

# Relationships between Hmong and Neighboring Ethnic Groups in China

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## Background Information

- ❖ There are 8 students and 2 faculty involved in this research project that took place in Yunnan Province, China
- ❖ Funded by ASIANetwork and CIE International Fellows Program
- ❖ All eight students had their own research topic
- ❖ This trip was conducted for three weeks in the summer of 2012 in 16 Hmong communities

## My Research Topic

- ❖ Born as a Hmong in the United States, I've always heard stories about how Hmong and Chinese did not get along. This sparked my interest to look in the relationships between Hmong, Chinese, and neighboring minorities.
- ❖ **Research Question:** How are the relationships and interactions between Hmong, Chinese and other minority groups in terms of dating and marriage in China?

## Literature Review

- ❖ "Many of the Hmong proverbs imply that the Chinese are selfish and take advantage of them" (Leepreecha, n.d., p.20)
- ❖ "...the relationship between the Hmong and the Chinese is not entirely negative; in fact, some Hmong proverbs portray the Chinese as an ideal group." (Leepreecha, n.d., p.20)

Leepreecha, Prasit. The Construction and Reproduction of Hmong Ethnic Identity in China. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 April 2013. <[www.asianscholarship.org/asf/ejourn/.../prasit\\_leepreecha.doc](http://www.asianscholarship.org/asf/ejourn/.../prasit_leepreecha.doc)>

## Where we Traveled to



Our group of students, faculties, and a Chinese linguist and our tour guide Yu You Xyooj



Interviewing villager Lee on his perspective about interacting outside the Hmong community



Elders in Village 13 that we interviewed

## Methodology Used

My qualitative research data

- ❖ Pre-interviews with Hmong elders in the United States about Hmong's relationships/interactions with Chinese/neighboring minorities in China
- ❖ Interviewed and observed in 10 Hmong communities throughout Yunnan Province
- ❖ During and after the research in China, I have noted my interviews with Hmong-Chinese about relationships/interactions with Chinese and neighboring minorities

## Findings in The United States

- ❖ Hmong and Chinese did not get along due to land and agriculture disagreements
- ❖ Hmong and Chinese had very few relationships due to different religious views and who/what to worship
- ❖ Hmong people would stay in their own community in order to maintain their identity

## Findings in China

- ❖ Hmong do get along with Chinese because the Chinese has never threatened to hurt the Hmong
- ❖ Hmong prefers to have more relationships with Chinese because this can help them economically and industrially (Many Hmong communities produces tobacco and corn for business)
- ❖ Integrating with Chinese/neighboring minorities is beneficial because this can expand their knowledge about Chinese behavior

## Conclusion

From my research, I was shocked to learn about the relationships in China between Hmong, Chinese, and neighboring tribes. The views of Hmong-American were contrary to the prevailing attitudes of Hmong-Chinese. While all the Hmong-Chinese I've interviewed supported inter-ethnic dating and marriage, the Hmong-Americans did not. One of the most common reason for this could be due to fear of losing Hmong identity in a different part of the world.

**“When we interact outside our comfort zone, we get to learn more about ourselves.”**  
- Hmong-Chinese