

*Please pray for the
Southern Thai people*



10th Month Festival (Duan Sip)

27th September - 6th October



The entrance to one of the many temples in S. Thailand

The Tenth month festival is very important to Southern Thai people. It is celebrated in the 10th lunar month (September) each year.

Also known as the festival of the hungry ghosts. It is a time when Buddhist people believe that the spirits of the dead, who had bad karma and were condemned to hell, are released by the god of death and allowed to visit their living relatives. During the festival offerings of certain foods are made to these ghosts ("breht") to seek to appease them. Particular things are done to give "merit" to the ghosts to help them to get out of hell. Ceremonies

include offerings of food, pouring of holy water by the monks and special prayers to the ghosts. Those who live away from their home town try hard to return for this time. It is both an important Buddhist event and a time of family gathering and fun.

This year the main days for "Duan Sip" are the **2nd, 3rd and 4th.**

It is not easy for new Christians to say no to their families when asked to participate in this festival. This and the two following festivals have a high level of spirit involvement and are a time when Christians can almost physically feel the oppression and darkness throughout the town. Pray for light, freedom and life that come through Jesus Christ.

Lark Pra (Festival of Buddhist floats)

29 October to 2nd November

To "Lark Pra" literally means to pull along the monks. This festival was originally influenced by Indian culture. It is said to celebrate the joy the people had when Buddha returned from heaven and was carried on a throne to a palace.

These days the monks and Buddha images are not carried but are pulled along on a highly decorated truck or float. Some are pulled by hand, others by truck. Each float has one or more monks, a sacred Buddha image and usually incense sticks, candles and often a special container of holy water. Once the float arrives at the place set aside near Pak Phanang High School (Nakhon province) it "parks" there. People give offerings of money and the monks bless them, sprinkling them with holy water. Each year there are around 100 floats that make their way to Pak Phanang from local temples in and around town.



A "Pra" float being pulled along during the Lark Pra festival

*"I (Jesus) have come
that they may have life"*

John 10:10

Vegetarian Festival (Gin Jai)

14-23 October

Every year people of Chinese background in Nakhon, Phuket, Phangna and Trang take part in the vegetarian festival. (Many of the local "Thai" people are really ethnically Chinese). This festival is reported to have begun in Phuket when an epidemic hit affecting both locals and a visiting Chinese opera company. The local Chinese community performed certain (Taoist) rites to honour and appease the gods and the epidemic abated. The modern festival stems from this and is to cleanse people both spiritually and physically, to ward off evil from the coming year and to bring good luck.

Participants dress in white and refrain from eating meat, drinking alcohol, lying or having sexual relations for nine days. Spirit mediums invite "the gods" to possess them. Once possessed they carry out feats including putting swords through their cheeks and walking on hot coals. (see picture on front page) They feel no pain and show little or no injury after.

The ceremonies include a lot of drumming and fire crackers to ward off evil and as part of the spirit-channeling.

Weekly Prayer Guide **28th September –28th October**

MONDAY: *Pray that people will begin to question where the world came from - and to want to know the creator.*

TUESDAY: *Pray that people will see the emptiness of repeating rituals year after year - that they would be dissatisfied and seek true peace.*

WEDNESDAY: *Pray for local believers that they will be bold in sharing their faith and that God will give them the words to say.*

THURSDAY: *Pray for young Christians to stand firm in their new faith and to resist the pressure to take part in offerings to spirits and in making merit (while being polite and respectful to their families)*

FRIDAY: *Pray for the People of God in South Thailand to shine with light and life. Spiritual attack is strong during this month and apathy abounds. Pray they will be filled with joy and active for God.*

SATURDAY: *Pray for spiritual and physical protection of all Christians in South Thailand at this time.*

SUNDAY: *Pray for pastors and full-time Christian workers in South Thailand, that they may faithfully serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.*



**"So, if the Son sets you free
you shall be free indeed."
John 8:36**

S Ambler, V&C Pirie, D&L Chang,
J&B Callow
PO Box 32, Pak Phanang
Nakhon Si Thammarat 80140
THAILAND
pakphanang@sthailink.net

**September / October 2013
in South Thailand**

10th Month Festival

Lark Pra

Vegetarian Festival

A month of spirit festivals

**A month to cover South
Thailand in prayer**



**"The true light that gives light to
every man was coming into the
world."**

John 1:9

*Pray that Southern Thai people would see
the light
and give glory to God*