

# A Reworking of Chinese Language Classification

by Robert Lindsay

## Introduction

The Chinese languages have undergone a lot of reclassification lately (Mair 2009), going from one to 14 in the latest edition of *Ethnologue*. However, [Jerry Norman](#), one of the world's top experts on Chinese, has stated that based on mutual intelligibility, there are 350-400 separate languages within Chinese (Mair 1991). Native speakers of Chinese have stated that according to my criteria of distinguishing a language from a dialect, there would be 300-400 separate languages in Fujian alone (Xun 2009).

[So far, 2,500 dialects](#) of the Chinese language have been identified, and a number of them are separate languages.

Based on the criteria of mutual intelligibility, I have expanded the 14 Chinese languages into **708 separate languages**.

There are different ways of calculating mutual intelligibility. Mutual intelligibility is hard to determine. I am not interested in typological studies of varieties involving either lexicon, phonology, or tones, unless this can be quantified in terms of mutual intelligibility in a scientific way (Cheng 1991). For the most part, what I am interested in is, "Can they understand each other?"

I decided to put it at 90%, with >90% being a dialect and <90% being a separate language. This is based on what appears to be *Ethnologue*'s criteria for establishing the line between a dialect and a language. Based on numerous conversations I had with linguists at various universities, there was wide agreement with the 90% benchmark.

In the cases below where I had mutual intelligibility data available, a number of Chinese languages had no more than 65% intelligibility between them (Cheng 1991).

The best way to see this study is as a pilot study. The purpose of the classification below is more to stimulate academic interest and sprout new thinking and theory. It is not intended to be an end-all or be-all statement on the subject; in fact, it is quite the opposite. Pilot studies, which is what this is, are de facto never accurate and precise.

Reasonable, fair-minded, and professional comments, additions, criticisms, elaborations, presentations of evidence, etc. are highly encouraged.

I assume this paper will be controversial. Keep in mind that this work is extremely tentative and should not be taken as the last word on the subject by a long shot.

Interested scholars, observers or speakers of Chinese languages are encouraged to contribute any knowledge that they may have to add to, confirm, or criticize this data below. So far as I know, this is the first real attempt to split Chinese beyond the 14 languages elucidated by [\*Ethnologue\*](#).

There are many problems with the data below. Unfortunately, I currently lack excellent mutual intelligibility data within the major language groups such as Gan, Xiang, Wu, and the branches of Mandarin. There is probably quite a bit of lumping still to be done below. Where varieties are mutually intelligible below, I have tried to lump them into one language with various dialects.

In many cases, we seem to be dealing with dialect chains. This is particularly the case with the Mandarin languages, incorrectly referred to as the Mandarin dialects. For instance, in Henan each major city can understand the next city over fairly well, but at the second or third city over, you run into serious comprehension difficulties. But even there, the languages are fairly close, with intelligibility at ~70%, and after three weeks of close contact, they can communicate fairly well. In many cases, it is a matter of working out the tone changes, for tone changes are very common even among the Mandarin varieties.



*Map of China showing all of the provinces.*

## Mandarin

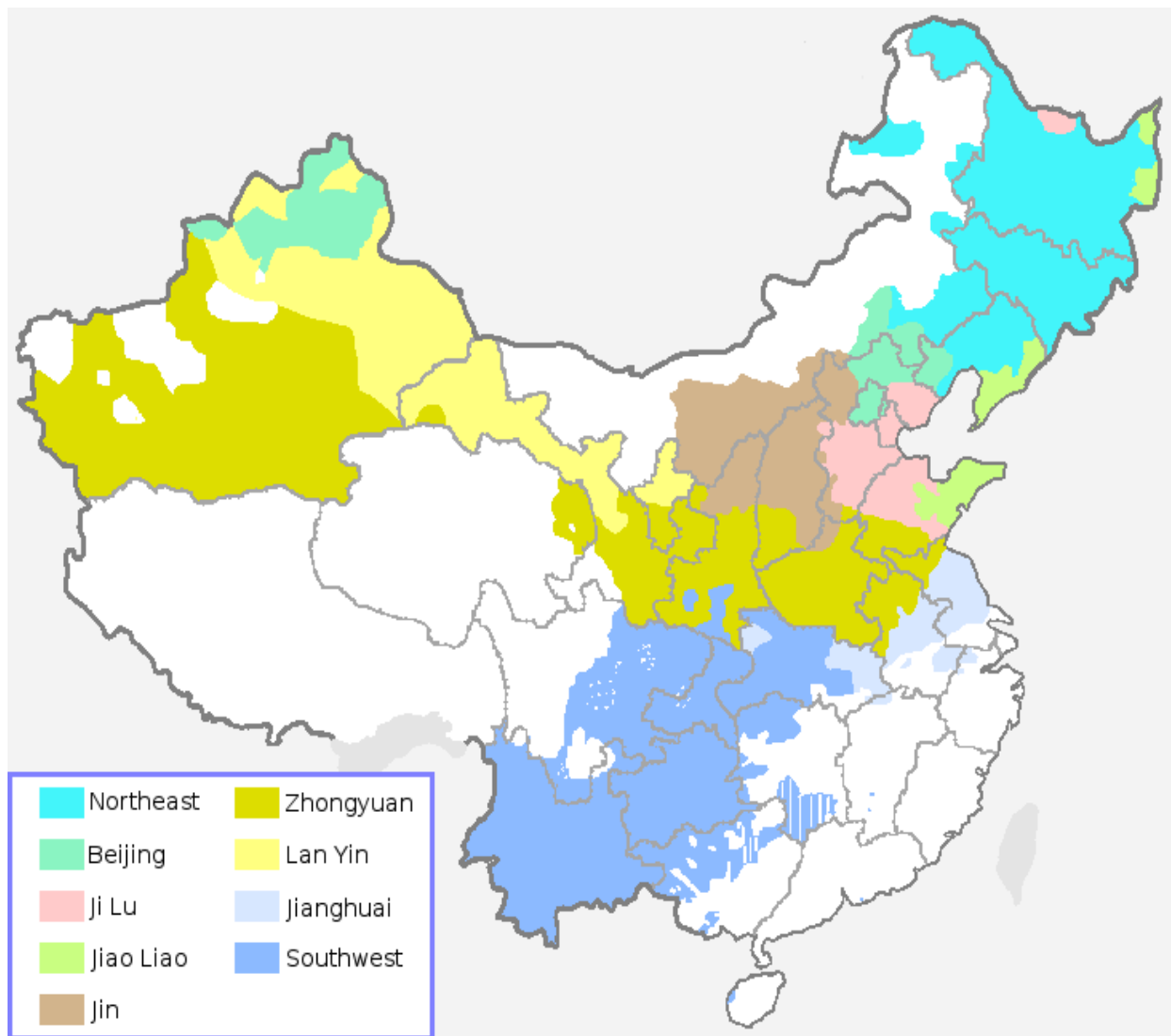
Mandarin is a Sinitic category that includes varieties that share a loosely based history with Ming and Qing Era Guan Hua, or Official's Speech. The speech was based on the Chinese spoken by government workers in northern capitals like Beijing and Nanjing which spread across the northern plains with migration and state influence. In most of the southern half of China, the government never had firm control, and Guan Hua only had a minor effect on the Chinese languages spoken there.

That is why Hui, Xiang, Hakka, Min, Wu, Cantonese, Ping, and Tuhua are mostly spoken in the south of China and the northern half of

China is almost exclusively Mandarin-speaking and the other Sinitic languages are not present there.

There are an incredible 1,526 varieties of Mandarin.

Mandarin has [873 million speakers](#).



*Different major groups of Mandarin: Northeastern is in blue blue-green. Beijing is in greener blue-green. Jilu is in pink. Jiaoliao is in light bright green. Jin is in brown. Zhongyuan is in dark yellow. Lanyin is in light yellow. Jianghuai is in light blue. Southwestern is in dark blue.*

# Beijing Mandarin

## Beijing

**Beijing Mandarin or Beijinghua** is best seen as a separate group in Mandarin encompassing 45 varieties spoken not just in Beijing but also in far Northern Hebei, Southwestern Liaoning, and a bit into Central Inner Mongolia. It is also spoken as a native language far over to the west in far Northern Xinjiang.

Beijinghua was the basis for Putonghua. However, [many Putonghua speakers](#) claim that Beijinghua is [not inherently intelligible](#) with Putonghua. Complaints about [unintelligible taxi drivers](#) in Beijing are legendary. At the very least, competing views of the intelligibility of Beijinghua and Putonghua deserve investigation.

On the other hand, Beijinghua [is intelligible](#) with Hebei Mandarin and Nanjing City Mandarin, yet Putonghua is [not intelligible](#) with Hebei.

The Beijinger dialect of Beijing's hutongs and taxi drivers is legendary for being [hard to understand](#).

The truth is that Putonghua was never entirely based on Beijinghua. It was in terms of pronunciation but in for vocabulary. Putonghua got only [35% of its vocabulary](#) from Beijinghua. Most of its vocabulary came from [Japanese Kanji words](#). They used a form of Mandarin that was [based](#) on Chinese scholars who went to study in Japan at the end of the Qing Era. So Putonghua, like Standard Italian which is based on Florentine Italian of Dante circa 1400, is in a sense frozen in time.

The two varieties may also have taken separate trajectories. This has also occurred in Italian, where, though Standard Italian was based on Florentine Tuscan, Standard Italian, and Tuscan Italian have taken separate trajectories since. If you see old Tuscan men on TV in Italy, a speaker of Standard Italian from Southern Italy would need subtitles to understand them, but one from Northern Italy would not.

Others say that Putonghua was based on the language of the Beijing suburbs, not the city itself.

For whatever reason, Beijinghua [often seems to have less than 90% intelligibility with Putonghua](#), though the question needs further research. Beijinghua, in its [pure](#) and [least](#) mutually [intelligible](#) form,

seems to be spoken mostly in the innermost hutongs and among taxi drivers and other low-income and working class people. The dialect of people with more education and money is probably a lot more comprehensible.

I would describe the real, pure, Putonghua as "[CCTV speech](#)", the dialect you hear on Chinese state television. [There](#) is quite a bit of good [evidence](#) that Bejinghua [lacks](#) full [intelligibility](#) with [Putonghua](#).

The question of whether or not Bejinghua is a separate language from Putonghua is sure to be highly controversial. Perhaps intelligibility testing could settle the question.

The 45 varieties inside of the Beijing Group are very uniform and it is probable that mutual intelligibility among the group is full.

## **Xinjiang**

Believe it or not, the Mandarin spoken in northern Xinjiang is actually a form of Bejinghua. This is because Han people only started moving there after the formation of the People's Republic in China in 1949. In particular, they arrived after Putonghua was made into the national language in 1955. Although they have only been there for 60 years, their Bejinghua has already changed quite a bit under the influence of the Turkic Uighur language. Nevertheless, intelligibility with the rest of Bejinghua is full.

*The Keshi Group of Beijing Mandarin* is the name for the Bejinghua spoken in Northern Xinjiang. It is composed of Burqin, Fuhai, Fuyun, Hoboksar, Jeminay, Shihezi, Toli, and Wenquan. Lanyin Mandarin and a type of Zhongyuan Mandarin are also spoken in Xinjiang in the south and center of the province.

## **Classification**

Chaoyang, Chifeng and seven others are members of the Chaofeng Group of Beijing Mandarin, which has nine varieties.

Chengde, Lanfang and 15 others are members of the Huaicheng Group of Beijing Mandarin, which has 17 varieties.

Beijing and five others are members of the Jinshi Group of Beijing Mandarin, which has six members.

Burqin, Fuhai, Fuyun, Hoboksar, Jeminay, Shihezi, Toli, Wenquan, and



two others are members of the Keshi Group of Mandarin has 11 varieties.

The Beijing Group of Mandarin has 43 varieties.

## **Jianghuai Mandarin**

*Jianghuai or Lower Yangtze Mandarin* is a separate branch of Mandarin that is very different from the rest of Mandarin and is not fully intelligible with Putonghua. It is spoken in most of Jiangsu, in Central and Southeastern Anhui, in Eastern and far Western Hubei, in a bit of far Northwestern Zhejiang, in a tiny spot in far Northwestern Jiangxi, and in a single location in Shanxi.

Some say that this is not even part of Mandarin, as it is better seen as in between Mandarin and Wu. Jianghuai, especially the variety spoken around Taizhou, is not intelligible at all with Anhui Zhongyuan Mandarin or Sichuan Southwestern Mandarin. Jianghuai Mandarin speakers cannot even tell that the Anhui or Sichuan speakers are speaking Mandarin because the language is so foreign.

Jianghuai Mandarin was the Standard Mandarin language or Guanhua until 1800, when Beijinghua took over (Norman 2003).

There is a concept in Chinese linguistics called the Jianghuai Line. This line divides Chinese languages into northern languages and southern languages. The line is approximately the border between the Zhongyuan Mandarin and Jianghuai Mandarin zones, with the southern border of Zhongyuan being the start of the northern Chinese languages and the northern border of Jianghuai being the start of the southern Chinese languages (Ray 1995).

This line stretches across a small part of Northeastern Jiangsu and a larger part of Northeastern Anhui down to the Henan and Hubei where it rides the border between the two provinces, with Henan being the start of northern Chinese languages and Hubei being the start of southern Chinese languages (Ray 1995).

Most of the influences in Chinese languages have been from north to south with very little in the opposite direction. Much of this influence moved to Southern China by crossing this Jianghuai Line. Linguistic

movement was facilitated by frequent invasions from the north that moved into Southern China by crossing this line (Ray 1995).

Jianghuai is badly splintered. It is probably the most splintered Mandarin group. It is so diverse that varieties spoken even right next to each other or in the same city may be unintelligible and best seen as completely different languages.

## **The Hongchao Group of Jianghuai Mandarin**

The Hongchao Group of Jianghuai is spoken in Central and Southeastern Anhui, in Central and Northern Jiangsu, and in a single dialect island in Fujian.

### **Anhui**

In 1933, there were [three different languages](#) spoken in Tongcheng. Whether these three languages still exist is not known, but surely some of the speakers in 1933 are still alive.

[East Tongcheng Jianghuai Mandarin](#), was a separate language spoken in the eastern part of the city of Tongcheng. It was not intelligible with the Tongcheng in the west of the city.

[Hefei Jianghuai Mandarin](#) is considered to be a separate language [by a 200 word Swadesh list](#) (Ben Hamed 2005). It is [not understood](#) outside of the city. It is spoken in Hefei Prefectural City.

[Wenli Tongcheng Jianghuai Mandarin](#) was the classical-based language spoken by the educated elite of the city of Tongcheng.

[West Tongcheng Jianghuai Mandarin](#) was a separate language spoken in the west of the city of Tongcheng, not intelligible with the Tongcheng spoken in the east of the city.

### **Fujian**

Hongchao is spoken in a single dialect island in Fujian.

**Nanping Jianghuai Mandarin** spoken in Nanping Prefecture in Northwestern Fujian is one of only two native Mandarin varieties spoken in Fujian.

As such, it has a number of odd characteristics and has been the subject of scholarly articles (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).



Careful research has shown that Nanping has some features of southern Chinese languages. It also has a number of features of Southwestern Mandarin, no doubt derived from the same southward migrations from Henan and Hubei that populated much of the Southwestern Mandarin region (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

The Ming Emperor sent a large group of soldiers down to the Nanping area to subdue a prolonged rebellion in 1448. Of these soldiers, 20,000 came from Zhejiang; 20,000 came from the capital but were originally from Henan, Northern Jiangsu, and Shandong; 10,000 were Mongols who were formerly stationed at Nanjing; and 7,000 were from Jiangxi. A military base was set up in Nanping after the rebellion was dispatched and the soldiers ended up staying there and influencing Nanping (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

A look at the garrisons from different regions shows that the 20,000 men from Zhejiang contributed almost nothing to Nanping, and the Mongols contributed nothing all. There are definitely some influences from Jiangxi as can be seen by comparing Nanping with Nanchang Gan (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

But the largest influence of all came from the soldiers who were from Henan, Shandong and Northern Jiangsu impact, as Nanping looks almost nothing like either modern Beijing or the Yin Yun Zhongyuan Mandarin spoken in around the capital at the time, so the influence is not a Beijing area influence as was thought earlier (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

Of the three influences, Shandong, Henan and Northern Jiangsu, Northern Jiangsu contributed the most influence (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

Nanping looks almost nothing like the important Kaifeng Zhongyuan Mandarin variety. However, Nanping does share some features with Lingbao Zhongyuan Mandarin located in the far northwest of Henan. Perhaps this was another input from these soldiers, as many did come from Henan (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

There is also some influence from Jiaoliao Mandarin in Shandong (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

But it looks more like Yangzhou Jianghuai Mandarin or Northern Jiangsu Jianghuai Mandarin than anything else (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

This is interesting because it is now thought that most of the north-to-south influence in Chinese has flowed through via holes in what is known in the Jianghuai Line, which more or less follows the border between the Jianghuai and Zhongyuan Mandarin languages. This border runs right through Northern Jiangsu near Yangzhou, so this instance would be one more case of north-to-south influence flowing down through a break in the Jianghuai Line.

Although Nanping has influences from all of the other named languages above, the influences from Jianghuai Mandarin has flooded and swamped out the those of the other languages.

Oddly, although Nanping has the most influences from Northern Jiangsu, Nanping people instead tend to trace their origins back to Henan and Hubei, especially far Southern Hubei. These memories are the results of the slow and steady movement of migrants in the Southwestern Mandarin zone, most of whom came from Henan and Hubei, and Nanping does share a number of Southwestern Mandarin features (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

Due to its isolated and odd nature, Nanping must be a separate language.

## **Jiangsu**

Hongchao is spoken in Central and Northern Jiangsu.

**Danyang Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate language spoken in the north of Danyang County in Southwestern Jiangsu. The south of the county speaks a language that looks like Wu, and the north of the county speaks a language that looks like Jianghuai. However, Danyang does not look like a typical Jianghuai language, and the Wu language does not look much like typical Wu.

**Lianyungang Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate language. It is not intelligible with Yancheng Jianghuai Mandarin.

**Yancheng Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate language. Yancheng and Lianyungang are not mutually intelligible.

**Yangzhou Jianghuai Mandarin** is spoken in Yangzhou Prefectural City in West-Central Jiangsu. It is considered to be a separate language by a [200 word Swadesh test](#) (Ben Hamed 2005). Yangzhou has about [52% intelligibility](#) with the other branches of Mandarin (Cheng 1997).

Phonetically, it [resembles](#) Wu. The city has gone back and forth between speaking Wu and Jianghuai Mandarin over the last few hundred years.

## **The Tairu Group of Jianghuai Mandarin**

The Tairu Group of Jianghuai is a group of highly divergent Jianghuai varieties spoken in the south of Jiangsu.

### **Jiangsu**

[Dafeng](#) is [similar](#) to Dongtai and may be a dialect of Dongtai. It is closely related to Haian and Xinghua. It is spoken in Jiangsu.

[Dongtai Jianghuai Mandarin](#), spoken in Dongtai County on the central coast of Jiangsu in Yancheng Prefectural City, is a separate language.

[Haian](#) is [similar](#) to Dongtai and may be a dialect of Dongtai. It is closely related to Dafeng and Xinghua. It is spoken in Jiangsu.

*Jinsha* is a dialect of Nantong. It is spoken in Nantong Prefectural City in Southern Jiangsu.

**Nantong Jianghuai Mandarin**, is a very strange Mandarin language on the border of Wu and Mandarin that shares many features with Wu languages, is a separate language. It is spoken in the city of Nantong in Nantong Prefectural City in Southern Jiangsu in the urban area. It is not intelligible with Tongdong or Rugao.

**Rudong Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate language, not intelligible with Rugao or Nantong. It is spoken in the city of Rudong in Nantong Prefectural City in Southern Jiangsu.

**Rugao Jianghuai Mandarin**, spoken next to Nantong in the city of Rugao in Nantong Prefectural City in Southern Jiangsu, is also a separate language. It is not intelligible with Tongdong or Nantong.

**Taizhou Jianghuai Mandarin** is spoken in the north of the Tairu Group of Jianghuai in Southern Jiangsu. Rugao is in the south and Tongzhou is in the west. Rugao and Nantong are not mutually intelligible and Taizhou is quite a ways away, so it is probably not intelligible with either.

**Tongdong Jianghuai Mandarin**, a sister language of Nantong, is also a separate language. It is spoken right next to Nantong in the

city of Nantong in Nantong Prefectural City in Jiangsu.

Xinghua is **similar** to Dongtai and may be a Dongtai dialect. It is closely related to Dafeng and Haian. It is spoken in Jiangsu.

## **The Huangxiao Group of Jianghuai Mandarin**

The Huangxiao Group of Jianghuai is spoken mostly in Hubei and in a few isolated places in the far northwest corner of Jiangxi.

### **Jiangxi**

Jiujiang Jianghuai Mandarin is a separate language. It is not intelligible with Xingzi Jianghuai Mandarin spoken just 12 miles to the south.

Xingzi Jianghuai Mandarin, located close to Jiujiang, is also a separate language. Although it is only 12 miles south of Jiujiang, the two are unintelligible with each other.

## **The Unclassified Group of Jianghuai Mandarin**

There are six unclassified Jianghuai languages in Sichuan in dialect islands, one in Jiangsu, and another in a dialect island in Shaanxi.

### **Jiangsu**

Jintan Jianghuai Mandarin is an unclassified Jianghuai language spoken in the city of Jintan. Since it is unclassified, it should be valid to split it off.

### **Shaanxi**

**Ankang Jianghuai Mandarin** is spoken in a strange dialect island far off from the Jianghuai area in Ankang Prefectural City in Eastern Shaanxi. This is obviously a separate language. A Zhongyuan Mandarin variety is native, but there is also this Jianghuai island, a Southwestern Mandarin island and a Xiang island. All of the Mandarin varieties have interacted with each other over time.

### **Sichuan**

There are a number of Jianghuai dialect islands spoken in scattered locations in Sichuan. It is not known how they got there, but

obviously, they are far removed from the rest of the family. They must have gotten there via a migration out of the main Jianghuai region, probably some time ago.

The Jianghuai region has been the source of many of the southward migrations of Sinitic groups in Chinese history (Ray 1995).

Since they are spoken as widely scattered islands, no doubt each one has taken an independent course of development and these islands now may differ considerably from each other. Even back in the Jianghuai heartland, many Jianghuai varieties differ dramatically, and even those spoken right next to each other often show poor mutual intelligibility and are separate languages. If they were already this diverse back in the homeland, no doubt they have only gotten more diverse in Sichuan.

**Mianning Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate unclassified Jianghuai language spoken in Sichuan as a Jianghuai dialect island far off from the rest of Jianghuai. It must be a separate language due to its status as a dialect island.

**Nanbu Jianghuai Mandarin** is an unclassified dialect island in Jianghuai spoken in Sichuan far off from the rest of Jianghuai. Due to its isolation, it must be a separate language.

**Shazhou Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate unclassified Jianghuai language spoken in Sichuan as a dialect island far off from the rest of Jianghuai. Its isolation qualifies it for being a separate language.

**Xichang Jianghuai Mandarin** is an unclassified dialect island of Jianghuai in Sichuan spoken far off from the rest of the family. As a dialect island, it must be a separate language.

**Xidi Jianghuai Mandarin** is an unclassified Jianghuai language spoken as a dialect island in Sichuan far off from Jianghuai Proper. It must be a separate language since it is a dialect island.

**Yilong Jianghuai Mandarin** is a separate unclassified Jianghuai language spoken in Sichuan as a dialect island far off from the main Jianghuai speaking area. Due to its extreme isolation, it must be a separate language. A Hakka dialect island is also spoken here. They arrived from Guangdong 200 years ago, so no doubt Yilong has been affected by Hakka.

## Classification

Anqing, Chuzhou, Dangtu, East Tongcheng, Huaian, Hefei, Lianyungang, Nanping, Wenli Tongcheng, West Tongcheng, Yancheng, Yangzhou, and 70 others are in the Hongchao Group of Jianghuai Mandarin, which has 82 varieties.

Dafeng, Dongtai, Haian, Jinsha, Nantong, Rudong, Rugao, Taixian, Taixing, Taizhou, Tongdong, and Xinghua are in the Tairu Group of Jianghuai Mandarin, which has 12 different varieties.

Jiujiang, Xingzi, and 18 others are members of the Huangxiao Group of Jianghuai Mandarin, which has 20 varieties.

Ankang, Jintan, Mianning, Nanbu, Shazhou, Xichang, Xidi, and Yilong are members of the Unclassified Group of Jianghuai Mandarin, which has eight varieties.

Jianghuai Mandarin is composed of 122 varieties.

The Jianghuai Mandarin languages have [65 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

## Jiaoliao Mandarin

[Jiaoliao Mandarin](#) is a group within Mandarin that is spoken along the eastern coast of China on the Shandong Peninsula, in Linaoling, and in a couple of places in Helongjiang. It is [not fully intelligible](#) with Putonghua. Jiaoliao is also known as "Bureaucrat's Language." The center of Jiaoliao is in Shandong, which is where it evolved. Speech communities in Liaoning and Helongjiang represent later movements of Jiaoliao speakers north to those places. Jiaoliao is somewhat splintered, but it is hard to say how much. It may be about as splintered as Zhongyuan Mandarin. It is more splintered than Northeastern Mandarin and possibly Jilu, but it is more uniform than Southwestern Mandarin or Jianghuai.

### The Denglian Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin

The Denglian group is spoken 2/3 in Shandong, and 1/3 in Liaoning, with one variety spoken in Heilongjiang.

## **Liaoning**

Jiaoliao is spoken along the coast of Liaoning in the eastern third of the province.

There are three different languages spoken in Zhuanghe as Zhuanghe Jiaoliao Mandarin along the coast of Liaoning – one on the offshore islands, one in the central city and another in the mountains outside of town. Zhuanghe is a mixture of Jiaoliao Mandarin which arrived via immigrants from Shandong, Northeastern Mandarin, and Beijinghua. Different mixtures have affected the three varieties differently. Evidence indicates that all three may well be separate languages.

**Buyunshan Jiaoliao Mandarin** is the form of Zhuanghe spoken in the northern mountains of Zhuanghe. There are [wide differences](#) between Buyunshan and the speech of the city itself.

**Downtown Zhuanghe Jiaoliao Mandarin** is spoken along the coast in the city of Zhuanghe itself. There are [large differences](#) between Downtown Zhuanghe and Buyunshan spoken in the mountains to the north.

**Zhuanghe Islands Jiaoliao Mandarin** is spoken on Shicheng and Wangjia Islands off the coast of Zhuanghe. This represents the speech of the earlier immigrants to Zhuanghe who have been less affected by Beijinghua spoken inland to the south. There are significant differences between the speech of the islands that of downtown or city speech such that island speech may be a separate language.

## **The Gaihuan Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin**

### **Liaoning**

**The Gaihuan Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin** is spoken exclusively in Liaoning. As a completely separate group in Jiaoliao, it is justified to classify it as a separate language.

## **The Denglian Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin**

### **Shandong**

The Denglian group is spoken about 2/3 in Shandong, and 1/3 in Liaoning, with one variety spoken in Heilongjiang.



**Wehai Jiaoliao Mandarin** is a separate language with difficult intelligibility of Qingdao.

*Yantai* is a dialect of Wehai spoken in Yantai Prefectural City on the northwestern edge of the Shandong Peninsula.

## **The Qingzhou Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin**

### **Shandong**

The Qingzhou Group of Jiaoliao is spoken exclusively in Shandong.

*Anqui* is spoken in Weifang Prefectural City.

**Changyi Jiaoliao Mandarin** is a heavily-Mandarinized Shandong variety spoken in Changyi in Shandong. Changyi has poor intelligibility of Qingdao Jiaoliao Mandarin.

*Linqu* is spoken in Weifang Prefectural City towards the western edge of the Jiaoliao zone in Shandong.

**Qingdao Jiaoliao Mandarin** is a separate language spoken in Qingdao Prefectural City in Eastern Shandong. Its intelligibility with Changyi is limited. Reports that Qindao is intelligible with Wehai Jiaoliao are incorrect because Qingdao must be learned as a separate language by Wehai speakers. Furthermore, Wehai is in a completely different Jiaoliao group as Qingdao. Qingdao uses a lot of retroflex consonants.

*Qingzhou* is spoken in Qingzhou in Weifang Prefectural City. It is a member of the Qingzhou Group of Jiaoliao – in fact, the group is named after this variety.

## **The Unclassified Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin**

### **Heilongjiang**

**Funyuan Jiaoliao Mandarin** is an unclassified Jiaoliao variety spoken in Heilongjiang. As it is unclassified, it should be classified as a separate language.

## Classification

Buyunshan, Dalian, Downtown Zhuanghe, Weihai, Yantai, Zhuanghe Islands, and 17 other varieties are members of the Denglian Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin, which has 23 varieties.

Gaixian and four others are members of the Gaihuan Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin, which has five members.

Anqui, Changyi, Linqi, Qingdao, Qingzhou, and 11 others are members of the Qingzhou Group of Jiaoliao Mandarin, which has 16 members.

Funyuan is unclassified.

Jiaoliao Mandarin is composed of 45 varieties.

## Jilu Mandarin

*Jilu Mandarin* is a major split in Mandarin that includes the Beijing dialect from which Putonghua or Standard Mandarin was derived. Therefore Jilu varieties will sound familiar to most Putonghua speakers. It is spoken in Western Shandong, Southern and Eastern Hebei, Tianjin, and far Northern Heilongjiang.

Jilu has [low intelligibility](#) with other branches of Mandarin: 72% with Southwest Mandarin, 64% with Zhongyuan Mandarin, and 55% with Jiaoliao Mandarin (Cheng 1997).

Jilu is somewhat splintered, more so than Northeastern anyway, but it probably not as splintered as Zhongyuan, and it is much more uniform than Southwestern or Jianghuai.

## The Baoding Group of Jilu Mandarin

### The Dingba Group of Baoding

#### Hebei

**Baoding Jilu Mandarin** is a separate language because there are people from the city who cannot speak it at all. It is spoken in the city of Baoding in Hebei. Baoding is a member of the Baotang Group of

Jilu, which is named after the Baoding language. Within that group, it is a part of the Dingba subgroup.

### **The Fulong Group of Baotang**

**The Fulong subgroup of Baotang** is spoken only in Hubei and may well be a separate language. *Qinhuangdao* is a member of this group.

### **The Jizun Group of Baotang**

**The Jizun subgroup of Baotang** is spoken mostly in Hebei but also to some extent in Tianjin. It may well be a separate language.

### **The Luanchang subgroup of Baotang**

**The Luanchang subgroup of Baotang** is spoken only in Hubei and may be a separate language. *Changli*, *Luannan*, and *Luanxian* are members of this group.

### **The Tianjin Group of Baotang**

#### **Tianjin**

**Tianjin Jilu Mandarin** is a separate language, as it is in its own completely separate group in Baoding Jilu.

Its tones are quite different from Putonghua's, its tone sandhi is much more complicated, and it is more closely related to varieties 150-500 miles away than to Putonghua, since originally, Tianjin speakers came from Anhui (Lee 2002). Tianjin is on the [list of hardest dialects in China](#), some say it is a [full language](#) and not a dialect, and others say that if you grew up within 20 miles of Beijing, you cannot understand Tianjin. Furthermore, normal rapid speech of the locals [cannot be understood](#) by outsiders.

### **The Canghui Group of Jilu Mandarin**

#### **The Huangle Group of Canghui**

The Huangle Group of Canghui is spoken in Hubei.

## Hubei

*Cangxian* is a dialect of Cangzhou spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City.

**Cangzhou Jilu Mandarin**, spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Southeastern Hebei south of Tianjin, is a [separate language](#). It is only partly intelligible with Putonghua. Putonghua speakers have to take translators with them with them when they go out into the Cangzhou countryside because the “thick Cangzhou dialect” is so hard to understand. Cangzhou is in the Canghui Group of Jilu that is widely spoken in Shandong.

Within that group, it is part of the Huangle subgroup of Canghui. This subgroup is mostly spoken in Hebei. So Cangzhou is in a completely different Jilu group than Baoding. Cangzhou shares [some similarities](#) with Tianjin and Baoding, but it is probably not fully intelligible with either at least partly because they are both in a different Jilu Group altogether.

Cangxian, Dongguang, Haixing, Hejian, Huanghua, Mengcun, Nanpi, Qingxian, Renqiu, Suning, Wuqiao, Xianxian, and Yanshan, all spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City, are all [dialects of Cangzhou](#).

*Dongguang* is a Huangle dialect of Cangzhou spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City.

*Haixing* is a Huangle dialect of Cangzhou spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City.

*Hejian* is a Huangle dialect of Cangzhou dialect spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City.

*Huanghua* is a Huangle dialect of Cangzhou that is spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei.

*Mengcun*, a Huangle dialect spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City, is a dialect of Cangzhou in Hubei.

*Nanpi* is a Huangle dialect of Cangzhou that is spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei.

*Qingxian* is a Huangle dialect of Cangzhou that is spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei.

*Renqiu*, a Huangle dialect spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City, is a dialect of Cangzhou in Hubei.

*Suning*, spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei, is a dialect of Cangzhou.

*Wuqiao* is a Huangle dialect spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei which is also a dialect of Cangzhou.

*Xianxian* is a Huangle dialect spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei, and it is also a dialect of Cangzhou.

*Yanshan* is a Huangle dialect spoken in Cangzhou Prefectural City in Hubei, and it is also a dialect of Cangzhou.

## **The Juzhao Group of Canghui**

### **Shandong**

The Juzhao Group is spoken only in Shandong.

**Rizhau Jilu Mandarin** is so strange that it is [not intelligible](#) at all with Putonghua. It is based on the [speech](#) of the ancient Donyi Civilization. Rizhau is notorious for being one of the most [difficult](#) varieties to understand in Shandong.

## **The Yangzhou Group of Canghui**

The Yangzhou Group is spoken only in Shandong. Many Shandong varieties are part of Yangzhou.

### **Shandong**

[Binzhou](#) is spoken in the northern city of Binzhou. It is [very similar](#) to Beijing, one of the Shandong varieties [most similar](#) to Beijing in the Jilu Group.

[Boxing](#) is spoken in [Boxing County](#) in Zibo Prefectural City. Zibo varieties are quite diverse, with [different tones and vocabulary](#) in each county.

**[Dongying Jilu Mandarin](#)** is spoken in the city of Dongying. It is a separate language, as it is in the Yangzhou subgroup of the Canghui Group of Jilu.

[Gaoqing](#) is spoken [close to Dongying](#). It is probably a dialect of Dongying.

[Shougang](#) is [spoken nearby Dongying](#) and is probably a Dongying

dialect.

[Weifang](#) is spoken in Weifang Prefectural City in North-central Shandong. It has [many subdialects](#) associated with it geographically but not necessarily linguistically, including Anqui, Central Weifang, Linqu, and Qingzhou. Anqui, Linqu, and Qingzhou are completely different from Weifang and are not even in Jilu. Instead, they are Jiaoliao varieties. So apparently the only true Weifang language is spoken in the city center itself.

Weifang is interesting because it retains a lot of [vocabulary from Old Chinese](#) similar to some Southern Chinese languages like Min in Fujian and Cantonese in Guangdong. Absent any information that Weifang has difficult intelligibility with the rest of Canghui Yangzhou, it is not proper to split it.

### **The Zhanghuan Group of Canghui**

The Zhanghuan Group of Canghui is spoken only in Shandong.

#### **Shandong**

[Lijin Jilu Mandarin](#) is spoken [close to Dongying](#), but it is in a completely different subgroup of the Canghui Zhanghuan Group of Jilu. Therefore, it may be a separate language.

[Zhanqiu](#) is spoken in the city of Zhanqiu in Zibo Prefectural City. Zhanqiu is in a completely different Jilu group than Zibo. We don't have evidence that it is different from Lijn, so we can't split it.

*Zouping* is spoken in [Zouping County](#) in Zibo Prefectural City. It is probably a lot like Zhanjiu.

### **The Shiji Group of Jilu Mandarin**

#### **The Liaotai Group of Shiji**

About 2/3 of the Liaotai Group is spoken in Shandong, while the other third is spoken in Hebei. Many Shandong varieties are members of Liaotai.

#### **Shandong**

[Boshan](#) is spoken in [Boshan County](#) in Zibo Prefectural City and is

probably a dialect of Zibo.

**Dezhou Jilu Mandarin** sounds a lot like Putonghua, but it is [not fully intelligible](#) with it. Dezhou is at the border of Shandong, Henan, Tianjin and Beijing, and it has [been influenced](#) by speech from all of those provinces. It has [managed](#) to marry all of these distinct Mandarin families into itself without developing a unique style of its own. Although it is spoken in Shandong, it does [not sound much](#) like a Shandong variety.

Although Putonghua speakers can understand Dezhou pretty well, there is a lot of unique vocabulary used that is [not intelligible](#) to those outside the area. This is similar to the case with some of the Northeastern languages. Dezhou is a Shiji Liaotai language.

**Jiaocheng Jilu Mandarin** is spoken in the Prefectural City of Jiaocheng in far West-Central Shandong. Jinan and Tai'an are to the east, Dezhou is to the north, Jining is to the south, and far Southeastern Hebei Province is to the west.

Jiaocheng is a Shiji Liaotai Jilu language like so many other Shandong variety, but it looks very different from the others since it the [alveolar-type consonants](#) s, ts, z, sh, ch, and zh are all different from Putonghua. This is unusual for Jilu and is more similar to Jiaoliao languages like Yantai in which the [alveopalatals sh, ch, and zh](#) also differ. Because it is so different from the rest of Shiji Liaotai Jilu, it may well be a separate language.

**Jinan (New Jinan) Jilu Mandarin** is a separate language. It is spoken in Jinan Prefectural City, the capital of Shandong Province. Jinan is located in the West-Central part of the province. Jinan has [some](#) old Mongolian and Manchu loans. Jinan is a Shiji Liaotai language.

[Laiwu](#) is spoken in the center of Shandong. It apparently a Shiji Liaotai variety like all of those around it. Tai'an is to the west, Jinan is to the northwest, and Zibo is to the northeast. All are Shiji Liaotai varieties. Laiwu is [influenced heavily](#) by the varieties spoken around it. Northern Laiwu is influenced by the Canghui Zhangyuan variety Zhanqiu, Northeastern Laiwu is influenced by the Shiji Liaotai variety Boshan, and Western and Southwestern Laiwu are influenced by Tai'an, a Shiji Liaotai variety.

The [true Laiwu dialect](#) is spoken in Central, Northwestern, Southern,



and Southeastern Laiwu and seems to be a Shiji Liaotai variety. This is no good evidence that Laiwu is much different from Shiji Liaotai in general, so there is no reason to split it off.

[Linyi Jilu Mandarin](#) is spoken in the city of Linyi in Central Shandong. Although it is a Shiji Liaotai language like many Shandong varieties, it is different, as it is a mix of the Jilu, Zhongyuan and Jiaoliao Groups of Mandarin. It is very different and quite unique, with a lot of soft syllables. This implies that Linyi may be a separate language.

[Linzi](#) is a Shiji Liaotai dialect spoken in [Linzi County](#) in Zibo Prefectural City in Shandong. It is probably a dialect of Zibo.

[Tai'an](#) is spoken in the city of Tai'an in Central Shandong. Tai'an is heavily influenced by the nearby [Tai'an Mountain Culture](#), which has deep roots in Chinese history. The historical city of [Quancheng](#) is in the north side of the mountain and [Confucious' mansion](#) is in the south side. The mountain [forms the border](#) between the ancient Qi and Lu Empires. Tai'an is a Shiji Liaotai variety like Zibo, Dezhou and Jinan, but there is little evidence to justify splitting it off into its own language.

[Zibo](#) is spoken in Zibo Prefectural City in North-Central Shandong. It is [similar](#) to Jinan, with the [exception](#) that each county has its own different tones and vocabulary. Some of the varieties spoken in Zibo Prefectural City are very different from each other. Zibo is in the Liaotai subgroup of Shiji.

[Zichuan](#) is a Shiji Liaotai dialect spoken in [Zichuan County](#) in Zibo Prefectural City in Shandong. It is probably a dialect of Zibo.

## **The Unclassified Group of Shiji**

### **Hebei**

**Huoli Jilu Mandarin** is an unclassified member of the Shiji group. As it is unclassified, it must be a separate language.

## **The Xinheng Group of Shiji**

### **Hebei**

**The Xingheng subgroup of Shiji** is spoken only in Hebei and may

be a separate language.

## **The Zhaoshen Group of Shiji**

### **Hebei**

**The Zhaoshen subgroup of Shiji** is spoken in Hebei only and may be a separate language.

## **The Taiping Group of Jilu Mandarin**

### **The Tunhua Group of Taiping**

#### **Heliongjiang**

**Jiayun Jilu Mandarin** is one of only two Jilu varieties spoken in Heliongjiang. Since it is the only member of its only group and subgroup in Jilu and since it is one of only two Jilu varieties spoken in Heliongjiang, Jiayun is a separate language.

### **Classification**

The Baotang Group of Jilu Mandarin has 52 varieties. The Baotang Group is made up of five subgroups: Dingba, Fulong, Jizun, Luanchang, and Tianjin.

Baoding and 23 others are members of the Dingba subgroup of Baotang, which has 24 members.

Quinhuangdao and three others are members of the Fulong subgroup of Baotang, which has four members.

The Jizun subgroup of Baotang has 14 members.

Changli, Luannan, Luanxian and one other are members of the Luanchang subgroup of Baotang, which has four members.

Tianjin forms its own subgroup within Baoding.

The Canghui Group of Jilu Mandarin has 45 varieties. Canghui is made up of four subgroups: Huangle, Juzhao, Yangshuo, and Zhongyuan.

Cangxian, Cangzhou, Dongguang, Haixing, Hejian, Huanghua,

Mengcun, Nanpi, Qingxian, Renqiu, Suning, Wuqiao, Xianxian, Yanshan, and 11 others are members of the Huangle subgroup of Canghui, which has 25 varieties.

Rizhou and two others are members of the Juzhao subgroup of Canghui, which has three members.

Binzhou, Boxing, Changle, Dongying, Gaoqing, Guangrao, Huimin, Jiyang, Shougang, Weifang, Yangxin, and two others are members of the Yangshuo subgroup of Canghui, which has 13 members.

Lijin, Zhanqiu, and two others are in the Zhanghuan subgroup of Canghui has four members.

The Shiji Group of Jilu Mandarin has 72 members. The Shiji Group is made up of three subgroups: Liaotai, Xingheng, Zhaoshen, and single unclassified language.

Boshan, Dezhou, Jinan, Laiwu, Linzi, Mengyin, Tai'an, Xintai, Zibo, Zichuan, and 27 others are members of the Liaotai subgroup of Shiji, which has 37 varieties.

The Xingheng subgroup of Shiji has 15 varieties.

The Zhaoshen subgroup of Shiji has 19 varieties.

Huoli is the only member of the Unclassified Group of Shiji.

The Taiping Group of Jilu Mandarin is made up of a single subgroup, Tunhua.

Jiayun is the sole member of the Tunhua Group of Taiping.

Jilu Mandarin has a shocking 170 varieties.

## **Lanyin Mandarin**

**Lanyin Mandarin** is a large group of Mandarin languages spoken in the far northwest of China in Ningxia, Northern and Central Gansu, across a wide stretch of Northern Xinjiang, and a bit in Southwest Inner Mongolia. It is not intelligible with Putonghua, despite claims to the contrary (Campbell 2004).

## **Gansu**

**Jiuquan Lanyin Mandarin** at least appears to be a completely separate language inside Lanyin.

### **Classification**

Jiuquan and 17 others are members of the Hexi Group of Lanyin Mandarin, which has 18 varieties.

Lanzhou and three others are members of the Jincheng Group of Lanyin Mandarin, which has four varieties.

Emin and 20 others are in the Tami Group of Lanyin Mandarin, which has 21 varieties.

The Yinnan Group of Lanyin Mandarin has two varieties.

The Yinwu Group of Lanyin Mandarin has 12 varieties.

Lanyin Mandarin is composed of 57 separate varieties.

The Lanyin Mandarin languages have [9 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

## **Northeastern or Dongbei Mandarin**

**Northeastern (Dongbei) Mandarin**, a major split in Mandarin, is made up of a number of varieties that do not vary much. It is spoken in most of Jilin, in parts of Eastern Inner Mongolia, in all of Liaoning, and in almost all of Heilongjiang. Approximately 50% of Northeastern is spoken Heilongjiang, 30% in Jilin, 15% in Liaoning, and 5% in Neimenggu.

This is a very new split in Mandarin, as Dongbei was only formed in the late 1800's and early 1900's by a wave of immigrants who moved into the sparsely populated Manchurian area. Hence, this language group is only 100-130 years old. These immigrants were primarily from the Hebei and Shandong areas. Their numbers were so large that they swamped the languages being spoken by the residents, creating new varieties that were a mixture between the old tongues and Hebei and Shandong Mandarin.

It is controversial whether this variety is intelligible with Putonghua.

Some say it is, but second language speakers who easily understand Putonghua [cannot understand](#) Dongbei. Furthermore, Dongbeihua made it onto the list of [hardest dialects in China](#), and reports say that outsiders [cannot understand it readily](#), generally due to different vocabulary.

Northeastern is quite uniform across its territory, and mutual intelligibility among its varieties is quite high, extending even across the borders of major Northeastern groups.

## **The Hafu Group of Northeastern Mandarin**

The Hafu Group of Northeastern Mandarin is spoken mostly in Heilongjiang, to a lesser extent in Jilin, somewhat in Liaoning, and in a few places in Neimenggu.

### **The Changjin Group of Hafu**

#### **Jilin**

*Changchun* is spoken in the city of Jilin. It is a dialect of Shenyang in Liaoning even though it is in a completely different Northeastern group spoken in an entirely different province. Changchun is in the Hafu group, while Shenyang is in the Jishen group.

