



Population in China:
 35,000 (1999)
 35,900 (2000)
 45,050 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 100

Overview of the Southern Gaisu

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Gai-soo”

Other Names: Gaisu Yi, Bailili, Gaisupuo, Bailisu, White Lisu, Luozu, Luoluo, Lolo

Population Source:
 35,000 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: Yunnan: Kaiyuan
 (33,600) and Gejiu (1,400)
 counties in Honghe Prefecture

Status:
 Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism,
 Ancestor Worship, No Religion,
 Christianity

Christians: 100

Scripture: None

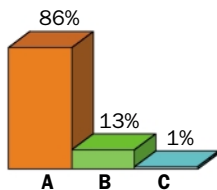
Jesus film: None

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: Approximately 35,000 Southern Gaisu live in the eastern half of Kaiyuan County in Honghe Prefecture of Yunnan Province, predominantly in the valleys and on the mountain slopes near Kaiyuan City. About 1,400 Gaisu spill over into Gejiu County.¹

Identity: The Southern Gaisu are one of approximately 100 Yi subgroups in Yunnan Province. They are not the same as the Western Gaisu who speak a completely different language. Neighboring minority groups have a host of names for the Southern Gaisu, including *Bailili*, *Bai Lisu* (White Lisu), and *Luozu*. Most Gaisu are highly assimilated to Han Chinese culture and language.

Language: The Southern Gaisu language is part of the Southern Yi linguistic branch. Some scholars have attempted to classify the Yi into six main language subgroups, but this has proved to be far from ideal. Within each language group many distinct languages can be found, all mutually unintelligible with other varieties within that same group.

History: As the various Yi groups splintered into smaller units, they moved southward from their original homeland near the juncture of today’s Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou provinces. The Southern Gaisu claim they entered their present location from Luxi and Muli counties to the north of where they now live in Honghe Prefecture.²

Customs: The Southern Gaisu observe the Tenth Month Celebration, held to celebrate the end of the harvest season. They sacrifice a pig to honor their ancestors and seek the blessing of the spirits for the upcoming year. They also celebrate the Torch Festival, common among many Yi groups in southern China. The Torch Festival is an occasion for relatives to get together and socialize. Events include bullfighting, wrestling, and singing.

Religion: The Southern Gaisu are polytheists. They worship many deities, ghosts and spirits. Days are set aside for the worship of the spirits. Ancestor worship is also widely practiced by the Southern Gaisu. Food is prepared and placed before pictures of dead family members. The Southern Gaisu observe many superstitions. They believe the manner in which guests

eat and the way they leave their plate and chopsticks may bring a curse on the host family. Many of the younger generation are atheists. Most Southern Gaisu have been assimilated to Han Chinese culture.

Christianity: Only a relative handful of Southern Gaisu are Christians. Few missionaries targeted them in the past. Devoted and love-filled laborers are still required today in order for the Gaisu to turn to Christ. Despite their relatively large population size, the Southern Gaisu have no Scriptures or audio recordings available in their language. This has created a barrier to their understanding of the gospel, as evangelists have customarily used written or spoken Chinese to reach them. The Chinese language is considered strange and foreign to many Southern Gaisu.



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