



**A COUNTRY STAYS
ALIVE WHEN ITS
CULTURE IS ALIVE.**

**HOPE NEVER DIES IN
THE
INDOMITABLE
VIETNAMESE MIND.**

- **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.**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2017 Black April Commemoration	1
Journey to Freedom Day: May 1, 2017	2
Images of the 1975 Black April Debacle	4
Phan Doi Phan Nguoi: Remembering 42 Years of Exile	7
Indochina in the Year of the Cat - 1975	8
Brig. Gen. Viet X. Luong Nominated for Major General	8
Sen. Janet Nguyen's Press Release	9
Misrepresenting Atrocities	10
Vietnam Arrests Anti-FORMOSA	12
Nguyen Huu Tan Died in Communist Jail	13

SAIGON ARTS, CULTURE & EDUCATION INSTITUTE



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese-American Culture

NEWSLETTER # 104

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2017 Black April Commemoration

<http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/04/29/vietnamese-americans-mark-fall-of-saigon-with-solemn-black-april-ceremony/>

Forty-two years after Saigon fell to the communists on April 30, 1975, the memories are still too painful for Khanh Nguyen.

"We still remember it because it was tragic for South Vietnam," said the 67-year-old Nguyen, a San Jose resident who served in the South Vietnamese military and was thrown into a communist forced-labor camp for "reeducation" for six years after the war. "We tried to hold on to the country, but unfortunately we could not make it.

"We didn't believe that we would lose the battle like that," he added. "After '75 ... they treated us like second-class citizens."

About 150 members of the Vietnamese-American community marked the anniversary of the collapse of the South Vietnamese government — still referred to in the community as Black April and the Day of Shame — with a solemn ceremony at the James P. McEntee Plaza at the County Government Center in San Jose, CA.

A group of women dressed in white áo dài and red and yellow sashes carried the old Republic of Vietnam flag in a brief procession as South Vietnamese military veterans looked on. The American and South Vietnamese flags were raised as the national anthems of their old country and adopted country were sung with pride.

San Jose Councilman Lan Diep, whose parents fled Vietnam by boat in 1979, said the event is an opportunity for younger generations to reflect on the sacrifices of those that came before them as they searched for liberty and a better life.

"For my parents' generation, they actually lost their home and fled the country to flee communism to find freedom and democracy," said Diep, 33. "For people of my generation, who were born outside of Vietnam, it marks the loss of our ancestral homeland. It's a day of mourning, a day of remembrance, not just for the lives lost during the war but the lives lost during the journey to freedom."



Continue on next page

Disclaimer: The listing in this newsletter of a book title or a film does not mean endorsement or approval by SACEI.

2107 Black April...

2017 Black April Commemoration in Westminster, CA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqLBSBa2tVE>

Commemoration in San Jose, CA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tjHzvGKWf0>

Commemoration in Washington DC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzTqWBzguQo>

Commemoration in Houston, TX

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyrRPpkO7yE>

Commemoration in San Diego

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgpnwH6MddU>

Commemoration in Australia

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IncPdyq0t0>

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SvWNzbIHQc>

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQkf8ReLLdo>

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U5M78EDmwc>



Journey to Freedom Day: May 1, 2017

<https://youtu.be/XmvMyEV2TeE>

This is the first time that the yellow South Vietnamese flag, which has been recognized as the “Heritage and Freedom” Flag of the Vietnamese in Canada, was raised in front of the federal Parliament Building in Ottawa, Canada on May 1, 2017.

This is also the occasion for the Vietnamese-Canadian community to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Canada or 150th anniversary of Confederation, which falls in 2017 and to thank the Canadian government for enacting the “Journey to Freedom Day” Act to commemorate the fall of South Vietnam, the harrowing journey of the Vietnamese boat people in search for freedom, and their contributions to Canada on arrival to that country.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYiQ1xENqYo&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PemTJ2ZxFGM&feature=youtu.be>



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Freedom Day...



Images of the 1975 Black April Debacle

These are some of the vivid and moving photos of the tragic events leading to the 1975 Fall of Saigon and the Republic of South Vietnam. Forty-two years after the event, they still evoked the painful and tragic memories of the 21-year North-South war (1954-1975) and the brutal invasion of the northern communists of the Republic of South Vietnam. They are vivid reminders of the savagery and barbarism of the military communist conquest of South Vietnam and the brutality with which they treated southern people. Women and children were indiscriminately killed, as well as civilians and military personnel.