### **The Zhaofu Group of Hafu**

#### **Heilongjiang**

[Harbin Northeastern Mandarin](#) could be seen as a separate language or at least the more pure Harbinhua spoken by older men could be, as there are also reports that Putonghua speakers [cannot readily understand](#) the hard Harbinhua spoken by rural men over 50, particularly due to different vocabulary and expressions.

## **The Jishen Group of Northeastern Mandarin**

### **The Tongxi Group of Jishen**

#### **Liaoning**

[Shenyang Northeastern Mandarin](#) appears to be a separate

language, as there are people who grew up in Shenyang and cannot understand old people speaking, since so much of the vocabulary was different. The pronunciation is not so much of a problem; instead, the problem is the different vocabulary and expressions. So at least the older varieties of Shenyang spoken by older rural people aged 50+ are not intelligible even to younger speakers in the same town.

Shenyang is a member of the Jishen Group of Northeastern, and within that group, it is a member of the Tongxi subgroup. Shenyang is intelligible with *Changchun*, although Changchun is a member of a completely different group of Northeastern, the Hafu group.

### **Classification**

The Hafu Group of Northeastern Mandarin has 64 varieties. It has two subgroups: Changjin and Zhaofu.

Changchun and 45 others are members of the Changjin subgroup of Hafu, which has 46 varieties.

Harbin and 17 others are members of the Zhaofu subgroup of Hafu, which has 18 varieties.

The Heisong Group of Northeastern Mandarin has 67 varieties. It has three subgroups: Jianfu, Nenke, and Zhanhua.

The Jianfu subgroup of Heisong has 21 varieties.

The Nenke subgroup of Heisong has 36 varieties.

The Zhanhua subgroup of Heisong has 10 varieties.

The Jishen Group of Northeastern Mandarin has 38 varieties. It has three subgroups: Jiaoning, Tongxi, and Yanji.

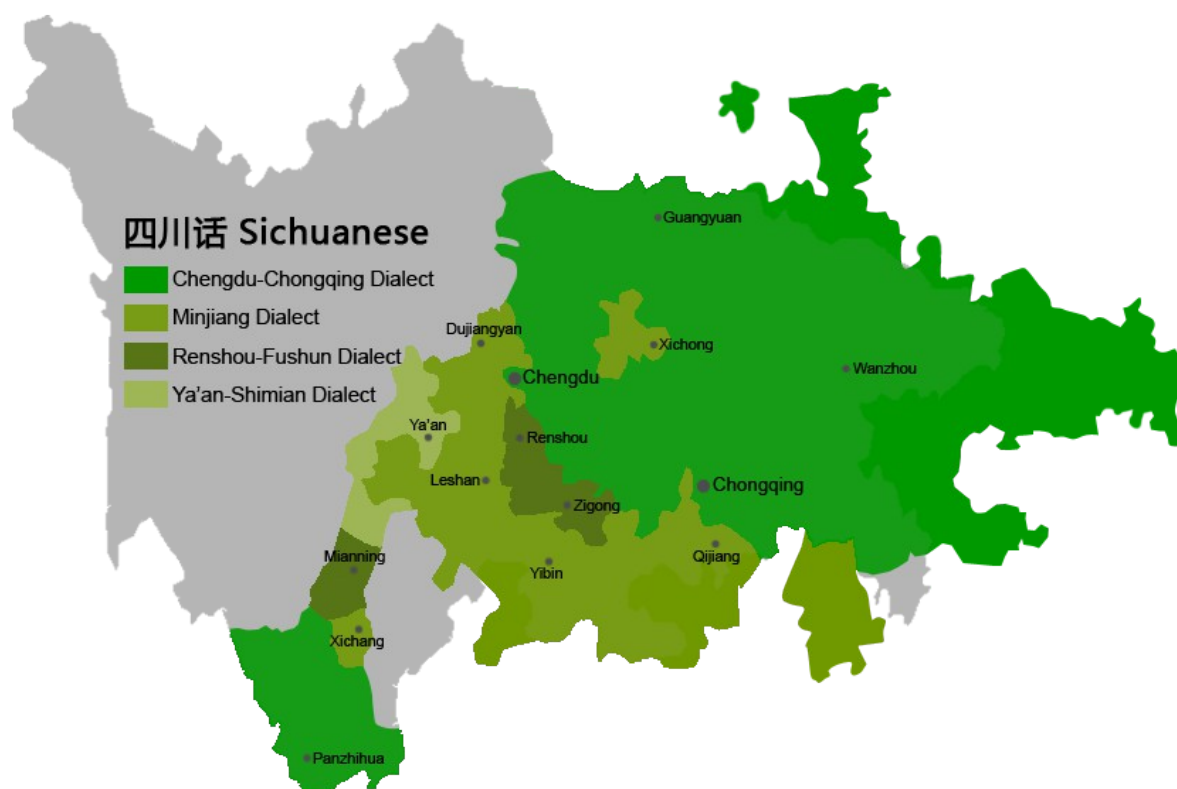
The Jiaoning subgroup of Jishen has 14 varieties.

Shenyang and 23 others are members of the Tongxi subgroup of Jishen, which has 24 varieties.

The Yanji subgroup of Jishen has 6 varieties.

Northeastern Mandarin has 102 varieties.

## **Southwestern Mandarin**



*The four main divisions of Southwestern or Sichuanese Mandarin spoken in Guangxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan for the most part.*

[Southwestern Mandarin](#) is a huge and diverse group of Mandarin which contains a multitude of varieties and is [not fully intelligible](#) with Putonghua. Southwestern Mandarin is derived from Ba-Shu Chinese, an offshoot of Old Chinese that developed in the area in 300. In contrast, most other major Chinese varieties are derived from Middle Chinese. Ba-Shu is little-known, but it seems clear that its phonology was quite a bit different than that of modern Mandarin.

It is spoken across the entire provinces of Guizhou, Yunnan, and Chongqing; in half of Guangxi; in Northern, Southern, and a bit in East-Central Hunan; in the eastern half of Sichuan; in Chongqing; in Western and Central Hubei; and a bit in Southern Shaanxi.

During the Yuan Dynasty, invasions and epidemics reduced the population of Ba-Shu speakers and eventually the language was



replaced by varieties of Mandarin spoken by immigrants, mostly from Hubei. Gan, Hakka, and Xiang speakers also made their way to Sichuan and influenced the newly developing Southwestern language. Intelligibility of Southwestern with Putonghua is as low as 20%, if that.

Southwestern is quite splintered, at least in some locations such as Guangxi. In Sichuan, it is not so splintered, mostly because a regional koine called Chengduhua has recently sprung up in the large cities of the east. But Southwestern is still quite diverse, more diverse than Zhongyuan Mandarin but not as diverse as Jianghuai.

## Chongqing

**Chongqing Southwestern Mandarin** is a [separate language](#) spoken in the city of Chongqing. Speakers of Chongqing cannot understand [Chengdu](#) or Guiliu speakers.

## Guangxi

Southwestern Mandarin is spoken in the western half of Guangxi.

**Beiliu Southwestern Mandarin** is an unclassified variety of Southwestern Mandarin, the only variety that remains unclassified. Since it is unclassified, Beiliu must be a separate language.

**Chuanlan or Tunbao Southwestern Mandarin** is a little-known language spoken by the Tunbao people. This language is frozen in time from the Ming Dynasty. Around 1300, large numbers of soldiers were sent down to the region to settle it. They ended up marrying into local groups. Their language, customs and architecture have not assimilated to their neighbors in hundreds of years. It is [unintelligible](#) with the rest of Southwestern Mandarin. The language is also known as Tunbao.

**Ducun Gate Southwestern Mandarin** is spoken in a very now built-up village in a suburb of the city of Yangshuo in Guilin Prefectural City only one mile from the city center, but it is so different that Yangshuo speakers cannot understand it. The language changes, often dramatically, [every 10-15 miles](#) in Guilin, so there may be quite a few languages here. This resembles the situation in the Wu area.

**Lingui Southwestern Mandarin**, spoken in Lingui County in Guilin

Prefectural City, is a separate language, as the Southwestern varieties spoken in different counties in Guilin seem to have poor intelligibility with each other.

**Longsheng Southwestern Mandarin**, spoken in Longsheng County in Guilin Prefectural City, is a separate language, as the Southwestern varieties spoken in different counties of Guilin seem to have poor intelligibility with each other.

**Xing'an Southwestern Mandarin**, spoken in Xing'an County in Guilin Prefectural City in Guangxi , appears to be a separate language with [poor intelligibility](#) of Yangshuo.

**Yangshuo Southwestern Mandarin**, spoken in Yangshuo County in Guilin Prefectural City in Guangxi, is a separate language. It is widely spoken in the county as Yangshuohua. There is considerable divergence in Yangshuohua, which has a number of dialects inside of it. It is [not intelligible](#) with Xing'an, and it is not even intelligible within itself.

## Hubei

Southwestern Mandarin is spoken in Central and Western Hubei.

**Gong'an Southwestern Mandarin** is a very unusual Southwestern Mandarin language spoken in the city of Gong'an. It is nearly a mixed language, having features of both Southwestern Mandarin and Xiang. However, it is generally classed as a Southwestern Mandarin language. As such, no doubt it is a separate language.

**Honghu Southwestern Mandarin** is spoken in Honghu County in Jingzhou Prefectural City in South-Central Hubei. It has high but not full intelligibility with Tianmen Southwestern Mandarin spoken in the city of Tianmen 50 miles to the north.

[Lonkou](#) is a dialect of Honghu spoken by 10,000 people in the small city of Lonkou along the Yangtze River 12 miles northeast of the city of Honghu.

**Tianmen Southwestern Mandarin**, which is spoken in the city of Tianmen in central Hubei, has high but not full intelligibility of Honghu spoken 50 miles to the south.

## Hunan

There are several varieties of Southwestern Mandarin spoken in Hunan. They are spoken in the far north and far south and a bit on the east-central border.

**Chengguan Southwestern Mandarin**, spoken in Linwu County, is apparently a separate language. There are five separate Sinitic varieties spoken there, all of which may be separate languages. Four of those are Eastern Min, Southwestern Mandarin, Tuhua, and Xiang are also spoken there.

**Gaoping Southwestern Mandarin and Baixi Southwestern Mandarin** are mutually intelligible varieties, even though Gaoping is in Longhui County and Baixi is in Xinhua County. Both varieties are surrounded by Luoshuo Xiang speakers. Although they are very far from each other, the two towns can communicate with each other in their own varieties without problems. This is because an extended family left Gaoping 150 years ago and moved to Baixi, marrying the two languages. It would be best to call this language Gaoping Southwestern Mandarin.

**Shaoshan Southwestern Mandarin** is a separate language spoken near Xiangtan in Hunan. Xiang is spoken in this region.

**Taoyuan Southwestern Mandarin** is not fully intelligible with other Southwest Mandarin varieties. It is spoken in Hunan.

**Zhangjiajie Maoxi Southwestern Mandarin** is a separate language spoken in Zhangjiajie County in Hunan. The Maoxi are a tribal group there that speak a strange type of Southwestern Mandarin.

## Jiangxi

There is a single Southwestern Mandarin dialect island in Jiangxi.

**Xinfeng Southwestern Mandarin** is a Southwestern Mandarin island spoken in the city of Ganzou in Xinfeng County surrounded by Gannan Hakka speakers. Over time, it has seen so much Hakka influence that it may now be characterized as a mixed language. Nevertheless, it is generally categorized as a Southwestern Mandarin language. Given the massive Hakka influence, Xinfeng is no doubt a separate language.

## Shaanxi

**Ankang Southwestern Mandarin** is a strange Southwestern dialect island spoken in the city of Ankang far off from the Southwestern zone. The native language is a Zhongyuan language, but there is also a Jianghuai island, this Southwestern island, and a far-removed Xiang island. All of the Mandarins have been interacting with each other over centuries to where they all now differ quite a bit from the norm of their group.

**Hanzhong Southwestern Mandarin** is spoken in the city of Hanzhong in the far south of Shaanxi. It is a Southwestern outlier and as such, is a separate language.

## Sichuan

The many small Southwestern Mandarin varieties around Mt. Emei in Sichuan are not intelligible with Chengduhua, appear to be very different, and may be one or more separate languages.

**Chengdu Southwestern Mandarin** is part of a broadly intelligible Sichuan Southwestern Mandarin koine that is spoken in many of the larger cities in Sichuan and Yunnan. Chengduhua is still very widely spoken in Chengdu by people of all ages (Xun 2009).

It includes *Baoxing*, *Bazhong*, *Dazhu*, *Deyang*, *Kunming*, *Luzhou*, *Mianyang*, *Neijiang*, *Yibin*, and *Ziyang* (Xun 2009).

**Emei Southwestern Mandarin** is a separate language spoken around Mt. Emei in Central Sichuan. There are a number of different languages spoken around this mountain.

**Gulin Southwestern Mandarin** is not intelligible with Chengduhua. It is spoken in the city of Gulin.

**Meishan Southwestern Mandarin** is not intelligible to Chengdu speakers (Xun 2009). It is spoken in the city of Meishan in Sichuan.

**Yingshan Southwestern Mandarin** is a separate language based on a [200 word Swadesh test](#) (Ben Hamed 2005). It is spoken in Yingshan County in Nanchong Prefectural City, Sichuan.

**Zigong Southwestern Mandarin** is not intelligible to Chengdu speakers (Xun 2009). It is spoken in the city of Zigong in Sichuan.

*Ziyang* is intelligible with the koine but has a heavy accent (Xun

2009). It is spoken in the city of Ziyang in Sichuan.

## **Yunnan**

**Dahua Southwestern Mandarin**, spoken in and around Dahua village on the Puduhe River near Dongchuan, is apparently a [separate language](#).

**Dali Southwestern Mandarin** is spoken in the city of Dali near Kunming. The language is still widely spoken.

*Kunming* is widely spoken by people of all ages in the city of Kunming. It is part of Chengduhua.

**Leshan Southwestern Mandarin** is a [separate language](#). It is spoken in the city of Leshan. It is unintelligible with the Chengduhua koine, but it can be learned in a few weeks of exposure (Xun 2009). Intelligibility between Leshan and Sichuanhua may be ~70%.

**Wenshan Southwestern Mandarin** is not intelligible with other Southwestern varieties (Johnson 2010). It is spoken in the city of Wenshan.

**Wuhan Southwestern Mandarin** spoken in the city of Wuhan in Yunnan, is [not intelligible](#) to speakers of Southwestern Mandarin from other provinces; for instance, it is only [80% intelligible](#) with Chengdu (Cheng 1998). Once you go an hour in any direction from Wuhan, Yunnan, Wuhan is no longer intelligible.

## **Classification**

Cengong and 13 others are members of the Cenjiang Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 14 members.

Gong'an, Taoyuan, and 12 others are members of the Changhe Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 14 varieties.

Bazhong, Chengdu, Dazhu, Deyang, Mianyang, Yichang, Yingshan, Ziyang, and 105 others are members of the Chengyu Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 113 varieties.

The Dianxi Group of Southwestern Mandarin has 36 members. Dianxi is divided into two groups, Baolu and Yaoli.

Lanping and 20 others are members of the Baolu subgroup of Dianxi, which has 21 varieties.

Dianxi and 14 others are members of the Yaoli subgroup of Dianxi, which has 15 members.

Baokang and 16 others are members of the Ebei Group of Southwestern Mandarin.

The Guanchi Group of Southwestern Mandarin has 85 varieties.

The Guanchi group has four subgroups: Lichuan, Minjiang, Renfru, and Yamian.

Binchuan and four others are members of the the Lichuan subgroup of Guanchi, which has five varieties.

Chongqing, Emei, Leshan, Luzhou, Meishan, Yibin, and 54 others are members of the Minjiang Group of Guanchi, which has 59 members.

Longchang, Neijiang, Zigong, and 10 others are members of the Renfu subgroup of Guanchi, which has 13 varieties.

Baoxing and seven others are members of the Yamian Group of Guanchi, which has eight members.

Dacun Gate, Lingui, Liuzhou, Longcheng, Luocheng, Xing'an, Yangshuo, and 50 others are members of the Guiliu Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 57 varieties.

Guangde and six others are members of the Hubei Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has seven varieties.

Kunming, Menghai, Wenshan, and 92 others are members of the Kungui Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 95 varieties.

Fenggang, Shiqian, Zhijin, and 30 others are members of the Qianbei Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 33 varieties.

Danzhai and 14 others are members of the Qiannan Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 15 varieties.

Xinfeng is the sole member of the Taiping Waicun Group of Southwestern Mandarin.

Honghu, Longkou, Tianmen, Wuhan, and five others are members of Wutian Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has nine varieties.

Chengguan and 16 others are members of the Xiangnan Group of Southwestern Mandarin, which has 17 varieties

Ankang, Baixi, Beiliu, Chuanlan, Dahua, Gaoping, Shaoshan, and Zhangjiajie Maoxi are members of the Unclassified Group of

Southwestern Mandarin, which contains eight varieties.

Southwestern Mandarin itself has a stunning 528 varieties.

The Southwestern Mandarin languages have [240 million speakers](#). (Olson 1998).

## **Standard Mandarin or Putonghua and Derivatives**

**Putonghua** is Standard Mandarin, based on the Beijing Mandarin dialect as of 1955, but it has since diverged wildly, and many Putonghua speakers today cannot understand Beijingshua. Putonghua is being promoted as the national language of China. In addition to Putonghua, there are 1,500 other dialects of Mandarin spoken in China. In general, other Mandarin dialects are not intelligible to Putonghua speakers (Campbell 2009). However, the Northeastern Mandarin dialects and the dialects around Beijing are more intelligible with Putonghua than the Mandarin dialects in the rest of the country.

The implication is that there may be over 1,500 Mandarin languages in China. However, many of these Mandarin dialects are intelligible with at least some other Mandarin varieties. Hence, despite the lack of intelligibility with Putonghua, there is a lot of potential lumping within Mandarin.

The degree to which Mandarin dialects are intelligible to each other is very much an open question and in general is poorly investigated.

We should also note here that even Putonghua, the language that was meant to tie the nation together, seems to be evolving into regional languages.

These varieties of Mandarin cause a particular interference with Putonghua that results in a severe dialectal disturbance in their Putonghua.

There are also varieties of Putonghua spoken in Singapore and Taiwan.

**Anhui Putonghua** has [poor intelligibility](#) with Standard Putonghua due to its phonology. Therefore, it is a separate language.



**Guangdong Putonghua** is not fully intelligible to speakers of the Putonghuas of Northern China and hence is probably a separate language.

**Jianghuai Putonghua** is not intelligible to Putonghua speakers not from the area (Campbell 2009). Jianghuai is spoken in Anhui, Jiangsu, Hubei, and to a much lesser extent Zhejiang Provinces.

**Malay Mandarin** is said to be quite different but nevertheless mutually intelligible with Putonghua. Nevertheless, Malay Mandarin speakers say they [have to make speech adjustments](#) with Chinese speakers, otherwise their speech is poorly intelligible. This implies that Malay Mandarin is indeed a separate language.

**Shanghai Putonghua** is often not intelligible with Putonghua from other regions. It has heavy interference from Shanghaiahua, which seriously effects the Putonghua accent. Even after four years of exposure, Standard Putonghua speakers often have problems with it.

[Singapore Mandarin](#) has fewer differences with Putonghua than Taiwanese Mandarin and hence is a dialect of Putonghua.

**Taiwanese Mandarin** is not fully intelligible with Putonghua as claimed. Actually, it is about 80-85% intelligible with Putonghua. Based on that intelligibility figure, Taiwanese Mandarin is a separate language.

**Tibetan Mandarin** has [heavy Tibetan admixture](#) and in all probability is a separate language.

*Yunnan Putonghua* is intelligible with Putonghua from other regions (Campbell 2009).

**Zhengcao Zhongyuan Putonghua** is also not intelligible to Putonghua speakers outside the region (Campbell 2009). Zhengcao Zhongyuan is spoken in Anhui, Henan, Shandong, and Jiangsu, with one dialect spoken in Hebei.

## **Zhongyuan Mandarin**

*Zhongyuan or Central Plains Mandarin* is a large split in Mandarin. It is [not fully intelligible](#) with Putonghua. For instance, Xi'an, a Zhongyuan

dialect, is about 65% intelligible with other Mandarin groups. However, Xi'an is a lot more intelligible to Putonghua speakers (70%) than Henan Zhongyuan Mandarin (35%).

Xi'an Mandarin is closest to Jinan Jilu Mandarin, with which it has 75% intelligibility (Cheng 1997).

Zhongyuan is spoken across almost all of Henan, in Central and Southern Shaanxi, in Southern Shandong, in far Northwestern Jiangsu, in Northern Anhui, in far Southern Shanxi, in the southern half of Gansu and Ningxia, in a broad swath across Central and Southern Xinjiang, and in a small part of East-Central Qinghai.

Jilu is sometimes seen as a form of Zhongyuan. Zhongyuan is splintered, but it is not nearly as splintered as Jianghuai or the non-Mandarin languages of the south. On the other hand, Zhongyuan is not as uniform as Mandarin groups of the north like Northeastern and Beijinghua.

## **Gansu-Qinghai**

Gansu and Qinghai Provinces are part of a Gansu-Qinghai Sprachbund where the languages share many unique features. The Han here are really Hanized minority groups, and many have little Han ancestry. Here the Han have been living close to non-Han minority groups for a long time.

### **Gansu**

Zhongyuan Mandarin is spoken in the southern half of Gansu. Within Gansu itself, there are divergent varieties.

**Gansu Zhongyuan Mandarin** appears to be a separate language. This is a code name for the general Zhongyuan Mandarin spoken in the province.

**Sale Zhongyuan Mandarin** is not intelligible with other Gansu varieties.

*Tongwei* appears to be a dialect of Gansu.

### **Henan**

Zhongyuan Mandarin is spoken in nearly all of Henan Province. In general, intelligibility between many varieties in Henan is not full, but

after a few weeks or so of close contact, they can start to understand each other. Mutual intelligibility between Xinyang, Gushi, and Nanyang may be ~70%.

**Fuyang Zhongyuan Mandarin** is very different and may well be a separate language.

**Gushi Zhongyuan Mandarin** is different from Nanyang and is probably not intelligible with it.

**Henan Zhongyuan Mandarin** is a good name a group of mutually intelligible varieties spoken in Henan Province, including *Luoyang*, *Kaifeng*, *Changyuan*, and [\*Zhengzhou\*](#).

**Lingbao Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken in the far northwest of Henan and is much different from standard Henan Mandarin languages such as Kaifeng (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981). No doubt it is a separate language.

**Nanyang Zhongyuan Mandarin**, spoken in the city of Nanyang, has high but not complete intelligibility with Luoyang. Intelligibility between Nanyang and Luoyang is probably ~70%. Nanyang has [15 million speakers](#).

**Xinyang Zhongyuan Mandarin** is a separate language spoken in the city of Xinyang in Henan and cannot be understood by Luoyang or Gushi speakers.

## Inner Mongolia

[\*\*Hohhot Xincheng Zhongyuan Mandarin\*\*](#), a combination of Hebei Jin, Northeastern Mandarin, and the Manchu language, is one of the Hohhot languages. The other Hohhot language is Hohhot Jin. Hohhot Mandarin is quite aberrant.

## Jiangsu

Zhongyuan Mandarin is spoken in a slice across the far northern part of Jiangsu, with the Zhongyuan zone being deeper in the far northwest and more narrow in the very far northeast.

**Gayu Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken in the far northeast of Jiangsu near the Shandong border. Gayu has some extreme differences with the rest of Zhongyuan and in some ways looks more like a Shandong Jianghuai language (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981). It is quite probably not

intelligible with Zhongyuan Mandarin spoken in other areas.

[Nanjing Zhongyuan Mandarin](#), spoken in the famous city of Nanjing in Western Jiangsu, is composed of two languages, Old Nanjing Mandarin - the old variety now [spoken only in the suburbs](#) which is a [separate language](#) - and city speech which is now a general Northeastern China Mandarin like that spoken in Beijing and Hebei.

**[Old Nanjing Zhongyuan Mandarin](#)** is a [separate language](#), as the language of the city is now a basic Northeastern Mandarin variety like those spoken in Beijing and Hebei.

## **Qinghai**

Zhongyuan Mandarin is spoken in a tiny protrusion into East-Central Qinghai on the border.

**Gangou Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken in Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County in a finger at the eastern edge of Qinghai. It has been strongly affected by Mongour Mongolian and Ambdo Tibetan. It has borrowed many words from and had its syntax and phonology strongly affected by both languages. Gangou Zhongyuan Mandarin is uncontroversially regarded as a separate language within Mandarin.

**[Qinghai Zhongyuan Mandarin](#)** is [very different](#) from that spoken in Gansu. This is a code name for the general Zhongyuan Mandarin spoken in Qihai.

## **Shaanxi**

Zhongyuan Mandarin is spoken widely in the southern half of Shaanxi Province.

In Shangzhou, Danfeng and Luonan Counties in Shangluo Prefectural City in Eastern Shaanxi, two different Mandarin languages are spoken. The first variety, Zhaozi, is spoken by the natives of the region. The second variety, Manxi, is spoken by a group that immigrated to the region from the south during the early Qing Dynasty. They came from the Southern Yangtze River and from coastal areas of Guangdong and Fujian. The natives refer to them as "settlers." The natives call the settlers' language *manzi* for "sly people" and the settlers call the natives' language *zhaozi* for rogue people. No doubt the two Mandarin varieties are quite different.

**Ankang Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken in Anyang Prefectural City in Eastern Shaanxi. This Mandarin variety is native, but there are also Southwestern and Jianghuai Mandarin islands and there is even a distant Xiang island. The three Mandarin types have been interacting with each other over centuries and they have all become different from the norm of their group.

**The Guanzhong Group of Zhongyuan** is a separate language. These varieties are spoken in much of Shaanxi outside of the north and south. It includes Huxian, Xi'an, and Zhouzhi.

**Manxi Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken by immigrants who came to Shangzhou, Danfeng, and Luonan Counties in Shaanxi from the far south of China in the early Ming Dynasty.

Xi'an, perhaps the prototypical Zhongyuan variety, is spoken in the large city of Xi'an in Shaanxi. It is part of Guanzhonghua.

**Xining Zhongyuan Mandarin**, spoken in Xinghai in Shaanxi, seems to be very different from other Shaanxi varieties and is probably a separate language altogether. It has severe influence from Tibetan and Mongolic languages. There are now two languages spoken in Xining, Old Xining, which is the language described here, and New Xining, a mixture between this dialect and Putonghua which is still not Putonghua at all but instead is a separate language.

**Yan'an Zhongyuan Mandarin** is part of a completely different group of Zhongyuan, Quinlong Zhongyuan, and as such may well be a separate language.

**Zhaozi Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken by the natives of Shangzhou, Danfeng, and Luonan Counties of Shangluo Prefectural City in Shaanxi.

## **Shandong**

Zhongyuan Mandarin is spoken in a swath across the south of Shandong.

*Heze* is spoken on the border of Shandong and Anhui, Henan, and Jiangsu. This is a Zhengcao variety like Zhaozhuang. Although Heze is different from other Shandong languages, there is not enough evidence that it is different from Zhaozhuang to split it.

**Jining Zhongyuan Mandarin** is spoken in Jining Prefectural City

Southwestern Shandong near Zhaozhuang. Nevertheless, Jining is in a completely different Zhongyuan group than Zhongyuan. Jining is in the Cailu Group of Zhongyuan. Based on that, it is a good guess that Jining could be a separate language. Jining is [based](#) on the language of the ancient Lu Empire, and much of the territory of this empire [lay within](#) Jining Prefectural City.

**[Zhaozhuang Zhongyuan Mandarin](#)**, spoken in the city of Zhaozhuang in the far south of Shandong, is [completely unintelligible](#) with Putonghua. Zhaozhuang is a member of the Zhengcao Group of Zhongyuan.

### **Classification**

Yingshang, Jining and 28 others are members of the Cailu Group of Zhongyuan Mandarin, which has 30 varieties.

Huxian, Xian, Zhouzhi, and 42 others are members of the Guanzhong Group of Zhongyuan Mandarin, which has 45 varieties.

Sale, Tongwei and 23 others are part of the Longzhong Group of Zhongyuan Mandarin, which has 25 varieties.

Luoyang and 27 others are members of the Luoxu Group of Zhongyuan Mandarin, which has 28 varieties.

Xining, Yanan, and 65 others are members of the Qinlong Group of Zhongyuan Mandarin, which has 67 varieties.

Bozhou, Changyuan, Heze, Kiafeng, Nanyang, Zengzhou, Zhaozhuang, and 86 others are members of the Zhengcao Group of Zhongyuan Mandarin, which has 93 varieties.

Gushi, Xinyang and 18 others are in the Xinbeng subgroup of Zhengcao, which has 20 varieties.

Zhongyuan Mandarin has a shocking 305 varieties.

The Zhongyuan Mandarin languages have [130 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

### **Unclassified Mandarin**

## Fujian

**Yanyucun Mandarin** is spoken in the Yanyucun District of city of Changle in Northern Fujian in the Eastern Min speaking area. This is one of only two places where a native Mandarin variety is spoken in Fujian. The other is in Nanping. Nanping is described under Jianghuai Mandarin.

This strange Mandarin island is the result of a movement of Mandarin-speaking immigrants to the area in the 1700's (Chung-yu & 陈重瑜 1981).

It has now been shown that this movement was due to northern soldiers being sent down to the area to set up a garrison. However, the Northern soldiers thought they were better than the locals, so they did not mix with them very much. Consequently, the language has retained much of its northern character. Nevertheless, due to its isolation, no doubt Yanyucun is a separate language.

## Qinghai

**Wutun or Wutunhua** is an unclassified separate Mandarin language, a Mandarin-Mongolian-Tibetan creole mixed language spoken by 2,000 Tu or Monguor people in Eastern [Qinghai Province](#). The Monguars speak Bonan, a Mongolic language with heavy Tibetan and Mandarin influence. Although the government regards them as Monguor Mongolians, the group self-identifies as Tibetan.

The source of the Mandarin is not known, but it is thought that the group came from outside the region, either from Jilu Mandarin speakers from Tianjin in the northeast or from a group of Southwest Mandarin-speaking Hui Muslims in Sichuan Province who converted to Lamaist Buddhism for unknown reasons. They have been in their present location since at least 1585. Over centuries of interacting with Mongolic speakers, a tremendous amount of Mongolic has come into the language.

This is best seen as a Mandarin language that came under [heavy influence](#) of Bonan and to a lesser extent Tibetan, after which when it was changed into an agglutinative language under the influence of these two other languages. Nevertheless, this is still mostly a Mandarin language. The [lexicon](#) is 60% Mandarin with the tones lost, 25% Tibetan and 10% Bonan. Wutunhua is best seen as an

unclassified Mandarin language.

### **Xinjiang**

**Karamay Mandarin** is an unclassified separate Mandarin language spoken in Xinjiang.

### **Zhejiang**

**Tiantai Mandarin**, a separate Mandarin language spoken around Tiantai in Central Zhejiang, has very heavy Taizhou Wu influence. It is unclassified.

### **Classification**

Wutun, Karamay, Tiantai, and Yanyucun are in the Unclassified Group of Mandarin, which contains four languages.

## **Jin**

*Jin* is a completely separate language from Mandarin, with only 57% intelligibility with Mandarin Proper (Cheng 1997), although the two are closely related. The differences between Jin and Mandarin are somewhat greater than the differences between Mandarin itself. Jin is spoken in most of Shanxi, in bits on the western edge and in Northwest Hubei, in North Shaanxi, in South-Central Inner Mongolia, and in a bit of far Northwest Henan.

### **The Bingzhou Group of Jin**

#### **Shanxi**

**Taiyuan Jin** is also a separate language according to the same Swadesh test, not intelligible with Yuci (Ben Hamed 2005). Taiyuan is the capital of Shanxi.

**Yuci Jin** is a separate language from Taiyuan Jin on a 200 word Swadesh test (Ben Hamed 2005). It is spoken in the Yuci District of Jinzhong Prefectural City.



## **The Dabao Group of Jin**

### **Inner Mongolia**

**Baoto Jin** may be a [separate language](#). It is described as a highly distinctive Jin language of Inner Mongolia.

## **The Hanxin Group of Jin**

### **The Cizhang Group of Hanxin**

**The Cizhang Group of Hanxin** is spoken in Hebei. Since it is separate from the Zhanghu Group also spoken there, it is probably a separate language.

### **The Houoji Group of Hanxin**

**The Houoji Group of Hanxin** is spoken mostly in Henan. As these are the only Jin varieties spoken in Henan, this group probably represents a separate language.

## **The Luiliang Group of Jin**

### **The Fenzhou Group of Liuliang**

**The Fenzhou Group of Liuliang** is a separate language, as it is its own subgroup. It is mostly spoken in Shanxi and to a lesser extent in Shaanxi.

### **The Xingxi Group of Liuliang**

**The Xingxi Subgroup of the Liuliang Group of Jin** is a separate language, as it is its own subgroup. It is mostly spoken in Shanxi, with one variety spoken in Shandong.

## **Shandong**

Jin is spoken in a single dialect island in Shandong.

**Yonghe Jin** is a separate language, as it the only Jin variety spoken in Shandong, and it is spoken far away from the rest of the group. This is the only dialect island in Jin, and as such, it is a separate language.

## **The Shandang Group of Jin**

**The Shangdang Group of Jin** is a separate language, as it a separate group. Shangdang Jin is spoken in Shanxi.

## **The Wutai Group of Jin**

### **Shaanxi**

**Jingbian Jin** is a separate language, since it is in its own group. It is spoken in the city of Jingbian.

## **The Zhanghu Group of Jin**

**The Zhanghu Group of Jin** is spoken in Hebei and Neimenggu. As a separate group of Jin, it is a separate language.

## **The Zhiyan Group of Jin**

**The Zhiyan Group of Jin** is spoken in Shaanxi. As a separate group of Jin, it is a separate language.

### **Classification**

Taiyuan, Yuci, and 14 others are members of the Bingzhou Group of Jin, which has 16 varieties.

Baotou, Yulin, and 27 others are members of the Dabao Group of Jin, which has 29 varieties.

The Hanxin Group of Jin has 35 varieties. Hanxin is broken into two subgroups, Cizhang and Huoji.

The Cizhang Group of Hanxin has 17 varieties.

The Houji Group of Hanxin has 18 varieties

The Luliang Group of Jin has 17 varieties. Liuliang is split into two subgroups, Fenzhou and Xingxi.

The Fenzhou subgroup of Liuliang has nine members.

Yonghe and seven others are members of the the Xingxi subgroup of Liuliang, which has eight members.

The Shangdang Group of Jin has 15 varieties.

Jingbian and 14 others are members of the Wutai Group of Jin, which

has 15 varieties.

The Zhanghu Group of Jin has 28 varieties.

The Zhihan Group of Jin has four varieties.

Jin is composed of 149 varieties, 12 of which are separate languages.

The Jin languages have [48 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

## **Gan**

[Gan](#) is a macrolanguage spoken mostly in Jiangxi Province. The mountainous and rugged terrain of Jiangxi means that Gan is very [diverse, with many mutually unintelligible varieties](#) within it. Whether Gan is as diverse as Xiang or Hui is not known. The two most well-known varieties of Gan are Nanchang Gan and Anyi Gan. Gan is spoken mostly in Jiangxi and to a lesser extent in Hunan, Hubei, and Anhui. There is a good possibility that there is a different Gan language spoken in every county in the Gan area. It is also possible that all major Gan varieties are separate languages.

### **The Changjiang Group of Gan**

Changjiang is spoken mostly in Jiangxi, with one language spoken in Hunan.

### **Jiangxi**

[Anyi Gan](#) is a separate Changjiang language spoken in Nanchang Prefectural City. Anyi and Nanchang Gan are separate languages based on a 200 word Swadesh test (Ben Hamed 2005).

[Duchang Gan](#) is a separate Changjiang language spoken in Duchang County. It is quite different from the rest of Gan (Sagart 1998).

[Gao'an Gan](#) is a separate Changjiang language spoken in the county-level city of Gao'an in the central part of Yichun Prefectural City. It is significantly different from the rest of Gan (Sagart 1998).

[Fengxin Gan](#) is a separate Changjiang language spoken in Fengxin

County in the northern part of Yichun Prefectural City. It part of a third major split in Northern Gan according to some systems (Sagart 1998).

**Hukou Gan** is a a separate Changjiang language. It is a major split in Northern Gan according to some analyses (Sagart 1998).

**Jing'an Gan** is a a separate Changjiang language spoken in Jing'an County in the north of Yichun Prefectural City in Jiangxi.

**Nangchang Gan**, spoken in Nanchang Prefectural City in Jiangxi, is a separate Changjiang language from Anyi based on a 200 word Swadesh test (Ben Hamed 2005). Nanchang has a great deal of dialectal diversity (Cui 2007), with several dialects covering different cities and the rural areas. Since Putongua is used by rural Nanchang speakers to speak to the urban ones (Cui 2007), this shows that the one or more Gan varieties spoken in the rural areas of Nanchang are not intelligible with Nanchang Proper spoken in the city. Nanchang is still spoken very heavily in Nanchang (Cui 2007). No doubt each rural county in Nanchang speaks its own Gan language.

**Tonggu Gan** is a separate Changjiang language spoken in Tonggu County in the northwestern part of Yichun Prefectural City in Jiangxi.

**Wuning Gan** is a separate Changjiang language spoken in Jiangxi. It is also a major split in Northern Gan according to some classifcatory schemes (Sagart 1998).

**Xinjian Gan** is a separate Changjiang language spoken in the Xinjian District of Nanchang Prefectural City in Jiangxi (Cui 2007).

**Yongxiu Gan** is a separate Changjiang language spoken in Jiangxi. It has significant differences with the rest of Gan (Sagart 1998).

### **The Datong Group of Gan**

Datong is spoken mostly in Hubei and to a lesser extent in Hunan.

#### **Hubei**

**Daye Gan** is a separate language as a member of the Datong Group of Gan.

### **The Dongsui Group of Gan**

The Dongsui Group is spoken in Hunan.

## **Hunan**

**Dongkou Gan** is a separate language as a member of the Dongsui Group of Gan.

## **The Fugang Group of Gan**

The Fugang Group is spoken mostly in Jiangxi and in a couple of places in Fujian.

## **Jiangxi**

**Jinxian Gan** is a separate language spoken in Jinxian County, part of Nanchang Prefectural City (Cui 2007).

**Linchuan Gan**, spoken in East-Central Jiangxi, is a very interesting Gan that differs from all others. This seems to be the remains of the old language that was brought into Jiangxi by the ancestors of the Hakka, Early South Central Chinese, and it indicates a close relationship between Gan and Hakka (Sagart 1998).

**Nancheng Gan** is quite different from the rest of Gan, so it may well be separate language (Sagart 1998).

## **The Huaiyue Group of Gan**

The Huaiyue Group of Gan is spoken in Anhui.

## **Anhui**

**Huaining Gan** is a separate language as a member of the Huaiyue Group of Gan.

## **The Jicha Group of Gan**

The Jicha Group of Gan is spoken mostly in Jiangxi and to a much lesser extent in Hunan.

Ji'an Gan, a macrolanguage, is divided into two varieties, one in the south and one in the north. The two are not intelligible with each other.

## **Jiangxi**

**Baixiang Ji'an** is a separate language, the southern part of the Ji'an

language. It lacks intelligibility of Nanxiang spoken in the northern part of the language.

**Nanxiang Ji'an** is a separate language, the northern part of the Ji'an language. It is not intelligible with Baixiang Ji'an, the southern part of the language.

### **Hunan**

**Dongxiang Chaling Gan**, spoken in Hunan near the Jiangxi border, is a language with mixed Gan and Xiang features. The best analysis is that this is a Gan dialect. Due to the heavy Xiang mixture, it is no doubt a separate Gan language.

### **The Jilian Group of Gan**

The Jilian Group consists of only a single language, and it is spoken in Jiangxi.

### **Jiangxi**

**Wanan Gan** is the sole member of the Jilian Group of Gan, so it must be a separate language.

### **The Leizi Group of Gan**

The Leizi Group is spoken only in Hunan.

### **Hunan**

**Leiyang Gan** is a separate language, as it is a member of the Leizi Group of Gan.

### **The Yiliu Group of Gan**

The Yiliu Group is spoken mostly in Jiangxi and in a couple of places in Hunan.

### **Jiangxi**

**Yichun Gan** is a separate language as a member of the Yiliu Group of Gan.

## **The Yingyi Group of Gan**

The Yingyi Group is spoken in Jiangxi.

### **Jiangxi**

**Hecheng Gan** is a major split in Southern Gan and as such is a separate language (Cui. 2007).

## **The Yiping Group of Gan**

The Yiping Group consists of only one language that is spoken in Jiangxi.

### **Jiangxi**

**Wanzai Gan** is spoken in Wanzai County in Yichun Prefectural City. It is the only member of the Yiping Group of Gan, and hence it is a separate language.

## **Classification**

Anyi, Dean, Duchang, Fengxian, Gao'an, Hukou, Jinj'an, Nanchang, Pingjiang, Tonggu, Wuning, Xingzi, Xinjian, Xiushui, and Yongxiu are members in the Changjing Group of Gan, which has 15 varieties.

Daye, Huarong, Jiangyu, and 10 others are members of the Datong Group of Gan, which has 13 varieties.

Dongkou and four others are members of the Dongsui Group of Gan, which has five varieties.

Fuzhou, Jinxian, Linchuan, Nancheng, and 11 others are members of the Fuguang Group of Gan, which has 15 varieties.

Huaining and eight others are members of the Huaiyue Group of Gan, which has nine varieties.

Nanxiang Ji'an, Baixiang Ji'an, and 13 others are members of the Jicha Group of Gan, which has 15 varieties.

Wanan is the sole member of the Jilian Group of Gan.

Anren, Changning, Leiyang, Yongxing, and Zixing are members of the Leizi Group of Gan, which has five varieties.

Yichun and 10 others are members of the Yiliu Group of Gan, which

has 11 varieties.

Boyang, Chaling Donxian, Leping, Hechang, Yingtian, and seven others are members of the Yingyi Group of Gan, which has 12 varieties.

Wanzai is the sole member of the Yiping Group of Gan.

Gan has 102 varieties.

There are [30 million speakers](#) of the Gan languages (Olson 1998).

## **Min**

There are 90 million speakers of the Min languages.





*Most varieties of Min are shown here, including all varieties of Inland Min. Inland Min includes Northern, Shaojiang and Central Min. Northern Min is spoken in red around Nanping. Shaojiang Min is spoken in brown around Shaowu. Central Min is spoken in yellow around Sanming. Coastal Min groups on the map are Eastern, Southern, Putian, Hainanese, and Luizhou Min. Longyan, Zhongshan, Hailufeng, Teochew, Hokkien, Datian and Zhenan Min are subsumed in Southern Min on this map, though in my treatment, many are placed outside of Southern Min in Coastal Min itself where Southern Min is reduced to a Coastal Min subgroup.*

*Zhenan Min is spoken in blue above the green Eastern Min zone. Longyan Min is spoken in a small area around Longyan inland of the Hokkien area. Hokkien is spoken around Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, and Xiamen in China and in Taiwan.*

*Teochew is spoken to the south of Hokkien around Shantou, Jieyang and Chaozhou. Hailufeng is spoken to the south of Teochew around Shanwei.*

*Zhongsan Min is not shown on the map, but is spoken across the bay to the west from Hong Kong in Zhongsan Prefectural City. Hainanese Min is spoken in Hainan in light purple. Leizhou Min is spoken in dark purple to the north of Hainan around Zhangjiang and Maoming.*

## **Inland Min: Central, Northern, Longyan, Pingle, and Shaojiang Min**

### **Inland Min: Central Min or Min Zhong**

[Central Min or Min Zhong](#) is a separate language not intelligible with Northern or Eastern Min. It has three varieties, *Shaxian*, *Sanming*, and *Yongan*, but we don't know if there are languages among them. The tones of the three varieties are quite different. Further, there are many dialects in the interior of Sanming Prefecture, so there may be more than one language there.

#### **Classification**

Sanming, Shaxian, and Yongan are members of Central Min, which has three dialects.

Central Min has [3.5 million speakers](#).

### **Inland Min: Longyan Min**

*Longyan Min* is group of Min languages that constitutes a major split in Min. It is [spoken](#) in Longyan Prefectural City's Xinluo District and Zhangping city deep inside Fujian to the west of the Hokkien-speaking area (Branner 2008) .

Longyan Min has anywhere from 300,000 (Branner 2008) to [740,000 speakers](#) and has limited intelligibility with other Min languages. It has heavy Hakka [influence](#) due to the large number of Hakka speakers in the surrounding areas. Some put Longyan Min in a Southern Min Nan division of its own, others put it in Hokkien, and others put it outside of all other major Min categories in its own Min category.

David Branner puts it in Inland Min but in a separate group from the first group of Northern Min, Central Min, and Shaojiang Min. This seems radical to me. Instead of these proposals, the best analysis seems to be that it is an Inland Min language in the same group as Northern Min, Central Min, and Shaojiang Min.

[Wan'an Longyan Min](#) is a macrolanguage comprising a number of separate languages in Wan'an Township of Fujian. Wan'an and the rest of Longyan Min are not mutually intelligible (Branner 2008).

Wan'an is a small township in Northwestern Longyan Prefectural City in Western Fujian which consists of very rugged, hard to access mountains with scattered very isolated villages made up of poor farmers. Some of these villages were visited for the first time by a Westerner only in the last 20 years (Branner 2000).

To give you an idea of how remote the area is, to walk between two villages in Wan'an would take six difficult and confusing hours down ancient cobblestone paths through dark forests. But to take a bus between the two towns that are six hours walking distance away would take three days (Branner 2000)! There are 13 varieties of Wan'an Longyan Min, all separate languages.

