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The Thousand-Year Myth: Construction and Characterization of Hmong {1}

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Abstract

Coined only in the last twenty years, the phrase "Hmong means free" has been thoughtlessly promoted by both Hmong and non-Hmong alike. This phrase, however, simply manifests thousands of years of narrow, one-dimensional characterization of the Hmong. To historical oppressors of Hmong, "free" entails primitive savageness and inability to assimilate, or to enter the fold of what these outsiders defined as civilization. To outsiders, "free" also captures the essence of the warlike Hmong character, the Hmong's inability to compromise on a peaceful, rational level. The author disputes this simple portrayal of Hmong and points to a historical diversity rivaling that of any human group. To various degrees, Hmong have assimilated culturally and politically in both the Chinese and French Indo-Chinese context. In addition, Hmong who have chosen to isolate themselves politically did so in response to unfair practices against them. Throughout, Hmong character and political history is complex. For this reason, the author urges Hmong to be cautious about embracing such a narrow, unfounded definition for the word "Hmong."

[1]

"Hmong," the word which an obscure people use to identify themselves, was not known to the world until two decades ago. Politically marginalized, it took the mountains upon which the Hmong inhabited to echo their name across the hemispheres. This once unknown people has risen to the forefront of international debate as a result of their entanglement in the Vietnam Wars. Occupying a strategic geographical position, the Hmong served as a buffer against Communism in Laos playing an ambiguously controversial role. Hmong involvement in this painful conflict has made them the focus of much debate resulting in Hmong being perhaps one of the more well-known ethnic minority groups of Southeast Asia. Awareness of the Hmong as a people does not, however, mean that the Hmong have advanced significantly. In fact, the construction of the Hmong people is largely based upon speculative myths and traditional stereotypes of politically dominant groups. Consequently, analysis of Hmong history which stretches 4,500 years into the past, {2} goes little beyond regurgitated opinions. Today, the Hmong are as elusive and misrepresented as ever. The Hmong are not blameless in the processes which have contributed to the misunderstanding of themselves.

[2]

Let us begin with the name "Hmong" itself. Virtually all authors who have written about the Hmong since the 1970's acknowledged the Hmong's preference to be known as "Hmong." In addition, almost everyone makes reference to the fact that the names "Miao" and "Meo," used by outsiders to identify the Hmong people, have pejorative connotations. Yet most of

these authors, even those of respectable scholarly background, have refused to establish the trend of labeling the Hmong by their preferred name, citing academic consistency and established tradition as excuses.{3} Today everyone and anyone who writes about Hmong is pulled into the debate of defining Hmong. Being here to discuss issues on Hmong I am also compelled to touch upon the name "Hmong."

[3]

There are two basic opposing views concerning the word "Hmong" in its written and spoken forms. Those who continue to use outsider's terms to identify the Hmong insist that the names "Miao" and "Meo" have no derogative connotations.{4} On the other hand, Yang Dao, prominent as the first Laotian Hmong to hold a doctorate degree, argues that the word means "barbarian." Introduced into Indochina in the late nineteenth century, the word "Miao" degenerated to "Meo," a derogatory term.{5} Swedish researcher Joakim Enwall disagreed with Yang, arguing that there is no reference to the fact that "Miao" meant barbarian although the people who used it to label the Hmong may have perceived the Hmong as barbarians. Finally, Enwall shoots down the arguments of Yang and other's who insist on the name Hmong by stripping the political context embedded in the debate of Hmong. Enwall raises questions regarding academic pragmatism versus a people's right to insist upon an orally correct name which may be impossible for others to pronounce. He also points to the fact that Chinese characters cannot accommodate the aspirated "m" in the word "Hmong." As to the meaning of the word "Miao," Enwall concludes: "To my Miao friends, I just want to say that the basic meaning of the word 'miao' in Chinese is 'young plant', which in an agrarian culture is

certainly a more positive concept than that of a 'swede' in the western world."{6}

[4]

The debate over whether the word "Miao" has negative connotations has been elaborated upon by many. Most writers have taken "Miao" to mean "aboriginal" with the added connotation of "uncivilized."{7}  However, others argue that the ancient form of the character "Miao," in fact, represented a cat's head and meant "cat." The Chinese probably used this word to describe the Hmong due to the Hmong's vocalized language which seemed to resemble the meowing of a cat.{8} William Geddes found it difficult to believe that the Chinese thought there was similarity between the feline utterance and Hmong speech which resembles Chinese. However, he speculated upon the relevance of this argument, citing Chinese references which speak of the Hmong as having tails and Hmong belief in their own ability to transform into tigers after death.{9}

