venerate spirits they believe inhabit places such as trees and mountains. Once a year, the Ghao-xong sacrifice a pig and spread its blood upon the doorposts in a ceremony to honor the god of the door. They also worship Pan Hu, whom they consider their dragon-dog ancestor.

Although some Christian work has been done among the Western Ghao-xong, no known believers exist among the Eastern Ghao-xong. They love to celebrate festivals by singing, dancing, beating a large drum and playing the suona, similar to an oboe. But without knowledge of the saving grace of Jesus, there will be no singing or dancing in heaven for the Eastern Ghao-xong.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013





## EASTERN LUOLUOPO people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the hearts of the Eastern Luoluopo will be softened and ready to accept the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that Gospel presentations will be translated into Eastern Luoluopo so these precious people can hear the truth in their heart language.*
- *Pray for evangelical workers to come into the Eastern Luoluopo areas and share boldly so that churches can be started and lives changed for eternity.*

The 120,000 Eastern Luoluopo (Luoh-luoh-po) who live in central Yunnan Province remain one of the most unevangelized people groups in the world.

Their name means “tiger dragon people” and they are also known by outsiders as the Lolo people, although they consider it a derogatory name. Counted by the Chinese government as part of the Yi minority, they share many of the same customs and traditions as other Luoluopo groups, especially the Central Luoluopo, but their language sets them apart.

Like many other minority groups in Yunnan, the Eastern Luoluopo women continue to wear traditional colorful clothing and head-dresses that distinguish them from their Chinese neighbors. Most are farmers who, because of oppression from the Chinese many years ago, were pushed up into the mountains, where steep slopes make farming more difficult.

For the Eastern Luoluopo, market day is a fun time for people from surrounding areas to meet and exchange goods. Some walk for several hours to buy the special foods and manufactured goods that are not readily available in the villages. Dentists pull teeth right on the sidewalk, paper money is sold to burn at the tombs of ancestors, and children run and play in the streets.

The Luoluopo are superstitious, practicing a mix of ancestor worship and animism. They often offer sacrifices, burn incense, and wear small amulets to keep the evil spirits away. They also celebrate various festivals throughout the year, many of which contain some religious purpose.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

The Ewenki (E-wenk-ee) people live mostly in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. With a population just over 27,000, the Ewenki are composed of at least three different groups with distinct dialects. The Ewenki people chose their current name meaning “people of the big mountain” in 1949. Originally they were known by tribal names such as Suelon or Tunggus that date back to the time of Genghis Khan. The Ewenki people originally came from the Lake Baikal area, but continued to move eastward. During the Qing dynasty they began to mix with other ethnic groups, and their descendants are now the Ewenki people.

Originally reindeer herders and forest hunters, about half of Ewenki people breed livestock. Most others are hunters or farmers, whose main crop is wheat. The Ewenki language has no written characters. However, they also speak either Mongolian or Chinese. They are known for making utensils, clothing, shoes and other items from birch bark, as well as crafting many things from animal horns and skins.

Some Ewenki now follow Tibetan Buddhism, but most believe in good and evil spirits that can be influenced only by shamans. The “god of mountains” and the “god of fire” are some of the false gods they revere and worship. Children are not allowed to play with fire for fear that bad things will happen to the herd if they do. There are a small number of Ewenki who consider themselves Christians of the Russian Orthodox tradition. But they tend to blend religious practices, such as worshipping the statue of Jesus along with their idols.

## EWENKI people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray that Christians in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia will respond to the call to share Christ with the Ewenki.*
- *Pray that spiritual strongholds among the Ewenki will be broken down.*
- *Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to evangelize and disciple the Ewenki.*



# JONE TIBETAN

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray God will raise up laborers from nearby Chinese cities and churches who will share the Good News with the Jone.*
- *Pray for God to open the hearts of the Jone to receive the Gospel when it is preached to them.*
- *Pray God will revive the work among the Jone Tibetans and begin a church-planting movement among them.*

On the eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau live 130,000 Jone (Joe-nee) Tibetans whose Buddhist traditions separate them from the knowledge of Christ.

