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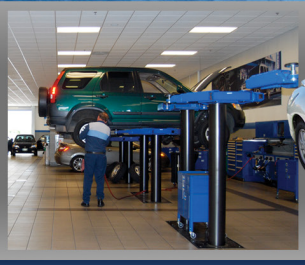
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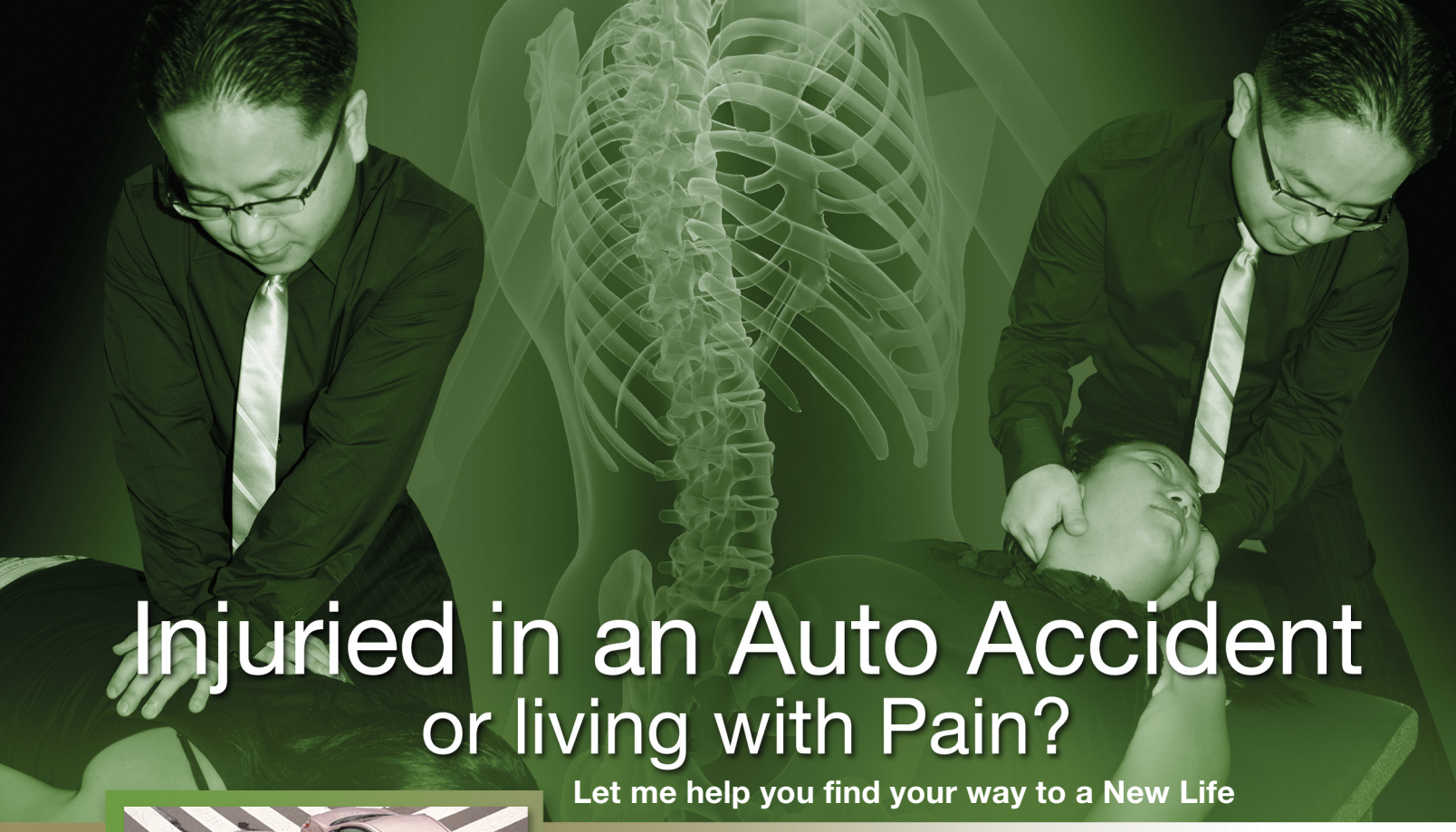
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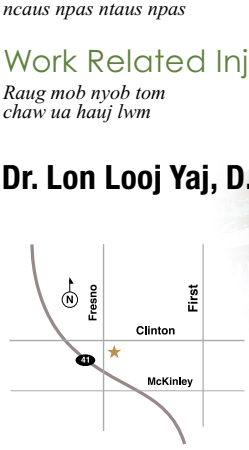
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



People often ask me why I created Txhawb?

Lar Yang
Txhawb publisher,
founder of Yang Design

Youa Za Yang
Txhawb Associate - publisher,
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For a long time, Txhawb was something I dreamt of, but at the time it was like a blurry dream that never seemed to come into focus. I never truly knew why I wanted to do Txhawb other then that it seemed like a good idea and I knew how to design magazines. I also knew that our community didn't have a professional publication that reflected all of its achievements, resources, strengths and successes.

But then when I read a few of the poems featured in this issue, I began to understand why something like Txhawb is fundamentally needed in our community. I have no conscious memory of life in Long Cheng, Laos but when I read, "Afternoon at the Long Cheng Cafe," I imagined myself as a Hmong person sitting beside the writer.

When my family immigrated to the United States in 1980, I was only five years old and too young to understand or recall what that was like. Yet a poem like "Here I Am" by Soul Choj Vang embodied so perfectly all the emotions I felt but couldn't articulate. When I heard the story of Lee Yang and Bao Moua's success after so much adversity, I couldn't help but be connected to their collective consciousness as a people; to feel connected to one another's hardships and to feel like I somehow lived through their experience with them as well.

Most people have the genuine desire to help our community. Soua Cha from Citi Tire said something very inspiring in his profile interview, "When I support you, you don't need to support me back, instead support the next Hmong person." In other words, pass it on. I think this is truly how we build our community. To return the kindness not directly to the giver but by investing in something positive for our community. Our community is so complex, the only way to contribute is if we each pick a corner and lift it together.

I am proud of all the stories we have showcased in the last four issues. By sharing these stories through Txhawb, their success is somehow all of our success as well. I truly feel that building strength and creating growth are only possible through the sharing and exchanging of stories and ideas. There are so many inspiring people and success stories, but without a place to tell them, it is as if they never happened. We must have storytellers and we must have a place to tell them.

Lastly, please support our advertisers. Thank them for supporting Txhawb and tell them you saw their business in Txhawb. If you don't, they may stop advertising, or worst they may go out of business. We live in tough times and they provide the only funding to continue Txhawb. They are the real heroes who are investing in you. I would like to thank all of the advertisers for their trust in Txhawb. Without their help, we would not be able to do it. Thank you also to everyone who contributed from the phenomenal writers, artists, photographers, sales reps and designers who worked so hard to make this issue possible. I hope you enjoy it and "remember to pass it on."

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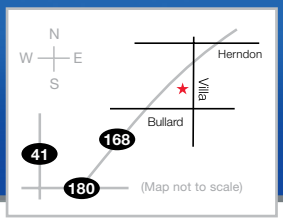


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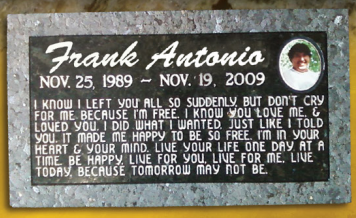
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Photo by Tudor Stanley

Muab Txoj Sia Rau Hmoob

NAI PHOO VAJ POV *by* Soul Tswvchoj Vang

Nyob rau xyoo 1941, muaj ib tug menyuam tub Hmoob cab nws tus txiv sam nees dub coj mus ntaus nqe them tojxeem. Lub sijhawm ntawd cov Fabkis twb tsis sau se lawm tabsis cov nom Hmoob tseem sau. Nws mus ib hnub kev nkaus thiaj li mus txog rau hauv tojxeem tsev. Tsis yog nws xwb uas tuaj them nqi rau tojxeem. Nws kuj pom muaj ib khub niam txiv Hmoob ntsuab tuaj them se rau tojxeem thiab. Nkawv qhov se them rau tojxeem yog raug 4 lag thiab 5 txiag yeeb. Vim yog xyoo ntawd kuj yog ib xyoo los te loj heev ua rau tej qoob loo tuaj tsis zoo "ces nkawv nkawj tau 4 lag coj tuaj them tshuav 5 txiag xwb. Yog li nkawv kuj "cab tau ib tug npua 4 cheej rau" tabsis kuj tseem tsis zoo tojxeem siab thiab. Tojxeem thiaj hais rau nkawv tias, "nam npua los tso rau hov ov, rov mus nrhiav 5 txiag yeeb tuaj thiab." Thaum pom li no lawm, thiaj ua rau tus menyuam tub Hmoob ntawd mob siab ib zag. "Kuv los kuag muag kiag," nws nco tau. Yog li ntawd nws thiaj los xav hais tias, "aub, kuv twb muaj txoj hmoo yug los ua ib tug neeg Hmoob thiab; twb muaj 13 xyoo lawm thiab; kuv los pw xav zoo zoo seb kuv puas ua ab tsi tau rau cov Hmoob es kom Hmoob dim Hmoob tej txim no."



Young Vang Pao Photo *Couresty of Fresno SGU*

Thaum ntawd los txog tamsim no twb yog 67 xyoo nkaus lawm. "Yog qhov ntawd nawb, qhov uas ua rau kuv mob siab es txiav txim los muab txoj sia rau Hmoob kiag," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov hais li.

Nrhiav Kev Vammeej Rau Hmoob

"Hmoob ib txwm poob teb poob chaw. Nws sib tawg ua pab ua pawg," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov piav. "Ces ib leeg mus nyob lub roob; ib leeg mus nyob lub ha. Mas Hmoob txomnyem heev; ntsev twb tsi muaj noj."

Tomqab nws pom Hmoob kev txomnyem tom tojxeem tsev tag, nws pib taug txoj kev tshiab. "Kuv tig rov qab los ces kuv mus kawm ntawv…Ces kuv yeej los txais (lav xaib) pab Hmoob; zaj twg Hmoob yuav txawj yuav ntse, zaj twg Hmoob yuav tau noj tau haus, yuav muaj nyiaj muaj txiaj, muaj vaj muaj tse, tau nrog luag ua nom ua tswv, tau lub suab lub npe zoo, ces kuv yeej nrhiav qhov ntawd rau Hmoob li," nws hais.

Nws kawm ntawv tau peb xyoos ces Yivpooj (Japanese) tuaj txeeb lub tebchaws tawm tsa Fabkis. Yog li, tus tubhluas Vaj Pov thiaj muab nws txoj kev kawm tso tseg, tawm los pib ua ib tug tub txhais lus thiab tub xa xov rau Fabkis, los "pab laj mej pej xeem Hmoob" tiv thaiv lub tebchaws.

Ob peb xyoo tom qab ntawd, lawv txais nws mus rau hauv Lao Gendarmerie, ib pab tubrog uas Fabkis ua cov tswjfwm. "Kuv mus kawm corporal los tau thib ib; mus kawm sergeant los tau thib ib. Ces tauj ntawd, los ua hauj lwm peb-plaub xyoos," nws nco tau. Lub caij ntawd, lawv pom tias nws mob siab thiab muaj peevxwm. Yog li, lawv thiaj xa nws mus kawm "Officer Candidate School (OCS)." Nws kawm tag OCS ces tawm los ua Hmoob thawj tug coj tub rog (officer) nyob hauv Royal Lao Army (RLA).

Hmoob Kev Vammeej Nyob Tebchaws Lostsuas

Nai Phoo Vaj Pov hais tias Hmoob kev vammeej nyob Tebchaws Lostsua qhov "ib, yog peb los thaiv lub tebchaws." Thaum xyoo 1962, Kauslusnia (Colonel) Vaj Pov raug nce qib mus rau xab Nai Phoo; tsoom fwv thiaj muab kiag sab tub rog Phaj 2 (Military Region II) rau nws tswj. Xam tag nrho cov tub tes tub taw uas Nais Phoo Vaj Pov tswj nyob rau sab phaj 2 muaj li ntawm 140,000 leej. "Cov uas tua rog zoo zoo mas muaj li 12,000 tus – peb cov Hmoob," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov hais li. Tsis



King Sisavang Vatthana visits the newly constructed medical center for Military Region II in Sam Thong, Lima Site 20, with his family members, General Vang Pao, and Phraya Touby Lyfoung. *Photo courtesy of Howard Buell via Noah Vang.*

tas li, thaum Hmoob los ua SGU lawm kuj muaj ntau tus Hmoob sawv los tuav hauj lwm loj thiab nyob rau qib siab.

Cov tub rog nyob sab Phaj 2 tiv thaiv lub tebchaws tawm tsam nrog cov Kooj Sam Lostsuas (Pathet Lao) thiab tsoom tubrog Nyab Laj Qaum Teb (North Vietnamese Army) thoob plaws sab hnub tuaj ntawm qaum Lostsuas teb. "Ces peb ua haujlwm tiv thaiv lub tebchaws Lostsua thiab txiav txoj kev Haum Cis Mees (Ho Chi Minh)," tabsis qhov chaws uas tsov rog loj thiab kub ntxhov tshaj plaws yog nyob rau ntawm Tiaj Rhawv Zeb los yog Thoob Haim Him (Plain of Jars) uas yog lub tiaj nrag ntawm qaum Looj Ceeb. Nais Phoo Vaj Pov hais tias, "qhov ntawd mas yog qhov loj tshaj plaws" txhua txhia qhov chaw huv tib si. Kob rog ntawm Tiaj Rhawv Zeb yog ib qho uas sib ntau sib "tua tsis mus tsis los," Nais Phoo Vaj piav; "tej zaum koj ntau qhov no poob, luag ho tuaj ntau qhov tov poob ces pheej sib laub li ntawm." Los txog ntua rau xyoo 1970 ces Nais Phoo Vaj Pov thiaj li txiav txim siab los txeeb kom tau lub tiaj nrag Tiaj Rhawv Zeb. Ces thiaj rov sib txeeb tsis mus tsis los thiab ces Tiaj Rhawv Zeb "thiaj poob rau xyoo '72," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov piav li. Kob rog tiv thaiv lub tebchaws Lostsuas muaj kev puas tsuaj raug cob leej ntau tus. Nais Phoo Vaj Pov cov tub rog uas raug tuag rau tom tshav rog muaj kwv yees li ntawm 35,000 tus. Hos cov raug mob muaj ntau caum phav tus.

Hais txog txoj kev vam meej thij ob uas Hmoob muaj ces "yog txoj kev qhia kom Hmoob txawj Hmoob ntse, qhia kom Hmoob paub nrhiav noj nrhiav haus, ces muaj noj muaj hnav muaj vaj muaj tse tej no," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov hais li. Qhov Hmoob txawj ntse ntawd yog vim Hmoob los sib sau nyob hauv Looj Ceeb, los sib pab dag zog uas tubrog thiab ua lwm yam kev kawm txawj ntse. "Qhov ua kom Hmoob muaj neej ua mas yog ntawm Looj Ceeb - pib ntawd," nws hais li. Xws li kev kawm ntawv, kev noj qab haus huv, "txhia tsav txhia yam kev txawj kev ntse ces tawm ntawd mus rau lwm qhov," Nai Phoo Vaj Pov hais ntxiv.

Hmoob Kev Vammeej Nyob U. S. A.

