

2026 History Essay Contest

School 6th Grade Winner

Vietnam

By Megan Tran
St. Joseph Academy
San Marcos, California

There are many countries in the world. One country I've always wanted to visit is Vietnam. This country is also where my mother, my father, their parents, and much of my family were born. This means I am a hundred percent Vietnamese. I love the rice fields. They are so green and beautiful! I love the food, the Vietnamese hats, non's, and the history! Two places within Vietnam are Ha Long Bay and La Vang. These are amazing places to visit!

One extraordinary place, that also had a miracle, is La Vang, which is located in the province of Quang Tri. In 1798, the people in Vietnam were being persecuted for the Catholic faith. The people went to the forest for refuge. Mary appeared with baby Jesus in her arms and gave the people comfort. She showed them how to heal their sickness which they had acquired, with local herbs. She instructed them on how to make the herbs into a tea that immediately cured the ill person. Mary is a great consoler and helper in our times of need! One of my younger cousins' name is La Vang, which means "Loud Crying." This describes when the people of La Vang were crying because of the terrible Catholic persecution that they were enduring. One day I want to visit La Vang, and maybe I will be able to bring my younger cousin too!

There is another special place I long to explore, Ha Long Bay. This bay is on the northern coast of the Gulf of Tonkin, which is near the city of Ha Long. It is in the Quang Ninh province in northern

Vietnam. This place holds some three-thousand rocky and earthen islands. There is a great range of marine and land mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish in the water and tropical forest. In 1288, Vietnam was invaded by the Mongols, who were led by an evil man named Kublai Khan. This unfortunate invasion took place in Ha Long Bay. However, the famous Vietnamese general, Tran Hung Dao, took advantage of the bay's tricky channels by stopping the enemy's ships so they wouldn't sail near the Bach Kang River. Tran Hung Dao was able to make this happen by placing wooden stakes that were extremely sharp in the water during high tide. The Vietnamese victory in Ha Long Bay was concluded when the tide of the water went out. That caused the Mongol ships to become stuck, which made Kublai Khan's army sink. The Vietnamese people celebrated joyfully by praising the Tran Dynasty leaders and by making poems in honor of the heroic victory!

Ha Long Bay was chosen as an UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) world heritage site. This occurred in 1994 and 2000 because of this place's natural landscapes. I would love to sail on that beautiful bay while watching the striking scenery. Ha Long Bay is such a pretty and unique place in Vietnam!

The legend of Ha Long Bay states that a huge dragon stomped on the earth. It formed valleys, which eventually got filled with water. However, there is another legend. The second legend tells that a dragon's tail tore up the earth, creating valleys and crevices. Afterwards, the dragon jumped into some close by water place. A dragon symbolizes the link between Heaven and earth in Vietnamese culture!

Our Lady of La Vang and Ha Long Bay are places that are extremely special in the country of Vietnam. I, for sure, want to visit Vietnam and especially Our Lady of La Vang and Ha Long Bay! The Vietnamese people, even though they were invaded by the Communists, still maintain their culture, food, and history!

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