

Location: The Southern Mashan are one of the smallest of the distinct Miao language groups in China, with a 1990 population of 10,000 people.¹ Despite the one-child policy in China, many Southern Mashan Miao have several children. This has resulted in a rapid population increase: their number was expected to exceed 12,000 by the year 2000. The Southern Mashan Miao live in a small region in the Mashan and Lekuan districts of Wangmo County. Wangmo is located in the extreme southern part of Guizhou Province. Their villages are accessible only by a lengthy walk over treacherous trails. For much of the year the weather in the region is wet and miserably cold.

Identity: Although the government considers them a part of the Miao nationality, the Southern Mashan Miao are a distinct people group. They live in small and compact communities, speak their own language, and have little to do with the outside world.

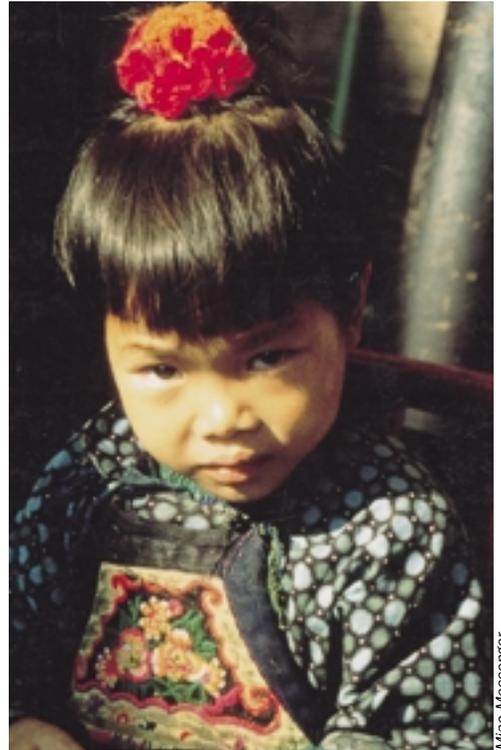
Language: Southern Mashan Miao is one of the four Mashan Miao languages. It is part of the Chuanqiandian (Western) branch of the Miao language group.

History: The Southern Mashan Miao are a group who migrated south following persecution against them in the past. The Chinese *Canon of Shuen* records one Miao group, the “San Miao,” being driven into the mountains of San Wei around 4,000 years ago.²

Customs: The Miao believe there was a time when dragons guarded their families, crops, animals, and trees against disease and pestilence. The people regularly sacrificed chickens to the dragons and burned paper money to procure their favor.

Religion: During funeral chants, which predate all Christian influence, many Miao groups refer to an outer place of darkness where the spirit of the deceased must travel. They believe it is a horrible place of demons, torments, and gnashing of teeth.³ Legend claims there was once a time when the Miao were able to climb to heaven on a huge fir tree, but the gods struck it down. Left with no other way to communicate with heaven, the people in Yanpai village of Xijiang County in Guizhou climbed to the top of the highest mountain and thrust a bamboo branch into its crest, signaling to the gods, “All is not well.”⁴ The Southern Mashan Miao are animists, living in fear of evil spirits.

Christianity: Wangmo County, the sole area where the Southern Mashan Miao live, was largely neglected by



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mission organizations in the pre-Communist era. The Southern Mashan Miao remain an unreached people group with no Scriptures in their language and no known ministries targeting them. There are a few Catholic believers among the Bouyei minority to the north, but the Miao and Bouyei have little contact with each other and speak different languages. Most Southern Mashan Miao cannot speak more than basic Mandarin; fewer still are able to read or write Chinese.



Population in China:
10,000 (1990)
12,900 (2000)
16,600 (2010)

Location: Guizhou
Religion: Animism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Southern Mashan Miao

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Ma-shahn-Meow”

Other Names:

Hmong: Southern Mashan

Population Source: 10,000 (1995 Wang Fushi – 1990 figure); 7,000 (1985 Wang Fushi – 1982 figure); Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)

Location: SW Guizhou: Mashan and Lekuan 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: HMA00

