

Media Resources Focusing on Southeast Asia

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Southeast Asia: Documentaries

Back to My Lai (1998)

Grades: 10-12+

During the 1990s, CBS's "60 Minutes" traveled back to the village My Lai to confront an incident many Americans would like to forget - the cold-blooded murder of hundreds of innocent civilians by U.S. soldiers. Accompanied by two airmen who helped stopped the atrocity, Mike Wallace talks with several of the town's former residents (no one actually lives in My Lai anymore, though some still work there), including a woman was saved by one of the airmen.

Candles for New Years (1998)

Grades: 10-12+

Produced by a multicultural team of Lahu, Thai, Japanese and Americans, this half-hour documentary discusses Host commentator for the program, anthropologist, Jacquetta Hill, has followed for more than a decade the fate of a group of Lahu who cleared the forest and built a community on a site north of Chiang Mai in Thailand.

Families of the World: Families of Thailand (2000)

Grades: K-4

Both of the children whose families were filmed in Families of Thailand are boys and relatively poor. The first 15 minutes shows the life a young Bangkok child who lives on a canal. In this boy's neighborhood, everyone is dependent on boats to get around, because there is little dry land. In this segment, viewers witnesses Buddhist monks collecting their morning rations, women going to a wet market and the child's older brother driving his water taxi. The second child's family, rural villagers who have recently had another baby, are also very dependent on water. The father makes his livelihood diving for tropical fish to sell to pet stores (perhaps abroad), an extremely dangerous profession. Families of Thailand does not hide the poverty these children live in, but it tries to emphasize the positive aspects about their lives, like the closeness of their families and the fact that they are receiving an education.

The Fall of Saigon

Grades:10-12+

The Discovery Channel feature, The Fall of Saigon, portrays the United States involvement in a very critical light. Twenty years after the fact, key players in Washington (including President Ford and Henry Kissinger), in the military, and at the embassy recount the chaotic situation that evolved over that last week before the North Vietnamese took over the city. Also featured are Vietnamese people who aided the Americans throughout the war and were then left behind.

Ho-Chi Minh Biography (1997)

Grades: 9-12+

From the Vietnamese perspective, the war lasted 30 years, from right after the end of WWII when negotiations with the French broke down to the day the North Vietnamese army marched into Saigon in 1975. The man who led them through most of that period

was the revered Ho-Chi Minh. Although most documentaries on the war barely mention him, A&E Biography has produced a respectable fifty-minute account of his life, focusing mostly on his time in Europe and as a young revolutionary. This video portrays Minh in a generally favorable light, but shies away from discussing politics in general.

Kim's Story: The Road from Vietnam (1996)

Grades: 9-12+

Filmmaker Shelley Saywell chronicles the life of Kim Phuc, the young girl photographed during the Vietnam War running naked after she had been napalmed by an American plane. In this 48-minute documentary, Kim, now a mother living in Canada, shares her philosophy on war and makes peace with Vietnam vets, including the one that ordered the attack on her location. Still badly scarred, this charming and forgiving woman serves as a living symbol of the horrors of war.

The Power of Place: World Regional Geography (1996)

Grades: 9-12+

1. Mainland Southeast Asia , program #13, is a 30-minute program that includes two case studies: "Prospects for development in isolated Laos" and "Rice Production in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam."
2. Maritime Southeast Asia, program #14, discusses "The growing importance of tourism in Indonesia" and "A geographer studies Malaysia's different ethnic groups."
3. Global Interaction is program #15 of the series, The Power of Place: World Regional Geography. The video includes two case studies: "How Singapore exploits its location to play a commercial role in Pacific Asia" and "Australia's European roots and recent Asian influences in economic development."

The Story of Puttanan (1994)

Grades: 6-12+

Part of the Turning 16 series, which focuses on the lives of six teenagers in six different countries, The Story of Puttanan tells the story of a young Thai girl, who having experienced child labor firsthand for three years, is devoted to stopping it. The video is 26 minutes long.

Regret to Inform (1998)

Grades: 9-12

This heart-wrenching 72-minute documentary chronicles one American widow's journey to Vietnam twenty years after the war ended. Featuring stories from both Vietnamese and American women who lost their husbands during the war, this film conveys a powerful anti-war message. Nominated for an Academy Award.

Thailand News Stories (2001)

Grades: 4-8

29 min. The growing stature of Southeast Asia is fueled, in part, by a growing Thailand. Its economy is one of the fastest-developing in the world, yet the Thai people still embrace fascinating age-old customs. Our student reporters go "on-location" to explore this East-meets-West dynamic in eight 3-minute, kid-made news segments.

Viet Nam: At The Crossroads (1994)

Grades: 9-12+

Vietnamese-American professor Hien Doc Do returned to Vietnam two weeks before the United States lifted its embargo on the nation. Concerned that the developing free market economy would destroy Vietnamese culture and increase the gap between the rich and the poor, Hien spoke with a large assortment of people, including sociologists, economists, merchants, rural workers, and students, trying to see how liberalization was affecting his homeland. Throughout his travels from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City, Hien questioned not only the nation's future, but also the role he, as an expatriate,

should play in it. This video is an account of his journey.

Vietnam: Chronicle of War (1981)

Grades: 10-12+

Vietnam: Chronicle of War deals heavily with the politics surrounding the war. It features, according to host Walter Cronkite, some of the most important and interesting stories filmed by CBS. More than half the clips in this 1981 documentary focus on United States soldiers, but there are several powerful scenes featuring Vietnamese people. In between the footage, several reporters who covered the war, including Dan Rather and Mike Wallace, give their analysis of various events.

Vietnam News Stories (2002)

Grades: 4-8

25 min. The contemporary culture of Vietnam is influenced by a thousand years of history. Traveling in the midst of this ancient culture, American middle school students created eight 3-minute news segments on modern day Vietnam.

A Voice of Her Own (1997)

Grades: 10-12+

This 27-minute video discusses the opportunities and challenges that face Cambodian and Filipino women in the 21st century.

World Religions: Buddhism (1997)

Grades: 8-12

This documentary, featuring the lives of young Thai monks, explains the origins and beliefs of Buddhism.

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Southeast Asia: Feature Films

Three Seasons (1999)

Grades: 10-12+

Rated: PG-13

Language: Vietnamese with English subtitles and English

Three Seasons is actually four separate stories about people who frequent the same street corner -a cyclo driver and a prostitute who fall in love, a young lotus picker who enchants a leper with her songs, a American vet who returned to find his daughter, and a street urchin looking for his lost suitcase of wartime trinkets. All of the stories are ultimately about healing and the importance of human bonds.

Southeast Asia: Slides and Curriculum Units

Passage to Vietnam (1995)

Grades: 7-12+

This award-winning CD-ROM for both Macintosh and Windows platforms presents a portrait of Vietnam and its people created by seventy of the world's leading photojournalists. Passage features more than 400 photographs, one hour of full-motion video, interactive passages covering Vietnam's history and culture, and an interactive map of Vietnam that lets you view the pictures by location or photographer, and traditional Vietnamese music. Published by Against All Odds/Interval Research.

The War in Vietnam (1996)

Grades: 9-12+

This Windows/Mac compatible CD-ROM was co-produced by CBS and The New York Times. It contains a lot of relatively accessible information about different periods of the war.