

# The Drug War

## A war on Drugs and Terror or a War on People?

aye? Where have we heard this game before? Let me count the ways, Columbia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua.....always the war business.

### Drugs with feet?

There is much discussion of late as to who is responsible for the drugs, pills with feet walking out of labs, chemicals with wings, money with no name, those who claim to punish drug dealers. Argument is made over drug policy in the region.

There is no doubt that drugs are moving around in Thailand and that a few of these people loose their lives in gunbattles. But as to who is NOT in the drug business, only the devil knows this for sure. For any group to claim in a definitive way that THEY are not in the drug business is a emphatic before a fall.

### Just how many males?

How many men will be arrested for smoking opium or meth before someone realizes that this approach is not working? If we consider that US drug policy in Thailand is what drives the market then we must also consider that there really has been no limit in the US as to the number of people the government is willing to imprison in its supposed quest for law and order during drug prohibition. The "illegality of drugs" certainly drives much of the market as racial and class profiling drives much of the arrests. If Thailand is to follow its drug law mentor then it can expect to be building a huge prison industry, with millions of Thai men and hilltribe men incarcerated. It will be no problem to eliminate a large portion of the hilltribe men, strapped in poverty, from the villages by use of this equation. Government driven societies no longer seem to ask what is good for the people, just what is good for corporate society.

When people are given law and its enforcement rather than justice, where does it lead us?

### Doctors not soldiers

The current poverty, nutrition and drug cycle in the mountains concerning hilltribe villagers is surely not something that can be completely solved with a gun. With the general disregard of the hilltribe by the government, beyond exploiting them for tourism, one is not surprised.

### A war on people?

Random arrests in hilltribe villages, very little aid to the villages which are deeply impoverished, the use of numerous forces to continue to pressure the hilltribe in a comprehensive way and we soon have what looks more like a war on people than the equal distribution of the law.

Does it do any good for the government to supply even medical care when the villages are loosing their most basic grip on nutrition?



### The New Chiangrai Prison

Well, if you are hill tribe you got a good chance of ending up there. Many Akha complain of having meth pills planted on them while they are being searched. And who can say? There aren't any lawyers for the Akha or checks and balances on the system to make sure they have representation, so the cops can do what they like.

And there is a huge new prison in Chiangrai that is nearly a kilometer to the side, so there is enough room to lock up every Akha male in Thailand, and the brothels have room for other job opportunities for all the girls. Assimilation, I think some people call it.

### Bangklang Prison, Bangkok

We do not know how many Akha prisoners are located in Bangkok. We do know that some of Chiangrai's Akha prisoners were moved to Mae Hon Son prison for unknown reasons, which makes visits by their families in Chiangrai difficult.

## News

### More Army Camps In Akha Villages

An army camp whose troops were rotated out of Meh Maw after the killing of Ah Juuh, did not move out of the area, they just moved into the back of Bpah Cheeh Akha village two kilometers away.

New troops came to Meh Maw Akha to replace them there. Add one more army camp. The camps are located right adjacent to Akha villages and there are often problems between the soldiers and the villagers. The close location increases the pressure on the Akha villages. Villagers lose their privacy, have army trucks coming and going and soldiers wandering through the villages at random. The history of soldier Akha relations here in the mountains have not been good for a long time, lets hope they improve.

There still are not regular border patrols nor road checkpoints set up in this region by the army in order to control the flow of drugs by obvious means.

Villagers say that they also lack medicine for detoxification of drug addiction. There are no doctors working with the detoxification program in the villages, and the villagers generally do not trust the army to do it.

### Community Forestry Bill Flunks

Despite a valiant effort, and one of the first of its kind to pass legislation by communities, the Thai Senate threw out the Community Forestry Bill that would allow local communities to control and manage the sustained use of their local forests.

The defeat was seen by bill supporters as the unwillingness of the urban elite to allow poorer communities govern their local assets, often exploited by outsiders.

Not discouraged, supporters take the bill to the shop for retooling.

### Who Runs Outlook?

We have long noted that when the community forest rights are discussed in the Bangkok Post they are almost always discussed from the perspective of what appear to be the Christian Karen. However, the Akha case regarding community forestry rights would add additional weight to the need for the changes in the law, but we have yet to see an article on the problems the Akha people experience with the Forestry Department.

Neither do we see the Akha discussed in Sanitsuda Ekichai's column.

### Coffee, Tea and Tomatoes

Coffee is taking off in the Loi Chiang Akha area. Families are harvesting up to 4 and 5 thousand kilos after only having planted their coffee plants for three years. Less than 5,000 plants with an investment less than \$500.

Coffee beans are picked according to ripeness and size, cleaned and dried.

Tea is flourishing among the Akha of Prai ah Pai village in Ampur Mae Faluang. A village that wasn't relocated, they have built up a very large tea plantation that grows by the year.

Tomatoes for export area also doing very well at Loi Chiang Akha, trucked and sold to Malaysia and Singapore. Selling for up to 17 baht a kilo on the road entrance of the village to buyers who come in trucks from Chiangrai.

Ginger prices this year in the mountain are a low 13 baht a kilo, so many Akha are holding onto their ginger to replant it one more year as the price fluctuates on an every other year basis.

### Big Drop in foreign tourism

Maesai is a mess and the guest houses are empty. Many people coming up for a few hours to do visas. Restaurant service in Maesai is very poor. The cook at the Top North will cook for you sometimes.. That is if you can find the place, the street cluttered with carts, and the sidewalks no room to walk on. We give Maesai a big fat "Zero" for aesthetics. Used to be you could go sit on the bridge, have a look, but now you would be lucky to find it.

The Wang Tong has an ok breakfast and buffet, but in the evening there is only one restaurant, spendy, near the police station. All else is closed. Another reason nobody wants to spend the night in Maesai. With the roads good, now you can travel from Chiangmai to Maesai, do your visa and be back the same day, all good food on your arrival back in the capital of the north for the evening.

Many Thais are touring to Maesai. Yep, lots and lots of Thais coming to Maesai to visit Burma. Lots of good buys in Burma.

### Headman Mr. Ah Aw Murdered

In Meh Maw Akha, Ampur Mae Faluang, Mr. Ah Juuh was beaten to death by the army as told of in the Bangkok Post.

Mr. Ah Aw the headman was afraid to sleep at home for fear that he too would be killed.

As fate would have it, while traveling to Booh Saw Lahu, Mr. Ah Aw was grabbed by men who the lo

cals say were army. He has disappeared and his family and the Akha say he is dead. Army folks deny that they had anything to do with it. The Akha are told to live by the rule of law, yet have yet to see it uniformly applied.

### **Who As Terrorists?**

The US Government was a little divided as to whether or not it was going to classify a local hilltribe group as terrorists. Action was threatened, but then the US said it “had the wrong man” and flying bomber were no longer mentioned.

