Languages of Myanmar

[See also SIL publications on the languages of Myanmar.]


Living languages


Anu [anl] 700. Classification: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-


Burmese [mya] 32,000,000 in Myanmar (2000 D. Bradley). Population total all countries: 32,301,581. South, central, and adjacent areas. Also spoken in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, USA. Alternate names: Bama, Bamachaka, Myen, Myanmar. Dialects: Merguese (Mergui, Beik), Yaw, Danu (Taruw), Burmese, Palaw. There are diglossic high and low varieties. The preferred variety is spoken in Mandalay. Merguese (250,000 speakers), Danu (100,000 speakers), and Yaw (20,000) may be separate languages. They are distinct varieties (1997 D. Bradley). Speakers in Bangladesh speak Bomang, not Standard Burmese. Classification: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Burmish, Southern


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Shimhrin, Lyen-Lyem), Khualshim (Kwelshin), Lente (Lyente), Chorei. Chorei may be a separate language. In India, other dialect or clan names are: Choral, Dap, Eauglong, Ranjkho, Bong, Bongcher, Kaljjang, Korbong, Langkai, Moosephang (Machaphang), Migli, Mitahar. They are collectively called 'Baro Halam'. Rupini and Koloi are said to be quite different from the others. Tapong is reported to have difficult intelligibility for speakers of other dialects. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Northern

**Chin, Haka**
[cnh] 100,000 in Myanmar (1991 UBS). Population includes 2,000 Zokhua, 60,100 Lai (1983). Population total all countries: 446,264. Chin Hills, Haka area. Also spoken in Bangladesh, India. **Alternate names:** Haka, Hakha, Baungshe, Lai. **Dialects:** Klangklang (Thlantlang), Zokhua, Shonshe. Shonshe may be a separate language. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Central

**Chin, Khumi**
[cnk] 36,700 in Myanmar (1983). Population total all countries: 37,888. Arakan Hills, Akyab area. Matu are in Southern Chin State, Matupi, Mindat, and Paletwa townships, western Myanmar. Also spoken in Bangladesh, India. **Alternate names:** Khumi, Khami, Khweymi, Khimi, Khuni. **Dialects:** Khimi, Yindi (Yindu), Khami, Ngala. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern, Khumi

**Chin, Khumi Awa**
[cka] 40,900 (2003). Arakan Hills, coast areas. **Dialects:** The coastal dialect differs from the inland Khumi. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern, Khumi

**Chin, Mara**
[mrh] 20,000 in Myanmar (1994). Lushai Hills. **Alternate names:** Mara, Lakher, Zao, Maram, Mira. **Dialects:** Tlongsai, Hlawthai, Sabeu. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern

**Chin, Mro**
[cmr] 137,765 (2000 WCD). Arakan State. **Dialects:** Lexical similarity 13% with Mru of
Bangladesh. Classification: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern


Chin, Tedim [ctd] 189,100 in Myanmar (1990 BAP). Population total all countries: 344,100. Chin Hills State, Upper Chindwin, Tiddim area. Also spoken in India. Alternate names: Tedim, Tiddim. Dialects: Sokte, Kamhau (Kamhow, Kamhao). Other Chin languages or dialects of this area are Saizang, Teizang, Zo (Zome). Classification: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman,
Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Northern
More information.


Hrangkhol


Intha


Jingpho

[kac] 900,000 in Myanmar (2001 Johnstone and Mandryk). Population total all countries: 940,000. Kachin State. Also spoken in China. *Alternate names:* Kachin, Jinghpaw, Chingpaw, Chingp'o, Marip. *Dialects:* Hkaku (Hka-Hku), Kauri (Hkauri, Gauri), Dzili (Jili), Dulong. Dzili may be a separate language. Hkaku and Kauri are only slightly different than Jingpho. Lexical similarity 50% with Singhpo of India. *Classification:* Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Jingpho-Konyak-Bodo, Jingpho-Luish, Jingpho

