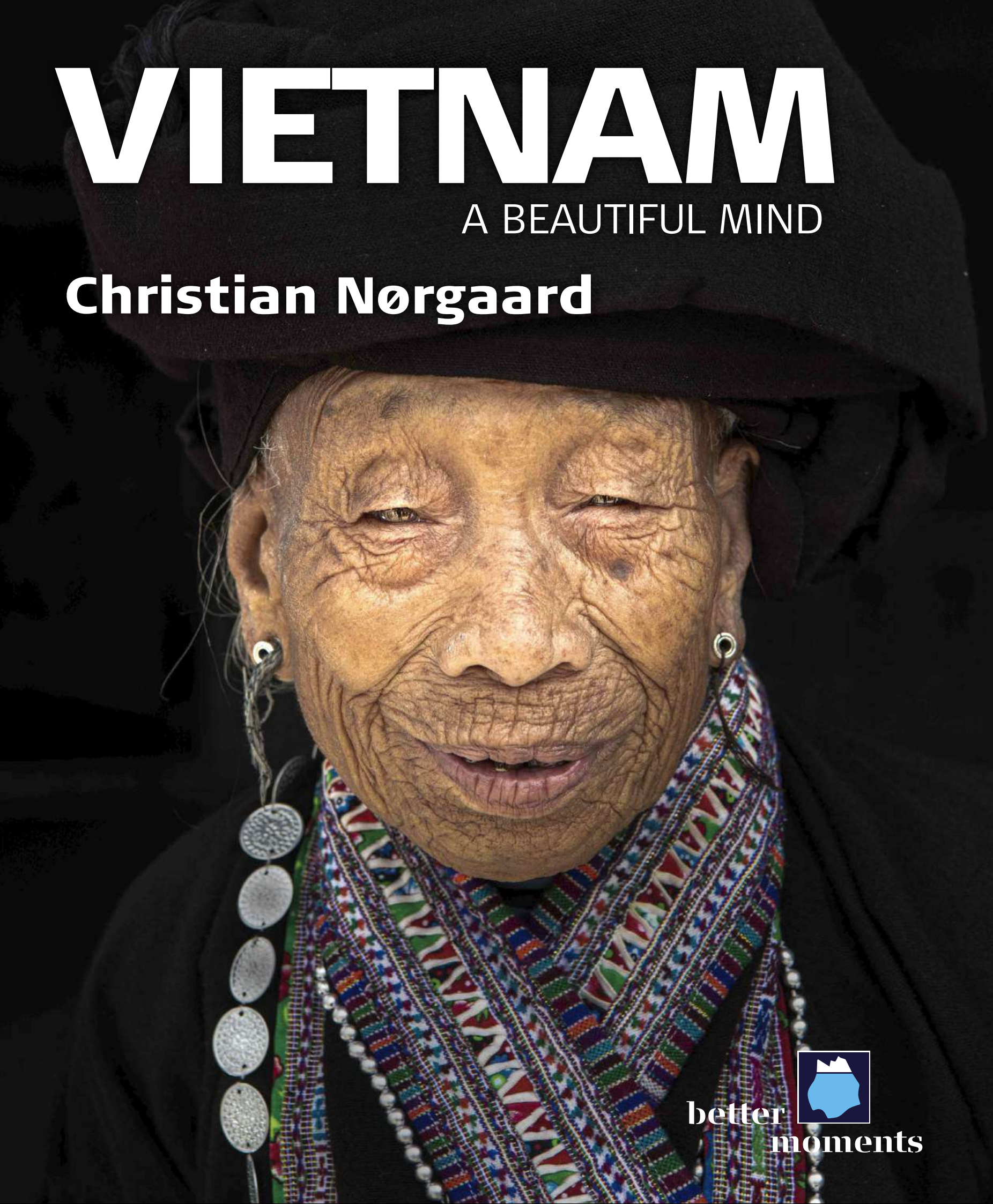


# VIETNAM

A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Christian Nørgaard



better  moments

# Photography with passion



Photography may be my first passion, but traveling is a close second. I spent decades exploring the globe with my camera and out of this passion, Better Moments was born in 2011. Since then, I have worked with the world's most renowned photographers to offer high-end workshops and expeditions for photo enthusiasts worldwide.

