

THE UCHINANCHU OF JAPAN

“How is your grandmother?” The elderly Kiyoko asked the much younger Nobuo as they both sat at the bus stop. “Slightly better, since the day she underwent the healing ritual at your house,” answered Nobuo. “Her nightmares have decreased slightly. But she still cries out for her lost family each time.” Kiyoko sighed, saying: “Yes, we old folks remember the terrible Battle of Okinawa. Such atrocities the Japanese Army inflicted on our people when the Americans advanced!” She paused before continuing: “Your poor grandmother witnessed her entire family being forced to commit mass suicide along with the other villagers by the Japanese Army. She survived by hiding.” “Can she be healed completely?” asked Nobuo, anxiously. Kiyoko shrugged and answered: “I dare not say. We healers can call upon the spirits to heal but in reality we can only do so much. I do hope that your grandmother will be healed from her trauma.”

Often referred to as Okinawan, the **Uchinanchu** (population: 974,000) are the indigenous people of southern Japan’s Okinawa Islands where their ancestors established the former independent kingdom of Ryukyu. Historic ties with China and subsequent subjugation by Japan have caused the **Uchinanchu**’s culture to be a mix of indigenous, Japanese and Chinese influences. Their language differs slightly from standard Japanese. The 1945 invasion of Okinawa by the American forces led to the deaths of thousands of **Uchinanchu** from crossfire and horrific atrocities by the Japanese Army.

The **Uchinanchu**’s religious beliefs are mix of Buddhism, Shintoism and folk beliefs. Women traditionally play an important role as ritual priestesses and shamans. Only a small number of **Uchinanchu** (2.0%) have turned to Christ.

- Pray for God’s complete healing upon the **Uchinanchu** who have suffered emotionally.
- Pray for the salvation of the majority who are still in spiritual darkness.
- Pray for the Christian groups reaching out to the **Uchinanchu** that they may persevere despite obstacles.
- Pray for the few **Uchinanchu** Christians that they may grow spiritually.

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/>