

# Vietnam and Vietnamese Americans: Helping K-8 School Librarians and Educators Understand the History, Culture, and Literature

By Frank Alan Bruno and Patricia F. Beilke

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a Southeast Asian country of almost 82 million people. It has been under foreign control, occupied by China, France, or Japan, through much of its history. The United States fought a war there in the 1960s and early 1970s to prevent the communist government of North Vietnam from taking power through the entire country. In 1975 Vietnam reunified under communist rule. Since then, the government has begun to loosen up and allow family businesses and farming. Today the country is experiencing a resurgence in tourism led by expatriates and war veterans.

Between 1980 and 1990 Vietnamese Americans comprised the fastest-growing Asian-American group, with an increase of more than 135 percent. Immigrants came in various waves from the fall of Saigon in 1975 until the late 1990s. Many of those who came to the United States in the late 1970s and 1980s had first traveled by boat to other countries in Southeast Asia and waited in refugee camps, often for a decade or more, before being allowed to immigrate. Among the later waves of immigrants were children of American soldiers and Vietnamese mothers who had experienced severe discrimination in Vietnam.

The literature included below presents the geography, history, and culture of Vietnam and the diverse experiences of the Vietnamese. Readers will learn of the folklore and history of the Vietnamese people, their daily lives in Vietnam and in the United States, and their extended families and their struggle for independence, freedom, and social justice.

## FOLKLORE

Garland, Sherry. ***Children of the Dragon: Selected Tales from Vietnam***. San Diego: Harcourt, 2001. 64 pp. Illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. ISBN 0-15-224200-7. Gr. 4-6.

The author shares six traditional tales with societal values. The cast of characters includes a tiger with stripes, the man in the moon, wild monsoons, a raven and a star fruit, a bowman and some sisters, and a boatman's flute. Many traits are examined—greed, kindness, bravery, and treachery. Author notes help the reader understand each tale in relation to Vietnamese culture and history. Hyman's use of India ink and acrylic paint gives a sense of the country's vibrant artwork and distinctive jewel-like colors. Exquisite detail makes the stories come alive.

Lee, Jeanne M. ***Toad Is the Uncle of Heaven: A Vietnamese***

***Folk Tale***. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985. unpaginated. Illus. by the author. ISBN 0-03-004652-1. Gr. K-2.

An ugly toad asks the King of Heaven for rain to save the countryside from drought. At first the king refuses to hear Toad. But Toad persuades other animals, including bees, a rooster, and a tiger, to join him, and they help him gain the king's ear so he can deliver his plea for water. Pastel illustrations employ browns and yellows to convey stark scenes and reds and blues in vibrant scenes to make the subjects, including the King, stand out.

Lum, Darrell. ***The Golden Slipper: A Vietnamese Legend***. New York: Troll, 1994. 32 pp. Illus. by Makiko Nagano. Series: Legends of the World. ISBN 0-8167-3405-4. Gr. K-2.

In this Cinderella variant, Tam, a poor rice farmer's daughter, is mistreated by her father's second wife. The stepmother favors her own daughter, Cam, over Tam, who must work in the fields during the day and in the kitchen all night. Tam befriends the animals that surround her and gives up her own food each day to feed them. Because she is given a large task to husk all the rice, she cannot attend the royal ceremony where the prince will choose his new bride. The impressionistic artwork is filled with reds and yellows that highlight Tam and give readers a sense of her royal destiny.

Shepard, Aaron. ***The Crystal Heart: A Vietnamese Legend***. New York: Atheneum, 1998. unpaginated. Illus. by Joseph Daniel Fiedler. ISBN 0-689-81551-4. Gr. K-2.

Mi Nong, a lonely, beautiful Mandarin's daughter, hears a man singing a lovely song. She becomes convinced that he is handsome and her destined husband, even though she has never seen him. On being told he is an ordinary fisherman and plain looking, she loses interest in him, with tragic consequences. Expectations are not always what they seem. The illustrations are dark and somber; an illuminated light or brightly colored object in the center of the picture draws the reader's attention.

Terada, Alice M. ***Under the Starfruit Tree: Folktales from Vietnam***. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1989. 160 pp. ISBN 0-8248-1553-X. Gr. 7-8.

Twenty-seven tales from both North and South Vietnam

are divided into four sections: foibles and quirks; tales from the lowlands and the highlands; the spirit world; and food, love, and laughter.

Tran Ngoe-Dung. *Ta Ve Ta Tam Ao Ta/To Swim in Our Own Pond: A Book of Vietnamese Proverbs*. Arcadia, Calif.: Shen's Books, 1998. unpaginated. Illustrations by Xuan-Quang Dang. ISBN 1-885008-08-2. Grades 2–5.

Twenty-two proverbs cover popular phrases in Vietnamese and English. These include “beggars can’t be choosers,” “beauty is only skin deep,” “with Buddha one wears a monk frock; with a ghost one wears a paper cloak,” and “you can press nuts to get oil, but you can’t force a marriage when there is no love.” Each proverb is illustrated with a warm watercolor; pink, yellow, orange, and lavender dominate. An author’s note contains information about the Vietnamese language and alphabet.

