

## The Tibetan of Myanmar

“I heard your son is getting married soon,” exclaimed Yumtso to her eldest cousin Ragpa. “Congratulations! Which village does your future daughter-in-law come from?” “From Mating,” answered Ragpa. “I do hope your family can come over to Tahawndam for the celebrations.” The two cousins stood chatting by the banks of rushing Adung Wang River. Strings of fluttering colourful Tibetan Buddhist prayer flags adorned the branches of the nearby pine trees. Not far away is the green valley where Tahawndam village is located with its sturdy houses made of pine logs. A row of snow-peaked mountains lie in the horizon.

This could have been a scene in China’s Tibet region, Bhutan or Nepal but the location is surprisingly in Myanmar. The 1,100 **Myanmar Tibetans** live in the remote northern tip of the country near the borders with India and China. The first Tibetan settlers arrived in the 1930s. The 1950s annexation of Tibet by communist China saw another trickle of Tibetan settlers fleeing into northern Myanmar. A small ethnic community, the **Myanmar Tibetans** are one of Myanmar’s most isolated ethnic groups. They are a hardy, industrious people who continue to uphold their ethnic identity.

Staunchly Vajrayana Buddhist, the **Myanmar Tibetans** have also absorbed certain elements of animistic spirit worship beliefs from the neighbouring tribes. Despite the nearby presence of the largely Christian tribes of Rawang and Lisu, the **Myanmar Tibetans** have resisted all inroads by Christianity. Unconfirmed reports say that there is one individual believer among them.

- Pray against the spiritual strongholds of Buddhism and animism over the **Myanmar Tibetans**.
- Pray that Christ will be revealed to this remote people through dreams and visions.
- Pray that committed Christians among the Rawang and Lisu will reach out to the **Myanmar Tibetans** in culturally sensitive ways.

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