

THE PUMI OF CHINA

The festive atmosphere that filled the air became more solemn as one of the villagers began blowing a conch shell. Wuxia and the other **Pumi** villagers quietened down as a village elder began chanting prayers evoking the protection of the Great Deity of the Mountain. The **Pumi** young man then joined the others in lighting the pine branches they had piled round the large pine tree that represented the Great Deity of the Mountain. Everyone then proceeded to walk clockwise around the large tree, throwing offerings of millet, rice cakes, wine and milk. The ceremony climaxed as all present prostrated to the sacred pine tree. Wuxia bowed deeply, hoping that the deity would protect his family from disasters and grant them a good harvest for the year. He remembered well the years when the deity for some unknown reason brought misfortunes upon his village and family.

The **Pumi** (population: 47,000) live in the northern mountains of Yunnan Province. During the 1300s, the Mongols drove this people group out of northern China and they fled to their present location. Over time, the **Pumi** discarded their original language and developed a new language similar to the ones spoken by their new tribal neighbours.

Though they profess to be Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhists, the **Pumi's** religion contains elements of animistic beliefs. Much of it involves the veneration of deities living in mountains. Prior to 1949, German missionaries won a few **Pumi** to the Lord before the communists drove them out. When recontacted by missionaries during the 1990s, no one could find a trace of these **Pumi** converts or their descendants. The task of reaching these people for the Lord had to start over from scratch.

In 1997, Christians from the nearby unreached Mosuo people group preached the Gospel in a **Pumi** village and won several **Pumi** to the Lord. **Pumi** Christians today number around 0.1% of their population.

- Pray that these new **Pumi** believers will grow in faith and begin spreading the Gospel to other **Pumi** villages.
- Pray that the workers among the **Pumi** people will persevere in taking to the Gospel to the **Pumi** villages.
- Pray that the **Pumi** may be freed from their fear of the spirit world and of vengeful folk deities.

This is a series of useful prayer profile compilations to pray for people groups collated from various online sources. Please click on the links below for more info:

<https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>, <http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>