



Jamin Pelkey

Location: Approximately 90,000 Eastern Lipo live in scattered communities across three counties in northern Yunnan and southern Sichuan provinces, primarily along the upper Yangtze River watershed.¹ The majority live in Wuding and Yuanmou counties. Eastern Lipo communities are located from Panzhihua in Sichuan all the way down to the outskirts of Kunming city in Yunnan.

Identity: Strangely, the Eastern Lipo have been included in the Lisu nationality at local administrative levels but are considered part of the Yi nationality at the national level — a classification that angers them.² They have more in common historically and linguistically with the Lisu than with the Yi. The Eastern Lipo have a different language, dress, and history from the Western Lipo.

Language: Although the Eastern Lipo language is closely related to Lisu on the China-Myanmar border,³ the Chinese have classified Eastern Lipo as a Yi language.

History: The Eastern Lipo originally lived with the Lisu in the Salween Valley, but they migrated to the Wuding area after suffering a crushing military defeat at the Salween River in 1812.⁴ In October 1995 a huge earthquake struck the Wuding District. One hundred and thirty thousand in Eastern Lipo people — were destroyed. Fifty people were killed, 1,000 wounded, and 200,000 people were left homeless.

Customs: The Eastern Lipo occasionally intermarry with neighboring tribes. Most of their culture is now centered around the church and their strong Christian faith.

Religion: The majority of Eastern Lipo are professing Christians. They were first converted by Australian missionary-doctor Arthur Nicholls, who traveled to the area in 1906.⁵ Conversions occurred almost immediately. In 1907, 60 Eastern Lipo believers traveled 97 kilometers (60 mi.) to Sapushan to participate in the Harvest Thanksgiving Service.⁶ In 1913 the four Gospels were translated into Eastern Lipo, using the Pollard script.⁷ By 1922 it was reported that the Lipo's "progress toward self-support is truly amazing and most gratifying. Already in many centers half of the working expenses are met by the native church."⁸ The Eastern Lipo church experienced severe persecution during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1978 one pastor "had both his arms crippled from being hung up for 15 days with galvanized wire which was wrenched tighter with pliers after every refusal to give up his faith."⁹

Christianity: In 1986 the Eastern Lipo, Naluo, Gesu, Eastern Nasu, A-Hmao, and Han believers in Sayingpan built Yunnan's largest church (1,500 seats) with their own labor and money. Their dedication and sacrifice was a tremendous witness to the local authorities. By 1988, in Luquan County alone, 475 Communist cadres and 390 Communist Youth League members had accepted the gospel.¹⁰ By 1990 there was estimated to be at least 60,000 Eastern Lipo believers.¹¹ In early 1998 Eastern Lipo churches sent evangelists to ten unreached minorities throughout southern China.



Population in China:
 80,000 (1995)
 90,200 (2000)
 113,300 (2010)
Location: Yunnan, Sichuan
Religion: Christianity
Christians: 60,000

Overview of the Eastern Lipo

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Lee-po"

Other Names: Eastern Lisu, Lipoo, Lipuo, Lisu Taku, He Lisu, Black Lisu, Taku, Machi, Machipuo, Lizu, Li-a, Heipo

Population Source:
 80,000 (1995 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *N Yunnan:* Wuding (27,000), Yuanmou (17,000), and Luquan (10,000) counties;
S Sichuan: Huli, Huidong, and Pingdi counties

Status: Officially included under Yi on a national level, and Lisu on a district, county, and prefecture level

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmic, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Northern Lolo, Lisu

Dialects: 0

Religion: Christianity, Animism

Christians: 60,000

Scripture: New Testament 1951; Portions 1913; Work in progress

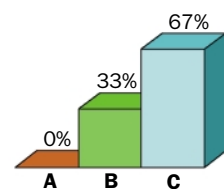
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: Lipo #04669

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: TKL00

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