

Rakhine Buddhists



Quick Facts

Population: 2,000,000

Myanmar: 1,800,000

Bangladesh: 180,000

India: 20,000

Lang. Group: Tibeto-Burman

Religion: Theravada Buddhism

Believers: 0.05% (BBB)

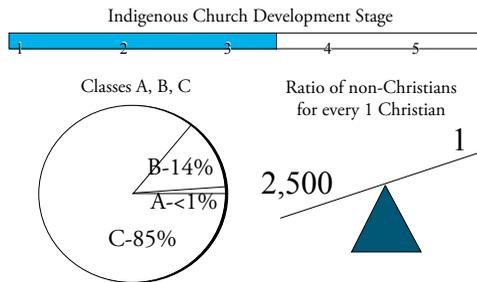
Scriptures: Portions

Ministry Tools: JGT

Church Status: 3

Mission Status: 2

MS Subgroups: 3



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Rakhine, also known as the Arakanese, are a Tibeto-Burman speaking tribe, believed by some anthropologists to be of Thai origin. Their language is close enough to Burmese to be considered a dialect. Due to their geographic proximity to India, their culture has been significantly influenced by the Bengali.

Lifestyle: Rakhine state in Myanmar is generally underdeveloped. The most common form of transportation is still the ox-cart, and electricity is only available in limited capacity in a few towns during the evening hours. Most live in small rural villages, which are widely distributed along the many rivers that crisscross their land, as well as along the coast. At one time the Rakhine were infamous for their piracy and Vandal-like raids. Today they are primarily “slash and burn” agriculturalists.

Customs: The Maghi have a tradition of only farming a particular field

for one year, and then leaving it fallow to allow the ground to recover. This practice forces them to clear more and more forest by burning it. As this is done by the entire community, farm land becomes the property of everyone, and the harvest is shared equally among every family in the village.

Religion: The Rakhine claim to have received the Buddhist faith from the Buddha himself during his earthly life. He is said to have cast a huge bronze statue at the request of the king and then breathed upon it an exact image of himself. Historical records indicate that by the 2nd century A.D., Buddhism had become the state religion under King Chandra Surya. Traditional shamanistic rituals (practiced by both males and females) continue to be important for appeasing spirits, healing the sick, and ensuring the well-being of the tribe.

Christian Outreach: Churches were planted among the Rakhine around one

hundred years ago by both Baptist and Catholic missionaries. However, most of these churches have ceased to grow evangelistically. The Scripture portions published in 1914 in the Rakhine language are no longer in use or distribution. There has been good progress in Bangladesh among the refugee populations forced out by the Burmese government, and many hundreds have come to faith in Christ.

How to Pray:

🙏 Pray for the revival of the century old Rakhine church. Ask God to raise up an effective training program for empowering a new generation of church leaders, evangelists and missionaries.

🙏 Intercede for the completion of the Scriptures in Rakhine, and for the required updating of the already existing translation of the gospels. Pray for an indigenous team of translators who will partner in this endeavor under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

🙏 The government of Myanmar continues to promote Buddhism as the state-favored religion, and actively persecutes the Church. Pray for the right conditions for the Arakanese church to grow and flourish.

Every year 18,000 Rakhine die without Christ.