Tran Van Dien and Gritter, Winabelle. *Gio Bac Va Mat Troi/The North Wind and the Sun and Other Stories*. Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1993. 94 pp. Illustrations by Nguyen Van Hieu. Series: Co Tich Nhi Dong/Folk Tales for Children. ISBN 0-8442-6108-4. Grades 4–6.

Seven classic European folktales are translated into Vietnamese: “The Three Bears,” “The Elves and the Shoemaker,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Jack and the Beanstalk,” “The Princess and the Pea,” “The North Wind and the Sun,” and “Dick Whittington and His Cat.” A pencil drawing illustrates each of the stories, which feature parallel English/Vietnamese text.

Tran Van Dien and Le Tinh Thong. *Ngay Xua O Que Hong Toi/Once in Vietnam*. Lincolnwood, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1995. 80 pp. Illustrations by Kim Bang. ISBN 08442-6112-2. Grades 6–8.

Nine very complicated folktales from Vietnam are included in parallel Vietnamese/English text. The English translations employ higher-level vocabulary words and read as almost literal translations, with a British sound. Some of the stories are Grimm in nature, with tragic consequences for the characters. This book is not for young, impressionable readers but requires a more mature audience.

Vuong, Lynette Dyer. *The Brocaded Slipper and Other Vietnamese Tales*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. 128 pp. Illustrations by Vo-Dinh Mai. ISBN 0-329-01988-0. Grades 3–5.

Five well-known Vietnamese tales are included: “The Brocaded Slipper,” “Little Finger of the Watermelon Patch,” “The Fairy Grotto,” “Master Frog,” and “The Lampstand Princess.” Many of the figures in these tales relate to American equivalents like Cinderella (Tam), Thumbelina (Little Finger), and Rip Van Winkle (Tu Thuc). The detailed pencil drawings of people and activities are nicely rendered. The author’s notes help put each tale into historical and cultural context. There is

a Vietnamese pronunciation guide in the back.

Vuong, Lynette Dyer. *The Golden Carp and Other Tales from Vietnam*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1993. 128 pp. Illustrations by Manabu Saito. ISBN 0-688-12514-X. Grades 3–5.

Vuong retells six detailed Vietnamese tales: “A Friend’s Affection,” “The Ogre’s Victim,” “Tears of a Pearl,” “Third Daughter,” “Second in Command,” and “The Gold Carp.” Saito’s illustrations are vibrant and imaginative; the orange-red colors draw attention to the action. Saito is noted for his use of green foliage to frame illustrations. Author’s notes for each tale help the reader learn a bit about customs and holidays such as Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. A pronunciation guide is included.

Vuong, Lynette Dyer. *Sky Legends of Vietnam*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. 128 pp. Illustrations by Vo-Dinh Mai. ISBN 0-06-023000-2. Grades 3–6.

The author has collected six legends—“Why the Rooster Crows at Sunrise,” “How the Moon Became Ivory,” “The Moon Fairy,” “The Miraculous Banyan Tree,” “The Weaver Fairy and the Buffalo Boy,” and “The Seven Weavers.” She describes the motif of the sun, moon, and stars and the universal mystery it holds for Vietnamese. An interesting description of fairies is included in her introduction. A song, “The Man in the Moon,” is included in the back as well as a pronunciation guide. The black-and-white illustrations feature dark shades that convey the stories’ somberness.

## FICTION

Breckler, Rosemary K. *Hoang Breaks the Lucky Teapot*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992. 32 pp. Illustrations by Adrian Frankel. ISBN 0-395-57031-X. Grades 2–4.

In the 1970s thousands of Vietnamese fled in small boats to other countries, including Laos and Cambodia, before coming to the United States. Many left with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

The story is set in a refugee camp and discusses the cultural practice of ancestor worship. Vietnamese revere their ancestors, and on the anniversary of their death, they place valuable possessions such as portraits and food with tea on the altar. Hoang somehow carries his teapot to safety so he can use it on the family altar. When the teapot is broken, it unleashes the power of an evil dragon spirit who brings bad fortune. Hoang experiences a cold winter, to which he is unaccustomed. Using some ingenuity, he restores the broken teapot and brings his good luck back. The impressionistic illustrations use a minimal amount of color, leaving much to the imagination of the reader.

Garland, Sherry. *The Lotus Seed*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1993. 32 pp. Illustrations by Tatsuro Kiuchi. ISBN 0-15-249465-0. Grades 3–5.

A young girl and her brother receive a lotus seed from their grandmother to remember their homeland. The grandmother brought the seed from her native Vietnam and carried it with her through war and escape on a rickety boat. The illustrations, in oil, show scenes from the grandmother's eventful life.

Garland is also the author of several longer novels that feature Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American youngsters: the middle-grade story of a shrimp-fishing family in Texas, *My Father's Boat* (Scholastic, 1998), and young adult novels *Song of the Buffalo Boy* (Harcourt, 1992), about an ostracized Amerasian girl in Vietnam, and *Shadow of the Dragon* (Harcourt, 1993), about a Vietnamese-American boy in Houston trying to rescue his recently immigrated cousin from a gang.

Gifford, Clive. ***The Water Puppets: A Story from the War in Vietnam***. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Barron's, 2002. 96 pp. Series: Survivor. ISBN 0-7641-2206-1. Gr. 7-8.

