

# MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

## PACIFIC RIM (ASIA)

### Myanmar

#### Snapshot Section

**Note:** The country's name was changed from "Burma" to "Myanmar" in 1989 by the ruling military junta. Most Western governments and other entities that do not recognize the junta's authority still refer to this country as Burma. Other more neutral entities use "Myanmar" in reference to the country and "Burmese" as the appropriate adjective. To avoid confusion, this profile will adopt the latter practice.

**Country Name:** Myanmar (called Burma by those who do not recognize the military junta currently controlling the country.)

**Country Founded in:** Declared independence from British rule on January 4, 1948

**Population:** 47,373,958 (July 2007 est.—the government has not conducted a census since 1983 so actual population statistics are difficult to discern.)

**Government Type:** Military junta

**Geography/location in the world:** Myanmar is the largest country in Southeast Asia, only slightly smaller than the state of Texas. It is situated between Bangladesh (to the west) and Thailand (to the east). Myanmar has a tropical monsoon climate, boasting hot, rainy, humid summers and mild, dry winters.

**Number of people groups:** Seven major ethnic groups make up 95% of the population; the other 5% are an amalgamation of different groups. When these groups are broken down into even smaller groups, however, based on traits like language and specific tribal customs/religion, the actual number of people groups skyrockets to 130+. The seven primary groups are:

- Burmese (68%)
- Shan (9%)
- Karen (7%)
- Rakhine (4%)
- Chinese (3%)
- Indian (2%)
- Mon (2%)

**Picture of flag:**



## Religion Snapshot

**Major Religion and % of population:** Buddhism—68%

Christian—3%, Muslim—4%, Ethnic religions (i.e. animism, ancestor worship)—1%, other—2%, and Roman Catholic-1%

## Government interaction with religion:

The Burmese government claims that all religions are free to believe and worship as they please. The Open Doors persecution watch list for 2007 ranks Myanmar as 19<sup>th</sup>, citing “severe limitations” placed on Christians by the government.

([www.opendoors.org](http://www.opendoors.org))

## Country Profile

### Basic Facts

**Country Name:** *Pyidaungzu Myanma Naingngandaw* (The Union of Myanmar)

### Demographics

Population: 47,373,958 (July 2007)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 26.1% (male 6,277,073/female 6,084,001)

15-64 years: 68.6% (male 16,089,764/female 16,425,299)

65 years and over: 5.3% (male 1,075,868/ female 1,421,953)

Median Age:

Male: 26.8 years

Female: 28 years

Population growth rate: 0.815%

Birth Rate: 17.48 births/1,000 population

Death Rate: 9.33 deaths/1,000 population

Life expectancy at birth:  
Total population: 62.49 years  
Male: 60.29 years  
Female: 64.83 years

HIV/AIDS- adult prevalence rate: 1.2% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS- people living with HIV/AIDS: 330,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS- deaths: 20,000 (2003 est.)

Myanmar's population seems primarily to live in rural areas. The largest city in Myanmar, Rangoon (also called Yangon), has a population of 5.5 million. Other large cities, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay, have populations of 200,000 and 700,000 respectively. That leaves almost 41 million of the population living in small cities or villages or in other isolated locations. The population density is 72 people per square kilometer/186 per square mile. Considering the burgeoning population of Asian countries, this number is very low.

Seven major ethnic groups make up 95% of the population; the other 5% are an amalgamation of different groups. When these groups are broken down into even smaller groups, however, based on traits like language and specific tribal customs/religion, the actual number of people groups skyrockets to 130+. The seven primary groups are Burmese (68%), Shan (9%), Karen (7%), Rakhine (4%), Chinese (3%), Indian (2%), and Mon (2%).

The Burmese, who make up the majority of the population, are ethnically kin to Tibetans and Chinese and are scattered throughout the country. The minority populations generally live near the borders of the country. They have been able to hold on to many of their cultural traditions by remaining isolated from the majority of the population.

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>

## **Language**

Burmese is the primary, official language. Many minority groups maintain their own dialects. (See the "People Groups" section for discussion of minority group languages.)

## **Society/Culture**

Burmese culture is heavily influenced by the Buddhist religion. Buddhism is the center of an individual's life and the monastery (*pongyi kyaung*) is the center of the community. It is believed that these monasteries hold wisdom and refuge may be sought there. A rite of passage for every adolescent boy is the *shinphyu*, in which the boy briefly relives the princely life of the Gautama, who became the Buddha, and enters the life of the monastery as a student monk. If he wishes to return to the monastery, he may return anytime for a longer or shorter time period. If he is married, the husband must seek permission from his wife whether he can return to the monastery for a period of time.

The daily life of the village begins with the monks begging for their food. By donating that day's food, the villagers earn good merit, and the monks, who are not allowed to work, are nourished. The people's lives follow the seasons, they start to plant rice when the summer monsoon brings the first rains. During the hardest time of the rainy season is considered to be the Buddhist lent. During that time, activities such as marriage and hunting are put off, but nat festivals can be enjoyed. Harvest time is a busy during the fall season, followed by the cooler season when the traditional form of entertainment is the *pwe*, a type of folk opera that retells past historic events of Burmese history.

The people of Burma eat boiled rice combined with a little spicy meat or fish and some vegetables. A typical breakfast is a hot noodle soup flavored with coconut. A popular sauce is *ngapi*, which is made from fermented fish or prawns and gives off a pungent odor. The common drink is weak green tea, which is drunk very cool throughout the day in small cups. Some of the typical fruits eaten are bananas, cococuts, and some more exotic fruits such as the mangosteen, the custard apple, and the durian.

Source: [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761574495\\_4/Myanmar.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761574495_4/Myanmar.html)

## **Government**

Burma is governed by a military junta. The military coup took over in September 1988 and brought the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to power. The ruling military junta changed the country's name from Burma to *Myanmar Naing Ngan* in 1989, a year after thousands were killed in the suppression of a popular uprising. Rangoon also became known as Yangon. The SLORC junta supervised and coordinated the work of the central and local organs of state power.

In November 1997, the SLORC renamed itself the State Peace and Development Council. In the multi-party election held May 27<sup>th</sup> 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) received 87.7% of the total vote and took 392 of its 447 contested seats. SLORC refused to hand over power to the NLD. They disregarded the election results and stated that a new constitution needed to be drafted by the SLORC. Senior General Saw Maung resigned due to ill health on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1992 and General Than Shwe replaced him that same day as Chairman of the SLORC and as Chief of State and Head of Government. Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested and put into jail and later under house arrest. She has spent 11 of the past 18 years in some form of detention under Burma's military regime. She is very popular among the people in Burma because she wants democracy for their country.

The government controls much of everything in Burma including the media. They have made life very difficult for the people, especially the minority groups. Many have had to flee Burma and declare refugee status in Thailand and the United States. The government has been accused of violating basic human rights and having a very poor economy that led to recent protests by thousands of people.

Source: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/7013943.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7013943.stm); [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country\\_profiles/1300003.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1300003.stm); WORLDMARK *Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania*, Tenth Edition

## **Economy**

Myanmar is primarily known to be an agricultural country. However, since the military take over of Burma, the country has suffered economically. They have lost much foreign investment after the SLORC refused to acknowledge the election results of 1990. Much of the people live in poor conditions and drinking water is considered to be unsanitary. In response to the government of Burma's attack in May 2003 on Aung San Suu Kyi and her convoy, the US imposed new economic sanctions in August 2003 against Burma, which included a ban on imports of Burmese products and a ban on provision of financial services by US persons. The infrastructure of Burma is very weak because of bad spending on the part of the military government. The unemployment rate is at 10.2% and 25% of the population is below the poverty line. The inflation rate is at 21.4% and the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at \$85.2 billion in 2006. Roads are very poorly constructed and virtually impassable during parts of the year. The black market has very much taken over Burma. Sadly, Burma sells high quantities of opium to many foreign countries.

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>; *WORLDMARK Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania*, Tenth Edition.

## **Literacy**

The overall literacy of Burma's population is 85.3%. There is, however, an almost 10% gap in the literacy rates of men and women. The male literacy rate is 89.2% and the female rate is 81.4%. Education is free and required for children from the ages of 5 to 9. Secondary education consists of four years of middle or vocational school and an additional two years for high school. Middle and vocational schools are also free, but fees are charged for high school.

Source: [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761574495\\_3/Myanmar.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761574495_3/Myanmar.html); and <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>

## **Land/Geography**

Myanmar is the largest country in Southeast Asia, only slightly smaller than the state of Texas. It is situated between Bangladesh (to the west) and Thailand (to the east). Myanmar also shares borders with China (northeast), India (northwest), and Laos (east). The Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal border Myanmar to the south and southwest, giving Myanmar a coastline of almost 2,000 kilometers.

Myanmar has a tropical monsoon climate, boasting hot, rainy, humid summers and mild, dry winters. Natural hazards include earthquakes, cyclones, flooding and landslides during the rainy season, and occasional droughts during the dry season. Man-made environmental problems include deforestation, air, soil, and water pollution from industrial waste, and poor sanitation and water purification systems that contribute to disease.

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>; *WORLDMARK Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania*, Tenth Edition

## History

The Mon people were probably the earliest inhabitants of the region now known as Myanmar, possibly arriving in the region as early as 3000 BC. They established a working civilization. Much later, the Pyu moved into western portions of the country (around 628 AD). In the mid-800s AD the Burmese made their way into the Irrawaddy River valley; the Mon and Pyu communities living in the area were absorbed into their new Burman population. The Karen people are thought of as the native population and later immigration brought the Shan and Kachin population into the region.

The first unified kingdom, the Pagan Dynasty, was established in 1044 AD, beginning Burma's Golden Age. Buddhism (of the Theravada variety) was first introduced to the people during this time; the Dynasty supported the construction of thousands of pagodas and monasteries. The Pagan Dynasty lasted until 1287 when it was conquered by the Mongols. During the time of turmoil to follow, Shan rulers took control for a short time.

