

**Location:** Almost 50,000 Naisu live at the juncture of four counties — Lufeng, Yuanmou, Wuding, and Mouding — in northern Yunnan Province. The Naisu live in isolated mountain villages.

**Identity:** Naisu women wear distinctive red clothing and so are known locally as the *Hong Yi* (Red Yi). There are several different groups known as the Red Yi, so to avoid confusion, their self-name, *Naisu*, is used in *Operation China*.

**Language:** Naisu falls within the Eastern Yi language grouping and is apparently closely related to the Eastern Nasu language. One Chinese researcher has remarked that the two are as closely related as British and American English are.

**History:** During the past 2,000 years the various branches of the Yi have migrated far across southern China. At one time they were spread deep into Guizhou before most of them were driven back into Yunnan during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).<sup>1</sup> The Naisu and other tribes were practically independent until the nineteenth century. The Chinese brought the region back under their control after successful military campaigns were launched against the Yi in Zhaotong and Weining.

**Customs:** The Naisu have many folktales which they hand down from generation to generation. They say that in the past their community life revolved around a sacred azalea tree

which was located in the center of their village.

The tree was huge and had a very wide trunk. Before men went out to find a wife they would pray at the base of the tree in order to secure success. For many generations the Naisu numbered only 99 families and could not seem to grow any larger. The people went to a *bimo* (shaman) and sought his advice. He told them to cut the tree down. All the Naisu men gathered their axes and began to chop the tree. The trunk bled profusely. As it was about to fall, two white cranes flew

out of the tree's branches and left the village. As soon as the sacred tree had fallen the Naisu started dying and the men had no more success at capturing brides. They went to another *bimo* who told them they were foolish to have chopped down the tree because the tree itself was the 100th family. The people were devastated at what they had done and migrated away from the area. Every year in the third lunar month the Naisu come together to celebrate the Flower Festival in remembrance of the tree, and to worship the Mountain gods.

**Religion:** Most Naisu are animists. They have an ancient system of worshiping the spirits of the mountains, trees, and rivers.



Paul Hattaway

**Christianity:** There are approximately 2,000 Naisu Christians in northern Yunnan. They were the first to hear the gospel from Lipo believers who had been converted by foreign missionaries in the early 1900s. The Eastern Lipo church was taught to take responsibility for winning other ethnic groups to Christ. They traveled extensively throughout the region sharing the gospel by song and dance. Many people came to Christ as a result of supernatural healing of the sick. Today Wuding has been saturated with the gospel. There are some believers in all the people groups. A-Hmao believers in Lufeng have reached out to the Naisu, resulting in a number of believers in Gaofeng District.



#### Population in China:

48,000 (1999)  
49,200 (2000)  
61,700 (2010)

**Location:** Yunnan

**Religion:** Polytheism

**Christians:** 2,000

## Overview of the Naisu

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:** "Nai-soo"

**Other Names:** Nasu, Nisu, Hong Yi, Red Yi, Hongee, Luowu

**Population Source:**  
48,000 (1999 J. Pelkey);  
Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)

**Location:** *N Yunnan:* Lufeng (17,000), Yuanmou (14,500), Wuding (10,500), and Mouding (6,000) counties

**Status:**  
Officially included under Yi

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

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:**  
Polytheism, Animism, Christianity

**Christians:** 2,000

**Scripture:** None

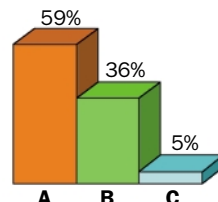
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:**  
Yi: Hong #04836

**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