Thirteen-year-old Xuan and his family live in the Noy Thian Village. When American troops bivouac there, it becomes a dangerous place to be as neighbor begins to fight against neighbor. A brief historical note in the back places the fictional story in historical context. The writing style is dry and overly factual, which distracts from the story line.

Gilson, Jamie. ***Hello, My Name Is Scrambled Eggs***. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991. 159 pp. ISBN 0-671-74104-7. Gr. 4-6.

When his folks host a Vietnamese family that has come to settle in their town, Harvey enjoys teaching his twelve-year-old friend Tuan about American customs. Things go awry when another boy tells Tuan lies that the immigrant believes.

Keller, Holly. ***Grandfather's Dream***. New York: Greenwillow, 1994. 32 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 0-688-12339-2. Gr. 3-5.

Nam, a young boy who lives in the Mekong Delta, champions his grandfather's dream to construct dikes to flood the wetlands around their farm and bring back the Sarus cranes, who brightened their lives before the war. The theme of conservation versus economic necessity is played out in the story. The illustrations, in earth-tone watercolors outlined in ink, enhance the story.

Myers, Walter Dean. ***Fallen Angels***. New York: Scholastic, 1989. 320 pp. ISBN 0-590-40943-3. Gr. 7-8.

After graduating from a Harlem high school, Richie Perry enlists and goes to Vietnam. There he learns the horrors of war and struggles to stay alive against great odds. In the end his deliverance comes through being wounded. This winner of the 1989 Coretta Scott King Award is a stark, riveting

account that will generate much discussion in the social studies classroom.

Ninh, Bao. ***The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam***. New York: Riverhead, 1996. ISBN 1-5732-2543-6. Gr. 7-8.

This is an unusual fictional account written by a former North Vietnamese soldier. Seeing the war from the other perspective helps us to understand the sorrow and loss felt by both sides. The story, told in flashbacks, describes Kien from his entry into the war as an innocent and idealistic youth to his later disillusionment.

Pomerantz, Charlotte. ***The Princess and the Admiral***. New York: Feminist Press, 2004. 48 pp. Illus. by Tony Chen. ISBN 1-55861-061-8. Gr. 3-5.

The story is set during the thirteenth-century invasion of Vietnam by Kublai Khan. Young princess Mat Mat uses her knowledge of the tides to defeat a powerful admiral and his fleet. This young woman leads her country as an intelligent and decisive commander against Khan's forces. Black-and-white illustrations are nicely rendered and add to the text.

Sherlock, Patti. ***Letters from Wolfie***. New York: Viking, 2004. 240 pp. ISBN 0-670-03694-3. Gr. 5-8.

In 1969 13-year-old Mark donates his part malamute, part German shepherd dog to the army scout program in Vietnam, where his brother Danny is fighting. From Wolfie's handler, Tucker, Mark learns of the realities of war, and he struggles to get his beloved pet back.

Surat, Michele M. ***Angel Child, Dragon Child***. New York: Scholastic, 1989. 40 pp. Illus. by Vo-Dinh Mai. ISBN 0-590-42271-5. Gr. 2-4.

Nguyen Hoa, a young Vietnamese girl, goes to America without her mother. She copes with loneliness and adjusting to a new language and culture; in the end, she and her mother are reunited. The warm illustrations will help young children empathize with the main character.

Tang, Eric M. and Ifkovic, Ed. ***Dragon on a Ten Speed***. Baltimore, Md.: PublishAmerica, 2004. 162 pp. ISBN 1-4137-2744-1. Gr. 6-8.

Fourteen-year-old Minh Li lives with his father in a gritty Hartford, Connecticut, housing project. Just before his mother and brother arrive from Vietnam, Minh watches a friend succumb to the temptations of drug dealing and himself becomes a witness to a drug-related murder.

## BIOGRAPHY

Brown, Tricia. ***Lee Ann: The Story of a Vietnamese-***

**American Girl.** New York: Putnam, 1991. 48 pp. Illus. with photos by Ted Thai. ISBN 0-399-21842-4. Gr. 2-4.

Lee Ann Trang was born in a refugee camp in Malaysia and came to the United States as a refugee. Brown talks about Lee Ann's life as a third-grader and the challenges she faces. Black-and-white photographs show her daily activities, from jumping rope, to transitioning from Vietnamese to English in her classroom, to shopping and watching television. This account will help children see that refugee children are very similar to their American counterparts.

Denenberg, Barry. **Voices from Vietnam.** New York: Scholastic, 1995. 272 pp. ISBN 0-590-44267-8. Gr. 7-8.

The author uses many primary sources—interviews, journals, diaries, and more—to give authenticity to this oral history. American soldiers describe their emotions about being there, including their fear of dying, as do Vietnamese who lived through this ordeal. An extensive bibliography and index are included.

Hayslip, Le Ly with Jay Wurts. **When Heaven and Earth Changed Places.** New York: Plume, 1993. 400 pp. ISBN 0-452-27168-1. Gr. 7-8.

As a young woman the author fought with the communist Viet Cong. She endured many hardships, including torture, rape, and betrayal. Twenty years later she returns to her homeland to see if it is the same as she remembers it.

Hillstrom, Kevin, ed. **Vietnam War: Biographies.** Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale, 2001. 2 volumes, 437 pp. Series: U-X-L Vietnam War Reference Library. ISBN 0-7876-4884-1. Gr. 7-8.

