

Ya in China



Photo: Anonymous



Map: Anonymous

"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

People Name	Ya
Country	China
Status	Unengaged Unreached
Population	61,000
Language	Tai Ya
Religion	Ethnic Religions
Written Scripture	Yes
Oral Scripture	No
Jesus Film	No
Gospel Recordings	No
Christ Followers	No
Churches	No
Workers Needed	1
Workers Reported	0

IDENTITY

Despite being acknowledged as a separate language by the Chinese, the Ya were combined with other related groups to form the official Dai nationality. The Ya are also known locally as the Cung and Tai Ya. Subgroups of the Ya include the Tai Sai and Tai Ka.

HISTORY

The Ya were originally part of the great Tai group. Today, after centuries of migration, as many as 20 million people scattered across southern China still belong to Tai related groups - including members of the Zhuang, Bouyei, Shui, and Dai nationalities. Other Tai groups have migrated as far west as northeast India, and as far east as China's Hainan Island and Vietnam.

CUSTOMS

The practice of tattooing has long held a prominent place in Ya culture. Legend has it that a long time ago there was no sun in the sky. Instead, a big pearl on a pipal tree gave light to the people. One day a demon stole the pearl. Wannapa, a Tai hero, started a long expedition to the edge of hell to recover it. On his way he recorded line maps on his body using sap, to enable him to find his way back. However, he found that after a few days the lines faded from the rain and sweat so he courageously bore the pain of pricking thorns into his skin to

make the maps sustainable. Chinese records from the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907) nickname the Tai "those with embroidered feet" in reference to their custom of tattooing.

RELIGION

The Ya are polytheists and animists. "The Buddhist Tai call all these illiterate Tai, Tai Ya. They say that the Lord Buddha once tried to teach these Tai, but found them so 'thick' that he desisted," recorded a researcher in the 1920s. Each year before the Ya plant their seeds, offerings are made to the spirit of the field and the goddess of rice.

CHRISTIANITY

Few Ya today have ever heard of Christ. Little has advanced in regard to Christianity among the Ya since one missionary who worked in southern China in the 1920s wrote, "Most of the tribes people are very ignorant and many have no written language of their own. Throughout that part of the province which is inhabited by tribal people, little Christian work has yet been done. Many areas have never even been explored."

PRAYER POINTS

* Pray for the Lord to thrust out workers to this people group. (Mt 9:37-38, Jn 4:35)

* Pray for the Holy Spirit to equip, empower, and guide these laborers to bear fruit through disciple-making and church-planting movements within this people group. (Mt 18:8, Mk 4:8, Jn 15:8)

* Ask the Holy Spirit to multiply these movements until there is no place left in this people group where Christ is not preached or known. (Mt 24:14, Mt 28:18-20, Acts 19:10, Rom 15:23)

* Ask that these movements transform this people group's culture to fully glorify God and represent His Kingdom on earth. (Mt 6:9-10, Rom 12:2, 2 Cor 3:18)

* Pray for every opposing spirit to give way to the liberating, life-giving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the coming King. (James 4:7, 2 Cor 10:4-5, 1 Cor 15:58, Mt 18:18)

SOURCES

Operation China, Paul Hattaway, pg. 554.
<https://goo.gl/Di59wG>