



**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.

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SAIGON ARTS, CULTURE & EDUCATION INSTITUTE



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese Culture

NEWSLETTER # 50

DECEMBER 2012

As the New Year approaches, SACEI wishes YOU and Your Family

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

and HAPPY 2013 NEW YEAR

Editorial Note: "All Men are Created Equal"

Xuan Loc was a small town 37 miles northeast of Saigon where on April 9, 1975 General Le Minh Dao and his 18th ARVN (South Vietnamese) division stood, held, and fought against the 6th, 7th and 341st PAVN (communist) divisions. If Xuan Loc fell, the open road to Saigon would trap thousands of Americans and three million Saigonese. After two weeks of bloody fighting, the town lay in ruins but the PAVN forces suffered heavy losses and bypassed Xuan Loc to aim straight at Saigon. (Veith G. *Black April*, 2012: 436-460) General Dao and his 18th division fought long enough for the remaining US citizens to get out of Saigon. After the war, hundreds of thousand southern ARVN soldiers, government officials, religious leaders were sent to reeducation camps. General Dao spent the next 17.5 YEARS in northern concentration camps. In his hours of desperation, having no one to confide to, he wrote poignant lyrics to his mother which were made into a song titled, "Remembering Mother."

*During the sad days in the north, I turned southward
"Mother, I missed you a lot
The sad years kept passing till our hair turn grey
Where was our glorious homeland?"*

*Leaving the destroyed south, I lived an exiled life in the north
In the nights, I heard the cries of my roommates,
Who lied to us? Who burned that poor land of us?
The country in ruins, I cried for it
I'm waiting for my release...*

*In the dim light, I remember mother's sad eyes
And your words when you held my hands
that Truth will push back darkness
And Love and Freedom will be here forever*

You can listen this sad song at the 1hr 21 min mark of this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNfZjTZGEzs&feature=related>

More than three decades later, singer Viet Khang wrote the song *Anh La Ai?* (Who Are You?) in December 2011 in which he described the oppression of fellow citizens by the Hanoi communist government. It became viral after he posted on the web.

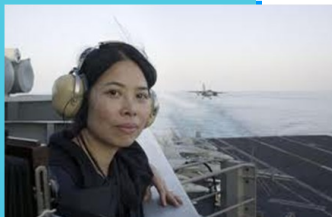
http://www.sacei07.org/FF2_Viet_Khang.html

*I cannot sit still
When my country is collapsing.
My people sinking
into thousand years of eternal darkness.
I cannot sit still
For the future of my children.
What will their roots be
when this world has no trace of...Vietnam?*

In March 2012, Hanoi jailed him at an unknown location in its vast gulag system.
http://www.sacei07.org/H109_VietKhangSentenced.html

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An My Lê: Photographer & McArthur Fellow



Thirteen scholars associated with universities and academic institutions are among the 23 recipients of MacArthur Fellowships for 2012, announced by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Each winner receives a \$500,000 grant, paid out over five years, that is awarded with no strings attached.

An-My Lê, 52, a professor of photography at Bard College. She is approaching the subjects of war and landscape from new perspectives to create images that blur the boundaries between fact and fiction and are rich with layers of meaning.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/02/arts/macarthur-fellows-named-for-2012.html>

An-My Lê was born in Saigon, Vietnam, in 1960 but left Vietnam during the final year of the war in 1975 before finding a home as a political refugee in the U.S. Ms. Lê received degrees in biology from Stanford and an MFA from Yale University in 1993. Her film and photography examine the effects and representation of war and have included the documentation (and participation) in Vietnam War reenactments in South Carolina. She's received fellowships from the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts and has had exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the International Center of Photography and MoMA P.S.I.



Night Operations #7, 2003-04



<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/an-my-le>



Aimee Phan: Writer

Aimee Phan is an [Vietnamese-American](#) author. She was born and raised in [Orange County, California](#). She received her MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she won a Maytag Fellowship. Her first novel, *We Should Never Meet*, was named a Notable Book by the [Kiriya Prize](#) in fiction and a finalist for the 2005 [Asian American Literary Awards](#). Her writing has appeared in [The New York Times](#), [Virginia Quarterly Review](#), [USA Today](#) and [The Oregonian](#). She worked as an Assistant Professor in English at [Washington State University](#) from Fall 2005 to Summer 2007, and now works at [California College of the Arts](#).

