



Paul Hattaway

Location: More than 20,000 speakers of the Heihu Qiang language inhabit nine districts in the central and southern parts of Maoxian County in western Sichuan Province.¹ The various Qiang groups, including the Heihu, live in small, scattered communities, resulting in “large dialect differences.”²

Identity: The Heihu Qiang have been combined with other related groups in Sichuan to form the official Qiang nationality.

Language: Linguist Robert Ramsey, in his overview of the Qiang, states, “The Qiang are bound together only loosely. Groups have diverged linguistically, and the Qiang in one area are frequently unable to understand the speech of those in another area.... No question of mutual intelligibility could possibly arise here; if groups from two areas were to come

together, it is quite likely they would have to communicate with each other in Chinese.”³

History: The Qiang have migrated a vast distance across China during their history. During the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC – AD 220) they lived in the present-day Alxa Prefecture in Inner Mongolia. There they joined forces with the Hun and Wuhuan peoples to fight the Chinese. Because of numerous conflicts with other nationalities in the past, the Qiang built imposing stone fortresses, many of which still stand in the remote mountain passes of western Sichuan.⁴

Customs: The Qiang have a fond love for music. They are talented singers and dancers, and love to “dance to the accompaniment of gongs, tambourines, sonas and bamboos.”⁵

Religion: Missionary Thomas Torrance amazed the world in the early 1900s with his claims that the Qiang people may be one of the lost tribes of Israel.⁶ He found numerous practices in Qiang culture and religion that he believed could only have come from a knowledge of the Old Testament. On a visit to Oir in 1925, Torrance met a Qiang priest who “explained their ancient sacrificial rites, and told us of their two-fold sacrifice on their annual day of atonement: one goat was slaughtered at an altar in a sacred grove at a ‘high place’, and one goat was released into the wilds beyond. When my father read to the priest and his family the sixteenth chapter of the book of Leviticus, in which details of this same rite are found in the ancient Hebrew liturgy, the old priest leaped up from his stool in excitement, saying that these were the lost Qiang Scriptures!”⁷

Christianity: Mao’s Communist forces destroyed several Qiang churches when the Long March passed through the region in the summer of 1935. “All Qiang pastors and most of their families were executed by Mao’s men. The Communists tried to burn all Bibles and New Testaments, even tried to destroy the Christian’s grain, so as to eliminate the Christian communities established in Wenchuan and Lifan counties. But in Tongmenwai the Christians saved some of their Bibles by burying them in caves. They resurrected them after Mao’s forces had passed on.”⁸



Population in China:
 16,000 (1990)
 20,640 (2000)
 26,600 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 150

Overview of the Heihu Qiang

Countries: China

Pronunciation:
 “Chee-ung-Hay-hoo”

Other Names: Chiang; Heihu, Heihu, Hei-hu Ch’iang

Population Source: 16,000 (1998 Liu Guangkun – 1990 figure); 30,000 (1998 J. Matisoff); Out of a total Qiang population of 198,252 (1990 census)

Location: *W Sichuan:* Maoxian County; Heihu, Sujiaping, Feihong, Goukou, Weimen, and Jiayuanping districts

Status: Officially included under Qiang

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity

Christians: 150

Scripture: None

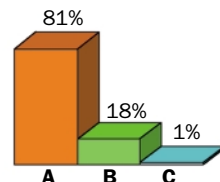
Jesus film: None

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