



A GUIDE TO THE KAREN PEOPLE

The Karen people have lived in Burma and Thailand for hundreds of years. Fighting against the Burmese government since 1948, a war that has killed thousands – tens of thousands living in refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border and now distributed into many countries.



Population: 3-5 million in Myanmar & 600,000 in Thailand.



A desire for harmony is a basic theme in Karen cultures.



In the Thai mountains they are farmers – cash crop farming.



In Thailand, around 20-25% are Christians and 75-80% are Buddhist/Animists.



The Bible and a hymn book have been available for a long time (160 years).



The Thai school has a strong influence, changing Karen culture.

Most Karen have stopped ancestor worship (aux xae). Many have become Christians or Buddhists with animistic practices. Faithfulness in marriage is traditionally a high value – in many areas the husband goes to live in the house/village of his wife.

