



Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind, and Spirit

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Vietnam: Journeys of Body, Mind, and Spirit takes the reader on an informed and engaging journey into the social and ritual life of contemporary Vietnam. Created to accompany the first major collaboration between a Vietnamese museum and an American museum on an exhibition of Vietnamese culture, this book moves beyond the troubled wartime history of both nations to a deeper portrayal of how Vietnamese of different ages, ethnicities, occupations, and circumstances live at the start of the twenty-first century. The contributors—most of whom live and work in Vietnam, while others have spent many years in intimate association with Vietnamese life—offer a unique perspective on the country and its diverse cultural mosaic. The text is complemented by a rich collection of photographs and illustrations that capture the complexity and nuance of daily life.

The journeys portrayed in this volume cut across virtually every domain of Vietnamese experience. Some take place on roads, railways, rivers, and footpaths, as family members come home for the New Year and traders carry goods precariously balanced on bicycles. Others are metaphorical: life is a journey marked by significant rituals, and the year is a journey mapped by a calendar with holidays as milestones along the way. Souls travel to the netherworld, while gods and ancestors return to the human world during celebrations in their honor.

Although the Vietnam War dominated the consciousness of a generation of Americans, few understand the country and few can imagine what it is like today. Appearing more than a decade after Vietnam's entrance into the global market and more than a quarter century after the cessation of hostilities between the Vietnamese and U.S. governments, this book provides a new understanding of how Vietnamese live, work, and celebrate critical passages of life and time.

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