The communists even used T54 tanks to invade Saigon at the end of the war. They shelled and mortared the civilian and military convoy on Route 7B that tried to escape from the central highlands. Even civilians tried to run away from the communists. They flew away or got away on sampans, military boats, or drove away in buses, cars, on motorcycles or they simply walked away. Where did they plan to go? Anywhere, as long as they got away from the incoming communists. How far could they walk on foot? Probably not too far without food, water, lodging; but they did walk away leaving behind their possessions, belongings, villages, lands, hamlets, towns, ancestral places. Their tired faces expressed the pain, the misery, the anguish, the fear, and the powerlessness of the poor people who tried to run away from their conquerors. In no time did they approve the revolution and the revolutionary tactics and methods. In no time did they wave the communist flag or rebel against the Republic of (South) Vietnam.



March 26, 1975: This picture shows the misery of fleeing civilians



March 23, 1975, on route 7B forty miles west of Tuy Hoa, central Vietnam



Fleeing civilians

Continue on next page

1975 Black April...



March 31, 1975, soldiers helping children moving away in Nha Trang.



People running away on foot from communists



April 20 in Dau Tien



XUAN LOC after the battle



Wife crying in front of husband killed by a mortar

Continue on next page

1975 Black April...



April 24, 1975 at Trang Bom, civilian escaping with his son



April 28, 1975. Carcass of enemy T54 tank on Truong Minh Giang St, Saigon



Saigon shelled by communists



April 24, 1975, Saigon was shelled by communists



April 29, 1975. Departure from the Bach Dang Quay, Saigon

Phan Doi Phan Ngươi: Remembering 42 Years of Exile



On 15 April 2017 at the San Jose Center for Performing Arts, 1,500 people gathered to participate in a live show to celebrate the 42 years of exile of the Vietnamese community



© KuBee Photography

Indochina in the Year of the Cat - 1975

Each book of the multi-volume series will cover a single year and delve into political, military and cultural aspects of a war that still sharply divides America. Written primarily by historians, academics and Vietnam veterans, the series will challenge long held orthodox views of academia and show how myths, falsehoods and distortions have perpetuated the myth that Vietnam was unwinnable and without purpose.

Contents

Nguyen Van Thieu's Four Wars

Fall of the Khmer Republic

Fall of the Republic of Vietnam

Doomed

The U.S. Senate and the Evacuation of Saigon

Democratic Revolution by the People?

ASEAN and the United States Involvement in Vietnam

U.S. Presidents and the Fall of Vietnam

Guam: Gateway to Freedom

Vietnamese Reeducation Camps

Our Side of the Story

Resolution 36 from the Communist Politburo

The Vietnam Peace Movement in 1975

When Night fell in Indochina

The Cultural Legacy of the Vietnam War

Nghia M. Vo

Ken Conboy

George J. Veith

Ira Hunt

FRUS

Kongvihan Phengphanouvaong

Joe De Santos

FRUS

Nghia M. Vo

Nghia M. Vo

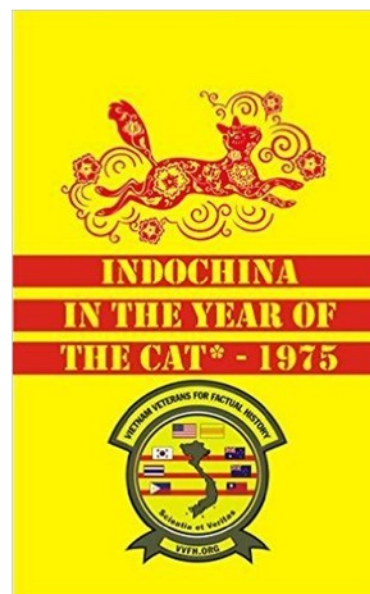
Quynh Dao

Hoi B. Tran

Roger Canfield

Bruce Herschensohn

James McLeroy



Brig. Gen. Viet X. Luong Nominated for Major General

https://www.senate.gov/legislative/nom_cmten.htm

On 4/24/2017, Brigadier General Viet X. Luong has been nominated for Major General along with a list of other Brigadier Generals. The list has been forwarded to the Senate for approval.

