



Population in China:
 1,500 (1998)
 1,550 (2000)
 1,810 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Naju

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Nah-joo"

Other Names:

Naru, Guabie Naxi, Kua-pie Naxi

Population Source:

1,500 (1998 AMO);
 Out of a total Naxi population of
 278,009 (1990 census)

Location: S Sichuan: Guabie
 District in Yanyuan County;
 Bowa and Liewa districts in Muli
 County

Status:

Officially included under Naxi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion:

Tibetan Buddhism, Polytheism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None



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History: The Naju claim to have originated on the Tibetan Plateau. Between 800 and 1,000 years ago they migrated down from the plateau. Some stayed behind at Lugu Lake on today's Sichuan-Yunnan border where they gradually developed into the group now known as *Mosuo*. The majority continued farther south to Lijiang and became today's *Naxi* people. Some time later, a group of the *Mosuo* left their homeland at Lugu Lake and they developed into the present-day *Naju* group. For several hundred years the *Naxi* and *Mosuo* had their own kings who dominated other ethnic groups and controlled commerce throughout the region.

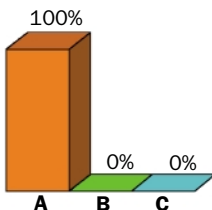
Location: More than 1,500 people belonging to the Naju ethnic group live in a remote part of southern Sichuan Province. Their main community is located in the Guabie District of Yanyuan County. Others are found in the Bowa and Liewa districts of Muli County. The area is rarely visited by outsiders. Few roads connect the remote peoples of southern Sichuan who live in isolated mountain villages. The region is marked with great ethnic and linguistic diversity. Muli County contains people from the Chrame, Sichuan Mongol, Ersu, Nosu, and several other small ethnic groups.

Customs: The whole western and southwestern part of Sichuan Province was formerly known as Xikang. It was a lawless and violent province where few outsiders dared to enter. Much of the murder and strife was the result of opium trade which flourished until Communist forces destroyed the poppy harvests in the early 1950s. Today most Naju live in poverty, growing vegetables and herding livestock.

Religion: Tibetan Buddhism is the predominant religious adherence among the Naju. They were originally polytheists but were converted to Buddhism by the Tibetans at least several centuries ago. Mixed in with their beliefs is a strong fear of powerful spiritual deities that they believe dwell inside mountains. As a result of these beliefs the Naju spend much of their time, energy, and money on appeasing and placating the spirit world.

Christianity: There is no record of missionary activity in Muli or Yanyuan counties prior to 1949. The geographic, linguistic, and cultural isolation of the Naju creates barriers to Christian outreach among them in the future. Perhaps a few believers live among the Lisu in southern Sichuan, but there is no record of any Christian activity among the needy Naju.

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

Identity: Although they have been officially included under the Naxi nationality, the Naju have a different name, language, and history from the Naxi in Yunnan, and the Naheng and *Mosuo* in Sichuan. The Naju actually prefer to call themselves *Naru*, but their alternative name is used in *Operation China* to avoid confusion with the unrelated *Naru* of northern Yunnan.

Language: The Naju speak their own language, which has been named *Guabie Naxi* by some linguists because of their primary location in Guabie District in Yanyuan County.¹ The Naju language is part of Eastern Naxi, related to *Mosuo* and *Naheng*.