

Location: More than 19,000 speakers of the Sanlong Qiang language live in the Fengyi, Sanlong, Shaba, Huilong, Baixi, Wadi, and Yazhuzhai districts of Maoxian County in western Sichuan Province. Maoxian, which is also known as Maowen, contained a total population of 89,000 people in the 1990 census, of which 72,000 (80.9%) were people who spoke Qiang languages.¹ Other inhabitants include Han Chinese, Tibetans, and a few families of minority groups such as Hui and Yi. Maoxian is part of the massive Aba Prefecture. The prefectural seat in the township of Aba is about two days' drive northwest of Maoxian.

Identity: The Sanlong Qiang are part of China's official Qiang nationality. Overall, the Qiang have one of the lowest education levels of any minority group. Only 34% of Qiang children attend primary school. From there the number declines to the 0.1% who attend university.

Language: The overall rate of literacy among the Qiang is 51%. Since the 1950s, the government has put in place an experimental program for primary school-age children (grades 1–3), to learn the Qiang language, with a standardized *pinyin* script. The writing system uses the Roman alphabet to convey about fifty different plain initial consonants. There is only about 55% shared vocabulary between the Northern and Southern Qiang varieties.

History: Today's Maoxian County was historically near the edge of Tibetan territory until the Chinese took control of western Sichuan in the 1700s.

Customs: Qiang women's clothing differs from men's in that the collar, cuffs, sash, and shoes are often cross-stitched with circles, triangles, and other designs. They are also decorated with a row of small silver plum-flower designs. The embroidered designs are mostly drawn from nature, depicting flowers and grass, deer, lions, rabbits, and human figures. Women like to wear especially large silver earrings, hairpins and finger rings, and silver and jade pins, among other decorations. At their waists women wear a silver sewing box, while men wear a silver tobacco box.

Religion: During the Qiang's *Zhuanshan* Festival, pieces of dough in the shape of the sun and half-moon are hung from an ox's horns. Sorcerers then proceed to call on the gods through a ceremonial drum dance. After the religious ceremony, people dance gaily to the sound of

flutes, drums, and bells. Qiang folk dances today have evolved from this festival. The male dancers carry sheepskin drums with small handles and keep time with short curved drumsticks. The women dancers carry bells that are sounded in time with the drums.

Christianity: The Sanlong Qiang are an unreached people group. Few have ever heard the gospel, although some living in Maoxian may have heard of the existence of Qiang Christians in Wenchuan County. There are no Scriptures or resources available in the Sanlong Qiang language.



Luke Kuepfer



Population in China:
 15,000 (1990)
 19,350 (2000)
 24,950 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Sanlong Qiang

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Chee-Ung-Sahn-long"

Other Names: Chiang: Sanlong, Chi'ang: Sanlong

Population Source: 15,000 (1998 Liu Guangkun – 1990 figure); Out of a total Qiang population of 198,252 (1990 census)

Location: *W Sichuan:* Maoxian County: Fengyi, Sanlong, Shaba, Huilong, Baixi, Wadi, and Yazhuzhai districts

Status: Officially included under Qiang

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Shamanism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

