

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Laos

Snapshot Section

Country Name: Lao People's Democratic Republic / Sathalanalat Paxathipatai Paxaxon Lao

Country Founded in: Received independence from France on July 19, 1949.

Declared a Communist state December 2, 1975.

Population: 6,677,534 (July 2008 est.)

Government Type: (national, regional and local) Communist state

The Country is divided into 16 provinces (Attapu, Bokeo, Bolikhamxai, Champasak, Houaphan, Khammouan, Louangnamtha, Louangphrabang, Oudomxai, Phongsali, Salavan, Savannakhet, Viangchan, Xaignabouli, Xekong, and Xiangkhoang), 1 municipality (Vientiane), and 1 Special Zone (Xaisomboun)

Geography/location in the world: South East Asia (South of China and between Thailand and Vietnam)

Number of people groups: approximately 140

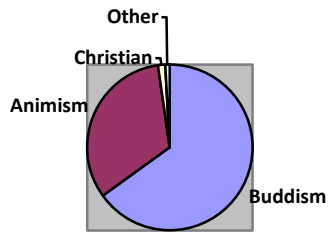
Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and % of population: Buddhism 65%

All religions and % for each:	Animism	32.9%
	Christianity	1.3%
	Other	0.8%



Government interaction with religion: Although Laos has made progress in its tolerance toward Christianity in the past few years, Laos still ranks 9th on the Spring 2007 Open Doors World Watch List, a bi annual report of the level of religious freedom and persecution of Christians.

Source:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html#Govt>

http://www.opendoorsuk.org/downloads/wwl_downloads/WorldWatchList.pdf

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html>

**Mission Atlas Project
Asia**

**Laos
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Sathalanalat Paxathipatai Paxaxon Lao**

Demographics (July 2008 estimate)

Population: 6,521,998

Age Structure: *0-14 years:* 41%
 15-64 years: 55.7%
 65 years and over: 3.1%

Median age: *total:* 19.2 years
 male: 18.9 years
 female: 19.5 years

Population growth rate 2.344%

Birth Rate: 34.46 births / 1000 population

Death Rate: 11.02 deaths / 1000 population

Life Expectancy at Birth: *total population:* 56.29 years
 male: 54.19 years
 female: 58.47 years

Total Fertility Rate: 4.5 children born / woman

HIV/AIDS – adult prevalence rate: 0.1% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS – people living with aids: 1,700 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS – deaths: less than 200

Source:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html#Govt>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html>

Language

Lao, the official language, can be broken down into five main dialects: Vientiane Lao, Northern Lao (Luang Prabang), North-Eastern Lao (Xieng Khouang), Central Lao (Khammouan), and Southern Lao (Champasak).

Although Laos is a relatively small country in size and population, its people speak over seventy different languages. These can be lumped into four large groups:

- (1) Tai (also known as Daic), accounting for 71% of the population
- (2) Mon-Khmer (a branch of Austro-Asiatic), accounting for 24.1% of the population
- (3) Hmong-Mien (also known as Maio-Yao), accounting for 4% of the population
- (4) Tibeto Burman, accounting for 1% of the population

English and French is also spoken as a second language in some areas.

Sources:

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=LA)

http://www.mpi.nl/world/persons/private/enfni/Enfield_ELL2_Laos_lg_situation_2004.pdf

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0867804.html>

Language map of Laos from SIL

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_map.asp?name=LA

Society/Culture

Because of its ethnic diversity, Laos maintains a rich and varied culture that is very different from Western culture. The head is considered to be sacred and should never be touched; the feet are considered to be unclean, so touching them, gesturing with them, or otherwise drawing attention to them is considered uncouth and extremely offensive. Shoes should never be worn indoors.

Respect should be shown to the elderly and to monks by keeping one's head lower than theirs. Lao culture values balance and peace, so any behavior that shows lack of control is frowned upon or feared. Cleanliness is highly valued, so one's appearance should always be neat and fresh. Shouting for any reason is considered unacceptable and even upsetting.

Also, affection should not be a public display; modesty and respect are always the rule. The traditional Lao greeting is to raise one's hands in a praying gesture and to say hello: "Sabai Dee." The higher one raises their hands in this gesture, the greater the amount of respect shown to those one is greeting.

Source:

<http://www.visit-laos.com/before/dos&donts.htm>

<http://www.asia-planet.net/laos/people.htm>

Women

One of the most fascinating aspects of Lao culture is their high view of women. Traditional family structure is matrilinear, and the majority of the population still adheres to this tradition. The youngest daughter is the one who inherits, and she is responsible to care for her parents in their old age. Women enjoy almost complete equality with men and are permitted to participate in nearly every aspect of social life.

Sources:

<http://www.suppressedhistories.net/matrix/laos.html>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

Festivals

Lao people celebrate numerous festivals throughout the year that correspond with the lunar calendar. Many of these festivals are Buddhist; usually offerings are made to monks and to deceased ancestors. These festivals generally take place at a local wat, which is the Buddhist temple and residence of monks. Other traditional festivals are directly related to agriculture, corresponding with the seasons. These festivals include rituals that seek to appease the gods in hopes that they will bless crops. Laos National Day, December 2, is celebrated to commemorate the 1975 founding of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

Sources:

http://www.culturalprofiles.net/Laos/Directories/Laos_Cultural_Profile/-947.html

http://www.threeland.com/cambodia/festivals_events.htm

<http://www.visit-laos.com/sabbaidee/festivals.htm>

Architecture

Traditional Lao houses are built on stilts along rivers. Villages are usually built centered around a temple. French colonial architecture and American architecture from the 1950s and 1960s can also be found in Laos. More recently, the Lao have adopted Vietnamese architecture styles.

Source:

<http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Laos.html>

Food

One thing that can truly be identified with Lao culture is the consumption of sticky rice. This is a dish that can be eaten with the fingers rather than with chopsticks. The rice is usually dipped into a paste either made from chili spices or fish. Chopped raw meat is a favorite dish of people living in the country. In the lowlands, the diet is mainly fish. Alcoholic drinks made from fermented rice are very popular at festivals, ceremonies, and in everyday life. Recently, it has become more popular to consume dog meat alongside the traditional chicken, beef, fish, and the occasional pork.

Source:

<http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Laos.html>

Music and Dance

The instrument that is most identified with Lao music is the khene (also called khaen), which defines Lao culture as much as its architecture and food. The khene is a mouth organ made out of bamboo reeds and can have between 6 and 18 silver pipes inserted to create different pitches. The khene's sound is similar to an accordion, but it is played much like a flute or recorder.

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHZiqYRxsDg&feature=related>

The khene plays a vital role in traditional Lao performing arts. The lam/khap is a traditional call and response music style that dates to the pre-Buddhist era of Laos. While the traditional lam/khap was performed as a healing ritual or an epic recitation, modern usage is focused on flirtatious courtship of young men and women. The lam luang, established in the late 19th century, is the popular Lao opera, which combines traditional Lao music and storytelling with theater.

The khene also accompanies traditional Lao folk dances, which are often shared with neighboring countries Thailand and Cambodia. The most popular is the lam vong (circle dance) which incorporates delicate and precise hand movements and three patterns of circles that are danced simultaneously: the individual's circle, the couple's circle, and the group's circle. The lam vong can also incorporate poetry recitation. Various other traditional dances were originally courtly dances and are related to folk tales or are based in specific people groups.

Sources:

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~lao/laostudy/khene.htm>

http://www.culturalprofiles.net/Laos/Directories/Laos_Cultural_Profile/-919.html

<http://www.laoheritagefoundation.org/>

Government

The Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) is the only legal party in Laos, although another group, the Lao Liberal Democratic Movement and Freedom Fighters, are attempting to establish themselves as a legitimate party as they attempt to achieve basic human rights for all Lao people.

Laos is not considered to be a free nation by Western standards because of their intolerant and oftentimes brutal treatment of political and religious dissidents.

Laos is divided into sixteen provinces:

1. Attapu
2. Bokeo
3. Bolikhamxai
4. Champasak
5. Houaphan
6. Khammouan
7. Louangnamtha
8. Louangphrabang
9. Oudomxai
10. Phongsali
11. Salavan
12. Savannakhet
13. Viangchan
14. Xaignabouli
15. Xekong
16. Xiangkhoang

The capital of Laos, Vientiane, is located in the province of Viangchan.

Executive Branch: *Chief of State:* President and Vice President, each being elected for a five year term

Head of Government: Prime Minister, appointed by the President for a five year term
Deputy Prime Ministers

Cabinet: Ministers are appointed by the president and approved by the National Assembly

Legislative Branch: National Assembly, popularly elected.

Judicial Branch: People's Supreme Court, appointed by National Assembly Standing Committee

Current Government Officials*:

President Choummali Saignason

Vice President Boun-grnang Volachit

Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh

*Some variations in the way names are spelled. Next elections will take place in 2011.

Sources:

<http://www.traveljournals.net/explore/laos/government.html>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html#Govt>

Economy

Laos, one of the poorest nations in Asia, is a relatively remote and underdeveloped country with no railways and few roads, so transportation of goods is nearly impossible.

Subsistence farming employs 80% of the population and accounts for 40% of the GDP. According to 2005 estimates, 30.7% of Laotians live below the poverty line.

Laos is one of the last remaining single-party Communist states, and the centralized control of agriculture has contributed to the poverty problem. Through recent reform, the economy has become less centralized, providing economic improvements that offer a more optimistic future for Laos. Yearly economic growth has averaged 6% for about the last 20 years. Foreign investments, especially in hydroelectricity, have also bolstered the economy and encouraged more friendly foreign relations. Laos achieved normal trade relations with the United States in 2004. The Laotian kip is the main currency; in 2006, 10,235 kips equaled 1 US dollar.

The main industries in Laos are the mining of copper, tin, and gypsum, timber, electric power, agricultural processing, construction, garments, tourism, and cement. The main crops grown are sweet potatoes, vegetables, corn, coffee, sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, tea, peanuts, and rice. Laotians farmers also raise water buffalo, pigs, cattle, and poultry.

ECHO (European Commission of Humanitarian Aid) ended its humanitarian aid programs in 2007, although it remains ready to assist with future problems. The country is still recovering

from the Vietnam War, and natural disasters such as floods and droughts constantly threaten the safety and food sources of rural communities. Some humanitarian effort has been expended in establishing schools and hospitals, but these are still few and far between. School and medical supplies are always in great demand, but these are difficult to transport to remote areas where the need is often greatest. Assistance in agriculture is also a great need in Laos, especially with the irrigation of rice fields.

http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/la/Laos_economy.htm

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/la.html>

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/field/laos/index_en.htm

Literacy

Estimates of Laotian literacy range from 43% to 68%; the disparity between these estimates is probably due to variations in the ethnic sampling. Minority groups are far less likely to be literate, as are those who are subsistence farmers in rural areas.

In general, men are more likely to be literate than women and the school dropout rate for girls, especially those who are struggling academically, is significantly higher than it is for boys. Boys also show a higher tendency to continue their education at the secondary level. People who do not speak Lao have an especially difficult time remaining in school.

Health, infant survival, agriculture, and general prosperity seem to improve with education for both men and women, even those who are subsistence farmers and have little necessity for education. This alone is encouragement for Laos to improve its education system, which has been under reform since 1975. Schools have been built, teachers have been hired, and programs have been introduced; as a result, enrollment rates are higher and literacy rates are slowly increasing. The main hindrances to education seem to be the lack of printed material available and the limited time that farmers can spend learning.

Sources:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html#People>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=LA

http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/laos/rapport_2_3.html

<http://countrystudies.us/laos/61.htm>

Land/Geography

Laos is a landlocked nation in Southeast Asia similar in size to the United Kingdom. It is bordered by China to the north, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, and Thailand and Myanmar to the west. About 70% of Laos is mountainous, and over 50% of the land is covered with forest. Because of this, only about 4% of the land is conducive to farming. The tropical monsoon climate has a cool, wet season, which takes place in May – November, and a hot, dry season, which takes place from December – April. The Mekong River forms a large portion of Laos' border with Thailand in the west.

Wildlife in Laos is varied and exciting. Along with elephants, tigers, monkeys, snakes, lizards, and hundreds of different species of birds, Laos is also home to one of the world's rarest

mammals—the saola. The saola is a forest-dwelling ox that has first become known to scientists in 1992. It is found only in the forests along the border of Vietnam and Laos.

The Kha-nyou, a rock-dwelling rodent completely unlike any rodent known to man, was discovered by scientists in 1995, although it is considered a common snack to Laotians, who eat it roasted on a skewer.

The flora in Laos is beautiful and varied, including many tropical plants such as bamboo and orchids; plant life in Laos is largely unexplored by science. The relatively pristine condition of Laos makes it a popular spot for ecotours. However, because timber and hydroelectricity offer the some of the best opportunities for economic growth for Laos, deforestation and the destruction of river habitats are major ecological concerns.

Sources:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html#Geo>

<http://www.visit-laos.com/sabbaidee/geography.htm>

http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/laos/GEOGRAPHY.html

<http://www.mapsofworld.com/laos/geography/flora.html>

<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn7370>

http://www.ultimateungulate.com/Artiodactyla/Pseudoryx_nghetinhensis.html

History

The original inhabitants of Laos were Austro-Asiatic, surviving through subsistence farming, travelling along mountain trade paths, and using canoes to transport goods along the Mekong River. Prior to the 13th century, small kingdoms, called mandalas, were centered on a ruler's palace and the mandala's religious structures. During the 13th century, power became centralized in Lan Xang, a hierarchical kingdom that covered a much larger territory than modern Laos. The Kingdom of Lan Xang lasted for almost four hundred years. During this period, the Lao people fought to maintain their borders, which were frequently invaded by Vietnam, Siam (Thailand), and Burma (Myanmar).

In 1690, after a series of weak rival kings, Lan Xang split into three kingdoms: Louangphrabang, Bientiane, and Champasak. Squabbling occurred between Vientiane and Louangphrabang, instigated by Burma and Siam, led to their weakening and eventual downfall. Siam conquered Vientiane in 1778. By 1828, Vientiane was destroyed after an imprudent uprising of rebel Lao. With Vientiane gone and Louangphrabang weakened from war, Siam had little difficulty in gaining control in Laos. In the late 1800s, Hmong from China migrated to Laos, creating peaceful trade by farming and selling opium.

In the 1880s, France developed an interest in Laos as a possible route to the interior of China. The French began negotiations with Siam with intentions of takeover. By 1893, France had taken full control of Laos. The transfer of power was relatively peaceful because neither side had an interest in spilling blood. Siam showed an interest in appeasing the French, and in turn they were granted many powerful positions in the new French government. Over the next forty years, the French government tried to suppress the revolts of Laotians resistant to taxes and forced labor.

Starting around the 1940's, Japan began extending its military border southward, infringing upon French Laos. Thailand (Siam officially changed its name in 1939) began to seek Japanese cooperation and to instigate rebellions in Laos against the French. The French occupiers, while prepared to deal with small internal eruptions of violence, began to feel uncomfortable with the prospect of outright war with the powerful Japanese military.

In January of 1941, Thai soldiers attacked French forces, resulting in Japanese mediation favorable to Thailand. Laotians felt betrayed by the French, who seemed to be giving in to Thai pressure at the cost of Laotian land and power. As a result of Laotian demands for France to honor their commitment to protect Laos, France granted the king of Laos a greater diplomatic domain. While this treaty was in place, Prince Phetsarath came to power in Laos, reorganizing the religious and governmental administrations and developing education in law and religion. During 1941, Laotian nationalism began to develop as well, resulting in the first newspapers written in Lao.

By 1944, France began to employ guerilla war tactics to evict Thai forces from French territory. A major part of this operation was to train nationals in guerilla warfare, and Lao men, especially the Hmong, were easily recruited to fight against the Thai. In March of 1945, however, the Japanese successfully ended the French occupation in Indochina, ending all protection and treaties that Laos had with France.

Phetsarath was confronted with the Japanese suggestions to declare Laotian independence now that the French occupiers had fled. Phetsarath reluctantly made the the declaration of Laotian independence on April 8, 1945, while secretly maintaining communication with Franco-Laotian guerilla forces. Because of his loyalty to France, Phetsarath distrusted the Japanese, but his desire for a free and united Laos led him to agree to Japanese proposals concerning the future of his country. Almost immediately the hope of independence began to dissolve, as the Laotian treasury became depleted and Thai occupation continued. Japan attempted to destroy all Franco-Laotian guerilla forces, but found them to be surprisingly resilient.

Once Japan was defeated, Phetsarath found himself in a precarious situation. He declared that Laos was still independent regardless of Japan's fate and refused to acknowledge French power. This sentiment was backed especially by members of the ICP (Indochina Communist Party) living in Laos, who instigated anti-French sentiment and encouraged a revolutionary liberation of Laos with hopes of creating another socialist state. Phetsarath's half-brother Souphanouvong began to negotiate with the Viet Minh, an ICP organization led by Ho Chi Minh, concerning Vietnamese involvement in Laotian independence. Phetsarath rejected his half-brother's help. He was misled into believing that the international community supported Laotian independence, unaware that the United States had granted France power over Indochina until the status quo had been restored there. On September 15, 1945, Phetsarath declared the unity of Laos, established the capital in Vientiane, and began to organize the government.

Souphanouvong left Vietnam for the province of Savnakheth in southern Laos; there he met with Oun, another of Phetsarath's half-brothers, and a Thai revolutionary named Phoumi Nosavan. They formed an alliance and went up the Mekong River to Vientiane, which had been recently named the capital of a provisional revolutionary government. Souphanouvong was immediately

declared the Commander in Chief. Meanwhile, Sisavang Vong, encouraged by promised French support, forced Phetsarath out of power because he had given up his French loyalties. Leading up the National Assembly elections on August 26, 1951, the Pathet Lao formed a united front against the French (with strong ties to Viet Minh) and the Lao People's Party (LPP) was established in secret. Despite the tangles of political parties, Prince Souvanna Phouma was elected leader of the National Assembly, and the country began to take positive steps toward unity and freedom.

