









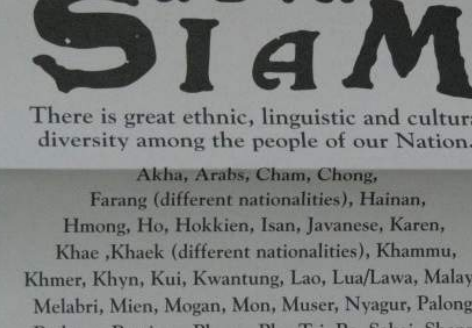





Pan-Southeast Asia Ethnic Minorities Culture Kit

- a complete list of items contained in the kit
- featured themes
- curriculum ideas

	Item	Description	Qty
	Hmong Plush Doll	<p>Although many Hmong resettled in the United States after 1975, sizable populations are also found in Laos, Vietnam and Northern Thailand. There are several significant Hmong subcultures varying in different countries. The two largest are the Hmong Der (translating to ‘Black Hmong’) and Mong Leng (translating to ‘Green/Blue Hmong’) In Thailand, there are also the White Hmong and Striped Hmong.</p>	1
	Lahu Plush Doll	<p>In Thailand, the Lahu are one of the six main groups categorized as hill tribes. They are excellent hunters and Thai often refer to them by the moniker Muso, meaning ‘hunter.’ In the late 19th century, the Lahu began moving to Northern Thailand and now mostly live in Lai Châu Province. The Lahu hill tribe women wear very distinctive black and red jackets and skirts and the men wear baggy green or blue pants.</p>	1
	Hill Tribe Dress	<p>There are seven broad hill tribes in Thailand: Karen, Lahu, Hmong, Lisu, Akha, Mien, and Padaung. Most live in remote upland areas practicing subsistence farming. They were left alone until the 1950s, when population increase, coupled with extreme poverty, statelessness and a threat of insurgency forced the government to form a National Committee for Hill Tribes. Often, hill tribes supplement income through opium. Through the “Royal Project,” initiated by King Rama IX, the government has worked hard to eradicate this cultivation through subsidizing other cash crops, such as cabbages and fruits.</p>	1
	Akha Jacket	<p>The Akha tribe is found in the mountains of China, Burma, Laos and Northern Thailand. Many Akha sell traditional handicrafts to supplement their incomes. Akha women spin cotton into thread with a hand spindle, then weave it on a foot-treadle loom. The cloth is dyed with indigo and brightened with elaborate embroidery, appliqué, seeds, silver ornaments, shells and other items. Women wear broad leggings, a short black skirt with a white beaded sporran, a loose fitting black jacket (like this one) with heavily embroidered cuffs and lapels.</p>	1

	<p>Shan Textile</p>	<p>The Shan are linguistically closer related to Thai. This piece of material is a nice example of Shan weaving.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Lisu Fertility Belt</p>	<p>Lisu Fertility Belt with old Burmese coins (from 1966). 25pya. Black cloth belt with shells, colorful beads, and coins.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Malaysia Frame</p>	<p>[Hmong Textile]</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Head Wrap</p>		<p>1</p>
	<p>Assorted Postcards of Thailand Hill Tribes</p>	<p>Postcards of various hill tribe groups including the Hmong, Lahu, Akha, Yao and long-neck Karen.</p>	<p>1</p>

	<p>Thailand Hill Tribes Packet</p>	<p>A fold-out book of the traditions of Hill-tribes in Thailand. This book gives pictures and background information on the origins, traditions and current state of the Lisu, Karen, Akha, Yao, Hmong, and Mussur (Lahu). Communities of these groups of people live in the Northern Hills of Thailand (around Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai) and have ancient origins in China and Burma.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Thailand Flyer of Hill Tribes</p>	<p>A flyer listing the different ethnic groups that populate Thailand which number over 50 ethnicities and languages. Siam is the former name of Central Thailand. Generally speaking, Thailand appears to be very homogeneous. Most people have the same hair color (black), eye color (dark), and physical proportions (small compared to most Westerners). The farther you get from Central Thailand in each direction you will see and hear many variations of what is commonly presented as Thai people, culture, and language.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Newspaper Article</p>	<p>Photographs of Christian minority/hill tribe groups as well as other people in Thailand practicing Christianity.</p>	<p>1</p>
	<p>Framed map showing Burma's Ethnic Groups</p>		<p>1</p>
	<p>Thai Lacquer Decorative Panel</p>		<p>1</p>

Karen Hill Tribe



Where do they live? Historically found in Burma, many began migrating to Thailand, settling in provinces on the Thai-Burmese border, in the 18th century.

