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Location: The previously unknown Raraq tribe consists of 300 people in the extreme western part of Myanmar against the border with the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. A 2013 survey found that 140 Raraq people live in 20 households of Taka village in Nanyun Township, which lies within the Naga Self-Administered Zone.¹ Other Raraq families reside in scattered villages alongside people from the other Tangshang-related tribes. The mix of people groups is astounding, with a linguist noting: "Of the 29 Tangshang villages in this area, only three have just one or two tribes. The villages have on average nearly seven tribes, and one village has 14 tribes."²

Identity: Although some people think that documenting tribes with just a few hundred people is a waste of time, one of the greatest privileges afforded to a person is to bring the knowledge of a people group, regardless of its size, into the public consciousness for the first time. The Raraq are one such unique group, created to reflect the attributes of God, who have never appeared in any lists of the ethnic

groups of Myanmar. Although the Raraq are culturally part of the broader Tangshang collective of tribes, they have their own name, identity, history, and dialect.

Language: Scholars believe the Raraq dialect fits into a language group that includes the three related varieties of Drancyi, Gaqha, and Gaqlun. These tribes have been profiled separately in *Operation Myanmar*. Together they form part of the Sal branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. The Sal vernaculars have been found to relate to the Jingpo language, spoken further north and east in Kachin State.

History: For centuries the Raraq and other tribes in this remote part of Asia practiced head hunting, but some groups in the Nanyun area took it a step further and indulged in an even darker demonically inspired act. Ethnographer J. D. Saul explained: "Human sacrifice was carried out for both individual and communal reasons. For example, a house that had been polluted by a woman dying in childbirth could only be cleansed by a human sacrifice to the spirit

of the house.... The victims were usually slaves or prisoners-of-war but could be drawn from the ranks of deformed or mentally impaired individuals, criminals, or those who had become enslaved by not being able to pay their debts.... Depending on age and condition, the victim would be placed in stocks to prevent movement. Child victims would, however, be allowed to play with other village children.... In some villages the victim was beaten between each house so that their cries would appease the spirits.... Following the sacrifice, the corpse was divided up. The head was given to the principal subscribers and the legs and arms to others. Sometimes the fingers would be cut off and sold to villages who could not afford a sacrifice of their own."³

Customs: The structure of Tangshang communities, including the Raraq, has always been a key component in their identity. Traditionally, "they believed in a joint family system, and property was equally divided between all family members. A tribal council, known by various names according to the dialect spoken, was administered by a chief who oversaw the daily affairs of the group."⁴

Religion: After knowing only violence and slavery to demons since time immemorial, the spiritual climate among the Raraq was dramatically transformed when news of Jesus Christ first reached the area in the 1950s, courtesy of Kachin evangelists who risked their lives to bring the Gospel to the head hunting area.

Christianity: After initially encountering strong resistance from the centuries of spiritual darkness that had enslaved the Raraq people, the light of Christ burst through, and today they say all members of their tribe are Christians belonging to Baptist churches. Lacking any Scripture or other Christian resources in their own or a closely related language, most Raraq believers who are literate have been forced to use Burmese Bibles.



Population
in Myanmar:
300 (2025)

Location:
Sagaing Region

Language Family:
Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion:
Christianity (100.0%)

Christians:
300 (100.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population:
300 in Myanmar
(2025 Asia Harvest)

Other Countries:
Other Names:
Rara, Raraq Tangshang

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

Language:
Naga Tangsa, Raraq [unclassified]

Dialects:
Scripture:
None

Jesus film:
None

Global Recordings:
None

People ID: 22553