Burma was unified once again in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. From 1486 to 1752, the Toungoo Dynasty prospered, aided by Portuguese adventurers. This dynasty boasted stable administrative and legal systems; this contributed greatly to its survival. In 1752, the Mons rebelled, ending the Toungoo Dynasty.

The Konbaung Dynasty was immediately established after the fall of the Toungoo Dynasty. This Dynasty was characterized by war (they were invaded by the Chinese four times and fought three wars with the British) and conquest (they toppled the Siamese capital in 1767).

After fighting three devastating wars with the British, the door was open for the British conquest; they were in complete control of the country by 1885. They subsequently annexed Burma to India and moved the capital city from Mandalay to Rangoon. Many Indians migrated to Burma at this time. Under British rule, Burma became a major exporter. Their economy was transformed as a result and by 1939 Burma was the world's primary rice exporter.

When the Japanese invaded Burma at the beginning of World War II, a small band of Burmese nationalists, led by General Aung San, joined forces with the Japanese to drive the British out of Burma. Soon, however, the Burmese turned on the Japanese and fought alongside British and American troops. At the end of the war, General Aung San led the Burmese in demanding complete freedom from British rule; the British government agreed. In elections in 1947, Aung San's Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) won by a landslide, occupying an overwhelming number of the seats in the new Burmese constitutional assembly. In July of that year, however, one of Aung San's political rivals, U Saw, had Aung San and most of his cabinet assassinated. U Saw was then asked to be the new head of the AFPFL. The first constitution was ratified in 1947 and complete independence followed in January 1948.

The following decades were tumultuous. There were disputes over the constitution and constant conflicts between political groups. One example is the revolt of the Karen people in the 1950s. The government's control over the country was loose and slippery. The prime minister declared martial law in 1958 in attempts to regain some sort of order; this lasted for 18 months. In 1962,

however, the government was overthrown in a military coup, led by General Ne Win. He declared the constitution invalid and established a military/socialist government. Ne Win's totalitarian regime greatly restricted the freedom and rights of the Burmese people and his socialist policies devastated the Burmese economy. Ne Win oversaw the drafting of a new constitution in 1974. This constitution really did nothing but officially establish the power of Ne Win's People's Assembly.

During this time, Ne Win's complete control of Burma was challenged by insurgency. Ethnic insurrections erupted in Kachin and Shan states and they maintained control of their territories, denying power to Ne Win's regime. The Karen insurrection flourished near the border of Thailand where the Thai black market supplied their war. The Communist Party of Burma, supported by China, also resisted Ne Win's regime. Ne Win eventually abdicated the presidency in 1981, continuing as chairman of the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP). San Yu, a retired general, took over the presidency.

New rules for full citizenship were enforced in the 1980s. Residents of Burma who could not trace their ancestry back to the "original races" of Burmese inhabitants were labeled as "associate citizens" and were denied public office. As the ruling regime continued to implement radical new policies, the Burmese economy continued to decline. The worsening conditions prompted student protests in Rangoon in March 1988. What began as a protest of economic policies developed into a protest of the regime itself. The military tried forcefully to suppress these protests but they continued to grow as citizens began to join the student movement. On August 8, 1988 the military massacred over 1,000 protestors. Soon after, Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of General Aung San, assumed leadership of the opposition movement.

After months of political chaos, the military turned on the regime that had brought it to power, deposing of Ne Win's BSPP on September 18, 1988. The constitution was suspended and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), a new military junta, took over. The SLORC intended to restore order, repair transportation and communication, provide food and shelter for the poor, and hold free elections. In attempts to restore order, they commissioned the army to suppress continuing public demonstrations. Around 3,000 demonstrators were killed in the following days and over 10,000 students ran to the hills or migrated to border areas.

National Parliamentary elections were held almost two years later on May 27, 1990. During the intervening time, SLORC controlled the country with martial law. In the elections, the National League for Democracy (NLD), headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, won an overwhelming number of the parliamentary seats—392 of 485 seats. The SLORC, however, refused to recognize the results of the election. They imprisoned leaders of the NLD and continued to rule by military might. NLD party leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was put under house arrest.

In 1997, the SLORC changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). That is really the only thing they changed; their oppressive ruling style continued. After 10 years of rule after the 1990 elections, the SPCD began political talks with the NLD. Political prisoners were soon released and, on May 6, 2002, Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. Soon, however, the SPCD government forced the closure of almost all NLD offices. Today only the NLD's Rangoon headquarters remain operable. Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD Vice Chairman

U Tin Oo were returned to house arrest and over 1,000 other NLD affiliates are political prisoners.

Burma's civil war, ignited by independence in 1948, is still unresolved even though there is currently no fighting. The ruling military junta continues to change leadership every few years when prime ministers are overthrown by aspiring members of their own party.

Source: WORLDMARK Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, Tenth Edition;  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761574495\\_8/Myanmar.html#p45](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761574495_8/Myanmar.html#p45)

## **Christian History**

One can find traces of Christianity that trickled through around the 10<sup>th</sup> century brought by the heretical Nestorians in an area called Pegu.

The Roman Catholics arrived in Myanmar by 1544

Protestants came along by the year 1813. The Protestant Churches of Burma were begun in the early 19th century by the American Baptist Missionaries, Adoniram Judson and his wife, Ann, Since the 1800s, Christianity has become deeply rooted and has grown stronger through many adversities.

Certain tribes took on the faith very quickly such as the Karen, Chin, and the Kachin peoples and have built a strong indigenous church.

Other groups in Myanmar have rejected or ignored the gospel message. Only a few of the ethnic Burmese (Bhama) that have converted to Christianity. Christians represent a small minority in the region and are mainly concentrated in the Irrawaddy delta and in the border areas. Baptists represent the larger group of Christians among the ethnic minority groups in Myanmar. Before private schools were nationalized in 1965-1966, many schools were actually run by local Christian churches.

In 1966 all missionaries were expelled by the Burmese government, but the Burmese Church has become a vibrant missionary-sending movement, despite financial limitations and geographic isolation. Baptists, Assemblies of God, Methodists, and Anglicans form the strongest denominations in Burma. Many Christians are well-educated, but cannot rise to positions of responsibility.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

## **Religions**

### **Non Christian**

*Theravada Buddhism*



This form of Buddhism is also called Little Vehicle or Hinayana. It came to Myanmar during the first century AD. Myanmar was the first country in Southeast Asia where the words of Buddha were spread. Buddhism became the dominant religion in Myanmar after King Anawratha took the throne in 1044. Later on, it absorbed many elements of traditional Burmese religions and became the dominant religion by the 9<sup>th</sup> century while majorly influencing the Burmese culture. Today, over 72% of the population is Buddhist, including the ethnic Burmese and the Shan peoples.

Source: <http://www.asiatour.com/myanmar/e-01land/em-lan14.htm>

### *Islam*

It is practiced by about half of the Arakan peoples who live on the southwest border near Bangladesh. It is also practiced by the Bengali people in Myanmar south of Prome and the Panthay immigrants from the Yunnan province in China. Muslims arrived in Myanmar in the early 1000's AD and today constitute about 2.4% of the population which is about 1,075,593 Muslims in Myanmar. Muslims are treated harshly by the present military government and many are denied Burmese citizenship.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries; [http://www.islamawareness.net/Asia/Burma/ro\\_article004.html](http://www.islamawareness.net/Asia/Burma/ro_article004.html)

### *Traditional religions*

Spirit worship is very prevalent amongst the people of Myanmar. These traditional beliefs are still widely practiced by the Montagnard groups (including the Moken and the Naga) and is still influencing the Buddhist religion. They practice ancestry worship and use wooden statues that serve as the home for the spirits known as Nats. 80% of the Karen people practice this type of worship.. The success of Christianity is due in part to the Karen ancient belief that their supreme being would be returned to them by a white man. Karens also practice syncretism which can be seen in the formation of several cults such as Hpo PAi San in 1866.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

### *Hinduism*

The Hindus that are in Myanmar come mostly from India. The Indian community that adhere to Hinduism in Myanmar are about 892,783 people which is about 2.0%. Many of the Hindus that practice their religion in Myanmar do it in secret and celebrate their festivals in secret also because the government persecutes religious minorities.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shri\\_Kali\\_Temple,\\_Myanmar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shri_Kali_Temple,_Myanmar); and World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

### *Confucianism*

The ones that practice Confucianism in Myanmar are from China. There are about 676,320 adherents which is about 1.5% of the population in Myanmar.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

### *Judaism*

The Jewish faith is practiced by a few expatriates in Myanmar and there is one synagogue found in Yangon, the capital of Myanmar.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

### *Catholic Church*

Catholicism came to Myanmar in the 16<sup>th</sup> century brought by the Portuguese. The Bayingyi, a group of ancient Eurasian origin, descendants of Portuguese and Burmese, are the oldest Catholic community, but 90% of the faithful are Karen, Kachin, Chin, Shan, and Kaw. There are about 590,000 Roman Catholics in Myanmar which is 1.3%.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

## **Christian or Evangelical**

### *Protestants*

The largest Christian presence in Myanmar is the Myanmar Baptist Convention which started under the direction of the American missionary, Adoniram Judson in 1813. The Karen tribe was first the first to be reached in 1827, the Chins in 1845, and the Kachins were then reached in 1876, and these 3 ethnic groups continue to make up the bulk of Baptist membership. The Methodists arrived in 1879 from India and settled in the south. They were then followed 7 years later by British Methodists who settled in northern Myanmar. The Presbyterian Church of Burma was formed by immigrant Lushais from Assam, India, who migrated to Myanmar after World War II, and brought their church with them. The Church of Christ is composed primarily of Chinese immigrants from the north. There are approximately 2,511,664 Protestants in Myanmar which is about 5.5% of the population.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

### *Anglicans*

Anglican chaplains arrived in Myanmar in 1825 and the first Anglican missionaries began in Moulmein until 1859. However, Anglicans usually date the founding of the church in Myanmar to 1877 when the first bishop of Yangon was appointed. There are approximately 58,000 Anglicans which is about 0.1% of the population in Myanmar.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

### *Indigenous missions*

Christians in Myanmar have been active in sending out missionaries to its people and also to other surrounding countries.