Aimee Phan's first book of fiction, *We Should Never Meet*, won the 2004 Association for Asian American Studies Book Award in Prose. It was also a finalist for the Asian American Literary Awards and a Kiriya Prize Notable Book of 2005. Her fiction has appeared in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Chelsea*, *Colorado Review*, *Meridian* and *Prairie Schooner*. Her nonfiction has appeared in *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and NPR's *This American Life*. She received her MFA in fiction writing from the Iowa Writers' Workshop where she won a Maytag Fellowship. She graduated from UCLA with a BA in English and a minor in Asian American Studies. She teaches creative writing and Asian American literature.

Christine Ha: 2012 MasterChef

Nearly 30,000 hopefuls auditioned at MASTERCHEF's open casting calls. Only the best amateur cooks were flown to Los Angeles for a chance to compete for the coveted title of MASTERCHEF, a cookbook deal, and the \$250,000 grand prize.

During Monday night's season 3 "MasterChef" finale (September 11, 2012), Ha won the title, \$250,000 grand prize and a cookbook deal, beating out Josh Marks and about 100 other chefs. But that's not what makes her so inspiring. Ha is blind -- the first blind contestant on the show. She nearly lost all of her eyesight about five years ago after being diagnosed with an auto-immune disease that attacks the optic nerves.

Sticking with what she knows best, Vietnamese comfort food, Ha's three-course finale dish included Thai-inspired papaya salad with grits and sweet potato puree, braised pork belly with rice and coconut-lime sorbet. Christine is an MFA candidate at the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program where she also serves as fiction Editor for *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*.

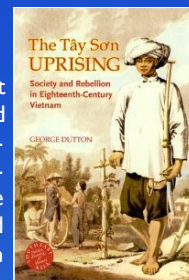
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ostX6NsP8jk>

<http://www.fox.com/masterchef/>



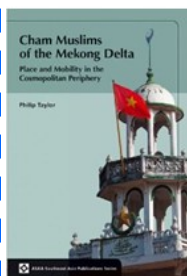
The Tay Son Uprising: George Dutton

"It is difficult to overstate the significance of George Dutton's terrific new book. *The Tay Son Uprising* represents the first serious western-language account of the intricate sequence of political developments that define the Tay Son era and that arguably mark the onset of modernity in Vietnam. In addition to providing a vividly evocative narrative of the complex political history of the period, Dutton offers lucid and judicious interpretations of the origins, evolution and downfall of the uprising and of its consequences for a wide range of social groups, political forces and ethnic communities. The level of research and historical craftsmanship is superb, and Dutton's frequent reflections on relevant theoretical and historiographical issues make for fascinating reading. In short, this is a stunning accomplishment and a major contribution to the study of Vietnamese history and historiography." —Peter Zinoman, University of California, Berkeley.



Available on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Tay-Son-Uprising-Eighteenth-century-Asia--Politics/dp/0824829840>

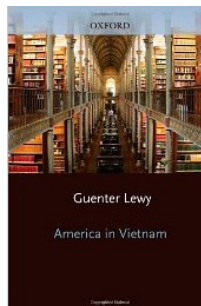
Cham Muslims of the Mekong Delta: Philip Taylor



This fascinating account of the vigorous survival of an Islamic community in the strife-torn borderlands of the lower Mekong delta, and of its creative accommodation to the modernizing reforms of the Vietnamese government, shows how Islam provides a unifying focus for Cham Muslims in their diversely constituted rural settlements. Full of Cham Muslim people's stories and voices, this highly readable ethnographic study reverberates with the texture of everyday life in rural Southeast Asia. Its original insights into the sources of religious and ethnic differentiation in the Mekong delta will enrich the comparative study of culturally pluralist societies, while its contributions to the study of Islam, cosmopolitanism, trade, rural development and resistance, as well as to our understanding of Vietnam, Cambodia and the Malay diaspora, are equally new and important.

Available on Amazon:
<http://www.amazon.com/Cham-Muslims-Mekong-Delta-Cosmopolitan/dp/0824831543>

Guenter Lewy: America in Vietnam



This book says some insightful things about the war in Vietnam and makes many valid points. Lewy demonstrates the superficiality of the more extreme opponents of the war--those who accused the US of violating international law but were blind to the horrors involved in the actions of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. This is a well-researched and balanced study of the issues which engaged the interest of the world while the war was going on, and is illuminating and full of important information.

