

Location: The 1990 national census listed a total of 7,314 Shui people living in Yunnan Province.¹ More than 6,800 live in the Huangnihe District of Fuyuan County, while 490 inhabit the Dahe and Long'an districts of Yiliang County.

Identity: The Yunnan Shui have been officially included as part of the Shui nationality — which numbered approximately 350,000 people in the 1990 census — by the Chinese authorities. However, Chinese linguists Wei Ch'ing-wen and Li Fang-Gui both state that the Shui in Yunnan speak a language mutually unintelligible with the Shui in Guizhou Province.² For this reason the Yunnan Shui are profiled separately and are considered a “mission-significant” people group. It is possible that this group has not always identified themselves as *Shui*. The government has included several small language groups who are more closely related to the Shui, such as the Mo and Rao, in the official Bouyei nationality in Guizhou. The government's classifications are often based on cultural similarities and not on any proven historical, linguistic, or ethnic kinship.

Language: The Shui in Yunnan speak a language from the Kam-Sui (Dong-Shui) branch of the Daic linguistic family. Most Yunnan Shui are adequately bilingual in Chinese. The Shui in Yunnan do not use the rudimentary Shui script known to many Shui village leaders in Guizhou. The Yunnan Shui pass down stories

and fables which “praise the diligence, bravery, wisdom and love of the Shui ethnic group and satirize the stupidity of the feudal rulers.”³

History: The Shui in Yunnan are a diaspora group who migrated to their present location at least 250 years ago. Today they live several hundred kilometers (200–250 mi.) west of the main body of Shui in central Guizhou. During their lengthy separation the Yunnan Shui have developed their own customs.

Customs: The Yunnan Shui have a festive dance called the Copper Drum Dance, which is greatly enjoyed by all. It is performed during special occasions such as the Duan Festival, celebrated each September after the harvest has been gathered. Traditional musical instruments include gongs, lusheng, huqin, and suona horns.

Religion: Most Shui in Yunnan are animists. Ancestor worship does not appear to take such a prominent place among the Yunnan Shui as it does among the Guizhou Shui.



Paul Hattaway

Christianity: The Shui in Yunnan are an unreached people group without a single known Christian among them. Few have ever been exposed to the gospel message since they live in one of the most spiritually neglected areas of Yunnan Province. Because they speak their own language, the Yunnan Shui will not be able to understand the Shui gospel recordings or *Jesus* film presently being considered for translation. The Chinese language may be the best medium for evangelizing the Yunnan Shui. Most now read and write Chinese, and all but the elderly can speak the Southwestern dialect of Mandarin.



Population in China:

7,314 (1990)
9,200 (2000)
11,550 (2010)

Location: Yunnan

Religion: Animism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Yunnan Shui

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Yoo-nahn-Shway”

Other Names:

Population Source:
7,314 (1990 census);
Out of a total Shui population of 345,993 (1990 census)

Location: *E Yunnan:* Huangnihe District of Fuyuan County (6,824), and the Dahe and Long'an districts of Yiliang County (490)

Status:

Officially included under Shui

Language: Daic, Kam-Sui

Dialects: 0

Religion: Animism, Polytheism, Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

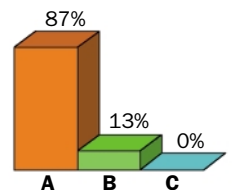
Jesus film: None

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