



Population in China:
 70,000 (1990)
 90,300 (2000)
 116,400 (2010)
Location: Guizhou
Religion: Animism
Christians: 200

Overview of the Central Mashan Miao

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Ma-shahn-Meow”

Other Names:

Hmong: Central Mashan, Bu Cao

Population Source: 70,000 (1995 Wang Fushi – 1990 figure); 50,000 (1985 Wang Fushi – 1982 figure); Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)

Location: SW Guizhou: Ziyun, Wangmo, and Luodian counties

Status:
 Officially included under Miao

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

Dialects: 0

Religion:
 Animism, Polytheism, Christianity

Christians: 200

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: HMM00



Paul Hattaway

Location: The 1995 *Miaoyu Jianzhi* lists a 1990 population of 70,000 Central Mashan speakers out of a total population of 92,000 for all four Mashan vernaculars. The Central Mashan Miao are found in the Zongdi District of Ziyun County, in the Dayi District of Wangmo County, and in the Banyuan District of Luodian County. The locals have a saying that the Chinese live at the base of the hills, the Bouyei halfway up, and the Miao at the very top.

Identity: There are four Mashan Miao language groups in Guizhou, designated Northern, Southern, Central, and Western Mashan. All four comprise part of the large Miao nationality — the fourth most populous of China’s 55 official minorities. The Central Mashan Miao may call themselves *Bu Cao*.

Language: The Central Mashan Miao language — which contains an extraordinary 11 tones¹ — is not spoken in any other part of China.

History: Out of the extensive history of brutality waged by the Chinese against the Miao, what was probably the most vicious war commenced in 1800. A vast Chinese

army was mobilized from provinces all over China in a bid to completely exterminate the Miao. Critics describing the war at the time stated that “elephant guns were used to hunt rabbits.”² An estimated 500,000 Miao in Guizhou were butchered in the carnage, forcing the survivors to flee to more remote and mountainous regions. This and many similar historical influences have scattered the Miao, which resulted in them speaking such a wide variety of languages today.

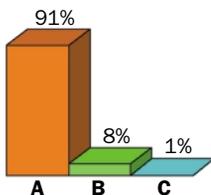
Customs: According to legend, at one time there were two Miao sisters who were unhappy because they could not find suitable husbands. A special social gathering was arranged with a neighboring village, enabling them to meet two handsome

young men, whom they married.³ To this day the Central Mashan Miao — and most other Miao groups — prefer to marry outside of their village. Marriage outside of their tribe or clan is extremely rare, however, and is discouraged by community leaders.

Religion: The Central Mashan Miao believe that all sickness is caused by evil spirits. A farmer with a headache is often thought to have met the “Shrinking Head Spirit” on a mountain slope. The victim is required to throw a bowl of rice and water outside the village gate to appease the spirit.⁴

Christianity: Only a tiny fraction of the Central Mashan Miao profess to be Christians. A small number of them have believed the gospel, but they currently do not have the resources or initiative to spread the gospel throughout the remainder of their people, most of whom have yet to hear the gospel. There is a massive church among the A-Hmao and Gha-Mu about 200 kilometers (124 mi.) to the northwest. If the believers from these two “Miao” groups came to the Central Mashan Miao they would need to learn a new language and new customs, and they might not be socially accepted.

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