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Location: Approximately 2,900 members of an isolated Kazak people group live in the northwest section of Qinghai Province.¹ Being seminomadic, they inhabit a wide stretch of land in the Haixi Autonomous Prefecture which is jointly administered by the Mongols, Tibetans, and Kazaks. They are the only group of Kazaks found in Qinghai (Blue Sea) Province.

Identity: Although the Qinghai Kazaks are part of the official Kazak nationality in China, they now consider themselves to be a distinct people group. Their language has also become different from other Kazaks in Xinjiang. The Qinghai Kazaks have a common affinity and kinship for each other because of the horrendous events of their history.

Language: The Qinghai Kazaks speak a variety of Kazak that has been heavily influenced by other peoples in the area because of trade, including the Oirat Mongols and Tibetans. The Qinghai Kazaks do not use their own written script, although some can read Chinese and Tibetan.

History: In 1936 a group of 10,000 Kazaks left northern Xinjiang and migrated south to Qinghai. "Beset there by Mongol nomads, the Kazaks moved further south in 1939, only to be caught and massacred by a local warlord. Of 10,000 Kazaks, they say all but 700 perished. Today they have recovered to become a commune of about 2,000 semi-nomads, who raise sheep, horses, cattle and camels and live in houses near Golmud in winter."²

The Kazaks have long desired to have their own independent state. In the 1940s a man named Osman led his fellow Kazaks in a rebellion. This rebellion gave them control of a large area of southwest Xinjiang. Several years later in 1951, Osman was captured and executed. In 1953, the Communists slaughtered 12,600 of the 15,000 Kazaks who attempted to flee China.³

Customs: The Qinghai Kazaks are nomads who migrate seasonally in search of new pastures. Their yurts are designed to be quickly assembled and easily transported. Their livestock includes sheep, goats, and some cattle. One of their favorite drinks is called *kumyss*, a wine made from fermented mare's or horse's milk. When a young Kazak couple marries, the "bride-price" is often paid in horses.

Religion: Although they claim to be Muslims, the Qinghai Kazaks are essentially animists. They also engage in ancestor worship. They are surrounded by Tibetan Buddhists on every side but have stubbornly refused to embrace their religion. The Qinghai Kazaks still admit to being Muslims; but without the *Qur'an*, teachers, or a mosque to worship in, their devotion has gradually eroded.

Christianity: Famous Scottish missionary George Hunter translated the first Scriptures for the Kazak in China. Books of the Bible were printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1922.⁴ Today the Kazaks of

Qinghai are a completely untouched group and have no knowledge whatsoever of Christ or the gospel.



Population in China:
 2,000 (1984)
 2,890 (2000)
 3,700 (2010)
Location: Qinghai
Religion: Animism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Qinghai Kazaks

Countries: China
Pronunciation: "Ching-hai-Kar-zark"
Other Name: Kazakhs, Haixi Kazaks
Population Source: 2,000 (1984 Wong How-Man); Out of a total Kazak population of 1,111,718 (1990 census)
Location: NW Qinghai: Haixi Mongol-Tibetan-Kazak Prefecture
Status: Officially included under Kazak
Language: Altaic, Turkic, Western Turkic
Dialects: 0
Religion: Animism, Shamanism, Ancestor Worship, Islam
Christians: None known
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: None

