From poppies to plant diversity
A visitor’s guide to the hill tribe communities of Doi Mae Salong, Chiang Rai Province, Northern Thailand
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From poppies to plant diversity

A visitor's guide to the hill tribe communities of Doi Mae Salong, Chiang Rai Province, Northern Thailand
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1. Welcome to Doi Mae Salong!

Perched on a steep mountain ridge in the very North of Thailand, at the border to Laos and Myanmar, lies the town of Mae Salong (also known as Santikiri (สันติคีรี), “hill of peace” in Thai). It was originally settled by the 93rd division of the Kuomintang Nationalist Party, who fled from China soon after World War II. Today, the slopes are clad in tea plantations, and Chinese, along with several hill tribe languages, is more commonly spoken than Thai. Yunnan Chinese restaurants line the streets in abundance and offer a great taste of Chinese dishes, always served with a beautifully decorated china cup of locally grown Oolong tea.

Mae Salong is the hub of the mountains of Doi Mae Salong (ดอยแม่สลอง, in Thai: “doi” = mountain; “mae” = water), where hill tribe communities make their living as farmers, growing an enormous variety of rice, vegetables and fruits along with coffee. Hill tribe communities in the surroundings of Mae Salong include Akha, Lahu, Lisu and Mian. Many of those living in Doi Mae Salong today – Chinese and hill tribe people - came here as migrants some decades ago.
2. How to get there

When coming from Chiang Rai, go to the old bus terminal in the city center of Chiang Rai. Best time to go is early in the morning, to make sure you catch the songthaew to Doi Mae Salong (see below). At Chiang Rai bus terminal, take the green bus towards Mae Sai. When coming from Mae Sai, take the green bus to Chiang Rai, then follow the same steps.

From here on, there are two possibilities to get to Mae Salong:

1) get off the green Chiang Rai-Mae Sai bus in Pasang, where the bus stops at the intersection with highway no. 1130. From here, take a blue songthaew to Mae Salong.
2) get off the green Chiang Rai-Mae Sai bus at Mae Chan market. From here, take a green songthaew to Kiu Sataa (highway no. 1089), and get off at the police checkpoint (T-junction). From here, take a yellow songthaew to Mae Salong.

Bus ride Chiang Rai-Pasang/Mae Chan: ~1 1/2 hours,
Ride in songthaews to Mae Salong: ~ 1 hour.

When coming from Thaton, just take the yellow songthaew directly to Mae Salong.
Life in the mountains starts well before the morning mist disappears. Early birds can enjoy breakfast at the morning market in the center of Mae Salong, which attracts not only residents of Mae Salong, but also hill tribe people from all over the area. Shutters are pulled up by the crack of dawn and the market is most busy before 8am, though some of the shops stay open longer.

As the whole of Mae Salong Town is built along the spine of a mountain, great views await you wherever you are. It is worth to just wander around town, enjoy the fresh, hot steaming tea in any of the small relaxed tea shops and to discover the backstreets and the tangible melting of Chinese, hill tribe and Thai cultures. Family-run tea factories line the way, and you can watch the whole process from the tea leaves being dried, up to the packages being sealed.

On the local souvenir market, hill tribe women sell the handicraft they make. Mainly Akha and Lahu items like bags, clothes and jewelry are on sale, all labor-intensive, valuable, locally handmade items.

As Doi Mae Salong looks back on a very vivid recent history, there is a Chinese Martyrs’ Memorial Museum, and the tomb of General Tuan Shi-Ven, who led the Kuomintang to Doi Mae Salong.

**Chinese Martyrs’ Memorial Museum**

The museum pays tribute to the Chinese Kuomintang, who fought for Thailand against China. It displays the struggles and history of their involvement in the border region up to today.

Location: Take the southern road a few hundred meters out of Mae Salong and you can’t miss it on the left hand side. See also Map 2.

Opening hours: 8 am – 5 pm daily; 20 Baht
The tomb of General Tuan Shi-Ven

General Tuan Shi-Ven led the 93rd division of the anti-communist Kuomintang forces, who fled from China to Myanmar and eventually settled down in Mae Salong. A steep road with spectacular views takes you up to his tomb.

Location: See Map 2.

4 Map 2: Mae Salong Town (Santikiri) © IUCN / Carolin Kugel

4. Religions

Through its history, Doi Mae Salong has become a melting pot of animistic beliefs as well as three major religions: Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. In Mae Salong Town, visitors have the chance to visit the Buddhist temples as well as the local mosque and churches. Animistic religious sites are found in the hill tribe villages.

Buddhist temples

Srinakarin Chedi / Phra Boromathat Chedi

Climb up the hill behind the morning market, leave the main road at Wat Santikiri (on the left) and challenge yourself with 718 stairs, leading you up to a temple with spectacular views of Doi Mae Salong and the Myanmar border. The temple was built in honor of the late Princess Mother, Srinakarindra. The Princess Mother Hall sits right behind the Chedi. Though the hall looks like a temple itself, it is not, and does not contain any religious objects.
Another way to get up is the winding concrete road with great views along the way. It starts from behind the tourist market (see Map 2).

**Wat Santikiri**
A Thai temple on the path to Phra Boromathat Chedi.
Location: see Map 2.

**Wat Santitham, the “forest monastery”**
The monastery of Santitham was founded in 1998 and is located on a hill just outside Mae Salong, behind That Village (“Baan That”) (see Map 1). The 15 monks live a very simple live and focus on learning through meditation. **Foreigners** (all genders) are welcome to join the monks and learn about their daily life, religion and meditation methods. Fluent English is spoken, and interested visitors can either stay overnight at the monastery (there are several guestrooms with own attached bathroom) or in any guesthouse in Mae Salong and come to the monastery only during the day. A stay of 3-5 days is recommended, but times are flexible: visitors can stay shorter or extend their stay, depending on their interest and available time.

Environmental concerns are part of life for the monks. Behind the monastery lies a lychee garden which the monks take care of. Monks planted the trees, grew them, water them regularly, apply fertilizer and harvest the fruits. The monks are even involved in a reforestation project of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. They planted trees on 2.88 hectares of land and take care of the young forest they helped bring into being.

Behind the temple, a new pagoda is under construction, which the monastery plans to surround with a forest of long lasting tree species, like teak trees.

