



Salai Kyawswar

**Location:** Eighteen thousand Hualngo people inhabit 36 villages in western Myanmar's Chin State in a long strip of land that runs hard up against the border with the Indian state of Mizoram. Their communities, which extend from Bapi village in the north to Lotharawn in the south, are located within Rihkhawdar Township in Falam District. Hualngo territory is bordered by five other Chin tribes: Zo, Tedim, Saizang, Teizang, and Zahau. Other language groups inhabit areas a little further away, while a small number of Hualngo people also live on the Indian side of the border, which is the traditional homeland of the tribe. In 1912 there were six Hualngo villages consisting of 200 houses in the Indian state of Mizoram.<sup>1</sup>

**Identity:** The Hualngo have been viewed as a distinct group in Myanmar for over a century, with the 1931 census returning 4,684 "Whelgo" people. Since that time, however, most scholars have included the Hualngo with

the Falam people, while others simply consider them Mizo people who live on the Myanmar side of the border. The physical appearance of Hualngo people is often different from other Chin in the area, with missionary Chester Strait commenting: "In certain localities or villages men will have rather heavy beards, and, often, wavy hair, resembling Indians rather than Chins. Probably this is a sign of mixture of the races, since among the same group one will see many typical Chin men with thin moustaches and no hair on the torso. Among the Hualngo in Falam, one meets with this variation frequently."<sup>2</sup>

**Language:** Linguists have recently determined that Hualngo in Myanmar is a distinct language. Previously it was only considered a dialect and variation of Mizo, which is part of the Tibeto-Burman language family.

**History:** According to one source, the Hualngo migrated to the Chin Hills from today's Shan State as early as the 1400s or early

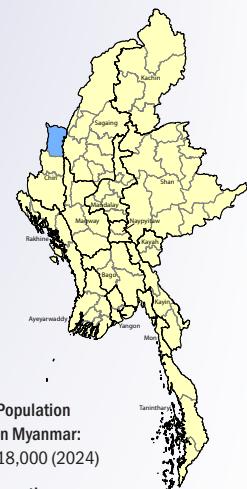
1500s.<sup>3</sup> Other historians, however, say the Hualngo originated east of the Manipur River in today's northeast India, where they were closely related to another tribe, the Hualhang. These two groups are said to have "sprung from two brothers, children of a Lushai (Mizo) woman by a Poi or Chin, and to have originated from a hole in the ground. The Hualngo and Hualhang formerly lived together in villages under Hualngo chiefs."<sup>4</sup> After suffering a military defeat, the Hualngo were "driven across the river into today's Myanmar and took refuge under the protection of the Falam chiefs, where their descendants still live."<sup>5</sup>

**Customs:** The Hualngo inhabit the area where the only two land border crossings between Chin State and India are situated.

The towns of Rihkhawdar and Khawmawi are located on the Myanmar side the border, and the crossings consist of two bridges (one for pedestrians and one vehicular) across the Harhva River. The Hualngo enjoyed the commercial benefits of cross-border trade until the outbreak of the 2021 civil war, which shut the border and brought an abrupt end to the movement of people and goods.

**Religion:** After appeasing a hierarchy of spirits for centuries, life among the Hualngo was dramatically transformed with the arrival of Christianity in the early 20th century. By the 1931 census, 270 Hualngo people had become Christians, representing 5.8 percent of the population at the time, while the rest remained animists.

**Christianity:** Today, practically all Hualngo people are professing Christians on both sides of the border. It is believed that most Hualngo use the Mizo Scriptures. The first portions were translated into Mizo in 1898, but believers had to wait over six decades before the full Bible was finally completed and published in 1959. Others in Myanmar might choose to read the Falam Chin Bible, which was completed in 1991.



Population  
in Myanmar:  
18,000 (2024)

Location:  
Chin State

Language Family:  
Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion:  
Christianity (98.0%)

Christians:  
17,640 (98.0%)

## OVERVIEW

Population:  
18,000 in Myanmar  
(2024 Asia Harvest)  
4,684 (1931 census)

Other Countries:  
200 in India

Other Names:  
Mizo Hualngo, Whelgo

Location:  
Chin State: Rihkhawdar Township  
in Falam District

Language:  
Chin, Mizo [lus]

Dialects: 0

Scripture:  
Bible 1959  
New Testament 1916  
Portions 1898

Jesus film:  
Mizo

Global Recordings:  
Mizo #6170

People ID: 22524

