

# Unreached Peoples: The Tribes of Myanmar Burma Shan State

by Paul Hattaway

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*Paul Hattaway shares his experience with the diverse ethnic minorities of Shan State, highlighting their unique cultures and traditions.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 11:6, Psalm 133:1, Ecclesiastes 3:1, Acts 17:26, Revelation 7:9

**Topics:** "Missions Outreach", "Cultural Diversity"

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## Description

This sermon explores the diverse ethnic minorities in Shan State, focusing on the Balaon tribe living peacefully in the high western Shan mountains, their unique customs, and the bonfire ceremony marking the end of the dry season. It delves into the marketplace where various tribes like Bo'o, Taungyo, and Tanu come together to trade, highlighting the unity among the Shans, including the Inna tribe living on Inle Lake.

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## Transcript

Shan State constitutes many different ethnic minorities, such as Balao, Ba'o, Tanyo, Inla, Tanu, Shan, etc. The name Shan State is given so in attribution to Shan, a tribe with largest population among them. We first stopped at a station which has road access to the place where Balaon tribe lives.

Balaon live peacefully on high western Shan mountains, growing tea leaves. Houses are more closely packed comparing to other tribal villages we have previously seen. They love to live closer to one another, I presume.

Ladies wear ornamental orange hairpieces, red-blue jackets, red sarongs and rattan belts. When we went inside their village, we feel a sense of welcome by their smiling faces. Our guide explains that they want visitors to see their bonfire ceremony to be held tonight.

At a square near Buddhist monastery of the village, men and women are gathering and waiting patiently for the sundown. A young monk who is in charge of the bonfire ceremony is leading a recital of Buddhist chanting with his choir until the sun slowly disappears and fades away behind western Shan mountain ranges. Then, someone lit fire on top of the bamboo scaffolding intricately built for the purpose.

The bonfire is intended to mark the end of dry season and a warning to all blounds to be ready for another cultivation season. This is one of the typical marketplaces of Shan state. Very many different ethnic minorities can be seen at this kind of marketplace held every five days.

One Bo'o brings his cattle and farming equipment to sell when another Taungyo and Tanu women come with their produce of crops and vegetables. Wearing dark blue dresses and turbans are from the Bo'o tribe and women in dark brown one-piece skirts and with their legs and hands and brass rings are from Taungyo tribe. Well, frankly, it is not so easy to say who is who for the first time visitor.

However, they are all collectively called Shans inclusive of this Inna tribe who live and work on the world noted Inle Lake. They catch fish in the lake, grow vegetables on floating islands and gather every five days at the market and trade for necessary items one another. This is a famous Taungyo number called Inle Taide performed by young Inla tribes.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qhH0mV7MCe0.mp4>

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