



Jon Arnold

**Location:** With a modest population of 800 people, the Haqman inhabit villages near Pangsau in Lahe Township, within northwest Myanmar's Sagaing Region. While they are scattered across a number of communities, two villages known to contain Haqman families include the village bearing their name (30 households) and Khamkeik village (10 households). Others dwell in mixed villages with people from other Tangshang tribes and dialect groups. Travel between villages in the Pangsau area tends to require a three-to-four-hour hike on mountain paths, with very few or no roads suitable for vehicles.

**Identity:** The Haqman have truly remained a “hidden” people group until now, having never appeared on any lists of the world’s peoples. Estimating populations of Tangshang tribes in Myanmar is problematic due to the dispersion and transient nature of communities there. A researcher explained: “Migration to the current villages has been fairly recent for most of the subjects....”

It seems there have been waves of immigration. Thus, Pangsau Sub-township represents a situation in transition. Further research over time will be needed to see how things continue to develop.”<sup>1</sup>

**Language:** After interviewing many Haqman people in 2012, a linguistic survey team concluded that Haqman is most similar to two other Tangshang varieties: Haqcym and Yangno. It was distant from and mutually unintelligible with most other Tangshang languages, however, and shares only a 56 percent lexical similarity with Shecyu, which is considered a premier dialect for Scripture translation among the Tangshang. A Shecyu Bible will not help the Haqman, however, as they will be unable to understand about half the words used in it. Most Haqman people under the age of 50 can speak Burmese, which they often use to communicate with people from other Tangshang tribes.

**History:** Lahe and neighboring Nanyun Township appear to be the original homeland of the

Tangshang in Myanmar, with “many of the village names in this region also being the names of sub-tribes today. Oral stories among the Tangshang in India (where they are known as Tangsa) agree that they all originally came from Myanmar. Reasons for the migration include flight from feuding, as well as to seek more land.”<sup>2</sup> Today, almost the entire population of Pangsau consists of Tangshang people from various tribes, apart from a handful of government workers.

**Customs:** Although most border areas of Myanmar are currently hot points of military conflict, the Pangsau Pass area is relatively calm. Over the years, many Tangshang people attended the weekly market on the Indian side of the border, as it was easy for people to cross over and return. Many of the people crossing from Myanmar seek to conduct business or attend school in India.

**Religion:** Prior to their conversion to Christianity in the past 50 or 60 years, almost all Tangshang people were animists who “believed that certain spirits controlled different natural phenomena and events that affected their daily lives. Nothing happened, good or bad, without the intervention of these spirits. It was implicitly believed that most spirits had their homes in natural features such as rocks, hills, and streams. This concept expanded to weapons such as guns, and even bullets.”<sup>3</sup>

**Christianity:** Today, the large majority of Tangshang people in the Pangsau area are Christians, with only a few families clinging to the religion of their ancestors. The Haqman and all other Tangshang tribes in this ethnically diverse part of Asia, however, are another Bible-less people group without any Scripture or other Christian resources produced in their language. To compensate, the Tangshang have sent some of their brightest young men to other parts of Myanmar and Asia to receive a theological education, with a view to returning home and becoming leaders of the Body of Christ among their tribe.



**Population in Myanmar:**  
800 (2024)

**Location:**  
Sagaing Region

**Language Family:**  
Tibeto-Burman

**Main Religion:**  
Christianity (90.0%)

**Christians:**  
720 (90.0%)

OVERVIEW

**Population:**  
800 in Myanmar  
(2024 Asia Harvest)

**Other Countries:**

**Other Names:**  
Gaman, Haman,  
Haqman Tangshang

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

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

**Dialects:** 0

**Scripture:**  
None

**Jesus film:**  
None

**Global Recordings:**  
None

**People ID:** 22518

