

Yaeyama (Kunigami) in Japan



Once independent merchants who sailed to China, today the Yaeyama are mostly farmers. The Yaeyama of Japan is one of several people groups living in the Ryukyu Islands to the southwest of the mainland. The family is central to Yaeyama culture and life, and they dislike being alone. They spend any time available with families or friends. The Yaeyama are considered Buddhist, though traditional shamanistic practices are still prevalent. Some of these include the belief in unseen gods, demons, and ancestral spirits, as well as “kami,” whom they believe have the power to cause harm if they do not appease it. Unfortunately, the Yaeyama are considered second-class citizens in Japanese culture, leaving them searching for a sense of belonging.

Ministry Obstacles

The shamanistic beliefs of the Yaeyama convince them to put their faith in spirits rather than the God of the universe.

Outreach Ideas

The Yaeyama may be attracted by the God who calls them to belong, the one who is always with them and will never leave them.



YAH-ay-ah-mah

POPULATION: 46,000

LANGUAGE: Yaeyama

RELIGION: Buddhism

BIBLE: Unspecified

STATUS: Unreached

Prayer Focus

Pray that the Yaeyama may be given opportunities to spread the gospel in their own communities and among their own people. Pray for a movement to Christ among the Kunigami and for strong churches to be raised up among them.

SCRIPTURE Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. Isaiah 61:9, ESV

PRAY *that those who live near today's people group will want their spiritual blessings after they submit to the Lord Almighty.*