### *Pentecostal/Charismatics*

The Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal continued to spread in Myanmar throughout the 1990s and spread across many older churches and there are approximately 960,000 adherents which is 31% Pentecostals, 26% Charismatics, and 43% Independents.

Source: World Christian Encyclopedia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A Comparative survey of churches and religions in the modern world. Volume 1: The World by Countries

## **People Groups**

\*Information below taken primarily from [www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org) and [www.joshuaproject.org](http://www.joshuaproject.org). Other sources are noted.

### **9475**

#### **Achang, Maingtha (2,153)**

The Achang people (Maingtha is their Burmese name) are a Tibetan/Himalayan people that live mostly in the Yunnan province of China. Their world-wide population is approximately 30,000. They speak the Achang language. There is no alphabet attached to this language so Chinese characters are often used instead. The Achang population of Myanmar is concentrated in the northeastern portion of the country where Myanmar borders China. They have 20% evangelicals that adhere to Protestant Christianity. The rest are Buddhist or practice ancestor worship. Multiple missions agencies are engaging this people group and they are experiencing a reproducing church movement. The complete Bible is still not available in the Achang language, however.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achang>

### **2402**

#### **Akha, Ekaw (214,331)**

The Akha people originated in China and Tibet but are now scattered all over Southeast Asia. They are a hill tribe, living in bamboo houses and surviving by farming and hunting. They speak the Akha language. At least 12% of Akha people claiming to be Christians are identified as evangelical. The translation of the Bible into the Akha language was completed in 2001.

### **22039**

#### **Anal (6,386)**

The Anal population in Myanmar is overwhelmingly Christian. Only 10% of the population claims a religion other than Christianity. An estimated 40% of Christians are identified as evangelical. Most other Anal people in the world live in India. The Anal people speak Anal.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=anm](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=anm)

**9404**

**Angku (927)**

The Angku people of Myanmar primarily practice animism. However, around 2% of their population is evangelical. There is no Scripture translation available in Mok, the Angku dialect.

**9405**

**Anu (835)**

The Anu are a people group native to Myanmar. There are no Anu people recorded as living anywhere outside of Myanmar. They are a small people group with their own language, Anu, who live in Shan state. Half of the Anu population is Christian, 38% evangelical. Twenty-six percent of the population practices ethnic religions and 24% are Buddhists. Although Christianity is the majority religion of the Anu people, a Bible translation into the Anu language has not even been attempted.

**9430**

**Bania, Jain (900)**

The Bania are an Indian people group and Jain (or Jainism) is their religion. *All* (100%) of the Bania people living in Myanmar practice Jainism, traditionally known as Jain Dharma. Over 3 million Bania live in India. There no known Bania believers in Myanmar. Jainism stresses spiritual independence and equality of all life with particular emphasis on non-violence. For a full description of Jain Dharma see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jain>.

**2409**

**Bengali (236,000)**

Bengalis were the original inhabitants of the Bengal region in southwest Asia. There are over 97 million Bengalis living all over the world. Eighty percent of the world's Bengalis live in India and Bangladesh. In Myanmar, the majority of them live in Rakhine state. They speak Bengali; Siripuria is the primary dialect. Most Bengalis are either farmers or fishermen. Bengalis are among the least-reached peoples of the world. Over half Myanmar's Bengalis are Muslim, 21. Only 0.13% of the Bengalis are evangelical. There is at least one missions agency on-site working with the Bengalis of Myanmar and there are groups of churches beginning to emerge.

**9415**

**British (4,561)**

Myanmar was a British protectorate for many years. The British population in Myanmar now consists primarily of aid workers, government officials, educators, etc.

**22041**

**Bulang, Blang (31,928)**

The Bulang are a Southeast Asian people group now living primarily in China. Thailand also has a small population of Bulang. They speak the Bulang language and they are still lacking a translation of Scripture into their heart language. A translation has not even been started. The Bulang are primarily Buddhist; 94% of the Bulang living in Myanmar are Buddhist. An estimated 1.5% of Bulang Christians in Myanmar are Evangelical. Globally, more than 5% of Bulgans are Evangelical Christians.

**22042**

**Burmese (31,000,000)**

The Burmese people originated in Tibet. Burmese, their heart-language, is a Sino-Tibetan language. They constitute the majority of Myanmar's population. An overwhelming majority (97.2%) of Burmese are Buddhist. Islam is growing among the Burmese, as well; 2.3% of the population is Muslim. Some Burmese (0.4%) claim to be non-religious. Only 0.07% are evangelical Christian. There are multiple agencies and churches who are committed to reaching the Burmese of Myanmar.

**9416**

**Chak (1,200)**

The Chak population of Myanmar is concentrated in the Blue Mountains of Rakhine State. The population figure given here is from [www.peoplesgroups.org](http://www.peoplesgroups.org). The Joshua Project ([www.joshuaproject.org](http://www.joshuaproject.org)) reports an estimated population of 21,000. The Chak people are 99% Buddhist but they don't practice "pure" Buddhism; they incorporate many elements of their culture and ethnic religious practices as well. A small number (0.6%) practice ethnic religions. The other 0.4% are professing Christians (0.2% evangelical). Translation work has never begun for a copy of Scripture in the Chak language but there are some Gospel recordings available. These people are among the least-reached people on earth, according to the Joshua Project.

**00000**

**Chaungtha (173,000)**

The Chaungtha are one of the Burmese hill tribes that live in the central part of the country. They speak their own language, Chaungtha, a language into which the Bible has never been translated. The large majority of Chaungtha are Buddhist (97%) and another significant portion of the population (2.9%) practice ethnic religions. Only 0.07% of the population is evangelical Christian.

**9406**

**Chin, Asho (12,000)**

The Asho are a Tibetan/Himalayan people that live in the Irrawaddy River lowlands of central Myanmar. They speak a dialect of Asho called Thayetmyo. The Asho are 37% evangelical. The rest of the population practices ethnic religions. Most of the Scriptures are available in their language and there is a reproducing church movement currently taking place among this people.

**9408**

**Chin, Bawm (3,800)**

The Bawm live in the Chin Hills of Myanmar. The Bawm population of Myanmar is, according to the Joshua Project are Christianized and 40% of them are evangelical. They are characterized as having a widespread and disciplined church.

**46600**

**Chin, Chinbon (19,600)**

The Chinbon population of Myanmar is more than 5% evangelical.

**9419**

**Chin, Chindwin (24,794)**

The Chindwin population of Myanmar lives primarily in the vicinity of Kanpetlet township. This people speaks Chinbon. There are no available Scriptures in this language. The majority of the Chindwin population practices ethnic religions/ancestor worship and are Buddhists. Only about 8% of them are evangelical.

**22045**

**Chin, Cho (32,151)**

The Cho are primarily Christian; at least 10% of their population in Myanmar are evangelical. Their primary language is Mun Chin. Scripture and many other evangelical resources are available in their dialect.

**9421**

**Chin, Daai (30,035)**

The Daai primarily live in and around Matupi township. They speak Daai. Most of the Daai (83%) practice ancestor worship as their religion. Five percent are Buddhist and between 5% and 10% are evangelical.

**22048**

**Chin, Falam (120,000)**

The Falam live in the Chin Hills of Myanmar. The Bible translation project for their heart language, Falam, was completed in 1991. They are primarily Christian and 25% are evangelical. The remainder of the population (39%) still practices ethnic religions and ancestor worship.

**9431**

**Chin, Haka (107,000)**

The Haka live in the Chin Hills of Myanmar near the Bangladesh border. They speak Haka and have had the Scriptures in their language since 1978. The Haka are primarily Christian and are 35% evangelical; the other 35% practice ancestor worship and other forms of ethnic religions.

**9457**

**Chin, Khumi (97,033)**

The Khumi live in far western Myanmar near the Bangladesh border. According to the Joshua Project, they are highly Christianized and 44% of them are evangelical and the rest practice ethnic religions. A small portion of the population (0.5%) classify their religion as "other". However, [www.peoplesgroups.org](http://www.peoplesgroups.org) reports that only around 2% of the Khumi population of Myanmar is evangelical.

**9456**

**Chin, Khumi Awa (36,489)**

The Khumi Awa are a primarily Christian people, about 43% evangelical, who inhabit the Arakan Hills of Myanmar. The rest of the people either practice ethnic religions or are Catholic.

**9461**

**Chin, Kuki (33,146)**

The Kuki are a large evangelical Christian population, about 35%, who live in Chin State in Myanmar. A large number of the population still practices ethnic religions and are Catholic.

**9481****Chin, Mara (12,315)**

The Mara live in the Lushai Hills of Myanmar, in the western part of the country near along the Indian border. They speak the Mara language exclusively. They are approximately 50% evangelical Christian.

**9489****Chin, Mru/Mro (43,139)**

The Mru are part of the same ethnic affinity bloc as the other Chin peoples. They speak the Mru Chin dialect. The majority of the Mru (55%) are Buddhist. Another 37.6% practice ethnic religions, usually some form of ancestor worship. Only about 5% of them are evangelical. There is one known evangelical church among the Mru but there have been no church planting efforts among them in the last few years. No Bible translation work has been started.

**9491****Chin, Mun (61,000)**

The Mun live in western Myanmar in the southern regions of the Chin state. They are also called *Chinbok*, a derogatory term in Burmese, meaning “rotten.” The hill tribes in southern Chin state are trappers, hunters, and loggers. They also grow rice, but only as a food source; none of it is sold to bring in income. The Mun practice their own version of ancestor worship; 86% of the population are adherents of this ethnic religious practice. Four percent claim to be non-religious and 10% are Christian (4% evangelical according to the Joshua Project, less than 2% according to [www.peoplesgroups.com](http://www.peoplesgroups.com)). There is a missions agency that has committed to reaching the Mun of Myanmar. A complete Bible translation is still needed in the Mun language.

