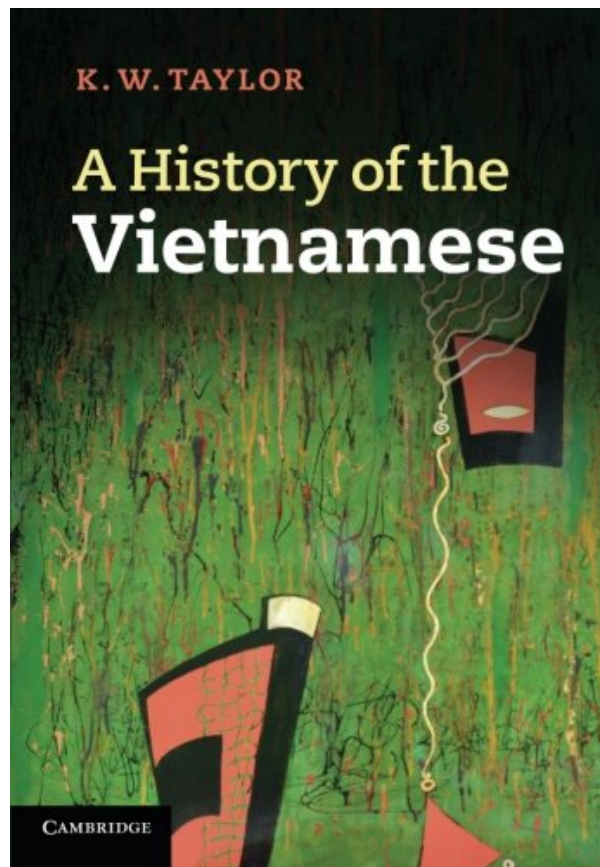
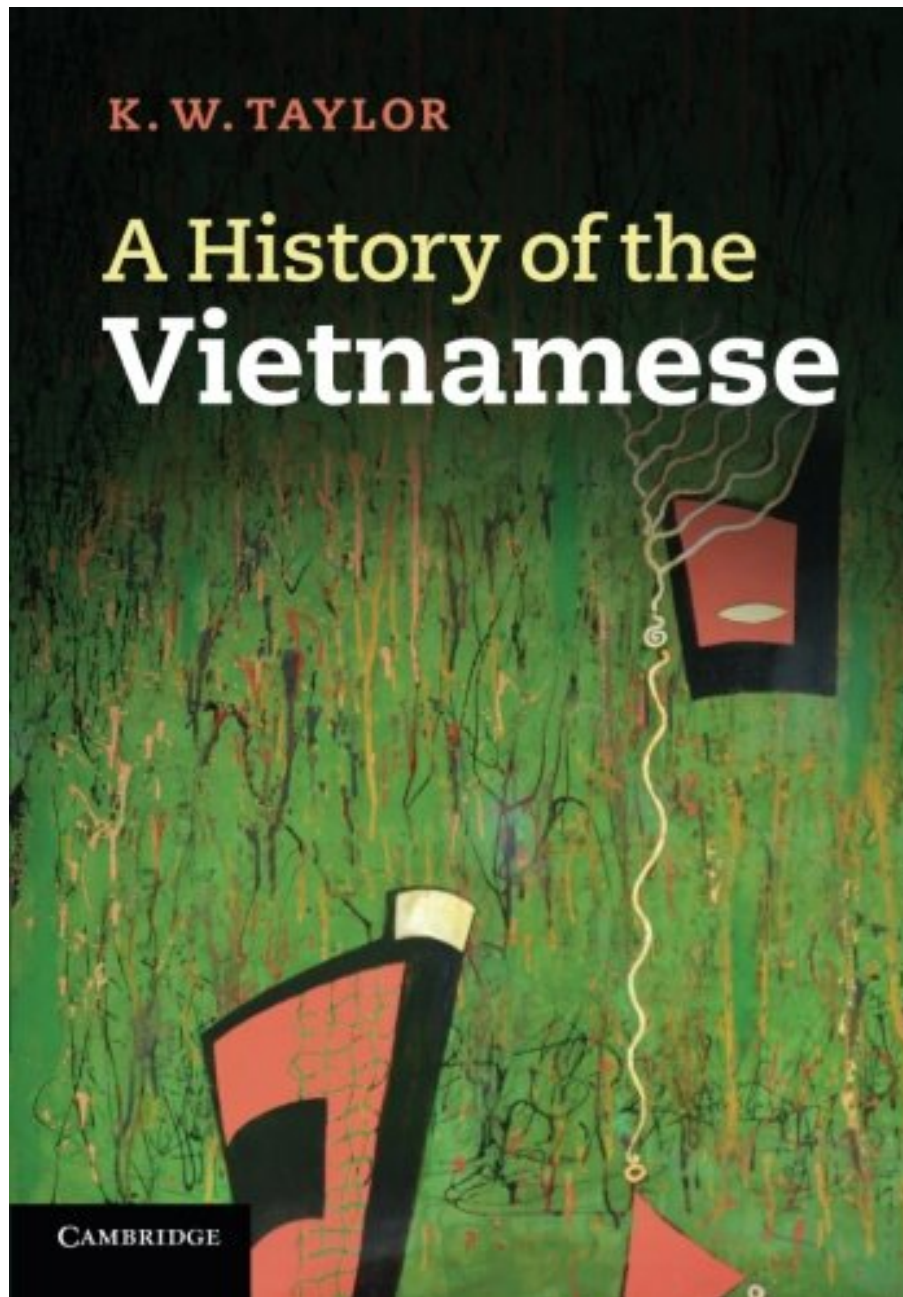


