

# 大学院教育支援機構 (DoGS) 海外渡航助成金 報告書

## Outcome report

計画名 Plan	中国少数民族の農村における持続可能な発展と文化保存の調査
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研究科・専攻・学年 Graduate school/Division/Year level	農学研究科生物資源経済学専攻 博士課程 二年生
渡航国 Country	中国
渡航日程 Travel schedule	2022年 10月 02日 ~ 2023年 03月 31日

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### 渡航計画の概要 Outline of the travel plan

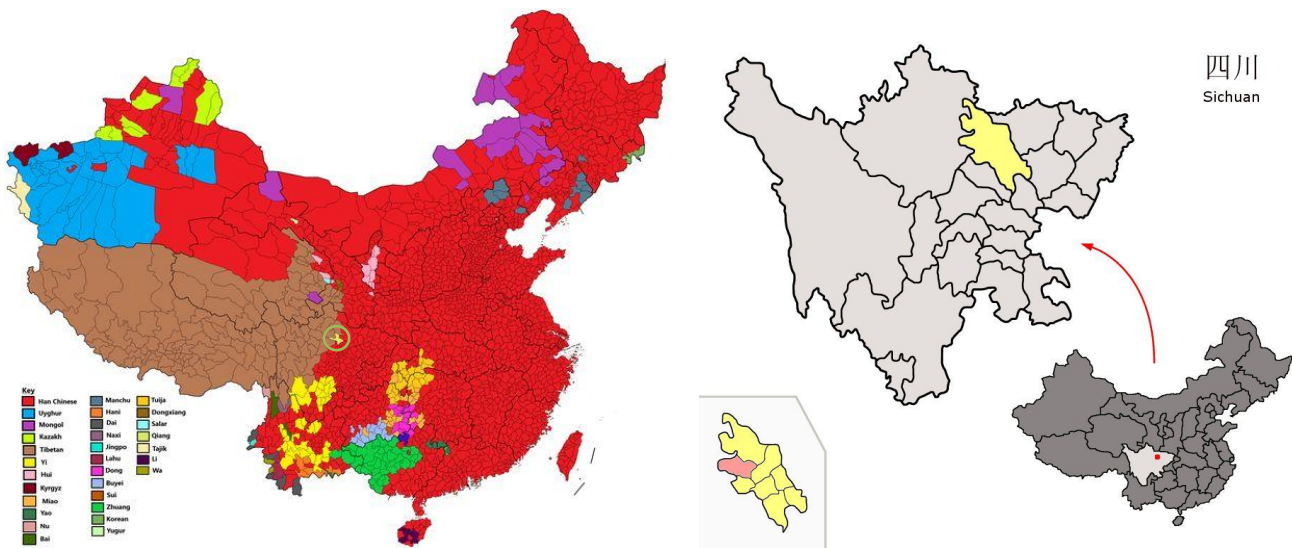
#### 1. Introduction of the research site: Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County

There are 56 ethnic groups in China, including the Han (漢) Chinese as the majority and 55 other ethnic minority groups. According to the 2020 Census Data, the total population of all ethnic minority groups in China is 125,467,390<sup>1</sup>. Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County (Beichuan) is the only Qiang (羌) autonomous county in China, located in Mianyang City, Sichuan Province. It governs 9 townships and 10 towns, including 202 villages and 33 communities.<sup>2</sup> By 2022, the total population of Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County is about 230,000, including 140,296 Han people, accounting for 61% of the total population. The ethnic minorities have a total population of 89,666, accounting for 39% of the total population. There are 86,194 Qiang people<sup>3</sup>, showing a slight growth trend compared with population 85,989 in 2016, accounting for 96.1% of the ethnic minority population. In 2008, Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County suffered from the Wenchuan Earthquake, which severely affected the whole county and cause the death of more than 100,000 people. The earthquake has serious impacts on the local economy, industry and natural environment. At the same time, under the influence of the policies of the central government of China and the system of regional autonomy of ethnic minorities, the development of Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County has attracted more academic attention. Therefore, this research will take the rural communities in Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County in Sichuan Province as the research object and conduct the field work to study the sustainable development of ethnic minority in rural areas and the inheritance and protection of ethnic culture.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2021-05/13/content\\_5606149.htm](http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2021-05/13/content_5606149.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.beichuan.gov.cn/zjbc/bcgl/xzqh/28271721.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.beichuan.gov.cn/zjbc/bcgl/rkymz/28361671.html>



