

Please Join Us for a Talk by Hmong American Anthropologist, Dia Cha!

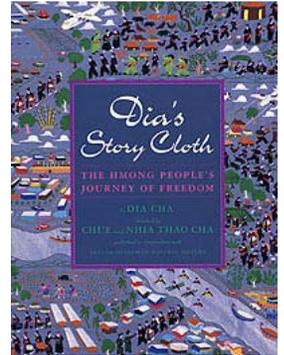
Thursday, September 15, 2011

3:00pm-4:30pm

UW-Milwaukee/Greene Hall

3347 North Downer Ave.

(Free and Open to the Public)



“Hmong Cosmological Beliefs and Their Impact on Daily Life”

The traditional religion of the Hmong is a variety of animism which combines ancestor worship with the belief that everything has a soul. The Hmong believe that reality consists of both the seen and the 'unseen' worlds, and that, while human beings occupy the seen world, various classes of spirits occupy a largely unseen stratum of reality. Moreover, human beings have multiple souls contained within the body, which exist at the interface of these two levels of existence. These souls must remain fully integrated with the body at all times in order for an individual to maintain good health. Should one or more of these souls become displaced or 'lost' in any way, illness and even death may result, and so, in such circumstances, the services of a shaman are sought. The shaman's unique genius is to act as an intermediary between the physical and spiritual worlds. It is the structure of the cosmology in which this shaman intercedes, and related Hmong beliefs, which will be discussed in light of daily behaviors and major life rituals such as those performed for births, weddings, and funerals.

Dia Cha, Ph.D., had been a Professor of Anthropology and Ethnic Studies at St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota for nine years and received many national academic and social group awards for the high caliber of her research, teaching, service to the community, and her tireless work as a champion of gender and ethnic equality. Awards included: Outstanding Woman Award at Metropolitan State College (Denver) and the TRIO Achievers Award of the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (Chicago) (1994), Hmong Women's Action Team (St. Paul, Minnesota) National Hmong Women's "Courage to Make a Difference" (2002), Professor of the Year by the Multicultural Student Services at St. Cloud State University (2002 and 2004), Teacher of the Year Award from Hmong National Development, Inc. in Detroit, Michigan (2007). She appeared twice before Congress: Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific's Hearing on Indochinese Refugee Issues (1994) and Congressional Summit on the Status of Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian Americans in Higher Education (2001). She holds a doctor of philosophy degree in anthropology from the University of Colorado-Boulder. With a great deal of original research to her credit, she has published widely. Two of her best known books are *Hmong American Concepts of Health, Healing, and Conventional Medicine* (Routledge, 2003), and *Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom* (Lee and Low Books, Inc., 1996).

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