As farmers, they live mostly in villages in the county of Jone in southwestern Gansu Province, with a small number living in northern Sichuan. They have lived in that area for more than 600 years. The name Jone may be derived from the Tibetan language, meaning “two pine trees.” In fact, Jone was an independent kingdom until 1928, when a Chinese general seized their lands and the ruling Jone prince was forced to step down.

Jone princes were chosen by succession, traditionally serving also as lama of the Jone monastery, which once housed nearly 4,000 monks and included 172 buildings. When a prince had two sons, the eldest ruled the people and the second son served as lama. But today, no princes reign and no strong religious sites remain.

Early in the 1900s, missionaries lived in Chinese towns near the Jone and found their prince amiable, but they lacked workers to reach out to them with the Gospel. About 200 Jone Tibetan Christians are reported to live in Lintan County, northwest of Jone, and a church was built in 1997. It is said that a family sold their television and another woman her hair to help with the construction fees. But today, little evidence remains among the Jone Tibetans of Christian work among them.

Their language is related to Khampa Tibetan and other dialects in the area. Many younger students are learning Chinese and Amdo Tibetan these days, but the elderly still primarily speak Jone Tibetan. No Bible exists in their language.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

# LABA

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Laba will hunger for the One True God and seek to know Him through contacts with believers in neighboring villages.*
- *Pray God will give Laba and Miao believers a vision for reaching every Laba village for Christ.*
- *Pray God will start a church-planting movement among the Laba.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Pressed into tiny villages scattered throughout western Guizhou Province's Qinglong, Shuicheng, Pu'an and Panxian counties are a people group known as the Laba (Lah-bah). They number about 250,000, most of whom have never heard the Good News.

Although they speak a local dialect of Mandarin Chinese, the Laba see themselves as a separate people group from the Han. They have been called the Huguang people at times because of their supposed origin in Huguang County, Hunan.

The Laba may have descended from a garrison of Han Chinese soldiers sent to Guizhou to fight the Miao. After the wars ceased, they settled down with local wives, many of them Miao, and gradually forgot their Han roots, taking on their own ethnic identity.

Today, the Laba share many characteristics of their Miao neighbors and speak a Miao word here and there. They worship the spirits of their ancestors, and in the past sacrificed a cow every three years, believing their ancestors would eat it in the afterlife.

Many of the Laba's Miao neighbors are now believers, due to missionary work in the late 19th century. As a result, the Gospel has reached a small group of Laba. Those in surrounding villages have heard that their neighbors follow Christ, but see it as something only for the literate, not for the majority of Laba who can't read or write.



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# LAMA

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Thank the Lord of the Harvest for providing better transportation into the Lama areas in recent years. Pray He will call out Chinese Christians or others to travel into their remote villages with the Gospel.*
- *Pray the Lama will turn away from their worship of idols and consulting of spirits, and turn to the True God who knows them by name.*
- *Pray they will hunger for the Truth and receive Him with open hearts.*

Isolated high in the mountains of Yunnan Province near the border with Myanmar live the Lama (Lah-mah) who have yet to hear of the saving grace available through faith in Jesus.

These 60,000 people live in an extremely mountainous area over 9,000 feet above sea level. They build their homes on steep slopes and use chain and rope bridges to connect their paths through the dense forest where wild animals such as tigers, leopards and bears live.

Because of their isolation from the world, the Lama have one of the most primitive religious beliefs known—a combination of nature worship, veneration of spirits and worship of local deities. They believe humans are not only flesh but spirit, so death is merely a death of the body, while the soul departs as a ghost to another world. Funeral ceremonies contain poetry, songs and dances to help guide the soul to the home of the ancestral gods. The Lama also offer sacrifices to their local gods, hoping they will bless them with a good harvest. Shamans are consulted to help them communicate with the spirits and discern their will.

