

## The Tai Yai of Thailand

“Please tell our parents that I beg for their forgiveness, older brother. I have caused them so much pain. I really regret getting involved as a drug trafficker.” Kya looked down and bit his lip on hearing the plea of Mong, his elder brother. Mong’s decision to leave the drug trade had resulted in him being pursued by the drug lords he used to work with in order to ensure that they would not be exposed. He now had to flee for his life. Mong gave Kya a sudden quick hug and hurried off down the mountain path. Kya watched numbly as Mong disappeared into the jungle valley below, heading towards the Thai-Myanmar border. The **Tai Yai** man’s heart was shattered. Mong might just as well be as good as dead to their family. There was no way he could return without risking being murdered by the drug lords.

The **Tai Yai** (population: 96,000) are a large ethnic minority in northern Thailand, concentrated in the Mae Hong Son region. Also known as the Shan people, Thailand’s **Tai Yai** are the descendents of settlers who left their homeland in Myanmar and migrated across the border into Thailand. Thrifty by nature, they are skilled farmers and traders. Many unfortunately are involved in the drug trade, drawn by the lure of making quick money.

Theravada Buddhism is the main religion of the **Tai Yai**. Old animistic beliefs are often intertwined with Buddhism. Both monks and astrologers are influential. Very few **Tai Yai** (0.4%) profess to be Christian.

- Pray that the hearts of the **Tai Yai** that have been hardened by spiritual deception, idolatry and unbelief will be softened to the Gospel.
- Pray against the scourge of drug trafficking that has destroyed many **Tai Yai** families.
- Pray for more mission workers to be raised and sent to the remote region where the **Tai Yai** live. May existing ministries experience growth and breakthroughs.

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This is a series of useful prayer profile compilations to pray for people groups collated from various online sources. Please click on the links below for more info:  
<https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>,  
<http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>