

Neil and Kelsie Cullers

2nd Generation Missionaries

Taiwan



Date: 02/20 - Prayer Letter Update:

a'ia-na-hun!

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Valentine's Day! We want to thank the plethora of churches and individuals who have so graciously blessed us financially during the Christmas season. Your sacrifice has meant a lot to us and made our holiday special.

Things here are starting to die down again after Chinese New Years. There was a festive buzz in the air much like we would experience at Christmas in the States. People were nicer, driving was crazier, everywhere you go was packed with people, firecrackers were going off frequently and at all hours of the night and Chinese New Years songs were playing in every shop and store. It was time to celebrate back at the family homestead, wherever that may be, and enjoy a week off of work and school.

We were able to get just the right used vehicle as well! The Lord really provided for us once again! Vehicles here are very expensive because they have to be imported. In the States, for \$3-6,000 one can find a decent car. Here, you are looking at \$10,000 for scraping the bottom of the barrel.

In other news, that exciting opportunity to hold a Bible study in the tribal village of Byuma is becoming a reality. I have been going at least once a week. The first word you read at the beginning of this letter is my attempt to write in English their equivalent for "long time no see." Lengthening the vowel "i" at the front shows the amount of longing you had for the person. I am also learning that the particular dialect of Paiwan I am studying is a little different than what other Paiwan tribesmen speak. Similar to how English fluctuates in different regions in the States, or across the pond in Britain. It is mutually intelligible, there are just different pronunciations and speech betrays where one is from. If I successfully learn from this village, than other "regions" of the tribe will either think I speak poorly or recognize that my accent is from a specific region. There is a word they use to distinguish these regions as I have called them, but I do not have a good English equivalent. They use the word "Bu-Luo" for village, but also for other villages too... maybe there is some clan-based kinship that connects them to some villages but not another one over the ridge. That village is also called a "Bu-Luo," just not one in *their* "Bu-Luo." I don't know how this works yet. Anyway, when I learn Paiwan here I will be quite a local boy to this "Bu-luo" haha. There are at least six of these Bu-Luo regions extending across all of the Paiwan territory that I am aware of.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Tribal Bible Study

- Language

Acquisition

- Visas and health

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The exact day and time I go varies due to “tribal time.” They are laid back and keeping exact time and place appointments isn't a big deal. “Just come find me when you get here,” “I’m sitting up at the standing rock near the entrance of the village,” or, “I’m up at the chiefs house” are phrases I hear often. My contact there is a man named Maichos. He is the leader of the men in a Presbyterian church in the village started by an American decades ago. Every week, I meet with him and a group of random men who happen to be hanging out with Maichos. For now, I am mostly learning the Paiwan tribal tongue and forming a culture file on their tribe. Their history is fascinating, and their oral remembrance of bygone eras is impressive. They are a very community minded people, eager to share their food though they have little and eager to tell stories of their past and teach me their language. I am discovering some of the men are rascals though and want to teach me everything inappropriate. So, stay tuned - getting slapped in the face may happen in my not-so-distant future haha. Every time we have sat down together members of that particular group on that day are either already drunk, or well on their way. “Va Va” (Liquor) is present every time, and drinking together is considered a sign of friendship and inclusion in the group. I have had to put my foot down hard on that a few times with the occasional angry drunk, though in general they accept why I do not drink when I explain it. I drink tea or something else instead. The Christian businessman (American) who took me up there that first time told me he was glad I didn't drink and wished he would have done things differently, as he will drink a bit with them. He thought it undermined his influence with them to speak about spiritual things. I have noticed there are one or two men who were drunk the previous time but weren't the next. They were in fact sober, though they had their bottle sitting next to them waiting for later. Keep in mind these are the Christian men of the village. They told me that in their tribe there is a wavering between being a Christian and following the old ways led by the priestess/witches. Remember back on our survey trip when we said we were starting to think what we were told about everyone being Christian wasn't the case as we saw with our eyes and spoke with villager after villager? I am learning just how wrong the consensus is, and how desperate the need is.

I am honored to have been given a Paiwan name - Ga’Niu. It is thrilling to think I have been accepted at least to a point by a people who are wary of outsiders. You don't just get a Paiwan name any ‘ole day. They have told me it means a lot to them that someone would even come to their village and actually want to write down their language and history or care to learn it. They don't seem to put much stock in written words, being an oral, story-telling people. They think the best way to keep the memory of the past alive is to tell it, not write it on some dusty perishable material and leave it in a corner to be lost. Because of my friendship with Maichos, he and some friends are eager to go on trips through the mountains to show me sites important to their tribe, and let me tag along as they check their traps for game. I would love to learn how they hunt and camp. The point is, I have an open opportunity to use these times to share Scripture with them, sit with them on the trail and begin walking through the Bible chronologically. These trips are all day or overnight and will provide me a lot of time to witness/disciple. They like to camp under a simple canopy for rain cover and throw a blanket on the ground next to the fire. I’m told they prefer open air camping to being in tents, which are considered foreign and a bit constrictive. Good thing there aren’t really mosquitos that high up in the mountains, just other crawlies and snakes.

Lastly, we are still waiting to travel to Okinawa to hopefully get our visas there. Due to the Corona Virus and travel restrictions, now is not the best time to chance getting trapped outside Taiwan. Hopefully things get better not worse and we can go in March. Thank you for your prayers and support! May God bless you.

Expecting Great Things,

Nathaneil, Kelsie and Logan Cullers



The transition altitude between jungle and more of a temperate forest.



Old growth forest.
Below: view of the many ridges.



Above: The trail from camp heading up to the top and more temperate forest. You notice the altitude makes breathing just a bit harder.

