

# The Mosuo of China

In the mountains of the China-Tibet border, the Mosuo are a Tibetan Buddhist people with a difference. Mosuo society is more prosperous than that of many other ethnic villages in the region. They are a small society numbering around 40 000. They are also a traditionally matriarchal society.

Matriarchal societies are structured around the women in the family. Family names and property are passed from mother to daughter, rather than from father to son. In Mosuo society, women do not marry, rather, they take romantic partners at will and men remain as part of their own mother's family. Children are raised by the family of their mother with their father visiting in what is known as a "walking marriage." Men work to provide for their children, but mostly for their mother's household, their nieces and nephews.

Their ancestral homeland is by beautiful Lake Lugu, and this location, coupled with the promotion of appealing, if not entirely true, versions of their culture, have made the area a popular tourist destination in recent years. As always, with the loss of remoteness, comes changes to traditional ways. Younger Mosuo women sometimes see the benefits of a more typical marriage situation, particularly when it comes to raising children in modern world. But they retain their strong identity and expectations of equality.

Mosuo society was traditionally animist, but Tibetan Buddhism has integrated and largely dominated over the years. Boys will often be sent off to become Buddhist monks, and the monks conduct most life rituals, sometimes alongside a traditional shaman, and Tibetan Buddhist festivals and holidays are celebrated.



## HOW CAN WE PRAY?

Though a small community, the Mosuo are precious to God. Pray that they will experience His love. (Matthew 10:29-31)



The Mosuo do not have a written language. Pray that they will have access to the Bible in audio form. (Romans 10:17)



There is a small fellowship of believers among the Mosuo. Pray that they will grow and disciple many others in the faith. (Matthew 28:18-20)