Kado

[kdv] 128,500 in Myanmar (1983). Population includes 90,300 Kado, 38,200 Ganaan. Population total all countries: 228,725. The Kado are found in Ban Mauk Township, Sagaing Division (a region west of the railway midway between Mandalay and Myitkyina). The Ganaan are found just west of the Kado people. The Thet are found in Rakhine State. Also spoken in China, Laos. *Alternate names:* Kadu, Kato, Kudo, Asak, Sak, Gadu, Thet, That, Mawteik, Puteik, Woni, Kadu-Ganaan. *Dialects:* Kadu, Ganaan (Ganan), Andro, Sengmai, Chakpa, Phayeng. Kadu, Ganaan, Andro, Sengmai, Chakpa, and Phayeng may be separate languages. *Classification:* Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Jingpho-Konyak-Bodo, Jingpho-Luish, Luish

Karen, Brek

[kvl] 16,600 (1983). All Karen languages in Myanmar 2,600,000. Southwestern Kayah State. *Alternate names:* Brek, Brec, Bre,


Karen, Pa'o


Karen, Pwo


Karen, Pwo


Karen, S'gaw


Karen, Yinbaw


Khamti [kht] 4,235 in Myanmar (2000 WCD). Population total all countries:

More information.


More information.


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More information.

Lahu Shi [kds] 10,000 in Myanmar (1998). Kentung District. Alternate names: Kutsung, Kucong, Yellow Lahu, Shi, Kui, Kwi. Classification:
Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Loloish, Southern, Akha, Lahu
More information.

Lama

*Dialects*: Dialect or closely related language to Norra. *Classification*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Nungish
More information.

Lamkang

More information.

Laopang

More information.

Lashi

More information.

Lisu

More information.

Lopi

More information.

Lü

Tai, Tai-Sek, Tai, Southwestern, Northwest
More information.

More information.

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Anong, Anoong, Anu, Nu, Lu, Lutzu, Lutze, Kiutze, Khanung, Kwinp'ang, Khupang, Kwingsang, Fuch'ye. **Dialects:** Cholo, Gwaza, Miko. 15 or 16 dialects, mostly inherently intelligible with each other. They understand the Mutwang dialect of Rawang. They may be the same as the Nu River Drung in China. May be related to Jingpho. Lexical similarity 70% with Rawang. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Nungish

**Palaung, Pale** [pce] 257,539 in Myanmar (2000 WCD). Total Palaung and Riang in Myanmar: 250,000. Population total all countries: 267,539. Southern Shan State area near Kalaw. 10,000 square mile area. Also spoken in China, Thailand. **Alternate names:** Di-Ang, Ngwe Palaung, Silver Palaung, Pale, Palay. **Dialects:** Close to Shwe Palaung and Rumai Palaung. **Classification:** Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Eastern Palaungic, Palaung

**Palaung, Rumai** [rbb] 137,000 in Myanmar. Population total all countries: 139,000. Northern Shan State. Also spoken in China. **Alternate names:** Rumai. **Dialects:** Close to Shwe Palaung and Pale Palaung. Officially included De'ang nationality in China. **Classification:** Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Eastern Palaungic, Palaung

**Palaung, Shwe** [pll] 148,000 in Myanmar (1982). Population total all countries: 150,000. Northern Shan State, centered in Nam Hsan. Also spoken in China. **Alternate names:** Ta-Ang Palaung, Golden Palaung, Shwe. **Dialects:** 15 Palaung dialects in Myanmar. Pale Palaung and Rumai are closely related, but distinct languages. **Classification:** Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Eastern Palaungic, Palaung

**Palu** [pbz] 4,775 (2000 WCD). **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Unclassified

**Pankhu** [pkh] Falam area, Chin Hills. **Alternate names:** Pankho, Panko, Pangkhu. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-
Chin, Central  
More information.

**Parauk**  
*Alternate names:* Wa, Praok, Phalok, Baraog.  
*Dialects:* Related to Lawa and Wa in Thailand and China.  
*Classification:* Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Western Palaungic, Waic, Wa  
More information.

**Purum**  
[pub] 300 (1977 Voegelin and Voegelin).  
*Alternate names:* Puram.  
*Dialects:* Related to Chiru, Aimol, Langrong.  
*Classification:* Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Northern  
More information.

**Pyen**  
*Dialects:* Close to Phunoi, Bisu, Mpi.  
*Classification:* Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Loloish, Southern, Phunoi  
More information.

