
TWO WORLDS

by
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As a teen life for me is hard. You got your whole life ahead to plan. Most plans are original. Get a car. Then get a place to live, or go to college. I plan to finish high school with good grades. Go to college to get a degree in art and animation. But all paths have a bump or two. The bumps for me are to hold on to my culture and make a life in this great land.

Unlike many teens of my culture, they learn to read and write in both English and Hmong. Learn the culture, respect all elders, no matter how much you dislike them. Keep your head down, don't make eye contact; sounds hard but its easy.

Just like many American families mine has adopted many holidays and many other special occasions. The most famous of all Hmong holidays is the Hmong New Year. But there are even more important occasions. Like when you honor the spirits of ancestors as well as purifying the house for good luck and fortune. My family also celebrates Thanksgiving, Halloween, and Christmas. All of the more American tradition were picked up and used by many Hmong families.

Ask any adult Hmong and they would say that the shaman is a very important person. The shaman has a large roll in the purifying of one's house. He/she is the one that chases all the evil spirits away and leaves the good spirit behind.

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The food is very different. We eat rice noodles at my house, but we also have adopted some American foods as well. At my house you'll find different foods from both cultures. I eat Hmong food and American food every day.

Schooling is different. If I were in Thailand I would learn Thai before I learned to write and read Hmong. Hmong have been using Thai in their ways of speaking for years. The names of the Hmong culture are different for many cultures. For your Hmong name is also, in a way, your English name. In many cases parents will name their child in a pattern. One pattern goes Toua, Lue, Xang, and Sue. That's mainly for the boys. There is no pattern for the girls.

Some American cultures that my family has woven into our culture are the really festive ones. But not the 4th of July fireworks. My family cooks a large array of foods for Thanksgiving. That has to be the biggest holiday we celebrate. Even Christmas seems small. For my family Christmas seems to be going, going and soon gone. Thanksgiving on the other hand is getting even better for the relatives in Thailand are coming.

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