Available on Amazon:
<http://www.amazon.com/America-Vietnam-Guenter-Lewy/dp/0195027329>

Editorial...continued

More than a thousand Viet Kieu demonstrated in front of the White House asking the US government to intervene on behalf of Viet Khang. <http://www.sacei07.org/Newsletter42.pdf>

For eight months, no one heard about Viet Khang again. Then on October 30, 2012, Hanoi sentenced him to 4 years in jail followed by 2 years under house arrest for "opposing" the Hanoi government.

http://www.sacei07.org/H109_VietKhangSentenced.html

These two stories separated by almost four decades highlight the true nature of the *illegal and oppressive* Hanoi regime. Having signed then reneged on the 1954 Geneva Accords and the 1973 Paris Accords, having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering the 1973 Paris Accords, Hanoi sent its troops to invade South Vietnam then locked southern officials and soldiers in concentration camps, some up to 25 years. Hanoi was all about smokescreen and fakery. The revolution was not a revolution, but a blatant and illegal invasion against the agreements of the Paris Accords. To support the Hanoi regime is to support oppression and illegitimacy.

On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee (Confederacy) surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant (Union) at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia, USA. Gen. Lee, the battle loser sat at a moderate-sized marble table while nearby the victorious Gen. Grant used a small wooden table. Grant allowed officers of the Confederacy to keep their "side arms, horses, and baggage...They were allowed to return to their homes undisturbed as long as they obeyed the laws of the land." With one bold and genial stroke, General Grant soothed the pains, anger, and resentment of the defeated southerners and brought long-term healing to a divided nation. For the next two centuries and counting, the South has remained a part of the United States of America.

On April 30, 1975, Saigon surrendered to Hanoi, which stated that "Only the Americans have been defeated. All the Vietnamese are the victors..." (Truong Nhu Tang, *A Viet Cong Memoir*, p 264) Joy and peace were short lived, for all southern officials, ARVN officers were

Continue on next page

Editorial...continued

hauled to concentration camps for the next 10 to 25 years. Many died in the camps because of executions, mistreatment, starvation, lack of medications... Their properties, houses, offices, factories, businesses, lands, belongings were confiscated, their wives, children, relatives banished to new economic zones where they had to build their lives anew out of scratch. Saigon and the South became an *occupied* land where southerners eked out a living as second class citizens. Not even the dead could escape Hanoi's wrath: ARVN cemeteries were bulldozed, the *Tiet Thuong* sculpture at the gate of the Bien Hoa National Cemetery was toppled, graffiti scrawled on headstones. Graves were violated... (Vo Nghia. *Saigon. A History*. pp. 192-222) Even David Lamb, an admirer of the Hanoi regime, steamed about the desecration:

"These were the faces and names of the vanquished... They had been dishonored by the victors who desecrated their headstones and let the crabgrass run wild over the graves. In a country whose pride and dignity and sense of nationalism I came to greatly admire, the cemetery stood as a symbol of national shame." (Lamb David. *Vietnam Now*, p 100)

Unable to stand the oppression and misery under the communist regime, millions of Vietnamese escaped from Vietnam aboard rickety boats to look for freedom somewhere else. They knew they could die from violent sea storms, engine failure, lack of food or fuel, piracy, but they set sail anyway... They became the so called *boat people*--the largest diaspora in the world due to political oppression. Worse, Hanoi now even tries to erase the memory of the diaspora by asking Indonesia and Malaysia to dismantle the Bidong and Galang memorials built by the boat people as a way of remembering their stay on these islands. (Quang Tue Tran. *Remembering the Boat People Exodus. A Tale of Two Memorials. J Vietnamese Studies*. 2012, vol. 7, n. 3, pp. 80-121) The history of Hanoi is full of deception, trickery, and criminality against its own people.

On the eve of the 2013 New Year, the Vietnamese, inside Vietnam or abroad demand the Hanoi regime treats its citizens equally and re-establishes FREEDOM AND JUSTICE in a poor and war devastated country. That is the only thing that the illegitimate Hanoi regime could do to redeem itself. Strangely, Hanoi and the communists have even copied a line from the US declaration of Independence, "**All Men are created equal**," although they never abide to it. Another disingenuity and fakery of the Hanoi government.

The Vietnamese also ask the US government to support Freedom and Justice in Vietnam.



Photo Source: http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Asia/Vietnam/South_East/Dong_Nai/Bien_Hoa/photo702772.htm