The Kam people are a minority nationality of 2.96 million people. They comprise people of mixed anthropological heritage. Most of the southern Kam belong to the southern Mongoloid race, either the Tai-Liao type or the southern Chinese type. In ancient times, the northern Kam also belonged to the southern Mongoloid race, but after mixing with migrants from the north their characteristics became closer to the northern Mongoloid race, further sub-classified as northern Chinese type. Although Xiangye was one administrative village, it was like the Kam nationality at large, possessing similarly complex mixtures of people from different anthropological classifications and blood-relationships.

In 1958 the author accompanied an anthropologist from Moscow University, Professor N.N. Cheboksalow, to survey a Yao village in Liannan county of Guangdong province. After taking measurements of the physique of some Yao men and women, Professor Cheboksalow was sure that the Miao, Yao and Kam were all communities of the southern Mongoloid race. This was consistent with the viewpoint of earlier European and American anthropologists, who even believed that these communities contained Austronesian blood and certain Austronesian physical characteristics. They surmised that the communities were originally distributed all the way from southern China throughout southeast Asia: today’s Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand, for example. This is the traditional anthropological viewpoint.

1 This population data is according to the 2001 national census in China.
Nurtured on glutinous rice.