**9493****Chin, Ngawn (18,591)**

The Ngawn live in the Chin Hills of Myanmar. Many adhere to Christianity and about 38% are evangelical. However, only portions of the Bible are available in their heart language.

**9498****Chin, Paite (11,261)**

The Paite are 50% evangelical Christian. The others still follow ethnic religions (animism and ancestor worship). The Paite are characterized as having a widespread, disciplined church.

**9516****Chin, Senthang (23,025)**

The Senthang live in the Chin Hills of Chin State in Myanmar. Many Senthang also live in Magway province. The large majority of the population (85%) practice ethnic religions/ancestor worship. Christian evangelicals make up 10% of the population. The remaining are non-religious.

**9521**

**Chin, Siyin (10,719)**

The Siyin live in the Chin Hills of western Myanmar. Eighty-four percent of the Siyin are Christian (44% evangelical) and 16% practice ethnic religions. A complete Bible translation is still not available in the Siyin language.

**9532**

**Chin, Tawr (853)**

The Tawr people live in the Chin Hills of Chin State, in the provinces of Magway and Sagaing. Most of the Tawr (85%) practice ethnic religions/ancestor worship; the other 15% are Christian (13% evangelical). No Bible translation work has been done in the Tawr language and there are no known ministry tools available.

**9534**

**Chin, Tiddim (189,000)**

The Tiddim Chin live in the Chin Hills of western Myanmar. They are 44% evangelical Christian. The remainder of the population practice ethnic religions. The Tiddim people speak Tedim. Bible translation in the Tedim language was completed in 1996. There is currently a reproducing church movement among the Tedim of Myanmar.

**9549**

**Chin, Zanniat (20,000)**

The Zanniat Chin have a large population of Catholics and evangelicals among them; more than 10% of the Zanniat in Myanmar are evangelical. They speak Falam Chin. The Bible is available in their dialect but few other evangelical resources have been translated.

**9552**

**Chin, Zotung (43,778)**

The Zotung live in the Chin Hills of western Myanmar and in Haka province. They are 42% evangelical. The other 25% of the population practices ethnic religions. Translation of the New Testament in the Zotung language was completed in 2004.

**00000**

**Dainet (27,000)**

The Dainet people belong to the same people cluster as the Chin (Kuki-Chin-Naga). They inhabit the mountainous regions of northern Rakhine State and overflow into adjacent areas of Chin State. They are among the least-reached peoples in the world; there are no known believers among them. 100% of the population is Buddhist. There is no translation work being attempted in the Dainet language, so there are not even fragments of the Bible available to them; they do not have access to Gospel recordings, the Jesus film or any other evangelism tools. No agencies are committed to reaching them.

**9422**



**Danu (180,000)**

The Danu of Myanmar live primarily in central Shan State and northern Kayah State. One of the Danu hubs seems to be the town of Pindaya. The Danu are currently an unengaged people; only 0.5% of their population claims to be Christians (0.4% evangelical). The Danu are overwhelmingly Buddhist (95%); 5% of the Danu population practice ethnic religions. There are some evangelistic resources available in Danu but no Bible translation work has been started and there are no agencies committed to reaching this people.

**00000****Deaf (Unknown)**

The status of this people group is unknown.

**00000****Derung (6,400)**

The Derung live in Kachin State, along the Salween River in northern Myanmar. They speak Nung. They are about 25% evangelical Christians. Followers of ethnic religions and Buddhism make up the rest of the population.

**22046****Eurasian/Anglo-Burmese (45,611)**

Also called Anglicized Chinese, Anglo-Indian, India, and Euronesian, the Eurasian population of Myanmar are ethnically South Asian but they have been Anglicized to the point where English is their primary language. Many adhere to the Christian faith and are about 30% evangelical.

**9426****Gangte (5,701)**

The Gangte are from the same people cluster as the Chin and Dainet (Kuki-Chin-Naga). Sixty percent of the population is Christian (30% evangelical) and 40% practice ethnic religions. The Gangte are characterized as having a wide-spread, disciplined church. Scripture is available in the Gangte dialect but very few other ministry tools have been translated.

**9430****Gujarati (31,928)**

The Gujarati are natives of the state of Gujarat in western India but today there are sizable Gujarat populations in 27 countries, including several African nations, Iran, Malaysia, and Myanmar. The Gujarati that have left India are typically from a high caste and, known around the world as resourceful businessmen, they maintain their standard of living and cultural traditions in their new countries. As would be expected of Indian natives, 84.2% of the Gujarati in Myanmar are Hindu. Another 13% are Muslim, 2% classify as "other," and only 0.8% are Christian (0.41% evangelical). Even though there are some believers, there are no known churches among the Gujarati and no agency is committed to reaching this people.

**22047****Han Chinese (938,000)**

The Joshua Project breaks down this large people group into smaller groups:

- *Han Chinese, Cantonese (147,000)*—The Han Chinese are the world’s largest ethnic group (more than 1.3 billion worldwide). This portion of the Han population speaks Chinese Yue as their primary language. They are primarily Buddhist (69%) and ancestor worshippers (20%). Nine percent are non-religious and 2% are Christian (1.3% evangelical). There are groups of churches among the Cantonese population of Myanmar and there is at least one missions agency committed to reaching this people.
- *Han Chinese, Hakka (36,000)*—Although they have never claimed to be non-Chinese, the Hakka are different in some ways from mainstream Chinese culture. For one thing, their roots are unsure; it is uncertain how they became part of Chinese culture. They carefully preserved their language, Hakka, by making any non-Hakka female who marries into the family learn the language. The Hakka that still reside in China are mostly non-religious since the advent of Communism. However, in Myanmar, they have maintained their Buddhist roots; 65% of the Hakka in Myanmar are Buddhist. Another 25% practice ethnic religions, 7% are non-religious, and 3% are Christian (1.4% evangelical). There are groups of churches among the Hakka of Myanmar and multiple agencies are committed to reaching the Hakka in all countries.
- *Han Chinese, Mandarin (614,000)*—The Mandarin Chinese population of Myanmar is primarily Buddhist (70%); 20% practice ethnic religions. Eight percent qualify as non-religious, leaving only 2% of this large population that are Christian (1.4% evangelical). There are groups of churches among this people group and multiple agency partnerships.
- *Han Chinese, Min Nan (184,000)*—The Min Nan population of Myanmar is primarily Buddhist (73%); 20% practice ethnic religions, 3% are non-religious, and 4% are Christian (2.5% evangelical).

## **22049**

### **Hindi (115,000)**

The majority of Hindi people living outside of their native India may be found in the neighboring countries of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Myanmar. They tend to live in clusters, surrounding themselves with other Hindi-speakers; in Myanmar they primarily live in Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, and Sagaing States. Although they all speak a common language, the Hindi population of Myanmar comes from various castes, tribes, and cultural backgrounds. They are 87.3% Hindu, 10% Muslim, 2% other, and 0.7% Christian (0.25% evangelical). Even though there are some believers and multiple agencies committed to reaching this people, there are no known churches among the Hindi of Myanmar.

## **46604**

### **Honi (65,000)**

The Honi’s primary religion is animism. There is no Scripture translation available in the Honi dialect as well as no known evangelical resources. Less than 2% of the Honi population of Myanmar is evangelical and there have been no known church planting efforts among them in recent years.

## **9444**

### **Hrangkhoh (7,754)**

The Hrangkhoh of Myanmar live primarily in Chin State. The majority practice ancestor worship, but 25% are evangelical Christians. A translation of the New Testament in the Hrangkhoh language was completed in 1997.

**9445**

**Hsifan (4,600)**

The Hsifan are primarily Buddhist but there are many Christians among them; 10% or more of the Hsifan population of Myanmar is evangelical. They speak Tibetan. Many evangelical resources, as well as complete copy of the Bible, are available in Tebetan.

**25000**

**Hui, Panthay (100,000)**

The Hui are in the Chinese-Hui people cluster and are considered a Muslim Chinese people. They primarily speak Mandarin but many also speak a dialect called Xinan Guanhua. 100% of the population is Sunni Muslim. There are no known believers among the Hui of Myanmar and no agencies are committed to reaching this people.

**9447**

**Intha (134,000)**

One of the many hill tribes of Myanmar, the Intha people live primarily in southwest Shan State, concentrated in villages around Lake Inle. They speak Intha, a language in which no Bible translation and very few (if any) evangelistic resources are currently available. An overwhelming majority of the Intha population of Myanmar (98%) are Buddhist. A small number (1.9%) practice ethnic religions and only 0.1% of the population are Christian (0.7% evangelical). There are no known churches among the Intha of Myanmar and no agencies are committed to working with the people.

**00000**

**Jew (100)**

The Jewish population of Myanmar is very small. These Jews are either descendants of Jews who inhabited Germanic regions of Europe and spread eastward into Central Asia from Soviet areas during World War II or Bukharan Jews, an indigenous population of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Most speak English as well as another dialect. Most, 95%, still practice Judaism, 4% claim to be nonreligious, and 1% are evangelical. There are no churches among this group.

**9448**

**Kachin (672,000)**

The Kachin, also called Jingpho, live in Kachin, Shan, and Sagaing states. The Kachin are 37% evangelical Christian. The rest practice ethnic religions and are Buddhist. There are groups of churches among the Kachin of Myanmar and multiple agencies involved with them.

**9449**

**Kado (86,000)**

The Kado people are one of Myanmar's hill tribes. They live primarily in Ban Mauk Township. There is one known church among the Kado; 3.5% of their population is evangelical Christian. The majority of the population practice ethnic religions and a small percentage of them are

Buddhist. Portions of the Bible were translated into the Kado language but since those portions were complete in 1939 no further translation work as been undertaken.

#### **9412**

##### **Karen/Black Karen/Pao Karen (1,000,000)**

Most of Karen of Myanmar live in southwestern Shan State. Their geographical hub is the mountain surrounding the towns of Taunggyi and Kalaw. Forty two percent of the Karen are Buddhist. Another 26% are evangelical Christian, and the rest practice ethnic religions and the final 0.4% of the population classify their religious affiliation as “other.” There are groups of churches among the Karen and multiple agencies are involved with this group. There are Bible portions available in their language but a complete translation has never been completed.

