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Refugee Update

February, 1987 Volume 7 Number 57

Jacques Lemoine's

Mien and their history

(Yao Ceremonial Paintings, 1982)

The Mien people are linked to ancient Chinese history, although a direct trail is difficult to follow, as several names have been used throughout history, and because Chinese scholars sometimes confused the many minority groups living in the far provinces of China. The Mien are most often called Yao, but other names include Mo Yao, Man, Nan Man, Shan Tse, or P'an Hu Chung. (M. Lemoine refers to the larger ethnic



group as Yao, with one of the dialect groups called Mien.-ed.)

The ancient story of

P'an Hu takes place in about 2400 BC, when Emperor Kao-hsin promised to give one of his

daughters in marriage to anyone who could rid him of General Wu, the chief of the marauding Chüan Jung tribe. A five colored dog named P'an Hu, a court pet, succeeded, and brought back General Wu's head to the Emperor. The dog and the princess married and their twelve children (6 boys and 6 girls, who intermarried) were the forefathers of the Mien clans.

The dog may have been a metaphor for a servant, or possibly a member of General Wu's own tribe, the Chüan Jung ('chüan' can mean 'dog'). Various authors have interpreted the myth as accounting for

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FY 88 Budget request submitted

The quota for refugee admissions from SE Asia is decreased by a further 5,000, continuing a downward trend (confirming a move to processing SE Asians as immigrants). The State Department request is \$33 million less, based on the lower numbers. The Office of Refugee Resettlement request is \$87 million less, based on a change in the federal reimbursement

to states and the lower numbers of refugees. ORR will reduce refugee assistance program from 31 to 24 months for AFDC and Medicaid. The refugees not eligible for AFDC will receive refugee assistance for only 12 months, instead of 18. An ORR press release notes that these reductions "should provide states with stronger incentives" to assist refugees in

becoming self-sufficient as soon as possible. The social services will be reduced from \$69 million to \$45 million. The funding authorization for targeted assistance was deleted in the refugee reauthorization act passed in October 1986. The budget authority for education assistance (TPRC) was transferred to the Dept of Education.

The Dept of Education

called for a rescission (call back of appropriated funds) of \$47 million for FY 87 for refugee and immigrant education, saying that the funds duplicate services under Title VII.

(from Refugee Reports, January 23, 1987)

School year 87-88 TPRC funding is \$17 million nationwide. The census date has not yet been set.

New Books:

CAMBODIAN WITNESS: The Autobiography of Someth
May. Random House, 1986, \$17.95.

WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER: THE VOICES OF CAMBODIA'S REVOLUTION AND ITS PEOPLE. Elizabeth Becker, Simon and Schuster, 1986, \$18.95.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION: A SOURCE-BOOK Garland Publishing Co., 340 pp, \$50, 136 Madison Ave, NY 10016. 212-686-7492.

More Mac Software

Mac Be Lingual v. 3.2
Ecological Linguistics,
PO Box 15156,
Washington DC 20003
Cambodian, Lao, Thai

Mien Naming System

(excerpted from "The Yao Naming System", Tan Chee Beng, in Walker, *Farmers in the Hills*, 1981.)

Mien society is organized along patrilineal clans (*fing*), subclans, and lineages. The clan name is taken as a surname in the United States, usually prefixed with "Sae" which is a convention among the Thai.

Listed below are the clans and subclans discovered by Tan Chee Beng in two Thai Mien villages in Lampang and Chiang Rai provinces.

