



Biplobchit

Location: Approximately 67,000 Khumi people live in Chin State near the juncture where Myanmar, India, and Bangladesh meet. Most live near the Kaladan River in Paletwa Township, while a few villages are found in Kyauktaw Township in Rakhine State. An additional 4,000 Khumi people live in southern Bangladesh, and a small, unspecified number also dwell across the nearby border in the Indian state of Mizoram. The population of the Khumi has more than doubled in Myanmar since the 1931 census, when they numbered 30,924 people.

Identity: The Khumi and Eastern Khumi tribes have been profiled separately in this book because of linguistic, cultural and historical differences. Khumi oral history says, “They were ruled in olden days by a hill king. People moving into the hill king’s jurisdiction were called Mi. They were also called Khumi, meaning ‘village people.’ The Khumi came from an area called Tui Ben.”¹

Language: The Khumi language,

which contains 12 dialects, is related to Eastern Khumi and Mro-Khimi, but over the centuries each group’s geographic isolation has caused their languages to drift apart. Although little variation exists among the dialects of Khumi, the language shares only 76% lexical similarity with some Eastern Khumi varieties and 78% with Mro-Khimi.² Most Khumi people can also speak Rakhine, especially those living in southern areas in or near Rakhine State.

History: According to Khumi legends, their ancestors were part of a large group known as the Masho that migrated from the east along with the forefathers of other southern Chin tribes today like the Anu, Khongso, Asho Chin, and Mro-Khimi. They are thought to have been among the first people to settle in today’s Chin State. Their migration route “passed through the big mountain ranges and moved west, leaving children and women to come behind. The advance party cut down plantain trees to mark their trail, but when the slower group

arrived...they assumed the advance group had already gone far beyond, so they decided to camp and plant rice. Thus the two groups lost each other.”³

Customs: Most Khumi live in small villages nestled in hilly terrain. They harvest rice once a year, so to supplement their income, many Khumi farmers have planted perennial crops to give themselves a year-round income. Many now have fruit trees and grow potatoes and cassava, while “elephant foot” yam has emerged as the most important cash crop in recent years. This diversification was expedited by a terrible famine in 2007, when a plague of rats destroyed all the paddy fields and ate the seeds. The famine was so severe that many Khumi families fled to Bangladesh and India.

Religion: The 1931 census of Burma listed 30,924 Khumi Chin people, of whom 944 were Buddhists and the rest animists, with not a single Christian among them. The Gospel slowly gathered momentum and a torrent of Khumi were swept into the Kingdom of God so that today more than 50,000 (around 80 percent) of Khumi people are followers of Jesus Christ.

Christianity: There were no Christians among the Khumi until the 1930s, after British missionaries from the Biblical Christian Missionary Society first visited Paletwa in 1924. At first their message was met with hostility and resistance, but people’s hearts gradually softened and a strong and vibrant Khumi church emerged. Although the first books of the Bible were translated into Khumi in 1935, 24 years passed until the New Testament was completed in 1959. Due to the upheavals that beset Myanmar and the removal of all foreign missionaries in the 1960s, work on the Old Testament was excruciatingly slow. Finally, almost 80 years after the first Scripture was translated, the whole Khumi Bible was printed in 2014, resulting in great joy and celebration among the churches. The Jesus film and other resources are also available in the Khumi language.



Population in Myanmar: 67,000 (2024)

Location: Chin State, Rakhine State

Language Family: Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion: Christianity (80.0%)

Christians: 53,600 (80.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population: 67,000 in Myanmar (2024 Joshua Project) 30,924 (1931 census)

Other Countries: 4,000 in Bangladesh Also in India

Other Names: Kaladan Khumi, Kami, Khaki, Khami, Khimi, Khumi Chin, Khuni, Khweymi, Kumi, Pi Chaung, Yangpan

Location: Chin State: Paletwa Township in Patetwa District; Rakhine State: Kyauktaw Township in Mrauk-U District

Language: Chin, Khumi [cnk]

Dialects: 12

Scripture: Bible 2014 New Testament 1959 Portions 1935

Jesus film: Chin, Khumi

Global Recordings: Chin, Khumi #5092

People ID: 12670

