

**Location:** According to Jamin Pelkey, 28,000 Central Niesu live along the common borders of Yangbi, Yunlong, and Yongping counties in the western part of Dali Prefecture in Yunnan Province. In Yangbi County, where 15,000 are found, the Central Niesu live in all the communities of Fuheng District; in the Goupi Community of Taiping District; in the Baizhang Community of Shangjie District; and in parts of Wanpo Community in Shuangjian District. In Yongping County, which contains 7,000 Central Niesu, they inhabit the Lishuping, Shuanghe, Heidouchang, and Liumi communities of Beidou District. In Yunlong County, the 6,000 Central Niesu live in all of the communities within Tuanjie District.<sup>1</sup>

**Identity:** The Central Niesu have been officially included as part of the Yi nationality in China. They are not the same as the similarly named Nisu, Neisu, Nasu, or Nosu groups in southern China who, even though they are all viewed as Yi groups, possess widely differing customs and languages. They are also not the same as a group in Weining County of Guizhou Province, also called Niesu.

**Language:** The Central Niesu language has been placed in the Central Yi group by Chinese linguists apparently on the basis that it displays similarities with the Western Lipo language, which has been classified a Central Yi variety.

**History:** According to past records, the Central Niesu were once part of

the Lowu nationality, as were the present-day Luowu people group. Many centuries ago the ancestors of the Central Niesu migrated to their present location and settled down in the mountains.

**Customs:** A Niesu couple usually gets married by one of two ways. First, the couple needs the consent of both sets of parents. The couple then customarily lives in the home of the bride's family until the first child is born. Only after the birth is the couple officially considered married. They are free to move into their own home. Alternatively, when a girl "reaches the age of 16 she is given her own room above the goat shed or cattle stall. Her boyfriend then comes and spends the nights with her. When a child is born, the father of the child is her husband for life. Before a child is born... the 'marriage' may be broken off by a simple ceremony of splitting a stick, but after the first child, divorce is very uncommon."<sup>2</sup>

**Religion:** The Central Niesu worship many gods and spirits. Some they see

as helpful spirits that can bless and protect them, but most they see as vengeful and dangerous spirits that must be continually appeased and feared.

**Christianity:** The gospel has yet to reach the ears of at least 90% of Central Niesu people in China. Dali Prefecture contains one of the lowest percentage Christians of any area in Yunnan Province. Not only are the Central Niesu unreached, but they are surrounded by numerous other people groups in a similar unfortunate position.



Paul Hattaway



**Population in China:**  
 28,000 (1999)  
 28,700 (2000)  
 36,050 (2010)  
**Location:** Yunnan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Central Niesu

**Countries:** China  
**Pronunciation:** "Nay-soo"  
**Other Names:** Niesupo, Neisu, Luowu  
**Population Source:** 28,000 (1999 J. Pelkey); Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)  
**Location:** *W Yunnan:* Yangbi (15,000), Yongping (7,000), and Yunlong (6,000) counties

**Status:** Officially included under Yi  
**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi, Central Yi  
**Dialects:** 0  
**Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship  
**Christians:** None known  
**Scripture:** None  
**Jesus film:** None  
**Gospel Recordings:** None  
**Christian Broadcasting:** None  
**ROPAL code:** None

