

FOLKTALES

Folktales teach, much like Aesop's Fables do in the United States. There are folktales for different audiences and different situations. There are a few folktales which are well-known, although it is difficult to know whether the few folktales which have been written down, to date, are the well-known folktales, or whether they became well-known because someone wrote them down.

Folktales tell how people came to live on the earth, how Hmong came to be, how Hmong clans started, how the moon and the sun came to be in the sky, why the crops have to be carried in from the fields, not to underestimate the youngest one or the orphan, how to be a friend, etc. There are tales which tell the history of the Hmong, and of historical problems with the Chinese and others. There are folktales which teach people how to be good Hmong and how to carry out customs.

Folktales differ somewhat according to the audience. Folktales for children tend to be shorter, simpler, and with a single message. Folktales for adults tend to be more complicated, with more characters, hidden meanings, symbols, and old words or 'flower words'.

One situation in which folktales are told is during the long nights preceding someone's funeral. People come from all over to stay with the family, and the visitors stay awake all night, keeping watch over the family and (in the old days) the deceased; the house of the deceased is supposed to be the one house in the village with lights on (fires burning) all night. One way to pass the time and keep people from dwelling on unhappiness is to tell folktales. Usually these groups are all men, and the folktales may be long and complex, humorous, clever, and full of hidden meanings.

Children's folktales are told as the time and situation allows. Sometimes the father, who watches the children while the mother prepares the meal, will tell the children short stories or songs. Grandparents tell stories, and anytime that people are gathered together and have spare time, such as during the New Year, folktales may be told.

Storytellers vary in their skill. Skillful storytellers remember the story well from the past generation, and add color and details, but the story line remains essentially the same. In this way, folktales are seldom exactly alike, but those with knowledge can agree on which folktales are 'right', and which ones are fabrications.

Story titles are very literal: 'story about being an orphan', 'story that tells about loving your parents', 'Hmong story'. The word for story (*zaj dab neeg*) translates literally as, 'group of words-spirit-people'.

DAB NEEG
NRUAB HNUB THIAB HMO NTUJ

Thaum ub mas muaj 9 lub hnuv, 9 lub hli. Nws tau tsaus-ntuj los tsaus ntev heev. Nws tau kaj-ntug los kaj ntev heev ces tib neeg ntiaj-teb ua tsis tau noj. Lawv chim, lawv thiaj mus txua ib rab hneev 9 dag taub 8 dag nta, muab tua tua hnuv.

Hnuv thiab hli ntshai ntshai ces hnuv thiab hli tsis kam tawm tuaj. Ntiaj-teb tsaus-ntuj tau 7 xyoo haj yam ua tsis tau noj. Ntiaj-teb tib neeg thiaj tias yuav tso tus tsiaj dab-tsi mus hu es lub hnuv thiab lub hli thiaj yuav tawm tuaj!

Tso nyuj mus hu saib puas tawm tuaj, hnuv thiab hli kuj los tsis tawm thiab.

Tso tsov mus hu saib puas tawm tuaj los tsis tawm.

Tso lib-nyug mus hu saib puas tawm tuaj los tsis tawm.

Thiaj li tias yog no cia tso qaib mus hu. Qaib hu hu ces lub hnuv thiaj li mam tawm tuaj, thiab lub hli mam tawm tuaj ua-qab es thiaj muaj nruab-hnuv thiab hmo ntuj los rau tib neeg ntiaj-teb tau ua noj ua haus.

Tus hais yog **Nylaj-lauj Vaj**

FOLKTALE
WHY IS THERE DAY AND NIGHT?

Long ago, there were nine suns and nine moons. When it was night, it was night for a very long time. When it was day, it was daytime for a very long time. The people of the world could not work enough to have sufficient to eat, and they were angry. They made a cross-bow nine *dah*⁴ long and eight *dah* wide, and went to shoot the suns. The suns and the moons were very afraid and were not willing to come out. The earth was dark for seven years and people of the world could do no work to get food to eat.

They said, "What kind of animal can go and call the suns and the moons to come out?"

They sent the bull to call, to see if the sun and moon would come out, but they would not.

They sent the tiger to call, to see if the sun and the moon would come out, but they would not.

They sent the bird, the *lee-nyu*⁵ to call, to see if the sun and the moon would come out, but they would not.

Then they sent the rooster to call, to see if the sun and the moon would come out. The rooster called and called, and the sun came out for a little while (daytime), and then the moon came out for a little while (night). Since that time there has been daylight and nighttime, so that the people can work, and have enough to eat, and they have lived until now.

Storyteller: **Nhia Lor Vang**

⁴*dag*: unit of measure, the distance between the tips of the fingers when the arms are held shoulder high, stretched out to the side; about five feet.

⁵*lib-nyug*: bird similar to a hawk

DAB NEEG
NPAWG-HLOB THIAB NPAWG-YAU

Puag thaum ub muaj ob tug npawg. Ib tug npawg-hlob thiab ib tug npawg-yau. Nkawd sib raug zoo heev ces muaj ib hnuv nkawd txawm sib yaum mus ua-si tom hav-zoov. Nkawd mus mus ces ntsib ib tug niag dais-nees. Tus npawg-hlob txawm khiav mus nce ntoo lawm. Ces tshuav tus npawg-yau, nws nce tsis tau ntoo. Nws txawm pw khwb-rwg rau hauv pem teb. Tus dais-nees los muab tus npawg-yau hnia hnia ncig ib lwm tas, tsis tom tus npawg-yau. Tus dais-nees txawm cia li khiav rov-qab dua tom hav-zoov lawm xwb. Tus npawg-hlob ho nqes los txog.

Tus npawg-hlob txawm los nug tus npawg-yau hais tias, "Npawg-yau, tus dais-nees los hnia hnia koj. Nws ho tsis tom thiab tsis khawb koj. Tus dais-nees hais li cas rau koj no?"

Tus npawg-yau txawm hais rau tus npawg-hlob hais tias, "Tus dais-nees los hnia hnia kuv nws tsis tom thiab tsis khawb kuv. Nws hais rau kuv hais tias, 'Txawm yog ua kwv-tij kwv-npawg zoo npaum li cas los yog txog thaum uas ib tug yuav tuag es ib tug ho tsis pab, ces kom tsis txhob ua kwv-tij kwv-npawg ntxiv lawm los tau no.' "

Zaj dab neeg no mas yog piv tias: ua phooj ua ywg nyob, yuav kom zoo tiag mas yuav yog thaum uas muaj yam zoo los kom ob leeg tau. Hos yog ho muaj yam phem los kom ob leeg yuav-tsum sib pab tiv kom dhau no.

Tus hais yog **Tooj-zag Vwj**

FOLKTALE
**THE OLD FRIEND
AND THE YOUNG FRIEND**

Long long ago there were two friends, one older and one younger. They were very close friends. One day the two of them decided to go play in the jungle. There they met a horse bear⁶ (a bear the size of a horse). The older friend ran quickly and climbed a tree to the very top, leaving the young friend below. The young friend couldn't climb trees, so he laid face down in the dirt. The horse bear circled the boy, sniffing and sniffing him from toe to head, but didn't bite or scratch him at all. Then the bear suddenly left, and went back his own way.

The older friend climbed down from the tree and asked the young friend, "Young friend, the horse bear came and sniffed and sniffed you from toe to head, but didn't bite or scratch you at all. What did the bear say to you?"

Then the young friend said to the old friend, "The horse bear came and sniffed and sniffed me from toe to head, but didn't bite or scratch me a bit. He said to me, 'Even though you two have been very close friends for a long time, now, when danger comes, one doesn't help the other.....it seems that your friendship has no value anymore.'"

This story explains: in friendship, it is fitting and right that when there are good things then friends share them. And when there are bad things then friends must help each other endure and overcome them.

Storyteller: **Tong Ga Vue**

⁶tus dais nees

DAB NEEG HNUB-QUB

Thaum ub tsis muaj hnuv-qub li niaj hnuv nim no.

Puag thaum ub huab-tais qaum-ntuj muaj ib tug ntshais. Nws lub npe hu ua Niam-nkauj-hnuv-qub. Nws mob ib lub txia loj loj rau ntawm ib sab caj dab. Ces txawm tsis muaj neeg nyiam thiab yuav nws li. Nws tsis muaj txiv yuav. Nws txawm khiav mus ua tsev nyob rau puag tom plawv hav-zoov. Nws nyob ib leeg thiab nws muaj ib tug aub ua nws luag xwb.

Nws mus nyob nyob txawm muaj ib tug niam-tais-poj-dab tuaj pom. Tus niam-tais-poj-dab hluv hluv nws. Niam-tais-poj-dab txawm muab nyiaj muab kub ntau ntau rau nws. Nws ua neej muaj txiaj thiab nplua-nuj heev.

Nws tuaj mus yuav khoom tom zos. Nws muab nws cov nyiaj cov kub coj tuaj yuav khoom tas. Thaum nws rov los txog tsev, nws cov nyiaj cov kub twb rov-qab los nyob hauv tsev tos nws lawm. Nws ho muab nqa coj mus pub rau tej neeg zej zog ib leeg ob peb lub, los luag pheej muab xa rov-qab tuaj rau nws. Nws ib leeg thiaj muaj nyiaj thiab kub xwb. Nws xav coj mus pub rau luag lwm tus, los pub tsis tau li.

Ces muaj ib hnuv nws txawm muab txawb mus rau tim tej qab-roob qab-ha. No na has ua cav nws cov nyiaj thiab kub txawm mus khuam rau qhov-chaw uas nws txawb mus. Ces nws muab nws cov nyiaj thiab kub txawb txawb mus rau qhov-tshia-qhov-chaw tag. Ua ciav txawm mus ua tau ib niag ntuj hnuv-qub ntsa-qas-iab. Ces nim no saum-ntuj thiaj li muaj hnuv-qub ntsa-qas-paug.

Hais rau sawv daws paub hais tias cov nyiaj mus ua cov hnuv-qub dawb, ci dawb pom kev zoo. Cov kub mus ua cov hnuv-qub tooj-dag, ci daj pom kev tsis heev.

Tus hais yog **Tooj-zag Vwj**

FOLKTALE **WHY ARE THERE STARS IN THE SKY?**

Once there were no stars in the sky like there are now.

Long ago the king of heaven had a daughter, named Princess Nou Kou⁷ She had a big goiter on the side of her neck. Nobody liked her, and there wasn't any young man to marry her. She did not have a husband. She ran away to build a house deep in the heart of the jungle and she lived there alone. She had only a dog to be her companion.

She lived there for a long time. There was a mother ghost⁸ who came along and saw her. The mother ghost loved her and took care of her. The mother ghost gave a lot of silver and a lot of gold to Princess Nou Kou, therefore, she became very very wealthy.

One day she went to buy things in the village and she used the gold to pay for the the things she needed. She returned to her home, and all the gold was already there, waiting for her. So she took the money and gave it to the villagers, a few pieces to each one, but the silver and gold always came back to her. She was the only person to have silver and gold. She wanted to give away her wealth to other people, but she couldn't; the pieces always came back to her.

One day, she took the pieces of silver and gold and threw them everywhere—to the top of the mountain, to the foot of the mountain, every place—the pieces stuck where they landed. She threw all her pieces of silver and gold, and suddenly, there was a great sky full of blinking stars. That's why the sky now has stars flashing and twinkling.

The silver pieces became white stars, very clear and bright enough to see well; the gold pieces became yellow stars, not quite clear and not quite bright enough to see well.

Storyteller: **Tong Ga Vue**

⁷ *hnub-qub*: star

⁸ *niam-tais-poj-dab*

**DAB NEEG
TSHUAV NQE**

Puag hnuv caj thaum ub muaj ob niam txiv, nkawd yug tau ib tug tub los ces tus tub txawm tuag lawm. Nkawd rov muaj dua ib tug, yog tus ob yug tau los, los kuj tuag lawm thiab. Tsis ntev tom qab nkawd ho yug tau ib tug tub, yog tus peb, los kuj tuag lawm thiab, ces nkawd thiaj mus yuav tau ib tug me-nyuam nyuj los tua rau nws, coj nws mus faus tas. Tau tsis ntev tom qab no nkawd ho rov qab muaj dua ib tug tub yug tau los yog tus plaub. Nyob nws muaj hnoob nyoog tsib xyoos. Muaj ib hnuv tus me-nyuam txawm mob-mob yuav tuag, nkawd ob niam txiv muaj ib tug txiv nees txheeb-dawb nyob hauv nkuaj; tus tub txawm hais rau nws txiv hais tias, "Txiv, kuv pheej mob-mob ua luaj no, yog tim tus txiv nees txheeb-dawb hauv nkuaj xwb. Yog koj kam muab nws tua no mas kuv thiaj li yuav nquag, hos yog koj tsis kam, mas tej zaum ntshai kuv yuav tuag xwb."

No ces leej-txi xav tias, "Ab....kuv twb yug tau ntau tus tub lawm es tsis tau ib tug los yuav li, mas tsam yog tim tus nees tiag. Cia kuv ho muab tus nees tua saib kuv tus tub puas yuav zoo los nrog kuv nyob." Leej- txi rho hlo ntaj xa tib nkaug nees plab, nees tuag kiag, rov hlo los txog tsev na has tus tub twb tuag lawm thiab.

Tus nees los tuag. Tus tub los kuj tuag tag lawm, ces leej-txi chim heev. Nws niaj hnuv quaj mus rau txhia txoj ke. Muaj ib hnuv nws mus ntsib phab-nyas-eeb. Phab-nyas-eeb nug hais tias, "Yog ua cas koj niaj hnuv yuav quaj rau txhia txoj ke li no naj."

Nws hais tias, "Yog kuv tus tub thiab tus txiv nees puav leej tuag tag lawm, es mob kuv siab hwm. Kuv thiaj li tsav quaj ua luaj no."

Phab-nyas-eeb hais tias, "Yuav kom koj nrhiav pom koj tus tub, mas koj taug txoj kev no mus lawm pem roob, ces muaj ib lub tsev loj-loj. Koj tus tub thiab tus txiv nees txheeb-dawb nyob pem."