Because the Lama honor and respect the elderly, young people bring them gifts of firewood each New Year to demonstrate their hope for the elderly to be warm and well cared for. They also offer them bowls of rice, wine, tobacco, sugar and tea.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

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# LIMIN

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Ask God to raise up local believers with a heart for the lost Li people. Pray He will show them how to share the Good News in such a way that the Li will see Christ as He truly is and receive Him.*
- *Pray that the Li will hunger for God and know that only He can satisfy their every need.*
- *Pray Li people will wander into churches, hear the Good News in Mandarin over the radio and bump into believers who will share the Gospel message with them.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Nestled among the Yi, Miao and Buyi peoples of western Guizhou Province are nearly 100,000 Limin (Lee-meen) who need Jesus.

They call themselves Li and are not to be confused with the Li of Hainan Island or the Limi of Yunnan Province. Although they speak the local Guizhou dialect of Mandarin Chinese and dress in clothing nearly indistinguishable from the neighboring Han people, the Li consider themselves a distinct ethnic group. They live mostly in Luzhi, Guanling, Qinglong, Pu'an, Xingren, Zhenning and Anlong counties of Guizhou.

When government officials sought to classify them under one of the minority groups of China at the end of the 20th century, the Li asked to be identified as Yi and were granted their request, although their ethnic origin is still unknown.

Some of the neighboring Miao peoples have come to Christ, but the majority of Li remain spiritually lost. Some Li engage in spirit and ancestor worship, as the neighboring people groups do, but most Li claim no religious belief system at all.

It is reported that several Li Christians are scattered throughout western Guizhou, and that two Li evangelists sought to share Christ with their own people in 1999. When they were not well received, they spread the Good News instead to the neighboring Buyi, resulting in about 300 believers.



# LUOWU

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Luowu will seek after the one true God who can free them from their fear of evil spirits.*
- *Pray that believers' hearts will be burdened for the Luowu and that they will engage them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that healthy, reproducing churches will be planted among the Luowu.*

Scattered among the mountains of Yunnan Province are 29,000 Luowu (Lwoh-woo) people who have never heard the Good News. These peaceful farmers are part of the Yi nationality and sometimes refer to themselves as the Alu people. They continue to marry primarily within their own ethnic group and maintain their own language and customs distinct from the Han Chinese around them.

Young Luowu people often use a match-maker to find a suitable mate. The wedding ceremony lasts for three days and involves giving gifts to the bride's family. On the final day a long horn called a suona is blown by the bride's family and she is allowed to enter the home of her groom, signifying that they are married.

As part of the Yi nationality, the Luowu's main festival is the Torch Festival, but they have their own unique legend about the origins of that festival. They believe a beautiful Luowu girl was in love with a young man named A'long. Many other suitors wanted to marry the girl and one of them even threatened her village if she didn't consent to marry him. To avoid marrying a man she didn't love, the girl jumped into a fire. A'long and several other young men tried to save her, but were unsuccessful. The Torch Festival is a day to remember the story of sacrificial love with singing and dancing.

The Luowu believe in many gods and live in fear of evil spirits who want to kill or destroy them. Although some Gospel recordings have recently been made in their language, most Luowu still have not heard the name of Jesus.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

# MO

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Mo will hunger after the One True God and lay down all other deities and religions to follow Him alone.*
- *Pray that Mo believers will reach out to their neighbors with the Good News and that many of them will joyfully accept Christ.*
- *Pray God will bring Christians across the paths of the Mo who will boldly speak the Good News in a way the Mo can understand and receive.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

The nearly 24,000 Mo (Moh) of southern Guizhou Province are a largely forgotten people who live in fear of demons without the knowledge of Jesus' saving power.

They are also called the Ching or Mak and reportedly speak five dialects: Mak, Chi, Ching, Hwa and Lyo. Their language shares similarities with that of the Shui, Yanghuang and Rao, although they have been classified under the Buyi nationality. Many Mo can speak local dialects of Mandarin and Buyi as trade languages.

Their rural villages are located in Dushan County and Jia Liang Township of Libo County, where water sources are often scarce. Some Mo walk several hours to obtain water for their families. They raise crops of rice, wheat, corn, millet, potatoes and beans. They also grow cotton, tobacco, silk, hemp and cocoa as cash crops. The Mo enjoy entertaining guests, often welcoming them with a treat made of sweet rice called a "pillow cake."