On our workshops, everyone is welcome. Whether you have only recently discovered your passion for photography or if you are an emerging pro – our workshops cater to everyone's needs and our experts are all experienced teachers that will adapt to your personal skill level.

Our mission is to help you to take your photography to the next level, refine your own style and sharpen your technical skills. Additionally, we want to inspire each other, create lasting memories and enjoy the best moments in life.

Better Moment's exclusive workshops in landscape, travel and wildlife photography take place in unique locations around the world. From the Himalaya region to Africa's deserts, from Scandinavia's fjords to Australia's Outback – we like to travel off the beaten track and work with local agencies as we are always striving to leave only footprints behind.

I am looking forward to meeting you on one of our adventures.

Christian Nørgaard

# better moments



Better Moments  
CEO and founder:  
Christian Nørgaard

Graphic design:  
Håkan Andersson

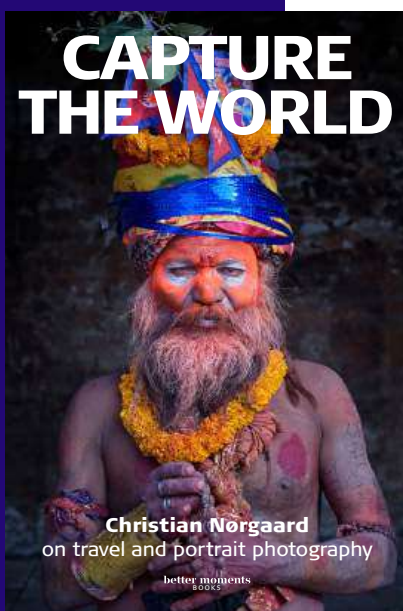
Text editor:  
Better Moments

Cover photo by  
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Our guests love to travel with us – which is why we are lucky enough to welcome them again and again.



## LET'S GET SOCIAL

For inspiring experiences, real-time updates, the latest trends or casual conversation, explore our social networks for all things travel.



LinkedIn



YouTube



## BETTER-MOMENTS.COM

You can view our current photography workshops on the Better Moments website, where you will find all dates and details – and can reserve a spot for your dream trip.



## NEWSLETTER

Stay up-to-date with our workshops, experts, and special offers: sign up to our bi-monthly newsletter – and receive Christian Nørgaard's guide to travel & portrait photography for free.

**SIGN UP AND RECEIVE A FREE TRAVEL & PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE.**

"I think that Better Moments' workshops are some of the best organized, most educational and most inspirational group workshops I have ever worked on. So I would encourage you to join us. Come along and have a great time, learn, be inspired and take great pictures."

Steve McCurry

## Our passionate experts

We are proud to work with some of the best photographers in the industry who are experts in their field and have years of experience in guiding and teaching photography workshops.



**Steve McCurry**

National Geographic,  
World Press Photo  
first place



**Michael Nichols**

Wildlife journalist,  
National Geographic  
editor



**Hamid Sardar-Afkhami**

Writer, photographer,  
award-winning  
filmmaker



**Sisse Brimberg**

National Geographic  
photographer



**James Nachtwey**

World Press Photo Award  
winner and TIME  
Magazine photographer



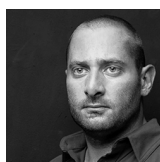
**Peter Eastway**

AIPP Grand Master of  
Photography, Publisher Better  
Photography Magazine



**Laurent Baheux**

Award-winning  
wildlife photographer



**Marco Di Lauro**

World Press  
Photo Award



**Andreas H. Bitesnich**

Award-winning fine art  
photographer



**Steve Bloom**

National Geographic  
photographer



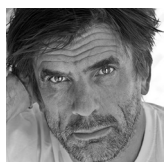
**Tom D. Jones**

Hasselblad Master  
& European Fine Art  
photographer



**James Whitlow Delano**

Award-winning visual  
storyteller and Pulitzer  
Center grantee



**Arne Hodalič**

National Geographic  
photographer &  
photo editor



# What our guests say about us

"It was a marvelous workshop with a lot of opportunities for great pictures. Obviously, the highlight was the night in Riisitunturi National Park watching the Northern Lights. It was the whole atmosphere having a rustic dinner in the hikers hut after shooting the sunset and waiting for the Northern Light which is staying in my memories."

