

Jamin Pelkey

Location: More than 7,000 people belong to the Talu ethnic group in southern China. About 4,000 are concentrated in the Shuanghe, Yushui, Yunshan, and Liude villages in the Liude District of Yongsheng County in northern Yunnan Province. An additional 1,800 Talu live in the Yongningping District of northern Ninglang County, while others inhabit Weixing and Tongda areas of northwest Huaping County.¹ All areas inhabited by the Talu are located in the mountains of northern Yunnan Province.

Identity: Little is known about the Talu, except that they have been officially included under the Yi nationality in China. The Talu, who are also known as the *Talusu*, have never before appeared in any mission lists of people groups in China.

Language: Although the Talu language has never been specifically studied, it is believed to be part of the Northern Yi branch of Tibeto-Burman. Chinese linguists have formally classified Yongsheng, Ninglang, and Huaping counties as “Northern Yi” areas.

History: Despite the existence of a number of smaller Northern Yi-speaking groups in China, most sources, when speaking of the Northern Yi, do not mention any groups other than the dominant Nosu people. Jamin Pelkey explains, “The great, proud Nosu of Sichuan clasp the imagination with their history of slavery and savagery. As a result, much attention has been paid to the details and nuances of their culture while the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the tribes and peoples included in their numbers

have gone unheeded.... The Nosu population also spills over into Yunnan, and by paying closer attention to detail in Yongsheng and Ninglang counties, what was previously thought to be Nosu has exploded into nine other small, and previously unknown tribes and peoples whose autonyms and dialects are distinct from the Nosu around them.”²

Customs: The Talu believe that when people are sick it is the result of a demonic curse. Often the sick are abandoned to a room where they stay until they show signs of improvement.

Religion: The Talu, and some of the neighboring Yi peoples, observe funeral customs that are designed to help the soul of the deceased find rest: “the horse which the deceased used to ride is brought to the door and saddled by the exorcist. The command is then given to lead the horse to the grave. All the mourners follow, and, marching or dancing in intertwining circles, cross and re-cross the path of the horse until the poor creature, bewildered and frantic with fear, rushes and kicks in a wild confusion. The whole company thereupon raise a great shout, and say, ‘The soul has come to ride the horse! The soul has come to ride the horse!’”³

Christianity: Few parts of China have been so thoroughly neglected by the ambassadors of Christianity than the areas inhabited by the Talu. Yongsheng, Ninglang, and Huaping counties are practically entirely devoid of any

Christian presence. As a result, the Talu are a completely unreached and unevangelized people group with no knowledge of Jesus Christ.

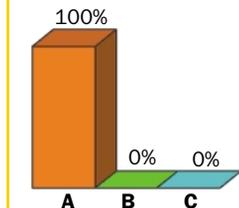


Population in China:
 7,000 (1999)
 7,150 (2000)
 9,000 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Talu

Countries: China
Pronunciation: “Tah-loo”
Other Names: Talusu
Population Source:
 7,000 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)
Location: *N Yunnan:* Yongsheng (4,000), Ninglang (1,800), and Huaping (1,200) 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: Yi: Talu
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