

Newsletter Credits: Edited by Dan Duffy, Design by Jonathan Hill and Jason Rainey. Literature News is published by Books & Authors: Viet Nam, Inc. d/b/a Viet Nam Literature Project, email editor@vietnamlit.org © 2006 VNLP. All rights reserved.

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.

**Board of Directors**  
Dan Duffy – President  
Stanley Katz  
Pamela Rosenthal  
Daniel Egger  
James Friedlander  
Nancy Seybold  
Peter Delevett  
**Advisory Board**  
Lucy Nguyen  
Lucien Ellington

#### Viet Nam Literature Project Programs

**Website** – representative works by Vietnamese authors with supporting materials for classroom and research use  
**Outreach** – newsletter, e-bulletins, and events in major cities to publicize VNLP authors  
**Speakers** – offering VNLP authors and staff to appear on campus and in classrooms  
**Promotion** – nominations of VNLP authors to awards, honors, and to events and publications of other organizations



*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.



Dan, Bob & Betsy photo © Timothy Duffy

**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



## E V E N T S

## 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.

**Lan**, 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**.



*Ly Lan photo supplied by the author*

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 **Lan**. I met **Lan** 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 Lan** 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.



Nguyen Chi Thien photo © Jean Libby

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.

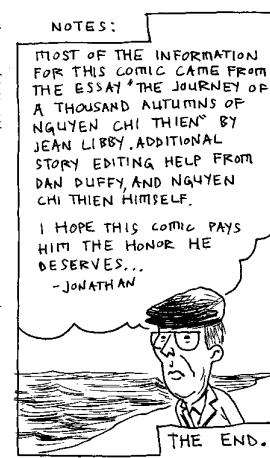
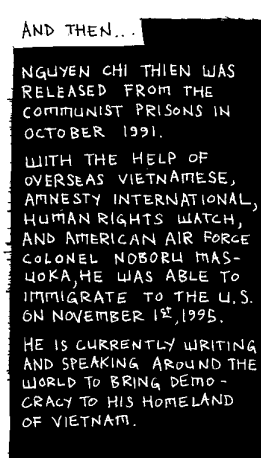
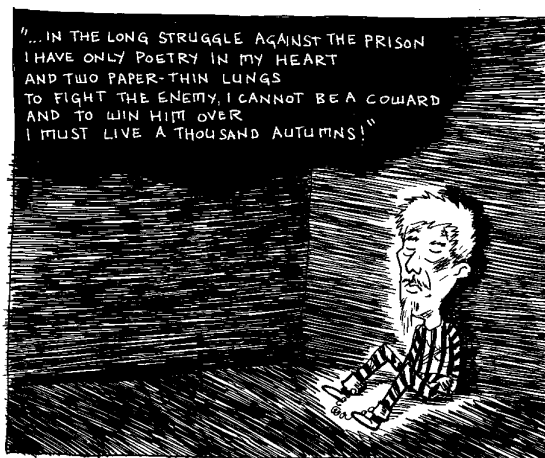
These are all consequences of **Jean Libby's** tireless efforts, including **Thien's** English-language page at **VNLP**, outreach building from **Thien's** own intense activity among Vietnamese people.

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**.



## A U T H O R S



Cover of *E Tao Day!* (trans. Hey You!), Nguyen Quoc Chanh's illegal poetry collection

### 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 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 Luu*; **Marjory Wentworth**, poet laureate, South Carolina. Thanks!



### 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*.



Illustration from *Customs*, 1935, for “*Philosophy*” chapter of *Going to France* by Nhat Linh.

## A N N O U N C E M E N T S

**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 re-appeared 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 capitals, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

Income	14,194.85
Expenses	13,203.70
Net	991.15

2006

Year Two - Through April 30

Income	6,498.22
Expenses	5,630.43
Net	858.79

## T H A N K S

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** designed our website; **Katharine Walton** started our publicity; **Lucien Ellington** of **Education About Asia** and **Lucy Nguyen** of the **University of Massachusetts** were the first to join our **Advisory Committee**. Thanks!

In the second quarter of 2005: **Sophie Quinn-Judge** 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** included us in their “**30 Years 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** during the events. Thanks!

In the fourth quarter: **Khanh-Van Nguyen**, outreach coordinator at the **Center for Asian Studies** at **Michigan State University** included us in her application to the **National Endowment for the Humanities** for a seminar on Vietnamese history and culture for high-school teachers; **Hong-Phong Pho** of the **Department of Commerce** tipped us to his father **Pho ba Long**’s extraordinary memoir; **Marcia Alina** at **Human Rights Watch** facilitated the nominations of **Nguyen Quoc Chanh** and **Nguyen Chi Thien** to the Hellman/Hammett awards; **Duke University** development officer **Beth Eastlick** reviewed our planning documents and outlined a strategy to raise foundation funds; **Techsoup** began selling us website, graphics, accounting and database software for next to nothing. Thanks!

In the first quarter of 2006: Webmaster **Ken Ray** handed our website off to **Paulette Stiles**; **Will Schwalbe** of **Hyperion** and **Jeri Laber** of **Human Rights Watch** invited us to speak to the **International Freedom to Publish Committee** of the **Association of American Publishers** about publishing and literature in Viet Nam; **Quang Phu Van**, **Ben Kiernan**, **Joe Errington** and **Kristine Mooseker** at the **Council for Southeast Asia 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 on both visits; **Mariam Beevi Lam**, **Isabelle Pelaud** and **Linh Dinh** supported 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 **Association for Asian Studies** meetings, where **Lucien Ellington** included us in the agenda for the **Education About Asia** meeting and **Michele Thompson** included us in the agenda for the **Viet Nam Studies Group** meeting; **Judith Henchy** included us in the deliberations and meeting of the **Translations Project Group**; **Will Schwalbe** and **David Cheng** invited us to their party in New York City welcoming Ha Noi novelist and dissident **Duong Thu Huong** and her translator **Nina McPherson** to the United States; **Huynh Tran** introduced us to **Katherine Kline** as she prepares reading groups on **Duong Thu Huong** at the **92<sup>nd</sup> St. Y** in New York. 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** the operations chief of the **Music Maker Relief Foundation** advises us on management issues and the **Viet Nam Studies Group** listserv 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!

## VNLP Mission and Programs

**Viet Nam Literature Project** publishes Vietnamese literature and supporting materials 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.

Four programs fulfill these goals:

**Website** • Representative works by Vietnamese authors with supporting materials for classroom and research use

**Outreach** • Print newsletter, e-bulletins, and events in major cities to publicize VNLP authors

**Speakers** • Appearances by VNLP authors and staff on campus and in classrooms

**Promotion** • Nomination of VNLP authors to awards and honors, referral to publications and events of other organizations

# Literature News

The Viet Nam Literature Project Newsletter



## Support VNLP

VNLP accepts donations by **Paypal** at our website, [www.vietnamlit.org/donations.html](http://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.



5600 Buck Quarter Rd.  
Hillsborough, NC 27278  
tel. 919 383 7274  
email - [editor@vietnamlit.org](mailto:editor@vietnamlit.org)  
[www.vietnamlit.org](http://www.vietnamlit.org)

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*.

☐ **Supporter \$50** or ☐ **Lit Lover \$100** helps us send *Literature News* to those who have not yet joined.

☐ **Impresario \$250** provides honoraria for the authors and translators for a page on the VNLP website.

☐ **Patron \$1000** pays all the direct costs of a new author page on the VNLP website.