This reference set contains short biographies of major American and Vietnamese figures involved in the war. Each essay is about 2,000 words and includes a few black-and-white photographs. Among the subjects are William Calley, Joan Baez, Jane Fonda, Ho Chi Minh, Abbie Hoffman, Le Duan, Lon Nol, Ngo Dinh Diem, Tim O'Brien, Pham Van Dong, Vo Nguyen Giap, Robert McNamara, and William Westmoreland.

Holmes, Jim and Morgan, Tom. **A Child's Day in a Vietnamese City.** New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1409-6. Gr. 1-3.

The book recounts a day in the life of two brothers, Huy and Vinh, who live in Danang, Vietnam. We follow the brothers as they go to school, shop with their mother, go to the beach, play soccer, and then participate in family activities during the mid-autumn festival. The color photographs of the two boys are quite detailed and take us through their daily routines. Also included are a history of Vietnam and a description of the Vietnamese language with a few common phrases and words, as well as a book list and index.

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. **Hoang Anh: A Vietnamese-American Boy.** New York: Holiday House, 1992. 32 pp. Illus. with photos by Lawrence Migdale. ISBN 0-8234-0948-1. Gr. 3-5.

The first half of the book discusses how Hoang Anh Chau, now a junior high student, came to the United States as a baby and grew up in San Rafael, California, with American cultural staples like football and pizza. In the second half of the book he discovers his roots during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. Hoang Anh feels the emotional ties to his birthplace at the festival when an elderly man shows him calligraphy with a blessing for prosperity, wealth, and longevity. A brief glossary and index are included. There is a color illustration on every page depicting the boy interacting with others in American and Vietnamese cultural situations.

Lorbiecki, Marybeth. **Children of Vietnam.** Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1997. 48 pp. Illus. with photos by Paul P. Rome. Series: The World's Children. ISBN 1-57505-034-X. Gr. 3-5.

The award-winning author describes the lives of a dozen children in the country in this appealing photo essay. She and the photographer journeyed from the north to the south, showing different children in everyday activities. The book touches on the geography, history, and culture of the country while offering an inside view into diverse children's lives. This is a well-written and artistic portrayal that belongs in most juvenile library collections.

O'Connor, Karen. **Dan Thuy's New Life in America.** Minneapolis: Lerner, 1992. 40 pp. Illus. with photos by the author. ISBN 0-8225-2555-0. Gr. 7-8.

Dan Thuy Huynh is exposed to shopping malls, fast food, computers, and movie theaters. She has a hard time adjusting to the United States and the English language. Black-and-white photographs depict her daily life, showing what immigrants face assimilating to American culture. After discussing these challenges in general terms, O'Connor shows Dan Thuy's successful adaptation, as she helps her family out with translation duties and makes friends at school.

Quang Nhuong Huynh. **The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam.** New York: Harper & Row, 1986. 128 pp. Illus. by Dinh Mai Vo. ISBN 0-06-024593-X. Gr. 5-8.

Quang recounts his youth on the central highlands of Vietnam in 15 short stories. In one, his cousin accidentally kills a hogsnake, a huge snake that usually takes several men to kill. The author shares remembrances of his family and village, helping us learn of Vietnamese traditions. A handful of black-and-white impressionistic drawings scattered throughout the text help readers visualize the story lines.

Quang Nhuong Huynh. **Water Buffalo Days: Growing Up in Vietnam.** New York: HarperCollins, 1997. 128 pp. Illus.

by Jean Tseng and Mou-Sien Tseng. ISBN 0-06-024957-9. Gr. 3–5.

The author describes his experiences with two water buffaloes while growing up in the central highlands of Vietnam. After one dies, he develops a close bond with the other, a calf that they raise. Quang describes a run-in with a bull, playing hide-and-seek, an encounter with a crocodile, and a fight with an otter. Delicate black-and-white sketches help us visualize Quang's friendship with his pet.

Schmidt, Jeremy and Wood, Ted. ***Two Lands, One Heart: An American Boy's Journey to His Mother's Vietnam.*** New York: Walker, 1995. 44 pp. Illus. with photos by Ted Wood. ISBN 0-8027-8358-9. Gr. 6–8.

This story depicts an interracial family that journeys to Vietnam to find the child's maternal relatives. The main character is TJ, an Amerasian boy of around nine or ten. The story has extensive vocabulary and details that will tax the average third or fourth grader. However, the details are fascinating and well suited for sixth grade up and for advanced younger students. The appealing and unique color photos show the boy at various stages in the journey.

Scoones, Simon. ***A Family from Vietnam.*** Milwaukee, Wis.: Steck-Vaughn, 1998. 32 pp. Series: Families Around the World. ISBN 0-8172-4908-7. Gr. 2–4.

The author describes the activities of a family of five living in a small village in the north of Vietnam and provides information about their life and customs. A bibliography and index are included. Color photographs show the family and what they do each day.

Warren, Andrea. ***Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became an American Boy.*** New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004. 144 pp. ISBN 0-374-32224-4. Gr. 5–8.

During Operation Babylift in 1975, Long, an orphaned Amerasian boy, leaves his home and goes to Ohio, where he is adopted and grows up. Now a young doctor he returns to find his family in Vietnam. This book tells his story and that of similar children.

