



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese Culture

NEWSLETTER # 43

MAY 2012

A COUNTRY STAYS ALIVE WHEN ITS CULTURE IS ALIVE.

- SACEI Newsletter updates you on the latest news about Vietnamese-America.
- It serves as a link between SACEI members and those who are interested in the Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American culture.

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Editorial Note:

April 30: The Day of Democracy and Freedom in Vietnam

April 30 is commemorated each year by Vietnamese-Americans and Vietnamese expatriates around the world as a Day of Mourning to remember the loss of their country to the communists. Since that attitude is understandable but negative, maybe they should promote it as the future Day of Democracy and Freedom in Vietnam, which is their ultimate goal.

As of today, the Vietnamese have lived under the communists for 37 years (58 years for northerners) during which they have suffered from imprisonment, harassment, loss of freedom and human rights, corruption, poverty, and criminality. Beatings, oppression of peasants and citizens occurred frequently, with the last one a few days earlier in Van Giang, North Vietnam. The government forces peasants to sell their lands on the cheap so that it could resell to foreigners at competitive prices. Those who refuse are beaten:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/vietnamese/multimedia/2012/04/120425_van_giang_violent_crackdown.shtml

They now realize that no matter how bad or corrupt South Vietnam was in the 1960s or 1970s, it was many times better than the present communist regime. People could demonstrate and make their opinions known under the Thieu or Diem regimes and even topple them. Today, had they demonstrated against the Hanoi government, they not only were beaten and/or landed in jails or concentration camps, but also disappeared into the thin air just like singer Viet Khang.

This is not to disparage all northerners, but to point to the fact that the ultimate culprit, Ho Chi Minh who introduced communism to Vietnam—a criminal and foreign ideology that has changed the society for worse—was responsible before history and the nation for having led Vietnam into disarray and economic and cultural decay. Vietnam today ranked 172 out of 179 countries for Freedom of Press (2012), 112/182 for corruption, 139/179 for economic freedom and 141/183 for GDP per capita or \$1,374 per year, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_rankings_of_Vietnam.

This is something Hanoi should be ashamed of. And forget about the westerners and some Americans --many of them now crowding elite US liberal schools—who still consider Ho to be a hero. They have never suffered or lived under communism and therefore do not know anything about communism.

Vietnamese-Americans should help fight for Freedom and Democracy in Vietnam and April 30, the day they lost their country should be the Day to re-establish Freedom and Democracy in the country. No one should rest until this goal is completed. Therefore, the Day of Mourning should be changed the Day of Democracy and Freedom we are all fighting for.

Call for Papers



SACEI plans to revisit the years of the Second Republic not only from the war aspect, but also from the economic, cultural, and historic points of view. The Second Republic faced its most bloody and violent period in 1968 (Tet Mau Than), 1972 (Summer Eastern Offensive) and 1975 (Total Offensive) when Hanoi launched its blatant invasions into South Vietnam, a far cry from a "people's revolution." While the South Vietnamese struggled and suffered militarily, economically, and socially, in Washington DC the doves fought against the hawks about the conduct of the war and internationally, Moscow, Peking, and Washington poured armaments into the battlefields.

SACEI (Saigon Arts, Culture, & Education Institute)—a non-profit organization—invites you to share your experiences and knowledge about this period with its audience.

Please submit a one-page abstract to sacei007@yahoo.com. The deadline is June 15, 2012.

Web: www.sacei07.org

Nominations for the **2012 SACEI PERSON OF THE YEAR** are also accepted.

Symposium Announcement

VOICES FROM THE SOUTH: NEW TESTIMONIES FROM THE LAST LEADERS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

KAHIN CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

640 STEWART AVENUE

CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NY

JUNE 11-12, 2012

Little Saigon in Seattle, Washington

Linda Le Tran and Tran Sinh Duyen have won the 2012 Signage competition for the Little Saigon section in Seattle, Washington with their original design titled **MOTHER VIETNAM**. They claim:

The sign bears the image of a Vietnamese woman wearing a traditional hat "Non La" (conical hat) and traditional dress "Ao Dai" (long dress). She represents a typical hard working Vietnamese mother who dedicates her entire life for her family. She exists everywhere in the Vietnam. Her sacrifices is honored and cherished in all situations- from daily life in Vietnam, to the war and subsequent escape out of Vietnam to building a new life in a foreign land.