Bernd Beykirch, Germany



"I found out that one of my favourite photographers, Lars van de Goor, was doing a workshop in the Netherlands so I signed up for the workshop and was introduced to Christian, the founder of the company, and I knew immediately that this would be a great workshop just by talking to him and seeing how incredibly well organized and precise everything was planned out. The hotels were first class, the food was phenomenal, which is important, and more importantly, each day was very well planned out and it has been a really great experience."

Aubra Franklin, USA

"Everybody has something to offer to the group, so we learn from each other, we share things, we have workshops in the evenings where we talk about what went well, what went wrong... and we see a lot of different styles, a lot of different techniques. And that is the good thing about this trip, it is really all about photography!"

Peter Dorr, The Netherlands.







Driving from Hanoi to Ha Long Bay is more than just a drive; it's an immersive cultural and visual experience, that we at Better Moments love to explore and share with our fellow photography enthusiasts.

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN NØRGAARD



As we travel into the heart of Vietnam we will explore these rural landscapes and capture the spirit and beauty of the most photogenic rice fields.





# Explore Vietnam

This workshop takes you to Northern Vietnam for a carefully curated tour of the best the country has to offer, from hectic Hanoi and stunning Halong Bay to meeting traditional tribes of Sa Pa or reaching the summit of Fansipan, "The Roof of Indochina".

You'll start off experiencing exciting, noisy, vibrant, wonderful Hanoi.

Here, the influence of the country's storied past is well-visible in both architecture and layout. You'll experience hectic markets, amazing street food and get an incredible sense of what life in modern Vietnam is like.

From here, you'll head up north to Sa Pa, a small village bordering China.

Here, you'll meet local tribes and get a glimpse of the ancient culture Vietnam is built on, a beautiful contrast to the hustle and bustle of the capital.

The indigenous tribes of Northern Vietnam number more than 54 distinct peoples, the most prevalent being the Kinh, or Viet, tribe, after which the country is named. Other large families include the Hmong and Khmer people, and this part of the workshop makes for outstanding portrait photography.

If Hanoi is all about portrait and street photography, Sa Pa is the opposite.

You'll experience breathtaking vistas from the summit of the tallest mountain in Vietnam, Fansipan, nicknamed the Roof of Indochina, and gaze at seemingly endless fields of rice crops and beautiful sunrises as well as sunsets.

Finally, you'll go to legendary Halong Bay for some of the most breathtaking coastal views in the world.

The myriad of small islets dotting the horizon makes for exquisitely textured landscape photography.

It's hard to find a reason not to go to diverse and incredible Vietnam.



# Expand with passion

Better Moments' mission is to deliver exclusive workshops and we want you to explore your passion for photography and work with one of the best photographers, Steve McCurry, during your Burma workshop.

## ■ ON LOCATION

- Learning and training in small groups with a maximum of four people under the guidance of Christian to ensure individual support.
- Composition and focus on lines, golden section, perspective, foreground.
- Work in different lighting and with short/long exposure times and aperture.
- Private hands-on lessons that can help take your photography skills to the next level.
- How to approach locals in a natural way.
- The secrets behind travel and reportage photography.

## ■ IN CLASSROOM

- Expert review and constructive criticism of the images taken during the day by Christian Nørgaard.
- How to create portraits of daily life in villages we visit.
- Private 1-on-1 portfolio review by Christian Nørgaard.
- Presentation of Christian Nørgaard's work.
- A Better Moments Certified Photo Instructor is available during the entire workshop to offer assistance with camera settings, the basics of composition, and to generally guide and help.

