

# GENERAL VANG PAO (Ret.)

Date: June 7, 2003

To: The Hmong Community At Large, Hmong Social Services Providers, and Hmong Professionals.

Re: Key Ua Tshoob Kos (Traditional Hmong Wedding Dowry)

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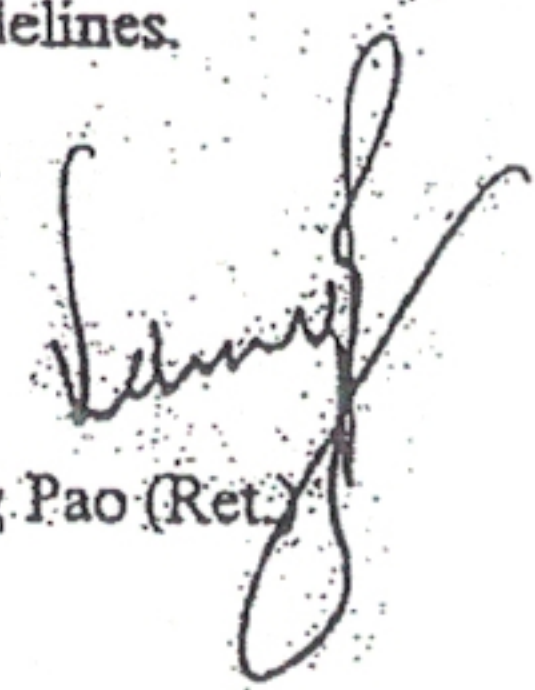
The Hmong United International Council of Minnesota, Inc. (Hmong 18 Clan Council) has approached me on a number of occasions to discuss the subject of Hmong marriage, "Tshoob Kos." These discussions have been centered on the traditional Hmong wedding dowry.

As many of you are aware, the Hmong wedding dowry has always been an integral component of our culture for as long as I can remember. And since coming to the United States in the mid-1970's, we have witnessed that the amount of this "dowry" has varied tremendously from wedding to wedding. Some dowry's are from several thousand dollars to well over \$10,000. The excessive amounts that are demanded for some wedding dowries has caused great hardship for many grooms and their families. Not only is it financially unreasonable, but more importantly it defeats the real cultural purpose of the dowry.

It is obvious that there needs to be some form of "unity and equity" in establishing limits on dowries. Our children, both the groom and bride, are not to be used as pawns for creating financial gains. Marriage is a sacred and special time that is to be used for the celebration in the union of two beautiful people into holy matrimony. Let's preserve our wedding dowry and its cultural value. But let's not let it turn into a means for division and an instrument of creating wealth at the expense of our children's union through love.

I have the greatest faith that you will "do the right thing" and support the efforts of the Hmong United International Council of Minnesota, Inc. to establish a uniform dowry limit and guidelines.

Best regards,



General Vang Pao (Ret.)