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Location: More than one million Kachin Jingpo people inhabit a wide area of northern Myanmar, with hundreds of villages spread across Kachin and Shan states. Others dwell in Yangon, Mandalay, and other urban centers. An estimated 34,000 Jingpo people live across the border in China's Yunnan Province, while 9,500 live in the northeast Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, where they are known as the Singpho. The Singpho migrated from northern Myanmar in 1793 "after a reign of terror was let loose by the Ahom king."¹

Identity: The term "Kachin" refers to a collection of cultural groups rather than an ethno-linguistic classification, and most of the Kachin in Myanmar are part of the Jingpo group. When the American missionary Eugenio Kincaid passed through their area in the 1830s, he asked a group of people who they were. They replied that they were villagers from Gahkyeng. He wrote "Kakhyen" in his notes, and Western writers used that name to describe the group until 1899, before the spelling subsequently morphed into Kachin.

Language: A scholar noted in the

1970s that "it is inaccurate to speak of the 'Kachin language.' Many people either know nothing of Jingpo or are quite ill at ease when endeavoring to communicate in it."² The Jingpo vernacular is used in local newspapers and on radio and television, and the publication of the Jingpo Bible in 1927 established it as the premier Kachin dialect. For centuries, the Jingpo believed that God once gave all races of men a copy of His Word, but the Jingpo lost it on the journey home.³ In India, the Singpho language has changed markedly from its original Tibeto-Burman form due to their close interaction with the Tai-speaking Khamti people.⁴ It now shares only a 50% lexical similarity with the Jingpo spoken in Myanmar.⁵

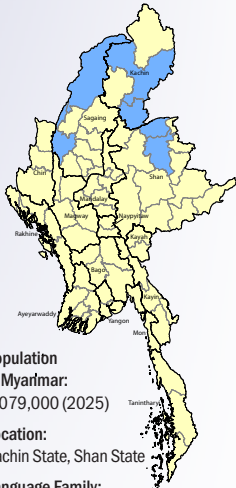
History: The Jingpo are known to have been living along the Yunnan-Myanmar border at the start of the 16th century.⁶ For countless generations, they handed down an account of a global flood in which two orphans survived by floating in a large, oval-shaped drum.⁷ The Kachin Independence Army was formed in the early 1960s, and has grown to become probably the country's

most powerful military force in the protracted civil war against the Burmese junta. Many Kachin soldiers are committed Christians.

Customs: Before their mass conversion to Christianity, Kachin Jingpo society was bound by darkness, with a visitor in the 1890s writing: "Robbery and murder would seem to be among their principal occupations. They are an independent, lawless, and wicked people, who practise rudely some of the arts of civilization."⁸ The Kachin Jingpo's openness to the claims of Christ was helped by their ancient belief in a supreme being who is both the creator and judge of all mankind.

Religion: An estimated two-thirds of Kachin Jingpo people in Myanmar today are Christians. The first seven converts were baptized in 1881, and over the ensuing decades, "The inhabitants of these fertile and well-watered hills became Christians in a series of great people movements. Churches of 50,000, 100,000, and a quarter of a million have arisen, and the Bible is honored as God's Word."⁹ Across the border in India, however, almost all Singpho people remain Buddhists, as they arrived in India about a century before the Gospel was first introduced to their cousins in Myanmar.

Christianity: The 1931 census of Burma found that of 153,345 Kachin people at the time, 15,532 (10.1%) were Christians and the rest were animists and Buddhists. Just a decade later, however, the number of Jingpo believers had tripled to 47,526.¹⁰ The headhunting Naga and Tangshang tribes in the Sagaing Region were first penetrated by courageous Jingpo evangelists in 1954, and today those groups are mostly Christian. The Swedish-American missionary Ola Hanson spent 36 years translating the Jingpo Bible. It was published in 1927, and the centennial celebrations will soon take place, when hundreds of thousands of believers will give glory to God for how His Word transformed this blessed group.



Population in Myanmar: 1,079,000 (2025)
Location: Kachin State, Shan State
Language Family: Tibeto-Burman
Main Religion: Christianity (64.0%)
Christians: 690,500 (64.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population: 1,079,000 in Myanmar (2025 Joshua Project) 900,000 (2021 Operation World) 465,484 (1983 census) 153,345 (1931 census)
Other Countries: 34,000 in China 9,500 in India 500 in Thailand 200 in Taiwan
Other Names: Aphu, Chingpaw, Chingpo, Jingpaw, Jingphaw, Keqin, Marip, Nhkum, Phu, Singfo, Singpho, Singpho, Singpo, Theinpaw
Location: Kachin State: Bhamo, Chipwi, Myitkyina, and Tanai districts; Shan State: Lashio & Muse districts
Language: Jingpho [kac]
Dialects: 6
Scripture: Bible 1927 New Testament 1912 Portions 1895
Jesus film: Jingpho
Global Recordings: Jingpho #175
People ID: 12401

