

Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American



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History of Vietnam

- Vietnam has been colonized by the Chinese and the French.
- The French colonized Vietnam and made it a territory of French Indochina. This paved its way for French influence in culture, architect, food and education system; they remained in power until WWII.
- Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Roman Catholicism, Hao Hao, Islam, Protestantism, Animism play a significant part in Vietnam because of the influences by the Chinese and the French.

History of Vietnam

- Ho Chi Minh, a political figure, started the Vietnam front in the northern Vietnam called the Viet Minh which divided the country into communist/socialist north referred to as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.
- Ho Chi Minh, wanting to unify the country into one communist country, gathered the Vietnam War which takes place in (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia). This occurred November 1, 1955 – April 30, 1975 when Saigon fell to the north.
- The Soviet Union backed the communist north.

History of Vietnam

- U.S. Americans backed the south but left Vietnam in 1973 because of the 1973 Paris Agreement.
- After the fall of Saigon, President Ford issued 130,000 refugees to enter the U.S. (125,000 of whom were Vietnamese); this was known as the first wave of refugees from 1975– 1978 composed of middle-class elite.
- In the late 1970s, a second wave of Vietnamese refugees entered the United States in what became known as the “boat people” refugee crisis.
- The third wave entered the United States throughout the 1980s and 1990s; unlike earlier arrivals, this group contained fewer refugees and included thousands of Vietnamese Amerasians (children of U.S. servicemen and Vietnamese mothers) as well as political prisoners

Geography of Vietnam



Geography of Vietnam

- Capital - Hanoi
- The country is long and narrow, almost like an S-shape (a.k.a. dragon shaped)
- 90% of the population are ethnic Vietnamese while the other are descendants of people who have migrated into the country.
- In America, Vietnamese communities, families and kinship are more prevalent in California, Texas, New York, and Florida.

Geography of Vietnam



Geography of Vietnam

- Tropical lowlands with dense forested mountains and hills.
- Part of Southeast Asia bordering the Pacific Ocean, Laos and Cambodia and southern part of China.
- Vietnamese American settled in California (40%), Texas (12%), Washington and Florida (4% each).

Politics of Vietnam

- Vietnam is a one-party Communist state; the Communist North conquered the South in 1975 after three decades of war.
- After 12 years of negotiations the country joined the World Trade Organization in January 2007. The ruling Communist Party shows little willingness to give up its monopoly on political power.
- It is one of south-east Asia's fastest-growing economies and has set its sight on becoming a developed nation by 2020. It became a unified country once more in 1975 when the armed forces of the Communist north seized the south.

Language

➤ Language – Vietnamese

- Tonal language
- Dialectical variations
- If the parents are somewhat traditional, Vietnamese is usually the main language spoken at home.
- Their children in Vietnamese Saturday and Sunday schools.
- The language is also used for social relationships meaning that the choice of words spoken depends on that person's relative age, social status, gender, respect, affection between the speakers and family relations.

Interpersonal Relationships

- Family is essential in Vietnamese society (a part of their social and moral values).
- Respect is highly emphasized.
- Age is an asset as the elderly are the most respected regardless of education, social position and financial situation but teachers and doctors are highly regarded even despite their age.
- Culture reflects French and Chinese because of previous influences from colonial periods.

Greetings, Displays of Respect and General Etiquette

➤ Greetings

- Shaking hands when greeting and saying goodbye.
- To elders, usually relatives, younger people bow their heads and cross their arms when greeting.

➤ Status, Role Prestige

- Education is highly valued; the education of the children is a reflection of the entire family.

➤ Role Prestige

- In the Vietnamese culture, it is highly patriarchal, but in the U.S., it is more egalitarian.



Marriage, Family and Kinship Structure

A person wearing a traditional conical hat is seen from behind, sitting in a small wooden boat on a pond. The pond is filled with large green lily pads and several pink lotus flowers. The background shows a dense line of green trees and foliage, suggesting a rural or natural setting.

➤ Marriage

- Interracial dating and marriage is more prevalent among Vietnamese Americans, especially Vietnamese women and another ethnic group.
- Marriage rates are higher than the national average of other U.S. Americans.

➤ Family

- Traditionally, when the Vietnamese parents retire or are no longer capable of working, they live and are cared for by their children.

