The Life of Shong Lue Yang: Hmong "Mother of Writing"

Keeb Kwm Soob Lwj Yaj: Hmoob "Niam Ntawv"

by / los ntawm / ປ່ ສ່

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Southeast Asian Refugee Studies, Occasional Papers, Number Nine
### SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEE STUDIES OCCASIONAL PAPERS

**Series Editor:** Bruce T. Downing

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A publication of the
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Hubert H. Humphrey Center
301 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455

1990

Publication No. CURA 90-1

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The Hmong text in this volume was written in the Hmong Daw (White Hmong) dialect because that is the dialect spoken by the Hmong authors. We regret that we could not make an adaptation to the Hmong Leng (Blue/Green Hmong) dialect as well.
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INTRODUCTION FOR READERS OF ENGLISH

A messianic figure known as Shong Lue Yang emerged among the Hmong people of Vietnam and Laos in 1959, and soon became the focus of intense loyalty and sharp controversy. In some ways he was similar to many Hmong prophets (bearers of divine messages) and messiahs (divine incarnations) who have arisen through the centuries in response to the plight of the Hmong. In other ways he was significantly different, even unique, both among such Hmong predecessors and in the world at large.

The times were bad. As a minority people in northern Southeast Asia, the Hmong had been relatively powerless for generations, mostly uneducated, living remote in the mountains, although their culture was rich and complex. Now they were divided and their culture disintegrating; factions were fighting on both sides of the "Vietnam War" (which began long before American involvement), for them a war waged mostly in Laos, in the mountains where many of them lived, constantly more disruptive as the years went by, inflicting horrifying casualties.

Before Shong Lue emerged as a messiah during this time of cultural stress he had been much like any typical uneducated Hmong peasant farmer. But then he did something unprecedented for an illiterate person: he devised alphabetic writing systems for two sharply different unrelated languages, his own Hmong language and the Khmu' language of his mother (the Khmu' being another minority people living in the hills of the Laos-Vietnam area). He apparently did this in both languages simultaneously. Later Shong Lue went on to revise his Hmong writing system three times, making it easier to learn and to use, although even the first stage represented all of the sound contrasts in the language perfectly. The people early on gave him the Hmong title, "Mother [source] of Writing."

We have found no other documented case in the world where such an illiterate person ever produced one alphabet, much less two. In the most similar known cases people in different parts of the world have devised syllabaries (ways of writing whole syllables with individual symbols), but not
alphabets (ways of writing consonants, vowels, tones). There are no more than six documented instances even of illiterate people creating syllabaries in modern times, however, and in each of those the syllabary was prepared for only one language.

Shong Lue Yang was also called "Savior of the People." He believed that he was one of the twelve sons of God, sent to earth to save the Hmong and Khmu peoples from their plight, from being a divided people without resources and without recourse in a world dominated by more powerful peoples who subjugated them politically and economically. The writing system he provided validated him as God's messiah because Hmong mythology includes a theme that writing is a gift from God.

A vigorous movement grew up around Shong Lue in Laos and in Vietnam, as people flocked to learn the writing and Shong Lue's teaching about the future and about how to live. This movement was seen as a threat, however, first by the communist government of the North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao allies, later by the Hmong leadership opposed to those communists in Laos. Shong Lue was assassinated and his movement violently crushed in 1971. It resurfaced in 1975 in Laos and in a refugee camp in Thailand, however, and various manifestations of it continue today.

Of the many messianic movements which have emerged in Southeast Asia among the Hmong and other pre-literate peoples, this one may now be the most accessible to scholarly investigation. The present account along with the book Mother of Writing (Smalley, Vang and Yang, 1990, to be described below) bring us closer to such a movement than we have ever been able to come before, closer, also, to the messiah figure himself. The events are fairly recent (1959-1971); relatives of Shong Lue and other participants in the events surrounding him are now living in the USA; and the first author of this book was also the primary disciple of Shong Lue in the last years of his life (1966-1971), a disciple who kept a notebook in which he recorded some of the things Shong Lue did and told him. He remains a leading figure in the propagation of the writing system and the teachings.

The accounts in this book

This volume records briefly the life of Shong Lue Yang, some of his teachings, and instances of his supernatural intervention, as written by two of his followers now in the United States. It begins with Shong Lue as one of the sons of God in Heaven, chosen against his will to go and save the Hmong and Khmu peoples. It details his enthusiastic
Introduction

reception by various groups of people among the Hmong and
the Khmu', recounts some of the things he taught and some
examples of his knowledge and power, and goes on with his
persecution and assassination.

Except for a few letters, Shong Lue Yang himself left no
texts. And except for Chia Kova's notebook and a primer,
Shong Lue's disciples did not write anything but letters
during his lifetime, either. Like Shong Lue they were people
without education, and they, too, were caught in the disrup-
tion and pressures of the war. The Hmong authors see the
present book, therefore, as an opportunity to fill the lack
of documentation with an authoritative account of Shong Lue.
The analogy of their role to that of the Gospel writers has
not escaped them.

Shong Lue did not actively propagate his message in other
ways, either. A shy and retiring person, suspected by the
authorities, he acted reluctantly in his messianic role,
especially in the latter years. He did not try to gather a
following, did not give speeches, lecture, or "teach" in any
conventional sense. Instead, he usually answered people's
questions in an oblique, oracular way. On the other hand, in
a few places where the account which follows does quote
Shong Lue at any length there is sometimes an apocalyptic
tone to the language, reminiscent of some Old Testament
prophets.

In addition to recounting the story of Shong Lue, this
text also gives us, in passing, a view of the Vietnam War
from the under side, from the perspective of some Hmong
villagers and low-level military personnel whose lives were
severely disrupted and dislocated by it. They look up at a
brave but sometimes despotic and foolish Hmong military
leadership which was often rife with graft, dissension and
eventually paranoia.

Here, also, powerless people tell their story in the face
of the contrary assumptions of more powerful ones, Hmong and
non-Hmong. Not only do they insist on Shong Lue's messianic
character against the majority of Hmong, but they also
interpret his messianism differently from what some of the
many and conflicting rumors and legends about Shong Lue have
done. The present authors do not show Shong Lue wanting to
be king of the Hmong, or stirring up the people to revolt
and to bring in a messianic king, as others have pictured
him. Neither do they portray him as subversive either to the
Vietnamese or to the Lao government. Instead, the Shong Lue
they portray sees the futility of Hmong rivalries and divi-
sions, and offers a different way, one of obedience to God,
of reconciliation and peace, of cultural revitalization, a
way symbolized and validated by the writing system.
This account is also fascinating as story, told with suspense, complete with reversals of fortune, a story of people caught up in forces too great for them at times, miraculously overcoming the odds at others, but culminating in disaster for Shong Lue Yang and his followers. It assumes world views very different from those in the West, startling to Westerners at times, always tantalizing. The manner of telling, however, is low key, without bombast or pathos in spite of some essentially tragic themes.

The first draft of this account was written in Hmong at intervals from 1986 to 1988 by Chia Koua Yang. He drew on his memories, his notebook, and his steady search over the years to learn everything he could about Shong Lue Yang. Chia Koua was most effective when writing narrative, describing events. He was not as able to write abstract statements on Shong Lue’s teaching or points of view, leaving Shong Lue’s beliefs somewhat veiled. Perhaps that is how the enigmatic Shong Lue would have liked it.

Chia Koua’s drafts were typed and scrutinized by Gnia Yee Yang, who first learned the writing system from Chia Koua in the Nam Phong refugee camp in Thailand, and who has worked to promote its use ever since. Gnia Yee questioned Chia Koua about everything which was not clear to him, sometimes reminding him of incidents which had been omitted. He also sought confirmation and amplification of some of the information from others who were close to Shong Lue Yang. This was especially important for the period before Chia Koua became Shong Lue’s disciple, and for events which happened when Chia Koua was not present. The text was revised several times through this process, with all changes reviewed by Chia Koua.

Gnia Yee drew especially on two essential sources, both now in the United States. One was Chia Long Thao, a neighbor, friend, and follower of Shong Luc, who was with him through many of the events in the years before Chia Koua knew him (1929-1966). The other was Colonel Yong Chue Yang, nephew of Shong Lue, who knew something of what was going on when sentiment to get rid of Shong Lue was developing in the Hmong military establishment.

After the texts were completed to the satisfaction of the two authors, they were translated into English by Mitt Moua and Yang See. William A. Smalley then studied the translation, edited the English, and looked for places where the account needed clarification for Western readers. He raised questions with the other authors, some of them resulting in clearer translation, others in annotations [inserted in the text in brackets].
Introduction

Smalley avoided any direct attempt to influence the content of what the Hmong authors wrote except to urge them to include all they could remember of Shong Lue's life and teaching, and to suggest topics he believed to be relevant, as reminders. Indirectly there was more influence than that, however. This work was part of a two-year project in which Smalley analyzed Shong Lue's writing system in detail to understand what lay behind its creation, as he and the Hmong authors were working together on a book on that subject. Long discussion over those matters doubtless influenced what the other men wrote here, although they have left out of this book almost everything having to do directly with the writing system, on the grounds that such information is covered in the "other book" (see below).

We have tried to leave the Hmong text as unmodified by further editing as possible. However, it was originally written with almost no chapters, section divisions or headings. These were prepared for the English translation and then incorporated in the Hmong. In addition, some Hmong passages which were written as an afterthought (incidents having been left out of the text earlier) were incorporated later in their chronological positions. The most extensive of these interpolations was the story of Chia Koua Vang's trip to Phong Saly.

The complex format of this book, with two scripts and two languages, is necessary under the circumstances. It would be inappropriate for these Hmong authors to have written on Shong Lue Yang only in the Hmong Romanized Popular Alphabet, but to have included only the Pahawh Hmong (as Shong Lue called his writing) would have cut the book off from most readers of Hmong. The present format makes the account accessible to three audiences, and also makes comparison possible for readers of either script who want to learn the other. Furthermore, it also enables the reader of English who knows Hmong to check the English translation, which is sometimes only approximate.

Mother of Writing

This volume is presented as a primary document with translation annotated to enhance clarity, but nothing more. There is no attempt to give background, documentation, amplification or interpretation. This book should be understood, therefore, as supplemental to another book, Mother of Writing: the Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script, by the same authors (Smalley, Vang and Yang; 1990). That book provides an analysis of the Pahawh Hmong in all four stages, describes the use which is made of it, and places it among the writing systems of the world.
It also gives background on Hmong history and world view, and makes an attempt to interpret Shong Lue Yang, his writing and his movement. It is fully documented, and has information about the authors and their respective contributions to the total study.

Each of these books contains extensive information about Shong Lue and his movement which is not contained in the other. They do not duplicate each other except for a few short passages because the present book focuses on Shong Lue’s life and influence, whereas *Mother of Writing* is about his alphabet, with only enough concerning the life and teaching to put the writing system in context. However, the present book will be more fully intelligible to non-Hmong if it is read after, or in conjunction with, *Mother of Writing* because of the interpretation and explanation of background provided there.

Equivalences between the writing systems

Readers who want to learn the Pahawh Hmong and who already know the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA), or vice versa, may find this book a help. To aid them we include here tables of equivalence for most of the Pahawh Hmong symbols they will find. Other symbols occasionally appear in the text, and for them reference will have to be made to *Mother of Writing*, which has a full explanation.

```
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<th>0</th>
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<th>100</th>
<th>400</th>
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<td>kr</td>
<td>726</td>
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<td>85</td>
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</tr>
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<td>91</td>
<td>k6</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>6k3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
```

Table 1. Numerals and examples of arithmetic combinations in the Pahawh Hmong. There are other numerals as well, for which see *Mother of Writing*, from which this table was taken (Ch. 6).
Introduction

The Pahawh Hmong symbols used here are from the Third Stage Reduced Version, one of the four stages through which Shong Lue Yang developed the Pahawh Hmong. Details on all the stages are to be found in Mother of Writing.

The consonant and vowel-tone tables shown here (Tables 2, 3) are organized in the way Shong Lue taught the system (except for the Romanized symbols added for reference, of course). In both those tables the order of the columns was standard with Shong Lue, but not that of the rows, which varied then but was standardized recently in the USA. There is no other "alphabetical order."

Table 2. Consonant symbols. The corresponding RPA is written with au, which is how the Pahawh Hmong symbols are read when not preceded by a vowel symbol. [?] is the glottal stop not written in the Romanized alphabet. Pronunciations in brackets in the table are Hmong Leng where the dialects differ (after Mother of Writing, Ch. 4).
Table 3. Symbols for vowels and tones. There are two classes of symbols for each spoken vowel in this version of the Pahawh Hmong, depending on the tone. The top line of the table shows the approximate tone contours, branching off from a vertical line which represents the voice range. RPA correspondences are written with an initial \( k \), which is how the Hmong symbols are read when not followed by a consonant symbol. Pronunciations in brackets are Hmong Leng, when the dialects differ (after Mother of Writing, Ch. 4).
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A few structural rules govern the Pahawh Hmong, as exemplified in Table 4:

1. In any syllable, the vowel symbol (if any) is written first, followed by the consonant symbol (if any), even though the consonant is spoken before the vowel.

2. If the initial spoken consonant in a syllable is unaspirated /k/ (RPA k, but not kh), no consonant symbol is written in the Pahawh Hmong. In that case the vowel symbol represents an intrinsic /k/ as well as the vowel.

3. If the spoken vowel in a syllable is /au/ and the tone /r/ (semi-high tone, the RPA unmarked tone), no vowel symbol is written in the Pahawh Hmong. In that case the consonant symbol represents an intrinsic /au/ as well as the consonant. This rule does not apply if the preceding written syllable consists of a vowel symbol alone (by rule 2), to avoid potential ambiguity if spacing between syllables is not clear.

4. When there is no initial consonant written in the RPA that absence represents initial spoken glottal stop /ʔ/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel + Tone + Consonant = Syllable</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɯ (unmarked)  ê</td>
<td>ɯ ê</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oo b                 hm</td>
<td>Hmoob Hmong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɯ                                  ũ  ũ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ua j                               tuaj  come</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɨ (unmarked)  (unmarked)  e v k</td>
<td>ɨ  kev  road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɨ                                  ɨ į  į</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i (unmarked)  kh</td>
<td>i  kh  tie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ह (unmarked)  ū</td>
<td>ह  ī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai b                             nplh  nplhaib  finger ring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unmarked)  ū  ū</td>
<td>ū  ū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>au (unmarked)  pl</td>
<td>au  plau  run away</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Examples of Pahawh Hmong vowel and consonant combinations within syllables (after Mother of Writing, Ch. 4).
which is symbolized by \( \ddot{a} \) in the Pahawh Hmong. However, there are a few words in Hmong which do not begin with any spoken consonant, not even a glottal stop. Some writers do not differentiate them in the RPA from words beginning with glottal stop. Others write such words in the RPA with initial /''/ (Heimbach 1969). In the Pahawh Hmong this complete lack of any spoken consonant is represented by \( \ddot{a} \).

Acknowledgments

We express our appreciation again to sources of support, information and ideas, acknowledged fully in *Mother of Writing*. The institutions which provided financial support for our work on the present book are the Indochina Studies Program of the Committee on Southeast Asia (jointly sponsored by the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, with funds provided by the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Henry Luce Foundation) and Bethel College.

Much of Chapter 2 was used in *Mother of Writing*, copyright 1990 by the University of Chicago Press, and is reprinted here by permission.
When Shong Lue was living at Nam Ngua [near Long Cheng, Laos] in 1966, he told Chia Koua Yang, who was one of his students, that all people have [the same] God. He said that he was commissioned by God his Father to bring a message to people and to be the savior on earth. He had been born to be a human being twice. The first time his name had been Shong Lue, and the second time his name [at first] was Chia Shua Yang.

Previous visits by sons of God

Shong Lue told Chia Koua that at the very beginning God created the earth. He created people to live on the earth, and then he sent his twelve sons to be the saviors and communicate with them. The twelve sons were sent down in turn [to different places where help was needed because
people were in need or in danger) to teach all people as
directed by the Father.

[Sons of God] have been born to be Hmong on four
different occasions. In the year 326 of the Buddhist Era
[the system of reckoning used in Laos; 326 B.E. = 217 B.C.]
one of them was born [as a Hmong] for the first time, but
soon he became known to foreigners [nationality
unspecified], who paid a Hmong to kill him.

The second was born [to be a Hmong] in B.E. 1269 [A.D.
728], but this messenger was also killed by foreigners, soon
after his birth.

The third occasion was in the year B.E. 1300 [A.D. 757]
[when one of them] was born once more among the Hmong. The
Hmong were afraid of him and killed him too.

And the fourth time was in B.E. 1455 [A.D. 912]. The
Father told this one to be born by an animal to see if the
Hmong would save him. So he was born by an animal, but the
Hmong did not accept him either, as in the past. The Hmong
did not feed him when he was born by the animal, and as the
phenomenon became known to the villagers, they accused the
The Beginning

owner of having had intercourse with his animal so they decided to kill them all, the owner, the animal and the child.

So the Father saw that the Hmong are people who lack respect for the savior from God; the Father therefore punished the Hmong [by requiring them] to be without recourse or adequate resources [without leader, land, food and shelter, to be subject to others, so that in time they would be willing to listen]. He would then send someone to come down and be their savior once more. The punishment of the Hmong by the Father was to end by B. E. 2500 [A. D. 1957].

God selects a son to be savior

Close to the end of the penalty period the Father called for the twelve sons to come and sit around him, in order to send them down to earth. The Father asked if any one would volunteer to go and save the Hmong and the Khmu’ [an unrelated ethnic minority in Laos and Vietnam] on earth. The twelve sons replied that Hmong and Khmu’ are skeptical,
unbelieving peoples; they did not want to go to those groups any more. The Father replied, "The Hmong penalty period has almost come to an end. Someone has to go down before then."

Finally the Father said to them, "Let me sift [test] you three times. The one left after my sifting will be the one to go." The Father did this, and there were six sons left after his first sifting. Three of them were left after the second sifting. They were sons number 7, 8, and 9 [in order of birth]. Number 9 was then the one left out of the three after the final sifting.

So the Father chose him and gave him the authority to come down to bring the message and be the savior for the Haong and the Khuu' on earth. The son asked the Father to give him the Pahawh [‘alphabet’ as validation], to be taught to the two groups prior to communicating to them about the Father’s love, expecting to use the Pahawh which was easy enough to be taught and learned in seven days so the Hmong
and Khmu' would be interested in learning it. The Father agreed and told him, "You go down first to be born as a human being, and then I will send your two younger brothers [younger from the perspective of birth order on earth, not in heaven] to bring you the Pahawh to teach to the Hmong and the Khmu'." The son had no choice but to be born as a human being and let his brothers follow once he was given that responsibility by the Father.

Shong Lue's first life on earth

His first period [on earth] Shong Lue was a son of a Hmong couple [clan unknown]. Three mornings after he was born, his parents named him Lue, and after he was grown and had a family his parents-in-law renamed him Shong Lue. [The adding of a name by in-laws under such circumstances is a normal Hmong practice.] Even up to when he had five children, three sons and two daughters [names unknown], Shong Lue still remembered all of the things his Father had
told him, and that he was the savior of the people. But although he had been waiting for a long time he had not seen his two younger brothers follow to bring him the Pahawh. So he took off his Shong Lue form and started back [to heaven] expecting to ask his Father why they hadn't followed him.

He took off his Shong Lue form and started back, but on his way he mistakenly turned into a wild boar living in the thick jungle. He spent many years as a boar in the jungle and could not take off the boar form. He [temporarily forgot everything, but finally] remembered that the Hmong are the only ones who could help to remove his boar form. He waited until the Hmong harvested their corn, and came to cut and eat corn in a corn field, and to dig for tubers at the northern edge of the cornfield. There he found a jar of silver bars which had been buried [for safe keeping] by someone a long time ago. [He left it there.]
After he was full of eating tubers he made his lair in a forest of bamboo. Once he had his lair established he kept coming back to the cornfield to bite off and eat the corn, and then would return. One day the owner of the cornfield came and saw that the corn was newly cut and eaten by a boar. The owner tracked him to his lair, but he did not move, so he was killed by the owner and finally had his boar form removed.

Shong Lue arrived in heaven where the Father was, and where the two younger brothers still were. The Father asked him, "Why have you come back?"

He replied, "I waited for a long time and didn't see the two of them follow me, so I came back to check."

The Father said, "It was not time yet; you just hurry back, and when the time comes I will tell them to follow you." The Father ordered him back, so he came back to be born as a human being for the second time.
Shong Lue was born the second time

Shong Lue was born to the Haong and the Khmu' peoples at Fi Tong village in Vietnam. He was born on the 9th month the 15th day, the year of 1929. He became a son of Chong Chi Yang [father] and Kong [mother], the father a Hmong and the mother a 'Khmu'. Three mornings after his birth his parents named him Shua Yang. He was not even a year old when his father Chong Chi was killed by a spirit [which kills and eats people] and later his mother died also [cause unknown].

Shong Lue lived at Fi Tong village for three years. His two older brothers, Koua Yang and Chia Chue Yang, then moved the family [which included two sisters, Mai and Pa, and an adopted sister Ying] out from Fi Tong to live with their grandfather Xai Lau Yang and their uncles, Pa Ying Yang and Ga Xeng Yang at Fi Le Village in Laos. He had lived at Fi Le for only three years when his uncle Pa Ying Yang asked all the relatives to move to a better place for farming at Fi Kha Village. They stayed at Fi Kha village for three years,
until his uncle Pa Ying Yang was killed [by Hmong soldiers under the French], and his uncle Ga Xeng Yang asked all of the relatives to move to Tham Ha village in Vietnam.

At that time Shua [Shong Lue] was almost nine years old, and just big enough to carry a bundle consisting of a blanket [as his pack over the trail] to Tham Ha Village. He lived at Tham Ha for three years, when his older brother Koua Yang was also killed. There were only his older brother Chue and himself [and his sisters] left with his grandfather Xai Lau Yang and uncle Ga Xeng Yang, but his grandfather Xai Lau and uncle Ga Xeng also died shortly after that.

Shong Lue was totally an orphan at Tham Ha village until he was fully grown. He married Pang Xiong at Choua Dai Village. His father-in-law was Chong hai xiong and mother-in-law was Xai Lo. After he married Pang Xiong they lived at Tham Ha for only a year, after which he and his wife moved to live close to the parents-in-law. He built a
house at Pha Ta which was very close to Choua Dai, about two hours walk. Once Shua had children, his parents-in-law renamed him Chia Shua Yang. He lived at Pha Ta for three years but did not like it there so he moved back to live at Tham Ha village.

Shong Lue returned to Tham Ha village and lived there until 1959 when the two younger brothers [other sons of God] brought him the Pahawh.
Shong Lue had prepared a new mountain rice field [by clearing the jungle in the usual Hmong fashion], and during the 4th month, after the rice field [i.e. the jungle] had been cut and burned, he and his wife went to clean off the unburned residue [as typical Hmong farmers must do when cultivating temporary slash-and-burn (swidden) mountain ricefields, not the more permanent paddy fields of more level areas]. They also needed to build a small shelter for [protection against the elements during the months when they would be working in the field and guarding it from birds and animals while] growing the rice.

