



Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam

Andrew X. Pham

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Winner of the Kiriayama Pacific Rim Book Prize

A *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year

Winner of the Whiting Writers' Award

A *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* Best Book of the Year

Catfish and Mandala is the story of an American odyssey—a solo bicycle voyage around the Pacific Rim to Vietnam—made by a young Vietnamese-American man in pursuit of both his adopted homeland and his forsaken fatherland.

Andrew X. Pham was born in Vietnam and raised in California. His father had been a POW of the Vietcong; his family came to America as "boat people." Following the suicide of his sister, Pham quit his job, sold all of his possessions, and embarked on a year-long bicycle journey that took him through the Mexican desert, around a thousand-mile loop from Narita to Kyoto in Japan; and, after five months and 2,357 miles, to Saigon, where he finds "nothing familiar in the bombed-out darkness." In Vietnam, he's taken for Japanese or Korean by his countrymen, except, of course, by his relatives, who doubt that as a Vietnamese he has the stamina to complete his journey ("Only Westerners can do it"); and in the United States he's considered anything but American. A vibrant, picaresque memoir written with narrative flair and an eye-opening sense of adventure, *Catfish and Mandala* is an unforgettable search for cultural identity.

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