The last ties of bondage to France were removed when the Franco-Lao Treaty of Amity and Association was signed on October 22, 1953. In July of the following year, Laos ended the First Indochina War by signing an armistice. Disregarding this agreement of peace, the Pathet Lao continued to recruit Laotians into their army and trained them secretly in Vietnam.

Laos joined the world community on December 14, 1955, by becoming a member of the United Nations. Although Laos appeared to be united and peaceful, warfare between the Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao armies were frequent occurrences. Crown Prince Savang Vatthana sought political support from the United States in the Laotian fight against Communism; US diplomats assured him that the United States supported their struggle and would be willing to assist in any way possible. Fearing that the Royal Lao army was not up to the task of opposing the Communist forces of the Pathet Lao, the United States began an incognito military mission to train Laotian soldiers. The December elections of 1955 excluded those of the Pathet Lao party.

In March of the following year, Souvanna Phouma began negotiations with the Pathet Lao. He sought to end the conflicts by completely incorporating the Pathet Lao into the existing Royal Lao government and military. The Pathet Lao party's interests were represented in the Lao Patriotic Front (LPF). The Pathet Lao agreed to his accommodating commands, and peace seemed to be a reachable goal. The United States, however, saw this coalition with known Communists to be an unacceptable arrangement and withdrew their support.

The coalition between the Royal Lao government and the Pathet Lao was shaky at best. Souvanna Phouma strived to create balance of power and a greater trust between parties. He allowed the Pathet Lao to participate in the planning of the new coalition government and set the next election date for May of 1958. While Souvanna Phouma did not believe that many Laotians desired communism, he underestimated the persuasive influence of the Pathet Lao over the people. The results of the 1958 election showed that the LPF had won thirteen of the twenty-one seats in the National Assembly. The United States began to fear communist takeover and decided to introduce a new political party called the Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDNI) made up almost entirely of young, non-communist nationalists and managed to incorporate a few of its members in subcabinet positions.

In December of 1958, the North Vietnamese army occupied Laotian villages in Xépôn District, beginning a land dispute that constituted military aggression on the part of North Vietnam. Meanwhile, the incorporation of the Pathet Lao troops into the Royal Lao army began to fail. During monsoon rains, two battalions of Pathet Lao troops abandoned their posts and joined efforts with the North Vietnamese armies along the border of Laos and Vietnam. Kong Le, a captain in the Royal Lao army, led a bloodless coup d'état in Vientiane. With the hope of ending

the fighting and establishing peace, he demanded that Souvanna Phouma be named Prime Minister and that Somsanith step down from his position as king.

When Kong Le's demands were met, Phoumi requested United States support in regaining control of the country. The US provided air travel, communication support, and military funding. Phoumi denounced Kong Le as a communist and established a new government. As a result, fighting began to break out between the Royal Lao troops and those who followed the command of Kong Le. Meanwhile, the Pathet Lao began to broadcast support of Phouma, Phoumi's prime minister, rousing nationalist aggression against the United States and Thailand by blaming them for social and economic woes. The US began to fear that its secret operations might be revealed worldwide unless the conflict could be resolved quickly.

On December 11, 1960, the National Assembly, urged by Phoumi, put in a vote of no confidence in Phouma's government. When Phouma refused to give up power, Phoumi prepared to attack Vientiane. Kong Le opposed him with the support of Soviet supplies. The United States began to supply Hmong soldiers with weapons to fight against Kong Le. The North Vietnamese united with the Pathet Lao and drove Phoumi's forces back, despite the United States' support.

On May 3, 1961, a ceasefire was declared, but the Pathet Lao continued to train soldiers and transport supplies. The United States, in turn, maintained military flights in Laos, breaking the ceasefire agreement. There were thus three groups fighting for control in Laos--- those who followed Phoumi, those who followed Phouma, and the Pathet Lao (who took sides when beneficial to their campaign).

In 1962, the second coalition began with the establishment of Phouma's new government. Less than a year later, after a series of assassinations, both the Pathet Lao and Kong Le supporters abandoned the coalition. In 1964, the United States began airstrikes in Laos against communist forces. The United States would drop 2.1 million tons of bombs on Laos during this nine years of air strikes.

After one last unsuccessful attempt to establish peace between the three parties in 1965, Phouma was arrested and Phoumi decided to flee the country in fear of communist takeover. The United States managed to rescue Phouma. On February 21, 1973, Phouma and the Pathet Lao signed a peace agreement. Once this agreement had been reached, the United States expressed an interest in pulling out of Laos and began to negotiate the return of American prisoners of war. These negotiations turned sour, and only one prisoner of war was returned.

On April 5, 1974, the Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU) created the third coalition in Laos. Although one of the demands of the PGNU was to have all foreign troops withdrawn from Laos, North Vietnamese troops remained.

Operating under the sanctuary of the PGNU, protestors began to popularize communist propaganda. Gradually, communist supporters began to infiltrate government offices, leading to the eventual decision to dissolve the PGNU. Kaysone proposed the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR), and the National Political Consultative Council agreed unanimously. The communist party, known as the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), became the only party as dissenters fled, were indoctrinated, or were weeded out. "Seminar

Camps” (called reeducation centers) were established to indoctrinate government officials. Even the king and his family were kidnapped and sent to a seminar camp, where they died of starvation or illness. Even the Buddhist monks feared the LPRP, and many fled the country or went into hiding.

In July of 1977, Laos and Vietnam signed the twenty-five year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. This peace was tested in 1984 when there was a military dispute over land rights on the border of Laos and Vietnam.

The devastating effects of the Vietnam War still haunt Laos. The struggle toward economic recovery has been labored and largely unsuccessful. Plans to overthrow the Laotian government were uncovered in 2007 in California, resulting in the arrest of nine men, including the Hmong general, Vang Pao.

Sources:

http://www.cpamedia.com/politics/japan_in_laos/

<http://www.visit-laos.com/sabbaidee/history.htm>

<http://countrystudies.us/laos/>

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/laos/index.html>

<http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Laos/History>

Christian History

The first recorded Christian activity in Laos was in 1642 with a Jesuit named Jen de Leria, who stayed five years until forced out by Buddhist monks. After this attempt, no Christians are known to have evangelized Laos for two hundred years.

Beginning in 1858, the Roman Catholic Church attempted several missions in Laos, but most struggled or failed because of disease or lack of supplies. A mission led by Prodhomme and Perraux at Kengoi, witnessed about 250 converts, so they moved to Ubon, which was closer to Laotian villages. After involving themselves with the liberation of slaves, they won the trust of the Lao and saw many converts. The Roman Catholic Church’s success in Laos came at a high price—many priests were martyred while sharing the gospel.

In 1872, Daniel McGilvary, a Presbyterian, became the first Protestant missionary to Laos. In 1902, the Swiss Bretheren began a mission in southern Laos led by Gabriel Contesse. Their work included planting churches, starting schools, and translating the Bible into Lao. Northern Laos was largely unreached until 1929, with the arrival of G. Edward Roffe with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. During the 1970’s, Protestant churches in Laos united under the Lao Evangelical Church (LEC). However, when the Communist Party took over Laos in 1975, all foreign missionaries fled Laos along with many Laotian refugees.

Although the persecution of Christians has dimmed somewhat in the past twenty years, Lao Christians still do not have social, political, or religious equality. Lao Christians are estimated to number over 32,000. Since 1994, the government has become more hostile toward Christianity, forcing some churches to close their doors or be torn down, confiscating Christian literature, and arresting Christians without trial. As of 2007, twenty-three Christians were held in prison

because of their faith. However, the biggest hindrance to the Christian church in Laos is their lack of ordained clergy and Christian literature, not persecution.

Sources:

Chumsriphan, Surachai. "Laos." *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*. Sunquist, Scott W., ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001).

http://sb.od.org/index.php?supp_page=laos_2

Religions

Non-Christian

Animism

The traditional Lao beliefs still affect the lives of those who adhere to other religions. Spirit (*phi*) and ancestor worship is common. Because it so readily mixed with other religions, the number of those who practice animism in Laos is difficult to determine. It is estimated that around 40% of the population practices animism to some extent.

Islam

In 2000, those practicing Islam numbered 19,560, which accounts for less than 1% of the total population of Laos.

Hinduism

In 2000, those practicing Hinduism numbered 6,787, which accounts for less than 1% of the total population.

Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism is the official religion of Laos. Practicing Buddhists make up 80% of the population. When professing but not practicing Buddhists are included, this number climbs to 93%. Every city, town, and village has at least one *wat* (also called a temple or pagoda), which serves as the religious and educational center of society.

Baha'i

In 2000, those practicing Baha'i numbered 1,229, which accounts for less than 1% of the total population of Laos.

Jehovah's Witness

In 1995, only about 300 people were practicing Jehovah's Witnesses in Laos.

Tao

In 2000, those practicing Tao numbered 1,159, which accounts for less than 1% of the total population of Laos.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

There is no information regarding the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Laos.

Atheism

In 2000, those holding atheistic beliefs numbered 61,878, which accounts for 1.1% of the total population of Laos.

Nonreligious

In 2000, those who claim no religion of their own numbered 234,962, which accounts for 4.3% of the total population of Laos.

Roman Catholicism

In 2000, those practicing Roman Catholicism numbered 32,000, which accounts for less than 1% of the total population of Laos. There has been a significant decrease in Roman Catholicism since the 1970's.

Christian/Evangelical

The LEC (Lao Evangelical Church) is the only government-recognized Evangelical religion in Laos, so specific numbers for unrecognized denominations are not available. Unrecognized denominations include Methodists, Church of Christ, Assemblies of God, Lutherans, and Baptists. It is estimated that about 40,000 Evangelical Christians lived in Laos in 2000, which accounts for less than 1% of the total population of Laos. Pentecostals/Charismatics numbered about 50,000.

Independent Churches found within the country

The Hidden Buddhist Believers in Christ, begun in 1970, are converted Christians who have chosen to remain involved with Buddhism and be witnesses for Christ. In 1995, the Hidden Buddhist Believers in Christ numbered about 10,000.

Sources:

Hattaway, Paul. *Peoples of the Buddhist World: A Christian Prayer Guide*. Winesboro, GA: Piquant Editions, 2004.

"Laos." *Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations*, 12th ed. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007.

"Laos." *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. Volume 1. Oxford: University Press, 2001.

<http://countrystudies.us/laos/58.htm>

<http://countrystudies.us/laos/59.htm>

People Groups

The information about the people groups comes from the following websites:

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/>

www.joshuaproject.org

www.peoplegroups.org

All other sources are noted separately.

20882

Aheu Luang (1,770)

The Aheu Luang, a subgroup of Mon-Khmer, are primarily animists who practice ancestor worship. The Aheu Luang people are also referred to by other names, mainly as the So.

Most of the Aheu live in the Khammouan and Bolikmxai provinces in central Laos. They live on the banks of the Theun River, east and south of Lak Sao in the Khamkeut District of Khammouan Province. Many Aheu also live in north-east Thailand.

The Aheu are sometimes called *Yellow Leaves* because of their practice of living in shelters made from banana leaves. When the leaves wither and turn yellow, they move to a new location and build new shelters.

There has been little to no evangelistic work done among the Aheu Luang people. Roman Catholics have done some work among them, but opium seems to be a difficult barrier to reaching them. No ministry tools, including the *Jesus* film, are available in Aheu, their native language. They are considered a least reached people group.

http://www.country-data.com/frd/cs/laos/la_appen.html#table3 70, 382 Makong

20883

Akeu (2,586)

The Akeu (also called Biyo), a semi-nomadic people who practice slash-and-burn farming, are ancestor worshippers who live in the Phongsali Province in far northern Laos.

The Akeu highly value their sons, especially the oldest, who is responsible to oversee the worship of ancestors. Polygamy is permitted if a man's wife fails to produce a male heir.

The Akeu speak Biyo, and neither a Bible nor Christian literature has been translated into their language, although some gospel recordings have been produced. The *Jesus* film has not been produced in the Biyo language yet. Currently there is no church planting being done among the Akeu and there are no known Christians among the Akeu.

33448

Akha, Bothche (656)

The Bothche Akha people, who live in remote northern Laos in the Phongsali and Louangnamtha Provinces, are known as the poorest people in Laos. Traditionally hunters, they have had a difficult time surviving in the agricultural-based society of Laos.

The New Testament has been translated into Akha, their native language, and the entire Bible will be completed soon. However, because so few Bothche Akha can read, literacy programs will have to be implemented in order for the Bothche Akha to be able to read the Bible. An effective tool to consider using with this people group would be audio versions of the gospel, or the *Jesus* film, which is available now in regular format as well as a Children's version in the Akha language.

They practice ancestor worship, and there are few, if any, Christians among this least-reached people group. There has been no active effort to reach them in the past two years.

33449

Akha, Chapo (527)

The Chapo Akha migrated to the Louangnamtha Province during the 1950's to avoid war in China. They speak Akha and had a complete Bible in their dialect in 2001. The *Jesus* film is also available in the Akha language in a childrens and adult version as well as an audio recording of the film.

The Chapo Akha people are ancestor worshippers and believe in good and bad spirits. They are very superstitious; because they believe that twins are a curse, they will kill newborn twins and drive the mother out of the village, never allowing her to return.

Although many Christians exist among the Chapo Akha in neighboring countries, there are no known Christians among the Chapo Akha in Laos. They are a least-reached people group largely due to their remote location.

00000

Akha, Eupa (700)

The Eupa Akha settled in the Phongsali Province sometime in the past century. Although they have a complete Bible available in their language, so few Eupa Akha are literate that it is little use to them. In fact, over 90% of the Eupa Akha people have never had formal schooling of any kind.

Their religion is a mixture of animism and ancestor worship, and there are no known Christians. There is no information regarding any evangelistic effort among the Eupa Akha. There are several resources available in the Akha language which includes: some gospel recordings from Global Recordings Network, a Bible completely translated into the Akha language as of 2001, and daily 15 minute radio broadcasts. Another excellent tool to use to reach the Eupa Akha would be the *Jesus* film, which has been translated into Akha. The *Jesus* film is currently available in the Akha language in an adult, children, and audio format.

Additional sources:

<http://www.millionelephants.com/UPGs/akhaeupa.htm>

<http://www.wbradio.net/jplang.php?ethcode=ahk>

20886

Akha, Kophe (1,414)

The Kophe Akha people live in the Louang-namtha and Phongsali Provinces of Laos. Their genealogies are extremely important to them, and they are able to recite 60 generations of family history from memory.

Their lives are ruled by their religious standard—called Akhazang (the Akha Way)—and those who do not follow this code of conduct are expected to leave the community. The Akhazang touches all areas of life, from family to farming, from religious rituals to building houses.

The Kophe Akha worship a variety of spirits. There are no known Christians among them. They are considered an unengaged least-reached people group. There is a Bible available in their language, but there is no one currently reaching the Akha Kophe. The *Jesus* film is currently available in the Akha language.

20887

Akha, Kopien (643)

The Kopien Akha people live in the Louang-namtha Province in northern Laos. They place a high importance on genealogies and practice ancestor worship.

Historically, the Kopien Akha people have been hunters; therefore, when moving to areas in Laos where wildlife is scarce, they were forced to make awkward attempts at agriculture. The result has been poverty and near-starvation for many of the Kopien Akha people.

There are no known Christians in this unengaged least-reached people group, and no work has been done in the past two years to evangelize them. An effective evangelistic tool for the Akha Kopien would be the *Jesus* film and audio recordings of the *Jesus* film, which are now available in the Akha language.

20888

Akha, Luma (3,227)

The Luma Akha practice animism mixed with ancestor worship. They often sacrifice animals such as dogs and pigs in order to satisfy spirits.

Their location just north of the Golden Triangle in the Phongsali Province exposes the Luma Akha to large amounts of opium. It is estimated that one in ten Luma Akha are addicted to opium.

There are a few Christians among the Luma Akha, but the percentage of these that are evangelical has not been determined. They are still considered a least-reached people group. Despite the strongholds among the Luma Akha, God's truth can still have a powerful effect. Effective ways of sharing the gospel may be through orally sharing Bible Stories, and using the *Jesus* film that is in the Akha language.

20889

Akha, Lylo (1,930)

The Lylo Akha are an isolated and mysterious people who live somewhere in the Loung-namtha Province in north Laos.

They are ardent animists, and missionaries have reported strong spiritual oppression when ministering to them. However, the Lylo Akha seem to be very receptive to the Gospel. Unfortunately, very little missionary activity is being done among them, even though there are several thousand Christian Lylo Akha in neighboring countries.

The Bible is available to them, but literacy programs need to be introduced among the Lylo Akha in order for them to be able to read it. The Lylo Akha are a least-reached people group. Another tool to consider using among the Akha people is sharing Bible Stories orally with the Lylo Akha or using the *Jesus* film, which is available in the Akha language.

20890

Akha, Nuqui (9,040)

The Nuqui Akha people live in the Phongsali Province in northern Laos and practice animism mixed with ancestor worship. A village priest (dzoe ma) leads each community in following the Akhazang (the Akha Way), a rigid, all-emcompassing moral code. The Akha Nuqui live close to the Akha Nutchi, but in spite of a shared language, they do not associate with one another.

The strong sense of community that is closely bound with the Akhazang is probably the greatest hindrance to the Nuqui Akha becoming Christian. If any member of the community rejects the religion of the group and fails to follow the Akhazang, they are no longer welcomed in the village.

This least-reached people group has no known Christians in Laos, even though a complete Bible is available in their language of Akha. The lack of Christians may be due to the fact that the Bible they have is a system invented by outsiders to put the Akha language into written form, so they do not grow up learning this writing system. It may be better to share in an Oral way with the Akha people such as by using Bible Storying or the *Jesus* film, which is available in the Akha language.

20891

Akha, Nutchi (5,812)

The Nutchi Akha people live in the Phongsali Province in northern Laos. They practice animism mixed with ancestor worship.

Although a Bible is available in Akha, the Nutchi Akha people are 96% illiterate, so the Bible is of little use to them. Recently gospel recordings have been made, and missionaries are experiencing some success with these combined with picture Bibles. The *Jesus* film is also available in the Akha language.

There are no known Christians among the Nutchi Akha and they are considered a least-reached people group.

20892

Akha, Oma (1,930)

The Oma Akha people live in the Phongsali Province of northern Laos. Their religion is a mixture of animism and ancestor worship.

