THE CHINESE LANGUAGE IN QINGHAI

Keith R. S. Dede

In this essay I will discuss the Chinese language in Qinghai province from two perspectives:

The first perspective is diachronic, a look at the Chinese language in Qinghai over time. Because there are no sources that provide information about the early stages of the language, I will focus on the questions of when the Chinese language came to be spoken in Qinghai, and from what period the present variety of Chinese used in Qinghai descended. Because these are primarily historical questions, their answers are necessarily derived from historical sources.

The second section takes a synchronic perspective, a view of the Chinese language in Qinghai through social and geographic space at the present time. This section will deal with the questions of what kind of Chinese is the Chinese in Qinghai, who uses it, and along what ethnic, geographic and social lines the internal variations in the language are most strongly associated. These are more clearly linguistic and sociolinguistic questions, and the sources with which they are answered, primarily my own research along with essays from the 1980s to the present by linguists in China, are quite different from those of the first section.

Indeed, it may be that these two sections should actually belong in separate essays, because there is precious little that binds them into a single entity. However, in the final section of this paper, I shall show that the Chinese dialects found in Qinghai have been heavily influenced by the non-Chinese languages in the area and try to explain how this influence may have occurred. This last point is inexplicable without both a synchronic and diachronic understanding of the situation. Moreover, the final section on linguistic contact will point out the value that the study of the Chinese language in Qinghai can bring to the study of whole of the Chinese language.

THE DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

The question of when the Chinese language came to be used in Qinghai hinges on the question of what we understand it to be. Throughout this essay I shall use the term "Chinese language" to refer to the common, oral communicative tool of the Han Chinese people. The Chinese language existed many centuries prior to the time that the term *Han*, originally a toponym later taken as the name of China's first, long-lasting dynastic empire, came to refer to the people who use the language. Still, the people of that first dynastic empire identified as their ancestors those who first used the Chinese language, whose genesis is the oracle bone inscriptions of the late Shang period (ca. 1200 to 1045 BC).

Certainly, an oral, communicative tool predates the written language preserved on the oracle bones, but because we lack evidence, we have no way to determine what language it was, who spoke it, and how long it had been in use. Nevertheless, the written language used in the oracle bone inscriptions was clearly derived from an oral language that shares both lexical and typological features with the modern Chinese language.

It is also certain the Chinese language has been used by people other than Han people, and in recent times, it has even been used as a first language by people other than the Han. Moreover, there are people today who may consider themselves to belong to the same ethnic group as the Han and who do not use the Chinese language. However, these are later developments arising out of special historical circumstances which do not preclude our identification of the Chinese language with the Han people in early historical periods.

Human habitation of Qinghai

Archaeological evidence shows that the region of today's Qinghai Province was inhabited as long as 23,000 years ago by a people sharing cultural characteristics with peoples to the east, in what is now Northern China. However, we cannot say with certainty whether those people spoke a language ancestral to Chinese. Similarly, the Yangshao Culture artifacts, dating from 2000 to 3000 BC and found in Northeastern Qinghai, the area of Qinghai today primarily inhabited by Han Chinese, cannot in confidence be said to have been left by people who spoke Chinese.

The earliest historical evidence for human habitation of Qinghai comes from the earliest historical sources of Chinese history, the oracle bone inscriptions. However, these sources clearly make a distinction between the people living in

Qinghai, referred to as the Qiang 羌, and the scribes who carved the inscriptions. The Qiang were regarded as enemies, and, though it cannot be known for sure, likely spoke a different language from the people who inscribed the oracle bones. Thus, we can conclude that from the earliest historically documented times the Chinese language was probably not used in Qinghai.

When the Chinese language came to be used in Qinghai is now a question of when Han Chinese people migrated into the area, settled down and established communities. We are not concerned with Han itinerant merchants, individual travellers, emissaries or other unsettled populations, who probably entered the region in very early, perhaps even prehistoric, times. Although they surely spoke some kind of Chinese, the fact that they did not settle down, raise families and form communities means that the Chinese language never developed a regional form associated with Qinghai.

The migration of Han people into Qinghai has probably always been restricted by two factors. First, the altitude and aridity of the region, which limited the ability of land cultivation to support a community, was unsuitable for the traditional Han agrarian community. Second, the region was already inhabited by people who were hostile to Han immigrants. In fact, it was this second factor that instigated the first period of Han immigration.

Beginning with the Han Dynasty (206 BC to AD 220), historical records document repeated military expeditions into northeastern Qinghai and the subsequent establishment of military colonies there in an attempt to pacify and secure the western frontier. With the establishment of military colonies, at times accompanied by penal and civilian colonies, the Chinese language came to Qinghai and developed its own characteristics, undergoing phonological changes and borrowing from the local languages, as would any language in a similar situation.

Indeed, as the following paragraphs will show, beginning with the Han Dynasty, the pattern of Han immigration to Qinghai and the subsequent use of the Chinese language in Qinghai was set. The pattern is that in times of a strong, central Han Chinese authority, Han immigrants arrived in the regions with arable land in the river valleys formed by the Yellow River and the Huang River in Northeastern Qinghai bringing the Chinese language with them. As long as the military colonies and frontier guards were able defend the area from incursions made by non-Chinese-speaking peoples and maintain the Han presence, the Chinese language was used. In other times, when strong, central authority weakened or disappeared, Han people in the region either assimilated to the surrounding non-Han populations, or emigrated to regions more securely within Chinese control, taking their language with them.

Moreover, I will argue that the language brought to Qinghai by Han immigrants during the last period of immigration, beginning in the Ming Dynasty

(1368–1644), is the ancestor to the variety of the Chinese language that we observe used there today.

Han era colonization

The first central Han authority to colonize Qinghai was the Han Dynasty, specifically the Former Han Dynasty (206 BC – 25 AD). The first major expedition was carried out by the general Zhao Chongguo 赵充国 in 61 BC to prevent the Qiang from forming alliances with the Xiongnu 匈奴 to their north and cutting off the dynasty's trade routes to the west (QLJ, pp. 13–14). General Zhao succeeded in breaking up the Qiang and set up several military outposts with names like Linqiang 临羌 (Overlooking-the-Qiang, near present day Huangyuan 湟源), and Poqiang 破羌 (Destroying-the-Qiang, near present day Ledu 乐都). These outposts were essentially military colonies, staffed by soldiers of the Han army who cultivated land in order to sustain themselves, introducing irrigation and other advanced agricultural techniques to the region. These settlements were the first communities of Chinese speaking people in Qinghai. Unfortunately, as is true of all subsequent periods up to the 20th century, we have no record of what their language was like.

This initial colonization was rather successful, lasting more than 200 years, despite periodic interruptions due to both Qiang hostilities and internal Han Dynasty weaknesses. Although the disturbances were followed by renewed efforts at colonization, including more military-farming colonies, their existence depended on the support of the dynasty's military, which by about 180 AD had weakened to the point that it was no longer able to sustain them (de Crespigny 1984: 146; QLJ, pp. 23–24). The colonies were abandoned, and the Han soldiers either returned to the east, assimilated to the surrounding Qiang people, or were killed. Thus ended the first period of the use of the Chinese language in Qinghai.

During the subsequent five centuries, there was no strong, central Han authority, and consequently there were no further attempts to colonize Qinghai and bring the Chinese language there. Qinghai was largely abandoned to the non-Han peoples of the region, whose ethnic make-up changed during this period. Several branches of the Xianbei 鲜卑, originally from what is now the eastern part of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, moved into the area, subjugated the populations already there, and formed independent political entities that engaged in warfare and strategic alliances with polities to the south and east. Over time, these groups, together with the people they subjugated, became known as the Tuyuhun 吐谷浑 QLJ, pp. 51–53).