Pills flow, arrests are made of designated locals who would benefit from their sale, and the situation still is not considered a threat to national security or banking. Neither can people explain where money for massive houses in Maesai comes from.

To an outsider it might appear that the drug war is being used to get rid of hilltribe males, what we call profiling in the west. Hey, in America they got nearly every black male locked up at one time or another.

### **Wildfires Rage**

This year has been one of the worst fire years to remember, slash and grasslands, forests, being burnt

without consideration by passerby’s and whomever. Only a portion of the burning that took place can be considered for farming. Much of it was just burning for the sake of burning, polluting the skies of Chiangrai and causing lung congestion in adults and children. There was little sign of any enforcement or attempt to extinguish the fires.

### **Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine Not Safe For Women or Babies**

Throughout Thailand the World Health Organization (WHO) pushes the administration of tetanus toxoid vaccine to pregnant women under the guise of preventing tetanus disease. There might be some excuse for this vaccine under dirty conditions if one stretches the imagination, but most Thais give birth in hospitals. So are the hospitals that dirty? We think not.

But in the mountain villages the number of women and children who have been endangered by tetanus might be less than the number of women who have immediately miscarried after being vaccinated at their local clinic.

**continued.....**



### **Forced To Travel**

Akha Women travel as far as Bangkok to try and sell their wares. The farming situation in their villages is poor as government policy has been to plant trees in their rice fields rather than kill them outright. Village conditions are no less than slow moving genocide, families unable to hold together, young people unable to marry and sustain themselves, not enough land to farm because there must be too many resorts and beer gardens for people with money.

furthermore for many of the hilltribe, to have a vaccine is against their religion, particularly during pregnancy. The clinic people tell them that they will not get an ID card for their baby if they do not accept the vaccination three times during pregnancy. But we checked and they were being vaccinated during each pregnancy. Why?

Fetal deaths immediately after the vaccine?

### **Misc. Interest**

#### **What's Going on in the Triangle?**

Did you know that the golden triangle refers to the whole region, not just Sah Bruak?

Caves, the golden triangle, stop at the lounge of the Ban Boran, and check out their library behind the bar on hill tribes while you are at it.

Wang Tong has an ok 100 baht breakfast and lunch buffette, good salad, good food. Coffee and tea included, other drinks extra.

Sleepy Chiang Saen.

Chiang Khong

Doi Tung

The old market at Mae Chan.

#### **Maesai Post Office**

Anyone know why it is so far out? You nearly have to take a bus to get there, then you gotta do the turn around at the bus station and come back, maybe they need to call it the Ban Chong post-office? Convenience obviously means nothing to these people.

#### **For old timers:**

Do you remember when the streets of Maesai were dirt, or split boulevard? Some of us do, but now there is so much crap being sold from the burmese side at the end of the street near the bridge, that the restaurants near the bridge, the bridge and other nearby streets are no longer nice to visit. Great sidewalk, there somewhere, if you can see it. If you really shove your way around you can see the red stones, but there isn't anywhere to walk, and all the wannabee shop owners with a slave girl for a sales crew are all selling the same crap. No wonder so many of the guest houses are empty, no one wants to fight the traffic jammed up at the end of the street, and a thousand Burmese hawkers shoving everything in your face from zappo hammers that have a lawn chair that pulls out of the handle, to a blaster fan you can run for two seconds after you buy it on its batteries from China.

But you can still buy fantastic warm heavy blankets from Burma that are made in China for a fair price if you cross the bridge.

The restaurant crew changed at the top north, nice Chin guys, but they haven't got a clue yet, give em a year. The other guys went back to school.

#### **Visas, the office does flip flop?**

Depends who you are I guess. Some get told they have too many stamps, comments about the IMF, you from rich country, go to Laos. Others no problem. Just look at the phone number and fax number on the wall for the General in Bangkok if you get the run around, cause the law is anyone can check out, and anyone gets thirty days when they come back in. Period. Unless you got black listed, and that is a whole different matter. Try Chiang Saen.

#### **Big Road Developments**

Yes, that's right, huge new road to Haen Taek following the older course. The Hill tribe villages aren't getting much of a chance. Used to be nice to visit them deep in the environment, but now many Thai and Chinese concrete houses, churches and shops are coming in and a horde of roads, and soon it will just be one big town. The Akha, Lahu, Lisaw, are all loosing their lands to these development schemes and Thailand is the poorer for it, once a haven for environmental trekking, now most of the remote villages have been relocated and destroyed.

#### **Rubies: Still a good deal in Maesai.**

Yes, if you are careful and know where to shop and what you are looking at you can buy reasonably priced Monshu heat treated rubies in Maesai. But watch out, all is not as it looks.

Burmese Building Casino Across Maesai River in Tachilek. The Golden Allure Resort is being constructed close to the river. Foundation going in now after months of pounding in concrete pilings. The area used to be under water half the year.

#### **Villages Burn in Dry Season Heat Wave**

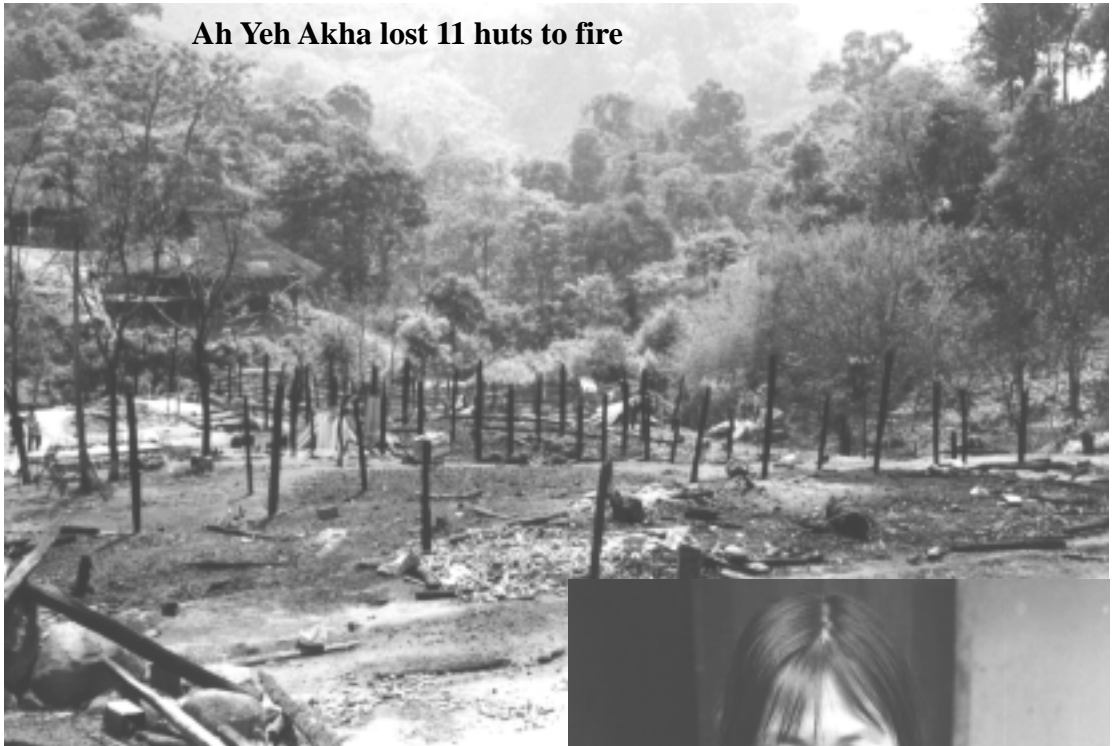
The village of Ah Yeh in the Wiang Pa Pao area had one hut catch fire and 11 were destroyed in a funnel of flame right through the center of the village and up the hill. A few people saved a couple blankets, the fire striking mid day in an old woman's house. She was over 90 and felt terrible about the accident, crying. Ginger crops stored below the huts were destroyed, leaving only cooked ginger, ashes and stubs of hut posts to remain. The village wasted no time rebuilding huts at new locations, as the Akha