#### **9414**

##### **Karen, Brek (20,999)**

The Brek of Myanmar live primarily in Kayah State, in the mountains of Kantarawady and Kyebugyi. They speak their own particular dialect, Brek. The large majority of the Brek population of Myanmar are Protestant, but only 36% of those are evangelical. The other 13% of the population practice ethnic religions. Even though Christians make up the majority of Brek society, scripture has never been translated into the Brek language.

#### **9427**

##### **Karen, Geba (51,000)**

The Geba live in Kayah and Shan States, primarily in the area around Moby. They speak their own dialect, Geba. They are mostly Roman Catholic, and only 20% evangelical. The remaining practice ethnic religions. No Bible translation is available in the Geba dialect.

#### **9428**

##### **Karen, Gheko (12,019)**

The Gheko are located primarily in Moby State in the Toungoo and Yamethin Districts. The Gheko are 40% evangelical and the remainder of the Gheko practice ethnic religions. Scripture has not been translated into the Gheko dialect; there are no other evangelical resources available.

#### **9450**

##### **Karen, Kayah (245,000)**

Called by many different names (Karenni, Karrenyi, Karieng Daeng, Kayah Li, Red Karen, Western Karen), the Kayah are one of the Myanmar’s largest minority populations; they are the largest ethnic group in Kayah State. They speak their own dialect, Western Kayah. Half of the population are Buddhist, 20% are evangelical Christian, and the rest of the Kayah population practice ethnic religions. No evangelistic resources or Scripture translation are available in Western Kayah.

#### **9462**

##### **Karen, Lahta (9,122)**

The Lahta live in Shan and Moby States. They speak their own dialect. The majority of the population (70%) practice ethnic religions. Another 25% are Buddhist. Only 5% of the population are Christians (2.5% evangelical).

**9479**

**Karen, Manumanaw (5,660)**

The Manumanaw live primarily in Kayah State. They speak their own dialect, Manumanaw. The large majority of the Manumanaw are Protestant; half of those are evangelical. The other 10% practice ethnic religions. Even with the large Christian majority, no Scripture translation is available in Manumanaw.

**9497**

**Karen, Padaung (53,000)**

The Padaung of Myanmar live in the forested area west of the Salween River in Kayah and southern Shan States. Also called the Long-Neck Karen because of their women's practice of stretching their necks, the Padaung speak a dialect called Kayan. Half of the population are Buddhist, 22% are evangelical, and the rest practice ethnic religions. There are multiple agencies involved with the Padaung and groups of churches exist among the Christian population. Scripture has not been translated into Kayan.

**9499**

**Karen, Paku, Mopwa (6,705)**

The Paku inhabit Kayah State, specifically around Taungoo. They speak Paku. The majority of the population (70%) practice ethnic religions; the other 30% are Christian (22%) evangelical. No Scripture or other evangelical resources are available in the Paku dialect.

**9510**

**Karen, Red (19,864)**

Also called Bghai, the Red Karen live in Kayah State, primarily in Kyebogyi. They speak the Bwe dialect; portions of Scripture have been translated into Bwe. The majority of the Red Karen practice ethnic religions; another 18% are evangelical Christian and the remaining 1% are classified as "other." A reproducing church movement has emerged among the Christian population in recent years and there are multiple missions agencies involved with the Red Karen.

**9518**

**Karen, S'gaw, Paganyaw (1,285,000)**

The S'gaw of Myanmar live in the Irrawaddy River delta. Thirty-five percent of the S'gaw population is evangelical Christian, and the rest practice ethnic religions. There is a reproducing church movement among the S'gaw and there is a functioning agency partnership with at least one missions sending agency. A complete translation of Scripture is available in the S'gaw dialect, as well as multiple evangelical resources.

**9524**

**Karen, Striped, Yinchia (6,121)**

The Striped Karen population of Myanmar is located primarily in southern Shan state. They speak the Yinchia dialect. The majority of the Striped Karen practice ethnic religions, 15% are evangelical, and the rest are Buddhist. There is no Scripture translation available in Yinchia and no evangelical resources; there are no missions agencies working among the Striped Karen of Myanmar.

**9546**

**Karen, Yinbaw (9,236)**

The Yinbaw of Myanmar live in Shan State, around the Shan Plateau. They speak their own dialect, Yinbaw. The religious breakdown of the Yinbaw population is fairly evenly divided. The majority of the population are Buddhist, 25% are evangelical Christian, and 28% practice ethnic religions. No Scripture translation is available in Yinbaw; none has ever been started. Neither are there any evangelical resources available in this dialect.

**9547**

**Karen, Yintale (9,122)**

The Yintale live in Myanmar's Kayah State, specifically around Bawlakhe. They speak a specific dialect, Yintale. Half of the Yintale population is Buddhist, 45% practice ethnic religions, and 5% are Christian (3.5% evangelical). There are no evangelical resources available in Yintale, nor is there a translation of Scripture.

**9550**

**Karen, Zayein (11,763)**

The Zayein Karen of Myanmar live among the other Karen in Shan State, specifically around Phekon and Moby. Almost half the population practice ethnic religions, 30% are Buddhist, and 15% are evangelical Christian. Even with the large percentage of Christians in the population, there are no Scripture portions or evangelical resources available in the Zayein dialect.

**00000**

**Khampa, Southern, Deqen (1,100)**

The Khampa are a Tibetan/Himalayan people who live primarily in southern Tibet and spread into northern portions of Myanmar. The Khampa are overwhelmingly Buddhist; 99.9% of the population of Buddhist. The other 0.1% of the population is evangelical. They speak Khams, a Tibetan dialect. There are less than 2,000 known Tibetan believers in the world and there are no translations of Scripture available in known Tibetan dialects. However, there are some evangelistic and evangelical resources available.

**9452**

**Khamti Shan (200,000)**

The Khamti Shan are a South Asian people group who largely populate the area where the countries of Myanmar, India, and China intersect. The Khamti Shan are 99% Buddhist; a small portion of the population (0.9%) practice ethnic religions and an even smaller portion (0.1%) are Christian (0.04% evangelical). Even though Christianity is not prevalent among the Khamti Shan, there are groups of churches among them and at least one missions agency is committed to reaching the Khamti Shan. No one has attempted a Bible translation in Khamti, the dialect spoken by the Khamti Shan.

**9454**

**Khmu (91,000)**

The Khmu are a Southeast Asian people native to China who now largely reside in northeastern Thailand. A sizeable number have now moved into Myanmar. The Khmu tribe largely accepted

Buddhism when it was introduced in Thailand in the 4<sup>th</sup> century but they have combined Buddhism with animist elements of their tribal religion. Today, 90% of the Khmu practice this combination of Buddhism and ethnic religion; 6% of the Khmu are evangelical. No Scripture translation is available in the Khmu dialect but other evangelistic resources, such as tracts and the Jesus film, are available.

#### **9458**

##### **Kiorr (9,122)**

Also referred to as Angku and Saamtaan, the Kiorr people of Myanmar live primarily in Shan State, near the convergence of the nations of Myanmar, China, and Laos. The Kiorr are 98% Buddhist, 0.4% evangelical Christian, and the rest practice ethnic religions. They are considered an “unengaged” people, meaning that there are no evangelical missions organizations working among them. Scripture is not available in the Kiorr dialect and there are no ministry tools available.

#### **9463**

##### **Lahu, Black (128,000)**

The Black Lahu of Myanmar live primarily in Shan State, in the Kengung area. The Black Lahu are 43% evangelical Christian. A small portion of the population practices ethnic religions. There are multiple missions agencies involved with the Black Lahu and the church among the Black Lahu in Myanmar is classified as “widespread and disciplined.” Scripture is available in Lahu as are multiple evangelical resources.

#### **9544**

##### **Lahu, Yellow (12,019)**

Also called the Lahu Shi, the Yellow Lahu are a Tibetan/Himalayan people who live primarily in Thailand. Within Myanmar they live primarily in Shan State in Kentung district. They speak their own dialect, Lahu Shi. They are primarily a Buddhist people; 55% of the Yellow Lahu are Buddhist. The rest practice ethnic religions and 5% are evangelical Christian. There is one known church among the Yellow Lahu of Myanmar and there is at least one agency committed to reaching them. However, there have been few church planting efforts in recent years.

#### **9466**

##### **Lama (4,301)**

The Lama people of Myanmar live in Kachin State. The majority of the Lama practice ethnic religions, 25% are Buddhist, and the remaining 10% are evangelical Christian. There are groups of churches among the Lama and multiple agencies are working among them. However, the Bible has not been translated into the Lama dialect and there are no evangelistic resources or other ministry tools available.

#### **9467**

##### **Lao (20,981)**

Natives of Myanmar’s neighboring country, Laos, many Laotians have made their way into Myanmar. Laotians living in Myanmar are primarily Buddhist (93%). A small percentage, 3%, consider themselves Christian (0.9% evangelical), 2% practice ethnic religions, and 2% are

described as non-religious. There are no existing churches among the Lao in Myanmar but there are known believers and at least one missions agency committed to working among them.

#### **9468**

##### **Laopang (9,122)**

The Laopang are natives of Tibet, and autonomous region of China. The Laopang practice their own brand of Buddhism; they have mixed many elements of their traditional ethnic religions with Buddhism, resulting in their own unique breed. Over half (60%) of the Laopang practice ethnic religions with distinctive Buddhist influences. Only 26% of the Laopang can be called traditional Buddhists. The rest of the population are evangelical Christian. There are groups of churches among the Laopang and at least one missions agency working among them. There is no Scripture translation available in their language, nor are there any ministry resources.

#### **9469**

##### **Lashi (70,000)**

Also known as the Letsi, the Lashi people are one of the hill tribes of Myanmar that live in the eastern portion of the country; specifically the Lashi live in Kachin State, the northernmost state in Myanmar. Ninety percent of the Lashi practice ethnic religions, 9.99% are Buddhist, and 0.01% are evangelical Christians. While Myanmar's hill tribes typically speak Shan as a common trade language, they mostly retain their native dialects. A translation of the New Testament in the Lashi language was completed in 2006 but the Old Testament has yet to be completed. Even though there are known Lashi believers there are no known churches. There is one missions agency on site working among the Lashi.