Wright, David. ***Vietnam Is My Home.*** Milwaukee, Wis.: Gareth Stevens, 1993. 48 pp. Series: My Home Country. ISBN 0-8368-0905-X. Gr. 4–6.

In the first section of the book, the author follows the daily life of Ho thi Kim Chau, an 11-year-old girl who lives in a small village near Ho Chi Minh City. We see the farm where she lives, and then we go with her on a visit to the big city. In the second section of the book, Wright includes a brief history of Vietnam as well as a description of what life is like for children there. A glossary, book lists, things to do, a map, and an index are included. Color photographs show

Chau in her local surroundings with family and friends.

## HISTORY

Auerbach, Susan. ***Vietnamese Americans.*** Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing, 1991. 104 pp. Series: American Voices. ISBN 0-86593-136-4. Gr. 4–6.

Vietnamese immigration to the United States is covered, with information about where the refugees settled and what they do for a living. A time line, glossary, resources list, bibliography, and index are included. Color photographs show Vietnamese Americans in their everyday activities.

Bandon, Alexandra. ***Vietnamese Americans.*** New York: New Discovery Books, 1994. 112 pp. Series: Footsteps to America. ISBN 0-02-768146-7. Gr. 4–6.

This history for more advanced readers includes a description of the country as well as why Vietnamese immigrants came to the United States. The author goes into great details about the fall of Saigon and its evacuation. She discusses life in the refugee camps. Her section about life in the United States focuses on prejudice and opportunities. The last section helps students learn about Vietnamese culture—topics such as religion, family ties, women's roles, occupations, education, food, and celebrations. Black-and-white photographs are sprinkled throughout the book. A valuable contribution of this work is Bandon's use of original narratives by refugees.

Blanc, Felice. ***I Am Vietnamese American.*** New York: Rosen, 1997. 24 pp. Series: Our American Family. ISBN 0-8239-5009-3. Gr. 2–4.

This is a basic history narrated by Nguyen Tran, a young boy now living in New Orleans. He introduces geography, key figures, historical events, religion, holidays, and food. A glossary and an index are included. There are color photographs on alternating pages showing people in different settings.

Brittan, Dolly. ***The People of Vietnam.*** New York: PowerKids Press, 1997. 23 pp. Series: Celebrating the Peoples and Civilizations of Southeast Asia. ISBN 0-8239-5125-1. Gr. 2–4.

This beginning reader covers a few topics about Vietnam—its early history, major cities, economy, language, religion and culture, and food. A glossary and an index are included. A color photograph accompanies each concept.

Bryan, Nichol. ***Vietnamese Americans.*** Edina, Minn.: Abdo, 2004. 32 pp. Series: One Nation. ISBN 1-59197-534-4. Gr. 3–5.

This treatment includes information about the history of Vietnam and the customs, language, religion, and experiences of Vietnamese Americans. Color photographs add information about various people and places. An index is included.

Cole, Wendy M. **Vietnam**. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 1999. 144 pp. Series: Major World Nations. ISBN 0-7910-4751-2. Gr. 4–6.

The author updates her earlier book on this subject, offering basic information about geography, history, government, and culture. A facts page, a history at a glance page, a bibliography, and an index are included. Color photos as well as several black-and-white photos from the earlier edition illustrate the text.

Condra-Peters, Amy. **Vietnam**. Milwaukee, Wis.: Gareth Stevens, 2002. 96 pp. Series: Countries of the World. ISBN 0-8368-2348-6. Gr. 6–8.

This look at the Socialist Republic of Vietnam includes information about its geography, history, arts, and relationship with the United States that is both interesting and relevant. Maps, a facts-at-a-glance page, a glossary, a bibliography, and an index add to the text. Color photos showing cultural artifacts and children in various locations are on every page.

Conley, Kate A. **Vietnam**. Edina, Minn.: Abdo, 2004. 40 pp. Series: The Countries. ISBN 1-59197-299-X. Gr. 2–4.

This treatment offers basic information about history, geography, government, cities, recreation, festivals, and culture. Fast facts and a timeline are included as are a glossary, web sites, and an index. Color photographs show Vietnamese children and adults in various settings.

Dahl, Michael S. **Vietnam**. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone, 1998. 24 pp. Series: Countries of the World. 1-56065-740-5. Gr. 2–4.

Dahl offers one-page informational sketches about the land of Vietnam, rivers, going to school, food, animals, homes and clothing, sports, and holidays. A few fast facts, maps, the flag, and currency are featured, as are basic phrases in Vietnamese. Ten color photos show young children and families in daily work and in worship.

De Capua, Sarah E. **Vietnam**. Minneapolis: Compass Point, 2003. 48 pp. Series: First Reports. ISBN 0-7565-0427-9. Gr. 2–4.

This straightforward account includes brief sections on land and weather, life in Vietnam, festivals and holidays, arts and literature, food and drink, clothing, and conditions today. The author has chosen interesting facts that might hold the reader's attention. A glossary, important facts and dates, and a reading list are included. The artwork is a bit distracting, with alternating blue and white pages containing less-than-inspiring photos.

Do, Hien Duc. **The Vietnamese Americans**. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1999. 148 pp. Series: The New Americans. ISBN 0-313-29780-0. Gr. 6–8.

