

Population in China:

330,000 (1987)
439,400 (2000)
511,400 (2010)

Location: Yunnan, Sichuan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 100

Overview of the Xiaoliangshan Nosu

Countries: China

Pronunciation:

“Shaow-leung-shan-Nor-soo”

Other Names: Lalaw, Green Yi, Xiaoliangshan Yi, Nuosu, Nosupo, Nisupo, Hei Yi, Black Yi

Population Source:

330,000 (1987 D. Bradley);
220,000 in Yunnan (1999 J. Pelkey);
Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *N Yunnan:* Ninglang (129,000), Yongsheng (16,000), Qiaojia (13,000), Eryuan (10,000), Zhongdian (8,900), Heqing (8,000), Yongshan (8,000), Lanping (5,500), Yangbi, Yunlong, Lijiang, and Weixi counties; *S Sichuan*

Status: Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity

Christians: 100

Scripture: None

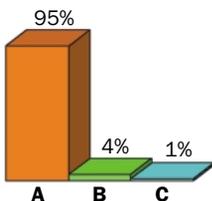
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

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

Location: More than 439,000 people belonging to the Xiaoliangshan Nosu group inhabit twelve widespread counties in the northwest and northeastern parts of Yunnan Province,¹ including Lijiang,² Dali, Zhongdian, Deqen, Weixi, Huaping, Yongsheng, Ninglang, and Yuanmou. In some locations the Xiaoliangshan Nosu live alongside the Bai, Naxi, Pumi, and Tibetans. The Xiaoliangshan Nosu also spill across into areas of southern Sichuan Province.

Identity: The Xiaoliangshan Nosu are ethnolinguistically related to the Shengzha Nosu in southern Sichuan. Most still call themselves *Nosu*, and their women’s dress and large headdress are similar to what Shengzha Nosu women wear. *Xiaoliangshan* means “smaller cold mountains” — the primary habitation of this group. The Nosu in Sichuan live in the *Daliangshan* (Greater Cold Mountains). There may be several subgroups among the Xiaoliangshan Nosu.

Language: Xiaoliangshan Nosu, which is part of the Northern Yi language group, is only partially intelligible with the other Nosu languages in southern China.

History: The Xiaoliangshan Nosu came from the Daliangshan in Sichuan at various stages of their history. The first migration began in the sixth century. Large numbers migrated after the defeat of Yang in 1730. Others followed after Chinese raids in 1802, 1814 and 1839.³ The Xiaoliangshan Nosu continued the practice of

slavery that was the hallmark of their lives in the Daliangshan. After Communism, 10,000 slaves were liberated from Xiaoliangshan Nosu villages in Ninglang between October 1956 and March 1958.⁴

Customs: Prior to 1949 the Xiaoliangshan Nosu practiced a system of slavery. “Even today, Xiaoliangshan Nosu society is a very complex system of castes, tribes and clans. In northwest Yunnan there were four classes of Nosu... Nuo, Tunuo, Gajia, and Gaxi.... The Nuo were the highest caste of landlord and slaveowner. The second tier of the caste system, the Tunuo, made up 54.5% of the Nosu population. The final two classes, Gajia and Gaxi, were 43% of the total Nosu population. The Nuo held sway in the daily affairs of the Tunuo and had absolute power over the lives of the Gajia and Gaxi — frequently taking them as slaves. In 1957 80% of the Nuo were slave owners. The

remnants of these class tensions are still an undercurrent in Nosu society today.”⁵

Religion: A combination of polytheism, animism, and ancestor worship dominates the religious life of the Xiaoliangshan Nosu.

Christianity: There are only a few Xiaoliangshan Nosu believers scattered over a widespread area. They are often in mixed congregations with Han Chinese or Bai believers. Few Xiaoliangshan Nosu have ever heard the gospel. Samuel Zwemer once asked, “Does it really matter how many die or how much money we spend on opening closed doors, and in occupying different fields, if we really believe that missions is warfare and that the King’s glory is at stake?”⁶ The widespread geographic area of the Xiaoliangshan Nosu has hindered efforts to see a strong church planted in their midst.



Paul Hattaway