

# VIETNAM



# THE FULL PICTURE OF VIETNAM

- **Capital:** Hanoi
- **Government & Politics:** Single-party socialist states espousing communism (along with China, Cuba, and Laos)
- **Population:** 90.3 million (2012 - it is the world's 13<sup>th</sup> most-populous country, and the 8th most-populous Asian country)
- **Subdivisions:** 58 provinces. There are also 5 municipalities which are administratively on the same level as provinces
- **Official Language:** Vietnamese
- **Currency:** Vietnamese dong

- **Climate:** rainy and sunny (tropical country)
- **Demographic:** Vietnam is home to 54 ethnic minority groups which Kinh is a significant ethnic minority group (85.8% of the population)
- **Religion:** About 85% of Vietnamese identify with Buddhism, though not all practice on a regular basis
- **Education:** divided into 5 categories: kindergarten, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and universities

# GEOGRAPHY



- ✓ S-shaped country.
- ✓ About 331,211.6 km<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Borders China, Laos, Cambodia.
- ✓ North-to-South distance of 1,650 km, 50km wide at the narrowest point.
- ✓ Coastline: 3,444 km (excludes islands)

# THE ORIGIN OF VIETNAMESE

- According to legend, the first Vietnamese descended from the dragon lord Lac Long Quan and the female heavenly angel Au Co. They married and had one hundred eggs, from which hatched one hundred children. Their eldest son Hung Vuong ruled as the first Vietnamese king.
- Historians believe that the earliest Vietnamese people gradually moved from the Indonesian archipelago through the Malay Peninsula and Thailand until they settled on the edges of the Red River in the Tonkin Delta.



# HISTORY

- The legendary Hong Bang Dynasty of the Hung kings is considered by many Vietnamese as the first Vietnamese state, known as Van Lang
- For the next thousand years, Vietnam was mostly under Chinese rule. In 938 BCE, a Vietnamese lord named Ngo Quyen defeated Chinese forces and regained independence after 10 centuries under Chinese control
- Between the 11<sup>st</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Vietnamese expanded southward by conquering the kingdom of Champa and part of the Khmer Empire

# HISTORY (cont.)

- Vietnam's independence was gradually eroded by France. Until 1885, the entire country became part of French Indochina which imposed significant political and cultural changes on Vietnamese society
- In 1954, the French Indochina was dissolved. According to the Geneva Accords of 1954, the forces of former French supporters and communist nationalists were separated south and north Vietnam

# HISTORY (cont.)

- The conflict between the North and South Vietnam led the US, who supported the South, to get involved
- Culminating in the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, South Vietnam briefly became the Republic of South Vietnam, under military occupation by North Vietnam
- July 2, 1976, South Vietnam is officially integrated with the North under communist rule as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam



# HISTORY (cont.)

- Upon taking control of the bomb-ravaged country, the Vietnamese communists banned all other political parties, arrested public servants and military personnel of the South Vietnam and sent them to re-education camps. The government also embarked on a mass campaign of collectivization of farms and factories
- Reconstruction of the war-ravaged country was slow, and serious humanitarian and economic problems confronted the communist regime



"Re-education" session for 26 generals of former South Vietnamese army. Second from left is onetime Defense Minister Nguyen Huu Co. (Below) Lower-ranking officers at another re-education camp.





# HISTORY (cont.)

- In a historic shift in 1986, the Communist Party of Vietnam implemented free-market reforms known as Renovation. With the authority of the state remaining unchallenged, private ownership of farms and companies, deregulations and foreign investment were encouraged. The economy of Vietnam has achieved rapid growth in agricultural and industrial production, construction and housing, exports and foreign investment. It is now one of the fastest growing economies in the World.

# EXODUS – VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE

- Vietnamese boat people is a term that usually referred to boat people refugees from Vietnam War during the late 1970s, who fled Vietnam in large numbers following the Fall of Saigon. Typically, they used boats that were old and crudely made.



