

Building Bridges: Teaching about the Hmong in our Communities (Abridged Version)

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Hmong Population Around the World

- Asia

China – 4,500,000 (estimate)

Vietnam – 558,000

Laos – 316,000

Thailand – 124,000

Burma – 2,656

- Western Countries

United States – 260,000

France – 15,000

Australia – 1,860

Canada – 640

French Guyana – 1,800

Argentina – 250

New Zealand - 150

Germany - 70

In China, Hmong are classified in the broader “Miao” Group. The “Miao” group includes Hmong, Kho Xiong, Hmu and A Hmao.



Estimates from U.S. Census, 2010 and Dr. Nicholas Tapp and Dr. Gary Yia Lee,
<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~yeulee/Topical/12point%20statement.html>

Timeline of Recent Hmong History

- 1790-1860 A.D.: Many Hmong migrate out of China to Laos, Northern Vietnam, and Thailand
- 1963-1975: The Vietnam War and the U.S. Secret Army in Laos
- 1975: Hmong Refugees Move to Thailand
- 1976 to Present Time: Hmong refugees move to the U.S., France, Australia, French Guyana, and Canada
- December 2003: U.S. State Department agrees to accept applications for resettlement from 15,000 Laotian Hmong refugees living in Wat Thamkrabok, Thailand
- 2004-2006: More than 15,000 Hmong refugees from Wat Tham Krabok arrive in Minnesota, California, Wisconsin and other states

The photo shows a Black Hmong boy in Vietnam. Hmong began moving to Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries at the end of the 18th century. The photo is from the Tribal Textiles website: http://www.tribaltextiles.info/Assets/images/Vietnam/Black_Hmong/9510I37T.JPG



Hmong Role in the CIA's Secret War in Laos 1963-1975

- Long Cheng – an airbase in Laos – was the focal point of the Hmong and U.S. effort to defeat the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese in Laos
- The late William Colby, Director of the CIA during the Reagan administration, credited the Hmong with saving the lives of thousands of U.S. soldiers as they blocked the North Vietnamese from their efforts to extend the Ho Chi Minh Trail into Laos for several years
- The full extent of the Hmong role assisting the U.S. in the Vietnam War era was not officially acknowledged by the CIA and U.S. officials until the early 1980s

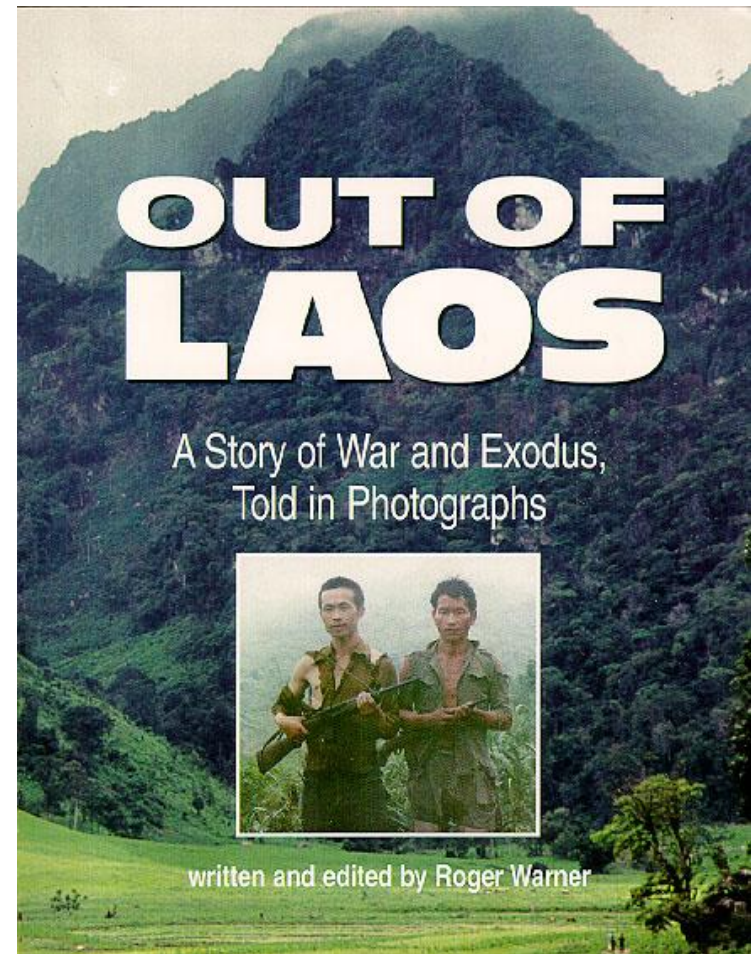


This 1998 photo shows the long-abandoned Long Cheng airstrip in Laos from the air. From Adventures in Laos Website:
<http://homepage.mac.com/peterlaos/Laos1998/Gallery15.html>