Subgroups

In Thailand, the Karen hill tribe is divided into four major sub-groups: the Sgaw Karen who call themselves and other related subgroups Pga-gan Yaw. Then there are the Pwo Karen or Plong: the Pa-O or Taungthu who are also known as Black Karen and the Bwe or Kayah or Red Karen. There are two sub-categories of Pwo Karen – in the north, the Pwo Rachaburi, and in the east, the Pwo Kanchanaburi.

Language

The Karen languages are members of the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family. They consist of three mutually unintelligible branches: Sgaw, Pwo, and Pa'o. The Karen languages are almost unique among the Tibeto-Burman languages in having a subject–verb–object word order.

Religion

Many Karen were converted to Christianity (particularly Baptism) by missionaries. Although some tribes still practice animism and some near Thailand practice Buddhism. Much of Karen hill tribe life is dictated by the spirits, including “Lord of Land and Water” who controls the productivity of the land and calls upon the rice spirit to grow, and bga, a matrilineal ancestor guardian spirit. The village priest is the most revered individual. He is the ritual leader and sets dates for the annual ceremonies.

Culture and lifestyle

The Karen occupy lowlying mountain villages, practicing crop rotation and cultivating rice. Many marketable crops, such as tomatoes, soya beans, peanuts, beans and peppers, have become almost as important as the basic rice crop. Skilled weavers, the Karen hill tribe people wear woven v-neck tunics of various natural colors and turbans. Unmarried women wear distinctive long white v-neck tunics.

Important festivals

As many Karen hill tribe people converted to Christianity they celebrate Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. During Easter the Karen also engage in ‘finding the egg’. Buddhist Karen celebrate the New Year (‘Nee Saw Ko’) in January.



Source: <https://www.green-trails.com/ethnic-minorities-in-northern-thailand/karen-hill-tribe/>

Photo: [Top] Daniel Nahabedian [Bottom]

Padaung Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

Found in three Kayan villages in the Mae Hong Son province of Northern Thailand. The Padaung are refugees from the civil war in Burma. There is a commercial tourist village.

Subgroups Also referred to as the Kayan Lahwi, the Padaung are a sub-group of the Red Karen (Karenni).

Religion

The traditional religion, Kan Khwan, has been practiced since the migration from Mongolia during the Bronze Age. One belief is that the Kayan people are the offspring of a female dragon and a male human/angel hybrid.

Culture and lifestyle

Women are well-known for wearing neck rings or brass coils that are placed around the neck, appearing to lengthen it. The tribe's nickname "Long Neck Tribe" derives from this traditional form of dress. Girls first start to wear rings when around 5 years old. Over the years, the coil is replaced by a longer one and more turns added. The weight of the brass pushes the collar bone down and compresses the rib cage. The neck itself is not lengthened. The appearance of a stretched neck is created by the deformation of the clavicle.

The government of Myanmar began discouraging neck rings as it struggled to appear more modern to the developed world. Consequently, many women in Myanmar began breaking the tradition, though a few older women and some of the younger girls in remote villages continue to wear rings.

In Thailand, many have been restricted to living in "refugee villages"—also called "human zoos" by critics—where tourists come to see women dressed in their coils—bringing much needed revenue to businessmen and the tribe through entry fees and souvenirs. Women are forced to choose between removing their neck rings to relocate off the camps or remain true to their traditions and provide for their families through tourism.

Important festivals The three-day Kay Htein Bo festival commemorates the belief that the creator god gave form to the world by planting a small post in the ground. During this festival in late March or early April, a Kay Htoe Boe pole is erected and participants dance around the pole. This festival is held to venerate the eternal god and creator messengers, to give thanks for blessings during the year, to appeal for forgiveness, and pray for rain.