All are spoken in Wan'an township except Shiahtsuen Buhyun Liling, which is spoken in Laiyuan Township in Southeastern Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City (Branner 2000).

With many of these varieties, they don't understand each other at first, but after they talk to each other for a while, they start to figure out the other variety (Branner 2008). Owing to difficult intelligibility from village to village, the best analysis seems to be that all of the above are separate languages. Intelligibility among the Wan'an languages is ~70%.

Koongfu Longyan Min and Shizhong Longyan Min are usually called dialects of Longyan Min, but on examination, they are quite different. Considering the extreme divergence of Longyan Min varieties in Wan'an, Koongfu and Shizhong and are separate languages.

## **Fujian**

[Baisha Youshui Longyan Min](#) is a separate Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Koongfu Longyan Min** is a separate Longyan language spoken in Kanshi Township in Yongding County in Longyan Prefectural City. Koongfu is quite different from Shizhong Longyan Min.

**Shanghang Baisha Pengxin Longyan Min** is a separate Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Shanghang village in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Shanghang Buhyun Liliing Longyan Min**, is another Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Shanghang village in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Shanghang Guanzhuang Shangzhuo Longyan Min** is spoken in Shanghang village in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City. It is also a Wan'an Longyan Min language.

**Shanghang Gutian Laifang Longyan Min** is a Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Shanghang village in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Shiahtsuen Buhyun Liliing Longyan Min** is a separate language spoken in Laiyuan Township in the southeast of Liancheng County of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Shikou Longyan Min** is a Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Shizhong Longyan Min** is a separate Longyan language spoken in Southern Longyan Prefectural City. It is significantly different from Koongfu.

**Songyang Longyan Min** is a Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Tutan Longyan Min** is a separate Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Wenheng Longyan Min** is a separate Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Wuzhai Longyan Min** is a Wan'an Longyan Min language spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Xi Longyan Min**, spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Xiangxi Longyan Min** is a separate language within Wan'an Longyan Min spoken in Wan'an Township in the Xinluo District of Longyan Prefectural City.

**Zhangping Longyan Min** appears to be a separate language. It is often thought to be a Hokkien tongue, but it is actually a Longyan Min language. It is spoken in Zhangping County in Longyan Prefectural City.

*Malaysian Longyan Min* is a variety of Longyan Min still spoken on the Malay Peninsula. The language has been dying out for sometime now in Malaysia, but it is still quite alive in Penang around Parit Buntar and in the far north of the peninsula in Taiping on the border with Thailand. In Taiping, there are six different Longyan Min associations, each from a different town in the Longyan Min area of China.

So there are six different dialects of Malaysian Longyan Min in Taiping alone: *Malaysian Longyan Min A*, *Malaysian Longyan Min B*, *Malaysian Longyan Min C*, *Malaysian Longyan Min D*, *Malaysian Longyan Min E*, and *Malaysian Longyan Min F*. Intelligibility data between Malaysian Longyan Min and Longyan Min in China is not known.

Longyan Min seems to have about [85% intelligibility](#) with Taiwanese Hokkien. The intelligibility of Malaysian Longyan Min with Penang Northern Malayland Hokkien is [very poor](#), near [zero](#).

### **Classification**

Baisha Youshui, Koongfu, Malaysian, Malaysian A, Malaysian B, Malaysian C, Malaysian D, Malaysian E, Shanghang Baisha Pengxin, Shanghang Gunzhuang Shangzhuo, Shanghang Gutian Laifang, Shikou, Shiahtsuen Buhyun Liliing, Shizhong, Songyang, Tutan, Wenheng, Wuzhai, Xi, and Xiangxi are all members of Longyan Min, which has 20 varieties, 14 of which are separate languages.

The Longyan Min languages have 300-740,000 speakers.

## **Inland Min: Northern Min or Min Bei**

[\*Northern Min or Min Bei\*](#), a macrolanguage, is a major split in the Min family. Northern Min has only [0-20% intelligibility](#) with Min Nan.

Northern Min or Min Bei has 13 varieties, almost all spoken in Nanping Prefectural City in the far north of Fujian.

Shibei Northern Min and Pucheng Northern Min are spoken in Pucheng County; Chong'an Northern Min, Wufu Northern Min, and Xingtian Northern Min are spoken in Wuyishan City; Zhenghe Northern Min and Zhenqian Northern Min are spoken in Zhenghe County; Jianyang Northern Min is spoken in Jianyang County, Shunchang Northern Min is spoken in Shunchang County, Songxi Northern Min is spoken in Songxi County, and Jian'ou Northern Min is spoken in Jian'ou County. All of these are spoken in Nanping City.

There are reports that there is no Min Bei standard and that each "mountain" speaks somewhat differently from others, and hence intelligibility is difficult among varieties. There is even difficult intelligibility within varieties, for instance, some Jian'ou speakers cannot understand other Jian'ou speakers from other parts of the county.

Hence, there is almost certainly a separate Northern Min language in each county, but to be on the safe side, we will split all Northern Min varieties in the Min Dong homeland as separate languages.

**Chong'an Northern Min** is a separate languages based on reports of difficult intelligibility among Northern Min varieties.

**Jianyang Northern Min** is a separate language, as it only has 75% intelligibility of Jian'ou Northern Min.

**Jian'ou Northern Min** is also a separate language, having only 75% intelligibility of Jianyang. There are some reports that there is difficult intelligibility even inside of Jian'ou, with some areas of the city having difficulty understanding other areas.

**Pucheng Northern Min** is a separate language as in general, there is difficult intelligibility among Northern Min varieties.

**Shebei Northern Min** is a separate language based on reports of limited intelligibility among Northern Min varieties.

**Shunchang Northern Min** is a separate language based on reports that there is difficult intelligibility among Northern Min varieties.

**Songxi Northern Min** is a separate language, as reports state that there is incomplete intelligibility among Northern Min varieties

**Wufu Northern Min** is a separate language since Northern Min

varieties are reported to have difficult intelligibility among themselves.

**Xingtian Northern Min** is a separate language since there is difficult intelligibility among Northern Min varieties.

**Zhenghe Northern Min** is also a separate language since each Northern Min “mountain” speaks differently from the others and there is difficult intelligibility between varieties.

**Zhenqian Northern Min** is a separate language also as each Northern Min variety speaks a bit differently from the others and there is difficult intelligibility from “mountain to mountain.”

### **Guangxi**

*Nandan* is an outlying variety spoken in Nandan County all the way down in Northwest Guangxi.

### **Zhejiang**

*Taishun* is spoken to the north in Taishun County in the far south of Zhejiang.

Intelligibility of the outliers Nandan in Guangxi and Taishun in Zhejiang with the rest of Northern Min in Northern Fujian is not known.

### **Malaysia**

*Overseas Northern Min* is spoken in [Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and Thailand](#). There are 389,000 speakers in Malaysia, 14,000 in Thailand, 12,000 in Singapore, and 9,600 in Brunei. Little is known about Diaspora Northern Min, and intelligibility of it with Northern Min in China is not known.

### **Classification**

Chong'an, Jianyang, Jian'ou, Nandan, Overseas, Pucheng, Shibei, Shunchang, Songxi, Taishun, Wufu, Xingtian, Zenqian, and Zhenghe are all members of Northern Min, which has 14 varieties, 11 of which are separate languages.

There are [10.9 million speakers](#) of the Northern Min languages.



## Inland Min: Pingle Min

This group refers to a little researched category consisting of Min dialect islands that are spoken far inland in Guangxi. There is already a [tradition in Chinese scholarship](#) to refer to the Min dialect islands in Guangxi collectively as Pingle Min.

The Min dialect islands in Guangdong are not usually grouped with Pingle Min, but they should be because they are the source of the Pingle islands in Guangxi. The islands in Guangdong are a result of movements of Hokkien speakers to the area from Zhangzhou during the Tang Dynasty from 600-900. The phonology is relict and harkens back to Tang Dynasty Proto-Zhangzhou Min phonology. After the movement to Western Guangdong, a number of these speakers then moved to Guangxi, where there are now scattered islands of Min speakers.

Although Pingle Min varieties are [sometimes simply characterized as unclassified Southern Min](#), that does not seem to be a good classification, as Southern Min is now a part of Coastal Min, and Pingle Min is spoken far inland. Instead, it is better to put these unclassified Min varieties in Inland Min like Longyan Min, with which they shares certain similarities, such as a derivation from Hokkien and an inland location.

Pingle Min in Guangdong and Guangxi is so poorly known that most people do not even realize that it exists. Nevertheless, there has been a tiny trickle of Chinese [scholarship](#) on these dialect islands, although I am [not aware](#) of further attempts to place them anywhere in the Min spectrum. Even in the [Chinese literature](#) there has been very [little work](#) done on [these varieties](#).

## Guangdong

Three Min dialect islands are spoken in Fulin, Taiping, and Xiaba Dam in Yunfu Prefectural City in Western Guangdong. They are a result of a movement to the area from the Zhangzhou region during the Tang Dynasty from 600-900. They have since been surrounded by Cantonese and Hakka speakers and a lot of Cantonese and Hakka



have gone into them. The phonology of both varieties is ancient, from the Tang Dynasty.

There are more Min islands in Shaoguan Prefectural City in the far north of Guangdong. These are probably best described as Pingle Min. They arrived here in 1750 from the Teochew region of Eastern Guangdong and the Hokkien area of Southern Fujian. They call their language Liantan Sheng or Liantan Speech. It is spoken in a few scattered villages here and there in Lechang, Qujiang and Ruyuan Counties. There are 20,000 Pingle Min speakers in Shaoguan.

**Changshabei Pingle Min** is spoken in Changshabei, four miles south of Danxiazhen in Renhua County in Shaoguan Prefectural City in the far north of Guangdong. They arrived there 250 years ago.

**Fulin Pingle Min** is spoken in Fulin in Yan'an County in Yunfu Prefectural City. They moved to the area from the Zhangzhou area over 1,000 years ago. It has heavy Cantonese and Hakka influences.

**Lechang Pingle Min** is spoken in Lechang County in Shaoguan Prefectural City.

**Qujiang Pingle Min** is spoken in Qujiang County in Shaoguan Prefectural City.

**Ruyuan Pingle Min** is spoken in Ruyuan County, Shaoguan Prefectural City. This is mostly a Hakka and Tuhua speaking area. They arrived here 250 years ago.

**Taiping Pingle Min** is spoken in Taiping in Xining County in Yunfu Prefectural City. Speakers moved here from Zhangzhou during the Tang Dynasty. It has been strongly influenced by Hakka and Cantonese.

**Xiaba Pingle Min** is spoken in the town of Xiaba Dam 2.5 miles south of the city of Yun'an in Yun'an County in Yunfu Prefectural City. They probably came there during the Tang Dynasty like the nearby Taiping and Fulin Min languages. This group also migrated to Guangxi and [is the source](#) of the Pingnan Min dialect island there.

## **Guangxi**

There are a variety of Min islands in Guangxi collectively known as in the Chinese literature as Pingle Min. All of these may be [derived from a movement](#) of Xiaba Min speakers from Xiaba Dam in Yun'an

at some time in the past. Pingle Min in Guangxi has since come under [heavy influence](#) of Southwestern Mandarin.

**[Pingnan Pingle Min](#)** is a Pingle Min dialect island in Guangxi. It is probably a separate language as it has been separated from the source language in Xiaba for so long.

## **Inland Min: Shaojiang Min or Min Gan**

[Shaojiang Min or Min Gan](#) is a group of Min languages, a separate high-level division of Southern Min. It is spoken in Shaowu, Guangze, and the western part of Shunchang Counties in the western part of Nanping Prefectural City and in Jiangle County in the northern part of Sanming Prefectural City in the far northwest of Fujian. It borders the Northern Min and Wu-speaking area to the east. It has four languages inside of it that have [limited mutual intelligibility](#). There are subdialects within these larger languages.

The substratum of Shaojiang is not for the most part Min, Gan or Hakka as often suggested - instead, it is the ancient Baiyue language; however, there are lesser Hakka and Gan influences. Others say that this is not Southern Min at all and instead it is a division of Min called Inland Min which includes Northern and Central Min. This would make sense due to its location and the fact that Shaojiang split away from Northern Min several hundred years ago.

These are originally Northern Min speakers who came under heavy influence of Hakka, Gan, and Baiyue. As the Min element is Northern Min instead of Southern Min, this classification makes the most sense. Chinese scholars sometimes call it Min Gan or Min-Hakka-Gan to illustrate the heavy Gan or Hakka admixture. Some consider it to be a Min-Gan transitional language, hence the moniker Min Gan.

**Guangze Shaojiang Min** is spoken in Shaowu County in the west of Nanping Prefectural City in the far northwest of Fujian. It has [limited intelligibility](#) with the rest of Shaojiang Min.

**Jiangle Shaojiang Min**, is spoken in Jiangle County in the northern part of Sanming Prefectural City in far Northwestern Fujian. It has only [limited intelligibility](#) of the rest of Shaojiang Min.

**Shaowu Shaojiang Min** is spoken in Shaowu County in the western part of Nanping Prefectural City in far Northwestern Fujian. Shaowu has [limited intelligibility](#) of the rest of Shaojiang Min.

**Shunchang Shaojiang Min** is spoken in the western part of Shunchang County in the west of Nanping Prefectural City in far northwestern Fujian. Shunchang has only [limited intelligibility](#) with the rest of Shaojiang Min.

### **Classification**

Guangze, Jiangle, Shaowu, and Shunchang are all part of Shaojiang Min, which has four varieties, all separate languages.

There are [984,000 speakers](#) of the Shaojiang Min languages.

## **Coastal Min: Eastern Min, Zhongshan Min, Puxian Min, and Southern Min**

### **Coastal Min: Eastern Min or Min Dong**

*Eastern Min, Min Dong, Eastern Min, Fukchiu, Fuzhou, Hokchiu, Hokchia, or Fooshuw* is a major split in the Min languages spoken in Fujian.

Eastern Min has [no intelligibility](#) with Teochew or Hokkien.

Three Eastern Min varieties, all spoken in Youxi County, are separate languages. The three languages have markedly poor intelligibility between them (Zheng 2008).

"Fuzhou" in general has at most 65-70% intelligibility between its varieties. According to George Ngù "Fuzhou is not intelligible even within its many varieties" (Ngù 2009). In Malaysia, intelligibility for some varieties is much lower than that.

## The Funing Group

### Fujian

**Fu'an Eastern Min**, a member of the the Fuzhou macrolanguage, is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Fuding Eastern Min**, a member of the the Fuzhou macrolanguage, is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Shouning Eastern Min** is another member of the the Fuzhou macrolanguage that is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Xiapu Eastern Min**, yet another member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, is also a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Zherong Eastern Min**, another member of the the Fuzhou macrolanguage, is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Zhouning Eastern Min**, as a member of the the Fuzhou macrolanguage, is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

## The Hougan Group

### Fujian

**Changle Eastern Min** is a separate language as a member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage (Ngù 2009). Changle has little understanding of Fuzhou, maybe 10%.

**Chengguan Eastern Min**, Chengguan is spoken in the middle of Youxi County and is a separate language, with markedly poor intelligibility of Zhongxian and Yangzhong, the other two Eastern Min languages spoken in Youxi County (Zheng 2008).

**Fuqing Eastern Min** is not fully intelligible with Fuzhou (Ngù 2009). Fuzhou speakers can understand Fuqing speakers better than the other way around.

**Fuzhou Eastern Min** is the variety on which the standard is based. It is not fully intelligible with the rest of Eastern Min (Ngù 2009).

**Gutian Eastern Min**, another member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, must also be a separate language (Ngù 2009). Many Gutian speakers also emigrated to Malaysia. Gutian and Mingqing sound a lot different and have very different vocabulary. There was bitter competition

between Gutian and Minqing speakers in Sibu, Sarawak, in Malaysia.

**Lianjiang Eastern Min** is yet another member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, hence it is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Luoyuan Eastern Min**, as member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, must be a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Matsu Eastern Min** is spoken on Matsu Island off the coast of China. It is similar to but probably not intelligible with Changle. Matsu may well be a separate language like all the rest of the Fuzhou macrolanguage (Ngù 2009).

**Minhou Eastern Min** is a member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage and hence is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Minqing Eastern Min**, being part of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, is also a separate language (Ngù 2009). Many Minqing speakers emigrated to Malaysia.

**Ningde Eastern Min** is a separate language as a member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage (Ngù 2009).

**Nanping Eastern Min** is a separate language (Ngù 2009). There are many dialects in the Eastern Min-speaking areas of Nanping, and there may be more than one language here.

**Pingnan Eastern Min** is a separate language since it is part of the Fuzhou macrolanguage (Ngù 2009). Many Pingnan speakers emigrated to Malaysia.

**Pingtian Eastern Min** is a member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, and since all Fuzhou varieties lack mutual intelligibility with the rest of the group, Pingtian is a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Tong'an Eastern Min** should also be included, as it is a member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage (Ngù 2009).

**Yangzhong Eastern Min** is spoken in the north of Youxi County and is a separate language, with markedly poor intelligibility of Chengguan and Zhongxian, the other two Eastern Min languages spoken in the county (Zheng 2008).

**Yongtai Eastern Min**, yet another member of the Fuzhou macrolanguage, must also be a separate language (Ngù 2009).

**Zhongxian Eastern Min** is spoken in the south of the Youxi County and is a separate language with strikingly poor intelligibility of

Chengguan and Yangzhong, the other two Eastern Min languages spoken in the county (Zheng 2008).

## Malaysia

Malaysian Eastern Min, Hokchiu, Hokchia, or Fooshow is spoken in Sibu, Sarawak, and Singapore. It is also spoken in Yongpeng, Johor, Serambam, Bintangor, Sarikei, Selangor, Sitiawan (where it is dying out), and Sabah. Hokchiu refers to Malaysian Fuzhou speakers and Hokchia refers to Malaysian Fuqing speakers. Collectively they are known as Fooshow. Malaysian Eastern Min speakers say that Hokchiu and Hokchia only have 12% intelligibility in Malaysia, which seems much lower than their intelligibility in China.

Malaysian Eastern Min is the most widely spoken Chinese language in Sarawak. The heart of the Malaysian Eastern Min region in Sarawak is Sibu, but it is also spoken in Bintulu and Miri. Many speakers have migrated from Sibu to Miri in recent years. Sibu was where the Malaysian Eastern Min community originally concentrated in Sarawak, and from there, they spread out to Miri, Bintulu, and Sabah. Sibu speakers mostly spoke Gutian. Most Malaysian Eastern Min speakers arrived around 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion.

Malaysian Eastern Min is similar across the region. The varieties spoken in Sibu are similar to the varieties spoken on the peninsula. These people were mostly Christians who left around 1900. Eastern Min speakers in Malaysia spoke different Eastern Min languages. Most were Gutian and Minqing speakers, but some also spoke Fuqing and Minhou. Intelligibility of Malaysian Eastern Min with the Eastern Min languages spoken in China is not known, but it seems to be quite high.

## Taishun Manjiang

### Zhejiang

Man, Mango, or Taishun Manjiang Eastern Min is spoken in the central part of Taishun County in Southern Zhejiang in the far southern end of the Wu-speaking area. The name means "barbarian speech." Mango is probably a mixture of Southern Wu, Eastern Min, Northern Min, and maybe even pre-Sinitic languages. Manjiang is not intelligible with Fuzhou. However, Manjiang has affinity with Shouning

in phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. Whether it is intelligible with Shouning is not known.

Min Nan speakers who have looked at Manjiang data say it [doesn't](#) even look like a Sinitic language. It is [best seen](#) as an Eastern Min language with very strong substratum of a Tai-Kadai or Austroasiatic language and significant Wenzhou and Northern Min influences.

### **Classification**

Fuan, Fuding, Shouning, Xiapu, Zherong, and Zhouning are in the Funing Group of Eastern Min, which has six languages.

Changle, Chengguan, Fuzhou, Fuqing, Gutian, Lianjiang, Luoyuan, Malaysian, Matsu, Minhou, Mingqing, Nanping, Ningde, Pingnan, Pingtan, Tong'an, Yangzhong, Yongtai, and Zhongxian are in the Houguan Group of Eastern Min, which has 19 varieties, 18 of which are separate languages.

Taishun Manjiang is in an Eastern Min division of its own.

Eastern Min contains 26 varieties, 25 of which are separate languages.

There are [9.5 million](#) speakers of the Eastern Min languages.

### **Coastal Min: Northeastern or Zhongshan Min**

In Guangdong Province [in the Pearl River Delta near Hong Kong](#), there is a large, divergent split in Min called *Zhongshan Min*.

Zhongshan Min is a small group of Min languages that has limited intelligibility with other Min varieties. It is located in Zhongshan Prefectural City to the south of the Hailufeng Min zone south of the Pearl River Delta in the heart of the Cantonese zone along the Southern Guangdong coast.

Looking at the whole picture, it appears that various immigrants speaking Puxian Min, Northern Min, and Southern Min all settled around Zhongshan. These various Min elements, along with a hefty dose of Cantonese, have gone into the creation of Zhongshan Min. They are sometimes referred to in old literature as "Northeastern



Min.” That's not really a category. It often means Northern Min, but sometimes it means Eastern Min.

I do not know which Min category we should put them in. Maybe bring back Northeastern Min, and put it in Coastal Min alongside Southern Min and Eastern Min because the Coastal Min components seem greater than the Inland Min components.

One expert says that Longdu Zhongshan Min and Nanlang Zhongshan Min belong to Eastern Min, while Sanxiang Zhongshan Min is Southern Min (Bodman 1998). This solution doesn't seem like it will work at all. But that at least would still put the group in Coastal Min, which seems to be where it belongs. Longdu and Namlong taken together have at least [100,000 combined speakers](#). Each language is a [dialect island](#) surrounded by Cantonese speakers, and all three populations are [unconnected](#).

In Chinese, Longdu, Namlong, and Sanxiang are referred to as [All-Lung Min, South Gourd Min, and Three Rural Min](#) respectively. [14% of the population](#) of Zhongshan Prefectural City speaks Zhongshan Min.

Sanxiang, Namlong, and Longdu are [not mutually intelligible](#), although Namlong is [close](#) to Longdu. Sanxiang is more [divergent](#). Further, there are dialects within these three languages, and dialectal divergence is considerable.

Zhongshan Min has borrowed extensively from Siyi Cantonese spoken in the Pearl River Delta.

**Longdu Zhongshan Min** is also a [separate language](#). It is spoken in the west of Zhongshan Prefectural City in the towns of [Shaxi and Dayong](#). Longdu Min has a number of dialects. For now it seems best to list Longdu A and Longdu B as Longdu dialects.

**Nanlang Zhongshan Min** is a [separate language](#) mostly spoken [10 miles southeast of Zhongshan Prefectural City in Cuiheng](#), but it is also spoken in Nanlang Town and the Zhangjiabian or Zhangshangbeng Subdistrict in Eastern Zhongshan City. Nanlang now has mostly elderly speakers. Nanlong has a number of dialects. It seems to best to list Nanlang A and Nanlang B as Nanlang dialects.

**Sanxiang Zhongshan Min** is a [separate language](#) spoken in the south of Zhongshan Prefectural City in Sanxiang Town in [hilly rural areas](#). Sanxiang has [30,000 speakers](#).



Sanxiang has at least two dialects, *Phao* and *Tiopou*. *Phao* is fairly uniform across a number of villages, but *Tiopou* is quite different. Nevertheless, there is near-full intelligibility between *Phao* and *Tiopou* (Bodman 1988).

### **Classification**

Longdu, Longdu A, Longdu B, Namlong, Namlong A, Namlong B, *Phao*, Sanxiang, and *Tiopou* are all members of Zhongshan Min, which contains nine varieties, three of which are separate languages.

There are [130-150,000 speakers](#) of the Zhongshan Min languages.

## **Coastal Min: Puxian Min**

[Puxian Min or Hinghua](#) is a group of two languages constituting major split in Min. It has already been identified as separate from the rest of Min. It is spoken on the southeast coast of Fujian.

Puxian Min has a close relationship with Hokkien. It was originally a part of Quanzhou speaking proto-Quanzhou, but it split when the Song Emperor made a military base there in 979 during the Mongol invasions. The area then saw a lot of fighting after the Mongols invaded South China. A large group of them went south to become the Teochew speakers, and another group stayed behind. The ones who remained [came under serious Eastern Min influence](#) and hence became a separate language.

Later, some Min speakers from the Puxian region broke off, moved down to far southern Guangdong and [became](#) the Leizhou Min speakers.

The close relationship with Hokkien can be seen by looking at cognates – Puxian had 62% cognates with Quanzhou, while it has only 39% cognates with Eastern Min.

It has limited intelligibility of other Min languages – for instance, Puxian Min has 60% intelligibility of Xiamen Hokkien - but the mutual intelligibility is lopsided, as Xiamen intelligibility with Puxian Min is lower at 30% (Terng 2016). Hence Puxian-Xiamen intelligibility is only 45% (Terng 2016).

The name is derived from the names of two different cities in China where this language is spoken – “Pu” for Putian and “Xian” for Xianyou.

Puxian Min has seven dialects. There is full intelligibility between all of the dialects, although there are some minor pronunciation and vocabulary differences (Terng 2016). The two main divisions of Puxian Min are into *Putian* and *Xianyou*, hence the name Puxian Min being a mix of the two main varieties. Both are dialects of the main Puxian Min language.

There are at least six subdialects spoken in Putian County, all subdialects of Putian. They are *Jiangyou* and *Changli* along with two spoken in Putian City called *North Putian City* and *South Putian City*. There are other Putian varieties spoken in the county to the north and south of the Putian City other than Chengli and Jiangyou, but their names are not known. We will call them *North Putian County* and *South Putian County*.

There are three subdialects spoken in Xianyou County, one in Xianyou City called *Xianyou City* or *Central Xianyou*, another in the north of the county called *North Xianyou County*, and a third in the south of county called *South Xianyou County*. All are subdialects of a single dialect of Puxian Min, Xianyou. All three subdialects are fully intelligible with each other with only some minor differences in pronunciation and some different vocabulary (Terng 2016).

For instance, North Xianyou *kou*, “to throw,” is lacking in Xianyou City. South Xianyou has [i] and [e] for [y] and [ø] in Xianyou City and North Xianyou has [θ] for Xianyou City [ʈ] (Terng 2016).

Xianyou city trades a lot with the north and south of the county, so there is a lot of contact between the subdialects. The city gets rice and rice-derived goods from the south and fish and shellfish from the south. There is also a lot of intermarriage between speakers of the three subdialects. Most speakers of one of the Xianyou dialects have relatives who speak another of the dialects. The only research on Xianyou has focused on the dialect of the city – Central Xianyou - with other two dialects being poorly known (Terng 2016).

Intelligibility between Xianyou and Putian is good at 90%-100%. There are some vocabulary differences.

For instance:

"white": Xianyou City *pann*, Chengli Putian 城里, Putian City *pa*

"officer": Xianyou City *kuann*, Chengli Putian *melon kua*

are two pairs that cause some confusion.

In these cases, Chengli Putian has lost nasalization that Xianyou City has retained. As we shall see below, loss of final nasalization is not just seen in Chengli Putian but in all of Putian. Nevertheless, Xianyou City intelligibility of Chengli Putian is full at 100% (Terng 2016).

There is some different vocabulary there too, and in some cases of common words, the differences are striking.

For instance:

"children": Xianyou *kann en*, Putian *ta a*

"wet": Xianyou *iunn*, Putian *tang*

Once again we see than Xianyou has retained the older nasalization, whereas it appears that all of Putian, not just Chengli, has lost it (Terng 2016).

There are also rhyme differences between Putian and Xianyou. Xianyou has retained more rhymes at 50 rhymes, whereas Chengli Putian has 40, and Jiangyou Putian has 36 rhymes (Terng 2016).

So in addition to loss of nasalization, there may have been rhyme reduction in Putian also. It appears that Xianyou may be the older form of the Puxian language and that Putian broke away from it more recently.

Jiangyou Putian's 36 rhymes versus Xianyou's 50 rhymes leads to some difficulties in communication, however, Xianyou retains full intelligibility of Jiangyou at 90% (Terng 2016).

**Hinghwa or Henghua Puxian Min**, the variety of Puxian Min spoken in Singapore, lacks full intelligibility with Puxian Min in China. Hinghwa speakers are a minority in Singapore, and their language has mixed a lot with Singapore Hokkien, Malay, English, and other languages spoken in Singapore, resulting in a separate language. Malaysian Hokkien has only 10% intelligibility of Henghua.

## Classification

Chengli, Highwa, Jiangyou, North Putian County, North Xianyou, North Putian City, South Putian City, South Putian County, South Xianyou, and Xianyou City are all part of Puxian Min, which has 10 varieties, two of which are separate languages.

The Puxian Min languages have 2.6 million speakers.

## Coastal Min: Qiongwen Min

[\*Qiongwen Min\*](#), a macrolanguage, is a major split in Min spoken on Hainan Island and to the north on the mainland.

Qiongwen Min itself has 17 separate varieties, all spoken on Hainan or next to Hainan on the mainland. It is split into two major groups, Hainanese Min and Leizhou Min, which are then split into their own subgroups and varieties.

Qiongwen Min consists of 28 varieties, four of which are separate languages.

There are 10.8 million speakers of the Qiongwen Min languages.

## Coastal Min: Hainanese Min

**Hainanese Min** is a macrolanguage with eight million speakers, five million on Hainan and three million more overseas. Speakers were Min and Cantonese speakers from Southern Fujian and Northern Guangdong who came to the island long ago. Later, Hakka speakers moved in and added some Hakka influence. The language has a lot of influences from the native Li language and Taishanese Cantonese. There also seems to be some Vietnamese influence.

Hainanese tones [\*vary from region to region\*](#), which calls mutual intelligibility into question once again. The Hainanese tone system does not seem to be well described.

Hainanese Min is divided into 19 dialects: *Changjiang*, Changliu,

*Chengbian, Chengmai, Dingan, Dongfang, Haikou, Henchang, Indonesian, Ledong, Lingao, Lingshui, Malaysian Hainanese Min, Qiongshan, Qiongzhong, Qionghai, Tunchang, Wanning, and Yaxian.*

Hainanese Min is split into five different groups. As all major subgroups in the rest of Min are separate languages, it follows that if Hainanese is like the rest of the family, then each of these is a separate language also. The groups are Changgan, Fucheng, Wanning, Wenchang, and Yaxian.

### **The Changgan Group**

**The Changgan Group of Hainanese** is spoken on the west coast of Hainan and includes Changjiang and Dongfang.

### **The Fucheng Group of Hainanese**

**The Fucheng Group of Hainanese** is spoken in the northwest of the island and includes Changliu, Chengbian, Chengmai, Dingan, Haikou, Qiongshan, Qiongzhong, and Tunchang.

[\*Changliu\*](#) is spoken in Changliu Township, six miles to the west of Haikou. In between, residents speak both Changliu and Haikou.

*Chengmai* is spoken near Haikou.

*Haikou* is spoken in Haikou City, the capital of Hainan and a few miles away in Qiongshan County. There are [no significant differences](#) between the language of Haikou city districts and the suburbs.

[\*Lingao\*](#), spoken in Lingao County, is [closely related](#) to Changliu.

### **The Wanning Group of Hainanese**

**The Wanning Group of Hainanese** includes Lingshui and Wanning.

### **The Wenchang Group of Hainanese**

#### **Hainan**

**The Wenchang Group of Hainanese** is spoken around Wenchang on the northeastern coast of Hainan. It includes Qionghai and Wenchang.

*Qionghai* has considerable variation in lexicon from other Hainanese

varieties. For instance, most Qionghai vocabulary is different from Haikou's.

*Wenchang* is the standard or prestige variety of Hainanese. Statements that Wenchang is understood well by all Hainanese speakers implies that there is less than full intelligibility among Hainanese varieties, otherwise there would be no reason to make a statement like that. A grammar written around 1900 on Bun-Sio (Wenchang) stated that a number of the more distant Hainanese varieties were "[perfectly unintelligible](#)" to Bun-Sio speakers (De Souza 1903).

Wenchang is spoken in the Wenchang District. This region encompasses the far northeastern end of the island. Wenchang has more of a Tai-Kadai substrate than Southern Min in general based on a [look at this grammar](#). There is also a trace of Cantonese and more of a Mandarin influence than in the rest of Hokkien and Teochew.

## **Malaysia**

**[Malaysian Hainanese Min](#)** is spoken in Penang, Selangor, Malaka, Kemaman, Terengganu, Johor Bahru, Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore. They were the last Chinese group to arrive in the region, with most of them coming from 1910-1920. Hainan Hainanese have a hard time understanding Malaysian Hainanese because of the presence of so many Malay loans. Some Malaysian Hainanese speakers say that they [cannot understand](#) Hainan Hainanese at all. Hence, Malaysian Hainanese Min is a separate language.

## **The Yaxian Group of Hainanese**

**The Yaxian Group of Hainanese** is spoken on the south of the island. It consists of Yaxian and Ledong.

## **The Unclassified Group of Hainanese**

### **Indonesia**

*Indonesian Hainanese Min* is a Hainanese variety spoken in Indonesia that is full of loans from Indonesian languages. Intelligibility data for this variety is not available.

Hainanese is also spoken in the highlands of Laos and in Brunei.

Nothing is known about these varieties.

## Classification

Changjiang, Changliu, Chengbian, Chengmai, Dingan, Dongfang, Haikou, Indonesian, Ledong, Lingao, Lingshui, Malaysian, Qionghai, Qiongshan, Qiongzhong, Tunchang, Wanning, Wenchang, and Yaxian are members of Hainanese Min, which has 19 varieties, two of which are separate languages.

The Hainanese Min languages have eight million speakers, five million on Hainan and three million overseas.

## Coastal Min: Leizhou Min

### Guangdong

*Leizhou Min* is a macrolanguage made up of two languages: Leizhou Min and Zhanjiang Min.

**Leizhou Min** is a [separate language](#), and it has a close relationship with Hainanese. It is spoken in Guangdong at the far southern end of the province next to Hainan. Intelligibility between Leizhou Min and Hainanese Min is controversial, with [some](#) saying it is full, but actually intelligibility is [not quite full](#) at 85%. Leizhou is very different from Hokkien that it is best to put it outside of Southern Min Proper because [Hokkien speakers](#) ask how can this possibly be a Min Nan language. This makes sense as the relationship between Leizhou Min and Hokkien is distant, since Leizhou speakers [originally came](#) from the Puxian Min region.

Leizhou Min consists of eight different varieties: *Haikang*, *Dianbai*, *Dianbai Tanka*, *Lianjiang*, *Malaysian*, *Suixi Wen*, *Wuchuan*, and [Xuwen](#).

At least some of the eight Leizhou varieties are very different in phonology and lexicon. Intelligibility data is not known, but they may be mutually intelligible. Leizhou has low intelligibility with other Min languages other than Hainanese.

*Dianbai* is spoken in the Dianbai County on the coast of Guangdong. It

is spoken in Shuidong Township in the city and in the Lintou, Poxin, Quijing Xiadong, and Yangjiao Districts.

*Dianbai Tanka* is spoken by Tanka fisherpeople in Dianbai County in Bohe, Chen Village, Dabang, Danchang, Jueshan, Magang, Mata, Nanhai, Shayuan, Shuzi, and Yanhaidianchang. Intelligibility with Dianbai Proper is not known.

**Yangjiang Leizhou Min** is an unclassified “Southern Min” variety where Southern Min includes Leizhou Min but does not include Yangjiang in Leizhou. Leizhou Min is spoken in the coastal areas of Yangjiang but not inland. The best evidence seems to be that Yangjiang is a type of Leizhou Min, but it's unclassified status implies that it might be very different and have poor intelligibility with the rest of the language, hence it proper to split it off as a separate language for now.

**Zhanjiang Min** is not intelligible with Leizhou Min. It is spoken in Zhanjiang Prefectural City in the far southwest of Guangdong and seems to be a separate language.

### Malaysia

[\*Malaysian Leizou Min\*](#) is spoken by Leizhou speakers who emigrated to Malaysia. The community is small and centered around Malaka. In the village of Kg Baru Tian Dua, [most people](#) still speak Leizhou. Intelligibility with Chinese Leizhou Min is not known.

### Vietnam

There are [many](#) Leizhou speakers in Vietnam. Nothing is known about Leizhou in Vietnam.

### Classification

Dianbai, Dianbai Tanka Haikang, Lianjiang, Malaysian, Suixi, Wuchuan, Xuwen, Yangjiang, and Zhanjiang are members of Leizhou Min, which has nine varieties, two of which are separate languages.

The Leizhou Min languages have [2.8 million speakers](#).



## Coastal Min: Southern Min or Min Nan

Within *Min Nan* or *Southern Min*, a major category in Coastal Min, there are a number of separate languages. First of all, there is huge confusion over what Min Nan or Southern Min even means. Technically it was always considered to be a single language with many dialects. The prototypical Southern Min language was always Hokkien. However, it has now become clear that Southern Min or Min Nan is actually a macrolanguage or better yet, a language family.

This group is split into a number of major subgroups, all of which are separate languages and most of which are actually macrolanguages in themselves. So Hokkien and Min Nan/Southern Min are not synonymous. Instead Hokkien is simply one of the branches of the Min Nan/Southern Min family of languages.

There was a [proposal](#) several years ago before SIL to split Southern Min/Min Nan into three separate languages - Xiamen, Qiongwen and Teochew. Not only are all three of those separate languages and not dialects of Min Nan, in fact, all three of those are also macrolanguages.

The proposal was initiated by a request for a separate Teochew *Wikipedia*. *Wikipedia* will not grant new *Wikipedia* language versions unless the language has an ISO code. Teochew had no code, hence no Teochew *Wikipedia* was allowed. The requesters then submitted the change request to SIL. To this date, SIL has not acted on this proposal. Instead it has been put on hold. This is unfortunate but typical of SIL's huge aversion to splitting and move towards lumping and conservatism since it was granted the right to issue ISO codes. Since SIL never made a decision on the change request, the request for a Teochew *Wikipedia* has been on hold for several years now.

The Min Nan languages were derived from a mass movement of Northern Chinese who moved into the Fujian region around 300 in the Jin Dynasty. This mass migration occurred due people fleeing the Invasion of the Five Barbarians which occurred in the early 300's.

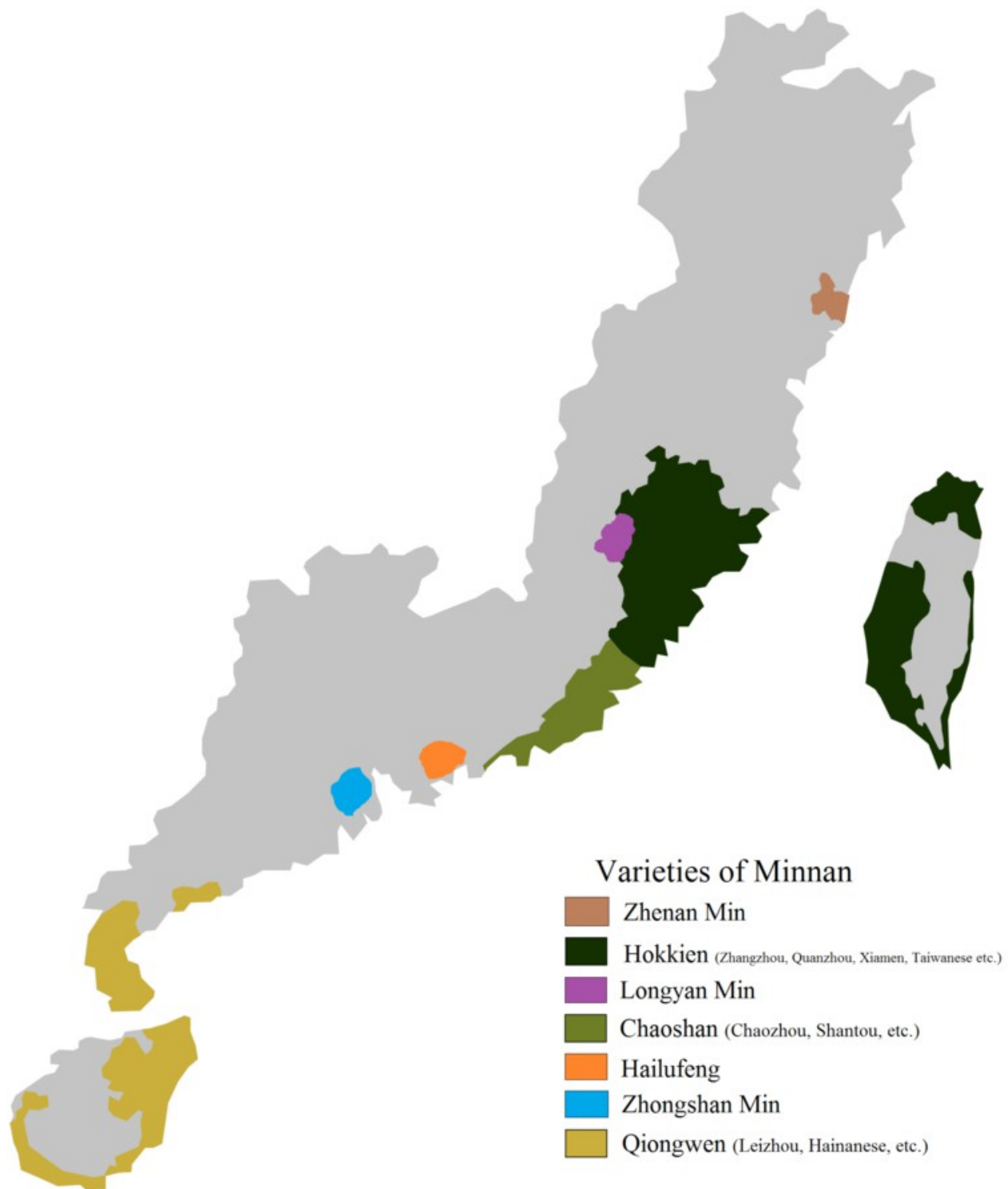
They settled around what is now the Jin River in Fujian in the heart of the Hokkien zone. They named this river the Jin River after the dynastic era during which they arrived. They named another river in

Fujian the Luoyang River after a city in northern China that many of them came from.

They brought with them the Northern Old Chinese variety they were speaking at the time, which formed the basis for Proto-Min Nan. Proto-Min Nan was not related to Proto-Eastern Min which was already being spoken in the Lower Min River at that time. The fact that all of the Min languages did not have the same etiology ought to make the concept that Northern Min and Southern Min are part of one language group controversial.

There are 43 million speakers of the Southern Min languages.





*The traditional view of Min Nan or Southern Min major groupings. This paper takes a dramatically different view. Min is instead divided into Coastal and Inland Min. Longyan Min and Qiongwen Min are moved out of Southern Min into separate categories in Coastal Min. Coastal Min then consists of Puxian Min, Eastern Min, Zhongshan Min, Longyan Min, Qiongwen Min, and Southern Min. Southern Min Proper, as subcategory in Coastal Min, is reduced to Hokkien, Teochew (Chaoshan Min on this map), Hailufeng Min, Datian Min, and Zhenan Min. Puxian Min is not shown on the map, but it is spoken somewhat to the north of the Hokkien zone on the coast. Datian Min is also not shown on the map. This is a new category that is somewhat controversial.*

## Southern Min: Datian Min

**Datian Min** in Fujian is in its own group in Min Nan and is [a separate language](#). It is spoken in Datian County in Sanming Prefecture in Central Fujian. Datian developed from Amoy Hokkien. Before 1535, this area encompassed Youxi, Dehua, Yong'an and Zhangping Counties. Youxi and Yong'an Counties spoke Eastern Min, and Dehua and Zhangping Counties spoke Hokkien.

Datian County was lopped off of this area and affiliated to Nanping, which spoke Northern Min. The county changed affiliation again in 1734 to Yongchun County, which spoke Hokkien. In 1949 it changed again to Yong'an Division of Sanming Prefecture, which spoke Central Min. This is a Southern Min language that has been influenced by Eastern Min, Northern Min, Central Min, and Puxian Min. With the continuous changes in administration, the differences between Datian Min and Hokkien became increasingly stark. It has poor intelligibility with the rest of Southern Min.

*Houlou* is spoken in Northwest Datian County, Southwest Youxi County, and some towns in Yong'an County and Shanxi County. Datian, Youxi, and Yong'an Counties are in Sanming Prefectural City. The main Houlou speaking area is in Northwest Datian County in Juangping, Jianshe, Qitao, Wenjiang, and Meishan. 22.5% of the population of Datian County speaks Houlou. Intelligibility with the rest of Datian Min is not known.

*Xianlou* is spoken in the town of Xianlou.

### Classification

Houlou and Xianlou are members of Datian Min, which has two dialects.

Datian Min has [300,000 speakers](#).

## Southern Min: Hailufeng Min

**Hailok'hong, Hailufeng or Hoklo Min** is a separate language within Southern that represents a later move of Zhangzhou speakers 400-500 years ago southwards towards Northeastern Guangdong by the same group that formed a small part of the Teochew. Since then there has been convergence with Teochew (Kirinputra 2014) because being located south of the main Quanzhang area and adjacent to Shanwei, it was cut off from Zhangzhou. It also has substantial [Hakka influence](#). Hailok'hong (Haklau) is spoken down the coast south of the Teochew zone between the Teochew area and Hong Kong.

Hailufeng is [widely spoken](#) in Vietnam. Intelligibility data is not available.

Many insist that Hailufeng Min is a Teochew language because this area was redistricted into the Teochew area administratively in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Chinese people are jealously loyal to their home districts and see all languages spoken in their district in geographical and not linguistic terms. So to admit that Hailufeng Min is not Teochew would be a sort of treason to the homeland if you will (Kirinputra 2014).

The area where the language is spoken along the coast of Guangdong is actually to the south of the Teochew area.