<i>Pieun:</i>	the first Mien clan, as the mythical dog ancestor was called Pieun Hu. Subclans: Ben Min Pieun and Ben Dieu Pieun
<i>Pum:</i>	Subclans: Lo Pum Si, Lo Pum Tuen, and Lo Pum Peh
<i>Yieun:</i>	Subclans: Tum Leu Yieun and Yieun Tueun
<i>Le:</i>	Subclans: Le Fong, Le Hei, Le Nyud (sun), Le Meng (green), Le Yi (fish), Le Teum Bawn (<i>teum bawn</i> means things gathered together).
<i>Chiu:</i>	Subclans: Tum Leu Chiu, Leu Chiu Tong, Paw Long Chiu, Chib Ngeh Ta Chiu, Chub Lai Chiu.
<i>Tang:</i>	Subclans: Tang Sui, Tang Kang, Tang Tong, Chi Nyeh Kiang Tang

Liu, Law, Tau, Chan, Zu Lai (knife), Chin, Ho, Tong

Important groups for decision making are the patrilineage (*tong cha chian*), the closest category of kin. A person's relatives by marriage (*ngueh cha chian*) and a sister's husband's people (*che mu chian*) are also important.

Naming males

The male's childhood name is based more or less on birth order, and may be used by close relatives after he receives his adult name.

First: *Lao Kau (Leu Kau)*;
Second: *Teu Nai (Lao Lo)*;
Third: *Lao San*;
Fourth: *Lao Su*;
Fifth: *Lao Wu*;
Sixth: *Lao Lu*;
Seventh: *Lao Chih*;
Eighth: *Lao Pa*;
Ninth: *Lao Chiu*;
Tenth: *Ong Chib (Ku Chib)*.

Nicknames may be given, indicating circumstances of birth, parents' wish for his future, parents' affection for the child, special significance, description designed to fool the gods.

A Mien boy also has a "small name", the last character of the father's adult name. For example: *Pieun San Meng* is a boy of the *Pieun* clan, who is a third son of a man whose name ends with the character *Meng*.

A Mien adult has a "big name". This name is given after a boy enters school, and may be given by his teacher. Since there is

Legal emigration from Vietnam

Orderly Departure

ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM: THE NEED FOR REASSESSMENT Migration and Refugee Services, US Catholic Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington DC 20005. 202-659-6618.

* ODP was suspended in January 1986 until the US had taken care of the backlog of 22,000 cases. The US has accepted

about 11,000 during 1986, and rejected 2,000; the backlog is down to 9,000. The current rate of departure is 250 per week.

* There are about 40,000 people with exit permits who wish to come to the US, but who have not yet been accepted.
* Those that the US consider high priority are not necessarily the ones granted exit permits by the Vietnamese government (reeducation camp

prisoners, Amerasian children and their families, former US government employees, and persons with approved immigration visa applications.

* A State Dept official told Refugee Reports that "the basic track for family reunification will be the immigrant route."

* There are 700,000 applications in the ODP office in Bangkok.

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usually no school, it is the father who gives the boy his big name at about age six. As an example: *Pieun Wun Fing* is a man of the *Pieun* clan, whose adult name is *Wun Fing*; *Fing* will be taken by his children as part of their small names.

A Mien male over twelve years old also has a spirit name. The clan name stays the same, but the second character is either *fa* or *long*, indicating spiritual rank, and the final character is a given spirit name. This name is used when communicating with the spirits on the man's behalf, or by his descendants when making offerings to his spirit after his death.

Female names

Just as *Lao* indicates a male name, *Mui* indicates a female. A girl is also given a childhood name, based on birth order.

First: *Te Ye*;
Second: *Te Ngh*;
Third: *Te Fam*;
Fourth: *Te Fey*;
Fifth: *Te Hm*;
Sixth: *Te Lua*;
Seventh: *Te Cheh*;
Eighth: *Te Pei*;
Ninth: *Te Chua*;
Tenth: *Te Chib*.

Later, she is given an adult name, which she keeps for her lifetime. It consists of four characters. The first is the clan name, the second is *Mui*, the third indicates her birth order, and the fourth is the last character of the father's adult name. Thus: *Pieun Mui Man Siu* is a girl of the *Pieun* clan, is the fifth born daughter, and the last character of her father's name is *Siu*. There is another numerical system for choosing the girl's adult name:

First: *Mui Muang* (*Mui Me*);
Second: *Mui Nai*;
Third: *Mui Fam*;
Fourth: *Mui Fey*;
Fifth: *Mui Man*;
Sixth: *Mui Liu*;
Seventh: *Mui Chei*;
Eighth: *Mui Pei*;

Ninth: *Mui Chua*;

Tenth: *Mui Chib*.

The elaborate system of naming, particularly for the males, indicates the importance of following a lineage through the father's line.

Mien clan names in the U.S.

The spelling of the Mien names differs from author to author, as there is not yet a widely accepted and known Roman alphabet for Mien. For Mien refugees processing through Thailand and UN camps to the United States, the Thai prefix "sae" is added to the clan name. (In parentheses is the corresponding name from Lemoine's article.)

Saechao
Saechin (Tsan)
Saechou (Tsiou)
Saefong
Saelo
Saeliew (Liou)
Saelee (Lei)
Saephon (Pien)
Saeteurn (Tang)
Saeto
Saewang
Saeyang (Yang)

Editor's note: There are differences between regions of Laos, clans, sub-clans; any one version has its corresponding version in another locale. The two articles summarized in this issue are what non-Mien have researched and written. The purpose is to encourage local Mien to explain to us non-Mien the way in which their groups are the same or different from the Thai Mien described Lemoine's article and Tan's article.

Future issues will contain more information, from local sources.

Mien Resources

Books:

Butler-Diaz, Jacqueline. YAO DESIGN OF N. THAILAND. Siam Society.

Campbell, Margaret. FROM THE HANDS OF THE HILLS. Bangkok: Uberoi; Hong Kong: Media Transasia, 1981.

Hamilton Merritt, Jane. *Hmong and Yao: Mountain Peoples of Southeast Asia*. SURVIVE 1982.

Knoll, Patricia. BECOMING AMERICANS, Coast to Coast Books, 1982. \$14.

Lemoine, Jacques. YAO CEREMONIAL PAINTINGS. White Lotus Ltd, 1984. \$85.

Lewis, Paul and Elaine. HILLTRIBES OF THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE. Thames & Hudson, 1984, \$29.95.

McKinnon and Bhruksasri, HIGH-LANDERS OF THAILAND. Oxford Univ Press, 1986.

Walker, Anthony. FARMERS OF THE HILLS: UPLAND PEOPLES OF NORTHERN THAILAND. Ohio St Univ, Dept of Anthro, 217B Lord Hall, 124 W. 17th Ave, Columbus, OH 43210. \$12

People:

Dr. Eric Crystal, Coordinator, Ctr for South and SE Asia Studies, 260 Stephens Hall, UC Berkeley, 94720. 415-642-3608.

Thai: total immersion

By Judy Lewis

It didn't take a proposition to determine an official language in Thailand; Thai is the language of the ethnic group who hold the reins of power and makes the decisions. Commerce determines other languages, and several scripts are co-mingled, with a pleasing result. On any given sign, messages are announced in Thai, English, Chinese, and Arabic.

The names of the streets are usually posted in both Thai and English, at least in Bangkok. I can now understand why Lue Vang will give directions to our office by saying, "...take the exit that begins z-i-n- (Zinfandel Drive)". If I was given directions in Bangkok, I had great difficulty remembering the unfamiliar sounds of the names, much less being able to decipher an initial consonant in the wiggly script. Luckily, I didn't have to watch for street signs to know where to go; the taxi-driver got paid for that. I shudder at the thought of trying to read a bus schedule.

English is taught in the schools, and often in the small towns children would walk or ride past me, saying clearly, "good afternoon, what's your name?" When I replied, they chortled with the magic of understood foreign syllables, and ran off, calling, "thank you, bye bye." I hope they told their language teachers that it works. Even toddlers are encouraged to join in; I was walking up and down residential streets in Chiang Khan, a small town on the Mekong River, and I heard a parent repeating to his small child, "...*tham a-lai...tham a-lai...*" (what are you doing?) and pointing at me, "...*hel-lo kop...*" Fortunately for his father, the tiny child called out "*hel-lo...what are you doing?*"

I knew no Thai when I arrived in Thailand, and because of my interest in second language acquisition, I jotted down the words that emerged from the cacophony around me. In three weeks, total immersion gave me about thirty to fifty words, all orally, since the alphabet is so unlike English. (See the side bar.) To be truthful, it was total immersion with the anxiety element removed... I depended on Lue and Say for the expressive element, I just listened.