Source: <http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=Karen>; Theurer, Jessica. 2014. Trapped in Their Own Rings: Padaung Women and their Fight for Traditional Freedom. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*. 2(4): pp 51-67

Photo: [top] Steve Evans [bottom] Peoples of the World

Lahu Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

Today, primarily in the Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces of Northern Thailand. The Lahu migrated from the Tibetan plateau in the 19th century facing pressure from Chinese domination. Settlements are usually remote from roads and towns, due to their strong commitment to preserving Lahu traditions and lifestyles.

Subgroups

Red Lahu, Yellow Lahu, Black Lahu, White Lahu and Lahu Sheleh. The Black Lahu is the largest sub-group, making up close to 80% of the total Lahu population.

Language

Lahu is a Tibeto-Burman language with various dialects. Black Lahu is the most common spoken dialect. While there is no traditional script, romanizations were introduced by Christian missionaries and Chinese government linguists.

Religion

The traditional religion of the Lahu hill tribe is polytheistic. Buddhism was introduced in the late 17th century and became widespread.

Culture and lifestyle

Thai often refer to them by the moniker Muso, meaning 'hunter.' Although they are excellent hunters, the Lahu also grow corn and rice to eat. Like many hill tribes, their incomes are often supplemented by opium production. Women wear very distinctive black and red jackets and skirts. Men wear baggy green or blue pants.

Every individual in the village answers to the common will of the elders. While less importance is placed on the extended family than in other hill-tribe communities, the Lahu are still strongly committed to principles of unity and working together for survival. Lahu hill tribe people may have the most gender-equitable society in the world.

Important festivals

The communal festival marking the beginning of the Lunar New Year, the Festival of Eating the New Rice and Christmas are all important.



Akha Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

The Akha tribe is found in the mountains of China, Burma, Laos and Northern Thailand. Originally from Yunnan in Southern China, many migrated south to Laos and Burma in the late 19th century. Ongoing civil war in both of these countries led many to move to Northern Thailand where they are now the largest of Thailand's hill tribes. Over 80,000 live in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai. The Akha hill tribe people generally live in bamboo houses raised on low wooden stilts in hilly areas. One side is for the women. The men's side is used as a more public area.

Subgroups - Akha Loi Mi and Akha U Lo.

The Loi Mi are easily recognizable by the distinctive metal plate on the back of the women's head dress. The U Lo women wear a conical headdress. In Laos, the Akha are known as Iko and have three subgroups: Iko Mutchi, Iko Eupa and Iko Loma.



Language

Akha is in the Lolo/Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman language group. Although the Akha have no traditional written language, romanizations were developed by missionaries or linguists which employ Roman, Thai or Burmese characters. Literacy in Akha is still virtually non-existent.

Religion

Though many Akha, especially younger people, profess Christianity, Akha Zang (The Akha Way), a total lifestyle prescribed in the oral literature of the Akhas, still runs deep in older generations. The Akha Way combines animism, ancestor worship and their deep relationship

with the land. For an Akha, the Akha Way is a way of life which extends beyond simple religious practice and infuses every aspect of their existence. The Akha Way emphasizes rituals in everyday life and stresses strong family ties; every Akha male can recount his genealogy back over fifty generations to the first Akha, Sm Mi O.

Culture and lifestyle

The Akha subsist through an often destructive form of slash and burn agriculture leading to elimination of old growth forest, native animal species and serious soil runoff problems. As expert farmers, they grow mountain rice, corn, and soybeans. Many Akha sell traditional handicrafts to supplement their incomes. Akha women spin cotton into thread with a hand spindle, then weave it on a foot-treadle loom. The cloth is dyed with indigo and brightened with elaborate embroidery, appliqué, seeds, silver ornaments, shells and other items. Women wear broad leggings, a short black skirt with a white beaded sporran, a loose fitting black jacket (like this one) with heavily embroidered cuffs and lapels.

Important festivals - Swing festival

This festival takes place at the peak of the rainy season (end of August/early September).

Source: <https://www.green-trails.com/ethnic-minorities-in-northern-thailand/akha-hill-tribe/>

Photo: [Top] Frans Betgem [middle] orientalescape.com

Hmong Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

Although many Hmong resettled in the United States after 1975, sizable populations are also found in Laos, Vietnam and Northern Thailand.