Although thousands of Christian Oma Akha live in neighboring countries, there are no known Christians among the Oma Akha in Laos. In the past two years, little missionary activity was done with this least-reached people group. A good tool for reaching the Akha Oma may be telling Bible Stories orally, or using the *Jesus* film which is available in the Akha language.

20893

Akha, Pouly (57,006)

The Pouly Akha people live in the Phongsali, Luang-namtha, Oudomxai, and Bokeo districts of northern Laos. Their religion is a mixture of ancestor worship and animism. The people especially fear the spirits of children who die before they are named and of women who die in childbirth. Healing ceremonies require expensive sacrifices and a fee to the shaman, so families who must finance a healing ceremony are often burdened with debt.

The Pouly are the only group of Akha to have known Christians among them, which account for 0.4% of the Pouly Akha population. Despite this fact, they are still considered a least-reached people group and there has been little missionary activity done among them during the past several years.

Some tools available to use among the Akha Pouly would be using Chronological Bible Storying sets told in an oral fashion which would be easy for them to remember or by using the *Jesus* film. The *Jesus* film is available in audio and visual format, both for children and adults.

00000

Akha, Tchitcho (1,100)

The Tchitcho Akha people live in the Louang-namtha Province of north Laos. They are considered closely related to the Pouly Akha, but there are several cultural distinctions between the two groups.

They are an unreached people group with no missionary work currently being done among them. There are no known Christians among the Tchitcho Akha, whose primary religion is animism.

Some tools to consider using among the Akha Tchitcho would be Bible Storying orally or using the *Jesus* film which is available in the Akha language.

Great website for picture of the Akha: <http://www.akha.net/index.htm>

9091

Alak (22, 300)

It is believed that the Alak live mainly concentrated in the Xekong and Saravan Provinces in southern Laos. Because they tend to live in remote areas and often mix with other tribes, it is difficult to determine how many Alak actually live in Laos.

The Alak maintain their traditional culture and religion. Communities are arranged in a matriarchal fashion and they practice a religion of mixed animism and ancestor worship. Most Alak people farm coffee, rubber, and bananas for their main crops.

The Alak are a least-reached people group and because of their remote locations, little missionary work is being done with the them. Only about ten Alak are professing Christians. A Bible is available in Alak, but only about 37% of the population is literate. Because of this, those working with the Alak implement gospel recordings to share Jesus Christ. One Gospel recording, entitled "Words of Life" is available from Gospel Recordings Network. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Alak language yet.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20894

Alu (1,816)

The Alu live in the extreme north of Laos in the Phongsali Province, which shares a border with China. This area was at one time under China's control and there is a strong Chinese presence there today.

The Alu are considered a least-reached people group with only 1% of the population being Christian and no Bible being available in their primary language of Nisu. There are gospel recordings available in the Nisu language from Gospel Recordings Network as well as some Scripture recordings from World Scriptures. The *Jesus* film is also available in the Nisu language. The number of evangelical Christians among the Alu has not been determined. The Alu practice animism mixed with ancestor worship and participate in ritual sacrifices to ensure good crops.

9094

Arem (683)

The Arem, part of the Chut minority group of Laos, live in the Khammouan Province along the border of Vietnam. They are considered to be one of the most primitive people groups in Laos, still living in caves and temporary shelters until the 1960's when they started to build houses. The Arem are very territorial, using landmarks to distinguish boundaries; encroachment on another's territory could start a war.

Although they used to speak Arem, this language is quickly being replaced by Chut.

The Arem seem to be struggling with improvements. Poor agriculture skills and general poverty often drive them back to their old lifestyle.

The Arem are completely unreached, and there are no known Christians among them. There is not a *Jesus* film available in their native language of Arem, or in the more frequently used language of Chut. There are no other ministry tools available in the Arem or Chut languages.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9095

Bit (2,060)

The Bit people live in the Phongsali and Louang-namtha Provinces of northern Laos. They live in villages of about 30 to 50 houses, typically located in valleys. Bit clans are named after different sacred birds, and women's traditional dress includes silver bracelets and jewelry made from shells.

The Bit people are quickly becoming assimilated into the larger culture, and they often speak multiple languages. Some of the languages that they may speak in addition to Bit are Lao, Lu, Khmu, and the Hmong languages. There is not a *Jesus* film available in the Bit language. However, there are translations of the *Jesus* film available in the Lao, Lu, Khmu, and various Hmong languages. These films may be avenues of sharing the gospel with the Bit depending upon which language they speak. There are audio Bibles available in Laotian and Hmong Njua that may be used among the Bit people who speak these languages. The Bible is available in Laotian for the Bit people who read the Laotian language.

www.faithcomesbyhearing.com

The religion of the Bit people is ancestor worship mixed with animism, although the practice of the religion is dying out along with their culture. The Bit people are a least-reached people group, and there are no known Christians among the Bit in Laos. There is currently no missionary activity among the Bit.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9099

Bo (3,596)

The Bo people live in the Khammouan Province, usually along the Mekong River. Within Khammouan Province they live in the Hinboun District. They speak a language distinct to the Bo people also called Bo. Little is known about the Bo people and there is some disagreement as to whether they really ought to be considered their own people group.

There are no recorded statistics of evangelical Christians available, but this may be due to the persecution that Christians in general are facing in the Khammouan Province. There is no documentation of missionary activity among the Bo. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Bo language. There are no evangelical resources available in the Bo language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9101

Brao (24, 051)

The Brao live in the Champasak and Attapu Provinces in far southern Laos. Each village is autonomous and ruled by a headman. The villages are built in circular patterns, like the mandalas of old kingdoms, with community building serving as the center of the village. The Brao rely heavily on agriculture, growing rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, and bananas. They also fish and harvest timber from the forests. Many Brao make pottery.

Brao villages are often at war with one another, contributing to the decline of their economies. This economic decline began with other wars that tore through Laos in the past century.

The Brao practice a combination of animism and ancestor worship, with the headman serving as the religious leader of the community. Three Christian organizations are currently working with the Brao and about .76% of the Brao people are evangelical Christian. Even with this progress, the Brao are still considered a least-reached people group. The Bible is not available in written or audio form in Lave, the native tongue of the Brao. The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the Lave language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20895

Bru (88,110)

The Bru, whose name means “mountain,” live in small, self-governing villages along riverbanks and hillsides. They live in the Savannakhet province. The village is built around a community building and the headman is the ruler of the community. The Bru have abandoned their traditional slash-and-burn agriculture techniques for more modern wet-rice farming, although the methods for this type of farming are still considered primitive.

Many Bru are bilingual, usually speaking Lao in addition to Bru, and have adopted much of Laotian culture. The Bru are skilled musicians who play a variety of instruments.

One major danger to the Bru is that there are still many unexploded bombs near where they live and farm. If these are disturbed, they explode, often ending in the deaths of those around.

The Bru practice animism mixed with ancestor worship. Paying homage to various spirits is part of everyday life. It is unknown the percentage of evangelical Christians among the Bru people.

The *Jesus* film is available in the Bru language. A New Testament became available in Bru in 1981, but a complete Bible has yet to be accomplished. Given the number of Bru who also speak Lao, this should not present a significant problem to evangelism.

A group of churches have been planted among the Bru, and there is at least one agency dedicated to reaching them. Despite these evangelistic efforts, the Bru are still considered to be a least-reached people group.

20930

Burmese, Myen (533)

The Myen moved from Myanmar to Laos about ten years ago for business purposes. They are called “Man” by the Laotian people. They live mainly in the Bokeo and Xaignabouri provinces within Laos.

The Myen people speak Burmese and have a Bible complete in their language. The *Jesus* film, as well as various printed resources and evangelical videos, are available for use in the Burmese language. However, the Myen are some of the world’s most devoted Buddhists, following the Theravada tradition. They consider themselves the ones who preserve true Theravada Buddhism. There are no known Christians among the Burmese in Laos and they are considered a least-reached people group.

20896

Cali (17,135)

The Cali people are a Mon-Khmer people group that practices ancestor worship.

Portions of the Bible have been available in their language of So since 1980. There are no known Christians among the Cali. The *Jesus* film is not available in the So language, however Gospel Recording Network has some evangelical resources available.

The percentage of Christians among the Cali is unknown, but it is believed there may be some Cali Christians due to Bru Christians from Vietnam sharing with the Cali. They are considered a least-reached people group.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Cali.jpg>

20897

Cham (775)

The Cham are originally from Cambodia, but in the 1970’s some fled to Laos to avoid forced labor and oppression. Almost all of the Cham in Laos live in Vientiane.

The Western Cham are primarily Muslim (Sunni), and the Eastern Cham follow Brahmanism. It is uncertain the percentage of evangelical Christians among the Cham. There is no scripture available in a language that the Cham can read. However, there is a *Jesus* film available in both the Eastern and Western Cham language. They are considered to be a least-reached people group.

20898

Chatong (714)

The Chatong live along the Vietnam border in the Xekong Province. They are practicing animists, worshipping spirits in hopes of gaining their favor. Chatong live in such a remote area that little is known about them or their culture.

Their language is unknown so there are no known evangelical resources available in the Chatong’s language. There are no known Christians among the Chatong at this time and there is no indication of missionary work among them.

9147

Chut-May (200)

The May, whose name means “beggar,” are a part of the Chut people group. These groups have recently united under a common tongue, but they are still culturally separate. The May people are hunter gatherers who live in the Khammouan Province.

The May people practice animism and believe in a creator-god, whom they proclaim in poetic recitations. It is not known if there are any evangelical believers among them.

There is not a Bible available to the May and they are considered a least-reached people group. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Chut language or the May dialect. There are no other known evangelical resources in the Chut language or the May dialect.

00000

Chut-Ruc (200)

The Ruc, whose name means “those who eat sago palm flour,” are part of the Chut people group. They live in an extremely isolated area along the Vietnam border in the Khammouan Province. They are relatively primitive and secluded from outsiders except for trading purposes.

Although the Ruc are animists, the shaman of the village practices spirit-worship on behalf of his people. They believe anyone who is bitten by a snake, tiger, or bear is cursed and must spend several months in isolation.

It is unknown how many of the Chut-Ruc people are Christians. There is not a Bible in their language and no missionary involvement. A *Jesus* film is not available in the Chut language or the Ruc dialect. There are no known Christians among the Chut-Ruc and because of this they are considered to be a least-reached people group.

00000

Con (1,800)

The Con people live in the Luang-namtha Province and practice ethnic religions. There are no known evangelical Christians among the Con. There is little information available about the Con at this time. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Con language. There are no other evangelical resources available in the Con language.

00000

Deaf (12,977)

The Deaf live throughout every province within Laos. The highest concentration is in the Savannakhet Province, followed by Huaphanh Province and Luang Prabang Province.

The fact that the highest percentage of Deaf live in Savannakhet Province may be due to the fact that a School for the Deaf was set up in Savannakhet Province. There also has been a School for

the Deaf set up in Vientiane Province. Within Laos these schools are sometimes referred to as “Sign Language Training Centers for the Deaf.”

Deaf children in Laos now legally have the option to study in school with their peers. There are few Deaf Christians in Laos and no known Deaf churches.

http://www.apcdproject.org/Countryprofile/lao/lao_org_go.html
http://www.apcdproject.org/Countryprofile/lao/lao_current.html

20899

Giay, Glay (6,585)

The Giay live in the Phongsali, Louang-namtha and Oudomxai Provinces of northern Laos. They practice a mixture of animism and ancestor worship. Each village has a sacred tree located in a “forbidden forest” where they make an annual sacrifice to placate the spirits.

Women live in submission to the men in their lives and must show submission to them no matter their walk in life. Children obey their fathers, wives obey their husbands, and widows obey their sons.

There are no known Christians among the Giay. There is no Bible available in Bouyei, their native language. There are some evangelical resources available in the Bouyei language. The *Jesus* film is available in the Bouyei language. There is also a recording available from the Gospel Recordings Network in the Bouyei language. There is not an agency focused on reaching the Giay and they are considered a least-reached people group.

9109

Halang (8, 167)

The Halang live in the Attapu Province of southern Laos where they rely on rudimentary agriculture to survive. They name all girls with the prefix *Y*, and all boy names start with *A*.

Although missionaries worked among the Halang in Vietnam prior to 1970, there is no current documented missionary activity with the Halang in Laos and no known Christians among them.

There are some Bible portions available to the Halang, along with some gospel recordings, and weekly radio broadcasts in the Halang language. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Halang language.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Halang.jpg>
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9110

Halang Doan (2, 377)

The Halang Doan people live in the Attapu Province of southern Laos. Although the Halang Doan are ethnically related to the Halang, there are several linguistic and cultural differences between them.

The Halng Doan people are ardent animists, allowing spirit-worship to control virtually every aspect of life. Few undertakings are begun without first consulting a shaman to mediate with the spirit world in order to ensure safety.

There are no known evangelical Christians among the Halang Doan. No Bible is available to the Halang Doan in their native tongue, and there are no known agencies working to reach the Halang Doan. The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the Halang Doan language and there are no other known evangelical resources available in the Halang Doan language. They are considered a least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9111

Han Chinese (26, 026)

Both Cantonese and Mandarin Han Chinese reside in Laos in large numbers. Combined, they could account for almost 100,000 people.

The Cantonese in Laos usually retain their Chinese culture and folk religion. Chinese folk religion is much like Laotian folk religion that combines ancestor worship with animism, although the Chinese also add elements of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism to the religious mix.

The Mandarin speaking people in Laos are primarily nonreligious. There are no known evangelical Christians among the Han Chinese which are Cantonese. About .47% of the Mandarin Han in Laos are Christians.

There are various evangelical resources available, including print and on-line evangelism and discipleship materials, various Christian films including *God's Story* and the *Jesus* film in both Cantonese and Mandarin languages. There is also praise and worship music available in Mandarin for use among the Mandarin speaking Han Chinese who live in Laos.

The Han Chinese have had the Bible available to them for over a hundred years, but they are still considered a least-reached people group because of their few believers and the little missionary work being done among them. At this time, there are no known churches targeted at reaching the Han Chinese in Laos.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9113

Hani (1, 536)

The Hani live in the Phongsali Province of northern Laos, probably migrating from Vietnam. They may have roots that go back as far as Tibet. Sometimes the Hani and Akha are lumped together by researchers because of ethnic similarities therefore, estimates of their numbers can sometimes range quite high.

The Hani practice animism mixed with ancestor worship. There are three different types of religious leaders among the Hani. First, the *zuima* is the oldest male who is the religious overseer. Second, the *beima* perform all the religious rituals. Last, the *nima*, which can be male or female, are the medicinal experts.

There are no known evangelical Christians among the Hani. At this time there is no missionary activity being done among this least-reached people group. There is no Bible available in the Hani's native language.

There are some gospel recordings available in the Hani language, but no translation of the *Jesus* film or any other evangelical resources. Translation work has begun on the Bible and *Jesus* film so that the Hani have these resources in their own language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33450

Hkun, Khuen (10,546)

The Khuen live in the Luang-namtha Province and the western part of Oudomxai in Laos. They are practicing Theravada Buddhists, although they worship a host of spirits. The Khuen heard the Gospel of Jesus for the first time in 1902 with the missionary William Clifton Dodd.

Today, about 1% of the Khuen are Christians. There is a group of churches currently trying to reach the Khuen. There is work taking place to translate the Bible into the Khuen language.

The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the Khuen language. There are no other known evangelical resources available in the Khuen language. They are still considered a least-reached people group.

20900

Hmong Daw (223,787)

Hmong Daw villages are usually built high in the mountains. They practice a religion that combines animism with ancestor worship.

This group of people helped the CIA during the Vietnam War, so they were allowed to flee to the United States when the Communists took over Laos in 1975. Likewise, many of the Christian Hmong Daw also fled Laos during the Communist takeover.

Prior to 1975, almost 10% of the Hmong Daw population was Christian, often with entire villages coming to Christ upon hearing the Gospel preached over the radio. Currently less than 1% of the Hmong Daw people are Christian.

A Bible was completed in Miao, the Hmong Daw's native language, in 2000. Currently there is at least one agency dedicated to reaching the Hmong Daw, and there is a group of churches ministering to them.

The Hmong Daw have the *Jesus* film available in the Miao White language. There are also many other evangelical resources, such as tracts, *God's Story* film, ethnic worship music, as well as other film and evangelical recordings available. They are considered a least-reached people group.

20901

Hmong Njua (191,918)

The Hmong Njua people dwell in villages on the mountains of northern and eastern Laos. They practice a religion that mixes animism with ancestor worship. The Hmong Njua have a fascinating legend of a Hmong Savior who will one day reveal himself, free the Hmong from bondage and oppression, and establish a Hmong nation.

The Bible has been available to the Hmong Njua since 2000. The *Jesus* film, among other evangelical resources, is available in the Hmong language. A New Testament has been translated into the Hmong language. About .61% are considered evangelical Christian. Although there is a group of churches and at least one agency dedicated to reaching the Hmong Njua, they are largely unreached.

20902

Hung (838)

The Hung, who call themselves the Pong, live in the Borikhan Province and are closely related to the Tum people group (*PopEntId: 9187*). Sometimes they are lumped together because of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural similarities.

The Hung people practice animism mixed with ancestor worship. Until recently, the Hung practiced teeth-breaking, which was the forceful removal of the front teeth of a 12-14 year old. This caused the child to have black stubs for the front teeth area. There is no information currently available as to why this ritual was important.

Because the areas in which the Hung live are so remote, this least-reached people group has had little opportunity to hear the Gospel. There are no known Christians among the Hung.

There is currently no missionary effort being expended on behalf of the Hung and there is no Bible or any type of evangelical resources, including the *Jesus* film, available in their native language.

9118

Ir (5,282)

The Ir people, who live in the Saravan Province of southern Laos, are part of the larger East Katuic language group along with the Kantu, the Katang, the Lor, and the Upper Taoih. They live in the mountains and practice slash-and-burn farming along with raising chickens, ducks, and pigs for sustenance.

A headman rules over a village council and directs most government affairs of the tribe. The Ir are animists who also practice ancestor worship. They sometimes mix Buddhism with their traditional religion.