The traditional Non La and Ao Dai are unique cultural characteristics of Little Saigon, comparable to the Chinese's Cheongsam or the Japanese's Kimono, the other ethnic groups in the international district. When seeing the Non La and the Ao Dai, people will immediately recognize that this is a Vietnamese town

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The yellow dress along with three red stripes resembles a standing woman. It also represents the flag of the Republic of Vietnam (prior to 1975) and the Vietnamese communities in the US. The yellow and red are used to represent the skin color and the blood of the people in the three regions of Vietnam.



Seattle with Yesler Terrace Redevelopment



Yesler
Terrace

Little Saigon

Non La and Ao Dai are intensely shaped to the map of Vietnam.

The diameter of the Non La is 4 feet and the height of the sign is 9 feet, drawn in Autocad for ease of future development. The Non La serves as a rain cover for the lights that are used to illuminate the sign at night.

The Non La and three red stripes together form an arrow pointing towards "Little Saigon."

The 2 by 2 information board/map will be located on the Ao Dai.

The sign will be posted at the corner of South Jackson St. and 12th Avenue St.

Little Saigon will soon be connected to the Yesler Terrace with downtown Seattle in the background in the photo.

Janet Nguyen: Supervisor First District Orange County, CA Board of Supervisors

Janet Q. Nguyen (born 1976) is the County Supervisor from the First District of Orange County, California. She won her seat following a historic special election where two Vietnamese-American candidates received half of the total votes cast in a field of 10, separated from each other by only 7 votes. She was sworn in on March 27, 2007, after a lengthy court battle. She won a full, four-year term in 2008 in another historic election when all three major candidates were Vietnamese Americans.

She is the youngest person to be elected to the board of supervisors, the first woman to be elected from the First District, and the first Vietnamese-American county supervisor in the United States. Prior to her election to the Board of Supervisors, she served as a city council member for the City of Garden Grove.



Van Tran, CA State Assemblyman



Van Thai Tran (Trần Thái Văn in Vietnamese), born October 19, 1964) is an attorney and politician in California, formerly serving as a Republican member of the California State Assembly, representing portions of Orange County. Tran took office one month before Vo did, making him the first Vietnamese American to serve in a state legislature. He served in the Assembly as Assistant Republican Leader

He earned a BA in Political Science in 1990. Tran completed a Master of Public Administration from Hamline University and a JD from Hamline University School of Law. He was admitted to the California State Bar in 1994.

Black April: The Fall of South Vietnam: 1973-1975

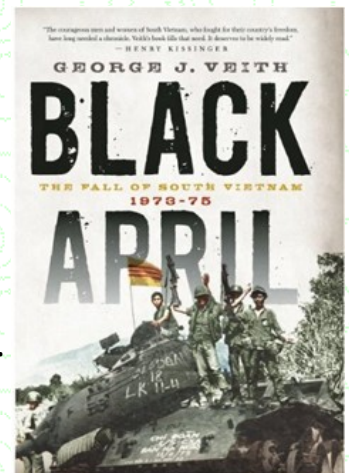
A culmination of exhaustive research in three distinct areas: primary source documents from American archives, North Vietnamese publications containing primary and secondary source material, and dozens of articles and numerous interviews with key South Vietnamese participants, this book represents one of the largest Vietnamese translation projects ever accomplished, including almost one hundred rarely or never seen before North Vietnamese unit histories, battle studies, and memoirs.

Ultimately, whatever errors occurred on the American and South Vietnamese side, the simple fact remains that the country was conquered by a North Vietnamese military invasion despite written pledges by Hanoi's leadership against such action. Hanoi's momentous choice to destroy the Paris Peace Accords and militarily end the war sent a generation of South Vietnamese into exile, and exacerbated a societal trauma in America over our long Vietnam involvement that reverberates to this day. How that transpired deserves deeper scrutiny.



