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Location: Thirty thousand people belonging to the Xijima ethnic group live in the central part of Yunxian County in the Lincang Prefecture of Yunnan Province. Yunxian is a hilly area inhabited by a number of distinct ethnic groups as well as the dominant Han Chinese.

Identity: The Xijima are one of 120 subgroups of the Yi nationality in China. They are also perhaps the most assimilated of all the Yi groups. After living alongside the Han Chinese for centuries, most of the Xijima's customs, language, and identity have been absorbed by the Han. Despite their similar names, the Xijima are not related to the Xiqi ethnic group farther east in Yuxi Prefecture. The Xiqi speak a Southeastern Yi language.

Language: The Xijima language, which is officially recorded as part of the Western Yi group of Tibeto-Burman languages, "is very close to extinction and only spoken by a handful of elderly individuals."¹ The rest of the group has reverted to using Mandarin Chinese.

History: Little is known about the history or migrations of the Xijima. Han Chinese settlers migrated into Yunxian County in large numbers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Xijima, unable to retain their identity against the forceful influence of the Han, gradually lost the use of their language and most of their culture.

Customs: One observer of the Xijima has found that they "retain their folk-

dances, certain festivals, and religious beliefs. These, however, along with their bloodline, are the only factors separating them from the pervasive Han culture."²

Religion: The Xijima have also been influenced by Chinese religious practices. Their ancestor worship closely mirrors that of their Han neighbors, while Daoist principles have been adopted by many. Posters of fierce Daoist deities clutching the severed heads of their victims are glued to the doors of many homes. Most of the younger generation of Xijima, however, are nonreligious. They have been influenced in their thinking by their atheistic education and have been taught to view their parents' religious beliefs as backward and foolish superstition.

Christianity: One factor of Xijima life that has remained constant is their ignorance of the gospel. There has never been a single known Xijima church, and there are no known believers in their midst today. Communism has placed additional barriers in the way of would-be evangelists and church planters among this group. David Adeney explains, "Communism attempts to provide a substitute not only for Christian doctrine and experience, but also for many of the methods and activities used in the church. Indeed, Communists have often adapted Christian methods and have proved themselves to be more thorough and efficient in using them than the Christians from whom they were borrowed."³ Although

the Xijima can best be reached by Chinese-language literature, recordings, and media, the gospel has yet to make an impact in this remote part of China.



Population in China:

30,000 (1999)
30,700 (2000)
38,600 (2010)

Location: Yunnan

Religion: Ancestor Worship

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Xijima

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Shee-jee-ma"

Other Names: Xiqima

Population Source:

30,000 (1999 J. Pelkey);
Out of a total Yi population of
6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *Yunnan:* Yunxian County

Status:

Officially included under Yi

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Ancestor Worship,
Animism, Daoism, No Religion

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

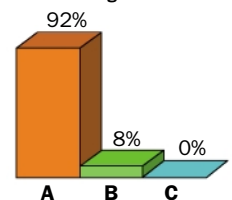
Jesus film: None

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