On the morning of the third day of going out to the field in this fashion, Shong Lue told his wife that he would leave early to hunt squirrels [around the field]. She was to prepare breakfast and bring it along when it was ready. Then he got ready and left. So Pang Xiong prepared food and started out along the jungle path after her husband. [Fields were anywhere from one half hour’s walk to two or more hours from the village.] Half way to the rice field, however, she was knocked down by a whirlwind and became unconscious,
lying there for almost half a day. She woke up a little after noon, and remembering her responsibility, raised the undamaged food basket to her back and continued on her way.

When she arrived at the field, Shong Lue was very upset. "How come you are so late?" he complained. "It's already afternoon! What's the point of coming at all at this late hour?"

But she said, "Please hold off your scolding until I tell you what happened, and then you can scold me all you want to."

When she told him what happened, Shong Lue was afraid, and decided they should go home and consult a shaman to find out what the whirlwind was, and come back to finish the work another day. Then they returned home.
Shong Lue hears the voice of God

So at dawn the next morning Shong Lue woke up early and prepared for a ceremony to select the powerful shaman who could best determine what Pang Xiong had encountered the day before. As he sat down to perform the ceremony he suddenly heard a loud voice speaking to him from the air:

You do not need a shaman. I am sending your two brothers to come to help you, that’s all. You mustn’t be afraid. Beginning today, you must not sleep with your wife, and she must not go outside of the house to work in the fields until your two brothers are born. You must prepare a set of opium-smoking equipment made of kulu bamboo so we can communicate. Also build a round house [as a place to worship], and build a monument [beside it]. Find candles and flowers [to put inside the round place of worship] as offerings. Make black ink from the indigo plant, and paper from bamboo, and have them ready. When that is done, people will come and bring you the Pahawh.
Thaum nws hnov lus li no tag nrho nws thiaj xam ncig lees ua cas tsis pom neeg nyob qhov twg li, nws thiaj xav dheeiv txog lo lus tej laus hais tias ntixoog vwg ces ua li no ntshe tsam lam yog paub, nws tau poob siab nthav, cas nws cia li raug ntaus 3 tawg ncuav rau ntaum sab plhu ua hnub qub ya liab vog. Nws rov hnov dua ib lub suab hais saum ntuaj tias "Kuv yog Vaj Leej Txi, yog koj Leej Txi uas tau tso koj los pheej xeeb ua neeg nyob rau ntiarj teb no lawd, tsis yog ntixoog vwg, koj yuav tsum ua raws nkaus li kuv cov lus hais." Nws thiaj xav ib plig rau hauv nws nruab siab tias, kuv txom nyem ua luaj no es yog tias cov lus no muaj tseeb tiag 'es kuv yuav ua li cas ua tau, yaj yeeb los kuj tsis muaj, nplej los twb yuav txog caij cog, yog kuv tseem los leg tej num no es xyoo tom ntej yuav muab dab tsi los yug poj tub se. Nws txawm rov qab hnov dua ib cov lus hais saum ntuaj tuaj tias "txhob txhawj xeeb txog qhov koj xav ntawd, kuv yuav tso

Shong Lue looked around quickly as he heard the voice, but saw nobody anywhere. He remembered an old saying that insanity begins this way, and became very fearful, wondering what it all meant. Suddenly he was slapped three times on the cheek, hard enough for him to see red stars flying around.

Again he heard the voice speaking to him from the air:

I am God, your Father, who sent you to be born on earth as a human being. You are not crazy, but you must do what I tell you to do.

Shong Lue thought to himself, "I am so poor; if this is all true how can I ever do all of these things? I have no opium; my farming season is coming. If that time is lost, what will I feed my family for the year to come?"

Once more he heard the voice speaking to him from the air:
God sends the Pahawh

Don’t worry about such matters. I will send three kings to come and help you to build the field shelter, plant the seed rice and weed the fields. Three days from now you just carry enough seed rice to the field and come back home. As for the opium, you only need to buy a little bit and it will last you for ever.

Shong Lue obeys the instructions

So Shong Lue Yang decided to try and see if all this was true. He counted up to the third day, and when he woke up early in the morning he carried a basket full of seed rice to the field. There he found a small shelter, made of earth, which had already been built up in the rice field. Little yellow ants were still crawling slowly down from it. He remembered what he had heard, so he left the basket of seed rice in the small earth shelter, and returned home.

The next morning Shong Lue carried another basket of seed rice to the field, and found that flocks of pulika birds
[brown, somewhat smaller than a crow, which like to eat rice and corn from the fields] were carrying away the grains of seed rice which he had left the day before, and were flying all over the field. So he left the second basket of seed rice in the small earth shelter and returned home.

Early the third morning Shong Lue carried still a third basket of seed rice to the field. Then he prepared kulu bamboo equipment for smoking opium, found wood and built up a round house and a monument, prepared candles and flowers, and began to worship as he was told.

The young men appear

Beginning on the night of the 15th day of the 5th month, in the year 1959, Shong Lue began to smoke opium for the first time, using the equipment he had made. He smoked until midnight; then, after his wife and children were all asleep, suddenly two young men appeared in the bedroom doorway. [The bedroom of such a house was just large enough for a sleeping
God sends the Pahawh

Nkawd tau teb tias: awd, yog wb los qhia Phaj Hauj Hmoob thiab Phaj Hauj Pub Thawj rau koj.


Neeg hnav hwm tsoos dub los hawm lawv peb leeg

Nkawd tau pib qhia Phaj Hauj Paj rau nws txog ntua ib tag hmo dua ces txawm pom ib pab neeg kom

platform for the parents and small children. The husband slept nearest the open doorway.

Shong Lue called out a greeting: "Are you here, the two of you?"

"Yes, we are here to teach you the Pahawh Hmong and the Pahawh Khmu,'" they replied. Shong Lue got up and brought in two low seats, and put them down next to his bed for the men to sit on. Soon they told him to get a pen and the paper he had made, so they could teach him. He got his bowl of indigo ink and his pack of bamboo paper, but didn't have a pen, so he asked what he should do.

They told him to sharpen a piece of bamboo into a pen. Then they took it, and with the ink they wrote the Source Version of the Pahawh on the bamboo paper to teach him.

People in black uniforms worship the three

They taught him until just a short time after midnight, when through the bedroom doorway came a group of people in black uniforms [of officials], wearing medals made of gold.
They brought candles and flowers and knelt down, bowing to the three who were sitting there. "We are very happy to have you as the saviors of the people. We bring candles, flowers and silver coins as offerings, to worship you."

They only stayed for a short while, but before leaving they said to Shong Lue, "We couldn't bring with us all of the money we have for you, so please come and get it."

They made an appointment, and told Shong Lue where he should go; they told him to build a small thatch shelter there in which to wait for them, and they would come and show him where the money was; then they left. Soon after that the two young men also left, disappearing through the bedroom doorway, and Shong Lue fell asleep.

The next day he went and waited, as he had been told, until those same people from the night before came to him, still dressed in black, with their medals of gold. They took
God sends the Pahawh

Lawv tau hu nws tias "koj tuaj txog lawm no nrog peb mus, nws tau teb thiab nrog lawv mus." Lawv tau coj nws mus txog rau ntawm qhov chaw muaj nysiaj nyob ces lawv txawm taw tes rau hauv pem teb thiab tau hais rau nws tias cov nyiaj nyob ntawm no es koj khaub ces pom, thaum lawv hais tag li ces lawv txawm ncaim nws mus tag lawm. Nws thiaj mam khaub no ciau muaj nyiaj tiag. Cov nyiaj ntawd mas yog nyiaj tshuab pheej thaum ub muaj neeg muab mus faus cia rau ntawd tau ntev heev lawm, thaum nws khaub tau cov nyiaj tag ces nws mam paub tseeb tias cov neeg los qhia nws ntawd yog neeg qaum tuuj. Nws tau cov nyiaj tshuab pheej no los siv rau nws tes dej num ib puas tsaav yam.

Soob Lwj kawm Phaj Hauj

Txij thaum ntawd los, ob leeg tub hluas txawm niaj hmo los qhia Phaj Hauj rau nws, tab sis tos txog thaum nws poj niam me nyuam pw tsaug zog tag lawm nkawd mam kom plaws ntawm rooj paim los xwb.

him to a place where they pointed down to the ground and said to him, "Here is where the money is. Dig down and find it." Then they left.

Shong Lue dug down and found a jar of silver bars buried by somebody a long time before. Shong Lue realized that those people dressed in black had come from heaven. So he took the silver bars to pay for all his expenses.

Shong Lue learns the Pahawh

From then on the two young men came to teach Shong Lue the Pahawh every night, always appearing after his wife and children had gone to sleep. Each night he lit his small round opium lamp and waited for the two young men to appear at the bedroom doorway, where they also disappeared again each night after the session was over.

They kept this up until one night when Shong Lue decided to pay special attention to just where the men came from,
and how they came. After he lit his lamp, just before the two young men appeared at the door, he felt something walking across his feet from the other side of the bed, where his wife slept. So then Shong Lue Yang knew for sure that the strong whirlwind which had struck his wife on her way to the field that day was really the two young men [with whom she became pregnant at that time].

The men continued teaching Shong Lue the Pahawh until the beginning of the 6th month, when he was allowed to go back and inspect his rice field. He found that the seed rice had been planted and that the rice was coming up evenly all over the field. Then he knew for certain that the pulika birds had been there especially to plant his crop for him.

So he continued learning the Pahawh until the beginning of the 7th month, and again was allowed to go back and see
God sends the Pahawh

zoo li kuj tsi pom teb fab qhov tug li, nws thiaj ua tub zoo saib no ciav Nas tsuag twb muab cov nroj txiav thob plaws teb tag thiaj tsis fab li lawm, nws tau zoo siab tias cov Ntsaum Kab Rwg, Noog Pum Liv Qag, thiab Nas Tsuag yog peb tug Vaj uas nws tau knov haiw lawm, nws tau zoo siab hlo tao tom teb los tsev.

Paj Xyooj xauv xeeb tau ob leeg Tub Ntxaib

Soob Lwj rau siab ntsa kawm Phaj Hauj txog rau thauv lub 9 hli ntuaj xiab 15, xyoo 1959, ces nws poj niam thiaj xauv xeeb tau ob leeg tub ntxaib. Thaum xauv xeeb tau nkawd los tau ob tag kis ces Soob Lwj npaj yuav hu plig tis npe, nws txawm mus hu niam tais thiab yawm txiv kom tuaaj nrog koom. Hnub uas niam tais thiab yawm txiv sawv kev tuaaj ces ntuaj tau ua nag xob nag cuaj loj heev los nplawm ntw s ua rau tib neeg mus los qhov twg tsis taj li, tab sis niam tais thiab yawm txiv nkawd tseem phoom2 tuaaj txog.

how the rice field was doing. He found no weeds interfering with the rice plants at all. As he took a good look around he noticed that the weeds had been cut by mice, and knew for certain that the ants, the pulika birds and the mice were the three kings of which he had been told; so he returned home happy.

Pang Xiong gives birth to twin boys

Shong Lue continued studying the Pahawh until the 9th month, the 15th day in the year 1959, when his wife gave birth to twin boys. [The Hmong authors cannot account for the five-month pregnancy.] The second morning after the twins were born, Shong Lue and his wife prepared a small traditional Hmong party to name their sons, and invited the wife’s parents. The day when these in-laws arrived was a stormy one, with heavy rain and wind, so that it was very difficult for anyone to get about, but the in-laws were nevertheless able to make it through the bad weather.
When they arrived at Shong Lue's house, and even before they had dried off, the mother-in-law walked over and sat down on the heavy horizontal bar to which the pestle for husking rice is attached. She began to scold the family angrily: "You two are so lazy that you haven't been going to work in the fields all this time but have just loafed at home. And on top of that, now you have twins! Don't you ever think about how you are going to feed your family?"

As she continued to berate Shong Lue and Pang, the faces of the twin boys turned blue. Shong Lue became very concerned and quickly picked up his bamboo pen, and with the indigo ink he wrote down a few of the Paawh letters which the twins had taught him. He handed the paper to his father-in-law (since a Hmong son-in-law is not supposed to deal directly with his mother-in-law) and said, "Please show this to mother and see if she can read it; otherwise she should stop scolding." [i.e., if the illiterate son-in-law can write, something miraculous is happening.] The father-in-law looked at it and realized it was writing. He
showed it to the mother-in-law, and she realized also that it was writing. So then she stopped scolding, and the twins' faces slowly returned to normal.

Early the next morning they had their celebration and named the twins. The older one was named Cha Yang and the younger Xa Yang. After the traditional celebration was over the in-laws returned home.

A message from Xa Yang

But the twins who had been born as sons of Shong Lue Yang and Pang Xiong did not live. First the older Cha Yang died, only seven days old. Xa Yang then lived for seven days more. Shong Lue was heartbroken, but he found a written message with a baby's footprint on it [like an official stamp], written to him by Xa Yang [the younger twin baby]. It said,

It has been seven months and seven days since we came to stay with you. [Note difference from the five-month pregnancy implied above]. We came this time only to find
and help you. When the mother-in-law came and scolded us, my older brother Cha suggested that we should leave and hide because we are creating problems for you.

So that's why he left me alone with you for a while. Our duty was only to bring you the Pahawh, as God had authorized us to come down and do, so you could teach it to the Hmong and to the Khmu'. You must understand, and try not to miss us any more.

This message is to let you know that the Pahawh for the Hmong and for the Khmu' is only being made available for a time now. The group that accepts the Pahawh will be blessed from now on, but if either group does not accept it, that people will remain downtrodden and poor, the servant to other nations for the next nine generations. After that the Pahawh will be brought back again.

You must also know that God has ruled that from now on the time for a generation will be eighty-five years. And
God sends the Pahawh

Tias Vaj Leej Txi tau txiąv txim kom txij no lawm tom ntej mas ib tiam neeg twg yog 85 xyos lawm xwb, thiab Vaj Leej Txi tau hais tias: Hmoob li Phaj Hauj mas raug luag lwm haiiv neeg rhauv tshem los lawm ntev, yog li Vaj Leej Txi tau muab txim txij no mus tias yog haiiv neeg twg uas tau rhauv tshem Phaj Hauj Hmoob thiab nywj keeb haiiv Hmoob ntawd tseem yuav raug luag lwm haiiv neeg muab nws rhauv tshem caij tsuaj tib yam nkaus thiab. Yog tias haiiv neeg twg pab nywj keeb haiiv neeg Hmoob thiab Pub Thaj tus Phaj Hauj mas haiiv neeg ntawd thiaj yuav tau txais Vaj Leej Txi li Koob Hmoo.

Txij li hnub no mus koj yuav rov nco qab tag nrho ib puas tsav yam uas Vaj Leej Txi twb tau muab lub luag thiv meem cob rau koj lawd es kom koj ua ntej los pheej xeeb tsheej neeg nyob rau ntauj tib no lawm tso wb mam nqa Phaj Hauj lawv qab los rau koj. Vaj Leej Txi twb tso lub yeej koob yeej huam los rau koj thiab tso koj theej kaj pej xeeb lawm. Koj yuav tsiam ua raws nraim li lub luag thiv meem thiab lub yeej koob yeej huam uas Vaj Leej Txi tau cob rau koj lawd.

God has ruled that since the Hmong writing system has been destroyed by other nations in the past, the nations who keep destroying it and destroying the Hmong people will themselves be destroyed in return. But the nations that help to save the Pahawh Hmong and Pahawh Ehmu’ will be blessed by God.

From today on you will be able to remember all of the authority God formerly gave you, when he sent you to earth to be born as a human being, with the two of us to follow and bring you the Pahawh. God gave you that power so that you could save people. You must now go on to do what God has already given you the authority and the power to do.
Shong Lue remembers his past

When Shong Lue had finished reading the message which Xa Yang had left for him, it all came back. He remembered that God had chosen the three of them to come down to earth to teach the Pahawh to the Hmong and Khu'm peoples. And so from that day on Shong Lue Yang was totally awakened, knowing everything in the universe from the beginning to the end.

He also remembered that he had been born in a Hmong family before, that he had had a family and that his name had been Shong Lue. He remembered his [earlier] three sons and two daughters, and how he became a wild boar living in the thick jungle for quite a while, and how he ate corn from fields belonging to Hmong people, and was killed by a Hmong which helped to remove his form as a boar. He went back to where he had lived in the earlier life to check with the
Hmong family which owned the corn field, and took them to visit the place where he had dug up the tubers and found the jar of silver. He told them to dig down and find the jar of silver, so they believed who he had been before. He also found his children [from his earlier life], and they corroborated his story, confirming that their father was Shong Lue. After that he told people to call him by the name of Shong Lue, but did not tell anyone about this history except Chia Koua Vang, so that it could be recorded.
3: Pej Xeem Cav

3: People Respond

Soob Lwj yog leej neeg tsis tau mus kawm kev txawj ntse los ntawm lwmm haiw neeg, tab sis nws muaj tsheej xeeb txawj ntse los ntawm Vaj Leej Txi. Nws pabu ib puas yam tsav nyob hauv lub ntiaj teb no uas yog Vaj Leej Txi tau tsim tseg. Thiab nws txawj tshuab raj, tshuab ncas, tshov qeej thiab txawj tsim Phaj Hauj rau haiw Hmoob thiab haiw Pub Thawj kawm, es kom lawv nyias ceev tau nyias li moj kuab. Nws tau xub muab Phaj Hauj los qhia rau lawv kom txawj tso yuav muab Vaj Leej Txi tej lus los cev thiab cawm kom lawv tsim feeb ua neeg zoo nyob hauv lub ntiaj teb no tso nws yuav muab tej kev txawj los qhia rau sawv daws no ces nws thiaj tau muab Vaj Leej Txi tes hauj lwmm pib leg raws fai Theej Kaj Pej Xeem li Vaj Leej Txi tau tso kom nws nqis los.

Shong Lue was a man who had no education from any foreign country, but was educated by the Father. He knew everything in the universe that was created by the Father. He also knew how to play the flute, the jew's harp and the bamboo pipes. And he knew how to create the Pahawh for the use of the Hmong and the Khmu' people, so that they could preserve their own languages. He first taught them the Pahawh, then taught them the message [sent by] the Father so that they could become good people on earth, and then he taught them knowledge. So he did the duty of a savior, as required by the Father.

Shong Lue teaches the Pahawh

When Shong Lue lived at Tham Ha village in Vietnam he began to teach the Pahawh to the Hmong and the Khmu'. He
taught only in his home, to those people who were interested in learning. Once the Pahawh had been taught widely to people, they came to appreciate his teaching and called him "The Mother [Source] of Writing." The people spread the word out to important people among the Hmong and the Khmu', so they came and questioned Shong Lue extensively about his knowledge and the creation of the Pahawh. When they did so he taught them the Father's message and about their own history from the beginning to the end.

There was no one who had as much knowledge as Shong Lue did. The Hmong people [readily] believed that he was the savior who was sent by the Father because he knew everything and could teach the Father's message. But [that was] not [true of] the Khmu' people; since he was a Hmong how could

Soob Luj qhia Phaj Hauj
Zwij ceeb Soob Luj nyob lub zos
he know about Khu'm' history? But whatever questions they asked, he was always able to give them the correct answer.

So the Khu'm' people tested him, setting up a drinking contest with him. They told him that they would believe him once he won the drinking contest, because most of the Khu'm' people use a lot of alcohol. They prepared a great deal of rice beer for the contest, but he won, so they believed him as well as did the Hmong. Once the Khu'm' believed that he was the savior and taught [God's] message, they loved him and came to him in large numbers.

The Hmong and the Khu'm' in the surrounding areas came in large numbers and whole-heartedly learned their own Pahawh from that time on. Shong Lue taught the young people who were interested in learning and who came to stay with him.
Those who learned well enough went back to teach others in their homes and at the fields [where people camp out at certain seasons, guarding their crops]. The word was spread by people in the surrounding areas, so the Hmong and Khmu’ from Mua Long and other areas came in a steady stream to learn.

Problems emerge

One of those years Yong Yia Yang [mayor of Nong Het, a major Hmong center then controlled by the communists] went from Nong Het, Laos to the funeral of his father Vang Cheng Yang [a former official in Laos] at Xa Xong Village in Vietnam. Shong Lue also came from Tham Ha to Vang Cheng Yang’s funeral. There were also some people who knew Shong Lue at the funeral and they told Yong Yia Yang about Shong Lue, about how he was a very poor orphan man, but he knew both Pahawh Hmong and Pahawh Khmu’.
Once Yong Via learned that, after his father was buried he went to Tham Ha village to look for Shong Lue. They had a long overnight talk together as he questioned Shong Lue about the creation of the Pahawh. Shong Lue told him all about it from the beginning to the end, and he was totally satisfied with the information. He then encouraged Shong Lue to teach the Pahawh openly to the Hmong and the Khmu'. He said he would send his two younger brothers to come to learn and help Shong Lue. With his authority as mayor he would move Shong Lue to Nong Het under his protection if Shong Lue’s teaching of the Pahawh created any problem for Vietnamese officials.

Yong Via returned home and sent Yong Gnua Yang and Pang Ge Yang [two of his younger brothers] to learn the Pahawh and to help Shong Lue. After the two of them came to learn
people Respond
tog nom tswv Nyab Laj tau tsis
texas siab rau Soob Lwj, lawv yuav
ntes nws ces Ntxoov Nyiaj thiab Paj
Zeb nkawd thiaw coj Soob Lwj khiav
mus nkaum nyob hauv zoov lawm hos
lawv tau tseg nws poj tub se nyob
hauv zos lawm xwb.

Txiaj Looj Thoj tau mus xyuas Soob
Lwj

Tib lub sij hawn tham xyoo 1963
ces sawv daws tau cav Soob Lwj lub
moo, thiab nws tej txawj Phaj
Hauj ncha txog rau ntawm lub zos
Fib Kham hauv teb chaws Nplog ces
Txiaj Looj Thoj tau hnov, nws paub
tias Soob Lwj yog ib leej lub
ntsuag txom² nyem xwb es, ua cas
sawv daws yuav cav tias nws txawj
Phaj Hauj heev no sim taug kev mus
xyuas seb vim li cas tiag. Txiaj
Looj Thoj thiab Ntsuab Txos Thoj
nkawd ob kuv tij tau mus ko taw
ntawm lub zos Fib Kham hauv teb
chaws Nplog mus xyuas Soob Lwj rau
ntawm lub zos Thab Has hauv Nyab

the Pahawh and help Shong Lue, the Hmong and Khu'm people
now came to learn it in increasing numbers. But beginning in
1963 the Vietnamese officials did not want Shong Lue [to
continue teaching]. They planned to have him arrested, so
Yong Gnia and Pang Ge took Shong Lue out to hide in the
jungle, leaving his family in the village.

Chia Long Thao visits Shong Lue

In the same year of 1963 the word about Shong Lue and his
Pahawh spread out and was heard by Chia Long Thao at Fi Kham
Village, Laos. [Chia Long Thao and Shong Lue had been born
in the same village of Fi Tong, and had continued to be
friends.] Chia Long knew Shong Lue was an orphan boy and
wondered about the news so he went to see what was going on.
Chia Long Thao and his brother Yova Chao Thao walked from Fi
Kham village, Laos, to Tham Ha village, Vietnam, arriving at
the time when the communist government forces were wanting
to arrest Shong Lue.
At Tham Ha village Shong Lue had already gone to hide in the jungle so Pang Ying Xiong [a villager] took them to meet with Shong Lue in a shelter at a field [mountain ricefield or cornfield]. They stayed together and talked for one night.

