1. Please provide as much detail about the village of Beizhongma and surrounding area (such as size, geographical details, significant landmarks or any other relevant information).

Beizhongma village is located 55km or one and a quarter hours’ drive from Shijiazhuang, which is the capital city of Hebei Province. The village is in Zhao county (also known as Zhaoxian). Please see the map at Attachment 1 for the location of Beizhongma village within China.¹ The population of Beizhongma village could not be found.

**Beizhongma village**

Satellite images and a Google map of Beizhongma village, which identifies the rural location of this area of Hebei province, is provided at Attachment 2.² As indicated from the map, the village is located slightly to the east of Road ‘S234’ between Jiashizhuang town and Xiezhuang Town.

There are no recorded names of roads in Beizhongma village on the Google map; however, several roads are visible from the Google satellite image. The map does indicate a major road called ‘234 Provincial Road’ which passes through Jiashizhuang town, just west of Beizhongma village. An unknown street in Jiashizhuang town is pictured for your information below.³

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¹ Location of Beizhongma village, Zhao County, Hebei 2010, Google maps [http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%B2%B3%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E6%99%8B%E5%B7%9E%E5%B8%82%E6%AD%A6%E9%82%B1%E6%9D%91&ll=39.325799,115.021362&spn=2.196759,6.306152&z=8](http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%B2%B3%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E6%99%8B%E5%B7%9E%E5%B8%82%E6%AD%A6%E9%82%B1%E6%9D%91&ll=39.325799,115.021362&spn=2.196759,6.306152&z=8) — Accessed 16 June 2010 — Attachment 1


Zhao County

Beizhongma village is located in Zhaoxian (Zhao County). According to Wikipedia\(^4\), Zhao county is 40km southeast of the provincial capital Shijiazhuang and 280km south of Beijing with a population of around 550,000 people. The area is known for its agricultural products in particular snowflake pears (also known as xuehua or ya pear), asparagus and wheat.\(^5\)

Major landmarks in the Zhao county include:

- The Zhaozhou (Anji) bridge – this bridge, spanning over the Jiaohe River in Zhaoxian County, was designed by a well-known Chinese mason called Li Chun. It is an important example of early Chinese engineering as it is the world’s first segmental bridge.\(^6\)

- The Bailin (Cypress Grove) Temple – The ancient Bailin Temple (Bailin Chan Si), pictured below, is one of the most famous Zen Buddhist temples in China and is the ancestral home of Chinese Zen Buddhism.\(^7\)

According to a Chinese Buddhist website, the postcode of the Bailin Temple in Zhao County is 051530 and the telephone area code is 0311\(^8\).

\(^4\) Wikipedia is a Web-based free-content encyclopaedia which is compiled collaboratively by volunteers. Wikipedia articles can be useful introductory reading for a new topic, and the list of references in Wikipedia articles can provide useful leads to reliable sources. Many Wikipedia articles can be highly reliable, especially in regards to non-controversial historical or factual matters, and Wikipedia uses preventative measures against vandalism, bias and inaccuracy. However, the collaborative nature of Wikipedia makes it vulnerable to contributors with overt or covert agendas, and Wikipedia articles are thus prone to unacknowledged bias.


\(^8\) ‘Bailin Temple, a Great Zen Buddhist Center Founded by Master Zhaozhou’ (undated) Bailinsi website [http://www.bailinsi.net/02txzz/01gsq/01zyjj/ywij.htm](http://www.bailinsi.net/02txzz/01gsq/01zyjj/ywij.htm) – Accessed 5 July 2010 – Attachment 6.
Shijiazhuang City

Shijiazhuang (simplified Chinese: 石家庄; pinyin: Shíjiāzhōu) is a prefecture-level city and the capital of Hebei Province, China. It is about 280 km south of Beijing.

The city is a large base for the pharmaceutical industry and is also an important textile industry area. Other main sectors include machinery and chemicals, building materials, light industry and electronics.9

According to Googlemaps, Beizhongma village is 55km or 1 hour 16 minutes drive from Shijiazhuang. A map showing directions from Beizhongma village to Shijiazhuang city is provided at Attachment 8.10

The China Yellow Pages lists the area code of Shijiazhuang as 0311 and the postcode as 050000.11 This area code is the same as mentioned above for Bailin Temple in Attachment 6.

