The Akha of Thailand

The Akha hill tribe people live in Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), China and Laos. Having originally come from Tibet over hundreds of years, the Akha number 400,000 with 70,000 living in Thailand. They are one of the region’s most colorful and vital hill tribe peoples and excellent farmers.

The Akha Heritage Foundation (Salem, Oregon) has worked for 13 years with the Akha people to protect their choices and defend their traditional culture, community and language.

Just recently the Foundation made presentations at the United Nations in defense of the Akha cause and human rights. The Akha Heritage Foundation will be developing funding to support the travels of Akha representatives to the next Permanent Forum in 2005.

The Akha in Thailand experience severe abuse and discrimination at the hands of the Thai government, army, police, the forestry department and the US financed “Drug War”. Documentation and photographs of these abuses can be seen in the contents section of www.akha.org. The Thai government takes away essential rice lands placing villagers in conditions of starvation, force the relocation of villagers to locations with no farm land, and allows the abuse of Akha prisoners. Hundreds of Akha languish abandoned in Thai prisons scattered across the country far from families and with no legal representation, often arrested for infractions or pleading guilty to offenses they didn’t commit to avoid getting a life sentence.

Missionaries threaten to completely eradicate Akha culture, religion and language. Making good on this promise, they have eliminated the culture in half of the 320 villages in Thailand. This is a far cry from good hearted assistance that church congregations think they are paying for.

Your interest and concern in spreading the word about the Akha struggle for freedom, human rights, and independence can make a difference in the safety of the Akha people.

We encourage you to discover the beauty of these unique mountain people and become a supporter of this valuable work.

For more information please look at our web site or contact us at the email address below.

Volunteers Wanted!

Info: The Akha Heritage Foundation
www.akha.org / akha@akha.org