

Location: More than 24,000 speakers of the Jiaochang Qiang language live in the western part of Sichuan Province among rugged mountains near the Min River. The great majority live in Maoxian County, in the districts of Jiaochang (which lends its name to the dialect), Shidaguan, Taiping, and Songpinggou; others live in the Xice area of Zhenjianguan District in Songpan County (which is the northernmost Qiang community in China). A small number of Jiaochang Qiang also live in parts of Beichuan County.¹

Identity: The name Qiang is a Chinese term. The Qiang refer to themselves as *Rimai* in Maoxian County; *Rima* in Mao Township and Chibusu District; and *Ma* in Lixian County. “The meaning of these words is ‘the righteousness of people’.”²

Language: Jiaochang is spoken by more people than any other dialect of Southern Qiang in China. The linguistic diversity among the various Qiang groups scattered throughout Sichuan is bewildering. Captain William Gill was one of the first Westerners ever to pass through Qiang territory in the 1870s. Gill compiled a brief wordlist from a Qiangic language, but stated, “This orthography can convey but a feeble idea of the astounding noises the people make in their throats to produce these words.”³

History: Between AD 600 and 900 many Qiang were assimilated by the Han and Tibetan cultures, leaving only

a small group intact. This group is now known as the Qiang nationality.

Customs: Although they may struggle to understand each other’s language, there are strong cultural ties between the various Qiang groups, including the mutual possession of stone towers. The Qiang believe their common ancestors constructed them.

Religion: The majority of Qiang people are polytheists and animists, deifying mountains, sheep, trees, storms, fire, etc. Others are followers of Tibetan Buddhism (especially those living close to Tibetan communities) and Daoism.

Christianity: There are approximately 100 Christians among the Jiaochang Qiang dialect group. They are the result of pre-1949 work by both Protestant and Catholic missionaries. In 1998 the Christian mission Gospel Recordings produced the first Christian audio recording in a Qiang language. It was recorded in Songpinggou District of Maoxian County, within the territory of the Jiaochang Qiang language. There are still no Scripture portions available in



Luke Kuepfer

any of the 11 Qiang languages. Apart from the labors of Thomas Torrance, mission work among the Qiang includes a Catholic church that was established in Maoxian in 1898 by French missionaries. In 1906 a British missionary, whose Chinese name was Feigesheng, preached in Maoxian. In 1906 and 1909, the Catholic Church of England established a church, hospital, and school in the Qiang area. In 1918 an Englishman named Maosenwei also founded a school, medical clinic, and churches.⁴



Population in China:
19,000 (1990)
24,500 (2000)
31,600 (2010)
Location: Sichuan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 100

Overview of the Jiaochang Qiang

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Chee-Ung-Jeeow-chung”

Other Names: Chiang: Jiaochang, Chi’ang: Jiaochang

Population Source: 19,000 (1998 Liu Guangkun – 1990 figure); Out of a total Qiang population of 198,252 (1990 census)

Location: *W Sichuan:* Maoxian County: Jiaochang, Shidaguan, Taiping, and Songpinggou districts; Songpan County: Xice area of Zhenjianguan District; Some speakers of Jiaochang

Qiang also live in areas within Beichuan County.

Status: Officially included under Qiang

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

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Daoism, Christianity

Christians: 100

Scripture: None

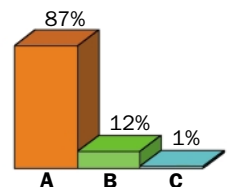
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: Qiang: Song Ping Gou #04835

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