



**Population in China:**  
 15,700 (1990)  
 20,250 (2000)  
 26,100 (2010)  
**Location:** Sichuan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** 150

## Overview of the Mianchi Qiang

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:**  
 "Chee-ung-Mee-an-chee"

**Other Names:** Chiang; Mianchi, Mianchi, Mien-ch'i'h Ch'i'ang

**Population Source:** 15,700 (1990 Liu Guangkun – 1990 figure); Out of a total Qiang population of 198,252 (1990 census)

**Location:** *W Sichuan:* All of Wenchuan County except Longxi District.

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Qiang

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Qiangic, Qiang, Southern Qiang

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity

**Christians:** 150

**Scripture:** None

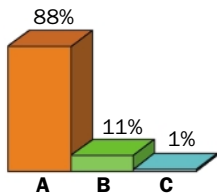
**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** None

### 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:** Approximately 20,000 speakers of the Mianchi Qiang language live in every part of Wenchuan County (except Longxi District) in Sichuan Province. The region is criss-crossed by the mighty Min River. One visitor described the terror of crossing a 300-year-old chain bridge: "We saw the river underneath dashing out of a gorge, like a reinless horse to make a thunderous noise, and lashing at the rocks and reefs in its middle, to send up a white spray."<sup>1</sup>

**Identity:** The name *Qiang*, which means "herdsmen,"<sup>2</sup> has for centuries been a generic description for a large number of nomadic tribes along China's western border with Tibet. Mianchi is a distinct language that cannot be understood by the members of any other Qiang group in Sichuan.

**Language:** Mianchi Qiang is one of the "9 or 10 Qiangic languages"<sup>3</sup> spoken in Sichuan Province. At one time in history there were 62 Qiang tribes,<sup>4</sup> but many of these have since assimilated into larger peoples or have simply vanished because of disease, warfare, and famine.<sup>5</sup>

**History:** Records inscribed on bones and tortoise shells dating from the Shang Dynasty (1700–1100 BC) indicate that the ancestors of the Qiang were one of the first people recorded in Chinese history. "One branch of these peoples gradually moved to the upper reaches of the Min River and subsequently became today's Qiang."<sup>6</sup>

**Customs:** Because of invading armies and bandits in the past, many Qiang villages built stone watchtowers and forts — often 13 or 14 stories high — which are still seen on the mountain passes today. The two-story stone houses of the Qiang, called *qionglong*, are flat-roofed and resemble a watchtower. Builders construct them without the use of plans or measuring tools, depending entirely on their memory.<sup>7</sup>

**Religion:** In addition to worshiping a multitude of deities, the ancestors of the Mianchi Qiang are highly honored. Strict protocol is observed in the home so that the spirits of the ancestors are not offended. "Placed on the upper part of the support are memorial tablets of their ancestors. The cauldron support is under a taboo and the place near it is where the whole family eat their meals, get together, sing and dance on

festive occasions and offer sacrifices to their ancestors."<sup>8</sup>

**Christianity:** There are about 150 Christians among the Mianchi Qiang, some of whom belong to the Quakers (Society of Friends).<sup>9</sup> Thomas Torrance Jr. met with the Qiang believers in 1994. He reported, "There is a whole cluster of Qiang Christians here in Wenchuan."<sup>10</sup> Many Qiang believers have moved to Wenchuan because of persecution and discrimination in their home areas. Torrance provided more than ¥200,000 (about US\$28,500) to the Amity Foundation for the purpose of rebuilding the church, but it is uncertain if anything has been done to help the Qiang believers.<sup>11</sup> The believers in Wenchuan intend their church "to be the center for the spread of the Gospel and the Christian church throughout the whole Aba region."<sup>12</sup>



Paul Hattaway