The Viet Nam Literature Project publishes Vietnamese literature in English translation, when necessary, in America and to the world. We do this to help teachers, students and readers understand the social realities of the nation that has played so great a role in the life of the modern world, and to develop Vietnamese literature as a field of study in the United States. We further support the freedom and influence of Vietnamese writers by working for their public recognition.

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Promotion – nominations of VNLP authors to awards, honors, and to events and publications of other organizations

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Blood Seeds Become Poetry continues inside...
Dear Friends,

It’s late spring today in Orange County, North Carolina. Foals are dropping from the unbelievably pregnant mares here on our landlord’s farm. Bob and Betsy, the coon hounds who live on the porch, are barking at Lily the newborn in the paddock next to the VNLP office above the barn.

I hope to get this written and off to our designer, Jonathan Hill, before an afternoon cloudburst knocks out the power and Internet connection. I love the quiet here in Buck Quarter Road because it lets me work long days connecting with far-flung worlds of Vietnamese literature.

Jonathan is a good example. He is valedictorian of Savannah College of Art and Design (’03) in sequential art, what the rest of us call comics. We got in touch after I put out a call on the listserv of the Vietnamese Studies Group for a newsletter designer. He isn’t on that listserv, because he isn’t a Vietnamese Studies scholar. But his mother, Kimloan Hill, Lecturer in Vietnamese Language, Literature and History at San Diego State University, certainly is. We are working with Kimloan toward publishing her insights from teaching Khai Hung, one of the founding novelists of modern Viet Nam.

She passed my call for a designer on to her son. He was interested in learning more about his Vietnamese heritage, and we are thrilled to have a real cartoonist profiling the VNLP authors. Don’t miss Jonathan’s comic of the poet Nguyen Chi Thien beginning on the back panel of this newsletter.

Viet Nam Literature Project is in debt to Nguyen Chi Thien and his collaborator Jean Libby for allowing us to launch our website in March 2005 with a page on his life and work, and for starring at our liftoff party, hosted by board member Pamela Rosenthal and supporters Tom Enders and Elise Thoron at their loft in New York.

Those events have sparked a year of writing and speaking for Thien, with a book underway at the Council for Southeast Asia Studies at Yale University, re-publication of his VNLP memoir in the University of Hawaii’s journal Manoa, and many personal appearances. The year has been as active for VNLP, launching five more authors at the website and sending me off to speak at universities, conferences and classrooms.

Literature News, the official Viet Nam Literature Project newsletter, will try to keep you abreast every season of our activities, our plans, our supporters, and most of all our authors. Thanks to Jonathan for his design work and to all of our readers for your support.

Our first annual appeal was a success. We hope that this quarterly newsletter, and a similar brochure for speaking engagements, will bring in income as we continue to seek support from government and institutions.

Please consider subscribing to Literature News in the envelope provided, or extending your support to our other operations. We are bringing Vietnamese literature to the United States entirely with private support, grateful for your help.

Dan

Editor, Viet Nam Literature Project
**Summer Party in Durham with Ly Lan**

Anna and Steve Wilson will host a party for Saigon author Ly Lan at their home in Durham on Thursday, June 15 to launch her new page at the VNLP website. RSVP for details to 919-383-7274 or to editor@vietnamlit.org.

Ly, who translates all the Harry Potter books into Vietnamese, will be visiting North Carolina in June with her husband the historian Mart Stewart, who will be leading a seminar at the National Center for the Humanities.

Steve served in Viet Nam with the Coast Guard during the war, and he and Anna now teach on frequent trips to Saigon, where Anna met Ly. I met Ly in 2000 in the Vietnamese library at Paris VII, and got to know her soon after as she wrote a master’s thesis at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem.

We met again at “The Other Viet Nam” conference which Lily Chiu organized at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Lily is the author of our new Ly page, contributing a translation, introduction, bibliography and teacher’s notes.

Lily gives teachers’ notes on how to present three of Lan’s short stories in the classroom, and the page altogether presents an overview of twenty years’ work by a multifaceted writer. Come to our first VNLP party in Durham and meet the author!

**Fall Parties in New York and DC**

Valerie Asher will host the second annual DC-area VNLP party at her home in Bethesda, Maryland, on the afternoon of Saturday, September 30, 2006. RSVP editor@vietnamlit.org. The speaker and other details will be announced in August. Save the date!

Carol Irving will host the first fall party for VNLP in New York at her loft on the Lower East Side. Elise Thoron & Tom Enders, Sam Duffy, and Pamela Rosenthal will host their second spring party in New York for VNLP in 2007. Dates and speakers to be announced.
Prison Poet — Liberates — World

Jonathan Hill’s comic of Nguyen Chi Thien is just the most recent attention paid to the heroic poet in the last year. He has been getting a lot of press, such as Nataly Teplitsky’s two-part article on him in Epoch Times, the Falun Gong publication.