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Considering Geddes' speculation, one is compelled to point out that there is a far stretch between a cat and a tiger. While a tiger is associated with supernatural powers, or as Geddes points out, "a more formidable species," which should be feared and respected, a common house cat is just an animal; not even suitable for eating. In Laos and Thailand the word "Meo," does indeed mean cat.{10} Thus, the objection of the Hmong in the West is not to the original meaning of the word "Miao" which could be debated, but how the Hmong themselves perceived it in historical context. Just as the Spanish word "negro" which simply means "black" degenerated in

English to "nigger" as a means of condescending Black people socially, the word "Miao" is imbued with negative political connotations that surpass time and space. As to Enwall's argument that the Hmong of China have not objected to being called Miao, one must consider the limitations of their political situation.

[6]

The debate on the definition of "Miao" has yet to be resolved, but a new and perhaps even more powerful myth regarding the meaning of the word "Hmong" has surfaced. Some claim that Hmong means "free." This definition is readily promoted by writers such as Sucheng Chan who entitled her book *Hmong Means Free*. {11} The origin of this meaning has been attributed to Yang Dao. According to Jean Mottin, Yang claimed that Hmong signifies "freeman."{12} However, if Yang did make such a claim, he has since recanted.{13} Yang's perspective on the various designations used for Hmong has already been discussed. He now defines Hmong as "man" or "human being" in contrast to "spirit."{14} But today the correlation between Hmong and "free" has been readily bought and promoted by the Hmong in the United States -- especially youths who have been much influenced by American notions of freedom and individualism.{15} At a deeper historical level, however, the phrase "Hmong means free" cannot be taken for granted because stereotypes of the Hmong as an aggressively warlike and independent people have long overshadowed other positive and perhaps more important cultural and social values. This image of the Hmong as a people who time and time again refused the persuasions of civilization originates from Chinese and colonial sources.

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Thus far, this definition which has underlying negative connotations has been polished and publicized by outsiders who felt the compulsion to be a voice for the Hmong people. The phrase, "Hmong means free," conveniently serves as a means of romanticizing the Hmong and sensationalizing their struggle. That Hmong youth who had little connection to their parents' struggles cling to the phrase requires some thought. During the Vietnam war, the phrase served the purpose of mobilizing the Hmong for group action. The Hmong were called to fight because they were historically perceived as aggressive and warlike in contrast to peacefill Lao Buddhists.{16} In his thesis concerning the Miao Rebellion in Quizhou, Robert Jenks writes, "Almost everyone seems to agree that the Miao were independent and warlike. Boys were raised to be brave warriors above all else."{17} Jenks does not dispute this stereotype, but concludes, "[t]he martial tradition was probably a function of necessity, for the Miao have been surrounded by a hostile population for much of their history."{18}

[8]

Stereotypes of the Hmong as a group who could not be brought into mainstream civilization date back to ancient Chinese records. From as early as the twenty-seventh century B.C., the Hmong appeared in Chinese history as a group who hindered Chinese expansionism in the basins of both the Yellow River and the Hoai. The Hmong were always described by Chinese as the attackers and as inferior barbarians, which was why the Chinese "had to punish them."{19} Whenever they were subjugated, strict measures were taken to divide Hmong and pull them under Chinese

domination. It was noted that, "In the year 2247, Chun [the mythical emperor] divided the San-Meau [Hmong] into various tribes in order to distinguished them from the other people." These tribes were alotted ground which they were supposed to cultivate, and houses and villages and were overseen by appointed Chinese officials. Chun differentiated the families, and "in short, neglected nothing in order to bend them gently under the yoke."{20}

[9]

Throughout history, the Han Chinese viewed Hmong and other minorities as inferior people known for their peculiar costumes, barbarity, belligerence, and moral license.{21} In regards to Hmong, this view comes out most clearly during times of ethnic unrest in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, Jenks provides evidence to dispel traditional interpretations of the so called "Miao" rebellion, and offers new insight into official Chinese characterizations of Hmong as a warlike people.

