

My Viet Nam War: Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: DIÊU TRANG VO
Interviewers: Faith Lam and Cynthia Brown
Date: November 12, 2021
Location: Irvine, California
Sub-collection: My Viet Nam War: Oral History Project
Length of interview: 1:43:59

Time log

- 00:00:47 Diêu Trang Vo discusses her parent's occupation and their return to Vietnam from France.
- 00:03:52 She discusses the French and Vietnamese education systems in Vietnam and what times she was at school in Dalat and Saigon.
- 00:08:45 She describes how her life was mostly sheltered from the war and going to school.
- 00:10:53 She recounts sheltering from the shelling of the North Vietnamese troops.
- 00:13:46 She describes her experience of the Buddhist movement against Ngô Đình Diệm. She describes the arrest of multiple families, thoughts about the president, and the movement.
- 00:21:15 She retells her witnessing of a self-immolation in late August 1963.
- 00:26:26 She discusses the difference between the French and American occupations and describes the American soldiers she encountered.
- 00:33:38 She describes her experience in Dalat during the Tet offensive of 1968, retelling how she sheltered with other evacuees and her point of view as a child. She also tells how she lost communication with her father and the violence she saw.

- 00:40:50 She talks about American foods and products during the war and the Post Exchange. (PX)
- 00:45:45 She talks about how one of her aunt's relationship with a US soldier, how they got married and then move to the USA.
- 00:47:45 She discusses her family's decisions around leaving Vietnam and their feeling about the communist from the north and their feeling of needing to stay serve the county. She discusses her view of the North Vietnamese, her sympathy for those on the bottom, and about effects of propaganda.
- 01:00:33 She recounts living with 175 North Vietnamese soldiers after her Grandfather's house in Saigon is taken by the communist. She tells of how they don't know about modern appliances or to properly clean the house.
- 01:02:51 She discusses how father and mother worked under communist rule, and how they sold their household items and the system of rations.
- 01:08:03 She discusses her feelings about the Fall of Saigon, how it never dawned on her that the Americans would leave despite the news of advancing troops. She discusses how she held out hope that the situation ends in the years after.
- 01:15:16 She talks about her escape from Vietnam, how she disguised herself to move through the countryside and leave on a boat. She discusses her time on the water, how Malaysian naval officers left them a tip to go to Terengganu, where they were accepted by the Red Crescent.
- 01:26:50 Discusses how she was able to sponsored to go to the US with help of the red crescent and US embassies while in Malaysia

- 01:28:28 She talks about arriving in the US in Charleston, Illinois, and subsequent moves to Washington DC and then Orange County, California.
- 01:31:42 She talks about her parent's attempts to leave Vietnam and their charity work in Vietnam.
- 01:36:26 She talks about how she corresponded with her parents while they were in Vietnam and she was living in the USA.
- 01:42:12 She gives closing remarks about the importance of South Vietnamese telling their own story about the war period.