

Unreached Peoples: China's Minority Groups #6 the Jungles of Southern Yunnan

by Paul Hattaway

The speaker emphasizes the importance of praying for the unreached people groups in southern Yunnan, China, and highlights the unique cultural practices and limited Christian presence among several minority groups.

Scripture: Psalm 67:2-3, Matthew 9:37-38, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14-15, Revelation 7:9

Topics: "Missions Outreach", "Unreached Peoples"

Description

This sermon focuses on various minority people groups in Xishuangbanna, China, such as the Hani, Kutsong, Jingpa, Lahu, Genua, and Bulong, highlighting their unique cultures, religious practices, and the introduction of Christianity among them. It emphasizes the importance of praying for these unreached groups, that the Word of God may reach their hearts and minds, leading to spiritual transformation and the expansion of God's kingdom among diverse communities.

Transcript

The mighty Mekong River is a playground for some children of the Hani people group. The Hani people were once known for their fierce bravery in fighting. Many legends exalt the victories of Hani heroes of the past.

Today, although the social status of this people group is considered lower than that of the Dai people, they enjoy cooperative trading ties with several groups and share common ownership of water with the Dai. Both the Dai and the Hani cultivate rubber trees, a crop well suited to Xishuangbanna. The chief religious practice of the Hani is the worship of their ancestors.

In addition, they hold elaborate ceremonies to make sacrifices to different forces of nature. Just before the communist revolution, the gospel was brought to some Hani areas by a Danish pastor. Today, they are about 4% Christian, but still most scriptures exist in their own language.

Pray that someday the precious words of God will fill the hearts and minds of the Hani people. Preparation for the trip to the market begins early. At the market, Hani peoples from other villages still wear the varied styles of Hani costume.

Amidst the bustling, bartering commotion of market day, it's possible to spot some of the variety of peoples from southern Yunnan. These women are from the Kutsong people group. The Kutsong were only recently recognized by the government as a minority group.

It is rare to catch a glimpse of these deep forest dwellers. The Kutsong were once in danger of extinction from starvation and disease. It is not known whether there are any Christians among the Kutsong.

Yet they too will someday stand before God's throne. Pray for the strategic revelation of God's truth to them. Among other crops, the friendly Jingpa people cultivate tobacco to sell at the market.

The red stains of the beetle nut the Jingpa like to chew are considered a sign of beauty. There are over 100,000 Jingpa. Traditionally, they have followed a highly supernatural folk religion.

Missionaries in the early 1900s translated the entire Bible into their language. Although this Bible was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, it was restored in 1990. Today, an estimated 46% of the Jingpa are Christians.

Pray that the current revival among the Jingpa will continue and impact other people groups in southern Yunnan. Yet another group represented in the market are the over 300,000 Lahu people. The Lahu are known for their great tiger hunting skills.

The name Lahu means roasting tiger meat. Like other minority groups, they worship different spirits. But the Lahu identify one spirit as a distant father God, creator of all things good.

A story is told of a Lahu prophet who said, When the time is fulfilled, God will search for us and will enter our homes. About 12% of the Lahu have become Christians. Pray that the Lahu will continue to respond to the Lord God who does search for them.

In a different area of Xishuangbanna lie the villages of the 12,000 Genua people. Unique woven hoods are worn by Genua women. This small minority group traditionally lived in the high forests of the Yoli mountains, cultivating tea leaves by primitive agricultural methods.

More recently, government assistance has helped this group to improve their agricultural practices and raise their standard of living. Yet there is still no written version of their own language. And there are still no known Christians among the Genua.

Pray for special messengers to be chosen and sent to this people group with the message of the gospel. Finally, welcome to the village of the Bulong people. There are over 80,000 Bulong people in China.

Like the Genua, there are no known Christians among them. The Bulong people are Buddhists. Like the Dai, they send their sons to the monastery at an early age.

But different kinds of spirits haunt the temples of the Bulong, for they are also spiritualists. The Bulong believe that during the month of July the door of hell is opened, and people can actually see demon spirits who come out to live among them. The people offer sacrifices and hold a great feast for the spirits before they return to hell at the end of this evil month.

Some costumes of the Bulong are so cheerful, that it's easy to forget about the darkness still remaining in their souls. In the marketplace, Bulong youths seem eager with excitement of life. Pray that the hope of Christ will become real to the Bulong people, breaking the bondage of their superstitions.

Each one of the people groups of the market today are valuable to God. It may be easier for us to remember to pray for our neighbors next door, whom we see as we leave our homes each day. But if there is a call on your heart to pray for those without a witness, then keep the video image of some of these people in your mind, and join with your family or church to pray for them on a regular basis.

That these peoples might be added to the kingdom, and that they too will help make the Lord's name great among every tongue and tribe in the world.

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