The next day the men told Shong Lue that in the middle of this difficult situation [they would not stay and study the Pahawh Hmong so] they were going back home. But Shong Lue asked them to hold on because he had already sent Long Yang [another brother of Yong Yia Yang, the mayor of Nong Het] to intercede with the communist officials. If [it turned out that] they really wanted him arrested Shong Lue would go with the two of them to live at Chia Long's village of Fi Kham, back in Laos, because Yong Yia had assured him that if anything happened he should look up Yong Yia in Laos [administered by a different Vietnamese official]. He also asked if the two brothers were willing to give his family hospitality.

The two of them agreed to help Shong Lue and his family, and waited until Long Yang brought back the news that if Shong Lue stayed and kept teaching he would certainly be
People Respond

puas yuav yug taus kuv mov thiab? Nkwad kuj tau thaj tsob tias yog koj tsev neeg xwb mas wb yug taus no ces nkawd thiaj theem tos Looj Yaj mus nug tog nom tswv Nyab Laj rov los txog ces Looj Yaj tau cej luam tias Nyab Laj tsis tseev, yog tias tseem pom muaj neeg tuaj kawm ntawv thiab no ces yuav tsum ntes xwb no, Soob Lwj thiaj tau txiav txim siab tias tab txawm yus tsis qhia los Hmoob thiab Pub Thawj pheej yuav tuaj nrhiav li ces ua ib siab khaib mus nyob lawm Fib Kham. Txiaj Looj nkawd thiaj tau coj Soob Lwj, Ntxooov Nyiaj, Paz Zeb lawv lav hav zoov tau 3 hnuh thiaj los txog rau ntawm lub zos Fib Kham lawm ces tshuav Soob Lwj poj tub se poob tag rau ntawm lub zos Thab Has.

Soob Lwj tsiv rau ntawm Fib Kham thiab Fib Khaw

Thaum Soob Lwj khaib dim los txog rau ntawm lub zos Fib Kham, Txiaj Looj Thaoj lawv tau mus ua tsev hauv hav zoov ntawm ntug zos rau Soob Lwj nyob tau 2 hlis ces lawv mam tso xov rov qab mus rau nws poj niam me nyuan pau. Nws

arrested. Shong Lue decided that even if he did not teach any more, the Hmong and Khu would come to find him anyway [which would create suspicion] so he would move to Fi Kham. Chia Long and his brother took Shong Lue, Yong Gnia and Pang Ge through the jungle for three days to Fi Kham village, leaving all of Shong Lue’s family at Tham Ha village.

Shong Lue moves to Fi Kham and Fi Kha

After Shong Lue had been moved to safety at Fi Kham, Chia Long Thao and his people built him a house in the jungle very close to the village, where he lived for two months, and sent a message back to his family about it. His family followed after him and stayed with him there in the jungle. The people in the area knew about it and came in large numbers to learn the Pahawh at Shong Lue’s home. He told them that since so many of them wanted to learn, if he
stayed long the Vietnamese officials would hear about it, so he moved and built another house in the jungle very close to Pi Kha Village [where he had lived earlier].

He had not been there very long when the Hmong again began coming to learn the Pahawh in increasing numbers. Those who were interested in learning came to stay with him [for a short time] and once they learned it well enough, they helped by teaching others in the jungle. The word again spread out everywhere and made the Hmong and Lao communist officials uneasy about Shong Lue, so Yong Yia Yang [mayor of Nong Het] went to meet with Gnia Vue Lo [brother of Faydang Lobliayao, the top Hmong communist leader] and a Laotian communist official by the name of Singkapo, and several Vietnamese officials. He asked for permission for Shong Lue to teach the Pahawh.
But the communist officials scolded him, saying, "You were one who completed the Songkhoueng training [a program in the communist system]. Why have you been taken in by this CIA plot? We know for sure that Vang Pao [Hmong General in the Royal Lao army] sent Savengsa [a Khmu'] to lead two American CIA agents to live in a bunker in Shong Lue's house and to teach him all about this alphabet." Yong Yia believed the accusation and became afraid of losing his position as mayor, so he drew back from helping Shong Lue and cooperated with the communist government attempts to arrest him.
That same year, Gnia Nou Thao from Mua Long was the chief commander of the [communist Hmong] Pa Chai troops at Nong Het. [Pa Chai had been a famous Hmong messianic leader of a resistance movement against the French some forty years before, and his name had been given to this particular contingent of troops which came from the area where he had led the insurrection.]

Gnia Nou was on his way back home [to Mua Long] when he met fifty-two civilians and seven of his soldiers on their way [from Mua Long] to learn the Pahawh from Shong Lue. He asked why they were traveling, but the soldiers lied to him, saying that they were going to their military assignment at Nong Het, whereas they were really going to learn the Pahawh at Shong Lue's place instead of going to work.

Gnia Nou had been home for ten days when officers from Nong Het ordered him to send the soldiers to their posts there. This surprised him because he had met them...
Fi Kha Village

hauj lwm no ces nws thiaj poob siab tias ua cas kuv twb ntsib lawv tom kev, thiab twb hais tias mus ua hauj lwm lawm Looj Hej es ua cas twb tau 10 hnb no lawm tseem mus tsis tau txog mas ntshe lawv dag kuv xwb, tej zaum lawv mus dua lwm qhov lawm. Tag kis sawv ntxov nws thiaj tau taug kev ntawm Muas Loom tuaj mus xyuas tim Soob Lwj seb puas pom nws cov xav pav. Nws mus txog ces pom lawv nyob kawm ntawv ntawm Soob Lwj tiag. Nws ncig xyuas lawv kawm ntawv ces nws thiaj qw tias, nej pheej qhia ntawv hauv hauv zoov li no 'es cov nom tswv thiaj liam tias nej yog xus xis, Xis Ais Es ntawm As Mes Lis Kas nev, kuv tuaj pom nej yog pej xeebm huab hwm xwb tiag, nej twb tsis ua dab tsi, tsuas yog kawm ntawv xwb ces cia li mus ua tsev qhia rau hauv zos Fib Khav tso kuv mam rov mus hais kom cov nom tswv txhob ua nyuaj rau nej lawm.

Nyiaj Nus Thoj tau lees li hais ces Soob Lwj thiaj zoo siab hlo kom sawv daws tawm los tsav teej kawm thiab tsev kheej teev hawm rau hauv zos Fib Khav.

[ostensibly returning to Nong Het] as he was traveling home ten days before. They must have gone somewhere else.
So the next day he went to Shong Lue’s place and found the soldiers there learning the Pahawh. He walked around [looking over the situation] and called out to the people there, "Because you have been learning and teaching [secretively] in the jungle, this is why the officials accuse you of [being part of] a plot by the American CIA. I see here that you are all civilians and are doing nothing wrong. What all you civilians are doing is nothing but learning. Go and build your school in Fi Kha. I will go to the officials and tell them not to bother you any more."

Shong Lue was happy with Gnja Nou Thao’s assurance and returned to build a school and a round house for worship at Fi Kha Village.
Shong Lue’s life at Fi Kha

While Shong Lue lived at Fi Kha Village they built a school and a round house for worship, and he named twelve clan representatives as [religious] leaders to worship the Father, and named many teachers to teach the Pahawh to the Hmong and Khmu’ people. One of those teachers was Pa Kao Hor [who has continued to be a major leader in movements spawned from Shong Lue Yang’s movement]. Shong Lue also named many Khmu’ teachers to teach the Pahawh Khmu’. So the Pahawh was now being taught in a classroom at Fi Kha Village.

Onia Nou Thao returned to Nong Het and asked the high officials not to bother Shong Lue, because he saw only civilians learning the Pahawh. But they criticized him, asking how, as the chief commander of the Pa Chai troops, he could become a victim of the American CIA plot. The argument led them not to trust him, and they would have had him
arrested, so he went back to Mua Long and never went back to his position. The communist officials sent Vietnamese soldiers to arrest Gnia Nou Thao but they were not successful because all of his relatives were well equipped with weapons. He stopped supporting Shong Lue and gave the people learning the Pahawh Hmong no further assistance, but Shong Lue continued worshiping the Father and had his teachers teach extensively.

When Hmong and Khmu' people from both Vietnam and Laos knew that Shong Lue was teaching the Pahawh again they all came to learn it in large numbers. Those who came from Vietnam, Shong Lue asked to stay at Fi Kham Village, to which he sent teachers from Fi Kha, to teach them. At that time there was a total of 250 students at both villages of Fi Kha and Fi Kham.
Chia Long Thao's house was located at the entrance of Fi Kham Village, so Shong Lue asked him to help those students who came from Vietnam by providing rice and other food, which Chia Long's family did. Because there was such a large number of students learning the Pahawh, the Lao communist officials were really very unhappy about the situation, so they placed [a few] soldiers outside the [entrance to the] village and wrote messages [in Lao] to the civilians not to learn the writing which came from the American CIA. [They threatened that] anyone who dared to continue learning would be killed.

But the civilian students were brave enough to continue learning and not to be intimidated by the Vietnamese soldiers. The Vietnamese soldiers could not kill them because they were civilians, so they stayed there outside the village and each day wrote a letter telling the people
Fi Kha Village

Laj kuj tuav cai tsis los puav tua Soob Lwj hauv zos vim nws cov me yes kuj tsis muaj riam phom tawn tsam lawv. Cov xav pav Nyab Laj tau tuaj nyob tim tej ntug zos zov thiab txawv tsis pub tsoom pej xeem txiv neej tawn mus nhiaj noj nruab teb li lawm tsam lawm mus ouag tau xusxis. Soob Lwj tau kev nyuaj siab heev, nws thiaj tau hais tias peb lub zog mas yuav yog Vaj Pov tuaj pav thiaj yuav tau lawm xwb no ces muaj ib leeg me yes Hmoob hu ua Npliaj Kaub Yaj, nws tseem ua xav pav rau tog Nyab Laj tau hnov Soob Lwj hais li ces nws thiaj mus hais rau Nyab Laj tias Soob Lwj yog Xis Ais Es ntawm As Mes Lis Kas tiag? vim nws tau hnov Soob Lwj tham txog Vaj Pov lub zog. Txij hnub ntawd los cov Nyab Laj txawm tuaj zov lawv lub zos nruj heev lawm.

to move out of the village so they could arrest Shong Lue [whom the people in the village protected by not identifying him]. The civilians were not free to come and go [over the trail to and from the village], and the soldiers could not attack Shong Lue’s village because it was inhabited by civilians without weapons. The soldiers did not allow the men [of the village] to leave looking for food, afraid that they would contact the enemy.

Shong Lue was in a difficult situation, so he [held a meeting] telling [his students] that they would have to turn to [General] Yang Pao [Hmong commander of the government forces defending against the communists] for protection. But a student by the name of Blia Kao Yang, a soldier on the communist side, heard this and reported to the higher communist officials that Shong Lue really was involved with the American CIA. From that day on a group of Vietnamese soldiers restricted access to the village even more closely.
3: loggedin
5: Phoij Fim Vaj Pov
5: Appeal to General Vang Pao

Shong Lue began to realize that the communist government would do everything possible to get him, so he called a meeting of the worship leaders [representatives of the clans] for their opinions about how to get help from Vang Pao. [Many other students were also present.] They [discussed ways of getting in touch with Vang Pao because they] wanted to be sure that they would not be killed once they reached Vang Pao [coming as they were from the communist side].

Chai Vang Yang [one of the students present] from Fi Kou Village noted that Chia Long Thao had the same clan name as Neng Chue Thao, a top commander under Vang Pao. In addition, Gnia Sau Her [another of their number] had a son who had joined up with Vang Pao. Furthermore, Chue Ching Vang [district official in Ban Vieng, with a garrison of government soldiers, three days walk away] was a cousin of
Vang Pao and Chue Ker Yang [whom Chai Vang Yang knew] was the brother-in-law of Chue Ching. The speaker, Chai Vang Yang, would volunteer to take Chia Long Thao and Gnia Sau Her [who had these connections], and Gnia Chao Her [who volunteered to go along] to meet with Chue Ker and ask him to take the three of them to meet with Chue Ching Vang to help them in making contact safely with Vang Pao.

Shong Lue agreed with the idea and gave them a message [for the general]. Chai Vang Yang then took them to meet Chue Ker at Chua Thor Village [after they had all sneak ed out of Fi Kha into the surrounding jungle]. Chue Ker then took the three to meet with Chue Ching Vang at Ban Vieng Village. When they gave him Shong Lue's message he replied that he knew all about the "Mother of Writing." He then called Vang Pao right away on his high-powered radio and gave him the names of the three people from the "Mother of Writing" who wanted to see him. The General agreed to receive Gnia Sau Her and Chia Long Thao only. [Gnia Chao Her was not received because he did not have a connection like
the others did.] So the next morning an American pilot flew from Long Cheng to pick them up at Ban Vieng Village.

When the American aircraft landed, the pilot took out a list with their names, and called them out. Chue Ching Vang boarded Chia Long Thao and Gnai Sau Her on the American aircraft which took them to Long Cheng [General Vang Pao’s military headquarters], leaving Gnai Chao Her to wait for them at Ban Vieng.

Meeting with General Vang Pao

They met with General Vang Pao and told him all about the situation. [They said] the main problem they had was that they were greatly interested in learning Shong Lue’s writing. Because they believed in Shong Lue and were involved with his writing they were getting in trouble, and had come to the general for help. The general replied to


Vias. Thaum As Mes Lis Kas mus tsaws tau ces nws mam nqa nkawd ob lub npe tawm mus hu. Twex Ceeb Vaj thiaj maub Txiaj Looj Thoij thiab Nyiaj Xauv Hawj nkawd rau As Mes Lis Kas coij tuaj tsaws rau hauv Looj ceeb, hos tseg Nyiaj Txoos Hawj nyob tos nkawd rau ntawm Npab Vias.

Kev ntsib nrog zaws roos Vaj Pov

Nkawd kuj tau mus ntsib zaws roos Vaj Pov thiab tau maub paus ntsis piav rau nws tias peb mas kuj tsis muaj dab tsi luag cav toob cav xib los tsuas yug lub ncauj cav lus paju lus cua xwb, tab si qhov peb tau plaub mas tsuas yug nyiam kawm Soob Lwj cov ntaww xwb. Soob Lwj yog ib leeg neeg ua liaj ua teb xwb tsis muaj kev txawj dab tsi li, tab sis nws ho txawj ua tau ib cov ntaww lo sau hais tau lus Hmoob meej ces kww tiij neej tsa Hmoob hnov. Leej twg hnov los pheej nyiam tuaj kawm mas thiay rau rau peb tau plaub. Wb tuaj ouag koj yog Hlob thiab thov kom koj mus pab. Zaws roos kuj teb zoo tias yog nej tsis muaj riam muaj pom tawm tsam, tsuas yog kawm ntaww xwb es Nyab Laj
their satisfaction, “You are only learning, not using weapons against them, but Uncle Faydang [Lobiayao] and Gnia Vue [Long, both top leaders of the communist Hmong faction] didn’t take you so I will. You all come and I will help.”

After the discussion the general took [flew] them [in his own plane] to visit Gnia Sau’s son who was studying in Vientiane. They had a good meal in Vientiane and then returned to Long Cheng.

The next morning [General Vang Pao] told the men that [Colonel] Neng Chue was fighting very close to Nong Het, so he would send them back to Neng Chue. Once Neng Chue regained Nong Het he would send soldiers, nurses and telegraph operators with the two of them to help Shong Lue.

Return to Fi Kham

So the general sent them to the base commanded by Neng Chue, which was very close to Nong Het. They had been there only six days, however, when the base was attacked by the communists and was lost to them so [the garrison] moved to
Phou Nong Mountain. They had been there at Phou Nong for twelve days when the general had aircraft fly the two of them back to Long Cheng. They stayed in the general’s quarters for two more months until finally he provided weapons, radios and seven soldiers to go with them, dropping them off first at Ban Vieng. But Gnia Chao had not been able to wait for them any longer and had already returned home.

They stayed at Ban Vieng for one night. Early morning the next day they got ready to leave, but an aircraft was arriving, so they waited and watched it land. On the aircraft were Fong Vang and Wa Ying Vang [two soldiers] who had been sent to go with them, as Fong Vang was also going to visit his parents at Nam Cha Village.

After they had passed the Nam Mak River, Fong Vang and Chia Lee [leader of the seven soldiers] decided that Vietnam
was still too far away [and the trail too dangerous], so they sent the two men on by themselves and all of the soldiers started to return. If Shong Lue and his family were in the same situation as before then they should come back again to get help. The two groups separated and headed in their respective directions. Once they were as far apart as a ricefield, however, the soldiers realized that they would face some trouble in returning without a good reason, so they called to the two men to wait for them.

Chia Lee then convinced them that it looked like there was a foot path running from the top down to the bottom of the hill, and [saying he was] afraid there were enemy troops down there, he had everybody wait while he went to check first to make sure it was safe. He went running down the hill, after which there were two gun shots and he came back claiming that the enemy had shot off the handle of his canteen, so they had better go back. He frightened them [at
ua ib siab nrog lawv rov qab mus rau Npab Vias. Lawv rov los mus rau hauv Npab Vias tau ob hnub, ces Txwj Ceeb Vaj thiaj hais rau nkawd tias, yog zoo li no lawm ces cia lawv nyob tso neb rov qab mus xyuas hos Soob Lwj thiaj neb poj tub se tseem nyob li qub no ces neb mam rov tuaj, kuv mam kom lawv nrog neb mus.

Nkawd ua ib siab rov los tsev li hais lawm ces thiaj tau tso cov xav pav uas zaws roos tso nrog nkawd mus rau hauv Npab Vias.

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first] telling them that they should return with the soldiers. But even when they realized it was a lie they decided to go back with the others to Ban Vieng anyway, because the others were armed.

After they had been at Ban Vieng for two days, Chue Ching Vang said to them, "Why don't you go home by yourselves to see if Shong Lue and your families are still in the same situation as before, in which case you two come back here, and I will send the troops back with you." The two took this advice and returned home and left the general's soldiers at Ban Vieng.
Once Chia Long and Gnial Sau arrived at home [Fi Kham] the communists knew [suggested] that they had contacted the enemy, and were afraid that the enemy troops could be hidden anywhere. The men stayed at home for two nights, and then on the third night went to Shong Lue with the word from General Vang Pao.

They talked it over during the night but early the next morning Yong Yia Yang and Gnial Vue Lor brought Vietnamese troops to attack Shong Lue at Fi Kha village. Yia Vue, a student from Mua Long, was shot to death right at Shong Lue’s door step, but Shong Lue, his family, Chia Long Thao and Gnial Sau Her had [earlier] escaped into the jungle. At that same moment a group of Kmu from Kiaw Ba village arrived to learn the Pahawh, but were shot at by the Vietnamese, and two of them were killed right at the village entrance.
Earlier the same day Gnia Sau Her had taken Shong Lue and his family off to join with Vang Pao’s side. On the way they arrived at a hilltop covered with thatch grass [Imperata, a tall, tough grass which grows in areas which have been over-cultivated by swidden farming]; it was raining heavily and everyone was wet and tired. Shong Lue was afraid that they would be caught by the Vietnamese soldiers so he [and his family changed plans and] went and hid in the [dense] Kiaw Boua Mou jungle in Vietnam instead.

Appeal to communist officials

While Shong Lue was hiding in the big jungle where he could not be found by the communist troops, the nearby civilians were put under very heavy restrictions, forbidden to take food [out of their villages] to eat at their fields
Shong Lue Flees Again

[when they were working], so that they would not be able to feed him. So Gnia Chao Thao and Gnia Xiong provided a pig of five fists [measured with a cord around the body, divided in half, to put on a feast in order] to beg for mercy from Yong Yia Yang, Gnia Vue Lor and the Vietnamese [who were staying] at a Lao village called Fi Chala [during this period of trying to find Shong Lue]. They had the meal all prepared but it was refused by [the communist leaders], who said that unless Chia Long Thao and Gnia Sau Her also came, they would not accept the meal. They would eat only if the two of them were also present.

So Gnia Chao and Gnia Xiong had to go back [two hours walk] to get Chia Long and Gnia Sau. It was a very risky situation, but the latter two men finally decided to attend the meal. On that particular day also, a daughter-in-law of Chia Long Thao was badly ill so that a shaman was performing a ceremony to find the cause of the illness, but Chia Long had to go. It caused great distress and foreboding to him and his family. His son held onto his arms and pulled him back, not letting him go, but someone was needed to steady
[the bench for] the shaman [jumping up and down to and from the bench in his trance] and to keep him from falling, so the son went back inside the house, and Chia Long Thao had the opportunity to leave.

Every one was crying because they were afraid that it would be the last time they would see each other. It was a situation in which the alternatives were all bad. However, Nao Va Thao, who was mayor of Muong Kham [a town in the area], had also come along with Gnia Vue Lor and the other officials. He asked the men if they were afraid, and they replied that they were, because they had contacted the enemy. Nao Va told them not to be afraid, "If the two of you should be arrested, Yong Yia should also be arrested, because his assurance to Shong Lue made him move to your village and caused you all of the problems." This made the two of them feel relieved.
They were all gathered in a Lao house on stilts when the communist officials arrived and questioned them about why they had contacted the enemy. They replied, "Shong Lue told us to go, so we did." Again the officials said, "We knew about that; that's why we needed you two to come and say that; what are you so frightened about?"

The facts were all discussed and the communist officials were satisfied. They joined the meal and forgave them; they all then stayed over night at the village. After the problem was solved, the Vietnamese allowed the civilians to go back freely to their farm fields as in the past, and they had the chance to harvest their rice crop that year.

Later the Vietnamese again put many restrictions on them. They kept telling the civilians not to be afraid, as they were only going to arrest those who contacted the enemy, but the clan representatives [leaders in worship under Shong
Luc] were afraid and sent people to talk with Shong Lue, to see what his suggestions might be. He responded that the twelve clan representatives should continue worshiping the Father and they had full authority to take charge of the people. They should do as he had taught them, and everything would be all right; they should not wait for him any more.

Once Shong Lue’s answer was received, many clan leaders were afraid [they might not do things right]. They stopped worshiping and learning the Pahawh, but Wang Chao Thao [who was one of them], together with Xai Xue Vang and Pa Kao Her [who were teachers of the Pahawh Hmong] and fifteen Khu men went to build a round house for worshiping the Father and teaching the Pahawh at Pha Bong village, in Vietnam. Right after everything was built, however, it became known to the Vietnamese, and Wang Chao Thao’s group was attacked by the communists.
Shong Lue Flees Again

There were two hard-fought skirmishes with the Vietnamese troops. [The villagers and students] won the first one, but the Vietnamese went back for more soldiers and in the second attack Wang Chao Thao lost one of his eyes so [the followers of Shong Lue] lost the second fight with the communists. During the period of the fighting between Wang Chao Thao and the communists, Chia Long Thao went back again to get help from General Vang Pao at Long Cheng.