They traditionally follow a variety of religions, including Buddhism and Taoism, but without any temples for worship. Pan Gu is said to be the father of all Buyi-related peoples, and some Mo believe he is the one to pray to for an abundant harvest. They may have ancestral altars in their homes and leave offerings for other spirits in various places around the village.

There are no known Christian materials in their language, but it is reported that a Mo church was begun in 1995 and a small number of Mo have come to Christ since then.





Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

High upon the ridges of the rocky mountain slopes of central Guizhou live 105,000 Northern Huishui (Hway-shway) Miao who have not yet heard the name of God, much less that of His Son Jesus.

Farming the difficult terrain of Guiyang's Gaopo district and the counties of Huishui, Longli and Guiding to make a living, the Northern Huishui Miao build their homes of rock and wood. They are poor, with little opportunity to advance in life unless they can make it to the city to find work.

Even so, the Northern Huishui Miao love to sing, play bamboo wind instruments called lushengs and dance. During festivals some women wear heavy black turbans with colorful material flowing from the top and back. Large loops of heavy silver hang from their ear lobes, and wide, circular necklaces of silver adorn their necks.

Some Northern Huishui Miao live in villages within an hour or more by vehicle of Han churches, but the villages are so isolated by difficult roads or paths that few have found their way to the believers' fellowships.

The Northern Huishui Miao are animists. They believe spirits inhabit such places as trees and wells and they appease demons with sacrifices and offerings to protect their families. The Northern Huishui Miao desperately need the Savior whose love can set them free.

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## NORTHERN HUISHUI

# MIAO

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Northern Huishui Miao will see the futility of appeasing demons and will desire the God of love.*
- *Pray God will call out believers from nearby churches to boldly enter Northern Huishui Miao villages to share the Good News. Pray He will give them a vision and a burden to reach them for Christ.*
- *Pray Northern Huishui Miao working in the cities will meet believers and hear the Good News in a way they can easily understand. Pray God will make a way for Scripture to be translated into their language.*



## NORTHERN MASHAN MIAO

people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Northern Mashan Miao will hunger for the Lord, so that when the Good News reaches their villages, they will receive it as truth and the truth will set them free.*
- *Pray God will lay the Northern Mashan Miao on the hearts of believers in Guiyang, who will catch a vision for reaching them for Christ and boldly preach the Gospel to them.*
- *Pray God will make a way where there seems to be no way for the Mashan Miao to know Him, and that He will plant churches that in turn plant churches that love Him and serve Him.*

When missionaries shared the Gospel with the Big Flowery Miao around the turn of the 20th century, leading 80 percent of that tribe to Christ and putting their difficult language into a script to translate the New Testament, the Mashan Miao languages southeast of them were left untouched.

More than a century later, the 53,000 Northern Mashan Miao (Ma-shahn-Meow) still don't have a written script and continue to walk in darkness. Their poor farming villages huddle at the juncture of the Daihua District of Changshun County, the Bianyang District of Luodian County, and the Dongshan District of Huishui County in south central Guizhou Province.

They are some of the poorest peoples in all of China, and many Northern Mashan Miao families don't have a good source of water nearby. Some winters are hard to survive without enough food to eat or clothing to keep warm.

Their language contains 13 tones. They do not necessarily understand other Miao languages, nor can other Miao groups understand them. They are an animistic people, sacrificing chickens or pigs during special times of the year to appease evil spirits or nourish the souls of their ancestors in the afterlife. Theirs is a life of fear and darkness, having not yet had the opportunity to hear of the One who gave His life to save them.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

## PALYU

people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray God will give the Palyu people a hunger for Him and that hunger will press them to travel far and wide to find someone who will tell them about God's love.*
- *Pray God will give believers a burden for the Palyu people and they will take the Gospel to them in a way they can easily understand.*
- *Pray the Palyu will turn to Jesus and that churches will be planted in their villages to shine as His light in the darkness.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Hidden away in western Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which remains one of the least evangelized areas in Southwest China, more than 13,000 Palyu (Pal-yoo) people live in darkness and fear of evil spirits, with no knowledge of Jesus' power to save them and set them free.

