



SAIGON ARTS, CULTURE & EDUCATION INSTITUTE



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese Culture

NEWSLETTER # 4 6

AUGUST 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: A Conquest Through the Barrel of a Gun

Dr. Lien Hang T. Nguyen has just released a book titled, "*Hanoi's War*." This is indeed a detailed research work on the Vietnam War from the perspective of a Vietnamese-American who was born into the war (1974) but never really knew it. She came to the US with her family in 1975 when she was five months old (p. 14) and is presently Professor of History at the University of Kentucky.

She is at least upfront for mentioning that "*she had kin who served in both sides of the war*" (p. 14) (Who are they?), but then she quotes Ho Hue Tai for saying "*practically every southern family has members who fought on different sides of the war*." (p. 317) The latter statement should be construed as a mere "guess" as there are NO statistics to back it up. And when she writes that she "*was the only scholar to gain access to the Archives of the Vietnam ministry of Foreign Affairs*," (p. 5) one wonders if the above kin have anything to do with it?

The book is in fact a biography of Le Duan for it began with his second marriage (while he was still married to his first wife) and the ascension of Le Duan and Le Duc Tho to the Politburo. It describes how the duo managed to take over the war of conquest of South Vietnam from 1960 to 1975 by bringing southern revolutionaries under Hanoi's control (1964), spearheading the Tet Offensive (1968) and the Fiery Summer Offensive (1972) and at the same time sidelining Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, and their many rivals.

Her work, although more balanced than other studies, is skewed toward the communists. As the part dedicated to Saigon is minuscule, she has titled for good reason her book "*Hanoi's War*." However, the subtitle is misleading, "*An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam*," because the war was conducted by Hanoi not to gain Peace, but to wipe out and conquer South Vietnam; the correct label should be "*An International History of the War of Conquest of South Vietnam*."

Also, if she mentions that "*Nguyen Van Thieu prolonged American withdrawal...*" (p. 312), she needs to put a stronger emphasis on South Vietnam (RVN) and stresses that the RVN was just defending herself against a northern invasion. What was wrong with defending one's country when one was attacked? This, she has not done forcefully enough and therefore, has not given an accurate account of the war.

The book concludes with the signing of the Paris Accords in 1973. And rightly so, because from then on, South Vietnam's fate was sealed. What the desperate Le Duan and his minions could not achieve on the battlefields in 1964, 1968, and 1972, they did it in Paris in 1973 with a simple signature. This episode may turn out to be the *most shameful episode* in US History. This explains why Nguyen Van Thieu wanted to "punch Kissinger in the mouth" when he was presented with the drafts of the Agreement (p. 281) and Kissinger and the Americans "were willing to knock off Thieu" (Nguyen Tien Hung, pp. 81, 148) should he refuse to cooperate. Worse, the duplicitous US emissary had American officials in Saigon spread the word that Thieu would sign the Agreement while deliberations were still ongoing (Nguyen Tien Hung p. 103).

She ends her work by saying, "*they were undeniable losers*"....but "*no clear cut victors either. The dark side of victory in the Vietnam War is that leaders ensured peace could only be won through the barrel of the gun*." (p. 312) Although she does not mention who the losers are, we can guess: South Vietnam, the South Vietnamese and the people of Vietnam in general.

For 20 years, Ho Chi Minh, Le Duan and the Communist Party of Vietnam had waged a ferocious war that killed 58,000 Americans and 4-5 million Vietnamese. The book exposes their deadly and criminal work and History will judge them for their "evil" action. The end result is the establishment of a corrupt and oppressive one Party-state that controls 85 M people who remain poor (annual GDP: \$1,200) and do not have legal rights and freedom of speech. What kind of revolution is that?

