



Population in China:
 24,300 (1999)
 24,900 (2000)
 31,200 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 600

Overview of the Southeastern Awu

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Ah-woo"

Other Names: Lawu, Luopuo, Awupuo, Mengwu, A-wou

Population Source:
 24,300 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Status:
 Officially included under Yi

Location: Yunnan: Mile (10,900),
 Luxi (8,000), Shizong (5,000),
 and Luoping (400) counties

Language: Sino-Tibetan,
 Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo,
 Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi,
 Southeastern Yi

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism,
 Ancestor Worship, Christianity

Christians: 600

Scripture: None

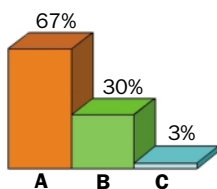
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: YIE03

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: Approximately 24,000 members of the Southeastern Awu ethnic group live in communities across a widespread area of southeastern Yunnan Province. Awu villages are located in parts of Mile (8,710 Awu people in 1984),¹ Luxi (8,000), Shizong (5,000), and Luoping (400) counties.

Identity: The Southeastern Awu are part of the official Yi nationality in China. Neighboring people groups call them a variety of names, including Lawu and Mengwu. The Southeastern Awu speak a language completely different from the Northern Awu.

Language: Awu is one of numerous languages and dialects that make up the Southeastern Yi branch of Tibeto-Burman. The Northern Awu speak a Northern Yi language.

History: The Southeastern Awu entered Honghe Prefecture from Shizong and Luoping during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).² The ancestors of the Awu are thought to have originally been part of the ancient Luowu tribe.

Customs: The Southeastern Awu living in Chuxiong Prefecture engage in a number of festivals and celebrations throughout the year. Some are shared with other Yi groups. On the eighth day of the second month of the lunar calendar, the people living in the mountainous areas of Chuxiong celebrate the Cattle Festival. The people wrap their cows' horns with flowers and place flowers above the cattle stall. They sing, dance, and pay

homage to the mountain god. Other celebrations throughout the year include the Third Month Fair, when people gather in the marketplace and play games; and the New Rice Festival, when people taste the freshly harvested rice and sing and dance. All gatherings are opportunities for the Awu to meet with friends and relatives, catch up on events, and trade with one another.

Religion: The majority of Southeastern Awu practice a mixture of animism, polytheism, and ancestor worship. On the second day of the second lunar month, the Awu of Mile County worship the White Dragon god.

Christianity: Before 1949 Catholic missionaries established a church among the Southeastern Awu at

Sunong Village in Dongshan District of Mile County. The number of Awu believers at one time numbered 94. In 1901 a church building was constructed in Aying Village of Xiangyang District in the eastern part of Luxi County. This church is still active today. By 1949 there were 132 Awu families professing faith in Christ in eastern Luxi. According to an official source there are presently 300 Awu believers in Luxi County.³ There may be many more Catholic believers among the Southeastern Awu in neighboring counties, although some reports suggest their faith has become extremely syncretistic since the departure of the missionaries almost 50 years ago. Idol worship and animistic rituals are practiced by many professing Christians, even inside the church buildings.



Jamin Pelkey