They are called Lai by neighboring peoples, and their language is Bolyu, which is related to Bugean, a Mon-Khmer language. The Palyu are farmers, living often alongside neighbors of the Gelao nationality in Longlin County. But they also live in Xilin County, overflowing into Guangnan County of Yunnan Province, where they are classified as Yi.

In many areas, their language is quickly dying out as they become assimilated into surrounding cultures that speak Chinese, Miao and Yi.

The Palyu live in two-story wooden homes, with the animals inhabiting the first floor and the families the second. They are animists who venerate spirits they believe protect their villages and homes. They also worship the spirits of their ancestors. The Palyu desperately need Jesus' saving power to rescue them from darkness. Many thousands have yet to hear His name.



# SAMEI

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Samei people's hearts will be softened toward the Gospel and that they will long to know God, who can give them life.*
- *Pray that nearby Christians will cross cultural barriers to reach out to the Samei with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that vibrant, multiplying churches will be started among the Samei so that every member of this people group will see the light of the world, Jesus.*

Most of the 35,000 Samei (Sah-may) people who live southeast of Yunnan Province's capital, Kunming, still have not heard the name of Jesus.

Part of the Yi minority, they are slowly being assimilated into the dominant Han culture. Because many of the younger generation can no longer speak Samei, the language is endangered. However, the Samei remain proud of their ethnic heritage and maintain their identity as a distinct people group.

Like many of the Yi tribes, the Samei's main festival is the Torch Festival, usually celebrated in July or August. According to their legend, one of the Samei kings was beheaded in a battle with a rival tribe. Every night his head grew back so that each morning he arose and fought again. At last, a spy revealed the king's resurrection secret to his rival, who used the branches of an Oldenlandia diffusa plant to brush across the king's neck so his head would not grow back again. Today, the red patches on this plant are said to be traces of the king's blood. In memory of this king, the Samei light torches each year on the 24th and 25th days of the sixth lunar month and then wander off into the night in search of his spirit.

Some initial church planting among the Samei has begun and a short video Bible story in the Samei language called "Words of Life" has been produced. But many thousands have yet to hear the Good News.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

# SANIE

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Sanie will turn from their worship of spirits and the moon to the Bright Morning Star, who already knows them intimately and longs to be known by them.*
- *Pray that a group of believers will heed the Spirit's call to dedicate their lives to reaching the Sanie with the Gospel of Jesus.*
- *Pray that linguistic, cultural and spiritual barriers will be removed so that churches may grow and flourish among the Sanie.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Most of the more than 32,000 Sanie (Sah-nyeh), called White Yi or White Lolo by their Chinese neighbors, have little, if any, knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus.

Residing in the counties of Xishan, Fumin, and Anning near Yunnan Province's capital, Kunming, the Sanie maintain a distinct ethnic identity separate from other Yi groups in the area. In fact, many still pass their language on to their children, although fewer and fewer are able to speak it. These farming people are known for their hospitality and delicious apples.

Although some mission work occurred in their area nearly 100 years ago, the Sanie people were overlooked, and even today Christians have yet to focus attention on these unreached people who live in darkness and fear of evil spirits.

The Sanie practice Chinese folk religion, which is a mixture of beliefs including elements from Buddhism, Taoism and ancestor worship. Many festivals are celebrated throughout the year, based on the lunar calendar. The festivals usually involve offering simple sacrifices of food, burning sticks of incense and bowing before the moon. Usually the old women also chant or sing songs in praise of the moon which is personified as "a tender, nocturnal messenger blessing the earth with refreshing dew."



## SICHUAN MONGOL people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Mongols of Sichuan will see their need for a Savior and call out to Jesus so they can find their true home in Him.*
- *Pray that near-culture believers will heed the Holy Spirit's calling to endure the hardships necessary to bring the truth and light of Jesus to this tribe of Mongols.*
- *Pray that a multiplying church will be started among the Mongols of Sichuan and they will lift up their voices in praise of the one true God.*

Transportation is difficult in southwestern Sichuan Province, where there are few paved roads. As a result, the Gospel has been slow to reach the remote villages where more than 34,000 Mongols live. Trails to their villages are steep, rocky and often covered with the very mud they use to make their homes.