do not rebuild a hut at the same place as where one was destroyed by fire.

The upper village of Bpah Cheeh Akha caught fire mid day as well, burning nearly all the village with the loss of 15 huts. They have already completely rebuilt of bamboo.

In Pah Nmm Akha there was a fire that took off in one hut but one man was able to beat the flames down with a jacket before they got all the way to the thatch roof. In his haste he ended up burning his foot in the process when the synthetic jacket he was using melted and stuck to his foot.

### **Ah Yeh Akha lost 11 huts to fire**



### **Embroidery for fancy jackets**

Fancy Akha jackets don't just happen, they take lots of work and it starts with carefully sewing together many decorated strips of cloth.

Akha women can be seen embroidering as they walk out a trail to the woods, sit on a porch, or wait in the shade. Their embroidery work is durable, colorful, imaginative and abundant. From jackets to shirts and leggings. Handbags are also well known and purchased by many Thais and foreigners as practical items that look good going anywhere.

Though many items are made of cloth that is bought in stores, up in Burma the Akha still weave and dye traditional cloth on in a brew of whiskey and leaves. The cloth is repeatedly dyed, the best cloth up to 35 times, drying in the sun between each dipping in the pots of dye. Cotton is still grown in some Akha villages in Thailand.



# The Government Feels The HEAT In Chiangmai Not Just a Tourist Attraction in the Land of Smile BUT REAL PEOPLE!

## By Truck To Chiangmai

Akha's by the hundreds flooded into Chiangmai more than a month ago to stage a protest at the Chiangmai provincial center. Coming from every province in the north and some supposedly even from Burma to give support, the Akha assembled in front of the Government Office to make their voices heard, regarding land rights, village evictions and ID cards.

And they stayed for more than a month, ferrying food and people. Incredibly hot and with no facilities, the Akha camped out in front of the provincial office.

Teamed together with the Thailand Assembly for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples the Akha presented a list of demands to stop forced village relocations, to speed up the ID card process for citizenship and to abolish the citizenship deadline in August that

threatened some 50,000 of Thailand's more than 70,000 Akha with deportation.

## ID CARDS

20,000 Akha have ID cards. 50,000 don't. The government has done little to speed up the process, while promising deportation for those who don't make the deadline.

## LAND RIGHTS

The Akha are in constant dispute with the forestry department about its assumptive laws that forestry owns all the forest of Thailand. The Akha have farmed in the mountains for over a hundred years in some locations and if not forced to relocate have





substantial investment in terracing, fruit trees, coffee plantations and honeybees.

## **FORCED RELOCATIONS**

The Thai Government has threatened to relocate 1,115 mountain villages which would include nearly all of 300 Akha villages in Thailand. Forced relocation is illegal but in the past the government has used many means of getting past this problem. More than a hundred villages have been forced to relocate in the past ten years into certain poverty in the lowlands where they are not prepared for the heat, have neither place to live or grow food.

### **Results?**

The Government is making promises it will review laws, remains to be seen.



## The Season To Rebuild Houses

Every spring in the dry season is the time for repairing or building new Akhha houses. A village task, everyone goes to work, first on your house, then on mine, till all the work is done. Few nails are used, rather everything is either notched together or tied with bamboo strips. Houses are of good size and well protected from the weather, elevated for good air, dry and cozy on the inside. An average sized Akha village may have 40 to 50 such houses while a big village may be over 300.



### New Shingles

Each house takes hundreds of big grass shingles and everyone gets into making these. The shingles are made of grass woven onto a wooden strip. The grass coming up each year near the farming areas. First the grass must be cut and cleaned of short pieces with a wooden rake, then tied in tall bundles which are carried back to the village and saved till the spring. Then when hut repair and building time comes the grass is soaked in water to make it soft to bend and work. Akha houses are wood, bamboo and grass.



## The Old Rice House

The rice house doesn't get rebuilt as often, sometimes a new layer of mud. Dead bamboo is gathered for fire wood and stored under the rice house.

The floor of a hut may be split bamboo, and the dividing post of the hut is always wrapped with stems of rice before the construction proceeds, tying the house to the rice and the fields as everything is tied together in the Akha way of life.

Building just one hut can take four or five days. The Akha prefer to build on the hillside where there is a view and good wind as compared to the flat tops of mountains or down in lowlands.



**NOT AKHA**

# Fools Destroying the Environment

## A Creek - An Entire Eco System - Disappears Near Pasang, Chiangrai

The backhoe has taken out an entire eco system along this creek for kilometers. Bamboo, trees, brush, plants of every kind were torn and trampled and burned till there was nothing left but a nude trickle of water in what had been home to frogs, fish, birds, every imagineable water creature and

bug. A place for children to discover and play was all destroyed with the stroke of a pen.

The roadside view is now charred and destroyed trees, upturned bamboo stumps. The shade for the road and break from the wind is gone.

Workmen shape the dirt into a great "V" and lay its walls with cement to rush the water to someone who needs it more than plants, animals, birds, creatures and children.

While the adjacent hilltribe are endlessly blamed for damage to the environment, what is done knowingly and foolishly by those in power is a crime of incredible proportions.



**No  
Fish**

**No Frogs  
No Crabs  
No Birds  
No Bamboo  
No Trees  
And Sure  
No Kids!**

**Concrete them walls!**



## Art or Exploitation?

Many art galleries exist on selling artwork copied from photographs of the Akha people and other hilltribes. The hilltribe peoples see little if any money from what is made off their images in a land where they are not welcome and few of them have land rights or ID cards.

The image without a face - any face will do - emphasizes the objectification of the hill peoples.

Sold for their tribal and loose sexual stereo-types, pictures of hilltribe peoples can fetch hefty prices.

