



**Population in China:**  
 1,500 (1999)  
 1,530 (2000)  
 1,930 (2010)  
**Location:** Yunnan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Muzi

**Countries:** China  
**Pronunciation:** "Moo-zi"  
**Other Names:** Muji, Southern Muji, La'ou Yuxi Mujiren  
**Population Source:**  
 1,500 (1999 J. Pelkey);  
 Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)  
**Location:** *S Yunnan:* Five villages (Gamadi, Adapo, Dimami, Liangshuigou and Bailedi) within Gamadi Community, Shuitian District in Mengzi County  
**Status:**  
 Officially included under Yi  
**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi, Unclassified  
**Dialects:** 0  
**Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship  
**Christians:** None known  
**Scripture:** None  
**Jesus film:** None  
**Gospel Recordings:** None  
**Christian Broadcasting:** None  
**ROPAL code:** None

**Location:** A 1999 research paper listed a population of 1,500 Muzi people living in southern China's Honghe Prefecture in Yunnan Province.<sup>1</sup> The Muzi inhabit the five villages of Gamadi, Adapo, Dimami, Liangshuigou, and Bailedi — all within Gamadi Community of Shuitian District in Mengzi County. The Muzi are not reported to live in any other part of China.

were part of the Muji people. Historians say that the two groups "diverged late in the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1367) when the Muji went to war with the Puwa of present-day Xibeile District."<sup>3</sup>

**Customs:** Every Muzi home has a fire-pit dug into the middle of the floor of the main room. Beside this fire-pit is a rock on which

to place the cooking pot. The Muzi believe "this rock and the area around it to be sacred — being the area where the guardian god of the home and the ancestors reside. No one is allowed to step on this rock."<sup>4</sup> Unmarried Muzi youth and widows usually live together in a *huafang* — a communal house where they can come together for sexual unions and courtship. "They may also spend the night with each other in rooms built above their homes adjoining goat stables."<sup>5</sup>

**Religion:** The Muzi set aside the first day of each third lunar month to worship the Dragon god. "On this day each Muzi village kills a pig, each family prepares fermented glutinous rice, and all gather around the altar at the sacred tree of the village to worship the dragon god. After the ceremonies the entire village feasts together on bean sprouts and pork. The



Jamin Pelkey

**Identity:** Despite their similar names and even though both have been included under the Yi nationality in China, the Muzi are not the same people group as the Muji. Jamin Pelkey explains, "The origin and development of the Muzi people are baffling. Not only are their customs and eating habits remarkably different from the Muji on all sides of them, but their language is divergent enough to be placed in a completely separate language family!"<sup>2</sup>

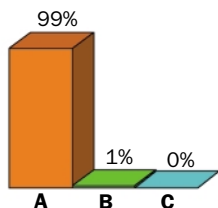
dancing of the 'slap dance' and folk singing after the feast is reportedly lively, but the Muzi do not allow outsiders to participate.... In history past the Muzi were acclaimed hunters and felt a need to appease the god of the hunt. In order to show their reverence they would save the bones from every animal they killed and, after amassing a certain weight, would take them into the forest to dump the bones into a prepared hole. After burying the bones a Muzi hunter would pray to the god of the hunt for a rich supply of game."<sup>5</sup>

**Language:** Although Muzi remains an unclassified member of the Yi (Lolo) language family, it is known to be mutually unintelligible with Muji, Puwa, and other Southern Yi varieties in the area.

**Christianity:** The Muzi are completely unaffected by Christianity. Their isolated location and mind-set have separated them from the mainstream of Chinese society and, consequently, from any contact they might have with Christians.

**History:** Despite the fact that the Muzi have a different language and customs today, historians speculate that at one time they

### 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