Hmong Role in the CIA's Secret War in Laos 1963-1975

- Estimates are that 30,000-40,000 Hmong died during the duration of the Vietnam War in Laos
- In June 1974, the last Air America plane and last U.S. military personnel left Laos. Over 40,000 North Vietnamese troops remained in Laos at this time to assist the Communist Pathet Lao
- In May 1975, the Hmong General Vang Pao was evacuated by air to Thailand, thousands of Hmong were left behind. Later In 1975 the Pathet Lao publicly announced their plans to “wipe out” the Hmong

The photo shows the cover of Roger Warner's 1996 book about the Hmong refugee exodus from Laos, Out of Laos

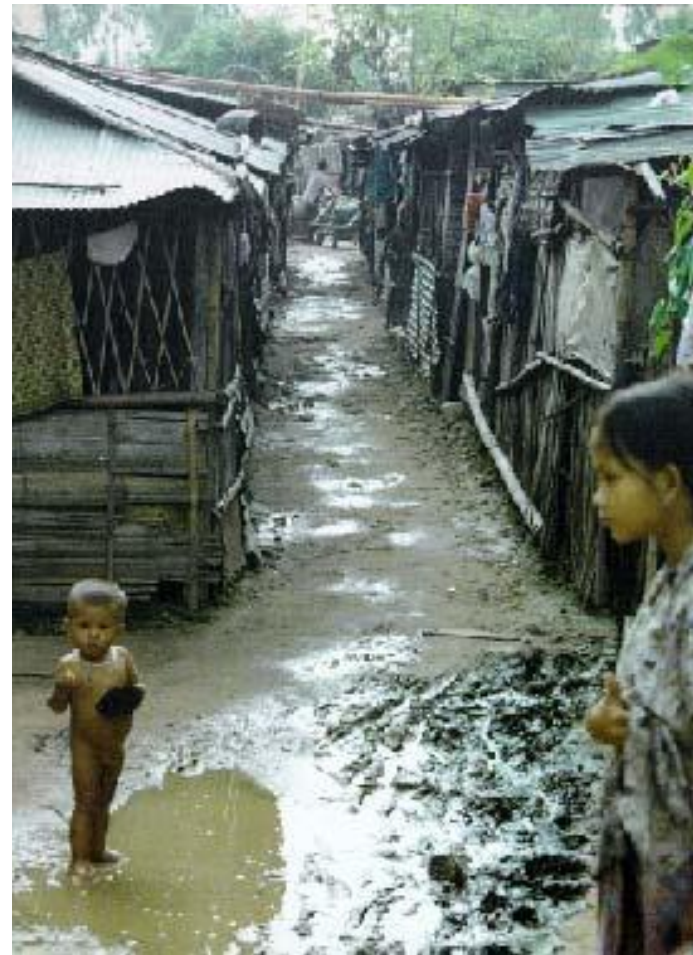


The Hmong Refugee Experience/Movement to the U.S. 1975-Early 1990s

- The number of Hmong refugees admitted into U.S. from the Thailand refugee camps exceeded 10,000 in 1979 and reached a peak of about 27,000 in 1980 before decreasing to under 5,000 in 1981 and even less per year through mid-1980s
- The number of Hmong refugees annually admitted to the U.S. began increasing again in 1987 and exceeded 10,000 in 1988. The number exceeded 5,000 each year between 1989 and 1994 with the exception of 1990
- The 1990 U.S. census found about 94,000 Hmong residing in the U.S.

Photo: Chiang Kham was another primarily Hmong refugee camp in Thailand. It closed in 1993, a year after Ban Vinai. The photo is from the Southeast Asian Refugee Archive at California State University, Irvine

<http://www.lib.uci.edu/libraries/collections/sea/seaexhibit/refugeecam.html>



Hmong Population in the U.S. (2010 Census)

- 260,076 Hmong Americans counted in the 2010 Census
- **Top 10 Hmong Populations by State**
 1. California – 91,224
 2. Minnesota – 66,181
 3. Wisconsin – 49,240
 4. North Carolina - 10,864
 5. Michigan – 5,924
 6. Colorado – 3,859
 7. Georgia – 3,623
 8. Alaska - 3,534
 9. Oklahoma - 3,369
 10. Oregon – 2,920

Hmong Population in the U.S.

2010 U.S. Census

- **Top 10 Hmong Metropolitan Areas in the U.S.**
 1. Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN – 64,422
 2. Fresno, CA – 31,771
 3. Sacramento-Yolo, CA – 26,996
 4. Milwaukee-Racine, WI – 11,904
 5. Merced, CA – 7,254
 6. Stockton-Lodi, CA – 6,968
 7. Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir, NC - 5,951
 8. Wausau, WI – 5,927
 9. Chico, CA – 4,354
 10. Madison, WI - 4,230

The photo shows a Hmong business on the East Side of Saint Paul, MN. With more than 29,000 Hmong residents, Saint Paul has the largest Hmong population of any city in the U.S.