Most interesting of all are the signs in the Chiangmai nightmarket galleries filled with the copies of hilltribe peoples: "No Photography". Beware, the copiers would not be copied!



### Akha Boys

Practical and inventive, two Akha boys make small containers from the layers of a banana tree which they will take with them into the jungle to hold the insects they collect. A piece of the banana tree layer is folded together, tied with a fine bamboo strip and a little dirt is tamped into the bottom. The top is covered with a piece of cloth. The sides are slick and the insects are not able to climb out.

Some insects are caught with long sticks to which a sticky tree sap has been applied. This is particularly useful in catching the buzzing bug called "ah geeh chah kaw".

The bugs are oil fried and eaten.



**Wasted government money, destroyed rice lands, importing alien specie trees, all leads to not enough land to farm.....**

## **PINE, POLICY and Huuh Gah Akha**

### **THE TREES OF GENOCIDE**

One might come to wonder after a while why the government took so much time destroying the lives of people? Why go to all the trouble to plant pine trees in people's rice fields year after year, displacing them and destroying their lives when you could burn their villages in a day? The results of both were sinister and tragic, but the latter makes no secret about the sentiment.

On thousands of rai of land in Chiangrai and other provinces, much of it hilltribe rice lands, the forestry department year after year plants non native specie geno-mod pine trees. All other species are destroyed. Even if this was a policy of reforestation it would be a stupid policy. Allowing the native jungle to grow back protects a much greater bio-mass and is much less prone to fire. Natural jungle supports a vast network of plants and animal species while the pine plantations support only pine, dry out the soil and rip off the Thai public.

Akha villages such as Huuh Gah Akha in Ampur Mae Faluang of Chiangrai Province get no say in

the decision, and there is no coordination with the villagers on forestry protection. While there are plenty of lands for incoming flower farmers, pig farmers and land speculators, the hilltribe are lucky to hold onto the food lands they have.

Or as one official said, "This is how we take the land away...." referring to taking land from the hilltribe rather than running a model forestation program. The condition of the pine and the care of the jungle was not near as important as a fast growing specie that could be used to take over farm lands. Villages such as Huuh Gah Akha face displacement and impoverishment. Many women of Huuh Gah Akha have had to go to cities such as Chiangrai, Chiangmai and as far away as Bangkok to sell inexpensive goods on the street to make up for the loss of the farmlands. They are forced to live in cramped conditions, spend long hours on the streets and many days away from home and children in order to gain some form of income. They are treated poorly by shop owners and police while just trying to stay alive.



**POOR PLANNING**

**Poorly placed culverts lead to road washout and waste government money**

**The hilltribe are seldom consulted**

**ARROGANCE**

# IGNORING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE

**BAD POLICY**

Forestry has planted this gen-mod pine on Huuh Gah Akha rice lands. The pine itself is not very valuable, but destroys the environment and the Akha village.

## DESTROYS LAND

Two Huuh Gah Akha women try to sell small handcraft items to tourists in Chiangmai night market. Far away from home, their families and hardly related to the food security they used to enjoy.



Huug Gah Akha Women preparing a field for planting corn on the little land they can find to farm



## DESTROYS LIVES

# Missions of Destruction

## What If.....

### Missions And Missionaries Were Not Who They Claimed To Be?

We all know that missions are really about colonialization and race, yes RACE. But what if it was even more interesting than that? What if the missions in South East Asia were actually chief players in the American network to gain access to and export for distribution hundreds of millions, no, BILLIONS of dollars in heroin to western markets from the lonely backroads and mountain villages?

What if that was what Paul Lewis the American Baptist Missionary in Burma was actually there for? A CIA plant, an Air America plant, part of a very large heroin operation? Now if that could fund huge cloak and dagger projects around the world it could also fund a heck of a lot of promotion of missions and mission agendas, things like taking away people's children instead of helping them raise them on their own?

So what would you do with all that opium? What if you took it somewhere else and cleaned it up a little till it turned white? Then you called it heroin. Then you got all your other buddies to put your competition in jail? And then what if you kept it all financed, I mean the cash coming in to get the goods out by running a bank in Australia called the Nugan Hand, and you carted the cold cash (before the days of ATM) from there to Burma and other purchase locations?

And then what if while you preached the "gospel" to Akha villages you also spread the "word" in America so that they would dig deep that Sunday evening and write a big check for your work of taking people's kids away and sterilizing their women (since you got none of your own). And while doing all this you were really busy flooding the streets of America with heroin? Now that would be real red white and blue of you now wouldn't it?

Now you might need the Akha poor so that until this day they have few options but to grow the opium that continues to supply that heroin? Cause wouldn't do to have them all up and start raising coffee instead and leave you in the cold?

But you could still preach how good it was to convert the Akha away from drugs, smoking opium and things like that?

Then while you spouted anthropology and the Akha you could keep press ganging their villages into the "Christan" fold?

Sounds like it worked pretty good?

People always did wonder where all their money came from?

Why would we be surprised?

## How Missionaries Divide a Village

One must start out by asking what is the premise of missions? Converts, converting people to think like themselves. Like Jesus, no, maybe only in part, but chiefly like western culture, and often this means like American Culture, like WHITE American Culture.

So the further one looks the logic and justification for interfering in another person's society becomes less and less, and the rationalizations and arrogance become more and more.

Not to be dissuaded, missionaries often find themselves in a kind of "convert contest" and must go to great length to make sure that they continue to make the prescribed progress for reporting back to sponsors and mission boards or supporters.

They soon find themselves running no less than a religious business.

Villages do not readily choose to give up their culture no matter what people from the outside may assume, and so when we look closely at what actually happens that a village or half a village would convert we find very specific events. Villages do not convert by all the people deciding that they now want to stop being who they are and have always been. What we find is that often the most contentious person in the village opts to be the new village pastor, the new dissenter, the new divider of brethren. Paid to take the job either in money or rewards or both, the dissenter then is rewarded for each house he can pull under his sway and get to break away from the rest of the village. Villagers are made promises and told information that they have no way of verifying. But the people directing from outside the village make sure that moves are taken so that once the culture is destroyed in the village it can never return. This is done by making sure that everything about the culture is villainized, that a replacement language is brought in, that the people in the village abandon anything that looks traditional as evil, the cause of all unhappiness and human illness. No matter that they may find out that they were lied to. The village does not fall in one piece, the dissenter convinces one family after

## Missions of Destruction

another to break away, with a little pressure or a lot as required. Often there are fights, but with the flaunting of money and power the dissenter can hold onto the effort. Villagers are promised help for their poverty, food subsidies that almost never come through, and that things will get better as a solution to what afflicts them in the way of poverty and lack of human rights, exploitation. Of course the cause or solution of these problems is never once addressed by the dissenter or the American Missionaries who back him. There are very few Akha villages which can be seen to have converted where outside money was not used via an Akha middle man, a sellout, an Akha elite, who for considerable financial reward above his peers, will make the village into a religious commodity for the use of the powerful religious franchisers living and working in the Chiangmai and Chiangrai area of Thailand. Hilltribe peoples are seen as fair game for missions on the part of the Thai government, so the abuses of this power go unchecked by local authorities.