Nws txawm taug txoj kev ntawd mus txog pem lub tsev uas phab-nyas-eeb hais. Nws thiaj li saib na has ua cas to ib lub qhov dua dab nrag teb lawm. Nws pom ib tug qhev-zov-rooj-vag. Tus qhev hais tias, "Koj yuav tuaj mus dabtsi?"

Nws hais tias, "Twb yog kuv yuav tuaj mus nrhiav kuv tus tub. Ua li koj puas pom kuv tus tub uas muaj hnub-nyoog tsib xyoos xwb, nws caij ib tug txiv nees txheeb-dawb?"

Ces tus qhev-zov-rooj-vag thiaj hais tias, "Kuv pom kawg, las mas. Kuv yuav coj koj mus ntsib koj tus tub, tabsis cia kuv ua rau koj saib tso, koj tus tub twb los yuav luag txog tam sim no ntag. Kuv muab koj zais rau qhov no, nws los rau koj saib ib plia. Kuv mam li coj koj mus ntsib tau nws. Koj nyob qhov no mas koj tsis txhob nti, thiab txhob ua nws pom koj. Koj hais tias nws yog koj tus tub, no uas yog koj pom nws tas mas nyaj koj yuav tsis quaj lawm laub."

Tus qhev-zov-rooj-vag txawm muab leej-txi cev khaub ncaws hle los kho rau ib tug niag dauj-khaub-hlab hnav, thiab muab yawg zai rau hauv ib chav tsev. Kom nws xauj hauv ib lub me-nyuam qhov me-me mus rau ntawm tus dauj-khaub-hlab.

Ces nws pom nws tus tub caij kiag nws tus txiv nees txheeb-dawb ya plo los tsaws ntua rau nraum qab khav, nws muab nees khi nkaus tas. Nws ya ntxiag los txog ntawm rooj vag. Nws nug tus qhev-zov-rooj-vag tias, "Kuv hnov tias niag yawg laus tuaj no dua twg lawm. Sim qhia kuv soj."

Tus qhev-zov-rooj-vag thiaj coj kiag nws tus tub los taw nkaus rau tus niag dauj-khaub-hlab. Tus tub rho hlo ntaj xa tib ntag dauj-khaub-hlab tu nrho ua ob ya, thiab cem hais tias, "Tus neeg no, phem tsis phem mas nws tshuav kuv nqe. Kuv mus sau nqe ob zaug tsis tau li. Zaum peb nws mam li muab ib tug me-nyuam nyuj rau kuv xwb. Zaum plaub no kuv mam mus dag tau nws tus txiv nees xwb. Nws tseem tshuav kuv nqe ntau heev," ces nws rov qab lawm.

Ces tus qhev-zov-rooj-vag thiaj los hais rau yawg hais tias, "Zaum no koj puas pom? Nws tsis yog koj tus tub na...yog thaum ub koj tshuav nws nqe koj them tsis tas, nim no yog nws los sau nqe ntawm koj xwb. Es txij li no mus koj tsis txhob quaj quaj lawm." Ces ua nwg nws kua muag tu nrho rov qab los tsev lawm.

Zaj dab neeg no mas hais txog cov neeg uas pheej yug tsis tau me-nyuam los yuav li mas yog thaum ub yus tshuav luag nqe them tsis tas. Es yus tuag ua ntej lawm ces tiam no luag thiaj rov los tsib nqe. Yog leej twg yug tau ob peb tug me-nyuam tuag tag lawm es tsis tau yuav li, mas yuav-tsum tua nyuj, tua twm ntau ntau rau kom yus thiaj li yug tau me-nyuam los yuav.

Tus hais yog **Swm-looj Vwj**

FOLKTALE COLLECTING THE DEBT

Long long ago there was a couple, and they had a son. Their son died. They had another son, the second son, and this son also died. A short while later, they had a third son, who also died. They decided to go buy a calf to sacrifice for his funeral ceremony, and then they buried him. Not very much time passed, and they had a fourth son. One day, when he was five years old, he became very very ill, ready to die. The mother and father had a gold stallion in their stable. The son said to his father, "Father, I have been so ill like this only because of your gold stallion in the stable. If you are willing to kill your horse, then I will recover, but if you're not willing to do this, then I'm afraid that I may die."

So the father thought, "Ah.....I have already had many sons, and yet this is the only son who has lived.....maybe it is really that horse.... Let me kill the horse, and I will see if this son will recover to go on living with me." The father pulled out his sword and stabbed the horse in the stomach, and the horse instantly died. He pulled the sword back out and went inside the house, and his son was already dead, too.

The gold stallion was dead. The fourth son was dead, too. Both gone, and the father's heart was broken. So everyday he cried everywhere, looking for them.

One day he went to see a king, Pa-nya-eng⁹. Pa-nya-eng asked him, "What's wrong with you? Why do you cry everyday, going everywhere, like this?"

The father replied, "It is because my son and my stallion are both dead, and my heart is very sick. That's why I cry so much."

Pa-nya-eng said, "You want to find your son....then follow this path to the mountain, and there you will see a large large house. Your son and your gold stallion are there."

So he did just that. He followed the path up to the mountain, and arrived at a house, just as Pa-nya-eng had said. As he looked at the house, it seemed like a hole opened up, and he could see into a village of departed spirits. He saw a guard at the gate. The guard asked him, "Why have you come here?"

⁹*phab-nyas-eeb*

He replied, "I have come here to search for my son. Have you seen him? He's five years old, and riding a gold stallion."

The guard then said, "I did indeed see him. I will take you to see your son, but let me check first..... ah, your son is almost here right now. I will hide you here, and when he comes, you look at him for a moment. Then I'll take you to meet him. You stay here and don't move, or let him see you. You say that he is your son, but when you've seen him, then you won't cry anymore."

The guard took the father's clothing off, and put the clothes on a cross of sticks, to make a scarecrow, and then he hid the father in a room. He told the father to look through a tiny hole into the next room, and watch the scarecrow.

Then the father saw his son riding the gold stallion, flying up to the fence surrounding the place of departed spirits. He tied his horse, and went towards the gate. He said to the guard, "I heard that an old gentleman came here looking for me. Where is he? Tell me!"

The guard led the son directly to the scarecrow. The son pulled out his sword, made one slashing blow, and cut the scarecrow into two pieces. He yelled, "This man is very stupid. He owes me money. I went to collect the debt two times and didn't get anything. The third time he gave me only a calf. The fourth time, I tricked him, but I got only his stallion. He still owes me a lot of money." Then he left.

The guard came and said to the father, "Now, do you see? He is not your son. In a previous life you were in debt to him, and didn't repay him, so now he comes to collect the debt you owe. From now on, you don't need to cry anymore." Suddenly the father's tears stopped completely, and he returned to his home.

This folktale tells those people who have had many children die in infancy that it is because in a previous life they were in debt too much. The children die now, because the person comes back to collect the old debt that is owed. If anyone has two or three children die at an early age, they have to sacrifice many cows and water buffalo for them at the time of the funeral ceremony. The sacrifice will pay off the debt, and the next children will live.

Storyteller: **Shue-long Vue**

**DAB NEEG
NRHIAV KEV TSIS PAUB TUAG**

Puag noob caj thaum ub, muaj ib tug nraug-ntsuag. Nws nrog nws tij-laug thiab niam-tij nkawd nyob. Nraug-ntsuag, nws niaj hnuv mus zov nyuj, saib nyuj noj zaub. Ua cas muaj ib hnuv nws mus saib nyuj, nws txawm pom ib tug npuj-npaim dai ib txog xov ntev-ntev los puag saum ntuj rau hauv ntiaj-teb no tuag dai vias, ces nws xav tias, "Ab....yus ua me-nyuam tsis muaj niam tsis muaj txiv, txom-txom nyem es tus nyuag npuj-npaim no ntshai zoo li yus txom-txom nyem tsis muaj niam tsis muaj txiv es nws thiaj tuaj tuag tus dai vias li no, ces cia kuv muab coj los pam ua si saib."

Nraug-ntsuag txawm coj los pam. Nraug-ntsuag txawm mus khawb ib xub niag nas tsuag xya tus, nws txawm muab ua nyuj tua rau tus nyuag npuj-npaim ntawd, ces Nraug-ntsuag rov los txog tsev. Nws txawm los piav qhia nws niam-tij tias, "Niam-tij os....hnuv no mas kuv mus zov nyuj noj zaub ces kuv pom ib tug npuj-npaim dawb dawb poob puag saum ntuj los mus tis ib txog xov dai vias, kuv xav xav kuv hlub hlub ces kuv muab coj los pam, kuv mus khawb tau xya tus nas tsuag coj los tua ua nyuj rau, kuv muab faus ua ib lub ntxa, es hnuv no kuv thiaj los lig-lig."

Niam-tij teb tias, "Nraug-ntsuag....ua twj-ywm tsam qeej hnov qeej nrov, nruas hnov nruas to qhov, suav hnov suav hlais nplais, Hmoob hnov Hmoob dua puab-tsaig."

Nraug-ntsuag tias, "Om..."

Ces aub....pa-taws hnov lauj...ces pa-taws mus qhia rau Xeev-laum qaum ntuj lauj!! Nws yog Xeev-laum ntxhais-nkauj-ntxawm tuaj dai tuag rau ntiaj-teb. Xeev-laum hnov ces nws tso kws-tshiab-tuaj-tshuaj, tso kiag ib tw huab poob nthav rau ntiaj-teb, ua kiag ob tug neeg, los nkag kiag hauv Nraug-ntsuag tsev thiab hais tias, "As....niam-tij thiab tij-laug, Nraug-ntsuag lub tsev puas yog lub no?"

Niam-tij thiab tij-laug teb tias, "Awb yog ntag."

Nkawd thiaj los nug Nraug-ntsuag tias, "Wb hnov lawv hais tias koj pom Xeev-laum ntxhais-nkauj-ntxawm tuaj dai tuag rau ntiaj-teb no mas...awb muaj lus ua-tsaug ntau thov koj qhia wb. Wb tuaj nrhiav Xeev-laum ntxhais-nkauj-ntxawm ntag."

Nraug-ntsuag teb tias, "Kuv tsis pom li as...kuv tsis paub li nawb Xeev-laue ntxhais-nkauj-ntxawm os!!"

Nkawd thiaj tias, "Koj paub xwb-xwb, thov koj qhia xwb-xwb."

Nraug-ntsuag tias, "Kuv tsis pom tiag hos..."

Nkawd nug-nug thiab thov-thov Nraug-ntsuag.

Nraug-ntsuag hais tias, "Kuv tsis pom tiag-tiag li..."

Nkawd hais tias, "Wb hnov tias koj pom Xeev-laue ntxhais-nkauj- ntxawm es koj coj los pam, koj tua xya tus nyuj rau no nev?"

Nraug-ntsuag thiaj xav txog tias, "Ob...ntshai tsam lam yog qhov ntawd xwb os." Nraug-ntsuag thiaj hais tias, "Awb...thov txim, kuv tsis paub nev, kuv pom ib tug nyuag npuj-npaim dai ib txog xov los puag saum ntuj los tuag dai vias ces kuv muab coj los pam, kuv mus khawb tau xya tus niam tub nas tsuag los tua rau ces kuv muab faus."

Nkawd txawm tias, "Awb yog li mas muaj lus ua-tsaug lauj...koj coj wb mus xyuas lub ntxa. Wb yuav khawb coj mus rau Xeev-laue qaum ntuj, nws yog Xeev-laue tus ntxhais-nkauj-ntxawm, Xeev-laue yuav coj mus cawm."

Nraug-ntsuag thiaj coj nkawd mus khawb. Nkawd khawb tau lawm ces nkawd hais rau Nraug-ntsuag tias, "Xeev-laue hais li no nws kom wb coj koj nrog wb mus lawm qaum ntuj ntag. Koj pom-yim pom Xeev-laue ntxhais-nkauj- ntxawm ces koj nrog wb mus xwb-xwb. Koj tsis mus mas tsis tau li ntag." Nraug-ntsuag thiaj teb tias, "Awb kuv yog neeg ntiaj-teb, kuv mus tsis tau nawb."

Nkawd teb tias, "Tau thiab tsis tau los wb kom mus ces mus xwb. Koj los rau wb qhov-tsos ces wb qaim koj ces peb mus xwb."

"Ua li, los ua li."

Nraug-ntsuag niam-tij hais rau Nraug-ntsuag tias, "Nraug-ntsuag, yog koj mus no mas koj tsis txhob yuav dabtsi. Huab-tais Xeev-laue yuav nug koj saib koj yuav yuav dabtsi. Dab tsis los koj txhob yuav, muab nyiaj los koj txhob yuav, muab kub los koj txhob yuav nawb. Koj yuav lub me taub- khwj-lwb thiab tsob nyuag hauv-kuab-muaj-tsuas coj los cawm tib-neeg hauv ntiaj-teb no ov...?"

Nraug-ntsuag teb tias, "Aws."

Nraug-ntsuag thiaj nrog huab mus, huab muab qaim kiag rau hauv qhov-tsos. Yaj-ntshis tib pliag, rua muag kiag cas twb txog qaum ntuj ces thiaj koj tau Xeev-laus ntshais-nkauj-ntxawm mus txog ntua Huab-tais. Huab-tais mas zoo siab tsis zoo, zoo zoo siab kawg, thiab qhuas hais tias yog tsis muaj Nraug-ntsuag ces Huab-tais tsis pom nws ntshais-nkauj-ntxawm uas mus dai tuag rau ntiaj-teb li lau. Huab-tais nrhiav tau xya hnuv xya hmo. Zaum no muab tau los lawm ces kho lauj....thiaj muab lub hauv-kuab-muaj-tsuas los tsuag laws peb pas mus, peb pas los, muab rub sawv ntsees los zoo-nkauj li tus qub, zoo-nkauj dua lawm thiab.

Ces Xeev-laus thiaj tias, "Nraug-ntsuag koj pom-yim pab tau kuv ntshais-nkauj-ntxawm, ua li koj yuav yuav dabtsi? Kuv muab nyiaj rau koj."

Nraug-ntsuag teb tias, "Nyiaj kuv tsis yuav, nyiaj yog peb ntiaj-teb nyiaj kua-muag xwb, kuv tsis yuav."