General Vang Pao sends help

The general used aircraft to transport troops commanded by [Captain] Youa Va Lee, SGU 1 [Special Guerrilla Unit 1], to help. Among them was Chia Koua Vang [first author of this account]. These were troops recently arrived from training in Thailand. They left Long Cheng in February 1964, and landed at Ban Xong Village, bringing along Chia Long Thao.
Once the 400 soldiers had all arrived, they walked from Ban Xong to Ban Vieng, past Kiaw Boua Village, the Nam Mak River, Chua Tho Village and Tue La Village, before they broke up into in three groups. One group went to Fi Kham village to look for Shong Lue. One group went to get the civilians from Nam Cha Village [because there were many followers of Shong Lue there] and brought them back to resettle in Kiaw Boua Village. The third group went to Ha Chau Village to cut off any Vietnamese pursuit and protect the civilians, so that they could be moved to Kiaw Boua.

The group that went to look for Shong Lue met Wang Chao Thao's group in retreat, right after losing the battle. Wang Chao was badly wounded and many students had been killed. They took the wounded to Kiaw Boua and sent them on [overland] to be hospitalized at Long Cheng. They could not find Shong Lue hiding in the jungle.
Shong Lue Flees Again

Shong Lue was in the jungle for nine months until he heard that Vang Pao's army had moved all of the civilians to Kiaw Boua. At that same time the Vietnamese were very restrictive toward the civilians [who were helping him]. Those who had brought him food could no longer help him. There were people [from the nearby villages] who led the communist troops to search for him and arrest him. They caught the rest of his family there in the jungle, but he escaped with his oldest son Ge Yang.

Shong Lue and his son then moved and hid in the jungle called Fi Eu. He went to see people [in a nearby village] who knew him well and sent a message by them to Wang Houa Ber Yang, who was one of the clan representatives who were worship leaders at Kiaw Boua, to come and get him so that he could join them.
Wang Houa Ber went to get Shong Lue and his son Ge Yang and took them to Kiaw Boua. On January 15th, 1965, at Kiaw Boua, Shong Lue married Bau Moua from Ban Xong village. Her father was Gnia Vue Moua and her mother Mai Thao. After he married Bau Moua and lived there for a while, people asked him to continue teaching them the Pahawh. He told them to find one person from each of twelve clans to learn and become teachers, and they did as they were told. Then he began teaching them the Second Stage Reduced Version (a simplification of what he had taught before) on April 15th, 1965.

Then the word spread widely that the "Mother of Writing" was teaching the Pahawh at Kiaw Boua, and Hmong and Khmu people gathered to learn it in large numbers. More and more of the Hmong and the Khmu were interested in learning the Second Stage Reduced Version which he taught at Kiaw Boua.
Both civilians and soldiers admired him, accepting his religious teaching and his teaching of the Pahawh, and some people became more considerate and helpful to each other. But other people were opposed to him.

Opposition from Nao Pou Lee

One day some soldiers found a nest of bumble bees [a very large species with a dangerous sting] and told their commander Nao Pou Lee about it. Nao Pou, who was in command over all the Kiaw Boua area [and now one of those opposed to Shong Lue’s movement], saw an opportunity [to discredit Shong Lue] and wanted Shong Lue’s believers to be stung by the bees, so he made an offer to Kao Vang [one of Shong Lue’s students] that if Shong Lue’s group could smoke out [the underground nest] and dig out the edible grubs [a delicacy] safely in the daytime [much more dangerous than at night] without anyone receiving a single sting, he would
daiv rau nej, hos yog tias nej mus hlawv es tseeb muaj ib leeg tug raug daiv plev no ces nej yog ib cov neeg dag xwb, kuv yuav tsis ntsese thiad yuav tsis tham nqi hlawv daiv rau nej. Nom Pu tau tsv rau Kos Vaj li ces nws tau los piav qhia Soob Lwj li hais, Soob Lwj tsw paub tias Nom Pu ntxias kom daiv plev lawv xwb nws yuav tsis ntsese thiaib tsis kam tham tus nqi li hais. Soob Lwj thiaj tau teb rau Kos tias yog muaj tseeb li tiag no nej mus thov neeg laus ua tim khawv nrog paub thiaib cog lus kom zoo tseg tso, Nom Pu yuav tsis them rau nej, tab sis kom cov laus neeg pab nej hais ces tau, hos nej mus hlav los daiv yuav tsis plev nej. Kos Vaj tau lus teb ntwaw, Soob Lwj tag ces nws thiaj mus thov tim khawv nrog nws mus ua pov thawj sib cog lus rau Nom Pu tag ces lawv muaj 10 leej txawm mus hlawv thiaib khaub tau xub daiv ntaub los txog thiaib tsis raug daiv plev. Lawv coj xub daiv los rau Nom Pu, ces nws tau dag xwb, nws tsis kam them cov nqi hlawv daiv li tau cog lus tseg, ces kawg cov laus neeg tau mus nrog sib

believe that they had a God, and he would pay them a sum of 200,000 kip ($400, a very large sum at that time and place). But if any one was stung by the bees, he would call them all a group of liars and not pay them anything.

Kao Vang told Shong Lue what Nao Pou said. Shong Lue suggested to Kao Vang that if what he said was true they should find witnesses [respected people who would go and verify with Nao Pou what he had said and then verify that Shong Lue's followers had followed the agreement]. The witnesses would make sure Nao Pou could not back down on his word. He knew Nao Pou was offering this incentive deceitfully, and did not intend to pay them, but if there were witnesses, it would be all right. They could just go and smoke out the nest and get the grubs without being stung.
Kao Vang found respected people to witness the agreement and sent a group of ten people to smoke out and dig up the bees, and bring the grubs back safely. Once they brought Nao Pou the grubs he refused to pay, but because of the verification by the witnesses he finally paid them, even though he did not have that much money with which to pay. He docked the soldiers' salaries and used that money for paying the amount in full [a practice also followed at times by others in the Hmong chain of command]. This caused a problem between Nao Pou and his soldiers, so he finally turned over the position of commanding the Kiaw Boua area to Pong Vang [his second in command, who had earlier been in the party which was sent by Vang Pao to look into Shong Lue's situation. Nao Pou returned to Long Cheng.]

Help from General Vang Pao

During this period, both the Hmong and the Khmu' populations in communist-controlled areas were aware that the Royal Lao Government was allowing Shong Lue to teach the Pahawh freely at Kiaw Boua, so they escaped from different places to join the people at Kiaw Boua and learn the Pahawh there. As there were so many students learning both Pahawh Hmong and Pahawh Khmu', Shong Lue realized that they lacked
nyias kawm nyias Phaj Hauj coob heev lawm ces nws tsis muaj twj txheej los teeb txheeb kom txaus qhia rau saww daws. Nws tau cia siab tias zaws roos Vaj Pov yuav txaus siab thiab zoo siab pak kom muaj Phaj Hauj rau Hmoob thiab Pub Thawj tau kawm kom txawj no ces nws thiaj tau thov nyooj hoom hauv Kiaj Npuam caij tuaj rau hauv Looj Ceeb.

Thawj zaug, Soob Lwj tau tuaj so rau ntawm Ntxoov Huas Yaj tsev tau ob hnuw xwb, ces nws thiaj mus phoj fim zaws roos Vaj Pov, nws tau muab nws li teej num thiab tej kev yuav siv nyiaj txiag ua twj txheej pluam tag rau luag. Luag kuj txawj xav thiab tau muab nyiaj txiag rau nws coj mus siv rau tej dej num raws li kev thov. Nws tau coj cov nyiaj txiag pab cuam ntawm zaws roos rov qab mus leg nws li teej num nyob Kiaj Npuam tau ib ntus, nws kuj tau tu nyiaj txiag siv dua ces nws thiaj ho tau rov qab tuaj rau hauv Looj Ceeb zaum ob thiab tau rov mus Phoj fim thov nyiaj ntawm zaws roos dua, nws tau teb tias nyiaj txiag ces kuv muab rau Foom nqa tag tuaj lawm, koj rov mus nug kom nws muab rau koj. Soob Lwj tau rov qab

materials [notebooks, pencils, pens, paper, etc.] for teaching and learning. He hoped that General Vang Pao would want to support the Pahawh for the Hmong and Khu languages, so he boarded the aircraft from Kiaw Boua to Long Cheng, to ask for help. [There was an extensive network of small planes between military airstrips during the war.]

On his first trip he stayed at Yong Houa Yang’s house [an uncle] for two days and then went to see General Vang Pao face to face. He told him all about his project and the need for help. He was kindly given a sum of cash to take back and to be used for the project.

The general’s money was very useful for a while but it ran out, and he went back to Long Cheng to ask for help from the general the second time. Upon his arrival, the general said to him, “I already gave Fong the money to be given to
you. Why don’t you go back and he will give it to you.” Shong Lue returned to Kiaw Boua and asked Fong as he was told, but there was no answer; he then stopped asking any more.

Shong Lue predicts a communist attack

The communists attacked Kiaw Boua. By the supernatural illumination he had, Shong Lue knew in advance what was going to happen, and from what direction they were going to be attacked by the communists. He told the soldiers to be ready, and events took place on time and in the way he had showed them. With his tips, the soldiers could never be defeated, and no casualties were incurred. This made people respect and believe him even more. But at the same time, there were also people who made the accusation that he knew all about these things because he had a radio for contact with the Vietnamese.
As this bad rumor circulated, Fong Vang said it could very well cause greater problems if Shong Lue stayed at Kiaw Boua, so Fong asked him to go to Long Cheng. But You Vue [one of the elders who believed in Shong Lue] killed a pig to provide a feast to beg Fong Vang to let Shong Lue stay at Kiaw Boua, and he was therefore allowed to stay at Kiaw Boua a little bit longer.

That continued until 1966, when Fong commanded a plane to take Shong Lue and all of his family to visit [his nephew Colonel] Yong Chue Yang and his family now living in Long Cheng [at Yong Chue's invitation]. Yong Chue was not home at the time when Shong Lue's family arrived, but they stayed at his home anyway. They had been at Long Cheng for a week when Yong Chue and [his neighbor] Chia Koua Vang [one of the authors of this book], who had been out in the front lines near Na Khang Village, returned home.
Shong Lue can not return to Kiaw Boua

Shong Lue visited Yong Chue for a month and was ready to go back home. As he waited for a ride on an aircraft to go back to Kiaw Boua, someone was preventing him from boarding any aircraft and returning home [not authorizing him to board]. One day after he waited until noon for a place on an aircraft and was not able to get on as usual, he went to Nao Bee Yang’s home [Yong Chue’s younger brother, Shong Lue’s nephew, an officer in the army]. He sat down and cried.

Nao Bee wondered what the matter was, and asked “Uncle, what are you sad about?”

Shong Lue replied, “Son, I was commissioned [by God] to bring a message to you, the Hmong people, but you Hmong still unjustly accuse me to the General of being a Vietnamese. What shall I do?”

Nao Bee asked, “That isn’t true, is it uncle?”

He said “It is true. Some one has just came from Kiaw Boua and reported to the general, as you will know when dark comes.”
Nao Bee did not yet believe this. But before it was very dark, Blia Yao Thao [a former neighbor in Vietnam] came to see Shong Lue and said to him, "Brother-in-law, someone came and reported to the general that you are with the enemy, that you have come here to spy on us. But as far as I know you are not doing that, are you, Brother-in-law?"

Shong Lue replied "I'm here to visit only, but it is all right if Hmong people turn against me."

Shong Lue realized that it did not matter where he lived, that people would always find something to accuse him of, so he decided to stay in Long Cheng but asked Yong Chue what would be best.
Shong Lue at Kiaw Boua

Soob Lwj tau tsis rov qab zov nyooj hoom mus nyob rau Kiaw Npuam lawm ces nws thiaj ua ib siab nrog Ntxoov Tswb nyob ua tib tse rau hauv lub nrog Looj Ceeb tau ib ntus ces Txiaj Kuam Vaj thiab Soob Lwj thiaj tau sib ntsib thiab sib paub thaum ntawd los lawm vim tias Txiaj Kuam thiab Ntxoov Tswb nkawd ob lub tsev nyob ua ke. Soob Lwj nrog Ntxoov Tswb nyob tsis tau ntew ces nws txawm hais rau Ntxoov Tswb tias nws yuav mus ua tsev nrog Paj Txawg Xyooj nyob rau ntawm lub zos Naj Gua no ces Ntxoov Tswb kuj xav tias nws los kuj muaj poj tub se es yuav cia nws nrog Ntxoov Tswb nyob mus li los kuj yuav nyuaj rau nws ces cia nws mus nyob nws thiaj yuav tsis ntxhov nws siab no ces Ntxoov Tswb thiaj tau cia nws mus ua tsev nyob rau hauv lub zos Naj Gua lawm.

Yong Chue could not predict the future, but agreed that it was a good idea for him not to return to Kiaw Boua, and said he would let Fong know.

Shong Lue continued to stay with Yong Chue after he decided not to go back to Kiaw Boua, and because Chia Koua Vang and Yong Chue Yang were neighbors, Shong Lue and Chia Koua came to know each other.

Shong Lue did not stay with Yong Chue very long, however. He asked if it would be possible for him to build a house at Nam Ngua [just outside Long Cheng proper] with Pa Yer Xiong [a relative]. Yong Chue felt that it would relieve a lot of stress for Shong Lue and his family to be on their own, and he agreed for him to build his own home at Nam Ngua.
At Nam Ngua Shong Lue built a small round house behind his home for worshipping the Father, but no school for teaching the Pahawh. Once he had settled down, however, the people of the surrounding areas spread the word that "Mother of Writing" now lived at Nam Ngua Village. The news about him spread everywhere, so that Hmong people from Phou Moc Village [about two hours’ walk] and from Long Cheng [thirty minutes walk] asked him to teach them the Pahawh.

Shong Lue asked those young men who had already learned at Kiaw Boua to do all the teaching. Those people who were interested in learning had to bring their own notebooks, and each time the young teachers would write a few characters for them to memorize. Then the next time they wrote some more for them until all the characters were completely memorized by the learners. Even though Shong Lue did not have a school for teaching, people were willing to come and
learn until they knew how to write and to read well enough, and then they went home.

Hmong people came to learn the Pahawh in the daytime and at night in increasing numbers. There were not only people who were interested in learning the Pahawh, but also people who flocked together to discuss its history [meaning, significance] as well. Once the people who learned the Pahawh and the people who came to question and discuss believed the message, rumors about Shong Lue’s knowledge spread widely. Civilians and soldiers alike became interested in learning the Pahawh.

At Nam Ngu village Shong Lue still had the young teachers teach the Second Stage Reduced Version, that had
not yet been systematized [i.e., the Third Stage had not yet been produced or was not yet being taught]. Both soldiers and civilians learned it and spread the word to others, so that Hmong young people from as far away as Na Khang, Pha Pou Village and Muong Moc areas [access only by plane from these distant areas] all came to learn, group after group, and they were all satisfied with it.

Plot against General Vang Pao
That same year of 1966, the general [Vang Pao] was wounded and had to be hospitalized in Thailand, and there was a group of people who wanted to stage a coup at Long Cheng. At that time the army commanders [in Long Cheng] said that many Vietnamese troops had reached Green Lake Village [close to the major Hmong center of Sam Thong, 2-3 hours away by military transport] so they took as many weapons and as much ammunition as they could up to most of the hilltop fortified points [on the heights above Long Cheng].
Colonel Youa Vang Lee also divided up his troops to man all of those hilltop fortifications. He ordered Company 3, which was led by Blong Chang, to locate at Phou Moc Mountain, and Companies 4 and 5 took over all the other hilltops. Company 1, of which Chia Koua Vang was a member, and Company 2 [both companies which remained fully loyal to General Vang Pao] were to remain stationed in Long Cheng, and some of the soldiers from those companies were sent out to patrol at Green Lake Village. These soldiers were at Green Lake Village for two days and checked with the civilians there, but were told that there were no Vietnamese troops in the area at all.

The soldiers returned to Long Cheng, where everybody was being told by the chief commanders to stay alert one particular night because the enemy would attack them for sure. That particular night, Chia Koua Vang was stationed as a guard at the airport. About midnight it rained a little and there was a little thunder; then everything was quiet until the next morning.
[In the morning] Chia Koua did not go to bed, but walked to Nam Ngua [about thirty minutes walk] to see Shong Lue. Shong Lue remarked to him [in his enigmatic way] that "If there had been no thunder and lighting, they would probably have attacked Long Cheng." Chia Koua asked him why they should attack Long Cheng? Shong Lue replied, "If you want to know then go to ask them why."

Chia Koua returned to Long Cheng and met Vue Khang [a soldier in Company 3, which had been stationed on one of the hills]. He questioned Vue, "I heard people say that the lightning killed someone last night; do you know anything about it?" [Chia Koua had surmised this from what Shong Lue had said].

Vue replied, "The lightning burned two members of our group at Phou Moc so badly that they were taken to the hospital. If you want to see them, come with me." They went to visit the burned soldiers at the hospital and found that the injuries were suffered by the operators of the bazooka 57 and the machine gun.

Chia Koua then climbed up to the military installation on Phou Moc Mountain, where the lighting had burned the two soldiers and found that they had set up the artillery to shell Long Cheng, and he believed that Shong Lue had saved the town [by causing the lighting to burn the soldiers]. He then questioned soldiers of Company 3 as to why their
artillery was aimed to shell the forces still in Long Cheng. His friends said, "We have no idea; we just did as ordered by the company commander." From that day on Chia Koua believed in Shong Lue's ability to protect people.
Chia Koua Begins to Learn

Txiaj Kuam Vaj, uas yog ib leeg me yes ntawm Soob Lwj Yaj, tau hais tias Soob Lwj muaj cwj pwm ib txwm hais lus paj lug. Nws pheej xeeb los muaj laj lim ntse ua rau nws paub tau txhua tsav txhua yam. Nws muaj lij xeeb paub txog leej tib neeg uas muaj pluaj siab zoo thiab pluaj siab phem. Ua ntej ntawm Soob Lwj yuav teb ib leeg neeg twg los yog yuav qhia, Soob Lwj yuav tsam teb raws nrain li leej neeg ntawd xeeb ceem.

Soob Lwj tej lus qhia thiab lus teb rau sawv daws mas yog paj lug xwb vim nws los pheej xeeb ncaj rau lub caij noob neej sawv ua plhu. Tim li ntawd, es leej twg txhais tsis tau tej lus paj lug ces tsis paub qhov tseeb.

Chia Koua Vang, who was a student of Shong Lue Yang, says that Shong Lue habitually spoke in cryptic, indirect speech. From birth he had spiritual illumination that enabled him to know everything. He was gifted to know people’s feelings and thoughts, including their good or bad intentions, so that in answering someone’s question or in teaching, he would do so according to that person’s nature.

All of Shong Lue’s teaching and answers were delivered to people in cryptic language because he was born at a time when human beings were very deceitful [and the truly good people would be able to interpret the cryptic language, but it could not be held against him by evil people]. Therefore, whoever cannot translate these cryptic messages [correctly] will not know the truth.
Chia Koua Begins to Learn

Shong Lue refuses to teach Chia Koua.

In 1966, when Shong Lue lived with Yong Chue Yang in the city of Long Cheng, Chia Koua Vang [then a neighbor] saw Shong Lue as a poor person, and not especially intelligent [because he did not talk much, did not volunteer information, was withdrawn and behaved like a poor, uneducated individual], unlike the way he had been portrayed by many others. But Chia Koua was curious to find out how Shong Lue knew the Pahawh writing system for the Hmong language, because over many generations no Hmong person had been able to invent a script for Hmong people to learn.

Curious to know the script and the truth surrounding it, Chia Koua approached Shong Lue at Yong Chue’s residence and asked him, "Are you Mother of Writing [the source of the Hmong script]?

Shong Lue did not answer at first, [but after three or four minutes] he glanced at Chia Koua and said: "Yes, I am. What do you want to ask me?"

Handing Shong Lue a writing pad and a ballpoint pen, Chia Koua then said, "Some time ago, we [the military unit sent by General Vang Pao] went to rescue you [from the
tias, "puag thaud, uas peb tau tuaj
tos koj mas kuv kuj tau kwawm txawj
me ntsis Phaj Hauj lawm, tab sis
kuv tseeem paub tsis tau tseeb tias
cov tsiay ntawv ntawd tag nro muaj
pes tsawg tus. Kuv thov kom koj pab
sau kom tag nro cov tsiay ntawv rau
tuv.

Soob Lwj txais nkaus nws phau
ntawv sau thiab tus mem koob, pib
sau tsawg tsuag tau ib cov tsiay
ntawv, thiab cev rov los. Txiaj
Kuam tau txais los ntsia zoj, thiab
pom ciav tsawg tshaj cov uas nws
tau kwawm dua lawm. Nws tau hais
Soob Lwj tias cov nws twb kwawm lawm
mas tsis sib thooyj thiab cov ntawd
ntau dua. "Koj puas ghia tau rau
tuv tias yog li cas es ob cov ntawv
thiaj sib txawv lawm?"

Nws nug Soob Lwj li; Soob Lwj
txawm teb tias, "kuv tsuas txawj li
xwb 'es" kuv tseeem paub ghia rau
koj, es koj coj mus kom lwm leej
ghia rau koj. Txawm tias tos ntev
heev los Soob Lwj tseeem tsis kam
ghia dab tsi rau nws li, ces Txiaj
Kuam tau mus tsev lawm.

communists), and I learned some of your Pahawh [from a
student of yours], but I still do not know how many letters
there are in all. I would like to ask you to write all of
them down for me."

Shong Lue took the pad and the ballpoint pen, quickly
began to write a few of the characters, and handed them
back. Chia Koua looked at them and saw that there were fewer
than he had formerly learned. He told Shong Lue that the
characters he had learned looked different from these and
that there had been more of them. "Can you tell me why the
difference between the two?" he asked Shong Lue. (Shong Lue
had written down only a few examples of the Second Stage
Reduced Version characters, whereas Chia Koua had earlier
learned the Source Version.)

"That’s all I know," Shong Lue replied [in his indirect
way, testing Chia Koua, as he did all inquirers who came to
him]. "I don’t know how to teach you, so go and ask someone
else to do so." [He did not tell Chia Koua to go and learn
Chia Koua Begins to Learn

Txij thau'm ntawd los ces Txiaj Kuam tau niaj hnews rov qab mus xyuas Soob Lwj thiab nug ntsoov kom qhia rau nws, tab sis kuj tais qhia. Tom qab uas Soob Lwj rau mus tzoos nyob rau hauv lub zos Naj Gua, Txiaj Kuam tau niaj hmo rov qab mus xyuas, tos kom Soob Lwj qhia rau nws, tab txawm tos thiab tos los tsii qhia. Nws tau niaj hmo mus nrog cov phooj ywg sawv daws nyob hauv Soob Lwj tsev.

Soob Lwj xaihv Txiaj Kuam raws li nws nyiam

Ciav ib hmo Soob Lwj tau hais rau nws tias, "Kuv pau boky jog ib leeg neeg zoo thiab neeg noaj nccees was xav nrhiaq qhov tseeb. Kuv yuav qhia rau koy, tab sis kev kawm mas yuav nyuanj. Pev muaj lo lus hais tias "Yog ntshaw tub ki ces yuav from one of his students, as he often told other inquirers.] Even after a long wait [of two hours or so] Shong Lue still refused to teach him anything, so Chia Koua went home.