Hailufeng Min is halfway between Teochew and Zhangzhou.

Hailok'hong or Haklou etymologically is Haihong + Lok'hong, which is the same thing Haifeng + Lufeng, so it is a combination of Haifeng and Lufeng. Haklau is also cognate with Hokkien *Holo* and Cantonese *Hoklo*, referring either to Taiwanese Hokkien or Teochew. In an overall sense, it meant Hokkien + Teochew, which is a good description of the language (Kirinputra 2014).

Hailufeng Min is still confused a lot with Hokkien in many casual descriptions. Many Hailufeng Min speakers can now understand Teochew, but that is due to bilingual learning (Kirinputra 2014). Although this is often said to be a Teochew language, Teochew speakers say they have a [hard time](#) understanding it.

Hailufeng is not intelligible with Hokkien, though it is fairly close to it. Hailufeng has 70% [intelligibility](#) of Hokkien.

Hailufeng Min is usually better known as Hailok'hong or Haklou Min. It

has at least three dialects, Haifeng, Lufeng, and Shanwei and has [limited intelligibility](#) of Teochew proper. Hailufeng is the most widely spoken language in Shanwei Prefectural City on the coast of Guangdong to the west of Teochew-speaking Jieyang Prefectural City and east of Cantonese and Hakka-speaking Huizhou Prefectural City. Haifeng and Lufeng are spoken in Central Shanwei in Lufeng city and Haifeng County. Luhe County in the north of Shanwei is Hakka-speaking.

Intelligibility among the three main Hailufeng Min dialects is full. Intelligibility data for the Tanka Hailufeng varieties and for Vietnamese Hailufeng is not available.

*Haifeng* is spoken in Haifeng County. The city of Haifeng has mostly Hailufeng speakers.

*Hong Kong Tanka or Hoklau* is spoken by a group of Hailufeng Min speakers who moved south from the Shanwei area to Hong Kong where they are now living in Hong Kong as part of the Tanka fisherpeople community. They live in the northern part of Hong Kong north of the Hokkien-speaking Tankas. In 1921, reports said that Hailufeng was [one of the three](#) major languages of Hong Kong, the other two being Cantonese and Hakka. All three were described as very different from each other. Reports further noted that Hong Kong Hailufeng was divided into a number of dialects which [differed considerably](#) from each other.

*Lufeng* is spoken in the western half of Lufeng City.

*Shanwei* is spoken more in Cheng or Chengku County, which is the urban area of Shanwei Prefectural City.

[Shanwei Tanka](#) is a Tanka variety spoken by Tanka fisherpeople in Shanwei itself. It resembles Shanwei, but much of the vocabulary is different.

### **Classification**

Haifeng, Hong Kong Tanka, Lufeng, Shanwei, and Shanwei Tanka are all members of Hailufeng Min, a single language which has five dialects.

There are 3 million speakers of Hailufeng Min.

## **Southern Min: Chaoshan Min or Teochew**





*The route taken by Proto-Putian speakers south to the Chaozhou area around 1000 when they fled due to Mongol invasions. Note that Zhangzhou, Xiamen, and Quanzhou are midway between Putian in the north and Chaozhou in the south. Fuzhou is where Eastern Min is spoken, so Putian is halfway between the Eastern Min area and the main Hokkien area. Shanwei is the Hailufeng Min zone south of the Teochew area.*

*Chaoshan Min* or *Teochew* is a group of Southern Min languages spoken in a nine-county region of Guangdong. It is also spoken a lot in Thailand. Most Overseas Chinese in Thailand speak Teochew. The Mandarin name for the language is Chaozhou, but Teochew speakers do not accept that appellation and prefer Teochew instead.

Teochew was formed by Proto-Putian Min speakers who left the Putian Min area fleeing Mongol invasions and moved south to the Teochew area in the 1200's during the Southern Song Dynasty. Proto-Putian was a split from Proto-Quanzhou. One branch went to Proto-Putian, and the other went to Nan'an-Quanzhou. Proto-Putian went to

Teochew and Puxian Min, and Nan'an-Quanzhou went to Quanzhou Min.

Putian County was a part of Quanzhou before 1000 before a separate Xinghua Military Prefectural was carved out for it in 979 in the Northern Song Dynasty. In other words, the Emperor established a military base in Putian at this time. Putian was chosen because it was close to Quanzhou, which was the largest port in China at the time.

The Putian area became a warzone when Mongols invaded Southern China during the Song Dynasty, and many Putian speakers fled south, probably on boats, past the Quanzhou-Xiamen-Zhangzhou area to the Han River Basin where Chaozhou, Shantou and Jieyang are situated. A group from Zhangzhou joined the Putian speakers because Zhangzhou is close to the Teochew area.

After hundreds of years in the Teochew area, Zhangzhou, She, and a heavy dose of some unknown substrate languages went into the language, possibly including a Cantonese-type dialect, producing modern Teochew (Kirinputra 2014).

[Sources report](#) that Teochew varieties can vary greatly in the [pronunciation](#) of even single words, and the tones can be [quite different](#) too.

Teochew has only [51% intelligibility](#) with Xiamen (Cheng 1997).

**Chaozhou Teochew** is the basis for Standard Teochew. This was formerly known as the Fucheng language.

*Chao'an Teochew* is a Teochew variety that has been heavily influenced by Hokkien such that there is a controversy about whether to put it in Teochew or Hokkien. It seems best to put it in Teochew for now.

**Chaoyang Teochew** is a highly divergent Teochew variety. The other Teochew varieties [cannot understand](#) Chaoyang.

*Chenghai Teochew* is spoken in the city of Chenghai, now the site of an international airport.

[Hong Kong Teochew](#) is spoken in Hong Kong. This variety is heavily influenced by Cantonese. Intelligibility data is not available.

*Huilai Teochew* is spoken in the city of Huilai.

*Jiexi Teochew* is spoken in the city of Jiexi.

*Jieyang Teochew* is utterly intelligible with Hokkien (Kirinputra 2014). Jieyang is spoken in the city of Jieyang.

*Puning Teochew* is spoken in the city of Puning.

*Raoping Teochew* is spoken in the city of Raoping in the far north of the Teochew area.

**Shantou or Swatow Teochew** speakers cannot understand Chaozhou, as Shantou is quite a bit different from the other Teochew varieties, and they also seem to have a hard time understanding other Teochew varieties, as they say the Teochew changes every hour or so as you travel and becomes difficult to understand. Shantou Teochew is a separate Teochew language.

Raoping, Jieyang and Shantou are spoken outside of the Chaoyang-speaking area which hugs the coastline southwest of the Shantou area (Kirinputra 2014), which may explain why they have a hard time understanding Chaoyang. Shantou is more intelligible with Hokkien than other types of Teochew, but intelligibility is still only 54%.

## **Overseas**

*Overseas Teochew* is a significant branch of Teochew that is spoken outside of the Teochew area in China in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Overseas Teochew is an extremely variable macrolanguage consisting of a number of different languages.

## **Malayland**

*Malayland Teochew* is spoken in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. Malayland Teochew, instead of being a language, is a macrolanguage composed of several languages.

## **Malaysia**

*Johor Bahru Teochew* is spoken in the state of Johor at the far southern tip of peninsular Malaysia. Speakers mostly came from Shantou like Singaporean Teochew speakers.

*Kedah Teochew* is spoken in the city of Kedah.

**Malay Teochew**, the Teochew variant spoken in Malaysia, is composed of many highly variant varieties. A different Teochew

variety is spoken in each subregion, and varieties [sometimes differ dramatically](#) in pronunciation and tones. Whether they are mutually intelligible is not known. Malay Teochew is [not intelligible](#) with Thai Teochew. It has come under heavy influence of Hokkien and to a lesser extent Cantonese and Mandarin.

Malay Teochew is spoken in [four different places](#) on the Malay Peninsula. It is spoken in [two places](#) at the southern tip of the peninsula in Johor Bahru and in Pontian, Muar, and Batu Pahat along the coast of Western Johor. In the north, it is spoken in Kedah and North Perak on the far northwestern coast where there are substantial Teochew populations. There are also speakers in Malaka, Iopoh, and Selangor, particularly in Sabak Berlam. Malay Teochew is not intelligible with other SE Asian Teochew languages. Malay Teochew has converged more with Hokkien than other types of Teochew.

*Miri Teochew* is spoken in Miri in Sarawak.

[North Perak Teochew](#) is spoken in the northern part of Perak in peninsular Malaysia.

[Penang Teochew](#) is spoken in the state of Penang in peninsular Malaysia. It is intelligible with Kuching Teochew spoken in Kuching in Indonesia.

[Western Coastal Johor Teochew](#) is spoken on the west coast of Johor state in far southern peninsular Malaysia.

There are 800,000 Teochew speakers in Malaysia.

## **Singapore**

[Singapore Teochew](#) is different from Malay Teochew, and both have undergone separate divergent influences, so [each one](#) should be regarded as a separate language. Furthermore, Singapore Teochew is a macrolanguage. However, Singapore Teochew is [similar](#) to Shantou because most Singaporean speakers came from there. Singaporean is regarded by Teochew speakers on the mainland as a heavily corrupted and impure variety of Teochew. Singaporean Teochew is not intelligible with any of the Teochew spoken in China anymore, not even the Shantou that it came from.

It has come under such heavy influence from Singaporean Hokkien that it is not better regarded as Singaporean Teochew-Hokkien than a pure Teochew tongue. Many of the original Teochew terms have been

replaced with Hokkien words. It is also now heavily admixed with Malay and a lot of the characteristics of Mainland Teochew have been lost.

There are variations even among Singaporean Teochew. Speakers of some of the coarser, more rural varieties can only understand 50% of the purer varieties. This is derived from the early days when only some of the immigrants from Shantou were educated and most were uneducated peasants. The peasants did not speak the same higher, more refined Shantou than the educated people did.

In time, the differences became more dramatic.

**High Singaporean Teochew** is the more literary and refined Singaporean Teochew, derived from the more educated immigrants to Singapore from the Shantou region. Lo Thia Khiang, the leader of Singapore's Workers Party, speaks High Singaporean Teochew and is poorly understood by speakers of Low Singapore Teochew.

**Low Singaporean Teochew**, is the coarser Singaporean Teochew spoken by the less educated immigrants who came to Singapore from the Shantou region. Low Singaporean can only understand 50% of High Singaporean speech.

There are 500,000 Teochew speakers in Singapore.

## Indonesia

*Indonesian Teochew* is composed of a number of different varieties spoken in various places in Indonesia such as Bantam Island, Dabo Singrep, Jambi, Kuching, Medan, Pontianak, Riau, Siantan, Singkawang, and Tanjung Penang.

*Kuching Teochew*, spoken in Kuching, Borneo, is [intelligible with](#) Penang Teochew spoken in Malaysia.

[Khuntien Teochew](#) is [based](#) on Chenghai Teochew. It is still very widely spoken in Pontianak, Indonesia, the capital of West Kalimantan Province. Khuntien tones are [flatter](#) than the higher and lower tones in China and elsewhere in Indonesia. Khutien has come under [heavy influence](#) of the Pontianak Malay language, which may have caused the tone flattening. The Teochew spoken nearby in Siantan and Singkawang is probably similar to Khutien. Khutien is [heavily mixed](#) with Indonesian. Khuntien speakers [no longer understand](#) Chinese Teochew well.

Jambi Teochew is a widely spoken dialect of Teochew spoken in Jambi City, Sumatra. It has also retained the higher and lower tones of the main Teochew speaking area. It has been heavily influenced by the the Jambi Malay language in its syntax. Jambi Teochew has been so heavily affected by Jambi Malay that it qualifies as a mixed language.

Medan Teochew, a separate language spoken in Medan, Sumatra, is particularly interesting. It has heavy Malay, Hokkien and Cantonese influence and cannot be understood by other Teochew speakers (Kirinputra 2014). The town of Brahing 12 miles from Medan speaks this type of Teochew.

Riau Teochew is spoken in Riau, Sumatra. It still has the higher and lower tones that are used in the Teochew region in China.

There are 3 million Teochew speakers in Indonesia.

## **Indochina**

Indochinese Teochew, the Teochew spoken in Indochina in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos is a macrolanguage. It is not intelligible with the Teochew in China, nor is it even intelligible within itself. Some Indochinese Teochew speakers who have returned to their family villages on the mainland say they could only understand 70% of the speech there.

## **Cambodia**

**Cambodian Teochew** is not intelligible with other Vietnamese or Thai Teochew (Tek 2016). Most Chinese in Cambodia are Teochew speakers. Cambodian Teochew is based on Jieyang and is full of Khmer borrowings.

## **Laos**

Laotian Teochew, spoken by 20,000 Teochew in Ventiane, Laos, is currently dying out and has only elderly speakers. It is about as different from Vietnamese and Cambodian Teochew as they are from each other, hence it is a separate language. Lao Teochew is full of Lao borrowings.

## Thailand

**Thailand Teochew or Diojiu-we** is spoken in Thailand and is not intelligible with Cambodian Teochew (Tek 2016). The Chinese lingua franca in Thailand is not Mandarin but Teochew. There are five million Chinese Thais with roots in the Teochew region, and three million of them speak Diojiuwe. It may also be based on Jieyang. Thai Teochew is full of Thai borrowings.

## Vietnam

**Vietnamese Teochew** is not intelligible with Cambodian Teochew (Tek 2016). It is full of Vietnamese borrowings.

## North America

**American Teochew** is spoken in the US and to a lesser extent in Canada. There are quite a few Teochew speakers in San Francisco, California. American Teochew speakers no longer understand much of the speech of Chinese Teochew speakers. They can understand some speakers but not others. In particular they can no longer understand the fast speech used on Teochew TV or in Teochew rap songs.

## Classification

Cambodian, Chao'an, Chaozhou, Chenghai, High Singapore, Jieyang or Kek'io<sup>n</sup>, Low Singapore, Nan'ao, Pouleng, Raoping, Shantou, Singapore, and Thai are all part of the Chaozhou Group of Teochew, which has 13 varieties.

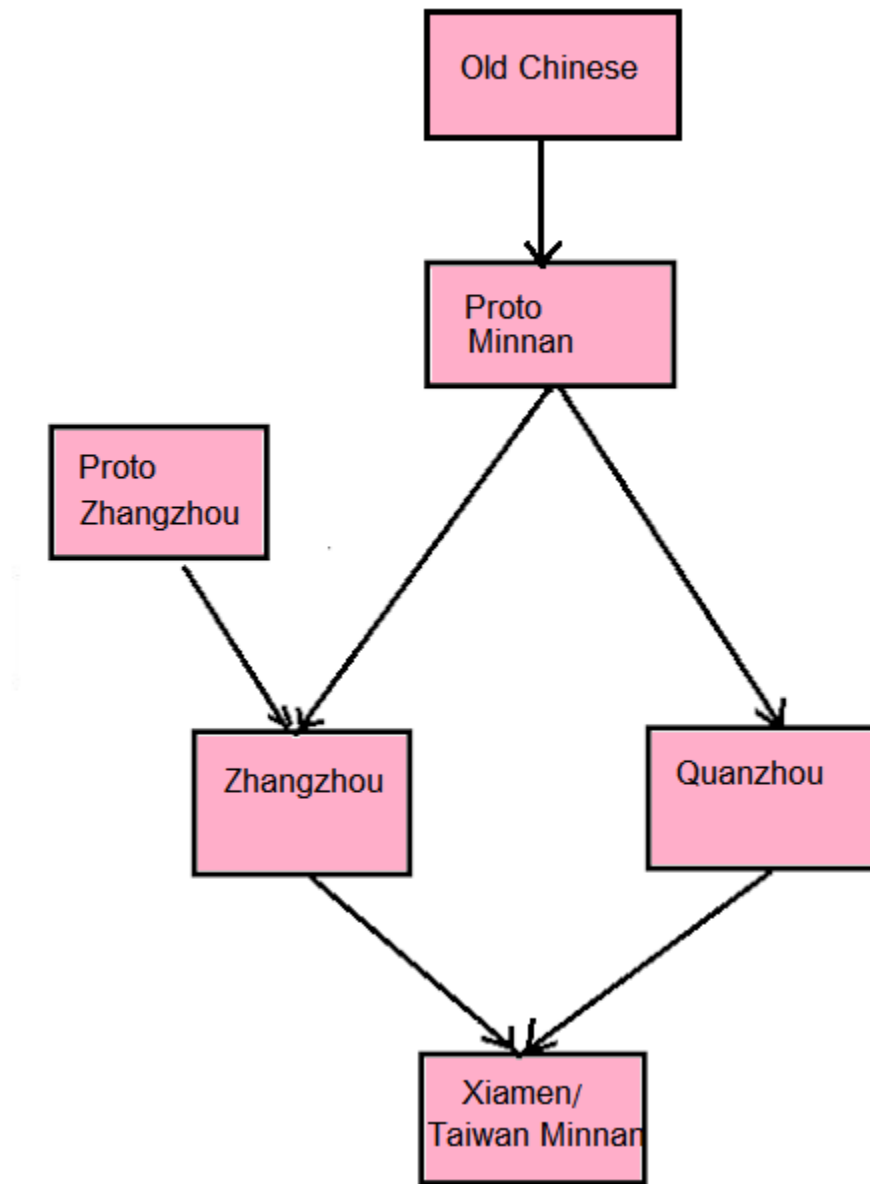
Chaoyang, Huilai, Indonesian, Jambi, Khuntien, Kuching, Puning, and Riau are part of the Chaopu Group of Teochew, which has eight varieties.

American, Coastal West Johor, Dabu, Fengshun, Hong Kong, Huidong, Jiexi, Johor Bahru, Kedah, Laotian, Malay, Medan, Miri, North Perak, Penang, and Vietnamese are unclassified. 16 Teochew varieties are unclassified.

Teochew has 38 varieties, 12 of which are separate languages.

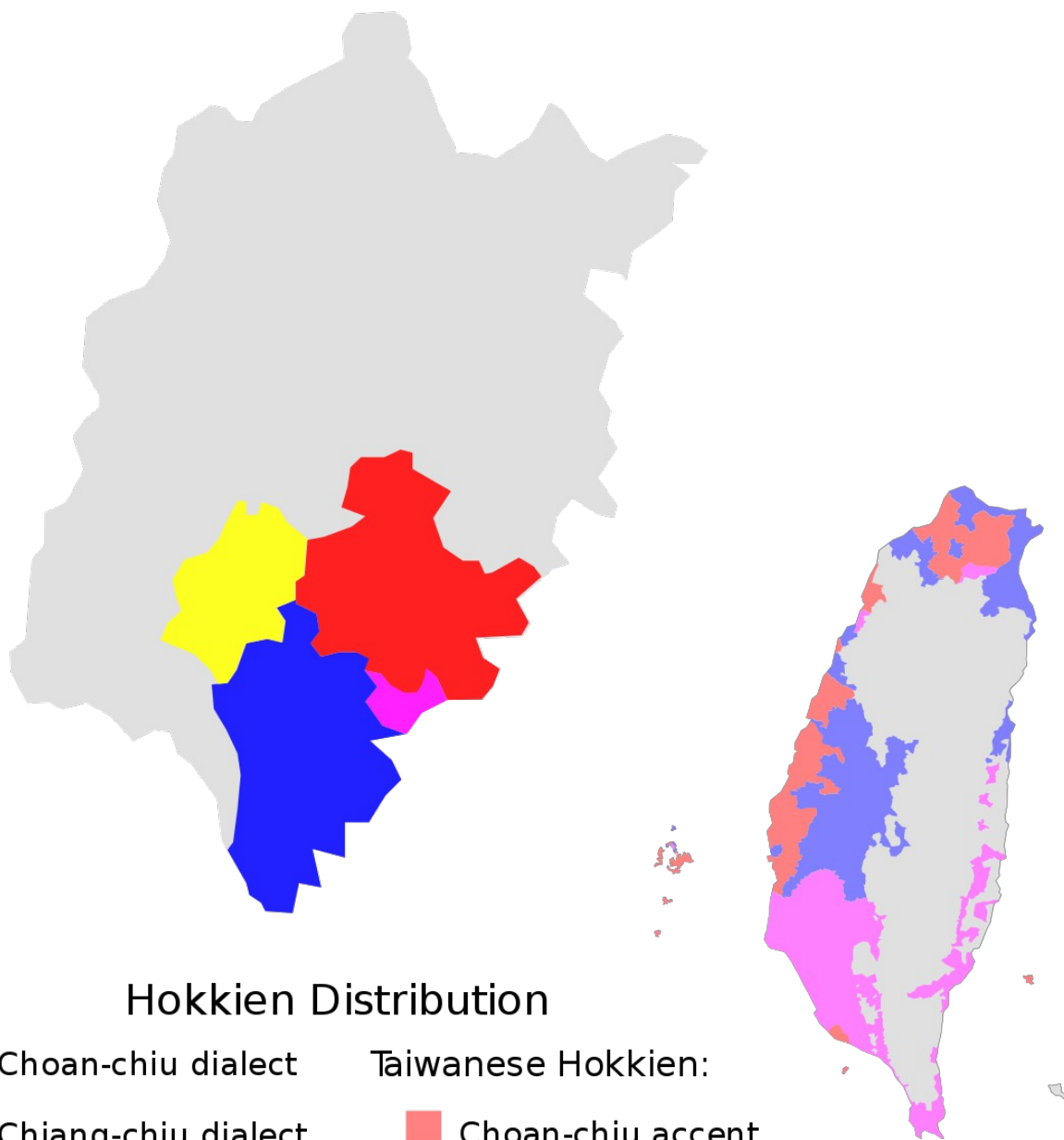
The Teochew languages have 10 million speakers.

## Southern Min: Hokkien



*The creation of the Quanzhang or Hokkien language.*





## Hokkien Distribution

<span style="color: red;">■</span> Choan-chiu dialect	Taiwanese Hokkien:
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Chiang-chiu dialect	<span style="color: lightcoral;">■</span> Choan-chiu accent
<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Amoy dialect	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Chiang-chiu accent
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Leng-na dialect	<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Mixture accent

*Map of Hokkien and Longyan Min. Hokkien is in red, blue, and pink. Quanzhou is in red. Zhangzhou is in blue. Amoy is in pink. Longyan Min, actually a separate branch of Min outside of Southern Min altogether according to our classification, is in yellow.*

*Min Nan, Hokkien, Hoklo or Banlamese* is the principal split in Southern Min. In fact, Hokkien is often considered to be synonymous with Southern Min and Min Nan. Hokkien is not a single language. In fact, it is a group of languages with many dialects among them.

Hokkien was formed first by the creation of Quanzhou and then the splitting off of Zhangzhou which was formed starting in 750 after it was split off from Quanzhou Prefecture. These two developed independently until the establishment of a military base in Xiamen in 1650, when migrants from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou began to mix in Xiamen. The result was the Quanzhang language with its Xiamen and Taiwanese dialects, now better known as Standard Hokkien.

**Xiamen Hokkien** is the standard version of Hokkien. It is spoken in the city of Xiamen, sometimes called by its old name, Amoy. Amoy and Taiwanese are dialects of Xiamen. They are really the same language, as Taiwanese is an Amoy dialect.

A better name for Xiamen according to the Chinese literature is *Quanzhang* (Campbell 2009). This would actually be a macrolanguage. Quanzhang is a combination of Quanzhou Hokkien and Zhangzhou Hokkien, the two closely related languages that combined together to create a single language called Amoy or Xiamen. Xiamen has only 51% intelligibility with Teochew (Cheng 1997).

The differences between Xiamen dialects are small. The differences between Xiamen and Taiwanese Hokkien are less than the differences between Xiamen and Quanzhou Hokkien, and those two have 89% intelligibility.

*Amoy*, the dialect spoken in Amoy city in China, is identical to certain Taiwanese Hokkien dialects (Kirinputra 2014).

Amoy was created when Xiamen became an important port city during the Southern Ming Dynasty in 1650 when Ming General Zheng Cheng Gong established a military base there. Over time, many migrant workers from Quanzhou and Zhangzhou moved to Xiamen due to its central location between the two cities and due to its status as an international port during the Southern Ming and Qing Dynasties. The intermixing of Quanzhou Hokkien and Zhangzhou Hokkien speakers created a new language that was a mix of the two Hokkien tongues. It is intelligible with Taiwanese Hokkien, as the differences between

the two are minor, [akin to British and American English](#). There have only been 120 years of separation between Amoy and Taiwanese Hokkien. Most of the differences are in modern and local vocabulary. Taiwanese Hokkien and Amoy tones are identical.

Amoy and Quanzhou Hokkien are no longer fully intelligible with each other due to lack of a standard and the dialectal variations in each. However, Quanzhou Hokkien speakers understand Xiamen much better than they understand Zhangzhou Hokkien because Xiamen is half Quanzhou Hokkien. Also Amoy is closer to Quanzhou Hokkien than it is to Zhangzhou Hokkien, whereas Taiwanese Hokkien is a pure 50/50 mix between the two. In addition, Amoy has developed more modern meanings for certain words, while Quanzhou Hokkien retains more of the older meanings for the same terms.

Zhangzhou Hokkien and Amoy are not fully intelligible anymore either. 50% of the residents of Amoy now are from other parts of China. In recent years, [many Mandarin loans](#) have gone into Amoy, replacing a lot of the original vocabulary.

Many Xiamen residents no longer speak Xiamen. ~30% of the population speaks good Xiamen. The rest either do not speak it at all or speak a broken version of it. Many Xiamen-speaking parents are raising their children in Mandarin and refusing to speak to them in Xiamen. In the region, all government workers under age 50 are forbidden from speaking Xiamen on the job as part of the Mandarin-only policy. Many Xiamen speakers feel that Xiamen is an inferior language and there is a lot of shame involved in speaking it.

Xiamen is not easily understood by speakers of Malayland Hokkien. There are cases of Malayland Hokkien speakers who have been living in Xiamen for six years who still do not understand it well.

[Jinmen or Kinmen](#) is a dialect of Amoy spoken on Jinmen Island only two miles off the coast of Amoy. It has good intelligibility with Taiwanese Hokkien.

*Map of Hokkien accents in Taiwan: Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, and mixed.*

Amoy has [1.5 million speakers](#) in Amoy and Jinmen.

*Taiwanese Hokkien* is the Xiamen variant very widely spoken in Taiwan by ~70% of the population. It is very close to Amoy is completely intelligible with it. Taiwanese tones are exactly the same as Xiamen tones.

However, it is in trouble, as fewer young people speak it anymore. 20 years ago in Đàoviên, Taiwan, it was [common](#) to hear young women in their late teens and twenties speaking Hokkien, but now it is uncommon (Kirinputra 2014).

The variations in the dialects below, especially those spoken in Taipei, are more common with the older generation. The Taiwanese of the young generation speak either the mixed Zhangzhou-leaning "Southern" style favored in the media, or they do not speak any Hokkien at all.

*Gaoxiong* is a Taiwanese dialect that is similar to Tainan. It is spoken in the city of Gaoxiong. Gaoxiong is one of the prestige dialects of Taiwanese.

*Lugang* is a Taiwanese dialect that is very different but is intelligible with Standard Taiwanese (Campbell 2009).

*Sulim (Shilin)*, the Taiwanese dialect spoken in Sulim in Taipei, heavily favored Zhangzhou Hokkien in the past. Other districts in Taipei spoke a Tong'an Hokkien-type dialect, which is just Quanzhou Hokkien mixed with Amoy.

*Taichung* is a dialect of Taiwanese spoken in the city of that name.

*Taipei* is considered to be a Taiwanese standard along with Tainan. Standard Taiwanese is often called [Longhai Hokkien](#), as it is quite similar to the Zhangzhou Hokkien spoken in that city. The situation regarding Taipei in the past was [interesting](#). The dialects of the city were a mix of Zhangzhou Hokkien and Quanzhou Hokkien.

*Taipei City*, the dialect of the center of the city, was mixed between the two, with a slight Quanzhou Hokkien lean to it. Actually, it was [nearly the same](#) as Xiamen.

*Tainan* is a Taiwanese dialect spoken in the city of Tainan. This is a

Zhangzhou dialect. Speakers hearing Taipei have [some communication problems](#), but it appears that they are still intelligible with each other (Campbell 2009). Tainan is one of the the prestige dialects of Taiwanese.

*Yilan* a Taiwanese dialect that is so different that it alone posed serious problems for the task of standardizing Taiwanese, yet it is intelligible with Standard Taiwanese (Campbell 2009). Yilan is a city in Taiwan.



*Map showing the Jin and Jiulong Rivers in Fujian. Proto-Min Nan and later Quanzhou developed along the Jin River where immigrants came in 300 in the Jin Dynasty fleeing Mongol invasions. 350 years later, more immigrants from Henan came to the Jiulong River area. They were fleeing south due to the Invasion of the Five Barbarians. The Zhangzhou language developed from these people.*

**Literary Hokkien** is based on court language taught in schools during the Tang Dynasty in the 600's. It is dramatically different from the rest of Hokkien such that it is hard to see how a speaker of Hokkien Proper could understand it. Its differences between both Quanzhou Hokkien and Zhangzhou Hokkien are dramatic and hence it is best seen as a separate language.

**Quanzhou or Coânciu Hokkien**, a separate language, is one of the main splits in Hokkien. Quanzhou dialects are spoken in Quanzhou Prefectural City in Fujian.

During the Tang Dynasty, there were two main settlements in Quanzhou Prefecture along the Jin and Mulan Rivers. This is where Proto-Min Nan was birthed from the Old Chinese spoken by settlers fleeing south to escape invasions during the Jin Dynasty. Quanzhou speakers were the earliest Min Nan speakers in the region, arriving around 300.

The settlers along the Jin River spoke Proto-Nan'an Min, and those in the Mulan River Basin spoken Proto-Putian Min, which later developed into Puxian Min up north around Putian City. These Putian speakers had migrated to Quanzhou to escape Mongol invaders. The two areas were part of Nan'an County around Quanzhou City, which was the cultural and linguistic center for Quanzhou speakers. It was via the mixing of Proto-Putian and Proto-Nan'an that Quanzhou was created.

Quanzhou was an important port along the Maritime Silk Road during the Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasties. Many European traders visited the port.

There are at least 16 dialects within Quanzhou, including Anhai, Anxi, [Dehua](#), Guanku, Hui'an, Jimei, [Jinjiang](#), *Longmen*, Nan'an, *Quangang*, Shishi, Shuishang, Tong'an, Woshan, Xiang'an, and Yongchun.

*Anhai* is a dialect of Jinjiang spoken in the township of Anhai in the city of Jinjiang. There are [Anhai dialect associations](#) in Hong Kong.

*Anxi* is a Quanzhou dialect spoken in Anxi County in Southwestern Quanzhou. There are [Anxi dialect associations](#) in Hong Kong and even worldwide.

*Dehua* is a Quanzhou dialect spoken in the far north of Quanzhou.

*Hui'an* is a Quanzhou dialect spoken in Hui'an County on the northern

coast of Quanzhou. The women of this town are famous for their elaborate clothing styles.

*Jinjiang* is a Quanzhou dialect spoken in the city of Jinjiang on the southern coast of Quanzhou. Jinjiang has [dialect associations](#) in Hong Kong and even worldwide.

*Nan'an* is a Quanzhou dialect spoke in the city of Nan'an in Central Quanzhou.

*Shishi* is a Quanzhou dialect spoken in the city of Shishi on the coast.

*Shuishang Tanka* is a Quanzhou dialect spoken by a a group of Hokkien speakers among the Tanka fisherpeople located to the north of the Four Counties area in Hong Kong. They speak a language that resembles Anxi. They communicate well with speakers from the Hokkien homeland, so it looks like their language has not changed much. Most of them arrived in Hong Kong from the main Hokkien-speaking region in the 1930's and 1940's, so their language has not changed much.

*Yongchun* is a Quanzhou dialect that has [dialect associations](#) in Hong Kong.

All Quanzhou dialects are mutually intelligible.

[Tong'an](#) is said to be a dialect of Amoy, but the truth is that it is in between Amoy and Quanzhou. The differences between Tong'an and Amoy are large. Tong'an is spoken in the city of that name. Tong'an varieties are also spoken in Malaysia and Indonesia, especially the Bagan Hokkien variety in Indonesia. Tong'an speakers in Indonesia cannot understand Amoy or Quanzhou. Tong'an actually has a number of dialects inside of it. Xiamen and Jinmen were originally Tong'an dialects, but they split away.

Whether Tong'an is a Quanzhou language or an Amoy language is hard to determine, but the best analysis is that it is Quanzhou with a minor Amoy mixture.

[Guankou](#) is a Tong'an dialect spoken in the northwest of Tong'an.

*Jimei* is sometimes seen as a Zhangzhou Hokkien dialect, but it is better viewed as a Tong'an dialect.

[Woshan](#) is another Tong'an dialect.

*Xiang'an*, sometimes considered to be a Zhangzhou Hokkien dialect, is



probably better seen as a Tong'an dialect.

Taiwanese speakers [can no longer understand](#) the pure Quanzhou spoken in the Chinese city of that name (Kirinputra 2014), and some Quanzhou speakers say they cannot understand Taiwanese either.

Nevertheless, Taiwanese has 80% intelligibility of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou Hokkien. After all, Taiwanese itself is just a mixture between Zhangzhou Hokkien and Quanzhou.

Quanzhou has [6.5 million speakers](#).

**Zhangzhou or Ciangciu Hokkien**, actually a macrolanguage, is a principal split in Hokkien. Zhangzhou is derived from a type of Old Chinese spoken by immigrants who moved into the region from Henan in the Tang Dynasty before Middle Chinese became widely spoken in Henan. Zhangzhou speakers arrived to the Min Nan area around 650, or 350 years later than the Quanzhou speakers.

They settled first in Zhangpu in the Zhang River Basin. Lonqui, which lies along the Jiulong River Basin was transferred from Quanzhou Prefecture to Zhangzhou Prefecture in the 700's. It is here where Zhangzhou was formed via a mix of Proto-Zhangzhou and the Proto-Min Nan spoken in Quanzhou. At the end of the Tang Dynasty, Zhangzhou developed into two main varieties – Lonqui and Zhangpu. Lonqui became the prestige dialect, as it was the seat of Zhangzhou Prefecture.

Although Zhangzhou is a younger variety of Hokkien than Quanzhou, it seems older, as it preserves more archaic features. Other varieties of Hokkien in general do not have full intelligibility of Zhangzhou anymore. The dialect of the city is more intelligible to other Hokkien speakers, but the dialects in the villages around Zhangzhou are harder to understand. It is spoken in Zhangzhou Prefectural City in Fujian. The language of the city itself is changing as many speakers of rural Zhangzhou varieties have been moving into the city, and their varieties have been mixing with city speech.

There are differences within Zhangzhou, and it has at least 12 varieties, two of which are separate languages.

*Changtai*, Dongfu, Dongshan, Longhai, *Haicang*, *Hua'an*, *Jingcheng*, *Nanjing*, *Pinghe*, Yunxiao, Zhangpu, and Zhao'an are all varieties of Zhangzhou, spoken in the vicinity of the city.

Dongshan, Zhao'an, and Yunxiao are all spoken in Southern Zhangzhou on the border of the Teochew region. They have been strongly affected by Teochew such that there is controversy over whether they are Teochew or Hokkien.

*Dongshan* is a Zhangzhou dialect that has been so strongly affected by Teochew that there is debate about whether it is Hokkien or Teochew. It has changed  $n \rightarrow ng$  and  $t \rightarrow k$  as in Teochew.

*Dongfu* is a dialect of Longhai.

*Longhai* is a Zhangzhou dialect that is very similar to the standard. There are [Longhai dialect associations](#) in Hong Kong.

**Yunxiao Hokkien** is a separate language. It is [not intelligible](#) to Zhao'an speakers. It has changed  $n \rightarrow ng$  and  $t \rightarrow k$  as in Teochew.

*Zhangpu* is a Zhangzhou dialect that is somewhat different. Quanzhou speakers have much better intelligibility of Standard Zhangzhou than they do of Zhangpu.

**Zhao'an Hokkien** is a separate language. It is very different from the rest of Zhangzhou and speakers [cannot understand](#) other Zhangzhou varieties, even the closely related Yunxiao. Zhao'an resembles Teochew more than Yunxiao or Dongshan, as it has an *ir* vowel.

Zhangzhou has four million speakers.

Zhangzhou and Quanzhou are [not fully intelligible](#) with each other in China, and both have [marginal intelligibility](#) with Teochew (Kirinputra 2014). The differences between Zhangzhou and Quanzhou are significant. When Zhangzhou and Quanzhou speakers talk, they often use Mandarin to avoid confusion.

There are cases of Quanzhou speakers who moved to Zhangzhou and vice versa who got so confused by the differences that they stopped speaking both languages. There are South Malayland Hokkien speakers who have been listening to both Zhangzhou and Quanzhou for years and still find both of them quite hard to understand.

*Diaspora, Nusantara, or Overseas Hokkien* is made up of all Hokkien spoken outside of China.

It is a language [in trouble](#), as young people everywhere in the diaspora switch to Mandarin, and many children are not learning Hokkien. Technically, Taiwanese is included in Overseas Hokkien, but

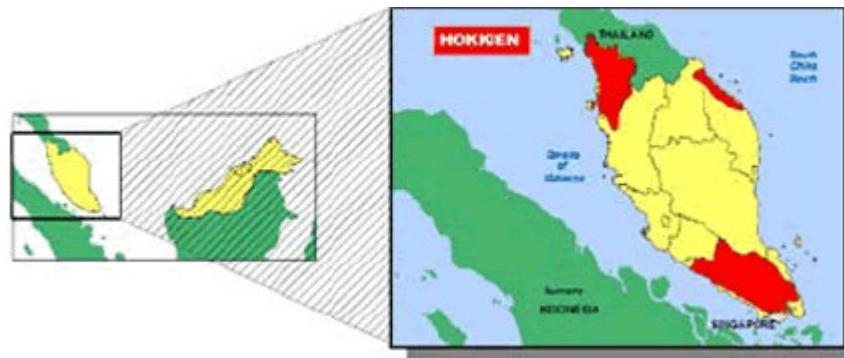
since it is merely a dialect of Amoy, we put it under Amoy instead.

50 years ago, we could learn interesting things about Overseas Hokkien forms spoken in Jakarta, Yangoon, Bandung, Phuket, Trang, Cebu, and possibly Palembang and Surabaya. Now Hokkien may be extinct in Yangoon and Surabaya and is in trouble in Phuket, Bandung and Cebu (Kirinputra 2014).

Overseas Hokkien could be seen as being composed of [two main groups](#) (Kirinputra 2014).

The first group, called [Eastern Hokkien](#), is in the north and is spoken in Taiwan and the Philippines (Kirinputra 2014).

The second group, which we shall call [Malayland Hokkien](#) for lack of a better term, is spoken in Malaysia and in Indonesia in Sumatra and Kalimantan. Malayland is heavily laced with Teochew (Kirinputra 2014).



*Hokkien in Malaysia. Northern Malayland (Penang) Hokkien is spoken in the north, and Southern Malayland Hokkien (Singaporean, Klang or Medan) is spoken in the South.*

Malayland is split into two languages, Southern Malayland Hokkien and Northern Malayland Hokkien.

**[Northern Malayland Hokkien](#)** was formerly spoken in Northern Malaysia from Taiping along the coast formerly all the way to Phuket, Thailand but is now spoken for the most part only to Penang and over to Terangganu in Malaysia and in Medan and other places in Northern Sumatra in Indonesia (Kirinputra 2014). It is spoken in Kedah, Penang, Terranganu, Medan, and Perak in Malaysia and in a few

places in Thailand and Burma, where it is dying out.

Northern Malayland is based on Zhangzhou with some Amoy mixed in, but for formal speech, Xiamen is still used. Northern Malayland is [still spoken](#) up into Thailand towards Phuket and in the Burmese Panhandle all the way to Rangoon, however the language is dying out badly in the region. Northern Malayland is still spoken in Surat Thani on the east side of the peninsula in Thailand by a few older speakers. On the Phuket side of the peninsula facing the Indian Ocean, it has been decimated.

Hokkien is still widely spoken on the Thai border with Malaysia in Bukit Kayu Hitam and Sadao. The Hokkien here seems to be a mixture of Northern Malayland and Southern Malayland Hokkien.

The language is also referred to as [Penang Hokkien](#) or [Medan Hokkien](#), after the [very similar](#) dialects spoken in those cities.

Penang sounds a lot like the Longhai dialect of Zhangzhou, in particular the Haikang dialect spoken in the city of Haikang, but it is [no longer intelligible](#) with the Haikang from which it is derived because Haikang still uses a lot of older Zhangzhou words that have fallen out of Penang. Penang intelligibility of Zhangzhou proper is [close to zero](#). Also Penang is full of Malay loans that Haikang speakers [cannot understand](#). Penang speakers have only [70% intelligibility](#) of Amoy, and they [cannot understand](#) Taiwanese at all.

Speakers of Northern Malayland have a [hard time understanding](#) the Southern Malayland Hokkien spoken in Klang and Malacca (Kirinputra 2014). Southern Malayland Hokkien speakers in general say they cannot understand Penang.

Northern Malayland is more of a [Zhangzhou variety](#) in terms of its accent. It is also heavily creolized, with a lot of Malay and Thai embedded deeply in the language. The differences between the two Malayland Hokkien languages are [as great as between Hokkien and Teochew](#). Intelligibility between the two may be as low as 50%.

*Baba* is a heavily-creolized dialect spoken on Penang Island. It is widely spoken.

[Burmese Hokkien](#) looks very much like Penang because many speakers came from Penang to Rangoon. Speakers are [mostly elderly](#), and the language is dying out.

*Butterworth*, spoken in Butterworth just across the strait from Penang Island, actually has significant differences in tones with Penang Island Hokkien.

*Lower Perak* is spoken in the southern regions of Perak state in Malaysia.

*Penang Island* is the name for the dialect spoken on the island. It is broken into two subvarieties. Hokkien is still very widely spoken in Penang, and it is possible to go through your entire day speaking nothing but Hokkien.

*Sin Khek* is a more pure dialect spoken on Penang Island.

*Terangganu* spoken in northeastern peninsular Malaysia is [different](#) from the Penang standard.

Northern Malayland Hokkien still has [1.5 million speakers](#).

**Kelantan, Kelantanese or Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien** is spoken in the Malay state of Kelantan. It is wildly creolized with Malay and is probably not intelligible with any other form of Hokkien.

Kelantanese is still [widely spoken](#). Other than the vast amount of loans, it looks a lot like Penang. Speakers in Kelantan, Kuching and Penang came to Southeast Asia much sooner than the Southern Malayland Hokkien speakers. Perhaps this is why Penang-type variants are so heavily-creolized – they have simply been in the area much longer, so they had much more time to accumulate Malay loans.

Nevertheless the Hokkien variety situation in Kelantan is poorly understood, and there are said to be two different types of Hokkien spoken in this area, *Kelantan A* and *Kelantan B* (Kiriputra 2014).

The variety of Hokkien spoken in Kuching, Sarawak, *Kuching*, is also very different and resembles Kelantan.

**[Southern Malayland Hokkien](#)** encompasses Southern Malaysia from Johor up to Kelantan in the cities of Selangor, Klang, Malacca, Muar, Tangkak, Segamat, Batu Pahat, Pontian, Singapore, Riau, the Riau Islands, and Johor Bahru.

In Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Southern Malayland Hokkien and Northern Malayland mix, and it is difficult to say which language is being spoken here, but Kuala Lumpur Hokkien and Malaccan Hokkien are best put into Southern Malayland Hokkien.

Speakers in one Indonesian city speak a Jinjiang variety that is close

to the rest of Indonesian Hokkien, but their Jinjiang variety is very different from the Jinjiang spoken in the Philippines. The Jinjiang varieties in both places took independent trajectories. Indonesian Hokkien speakers mix a lot of Indonesian in with their Hokkien.

There are also a few speakers of an Anxi Quanzhou variety all the way up in Penang in the Northern Malayland zone. Northern Malayland speakers find them [hard to understand](#).

There are some speakers of Amoy/Hui'an mixed varieties in Malaysia, but they find most other types of Hokkien hard to understand.

[Southern Malayland](#) is less creolized than Northern Malayland, if it is creolized at all. Southern Malayland is more of a [Xiamen](#) variety, while Northern Malayland is a type of Zhangzhou. Southern Malayland lies between Northern Malayland and Taiwanese on the continuum. Southern Malayland speakers generally cannot understand any other type of Hokkien, although they can apparently understand Philippines Hokkien.

*Bagansiapiapi* or *Bagan* is a [very pure dialect](#) of Southern Malayland Hokkien spoken in Bagansiapiapi in Riau on the east coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. They can understand Medan speakers, but Medan speakers [cannot understand](#) them.

It has avoided the Mandarinization of Hokkien that is occurring elsewhere. It also [lacks influence from Cantonese and Teochew and has fewer loans from Austronesian and English](#) compared to neighboring Southern Malayland or Philippines Hokkien speakers (Kirinputra 2014). They speak a Tong'an variety. Bagan speakers cannot understand Quanzhou or Zhangzhou.

While a relatively pure dialect, younger Bagan speakers mix a lot of Indonesian in with their Bagansiapiapi, while speaking the purer dialect mostly with older people. There are [only a few thousand speakers](#) remaining, and the language seems to be on its way out.

Bagansiapiapi is intelligible with Philippines Hokkien. Much of the good intelligibility between Bagansiapiapi and Taiwanese and Amoy seems to be due to bilingual learning. They understand Taiwanese better than Amoy since Taiwanese speakers speak more slowly than Amoy speakers.

*Bangkok*, the Southern Malayland dialect spoken in Bangkok, [contains](#) Malay loans (Kirinputra 2014). This dialect also seems to be dying



out. This seems to imply a large trading community involving Saigon, Bangkok and Malayland which exchanged words via different speech forms (Kirinputra 2014).