Upon conversion of part or all of a village the young people, and children, particularly the young women are taken out of the village to the mission boarding schools. Few can explain where these young women go as few of them ever end up back in the village or married to an Akha young man. The result is that many Akha young men have no young women to marry. The fifth amendment on the Geneva Convention on Genocide makes it illegal to take people from one group, as in their society and culture, and make them members of another group. Yet this is what the western missions do in northern Thailand on a daily basis at the expense of the culture of the Akha people. To support the Akha villages as who and what they are would be beyond the thinking of these exploiters.

### Further Mission Tactics

Akha are blamed for smoking opium. As a great moral error. This is so often said by non Akhas and missionaries. "We must help them change" it is said. Nothing is said of the Christian British who brought the opium here and exploited so much of Asia with it, nothing less than a form of genocide. Nothing is said of the incredible wealth they made off opium. Nothing is said that now, having made their money off this scourge, they do nothing to undo what they have done to so many poor people. The western memory is so prone to amnesia about what it has done.

Against this backdrop zealous western missionaries prey on impoverished Akha villages telling the Akha that it is because of their culture that they are poor and that as soon as they abandon their culture and become "Christian" they will find prosperity.

The missionaries themselves do not live or stay long in the villages and go back to comfortable and costly compounds in Chiangrai and Chiangmai. These same missionaries are not at all open to cultures other than their own nor to the fact that what they are preaching in the villages, the changes that they are forcing on the Akha, are products of their own western culture and theology and have very little support from the Bible and the teachings of Jesus himself. The missionaries are almost always white. The missionaries are very racist.

Bordering on the fanatic they destroy the traditional ways of doing things in village after village. This weakens the Akha, causing a domino effect. The missions will not be able to catch all the wounded fallout but are oblivious to this fact.

Often the missions claim the children they take are orphans. This may not at all be true. Extended Akha families take very good care of Akha who have lost their parents, and support to the families and the village, in the village context is much more valuable. But the missions refuse to do this, because they will not work with the Akha if it does not line up with their misguided goal of forcing them to convert, forcing them to stop being who they are, Akha.

However slowly or long they must work, it is their goal to convert every last village. Missions have become more sensitive about this criticism. No, they haven't changed, they just are more willing to pay Akha people to do the dirty work for them. They have created a Christian Akha Elite for this job, rich with western rewards for their services to the central missions.

They can give lipservice and play smoke and mirrors about the culture all day long, as they are now doing, but their agenda to eliminate the culture remains unrepentant, unchanged. Whatever they would leave in tact, it would always be the subservient fragment.

If persuaded by the missionaries to abandon their culture the Akha will no longer find its support and face increasing hardship. Villages and families are and will continue to be split. Villages which find

## Missions of Destruction

problems with the missionary approach are labeled as “bad” villages and deserving of any hardships which they might face. Missionaries repeatedly demonize the Akha with shallow logic and claim that they are “under the power of darkness and bondage” suggesting therefore that destroying their culture is justified. They have little proof of this, especially as compared to their own society and uncontrolled appetite for wasteful consumption.

As quickly as possible the numerous mission groups impose large church buildings in a dominant spot in the village and place their name on it as if to claim the village. After all, that is what they are doing. You can go to <http://www.akha.org> to see photographic evidence of these events. The Akha are then forbidden and discouraged from practicing their traditional culture. Traditional elders are pushed aside. We have very carefully documented these occurrences. These events are caused by the use of much disinformation although the missionaries themselves don't have much knowledge about Akha Culture and may not even be able to speak the language.

Rather than being clever enough to work with the culture as something that is not separable from the people themselves and help the people the missionaries insist that the culture be abandoned. Quickly they begin to remove children to the low lands for indoctrination at the large mission compounds. These youngsters are taken away from their families, villages and culture and will not soon be back. Some people feel that the Thai government has either encouraged this practice or intentionally overlooks it. In rare cases when the villages have been relocated to the low lands, wealthy missions are built amid poverty. The missionaries themselves seldom sharing in the grief of the people they claim they are there to serve.

Missionary practices are completely disregarding of the UN Draft on Indigenous Human Rights such as the Akha people having a right to their own culture, customs and religious beliefs. This would seem obvious, and is to most, most people except missionaries. Of the few missionaries who do locate in the Akha villages in the mountains, their efforts are relentless, without shame, in trying to get the Akha to abandon who they are. How these people can think that they can come here and do this, what they would never allow others to do in their home countries? Try and go to Seattle, or any other American

city with the stated public goal of converting the entire city to Hinduism? See how far that would get you? American missionaries can not admit the odious truth, that they want only religious freedom for themselves. Not for others.



### Sign Removal Fund!

### Help Take Down The Ugly Yellow Mission Signs!

### 100 Baht Takes Down One Sign!

The foreign missionaries have been placing religious signs high in trees around Akha villages. Something they wouldn't dare do in a Thai Village. But finally someone is taking all the signs down. Maybe the Thais like this idea. People should keep their religion to themselves. Should religion target a people by race? Like the hilltribes?

## Missions of Destruction

### Have You Ever Wondered?

- Where do all the Catholic girls go from Keng Tung?
- Why they call missions who claim to save the girls “Super Pimps”?
- Where do all the other mission girls go?

a. Many to prostitution jobs in Thailand. Who sells them? b. They make more off the girls than the other pimps would. c. No one knows and no one is able to tell.

### Just what could be done with all that money, for girls, for families.....for villages.

Morality, missions, drugs.  
Just who is doing who?  
Just who should be saving who?

### Dapa Tries for Remake

Dapa, the Development Agricultural Project for Akha continues to try and shake its image as a mission organization pushing conversion and destruction of Akha culture. Trying so hard, they have started Dapa Tours, sporting Akha culture. If people only knew what these people have always been up to. Originally set up and financed by the two coat missionary Paul Lewis, the organization has been anything but supportive of Akha culture or traditional Akha villages. Quite the contrary, while peddling himself on one hand as a qualified anthropologist, Paul Lewis pressed scores of Akha villages to abandon their culture. He also sponsored one of the homes well known for removing girls from their villages. Despite denials that they are no longer a mission organization, the people at Dapa could not confirm that they no longer push village conversions. Dapa is managed from a golf course we are told.

**Missionaries**  
**Take Away Akha Children**



### Meeh Naw Rgoueh Zurh Says:

“If you can’t help us without forcing us to change our culture and taking away our children to the cities where they forget who they are, then stay OUT of our villages. You aren’t welcome. We didn’t get here after 2500 years because we are ignorant, we just don’t see the world the way you all do and we have our obligations which come first.