Thien has returned to Yale University since visiting there with VNLP in 2005, to speak this past April to Quang Phu Van’s Vietnamese culture class. Yale University Southeast Asia Studies plans to release Thien’s Hoa Lo: Ha Noi Hilton Stories in English in 2007.

These stories include such reminiscences as Thien gave at his talk at Johns Hopkins University’s School for Advanced International Studies last fall. Manoa, the journal of Asian and Pacific literature at the University of Hawaii, will publish in July an improved version of Thien’s autobiography from the website.

VNLP has further nominated Thien for a second Hellman/Hammett award from Human Rights Watch. Asian-Americanist curator Vu Pham has selected a photograph of Thien, taken in the prison camps, to go with a narrative by collaborator Jean Libby and one of Thien’s poems in the upcoming Smithsonian exhibit on Vietnamese Americans.

In September Thien will travel to Great Barrington, Massachusetts to speak at “Resilience of the Human Spirit: an International Gathering of Poets” in the Guthrie Center, located in the former church made famous by Arlo in his “Alice’s Restaurant” anti-massacre talking blues.

These are all consequences of Jean Libby’s tireless efforts, including Thien’s English-language page at VNLP, outreach building from Thien’s own intense activity among Vietnamese people.

He just visited Australia at the invitation of the Vietnamese community there, to take part in a demonstration marking April 30, the fall of Saigon in 1975. Thien is also putting his celebrity to work promoting other Vietnamese writers, particularly fellow prisoners.

He appeared at the launch of a prison memoir by Dang Chi Binh, a Saigon commando captured in the North in 1967, which Jean Libby is helping to translate as Black Steel. VNLP is talking with her about a possible book of selections from Vietnamese prison literature.

Thien’s translator at the VNLP website, Nguyen Ngoc Bich has just released the most complete and authoritative collection to date of Thien’s poetry, Hoa Dia Nguc (East Coast USA Vietnamese Publishers Consortium), over 500 pages including about 700 poems in Vietnamese with the texts corrected by Thien.

Nguyen Chi Thien photo © Jean Libby

NOTES:

Most of the information for this comic came from the essay “The Journey of a Thousand Authors of Nguyen Chi Thien” by Jean Libby. Addional story editing help from Dai Dunny and Nguyen Chi Thien himself. I hope this comic pays him the honor he deserves...

THE END.
Greg Lockhart and Nhat Linh

Greg Lockhart called from Australia the other night to suggest a possible collaboration with community colleges there, using VNLP materials in the classroom. Greg and his wife Monique translated our two stories from Nhat Linh, a founding editor as well as author of modern Vietnamese literature.

“Going to France” and “A Dream of Tu Lam” are the most visited pages on our website, we think because of their inclusion in college courses. Nhat Linh is significant to Vietnamese history as well as literature, and the Lockharts’ heavily annotated translations provide rich entrée to the past.

Greg himself was an Australian soldier in Viet Nam before becoming an historian. He has just completed pre-publication work on his book The Minefield, about an Australian military disaster in Phuoc Thuy in 1967, already the basis of a documentary film, Vietnam Minefield.

Human Rights Watch Nomination for Nguyen Quoc Chanh

VNLP has nominated Nguyen Quoc Chanh for a Lillian Hellman/Dashiell Hammett award from Human Rights Watch. HRW administers the grants “for writers all around the world who have been victims of political persecution and are in financial need.”

The VNLP page on Chanh is a key document of his nomination, explaining to the judges the heroism of this surrealist poet and his independent publishing in Saigon. We were joined in this nomination by many distinguished co-signators:

Dr. Sven Arnold, Program Coordinator, Department of Literature and the Humanities, House of World Cultures, Berlin, Germany; Nguyen Hung Quoc, critic and co-editor of the premier Vietnamese-language poetry journal, Tho; Mong-Lan, poet; Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh, poet and editor of the literary journal, Gio Van; Linh Dinh, poet, fiction writer, translator; Pham Thi Hoai, novelist and founder of the leading Vietnamese-language web forum on literature and society, talawas; Paul Hoover, poet, critic, co-editor of New American Writing and editor of The Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry; Do Kh., poet and editor of the leading Vietnamese-language poetry journal, Tho; Mong-Lan, poet; Nguyen Hung Quoc, critic and co-editor of the premier Vietnamese-language literary web journal, Tien Ve; Susan Schultz, poet and publisher of Three Vietnamese Poets, Professor, English Department, University of Hawaii, Manoa; Hoang Ngoc Tuan, critic, composer and the other co-editor of Tien Ve; Tran Vu, fiction writer and former editor of the prominent literary journal, Hop Lau; Marjory Wentworth, poet laureate, South Carolina. Thanks!