The Ir is a least-reached people group. Currently there is no church or agency dedicated to reaching them. Because a Bible has not been translated into Ir, they rely on Gospel recordings to hear about Jesus. The *Jesus* film or other known evangelical resources, are not available in the Ir language. About 1% of the Ir people are evangelical Christian.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

22372

Iu Mien, Yao (22,634)

The Yao live scattered throughout Phongsali, Louang-namtha, Bokeo, and Xaignabouri Provinces of northern Laos. They live in wooden houses with dirt floors and grow rice and corn as food.

Although they trade resin and honey they collect in the jungles, many Yao support themselves through opium trade. Generosity and education are extremely important in Yao society. The more generous and well-educated a person is, the higher their rank is in their community. As a result, the Yao enjoy a very high literacy rate.

Male Yao wear decorative earrings and brightly embroidered tunics. Women wear beautiful dresses with red collars. Children wear beautifully decorated caps in order to protect them from evil spirits.

The Yao are animists who also practice ancestor worship. Their religion shows some influences from Taoism as well. Christians account for .5% of the Yao population.

A New Testament was translated into Iu Mien, their native language, in 1991, and as of 2001, a complete Bible was available along with gospel recordings and the *Jesus* film. The Yao are considered a least-reached people group. They have no churches or agencies dedicated to reaching them at this time.

9119

Jeh (10, 983)

The Jeh live in the Attapu and Xekong Provinces of far southern Laos. Their villages, which are built around a community building (called a *rong*), are made up of stilted houses with roofs that look like tortoise shells.

Girls typically signify their marital status by the way they wear their hair; an unmarried girl wears her hair loose, while a married woman wears her hair in a knot. When she gets married, usually around 15 or 16 years old, she must offer a large pile of firewood to her husband's family to prove that she is a hard worker.

Violence between villages of Jeh and their neighbors have been common in the past, often leading to kidnappings and vendettas. The Jeh are animists and ancestor worshippers. They believe a person's soul is in their ears, and at death the soul becomes a bird and flies to join its ancestors. The water buffalo is a sacred animal to the Jeh.

Although there are many Jeh Christians in Vietnam, the number of evangelical Christians has not been estimated among the Jeh in Laos. This least-reached people group has a New Testament available in Jeh, but there is little information concerning missionary activity among the Jeh people group. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Jeh language; however there are some gospel recordings and radio broadcasts in the Jeh language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9120

Jeng (8,923)

The Jeng live in six loosely associated villages in the Attapu province of far southern Laos. Unlike most other Mon-Khmer people groups, their villages are scattered randomly rather than built in a circular pattern around a community building. The Jeng are sometimes referred to as the Cheing.

Moving from Vietnam in the 1930's, the Jeng have adopted most of the Lao culture except for Buddhism. They are animists who practice ancestor worship. The Jeng are known to build miniature villages outside their own village so that the spirits have a place to live.

Ritual sacrifices are made at these miniature villages in order to appease the spirits. Because the Jeng are becoming increasingly acculturated, they have lost much of their traditional religion along with their dress and customs.

The Bible has not been translated into Jeng, but there are some gospel recordings available. The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the Jeng language. There are no known Christian believers among the Jeng, but it is thought that some of the Jeng may have heard the gospel from Brau and Oy Christians. Currently there is no known missionary activity among the Jeng.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9121

Kado, Kadu (274)

The Kado, who live in the Phongsali province of northern Laos, are often lumped with other Mon-Khmer people groups when a census is taken. However, they are linguistically distinct from other people groups in Laos, and have only recently migrated from China. It is still uncertain why this migration occurred.

While many of the Kado in China have experienced revival and have come to Christ in large numbers, the Kado in Laos are virtually unreached and are still waiting for someone to come and share the gospel with them.

There are no known believers among the Kado. Bible portions have been available in Kadu, their native language, but a complete Bible has yet to be translated. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Kadu language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20905

Kanay (790)

The Kanay people live along the Vietnam border in Saravan province of southern Laos. They still practice the tradition of dying their teeth black and of tattooing their faces. Kanay women signify their marital status by the way they wear their hair; single women wear their hair in a knot on the left side of their head, while married women wear their hair knot on the right.

Weddings are the most celebrated events, and despite severe poverty, the groom pays a high price for his bride's dowry. At the ceremony, the bride is usually presented with a sword.

The Kanay's primary language is unknown, but they also speak the Bru, Eastern, Khmu, Khroong, and Kamo languages. The *Jesus* film is available in the Bru, Eastern and in audio and film format in the Khmu language.

There are some gospel recordings and radio broadcasts available in the Khmu language. There are also some Bible portions available in the Khmu language for use among the Kanay who use the Khmu language.

The Kanay are animists who also practice ancestor worship. 8.89% of the Kanay are evangelical Christians. There is at least one church dedicated to reaching the Kanay in Laos.

<http://globalrecordings.net/language/1005>

9124

Kantu (1,914)

The Kantu live in an extremely remote area along the Vietnam border in the Saravan Province of southern Laos. The Kantu, who are expert weavers, choose to remain an isolated group, refraining from interaction with outsiders. After the farming is done for the day, they gather together to participate in traditional songs and dances. Their society is matriarchal, and older women tend to make all important village decisions.

The Kantu practice animism mixed with ancestor worship and often build spirit-houses outside the village where they make ritual animal sacrifices. It was thought that the Kantu still practiced human sacrifice until recently.

.47% of the Kantu are Christians. Most missionaries to the Kantu have been Bru Christians, and almost every attempt to share the Gospel with them has been met with hostility. There is one known church dedicated to ministering to this least-reached people group.

There are a few evangelical resources available in the Katu language, but no *Jesus* film. The Bible has not been translated into the Katu language. Pray that the one church among the Kantu would continue reaching their community so that more can know about Jesus Christ.

<http://globalrecordings.net/language/1005>

9127

Kasseng (10, 788)

The Kasseng live in the mountains along the Vietnam border in the Xekong and Attapu provinces of southern Laos. They speak the Kasseng language. They share linguistic similarities with neighboring Jeh, Alak, and Laven people groups and can communicate with them.

There is no record of missionary activity among the Kasseng. They have no written language, so they rely on gospel recording available in Kasseng to learn about Christ. The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the Kasseng language. There are no known evangelical Christians among the Kasseng. The Kasseng are considered to be a least-reached people group.

<http://globalrecordings.net/language/1005>

9128

Katang (125,000)

The Katang, the sixth largest people group in Laos, live in the Savannakhet, Saravan, and Champasak provinces of southern Laos. They traditionally live in longhouses. When a couple in the community married, they would simply add onto the longhouse. One longhouse was over 300 feet long and housed over 30 families!

The Katang are known for the beautiful cloth they weave and for their practice of extending their earlobes by inserting pieces of bamboo to stretch them. Unfortunately, much of the Katang traditional culture has been lost due to their assimilation into Lao society.

The Katang are fervent animists and ancestor worshippers. There is one small church among the Katang, which accounts for only about .1% of the total population. There is no Bible available in Kataang, their native language, but there are some Gospel recordings. The Katang do not have the *Jesus* film available in their language of Katang. They are considered to be a least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20906

Kate (683)

The Kate people live in the Champasak Province of far southern Laos. They are animists who also practice ancestor worship. There are no known evangelical resources, including the *Jesus* film available in their native language. Their language is unknown to outsiders. There is little information regarding the culture or evangelism status of this least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9129

Katu (23, 344)

The Katu live in the Champasak, Saravan, and Xekong provinces of southern Laos in isolated villages they sometimes share with Alak, Ngae, Ta Oi, and Talieng people groups. They usually live in longhouses in isolated forest areas.

Katu women traditionally tattooed their faces, but this practice has been dying out. Most Katu men, except for the very rich or powerful, are monogamous. The water buffalo is a sacred animal to the Katu, and once a year they sacrifice of buffalo in a ceremony to appease the spirits.

The Katu mix ancestor worship with their animistic practices. The New Testament was translated into Katu in 1978, and missionaries have had some success reaching the Katu in Vietnam. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Katu language, however, there are some evangelical gospel recordings available in the language.

In Laos, only .1% percent of the population is considered to be evangelical Christian. The Katu are considered to be a least-reached people group.

<http://globalrecordings.net/language/1005>

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9130

Khlor (10, 788)

The Khlor live in villages with other people groups in the Saravan province of southern Laos. Their culture has been fading in the past century; they have not done traditional dances or used ceremonial swords or shields for fifty years. Shamans still maintain a certain amount of influence, although this has also diminished in recent years.

The Laotian government has discontinued the Khlor's annual buffalo sacrifice ceremony, their most important religious ceremony. Traditionally, their religion was animism mixed with ancestor worship. Christians account for .45% of the population, and the entirety of that percentage is considered evangelical.

Prior to the Communist takeover in 1975, missionaries were relatively successful at reaching the Khlor, but currently there is no record of evangelistic activity with this least-reached people group. They have no Bible translated into Khlor, but Gospel recordings have been made. The *Jesus* film is also unavailable in the Khlor or Ngeq languages.

<http://globalrecordings.net/language/1005>

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20907

Khmer, Cambodian (5,351)

The Khmer fled war-torn Cambodia during the Vietnam War, seeking peace and shelter in Laos. Unfortunately, Laos was also battered with war and violence, and the Khmer often found themselves lacking food and shelter. More men were killed during this violence than women, creating an imbalance in their society that forced women to take up men's work.

Today, the Khmer live in small villages that are controlled by a chief, who is the political and social leader, and a Buddhist monk, who is the educational and religious leader. The Khmer still follow the practice of making all their textiles out of red and white checkered cloth, and their traditional dances and opera are still very popular.

Over 90% of the Khmer people are Theravada Buddhist. Spirit and ancestor worship are still practiced to some extent. About .1% of the Khmer are considered evangelical Christians. A Bible is available in Khmer, as are Gospel recordings, the *Jesus* film, and radio broadcasts. Regardless of these resources, the Khmer are still considered a least-reached people group, and there is no agency or church dedicated to reaching them.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 list

20908

Khmu, Keun (823)

The Khmu Keun, the smallest tribe of the Khmu people group, live in the Bokeo province of northern Laos. They are animists who also worship their ancestors. Although many other Khmu tribes have experienced revival, there are no known Christians among the Khmu Keun.

Portions of the Bible were translated into Khmu, but there is no current evangelistic work being done among this least-reached people group. The *Jesus* film and gospel recordings are available in Khmu. There are Christian radio broadcasts in the Khmu language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20909

Khmu, Khong (3,425)

The Khmu Khong people live in the Oudomxai province of northern Laos, often sharing villages with the Khmu Rok. They practice animism mixed with ancestor worship. They speak Khmu as well as the Khroong dialect. Portions of the Bible have been translated into Khmu. The Khmu have excellent memories and respond well to Gospel recordings. In addition to gospel recordings, the *Jesus* film, other Christian films, as well as radio broadcasts are available in the Khmu language. About 3.57% of the Khmu, Khong are Christians.

Missionaries have great hope concerning the Khmu people, believing that they will be God's means of reaching Laos for Christ. The Khmu are generally respected and well-liked, being hard-working and kind and having a strong sense of honor. These characteristics make them perfect for relating to the majority of Laotian people groups.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20910**Khmu, Lu (27,427)**

The Khmu Lu people live in villages near the rivers at the base of mountains in the Bokeo, Louan-namtha, and Oudomxai provinces of northern Laos. They share cultural and linguistic characteristics with the Khmu Ou and can communicate with them easily, but not with any of the other Khmu tribes. The Khmu Lu wisely built their homes near rivers to be able to easily get water and they also prefer to build their homes at the foot of the mountains.

The Khmu Lu are practicing animists and ancestor worshippers, but missionaries have found that they usually worship the spirits out of fear. Pigs and chickens are sacrificed on a regular basis in order to appease angry spirits. Once the Khmu Lu are offered freedom in Christ, they usually respond joyfully, ready to be rid of their spiritual bondage.

Less than 1% of the Khmu Lu are Christian. Though the people are mainly illiterate Bible portions in Khmu were made available. Probably more useful are the Gospel recordings, radio broadcasts, and the *Jesus* film. Although these resources are available and the Khmu Lu seem ready to accept the Gospel, there is no record of missionary activity in the past two years. There is no agency or church committed to evangelizing this least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20912**Khmu, Me (47,998)**

Most Khmu Me live in the Louang Phrabang province, but others live in the Bokeo and Xaignabouri provinces. Despite the cultural differences between the two groups, the Khmu Me often share villages with the Khmu Ou. Khmu Me society is patrilinear. However, when two people marry, they live with the wife's family for a time until the couple can establish themselves in the community.

The Khmu Me practice animism and ancestor worship, believing that multiple spirits will live in all people, animals, and objects. They believe in a hierarchy of spirits (*hrooi*) and will not allow outsiders to participate in ceremonies regarding spirits.

Missionaries have had much success in reaching the Khmu Me who are ready to be freed from spiritual bondage. It is estimated that over 10% of the Khmu Me are evangelical Christian. The total number of Christians is unknown.

There are many resources available in the Khmu language. Bible portions are available. There are various Christian films including the *Jesus* film available in the Khmu language. Radio broadcasts are available in the Khmu language. Multiple agencies and churches are dedicated to serving the Khmu Me population.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20913**Khmu, Ou (616,811)**

The Khmu Ou, the largest ethnic minority in Laos, account for 90% of the Khmu population. Most live in the Houaphan, Phongsali, and Vientiane provinces, often sharing villages at the base of mountains with Hmong, Lu Mien, Lao, and Pong.

This large people group is divided into numerous clans, which are identified by a sacred mammal, bird, or vegetable. The clan is not allowed to touch its sacred animal or plant. The Khmu Ou are animists and ancestor worshippers, concentrating of the worship of the “King Spirit,” which is the spirit of the house, forest, rivers, rice, and livestock. About 9.8% of the Khmu Ou are thought to be evangelical Christians.

It is estimated that the Khmu Ou account for over 50% of all Christians in Laos. They were first reached with the Gospel in 1902, where missionaries experienced great success in converting the Khmu Ou. Recently, the Khmu Ou have been experiencing revival, with many new converts and congregations.

Currently several evangelical resources are available to the Khmu Ou in the Khmu language. They include gospel recordings, the *Jesus* film in addition to other Christian films, Bible portions, and radio broadcasts.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20914

Khmu, Rok (68,568)

The Khmu Rok people live in the Oudomxai and Louang Phrabang provinces of northern Laos. They are the only Khmu tribe to roof their houses with wooden tiles rather than straw. They dress differently than the other Khmu tribes; traditionally, the men wore only a loincloth and women white skirts.

The Khmu Rok are animists who also worship their ancestors. However, recently missionaries have had great success among the Khmu Rok, and they have had many new and dedicated converts. In spite of persecution and imprisonment the Khmu Rok have continued to share their faith. Their congregations grow in numbers and strength.

Over 7% of the Khmu Rok people are evangelical Christians. The Khmu speak the Khmu language as well as the Rok dialect. There are several evangelical resources available in the Khmu language including portions of the Bible, gospel recordings, various Christian films including the *Jesus* film, and radio broadcasts.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9134

Khua (3, 596)

The Khua live in the Khammouan Province in a conservation area that hosts numerous species of rare animals such as elephants and tigers. Until recently, the Khua wore clothes that they dyed themselves with tree bark. However, a growing number of Khua wear westernized clothing.

They practice a rather detached version of animism mixed with ancestor worship. Paying homage is done out of duty or necessity, not because of a desire to carry out their religion. Because of Bru Christians in the area it is believed that the Khua may have heard the gospel, however there are no known Christians among the Khua.

The Bible has not been translated into Khua, and there is no known agency or church dedicated to reaching this least-reached people group. There also is not a *Jesus* film or any other evangelical resources available in the Khua language.

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20915

Kim Mun (6,168)

The Kim Mun people live in the Bokeo, Luangnamtha, and Oudomxai Provinces of northern Laos. Their history is a little difficult to decipher because they have been called by so many different names. In Laos, they are often called Lanten (**PopEntId: 20923**), which is a Chinese term meaning “those who make dye.”

The Chinese sometimes call them Shan Zi Yao, which means “mountaineer Yao.” Kim Mun is the name they call themselves, and their language is called the same. Their population is decreasing because of disease and drug addiction.

Daoism is the main religion of the Kim Mun, although ancestor worship is also an important part of their religion. Because the texts of Daoism are available in Chinese, it may be possible to use Chinese translations of the Bible with the Kim Mun people who read the Chinese language.

Ideally evangelical resources in the Kim Mun language would better reach the Kim Mun. There are no Bible translations or *Jesus* film translations in the Kim Mun language. There are gospel recordings available in the Kim Mun language and these recordings would be very useful in reaching the Kim Mun for Christ. There are several churches and agencies dedicated to evangelizing this least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 list

20963

Kinh, Vietnamese (108,856)

Most Vietnamese who live in Laos are concentrated in the Houaphan, Phongsali, and Xekong Provinces. The majority of Vietnamese moved to Laos since the Vietnam War, even though the two countries have had contact for several hundred years. Most Vietnamese are merchants and businessmen, so they usually travel extensively throughout Laos.

Traditionally the Vietnamese follow Mahayana Buddhism, although numerous other influences can be traced, including animism, Daoism, Caodaim, and ancestor worship. About 9% of the Vietnamese in Laos said to be Christian, most following Roman Catholicism. Evangelical Christians account for about 5.6% of the population.

A complete Bible is available in Vietnamese, at least one agency is dedicated to reaching the Vietnamese, and a group of churches minister to them on a regular basis. There are also many resources available to share about Christ and disciple new Vietnamese believers.

Various printed materials, including tracts and discipleship materials are available for use. In addition to printed materials, the *Jesus* film, among other Christian films, is also available. Radio broadcasts, gospel and various other audio recordings are available, including Vietnamese worship music.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

00000

Kiorr, Angku (3,800)

The Kiorr live in the Luang-namtha and Bokeo Provinces of northern Laos. They practice Theravada Buddhism, and it is unknown how many if any Christians exist among the Kiorr people. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Kiorr language. There are no other evangelical resources available in the Kiorr language. Currently there is no agency working among the Kiorr to reach them for Christ. There is little information concerning the Kiorr available at this time.

