



Sumtography

Location: In western Myanmar's Chin State, the 54,000 Zotung people live in Rezua Township and more than 50 villages throughout Mindat District, with a few villages in Hakha Township. Another four Zotung villages are located across the border in Magway Region. Zotung territory is bordered by seven tribes: the Senthang, Lautu, Mara, Matu, Rawngtu, Cho, and Thaiphum. Several Zotung villages in the west have assimilated to Mara culture and language and are now considered to be Mara. Many Zotung people have fled Myanmar as refugees and are now found in Malaysia, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries throughout the world.¹

Identity: The Zotung are a proud, progressive people who adapt well and contribute to every culture they live in. They had a population of 8,992 people at the time of the 1931 census. Known for the beautiful distinctive dress of their women, Zotung is the self-name of this group, although many Chin tribes call them Zo, and their Mara neighbors known them as "Azyu." The Zotung are culturally

and linguistically different from the similarly-named Zophei and Zokam tribes in Myanmar.

Language: The Zotung vernacular, which is related to Lai (Hakha) Chin, was an unwritten language until a Roman script was adopted in 1933. The Burmese government has outlawed its use, however, as they seek to assimilate tribes to the Burmese culture and language. As a result, all Zotung people can also speak Burmese, and many are fluent in English. Zotung consists of three dialects, named after the key villages of Rezua, Lungngo, and Calthawng. The dialects reportedly have "multiple variations and pronunciations. Zotung speakers use a widely accepted alphabet for writing with which they spell using their respective dialects. Formal documents are written using the Lungngo dialect because it was the tongue of the first person to prescribe a writing system."²

History: Zotung history "can be traced back as far as AD 900 since there are place names in traditional songs, folktales, and legends that reveal the time period they were composed."³ Another source says: "Zotung people are believed to

have settled in this land since the early 15th century, escaping the torture and extortion of Burmese kings and rulers while they were in plain areas of the Kale Valley."⁴ On November 29, 2023, the Chinland Defence Force joined with the Chin National Army to capture the town of Rezua from the Burmese junta during the Myanmar civil war.⁵

Customs: Celebrating festivals and performing traditional songs and dances is important to the Zotung. The annual Insuakae Festival is held in villages throughout the area in the last week of February. The Zotung traditionally relied on hunting for their food supply, but today most are farmers who depend on the slash-and-burn agriculture system, although with much of the Zotung area sitting at 8,000 feet (2,440 meters) above sea level, finding suitable land for growing crops is a challenge. The Zotung area was devastated by landslides in July and August 2015, which destroyed 364 homes and wiped out their crops.

Religion: Before Christianity transformed their communities, the Zotung were animists who "believed in *Pachia* as the supreme God. They also believed in evil entities, known as *khozi*, which roamed around the world causing great mischief. The people appeased the various *khozi* through their high priests for health, wealth, safety, and prosperity. However, they did not sacrifice to *Pachia* because he was not believed to cause harm to humans."⁶

Christianity: Although the first Zotung church was formally established in 1933, a mission school among them was opened in 1926, and at the time of the 1931 census, five individuals had declared they were Christians and the other 8,987 were animists. Today, an estimated 80 percent of Zotung people are Christians, while the rest continue to observe animistic rituals. Although the first books of the Zotung Bible were published in 1951, more than half a century passed until the New Testament was finally printed in 2004, followed by the full Bible in 2016.



Population in Myanmar: 54,000 (2025)
Location: Chin State, Magway Region
Language Family: Tibeto-Burman
Main Religion: Christianity (80.0%)
Christians: 43,200 (80.0%)

OVERVIEW

Population: 54,000 in Myanmar (2025 Joshua Project) 40,000 (1990 United Bible Societies) 8,992 (1931 census)
Other Countries: Malaysia, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand
Other Names: Azyu, Chin Zo, Chin Zotung, Yo, Yos, Yotun, Zo Mingphuinn, Zobyah, Zohae
Location: Chin State: Rezua Township in Matupi District and Hakha Township in Hakha District; Magway Region: Gangaw Township in Gangaw District
Language: Chin, Zotung [czt]
Dialects: 3
Scripture: Bible 2016 New Testament 2004 Portions 1951
Jesus film: None
Global Recordings: Chin, Zotung #5141
People ID: 16110