**Churches**
There are several churches in Mae Salong itself and in the hill tribe villages.
Mosque

Islam has long ago gained a foothold in many parts of Southern China, and came to Doi Mae Salong with the Chinese settlers.

Location: up a few steps the road just uphill from Little Home Guesthouse (see Map 2)

**PORTRAIT OF ABOE JISAW**

Village: Tung Ja Sai (Akha village)
Age: 69

Everyone in Doi Mae Salong knows me. Every day, for now eleven years, I stroll through town with my two beautifully decorated horses named Lisa and Apiu. I sing, dance (my own free style) and play the gong and the harmonica to the enjoyment of the people of Doi Mae Salong. You can hear me coming from far away. I am Akha and dress in colorful Akha clothes to look nice and handsome. I never go without my traditional hat for Akha men, which I decorate with fresh flowers from my garden. I make my living through a small farm. In addition, I offer rides on my horses for tourists.

I was born in Myanmar, but came to Thailand when I had to flee from Myanmar 12 years ago, due to the ongoing fighting of several splinter groups in the border region. Settling in here was easy, because many Akha hill tribe people who share the same culture and language with me were here already. One year after my flight to Thailand I started dressing up, doing my music and dance in Mae Salong and have done it ever since. The songs I sing are all Akha songs, and vary according to the season: the most beautiful love
songs I sing in winter, in the hot season I like to recite funny songs, and during the rainy season I sing sad songs about the rain and loneliness.

5. Facilities in Mae Salong Town

Sweet Mae Salong Coffee Shop

For the world’s best coffees and delicious cakes with a fabulous mountain view visit the Sweet Mae Salong Coffee Shop. The owner couple, Ton and Mee, will go out of their way to make you happy - success guaranteed. Maps of the Golden Triangle are also sold here.
Location: see Map 2

For the location of a clinic, the 7/11, the gas station, bank/ATM and internet café, please see Map 2.

Accommodation:

$s = \text{single}, \ d = \text{double}$

There is no shortage of budget accommodation in Mae Salong. Below is a list of some guesthouses. For orientation in Mae Salong Town have a look at Map 2.

Little Home Guesthouse
Location: next to the market; Phone: 053-765389, Mobile phone: 0812887084; www.maesalonglittlehome.com; Rooms: d 100BHT (shared bathroom), Bungalow: d 400BHT (private bathroom)

Akha Guesthouse
Location: next to the market; Phone: 053-765103; Rooms: 50BHT downstairs, 100BHT upstairs

Mae Salong Mountain Home
Location: 9 Moo 12; in a beautiful garden; Email: mail@maesalongmountainhome.com; www.maesalongmountainhome.com; Phone: 0846119508; Rooms: 500BHT– 1200BHT

A pink carpet of Sakura Cherry Blossoms covers Doi Mae Salong in January © IUCN / Carolin Kugel
Shin Sane Guesthouse and Bungalow
Location: next to the market; Phone: 053765026, Mobile phone: 0871851978; Rooms: s 50BHT, d 100BHT; bungalows: s 200BHT, d 300BHT

Osmanhouse
Location: 90 Moo. 1, at the main road; Phone: 053-765455, Mobile phone: 0840458031; opposite Sweet Mae Salong Coffee Shop

Baan See See
Location: 18/3 Moo.1; (20m uphill from the market); Phone: 053-765053; Bungalows for 2-3 people each, 400-500BHT in low season, 500-1000BHT in high season

Mae Salong Central Hills
Location: opposite the 7/11-shop; Phone: 053-765113, Mobile phone: 0896318913; www.maesalongcentralhills.net
Rooms: d 500BHT, 3 beds: 600BHT, 4 beds: 700BHT, 6 beds: 800BHT

Mae Salong Flower Hills Resort
Bungalows; Phone: 053765496 and 053765497; www.maesalongflowerhills.com; Prices vary with season and different bungalows, about 1200-2500BHT/double bungalow

Mae Salong Resort
Location: up the hill behind the market; Phone: 053-765014 and 053-765018; www.maesalong-resort.com

6. Activities in the hill tribe villages

The variety of hill tribe villages is the gem of Doi Mae Salong. Hill tribe people in the area belong to Akha, Lahu, Lisu and Mian tribes. Their villages are within easy reach from Doi Mae Salong, many of them within walking distance.

Visitors are very welcome to visit any of the hill tribe villages. To get there, you can either rent a motorbike in Mae Salong (be aware that you will have to go up and down some very steep bumpy dirt roads, not recommended in the rainy season), take a horse ride or simply go for a hike. Some villages offer homestays, such as Ang Law (Akha village) and Jabosee (Lahu village) (see next section). Here you can stay in a family’s home, either in a private room or in the same room as the family. This is the best way to genuinely get involved into local life and to take part in daily activities of the people. The traditional
bamboo houses are built to have excellent ventilation to cool the place down during the midday heat, and are clean, safe and cozy. If a family offers the possibility to stay overnight, blankets will generally be provided. Many villages have fixed prices for overnight stays and meals – prices for meals mostly ranging from 50 – 100 BHT, overnight stays are mostly 100 BHT.

If you want to see more of the culture and the nature of Doi Mae Salong than what is visible at first sight, ask for workshops in the villages. Many villages offer workshops for visitors, where you can learn how to weave a traditional bag, how to make a basket, how to cook local dishes, and even how to play local instruments.

Some villages also offer agricultural workshops, where you will be shown around the fields and can help with sowing, planting or harvesting, depending on the season and the fruit.

Guided trekking tours through forest, fields and countryside show you the beauty of the forests and mountain creeks and give a good insight into hill tribe farmers’ every day lifes. Decide yourself, whether you want to go for a few hours or a whole day or more (trekking tours up to two days are offered in the Akha village of Ang Law, see below, and a one week tour package is planned by the same village).

Below is a list of workshops offered by villagers in Jabosee (Lahu) and Ang Law (Akha) villages. The prices were set by the villagers and are considered fair payment. Most other villages in Doi Mae Salong will be able to offer similar workshops on request. By taking part in workshops offered by the hill tribe villagers, visitors can directly support local livelihoods, get in touch with people and have an unforgettable experience at the same time.
6.1. Homestays in the Villages and Contact Details

To contact the villages, please use the numbers and email addresses given below.

