

Memoirs of a Bodhisattva

Short stories by Skip Nelson



RADIO HANOI

I remember, while serving with the US Army in Vietnam in 1968, I used to take my transistor radio and go to the office at night. I would tune in Radio Hanoi and Hanoi Hanna, who was our version of Tokyo Rose in WWII.

As I listened to the program, I wondered what the people in Hanoi were thinking. I wondered what they were like. I wondered what they were feeling.

That is not unusual for me. Up to that point, I had lived my life from a world perspective rather than a national one. I spent my childhood being educated by National Geographic and The World Book Encyclopedia.

I was raised in diversity so my relationship with others that were not like me was rather easy and unencumbered. I knew they were mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters who wanted nothing more than to live in peace. Like us.

I also knew that they, like us, were catapulted into the war by their governments. I also knew that they, like us, were dedicated to their cause.

I wondered and fantasized about going to Hanoi for myself to find out....which is again totally within my nature to do so.

How fortunate I am to have met the woman who has become the love of my life, who at that very moment, was dodging B-52 bombs in Hanoi. How fortunate I have been to have been able to live that dream.

Consequently, I have met many people in Hanoi and North Vietnam.

They are, as I imagined, loving, kind family-oriented people who were dedicated to their cause, but many, who, like us, now realize that they were misled by their government.

They are not monsters. They are not cruel Communists. They are a proud people trying to live their lives just as we do.

My wife's uncle was a high ranking official in the North Vietnamese Army and her mother ran an anti-aircraft battery in Hanoi, targeting our B-52s.

I had the opportunity to meet with her uncle before he died. Through Ngoc's translation efforts, we had a very great and friendly meeting.

As people in Hanoi say, he also said..."The war is in the past. We need to move forward."

Living a dream is wonderful.

Skip Nelson

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