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Location: More than 6,000 people belonging to the Lagou ethnic group live in Weining County in northwestern Guizhou Province, and in Yiliang County in northeastern Yunnan Province. Two thousand Lagou live within Yunnan Province.¹ In Guizhou, the Lagou are concentrated near the town of Majie.²

Identity: The self-name of this people group is *Lagou*, although few people apart from the members of the group know it. The Han Chinese call them *Hong Yi* (Red Yi). The Lagou were former slaves of the Nasu. In the 1950s they were liberated by the Communist authorities.

Language: The speech of the Lagou may be exactly the same as the Nasu in Guizhou. They may have originally spoken their own dialect but adopted the

language of their masters while under slavery. Lagou is part of the Eastern Yi branch of Tibeto-Burman.

History: Weining County in Guizhou has long been viewed as a strategic location by military leaders. To the dismay of the Chinese, however, Weining was inhabited by a large number of Yi people who steadfastly resisted Chinese rule, giving rise to many armed conflicts. In 1381 Weining was selected by Fu Youde, “the general who conquered the south,” as a defense post. A garrison of 5,600 Imperial troops was stationed there. Later, when the Manchus assumed rule of China (1644), they launched a massive campaign against the Yi of Zhaotong and Weining. For the first time the area was fully brought under Chinese control.³ It was at this time that many Yi people left the area, crossed the Yangtze

River, and fled into the Daliangshan Mountains in southern Sichuan.

Customs: Despite their history of oppression, the Lagou today are a very colorful and fun-loving people. One visitor to Majie in Guizhou commented: “The Yi people of Majie are *Red Yi* [Lagou]; in the old days, they would have been slaves of the *Black Yi* [Nasu], in other words, at the very bottom rung of the social ladder. The Red Yi of today’s world have gained a reputation for their expertise in basketry, as well as in the manufacture of other bamboo articles, so that they are now often referred to jokingly as ‘that tribe of bamboo craftsmen’. I was much taken by the blue dress of their womenfolk with collar, shoulders, front opening and sleeves all trimmed with broad bands of embroidery and braiding. A villager told me that the clothing worn by Yi women around Majie is old-fashioned, reflecting the styles of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and is rarely seen elsewhere, even within the area of Weining.”⁴

Religion: Ancestor worship and Christianity are the two main religious beliefs among the Lagou.

Christianity: Before 1949 the China Inland Mission planted 16 churches among the Yi in Weining County. The Methodists also joined in the work, so that by 1950 there were 25 private Christian schools in the county. Today there are an estimated 2,000 Lagou believers in China — or approximately one-third of the population. One official publication estimates that

50% of all Yi in Weining County are Christians.⁵



Population in China:

6,000 (1999)
6,150 (2000)
7,720 (2010)

Location: Guizhou, Yunnan
Religion: Ancestor Worship
Christians: 2,000

Overview of the Lagou

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Lah-gaow”

Other Names: Lagoupu, Hong Yi, Red Yi

Population Source: 6,000 (1999 AMO); 2,000 in Yunnan (1999 J. Pelkey); Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: NW Guizhou: Weining County; NE Yunnan: Yiliang County

Status: Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Ancestor Worship, Christianity, Animism

Christians: 2,000

Scripture: None

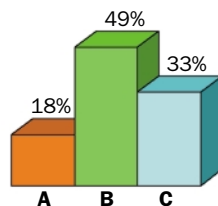
Jesus film: None

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