**Ang Law Village (Akha)**
Three families in the village take part in the homestay programme. Visitors can choose whether they want to stay in a separate house or with the family. Hot showers are available.

100 Baht / person / night

**CONTACT:**
Phone Mr. Arpee: 0867305973 and 0843707556  
www.akhamaesalong.com  
Email: apeedoimaesalong@hotmail.com

**Jabosee Village (Lahu)**

100 BHT per person / per night

**CONTACT:**
Mrs Amonrat: Email: amornrat_noi@hotmail.com  Phone: 0810213992  
Mrs Sila: Email: silasri@hotmail.com  Phone: 0815419427  
Mr. Nawil: Email: nawil3924@hotmail.com  Phone: 0850338821

**Lawyo Village (Akha)**

"Hill Mud House" - This is not a homestay, but a guesthouse.

**CONTACT:**
Phone: 0835731765  
Email: yohun_oq@hotmail.com  
www.hillmudhouse.com (website under construction)
### 6.2. Trekking Tours

**Ang Law Village**

**1 day tour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Walk through forest, a herbal farm, waterfall, come to a river, to catch fish by hand, for lunch (vegetarian meals available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noon</td>
<td>Cook fish for lunch in a bamboo pipe, assorted with wild vegetables from the forest (according to the season)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After lunch</td>
<td>Relax with a tea made from wild herbs collected in the forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Walk back through rice and corn fields to the village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 pm</td>
<td>Back to Ang Law Village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

500 Baht / person, including water, lunch, and English speaking guide

Need to bring: if you need any medical supplies, please bring them with you. Bring good walking shoes and best would be long pants.
ANG LAW VILLAGE

2 days / 1 night tour

Day 1:
9 am  Walk through forest, see a herbal farm, pass a waterfall, come to a river to catch fish by hand
lunch  cook fish for lunch in a bamboo pipe (vegetarian meals available), assorted with wild vegetables from the forest (according to the season)
after lunch  relax with a tea made from wild herbs collected in the forest,
evening  have dinner in Mae Ter Akha Village and stay overnight in their homestay, enjoy the evening with the family you stay with

Day 2:
7 am  breakfast in Mae Ter Akha Village, cooked by the family you stay with
walk through fields
lunch  cook together in the field
4-5 pm  back in Ang Law Akha village

1.300 Baht / person, including water, meals as described and English speaking guide
Need to bring: if you need any medical supplies, please bring them with you. Bring good walking shoes and best would be long pants.

JABOSEE VILLAGE

1 day tour:
Through fields and forest. Have lunch from local ingredients in the field.
250 BHT, including lunch and Thai-speaking guide

6.3. EATING IN A VILLAGE
Lunch time is roughly between 1 and 2pm.

JABOSEE VILLAGE
50 BHT / per meal / per person
Vegetarian meals available.

ANG LAW VILLAGE
100 Baht / person / meal
Akha hill tribe menu, to introduce visitors to the local cuisine, ingredients come fresh from the village’s fields. Vegetarian meals available.
6.4. TRADITIONAL DANCE SHOW

**JABOSEE VILLAGE**
500 – 1000 BHT per show, traditional Lahu dances

**ANG LAW VILLAGE**
Akha dances in traditional clothes. Visitors are welcome to join the dance if they wish.

*Show dance of women:*
1000 Baht / show / 1 hour

*Show dance of children:*
500 Baht / show / 1- 1.5 hours

6.5. HORSE RIDING TOUR

**ANG LAW VILLAGE**
Price: 500 Baht / half day / person, including horse and guide
Need to bring: water, best would be long pants
No riding experience required

6.6. TOURIST GUIDE (ENGLISH SPEAKING)

**ANG LAW VILLAGE**
Price: 500 Baht / day
The guide shows visitors around in Doi Mae Salong. If you wish, you can choose yourself where to go, what to do and see, otherwise the guide will lead you.
There is one guide for groups up to 5 people; for groups of 6 and more an additional assistant guide is required.

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13 Jabosee Women’s Group: The women sewing traditional clothes are highly skilled artisans and designers © IUCN / Carolin Kugel
### 6.7. Handicraft Workshops

**JABOSEE VILLAGE WOMEN’S GROUP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craft</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bracelet</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>200 BHT for the 1 day lesson, plus 20-30 BHT for the material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish* small bag</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>200 BHT for the 1 day lesson, plus 20-30 BHT for the material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. for cell phone)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish* medium size bag</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>200 BHT for the 1 day lesson, plus 50 BHT for the material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small or medium size bag</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>400 BHT for the two day lesson plus material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(whole item done by visitor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This means you will finish a bag that has been prepared before.

### 6.8. Basket Weaving Workshops

**JABOSEE VILLAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basket</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Cost Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small basket</td>
<td>1-2 days</td>
<td>200 BHT per day for the lesson, plus Material: 30-50 BHT (small basket), 100 BHT (big basket)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.9. Cooking classes

**JABOSEE VILLAGE**

Chili  
Bamboo shoot soup  
Taro soup  
Sweet sticky rice (dessert)  
... and many more on request, according to the season.

**PORTRAIT OF AMI**

Village: Jabosee (Lahu)  
Age: 41

I am Lisu, but live in the Lahu village of Jabosee. I moved here at the age of ten, when my parents died. My brother had moved here before and I followed him after our parent’s death. At seventeen, I moved to Chiang Rai by myself and made some money as a construction worker. I got married and gave birth to my daughter in Chiang Rai. I was 35 when I moved back to Jabosee to live here. Even though living in a city like Chiang Rai has advantages, I prefer to live in the countryside. I love the clean air, the peace, the cool climate without having to have a fan or aircon, the forest and the clean mountain water, which is for free. Also, I can grow my own food here and support myself. I have 10 cows, which my husband and I herd in the forest to sell them later. We grow rice and corn for our personal need, and I do some handicraft, too. I adapted to my village and learned to do my handicraft the Lahu style. Of all my activities, I like sewing and weaving best. It gives me time to think about myself, like a kind of meditation. I can forget about my problems and just enjoy sewing. I sew either on my porch or in the forest while herding my cows. When I finish a piece of handicraft I am proud to have achieved something I can show to people and sell. It gives me the possibility to earn some money for myself. I save the money and will live from it when I am old. This way I can support myself even when I grow old and will not become a financial burden for my daughter.