This in-depth guide covers settlement patterns, language, common family names, religion, cultural values, cuisine, and a brief history focusing on the war in Vietnam. Two chapters cover Vietnamese immigration history as well as issues affecting the immigrants. The last three chapters discuss employment and education trends, cultural practices, and future prospects. There are a handful of black-and-white photos to illustrate concepts or events. Because of its complexity of language and concepts, the book is for upper-level students in this age range.

Donnelly, Judy. **A Wall of Names**. New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1991. 48 pp. ISBN 0-6799-0169-8. Gr. 4–6.

The author answers basic questions about the Vietnam War and the memorial wall. She argues that the wall is there for healing loss, regardless of one's views on the war. Color photos depict the war and the wall in a dramatic fashion.

Dubois, Muriel L. **The Vietnam Veterans Memorial**. Bloomington, Minn.: Bridgestone, 2002. 24 pp. Series: National Landmarks. ISBN 0-7368-1116-8. Gr. 2-4.

Young readers learn the purpose of the wall and how it was designed and constructed. Color photos show the wall and prominent people involved in its creation. A glossary is included.

Edelman, Rob. **The Vietnam War**. San Diego, Calif.: Blackbirch Press, 2004. 48 pp. Series: People at the Center. ISBN 1-56711-771-6. Gr. 6–8.

This treatment of the war focuses on key individuals on both sides, reinforced by numerous color photos of leaders and ordinary soldiers.

Edwards, Charlene. **Voices from Vietnam: The Tragedies and Triumphs of American and Vietnamese—Two Peoples Forever Entwined by the Legacy of War**. Bayside, N.Y.: Journeys, 2002. 264 pp. Foreword by Robin Moore. ISBN 0-9714020-3-5. Gr. 7–8.

This is a well-written history of Vietnam with primary accounts of people involved with the country and the war, from soldiers to refugees. The color photos are dynamic and exceptionally well chosen. A resource guide with addresses of organizations is in the back, along with a map, a historical chronology, and an index.

Fitterer, C. Ann. **Vietnamese Americans**. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 32 pp. Series: Our Cultural Heritage. ISBN 1-56766-160-2. Gr. 4–6.

Four chapters deal with life in the country of origin, the move to America, becoming established in the United States, and cultural contributions/significant people. A time line, glossary, further information section, and index are included.

ed. Color photos show young people with their families. A few black-and-white ones show refugees fleeing in boats.

Frost, Helen. **A Look at Vietnam**. Mankato, Minn.: Pebble Books, 2003. 24 pp. Series: Our World. ISBN 0-7368-1431-0. Gr. K-2.

Frost offers a beginning-level treatment of the land, animals, people, and puppet shows. A map, the flag, and money are described. Words to know, Internet sites, and an index/word list are included. Color photos depict highlighted words to know on alternating pages with the text.

Garland, Sherry. **Vietnam: Rebuilding a Nation**. Parsippany, N.J.: Silver Burdett, 1990. 130 pp. Series: Discovering Our Heritage. ISBN 0-87518-422-7. Gr. 4-6.

The book covers the history and culture of the Vietnamese people, geography, legends, holidays, school, service, sports, lifestyles of the people, and their immigration to the United States. A brief bibliography, a glossary, and an index are included, as are black-and-white and color photos.

Gray, Shirley Wimbish. **Vietnam**. Danbury, Conn.: Children's Press/Scholastic, 2003. 48 pp. Series: A True Book. ISBN 0-516-24211-3. Gr. 2-4.

The series is designed for younger children, with large type and simple sentences and vocabulary. The topics covered are geography, people, history, economy, and daily life. Lists of books, organizations, and web sites are included, as well as an index. Color photos show key figures and places.

Hall, Margaret C. **Vietnamese Americans**. Chicago: Heinemann, 2003. 32 pp. ISBN 1-40340-733-9. Gr. 3-5.

The author begins by telling the story of Nan Thi Nguyen, who secretly leaves her village and makes her way to the United States with her son; eventually, her husband joins them in Florida. From there, Hall offers a brief history of Vietnamese migration to the United States and Vietnamese cultural practices. Color photos spotlight several Vietnamese families. The book concludes with a reading list and a glossary, as well as a Vietnamese immigration chart.

Hanson, Ole Steen. **Vietnam**. Austin, Tex.: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1997. 48 pp. Series: Economically Developing Countries. ISBN 0-8172-4526-X. Gr. 6-8.

Hanson enumerates current economic problems in Vietnam as well as the transition from a communist state to limited capitalism. A glossary, a bibliography, and an index are included. Color photos show young people in daily pursuits.

Hay, Jeffrey T. **Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War**. San Diego, Calif.: Greenhaven, 2004. 300 pp. ISBN 0-7377-1149-3. Gr. 5-8.

This comprehensive treatment includes material about major battles and missions, key figures such as generals and antiwar activists, and policies and initiatives. Entries run from one paragraph to one page in length, with many black-and-white illustrations. A chronology, an index, and a list for further reading are included.

Hoobler, Dorothy and Hoobler, Thomas. **Vietnam: An Illustrated History**. New York: Knopf, 1990. 208 pp. ISBN 0-394-91943-2. Gr. 5-8.

The Hooblers examine why the United States fought the Vietnam War. The book's perspective is a bit controversial, since it portrays the United States as the aggressor. Detailed color photos support the authors' point of view.