#### **9413**

##### **Lisu, Black (4,561)**

The Black Lisu live in Shan state in eastern Myanmar. The Black Lisu are 40% Christian and the rest practice ethnic religions. The church status among the Black Lisu of Myanmar is classified as a reproducing church movement. There are multiple agencies committed to the Black Lisu and, unlike most of the hill tribes of Myanmar, the Black Lisu have access to a complete Scripture translation in their native dialect. There are multiple other evangelical resources available to them as well.

#### **9523**

##### **Lisu (147,000)**

The Lisu live along the border of Myanmar and China in far eastern Kachin state and in pockets across Shan state. The Lisu are 52% evangelical Christian. The remaining practice ethnic religions. There is a reproducing church movement among the Lisu and there are multiple missions agencies committed to working among them. Many evangelical resources are available in the Lisu dialect as well as a complete translation of the Bible.

#### **9470**

##### **Lopi (4,561)**

The Lopi are a Southeast Asian people living in Myanmar. They primarily practice ethnic religions (79%). Another 15% are evangelical Christian and a small percentage are Buddhist. There is no Scripture translation available in the Lopi dialect and no other evangelical resources.



**9471**

**Lu (271,000)**

The Lu live in far eastern Myanmar (Shan state) near the borders of China and Laos. The Lu people are originally from China but many fled south during World War II. The Lu differ in appearance and dress from other inhabitants of eastern Myanmar; they men are large in stature and both men and women dress in distinctive blue jackets and turbans. Lu society is tribal; each village has a chief. The chief uses witchcraft, public opinion, and gossip to maintain control. The majority of the Lu (88%) practice a form of Theravada Buddhism, 11.8% practice ethnic religions (animism mixed with some Buddhist elements), and 0.2% are Christian. The Lu are very connected to a spirit world that they believe in very strongly. "Sixty percent of the Lu practice ethnic religions. Theravada Buddhism is often mixed with folk animism. They believe that non-human objects have spirits, and that people have multiple souls. They also believe that there are "territorial spirits," which are identified with different levels of society. In addition, they practice ancestor worship (praying to deceased ancestors for guidance). They live in fear of their gods and constantly strive to appease them with religious chants, rituals, and sacrifices. The Lu put great emphasis on reincarnation, believing that if they live a good life they will be reborn into a higher social order. If they are wicked, however, they will be reborn as degraded animals." (<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>) There is at least one agency committed to working among the Lu and a group of churches has emerged. A translation of the New Testament in the Lu dialect was completed years ago and there are multiple other evangelical resources available.

**9473**

**Lushai (15,813)**

The Lushai live in western Myanmar. They speak Mizo, a Tibetan/Himalayan dialect. The majority of the Lushai are Christian (45% of them are evangelical) and the remaining practice ethnic religions. There is a reproducing church movement among the Lushai and a functioning agency partnership with an evangelical missions agency.

**9474**

**Mahei (11,763)**

The Mahei of Myanmar live primarily in Shan state. The large majority (95%) of Mahei practice ethnic religions and the remaining 5% are Christian (3.4% evangelical). Multiple agencies are involved with the Mahei and groups of churches have begun to emerge. Although there are many Christians among the Mahei there has been no translation work started on Scripture in the Mahei dialect.

**9476**

**Malay (22,806)**

The Malay, natives of Malaysia, have migrated to most Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand and Myanmar. The Malay are 99.97% Muslim. A small percentage (0.03%) are Christian. The percentage of Christians among the Malay is so insignificant that, as a people group, they are considered "unengaged." A complete translation of Scripture in Malay was completed in 1993 and there are many other evangelical resources available.

**9477**

**Malayalam (20,981)**

The Malayalam primarily practice Hinduism. Less than 2% of the Malayalam population of Myanmar are evangelical and there has been no known church planting activity among them in recent years.

**9478**

**Manipuri (22,806)**

The Manipuri population of Myanmar is largely concentrated in northern Sagaing state. The majority the Manipuri population is Hindu (84.4%). Seven percent (7%) practice ethnic religions, 6.9% are Muslim, and slightly over 1% are evangelical Christian. There is at least one agency committed to working among the Manipuri and there are groups of churches. A translation of Scripture in the Manipuri language, Meitei, has been available since 1984.

**9482**

**Maru, Laungwaw (125,000)**

Kachin state in northern Myanmar has the largest population of Maru in the country. The majority of the Maru people practice ethnic religions (87%); four percent describe themselves as non-religious and under ten percent are evangelical Christian. Their language, Maru, is widely spoken among this Tibetan/Himalayan people but a complete translation of Scripture is not yet available to them; the New Testament has been available since 1985 and there are many other evangelical resources available. Multiple agencies are working among the Maru and there are groups of functioning churches.

**9485**

**Mindat (32,717)**

The majority of the Mindat population practices ancestor worship. Between 5% and 10% of the Mindat are evangelical. The Bible is available in their language, Chin Mun, as well as a few other evangelical resources.

**9486**

**Moken (7,156)**

The Moken, disparagingly referred to by some as Sea Gypsies, live on the islands off the coast of southern Myanmar in Tanintharyi state. They are a Malay people but live primarily in Myanmar. Only a few thousand more Moken exist outside of Myanmar, scattered throughout southeast Asia. A majority of the Moken, 74.95%, practice ethnic religions, 24% are Muslim, and 0.05% are Christian (0.04% evangelical). They are considered one of the least-reached people groups of the world. Even though there are some known believers among the Moken there are no known churches. Work on the New Testament in the Moken language was completed in 2002.

**9487**

**Mon (2,500,000)**

The majority of the world's Mon population, also known as the Talaing, lives in Myanmar, specifically east of Yangon and along the coastal regions of Mon and Kayin states. The Mon people are a southeast Asian people originally from northern regions who migrated to Myanmar centuries ago. Their kingdom reached its peak from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries but were eventually conquered by the Burmese. The Mon population that exists in Myanmar today are

mostly descendents of the survivors of the Burmese overthrow of the Mon empire. Primarily Buddhist (85%), 10% of the Mon practice ethnic religions, 4% are non-religious, and less than 1% are evangelical Christian. Even though the percentage of Christians is less than 2% and there have been no active church planting efforts in recent years, there are groups of churches among the Mon. There are also multiple agencies committed to working among them. A complete copy of the Bible is available in the Mon language, as are many other evangelical resources.

#### **9453**

##### **Naga, Khiamngan (2,281)**

The largest population of Khiamngan in Myanmar live in northwestern Sagaing state. The data regarding the religions affiliation of the Khiamngan in Myanmar is quite varied. The Joshua Project reports that the majority of the Khiamngan (65%) practice ethnic religions and the remaining 35% are Christian (28% evangelical). Peoplegroups.org, however, reports that evangelicals make up less than 2% of the Khiamngan population. A complete translation of Scripture has been available in the Khiamngan dialect since 2005 but there are few other evangelical resources available.

#### **9460**

##### **Naga, Konyak (1,368)**

The largest population of Konyak in Myanmar live in northwestern Sagaing state. The majority of them, 83%, are Christian (45% evangelical) and 17% practice ethnic religions. A complete translation of Scripture is available in the Konyak dialect, as are a few other evangelical resources.

#### **00000**

##### **Naga, Tangsa (59,000)**

The Tangsa live among the other Naga in Sagaing state. Forty five percent of the Christian population are evangelical Christian and a small percentage of them practice ethnic religions. A translation of the New Testament in the Tangsa dialect, Tase, was completed in 1992. A complete translation has not yet been completed and there are few other resources for evangelicals available in Tase.

#### **9545**

##### **Naga, Yimchungru (4,561)**

Information regarding the religions status of the Yimchungru in Myanmar is quite varied. Peoplegroups.org reports that only about 2% of the population is evangelical while the Joshua Project reports that 80% of the Yimchungru population is Christian (45% evangelical), leaving only 20% to practice ethnic religions. A translation of the New Testament is available in the Yimchungru dialect but they are still waiting for a complete translation of Scripture

#### **9492**

##### **Nepalese, Gorkha (265,000)**

Most of the Nepalese population of Myanmar, also known as the Gorkha, are immigrants (and descendants of immigrants) who fled Nepal in the 1950s when Nepal became a nation state. The Nepalese population of Myanmar helps to make up a Hindu minority; 79% of the Nepalese in Myanmar are Hindu. Another 16% have converted to Buddhism, the predominate religion of

Myanmar, 4% are Muslim, and less than 1% are evangelical Christian. There is at least one missions sending agency committed to working with the Nepalese of Myanmar; there are groups of churches, as well. A complete translation of Scripture is available in Nepali as well as many other evangelical resources.

#### **00000**

##### **Nga La (43,000)**

The Nga have a very large Protestant population; 19.5% practice ethnic religions and 0.5% practice a religion categorized as “other.” A translation of the New Testament is available in the Nga La dialect, as a few other evangelical resources.

#### **9494**

##### **Norra (10,000)**

The Norra people are one of Myanmar’s hill tribes. They live in Kachin state along the Tibet border. The majority of the Norra,, 70%, practice a form of animism distinct to their ethnicity; another 28% are Buddhist and 2% are Christian (1.5% evangelical). The Norra are classified as an unengaged people group. There is only one known church among this group but there is one known missions agency on site working among them. There is no Bible translation in the Norra dialect.

#### **9495**

##### **Nung (18,244)**

The Nung people are primarily ancestor worshippers. Around 2% of the Nung in Myanmar are evangelical Christians. No copy of Scripture and no known evangelical resources are available in the Nung dialect.

