

Location: The Neisu tribe, who number more than 16,500 members, inhabit parts of the Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, in the south central part of Yunnan Province. Honghe Prefecture shares its southern border with Vietnam.

Identity: Although officially counted as a Hani subgroup, the Neisu have possessed their own customs and national dress for centuries, as well as their own distinct language. One writer explains, "The term *Hani* can be a little misleading. In the 1950s, Communist government officials... found a host of various minority groups and began to combine those that had some sort of affinity into larger groups for administrative purposes."² Neisu women are easily identified by their distinctive rooster-shaped hat and the colorful decorations of silver and embroidery on their aprons.

Language: Neisu is a distinct language. Although it is partially related to other languages in the area such as Kado and Biyo, most speakers from the different groups use Chinese in order to communicate with each other. The Chinese list "five different subgroups and dialects in Mojiang County alone,"² but other sources indicate the situation is much more complex. One visitor reported "14 different Hani dialect groups in just one area."³ Note the Neisu language of the Hani subgroup is not the same as the Nisu varieties in southern China.

History: The oral stories and poems of the Neisu are rich with images of high mountains and rice-terracing systems. The Neisu have been cultivating rice on the steep mountain slopes of southern China for many centuries.

Customs: Neisu villages are constructed, where possible, along mountain ridges. Their homes are built with thatched roofs. Inside there is a strict division between the men's part of the house and the women's. Males are not allowed in the women's section. Every year the Neisu traditionally carve a pair of male and female wooden figures. These are placed on paths leading to the village entrance. At the end of the year the figures are not removed but are simply left to rot. After a number of years the village entrance seems to be guarded by many of these distinctive carvings.

Religion: The primary religion among the Neisu is polytheism. The term *polytheism* literally means "many gods." Indeed the Neisu worship a multiplicity of deities, from Chinese Daoist gods to ones portrayed as fearsome figures brandishing swords and clutching the severed heads of their human victims.



Paul Hattaway

Christianity: There are believed to be several hundred Neisu Christians meeting in mixed churches with believers of other nationalities. In the 1950s and 1960s the Communist authorities launched a systematic plan to destroy the church in Honghe. Believers were forced to work on Sundays to prevent them from meeting together. Many worked twice as hard on Saturday to meet the quota for Sunday, so they could take the day off. Others continued to meet secretly on Sunday or stopped work to worship God in the fields.⁴ Believers still suffer discrimination today.



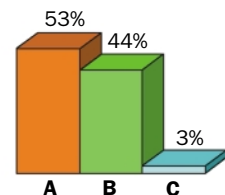
Population in China:
 15,000 (1995)
 16,700 (2000)
 20,500 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 400

Overview of the Neisu

Countries: China
Pronunciation: "Nay-soo"
Other Names: Nisu
Population Source:
 15,000 (1995 AMO);
 Out of a total Hani population of 198,252 (1990 census)
Location:
 S Yunnan: Honghe Prefecture
Status:
 Officially included under Hani

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Southern Lolo, Akha, Unclassified
Dialects: 0
Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Christianity, Daoism
Christians: 400
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