



**Population in China:**  
 84,000 (1990)  
 108,350 (2000)  
 139,800 (2010)  
**Location:** Guizhou  
**Religion:** Christianity  
**Christians:** 80,000

## Overview of the Gha-Mu

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** "Ghah-Moo"

**Other Names:** Small Flowery Miao, Xiao Hua Miao, Hsiao Hwa Miao, Miao: Small Flowery

**Population Source:**  
 84,000 (1995 Wang Fushi – 1990 figure);  
 60,000 (1985 Wang Fushi – 1982 figure);  
 Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)

**Location:** *W Guizhou:* Shuicheng, Nayong, Zhenning, Guanling and Hezhang counties

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Miao

**Language:** Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Western Hmongic, Farwestern Hmong, Gha-mu

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Christianity, Animism

**Christians:** 80,000

**Scripture:** None

**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:**  
 Miao: Small Flowery #04793

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** None



Robert Sussland

**Location:** A 1995 study listed a 1990 population of 84,000 Gha-Mu in China.<sup>1</sup> They are located in Shuicheng, Nayong, Zhenning, Guanling, and Hezhang counties in the western part of Guizhou Province. The main center for the Gha-Mu is Nayong County. The area is cold in the winter, with frequent snowfall and frosts.

**Identity:** The Gha-Mu are widely known as the *Small Flowery Miao* in Chinese and mission literature. The Small Flowery Miao (Gha-Mu) are not the same people group, nor do they speak the same language, as the Big Flowery Miao (A-Hmao) of Guizhou and Yunnan. The names were given to these groups by the Chinese last century. They do not use the word *flowery* in their autonym, which is *Gha-Mu*, and which may be a cognate for the name *Hmong* used by many Western Miao tribes and peoples. The Gha-Mu have small, complex geometrical shapes embroidered on their clothing around the shoulders and waist.

**Language:** The Chinese classify the Gha-Mu as a second dialect of the Farwestern Miao group of languages. It is unintelligible with all other Miao varieties in China.

**History:** There are many flood legends among the Gha-Mu. They believe that when

the Thunder god threatened to destroy the earth with a deluge, a man called A-Zie "hollowed out a large gourd for himself, collected a hundred kinds and a thousand sorts of seeds, and put them in a smaller gourd."<sup>2</sup> They believe that from A-Zie came all the peoples of the earth, including the many different branches of today's Miao nationality.

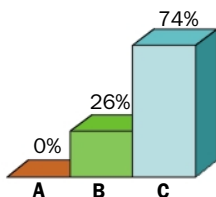
**Customs:** The Gha-Mu observe the Tiaohuapo Festival each March. "For the marriageable young of both sexes... it is one of their main chances to find a possible spouse. The young men decorate themselves with hats with long pheasant feathers."<sup>3</sup> In the past, bandits raided remote Gha-Mu villages in Nayong County. The Gha-Mu had no weapons with which to defend themselves so they used

sticks. Today, to remember their bravery, Gha-Mu maidens perform a Painted Stick Dance during their festivals.<sup>4</sup>

**Religion:** The Gha-Mu call the spirit world *bi-lao*, a general term "including gods, specters, ghosts, elves, demons, and any other supernatural media. While some *bi-lao* are kind and act as bodyguards, most are evil and compared to thieves. These malevolent *bi-lao* are indifferent to human feelings and are continually seeking ways to cause harm to people."<sup>5</sup> Today as many as 80% of the Gha-Mu are reported to have converted to Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

**Christianity:** The first Protestant missionary to the Gha-Mu was J. R. Adam who commenced work near Anshun in 1899. Just as a breakthrough in the work was starting to occur, a military official and a village headman went through the region, threatening people with death if they joined the "foreign religion." The floodwaters were ready to break, however, and by 1907 the number of believers numbered 1,200. Despite severe persecution in the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>7</sup> the Gha-Mu believers today are a vibrant and effective Christian community of approximately 80,000.<sup>8</sup>

### 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