Sui-Tang era colonization

When the second period of Han colonization began, under the direction of the Sui Dynasty (581–618), who were able to unify China under a single regime for a short time, they came into contact with the Tuyuhun. Although the relationship started out on friendly, cooperative terms, by 609 it had deteriorated to the point that the Sui emperor, Yang Di 炀帝 (r. 605–617), personally led a punitive expedition against the Tuyuhun in eastern Qinghai (QLJ, p. 60). This resulted in the establishment of military colonies of the Han Dyanasty pattern seen above.

Though the Sui Dynasty was short-lived, the succeeding Tang Dynasty (618–907) continued the colonies and regularized those in northeastern Qinghai into their administration, establishing the prefectures of Shanzhou 鄯州 (near modern Ledu) and Kuozhou 廓州 (near modern Jianzha 尖扎) (QLJ, p. 62). Again, these communities were rather successful as long as the Tang military was able to protect them from hostile groups on their southern and western frontier. Indeed, the Tang military was so successful at this task, that it largely destroyed the Tuyuhun as an independent ethno-political entity. In so doing, however, the Tang opened the way for direct conflict with the Tufan 吐蕃, or Tibetan, forces expanding from Central Tibet toward the northeast into Qinghai. In 670, the Tang and Tibetan forces met at Dafeichuan 大非川, south of Qinghai Lake, resulting in a devastating defeat for the Tang armies, and threatening the survival of the Han colonists in Qinghai (QLJ, p. 71).

However, the Tang military held firm in northeastern Qinghai for nearly a century afterwards. In keeping with the pattern of Han colonization outlined above, not until internal Tang weakness, the rebellion of General An Lushan 安禄山 (703–757) in 755, did the Tang military abandon the northwestern frontier, thus ending the second period of Han colonization.

For the next 100 years, Qinghai and its neighboring areas to the north and east constituted the northeastern part of the Tibetan empire. Again, the Han colonists must have either left, been killed or assimilated by the ruling Tibetans. There is some evidence that the latter occurred. In 822, an ambassador of the Tang court, named Liu Yuanding 刘元鼎 (fl. 822), passed through Qinghai on his way to the Tibetan imperial court. At a town called Longzhicheng 龙支城 (now extinct, but probably near the present Gansu-Qinghai border), he wrote as follows:

> A thousand people in their seventies and eighties bowed to me and cried. They asked how the emperor was. One of them said, "We came here with the army. Even now our sons and grandsons have not forgotten the clothing of the Tang people. Does the court still remember us? When will the army come back?" His speech was filled with sorrow. (*Xin Tangshu* 216.6102–6104.)

The passage clearly states that the former military colonists had been cut off from the Tang world. The remark about clothing suggests they were under pressure to assimilate to the politically dominant Tibetan culture.

Song and Yuan era

The third period of Han colonization in the Qinghai region lasted a mere 28 years, from 1099–1127, under the direction of the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127). Prior to 1099, the kingdom known as the Qingtang 青堂/青唐, formed from the remnants of the Tibetan empire around 1032, ruled most of northeastern Qinghai. From the Song point of view, the Qingtang served as a useful buffer between themselves and the Xixia 西夏 (1038–1227) farther north and west. At the same time, the Qingtang was an irreplaceable supplier of horses for the Song military, and served as the conduit through which "Silk Road" trade with the far west was carried out (QLJ, p. 93). In 1099, the Song, deciding it would be best if they ruled northeastern Qinghai themselves, advanced up the Huang River. They set up the Huangzhou 湟州 commandery (near modern Ledu), and in 1104 set up another near modern Xining 西宁 (QLJ, p. 95).

Military-agrarian colonies were established again, bringing the Chinese language to the region. And, again, it was not because of local events that these colonies were abandoned, but rather weakness in other parts of the empire. In 1127, the Song's northeastern frontier was breached by the Jin (1115–1234), an Altaic-speaking people from Manchuria. The Jin quickly swept across north China, occupying all areas vacated by the retreating Song army, including those in northeastern Qinghai, where they took over the task of defending it against the Xixia (QLJ, p. 104). Needless to say, the Song colonies met the same fate as those at the end of the Han and the Tang.

For the next 250 years, northeastern Qinghai, like the rest of North China, was under the control of non-Han regimes. For the majority of that time, it was under the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1206–1368), who swept through the region in 1227 on the way to conquering Central Tibet. Though the Yuan were non-Han, they considered Qinghai a strategically important area, and stationed a large number of troops there. Though still disputed, the majority opinion is that the present "Tu nationality" (*Tuzu* 土族), more properly referred to as Monguor, are the descendants, at least in part, of portions of the Mongol army stationed in northeastern Qinghai. The descendants of other Mongol army forces are found in southeastern and western Qinghai. However, during this time there is no evidence of Han communities in the region, and it is safe to conclude that the Chinese language was not used there.

Ming to present and the antecedents of modern Qinghai Chinese

The arrival of the Ming Dynasty's (1368–1644) forces in Qinghai in 1370 marks the final and most successful period of Han colonization of the area. Since the late 14th century there has been a continuous Han presence in northeastern Qinghai for over 600 years. Over that time, the communities that started as military-agrarian colonies, along with penal and civilian colonies, have become majority Han towns and cities administered through the same bureaucracy as all of China. In short, northeastern Qinghai became part of China proper, because during this period there has been a central authority with the power to maintain those communities.

The Han colonizers of the early Ming certainly brought their varieties of the Chinese language with them, and for a time shortly after the initial settlement these dialects maintained their status as the means of oral communication among the population. As the initial colonies became permanent communities, a variety of the Chinese language indigenous to Qinghai began to take shape. Internal phonological, lexical and syntactic changes, as well as borrowings from neighboring languages and dialects occurred. Unfortunately, the precise nature of those changes and borrowings will never be known because we lack any record of either the varieties of Chinese the original settlers used or the subsequent indigenous Qinghai variety. However, for at least three reasons, the Chinese language presently used in Qinghai may be considered the direct descendant of that used by the early Ming colonizers.

First, the local tradition among the present Han residents in Qinghai, those who call themselves *Qinghairen* (青海人, natives of Qinghai, as opposed to more recent immigrants) is that their ancestors first came to Qinghai from the lower Yangtze area of eastern China at the time of the early Ming. This oral tradition is supported by family genealogies and the fact that important military leaders in the Qinghai area during the early Ming were born in the lower Yangtze region. There is another oral tradition among some *Qinghairen* that they are the descendants of a group of people from one city block in Nanjing. Their ancestors were sent to Qinghai as a punishment when, as part of their lantern festival celebration (the 15th day of the first lunar month), they included a painted lantern depicting the emperor's wife as a grotesque figure with big feet, riding a donkey with a watermelon clutched to her breast. While this latter story is most certainly spurious (Mi 1995: 443), the family genealogies and other historical evidence is more convincing.

Second, there has been remarkable stability in the administration of the region from the early Ming to the present, suggesting the kind of social stability

necessary for the evolution of a distinctly regional linguistic variety. The present capital of Qinghai, Xining, though established by the Qingtang and later the center of Song and Yuan administration, became a Han city for the first time during the Ming period, when the city walls, remnants of which still stand, were built (QLJ, pp. 129–130). Similarly, the county seats of northeastern Qinghai all occupy the locations of the towns originally established by the Ming. Moreover, the "local headman" (tǔsī 土司) system, the administrative system for non-Han people in the imperial bureaucracy based on an inherited position, was largely established during the Ming, and in many cases these positions stayed within the same family until the late 19th century. Certainly, new Han settlements arose and the regions under which their jurisdiction changed over time, but the major towns and their administrative districts are largely the same today as they were in the early Ming.