(note: the Kiorr may be related to the Con)

20916

Kongsat (128)

The Kongsat is one of the smallest people groups in Laos. There may be more Kongsat in China, but this is uncertain. They do share more characteristics with Chinese than with Laotians. The Kongsat may be related to the Ou of extreme southern Laos, but why the Kongsat would have moved to their current location in Oudomxai is unknown.

The Kongsat have lived in Oudomxai for five generations. Prior to this, there were many more Kongsat, but they were wiped out by war and disease. Today, most Kongsat speak Lao and Khmu. Intermarriage with the Pouhoy has been increasing in recent years and the Kongsat will most likely cease to exist as its own people group.

The Kongsat still practice their traditional religion, animism mixed with ancestor worship, and celebrate their traditional festivals. It is uncertain whether there are any Christians in this least-reached people group. There is no record of missionary activity being done among them. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Kongsat language. There are no evangelical resources available in the Kongsat language.

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20917

Kri (1,012)

The Kri live in the forests of the Khammouan Province. Until recently they lived in trees and caves and foraged for their food. Although many have adopted a more modern lifestyle, most Kri still live semi-nomadic lives in the jungles and refuse to adopt an agricultural way of life. Communities of Kri often live in fear of tigers, which run wild in the jungles where they live.

The Kri are animists and ancestor worshippers. This least-reached people group has no known Christians living among them. The Bible, the *Jesus* film, as well as other evangelical resources are not available in the Kri's language. There are no agencies known to be currently working to reach the Kri.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20918

Kuan (3,425)

The Kuan, who are known as Tao Kouane, live in the Borikhan Province of central Laos, along the banks of the Mouan River. Although they are traditionally animists, they have adopted Buddhism and practice it in addition to their spirit and ancestor worship. There are no known Christians in this least-reached people group, and there is no record of evangelism being done among them. There are no evangelistic resources available in the Kuan language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20919

Kuong Lahu Shi, (3,425)

The Kuong Lahu Shi are not adept farmers, often having to supplement agricultural efforts with foraging and hunting. They live mainly in the Luang Namtha and Bokeo provinces within Laos. Their women traditionally shave their heads, even though this can bring them ridicule from other people groups.

There are some gospel recordings available in the Lahu Shi language. There is little specific information regarding the Kuong in Laos, but the Kuong in China are known for their extreme poverty.

It is unknown how many if any of the Kuong Lahu Shi are Christians, and there is no Bible in their native language. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Lahu Shi (Yellow Lahu) or in Kui as their language is sometimes referred to. Although most Kuong in China are Buddhists, the native religion of the Kuong is ancestor worship.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

105352

Kui (62,388)

The Kui are scattered throughout Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. The Kui people, also called Kuay or Suei, live in the Savannakhet, Saravan, and Champasak Provinces within southern Laos.

They were traditionally slash-and-burn farmers, but recently have adopted modern farming techniques. They are also cattle breeders, ironworkers, and elephant hunters.

Most Kui are Theravada Buddhists, although they practice animism and ancestor worship. It is unknown how many if any of the Kui are evangelical Christians. The *Jesus* film as well as some gospel recordings and radio broadcasts are available in the Kuy language. The New Testament has been available in the Kuy language since 1978.

However, because the literacy rate for the Kuy language is between 1 and 5%, it may be more effective to use oral methods to share the Gospel. There are Gospel recordings and radio broadcasts available. The Kui also speak Antra and Na Nhyang dialects and the literacy rate for these languages is much higher, at 37%. Gospel recordings are available in the Antra dialect.

<http://www.everyculture.com/East-Southeast-Asia/Kui.html>
<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Cambodia/Kui.pdf>
http://www.ethnologue.org/show_language.asp?code=kdt
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20920

Kui Lung (4,632)

The Kui Lung people, who are closely related to the Kucong, live near the Myanmar border in the northern provinces of Louang namtha and Bokeo. They have struggled extensively with poverty, sometimes enduring periods of time with no clothing other than banana leaves until proper clothing can be traded for.

It is unknown how many if any of the Kui Lung are evangelical Christians. There are no known agencies targeting the Kui Lung with the gospel. Their primary language is unknown therefore no Bibles, gospel recordings, or the *Jesus* film is available in their native language. If there are Kui Lung people who speak Kuy, it may be possible to reach them through Gospel recordings or the *Jesus* film in Kuy.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20921

Lahu Aga, Lahu Na (7,200)

The Lahu Aga, or “Black Lahu,” people live in the Bokeo Province along the Mekong River. They are known to be the least assimilated and most isolated people group in Laos, often confining themselves to their mountain villages, often more than 4,000 feet above sea level.

Most Lahu Ago are animists and each village has a priest called a Paw Khu, who leads the community in the worship of the Lahu God, G’ui Sha. The Lahu have had missionary contact since 1892.

The number of evangelical Christians has not been estimated. A complete Bible has been available in Lahu since 1989 and numerous other Christian resources are available to reach them, including the *Jesus* film, *God's Story* film, various tracts, and gospel recordings.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20922

Lahu Nyi, Lahu Phu (2,580)

The Lahu Phu, or “White Lahu,” people live in the Bokeo Province of northern Laos. Their dialect is very closely related to that of the Lahu Na. They are animists who worship the Lahu god G’ui Sha. Male Lahu Phu wear ropes on their wrists to symbolize their spiritual bondage. They have a legend of a sacred book that was lost a long time ago and they have been waiting for a messenger from G’ui Sha to bring them the lost book.

Christian missionaries have had some success in reaching the Lahu Phu, but illiteracy has hampered their progress somewhat.

It is unknown how many evangelical Christians exist among the Lahu Nyi. A complete Bible has been available in Lahu since 1989. Numerous other Christian resources are available to reach them, such as the *Jesus* film, various tracts, Gospel recordings, and Christian films. Using an oral method to share the gospel and do discipleship may be well-received among the Lahu Phu.

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9138

Lamet, Khamet (22, 954)

The Lamet are spread throughout 87 villages within northwest Laos. The Lamet people have a strong pride in their language, Lamet, as well as in their distinct culture and style of dress. The Lamet are slash-and-burn farmers who grow mostly rice and supplement their diet with hunting.

Wealth determines social rank; men strive to achieve the status of *lem*, which means “one who is wealthy.” In addition to using the Lamet language, the Lamet also use the Khmu language on a limited basis. Education wise 71% of the Lamet have never attended school.

Because of their strong pride and desire to protect their unique culture, the Lamet do not always quickly welcome outsiders into their villages.

Their main religions are animism, and ancestor worship. During the late 1800s some of the Lamet were exposed to the gospel by a missionary named Daniel McGilvary. However, there are no known Christians among the Lamet.

There is an effort underway to translate the Bible into the Lamet language. The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the Lamet language yet. However, there are some recordings in the Lamet language available from the Gospel Recordings Network.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing
<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Lamet.jpg>

20923

Lanten (5,485)

The Lanten people live mainly within Gnot-Ou District, in the Phongsali Province. Before relocating to Laos, the Lanten lived within China and endured difficult times under landlords that took advantage of them.

Their name "Lanten" is taken from the Chinese language and means "those who make dye." The Lanten are famous for their ability to make paper from roots and leaves.

The Lanten's main religions are Daoism, ancestor worship, and animism. There are no known Christians among the Lanten. There are no known evangelical resources in the Lanten's language.

Within their belief system concerning heaven and hell, the Lanten believe that their only hope for being in heaven as a good person will be dependent on their oldest son's ability to care for their dead spirit, thus increasing the level of heaven they can live in. If they do not have a son to care for their spirit in the afterlife then their soul is lost forever. Bad people automatically go to hell, which is thought of as a dark endless forest. Ancestor worship is observed three times a year by sacrificing pigs.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Lanten.jpg>
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9139

Lao (2,653,020)

The Lao live throughout the Mekong Valley and in the cities surrounding it. Traditionally their houses, built on stilts, are built around a Buddhist wat, or temple. The power in the village is divided between the chief, who controls secular issues, and the Buddhist monk, who controls religious matters.

Most Lao are wet rice farmers, although many also raise cattle, pigs, and chickens as well. For those Lao who are more westernized, often the only traditional item of clothing they continue to wear is the women's skirt, called a *pha sin*. Many Lao are skilled craftsmen and musicians.

The majority of the Lao are Theravada Buddhists. About 1.2% of the population are considered evangelical Christians. A complete Bible in Lao has been available since 1932. There are multiple agencies and a group of churches dedicated to reaching this least-reached people group. Many resources including the *Jesus* film, various tracts, and other evangelism and discipleship materials are available in the Laotian language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20924

Lao Isan (9,593)

The Lao Isan, named after the Hindu goddess Shiva, always live near the Vietnam border in the Bolikhamxai, Vientiane, and Champasak provinces. They are very similar to the Lao linguistically and culturally.

Today, most are at least nominally Theravada Buddhists, although they retain traditional animism and ancestor worship. While there are many Christian Lao Isan in Vietnam, it is unknown if any of the Lao Isan in Laos are Christian. There is one agency working in Laos to reach the Lao Isan for Christ.

There are several evangelical resources available for sharing with the Lao Isan in their language of Northeastern Thai. The *Jesus* film, films from World Christian Videos, radio broadcasts, and some gospel recordings are available.

Translation work has been done to put the Bible into the Northeastern Thai language. There are some portions of the Old Testament available along with 80% of the New Testament.

<http://www.isanbible.com/>

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20925

Laoseng (8,984)

The Laoseng, who are also known as Tareng or Tariang, live in the Phongsali Province of northern Laos. They share linguistic ties to people groups that usually live in southern Laos, so it is possible that the Laoseng used to live in southern Laos some time ago and relocated to northern Laos. They are part of the larger Mon-Khmer speaking group.

Most Laoseng are animists that also practice ancestor worship. There are no known evangelical Christians among the Laoseng. There are no Christian resources available in Tareng, the Laoseng's native tongue, and there are no churches or agencies dedicated to reaching them. As a result, the Laoseng are considered a least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9140

Laven (55,562)

The Laven people, also called Boloven, live in the Saravan, Champasak, and Xekong Provinces of southern Laos, in the area that receives the most yearly rainfall of more than 150 inches.

The Laven are skilled in agriculture, learning to raise potatoes from the French colonists and eventually turning that skill into a booming industry. They also raise rice, maize, peppers, yams, some spices, and are skilled workers. Being able to trade all these items has made many Laven relatively wealthy.

Wealthier Laven live in wooden houses with tile roofs, while poorer Laven live in thatch houses with thatch roofs. Both types of homes are built on stilts. Villages are usually small and are controlled by a headman. In a first marriage, the groom is not required to pay the bride's family, but he is to do so if he marries a second time.

The Laven are nominally Theravada Buddhist, but they still cling to animism and ancestor worship. .09% of the Laven people are evangelical Christians. There is only one known church and one agency dedicated to reaching the Laven with the Gospel. There is no Bible available in Laven, but Gospel recordings do exist. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Laven language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20926

Lawi (737)

The Lawi live in the southern province of Xekong, where they are famous for their beautifully carved and painted ladders that lead up to their stilted houses. It is thought four generations ago, the Lawi migrated from Vietnam. Their numbers have been wavering in recent years, probably due to disease and poor hygiene.

The Lawi are animists who also practice ancestor worship, often calling on a shaman (*Djamon*) to determine what spirit has been offended when sickness or disaster strikes and offering sacrifices of pigs or chickens in order to placate the offended spirit.

It is unknown whether there are any Christians among the Lawi in Laos and there is no record of missionary activity with this least-reached people group. There are currently no evangelical resources available in the Lawi's language, which is a Malayo-Polynesian language unlike most other languages spoken in Laos. Their language is primarily unknown to outsiders.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9145

Lu, Tai Lu (163,467)

The Lu people live in the Bokeo, Louangnamtha, Louangphrabang, Oudomxai, Phongsali, and Xaisomboun Provinces of northern Laos. Their traditional culture is almost entirely preserved. Most Lu are wet rice farmers, still using water buffalo to pull wooden plows. They are also skilled silversmiths and fishermen, and they are famous for making Lu swords and beautiful embroidered fabrics.

They live in bamboo and thatch houses within their villages that are controlled by a chief, although the chief's main concern is where to sow rice fields and not the strict leadership of the community. It is believed that control among the Tai Lu people is kept through witchcraft.

The Lu are nominally Theravada Buddhists, with over 80% still practicing animism and ancestor worship. They rely on chants, rituals, and sacrifices to appease angered spirits. .01% of the Lu are evangelical Christian.

There is only one known church dedicated to ministering to this least-reached people group. Although a New Testament has been available in Lu since 1933, it is unreadable by modern Lu. A new translation is required in order for them to benefit from the Bible.

There are several evangelical film resources including the *Jesus* film and the *God's Story* film. There are also radio broadcasts and gospel recordings available in the Lu language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33451

Mal, Khatin, T'in (31,804)

The Mal, who sometimes call themselves the Madi, live in the Xaignabouri Province of western Laos. The Mal, who practice slash-and-burn agriculture, have experienced much poverty due to poor crop yields. As a result of their farming practices, they are semi-nomadic, farming in one area for one year and then moving to new ground. They leave a burned plot alone for ten years before farming it again. They prefer to marry within their own village, often resulting in inbreeding. The bride and groom usually live with the bride's family until they have several children of their own.

The Mal are animists and ancestor worshippers, relying on a shaman to conduct ceremonies in order to appease angered spirits. Missionaries to the Mal in Thailand have had some success after a Buddhist monk converted to Christianity in 1992. In Laos, however, only about 1.15% of the Mal are evangelical Christian.

There is one church and multiple agencies dedicated to reaching the Mal in Laos, and a New Testament was translated into Mal in 1994. There are gospel recordings available in the Mal language. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Mal language. The Mal are still considered a least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33452

Maleng (896)

The Meleng live in the sparsely populated Khammouan Province of central Laos along the banks of the Theun River. They probably broke off of the larger Chut people group sometime in the past and have developed their own language and culture over time. They have struggled to develop an agriculture-based society, growing tobacco, beans, sugarcane, and rice.

Traditionally, the Meleng are animists and ancestor worshippers, but about 2% of the population is Christian. The number of evangelical Christians has not been estimated. There are, perhaps, many more Christians among the Maleng; many are forced to secrecy because of heavy persecution.

There is at least one agency and several churches dedicated to ministering to this least-reached people group. Although no written resources are available in Maleng, there is a Gospel recording

available to communicate the message of Jesus to them. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Maleng language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33453

Mangkong (126,605)

The Mangkong were originally a mountain-dwelling people, but they recently relocated to the lowlands of the Borikhan, Savannakhet, and Khammouan Provinces of central Laos. They are often combined with the Bru and So people groups because their languages are similar, but they are different ethnically. Only one out of four Mangkong is literate, and three out of four have never had formal schooling.

Most Mangkong are animists and ancestor worshippers, but Christian missionaries have been working with them since the 1950's. By the time the missionaries were expelled during the Communist takeover in 1975, there was a well-established Christian church with the Mangkong people. Today, about .2% of the population is evangelical Christian.

Despite heavy pressure from the government, these Christians still cling to their faith. While at least one agency is committed to reaching the Mangkong, there is no known church dedicated to ministering to this least-reached people group.

Portions of the Bible have been available in the So language since the 1980s, but a complete Bible has not been translated yet. There is a gospel recording available in the So language. However, the *Jesus* film, as well as other evangelical resources, has not been translated into the So language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20928

Mlabri (29)

The Mlabri is the smallest ethnic group in Laos. They live in the forest of the Xaignabouri Province, where they carry out a nomadic lifestyle of foraging for food and living in temporary shelters. Male Mlabri clothe themselves in simple loincloths. They practice serial monogamy, where a woman will be married to a single man for about five years, then she will marry again taking her children with her.

The Mlabri are animists who live in constant fear of evil spirits who dwell in all things, even the especially feared rainbow. There are no known evangelical resources in the Mlabri language. Missionaries with New Tribes Mission have been working with the Mlabri for over 20 years, but they have yet to see a convert.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20929

Mon, Muong (297)

There is little information regarding the Mon at this time. There are no known Christians among the Mon. There are no known agencies working with the Mon. However there is a Gospel recording in Muong, their native language for those who wish to work with them.

The Muong language seems to be quite prevalent in Vietnam. This may influence their current location in Laos, but this is not known for sure. The *Jesus* film has been translated into the Muong language in addition to some evangelical radio broadcasts. Some portions of the Bible were translated into the Muong language in 1963.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=mtq
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

00000

Mongol, Yunnan (9,000)

The Mongol people live in northern Laos along the southern border of China. While most practice ethnic religions, probably animism, about 25% of Mongols in Laos are Christians. The number of evangelical Christians has not been estimated. The Mongols in Laos speak Kaduo. There is a gospel recording available in the Kaduo language, but there are no other evangelical resources available in the Kaduo language. There is no other information regarding the Mongol people group and their culture available at this time.

20939

Ngae (16,712)

The Ngae, who call themselves the Nkriang, live in the Xekong, Saravan, and Champasak Provinces of southern Laos. *Kha Koh*, which means *mountain people*, is a name that the Ngae consider degrading and should not be used because it is offensive. It is customary for the Ngae to smoke tobacco from the age of eight and for the youngest child of the family to remain with his parents until their death.

The Ngae's animistic religion controls much of their lifestyle. Infants must remain indoors until a buffalo has been sacrificed, and ancestors are worshipped for a solid week in April every year. Evangelical Christians account for 4.38% of the population.

Bible portions have been translated into Ngeq, their native language, and at least seven churches are dedicated to reaching them. There is a gospel recording available in the Ngae language, however the *Jesus* film and other evangelistic resources are unavailable.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20941

Nguan (35,973)

The Nguan live in the Luangnamtha and Bokeo Provinces of northern Laos, where they live in houses with wooden tiled roofs that are built on beautifully carved stilts. Villages are built in a circular pattern facing a central community building. They can be divided into two distinct clans: the SimTakok and Sim Ome. The birds associated with each clan are considered sacred.

