

Larry & Dee Woodson

From: "grandpa vang" [REDACTED]
To: "Larry & Dee Woodson" [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2005 4:06 PM
Subject: Re: Hmong Marriages

Larry,

You ask me strange question. Let me explain to you what I know and understand.

1- Hmong or Lao have many wives because culture and believe. Culture issue: If I'm their leader and to build trust with the clans (18 clans). I must chose to marry several wife from the strong clans to gain trust and support. In this situation I must treat al the wife equal and not first or second. Believe issue: some hmong marry the second wife because the chaman or predictor teller said to a man your first wife not bring luck to you and you need to find an other wife or you may suffer some consequences. He must find a second wife or third. Many men marry two wife. the women not go along verywell but with the third they are doing better because one in one side against others two. 2- Lust: most of the men rich Hmong and Lao tend to have many wives. I don't blame on them too because many women just don't think about problems just think about the way of life most poor country alway think that way. My father tought me that If you marry too many wife then you have a trouble heart because the proverb said in Lao

Yak hai heuan hok ao no lane ma kine yak hai heuan lam khane hai ao me noi. It means in english If you want your house to be messed up bring bambou shoot to eat If you want trouble in your house marry second wife. No law to say you must have second wife but no Law in Laos said you can not have second wife. Laos is Lawless. By lust the first wife has more authority because the income and the wealth in the family belong to her and she is the first to start. All the women in the family must ask the husband autorization before doing something, no mistress because the marriage alway has the parents and the family of the bride behind her. I hope this will help you. Good to hear from you and thanks for the Khao Lao. It is very informative to me.

Larry & Dee Woodson <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Please refresh my memory.

Under Hmong custom, when could a man have a second wife? Was the second one considered a wife or a mistress? Did the second wife have the same rights as the first wife?

Was there any laws as far as the Lao were concerned?

Could a Lao have more than one wife? Legally?

Thanks for any help.