> Modern authors have argued that the "Miao" rebellion was so named because the Miao participated in every rebel group during the course of the insurgency: the Miao served as the underlying foundation of the rebellion, and therefore it bears their name. This questionable argument seems to be driven by political considerations. The term "Miao rebellion" (*Miaoluan*) was first used by the Qing government while the insurrection was still in progress. The designation served a useful function as a convenient, succinct way of describing an ethnically complex rebellion, for "Miao" in Chinese could refer to either a particular ethnic group or to southern barbarians in general. More important, the term provided a scapegoat on whom responsibility for the rebellion could be fixed. The Qing

> authorities were well aware that the Han played a major role in the rebellion. By labeling it a "Miao" rebellion in official historiography, the authorities made sure that the stigma of having rebelled and caused vast destruction and misery was attached squarely to the Miao and not to the Han. At the same time, some of the onus was removed from the government for its role in precipitating the turmoil. The Miao, after all, were in the traditional Chinese view a barbaric people who could be expected to rebel gratuitously no matter how well governed the empire might be.{22}

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The last sentence merits repetition, "The Miao...were...a people who could be expected to rebel gratuitously no matter how well governed the empire might be." The stereotype belies Hmong ability to integrate and compromise on a peaceful level. Today, the stereotype is kept alive by scholars who continue to disregard a well-known fact -- that the Chinese use the word "Miao" as a generic term for southern barbarians, of which Hmong are a sub-group, as well as for ethnic Hmong. Scholars, therefore, equate "Miao" directly with Hmong. A characteristic which was once associated with a general group has now been attributed to a specific group. It is rather ironic that scholars would debate the various designations used to identify the Hmong, and that scholars recognize the complexity of the terminology "Miao" when applied to ethnic groups throughout history, but readily attribute "Miao" character to the Hmong people.

[11]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a result of tightening Qing policies, Hmong gradually migrated southward and came in contact with French

colonialists who propagated the stereotype of the warlike Hmong to the West. Two revolts established Hmong notoriety. The Hmong of Laos were the first group to threaten the colonial order in 1896 just three years after Laos became a French protectorate. In this year, Hmong *kaitong* refused to collect taxes from the people who had not been informed of its increase. An armed struggle ensued which ended in the negotiation for a new tax settlement and twenty-five years of peace.{23} Before long, however, abuses mounted and when the Hmong could no longer tolerate them rebellion was inevitable. From 1919-21 a revolt known as the *Guerre du Fou*,{24} or "Madman's War," engulfed virtually all of northern Indochina. This uprising exacerbated the stereotype of the warlike Hmong and forever colored Hmong history by dividing the Hmong people. While the Hmong of Xieng Khouang were quickly accorded some autonomy following the revolt, the ones in northern Vietnam remained under Tai domination. John McAlister notes that during the Indochina wars the Hmong in Vietnam who had been subjected to French-appointed Tai officials turned to the Viet Minh, while the Hmong in Laos who negotiated directly with the French sided with France.{25}

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As happened with the rebellions in China, Hmong bore the brunt of the *Guerre du Fou*. Extreme measures were taken by French forces with superior firepower to quell the Hmong. The French "drove the Meo from stronghold to stronghold, harassing them without reprieve, surrounding them and decimating them so swiftly that within a month all the units had either been destroyed or had surrendered, that Batchay (Batchai, Pachay), *en rout*, was abandoned by the last survivors, and that in March 1921 the column

could be disbanded."{26} Although French officials recognized the reasons behind the rebellion, its causes escape contemporary French historians. The revolt was attributed not only to the Hmong's warlike nature, but their superstitious stupidity. The *Guerre du Fou* was described as "fanaticism of the suspicious tribes, superstitious to excess, blindly obedient (like the Kha of the south to the *phou-mi-boun*) to leaders who impressed them with practices of the lowest kinds of craft."{27}

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The incidents of 1896 and 1919-21 stigmatized the Hmong as warlike in the eyes of colonialists and deeply affected the direction and narrative of Hmong history. Hmong temperament was increasingly contrasted to Lao laziness and apathy. During the Vietnam Wars, Hmong ability and fearlessness for action was cultivated for counter-insurgency purposes, entangling the Hmong in the webs of international politics. Through the descriptions of colonial soldiers Hmong men became romanticized as "warriors."{28} The Hmong people who have run for over four thousand years, and whose society (as Enwall claims above) is based predominantly upon agricultural pursuit, have suddenly taken on the persona of a warrior race. Generalizations, however, belie Hmong ability to integrate and compromise as evidence in the Hmong proverb *"hla dej yuav hle khau, tsiv teb tsaws chaw yuav hle hau"*,{29} ("cross the river, take off your shoes; flee from your country, yield your status").

[14]

Contrary to stereotypes of the unassimilable, independent Hmong, the Hmong are not afraid to admit

that other means of existence may be more preferable. Geddes, studying the Hmong of Thailand wrote:

> In October 1970, I stood on top of Chiengdao mountain with a Miao whose maize and opium field was just under the lip of the crater. As we looked down six thousand feet at the cars moving along the road to Chengmai he remarked that he would like to die and be born again so that he could live as a lowlander.{30}

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Historical evidence also disputes the one dimensional view of the Hmong as an independent group. In China, there were Hmong who willingly integrated into the mainstream when offered the opportunity, and there were hard independents who may have had good reasons not to assimilate. The Chinese distinguished the "raw Miao" from the "cooked Miao."{31} By definition the former lived in remote areas beyond the pale of Chinese civilization and political control, paid no taxes and rendered no labor services; the latter lived near Han towns, were under direct or indirect Chinese control, paid taxes and did labor service. While one group may have been totally free from influence, others were assimilated to varying degrees.{32}

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Also, it was not that they were unassimilable, but that Hmong had justifiable reasons to refuse integration. Being in the folds of Chinese civilization and colonial rule offered little in return. Assimilation meant that Hmong were under Chinese legal and administrative control, forced to pay taxes and perform corvee labor, but were not

equated with the same rights and equalities of Han Chinese. Eighteenth century Qing laws, for example, discriminated against Hmong. The law demanded execution of two Hmong for every death of a Han Chinese murdered or killed by Hmong. Hmong were forbidden to go to Han towns and markets except under prescribed circumstances.{33} In addition, rules governing educational attainment of minorities in general kept Hmong uneducated and without other avenues of livelihood. Lastly, the Hmong were not allowed into the regular Army of the Green Standard except by special dispensation as reward for valor. When admitted into the regular army, Hmong were not permitted to rise above a certain rank.{34} Samuel Pollard, a missionary who developed a Romanized script for the Hmong language in the late nineteenth century, recorded the existence of widespread persecution by Chinese and politically dominant groups that goaded Hmong to convert to Christianity. Sure enough "Church membership . . . assured them of a number of privileges. Yi landlords were afraid to molest the Miao tenants as they had done formerly."{35}

[17]

Hmong who fled into Southeast Asia did not escape persecution of similar fashion. Under Tai rule, they paid more tribute than the ordinary Tai peasant.{36} In Laos, Hmong were subjected to exploitation by petty local chiefs who "brandished the bogey of the French government."{37} Hmong paid taxes, performed corvee labor and abided by laws, but got nothing in return. In 1922, R. Barthelemy, head of the Civil Services in Indochina noted, "Laos is apparently organized for administrative purposes as though it were populated solely by Laotians. . . . Consultation Chamber has never included a single

representative of the mountain races. [In addition], we gave the Buddhists a total monopoly on education . . . all those non-Buddhists who live in the mountains are still illiterate."{38} He went on to propose that ethnic representatives be appointed to Provincial Councils, schools be established in the mountains outside of the pagodas, and that each group have its own officials. However, schools were not established until 1939, and even then only in Xieng Khouang. Not a single provincial council contained minority representatives until 1945, and it was not until the 1970s that most provinces had minority representatives.{39}

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Ultimately, Chinese and colonial abuses motivated rebellions. However, even in rebellion, Hmong cannot be categorized. During the "Miao" rebellion attributed to the Hmong, Hmong fought on both sides. The Hmong of Hunnan did not rebel and "good" Hmong resisted "rebel" Hmong. Hmong who were defeated were incorporated into the militia after 1866 and used to defeat their former comrades.{40} This pattern and complexity of Hmong politics continued during the Vietnam War. Hmong fought as communists, and as French and American supporters. Hamilton-Merritt has been heavily attacked for failing to note this fact, and for intending her book, *Tragic Mountains*, to demonstrate that the Hmong universally supported the French and the U.S. during the First (1945-54) and Second (1954-75) Indochina Wars.{41}

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By examining just a few sources, we can see that Hmong culture, politics, history, and Hmong character represent a complex mosaic that requires

cautious assessment. The thousand-year myth (really the four-thousand-five-hundred-years myth) that the Hmong are warlike, fiercely independent, and unassimilable remains to be challenged and addressed diligently. For far too long this one dimensional characterization of Hmong, which was constructed by outsiders and political oppressors of Hmong, have overshadowed the development and understanding of Hmong. Recently this once negative stereotype has taken on an equally dangerous turn into a romanticism of Hmong people. The phrase "Hmong means free" has been readily promoted by Hmong and non-Hmong alike. However, one should be aware of the complex history and underlying meaning of this definition. In the Chinese context "free" had more the sense of barbarity and inability to enter the fold of civilization, and in the French colonial period, the Hmong were seen as superstitiously warlike. In both cases Hmong were constructed by politically dominant groups who expected them to comply with tax and corvee laws without being granted much in return. Characterizations of the Hmong as irrationally aggressive persists to the present and Hmong become one-dimensional, lacking the eccentricities and characteristics associated with all human beings.