As farmers, most Mongols of Sichuan are too poor to own any type of vehicle but their feet. They call themselves Naze in their own language and Mengguzu (Mongolian) in Chinese. Proud of their heritage, they claim their ancestors were members of Kublai Khan's army, which conquered this area of Sichuan many centuries ago.

Today, local cultural and linguistic influences have begun to usurp Mongolian influence, acculturating them into the dominant Han society. Even though many no longer speak their native language or wear their traditional ethnic clothes, they still strongly identify themselves as Mongols. Signs in both Chinese and Mongolian can be found throughout the area, although few Mongols of Sichuan can read their native script.

They believe in spirits and carry on a loose affiliation with Buddhism. When someone dies they call a priest to perform the ceremony they believe will send the spirit through a series of intermediate stops back to Inner Mongolia, their original homeland. Most Mongols of Sichuan have never heard Jesus' name.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

## SOUTHERN DALI LOLO (ENIPU) people of China



### Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Southern Dali Lolo people will look past their superstition and seek out the living God who loves them and sent His Son to save them.*
- *Pray that Christian brothers and sisters within China will reach out to the Southern Dali Lolo with the Good News of Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that effective Bible teaching resources will be created in their language so that the Southern Dali Lolo people can come to know the love of Christ.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

The 21,000 Southern Dali Lolo of Yunnan Province have never heard about God's great love for them.

A part of the Yi minority group, they are called "Enipu," a derogatory term meaning "water buffalo person," by outsiders. The Southern Dali Lolo share an affinity with other Lolo groups in the area, but maintain their separate cultural identity.

In order to maintain their cultural distinctiveness, many Southern Dali Lolo have moved further and further into the mountains, removing themselves from Han Chinese influence. They maintain a strong oral culture, passing on their history by telling stories and their family genealogy by reciting long lists of names.

Superstition plays a major role in the lives of the Southern Dali Lolo. They believe that after a person dies, the soul of that person roams the earth for three years. Magic formulas are used to keep the soul fixed within an effigy that the family creates of wood, hemp or orchid root. The effigy is placed in a box or under the roof of the house. When three years have passed, the family destroys the effigy, exhumes and cremates the body, and places the ashes in an urn.



## SOUTHERN QIANDONG MIAO

people of China



### Prayer Starters

- Ask God to raise up local believers with a heart for the Southern Qiondong Miao and a vision to reach them.
- Pray for believers living near the Southern Qiondong Miao to be bold to share the Good News with them.
- Pray portions of Scripture will soon be translated into their many dialects so that the Southern Qiondong Miao can hear the Gospel in their own languages.

Among the most difficult to access of China's minorities are the Southern Qiondong Miao (Chyehn-dohng Meow), who number more than 762,000 and populate the mountainous terrain of southeastern Guizhou Province, spilling over into neighboring Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

They live in such isolated circumstances that many cannot speak, read or write Chinese. In fact, due to the mountainous terrain where the Southern Qiondong Miao live, their language and clothing styles often vary village to village.

The Southern Qiondong Miao are known for their extraordinary costumes of embroidery and silver. In some villages, the women wear "flying skirts"—strips of embroidered cloth with chicken feathers sewn on the ends. As they twirl around in dance, their skirts float in the air around them. In another village, the men of the Southern Qiondong Miao tribe of hunters known as the Basha wear one knot of long hair atop shaved heads, while the women wear triangular aprons with embroidery at the seams.

The Southern Qiondong Miao are a diverse and beautiful people who love music and dance, but do not yet know of the Savior who died to set them free. They are animists, living in fear of evil spirits, appeasing them any way possible in hope that the spirits will not maim or otherwise harm them.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

## SOUTHWESTERN HUISHUI MIAO

people of China



### Prayer Starters

- Pray the Southwestern Huishui Miao will hunger after God and travel far and wide to find Him. Pray those who have found work in the cities will meet Christians who can share the Good News with them.
- Pray God will raise up believers in Guiyang and other places with a vision and a burden for reaching the Southwestern Huishui Miao for Christ.
- Pray God will protect believers who enter Southwestern Huishui Miao villages and allow them to freely share the Good News.



