Alu　阿鲁

Population in China:
5,500 (1999)
5,640 (2000)
7,050 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Alu

Countries:
China, Laos, possibly Vietnam

Pronunciation: "Ah-loo"

Other Names: Alupo, Luwu, Luowu

Population Source:
5,500 (1999 J. Pelkey);
Out of a total Yi population of
6,572,173 (1990 census);
1,407 in Laos (1999 AMO);
Possibly also in Vietnam

Location: *S Yunnan:* Laojizhai
District of Jinping County (4,400);
Huangcaoling District of Yuanyang
County (600); and Jiangcheng
County (500) of Simao Prefecture

Status:
Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism,
Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None
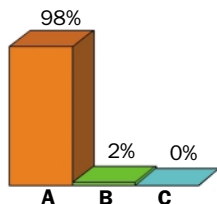
Jesus **film:** None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

Status of Evangelization

98%   2%   0%
A   B   C

A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not
become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of
Christianity

Location: A total of 5,500 Alu people live in southern Yunnan Province. They live in the Hama Community of Huangcaoling District in Yuanyang County and in the adjoining western part of Laojizhai District in Jinping County.[1] There is also a people group who call themselves Alu living in Jiangcheng County of Simao Prefecture. An additional 1,407 Alu live in northern Laos where they are officially labelled Lolo.

Identity: Because of their extreme geographic isolation, the Alu are not well known. They have little contact with the outside world. The Alu have been placed under the official Yi nationality in China, even though they speak their own distinct language and possess their own unique customs and style of dress. They are also known as *Luwu* and *Luowu.*

Language: Alu is believed to be a part of the Southern Yi linguistic group. Most Alu women and children are only able to speak their own language and do not know any Chinese. Little else is known about the Alu language.

History: During the Tang and Song dynasties (581–1276), the various Yi groups in southern China were known by the Chinese as the "Seven tribes of Wuman." They were part of a much larger Tibeto-Burman group. According to Chinese records, the Wuman started to migrate southward into Yunnan during the second century BC and gradually splintered into the numerous different tribes and clans that make up the Yi nationality today.[2]

Customs: Most Alu families live in packed-dirt homes with flat roofs. They use the flat roofs as a place to dry grain. Alu homes usually have three large rooms. The central room is used as a living room, dining room, and an animistic worship center. The other two rooms serve as a kitchen and a bedroom. In some areas, the Alu slap water buffalo manure on the sides of their homes and leave it to dry in the sun. The dried manure is later used for fuel and also for insulation from the weather in the winter. Among other things, the Alu are known for their home-brewed whiskey. During special occasions and festivals it is not uncommon to see the entire community of Alu people, including small children, completely drunk. Alcoholism has a strong hold on the Alu and contributes to a short life expectancy among them.

Religion: The Alu are animists and polytheists and, as a result, feel the need to appease many gods and ward off many forms of evil. On the first day of the year two chickens are sacrificed at every path of entrance into a village. They pray to a dragon spirit, asking it to not allow demons to enter the village in the coming year.

Christianity: The Alu are a totally unreached people group. Yuanyang County, where the majority of Alu live, counts about 2,000 believers among the Yuanyang Nisu. These believers live some distance away from the Alu, however, and have not attempted to take the gospel to them at this stage. Chinese evangelists visited the Alu in March 2000, but reported, "The Alu couldn't speak Mandarin and didn't want to listen to the gospel."

Jamin Pelkey