

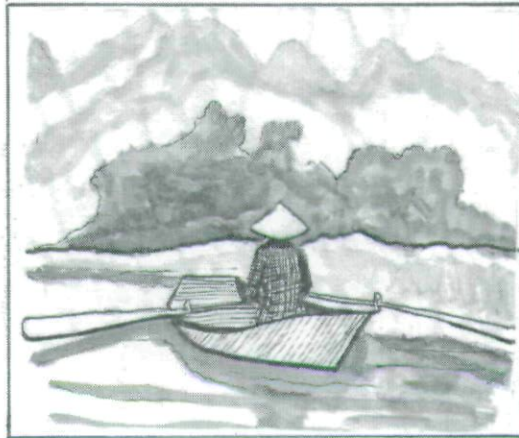
## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Jillian Jimenez, Ph.D.

Southeast Asia is seared in the memory of my generation. The names of some of its countries — Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia — evoke complex historical associations that anchor my age cohorts in a political context necessarily partisan and ideological. In this country, the narrative about the Vietnam War has been about *America* in the war—those who fought have one story and those who refused to fight another. Both stories were enormously gripping in their day; the fallout from the first has yet to end. Even those in the United States who witnessed the war as protestors or supporters cannot forget the passion they once felt and the enemies they made while defending their positions on “the war” (as it was called). Presidential candidacies have been roiled and have even foundered over the candidates’ relationships to the war. The ongoing power of the narrative of American in Vietnam is evinced by its frequent evocation in the effort to make sense of the current war in Iraq.

This issue of *Reflections* looks at another side of Southeast Asia and another consequence of the United States war — the refugees from that war. The narratives here remind us that the most powerful stories about Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are told by those who lived there. In this issue the Southeast Asian perspective on the war’s aftermath and on the experience of Southeast Asian refugees in the United States takes center stage and graces us with a far deeper understanding of the long term impact of the suffering that trailed after us as we left Vietnam. The narratives tell the stories of the struggles of adjustment to the United States of people who may not have come here if it were not for that war. War, suffering, and

dislocation are our legacy in Southeast Asia. These narratives offer both a corrective and a counterpoint to Americans’ understanding of the war in Southeast Asia. I am grateful to Brian Lam for creating this issue and to all the authors for sharing their experiences as refugees and sons and daughters of refugees from Southeast Asia.



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