



Jon Arnold

**Location:** Just over 1,000 Cyuyo (pronounced “Chuyo”) people live in one small area near the town of Pangsau in Lahe Township. Lahe is one of three townships comprised by the special Naga Self-Administered Zone, which was created in 2008 and enshrined in the constitution of Myanmar. This remote mountainous area borders the northeast India states of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, which are on the other side of the nearby Pangsau Pass. The main village inhabited by the Cyuyo people is called Phapong, and consists of at least 50 households. In this part of Myanmar families tend to be large and the presence of extended family members means that a dozen or more people often live under one roof. The Cyuyo share the large Phapong village with members of the Cyamkok tribe, even though their dialect differences mean they struggle to communicate when using their native tongues.

**Identity:** The Cyuyo are one of 49 different Tangshang tribes in Myanmar, each speaking its own dialect and possessing a shared sense of identity and history among its members. Although this group calls itself Cyuyo, other tribes in the area know them by a variety of names in their respective vernaculars, including Vangu and Wanggu.

**Language:** A team of linguistic researchers surveyed 385 Cyuyo people in Phapong village in 2012.<sup>1</sup> They found that although Cyuyo is closely related to the Gaqkat language, it shares only a 51 percent lexical similarity with Shecyu. Shecyu is considered a premier dialect for Scripture translation that linguists hoped many other Tangshang groups would use. The low mutual intelligibility, however, means the Shecyu Bible is meaningless to the Cyuyo as they can understand only half the words used in it.<sup>2</sup>

**History:** The Cyuyo are recent arrivals in Phapong village and claim to have been living there only since the early 1980s. It is uncertain where they originally lived, as many Tangshang tribes have become mobile in recent decades, resulting in many villages now including people from several different dialect groups. Throughout their history, the Cyuyo have always been careful to retain their traditional songs and dances<sup>3</sup> and to observe their New Year festival.<sup>4</sup>

**Customs:** Traditionally, both Tangshang men and women “kept their hair long, often tying it into a bun and covering it with a piece of cloth. Tangshang men used to wear a long and narrow piece of cloth called lamsam that covered the hip and pelvis region.... On the other hand, the costume of the women had traditionally been a piece of cloth wrapped around the chest and a similar piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, extending to just below the knees. Nowadays, with the availability of yarn, their costume includes an artistically woven petticoat, which acts as the lower garment, and a linen blouse.”<sup>5</sup>

**Religion:** For centuries, the Tangshang believed in a supreme being known as Rangfrah, Rangwa, or Rangkhothak, depending on the dialect being spoken. Annual festivals are still held in April or May to ask this deity for a bumper harvest.... At funerals “a similar ceremony is undertaken and a feast between villagers is held by the bereaved family. After dusk, men and women start dancing together rhythmically with the accompanying drums and gongs.”<sup>6</sup>

**Christianity:** The Cyuyo benefitted from a tremendous move of God that brought revival to the region over the past three generations, with many tribes across the border in Nagaland almost entirely converting to Christ.<sup>7</sup> Nearly all Cyuyo people are professing Christians today, and many churches are found scattered throughout Lahe Township, including Baptist, Catholic, and Church of Christ fellowships.



**Population in Myanmar:**  
1,100 (2024)

**Location:**  
Sagaing Region

**Language Family:**  
Tibeto-Burman

**Main Religion:**  
Christianity (85.0%)

**Christians:**  
935 (85.0%)

OVERVIEW

**Population:**  
1,100 in Myanmar  
(2024 Asia Harvest)

**Other Countries:**

**Other Names:**  
Chuyo, Cyuyo Tangshang, Vangu, Wanggu, Wangoo

**Location:**  
Sagaing Region:  
Lahe Township in the Naga Self-Administered Zone

**Language:**  
Naga Tangsa, Cyuyo  
[unclassified]

**Dialects:** 0

**Scripture:**  
None

**Jesus film:**  
None

**Global Recordings:**  
None

**People ID:** 22504