Notes

{1} This is an edited version of a paper presented at the Hmong Leadership Conference held at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio from March 27-29, 1997. In writing this paper I owe much debt to Professor A.W. McCoy who encourages me to move from the path of intellectual apathy and unquestioning acceptance of the "one dimensional" portrayal of Hmong.

Professor McCoy commented on the original which was a much longer paper, but I bear sole responsibility for the viewpoint and any errors contained herein. The purpose of this paper is not to offer answers, but to generate discussion. I hope to encourage other Hmong and non-Hmong to come to realize the rich diversity and complexity of what it means to be Hmong--to be human beings of equal value with all other ethnic groups and nationalities. As Hmong people, we do not need to cling to vague, romantic phrases to be proud of who we are. Our history speaks for itself. (Return to text)

{2} Dao Yang, "The Hmong: Enduring Traditions," in *Minority Cultures of Laos: Kammu, Lua', Lahu, Hmong, and Mien*, ed. Judy Lewis (Rancho Cordova CA: Southeast Asian Community Resource Center, Folsom Cordova Unified Schcol District, 1992), p.259, and Hugo Adolf Bernatzik, *Akha and Miao: Problems of Applied Ethnography in Farther India* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1970), p.26.(Return to text)

{3} Roger Warner, *Back Fire* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p.400, and William Geddes, "Note On The Name 'Hmong,'" *Migrants of the Mountains* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).(Return to text)

{4} Ibid.(Return to text)

{5} Dao Yang, *Hmong At the Turning Point* (Minneapolis: WorldBridge Associates, Ltd., 1993), footnote 1, p. xvi.(Return to text)

{6} Enwall, Joakim, "Miao or Hmong?", *Thai Yunnan Project Newsletter*, No.17 (June, 1992). [Read the full text of the article: http://www.como.stpaul.k12.mn.us/Vue-Benson/92-06-00_HmongMiao.html]

Arguments against the use of the word "Miao" and its various forms as it exists in Southeast Asia has come mainly from the Hmong who now live in western countries. Scholars who retain the word "Miao" when referring to the Hmong people often promote the positive aspects of it, agreeing with Enwall that it does not have demeaning connotations. Also, like Enwall, many claim that the "Miao" outside the United States have not made similar demands to change the use of the term.

Although the "Miao" in China have not publically expressed opinions against the term, they are not unaware of its negative implications. Yang Kaiyi, a Chinese Hmong, is careful to qualify that since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, discrimination and exploitation of different nationalities have been eradicated. However, he writes, "[In the past] The Miao people were abused as 'Miao-Zi,'....Even when people are cursing something and someone who has nothing to do with the Miao people, they always say 'Miao.' When two people are quarreling the sharpest verbal attacks include the use of the word 'Miao.' Therefore, 'Miao' is a synonym for being stupid, backward, and uncivilized." Despite what outside observers claim, the reality remains that the Hmong outside the United States have not been heard, and whether or not they prefer Hmong as opposed to 'Miao' is unknown. However, no Hmong as far as I am aware of, whether outside or inside western countries, have expressed opinions against the use of the term Hmong. [Yang, Kaiyi, "Are the Hmong Mongolians?" found at http://web.io-online.com/USERS/YIMHMOOB/mongolia.htm] (Return to text)

{7} Geddes, *op. cit.*, p.134. (Return to text)

{8} Ibid., p.14. (Return to text)

{9} Ibid., pp.14-15. (Return to text)

{10} Jean Mottin, *History of the Hmong* (Bangkok: Odeon Store Ltd. Part., 1980), p.3.
There are conflicting opinions as to whether "Meo" means cat in Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese. In the written form, "Meo" most probably is not the same word as cat in these languages. However, with the slightest variation in pronunciation, when spoken the word "Meo" can be easily exploited to be the same word as cat, and can conveniently serve the purpose of belittling Hmong people -- thus the aversion of the Hmong to the term "Meo." As discussed further on, this is similar to how the word "negro" functions in American society. (Return to text)