Hmong in Minnesota

Minnesota Hmong Populations by Community (2010 U.S. Census)

1. St. Paul – 29,662
 2. Minneapolis – 7,512
 3. Brooklyn Park – 5,151
 4. Brooklyn Center – 3,170
 5. Maplewood – 2,152
 6. Oakdale – 1,524
 7. Woodbury – 1,103
 8. Blaine – 950
 9. Cottage Grove – 890
 10. Coon Rapids – 765
- In addition to Rochester, and Winona, there are also outstate Hmong populations in Tracy/Marshall/Walnut Grove in Southwestern MN and in Duluth, Saint Cloud and Taylor's Falls

The picture shows Hmong Jao Fa Grocery on White Bear Avenue on Saint Paul's East Side



Hmong Demographics in the U.S. 2010 American Community Survey

- Median Age of the Hmong Population in the U.S.: 20.4 Years compared to 37.0 years among the entire population of the United States
- % of the Hmong Population in the U.S. under 18 Years Old: 43.2% compared to 24.2% of the entire U.S. Population
- Average Hmong Household Size per occupied Housing Unit: 5.36 persons compared to 2.61 persons among the entire U.S. Population

The photo is from the 2002 Hmong New Year in Green Bay, WI. It was published by the Hmong Times Newspaper, September 15, 2002.



Hmong Clans

The 18 Hmong Clans

1. Chang/Cha (Tsaab)
2. Chue (Tswb)
3. Cheng (Tsheelj)
4. Fang (Faj)
5. Her (Hawj)
6. Hang (Taag/Haam)
7. Khang (Khaab)
8. Kong (Koo)
9. Lee/Ly (Lis)
10. Kue (Kwm)
11. Lor (Lauj)
12. Moua (Muas/Zag)
13. Pha (Phab)
14. Thao (Thoj)
15. Vang (Vaaj/Vaj)
16. Vue (Vwj)
17. Xiong (Xyooj)
18. Yang (Yaaj)

Hmong Religion

- About 2/3 of Hmong in the U.S. continue to practice the traditional Animist Hmong Religion and Shamanism
- About 1/3 of the Hmong population in the U.S. are Christians. Hmong Christians belong to many denominations, but the largest number are members of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church

The photo shows a 12-year old Hmong-American Shaman. The photo is from The Split Horn film documentary website:

www.pbs.org/splithorn/shamanism.html



The Hmong Language

- In the Modern Era, a Hmong writing system wasn't developed until the 1950s
- The Romanized Hmong writing system was developed by missionaries from the Christian Missionary Alliance Church who were working with Hmong Communities in Southeast Asia
- The Hmong language differs from English in that most words only have one syllable
- Even though a Romanized system is used, the sound system that goes along with the Hmong alphabet is very different from English

The Hmong Language

- There are 8 tones in the Hmong language. The tones completely change the meaning of words that may sound very much alike to non-Hmong
- The Hmong language uses tonal markers, which are the last letter at the end of each word. The markers are not pronounced but indicate the tone
- The Hmong language uses the following tonal markers which are underlined in this example of the hypothetical combination between Da + the tone.

1. Dam (low tone)
2. Das (low tone)
3. Dad (low tone)
4. Dag (breathy tone)
5. Da (no tone)
6. Dal (high long tone)
7. Day (high medium tone)
8. Dab (high short tone)

- In Hmong, **Nyob Zoo** = Hello. Pronounced Nah Zhong
- In Hmong, **Sib Ntsib Dua** = Goodbye. Pronounced She Gee Duo

Cultural Etiquette for Interacting with Traditional Hmong

Greetings and Communication

- The handshake may be a new concept to the traditional Hmong person, this is especially the case among women. Traditional Hmong usually do not shake hands with women. Many Hmong women feel embarrassed shaking the hands of a male. Traditionally, handshakes do not occur. Persons greet one another verbally. Holding hands too tightly during a handshake will embarrass Hmong women
- Most traditional Hmong families do not enjoy hearing direct comments about their children, especially infants and babies. A comment such as "your child is cute" is not looked upon favorably. Many Hmong believe that if a bad spirit hears such comments, it might come and take the child's soul away
- When talking to a Hmong person, he or she may not look directly at you or give eye contact. The person you are speaking to may look down or away from you. Traditionally looking directly into the face of a Hmong person or making direct eye contact is considered to be rude and inappropriate

Useful Resource Websites

- Hmong Cultural Center Library
www.hmonglibrary.org
- Hmong Studies Journal
www.hmongstudies.org
- Learn about Hmong Page
www.hmongcc.org
- WWW Hmong Homepage
www.hmongnet.org

Schedule a Building Bridges Presentation

- This is the abridged version of Hmong Cultural Center's Hmong 101 Presentation, the curriculum we use for our scheduled presentations is far more comprehensive and nearly triple the size of this powerpoint
- Contact Hmong Cultural Center to schedule a Building Bridges Presentation for a fee with extensive additional information related to Hmong history, cultural etiquette, Hmong marriages and funerals, Hmong clans, the Hmong language, Hmong religion, and Hmong beliefs related to health and medicine
- The content of scheduled presentations can also be tailored to the interests of groups
- Contact Hmong Cultural Center at 651-917-9937 or txong@hmongcc.org for additional information about scheduling a presentation.

Produced by Hmong Cultural Center

Contact Hmong Cultural Center to schedule a Building Bridges Presentation for your group!

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