

ZIGONG 自贡

Approximately 1.3 million people, living in more than a quarter of a million homes, reside in Zigong City in southeast Sichuan Province. Zigong, which is situated roughly halfway between Chengdu and Chongqing, is one of several large cities in the area. Because it is somewhat out of the way, Zigong is rarely visited by travelers. Zigong remains one of the more unspoiled cities in southern China as a result. Zigong Prefecture, which contains four districts and two counties, contains a total of 3.1 million souls. Zigong is situated between the two large Min and Tuo rivers. The population of Zigong is almost exclusively Han Chinese. Even the Hui, who seem to have significant communities all over China, only number a few hundred in Zigong.

Zigong was named as one of China's 92 "famous and historical sites" by the State Tourism Bureau, largely because of the discovery of numerous dinosaur bones in and around the city. Indeed, Zigong seems to have been a veritable dinosaur playground. The city is home to the only "on-site" dinosaur museum in the world, and the only dinosaur museum in Asia. The Chinese name for 'dinosaur' means 'terrible dragon'. Thousands of their bones and fossils have been excavated during the past 70 years, most of them at Dashanpu about ten km (six miles) outside the city.

Population:
977,147 (1990)
1,313,100 (2000)
1,764,700 (2010)

Province:
Sichuan

Major Ethnic Groups:

Han 99.7%
Hui 0.1%
Manchu 0.1%
Tujia 0.1%

Christians:
9,000 (0.7%)

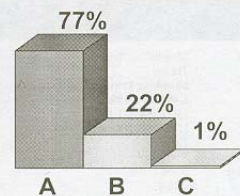
Initially, Chinese scientists were puzzled at why so many dinosaur bones were found in a small area of Zigong, but now they believe they were washed here during a massive flood many thousands of years ago. Of course, in atheistic China, they refuse to acknowledge any link to the Biblical flood, the most likely event to have made this occurrence possible.

Founded in the first century AD, Zigong is also famous for its production of salt. Indeed, the name of the city means 'City of Salt'. More than a thousand years ago the people of Zigong were recorded as already digging thousands of feet into the ground for salt-laden brine. The brine was brought to surface, boiled, and dried by burning the natural gas that accompanied it. Today, except for agriculture, salt-production still comprises the number one industry in Zigong. There is also a Salt Museum in Zigong, tracing the history that salt has had on the inhabitants. Because it is so far from the sea, salt was especially valuable for the people of Zigong. Many families grew extremely wealthy from the industry and erected temples and family halls around the city which can still be seen today.

Zigong also abounds in natural gas. Local buses in Zigong and also the city of Yibin run on the gas, which is stored in large canvas bags on the roof of the bus. Forty-four



Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = adherents to any form of Christianity

scientific research institutes and approximately 1,300 industrial enterprises employ more than 74,000 engineers and technical personnel in Zigong.

Another major attraction in Zigong is the annual Lantern Festival, held in Zigong for 40 days every early February to early March. The festival

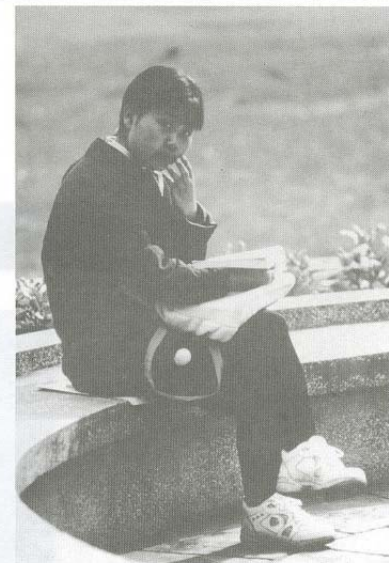


has a long history, dating back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Thousands of carefully designed artistic lanterns are displayed. More than a hundred huge lanterns, often representing dinosaurs, are also on display. In keeping with Zigong's museum-theme, the city operates the world's only Museum on the Oriental Art of Lantern Making.

Catholic missionaries commenced work in Sichuan Province more than 200 years earlier than the Protestants. By 1922, the Catholics reported 143,747 converts, more than ten times the number of Protestants at that time.

The China Inland Mission dominated Protestant work in Sichuan before 1949. We have been unable to find any specific mention of missionaries assigned to Zigong City, but there are a small number of both Catholic and Protestant churches in the city today.

On June 27, 1997, a sudden freak storm with torrential rain struck Zigong. Whole streets of shops and houses were completely destroyed, as were crops and livestock. The believers in the city gave an excellent witness by attending to the needs of their neighbors before their own, which caused many to open their hearts to Christ. More than 99% of the city's inhabitants, however, have never had the opportunity to respond to God's love for them.



Zigong is one of China's growing tourist destinations, but few people in the city have ever heard that the Blood of Jesus Christ can wash away their sin.

Pray for Zigong

- 1 Jesus said 'No one comes to the Father except through me'. Pray Christians would exalt Christ in Zigong so that tens of thousands would soon intimately know the Father.
- 2 Pray the Christians in Zigong will continue to share their faith by word and deed with the lost. Pray their good deeds will melt the hearts of people and turn them to Jesus.
- 3 Pray the house church movements in eastern China would specifically target Zigong City with the Gospel.

Overview of Zigong

Pronunciation : "Tzeh-gong"
Old Spelling : Tze-kung
Location : Sichuan Province, southwest China
Population : 977,147 (1990 census)
Males : 500,878 (51.26%)
Females : 476,269 (48.74%)
Households : 257,120
Average household : 3.50 people
Divorced people : 4,783
% of population : 0.49%
Centurions (1990) : 10 people aged 100 or more
Immigrants to City : 6,739 per year
From same province : 6,089 (90.3%)
From other provinces : 649 (9.6%)

Employed people : 596,043 (61.0% of total population)
Main Industries : Agriculture 56%; Industrial 25.5%; Professional 7.5%
Educational : University: 1.0%
Attainment : High School: 44.2%
(highest level) : Primary School: 37.6%
attended) : Never attended any level of school: 17.2%
Population under 15 : 22.2%
Adult Literacy : 82% (men 89%; women 74%)
Major Nationalities : Han 976,202
Hui 269
Manchu 173
Tujia 130
Miao 93
Others (21 groups): 280
Christians : 9,000 (0.7%)