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Location: An official government study in 1995 listed 130,000 speakers of the Iu Mien language living in southern Hunan Province.¹ They inhabit at least 17 different counties within Hunan, including Yongzhou, Shuangpai, Xintian, Changning, Daoxian, Lanshan, Lingxian, Ningyuan, Jianghua, Jianguo, Dong'an, Linwu, Guiyang, Xinning, and Yizhang. In many locations the Iu Mien live alongside Ghaio-Xong and Han Chinese. There are no speakers of the Hunan variety of Iu Mien reportedly living outside of China.

Identity: Although they are part of the great Yao nationality in China, the Iu Mien living in Hunan Province have been found to speak a dialect that differs and is considered mutually unintelligible with Iu Mien varieties elsewhere.

Language: The language of the Iu Mien in Hunan has probably changed because of influences from neighboring languages such as Ghaio-Xong and Xiang Chinese. Today speakers of Hunan Iu Mien struggle greatly to understand the speech of their counterparts in Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces. Hunan Iu Mien is closer to the speech of the Iu Mien in northern Guangdong Province, but it is still different enough to be labeled a separate *fangyan* (language, in a Western sense) by contemporary Chinese scholars.²

History: There has been great conflict between the Iu Mien (Yao) and the Han for many centuries. Until this century the Chinese character for writing Yao used the radical for "insect" instead of the radical for "people." A series of

rebellions occurred among the Iu Mien in Hunan, starting in 1836. The fight was over the control of the opium trade. Most drugs going from southern China to the northern provinces passed through Xinning County, just to the west of the Xiang River valley. The Iu Mien in this region were involved with the trade as well as several Chinese triad societies, including the *Qinglian Jiao* (Black Lotus Society) and the *Bangbang Hui* (Cudgel Society). In 1847 another revolt occurred in Xinning, led by an Iu Mien, Li Caihao. The Iu Mien were savagely defeated after fighting lasted for several months. Thousands of Iu Mien were killed.³

Customs: Many of the Iu Mien in Hunan live in isolated villages at the summits of high mountains. Because of their location, the Iu Mien pipe fresh water to their villages through a skillfully constructed system of bamboo pipes.

Religion: The Hunan Iu Mien share three religious belief systems. They worship Pan Hu, the mythical progenitor of their race, they appease spirits and demons, and they also observe rituals borrowed from Daoism (which includes ancestor worship).

Christianity: The Iu Mien in Hunan are among China's most unreached people groups. There is very little Christian influence of any sort in Hunan, and few believers have ever dared to venture into the isolated mountains inhabited by the Iu Mien since time immemorial.



Population in China:
 130,000 (1990)
 167,700 (2000)
 216,300 (2010)
Location: Hunan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Hunan Iu Mien

- Countries:** China
- Pronunciation:** "Hoo-nahn-Yoo-Mee-en"
- Other Names:** Hunan Yao, Mien, Pan Yao
- Population Source:** 130,000 (1995 Wang Fushi – 1990 figure); Out of a total Yao population of 2,134,013 (1990 census)
- Location:** S Hunan: Yongzhou, Shuangpai, Xintian, Changning, Daoxian, Lanshan, Lingxian, Ningyuan, Jianghua, Jianguo, Dong'an, Linwu, Guiyang, Xinning, and Yizhang counties
- Status:** Officially included under Yao
- Language:** Hmong-Mien, Mienic, Mian-Jin
- Dialects:** 0
- Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Daoism
- Christians:** None known
- Scripture:** None
- Jesus film:** None
- Gospel Recordings:** None
- Christian Broadcasting:** None
- ROPAL code:** IUM03

