

Vocabulary

You will hear the below terms while watching the animation.

communism: a type of government or system where the government or whole community own property, like land factories, and machinery; individual people do not

Hmong: a group of people who live in Southeast Asia or the language that these people speak

qeej: pronounced *g-eng*; a Hmong instrument made of reed pipes used in funerals and rituals to communicate with the spiritual world

reeducation camp: a prison camp where prisoners often had to do manual labor and were forced to learn and follow the beliefs of those in charge

refugee: someone who leaves their country, especially because of war or other threatening events

Setting

Joe Bee Xiong was born in Laos in about 1961. Then he went to Thailand as a refugee. Laos and Thailand are both in Southeast Asia.

Outline the countries of Thailand and Laos on the map.



Leaving Home

Imagine you are a refugee about to go to a new country.

Draw a picture of an emotion you may be feeling.

Write three questions or thoughts you may be having.

Story Cloths

You will notice that the illustrations in this animation look like stitching. That is because the story is told using a **story cloth**.

Traditionally, some Hmong decorated clothing and other textiles with elaborate needlework patterns. This was called *paj ntaub* (*pah dow*), or flower cloth.

When Hmong relocated to refugee camps after the Vietnam and Secret Wars ended, Hmong women used their needlework skills to create story cloths. These cloths had pictures on them made of sewn pictures that told stories like about the Hmong's past or experiences during the Secret War. Story cloths were often sold to people in the West, like the United States, to help the Hmong make money.

Story Cloth Examples

Image from Kansapedia.



Image taken at Eau Claire Hmong Mutual Assistance Association by WPT Education.



Create Your Story Cloth

Think about your personal story. How did you get to be who you are today?

Sketch one scene from your personal story cloth in the space below. *Optional: Create a full story cloth that tells either all or part of your personal story.*

Paj Ntaub Examples

Daderot [CC0], from Wikimedia Commons.

Image from Minnesota Historical Society.