"Yog koj tsis yuav nyiaj, kuv muab nees rau koj."

Nraug-ntsuag teb tias, "Nees los kuv tsis yuav, nees yog peb ntiaj-teb nees kuas-txaij kuas-nraug xwb, kuv tsis yuav."

"Yog li ntawd kuv muab nyuj rau koj nawb."

Nraug-ntsuag teb tias, "Nyuj los kuv tsis yuav nawb, txiv Xeev-laus, nyuj yog peb neeg ntiaj-teb niag nyuj ncig tshuav xwb, kuv tsis yuav."

"Awb....yog li muab dabtsi los koj tsis yuav ces kuv tsis pom qab muab lawm. Yog koj nyiam yuav dab-tsi no mas koj txawm hais ntag."

Nraug-ntsuag tias, "Ab....kuv xav yuav koj ib yam dab-tsi thiab tiam sis ntshai hais los koj yuav tsis muab."

Xeev-laus hais tias, "Tsis hais li cas los mas koj hais ces muab xwb koj pom-yim pom kuv ntshais-nkauj-ntxawm, koj yuav dabtsi los kuv yeej muab, hais tsis dag koj yuav kuv ntshais-nkauj-ntxawm los kuv muab."

Nraug-ntsuag teb tias, "Txiv Xeev-laus koj ntshais-nkauj-ntxawm mas kuv tsis yuav nawb, kuv xav yuav koj cov me hauv-kuab-muaj-tsuas, kuv yuav qhov ntawd xwb yog koj kam."

Xeev-laustias, “Awb....koj yuav-yuav los muab, kuv qhov nyuag hauv-kuab-muaj-tsuas, mas tsawg hwv, yog koj yuav los kuv muab ib qho rau koj.”

Xeev-lausthiaj muab ib tsob hauv-kuab-muaj-tsuas thiab lub taub- khwj-lwb rau Nraug-ntsuag ces xa Nraug-ntsuag los rau ntiaj-teb.

Nraug-ntsuag yuav coj los kho neeg ntiaj-teb, nws los-los txog puag tim toj roob, nws mus tawm-rooj ces luag hlawv toj kub-hnyiab tuaj yuav ti ntawm nws ces nws txawm tsis nco-qab nqa los.

Ces ntiaj-teb thiaj tsis tau tsob hauv-kuab-muaj-tsuas los cawm teb-neeg. Yog tsis li ntawd mas niaj hnub nim-no peb tau coj los siv ces peb tib-neeg yeej tsis paub tuag li.

Tus hais yog **Swm-looj Vwj**

FOLKTALE
SEARCH FOR IMMORTALITY

Long long ago, there was an orphan. He lived with his old brother and his sister-in-law. Ndrau-njua,¹⁰ he went each day to watch over the cattle as they grazed. One day while he was watching the cattle, he saw a butterfly hanging by the neck from a long long thread coming from heaven, coming to earth to commit suicide by hanging. He thought, "Ah...I am a child without a mother, without a father, very miserable, and this butterfly is probably like me, miserable because she has no mother, no father, and so she commits suicide by hanging like this. I think I will take her and perform a pretend funeral ceremony for her." So Ndrau-njua took her to perform the ceremony. He dug up a family of seven mice to sacrifice for her funeral, and then he returned home.

He told his sister-in-law, " Oh, Sister-in-law, today I went to watch the cattle grazing and I saw a bright white butterfly fall from heaven, hanging from the end of a long long thread. I thought I loved her, so I took her to perform a funeral ceremony. I dug up a family of mice and sacrificed them for her ceremony, and buried her in a grave. That's why, today, I came home so late."

Sister-in-law replied, "Ndrau-njua....you have to be quiet, if the wind-pipe hears you, the wind-pipe will break in two.... if the funeral drum hears you, it will have a hole in it.... if the Chinese hear you, they will cut out your tongue....if the Hmong hear you, they will pull off your chin."

Ndrau-njua said, "Oh....."

Then the smoke from the fire heard him. The smoke went to tell Seng-lau¹¹ in heaven!!

It was Seng-lau's youngest daughter who come to commit suicide on earth. Seng-lau heard, then he sent his investigators, who happened to be a group of clouds. The clouds fell to earth, and became two men. They went into Ndrau-njua's house and said, "Ah....sister-in-law and brother, is this Ndrau-njua's house?"

Sister-in-law and brother answered, "Ah, yes indeed."

¹⁰*nraug-ntsuag*: orphan boy

¹¹*Xeev-laous*: king in heaven

The two of them then asked Ndrau-njua, "We heard them say that you saw Seng-lau's youngest daughter who came here to commit suicide on earth....we'd appreciate it if you'd tell us. We have come searching for Seng-lau's daughter."

Ndrau-njua answered, "I haven't seen her....I don't know Seng-lau's youngest daughter at all!"

They said, "Sure, you know her....please tell us."

Ndrau-njua said, "Really, I haven't seen her..."

The two of them insisted and pleaded with Ndrau-njua to tell them.

Ndrau-njua said, "I really haven't seen her."

The two of them said, "We heard that you saw Seng-lau's youngest daughter, and that you performed a funeral ceremony for her, killing seven cows for her.... eh?"

Ndrau-njua thought to himself, "Oh....maybe it is the butterfly..." Ndrau-njua said, "Ah, excuse me, I didn't know what you meant. I did see a butterfly hanging from a thread that came from heaven, who committed suicide by hanging, and I performed a funeral ceremony for her. I dug up a family of mice and sacrificed them for her funeral and then I buried her."

They said, "So that's it. Thank you.....you take us to see her grave. We will dig her up and take her to Seng-lau in heaven. It is Seng-lau's youngest daughter, and he will revive her."

Ndrau-njua then led them there, and they dug up the body. They said to Ndrau-njua, "Seng-lau said that you must come with us to heaven. You have seen his youngest daughter, so you must come with us. If you don't the problem will not be solved."

Ndrau-njua then answered, "Ah, but I am a human of the earth, I can't go up to heaven."

They replied, "Yes, you can. We must take you up there with us. You get into our armpit and we will hold you there and go."

"Okay."

Ndrau-njua's sister-in-law said to Ndrau-njua, "Ndrau-njua, when you get there, don't take anything. King Seng-lau will ask you what you want to have, but whatever it is, don't take it. If he offers you silver or gold, don't accept it.... if he offers you a horse, don't take it.... if he offers you a cow, don't take it. You can accept only a small gourd¹² and a small plant of hau-kua-mua-jua,¹³ and bring them back to earth to help revive people who die, all right?"

Ndrau-njua answered, "All right."

Ndrau-njua then went with the clouds, the clouds held him in their armpit. An instant disappeared, and they were there in heaven. They took Seng-lau's daughter to him, and he was very very happy. With gratitude and admiration, he told Ndrau-njua, "If it wasn't for you then I would never have seen my youngest daughter, who went to earth to commit suicide, ever again. I have been looking for my daughter for seven days and seven nights."

So Seng-lau began to revive his daughter. He took the hau-kua-mua-jua and mixed it with water, then sprayed three mouthfuls back and forth over her, and then used the gourd to cover her. Seng-lau's daughter got up and was as lovely as before, in fact, she was even more beautiful.

Seng-lau said, "Ndrau-njua, you helped me rescue my daughter, what would you like to have? I'll give you silver."

Ndrau-njua said, "Silver I don't need. On earth, silver is tears, so I don't need it."¹⁴

"If you won't take silver, then I'll give my horse to you."

Ndrau-njua said, "A horse I don't need. On earth a horse is the stretcher that carries me to my grave, so I don't need it."¹⁵

"If so, then I'll give you my cow."

¹²*lub taub khwj-lwb*: a gourd shaped like a chalice.

¹³*hauv kuab muaj tsuas*: a plant, with mythical powers to revive the dead.

¹⁴*nyiaj yog peb ntiaj-teb nyiaj kua-muag xwb*

¹⁵*nees yog peb ntiaj-teb nees kuas-txaij kuas-nraug xwb* (If one dreams of riding a horse, death will soon follow, according to superstition. This phrase says that the horse symbolizes the stretcher that is used to carry the body to the gravesite.)

Ndrau-njua said, "A cow I don't need. On earth a cow is sacrificed for a funeral ceremony, so I don't need it."¹⁶

"Ah....if you don't want to take anything, what can I give you? Whatever you want, just say it, and I'll give it to you."

Ndrau-njua said, "Ah...I do want something, but perhaps you won't give it to me."

Seng-lau said, "Don't say that, you just tell me and I'll give it to you. You rescued my daughter, if you want something, I'll do it. I'm not lying to you. If you want my daughter, I'll give her to you, too."

Ndrau-njua said, "Father Seng-lau, your daughter I don't need. I just want to have a little bit of the hau-kua-mua-jua.....that's all I want, if you are willing."

Seng-lau said, "Ah...if you want it, I'll give it to you. I have only a little bit left, but if you want it, I'll give you some of mine."

Seng-lau gave one plant of hau-kua-mua-jua and a gourd to Ndrau-njua, and sent him back to earth.

Ndrau-njua came back to earth with the means to revive the humans who die. He reached the mountain top, and stopped to relieve himself. While he was there, people were burning their fields, and the fire came closer and closer to him. In his haste to get away from the fire, he forgot to pick up the plant and the gourd.

This is why the earth does not have the hau-kua-mua-jua plant to save people from dying. If this had not happened, people would now use the plant and the gourd and we would not know death at all.

Storyteller: **Shue Long Vue**

¹⁶nyuj yog peb ntiaj-teb niag nyuj ncig tshuav xwb : the cow is used for all sorts of sacrifices during the year; the most important time is the funeral.

**DAB NEEG
TXOJ KEV HLUB-NIAM HLUB-TXIV**

LEEJ-TWG HLUB-NIAM, HLUB-TXIV MAS LEEJ-TWG LI TAU ZOO. LEEJ-TWG TSIS HLUB-NIAM HLUB-TXIV MAS LEEJ-TWG YUAV TSIS TAU ZOO.

Noob caj puag thaum ub, muaj ob niam-txiv yug tau 3 tug tub. Leej-niam hmoov tsis muaj, leej-niam tuag lawm, tshuav leej-txiv ces nws nrog 3 tug tub nyob.

Nyob-nyob ces 3 tug tub hais leej-txiv tias, "Txiv, koj txawj-txawj saib mem-toj li. Koj sim saib ib lub mem-toj tib qas zoo. Koj tsis tuag no los tseg. Yog koj tuag no ces peb coj koj mus faus¹⁷ rau saib peb puas yuav zoo, mas txiv...?"

No ces leej-txiv txawm teb hais tias, "Lawv nyuag, yuav tsis tas kuv yuav saib ib lub mem-toj cia los mas! Ib tsam tsaus-ntuj nej mus zov pem-dawm ces nej tau xwb, los mas."

Ces tsaus-ntuj 3 tug kwv-tij mus zov pem-dawm li hais, cas nyob-nyob na has los loo ib tug txiv-nees-dawb. Tus kwv-ntxawg tias, "Ntaus los mas, tij-laug!"

Ob niag tij-laug hais tias, "Ab, zoo tug txiv-nees ces cia nws mus nws." Nyob-nyob ho los loo ib tug txiv-nees-txheeb. Tus kwv-ntxawg tias, "Ntaus los mas, tij-laug!"

Ob niag tij-laug hais tias, "Ab, zoo tug txiv-nees ces cia nws mus nws." Nyob-nyob ho los loo ib tug txiv-nees-liab. Tus kwv-ntxawg tias, "Ntaus los mas, tij-laug!"

Ob niag tij-laug hais tias, "Ab, zoo tug txiv-nees ces cia nws mus nws."

No ces tib pliag ntshis, los loo tus tom-qab kawg nkaus, nws yog ib tug txiv-nees-dub. Tus kwv-ntxawg hais tias, "Ntaus los mas, tij-laug!"

Ob niag tij-laug nkawd tseem hais tias, "Zoo tug txiv-nees ces cia nws mus nws." Tus kwv-ntxawg cia li xa tib qws rau ces nrov zuag tib niag roob hlau-dub xwb!!

Ces 3 tug kwv-tij rov-qab los tsev. Txog tsev, leej-txiv nug tias, "Lawv nyuag....nag hmo, nej mus zov es pom dab-tsi?"

Tus tub-ntxawg teb tias, "Awb yaws, txiv e, los tus nees-dawb, nees-txheeb, nees-liab. Kuv kom tij-laug nkawd ntaus, los nkawd tsis ntaus li. Tus nees-dub los txog ces kuv thiaj xa tib qws rau ces poob tib roob hlau-dub xwb!!"

Leej-txiv teb tias, "Awb yaws, nej mas tsis sawm tau laus, nej yuav txog siav me-ntsis ntag."

Cov tub mus muab cov hlau-dub coj los ntaus-ntaus, tau ib pawg thi-hlau-dub. Hmoov tsis muaj, leej-txiv tuag lauj. Peb tug tub mus ua tau ib hwm-txiag, muab leej-txiv coj los zwm rau hauv, muab cov thi-hlau-dub coj los thi-thi hwm-txiag tau khov qas kho. Lawv tis ib txog saw-hlau rau es yuav luag mus nrhiav chaw faus.

¹⁷faus = los

Peb tug kwv-tij txawm luag mus. Lawv luag-luag tau ib xyoos. Ces tus tij-laug tias, "Ab, kwv-nrab thiab kwv-ntxawg, kuv txhuv¹⁸ noj tag lawm, kuv rov-qab mus tuav-txhuv, tuaj peb li mam luag mus." Tus niag tij-laug los txog tsev, nws txawm tias, "Hawb yaws, qas-ncuav-laush, nws tuag tsis tuag, nws twb tuag nws lawm, es tseem yuav mus muab qas-ncuav-laush, luag ua luaj no. Rov-qab los nrog tej poj-niam-tub-se ua noj ua haus. Cia kwv-ntxawg nkawd nquag los nkawd kav-tsj luag mus. Kuv tsis rov-qab mus lawm." Ces niag tij-laug txawm tsis rov mus tiag.