*Ami and the village’s women’s group offer handicraft workshops in Jabosee village.*
6.10. LISU MUSIC WORKSHOPS

**HEGKO VILLAGE**

Khun Kamron, who is the musical leader of Hegko village, teaches Lisu instruments since 1998 and offers music workshops for visitors.

Visitors can choose to have lessons on any of the three traditional Lisu music instruments he plays (two kinds of flutes, one guitar). Khun Kamron can teach up to three people at the same time. Visitors can call ahead, his mobile phone number is 0838695019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 participant</th>
<th>2-3 participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half day</td>
<td>300 BHT/per person</td>
<td>250 BHT/per person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full day</td>
<td>500 BHT/per person</td>
<td>400 BHT/per person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.11. AGRICULTURAL WORKSHOPS

The participation on farming activities depends on the season. Ask around about what is on schedule at the time of your visit. For example, you can support farmers to bring out the seeds, to harvest, to manure fields and to plant trees.
People in Doi Mae Salong use virtually every part of the banana tree:

**Banana leaves** are used:
- as plates to have lunch in the field or forest
- as a wrap for lunch packets
- for children to make hats from
- to build children’s hobby horses and other toys
- to wrap food during the cooking process, e.g. fish
- to roll cigarettes
- as natural umbrellas and temporary roofs

**Banana stems** are used:
- as food for chicken and pigs
- as a basis for floating baskets during the Thai festival of Loy Kratong
- to produce ropes from the strong fibres

**Banana fruits and flowers**
- are harvested and eaten
7. Everyday life in the mountains

Most villagers in Doi Mae Salong make their life as farmers. They grow rice, corn, cabbage, tea, bananas, lychees, cherries and many other fruits and vegetables, some own cattle, chicken and pigs as well. Farming involves getting up well before sunrise, when the roosters announce the new day. The women of a household generally prepare family breakfast. Rice with meat, fish and vegetables, often from their own field, refined with roots and herbs collected in the forest, make a healthy and very tasty meal. Cooked rice is wrapped in banana leaves and taken to the field as lunch packages. If there is enough time, lunch is even prepared freshly in the field, with vegetables literally being harvested right into the cooking pot - all without using any metal dishes or plastic! A bamboo pole is cut into several pieces which serve as cooking pots over open fire. Banana leaves make the dishes, and even the chopsticks are cut from bamboo wood. No non-organic waste is produced, and anything left over goes straight back to the natural cycle.

The whole family is involved in making a livelihood, though the children nowadays finish at least primary school. Even pregnant women work until birth, and are mostly back to business as usual two weeks after. At home, babies are carried in a handmade baby-sling. In the field, the child’s parents usually prepare a “nest” for the baby next to the field they work on. Clean leaves are collected and piled up, and a soft cloth is put in the center. Finally, an umbrella is set up as a sun protection for the child. Alternatively, older people often stay at home and take care of their grand children while the parents are at work.

Every evening, the picture of hill tribe farmers carrying firewood in baskets on the back on their way home is visible all over Doi Mae Salong.

Some demographics...

In the past, many women would give birth to well over 10 children, as child mortality rates were high. Meanwhile, demographic changes have taken place. Child mortality rates have dropped, and contraception methods like condoms and birth control pills are supported by the government and cheaply available. Many couples take their time and have their first child only four to five years after their marriage.

The education level differs from child to child, but all children in Doi Mae Salong get
basic school education. Preschool starts at the age of two or three, followed by primary school. Later, some even enroll at university and graduate.

Life in the hill tribe villages is highly dependent on the three seasons: the cold season (November to February), the hot season (March to May) and the rainy season (June to October). As there is an abundance of species that are cultivated and collected, it is always harvesting time for one or the other. The main harvest season is in November.

**Festivals in the hill tribe villages**

... are therefore celebrated all year round:

- January: Women’s New Year
- February: Akha Egg festival
- March: Men’s New Year
- June: Rice Sowing Festival
- July: Celebrations of young growing rice
- August: Akha Swing Festival
- November: Rice Harvest (around November 21st)

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**BROOM GRASS!**

*(Thysanolaena Maxima)*

If you come to Doi Mae Salong between January and March, you might wonder what all the bunches of grass are, put up for drying on the ground, on rooftops and even attached to fences. It is broom grass, or tiger grass. The flower panicle, which is collected from January to March, is used to make brooms. After the panicles are dry, the seeds have to be removed by rolling the bunch back and forth on the ground (see picture). Anyone doing this labor has to take a thorough bath afterwards, as the seeds are extremely itchy (that is why they are removed before binding the broom). The brooms are sold on the local market.
8. Some advice for visiting hill tribe villages

In most cases, behaving in a way that would be considered polite in your own country will do the job. Still, there are certain things you should be aware about, to show your hosts the respect they deserve.

Taking photographs

Mostly, hill tribe people will allow visitors to take their picture. However, please ask for permission before taking photographs, as not everyone is always comfortable with it.

In the village

You are very welcome to enter any hill tribe village. Before entering a house please ask for permission, just as you would back home, too. Make sure to take off your shoes before entering (except in Lisu villages, where houses have no bamboo floor – best is to take a clue from the people around). This is important, as people sit and lie on the floor and want to keep it clean.

Don’t bring any alcohol to the village. If offered rice whisky, please drink modestly.

Show respect for religious symbols and rituals. Don’t touch any objects with an obvious symbolic value without asking for permission first.

If you have some things you would like to give to the village, like books, pens, clothing etc., give it to the village leader, who will then distribute the items fairly. However, your friendliness, interest and goodwill are the most precious gifts you can offer.

In the countryside

Hill tribe people are directly dependent on the environment they live in. Many farm for their own subsistence and the water in the pipes comes straight from local creeks. Therefore, please take your waste with you. Respect nature, stay on the trail and follow the guide’s advice.

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1 Reference (10)
Dressing

Dress modestly. To make the villagers feel that you are paying them proper respect, don’t kiss and cuddle in public. It would simply make most people feel uncomfortable.

Opium

Don’t ask for opium in the hill tribe villages. Most of the opium comes from Burma and so, contrary to romanticized myths, has not been grown by the people for their own use. Just like anywhere else, people are buying drugs from the local drug pusher. A woman whose husband is addicted (the vast majority of addicts are male) has a heavy burden to bear. Apart from her husband not being able to work enough, a large share of the household’s income evaporates directly into the hands of ordinary drug dealers. By not asking for opium and not smoking it, you show that you understand the social, health related and economical threats of opium addiction, and do not want to encourage anyone to even try it.

LOOFA!
(Luffa aegyptiaca)

If the red dust of Doi Mae Salong still sticks to your feet after you think you have tried everything to get rid of it, try this natural, home-grown sponge. People in Doi Mae Salong cultivate it for their own use and sell the oversupply on the market for 10-20 Baht per piece. It can be used for scrubbing oneself clean in the shower, as well as for washing the dishes. Besides cleaning reliably, it provides you with a refreshing massage and mild peeling at the same time.

Requiring neither much care nor fertilizer, the climbing plant with big yellow flowers is fairly easy to grow. Until the age of two or three weeks, the fruit can be harvested as an edible vegetable. Later, the structure becomes highly fibrous, and it turns into a sponge.

Loofa is even used as a culture medium to grow orchids. Mixed with the clayey earth of Doi Mae Salong, it can loosen up the soil structure to make it hold more water.

And, after all, it will decompose 100% after it has done its purpose.
Age: 24
Village: Ang Law (Akha Village)

I grew up in the Akha village of Ang Law, where I live until today. My mother makes Akha clothes and sells them on the market in Mae Salong, while my father is a farmer and has an agroforestry plot. He grows several species, like coffee shrubs and fruit trees, on the same plot, so they can benefit each other e.g. through providing shade.

My village is very close to the town of Mae Salong. We started a community-based tourism enterprise here. So far, three families of the village take part in the homestay programme, but others also benefit from the project. Families who do not have the capacities to host visitors can provide ingredients for meals and cook for the visitors.

Unfortunately, many young people in Doi Mae Salong – I would say around 80% - see no economic perspective in their life in the mountains. They leave for the big cities to make some cash, like my two younger sisters, who work in Rayong, southeast of Bangkok. The money is needed to build houses and to support families back home here. The wages they earn are low, since the standard of education is generally low here. That makes it hard to find a well-paid job. The migration of young people away from Doi Mae Salong is one problem that I hope can be tackled through our community-based tourism project. Young people who guide visitors on trekking trails have a chance to make a good living right here and thereby keep the village alive.

These times I work as a construction worker in the area, because my parents want to build a new, better house. My wife and I have a daughter, Lisa, and a son, Phanuk, who you see in the picture with me. We stay with my parents.

I don’t want to live in a city, with all the air pollution. The job I have as a construction worker I also see as only temporary. I want to change things to the better in my village, and am involved in several initiatives of social improvement. At the sub-district level, I represent my village in terms of social matters and economic development. Another idea I have is to train more youngsters in Ang Law as tourist guides. Also, I want to educate villagers about healthy lifestyles, about how to prevent diseases and how to solve everyday health problems like high blood pressure. Another idea is to build up a rabbit farm with young people from the village. They can learn how to look after the animals, take care of them and have some income from selling them. They could spend their time doing something useful, and would not get involved with alcohol and drugs. I hope to make a contribution to improving young people’s perspectives in this beautiful area.

Khun Awoy is involved in the community-based tourism project described on page 16ff.
9. Going on from Doi Mae Salong

Songthaews from Mae Salong Town run between 8am and 3:30pm.

Blue songthaews to Pasang (Chiang Rai-Mae Sai Highway) wait around the 7/11 in Mae Salong Town.

Yellow songthaews to Thaton/Kiu Sataai (police checkpoint) wait around the souvenir market/primary school.

When moving on from Doi Mae Salong, there are some other places in the area which you should not miss, above all the "Hall of Opium", which provides an excellent overview over any issue related to Opium and displays the history of Opium in a way that makes you not want to leave the exhibition anymore.

Doi Tung Development Project

For tour packages see http://www.doitung.org/

Hall of Opium

Golden Triangle Park, Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai, Thailand, Tel. 053784444-6, see also http://www.maefahluang.org/hall_opium.php

Throughout the 1960s to early 1990s, the Golden Triangle supplied most of the world’s heroin. Ten years of research were spent to create this amazing exhibition, which tells the 5000 year old story of opium (in English). Learn how, in the earliest days, opium was used as a drug to treat illness, how imperialist expansion used opium in the economic colonization and control of China; find out about the underlying reasons of the fights over the Golden Triangle and discover the most amazing ways how heroin has been smuggled. Visitors also learn about current opium-related issues and the impact of drug abuse and addiction.
Mae Fah Luang Garden

This beautiful garden was also initiated as part of the Doi Tung Development Project. Set in wonderful scenery, the flowers are grown and nurtured with much creativity by local villagers.
See also http://www.doitung.org/tourism_attraction_mfl_garden.php

Hill Tribe Museum and Education Centre

Located in the center of the city of Chiang Rai at 620/25 Tanalai Road. See also http://www.pda.or.th/chiangrai/hill_tribe_museum.htm
Displays very interesting facts about everyday hill tribe life, about the history of opium in relation to hill tribes, about farming, and about tourism in hill tribe villages. There are also two very well-done movies shown (each about 20 minutes).

Mae Sai (แม่สาย)

Mae Sai is the northern-most town of Thailand. Located right on the border, it is a stepping stone for visits to Myanmar.

The actual Golden Triangle

The actual border triangle between Thailand, PDR Lao and Myanmar is located at the small town of Sop Ruak, which sits about 15 km upriver from the town of Chiang Saen. Long tail boat trips between the two towns are an easy and fun way to get here.
10. From Cold War to hot tea – the eventful history of Doi Mae Salong

Doi Mae Salong is a melting pot of people and cultures from Tibet, China, Burma, Laos and Thailand. Everyone has a different story of how they got here, but almost everyone in Doi Mae Salong can tell a story of migration. To understand the situation in Doi Mae Salong, take a look at the bigger picture and learn about the international entanglements, which brought about life in Doi Mae Salong as it is today.

Hill tribe people, whose ancestors originated from Tibet and migrated to Yunnan (Southern China) about 1400 years ago, have lived in Doi Mae Salong for a long time. Hill tribe communities are spread over Burma, Laos, Thailand and China, and used to migrate according to their agricultural systems, often not aware of which nation they were actually in at that moment.

However, things started getting hot in the border triangle of Thailand, Burma and PDR Laos after World War II, and hill tribe people were – willingly or unwillingly - affected and involved. Mao Zedong2 proclaimed the communist People’s Republic of China (1949). The Communist Party of China (CPC) came into power, and the Thai government became concerned about the possibility of Chinese communist ideas infiltrating through the hardly controlled northern borders.

In the first years, the CPC was opposed by the anti-communist Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) forces from Yunnan. However, the Kuomintang were defeated by the CPC during the Chinese Civil War (1946-1950). Most Kuomintang left the mainland and traveled to Taiwan, where they rule until today. Only their 93rd division fled to Burma and eventually migrated to the mountains of northern Thailand. In exchange for their commitment to combat communist insurgencies on the northern border, the Thai government granted them Thai nationality and a 30 year short term land tenure right.

27 The tomb of General Tuan Shi-Ven, who led the Kuomintang to Doi Mae Salong, overlooks Mae Salong Town © IUCN / Carolin Kugel

However, there was a downside to the protection the Kuomintang granted Thailand against China: the old Kuomintang armies largely depended on revenue from the opium trade to support their families and fund their resistance to the communist forces. At the time, the Thai government and countries like the United States were well aware of the drug trade, but made it their priority to prevent communism from spreading. This allowed the Thai opium trade to develop into a big, lucrative international business and to turn the area into the world’s number one opium and heroin hub.

**Turning flowers into gold – the emergence of the “Golden Triangle”**

*The origin of the poppy seed...*

The opium poppy (*papaver somniferum*) was discovered in the Neolithic Age, growing as a wild red flower in the mountains of the Eastern Mediterranean. Arab traders introduced it to Asia in the 7th and 8th centuries, where it became popular immediately. However, it was not cultivated commercially to any considerable degree until 150 years ago.

*Its breakthrough in the mountains of Northern Thailand, Burma and Laos...*

The first scene of the rising of the Golden Triangle’s is set in a trading office in London, Great Britain, about 300 years ago. In the 18th century, Britain had a huge trade deficit with Qing Dynasty China. China supplied goods that were becoming increasingly popular in Europe – including tea, silver and chinaware – while Britain had little to offer in return. The solution was opium. The British East India Company created a monopoly on opium trade in Bengal (today: East India/West Bangladesh) and introduced extensive cultivation of opium to its Indian colonies. The drug was then smuggled into China and sold on a grand scale.

However, when opium became more and more popular in China, the country began to grow her own opium. Most suitable for growing the opium poppy was the province of Yunnan (Southern China, bordering Myanmar and Laos). The highlands of Yunnan were

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3 Lindner 2000
high enough for the poppy to grow well. Yunnan had also long before become the home of various hill tribes. However, many hill tribe peoples such as Lahu, Lisu and Akha saw themselves being forced to migrate southwards due to political instabilities in Southern China in the 19th and early 20th century. At this time, hill-tribe refugees discovered the opium poppy as a valuable crop to earn quick cash. Thus, in the late 19th century, poppy cultivation spread from Yunnan into northeastern Burma, and to the Northern parts of Thailand and French Indochina (today Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos).

The emergence of the “Golden Triangle”...

It was half a century later, after the end of World War II in 1945 and the beginning of the Cold War that the Chinese Kuomintang forces settled in Doi Mae Salong. To finance their war against Mao Zedong, the Kuomintang traded the sole cash crop of any importance in the mountainous area at that time: opium poppies. Within five years, opium production in the Burmese part shot up 10-20 times, adding up to an annual yield of 300-600 tons. Thousands of hill tribe people had to flee from their homes in Burma and resettled in Chiang Rai Province, Northern Thailand (see also Ami’s portrait on page 36). Political and economical disorder in the frontier areas as well as confusing military structures enabled private armies run by local warlords to establish their own territories in the border area during the 1960s. A new phenomenon arose: laboratories were built, where raw opium was refined into heroin. However, while the middle-men became rich, the hill tribes remained as poor as ever.

The establishment of the big business...

By the late 1960s, the hierarchy of the rising opium business was the following:

- **The farmers** – mostly hill tribe people like Lahu, Lisu and Akha - who grew the poppies were paid ridiculously low wages for months of hard labour.

- **The rebels** who claimed tax from the farmers.

- **The merchants**, who also paid tax to the rebels and whose agents bought the opium from the farmers. Armed gangs then transported the drugs to the refineries.

- **The Kuomintang** forces had a buffer function for the Thai borders. They collected intelligence for Taiwan, the United States and Thailand. In return, the Kuomintang’s drug business in the border region was overlooked by the Thai authorities.

- **Intelligence agencies** from other countries, including the US American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), used the Kuomintang as their own informants. The CIA also recruited mercenaries to fight against communists in Northern Vietnam and in Laos (Vietnam War 1959-1975).

29 *Left: Trees fulfill more than one purpose in Ang Law Village (Akha) © IUCN / Carolin Kugel*
Leaving for now aside international drug syndicates and the drug couriers, the last but not least element of the chain are the **addicts**, the consumers of opium and/or heroin. Most drugs from the Golden Triangle were exported to foreign markets. Heroin enjoyed high popularity in Western societies. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, American soldiers in Vietnam were the main purchasers of the new narcotic. When returning home, they brought the heroin problem with them – straight from Saigon’s army barracks into US-American middle class suburbs. On the other hand, opium and heroin abuse was - and partly still is – causing massive social problems in the hill tribe villages of the Golden Triangle. In the 1960s, an addiction rate of 70-80 per cent of the male population was not unusual for opium growing tribal villages.

**Thailand’s role in the opium trade of the Golden Triangle until today...**

Thailand was stuck in a predicament. On the one hand, the country relied on support from countries which were fighting communism and were concerned about the drugs entering their societies. On the other hand, many drug traffickers were strongly connected to Thailand’s security agencies, and the country achieved economic benefits from the trade.

However, compared to Burma and Laos, Thailand had never been a major opium **producer**. Its role in the international narcotics trade lay in transporting, trading and exporting the drug to the world market. Its well-functioning infrastructure was needed to **transport** the drugs from the remote mountain areas of Burma and Laos on to East Asia, Australia, North America and Europe, where the business was booming.

Thailand was able to reduce its opium production rapidly. In the 1970s, the Thai government introduced a campaign to eradicate opium production by transforming plantations to other permanent crops. Nowadays, Thailand’s hills are virtually poppy free. However, even though Afghanistan has taken over the position of the world’s largest opium producer, illegal drug trade and consumption in the former Golden Triangle are still considerable.

*More information is available from Bertil Lindner (2000): The Golden Triangle Opium Trade. An overview. (see References)*
11. Recovering the forests and waters of Doi Mae Salong

The highlands of Northern Thailand constitute the headwater for large parts of the central Thai provinces and play an important role in the provision with sufficient and clean water to downstream water users. The water shed of Doi Mae Salong is a tributary to two rivers, which feed into the Mekong. These rivers are the main water source for household consumption and agriculture in the area.

Until the mid-20th century, Doi Mae Salong was in large parts covered by a mix of rainforest, dry evergreen forest and deciduous forest. However, decades of forest clearing for agriculture and settlements brought about a highly patchy landscape. Today, patches of original forest, degraded forest, grasslands, bamboo forest, recovered forest, rice and corn fields, terraced paddy fields, tea and coffee plantations, orchards, flower gardens and vegetable plots are scattered over the mountain range. While the hilltops are covered in remnants of green forest, the slopes are used for crop cultivation.

The extensive deforestation in Doi Mae Salong was caused in part by increasing population pressure and expansion of agriculture onto steep slopes. In 2007, the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF) initiated an environmental project in honor of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s 80th birthday. However, the project was put into practice in a typical top-down manner. This led to protests by local farmers of Doi Mae Salong, who claimed their right to a say in decisions about land use. As a quite unusual act, the RTAF asked IUCN, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, for advice about better approaches to nature conservation.

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4 Reference (6)  
5 Reference (6)  
6 "Deforestation" is the logging of forests  
7 Reference (5)  
8 Reference (2)
PORTRAIT OF APEE

Village: Lawyo (Akha)
Age: 74

I have seen a lot in my 74 years of life. Born in an Akha village in Northern Burma, I grew up between fights and gang wars over the opium trade and other issues. Many Akha, like me, were forced to carry the fighting equipment for local Burmese warlords. Whoever refused, faced death. When I was 32, we couldn’t bear it anymore. My husband and I decided to flee the country over the border to Thailand, with our three children. With us were four other families, each one helped the others as much as we could. We had to pay a smuggler, whose gun protected us from being robbed by muggers on the way. Five days and four nights we spent walking through the jungle, trying to find the way to Thailand. The men went ahead to make sure we were on the right way to the green border, then came back to pick up us women and children. Luckily, my sister in law could help me carry the children. What became of the rest of my family, who stayed in Burma, I will never know. In the destruction of the guerilla warfares it was impossible to keep up any contact, and we entirely lost trace of each other.

When we arrived in Lawyo village 42 years ago, there were only five houses with lots of land and enough resources for everybody to sustain their own life as farmers. We were welcome to stay in Lawyo and built up a new life here. Luckily, after all we had been through, at least we had an easy start in our new home. However, these conditions have changed in the meantime. Due to the growing population pressure, land and resources have become scarce in Doi Mae Salong, and only people who already have family here have a chance to move to Doi Mae Salong and share their relative’s land.

Being asked if I have the wish to go back to Burma, the answer is no. I want to spend the rest of my life here in Lawyo Village, which became my new home.

Challenges and achievements of environmental rehabilitation

(1) Governance

When RTAF asked IUCN and others for help in 2007, the biggest challenge was to improve the governance of the reforestation attempts. The most fundamental step was the establishment of a committee, where villagers, RTAF, IUCN, local NGOs and government agencies come together and discuss about how to regain environmental security in the region. Through giving a voice to all people affected by landscape

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9 “Reforestation” is the reestablishment of a forest, either by natural regeneration or by planting in an area where forest was removed.
https://www.uwsp.edu/natres/nres743/Definitions/Reforestation.htm
10 NGO = Non-Governmental Organisation
planning decisions, conflicts can be prevented, and the land use management system in Doi Mae Salong is expected to be sustainable in the long term.

(2) Restoring the forests

Forest was historically cleared on a grand scale. Due to land scarcity, newly cleared areas were inevitably located on steep slopes. However, especially during the heavy tropical rainfalls, farming on steep slopes bears a high risk of erosion, landslides and floods in the nearby lowlands. **Forests and water regimes are ecologically closely linked**, and loss of forest and impairment of the landscape’s water regime go hand in hand. In a landscape where forests are cut down, water run-off\(^\text{11}\) volumes after heavy rainfalls are higher, and water is delivered to the rivers more quickly, as infiltration rates of water into the ground drop. As a consequence, ground water levels in the highlands sink and the risk of rivers to run dry in the dry season is higher, because less water can be stored in the landscape. As Thailand’s Northern Provinces are a main water source for large parts of the country, deforestation impacts livelihoods far beyond the local scale. The lowlands of the Doi Mae Salong watershed went through several severe floods in the last decades. Instability of water flows in the highlands (Doi Mae Salong) caused the loss of infrastructure: bridges were knocked down and fields were flooded in the lowlands. Furthermore, the water quality in the lowlands has been impaired by the soil particles washed into the rivers through erosion in the highlands.

Another consequence of deforestation is the reduction of forest connectivity. This means that single patches of forest are located so far away from each other, that many animal and plant species cannot cross the distance from one patch to the next. However, most animal species need a continuous territory of a certain size to find enough food, shelter and nesting places. If their habitat – the forest – is logged, these species disappear along

\(^{11}\) The term “run-off” refers to water that flows directly into rivers or lakes, without being absorbed into the ground.
with it. This is very likely to lead to a loss of biodiversity\(^\text{12}\). Apart from the biological loss, a large number of forest species have a spiritual meaning to the hill tribe people. Many aspects of hill tribe culture are based directly on the natural environment and cannot be sustained without the forest.

- **Reforestation**

Several reforestation sites were launched in Doi Mae Salong, where trees were planted by villagers in joint actions. Tree and shrub species were chosen carefully, to ensure the newly planted plot resembles best a natural forest.

However, Doi Mae Salong is a very densely populated area. As most people need land to farm on, there is only a limited area available to replant forests. As a solution, agricultural methods have been intensified, so farmers have more income from one plot, and can leave more land for forests without economical loss.