#### **9496**

##### **Oriya, Orisi (105,000)**

Around 25 million Oriya live in eastern India on the Bay of Bengal and other sizable groups have spread into neighboring countries over the years. Almost entirely Hebrew (94%), a smaller percent practice Islam (4%), Christianity (1%), and 1% are non-religious. There are multiple agencies committed to the Oriya and groups of churches are springing up. A complete translation of Scripture is available in the Oriya dialect, Orisi, along with many other evangelical resources.

#### **9429**

##### **Palaung, Golden (159,000)**

The different varieties of Palaung peoples live in Shan state. The Palaung are thought to be very old to Myanmar, migrating to their present location even before the Shan did in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Golden Palaung are some of the world least-reached people; they are 96% Buddhist. A smaller number, 3.8%, practice ethnic religions and less than 1% are evangelical Christian. There is at least one agency committed to working among the Golden Palaung and one known church. There is no Scripture translation available in the Golden Palaung dialect, Shwe; none has ever been started. There are no ministry tools available, either.

#### **9511**

**Palaung, Riang-Lang (46,633)**

The Riang-Lang live in far eastern Shan state, near the Chinese border. The majority of the Riang-Lang are Buddhist—90%. Another 8% practice ethnic religions and over 1% are evangelical. There is at least one agency presently working among the Riang-Lang and there is an existing group of churches. There is no Scripture translation available in Riang, the Riang-Lang dialect, but some portions have been translated.

**22053****Palaung, Rumai (218,000)**

The Rumai live in western Shan state, spreading over into Mandalay state. They are overwhelmingly Buddhist—98%. A small percentage, 1.6%, practice ethnic religions and less than 1% evangelical. There are multiple missions agencies involved with the Rumai and groups of churches exist. No Bible translation is available in the Rumai dialect.

**9520****Palaung, Silver (272,000)**

The Silver Palaung live in far eastern Mandalay state and far western Shan state. They are 99% Buddhist; 0.9% practice ethnic religions and 0.1% are Christian. There is at least one known church among the Silver Palaung and at least one agency committed to working among them. There is no Scripture translation available in their dialect but there are several evangelical resources.

**9501****Palu (4,561)**

The Palu are among the world's least-reached people; 95% practice ethnic religions. A small percentage, 4.6%, are non-religious and 0.4% are Christian (0.2% evangelical). There is no Scripture translation available in Palu and no known ministry tools have been translated or developed.

**46356****Parauk (348,000)**

The Parauk's primary religion is Buddhism. Less than 2% of the Parauk population in Myanmar is evangelicals but there has been some church planting activity among them in the last few years. Scripture is available in the Parauk dialect, as are a few ministry tools and evangelical resources.

**9503****Phun (2,153)**

The Phun live in the Upper Irrawaddy River area, near Bhamo. A large majority of the Phun, 98%, practice ethnic religions. Another 1% are Christian and 1% are non-religious. No translation of Scripture is available in Hpon, their primary language, and no ministry tools are available, either.

**9504****Punjabi (53,000)**

The world's Punjabi population is native to India and Pakistan but sizeable groups have migrated to other countries around the world. Even though they have left their country of origin, the Punjabis of Myanmar have retained much of their original culture and traditions. Punjabis are primarily Hindu (71.8%); 12% are Muslim, 15% practice religions qualified as "other," and less than 1% are evangelical Christian. They are considered an unengaged people. There is at least one agency committed to reaching the Punjabi population of Myanmar and there is one known church among them. A complete translation of Scripture is available in Punjabi, as are various other evangelical resources.

#### **9505**

##### **Purum (429)**

The Purum are a Tibetan/Himalayan people who live primarily in northwestern Sagaing state. The majority of the Purum practice ethnic religions. According to the Joshua Project, a very high percentage practice ethnic religions, less than 10% are evangelical Christian, and 3% are non-religious. However, [www.peoplesgroups.org](http://www.peoplesgroups.org) reports that less than 2% of Myanmar's Purum population are evangelical. There is no Bible translation available in their dialect.

#### **46601**

##### **Pwo, Eastern Karen (267,000)**

The Eastern Pwo are primarily located in Myanmar's southern provinces. They are 39% evangelical Christian; and the rest practice ethnic religions and 1% practice religions classified as "other." The condition of the church among Myanmar's Eastern Pwo is considered a reproducing church movement. There are only portions of Scripture translated into this Karen dialect but there are a few ministry tools available.

#### **46602**

##### **Pwo, Western Karen (800,000)**

The Western Pwo live primarily in the Irrawaddy River delta area. While a majority of the Western Pwo still practice ethnic religions (57%), a sizable percentage of the population are evangelical Christian. One percent practice religions classified as "other." A complete translation of Scripture is available in the Western Pwo dialect as well as many other evangelical resources.

#### **9506**

##### **Pyen (1,054)**

The Pyen are a Tibetan/Himalayan people who live near the Laotian border along the Kha River. They are considered one of the world's least-reached peoples. They are overwhelmingly animist; 99% practice ethnic religions. Only 1% are Christian (0.5% evangelical). They are currently unengaged and have no Bible translation or ministry tools available in their heart language.

#### **22040**

##### **Rakhine, Arakanese (2,300,000)**

The Rakhine tribe originated in the Arakan region of Burma but today live primarily along the Myanmar/Bangladesh border in the Chittagong Hills. They are ethnically Thai and it is believed that they made their way to Myanmar and Bangladesh when their ancestors were forced to leave

China. The Rakhine, who refer to themselves as “Maghi” (meaning “Burmese”), are communal farmers. The Rakhine people are among the least-reached peoples in the world. An overwhelming majority of the Rakhine people—82.5%—practice a religion that is a mixture of Buddhism and animism. Fifteen percent practice other ethnic religions, 2% are Muslim, and 0.3% are Hindu. Only 0.1% of the Rakhine people are Christians and only .04% of those Christians are evangelicals. There is one known Rakhine evangelical church. Only portions of the Bible have been translated into Arakanese.

#### **9508**

##### **Ralte (13,693)**

Most of Myanmar’s Ralte population lives in northwestern Sagaing state. They are 65% Christian (40% evangelical) and 35% practice ethnic religions. There is a functioning agency partnership between Myanmar’s Ralte believers and at least one evangelical missions agency. The church among the Ralte is reproducing. There is no Scripture translation available in the Ralte dialect.

#### **9509**

##### **Rawang (100,000)**

The Rawang population of Myanmar is concentrated in the highlands of Kachin state. Eighty percent of the Rawang claim Christianity as their religion (45% evangelical); 20% practice ethnic religions. There are multiple agencies working among the Rawang and there is a reproducing church movement.

#### **22052**

##### **Rohingya (1,000,000)**

The Rohingya are a South Asian people who live primarily in the Arakan area. They are one of the world’s least-reached people groups; 100% of the Rohingya people are Muslim. There are very few, if any, believers among the Rohingya. As of 2006 there is a Bible translation available in Chittagonian, the Rohingya dialect. There are other ministry tools available, as well.

#### **22054**

##### **Samtao (9,122)**

Ninety percent of the Samtao population of Myanmar is Buddhist, 5.4% are evangelical Christian, and the rest of the practice ethnic religions. There is at least one agency with missionaries on site and there is a group of church among the Christian Samtao population. No Scripture translation work has been done in the Samtao dialect and there are very few, if any evangelical resources available.

#### **9515**

##### **Sansu (4,561)**

Myanmar’s eastern-most state, Shan state, has the largest population of Sansu of any of Myanmar’s states. The majority of the Sansu practice ethnic religions and 3.4% are evangelical Christians. There is at least one agency committed to working among the Sansu and a group of churches has emerged among the Sansu believers. No translation of Scripture is available in the Sansu dialect and there are no ministry tools available.

**22043****Shan, Burmese (3,500,000)**

The Burmese Shan of Myanmar, as might be expected, live primarily in Shan state. “The Burmese Shan are a large group of civilized people who migrated south from China in the twelfth century and established three small states in Myanmar (Burma)...The people refer to themselves as the ‘Great Tai.’ The Shan have maintained much of this imperial mindset; they “wish to have equal importance in government and commerce” with the current government and still maintain their own army who fight against the national military regime in Myanmar, causing the resulting civil war. ([www.joshuaproject.org](http://www.joshuaproject.org)) The Shan is one of the world’s least-reached people groups; 99.1% of their people are Buddhist. The remaining small percentage, 0.9%, are Christian (0.7% evangelical). There are multiple missions agencies involved with the Shan and one known church among the Shan believers. A complete translation of Scripture is available in the Shan language, as are many other ministry tools.

**22055****Sino-Burmese (13,683)**

The Sino-Burmese live primarily in south-central areas of Myanmar. There are no known Sino-Burmese populations in any other country in the world. They are an East Asian people from the Chinese people cluster. They are 98% Buddhist, 1% Christian (0.7% evangelical), and 1% non-religious. They are among the world’s least-reached peoples. There is a functioning agency partnership between the Sino-Burmese and at least one evangelical missions agency and a group of Sino-Burmese churches has emerged, as well. A copy of Scripture is available in Burmese, along with many other evangelical resources.

**22056****Striped Meo, Blue/Hmong Njua (11,635)**

The Striped Meo live primarily in Kachin and Shan states. Eighty percent of them practice ethnic religions; the remaining 20% of the population are Christian (12% evangelical). There are multiple agencies involved with the Striped Meo and a group of churches has emerged. A complete translation of the Bible was finished in 2000. There are also many other ministry tools available in the Striped Meo dialect, Hmong Njua.

**9441****Tai Khun, Khun Shan (100,000)**

The Tai Khun are one of Myanmar’s many hill tribes; they live in Shan state. They are overwhelmingly Buddhist (97.7%); only 2.3% of the Tai Khun population is Christian (1.7% evangelical). There is at least one agency committed to working among the Tai Khun and a group of churches exists among Tai Khun believers. Portions of the Bible were translated into their dialect, Khun, in 1938 but no other translation work as been attempted.

**9525****Tai Loi (1,368)**

The Tai Loi of Myanmar live near the borders of Laos and China. According to the Joshua Project, the Tai Loi are some of the world’s least-reached people; they report that 55% of the Tai Loi are Buddhist and 45% practice ethnic religions. However, according to



[www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org) at least 2% of Myanmar's Tai Loi population is evangelical. There is no Bible translation available in the Tai Loi dialect as well as no evangelical resources.

