

Population in China:
 5,000 (1999)
 5,110 (2000)
 6,300 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Guanyingqiao Jiarong

Countries: China

Pronunciation:
 “Gwan-ying-cheeow-Gee-ah-rong”

Other Names: Gyarong, Gyarung, Rgyarong, Chiarong, Jarong, Chiajung, Guanyingqiao

Population Source:
 5,000 (1999 AMO);
 Out of a total Tibetan population of 4,593,330 (1990 census)

Location: NW Sichuan: Jinchuan, Barkam, and Zamtang counties

Status: Officially included under Tibetan

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Qiangic, Jiarong

Dialects (8): Xiaoyili, Siyaowu, Muerzong, Guanyingqiao, Ergali, Taiyanghe, Ere, Yelong

Religion:
 Tibetan Buddhism, Polytheism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: JIQ00

Location: Several thousand speakers of the Guanyingqiao Jiarong language live in the remote northwestern part of Sichuan Province. According to linguist Jonathon Evans, “The language is spoken along the tributaries of the Jinchuan River in the southwestern tip of Ma’erkang (Barkam) County, northwestern Jinchuan County, and southeastern Zamtang County. It has been named Guanyingqiao after the district in Jinchuan County which is the focal point of the Guanyingqiao-speaking area.”¹ Although no specific figure for the Guanyingqiao Jiarong has been published, they are believed to number approximately 5,000 speakers. Their location is shared with Tibetans. Very few outsiders have ever ventured as far as the Guanyingqiao area.

Identity: Although the Guanyingqiao Jiarong have officially been classified as members of the Tibetan nationality, they do not even speak a language closely related to Tibetan and are known to have a different history, origin, and customs. Whereas certain Chinese experts were in favor of giving the Jiarong status as a distinct minority group, certain Tibetan leaders are believed to have campaigned for their inclusion in the Tibetan nationality, fearing that the exclusion of the Jiarong would weaken the Tibetan cause.

Language: Guanyingqiao Jiarong is a member of the Qiangic branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. It is related to Ergong and Shangzhai Jiarong. Despite their small population, studies indicate the existence of eight dialects within Guanyingqiao Jiarong. “Representative local varieties of Guanyingqiao, some very different, include Xiaoyili and Siyaowu in Zamtang County, Muerzong in Barkam County, Guanyingqiao, Ergali, Taiyanghe, Ere and Yelong in Jinchuan County.”²

History: Thousands of years ago the various branches of the Jiarong in Sichuan were more closely related to today’s official



Luke Kuepfer

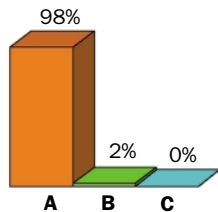
Qiang nationality. The Jiarong, however, migrated into Tibetan areas and have been culturally assimilated to Tibetan ways.

Customs: Although the dress and most customs of the Jiarong are now identical to their neighboring Tibetans, they proudly retain their ancient stone defense towers, called *tianlu*, which show their historic relationship with the Qiang peoples.

Religion: Tibetan Buddhism is embraced by all Jiarong people. Polytheism and shamanism are also present. The deities most feared by the Jiarong are the Mountain gods, which they believe dwell inside large mountains and are responsible for most bad things that happen.

Christianity: The extreme geographic remoteness of the Guanyingqiao Jiarong has separated them from gospel witness throughout their history. There are few roads in this sparsely populated part of China, and most local people here have never seen a Westerner. Very few Han Chinese have settled in this part of Sichuan, except for government officials and some adventurous merchants. Few Guanyingqiao Jiarong have ever heard the name of Jesus Christ.

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity