

## The Thai (Central Thai) of Thailand

The smell of incense filled the air of the Nangnak Shrine. Ratanapon bowed reverently before the image of Mae Nak Phra Khanong, hoping that the ghost of the legendary woman who died of childbirth would grant her good fortune. The **Thai** girl arose and proceeded to apply gold leaf on the statue. She had also brought an offering of a traditional dress for Mae Nak and a new toy for the spirit of Mae Nak's dead offspring. Also inside her shopping bag was a length of pink cloth to be coiled round the sacred Bo tree outside the shrine.

The **Thai** people call themselves 'Khon Thai', meaning "The Free People." They inhabit the rich central plain of Thailand that includes Bangkok, the capital city. This is the dominant people group in the nation. They love their country, revere the King of Thailand and have a very strong national identity. Politeness and respect are virtues of the Thai people. They especially respect the elderly and those with high rank.

While the official religion of most **Thai** people is Buddhism, what they actually practise is a mixture of Theravada Buddhism, animism and ancestor worship. Out of approximately 19.27 million **Thai** people in Thailand, only a few (0.3%) profess to be Christians after nearly 400 years of missionary work. The largest barriers for the **Thai** people coming to faith in Jesus are their fear of ostracism by society and their comfortable familiarity with Buddhism. They simply see no need for change.

- Pray that God will be revealed in dreams and visions to the Thai people.
- Pray against the spiritual strongholds of Buddhism, animism and ancestor worship over the **Thai** people.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will give the **Thai** people who want to believe in Jesus Christ the courage to face ostracism from their society.
- Pray that the **Thai** believers in Christ will lead Spirit-led, Christ-centred lives that reflect the relevance and power of the Gospel to those who do not yet believe.

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<https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>, <http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>