Finally, there is both an ethnic and linguistic continuity from the early Ming to the present. Changes in the ethnic constituency of the population inhabiting the Qinghai region since the earliest historic times have been briefly outlined above. From the time of the first Ming colonies to the present, the ethnic situation has been more or less the same. Tibetans have been in the area since Tang times. Mongols, Monguors, Salars and Hui seem to largely have arrived in the area during the Yuan Dynasty. The Han came during the Ming. These six groups are the largest ethnic groups in Qinghai today, and, with some changes in their proportional representation, have been there continually since the early Ming. All these groups, except the Hui, who like the Han speak Chinese, have their own, mutually-unintelligible languages, and there is no reason to think that 600 years ago the situation was any different. The languages certainly changed over those 600 years and influenced each other in their evolution, but they have remained distinct languages.

Moreover, the linguistic continuity extends to the Chinese language as well. Since at least Ming times, and perhaps much earlier, there was a *lingua franca* among the educated or traveled elite in China known as *Guānhuà* 官话, or Mandarin. In early Ming times, this variety of Chinese was phonologically based on the dialects of the lower Yangtze region, though it certainly had regional variants based on dialects throughout the country. Its lexicon was drawn from both spoken Chinese and the classical, written language. Its speakers were primarily the literary elite, who needed a common spoken language as they traveled from one bureaucratic post to another throughout the country. Because of its association with the literary social elite, Mandarin became the prestige variety of spoken Chinese. Indeed, when western missionaries arrived in the 16th century, the Chinese language variety they most wanted to learn, other than the classical, written language, was Mandarin. Other than the classical, written language, Mandarin

is also the variety of Chinese likely to be the source of borrowings made into the early variety of the language used in Qinghai.

The external factors that have influenced the development of the Chinese language in Qinghai, the non-Chinese languages and Mandarin, have been in place and relatively stable since the early Ming period. Though we may never know precisely the phonology, lexicon or syntax of the indigenous variety of the Chinese language that first took shape in the early Ming, the social and linguistic continuity in Qinghai over the past 600 years suggests we can regard the present variety of Chinese used in Qinghai as the descendant of that first variety.

This is not to suggest that nothing has changed in Qinghai over the past 600 years. Indeed, on at least three occasions, major wars swept through the region seriously disturbing the social fabric of the area. Population increase and the movement of some ethnic groups in relation to their neighbors have been the source of some tension. Internal administrative boundaries have been redrawn a number of times. Since the incorporation of Qinghai into the People's Republic of China in 1949, the most recent wave of Han immigration has occurred and attempts at industrialization have radically altered the social situation, especially in the larger towns. Nonetheless, because of the relative social stability of both Han and non-Han peoples in the region, and the stable linguistic environment, we must conclude that there is a high degree of linguistic continuity between the first variety of the Chinese language in Qinghai in the early Ming period and the variety that we observe used there today.

THE SYNCHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

Until now I have refrained from using the term "Qinghai Chinese", for the simple reason that, although there is a common word used in the Chinese language in Qinghai with the meaning "Qinghai Chinese", *Qinghaihua*, the term lacks a rigorous linguistic definition. Indeed, most of the terms in the Chinese language that refer to varieties of speech and contain the morpheme *huà* 话, such as *Beijinghua*, *Shanghaihua*, *Sichuanhua*, etc., lack rigorous linguistic definitions, and rely on geographic reference to derive their meaning. For the communicative needs of most situations, these terms are adequate, and a similarly geographic definition for the term Qinghai Chinese can be given: the varieties of the Chinese language used within the borders of Qinghai province.

This definition, though geographically based, serves the purpose of excluding the non-Chinese languages used in Qinghai, such as Monguor, Mongol, Tibetan, etc., restricting the focus to the oral communicative tool of the Han people and others who learn to use it. For this reason, I will make use of it in the remainder of

this essay, in which I will discuss the social and geographic lines along which the varieties of the Chinese language in Qinghai are drawn.

Classification of the Chinese language in Qinghai

Before discussing these varieties, it is worth looking at the above definition from a linguistic point of view to see whether there are linguistic criteria for considering the varieties of the Chinese language used within the borders of Qinghai province as distinct from the varieties of Chinese in neighboring Gansu province and across North China. Clearly, this is a problem of dialect classification. The criteria most widely used to classify Chinese dialects are phonological, rather than lexical or syntactic, because when they are applied to the mass of Chinese dialect data, the resulting categories most elegantly correspond to the notions people already have about what constitutes a dialect.

When the phonological criteria are applied to Qinghai Chinese, it is immediately apparent that it belongs to the Mandarin dialect group (*Guānhuà fāng-yánqū* 官话方言区), the largest dialect group in China, which includes over 800 million speakers and stretches from Xinjiang in the northwest, to Manchuria in the northeast, to Yunnan in the southwest. Such a large dialect group calls for sub-classification, leaving open the possibility that Qinghai Chinese is distinct from its immediate neighbors. However, using the most widely accepted criterion for sub-classifying Mandarin dialects, it is clear that Qinghai Chinese is part of a dialect group that stretches from Shandong in the east to Xinjiang in the west and includes its immediately neighboring dialects.

The criterion is the modern reflection of the Middle Chinese tone category called the "entering tone", *rùshēng* 入声. Li Rong, the preeminent Chinese dialectologist, first used this criterion to distinguish seven groups of Mandarin dialects (Li 1985). Liu Xunning revised these seven groups into three when he organized them according to the number of different modern tone categories into which the Middle Chinese *rùshēng* merged (Liu 1995). The three groups are Southern Mandarin (*Nánfāng guānhuà* 南方官话), in which there is a distinct *rùshēng* category or the *rùshēng* merged into one other tone category; Central Plains Mandarin (*Zhōngyuán guānhuà* 中原官话), in which the *rùshēng* merged with two other tone categories; and Northern Mandarin (*Běifāng guānhuà* 北方官话), in which the *rùshēng* merged with three or more tone categories. One of the strengths of Liu's classification is that it accords with geographical realities and historical developments in North China, lending it great explanatory value. When viewed through Liu's classificatory scheme, Qinghai Chinese neatly fits into the Central Plains group.

There is still the possibility that syntactic or lexical features of Qinghai Chinese might serve to distinguish it as a linguistic group distinct from its neighbors. Even here, though, we find that the majority of features that characterize Qinghai Chinese are also found in dialects across the border in Gansu Province.

There are solid geographic and historical reasons for classifying the varieties of the Chinese language in Qinghai with those in other areas of North China. First, only in 1929 did Qinghai attain provincial status. Prior to that time, the counties in northeastern Qinghai where the majority of the Han people live were part of Gansu province, and their political, economic and cultural ties were with administrative centers in that province. Second, the mountainous terrain of northeastern Qinghai dictates that communication and transportation networks follow the major river valleys. Both of the major river valleys in the area lead directly into Gansu. Therefore, the intimate historical and geographic association between the northeastern region of Qinghai and southern Gansu exclude the likelihood that there are distinct linguistic entities, and we are left only with the geographical definition of Qinghai Chinese.

The Dialects of Qinghai Chinese

I use the term "dialect" to refer to a variety of a language associated with a geographic or spatial entity. As noted before, there are often no good linguistic reasons to suppose that a particular area has any justification to be considered a distinct variety of a language, as in the case of Qinghai Chinese. On the other hand, it is more often the case that linguistic features congregate around certain topographic features, reflecting the barriers to, or facilitation of, communication that geography often presents. The dialects of Qinghai Chinese similarly reflect the geographic features of northeastern Qinghai.