2. Are there any official Catholic churches in the area?

Yes, sources indicate that there are official Catholic churches located within the vicinity of Beizhongma village. The 2008 Guide to the Catholic Church in China says that the Hebei dioceses have 1.5 million Catholics with 11 government recognised bishops, 240 priests and 800 sisters.12

This Guide lists an official Catholic church in Houyingxiang village called the Houyingxiang Zhaojiazhuang Church.13 According to Googlemaps, this would most likely be the closest official church to Beizhongma village.

Please see directions from Google maps below which indicate that the distance from Houyingxiang village to Beizhongma village is approximately 8.7km. In comparison, the Jinzhuo Wuqui underground church in Wuqui village is located approximately 11.7km from Beizhongma village:14

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10 “Directions from Shijiazhuang to Beizhongma Village, Hebei” 2010, Google maps http://maps.google.com/maps?f=d&source=s_d&saddr=Shijiazhuang,+Hebei,+China&daddr=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E4%B2%83%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E8%B5%B7%E5%8E%BF%E5%8C%97%E4%B8%AD%E9%A9%AC%E6%9D%91&hl=en&geocode=FdB6RAIdsFvTBik9DmKmiN3mNTQDuToC79YHA%3BFeCyAQQld3HbaBilzjc9cqvNTHqPofK4P-V_w&mra=ls&sll=38.006984,114.947205&sspn=1.118832,2.112122&ie=UTF8&ll=37.962606,114.738464&spn=0.279882,0.52803&z=11 - Accessed 16 June 2010 - Attachment 8.
14 “Directions from Houyingcun to Beizhongma Village to Wuqui village, Hebei” 2010, Google maps http://maps.google.com/maps?f=d&source=s_d&saddr=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E4%B2%83%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E8%B5%B7%E5%8E%BF%E5%8C%97%E4%B8%AD%E9%A9%AC%E6%9D%91&daddr=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E4%B2%83%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E8%B5%B7%E5%8E%BF%E5%8C%97%E4%B8%AD%E9%A9%AC%E6%9D%91&hl=en&geocode=FSGuQgldPtTzzrFKEvKZ3SmNUg%3BFeCyAQQld3HbaBilzjc9cqvNTHqPofK4P-V_w&mra=ls&sll=37.85561,114.955788&sspn=0.195444,0.265388&ie=UTF8&ll=37.897072,114.984455&spn=0.070033,0.132008&z=13 – Accessed 16 June 2010 – Attachment 11.
A map from the 2008 *Guide to the Catholic Church in China* identifies numerous churches in the Shijiazhuang Diocese region including the villages/towns of Zhaoxian, Jinzhou, Shijiazhuang, Xinji and Zhengding as provided at Attachment 10.\(^{15}\) The map does not specify whether these churches are “official”.

The *Guide* also lists official Catholic churches in the towns of Luancheng, Gaocheng and Jinzhou.\(^{16}\) Please see Attachment 2 for the location of these areas compared with Beizhongma village. According to the *Guide*, these towns are within the Shijiazhuang Diocese (previously referred to as Zhengding Diocese).\(^{17}\)

This information corresponds with an article published on the Catholic News website in regards to the underground or “unrecognised” Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding in Hebei, which also reports that the official church in the area is the diocese of Shijiazhuang (Hebei) and Jang Taoran is the bishop of this diocese.\(^{18}\)

### 3. Is there any information about Bishop Zhiguo Jia and the Jinzhou Wuqiu Catholic Church?

Yes, multiple sources provide information relating to Bishop Jia Zhiguo and the Jinzhou Wuqiu Catholic Church. Bishop Jia Zhiguo is a prominent figure of the underground Catholic church in Hebei who has been arrested multiple times throughout his life in relation to his religious practices. Reports suggest that he has continuously been of interest to local officials with his most recent arrest on 30 March 2009 and whilst unclear it seems that he is currently still in detention.

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An image is included below of Bishop Zhiguo from a Christian news site called Asia News.¹⁹

The Jinzhou Wuqiu Catholic Church is a well known church in the area. Some sources state that the church also houses an orphanage where Catholic nuns have taken in disabled children over the years.²⁰ The following image is from *The Washington Post* of Bishop Zhiguo Jia in the orphanage housed by the Jinzhou Wuqiu Catholic church.²¹

Several US government and media sources have reported the most recent arrest of Bishop Jia Zhiguo was on the 30 March 2009 because he was trying to distribute an open letter from the Pope to Catholics in China.