Subgroups

There are several significant Hmong subcultures varying by country. The two largest are the Hmong Der (translating to 'Black Hmong') and Mong Leng (translating to 'Green/Blue Hmong') In Thailand, there are also the White Hmong and Striped Hmong.

Black Hmong women wear their hair in a bun and wear dark blue and white pleated knee length skirts with embroidered borders while men wear a black or dark blue jacket without collar and have wide sleeves and cuffs. Both women and men wear a lot of jewelry made of silver.

Striped Hmong don black trousers with a dark jacket with embroidered collars and green, white and blue stripes on their long sleeves. White Hmong women wear long loose dark blue trousers with plain long sleeved jackets with embroidered collar flaps and a turban. On festive occasions, they wear a white skirt with stripes of embroidery down the front—hence their name.

Language

The language of the Hmong hill tribe people belongs to the Austro-Thai linguistic family of the Miao-Yao sub group.

Religion

In Thailand, Hmong believe in a mixture of animism and shamanism with ancestor worship. Villages have spirit shrines to protect from evil. The Hmong bury their dead and believe each person has three souls, and that upon death, one goes to heaven, one goes to be reincarnated and the other remains in the grave with the corpse.

Culture and lifestyle

Traditional rice growing is being replaced by other cash crops — cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes and strawberries — which were introduced as substitutes for opium growing.

Important festivals The most important festival of the Hmong hill tribe is the Hmong New Year celebrated in January.



Source: <https://www.green-trails.com/ethnic-minorities-in-northern-thailand/hmong-hill-tribe/>

Photo: Frans Betgem

Yao Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

From the late 1800s to the early 19th century, the Yao migrated from Southern China to Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. In Vietnam, Yao are called “Zao”. There are Red and Black Zao in Vietnam. In Thailand, many Yao live in Chiang Rai province. The Yao prefer high altitude dwellings. In a traditional Yao home you will find a communal living area, a few bedrooms, and a guest area.

Subgroups

In Laos, the Lanten is a major subgroup of the Yao hill tribe

Language

There are several languages spoken depending on the subgroup. Chinese characters are used rather than a written script.

Religion

In Thailand, primarily Buddhism mixed with traditional animistic beliefs.

Culture and lifestyle

Women wear long black jackets accented with woolen scarlet lapels, loose black pants embroidered with exquisite designs and a matching black turban. The intricate designs are unique facets to the clothing of each member of the Yao family. Babies commonly wear intricately embroidered caps. Men wear loose jackets that are accented with embroidered pockets and trim. During special events women and children often wear silver neck rings along with an intricate set of chains and ornaments. Jewelry is very popular and silversmiths are known for producing exquisite silver pieces which contributes to the economy.



The Yao typically grow corn and rice as their major agricultural crops, though they are known to grow other smaller crops as well. The Yao are adapting to Thai culture and agriculture and learning to produce a variety of new crops with each passing year. Opium farming is still relevant in some sections of Yao culture, though the tradition is on the decline.

Important festivals The most important festival of the Yao hill tribe is the New Year which falls on the same day as Chinese New Year.

Shan Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

In the Shan State of Burma, they comprise the majority of the population—between four and six million. In the early part of their migration out of today's Southwest China the Shan ruled over "Shan states" that are in today's China, Laos and Thailand as well as other parts of Burma.

The Shan have been engaged in an independence struggle that has led to intermittent civil war within Burma for decades. During the conflicts, many civilians have been forced out of their villages and fled to Thailand.

Subgroups

The main subgroups are Tai Yai; Tai Lü; Tai Khuen and Tai Nüa.

Language

Most speak Shan—a language part of the Tai languages that is closely related to Thai and Lao. Hsenwi Shan and Mongnai Shan, the two dialects, differ in the number of tones. The script is an adaptation of the Mon script but few are literate.

Religion

Mostly Theravada Buddhism. The Shan are one of the four main Buddhist ethnic groups in Burma.