Since March 2016, Brig Gen Luong holds the title of Chief of Staff, United Army Central based at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/1168558/general-officer-assignments/>

On 5/1/2017, the Chief of Staff, Army has reassigned Brig. Gen. Viet X. Luong, chief of staff, U.S. Army Central, Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, to deputy commanding general (operations), Eighth Army, Republic of Korea.



Sen. Janet Nguyen's Press Release: May 17, 2017

Senator Janet Nguyen (CA's 34th Senate District) Announces that Assemblyman Bonta has Dropped Effort to Pass AB 22

(Garden Grove, CA) Senator Janet Nguyen is proud to inform the community that Assemblyman Rob Bonta has pulled Assembly Bill 22 (AB 22), effectively ending an effort to allow Communists to work for the Government of the State of California. Assemblyman Bonta's decision not to pursue the bill came after hearing the concerns of the Vietnamese-American community and residents throughout the State of California.

"I commend and thank Assemblyman Bonta for abandoning this outrageous piece of legislation, which inadvertently hurt the Vietnamese-American community and countless Veterans who have fought to defeat Communism," said Senator Janet Nguyen. "This victory belongs to the Vietnamese-American community and Veterans, who came together to defeat this bill. Together, we made our voices heard and made it clear that Communism has no place in California."

Senator Nguyen personally received this important update regarding the future of AB 22 directly from Assemblyman Rob Bonta. Just a few hours prior, AB 22 had been referred out by the Senate Rules Committee and was set to be reviewed by the Senate Public Employment and Retirement Committee.

"I hope that AB 22 will now serve as a reminder to the Vietnamese-American community that we must remain vigilant of legislation under consideration by the State Legislature. This is not the first time that a bill of this nature is considered and sadly, it will probably not be the last," said Senator Janet Nguyen.

In an effort to defeat AB 22, Senator Janet Nguyen had been working with Assembly members Ash Kalra and Kansen Chu, who respectively represent the Vietnamese-American Community of San Jose.

In addition to these joint lobbying efforts, Senator Janet Nguyen had also been garnering community support against AB 22 via a petition that garnered thousands of signatures. Just today, Senator Nguyen had also announced the creation of the 'Committee to Defeat AB 22'. The Committee, composed of Vietnamese-American organizations and individuals from throughout the State of California, sought to provide a mechanism for the Vietnamese-American community to voice their opposition and to present a unified front.

Despite this great news, there is still a mechanism by which any member of the State Legislature could still revive the proposal at any time until July 21st, which is the deadline to hear bills in committee.

Senator Nguyen will continue to monitor this issue and will inform the community immediately if there are any changes.

MISREPRESENTING ATROCITIES: Kill Anything That Moves and the Continuing Distorsions of the War in Vietnam. GARY KULIK, PETER ZINOMAN

https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/e-journal/articles/zinoman_kulik.pdf

Balance and Politics (Excerpts)

