

# LONGPHURI NAGA

# လောင်ဖူးရီ နာဂ



Timothy Allen

**Location:** The 2,200 members of the Longphuri Naga tribe inhabit six villages in Leshi Township in western Myanmar's Naga Self-Administered Zone. An unspecified number of Longphuri people live across the border in the Indian state of Nagaland, where their name is spelled "Longpfuru." It is thought their population there is at least as large as the 2,200 found in Myanmar and possibly much higher.

**Identity:** In Myanmar the Longphuri are considered closely related to the Makury Naga tribe.<sup>1</sup> In 2003, when dozens of small tribes joined forces to create the Tangshang ethnicity, the Longphuri leaders refused to join the collective as they desired to be seen as Nagas. The Bomrr clan living near Mt. Saramati on the Indian side of the border have been criticized by environmentalists for their annual bat cull, which they claim to have been doing for 400 years and is an essential part of their culture.<sup>2</sup>

**Language:** While the Longphuri Naga acknowledge historical and cultural connections to other Naga tribes, they speak their own language and are proud of their distinct identity. Linguistic studies have shown that Longphuri is not closely related to other Naga varieties at all. It shares only 30% lexical similarity with Makury Naga and 23% with Para (also known as Jejara) Naga.<sup>3</sup> This means that

less than one-third of the words in these languages come from the same root, making communication impossible unless a third language is used. Most elderly Longphuri people can speak Makury Naga, while many youths speak Burmese, although only one in four is able to read the Burmese script.

**History:** The Longphuri Naga say they originated in Nagaland. One source says the Yobami clan migrated to Myanmar after a man named Yobamo went in search of his lost mithun (a large ox). After walking for many days, "he arrived at a new place with salty water coming out from a rock."<sup>4</sup> Others say "the Longphuri were once more numerous and powerful in Myanmar and may have occupied large villages along the Nantaleik River. At the end of the 19th century, these villages were decimated by the Thado and the inhabitants dispersed."<sup>5</sup>

**Customs:** When a Longphuri man desires to marry a girl, he must first give shawls to the girl's family and see if they are accepted. If they are, the bride price consists of a pig, "which must be split, with five ribs and the right leg being presented to the girl's parents and the rest of the pig set aside for the common feast.... Divorce is frowned upon in Longphuri society, and the couple must seek to reconcile amicably three times."<sup>6</sup> Although the

Longphuri love to come together for festivals where they sing, dance, and play traditional games,<sup>7</sup> gatherings with other Naga tribes are often tense because of past conflicts and headhunting.<sup>8</sup>

**Religion:** Although most Longphuri Naga have converted from Animism to Christianity in the last few generations, tribes in this region often follow the commands of their leaders, and religious adherence can quickly change if people have not repented of their sins and been thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Gospel. In Leshi Township, "People convert from Christianity to Buddhism (and vice versa), as well as between denominations. For example, 100 villagers from Kung Kai Lung changed their faith from Baptist to Catholic following the idea of the tribe's leader.<sup>9</sup>

**Christianity:** Although an extraordinary 99.3% of the 68,000 related Yimchungra people in India declared they were Christians at the time of the 2011 census, the Gospel has not made the same impact among the Longphuri Nagas in Myanmar, and the mighty revival that swept through Nagaland for a generation did not impact areas in Myanmar as powerfully. Still, today an estimated 70 percent of Longphuri Naga people are professing Christians, with Buddhists and animists making up the other third.



Population  
in Myanmar:  
2,200 (2025)

Location:  
Sagaing Region

Language Family:  
Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion:  
Christianity (70.0%)

Christians:  
1,540 (70.0%)

## OVERVIEW

Population:  
2,200 in Myanmar  
(2025 Joshua Project)  
1,800 speakers (2024 SIL)

Other Countries:  
2,200 in India

Other Names:  
Amimi Naga, Bomrr, Laungba, Longpfuri,  
Longpfuru, Longphur Naga, Mimi

Location:  
Sagaing Region: Leshi Township in the  
Naga Self-Administered Zone

Language:  
Naga, Long Phuri [lpn]

Dialects: 1

Scripture:  
None

Jesus film:  
None

Global Recordings:  
Naga, Long Phuri #20418

People ID: 18963