It is important to repeat here that the area under discussion is not the whole of Qinghai Province, but the northeastern section of the province in which the Huang and Yellow Rivers and their tributaries carve deep valleys between mountain ranges. This is where Han communities have existed since the early Ming, and constitutes the one area of the province where the kind of intensive agriculture practiced by the Han is possible. To the south and west, the altitude rises above 3000 meters, shortening the growing season, which, combined with scant rainfall, makes land cultivation impractical, and in pre-modern times, impossible. In recent years, Han people have come to reside in every county and prefecture in the province, but because these are new communities, it is hard to say at this time whether a distinct variety of Chinese has evolved with them.

Among the Han communities of northeastern Qinghai, Zhang Chengcai, who has done research on the Chinese dialects of Qinghai for 30 years, recognizes

three dialect groups. The three groups are: 1) the Xining group, including metropolitan Xining, the counties of Huangzhong 湟中, Ping'an 平安, Huangyuan, Huzhu 互助, Hualong 化隆, Menyuan 门源 and the speech of the county seat of Guide 贵德; 2) the Ledu group, including the counties of Ledu and Minhe 民和; and 3) the Xunhua group, including the counties of Xunhua 循化, Tongren 同仁 and the rural dialects of the county of Guide. The Xunhua group, essentially the areas along the Yellow River, accords with the area that is said to use "*Hézhōuhuà*" 河州话. Hezhou is the former name of Linxia 临夏, a county seat across the border in Gansu, where *Hézhōuhuà* is also used. When this area was still part of Gansu province, its prefectural capital was Hezhou, so it is natural that even today the two regions have similar dialects.

Rather than relying on one feature to distinguish these three groups, Zhang uses the co-occurrence of several phonological features, of which, for lack of space, I will only discuss a few. The first feature is that of tone; the Xining group distinguishes four monosyllabic tones, while the other two groups distinguish only three. The second is the pronunciation of the first person pronoun; in the Xining group it is [nɔ^{53}]; in the Ledu group it is [və^{53}]; and in the Xunhua group it is [ŋɣ^{53}].

The other features are perhaps best understood after considering the data below in Table 1 (adapted from Zhang 1984: 190–193):

Table 1: Character Readings from Several Qinghai Counties

Character-Gloss		Xining	Huzhu	Guide	Huang-yuan	Ledu	Minhe	Xunhua	Tongren
1	猪 'pig'	tʂv^{44}	tʂv^{44}	tʂv^{44}	tʂv^{44}	tʂv^{24}	tʂv^{24}	tʂu^{24}	tʂu^{24}
2	出 'go out'	tʂ'v^{44}	tʂ'v^{44}	tʂ'v^{44}	tʂ'v^{44}	tʂ'v^{24}	tʂ'v^{24}	tʂ'u^{24}	tʂ'u^{24}
3	书 'book'	fv^{44}	fv^{44}	fv^{44}	fv^{44}	fv^{24}	fv^{24}	ʂu^{24}	ʂu^{24}
4	入 'enter'	v^{24}	v^{44}	v^{44}	v^{44}	v^{24}	v^{24}	ʐu^{24}	ʐu^{24}
5	止 'stop'	tsɿ^{53}	tsɿ^{53}	tsɿ^{53}	tsɿ^{53}	tsɿ^{53}	tsɿ^{53}	tʂʅ^{53}	tʂʅ^{53}
6	齿 'tooth'	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ʅ^{53}	ts'ʅ^{53}	ts'ʅ^{53}	ts'ʅ^{53}
7	始 'start'	sɿ^{53}	sɿ^{53}	sɿ^{53}	sɿ^{53}	ʂʅ^{53}	ʂʅ^{53}	ʂʅ^{53}	ʂʅ^{53}
8	低 'low'	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsi^{12}	tsi^{12}	tsi^{12}	tsi^{12}
9	资 'capital'	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{12}	tsɿ^{12}	tsɿ^{12}	tsɿ^{12}
10	基 'base'	tɕj^{44}	tɕj^{44}	tɕj^{44}	tsɿ^{44}	tsɿ^{12}	tɕj^{12}	tɕi^{12}	tɕi^{12}
11	踢 'kick'	ts'ɿ^{44}	ts'ɿ^{44}	ts'ɿ^{44}	ts'ɿ^{44}	ts'ɿ^{12}	ts'ɿ^{12}	ts'i^{12}	ts'i^{12}
12	雌 'female'	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{12}	ts'ɿ^{53}	ts'ɿ^{12}	ts'ɿ^{12}
13	欺 'cheat'	tɕ'j^{44}	tɕ'j^{44}	tɕ'j^{44}	ts'ɿ^{44}	ts'ɿ^{12}	tɕ'i^{12}	tɕ'i^{12}	tɕ'i^{12}
14	希 'hope'	ɕj^{44}	ɕj^{44}	ɕj^{44}	sɿ^{44}	sɿ^{12}	ɕj^{12}	ɕi^{12}	ɕi^{12}
15	思 'think'	sɿ^{44}	sɿ^{44}	sɿ^{44}	sɿ^{44}	sɿ^{12}	sɿ^{12}	sɿ^{12}	sɿ^{12}

The character readings in Table 1 demonstrate three differences among the three dialect groups in Qinghai. First, examples 1–4 demonstrate that where the Xining group and the Ledu group have a final [-v] after retroflex initials in certain character readings, the Xunhua group has a final [-u]. Second, examples 5–7 demonstrate that in certain readings where the Ledu and Xunhua groups have retroflex initials, [tʂ-], etc., the Xining group has dental initials, [ts-], etc. Finally, examples 8–15 demonstrate a complex group of distinctions, which are not entirely consistent across the three groups, but significant nonetheless. Basically, in the Xining group example 8 is the same as example 9, but different from example 10 (or, in shortened notation, 8=9≠10), and similarly in the Xining group, 11=12≠13, discounting tonal distinctions. Although Minhe is like the Xining group, the rest of the Ledu group is 8=9=10, 11=12=13 (discounting tone). The Xunhua group has 8≠9≠10, and 11≠12≠13 (discounting tone). Finally, examples 14–15 show that the three groups are not entirely consistent in these distinctions. Huangyuan and Ledu are alone in merging 14 and 15, while the others keep them distinct. Certainly, the features outlined above are not decisive proof of the distinctiveness of the three groups, but they serve to demonstrate that there are sound linguistic reasons for distinguishing them.

Zhang's classificatory scheme works well for two additional reasons. First, it accords with the geography of northeastern Qinghai. The Xunhua group is the most distinct of the three and is separated from the other two by a large mountain range, the Lajishan 拉鸡山, and they are all located along the Yellow River or its tributaries. This group, as stated above, is geographically and historically connected to the Gansu region of Linxia, with which it shares linguistic features. The Ledu and Xining groups are both located along the Huang River valley. The dialect boundary that separates them is the eastern edge of Ping'an county and the western edge of Ledu county, near the township of Gaodian 高店. Here the Huang River narrows as it passes through a large gorge, the Daxia 大峡, that has long been an impediment to travel and communication between the two regions. West of the gorge, the valley opens up, and essentially extends all the way west to Huangyuan. East of the gorge, the valley also widens all the way into Gansu province, so that the Ledu group, and Minhe in particular, shows strong resemblance's to the dialect found down river in Lanzhou.

Second, the three-way classification accords well with the opinions of native speakers. While doing fieldwork in Xining in 1995–96, I often asked people what differences they noticed between their dialect and that of others in Qinghai. The most common reaction was that people in Ledu speak different. When I asked how it was different, the most common response was that they pronounce the first person pronoun as [və⁵³], as Zhang noted above. When I asked the same questions to Ledu speakers, their responses were largely the same. When I asked about the

dialects along the Yellow River, the common response was, "That's Hezhouhua; it's not the same as ours."