"Kill Anything that Moves" suffers from two additional problems, one obvious and one more obscure, but both connected to the allegedly "progressive" political agenda of its author. The obvious problem is its lack of balance, manifested most clearly in its tight focus on American atrocities and its near-total neglect of the widespread violence against civilians perpetrated by Communist forces. As a result of this partisan approach, a vast quantity of civilian suffering caused by Communist violence is absent in Turse's account. In a wide-ranging comparative study of the use of terror by guerrilla movements, sociologist Timothy P. Wickham Crowley singled out the Communist insurgency in Vietnam for its unprecedented brutality toward noncombatants: "The Viet Cong unleashed upon the civilian populace a siege of terror of such dimensions that it has not been subsequently approached by any other guerrilla movement" (1990, 215). Notwithstanding his avowed empathy for "civilian suffering," Turse devotes less than a page to Communist atrocities and mentions no specific examples other than a glancing reference to the massacre of roughly three thousand victims by Communist forces in Huế during the Tet Offensive (102). While multiple sources indicate that women, secondary school students, monks, teachers, priests, and foreign aid workers were murdered during this notorious episode, many in horrible ways, Turse cites a Communist document to minimize the killings as "preplanned, targeted executions of select officials, military personnel and others loyal to the Republic of Vietnam" (103). His longest discussion of Communist atrocities occurs in a single footnote, marred again by suspect claims and slipshod research (299, fn. 120). Here, Turse restates the speculative claim that the "most common" Communist atrocities were targeted "assassinations of South Vietnamese government officials" (299–300). As with American atrocities, Communist atrocities are hard to quantify, but one study estimates that 80 percent of the casualties from Communist terror between 1968 and 1972 were civilians (Lewy 1978, 273). And the overall numbers are significant. The same study suggests that between 1957 and 1972, Communist forces killed over thirty-six thousand noncombatants and abducted close to sixty thousand. Another study reaches different figures, claiming that between 1957 and 1970, Communist forces committed 26,922 assassinations, 39,293 kidnappings, and 151,168 terrorist acts (Pike 1970, 82). That the Americans may have been more murderous and more indiscriminate in their brutality is beside the point and does not diminish the gravity of these numbers. Evidence of the vast scale of Communist atrocities appears in many reliable sources, including contemporary press coverage, Rand Corporation reports, and the Pentagon Papers (1:335–339). A motivated researcher could easily find graphic narratives of Communist butchery that resemble Turse's account of American atrocities. Given that the Vietnam War witnessed horrific levels of violence on all sides, Turse's decision to eschew balance and write a book focused only on American atrocities makes little intellectual sense. The choice is more puzzling because the existing scholarly and journalistic literature, as discussed above, focuses on American atrocities almost exclusively. Consider, for example, the contrast between the large number of academic books on Mỹ Lai and the absence of a single scholarly monograph on the much more murderous Huế massacre. Turse's one-sided approach, therefore, cannot be defended as an effort to rebalance a distorted record. On the contrary, it adds to the distortion. It is also surprising because Turse describes his project as "the true history of Vietnamese civilian suffering" (2, 262). Such a broadly humanistic agenda is jarringly inconsistent with the selectivity of moral vision here on display. Not only does Turse's one-side approach ignore much "civilian suffering," it discourages a nuanced understanding of the conflict's transactional dynamics that encouraged violence against Vietnamese civilians. A balanced account that explores the behavior of both sides would reveal that the Vietnam conflict was both an "asymmetric war" and a "civil war." Recent scholarship, including important work by Stathis Kalyvas (2006), suggests that both types of

Continue on next page

MISREPRESENTING ATROCITIES...

conflict, for different reasons, encourage violence against civilians. Kalyvas also links brutality toward civilians to “endogenous polarization,” cleavages heightened and created by the war itself (2006, 76). This factor seems especially significant for Vietnam given the remarkable length (1945–1975) of the postcolonial conflict there. Again, an understanding of asymmetry, cleavages, and civil conflict requires attention to relations between at least two forces, a feature wholly absent from KATM. Moreover, Turse’s depiction of murderous Americans, moderate “revolutionaries,” and innocent villagers obscures a much darker story about two warring sides equally willing to cause enormous civilian casualties to achieve political aims. It also ignores what Kalyvas calls the large “grey zone” populated by those who partake in the process of violence in a variety of ways without, however, being directly involved in its outcome, as either perpetrator or victim. A corollary is that the line between perpetrators and victims is blurred as yesterday’s victims turn into tomorrow’s victimizers and vice versa. (2006, 21)

