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**Location:** More than 190,000 speakers of Xinping Nisu live in Xinping, Yuxi, Eshan, Yuanjiang, Jiangchuan, and Yimen counties of Yuxi Prefecture (143,400); Anning and Jinning Counties of Kunming Municipality (18,000); and Shiping County in Honghe Prefecture (31,000).<sup>1</sup> These locations are all within China's Yunnan Province.

**Identity:** Although the Xinping Nisu are officially included as part of the Yi nationality, they wear different dress, speak a distinct dialect from all other Yi groups, and possess their own self-identity. The Chinese call this group *Huayao Yi* (Flower Belt Yi) in reference to the clothing worn by the women. The Xinping Nisu in some areas call themselves *Tuli*, but they speak the same dialect as other Xinping Nisu.

**Language:** Xinping Nisu, which is mutually unintelligible with the other Nisu languages in southern China, is part of the Southern Yi language family. It has no written script.

**History:** Different Yi groups, including the Xinping Nisu, have developed their own identity and customs after centuries of isolation from each other.

**Customs:** Unmarried Xinping Nisu women wear gorgeous cockscomb hats made of wool tassels and silver bubbles. A legend states that there were once two Nisu villages in the Honghe area that were constantly harassed by an evil spirit. The demon was defeated by magic when a rooster crowed.<sup>2</sup> Of the many festivals observed by the Nisu in Yunnan, the one that takes place on the slopes of the Mopan Mountain in Xinping County is considered

the greatest. When a Nisu girl turns 15 or 16 she is said to have entered the "spring time" of her life. When this time has come, her family sends her into the mountains with a selected boy from her village. The two pick a selection of beautiful flowers and grass and return home. The girl arranges a large structure of flowers on the roof of her house. When she has finished, her mother places a special headdress on her head and jewelry on her wrists. She also adorns herself with necklaces and earrings, and wears a special belt around her waist. Then her family and friends hold a ceremony where they drink wine and sing the following song: "Springtime has come to the mountains, The flowers are opening and the birds are beautiful on the hills; The young birds are flying away from their nests.... Springtime has come to this young maiden, She has blossomed and is beautiful; She too must leave her old home."<sup>3</sup>

**Religion:** Roosters are held in great reverence and are even worshiped by the Xinping Nisu. They also believe the spirits of dragons and the ox can protect them.

**Christianity:** Although an attempt by the China Inland Mission to reach the Tuli (a subgroup of the Xinping Nisu) apparently ended in failure,<sup>4</sup> there are a few known Xinping Nisu Christians in Yuanjiang County today. A 1989 study listed 528 Yi Christians in Yuxi Prefecture, of which 55% were in Yuanjiang County.<sup>5</sup> Most of these are probably Xinping Nisu.



**Population in China:**  
192,400 (1999)  
197,300 (2000)  
247,600 (2010)  
**Location:** Yunnan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** 1,000

## Overview of the Xinping Nisu

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** "Shin-ping-Nee-soo"

**Other Names:** Huayao Yi, Flowery Belt Yi, Flowery Waist Yi, Hua Yao Yi, Nisu, Nisupuo, Tuli, Tuli Yi, Tuly, Niesu, Neisu

**Population Source:** 192,400 (1999 J. Pelkey); Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)

**Location:** *Yunnan:* Xinping (37,800), Yuxi (31,500), Eshan (28,900), Yuanjiang (28,000), Jiangchuan (12,700), and Yimen (4,500) counties of Yuxi Prefecture (143,400); Anning and Jinning (18,000) counties of Kunming Municipality; Shiping County (31,000) of Honghe Prefecture

**Status:** Officially included under Yi

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

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Christianity

**Christians:** 1,000

**Scripture:** None

**Jesus film:** None

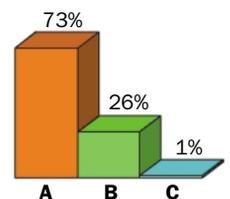
**Gospel Recordings:**

Yi: Nisu #04976

**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