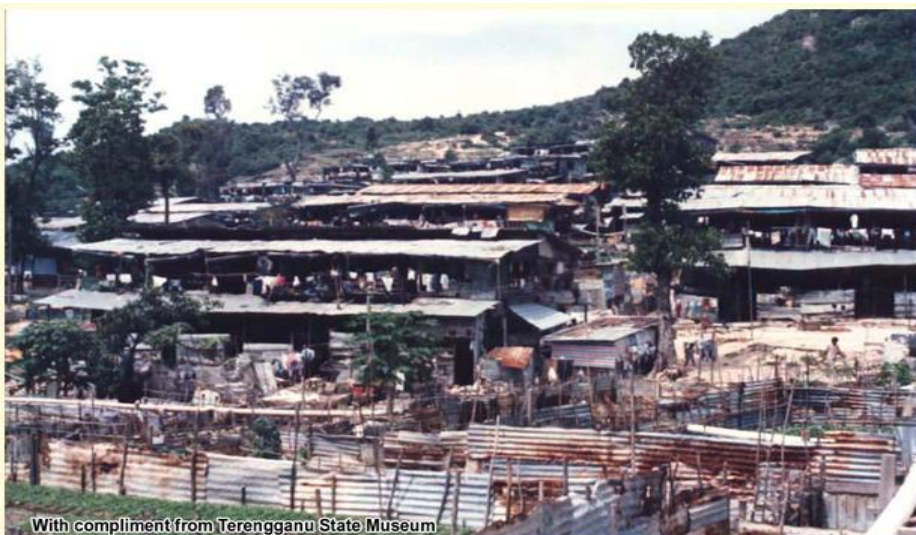
# EXODUS – VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE (cont.)

- “Boat people” suffered from hunger, thirst, disease, deadly storms and pirate attacks before finding safety.
- Woman and children were often raped and beaten by pirates, mostly by Thai pirates.
- According to the United Nations high Commission for Refugees, between 200,000 and 400,000 boat people died at sea.



# REFUGEE CAMPS

- The UNHCR, under the auspices of the United Nations, set up refugee camps in neighbouring countries to process the “boat people”, such as Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Hong Kong and Indonesia.
- According to the stories told by the Vietnamese refugees, the conditions at camps were poor. Refugees at Thai camps were maltreated and many were brutally bullied by the Thai guards.



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# CULTURE

- The ancient Bronze age Dong Son culture is considered to be one of its most important progenitors.
- Due to the long-term Chinese influence on its civilization, in terms of politics, government and Confucian social and moral ethics, Vietnam is considered to be part of the East Asian Cultural Sphere.



# CULTURE (cont.)

Following independence from China in the 10th century, Vietnam began a southward expansion that saw the annexation of territories formerly belonging to the Champa civilization (now Centre Vietnam) and parts of the Khmer empire (today southern Vietnam), which resulted in minor regional variances in Vietnam's culture due to exposure to these different groups.



# CULTURE (cont.)

- During French colonial period, Vietnamese culture received merchant influences from the Europeans, including the spread of Catholicism and the adoption of Latin alphabet—to this day, Vietnam is the only nation of Indochina which uses the Latin alphabet to write the national language.
- Important symbols present in Vietnamese culture include dragons, turtles, lotuses and bamboo.



# CULTURE (cont.)

- Arms crossing while talking with elder, teachers, or monks shows respect which is different from Western culture.
- One's head is where to place the respect to his/her parents, grandparents or ancestors. Only the elder can touch a young person's head.
- Using feet to point someone shows disrespect.
- Vietnamese people do not recognize "personal space". They like touching others while they are talking such as touching hands, crossing shoulders, etc., which is not allowed in Western culture.





