



**Population in China:**

14,000 (1990)  
18,050 (2000)  
23,300 (2010)

**Location:** Guizhou

**Religion:** Animism

**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Western Mashan Miao

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** “Ma-shahn-Meow”

**Other Names:**

Hmong: Northern Mashan

**Population Source:** 14,000

(1995 Wang Fushi – 1990 figure);  
10,000 (1985 Wang Fushi – 1982 figure);

Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)

**Location:** S Guizhou: Houchang and Sidazhai districts in Wangmo County

**Status:**

Officially included under Miao

**Language:** Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Western Hmongic, Mashan

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Animism, Polytheism

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** None

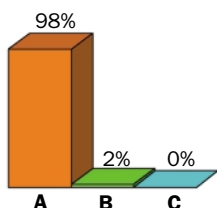
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** HMWOO

### Status of Evangelization



**A** = Have never heard the gospel  
**B** = Were evangelized but did not become Christians  
**C** = Are adherents to any form of Christianity

**Location:** More than 18,000 people in China speak the Western Mashan Miao language. Their villages are located in the small, remote area of Houchang and Sidazhai districts in Wangmo County. Wangmo, located in southern Guizhou Province, is a mountainous region rarely visited by outsiders. The total population of Guizhou fell from 14.7 million in 1928 to 9.2 million in 1935, mainly due to two civil wars.<sup>1</sup> Today the province’s population has mushroomed to 35 million. Roads and facilities are poor or nonexistent in the region. The Western Mashan Miao live near the Bouyei, Yao, and Zhuang.

**Identity:** The minority peoples of southern Guizhou are among the poorest in Asia and face mounting health risks. According to United Nation’s figures for the late 1980s, only 22% of Guizhou’s rural villages had access to an improved water source (running water, pump, or well). “The main source is usually a river or pond which is affected by droughts and almost always polluted from factory waste, seepage of agricultural chemicals, and human and animal waste.”<sup>2</sup>

**Language:** The Western Mashan Miao language — which has 13 recognizable tones<sup>3</sup> — does not have a written script.

**History:** A festival on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month commemorates the death of Ya Nu, who was killed in action as he led the Miao into battle against the Chinese 1,700 years ago.<sup>4</sup>

**Customs:** The majority of Western Mashan Miao are

hardworking peasants. They are also talented musicians, composing songs for festivals and creating energetic and demonstrative dances. Because of the region’s mountainous terrain, it often takes several hours to walk down into the valley and up again to reach a village on a nearby hill. Without the use of telephones, the Miao have learned to project their voices across the valleys and trees to reach a neighboring village.

**Religion:** The Western Mashan Miao put their trust in the spirit world. If a crop fails or a woman cannot produce children to help with work in the fields, the village could face starvation. As a result, an intricate system of spirit appeasement gradually developed. The

Miao believe that if they make peace with the spirits, the survival and prosperity of their communities will be ensured.

**Christianity:** The Western Mashan Miao have no knowledge of the gospel. Little has changed since William Clifton Dodd traveled through southern China in the 1920s: “It was a Christless land that we passed through. A man can endure a few days of absolute heathenism if he has a few Christian companions. But to foot it for a thousand miles without any sight or sound giving any evidence of anything Christian, to march as boldly as may be for so long and so far against such a blank wall of heathenism; this is to enter the land of darkness that may be felt.”<sup>5</sup>



Miao Messenger