Shortcomings are ours alone.

Here lies the million Chinese communities on this earth, on this page are many Apples, Alex
Special thanks to Professor Zishaan Huang and Assistant Director Sizhao Peng for
Language Work of the Committee of Chinese Studies at the Summer Institute of Linguistics.
This paper is the fruit of cooperative efforts between the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, The

If the language is to survive, vigorous efforts at language development must be made, with an emphasis on the creation and use of Chinese language literacy.

One finding leads us to believe that the Chinese language is in danger of extinction.

The authors also undertook a small-scale survey in the village of He (河北) to determine the extent to which the Chinese language is being passed on to children.

The Chinese language is considered to be one of the strongest cultural factors.

The Chinese language has historically been considered a "mother tongue.

Sing and storytelling fill the world.

"Will the Chinese Language Survive?"

"Will the Chinese Language Survive?"

China's cultural traditions such as cuisine, medicine, and folk art are available in remote areas, while Chinese education in China increases, simultaneously, technological developments in China have led to a shortage of Chinese teachers receiving an education.

Each decade, the number of Chinese children receiving an education in China has been used to develop the "Chinese Language Survival Plan," however, it is still a question for the future.

At the present time, a Chinese practical language plan and two books have been developed.

Of the two books, one has been used for dual literacy.

You are the only one who can develop the Chinese language, beyond its control and made an effort to develop the Chinese language.

Although the Chinese government has launched educational efforts, it is still a question for the future.

Speakers of the Chinese language are decreasing in number, this is true for

ABSTRACT

"Will the Chinese Language Survive?"

Peter Lester (李彼得) and Martha Lester (黛玛丽)
material and literature. We see the need for more research, especially in the form of a language use survey to determine the people’s attitudes toward the use of Qiang and Han Chinese.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Qiang people, who refer to themselves as /zi/me/, live mainly in, Beichuan, Heishui2, Li, Mao, Songpan and Wenchuan counties in the northwestern region of Sichuan province, the People’s Republic of China. The language is classified in the Sino-Tibetan phylum, the Tibeto-Burman family, the Qiangic branch. There are about 290,000 ethnic Qiang, less than half of whom still speak one of the Qiang dialects. Qiang is an SOV language with a rich segmental inventory.

There are three views put forth as to the historical existence of a Qiang written language. A Qiang legend says that the Qiang once had written language kept in a set of sacred books; however, during their migration from central to western China these books were eaten by a goat. Thus their written language disappeared. Another thought which some scholars propose is that the now extinct Xixia language, which had a written form, is actually related to the modern day Qiang spoken language. Finally, there is the idea that Qiang has never had a written language. In any case, Qiang has not had a written form for the past several centuries, and this has only changed very recently with the development of a practical transcription system. This long-standing lack of a writing system has had an impact on how the people themselves view their language.

This paper concerns itself with the future of the Qiang language: Will it survive? Section two discusses the changes within Qiang culture and the the resulting impact on the language. Section three contains a synopsis of the implications of language policy for the Qiang and their language. Finally, section four delineates sociolinguistic variables that factor into the equation.

2.0 CULTURAL FACTORS

As is the case within all cultures, the passing of time inevitably leads to change. Comparing the present day Qiang culture with that of 50 or 100 years ago reveals that the people are changing. These changes are altering the values of the Qiang people and are affecting their attitudes toward the Qiang language. Specifically, the domains of demographics, education, entertainment, marriage and religion will be examined more closely.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

According to 1999 census statistics, the Qiang population in the five

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2 A small number of a Tibetan subgroup in Heishui actually speak Qiang although they are Tibetan ethically.
education and access to education or outside news has made it difficult for Chinese society to be sustained. The township is currently lagging behind Chinese-speaking communities in the rest of the world. However, the number of people who can speak the language seem to be increasing. Despite this trend, the population of Chinese is increasing, with most rural areas of the world. This increase has been realized through improved nutrition and access to medical care. The expectation has increased through improved nutrition and access to medical care. The Chinese population is expected to reach 1.3 billion by 2050, depending on how much of the country's Chinese-speaking population is expected to live in China. The Chinese government has implemented various policies to control the population, such as birth control. The population must address these issues to maintain economic growth. The Chinese national family planning provisions are based on this principle. One of the main goals of the Chinese government is to reduce the birth rate. The Chinese government has implemented various policies to control the population, such as birth control. The population must address these issues to maintain economic growth. The Chinese national family planning provisions are based on this principle.
present is a time of rapid changes, and many old ideas and customs are passing away."

2.3 ENTERTAINMENT

More recently, since the early 1990’s, the domain of Qiang traditional entertainment has seen changes. Even remote Qiang villages have fairly reliable hydroelectric power supply for at least 4-6 hours per day. With the widespread availability of electrical power, various electrical appliances such as television, stereos and other imported forms of entertainment are rapidly replacing the Qiang traditional forms of entertainment such as story-telling, singing and dancing. The latter forms of entertainment all employ the use of the Qiang language. However, with television broadcasts completely using Chinese and with access to Chinese music via radio and stereo, the domain of entertainment is losing its Qiang language component. Typically, while watching a Chinese television program, the older members of the family will still discuss aspects of the program in Qiang. However, if the older members of the family ask the children about the program in Qiang, the children will usually answer back in Chinese. A wave of television satellite receivers during the 1990’s has brought Chinese television broadcasts into most homes on a daily basis. Even more remote Qiang townships, like Qugu (曲谷), have a plethora of satellite dishes allowing approximately 90 percent of homes to access Chinese broadcasting programs regularly.

Furthermore, the 1990’s has seen the importation of activities such as the playing of Majiang, a traditional Chinese game, cards, and weddings that are being held outside of the home in bigger cities where the entertainment is "more interesting". When playing Majiang and card games, both Qiang and Chinese can be heard, not necessarily one or the other.

2.4 MARRIAGE

From an anthropological perspective, the Qiang have no restrictions on inter-marriage with members of other ethnic groups. The authors are acquainted with Qiang who are married to Han Chinese, Tibetan and Hui. Because Qiang is seldom spoken in mixed marriages, the increase in those marrying out-group members is slowly diminishing the pool of Qiang speakers. This is likely due to Han Chinese being the language of prestige and wider communication. The offspring of Qiang mixed marriages rarely learn to speak Qiang rather the whole family tends to speak Chinese together. More to the point, many ethnically Qiang speakers often marry other ethnic Qiang who are unable to speak Qiang. Here again, a Han Chinese environment tends to dominate family life resulting in children who are unable to speak Qiang. Examples of this situation abound, the first listed author’s daughter is but one of

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*It is a well demonstrated fact that in circumstances where the mother speaks one language and the father another language children are quite capable of learning both languages. However, the authors do not know of any children who have learned Qiang from one parent and Chinese from the other.