Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: NGUYỄN VĂN LÀNH
Interviewer: Thúy Võ Đặng
Date: March 1, 2012
Location: Westminster, California
Sub-collection: Thuy Vo Dang Oral Histories
Length of Interview: 01:45:01

FIELD NOTES

I was introduced to Mr. Lanh through a third party. He was recommended as someone who has a very unique experience and perspective, given his interest and research on the Book of Changes, which can predict world events in advance. We conducted the interview in his Westminster home, in a study overflowing with books and framed images of bygone eras. He has a photo of former president George W. Bush signed and prominently displayed next to his desk. He pointed out the framed photos of his class at the Da Lat Military Academy—young men in bright white uniforms poised in neat rows. His study seems to be where he spends a great deal of time—reading, thinking, and writing articles he has had published in Vietnamese magazines.

Mr. Lanh was very kind and willing to share his story, but he also had a particular focus. He did not seem to want to discuss much about his personal life, but more about the art of reading the Book of Changes and his research into cosmology and philosophy. Often, during the interview, re-directed questions about his personal life, his wife, his children to speak about the Book of Changes. From what I understand, the Book of Changes (I Ching) is a classic Chinese text that has been translated from Chinese to old Vietnamese (chu nom) and romanized Vietnamese and is also available in English. The hexagrams in the Book of Changes pre-dates recorded history, and Mr. Lanh went to great lengths to explain to me how he used his understanding of this text to predict 9/11 before it happened.

His interest in studying the Book of Changes was inherited from generations ahead on his father’s side. He is worried that this knowledge will be lost if he does not have a way to teach about the Book of Changes to young Vietnamese Americans.