Isaac, John and Greenberg, Keith Elliot. **Vietnam: The Boat People Search for a Home**. Millbrook, Conn.: Blackbirch, 1996. 32 pp. Series: Children in Crisis. ISBN 1-56711-188-2. Gr. 2-4.

Isaac, a United Nations staff photographer, presents an overview of Vietnam's history and his impressions of the people, particularly children, who have fled the war-torn country. Each subject has introductory material accompanied by color photos.

Kalman, Bobbie. **Vietnam, the People**. New York: Crabtree, 1996. 32 pp. Series: The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures. ISBN 0-86505-224-7. Gr. 2-4.

This better than average look at Vietnam focuses on the lives of children. A glossary and an index are included. The three to six color photos per topic show many different people and areas of the country. Photos of school-aged children dressed in colorful outfits in different settings help readers better conceptualize the text.

Luangpraseut, Khamchong. **Vietnam and Vietnamese**. El Monte, Calif.: Pacific Asia Press, 1995. unpaginated. Trans. from Vietnamese by Le Van Doan. ISBN 1-879600-43-9. Gr. 4-6.

This is a sympathetic treatment of the communist regime in Vietnam written by a Laotian writer in parallel English/Vietnamese text. The book adds controversy, as the author occasionally throws in commentary critical of the United States. Some of the topics discussed are history, education, social values, population size, cities, and geographic regions. The black-and-white drawings are nicely rendered and complement the text.

Marrin, Albert. **America and Vietnam: The Elephant and the Tiger**. Sandwich, Mass.: Beautiful Feet Books, 2002. 277 pp. ISBN 1-893103-08-0. Gr. 7-8.

Marrin delves into the complicated causes of the war, its political and military aspects, and its impact on both the

United States and Vietnam. With its graphic descriptions, this book is not for squeamish readers. An index and a list of further readings are included.

Matthews, Jo. ***I Remember Vietnam***. Austin, Tex.: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1995. 32 pp. Series: Why We Left. ISBN 0-8114-5605-6. Gr. 2-4.

Han, a refugee boy, gives an overview of the country—the weather, the wildlife, the people, religion, family life, leisure, life on the river, city life, farming, and life in the mountains—as well as the reasons why his family emigrated. Color photos complement the text well; one that stood out was of young children in military attire.

Ng, Yumi and Condra-Peters, Amy. ***Welcome to Vietnam!*** Milwaukee, Wis.: Gareth Stevens, 2003. 48 pp. Series: Welcome to My Country. ISBN 0-8368-2548-9. Gr. 2-4.

This introductory text includes information on history, language, arts, leisure, food, government, economy, people, and lifestyle. In the back are a map, quick facts, a glossary, and a list of books, videos, and web sites, as well as an index. Vivid color photos adorn every page and are the major strength of the book.

O'Connor, Karen. ***Vietnam***. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda, 1999. 48 pp. Series: Globe-Trotters Club. ISBN 1-57505-117-6. Gr. 2-4.

This history is written in a conversational style with beginning-level glossary words bolded in the text. Topics covered are geography, climate, forests, ethnic diversity, family life, cities, farm life, cooking, language, home life, art, clothing, school, religion, holidays, music, poetry, games, and water puppets. In the back are a glossary, a pronunciation guide, a list of books for further reading, and an index. Color illustrations and photos show families in various activities, from worship to work.

Park, Ted. ***Taking Your Camera to Vietnam***. Austin, Tex.: Steadwell Books, 2001. 32 pp. Series: Taking Your Camera To. ISBN 0-7398-3572-6. Gr. 1-3.

This basic geography for younger elementary school children is designed with extensive color photos. Glossary words are bolded in the text. There is also a section of quick facts and an index.

Parker, Lewis K. ***Vietnam***. Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke, 1994. 32 pp. Series: Dropping In On. ISBN 1-55916-008-X. Gr. 1-4.

The author takes a brief tour of Vietnam that covers geographic places and ethnic groups for a younger audience. A glossary, further readings, and an index are included. Color photos on every page show various locales.

Parker, Lewis K. ***Why Vietnamese Immigrants Came to***

***America***. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. Series: Coming to America. ISBN 0-8239-6461-2. Gr. 1-4.

The book bills itself as an easy reader, with a sparse 399 words. The text includes two distinct areas: the history of Vietnam from the 1960s to the present and Vietnamese immigrants in the United States, including their contributions. A glossary, resources, and an index are included. There is a mixture of rather utilitarian color and black-and-white photos on every page.

Simmons, Pat. ***Vietnam***. Chicago: Heinemann, 1998. 32 pp. Series: World Focus. ISBN 1-57572-026-4. Gr. 3-5.

The author gives an overview of the country followed by a description of a specific Vietnamese village and a pair of children who live there. A glossary and an index are included. Color photographs depict families and children in various locations and settings, including working, going to school, and leisure activities.

Smolan, Rick and Erwit, Jennifer. ***Passage to Vietnam: Through the Eyes of Seventy Photographers***. Sausalito, Calif.: Against All Odds Productions, 1994. 228 pp. Introduction by Pico Iyer. ISBN 1-885559-00-3. Gr. 5-8.

Award-winning photographers from 14 countries team up to present a compelling picture of the country as it emerged from Communist domination. The photographs are superior in composition and color. This is a finely written and illustrated treatment.