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Review

'This book is a landmark in scholarship, the product of Keith Taylor's four decades of intensive and prolonged engagement with Vietnam. There is no other book quite like it: it is the most authoritative work yet written on the full sweep of Vietnamese history. In these pages, stories from this past - whether of cannibals or kings, eunuchs or slaves, queen regents or revolutionaries - are woven into a rich historical account of the Vietnamese past. A magisterial achievement.' Shawn McHale, George Washington University

'Elegant, erudite and stunningly comprehensive, A History of the Vietnamese is, by a wide margin, the finest general survey of Vietnamese history ever produced in any language.' Peter Zinoman, University of California, Berkeley

About the Author

K. W. Taylor is a professor in the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell University, New York. His career began in the US Army, where he was deployed in the US-Vietnam war. He has now been researching Vietnam for nearly forty years, and his work has made a fundamental contribution to the development of the field.

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16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

I strongly recommend this book to all people who want to understand ...

By john nguyen

As a Vietnamese American, Ph.D in Science, who retired as a Cancer Researcher at several US Research Institutes and Universities, I spent my professional life looking at very complex problems such as the abnormal biology of cancer cells. Vietnam's History is my non bread winning activity occupying most of my non-cancer related mental activity.

Dr Keth Taylor 's book A History of the Vietnamese was a first book on the subject that provided, certainly to me, a coherent rationale explaining the two millennium evolutionary process ending with an entity known as the country of Vietnam inhabited by the Vietnamese of today.

Dr Taylor's theory was the creation of post 1975 Vietnam, a country spanning over 2000 km long with 90 millions inhabitants was almost accidental depending on the action of a few leaders who motivated the very heterogeneous populations of different ethnicity, language, culture, beliefs and religions. Vietnam was One only for a very brief time of her existence less than 10% .

I strongly recommend this book to all people who want to understand in depth a very complex people and a very complex country.

12 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

A classic of Vietnamese history

By Toto

When it first appeared, I bought 2 copies of this book. One was a gift to a friend who writes about Vietnamese history, the other copy I bought for myself, I could not resist giving it out to another friend because I knew it would make him happy.

I did read a great deal of the book though, and I am really impressed with the amount of research, analysis and organization involved in its creation. It means a lot that this comprehensive, mostly accurate, generally non-partisan and, last but not least readable, book about Vietnam comes from an American scholar. I think we Vietnamese must be grateful to the author for his dedication to the history of our country and for saying things (in its final chapter) that insiders may see but don't have the courage to say due to current political divisions. The book deserves a Vietnamese translation.

I guess I have to order a third copy then.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

I bought this Keith Taylor's excellent book on the History of the Vietnamese

By Kevin S Ernsting

I bought this Keith Taylor's excellent book on the History of the Vietnamese, because I love his earlier book The Birth of Viet Nam very much.

Professor Keith Taylor approached this history of the Vietnamese with a new and fresh optic very much different from the way Western & French and traditional Vietnamese historians wrote on the same topic.

Taylor emphasized the role the Chinese immigrants and their descendants played during the first 6 centuries AD, after the first war of Independence of Viet Nam led by the Trung sisters in 43 AD, a fact that was not elaborated at its just value by previous historians.

He discussed of the matrilineal - and probably matriarchal also - aspect of Viet Society during these earlier centuries, which explains why the first anti Chinese wars were led by female leaders like the Trung sisters in the First century and the Lady Trieu in the 3rd century AD.

Taylor shows us that one of the causes of the decline of the Ly dynasty, beside the weak personalities of the Ly kings, was the fact that maternal family played a predominance role in the government for many years.

Ho Quy Ly - Le Quy Ly by his previous name - the man who overthrew the last king of the Tran dynasty in the last years of the XIV century was seen as a ruthless but very efficient state man who tried very hard - but

unsuccessfully - to reform the Vietnamese society in the beginning of the XV century. Ho Quy Ly was splendid in his conquests of southern regions of Viet Nam but ran into troubles by the early and over-aggressive hegemonic policy of the Ming emperor.

Probably the political landscape of Vietnamese XV century would be very much different if Ho Quy Ly had a few more years to consolidate his new government before the Chinese Ming invaded Viet Nam. His plan to convert coins money into paper money was a good one but required much more time to implement.

I believe that Taylor's view was influenced partly by the excellent researches of his old friend from the U of Michigan John Whitmore who wrote his doctorate thesis on Ho Quy Ly.

I believe this is a very good history book on Viet Nam.

I feel bad that Taylor does not give us any footnote to help us locate the proper reference on many of his points of view on historical facts. The very long bibliography at the end of the book is overwhelming but a difficult maze to navigate.

It is excellent that Taylor is good in reading and interpreting the ch? Nôm - an old logographic script of the old Vietnamese language - which enabled him to decipher the many scriptures carved in stone steles dating from the first millennium in Viet Nam. This gives us a different view of History when compared side by side with the official Chinese history books.

I will advise anybody interested in the History of Viet Nam to buy this excellent book
Nguyen Thuong Vu M.D.

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