Kwv-nrab thiab kwv-ntxawg nkawd ob tug txawm luag-luag mus tau 2 xyoos txwm-nkaus. Tus kwv-nrab hais tias, "Ab, kwv-ntxawg! Koj maj-mam luag txiv mus nawb! Kuv txhuv noj tag lawm. Kuv rov-qab mus tuav-txhuv thiab mus hais tij-laug tuaj es peb mam luag mus ntxiv." Ces tus kwv-nrab rov-qab los lawm thiab laus.

Thaum kwv-nrab nws los txog tsev, tus niag tij-laug hais rau kwv-nrab tias, "Awb yaws, qas-ncuav-laush, nws tuag tsis tuag, nws twb tuag nws lawm, es tseem yuav mus muab qas-ncuav-laush, luag tus tsi ua luaj. Kwv-ntxawg nquag, los-sis cia kwv-ntxawg nws luag nws mus. Wb rov-qab los nrog tej poj-tub-se ua noj ua haus."

Ces tus tij-laug thiab kwv-nrab nkawd txawm tsis rov-qab mus lawm tiag. Tshuav tib tug kwv-ntxawg xwb ces nws niaj hnuv luag nws txiv mus.

Luag-luag txhuv noj tag, nws mus nrhiav zog ua tau txhuv, nws rov-qab los luag dua. Nws luag-luag, mov noj tag ho rov-qab mus ua zog tau mov.

Nws rov-qab los luag ces luag-luag li no txwm-nkaus peb xyoos. Txoj saw-hlau mus tu rau pem ib lub zos Hmoob, pem Hmoob qaum-tsev. Tus kwv-ntxawg txawm mus qiv Hmoob tuam-txhob-hlau,¹⁹ los khawb qhov faus leej-txiv. Nws khawb-khawb mus txog hauv na has cas pom ib tug nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab nyob hauv! Ces nws khaws tau tus nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab, nws muab nws txiv faus tag. Nws xav tias, "Ab, luag-luag txiv tau 3 xyoos no, tsis tau dab-tsi, tau tus nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab no xwb, ces cia kuv lam sim coj mus koom saib lauj..."

Ib hmos ntsaws 3 lub txhuv, tag-kis nws tso tau 3 txiag-nyiaj. Ib hmos ntsaws 3 lub txhuv, tag-kis nws tso tau 3 txiag-kub.

Tus kwv-ntxawg koom-koom ces nws nplua-nplua-nuj, ces qaib, npua, nyuj, twm, nees, puas tsav puas yam mas nroo-qas-ntws tog vaj tog tsev, hos nyiaj-kub luam taw qas lawg.

Tus kwv-nrab tuaj pom ces nws hais tias, "Awb, neb rov los lawm, neb tsis tuaj nrog kuv luag txiv, ces kuv ua siab ntuj-ntev luag. Txoj saw-hlau mus tu rau pem Hmoob zos. Kuv mus qiv Hmoob tuam-txhob-hlau los khawb qhov faus txiv. Kuv khawb-khawb mus na has kuv pom ib tug nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab nyob hauv. Kuv khaws tus Ceeb-vuaj-vuab. Kuv muab txiv faus tag, ces kuv tias lam coj nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab los koom saib puas yuav zoo li cas? Ces nim-no kuv thiaj muaj li no...."

¹⁸txhuv = mov

¹⁹tuam-txhob-hlau = taum-txhob-hlau

Niag kwv-nrab teb tias, "Awb, yog li mas ho, muab rau kuv coj mus koom thiab saib?" Ces tus kwv-ntxawg txawm muab tus nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab rau tus kwv-nrab coj mus koom.

Ib hmos ntsaws 2 lub txhuv, tag-kis nws tso tau 2 txiag-nyiaj. Ib hmos ntsaws 2 lub txhuv, tag-kis nws tso tau 2 txiag-kub.

Tus kwv-nrab nyuam-qhuav pib muaj tib nyov, ces tus tij-laug ho tuaj pom tus kwv-nrab. Nws hais tias, "Kwv-nrab! Kwv-ntxawg neb mus faus kuv txiv, es ua cas neb yuav mus muaj nyiaj, muaj kub, ua luaj li?"

Kwv-nrab teb tias, "Koj, wb tsis kam nrog kwv-ntxawg luag txiv mus faus, es cia kwv-ntxawg tib leeg luag xwb. Ces txoj saw-hlau uas luag txiv mus tu rau pem Hmoob zos. Nws mus qiv Hmoob tuam-txhob-hlau los khawb qhov faus txiv. Ces kwv-ntxawg nws khawb-khawb mus, nws pom ib tug nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab. Ces nws faus txiv tag. Nws thiaj coj tus Ceeb-vuaj-vuab los koom, ces nws txawm muaj-muaj nyiaj-kub, tsiaj-txhu, nyuj, twm, nees, qaib, npua, nroo-qas ntws, thiab nyiaj-kub luam taw qas lawg. Kwv-ntxawg mas nplua-nuj kawg. Kuv mus pom ces kuv ho coj tus nyuag Ceeb-vuaj-vuab los koom es kuv nyuam-qhuav muaj li no xwb!"

Niag tij-laug hais tias, "Yog no ho, muab rau kuv coj mus koom, saib kuv puas yuav muaj thiab?"

Kwv-nrab hais tias, "Yuav coj sis coj mus mas..." Tus niag tij-laug nws coj tus Ceeb-vuaj-vuab mus koom. Ces ib hmos ntsaws 1 lub txhuv, tag-kis nws tso tau 1 txiag-nyiaj. Ib hmos ntsaws 1 lub txhuv, tag-kis nws tso tau 1 txiag kub. Nws koom-koom, nws twb pib muaj tib nyov.

Nws txawm xav tias, "Ab, tam tseeb lub qhov yau hwm!! Muab hau-riam tsheb kom lub qhov loj me-ntsis, xwv thiaj li ntsaws tau ntau lub txhuv es thiaj yuav muaj sai." Nws txawm muab hau-riam tsheb-tsheb Ceeb-vuaj-vuab lub qhov-ncauj, tau ib pawg hmoov daj-qas-ntshuv rau ntawd. Nws txawm tib tshuab cov hmoov, ces tus Ceeb-vuaj-vuab ya plaws mus saum-ntuj tam-sim ntawd!!

Ces niag tij-laug tsuas tau raws²⁰ li 1 xyoo uas nws luag nws txiv mus faus.

Tus kwv-nrab tsuas tau raws li 2 xyoo uas nws luag nws txiv mus faus.

Tus kwv-ntxawg nws tau raws li 3 xyoo uas nws luag nws txiv mus faus.

Qhov no qhia tau tias, Cov tub-ki uas tau koom niam, koom txiv los lawd. Lawv yuav tau nqi zog raws li lawv dej tes num uas lawv ua tag los!

Tus hais yog **Khu-ntxawg Hawj**

²⁰raws li = tam li

FOLKTALE
**LOVE AND CARE FOR²¹ YOUR PARENTS:
YOU WILL PROSPER**

Long long ago, there was a couple who raised three sons. Unfortunately, the mother died, leaving the father to live with his three sons.

One day the three sons said to their father, "Father....you know how to identify the right place for a gravesite²². You go find a very good place for your gravesite, and if you don't die, then fine. If you do die, we will take you there to bury you, and then we will see if we prosper in the future....eh, Father?"

So the father said, "Ah, you boys.....it is not necessary for me to look for one²³. This evening you go over there into the high valley and watch...you will get something."²⁴

When evening came, the three brothers went into the high valley to wait. A while later, a beautiful white stallion came galloping by. Young Brother said, "Hit him, brothers!"²⁵

The two older brothers said, "Ah, this beautiful white stallion should be allowed to go his own way." A moment later, a gold-colored horse came galloping by. Young Brother said, "Hit that one then, old brothers!"²⁶

They both answered, "Ah, this beautiful stallion should be allowed to go his own way." A short while later, a beautiful red stallion came galloping by. Young Brother said, "Hit this one, brothers!"²⁷

The two of them answered, "Ah, this beautiful stallion should be allowed to go his own way." An instant later, the very last horse, a black stallion,²⁸ galloped by. Young Brother said, "Hit it, brothers!!"

The two brothers still answered the same, "This beautiful stallion should be allowed to go his own way." So Young Brother suddenly picked up a stick and hit the

²¹ *hlub* translates as 'love', but it is the type of love that implies taking care of and being responsible for someone: *hlub-niam hlub-txiv* means to love and care for your mother, love and care for your father. Persons who do not have obligations and responsibilities towards one another cannot *hlub* one another.

²² looking for the right gravesite (*saib mem-toj*): If someone is buried in a favorable site, then good fortune and prosperity will come to his sons and daughters. If a gravesite is in a less favorable spot, then descendants can expect various kinds of misfortune (see notes).

²³ The sons want the father, skilled at *saib mem-toj* to take time to point out the right spot before he dies. The father means that it's not necessary for him to have the right gravesite, because the boys will receive their 'good fortune' while he's still alive, if they recognize what to do.

²⁴ They will receive their 'good fortune' if they know what to do.

²⁵ Young Brother suspects that this is a clue to their fortune. In fact, if they had hit this one (*nees dawb*), it would have turned into a pile of silver.

²⁶ *nees txheeb*: would have turned into a pile of gold

²⁷ *nees liab*: would have turned into a pile of copper

²⁸ *nees dub*: would have turned into a pile of iron

horse himself. With a 'swoosh', a sound like a mudslide, the horse turned into a great pile of black iron.

The brothers returned to their home. Their father asked, "My sons, you went to the high valley yesterday...what did you see?"

The youngest son answered, "Ah ya, Father....a white stallion, a gold-colored stallion, and then a red stallion came. I told my brothers to hit each one, but they didn't hit any of them at all. When the black stallion came, I hit it with a stick, and it fell into a great pile of black iron."

Their father said, "Ah ya, too bad...you should have taken the first three. You will have to suffer a little bit now."

The sons took the black iron and forged it into a great bale of binding wire. Unfortunately, their father died. The three sons made a coffin for him. They took their father and put him into the coffin, and wrapped the binding wire around the coffin until it was tight and secure. They connected an iron chain to the coffin in order to drag it.

The three brothers dragged and dragged the coffin, looking for the right gravesite,²⁹ for one year.

Old Brother said, "Ah, Middle Brother and Young Brother, my rice is all gone. I will go home to pound some rice, and then I will come back to help you drag the coffin." When Old Brother reached home, he said, "Hah ya, that old moldy rice-cake, dead or not, he's finished and gone, why should we still drag him around so much? I've returned to my wife and children, so I'll stay here to earn my living,³⁰ and let Middle Brother and Young Brother waste their energy dragging him around. I will not go back to help them." So Old Brother did not go back.

Middle Brother and Young Brother both dragged and dragged their father for two years. Middle Brother said, "Ah, Young Brother, you go ahead and drag our father. My rice is gone. I will return home to pound some rice, and to tell Old Brother to come help us drag our father some more." So Middle Brother returned home also. When he arrived home, Old Brother said to him, "Ah ya, that old moldy rice-cake....dead or not, he's finished and gone, and why should we continue to drag him around so much? Young Brother has energy, let him drag our father. We will both stay home with our families and earn our livings."

So neither Old Brother nor Middle Brother returned to help Young Brother drag their father to bury, leaving only Young Brother, who each day dragged his father.

²⁹When the iron chain breaks, that will be the right spot for burying the father, and that spot will hold the key to their 'good fortune'. Dragging the coffin this way was necessary since there was no one to *saib mem-toj*.

³⁰*ua noj ua haus*: literally, to 'make food make drink'

Dragging and dragging him, and when his rice was all gone, he stopped and exchanged his labor for some hulled rice,³¹ and then returned to drag again. He dragged and dragged until his rice ran out, stopped to exchange his strength for some cooked rice, and returned to drag his father some more.

He dragged and dragged his father for exactly three years. The iron chain finally broke on the uphill side of a Hmong village. Young Brother went there to borrow a Hmong digging stick³² to dig a grave for his father. He dug and dug down deep, and there in the ground, what did he see but a Dyeng-vua-vua!³³

He picked up the Dyeng-vua-vua, and put his father in the hole to finish burying him. He said to himself, "Ah, I've dragged and dragged my father for three years, and I got nothing. All I've got is this Dyeng-vua-vua, so I'll take it home and care for it."

One night, he fit three grains of rice³⁴ into the Dyeng-vua-vua's mouth, and the next morning they had become three ounces of silver. The next night, he fit three grains of rice into the Dyeng-vua-vua's mouth, and the next morning they had become three ounces of gold.

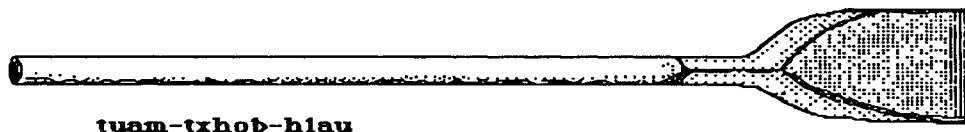
Young Brother kept the Dyeng-vua-vua, and after a while he became very wealthy. He had chickens, pigs, cows, buffaloes, horses, all kinds of animals, milling around his house and garden. He had silver and gold, so much that he could not walk without tripping over the piles of money.

Middle Brother happened to come by and see all of this, and he said, "Young Brother! You went to bury our father, so why do you have all this silver and gold, so much that you trip over it like this, and all these animals, overflowing into the village?"

Young Brother replied, "Ah, you two returned home, and did not come back to help me drag our father to bury him. I was very patient, and dragged him on and on

³¹ *ua zog tau txhuv* or *ua zog tau mov*: literally, 'do strength get rice'.

³² *tuam-txhob-hlau* or *taum-txhob-hlau*: tool used for digging post holes for the supporting poles of a house. It's a long wooden pole with a forged iron tip, curved and sharpened along the digging edge.



³³ *ceeb-vuaj-vuab*: a mythical creature, somewhat like an angel, that lives in the sky, but that can assume any size and can live in any place. It can carry out someone's wishes, in this case, the father's wishes to reward his sons who care for him properly. It has been sent to this spot to wait for the son to come, the iron chain to break, and the son to dig the grave.