**Figure1 (Left):** The Distribution of Different Ethnic Groups in China ( The green-circled place in the middle is the research site-Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County)

**Figure 2 (Right):** The Location of Mianyang City and Sichuan Province in China

## 2. The Purpose of Going to Beichuan County

The fieldwork is to provide interview and survey data for the research on the sustainable development and ethnic culture protection of ethnic minority groups in rural areas in China, which takes the Qiang people in Sichuan Province as the case. By arriving at the research site, first-hand information on local Qiang research can be obtained through face-to-face interviews, group discussions, anthropological research methods, and other methods. Therefore, it is possible to have a comprehensive understanding of the development status and overall situation of the research site, as well as the true attitudes, thoughts, and living standards of local residents.

The purpose of going aboard to China is to conduct the fieldwork in the research site of Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County, by using face-to-face contact with local villagers and in-depth semi-structured interviews to understand the local Qiang villagers’ attitudes, views on the sustainable development of local villages and their own families (Chen et al, 2019)<sup>4</sup>. In particular, this research focuses on the perspective of tourism and the industrial development models, which are implemented by the Chinese government in ethnic minority areas and underdeveloped rural areas, and attempts to explore how these industries remold the local development structure and their impact on the traditional culture of local ethnic minorities (Gustafsson & Shi, 2003)<sup>5</sup>. Thus, this research explores the development and subsistence patterns of ethnic minority in rural areas in China during the process of urbanization and industrialization.

This fieldwork focuses on the following three aspects:

<sup>4</sup> Chen, F., Xu, H., & Lew, A.A. (2019). Livelihood resilience in tourism communities: the role of human agency. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28, 606-624.

<sup>5</sup> Gustafsson, B., & Shi, L. (2003). The ethnic minority-majority income gap in rural China during transition. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 51(4), 805-822.

- (1) The current situation of Qiang people in Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County, especially the population change, industries and family structure
- (2) The impact of top-down policy on the sustainable development of local places and Qiang people.
- (3) Local Qiang residents' attitudes and thoughts towards sustainable development in the future.

## **成果** *Outcome*

Since the Chinese government's COVID-19 policy had strict restrictions on mobility and quarantine requirements between two different locations before December 2022, and researchers were infected with COVID-19 at the end of December 2022, it was difficult to conduct field surveys in 2022. Therefore, fieldworks were conducted multiple times in January, February, and March 2023. Through the fieldwork, the researcher has visited the Beichuan Qiang Ethnic Museum, Qiang Style Street, Qiang agritainment resort, Beichuan National Earthquake Ruins Museum, Beichuan County Government, and conducted the interviews and surveys with local residents in Gao'an village, Yongchang Town of Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County.

### **1. The current situation of Qiang people in Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County**

**Qiang residents are mainly engaged in tourism and planting industries:** The geographical environment of Beichuan is mountainous and hilly areas, so agricultural cultivation has long been the main source of income for local residents in history. In recent years, with the promotion of the tourism industry led by the local government, the tertiary industry like tourism has also become an important source of income. In 2020, Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County achieved a total tourism revenue of 6.14 billion yuan and attracted 7.54 million tourists. In 2021, the GDP of Beichuan is 8.81 billion yuan, and the tertiary industry GDP is 5.09 billion yuan, accounting for 57.8% of the GDP.<sup>6</sup> Most of the local Qiang ethnic residents are engaged in the tourism industry and planting industry to make a living.

**The family structure of the local Qiang groups shows an aging trend, and there is a serious loss of local population:** The main family members of both Qiang and Han families in Beichuan are elderly people, children, and women. The main labor force members of these family mostly have left Beichuan and worked outside. The local permanent population in Beichuan decreased by about 4000 people from 2017 to 2023, accounting for 2.85% of the total local population. However, the outflow of population is mainly the Han population, while the number of Qiang people remains basically unchanged and their proportion to the total local population has increased. This shows that the Qiang people have a strong sense of ethnic and cultural identity with Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County, and have established powerful ties with Beichuan.

**Young Qiang people have a higher level of education, but compared to the elderly, they are less willing to stay in Beichuan and prefer to make a living in big cities:** The elderly are limited by

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.my.gov.cn/mlmy/mygk/xzqh/29349651.html>

their education level and often work in cities as waiters, vendors, and other jobs that do not require high technical knowledge. However, in Beichuan, local elderly Qiang people can still rely on their own land to make a living and cultivate their own crops, so the proportion of elderly people staying in Beichuan is relatively high. On the other hand, the willingness of young Qiang people to stay in Beichuan is not high. Unless the young Qiang people could become government civil servants with a relatively high and stable income, or they prefer to go out to the big modern cities to live a more modern life with better salaries.