Thaum Nais Phoo Vaj Pov tuaj txog rau lub tebchaws Asmeslikas lawm, nws paub tias nws qhov haujlwm tseem ceeb tshaj plaws yog los saib xyuas nws cov tib neeg uas tawm hauv lub tebchaws Lostsuas tuaj khuam nyob rau hauv Thaib lub tebchaws. Yog li nws thiaj nrhiav txoj hau kev mus cuag tsoom fwv Asmeslikas kom qhib kev txais tos tsoom neeg thoj nam Lostsuas tuaj rau txawv tebchaws. Thaum ntawd, tus nom Richard Nixon tab tom tawm tso nws txoj hauj lwm tseg yog li nws tus loo, Gerald Ford, thiaj sawv los hloov nws qhov chaws. "Ces President Ford no txawm tsis lav paub peb cov Hmoob thiab Nplog; nws tsuas lav paub Qhabmim (Cambodia) thiab Nyab Laj (Vietnamese) xwb. Ces kuv tsis txaus siab kuv mus nrog nws tham. Ces kuv hais tias, 'Hmoob thiab Nplog thiab Nyab Laj thiab Qhabmim no caij tib lub nkoj no tauj xub Nyab Laj Qaum Teb; koj hais li ntawm koj mas nej Asmeslikas no tsis ncaj' no ces nws saib kuv muab khi nws caj dab lawm ces nws thiaj hais tias 'txhob tu siab Nais Phoo, kuv mam li hais rau State Department refugee department es kom muab nej qhaub rau program Refugee International' ces peb thiaj li mam tau tuaj," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov piav li.

Thaum tsoom fwv Asmeslikas qhib kev txais tos tsoom neeg thoj nam Lostsuas lawm, Nais Phoo Vaj Pov kuj tig los saib luag lwm pawg neeg uas tuaj sab Europe, Africa, Latin America thiab Asia hais tias "lawv tuaj ua li ca thiaj li nyob taus." Nais Phoo Vaj Pov thiaj piav hais tias, "yuav nyob taus mas yuav tsum yog tab cov ooskas nonprofit…no mas koj thiaj nyob taus." Tsa lub koos haum los pab "qhia cov Hmoob tsuag tsuag es kom lawv paub siv luag dej luag hluav taws (fais fab), paub nav thwm luag kauv maim, paub tsav lub fais, paub mus nrhiav kam ua, paub mus xam phaj tom xoos qhaub. Qhov



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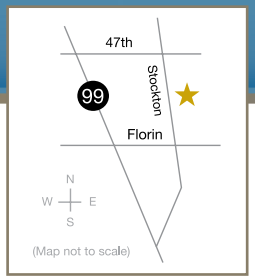
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no yog immediate ces thiaj tab lub Lao Family," Nais Phoo Vaj Pov piav. Thawj lub yog tsa rau hauv Santa Ana, California ces li mam tsa tauj ntxiv mus rau lwm lub zos thiab lav uas muaj Hmoob tuaj nyob coob.

Tom qab no uas tsoom kwv tij neej tsa Hmoob tuaj coob lawm, Nais Phoo Vaj Pov thiaj li los tsa tau lub Hmong Council kom muaj 18 xeem Hmoob. Nws thiaj hais tias, "Yog tsis tab lub no mas yuav hu tsis tau cov Hmoob los ua ke – Hmoob los yeej tsis sib haum thaum ub los ntev lawm thiab." Tauj ntawd, kuv los tsim tsa tau lub koos haum Lao Veterans los hais txog tsoom qub tub rog tej txiaj ntsim uas sawvdaws tau pab lub tebchaws Asmeslikas. Tag ntawd, tsoom kwv tij neej tsa Hmoob poob khuam rau hauv lub tebchaws Lostsuas los kuj tseem raug kev tsim txog yog li nws thiaj li los tsim tsa tau lub Lao Human Rights Council thiab lub United Lao Movement for Democracy los hais kev ncaj ncees txog ntawm "human rights thiab democracy hauv lub tebchaws." Tom qab no kuj muaj lwm leej lwm tus cov kwv tij neej tsa Hmoob los tsim tsa tau lwm cov koos haum non-profits ntxiv los pab pub rau tsoom Hmoob sawvdaws thiab.

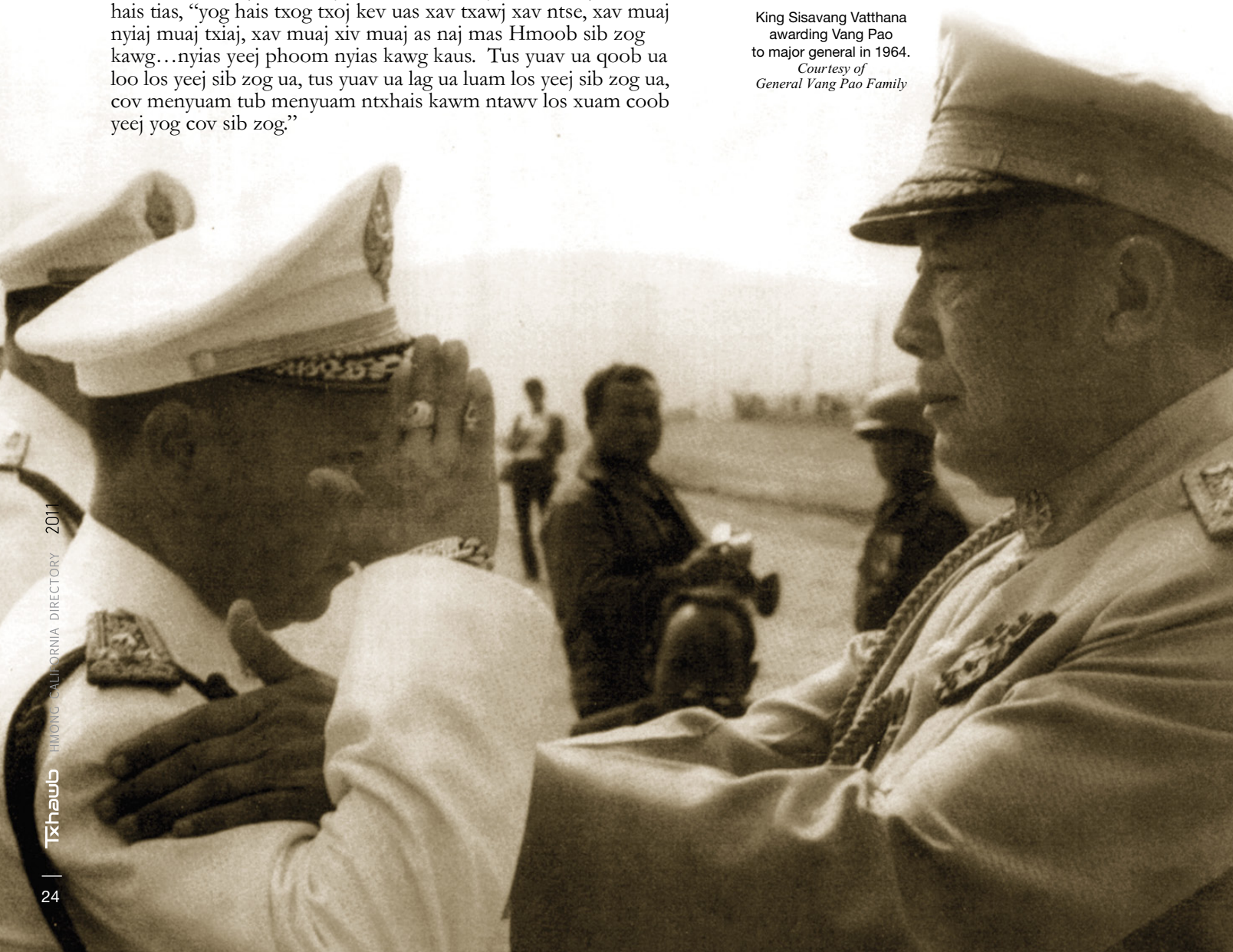
Hmoob Kev Vammeej Yav Tom Ntej

Nais Phoo Vaj Pov yog ib tug neeg xav ua hnub ua hmo txog Hmoob lub neej hais tias yuav ua li cas rau yav tom ntej. Nws hais tias, "yog hais txog txoj kev uas xav txawj xav ntse, xav muaj nyiaj muaj txiaj, xav muaj xiv muaj as naj mas Hmoob sib zog kawg…nyias yeej phoom nyias kawg kaus. Tus yuav ua qoob ua loo los yeej sib zog ua, tus yuav ua lag ua luam los yeej sib zog ua, cov menyuam tub menyuam ntxhais kawm ntawv los xuam coob yeej yog cov sib zog."



General Vang Pao's Father: Neej Tswb Vaj
Courtesy of General Vang Pao Family

King Sisavang Vatthana awarding Vang Pao to major general in 1964.
Courtesy of General Vang Pao Family



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(Top) Long Cheng Photo by Capt. David Kouba, *Courtesy of Tua Vang*



(Above) General Vang Pao at Long Cheng *Courtesy of Tua Vang*





(Left) General Vang receives a flintlock gun as a gift at the Fresno New Year in 1991. *Photo courtesy of Captain Vang Neng of St. Paul, Minn.. via Noah Vang*

(Above) General Vang Pao dances with crowned pageant contestant winner in Long Cheng in the late 1960s. *Photo courtesy of Colonel Lee Teng via Noah Vang*





(Top) General Vang Pao tests out the new winger T-28 during a airplane show in La Crosse, Wis. *Courtesy of Captain Vang Neng via Noah Vang*



(Left) General Vang Pao *Photo by Tudor Stanley*



(Right) King Sisavang Vatthana's first visit to Long Cheng in 1960. *Courtesy of General Vang Pao Family*

(Bottom) Bill Lair & General Vang Pao *Courtesy of Noah Vang*



(Bottom) Long Cheng Evacuation *Courtesy of Tua Vang*





General Vang Pao toasts during a baci.
Photo courtesy of Colonel Lee Teng of Minnesota via Noah Vang.



(Top) General Vang Pao at Pentagon in 1971. *Courtesy of Tua Vang*



General Vang Pao *Photo by Tudor Stanley*

Hais txog Hmoob txoj kev ua neej uas nyias nrhiav rau nyias tus kheej thiab rau tsev neeg ces Hmoob yeej sib zog kawg nkaus lawm. Txij li thaum nws xeev xwm es ntshaw lub neej Hmoob thaum nws muaj hnub nyug13 xyoo los txog rau tam sim no ces lub neej Hmoob twb nce vam meej los caum cuag luag lwm haiv neeg lawm. Tabsis yog hais txog ntawm Hmoob lub neej es yuav ua li cas luag lwm haiv neeg thiaj saib Hmoob muaj nuj nqis thiab vam txog Hmoob no ces sawvdaws tseem poob qab deb heev li. Nws tseem tshuav ob peb yam uas Hmoob yuav tsum tau ua mas Hmoob lub neej thiaj li yuav vam meej tsheej neeg rau lub neej Hmoob yav tom ntej.

Nai Phoo Vaj Pov hais tias, "txawm yog peb ib leeg ib tug yuav vammeej npaum li ca los yus ib leeg xwb tsis muaj zog…Cov tub txawj tub ntse yuav tsum los zaum sib tham ua cov platform hais tias 5 xyoo saum no, 10 xyoo saum no peb yuav ua yam twg peb thiaj nyob taus tebchaws no." Sawvdaws los sau ua ib lub suab, ces txawm yog leej twg sawv los ua tsoomfwv los luag thiaj li paub yus thiab yus cov tibneeg.

Nws hais ntxiv tias, yog peb xav nyob tau ua ke, peb Hmoob yuav tsum tau "nrhiav kev siab los qhia rau Hmoob," kom peb paub sib hlub sib hwm. Nws hais tias, "Ua neeg nyob mas…yog wb sib ntsib, koj pom kuv es koj tsa tes rau kuv los kuv yuav tsum tsa tes rau koj thiab. Tsis txhob hais tias kuv loj ces kuv yuav tsis tsa." Nws hais ntxiv tias peb yuav tsum "ua siab ntev ntev, txhob sib tshum qhov muag, tsis txhob xam khib. Sib cog ua phoojywg; muaj noj muaj haus los txhob sib cais."

Nai Phoo Vaj Pov kuj hais ntxiv tias peb Hmoob yuav tsum sib koom ua ke los xav txog txoj kev taug, xws li: "Ib, peb kho lub Hmong Council (18 Xeem) no kom khov…vim nws kho tau [Hmoob] ntsuj plig nyob ua ke. Ob, los ua lub senior home rau cov laus tsis muaj me tub menyuam kom lawv muaj chaw nyob, kom lawv txhob tu tu siab. Peb, los ua lub funeral home. [Tam sim no] ua lub neej khwv khwv 30, 40 xyoo los sau mus rau qhov ntawd xwb." Nws xav kom cov non-profit mus nrhiav ib cov nyiaj los yuav cov funeral home los rau Hmoob siv. "Plaub, los kho Hmoob tej txuj tej ci, kab tshoob kev kos, kab mob kev tuag." Xws li cov txiv qeej txiv ruas, "yav nram ntej mas peb sib pab xwb, tabsis tamsim no peb yuav tau ntiav nyiaj thiab. Ces tej no peb yuav tau los kho."

Nais Phoo Vaj Pov hais tias, "Tam sim no dagzog nyob ntawd cov hluas lawm." Lawv yog cov yuav los sib sau cov Hmoob, los qhia, los coj cov Hmoob mus lawm yav tom ntej. "Yog hais tias sawvdaws txawj xav es peb cov laus los sib sau kiag; cov hluas yog cov hlob lawm niam no dag zog nyob ntawm cov hluas lawm. Es peb los tawm lub tswv yim ua model rau peb cov me tub menyuam ntawd. Es peb sawvdaws cov laus hais tib lo lus xwb tsis txhob mus hais nyias cam nyias."

Thaum xaus nkaus no, hais txog ntawm haiv Hmoob lub neej, Nais Phoo Vaj Pov yeej txiav txim ntawm nws tus kheej pog thaum nws muaj 13 xyoo los lawm. Yeeb vim yog tej kev txom nyem thiab kev tsis zoo uas muaj rau nws pom nws thiaj li txiav txim siab hlo muab nws txoj sia cog kiag rau Hmoob. Twb los tau 67 lub xyoo lawm los nws txoj sia, lub sijhawm thiab tus kheej yeej tseem muab cog ruaj nrho rau Hmoob. Nais Phoo Vaj Pov thiaj lo xaus lus hais tias, "niaj hnub no ces kuv txoj sia thiab kuv cov roj ntsha ces kuv yeej muab tuag nthi rau Hmoob 100% li."

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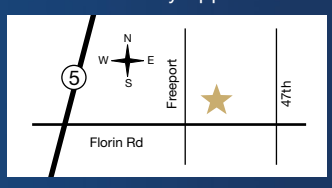
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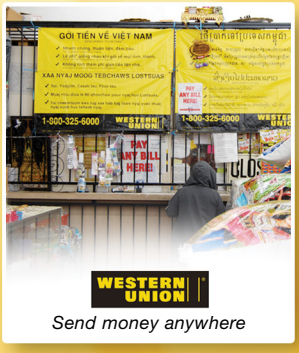
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Courage *Under* Adversity

Story by Burlee Vang
Photos by Tudor Stanley

Many folks will give up in times of extreme hardship. It doesn't take much for us to break under pressure, or to let go and sink into a lake of hopelessness when we are burdened with financial instability and responsibilities that stretch beyond our familial obligations. But only the few like Lee Yang and his wife, Bao Moua, have been molded by their own life obstacles into examples of rare endurance and leadership - their story nothing short of triumph and greatness.

Lee Yang is currently director III of Sacramento City Unified School District's (SCUSD) Multilingual Literacy Department. Bao Moua is principal of Clayton B. Wire Elementary School. The two have come a long way to arrive at where they are now. Lee is from a family of ten children. Bao comes from a family of nine children. Both are the oldest of their siblings, which means there was a great deal of responsibility on their shoulders growing up.