*Klang* is recognized as a specific dialect, and Hokkien is still very widely spoken here.

*Johor* is [family close](#) to Klang. Hokkien is very widely spoken here.

*Muar* is spoken in Muar, Johor. They speak an Anxi variety.

*Indonesian Hokkien* is spoken in [Indonesia](#) in several places.

*Riau*, spoken in the state of Riau, is very close to Singapore Hokkien.

*Saigon*, the [moribund](#) Southern Malayland dialect still spoken by a few people in Saigon, is another very pure type of Hokkien (Kirinputra 2014).

*Selangor*, the variety spoken in Selangor, is best described as a Southern Malayland Hokkien dialect, as they cannot understand Penang well. Hokkien is still very widely spoken in Selangor.

*Singapore Hokkien* is the version of Southern Malayland Hokkien spoken in Singapore and is based on [Amoy](#), and possibly even more on Jinmen, but speakers also came from Tong'an, Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, Anxi, and Hui'an. It is similar to Taiwanese, but Singapore Hokkien speakers [can no longer understand](#) Taiwanese well, though they have partial understanding of it. For instance, they have only [30-40% intelligibility](#) with Yilan Taiwanese Hokkien.

A Singapore Hokkien speaker, if immersed in Taiwan, could pick up Taiwanese fairly quickly, within three months.

Singapore Hokkien has been isolated from Taiwanese for quite some time, so it has retained older features that are losing ground in mainland Hokkien varieties. Word-final unvoiced stops *p*, *t* and *k* and [starting to be lost](#) in Zhangzhou on the mainland and replaced with a glottal stop, whereas in Singapore Hokkien, they are still preserved. Many [Malay, Cantonese and Teochew words](#) have gone into Singapore Hokkien which hinder understanding with Taiwanese speakers.

[Mutual intelligibility](#) between Singapore Hokkien and Hokkien Proper is ~55%. Singapore Hokkien is no longer intelligible with Amoy in China. Nevertheless, Southern Malayland speakers still use Xiamen for formal speech.

Singapore Hokkien speakers, even the older ones, now mix a lot of Mandarin, English, and Malay in with their speech. They have been isolated from the main Hokkien-speaking communities in Amoy and Taiwan for so long that they have lost many of the subtler aspects of the language spoken in these areas. Singapore Hokkien has withered into a weakened and corrupted version of the more pure Hokkien spoken in Taiwan and Fujian. Further, the language has changed a lot since the Singapore Hokkien speakers left the region, and Singapore Hokkien have not kept up with the continuously evolving Hokkien language spoken in the Hokkien homeland.

Singapore Hokkien has also become so heavily admixed with Teochew that it is more properly seen as Hokkien-Teochew than Hokkien Proper.

All dialects of Southern Malayland spoken in Nusantara are mutually intelligible.

**Banlam-ue, Banlamhue, Binamhue, Lanlang-ue, Minnanhua, or Philippines Hokkien** is the version of Southern Malayland spoken in the Philippines. Lanlang-ue means "[our language](#)." Minnanhua is the [name](#) of this language in Mandarin (Kirinputra 2014). It derives from Quanzhou, mostly from the Jinjiang and Sheshi dialects on the outskirts of Quanzhou but also from Nan'an. A Standard Philippines Hokkien has evolved based on a Jinjiang/Amoy mix.

Philippines Hokkien is [not readily intelligible](#) with Standard Hokkien. Speakers came to the Philippines long ago, so their Hokkien contains [many old words](#) that have fallen out of other Hokkien varieties.

At present, it [is not intelligible](#) with Quanzhou or Xiamen. Philippines Hokkien speakers claim that they can only understand about 70% of Taiwanese television. In general, Philippines Hokkien speakers say that speakers of other Hokkien varieties find Philippines Hokkien hard to understand. Singapore Hokkien seems to [lack full intelligibility](#) of Philippines Hokkien, although intelligibility is quite high. It is too much of a pure Quanzhou variety for Singapore Hokkien speakers to understand, as Singapore Hokkien speakers [have a hard time](#) understand pure Quanzhou. In fact, Philippines Hokkien seems to be a near-perfect fossilization of Quanzhou from the late 1800's.

Despite intelligibility issues, Philippines Hokkien and Taiwanese have a [very similar lexicon](#). The lexicons of both are similar to Amoy speech.



Apparently the Amoy-Luzon-Taiwan trade route produced a [convergence](#) in the lexicons of these varieties (Kirinputra 2014). Philippines Hokkien is full of Tagalog words.

Philippines Hokkien is spoken in Manila, Cebu, Zambaonga, Sulu, and Jolo. Cebu and Jolo Islands were part of an important route for smuggling goods into the Philippines for centuries. Most of the smugglers were Hokkien Chinese. Philippines Hokkien is still widely spoken on Sulu, in Zamboanga, and in the Binondo region of Manila. The situation with Jolo is not known.

*Cebu*, spoken on Cebu, is in bad shape, with few speakers left.

*Jolo*, spoken on the far southern island of Jolo, resembles Cebu.

*Manila*, spoken in the capital, is the dialect on which Standard Philippines Hokkien is based.

*Sulu*, the dialect on Sulu Island, is [different](#) from the rest of Philippines Hokkien, sounding more like Amoy and Taiwanese with a trace of Singapore.

*Zamboanga* [differs](#) from Manila Hokkien in that it has more Spanish and Chavacano borrowings and fewer Tagalog words.

All Philippines Hokkien dialects are mutually intelligible, and they are all quite similar, having converged on a standard in the same way that Taiwanese Hokkien dialects have.

### **Classification**

Amoy, Anxi, Baba, Bangkok, Bagansiapiapi, Burmese, Butterworth, Cebu, Changtai, Dehua, Dongfu, Dongshan, Gaoxiong, Guanku, Hua'an, Haicang, Hui'an, Indonesian, Jimei, Jingcheng, Jinjiang, Jinmen, Johor, Jolo, Kelantan, Kelantan A, Kelantan B, Klang, Kuching, Literary, Longhai, Longmen, Lower Perak, Lugang, Manila, Medan, Myanmar, Nan'an, Nanjing, Northern Malayland, Penang, Penang Island, Philippines, Pinghe, Quangang, Quanzhou, Riau, Saigon, Selangor, Shin Kek, Shishi, Shuishang, Singapore, Southern Malayland, Sulim, Sulu, Taichung, Tainan, Taipei City, Taiwanese, Terangganu, Tong'an, Woshan, Xiang'an, Yilan, Yinchuan, Yongchun, Yunxiao, Zamboanga, Zhangpu, Zhangzhou, and Zhao'an are all part of Hokkien, which has 71 varieties, 11 of which are separate languages.

There are [30 million](#) speakers of the Hokkien languages.

## **Southern Min: Zhenan Min**

**[Zhenan or Zhejiang Min](#)**, a major split in Min Nan, spoken in pockets in Yixing, Anji, and Linan in Southern Jiangsu, in Wenzhou and Changxing in Southern Zhejiang Province around Pingyang and Cangnan, and in the Zhoushan Islands, is a separate language. Speakers are found in Anhui Guangde, Nigguo, Langxi, the eastern part of Wuhu, Jiangxi Shangrao, Yushan Island, and Guangfeng County, in addition to Pucheng on the northern border of Fujian.

These speakers moved north from Fujian as early as the Tang Dynasty from 618-907. New waves of Fujian immigrants came during the Southern Song Dynasty from 1187-1279. Many more came as a result of a migration of Hokkien speakers from Hui'an, Jinjiang, Quanzhou, Nan'an, Xiamen, and Jinmen to the area in middle of the Ming Dynasty about ~500 years ago due to pirate attacks and civil wars in the region they fled from. Once they arrived at their new home, high waves prevented them from returning, so they decided to make their new homes here in the north.

Zhenan Min is [influenced](#) by Eastern and Northern Min and has limited intelligibility with other Min languages. In the area around Wenzhou, it has come under heavy Wenzhou Wu and Manhua Wu influence. Zhenan Min is still confused with Hokkien in casual descriptions. Intelligibility among Zhenan Min varieties is not known.

### **Zhejiang**

*Baizhang* is spoken as a dialect island in the south of Taishan County. It has come under severe influence from Luoyang Wu and Manhua. It is presently near extinction. Baizhang appears to be a dialect of Jujiang.

[Cagnan](#) is spoken in Cagnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural Level City. It is actually the [principal language](#) of Cagnan County along with Manhua and Cagnan Wu, having [converged](#) significantly both languages. This is often considered to be a Hokkien language, but it is

really Zhenan Min.

[\*Dongtou\*](#), with 52,000 speakers, is spoken in Dongtou County in Wenzhou Prefectural City on an island off the coast of Wenzhou. This language is a result of Fujian Hokkien speakers who migrated to the area recently. This variety is often thought to be Hokkien, but actually it is Zhenan Min.

*Jujiang* is spoken in Taishan County near the Manhua-speaking area.

*Pingyang Aojiang* is spoken in Pingyang County in Wenzhou Prefectural City. It has 243,000 speakers. This variety is also often listed as Hokkien, but it is really Zhenan Min.

[\*Ruoshan\*](#) has heavy Wu influence.

*Taishun* has 14,000 speakers.

*Yuhuan* is also often considered to be a Hokkien language, but it is a part of Zhenan Min instead.

## **Jiangsu**

*Yixing* is spoken in Yixing County in southern Jiangsu. In Yixing County, half the population speaks Zhenan Min.

## **Classification**

Anhui Guangde, Anji, Baizhang, Beigang, Cagnan, Changxing, Dongtou, Fenwenxiang, Guangfeng, Jiangxi Shangrao, Jingning, Jujiang, [\*Kengkou\*](#), Lake, Langxi, [\*Lengkeng\*](#), [\*Lengkugang\*](#), Lianjiang, Linan, Liyang, Ni Island, Nigguo, Ningde, Northern Rui'an, Peng River, Pengxi, Pingyang Aojiang, Ruoshan, Sanyang, Shengshi Island, Shiyang, South Cangnan, Taishun, Wenling Shitang, Wuhu, Yixing, Yuhuan, and Yushan Island are all part of Zhenan Min, a single language which has at least 38 dialects.

There are [\*848,000 speakers\*](#) of Zhenan Min.

## **Hakka**

*Hakka* is an extremely diverse group of Chinese languages spoken in Southern China. There may be up to 1,000 varieties in Hakka. Hakka is very different from all other forms of Chinese. Although Southern Min and Hakka are said to be close, Taiwanese Hokkien can understand only 1% of even Taiwanese Hakka.

It is not only spoken by the Han, but it is also spoken heavily in China by some ethnic minorities, especially the She. [99% of the She people now speak varieties of Hakka.](#) The other 1% speak Hokkien. These varieties are [very different](#) from the nearby Hakka variety from which they arose because they are mixed in with layers of Cantonese, Gan, Wu, and Min, in addition to the Hmong-Mien She language substrate. Each She Hakka variety is probably a separate language. There are over a dozen different Sinitic varieties that the She speak, and most of them are Hakka languages. So there may be up to 12 different She Hakka languages.

The variety situation with Hakka is quite confused and somewhat contradictory. Some speakers report adequate intelligibility between varieties, while others report difficulty. There are also reports of great diversity and difficult intelligibility even from village to village in Southwestern Fujian, Gannan County in Jiangxi, and Northern Guangdong. Intelligibility testing could clear up some of the confusion.

In general, it is widely reported that Hakka speakers [cannot understand](#) the Hakka of other counties and in some places even other villages in the same county. So a good rule of thumb is that there is at least one Hakka language in every county where Hakka is spoken in China. This rule was generally followed below, with exceptions anywhere that the rule was proven false. Hakka varieties are extremely fragmented compared to Mandarin varieties.

## **Fujian**

There are 5 million Hakka speakers in Fujian. Hakka speakers' presence in Fujian dates back to a very early time. Fujian was populated by Hakka speakers at the end of the Tang Dynasty in 900 as waves of Hakka speakers moved from the northern plains down through Hunan and Jiangxi all the way to Fujian. Southwestern Fujian,

along with Jiangxi and Hunan are considered to be the heartlands of the oldest population of Hakka speakers. Consequently the Hakka spoken here is extremely diverse and in some counties, up to 14 different completely separate Hakka languages are spoken and there is difficult communication from county to county if not from village to village.

### **Northwestern Fujian**

**Fu'an Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in the county-level city of Fuan in the Ningde Prefectural City in the Eastern Min zone. Fuan Eastern Min is spoken in this city.

**Fu'an She Hakka** is spoken in the county-level city of Fuan in Ningde Prefectural City alongside Fuan Hakka and Fuan Eastern Min. Fuan She Hakka is completely different from either language.

**Fuding Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in Fuding County in Ningde Prefectural City in the Eastern Min speaking zone.

**Fuding She Hakka** is spoken in Fuding County in Ningde Prefectural City alongside Fuding Hakka and Fuding Eastern Min. It is very different from either language.

**Shunchang She Hakka** is spoken in Shunchang County in Nanping Prefectural City in the Northern Min and Shaojiang Min speaking area.

### **Western and Southwestern Fujian**

Many extremely diverse forms of Hakka are spoken in Southwestern Fujian. These are the remains of the earliest Hakka speakers who formed in the area around 500 AD.

[Sources](#) say that each Hakka county in Southwestern Fujian speaks its own variety, and the varieties are far enough apart to make communication from county to county very difficult. The wildly diverse *Tingzhou Hakka Group* is spoken in Southwestern Fujian. A good conclusion is that all Tingzhou varieties are separate languages.

Within *Longyan Hakka*, a macrolanguage, in one county, Liancheng County, many divergent varieties of Hakka are spoken. Whether these are dialects or separate languages is difficult to determine. Usually they cannot understand each other at first, but after a while, they figure out how to communicate with each other. There is significant

enough difficulty in communicating between these villages that a local Mandarin dialect is used for inter-village communication, suggesting difficult communication from village to village (Branner 2008). This suggests that it is valid to split all of the above off into separate languages.

**Changting Hakka** is a separate language and a member of the Tingzhou Group spoken in Changting County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian. Despite Meixian being the standard, Changting preserves more of the original Hakka tones than Meixian does. This is because Changting is probably related more to the original Hakka group in Southwestern Fujian and Southern Jiangxi, as opposed to Meixian, which is a result of a more recent movement out of the original area in the last 500 years.

**Dikeng Tangqian Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Dikeng village in Tangqian township in Northern Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

**Dongnancun Xinquan Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in the Dongnancun village in the township of Xinquan, located in Liancheng County, part of Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian. There are three Hakka languages spoken in the township – Dongnancun, Lelian and Linguo (Branner 2008).

**Gaoding Juxi Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Hakka language spoken in Gaoding village in Juxi Township towards the south of Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008). Juxi is a beautiful town where people speak different dialects depending on their last names. For instance, people with the last name Shen speak differently from people with the last name Luo. People with different last names also celebrate traditional Chinese holidays on different days.

**Gutian Shanghang Hakka** is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in Gutian township in Shanghang County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian.

**Hengming Wenheng Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Hengming village in Wenheng Township in Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

**Jiangshe Miaoqian Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Hakka language spoken in Jiangshe village in Miaoqian Township in Liancheng County in

Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian. Jianshe and Zhixi are two separate Hakka languages spoken in Miaoqian (Branner 2008).

**Lelian Xinquan Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Hakka language spoken in Lelian village in Xinquan Township, part of Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian. There are three Hakka languages spoken in Xinquan, Dongnancun, Lelian and Linguo (Branner 2008).

[Liancheng Hakka](#) is a macrolanguage consisting of 14 different Hakka languages spoken in a single county in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

**Linguo Xinquan Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in Linguo village in Xinquan Township, which is part of Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian. Dongnancun, Linguo and Lelian are the three Hakka languages spoken in the township (Branner 2008).

**Luoyuan She Hakka** is an extremely diverse form of Hakka that differs from all other Hakka. It must surely be a separate language.

[Mingxi Hakka](#) is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in a wide north-to-south strip just to the west of the main Hokkien-speaking region in Fujian.

**Nanban Zhangwu Liwu Changting Hakka** is actually spoken in Changting County, part of Longyan Prefectural City, in Zhangwu village in Liwu Township three miles west of far Northern Liancheng County in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

[Ninghua Hakka](#) is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in Ninghua County in Sanming Prefectural City in Western Fujian.

**Puxi Dongxiduan Quxi Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Quxi Township in Northwestern Liancheng County 10 miles southeast of Liancheng in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

**Qiaotou Quxi Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Qiaotou village in Quxi Township, located in Northwestern Liancheng County 10 miles southeast of the city of Liancheng in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

[Shanghang Hakka](#) is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in



Shanghang County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian.

**Shangjian Zhenbian Sipu Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Sipu township in the far north of Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian.

**Shengxing Xuanhe Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Shengxing village in Xuanhe township in Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian.

**Wangcheng Pengkou Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Tingzhou language spoken in Wangcheng village in Pengkou Township, which is located in Liancheng County, part of Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

**Wuping Hakka** is spoken in Wuping County in Southwestern Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian.

**Yongding Hakka** is a separate language within Tingzhou spoken in Yongding County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian.

**Zhixi Miaoqian Liancheng Hakka** is a separate Hakka language spoken in Zhixi village in Miaoqian Township in Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian. There are three separate languages spoken in Miaoqian, Jianshe and Zhixi (Branner 2008).

**Zhuyu Gechuan Liancheng Hakka** is spoken in Zhuyu village in Gechuan Township in Northern Liancheng County in Longyan Prefectural City in Southwestern Fujian (Branner 2008).

### **Southern Fujian**

Hakka is spoken in a few places in the south of Fujian near where the south end of the Hokkien zone meets the north end of the Teochew zone and you have strange Southern Min languages that are mixtures of Hokkien and Teochew and are sometimes hard to place in one category or the other.

The same movement that resulted in a large Hakka settlement in Southeastern Guangdong in the Teochew zone is probably responsible for these few Fujian outliers right across the Fujian border. These Hakka languages are mostly unclassified like the Southeastern Guangdong Hakkas, probably due to their diverse nature and strong



Min influences.

**Zhao'an Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in the Zhangzhou region in Zhao'an, where a Zhangzhou Min variety heavily affected by Teochew is spoken.

**Zhao'an Xiuzhuan Hakka** is a separate language, no doubt spoken in the same area as Zhaoan proper.

## Guangdong

There are 21 million Hakka speakers in Guangdong. Guangdong is usually seen as the Hakka heartland, but Hakka speakers moved into Guangdong at a relatively later date after the fall of the Song Dynasty in 1300. Previously, Hakka speakers had only inhabited Southern Jiangxi and Southwestern Fujian and Southern Hunan, where they arrived by 900 or in some cases by 400. This later expansion proved very successful, with settlements like Meixian being so successful that it later become known as the Hakka heartland.

### Central Guangdong

**Conghua Hakka** is spoken in the Conghua District, a county-level city in Guangzhou Prefectural City. It connects the Pearl River Delta where Cantonese is the main language with the mountainous area of Guangdong where Hakka is heavily spoken to the north.

**Zengcheng Hakka** is spoken in Zengcheng, a county-level district in Guangzhou Prefectural City to the south of the Conghua District. Zengcheng is far away from the city center, so people there consider themselves different from Guangzhou people.

### Eastern Guangdong

This area is considered to be the Hakka Heartland due to the presence of Meixi, the unofficial capital of the Hakka speakers, although the area was only settled 500 years ago as a late movement from the main Hakka zone in Southwestern Fujian.

*Changlin* is spoken in Changlin village in Tangnan town in Fengshun County.

*Chitan* may be a dialect of Dapu Hakka.

**Dapu, Taipo or Taipu Hakka**, while close to Meixian, is a separate

language. Its phonology is [quite different](#) from Meixian's. It is spoken in Dapu County. Dapu was [the basis](#) for Taichung Dongshi Hakka spoken in Taiwan. Actually, Dongshi was derived directly from Chitan Hakka spoken by the founder of the Hakka community in the county. However, Dongshi is now very different from Chitan.

**[Fengshun or Banshan Hakka](#)** is a separate language spoken in Fengshun County. Fengshun is on the border of Fujian and has come under [heavy Teochew influence](#).

**Jiaoling Hakka** is a separate Hakka language, spoken in Jiaoling County.

**Meixian (formerly Jieyang)** is spoken in Mei County. Meixian Hakka is the Hakka version used as Standard Hakka. It is understood by [75% of Hakka speakers](#), so it is often used for communicating with Hakkas who speak other Hakka languages. Meixian was chosen as the standard because the region where it is spoken is one of the major strongholds of Hakka language and culture. In addition, it has preserved most of the original Hakka phonology and has less influence from Cantonese and Hokkien.

Varieties of Meixian are spoken in many places in Asia outside of mainland China. They are spoken in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Taiwan. It is commonly held that all of the varieties of Meixian spoken outside of the Chinese mainland are mutually intelligible, that is just not true. For instance, Taiwanese Hakka is said to be exactly the same as Meixian Hakka, however there is poor intelligibility between the two.

**[Pingyuan Hakka](#)**, although close to Meixian, is actually quite different from it and must be a separate language. It is spoken in Pingyuan County.

**[Rumei Hakka](#)**, spoken in Rumei County, is a separate language.

**[Wuhua Hakka](#)** is a full language spoken in [Wuhua County](#). Wuhua is a [huge split](#) in Meixian-type Hakkas or the Jieyang subgroup (JYS). They are [split between](#) Wuhua types and JYS types.

**[Xingning Hakka](#)** is close to Wuhua and Dapu. It is spoken in Xingning County. Xingning is only 40 miles east of Meixi, but the phonology is [quite different](#).

## Northeastern Guangdong

This group may also include the remains of some of the earliest Hakka speakers to arrive in Guangdong around 900.

In Northeastern Guangdong, there may be [many different Hakka languages](#), since varieties tend to differ from village to village, and in many cases, communication is difficult between villages.

[Boluo Hakka](#) is spoken in Boluo County in Huizhou Prefectural City.

[Chetian Hakka](#) is a type of Longchuan Hakka with heavy Teochew and Cantonese influence. Chetian is a Bendihua language.

[Heping Hakka](#) is spoken in Heping County in Heyuan Prefectural City. Hakka is spoken by the majority of people here. This is a Bendihua language.

[Heyuan Hakka](#) is spoken in Heyuan Prefectural City. It is not intelligible with Boluo. Heyuan is distant from other Hakka. It is so different that people in Hunan describe Heyuan varieties spoken there as not even Hakka but [similar to Hakka](#). Heyuan is a Bendihua language.

[Huangbu Hakka](#) is a separate Longchuan Hakka language with a lot of Teochew and Cantonese influence. Huangbu is a Bendihua language.

[Huicheng Hakka](#) is spoken in Huicheng County in Huizhou Prefectural City.

[Longchuan Hakka](#) is a separate language spoken in Longchuan County in Heyuan Prefectural City that is quite distant from other Hakka, with [poor intelligibility](#) with [other](#) Hakka varieties. Longchuan has [five different varieties](#), Huangbu, Sidu, Chetian, Huicheng, and Tuocheng. Longchuan has [heavy Cantonese and Teochew](#) influence. It is mostly spoken in Huicheng District and Bolou County. Diversity is great within Longchuan, and varieties differ from village, with [difficult intelligibility](#) from village to village. Longchuan is a Bendihua language.

[Sidu Hakka](#) is a type of Longchuan Hakka that is [close to Tuocheng](#). Sidu has [18,000 speakers](#). Sidu is a Bendihua language.

[Tuocheng Hakka](#) is a type of Longchuan Hakka that is close to Sidu. Tuocheng is a Bendihua language.

**Zijn Hakka** is a separate language, spoken in Zijn County in Heyuan Prefectural City. Zijn is a Bendihua language.

## **Northern Guangdong**

This group may be the remains of the earliest Hakka speakers in Guangdong who came around 900.

*The Yuebei Group of Hakka* is highly divergent. This group is spoken in the Prefectural Level City of Qingyuan in Northcentral Guangdong. The main language here is Cantonese. The city itself is on a plain, but it is surrounded by mountains.

**Fogang Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Fogang County.

**Lechang Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Lechang county-level city in Northwestern Qingyuan Prefectural City.

**Nanxiong Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Nanxiong county-level city in Northeastern Qingyuan Prefectural City.

**Ruyuan Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Ruyuan County in Western Qingyuan Prefectural City.

**Shixing Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Shixing County in Eastern Qingyuan Prefectural City.

**Shuiyan Xinfeng Hakka** is spoken in Shuiyan township in Xinfeng County about 10 miles north of the city of Xinfeng in Shaoguan Prefectural City. This is a Bendihua language.

**Wengyuan Hakka**, is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Wengyuan County in Southern Qingyuan Prefectural City.

**Wujing Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Wujing township in Nanxiong county-level city in Qingyuan Prefectural City.

**Xinfeng Hakka** is a separate Yuebai language spoken in Xinfeng County in far Southern Shaoguan Prefectural City.

If the hypothesis that all members of Yuebai are separate languages is true, then **Liannan Hakka**, **Lianshan Hakka**, **Lianzhou Hakka**, **Yangshan Hakka** and **Yingde Hakka** are all separate languages.

## **Northcentral Guangdong**

Hakka is spoken here and there in South-Central Guangdong in the

Cantonese zone. Most of these Hakka varieties have come under severe Cantonese influence. These Hakka speakers may be a result of a late movement from Meixian to Southern Guangdong 300 years ago.

**Bao'an Hakka**, located near Hong Kong in Shenzhen Prefectural City, is a separate language. However, it is close to Hong Kong. 56% of Shenzhen speaks Hakka. There are over 100 Hakka villages in the area.

**Dongguan Hakka** appears to be a separate language.

**Dongguan Qingxi Hakka** is a separate Hakka language spoken in Dongguan Prefectural City.

**Huidong Hakka** is a separate language spoken along the coast north of Hong Kong in Huidong County, part of the Prefectural Level City of Huizhou. Huidong is a Bendihua language.

**Huiyang Hakka** is a separate language spoken in the Huiyang District of the Prefectural City of Huizhou near Shenzhen. Huiyang has heavy Cantonese influence. Most people in Huizhou are Hakka speakers. Huiyang is close to Bao'an.

**Huizhou Hakka** is in its own group of Hakka, so it must be a separate language. Huizhou is heavily spoken in Huizhou Prefectural City. Huizhou is not intelligible with Moien, Dapu, Hopo, or Taiwanese. Huizhou is the classic Bendihua language.

**Longmen Hakka** is spoken in Longmen County in Northern Huizhou Prefectural City.

**Sanxiang Hakka**, spoken in Zhongshan Prefecture west across the bay from Hong Kong, is different from all other Hakka. It is a separate language.

*Sin On* is very close to Dongguan and may be a Dongguan dialect.

## **Southeastern Guangdong**

Hakka is spoken in a number of areas in Southeastern Guangdong around Teochew speakers. Most of these Hakka varieties are unclassified, which shows that they are quite diverse. They have come under serious influence of Teochew and in some cases, Cantonese. They came from the Meixian area 300 years ago.

**Banshan Hakka** is spoken in Jindengzhan village in Tangnan township in the Chengkang District, where Teochew is spoken. Banshan is a dialect island surrounded by Teochew and may have significant Teochew influence. Banshan is probably a separate language.

**Chaoshan She Hakka** is spoken by the She people. They live in the Phoenix Mountains in Chao'an County in Chaozhou Prefectural City. The language has had heavy contact with Teochew. This is a separate language, unintelligible with other She Hakka languages and Teochew.

**Chaoyang Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in the city of Chaoyang that has a lot of Teochew influences.

**Jiexi Hakka** is spoken in Jiexi County, so it is a separate language. Jiexi has deep Teochew influences.

**Haifeng Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in Haifeng County in Shanwei Prefectural City that has heavy influences from Hailufeng Min.

*Hailufeng Hakka* is a [macrolanguage](#) made up of three languages, Haifeng, Lufeng and Luhe, spoken next to each other in Haifeng, Lufeng, and Luhe Counties in Shanwei Prefectural City. All three are spoken in separate counties, so each is probably a separate language. This is a Hakka group with heavy influence from Hailufeng Min.

*Hopo*, spoken in the city of Jiexi, is not intelligible with Dabu, Hailu, or Meixian. Hopo has [deep influence](#) from Teochew because it is located right next to the Teochew area. Hopo is probably a Jiexi dialect.

**Huilai Hakka** is thought to be a dialect of Hopo, but Huilai and Hopo are sometimes referred to as different varieties, so it may be a separate language.

*Liongkeng* is a dialect of Choasan She.

**Lufeng Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in Lufeng County in Shanwei Prefectural City. Lufeng is heavily influenced by Hailufeng Min.

**Luhe Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka language spoken in Luhe County in Shanwei Prefectural City that has heavy Hailufeng Min influences. In Luhe County, [most people](#) speak Hakka.

**Jieyang Hakka** is an unclassified separate Hakka language spoken in the city of Jieyang that has a lot of Teochew influences.

**Puning Hakka** is an unclassified Hakka variety with heavy influence from Puning Teochew.

**Raoping Hakka** is an unclassified separate Hakka language spoken in the city of Raoping with a lot of influences from Teochew.

### **Southwestern Guangdong**

Hakka is spoken in a few dialect islands here and there along the Southeastern Guangdong coast. All of these Hakka varieties are unclassified, which implies that they are highly divergent. These varieties are very poorly known and have probably come under severe Cantonese influence. These speakers arrived here from the Meixian area 200 years ago.

**Dianbai Hakka** is spoken in Dianbai County in the far south of Guangdong in the Leizhou Min speaking zone. Hakka is spoken in the far north of the county in the Xiadong District in a few villages and in the Daya, Guanzhou, Huangling, Luokeng, Nahuo, Shalang, and Wangfu Districts.

### **Guangxi**

Hakka is also spoken in the north, south and east of Guangxi. There are [4.6 million](#) Hakka speakers in Guangxi. They arrived in Northern Guangxi 300 years ago from the Meixian area. Nevertheless, there are now many differences between Meixian Hakka and Guangxi Hakka. Language to language comparisons show up to 11 major and 100 total differences between Meixian and Guangxi Hakka.

### **Eastern Guangxi**

**Mengshan Xihe Hakka** is spoken in Eastern Guangxi. Mengshan Xihe is a separate language.

### **Southern Guangxi**

Hakka in Southern Guangxi has been significantly affected by Southwestern Mandarin. It also seems to be developing its own regional Guangxi Hakka vocabulary. These speakers came from the Meixian area 200 years ago.

**Binyang Hakka** is a separate language spoken in the city of Binyang.

They are Meixian speakers who came to Guangxi 400 years ago. The language is now very different from Meixian. It is quite probably a separate language.

**Fengchangguang Hakka** must be a separate language. They originally came from Dapu, but it is very different from Dapu now. A study found over 100 differences between Fengchangguang Hakka and Meixian. In addition, the study found that Guangxi Hakka was developing its own vocabulary.

**Mashan Old Naxing Hakka** is spoken in Mashan Old Naxing village. It is located far from other Hakka and has come under the influence of other Sinitic and non-Sinitic languages such that it is now very different. It is surely a separate language.

**Pinxiang Hakka** is a separate language spoken in Liujin village in Xiashi Township in Pingxiang City in Chongzuo Prefectural City in Zhuang Autonomous Region in Southern Guangxi in the border with Vietnam.

**Yulin Hakka** is a separate Hakka language spoken in Xing Ye Xian village in the city of Yulin in Zhuang Autonomous Region in Southern Guangxi.

## **Hainan**

Hakka speakers first arrived in Hainan from the Meixian area in 1800, with many more arriving while fleeing the Hakka-Cantonese wars in Guangdong in the 1860's.

**Danzou Hakka** is a distinct type of Hakka is spoken by 2,000 Hakkas in spoken in four different varieties in four different villages near the Songtou Reservoir in far southwestern corner of the city of Danzhou on Hainan. It is unintelligible with Mainland Hakka, although it resembles Meixian. Formerly they were spread out a lot more around the island, but after the reservoir was built, they moved over near it.

## **Hong Kong**

Hakka speakers began arriving in Hong Kong anywhere from 150-375 years ago. The earliest arrivals came from Huiyang 375 years ago. The latest arrivals came from the Fujian Hakka zone 150 years ago. They mostly came from the Meixian area 200 years ago.



In 1921, reports said that Hakka was one of the three major languages of Hong Kong, and it was subdivided into various varieties that differed considerably with each other. Hakka is seriously endangered in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has [1.25 million Hakka](#), but only [6,000](#) speak the language anymore.

*Dongguan Hong Kong* is spoken near Hong Kong.

**Hong Kong Hakka** is [not intelligible](#) with the Taiwanese, Dabu, or Meixian. It is spoken in the New Territories in [Sam Tung Uk and Yim Tin Tsai Villages on the Sai Kung Peninsula](#), in [Hoi Pa Village in Tsuen Wan](#), in [Shatin](#), in [Taipo](#), in [Shataukok](#), in [Sai Kung Yam Tin Chi](#), in [Island Bridge](#), in [Ho Sheung Heung](#), in [Yen Kong](#), in [Ebara](#), in [Shujian Village in Southern Yuen Long](#), and in [Eastern Yuen Long](#).

Many Hong Kong varieties are similar to the Hakka spoken around [Huiyang in Eastern Guangdong](#). This group [moved](#) from that area to Hong Kong at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty 375 years ago. By 1700, they had built [more than 400 Hakka villages](#) in the Hong Kong area.

Despite the fact that Hong Kong varieties seem most similar to Hakka varieties spoken in Eastern and Northeastern Guangdong, many Hong Kong Hakka also trace their origins to Guangxi.

**Shataukok Hakka** is spoken in Shataukok in the rural area of the New Territories. It is different from the rest of Hong Kong, and evidence indicates that [Shataukok](#) may indeed be a separate language. Shataukok has a number of dialects within it, and they are different, but they may be more or less [mutually intelligible](#). However, the MI is difficult to characterize, as it is said that speakers of other dialects can ["get the gist"](#) of what the other speakers are saying. "Getting the gist" of a dialect usually implies less than 90% intelligibility.

**Shujian Hakka** is spoken in Shujian Village in the southern part of Yuen Long. It is completely different from the rest of Hong Kong. They moved to Hong Kong from [Western Fujian 150 years ago](#). Shujian is said to be similar to [Boluo Hakka](#) in Northeastern Guangdong, but this has not been proven.

Shujian is best seen as a separate language, completely apart from the rest of Hong Kong. This language is now spoken only by older people who are ashamed of their language and generally refuse to

speak it with outsiders.

*Taipo* is a Hong Kong dialect spoken in the village of the same name in Hong Kong.

*Wakia* is a Hong Kong dialect also spoken in Hong Kong.

## **Jiangxi**

There are 12.5 million Hakka speakers in Jiangxi, the second largest population outside of Guangdong. Jiangxi is home to the oldest population of Hakka speakers. This group moved south from the northern plains down into Hunan and Jiangxi starting in 400. More moved in after the fall of the Tang Dynasty in 900.

Southern Jiangxi Hakka is among the most diverse Hakka of all, with each county having its own Hakka language and difficult intelligibility from county to county if not from village to village. Hakka in Southern Jiangxi seems related to Southern Gan and both seem to have a common root. Hakka speakers here are heavily interspersed with Gan speakers and the two languages have intermingled quite a bit.

In Southern Jiangxi, the Ninglong or Gannan Group of Hakka is spoken. It is extremely diverse compared to the Hakka of Guangdong and Fujian. Ninglong Hakka varieties [differ even from village to village](#).

With Ninglong, we may be dealing with a situation of many different languages, as with Wu, Hui, Tuhua, and Xiang. In fact, it is possible that with Jiangxi Hakka, we may be dealing with every Hakka variety being a separate language.

Ninglong was formerly split in two major subgroups, Bendi (Locals) and Keji (Immigrants). Bendi varieties are some of the most divergent Hakka varieties of all, while Keji varieties are more traditional, having moved out of the core Meixian area 350 years ago.

Bendi varieties are sometimes referred to as "Paleo-Hakka." These seem to be the remains of the first speakers of Hakka which developed in the Southern Highlands around 500 AD. The later Hakka varieties mostly moved out of the core Hakka area of Northern Guangdong, Southern Jiangxi and Southwestern Fujian only 350 years ago, so they are less diverse.

The hypothesis is that all members of Ninglong Hakka in Southern

Jiangxi are separate languages.

### **Northern Jiangxi**

Hakka speakers migrated to this area from the Meixian area 300 years ago.

**Dageng Hakka** is spoken 10 miles north of the city of Yushan in Yushan County, located on Shangrao Prefectural City in far Northeastern Jiangxi.

**Fengxin Hakka** is a separate language, a member of the Tonggu Group spoken in the northern part of Yichun Prefectural City in Northwestern Jiangxi.

**Jing'an Hakka** is a separate language, a member of the Tonggu Group spoken in Jing'an County in the northeastern part of part of Yichun Prefectural City in Northwest Jiangxi.

**Tonggu Hakka**, spoken in Tonggu County in the northeastern part of Yichun Prefectural City in Northwestern Jiangxi, is a member of a completely separate group of Hakka, the Tonggu Group of Hakka, so it must be a separate language. Tonggu speakers came from Wuhua a while back. Tonggu is a huge group of highly diverse Hakka languages spoken in the northern part of Jiangxi and in Hunan far outside of the main Hakka area. Most if not all Tonggu varieties are probably separate languages.

**Wanzai Hakka** is a separate language, a member of the Tonggu Group spoken in Wanzai County in Eastern Yichun Prefectural City in Northwestern Jiangxi.

**Yifeng Hakka** is a member of the Tonggu Group spoken in Yifeng County in Central Yichun Prefectural City in Northwestern Jiangxi.

### **Southern Jiangxi**

**Anyuan Hakka** is a separate Ninglong language spoken in Anyuan County in Southern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southern Jiangxi.

**Dingnan Hakka** is a separate Ninglong language spoken in Dingnan County Southern Guanzhou Prefectural City in far Southern Jiangxi.

**Hechang Hakka** is spoken in Hechang Township in Nankang District in Eastern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southwestern Jiangxi.

**Longnan Hakka** is a separate Ninglong language spoken in Longnan County in Southern Guanzhou Prefectural City in far Southern Jiangxi.

**Ningdu Hakka** is a separate language, part of Ninglong spoken in Ningdu County in Northern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southern Jiangxi.

**Quannan Hakka** is a separate Ninglong language spoken in Southwestern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southern Jiangxi.

**Ruijin Hakka** is a part of Ninglong Hakka spoken in Ruijin County in Eastern Guangzhou Prefectural City in Southern Jiangxi. It is very different and is a separate language.

It looks a lot like Gan and in fact is thought to be transitional to Gan (Sagart 1998).

**Shicheng Hakka** is a separate Ninglong language spoken in Shicheng County in Northeastern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southeastern Jiangxi.

**Xinfeng Tieshikou Hakka** is a member of the Ninglong Group and a separate language spoken in Xinfeng County by 90% of the population in Southern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southern Jiangxi.

**Xingguo Hakka** a separate language that is part of the Ninglong Group spoken in Xingguo County in Northern Ganzhuo Prefectural City in Southern Jiangxi.

**Xunwu Hakka** is a separate Ninglong language spoken in Xunwu County in Southeastern Guanzhou Prefectural City in Southeastern Jiangxi.

**Yiqian Hakka** is a Ninglong language spoken in Yiqian Township in Guangfeng County in far Southern Fuzhou Prefectural City in East-Central Jiangxi. Gan is heavily spoken here.

**Yongfeng Hakka** is a Ninglong language spoken in Yongfeng County in Ji'an Prefectural City in Central Jiangxi.

## **Sichuan**

Hakka speakers immigrated to Sichuan a long time ago.

In the mid to late 1600's, Sichuan was ruled by a murderous ruler who set up the Xi Empire there. It only lasted for several decades before it fell apart. Towards the end, paranoid or outside rebellions,

he said that all of his subjects were traitors and went about massacring them. His massacres are said to be some of the worst in Chinese history. When he was done, he had murdered 1/3 of population, including men and women.

A massive famine and disease epidemic followed this depopulation, and even more people fled the area. Chengdu was a ghost city with tigers roaming the streets. The few survivors were often attacked by tigers. In 1670, the Manchus conquered the Xi Empire. The Emperor noticed that the Hakka were living in an impoverished state in Guangdong so he asked them to repopulate Sichuan. So the Hakka dialect islands in Sichuan date from 200-350 years ago.

Six Hakka varieties – Longtanshi Hakka, Longcheng Hakka, Yilong Hakka, [Huanglianguan Hakka](#), [Panlong Hakka](#), [Xindu Hakka](#), and are the main Hakka islands in Sichuan. Although they have commonalities, they are all also quite different. Quite probably all of them are separate languages.

**Chengdu Hakka** is spoken in Chengdu, Sichuan. It is quite different from other forms of Hakka and has poor intelligibility with other forms. At the moment, Hakka is the [main means of communication](#) in the Jinjiang, Jinniu, Chenghua, Longquanyi, Xindu, and Qingbaijiang Districts in Chengdu.

[Longcheng Hakka](#) is spoken in Longcheng by Hakka who immigrated there a long time ago. It has since come under heavy influence from Longcheng Southwestern Mandarin.

[Longtanshi Hakka](#) speakers came from Mei County in Guangdong long ago, but now Meixian and Longtanshi are very different. It [resembles](#) Wuhua and Xingning more and has since come under [heavy influence](#) from Chengdu Southwestern Mandarin.

[Yilong Hakka](#) speakers came to Sichuan 200 years ago.

Hakka varieties are [also spoken](#) in various other places in Sichuan such as *Longwang*, *Sansheng*, *Shibantan*, *Shiling*, *Taixing*, *Tianhui*, and *Xihe*, all spoken in the [named locations](#). All have come under heavy influence from Southwestern Mandarin.

There are [3.8 million Hakka speakers](#) in Sichuan.

## Taiwan

Hakka speakers began arriving in Taiwan with the fall of Ming Dynasty in the late 1600's, when impoverished Hakka speakers in Guangdong moved into Sichuan, Taiwan and other places, but most of them came 200 years ago in the early 1800's. They continued to trickle in until 1900, when the Japanese banned further immigration from China. Most Hakka speakers in Taiwan are part of a group that arrived 200 years ago.

**Taiwanese Hakka** has been spoken on Taiwan for a very long time, though the language has gone into a serious decline. In general, speakers of other kinds of Hakka find to be hard to understand, possibly due to Southern Min influence. Hakka speakers make up only [5% of the population of Taiwan](#). Almost all are proficient in Mandarin or Hokkien, and there are few monolinguals left.

However, as of 2001, it was still easy to find fluent speakers of Sixian, Hailu and Raoping. Most speakers are older, but speakers in their 30's were not unusual (Oppert 2009-2010).

Sixian, Hailu, Dongshi or Dapu Taiwanese Hakka, and Raoping and are the main varieties spoken on Taiwan. It was reported earlier that Sixian, Dongshi and Hailu were not mutually intelligible, hence the necessity of creating the mixed *Gaoxiong Taiwanese Hakka* koine in order that these three varieties could communicate with each other. The koine was reportedly not mutually intelligible with Sixian, Dongshi, or Hailu either, but if learned, could be used to communicate with the other varieties.

However, new research indicates that as of 2001, Sixian, Hailu, and Raoping Taiwanese Hakkas were mutually intelligible (Oppert 2009-2010).

**[Dongshi or Dapu Taiwanese Hakka](#)** speakers [came](#) from Dapu County, Guangdong.

**[Fengshun or Fengcheng Taiwanese Hakka](#)** is also spoken in Taiwan. Fengshun [came](#) from [Fengshun](#) and [Jieyang](#) Counties in Guangdong. Fengshun still has a [few speakers left](#) on Taiwan. This is a separate language since it is a separate language in China. Fengshun is [hard](#) for other Taiwanese Hakka speakers to understand.

[Hailu](#) comes from Huizhou Prefecture. Hailu is a [Bendihua dialect](#).

**Jiexi Taiwanese Hakka** is another Hakka that is still spoken here and there in Taiwan. Jiexi is a county in Guangdong and a full language there, so it may be one here too.

Raoping is apparently mutually intelligible with Sixian and Hailu according to new research as of 2001 (Oppert 2009-2010). Raoping speakers came from Chaozhou Prefecture, specifically Raoping and Huilai Counties, in Guangdong.

Sihai is the name of the present koine, a combination of Sixian and Hailu, the two most widely spoken dialects.

**Sixhai Taiwanese Hakka** used to be spoken on Taiwan but is now extinct. It was a separate language.

Sixian (Four Counties) is currently the most widely spoken Hakka dialect in Taiwan. The name came from the four Guangdong counties of Rumei, Wuhua, Jiaoling, and Pingyuan. But Sixian speakers generally came from Jiaoling, so Sixian currently resembles Jiaoling more than Meixian. Nevertheless, Sixian is said to be very close to Meixian. Despite that, intelligibility between Sixian and Meixian is poor.

Sixian is divided into two main dialects, Miaoli and Liudui. The differences between the two are so significant that Sixian speaking contests for young people have been broken up into separate Miaoli and Liudui contests.

However, if Sixian, Raoping, and Hailu are mutually intelligible, Sixian cannot be unintelligible inside of itself. The situation is confused.

Taoyuan, Xinzhu, Zutian, and Gaoxiong (Oppert 2009-2010) are all dialects of Sixian. All of these dialects are mutually intelligible. Guanxi Sixian shows considerable influence from Hailu.

**Tingzhou Taiwanese Hakka** is extremely different and is surely a separate language. Tingzhou comes from the Changting, Ninghua, Qingliu, Guihua, and Liancheng Counties of Tingzhou Prefecture in Fujian. Tingzhou and Zhao'an are the two most divergent Hakka languages on Taiwan. Tingzhou is hardly spoken anymore and may be extinct on Taiwan.

**Western Fujian Taiwanese Hakka**, was formerly spoken on Taiwan but is now extinct. It was probably a separate language.

**Wuhua Taiwanese Hakka** is spoken in patches in Taiwan. As Wuhua



is a full language in China, it is in Taiwan also.

