



SAIGON ARTS, CULTURE & EDUCATION INSTITUTE



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese Culture

NEWSLETTER # 40

FEBRUARY 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.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Editorial Note	1
Dr. Trinh Xuan Thuan: Astrophysicist	1
Dr. Quyen Nguyen	2
Kiem Lam: Photographer	2
The Tonking Gulf Through History: Nola Cooke, Li Tana	3
The American Dream in Vietnamese: Nhi T. Lieu	3
Vietnamese Short Stories: James Banerian	3
Poetry: In Search of My Father's Grave	4

Editorial Note

The Land of Possibilities

In this newsletter, you will read the story of Kien Lam, a graduate of Wharton School of Business who one day decided to quit his daily job to tour the world. He visited 17 countries during which he took more than 6,000 photographs.

You have also read in newsletter #39 the story of Thanh Ha Lai, a Vietnamese who came to the US at the age of 12. She did not speak any English then, went to school in pajamas, was of course bullied and had to hide in the toilet room during lunch break; yet, she overcame

odds and won the 2011 National Book Award for her book *Inside Out and Back Again*.

The list of Vietnamese-Americans who came to America and found success is long.

If America is the Land of Freedom, of Invention (Steve Jobs), of Dream (Walt Disney), and of Exploration (Endeavor) to name just a few, it is also the Land of Possibilities (Thanh Ha Lai, Kiem Lam, and you included).

Vietnamese Americans should use this opportunity to make the Most of It. Although not everything is rosy in America, it is still one of the best in this imperfect world.

Dr Trinh Xuan Thuan: Astrophysicist



Born in Hanoi, he moved to Saigon in 1954 at the age of six when the communists took over North Vietnam. He graduated from the French Jean Jacques Rousseau High School in Saigon and spent a year studying in Switzerland before moving to the US where he completed a BS at the California Institute of Technology and a

PhD at Princeton University. He has taught astronomy at the University of Virginia since 1976. He was a founding member of the International Society of Science and Religion.

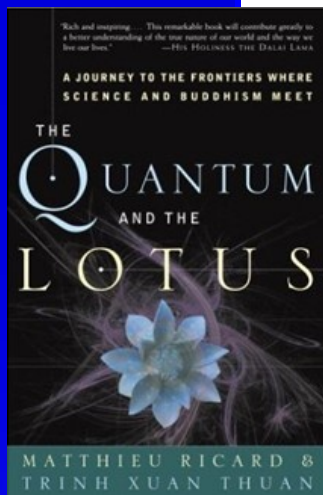
He has received the Grand Prize Moron from the French Academy in 2007 for his book: "The Way of Light: Physics and metaphysics of Light and Darkness and UNESCO's Kalinga Prize in 2009 for his work in popularizing science.

His areas of interests are extragalactic astronomy and galaxy formation. He is the author of: *The Birth of the Universe* (1993), *The Secret Melody* (1994), *Chaos and Harmony* (2000),

and *Quantum and the Lotus* (2006). All his books have been published in French before being translated to English.

<http://www.trinhxuanthuan.com/indexen.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinh_Xuan_Thuan

Dr. Trinh Xuan Thuan: Astrophysicist...



Available on Amazon

This transcribed and expanded dialogue between Buddhist monk Ricard and astrophysicist Thuan claims few original insights but provides a good general introduction to science-and-religion issues representing two notably different Buddhist perspectives. At its best, the book is animated by contrasts. Thuan, a Vietnamese-American trained at CalTech, identifies with Buddhist ethics and spirituality, but his worldview often reflects Western science and philosophy. Ricard, a French biologist who emigrated in the 1970s to become a disciple of Khyents, Rinpoche, speaks from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Although Thuan and Ricard find common ground on many ethical matters and agree in

a general way

about the "interconnectedness of phenomena," they also run into genuine disagreements about cosmic origins, the nature of consciousness and the orderliness of the universe all areas where traditional Buddhist beliefs are in tension with scientific theories or their implications as commonly understood in the West.

Available on Amazon:

The Quantum and the Lotus

<http://www.amazon.com/Quantum-Lotus-Journey-Frontiers-Buddhism/dp/1400080797>



Dr. Quyen Nguyen

Dr. Quyen Nguyen, MD, Ph. D: ENT Surgeon

Dr. Quyen T. Nguyen is an Assistant Professor in the UCSD Department of Surgery, Division of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. She is fellowship trained in Neurotology/Skull Base Surgery and Board Certified in Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

Surgeons are taught from textbooks which conveniently color-code the types of tissues, but that's not what it looks like in real life -- until now. At TEDMED, Dr. Quyen Nguyen demonstrates how a molecular marker can make tumors light up in neon green, showing surgeons exactly where to cut.

http://www.ted.com/talks/quyen_nguyen_color_coded_surgery.html?awesm=on.com_Nguyen

Kiem Lam: Photographer

Kien Lam graduated with a business degree from Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and worked in finance as a strategist for a few years before parting ways with his company and starting on a journey to live out his dream of traveling around the world. He traveled for 343 days through 17 countries, snapping more than 6,000 photographs. The result of this endeavor is a less than five-minute, time-lapsed video around the world:

<http://kienlam.net/around-the-world>

<http://news.yahoo.com/stunning-time-lapse-photographer-long-17-country-journey-193306545.html>

On his website, Lam, a photographer based in San Francisco, writes:

"It's staggering to think that I was standing in front of something that's been there for 5,000 years. Checking this off my bucket list felt good, especially since I knew that for the next few months, I'd be traveling around the globe and checking many more things off this little list. I look back and envy the person I was on that day, standing there at one of the ancient wonders of the world (not officially) with all the exciting possibilities of adventures yet to be had and stories yet to unfold and fill itself with details."

