



Lahpae Nang Kai

Location: Although the population of the Gauri is extremely tenuous and difficult to estimate, most live in villages in the hills east and northeast of Bhamo in Myanmar's Kachin State. Bhamo lies just 40 miles (65 km) from the Chinese border and 116 miles (186 km) from the state capital, Myitkyina. A small number of Gauri spill across the border into the western part of Yunnan Province, China. A linguist has noted: "The speaking population in China numbers only a few dozen people, in one village within Yingjiang County."¹

Identity: Traditionally this group spelled their name Hkauri, which is how it appears in the Myanmar government's outdated list of the nation's 135 ethnic groups. Although the Gauri have long been recognized as one of five tribes related to the Kachin, those groups have been encouraged to profess unity as one people as claims of separate ethnicity are viewed as a sign of weakness, especially by the leaders of the Kachin Independence Army who wish to portray unified political and military strength. In China, the Kauri have been counted as part of that country's official

Jingpo nationality.

Language: Early Baptist missionaries working among the Gauri found that their dialect was different from other Jingpo varieties, with one reporting: "The Gauri speak a dialect so different from the other Jingpo of that district that we favored making a separate dictionary for their language."² Over the last century, however, the Gauri vernacular has been gradually subsumed into the larger Kachin Jingpo language, so today it is no longer considered distinct, but a mere dialect of Jingpo with some phonological (speech) differences.

History: According to Gauri legends and folklore, their first ancestor, Ning Gawn Wa, was also involved with creating the earth. Later, he married an alligator and "their great grandson, Wahkyet Wa, became the progenitor of the Kachin tribes. The five eldest sons of Wahkyet's first wife became the founders of the five major clans, including the Gauri."³ The Gauri claim to have migrated from a place far to the north known as Majoi Shingra Bum ("Naturally Flat

Mountain"). Some researchers have suggested they once lived on the Tibetan Plateau in today's China. In 2017, a Gauri chief gave an interview in which he shared some of the oral traditions that are passed down through generations of his people.⁴

Customs: Although most of the branches of the Kachin Jingpo group traditionally employed the "slash and burn" agriculture technique, one source said: "There are a few areas where the hillsides have been terraced and the paddy is grown in irrigated fields, thus eliminating the necessity of shifting every year or two. These areas lie on or near the ancient Burma-China trade routes (including the Gauri Hills), where Chinese influence has been the strongest, and military and toll-collection considerations have been important."⁵

Religion: For centuries the Gauri practiced Animism, placating a hierarchy of spirits while shamans led religious rituals and acted as mediators between the community and the spirit world. The religious landscape began to change in 1876 when the Baptists commenced work in the Gauri area. The first Christian to have the honor of preaching Christ to the Gauri was Josiah Cushing's Karen co-worker, Bogalay, who accompanied the missionary on an eight-day journey through the Gauri Hills and was left behind to evangelize the people.

Christianity: Cushing was encouraged by their initial trip and the discourse he enjoyed with the Gauri chief. He reported: "The prominent people of the villages expressed a strong desire for books, and that their children should learn to read."⁶ Today the majority of Gauri people are Christians, with most belonging to Baptist or Catholic churches. The Jingpo Bible is used by Gauri believers, and there is no longer a need for the Scriptures in their own dialect. The Jesus film and other Gospel resources are also available in Jingpo.



Population
in Myanmar:
4,000 (2025)

Location:
Kachin State

Language Family:
Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion:
Christianity (65.0%)

Christians:
2,400 (65.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population:
4,000 in Myanmar (2025)

Other Countries:
100 in China

Other Names:
Gaori, Gauri Lahpae, Guar, Hkauri, Kao-jih, Kauri, Kauzhika, Khauri

Location:
Kachin State: Bhamo District

Language:
Jingpo [kac]

Dialects:

Scripture:
Jingpo Bible 1927
New Testament 1912
Portions 1895

Jesus film:
Jingpo

Global Recordings:
Jingpo #175

People ID: 18490