Figure 3: The Meeting Scene of Qiang Villagers (taken by researcher at the Beichuan Qiang Ethnic Museum)

## 2. The impact of top-down policy on the sustainable development in Beichuan

Through interviews with officials and their government websites in Beichuan County, we learned about the decision-making of different village development strategies and found that the combination of agriculture and tourism development is the main local economic development strategy. Local agriculture mainly develops the planting industry based on tea, traditional Chinese medicine, fruits and organic vegetables, as well as the characteristic breeding industry based on black pigs and white goats. The tourism industry relies on the local natural scenery and ethnic culture to create healthy vacation tourism and the tourism with ethnic cultural characteristics<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.beichuan.gov.cn/zjbc/bcgl/shsy/29035971.html>



Figure 4: The Slogan of Beichuan Autonomous County<sup>8</sup> (It means “Walking in the World, Stopping for Beichuan, Beautiful Qiang City, Strong Ecological County, Prosperous Beichuan, Welcome”)

**Tourism Industry:** Beichuan County has abundant tourism resources and superior natural conditions. The tourism industry in Beichuan County mainly highlights five aspects: Qiang culture, Huangdi culture, 5.12 Wenchuan Earthquake, Red Army revolutionary culture, and natural scenery. Qiang culture is the symbol of tourism in Beichuan County. The video introducing Beichuan on the official website of the Beichuan government has the final slogan, and it reads: “Walking in the World, Stopping for Beichuan, Beautiful Qiang City, Strong Ecological County, Prosperous Beichuan, Welcome”. The slogan mainly highlights the Qiang ethnic characteristics of Beichuan county, the historical and mythological stories of Dayu’s hometown, the natural and ecological scenery, the Wenchuan earthquake museum and ruins. Through a combination of cultural tourism, ethnic tourism, and agricultural tourism, Beichuan government aims to create the characteristics and attractions of Beichuan’s tourism brand. Meanwhile, the protection of ethnic minority culture is achieved by actively applying for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage of the Qiang people, and strengthening and amplifying it through tourism.



Figure 5: Qiang Ethnic Style Street in Beichuan County

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.beichuan.gov.cn/mongo1/5d72a891b8cb435da954c84d2519ca7c.mp4>

**Tea production and processing industry:** Due to geographical conditions, the long-term planting industry in Beichuan has led to the production of many high-quality traditional agricultural products. In combination with the recent modernization, industrialization, and mechanization of the planting industry promoted by the government, Beichuan has developed a composite new type of agriculture mainly focused on tea production and processing, combined with the breeding industry and fruit industry. Beichuan tea has obtained China’s National Geographic Indication Product Certification and Sichuan Excellent Agricultural Product Regional Brand Certification. The tea industry has become a pillar industry in Beichuan to increase rural residents’ income and achieve rural revitalization.



**Figure 6:** Qiang Women Wearing Qiang Costumes are Selling and Promoting Beichuan Tea Products Online through Mobile Phones

**After the Wenchuan earthquake, Beichuan county has improved infrastructure, attracted more investment, and developed more diversified industries.** The earthquake had a huge impact on local residents, with many houses and traditional buildings of Qiang ethnic damaged. Many local agricultural and industrial lands and factories were also severely damaged in the earthquake. In this situation, funds and subsidies were allocated by the center government, and architectural design is provided to local residents based on the traditional Qiang architectural style. The unified architectures provided a good opportunity for the construction of Qiang ethnic tourism villages. The Qiang agritainment resort of “Jina Qiang Village” was established in this way. In addition, the national assistance after the earthquake helped to relocate the entire Beichuan County, while improving and strengthening infrastructure construction, providing a good foundation for the construction of a modern industrial system and attracting more investment in Beichuan. Beichuan is developing new planting industries, such as the cultivation of traditional Chinese medicine and establishing China’s first medicinal themed tourism, “Yaowang Valley”, while also promoting the development of high-tech industries such as drone industrial parks to achieve multi-level development of the industry.

