



Population in China:
 139,000 (1993)
 161,550 (2000)
 199,050 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Situ Jiarong

Countries: China

Pronunciation:
 "See-too-Gee-ah-rong"

Other Names: Eastern Jyarong, Gyarong, Gyarung, Rgyarong, Chiarong, Jarong, Chia-jung, Situ, Eastern Jiarong

Population Source:
 139,000 (1993 Lin Xiangron);
 Out of a total Tibetan population of 4,593,330 (1990 census)

Location: *Sichuan:* Lixian, Wenchuan, Xiaojin, Barkam, and Jinchuan counties

Status:
 Officially included under Tibetan

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

Dialects (4):
 Lixian, Jinchuan, Xiaojin, Barkam

Religion:
 Tibetan Buddhism, Polytheism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

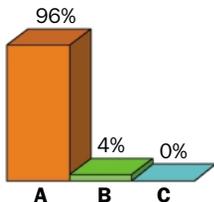
Jesul film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: JIROO

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

Location: A 1993 study listed a total of 139,000 Situ Jiarong people in Sichuan Province.¹ They are the dominant Jiarong group in China. The Situ, also known as the Eastern Jiarong, inhabit parts of Li, Wenchuan, and Xiaojin counties in central Sichuan, as well as sections of Barkam (Ma'erkang) and Jinchuan counties. Many Situ Jiarong live in a V-shaped valley between the Zagunao River — which originates in the Zhegu Mountains — and the upper section of the Min River.

Identity: The name *Situ* "refers to the traditional territory of the four chieftaincies of Zhuokeji, Suomo, Songgang and Dangba in the heartland of Jiarong country. The term is adopted since it is now a widely used local label for this language."² The several Jiarong groups in China have been officially counted under the Tibetan nationality by the Chinese authorities. The Jiarong, however, speak their own distinct languages and believe they are ethnically and historically different from the Tibetans. They have been listed as one of the people groups in China that "need further investigation."³

Language: The classification of Jiarong has baffled Chinese scholars. "The languages of the Jiarong who live in Aba and Garze areas of Sichuan are a puzzle. Their language is different from Tibetan in terms of grammar, and akin to the Qiang and Pumi languages. They are considered the 'language bridge' between Tibetan and Burmese."⁴ Differences in

the five Jiarong languages are great. Situ Jiarong has only 55% lexical similarity with Sidabao Jiarong and 75% with Chabao Jiarong.⁵

History: Until 1949 the Jiarong were divided into 18 small kingdoms. They kept the Chinese military at bay for ten years during the eighteenth century. The Jiarong languages suggest that they may have originally been part of the Qiang group who, after many generations of contact with Tibetans, became a distinct people.⁶

Customs: The majority of Situ Jiarong are farmers, herding livestock and growing crops along the river basins in central Sichuan. A number of urban Jiarong are merchants and shop owners.

Religion: Almost all Jiarong farther to the west are Tibetan Buddhists, but many

of the Situ Jiarong have adopted the polytheistic practices of the Qiang.

Christianity: The Jiarong were first targeted in the early 1900s by the American Baptists — who had a mission base at Ya'an — and by the Border Mission of the Church of Christ in China in the 1910s. One writer summarized their efforts: "In the early half of this century some missionaries stationed in areas relatively close to the Jiarong took some trips into Jiarong territory. This led to the translation of some tracts. It was not until the 1930s that an effort to specifically learn and analyze the Jiarong language got underway. A draft translation of the book of Jonah was in progress when the invasion of the Red Army in 1936 made work impossible. All materials were lost in the war."⁷



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