In short, the scope and the dynamics of atrocities, war crimes, and “civilian suffering” during the Vietnam War can only be grasped through an unflinching appraisal of both Communist and anti-Communist brutality. For readers in the West, a less obvious problem with *Kill Anything that Moves* is the support that it provides for the authoritarian political agenda of hardline opponents of reform within the Vietnamese party-state. Leading elements of this dominant political faction include party bosses at the local, regional, and national level, the enormous state security apparatus, the military, and a coterie of recently enriched captains of Vietnamese industry (mainly party men whose wealth derives from corruption and the monopolization of public assets for private gain). Presiding over one of the worst human rights and civil liberties records in the region, this small elite maintains a stranglehold over the national media, which unceasingly recycles a distorted, self-serving history of the war to bolster the party’s sagging legitimacy. The depiction of the war in this history as a simple conflict between the American military and the Vietnamese people undergirds a parallel official narrative, in which local democracy and human rights activists are dismissed as dupes or puppets of the United States (deserving of persecution and jail), which remains bent on undermining Vietnam through “peaceful evolution” (đổi biến hòa bình). Given that all local and national newspapers are owned by the party-state, the widespread promotion of *Kill Anything that Moves* in the Vietnamese media throughout 2013 reflects the Communist establishment’s approval of its message. Extensive local press coverage—including the printing of excerpts from the text and interviews with its author—has been facilitated by the rapid translation of the book into Vietnamese and its publication by the Youth Publishing House a mere three months after its American release (Turse 2013b). Further insight into the strategic mobilization of *Kill Anything that Moves* by local hard-liners may be found in a lead editorial about it, republished in the electronic version of the ultra-orthodox party daily *The People* (Nhân dân) (Lý 2013). After offering up a glowing review, the editorial posited three lessons that different groups of readers should take away from the book. For military veterans of the southern Republic of Vietnam “who raise statues to the glories of the American-Vietnamese strategic partnership,” it reminds them that they cannot escape their guilty past. For the “privileged whiners [cậu ấm bắt măn] in Hanoi who admire and hope to follow the United States as a political model for Vietnam in the future,” it reveals that American politics reflect a violent culture that originated with trigger-happy cowboys. And for those readers “who would welcome foreign bandits into our home, it underscores the unforeseen harm that can come from bandits trumpeting the values of freedom, democracy and human rights” (Lý 2013). Printed without citations, the Vietnamese version of the book does not include the single lengthy discussion of Communist atrocities found in the notes, and the brief paragraph on the Hue massacre has been scrubbed from the text. The effect of these cuts is to provide Vietnamese readers with an even more distorted picture of their recent history, while enhancing the book’s value as an instrument to validate the authoritarian and antidemocratic impulses of the party-state. It is unclear if Turse consented to the censorship of his own book for a Vietnamese audience, but there is no evidence yet that he has registered a protest. Nobody can argue with Nick Turse’s condemnation of atrocities committed during the Vietnam War, but there are whiffs of anachronism and ethnocentrism in the broader political project that his book seeks to advance. It is no surprise that the discourse on atrocities during the war years was polemical.

Continue on next page

MISREPRESENTING ATROCITIES...

cal, marked by the selection of data to strengthen positions in an urgent ongoing political and military struggle. What's more difficult to understand is the adoption of this thoroughly dated approach today, forty years after the end of the war. Moreover, Turse seems unaware that the postwar reconfiguration of Vietnamese politics has altered—and in some cases reversed—the specific political charge of the discursive tactics employed on both sides during the war era. While the one-sided dissemination of American atrocity stories may have once served the broad cause of “peace” in Vietnam, a similar approach today strengthens the most illiberal and repressive forces in Vietnamese society. Hence, just as its unreliable treatment of evidence raises doubts about its utility as a documentary source, the enthusiastic embrace of Kill Anything that Moves by the authoritarian Vietnamese political establishment undermines its value as an instrument of progressive politics.

Conclusion “The country desperately needs a sane and honest inquiry into the question of war crimes and atrocities in Vietnam,” wrote Neil Sheehan in 1971. Turse’s Kill Anything that Moves doesn’t come close to meeting that test (Turse 2013a, 39; Sheehan 1970). The issue before us, however, is larger than Turse. We need to move beyond the agenda-driven scholarship of both the left and the right—the orthodox/revisionist lockstep remains mired in the politics of the 1960s. As the Vietnam War recedes further into the past, we have the opportunity to look with fresh eyes, to bring to the study of that war and its war crimes a fairness, a balance, and a sense of complexity that it too frequently lacks. Scholars of the vast European war crimes of the twentieth century have already succeeded at moving beyond simplistic conclusions and writing history attentive to time, place, and specificity—to get the story right, so that the full horror emerges detail by detail. They’ve done that by asking new questions, as well as by moving beyond the boundaries of national history. The war in Vietnam was not just an American war. Younger scholars of Vietnamese history, many of whom were too young to sup at the kitchen tables of the 1960s, have also begun to ask new questions. Their findings are only now making their way into print, but they have already begun to redefine the war. We can expect to see in the future a history of Vietnam and the war marked with nuance, subtlety, and depth. That’s the future. Nick Turse is the past.