- **Adapting agricultural techniques:**

  **Contours and alley cropping:** Contour lines were dug on particularly steep fields (see picture on next page). Along these lines, farmers plant permanent crop species, mostly trees like macadamia nut, jackfruit, mango, banana and avocado. The space between the lines is used to plant annual species, like dry rice and corn. This measure enhances infiltration rates of water and prevents erosion of fertile soil. Also, biodiversity on the field is high (compared for example to monoculture plantations). A high diversity of plants generally goes along with a high diversity of animals and a more stable ecosystem.

  **Construction of rice paddy terraces:** With improved irrigation systems, paddies produce a significantly higher yield than other farming methods. Achieving the same yield requires less area, and more land is available for planting forests.

  **Produce organic fertilizer to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers:** Villagers started cultivating the Red Wiggler Worm (*Eisenia fetida*) in tanks. Through their digestion process, the worms very effectively decompose biodegradable matter. They are fed with organic matter, like the leftovers on agricultural fields after harvest and organic household waste. Within a short time, the worms turn the “waste” into high value humus that villagers use to fertilize their fields.

- **Rethinking the choice of crops and trees: Agroforestry**

  The word “agroforestry” is a combination of the two words “agriculture” and “forestry”. It means planting trees along with other agricultural crops on the same plot. In Doi Mae Salong, this is generally fruit trees with coffee shrubs underneath. Forest tree species, with no direct economical purpose, can also be intermingled.

  These permanent species (trees and coffee shrubs) provide an all season canopy. The canopy decelerates rainfall. Raindrops hit the ground with less force. Erosion and water run-off are therefore reduced, and infiltration rates are higher. In addition, the strong roots hold the soil. Also, permanent cultures do not require tillage, so the soil is less susceptible to erosion.

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\(^{12}\) *Biodiversity* is defined by the *United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity* as the “diversity of ecosystems, species, and the genetic diversity within species” (http://www.cbd.int/)
The fruit trees provide the shade necessary for the coffee shrubs to grow well, and the different heights of the plants attract a wide range of animal species. Furthermore, fruit trees as well as coffee shrubs yield a comparatively high income for the farmer. Establishing an ecologically sound agricultural plot is therefore associated with the generation of income for local villagers, and poverty alleviation is linked with improved natural resources management.

- **Educating younger generations about the value of forest biodiversity:**
  
  Local schools started providing training in tree nursery techniques. The children’s direct experience with forest tree species raises awareness of the biological diversity of local forests and the benefit of forest plants diversity for people and the entire ecosystem.

(3) **Poverty Alleviation**

Many hill tribe families farm primarily for their own subsistence and sell only a fraction of their farm products. Therefore, cash income is limited. Certain goods and services (like higher education) might stay out of reach.

- **Poverty alleviation in the hill tribe villages through supporting new sources of income:**
  
  Hill tribe villages who attempt to establish nature- and community based tourism are supported.
What is “Community Based Tourism” and how can it contribute to environmental rehabilitation in Doi Mae Salong?

Community based tourism is tourism that takes environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, and with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life.13

At first sight, it might not be obvious how you as a visitor can contribute to helping local people in restoring the ecological functions of Doi Mae Salong.

But there is actually a lot you can do!

You can virtually contribute by simply having fun! Staying overnight in hill tribe villages, enjoying the fresh meals there, going on guided hikes and participating in workshops

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13 Reference (14)
raises income for the local villages that practice Community Based Tourism, like Ang Law and Jabosee Villages.

An agreed share of the income (e.g. 10%) generated through Community Based Tourism goes straight to a community fund. This money is used to support reforestation projects on the village’s land. Other purposes of common interest can also be supported, e.g. improving a road or a water pipeline. The money reaches the hill tribe people directly, with no tour agency in between you and them.

Families who do not have the capacities to host visitors, can take part by guiding tourists on nature treks, offering handicraft workshops or by cooking meals.

The income from tourism can provide important economic possibilities particularly for young people. Many young hill tribe people in Doi Mae Salong see little economic perspective in their home villages and move to cities to earn cash (see also Awoy’s portrait on page 28). Community based tourism can be an incentive for young people to stay in the village. As a side-effect, with young people staying on-site, traditions can be reinterpreted and creatively developed and therefore be kept alive.

If you are interested, ask your trekking guide specifically about the village’s reforestation efforts. Many of the offered trekking routes (see page 17-18) lead through newly planted orchards. You can learn more about the planted tree species, the background of the reforestation projects and refresh yourself with seasonal fruits right from the trees.

Last but not least, it is important to be environmentally conscious yourself. Save water, as it is a precious good in the mountains. Produce as little waste as possible, and if it is unavoidable, take your waste with you and dispose it in a waste bin.

Enjoy your stay!
13. **What is IUCN?**

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, is the world’s oldest and largest global environmental network.

The project in Doi Mae Salong is part of IUCN’s *Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy* (LLS), which is currently being implemented in 23 African, Latin American and Asian countries. The LLS initiative represents a new way of thinking – from seeing nature as needing to be protected from threats, to promoting negotiated plans and actions for productive landscapes. The Thailand Programme of IUCN has been active in Doi Mae Salong since 2007.

14. **IUCN’s partners in Doi Mae Salong**

Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF); Plant A Tree Today Foundation; Land Development Office of Chiang Rai; Royal Forest Department; Department of Water Resources; Community Development Department (CDD); Department of Agricultural Extension; Department of Fisheries; Department of Local Administration; Mae Salong Nok Tambon Administration Organization; Patung Tambon Administration Organization; Hill Area
Development Foundation (HADF); Mae Fah Luang Foundation; Chiang Mai University Forest Restoration Research Unit (FORRU); Royal Project Foundation; Highland Research and Development Institute (HRDI).

15. References, links and recommendations for further reading

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(8) IUCN (2010): Better Forests, better water, better lives. Factsheet about IUCN’s involvement in Doi Mae Salong, to be downloaded at iucn.org/thailand

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16. **Acknowledgements**

Somchai Mue Lae Goo from Lawyo (translation and driving), and all the people in the villages of Doi Mae Salong who contributed their knowledge, enthusiasm and support.
Hope to see you again in Doi Mae Salong! Ang Law Village (Akha) © IUCN / Carolin Kugel