

A NOTE ABOUT THE VN WAR, THE VN DIASPORA, AND UNITY

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

The VN War is a very sensitive subject. No matter who you talk to, there is going to be some strong emotions on either side. I mean, you're not gonna start a conversation about WWII and have someone say, "That Hitler wasn't so bad and I kinda support what he did." That's almost never gonna happen. (I say "almost" because some people be trippy, man.) But the VN War was different. The lines were, and still are, blurred.

We are the children of the diaspora; the blood that runs through our veins stem from centuries before the war, from China and Annam, to now in America, Canada, Belgium, France, all over the world. We have no voice. And our history, our truth, our version of the story are all through word of mouth. Which, actually, shouldn't matter because truth and history are subjective, right? But we need some sort of official scribe to record our parents' versions just to have some sort of a voice for our children and our children's children's who will not have the luxuries of firsthand accounts.

We were raised on personal stories our parents told. To be fed so full of those words and then go to school, trusting our malleable brains to the hands of American teachers, just to have them shred to pieces everything we have ever been taught at home is a more than a slap in the face.

Sometimes I think about these things and I worry. I worry about losing VN, the country. (China keeps subtly invading us, damnit.) I worry about the loss of the language. I worry about fading traditions and values. I worry about the loss of the tranquility and sophistication of which my mother spoke.

I worry and I try to come up with solutions that I can't implement by myself. I'm not saying we should forget the past; I'm saying we should look to the future. South VN may have lost, but VN is still our country. And I can't see us progressing and strengthening without unity, from both the North and the South, and from people like us: those who were born and raised abroad. Mix and match the cultures, throw out the bad, keep the good.

We can fix this: the corrupt government, the hatred, everything. We can gather the debris left over from the war and rebuild, the way our parents have and are still rebuilding. We might not see any results, but our children's children's children might. I truly believe that.

If you are constantly telling that one token single friend to "go out and meet someone," you are essentially telling him that he is not an entity in and of himself, and must need another person to "complete him".

If a person is broken, the glue with which to put the pieces back together should come from the person himself. We live in a world that tells us if we are

single, there is something inherently defective about us. And that's just not true.

There's needing someone to complete who you are as a person. And then there's meeting someone who highlights your strengths and helps fix your flaws. There's a difference. One is dependence and the other is development.

We need to stop listening to people who tell us we are incomplete if we are alone. Because we're not. Each one of us is as complete as we allow ourselves to be.

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