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"The Newspaper of the Hmong Community"



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A Hmao (Hua Miao) Songs, Stories and Legends from China

A New Book Collection edited by Nicholas Tapp and Mark Pfeifer and published by Lincom.

From Mark Pfeifer

Hmong Studies Internet Resource Center

www.hmongstudies.org

October 7, 2009

These wonderful materials come from the A Hmao people of Southwest China, a Miao people related to the Hmong. Their language is a unique one and this book represents a fair selection of their whole corpus of oral legends - songs and folk tales about the origins of the world, their oppression by the Chinese, their flight and exodus, their relations with landlords, together with stories of their social customs, lovesongs and animal fables. Before the Chinese revolution of 1949 the Parsons brothers, who collected and translated these materials, worked with the A Hmao as Christian pastors. Before leaving China they had asked the A Hmao to write down their entire oral corpus in the special form of writing invented by missionaries for their hitherto oral language. After China opened up in 1978 more of these materials were sent to the Parsons brothers, for all through the years of socialism the A Hmao had faithfully recorded their entire corpus.



Mark Pfeifer



Nicholas Tapp

There are four sections - the 'Beginnings', dealing with Creation and the Flood, 'History', dealing with early leaders, clashes with the Chinese, and the loss of the homeland, 'Social Life', covering shamanism, marriage and other customs, and 'Narratives' (fantastic stories about orphans, tigers, and many animal fables). Each legend has a brief introduction by the Parsons brothers followed by their free translation. This selection has been put together from the entire mass of the collection by Nicholas Tapp, a Professor of Anthropology at the Australian National University, and Mark Pfeifer, former Head of the Hmong Resource Center Library at the Hmong Cultural Center in Minnesota, current editor of the Hmong Studies Journal and an Academic Librarian at the Texas A and M University campus in Corpus Christi. To show the uniqueness of the language, some examples of the word-for-word translations which accompany each entry in the original are given, and some samples of the special Pollard script invented for the language. This is a unique corpus of imaginative folklore and linguistic materials and marks a considerable contribution towards world mythology. For more information about this collection visit the Lincom website at: <http://www.lincom.at/>. For more information about Hmong Studies research visit the Hmong Studies Internet Resource Center at www.hmongstudies.org.

St. Paul, MN



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