### **3. Local Qiang residents' attitudes and views towards future's sustainable development.**

Based on the collected questionnaires and individual interviews, it can be seen that Qiang residents generally have a positive evaluation of the tourism industry. Qiang residents think that the tourism industry with focus on Qiang ethnic culture, provides them with a large number of local employment opportunities. Qiang folk tourism activities such as bonfire party, the Qiang toasting ceremony and other Qiang folk tourism activities require the guidance and assistance of local Qiang residents who are familiar with Qiang customs and traditions. At the same time, the local Qiang cuisine and Qiang style accommodation provide most employment opportunities for local Qiang residents. They are mainly engaged in tour guides, local specialty sales, restaurants and accommodation, and folk tourism activities. However, there are two main issues with the employment of ethnic minority residents in the tourism industry. Firstly, the local Han residents' "culture appropriation" of Qiang ethnic reduced the employment opportunities of Qiang residents. Secondly, the enthusiasm of Qiang youth in engaging in ethnic cultural tourism related industries in Beichuan has decreased. The proportion of elderly and female practitioners is relatively high, and young Qiang residents tend to go out for employment, which means that the tourism industry cannot provide sufficient employment attraction and employment opportunities for local Qiang young people. And it could be a problem for the sustainable development of local Qiang community, as they may face the labor and population loss.

From interviews and surveys, some Qiang people expressed their concerns about the protection of Qiang ethnic culture by promoting tourism. The local Qiang ethnic culture in Beichuan has gradually shifted to cater to the needs of tourists, tourism, entertainment, and profit seeking. In interviews with local ethnic minority residents, although the majority expressed approval for the tourism industry, there are still a few elderly Qiang residents who say that many of the Qiang customs they learned as children have gradually been replaced, transformed, or even disappeared due to not adapting to modern lifestyles or not meeting the entertainment needs of tourists. For example, the "Zajiu" (a Qiang drinking activity) and bonfire parties of the Qiang ethnic group were warmly promoted by tourists because they provide tourists with good entertainment and joyful atmosphere. But the "Shibi" (the people related to divination) of the Qiang ethnic group was not promoted because of the resistance to feudal superstition. As for the protection of Qiang language, as tourists always speak mandarin or Sichuan dialect and they show little interest in the Qiang language, so Qiang language has not been promoted and deemed as low commercial value. Even for young Qiang people, they hardly understand or speak Qiang language, so more attention and research are necessary to analyze the tourism's role in protecting Qiang ethnic culture.



**Figure 7:** Zaju (呷酒) -The Traditional Drinking Activities of the Qiang People and very Popular Among Tourists.  
(Taken by researcher at the Beichuan Qiang Ethnic Museum)

The flow direction of local Qiang residents is mainly from villages and towns to Beichuan County, or to Mianyang City and Chengdu, which is also a signal of the serious population loss in rural China today. Local Qiang residents are relatively satisfied with the current overall development level, but due to the impact of the Covid-19, the development of the tourism industry between 2020-2022 was not ideal. Thus, there is some uncertainties in future development. Some residents express appreciation for the government’s rural revitalization policies and subsidies and support for local industries, and have great hope for the future development of Beichuan. Overall, although there are many uncertainties, local Qiang residents believe that with the government's guidance and industrial support, they have a positive and optimistic attitude towards the sustainable development of their community in the future.

### **今後の展望** Prospects for the future

As one of the 55 ethnic minorities in China, the Qiang people have been influenced in their traditional production, lifestyle, and customs by urbanization, industrialization, and modernization. The production efficiency of traditional agricultural planting or animal husbandry production methods of ethnic minorities is much lower than that of industrial production. Utilizing ethnic characteristics to develop characteristic planting and tourism industries has become the main development method in



ethnic minority areas. From the case of the Qiang ethnic group in Beichuan, it can be seen that developing ethnic characteristic tourism and planting industries can provide more employment opportunities for the Qiang ethnic group region. However, due to the convergence and commercialization of ethnic tourism to cater to tourists' preferences, the sustainable development of Qiang ethnic group in rural areas in the future has uncertainties.

At present, due to the limited sample size of the questionnaire and the limited diversity of interviewees, more fieldwork and data collection work are still needed to improve the reliability of the conclusion in this research. In current Chinese literature, there is little research on the combination of ethnic minority village research and China's rural revitalization policies, which has great research value and potential. Meanwhile, for China, a multi-ethnic country composed of 55 other ethnic minorities and the Han nationality, it is of great significance to study the current situation, policies and the sustainable development of ethnic minority groups in rural areas. Coordinating the development of different ethnic groups is also of great significance for countries with different ethnic groups. Therefore, the following research will be further improved, and it is planned to complete the entire content as the first draft of my doctoral thesis by the end of 2023.