While the US had backed out of Vietnam in 1973, the South Vietnamese (now overseas Vietnamese) would continue their fight for freedom and justice in Vietnam. A Peace with "Dishonor" forced under the barrel of the gun is simply chimerical. Come to think about it, Vietnamese and Americans view "honor" differently because "the Vietnamese mind establishes reality in mythical situations" (Nguyen Tien Hung p. 91) while Americans value practicality.

This should be an interesting and recommended reading book for the second and subsequent generations of Vietnamese Americans and "progressive" (read liberal) Americans who do not understand/want to understand how the war began, who initiated and pursued it to its end, and why overseas Vietnamese are now scattered all over the world.

FOURTH ANNUAL SACEI CONFERENCE (2012) *THE SECOND REPUBLIC: 1967-1975*

August 25, 2012



COURTYARD MARRIOTT, TYSONS CORNER
1960-A Chain Bridge Road
McLean, VA 22102

PROGRAM

12:20-12:25	ANTHEMS	
12:25-12:30	SACEI INTRODUCTION	
12:30-13:10	WESTMORELAND, THE GENERAL WHO LOST VIETNAM	LEWIS SORLEY
13:10-13:50	REVISITING THE TET OFFENSIVE	JAMES ROBBINS
13:50-14:30	MARIGOLD: THE LOST CHANCE FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM	JAMES HERSHBERG
14:30-15:10	COFFEE BREAK--CULTURAL INTERLUDE	PHUONG CHUONG TRINH
15:10-15:50	THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF VIETNAM THROUGH HER POSTAGE STAMPS	GARY McCONE
15:50-16:30	RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FALL OF SAIGON	TOM GLENN
16:30-17:10	LONG TERM AGENT ORANGE HEALTH EFFECTS	VERONICA FRIEL
17:10-17:30	ALL PANELISTS: OUTCOMES OF THE WAR	MODERATOR: LEWIS SORLEY

Registration: www.sacei007.org

Dr. Jane Luu: Astronomer

Born in South Vietnam in 1963 as Lưu Lê Hằng, she immigrated to the US in 1975 when Saigon fell. A visit to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory inspired her to study astronomy. She attended Stanford University where she received a bachelor's degree in 1984.

As a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she worked with David Jewitt to discover the Kuiper Belt. The American Astronomical Society awarded Luu the Annie J. Cannon Award in Astronomy in 1991. In 1992, Luu received a Hubble Fellowship from the University of California, Berkeley. The asteroid 5430 Luu is named in her honor. She received her PhD in 1992 at MIT.

In 2012, she won (along with David C. Jewitt of the University of California at Los Angeles) the Shaw Prize "for their discovery and characterization of trans-Neptunian bodies, an archeological treasure dating back to the formation of the solar system and the long-sought source of short period comets" and the Kavli Prize (shared with Jewitt and Michael Brown) "for discovering and characterizing the Kuiper Belt

and its largest members, work that led to a major advance in the understanding of the history of our planetary system

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Luu.

The Kavli Prizes given annually since 2008 are established by the Swede Fred Kavli; they recognize scientists for their seminal advances in astrophysics, nanoscience and neuroscience, and include a cash award of one million dollars in each field.

The Shaw Prize, established by Mr. Run Run Shaw in 2002 in Hong Kong, consists of three annual prizes: Astronomy, Life Science and Medicine, and Mathematical Sciences, each bearing a monetary award of one million US dollars.



2012 Kavli laureates in Astrophysics: Jewitt, Luu,

THE SHAW LAUREATES IN ASTRONOMY 2012



Professor
David C Jewitt



Professor
Jane Luu



Linh Dinh: Montebello School District Police Chief

Chief Linh Dinh became on April 19, 2012 the first Vietnamese American in law enforcement to ascend to the rank of chief.

Born in Vietnam, his parents came to the US after the fall of Saigon at the end of the war. The family lived in the Midwest before moving to California. He attended UCLA where he earned a bachelor's degree in bio-geography.

Dinh is now the top cop in one of Los Angeles's largest school districts overseeing a staff of 102 employees including 40 full- and part time sworn officers.

