

VU Research Portal

The New Way: Becoming Protestant Hmong in Contemporary Vietnam

Ngo, T.T.T.

2011

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

citation for published version (APA)

Ngo, T. T. T. (2011). *The New Way: Becoming Protestant Hmong in Contemporary Vietnam*. [PhD-Thesis - Research and graduation internal, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam]. VU University Amsterdam.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

E-mail address:

vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

LIST OF CONTENTS

List of illustrations	viii
Introduction	
Marginality to Modernity: The trajectory of an aspiration	1
Why the Hmong and why religious conversion	1
Hmong conversion: Problems and perspective	5
Agency and conversion	15
Conversion and the modern state	19
Marginality and Modernity	23
Marginality	23
Global Christian Mordernity	29
Chapter 1 Setting the scene: The Hmong in Vietnam	36
The Hmong in Vietnam	36
Demography and Ethnonym	36
Kinship system	40
Migration and resettlement	41
Early contact with Catholicism	45
Lào Cai	47
Geography	47
The Hmong Leng group	49
The political situation of the Hmong from the early twentieth century to 1975	53
French colonialism	53
The Việt Minh' burden: Civilizing missions in the Northern Highland	55
Tiểu Phĩ: the bloody path to citizenship	57
Fieldwork location	72
Fieldwork methodology	78
Gaining access	78
Establishing rapport	85
Ethical concerns	87

Chapter 2 The short-waved faith	93
Introduction	93
Religion and media: A dialectical relationship	95
Intentional project: The work of the Far East Broadcasting Company	99
General history and strategy	99
The Hmong mission: Indigenization of Christianity in a transnational sphere	103
Unexpected responses: Protestantism with the Hmong in Northern Vietnam	106
Accidental hearing: Grandpa Ceem's conversion	106
The short-waved faith	112
Religion as the medium	117
Conclusion	123
Chapter 4 Marginality and conversion	125
Pragmatism and conversion: Revisiting some main assumptions	125
The Hmong predicaments	130
Economic situation	130
Blaming the victim	135
Waiting for the road to come	145
Communism and Protestantism on the question of conversion motivation	157
Allurement and pragmatism: Vietnamese state's perception	157
Missionaries' endorsement and condemnation	162
Looking beyond the relative deprivation thesis: Conversion narratives	164
Disenchanted millenarian dream: The conversion of Cur Seo Lữ	168
Price of a good daughter-in-law: Mr. Gi's conversion and deconversion	179
Conclusion	189
Chapter 4 Building a church community	191
Introduction	191

The Impact of the Việt Minh’s Civilizing Missions in the Northern Highland	195
Disenchantment	199
Mr. Chou’s conversion	199
The isolation of those who resisted conversion in a Hmong Christian community: Story of Duav	204
Unsettling awareness	207
Establishing a community of converts	210
Turning the other cheek: conflict and a Christian way to suppress the will to revenge	210
Confrontation and church separation	213
Leadership building and political involvement	217
State regulations and the foreign hand	223
Conclusion	230
Chapter 5. Remittance of Faith and Modernity	
Introduction	232
An encounter	235
The Mediated bonds: Ethnicity and double transnationality	241
Ethnic origin and double transnationality	241
The mediated bonds: American Hmong in the imagination of the Vietnamese Hmong	246
The missionary zeal	253
Incomplete conversion	255
The Calling	261
Remittance of Faith and Modernity: The double impact of Evangelism	271
Conclusion	280
Chapter 6. Inappropriate positions: Discourse about sex and the transformation of morality	281
Introduction	281
Technology of the Soul: Conversion and the transformation of morality	284
Improper positions: Sex, prejudices and conversion	292
Courting	293

Marriage	295
Marriage by capture	296
Sexualized minority: stereotype and prejudices	299
Protestant discourse on family and personhood	302
The formation of sin	305
Marrying non-Christians and polygyny	306
Mode of subjection: Romantic love and liberation	310
Technology of the self: marriage	
by capture or kidnapping	313
Conclusion	320
CONCLUSION	322
BIBLIOGRAPHY	328
APPENDIX	347
The list of Vietnamese ethnic minorities	

List of illustrations

Figure 1. A postcard picture of Hmong Leng children	37
Figure 2. Attire of White Hmong women	38
Figure 3. A View from Ô Quý Hồ pass, Sapa	48
Figure 4. Old Hmong village with rice terraces	51
Figure 5. Newly resettled Hmong village houses in the Kơ Mú house style	51
Figure 6. A Hạ Sơn village in Phong Hải	74
Figure 7. Tourists visit Hmong village in Phong Hải	75
Figure 8. Being dressed up for going to church	134
Figure 9. Propaganda against religion and superstition	158
Figure 10. Propaganda against illegal evangelization	159
Figure 11. Propaganda against religion and superstition	161
Figure 12. Watching Hmong American soap opera	247
Graph 1: Nicholas Tapp's diagram of spheres of influence and obligation in Hmong traditional morality as adapted from Marshall Sahlins	285
Table 1: Population of Phong Hải	76
Map 1. Map of Vietnam	39
Map 2: Map of Lào Cai province	49
Map 3. Map of the survey site	73