

The Pa-O of Myanmar

Loud sounds of clanging gongs and cymbals along with chatter filled the air as crowds of black-clad **Pa-O** with their colourful turbans made their way through the Kekku temple complex. Swirls of smoke from burning incense, joss sticks and lit candles wafted through the 2,500 crumbling *stupa* structures in the old temple complex. Amidst the religious pageantry, Shway stood, wearing her newest turban, looking intently for Ya. Her heart skipped a beat when she spied the young man, considered to be the most eligible young man in her village. He looked to her direction and greeted her with a brilliant smile. Startled, Shway almost gasped but managed to return a demure smile. The nearby young people observed the scene, and there were smiles, chuckles and a few envious looks. For Ya and Shway, the religiosity of the festival took a back seat as they began a casual conversation. Meantime, the other **Pa-O** young people discreetly sought out potential future spouses amidst the religious ceremonies.

The **Pa-O** (population: 851,000) live in northeast Myanmar, primarily in the mountains around the towns of Kalaw and Taunggyi. They are perhaps best known for the striking colourful turbans worn by their girls and women. Men wear smaller and equally striking turbans.

The **Pa-O** are devout Theravada Buddhists and regard the Kekku temple complex to be their holiest religious site. Resistant to the Gospel, only 1.7% profess to be Christian.

- Pray for the **Pa-O** that hearts hardened by unbelief, fear and spiritual deception may be softened to receive the Good News.
- Pray for local workers to be raised and sent to reach out to the **Pa-O**.
- Pray that the few **Pa-O** believers will remain strong in their faith despite social pressure from their own people, the local authorities and religious leaders.

This is a series of useful prayer profile compilations to pray for people groups collated from various online sources. Please click on the links below for more info:

<https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>,
<http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>