The department is responsible for providing public safety services for more than 30,000 K-12 students at the district's 33 campuses spread out among 10 different cities and communities.

http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci_20499843/montebello-unified-school-district-makes-historic-appointment?source=rss

Nguyen Duc Dat: A Blind Asian American Guitarist

Nguyen Dat was born blind in 1970 in Vietnam from an American GI and a Vietnamese lady. As his mother passed away in 1975, he lived in the streets with his 3 year-old sister. At age 8, he became interested in pop French music of the 1970's. He saved enough money to buy himself an old guitar by the age of ten.

In 1991, he immigrated to the US as an Amerasian. Although 21 at the time, he was still accepted at a high school as a freshman.

In 1994, he won the Southern California ASTA Solo Guitar Competition and the First Prize at the California State Finals. He frequented the Classic Guitar program under David Grimes at California State University, Fullerton and went on to become a well know guitarist. He is the main guitarist in Bayadera band in California.

Hòn Vọng Phu : <http://www.youtube.com/embed/3I-FInqibLE>

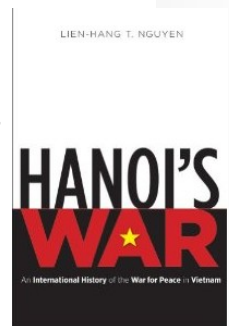
La Cumparsita hợp tấu: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/Go2h7TZ4A-k>



Lien Hang T. Nguyen: Hanoi's War



While most historians of the Vietnam War focus on the origins of U.S. involvement and the Americanization of the conflict, Lien-Hang T. Nguyen examines the international context in which North Vietnamese leaders pursued the war and American intervention ended. This riveting narrative takes the reader from the marshy swamps of the Mekong Delta to the bomb-saturated Red River Delta, from the corridors of power in Hanoi and Saigon to the Nixon White House, and from the peace negotiations in Paris to high-level meetings in Beijing and Moscow, all to reveal that peace never had a chance in Vietnam.

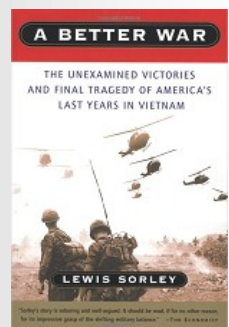


Available on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Hanois-War-International-History-Vietnam/dp/080783551X>

Lewis Sorley: A Better War

Neglected by scholars and journalists alike, the years of conflict in Vietnam from 1968 to 1975 offer surprises not only about how the war was fought, but about what was achieved. Drawing on authoritative materials not previously available, including thousands of hours of tape-recorded allied councils of war, award-winning military historian Lewis Sorley has given us what has long been needed—an insightful, factual, and superbly documented history of these important years. Among his findings is that the war was being won on the ground even as it was being lost at the peace table and in the U.S. Congress. The story is a great human drama of purposeful and principled service in the face of an agonizing succession of lost opportunities, told with uncommon understanding and compassion.

Available on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Better-War-Unexamined-Victories-Americas/dp/B0031WYJNG/>



Quynh Dao: Tales From a Mountain City

What happens to a Vietnamese family when a change of government turns their whole world upside down? How would you feel if your money lost its value overnight? If a group of soldiers moved into your house? If your books were thrown on a bonfire in your yard? If your children were taught to chant slogans at school instead of learning language, and dug holes instead of studying science?

Tales from a Mountain City is a blend of history and memoir told by a young Vietnamese girl growing up during the last years of the war and the communist regime. This is a poignant account of the innocence of a child, the innocence of a people, shattered again and again by the cruel tides of power and dogma, clinging tenaciously to their traditions, their home provinces, their hometowns, until the sheer pervasiveness of a communist value system drives them to suicide or exile.

Available on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Tales-Mountain-City-Vietnam-Memoir/dp/098069096X>