PRICE & BOOKING



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN NØRGAARD



The rice plants raise, their green stalks reaching



g toward the sky, breathing new life into the old cemetery.



Immersed in the ethereal beauty of Ha Long Bay—where thousands of limestone islands reach skywards, their peaks crowned with lush rainforests and embraced by azure waters, where local fishing towns bustle with life and culture.







An easy drive from Sa Pa we meet the rice fields of the Muong Hoa Valley and hill tribes, such as the Hmong, Tay, and Dao.

# About Christian Nørgaard



PHOTO BY STEVE MCCURRY

## Capture the moment

Photographer and founder of Better Moments Christian Nørgaard's fascination for the photographic medium took root early in his life. Captivated by the power of a still image to convey a world of emotion, narrative, and intricate detail, has embraced the role of the silent observer, and his camera has been his tool of storytelling.

He has spent years honing his craft, working tirelessly for international newspapers, magazines, and ad agencies, using his lens to capture the heartbeat of life and the essence of moments.

His career as a photographer is taking him to many corners of the world, which sparked his love for travel. It is the exciting blend of discovery, adventure, and learning that keeps drawing him on an adventure. Every journey is a new opportunity to experience, understand and photograph diverse cultures, people, and landscapes.

In 2012, driven by his entrepreneurial spirit, Christian took a leap of faith and launched Better Moments. His vision was clear: to offer high-end travel experiences guided by professional photographers who would provide personalized tutoring. He wanted to create a platform where photography enthusiasts could travel, learn from the best in the field, and find their unique creative voice, all while discovering beautiful locations around the globe.

Today, Better Moments is a testament to Christian's vision and dedication. With over 25 workshops in more than 10 countries, the company has become a beacon for aspiring and professional photographers alike. What sets Better Moments apart is its commitment to providing unparalleled experiences and exceptional photographic guidance. It boasts a team of experts, each with their own distinct specialties, dedicated to nurturing the creative growth of their students.

Christian's lifelong passion for photography has not waned but has instead been channeled into this extraordinary venture. He continues to play an active role in the company, personally ensuring the standard of excellence he envisioned is upheld. He remains dedicated to his vision of fostering creativity, exploration, and above all, a deep love for the art of photography.

As you turn the pages, prepare to be taken on a visual journey through the captivating landscapes and vibrant culture of Vietnam, as seen through the masterful lens of Christian Nørgaard. Each photograph has been thoughtfully selected to provide a preview of the experiences that await you at your workshop, inviting you to immerse yourself in a world of stunning vistas, fascinating history, and rich human stories.

One glimpse at Christian's work and you understand why he believes that traveling with a camera is truly living. Nørgaard's philosophy revolves around the idea that every photograph we take is a nano glimpse of the past - a testament to the world as it once was. He encourages us to embrace this perspective, to understand the gravity of our role as photographers. As we click the shutter, we are not just taking a picture; we are capturing a moment that will never occur again, creating a time capsule that will carry these precious fragments of history into the future. This belief fuels his passion and serves as a guiding principle for all of his workshops.

As you delve into the selected works of Christian Nørgaard, may you find yourself inspired by his talent, vision, and deep respect for the art of photography. Allow these images to kindle your own passion for capturing the beauty of the world, and prepare for an unforgettable journey of exploration and discovery in Vietnam, under the guidance of Christian Nørgaard.





The man captured in verse on rice paper,  
a poem blooms with his brush, Temple of  
Literature / Van Mieu, Hanoi.



Stepping back in time—on the border of China time times to stand still.

A photograph of a textured wall with a broom and a woven basket. The wall is composed of several layers of plaster or paint, with a dark grey top layer, a yellowish middle layer, and a dark, possibly black, bottom layer. A broom with a wooden handle and a bundle of straw is leaning against the wall on the left. In the foreground, a large, round, woven basket with a dark, patterned rim and a flat, woven top sits on the floor. The lighting is dramatic, casting shadows and highlighting the textures of the wall and the objects.