While even native speakers recognize differences among these dialects, it should be noted that they are largely mutually-intelligible. Speakers from Xining have no problem understanding people from Ledu, and can generally understand people from the Xunhua group, providing neither one speaks the most "local" *tǔ* 土 variety of their dialect. These are dialects much like dialects in English. A New Yorker immediately recognizes the speech of an Alabaman as different from his own, but generally has no trouble understanding him. That is to say, these are dialects in the English sense of the term, unlike the Standard Chinese (*Pǔtōnghuà* 普通话) *fāngyán* 方言 "dialect", which is generally used to refer to differences as large as those between the speech of Beijing and the speech of Guangzhou (Canton), which, in purely linguistic terms, are two mutually-unintelligible languages. So, although there are dialect differences within Qinghai Chinese, they are slight differences when viewed from the perspective of the great variety of all Chinese dialects.

Social variation in Qinghai Chinese

In the previous published work on the varieties of the Chinese language used in Qinghai Province, very little attention has been paid to differences in variation among social groups. Therefore, much of what I have to say in the following paragraphs is drawn from my own year of fieldwork in Xining from 1995 to 1996. Because I was working on the varieties of the language used in the city of Xining, what I have to say below is best considered as applying primarily to that area. However, I suspect that the social variation I found in the Xining dialect is common among the other dialects.

Ethnic differences: Han and Hui

When asked what sub-dialects of Xining dialect they recognize, Xining people point out that there are differences between the way the Hui people speak and the way Han people speak. The Hui are a notoriously difficult ethnic group to define. They are found throughout China, but primarily in the northwest. They speak Chinese, or whatever dialect of Chinese is used in the area where they reside, although there are reports that some groups of Hui in Qinghai use Tibetan as their first language. Hui are Muslims and maintain mosques in their communities, and, in some cases, separate schools for training in Arabic in order to read the Koran. While no single feature listed here unambiguously distinguishes them from other

ethnic groups in China, there is nonetheless a strong identity among the Hui that cannot be refuted. Intermarriage between Han and Hui is rare, and they largely reside in separate communities within the city.

The largest Hui community in Xining is called Dongguan 东关, just to the east of the old city walls. One informant told me that prior to the mid-1800s, Han and Hui both lived within the old city walls, but after the suppression of the Muslim rebellion in 1872, General Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812–1885) issued the order that the Hui were no longer allowed to do so. Thereafter, Dongguan came to be the primarily Hui area that it is today. Now, of course, there is no such restriction on where the Hui can reside, and they live in almost every part of the city. Still, when I asked Hui informants who were not presently residing in Dongguan where their family was from, they usually responded that it had its roots in the Dongguan area.

The most noticeable phonological difference between Hui speech and Han speech in Xining is in a particular group of words, 'to say', 'a pair', 'water', etc., which are pronounced with a labio-dental initial [f-] by the Han, but with a retroflex fricative initial followed by a high, back rounded vowel [ʂu-] by the Hui, as the following table demonstrates:

Table 2: Han-Hui Phonological Difference in Xining Dialect

Chinese Character	Gloss	Xining-Han	Xining-Hui	Standard Chinese
说	'to say'	$fɔ^{44}$	$ʂuə^{44}$	$ʂuɔ^{44}$
水	'water'	$fɿ^{53}$	$ʂui^{53}$	$ʂuəi^{213}$
耍	'to play'	fa^{53}	$ʂua^{53}$	$ʂua^{213}$
书	'book'	fv^{44}	$ʂu^{44}$	$ʂu^{44}$
双	'a pair'	$fɔ̃^{44}$	$ʂuɔ̃^{44}$	$ʂuaŋ^{44}$

Several of these are high frequency words, so the difference between Han and Hui is almost immediately apparent in any conversation. In addition, I was told there are lexical differences as well. For example, an informant told me that Han speakers say [$tɿ^{44}$ tɿ] for 'father', but Hui speakers say [a^{24} ta].

There may be some historical justification for these differences. The phonological difference between Han and Hui in Table 2 is also a difference between the Xining dialect group and that of *Xúnhuà*. As I mentioned before, the *Xúnhuà* dialect group is essentially *Hézhōuhuà*, after the former name of Linxia, Gansu. Linxia today is primarily a Hui region, as was Hezhou in the past. This suggests the possibility that the Hui of Xining at some time in the past came to Xining from Hezhou, and preserved some phonological traces of their old dialect. I have not

found any historical evidence documenting such a move, but I suspect further research into both *Hézhōuhuà* and the Hui dialect of Xining will likely reveal a close relationship between the two.

While it is clear that Han speakers and Hui speakers of the Xining dialect have differences in their speech, it is not clear that the differences infallibly mark one group or the other. On several occasions, Hui informants used the pronunciation [fɔ⁴⁴] for 'to say', or varied between that pronunciation and the more common Hui pronunciation [ʂuə⁴⁴]. On at least one occasion, after producing the [fɔ⁴⁴] form, an informant said to me, "Oh, yeah, I'm a Hui; we usually pronounce this [ʂuə⁴⁴]," indicating a consciousness of this difference as a marker of her ethnic identity. Therefore, I suspect that among some Hui the differences mentioned above are primarily ethnic-identity markers. In situations in which one's identity as Hui is of some importance the linguistic features associated with being Hui are more likely to emerge. In other situations, where one's identity as Hui is irrelevant, then the same linguistic features are less likely to do so.

Viewed from another perspective, one might see this variation as Hui assimilation to the Han. Indeed, assimilation is evident among certain Hui people who work and reside in primarily Han communities, make an effort to advance in Han society through higher education in Han schools and dispense with the clothing or other outward markers of an identity distinct from Han. In this context, shedding linguistic features that mark Hui identity for both Han and Hui is simply a matter of getting rid of one more overt feature of ethnic identity. Still, in Xining such people are a small group, while the larger community of Hui maintain their distinct identity. Therefore, I do not expect the differences between Han and Hui speech in Xining in disappear in the foreseeable future.

Old and New in the Xining Dialect

A language is intimately associated with the people that speak it, or, more precisely, it is inseparable from the society in which it is used. As that society undergoes change, we should expect the tool with which it communicates to evolve also. The Xining dialect affords us an example to view rapid linguistic change as a reflection of a rapidly changing society.

How Xining has changed in the last 50 years is most clearly demonstrated by the rapid increase in population. On the eve of liberation in 1949, Xining was a small, provincial town of around 50,000 people. Beginning in the 1950s, the central government employed a policy of re-inforcing the Han Chinese presence in the region by inducing and forcing large numbers of people from other parts of the country to move to the city, following the pattern of strong central authority throughout Chinese history which I outlined above. By 1965, the population had

reached 250,000, even after the devastating effects of the famines of the early 1960s. By 1985, the population was up to 650,000, and today it is over one million (Zhai 1989: 226; Zhang 1994: 3). The entirety of this increase has not been absorbed into the urban center of the city, which today has a population of around 700,000. Metropolitan Xining includes large amounts of rural areas surrounding the urban core, as well as the neighboring county of Datong 大通, which itself includes an urban center and where a large number of the recent immigrants now reside. However, the rural, agricultural areas provided little unused land to absorb immigrants, so the majority of them were assigned to work-units in the urban area.

At the same time the immigrants were replacing the native Han population as the majority group in Xining, the central government was promoting the use of Standard Chinese throughout the country. The new immigrants to Xining readily complied with the government's promotion of Standard Chinese, because, since they came from all parts of the country, they had no single variety of the Chinese language in common. Indeed, the Xining people's willingness to comply with the government's promotion of Standard Chinese exceeds that of any other region in China I have visited. In virtually every Xining school, there hangs a sign that reads, "Speak Standard Chinese, and write Standard Chinese Characters" (*Shuō Pǔtōnghuà, Xiě guīfàn zì* 说普通话, 写规范字), which I have never seen in my travels throughout the southwest and northwest of the country.

