



Photo by Paul Noah

## The Lolopo of China

The 380,000 Lolopo people live in southern China. The majority of the Lolopo live in Chuxiong Prefecture in China’s Yunnan Province. They build their homes in the rugged mountains, but it was not always this way. More than a thousand years ago, the Lolopo were the dominant people groups in the region. Then wave after wave of Chinese settlers entered the area, seizing the best land from the Lolopo and forcing them to flee into the mountains.

Today they are one of the more than 100 different ‘Yi’ groups in China. Although the Chinese now call the Lolopo “Yi”, they have never used this name for themselves. In their tongue, Lolopo means “People of the Tiger” or “Tiger, Dragon People”. The Chinese used to call all Yi people “Lolo”, but it was a derogatory term which carried a racist note with it.

The Lolopo have worshipped and feared the tiger. In some locations, the Lolopo celebrate the “Tiger Dance Festival” during the first lunar month of every year. The people, clad in their finest traditional dress, come from far and wide to dance, drink, sing and have a big feast. The village elder dresses up as a tiger, and pretends to act like one. He is followed by sixteen other Lolopo men who dress up as mountain gods and panthers. They perform a dance and pray to the Tiger god for protection and prosperity. They then enter each home in the village and chant incantations in a bid to ward off evil spirits.

**Primary Religion:**  
Animism

**Disciples (Matt 28:19):**  
Very few

**Churches:**  
0

**Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):**  
None

**Population (date):**  
380,000 (2007)



### LOLOPO HOMELAND



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### Have They Heard The Gospel?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Call Themselves Christian                     | Perhaps 2% but there are no reliable statistics on this.   |
| Believe In Jesus As God And Only Savior       | The same   |
| Believe In Their Local Traditional Religion   | 98%  |
| Have Not Heard Who Jesus is                   | 95%  |
| Hindrances to Scripture Distribution          | A hindrance when scripture becomes available is the lack of people who are interested in getting involved in literacy and evangelism for this group. Another hindrance is their low self and language esteem.  |
| Are Cross-Cultural Missionaries Needed?       | There is a great need for evangelism, and once there is a solid church there will be a need for literacy workers to help them read the Scriptures and a need for all kinds of Christian training so they can develop a solid and mature church with its own indigenous leadership. |
| Other Forms of Gospel Presentations Available | Recordings: Yes  |

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### Group Description

#### Language & Linguistics

Primary Language of Wider  
Communication

Mandarin would be their second language, which is used with others who do not speak their mother tongue.

#### Literacy

Literacy Attitude

The young people are more and more bilingual as their access to education improves and as more and more of them leave the village and go to the city to work. The people who stay in the villages—regardless of their gender or age—speak Lolopo as their primary language and learn what they need to in Mandarin.

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### Status of Christianity

#### Response To The Gospel

There are very few Christians. The Church is in the process of slow growth.

#### Church Growth

Church Status

No official Lolopo churches but there are Lolopo Christians who attend church if they are in the city and can understand enough Mandarin Chinese to make it worth their while.