



Jane Sweeney

Location: Numbering about 400 people, the Yangno tribe is scattered throughout villages in and around the small town of Pangsa, which sits at the foot of the main mountain pass leading to India. Their principal village appears to be Khamkeik, where 24 of the approximately 100 households residing in the village are Yangno families. In this part of Myanmar, households average 6.5 people per home. Other Tangshang-related tribes in the village include the Cyamkok, Cyampang, Haqman, Kaishan, and just a few households of Lungri. The sensitive border area is off-limits to foreign tourists and even to domestic Burmese travelers.

Identity: Because of their isolation, the Yangno people have remained hidden until now. While they share many cultural traits of other Tangshang groups, the Yangno have a strong sense of shared identity and a history of battles and migrations as they fought for survival. They are part of the wider Naga cultural sphere that extends into Nagaland and other parts of northeast India, although if a Naga person from one of the many tribes in India visited the Yangno they would struggle to communicate with them.

Language: In 2012, linguists surveyed the Yangno people and decided their vernacular is part of a small group of three related varieties, including Haqchum and

Haqman.¹ The Yangno dialect shares only a 57 percent lexical similarity with Shecyu, which is considered a premier dialect for Scripture translation that linguists hope will be used to influence many other Tangshang groups with the Gospel. This means that only just over half of Yangno words are the same in the Shecyu language. Consequently, the Yangno will need access to their own or a more closely related translation to be able to comprehend the Bible.

History: Little is known about Yangno history due to the tribe's lack of a written language. In recent decades a Roman script was introduced to tribes in the area, but one report laments: "Illiteracy constitutes a significant obstacle to language development. While more Tangshang are attending school where they learn the Burmese script, Buddhist associations with that script keep the Tangshang committed to a Roman orthography, which they cannot read."²

Customs: After the Yangno and other tribes converted to Christ, the new spiritual atmosphere clashed with many of their traditions, which were rooted in animistic rituals. Some pastors have attempted to retain parts of their traditional ways while trying to thread a needle that doesn't violate biblical teaching. A Baptist pastor hoped that by organizing "modified" forms of

their traditional festivals they would "show that it is possible to participate in a suitably modified form, even while remaining a practicing Baptist.... Of course, that did not mean that one should start drinking rice beer again or start fighting with one's neighbors as in former times. So, although we do not sacrifice animals any longer, we set up the sacrificial altar in the festival area, and the ritual prayer that would have been said before sacrificing animals are now enacted as a 'performance' at the festival."³

Religion: The first tribal believers in the Lahe area came to Christ in the 1950s, and revival fires spread during the 1970s and 1980s to such an extent that entire tribes embraced the Gospel. Today all Yangno people are professing Christians, apart from a small number of Buddhist and animists in their midst.

Christianity: Despite the high percentage of Christians among the Yangno people, the only Scripture in use among them is the Burmese Bible, as no translation is available in a dialect like their own. Baptist leaders have tried to make the Yangno use the Tangsa New Testament from India, but in 2013 the pastor of the church in Khamkeik village reported: "We do not use the Tangsa New Testament because our church members cannot understand it."⁴



Population
in Myanmar:
400 (2025)

Location:
Sagaing Region

Language Family:
Tibeto-Burman

Main Religion:
Christianity (88.0%)

Christians:
350 (88.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population:
400 in Myanmar
(2025 Asia Harvest)

Other Countries:

Other Names:
Yangnaw, Yangno
Tangshang, Yangnos

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

Language:
Naga Tangsa, Yangno [unclassified]

Dialects:

Scripture:
None

Jesus film:
None

Global Recordings:
None

People ID: 22567