Illustration from Customs, 1935, for “Philosophy” chapter of Going to France by Nhat Linh.
Welcome Back Linh Dinh!  

Linh Dinh has returned to Philadelphia from his year’s fellowship at Norwich University, just after giving readings in Cambridge, Colchester and London. He is off to Bard to teach for July. Publisher’s Weekly just reviewed his last book of poems, American Tatts, his collection of translations from contemporary Vietnamese fiction, Night Again, has reappeared with two new stories, and the new poetry book, Borderless Bodies, is in the stores. Hats off! Come see Linh at a VNLP party in New York soon!

Host a VNLP Party  

We hold parties in private homes to build an audience for our authors and contacts for our organization. A VNLP author makes a personal appearance, everyone has a good time, and we take names for our mailing list. We started with New York and Washington, DC, the national capitols, and with our home base of Durham, North Carolina. We seek hosts for more parties in these cities and new locations. Contact Dan at 919-383-7274 or editor@vietnamlit.org.

Tran Dieu Hang Update  

Tran Dieu Hang’s page at our website, one of the first, will expand soon with a translation of an interview from the Vietnamese-language American press. Translator Alyce Van introduced herself after I gave a talk at Yale University. We continued to discuss her wide interests in modern Vietnamese literature by email, and she volunteered to do some work for the website. We look forward to her work bringing more attention to Dieu Hang.

Congratulations to JVS!  

Mariam Beevi Lam and Peter Zinoman, working with the University of California Press and the Center for Southeast Asia Studies at the University of California, and support from Helena Kolenda and Terry Lautz at the Henry Luce Foundation are launching the Journal of Vietnamese Studies this fall!

Individual subscriptions are $45 at http://www.ucpress.edu/journals/vs/shop.htm, or call 510-642-9917 or email journals@ucpress.edu.

VNLP Legal Status and Funding  

VNLP is a d/b/a for Books & Authors: Viet Nam, Inc., a federally recognized 501.c.3 non-profit corporation in North Carolina. VNLP is establishing its program with private funding over the first three years, 2005-7, while developing income-generating programs and approaching institutional partners.

Four major donors have made a three-year commitment of annual gifts in the range of one to five thousand dollars to support initial operations: Anonymous, Lucy Duffy, Tom Enders & Elise Thoron, and Pamela Rosenthal & Samuel Wertheimer.

Six individuals have committed to hosting annual events to bring the VNLP mission to potential supporters in major cities: Pamela Rosenthal, Tom Enders, Elise Thoron, Sam Duffy and Carol Irving in New York City, and Valerie Asher in Washington, DC.

In November 2005 we made our first annual appeal by mail to addresses gathered at these events, and at VNLP appearances at conferences and universities. Those who have responded at parties, via Paypal on the website, or to the annual appeal with support are: Le Phuong Anh, Anne Asher, Valerie Asher, Kim and Laurence Berger, Donna Dennis, Nina and Harold Drooker, Denise and Timothy Duffy, Lan Duong & Viet Nguyen, Anne Frank, Chan Khuong, Robert R. Jones III, Terri Moore, Penny and Bernard Snow, Jeneva Stone, Son Truong, and David Yin.

Other income has come from speaker’s fees to the editor from the Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture and Society at Temple University, and the Council for Southeast Asia Studies at Yale University, and from a consulting fee for reviewing the Vietnamese-language programming of Radio Free Asia.

VNLP Financials  

2005  

Year One - Annual

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2006  

Year Two – Through April 30

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<tr>
<td>Net</td>
<td>858.79</td>
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</table>
The first six quarters of VNLP have been the work of many hands. Tom Enders started the project with an offer of support, matched by Anonymous and Lucy Duffy; Stephen Denney hooked us up with Nguyen Chi Thien and his collaborator Jean Libby; Ken Ray invited us to our first university presentation on VNLP at the Center for Vietnamese Philosophy, Culture and Society, at Temple University; Mariam Beevi Lam, Fiona Ngo and Isabelle Pelaud invited us to their party in New York City welcoming Ha Noi novelist and dissident Nguyen Chi Thien; Wynn Wilcox invited us to his father’s class at the Village loft of The First Church of Christ at the Village; Beth Eastlick, Jean Libby and Dan Rogers began selling us website, graphics, and accounting and database software for next to nothing. Thanks!