From there he went to other areas in England, Paris, Portugal, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Uruguay. Throughout his journey, Lam took 19 airplanes, traveled on 58 buses and was ferried on 18 boats.



Abu Simbel, Egypt

The Tongking Gulf Through History: Nola Cooke, Li Tana



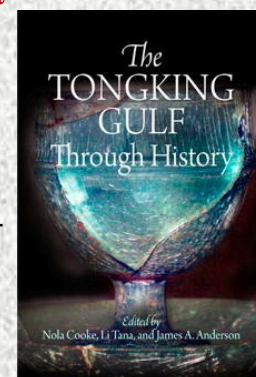
Drawing on fresh historical insights and recent archaeological research in northern Vietnam and southern China, *The Tongking Gulf Through History* reveals that this region has long been a center of cultural, political, and economic exchange. From a historical point of view, contributors argue, the Gulf of Tong-king has come full circle. Inspired by the

Braudelian vision that regionality arises from long-term hu-

man interactions, essays avoid state-centered approaches of nationalist histories to focus on local communities throughout the Gulf. In doing so, they reveal a complex pattern of interrelationships and geopolitical factors that has shaped the gulf region for over two millennia.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Tongking-Gulf-Through-History-Encounters/dp/0812243366>



The American Dream in Vietnamese: Nhi T. Lieu



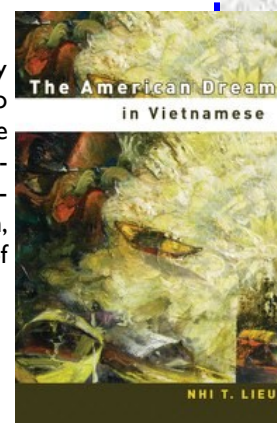
In her research on popular culture of the Vietnamese diaspora, Nhi T. Lieu explores how people displaced by war reconstruct cultural identity in the aftermath of migration. Embracing American democratic ideals and consumer capitalism prior to arriving in the United States, postwar Vietnamese refugees endeavored to assimilate and live the American Dream. In *The American Dream in Vietnamese*, she claims that no-where are these fantasies played out more vividly than in the Vietnamese American entertainment industry.

Lieu examines how live music variety shows and videos,

beauty pageants, and Web sites created by and for Vietnamese Americans contributed to the shaping of their cultural identity. She shows how popular culture forms repositories for conflicting expectations of assimilation, cultural preservation, and invention, alongside gendered and classed dimensions of ethnic and diasporic identity.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/American-Dream-Vietnamese-Nhi-Lieu/dp/0816665702>



University of Minnesota
Press, April 2011

Vietnamese Short Stories: James Banerian

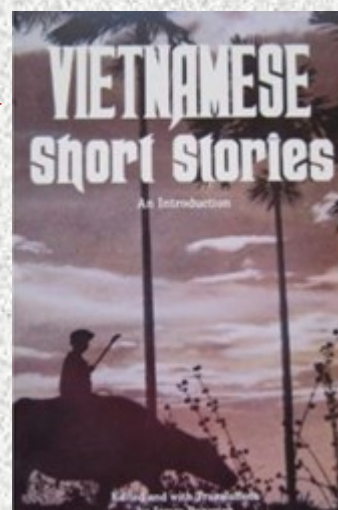
Short stories by 10 Vietnamese authors are brought together in this unique collection of contemporary prose. Spanning half a century of literary development, these stories provide an introduction to the works of some of Vietnam's most talented writers of the modern era. *VIETNAMESE SHORT STORIES* takes the reader into the heart of the country during a period of conflict and transformation. For those who know of Vietnam only through news reports or descriptions by foreign observers, this anthology offers another side of Vietnam through stories of life, love and human struggle as told by the literary artists of that land.

Edited and translated by James Banerian, this collection represents a cross-section of some of the Vietnamese cultures' best known authors. The stories present a mo-

saic picture of both the quality and character of the Vietnamese people. Each story presents a fragment of the everyday lives of many individuals portrayed by the authors in a short story setting. As in life, some stories are hauntingly sad and the endings are not very pretty. Others depict the stark realities of living. Some are sheer joy. Each, in its own way, has a message.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Vietnamese-Short-Stories-James-Banerian/dp/0932729037>



Poetry: In Search of My Father's Grave

(To all the missing soldier's children in Vietnam)

The day I returned to my homeland,
Twenty years have passed,
On the dust of war,
On my life, on my youth.
My mother's tears have dried,
Not from exhaustive sorrow,
Not from the healing power of time,
But from my promise,
That I would find where my father was buried.

The day I returned to my country,
I walked the paths of tears and grief.
I searched all the cemeteries,
To find my father's grave,
I walked all the reformed camps,
To look for his whereabouts,
His message from beyond the grave,
Left behind for his bereaved family.

From North to South, I walked,
Through forests now thick with foliage,
On meadows again green of grass and red with flowers,
On ricefields once more heavy with golden crops,
I walked through mounds overgrown with grass,
On bare hills of burned thorns,
On frequented passages, on desolate lands,

In the hope of finding vestiges,
Grave or bones of my soldier father.

I walked the entire country,
In its length, its width,
I saw my father everywhere,
In each grave, each mound,
In empty burial grounds,
In every prison, every reformed camp,
As everywhere,
Each soldier's remain holds my father's spirit,
Each story is his story,
Of courage, of integrity,
Of selflessness, of intensity.
O mother,
I did not find where my father was buried,
The place of his rest,
But I found his grave, his greatness,
In every parcel and corner,
Of the earth and the sky,
Of our homeland.

Humbly, and with gratitude,
Huỳnh Anh Trần-Schroeder



<http://www.sacei07.org/H18-In-Search-of-My-Father-s-Grave.pdf>