Akha Traditional Law is very specific about our lives with each other and our lives with nature and God. It is important that our children learn it.”

### Would You Buy?

They come crawling up the mountain like lice and rising water, the most war like, the most racist, grasping all that they can find, living in a world of fast consumption and excess, ready to bomb all who oppose them, turning every natural resource into a countable commodity, and yet when they arrive, they tell the Akha that it is the Akha who are evil, and that THEY are here to convert the Akha to God. Did you hear that correctly?

## Missions of Destruction

### Fat Mission Folks Today's Topic: Starving Akha

#### Fat Bob Says

"Mission conversion of Akha people IS good. Without them we wouldn't have any excuse to live in Thailand and eat every day at the Pizza Company in downtown Chiangrai. We all get a nice new four wheel drive truck, a salary, health care, private schools for our kids, houses in town and plenty of time off. There is a lot we could teach the Akha about life, life like ours, fat in girth, short in performance, taking it easy in the shade. Some Akha did learn and they play golf with us every day.

The faster the Akha all assimilate and be good fundamentalist Christians the sooner they can be the boss like us too.

If you help finance one of our mission projects we can even help you find a spare girl or two. There are lots, after all we took nearly every last one out of the villages, away from their families and culture, leaving the smaller kids to fend for themselves. Yes, that is what you call job security, and boy do we have it."

Fat Bob works for the "Overseas Export Of Traditional White Values" Mission.

Their Theme Song is "Get It Right White Boy"

#### Canadian Church of Christ Digs Deep

The United Church of Christ in Canada is having to sell church property and dig deep to pay of settlements regarding abuse cases in the Church Mission Boarding Schools in Canada where so many native children were abused and separated from their culture.

We look forward to the days when similar cases make their way to the Thai Courts for the seizure of church and mission assets in Thailand.

### OTHER TRIBES

**Akha and the American Indians get it together on boarding schools and the missing and abused generations.**

### Akha and Aborigine's share a similar Background

#### Do You Know The Other Tribes?

There are hundreds of independent tribes such as the Akha around the world. But just here in Thailand there are quite a number. Lahu, Lisaw, Hmong, Mon, Karen, Yao, Palaung, **Karenni** or

#### Missions Continue to Take Akha Children

Under the guise of educating them, and rather than assisting their parents, the Christian Missions continue to remove children and young girls from the Akha villages. There is already a shortage of girls for the Akha boys to marry and this precedent long favored by the missions is not helping any. The missions mimic and preach the government gospel of assimilation without shame, curry favor for their visas renewals while living out difficult lives of austerity and meager diets in the large mission compounds. Just joking.

The missions can not answer as to what happens to these children when they grow up, what they loose from their culture, and the effect on the Akha as a people when there are not enough girls for the Akha boys to marry. Never trouble by these contradictions, the missions say that they see no problem. They are "doing God's will". Meanwhile scores of missionaries get on the band wagon to build mission boarding schools and take as many children as they can from the Akha people. We protest these actions.

Missions should help families to raise their own children and should not require them to abandon their culture and convert as they now require. The missions are chiefly from white anglo middle America on one side or Taiwanese Baptists financed from the US on the other side.

The total number of Akha children removed from the culture and "converted" in the Chiangrai area numbers in the thousands.

**\$Missionaries\$  
Are Big Business**

## Missions of Destruction

### Maesai Chinese Baptist Boarding School

#### The Chinese Baptists American Dollars?

The Chinese Baptist have built a massive boarding school south of Maesai in Ban Chong. The American based contractor said that the entire project cost \$500,000 US dollars just to build and that it would cost considerable to run. The school administration based in Maesai intended to remove up to 300 hilltribe children from mountain villages to place in this prison camp locted in a rice marsh.

On first interviewing a Simon at the Church headquarters in Maesai he denied that the Church had any hilltribe children at all. But when presented with video of children being made to work at 8pm in the evining to lay concrete in the old camp compound, he finally admitted that kids were hidden about but did not belong to the Chinese Baptist. But with further discussion Simon, the pastor at the Maesai Chinese Baptist Church finally admitted that the kids after all did “belong” to the church. But he asserted that the Thai government wanted all the hilltribe out of the mounatins anyway so they were just helping along the government wishes by taking children away from their parents under whatever guise. He felt that there was no contradiction

in the fact that they would not be taught in their own language but in Chinese, and that they would not be taught about their own culture or who they are.

Neither did he feel there was any contradiction between the teachings of Jesus to help others, and the fact that just the construction cost alone was enough to give 50 villages \$10,000 dollars apiece in coffee plants, tea plants or fruit trees. Enough to make villages financially independent so that.....perhaps, just maybe, the parents of all these children might keep them at home and raise the children by themselves without giving them up and sending them far away from their natural lives. Simon said that much money for this misguided project was donated by Bay area Chinese Churches.

**Missionaries**  
**Don't Follow The Teachings Of**  
**Jesus**



## Ginger Root Price Drops

8 baht a kilo as of September. 12 baht a kilo with winter.

Last year was 20 baht a kilo  
This year many Akha watched in sadness as their crops caught fever and died. What will the next months show?

## Village Fund

The Thai Village fund has made it to numbers of Akha villages, allowing families to get up to 20,000

baht for investment in projects. Buying a water buffalo, tea plants, coffee plants, a piece of land or starting some other small business. Fund is repaid after 10 months at low interest.

**Drug companies  
want to be the only ones  
to sell you drugs!**

## Drum Notes:

1. Current Akha Festival:

“Hkmm Shuuh Hkmm Meeh Mm Urh”

Festival of planting the new rice and giving red eggs (Did missions creep in long ago? One might think so.)

2. How Many Festivals Are there In An Akha Year?  
More than 13.

3. What are the four most important things in an Akha village?

The swing, the gate, The Law and of course the people.

4. How long is a festival dance?

Till the sun comes up.

Why?

Because it is a tradition, an ode to the rice which feeds them, and also a means of thanking the old people of the village that the young will carry on the traditions that have cared for them over the ages. It is a beat to their existence, steady and endless through the night, sending far off the continuous signal, that the Akha are still here.

5. How does an Akha woman know what bamboo pole has the valuable grubs in it without damaging the bamboo that is good?

The bamboo pole with the grubs in it has shorter sections to it because the grubs caused the growth to be stunted.

6. How do the Akha keep grasshoppers from eating the rice?

They pull blinders over the eyes of the grasshoppers, then they sing and dance into the night and send the grasshoppers away. They never kill the grasshoppers, cause then they would get angry and

many more would come back and eat everything.

7. How can Akha know you are coming to the village the next day?

Cause they saw you in a dream the night before.

8. How many of their grandparents names can an Akha tell you?

Back 57 generations to their first parent, name by name.



