

# Antioch Christian Fellowship

## The Zhuang People of China

### Unreached People Prayer Profile for September & October, 2003



The Zhuang are China's largest ethnic minority group. In many ways, they appear to be affiliated with the Tai. In fact, the term "Zhuang" generally refers to a Tai-speaking population located in southern [China](#).

The more than twelve million Zhuang live in the Guangxi province of southern China, near Vietnam's border. Their language, also called Zhuang, consists of two closely related dialects: southern and northern. The geographical dividing line between the southern- and northern-speaking Zhuang is the Xiang River of southern Guangxi.

One way the Zhuang have held on to their ethnic identity has been through the preservation of their language. Zhuang remained unwritten until the 1950's when an alphabet based on the Roman alphabet was developed. Now some Zhuang primary school children are receiving bilingual education, learning both Zhuang and Chinese.

#### **What are their lives like?**

The Zhuang are very similar both in language and culture to the [Puyi](#) and other minorities of southern China. Since most of them speak Chinese as well as Tai, their way of life is, in many respects, no different from the lifestyles of the Han Chinese peasants.

The Zhuang are, for the most part, plains dwellers practicing wet rice farming side by side with the Chinese. Where sufficient bottom land is not available, they grow rice and other crops on terraced hillsides.

In rural areas their homes, called galans, are usually built on stilts and are large and rectangular. Each village is grouped by male family members. A newly married woman stays with her mother until the birth of her first child, after which she will go and live with her husband. Society is both patrilocal (inheritance is passed on from the father) and patrilineal (line of descent is through the father).

By 1990, large areas of China were undergoing significant economic development. The most surprising changes took place in southern China. The prosperity in this area has been broadly based. Unfortunately, however, the Zhuang are being left out of China's modernization and industrialization programs.

#### **What are their beliefs?**

Rural Zhuang, more than city dwellers, still adhere to their traditional way of life and their traditional religion, polytheism. They believe in many spirits, often malicious, who control the events of their lives and must be appeased. Despite this, the Zhuang are very open and ready to receive the Gospel. Recent reports indicate that many Zhuang are now turning to the Lord. It is estimated that there are several thousand believers among them, with an increasing interest in the Gospel. However, Christianity still makes up only 1% of their total population; while ethnic religions and Buddhism make up the remaining 99%.

#### **What are their needs?**

Although China's government is making some strides towards modernizing the country, the Zhuang are being left out of the industrialization programs. For this reason, they are lagging behind both economically and educationally. They are in need of current techniques to improve their agricultural pursuits as well as opportunities to educate their people.

The complex culture of the Zhuang is based primarily on their language. There is now more openness to the Gospel among them than there has ever been, but missionaries must be willing to cross over into their world and learn their language. This will be the key to reaching the Zhuang with the Gospel.

Currently, the *Jesus Film* and Christian broadcasts are available to the Zhuang, but there are still only portions of the Bible available in their language. Many laborers are needed to reach the twelve million Zhuang.

This is a very critical time for the Zhuang. Their openness brings a need for them to have the truths that only the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers. We must use every resource available to reach these precious souls while their hearts are soft and ready to receive salvation!

### Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to go to China and share Christ with the Zhuang.
- Pray that the doors of China will soon be opened to missionaries.
- Ask God to raise up qualified linguists to complete translation of the Bible into the Zhuang language.
- Pray that the Zhuang Christians will grow and stay faithful, even under persecution and trials.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to continue to soften the hearts of the Zhuang toward Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Pray that God will open the hearts of China's governmental leaders to the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a strong local church among the Zhuang.

### People Group Information:

<b>Country:</b>	China
<b>Language Spoken:</b>	Zhuang, Northern
<b>Population of People in this Country:</b>	15,490,000
<b>Population of Language Speakers in the World:</b>	15,490,000
<b>Language Code:</b>	CCX00
<b>% Christians of this People in this Country:</b>	1%
<b># of Evangelicals of this People in this Country:</b>	40,000
<b>% Evangelicals of this People in this Country:</b>	0%
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	23.6395, 108.5328
<b>GMI Map Code:</b>	CCX-CHN-EPY
<b>Affinity Block Name:</b>	Thai/Dai Peoples and Others - SE Asia
<b>People Cluster:</b>	Zhuang
<b>Race Code:</b>	MSY49a
<b>1995 Beginning Joshua Project List:</b>	Yes
<b>Active Original Joshua Project List:</b>	Yes

### Additional People Group Information:

<b>Complete Bible:</b>	No
<b>New Testament:</b>	No
<b>Bible Portions:</b>	1904
<b>Jesus Film:</b>	Yes
<b>Christian Radio Broadcast:</b>	FEBC
<b>Audio Recording of Gospel:</b>	Yes