"What doesn't break you will make you," the couple says as they reveal to Txhawb their journey from poverty to success. After some twenty years of self-discipline and unbroken determination - especially in the upbringing of their own children and extended family members, as well as in their continuous leadership work for SCUSD - they can now humbly say, "It is how you finish that matters."

Hard Times

"We had gotten married right after high school," Lee reveals. "We were living in a one bedroom apartment across from my parents and my nine siblings who all lived in a two-bedroom. Like most poor parents, mine often fought and were on the verge of divorce because there wasn't enough money. Bao and I, being the oldest children, had to be responsible for my extended family. As students we had to worry financially about our schooling as well as whatever my extended family members needed."





THE LEE YANG AND BAO MOUA STORY



"We suffered," says Bao. "All of us lived off of $600 a month."

"I tell you, there wasn't much partying for Bao and me," Lee adds, jokingly. He recalls how the only time they had any meat to eat was when Bao's parents held traditional feasts and gave them a slab of beef or pork. Most of the time, they lived meagerly on rice with water and cherry tomatoes crushed with chili peppers. "Looking back on it, we actually ate healthy—but of course it wasn't a choice."

"We also qualified for WIC then," says Bao. "So that helped feed our babies."

Lee drove a $1,000 Toyota corolla which he later gave to his younger brother. Later his father-in-law would give Lee and Bao a station wagon. But the vehicle had a bad carburetor, and on cold days the engine would stall at stoplights. If Bao (who was pregnant at the time) was driving the car, she'd have to get out, open the car's hood, stick a pencil into the carburetor, go back into the car and turn on the ignition, go back outside and take the pencil out and close the hood, all before driving away. A friend eventually gave Lee his dodge challenger, which had a loose muffler that would fall off every time the car went over a bump. He drove that vehicle until he finished school and began teaching. They didn't buy their first brand new car until 1998.

But the greatest challenge for Lee and Bao occurred when Lee's father died. Lee was 29 years old. His mother had decided to remarry and left behind her nine children. Lee and Bao took them into their three-bedroom home where they all lived off of Lee's vice principal's salary, which was only $4,000 a month. Three years after Lee's father's death, Bao's father also passed away, leaving behind eight of her siblings.

"We were now responsible for the well-being of all the children from our two extended families, including our own kids," says Lee. "I quickly developed an anomaly of high-blood pressure."

The couple would struggle greatly through the following years. Despite the family deaths and financial challenges that came with raising a large family, Lee and Bao still found the spirit to endure and persist toward their career goals.

"We had become parents for everyone," Lee says. "In the end, we even paid the bride price for each of my brothers' wives. Everything fell on our shoulders."

Education and Teaching

When they were married, Bao held shifts at K-Mart and attended Sacramento City College. Lee, on the other hand, had enrolled at Sacramento State University and worked as a store clerk. Although he was a student, he had spent years as an undeclared major, roaming from class to class without a real plan. "Mr. Dienstein, a high school Algebra teacher had informed me that if I didn't know what to do with my life, I should keep staying in

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school until I figured it out," says Lee, smiling. "I ended up taking all kinds of classes, including courses in piano and guitar to taekwondo and karate - all the easy classes I could get A's in. But I had debts to pay. I had a family to feed. It wasn't until I met an academic advisor who advised me to finish as a liberal arts major - which was the fastest way for me to get out of school - that I finally had an academic goal to pursue."

Lee received his bachelor's degree in liberal studies in 1993. In 1994, he completed his credentials and began teaching. After seven years of teaching, Lee returned to school and received his master's degree in education leadership. By then, he had already left a vice principal position at Pacific Elementary School and had assumed the role of principal at Freeport Elementary School in Sacramento. Within the first decade of the millennium, Lee would climb up the ladder of success by serving as principal for William Land Elementary School; then administrator for the Curriculum & Professional Development Support; then director III for the Multilingual/Multicultural, Equity, Access and Achievement Department; and finally, as director III of the Multilingual Literacy Department.



In 1997, Bao also finished her bachelor's degree in liberal studies after having transferred to Sacramento State University. She taught for five years at Pacific Elementary School until she took on the assistant principal position for another eight years. "Eventually, I realized that I knew how to run a school by myself," says Bao. "I carried out all the principal's duties and responsibilities. It was only a decision away to officially become one." She recently assumed that position at Clayton B. Wire Elementary in August of this year.

Making Changes as a Leader

In 2002, after having worked for two years as vice principal at Pacific Elementary School, Lee applied for two open principal positions in the district: one at Huber H. Bancroft Elementary School, located in a middle-class area; the other at Freeport Elementary School, located in an area of low socioeconomic status and high poverty. Surprisingly, both those schools had selected Lee as their primary candidate.

"I was called in and had to choose between the two," Lee recalls. "Two superintendant assistants asked me for my honest answer. I knew that Bancroft Elementary had systems in place already, and that I would just go in and maintain what was already there. Freeport Elementary, on the other hand, had had a multitude of interim principals going in and out because of the extreme challenges each had faced in running the school. Twenty-five percent of the students at Freeport were Hmong. With my experiences and background, I felt that I could relate to Freeport. I told myself that such a school could make or break me. If I could survive in an economically tough environment, I could prove that I was a good principal. In the end, I made my decision to go with Freeport." Lee started the position without a vice principal. He would be at school from sunrise to sundown. "I worked hard supporting the teachers, implementing afterschool programs since there were none, getting the community to be involved, and within two years our API (Academic Performance Index) was at its highest level ever." In two years Lee would take on another challenge as principal of William Land Elementary School. "There were only two Hmong students at this school, and I wanted to prove that I was good at running any school in the district." Within his third year, Lee and the staff at William Land would help its students achieve the highest API scores in all of SCUSD schools.

Lee's leadership successes have led him to become director III of the Multilingual Literacy Department, a position overseeing English learners' program for the entire district. He plans, organizes, controls, and directs a variety of programs, projects, and activities related to multilingual education, including federal and state projects related to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. He also provides effective leadership, technical assistance and training, and compliance monitoring to maximize student achievement, and create a more equitable educational system for all students.

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What Lee and Bao find most rewarding about their careers is trying to find answers for the hard daily questions posed by students, parents, and teachers. They enjoy the challenge of getting everyone involved to work in unison toward a positive change. The payoff is knowing that through everyone's diligent efforts, relationships between staff and parents are strong and student academic performances are in good standing.

What We Can Do

"There is still much we need to do," says Lee when asked about how the Hmong community can grow within the education system. "In a parent and child relationship, you must be attentive to your child's education. You need to spend time with them at home on the subjects they need help in. You can do this while you're cooking dinner, and it might only take ten minutes a day. That's enough to make a change in your child's learning and performance at school. A lot of working parents need to divide some time and patience for their children's educational growth."

"In regards to our Hmong parents who cannot speak English, the simple gesture of showing interest in your child's education can make a huge difference," says Bao. "By attending campus events or conferences, you show your child that you care about their schooling. This motivates children to perform better as students. When parents do not participate in school engagements, children may lose interest in their education."

"There's the old Hmong saying: Don't do what I do, but do what I say," Lee adds, smiling. "This doesn't work as well in America as it did back in Laos. Here, you have to be what you want your child to be. During meetings, when I ask Hmong parents if they have any concerns or questions, no one really raises their hand. Our Hmong parents need to not be so afraid to share their thoughts and opinions. If you want your child to speak more in school, you have to speak more as a parent - you have to raise your hand too. Be the role model. We as parents also need to be more positive toward our kids. Sometimes we need to step back and, instead of yelling at them or trying to point out what they did wrong, we need to encourage them in what they are doing correctly. We need to nurture them."

Letting Struggle Shape Us

As educational leaders, Lee Yang and Bao Moua have much on their shoulders. But they handle their work with great passion, diligence, and confidence. "We've been through a lot of obstacles," Bao says. "Our past experiences have prepared us well for the responsibilities we now have in our careers. What we currently do cannot compare to what we had to do in order to survive those harsh years of poverty and raising a large family."

"My first words in this country were: I don't know," says Lee, laughing as he recalls his early days in America. "If I, a person from the mountains of Laos, can become who I am now, what does that say? We can become anyone we want to be in America! What people need to know, especially our younger generation, is that we shouldn't let our current condition get the best of us. Things happen for a reason - even bad things. Be responsible. Set goals. Seek guidance. Work hard. Most of all, learn to love one another. Despite any suffering, be happy - because you are meant for something special."

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Koua Lee

txhawb profile

As a 12 year old boy in Laos, while many young grade school children focused only on school, Koua Lee would wake up every morning at 3am to help his uncle run a family business processing pork and chickens to deliver to market. Koua would dedicate 3am to 7am to the family business and then attend school the rest of the day. This insight taught Koua to love business at a very young age and though he would become a teacher and later in life, earn an AA degree in photography, his heart was always in business.

After immigrating to the United States in 1978, Koua Lee found himself starting his life all over again at the age of 20. Though he landed in Providence, Rhode Island, he would move his family to Portland, Oregon before finding a home in Merced, California in 1982.

After several years of working odd jobs, Koua would risk everything and try his hand at business. In 1989, he opened C Oriental and following its success would later open the larger KL Market in Merced. He would also start KM Video Production and KL Trading Company in 1994.

"I believe my businesses were successful because I always treated every customer like they were a friend and I always viewed interacting with them as a way of releasing stress and connecting with my community. To me, business is always about relationships with my customers and understanding how to serve them better."

One morning at 3am, while listening to Hmong Radio in 2003, Koua Lee started to think about how many lives were touched by Radio. He started to dream about how many more lives could be impacted and changed by something even more powerful - Television that served the Hmong community. "We could educate by sharing knowledge, ideas, tell stories, entertain and grow our community by connecting in a way radio could never do." Without any idea regarding cost or experience in TV broadcasting, Koua Lee found Hmong TV Network in 2007. "It's been an expensive sacrifice, but necessary to advance our community in the right direction." Today, Hmong TV Network is broadcasting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all over the world via set top box and Internet and free over-the-air locally in Fresno on digital channel 32.6.

writer
Lar Yang

photography
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Hmong TV Network

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txhawb profile

Dr Geryoung Yang

Dr. Geryoung Yang has been providing dental services in the Central Valley for the past twenty years. He received his Doctor of Dental Surgery from Marquette University School of Dentistry in Milwaukee in 1991 and opened his private practice within that same year. As a medical professional, his focus has always been to provide dental services, inform his patients about the values of the human teeth, and educate them on the different types of health issues/treatments relating to oral cavity. "I have a very strong commitment to my profession," he says. "I still attend annual dental conferences so that I am updated and aware of the latest treatments and technologies."

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Lue Vang

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It is his family that has gotten him to where is now, Geryoung reveals. "They fill me with energy and motivate me to continue working hard. I believe that success begins at the root, and to my family and my children, I am that root. I have to sacrifice to provide for them, and although it can be exhausting, I have never second-guessed my decision because I know that it is my commitment to them that will help create their future success stories. My work has never been all about me because in order to help the world on a larger scale, a person must be selfless and always think about the future of younger generations." Geryoung's business philosophy is to always maintain good relationships, which he believes is the foundation for many of life's successes. "Success is measured by the kinds of relationships you're able to form and how much you're able to give back to your community with the resources and knowledge you've obtained. I am a healer of teeth, but I am also a healer of my Hmong community, and a truly successful person knows how to focus on the bigger picture while never forgetting the smaller details because those things are also equally important."

For the past 20 years, Geryoung has donated time and money to many Hmong New Year, fundraising, and community events. He is also very involved in the Hmong traditional culture, frequently attending funerals and as many family functions as he can. In the past, he established a scholarship fund at Fresno State University for Southeast Asian students, and also served as a board member for Fresno Center for New Americans and Stone Soup Fresno. He also co-founded the Hmong Business Association. Currently, he is serving as Advisory Council for the Superintendent at Sacramento City Unified School District. "Education has always been a top priority for me," he says, having spent much of his time attending school, organization, and community events throughout the United States to give speeches about the importance of education. He has also given speeches and provided free dental screenings at local schools to promote healthcare and the importance of maintaining good dental hygiene.



Dr. Judith J. Vue

txhawb profile

"I owe my success to my family and my husband for their unconditional love and support," says Dr. Judith Vue when describing how she found a successful career in dentistry. "I came from a family of seven children. Like a typical Hmong girl growing up in the late 80s, I too, got married. My family, my in-laws, and my husband supported me through college."

As a young student, Judith was open to all career possibilities. She knew that one day she'd eventually have a family, that she'd become a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother. But she also wanted to have a career. "After meeting various health professionals, I decided that dentistry would be an ideal career because I'd be self-employed," she says. "This meant I'd have both the opportunity to work directly with patients and the flexibility to raise a family at the same time. I graduated from California State University, Chico with a B.S. degree. After graduation, I moved to Michigan. I continued my graduate studies at the University of Detroit, Mercy where I completed my Doctoral of Dental Surgery and a Masters of Science with an emphasis in microbiology. It took nine lonely years to complete my B.S., M.S., and D.D.S. degrees." After her graduation in 2001, Judith returned to California and started a residency at the University Medical Center in Fresno. Although dentists are not required to complete a residency, she chose to do one because she wanted to continue her postgraduate studies.

Coming from a humble beginning and having struggled financially during her years in school, Judith says that success is not always about money. "It is about being happy as an individual. I am successful when I can still make a difference in someone's life, when I am able to relieve someone of his or her pain. If I can use my skills and knowledge to help others, then my purpose has been served and my nine years of education is not wasted. What good is success when you can't share it?" She believes that everyone is qualified and should work together to build a better collective community regardless of one's education or success. "When everyone is sincerely working collaboratively toward a common cause, anything is possible." Over the years, Dr. Judith Vue has made many contributions to non-profit organizations and fund-raising events in her community. She has participated in the Sacramento Dental Society pro-bono programs and is currently a member of American Dental Society, California Dental Society, Sacramento Dental Society, Academy of GP Orthodontic, and Doctor of Oral Conscious Sedation.

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txhawb profile

Dr. Daniel Moua

After three years of running Ministry TV in Michigan, Dr. Daniel D. Moua and his wife, Pahoua Lor Moua, moved to California to embark on a radio venture. They launched Hmong American Broadcasting, first on KQEQ 1210AM, and then on KGED 1680AM.

"Our people have been dispersed throughout the world," says Daniel, "and the radio is like our bridge. We can use it to reconnect with one another and to educate everyone. Important issues can also be addressed and discussed on air, thus our community can progress together."

"Think of the radio as the community's eyes and ears," Pahoua adds. "We will give people airtime if they want to come in and share their ideas with those who are listening. Unlike the old days, we shouldn't bury our ideas but speak about them."

"There's no money in media," the couple says. "What we do is also very time consuming." Content and production work requires a lot of patience and effort. It takes about six to eight hours of preparation for Daniel to record their daily three-hour news report. Meeting the needs of customers can also be a challenge. Nonetheless, they see Hmong American Broadcasting as an important necessity for the growth of the Hmong community. "The radio station belongs to the community, we just pay the bills. We want everyone to know that our door is open for anyone who wants to share their goals and ideas."

Aside from preparing programs and news for Hmong American Broadcasting, Daniel, also known as Xib Fwb Ntxoov Nruas, has been working as a fulltime pastor for the Hmong Christian Reformed Church since 1991, after receiving his PhD in theology from Cambridge State University. His wife, Pahoua, has fifteen years of experience in marketing and advertising, having spent eleven years as a recruitment sales specialist with newspaper giant, McClatchy Company, where she learned most of her skills through handling national agencies for The Fresno Bee. The couple is often busy with their children, ten in all, ranging from 3-22 years of age. They are also the owners of Moua Insurance and Financial Services.