**Red eggs for everyone**



### **Where it hurts**

An Akha albino man from Mah Ngurh Akha Village shows how he broke his arm and then made a splint for it and applied a herbal dressing to help it heal. The ole arm is not as strong as it used to be. First the neighbor shot him in the arm by accident while hunting, and then while THAT was trying to heal the arm broke. He can't remember all the times he got stopped by the army in Burma for looking like a foreigner who snuck in. Not easy being an albino in these hills he claims.

## Spinning For Fun The Akha Spindle

The Akha spindle is a lot of fun for anyone interested in cotton fabrics and weaving or spinning. The Akha used to grow all their own cotton way up north in Burma on Loh Meeh Mountain, but since many have migrated to Thailand they do not farm cotton very often. However there is still one Akha village at least that farms cotton near Ban Song in Thailand.

The Akha take tufts of cotton and pull it into a thread, spinning the spindle off the right leg and dropping it while pulling and tightening the thread for uniformity. When the thread has a thick spot in it, the Akha woman will try to pull it into a thinner thread with her fingers but if it is too big a bunch in the thread then she will bite the thread with her teeth while pulling the excess cotton into a uniform thread. When the spindle fills up they roll the thread into a ball



and when they get many balls of thread saved up they wrap the thread all together to prepare it for weaving.

Looms are set up outside and the Akha normally weave strips of cotton that are 9 to 11 inches wide. Once a large roll of cloth is had, which may take many days, the cloth is then ready for dyeing.

In order to dye Akha cloth the Akha grow two kinds of plants and take the leaves from these plants which they mash and place as a paste in big earthen crocks. As they need dye they take paste, mix it in another crock with water and rice whiskey. The rolls of cloth are dipped in the crock and then hung on the fence to dry. A good color of deep blue or black requires that the cloth be dipped at least 35 times.

The Pah Meeh Akha village in Keng Tung is very well known for Akha cloth traditional

weaving and dying.

One “Lmm” is an Akha measurement and is about a 5 foot length of cloth. Cloth is sold by the Lmm.

## **Keep Your Eye On The Thread**



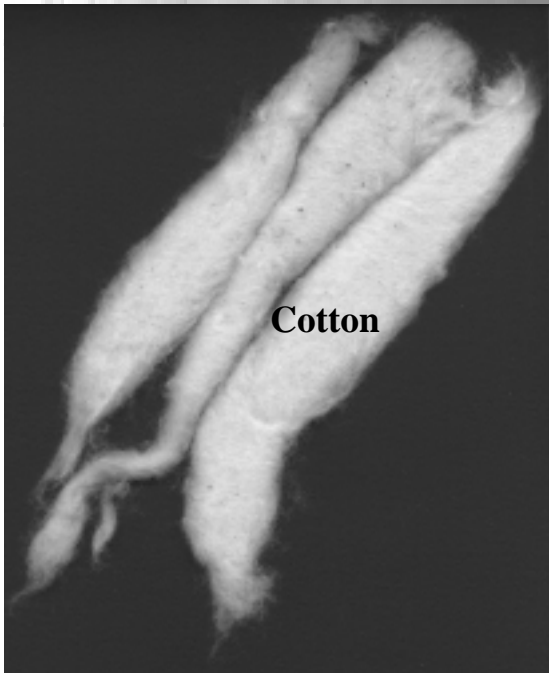
# Akha Spindle Set *Special* \$50 US

Order from [akha@akha.org](mailto:akha@akha.org)

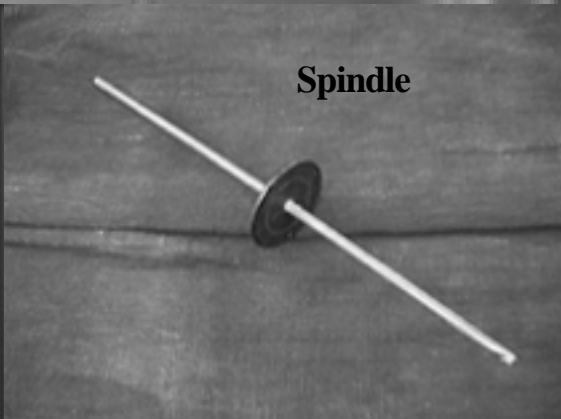
Delivery Included



Native Carry Case



Cotton



Spindle



## **Know The Issues**

Do you know the issues that effect the lives of the Akha people?

**Akha Culture:**

The Akha have a unique culture to their society. Outside forces are doing much to damage this culture.

**Land Rights:**

The Akha raise all the food they eat, in an excellent example of organic food and self sufficiency. Yet profiteering people would take away all their rice growing lands. Relocated villages and villages with not enough land left to grow their food on suffer from malnutrition and miscarriages. Land divestiture effects people who live and farm by land tenure systems rather than by court rulings and nation states.

**Human Rights:**

The Akha are often detained, many don't have ID cards, and they have no representation in court. A new prison has been built in Chiangrai, many Akha are being arrested to there, but what are the safeguards?

**Health Care:**

Still many Akha villages have no health care, nor know what their health rights are, such as refusing vaccinations which may not be good for them.

**Education:**

Akha traditional and oral education is being replaced by books, in other languages. Will the Akha get to retain their oral traditions and respect for elders?

**Missions:**

Rather than the good element one might think of, missions push conversion of villages, splitting families, offering money and gifts, destroying the culture of the people. Yet the converted villages of many years are havens of heroin, poverty and despair.

## **Tourism**

There used to be much good trekking to Akha villages, remote, pristine, even though the Akha didn't get much of the money the tourist paid. The Thais didn't mind that. But the Army took care of the problem and moved the Akha from the nicest loca-

tions, and that is why it is no more.

This action on the part of the army damaged Thailand's tourism reputation, ended a valuable exchange between the Akha and foreigners and opened up many areas for the UGLY kind of development. The old villages didn't need any development, they were beautiful and effective, safe living places as they were.

The western missionaries are also much to blame, they scorned the traditional Akha and try best they can to destroy their traditional ways and teach all the young people not to live or dress traditionally. We think missionaries suck big time and wish they all would go home, yesterday! When half the churches in America are empty, why do these morons have to come here to build more churches in an Akha village?

In some cases repeated exchanges between tourists and the Akha have left the Akha cast as pushy beggars, while there is a huge monetary gap between the wealthy visitor and the families which are lucky to find enough food. Please keep this in consideration. If you have a camera, pay for photos, be polite, get permission and keep in mind that your camera is a luxury they don't and won't have and may be worth more than a year's wages for them.

An Akha woman wearing a head dress often considers it a taboo to be photographed so check.

Villages are large extended Private Families for raising healthy children. We encourage the western visitor to respect this and realize that an Akha village is not the same thing as a "residential neighborhood". The life circumstances, beliefs and living conditions of the people are very different. If you go to visit the Akha, try to find out about their lives, read existing books, and come to understand their beliefs. Be very respectful of them, and never give the children candy and crackers. Far better to bring fruit. Please wash it first.

