



## Mai Der Chang

*Mai Der Chang is a 12 year old from Wat Tham Krabok, Thailand and now lives in Wausau, Wisconsin.*

***What is your name?***

My mom and dad call me Mai Der.

***What is your last name?***

It's Chang.

***How old are you?***

I am 12 years old.

***Do you remember where you were born?***

I was born in Thailand.

***Do you know where in Thailand you were born?***

I was born in Wat Tham Krabok.

***How many brothers and sisters do you have?***

I have four brothers and two uncles.

***What are the names of your brothers?***

Ker, Lou, Kou, and Tong Nou.

***How old is your oldest brother?***

He is 15 years old.

***When did you and your family arrive in the United States?***

We came during the fourth month.

***This year?***

Last year.

***What did you think when you arrived in the United States?***

I thought it was strange.

***How was it strange?***

There wasn't sand all over the place.

***Do you like living here in America?***

Yes, I do like it.

***What is it about America that you like?***

I like to go to school and read.

***Do like anything else?***

I also like to go out and play with my friends.

***Do you have a lot of friends to play with?***

Yes.

***How long have you been learning English?***

About a year now.

***Is it hard for you to learn English?***

Yes, it was hard.

***Do you know another language?***

I know Thai.

***How do you know Thai?***

I learn Thai when I went to school in Thailand.

***What was it like? Was it different than here?***

Yes, it was different. You write differently.

***Are the teachers different?***

Yes.

***How different are they from the teachers in America?***

They are Thai and a little more strict.

***What are the punishments at the schools?***

They would hit you on the hand with a stick or something like that.

***Did you have to wear a uniform when you went to school?***

Yes.

***What was the uniform?***

It was a dress and a shirt.

***What were the colors?***

Black and white.

***Did they allow you to have long hair?***

No, you had to cut it.

***How long did you have to cut it?***

It had to be short.

***What were your houses made of?***

Straw.

***Can you tell me what you and your family did when you were still living in Thailand?***

We cooked, washed the clothes, played around at times and sewed flower cloths.

***You know how to sew flower cloths?***

Yes.

***What kind of flower cloths did you do?***

They gave us cloths like animal cloths to work on and then we sold them for money. After that we went to collect cans.

***How many cans did you have to pick up to get lots of money?***

We had to pick up a few bags.

***Out of these few bags, how much did you make?***

140 Baht.

***When you said that you made animal flower cloths, can you tell me what it is?***

Animal cloths are cloths that are sewn onto a green sheet of cloth with animals and Hmong houses.

***Oh, those are called story cloths here in America.***

***Did you and your parents garden?***

No, we didn't garden.

***What else did you do other than just sew flower cloths?***

We also washed clothes and other chores.

***When you washed clothes, did you have to wash by hand?***

Yes, we hand washed and got water from the well.

***Did you go to the flee market?***

No, we did not go.

***Why did your parents decide to come to America?***

They want us to come to the United States to go to school and become smart.

***Were your uncles already living here or did you all come together?***

They were already living here and then we came after them.

***Did they help you and your family when you arrived?***

Yes.

***Are you living with your uncles now?***

Yes.

***Were you afraid on the plane?***

Yes, I was.

***Where did your plane land?***

We landed in India, Japan, and then New York.

***Then you came to Wisconsin?***

Yes.

***When you came, how did you register?***

If they check and you are sick, then you have to take medicine.

***No one in your family was sick, correct?***

Yes.

***Do your parents know how to drive?***

They know now.

***Do your parents also go to school to learn English?***

Yes.

***Do you have any friends that are still living in Wat Tham Krabok?***

No, they all came here already.

***Did you all come together?***

No, they came before us.

***Do they all live here or somewhere else?***

They live far away.

***Do you still have any contact with them?***

I don't have their phone numbers.

***Do think there is a difference between the Hmong Americans and the newcomers?***

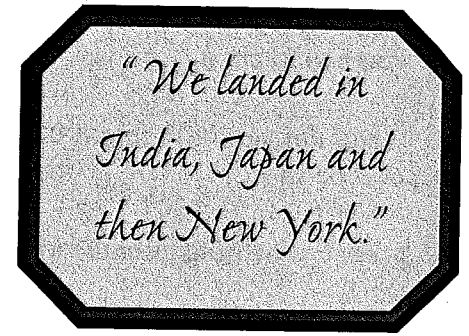
They know how to speak English.

***Is there anything else?***

I don't know.

***Do you like America?***

Yes.



***Do you like the food?***

Not really.

***What are your future plans? Do you know?***

Finish school and then...I'm not really sure yet.

***Do you want to work?***

Yes.

***Do you have anything to share?***

In Thailand, we cooked, played, and we also went fishing. After we were done, we would bring that home and cook it for everyone.

***Did you eat a lot of fruits?***

Yes, we did.

***What kind of fruits did you eat and are they different from America?***

No, it's pretty much the same.

***Do you eat apples?***

We eat apples, berries, bananas, strawberry, and grapes.

***Do you have anything else to add?***

No.