

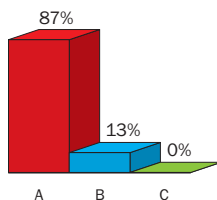


Population:
 8,460 (2000)
 10,420 (2010)
 12,800 (2020)
Countries: China
Buddhism: Tibetan
Christians: none known

Overview of the Queyu

Other Names: Zhaba, Hokow
Population Sources:
 7,000 in China (1991, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Chinese Linguistics*)
Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Tangut-Qiang, Qiangic
Dialects: 0
Professing Buddhists: 100%
Practising Buddhists: 45%
Christians: 0%
Scripture: none
Jesus film: none
Gospel Recordings: none
Christian Broadcasting: none
ROPAL code: QEY

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
 B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians
 C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity

Seven thousand speakers of the Queyu (pronounced 'chue-yoo') language were reported in a 1991 Chinese study.¹ It is expected that this figure grew to 8,460 by the year 2000 and that it will have increased to 10,420 by 2010.

The Queyu inhabit the three counties of Xinlong, Yajiang and Litang in the large Garze Prefecture, which covers a vast area of western Sichuan Province in western China. Their two main villages are called You Laxi and Xhi Tuoxi. About 2,486 people lived in these villages in 1990.² Litang Township lies at an altitude of 4,700 metres (15,400 ft.) above sea level. The Queyu area was formerly part of the Kham Province of



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Tibet, until it was invaded and incorporated into China in the 1950s. The area has seen many horrific human rights abuses during Chinese rule, with many Tibetans being killed or imprisoned. One source states, 'The Queyu are one of the most unknown of the Qiangic speaking Tibetans. Most Tibetans and Chinese in surrounding counties have never heard of them. It is not known if any foreigners have ever travelled to this extremely remote mountainous area.'³

The Queyu have been officially counted as part of the Tibetan nationality, primarily because they follow the Tibetan Buddhist religion. Linguistically, however, the Queyu are closer to the Qiang minority. The Queyu language has four tones.

In the Tuanjie Township of Yajiang County

the people call themselves *Zhaba*, although they speak the same language as the Queyu there. They should not be confused with another Qiangic language group called *Zhaba* who live in the Zhamai District, also within the Garze Prefecture. The *Zhaba* are profiled separately in this book.

In late 1955, Chinese authorities ordered the monks of the large Litang Monastery to make an inventory of the monastery's

possessions for tax assessment. The monks refused to oblige. In February 1956, the People's Liberation Army responded by laying siege to the Litang Monastery. Several thousand monks and farmers, many armed with farm implements, defended the monastery. Chinese aircraft bombed Litang, destroying the monastery and killing hundreds of people. The Tibetans, outraged by the attack, spread the conflict to the surrounding towns of Dege, Batang and Chamdo.⁴

All Queyu profess to be Tibetan Buddhists, although there are also many aspects of shamanism and black magic in their religious practices.

Protestant and Catholic missionaries worked in the Litang area until the early 1950s. Today there is a small Protestant church among the Khampa Tibetans in Litang County,⁵ and there are some Catholics in Yajiang.⁶ Most people in the area, however, have never heard the name of Christ, and there are no known Queyu believers. The situation has changed little since this report in 1922: 'This region is not only without a resident missionary, but even the scouts of Christianity have barely touched it except at one or two points. . . . What is more serious is the fact that many border mission centres are undermanned or not manned at all.'⁷