



A GUIDE TO THE
AKHA PEOPLE

The Akha people have originated in Yunnan province of southwest China. Over the last century they have migrated southward with a total population of over 900,000+ which is now spread throughout Eastern Myanmar, North Thailand, Northern Laos, North West Vietnam and Yunnan province China.

There are four major Akha groups: U-law, Law-mi, Pa-mi, and the A-keu. Each group has their own dialect but all can speak the Akha language in general. Each sub group of the Akha also dresses differently from the other and these are noticeable by the headdresses of the ladies.



Akha population - 900,000+ (excluding Hani).



Akha religion is a combination of animism and ancestor worship.



The language has two recognized scripts, the Roman and Thai.



The principal village authority is the Dzoema; its organizer and perhaps its founder, he is the religious leader & interpreter-judge.



The Akha people were formerly slash and burn cultivators, many still are. They grow mountain rice and a variety of vegetables.



2.8% of the Akha people are Christian.



The Akha people have a great sense of interest in, and a remarkable knowledge of, their ancestors. Many of them are able to recite over 60 names of their male ancestors. They keep an ancestral altar in their homes, at which food and wine are offered up at important times such as New Year and after new rice harvest.



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