But from that time on Chia Koua went every day to see Shong Lue [approaching him when nobody else was there] and kept asking him to teach him, but without success [as he was always politely refused]. Later when Shong Lue moved out to settle in the village of Nam Ngua, Chia Koua kept going back to see him almost every night, waiting for Shong Lue to teach him, but the latter still flatly refused. He joined other disciples congregated there every night at Shong Lue's house.

Shong Lue selects Chia Koua as his disciple

Then one night Shong Lue said to him, "I know you are a good and righteous man who is seeking the truth. I am going to teach you, but learning is difficult. We have a saying 'If you want to have a baby, you have to sacrifice some sleep; if you want to have knowledge you have to bear the heat of the sunshine.' If you can go through such hardship I will teach you. But you will only receive instruction from midnight on [actually they began whenever the other people who flocked to Shong Lue's house had left or had gone to sleep]. If you are concerned about your wife, she is welcome
tau nyiaj dab ntub; yog tshaw txuj ci ces yuav tau tiv tshaw kub." Yog koj peem ntxeem taus li no ces kuv yuav qhia rau koj. Tab sis ntuj tag hmo mas koj thiaj yuav tau kwam xwb. Yog tias koj nco poj niam hwy no los kom nws nrog koj tuaj ntawm no tib si."

Txiaj Kuam kuj tsis paub tias Soob Lwj yuav qhia dab tsis rau nws, tab sis lwm hmo nws tau coj nws poj niam nrog nws mus rau ntawm Soob Lwj tsev. Thaum knawd tau mus txog rau ntwad, niam Soob Lwj tau pua chaw rau niam Txiaj Kuam pw ho knawd ob leeg txiv neej tau si bham laug caij. Txog ib tag hmo, thaum cov neeg hauv tsev tau tsauq zog tag lawm ces Soob Lwj pip paus ntsis hais txog ntwaw nws rau Txiaj Kuam ua ntu zus, raws li uas nws raug los theej kaj, thiab kev tshaw sim Phaj Hauj. Txij hmo ntwad los ces Txiaj Kuam thiaj tau niaj hmo rov mus kwam Phaj Hauj thiaj keeb kwam Soob Lwj.

to be here with you, too." [Chia Koua does not know why he was chosen for this unique privilege rather than older students and followers like Pa Kao Her and Moua Lor. He believes, however, that Shong Lue, facing opposition from Hmong leadership, had come to realize the need for someone to take the responsibility for preserving his work.]

Chia Koua did not know what Shong Lue would teach him, but [the next] night he brought his wife along to Shong Lue’s residence. When they arrived there, Shong Lue’s wife made a bed for Chia Koua’s wife to sleep on while the two men were holding conversation to pass the time away. At midnight [when others in the house had gone to sleep and they were alone] Shong Lue began telling Chia Koua about his mission, one episode after another, such as why he was sent down as a savior, and how the Pahawh script came into existence.

From that night on Chia Koua was allowed to go to study the Pahawh and Shong Lue’s history every night [working anywhere from two hours to the remainder of the night.]
Chia Koua Begins to Learn

Chia Koua sometimes went directly from the session to his work in an army office, and slept in the evening. He does not know why he did not become tired.]
Shong Lue taught that all human beings, animals and plants that exist in this world were created by God. Chia Koua asked Shong Lue where God resides now and Shong Lue told him that once God had created the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars, he chose the moon as his dwelling place and made the sun the place for his wife. In addition, he chose two stars, one with six points, the other with twelve points, to be dwelling places for his sons, leaving the earth to be populated by human beings, animals and plants. [The moon is the father of the physical universe, the sun the mother, and the earth and stars are their children.]

Shong Lue said that God painted his own dwelling place in two colors, the first [half] black, the second [half] white, to indicated time [phases of the moon] to the earth. He lit the dwelling place of his wife like a torch to dry the earth. The earth and the moon turn themselves in
synchronized time, so that day and night exist on the earth.

Chia Koua asked Shong Lue how the world was positioned so that it could turn by itself. Shong Lue responded by saying that the world is made up of rocks, dirt and minerals. God created four streams of air located in the four corners of the atmosphere [understood as a rectangular shape outside of the ball-shaped earth]. These streams of air support and turn the earth to match [the passage of] time. If the four streams of air ever stop operating, the earth will disintegrate.

The earth itself is composed of many successive layers of clay, rock, and water. There is air surrounding the surface of the earth.

God sent his twelve sons down on earth to establish the weather cycles. As they came [in succession] the seasons on earth changed twelve times.
Soob Lwj tau qhia tias hauv lub ntiaj teb no thau um ub Vaj Leej Txi tau nphau tog fooj siv nyab tog thvw siv ciav txhua tsav yam tuag tag lawm. Tab sis tom ntej, Vaj Leej Txi yuav tsis rov nphau tog fooj siv nyab tog thvw siv lawm vim tias tus txhuaum thiab tus tsis txhuaum los tuag. Tsav muaj txoj sia me tsim nyuaj heev. Yog thauum twg ntiaj teb muaj cov txhuaum coob, Vaj Leej Txi yuav tso hluav taws hlaw lawm xwb.

Txiaj Kuam tau nug tias vim li cas tog fooj siv thiaj nyab tau tog thvw siv? Soob Lwj qhia tias txo ob ntswj cuva uas tuav lub ntiaj teb no xwb ces tog fooj siv nphau nyab tog thvw siv. Nws tsis yog dej nag los nyab. Hos yog tias Vaj Leej Txi txo peb ntswj cuva ces lub ntiaj teb ntsoog.

Txiaj Kuam tau ntshai tias hluav taws kub yuav heev dua. Nws tau nug Soob Lwj tias tim li cas dej nyab

Shong Lue taught that at one time God caused the water part of the earth [conceived as half of the surface of the earth] to cover the ground part, killing everything. [He did this because human beings had become evil again.] But from now on God will never again tip the water over the dry land because sinful as well as innocent creatures alike were killed. Small creatures with tiny life [tiny creatures like ants, lice, etc.] are hard to create [they are extremely numerous and take a long time]. Whenever there are more sinners than good creatures, God will release fire to burn only [the sinners].

Chia Koua asked how the water rose to flood the ground. Shong Lue said that [God] only needed to cut off two of the streams of air, tipping the earth so that the water would flow to flood the dry land. It was not a rain flood. If God should cut off three of the streams, the earth would disintegrate at once.

Chia Koua feared that to burn in a fire would be even worse [than drowning in a flood]. He asked Shong Lue why good and the bad people alike died in the flood, and how innocent people would be spared the fire, which would be
Teaching about God

tus phem tus zoo twb tuag tag lawm es hluav taw tsee new dua dej es yog li cas tus tsis txhaum thiaj tsis kub? Soob Lwj tau hais tias tsis yog hluav taw yuav kub zus ib tog tuaj, tab sis hluav taw yuav cig ntawm ntsis ntaj thib ab ntsis phom tuaj, yog li ces cov tsis txhaum yuav zam dhaux.

Vaj Leej Txi tsm dab tsi tseg
Soob Lwj hais tias txhua yam uas Vaj Leej Txi tsm muaj nyob hauv lub ntiaj teb, tsi muaj ib yam twg yuav tawm tsam tau rau nws. Tsawm yog noob neej hauv ntiaj teb no los, yog tias Leej Vaj tsis tso nws leej tub nqis los qhia, lawv yeej yuav tais puab muab tag txhua tsav txhua yam uas Leej Vaj tau tism tseg. Nws hais ntxiv tias "hu ua noob neej xwb, txawm kawm txawj ntse npham li cas yeej tsis muaj ib leeg twg txawj ntse tag nrho los yog puab txhua yam."

Txiaj Kuam hais rau Soob Lwj tias nyob hauv lub ntiaj teb no twb muaj neeg puab mus txog saum hli lawm, thiab lawv twb yuav txawj

even worse. Shong Lue said the fire would not burn everything from one end [of the world] to the other, but it would be ignited by weapons and guns, and innocent people could therefore escape.

What God created

Shong Lue said that of everything God created on earth, nothing will succeed in rebelling against Him. As for the human beings on earth, if God had not sent his sons down to teach them, they would not know how to use all the products of God’s creation. He added, "So far as human beings are concerned, no matter how clever and educated they are, none of them have total knowledge of anything or of everything."

Chia Koua reminded Shong Lue that people had been able to reach the moon from earth, and that very soon they would be able to bring life back to the body. What else remained to
be done? Shong Lue replied by saying, "Even though people have reached the moon, they surely did not reach the exact place [where God lives]. On the other hand, educated people might be able to put life back in some things but not in everything that died because the medicine used to bring life back does not exist on earth. The most educated people may be able to find and use only six kinds of technology but no one will be able to find and use the remaining six. [Chia Koua does not know what these categories of technology are.]

The Hmong

Shong Lue said that the Hmong on earth are a very impatient people who have no endurance to accomplish difficult tasks. For any difficult task they do not know how to perform, the Hmong still hope that some day God will descend from the sky and help them. They believe the face of God will be as wide as a fan, his eyes as large as cups, his nose as big as the handle of an axe, his feet as big as rice-winnowing trays, and that he will darken the face of
Teaching about God

the earth when he comes down [a recurring image in Hmong tradition].

But it will never happen like that, according to Shong Luc, because the way God comes to human beings on earth is just a rotation of God's twelve sons coming down one after another [born as human beings except for one who came to the Hmong as a pig] to make sure that no kind of creature does harm to the others. If a species [or nation or ethnic group] becomes too bad God will reduce the power [and unity] of that group. God will never let any part of his creation die off without leaving offspring or seed.

There are still human beings on earth who are suffering, and who keep appealing to God and waiting for God to come and help them and to live with them. God has actually already come to them but no one knows it because he does not come beautifully dressed and only comes to where human beings do not know who he is.

Shong Lue disclosed further that he was one of God's twelve sons sent down to be savior of the people. Chia Koua
thought to himself [about the fact] that Shong Lue was born of human beings and wondered how he was different from others. Responding to Chia Koua, Shong Lue said, "If you want to know who God’s son is, I will tell you."

"The time of punishment for the sins of the Hmong people is over," he added [reference to a period when, according to Shong Lue, God left the Hmong people to suffer on their own because they had successively killed four of his sons who had been sent to help them]. "Now old people as well as animals can drink the milk from a woman’s breast without being killed by lightning" [reference to a traditional Hmong taboo, such that if even a drop of milk from a woman’s breast falls on food intended to be eaten by adults, the food has to be thrown away lest lightning strike the person who eats it. According to Shong Lue this taboo was established only for the period of punishment, and was no longer in effect now that period is over.] "If you don’t believe me you can try drinking it yourself. If lightning strikes you I am responsible because the time of punishment for the sins of the Hmong people has been over since the year 2500 of the Buddhist calendar" [1957 A.D., two years before Shong Lue started teaching the Pahawh Hmong].

Chia Koua said to Shong Lue, "If what you have said is true please give me some milk to drink." Shong Lue’s wife
Religion

Shong Lue said that to be human, people must have religion, and must be guided by it to worship God, in order to become a long-lasting nation. [Shong Lue did not see traditional Hmong religion as the unified ethnic religion he advocated.] God has bestowed great good fortune [on people] and has also given his bottle of life-restoring medicine for curing blindness, deafness and maintaining flesh of copper and skeleton of iron, flesh of stone and skeleton of rock [perpetual life]. It is for his son to take down [to earth] to save humanity.

Many ethnic groups have prayed, begging to go and live with God, but human beings must know that they and the animals and the plants cannot stay where God is because they were all created with a life that belongs to earth and clay. But God will send his son to live with people because human

then massaged out some of her breast milk to give to Chia Koua, who drank it and was not killed by lightning.
beings and evil spirits are living intermingled on the earth.

If anyone wants to worship God and wait for him to come [respond] that person has to know the right time when God can be called upon [primarily the fifteenth day of the month in the lunar calendar, plus the fifth and twenty-fifth as well, if necessary]. On the other hand, worshipping and waiting for God at the wrong time will result only in reaching evil spirits [because they will be the ones which respond at the other times].
Once Chia Koua was involved in learning what Shong Lue taught, he wanted to know more about God. Realizing what Chia Koua had in mind, Shong Lue told him, "If you want to know about God [learn more explicitly what God is like], I am going to tell you." [The lessons then came about in the following way.]

Visit from souls of the dead

In 1966 a Hmong couple, Neng Tru Her [and his wife] lived in Na Hai Village in Phong Saly Province [bordering China on the north, controlled by the communists]. They had two children, an eleven-year-old girl named Youa Her and a nine-year-old boy named Xeng Her.

Every day Youa and Xeng’s parents went to work in their ricefield all day long, leaving the children to watch the home. One day the children saw three cats in the large rice storage bin located in the center of the house. Then, as the
time approached for the parents to return from the ricefield, the cats all disappeared. The cats showed up for three consecutive days but then they no longer came back. Instead, three monkeys appeared for another three days, and then stopped coming back. [Chia Koua does not know why the cats or the monkeys, or why there were three of each.]

Then eight people who could speak Hmong like real Hmong people appeared and stayed with the children, and when the parents returned from the ricefield the people did not disappear, but stayed there with the children. Pointing the people out, Youa and Xeng said to their parents, "Some Hmong people came and stayed with us!" But the parents could not see them or hear them talk.

The fact that Youa and Xeng [claimed to be] able to hear and see [people] surprised the parents, who called the elders of the village to come and question the children. [Chia Koua does not know how the children were able to see the people.] Youa and Xeng pointed the guests out to
People Seek Shong Lue

“Everyone, saying, "They are sitting here and there," but since no one saw the guests no one believed the youngsters. The guests then said to the children, "We are only souls [of dead people]; that's why they cannot see us or hear us talk. Tell them to curtain off that corner of the house with a blanket, and we will stay in there and talk to them."

Youa and Xeng asked the villagers to do as instructed. The souls moved behind the blanket and started talking to the villagers, who could now hear; but when they lifted the blanket no one was in there.

Then one voice said, "I am Yang Shi Lue; I formerly lived on the other side of Za Tsua Tia Village. I want to tell all of you that God's son has come down to the Long Cheng area [where Shong Lue was living]. Please go and meet him. My coming here is to select the souls of good people [when they die, to be] ready when God comes to raise them from death.
Nplig mus nyob npaj tos Leej Vaj yuav los tsa lawv sawv rov qab. Cov nrog kuv los ntawm no yog nej tej neeg tej ntsuj plig; mas nej tsis pom lawv. Yog tias nej leej twg muaj tej txheeb ze ploj tuag lawm es nej tseem nco no hais kuv txheeb los nrog nej sib tham.

Cov txiv neej uas muaj poj niam thiab cov poj niam uas muaj txiv tau tuag lawd tau kom Yaj Sis Lwj txheeb lawv cov neeg los nrog lawv sib tham seb puas yog tseeb li nws hais. Thaum cov poj niam ntsuj plig los nrog cov txiv uas tseem ua neej nyob sib tham ciav piav tau tej kev khuv noj khuv haus yav tag thiab ua li cas nws thiaj tuag lawd yog tib si thiab lub suab lus hais tseem yog tus qub neeg. Tab sis thaum cov txiv neej ntsuj plig los nrog cov poj niam uas ua neej nyob sib tham ces lub suab lus nqus lawm.

Cov neeg nruab zog taug Soob Lwj
Cov Hmoob nyob lub zus Naj Haib
tau ntseeg tias yog muaj Vaj ngis los lawm mas Yaj Sis Lwj thiaj los

All those with me here are souls of your own people; that’s why you cannot see them. If you have a deceased relative whom you still miss and want to speak to, let me know, I will bring him or her here to speak to you.”

All those husbands or wives whose loved ones had died asked Yang Shi Lue to bring their loved ones back to talk to them in order to test the truth of what he had said. When the deceased women’s souls came to talk to their living husbands they spoke in detail of how their past life had been, and how they had died. Their voices still sounded the same to their husbands. But when the deceased husbands spoke to their living wives, their voices seemed somewhat distorted. [Chia Koua does not know why.]

Villagers search for Shong Lue
The Hmong in Na Hai Village then believed that God had come and that Yang Shi Lue had come to tell them. So the
Zaws roos Vaj Pov tau hais kom lawv rov qab mus tsev, thiab nws tau ceeb toom yuav kws tshuaaj txab mus nrog lawv, tab sis tsis muaj neeg yeem thaj mus vim tias lub nrag xeev Foo Xam Lis raug poob rau tog Koom Pheej kav los tau 20 xyoo lawm. Ntau pws neeg tau mus rau ntawd puav leej raug ntes tag lawm. Thaum kawm Tub Lis thiab Paj Kaub Hawj nkawd tau yeem thaj mus, ces nkawd nrhiaj tau 10 leej neeg ntxiv nkawd thiab lawv 4 leeg, tag nrog muaj 16 leej ua ib pab.


General Vang Pao told the men to go back home, and asked for volunteers to go with them, but no one dared because Phong Saly Province had been under communist rule for twenty years. Several people had been sent there [at various times], but all had been caught. [General Vang Pao saw the arrival of these men as creating an opportunity to cultivate support in the communist-controlled area from which they came.] Finally, Tou Lee and Pa Kao Her volunteered to go, and found ten additional volunteers as well, so that they made up a team of sixteen people, including the four villagers.

On the day of departure Pa Kao Her changed his mind and brought all his equipment to Chia Koua at his home, telling Chia Koua to take his assignment. [Chia Koua does not know why.] Chia Koua, however, said he did not want to go. Pa Kao then repeated an old saying to Chia Koua: "If the older brother is not able to do something the younger brother must do it for him," and insisted that Chia Koua go.
hais rau luag. Ces zej zog tau tso
Vam Yis Tsab, Choo Vaj, Nplaib Hawj
thiab Yeeb Hawj mus cuag Vaj hauv
Looj Ceeb seb puas muaj tseeb. Lawv
4 leeg tuaj tau 3 hli ces tshm rau
qaum teb hauv nrag xeev Luam Phab
Npas, raug cov xav pav Nplog ntes
tau lawv. Lawv tau qhia rau xav pav
Nplog tias lawv yog Hmoob, lawv
yuav tuaj mus cuag Hmoob lawm Looj
Ceeb no ciav cov xav pav Nplog
txawm tso laww thiab muab nyooj
hoom xa lawv tuaj cob rau zaws roos
Vaj Pov hauv Looj ceeb. Kuj tsis
muaj neeg paub tau tias laww ho
hais li cas rau zaws roos thauam uas
laww tau ntsib nws. Tom qab uas
laww nyob hauv Looj Ceeb tau ib
ncua laww mam mug cov pej xeem
Hmoob hauv Looj Ceeb tias un li
sawv daws puas pom muaj dab tsi
tshm sim txawm los rau hauv Looj
Ceeb, leej twg los kuj teb rau luag
tias, "Tsuas muaj Nam Ntauw xwb."
Lawv taug tau nws chaw nyob hauv
Naj Gua ces laww thiaj tau mus cuag
nws thiab sib tham. Ces Paj Kaub
Hawj thiab laww thiaj tau sib
ntsib.

villagers sent Wang Yi Chang, Chon Vang, Blai Her and Ying
Her to go and inquire in Long Cheng and learn the truth.
These four men took three months to reach the northern part
of Luang Prabang Province, where they were arrested by Lao
soldiers. They told the Lao soldiers that they were Hmong
and wanted to go and meet the Hmong in Long Cheng, so they
were released and airlifted to General Vang Pao [in Long
Cheng]. No one knows what they said to the General when they
met him.

After a while they asked around among people in Long
Cheng about whether any important events had been taking
place there, and everyone told them, "Only the Mother of
Writing." So they traced Shong Lue to Nam Ngua Village and
talked to him. Pa Kao Her [early student of Shong Lue Yang,
than in military service in Long Cheng] met them then
[also].
Chia Koua answered, "In that case leave the equipment here, and I will go and ask Shong Lue first."

So Chia Koua walked to Shong Lue’s house and told Shong Lue that Pa Kao had accepted this mission but was no longer going, and had asked Chia Koua to go instead. Should he do so?

"Of course, you should go," replied Shong Lue. "I think you will only be gone for three months. Please go and learn for yourself where God is."

Chia Koua told him that part of the northern country was not safe to travel; how could they make it?

Shong Lue said: "I am going to write a pass for you and that will do it." He then wrote a pass in Pahawh to wish good luck to Chia Koua. It was signed with an inscription "People to protect Chia Koua Vang" [and is still in Chia Koua’s possession]. He said further that wherever Chia Koua
went, if he faced difficulties, he should call and Shong Lue would rush there to help him.

After obtaining the pass from Shong Lue, the sixteen people left for Na Hai in April 1967. They took an airplane from Long Cheng to the Luang Prabang airport and from there they rode a helicopter to land at a jungle site on the border of Luang Prabang and Phong Saly Provinces.
Then they walked through the jungle toward Na Hai Village but the route they took [not following any established trail, to avoid meeting the enemy] went up and down the high hills and deep valleys of a mountain range. After three days and three nights each of them had consumed about one case of dried rice and they had not yet even fully crossed that one range. Finally Chia Koua had an idea which he shared with his traveling companions: they would never reach Na Hai before consuming their entire rice supply if they continued going directly through the jungle like this. He suggested that they look at the map to find a trail to follow, and everyone agreed. [Tou Lee was supposed to be the leader of the group, but increasingly deferred to Chia Koua.]

Shong Lue leads Chia Koua to the trail
Once they found the right trail they walked along it for five days and five nights [with short rest stops of two to three hours]. They finally heard roosters crowing and
realized there must be a village in that vicinity, so they waited until dark to go on. After dark they walked on again, but the people of the village had just cut down and burned [the jungle to make] a ricefield, which obliterated the path under a covering of ashes, and they did not know which way to go. In the middle of the wide ricefield, even though the moon was shining, they had no way to figure out where the path was. They were very worried.

They divided up into three groups to find the path again. Two of the groups went around the two edges of the field and the third walked across it. If one of the groups found the path it was to inform the others by radio. Chia Koua was with the group which walked across the field. He put the radio on standby, ready for the other two groups to call any time.

After the groups had gone in their different directions, Chia Koua was very worried, so he called on Shong Lue for help [thinking, "Shong Lue help us find the trail."] A moment later he saw a striped bird, unlike any he had ever
Tom qab Sawv daws sawv kev mus lawm, ces Txiaj Kuam tau txhawj heev, nws txawm tau hu txog Soob Lwj kom pab, tib pliah xwb nws txawm pom ib tug noog txaij² tsis thooj li tej uas nws ib txwm pom dua, ya los thiab tsaw ntua hauv av ze rau ntawm nws hauv ntej. Nws tau xav zoj tias: "cas twb tsaus ntuj lawm es tsee muaj noog zoo nkauj ua luaj li ya los tsaw ntawm no?"

Xav Pav Khuaj tuaj caum
Lawv rov muab tau yeej cum kev

seen before, fly down and land just in front of him. He asked himself, "It is very late; why did this beautiful bird come and land right here?"

He tried quickly to catch the bird, but it flew a few steps away. Every time he made an attempt to catch it Chia Koua almost got the bird, and in trying to catch it he followed the bird until he reached the edge of the field, where it disappeared. He looked around and there was the path entrance [into the jungle] again, so he called the other groups to join his. He did not realize that it was Shong Lue who had come to lead their way [until after they got back to Long Cheng and he discussed everything with Shong Lue.]