## **Long Neck Camps: Protest The Exploitation**

The "long necks" are exploited as a tourist destination in camps like owned property. Called long necks because of the brass rings the women wrap around their necks, which causes the collar bone to distort, giving the appearance of a long neck. Please do not go to see them and encourage this exploitation.

## Supporters of the Akha

### A Few Friends of the Akha:

Manna Jo - USA  
Martha Ture - USA  
EU  
Sharon Hainsfurther  
Ellen Bruno - USA  
Roberto Dati - Italy  
Lorenzo Hendel - Italy  
Massimo - Italy  
Hartmut Heller - FPCN Germany  
Siegfried Ziller - Germany

Join "Friends of the Akha" and start an education group in your area.

### To Join The Akha Weekly Journal by Email Send from your email:

akhaveeklyjournal-subscribe@yahoo.com

## The Akha Way Video

A video about the lives and times of the Akha people, with compelling footage and discussion about their struggle to survive.

Filmed in Thailand and Burma over a period of three years from within the Akha community this video is an introductory trip into Akha Land.

**\$50 Donation**  
**akha@akha.org**

Specify PAL or NTSC format.

Or you may send a check or money order directly to:

The Akha Heritage Foundation  
PO BOX 6073  
Salem, OR 97304  
USA

**Be Sure To Visit**  
**<http://www.akha.org>**  
**for a large collection of**  
**information on the Akha**

### Recommended Reading:

**Meet the Akha**

**The Akha: Guardians of the Forest**

**The Politics of Heroin in South East Asia**

**Crimes of the Patriots**

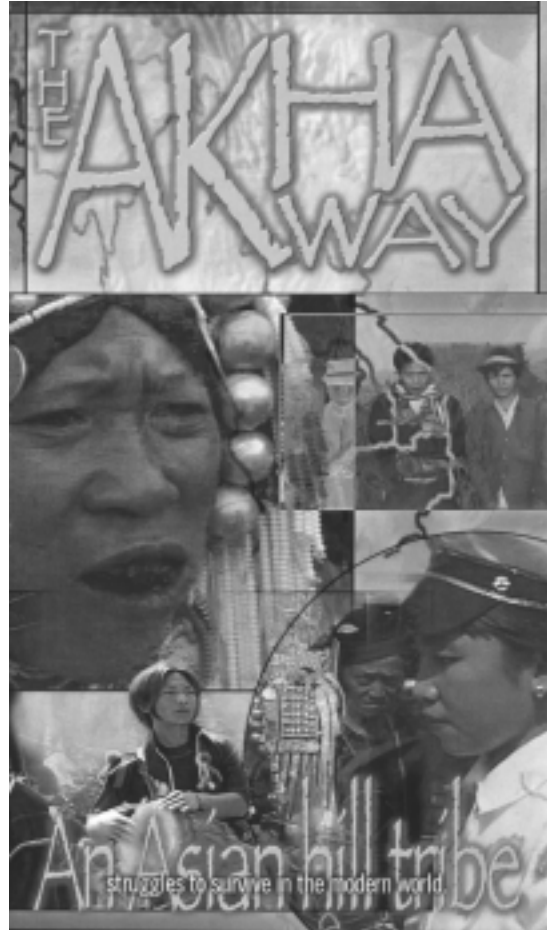
**Barry and the Boys**

### Indigenous Organizations

**FPCN**

**Friends of People Close To Nature**

In March Hartmut Heller with FPCN Germany visited to Chiangrai province to see what was happening to the Akha people with particular note of the village relocations, poverty and the placement of expensive churches in their villages forcing abandonment of traditional culture.



## Your Donation Will Help

Your Donation will help further the work of this project.

A monthly pledge and donation or a one time gift to help with a project will benefit many people in an Akha village.

I would like to donate:

\$10 _____	\$100 _____	_____ One time	_____
\$20 _____	\$500 _____	_____	_____
\$50 _____	\$1,000 _____	_____ Monthly	_____

Donate funds for the following items:

Vitamins _____	First Aid Medicine _____
Blankets _____	A village School _____
Fruit Trees _____	Akha Books _____
Well _____	Fish Farm _____

## Join "Friends of the Akha"

Friends of the Akha is a support group of people living in Thailand and around the world who want to help the Akha to survive and have the right to choose their way of life.

From supporting direct projects to advocacy for change, these people support the Akha cause.

Get INVOLVED! Send an email to [akha@akha.org](mailto:akha@akha.org) for details.

### Other Ways You Can Help:

Make a trip to the villages with us.

We are in need of the following materials:

Surgical Tape

Cotton

Gauze Patches

Band aids

Multiple vitamins including Folic Acid

Pens, Pencils, erasers, lined paper writing books

Vegetable seeds of any variety

Blankets

Activisms, contact us for details.

Join the Akha Weekly Journal email list.

[akhaweeklyjournal-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:akhaweeklyjournal-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**In Thailand contact us at  
[akha@akha.org](mailto:akha@akha.org)**

### Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities to volunteer and help in the villages. From working with the village visitation circuit to actually working on projects in the villages. Village projects may include helping to build a road, digging a well, helping to improve trails, building a school, toilets etc.

Volunteers are required to help sponsor projects as part of their involvement. Sponsoring a project can be more satisfying if a little fundraising is done before arrival in Thailand.

### Donations:

Made by check or money order may be sent to:  
The Akha Heritage Foundation  
PO BOX 6073  
Salem OR 97304 USA



Traditional Akha women and Nyeeh Pahs meet for a festival in an Akha village during one of the hottest days of the dry season just before rice planting.

A sign explains in Thai a point the missionaries still don't get. They are destroyers of traditional culture. Where ever the signs appear, someone works hard to take them down quickly if they can.







## **Welcome To The Akha Mountains of Northern Thailand**

### *Inside*

Read about the project, about the work with the Akha Hill Tribe, the unique life and times of these mountain people. Their needs are great, but also their lessons to the world. You will find stories from their villages, about the tools they use, the fields they farm, their ceremonies, songs and dances and the precarious political situation about the environment they live in. Are they mountain villains, or warehouses of knowledge being lost?

Find out how notorious western missions rewrite their story, relegating their indigenous knowledge to the dustbin of history, a loss for the Akha and all of us.

You can take a trip to a village via the photos, or come travel by truck. Take your pick, but there will be no lack of events, adventure and food for thought in the lives of these people.

There are videos available and you can join a newsletter mailing list by sending us an email to [akha@akha.org](mailto:akha@akha.org).

Much of the wilderness tradition of the Akha has been lost over the last ten years. Inside you will get glimpses into their desperate struggle to keep from being over run, relocated and forgotten. Take interest, come to understand the issues and find out how you can help assist these people.

### **Akha Journal**

**Beware of those who protest loudly for THEIR right to practice their own religion but would gladly deny that SAME RIGHT to others of different color and race!**