

**Location:** More than 35 million speakers of Gan Chinese live in Jiangxi Province and the southeastern corner of Hubei Province, including Dachi, Xianning, Jiayu, and Chongyang counties. The Gan account for approximately 3% of all Chinese in China. The greatest concentrations live along the Fuhe River, the lower reaches of the Ganjiang River, and around Poyang Lake. Small numbers of Gan speakers also live in eastern and southwestern Hunan, southern Anhui, and the northwestern part of Fujian Province.

**Identity:** The Gan Chinese are part of the great Han Chinese nationality — the largest ethnic group in the world. Gan, however, is a distinct language that differs from Mandarin and other Chinese varieties.

**Language:** The Gan language contains nine dialects. It has only marginal intelligibility with Mandarin and Wu Chinese. Almost all Gan are adequately bilingual in Mandarin Chinese, the national language which is used throughout China for education and in the media.

**History:** The *Xia Dynasty* (2200–1700 BC): The Chinese claim 5,000 years of continuous history, beginning with the mythological Xia Dynasty. The very existence of the Xia is doubtful, as archaeological evidence has not been found to support the written accounts of the time. According to legend, the Xia was preceded by three sovereigns. The first sovereign, Fuxi, was thought to be half human and half dragon. His

wife, Nüguā, is credited with having created humans from clay. Fuxi taught men how to hunt, fish, and farm. The first emperor, Huang Di, is said to have invented the calendar, boats, and pottery. After 500 years, the Xia leaders “became corrupt and were... overthrown by the Shang.”<sup>1</sup> Jiangxi, where most Gan live, was incorporated into the Chinese empire at any early date but remained sparsely populated until the eighth century.

**Customs:** Jiangxi is famous for its abundance of silver. Extensive mining caused the formation of a wealthy ruling class. Today, Jiangxi is one of the most densely populated provinces in China.

**Religion:** Although the majority of Gan are nonreligious, there has been a revival of Buddhism and Daoism since the relaxing of restrictions on religion in recent years. Zhuangzi (369–286 BC) was an early leader of Daoism. His writings introduced the idea of the unity of opposites, ying and yang. This led to the notion of accepting life without struggle.



Paul Hattaway

**Christianity:** In 1900 the diabolical Boxer Rebellion broke out across China. Thirty thousand Chinese Catholics and 2,000 Protestants were massacred,<sup>2</sup> as antiforeign and anti-Christian feelings ran hot. The number of Christians in China more than doubled in the six years following the massacres. In 1901 one missionary in Jiangxi reported 20,000 converts.<sup>3</sup> There are an estimated 400,000 Christians among the Gan Chinese today.<sup>4</sup> The *Jesus* film has recently been translated into the Gan language, although most Gan are adequately bilingual in Mandarin.



**Population in China:**  
31,270,000 (1987)  
36,554,000 (2000)  
41,306,000 (2010)

**Location:** Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Anhui, Fujian  
**Religion:** No Religion  
**Christians:** 400,000

## Overview of the Gan Chinese

**Countries:** China  
**Pronunciation:** “Gahn”  
**Other Names:** Gan, Kan  
**Population Source:**  
31,270,000 (1987 LAC);  
Out of a total Han population of 1,042,482,187 (1990 census)  
**Location:** Jiangxi; SE Hubei; Hunan; S Anhui; NW Fujian  
**Status:** Officially included under Han Chinese

**Language:** Chinese, Gan  
**Dialects (9):** Changjing, Yiliu, Jicha, Fuguang, Yangyi, Datong, Leizi, Dongsui, Huaiyue  
**Religion:** No Religion, Daoism, Buddhism, Christianity  
**Christians:** 400,000  
**Scripture:** Chinese Bible  
**Jesus film:** Available  
**Gospel Recordings:** None  
**Christian Broadcasting:** None  
**ROPAL code:** KNN00