Springstubb, Tricia. ***The Vietnamese Americans***. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2002. 111 pp. Series: Immigrants in America. ISBN 1-56006-964-3. Gr. 5-8.

The book is divided into three parts: the history and political conditions in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, adjustment of refugees when they came to America, and current conditions of Vietnamese in the United States. The black-and-white photos used have been seen in similar works. A major contribution of this account is its use of primary sources that add perspective to the retelling of the war. A notes section, a list of further reading and works consulted, and an index are in the back.

Taus-Bolstad, Stacy. ***Vietnam in Pictures***. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. Series: Visual Geography. Revised edition. ISBN 0-8225-4678-7. Gr. 5-8.

This brief survey covers the land, history and government, people, cultural life, and the economy. A time line, a fast facts section, lists of famous people and sights to see, a glossary, and a bibliography are included. The few color photographs are quite unique and complement the text.

Willis, Terri. ***Vietnam***. New York: Children's Press, 2002. 144 pp. Series: Enchantment of the World. Second Series. ISBN 0-516-22150-7. Gr. 6-8.

Willis offers a creative account of Vietnamese history and culture. Exceptionally nice color photographs show children in happy poses and diverse settings.

## FESTIVALS/CULTURE

Ferro, Jennifer. **Vietnamese Foods & Culture**. Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing, 1999. 48 pp. Series: Festive Foods and Celebrations. ISBN 1-57103-306-8. Gr. 3–5.

Three holidays are featured—Tet (New Year's), Wandering Souls Day, and the Mid-Autumn Festival—with a description of cultural activities and recipes. A few featured recipes include asparagus soup, glass noodle salad, Vietnamese bananas, fish sauce, stir-fry vegetables, spring rolls, *nuoc cham*, chicken *pho*, sticky rice with peanuts and raisins, and Vietnamese pancakes. A brief introduction to Vietnam is also included as well as a glossary, a bibliography, an index, and color photos and illustrations.

Kalman, Bobbie. **Vietnam, the Culture**. New York: Crabtree, 1996. 32 pp. Series: The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures. ISBN 0-86505-225-5. Gr. 3–5.

The author covers a lot of cultural ground in this book. She does an adequate job explaining music, arts and crafts, architecture, theater, fashion, food, religion, holidays, and festivals. A glossary and an index are included. The photos are attractive and colorful.

Kim-Anh, Nguyen-Phan. **Vietnamese Word Book**. Honolulu: Bess Press, 1994. unpp. Illus. by Ha My Ly. ISBN 1-880188-70-8. Gr. 2–8.

A basic vocabulary book that teaches the Vietnamese language, this title covers basic concepts like family relations, social relations, lifestyle, transportation, clothing, food, school, careers, nature, animals, the human body, actions, opposites, numbers, and days of the week. Vietnamese/English glossaries are in the back. Line drawings illustrate words and concepts. An audiotape for pronunciation accompanies the book.

MacMillan, Diane M. **Tet: Vietnamese New Year**. Springfield, N.J.: Enslow, 1994. 48 pp. Series: Best Holiday Books. ISBN 0-89490-501-5. Gr. 2–4.

This is a very detailed description of the Vietnamese New Year, including how the holiday began, family practices, and school activities. Black-and-white and color photos show children celebrating the holiday. Includes a glossary and an index.

McKay, Susan. **Vietnam**. Milwaukee, Wis.: Gareth Stevens, 1997. 32 pp. Series: Festivals of the World. ISBN 0-8368-1937-3. Gr. 2–4.

Festivals and monuments—Tet (New Year's), the Firecracker Festival, and the Ngoc Son Temple—are described in great detail, including food, games, and activities. A bibliography, an index, and a glossary complete the book.


Molinsky, Steven J. and Bliss, Bill. **Word by Word/Tu Dien Hinh Anh**. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Regents, 1996. 152 pp. ISBN 0-13-278607-9. Gr. 6–8.

This detailed vocabulary book has illustrations for over 3,000 Vietnamese words or concepts. Subjects covered include family, the classroom, rooms in the house, gardening, mathematics, time, the calendar, people and places, the supermarket, restaurants, food, colors, clothing, jewelry, computers, the body, occupations, transportation, sports, music, agriculture, and the universe. The illustrations are in colored cartoon panels in English and Vietnamese.

Shalant, Phyllis. **Look What We've Brought You from Vietnam: Crafts, Games, Recipes Stories and Other Cultural Activities from Vietnamese Americans**. Parsippany, N.J.: Julian Messner, 1998. 48 pp. ISBN 0-382-39982-X. Gr. 2–4.

This book covers various customs and crafts for selected holidays—dragon puppets for Tet and lanterns for Trung-Thu (the mid-autumn festival), for instance. Games such as O-lang and Bite the Carp's Tail are described, as are recipes like long rice soup and mooncakes. There are extensive details for setting up and designing a water puppet show, along with a script of the play *Under the Carambola Tree*. The folktale *Why the Monsoon Comes Every Year* is included. Color photos and drawings enhance the text. A pronunciation guide, a further readings section, and an index complete the book.

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### *Coming in the Winter Issue*

- The Kindertransport: A Bibliography
- The World War II Code Talkers in Books for Children
- Web Sites on Vietnam and the Vietnam War
- Children's Books in Spanish