Geography of Ethnic Groups of East and Southeast Asia
Term Paper – 25% of Class Grade
Due Sunday, May 3, 2015

Learning Objectives:

1. Characterize the cultural perspectives and foundations of a specific ethnic or cultural group, with particular focus on geographic characteristics.
2. Describe the interactions between this ethnic or cultural group with another group that represents a contrast.

Overview:

For this paper you will characterize the cultural perspectives and defining characteristics of an ethnic group in one of two world realms: East Asia or Southeast Asia. You will research and develop a paper that tells a story of unique cultural practices, beliefs, economic conditions, and geographic patterns that help define a group.

An ethnic group is defined as people who share a common racial heritage, language, and religion or system of beliefs. Ethnic groups generally have a shared culture, which is the sum and total knowledge, attitudes, and habitual behavior patterns shared and transmitted by members of a society.

Your textbook is a good place to find examples of societies with shared culture or ethnic heritage. In choosing an ethnic group, students are directed to choose one with definable cultural characteristics, which generally means they will have a more limited geographic extent and are not likely to be the dominant ethnicity of their country. For example, the Han Chinese number close to 1 billion people, so their cultural characteristics are widely variable, and therefore would not be a good choice for the focus of the paper. The Han would be a good group for discussing interactions between your specific group and others.

An important objective of this paper is to identify the unique geographic patterns and connections. Therefore, as you research your topic, look for descriptions of place, relative location, movement, settlement patterns, and transportation.

In addition, you will describe at least one example of interaction that this group has with another ethnic group. For example, in investigating the Yao people of southern China and Laos, one might include a discussion of their interaction with the Han Chinese.
Steps to a Successful Paper:

1. **Select an ethnic group.** Read, research and consider candidate groups for your paper. Try googling the name of an East Asian or Southeast Asian country and “ethnic groups” or check one of the references given at the end of this assignment.

2. **Read and Research.** Once you have selected an ethnic group as the subject of your paper, you will research the following: geographic distribution; relative locations and places associations; elements of culture, both tangible (e.g., art or architecture) and intangible (e.g., language, religion or beliefs); economic conditions or livelihoods; and interaction or conflict with another group.

3. **Outline your paper** by fleshing out details for each of the categories listed in Step 2. Include list of sources in MLA format. A graded 1-page outline the paper and is due Monday, April 13, 2015. This is the day after Spring Break ends.

4. **Write, proof-read and re-rewrite your paper.** I strongly suggest that you have someone else read and comment on your paper. Your paper should have introduction, body and conclusion sections. Sub-heading may be used to organize your paper highlight themes or topics. The Writing Center is located in the first floor of the 700 building on the Shasta College main campus. They have tutors available to assist you with your paper. You can book an appointment at 242-7589.

**Caution:** Avoid the temptation to create a running list of facts. Instead, work to tell a story of the people, their unique geography, culture, perspectives and challenges. All information included should serve a purpose in supporting your overall objective in describing the people and their place in the world today.

**Maps.** Geographic characteristics will be supported by two maps: the first will be a general reference map of the geographic area which the group is most strongly associated (this map can be derived from a wide range of map sources, such as CIA Factbook country maps, Google maps or other sources); the second will be a thematic map, based on a single cultural characteristic such as religion or language. For both maps, be sure to embed the map in the body of the paper (most word processing programs have an “insert picture” option), assign a figure number, and explicitly discuss to the map and its patterns in the body the paper.

**Grading standards/rubric:**

— Thoroughly and accurately describe the perspectives and cultural expressions of a chosen ethnic group in South Asia or Southeast Asia

— Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural characteristics, that is free from stereotypes and oversimplifications
— Comparison of characteristics with another ethnic group with who they have contact, interaction or conflict

— Describe contemporary challenges and opportunities for chosen ethnic group

**Paper standards/guidelines:**

— Encyclopedia sources such as Wikipedia may not be used as a source in this paper.

— Paper length should be between 2000 and 2500 words (see word count in status bar along bottom margin of screen in MS Word) or the Review tab across the top (fourth item from the left).

— Corrected for grammar and spelling..

— Paper follows logical flow including introduction, body and conclusion.

— Sources are cited in body of the text and in a List of References at the end of the document. URL addresses (such as www.xyz.com) are not considered a full citation. See the Writing Center handouts on how to cite online sources in MLA format.

— Includes at least two maps, including reference in the body of the text

**Resources for Ethnic and Cultural Groups:**

World’s Indigenous Peoples  http://www.indigenouspeople.net/world.htm

The CIA World Factbook Library Ethnic Groups  

*Explore the Geography 8 Research Guide on the Shasta College Library website with sources for this assignment. You access by going to the Library home page (linked from www.shastacollege.edu).

On the left side of the page, click on Research Guides (third item from the bottom).

From the next screen, scroll down and select Geography.

Next, select Geography 8.

Last page: A list of source categories on the left side. Click on the source category. There is also a link to writing sources in MLA format.