{11} Sucheng Chan, *Hmong Means Free: Life in Laos and in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). [Introductory chapter: http://www.stolaf.edu/people/cdr/hmong/publications/h-intro.html] (Return to text)

{12} Mottin, *op. cit.*, p.5. (Return to text)

{13} During an open forum at the conference I asked Dr. Yang Dao whether or not Hmong really means "free" and if he could explain how he came to this conclusion. Dr. Yang Dao responded that he came to this definition after having talked to many Hmong elders who emphasized the Hmong's love of freedom and unwillingness to be dominated politically by other groups as evidenced by their constant migration. Rather than subjecting themselves to the laws of invaders, the Hmong leave their homelands so that they can maintain political independence.

However, after having talked to many anthropologists, Yang came to the realization that in order to be free one must first have been enslaved. Since it is doubtful that the Hmong were an enslaved group, he came to accept that just as words used by many other ethnic groups to identify themselves mean "human being," Hmong simply means "human being." (Return to text)

{14} Dao Yang, "Enduring Tradition," *op. cit.*, p. 253, and *Hmong at the Turning Point*, *op. cit.*, footnote 1, p. xvi. (Return to text)

{15} That Hmong youth promote this phrase enthusiastically was clearly demonstrated during a panel discussion chaired by Tou Ger Xiong and Chao Lee. The whole auditorium of over one hundred twenty Hmong youth, ranging in education from junior high school to graduate school, and over two dozen elders roared, "Yeah!" in response to Tou's question, "Hmong means 'free,' right?" Tou Ger Xiong, the Hmong self-styled "rap-artist/historian," who was there to perform also advertised and sold a video cassette titled "Hmong Means Free" in which he played a leading role. (Return to text)

{16} Timothy N. Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p.35. (Return to text)

{17} Robert D. Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou: The "Miao" Rebellion 1854-1873* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p.35. (Return to text)

{18} Ibid. (Return to text)

{19} Bernatzik, *op. cit.*, pp.15-16. (Return to text)

{20} Ibid., p.18. (Return to text)

{21} Jenks, *op. cit.*, p.6. (Return to text)

{22} Ibid., p. 4. (Return to text)

{23} Yang, *Hmong at the Turning Point*, I, p.36. (Return to text)

{24} Also known to the Hmong as *Rog Pajcai*, or "Pachay's War." (Return to text)

{25} John T. McAlister, "Mountain Minorities and the Viet Minh: A Key to the Indochina War," in *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations*, ed. Peter Kundstadter, v.II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). (Return to text)

{26} Yang, *Hmong at the Turning Point*, *op. cit.*, p.37. (Return to text)

{27} Ibid. (Return to text)

{28} For an example of such an account see Jane Hamilton-Merritt, Tragic Mountains (Bloomington: indiana University Press, 1993), p.34. (Return to text)

{29} Yang, "Hmong: Enduring Tradition," *op. cit.* p.255. Yang translates the saying as: "Cross the river, you'll take off your shoes; Flee from your country, you'll lose your status." (Return to text)

{30} Geddes, *op. cit.*, p.31. (Return to text)

{31} Jenks, *op. cit.*, p.34. (Return to text)

{32} Ibid., p.35. (Return to text)

{33} Ibid., p.43. (Return to text)

{34} Ibid., p.84. (Return to text)

{35} Nicholas Tapp, "The Impact of Missionary Christianity Upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Hmong," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 20(1989), p.78. (Return to text)

{36} Geoffry G. Gunn, "Shamans and Rebels: The Batchai (Meo) Rebellion of Northern Laos and North-west Vietnam (1918-21)," *Journal of the Siam Society* 74 (1986), p. 113. (Return to text)

{37} Yang, *Hmong at the Turning Point, op. cit.*, p. 37, and Alfred W. McCoy, "French Colonialism in Laos, 1893-1945," in *Laos: War and Revolution*, eds. Nina S. Adams and Alfred W. McCoy (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), p. 92. (Return to text)

{38} Yang, *Hmong at the Turning Point, op. cit.*, p. 25-6. (Return to text)

{39} Ibid., p. 26. (Return to text)

{40} Jenks, *op. cit.*, p.47. (Return to text)

{41} Frank Proschan, "*Tragic Mountairs: The Hmong, The Americans, and the secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992*, by Jane Hamilton-Merritt, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992," unpublished manuscript (n.d), p.24. (Return to text)

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