Chased by Khua soldiers

Once they got on the path again they walked for another four days and four nights until they approached a village populated by Khua people [an unidentified ethnic group with
clothes similar to the Iu Mien]. They came first to a
ricefield, arriving toward evening when villagers were
returning home. Fearful of being seen by people walking back
and forth, they looked for a place to hide, intending to
wait until all the people were home before they went on.

While on the way to their hiding place at the top of a
small hill, they unfortunately encountered a Khua woman
picking bamboo shoots. The woman ran toward the village to
alert the soldiers there [who were allied with the] Vietnamese, and the soldiers came after the team with
hunting dogs to chase and kill them, but [by the time the
soldiers arrived] the team was well on its way.

No one knows what the soldiers saw when they arrived at
the scene, but they fired several rounds of ammunition for a
while [which the team could hear from where they were]. The
dogs [apparently] did not pick up the trail left by the
team, either.
Help from Shong Lue

Noj hno tag
Lawv tau lug hav zoov mus muab
tau yeej cum kev taug. Lawv taug
kev tau 29 hnb, lawv cov mov kib
tag. Thaum lawv tsis muaj dab tsis
noj thiab tau tshaib plab yuav tuag
li lawm, lawv tau ntaus xov tooj
rov los rau hauv Loog ceeb, kom xa
mov mus pov hmo ntuj rau lawv, tab
is cov nom tswv Hmoob teb tias
thaj tsam ntawm lawv nyob nyooj
hoom mus tsis tau ze thiab tau hais
kom lawv nrhaiv lawv lawm xwb. Tej
lus tsis zoo ua rau saww daws tau
quaj tag. Saww daws thxawj tias
yuav rov qab los deb, thiab yuav
mus los tsis cuag ncuaw lawm. Tej
zaum lawv yuav tuag tshaib tag.
Saww daws thxawm hais rau Txiaj Kuam
tias, "koj yog Niam Ntawv me yes,
seb koj puas muaj tswv yim pab
tau?"

Txiaj Kuam tau hais tias yog nej
nloog kuv hais no ces kuv mam hu
Niam Ntawv tuaj pab peb. Saww daws
tau lees rau nws muab siav khi rau
nws thiab lawv yuav ua raws li nws
hais. Txiaj Kuam tau hu Soob Luwj

Food is used up
The team went off the path into the jungle and then
returned to it again after a distance. They walked on for
another twenty-nine days, during which time everything [they
had brought along to eat], including the dried rice, was
consumed. When they had nothing left and were extremely
hungry, they radioed to Long Cheng, urgently requesting
night drops of food, but the Hmong authorities there replied
that aircraft could not approach where the team was, and
they would have to figure out how to survive by themselves.
This bad news made everybody weep. They realized it was too
far to go back and even farther to reach their destination.
They probably would all die of hunger. Everyone said to Chia
Koua, "You are the student of Mother of Writing; do you have
any ideas that could help?"

Chia Koua told them to do what he said so that he could
ask for help from Mother of Writing. Everyone assured him
that they were dependent on him, and that they would do
whatever he told them. Chia Koua then called upon Shong Lue to provide them with ideas and to strengthen them until they could find food to eat. After this appeal to Shong Lue they were strongly guided by the idea that they should go forward and not return. They decided to make every effort to go on and take a chance on finding a village ahead. Chia Koua told the team members that if they came to a village he promised to find food for every one of them.
Although all the team members walked on without eating [rice] for two more days and two nights, they felt fine and were not tired. [They did eat jungle products like bamboo shoots when they could find them.] But beginning from the second night after that, some team members fell behind because of hunger. Chia Koua and Tou Lee, who were walking ahead, had to stop and wait for the last ones to catch up. Then they pulled out the map to look at it again and found that there was a village nearby.

Chia Koua urged the team members, "Let's make an effort to walk on until we can hear the roosters crow. When we get to the village we must make a detour and pass it before setting up our camp for the night. Then I will go and find some food for us."

Not far from where they started walking on they came to an intersection where another path branched off to another
village. But Khua people of that other village were transporting salt [along the intersecting path], and another group was waiting for them a little beyond the intersection. Chia Koua’s team came up behind [the forward group] without being spotted. After they passed the intersection they heard the Khua [of the ‘forward group’] talking, so they turned back to find a place to hide, but the following group of Khua had already reached the intersection, and the team found itself caught between the two.

They did not know what else to do but to exchange greetings and converse with the Khua [through the use of Chinese, spoken by the four members of their party who came from Phong Saly Province]. Chia Koua gave the Khua some money [paper currency used in the communist area]; the Khua were pleased and gave them lunch in return.

Chia Koua told the villagers that his team wanted to go into the nearby village and asked whether or not they could do so. "Let us go and ask the village chief first," replied the Khua. "If there are no Vietnamese solders, we will come back to let you know." So the team stayed there waiting.

These Khua people, however, were actually all soldiers allied to the Vietnamese. Because they had been away to get
Cov neeg Kuaj ntawm lawv puav
leej yog xav pav ntaum tog Nyab
Laj. Vım tias luag mus ris ntsev
xwb tsis nqä phom nrog, ces lawv
tsis paub tias yog Nyab Laj li xav
pav txawm xav tias yog pej xeem
xwb. Cov Kuaj ib txhia nre nrog
lawv, hos ib txhia tau mus hais rau
cov tom zos kom zais lawv cov phom
thiab cuab yeej. Tom qab ntawm ces
ob leeg rov tuaj caw lawv mus rau
hauv zos. Txiaj Kuam thiab cov xav
pav tau mus so hauv tswv zos lub
tsev ib hmo, tab sis xav pav Kuaj
tsis coob ces kuj tsis yeem ntes
lawv.

NTSIB KAS XAM

Tag kis kaj ntug lawv tau muab
nyiaj muas zaub mov ntaum cov neeg
nuab zog, ces lawv sawb sim juav
sawv kev ciaj Kuaj txawm hais
tias: "peb leej Kas Xam yuav ntsib
nej. Nws kom nej mus ntsib nws ua
ntej tso nej mam mus."

Txiaj Kuam thiab nws cov xav pav

salt they did not have their guns with them, so the team did
not realized that they were solders on the side of Vietnam,
but [thought they were] only civilians. Some of the Kuah
stayed with the team while the others went into the village
to tell everyone to hide their weapons [as became evident
later]. Then two of them came back to invite [the
travelers] into the village. Chia Koua and the solders
rested in the home of the village chief for one night, but
since there were not many Kuha soldiers there they did not
dare to arrest the members of the team.

Visit to the district chief

When daybreak came the team bought food supplies from the
villagers, but as they got ready to walk on the Kuah said to
them, "Our district chief wants to meet you. He asked that
you go to see him first before leaving here."

Chia Koua and his solders did not know what to do but to
accept the invitation. "Of course, we also want to meet
him," they said. "Can you lead us to him?"
They had to wait in the village until dark, and then the Khua led them, walking all night long, until they reached the district chief’s village at dawn of the following day. The Khua asked the team to stay outside the village while they went to tell the district chief and have him send his own men out to welcome them. When Chia Foux and his soldiers arrived at the district chief’s house, enough soldiers had gathered there to be able to seize them, so they felt very insecure and feared they would surely be captured, and were very worried.

Tou Lee said to Chia Koua, “We are probably trapped now. You are the only one who has assurance from Mother of Writing. How are you going to help?”

Chia Koua replied, “Don’t be afraid. I am going to call Mother of Writing for help. Don’t say anything, but let me do the talking to see if they are going to let us go.” Chia Koua appealed to Shong Lue, telling him that they were in great danger, and that Shong Lue should therefore help by giving him ideas to convince the Khua.
In the evening of that same day when Chia Koua made the appeal to Shong Lue, the Khua commanding officers took steps to arrest the members of the team. The Khua officers brought liquor and opium to the district chief’s house and divided the team into two groups, having them spend the night in two different places. The Khua soldiers gave the team members alcohol to drink to get them drunk before they tried to seize them. [It would not have been polite to the hosts not to drink. People came to them, drank from a cup and said, “I drink to you,” obligating them to take a responding drink. However, different Khua people would change off in doing this, so that the same member of the party would have to respond in this way to a number of different Khua individuals.]

That evening the district chief also told Chia Koua that he wanted to talk with him. [They talked in Lao.] He also asked Chia Koua to send one of his men to go out and to stand guard with each of the Khua soldiers. One team leader would also go with one Khua supervisor to inspect the guards outside.

Chia Koua knew that the Khua had divided them into small groups and scattered them in order to seize them one after another, so he told the district chief that since the team had come to the chief's village it was now completely under
the chief [so it was enough for] Khua people to go out on guard. The members of the team then laid aside their weapons, [and other American-made equipment], took off their uniforms, and left everything [in a pile in a corner], walking around freely [unencumbered and unarmed, to allay fear and suspicion].

Shong Lue helps Chia Koua persuade the chief

The Khua soldiers did not know how best to arrest the team members, so they gave them more alcohol to drink. Then, after they all became drunk and fell asleep, the district chief made a bed, brought some ready-to-smoke opium to it, and invited Chia Koua to join him. The chief poured the alcohol and they drank up the two bottles of rice wine and smoked all the opium. The district chief drank and smoked less than he offered Chia Koua, but when the latter showed no sign of drunkenness or weakness the chief became worried and suspicious and asked Chia Koua, "If you do not ever
Trapped by the Khua

"Why did you come here?"

"I didn't want to fight."

"Don't you know that you have to fight?"

"No, I don't want to fight."

"Why?"

"I don't."
village on the other side of the mountain slope. We can only accompany you this far [as they wanted to go home, having escorted them as far as necessary]. Please go to the village and the people there will find someone to lead you on." After saying this the Khua soldiers returned home.
The team decided that they should not take the regular path to the village but should instead go off into the forest to reach it (because they were fearful of being ambushed on the way by the Khua, who would blame the killing on the Hmong villagers). While walking up to a hilltop in the forest, a bird flew and landed right in front of Chia Koua, who told the bird, "If we would meet bad people on going into the village, don't fly away, but let me catch you. If we would meet only good people, please fly away so that I will know." The bird then flew off at once.

Encounter with Hmong villagers

Chia Koua told everyone that they were going to meet some people, so he should go first. After they had walked on for a while, they heard the sound of people talking. They
listened carefully and recognized that the language was Hmong.

Chia Koua [alone] then cautiously approached the people, [who turned out to be] a group of Hmong girls wearing clothes made of hemp [an indication of poverty]. He asked the girls, "Sisters, are you digging for tubers?" [an indication of insufficient food in the village].

The girls were startled when they saw Chia Koua, but he said to them: "We are Hmong too. Since we have come, don't bother to dig for tubers any more. We will give you some money to go and buy food [in another village]. Are there any Hmong men along with you?"

"Yes, there are some," replied one of the girls. She then led Chia Koua and his soldiers to meet the Hmong men.

Chia Koua told the men, "We are Hmong from Long Cheng, coming to see how miserable Hmong life is here." Chia Koua then passed out some money to them, telling them to use it to buy food for themselves rather than digging for tubers. He asked them to take the team to the leaders of the village.
As they reached the outskirts of the village they saw Vietnamese soldiers with guns walking back and forth, so the Hmong told Chia Koua and his team to hide while they went to confer with the village chief first, before coming back to get them. The Hmong villagers then went and told the village chief about the newly-arrived group.

A few minutes later the chief came and led them off to hide on a jungle hilltop [away from where soldiers might pass by chance], where the team rested for three days and three nights. They gave money to the Hmong villagers to buy meat and rice supplies for them.

The Hmong also told them about Chong Lor, formerly a soldier under the French, who lived in hiding with them because the Vietnamese were seeking to arrest him. He had no wife or children. Chia Koua asked the Hmong villagers to bring Chong to him, and after the team members met him Chong happily joined them. He knew the trails well and led them directly towards Na Hai.
Crossing the river

They arrived at the Nam Ou River, which was so deep and wide they could not cross it. Chong Lor said to the team, "There is a Lao village nearby, where I will steal a canoe [Lao-style dugout hollowed from a single log] in the darkness, so we can cross the river."

After a while Chong came back with a canoe and they divided up into three groups to avoid swamping it. Chong Lor paddled the first load to the other bank of the river, and came back for the second load which included Chia Koua. Tou Lee was in the third load.

When [the second load] reached the middle of the river it was overtaken by two other boats paddled by Lao communist soldiers. These two boats quickly came alongside them, the one upstream, the other moving ahead of them. The Lao communist soldiers were getting ready to fire on them until
they saw the two groups of Chia Koua' other soldiers aiming guns at them from both banks of the river.

Since the Lao were in the water, too, they no longer dared shoot at Chia Koua's boat. Instead, their canoe was allowed to cross the river freely and Chong Lor was allowed to return safely to pick up the last load without intervention. [The Lao soldiers sat quietly in their canoes, watching but making no attempt to interfere.] The Lao communist soldiers did send a message to the Hmong communists in the village of Hang Yu, to inform them of some passing spics [as it turned out later].

The Hmong begin to believe

Time went by, and Chia Koua arrived with his team at a Hmong village of about one hundred families. Chong Lor and the four people Chia Koua had accompanied there all had some acquaintances in that village, so Chia Koua directed Chong Lor, Chon Vang, and Wang Yi Chang [the latter two men from Na Hai Village] to go into the village and make contact with the leaders while the rest of the team waited, hiding in the forest outside.

Help from People

pab npaj rawv phom nyob tim ob sab ntuug dej.

Cov Nplog los kuj nyob hauv dej tib yam, luag ho tsis kam tua Txiaj Kuam lawv nkog. Ces txawm txav rau lub nkoj tuaj mus hauv thiab cia Txoov Lauj rov qab tos pab tom qab yam tsis sib ntaus sib tua. Cov xav pav Nplog Koom Pheej tau xa xov mus rau cov nom tswv Hmoob, Koom Pheej nyob lub zos Hav Yuj kom luag paub tau tias muaj xus xis dhaub tuaj lawm.

Hmoob pib ntseeg

Sij hawm Txiaj Kuam thiab nws pab tau tuaj txog rau ib lub zos Hmoob muaj 100 yim. Txoov Lauj thiab lawv 4 leeg uas Txiaj Kuam nrog mus ntawd kuj muaj neeg nyob hauv lub zos ntawd sib paub lawm, ces lawv tau them nkaum nyob hauv hauv zoov tos ces Txiaj Kuam tso Txoov Lauj, Choo Vaj thiab Vam Yig Tsab mus cuag cov thaj hauv zos.
The Hmong leaders came out to talk to them. Once they had met one another and Chia Khoua saw that only Hmong people came, he said to them, "We came here because of Mother of Writing, who created the Pahawh for Hmong people to learn, and we came to teach it to the Hmong." Chia Khoua laid out the Pahawh in front of them and suddenly the Hmong remembered that their ancestors, who had lived in China, had followed God down to Laos.

The Hmong were happy when they realized that Pahawh was a script different from any other nation's script. [They knew of the Lao-based Hmong writing developed by the communists, but did not like it.] One of them told Chia Khoua, "A long time ago our ancestors came to this country from China. They came to follow God, and left all their relatives behind, but could not reach God and had to stop here to farm. God has probably appeared in your area, then."
Help from People

Ancestors followed God

They told how one of their ancestors [in China] had a virgin daughter who was pregnant for nine years without delivering the baby. When the Chinese heard that God would come down to the Hmong, they ordered all pregnant women killed [assuming God would be born a human being.] Knowing of the imminent danger, the ancestors took the pregnant girl and fled southward.

They arrived at a ricefield where they saw a hut with a banana stalk down the hill from it. They spent the night there, and the girl told them all that God was going to appear. If she was gone the next morning they should go out and see whether or not the banana stalk had produce three flowers [whereas a banana stalk normally produces only one flower]. If it had, God had already come, and they should check the direction in which the bamboo and the trees had been flattened, following along in that direction to find God. If the banana stalk had not produce three flowers, God had gone back.
The next morning the girl had disappeared, and when the Hmong checked the banana tree they saw that it had produced exactly three flowers. Looking farther down the slope they saw trees and grass flattened down to make a swath as wide as a road. They followed that swath [for many years, stopping periodically to grow crops] and arrived in this country where new trees had grown up [after all these years] to be as big as the former trees [so that they could no longer find the swath which had been knocked down], so they could not reach God. That is why their ancestors had settled in this part of the country, and had been living in the area ever since.

The Hmong in that village believed Chia Koua and wanted to study the Pahawh. [But first] they told fifty of their young men who were communist soldiers to arm themselves and accompany Chia Koua to Na Hai. The villagers asked [Chia
Koua's] soldiers to come back and get them as soon as they had finished establishing themselves in Na Hai.

Not long after the fifty soldiers had left with Chia Koua's team, the communist officials in Hang Yu Village sent Hmong and Khmu' soldiers to check on whether any American spies had appeared anywhere around there. The villagers [as they recounted to Chia Koua later] told the soldiers that a group had just passed through their village but they did not seem to be American spies, just a group of young Hmong boys. They asked the soldiers not to go after them.

They also told the soldiers [openly] about the reasons why Chia Koua's team had come there [to teach the Pahawh Hmong and about Shong Lue]. After listening to the story, the communist soldiers decided to kill a chicken [or two] and [perform a ceremony to] look at the omens in the [way the] feet [responded to being placed in hot water] so as to make sure which side was the more powerful. They did so and found that their side was weaker. So they went back and reported to the officers in Hang Yu Village that there had been some spies, but they had already gone so far on that they could no longer be reached.
15: Arrival at Nang Hai

Tom qab uas tau 10 hnhub, Txiaj Kuam lawv pab xav pav mus txog lub zos Naj Hai. Cov plaub leeg neeg uas tuaj coj lawv kev tau nkag ua ntej yuav mus rau hauv zos, tab sis tau pom xav pav Nyab Laj twb tuaj nyob txum qhov txhia chaw lawm, ces lawv mus txum tsis tau hauv zos lawm. Lawv tej zaub mov los tag, ces lawv mus ntaus xov tooj cej luam rov qab los rau hauv Looj Ceeb tias lawv tau txog chaw lawm thiab thov zaub mov. Cov nom thiaj tau kom As Mes Lis Kas thauj mus pov hmo ntuj rau hauv hauv zoov ntawm lawv chaw nyob.

Txiaj Kuam nrog ntsuj plig sib tham

After ten more days, Chia Koua's team reached Nang Hai. The four men who had led the group back [to their home] tried to enter the village first, but saw Vietnamese soldiers everywhere, so they could not go in. Their food had run out, so they radioed to Long Cheng to report that they had reached their destination, and requested supplies. The authorities therefore asked the Americans to make night drops in the forest area where the team was located. [Three drops were made in a period of over one month.]

Chia Koua talks with the souls

After the team had waited in the forest for some time [about ten days, during which they did have contact with the villagers], for some unknown reason the Vietnamese
Authorities in Phong Saly sent messengers to call the
Vietnamese soldiers back to the city. Chia Koua’s team then
came out of hiding to establish itself in the village
[although not to live there, as it was now too large a
group, having been augmented by the fifty soldiers from the
last village].

Chia Koua visited Neng Tru Her [and his wife], the Hmong
couple whose children had seen the human souls, met Youa and
Xenx, and asked them if there was any truth to the report
that the four men had given to the Hmong in Long Cheng. Both
confirmed that the account was true and that Chia Koua could
still talk to those souls if he wanted to. Chia Koua told
the youngsters that whenever they saw the souls again they
should call him to come and talk to them. Then he went back
to the hiding place in the forest.

One day the souls returned, and Youa and Xen went to
inform Chia Koua, who came and talked to them in the
children’s house. They covered one corner with a blanket and
when he began talking to the souls he heard the voices as if
there were real people behind the blanket; but when they lifted it there was no one.

Chia Koua told himself that maybe some Chinese people [assuming Chinese because of their higher level of technology] had come to play a theatrical trick such that they could talk, but could not be seen. He did not yet believe [that the phenomenon was authentic], so he came up with the idea of taking the two youngsters out into the forest where there were no [regular] houses, assuming that the voices would no longer be heard there. Xeng then set up a blanket in the forest [stringing it across the corner of a hut in Chia Koua’s camp] and called the souls, who were still able to converse with Chia Koua, just as in the house; so Chia Koua finally became convinced that they truly were souls.

During his conversation with the souls Chia Koua asked them to locate his father and bring him back to talk to him. They were gone for seven days and succeeded in bringing the soul of Chia Koua’s father with them when they came back.
Arrival at Nang Hai

Ntsuj plig nqa txiv pos los

When Xeng saw them come he told Chia Koua to cover a place with a blanket and talk to them. During the conversation Chia Koua’s father described how he had died and left his son behind. Everything he said was accurate but the soul could not be seen, only heard.

Some souls bring raspberries

One day Chia Koua and his soldiers went out to clear space in the forest to make an airstrip [about five kilometers from the village. They planned a full airstrip but ultimately would succeed in clearing only a helicopter pad one hundred meters square, a task which would take them about twenty days.] That night they all slept in [a camp in] the jungle. The following morning Chia Koua woke up first and ordered his soldiers to go and get water and cut firewood to cook their food. After some had already left and the others were about to go, Chia Koua went back into his tent and found a package of freshly-picked raspberries [wrapped in a large leaf]. The package, which had been left next to his pillow, was still wet with the morning dew.

Chia Koua thought the soldiers had brought him the raspberries, and asked those still present if any of them
had gone out to pick raspberries. No one said "Yes," so Chia Kova ate the raspberries, thinking they must have been picked by the others whom he had sent out for water and firewood. Then when everyone had returned from their duties he asked them again if any of them had picked raspberries and brought them back to his bed that morning. All insisted that there were no raspberries growing in the surrounding area, but maybe ghosts [dangerous spirits who had originally been human beings] had brought them from somewhere else for him to eat. Chia Kova was surprised and said jokingly, "If someone did bring these raspberries to me, please bring some more, as there were not enough to share with all the soldiers."

Four hours later rain fell, and everyone went into their tents for shelter. When Chia Kova got back to his tent he found another package of raspberries wrapped in two large green leaves next to his pillow. He told everyone that someone had brought him more raspberries, and shared them with the eighteen soldiers [who included men from among the
Arrival at Nang Hai

fifty soldiers who had come from the last village. They ate the raspberries but wondered [uneasily] if some evil ghosts had really put them there. [If so, eating them could cause disease.]

Chia Koua went back into the village to ask Xeng if he had seen anyone come. Xeng told him that three young girls who had heard about the team’s arrival in the area had come to pay the men a visit. "You did not see them, of course," [he said], "so they decided to pick raspberries for you to eat to make you feel their presence. The girls have already gone back, but they did ask me to let you know." Chia Koua was then even more convinced that some friendly souls, and not evil ghosts, brought him the raspberries.
Cov Hmoob nyob lub zos uas tau muab 50 leej xav pav nrog Txiaj Kuam tuaj lawd tau tso neeg lawv qab tuaj ceeb toom rau lawv txog cov nom tswv uas nyob Hav Yuj es twb tso xav pav tuaj caum Txiaj Kuam pab thiab yuav raws tua lawv. Cov neeg nruab zog tau piav txog ntsiab tseeb ntawm pab uas tuaj rau cheeb tsam ntawd, thiab cov xav pav tau tua qab sai taw, yuam tau lawv tog tsis zoo xwb, thiab ua rau lawv rov qab mus tsev lawm. Cov neeg nruab zog tau ceeb toom rau Txiaj Kuam pab kom yuav tsum ceev faj vim tias tsam cov nom tswv xa xav pav Nyab Laj tuaj tua lawv.