³⁴ Here the Dyeng-vua-vua is very small, so that its mouth is big enough for only three grains of rice.

until the iron chain broke on the uphill side of a Hmong village. I went there and borrowed a Hmong digging stick to dig a grave for our father. I dug and dug, and I saw a Dyeng-vua-vua, then I finished burying our father, and decided to take the Dyeng-vua-vua home to care for. Now I have just about this much."

Middle Brother said, "Ah, if that's so, then give me the Dyeng-vua-vua, and I'll take it home to care for." So Young Brother gave the Dyeng-vua-vua to Middle Brother to take home to care for.

One night he fit two grains of rice³⁵ into the Dyeng-vua-vua's mouth, and the next morning they had turned into two ounces of silver. The next night, he fit two grains of rice into the Dyeng-vua-vua's mouth, and the next morning, they had become two ounces of gold.

Middle Brother was just beginning to become a little bit rich, when Old Brother happened to pass by and see Middle Brother, and he said, "Middle Brother! You and Young Brother went to drag our father to bury him, so why do you have so much silver, so much gold, like this?!"

Middle Brother replied, "You and I were not willing to go with Young Brother to drag our father to bury him. Young Brother, all alone, dragged and dragged our father until the iron chain broke on the uphill side of a Hmong village. He went there to borrow a Hmong digging stick to dig a grave to bury our father. He dug and dug, and he saw a Dyeng-vua-vua. He finished burying our father, and he took the Dyeng-vua-vua home to care for. Then he became rich, and has silver, gold, animals—cows, water buffaloes, horses, chickens, pigs—all over the house and garden, and so much silver and gold that he cannot walk without tripping over it. Young Brother is very wealthy. I went to see him, and I took the Dyeng-vua-vua home to care for, and I am just beginning to have this much."

Old Brother said, "Right! So give me the Dyeng-vua-vua to take home to care for, and I will see whether or not I become rich, too."

Middle Brother said, "If you want to, then take it."

Old Brother took the Dyeng-vua-vua home to care for, and one night he fit one grain of rice³⁶ into the Dyeng-vua-vua's mouth. The next morning it had turned into one ounce of silver. The next night he fit one grain of rice into the Dyeng-vua-vua's mouth, and the next morning it had become one ounce of gold. He continued to care for the Dyeng-vua-vua until he just started to become a little bit rich.

He thought, "Ah....goodness! The hole is so small! I'll take the point of a knife and drill out a little larger hole, so it can hold more grains of rice, and I'll get rich sooner."

³⁵Magically, the mouth is now smaller; only two grains of rice can fit.

³⁶Now only one grain of rice will fit.

He took the point of a knife, twisted and drilled the mouth of the Dyeng-vua-vua, producing a little bit of bright yellow dust. He blew the dust away.....causing the Dyeng-vua-vua to fly suddenly away into the sky!

The Old Brother only received as much as he deserved for the one year that he dragged his father to bury him.

The Middle Brother only received as much as he deserved for the two years that he dragged his father to bury him.

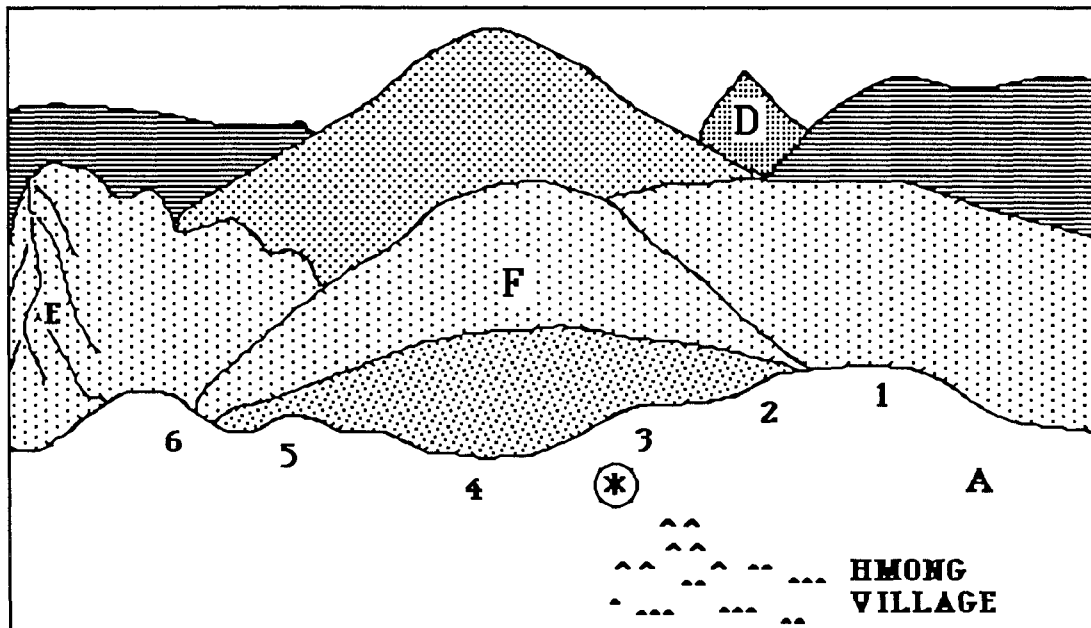
The Young Brother received as much as he deserved for the three years that he dragged his father to bury him.

This story tells: *The children who have cared for their parents will receive a reward that is equal to the extent of their efforts.*

Storyteller: **Khou Yer Her**

NOTES LOVE AND CARE FOR YOUR PARENTS

The information below is based on a translation of Jean Mottin's text in *CONTES ET LEGENDES HMONG BLANC*, pages 131-133. It relates only a few of the factors that one evaluates in locating the right *mem-toj*. Only an expert knows all the factors and the implications for the descendants. (The art of locating a favorable gravesite is called 'geomancy').



* site of the grave, the body lying 'along' the mountain chain, rather than 'across' the mountain (which is the Chinese style of burial). In the story, this was perhaps where the iron chain broke, on the uphill side of a Hmong village.

- A. the ground can be visualized as a person, lying down. (1) is the head; (2) is the mouth; (3) is the chest; (4) is the hip; (5) is the knees; (6) is the feet. The most favorable spot for the grave is the chest, since this is the location of the heart and lungs, necessary for life in the next world.
- B. If there are mountains on the left of the body, and they are more numerous than those on the right of the body, then it will be the sons who have a good future. If

the mountains on the right are more numerous, then it will be the daughters who enjoy a good future.

- C. If the mountains surrounding the gravesite are determined to have the 'majesty of the dragon' (*zaj hwj chim*) , then the offspring will be intelligent, respectable, and persons of value. If it is the 'majesty of the tiger' (*tsov hwj chim*) that's seen, then the offspring will be unsuccessful and miserable.
- D. If there is within sight an isolated, sharply pointed peak (thief's peak or *lub roob ua tub-sab xauj*), then the offspring will suffer at the hands of thieves, or may even be thieves themselves.
- E. If there is a smaller chain of mountains running perpendicular to the main chain of mountains, and perpendicular to the body in the grave, then the offspring will suffer legal problems.
- F. If in the perpendicular chain of mountains, there are two branches, curving towards the grave like the jaws of pincers or pliers, then the offspring will meet a violent death.

KEEB-KWM NTAWM YAWM KHU-NTXAWG HAWJ

Nwg muaj noob-nyoog le ntawm 85 xyoos. Nwg yug nyob rua lub zog hu ua As-laas. Nwg lug luj hlub nyob rua lub zog Phwv-lis, Naaj-haab, Phwv-los-taij, Phwv-xoom, 3 zag moog-moog lug-lug hab lug rua Phwv-xov, es lug yuav quas-puj rua lub zog Poos-xaas, hab lug rua Phwv-xoom. Nwg le maam tsiv lug rua Naab-npab hab lug rua Puj-koob, lub teb-chaws nplog tau hloov nom hloov tswv ces txhaj tau moos lib rog rua Naab-fien hab ntau-ntau lub zog txhaj le maaj-maam txav tuaj moog txug rua teb-chaws Thaib.

Nwg nam-txiv kws yug nwg hu ua Num-kim Hawj, nwg tug tij-lauj hu ua Vaam-nruag, nwg tug kwv hu ua Paaj-kaws, nwg yawm hu ua Khu-laum.

Has txug peb Moob tej kev lig kev cai mas nwg kuj pum zoo tas ca cov hluas muab sau tseg ca. Yog tas tsi muab sau tseg, thaum cov laug dlua taag lawm ces yuav tsi muaj leej-twg paub txug Moob, tsi taag le ntawd nwg tseem tau has rua nwg tug vauv, Xeev-nruag Xyooj, ntau zaaj has txug nwg lub neej kuas tug vauv muab sau ca lawm. Yog leej-twg xav paub los nug tau ntawm nwg tug vauv.*

Nwg tuaj txug teb-chaws nua yog xyoo 12/1980. Taam sim nuav nwg nrug nwg tug tub yau, Txooj-tsaab, nyob ua-ke. Nwg laug heev lawm nwg tshuav 7 tug tub, 3 tug ntshais, 2 tug nyob rua teb-chaws nua, 1 tug nyob rua Faab-kis teb.

Khu-ntxawg Hawj
Illinois

*Xeev-nruag Xyooj

BIOGRAPHY OF KHOU-YER HER

Khou-yer Her is Hmong Leng, and is about 85 years old. He was born in a village called Ah-Lang (*As-laas*), in northeastern Laos. He grew up in the villages of Peu-Lee (*Phwv-lis*), Nang-Hang (*Naa-j-haab*), Peu-Lo-Tai (*Phwv-los-taij*), and Peu-Song (*Phwv-xoom*), moving back and forth between them several times. He then moved to Peu-So (*Phwv-xov*), and went to marry a girl from the village of Pong-Sang (*Poos-xaas*), after which they moved back to Peu-Song.

Eventually he moved to Nang-Ba district (*Naab-npab*), central Laos, and lived here and there, finally moving back to Pou-Kong (*Puj-koob*). The country was in turmoil in the late 1960's, so he moved to the village of Song-Lai (*Xoom-lais*). When Laos changed governments in 1975, he and his family became refugees within the country, moving to Nang-Fien, and many other villages, moving gradually towards Thailand, where they finally escaped as refugees.

Khou-yer is *Hmoob Hawj* ; Her (*Hawj*) is his clan name. Of his natural parents, his father's name was Nou-Kee (*Num-kim*), his older brother was Wang-Doua (*Vaam-nruas*), and his younger brother was Pang-Ker (*Paaj-kaws*); his grandfather was Khou-Lao (*Khu-laum*).

Talking about Hmong culture, customs and ways of life, he agrees that the young ones should write them down to preserve them. If they don't keep any of the old ways, then when the old ones are gone, there will be no one who will know about Hmong. He has told his son-in-law, Seng Doua Xiong (*Xeev-nruas Xyooj*) much of what he has in his mind, so that his son-in-law can record and preserve what he knows. If anyone wants to know, they can ask his son-in-law.

He came to this country in December, 1980. He now lives with his young son, Chong Chang (*Txooj-tsaab*) in West Chicago, Illinois. He is already very old, and has seven sons and three daughters, two in this country and one in France.

DAB NEEG
NUJ-NQIS KEV TSIM-TXOM TIB-NEEG

Puag noob caj thaum ub, Kob-yim-tshaj nkawd ob niam-txiv txom txom nyem, pluag pluag kawg. Kob-yim-tshaj haus haus yeeb lig lig, ces nws mam mus ua teb. Kob-yim-tshaj mus txog nram kev-tshuam ua cas nws pom ob niam-txiv nab tuaj sib qaub nrad. Ib tug nab-pluaj-ce, ib tug nab-ntsuab-zag tuaj sib deev nrad. Kob-yim-tshaj xav tias, "Ua cas ob tug nab no yuav tuaj sib qaub qhov no? Kuv muab tua pov-tseg saib!"

Kob-yim-tshaj rho hlo ntaj tib ntag na has, ob tug nab nthuav sua ces. Teg tug nab-ntsuab-zag tu nrho ua ob ya. Teg tug nab-pluaj-ce ntsis tw tu nrho xwb.

Niam nab-pluaj-ce txawm mus hais rau nws tus txiv nab-pluaj-ce tias, "Koj txiv lauj! Hnub no, kuv mus de zaub-npuas txog pem kev-tshuam. Kob-yim-tshaj tus dev kob huam, nws haus haus yeeb pov khawv. Nws tuaj mus ua teb ces nws cia li tib ntag kuv taw tiab tu nrho. Yog kuv dhia tsis dim ces kuv tuag; kuv tsis pom koj las koj txiv."

Tus txiv nab tias, "Yog li mas, Kob-yim-tshaj phem hwv tiag! Cia ib tsam tsaus-ntuj tso, kuv mus nyob hauv nws qab-txag. Thaum nws los pw kuv muab nws tom kom tuag." Ces ib tsam tsaus-ntuj txiv nab-pluaj-ce tuaj nyob hauv qab-txag tos.

Kob-yim-tshaj nws noj noj hmo tag, nws yuav mus pw. Cuag li ntuj pab, nws tham rau nws poj-niam mloog tias, "Koj niam os, hnub no mas, kuv mus teb, kuv mus txog nram kev-tshuam kuv ntsib ob niam-txiv nab sib qaub nram kev. Kuv yuav muab tua kom ob tug tuag tib-si, tiam-sis kuv tib ntag rau na has nthuav sua. Tus niam dhia dhau, raug tus ntsis tw tu nrho xwb. Hos raug tus txiv nab-ntsuab-zag tu nrho ob ya tuag lawm tiag."

Ces txiv nab-pluaj-ce nyob hauv qab-txag hnov dheev lauj!

Nws txawm teb nkaus tias, "Es, tiag, tiag los?"

Kob-yim-tshaj teb tias, "Tiag tiag lauj."

Nab-pluaj-ce tias, "Kuv poj-niam yeej tsis tsheej, yeej ib txwm deev hluas-nraug. Nws los dag rau kuv tias nws dua nws kev koj cia li tua nws. Yog li koj tua nab-ntsuab-zag tuag lawm, tiag tiag los?"

Kob-yim-tshaj teb tias, "Kuv tua tuag lawm."

Txiv nab-pluaj-ce tias, "Nws loj kuv me, nws yeej deev kuv poj-niam nawb, kuv muab tsis tau. Koj pab tau kuv lawm mas zoo heev, kuv sim mus xyuas saib."