# **FAMILY LIFE IN VIETNAM**

The Vietnamese way of life is profoundly influenced by ancestor worship. Children learnt at very early age that they owe everything they have to their parents and their ancestors. Doing well in school and working hard is one way to honour their parents and the family name.

Respect for the parents, ancestors is extended to elders; their life experiences are valued

# FAMILY LIFE IN VIETNAM (cont.)

- In the traditional Vietnamese family, the roles are rigid:
  - **The roles of men:** The man is the official figure of the family. He is the one who makes the decision for the family, not only socially but also economically. He is primarily responsible for the economic well-being of the family. He takes pride in his role of family provider.
  - **The roles of women:** The woman of the house is referred to as *noi tuong*, “General of the Interior.” Anything that relates to the smooth operation of the household is the woman’s responsibility. She looks after the children, her husband as well as her in-laws. Vietnamese women live by the “four virtues”: hard work, beauty, refined speech and excellent conduct.
  - **The roles of children:** Children always are expected to obey the adults. Older children help to look after younger children. Discipline is viewed as a parental duty. After early childhood, spanking is common. Children are not allowed to interfere when the adults are speaking. They are not expected to look at the elders’ and parents’ eyes. It is considered to be rude when it happened. Therefore you might find that in general the Vietnamese children in Vietnam are passive.

# THE WORSHIP IN VIETNAM

There is a strong aspect of ancestor worship in many Vietnamese families. Vietnamese try to act in ways which they believe will please their elders and their ancestors. In a typical Vietnamese house, the best place is dedicated to the ancestors' altar. Families burn incense and place food on the altar, which is filled with pictures of the deceased family members.



# COSTUME

- Different ethnic minority groups have different costumes
- The most popular and widely-recognized Vietnamese national costume is the Áo Dài. Áo Dài was once worn by both genders but today it is worn mainly by females, except for certain important traditional culture-related occasions where some men do wear it. Áo Dài consists of a long gown with a slit on both sides, worn over cotton or silk trousers. Áo Dài is elegant and comfortable to wear



“four-part” dress



Áo Dài



Áo bà ba

# CUISINE

- Vietnamese cuisine is extremely diverse, often divided into three main categories, each pertaining to Vietnam's three main regions (north, central and south)
- Currently, Vietnamese cuisine has been gaining popularity and can be found widely in many other countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, France, etc.



Pho – Vietnamese Noodle Soup



“Cha Gio” – Vietnamese Spring Rolls

# LUNAR NEW YEAR

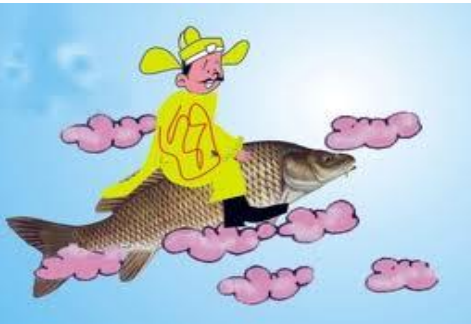
- It is also known as Tết or Vietnamese New Year – the most important and popular holiday in Vietnam
- Before New Year's Eve, one or two weeks before the actual celebration, Vietnamese families do a massive shopping, clean up, decorate inside and around the house and make delicious and traditional cakes or deserts (sticky rice cakes, sweeties, etc.)



# LUNAR NEW YEAR (cont.)



- On the 23rd day of the twelfth month by lunar calendar, Vietnamese families clean up their kitchen to say goodbye to the three Kitchen Gods to the heaven to report to the Jade Emperor about the events happened in the family in whole year and welcome them back on the last day of the lunar year.



- All the family members return home for the Lunar New Year.





