Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: NATHAN THUAN NGUYEN
Interviewer: Jessica J. Reyes
Date: April 30, 2012
Location: Fullerton, California
Sub-Collection: Natalie Newton Class Oral Histories, 2012
Length of Interview: 01:26:44

Time Log

1:11 He talks about his parents and how they have influence him.

1:56 Discusses about the different places he and his family have lived in the United States and in Vietnam.

4:01 Discusses main industries in Vietnam and in particular with his family.

4:30 Discusses celebration or lack of celebration for important days and holidays

6:12 Different jobs and work he and his family have had.

8:54 Discusses family name and its origins.

9:48 Discusses bilingualism and how he cannot write in Vietnamese.

10:18 He discusses a memorable story of his childhood that reflected the conditions of his family.

12:40 Occupations in his family and how it varies through all his family.

13:15 He talks about educational background through different generations. He is college educated.

13:55 He discusses family reunions and more gatherings that are not planned.

15:15 The topic moves to that of culture, traditions, and religion.

16:31 He talks about importance of preserving culture and language for future generations.

19:06 Says that a consistent part of his culture and religion in keeping an altar.

21:33 Discusses family practices (religion). He does claim a religion.

22:14 Discusses how the war affected his family and the community. He was of young age and explains how he does not remember much.
24:45 Family lived in Saigon and discusses why people moved to certain areas. Also how family members were involved in the war.

26:40 Talks about how he has heard multiple stories of reeducation camps but does not know anyone directly. Discusses conditions of camps.

27:56 Emotional and psychological effects of family being dislocated and trauma from war.

29:27 Does not remember trauma such as the fall of Saigon as he believes he blocked the memory.

31:35 Reasons for leaving country was very complex and included feelings of fear and uncertainty. Also about their journey the United States.

35:05 Talks about he how cannot remember much about the refugee camp, only remembers it was in Guam.

35:54 He discusses culture shock upon arrival to the United States. Also discusses that they settled in areas because of relationships they had.

38:19 Talks about parent occupations in the United States.

40:15 Parents decision to come to the United States, says he understands why parents did what they did.

43:34 Challenged meeting basic needs upon arrival. Also issues with experiences of other people of color as a whole.

45:57 He discusses how some people believe America is more than Vietnam. Also about the history of their country and where they currently live.

48:13 Encountered individual racism but looks mostly as systemic organization. History in the United States has racism and people need to become educated about it as it still impacts population.

52:24 He describes his different identities within society and how he has multiple identities.

53:48 He has strong criticism of electoral system and does not vote consistently. Looks at foundation of voting and how it is hypocritical.

55:19 Return to Vietnam in 2000 and has gone back 7 times since. He discusses friends and family in Vietnam. He describes his first time back to Vietnam.

57:14 He discusses symbols that remind him of Vietnam.
58:37 He talks about issues with name of Black April. Also he and those around him discuss about the event.

1:01:10 He talks about how he wants the youth to be aware of traditions and what they mean.

01:01:51 Hopes that the Viet community will become more complex and that more spaces will be created.

01:02:36 He talks about the importance of community in respect to history.

01:03:38 Discusses his organizational work and how it is not traditional.

01:05:38 He discusses about visiting little Saigon and events.

01:11:00 Dialogs about how people need to realize they have many years of history

01:12:17 Different communities and inhabitants create different spaces.

01:13:14 Talks about there are a lack of opportunities to become politically involved.

01:13:29 The Vietnamese movement and how some people don’t believe in it.

01:14:33 He discusses how Vietnamese are not politically apathetic and how they are politically conservative.

01:15:24 Discusses status quo and how do we move forward from that. Also discusses how the community needs support people to better their lives and conditions.

01:16:25 anticommunism in community is related to war.

01:17:30 are we looking at the issues and root causes to work through the issues or are we accepting them.

01:19:11 Parallels between Latino community and Asian American community.

01:26:44 Interview ends.