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Soua Cha

txhawb profile

"Back in Laos, My grandparents and parents were business owners," says Soua Cha of Citi Tire. "As a child, I saw the money my family earned from their business and I told myself that one day I'd have to find something for myself, too." But like so many of the thousands of Hmong families whose lives were uprooted after Laos fell to Communism, his family would begin all over again when they resettled in the United States. He recalls arriving in America at the age of fifteen and struggling as a high school student. "There were many Hmong students in my classes then. Although we were in high school, we were given only preschool materials - that was our level. Everyone around me wanted to be a phaj ej - which meant 'doctor' or 'lawyer,' but I quietly wondered to myself then how unrealistic those dreams were, especially if we were still learning preschool work as teenagers. I have always been a realistic person, and those were not realistic options for me."

It was a time of great struggle for newly arrived refugees, and for a young Soua, trying to find out a career path was his most challenging obstacle. The future was so unclear. English was difficult to grasp. I was sixteen and stressed." Overwhelmed, he decided to take a walk one day. While crossing a freeway overpass he stopped to observe the morning traffic below. "As the sun came up, I noticed how many cars there were, so many of them, all coming toward me as I stood on that bridge. The flow of cars seemed endless. At that moment, I told myself: If I found a way to work with cars, business would never end. I knew then that I wanted to become a mechanic." Graduating high school, Soua attended Fresno City College and obtained his mechanic certificate. He began working for Patterson Tire soon after. "I was always on time, six days a week. I never took a day off, not even when my wife went into labor. I carried out every task without complaint and without being jealous that I was doing much more than other employees. I did everything the boss and the customers wanted me to do. Nine years went by, but I had finally saved enough money and trained myself to be my own boss." Citi Tire opened in 1989, becoming one of the most successful Hmong-owned mechanic and tire shop in Fresno.

"Money is power," Soua Cha says. "That's what my father always told me. You may not be so smart in school, but if you have money, you can make a smart person work for you. Nowadays I teach my children to save their money instead of spending it on unnecessary things. It's about saving enough money to make your dreams come true. That's success. Without money, you can't do anything." Throughout the years, Soua Cha has donated to schools and countless community events. "When I give to people, I don't expect a returned favor. My only expectation is that they pay the favor forward in order to help others. The same goes with our community businesses. There is so much we can learn and do if our businessmen come together to find ways to help one another.
The work we do would never end, I think, and our businesses would only grow."

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txhawb profile

Cheng Vang

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Cheng Vang is the owner and broker of Golden Key Realty and Mortgage. He holds a degree in both Electrical Engineering and Business, but it would be the latter area of study that determined his career. While attending school he was supported by his wife and family. As he was attending school he with his six brothers opened KC Super Market and Bingo; the first major Hmong grocery store in the Central Valley. "We started with a little store in Fresno called KV Mini-Market, and then we opened another one in Stockton called Highland Mini-Market," Cheng recalls. "Those ran from 1985 to 1989."

In 1991, the brothers also opened KC Mini-Mart, which would turn into KC Super Market in Fresno's Asian Village, drawing the attention of Hmong shoppers from all around. In 1992, they opened Bingo and operated the two establishments simultaneously. KC Super Market ran until 1996 then it was sold. Bingo, however, has remained in their management to this day, and has had good business since its opening, receiving much costumer support from the Hmong community throughout the years.

When asked about the success of Bingo, Cheng says, "We did well with Bingo because we had provide a full line of products and provide services like check cashing, and local grown fresh produce—which really attracted restaurants and merchants. But most importantly, we did well because it was trust. What that means is there must be a strong level of trust. Trust is needed, especially for a family business. That we definitely had."

"I'm always looking for other business opportunities," Cheng says, who is also a restaurant owner and has three FedEx contracts. He also spends time investing in real estates. Above all, Golden Key Realty and Mortgage is still his main business operation. Golden Key provides a multitude of services, including but not limited to home and commercial loans, home listings, and short sales. "At Golden Key, I offer the best services I can. I work with clients from beginning to end. My job is to give them the best that I can get them. They trust my work. I haven't done a lot of promotion. Most of my customers are referrals from old clients. That's how my business has been growing."

Cheng believes that Hmong businesses need to communicate and work together in order to grow and meet the demands of their customers. "We not only need to provide the best service for them, but also reflect on ourselves as how to improve our business practices. Instead of always focusing on competing with one another, we need to understand each other and figure out how we can best work together. This is how our businesses will grow as a community."



John Thao

txhawb profile

"I always wanted to play an important role in the community," says John Thao of Kasia Insurance Services. "I wanted to be someone who could uplift the Hmong, who could serve as a kind of resource, like a doctor or teacher." Early on, he had decided to pursue a career in education. But by the time he had completed his undergraduate studies in liberal studies at Sacramento State, John had a change of heart. "At the time I had been impacted by my experience working for Equinox International, a multi-level marketing organization. I was able to learn what it meant to be self-employed, so I went on to obtain my master's degree in business from Columbia State. I wasn't going to be working in education after all."

In 1995 John founded the Asian Advancement Association, inc. a 501(c)(3) that ran for eight years, providing assistance and knowledge on self-sufficiency to Southeast Asians through the organization's social services. In 2002, John would venture into the real estate business and launch Elite Real Estate Associates. With offices in Stockton and Fresno, Elite Real Estate Associates at its peak had a staggering number of 187 working agents. After the collapse of the housing market, John expanded his business and started Kasia Insurance Services, inc. while still maintaining affiliation with his Elite Real Estate Associates. Kasia Insurance Services is currently his main operation where he specializes in auto, home, life, workers compensation, health, business, commercial, and renters insurance. He reveals with a smile that, aside from a two-week stint at McDonald's, he has always been self-employed.

"My father was uneducated but he still had a huge impact on my success," John says. "Having arrived in this country late in life, he held high expectations for his children. That was my source of encouragement. I felt that if I failed in life, my father would share my failure. But if I succeeded, my father would also succeed through my accomplishments. That made me work as hard as I could." Reflecting back on the community, John feels that many who have found success in America have grown individually through their personal achievements, but not as a whole community. "In order for us as a people to move and grow as one, we must work together. This is something we can still work on."

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Language as Identity

The Hmong Language

Story by Ka Va, Ed.D.
California State University, Sacramento

As professor teaching Hmong literacy for more than ten years, I have seen drastic changes in the level of Hmong proficiency amongst Hmong college students who attend California State University, Sacramento.

According to my observations and the data I collected from my Hmong literacy course, more and more Hmong students are losing the Hmong language at a rapid pace. To validate my observations, for the past five years I have collected pre and post assessments of students enrolled in the course. In general, my pre-test results for the first three years indicate that 70% of the Hmong students are fluent in Hmong. Currently, this number has shifted in a downward trend to 53%. Ninety two percent are not literate (cannot read or write) in Hmong. The results are understandable since most Hmong students do not have the opportunity to learn how to read and write Hmong in the k – 12 schools. Eight percent of my students can read only simple Hmong and cannot write Hmong.

Given these data, it is evident that we are losing our language and are assimilating quickly into mainstream American culture. Our children are not acquiring our native language; we are slowly changing our culture and forming new identities. Hmong children are no different from other immigrant children whose original, traditional identities are almost completely lost. This does not have to happen with the Hmong culture. Maintenance of the language is an important part of maintaining our culture. Language loss need not occur. Language retention will ensure that new identities, bicultural identities, are positive on many levels. To avoid language loss, we must utilize our





Illustration by Boonma Yang

strengths in family and community relationships. We can do this by building a solid foundation in educating our children in Hmong literacy. We can do this by the direct teaching of the Hmong language and culture and creating and encouraging dialogue in the Hmong language among our children, their grandparents, parents, and friends. Hmong youth can learn to read and write Hmong, through Hmong stories and traditional practices. Folktales, folklore, oral poetry songs and family history should be learned. The majority of Hmong students that I have in my class have not heard Hmong stories. In most cases, since children do not see the importance of these stories, they are not interested in listening to them. If they are in an environment that fosters and encourages actively participating in learning Hmong, children will see its relevancy and will want to participate. These stories can be practiced, recited, and performed at cultural activities. While studying these oral stories, children can be introduced to Hmong vocabulary and cultural values. Simple Hmong vocabulary such as "noj, ntau, ntshiab" to difficult vocabulary, "txhawb, yeej huam, twm zeej" will be learned. Customs and traditions, as in marriage, funeral ceremonies, kinship patterns, art, and music can be studied as children become literate in Hmong. Hmong marriage and funeral songs and playing traditional Hmong musical instruments (qeej, ncas, raj, and qwv nplooj) can be learned and performed at religious and cultural events. These activities could take place at home, in schools including elementary schools, college and universities, at non-profit social activities, and the local communities. Hmong volunteers such as Hmong parents, grandparents, teachers, and professionals can organize and volunteer to teach in the schools and community at large. More importantly, Hmong parents, grandparents, and children should be encouraged to communicate with each other in Hmong more often. If these educational opportunities are provided, Hmong children will then be more fluent in the language and maintain a closer identity to their elders and their culture. At the same time, identity with the newer culture will inevitably be developed in the schools and the community through direct education and the media.

"Most of my college students and younger Hmong students do not see the relevance and importance of the Hmong language and culture."

The older generation will have to accept the fact that the native culture and our agrarian way of life in Laos will not all be maintained by the younger Hmong generations. Language, culture, and activities at home and in the community are significantly different in mainstream America than it was in the mountains of Laos or in the camps in Thailand. Hmong language usage in the new life has also changed. The younger generations use vocabulary from English in Hmong sentences and vice versa, a natural phenomenon known by linguists as code-switching. Sometimes this is due to convenience or a choice made by children, who want to be accepted by their peers. This pattern occurs wherever Hmong live. Other times, it is due to the lack of Hmong vocabulary knowledge. Code switching between Hmong and English has become a part of the younger Hmong conversational patterns. For example, the following are sentences involving code switching between Hmong and English: "Peb mus school. Kuv mus bathroom tso. Kuv nyiam saib TV." Or, "I like koj lub tsev." Between Hmong and Thai the following expressions can be heard: "Kuv maib aus. Kuv maib daib. Kuv noj laj" and between Hmong and Lao: "Cov mis nyob hauv lub tub yees. Nws caij lub lus thij. Cov me nyuam kawm ua lej." For some, English is the only language used for communication. The elders have also experienced a metamorphosis in language. They have made language adjustments in terms of morphologically adapted loanwords. They have changed certain English words and made Hmong words out of them. For example, in the following English names, Jenifer becomes "Fawm", Tom becomes "Thoos", Richard becomes "Tshawm", Lisa becomes "Xam", orange becomes "oran", etc. In some instances, inflections have dropped from the English pronunciation. This occurs most commonly in words that end in an "s" sound as in the following words: Bus to "npav", ice to "aij", apples to "av paum", etc. These are adjustments being made to accommodate the sounds in Hmong and it has become common patterns that occur with older Hmong. Additionally, these changes are being accepted and become a part of the Hmong language. Therefore, it is true that as Hmong acculturate and assimilate into the mainstream American culture, we will make changes in our language and adjust to the mainstream culture rather than maintaining the old ways "Grandmother's Path and Grandfather's Way" (Vang and Lewis, 1990). A change in the Hmong language also involves a change in the Hmong culture.

Creating and providing dialogue settings in the homes, schools and community will help Hmong children become more fluent and proficient in using the Hmong language. In the home setting, grandparents, parents, siblings, and friends can promote dialogue that encourage and foster communication in Hmong and about Hmong cultural customs and traditions. It will help Hmong children acquire new vocabulary as they negotiate meanings and comprehend messages. Grandparents and parents can share oral folktales, folklore, and their real life stories from Laos to America. Most young Hmong people today do not have the opportunity to listen to these important life stories of the elders. Most of my college students and younger Hmong students do not see the relevance



"Hmong parents have to be more involved in their children's education."

and importance of the Hmong language and culture. Many students only enroll in the Hmong literacy course to pass the foreign language requirement examination for graduation. Their interests are not in learning more about Hmong language, history and culture or Hmong literacy. According to course evaluations, after a semester studying Hmong literacy, history, and culture, all students appreciate and feel extremely satisfied about taking the course. Since many grandparents and parents have now passed away and only some are still living, Hmong students need to take advantage of listening, conversing, learning, and documenting their life stories. If these stories are not told, acquired, and recorded by the younger generations, then much will be lost.

In schools, Hmong parents have to be more involved in their children's education. They need to be encouraged to attend school functions becoming much more familiar with the school system and how it operates. This will help them support the inclusion of Hmong language, history and culture into the school curricula. The more Hmong is promoted, the more Hmong children and other children will understand Hmong. Self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-identity will be elevated to a higher level for Hmong students. This can also contribute to raising academic achievement. Students do better in school when they feel better about themselves.

In the community, if dialogues about Hmong are promoted, valued, and supported, Hmong children will also see the importance of learning the Hmong language. Since there are still family gatherings, celebrating cultural customs and traditions, Hmong children can be involved in these functions on a regular basis. By young adulthood, students will have learned, all, if not most of the important aspects of Hmong language and culture. It has to be a part of their educational process. Without the help from the Hmong community, younger Hmong generations will surely melt their way into mainstream American culture without knowing who they are and where their parents came from.

In conclusion, losing a language is equivalent to losing part of one's culture and identity. In today's cultural, educational, social, political, rapidly changing global and technological society, language continues to be of primary importance in maintaining one's identity. No matter how high Hmong people leap, how far Hmong people wander, and how deeply Hmong people study and understand one another, the importance of language plays a pivotal role in our life. As with most immigrants and refugees, the Hmong way of life changes and transforms when we are immersed in a different language. Minority languages change as they are influenced by the majority language. This is a complex process worthy of further study. With more than 300 languages spoken in the United States, much of our language, as is true of other minority languages, will disappear unless a conscious effort is made to maintain them. The question is whether we can find ways to maintain and preserve part of our ancestor's life that is so precious to us.

