



## Northern Dong people of China

Living in the rolling hills of south central China are the approximately 1.3 million precious people known as the Northern Dong. Less than one in 1,000 believe in Jesus Christ; the rest are living with no hope. Since they have no written language, reaching the largely illiterate Northern Dong people will require that the Gospel be shared orally.

The Northern Dong people have a very family-oriented culture. Each village has between 50 to 600 families, all of whom share only one or two surnames. When the farming is less demanding, the village families will gather at the “drum towers”. These extravagant buildings, towering over 100 feet tall and built without nails, are the center of village social community. The Dong will gather around the tower to sing, tell stories, share news, or play games.

Festivals are an important part of the Northern Dong culture, and traditional courting rituals give young Northern Dong men and women an opportunity to meet a future spouse. During times of courting it is expected that a Dong girl should be able to sing songs straight for 2-3 days without repeating herself. A huge singing festival is held every February, drawing 25,000 to 30,000 people as competitors or spectators. Beautiful melodies sung in the Northern Dong language fill the valleys and tell of the wonders of the Dong culture.

The Northern Dong believe that all things in nature have a have a spirit, including rivers, trees, mountains, rocks, and fields. Fear has gripped their hearts, consuming their lives with attempts to appease the spirits. Ancestor worship also permeates the culture as they look to the dead to mediate between the spirits and the living. The Northern Dong need to know Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and men.

### Priority Focus People Group

<http://eastasianpeoples.imb.org> | [eaprayner@pobox.com](mailto:eaprayner@pobox.com)



Map courtesy of The World Factbook 2010

## Prayer Starters

- Pray that one day the drum towers which are central to most villages will become central places of worship to the One True God.
- Pray that one day the songs that fill the valleys will be songs of praise offered to the One True God.
- Pray for the few existing Northern Dong believers. Pray that they will grow daily in their walk with God and that they live as bold and passionate witnesses for their Savior, Jesus Christ.