Thaum cov pej xeem nyob lub zos Naj Haib tau hnov xwm txheej phemes lawv tau txhawj heev. Lawv tau cuag Lis Tub, thiab hais tias yog

[A short time later] the Hmong of the village which had provided Chia Koua with fifty soldiers came to inform the team about how the authorities in Hang Yu had sent [Hmong and Khmu’] soldiers to chase after Chia Koua’s team and kill them. The villagers told how they had informed those soldiers of the true purpose of the team’s coming into the area, and how the soldiers had then killed [two] chickens to check the omens, only to find them inauspicious, and had therefore returned home. The villagers warned Chia Koua’s team to be more careful because the authorities might send Vietnamese soldiers to kill them.

When the people of Nang Hai heard this bad news they were greatly worried. They approached Tou Lee, saying that since the authorities in Hang Yu already knew of the team’s presence in the area they would certainly send troops to attack them all. Tou Lee, however, told the villagers not to
Communist Visitors

Worry because Chia Koua had Mother of Writing on his side, and would call Mother of Writing for help if needed.

The villagers conveyed the same concerns to Chia Koua, who told them not to be afraid, not to worry. In three or four days, once the authorities had heard the full story, they would send people to pay their respects instead, and would back off from attacking the village. When the villagers heard what Chia Koua said, they felt much relieved. Chia Koua then called on Shong Lue to inspire the Hmoob communist authorities not to send troops to attack them all.

Four communist visitors

Three days later, four of the soldiers who had been sent to chase after Chia Koua’s team, and had returned to Hang
Yu, came dressed as civilians to meet and talk with Chia Koua. Their conversation centered around the existence [source and nature] of the Pahawh. After the meeting was over Chia Koua wrote a letter in Pahawh to the Hmong communist authorities in Hang Yu and sent it with the four visitors. [He did not want to write it in Lao because that would make the Vietnamese suspicious if they saw it, and he wanted to stimulate the Hmong communists to contact him. He gave the messengers the general idea of what was in the letter.] It said,

You are respected high authorities who know how to read, write and understand the languages of other nations. If you know how to read and write the Pahawh you can go ahead and attack us, but if nobody among you knows how to read and write the Pahawh, please come for a visit and talk it over with us.

Chia Koua gave the letter to the four visitors to take back to the authorities in Hang Yu and strongly urged that these authorities come and talk to him if none of them had
previously learned to read and write the Paähw. The four
visitors then handed the letter over to the Hmông
authorities for whom it was intended, and when these people
looked at it they found [the writing] to be different from
the alphabets of other nations. They called in the educated
people in the villages, people who had seen the alphabets of
several other nations, to take a closer look at it, and they
all confirmed that the Paähw was unique, different from any
other writing system. [Chia Koua learned about such events
in the communist camp when these people later joined him.]

Twenty communist visitors
So the authorities ordered twenty of their soldiers to
dress in civilian clothes and to go to Nang Hai. On their
arrival they killed a pig and prepared a feast in the house
of one of the villagers, inviting Chia Koua, Tou Lee and two
other members of the team to join them. After the formal
Hmong introductions to each other [name and an exchange of questions to establish how they might be mutually related through some ancestor] nothing [of a business nature] was discussed before the feast was ready. Then one of the soldiers took a plate, filled it with rice and meat, and offered it to Chia Koua first [a sign of respect for an elder or a newcomer], inviting him to sit in the seat of the guest of honor in the middle of the living area under the spirit shelf). All of the others [people from both parties] were [invited] to join him at the table as soon as he was seated [a low rattan table with a height suitable for eating when seated on the floor).

Chia Koua had the strong impression that these Hmong communist workers had come only to seek [incriminating] information about him and his team [not to establish better relations], so after the dinner he told Tou Lee to take them to the camp to spend the night, and he would sleep in the village and talk with some of the village elders. [At least one of them would then be left alive if the visitors attacked!] But as the soldiers were leaving the house where the feast was held, one older man among them, also of the Vang clan, told his friends that he wanted to sleep in the
village too, so that he could talk with Chia Koua. He would meet them again in the morning.

When the two men were alone in the house the older Vang questioned Chia Koua about why he had come to Nang Hai. Chia Koua told him, "Where I live my military commander is Vang Pao, but there is one Hmong man named Shong Lue who is the Mother of Writing, having invented the Pahawh Hmong [as well as] instituting a new way of life for the Hmong. The purpose of our coming here is to introduce that man's teaching to the Hmong. The uniforms we wear and the equipment we carry were bought from Americans because Hmong people do not yet know how to make them."

Chia Koua also explained to the older Vang how God had sent Shong Lue to earth to save humanity, to create the Pahawh Hmong and institute a new morality. He then made this request of the older Vang: "You have come here, have seen us and know us. Please go back to tell the Hmong authorities
mus hais cov nom Hmoob tsis txhob tuaj tua peb. Yog tias lawv tsis ntseeg koj, thiab tseem yuav tua peb, lawv yuav tsum ua tib zoo xav vim tias lawv yeej tuaj tsis txog peb thiab lawv yuav sib tua kom lawv tuag tag. Qhov zoo tshaj mas kom lawv tuaj rau ntawm no thiab nrog peb tham es kom peb muaj kev sib cuag tau txoj kev to taub. Tom qab uas sib tham tag, yog tias lawv tsis txaus siab thiab tsese yuav tua peb, no los peb tseem yuav muab peb tej muas txawv rau lawv tua peb tib sis.

Txog hunb qab Txiaj Kuam thiab tus laus Hmoob Vaj nkawd taug kev tav ua ke rov mus rau ntawm lub yeej. Nyob rau ntawd kuj tsis tau muaj dab tsis txawv txawv sib nug txog dab tsi ntawm cov uas rau pw rau hauv lub yeej thiab Txiaj Kuam cov xav pav. Txiaj Kuam kiaj los kuj tsis tau hais dab tsi rau cov neeg uas tuaj nkawg txab, tab sis lawv nyob ib hunb nkauv ncig tsuam xyuas lub yeej, kuj tsis muaj tej hnaab puas pws thiab rau khoom noj uas yog xav pav tug, tab sis nyob rau ntawd tej cuab yeej thiab riam
to attack us. If they do not believe you, and still want to attack us, they had better think twice because they will not reach us and will have to fight until the last person dies. [He wanted to give the impression that he was not afraid, and would be ready for an attack.] The best thing for them to do would be to come here and talk to us so we can reach a mutual understanding. After the talk, if they are not satisfied and still want to attack us, then we will give them our own ammunition to use in shooting at us as well."

At daybreak Chia Koua and the older Vang walked together back to the camp. There had been no exchange of [pertinent, relevant] information between [the visitors] who had slept in the camp and Chia Koua’s soldiers. Chia Koua himself did not say anything to the men seeking information, but they spent the full day looking around the camp, noting the
sleeping bags and the eating arrangements of the soldiers, and that they had American equipment and weapons. They spent one more night in the camp before heading back to Hang Yu.
Once they had reached home, the men who went looking for information reported to the authorities that Chia Koua's men were American spies [shown by the fact that] all of their uniforms, equipment and weapons were American-made. There were, furthermore, only a few of them, and a mere one hundred communist soldiers could easily overcome them. So the Hmong communist authorities prepared to attack.

But the older man of the Vang clan tried to stop the move by saying that he had talked personally with Chia Koua, and although their equipment and weapons were American, the most important thing they had brought with them was the Pahawh Hmong. He asked the authorities not to be in a hurry to launch the attack but to investigate further instead, and determine whether the team really consisted of American
Kas los tsis yog tso. Yog tias luag yog xus xis tiag no los mam tua twb tsis lig. Tab sis thauam yawg laus neeg Hmoob Vaj pab hais Txiag Kuam cov lus tag rau cov nom twv, luag kuj tsis ntseeg nws vim tias nws tib leeg yog leej uas tai tham nrog Txiag Kuam xwb; lwm leej tsis hnov dab tsi los ntawm nws. Lawv yuav tsum tua, yog tsis yeej tiag no los mam sub twb tsis lig.

Cov nom twv Hmoob Koom Pheej npaj 100° leej xav pav txhij, ces tau tso luag tuaj mus tua Txiag Kuam pab rau ntawm lub zos Naj Haib. Thauam cov neeg ntawd tuaj txog rau ntawm ib lub roob laug taw ncua kev kwv yees ib nrab ke rov los lawm tom tsev lawv txoj xub ke txawm nqs lias rau hauv lub dawn nkhaus ua luj tshib. Ntu kev ntawd muaj ntoo siab thiab nroj ntis lawm, ua rau tib neeg taug kev tsis sib pom tom hauv ntej.

Lawv tuaj mus ua ob pab nrug sib nrhav ces leej xav pav uas ua ntej

spies or not. If they should be spies, it would never be too late to attack them.

But when the older Vang relayed Chia Koua’s message to the authorities they did not believe him because he was the only person who had spoken to Chia Koua; the others had not heard anything from him. They [felt that they] should attack, therefore, whether they would succeed or be defeated.

The Hmong communist authorities ordered [approximately one hundred] soldiers to get ready, and sent them to attack Chia Koua’s team at Nang Hai. When the men came to the top of a mountain range approximately midway between home and their destination they saw that the path took a zig-zag route through some saddles [lower points in the ridge, between higher elevations]. Part of the trail was obscured by high trees and grass, making it difficult for people walking behind to see those walking [single-file some distance] ahead.

[As they moved forward in two groups some distance apart] the lead soldier [suddenly] came upon a tiger sitting
motionless in the middle of the path. Without warning the men behind him, he raised his AKA rifle and fired one shot at the tiger. He missed, but the tiger was frightened and jumped away into the jungle.

When the men farther behind (in the second group) reached the top of the mountain they fired long-range toward the place from which they had heard the shot, wanting to cover their friends whom they thought were under attack by enemy spies. But after the communist soldiers were able to regroup [they found that] they had suffered two deaths and three men wounded by their own bullets. Instead of going on they had to carry home stretchers with the two dead and the three wounded. They could not reach their destination, just as Chia Koua had predicted.

When they got home the older Vang could not have been more delighted [at his vindication]. He was convinced that the points he had made when asking the authorities to refrain from sending the troops had been proven right. He said, "Exactly! Didn't I tell you not to hurry? If there
were no truth in what Chia Koua said, why would they risk coming here to tell us about it? For that matter, didn’t we move here [from China] in the first place in search of the truth [God, king, better way of life]. Why does no one believe [what Chia Koua said] until death comes to our people?”

The communist authorities join Chia Koua

One month after this incident the Hmong communist authorities in Hang Yu sent a delegation to meet with Chia Koua. They said to him, "We all want to join you but Lor Fong’s son is married to our leader’s daughter. [Lor Fong was a powerful communist individual, a member of the Central Committee.] Would it be all right if he [the son] also came over to you here?"
Chia Koua told them, "The new doctrine, unlike the old, accepts people from any political affiliation [a practice Shong Lue followed with individuals who flocked to him]. It will not allow quarreling between the two sides. So don’t worry; go back and send your unemployed sons and daughters [those not assigned to communist cadres] here to study the Pahawh. As for Lor Fong, I will talk [to whomever is necessary] so that nothing happens to either side."

After obtaining Chia Koua’s assurance, the delegation headed back home and sent a list of the names of their children [young teenagers] to Chia Koua [as registration for school] [but as events transpired, no classes were ever held]. And once the Hmong had rallied to Chia Koua, the Khmu', the Khua and other ethnic minorities in the area did the same. [Villagers made their decision by consensus, and each village sent two or three people to Nang Hai as contact people]. When the rallying crowd grew large enough, Chia Koua also recruited some soldiers to go with him and bring back all of the people [not just a few contact people] from the village which had supplied him with the fifty soldiers.

Chia Koua and Tou Lee then radioed to Long Cheng to ask the general what to do now that all of the people in that area had been liberated. The general therefore sent a helicopter to pick up the two men along with three of the
four people who had led them to Nang Hai, and to bring them back for consultation in Long Cheng.
While Chia Koua was away on the trip to Phong Saly some Hmong officers [again] instigated a plot [against General Vang Pao through discrediting his protector Shong Lue] by having their people tie twisted red cloth around their wrists, seeking to make trouble for Shong Lue so that he would be arrested.

After Chia Koua returned he stayed at home for two nights, and the next morning, as he went out shopping, he met [overheard] a [small] group of people discussing Shong Lue along the way. He asked what they were talking about. One of them said to him, "A Hmong man came from Ha Xong Village [two hours walk away] and on his way, he saw a very big frog that could talk and sent Shong Lue a message that he should tell people to tie their wrists with a piece of red cloth." [Red is an auspicious, protective color for Hmong people. Some people assumed it would mean that God was coming.] Chia Koua asked who the man was and they told
him to go and ask Shong Lue, who knew the man, but Chia Koua went home.

The next day Chia Koua went for a walk to the north of the new airport runway and came back. On his way he met another group of people gathered and talking about Shong Lue. He went to listen and asked them what they were discussing. They told him "A Hmong man came from Phou Moc village to see Shong Lue and said he saw a squirrel that could talk, and the squirrel asked him to tell Shong Lue to tell everyone to tie their wrists with a piece of red cloth." Chia Koua asked who had brought the message. They replied, "We don't know, but you go and ask Shong Lue; he knows the man."

Chia Koua went straight to ask Shong Lue about the two different stories he had heard, wanting to know who the two people were.

Shong Lue replied, "It has not yet happened [i.e., they have not yet come to me]. The military officers tried to
take over control [from General Vang Pao] but failed and they lost face. Now they are just plotting to blame me for something. At this time [Hmong] people are doing so much harm [to each other]. You shouldn't go back to Phong Saly any more. The umbrella is now tilting [i.e. protection is no longer available] and I have only two ways I can take. By the first one we can still see each other, and it will not be so difficult for you people. But by the second way we will not be seeing each other. It will put you people in bad shape, and the country will be lost also. [Chia Koua is not sure what this meant. Perhaps the first way was jail and the second death.]

After that a Hmong man by the name of Chia Yia [clan name Lee or Her, a man who had a grudge against Shong Lue] came to Shong Lue's house carrying a large knife. He told Shong Lue that when he went to gather bamboo on the hilltop he saw a squirrel that could talk. Shong Lue knew that he was lying, but he was a savior, and should not tell the man that he was lying [as it would not be polite], so he kindly
replied that if that is true it would be good, but everyone should learn [what the truth is, and how to behave].

Chia Yia was not able to interpret Shong Lue’s reply, so he went out telling everyone that a squirrel could never talk, and that Shong Lue did not know anything, was a liar, and really was a communist. He then reported to the high officials that Shong Lue was a communist, saying that he knew Shong Lue had a radio with which he frequently communicated with the communists.

Chia Koura paid a visit to Shong Lue, who asked if he had seen God anywhere. "What do you mean?" Chia Koura asked. Then Shong Lue detailed at length the various times and places where the team had been in danger but had been able to avoid it with no harm, or had been saved. Chia Koura became more convinced than ever that Shong Lue was the son of God.

Shong Lue’s instructions and prophecies

Shong Lue gave Chia Koura these instructions:
Return to the fields to care for your crops;  
have no desire to be an official;  
have no desire for money and gold;  
start walking in bare feet.

[With these instructions Chia Koua later quit the 
military and worked as a farmer for two one-year periods.  
The military situation at Long Cheng had become very 
precarious.]

Shong Lue added,

I tell you, some time between 1968 and 1973 the 
authorities on both sides [of the conflict in Laos] will 
reach an agreement. Please pay close attention from 1974 
to 1975, because if that reconciliation fails, no harm, 
no misery will fall upon the people. On the other hand, 
if that reconciliation is successful, the peoples of Laos 
will fall into poverty and misery, and will be divided 
into two groups. The poor people without clothes will get 
unlimited farmland and the well-to-do group will be 
squeezed into one detention center where they will drink 
with dispute and eat with hatred [will have no peace 
whatever they do].
Get yourself digging spades [a basic Hmong farming tool] because time does not wait. Whenever the rivers flow uphill, the leaves lie down on the river bed [rather than floating on the water when they fall], the rocks float, and the tau nia grasses grow as tall as the tua tsu bamboo, at that time the war will be endless. [These images of reversal of expectations signal upheaval, harm coming to society.] Shooting and fighting will last forever. Those who want to fire a gun will have to keep shooting until they cry [in weariness, futility]; those who never want to use a gun will still have to fire at least three shots [will have to do some shooting to protect themselves].

The people will be miserable. During the day they will cry three times before seeing nightfall [constantly sad, in misery], and at night they will cry three times before seeing daybreak. If and when the Hmong have suffered enough God will tell three great nations on the earth to
come to their rescue. The nation which does not want to respond will fall into misery as well.
Chia Koua said to Shong Lue, "I brought three Hmong people down here with me [from Phong Saly Province]. If I do not go back the people there will not stand for it."

Shong Lue replied, "Now it is still possible go back, but don't stay long. Hurry to find a way to come home."

Chia Koua did as instructed by Shong Lue [returning by helicopter]. One month after he had gone back there [Colonel] Wang Xeng Vang [Chia Koua's commanding officer in Long Cheng] sent him a message in Morse code to inform him that Shong Lue had been jailed. Chia Koua realized that if Shong Lue had been put in jail the people [in Phong Saly] would no longer pay any attention to him [Chia Koua]. He radioed back to Long Cheng urgently requesting an airplane [helicopter] to transport a seriously-wounded soldier for hospitalization. A moment later the general called back
herself to say that all airplanes had broken down and that Chia Koua had to wait until repairs were completed.

The next morning one of the soldiers by the name of Lor Thao developed a serious stomach pain and was about to die. Tou Lee radioed Long Cheng urgently requesting an airplane to pick up the dying soldier, and this time the Long Cheng authorities could not refuse, so an airplane was sent to Nang Hai. When the plane landed Chia Koua [and Tou Lee] boarded it and returned with it to Long Cheng. Chia Koua has not been back since [but sent Tou Lee and Pa Kao Her back to Nang Hai to lead the movement].

Nang Hai people ask for help again

In response to Chia Koua’s absence, a few months later the people at Nang Hai sent four men of different ethnic groups down [by helicopter] to see him. They invited him back to Nang Hai because people in that area had never known anyone who could make so many people believe him like Chia Koua did. Chia Koua told them that even if he went back with
Chia Koua Returns North

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tau paub dua uas yuav muaj leej twg txawj hais pej xeem ntseeg raws li Txiaj Kuam hais.
Txiaj Kuam cam tsis dhou lawv tej lus caw, tab sis nws hais rau plaub leeg ntawd tias, txawm li cas los nej mus muab lus pom zoo ntawm zaws roos Vaj Pov tso. Zaws roos tau kom lawv rov qab ua ntej mus tsev, thiab nws mam xa lwm leej uas ua nom loj dua Txiaj Kuam mus. Lawv tau rov los hais rau Txiaj Kuam txog zaws roos tej lus teb thiab hais ntxiv tias, "peb tsis pom qab yuav ua li cas tau lawm ces cia rov qab mus tsev li hais tso. Peb xav kom koy paub tau tias peb mus txog tsev mas tsis muaj leej twg thiab tsis muaj dаб tsi uas yuav pab tau peb lawm. Tej zauv cheeb tsam ntawd yuav raug poob rov qab tag rau tog Koom Pheej."

Tom qab tsis ntev ciav zaws roos

them the people would no longer believe him because Mother of Writing had been arrested and was in jail. No matter what anyone said, nobody would believe. [They were not convinced of this, but Chia Koua was.]

Chia Koua could not [directly] refuse their invitation, however, but asked the four people to get General Vang Pao's opinion. The general told them to go back home first, and he would send someone with higher rank than Chia Koua. They returned to tell Chia Koua about the general's response and added, "We don't know what else to do but to return home as told. We want you to know that once we arrive at home no one and nothing will be able to help us. Perhaps the entire area will again fall under communist rule." [These people no longer considered themselves under the communists, but they had not joined General Vang Pao as such either. They were followers of Shong Lue Yang and of Chia Koua. Chia Koua had told them to keep behaving normally within the communist system as usual until they became strong enough to resist. The Vietnamese, therefore, did not yet know anything about the defection.]

Not long after that the general did send a higher [Hmong] official to the Nang Hai area, but he was a very corrupt person who did all kinds of evil to the local population.
He killed domestic animals belonging to the people for his personal consumption without their consent or paying even a minimal price; he repeatedly raped some of the teenage daughters and forced others to become his concubines. That did not last long [less than one year] and all the people in that entire area rallied again to the communist side. [In addition to alienating the people, this official was not discreet. He ordered helicopters flown in and out too often and they finally came to the attention of the Vietnamese, who attacked. General Vang Pao sent in a company of reinforcements, but most of them were killed.]

As for the people Chia Koun had brought [from the village which sent the fifty soldiers] to resettle at Nang Hai, they could not return home because of fear of reprisal from the communists. They scattered to live miserably in the jungle until [by order of General Vang Pao] Americans were informed about them, recognized their ill fate and sent helicopters to transport and resettle them at Nam Fen in the heart of the Plain of Jars [a good location in Xieng Khouang Province, not very far from Long Cheng].
At that time the general did not believe the accusations people were bringing [against Shong Lue] but that same year, during the rainy season, a period came when it was foggy for four days and four nights. Someone went to Shong Lue and told him, "General Vang Pao wants you to hold a ceremony to stop the rain and clear up the sky, so the soldiers can be transported out to their posts."

Shong Lue replied, "I can't do that. The weather is made by the sky and it will change by itself." So he did not go with them to perform the ceremony to stop the rain and the fog, and no one knows what they reported to the general.
Not very long after that a highly educated Hmong man went to check out Shong Lue for about half a day. They had a discussion about democracy and he returned back to Long Cheng. No one knows what was reported to the general. One day a Hmong man of the Yang clan [a man of considerable influence] went to the general and told him to be careful and watch out for Shong Lue, that back in the Republic of China [the Chinese communists] sent groups of people to Hanoi to learn to do exactly what Shong Lue does [referring to religious, messianic activity].

In addition to that, [Chia Koua has] no idea of what other complaints may have been made to General Vang Pao [concerning Shong Lue].

How they arrested Shong Lue

On September 15th 1967, it was chilly in the morning. After the light rain stopped Chao Yang [a notorious military police officer] drove to Shong Lue’s house and asked him to get in the vehicle; they were going to talk in Long Cheng.
Shong Lue is Arrested

Shong Lue got in and went to Long Cheng. When he was gone for half a day and did not return, his wife, Bau Moua, became worried about him and hurried over to Nao Bee Yang’s house in Long Cheng. As she arrived Nao Bee said to her, “Aunt, it was raining a little bit this morning and I was not able to get you more rice. Are you out of it and is that what you have come for?”

Bau Moua replied “No, no, son, this morning Chao Yang came to get your uncle Shong Lue right after the rain stopped, and he hasn’t returned, so I’m here to go after him.”

Nao Bee was greatly worried by this news and drove [a military jeep] hurriedly off to look for Shong Lue at Chao Yang’s house. On his way he met Tong Ying Lee and Gnia Sau Her at the market. [Both men were from the Fi Kham area, and the latter had earlier been part of the group which went to get help from General Vang Pao when Shong Lue was still being hunted by the communists]. They were eating bowls of noodles in a restaurant. They invited him to join them in a bowl of noodles, and then they all went together to Chao Yang’s house.
When they arrived Nao Bee said, "Aunt came and told me that you picked up Uncle Shong Lue this morning for a talk. So where did you take him to work [making the polite implication that everything was perfectly normal], because he is not yet returned?"

Chao Yang replied, "Don't ask about it; I don't know who else [implying Nao Bee] might end up in jail, too."

They were upset by what he said but tried to talk calmly with him. "We are here for a good purpose. 'Once the father is gone, the son shall find out; and if the son is gone the father shall follow him.' So would you please just let us know where he's been taken, that's all."

Chao Yang then replied, "He has been taken to be jailed at Pha Khao" [about a day's walk or 3-4 hours by vehicle].

The men returned to Shong Lue's wife Bau Moua with the message, and nobody had any idea of what the charge was, and no one could do anything to help.
Chia Kow Vang was in Phong Saly at the time, and received a radio report from Wang Xeng Vang [the colonel over Chia Kow] that Shong Lue had been put in prison. He knew that if this had happened, the country was going to be lost for sure, so he found his way back home immediately.

When he arrived back at Long Cheng, Chong Vang [a student of Shong Lue] was so upset about the case that he decided to kill himself by jumping down from a high cliff, but was finally stopped by Chia Kow and Kao Lee [Shong Lue's nephew, who persuaded him that there were ways of helping Shong Lue.]
21: Shong Lue Teaches in Jail

Shong Lue was in jail at Pha Khao (a maximum security detention center used by the CIA and the clandestine army to keep all prisoners of war after interrogation) until late 1969. After that he was allowed out of his cell to stroll on the playing field of the detention center, which made it possible for Chia Koua to visit him from time to time. During one of these visits Chia Koua spent one night with Shong Lue in the detention center, where he heard the account of the creation from Shong Lue himself:

When God created the earth, the land and the water were mixed. The land and the rocks were muddy. God used the heat of the rays of the sun to separate the water from the land. It took God from year 1 [the first year he started to create] to year 22 to complete the separation of the land from the water.

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Shong Lue Teaches in Jail


Xyoo 64 Vaj Leej Txi tsiav dej nag nqis yug txhua tsav txhua yam hauv ntiaj teb. Xyoo 74 noob sim pib nthaw kaus. Xyoo 88 noob sim tuaj txhij. Xyoo 96 noob neej mam txawm noj, noob tsiaq mam txawj nog.

Xyoo 102 Nkauj Ntsuab thiab Nraug Nab nqis puab nrhaw zeb, thiab nkawd rov qab xyoo 135. Xyoo 161 Vaj Qav Kawg sawv kav ntiaj teb thiab tau rov qab xyoo 175.


God then completed the creation of human beings and animals in year 35. Not until year 55 did God sow seeds for vegetation over the surface of the earth. [People did not yet need to eat.] Then in year 59 God dried up the sky and the earth to allow human beings and seeds to mature [children to become adults, seeds to germinate].

In year 64 God created the rain to sustain the life of all kinds of creatures on the earth. In year 74 all vegetation started sprouting. In year 88 all the vegetation became full plants. In year 96 the human beings and the animals started consuming the vegetation.

In year 102 Gau Yua and Drau Na [characters known in Hmong legend, date supplied by Shong Lue] came down to form the jars of rock [huge prehistoric stone urns still scattered across the Plain of Jars in Xieng Khouang Province, the phenomenon from which the plateau gets its name]. They left again in year 135. In year 161 the king of the toads [a personified toad in Hmong legend] rose up to reign as king of the earth and he left again in year 175.

In year 336 vampires [creatures able to mate with human beings] appeared to devour human beings for three years. In year 339 the Xeng Xai brothers [figures of Lao legend] rose
Up to kill all the vampires. They ruled the earth for one hundred thirty-nine years.

Before leaving again the Xeng Xai brothers asked a Hmong man to prepare them a big feast with thirty-two kinds of animals [to eat], promising that after eating the meal they would leave all the alphabets [which included the Pahawh Hmong] to the Hmong to keep for all humankind [all over the world.] The Hmong man went out in search of thirty-two different kinds of animals, but because he could not find enough of them he went off and was ashamed to return.

When [enough] time [to prepare the meal] was up and he had still not come back, the Xeng Xai brothers asked the Buddha to prepare the meal with thirty-two kinds of animals for them to eat so they could leave the alphabets with him. [Note that the basic legend comes from the Lao, who are a Buddhist people, although the Hmong generally are not.] The Buddha asked the two rulers what he could do to find thirty-two kinds of animals since the Hmong man had already tried unsuccessfully. But the Xeng Xai told the Buddha it was not necessary to find thirty-two kinds of real animals.
Shong Lue Teaches in Jail

Ces Phab Phuv taw. ua raws nraim li hais thiab cov noob ntawv tau muab cob rau nws. Tom qab uas Xeem Xais nkawd ob kuv tij rov qab lawm ces Phab Phuv tau muab noob ntawv faib rau txhuaiv nywj keeb haiv neeg kom nyias mus kawm nyias tug. Txij thauam ntawm los ces cov nywj keeb haiv neeg thiaj muaj noob ntawv ua luag tug tab sis Hmoob ib txwm tsis kam mus kawm lawv ntawv ces thiaj tsis muaj tug.

Nws tau hais rau Txiaj Kuum tias, "txog caij kuv yuav rov qab lawm. Yog tias koi yuav ceev Phaj Hauj tseg rau Hmoob no ces koi mus npaj ib tsam mov 32 yam tseaj rau hauv kuv lub Tsev Kheej ntawm Naj Gua, thiab hu Vaj Leej Txi los lees thiab kom tso Phaj Hauj tseg rau Hmoob. Txiaj Kuum tau nug tias, kuv tsis paub es yuav ua li cas thiaj tau tsam mov thiab hu tau Vaj Leej Txi los lees."

he could use sticky rice [steamed glutinous rice eaten as a staple by the Lao] to mold the different ones.

So the Buddha did as instructed and the alphabets were given to him. After the rulers departed the Buddha distributed the alphabets to all the human races [ethnic groups] who were willing to study them. Ever since then those races have had their own alphabets but the Hmong never were willing to study their alphabet and have therefore never had one of their own [although the sons of God, culminating in Shong Lue, tried to supply alphabets to the Hmong later on].

[Shong Lue asked Chia Koua if he would be willing to serve a similar function and preserve the Pahawh Hmong for the Hmong people.] He told Chia Koua, "It is time for me to return [to God]. If you want to keep the Pahawh Hmong for the Hmong, go and prepare a feast with thirty-two kinds of animals [for God] in my round house at Nam Ngua, and call God to come and accept the offerings and to leave the Pahawh for the Hmong [otherwise it will be taken away].

Chia Koua asked, "What shall I do to provide the feast and to call God to come and accept the offerings?"
Shong Lue answered, "Just go and use sticky rice to mold thirty-two kinds of animals [placing them in a circle on a round food table]; put some flowers [any kind that can be found in the jungle] and light some candles [twenty-four, arranged in a circle] in my round house and I will call on God myself [from prison]." [The arrangement of circles and flowers was standard in Shong Lue's round house worship.]

On his return to Long Cheng on December 15 [1969], Chia Koua and a friend, Kao Lee [Shong Lue's nephew], went to mold thirty-two kinds of animals, place the flowers, and light the candles at Shong Lue's round house. When they finished they went home [leaving the round house ready] for Shong Lue to invite God. Not long after that Chia Koua went back to see Shong Lue, who told him that God had accepted the offerings and had told him to leave the Pahawh for the Hmong people.
Shong Lue had been in prison at Pha Khao for four years when some Hmong officers decided to have him killed. But others of them disagreed, suggesting that everyone should hold off until they found out what all of the good things were [i.e., the means of self-protection Shong Lue had] and took them away from Shong Lue, and then killed him after that. So Cher Yang [an officer responsible for the prison] went to Shong Lue and asked what good [protection] he had.

Shong Lue replied "I don't have any valuable things, son. What I have are only my bones and your flag [a flag Shong Lue had designed for the Hmong people]."

Cher asked him for the flag and Shong Lue replied, "This does not belong to me, but to your people. If you really want it I will give it to you."

After agreeing to give it to Cher, Shong Lue drew a flag and sent it to one of his students in Long Cheng [Chia Koua,
who made it with the help of Kao Yang] and gave it to Shong Lue once it was sewed. Shong Lue gave the flag to Cher as promised, but Cher didn’t keep it. People used it for target practice until it was all torn and thrown away. [Rumors had circulated that anything from Shong Lue could not be shot.]

Shong Lue predicts his death

The students asked Shong Lue why the flag was given away to be shot at, and Shong Lue replied, "Don't worry. They only shot at what was their own. Yours is still safe" [i.e., he had not given away the real flag designed for his followers]. After they shot up the flag he knew it was time for them to kill him, and he wrote a letter which someone took to his students [primarily Chia Koua Yang and Kao Lee]. In his letter there were only three symbols, N N X [Pahaw Hmong numbers for 7 8 9, K K K, written backwards]. The students did not know what this meant and asked why the three numbers were all backwards. Shong Lue replied, "The three sons of God [Shong Lue and his twin sons, his brothers from heaven] will return [to God who sent them]."
The students asked why they [the sons of God] would not stay on earth with them. He replied, "The Hmong will not allow us to stay, so we have to return."

Students rescue Shong Lue

The students begged Shong Lue to stay with them and they would have him rescued from prison, which they did. Gnia Pha Her volunteered to provide food for Shong Lue’s family, so they went to live near Gnia Pha at Nam Chia village. Gnia Pha built Shong Lue a house out in the jungle near Nam Chia Village which was at the foot of Phou Bia Mountain [one of the most rugged areas of Laos].

Shong Lue had only been there for a little while when two people brought some money to Gnia Pha, asking him to take them to see Shong Lue, which Gnia Pha finally agreed to do. Shong Lue realized that those two people were secret service agents [and that his hideout had been discovered], so he asked Gnia Pha to build him a house in the village itself.
Onia Pha built the house and Shong Lue moved into Nam Chia Village with no intention of going anywhere else. The two secret agents stayed with him all this time [a few weeks], never going back to their homes.

General Vang Pao gives orders

Many Hmong officers knew about Shong Lue's being in Nam Chia village. They thought he was there through the help of Colonel Yong Chue Yang [Shong Lue's nephew]. One morning at Long Cheng, Cher Chang Vang [one of General Vang Pao's bodyguards] went to get Yong Chue Yang and Nao Bee Yang and took them to see General Vang Pao at his house.

When they arrived at the general's house, there sat [Colonel] Tou Pao Lee [a top commander], Fong Vang [who had been in command at Kiaw Boua] and General Vang Pao, waiting for them. When they sat down the general started scolding them, saying, "You just have to understand that there is no way on earth that anyone would just come from the jungle and
become the king. [The Hmong authors do not know where he got the king idea.] Whoever wants to be a king has to have completed his education in a foreign country, and be intelligent enough for the world to accept him as a king. Why should people kneel down to bow and raise their hands to salute a very common person who came out from the jungle like that?" [i.e., like people do in the presence of the Lao king. Nobody actually made obeisance to Shong Lue.]

After the general got this scolding off his chest he changed the subject and said, "The reason we called you here is that Chia Shua [Shong Lue's original adult name] has escaped and we want Yong Chue to recapture him. If [Shong Lue] needs money we will let him work with the elders [a group the general had established to work out problems in the civilian population] and he shouldn’t need to escape any more."

After the general finished saying that he told Yong Chue to go and bring Shong Lue back. But Yong Chue didn’t really know where Shong Lue was. Yong Chue asked the general where
to go to find Shong Lue, but the general replied, "You must know where he is; if you really don’t know then you should go to see Pang Chong Yang [Yong Chue did not know who that was, either, but assumed it was the man who had reported to the general where Shong Lue was.] He will take you to him."

Yong Chue thought, "Since I am an officer, and a superior has given me an order, I must do it." So he answered, "If you order me, I will do it, but give me a written order to take along." The general told Tou Lue Moua [an aide] to prepare the written order for Yong Chue, and then he left the group to go to Thailand. Yong Chue waited there [in the general’s house] for a long time, but was not issued the written order, so he returned home and decided not to go and find Shong Lue as agreed.

But [in the mean time] five Hmong people were being prepared by Hmong leaders, given Vietnamese uniforms and AK weapons [used by Vietnamese troops], and then parachuted from an aircraft at Pha Phai Village [about half a day’s
walk from Nam Chia], to walk through the jungle and assassinate Shong Lue at his Nam Chia home.

Shong Lue prepares to die

Shong Lue, by his spiritual illumination, already knew in advance that the Hmong leaders were preparing to kill him. He set about finishing the revision of the Pahawh, and completed the Final Version. On January 21, 1971, he sent an urgent message to Chia Koua Vang and Kao Lee [son of Shong Lue’s adopted sister] to come to see him, which they did. [Chia Koua was then living one day’s walk away because Long Cheng was under attack.]

When they arrived he gave them [a packet of papers and] the Final Version Pahawh which he had done and told them not to lose it. He told them that it was not to be taught to anyone else yet. "There will be one who comes to replace me, and that person will look for what I have left with you. This is the end for me." [He gave them authority and responsibility to preserve everything he wanted transmitted
to the Hmong people: the Pahawh Hmong in its various stages, the ethical system, religion, etc.).

They asked when that person would come and he replied, "He is already born and is now already your age." Shong Lue added, "The bad people will very soon arrive." The two asked if they could take Shong Lue away, but he refused and said "It cannot be that way. The country is now in a very precarious situation. You two go back and find safe places for your families and come back to me from the Nam Theng direction. Then I will go with you; that is the only way."

The two of them believed him and did what he suggested [although actually he was sending them away from the danger that was coming.] The next morning, before they left for home, Shong Lue told them, "Once you go, from where you heard the singing of the pukha bird [which only sings when it is going to rain], that will be where the shooting will begin."
After he told them this, the two of them then left, and on their way to the other side of the other hill that faced his home they heard the pukha singing from the direction of Shong Lue’s house. When he heard it Chia Koua became very upset, and asked Kao Lee if they should go back to the village. They stopped to discuss the question, but decided that it wouldn’t matter, for it was just the sound of the bird from the village direction and they went home.
After the two had left, the next morning Gniala Phab Her took all of the villagers who lived [there in the village] with Shong Lue to go fishing. The two secret agents, however, did not go, staying at Shong Lue's house. Shong Lue mournfully remarked to his wife, "Today, we have to go, and you mustn't be afraid." Shong Lue's wife asked him, "Where are you going, that you tell me not to be afraid?" He said to her, "Wherever I go, you must come with me," but she did not understand yet.

At 9:00 a.m. one of the two secret agents told the other that he was going out to fix the bamboo water conduit [which brought water from a spring into the village]. Then he started out and followed the pipe north into the jungle. The
other man told Shong Lue and his wife that he was going out to defecate, and he went south of the house into the jungle. After about 30 minutes Song Cheng Her, who lived next to Shong Lue, came out of his house to sharpen his machete in his back yard. Then Bau Moua [Shong Lue’s wife] saw two Hmong men in Vietnamese uniforms, equipped with two AK rifles, coming from the direction of the bamboo water conduit toward Song Cheng Her. One pointed his gun at the man to keep him from moving, and the other came directly on toward them. Shong Lue’s wife went in to where Shong Lue was lying on the bed and told what she had seen, and urged that they should leave, but he replied, "Don’t be afraid."

At that moment the killer arrived and asked them in Hmong, "There are communists in here, right?"

Shong Lue got up and stood in the bedroom door. He replied, "There are no communists in here, but only me, son." The man fired his AK right at Shong Lue’s chest. Shong Lue slowly fell down and Bau Moua ran toward him and held
him. He again fired his AK at the lower part of Bau’s stomach; the bullets went through her body and made her fall to the floor. Their son Ba Yang darted outside, and the killer fired at him, wounding him on the leg, but he luckily made it into the jungle. The Hmong man of the Her clan was shot by the soldier who was pointing the gun at him, and he died instantly.

The two killers had gone back into the jungle for quite a long while when Gnia Pha and the people who had gone fishing with him arrived back, having heard the firing of rifles. Shong Lue was dead, and his wife was in critical condition. They went to get Youa Pao Yang (a fellow clan member of Shong Lue who lived in the village) and then went to look for and found Ba Yang in the jungle.

Then both wounded people were taken [into the jungle to hide them] for treatment [with traditional medicines] for two nights. Shong Lue’s wife was able to tell others about
what had happened, but she finally died for lack of medical help. She was then taken back to the village to be buried in the same funeral as Shong Lue. A total of three people died in this killing.

Chia Koua returns

Chia Koua and Kao Lee soon arrived at Pha Khe, their home village, but unfortunately Kao Lee’s feet were sore [from the jungle trek] and he was unable to go back to Nam Chia. Chia Koua told his family that if the situation got worse [in the serious fighting then taking place around Long Cheng] they should leave and should not wait for him. Then he enlisted Dang Lee Vang and Yang Vang with three others [all soldiers living in the village], and the six of them went back to Shong Lue, as Chia Koua had been directed.

After they came to Nam Theng Village, they went over a hill before coming to Shong Lue’s place. At the top of the hill there came a nengdaua animal [which looks like a small fox], growling and snarling at them. The six of them all fired at the animal until they emptied the ammunition from
ho tsis tom lawv, tib pliaug xwb ces nws txawm khlav kiaj lawm. Lawv tau taug roob mus txog rau ntawm ib lub dawn ces Nraj Lis Vaj ho rov pom dheev ob tug lau nraj dawb paug tib tsaug khlav nws lam txais tua tib pom xwb ua ciav ib tug vau hlo lawm ces muaj ib tug tig loo rov qab los khaws tus tuag kew, Txiaj Kuam thiab Nraj Lis nkawd ob leeg mam txais tua tib tsaug phom rau tus ntawd tuag kiaj ces laww mus khaws tau coj los saib ob tug nraj kuj puav leej raug muas txwv tib si tab sis laww kuj tau poob siab heev tias ib txwm yeej tsis tau pom dua nraj txawj los kew tus tuag li ntawd ib zaug li ces laww thiaj xav tias tua tuag laww ces nqa mus rau Soob Lwj thiab piav rau nws seb yog tim dab tsi thiaj ua li ntawd no ces Yaj Vaj thiaj ua tus nqa ob tug nraj ntawd. Laww tau lav hav zoov mus tshwm ntawm Soob Lwj tsev nram qab tsib taug hauv ib tug me nyuam kwj deg ces muaj laww 4 leeg cia li mob ko taw heev mus tsis taus kev

their guns, but the animal was not struck even once; however, it did not attack them, and quickly ran away.

They went on, walking down a long hill into a valley, when Dang Lee Vang saw two very white pheasants which quickly ran off together. He immediately shot at them and one of the birds fell down, but the other darted back to carry it away. Both Dang Lee and Chia Koua then shot at that bird at the same time, and both birds were killed. They picked them up and found both had been shot, but they wondered about the live one coming back to carry away the dead one, because such a thing had never happened before. They decided that since the birds were dead anyhow, they should take them to Shong Lue and find out what it all meant, so Yang Vang carried the birds.

They went through the jungle to Shong Lue’s house [without following any trail], but when the six of them arrived at a little valley with a small stream south of his home four of them had very sore feet so that they were unable to walk any farther. Chia Koua told them to stay
there, that he and Yang Vang would take the birds and go on to Shong Lue. Then he would come back to get them.

When they arrived at Shong Lue’s house with the birds the interior was all lit up with many candles [even though it was daytime]. They saw people crowded together in the house, but they did not see Shong Lue.

Chia Koua asked, "What are you doing?" to which Youa Pao Yang responded, "Don’t you know [what happened]?"

He replied, "I don’t know; what happened?"

Youa Pao pulled Chia Koua’s hands [to draw him aside privately, as he did not want Yang Vang to hear], and said, "They came and killed our Father and our Mother; they are both dead."

Chia Koua was terribly shaken and asked, "Where are they?"

Youa Pao said, "Right here in the bed; both of them are still in there dead."
Youa Pao said to him, "Our Father and Mother are dead, but I want to tell you what they said so you can return and not stay here." [He was afraid of what word Chia Koua's companions might spread.] The information given by Shong Lue's wife [about the assassination] was conveyed to Chia Koua. Then he returned home with the men who were with him [telling them Shong Lue was away from home, so as not to create suspicion. He could not be present for the funeral, but returned later to learn about the events more thoroughly.]

The killers who assassinated the Shong Lue family

After they killed Shong Lue, early the next morning the five assassins arrived at Tia Qhi Village [a few hours walk from Nam Chia]. They were still in Vietnamese uniforms and carrying their AK's. They ate breakfast at Tia Qhi village then left for Long Cheng. For killing Shong Lue they received one million kip [$2,000] and were promoted one grade, which made their life better for a while.
Shong Lue sends a sign

Before Shong Lue was shot he knew in advance that he would be killed, but did not tell anyone. He sang mournfully to others that, "If things should happen, you people must not bury me too soon. Be patient and keep my shirt [body] for thirteen days [a significant period of time in Hmong myth because a deity had been killed and had come back to life after thirteen days.] I will go back to God the Father and see whether or not he will continue to leave the Hmong without recourse. If the Father wants the Hmong to remain poor and without resources, and for me to return [to heaven] I will give you a sign, so you can bury my body. If the Father does not want the Hmong to continue without recourse, then I shall be raised again."

After the death of Shong Lue and his wife they were no longer breathing, but their faces were healthy with no change in color. People had not even watched them for thirteen days when one night at 9:00 p.m. they heard a loud
reverberating sound from the sky. Everybody rushed outside together and saw a star falling from the air toward the round house for worship. It fell down as low as the top of the trees, where it broke into two stars. These two stars fell to opposite sides of the round house and in a short moment the two stars flared up from both sides of the round house as high as the top of the trees. Then they became one star again and rose up very high in the sky. After that [the combined star] broke into four stars, one flying to the south, one to the north, one to the east and one to the west. Once the stars were gone, it was very dark outside and nothing else could be seen.

The people came back into the house and realized that the bodies of Shong Lue and Shong Lue's wife had changed from a healthy appearance to a sickly one. The next day they began to decay, and people decided to bury them in the way introduced by Shong Lue while he was alive. [A ceremony so far performed only this one time, somewhat different from
traditional Hmong funerals in that the soul was sent directly to God rather than first going to find the placenta buried at the individual's birth.]

What Shong Lue's sign meant

In May, 1975, which was not long [four years] after Shong Lue was assassinated, both [warring] Lao governments had established a peace agreement in Laos. [First a coalition government was formed in 1974, the two halves of the star reuniting, and then in 1975] they began to, drive out the Hmong people, scattering them in different directions around the world, exactly as shown by the stars at the night of the funeral. [Chia Koua understood this meaning of the sign when reflecting on it in the Nam Phong refugee camp in Thailand, in 1975.]

There are more of Shong Lue's predictions still to be fulfilled, and nobody knows when those events will happen. But because there has been fulfillment of [some of] his predictions, as described above, they should be written down and made known to people throughout the universe.
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