**Wuping Taiwanese Hakka** is another Taiwanese Hakka that is still spoken here and there in Taiwan. Since Wuping is a full language in China, it is one here in Taiwan also.

Xihai is still spoken in the north of Taiwan.

**Xingning Taiwanese Hakka** is still spoken in a few places. It is a separate language because it is a separate language in China.

*Yangmei* is a dialect of Hailu (Oppen 2009-2010).

**Yongding Taiwanese Hakka** is said to be extinct on Taiwan, though it still has a few speakers. Yongding is surely a separate language. Yongding speakers came from Yongding, Shanghang, and Wuping Counties of Tingzhou Prefecture of Fujian near Zhao'an.

**Zhangzhou Taiwanese Hakka**, was formerly spoken on Taiwan. It is now extinct. It was no doubt a separate language.

**Zhao'an Taiwanese Hakka** is very different and must be a separate language. Zhao'an came from the Zhao'an, Pinghe, Nanjing, and Hua'an Counties of Zhangzhou Prefecture in Fujian. Zhao'an cannot understand the other Hakka varieties on Taiwan.

There are 4.6 million Hakka speakers in Taiwan.

## **Zhejiang**

There are also some Hakka speakers in the far south of Zhejiang around Taishan County. They have come under the heavy influence of Wu, Zhenan Min and Manhua.

**Jingning She Hakka** is very different from the Hakka varieties around it.

**Taishun Hakka** is spoken in Taishun County, but it has only 1,600 elderly speakers.

**Taishun She Hakka** is spoken by the She minority in that county. It is very different from Taishun. It has 2,600 speakers.

There are 1 million Hakka speakers in Zhejiang.

## **Overseas**

Overseas Hakka is a group of Hakka languages spoken outside of



China and Taiwan. There are 5 million Hakkas living overseas, mostly in Malaysia, Thailand, South Africa, Burma, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Central America, and the UK. Most Overseas Hakka speakers in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Americas came 120 years ago around 1900.

## **India**

*Calcutta Hakka* is a Meixian variety spoken in a part of Calcutta. Calcutta Hakka run many tanning factories in the area and have gotten quite rich via running these factories.

## **Indonesia**

Most Hakka speakers in Indonesia came 120 years ago around 1900. Most elderly Hakka speakers in Belitung and Singkawang are [Hakka monolinguals](#) who cannot speak Bahasa Indonesia at all. These elderly speakers have to bring interpreters with them when they go to the doctor. Although some Indonesian Hakka speakers speak a very pure Hakka, these are mostly the oldest generation. The younger generations speak a language that is very heavily adulterated with Indonesian languages.

[\*\*Bangka Island Indonesian Hakka\*\*](#), spoken on Bangka Island in Indonesia, has diverged so radically with its tones that it is now a [separate language](#), as speakers of other Indonesian Hakka varieties say they cannot understand Bangka Island speakers. It's actually a Hakka creole, a Hopo language that is heavily mixed with Malay.

**Belitung (Ngion Voi) Indonesian Hakka** is spoken mostly on Sumatra and Borneo. Belitung is characterized by a soft way of speaking and is mostly derived from Meixian speakers. Belitung cannot understand Kun Dian, but Kun Dian can understand Belitung.

*East Timor Hakka* is a variety of Meixian spoken in East Timor.

[\*\*Indonesian Hailu Hakka\*\*](#) is spoken somewhere in Indonesia.

*Jakarta Hakka* is a variety spoken in Jakarta. They were originally Meixian speakers who later mixed with Kun Dian, Belitung and Bangka speakers.

**Kun Dian Hakka** is spoken in Borneo. Kun Dian is the largest Hakka group in Indonesia. Most live at Pontianak and Singkawang, where

they speak [two different mutually intelligible](#) varieties, and but they have spread all over Indonesia. Kun Dian is also spoken in Jakarta, Medan and Surabaya. It has [80% intelligibility](#) of Sabah (Longchuan) Malay Hakka and Hong Kong. Belitung and Bangka Island say they cannot understand Kun Dian, but Kun Dian speakers say they can understand the other two for the most part.

[Pontianak](#) is a Kun Dian dialect. It was originally a type of Hopo or Huizhou that has been influenced by Teochew, Malay and Dayak languages.

[Singkawang](#) is a Kun Dian dialect that was originally a type of Jiexi that later mixed heavily with Hopo along with some Huilai and Wuhua. There are 1.5 million Hakkas in Indonesia speaking three different Hakka languages.

## **Jamaica**

*Jamaican Hakka* is a type of Hakka is still spoken in Jamaica by Hakka people who arrived there in starting in 1850, with most arriving in 1900. Little is known about it, but it may be quite different. It is not intelligible at all with Taiwanese Hakka, but it sounds a lot like Malaysian and Indonesian Hakka. Jamaican Hakka is exactly the same as Pontianak Hakka spoken in Indonesia, hence it is a dialect of Pontianak. Jamaican is a Huizhou variety.

There are 4,000 Hakka speakers in Jamaica.

## **Malaysia**

Most Hakka speakers came to Malaysia from the Meixian area 120 years ago around 1900.

In the late 1800's, there were Hakkas speaking Yongding, Fengshun, and *Jengcheng Hakka* varieties from Guangdong in [Singapore, Penang, Malacca, and Tel Anson](#) on the Malay Peninsula. It is not known whether these varieties are still spoken. Most Hakka varieties in Malaysia are full of Malay loans. Malay Hakka is not intelligible with Taiwanese Hakka.

There are also some Hakka speakers around Ipoh, Perak (in Beruas and Pusing), Pulau, Raub, Kuala Krai, Sitiawan, Selangor, [Serambam](#) (where there are many speakers), and Kuala Lumpur on the Malay

Peninsula.

**Beraus Hakka**, spoken in Beraus, is apparently not readily intelligible with Pusing Hakka, though it is close to it. This is a Longchuan variety.

**Kuala Lumpur Dapu Hakka** is very different from the Dapu spoken in China. It is now heavily creolized with Malay. It is quite probably a separate language. It is heavily spoken in the Serdang and Ampang regions of the capital.

*Kuala Lumpur Huizhou Hakka* is a Huizhou variety spoken in Kuala Lumpur. Hakka speakers live in the central city in Kuala Lumpur.

*Ho Po Hak Hakka* is the Hakka variety spoken in Kunming, Kuching, and Miri in Sarawak in Malaysia and is similar to Hopo. Ho Po Hak is very different from the Hakka spoken in Sabah, Malaysia. Although Ho Po Hak speakers make up 70% of the Sarawak Hakka population, there are speakers of other Hakka varieties in Sarawak also.

*Ipoh Hakka* is spoken in Ipoh.

*Penang Hakka* is a Huiyang variety still spoken in Penang. It is not known how close this is to Sabah Hakka, which is also derived from Huiyang.

*Perak Hakka* is a Meixian variety spoken in Perak, while those in Beruas and Pusing speak a Longchuan language.

**Pulai Hakka** is spoken in Pulai in the far south of Kelantan. Pulai Hakka cannot understand any Taiwanese Hakka. They arrived in the 1600's to early 1700's to mine gold. Intelligibility with the rest of Malaysian Hakka is not known.

**Pusing Hakka** is not intelligible outside the city of Pusing. This is a Longchuan variety.

*Sabah Hakka* is still widely spoken on Sabah. The majority (57%) of the Chinese in Sabah are Hakka. Many arrived in the 1860's fleeing the massacres perpetrated by the Manchus following the failed Taiping Rebellion. This group settled in Sandakan. Others were brought from Longchuan County, Guangdong to Kudat in 1882 as laborers by the North Borneo Chartered Company. Sabah Hakka looks like Huiyang and Bao'an spoken around Shenzhen. The main Hakka centers in Sabah are the cities of Sandakan, Kudat, Kota Kinabalu, and Tawau. Intelligibility with Huiyang, Bao'an and Longchuan in China is not

known.

*Sarawak Hakka* has speakers of Dapu, Fengshun, Huizhou, Bao'an, Dongguan, Lufeng, Wuhua, Meixian, and Yongding. These speakers probably cannot be classed as Ho Po Hak. So *Sarawak Dapu Hakka*, *Sarawak Fengshun Hakka*, *Sarawak Huizhou Hakka*, *Sarawak Bao'an Hakka*, *Sarawak Dongguan Hakka*, *Sarawak Lufeng Hakka*, *Sarawak Wuhua Hakka*, *Sarawak Meixian Hakka*, and *Sarawak Yongding Hakka* are all spoken in Sarawak.

*Taiping Hakka* is a Hakka variety spoken in the city of Taiping in Northern Malaysia. There are many different different types of Hakka spoken in this city alone. We will call these *Taiping Hakka A* and *Taiping Hakka B* until we get more information.

There are 1.25 million Hakkas in Malaysia speaking at least two different Hakka languages.

## Singapore

In Singapore, most Hakkas speak Meixian and Dapu varieties. Intelligibility of Singapore Hakka with other Malaysian Hakkas or the Chinese Hakkas they are derived from is not known. Hakka speakers came to Singapore in large numbers 120 years ago around 1900.

*Singapore Dapu Hakka* is a variety of Dapu spoken in Singapore.

*Singapore Meixian Hakka* is a variety of Meixian spoken in Singapore.

There are 200,000 Hakka speakers in Singapore.

## Thailand

**Banshan Hakka** is based on Fengshun, Meixian, and Jiexi. Although it has been affected by Teochew influence in Bangkok, Bangkok is still a relatively pure type of Hakka. Nevertheless, it has undergone dramatic changes compared to the original language. It is probably a separate language. It now has mostly elderly speakers.

There are 550,000 Hakka speakers in Thailand.

## Vietnam

**Ngái Hakka** is spoken by a group of Tanka fisherpeople in Vietnam called the Ngái. It is a small group of only 1,000 speakers. This Hakka

language no doubt is quite different due to contact with Vietnamese, and it is probably a separate language.

However, there are 150,000 Hakka speakers in Vietnam, and there must be other Hakka lects spoken by them, but we know nothing about them.

## **Classification**

Belitung, Hong Kong, Huizhou, Jamaican, and Kuala Lumpur Huizhou are members of the Huizhou Group of Hakka, which has five varieties.

Anyuan, Dingnan, Hechang, Longnan, Ningdu, Quannan, Ruijin, Shicheng, Xinfeng Tieshikou, Xingguo, Xunwu, Yiqian, and Yongfeng are in the Ninglong Group of Hakka, which has 13 varieties, all separate languages.

The Tingzhou Group of Hakka has two subgroups: Mingxi and Liancheng.

Changting, Mingxi, Nanban Zhangwu Liwu, Ninghua, Qingliu, Sarawak Yongding, Shanghang, Taiwanese Tingzhou, Taiwanese Yongding, Xinquan, and Yongding are all part of the Mingxi Group of Tingzhou, which has 11 varieties, all separate languages.

Dikeng Tangqian, Dongnancun Xinquan, Gaoding Juxi, Hengming Wenheng, Jiangshe Miaoqian, Lelian Xinquan, Linguo Xinquan, Puxi Dongxiduan Quxi, Qiaotou Quxi, Shangjian Zhenbian Sipu, Shengxing Xuanhe, Wangcheng Pengkou, Zhixi Miaoqian, and Zhuyu Gechuan are all members of the Liancheng subgroup of Tingzhou, which has 14 varieties, all separate languages.

Tonggu and 33 others are members of the Tonggu Group of Hakka, which has 34 varieties.

Lechang, Liannan, Lianshan, Lianzhou, Nanxiong, Renhua, Ruyuan, Shixing, Wengyuan, Yingde, and Yangshan are members of the Yuebei Group of Hakka, which has 11 varieties.

The Yuetai Group of Hakka is split into four groups: Jiaying, Shaonan, Xinghua, and Xinhui. The Yuetai Group of Hakka has 58 varieties.

Belitung, East Timor, Gaoxiong, Jakarta, Jiaoling, Liudui, Meixian, Miaoli, Perak Meixian, Pingyuan, Sarawak Meixian, Sihai, Singapore Meixian, Sixian, Taoyuan, and Xinzu are members of the Jiaying subgroup of Yuetai, which has 15 varieties.

Qujiang, Shaoguan, and Yingde are members of the Shaonan subgroup of Yuetai, which has three varieties.

Chitan, Dapu, Dongguan, Fengshun, Hanshan, Kuala Lumpur Dapu, Sarawak Dapu, Sarawak Dongguan, Sarawak Fengshun, Sarawak Wuhua, Sin On, Taichung Dongshi, Taiwanese Fengshun, Taiwanese Xingning, Taiwanese Wuhua, Wuhua, Xingning, and Zijin are members of the Xinghua subgroup of Yuetai, which has 18 varieties.

Xinghua Yuetai has [3.4 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Bao'an, Bangka Island, Chaoyang, Conghua, Fogang, Hopo, Ho Po Hak, Huidong, Huilai, Huiyang, Jamaican, Jiexi, Kun Dian, Penang, Pontianak, Qingyuan, Sabah Huiyang, Sarawak Bao'an, Sarawak Lufeng, Singkawang, Xinfeng, and Zengcheng are in the Xinhui subgroup of Yuetai, which has 21 varieties.

Xinhui Yuetai has [2.4 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Beraus, Boluo, Chetian, Dongyuan, Heping, Heyuan, Huangbu, Huicheng, Lianping, Longchuan, Shujian, Sidu, and Tuocheng are members of the Yuezhong Group of Hakka, which has 12 varieties.

The Yugui Group of Hakka has 43 varieties.

Binyang, Chaozhou, Chengdu, Dayu, Fengchangguang, Fu'an, Fu'an She, Haifeng, Hainanese, Huanglianguan, Jieyang, Longchang, Longtanshi, Longwang, Longyan, Lufeng, Luhe, Manshan Old Naxing, Mengshan Xihe, Nanjing Qujiang, Ngái, Panlong, Pinxiang, Puding, Raoping, Sansheng, Shibantan, Suixi, Shiling, Taiping A, Taiping B, Taixing, Tianhui, Xindu, Xihai, Xihe, Yilong, Yulin, Zhaoan, and Zhaoan Xiuzhuan are unclassified. There are 36 unclassified varieties of Hakka.

There are [12 major Hakka groups](#) and 237 [Hakka varieties](#). Others claim that there are [over 1,000 Hakka varieties](#) spoken in China.

There are [45 million Hakkas](#) in the world and [30 million speakers](#) of the Hakka languages.

## **Xiang**

*Xiang* is an extremely diverse group of Chinese languages mostly spoken in Henan Province, but also in Sichuan, and a bit in Guangxi and Chongqing. According to [good sources](#), there is a tremendous amount of linguistic diversity in Western Hunan, and most of it probably involves Xiang varieties, where most if not all of the main varieties are not mutually intelligible.

## **The Changyi Group of Xiang**

All Changyi languages are spoken in Hunan.

*Changsha Xiang* has only only [47% intelligibility](#) of Shuangfeng (Cheng 1997). It is spoken in Changsha Prefectural City in Northwestern Hunan. Changsha is prestige Xiang language.

In fact, Changsha itself is divided into multiple languages [in the city itself](#). We do not know how many there are, but we know that they exist. For the moment, we shall add Changsha as a macrolanguage and divide it into at least two separate languages spoken in the prefectural city, one of which is Wugang.

*Ningxiang Xiang* is a Xiang macrolanguage spoken Ningxiang County in Changsha Prefectural City. It is very different from Changsha.

The Xiang in Ningxiang County is split into two separate varieties, *North Ningxiang* and *South Ningxiang*. The differences between the two are [great](#). Upper Ningxiang looks more like a [Lianyuan dialect](#), and Lower Ningxiang looks more like a [Changsha dialect](#). Both Lianyuan and Changsha are Changyi languages.

Beyond that, Ningxiang is split into four major divisions – Chengguan Xiang, Huaminglou Xiang, Liushahe Xiang, and Shuangjiangkou Xiang.

*Liuyang Xiang* is a Xiang macrolanguage spoken in [Liuyang county-level city](#) in [Changsha Prefectural City](#) near the Jiangxi border. Liuyang is split into five divisions – North Liuyang Xiang, South Liuyang Xiang, West Liuyang Xiang, East Liuyang Xiang, and Liuyang City Xiang. South and East cannot understand each other. On closer observation, none of the Liuyang varieties are intelligible with each other. A Liuyang koine was created in recent years that is understandable to speakers of all Liuyang languages.

Even within this classification, each of the five Liuyang languages has



multiple dialects. Each village has its own dialect of Liuyang.

In the city of Yiyang, three Chinese varieties are spoken. One is a Changyi Xiang language, another is a Luoshao Xiang language, and a third is Luoyang Southwest Mandarin. All are separate languages.

[Hengshan Xiang](#) is a Xiang macrolanguage with vast dialectal divergence divided by Mount Hengshan.

There are two Hengshan varieties on either side of the mountain – one in the southeast and another in the northwest - that are [very different](#) and must be separate languages.

## Hunan

[Baishi Xiang](#), a separate Changyi language spoken near the city of Xiangtan, is [very different](#).

**Changsha City Xiang** is a good name for one of the Changyi languages in the city of Changsha in Changsha Prefectural City. The first language is Wugang. There are [at least two Xiang languages](#) spoken in Changsha Prefectural City. Furthermore, there are significant differences between the Changsha in the city of Changsha and the Changsha in the surrounding countryside.

**Chengguan Xiang** is a separate Changyi language spoken in Ningxiang County in Changsha Prefectural City, one of the four divisions of Ninxiang.

**East Liuyang Xiang** is spoken on the east side of the city of Liuyang in Liuyang Prefectural City. It is a separate Changyi language, not intelligible with South Liuyang Xiang.

[Guzhang Xiang or Sikehua](#) is a Sinitic language spoken in Guzhang County that has traditionally been considered a Hakka language. New analysis indicates that it is actually [a type of Changyi Xiang](#). Considering the strong Hakka influence, this must be a separate language.

[Hengyang Xiang](#) is a separate Changyi language. There is significant dialectal diversity in Hengyang.

[Houshan Xiang](#) is a separate Changyi Xiang language spoken on the northwest side of Mount Hengshan in Hunan. It is [very different](#) from Qianshan Xiang, which is spoken on the southeast of the mountain.



**Huaminglou Xiang** is a separate Changyi language spoken in Ningxiang County in Changsha Prefectural City in Hunan and one of four divisions of Ningxiang.

**Jiashanqiang Xiang** is a separate Changyi Xiang language spoken in Hunan in a transitional area in the center of Mount Hengshan containing features of both Houshan on the northwest of the mountain and Qianshan Xiang on the east. There are 354 villages in the Hengshan Mountain area.

**Lianyuan Xiang** is a separate Changyi Xiang language spoken near Xiangtan in Hunan. Lianyuan has quite a few dialects in it.

**Liushahe Xiang** is a separate Changyi language spoken in Ningxiang County in Changsha Prefectural City in Hunan. This is one of four Ningxiang languages.

**Liuyang City Xiang** is a separate language spoken in the city of Liuyang in Hunan , the koine that has developed recently to allow all Xiang speakers in Liuyang to talk to each other.

**Liling Xiang** is also spoken around Xiangtan in Hunan and must be a separate language.

**North Liuyang Xiang** is also a separate language, as all Liuyang languages are mutually unintelligible.

**Qianshan Xiang** is a separate Xiang language spoken on the southeast side of Mount Hengshan in Hunan. It is very different from Houshan spoken on the northwest of the mountain.

**Shaodong Xiang** is a separate Xiang language spoken in Hunan in Shaodong County, which borders Hengyang County. There are transitional dialects between the Hengyang and Shaodong languages on the border of the two counties.

**Shaoshan Xiang** is another separate Xiang language spoken near Xiangtan in Hunan. Shaoshan has a number of dialects within it.

**Shuangjiangkou Xiang** is a separate language spoken in Ningxiang County in Changsha Prefectural City Hunan, one of four divisions in Ningxiang.

**South Liuyang Xiang** is a separate language spoken on the south side of the city of Liuyang in Liuyang Prefectural City in Hunan, not intelligible with East Liuyang Xiang.

**West Liuyang Xiang** is also a separate language spoken on the west side of in the city of Liuyang in Liuyang Prefectural City in Hunan, unintelligible with the rest of the Liuyang languages.

**Wugang Xiang** is a [separate language](#) spoken in the city of Changsha in the Prefectural City of Changsha in Hunan, one of at least two Xiang languages spoken in the city of Changsha.

**Xiangtan Xiang**, a separate Xiang language spoken in the city of Xiangtan in Hunan, was the language of Mao Zedong. Mao was noted for speaking a notoriously difficult Xiang language, about which it was said, "No one can understand it." Of the people around him, only his secretary could understand him when he spoke Xiang. Xiangtan itself is internally diverse, with [differences](#) between the varieties of the city of Xiantan itself and rural areas.

**Yueyang Xiang** is a separate Changyi Xiang language spoken in the city of Yueyang on the shores of Dongting Lake in Hunan, a famous tourist attraction.

**Yiyang Changyi Xiang** is the Changyi language spoken in the city of Yiyang in Hunan, and it must be a separate language.

### **The Jixu Group of Xiang**

All of the Jixu varieties are spoken in Hunan.

#### **Hunan**

**Jishou Xiang** appears to be a separate language. It is unintelligible outside of the region.

### **The Luoshao Group of Xiang**

Most Luoshao varieties are spoken in Henan, but there are a few Luoshao islands in Guangxi.

#### **Guangxi**

There are also a few Luoshao Xiang islands spoken in Guangxi.

**Quanzhou Xiang** is a separate Xiang language in Guangxi as a Luoshao Xiang island. It has extreme differences with Hunan Luoshao languages like Shuangfeng.

## Hunan

**Gantang Xiang**, spoken in only one town in Shuangfeng County, is probably different enough to be a separate language.

**Lingshuijiang Xiang**, spoken by 300,000 people in Lingshuijiang County, is a separate language, as each county in the Xiang region has its own Xiang language.

**Shuangfeng Xiang** is a separate language spoken in Shuangfeng County. Shuangfeng is also very different within itself, as the vocabulary changes every 10 miles or so. In addition, the Xiang varieties of surrounding counties are all quite different from Shuangfeng.

**Yiyang Luoshao Xiang** is the Luoshao language spoken in Yiyang and must be a separate language, as it is in a different Xiang group than the Changyi language spoken in Yiyang.

## The Shuitang Group of Xiang

The small Shuitang group is spoken in Southwestern Hunan on the border of Southeastern Guangxi.

Shuihui Xiang and Suantang Xiang are both spoken in Southwestern Hunan on the border with Southeastern Guangxi in regions where Hmong and Dong people have been living for many years.

Consequently, a lot Hmong and Dong influences went into both over time. Later on, Southwestern Mandarin become widely spoken in the region, and both varieties were even reclassified as Southwestern Mandarin varieties. But neither language is Mandarin. Instead, they look much more like Xiang.

**Suantang Xiang** itself is very different. It is spoken by 80,000 Hmong in the towns of Baibu, Dabaozi, Dihu, and Sanquiao in Jingzhou and Huitong Counties in Hunan and in Tianzhou County in Guizhou. It has Southwest Mandarin and Xiang elements along with Hmong and Dong influences. Suantang is so different that it is controversial whether it is Southwestern Mandarin or Xiang, but the best analysis seems to be that it is a Xiang language.

Clearly Shuihui Xiang and Suantang Xiang are separate languages. Suantang Xiang itself has great differences, and the current suggestion is that it should be split into two on the basis of

vocabulary, tones, etc. This would give us two separate Suantang Xiangs.

## Hunan

**Shuihui Xiang** is so different that it is recommended to [split it](#) from Luoshao into its own group with Suantang Xiang. It was member of Luoshao Xiang, but it is so different that the new recommendation is to split it off with Suantang into a new Xiang branch containing only those two languages.

**Suantang Xiang** is one Shuantang language. It differs significantly enough from the rest of the language to justify a split.

**Suantang Xiang B** is another Shuantang language that differs dramatically enough from Suantang A to justify a split as a separate language.

## The Unclassified Group of Xiang

### Chongqing

**Tongnan Xiang** is a separate unclassified Xiang language spoken in a Xiang dialect island the towns of Chadian, Longxing, Minzhu, Mengzi, Liaojiachanggou, and Guxi northeast of Tongnan. One theory is that this is a relict of Old Huguang Dialect. Hougang was a region in China around 1600 that later became Hunan and Henan Provinces. Xiang is heavily-spoken in Hunan, so perhaps this island is a relict of old Huguang speech.

## Hunan

**Shamuqiao Lengshuitan Xiang**, formerly classed as a Tuhua, is now thought to be a Xiang language. It has influences from Huaquio Dong'an Tuhua and Lingling Mandarin.

## Sichuan

Xiang is also spoken in a few islands in Sichuan.

**Huangxu Xiang**, an unclassified Xiang island in the Southwestern Mandarin-speaking city of Deyang in Sichuan, is [very different](#) from the rest of Xiang and must surely be a separate language.

## **Shaanxi**

**Ankang Xiang** is a little-known unclassified Xiang dialect island in Ankang Prefectural City in Shaanxi. This region has seen a great deal of immigration from the south in the last 1,000 years. This is surely a separate language.

### **Classification**

Anhua, Anxiang, Baishi, Cenyang, Chengguan, Changsha City, East Liuyang, Guzhang, Hengdong, Hengnan, Hengyang, Hetong, Hongjiang, Houshan, Huaminglou, Jiashanqiang, Lianyuan, Liling, Liushahe, Liuyang City, Miluo, Nanxian, North Liuyang, Pingjiang, Qianshan, Shaodong, Shaoshan, Shuangjiangkou, South Liuyang, Taojiang, Wangcheng, West Liuyang, Wugang, Xiangtan, Xiangyin, Yiyang Changyi, Yuanjiang, Yueyang, and Zhuzhou are members of the Changyi Group of Xiang, which has 39 varieties.

Anhua, Chengbu, Donkou, Gantang, Guanyang, Lianyuan, Lingshuijiang, Longyui, Loudi, Mayang, Qidong, Qiyang, Quanzhou, Shaoyang, Shuangfeng, Wugang, Xiangxiang, Xingan, Xinhua, Xinning, Yiyang Luoshuo and Ziyuan are members of the Luoshao Group of Xiang, which has 22 varieties.

Shuihui and the Suantangs are members of the Shuitang Group of Xiang, which has three members.

Baojing, Chenxi, Huayuan, Jishou, Jixi, Xupu, and Yuanling are members of the Jixu Group of Xiang, which has seven varieties.

Ankang, Anxian, Fengan, Fengxi, Huangxu, Jiangyou, Jianyang, Jintang, Lianping, Mianyang, Mianzhou, Santai, Tongnan, Weiyuan, Yibin, Yilong, and Zizhong are unclassified. 17 Xiang varieties are unclassified.

Xiang is composed of 88 varieties. Most or possibly all of them are separate languages.

The Xiang languages have [50 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

## **Wu**

*Wu* is a major group of diverse Chinese languages that is divided into *Northern Wu* and *Southern Wu*. *Wu* is spoken mostly in all of Zhejiang, Southern Jiangsu and Shanghai. It is also spoken in Eastern Anhui, a few of places in and Northeastern Jiangxi, and in a single location in Northern Fujian. *Wu* varieties are extremely diverse, especially in the mountainous areas of Zhejiang and Eastern Anhui.

The *Wu* languages are well known for their tonal complexity. They exhibit the most complex tone sandhi in the world and their citation tones have a bewildering complexity.

In general, the *Wu* varieties are mostly separate languages; however, a few are merely dialects of other *Wu* varieties. The northern varieties in Southern Jiangsu are much less diverse than the southern ones, but Northern *Wu* is also quite diverse, with most varieties being separate languages, also in some cases, they are not very far apart.

For instance, in the Taizhou Prefecture region, there are [between four and five mutually unintelligible \*Wu\* varieties across a 12 mile area](#). In Zhejiang, the mountains go all the way down to the sea, so there are few flat areas where language can spread out and become mutually comprehensible.

## **Northern Wu**

### **Taihu Wu**

#### **The Hujia Group of Taihu Wu**

The Hujia Group is spoken mostly in Jiangsu and Shanghai and to a lesser extent in Zhejiang.

Several varieties are spoken in the suburbs of Shanghai. Reports vary, but Shanghai residents generally report that these varieties are [not mutually intelligible](#) with Shanghainese (Gilliland 2006). Shanghai suburbs varieties are generally not fully mutually intelligible. These varieties spoken in the suburbs of Shanghai are closer to the Old Shanghainese, which is quite a bit different from the New Shanghainese spoken in the city center nowadays.

## Jiangsu

**Jiangyin Wu** is spoken in Jiangyin County in the north of Wuxi Prefectural City. It is related to Changzhou and has high intelligibility with Changzhou to the west and Wuxi to the south. It has some definite differences with Suzhou. As you move south from Jiangyin, Jiangyin starts sounding more like Wuxi, so we may be dealing with a dialect continuum here.

Claims that Jiangyin is intelligible with not only Wuxi and Changzhou but also with Suzhou and Shanghai are false. It is closest to Wuxi, and it is not even fully intelligible with that language. Jiangyin is a separate Hujia language because it cannot be understood outside the city. Many older people still speak only Jiangyin.

*Kunshan Wu* is a Hujia variety spoken in the “floating city” of Kunshan in Suzhou Prefectural City located east of Suzhou city between Suzhou and Shanghai. It is still very heavily-spoken by all age groups in the city. It seems to be intelligible with Suzhou.

**Suzhou Wu** is a separate Hujia language spoken only in the city proper and its suburbs, although the Suzhou Prefectural City administrative area is large. Suzhou city dwellers say that people in the suburbs have a rural or “hard” accent, while the speech of Suzhou city is called “soft.” Suzhou is presently divided into two sets of speakers, one over 50 and another under 50. Differences between age groups in Suzhou were noted as early as the 1930's. Suzhou is still very widely spoken in the area.

Suzhou is 70% similar to Shanghaihua. That is not enough for full intelligibility. Shanghainese find Suzhou to be incomprehensible. The differences between Suzhou and Shanghainese are much greater than between suburban Shanghai languages. A Shanghainese speaker would need a few months in Suzhou to learn Suzhou. This is about the same as the difference between Castilian-Catalan and Castilian-Asturian.

Suzhou is more complex phonologically and tone-wise than Shanghainese, so it is harder to learn. Even native Suzhou speakers have problems with the tones sometimes. Further, tone sandhi in Suzhou is quite complex.

**Tongxiang Wu** is probably a separate Hujia language spoken in the city of Tongxiang in Jiaxing Prefectural City in Jiangsu. Tongxiang is



80% similar to Shanghaiese, but that is probably not enough for full communication, as Suzhou and Shanghaiese are 70% similar, and Shanghaiese speakers find Suzhou incomprehensible. Intelligibility with Suzhou is unknown.

**Wuxi Wu** is a separate Hujia language spoken in Wuxi Prefectural City in Jiangsu. Wuxi is spoken in [two areas](#), referred to as East Mountain and West Mountain. East Mountain refers to the city of Dongshan, and West Mountain refers to the city of Wuxi. Wuxi is not intelligible with Changzhou or Suzhou and is only [20% similar to Shanghainese](#). Wuxi can understand Shanghainese, but that is no doubt due to bilingual learning. Shanghainese do not understand Wuxi well.

**Yixing Wu**, spoken in the south of Wuxi Prefectural City in Jiangsu, is probably a separate Hujia language. It is spoken 30 miles south of Wuxi city, and it is about as far away from Wuxi as Jiangyin is, and Jiangyin is a separate language.

[Zhangjiagang Wu](#) is a Hujia variety spoken in Zhangjiagang County in the far north of Suzhou Prefectural City in Jiangsu. It is said to be fully intelligible with Suzhou.

## Shanghai

**Baoshan Wu** is spoken in the suburbs of Shanghai. It is not intelligible with Shanghaiese (Gilliland 2006).

**Chongming Wu**, spoken on Chongming Island in the suburbs of Shanghai, is [not intelligible](#) with Shanghainese.

**Fengxian Wu** is spoken in the Shanghai suburbs and is not intelligible with Shanghaiese (Gilliland 2006). It is [not fully intelligible](#) with Jiading. Intelligibility between the two may be ~70%.

**Jiading Wu** is spoken in the Shanghai suburbs and is not intelligible with Shanghai (Gilliland 2006). It can be learned by a Fengxian speaker in [only a few weeks' exposure](#).

**Jinhui or Dôndăc Wu** is spoken in the town of Jinhui in the Fengxian District of Shanghai. It is not intelligible with Shanghaiese or with other suburban Shanghai varieties. Jinhui is noted for having more vowels than any other language, 20 phonemic vowels. It also has a very unusual consonant inventory. It has the most complex phonemic inventory of any language on Earth. Jinhui has 100,000 speakers.



**Jinshan Wu** is another Wu language spoken in the suburbs of Shanghai that is not intelligible with Shanghaiese (Gilliland 2006).

**Lusi or Tongdong Wu**, spoken in the town of Lusi in Qidong County, is not mutually intelligible with Qidong. It is very widely spoken in the city. In recent years, many have become bilingual in Qidong Wu.

**Nanhui Wu** is spoken in the Shanghai suburbs and is not intelligible with Shanghaiese (Gilliland 2006). This was formerly a separate district called the Nanhai District, but recently it was dissolved and folded into the Pudong District. There is extensive reconstruction going on in the area in the creation of the New Nanhai District.

**Pudong Wu**, the older form of the Shanghai language, is still spoken in the Pudong District of the city, but it is dying out. There is a question of whether or not it is mutually intelligible with Shanghaiese, but Shanghaiese speakers seem to feel it is not mutually intelligible (Gilliland 2006).

**Qingpu Wu** is spoken in the Shanghai suburbs and is not intelligible with Shanghaiese (Gilliland 2006).

**Shanghaiese Wu** is the Wu standard. Many speakers in the suburbs of Shanghai say that they can understand Shanghaiese well but not the other way around.

The reason for this is complex. About 100 years ago, Suzhou became a very prestigious language in Shanghai and was widely spoken there. However, in the past century, many immigrants came to Shanghai from other parts of China. In particular, many speakers of Ningbo came to Shanghai. Ningbo is quite a bit different from either Shanghaiese or Suzhou.

With speakers of Ningbo, Suzhou, and Shanghaiese all present in the city in large numbers, a koine needed to develop. Shanghaiese was chosen as the koine, and because speakers of three different languages were communicating, Shanghaiese got dramatically simplified phonologically in order for it to be better understood by everyone. Hence, Shanghaiese has evolved in a highly simplified form of Taihu. This is why many speakers of nearby Wu languages say that they can understand Shanghaiese but not the other way around.

Songjiang was the original Shanghaiese language, having been formed in the area 700 years ago. In 1843, Shanghai was forced to

open its port, and the language changed again. Many migrants [poured in](#) from Suzhou and later from Ningbo in Zhejiang, and Suzhou and Ningbo influence [added](#) to the Old Jixiang to create modern Shanghaiese.

**[Songjiang Wu](#)**, spoken in the Shanghai suburbs, is not intelligible with Shanghaiese (Gilliland 2006). Songjiang is the leftover of the [original Shanghai language](#) that formed in the area 700 years ago. It still [resembles](#) the Ming-era Jiaxing variety. Songjiang was also called Old Jixiang. Songjiang was [de facto Shanghaiese](#) until the city opened up in 1843.

### **The Piling Group of Taihu Wu (Northwestern Wu)**

The Piling Group is spoken in Jiangsu. Haimen is a city of 1 million situated on Hainan Island.

#### **Jiangsu**

**[Changzhou Wu](#)** is a separate Piling language spoken in Changzhou Prefectural City. Changzhou and Wuxi have [high but not full](#) intelligibility. Changzhou and Wuxi are part of a [dialect chain](#) in which eastern Changzhou speakers can communicate with western Wuxi speakers, but as one moves further east into Wuxi or west into Changzhou, intelligibility drops off. It is best then to split Wuxi and Changzhou into separate Piling languages. Changzhou itself has [considerable dialectal divergence](#), though apparently all dialects are mutually intelligible.

Changzhou is the most [orthodox](#) Taihu language. It has eight tones, and compared to Suzhou, it is many more sounds and a lot more traditional vocabulary. Changzhou has [3 million speakers](#).

**[Danyang Wu](#)** is a separate Piling language spoken in Southern Danyang County south of the Yangtze River in the west of Jiangsu. The language looks more Wu in the south of the county and more like Jianghuai Mandarin in the north. Danyang Wu does not look like a typical Wu language and its tone sandhi is very different. Danyang is very divergent due to extreme Jianghuai influence. There are many dialects within Danyang, but in general, they are mutually intelligible.

**[Haimen Wu](#)** is a separate Piling language spoken in the city of Haimen in Nantong Prefectural City in Jiangsu. It is [not intelligible](#)

with the other Haimen language spoken in the city.

**Haimen Wu A** is a separate Piling language the other language spoken in the city of Haimen in Jiangsu. It is [not intelligible](#) with Hainan B.

**Nantong City Wu** is a separate Piling language spoken in Nantong city in Nantong Prefectural City in Jiangsu. It is spoken in the Chongchuan and Gangzha Districts in the city center.

**Qidong Wu**, spoken in the city of [Qidong](#) in Nantong Prefectural City in Jiangsu, is a [separate Piling language](#).

**Rudong Wu** is a separate Piling language spoken in Nantong Prefectural City in Jiangsu.

**Taixing Wu** is a separate Piling language spoken in in Taixing in Taizhou Prefectural City in the far north of the Wu zone north of the Yangtze River in Central Jiangsu. It was formerly part of a separate subgroup of Wu called Huainan Wu. Huainan means south of the Huai River. Huainan Wu is very ancient, having been formed in the region from Old Chinese from 750-500 BC.

**Tongzhou Wu** is a separate Piling language spoken in Nantong Prefectural City in Jiangsu.

## Zhejiang Location & Topography



*Topographical map of Zhejiang Province shows the extremely mountainous nature of the province which has resulted in extreme diversity of Wu varieties. The only level areas are at the very far north of the province. In general, Wu varieties in Zhejiang are highly diverse. Map also shows the location of many Wu varieties in Zhejiang.*

### The Hangzhou Group of Taihu Wu

Hangzhou is spoken in Zhejiang. Hangzhou is the only member of the Hangzhou Group.

## **Zhejiang**

**Hangzhou Wu** is reportedly [much different](#) from the varieties of Shanghainese, Ningbo, etc. to the northeast and is [not intelligible](#) with Shanghainese, [nor with Suzhou](#). Hangzhou has [1.2 million speakers](#). Nevertheless, Hangzhou appears to be dying out in Hangzhou Prefectural City, as only older people seem to speak the language anymore. Hangzhou is [40% similar](#) to Shanghainese. Hangzhou is not intelligible at all with Huzhou and especially Deqing, contrary to claims.

### **The Linshao Group of Taihu Wu**

The Linshao Group is spoken in far northern Zhejiang around the city of Hangzhou. As it is spoken in a region that is quite mountainous, and the most divergent Wu lects of all are spoken in the mountainous areas of Zhejiang, a good guess is that all of Linshao are separate languages.

## **Zhejiang**

**Cixi Wu** is spoken in Cixi county-level city on the southern shores of Hangzhou Bay in the far north of Ningbo Prefectural City. It has the [odd whispery voice feature](#). As the only Linshuo variety that has whispery voice, Cixi is quite probably a separate language.

**Fuyang Wu** is a separate Linshuo Wu language spoken in the mountains along the Fuchun River in the Fuyang District in Northwestern Hangzhou Prefectural City.

**Jiande Wu** is a separate Linshao language spoken in the high mountains of Jiande county-level city in Southern Hangzhou Prefectural City. It is most probably a separate Linshuo language.

**Lin'an Wu** is probably a separate Linshuo language. It is spoken in the mountains of Lin'an District of Northern Hangzhou Prefectural City.

**Nanyang Wu** is a separate Linshuo language spoken in the mountains in the Southern Xiaoshan District in Northwestern Hangzhou Prefectural City. It differs from other Xiaoshan Wu varieties.

**Shangyu Wu** is a separate Linshuo Wu language spoken in the mountains along the southern shore of Hangzhou Bay between Yuyao



and Shaoxing.

**Shaoxing Wu** is a separate Linshuo language spoken in the city of Shaoxing in the mountains at the far western end of Hangzhou Bay in Zhejiang. It has been used for Wu operas. There are 633,000 speakers. Shaoxing is very ancient, dating all the way back to Chu Old Chinese, spoken from 500-250 BC.

**Shengxian Wu** is a separate Linshuo language spoken in Shengzhou County high in the mountains south of Huiji Mountain in Central Zhejiang.

Shengxian has eight tones (Zhu & Rose 1998).

**Tonglu Wu** is a separate Linshuo Wu language spoken high in the mountains along the Fuchun River in Tonglu County in Huangzhou Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

Tonglu has eight tones (Zhu & Rose 1998).

**Xiaoshan Wu** is a separate Linshuo Wu language spoken in the mountains in Xiaoshan District in Hangzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Xincheng Wu** is a separate Linshuo language spoken in Zhejiang.

**Yuyao Wu** is a separate Linshuo language spoken in Yuyao County in the north of Ningbo Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Zhuji Wu** is a separate Linshuo Wu language spoken high in the mountains in south of Hangzhou in Zhejiang.

### **The Taioxi Group of Taihu Wu**

The Taioxi Group is spoken in the far north of Zhejiang on the southern border of the Hujia Group near Hujia languages like Jiaxing and Haining. Taioxi is mostly spoken in the mountains on the edge of the plain that covers the northern peninsula that forms the northern shore of Hangzhou Bay. It is also spoken in one place over the border in Anhui.

### **Anhui**

**Guande Wu** is spoken in Eastern Anhui. It is closely related to Huzhou Wu. The area is extremely mountainous. As is the case with most Anhui Wu varieties, Guande Wu, now called Old Guande, is

losing ground to a Jianghuai Mandarin variety known as New Guande. As it is spoken in a completely different province full of the most divergent Wu varieties around, Guande is quite probably a separate language despite its close relations with Huzhou. Also Huzhou can only be understood for 30 miles from the city center, and Guande is further away than that.

## **Zhejiang**

**Anji Wu** is definitely a separate Taioxi language. Anji County was very isolated from Huzhou Prefectural City until the mid-1990's when a new highway was built. The region is very mountainous and is known for its bamboo crop. This is a major area of ecotourism and sustainable development. Huzhou can only be understood for 30 miles from the city, and Anji is farther away than that.

**Changxing Wu** is spoken in Changxing County in far Northwestern Zhejiang to the west of Huzhou Prefectural City. The region is fairly mountainous. Also Huzhou can only be understood for 30 miles outside the city and the city of Changxing is 30 miles away, and much of the county is further away than that. Changxing is a separate Taioxi language.

**Deqing Wu** must be a separate Taioxi language. It is spoken in Dexing County in Huzhou Prefectural City. The region is fairly mountainous and no doubt Dexing is a separate language. Deqing is an old city in Huzhou, having been built [1,700 years ago](#). The speech in Deqing is [very different](#) from the speech in the city of Huzhou. Also Huzhou can only be understood for 30 miles outside the city, and Deqing is farther away than that.

**Huzhou Wu** is apparently a separate Taioxi language, spoken in Huzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang. It is still very widely spoken by all ages in the city. Huzhou is the prestige variety of Taioxi. Huzhou cannot be understood outside of Huzhou Prefectural City, contrary to reports.

## **The Yongjiang Group of Taihu Wu**

The Yongjiang Group is spoken in far Northeastern Zhejiang around Ningbo and in the Zhoushan Islands. There are claims that Yongjiang Wu varieties are very closely related and are better seen more as

accents than dialects, differing only in some phonology and lexicon. This implies that they are all mutually intelligible. However, Fenghua, Xiangshan, and Yinzhou Counties in Ningbo Prefectural City are very mountainous, and the mutual intelligibility of these varieties with the rest of Yongjiang is dubious.

Although Daishan and Dinghai are only separated by a strait, their phonologies are [differ significantly](#).

## **Zhejiang**

**[Daishan Wu](#)** is spoken on Daishan County on Daishan Island in the Zhoushan Archipelago. Daishan has some Min influences related to maritime immigration from Fujian in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Daishan has a [significantly different phonology](#) and vocabulary from Dinghai on Zhoushan Island, so it may well be a separate Yongjiang language. The reason for the different phonology and vocabulary has to do with the Fujian immigrants who came to Daishan.

**[Dinghai Wu](#)** is spoken in the Dinghai District on the western half of Zhoushan Island in the Zhoushan Archipelago. It is probably a separate Yongjiang language, as its phonology [differs significantly](#) from Daishan's and it has the odd [whispery voice](#) feature. Having this odd feature may make Dinghai a separate Yongjiang language.

**[Fenghua Wu](#)** is spoken in the mountainous Fenghua District southwest of Ningbo city in Ningbo Prefectural City. It has the odd whispery voice [feature](#). The odd whispery voice and the very mountainous terrain may be enough to make Fenghua a separate Yongjiang language.

**[Ningbo Wu](#)** is a separate Yongjiang language spoken near the coast by the Zhoushan Archipelago. It is close to Shanghaiese, and Ningbo speakers can learn Shanghaiese in two months. This is because many Ningbo speakers moved to Shanghai in the past 100 years after the Taiping Rebellion, and Ningbo became a prestige language in Shanghai in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, so Shanghaiese has a lot of Ningbo influence in it.

*Putuo Wu* is a Yongjiang variety spoken on Putuo County on the eastern half of Zhongshan Island in Zhejiang.

*Sheshi Wu* is a Yongjiang variety spoken in Sheshi County in the Sheshi Islands in the Zhoushan Archipelago of Zhejiang.



**Xiangshan Wu** is spoken in mountainous Xiangshan County to the south of Ningbo city in Ningbo Prefectural City in Zhejiang. This is an area where mountains go right down to the coast. Xiangshan has the odd whispery voice feature. The odd whispery voice feature and the very mountainous terrain may make Xiangshan a separate Yongjiang language.