In the second quarter of 2005: Sophie Quinn-Judge invited us to our first university presentation on VNLP at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, who invited Nguyen Chi Thien to Yale University for our first author reading, invited Dan back to talk about the overall project; John Rogers and Cornelia Pearsall, masters of Berkeley College at Yale, hosted our “Beyond the Viet Nam War” conference at the University of California at Riverside; Pamela Rosenthal hosted our first VNLP party for Nguyen Chi Thien at the Village loft of Tom Enders and Elise Thoron in New York City where Sam Duffy of One With Heart gym and his students Nils Hasche and Lucy Stein worked the door, desk, and refreshments; Erik Reavely invited us to speak at his Anthropology class at the University of North Carolina; publicist Katharine Walton handed off to Marjory Wentworth. Thanks!

In the third quarter: Valerie Asher hosted Thien at the first DC-area party at her home in Bethesda, Maryland, when Fred Brown invited Thien to speak at the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins campus in DC; David and Renee Asher’s son Jacob and daughters Hannah and Kara hosted Bob & Betsy for the events. Thanks!

In the fourth quarter: Khanh-Van Nguyen, outreach coordinator at the Center for Asian Studies at Michigan State University hosted us in Atlanta for our presentation to the Viet Nam Studies Group; Isabelle Pelaud hosted our first meeting and invited us to her summer colony in August. For the future: One With Heart & Rights Watch funded a Rockefeller fellowship application for Dan through the William Joiner Center at the University of Massachusetts to launch a wiki at the VNLP website on Vietnamese literature scholars; Wynn Wilcox included us in his “Viet Nam and the West” conference at Western Connecticut State University, who hosted us in Danbury; Marc Gilbert hosted us in Atlanta for our presentation to the Vietnamese American Studies Team at the Association for Asian American Studies; Lorraine Aragon invited us to speak at her Anthropology class at the University of North Carolina; Saigon author Minh Ngoc visited us here on the farm with her husband and helped to feed the horses; Amy Stolls reviewed our last year’s application to the Access to the Arts program at the National Endowment for the Arts and advised us on our next application. Thanks!

In the quarter ending with June 2006: Kimloan Hill referred us to Jonathan Hill who designed this newsletter and contributed the comic about Nguyen Chi Thien; Scott Savitt hosted us at the Medicine Buddha temple in San Francisco for our presentations at the Asian Studies meetings, where Lucien Ellington included us in the agenda for the Education About Asia meeting and Michele Thompson invited us to launch a wiki at the VNLP website on Vietnamese literature scholars; Wynn Wilcox included us in his “Viet Nam and the West” conference at Western Connecticut State University, who hosted us in Danbury; Marc Gilbert hosted us in Atlanta for our presentation to the Vietnamese American Studies Team at the Association for Asian American Studies; Lorraine Aragon invited us to speak at her Anthropology class at the University of North Carolina; Saigon author Minh Ngoc visited us here on the farm with her husband and helped to feed the horses; Amy Stolls reviewed our last year’s application to the Access to the Arts program at the National Endowment for the Arts and advised us on our next application. Thanks!

In the next quarter: Nina Drooker has invited us to speak at Three Arrows summer colony in August. For the future: Sam Duffy has offered his One With Heart gym and Carol Irving her Lower East Side loft for New York City events; Greg Lockhart is investigating a possible VNLP collaboration with community colleges in Australia; Tim Duffy is lending us a camera to take high-density digital photos for the next newsletter; Y Ban & Elizabeth Collins, Dennis Dunnivan & Viet Nguyen, Thuong-Vuong Riddick, Wendy Duong, Wynn Wilcox, Kimloan Hill, Pho ba Long and Alyce Van are now working with us on pages for the website. Thanks!

Throughout: Denise Duffy operates the children of the Music Maker Relief Foundation advises us on management issues and the Viet Nam Studies Group listserver provides constant counsel. Most of all: Linh Dinh, Mong Lan, Tran Qui Phiet, Do Le Anhdao, Greg and Monique Lockhart, Jean Libby, Nguyen Ngoc Bich and Lily Chiu have translated, facilitated, and commented on Nguyen Chi Thien, Nhat Linh, Tran Dieu Hang, Nguyen Quoc Chanh, Do Kh, and Ly Lan for the website. Thanks!
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Support VNLP

VNLP accepts donations by PayPal at our website, www.vietnamlit.org/donations.html and by check to Viet Nam Literature Project, 5600 Buck Quarter Road, Hillsborough, NC 27278. All donations are tax-deductible under relevant US law.

Please consider supporting the Viet Nam Literature Project. Private support pays for all our work these first three years, 2005-7, while we develop income-producing projects and seek institutional, government and foundation partners.

- Member $25 covers the cost of preparing and sending you Literature News.
- Impresario $250 provides honoraria for the authors and translators for a page on the VNLP website.
- Supporter $50 or Lit Lover $100 helps us send Literature News to those who have not yet joined.
- Patron $1000 pays all the direct costs of a new author page on the VNLP website.