



VANG, SHENG YANG

Sheng is a student at D.C. Everest Junior High. She enjoys reading and listening to music on her free time. She plans to attend UW-Stevens Point in the future.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I like to read, sometimes I like to draw and sketch. I have 7 sisters; one is married and is in St. Paul, one's in college, three's in high school, one younger sister in middle school and one in Weston Elementary School. I also have 2 brothers, one in Junior High School and one also at Weston Elementary.

How do you feel about being a Hmong girl?

Sometimes I feel kind of stress because Hmong girl doesn't have choice of what we can do, unlike the Hmong boys, and sometimes I feel really bad because sometimes the Hmong tradition is kind of harsh to the girls. Girls are more confined into the house than the boys and because of that, we are more likely to rebelled to our tradition that our parents are just following, although I do think that the parents re softening on the girls.

What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Well, advantage I can't think of any advantages, but, well the Hmong girl is most likely to do more chores, and more responsibility, so, we can learn to take care of the jobs because we got a lot to take care of. That way we are ready for the future more that some other girls our age. We have responsibility when we are young so later in our future, we can handle some things. Like children and cooking for your kids, cleaning after them, etc. The disadvantage is that Hmong girls can't really do what other girls do if their parent are totally traditional.

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What do you know about your tradition and your culture, and how do you feel about them?

Well, I know only some traditions that my mom told us. I not really a traditional person but I enjoy some of it while other just bored me. And I appreciate it even though I don't like it because it is what represents us.

How do you feel about being Americanized?

I feel kind of happy because we don't have to do all these work, and work like, gardening. I think it's really hard and I'm kind of happy that we don't do it any more. I loved America because they have computers, electronic machines, women equality and freedom to do things.

How do your parents feel about it?

Sometimes, I think my parents are against it sometimes, but they just want us to be happy in life and all. Also I think they had adapted and are grateful for some.

Do you ever feel torn or trap between the two?

I never that really considered the topic. I always related the two somehow and I never felt trap, even though I might do things different than what others do.

What is it like to live in two cultures?

I exciting because then is something boring is happening in my culture I could always use something electric and if something boring is happening at my America culture I could always enjoy writing in Hmong and humming Hmong song that others don't know at all.

Which culture do you feel is more beneficial and why?

I think the American culture is more beneficial because you can be more successful and you have an education. Also that we don't hold so much responsibility while the male have to do nothing except play and go to school.

Are your parents more Americanized or are they stuck to the traditional way?

My parents are definitely more of the traditional way but is adapting little by little.

How do you feel about that?

Well, I respect them and appreciated their choices on how to raise us.

What have your parents taught you?

My mom, she taught me how to believe in trusting people when I was small, and now I have too many people I have trust in.

Is education important to you?

Yeah. For me, education helps me have a better future and how to put your stuff together.

What are your expectations and you parents expectation for you?

Well, I think my dad kind of wants me to be a doctor, but my mom just wants to raise our family, but I want to be an artist.

At school or anywhere else, have you ever felt peer pressure to do something?

Well, sometimes when a lot of things are hard on me, and I don't have time to get use to it, and I guess it gives me peer pressure sometimes.

Have you ever been discriminated against because of your ethnicity?

When I was in kindergarten, there was an older woman next door that lived next to us, and she yelled at me because I was picking flowers. They weren't hers either.

How did you feel about that?

At first I was kind of scared of her, because that was the first time I ever heard scream to me and I didn't like it, but later in the year I started to get used to it.

What is your advice to someone who would know how to deal with racism?

My advice is that, they should not let people go down because of ethnicity.

Why do you think people discriminate because of ethnicity?

Well, probably because they're not use to having a lot of people with different skin color around them, so they don't have time to get use to it.

How do your parents feel about dating?

My dad doesn't let us, but my mom sometimes is use to it, if the other person is nice, but she will be a little sad and upset, but it would be better if us Hmong girls are dating Hmong boys.

Stereotypes are that all Hmong people are in gang. How do you feel about that?

I feel that people are too quickly to judge people on what they heard of other of their races. So I think that if anyone decide to judge others, try to find out what others people think of Hmong and what other Hmong act and think about being judge. And then try to find if all the Hmong around your neighborhood are join in gangs. And I garentee that most of them don't belong in gangs.

Have you ever been ask to join a gang?

No.

Do you have any ideas why some people do join a gang?

Probably because they're insecure and say that no one cares about them and that they join a gang and they feel that the gang people are more like their family, than their real family.

What do you see in the future for the Hmong?

I see the Hmong can raise up a bit so they can have more education, then they don't have to do as much as their parents say and they would do whatever they want, and do something for their children that is not that bad. And that the Hmong would not be judge by someone else actions.

What are your hopes for them?

I hope that they could achieve their goals and I hope they could be happy about the choices they choose.

Do you have any advice or wisdom to share?

Don't try to be to rebellious or your parents are more likely to barge in your life and interfere with your life. Also that they are more likely not to trust you if you rebelled so much as sneaking out or staying out all day so just considered the position they are in.