**Yinxian Wu** is spoken in the Yinzhou District south of Ningbo city in Ningbo Prefectural City in Zhejiang. The area is very mountainous, and the mountains go all the way down to the sea. The area is heavily-forested, and there are a number of parks in the region. Most of the other Yongjiang varieties in this area with this sort of geography are separate languages, so Yinxian is probably one too.

**Zhenhai Wu** is spoken in rural Zhenhai County, located on the coast 12 miles northeast of Ningbo city in Ningbo Prefectural City in Zhejiang. Zhenhai has many odd features, including modal voice, tense voice, harsh voice, whisper, whispery voice, and growl. Zhenhai also has extensive tone sandhi, so the actual shape of its tones can vary considerably. The growl is found only in Zhenhai Wu among Chinese languages, and in fact, it is found nowhere else on Earth other than some Khoisan languages, making it truly a bizarre feature. Considering the astounding number of odd voicing features, Zhenhai is quite probably a separate Yongjiang language.

**Zhoushan Wu** is spoken in the city of Zhoushan on Zhoushan Island off the coast of far Northeastern Zhejiang. Although Zhoushan and Ningbo are said to be fully intelligible, this is not the case, as Zhoushan lacks full intelligibility of Ningbo, so it is a separate Yongjiang language .

### **Unclassified Taihu Wu**

**Jinxiang Wu** is a separate Wu language with Mandarin influences. This is a Taihu (Northern Wu) outlier spoken far to the south of the Taihu region in the Wenzhou area in Cagnan County in Zhejiang around Zhenan Min speakers.

### **The Taizhou Group of Wu**

Taizhou Wu is a major split in Wu. All Taizhou languages are spoken in Zhejiang.

It is [centered](#) around the Prefectural City of [Taizhou](#) in Eastern Zhejiang and is composed of many separate varieties, all of which are separate languages.

There are 4-5 [mutually unintelligible](#) Wu varieties spoken in Taizhou Prefectural City's metropolitan area alone. This is a region that is only 12 miles across. Three of these languages are Huangyan Wu, Jiaojiang Wu and Luquiao Wu, but the names of the other two are not known. The area has split into so many mutually unintelligible languages mostly due to terrain.

## **Zhejiang**

[Huangyan Wu](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the Huangyan District of Taizhou Prefectural City, which is now only a [10 minute bus ride from Taizhou](#), but the highway was only built recently, and there is a huge mountain between both cities.

[Jiaojiang Wu](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the Jiaojiang District along the coast of Taizhou Prefectural City, [now only a 10 minute bus ride from Taizhou](#), but there is a huge river separating them, and it could be crossed only by boat until a ferry was built in the 1990's.

[Linhai Wu](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in Linhai county-level city along the coast and inland high in the mountains in Taizhou Prefectural City, which is now only [20 minutes away from Taizhou](#) since a new expressway was recently built that involved blasting through a few mountains that previously had separated the cities.

[Luquiao Wu](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the Luquiao District along the coast of Taizhou Prefectural City.

[Ninghai Wu](#) is spoken in the city of Ninghai high in the mountains in the far south of Ningbo Prefectural City. It is so different from Ningbo that it is in a totally separate Wu group.

[Sanmen Wu](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in Sanmen County along the coast in the north of Taizhou Prefectural City.

[Taizhou Wu](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the metropolitan area of Taizhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

[Taizhou Wu A](#) is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the metropolitan area of Taizhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Tiantai Wu** is a separate Taizhou language spoken in Tiantai County high in the mountains in the north of Taizhou Prefectural City south of Tiantai Mountain in Central Zhejiang. **Tiantai** has eight tones, and it even has creaky voice (Zhu & Rose 1998).

**Wenling Wu** is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the county-level city of Wenling along the coast of Taizhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Xianju Wu** is a separate Taizhou language spoken in the eastern part of Taizhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Yuhuan Wu** is a separate Taizhou language spoken in Yuhuan county-level city along the coast in Taizhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

## **Southern Wu**

### **The Oujiang Group of Wu**

Most of Oujiang Wu is spoken in Zhejiang, with one outlier spoken in Anhui.

**The Oujiang Group of Wu** is extremely divergent, and all members are separate languages. In fact, this is the most diverse group in all of Wu. It is **not understood** outside of Wenzhou, and it is not even intelligible within itself. Wenzhou, instead of being a single language, is instead of family of **partially mutually unintelligible** varieties. See more **evidence** for that here.

Since there are **11 different cities and counties** in Wenzhou, and the language changes every five miles or so, it would be logical to assume that there are 11 separate languages within Wenzhou. However, closer analysis reveals at least 14 languages within Wenzhou.

So we should then split off at least one Wenzhou language for each major division of Wenzhou City.

**Manhua Wu or Mayo**, a macrolanguage, is quite different. It is spoken around Cangnan and Wuzhou Prefectural City in Northern Zhejiang on the southern coast of Wuzhou Prefectural City in about five townships. The word *man* literally means “barbarians.”

There is a controversy over whether or not Manhua is Macro-Min or Macro-Wu. It is probably Macro-Wu based on phonology, and it also

shares some similar Min-like traits with other Wu varieties such as those in the Chuqu group. Some think it originated in a Southern Min dialect that came under the influence of a non-Sinitic language. Word order is completely different from Chinese word order. However, the word order is changing under the influence of Mandarin, and many younger people are using a more Mandarin word order.

Some theories think it has Proto-Vietnamese, Austronesian, and She influences. The major components seem to be Old Cantonese, Old Chinese, and Mandarin. Some also suggest Northern Min, Eastern Min, Southern Min, and especially Wu influences.

A good guess would be that this is a [Sinicized version of Manjiang Eastern Min](#).

Within Manhua Wu, there is a northern group spoken in the town of Yishan, and a southern group spoken in the towns of Qianku and Jinxiang.

Manhua Wu has 200,000-400,000 speakers.

## **Anhui**

**Shexian Wu** is a separate language, an Oujiang outlier spoken in Eastern Anhui.

## **Zhejiang**

**Cangnan Wu**, spoken in Cangnan County along the coast of Wenzhou Prefectural City, is a separate Oujiang language.

**Chu River Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in Wencheng County in Wenzhou Prefectural City. It is closely related to Wencheng Wu.

[Dongtu Wu](#), spoken on Dongtu Island in the Dongtu District of Wenzhou Prefectural City, is a separate Oujiang language.

**Jinxiang Manhua Wu** is a Manhua Wu language spoken in Jinxiang in Cangnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural City. Jinxiang and Qianku Manhua Wu are not mutually intelligible, so Jinxiang is a separate language.

**Leqing Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in Yueqing County in the north of Wenzhou Prefectural City.

**Longwan Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in the Longwan District along the coast of Wenzhou Prefectural City.

**Lucheng Wu** is a separate Oujiang language, the standard version of Wenzhou, spoken in the Lucheng District in Wenzhou Prefectural City by 1 million people.

**Luoyang Wu** is a separate Oujiang language best seen as a southern extension of Yesou Wu that is spoken in the town of Luoyang in Cangnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural City. Luoyang is influenced by Manjiang Eastern Min.

**Liqu Wu** is a separate Oujiang Wu language related to Luoyang spoken in Quiaodunzen in Cangnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Northern Yueqing Wu** is a [separate Oujiang language](#), spoken in the northern part of the Yueqing County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang. It is separated from the rest of the city of Yueqing by Yangdang Mountain.

**Ouhai Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in the Ouhai District in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Pincheng Wu**, a separate Oujiang language spoken in Pingcheng County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang, is related to Ru'ian (Rose 2006).

**Pingyang Manhua Wu** is another Manhua language spoken Pingyang County along the coast in Wenzhou Prefectural City in the far southeast of Zhejiang. It has significant Min influences.

**Qianku Manhua Wu** is the standard for Manhua Wu. Although the internal differences in Manhua Wu are not great, the differences are great enough to impede mutual intelligibility. It is spoken in far Southern Zhejiang in the city of Qianku in Cangnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural City.

**Qingjiang Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in the city of Qingjiang along the coast of Northern Yueqing County where the Qingjiang River empties into Yueqing Bay in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang near the northeastern border of the Oujiang area where it abuts on the Taizhou area to the east (Rose 2006).

**Qingtian Wu** (Christiansen 2005) is a separate Oujiang language spoken in Qingtian County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang

inland from Wenzhou city.

**Rui'an Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken by 1 million people in the city of Ru'ian in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang to the south of Wenzhou city. Rui'an has eight tones.

**Taishun Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in Taishun County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang that has significant Min influences (Ballard 1989).

**Wencheng Wu** (Christiansen 2003), spoken in Wengcheng County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang, is a separate Oujiang language. It is very different from the rest of Oujiang. It is so different that there are questions about whether it was always Oujiang or whether it was another language that came under the influence of Oujiang (Rose 2006).

**Wenxi Wu** is a separate Oujiang language. It is spoken in one town in Qingtian County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang to the west of Wenzhou city.

**Wujiang Wu** is a separate Oujiang language that has come under serious influence of Luoyang Wu. It is spoken in the far south of Zhejiang.

**Xiangjiang or Xiangyang Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang nine miles east of Wenzhou city (Rose 2006).

**Yishan Manhua Wu** is spoken very heavily in the town of Longgang in Cangnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang. It must be a separate language due to its distance from the other two Manhua Wu varieties.

**Yueqing Wu** is spoken in Yueqing County along the coast in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang 15 miles northeast of the city of Wenzhou, is a Oujiang separate language, as the variety in the north is not intelligible with the language in the south of the county (Rose 2006).

**Yongjia Wu** is a separate Oujiang language spoken in Yongjia County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang eight miles north of the city of Wenzhou (Rose 2006).. If you go five miles in any direction in Wenzhou, there's a new variety, and it's hard to understand people.

**Yesou Wu** is an aberrant Oujiang Wu language spoken in Cangnan County in Wenzhou Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

## **The Wuzhou Group of Wu**

Wuzhou is highly divergent, much more so than Taihu Wu. A single county, Yiwu, contains 18 separate languages, all mutually unintelligible. Wuzhou Wu consists of at least 30 languages.

### **Zhejiang**

**Dongyang Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in the county-level city of Dongyang in Northern Jinhua Prefectural City (Ballard 1989).

**Fangyan Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken to the east of Yongkang Wu (Ballard 1989) in Jingtian County in Lishui Prefectural City.

**Jinhua Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Jinhua Prefectural City. (Ballard 1989).

**Jinhua Xiaohuang Wu**, is another separate Wuzhou language spoken in Jinhua Prefectural City.

**Lanxi Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Lanxi county-level city in Northern Jinhua Prefectural City.

It has 660,000 speakers (Rickard 2006).

**Longyou Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Longyou County in the far east of Quzhou Prefectural City.

It has some Min influences (Ballard 1989).

**Maodian Wu** is one of the Yiwu languages, one of 18 different Wu languages spoken in Yiwu alone. It is spoken at the southern tip of Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City. Maodian has nine tones.

**Pan'an Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Pan'an County in Northern Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

It has strong Min influences (Ballard 1989).

**Pujiang Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Pujiang County high in the mountains in the north of Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang. Pujiang has eight tones (Zhu & Rose 1998).

**Tangxi Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken a bit to the southwest of Jinhua and to the east of Longyou in Zhejiang (Ballard



1989).

**Wuyi Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Wuyi County in Southern Jinhua Prefectural City in Zhejiang (Lam 2005).

**Yiwu Wu** is one of the Yiwu languages. It is spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu A** is a separate Wuzhou language, one of 18 spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu B** is one of 18 separate Wuzhou languages spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu C** is a separate language spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu D** is one of the 18 separate Yiwu languages spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu E** is a separate Wu language spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu F**, a separate language, is one of 18 Wuzhou languages spoken in a single county-level city in Yiwu in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu G** is a Wuzhou language spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang, one of 18 Wu languages spoken there.

**Yiwu Wu H** is a separate language, a Yiwu Wu language spoken in massively splintered Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang, where 18 different Wu languages are spoken.

**Yiwu Wu I** is one of 18 different Wu languages spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu J** is one of the 18 separate Wuzhou languages spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu K** is a language that is part of Yiwu Wu, a Wuzhou subgroup consisting of 18 separate languages spoken in a single county-level city, Yiwu, in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu L** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in very mountainous Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City Central Zhejiang, one of 18 different Wu languages spoken in that one



county.

**Yiwu Wu M** is one of the massively splintered Yiwu Wu languages spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang, where an incredible 18 different Wu languages are spoken in a single county-level city.

**Yiwu Wu N** is one of the 18 different Wu languages spoken in Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu O**, a separate Wuzhou language, is one of 18 different Wuzhou languages spoken in a single county-level city, Yiwu, in Jinhua Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Yiwu Wu P** is a Wuzhou Wu language, one of 18 different languages spoken in extremely diverse Yiwu county-level city in Jinhua Prefectural City in Central Zhejiang.

**Yongkang Wu** is a separate Wuzhou language spoken in Yongkang County in Jinhua Prefectural City (Ballard 1989).

## **The Chuqu Group of Wu**

Chuqu Wu is split into two subgroups, Chuzhou Wu and Longqu Wu. It contains contains [23 varieties, all separate languages](#). Some members of this group extend south beyond Zhejiang into Northeastern Jiangxi and Northern Fujian. We are going to cautiously classify almost of Chuqu Wu as separate languages, since it is much more divergent and much less mutually intelligible than Taihu Wu, and Taihu Wu itself has low internal intelligibility.

## **The Chuzhou Group of Chuqu Wu**

Chuzhou Wu is spoken in the far south of Zhejiang. **Xuanping Wu** is a Chuzhou language.

## **Zhejiang**

**Hedi Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language similar to Manjiang Eastern Min spoken in the town of Hedi in Qingyuan County in Eastern Lishui City.

**Jingning Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in Jingning She Autonomous County in the high mountains in Southern Lishui City. There are many She people living here.

It has significant Min influences (Ballard 1989).

**Jinyun Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in the high mountains of Jinyun County in far Northeastern Lishui Prefectural City.

**Lishui Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in the high mountains far inland in Lishui Prefectural City.

It also has a deep Min layer in the language (Ballard 1989).

**Longquan Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in the high mountains in Longquan County in Western Lishui Prefectural City.

It has significant Min influences (Ballard 1989).

**Qingyuan Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken high in the mountains in Qingyan County in Eastern Lishui Prefectural City.

**Songyang Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in the high mountains of Songyang County in Central Lishui Prefectural City.

It has significant Min influences (Ballard 1989).

**Suichang Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in the high mountains of Suichang County in the far northwest of Lishui Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Yunhe Wu** is spoken a separate Chuzhou language in Yunhe County in the center of Lishui Prefectural City in Zhejiang.

**Zaicheng Wu** is a separate Chuzhou language spoken in Zaicheng, the county seat of Lishui Prefectural City in Zhejiang. Zaicheng is [dying out](#), now spoken mostly by older people over 60 who use it among their family members. Lishui is on the [border](#) of Jianghuai Mandarin and Wu. A dialect of Jianghuai has been spoken in the city for the last 100 years and is now [replacing](#) Wu. All of the areas surrounding Zaicheng are Wu-speaking (Guo 2006).

### **The Longqu Group of Chuqu Wu**

Longqu Wu is spoken mostly in Southwestern Zhejiang but also in Northeastern Jiangxi, Northern Fujian, and Jiangsu. [Pucheng Wu](#) has two dialects, *Nampo* and *North Dabei*. It is so diverse that some say it is a [language isolate and is not even a part of Wu](#) (Norman 1988). It is spoken outside of the general Wu region in far Northern Fujian.

Pucheng has six different dialects, and all are quite different in terms of voicing, devoicing, and tone shifts (Zhengzhang 1984). A good

argument can be made that each one is a separate language, making Pucheng a macrolanguage. Pucheng seems to be a mixture of Wu and Min similar to Manhua Wu and Manjiang Eastern Min.

Pucheng is an excellent example of the theory of Wumin or of an ancient link between Northern Min languages (where Min refers to the Min languages spoken in the northern part of the Min-speaking region and not to broad Southern Min) and Southern Wu (Ballard 1989).

Deep connections that cannot be attributed to borrowing have been shown between Southern Wu and Northern Min languages, in particular Northwestern Min or Minjiang Min. The suggestion here is that there was once an ancient language something like Wumin or the Min languages of the north combined with Southern Wu. It is from this common source that Southern Wu and the Min languages of the north rose (Ballard 1989).

This theory also notes the extreme differences between Northern Wu and Southern Wu, which seem to have different geneses. Whatever Northern Wu is, it did not seem to derive from this ancient Wumin language. Instead it developed in the north and then later imposed itself on the Southern Wu languages, giving them what we now see as a Wu layer. The theory also suggests that Southern Min and the northern Min languages also had different geneses: the Northern Min languages from this Wumin language and Southern Min via something else, possibly influences from the Yue or other languages of Southern China (Ballard 1989).

What is important to note here is that typological similarities used to create and divide language families do not necessarily imply a common origin at all. Instead, what is shown is that at one time, one of the related languages may have imposed itself on the other as a superstratum. Typological similarity shows familial relationship, but it does not necessarily imply monogenesis (Ballard 1989).

As an additional piece of evidence for a Min-Wu special relationship, another theory in Chinese linguistics divides Chinese languages in Southern China into eastern and western languages. Min and Wu are eastern languages and Xiang, Gan and (somehow) Cantonese are western languages.

## Fujian

**Nampo Wu** is a Pucheng Wu language spoken in Northern Fujian. It is extremely divergent (Zhengzhang 1984).

**North Dabai Wu** is another Pucheng Wu language spoken in Northern Fujian around Pucheng. It is also very divergent (Zhengzhang 1984).

**Pucheng Wu A** is a separate Pucheng Wu language spoken around Pucheng in Northern Fujian. It is highly divergent (Zhengzhang 1984).

**Pucheng Wu B** is a highly divergent Pucheng Wu language spoken in Northern Fujian around Pucheng (Zhengzhang 1984).

**Pucheng Wu C** is another very divergent Pucheng Wu language spoken in the far north of Fujian near Pucheng (Zhengzhang 1984).

**Pucheng Wu D** is yet another divergent Pucheng Wu language spoken in far northern Fujian near Pucheng (Zhengzhang 1984).

## Jiangxi

**Dexing Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Dexing county-level city in Shangrao Prefectural City.

**Geyuan Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Hengfeng County in Shangrao Prefectural City. Nevertheless, it is completely different from all surrounding Sinitic varieties, and it must be a separate language. Until recently, speakers were not even sure they were speaking a Wu language.

**Guangfeng Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Guangfeng County in Shangrao Prefectural City.

**Shangrao City Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Shangrao Prefectural City. This language is apparently spoken in the city itself as opposed to the surrounding county where Shangrao County is spoken..

**Shangrao County Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Shangrao County in Shangrao Prefectural City. This language is presumably spoken in the surrounding county as opposed to the city itself, where Shangrao City is spoken.

**Yushan Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken Yushan County in the far west of Shangrao Prefectural City in Jiangxi.

## **Zhejiang**

**Changshan Wu** is spoken in Changshan County in Central Quzhou Prefectural City in Southwestern Zhejiang on the border of Jiangxi.

**Jiangshan Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Jiangshan County in far Southern Quzhou Prefectural City.

**Kaihua Wu** is a separate Longqu language spoken in Kaihua County in far Western Quzhou Prefectural City.

**Quzhou Wu** is a separate language within Longqu spoken in Quzhou Prefectural City .

## **Unclassified Wu**

**Nanjing Wu** is a separate language. It is close to Shanghainese Wu but is not fully intelligible with it.

## **Classification**

Taihu Wu is composed of 81 varieties, most of which are separate languages. It contains seven subgroups.

Baoshan, Canlang, Changsha, Changshu, Chengxiang, Chongming, Fengxian, Haining, Haiyan, Huinan, Jiading, Jiangyin, Jiashan, Jiaxing, Jinchang, Jinshan, Kunshan, Nanmen, Pinghu, Pingjiang, Pudong, Qingpu, Shanghai, Songjiang, Suzhou, Taicang, Tailun, Wunang, Wujiang, Wuxi, Xishan, Yixing, and Zhangjiagang are all members of the Hujia Group of Taihu, which contains 33 varieties, most of which are separate languages.

Changzhou, Danyang, Gaochun, the Haimens, Jingning, Jintan, Lishui, Lusi, Liyang, Nantong City, Qidong, Rudong, Shazhou, Taixing, Wuhu, and Wujin and are in the Piling Group of Taihu, which has 17 varieties.

Piling has [8 million speakers](#).

Hangzhou is a member of the Hangzhou Group of Taihu, of which it is the only member.

Changle, Cixi, Fuyang, Jiande, Lin'an, Shangyu, Shaoxing, Shengxian, Tonglu, Xiaoshan, Xinchang, Yuyao, and Zhuji are in the Linshao Group of Taihu, which contains 13 varieties.

Anji, Changxing, Deqing, Huzhou, and Yuhang are members of the Taioxi Group of Taihu, which has five varieties.

Daishan, Dinghai, Fenghua, Ningbo, Putuo, Shengxian, Xiangshan, Yinxian, Zhenhai, and Zhoushan are in the Yongjiang Group of Taihu, which contains 10 varieties.

Yongjiang has [4 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Guangde, Jinxiang, and Lanxi are in the Unclassified Group of Taihu, which has three varieties.

Taihu has [47 million speakers](#).

Huangyan, Jiaojiang, Leqing, Linhai, Luqiao, Ninghai, Sanmen, the Taizhous, Tiantai, Wenling, Xianju, and Yuhuan are members of the Taizhou Group of Wu, which has 13 varieties, all separate languages.

Cangnan, Chu River, Dongtou, Hedi, Jinxiang Manhua, Leqing, Liqu, Longwan, Luoyang, Northern Yueqing, Ou hai, Pingyang, Quianku Manhua, Qingjiang, Qingtian, Ruian, Shexian, Taishun, Wencheng, Wenxi, Wenzhou, Wujiang, Xiangyang, Yishan Manhua, Yesuo, Yongjia, and Yueqing are in the Oujiang Group of Wu, which contains 28 varieties, most of them separate languages.

Dongyang, Jiande, Jinhua, Jinhua Xiaohuang, Jinyun, Lanxi, Longyou, Pan'an, Pujiang, Tangxi, Wuyi, the Yiwus, and Yongkang are all members of the Wuzhou Group of Wu, which contains 30 varieties, all of which are separate languages.

Wuzhou has [4 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Chuqu Wu has two subgroups, Chuzhou Wu and Longqu Wu. Chuqu Wu contains 26 separate varieties, almost all separate languages.

Jingning, Lishui, Longquan, Nampo, North Dabai, the Puchengs, Qingyuan, Songyang, Suichang, Taishun, Xuanping, Yunhe, and Zaicheng are in the Chuzhou group of Chuqu, which contains 16 varieties, almost all separate languages.

Chuzhou has 1.5 million speakers.

Changshan, Dexing, Geyuan, Guangfeng, Jiangshan, Kaihua, Quzhou, Shangrao City, Shangrao County, and Yushan are members of the Longqu Group of Chuqu, which has 10 languages.

Longqu has [5 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Southern Wu has [18 million speakers](#).

Guangde, Lanxi, and Nanjing are in the Unclassified Group of Wu,

which has three members.

There are 178 varieties of Wu. Some say that there are [hundreds of mutually unintelligible languages](#) inside of Wu alone.

The Wu languages have 85 million speakers (Olson 1998).

## Huizhou/Hui

*Hui, Huizhou, or Huianan* is a major group of many different Chinese languages with wide internal variation. There is a possibility that all Hui varieties are separate languages. Hui is spoken in the historical area of Huizhou, located mostly in Southeastern Anhui but also partly in Jiangxi and a tiny bit in Zhejiang. The area is very mountainous, leading to strong differentiation among the varieties. Every county in the area has its own Hui version unintelligible to outsiders. The classification below will assume that each county-level variety of Hui is a separate language. In fact, there is a very good probability that each major Hui dialect is a separate language.

### The Jingzhan Group

The Jingzhan Group is spoken in Anhui and Jiangxi.

**Chilingkou Hui**, spoken in Chiling, Qimen County, Anhui, is a separate language.

**Jingde Hui** is a separate Jingzhan language spoken in Anhui.

**Meixi Xiang Hui** is a separate Jingzhan language spoken in [Meixi, Jiangxi](#).

**Ningguo Hui** is a separate language spoken in Ningguo County in Anhui.

Within Qimen County in Anhui itself, there are six different Hui varieties with low intelligibility between them. We are talking about six different languages here. One of them is Chilingkou.



The others we will just call **Qimen Hui A**, **Qimen Hui B**, **Qimen Hui C**, **Qimen Hui D**, and **Qimen Hui F**.

**Shitai Hui**, spoken in Shitai County, Anhui, is a separate language.

### **The Jishi Group**

The Jishi Group is spoken in Anhui.

**Shexian A** is one language that is spoken in the Shexian area of Anhui. It is not intelligible with Shexian B.

**Shexian B** is the other language that is spoken in the same area of Anhui. It is not intelligible with Shexian A. that we will only call Shexian Hui A and Shexian Hui B for now.

**Jixi Hui** is a separate language.

**Hongmen Hui** is a separate language.

### **The Qide Group**

The Qide Group is spoken in Jiangxi and Anhui.

**Dexing Hui**, spoken in Jiangxi, is a separate language.

**Dongzhi Hui**, spoken in Dongzhi County, Anhui, is a separate language.

### **The Xiuyi Group**

The Xiuyi Group is spoken in Anhui and Jiangsxi.

**Tunxi Hui**, spoken in the Tunxi District of Anhui, is a separate language.

**Wuyuan Hui**, spoken in Jiangxi, is a separate language.

**Xiuning Hui**, spoken in Xiuning County in Jiangxi, is a separate language.

### **The Yangzhou Group**

The Yangzhou Group is spoken in Western Zhejiang and a bit in Jiangxi. It is interesting because there is controversy whether these are Wu or Hui languages. Careful examination reveals that they cannot be subsumed under Southern Wu due to their great divergence from it, despite having some similarities with Wu. Some

authors feel that they are Hui-Wu merged varieties, and their similarity with both is given as a reason for merging Wu and Hui into a supergroup.

While it is best to classify them as Hui, they are [much different](#) from most Hui varieties.

**[Chun'an Hui](#)** is a separate language. It is spoken in Chun'an County in Jiangxi. Chunan is very diverse.

**Suian Hui** is a separate language within Yangzhou. It is spoken in Western Zhejiang and is very diverse.

**Shouchang Hui** is a separate language within Yangzhou spoken in Western Zhejiang. It is extremely diverse.

**[Jiande Hui](#)** is a separate language in Yangzhou. Jiande has some differences between it and Shouchang. It is also spoken in Western Zhejiang.

### Unclassified

**[Xidi Hui](#)**, spoken in a village at the foot of Huangshan Mountain in Anhui, is a [separate language](#). Xidi is unintelligible even to villages a few miles away.

### Classification

Huangshan, Tunxi, Wuyuan, Xiuning, and Yixian are members of the Xiuyi Group of Hui, which has five varieties.

Chilingkou, Jingde, Meixi Xiang, Ningguo, the Qimens, and Shitai are members of the Jingzhan Group of Hui. Jingzhan has 11 varieties, all separate languages.

Hongmen, Jixi, the Shexians, and Taicun are members of the Jishe Group of Hui. Jishe has five varieties.

Dexing, Dongzhi, Fuliang, and Zeichun are members of the Qide Group of Hui. Qide has four varieties.

Chunan, Jiande, Shouchang, and Suian are members of the Yangzhou Group of Hui. Yangzhou has four varieties, all separate languages.

Xidi is unclassified.

There are 29 different Hui varieties, at least 24 of which are separate languages.

The Hui languages have [3.2 million speakers](#).

## **Cantonese**



*Map of the Cantonese and Ping languages. Ping is in yellow and light orange. The rest is Cantonese. Guibei or Northern Ping is in yellow. Guinan or Southern Ping is in orange. The different groups of Cantonese are as follows: The pink group is the Guangfu Group. The dark pink group is the Siyi Group. The light purple group is the Goulou Group. The dark green group is the Quinlian Group. The light green group is the Yongxun Group. The dark purple group is the Gaoyang Group. The blue group is the Wuhua Group. The Danzou group is off the map to the south on Hainan. The Liangjiang Group is not shown but would be the part of the blue group separated from the rest in the far west of Guangdong.*

Cantonese is a major language group spoken in the south of China. Cantonese speakers are said to be a mix between the Yue people and the Han. They have great pride in their speech which is closer to ancient Chinese than Mandarin.

Some Cantonese activists denounce Mandarin as a pidgin language spoken by Manchu and Mongol invaders glommed onto the Chinese of the people they conquered.

Various attempts are utilized to determine intelligibility between varieties of Chinese. They vary in efficacy, as the following shows.

Attempts to determine intelligibility through the use of complex lexical, tonal, grammatical and phonological formulae produce results that are excessively high in terms of percentage of intelligibility.

A better method is presented in which sentences in other varieties,

say Varieties B and C, are played to speakers of Variety A, and speakers of Variety A are asked to give the basic meaning of the Variety B and C sentences played to them. A sentence is recorded as correct if the basic meaning was ascertained (Szeto 2000).

By this better method, Standard Cantonese has only [31.3% intelligibility of Siyi, 7.2% of Hakka, 2.7% of Teochew and 2.5% of Xiamen](#) (Szeto 2000). This paper also highlights the very important role morphological and syntactic differences play in intelligibility, even apart from phonology and other factors.

In contrast, the more complex method through the use of complex lexical, tonal, grammatical and phonological formulae not relying on actual informants gives false positives. By this method, Cantonese has 54.7% intelligibility of Hakka, 47.45% of Teochew, and 43.5% of Hokkien. This method falsely overestimates the intelligibility of Hakka by 7.6X, of Teochew by 16.1X and of Hokkien by 19X.

Standard Cantonese is traditionally said to have [nine tones](#), but phonemically there are only six tones, since the last three are just three of the first six with a voiceless stop consonant on the end.

These are often called [entering tones](#) in traditional Chinese scholarship. Entering tones disappeared from most Mandarin varieties about 800 years ago due to the influence of invading Mongols speaking Turkic languages but are still present in Cantonese, Hakka and Min. The original entering tones of Middle Chinese have [merged](#) into other tones or into Mandarin's four tones. Traditional Chinese tones or contour tones end in a vowel or a nasal. However, in Standard Cantonese, the entering tone has retained its original [short and sharp character](#) from Middle Chinese, so in a sense, it has a different sound quality.

One of the most well-known divisions in Cantonese is Yuehai.

The other major divisions of Cantonese are Goulou and Yongxun, found in the watershed of the Pearl River, and Siyi, Gaoyang, Wuhua, and Quinlian.

## **The Yuehai Group**

Yuehai contains four divisions: Guangbao, Guangfu, Sanyi, and Zhongshan.

## The Guangbao Group of Yuehai

*The Guangbao Group of Cantonese* is spoken mostly east of the Pearl River Delta in Shenzhen and Dongguan Prefectural Cities and in Hong Kong. It consists of Danija Cantonese, Dapeng Cantonese, Gashiu Cantonese, Hainanese Danija Cantonese, Namtou Cantonese, Raoping Cantonese, and Xiangzhou Cantonese.

[Danija Cantonese](#) is a Cantonese macrolanguage spoken by the Tanka fisherpeople who live on boats off the coast of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Zhejiang.

One theory is that the languages of the Tanka are very [archaic](#) languages from old Chinese, before Hakka and Cantonese had even formed yet. They may share this archaic character with [Danzou speakers in Hainan, Ping, and the Tuhua languages of Hunan and Guangdong](#). As early as 800, scholars reported that the Tanka spoke a [different language](#) than the Chinese people. They may be the remnants of a [seagoing pre-Han](#) group.

The Tanka are descended from local fisherpeople who took to the sea to flee wars from 300-600, so their languages may indeed go back that far. There are some indications of a Tai layer in some Tanka languages. Wherever they live, Tanka speak very different languages than the local Chinese.

**Dapeng Cantonese** is spoken on the Dapeng Peninsula in Hong Kong in Dapeng, Shenzhen, Tai Kok, and Tung Ping Chau on the Ping Islands. It has been very heavily influenced by Hakka. It is so different that it must be a separate language. The latest thinking is that this is a form of Junhua or Military Language, a mixed language that remains unclassified but is made up of various combinations of Hakka, Gan, Cantonese, Min Nan, or Japanese. It has only 6,000 remaining speakers.

[Dongguan Danija Cantonese](#) is similar to Dongguan but is nevertheless probably distinct, as Tanka languages differ markedly from local languages everywhere they are spoken. It is now almost extinct with only a few elderly speakers.

[Gashiau Cantonese](#) is spoken in Hong Kong by a group of fisherpeople related to the Tanka. This language is related to Danija/Weitou but is not intelligible with it.

[Hainanese Danija Cantonese](#), spoken by the Tanka on Hainan, is a

separate language. Over the years, it evolved to be drastically different from the surrounding languages. There are 10,000 Tanka living in the city of Sanya in Hainan. Lately there are plans to turn the city into a tourist attraction, and many of the low income areas where they Tanka are living are getting bulldozed.

**Hong Kong Danija Cantonese** is spoken by a group of Tanka fisherpeople in Hong Kong [in Aberdeen and Taio](#) to the north of the Hokkien-speaking Tanka area in Hong Kong. These are former Hakka and Hokkien speakers who switched to Cantonese. They have been in the area for 200 years. There are suggestions that they are from the Panyu Region, but this is not proven.

Early reports indicate that Guangzhou speakers regarded Tanka speech as an [utterly foreign](#) language. There are significant [phonological differences](#) between Hong Kong Danija and Guangzhou, and in addition, there is a lot of [specialized lexicon](#) related to fishing.

**Namtou Cantonese** is spoken in the Namtam area of Nantou and in Yuen Long in Shenzhen by 5,000 people. It is [not fully intelligible](#) with Guangzhou.

**[Raoping Cantonese](#)**, spoken by Tanka fisherpeople in Northern Guangdong, is probably a separate language. It has come under extreme influence of Raoping Teochew because it is spoken in the Raoping-speaking area. In addition, the speakers hate their own language, so it is rapidly dying out.

**Satinese Cantonese** is spoken by Tanka fisherpeople in Zhongshan in Guangdong in the towns of Namtau, Wongpo, Fausa, Manchung, Gonghau, Tungsing, Tungfung, Siulaam, Wanglan, Salong, Panfu, Sanwan and Tanchau. It differs [dramatically](#) from Guangzhou. It has some similarities with Shunde.

[Tung Ping Chau](#) is a a Dapeng dialect spoken in Hong Kong that is [highly endangered](#).

**Xiangzhou Cantonese** is a Danija variety spoken by Tanka fisherpeople in Xiangzhou County in Guangxi.

## **The Guangfu Group of Yuehai**

*The Guangfu division of Yuehai* consists of Bao'an Cantonese, Conghua, Dapo, Dongshan, Dongguan Cantonese, Guangzhou



Cantonese, Guangcheng, Foshan, Hong Kong, Houjie, Huizhou  
Cantonese, Humen, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Macao, Malaysian  
Cantonese, Nishimura, Panyu Cantonese, Sabah, Shunde Cantonese,  
Vietnamese Cantonese, Weitou Cantonese, Wenzhou, Wuzhou  
Cantonese, Xiguan, and Xiguan Guangzhou.

## Guangxi

**Wuzhou Cantonese** is a very divergent Cantonese language spoken in Wuzhou Prefectural City in Eastern Guangxi that is very hard for other Cantonese speakers to understand.

## Guangdong

**Bao'an Cantonese** is a separate language spoken in Shenzhen Prefectural City. The percentage of Cantonese speakers in Bao'an City is less than in Guangzhou City, possibly 30%.

Conghua or Congzhou is a Guangzhou variety spoken in three different dialects in Central Guangdong.

**Dongguan Cantonese** is not intelligible with Guangzhou. It is spoken in Dongguan Prefectural City. A lot of young people are forgetting how to speak it under the influence of Guangzhou. Dongguan is divided into Guangcheng, Houjie, Humen, and Weitou. The first three are dialects of Dongguan, but Weitou is a separate language.

*Dongshan* is a Guangzhou variety spoken in the downtown of the city of Guangzhou.

Foshan is a Guangzhou dialect spoken in Foshan Prefectural City.

*Guangcheng* is a Dongguan dialect spoken in the Guangcheng subdistrict of Dongguan Prefectural City.

**Guangzhou Cantonese** is the basis for Standard Cantonese spoken in the Guangzhou Prefectural City. Although Putonghua has been promoted there for a long time, as recently as 15 years ago, teachers were still teaching classes in Cantonese. It is important to note that Cantonese is only spoken by 60% of the population even in Guangzhou Prefectural City, the heart of the Cantonese zone. Guangzhou dialects spoken in the city of Guangzhou include Nishimura, Dongshan, and some others.

*Hong Kong* is a Guangzhou dialect spoken in Hong Kong. There are a few differences with Guangzhou but not enough to impair communication.

*Houjie* is a Dongguan dialect spoken in Houjie Township to the north of Humen in Dongguan Prefectural City.

**Huizhou Cantonese** is a Cantonese language spoken in Huizhou Prefectural City east of Guangzhou to the northeast of Dongguan City and to the west of Shanwei City. This is part of the Pearl River Delta. Huizhou has very heavy Hakka influence such that it is probably a separate language.

*Humen* is a Dongguan dialect spoken Humen Township on the east side of the Pearl River.

*Macao* is a Guangzhou dialect spoken in Macao that is fully intelligible with Guangzhou.

*Nanhai* is a [Shunde Cantonese](#) dialect, as the two are mutually [intelligible](#).

*Nishimura* is a Guangzhou variety spoken by a few old people in the Nishimura neighborhood in Guangzhou city, but it is going extinct.

**Panyu Cantonese** is definitely a separate language (Chan 1981). Panyu is spoken in Xiaolan and Huangpu towns in Zhongshan Prefectural City.

*Sabah* is a Guangzhou dialect, a very pure form of Cantonese spoken in Sabah in Malaysia. It resembles Standard Cantonese so much that the speaker community is called Little Hong Kong.

**Shek Pik Cantonese** is a separate Waitou language, unintelligible to Shui Hau Waitou speakers. Shek Pik village on Lantau Island was inundated by a reservoir in 1961. Shek Pik is now nearly extinct.

**Shunde Cantonese** is spoken in the towns of Daliang, Longjiang, Ronggui, and Beijiao. It is said to be almost the same language as Panyu, but that seems dubious as a report from 1962 indicated that Panyu was the standard for the area, and Nanhai and Shunde differed dramatically from the Panyu standard language.

**Shui Hau Cantonese** is a separate language within Waitou, unintelligible with Shek Pik Waitou.

**Waitou Cantonese** is spoken mostly by older people in Hong Kong's

inland rural New Territories in walled villages (Wai means walled). The name Waitou Wa means "Village Cantonese."

It is spoken in the New Territories in Fanling, Fanling Po Tsuen, Kam Tin, Kau Sai, Lam Tsuen, Ping Shan, Pinghu, Shantin, [Shek Pik](#), Sheung Shui, [Shui Hau](#), Songgang, Tai Tau Leng, Taipo, Tam Chung Tsuen, and Yan Gang, in Shenzhen in the Bao'an District, in Akao, Fukuda, Gangxia, Huanggang, Shangsha, Xiasha, Xinzhou, and Yuen Long, in the Longgang and Nanshan Districts, and in parts of Nantou. It is also spoken inland by farmers.

Guangzhou-Waitou [intelligibility](#) is not full, with only 85% intelligibility even with careful listening. Waitou varieties can differ greatly. On rural Lantau Island in the New Territories, Shui Hau Waitou speakers are not able to understand Shek Pik Waitou.

*Wenzhou* is a Guangzhou dialect.

*Xiguan* is a Guangzhou dialect spoken in the suburban areas of Guangzhou Prefectural City. It has a few differences with Guangzhou but presumably not enough to impair communication. It spoken mostly by the older people now. The dialect is dying out.

*Xiguan Guangzhou*, is the Guangzhou dialect now spoken in Guangzhou by young people who have given up the actual Xiguan dialect. Xiguan Guangzhou is just Guangzhou with a Xiguan accent as opposed to being an actual dialect of Guangzhou.

## **Malaysia**

[Ipoh](#) is a Malay Cantonese dialect has been affected by Hakka in its phonology.

[Kuala Lumpur](#) is a Malay Cantonese dialect that has a lot of has more British loans. Cantonese is the most commonly spoken Chinese language around Kuala Lumpur.

**Malay Cantonese** is also [quite different](#) from Guangzhou Cantonese speakers who talk to Malay Cantonese speakers say that Malay Cantonese sounds like a foreign language. Therefore, Malay Cantonese appears to be a separate language. Malay Cantonese is mostly spoken in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, less so in Singapore.

*Singaporean* is a Malay Cantonese dialect spoken in Singapore. In Singapore, Cantonese is still the most popular Chinese language in

Chinatown, although Hokkien is the most widely popular non-Mandarin Chinese language.

*Taiping* is a Malay Cantonese dialect spoken in the northern city of Taiping. There are many subsects of Cantonese speakers in the far northern city of Taiping alone.

## **Vietnam**

**Vietnamese Cantonese** is quite different from Guangzhou, and Guangzhou speakers say they cannot understand it very well.

## **The Sanyi Group of Yuehai**

**The Sanyi Group of Cantonese** consists of Jiujiang, Shawan, and Xiquiao. It is spoken in Foshan Prefectural City. Since it is a separate category in Cantonese, Sanyi must be a separate language.

## **The Zhongshan Group of Yuehai**

The *Zhongshan Group of Cantonese* is spoken in Guangxi and is composed of Sanjiao and Shiqi.

**Shiqi Cantonese**, a Zhongshan language spoken in the city of Shiqi, cannot be understood by Guangzhou speakers, but Shiqi people can understand Guangzhou. Shiqi is spoken in the urban areas and Sanjiao is presumably spoken in the rural areas. Whether Shiqi and Sanjiao are mutually intelligible is not known.

## **The Danzou Group of Cantonese**

*The Danzou Group of Cantonese* is spoken in Hainan and consists of Changjiang, Danxian, and Ledang.

*Changjiang* is a dialect of Danzou probably spoken in the south of Hainan. It is fully intelligible with Danxian.

*Danxian* is a Danzou dialect spoken in the city of Danzou. It is intelligible with Changjiang.

**Danzou Cantonese** is spoken in Northwest Hainan and on the southern coast of Hainan. In Danzou it is spoken by the Lingao people. Danzou is related to the Lingao language. There are three varieties of Danzou spoken there, Changjiang, Danxian, and Ledong, and they cannot be understood by others.

Lately, linguists are referring to Danzou as a Min language, but that seems wrong. It is utterly unintelligible with Hainanese Min, but Cantonese speakers say it sounds somewhat Cantonese.

Nevertheless, Cantonese speakers cannot understand Danzou at all.

Danzou Cantonese is mostly spoken in the city of Danzou to the west of Haikou in the far north of Hainan. It is also spoken in a city in the south. The dialect spoken in the south is exactly the same as the Danzou spoken in Danzou City. Most residents of Danzou city speak either Danzou or Putonghua. Hainanese Min is hardly spoken there, despite the fact that it is spoken by 80% of Hainanese. Danzou is also spoken in Ledong.

### **The Gaoyang Group of Cantonese**

*The Gaoyang Group of Cantonese* is a division of Cantonese that is composed of *Dianbai*, *Gaozhou*, Maoming Cantonese, *Xinyi*, *Yangchun*, and *Yangjiang*. It is spoken in far Southwestern Guangdong on the coast.

*Dianbai* is spoken in Dianbai County in the Yangjiao District, in most of Bohe Township, and in a few villages in the Qijing District.

**Maoming Cantonese** is an [extremely diverse](#) Cantonese language that must be a separate language. Intelligibility of Maoming with the rest of Gaoyang is not known.

### **The Goulou Group of Cantonese**

*The Goulou Group of Cantonese* is separate from all of the rest of Cantonese and is linked with Ping and Tuhua. It is made up of Bobai, Beiliu, Cangwu, Cenxi, Deqing, Ertang, Fengkai, Guangning, Guigang, Guixian, Huaiji, Lianshan, Luchuan, Luoding, Mengshan, Rongxian, Shanglin, Shuishan, Sihui, Tengxian, Yangshan, Yongjiang, Yulin Cantonese, and Zhaoping. This group is spoken in Northern and Eastern Guangxi in Guilin, Yulin, and Wuzhou Cities far inland from the rest of Cantonese.

This group represents the oldest layer of Cantonese going all the way back to Proto-Cantonese. Proto-Cantonese began in the Qin Dynasty in 200 BC. Large waves of immigrants from Northern China moved into the area for the next 600 years. In the process, many Yue or native people were Sinicized. Many were speakers of Zhuang and

other Tai languages. In 400 AD, Lianshan became the center of an independent state in Southern China.

All of these processes continued through the Song Dynasty from 900-1200, resulting in the creation of the Cantonese language. Wuzhou and its rural areas, Lianshan, the Yongjiang and Wujiang River Basins are the areas where the oldest layers of Proto-Cantonese and Old Cantonese remain today. Since these Cantonese varieties are so archaic, they are hard for other Cantonese speakers to understand and often regarded by these speakers as strange or odd speech varieties

This same process of retention of archaic Proto-Cantonese features is probably what resulted in the Ping language, and Ping is often confused with Goulou Cantonese and Ping and Goulou are sometimes spoken side by side in the region.

*Bobai* is spoken in Bobai south of Yulin. It is a dialect of Yulin.

