

**Population in China:**  
 7,400 (1990)  
 9,540 (2000)  
 12,300 (2010)  
**Location:** Sichuan  
**Religion:** Polytheism  
**Christians:** None Known

## Overview of the Dajishan Qiang

**Countries:** China

**Pronunciation:**  
 "Chee-ung-Dah-jee-shahn"

**Other Names:** Chiang; Dajishan, Dajishan, Daqishan Qiang, Ta-ch'i-shan Ch'iang

**Population Source:** 7,400 (1998 Liu Guangkun – 1990 figure); Out of a total Qiang population of 198,252 (1990 census)

**Location:** *W Sichuan:* Lixian County; Xuecheng, Shangmeng, Xiameng, Xinglong, Ganbao, Lielie, Jiuzi, Muka, Piaotou, and Puxi districts

**Status:**  
 Officially included under Qiang

**Language:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Qiangic, Qiang, Southern Qiang

**Dialects:** 0

**Religion:** Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship

**Christians:** None known

**Scripture:** None

**Jesus film:** None

**Gospel Recordings:** None

**Christian Broadcasting:** None

**ROPAL code:** None

**Location:** A Chinese linguist in 1990 listed 7,400 speakers of the Dajishan Qiang language, living in ten districts within Lixian County in the Aba Prefecture of western Sichuan.<sup>1</sup> The Qiang, who total approximately 200,000 people, inhabit an extremely rugged region, with gushing emerald-colored rivers cutting their way past 18,000-foot (5,480 m) snowcapped mountains.

**History:** Numerous references to the Qiang tribes, dating back 4,000 years, are found in Chinese history. Sandwiched between the wild, warlike Tibetans to the west and the expanding Chinese to the east, these various nomadic tribes came to be known as the *Qiang*, a name that one source says means "herdsmen."<sup>7</sup>

**Customs:** Almost all Qiang weddings and festivals are scheduled during the tenth month of the year. On the eve of the wedding day the bridegroom's family will send a "gift-bearer" to the bride's home with presents. After the wedding feast, which may last up to ten hours, the custom of "singing in the hall" commences. "The bride, whose face is veiled by a handkerchief, will first sing a song to bid farewell to her parents and thank them for her upbringing. She is then followed by the bridesmaids who will sing a song persuading her to go to the groom and live with him as man and wife."<sup>8</sup>



Paul Hattaway

**Religion:** Most Qiang are polytheists. "They believe that everything on earth — the earth itself, the sky, the sun, trees, fire, saplings, doors, even cauldron supports, pillars, white stones etc. — has a soul and they are all to be worshipped. They have no idols of any deity but choose a kind of milk-white stone as the symbol of all deities.... Usually on the back

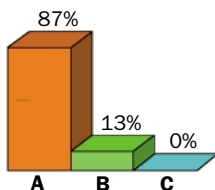
**Identity:** The Qiang are one of the oldest and most famous of China's peoples. In ancient times they numbered 62 different tribes.<sup>2</sup> Today's official Qiang nationality is a collection of 11 different tribes and languages, including the Dajishan Qiang.<sup>3</sup>

wall on the top floor of every house there are five white stones representing deities of Heaven, Earth and Mountains."<sup>9</sup>

**Language:** Linguist James Matisoff in 1991 discovered there to be "9 or 10 Qiangic languages."<sup>4</sup> The Qiang have a legend of once possessing a script and "lost book" of their own.<sup>5</sup> Dajishan Qiang is part of the Southern Qiang linguistic group. One linguist says, "Southern Qiang has been divided by researchers into five sub-dialects [including Dajishan] which are considered to be too divergent from each other to permit communication between people from different villages."<sup>6</sup>

**Christianity:** Thomas F. Torrance, from Scotland, was the first Protestant missionary among the Qiang. He served with the China Inland Mission from 1895 to 1909 and then with the American Bible Society until the 1930s. Torrance reported, "scores and scores of Christian converts among these tribesmen, especially in the Wenchuan and Weizhou [Maoxian] areas, and seven meeting places established around Tongmenwai."<sup>10</sup> There are several hundred Qiang believers today, but it is unclear if any are from the Dajishan Qiang language group who live in Lixian County.

### 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