

## The Kaleung of Thailand

“What’s that noise?” asked Puong, sleepily. She and her husband Lak woke up, startled out of their sleep. Lak staggered out of bed and peered out of the window. “Oh, it’s Trat and his friends,” he said. “They seemed to have drunk a bit too much rice wine just now at the festival. They are wandering along the village road now, looking really drunk, singing at the top of their voices!” “Ooh..make sure our front and back doors are properly locked,” exclaimed Puong, alarmed. “That Trat can be quite rowdy when he’s drunk. The last thing we need is him barging into our house and creating a disturbance.” “Oh, the doors are locked, don’t worry,” said Lak, reassuringly. “What time is it now? Heavens, it’s 3 am!” “You’d think they would have a bit of reverence during the festival when we honour the ‘Guardian Spirit’ of the village,” grumbled Puong, yawning. “I just wonder how Trat’s wife tolerates her husband’s constant drunkenness.”

The **Kaleung** (population: 8,500) live in northeast Thailand. Their forefathers are believed to have come from central Laos and migrated into Thailand during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. They gradually adopted the local customs of the area, to the point of losing their own native tongue and adopting the Isan language. Their traditional costumes have been replaced with the local folk costumes of the Isan people. Even so, the **Kaleung** still regard themselves as a separate ethnic people.

Formerly an animistic people, the **Kaleung** adopted Theravada Buddhism as their main religion. While some animistic beliefs are dying out, elements of spirit worship can still be seen among them. It is not known if there are any **Kaleung** believers.

- Pray for Christ to be revealed to the **Kaleung**, that they may be set free from their spiritual darkness.
- Pray for opportunities for the **Kaleung** to hear the Good News. Pray that mission workers may be mobilised and equipped with adequate resources.

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