I never did figure out the system for pronouns, for *I, you, he, she, they, we*; I dropped personal references and just pointed. The feature of the language, the inherent respect and recognition of status, lies with the *ka* and *kop* that ends almost every utterance. What makes it difficult to understand, until you hear it used in context, is that a woman says *ka*, unless she's a radio announcer, then she says *kop*, like a man. Men always say *kop*, and *sa bai di kop* (good health, sir) becomes shortened to *di kop* (good, sir). The Thai women speak with a slight breathy effect, and I noticed that when a young Hmong woman switched to Thai, she adopted the characteristics of Thai femininity along with the speech. It's a beautiful language, with trilled r's, and romanized r's that sometimes are pronounced as l's (*a-rai, a-lai*).

The *song-teos* (bus-taxis in the north) and buses have ticket

A basic vocabulary?

a-lai	what?
di mahk	very good
dai	can do, yes
chai	true, yes
mai dai	no can do
mai chai	not true
ka	feminine
	for "sir, ma'm"
kop	masculine for "sir, ma'm"
ra ka	price
ra kahn	love (in almost every song on the radio)
bou le sap	company
to le sap	telephone
krong thep	Bangkok
layo	already
ni	here
a ni	this
a nan	that
ti ni	here
ti nan	there
bai	go
bai nai	go where
wan ni	today
phu dai	who
kuhn	Mr/Ms
nit noy	little bit
noy	little
dek noy	child
pa sa thai	Thai language
tham	do
du	see
put	speak
ma	come
ao	give
sa bai di	hello, how are you
kohp kuhn	thank you
Me Li Kan	American
fa lang	foreigner
baht	currency
mi	have
mai mi	don't have
lw va	or
a thi bai	explain
a thit	week
na thi	minute
rung	one
song	two
sam	three
si	four
ha	five

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takers who hang on the back, and yell out "bai bai" when all the passengers are in place. I thought he was shouting "bye bye", but the intonation was all wrong, and besides he was yelling too loud, and even when people just got on, none got off. Finally I figured out he was yelling "go go" to the driver.

I tuned in to the use of English. The English transformations on signs sometimes took diligence to figure out. Laundromats are *washy-mashy* (washing machine); *VDO* is video. Television has broadcasts in English, as well as public English instruction (I watched a show on reading a dictionary entry). The *Bangkok Post* and the *Nation* are English language dailies, and *Asiaweek* is a weekly magazine. I could listen to the solid gold countdown every day, and American songs were intermingled with Thai songs. In the small towns, radio speakers mounted at strategic locations blared out the news from 6:30 to 7:00 am every day, in Thai. Lue told me they exhorted the Thai citizenry to take good care of the tourists, to be friendly, not to let anyone steal their wallets, not to exploit their naivete, to be alert for tourists trying to cross the road.

There was a strong nonverbal element to the use of Thai, that I can't quite analyze, on a random sample of one. There were taxi drivers in Bangkok, with whom Lue always talked in Thai (limited, and noticeably northern--Lao Issan--in flavor, according to him). I watched and listened, not really knowing the substance, but found out that somehow some of the drivers responded to him in such a way that he behaved differently. After a while he began to avoid taxi trips, or wait until Say, who knew both the verbal and nonverbal local dialect, was available to help us negotiate. There were other drivers with whom it was obvious he was joking, asking questions, answering questions. The Southern Thai is evidently quite different from the Northern Thai, both in accent and vocabulary, and some of those who speak Southern Thai must look down on those who speak the northern version.

