

Location: A Chinese source lists a 1990 figure of 9,800 speakers of Cimulin Qiang living in five districts within Heishui (Black Water) County in northwest Sichuan Province.¹ The total Qiang population in the 1990 census was 198,252 — a four-fold increase from the 1964 figure of only 49,105. Most of the increase can be attributed to the reclassification of additional peoples under the Qiang, rather than to biological growth.

Identity: The Cimulin Qiang language is very different from other varieties of Qiang. “The Chinese character for *Qiang* is a combination of *yang* (sheep) and *ren* (people), with the composite meaning of ‘people tending sheep’.”²

Language: Cimulin Qiang, which is a Northern Qiang language, is not tonal, whereas Southern Qiang varieties consist of between two to six tones.³ Many of the Cimulin Qiang are bilingual in Tibetan, while others living near the towns are able to speak Chinese. In addition, more than 50,000 speakers of Northern Qiang dialects have been placed under the Tibetan nationality.⁴

History: Qiang history dates back as far as the Western Zhou Dynasty (1100–771 BC), when considerable numbers of Han people migrated west and formed mixed communities with the Di and Qiang.⁵

Customs: One of the Qiang festivals is called *Jishanhui*, which women are

not allowed to attend. A cow or sheep is sacrificed on an altar to the god of the Mountains. They ask for a good harvest and peace for the village.

Religion: The Northern Qiang language groups have embraced Tibetan Buddhism more zealously than the Southern Qiang, because of centuries of influence from neighboring Tibetans. The Northern Qiang also worship a multitude of Chinese and Tibetan deities, of which the Sky god is considered the greatest. In addition, shamans, witches, and mediums are located throughout the countryside. In 1994 one Christian interviewed a Qiang sorceress at a temple reputed to be 1,000 years old. The woman told the visitor, “I have the power to put people into a trance, and make their spirits leave their bodies and travel to hell. Usually, we can then call their spirits back, but sometimes it doesn’t work, and the person dies and is trapped in hell forever.’ When we told her about a God who has the power to take her spirit to heaven, she was delighted and wanted to know more.”⁶ Most Qiang people, like this sorceress,



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have absolutely no awareness of the gospel.

Christianity: One Christian ministry has incorrectly reported there to be “no Qiang Christians remaining,”⁷ but a small Qiang church does exist in China. There are a very small number of Northern Qiang Christians, including some families living in Songpan. “There are no church buildings any more, but still Christian believers.”⁸ It is not known, however, if there are any Christians specifically among the Cimulin Qiang. Several short-term missions teams in the early 1990s were arrested and expelled from China for distributing literature in the Qiang region.⁹



Population in China:
9,800 (1990)
12,600 (2000)
16,300 (2010)

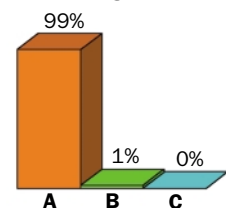
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Cimulin Qiang

Countries: China
Pronunciation: “Chee-ung”
Other Names: Chiang; Cimulin, Ch’iang, Cimulin, Tz’u-mu-lin Ch’iang
Population Source: 9,800 (1998 Liu Guangkun – 1990 figure); Out of a total Qiang population of 198,252 (1990 census)
Location: NW Sichuan: Heishui County: Cimulin, Gewo, Wumushu, Rewo, and Qinglanggou districts

Status: Officially included under Qiang
Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Qiangic, Qiang, Northern Qiang
Dialects: 0
Religion: Tibetan Buddhism, Polytheism, Animism, Shamanism
Christians: None
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