

The Lao Naga of Myanmar



Lao is also spelled as Law or Loh. Lao is what the people call themselves and their language. Other people call them Law.

The Lao Naga are included in some of the literature under Konyak Naga or Leinong Naga, but low lexical similarity shows Lao is a distinct language. There is very little (if any) dialect variation among all the Lao Naga villages in Myanmar. Law village is the main village and the prestige dialect.

The Lao people live in 2-3 villages along the border with India in Sagaing Division, Khamti District, Lahe Township, with about 200 total households. Law village is the largest and most important village. Their speech variety is reportedly very different from other varieties in Lahe Township. According to the interviews conducted by Saul (2005:30), the Lao people originally came from Pesao in Nagaland, India.

Whenever Leinong people meet Lao people, the Lao people switch to Leinong, and the Leinong subjects said that they can easily understand the Lao people's Leinong. Leinong people reported that they do not understand the Lao language at all. Literature materials are beginning to be developed in Leinong. Since many Lao people seem to be bilingual in Leinong, it may be possible for the Lao people to use Leinong materials. However, since the survey team has not been able yet to visit any Lao villages, the team is not sure what the Lao people think of the Leinong people or language. More research should be done to confirm that Lao people can adequately use Leinong literature.

The Lao people are majority Christian. Many of them are bilingual in Leinong Naga and/or Burmese.

Primary Religion:

Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

90%

Churches:

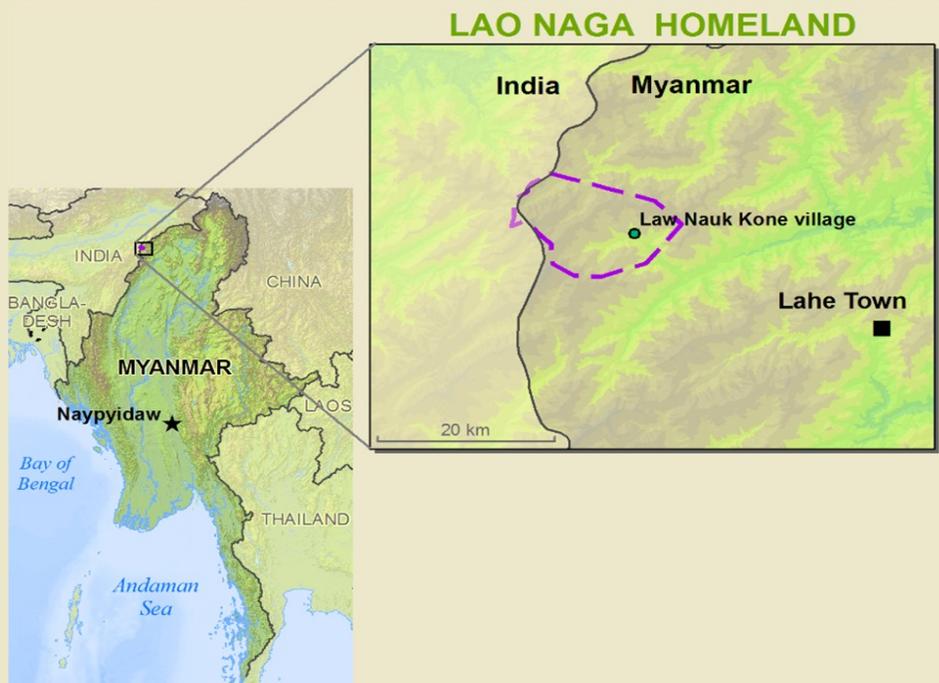
many

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

None

Population (date):

1,000 (2008)



The Lao Naga of Myanmar

Have They Heard The Gospel?

Call Themselves Christian 90%

Believe In Jesus As God
And Only Savior 90%

Believe In The Local
Traditional Religion 10%

Have Not Heard Who Jesus is 0%

Response To The Gospel?

Attitude to Christianity Very Receptive

Attitude to Religious Change Very Receptive

Do They Have A Church?

Number of Churches
Comment

Among the Lao, the majority of them are Christians and they belong to the Baptist denomination.

Is The Word Of God Translated?

No, there are no Scripture portions translated yet into Lao Naga. However, since Leinong Naga is beginning to produce literature materials, and many Lao people are bilingual in Leinong, the survey team recommends that more survey be carried out in the more remote areas of Lahe Township, especially the northwestern parts, where the Lao people are living, to learn what the attitudes of those people groups are toward using Leinong literature. The Lao language is so different that Leinong people cannot understand it at all, but many Lao people have learned to speak Leinong. The team also recommends that intelligibility testing of Leinong (using RTT) be done in remote villages of the Lao people group, in order to learn whether they can adequately understand Leinong or not.

Other Forms Of Gospel Presentation
Available?

Recordings No

Literature No

Films/videos No

Radio No

TV No

Comment There are a wide variety of materials available in Burmese [mya] that could possibly be used among the Lao Naga.

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There are a few materials beginning to be produced in Leinong Naga on the Myanmar side, that could possibly be used among the Lao Naga, if distribution, promotion, and literacy activities would be done.

Describe the Hindrances

The Lao Naga region is on the border with India in an off-limits region, so no outsiders can visit their villages at this time.

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Group Description

Economics

Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists
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Education

Language of Instruction Early Years	Burmese
Language of Textbooks Early Years	Burmese
Language of Instruction Later Years	Burmese
Language of Textbooks Later Years	Burmese

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Status of Christianity

Religion Population

Religion 1	Ethnic religions
Adherents	10%

Religion and Response

Resistance/Receptivity	Very receptive
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Scripture

Scripture Use	
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Comment	Currently using the Burmese Bible [mya] in their churches.
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Uncertain Need of Translation	There may not be a need for additional literature development among the Lao Naga people, if it can be determined that they understand Leinong Naga well enough to use Leinong literature materials. More research should be done to test whether Lao people can adequately use Leinong literature.
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Missions and Churches

Organization #1	Baptist Church
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Country of origin	Myanmar and India
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