Kob-yim-tshaj teb tias, "Mus koj sim mus xyuas." Nab-pluaj-ce ntaug lees mus txog nram kev-tshuam cas tuag tug chev cees nrad tiag.

Nws rov-qab los txog, nws hais rau Kob-yim-tshaj tias, "Koj pab tau kuv lawm, kuv poj-niam deev hluas-nraug tiag, kuv muab tsis tau. Zaum no koj tua nws tus hluas-nraug tuag lawm, kuv muaj lus zoo siab ntau, kuv tsis muaj dab-tsi rau koj. Tag-kis koj sawv ntxov ntxov mus tim koj thaj-teb-qos. Koj pom dab-tsi los koj yuav dab-tsi."

Tag-kis, Kob-yim-tshaj sawv ntxov tsees, nws mus txog ntua tim thaj-teb-qos. Ntuj qhua teb nkig tsis muaj dab-tsi, nws ntsia qab-teb quam-teb tsis pom dab-tsi. Nws saib saum daim nplooj-qos muaj ib lub me lwg-dej dawb dawb nyob saud. Muab de yuav nqa los, nqa qhov qaij qhov, ntog lam rau sab. Nws xav xav ntshai yuav nchuav ces cia muab haus kiag lauj.

Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj muab haus kiag na has pob-ntseg to qhov ntshua lauj....hnov me lus kab, lus ntsaum, lus me nas, me noog.....

Kob-yim-tshaj mus ua teb. Tuag ib tug yaj pem roob. Uab-lag txawm los hu Kob-yim-tshaj hais tias, "Kob-yim-tshaj, tuag ib tug yaj pem roob no es koj tuaj hlais, koj noj nqaij, kuv noj hnyuv."

Kob-yim-tshaj txawm mus hlais, coj poj-niam me-nyuam mus hlais. Kob-yim-tshaj siab txawm phem, nqa tag nrho me plab me hnyuv huv tib-si tsis pub Uab-lag noj.

Uab-lag chim chim, mob mob siab. Tau ob peb hnuv tom-qab, tuag ib tug niag qhev suav tuaj txiav zaub-nees pem roob. Uab-lag rov-qab los hu dua, "Kob-yim-tshaj!! Tuag ib tug yaj pem roob no es koj tuaj hlais, koj noj nqaij, kuv noj hnyuv."

Kob-yim-tshaj coj poj-niam me-nyuam mus txog pem ntug teb. "Ua cas tuag ib

tug niag qhev suav tuaj txiav zaub-nees xwb?! Ua li mas tuag ze yus ntug teb, yog luag tuaj nrhiav tau, ntshai yus yuav txhaum plaub pau??"

"Ces cia muab luag pov-tseg xav...."

Kob-yim-tshaj nyuam-qhuav nthos nkaus ko-taw yuav luag....hnov suav tuaj nrhiav, suav tuaj ti nkaus lauj, suav pom kiag. Suav hais tias, "Ua cas koj yuav tua neeg? Tua peb tus qhev?" Muab Kob-yim-tshaj ntaus, muab khi, cab mus rau suav Huab-tais.

Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj mus hais rau suav Huab-tais tias, "Thov koj lauj, vim li cas kuv ho yuav tuaj pom tus suav no? Tsis yog kuv tua. Kuv mas paub lus kab, lus ntsaum, lus nas, lus noog. Vim Uab-lag los hu tias tuag ib tug yaj pem roob kom kuv mus hlais, kuv noj nqaij, nws noj hnyuv. No ces kuv tuaj mus hlais. Thawj thawj zaug, kuv txawm muab me nqaij me hnyuv nqa los noj tag, tsis pub rau Uab-lag.

"Zaum tom-qab Uab-lag thiaj los dag kuv; kuv tsis paub, kuv tuaj cas yog tuag tus qhev suav no. Kuv thiaj li xav hais tias tsis luag los tuaj txog lawm, tuag ze ntug vaj ntug teb. Kuv thiaj li yuav muab luag pov-tseg no, ces lawv thiaj tuaj pom lawm. Thov nej txhob tua kuv."

Suav Huab-tais thiaj hais tias, "Yog koj paub lus kab, lus ntsaum tiag, no tsheev tsawm tua, tub-mab-tub-qhe. Kob-yim-tshaj tus neeg loj leeb no, tsis lam paub. Hauv kuv lub tsev no, hauv qab-txag ntsaum coob coob mas nkag ib txog kev luaj nkaus li daim nplooj-ntse, tau peb xyoos no lawm nawb. Kom koj mus mloog cov ntsaum saib. Yog koj paub no mas muab koj tso. Yog koj tsis paub no mas muab koj tua."

Kob-yim-tshaj teb tias, "Ua li los, ua li ntawd los mas," thiaj coj Kob-yim-tshaj mus mloog thiab mloog.

Ntsaum thiaj hais li no rau Kob-yim-tshaj tias, "Hauv Huab-tais lub qab-txag no mas muaj 9 hub zib-nyiaj zib-kub. Peb noj tau 3 xyoos no, mas peb noj tag lawm 3 hub mas tseem tshuav 6 hub, mas peb tseem yuav noj 6 xyoo ntxiv. Peb thiaj mam li noj tag."

Kob-yim-tshaj hais rau Huab-tais. Huab-tais thiaj tias, "Ua li no tiag los dag? Kuv sim txhij tub-mab-tub-qhe mus khawb hauv. Yog muaj 6 hub zib-nyiaj zib-kub no mas muab koj tso. Yog koj dag xwb, muab tsis tau, muab koj tua tam-sim no."

Kob-yim-tshaj teb tias, "Ua li los mas khawb los khawb."

Ces thiaj txhij tub-mab-tub-qhe tuaj khawb. Cas tau 6 hub zib-nyiaj zib-kub tiag! Qab ...tsis ...qab...os... qab-zib nplaum tib ntxiag. Huab-tais noj nyooj noj nyooj, noj yaim ntiv-tes, noj yaim ntiv-tes.

Ces Huab-tais hais no, 'Kob-yim-tshaj, tus dev dag loj leeb no, ua cas yuav mus dag ua luaj li? Hauv kuv lub qab-txag no yeej muaj zib naj!! Koj dag xwb, kuv yeej faus rau hauv.

"Yog koj paub diam, ntawm kuv tog tsev no muaj ib tug ntoo loj loj. Nyob ntawd muaj ob niam-txiv noog quaj tag hnuv tag hmo li. Koj mus mloog, hos yog koj paub tias ob niam-txiv noog ua cas yuav quaj ua luaj no. Yog koj paub tiag no mas muab koj tso. Yog koj tsis paub, muab koj tua pov-tseg."

Kob-yim-tshaj hais tias, "Mloog los mloog thiab tiag," thiaj mus mloog ob niam-txiv noog quaj...quaj...quaj tag. Ces Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj los hais rau Huab-tais tias, "Txiv Huab-tais, ob niam-txiv noog no mus muab tau nkauj-zag ib txog plaub-hau puag nram Plhob-yaj-kum-hiav los ntev 9 dag. Tus txiv hais tias, 'Yuav kom muab thi lub ncauj-zes, cua hlob thiaj tsis poob thiaj ruaj.' Tus niam hais tias, 'Yuav kom muab pua lub qab zeg thiaj sov.' Ob niam-txiv hais tsis hum thiaj sib-ceg sib-ceg tag hnuv, tag hmo. Vim yog txoj plaub-hau ntawd xwb."

Huab-tais tias, "Tam tseeb, yog li no mas txhij tub-mab-tub-qhe mus ntov xyuas lub zes noog ntawd. Yog muaj ib txog plaub-hau raws li koj hais, muab koj tso, hos yog tsis muaj, koj dag, muab koj tua."

Kob-yim-tshaj tias, "Ua li los ua li, kuv yeem thiab tiag." Tub-mab-tub-qhe mus ntov tus ntoo vau, mus xyuas. Ua cas lub zes noog muaj ib txog plaub-hau ntev 9 dag tiag las.

Huab-tais suav txawm tias, "Kob-yim-tshaj, tus neeg ntawm kod dag hwm thiab!

"Yog koj mus muab tau nkauj-zag los rau kuv ua poj-niam no ces tso koj. Yog koj muab tsis tau no ces muab koj tua."

Kob-yim-tshaj tias, "Yuav muab los muab thiab tiag."

Kob-yim-tshaj mus muab nkauj-zag rau Huab-tais ua poj-niam.

Kob-yim-tshaj mus ces teb-chaws hais nchuav-qas-nthwv, ntiaj-teb hais nroo nreb tias, "Kob-yim-tshaj yuav mus muab nkauj-zag!"

Kob-yim-tshaj mus 3 hnuv mus txog rau lub zos suav. Suav paub tias Kob-yim-tshaj tuaj mus muab nkauj-zag. Kob-yim-tshaj mus pw hauv ob niam-txiv suav tsev.

Ob niam-txiv suav sab-laj tias, "Kob-yim-tshaj no nws tuaj hauv Huab-tais xub-ntiaj tuaj, yuav tuaj mus muab nyab rau Huab-tais. No mas tsis muaj dab-tsi, ces tag-kis muab wb ob niam-txiv os ntawd, ib tug tua rau Kob-yim-tshaj noj lauj."

Ob niam-txiv os nyob hauv qab-lawj, ob niam-txiv os hnov. Nkawd txawm sab-laj tias, "Koj txiv!! Lawv yuav muab wb tua rau Kob-yim-tshaj noj. No mas yog muab kuv tua lawd, los yuav tseg koj ua yawg-ntsuag. Yog muab koj tua lawd, los yuav tseg kuv ua poj-ntsuam, yuav ua li cas? Kheev Kob-yim-tshaj txhob noj wb mas, wb thiaj dim. Yog noj mas, kawg koj tsis tuag, los kuv tuag."

Kob-yim-tshaj hnov lawm lauj, ces nws txawm tsis noj. Tag-kis ces suav txawm ntes tus poj-os los, yuav tua rau Kob-yim-tshaj noj. Kob-yim-tshaj tsis noj (tsis kam kom tua). Kob-yim-tshaj hais tias, "Kuv tsis noj....ua cas los kuv tsis noj."

Ob niam-txiv suav tias, "Noj xwb!! Koj pom-yim tuaj nom-tswv Huab-tais kam diam, mas noj xwb xwb. Noj los tua, tsis noj los tua."

Sib-yig, sib-yig. Kob-yim-tshaj hais tias, "Yog neb siab tsis kheev tiag, los cia muab rau kuv nqa mus, es kuv nqhis thaum twg, kuv mam tua noj." Ob niam-txiv suav thiaj muab niag poj-os rau Kob-yim-tshaj nqa.

Kob-yim-tshaj nqa nqa mus tau 3 hnuv. Poj-os nteg tau 3 lub qe. Kob-yim-tshaj muab niag poj-os tso rov los. Nws nqa 3 lub qe ntawd mus.

Kob-yim-tshaj mus mus txog rau ib lub zos suav dua; nws mus pw suav zos. Hauv ob niam-txiv suav muaj ob niam-txiv twm thiab ib tug me-nyuam-twm. Thaum mus pw ob niam-txiv suav txawm sab-laj tias, "Kob-yim-tshaj tuaj mus muab nyab rau Huab-tais, ces tsis muaj dab-tsi tua ua zaub rau Kob-yim-tshaj noj. Tag-kis ntshai yuav muab ib tug twm tua rau Kob-yim-tshaj ua zaub nawb, koj txiv?"

Txiv suav tias, "Yuav tua los, tua li thiab tiag."

Ob niam-txiv twm thiab tus me-nyuam-twm hnov lauj!! Ib tsam cov niam-tub twm

txawm sab-laj, "Koj txiv las!! Wb tus tswv hais tias, 'Kob-yim-tshaj tuaj lawm mas tsis muaj dab-tsi. Yuav muab peb ib tug tua rau Kob-yim-tshaj noj!' Muab koj tua, los yuav tseg kuv ua poj-ntsuam. Muab kuv tua los yuav tseg koj ua yawg-ntsuag. Muab wb tus me-nyuam tua, los ntshai wb tsis muaj me-nyuam lawm. Wb yug tau tib leeg tub xwb, yuav ua li cas??"

Ces txawm hnov tus me-nyuam-twm hais no, "Yog Kob-yim-tshaj noj neb thiab noj kuv lawm, mas Kob-yim-tshaj yeej mus muab tsis tau nkauj-zag, huab-tais zaj tus ntshais plaub-hau ntev 9 dag. Yog tsis noj, no mas Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj mus muab tau."

Kob-yim-tshaj hnov dheev lauj!! Tag-kis sawv ntxov tsees, suav sawv los yuav tua twm. Kob-yim-tshaj tsis pub tua. Sib-yig...sib-yig. Suav yuav tua twm rau Kob-yim-tshaj noj xwb xwb li. Kob-yim-tshaj tias, "Kuv tsis noj. Yog neb siab tsis kheev li, los muab neb tus twm rau kuv cab mus. Kuv nqhis thaum twg, los kuv mam li tua noj."

Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj cab tus me-nyuam-twm mus. Cab cab, mus txog ntua Pihob-yaj-kum-hiav, tib lub pas-dej ntas ntoov ntas ntua.

Me-nyuam-twm hais li no, "Kob-yim-tshaj nawb, wb mus muab nkauj-zag rau Huab-tais, mas thaum txav mus txog ntua. Kuv 3 yom kub pas-dej ntas ntua, 3 yom kub 3 ceg kaum ntuj. Toj pob liab pes vog. Yog tawm plaws 3 tug hluas-zaj tuaj, nqa lub yeeb-yaj-tsom. Tsom qhov twg mas yeej kub-hnyiab xwb nawb. Yog tsom kiag rau wb, mas wb yeej tuag. Wb muab tsis tau. Tsis tsom rau wb, es tsom rau tej roob, tej hav xwb. No mas koj muab koj 3 lub qe os no, pov kiag rau 3 ceg kaum dej. Mas 3 tug hluas-zaj ntawd ya-ntxiag mus txeeb 3 lub qe ntawd, muab lub yeeb-yaj-tsom tso plhuav tseg. Mas koj ya-ntxiag mus nthos nkaus ov!! Mas wb thiaj txeeb tau nkauj-zag."