The resulting linguistic situation in Xining is strikingly similar to that of the Beijing dialect, described by Hu Mingyang:

> After liberation (1949), a large number of people from other places (*wàidìrén* 外地人) came to Beijing and quickly superseded local people in terms of proportion of the population. These *wàidìrén* spoke the dialects of the various places from which they came, or a not entirely standardized "Standard Chinese". In order to communicate with the surrounding large numbers of *wàidìrén*, Beijing people as much as possible had to abandon the most local accent and vocabulary of Beijing dialect and change to speaking "Standard Chinese". Of course, this "Standard Chinese", in its phonology and lexicon, preserved a large number of features of the Beijing dialect... In this way, two styles of the Beijing dialect were produced. One type is the household style used in the household and in communication with other Beijing people. This is also known as local Beijing dialect, or Old Beijing dialect. The other type is the social style used in offices and work units or when communicating with *wàidìrén*. This is the Beijing dialect after the local accent and lexicon has been removed. It may be called the "Standard Chinese" of Beijing, and to a certain degree, it is also the New Beijing dialect. Now, besides a very small minority of old people who have never had to go to work, all Beijing people know how to speak "Standard Chinese", with only a difference in the degree to which it is standardized; or, put another way, there are varying amounts of local accent and local vocabulary mixed into it. Nowadays, an adult's time is largely spent at offices and work units, so that many native Beijing people only speak Old Beijing dialect after they return home. As this situation has persisted over a long period of time, the Old Beijing dialect of even these people has undergone some changes, at least in terms of choice of vocabulary... Other native Beijing people say that when they are at home they speak

some local dialect, but as soon as they get to the office or work unit, they change to speaking "Standard Chinese". This, then, has caused the Beijing dialect to gradually draw closer to Standard Chinese. (Hu 1991: 182–183).

Indeed, this description is so similar to what has happened in Xining, that if the word Beijing were replaced with the word Xining, it would almost perfectly describe the linguistic situation in Xining, particularly with regards the existence of two styles of the dialect; Old Xining dialect and New Xining dialect.

The differences between the Old Xining dialect and the New Xining dialect, like the differences between Old Beijing dialect and New Beijing dialect, are found primarily in the phonology and lexicon. For example, the Old Xining pronunciation of the morpheme meaning 'storied building' (Standard Chinese *lóu* 楼) is [lv^{24}], which, when viewed from a comparison of Standard Chinese phonology and Xining phonology, is irregular. Syllables in Standard Chinese with the final [-ou] correspond to the Xining dialect final [-ɯ]. The New Xining dialect has regularized this correspondence in the pronunciation of the morpheme, so that in the New Xining dialect it is pronounced [lɯ^{24}].

Similar differences exist in the lexicon. The Old Xining dialect word for 'yesterday' is [i^{213} le^{53} kɔ ɛ^{53}], or [i^{213} le^{53} kɔ], or [i^{213} le^{53}] 夜来(个)(儿). The New Xining dialect word is [tsu^{24}t'iã^{44}] 昨天, the same word used in Standard Chinese. Again, the Old Xining dialect word for 'last year' is [niã^{21} sʅ^{53}] 年时, but the New Xining dialect word is [tɕ'y^{213} niã^{24}] 去年, the same word used in Standard Chinese.

What is striking about the difference between old and new in the Xining dialect, and perhaps unlike the situation in Beijing, is that these differences are also manifest in the syntax of the dialect. In the course of doing fieldwork there in 1996, I came across a syntactic pattern in the Xining dialect for expressing ablative relationships by means of a postposition [tɕia], which is unlike the pattern of any other Chinese dialect. An ablative relationship indicates that the noun phrase to which the marker is attached is the 'source', or 'starting point' from where the action occurs. The pattern in the Xining dialect can be summarized in the following formula, where {} indicates optional elements:

A. SUBJECT-{PREPOSITION}-SOURCE_NOUN-POSTPOSITION-VERB_PHRASE

Two examples from the data I collected last year will suffice to demonstrate this pattern (Pr. = preposition and Po = postposition):

1) 他 夜来个儿　　从　　内地里 **tɕia**　来了

t'a^{44} i^{213} le^{53} kɔ ɛ^{53}　ts'uɔ̃^{24} nui^{213} tsʅ l **tɕia**　le^{24} liɔ

he- yesterday-　　Pr.- interior-　Po- come-asp.

He came back from the interior yesterday.

2) 我 上个 星期 **tɕia** 就 没 吃烟 著

nɔ⁵³ ʂɔ̃²¹³ kɔ ɕiɔ̃⁴⁴ tɕ'j⁵³ **tɕia** tɕiũ²¹³ mɔ²¹ tʂ'ʅ²⁴ iã⁴⁴ tʂɔ

I- last week- Po- then- didn't- smoke- asp.

I haven't smoked since last week.

The origins of this postposition are probably in a non-Chinese language, about which I will say more below.

In addition to Pattern A above, the Xining dialect also uses the Standard Chinese pattern for expressing the ablative, which is formulated below:

B. Subject-Preposition-Source_Noun-Verb

Again, two examples will suffice to demonstrate this pattern:

3) 我 大大 从 上个 星期 就 开始 不 抽烟 了

nɔ⁵³ ta⁴⁴ ta ts'uɔ̃²⁴ ʂɔ̃²¹³ kɔ ɕiɔ̃⁴⁴ tɕ'j⁵³ tɕiɯ k'ɛ⁴⁴ sʅ⁵³ pv²¹ tʂ'ɯ²⁴ iã⁴⁴ liɔ

I- father- Pr.- last week- adv.- start- not- smoke- prt.

My father hasn't smoked since last week.

4) 他 昨天 从 北京 回来 了

t'a⁴⁴ tsu²⁴ t'iã⁴⁴ ts'uɔ̃²⁴ pɿ⁴⁴ tɕiɔ̃⁵³ xui²⁴ lɛ liɔ

he- yesterday- Pr.- Beijing- return-come-prt.

He returned from Beijing yesterday.

There are some variations between these two patterns which for lack of space I will not mention here, but clearly this is another example of the Old Xining dialect (pattern A) in contrast to the New Xining dialect (pattern B).

Natives of Xining have their own name for what I have called the New Xining dialect. They refer to it, somewhat ashamedly, as *Qīngpǔhuà* 青普话, a contraction of the terms *Qīnghǎihuà* and *Pǔtōnghuà* (Standard Chinese). Their shame arises from their interpretation of the fact that *Qīngpǔhuà*'s existence testifies to their having inadequately learned Standard Chinese. In fact, the existence of *Qīngpǔhuà* is a natural development in the context of native Xining people having to communicate with the disproportionately large number of non-natives, just as in the case of Beijing described by Hu Mingyang above.

Social Variation and Language Change

Another way to think of the New Xining dialect, or *Qīngpǔhuà*, is that it is an adapted form of the dialect, changed under the influence of Standard Chinese. Once we accept that languages change with the societies that use them, and that certain social groups will change more rapidly than others, it follows that the

language of some social groups will differ accordingly. The New Xining dialect, in addition to being a stylistic variety, is the language variety of the dialect used by social groups more open to and affected by the presence of Standard Chinese.

