



Population in China:
 3,500 (1999)
 3,590 (2000)
 4,500 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Tagu

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Tah-goo"

Other Names: Taguren, Tagupo

Population Source:
 3,500 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *N Yunnan:* Ninglang
 (2,000) and Yongsheng (1,500)
 counties

Status:
 Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism,
 Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

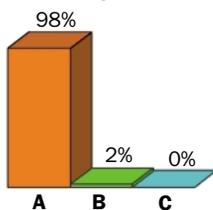
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

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



Target Ministries

Location: More than 3,500 people belong to the Tagu ethnic group in northern Yunnan Province of southern China. The Tagu mainly inhabit villages in the Dongshan and Gai communities of Dongshan District in Yongsheng County. The principal village of the Tagu is Taguping.¹ The Tagu are also known to live in Ninglang County, but their specific location is unknown.

Identity: The Tagu are part of the official Yi nationality in China, although they view themselves as distinct from all other ethnic groups. The Tagu are not the same as the Talu — a different Yi group also found in Yongsheng and Ninglang counties.

Language: Tagu has been classified as part of the Northern Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family.

History: The Tagu may have been a tribe who came out of southern Sichuan Province centuries ago to escape the slave system practiced by the Nosu people there. After several generations, the ancestors of the Tagu forgot their origins and developed their own ethnicity, language, and culture.

Customs: When a missionary visited a Yi village in the early 1900s, he was given a never-to-be-forgotten meal: "As we sat on bear rugs on the ground a goat was brought

in and presented to us, and there and then they set to slaughter and prepare it for the meal. This is considered very respectful to the guest and assures him that the meat is fresh and that the animal has been killed especially for his benefit. When the carcass was ready, the heart and liver were thrown into the ashes of the wood fire and after a few minutes they were taken out, placed on wooden plates and handed to the visitors. I ate mine with as much delight as I could.... Staying among these wild people convinces me that in their homes and among their own people they are worthy of our best efforts to evangelize among them. I found a warm welcome wherever I went and nowhere met with the ill-treatment predicted for me by the Chinese."²

Religion: One of the main deities feared by Yi people everywhere, including the Tagu, are the powerful Mountain gods they believe dwell inside the largest mountains in each area. Offerings and sacrifices are made to placate these demons. It is possible that the legends related to the power of the Mountain gods started as a result of volcanic activity long ago: this convinced the people a powerful being was responsible for displaying his wrath and venting his anger through the mountain. The Tagu also worship many local spirits, such as the spirit of the soil, the spirit of the rice harvest, and the spirit of the forest.

Christianity: Ninglang and Yongsheng, for all practical purposes, have only been connected to the rest of China for the last few decades. Before the 1950s there were few or no roads in the area and, therefore, they experienced little Chinese influence. For the same reason, no missionaries are known to have lived in the Ninglang or Yongsheng areas before 1949. Today there are no known believers or churches among the Tagu. They have little access to the gospel, and most Tagu have never yet met a Christian.