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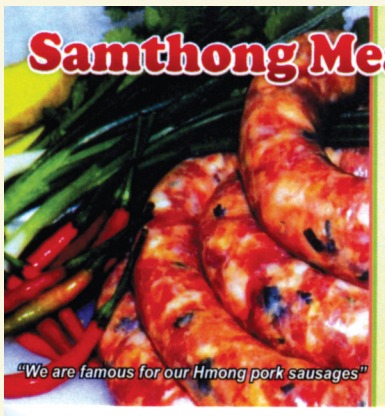


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Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 497-9261

Pho N Seafood Restaurant
Doua Xiong
924 N Court St
Visalia, CA 93291
(559) 732-3663

Pho New Hope
1234 N First St
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 268-1960

Pho Paradise
1848 N First St
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 264-9025

Pho Phuong Nine
4903 E Kings Canyon Rd #107
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 454-1762

Pocket 8 Sushi
9 W Alexander Ave
Merced, CA 95348
(209) 384-0212

Takashi
Japanese Cuisine/Sushi Bar
7675 N Blackstone Ave Ste 114
Fresno, CA 93720
(559) 449-0251

BUFFETS

China Buffet
5155 N Blackstone Ave
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 222-8478

A Star Buffet and Banquet
4984 E Kings Canyon Rd
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 255-2788

Tang Dynasty
2066 W Shaw Ave
Fresno, CA 93711
(559) 432-6118

SHOPPING CENTERS

Fashion Fair Mall
4841 N 1st St
Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 224-1591

Fig Garden Shopping Center
5082 N Palm Ave Ste A
Fresno, CA 93704
(559) 226-4084

Manchester Mall
3742 N Blackstone Ave
Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 222-9181

Merced Mall
851 W Olive Ave
Merced, CA 95348
(209) 723-3981

River Park Shopping Center
7628 N Blackstone Ave
Fresno, CA 93650
(559) 437-4855

Sierra Vista Mall
1050 Shaw Ave
Clovis, CA 93612
(559) 299-5070

SPORTING GOODS FISHING & HUNTING

California Bait & Tackle
4516 E Belmont Ave
Fresno, CA 93702
(559) 454-1155

California Hunter Education Program
1220 N Abby St Ste G
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 367-1688

Herb Bauer Sporting Goods
6264 N Blackstone Ave
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 435-8600

Valley Rod & Gun
2704 Clovis Ave
Clovis, CA 93612
(559) 292-3474

TATTOOS

So Fresh Ink Tattoo
4783 E Madison Ave
Fresno, CA 93702
(559) 454-8366

TAX SERVICES

DDM Income Tax
2025 N Gateway Blvd, #103
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 222-9281

Liberty Tax Services
David Fang
2373 S Chestnut Avenue
Fresno, CA 93725
(559) 251-8500

NTL Acct. & Tax Services
777 Minnewawa Ave Ste 10
Clovis, CA 93612
(559) 217-9308

P & N Book Keeping and Income Tax Services
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Mark Moua
1639 E Shields Ave
Fresno, CA 93704
O: (559) 227-7633
C: (559) 824-5502

Vangold Tax Services
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Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 497-8889

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Excel Travel
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CALIFORNIA HMONG NEW YEAR ORGANIZATIONS

Butte Co. Hmong Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 8646
Chico, CA 95927
(530) 990-2582

Hmong American Association, Inc.
1621 2nd St
Olivehurst, CA 95961
(530)415-8616

Hmong International Health Aide
3523 La Grande Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 670-8215

Hmong International New Year, Inc.
1558 North 9th Street
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 487-1012
www.hmongnewyear.us

Hmong 18 Xeem United Hmong International, Inc.
4903 E. Kings Canyon, Ste 241
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 251-0008

Lao Family Community of Fresno, Inc. Water Festival - SEA Games USA
4903 E Kings Canyon Rd Ste 281
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 453-9775

Lao Family Community of Stockton, Inc.
2701 Hammer Ln Ste 120
Stockton, CA 95210
(209) 466-0721
info@laofamilyofstockton.org

Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc.
July 4th Tournament & New Year
320 University Ave
St. Paul, MN 55103
T: (651) 221-0069
C: (651) 216-5790

Lao Hmong Family Association of San Diego
2757 Ulric St
San Diego, CA 92111

Lao Veterans of America Institute
Veterans Memorial Services
711 S. Minnewawa Ave
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 252-3561

Merced Lao Family Community, Inc.
855 W 15th St
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 384-7384

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- Youth Development
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- Health Programs
- Mental Health Support

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www.hmongwomenheritage.org
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1252 12th St
Oroville, CA 95965

Sacramento Hmong New Year, Inc.
Lance Fang
P.O. Box 232118
Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 821-4576

CALIFORNIA

API – American Public Affairs Association
7000 65th Street
Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 743-9204

Asian Business Institute & Resource Center (ABIRC)
7035 N. Fruit Ave
Fresno, CA 93711
(559) 438-9680

Center for Asian-American Media
145 Ninth St Ste 350
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 863-0814

Center for Multi-Cultural Cooperation Hmong Voices
Ue Yang
P.O. Box 27442
Fresno, CA 93729
(559) 286-9255

Central Valley Asian-American Chamber of Commerce
178 West Adams Street
Stockton, CA 95204
(209) 469-8860

Cover the Kids
2750 Gateway Oaks Dr Ste 330
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 876-6684
www.sackids.sacounty.net

Empowerment Institute, Inc.
Ms. Connie Cha
5654 E. Westover Ave Ste 101
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 291-7587

F.I.R.M.
1940 N. Fresno St
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 487-1500

Fresno Center for New Americans
4879 E. Kings Canyon Rd
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 255-8395

Greater Health Organization, Inc
Dr. Tou Xa Lyfoung, Administrator
4929 E. Kings Canyon Rd
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 255-6476

Hmong American Association of San Joaquin County, Inc.
Mr. Jim Lee, President
4502 N. Pershing Ave Ste B
Stockton, CA 95207
(209) 743-3340

Hmong American Assn. Inc.
1559 N. Beale Rd
Marysville, CA 95901
(530) 749-1580

Hmong American Community, Inc.
Pheng Lee
1044 Fulton Mall Ste 207
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 237-4914

Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County
Mr. Sor Lor -Executive Director
1640 Lincoln St
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 534-7474

Hmong Family Heritage
620 S. 10th St
Fresno, CA 93702
(559) 456-4626

Hmong Health Collaborative
4879 E Kings Canyon Rd
Fresno, CA 93727
O: (559) 255-8395
F: (559) 255-1656

Hmong New Life Health Center
3811 Florin Rd
Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 427-1227

Hmong Org. for Parents, Educators & Students, Inc.
Mr. Tsia Xiong, President
P.O. Box 188695
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 951-5931

Hmong Women's Heritage Assoc.
2245 Florin Rd
Sacramento, CA 95822
(916) 394-1405

Lao Veteran Inst. Of America
711 Minnewawa Ave
Fresno, CA 3727
(559) 252-3921

Laotian Cultural & Research Center
1413 Meriday Ln
Santa Ana, CA 92706
(714) 541-4533

National Hmong American Farmers
2904 N. Blackstone Ave Ste A2
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 255-5309

New American Media
San Francisco, CA
(415) 503-4170

Pan Valley Institute
1440 W. Shaw Ave
Fresno, CA 93711
(559) 222-7678

Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce
2012 H St Ste 202
Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 446-7883

Sacramento Hmong Mediation Council, Inc
(916) 743-9204

Southeast Asia Community Resource Center
Ms. Judy Lewis, Chair
10836 Gadsten Way
Rancho, Cordova, CA 95670
(916) 635-6815

Southeast Asian Assistance Center
Laura Leonelli
5625 24th Street
Sacramento, CA 95822
(916) 421-1036

Stone Soup Fresno
1345 E. Bulldog Lane Ste 4
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 224-7613

United Hmong Foundation
Steve Her
4568 East Pine Avenue
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 252-5566

NATIONWIDE

Association Advancement of Hmong Women in Minnesota
Ly Vang
1518 E. Lake Street, Suite 209
Minneapolis, MN 55407-1750
(612) 724-3066

Center for Hmong Arts & Talent
Kathy Mouachupao
995 University Avenue, Suite 220
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 603-6971

East Side Hmong Association
Fong Cha
328 Avenue Northeast
Carnation, WA 98014
(425) 333-4393

Eau Claire Hmong MAA
423 Wisconsin St
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(715) 832-8420

Freedom, Inc.
Kabzuaj Vaj
601 Bayview
Madison, WI 53715
(608) 661-4098

Hmong American Center
Thao Phia Xaykao
1032 W. Pioneer Parkway Ste 100
Arlington, TX 76013

Hmong American Community Association, Inc.
1421 N. Broadway Ste 116
Monomonie, WI 54751
(715) 232-9350

Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association
1718 Washington Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55411
(612) 374-2694

Hmong American Association of South Carolina
Harry Moua
507 Foster Grove Rd
Chesnee, SC 29323
(864) 599-0457

Hmong American Association of Portage County
Mai Khou Yang
101 Division Street, N. Ste E
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 341-3703
hmong_am_assoc@sbcglobal.net

Hmong American Partnership (Main Branch)
1075 Arcade St
St. Paul, MN 55106
(651) 495-9160

Hmong American Partnership - Fox Valley
2198 S. Memorial Dr
Appleton, WI 54915
(920) 739-3192

Hmong American Partnership - Minneapolis
1121 Glenwood Avenue, North
Minneapolis, MN 55405
(612) 377-6482

Hmong American Partnership - St. Paul
430 Dale Street
St. Paul, MN 55103
(651) 291-1811

Hmong American Women's Association
Christa Xiong
2414 West Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205
(414) 342-0858

Hmong/American Friendship Association, Inc.
Lo Neng Kiatoukaysy
3824 West Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 344-6575

Hmong Association of Green Bay, Inc.
200 S. Ashland Ave
Green Bay, WI 54303
(920) 437-4550

Hmong Association of Wood County, Inc.
Xou Khang
1430 2nd Street N.
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
(715) 424-4981

Hmong Community of Metro-Detroit, Inc.
P.O. Box 3810
Centerline, MI 48015
(586) 945-0868

Hmong Cultural Center
995 University Ave Ste 214
Saint Paul, MN 55104
(651) 917-9937

Hmong Educational Advancement, Inc.
2414 W. Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205
Ge Xiong
(414) 931-8834

Hmong-Lao American Association, Inc.
Za Teng Thao
316 Court Street
Oshkosh, WI 54901-5032
(920) 235-5133

Hmong-Lao Assistance Association, Inc.
Catherine Hodges
124 Logan Drive
Mount Gilead, NC 27306
(910) 439-9533

Hmong Minnesota Pacific Association
925 Payne Ave Ste B
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 778-8937

Hmong Mutual Assistance Association of Sheboygan, Inc.
Chasong Yang
2304 Superior Ave
Sheboygan, WI 53081
(920) 458-0808
hmaas@powercom.net

Hmong National Development
1628 Sixteenth St NW Ste 203
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 797-9105

Hmong National Organization, Inc.
501 Dale St North Ste 106
St. Paul, MN 55103
(651) 290-2343

Hmong United Association of Rhode Island
340 Lockwood Street
Providence, RI 02907
(401) 455-0847

IRCO - Asian Family Center
Lee Po Cha
4424 NE Glisan Street
Portland, OR 97213
(503) 235-9396

La Crosse Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc.
Dennis Tucker
2615 George Street
La Crosse, WI 54603
(608) 781-5744

Lao-Hmong American Coalition
Yang Chee
7051 Beacon Way
Westminster, CO 80030
(303) 429-8724

Lao Family Community of Minnesota – Minneapolis
320 W. University Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55103
(651) 221-0069

Lao Family Community of Minnesota – St. Paul
1433 E. Franklin Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612)870-1719

Lao Family of Milwaukee
2331 W. Vieau Pl
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Lauj Youth Society
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Southeast Asian Resource Center
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United Hmong Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 9683
Hickory, NC 28603-9683
(828) 465-6288

United Hmong Comm. Center
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Green Bay, WI 54304
(920) 432-8900

CHURCHES

CALIFORNIA

Central Valley Hmong Alliance Church
3200 East Walnut St
Hanford, CA 93291
(559) 909-2379

Central Pacific Coast Hmong Alliance Church
1000 West Ocean Ave
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-5577

Emmanuel Hmong Baptist Church
1147 West 6th St
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 722-7995

Eureka Hmong Baptist Mission
Chong Na Chang
1357 Mc Farlan
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 267-5443

First Hmong Evan. Church
5314 Ardelle Ave
Stockton, CA 95215
(209) 547-1921

First Hmong Alliance Church
Santa Ana, CA 92799
(951) 294-0674

Hmong Alliance Church
Banning CA 92220
(951) 849-9608

Hmong Alliance Church
Cypress, CA 90630
714-995-4375

Hmong Alliance Church
Chico, CA 95927
(530) 826-3495

Hmong Alliance Church
Merced, CA 95341
(209) 384-7167

Hmong Alliance Church
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 532-1979

Hmong Alliance Church of Fresno
8234 E. Belmont Ave
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 252-5823

Hmong Alliance Church of Modesto
Modesto, CA 95358
(209) 204-0976

Hmong Alliance Fellowship
Moreno Valley, CA 92552
(951) 333-7995

Hmong Baptist Church of Fresno
4141 N. Fresno St
Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 225-5809

Hmong C&MA Church of Stockton
4040 Clark Drive
Stockton, CA 95215
(209) 937-9874

Hmong Catholic Community
1526 N. Fresno St
Fresno, CA 93706
(559) 488-7438

Hmong Community Church
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Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 251-3140

Hmong Comm. Alliance Church
3563 E. Madison Ave
Fresno, CA 93702
(559) 498-3966

Hmong Community Church Mennonite
5015 E. Olive Ave
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 264-2851

Hmong Fresno Community Church
819 Tulare St
Fresno, CA 93706
(559) 226-0146

Hmong Grace Lutheran Church
4863 E. Tulare St
Fresno, CA 93727
(559) 434-8369

Hmong Methodist Church
1343 E. Barstow Ave
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 251-4107

Messiah Alliance Church
Fresno, CA 93747
(559) 277-8091

Sac Hmong All Church
Dr. Christopher Thao
9131 Locust St
Elk Grove, CA 95624
(916) 685-6921

Stockton Hmong Baptist Church
7525 Oakmont Dr
Stockton, CA 95207
(209) 472-9122

The Crossing
Fellowship Word Center
Mike Soung
4626 E. Dakota Ave
Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 307-7631

Trinity Christian Headquarters
Rev. Konghtxoujh Mitt Moua
1028 P Street
Sanger, CA 93657
(559) 876-9075
www.tch12.org

Trinity Hmong Baptist Mission
2510 Jordan Ct
Stockton, CA 95205
(209) 464-5077

United Church Liberty Evangelical
4557 E. Tulare St
Fresno, CA 93702
(559) 456-0532

Yuba Sutter Hmong Alliance Church
Yuba City, CA 95992
(530) 755-3529

MICHIGAN

Detroit Hmong Alliance Church
11488 Jackson Ave
Warren, MI 48089
(586) 756-1916

First Hmong Baptist Church
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(810) 757-7471

Hmong American Baptist Church
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(763) 574-2548

Hmong Alliance Church
11505 Ilex St NW
Minneapolis, MN 55448
(763) 757-2616

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Hmong American Alliance
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Saint Paul, MN 55109
(651) 765-2443

St. Paul Hmong Alliance Church
1770 McMenemy St
Saint Paul, MN 55117
(651) 774-7955

WISCONSIN

Hmong Alliance Church
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(920) 832-1210

Hmong Alliance Church
2604 W. Orchard St
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 643-5272

Hmong All. Church of CMA
303 N. Oneida St
Appleton, WI 54911
(920) 832-1310

Hmong Alliance Church of Stevens Point Inc.
301 Dearborn Ave
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 346-0080

Hmong Christian Community United Methodist Church
3001 W. Mitchell St
Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 645-4844

Hmong Christian Ref. Church
1556 N. 16th ST
Sheboygan, WI 53081
(920) 458-1710

Hmong Comm. All. Church
2916 S 11th St
Sheboygan, WI 53081
(920) 458-2444

Hmong First Baptist Church
Hoyu Sayaovang
6693 North 99th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53224
(414) 358-2610

United Hmong Comm. Center
401 9th St
Green Bay, WI 54304
(920) 432-8900

Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations
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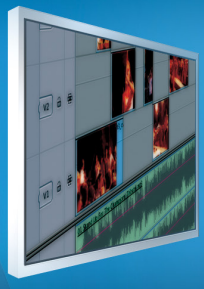
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Silent Killer

Hepatitis B

Story by Burlee Vang



With a professional kickboxing career spanning more than ten years, five championship belts, his stunning fights broadcasted on ESPN and Youtube, Yia "the Bull" Mua boldly established himself as the first and most recognized Hmong figure to break into mainstream martial arts.

To the eyes of fans and friends in our community, the world-class fighter seemed invulnerable, especially in the glossy photos and posters depicting his solid physique adorned with championship belts. But in the prime of his life, while training to compete in the new world of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and shooting in the movie Finding Hope Now, Yia Mua suddenly fell ill. For seven excruciating months he fought the final and biggest battle of his life in hospital rooms and chemo/radiation therapy sessions, his athletic physicality quickly deteriorating from liver cancer. At the age of 34, Mua passed away on January 15, 2010, leaving behind an unfinished legacy. But Mua's case is only the tip of the iceberg - one example of the unspoken prevalence of a very urgent and important health crisis in our community today. In the wake of this tragedy, the Hmong Health Collaborative (HHC) has worked diligently to shed light on this silent killer...