Which social groups are leading the change in the Xining dialect toward Standard Chinese? As I stated before, Metropolitan Xining includes large tracts of rural land where Han people live in villages and engage in subsistence agriculture. Over the past several years, as all of China has come to experiment with market economic forces, these tracts of land are quickly becoming incorporated into the urban core as suburbs; or, more commonly these lands are being changed to truck gardens for the urban market, bringing the peasants into more frequent contact with urban residents at the market place. Still, in comparison to the urban center, social life in some of the outlying villages has not changed much for the last 50 years. Therefore, one would expect that the language of the rural speakers would be less influenced by Standard Chinese, in comparison to urban speakers.

When investigating the ablative pattern mentioned above, I interviewed 71 people, including 40 from rural parts of the city and 31 from urban parts. The distribution of the Standard Chinese ablative pattern and the non-Standard Chinese ablative pattern among all the informants is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Rural-Urban Distribution of Ablative Pattern in the Xining Dialect

	Use Standard Chinese Pattern	Use Non-Standard Chinese Pattern	Total
Rural	8	32	40
Urban	19	12	31
Total	27	44	71

Clearly, rural informants overwhelmingly produced the non-Standard Chinese pattern. A *chi*-square test with Yate's Correction was performed on this data resulting in $p < .01$, suggesting the difference between urban and rural informants' use of the Standard Chinese pattern is significant.

One would also expect younger people to be more strongly influenced by Standard Chinese, because of generally higher education levels among the young and from growing up with non-Qinghai natives as playmates with whom they would have to use Standard Chinese to communicate. The relevant age data from the group that used the Standard Chinese pattern and those that did not are provided in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Age Data for Use and Non-Use of Standard Chinese Pattern

	Number of Informants	Mean Age	Standard Deviation
Use Standard Chinese Pattern	27	29.9	12.5
Use Non-Standard Chinese Pattern	44	40.8	15.5

A *t*-test was done with the data in Table 4, resulting in $p < .01$ suggesting the difference in mean age between these two groups is significant.

We would further suppose that more highly educated people are more likely influenced by Standard Chinese because it is the language of education. The educational level of all 71 informants was ranked between 1 and 9, where 1 is illiterate and 9 is a college graduate. The educational data of the group that used the Standard Chinese pattern and the group that did not are provided in Table 5 below:

Table 4: Educational Data for Use and Non-Use of Standard Chinese Pattern

	Number of Informants	Mean Educational Rank	Standard Deviation
Use Standard Chinese Pattern	27	6.4	2.1
Use Non-Standard Chinese Pattern	44	4.9	2.5

A *t*-test was done with the data in Table 5, resulting in $p < .01$ indicating that the difference in mean educational rank between the two groups is significant.

Therefore, those who use the Standard Chinese ablative pattern in the Xining dialect are on average more highly educated, younger and more likely to reside in an urban environment than those who do not. Because these social characteristics are generally highly valued, I suspect the change to the Standard Chinese pattern in the ablative to be completed in the near future.

There is one other reason that the change to the Standard Chinese pattern in the ablative in particular, and New Xining dialect in general, will likely be complete in the near future. That is the almost universally low regard in which the Xining dialect is held. Xining and northeastern Qinghai are poor areas, regarded as "underdeveloped" and "backward". The economic prosperity rising along the

eastern seaboard of China has not yet spread to the interior of the country, yet the residents of the interior provinces are daily beamed images of that wealth on their television screens. These images provide a stark contrast to the relative poverty in which many Xining people reside. Moreover, Qinghai has a reputation as an undesirable place to be associated with because of its penal colonies and its rugged, inhospitable terrain. Even some natives of Xining look down on all things associated with the province, including the dialect, which is said to sound "rough" or "crude". Dialects are generally considered markers of "backwardness" and poor education, but these attributes are compounded in Xining because of its association with the relatively poor and inhospitable terrain in which it is used. Indeed, many Xining people found it laughingly absurd when I told them I had come from America to research their dialect.

THE CHINESE LANGUAGE AND NON-CHINESE LANGUAGES IN QINGHAI

The last aspect of the Chinese language in Qinghai to be discussed in this paper is its relationship with the non-Chinese languages of the province. There are two ways to look at this relationship. The first, and perhaps less interesting, is the influence of the Chinese language on the non-Chinese languages, which in Qinghai are primarily Tibetan, Mongol, Monguor and Salar. There is no question that Chinese has had a profound affect on these languages. Standard Chinese is the language of advancement in China. All institutions of higher learning require a high level of competence in it. It is the primary language of commerce, politics and the modern entertainment industry. Any citizen of the People's Republic of China whose mother tongue is other than Chinese will have to learn it if they have any desire to advance their lot in life. Some members of the minority ethnic group no longer speak the language that shares the name of their ethnicity, having assimilated to the Han world in every way but name.

Consequently, the non-Chinese languages of Qinghai have all been influenced by Chinese, primarily in their lexicon, but also in their phonology and syntax. A discussion of these influences can be found in virtually any description of the language in question and is more properly the topic of another essay.

The other aspect of this relationship, and from the point of view of Chinese language studies the far more interesting aspect, is the influence non-Chinese languages have had on the Chinese language in Qinghai. For years, scholars of the history of the Chinese language have debated the extent to which it was the recipient of influence from neighboring languages at various times in its development. However, because the suspected donor languages were either extinct, never recorded or only poorly understood, the debate has largely been based on specula-

tion. The Chinese language of Qinghai, on the other hand, provides concrete evidence that neighboring languages have had a profound affect on the Chinese language, at least in this one corner of it.

As might be expected, the non-Chinese language influence on the Chinese language of Qinghai is evident in certain lexical items, in the form of loanwords. Zhang (1995: 12–13) lists 32 words in the Xining dialect that are borrowed from Tibetan alone. I am sure that in the countryside, farther away from the center of Han culture, one could find many more. Jin (1995: 98) believes the degree adverb, $[xv^{21} tv^{53}]$ 'very, extremely', is a loan from an Altaic source, probably Monguor.

These are merely borrowings, however. Though there may be more of them in Qinghai Chinese than elsewhere, similar phenomena occur in every known language. What is unique about Qinghai Chinese is the extent to which its syntax has been altered due to the influence of non-Chinese languages. In the following paragraphs I will present three features of Xining dialect syntax which derive from the influence of the non-Chinese languages. Where possible, I will trace the origin of the feature to the specific donor language.

The first feature, mentioned in numerous accounts about the dialect, such as Zhang (1984), is a quotative particle, pronounced [fɔ] in the neutral tone. It is generally written with the Chinese character 说 'to say', because it is obvious that it derives from the same morpheme that the character represents. It appears at the end of sentences to indicate that the preceding sentence is hearsay, or quoted from some other source. Consider the following example I collected from a Xining resident in 1996:

5) 李四　说　　着,他　城里去　　哩说
$l^{53} sι^{213} fɔ^{44}$　　tʂɛ　t'a^{44}　t'ʂɔ̃^{24} l　tɕ'j^{213} l　fɔ
Li Si-　said-　prt.-he-　town-　go-　prt-　quot.
Li Si said he's going downtown.

Although no other closely related Chinese dialect uses a quotative particle (the dialect of Canton uses one, but I am sure it is unrelated), all the non-Chinese languages use a similar construction, with a quotative particle at the end of the sentence. Moreover, the quotative particles in the non-Chinese languages are usually derived from the verb meaning 'to say'. However, because virtually all the non-Chinese languages use a similar particle, it is hard to say which language is the donor of the Qinghai Chinese particle.

