



Being Chikkin

Location: More than 12,000 Taisun (also called Tashon) people inhabit Falam Township and six villages surrounding the town in western Myanmar's Chin State. Taisun territory is bordered by five other tribes: the Tapong, Zanniat, Lente, Sim and Laizo. More than 42,000 Falam Chin people live in northeast India, where they are recognized as a Scheduled Tribe under the name "Halam." Most of them are related to the Taisun of Myanmar and speak the same or a similar dialect. In the past 50 years, many Taisun people have been accepted as refugees by other countries and are found today in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and elsewhere.

Identity: For over a century the Taisun have been classified as a distinct tribe in Myanmar, returning a population of 3,628 people in the 1931 census. The Taisun and Zahau tribes claim to share the same origins, but over time

they diverged and fought each other for generations. The Taisun were cautious toward outsiders, not trusting anyone. When the British tried to understand Taisun history, they reported: "They put every obstacle in our way, even to the extent of threatening heavy penalties to anyone who should disclose their past history...lest it is understood how downtrodden and bullied they are."¹

Language: Linguists previously considered Taisun one of nine dialects of the Falam Chin language, but subsequent research has shown most of those varieties to be distinct languages with low mutual intelligibility. As each of the nine former dialect groups also possesses their own customs and history, each has been profiled separately in *Operation Myanmar*.²

History: Taisun history is filled with war and conflict.³ In 1700, the Taisun suffered heavy loss of life when they attacked a Zahau village, and in 1805, a

war between the Taisun and Siyin tribes destroyed the town of Lopei, and the Taisun annihilated large numbers of Zanniat people in a separate battle.⁴ Inter-tribal conflicts were often sparked by minor grievances and disputes, including one incident when the grandfather of a Taisun chief agreed to exchange a gun for two slaves. Only one slave was delivered, however, and in retaliation the insulted Taisun marched on a Siyin village in the dead of night and massacred its inhabitants.⁵ The fierceness of the Taisun caused much grief to the British when they took over Chin State in the 1890s, leading one British officer to lament: "It seemed a pity that we had not attacked and utterly destroyed that army.... The Chins would have learned at the outset how small the power of the Taisun tribe was and how easily it was broken, and how that resistance was futile."⁶

Customs: The Taisun were one of a few Chin tribes that traditionally allowed chiefs to have more than one wife. The remains of Taisun people were buried in family vaults in the corner of the courtyard. The vault was only opened to insert the remains of new family members.⁷

Religion: After practicing Animism for centuries, Christianity arrived in Falam in the early 20th century. By 1931, a total of 521 Taisun people had declared they were Christians, representing 14 percent of the population at the time. Today almost all Taisun people in Myanmar are Christians, with a small number of animists remaining in the villages and a few converts to Buddhism living in the township.

Christianity: Missionaries created a script and published the Falam Chin New Testament in 1951, although military coups and societal upheaval in Myanmar meant the full Bible was not completed for 40 more years. Today, the Taisun and other Falam groups have a strong and thriving faith in Christ, with many churches among their communities in the United States and other countries where they have settled.⁸

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OVERVIEW

Population:
12,100 in Myanmar
(2025 Asia Harvest)

Other Countries:
42,000 in India
Also in USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia

Other Names:
Shunkla, Sunkhla, Taishon, Taishun, Tashom, Tashon, Taisun

Location:
Chin State: Falam Township in Falam District

Language:
Chin Falam, Taisun [cfm]

Dialects:

Scripture:
Falam Chin Bible 1991
New Testament 1951
Portions 1933

Jesus film:
Chin, Falam

Global Recordings:
Chin Falam: Taisun #8771

People ID: 22561