Culture and lifestyle

Traditionally wet-rice cultivators, shopkeepers and artisans. The majority live in small, rural villages where they farm subsistence and cash crops such as rice and tropical and sub-tropical fruit and vegetables. Tea is also an important cash crop for the Shan

Important festivals The Baw-gyo Festival is an annual event held in the small town of Hsipaw in eastern Shan State. As Buddhism spread east from India this area of Burma was one of the first to which it was exported, and the Shan, among others, adopted its ceremonies — of which the Baw-gyo Festival was one. The festival survives to the present day and is one of the largest events in the Shan calendar — but its religious origin now plays a very small part. It has been replaced by Shan artisans who now sell alongside their traditional crafts the same mass-produced trinkets from China that are available worldwide.



Source: <http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=Shan>

Photo: [top] <http://www.thailandsworld.com/en/thai-people/north-thailand-people/shan-people-thailand> [bottom] <http://www.shanoc.com>

Lisu Hill Tribe



Where do they live?

China, India (primarily in Arunachal Pradesh), Myanmar and Northern Thailand. Many migrated to North Thailand from Burma during the last century.

Language

The spoken language belongs to the Lolo branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. Two scripts are used and the Chinese Department of Minorities publishes literature in both. The oldest and most widely used one is the Fraser script developed by missionaries in the 1920's. The second script, developed by the Chinese government, is based on pinyin.

Religion

A mix of ancestor worship and spirit propitiation. The Lisu believe all animate things have an associated spirit as do some inanimate objects. Important spirits are those related to ancestors, water, mountains and villages. They are not preoccupied with the after life and see the spirit world as something for the present, to be dealt with on a daily basis. They believe spirits have emotions and flaws—the same as humans.

Within each Lisu house is an ancestral altar. In each village, there is a “village guardian spirit shrine” located in a roofed pavilion above the village. Women are forbidden to enter.

Culture and lifestyle

Women wear brightly colored tunics over long pants. Some of the older generation continue to wear tasseled turbans on their heads.

Occupying villages at 1,000 m or higher, Lisu keep livestock, cultivate corn and grow vegetables. Rice is grown at lower altitudes and the opium poppy at over 5,000 feet. Some members of the Lisu hill tribe have been involved in the drugs trade. Most notorious is Lao Ta Saenlee, a lieu hill tribe headman from Lao Ta village near Thaton. Most Lisu live close to water because they believe water has a special power. Unlike other tribes, they don't usually live in stilted houses. Villages are located so that the inhabitants can maintain some independence from the Thai authorities. At the same time, these villages are relatively close to the market so that the Lisu can trade.

Important festivals

The main Lisu Festival is the New Year festival which is on the same date as the Chinese New Year and is celebrated with music, feasting and drinking. People wear large amounts of silver jewelry and wear their best clothes at these times as a means of displaying their success in the previous agricultural year.



Source: <https://www.green-trails.com/ethnic-minorities-in-northern-thailand/lisu-hill-tribe-history-and-culture/>

Photo: [Top] Steve Evans [Bottom] Frans Betgem

Pan-Southeast Asia Ethnic Minorities Culture Kit



Complimentary Library Materials

Hill Tribes

- The Hill Tribes of Thailand - Emmanuel Perve
- Slow Anthropology: Negotiating Difference with the Lu Mien - Hjorleifur Jonsson
- Southeast Asia: An Illustrated Introductory History - Milton Osborne

Karen

- Burma Culture Kit #2 : Ethnic Minorities
- English- Sgaw Karen Dictionary
- Drum English-Karen Student Dictionary

Hmong

- Miao Year [VHS] - William Geddes
- Folk Stories of the Hmong -Norma J. Livo
- Nine-In-One Grr! Grr! - Blia Xiong and Cathy Spagnoli

Refugees

- Forced to Flee: Visual Stories by Refugee Youth from Burma
- Fear and Sanctuary: Burmese Refugees in Thailand - Hazel J. Lang
- Nowhere to Be Home: Narratives From Survivors of Burma's Military Regime
- Restless Souls: Rebels, Refugees, Medics and Misfits on the Thai-Burma Border - Phil Thornton
- Conflict, Violence, and Displacement in Indonesia
- Refugees from Burma: Their Backgrounds and Refugee Experiences

Refugees in the United States

- The Gangster We Are All Looking For -Thi Diem Thuy Le
- The Dream Shattered - Patrick Du Phuoc Long and Laura Ricard
- The Best Place to Live [VHS] -Ralph Rugoff and Peter O'Neil