

Location: In 1999 ethnographer Jamin Pelkey listed a population of 38,300 Wumeng people in China. They live in four counties of Zhaotong Prefecture in northeast Yunnan Province. "In Zhaotong County the Wumeng live mainly in the Buga, Siwang, Xiaolongtong, Beizha, Qinggangling, Panhe and Sayu districts, as well as Dashanbao and Tianba districts in the western arm of the county. In Yongshan County, Wujia District contains the highest concentration of Wumeng. The Wumeng also inhabit parts of northern and northeastern Ludian County and much of Shanggaogiao District of Daguan County."¹ Although the Wumeng live close to the provincial border with Guizhou, they are believed to live exclusively within Yunnan Province.²

Identity: *Wumeng* is an ancient tribal name that has been used for centuries to describe this people. It is probably just a loconym invented by the Chinese because this group lives in the Wumeng Mountain range. It is uncertain what name the Wumeng use for themselves, or whether they have adopted the use of *Wumeng* as their name.

Language: Wumeng is part of the Eastern Yi group of Tibeto-Burman languages. It is related to Shuixi Nosu, Mangbu Nosu, and Wusa Nasu, although speakers of these languages have only limited mutual intelligibility and usually revert to Chinese in order to communicate with each other.

History: The Wumeng are relatively recent arrivals in the region, having migrated there within the last 300 to 400 years. Their situation was described by Samuel Clarke, who wrote that "two days to the north of Anshun begin the estates and residences of the large Nosu [Yi] landholders, which stretch away as far as Zhaotong, Yunnan, one hundred and fifty miles away as the crow flies."³

Customs: In the past the Wumeng were relatively wealthy slaveholders and landlords. Today they are still a proud people who discourage intermarriage with other ethnic groups, including other peoples classified as "Yi." In recent years a few Wumeng have married partners from other ethnic groups, only to have their families disown them and cut them off.

Religion: Polytheism, ancestor worship, and, in the past century, Christianity are the main religions among the Wumeng.

Christianity: The Paris Foreign Missionary Society commenced work in Zhaotong in 1780. The China Inland Mission and the Methodists arrived in the area at the start of the twentieth century. On Christmas Day, 1905, Samuel Pollard recorded in his diary:



Midge Conner

"This Christmas for the first time we have had [Yi] visitors. More than thirty came as a result of the preaching of Mr. Wang. They are a strange-looking lot, much wilder than the Miao, and fiercer-looking. One of them was a Yi wizard who taught me some characters. They say there are about eight or nine hundred families who wish to come. Does this mean that salvation for them has come at last?"⁴ Today, there are believed to be approximately 5,000 Wumeng Christians in northeastern Yunnan, meeting in small house fellowships throughout the mountains.



Population in China:
 38,300 (1999)
 39,250 (2000)
 49,300 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 5,000

Overview of the Wumeng

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Woo-meng"

Other Names: Wumeng Yi

Population Source:
 38,300 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: NE Yunnan: Zhaotong (16,000), Yongshan (9,000), Ludian (8,400), and Daguan (4,900) 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, Ancestor Worship

Christians: 5,000

Scripture: None

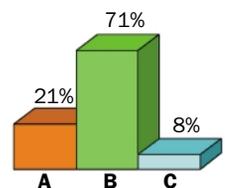
Jesus film: None

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