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by HBV in the blood. The virus spreads through blood contact, often from an infected mother to her child during birth. Although hepatitis B symptoms vary from loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, body aches, mild fever, dark urine, and jaundice, most people who are infected with HBV show no symptoms at all while acting as carriers of the virus. They can infect others, and they may develop liver diseases such as cirrhosis (scarring) and liver cancer, which can lead to death, as in Mua's case.

According to the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University, 370 million people worldwide have chronic (life-long) hepatitis B infection compared with 33 million living with HIV. Without appropriate treatment or monitoring, 1 in 4 infected persons will die of liver cancer, cirrhosis or liver failure. Chronic hepatitis B takes a total of 700,000 lives each year. About two-thirds who carry HBV do not know they have it. Many, like Mua, do not discover it until they become seriously ill from cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Community

Our community is at great risk. It is a frightening fact that hepatitis B, prevalent among Asian populations, is a silent epidemic among the 30,000 Hmong in Fresno County. According to studies, 1 of 6 of us could be infected. The Asian Liver Center at Stanford and a study conducted by Dr. Muhammad Y. Sheikh at the University of California at San Francisco-Fresno Medical Education Program state that as much as 16.7% of the Hmong in Fresno live with the disease, which is a higher infection rate than among foreign-born Asians as a whole. Experts predict that the disease could be more widespread in our community than what studies suggest.

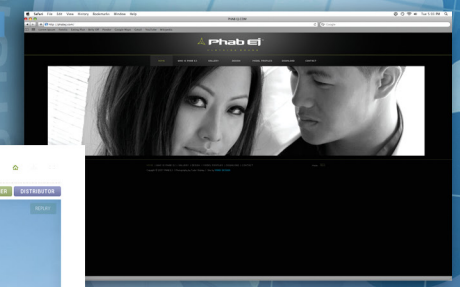
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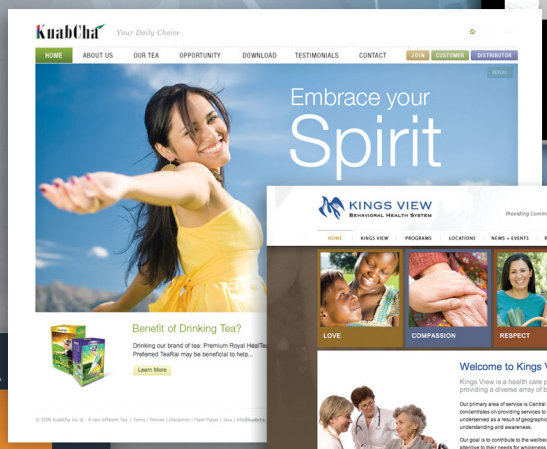
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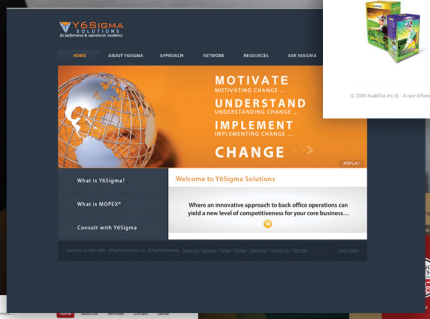
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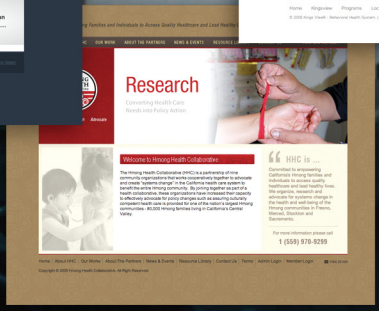
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Vaccination & Prevention

Despite the staggering percentage of our people who may be living with the infection, many of us go untested. A great number are unaware that the disease could be fatal and that they can receive vaccination to protect themselves. The first thing to do is to get checked. If you are not infected, you can get preventative vaccination. For those who test positive for HBV, they should have an ultrasound test of the liver, a process that should be repeated every 6 to 12 months. A blood test also needs to be done every 6 months to screen for liver cancer. It is critical that the blood and liver is monitored. If needed, medications can be used to suppress HBV from damaging the liver. Although there is no complete cure for those who are infected with HBV, treatment is available.

Since HBV spreads through blood contact, your child can be infected if you are an HBV carrier. Newborns that become infected have a 90% chance of developing chronic hepatitis B. Since 1991, U.S. national guidelines have recommended that all newborns be vaccinated against HBV. You can protect your own child against hepatitis B for life if given the three required shots: (1) dose of hepatitis B vaccine and hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) at birth, (2) second dose of hepatitis B vaccine at 1-2 months, (3) third dose of hepatitis B vaccine at 6 months.

Liver cancer is the most common cancer in our community. As a Hmong person, it is very important to get tested for HBV. "Too many patients receive medical care when it's too late," says Dr. Muhammad Y. Sheikh. If liver cancer is caught early, "We can actually save a life."

Get checked today. Get vaccinated. Get treated. It's the only way to stop this silent killer.





Hmong Hmong Health Collaborative

HHC is a partnership of Hmong-serving nonprofit agencies from Central to Northern California who organize, research, and work cooperatively to advocate and create systems change in the health and well-being of the Hmong communities in California. With major funding from The California Endowment, HHC has provided direct assistance to Hmong healthcare consumers, conducted research on healthcare needs and options for Hmong families, and successfully advocated for policies that increase culturally and linguistically competent care for the Hmong. One of the current goals of HHC is to shed awareness on the unspoken threat of hepatitis B on the Hmong community and the possibility of prevention by educating its members about the damaging effects of HBV and the availability of vaccination and treatment. To learn more about HHC, please visit: www.hmonghc.org or reference page 35.

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Hmong Poets Showcase

Excerpt from the Introduction of forthcoming anthology "How Do I Begin?: A Hmong American Literary Anthology" (Heyday, 2011) by the Hmong American Writers' Circle (HAWC)

This anthology has been one of the goals of HAWC from the very beginning. Most of the writers within these pages are from California, mainly the Central Valley. This 400-mile stretch of flatland that dominates the central portion of California, one of the world's most productive agricultural regions, is home to some 47,000 Hmong.

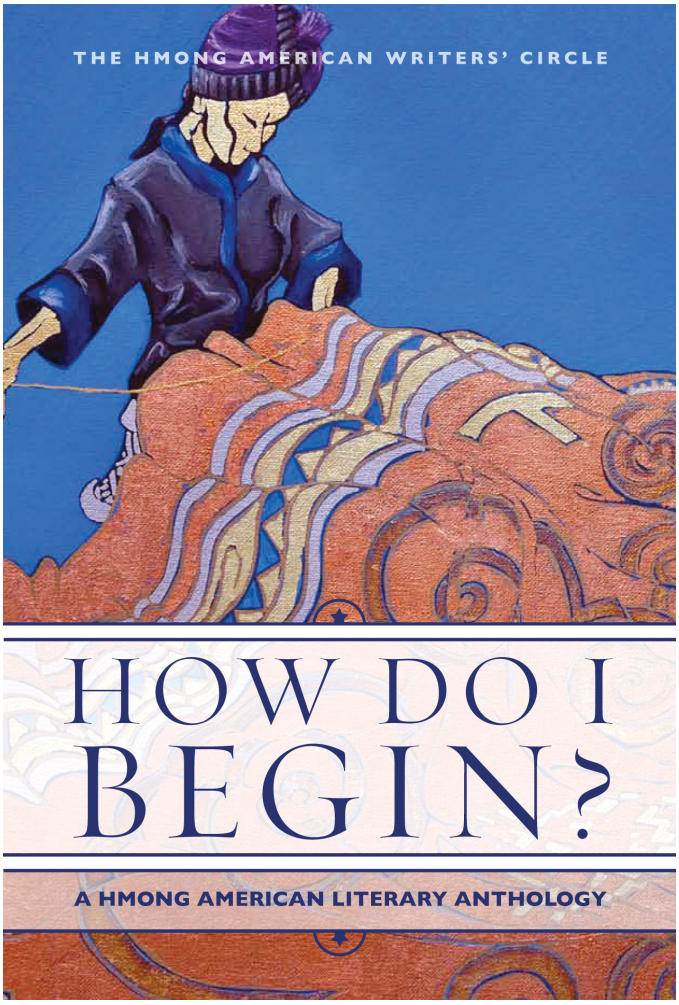
"I have always felt that the Central Valley was the 'true' Hmong paradise, or the refuge, the place for those in exile, internally and externally," says Mai Der Vang, a writer and member of HAWC. "And the irony or the paradox is that it is not paradise in the way we might imagine San Francisco or Los Angeles to be—with employment opportunities, great weather, scenic views—but it is paradise because there was a sense that people could really start their lives over, especially after having been through a war.

I remember in the 80s when hundreds of Hmong began to flock to the great 'west' with the hope that they'd find land to farm, mountains to reminisce, and family nearby. It almost reminded me of the Gold Rush or Dust Bowl era when people moved west in search of new opportunities, for whatever reasons. My own family was first resettled in St. Paul, MN but could not handle the weather and so it was decided that the clan would move to this mysterious 'paradise' called 'Fresno.'"

"[A]n immigrant who has already made his own deep connections with the landscape," Gary Snyder describes the poet Pos Moua, also a HAWC member.

But there are other Hmong writers in this collection who are writing from as far away as Washington, Minnesota, Illinois and Ohio, and yet their prose and poetry resonate thematically with those writing from within the Central Valley. Some have either visited or lived in the valley, or still have family members here.

A surprising inclusion are also two non-Hmong writers, Bryan Thao Worra and Anthony Cody, whose long experiences with the Hmong have woven them into its community. "The perspective is one of experience," says Anthony. "There can be and should be a tie for people across ethnicities in whatever ways their stories, or the stories of their ancestors, intersect." Soul Choj Vang agrees. "Writing is an individual act," he says, "but it needs a context, a community, to be meaningful. It can never be a monologue, it has to be part of a larger conversation."



I believe all the voices in this anthology transcend ethnic and geographic boundaries and speak about the collective experience of the Hmong as well as what it means to be a member of the larger and diverse community of America. Margins are erased and worlds confront and begin to live within one another. The subjects we've written about are vast but interconnected. Some of us have revisited the ghosts of war or lamented on the loss of a country or explored the challenges of assimilation. Some have examined more universal themes like identity, family, food, love, religion and pop culture. Some write as representatives of the Hmong, some as individuals. The prose and poetry in this anthology are glimpses of our perseverance through war, persecution and exile. Through ethnical, cultural and language barriers. How we have survived the elements, the invisible. How we have overcome ourselves.

-Burlee Vang, HAWC Founder

This Special Section is a collection of poems written by the Hmong American Writer's Circle (HAWC)

If you enjoy reading them, please support their ground breaking work by picking up their books:

"How Do I Begin? A Hmong American Literary Anthology"

and

"The Dead I Know: Incantation for Rebirth."

Here I Am

By Soul Choj Vang

Once, American poets were born
in the factories of Detroit,
the vineyards of the Great Valley,
the haunted plantations of the South,
but they were all raised on the plains of Iowa.
They wrote about life enclosed by white
picket fences, children creating
kingdoms under apple orchards,
tornadoes turning trees into rows of corkscrews
and carrying trout
miles out of rivers.

Now, here I am, adopted citizen,
not rooted in this land, unable to taste
the spirit in its dust,
to sense its moods in the pollen.
How do I begin my song?
Where do I enter the chorus
when my part is not yet written,
when the conductor won't point
my way?

Shall I start with my birth on Sky Mountain?
Then follow with my childhood,
shaping paper planes to ride the wind?
Or shall I tell of my boyhood,
playing on the shore of the Dragon River
that flowed like a cool blue ribbon
and raged into a yellow monster
during the monsoon season?

Shall I sing of fleeing
my homeland, knowing I was leaving
the mountains and gorges forever.
Should I sing of crossing
the Mekong, floating on a bamboo raft?
Or sing of my coming
to this land, as a beggar,
wishing to share my story,
but unable to speak its language?

If I sing of these things
who would listen to me,
who knows nothing of picket fences,
the sanctuary of apple orchards,
or the lessons of tornadoes?
I will have to relearn
and trust my childhood, give
the wind my song
and let all who can,
hear.

Afternoon at the Long Cheng Café

By Soul Choj Vang

I inhale the aroma of *fawm*
thin noodles in steaming clear broth
with slices of crispy pork
spiced with green onions and cilantro,
prepared the way we prefer.
I look out the window and I don not see
Kings Canyon Boulevard or the colorful evening
lights of the Big Fresno Fair.

Rather, my senses turn inward
and I remember the first time
I had eaten *Fawm Looj Ceeb*
at the original Long Cheng Café
in Laos, a block
from General Vang Pao's compound.

It is a special treat from my mother,
for I have come to visit from the relative
peace of a country village
where I have been left with an uncle
to continue my schooling, away
from the artillery shelling that interrupts
the daily lives of Long Cheng.

Mother and I sit in the Long Cheng Café
watching the throng wending
through roadside shops,
food stands serving busy housewives,
and swaggering Hmong pilots
who have found godlike power
and prestige in flight. Children escape the clutches
of their mothers and chase one another
among soldiers, gawking American pilots
and military advisors...

Army jeeps splash through the wet, winding road
paved with crushed karst rocks
shining like diamonds in the afternoon sun

In the End

By Soul Choj Vang

~ for Chayut Xiong

"In the end,

we'll lose all the things,

language,

traditions,
even our children (when
they are no longer
Hmong),"
you, my friend,
said.

And I think
you're right. But
in the end, we'll
probably never
know.

And are our language,
traditions,
and children
ours to lose,
or just ours to let go?

In the end, all we may
be able to do
is to present
our very best.
And let the next
take it over.

That's what every generation
must have finally felt
and done
in the end.

My Father After Reading Ecclesiastes 12

By Burlee Vang

Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

The mourning doves won't
let me sleep past five, he said,
the gray patches gathering

like ash at his feet
by the time my mother finished
his haircut. He's shied

from mirrors since,
quit work & pulled his pension.
Said he couldn't wait

five years more, said he
wanted grandkids. He picked
at his molars daily until one

dropped into his palm. *They're all*
loose, he wept to my mother,
a decade younger.

This morning we heard
him lamenting, *I've reached the day*
of my father & *his father*,

& said he wanted
a one-way flight to Laos,
but was afraid of heights.

At noon he did not eat with us.
Too much flavor in the meat,
the rice too hard to grind.

He spent the afternoon
wandering the yard, stooping over
my mother's vegetables.

& later, we found him
on his knees, weeping
over a fallen nest,

the eggshells scattered
like tears, the parents
nowhere in sight.

Drinking the Dead

By Burlee Vang

Grandmother pulls a large cucumber
from the fridge, cold as a corpse,
plucked from the fields.
The glint of the knife catches my eye
when she lays the fruit on a chop-block
the way a mother would her child
into its crib — before splitting it
from top to bottom.

With a spoon she scrapes
one of the halves,
the seedy insides
falling in strips
into a wooden bowl.
Then she shakes the loose skin over the sink.
We bury placentas in the earth, she whispered once,
so the dead can crawl back to be born again.
I scoop the other half,
pulp dripping
clumsy as fish guts.

She pulls two cups from the cabinet
while I pour water into the bowl,
stir in cubes of ice & sugar.
Drink, she says, & I swallow
the sweetness, the sour seeds—the sun
pooled in the kitchen, even the knife
blinking like a metallic fish
on the counter. Everything rushes
like a mountain river,
the cold pulsing as if
I'd swallowed a child's heart.
It drums deep in the valley.

