



Jamin Pelkey

**Location:** More than 100,000 Southern Nasu live in five counties of central and southern Yunnan Province. The majority (42,900) live in Eshan County, followed by Xiping County (33,300), while Yimen County contains 17,000 Southern Nasu. In addition, about 9,000 Southern Nasu live in the southern part of Anning County and the southwestern part of Jinning County in the Kunming Municipality.<sup>1</sup>

**Identity:** Although this people group calls itself merely *Nasu*, an added description is needed in order to separate them from other groups who refer to themselves as Nasu but who speak different languages and dialects.<sup>2</sup> The Southern Nasu are also different from the Nisu in Xiping and Yuanyang counties who have been profiled separately.

**Language:** The Southern Nasu speak a northwestern dialect within the Southern Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Southern Nasu is reportedly very similar to the Xiping Nisu language. The two groups have little trouble communicating with each other in their own languages. The two groups, however, do have different customs, style of dress, and insist that they are distinct groups.

**History:** The Southern Nasu probably originated in southern Sichuan and northern Yunnan many centuries ago. The name *Nasu* means “black people.” The color black is revered by the Nasu.

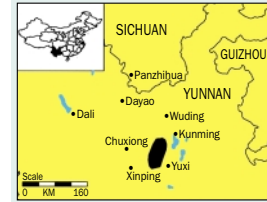
**Customs:** The Southern Nasu retain many aspects of their traditional culture, including the four-stringed guitar and a host of folk dances and songs. They

also participate in the annual Torch Festival which takes place on the 24th day of the sixth lunar month.

**Religion:** The Southern Nasu are polytheists who attempt to placate a wide array of spirits and deities. Some spirits are considered helpful while others are evil and cause death, sickness, and destruction. One source says, “Animistic spirituality and ancestor worship is alive and well among this people. The Southern Nasu of Eshan County still have living *bimas* or sorcerers who perform rites and incantations from the ancient script to appease demons and ward off evil from sick persons, households, and at

funerals. Besides the *bimo* there is a significant number of ordinary people who have linked themselves with the spirit world, and are able, through such channels, to heal sicknesses.”<sup>3</sup>

**Christianity:** There are presently only about 100 known Christians among the Southern Nasu. These believers meet in Han Chinese churches in the townships of Yuxi Prefecture. There is no Nasu-language congregation in existence. Today most Southern Nasu have no knowledge of Christianity. Mission work among them prior to 1949 was nonexistent. In 1998 the Christian ministry Gospel Recordings produced audio tapes of the gospel message in Southern Nasu, resulting in a few people making decisions to follow Christ.



**Population in China:**  
 102,200 (1999)  
 104,800 (2000)  
 131,500 (2010)  
**Location:** Yunnan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** 100

## Overview of the Southern Nasu

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** “Nah-soo”

**Other Names:** Southern Yi

**Population Source:**

102,200 (1999 J. Pelkey);  
 Out of a total Yi population of  
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

**Location:** *Yunnan:* Eshan (42,900), Xiping (33,300), and Yimen (17,000) counties of Yuxi Prefecture; Jinning and Anning (together 9,000) counties of Kunming Municipality

**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, Shamanism, Christianity

**Christians:** 100

**Scripture:** None

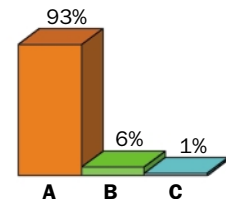
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:**  
 Southern Nasu #04670

**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