# LUNAR NEW YEAR (cont.)

- The first 3 days of the Lunar New Year (Tet) are very important for the Vietnamese families. They avoid fighting, suing, cleaning up, or limit to visiting other families (especially the first day of Tet).
- Children receive red envelopes containing money from their elders. Children wear new clothes and give their elders the traditional Tết greetings before getting the envelop.
- People are going to the temples, visiting cousins, teachers, and friends, gambling or travelling during Tet.
- Some Vietnamese families pay for the dragon dance in the front of their house, which means to chivy unlucky things and welcome happiness and luck. There are also public performances for everyone to watch.
- Tet holiday is usually about 4 days. After that, people start cleaning up, get ready to be back to work or school.



# OTHER PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

- Besides Tet holiday, there are several different public holidays during the year in Vietnam. However, they are not very important as Tet, such as:
  - Hung Kings Commemorations ( 10<sup>th</sup> day of 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month)
  - Liberation/Reunification Day (April 30<sup>th</sup> )
  - International Workers' Day (May 1<sup>st</sup>)
  - National Day (Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Etc.



# VIETNAMESE CANADIAN

- Mainstream Vietnamese communities began arriving in Canada in the early 1970s as students. There were around 2000 people and they mostly located in Quebec.
- The next flow came to Canada after 1975s as refugees or boat people following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.
- Most of the arrivals were sponsored by groups of individuals, temples, and churches and settled in areas around Southern Ontario, Montreal, Quebec, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

# VIETNAMESE CANADIAN (cont.)

- Most Vietnamese settled in large urban areas, such as Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver, etc.
- According to the Statistic Canada in September 1, 2012, the total Vietnamese Canadian population was 180,125. Ontario is the province which has the largest number of Vietnamese Canadian population.

# LIFE IN CANADA

- The elderly find themselves isolated from their traditional role and from younger members who take on Canadian values. They might refer themselves as “deaf and dumb” to describe their isolation and limited abilities in Canada. Homesickness and loneliness often result in depression and anxiety for many Vietnamese in Canada.
- Because of different language, most Vietnamese as refugees or boat people face difficulty in profound conversation in English. Sometimes, they appear to answer “yes” to all questions. This “yes” may mean, yes, I am listening or yes, I am confused or yes, I do not want to offend.

# VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN LONDON, ONTARIO

- By best estimates, Vietnamese first began arriving in London and area in the mid 1970's. Larger groups arrived in the late 70's and early 80's as refugees, sponsored by many Canadian churches and community groups.
- Since then, more family members have immigrated to London and the community now stands at about 4,000, largely settling in North-East area of the city.

(According to "London's Vietnamese Community" by Jane Antoniak)

# VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN LONDON, ONTARIO (cont.)

- In London, there are two temples where Buddhist Vietnamese can practice their faith. As well, for Christians, there is the Vietnamese Catholic Church which operates from St. Andrews Church and offers monthly services in Vietnamese.
- There is the Vietnamese Heritage Language School, supported by Catholic Board of Education, the school has operated for more than 20 years in London, with approximately 100 students from kindergarten to grade 6.



# CULTURAL COMMUNITY RELATED TO LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Since the London Vietnamese Association dissolved in 2001, there was not many representatives in the community to voice their concerns.
- They started to seek supports and helps from the main stream services. And of course, many have faced the barriers in communication in term of Language and recourse.
- They obtain legal support in bigger city like Toronto and pay lawyers for services



# **CULTURAL COMMUNITY RELATED TO LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **(cont.)**

- Vietnamese considers that “what happens in the house, stay inside the house”. They are unfamiliar with counselling services. They do not like someone else to know their personal issues. Therefore, it might be difficult for support services to help the family.
- Some who had bad experience with the legal system in Vietnam might have a fear to contact with the legal services in Canada, especially police or court.

# CULTURAL COMMUNITY RELATED TO LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

- There is a lack of knowledge and awareness of community resources, especially in justice.
- Most importantly, they feel discriminated when involved with legal aspects including both young and old generations.



Remember that it is not important to memorize thousand facts about Vietnam. What important is that you could give your time and your supports to help the Vietnamese community achieves a higher standard of life.

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**THANK YOU !!!**