**Ralte**  
*Dialects:* Related to Tiddim, Paite, Thado, Zo.  
*Classification:* Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Northern  
More information.

**Rawang**  
*Alternate names:* Nung Rawang, Ganung-Rawang, Hkanung, Nung, Krangku, Taron, Kiutze, Ch'opa, Chiutse.  
*Dialects:* Rawang, Agu, Hpungsii, Htiselwang, Matwanly, Mutwang, Serhta, Serwang, Wadamkong, Wahke, Taron, Tangsarr, Longmi (Lungmi), Zithung, Kunlang. 75 to 100 dialects, some of which are inherently unintelligible to each other's speakers. Five major divisions: Longmi, Mutwang, Serwang, Tangsarr, Kwinpang (Nung); each has 20 to 30 subdialects. Dialect continuum with Nu nationality in China. Dialects near the Tibet border are harder to understand. Kunglang in
India; communication cut off in 1950s. Most dialects understand Mutwang, the central, written dialect. Related, but not the same as Drung in China. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Nungish

**Riang**


**Samtao**


**Sansu**

[sca] 4,775 (2000 WCD). **Dialects:** May not be a distinct language. In China, included with the Hani. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Loloish, Southern, Akha, Hani

**Shan**

[shn] 3,200,000 in Myanmar (2001 Johnstone and Mandryk). Population includes 350,000 Tai Mao (1990 A. Diller ANU). Population total all countries: 3,260,000. Shan States, southeast Myanmar. Kokant Shan is in the Kokant area in northern Wa State in the Shan States. Tai Mao is on the Burma-Yunnan border, centered at Mu’ang Mao Long or Namkham, Myanmar. Also spoken in China, Thailand. **Alternate names:** Sha, Tai Shan, Sam, Thai Yai, Tai Yai, Great Thai, Tai Luang, Mau, "Ngio", "Ng iod", "Ngia w", "Ngiao", "Nge o". **Dialects:** Kokant Shan, Tai Mao (Mao, Maw, Mau, Tai Long, Northern Shan). Burmese Shan is spoken with regional dialect differences, but dialects are close linguistically. Tai-Khae (Khe) may be a dialect. Low intelligibility of Lü. **Classification:** Tai-Kadai, Kam-Tai, Be-Tai, Tai-Sek, Tai, Southwestern, Northwest
Tai Loi


Tai Nüa


Taman


Taungyo


Tavoyan


Wa

Son are very different from each other. Son, En, and La may be separate languages.

**Classification:** Austro-Asiatic, Mon-Khmer, Northern Mon-Khmer, Palaungic, Western Palaungic, Waic, Wa

More information.

### Welaung

[weu] 9,550 (2000 WCD). **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern

More information.

### Wewaw

[wea] 23,874 (2000 WCD). Toungoo District. **Alternate names:** Wewau. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Karen, Sgaw-Bghai, Sgaw

More information.

### Yangbye

[ybd] 810,300 (1983). **Alternate names:** Yanbe, Yangye, Yanbye. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Burmish, Southern

More information.

### Yinchia


More information.

### Yos

[yos] 3,400 (1983). **Alternate names:** Yo, Yote. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Northern

More information.

### Zaiwa

[atb] 30,000 in Myanmar (1997). Kachin State, Sedan, Kentung. **Alternate names:** Zi, Tsaiwa, Atsi, Atshi, Atzi, Azi, Aci. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Lolo-Burmese, Burmish, Northern

More information.

### Zome

[zom] 30,000 in Myanmar. Population total all countries: 39,112. Chin State, Tiddim, Chin Hills. Also spoken in India. **Alternate names:** Zorni, Zomi, Zou, Zo, Kuki Chin. **Dialects:** Paite Chin, Zome, and Simte are almost identical. **Classification:** Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Northern

More information.

### Zyphe

[zyp] 17,000 in Myanmar (1994). Population
total all countries: 20,000. Chin State, Thantlang Township. Also spoken in India. Alternate names: Zophei, Zoptei. Dialects: Lower Zyphe, Upper Zyphe. Close to Mara Chin. Myanmar and India varieties reported intelligible to each other’s speakers (Davis 01). Classification: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Kuki-Chin-Naga, Kuki-Chin, Southern

More information.

Extinct languages


More information.