Years later, I prepare
this drink again in the solitude
of my kitchen. Outside a crow caws
her name, its dark voice flapping
while ice cubes clank against
the circles of my spoon. I pull
a cup from the cabinet—the tallest one—
& fill it to the top with such boyish thirst
that my eyes leak from the overflow. Sweetness
has left my tongue, the pulp settled in
my throat like the day she lay down, stiff
as a cucumber in the fields. I lick
the sides, sip the edges of the glass
to keep the dead from spilling out.

Joyride

By Andre Yang

- for Uncle CJ

Weren't you ever told not to tag along
in someone else's G-ride? What thoughts
scrambled in your mind as you hid there
between carport wall and a beat-up Toyota
Cressida, while red and blue flashes sprayed
the alleyway and helicopter searchlights
frisked the Mayfair neighborhood crevices?

Were you reminded of the time you clung
tightly to your father's back, quiet as a whisper
in water, so the Pathet Lao soldiers wouldn't
detect your family's flight from Laos?
Or was that the last time you confessed
your most intimate secret to the dark -
how you still wished your father had stayed
with you in the Thai refugee camp that day
instead of following his second wife to French Guiana?

Did your thoughts trickle onto the ground
through your long black strands, into the pools
of oil by your head? Did an autumn blanket
wrap you as you slept, wearing only thong sandals,
shorts, and a T-shirt? I don't imagine any other way
you could have woken up five hours later
and walked fifteen blocks to McLane High School
as if yesterday were any other Sunday.

Waiting

By Andre Yang

My father, in a bathrobe, is sitting
in the living room watching Monday

Night Raw wrestling. He waits
for my mother, still at the Foster

Farms chicken plant. It could be hours
until he can go to sleep, though

he'll need to be at work in six.
He is probably thinking of her tiny hands

dressed in thin metal gloves, clutching
a blade just large enough

to sever breasts from the carcasses
conveyor belting by. The two have been

married for one year longer than I am alive -
I'll be 29 this year - and he performs this ritual

nightly, each time to a different TV show.
At every commercial break he walks over

to open the front door, as a monk does
a heavy monastery door, to check the night

for any inkling of return.

I Am Still Here

By Mai Der Vang

-Driving Watts Valley, 2009

There are empty roads that wind into hills,
where afternoon fog idles above
the barren meadows of November.

Where the roots of iron and stone
tick like clocks built with no hands.

Where trees grow parched, their feeble limbs
ready to snap at the slightest bend.

Somewhere in this vista, I drive down a road
that takes me deeper to nowhere, as if to find
that nothing is what I came looking for.

This could be any place. These could be any hills.
Like the ones I have never seen in Laos,
stretching open the sky. The overgrown
brushes of bamboo and bark buried alongside
the souls of the dead still wandering home.

I imagine the mountains of Laos,
their voices as the wind, tarnished by time lost,
and thousands of miles away, I am still here,
waiting for them to resonate.

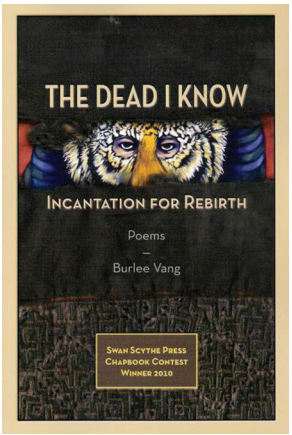
The Last Drops

By Soul Choj Vang

Years ago, we ignored the old men
who gathered when there was a feast or funeral
and regaled any who would listen
with their tales of war and little conquests
back in the mountains.

Now, when we gather, the old men
are hard to find. Two or three
sit in the corners and still whisper
their tales.

Some of us who know
ignore discussions of jobs,
BMWs, golf games, trips
back to Thailand or Laos,
gravitating to the corners
to drink the last drops
of a mountain spring
running
dry.



The Dead I Know: Incantation for Rebirth is available for purchase at http://www.swanscythe.com and http://www.amazon.com.

The Dead I Know: Incantation for Rebirth *by Burlee Vang*

Swan Scythe Press, one of the U.S.'s most respected poetry publishers, introduces the winner of their 2010 Poetry Chapbook Contest: Burlee Vang, of Fresno, California. Vang's book was chosen from among more than 130 submitted manuscripts from more than 20 U.S. states and foreign countries. These powerful poems of remembrance and transformation cast a brilliant light on the experiences faced by many in our century who have been exiled and forced to invent themselves again in new land.

That's what the reader is in for, in this undertow of a book. Burlee Vang is part of everything and everybody he writes about, from growling stomachs to the tiger's roar. This is a persuasive debut."
—Sandra McPherson, author of *Expectation Days*

A beautiful and powerful collection! Every piece is painstakingly crafted with its own daring sword, cutting through the heart's sorrow. Here, poetry is liberation, and Burlee Vang is thus far our best Hmong writer!"
—Pos Moua, author of *Where the Torches Are Burning*

These poems articulate the harsh world of a war-torn country and its human aftermath as powerfully as any I've ever read. The various and distinct voices flinch at nothing, and yet somehow the book is not despairing. This is a visceral book, full of passion and fire, and something like hopefulness starts to rise from the ruins here—not as a gesture or a poetic device—but as an honest human response. This is a beautiful, harrowing and necessary book, and Burlee Vang is an extraordinary new voice in American poetry."
—Corrinne Clegg Hales, author of *Separate Escapes*

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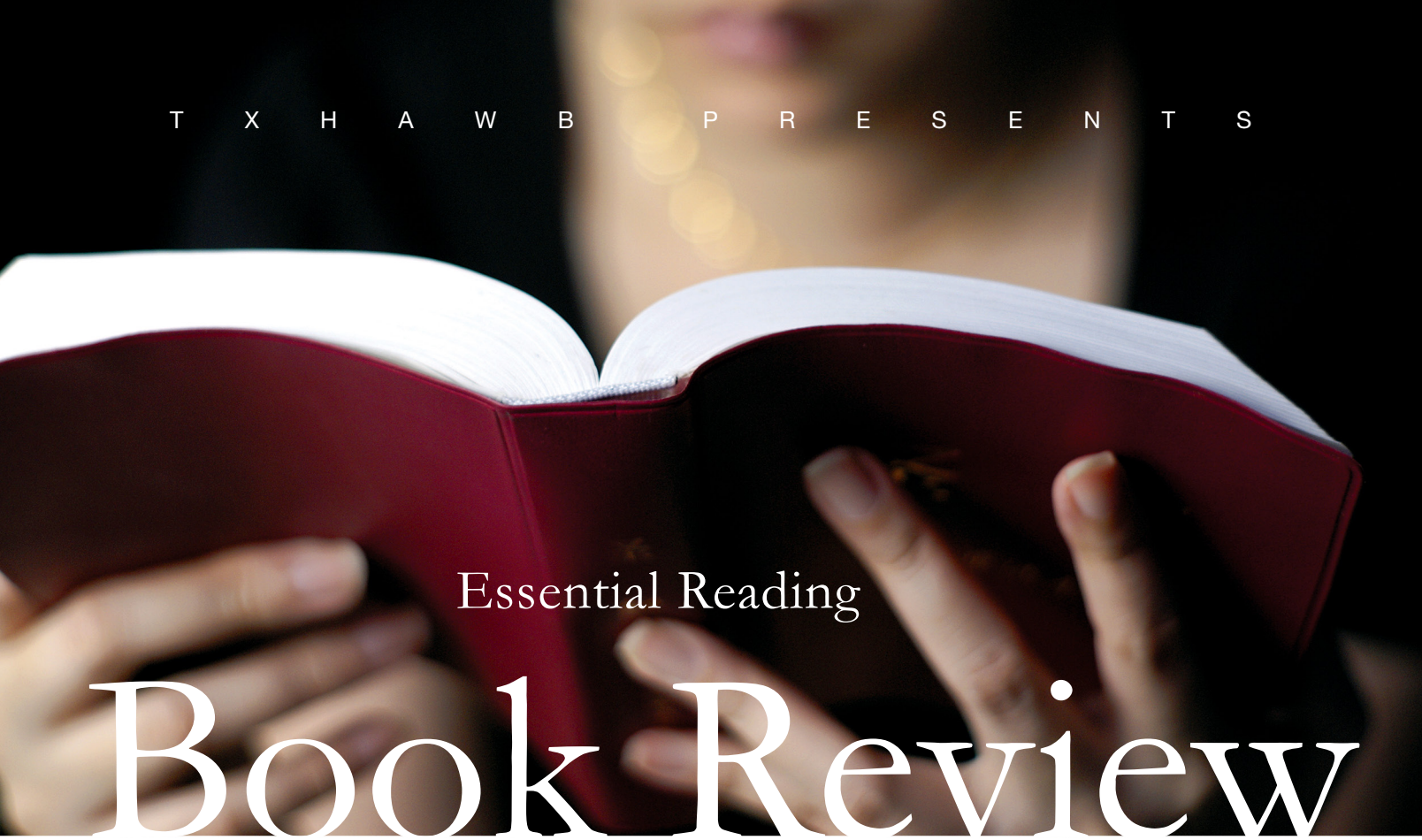
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T X H A W B P R E S E N T S



Essential Reading

Book Review

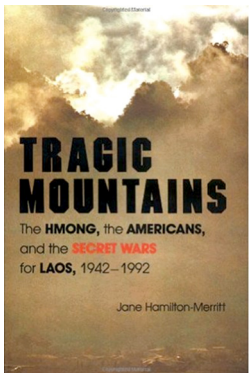
Here's a list of important books for readers interested in Hmong history, culture, and identity.

Published in the last two decades, these 14 works range from the historical and anthropological - full of insightful analysis and informative research - to the personal and lyrical - full of self-discovery, revelation, and poetic wisdom.

The list includes nonfiction, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and even a collection of age-old proverbs. For essential reading on the Hmong experience, past and present, don't miss out on these books!

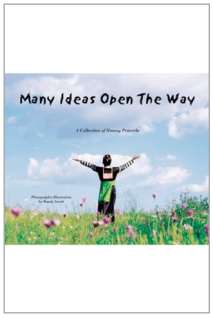
Reviewed and Recommended by Hmong American Writer's Circle (HAWC)





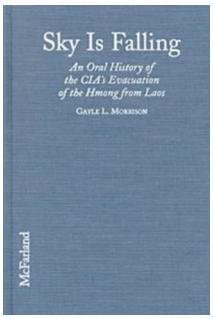
Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, the Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos
1942-1992
by Jane Hamilton-Merritt
1999, Indiana University Press

One of the most referenced books detailing the Hmong participation in the Secret War, *Tragic Mountains* takes a comprehensive historical and journalistic approach in re-telling the catastrophic events of the Vietnam War and the Secret War that resulted in the Hmong diaspora. Hamilton-Merritt provides a detailed chronicle beginning with the French occupation, to the U.S. involvement, to the many ongoing battles, along with the rise in leadership of General Vang Pao, ending with the exodus that drove hundreds of thousands of Hmong civilians from Laos. The book also includes an in-depth look into the use of chemical warfare against the Hmong following the mass migration out of Laos. Despite the book's length and its intense documentation of the events, *Tragic Mountains* is an important book to read and re-read as a reminder of how far in this world the Hmong have come.



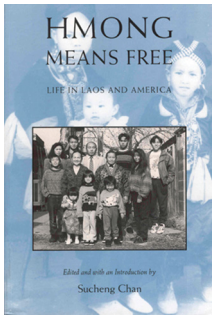
Many Ideas Open the Way: A Collection of Hmong Proverbs
by Randy Snook
2003, Shen's Books

Traditional meets contemporary in this vibrant picture book that is sure to please any reader regardless of age. Written in both Hmong and English, photographer Randy Snook presents a fresh, visual depiction of age-old Hmong proverbs for the modern audience. Whether you're well versed in Hmong proverbs or wanting to learn, this will be a valuable book for generations to come.



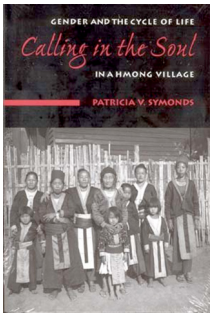
Sky Is Falling: An Oral History of the CIA's Evacuation of the Hmong from Laos
by Gayle L. Morrison
1999, McFarland

It was a year that many older Hmong will never forget, 1975, when Laos fell to Communism. In *Sky Is Falling*, Morrison collects from Hmong and American service men the first-hand stories of the evacuation from Laos and the final departure from a homeland. This book, which includes rare photos and maps, is a vital and necessary record of one of the most important years in the history of the Hmong.



Hmong Means Free: Life in Laos and America
by Sucheng Chan
1994, Temple University Press

Hmong Means Free: Life in Laos and America is a collection of personal testimonies provided by four families, the Xiongs, Fangs, Tchas, and Mouas. These families are members of the first wave of emigrants to the United States. This book is arguably the first collection of the Hmong refugee experience, providing general information on the lifestyles in Laos, perspectives of the Vietnam war, and the common and distinct struggles that are faced as refugees begin to settle and assimilate in the United States.



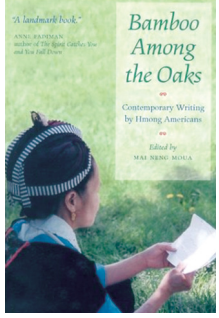
Calling in the Soul
by Patricia Symonds
2005, University of Washington Press

This book is a necessary read for scholars, those interested in learning more about Hmong culture, as well as those who want to rediscover or re-explore their Hmong roots. The author, Patricia Symonds, is very considerate with her perspective as an outsider entering such a private culture and its affect on her objectivity to her study. She recognizes the complex balance involved in social roles of the Hmong in Southeast Asia and utilizes it to help her understand how this mindset affects the Hmong assimilation and acculturation process in America. The information collected into this book, ranging from socio-sexual societal roles to transcription of ceremonial chants, serves as a solid knowledge base on Hmong beliefs and culture and creates an opportunity for its readers, Hmong or not, to formulate further questions to explore on their own accord.



The Latehomecomer
by Kao Kalia Yang
2008, Coffee House Press

Chronicling her family's journey from a fallen Laos to Ban Vinai refugee camp in Thailand, and then to resettling in the snowy landscape of the American Midwest, Kao Kalia Yang's *The Latehomecomer* is both a memoir and a collective history of the Hmong people. The author's voice exhibits a poet's sensibilities, and her storytelling unfolds through language that is both lyrical and full of childlike wonderment. Her main story, centering around her grandmother, is reverent and poignant. This first award-wining book by a Hmong author is a recommended read for anyone interested not only in the Hmong experience, but the craft of creative nonfiction as well.



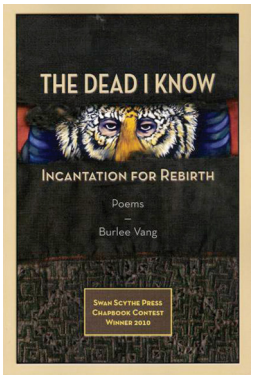
Bamboo Among the Oaks
edited by Mai Neng Moua
2002, Minnesota Historical Society Press

Unlike many books written with an anthropological or historical perspective on the Hmong, *Bamboo Among the Oaks* broke ground as the first Hmong American literary anthology. It demanded a space in the world of literature and carved it out when the book's editor, Mai Neng Moua, realized no one else would create the space for it. Including a large number of pieces from the literary journal *Paj Ntaub Voice*, this collection of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and drama touches upon a spectrum of topics ranging from personal identity to reminiscing about the life of a shoe. The introduction alone can stand solidly, but dive into the rest of the book for a richer understanding of what it means to be a Hmong American creative writer.