[Ertang](#) is spoken in Pingle County in Guilin Prefectural City in far Northern Guangxi. Speakers arrived from Yunfu County in Yunan Prefectural City in Eastern Guangdong on the Guangxi border [100 years ago](#). It has been heavily influenced by Ping.

[Shuishan](#) is spoken in Pingle County [Guilin Prefectural City in far Northern Guangxi](#). Speakers arrived 100 years ago from Yangshan County in Yunan Prefectural City in Eastern Guangdong bordering Guangxi. It has a lot of Ping influence.

**[Xingye Cantonese](#)** is spoken in Xingye County in Yulin Prefectural City, but it is not Yulin. It is closer to Wuzhou, but it is not Wuzhou. Instead it is closer to some Wuzhou County rural varieties such as *Cenxi* in the city of Cenxi in Wuzhou.

*Yangjia* is a Goulou variety spoken in Yongjia village in Daxu Township of Linguan County in Guilin Prefectural City near Ertang and Shuishan. Speakers also came from Yunan Prefectural City in Guangdong 100 years ago.

**[Yulin Cantonese](#)** is a representative language in Goulou Cantonese and is the existing form of Chinese that is [closest](#) to Old Chinese. It is spoken in Southeastern Guangxi. Yulin and Baobai are mutually intelligible, but they are not intelligible with the rest of Goulou.

## The Haihua Group of Cantonese

The *Haihua Group of Cantonese* consists of only Lianjiang Cantonese.

**Lianjiang Cantonese** is spoken in the city of Lianjiang in far Western Guangdong. It is the only member of a separate group of Cantonese, so it must be a separate language.

## The Quinlian Group of Cantonese

The *Quinlian Group of Cantonese* is a division of Cantonese spoken in the Guangxi coastal areas on the southern coast of China in the prefectural cities of [Qinzhou](#), [Beihai](#), and [Fangchenggang](#).

The group is divided into urban varieties which share a high degree of mutual intelligibility with each other and even with other urban varieties in the Yongxun and Gaoyang Groups but have poor intelligibility with the rural varieties. The reasons for the higher mutual intelligibility with urban varieties even outside of the group may be due to the cities themselves, even outside of known groups, being closer to each other than they are to rural varieties even within the same group. This may have to do with histories of intense trade between cities even outside of groups which made brought the Cantonese varieties spoken in those cities closer together.

The rural varieties are split into three major groups: Lianzhou Cantonese, Lingshan, and Xiaojiang. The rural varieties have poor intelligibility with the urban varieties.

The urban varieties consist of Dongcheng, Fangcheng, and Qianzhou.

[Beihai](#) is a Quinlian variety very widely spoken in Beihai Prefecture in the area around Nanning as the major language. It is not known whether this is an urban or rural variety. Beihai itself has [five separate dialects](#) within it: *Beihai A*, *Beihai B*, *Beihai C*, *Beihai D*, and *Beihai E*. Beihai is not intelligible with Lianzhou.

*Hepu*, spoken in Hepu in Beihai City, was thought to be a dialect of Lianzhou, but it is probably not intelligible with it, as it is quite different. It has undergone independent development as a result of complex migration patterns in Hepu.

**Lianzhou Cantonese** has a Ping base with some Min and quite a bit of Hakka blended in. It is spoken in [Hepu](#) County in Beihai Prefectural City where it is one of the [most widely spoken](#) languages, the



southern part of [Pubei](#) County in Qianzhou City, and the coastal areas of Qianzhou. Lianzhou is so different from the rest of Quinlian that it must be a separate language. It has such heavy substratum of the ancient Yue language that it has poor intelligibility with the rest of Quinlian. The [Hakka influence](#) is so strong that this language is often thought to be a Hakka language. Rural Quinlian Cantonese and Behai have poor intelligibility of Lianzhou.

*Lingshan* is a Rural Quinlian variety spoken in the countryside of Qianzhou Prefectural City in Lingshan and Pubei Counties. The [prestige dialect](#) of Lingshan is spoken in the township of Nahe.

*Longmen* is a dialect of Lianzhou or possibly a Xiaojiang–Lianzhou transitional variety.

**Rural Quinlian Cantonese** would be a reasonable name for Lingshan and Xiaojiang, as Lianzhou is a separate language. Lingshan and Xiaojiang are not intelligible with Lianzhou.

**Urban Quinlian Cantonese** is a good name for the urban varieties consisting of Dongcheng, Fangcheng, Lingshan, and Qianzhou. All of these may be mutually intelligible.

*Xiaojiang* is a variety of Rural Quinlian *spoken in Pubei*.

## **The Siyi Group of Cantonese**

*The Siyi or Sze Yup Group of Cantonese* is a huge group of Cantonese varieties spoken in the part of the Pearl River Delta to the south of the Guangzhou area. Siyi Cantonese is the language of the Four Counties: Enping, Kaiping, Taishan, and Xinhui. Researchers have found [664 different Siyi varieties](#) in the Pearl River Delta area alone. [194 of them were similar, but another 442 of them were quite different](#). Since it is mostly Siyi varieties that are spoken in this area, this implies that there may be up to 664 different varieties in Siyi alone.

Siyi has [very low intelligibility](#) with Guangzhou, 10-20%.

150 years ago, there were [fewer but still significant](#) differences between Siyi and Sanyu (what later came to be known as Standard Cantonese), but Siyi was disparaged as a "hill dialect" of poor farmers, while Sanyu was elevated as the prestige language of the cultured and cosmopolitan. This is why Sanyu became the Standard Cantonese language. Siyi speakers incorporated this negative view into their self-image even to the point where they held overseas

meetings meeting in Sanyi.

*Baisha* is a dialect of Taishan Cantonese spoken in Bei Hou.

**Enping Cantonese**, spoken in Enping County, cannot understand some other Siyi varieties. Therefore, Enping is a separate language.

*Gee* is a dialect of Kaiping.

*Heshan* is a dialect of Xinhui Cantonese.

**Hetang Cantonese**, spoken in Xinhui, is very divergent and has many strange features not found in other Siyi varieties. Doubtless it is less than fully intelligible with other Siyi varieties.

**Kaiping Cantonese**, spoken in Kaishan County, is not fully intelligible with Enping until they get used to each others' sounds. Kaiping is so different from Taishanese that it is hard to imagine how they can communicate well, though there is partial intelligibility. There are many different dialects inside of Kaiping alone, and pronunciation varies almost from neighborhood to neighborhood. However, the dialects seem to be mutually intelligible



*Location of Taishan in Guangdong.*

**Taishanese, Hoisonese, Hoisan or Toison Cantonese** is a Cantonese macrolanguage spoken north of Macao in Taishan County where there are 20 townships, and there is a different variety in every township. Taishanese is the basis for Standard Siyi. As late as the early 1990's, children in this area were still being taught in the local

Taishanese dialect. Taishanese is still spoken widely in Chinatowns in the US such as in San Francisco (especially Stockton Street) and in New York.

The varieties in Taishan County can be quite different.

For certain, there are at least three distinct languages within Taishanese besides the standard - **Taishan Cantonese A**, **Taishan Cantonese B** and **Taishan Cantonese C** - and these three have a hard time understanding each other.

There are clearly [at least 17 varieties](#) within Taishan Proper alone. Each town has its own variety, and in fact, each village has its own dialect. The main town varieties are Baisha, *Beidou*, *Chixi*, *Chonglou*, *Chuandao*, *Dajiang*, *Doushan*, *Duanfen*, *Duhu*, *Guanghai*, *Haiyan*, *Sanhe*, *Shenjing*, *Shuibu*, *Sijiu*, *Taicheng*, and *Wencun*.

**Xinhui** is quite [different](#) from Taishanese. It is spoken just to the northwest of Macao to the south of the Taishan area. Xinhui varieties differ slightly from village to village, but the differences are not great. When you cross from the Xinhui area north to the Taishan zone, the difference in the speech is dramatic.

## Malaysia

[Perak Taishanese](#) is a variety of Taishanese spoken in Perak. There are also speakers of especially in Perak. Intelligibility with Taishanese back in China is not known.

## The Wuhua Group of Cantonese

*The Wuhua Group of Cantonese* consists of Huazhou Cantonese, *Wuchuan* and Zhanjiang Cantonese. This group is spoken in the far south of Guangdong along the coast near the Leizhou Min area.

**Huazhou Cantonese**, spoken next door to Maoming, also [cannot be understood](#) by Guangzhou speakers.

**Zhanjiang Cantonese** is utterly [unintelligible](#) with Guangzhou. They speak Zhangjiang Min in this area, and the Cantonese has heavy Min influence, hence it is probably a separate language. Zhanjiang is spoken in the Leizhou Min area.

## The Yongxun Group of Cantonese

*The Yongxun Group of Cantonese* consists of Baise Cantonese, Chongzuo, Fusui, Guiping, Hengxian, Luizhou Cantonese, Nanning Cantonese, Ningming, Pingguo, Pingnan, Tianyang, and Yongning. Yongxun is spoken in the far southwest of the Cantonese area in Guangxi. It is surrounded by Ping speakers, and it is sometimes hard to tell what is Ping and what is Cantonese here.

**Baise Cantonese** must be a separate language. It is spoken in the Yongjiang District in Baise Prefectural City in Western Guangxi. It is very different, having been influenced heavily by Zhuang speakers.

**Luizhou Cantonese** has difficult intelligibility with Standard Cantonese. It is spoken apart from the main group in Luizhou Prefectural City in Northern Guangxi, so it may be a separate language.

**Nanning Cantonese** is more [intelligible](#) with Guangzhou than with any of the Cantonese varieties around it, but whether this intelligibility is full or not is not clear. If it has poor intelligibility with related Cantonese varieties around it, it is hard to see how it would have full intelligibility with Guangzhou. Nanning is spoken in Nanning Prefectural City in Central Guangxi.

## The Unclassified Group of Cantonese

**Ledong Cantonese** is an unclassified Cantonese language spoken on Hainan. It is not part of Danzhou Cantonese. It must be a separate language.

**Jimmi Cantonese** is an unclassified Cantonese language spoken in Jilong and Tiechong in Huidong and Erbu and Chishi in Haifeng north of Hong Kong. The popular notion is that this is a blend of Cantonese, Hakka, and Min. Hailufeng Min is widely spoken in the area, and Haifeng Hakka is also spoken. Jimmi varieties appear to be mostly Cantonese with some Hakka and an even smaller trace of Min. Surely Jimmi must be a separate language.

**Namlong Cantonese**, is an unclassified Cantonese language from the Pearl River area. It is also a [separate language](#) or at least it was in 1949. Whether it still exists is not certain, but native speakers must still be alive.

**Yaxian Cantonese** is an unclassified Cantonese language spoken in the city of Yaxian on Hainan.

### **Classification**

Yuehai itself is split into the Guangfu, Zhongshan, Guangbao, and Sanyi subgroups.

Bao'an, Conghua, Dongguan, Dongshan, Fogang, Foshan, Gaoming, Gaoyao, Guangzhou, Guangcheng, Hexian, Houjie, Huaxian, Humen, Hong Kong, Huizhou, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Lechang, Longmen, Macao, Malayland, Nanhai, Nishimura, Panyu, Qingyuan, Qujiang, Sabah, Sanshui, Shaoguan, Shenzhen, Shunde, Vietnamese, Weitou, Xianggang, Xiguan, Xiguan Guangzhou, Xinxing, Yingde, Yunfu, Zengcheng, Zhaoqing, and Zhuhai are members of the Guangfu Group of Yuehai, which has 43 varieties.

Guangfu has [13 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Jiujiang, Shatin, Shiwan, and Xiquiao are members of the Sanyi Group of Yuehai, which has four varieties.

Danija, Dapeng, Gashiu, Nanou, and Tung Ping Chau are members of the Guangbao Group of Yuehai, which has five varieties.

Sanjiao and Shiqi are members of the [Zhongshan Group of Yuehai](#), which contains two varieties.

The [Yuehai Group of Cantonese](#) has 54 varieties.

Baisha, Beidou, Chixi, Chonglou, Chuandao, Dajiang, Doumen, Doushan, Duanfen, Duhu, Enping, Gee, Guanghai, Guzhen, Haiyan, Hetang, Heshan, Jiangmen, Kaiping, Sanhe, Shenjing, Shuibu, Sijiu, Siqian, Taicheng, Taishan, Taishan A, Taishan B, Taishan C, Wencun, Xinhui and are members of Siyi Cantonese, which has 664 varieties.

There are [3.6 million speakers](#) of Siyi.

Baise, Chongzuo, Fusui, Guiping, Hengxian, Luizhou, Nanning, Ningming, Pingguo, Pingnan, Tianyang, and Yongning are members of the Yongxun Group of Cantonese, which has 12 varieties.

Yongxun has [five million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Dianbai, Gaozhou, Maoming, Yangchun, Yangjiang, and Xinyi are members of the Gaoyang Group of Cantonese, which has six varieties.

Gaoyang has [5.4 million speakers](#) (Olson 1998).

Lianjiang is the sole member of the Haihua Group of Cantonese.

Huazhou, Wuchuan, and Zhanjiang are members of the Wuhua Group of Cantonese, which has three varieties.

Changjiang and Danxian are in the Danzou Group of Cantonese, which has two varieties.

Beihai, Beihai A, Beihai B, Beihai C, Beihai D, Beihai E, Dongxing, Fangcheng, Jianjiang, Hepu, Lianzhou, Lingshan, Nahe, Qianzhou, Pubei, and Xiaojiang are members of the Quinlian Group of Cantonese, which has 16 varieties.

Bobai, Beiliu, Binyang, Cangwu, Cenxi, Deqing, Ertang, Fengkai, Guangning, Guixian, Huaiji, Lianshan, Lianzhou, Liujiang, Luchuan, Luoding, Mengshan, Rongxian, Shanglin, Shuishan, Sihui, Tengxian, Wuzhou, Yangshan, Yulin, and Zhaoping are members of the Goulou Group of Cantonese, which has 24 varieties.

Haikang, Ledong, Jimmi, Namlong, Rucheng, Suixi, Xuwen, Yaxian, and Zhongshan are unclassified. Nine Cantonese varieties are unclassified.

There are 786 varieties of Cantonese. 44 of them are separate languages.

The Cantonese languages have [64 million speakers](#).

## **Ping/Pinghua**

*Ping*, now recognized as a major split from Cantonese, is composed of two main splits, Guinan or Southern Ping and Guibei or Northern Ping. Guinan and Guibei are definitely separate languages. Ping is mostly spoken in Guangxi, but there are a few speakers in far southwestern Hunan near where Guizhou, Guangxi and Hunan all come together. A number of strange mixed-type languages composed of Chinese mixed with different minority languages that are hard to classify are spoken in this region.

Liuzhou Prefectural City separates the two Ping divisions. [There](#) are significant different differences between Northern and Southern Ping, but there are also a few similarities. Guibei has [five tones, while Guinan has eight tones](#).

Ping has been heavily influenced by the language of the [Dong people](#). Cantonese has almost [no intelligibility](#) of Ping, although Ping has sort of a Cantonese sound to it.

### **The Guibei Group of Ping**

**Guibei Ping** is spoken in sporadically in Northern Guangxi around Guilin Prefectural City and in Hezhou near the Southwestern Mandarin-speaking area. Guinan sounds similar to Zhuang or Tai languages. The northern group extends from Guilin south through Yangshuo to Fuchuan, Zhongshan, and Hexian.

[\*\*Bendi or Bendihua Ping\*\*](#) is a Guibei language that has been heavily influenced by the Dong language. It is spoken by 20,000 people in Tongdao Dong Autonomous County in Hunan. They are classified by the Chinese government as Han, but the speakers see themselves as a separate ethnic group and not a part of either the Han or Dong ethnicities. Bendihua has such significant Dong influence that it must be a separate language.

### **The Guinan Group of Ping**

**Guinan Ping** is spoken in Southern Guangxi in a contiguous geographical area around the Prefectural City of Nanning. It is close to Cantonese, especially the Nanning Cantonese spoken in the same area. Guibei has some loans from Zhuang.

[\*\*Nanxiang Ping\*\*](#) is only [somewhat](#) like Pengma very close by, and it is probably not intelligible with it. It is spoken in the town of Nanxiang in Nanning Prefectural City in Guangxi.

[\*\*Pingma Ping\*\*](#) is a Guebei variety spoken around Pengma and Taoxu in Heng County in Nanning Prefectural City in Guangxi. It is [only a bit like](#) and probably not intelligible with Nanxiang close by. Taoxu is [part of](#) this language. It [sounds a lot](#) like Zhuang or other Tai languages. It also [sounds like](#) Cantonese.



## Malaysia

Kwongsai or Malaysian Ping is spoken by Ping speakers who migrated to Malaysia. They live in Pahang in Bentong, Mentakab, and Raub. Intelligibility with Chinese Ping is not known.

## Classification

Beni, Fuchuan Xiushui, Guanyang Guanyinge, Hezhou Jiudusheng, Lingui Liangjiang, Lingui Lining, Lingchuan, Longsheng, Pingle, Quanzhou Wenquiao, Yangshuo Putao, Yongfu Tangbao, Xing'an Gaoshang, Zhongshan, and Ziyuan Yandong are members of Guibei Ping, which has 15 varieties, one of which is a separate language.

Baise, Binyang, Chongzuo, Du'an, Fusui, Hengxian, Laibin, Liucheng, Liujiang, Liuzhou, Longzhou, Luancheng, Mashan, Nanning, Nanxiang, Pingguo, Pingma, Rong'an, Rongshui, Shanglin, Taoxhu, Tiandong, Tianyang, Yinshan, and Yongning are members of Guinan Ping, which has 25 varieties, three of which are separate languages.

Kwongsai and Fuchuan are unclassified. Two Ping varieties are unclassified.

Ping has 42 varieties, four of which are separate languages.

There are two million speakers of the Ping languages.

## Tuhua

*Tuhua* is a separate branch of Chinese spoken in Northern Guangdong; Western, Southeastern, and Northeastern Hunan Province, and parts of Southern Guangxi. It has 132 separate varieties. Tuhua is not really a language group but a wastebasket group for various varieties derisively referred to as *tuhua* - or "farmer's language."

Initial examination suggests that a number of things.

First of all, that the Tuhua varieties, especially those of Southern

Hunan, are very diverse, possibly as diverse as Wu, Xiang, and Hui. Many or all of them may well be separate languages. If Tuhua is really as diverse as Wu, Xiang, and Hui, then quite probably there is a different Tuhua language spoken in every county. Further, they are poorly studied and dialectally very diverse. There are many dialects inside the known Tuhua varieties, and these dialects are often very different. So there are languages inside even the known Tuhua varieties.

Further, there appear to be links between the Tuhua varieties of Southeastern Hunan and Northern Guangdong and the Ping language of Northern Guangxi, as they border each other. They all appear to be related and to have descended from a common ancestor.

Tuhua may have originally begun as a Sinicized form of the Yao language, and many of its speakers are still Yao people. One theory is that Tuhua is simply an extension of Ping. Another theory is that Tuhua started out as Middle Gan and then mixed with Cantonese, Hakka, and Southwestern Mandarin.

Additionally, many Tuhua varieties are starting to splinter recently, as influences from Hakka, Cantonese, and Southwest Mandarin begin to affect the younger speakers such that the language of the youngest speakers is quite a bit different from the language of the older speakers.

### **Northern Guangdong**

The best known of the Tuhua groups is Shaozhou Tuhua, referred to here as [\*Shaozhou or Shaoguan Group of Tuhua\*](#). Sometimes this name is used to describe all Tuhua varieties. It is spoken in northern Guangdong on the border of Hunan, Guangdong, and Jiangxi. Most of the speakers are in Northern Guangdong, but there are also some speakers in Southeastern Hunan.

In Guangdong, it is spoken in Qingyuan Prefectural City in Lianzhou County, Liannan Yao Autonomous County and Lianshan Zhuang and Yao Autonomous County on the border of Guangxi and in Shaoguan Prefectural City in Lechang, Nanxiong, Quijiang, Renhua, Wujiang, and Zhenjiang Counties, and in Ruyuan Yao Autonomous County on the borders of Hunan and Jiangxi. The Tuhua languages spoken in Shaoguan are collectively called *Yuebei Tuhua* or Shaoguan Tuhua.

Shaozhou is [very different](#) from other Chinese varieties. It consists of [many different varieties](#) which all differ significantly from each other. Some say that Shaozhou is a [branch of Min Nan](#), while others say it is [related to Hakka](#). In the last 100 years, the Shaozhou region has been swamped by Hakka speakers who have flooded into the region.

Shaozhou can be split into four basic groups: Lianshan Tuhua, Lianzhou Tuhua, which is close to Xiangnan Tuhua in Hunan, Shaoguan Tuhua, spoken in Shaoguan Prefectural City, and Xiongzhou Tuhua, which is very close to Hakka.

### **Liannan Tuhua**

**Liannan Tuhua** is spoken in Liannan Yao Autonomous County in Qingyuan Prefectural City.

### **Lianshan Tuhua**

**Lianshan Tuhua** is spoken in Lianshan Yao and Zhuang Autonomous County in Qingyuan Prefectural City. It is in its own group in Tuhua, and some put it outside of Shaozhou Tuhua altogether. It borders on Hunan.

### **Lianzhou Tuhua**

Lianzhou Tuhua is a major split in Shaozhou. It is spoken in Lianzhou County and in Liannan Autonomous Yao County in Qingyuan Prefectural City in Northern Guangdong on the Hunan border. It is closely related to Xiangnan Tuhua in Southern Hunan.

**Bao'an Lianzhou Tuhua** is a separate Lianzhou Tuhua language spoken in Lianzhou County in Qingyuan Prefectural City (Zhang 2004).

**Fengyang Lianzhou Tuhua** is a separate Lianzhou Tuhua language spoken in Lianzhou County in Qingyuan Prefectural City (Zhang 2004).

**Xi'an Lianzhou Tuhua** is a separate Lianzhou Tuhua language spoken in Lianzhou County in Qingyuan Prefectural City (Zhang 2004).

**Xingzi Lianzhou Tuhua** is a separate Lianzhou Tuhua language spoken in Qingyuan Prefectural City (Zhang 2004).

## Shaoguan Tuhua

**Dacun Tuhua** is a separate Shaozhou language.

**Guitou Tuhua** is a also separate Shaozhou language.

In Lechang County in Shaoguan Prefectural City in Northern Guangdong bordering Hunan, there are five separate Shaoguan Tuhua languages, **Lechang Tuhua**, **Lechang Tuhua A**, **Lechang Tuhua B**, **Lechang Tuhua C**, and **Lechang Tuhua D**, which are not fully intelligible with each other.

**Longgui Tuhua**, spoken in Qujiang County in Shaoguan Prefectural City, is a separate Shaoguan Tuhua language. Longgui has 2,000 speakers.

**Shibei Tuhua** is a separate Shaoguan Tuhua language that has heavy Hakka influence, having been in contact with Hakka for centuries.

**Shitang Tuhua** is a separate Shaoguan Tuhua language spoken in Renhua County in Shaoguan Prefectural City. Renhua borders on Hunan.

**Xiangyan Tuhua** is a separate Shaoguan Tuhua language that has only been in contact with Cantonese for a few decades, but it has been turning more Cantonese lately. It is spoken very close to Shitang Tuhua in Renhua County in Shaoguan Prefectural City. This area borders on Hunan.

**Zhoutian Tuhua** is a separate Shaoguan Tuhua language spoken in Renhua County in Shaoguan Prefectural City, which borders on Hunan.

## Xiongzhou Tuhua

**Nanxiong Tuhua**, spoken in Nanxiong County in Shaoguan Prefectural City, is a form of Xiongzhou Tuhua that shares a common ancestor with Hakka. Nanxiong borders Jiangxi. Nanxiong is spoken in the city itself, but the surrounding area speaks Hakka. Nanxiong is older than the surrounding Hakka varieties, which expanded into the area in more recent times. Nanxiong is a classification mystery, as some say it is a closely related to Min, and others say it is closer to Hakka (Sagart Undated).

Nanxiong is actually derived from a very early form of Proto-Hakka which became isolated in the city, cutting them off from the rest of the Hakka speakers. Therefore, they did not go through the sound

changes that affected the Hakka varieties, including changes that were caused by contact with speakers of the She language. Between 1550 and 1850, many Hakka migrated to the surrounding area from the Meixian area. Nanxiong is related to Hakka but it is not a Hakka language, having broken off from Hakka very early in its development (Sagart Undated).

### **Southeastern Hunan**

In Yongzhou Prefectural City and the western half of Chenzhou Prefecture in Southeastern Hunan, the [Yongzhou or Xiangnan Group of Tuhua](#) is spoken. The main section of Xiangnan has at least 27 main varieties:

The varieties are Baimangying Jianghua Tuhua, Chengguan Jiangyong Tuhua, Gangyu Tuhua, Gaofeng Daoxian Tuhua, Guiyang Liuhe Tuhua, Huasheng Southern Tuhua, Huilongxu Jiangyong Tuhua, Lanjiaoshan Lengshuitan, Northern Rural Xintian Tuhua, Pinghua Ningyuan Tuhua, Qidouhua Jiangyong Tuhua, Shangdong Lanshang Tuhua, [Shiqishi Dong'an Tuhua](#), Shuangpai Lijiaping Tuhua, Songbai Jiangyong Tuhua, Southern Rural Xintian Tuhua, Sumitang Jianghua Tuhua, Sumitang Qidouhua Tuhua, Taiping Lanshang Tuhua, Taochuan Jiangyong Tuhua, Tushi Lanshang Tuhua, Xiacengpu Jiangyong Tuhua, Xianglinpu Daoxian Tuhua, Xiangyu Tuhua, Xiaojia Daoxian Tuhua, Xiaojiangqiao Lengshuitan, Xiaopu Jiangyong Tuhua, Xuaqiao Daoxian Tuhua, Yunshan Jiangyong Tuhua, and Zhangjia Ningyuan Tuhua.

There are four main types represented here:

*Dong'an-Lengshuitan* is the first type, comprising Gaofeng Dong'an Tuhua, Huaqiao Dong'an Tuhua, Shiqishi Dong'an Tuhua, *Xiaojiangqiao Lengshuitan*, Lanjiaoshan Lengshuitan, Shamuqiao Lanjiaoshan, and Sumitang Qidouhua Tuhua.

The second type is a *Jiangyong-Daoxian type* comprising nine varieties. At least seven of them are clearly separate languages.

The third type is a Southern Rural Xintian Tuhua type.

The fourth type is a Pinghua Ningyuan Tuhua type.

There is also a group of unclassified types in Xiangnan comprising Gangyu Tuhua, Guiyang Liuhe Tuhua, Huasheng Southern Tuhua, Northern Rural Xintian Tuhua, Shangdong Lanshang, Taiping Lanshang Tuhua, Tushi Lanshang Tuhua, Shuangpai Lijiaping Tuhua, Xiangyu

Tuhua, and Zhangjia Ningyan Tuhua.

**Baimangying Jianghua Tuhua** appears to be quite different, so it is probably a separate language also.

**Chengguan or Shonan Jiangyong Tuhua** is spoken Linwu County in Hunan and also in Jiangxi. Xiang and Eastern Min is also spoken there in addition to Southwestern Mandarin. It is also called Shonan Tuhua or even Shonan Ping. Ping and Tuhua are often confused in local descriptions. Many of them moved to Jiangxi in recent years.

**Cushjiang Jiangyong Tuhua**, a separate Tuhua language, has nine dialects.

**Gangyu Tuhua** is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua, and it represents the name of a county, so it is a separate language.

**Gaofeng Dong'an Tuhua** is a separate language, as it is spoken in its own district.

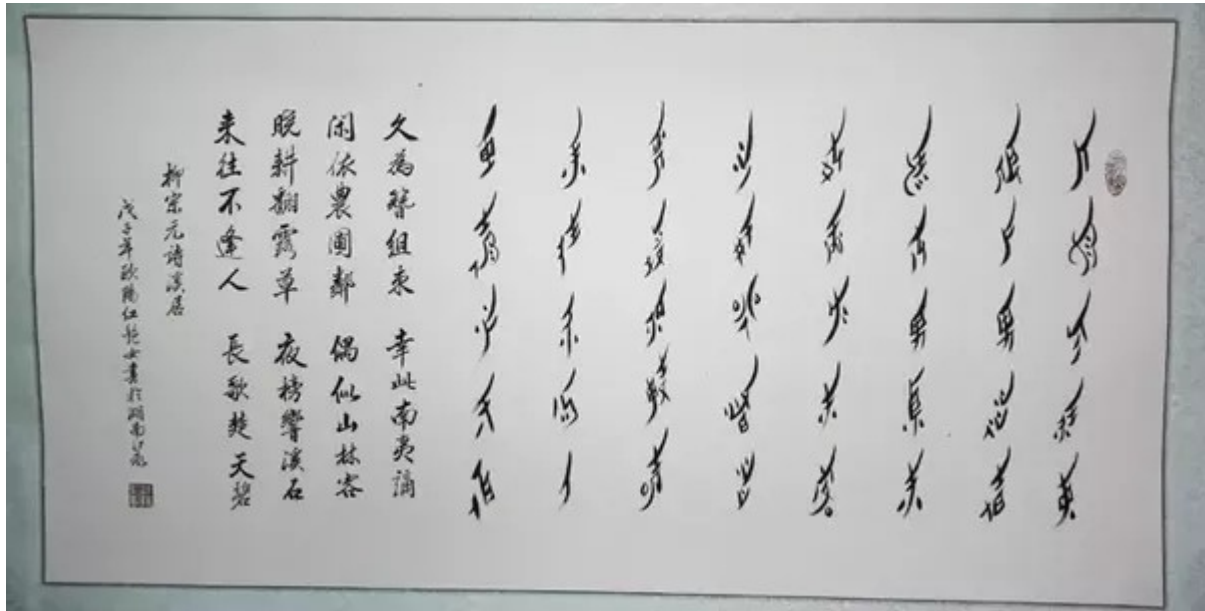
**Guiyang Liuhe Tuhua** is a separate language, as it is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua, and Guiyang is a county in Southeastern Hunan. There is a great deal of dialectical diversity in Guiyang. *Yantang* and *Yangshi* are two of these dialects.

**Huaqiao Dong'an Tuhua** is a separate language, as it is spoken in its own district.

**Huasheng Southern Tuhua**, is a separate language as it is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua. It is spoken in Yongzhou in the southern part of the region, and it may have as many as 75 different dialects inside of it.

**Huilongxu Jiangyong Tuhua** is the language was the basis for the famous *nishu*, "women's script", a secret language of women (Leming 2004), originating from the Shangjiangxu (Xiao River) region of Northeastern Jiangyong County in Hunan, of which much has been written lately of the famous Jiangyong women's script referenced above (Liming 2004). There are 18 women left who can still write the women's script. The youngest is 80 years old. The script was only discovered in 1980. It was a secret language that the women used to speak among themselves to resist the authority of men.

Huilongxu Jiangyong has two dialects.



*Nishu or women's script is on the left, and Chinese characters are on the right.*

**Jiahe Tuhua** is a completely separate Xiangnan Tuhua language, unintelligible with other varieties. Furthermore, there are huge dialectal differences within Jiahe that may or may not constitute separate languages.

**Lengshuitan Tuhua** varieties appear to represent at least one language. Lengshuitan has a close relationship to Dong'an Xuaqiao Dong'an. *Lanjiaoshan Lengshuitan Tuhua* has at least one dialect, Shamuqiao Lanjiaoshan. The latest theory is that that Shamuqiao Lanjiaoshan Lengshuitan Tuhua is a Xiang language.

Linwu Dachong is a form of Xintian Tuhua.

**Northern Rural Xintian Tuhua** is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua that is completely different from Xintian Southern Rural, so it is a separate language also.

**Pinghua Ningyuan Tuhua** is a separate language, as it is one of the four major splits in Xiangnan Tuhua.

**Qidouhua Jiangyong Tuhua** appears to be a separate language.

**Shangdong Lanshang Tuhua** must be a separate language as it is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua.

**Shiqishi Dong'an Tuhua** has Xiang and Wu influences. As an



unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua, it must be a separate language.

**Shuangpai Lijiaping Tuhua** is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua, and it represents the name of a county, so it is a separate language.

**Songbai Jiangyong Tuhua** is closely related to Chengguan Jiangyong and Sumitang Jianghua, as all are thought to be derived from a single source. Nevertheless, it seems to be a separate language.

**Southern Rural Xintian Tuhua** is a separate language as it is a major split in Xiangnan Tuhua.

**Sumitang Jianghua Tuhua** appears to be a separate language.

**Sumitang Qidouhua Jianghua Tuhua** has a reasonably close relationship to and Chengguan Jiangyong and Songbai Jiangyong, and all three are thought to have derived from the same base. Although it is spoken in the same county as Baimangying Jianghua, it appears to be completely different, so it must be a separate language.

**Taiping Langshang Tuhua** is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua that also represents the name of a county, so it is a separate language.

**Taochuan Jiangyong Tuhua**, a separate Tuhua language, has 34 dialects, but there is a lot of uniformity between them.

**Tushi Lanshang Tuhua** appears to be a separate language as it is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua.

**Xiancengpu Jiangyong Tuhua** is a separate Tuhua language. It has 21 different dialects.

**Xianglinpu Daoxian Tuhua** must be a separate language, as it is named after a county.

**Xiangyu Tuhua** is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua, and it represents the name of a county, so it is a separate language.

**Xiaojia Daoxian Tuhua** must be separate language also, as it is a major split in Xiangnan Tuhua.

**Xiapu Jiangyong Tuhua** appears to be a separate language.

**Xintian Tuhua**, spoken in Linwu County in Southern Hunan, is a major split in Xiangnan Tuhua, so it is surely a separate language.

**Yunshan Jiangyong Tuhua**, is spoken in the township of Yunshan in Jiangyong County. There are many dialects even within this language

spoken in a single township. Yunshan Jiangyong is transitional between Chengguan Jiangyong and Xiacengpu Jiangyong.

**Zhangjia Ningyan Tuhua** is a separate language, since it is an unclassified Xiangnan Tuhua.

Intelligibility between varieties is not known, but dialectal divergence within Tuhua varieties is typically great, and some or all of the above may be separate languages. There are clearly at least 33 different languages here, and there may be more.

The Xiangnan Tuhuas of Yongzhou and Chenzhou in Southern Hunan appear to be [Gan/Xiang mixed languages](#).

### **Western Hunan**

The *Xianghua Group of Tuhua* is spoken in a small area in Western Hunan away from the rest of the Tuhuas.

**Xianghua Tuhua** is a [completely separate and highly diverse language](#) that is spoken in Western Hunan far away from the rest of the Tuhua. Xianghua has six varieties, Chenxi, Guzhang, Luxi, Xupu, Yongshun, and Yuanling.

### **Guangxi**

One Tuhua variety is spoken as a dialect island in Guangxi.

**Luojin Chongshan Tuhua** is spoken in Yongfu in Southern Guangxi. It has a close relationship to Guibei Pinghua. It is clearly a separate language. It seems to be in a completely separate category of its own as a Chongshan Tuhua language.

### **Classification**

Lianshan is a member of the Lianshan Group of Tuhua, of which it is the only member.

The Shaoguan Group of Tuhua is made up of two subgroups, Shaozhou and Lianzhou. It has 22 members.

Dacun, Guitou, the Lechangs, Liannan, Longgui, Nanxiong, Shibei, Shitang, Xiangyang, Yangshi, Yangtan, and Zhoutian are members of the Shaozhou Group of Shaoguan Tuhua, which has 17 members.

Bao'an, Fenyang, Xian, and Xingzi are members of the Lianzhou

Group of Shaoguan Tuhua, which has four members.

Shaoguan Tuhua has 800,000 speakers.

Chenxi, Guzhang, Luxi, Xupu, Yongshun, and Yuanling are members of the Xianghua Group of Tuhua, which has six members.

Luojin is a member of the Chongshan Group of Tuhua, of which it is the only member.

Tuhua has 30 varieties.

## Unclassified Sinitic

### Guangdong

**Huping Junhua**, spoken by [16,000 people](#) around Hakka speakers in Wuping County in Zhongshan Prefectural City in Guangdong, is not understood by the surrounding peoples and is not considered part of Hakka. The language began in the area in the 1390's when the Ming Dynasty sent its army to Zhongshan to put down a rebellion. Soldiers came from all over China and remained in the area after the fighting, creating a new languages out of all of their languages mixed together along with local varieties. This is thought to be a Gan language with Hakka influences.

### Hainan

**Changjiang Junhua** is a Hainanese Junhua language spoken on Hainan in the city of Changjiang on the northwestern coast of the island. Considering how splintered Junhua is, this may well be a separate language.

*Changpoxu Danzou Junhua* is a Danzou Junhua variety spoken in the city of Danzou on Hainan.

[Danzou](#) is a separate group of unclassified Chinese languages. Danzou is spoken in the northwest of Hainan, and Hainanese speakers [cannot understand it](#). It is similar to the languages spoken by the [Lingao](#) and

Li people on the island. The best explanation is that Danzhou speakers were formerly speakers of the Lingao language who underwent a language shift to Sinitic.

*Danzou* seems to go back far in time. Most trace it back to 500 when large numbers of soldiers speaking some Sinitic variety were sent to Hainan. Some say that the soldiers were speaking Proto-Cantonese. The Sinitic base mixed with Lingao and then later with some Hakka and Min to form Danzhou. This theory attempts to link Danzhou to Hainanese Junhua, positing that Danzhou is an outgrowth of Hainanese Junhua.

Yet the Danzhou people speak nine different varieties, including varieties described as Hakka, others described as Cantonese, and others described as Mandarin, so obviously there are at least three separate languages inside Danzhou.

To some extent, Danzhou [looks Hakka](#) more than Min or Cantonese, but it [does not](#) look like any existing Hakka variety. In addition, there are Hakka speakers on Hainan near Danzhou, but Danzhou looks [nothing](#) like Hainanese Hakka.

It looks [somewhat](#) like Taishanese Cantonese and Linchuan Gan, a very interesting Gan language that has derived from Early South Old Chinese, thought to be the base of Hakka and Southern Gan. In this sense, Danzhou may also be a very ancient Sinitic language.

Danzou Cantonese is described under Cantonese.

There is also a theory that there is a Danzhou language that is [neither](#) Mandarin, Hakka, Cantonese, or Min. Instead it is a [completely different](#) Sinitic language that is unlike any other Chinese language and cannot be obviously derived from any mixtures of known Chinese languages.

**[Danzou Junhua](#)** is a Hainanese Junhua language spoken in the city of Danzhou on Hainan. It is spoken in four different varieties in a small part of Danzhou in the southeastern part of the city.

**Dongfang Junhua** is a Hainanese Junhua language spoken on the West-Central coast of Hainan in the city of Dongfang. This may be a separate language considering how splintered there Junhua language is even among itself.

[Hainanese Junhua](#) appears to be a separate language. Hainanese

Junhua has 100,000 speakers. It is spoken in Sanya, Changjiang, Danzhou, Zonghe, and Lingao on Hainan. It may be quite variable. For instance, there are four different main Junhua varieties spoken on Hainan: Changjiang, Daxian, Dongfang, and Yaxian. Danzhou Junhua has four different varieties: Changpoxu, Nada, Wangwuxu, and Zhonghexu.

**Mai or Maihua** is an unclassified [Sinitic language](#) spoken [by 15,000 people in Sanya](#) in Southern Hainan. It is sometimes classified as Cantonese, but it also has features of Hakka. Lately, linguists are referring to it as Min. The [best analysis](#) so far says it is a mixture of Cantonese, Hainanese Min, and Hakka. The best solution is to keep it [unclassified](#) for now. It is not intelligible with other Hainanese languages.

*Nada Danzhou Junhua* is a Danzhou Junhua variety spoken in Danzhou on Hainan.

**Yaxian Junhua** is a Hainanese Junhua language spoken on Hainan in the city of Yaxian in the far south of the island. Hainanese Junhua languages may be as badly splintered as the rest of Junhua, so this may be a separate language.

*Wangwuxu Danzhou Junhua* is a Danzhou Junhua variety spoken in the city of Danzhou on Hainan.

*Zhonghexu Danzhou Junhua* is a variety of Danzhou Junhua spoken in the city of Danzhou on Hainan.

## Hunan

**Badong Yao** is an unclassified Chinese language [spoken by](#) a Yao group in Huangyandong, Malindong, and Dazhendong in Huangjin Ethnic Yao Township in Xinning County in Southwestern Hunan. In this region of Southwestern Hunan near the borders of Guangxi and Guizhou, there are a number of languages often spoken by ethnic minorities that seem to be mixed language made up of mixtures of Sinitic and ethnic languages or are ethnic minority languages that have become Sinicized. There is little information about the possible Sinitic affinities of Badong Yao. Badong Yao is presently endangered.

**Baidu Yeheni** is spoken in most of Dashiquiao Township in the west, Baimangying, in some parts of Dalapu and Qiaoxing townships, and in

Heluou and Tuojiang townships in Jianghua Yao Autonomous County in Yongzhou Prefectural City in Southern Hunan. Baidu Yeheni has 17,000 speakers. Probably a Gan/Xiang mixed language.

**Waxiang** is an unclassified Chinese language spoken by the Waxiang ethnic group in in Northwestern Hunan in Luxi, Guzhang, and Yongshun Counties in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, in Zhangjiajie Prefecture-level city, and in Chenxi, Xupu, and Yuanling Counties. It is nothing like the Southwestern Mandarin, Xiang, Tujia, and Xö Miao Hmong languages that surround it, and [none of them](#) can understand it. There are 362,000 speakers of Waxiang.

It shares some lexical influences from the Bai language, suggesting a substratum from the Bai languages. This is either an unclassified Chinese language or a separate minority tongue, maybe related to Hmong. Others view it as a Xiang-Hmong mixed language. However, the general opinion now leans towards this being a Sinitic language.

**Wuzhou Yeheni** is spoken in Western Tuojiang, Baimangying, Tao Wei, Xiao Wei, Daxu, and part of Dalapu Township in Jianghua Yao Autonomous County in Yongzhou Prefectural City in Southern Hunan. 45% of the population speaks Wuzhou Yeheni. This is probably a Gan/Xiang mixed language.

*Yeheni or Pingyao Yaohua* is an unclassified Sinitic language spoken by the Yao people in Jianghua Yao Autonomous County in Yongzhou Prefectural City in Southern Hunan. It is divided into two different languages. Jianghua Tuhua varieties are also spoken in the county. The general impression is that Yeheni may be related to the Yongzhou Tuhuas, which seem to be Gan/Xiang mixed languages.

### **Guangxi/Hubei/Hunan**

**Maojiahua** is a language spoken by 200,000 Aoka Hmong in Southwestern Hunan, in the northeast of Guangxi, and in some areas of Hubei. In Southwestern Hunan, it is spoken in Suining, Wugang and Chengbu Counties. In Guangxi, it is spoken in Longsheng and Ziyuan Counties in the northeastern part of Zhuang Autonomous Region. The largest populations are in Chengbu, Longsheng, and Ziyuan. Lately most linguists say that this is a Sinitic language, but the speakers insist that they do not speak Chinese and they speak Hmong instead. This is probably a Sinitic language with heavy Hmong influence. It is not intelligible with other Sinitic languages.

## **Taiwan**

**Taiwanese Junhua** is spoken in Taoyuan County and in Luidui in Pingtung County in Taiwan. It is not the same language as Military Language elsewhere. This language has heavy Hakka influences, but it also has Min Nan, Mandarin, and even Japanese influences. Some say this is a Hakka language. At any rate, it is not intelligible with other in Taoyuan County and Luidui in Pingtung County in Taiwan.

## **Various Provinces**

**Junhua or Military Language** is spoken in Taoyuan County and Luidui in Pingtung County in Taiwan; in Lufeng County in Sanwei Prefectural City, in Huizhou Prefectural City and around Hakka speakers in Wuping County in Zhongshan Prefectural City in Guangdong; in Changjiang, Danzhou, Lingao, Sanya, and Zonghe in Hainan; in Guangxi; in Fujian, and in other places.

On a Mandarin base, Junhua adds various mixtures of Hakka, Gan, Cantonese, Taiwanese, or Japanese. It is considered to be an Old Mandarin language and is normally placed in Southwest Mandarin in a group called the Junhua Group, which contains four varieties.

But others say that different Military Language varieties are either Hakka or Gan. Wherever these varieties are spoken, they are not understood by people nearby. Junhua seems to derive from a lingua franca spoken by soldiers in the Ming Dynasty Army and was widely learned and understood by all soldiers at the time. It bears a strong resemblance to Ming Era Chinese. Military Language is not the same language in the various areas where it is spoken. The different varieties of Junhua spoken in different locales are probably not mutually intelligible at all.

## **Classification**

11 Sinitic languages are unclassified.

## **Uncertain Affiliation/Possibly Not Sinitic**



In the Guangxi-Hunan-Guizhou border region, a number of strange languages are spoken. Linghua, Waxiang, and Maojiahua are all spoken by various ethnic groups that nevertheless are generally seen as Han and not recognized ethnicities because their culture has become so Hanized over time. All of these languages appear to be mixtures of Chinese and minority languages. Maojiahua is now generally recognized as Sinitic, but Lingua is not, and Waxiang is more controversial, but the consensus now leans towards it being Sinitic.

**Lingling or Linghua** is an unclassified language spoken in Taiping in Pingdeng Township in Longsheng County, in mountainous Zhuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi, where it is spoken by 20,000 ethnic Hmong. The area was once only inhabited by tribal non-Han peoples. In the last 400-500 years, many Han moved into the area and found themselves a minority among the tribal peoples. Linghua is a result of the mingling of tribal languages and the Sinitic languages of the immigrants. It may share similar origins with Ping.

It is spoken by residents as a sort of secret language. Southwestern Mandarin is used with outsiders. The language is a mixture of Hmong and Southwestern Mandarin. It is controversial whether this is a Sinitic language or a Hmong language. At any rate, it is not intelligible with any other language.

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