Mus txog ntua ntawm lub pas-dej Pihob-yaj-kum-hiav, tib lub ntas ntwb ntoov ntsuab xiab. Me-nyuam-twm mus txog ntua. Nws kes av kwb kaws...3 yom kub rau pas-dej ntas ntua, peb yom kub 3 ceg kaum ntuj. Toj pob liab pes vog, toj nphau liab vog, rau qhov txhia chaw.

Yawg zaj laug hnov dheev, ntsaj laws. Nws tias, "3 tug hluas, sim tawm mus xyuas saib, muaj sim zeej dab-tsi, yuav heev ua luaj, ua cas yuav ua kuv tiaj teb deeg daws li no."

3 tug hluas-zaj tawm-plaws tuaj txog ntua. Nqa lub yeeb-yaj-tsom, tsom zoj lub roob kub-hnyiab liab yaj ntshis. Tsom zoj lub ha kub-hnyiab yaj ntshis. Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj muab kiag 3 lub qe os pov kiag rau 3 ceg kaum dej. Ces 3 tug hluas-zaj ntawd tso

plhuav lub yeeb-yaj-tsom ntawd ua lias pov-tseg ntawm ntug dej. Tib tsaug mus fuas kiag 3 lub qe. Ces Kob-yim-tshaj ya-ntxiag mus nthos nkaus tau lub yeeb-yaj-tsom. Kob-yim-tshaj 3 yom 3 ceg kaum ntuj. Ua cas kub-hnyiab yaj pes ntshis tag. 3 yom rau 3 tug hluas-zaj, lawv kub-hnyiab yaj pes ntshis tuag tag.

Tsom kiag rau pas-dej. Pas-dej nqhuab tib lua. Nkauj-zag ua ntos nthawv nthav hauv. Ces Kob-yim-tshaj nrawm nroos mus txog ntua, nthos nkaus nkauj-zag caj npab niug cab. Ces nkauj-zag quaj tib les tawm plaws rau saum yaj ceeb no. Nkauj-zag mas zoo zoo zoo nkauj kawg nkaus. Plaub-hau ua ntxhee tib yees, ntev 9 dag, mas zoo nkauj tag tag.

*Tsuas tias ci ntsa qas iab,
zoo tag los zoo thiab,
zoo cuag Ntxwg Nyoog lub qub ntshiab;
zoo tag los zoo hu
zoo cuag Ntxwg Nyoog lub qub txhu.*

Coj los, los hla luag tej zos, los tsis tau txog. Mas ntiaj tog qaum pes, teb-chaws neeg zej-zog qhuas, cav ua zog kwb koog. Los los txog ntua Huab-tais tsev. Huab-tais zoo zoo siab kawg. Huab-tais tawm plaws tuaj. Neeg zej-zog saib ua nchuav-qas-nthwv.

Huab-tais nyiam thiab txaus siab, zoo siab heev. Nws hais tias, "Kob-yim-tshaj, cas nkauj-zag yuav zoo nkauj tag npaum li no? Txiv Huab-tais mas yuav tau nkauj-zag yuav tiag tiag. Zaum no yuav tau nrog nkauj-zag pw. Koj qhia kuv soj! Koj ua li cas ho yuav tau nkauj-zag tiag lauj??"

Kob-yim-tshaj hais tias, "Txiv Huab-tais, kuv mus txog ces kuv muab lub yeeb-yaj-tsom, tsom tsawg tsuag pas-dej nqhuab. Tsom qhov twg los kub-hnyiab tag. Ces kuv cia li mus muab xwb tiag."

Huab-tais txawm hais tias, "Koj muab tsom kuv saib soj!" Kob-yim-tshaj muab tsom kiag lub roob yaj ntshis, tsom kiag lub ha kub-hnyiab yaj tib ntshis thiab!!"

Huab-tais hais li no, "Kob-yim-tshaj!! Koj muab tsom kiag rau kuv saib."

Kob-yim-tshaj tias, "Tsom tsis tau nawb, txiv Huab-tais. Yog tsom koj ces koj yeej kub-hnyiab xwb!!"

Huab-tais tias, "Tsi nas...kuv twb kam yog ib tug huab-tais diam. Yog tsom, es tseem kub-hnyiab thiab, ces koj kuj ua kuv tus huab-tais!"

Kob-yim-tshaj thiaj tias, "Yuav tsom los tsom tiag." Tib tsom rau Huab-tais, Huab-tais kub-hnyiab yaj ntshis tag tiag.

Kob-yim-tshaj tau ua Huab-tais thiab tau nkauj-zag los yuav ua poj-niam. Ces nws muab Huab-tais suav xya tus poj-niam ua qhev tuav txhuv.

Zaj dab-neeg no qhia txog tias, *Txhob tsim lwm tus, thaum kawg yus yuav tau txais lub txim ntawd yam tsis poob ib lo lus...*

Tus hais yog **Swm-looj Vwj**

FOLKTALE
PRICE OF TORMENT

Long long ago, there lived a man, Kaw-yee-cha,³⁷ and his wife, who were destitute, very very poor. Kaw-yee-cha and his wife farmed the field on the other side of the mountain. As usual, Kaw-yee-cha smoked opium until very late, and went slowly to work in the fields. Kaw-yee-cha walked downhill and at the crossroads, what did he see but a pair of snakes, coiled together, right there in the road.

One snake was a small white, very poisonous snake, Na-plua-dyay,³⁸ and the other, Na-njua-za,³⁹ was much larger and had green stripes around his body. They did not belong together, but there they were in the road! Kaw-yee-cha thought to himself, "Why have these two snakes come here to mate? I'll kill them and get rid of them!"

Kaw-yee-cha pulled out his sword and slashed at the snakes with a single blow. As the sword came towards the ground, the two snakes uncoiled and fell apart. Na-njua-za was cut completely in two. Na-plua-dyay lost only the tip of her tail.

Na-plua-dyay then slithered to her husband and said, "Oh husband! Today, I went to pick vegetables at the crossroads. Kaw-yee-cha, that poor dog, had been smoking opium and had smoked enough. He was on his way to the fields when he suddenly pulled out his sword and whacked at me, cutting off the tip of my tail. If I hadn't jumped quickly away, I'd now be dead, and I'd never see you again, dear husband."

Her husband, Dzee-na-plua-dyay,⁴⁰ replied, "It is true then that Kaw-yee-cha is a very bad man. In a little while, when it gets dark, I'll go hide under his bed. When he goes to sleep, I'll bite him, and he will die." So, when evening came, Dzee-na-plua-dyay slithered to wait under Kaw-yee-cha's bed.

Kaw-yee-cha finished his dinner, and then was ready for bed. As if heaven helped him, he said to his wife, "Wife dear, today, I was on the way to the fields, and when I reached the crossroads, I came upon two snakes coiled together in the road. I tried to kill them both, but as I struck with my sword, they uncoiled. The female, a small white snake, escaped, losing only the tip of her tail. The male, a green-striped snake, was chopped in two, and died at once."

So it was that Dzee-na-plua-dyay, under the bed, heard the whole story!! Dzee-na-plua-dyay then said, "What?! Is that really really true?!"

Kaw-yee-cha answered, "Really, really true, indeed!"

³⁷ *Kob-yim-tshaj*

³⁸ *nab-pluaj-ce*

³⁹ *nab-ntsuab-zag*

⁴⁰ *txiv nab-pluaj-ce*

Dzee-na-plua-dyay said, "My wife has been unfaithful, and is always with Na-njua-za. She lied to me and said that she was going her own way, and that you tried to kill her. Is it really true that you killed Na-njua-za?"

Kaw-yee-cha answered, "I did indeed kill him."

Dzee-na-plua-dyay said, "He's big and I'm small, and he's always with my wife, you see, but I've never caught him. It is very good that you've been able to help me in this way. I'm going to see him with my own eyes."

Kaw-yee-cha answered, "Go, and see with your own eyes."

Dzee-na-plua-dyay slithered to the crossroads, and there, coiled up in two piles, lay Na-njua-za.

He went back, and said to Kaw-yee-cha, "You have been able to help me; my wife has been playing with this other fellow, and I have never caught him. Now you have killed him, and I appreciate it very much, but I have nothing to give to you. Tomorrow, you get up very very early and go to your tuber⁴¹ field. Whatever you see, you can have."

The next day, Kaw-yee-cha got up very very early and went to his tuber field. It was as he expected; nothing unusual there. He looked north and south, everywhere, but there was nothing unusual to be seen. Then he spotted a single tuber leaf, and on it, one drop of clear dew. He picked the leaf to carry home, but it tilted back and forth, the drop of dew rolling from one side to the other. He was afraid he'd spill the drop, so he quickly drank it.

When Kaw-yee-cha swallowed the drop of dew, his ears popped and cleared....he could hear the words of the insects, the ants, the small furry animals, and the birds....

Kaw-yee-cha went to the fields. There was a dead sheep up on the mountain. The crow, Ua-la,⁴² called to Kaw-yee-cha, "Kaw-yee-cha, there's a dead sheep up here on the mountain. You come butcher it, you take the meat, and I'll eat the innards." So Kaw-yee-cha went to butcher the sheep; he led his wife and children there to help butcher it. Kaw-yee-cha's heart turned bad, so he took the stomach, the intestines, and all the innards without giving any to Ua-la to eat.

Ua-la was very very angry, offended and sick at heart. Two or three days later, there was a dead Chinese servant up on the mountain, who had come there to cut hay for the horses. Ua-la returned and called, "Kaw-yee-cha! There's a dead sheep up here on the mountain, and you come butcher it. You take the meat, and I'll take the innards."

Kaw-yee-cha led his wife and children to the field. "What?! Why is there a dead Chinese servant here? The man died close to my field! What if someone comes to

⁴¹ *thaj-teb-qos*: field where tuber crops of all kinds are grown (tapioca, sweet potatoes, potatoes....)

⁴² *uab-lag*: large black crow

search for him? Maybe I will be blamed for killing him! It would be a good idea to drag him away, and get rid of him...."

Kaw-yee-cha was just about to grab one foot to drag the man away, when he heard some Chinese coming to look. The Chinese were right next to him already! They saw, with their own eyes. The Chinese said, "Why did you kill our man? Kill our servant?"

They hit Kaw-yee-cha, tied him up, and led him away to the Chinese King.

Kaw-yee-cha said to the Chinese King, "Please, please, it is because I came to the field, I saw the dead Chinese there. It is not me that killed him. I can understand the words of the insects, the ants, the small furry animals, and the birds. It is because Ua-la called to me that there was a dead sheep on the mountain, that I went there to butcher it (I could have the meat, and he would have the innards). I went there to butcher the sheep. The very first time, I took all the meat and all the innards, and carried them away to eat, without giving any to Ua-la.

"The next time Ua-la came and lied to me. I didn't know, so I went up to the mountain, but it was a dead Chinese servant there, not a dead sheep. So I thought, 'No one has come here yet, to see this dead man so close to my fields. I will drag him away and get rid of him, so no one will come and see him.' Please, don't kill me."

The Chinese King then said, "If he can understand the words of the insects, the ants, really, then let's not kill him yet, servants. Kaw-yee-cha, this wandering no-good outcast, doesn't really know anything. In my house, under my bed, there have been many many ants, crawling in a path as wide as an 'njay'⁴³ leaf, for three years now, understand? You go listen to the ants, right? If you know why they're under my bed, then I'll let you go. If you don't know why, then I'll kill you."

Kaw-yee-cha answered, "It is all right with me," and he went to listen.

The ants told him this: "Under the King's bed there are nine jars of silver-honey, gold-honey. We have been eating it for three years now; we've finished three jars, but there are still six jars left, and we will eat those for the next six years. We will eat them all."

Kaw-yee-cha told the King. The King said, "Is this the truth, or is it a lie? I will send my servants to go dig under my bed. If there are six jars of silver-honey, gold-honey, then I will let you go. If you are lying, and there's nothing there, then I will kill you right away."

Kaw-yee-cha answered, "Go ahead and dig, it is all right with me."

Then the servants went to dig. There were six jars of silver-honey, gold-honey, for sure! Delicious....so delicious.....sticky and delicious. The King gobbled and gobbled, licking the fingers on one hand, then licking the fingers on the other hand.

⁴³*ntse* (*qos ntse*): a tuber leaf that's about 6-8 inches wide

Then the King said this: "Kaw-yee-cha, you lying wandering dog, why do you go on lying so much?! Under my bed I certainly did have honey! You lie, I certainly did bury honey there.

"If you know so much, there is near my house a large, tall tree. In it there is a pair of birds who cry all day and all night. You go listen, and if you know what this pair of birds is crying about so much, then I'll let you go. If you don't know, then I'll kill you and throw you away."

Kaw-yee-cha said, "I'll go ahead and listen, it is all right with me."

He then went to listen to the pair of birds crying. Kaw-yee-cha went back to tell the King, "Father King, this pair of birds went and got a hair from the Dragon's Daughter⁴⁴ at the Dragon Sea.⁴⁵ It was as long as nine yards,⁴⁶ and the husband bird said, 'Let's wrap it around the mouth of the nest, so when the strong wind blows, the nest will be steady and will not fall.' The wife bird said, 'Let's spread the hair on the floor of the nest so it will be warm.' The two birds cannot agree, and argue and scold each other all day and all night. Because of that hair."

The King said, "My goodness, if it is like that, then my servants will go cut the tree and look at the bird's nest. If there is a hair like you say, I'll let you go, but if there isn't, you lie, and I will kill you."

Kaw-yee-cha said, "Go ahead, it is all right with me."

The servants went to cut down and look at the fallen tree. The bird's nest did indeed have a hair nine yards long.

The King said, "Kaw-yee-cha, you lie so much again!!

"If you are able to go and get the Dragon's Daughter and bring her here for me to marry, then I'll let you go. If you are not able to get her, then I will kill you."

Kaw-yee-cha said, "Okay, it is all right with me."

Kaw-yee-cha left to get the Dragon's Daughter for the king to marry. Kaw-yee-cha travelled and the whole country buzzed and chattered, "Kaw-yee-cha will go to get the Dragon's Daughter."