George J. Veith

**Dedicated to the men and women,
soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines,
of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces,
1955–1975,
who stood and fought
And to the men and women,
U.S. Mission, Vietnam,
1973–1975,
who so valiantly tried to uphold America's honor**



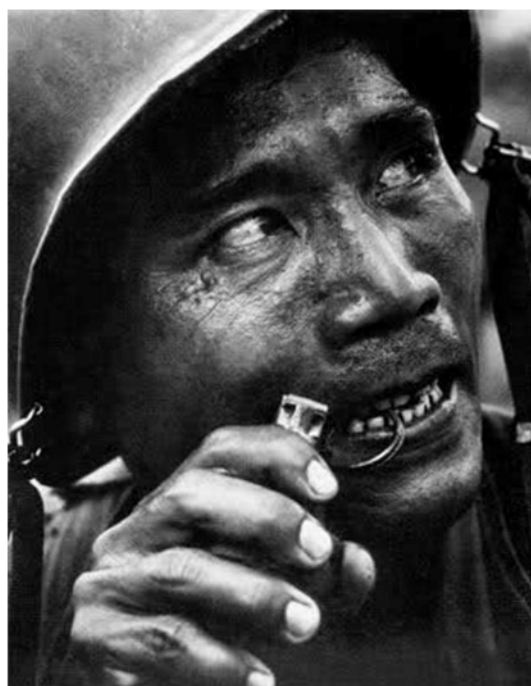
Nguyen Ngoc Hanh: Photographer

Born in Ha Dong, North Vietnam in 1927, he enrolled in the South Vietnamese Air Force in 1950. After graduating from the Toulouse, France School of Photography in 1956, he became a professional photographer and founded the ARVN Photographic Society in 1957. As a war photographer since 1961, he earned prestigious awards from various photographic societies worldwide.



After 1975, he was sent to various reeducation camps for eight years and was released in 1983 following the intervention of the Royal Photographic Society of England. He came to the US in 1989.

He founded the Vietnamese Photographic Society in 1990 and began teaching photography. During his lifetime, he was awarded more than 92 Gold Medals, 110 Silver Medals, as well as multiple other awards. His students have also earned their shares of awards.



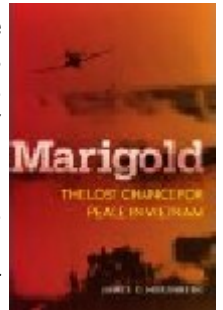
Mary Gold - The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam



James Hershberg

Marigold presents the first rigorously documented, in-depth story of one of the Vietnam War's last great mysteries: the secret Polish-Italian peace initiative, codenamed "Marigold," that sought to end the war, or at least to open direct talks between Washington and Hanoi, in 1966. The initiative failed, the war dragged on for another seven years, and this episode sank into history as an unresolved controversy.

James Hershberg is Associate Professor of History and International Affairs at George Washington University. He was the founding director of the Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project and author of *James B. Conant: Harvard to Hiroshima and the Making of the Nuclear Age*

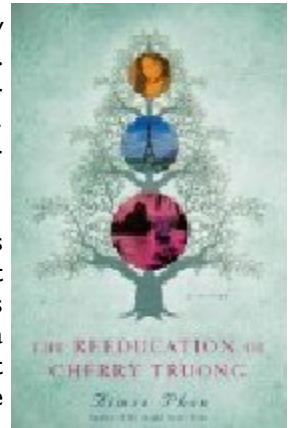


Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Marigold-Vietnam-International-History-Project/dp/0804778841>

The Reeducation of Cherry Truong

A story of loyalties, histories, and identities, *The Reeducation of Cherry Truong* explores multiple generations of the Truong and Vos families. Touching on the events of the Vietnam War, cultural assimilation, reconciliation, forgiveness, and redemption, Phan crafts an epic tale. Through Cherry's eyes, the complex country of Vietnam is lovingly explored in immense, realistic detail.



AIMEE PHAN grew up in Orange County, California, and now teaches in the MFA Writing Program and Writing and Literature Program at California College of the Arts. A 2010 National Endowment of the Arts Creative Writing Fellow, Aimee received her MFA from the Iowa Writer's Workshop, where she won a Maytag Fellowship. Her first book, *WE SHOULD NEVER MEET*, was named a Notable Book by the Kiriyama Prize in fiction and a finalist for the 2005 Asian American Literary Awards. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Oregonian* among others.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Reeducation-Cherry-Truong-Novel/dp/0312322682>



Aimee Phan

