

Location: More than 50,000 Miao people living in the Lupanshui and Qinglong areas of western Guizhou Province form their own ethnolinguistic group, which we have labeled *Miao, Lupanshui*. Lupanshui (also spelled *Liupanshui*) is an amalgamation of several towns and districts, combined to form a municipality which contains 2.5 million people.¹ Qinglong County, farther to the south, contained a total of 51,555 Miao people in the 1990 census, of which about 30% are part of the Lupanshui Miao group.

Identity: The Lupanshui Miao are a peculiarity. Scholars have found that although they are ethnically members of the Miao nationality, they speak the Xiang (Hunanese) Chinese language. Their dialect is similar to the Xiang language spoken in Dongkou County in western Hunan Province, at least 400 kilometers (247 mi.) from their present location. Today the Lupanshui Miao are linguistically distinct from all of the other Miao groups in western Guizhou. Other Miao people view the Lupanshui as a different group and usually do not intermarry with them.

Language: Lupanshui Miao speak a dialect of Xiang Chinese that is only spoken in three counties of Hunan Province: Dongkou, Suining, and Longhui. The Lupanshui Miao probably lost the use of their original Miao speech at least 300 years ago. Their homeland in Hunan is near the home of today's Ghaio-Xong ethnic group.

History: The precise reason why the Lupanshui Miao migrated away from

their homeland in Hunan Province is uncertain. The 1990 Chinese census listed only 304 Miao people still living in Dongkou County in Hunan, suggesting that almost the entire people group were transplanted across the province to their present-day location in Guizhou. Chinese military campaigns against the Miao are a likely reason for their migration. On certain occasions, the authorities uprooted whole communities and forced them to move to sensitive areas as guards and soldiers, and to spy on other Miao groups.

Customs: Since the mid-1980s there has been a growing desire among young people to move to Lupanshui City or one of the other economically thriving towns in the area, to find work in a factory or on a construction site.

Religion: The Lupanshui Miao are not a particularly religious people. Most of them are hardworking agriculturists



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who do not center their lives around religion. Many older Lupanshui Miao practice animism and still worship spirits and the elements of nature, but many of the youth are atheists.

Christianity: There are no known churches or Christian believers among the Lupanshui Miao. Miao churches do exist among other subgroups in the vicinity, but they speak languages very different from the Lupanshui and have been unable, and perhaps unwilling, to communicate the gospel to them. Christians in the Lupanshui area have experienced severe persecution in the past.



Population in China:
 40,000 (1990)
 51,600 (2000)
 66,500 (2010)
Location: Guizhou
Religion: Animism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Lupanshui Miao

Countries: China
Pronunciation: "Loo-pahn-shway-Meow"
Other Names: Miao, Liupanshui
Population Source: 40,000 (1990 AMO); Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)
Location: W Guizhou: Lupanshui Municipality; Qinglong County

Status: Officially included under Miao
Language: Chinese, Xiang
Dialects: 0
Religion: Animism, Polytheism, Ancestor Worship, No Religion
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: None