Kaw-yee-cha walked for three days, and reached a Chinese village. The Chinese knew that Kaw-yee-cha had come to get the Dragon's Daughter. Kaw-yee-cha went to stay overnight in a Chinese couple's house.

The Chinese couple talked together: "Kaw-yee-cha has come under the King's authority, to take a bride for the King. Now, we have nothing, so tomorrow we must take one of the ducks to kill for Kaw-yee-cha's breakfast."

⁴⁴*nkauj-zag*

⁴⁵*plhob-yaj-kum-hiav*

⁴⁶*dag*: about five feet, or the distance between the tips of the fingers, arms held chest high and outstretched.

The pair of ducks were under the floor of the house, and they heard. The two of them talked together: "Dear husband! They will take one of us to kill for Kaw-yee-cha to eat. Now, if they kill me, then you will be a widower. If they kill you, then I will be a widow; what shall we do? If Kaw-yee-cha is willing not to eat us, then we will be saved. If he plans to eat us, and if you don't die, then I will."

Kaw-yee-cha heard what they were talking about, so he decided not to eat duck. The following morning, the Chinese went to catch the female duck, to slaughter for Kaw-yee-cha's meal. Kaw-yee-cha said, "I won't eat....whatever you do, I will not eat."

The Chinese couple said, "Eat!! You come here on the authority of the King, so eat. Eat or not, the duck will be killed!"

Back and forth, back and forth, he tried to refuse. Kaw-yee-cha said, "If you two are not willing to spare the duck, then give her to me, and I will carry her. When I want to eat, then I'll kill the duck to eat." The Chinese couple then gave the female duck to Kaw-yee-cha to carry.

Kaw-yee-cha carried the duck and travelled for three days. The duck laid three eggs. Kaw-yee-cha let the female duck go back home. He carried only the three eggs and walked on.

Kaw-yee-cha walked and walked until he reached another Chinese village. He went to stay overnight in the Chinese village, in a Chinese couple's house. They had a pair of water buffalo and a young water buffalo. When they were going to sleep, the Chinese couple talked to each other, "Kaw-yee-cha has come to get a bride for the King, and we have nothing to slaughter for his breakfast. I think tomorrow we should take one of the water buffalo to kill for his meal, don't you think so, dear husband?"

The Chinese husband said, "Go ahead and kill it, it is all right with me."

The pair of water buffalo and the young water buffalo heard what they said!! The three water buffalo talked with each other for a while, "Husband! Our owner said, 'Kaw-yee-cha has come and we have nothing. We will kill one of our water buffalo for Kaw-yee-cha to eat!' If you are killed, then I will be a widow. If I am killed, then you will be a widower. If our child is killed, then I fear we will have no child. We have raised only one child, what shall we do??"

Kaw-yee-cha could hear the young water buffalo say this: "If Kaw-yee-cha eats you and eats me, then he will not be able to get the Dragon's Daughter, whose hair is nine yards long, from the Dragon King. If we are not eaten, then Kaw-yee-cha will be able to get her."

Kaw-yee-cha heard it all!! The next morning early, the Chinese got up and went to kill the water buffalo. Kaw-yee-cha could not allow them to kill it. Back and forth, back and forth, they offered and he refused. The Chinese really wanted to kill the water

buffalo for Kaw-yee-cha to eat. Kaw-yee-cha said, "I won't eat. If your hearts are not willing to agree with me, then give me your water buffalo, and I will lead it with me. When I want to eat, I will kill it."

So Kaw-yee-cha led the young water buffalo away. Leading, walking, until they reached the Dragon Sea, a lake with quiet, gently lapping waves.

The young water buffalo said this: "Kaw-yee-cha, hey, we are going to take the Dragon's Daughter for the King, and we have arrived at the place. I will swing my horns in the Sea, splash the water, and then I'll fling my horns in three directions. There will be a mudslide. If the three young dragons come out, they will carry binoculars. If someone points these binoculars at something, there will be a fire, for sure. If the binoculars point at us, we will die, and we will not be able to get the Dragon's Daughter. If they do not point at us, then they will point only at the mountains and the valleys. So you take these three duck eggs and throw them to three directions in the lake. The three young dragons will dash across the water to snatch the three eggs, and they will release the binoculars and drop them. Then you dash to grab them, OK? That way we will snatch the Dragon's Daughter."

They arrived at the Dragon Sea, with gentle waves, quiet and deep blue. The young water buffalo reached the edge of the water. He scratched at the ground...he swung his horns in the Dragon Sea three times...then flung water in three directions. There was a mudslide, the mountain slid and mud was everywhere.

The old Dragon King⁴⁷ heard the noise and groaned. He said, "Three young ones, go out and look to see what is happening, why my fields are shaking up and down." The three young dragons left to go out and see. They carried the binoculars, pointed them at the mountains and valleys, which burst into flame and disappeared in an instant. Gone in a flash. Kaw-yee-cha then took the three duck eggs and threw them to three directions of the Dragon Sea. The three young dragons released the binoculars at the edge of the Sea. At the same time, they grabbed for the three eggs, and Kaw-yee-cha flew across the lake and grabbed the binoculars with both hands. Kaw-yee-cha pointed the binoculars in three directions, and those spots burst into flame and disappeared in an instant. He swung three times at the young dragons, and they all burned up and were dead in a flash of fire.

He pointed them at the Dragon Sea. The Sea was suddenly dry. There at the bottom of the lakebed was the Dragon's Daughter, weaving cloth. Kaw-yee-cha hurried there, grabbed the arms of the Dragon's Daughter and pulled her away. The Dragon's Daughter cried as he led her up and into the real world. The Dragon's Daughter was very very beautiful indeed. Her hair was silky and loose, as long as nine yards and so so beautiful.

⁴⁷*yawg zaj laug*

*Bright and glittering,
most beautiful in the world,
as rare as a single grain of the Spirit King's⁴⁸rice;
more beautiful than words can say,
as precious as rice from the Spirit World.*

Leading her, they crossed the land, from village to village, not yet arriving at their destination. The world shook with the news. The people of the villages of the country buzzed with wonder and admiration; the talk was everywhere. They finally arrived at the King's house. The King was very very happy. The King came out. The people of the villages watched with excitement.

The King was pleased and happy, very happy indeed. He said, "Kaw-yee-cha, she is really beautiful, more than anything. I, Father King, want this Dragon's Daughter, to marry right now. I am going to live with her. You tell me how you got her! How did you really get the Dragon's Daughter?!"

Kaw-yee-cha said, "Father King, I went to the Dragon Sea, and I took these binoculars, pointed them at the lake and the lake dried up. If you point them at something, then that spot burns up. That's how I was able to get her."

The King then said, "You point them and show me!" Kaw-yee-cha pointed them at the mountain, and it disappeared in a flash of fire, pointed them at the valley, and it was gone in an instant!

The King said this: "Kaw-yee-cha!! You point those at me!"

Kaw-yee-cha said, "I cannot point these, surely, Father King. If I point them at you, then you will burn up!!"

The King said, "Nonsense....I am King. If pointing them at me burns me up, then you will take my place as King."

Kaw-yee-cha then said, "Okay, it is all right with me." He pointed them at the King and the King burst into a flash of fire and disappeared.

Kaw-yee-cha became the King, and had the Dragon's Daughter to marry. Then he took the King's seven Chinese wives to work as servants, pounding rice.

This story tells: *"Don't torment another person, because finally you will receive that torment yourself, without dropping a word."*

Storyteller: **Shue-long Vue**

⁴⁸Ntxwg Nyoog

SWM-LOOJ VWJ LUB KEEB-KWM

Kuv yug rau lub 6 hli ntuj, hnuv tim 22, xyoo 1940. Kuv yug rau lub zos npuas-caas, xeev Luang-pra-bang. Kuv los mus loj hlob nyob rau lub teb-chaws Lam-theeb, Mouang Mouang-na, xeev Luang-pra-bang. Lub teb-chaws uas nws nyob-nyob es cia li khiav tuaj kiag rau Thaib-teb ces tuaj As-mes-lis-kas kiag yog Lam-theeb. Kuv niam thiab txiv hu ua Ntxoov-khwb thaum ub mas lawv yeej ib txwm nyob rau lub zos Npoos-cas, ces yeej nyob ntawd laus thiab tau khiav los mus rau lub zos hu ua Thaj-kub-lub ces txiv thiab tau los tso ntiaj-teb tseg rau ntawd. Thaum kuv txiv tuag tseg kuv tseem me-me , kuv thiab khiav los mus raws kuv txiv ntxawm nyob rau Lam-theeb thiab nyob loj hlob laus li no.

Kuv niam kuv txiv lawv lub keeb thaum ub mas nyob raws toj-roob hauv peg ua noj ua haus yug tsiaj yug txhuv kuv yawg (lub npe hu ua Txhiaj-lwv) kuj tsis ua dab-tsi, tsuas peb yawg no tau ua ib tug nyuag xeev-meem xwb. Los mus yav tom qab no, kuv txiv los kuj tau ua ib tug(nai-ban) tswv-zos, nyob rau hauv peb lub zos.

Txij li thaum yug tau kuv los, loj hlob yuav poj-niam nyob ua teb noj txog hnuv-nyoog muaj 20 xyoo 1960 tau muaj kev rov-tsog ces kuv kuj raug mus pab lub teb lub chaws, kuv kuj tau xaab nai-muaj. Kuv ua tub-roq pab teb chaws tau 4 xyoo, kuv thiab tawm los nyob ua neeg pej xeev ua noj ua haus hauv peb lub zos tsis tas li ntawd xwb kuv kuj tseem ua ib tug nyuag (nai-ban) tswv zos xyuas peb lub zos txog thaum peb khiav tawm teb-chaws xyoo 1975. Kuv niam thiab txiv tsuas yug tau peb 4 tug xwb, cov tub ces yog kuv tib leeg, hos cov ntxhais 3 tug. Cov dab-neeg ua kuv txawj, paub hais ntawd mas yog kuv kawm ntawm kuv tus dab-laug los, nws mas txawj txawj hais dab-neeg li, kuv tsis muaj niam muaj txiv ces thaum twg lawv tuaj ua luam ces lawv coj kuv mus nrog lawv nyob ces yeej piav dab-neeg tas hmo li, ib zag twg tsuav yog lawv hais ib lwm xwb ces kuv yeej kawm tau li lawm vim tias yooj-yim.

Thaum uas kuv tuaj txog teb-chaws no mas lus los kuv kuj tsis paub, mus kawm ntawv los kuj kawm tsis tau, (tsis zoo li thaum ub kuv kawm dab-neeg lawm) es nim-no kuv thiab tsis tau ua dab-tsi li. Kuv tus kheej kiag mas xav tias peb tej(cov) txuj ci Hmoob uas poj ua kab, yawg ua cia thiab ntau-ntau yam uas zoo, tsim-tsim nyog peb cov hluas tom qab no yuav tsum ceev khaws tseg. Tam sis no kuv cov me-nyuam tseem me-me kuv tsis tau qhia kev cai Hmoob dab-tsi rau lawv li, tab sis thaum lawv loj hlob lawd kuv yuav qhia kom lawv paub thiab. Kuv kuj tsis paub kab ke, kev cai Hmoob ntau thiab tab sis yog leej twg xav kawm kom paub Hmoob meej me ntsis los kuv nyaj yuav qhia tau. Peb Hmoob thaum ub tsis muaj ntaub muaj ntawv ces yuav

tsum yog kawm khaws cia rau ntsuab siab xwb yog tsis li ntawd ces yeej tsis paub ib yam txuj-ci kev cai Hmoob.

Cov uas kuv hais tag los saum toj no mas kuv tias yam twg uas yog nej xav tias yuav zoo no los nej ho khaws, yam twg nej tias tsis zoo no los nej ho muab pov-tseg.

Ntsib nej sawv-daws lwm-zaus.

SWM-LOOJ VWJ

BIOGRAPHY OF SHUE-LONG VUE

I was born June 22, 1940, in the village of Boua-dyang, Luang Prabang province. I grew up in villages around La-theng, Mouang-na District, Luang Prabang province. I lived there until I escaped from Laos to Thailand and then to America.

My father was named Ndzong-keu. He used to live in the village of Boua-dyang, and he grew up there, except he moved one time to the village of Tha-ku-lu, where he left this world. When my father died, I was still small, and I went to live with my father's young brother in La-theng, where I grew up.

His parents, in the old days, lived on the mountain tops, supporting themselves by raising livestock and crops. My grandfather, whose name was Tzia-leu, was assistant to the village-chief, and later on, my father became chief of the village Boua-dyang.

When I was old enough I got married. When I was 20 years old, in 1960, the communists came, and I joined to serve the country. I was a 'sang nai-mua', in charge of 25 men. I was a soldier serving the country for four years, then I left to live as a civilian, helping raise the crops and animals to support the family in my village. Not only that, but I served as a village-chief, until the country collapsed in 1975. My parents only had four children; I was the only son, the youngest, and I had three sisters.

I became talented at telling folklore. I learned them from my uncle, who knew how to tell folktales. I had no mother, no father, so whenever the traders came, they took me to stay with them, and told me folktales every night, one folktale and then another, and I learned quickly because it came easily. I also learned wedding ceremonies and funeral ceremonies. They just had to say it once and I could repeat it.

When I arrived in this country, I didn't know the language, and I went to school, but I couldn't learn (learning English was not easy like learning folktales), and right now I don't do anything at all.

In my opinion, I think and hope that since Hmong customs, culture, and way of life that was passed down from grandparents and great-grandparents, have many good things and we should keep them. It's important that the young should learn and retain these in the future. Right now, my children are still young and I haven't taught them the Hmong traditions yet, but when they are old enough, I will tell them so that

they will know what I know. I don't know very much about the Hmong traditions, but if there is someone who wants to learn so they will know Hmong ways more clearly, I will tell them what I know. Hmong have never had writing or reading, and they have had to learn by heart what they know. If it hadn't been this way, we wouldn't have any Hmong traditions, and customs, and our way of life wouldn't be Hmong.

This is all I have to say, but if there is anything here that makes sense, people can keep it, and if there is anything that is not good, people can disregard it.

Until next time,
Shue-looj Vue