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

The rocky, Hershey-kiss-shaped mountains of central Guizhou province are home to more than 84,000 Southwestern Huishui Miao (Hway-shway Meow) who desperately need a Savior.

The Miao are a diverse people group of more than 12 million spread throughout several provinces in China, as well as other countries. They speak more than 80 languages and are divided into four major language groups. Categorized under the Western Hmongic language group, the Huishui Miao are further divided into at least four distinct languages, including the Southwestern Huishui Miao.

This unreachable people group mostly raises crops such as rice and rapeseed on the difficult, rocky slopes of Huishui, Sandu and Changshun counties just south of Guizhou Province's capital, Guiyang.

They have a complicated system of appeasing spirits, including the spirits of their ancestors, and believe that if their departed grandparents are not pleased with offerings of incense, paper money, food and wine, they may retaliate against the family by setting fire to their home or bringing sickness, even death.

The Southwestern Huishui Miao live in fear of evil spirits. Even so, they happily celebrate festivals with singing and dancing. Some of the young people have been able to attend school and speak Mandarin Chinese, but many of the older people still cannot read or write. There is no Bible in their language, or even portions of Scripture.



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# XIANG TANG

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray that the Xiangtang, both young and old, will see their need for a Savior and seek out the One who knows and loves them intimately.*
- *Pray that Chinese believers who live around the Xiangtang will have compassion and boldness to tell them about the saving faith found in Jesus Christ.*
- *Pray that multiplying churches will be planted among the Xiangtang to nurture and disciple new believers.*

Most of the 107,000 Xiangtang (Shyahng-tahng) in southwestern Yunnan Province have never heard the name of Jesus.

The Xiangtang are farmers, who eat mostly corn, buckwheat, bean curd and vegetables. Many of their traditional customs have died out, but they continue to seat important guests behind the hearth in the place of honor while less important guests sit near the door. One of their old customs involved buying a bride. Men were required to pay in silver coins or agree to work for the bride's family for three years in order to win her hand in marriage.

Although many people in this Yi sub-group have been assimilated into Han Chinese culture, in some remote areas they still hold tightly to their own cultural identity and beliefs. In such rural areas the Xiangtang worship their ancestors and have many superstitions about various spirits, both good and evil. They worship the dragon and the "Spirit of the Ravine," to whom they pray for help, blessing and protection.

The Xiangtang who live in more urban areas, however, have conformed to the surrounding Chinese culture and given up any type of religious beliefs. When asked what they believe in, most young people respond, "I believe in myself."



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

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# YOUNUO

people of China



## Prayer Starters

- *Pray the Younnoo will lay down their worship of other gods and long to know the One True God who loves them.*
- *Pray God will raise up laborers with a heart for the Younnoo who will take the Good News to their isolated villages in a way they can easily understand.*
- *Pray God will plant a multiplying church among the Younnoo that will spread the Gospel throughout Longsheng County.*



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2013

Most of the 23,000 Younnoo (Yoh-nwoh) people of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region do not know of the Savior's love.

Called Shanhua (mountain speech) Red Yao because of the women's red clothing and the mountains they live in, the Younnoo are one of several Red Yao groups who speak differing languages. The Younnoo speak a Western Hmongic (Miao) language classified under the Bunu. It is most closely related to another Red Yao language called Pa-Hng.

The Younnoo women of Huangluo Village cut their hair when they reach marrying age (around 16-18) and keep it to make a hair-piece that is wound around their head. Because they never cut their hair again, that village is called "The First Village of Long Hair Under Heaven," and it has been reported that they hold a world record for long hair.

The Younnoo also live in the villages of Liutian, Xiaozhai, Jinjiang, Xinlu and Jinkeng in Longsheng County. They are farmers who worship various gods and spirits, including a dragon spirit, Zaj Laung, who they believe controls the weather and the waters and appears as a rainbow.

They also believe that long ago, flood waters rose and covered the earth all the way to heaven. But when men awakened the thunder god with a loud gong, he rescued them by ending the flood.

No Christian materials are available in their language and there are no known believers.



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