Marriage, Family and Kinship Structure

➤ Family continue...

- Recently, this is no longer relevant as a lot of elders are either living by themselves because their children are caring for their children; really depends on the relationship of the parents and the children.
- Extended family is very important.
- Family includes maternal, paternal grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles.
- Family usually live in the same city; communal reasons.

Marriage, Family and Kinship Structure

A person wearing a traditional conical hat is rowing a small wooden boat through a pond filled with large green lily pads and pink lotus flowers. The background shows a dense line of trees and foliage, creating a serene and natural setting.

➤ **Family continue...**

- Family includes maternal, paternal grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles.
- Family usually live in the same city; communal reasons.

➤ **Kinship Structure**

- The older you are the more respect you have.

Gender Roles

- Vietnamese culture is very much **patriarchal** but that is shifting in the United States.
- Higher education is highly encouraged.
- Traditional Vietnamese home, the father is the authority figure and the mother is expected to take care of her husband, parent in law, and the children (no so much relevant within younger Vietnamese Americans).

Reproduction

- Generally, Vietnamese-American have 2-4 children. Having a son is thought to be good because the idea that the son will take care of the family if the father passes.
- In California alone, there are approximately 1.3 million Vietnamese living here. This is 40% of the Vietnamese population in the United States. The majority live in Southern California in Orange County, Los Angeles and Santa Clara areas. The entire population of Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American are 2.1 million people in the U.S.

Childhood and Socialization

A person wearing a traditional conical hat is seen from behind, sitting in a small wooden boat on a pond. The pond is filled with large green lily pads and some pink flowers. The background is a dense line of trees and foliage, creating a lush, natural setting. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

➤ Childhood and Socialization

- Education is highly valued as the knowledge of the children reflects on the entire family.
- Lots of conflicts because of the traditional values of their parents and the influences of growing up in American society.

Childhood and Socialization

➤ Socialization

- Many tend to rebel because of conflicting message from school and American culture.
- Expressing feelings is condemned in traditional society.
- Extracurricular activities like sports, girl/boy scouts and etc. helped.

Adolescence, Adulthood and Old Age

➤ Adolescence

- “U.S. born Vietnamese youth often have the mannerism and cultural traits of other American adolescents” causing intergenerational conflicts.
- Parent usually enroll their adolescence in Vietnamese weekend schools.
- **Because adolescence go to Viet and American schools, adolescence looks a distinctive characteristic; some even resent their parents because they want to be like their friends, share the same value.**
- The household is very strict and children feel too overprotective, almost feeling like subordinates
- **Conflicting values from American and Vietnamese society.**

Adolescence, Adulthood and Old Age

A person wearing a traditional conical hat is seen from behind, sitting in a small wooden boat on a pond. The pond is filled with large green lily pads and several pink lotus flowers. The background is a dense, green forest, creating a serene and natural setting.

➤ Adulthood

- Maintaining Vietnamese tradition is difficult among adults especially because of the social circles brought on by education, work, etc.

➤ Old Age

- The grandparents live with their children; they take care of the grandchildren or they are provided by their children.

Vietnamese-American Perception on People With Disabilities

- Depending on the family structure, they will perceive their children differently.
- In the traditional Vietnamese-American family unit, when they have a child with disability, it also reflects factors such as religion and social acceptance and etc.
- Vietnamese-American , there is a negative social stigma attached to knowing a person with disabilities.
- The changing attitude is more prevalent now because of education, American culture influences and etc.

Vietnamese-American Perception on People With Disabilities

- Because the Vietnamese-American family is structured as a **collective society** that if someone in the family does something wrong or is different from the norm, that affects everyone. There is this sense of reputation to hold and if that reputation is not “good” or normal, then the family unit is looked down on or embarrassed.
- The Vietnamese-American who has an education, will look at disabilities differently because they have more knowledge on this subject.

Vietnamese Courses and Centers in CA

1. Vietnamese-American cultural centers
2. Vietnamese Buddhist temples and churches around Sacramento. Religion practiced include Buddhism, Roman Catholicism (influenced by the French), Christianity, Confucianism, and others.
3. Vietnamese studies Internet Resource Center

Vietnamese in the USA Fact Sheet

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/fact-sheet/asian-american-vietnamese-in-the-u-s-fact-sheet/>