The Nguan are animists and sacrifice different animals to the spirits associated with different objects. A chicken is sacrificed to the spirit of the forest, a pig to the spirit of the village, and a cow to the spirit of the house. Shamans are present to oversee the sacrifices and rituals involved with spirit and ancestor worship. Only .85% are evangelical Christian. There are about 200 believers comprising two Nguan churches in Laos.

Bible portions in Khmu, the Nguan's native language, have been available since 1918. There are several evangelical resources available in the Khmu language including, the *Jesus* film, gospel recordings, and radio broadcasts. There is no record of missionary activity currently being done among this least-reached people group.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9152

Nguon (1,769)

The Nguon live in the Khammouan Province of central Laos. They are closely associated with another group of Nguon that speak Muong, and peoplegroups.org lists these as separate people groups (PopEntId: **22494**).

Nguon villages (*quoi*) are marked by large boundary stones and are governed by a village leader (*Lang can*) who makes important community decisions.

The Nguon are animists and ancestor worshippers. It is unknown how many, if any Nguon are evangelical Christians. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Nguon language, but is available in their second language of Muong. There are also gospel recordings, radio broadcasts, and some Bible portions available in the Muong language. There are currently no churches or agencies dedicated to reaching the Nguon in Laos.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

00000

Nung, Tai Nung (29,000)

The Nung, or Highland Nung, are originally from China and their dress is similar to that of the Chinese. The women wear their hair in a bun on the top of their head and often wear a small turban as well. The Nung usually live in hilly areas where they grow rice and corn, and the women are famous for their beautiful, intricate embroidery. Their society is patriarchal, and wealthy men can have more than one wife.

The Nung practice animism and ancestor worship, although they are also influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Each village can have several shamans, which can be either male or female, who prescribe various sacrifices and rituals to appease angered spirits.

There are no known evangelical Christians among the Nung. The *Jesus* film, the *God's Story* video, gospel recordings, and radio broadcasts are available in the Nung language. Bible portions are available in the Nung language.

9157

O'du (299)

The O'du; (also spelled O-Du) live in the Xiangkhoang Province of northern central Laos. They are counted under another people group in an official Laotian census, although they are an officially recognized minority in Vietnam. They live in stilted houses with thatched roofs, and are practicing animists and ancestor worshippers.

Although their native language, O'du, is dying out, the elderly take care to learn it before they die, because they believe that without it, they will not be able to communicate with their ancestors in the afterlife. Likewise, traditional garments are usually not worn until a person is near death.

There are no known evangelical Christians among the O'du. There is one agency that is working to share Christ with the O'du. There are few, if any, Christian resources in the O'du language that can be implemented to reach them.

However, since their second language is Khmu, it may be possible to use the evangelistic resources that are in the Khmu language to share with the O'du, until resources can be translated into their primary language of O'du. Resources available in the Khmu language include the *Jesus* film, gospel recordings, radio broadcasts, as well as some Bible portions.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9159

Oy (20,491)

The Oy live in the provinces of Champasak and Attapu on the Boloven Plateau in the southern region of Laos. Because of their location on the Boloven Plateau many are rice farmers. Most rice farmers use a "slash and burn" method for planting due to the thick brush and grass that covers the area. They continue growing rice in one area for 3 to 4 years before moving to a new area to plant rice. Other crops grown are cassava (a shrub that is grown mainly for its roots), sweet potatoes, and bananas.

Traditional stories passed down in their culture indicate that they trace their roots back to mainland China. Oy is considered the main language. There are four dialects spoken among the Oy people.

Their main religious practice today is ancestor worship. They live in fear of spirits and consult the local village priest in order to appease them. Currently about 1.19% of the Oy are evangelical Christian. There are some Bible recordings available to the Oy in these various dialects, though there is still much more that needs to be done in this area. The *Jesus* film is not available in the Oy language or any of their dialects. There are no other known evangelical resources available in their language.

<http://asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Oy.jpg>

http://www.congocookbook.com/about_africa/what_is_cassava.html

<http://globalrecordings.net/langcode/oyb>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=oyb

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 lis

9160

Pacoh (18,126)

The Pacoh live in the southern part of Savannakhet Province and the northern part of Saravan Province within Laos. The Pacoh live in a very mountainous region of Laos and the Pacoh name itself is considered to possibly mean “mountaineers.” It is believed that there are several thousand Pacoh who live in Vietnam in addition to the eighteen thousand plus who reside in Laos close to the Vietnam border. Their main language is Pacoh and the Pacoh also speak a dialect called Pahi.

The Pacoh people live in silted houses which are grouped in clusters of 10, which they refer to as a “vel.” In addition to the vels that are set up, each village has a common area where the men of the village meet for drinking, greeting guests, and swapping stories of their hunting prowess.

Other activities the Pacoh enjoy are singing and dancing. 15-25% of Pacoh adults can read, so sharing of poems, proverbs, and puzzles allow the Pacoh to communicate an oral history of the past struggles their ancestors have endured as well as express their own current personal struggles.

The Pacoh people work as “slash and burn agriculturists” and their religious belief is interwoven with their work. As animists, the Pacoh believe that it is important to have a “Spirit-house” in place outside each of their villages. They pray to specific gods, deities, and ghosts. There are no known Christian believers among the Pacoh in Laos.

The New Testament books of Mark and John have been translated into the Pacoh language, but it is not known how many Pacoh can read it. Recordings of the Bible would be very helpful to reach the Pacoh, if these recordings could be produced in the Pacoh language. There are some scripture portions available in the Pacoh language, but no other evangelistic resources are available.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33454

Pala (5,485)

The Pala live in northern Laos scattered among 26 villages. Their villages are located within the Mai and Koua Districts in the Phongsali Province. The region they live in is fairly mountainous and they live close to the Oma people. The Pala's culture holds their past traditions in great esteem and do not easily accept new ideas into their culture. When counted in a government census, the Pala were counted among the Akha people group. This may be because the language they speak is Akha. Economically they trade goods among the Lao and Khmu people groups and occasionally barter for goods from the market in Koua.

The standard clothing is made of blue indigo cloth. The women will also wear embroidered clothing, such as aprons, vests, trousers, and turbans. The women usually wear their traditional clothing when going to the market or on festival days. The traditional clothing, which may be arrayed with coins and aluminum, is made within the Pala's own villages.

The Pala religious beliefs consist of animism and ancestor worship. Homes normally have altars that are used for ritualistic acts and offerings. The Pala's worship of deities and spirits is interwoven with other aspects of their lives as well. Each year, in June, after they have planted rice they will take part in a ceremony called "Tgelapeu." This ceremony is a time that they honor the spirits of the village in addition to honoring the harvest of rice that they have planted.

Whenever a child is born, someone dies, or there is a wedding there are special ceremonies that are officiated by a "spirit-priest." The Bible and the *Jesus* film are available for use among this people, but there is currently no one working with the Pala. There are no known Christian believers among the Pala. It has been suggested that the Khmu people that are believers may be able to reach the Pala with the gospel.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33455

Pana (475)

According to the Pana's history they migrated from China to their present location in northern Laos. Their ancestors in China are now classified as the Hani minority which reside in Yunnan Province in China. The Pana currently live along the China-Laos border in the Luang Namtha Province of Laos in the Luang Namtha District. They also live in the Bokeo Province of Laos in the Houayxay District.

They are generally called the Pana or Phana and their primary language is Phana. Other languages that some of the Pana speak are Tai Lu, Lao, and Khmu. Among the Pana in Laos there are three family groupings: Sing Di, Sing Chao, and Sing Pong.

The Pana people are skilled at growing irrigated crops. Because of the socialization among the Pana and other ethnic groups their distinctions as a group is less noticeable. Instead of wearing the Pana traditional style of clothing, they wear clothing that follows the Lu and Lao people's style of clothing. The Pana have adapted the Hmong people's style of building houses. Because of the small population of the Pana they have not been written about in official government literature produced by Laos and China.

The only known evangelical resources available for sharing with the Pana are a few gospel recordings. There are no known Christian believers among the Pana in Laos. It may be possible to use some of the other languages the Pana know in order to start sharing the gospel with the Pana. The Khmu language, which they can also speak, has several evangelistic resources available such as the *Jesus* film, gospel recordings, radio broadcasts, as well as some Bible portions.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/china/chinaPeoples/P/Pana.pdf>
website with links for other ethnic groups: <http://www.theboatlanding.laopdr.com/ethnic.html>
<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/china/chinaPeoples/P/Pana.pdf>
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33456

Phai (20,564)

The Phai people live in the northern province of Phongsali and the southern province of Xaignabouri. They are commonly referred to as the Htin, which groups them with the Mal people. Sometimes they are referred to as the Kha Phai, but that name is considered demeaning and shouldn't be used in reference to them.

The Phai and Phunoi people in Thailand have influenced the culture of the Phai in northern Laos, while the Phai in southern Laos remains uninfluenced by the Thai Phai. Many of the Phai are very poor and are looked down on by other people groups.

Their situation in life affects their outlook on life. Many times the Phai come across as a people who think very little about their self-worth. In their culture whenever someone dies, the youngest daughter will inherit.

Culturally they do not use metal. They work in many servant-style jobs, and also hunt, breed animals, and farm as well. They are very skilled at using bamboo to create household items. Sometimes they use bamboo and dark colored grass when making items such as floor mats and baskets.

There are Buddhist temples in some of the Phai villages and one known Christian church. There are about 100 known Christian believers among the Phai. Many of the Phai feel bound to appease spirits and practice animism.

Currently there are no evangelistic resources in printed or in audio/visual format to reach the Phai. The Bible is currently in the process of being translated into the Phai language, but is not finished yet.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Phai.jpgm>
http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=PHN
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

9164

Phu Thai (183,337)

The Phu Thai mainly live in the lower half of Khammouan Province in Laos. Their name means the “Thai people.” They are also spread out among the Savannakhet, Saravan, Champasak, Oudomxai, and Luang Prabang Provinces.

They speak Phu Tai which is classified as a part of the Southwestern Tai branch of languages. Unlike their Tai language counterparts they do not follow Buddhism, but instead hold to their traditional animistic beliefs, worshipping a total of 25 different spirits.

During the third lunar month of the lunar year the Phu Thai people celebrate “Pi Tian.” This festival, called “Spirit of Heaven” in English, is a time when the Phu Thai enjoy riding horses, elephants, and shooting arrows, among other activities.

Afterwards the Phu Thai gather together and have a time to offer prayers and offerings to the spirit which lives in paradise. They believe there is a time that this spirit comes down and visits them. During the time that the spirit visits them they will dance and jump and often witness miracles.

Currently there are about 150 known Christian believers among the Phu Thai. They do not have their own church, but instead attend church with other local Lao Christians. There are some gospel recordings available in the Phu Tai language. Other resources such as the *Jesus* film and the Bible are not available in the Phu Tai language.

[http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Phutai%20\(B\).pdf](http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Phutai%20(B).pdf)
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20932

Phuan (137,503)

The Phuan, which are also known as the Lao Phuan, mostly live close to the Plain of Jars which is in the Xiangkhoang Province. They also live in the Borikhamxai, Oudomxai, and Houaphou Province as well as the Vientiane Municipality and Xaisomboun Special region.

The Phuan people have a solid sense of themselves as a people and speak the Phuan language. The Phuan are divided into village style groupings with the “Chao Muong” (prince) as their leader. In the past they have been forced to work as slaves, but this disapated under Communist rule in Laos

The typical family size will include five children for very interesting reasons. They hope the first-born is a girl, followed by three boys, then followed by one more girl. The first-born girl helps the mother in taking care of the other four children. The three boys are responsible to help with work and they hope that their oldest son will be able to become a Buddhist monk, because his position provides for his family to be taken care of in the “afterlife.”

In spite of no available gospel resources in the Phuan language there are believed to be some Christians among the Phuan in the Borikhamaxai Province, but it is unknown how they first knew about Christ or when they came to faith in Christ and no specific details have been given.

www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=phu

[http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Phuan%20\(B\).pdf](http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Phuan%20(B).pdf)

20934

Phunoi (48,869)

The majority of Phunoi live in the Phongsali Province in Northern Laos. They also live in various communities scattered among the Oudomxai, Luang Namtha, Luang Prabang, and Houaphan Provinces. The Phunoi live among the Han Chinese, but the unique white leggings that they wear set them apart from other people groups.

There is not a lot of concrete information about the Phunoi. This may be due to the fact that they do not have permanent villages because of the type of farming they use. They practice “Shifting Cultivation” which involves growing crops in an area until the land is striped of nutrients, caused by heavy use of the land or heavy rains, then moving to a new area with fresh soil. It is believed that they also grow poppies that are used to make Opium. Typically Opium produced in Laos would be sent to China.

The Phunoi hunt animals and are skilled at gathering food staples from nearby forests. Their homes are made from different types of wood, including bamboo, and are usually built on stilts and lean against hills. The houses are built above ground so that the animals they care for can live underneath the house.

Land mines or cluster bombs from the Vietnam War which touched Northern Laos still affect the Phunoi today. Since many doctors fled Laos during the war, there is a lack of adequate medical care for people.

Currently the Phunoi syncretize Buddhist beliefs which they were taught from the Lu people, with their animistic worship. There are few known Christian believers among the Phunoi and no known evangelistic resources in the Phunoi or Phuan languages. However, there is translation work taking place to translate the *Jesus* film and other evangelistic resources into the Phunoi language.

www.millionelephants.com/UPGs/phunoi.html

<http://www.geocities.com/hamchinpeng/shifting1.htm>

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33457

Pong (29,329)

The Pong people live primarily in the Houaphan Province, but can be found in the Xiangkhoang, Khammouan, and Borikhamxai Provinces in Laos. The Pong people are also referred to as the Tay Pong. According to research by Ethnographer Laurent Chazee, the Pong people are spread throughout 20 different villages. They were previously a part of a Viet-Muong group, but later married within the Cuoi people to form the current Pong people group that we know of today.

Related to choosing whom to marry the Pong people have a ceremony called “Ngu Mai,” which is translated “women sleeping” in which a boy sleeps next to a girl, but is not allowed to have a

sexual relationship with the girl. If the boy successfully controls himself then he is considered to have a good reputation and may choose the girl to marry. If he fails then he is not allowed to marry her.

The Pong people are animists. There is one agency working among the Pong to reach them for Christ. Currently there are no known Christians among the Pong and no known evangelistic resources in the Hung language.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonchina/Laos/Pong.jpg>
<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

20935

Pong Kniang (1,798)

The Pong Kniang people live mainly in the Houaphan Province but are set apart from the Pong people because their main hub stems from the town Hua Mong. Their homes are close to the Neun River within the Viangthong and Houamuang districts inside of the Houaphan Province. They are a very tight knit community.

The main language is Pong Kniang and it is closely related to the Khmu language. It is believed that part of the Pong Kniang people also live in northern Vietnam and are classified as the Xinh Mun people group there.

Whenever a Pong Kniang couple marries they live with the bride's family until the couple has given birth to their first son. After they have their first son, they are allowed to move out. If they do not have a son they must remain with the bride's family.

Birth and death are quite interesting in the Pong Kniang's culture. The women give birth in the home. After the birth the umbilical cord for the baby is put in a bamboo holder and placed up in a tree. The umbilical cord is then kept until the person dies to be used as a way to confirm who they are to the spirits in the afterlife.

The body of the deceased stays in the home for about a week, depending on the time of year. It is buried with aromatic leaves on top of it. A male in the home is responsible for conducting a ceremony that involves throwing stones on the family altar to express the home spirit's anger that someone in the home has died.

There are few known Christians among the Pong Kniang and most Pong Kniang are animists. There are no evangelical resources available in the Pong Kniang language.

<http://www.imb.org/globalresearch/downloads.asp> February 2009 listing

33458

Pouhoy (265)

The Pouhoy people reside in northern Oudomxai Province within the Namo District. They consist of about 35 families which live in a village named Kang. They are not official recognized

as a people group, but still consider themselves as one. They are believed to be in the Jeng and Oy's lineage.

It is unknown which language the Pouhoy speak. They are animists in belief. There are few, if any, known Christians among the Pouhoy. They are unreached.

33459

Poumong (1,183)

There is very little information available about the Poumong. Their language is unknown.

It is known that they are a people that believe strongly in magic and supernatural forces. They believe the Laotian king and princes had magical powers and could change themselves into different animals as needed.

Even today the Poumong themselves use prayers, sacrifices, and ancestor worship to appease the supernatural world. There are no known evangelistic resources for the Poumong people and no known Christians.

33460

Poussang (2,437)

The Poussang live in the Phongsali and Oudomxai Provinces within Laos. The Poussang are comprised of over 300 families which are spread over the following villages: Poussang, Khen Chang, Chaxu, Foussang May, Foussang Kao, Nong Keo, Khen Chang May, and Khen Chang Kao. Those who live within Oudomxai Province live in the Namo District. Their villages are somewhat remote and situated about two to three thousand feet above sea level.

Because of the remoteness of their location not much is known about the Poussang people as a whole. It is known that they do not use Lao money but barter for staples. Their language is related to the Tibeto-Burman language group, but it is unknown which dialect the Poussang use.

Their style of clothing is similar to the Eupa Akha and the Kucong people groups. The local Poussang leaders encourage pre-marital sex. They also plan religious ceremonies in which they establish what new ideas will be accepted into the community.

Like the Poumong there are few, if any known, Christian believers among the Poussang. Most Poussang are animists and there are no evangelical resources in the Poussang's language.

33461

Puoc (3,480)

The Puoc people live along the Et River that runs thru Xiangho District in the Houphan Province. There are over 11,000 Puoc who live in Vietnam where they are known as the Xinh Mun.

Puoc women are distinctive because of their practice of chewing Betel-nut which turns their teeth black. It is considered an esteemed thing to have black teeth. The women wear a style of clothing very similar to the Tai Dam people group. The vest they wear usually has one row of silver buttons shaped like butterfly wings.

The Puoc people have a special animal that is considered sacred to each family line. It is typical in a home to have grandparents, parents, and children all in the same home. The home is divided into two main sections. The *plang* has the family altar and is where single men or guests sleep. The *xia* is the most commonly used area which houses the rest of them family and where they cook and eat meals.

