

Tai Nua in Myanmar



Map: Joshua Project / GMI / IMB

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

People Name	Tai Nua
Country	Myanmar
Status	Unengaged Unreached
Population	80,000
Language	Tai Nua
Religion	Buddhism
Written Scripture	Yes
Oral Scripture	Yes
Jesus Film	No
Gospel Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	No
Churches	No
Workers Needed	1
Workers Reported	0

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IDENTITY

Although the Tai Nua are part of the official Dai nationality in China, they speak their own distinct language. They should not be confused with the identically named but different Tai Nua of Laos.

Linguists have pointed out that Tai Nua is "a name given to at least two quite different southwestern branch groups." The Tai Nua are members of the Southwestern branch of the Tai language family, while the Tai Mao language spoken throughout Dehong Prefecture is similar to the Shan language of Myanmar. The confusion of names is caused partly by "the Chinese tendency to group languages together into nationalities, exemplified by the Dai nationality, which includes all the Southwestern Tai languages of China."

HISTORY

The Tai Nua are historically part of the great Tai race of Asia, which dispersed during the past millennia to now inhabit parts of China, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, India, and, of course, Thailand. "Based on evidence from Neolithic finds by archeologists during recent decades it is now believed that before migrating southwards, the forefathers of the present day Thais lived in most parts of Guangxi and Sichuan, plus parts of Guizhou and Yunnan."

CUSTOMS

After a Tai Nua wedding ceremony the bridegroom goes to live with his bride's family. Traditionally he must take with him gifts of tea, rice, meat, bananas, four eggs, and two salted fish for his new in-laws. Upon arrival, the village elder takes the packets of tea and rice out to the road and calls on the spirits of heaven and earth to witness the marriage. He then ties a white thread seven times around the wrist of the bride and once around the wrist of the groom to indicate their unbreakable commitment to each other.

RELIGION

Although they are nominally Theravada Buddhists, the Tai Nua have many aspects of animism and polytheism mixed into their beliefs. The very first Tai god was Shalou, the god of hunting.

CHRISTIANITY

There are no known Christians among the Tai Nua and very little outreach is presently focused on bringing the gospel to them. Little improvement in their spiritual condition has taken place since the 1920s when one missionary lamented, "There is not a missionary working south of [Kunming] to Mohei, I am here alone and my little candle is the only light. Yet in these mountains are thousands of tribesmen who have never heard of the Gospel."

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)