A US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) *Annual Report 2009 - Countries of Particular Concern* states that:

The Chinese government took active steps to halt distribution of Pope Benedict’s 2007 open letter to Chinese Catholics, including twice detaining Bishop Jia Zhiguo of Hebei province, and beating him while in custody, to prevent him from distributing the letter.

In that letter, the Pope recognized that, although there have been some improvements, grave limitations on religious freedom in China remain, which the Church cannot accept. Nevertheless, the Pope called on Chinese Catholics to adopt the approach of

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“respectful and constructive dialogue”. More recently, Bishop Jia was arrested again on March 30, 2009 to prevent him from meeting with another bishop who had reconciled with the Vatican. Chinese officials objected to the relationship between the two bishops because it was desired by a foreign power, the Vatican, not by the government and the CPA.22

The US Congressional Executive Commission on China – Annual Report 2009 reports the following on Bishop Jia’s most recent arrest in March 2009:

In March 2009, security officials forcibly removed Bishop Jia Zhiguo from his living quarters and took him to an undisclosed detention facility. Bishop Jia, the 74-year-old unregistered bishop of Hebei province’s Zhengding diocese, previously served two decades in prison, and since 2003, authorities have detained him numerous times and kept him under strict surveillance when not detaining him. (p.118) The detention of unregistered Bishop Jia Zhiguo in March reportedly was linked to the CPA’s displeasure at a Vatican-brokered reconciliation agreement between Bishop Jia and Jiang Taoran, the bishop of the registered Shijiazhuang diocese.23 (p.120)

An article on the AsiaNews website also reported this arrest. The article stated that Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo is the underground bishop of Zhengding (Hebei) and was arrested on 30 March 2009 during a close encounter of the Vatican Commission on China. The article states that “underground priests were often targeted and subjected to periods of imprisonment to force them to join the Patriotic Association, the state body that wants to build a National Catholic Church, separate from Rome.”24

An article on the ‘Free Church For China’ website also reported that Bishop Jia was taken away from Christ the King Cathedral in Wuqiu village by five policeman on 30 March, the day the Vatican’s Commission for the Catholic Church in China began its meeting in Rome. The report said that Bishop Jia is not affiliated with the government-approved “open” Church community. The report further states that “sources also quoted Bishop Jia as saying that he and the 150,000 Catholics of Zhengding diocese will continue following the Pope’s call for unity between the open and underground Church communities.”25

The Cath News also reported the arrest of Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo and that he was taken to an unknown location. The article states that for years the bishop had endured arrest and isolation by the police as the police had tried to indoctrinate him on the religious policies of the Party, and to force him to join the Patriotic Association. Referring to his arrest on 30 March 2009, the article said “this time, the motives are even more serious and strike at the heart of the Vatican’s attempts to reconcile the official and underground church in Hebei, the region with the highest concentration of Catholics.”26

The following sources provide details of Bishop Jia’s earlier arrests:

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According to *The New York Times*, Bishop Jia was also detained in August 2008 which coincided with the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games.\(^\text{27}\)

Asia News also reported that Bishop Jia had been under surveillance during the Olympics in Beijing and stated that:

On the concluding day of the Olympics, Msgr. Giulio Jia Zhiguo, underground bishop of Zhengding (Hebei), was taken away by police to an unknown location. The bishop had been under house arrest for months.

During the Olympics the government had kept many bishops and priests from the underground Church under house arrest. Msgr. Jia was under 24 hour surveillance. Police had even built a shack from which to keep a constant eye on him day and night, outside the bishop’s home.\(^\text{28}\)

In August 2007, a press release from the Cardinal Kung Foundation noted that Bishop Jia had been arrested eleven times since January 2004. The Foundation did not know the reason for his arrest on 23 August 2007 but they reported that the Religious Bureau had forcibly put a sign at the gate of Bishop Jia’s church saying “The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association”. The press release provided some background information about the bishop including that he was ordained as a bishop in 1980 and had previously been jailed for approximately 20 years and was under strict surveillance for many years by the Chinese authorities. In addition, he took care of approximately 100 handicapped orphans in his house.\(^\text{29}\)

A 2005 media article from *The Washington Post* reports the following in regards to Bishop Jia’s background:

In the 1950s, Jia’s education was interrupted when police shut down his seminary and arrested his teachers. In 1963, the government arrested Jia for trying to protect a priest and sentenced him to 15 years of hard labor.