There are no known Christian believers among the Puoc in Laos. There are no known evangelistic resources for the Puoc.

20936

Ruc (574)

The Ruc people live in a very remote region of Laos on the Lao-Vietnam border in the province of Khammouan. The area is mountainous and heavily forested. The Ruc name means “the people who eat the flour made from the Sago Palm.”

In the past the Ruc had their own language, but have started using the Chut language which is commonly used among Chut tribes. They trade with other Laotians or the Vietnamese for their clothing, copper pots, axes, and knives. Men usually wear a loin-cloth of white cloth during the summer and a *Kche* which is made from tree bark during the winter.

Ancestor worship is only practiced by the Ruc in the home of the village chief. They strongly believe in a spirit world, with the spirits of earth, humans, animals, and the forest considered the strongest. If someone suffers a bite from a tiger, bear, or snake they are considered accursed and are not to go into their village again for two to three months. Their family and friends are not allowed to visit them while they live outside the village.

These people have yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ which can set them free. There are no known available evangelistic resources to share with them yet.

20937

Sach (1,414)

The Sach according to some sources are also known as the Chut Sach or Xaek. They live in an isolated part of the mountains in the Khammouan Province. The shaman of the community is the religious leader; often he is the social and medical leader as well. The Sach grow rice, corn, vegetables, and beans for food, in addition to growing tobacco which makes them the only Chut group that relies on agriculture for sustenance.

There are no known Christians among the Sach, there are no known evangelical resources in the Chut language, and are considered a least-reached people group.

9172

Saek (21,538)

The Saek live by the Mekong River in central Laos. The Saek people have been scarred by warfare as the Thai conquered them among other people groups in Laos in the past. Their culture has a Thai and Laoian influence.

The Saek peoples' first allegiance is to their individual villages above the local country's government. Their homes are built of bamboo or other kinds of wood and are built up high on stilts so the animals they raise can live underneath the house. Their society is well-structured with men and women carrying out various responsibilities. They mainly raise rice. They also hunt and fish. The Saek women are well known for the "round dances" that they perform.

The Saek practice ancestor worship in order to have guidance in daily activities. They considered it important to keep these spirits content so no harm comes to those in the village. The only evangelistic resource available for use in the Saek language is a recording from the Gospel Recording Network. .16% of the Saek have become Christian. There is one agency seeking to reach the Saek in Laos for Christ.

33462

Salao (915)

The Salao people are considered a people that have been more recently discovered. It is unknown exactly which language they speak.

They reside just northeast of Cambodia in Champasak Province in Laos. Champasak Province is in an area that is still very rugged in regards to local transportation. They formerly were a part of an empire that stemmed from what is present day Cambodia. During the Communist Revolution in Laos, a statue of the previous empire's king was removed from its place in Champasak Province, and later allowed to stay in the present Vat Thong, also known as the Thong Temple.

The Salao people follow animistic practices and have been influenced somewhat by Buddhism. There are no known Christians among the Salao and no evangelistic resources available to them.

33463

Samtao (2,918)

The Samtao people live in Laos, Myanmar, and China. Within Laos, the Samtao people live in various villages that are within Luang Namtha and Bokeo Provinces. Inside these villages there are also Lu, Kouene, and Nguan people groups.

Because of the many different minorities the Samtao live close to they speak various languages in addition to their native language, Samtao. The Samtao culture is similar to those they live around. Polygamy and infant marriage is allowed as approved by the village leader.

The Samtao who are Buddhist are devoted to Buddhism. Those who practice animism have a special devotion to the spirits of the village, parents, as well as forest, water, and house. There has been no known witness of Jesus Christ among the Samtao ever. There are no known evangelical resources available in the Samtao language.

9174

Sapuan (1,883)

The Sapuan are located in a very remote southern province in Laos called Attapu. Whenever it rains excessively the Attapu Province is cut off from the rest of Laos. The Sapuan language is closest to the Oy and Jeng languages.

The Sapuan, like many other ethnic groups in Laos, follow animistic practices in spite of the fact that Laos has outlawed the worship of spirits. An audio recording of the gospel has been produced in the Sapuan language by Global Recordings Network.

There are no other known evangelical resources in the Sapuan language. It is unknown how many if any of the Sapuan are Christian.

33464

Sedang (1,031)

The Sedang live in Attapu Province in Laos. This province is close to the borders of Vietnam and Cambodia. There is a large population of Sedang living in Vietnam as well.

Within Laos the Sedang speak the Sedang language which is similar to Halang and the Halang Doan language. Each Sedang village has a special building which is used by the entire community. This building is built of wood from the surrounding area. In the past, when building the community center the Sedang would sacrifice a human by placing them in a hole where the building's central column would be placed. This sacrifice was given to demons.

The Sedang have said that they have learned of a God who created the world and of a flood that happened many years ago. However, there are no known Christians among the Sedang in Laos, but there are some Christians among the Sedang in Vietnam, which may be a key factor in reaching the Sedang in Laos. There are no known evangelistic resources in the Sedang language.

9175

Sila (2,286)

The Sila live in northern Laos on the other side of Muong Hai. The Sila are a people in transition due to their work as shifting cultivation farmers. They do not have permanent villages established.

There is not much concrete research available on the Sila, but conclusions have been made based on other people groups that are similar to the Sila's lifestyle. They usually live close to where

they farm and their homes are built high up so that the animals they take care of can live underneath the house.

In the area they live within Laos there are possibly landmines and bombs left by the U.S. during the Vietnam War. Teams are teaching the people how to successfully remove the landmines and bombs to help improve the safety where they live.

Like many other ethnic groups in Laos it is believed the Sila are animists. They also practice ancestor worship. There are no known available evangelistic resources in the Sila language and few if any known Christians. However, some Christian materials and the *Jesus* film are being translated into the Sila language.

<http://www.seamist.org/people/sila-laos.shtml>

20938

Singmoon (7,616)

The Singmoon live in the Thathom District of Xaisamboun Special Region which is located within Vientiane Province. They also live in the Borikhan District of Borikhamxai Province.

In the past a slave trade was in operation which displaced whole communities. This may have lead to the Singmoon being placed in two separate areas of Laos. The Xaisamboun Special Region is an area where bandits killed four UN drug control workers in 1994, causing this area to be one of the most dangerous places for travel within Laos.

The Singmoon follow animism practices. There are no known Christians among the Singmoon. There are no evangelistic resources available in the Singmoon's language which is unknown to outsiders.

9176

So (122,400)

The So, which translated means "elder brother," live on the Mekong River throughout Laos and Thailand. The area is very tropical. The So people are considered natives of the land but were forced to leave by others.

The So people are mainly farmers now and grow rice, fruit, and various vegetables. They are considered very dependent on the Lao for various products and services. The area where they live has problems with leftover cluster bombs from past wars.

The majority of the So people follow Buddhism, but many mix the Buddhism with animism. They also practice ancestor worship. .06% of the So people are Christian. There are a few evangelical resources available for the So, and one agency is seeking to reach the So in Laos for Christ.

Portions of the Bible have been available in the So language since 1980 and there are some evangelical recordings available via Global Recordings. The *Jesus* film has not been translated into the So language.

9177

So Tri (26,994)

The So Tri people are one of 60 ethnic groups officially recognized by the Laotian government. Their language is similar to the So and Bru language. However, the So have their own distinctive culture and customs that make them uniquely So Tri.

Unfortunately the things unique to the So Tri are quickly being lost as they adapt many of the general Laos population ways. The So Tri live in the Khammouan Province among the So and Bru people and may have at one time been part of their larger tribe.

Most So Tri have never attended school. They mainly work as rice farmers, using skills they learned from the Laos people instead of the “slash and burn” agriculture that is still practiced by So Tri who live in more remote areas of Laos.

The So Tri main religious beliefs are animism and mixed with Theravada Buddhism which is also known as Southern Buddhism. .10% of the So Tri people are Christian. There is a So Tri New Testament translation, but it is unknown how available it is for use among the So Tri. Also the *Jesus* film, recordings via Global Recordings Network, and radio broadcasts are available for use among the So Tri. There is not an agency currently working with the So Tri.

<http://www.acesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bullitt/theravada.html>

9179

Sou (2,710)

The Sou people live in the Attapu Province within the Phouvong District. Some of the Sou live in the Sanamxai District’s eastern region. The Sou people speak the Sou and Sok languages. Sou is similar to the Oy, Jeng, Sapuan, and So languages.

In the past, leaders who ruled over the Sou followed the advice of mediums. Today animism is a strong part of the Sou’s cultural identity. The Sou still consult the village shaman or female medium.

Very few Sou have ever received an accurate presentation of the gospel in their own language. In spite of a gospel recording which exists in the Sou language there are few if any known Christian believers among the Sou today. The *Jesus* film is unavailable in the Sou language. No other evangelistic resources are available in the Sou language. There is one mission agency committed to reaching the Sou.

20964

Ta Oi (39,479)

Most of the Ta Oi people live within the Ta-Oy District located in Saravan Province. Other Ta Oi people may live in the Savannakhet and Kekong Provinces, as well as on the Bolaven Plateau.

The Ta Oi people have syncritized animism and Shamanism and are severely demon-oppressed. In the past when the Bru attempted to take the gospel to the Ta Oi they were not allowed to stay in the area.

There are about 350 to 500 Ta Oi which follow Catholic teachings, and 1.4% of the Ta Oi population is evangelical Christian. The Ta Oi are very resistant to outsiders, so for the gospel to spread within this people group it seems that it would be best received when presented by a Ta Oi person themselves. There are no known evangelical resources in the Upper Ta Oi language.

<http://www.maplandia.com/laos/saravane/ta-oy/>

20943

Tahanag (387)

The Tahanag people live in the Pahxong District of the Champasak Province. There is not a lot of information known about the Tahanag language or culture. The Tahanag language is unknown to outsiders.

Older Tahanag still follow animism, but the majority of Tahanag have no religious beliefs. There are no known Christians among the Tahanag and no known evangelical resources available.

20944

Tai Dam, Black Tai (65,000)*

The Tai Dam people group have several sub-groups, one of which is the Black Tai. The Black Tai are named so because of the black clothing that the women wear.

The Black Tai culture is extremely respectful and their society is organized based on class ranks for people according to occupations. The family is considered extremely important and they work together as an agricultural society to farm as well as live together.

The Black Tai leadership in the community comes from the oldest male. Men and women share in all duties of home and work evenly.

The Black Tai live scattered throughout about eight provinces within Laos which are the Houaphan, Xiangkhoang, Luang Prabang, Phongsali, Phongsali, Luang Namtha, Xaignabouri, Vientiane, and Khammouan provinces. The Black Tai prefer to live in valleys in order to be able to grow rice.

The Black Tai practice animism and ancestor worship. They believe it is very important to keep the spirits happy in order to have a peaceful life free from harm. This appeasing of spirits links in with the need to keep the spirits of deceased loved ones well taken care of. They rely on shamans

to cure illnesses and believe the shaman can communicate with other gods and help control what happens in the future.

The Black Tai are considered a least reached people group and less than 1% of the Black Tai are evangelical Christian. There are portions of the Bible available in the Tai Dam language. Radio broadcasts as well as recordings from the Global Recording Network are also available in the Tai Dam language. The *Jesus* film has been translated into their language. Currently there are some agencies involved in reaching the Tai Dam for Christ.

<http://www.infomekong.com/taidam.htm>

33466

Tai Deng (33,977)

The Tai Deng, also known as the Tai Daeng or Red Tai, live along the Red River within northeastern Laos, which is why they are sometimes referred to as Red Tai. Their primary language is Tai Deng. The Tai Deng people are very respectful of others. Within their society age is given primary importance followed by occupation, wealth, and type of home.

Clergy are considered a separate social group from the others. Usually one village will be established in one valley. The Tai Deng people pay taxes to a prince. The Tai Deng people are citizens of Laos, but are not heavily involved within the government.

The villages are comprised of wet-rice farms that individual families work. Public transportation is improving in the area where the Tai Deng live which is bringing better government services to the area.

Almost 40% of Tai Deng, or Red Tai, are Buddhists, with the majority of Tai Deng people combining Buddhism with animism. It is common for young men to go to the village monasteries for several months in order to learn more about Buddhism.

There are no known evangelical Christians among the Tai Deng. There are no evangelical resources available and the Bible is completely unavailable in the Tai Deng language.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tyr

33467

Tai Doi (421)

The Tai Doi people live primarily in the Luang Namtha Province. They speak the Tai Loi language and have been mistaken for the Tai Loi people. The name Tai Doi means "mountain people." The Tai Doi people are physically separated from the Tai Loi people by the Mekong River.

Their location near a river is very important and the local shaman is consulted when deciding where to start building a new village. Within their villages there are Tai Doi, Lu, and Akha people.

The Lu people have influenced some of the Tai Doi people to start following Theravada Buddhism. They also practice animism and conduct ancestor worship on a yearly cycle. There is no agency currently reaching the Tai Doi and there are no known Christians among the Tai Doi.

Gospel recordings are available in the Tai Loi language from Global Recordings Network. However, there are no other evangelical resources.

00000

Tai Gapong (1,200)

There is little information available about the Tai Gapong at this time. They are also called the Phu Tai Gapong. It is unknown what language they speak. Their main religious belief is Theravada Buddhism. There are no known Christians among the Tai Gapong or evangelical resources available to the Tai Gapong.

33468

Tai He (10,546)

The Tai He people live in the Borikhamxai Province within the central part of Laos. The Tai He people are not officially recognized as a distinct ethnic group within Laos. However, Laurent Chazee did include them in his survey of Laos. There is not a lot of information available on the Tai He at this time. Their language is primarily unknown by outsiders.

Buddhism has had a strong influence in the Tai He lives and more so politically since the communist take over in the 1970s. They currently follow a mixture of animism and Buddhism. There are no known Christian believers among the Tai He. There are no evangelical resources available for use, and no agency is working among the Tai He.

33469

Tai Kaleun (8,564)

The Tai Kaleun people live mostly within the Khamkeut District in Borikhamxai Province. Some live in the Nakay District in the Khammouan Province. They mainly speak Northeastern Thai, but also speak a dialect called Kaleung.

The Tai Kaleun mix Theravada Buddhism with animism. No agency is currently working to reach the Tai Kaleun people, however, there are some evangelical resources available for those who feel called to work among the Tai Kaleun. In the Northeastern Thai language there are radio broadcasts, gospel recordings, Christian films including the *Jesus* film, tracts, and some portions of the Bible available for use.

<http://www.maplandia.com/laos/bolikhamsai/khamkeut/>

20945

Tai Kao (48,037)

The Tai Kao people are also known as the White Tai because of the women choice of colors for outfits. They speak the Tai Don language which is also called Tai Kao. The Tai Kao people are from a group of Tai people who were forced to leave China many years ago. They moved south and settled close to the Black and Red Rivers in Laos.

The Tai Kao culture is very respectful of others and similar to other Tai groups. They highly respect age and social status. Families are extremely important to the social structure of Tai Kao society. The family will help support a newly married couple until they can move to a new place to live on their own.

The main religion is animism. The young Tai Kao men also receive training in Buddhist beliefs. It is unknown if any of the Tai Kao are Christian. There are no evangelical resources available in the Tai Don language.

20946

Tai Khang (6,456)

The Tai Khang people live in the Houphan Province within the Xam-Tai District. A smaller group of Tai Khang people are living in the Viangthong District in the Borikhamxai Province. They speak the Kang language. Not much else is known about this people group.

They are mainly Buddhist with absolutely no Christian believers and no available Christian resources. There is a tremendous need among this group to share the gospel with them.

20947

Tai Laan (517)

The Tai Laan people live in the Kham District of the Xiangkhoang Province. This area has opened up to the outside world with the building of Highway No. 6. Their language is mostly unknown but it is thought to be similar to the Tai Dam language.

The primary religious beliefs are Theravada Buddhism. There are no known Christians among the Tai Laan and no gospel resources available to them at this time.

9181

Tai Loi (1,149)

The Tai Loi people live within the Long District in the Luang Namtha Province. They usually live along the Mekong River. They speak the Tai Loi language as well as a dialect, Tai Doi. Though they speak the Tai Doi dialect, they are not the same ethnicity as the Tai Doi people. Other names for the Tai Loi include Loi, Doi, Wakut, Monglwe, and Tailoi.

There is not a lot of information available about the Tai Loi, but it is known that their primary religious belief is a mixture of ancestor worship, animism, and Theravada Buddhism. There are no known Christians among the Tai Loi. There is a gospel recording available in the Tai Loi language, however this is the only evangelical resource that is currently available.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tlq
[http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Tai%20Loi%20\(B\).pdf](http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Tai%20Loi%20(B).pdf)
<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/TaiLoi.jpg>

9182

Tai Long (5,514)

The Tai Long people living within Laos are still shrouded in mystery at this time. It is known that they speak the Tai Long language, but much about their culture is unknown to outsiders. They mainly follow ethnic religions primarily ancestor worship.

It is unknown if there are any Christians among the Tai Long. There are no known evangelical resources in their heart language of Tai Long, and there is currently no one who is working among them to share the gospel.

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bullitt/theravada.html>

20949

Tai Men (9,490)

The Tai Men, also known as the Tai Maen, live in the Borikhamxai Province spread among the Khamkeut, Viangthong, and Pakkading Districts, with smaller numbers in the Pakxan District. They speak Tai Mene within their villages, but speak Lao with those who are not of Tai Men background. The Tai Men customs set them apart as a unique people group.

The Tai Men follow ethnic religions, one of which is animism. It is believed that there may be work occurring among the Tai Men and with about 50 Christians among the Tai Men. Though there are no evangelical resources available in their heart language, the Tai Men do have evangelical resources available in the Laotian language.

20950

Tai Meuiy (51,555)

The Tai Meuiy people live primarily in the Khammouan Province. The Tai Meuiy can interact with speakers of Tai Dam with relative ease because the Tai Meuiy and Tai Dam languages are somewhat similar.

Culturally the Tai Meuiy stand out among other people groups because of their distinctive songs and poetry, as well as having unique customs that are only practiced among the Tai Meuiy.

