

Introduction

The Biao people are located in the Guangdong province, which is in the southeastern most part of China.¹ According to Ethnologue the Biao speak their own dialect of Chinese called Biao, but they are also in contact with a lot of Mandarin speaking Chinese, suggesting that they may know Mandarin as well.²

What are their lives like?

The Biao people live in a very fertile area. Because of this, they have a number of crops that they produce. Their primary farm and forest products include rice, fruits and vegetables, livestock, rosin, cinnamon, bamboo, cassava, sugarcane, and medicinal herbs.³ The Biao also live relatively close to Hong Kong, so much of their trade is done with those who live there.

What are their beliefs?

China Quarterly conducted a study over 600 villages around which the Biao people live. Their study suggests that most of the religion of the Biao and the surrounding areas is not defined by its doctrine, organization, or hierarchy, but rather is centered around rituals that are performed. The local religion is polytheistic and revolves heavily around spirit worship in local temples. The Biao worship in temples that are dedicated to local deities, and sometimes have operas performed for these deities. The rituals that are performed by the Biao are often led by temple committees and specialists. These rituals have a close tie with Daoist traditions. They also

¹ "University of Texas Libraries." China Maps. Accessed March 15, 2015. <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/china.html#country.html>.

² "Biao." Ethnologue. Accessed March 15, 2015. <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/byk>.

³ 2014. "Zhaoqing." *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia* 1p. 1. *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 11, 2015).

use Confucian texts to guide their rituals with mediums to contact spirits of the dead. This seems to suggest that there is syncretism amongst the Biao people of a plurality of Chinese religions and philosophies. In their worship and daily lives, the Biao also have close ties to their ancestral history; however, in the 20th century and 21st century this has been in decline. Local religions such as the one that the Biao follow are currently under attack from the Chinese government.⁴

What are their needs?

The Biao people believe in a plurality of spirits. They need to know that there is one true God. They are also unreached, so they need people to go to them and share the gospel with them. Like all people, the Biao ultimately need Jesus. They need to come to an understanding of who he is and know that in Christ Jesus they have hope now.

There is not a translation of the Bible in the Biao language.⁵ A translation is important so the Biao can come to a deeper understanding of God. It is also important so they can have the word to tell others stories of Christ.

Prayer Points

- Pray for there to be missionaries who are willing to go to this unreached people group.
- Pray for God to soften these people's hearts to become more receptive to the gospel.
- Pray for the local government to have open minds and hearts toward Christianity.
- Pray for the Biao not to view Christianity as just another religion, but rather something that changes their lives through a relationship with Christ.
- Pray for the Bible to be translated into their heart language so the people can come to a better understanding of who God is.

⁴ Overmyer, Daniel L. *Religion in China Today*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 32-40.

⁵ "Language: Biao." Language. Accessed March 15, 2015.
<http://joshuaproject.net/languages/byk>.

