

XIONG, DAO

Dao Xiong is a high school teenager who enjoys spending time with her friend. She rarely gets time to go out with friends but she cherishes the time that her parents let her get out of the house.

Dao speaks mostly English at home and at school.

Were you ever discriminated against in school?

No, I have never really had a real problem with it.

Do you think schools do anything about racism and treating everyone as individuals?

I don't really think they do anything about it. I think they just expect that everybody is okay with it.

Do you think some of the Hmong kids take advantage of the way the teachers act around them, like not calling on them spontaneously when they don't know the answers?

I really think that they don't pick on them, I think they just do it equally.

Why do you think that some people dislike the Hmong especially?

Sometimes they don't bother to get to know us and they don't know what to think of us; so whatever they hear, they go along with it.

Do you think that Hmong kids like it? Do you think Hmong kids do anything to help themselves find friends or are they just shy?

I don't know. If there's ever a new Hmong kid around, they just try and make them feel like they fit in.

Do you feel like the high school is different from the others and is a giant community where every single Hmong kid knows everybody else?

No, I don't think everybody knows everyone else. Sometimes some Hmong keep to themselves and some Americans keep to themselves. They just don't want to get involved in anything so they stay by themselves.

Does that mean there are no Hmong Kids who have Caucasian friends?

I think they have some Caucasian friends because you see some Caucasian hanging with some Hmong. I guess it all depends on the person.

What language do you mostly speak at home?

I mostly speak English but sometimes I speak Hmong.

Do your parents appreciate speaking American at home?

Not really. A long time ago, my dad told us to speak American so my mom could learn, but now that we

are older, we don't know as much Hmong as we used to. So they just tell us to speak more Hmong at home because my little brother and sisters don't know how to speak it.

Do your parents speak English well and do you help them a lot?

My dad knows English better than my mom but sometimes he needs help spelling words. My mom, she doesn't really know English. It takes her a while to understand what we're saying and she doesn't really know how to pronounce words that well either.

Is it hard to make friends with those that are not Hmong?

Well, I don't know. It usually depends on what type of person they are, like if they're preppy girls, they don't seem to like us. They don't bother to get to know us and you don't really want to get to know them because they might start "ditching" you. So I don't really try to make friends with those people. I just go toward people who are the nicer type, not so racist-looking or something.

Would you say that the Hmong have a trust bond that Caucasians don't have?

Yeah, because Hmong are the same. They have the same language and traditions and they know the hardships of each other. Sometimes the Hmong and Caucasian have the same relationship as friendship.

What do you think about people who date other people that aren't Hmong?

I think it's fine. I usually think that white boys cheat on Asian girls. They just go out with Asian girls for fun, but some of them aren't like that. I don't care if they go out with each other as long as everything's fine between them.

Do you ever feel that in the future you could have a relationship with a white person?

Probably not, because what I am learning at home is a little different from what they are learning, and I probably won't fit into their lives.

Do you think your parents would want you to and what would they think of it?

Well, I know that they don't want me to marry a white guy because sooner or later the white guy will leave me; the rate of divorce is really high these days. I don't really think I want to marry a white guy. I think I am going to try a Hmong guy.

"I know that they don't want me to marry a white guy because sooner or later the white guy will leave me."