The second feature has also been described in a number of publications about the dialect, but most completely in Du 1995 and Dwyer 1992. The feature is a comitative-instrumental postposition, which in the Xining dialect is pronounced [lia] in the neutral tone. When attached to the end of a noun phrase, it indicates

with whom or with what object the verb was carried out. Consider the following examples I gathered from Xining residents in 1996:

6) 你的　　袜子　　　tɕ²¹³　鞋子　　lia　一挂　　在　　盒盒里俩
    ni⁵³tsɿ　ua⁴⁴tsɿ　　tɕ²¹³　xɛ²⁴tsɛ　lia　j²¹kua²¹³tsɛ²¹³　xu⁴⁴xu⁵³l lia
    your-　　sock-　　Pr-　shoe-　Po- all-　　at-　box- in- prt.
    Both your socks and shoes are in the box.

7) 你　把　　它　　tɕ²¹³　报报　　lia　包下
    ni⁵³　pa⁵³　t'a⁴⁴　tɕ²¹³　pɔ²¹³pɔ⁵³　lia　pɔ⁴⁴xa
    you-Disp.-it-　　Pr- newspaper- Po- wrap-down
    Use a piece of newspaper to wrap it up.

In example 6, the final particle [lia] is a different morpheme from the postposition I am interested in here, which in this example demonstrates its comitative funtion, while example 7 demonstrates its instrumental function. Dwyer (1992) finds similar postpositions in a number of languages in the Qinghai-Gansu area and concludes that it is an areal feature. Du (1995) notes the similarity of the Xining dialect postposition to the Monguor comitative/instrumental case marker, pronounced [la], and concludes that the source of the Xining particle is probably Monguor.

    The third feature is the ablative postposition described above. In examples 1–2 above, the postposition has the phonological form [tɕia], but a number of the informants used a variant, pronounced [sa]. This latter form is exactly the same as the ablative postposition in the Monguor language, as the following examples demonstrate (Qingge'ertai 1991: 162–163, my emphasis):

8) dəre:**sa** jausa badzar kurə ʂdana
    here-Po- leave- town-　come- may
    Setting out from here, you can get to town.

9) ndəre:**sa** ɢara: ɕdʑa
    here- Po- out-　went
    [He] went out from here.

The phonetic and funtional similarity between the one variant of the Xining dialect's postposition and the Monguor suggests that the Xining postposition is derived from Monguor.

    These three syntactic features are, to my knowledge, unique among varieties of the Chinese language. Since they most certainly did not come into the Xining dialect under the influence of the Chinese language, they must have arisen under influence from non-Chinese languages. If that is the case, then the question

becomes how did this re-analysis of the syntax occur. I suggest it came about through sub-stratum interference.

I argued above that the present Qinghai variety of the Chinese language descends from the variety of Chinese brought to Qinghai by military colonists in the early years of the Ming Dynasty. When the colonists first arrived in Qinghai, they were the minority ethnic group in the area, but because they were representatives of the empire, they had considerable prestige and power. Over the years, as the number of Han colonists and the pressure to assimilate to Han culture increased, non-Chinese language speakers must have begun to use the Chinese language. Because there were probably inadequate opportunities for a proper study of the language, the speakers of the non-Chinese language probably began by using Chinese morphemes within the grammatical structures required by their native languages. For example, when expressing an ablative relationship, the grammar of Monguor required that a postposition be used after the noun phrase, and because Chinese lacked a similar morpheme, they simply used the morpheme from their native Monguor. Similarly, when quoting speech, they performed the same grammatical operation that their native language required (that is, using a particle after the quoted speech that is derived from the verb for 'to say'), but they used Chinese morphemes to carry out the grammatical operation. Perhaps large numbers of people switched to using the Chinese language, so that over time, these features became used in the speech of Han people who were not switching their language and thereby became common features of Qinghai Chinese.

Another scenario, though still a kind of sub-stratum interference, is that the military colonists of the early Ming period intermarried with non-Han women in the region. The first generation would have used a kind of pidgin Chinese to communicate, but their offspring would have made it into a creole, combining elements of both Chinese and non-Chinese languages. Over the centuries, because of increased contact with the prestige variety of vernacular Chinese, *Guānhuà* or Mandarin, many of the non-Chinese language features were replaced with recognizably Chinese features, so that now, only a few of the old creole features still remain.

Whichever scenario actually occurred, and it is possible that they both occurred simultaneously, the implications for the study of the Chinese language are clear. If this kind of contact-induced language change could occur in Qinghai in the last several hundred years, then it could very well have occurred in a number of places in China over the last 3,000 years. Through much of China's history, the north was under the political control of non-Chinese speaking people, suggesting the possibility that Qinghai-like pidgins and creoles were created at various times in the past and influenced the development of the language as a whole. Moreover, military colonists were the first Han people to settle in many parts of the south of

the country, suggesting the possibility that Qinghai-like pidgins and creoles underlie the modern southern Chinese dialects. Therefore, though many native speakers do not recognize it as such, the Chinese language in Qinghai is an immensely important variety of the language, whose further investigation will likely have wide ranging implications for the study of the Chinese language as a whole.

REFERENCES

CRESPIGNY, Rafe de 1984. *Northern Frontier. The Policies and Strategy of the Later Han Empire.* Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies.

DU Xingzhou 都兴宙 1995. Lùn Xīnínghuà lǐ de xūcí <lia> 论西宁话里的虚词<lia> ['On the particle <lia> in the Xining dialect'], *Qinghai Minzu Xueyuan Xuebao* 青海民族学院学报 1: 56–61.

DWYER, Arienne M. 1992. Altaic elements in Linxia dialects: Contact induced change on the Yellow River Plateau. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 1: 160–179.

HU Mingyang 胡明扬 1991. *Yǔyánxué lùnwén xuǎn* 语言学论文选 ['Selected writings in linguistics']. Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe.

JIN Yulan 靳玉兰 1995. Qīnghǎi fāngyánzhōng de chéngdù fùcí "hudu" 青海方言中的程度副词 "糊涂" ['The degree adverb "hudu" in the Qinghai dialect']. *Qinghai Shifan Daxue Xuebao* 青海大学学报 3: 97–98.

LI Rong 李荣 1985. Guānhuà fāngyán de fēnqū 官话方言的分区 ['The classification of Mandarin dialects']. *Fangyan* 方言 1: 2–5.

LIU Xunning 刘勋宁 1995. Zài lùn Hànyǔ Běifānghuà de fēnqū 再论汉语北方话的分区 ['A further discussion on the division of the northern Chinese dialects']. *Zhongguo Yuwen* 中国语文 6: 447–454.

MI Yizhi 半一之 (ed.) 1995. *Huánghé shàngyóu dìqū lìshǐ yǔ wénhuà* 黄河上游地区历史与文化 ['The history and culture of the area in the upper reaches of the Yellow River']. Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe.

QINGGE'ERTAI 清格尔泰 (ed.) 1991. *Tǔzúyǔ hé Ménggǔyǔ* 土族语和蒙古语 [The Tu (Monguor) Nationality's Language and Mongolian]. Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe.

QLJ = *Qīnghǎi lìshǐ jìyào* 青海历史纪要 ['An outline of the history of Qinghai']. Ed. by the Qinghai Provincial Gazetteer Editorial Committee 青海省志编纂委员. Xining: Qinghai Renmin chubanshe, 1991.

Xīn Tángshū 新唐书 1974. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

ZHAI Songtian 翟松天 1989. *Zhōngguó rénkǒu: Qīnghǎi fēncè* 中国人口：青海分册 ['China's population: Qinghai volume']. Beijing: Zhongguo Caizheng Jingji chubanshe.

ZHANG Chengcai 张成材 1984. Qīnghǎishěng Hànyǔ fāngyán de fēnqū 青海省汉语方言的分区 ['The classification of the Chinese dialects of Qinghai province']. *Fangyan* 方言 3: 186–196.

------ 1994. *Xīníng fāngyán cídiǎn* 西宁方言词典 ['Dictionary of the Xining dialect']. Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe.