

# Chue Thao Xiong

*Chue Thao Xiong saw many of her family members killed as she escaped through the jungles to safety in Thailand.*

My name is Chue. I am 47 years old right now.

*What is your maiden name?*

Chue Thao

*When you were in Laos where did you live?*

We lived in Sonyoung. We lived in Somgmai and then we moved to Viennasso.

*Tell about the problems you faced when you went to Thailand and when you came here to the United States.*

I am going to tell you in America about what our lives were like when we were in Laos and Thailand. We didn't know how to read and write so we'd usually stay home or we'd go to the garden all day and just eat, sleep, and work. When we migrated to Thailand we were really poor. We crossed the Mekong River and that was hard. The Thais tried to kill us and then we were lost and we'd be in little groups migrating to Thailand. If the Thai caught you they would send you back to Laos and maybe punish you for trying to run away. Then if you were caught you'd be sent back but then you could try to escape to Thailand again. We ate bananas and bamboo and we drank water from the stream. We did that until we got to Thailand safely. But then we'd be hungry and some would die. Banana peels were also eaten because there was nothing to eat but it kept us alive. When we crossed safely we did the papers to come to the United States. We saw that America was a good place and cared about people. When we did the papers we thought that America would help us out of our miserable lives and care for us. When we made it, we were really happy that we had made it. I want to tell all the Americans or whites that we are poor but you can help us by helping us apply for work and trying to do good things instead of hating us so much. Now we aren't poor and we have a good life just like you guys. We are happy that you (most) helped us get out of tragic times and now we have a better life than what we had when we first came to the United States. I just want to tell you how bad our lives were. Now that we came to America, when we are sick there are doctors and other people that actually help us and then we become a lot better and we can thank them or help them with their things. When we have nothing they can help us and when we lost a job they can help us find a new job. It's a nice life in America right now.

*Do you have anybody in your family that died?*

Us? Yes, we do have some people that died. Yes I can tell you the Communist killed three people in our family.

*Did you see them died?*

Yes I did. I also saw when my parents died, too.

*Who were the people that died?*

The first person was my dad, the second person was my mom, and the third person was my cousin. Also our dad's side of the family. We had two dads. They all were killed by the Communist. That was when I hadn't married my husband yet. My family were killed like just the way that I told you about, but my future husband and his family had already ran before the Communist could reach them. I'm just telling mostly about my family because that was when I hadn't married my husband yet. I married him in the year '65 or '66 around that year I came and there were already two people that died in his family. I didn't know how they died, but I heard them say that they were killed by the Communist. When I came they were already dead. My older sister and I ran and we ran. The Communist shot and hit my sister's side and she was tired and we couldn't run anymore so we went and found some leaves to cover it up and tie it. Then we came across Burline. We ate some food and she died after eating. Then she came back alive so we took her and they fixed her up. We stayed in Burline and the Communist came again to shoot at us. It exploded and we ran back to Nunsoun. Then we came to Nusoun and we lived at the town Person. We stayed over there for about ten years and we finally ran over and came to Kimini. We took her to the doctor and then the doctor said why she wasn't getting any better. So then we took her home again and did a traditional thing to fix her up. It helped a little because we did it to get her spirit back because we believed that her spirit had left her body. When we came here, there was an American guy that lives on Fourth Street. Well, I have an uncle that could do the traditional things to get the spirit back. The American dude was sick but he and my uncle were good friends and then my uncle did the spiritual things and the American dude was better. At first they were like "If you went to the doctor and you're not better, let me try our Hmong spiritual thing to help you." When the American dude came he was better and so now the American dude believes in our Hmong spiritual things because he got better from it. The doctor didn't help him at all.