



Population in China:
 199,200 (1999)
 204,200 (2000)
 256,300 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 2,000

Overview of the Yuanyang Nisu

Countries: China

Pronunciation:

“Nee-soo-Yoo-ahn-yung”

Other Names: Neisu, Niesu, Nosu, Nisu, Nisupo, Hei Yi, Luoluo, Lolo, Nuosu

Population Source:
 199,200 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: S *Yunnan*: Yuanyang (83,300), Honghe (29,100), Jiping (11,600), Luchun (10,200), and Yuanjiang (2,000) counties of Honghe Prefecture; Mojiang (37,000), Jiangcheng (8,000), Pu'er (8,000), and Simao (10,000) counties 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, Shamanism, Christianity

Christians: 2,000

Scripture: New Testament 1948; Portions 1913

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None



Paul Hattaway

Location: More than 200,000 Yuanyang Nisu live in southern Yunnan. Some 135,000 inhabit areas south of the Honghe River in Yuanyang, Honghe, Jiping, Yuanjiang, and Luchun counties.¹ Others live in Mojiang, Jiangcheng, Pu'er, and Simao counties.

Identity: The Yuanyang Nisu are different from the other Nisu groups in southern China because of dialect differences and cultural variation. They have been included in the official Yi nationality by the Chinese authorities.

Language: Yuanyang Nisu is part of the Southern Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. The linguistic complexity of Yi groups in southern Yunnan has created obstacles to the Chinese government's attempts to introduce a Roman script. An orthography has been created, but speakers from groups like the Yuanyang Nisu use different vocabulary from the standard that was selected. The result is that the script has gained acceptance only in the area where it was produced.

History: The Yuanyang Nisu are believed to have migrated into their present areas from

locations to the north, such as Yuanjiang, Shiping, and Jianshui, during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368–1911). Because of their geographic dispersion, their dialect and customs gradually evolved so that today this group should be considered distinct from other Nisu groups in China.

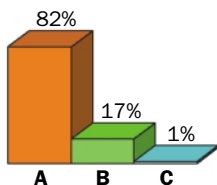
Customs: Unmarried Yuanyang Nisu girls wear cockscomb headdresses. Each hat contains as many as 1,200 silver beads. Even after marriage, Yuanyang Nisu women take pride in their clothing. Their headdresses are richly embroidered with laces that encircle the neck and flow down onto the back.

Religion: The Yuanyang Nisu are polytheistic animists. “They feel the need to appease many gods and ward off many forms of evil. On the first ‘rat day’ of the year,

Yuanyang Nisu in some areas appoint one family from each village to appease the ‘god of the path’. Two chickens are sacrificed at every path of entrance into the village. They construct crosses made of bamboo strips and fasten the chickens’ heads, wings and feet to the crosses with rope. Having done so, the bloody crosses are erected at the gate of each village to ward off evil. Finally, the family in charge of the ritual chant the following spell: ‘One mountain, one village, one village guardian, one village leader and all of the families under him — one path and all the doors along it — may the god of the path protect the paths to all the doors, may all the demons be frightened away. If we have succeeded, then come to our aid. We have worshipped you with a meat sacrifice; if you are satisfied then be our guardian from this day forward.’²

Christianity: There are about 2,000 Catholic and Protestant believers among the Yuanyang Nisu in Yuanyang County and surrounding areas.³ Missionaries translated Scripture portions into Yanyuang Nisu in 1913 and the entire New Testament in 1948, but the script used is now obsolete.

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