**9420**

**Tai Nua, Chinese Shan (92,000)**

The Tai Nua of Myanmar are primarily concentrated in the eastern part of the country in Shan and Kachin states. There are also pockets of Tai Nua people in northern Myanmar. The Tai Nua are 85% Buddhist, 14.5% practice ethnic religions, and 0.5% are Christian (0.35% evangelical). There is at least one agency committed to working among the Tai Nua and one known church among Tai Nua believers. Some Bible portions were translated into Tai Nua, their primary language, decades ago but no other translation work has been attempted since then.

**9526**

**Taman (11,859)**

The Taman are one of Myanmar's hill tribes. As can be said of most of Myanmar's hill tribes, the majority of them practice ethnic religions. Another 5% are evangelical Christian and 4% are Buddhist. There is one agency currently working among the Taman in Myanmar and a group of churches has emerged among Taman believers. No known Scripture translation work has ever been attempted in the Taman dialect.

**9466**

**Tamang, Eastern/Lama (4,301)**

The evangelical population among the Eastern Tamang in Myanmar is less than 2% evangelical and there have been little or no church planting efforts among them in the last few years. Other information about this people group is unknown.

**9527**

**Tamil (123,000)**

The Tamil people, also called Ceylon, East Indian, and Sri Lankan, are a South Asian people group that are primarily Hindu. There are 3.8% evangelical Christians and the rest are considered to be non-religious. There is currently no missions agency committed to working among the Tamil in Myanmar but there is a reproducing church movement among the believers there. A complete translation of Scripture is available in Tamil, as are many other evangelical resources.

**46358**

**Tangkhul Naga (16,961)**

Information about the Tangkhul Naga is widely varied. The Joshua Project reports that 90% of the Tangkhul are believers, 50% evangelical, and 10% practice ethnic religions. The Tangkhul believers are classified as people with a mission-sending vision and the church is classified as "reproducing." Peoplegroups.org, however, reports that, as of 2001, less than 2% of the Tangkhul population is evangelical and that there have been little or no church planting efforts among them in recent years. The two organizations agree that there is a complete translation of Scripture in Naga, the primary language of the Tangkhul. There are a few other evangelical resources available, as well.

**9530**

**Taungyo (50,000)**

The Taungyo, one of Myanmar's hill tribes, live primarily in southwest Shan State. The town of Pindaya is the center of the Taungyo population in Myanmar. The Taungyo, unlike most of Myanmar's hill tribes, are overwhelmingly Buddhist (98%); most hill tribes practice animism or other forms of ethnic religions. Only 1.4% of the Taungyo practice ethnic religions and 0.6% are Christian (0.4% evangelical). There is at least one agency on site working among the Taungyo and a group of churches has emerged. There is no Scripture translation available in the Tuangyo dialect and no known evangelical resources exist.

**46605**

**Tavoyan (100,000)**

The Tavoyna people live on the northern coast of Myanmar's southern-most state, Tanintharyi. The Tavoyna people trace their ancestral homeland to the regions around Dawei City. According to [www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org), there are no known Tavoyna Christians or churches and no evangelical resources. The Joshua Project, however, reports that 0.1% of the Tavoyna population of Myanmar is Christian (0.04% evangelical). Whatever numbers are accepted, almost 100% of the Tavoyna are Buddhist. A very small percentage practice ethnic religions. There is no Scripture translation available to the Tavoyna. They are, by all considerations, completely unengaged.

**9533**

**Telugu (114,000)**

The Telugu are ethnically South Asian. It is no surprise, therefore, that their population in Myanmar are 88% Hindu. Eight percent are Christian (1.2% evangelical) and 4% are considered non-religious. There is no agency committed to working among the Telugu but there are groups of Telugu churches. Multiple evangelical resources are available in Telugu as well as a complete translation of Scripture.

**22044**

**Thai, Central (36,489)**

The Thai population of Myanmar lives primarily in Shan and Tanintharyi states. They are among the world's least-reached peoples. Buddhism is the primary religion of the Thai, both in their home country of Thailand and in Myanmar; 99.4% of the Thai living in Myanmar are Buddhist. The remaining population is less than 1% evangelical Christian. There are multiple ministry tools and resources available in Thai, as well as a complete translation of Scripture.

**46357**

**Thet (23,000)**

The Thet population of Myanmar is primarily Buddhist. It is estimated that less than 2% of the Thet are evangelicals and there has been no known church planting work among them in recent years. There are very few evangelical resources available in Kado, the Thet dialect, and no copy of the Scriptures, as well.

**9535**

**Tulung (57,000)**

The Tulung people, also called the Drung after the dialect they speak, are primarily Christian according to the Joshua Project. Peoplegroups.org is less optimistic, however, and believes only around 2% of Myanmar's Tulung population is evangelical. Whatever numbers are believed, the members of the Tulung population that are not Christian practice ethnic religions. There is a functioning agency agreement among the Tulung and an evangelical missions sending agency. There is no Scripture translation available in their dialect, Drung.

**9537**

**Vaiphei (6,842)**

It is widely acknowledged that the Vaiphei are majority Christian, at least 50% are evangelical. A complete translation of Scripture is available in the Vaiphei dialect, as are several evangelical resources and ministry tools.

**9538**

**Wa (1,000,000)**

The Wa live primarily in Shan state, along the Salween River. The majority of the population (60%) practice ethnic religions, 30% are Buddhist, and 10% are Christian (0.55% evangelical). An evangelical missions agency is committed to working among the Wa people and, in spite of the seemingly small numbers, there is a reproducing church movement among the Wa. There is a complete translation of Scripture available, only recently completed in 2006, as well as many other evangelical resources.

**9539**

**Welaung (9,122)**

The Welaung are a Tibetan/Himalayan people who overwhelmingly practice ethnic religions; 95% of the population animist. A small percentage, 4.6%, are classified as non-religious and the remaining 0.4% of the population is Christian (0.2% evangelical). They are considered "unengaged." There is no Bible translation or any evangelical resources available in their dialect.

**9540**

**Wewaw (22,806)**

The Wewaw people of Myanmar live primarily in the district of Toungoo. They are part of the Karen people group cluster so they share some ethnic traits with the various Karen tribes. The data concerning the religious affiliations of the Wewaw people is varied. Peoplegroups.org reports that the Wewaw population of Myanmar is less than 2% evangelical and have had little or no missionary activity among them in recent years. The Joshua Project, however, reports that 26% of the Wewaw are Christian, 20% evangelical, and that the majority of the Wewaw, 74%, practice ethnic religions. There is no copy of the Scriptures available in the Wewaw language, and very few, if any, ministry tools are available.

**46603**

**White Meo (10,000)**

Buddhism is the primary religion of the White Meo in Myanmar. Less than 2% of the population is evangelical and there have been no known church planting efforts among them in recent years.

**9543****Yangbye (25,000)**

The Joshua Project reports that 90% of Myanmar's Yangbye population practices Buddhism, 9.5% practice ethnic religions, and less than 1% are evangelical Christian. Peoplegroups.org agrees that there are very few Christians among the Yangbye; they report that less than 2% of Myanmar's Yangbye population is evangelical. However, there is at least one agency currently working among the Yangbye. No Scripture translation or ministry tools are available, however.

**9548****Yos (4,301)**

Peoplegroups.org reports that less than 2% of the Yos population of Myanmar is evangelical. The Joshua Project, however, reports that 15% of the Yos are Christian, 12% evangelical. The remainder of the population practices ethnic religions. No Scripture translation is available to the Yos and there are no known missionaries currently working among them.

**9407****Zaiwa (30,000)**

The majority of the Zaiwa people in Myanmar (70%) practice ethnic religions. Another 20% are Buddhist and 3% are considered non-religious. That leaves 7% of the population that are considered Christian (5% evangelical). There are missionaries from at least one agency currently working among the Zaiwa and groups of churches are emerging among Zaiwa believers. Their greatest need is a complete copy of the Scriptures; only portions have been translated into their language up to this point. There are a few key evangelical resources available in Zaiwa but more are needed.

**9551****Zome (34,961)**

The Zome, also called the Zo, Yo, and Jou, live in the Chin hills of Myanmar's Chin state. They are largely Christian (84%, 50% evangelical). The remaining 16% of the population is Buddhist, in keeping with the ancient Chinese heritage of the Zome people. A complete translation of Scripture was completed in 1992 and there are many other ministry tools available in Zo.

**00000****Zyphe (20,000)**

The Zyphe people of Myanmar are primarily Christian; 65% of their population claims Christianity as their religion and 35% are evangelicals. The remaining 35% of the population is thought to practice some form of animism. There is no Scripture translation in their language and no known ministry tools are available.

### **Missiological Implications**

This culture is very much encroached in the Buddhist culture. However, there are small minority groups that have strong evangelical backgrounds.

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray that the government problems would ease up because of the military take over that took place in the early 1990s. Many people

live in poverty and are escaping for their lives because of the government's persecution of its minority groups.

2. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray that Myanmar will regain some form of economic stability.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to develop evangelistic and church planting programs to reach Buddhists in Myanmar and should train local believers in the use of these programs
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should increase the efforts to provide Scripture, the Jesus Film, and other Christian resources in minority languages where such resources are lacking (see People Group section)
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek means of reaching to the many people in Myanmar who still follow traditional religions including ancestor veneration (see People Group section.
6. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to support and aid existing church groups in Christian discipleship
7. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to engage the un reached peoples such as the Dainet , Pyen, and Malay with the Message of Jesus.

**Pictures-** See fold labeled Myanmar Pictures.

## **Links**

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761574495\\_3/Myanmar.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761574495_3/Myanmar.html)

<http://www.myanmar.com/>

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[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=mm](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=mm)

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<http://www.world-newspapers.com/myanmar.html>

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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country\\_profiles/1300003.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1300003.stm)



