Nasu, Wusa   纳苏，乌撒

Population in China:
242,400 (1999)
248,500 (2000)
312,000 (2010)
Location: Guizhou, Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 60,000

Overview of the Wusa Nasu

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Nah-soo-Woo-sa"

Other Names: Wusa, Nasu, Nasupo, Lousu, Henke Yi, Hezhang Yi

Population Source:
242,400(1999 AMO);
85,000 in Yunnan
(1999 J. Pelkey);
Out of a total Yi population of
6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *W Guizhou:* Weining, Shuicheng, Hezhang, Nayong, Dafang, Bijie, and Qianxi counties; *NE Yunnan:* Xuanwei (58,000), Yiliang (15,000), and Huize (12,000) counties

Status:
Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects (3):
Weining, Hezhang, Henke

Religion: Polytheism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity

Christians: 60,000

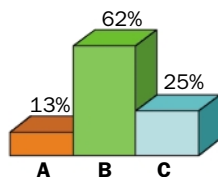**Scripture:** None

***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

Location: Approximately 250,000 Wusa Nasu people live in seven counties of northwest Guizhou Province and in three counties of northeast Yunnan Province in southern China. The Wusa Nasu are the dominant Yi group in this region of China. The highest concentrations are found in Weining, Shuicheng, Hezhang, and Nayong counties of Guizhou; and in Xuanwei County of Yunnan where 58,000 reportedly live.[1]

Identity: The Wusa Nasu speak a different language from the several other Yi groups in southern China who use the autonym *Nasu*. The name *Wusa* is an ancient tribal name which formerly designated this people group.

Language: Wusa Nasu is part of the Eastern Yi group of Tibeto-Burman languages. In areas where their population is thin, the Wusa Nasu language is being lost to Chinese, but in densely concentrated areas the language is still used vigorously. In Weining County, for example, 85% of the Yi in the county still speak their native tongue and use it daily.[2]

History: The Wusa Nasu claim they are descended from their esteemed ancestor Dumu, "who had six sons after moving into the region of present-day Zhaotong. These six sons became separate tribes — one of the tribes being the *Wusa*. Among the other tribes were the *Wumeng* and *Mangbu Nosu*. These six tribes have developed quite separately in terms of language."[3]

Customs: Most Wusa Nasu are herders of goats, sheep, cattle, and pigs. Since the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) the Wusa Nasu have used Chinese names, although many still also have Wusa names which consist of two characters. Folk dancing is an important part of Wusa Nasu culture. They dance at weddings, festivals, and at family get-togethers. Children often wear hats decorated with pictures of the sun, moon, and stars.

Religion: The Wusa Nasu used to bury their dead but now they cremate them. The people worry that their relatives' souls will not reach their ancestors' homeland, so shamans are called on to perform rituals over the dead body. Shamans still operate in Weining County, but most of them are over 60 years old. Nature worship is embedded in Wusa Nasu customs. They particularly revere the sun and the moon. In totem worship they idolize woodcarvings of bamboo, cranes, tigers, and dragons.

Christianity: At least 25% of Wusa Nasu are Christians today. Missionaries commenced work among them in the early 1900s. In 1907 the Wusa Nasu tried to murder Samuel Pollard because many of their A-Hmao tenants were being converted. The Wusa Nasu feared the missionaries were giving poison to the A-Hmao to put in their wells.[4] By 1911 the work was advancing slowly. It was reported: "Some of them [Wusa Nasu] gather a little consolation from the coming of Christianity, and hope that it means an arrest of their decline."[5] Large numbers of Wusa Nasu have followed Christ, including about 50% of the population in Weining County;[6] in other areas they have firmly resisted the advance of Christianity.

Paul Hattaway