

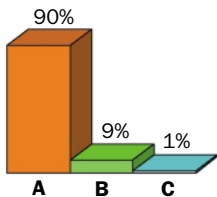


Population in China:
 300,000 (1995)
 319,500 (2000)
 361,000 (2010)
Location: Hunan
Religion: Animism
Christians: 500

Overview of the Waxiang Chinese

Countries: China
Pronunciation: "Wa-sheung"
Other Names:
 Waxianghua, Xianghua, Wogang
Population Source:
 300,000 (1995 S. Milliken);
 Out of a total Han population of
 1,042,482,187 (1990 census)
Location: *W Hunan:* Yuanling,
 Chunxi, Jishou, Guzhang, and
 Dayong counties
Status: Officially included under
 Han Chinese
Language: Chinese, Xianghua
Dialects: 0
Religion:
 Animism, No Religion, Daoism
Christians: 500
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: WXA00

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



Paul Hattaway

Location: Approximately 320,000 speakers of the Waxiang language live scattered throughout an area of more than 6,000 square kilometers (2,340 sq. mi.) in western Hunan Province. The majority are located in the Wuling Mountains, including parts of Yuanling, Chunxi, Jishou, Guzhang, and Dayong counties.

Identity: Although officially considered part of the Han Chinese nationality, Waxiang may not even be a Chinese language. Little study has been conducted into Waxiang, but one scholar notes, "Some view it as a special variety of Chinese, others as a minority language, perhaps related to Miao."¹ It is possible that the Waxiang are a mixture of Miao and Chinese people who developed their own distinct characteristics after centuries of mutual contact.

Language: Waxiang differs greatly from both Mandarin and Hunanese (Xiang) Chinese. Neighboring Han, Miao, and Tujia do not understand Waxiang. In 1969 a Miao woman from the Waxiang region in Hunan tried to communicate with the Chinese authorities by using a unique script.²

History: *The Qing (Manchu) Dynasty (1644-1911):* The Manchus in the northeast took advantage of the peasant

unrest throughout China and seized control of Beijing. Yet again, the Han Chinese majority were ruled by a neighboring minority tribe. It took a further four decades for the Manchu to take control of southern China. Today's Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang were all conquered and subdued, leading to ethnic unrest which persists to this day. The Manchu period witnessed the entrance of foreign powers into China and the seizing of key ports and regions. Hong Kong was taken by the British, Macau by the Portuguese, while the Dutch, Spanish, French, Japanese, and Russians all laid claim to parts of China. The Chinese consider the

Manchu Dynasty one of the most humiliating of their long history.

Customs: Many of the customs of the more rural Waxiang are similar to those of the neighboring Ghaio-Xong.

Religion: The majority of Waxiang practice animistic rituals. They appease spirits and ghosts who they believe dwell in their villages and influence their lives for good or for evil.

Christianity: There are few Christians among the Waxiang. The region has historically given a cold reception to those few missionaries who ventured into the Wuling Mountains. American Catholic priests, from the Blessed Gabriel Monastery in Massachusetts, USA, commenced work along the Hunan-Guizhou border in the 1920s. One early missionary reported, "The good work is moving but very slowly. The people are as hard as steel. They are eaten up both soul and body by the world, and do not seem to feel that there can be reality in anything beyond sense. To them our doctrine is foolishness, our talk jargon. We discuss and beat them in argument. We reason them into silence and shame; but the whole effort falls upon them like showers upon a sandy desert."³