The social interchange of bargaining seems to involve much more than simply arriving at an agreeable price. I watched with interest long laughing rounds of bargaining with a vivacious young (female) tailor, verbal jousting and measuring the worth of the adversary. In a society where social interaction between the sexes follows strict rules, bargaining appears to take on aspects of cocktail party flirting. Department stores are becoming popular in some parts of Bangkok, but I doubt that the custom of bargaining will fall into complete disfavor.

My experiences with a Hmong woman in Chiang Mai, whose language I knew slightly better than Thai when I arrived, underlined the importance of the human element in learning a language. In her shop, where she and her husband sell needlework, she spoke a few words of English to me, and I tried a few words of Hmong with her. She quickly adjusted her Hmong to better fit my levels of inexperience, repeating key words and key phrases, trying several different ways of expressing a thought until I grasped her intent. She guessed at what I was trying to say, and responded in such a way that I was exhilarated with communicating. She corrected me gently, by repeating part of an utterance correctly. She was patient, waiting out my groping for vocabulary without letting her attention wander. She jumped into interesting topics, and talked on and on, knowing I was getting only a fraction, but using gestures and rephrasing until I could at least know the topic. She wanted me to

hoke	six
chet	seven
bet	eight
kao	nine
sip	ten
si sip	forty
ha sip	fifty
song loy	two hundred
ha loy	five hundred
cafe	coffee
oh li yen	black iced coffee
nam	water
a hahn	food
kwi teo	noodles in soup
paht thai	fried noodles
mu	pork
hong kahn	office
hong hien	school
pa thet	country
kin	eat
kin kao	eat (rice)
Pep-si!	Pepsi, different tone
tak-si	taxi
lok fai	car, sometimes train
lok bus	bus
lok toua	tour bus

try, and gave me enough success to keep on trying. This is what I have seen happening at schools, between classroom aides and students, and in the community, when a volunteer gives an hour or two a week to a newcomer.

I compare this approach to that of a teacher, correcting tones and grammar at the expense of understanding. The pressure of being right overwhelms the drive to try. There is certainly a need for both approaches: instruction, drill and practice, correction and attention to detail, preferably using the native language to teach the second language; and having a warm outgoing patient person with whom one wants to communicate, along with continual auditory exposure to native speakers doing what comes naturally.

It occurs to me that the artificial division and battling between adherents of bilingual instruction, total immersion, and English as a second language causes polarization, wasted efforts, and skewed public awareness. A second language learner needs all approaches, more or less of one depending on age, temperament, and literacy.



(from page 1)

the origin of all the Chinese clans, or of the various minority groups. By any account, the Mien taboo on the eating of dog is attributed to this myth, as is the wearing of a full bridal veil. The myth has been used to explain the close relationship of the Mien to the Chinese, as one of the founding parents was a Chinese princess.

When the French first encountered the Mien in Tonkin and northern Laos at the beginning of this century, they were given the Mien's own account, written in Chinese. It was called the Yao (or Man) Charter, and the Mien call the document *Kia sen pong*; its full title, in Mandarin, reads: "P'ing-huang ch'uan-tieh kuo-shan fang-shen yong-yuan", or "King Ping's Charter: permanent safe-conduct for crossing the mountains." It is essentially the same tale as above (the Chinese version), with these exceptions: it took place in the Ch'u Kingdom (about 520 BC), and the Emperor was King P'ing, not Kao-hsin; the enemy was

King Kao, not General Wu; the children each took a mate from outside, rather than intermarrying.

There was an imperial edict from King P'ing which makes P'an Hu a king (P'an Wang, or *Pien hung* in modern Mien), exempts his descendants from taxes, and allows them permanent freedom to cultivate by "sword and fire" (slash-and-burn) all the mountains of the Empire. The name Yao came about during this time, as Mo yao, meaning "not subject to compulsory service".

