

Dainet

The 25,000 Dainet people of south-west Myanmar are among the least known Buddhist people groups in the world. They live in the mountains of northern Rakhine State and adjacent southern areas of Chin State. Although these areas are close to the Myanmar border with Bangladesh, no Dainet are recorded to be living inside Bangladesh.

The Dainet, along with the Kadu and Ganan tribes, are thought to be the earliest Tibeto-Burman-speaking groups to settle in Myanmar (formerly Burma). The 1931 British-conducted census in Burma combined these three related groups under the heading 'Sak', which had a population of 36,400 at the time.¹ The groups were described as Buddhists, with 'a great reputation for honesty, diligence and reliability'.² The Dainet are one of the seven ethnic groups of Rakhine State officially recognized by the Myanmar authorities.

Researcher and author Richard Diran visited and photographed the Dainet in his magnificent book, *The Vanishing Tribes of Burma*. He interviewed the leader

of a Dainet village on the Lemro (Lemyo) River in Rakhine State. The man was photographed in his traditional Dainet dress, consisting of a white wrap-around robe with red markings and a white headdress.³

Unlike other Tibeto-Burman speaking tribes in Myanmar, who migrated southward from China, the Dainet are believed to have come eastward from today's Bangladesh or India 'to escape fighting in Bengal to the west during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries'.⁴

Despite the obvious evidence of the existence of the Dainet people in Myanmar, for some reason Christian researchers have never recognized them at all. They have never been listed in the *Ethnologue*, or on any lists of unreached people groups.



Create International

For centuries the Dainet have strictly adhered to the teachings of Theravada Buddhism. Indeed, the town of Mrauk-U, south of the Dainet homeland, was one of the most powerful ancient Buddhist kingdoms of Myanmar.⁵ It was founded by the Rakhine king Min-zawmun in AD 1433. 'In the next century, the city became a free port that traded with the Middle East, Asia, Holland, Portugal and Spain; elephants were one of the main commodities supplied from the Rakhine region. A Dutchman who visited Mrauk-U in the 16th century described it as one of the richest cities in Asia, and compared it with Amsterdam and London in size and prosperity'.⁶ At one time the kingdom created a naval fleet of 10,000 war boats that dominated the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Martaban.

It was during the height of this Buddhist kingdom's power that the Dainet migrated into the

region, coming under Buddhist influence, which continues to this day. Much later, Baptist missionaries brought the gospel into western Myanmar. They encountered enormous success among animistic groups such as the various branches of Chin, but those tribes like the Dainet who had already embraced Buddhism were difficult to reach.

Today there are no known Christians among the Dainet in Myanmar.



Population:
25,000 (2000)
28,100 (2010)
31,600 (2020)

Countries: Myanmar

Buddhism: Theravada

Christians: none known

Overview of the Dainet

Other Names: Daignet, Daingnet, Dinenet

Population Sources: 25,000 in Myanmar (2002, Myanmar Faces and Places)

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Jingpho-Konyak-Bodo, Jingpho-Luish, Luish

Dialects: 0

Professing Buddhists: 100%

Practising Buddhists: 75%

Christians: 0%

Scripture: none

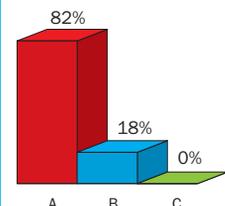
Jesus film: none

Gospel Recordings: none

Christian Broadcasting: none

ROPAL code: none

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Have heard the gospel but have not become Christians
C = Are adherents to some form of Christianity