

Zobya of Myanmar (Burma)



The Zobya are also referred to as Zotung-Chin. They are centrally located in the Chin State of Myanmar. They are Tibetan/Himalayan people, clustered with several other groups under the name *Chin*. Zotung-Chin is a Central Chin language. The literacy rate amongst the Zobya is substantially below the national average of 85.3%. Though 60% of the Zobya population are Christian, there are very few fundamental Baptist churches among these people.

The Chin tribes were once referred to as the “wild hill tribes” of Myanmar. Chin, too, was a derogatory Burmese term used in the past to denote all the various hill tribes living near the Myanmar and India border—a neglected and underdeveloped area.

The people in the hill tribes earn a living by trapping, hunting and logging. They also practice shifting cultivation. Myanmar is one of the world’s leading rice producers, but the Zobya are able to raise only enough to feed themselves.



Statistics

- **People Group:** Zobya
- **Country:** Myanmar
- **Language:** Zobya
- **Population:** approx. 48,590
- **Percentage of Zobya that are Christian:** 60%
- **Literacy Rate:** < 50%
- **Mission agencies working amongst people:** Unknown
- **Christian broadcasts in their own language:** None
- **Major religions in Myanmar:** Buddhist 87.8%
Christian 8.5%
Muslim 3.8%

Prayer Points

- ◆ Pray that God will enable the translator to work thoroughly and quickly in his translation work to expedite getting the New Testament into the Zobya language.
- ◆ Take authority over the principalities and powers that are keeping the Zobya people from having the whole Word of Truth.
- ◆ Ask the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers to work among the Zobya.
- ◆ Ask the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and favor to those who are targeting the Zobya people group.



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INTERNATIONAL

The **Zobya** of Myanmar (Burma)



Beliefs

While most of Myanmar is Buddhist, many practice their own ethnic religion that embraces *animistic* beliefs. Animism includes the notion that forces of nature (wind, rivers, trees, earth) are connected with spirits that need to be appeased through sacrifices and rituals. Farmers spend more money in a year on their religion than on their family's schooling, health and clothing.

Needs

The Zobya have many medical problems. Iodine deficiency disorders, such as goiters, are among the priority health problems in the area. Christian medical teams are needed to minister to the physical needs of these people as well as to minister to their need to know the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Country

Myanmar (Burma) is a country of forests, hills and valleys located in Southeast Asia. Mountains surround Myanmar on three sides and dense forests cover much of the nation.

The economy is heavily dependent on agricultural exports, and the agricultural sector employs about 65% of the work force. It is considered a poor country, and has been relatively closed to outsiders in recent years.

Politically, the **Union of Myanmar** has a military government. It received its independence from the British Commonwealth in 1948. It has known little peace since the World War II Japanese invasion in 1942. In many areas, cultural insensitivity has provoked bitter ethnic wars. Demand for democratic rule led elections in 1990, but the military regime refused to hand over power.

FirstBible and the Zobya New Testament

Unreached People Group: Zobya, Myanmar (Burma)

Project: Translating the New Testament into the Zobya Language

Targeted Completion: December 2007

FirstBible International in partnership with its affiliate *Bibles International*, has been working since February 2002 to translate the New Testament into the Zobya language.

A few local churches in the area have banded together to supply half the salary of Timothy Khua Peng, the lone translator for this project. At this time, about one half of the rough draft has been completed.