Upon his release in 1978, two years after Mao’s death and as the papacy of John Paul II was beginning, Jia resumed his studies for the priesthood. He was ordained in the underground church in the summer of 1980. Several months later, John Paul named him the bishop of Zhending diocese. The government tried to persuade him to join the official church, Jia said, but he refused.\(^\text{30}\)

This media article indicates the ambiguity of the authorities’ attitudes towards underground Catholics in Hebei, as Bishop Jia is quoted as saying “they have never stopped trying to control the underground church”, whilst it is reported that Bishop Jia’s cathedral was built with the tacit approval of local officials and hundreds of villagers joined him for Mass every night in Wuqiu, and the police did nothing to stop them. Further, it is reported that in recent years, priests ordained by Bishop Jia have built spacious new churches in several nearby villages, some of them larger than government-approved churches. According to the article, local officials look the other way because they sympathise with worshippers or want to collect fees and fines from them. “The government’s efforts to crush the underground church have also faltered. Especially here

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in Hebei, home to about a quarter of all Catholics in China, many underground clergymen now perform their duties so openly that “underground” seems a misnomer.”

Previous Country Research on underground Catholics in Hebei and earlier reports of Bishop Jia’s arrests are included for your further reading:

- **RRT Country Research CHN32301** discusses an open letter issued by Pope Benedict XVI’s on 27 May 2007 to Catholics in China. Bishop Jia’s arrest in 2007 is also mentioned. 31
- **RRT Country Research CHN17609** provides general information on the presence of the underground Catholic Church in Hebei and the attitude of the authorities. 33
- **RRT Country Research CHN16738** provides information of Catholics in Hebei and also refers to Bishops Jia’s arrest in 2004. 34

**Attachments**

1. Location of Beizhomgma village, Zhao County, Hebei 2010, Google maps [http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%B2%B3%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E6%99%8B%E5%B7%9E%E5%B8%82%E6%AD%A6%E9%82%B1%E6%9D%91&sl=37.0625-95.677068&sspn=35.957999,67.587891&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=China+Hebei+Shijiazhuang+Jinzhou%E6%AD%A6%E9%82%B1%E6%9D%91&ll=39.325799,115.021362&spn=2.196759,6.306152&z=8] – Accessed 16 June 2010.
8. ‘Directions from Shijiazhuang to Beizhongma Village, Hebei’ 2010, Google maps [http://maps.google.com/maps?f=d&source=s_d&saddr=Shijiazhuang,+Hebei,+China&daddr=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%B2%B3%E5%8C%97%E7%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E8%B5%B5%E5%8E%BF%E5%8C%97%E4%B8%AD%E9%A9%AC%E6%9D%91&hl=en&geocode=FdB6RAIdsfTBik9DmKgmN3mNTFQDaTOc79YHA%3BfcyAQQId3HabBilztjc9cqvnNTHqPofK4P-] – Accessed 6 July 2010.

32 RRTCountry Research 2007, Research Response CHN32301, 19 September Attachment 23.
9. ‘Shijiazhuang area code search’ 2010, China Yellow Pages


11. ‘Directions from Houyingcun to Beizhongma Village to Wuqui village, Hebei’ 2010, Google maps
   http://maps.google.com/maps?f=d&source=s_d&saddr=%E4%B8%AD%E5%B3%8C%E9%87%9F%E5%9C%81%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E8%97%81%E5%9F%8E%E5%B8%82%E8%97%81%E5%9F%8E%E5%B8%82%E4%B8%AD%E5%BF%83%E9%83%A8+(%E5%B8%B8%E5%B8%AE%E8%99%85%E5%95%85%E5%90%8E%E8%90%A5%E6%9D%91%E5%9F%8E%E5%B0%8F%E5%AD%A6%E5%A0%A1)&daddr=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%B2%B3%E8%9C%89%E7%9F%B3%E5%AE%B6%E5%BA%84%E5%B8%82%E8%5F%8E%E5%9B%BE%E5%8C%97%E6%9C%89%E5%AE%AE%5B%E8%97%81%E5%9F%8E%E5%B8%82%E8%97%81%E5%9F%8E%E5%B8%82%E4%B8%AD%E5%BF%83%E9%83%A8 – Accessed 16 June 2010.

12. ‘China arrests bishop’ 2009, Cath News website 1 April


19. ‘Underground’ bishop taken away as Vatican’s China Commission meets’ 2009, Free Church for China website