



VUE, VONG

Vong is a student at D.C. Everest High School. He enjoys surfing the internet and chatting. Vong is a good student who hopes to become a doctor or lawyer in the future. Vong learns many traditions from his parents.

My name is Vong. Last name is Vue. I'm seventeen. I have tons of people in my family, two brothers, five sisters, a mom, and a dad.

And where were you born?

I was born in Thailand.

How do you feel about being a Hmong guy?

There's not much to it. It's like no different. It's just like any other guy, I guess.

You think there are advantages in being a boy rather than a girl?

Not sure on that one. Never thought about that.

Are there in Hmong culture?

Well to me, I don't think so. But my parents, they think it is an advantage. That is, later on in life when I get a wife. My mom actually will like that. So, yeah, they would rather have boys than girls.

What do you know about your traditions and cultures and how do you feel about them?

I don't know much because no one ever taught me and now I don't really have time to learn them with school and plans for college. The only person I know that knows a lot about Hmong culture is my dad, but he works a lot now.

How was the transition from Laos and Thailand to America and how old were you?

I don't remember any of that because I was only one year old.

How do you feel about being Americanized?

Personally, I think it's okay. There are some ups and downs to it but I don't mind much.

How do your parent feel about it?

They actually like it.

Do you ever feel torn between the two cultures?

Yes I do, because when we have parties, I don't really know what to do and I always get yelled at. This irritates me, how one cannot know his own culture.

What is it like to live with two cultures?

It's actually kind of hard because my mom doesn't speak English so sometimes I have to translate for her.

What culture do you feel is more beneficial? Like for your future?

I say Hmong culture because it needs to be kept alive; I personally do not want it to perish.

"The hard part is that some English words do not exist in Hmong and to find a substitute for that word takes awhile."

What religion are you?

I say we all believe in Shamanism.

And are your parents more Americanized or do you think they're more into the traditional way of life?

They're still in traditional ways. My dad, he's Americanized but they still go the old ways.

What have your parents taught you about Hmong culture and how will you use it?

My dad hasn't taught me much, but he teaches me about Shamanism. My mom teaches me a lot about the old ways of life in Thailand and Laos.

Is education important to you?

Yes, education is important to me. I want to go to college and my parents expect me to go to college.

What are your expectations and your parents' expectations for your future?

My parents want me to go to school, get good grades, and become a lawyer. I need to go to school, but actually I'm not going to become a lawyer because law school is not for me. I'm not good at arguing.

At school or anywhere else, have you ever felt peer pressure to do something? What was it and did you follow through?

No, I don't really have peer pressure.

Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your ethnicity?

Yeah. Sometimes I realize that I'm being discriminated against.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted help dealing with his or her racial issues? Why do people discriminate because of ethnicity?

Well, I think they discriminate because of things that others can and can't do. Like if one group is better than another group.

How do you and your parents feel about interracial dating?

My mom doesn't like that at all. If she catches me with someone who is not my race, then she would probably kick me out of the house.

How do you feel about it?

I don't mind at all.

A stereotype is that all Hmong are in gangs. How do you feel about that?

I don't like it but there's not much that I can do. Stereotype or not, I see it happens and I do believe that stereotypes are strongly believed by other people. I should know for I went through the experiences.

Have you ever been ask to join one?

Actually, I've been asked a lot of times but I don't like gangs.

What do you see in the future for the Hmong?

Well, now I see that Hmong culture is dying and not a lot of people can read or write the language. I think that in the near future it will decay.

Now what are your hopes for then?

I hope that it could still be kept alive.

Do you have any last comment?

Usually I have them, but right now I don't have any.