



Khualsim Miphun

Location: With a population approaching 10,000 people, the Khualsim tribe inhabits 16 villages in eastern Chin State. Their territory straddles both Falam and Hakha townships, with villages southeast of Falam and northeast of Hakha, near the juncture where Chin State touches the Sagaing and Magway regions. Other Chin tribes that border the Khualsim territory include the Zanniat to the north, the Lente and Laizo to the west, and the large Lai Chin group to the south.

Identity: The battle for the Khualsim to be recognized as a distinct people group has gone on for generations, with most sources, including Christian ministries, simply viewing them as a dialect group of Falam Chin. The British colonial government, however, acknowledged them as a unique tribe, with the 1931 census returning 2,809 “Kwelshim” people,

96 percent of whom were animists.

Language: Khualsim has been considered a dialect of Falam Chin, with a 1983 study finding that 7,000 people spoke Khualsim at the time.¹ Recent linguistic studies, however, have separated it as a distinct variety. The people themselves showed their desire to be viewed as a distinct people and language by insisting the Bible be translated into Khualsim, rather than continuing to use the Falam Chin Bible as they had done for decades. The Khualsim New Testament was published in 2013, even though many scholars continue to hold the view that Khualsim is so closely related to Falam that a different translation is not needed. However, this view fails to consider the people’s own sense of group identity, including their culture and shared history.

History: Warfare and struggle have

played prominent roles throughout Khualsim history. In 1860, they joined forces with the neighboring Zanniat tribe and attempted to seize the town of Tlasun. After killing more than 80 men, the fighters of Tlasun crossed the river “and utterly laid waste the Zanniat-Khualsim tract. Only those who fled to Burmese areas evaded the death penalty.... The result of the rebellion proved disastrous. They became for all purposes the slaves of the Tlasun and were forced to carry salt and rice from Burma.”²

Customs: In the past, before their conversion to Christianity, three main social classes existed among Chin people in this part of Myanmar: “The chief or ruling class, the middle or free commoners, and the slaves. All those of pure blood came within the chief or ruling class.... The children of a common woman would be commoners, and those from a slave woman would be slaves. A man could have as many wives as he could afford to purchase.”³

Religion: Animism had a vice-like grip on the Khualsim for centuries, with one source saying: “People fear spirits or devils who are under the rule of the king of spirits. The spirits live on the earth, below the earth. in the sky, in springs, trees, caves, mountains, streams, houses, and even in human bodies.”⁴ The Gospel first reached the Khualsim area in the early 20th century, and people embraced Jesus when they saw He offered them freedom from being enslaved to the spirit world. Although in 1931 just 117 Khualsim people (4.2 percent of the population at the time) stated they were Christians, the seed of the Gospel took root and flourished in later decades.

Christianity: Today more than nine out of every ten Khualsim families are followers of Christ, with Baptist churches dominating the region. The mission organization Global Recordings was one of the first to meet the needs of the Khualsim people by producing Gospel audio recordings in their language, which served as a precursor for the Khualsim New Testament that was published in 2013.



Population in Myanmar: 9,800 (2024)

Location: Chin State

Language Family: Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion: Christianity (94.0%)

Christians: 9,200 (94.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population: 9,800 in Myanmar (2024 Asia Harvest) 2,809 (1931 census)

Other Countries:

Other Names: Khualshim, Khualsim Chin, Kwelshim

Location: Chin State: Falam Township in Falam District; Hakha Township in Hakha District

Language: Chin Falam, Khualsim [cfm]

Dialects: 1

Scripture: New Testament 2013

Jesus film: None

Global Recordings: Chin Falam, Khualsim #5146

People ID: 22529