Their primary religious beliefs are animism mixed with ancestor worship. They make sacrifices bi-annually to a local village spirit. The spirit world is very important to the Tai Meuiy. It is uncertain exactly how many evangelical Christians are among the Tai Meuiy, but it has been reported that there are about 150 Christians.

There are no available evangelical resources in the Tai Meuiy language; however resources such as the *Jesus* film, gospel recordings from the Global Recordings Network, radio broadcasts, and

portions of the Bible are available in the Tai Dam language. Utilizing these tools may be helpful in reaching the Tai Meuiy for Christ.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/TaiMeuiy.jpg>
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=109709&rog3=LA>

20951

Tai Nua (45,223)

The Tai Nua people, also known as the Chinese Shan or the Shan, live throughout northwestern Laos. They speak the Tai Nua language. During B.C. times the Tai Nua lived in Southern China and Southeast Asia.

Currently the Tai Nua work as farmers harvesting rice, corn, sugar cane, tropical fruits, and other vegetables. They raise various animals including water buffalo. Others are traveling merchants who sell food, clothing, handmade items, as well as electronics and vehicle parts.

The men wear *sarongs*. The village Buddhist temples keep Burmese time due to influence from the Burmese. They also wear *sarong* styled skirts or pants with button up shirts. The women usually wear dresses or *sarongs* and shirts.

The younger women wear brighter colors. The older women wear colors that are less bright and wear their hair up more often. Most people wear sandals or flip flops. They enjoy eating rice mixed with bean paste which is usually placed inside a pineapple. Chinese tea, soft drinks, or beer are typical drinks served during meals.

The Tai Nua people enjoy wearing brightly colored costumes while performing songs and dance during special festivals. The women are generally more out-going, while the men are more soft spoken. Men have great responsibility in providing for the family financially as well as giving the family guidance in decision making. Men are ranked above women in their society.

The homes of the poor are usually made from bamboo with roofs made from various materials. Upper class homes are made from more sturdy material such as cement and brick and are usually decorated with a variety of items, such as family pictures or pictures of animals or nature scenes.

The Tai Nua people are primarily Theravada Buddhist with a mixture of animism in their belief system. Though work has been done in the 1920s with the Tai Nua to share with them about Christ, currently there is not an agency working to reach the Tai Nua for Christ.

There are no known evangelical Christians among the Tai Nua. Portions of the Bible have been translated into Tai Nua since 1948, but the Bible has yet to be completely translated into the Tai Nua language. There is a radio broadcast and some gospel recordings available in the Tai Nua language.

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tdd

To see a picture of a sarong:

<http://www.molon.de/galleries/Myanmar/People/index.php>

20952**Tai Nyo (15,817)**

The Tai Nyo, also commonly referred to as the Nyaw, live within the Borikhamxai and Khammouan Provinces, along the Mekong River in central Laos. They fish for a living. They speak the Nyaw language which is considered similar to the Phutai language. This language is also similar to the Isan language spoken in Luang Prabang.

Some of the Tai Nyo follow Theravada Buddhism, but many follow animistic practices in order to keep the spirits happy. There are a few Tai Nyo Christian believers, but the scriptures are not completely translated into the Nyaw language.

Hattaway, Paul. Piquant Editions, 2004. Peoples of the Buddhist World, p. 212.

20953**Tai Pao (4,262)**

The Tai Pao people live in the Borikhamxai Province. Borikhamxai Province has a total of six districts. The Tai Pao people live mainly at the juncture of three of the districts: Viangthong, Khaamkeut, and Pakkading Districts. They speak the Tai Pao language, but this language is not understood by many and this issue still needs to be addressed.

The Tai Pao, similar to many people groups in Laos, practice a mixture of Theravada Buddhism and animism. They also believe in order to be included with their people group they must follow these religious beliefs and to forsake these beliefs would be the same as forsaking their culture. This makes trusting Christ as Savior very difficult for them, but not impossible.

There are no known Christian believers or evangelical resources available for them. About 79% have still never heard the gospel. They are unreached.

Peoples of the Buddhist World, Patrick Hattaway, United States: 2004.
<http://www.culturalprofiles.net/Laos/Units/25.html>

20954**Tai Peung (1,312)**

The Tai Peung people live within eastern Laos in the province of Xiangkhoang. It is not known what language they speak. Part of the Tai Peung culture is the importance of celebrating certain festivals throughout the year.

One of the main festivals is the Laotian Lunar New Year. Similar to New Year's activities around the world, this is a time of year that "fresh starts" are made in the culture. Activities vary from personal: purchasing new clothes, making fresh commitments to be a good person, to group oriented: throwing of water on others to symbolically cleanse from past sins.

The Tai Peung people mainly follow animism. As far as is known the gospel has not been shared at all among the Tai Peung. There are no known Christians living among them or evangelical resources in their language.

20955

Tai Sam (897)

The Tai Sam people live in the Xiangkhoang Province in the Kham District. The Tai Sam are well-known for their skill in weaving and dyeing beautiful textiles. The Tai Sam speak Shan.

The Tai Sam people practice ancestor worship and animism, the worship of spirits. In Tai Sam culture, important spirits the Tai Sam believe they should worship are the spirits of the house, water, fire, mountains, thunder, door, and the village gate.

There are some evangelical resources such as Bible translations, the *Jesus* film, and radio broadcasts available in the Shan language. In spite of the resources in the Shan language, there has been no church planting work done with them in the several years, thus they are one of the most unreached people groups.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/TaiSam.jpg>

http://www.culturalprofiles.net/laos/Directories/Laos_Cultural_Profile/-944.html

20956

Tai Yuan (11,200)

The Tai Yuan, over 11,000 strong within Laos, reside primarily within the Bokeo Province, followed by Oudomxai, Louang Namtha, and Xaisomboun Provinces. These provinces are located near each other in the Northwest corner of Laos, which formerly was under rule by the Lanna- the “million Rice-fields” kingdom- that extended from Northern Thailand into Northern Laos. This links the 11,000 plus Tai Yuan, or KamMuang as they prefer to be called, with six million plus KamMuang or “Muang” spread throughout Laos, Thailand, Burma, and China.

There are a total of about 18 names used to refer to the Tai Yuan people. They speak what is referred to as the KamMuang or Northern Tai language. The women are well-known for their beauty. Due to families selling their daughters into prostitution in certain areas of Southeast Asia, AIDS is a problem among the Tai Yuan. For those involved in this lifestyle it is estimated that ten “Muang” people die each week.

They have Buddhist information as well as the Bible in the Tai Yuan language, but most people are not skilled in reading the Tai Yuan language. Currently there is no known church planting being done among this people and they are classified as a “Last Frontier” people.

<http://www.thailandsworld.com/index.cfm?p=74>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=nod

<http://www.infomekong.com/taiyuan.htm>

<http://www.thefellowship.info/Missions/Global-Missions/People-Groups/Muang>

20965**Taket (592)**

The Taket people live in the Nambak District within Luang Prabang Province. Their language is unknown but it is thought that their language can possibly be traced back to roots in the Mon-Khmer language group.

There has been considerable resistency to Christianity since Luang Prabang was classified as a “World Heritage Site” by the United Nations in 1995. Luang Prabang’s architecture has been described as “an outstanding example of the fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures with those built by the European colonial authorities in the 19th and 20th centuries.” It goes on to say that “Its unique, remarkably well-preserved townscape illustrates a key stage in the blending of these two distinct cultural traditions.”

This award given to Luang Prabang was used by authorities to start removing Christians from the historical site in order to keep with the historical Buddhist environment as in the past. Luang Prabang has a large number of Hmong, Khmu, and Lao people there in addition to the Taket people.

It is unknown how many, if any, of the Taket people are Christians. They generally practice animism, ancestor worship, and follow Theravada Buddhism. There are no known evangelistic resources available in their language. Research needs to be done into their language in order to provide Christian resources.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Taket.jpg>

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/479>

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/479/video>

20957**Talieng (30,427)**

The Talieng live in the southern part of Laos. Their primary language is Talieng. They are sometimes referred to as the Tariang, which also means “headhunters.” It is believed that they may be the same people group as the Trieng in Vietnam.

The Talieng live in the Xekong and Attapu Provinces within the Dakchun, Lamam, and Sanxai Districts. They also are located in the Savannakhet and Khammouan Provinces within the Nakay District. For many years they lived in very remote locations, with little contact with outsiders.

The Dakchung Highway, which was built in 1990, has allowed the Talieng to be able to travel more into other parts of Laos. In Attapu Province especially, the Talieng focus on agriculture for survival. Coffee, tea, mountain rice, and various vegetables are grown there.

The Talieng are considered a least reached people group because less than 1% are Christian. There are no known evangelistic resources available to the Talieng people. The Talieng people worship the spirits of their ancestors and along with other spirits. When they celebrate festivals they use a lot of tobacco and alcohol.

Typically, whoever is the youngest of the siblings will be responsible to make sure their ancestors are worshipped properly. They must take part in a week long ceremony praying for their ancestors. They will also take part in a buffalo sacrifice. These people have been seeking to have peace for many years. Who will tell them how they can have true peace with God forever?

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=tdf
<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Talieng.jpg>
<http://www.millionelephants.com/UPGs/talieng.html>
<http://www.ourweb.info/01/maps/laos/index2.shtml>

20958

Tamoy (656)

The Tamoy of Laos are located within the Viangphoukha District of Luang Namtha Province in Northern Laos. Their language has not been studied in-depth, but is believed to be a Mon-Khmer language. It is difficult to find extensive information about the Tamoy, even though they consider themselves a distinct people group.

In spite of the absence of Buddhist temples and altars in their villages, the Tamoy have been somewhat influenced by Theravada Buddhism. They practice animism as well. There are no known evangelistic resources and no known Christians among the Tamoy of Laos.

20959

Tayten (387)

The Tayten people live specifically in the Pakxeng District of Luang Prabang Province. They mainly live within two villages: Ban Phia and Ban Thenngiou. They are perceived by their neighbors as being a “mysterious” people because they are fluent in three different languages. Their primary language, Tayten, has not been studied. The only information about the Tai language is that it stems from the “Tai Linguistic Family,” but it is quite different from other languages that extend from this linguistic family tree.

The Khmu and Lao languages, which are spoken by some Tayten, have been studied more in-depth by outsiders. There are portions of the Bible translated into Khmu. The entire Bible is translated into Lao. None of the Bible has been translated into the Tayten heart language of Tayten. It is unknown how many, if any of the Tayten are Christian. They primarily follow spirit worship, which is also known as animism.

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Tayten.jpg>
<http://www.joshuaoproject.net/languages.php>

20960

Tchaho (328)

The Tchaho people live in the Gnot-Ou District within Phongsali Province which is extremely close to the Laos/China border. This district has one of the highest birth rates in Laos. The heart language for the Tchaho is the Tchaho language, based on the Mon-Khmer language group.

It is mostly unknown to outsiders. As a result there are no known evangelical resources available in the Tchaho language.

The Tchaho practice animism syncretized with shamanism. In their desire to appease spirits many of the Tchaho people have gone into debt financially. They have also alienated themselves from each other at times during their worship because of fear of spirits. There are no known Christians among the Tchaho people.

20961

Thae (3,354)

The Thae live in the Sanxai District in the Attapu Province in southeast Laos and is surrounded by Cambodia and Vietnam. It is an area of Laos that is still considered rugged, especially where transportation is concerned. Sanxai or Sanxay District as it is currently referred to, is home to the NongFa Lake. Nong Fa Lake depth has not been measured and many believe it is an inactive volcano that has become a lake. The Sanxay District, considered one of the least populated districts in the area.

The Thae people speak a language that has not been studied in depth. It may be similar to or the same as the Oy language. The Thae people practice animism and desire to appease the spirits. There are no known Christians among the Thae people or evangelical resources available for them.

<http://www.mysin Chew.com/node/9560>

<http://www.southlaostour.com/index.php?lay=show&ac=article&Id=5368071&Ntype=15>

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Thae.jpg>

http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=THX

9184

Thai (770)

The Thai people live along the Mekong River in Laos. They moved to Laos from Thailand for various economic reasons such as jobs, the ability to purchase cheap land, and sometimes to simply visit Laos as tourists. Many Thai fish along the Mekong River as a way to provide income for their families. It's interesting to note that the Mekong River is the border between Laos and Thailand. The Thai mainly live in the Savannakhet and Champasak Provinces, except for a smattering of Thai people who reside in the capital, Vientiane City.

The main language for the Thai people is Thai. Their main religious belief is Theravada Buddhism. This greatly affects their culture as to be Thai means that one is Buddhist. This is ingrained in the Thai person's heart.

It is unknown how many of the Thai people within Laos are evangelical Christian. There is one agency committed to reaching the Thai people. A complete Bible is available in the Thai language. There are many evangelistic resources available in the Thai language such as the Evangelism Toolbox, Four Spiritual Laws, Got Questions Ministry, the Heavenly Man, and tracts. Various Christian videos are available, including *God's Story* and the *Jesus* film.

There is worship music in the Thai language that is distinctly Thai. Weekly broadcasts in the Thai language are transmitted. Gospel recordings are also available in the Thai language.

20962

Tong (11,831)

The Tong people live in the Saravan Province in Laos. The Tong have been known by various names including Ong and Hantong. Others have included them as apart of the Lower Ta Oi people. However, the Lower Ta Oi and Tong people now have their own separate unique languages. The Tong primary language is Ong.

While not a lot is known about the unique Tong culture, it is known that their main religious belief is animism. They believe the spirits they worship control the world around them. About 1.40% of the Tong people are evangelical Christian. It is uncertain how they first heard about Christ. There are no known evangelical resources available in their heart language of Ong.

9187

Tum (3,240)

The Tum people of Laos are classified as a Mon-khmer language group. Their language is similar to if not the same as the Huang Language. The Huang people have also been counted as a part of the Tum people, though it is debated if they are truly two distinct ethnic groups or not.

The Tum people live primarily in the Borikhamxai and Khammouan Provinces within Laos. In the Borikhamxai Provincence they live in the Khamkeut District and in the Khammaaauan Province they live in the Nakay District.

The main religion for the Tum people is animism. There are no known Christians among the Tum. They do not have any evangelical resources available to learn about the gospel. It is expected that the Tum people group will become larger due to the fact that Laos has one of the highest average birth rate in the world.

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/%15Ethnic-groups-in-Laos>

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/nonChina/Laos/Tum.jpg>

9191

Yoy (1,292)

The Yoy people live clustered around the Mekong River, both in Laos and Thailand. Within Laos the Yoy mainly live in the Khammouan Province.

The Yoy language, also called Yoy, has a Northern Tai language base. The Yoy are bi-lingual in Laotian.

About 80% of the Yoy claim Buddhism as their religion, with about 55% practicing Buddhism faithfully. The Yoy also seek to keep peace in their community through spirit worship and

appeasement. About 19% of the Yoy people as a whole have heard the gospel. There are no translations of the Bible, Jesus film, or Christian broadcasts in the Yoy language.

Because the Yoy are bilingual in the Laotian language, it may be possible to use evangelical resources available in Laotian to reach them until translations are available in Yoy. Currently, there is no known church planting taking place among the Yoy and there are no known Christians among the Yoy.

Missiological Implications

- 1) There are so many unreached people groups in Laos that it is unrealistic to think that foreign missionaries will be able to complete the work with any speed or effectiveness.
- 2) Priority should be on biblical training for nationals to be evangelists, translators, and teachers.
- 3) Literacy programs are a great need among the people groups with low literacy rates and those that lack a written language. While written resources are often available, people lack the necessary knowledge to benefit from these resources.
- 4) Where written resources are unavailable or where the people may primarily pass on their culture, history, and life experiences more in an “Oral” or spoken format than in a written one, one could consider sharing God’s word via “Bible Storying.”
- 5) By sharing God’s word in their heart language thru “Bible Storying” and in a format that they are already used to, it could have a tremendous impact in reaching the people of Laos. They would be able to automatically share what they are learning with others, in a way that they naturally would share information. This could allow more of Lao’s people groups to have access to the Bible more quickly, to be disciple, and to be able to share their faith with others more quickly than one missionary could over the course of many years.
- 6) Agricultural and medical missionaries would probably be well-received, even by the Laotian government, as would missionaries who are willing to be teachers in rural areas.

Good website for general overview of Laos:

<http://plainofjars.net/lifest.htm>

Helpful websites for Bible Storying:

<http://www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com/>

<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/>

*It is possible that Dams being built along the Mekong River may change many of the above people groups' way of life and location, though currently there is no definite resources documenting this; for more information about the Dams, please see the following websites for a brief overview:

<http://iaoj.wordpress.com/2008/11/14/dams-upriver-hurting-people-living-downstream>
http://www.mrcmekong.org/Catch-Culture/vol14_2Sep08/dams-fish-fisheries.htm
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKI5Kr4r1Q>
<http://www.mrcmekong.org/>
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/laos_rel_2003.jpg

Links

<http://www.laostudies.org/> Has information from First International Conference on Lao Studies and upcoming conferences

<http://countrystudies.us/laos/> an on-line version of the book previously published in hard copy by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress as part of the Country Studies/Area Handbook Series sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Army between 1986 and 1998 offering a comprehensive description and analysis of the historical setting, geography, society, economy, political system, and foreign policy of Laos.

http://www.herbswanson.com/kmn/kmn_bibliography.php A list of resources relating to the church of the Northern Thai and Lao

<http://www.country-data.com/frd/cs/latoc.html#la0064> Very in-depth information on anything you would want to know about Laos. It is the results of a study prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies/Area Handbook Program

<http://www.seasite.niu.edu/lao/lao3.htm> Lao Language and Culture Learning Resources

<http://www.hopeforlaos.net/> This website has many resources in the Lao language available online

<http://globalrecordings.net/country/LA> Provides a list of languages spoken in Laos and whether gospel recordings are available.

www.multimap.com A great website with detailed maps of anyplace in the world. Allows you to pan and zoom in on the map you are looking at.

http://www.everestinfo.org/laos2/index.php?page=Tan_Pop The story of an American farmer who was involved with humanitarian efforts with the Hmong of Laos.

<http://www.laofreedom.com/> The Lao Liberal Democratic Movement's newsletter, including open letters to the world community.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Laos Website about religion within Laos