

Location: Nine thousand Qiangyi people reside in the Xiangme, Ziqianglang, Huangcaoshao, Chuchang, and Chalangshao communities within the Midian District; and in the Daying and Xinxingzuo communities of Hedian District. These places are all within Xiangyun County in China's Yunnan Province. An additional 1,000 Qiangyi are believed to live in parts of southern Binchuan County as well.

Identity: The Qiangyi, who are officially classified as part of the Yi nationality, are one of the most interesting people groups in southern China. As Jamin Pelkey points out, "Many Tibeto-Burman peoples are said to have descended from the ancient Qiang tribes, but this is the only known case in Yunnan in which one of the people groups actually retains the name *Qiang* as part of their autonym. The suffix *yi* in the autonym is... probably a traditional Han name for the people meaning 'the Qiang foreigners' and may have been picked up by this people after having had centuries of contact with the Han Chinese."¹

Language: Although the Qiangyi language is classified as a Western Yi variety, "at least one Chinese anthropologist says they may just as well be classified as Southern Qiang."² Most or all of the Qiangyi are adequately bilingual in Mandarin Chinese.

History: The history of the Qiangyi is fascinating in that they provide a living

link between today's Tibeto-Burman-speaking tribes in southern China and the Qiang tribes who roamed China's northwest up to 4,000 years ago. One researcher has stated, "The Qiangyi are confirmed descendants of the ancient Qiang nation which migrated during the 'stone-ages' from Gansu to Sichuan — some of them moving into Yunnan. After crossing the Yangtze River into Yunnan, the Qiang separated into three distinct tribes, and slowly bifurcated into 11 other tribes which, in turn, became over 150 tribes. It seems that, finally, distinctions between tribes became so great and the multiplication and racial mixing so complex that historians lost count and the 'tribes' became known as separate 'peoples'.³

Customs: Little is known about the culture of the Qiangyi today and, outside the area where they live, few people have heard of them. Although the Qiangyi used to wear their own traditional dress, it is believed they now wear standard Han clothing except during festivals and special occasions.



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Religion: Polytheism (the worship of many gods) could accurately be described as the main religion among the Qiangyi. There are also elements of ancestor worship and Daoism present, which were probably adopted from their Bai and Chinese neighbors.

Christianity: Despite their long history, the Qiangyi are not known to have been impacted by Christianity. Today, there are no known Christians among them. Xiangyun and Binchuan counties, where the Qiangyi are found, have very little Christian presence except for a few small government-sanctioned churches affiliated with the TSPM. These churches are mostly comprised of elderly Han and Bai believers.



Population in China:

10,000 (1999)
10,250 (2000)
12,850 (2010)

Location: Yunnan

Religion: Polytheism

Christians: None Known

Overview of the Qiangyi

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Chee-ung-Yee"

Other Names: Qiang Yi

Population Source:
10,000 (1999 J. Pelkey);
Out of a total Yi population of
6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *Yunnan:*
Xiangyun (9,000) and
Binchuan (1,000) counties

Status:
Officially included under Yi

Language: Sino-Tibetan,
Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo,
Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi,
Western Yi

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism,
Ancestor Worship, Daoism

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

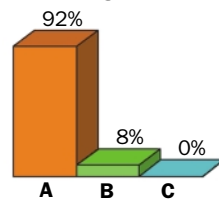
Jesus film: None

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