

**Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine**

Narrator: TUAN NGUYEN

Interviewer: Camille Garcia

Also present: Linda Nguyen

Date: February 20, 2012

Location: Orange, California

Sub-Collection: Vietnamese American Experience Winter 2012

Length of Interview: 01:47:29

**Time Log**

- 00:00:03 The interview starts. The introduction includes the date, time, and place.
- 00:00:29 Tuan Nguyen gives his introduction, which includes his name, age, ethnicity, and the year of his arrival in the United States.
- 00:00:55 Tuan talks about his date and place of birth – Da Nang, Vietnam.
- 00:01:13 Tuan talks about his family moving to Saigon when he was about one year old.
- 00:01:53 Tuan talks about some of his childhood memories, which includes going to school such as a seminary to become a priest and a private high school in Saigon.
- 00:05:44 Tuan talks about the differences and similarities between private school and public school. He also talks about how every man who could hold a gun must go into battle during the war.
- 00:09:46 Tuan talks about how he left Vietnam in August 1981, and how he arrived in Indonesia in September 1981. He also talks about the refugee camp, and his arrival in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on the day before Thanksgiving 1982.
- 00:12:52 Tuan talks about his life after the Vietnam War. He also talks about work and unemployment in Vietnam.
- 00:16:30 Tuan talks about his memories of the Fall of Saigon.
- 00:17:59 Tuan talks about the effects of the war on his family. He also talks about how his father was an officer in Southern army.

- 00:20:10 Tuan talks about his mixed feelings of leaving Vietnam. He also talks about how important freedom is to him and many Vietnamese people. He also talks about how he misses the country that he was born and grew up in.
- 00:20:57 Tuan talks about his only visit in 1998 to Vietnam after leaving. He also talks about the big changes in Vietnam especially economically.
- 00:23:37 Tuan talks about his decision to leave Vietnam. He wants to make it clear that he did not decide to go to the United States, but he did decide to leave Vietnam.
- 00:24:45 Tuan talks about his experience of leaving Vietnam by boat. He also talks about how a Texaco oil platform named Hurricane Ashley brought them to Indonesia.
- 00:27:25 Tuan explains the reason why they are called boat people.
- 00:30:09 Tuan talks about how his entire family stayed behind in Vietnam.
- 00:30:24 Tuan talks about how his father was released in 1987 from prison. He talks about the importance of human rights, and how Vietnam now wants to normalize the relationship with other countries like the United States.
- 00:34:29 Tuan talks about his refugee camp experience. He also talks a lot about the idea of freedom.
- 00:36:40 Tuan talks about his experiences in the United States. He also talks about arriving in the San Francisco air force base, and seeing the Golden State Bridge.
- 00:39:14 Tuan talks about how he settled here in Southern California.
- 00:39:44 Tuan talks about when he and his wife, Linda, got married.
- 00:40:18 Tuan talks about his three children (two daughters, one son) and how old they are.
- 00:41:36 Tuan talks about the challenges in the United States, especially the language barriers.
- 00:42:16 Tuan talks about his job experiences, such as manufacturing. He also talks about how easy it was to get a job at the time because California was booming. His current job is a radiology technician.
- 00:46:14 Tuan talks about his encounters of racism, which was not a big deal to him.
- 00:47:08 Tuan talks about the similarities and differences between Vietnam and his current community here in the United States. He talks about the tightness (closeness) of both communities. Again, he talks about freedom.

- 00:50:55 Tuan talks about the hatred and hurt of the Vietnamese community due to communism. He also talks about the healing process.
- 00:53:06 Tuan talks about being Vietnamese American, and his independent political view.
- 00:54:10 Tuan talks about the process of becoming a citizen, and how getting a job is easier for a United States citizen.
- 00:55:38 Tuan talks about the war as a reminder of Vietnam. He also talks about how men were drafted during the war.
- 00:59:08 Tuan talks about the traditions of the Vietnamese people. They like to remember their ancestors like his wife's parents who passed away. They have family reunions, and they celebrate New Year's Day/Lunar New Year. They even have certain days to remember particular family members such as the day in August to celebrate children.
- 01:04:13 Tuan talks about passing the Vietnamese language to his children.
- 01:04:44 Tuan talks about what will become of the Vietnamese culture in the United States. He hopes that his children can achieve higher education, and how the first generation paves the way for the second generation. He does not expect his children to pay him back.
- 01:08:06 Tuan talks about how he is not involved with the Vietnamese community.
- 01:08:55 Tuan talks about visiting Little Saigon in Orange County, California at least once a week.
- 01:09:44 Tuan talks about Vietnamese food, such as beef noodle and chicken noodle. He also talks about the special dishes that are made for family gatherings.
- 01:12:27 Tuan talks about the religions that are practiced by Vietnamese Americans such as Buddhism, Catholicism, and something like ancestor worship. He and his family is Roman Catholic.
- 01:14:23 Tuan talks about how he does not have many family momentos because he did not bring that much stuff from Vietnam.
- 01:15:23 Tuan talks about how Vietnam is not home anymore, but it just represents the past. He also talks about how the United States is home now.
- 01:17:37 Tuan talks about the most important things that future generations of Vietnamese Americans should remember about their past, such as family values, history, and the lessons of the past.

- 01:19:31 Tuan talks about how his children know a little bit of the history of Vietnam. His children also know a little bit of his life in Vietnam.
- 01:22:18 Tuan remembers when his father brought him a high-tech toy car when he was 3 years old.
- 01:24:07 Tuan talks about how he took many tests, and how he passed them. He also talks about how he failed a test because he used periods instead of commas when writing numbers.
- 01:28:48 Tuan talks about how his first English class was actually a Shakespeare class.
- 01:35:07 Tuan talks more about his decision to leave Vietnam, and why other people had to leave.
- 01:41:43 Tuan talks about being anti-communist, and his opinion of communism. He believes life is changing. He even mentions Cuba and North Korea. He believes it just takes time for these countries to change.
- 01:47:00 This is the end of interview, and we both thank each other.