During the Sung dynasties, 300 years, there were at least 38 Mien uprisings, probably linked to the exemption from taxation and compulsory service. Chinese families may have put their lands in Mien hands to avoid taxes.

The emergence of the Mien as a distinct ethnic group is obscure. The Yao are today found widely distributed over South China, speaking a variety of local dialects (*mien, mun, pu nu, iu ngien, lak kja*). The Yao of Laos and Thailand are most closely related to the *mien* group, the most numerous.

Their oral history and folk songs tell of terrible time of drought and starvation, when the people took to boats (from Nan-king?), traveling across the seas eventually landing in Kwangtung province (Shao-chow region). Three years after finding safety they held a thanksgiving ceremony, which bears on the names of the clans today. For example, the twelve clans were subdivided according to where they stood during the original ceremony. The *Tsiou* clan has a subclan called *Beng Min Tsiou*, and another called *Beng Dia Tsiou*, the former being those who stood on top of the cliff, and the latter those who stood at the bottom of the cliff. Likewise, the *Tang* clan divides between the *Tang K'ang* (for the rack the used to offer pigs at the ceremony), and *Tang Swi* (for the citrus they offered).

The purpose of this division may have allowed the marriage of *Tang* to *Tang*, *Tsiou* to *Tsiou*, in a time when potential mates were too few; they could then observe the Chinese rule that one could not marry another of the same clan. Today, exogamy is no longer practiced, as long as the couple has no common ancestor for at least three generations.

Mien in Thailand (& Laos)

The Mien in Thailand subsist on slash and burn agriculture, performing it competently, allowing the fallow period to last long enough for the forest to regenerate. They produce rice for their own consumption, and maize for feeding the pigs and poultry. Opium was introduced during the British Opium Wars in China, and provides the main source of cash income. Some gather enough cash from the sale of opium, excess rice, and pigs, to move to the lowland towns to become merchants. The majority prefer the isolation and security of the mountains, where

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their culture is not subject to outside pressure.

In their villages they tend to maintain an extended family for as long as possible in the same household, and to place emphasis on remembering lineage lines. They freely adopt children from neighboring tribes, and being free of racial prejudice, they consider cultural identity more important than blood origins.

They are remarkable in their cultural vitality, maintained over a long span of time and a large geographical area, and today face new pressures as refugees to Europe and the United States. Their ceremonial paintings, used in rituals, are an important feature of their cultural continuity.

Mien paintings

Only ten years ago, the elaborate Mien taoist paintings were kept beyond the reach of prying eyes; only a few anthropologists had been allowed to see them during religious ceremonies. Since the takeover by the Pathet Lao in Laos, the Mien have had to part with these treasures, and already 300-400 sets have reached the international art collectors' market, the price rising fifteen hundred per cent in a few years. The paintings exist in sets of 22 or 24, but in the commercial market the sets are broken into individual panels, each sold and dispersed world-wide. Anthropologists will have great difficulty in classifying the individual paintings into sets and recording their histories.

The Mien priests rely on Chinese characters to read the book of ritual texts, and young boys were traditionally taught the brush strokes either by their fathers or by Chinese tutors. The characters are pronounced with Mien words. The priest at various times writes petitions to the gods on paper which is later ceremoniously burned.

The holy paintings are preferably on thin "Canton" paper, which are kept rolled up in a closed basket near the family altar until they are unrolled for a ceremony. There is tremendous variation in the quality of materials and the talent of the painter, who may have been either Chinese or Mien. The pictures are painted with specially prepared pigments and a kind of glue made from the boiled hide of an ox, painted in specially prepared places, with rules about who can enter the house during the month or two it takes to complete a set of paintings; the paintings must be specially prepared, so the gods will enter them.

Mien names

The Mien names are constructed differently for men, women and children. The man's name (example, *Tang Fu On*) is of three syllables: the first is the clan name (Tang); the second is the generation name (Fu), shared by all the members of the same descent level of the same lineage, and so relatives can recognize relatives merely by exchanging names; the last is the personal name. When a man achieves the rank to perform some rituals, he changes his generation name for "Fa", so that *Tang Fa On* becomes the "faithful On of the Tang Family".

