



Location: Six thousand Likhy people are distributed throughout 12 villages within western Myanmar's Chin State, ranging from Auk Sain in the north to Par Maung in the south. These communities are located within the Sami area of Paletwa Township. Sami, which is officially labeled a "sub-township" in Myanmar, is home to several different tribes. The mountainous and thickly forested Likhy territory borders many other tribes on every side, with the Maru and Khongso to the north, Lemi Chin and Khawngtu to the east, Matu and Kanise to the south, and Khumi and Asang Khongso to the west.

Identity: The Likhy have never appeared on any secular or Christian lists of the world's people groups until now. Although they feel a sense of pride and dignity because of their group identity, shared history, and culture, outsiders have generally refused to acknowledge their existence but have lumped them together with a collection of other tribes under the

banner of "Eastern Khumi Chin."

Language: Despite being identified as Eastern Khumi by many linguists, the Likhy language is more closely related to Mro-Khimi, which is spoken by about 200,000 people further south where Chin State borders Rakhine State. Likhy shares an 86 percent lexical similarity with Mro-Khimi Chin.¹ Further research will probably find that Likhy deserves to be classified as a distinct language.

History: Being hidden away in the rugged mountains of Chin State, the Likhy people led relatively peaceful lives until the Burmese, followed by the British, invaded their territory and forced them to take up arms. The diary of Baptist missionary E. H. East recorded this encounter with a Chin chief in January 1905: "The old chief took me out of the village and up into a high mountain. As we stood there, he stretched out his right hand and pointed to the country below. 'Here, we sat and planned our raids upon the Burmese villages before the white men came and took our

lands away.... Early in the morning, while the Burmese were still sleepy, we surrounded the village and gave our war cry. We killed all men, made prisoners of the women and children, and brought them home with us as slaves. After these wars we had many feasts."² Conflict with the Burmese has never really ceased. The Paletwa area fell to the Arakan Army in January 2024 in a decisive blow to the Burmese junta during the civil war.³

Customs: One way that Likhy people identify themselves is by their traditional dress, which differs from that worn by other tribes in the area. Women like to wear many necklaces and large earrings and a pink-colored shawl over their dresses. Tribal clothing holds greater importance than most outsiders realize, as it gives a cohesive identity to a community, even if their most beautiful traditional garments and accessories are only worn during festivals and other important occasions.

Religion: Apart from a smattering of animists and Buddhists, the strong majority of Likhy people today are Christians. They are one of dozens of tribes in Myanmar and adjacent parts of northeast India that turned to Christ during the 20th century. The message of the Bible made sense to them and fit into their worldview of creation, the fall of man, morality, and heaven and hell. Often, an entire community converted after a chief or respected elder decided to trust in Jesus. Buddhism held no such attractions to most Chin tribes, especially as it was the religion of the Burmese who had fought and oppressed them for centuries.

Christianity: Although more than 5,000 Likhy people are professing Christians today, no Scripture or other Christian resources are known to have been produced in their language. The Likhy believers appear to use the Eastern Khumi Bible, which was published in 2017, even though the Likhy vernacular has been described as very different from the various Eastern Khumi varieties.



Population
in Myanmar:
6,000 (2024)

Location:
Chin State

Language Family:
Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion:
Christianity (85.0%)

Christians:
5,100 (85.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population:
6,000 in Myanmar
(2024 Asia Harvest)

Other Countries:

Other Names:
Likhaeng, Likhak, Likhy Chin

Location:
Chin State: Paletwa Township
in Paletwa District

Language:
Chin, Likhy [unclassified]

Dialects: 0

Scripture:
None

Jesus film:
None

Global Recordings:
None

People ID: 22540