Vietnam Arrests Anti-FORMOSA Activist

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/arrest-05152017165544.html>

Authorities in Vietnam on Monday detained prominent activist Hoang Duc Binh for anti-state activities and announced a warrant to arrest fellow rights defender Thai Van Dung for violating probation, amid a crackdown on those protesting the government’s handling of a devastating 2016 toxic waste spill.

The police of central Vietnam’s Nghe An province arrested Binh, 34, for “opposing officers on duty” and “abusing democratic freedoms to infringe on the interests of the state” under Articles 257 and 258 of Vietnam’s penal code, according to a report by the Nghe An Public Security newspaper.

Binh will be detained for 90 days on the charges, which the report tied to defaming the ruling Communist Party on social media and using the April 2016 waste spill by Taiwan-owned Formosa Plastics Group’s steel plant as an excuse to cause social disorder through protests in Nghe An and Ha Tinh provinces.

Emily Page Le, a U.S.-based democracy activist currently visiting Vietnam, told RFA’s Vietnamese Service that she had been riding in a car with Binh and Priest Nguyen Dinh Thuc Monday after leaving Song Ngoc parish in Nghe An’s Quynh Luu district when plainclothes officers pulled them over in neighboring Dien Chau district and arrested Binh.

Reports of the arrest and warrant came as Paris-based Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR) announced that Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) secretary-general Le Cong

Continue on next page

VN Arrests Anti-FORMOSA Activist...

Cau is holding a hunger strike in protest of a ban prohibiting him from visiting Thich Quang Do, the church's critically ill detained leader.



VCHR said that Do, 89, had called Cau on Sunday, asking him to come urgently to Vietnam's commercial capital Ho Chi Minh City from his home in Hue city in Thua Thien-Hue province to discuss his health situation and related UBCV affairs.

Cau purchased a plane ticket and was preparing to fly to Ho Chi Minh City Monday, but police—who monitor the telephones of both Do and Cau—intercepted the communication, traveled to his home Sunday evening, and prohibited him from traveling without providing any order or explanation.

Cau has announced that he is holding a hunger strike until May 22 in protest.

Nguyen Huu Tan Died in Communist Jail

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/suicide-05042017153429.html>

<http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/vietnamese/en/content/nguyen-huu-tan-has-been-buried>

Authorities in Vietnam's Vinh Long province on Thursday announced that a Hoa Hao Buddhist follower had committed suicide in police custody, but the man's family has questioned their account, saying the "evidence" that proves he killed himself is inconclusive.

Vinh Long provincial vice director Pham Van Ngan told reporters that a police investigative unit arrested Nguyen Huu Tan, 38, in Binh Minh township's Thanh Phuoc commune after searching his home on May 2 for "disseminating anti-state documents," according to a report by the official *Thanh Nien* news.

"On the morning of May 3, when an investigator went to talk with Tan [at the Vinh Long detention center] with a monitoring camera in the room, Tan asked for a cigarette and a bottle of water," the report quoted Ngan as saying.

"As soon as the investigator left the room, Tan went into the investigator's briefcase, took out a letter opener, and cut his own throat. Within three minutes, the investigator returned to the room, but Tan was in shock due to blood loss and he died shortly after," he said.

Tan's father, a Hoa Hao monk known as Thich Phap Quan, whose secular name is Nguyen Huu Quan, told RFA's Vietnamese Service that the family does not believe he killed himself because of the extent of the injuries he sustained.

"They told me that he cut his own throat and committed suicide, but why was his head injured and how was he able to cut through nearly the entirety of his own neck, leaving only a little bit of flesh connected," he asked.



"[When we went in to see him] he was on the floor with blood sprayed everywhere. I almost fainted when I saw it. I want to ask the government to investigate this case."

Quan also told RFA that CCTV video showing the incident, which police have not released to the public, is inconclusive because the picture is unclear, and questioned whether the subject of the footage is actually his son.

"I could not see the face of the person in the video, but he was wearing a prison uniform and my son was never convicted, so he shouldn't have been wearing that uniform," Quan said.