There are twelve Mien clans mentioned in the original Yao charter, but the most frequently encountered in Laos and Thailand are: *Pien, Pung, Tang, Tsiou, Tsan, Yang, Liou, Lei*.¹ The clans are subdivided into subclans, as mentioned above.

¹The spelling used here is neither romanized Chinese nor Mien; it is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet.

David Lubin (454-8434)
Chio tim Saetum
Pacific Elem (454-8342)
Nai Saechao

Where in Sacramento are Mien workers?

There are very few resources for learning more about the background of the Mien. The following people are bilingual English-Mien, or trilingual with Lao or Thai. None are trained ethnographers, but all are working in a capacity that requires cultural interpretation as well as language interpretation.

UCD Medical Center: 453-2321
Seng Chan Saetum
Chip Saelee
Sam Sine Saelee
Pao Saechao
May Few Saephon

Catholic Social Services
Kenny Tungc 452-1445
Peter Chao 452-5211

Lao Family Community 424-0864
Sin Phin Saechao

Indochinese Ass't Ctr
Muang Mai Saechao 421-1036
Lee

Oakdale Elementary 332-0246
Judy Thungc
Nai Saechao
Sylin Saechao
So Seng Saechao

Chest Clinic 732-3255
Kou Chow Keopraseth

Sac Co. Outreach (WIC)
Chio Chiew Saelee 366-2188

Sac Co. Welfare 732-3233
Saeng Saechao

Health for All 466-6012
May Saephon

Johnson Elementary (No. Sac)
San Saelee
Hagginwood School (No. Sac)
Pao Saechao

SCUSD Translation Unit (454-8152)
Saeng Meng Saelee

Questions reveal the distance some refugees must travel...

These are some questions asked by Hmong refugees in Camp Ban Vinai of an American worker in January 1987:

Phanat Nikom is the site of the 6 month ESL and cultural orientation and final physical exam before refugees leave for the US.

JVA is Joint Voluntary Agency, the ones who interview and decide who comes and who stays.

- *What American custom when we die?
- *In America the house just for rent only. True or false?
- *Most American people always hit Hmong people. True or false?
- *American people hate Hmong people. True or false?
- *I heard that the American people always operate on Hmong people when they die. True or false?
- *I heard that most Hmong people who live in America are very rich. True or false?
- *I heard that the American people love Hmong people very much. True or false?
- *I would like to go back to Laos and I would like to go to the USA. Can you help me decide which country is better? If I go back to Laos I am afraid to die. If I go to the USA I don't know English well.
- *I would like to go to America, but I heard that they will separate the family. Example: Now I am married. I think they will say you must go to another house, you may not live with your parents. I don't want to go away from my parents.
- *When Hmong woman is pregnant the American people inject her with bad medicine. True or false?
- *One of my friends in Phanat Nikom wrote to me and said that when they go to interview with the JVA the worker orders them to take off all their clothes. Is that true or false?
- *Why do the JVA officers interview only the soldiers?
- *Today I finish teacher training. If I go to the USA which grade will I study?
- *I heard someone say that the refugees who went to the USA after 1985 have no house, no food, no money. Is that true?
- *When I get to America, how do I find a job?
- *If we live in an apartment in America how much do we pay each month?
- *They say in America is very good. Why do American people still come to work in another country?
- *Do Hmong people in America have the privilege of studying as high as they can?
- *Suppose an old person who doesn't know English goes to the US. How can he get a job?
- *Some people say that if one of the American men likes my wife, and my wife likes him too they can go away from me and get married. Is that true?
- *The USA has many giants. True or false?
- *Why do Chinese people like to move to the US?
- *Some people say that in America the American men can embrace the Hmong's wife. Is that true?
- *If I get to America will it be difficult for me to find a job? Does everyone have a job?

Refugee Update

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