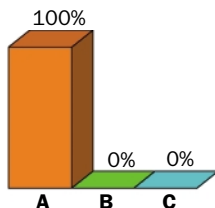


Population in China:
 80 (1998)
 82 (2000)
 94 (2010)
Location: Tibet
Religion: Shamanism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Miguba

Countries: China, probably India
Pronunciation: "Mih-goo-bah"
Other Names: Damu
Population Source:
 80 speakers (1998 J. Matisoff);
 Probably also in India
Location: *SE Tibet:* Damu Village
 in Motuo County
Status: Possibly officially included
 under Lhoba
Language: Sino-Tibetan,
 Tibeto-Burman, Baric, Mirish
Dialects: 0
Religion: Shamanism,
 Animism, Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: None

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: According to linguist Jackson Sun, 80 speakers of the Miguba language live in just one village in southeastern Tibet: Damu Village is located in a densely forested area of Motuo County.¹ The region is one of the least populated places in China. The few other inhabitants in the vicinity, mostly Lhoba and Tibetans, call the members of this group *Damu* after the name of their village. The Miguba may be the same ethnic group as the Ashing Adi people in Arunachal Pradesh, India. The legends of the Miguba closely match those of the Ashing, who numbered 959 people in India according to the 1971 census.

Identity: The Miguba ethnic group was only recently discovered. They may have been officially counted as part of the small Lhoba nationality by the Chinese authorities. The Miguba share linguistic similarities with the Bogar and Yidu, two tribes combined by the Chinese to form the Lhoba minority.

Language: The Miguba speak a dialect from the Mirish branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. Most Miguba are illiterate.

History: According to Miguba mythology, Abo Tani was the first human. They say they migrated across the Himalayas to their present location from a place named Padong-Among, which means "land of rain." Child marriages were prevalent in the past, but today most Miguba marry when they are 15 to 17 years of age.

Customs: In the past, the Miguba wore hats made of cane. The men still wear a long coat and a *langoti* (loincloth). The Miguba love to eat meat, especially deer, tiger, pork, and chicken. Their diet is supplemented by vegetables and fruit such as jackfruit, bananas, pineapples, guavas, and oranges. Premarital sexual relations are not only allowed by the Miguba but are encouraged. A boy's hut called *bango* and a girl's hut called *rasheng* are located in their village. Girls are not allowed to enter the *bango*, but boys are permitted to spend a night with a girl of their choice in the *rasheng*.

Religion: The Miguba live in constant fear of demons and the spirit world. Numerous aspects of their lives reflect their bondage. Before a woman gives birth, "pre-delivery rituals are observed to avoid future complications, but in case of certain problems a ritual

becomes a must to ward off evil spirits. The nature of animal sacrifice in the ritual depends upon the financial condition of the person concerned, as well as on the severity of the case. A name is given to the baby immediately after birth, either by the family or relatives, in order to save the baby from the clutches of evil spirits."² Some Miguba outwardly profess to be Buddhists, but this is done only to please the Tibetans.

Christianity: The whole region of southeast Tibet is somewhat of a mystery to outsiders. Few people have ever traveled to the area inhabited by the Miguba. The gospel has also failed to penetrate the thick forests and deep valleys of the northern Himalayas. There are no known Christians in the area to impact the Miguba, who have yet to be exposed to the gospel.



Paul Hattaway