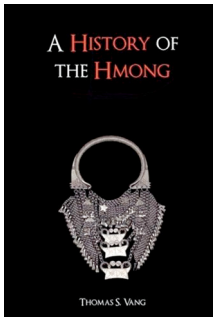
The Dead I Know: Incantation for Rebirth

by Burlee Vang

2010, Swan Scythe Press



Winner of the Swan Scythe Press 2010 poetry chapbook contest, Burlee *Vang's The Dead I Know: Incantation for Rebirth* is a collection of poems that reaches out toward ancestors and summons the memories of the past within a modern context. Addressing war, solitude, identity, and the struggle to honor those who have passed, the writer offers a fresh and startling perspective through the use of powerful imagery and voice. This collection brings out a profound sense of sadness, yet provides a sense of clarity and liberation in knowing that, in each poem, the speaker is searching to honor the dead and calling the reader to remember the past, as well as the reader's sense of self in today's society.



A History of the Hmong

by Thomas S. Vang

2008, Lulu.com

This book is a broad exploration of Hmong history, starting with Hmong legends that echo the Flood and the Tower of Babel and the discussion of various theories of Hmong origin. It traces Hmong migration from China to Southeast Asia to the Hmong Diaspora out of Laos. It even catches up to Hmong life in different countries such as the United States, Australia, and French Guiana, and it touches on recent events like the arrest of General Vang Pao. The author, being Hmong, brings a unique perspective to the Hmong experience and the personal relationships between important Hmong figures.

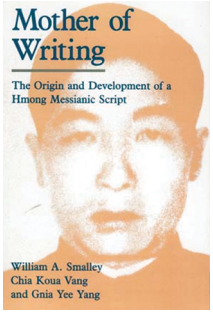


Where the Torches Are Burning

by Pos Moua

2002, Swan Scythe Press

Pos Moua's *Where the Torches Are Burning* - the first book of poetry by a Hmong author - is an incredible meditation on the human soul and its experiences in the tangible world. The author muses over the perilous journey out of Laos, his days as a college student at UC Davis, his relationships with the people around him, and his deep connection to the mysteries of nature. His style is full of haunting beauty, passion, and transcendence, his voice weaving through history, memory, identity, love, and loss - all of which culminates into a powerful confession. This is poetry at its best, and Pos Moua is one of the most important literary voices from our community.

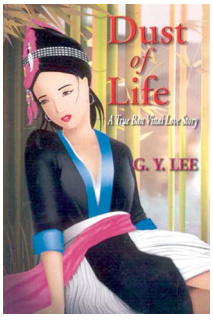


Mother of Writing: The origin and development of a Hmong Messianic Script

by William A. Smalley, Chia Koua Vang, Gnia Yee Yang

1990, University Of Chicago Press

Shong Lue Yang, a common farmer, became known as the messianic figure Mother of Writing after establishing the Pahawh Hmong writing system. Collaborating with Shong Lue's students, linguist William A. Smalley, who developed the RPA Hmong, offers us this extraordinary book that teaches the complexity of the Pahawh script and reveals the unusual and remarkable history of Shong Lue's messianic years until his mysterious assassination.

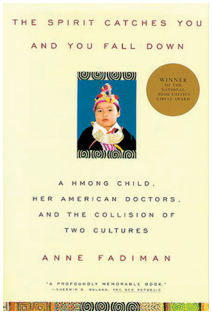


Dust of Life

by Gary Yia Lee

2004, Hmongland Publishing

Dust of Life is a Hmong-flavored romance novel set in Thailand at the Ban Vinai Refugee Camp during the years immediately following the fall of Laos. The protagonist is an "Americanized" Hmong who has spent his time studying in the United States, prior to Laos' collapse. When he returns to Thailand to court and marry a refugee girl recommended by his family, many misunderstandings occur, ultimately leading to the story's bitter ending. This book captures an important period of Hmong history and shows the reader Hmong courtship rituals that are becoming obsolete through the years.

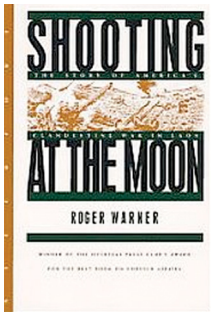


The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

by Anne Fadiman

1998, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Winner of the 1997 National Book Critics Circle Award for General Nonfiction, author Anne Fadiman delicately weaves a story about the culture clash between the Lee family and the local doctors of Merced as she sincerely focuses on who is at stake here: the Lee's sick daughter, Lia, who has been diagnosed with severe epilepsy. Alongside Lia's situation, Anne Fadiman also illustrates the history of the Hmong and how they came to Merced carrying their traditional beliefs in Shamanism amidst the growing tension of immigration resentment from the locals and professionals. This is an important book that is often assigned to students in medical and anthropology classes studying cultures and culture clashes within the United States.



Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos

by Roger Warner

1998, Steerforth

A unique perspective on the secret war, this book discusses the Thai strategy of using the elite Thai Police Aerial Reinforcement Unit (PARU) to train the Hmong to fight the Communists so that Thailand would remain insulated from invasion. The book gives a detailed account of the training the Hmong underwent as well as the personal relationships between the various CIA advisors such as Colonel Bill Lair and General Vang Pao. As the title suggests, the book shows the reader why the war was a futile effort, even while it was being conducted.

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KEV TSIM KHO TXOJ KEV UA
MOVIE NTAWM HMOOB

by Boua Long Vue

Kev piv txog li 20 xyoo dhau los saib Hmoob Txoj kev ua Movie no vameej npaum li cas. Yog muab tig saib txij thaum xyoo 1990 - 2000 ntawd kuj pom tias tsis muaj dab tsi txawv ntau. Tej tug ua tau zoo yeej zoo haujsim, tabsis feem coob kuj tseem yog nyias ua nyias xwb thiab ke ua ke kawm yog cov ntau. Vim lub sijhawm ntawd peb Hmoob tsis tau txawj sib qev los theej saib los yog muab nyiag luam muag thiab tsis tau txawj muab mus tso rau hauv Internet kom nyias mus saib nyias tau. Thaum ntawd cov tuam txhab uas txawj ua ntawd kuj muaj tshaj thawj thiab tau nyiaj tau txiaj.

Txij xyoo 2000 - 2010 no kuj pom tias Hmoob cov yeeb yaj duab kuj vameej ceev heev. Tabsis txij ntawd los cov tuam txhab kuj tsis muaj tshaj thawj npaum li yav dhau los. Coob tus kuj poob peev loj thiab tso tseg. Muaj ib co kuj sawv los nyias ua nyias zaj dabneeg zoo li cas los kuj muaj. Raws li kev tshawb xyuas nyob rau ntawm 10 xyoo no peb Hmoob yog cov uas ua movie ntau dua li lwm haiv neeg tibsi. Qhov ua tau ntau dhau ntawd kuj yog ib qho ntawm sawv daws txoj kev poob peev.

Tej teebmeem kev ua tsis tau nyiaj no kuj yog los ntawm ntiaj teb txoj kev vameej, xws li sib qev theej saib yooj yim heev, kev sib nyiag luam muag yooj yim heev, tseem muaj ib co neeg sib tw nyiag coj mus tso rau hauv Internet rau tib neeg mus saib dawb ntau heev thiab.

Kwv tij Hmoob sawv daws, yog peb txawj sib txhawb sib pab, xav kom txij no mus peb txhawb cov tuam txhab uas ib txwm ua mus rau seem yog. kom txhawb tau Hmoob lub npe, khaws tau Hmoob keebkwm, khaws tau hmoob kab li kev cai thiab raug ntsej raug muag. Thov pab yuav daim tseem kom koj txhawb tau koj lub tuam txhab los yog txhawb tau tus Hmoob uas muaj peev xwm zoo.

Yog tias koj tsuas yog qev los theej saib xwb los yog koj yeej ib txwm nrhiav yuav daim cuav uas pheej yig xwb ces koj tsis yog tus uas txhawb tau koj haiv neeg txoj kev vameej tabsis koj yog tus txov koj haiv neeg thiab mus txhawb yuam kev tus neeg khaws xyeem lawm xwb.

Peb Hmoob ib txwm tsis nyiam luag lwm haiv thuam thiab hais tsis zoo rau peb kiag li, tabsis yog peb tsis txawj sib pab ces peb yuav yog cov uas raug luag thuam tom ntej no. Yog Hmoob paub meej tseeb txog txoj kev uas yus rov rhuav yus no thiab tseg txhob ua yam tsis yog ntxiv, ntseeg tias muaj ib hnub peb yuav zoo siab heev rau yam uas peb Hmoob ua tau.

Vim los ntawm tej kev phem kev zoo sib txuam ntxaws li no, ntau lub tuam txhab nyob rau Meskasteb uas ib txwm nrhiav kev tsim Hmoob zaj tseem dabneeg rau Hmoob saib thiab nrhiav Hmoob zaj tseem nkauj Hmoob rau Hmoob mloog thiaj npaj muaj lub zeem muag kom muaj kev tsim kho thiab los koom tes tiv thaiv uake.

Txog rau xyoo 2008 thaum lub 7 hli ntuj kuj muaj cov tuam txhab ntau lub kuj los sib tawm tswvyim uake txog kev tiv thaiv yam phem yam zoo rau yus haiv neeg thiab lwm haiv neeg ntawm yus teej tug nrog rau lub zeem muag ntawm kev sib pab kom tom ntej no peb Hmoob tej yeeb yaj duab no muaj kev vam meej tshaj qub.

Sawv daws sib cog soj ntsuam xyuas thiab nrhiav kev tiv thaiv kom tsis txhob lam tau lam ua, tabsis kom yog muaj txiaj ntsim rau yus haiv neeg mus rau lub koob npe zoo thiab nrhiav kev txuas txoj kev lag luam ntawm Hmoob Meskas kom mus tau rau txhua lub teb chaws uas muaj Hmoob nyob.

Nrhiav kev txhawb nqa Hmoob tej tub ntxhais txog kev rag txuj los yog kev kawm ua duab no kom loj hlob thiab tsim txiaj li lwm haiv neeg. Dua li ntawd yuav tau muab kev qhuas los yog kev txhawb siab rau peb tej tub ntxhais Hmoob uas muaj peev xwm kom lawv thiaj li muaj zog ntws rau yam lawv ua kom npaj txhij rau txoj kev sib tw nrog rau neeg ntiajteb lawm yav pem suab.

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Qhov kev sib koom tes ua ke no vim sawv daws nyias phoom nyias los tau tshaj li 20 xyoo no los sawv daws yeej tsis txog twg thiab yam li txoj hau kev tsuas yog nqaim zuj zus thiab tawm tsis tau rau sab nraud. Txij li ntawd los sawv daws thiaj li tsim kom muaj lub koom haum Hmong International Filmmakers Organization "HIFO" thiab xaiv tsa ib cov neeg khiav dej num los tuav hauj lwm sawv cev lub koom haum.

Dhau li ntawd los lub koom haum thiaj li muaj kev tsim tsa ntau lub koob tsheej txhawb siab thiab qhia txog lub hom phiaj rau tsoom Hmoob sawv daws kom los paub txog thiab qhia txog txoj kev sib txhawb. Txij ntawd los kuj npaj muaj 3 lub koob tsheej nyob rau xeev Minnesota thiab ib lub nyob rau nroog Fresno hauv xeev California.

Cov koob tseej tseemceeb nyob rau sab Minnesota xws li lub "Hmong International Film Festival" uas yog thawj lub tsim muaj thawj zaug rau tsoom Hmoob sawvdaws los ntawm kev sib pab ntawm HIFO nrog rau Director Lee Pao Xiong ntawm lub Center for Hmong Studies hauv tsev kawm ntawv qib siab Concordia University- St. Paul thiab yog ib lub uas tseem yuav muaj ua ntu zuj zus lawm yav tom ntej ntxiv.

Nyob rau lub koob tsheej hais los ntawd, lub koomhaum kuj caw tau ntau tus neeg tseem ceeb xws li Dr. Jerry Yang, Hmoob ib tug tub nplua nuj nrog rau coob tus sab nraud uas yog cov kwv tij Hmoob nyob rau sab Tuam Choj, China" thiab Nyablajteb, "Vietnam" uas rub lawv tuaj koom ua ke sib tham ntau yam txog kev lag luam thiab koom txuj uake.

Txij thaum muaj cov tub ntxhais sau xov xwm Hmoob, muaj I am Hmong TV thiab xov tooj cua Hmoob ntau lub tuaj koom thiab sib cog sau xov xwm tawm txog lub koom haum. Txij ntawd los kuj ua rau peb Hmoob thoob qab ntuj pom txog lub zeem muag ntawm lub koom haum HIFO thiab kuj tau txais lus txhawb zog ntau heev los ntawm peb hmoob tej neeg txawj ntse thiab lwm haiv neeg.

Lub koom haum kuj tsim muaj 2 lub website uas yog: www.hmonghifo.org thiab txuas rau lub: www.hifonetwork.com los ua kev txuas lus thiab teeb lub hom phiaj rau tsoom Hmoob thiab lwm haiv neeg sawv daws tuaj koom ua ke thiab sib txhawb sib pab. Tom qab ntawd kuj ua rau ntau lub tuam txhab thiab Hmoob tej tub ntxhais kuj los pom txog lub homphiaj thiab los koom tes nrog rau txoj kev sib txhawb mus tau zoo heev.

Kwv tij Hmoob sawv daws nyob rau lub sij hawm no peb sawv daws twb tso txoj kev saib lwm haiv neeg tej yeeb yaj duab thiab mloog lwm haiv neeg tej nkauj lawm ntau heev. Peb Hmoob twb muaj peev xwm tawm tau Hmoob TV 24 teev los yog Hmoob cov xov tooj cua nrov 24 teev ntau lub. Tej txiaj ntsim ntawm no kuj puav leej yog los ntawm tsoom tub txawg Hmoob txoj kev npaj kom yus muaj yus teej yus tug .

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- **Are you shopping for that dream home?**
  (Koj puas yog tseem tab tom nrhiav lub tsev npau suav los ntev lawm?)
- **Are you a first time home buyer?**
  (Koj puas yog yuav tsev thawj zaug?)
- **Are you behind on your mortgage due to hardships and don't know how to get out of it?**
  (Puas yog koj them tsis taus koj lub nqi tsev vim muaj kev txom nyem es tsis paub youv ua li cas?)
- **Are you selling your home, rental, commercial and need a professional guidance?**
  (Puas yog koj tab tom yuav muag koj lub tsev, teb, taj laj, es xav tau ib tug neeg muag vaj muag tsev los pab?)
- **Are you looking for a professional to build your dream home, apartments, community center, shopping center, churches?**
  (Puas yog koj tab tom xav txua ib lub tsev ntawm ko tus npau suav, ib cov tsev apartments, ib lub kiab khw, ib lub tsev kwv tij neej tsa tau siv, los yog ib lub church?)

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  (Cia cov tub/ntxhais muag tsev tom Pegasus Reality pab koj vim tej zaum koj tsis tau khoom. Peb twb ua cov hauj lwm no los dhau 10 tawm xyoo lawm. Hais txog vaj tsev nyob, liaj teb, apartments peb ua tau thoob plaws teb chaws Ameeskas. Peb yuav ua sib zog tshaj qhov peb ua tau. Peb cov hoob kas muaj nyob rau San Francisco & Fresno.

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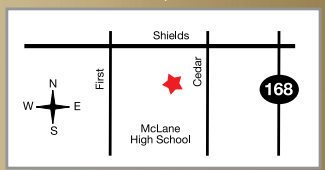
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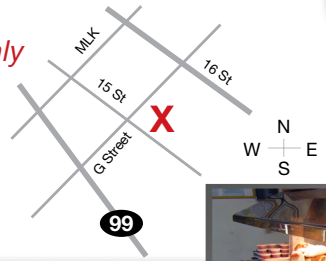
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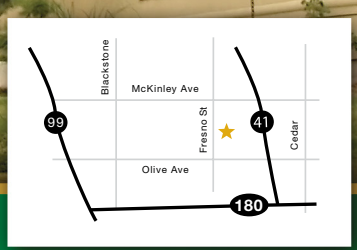


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