**"In every photograph lies a story untold,  
a moment forever held  
in the silent language of light and shadow."**

Christian Nørgaard



A smile from a Lu woman is a captivating glimpse into the unique aesthetics of northern Vietnam



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN NØRGAARD



A pause on the journey to a market.



A mother's love and life lessons passed on from one generation to the next.

# Itinerary

DAY 0: Hanoi Arrival

## ■ GET READY FOR ADVENTURE

To make the most of your workshop, we suggest you arrive a day before workshop start. Most participants meet at this day to go photographing and having dinner together.

DAY 1: Hanoi Full Day City Tour

## ■ GOOD MORNING HANOI

We'll start our day off in the early morning by the beautiful Tran Quoc Pagoda in West Lake. Here, we'll experience and photograph the monks and the locals meeting each other for the morning rituals.

After breakfast, we're off to the Temple of Literature, surrounded by a beautifully lush garden in which the Hanoi locals meet. Here, we'll see the local students going through homework together.

Lunch: Every day of the workshop, we'll enjoy lunch at local restaurants. Today, we'll do so in the French Quarter.

Vietnamese cuisine ranks amongst the finest of the world, a wonderfully eclectic mix of local produce and French inspiration.

In the soft evening light we'll journey through the city by rickshaw, photographing the city coming to life.

The lecture of the day will be on Christian Nørgaard's iconic travel photography as well as on what makes for good street photography.

DAY 2: Duong Lam

## ■ BACK TO THE PAST

We leave Hanoi during the chaotic, but charming morning traffic.

Bikes, cars and motorcycles weave seamlessly between one another in an anarchistic chaos that manages to work without a hitch.

We'll spend the day in the historical and immensely photogenic ancient village of Duong Lam in the Son Tay Province, a small farming village by the Northern Red River Delta.

We'll saunter around photographing the locals running their oxcarts through the narrow streets, and in the small clay houses we'll meet their families.

Highlights of the day include: Mong Phu Temple dedicated to national heroes, the King Ngo Queen and King Phung Hung Temples and Mia Pagoda, built in the 15th-century containing and impressive 287 statues.

After dinner: Expert review and constructive criticism of the images taken during the day by Christian Nørgaard.

DAY 3: Onwards to Sa Pa

## ■ NIGHT TRAIN TO SA PA

In the morning hours we'll visit the local florists' market followed by the Dong Xuan market, the biggest in Hanoi.

Here, a wonderful assortment of practically anything can be purchased - from kitchen appliances to livestock.

Come evening, we depart from Hanoi Railway Station, soon passing the legendary Long Biên Steel Bridge.

You'll dine and sleep in your own private, authentic and charming cabin, not unlike traveling first class back in the day.

DAY 4: Sa Pa

## ■ MOVING NORTH

There's an immediate change in scenery as we move north. The breathtaking countryside surrounding us will be our backdrop for the next couple of days as we move closer to the Chinese Border.

We'll take a cable car to the top of the tallest peak in Vietnam, Fansipan, also called the Roof of Indochina. From here, there's an incredible view of the valley below, as Sa Pa comes to view between the clouds.

After lunch we'll stroll through Sa Pa before heading for a local village in the afternoon. Here, we'll meet people from the Kinh tribe that live in wooden huts heated by hearths in the center.

In the evening, a lecture on landscape photography based on Christian Nørgaard's travels around the world, as well as constructive criticism.



DAY 5: Departing Sa Pa

#### ■ MEETING THE LOCALS

We leave Sa Pa for the mountains, visiting the small villages of the intruding Khmer and Hoa peoples.

We'll stop by the multi-storied rice fields and photograph normal life in the mountains, such as the locals bringing home the harvest by oxcart.

After dinner: review and constructive criticism of the images taken during the day.

DAY 6: Market visit

#### ■ JOURNEY BY 4X4

About an hour's worth of driving by private 4x4 brings us to a vibrant local market.

Here, the local tribes sell off their crops and livestock - chickens, pigs and goats go to the highest bidder.

There's also all sorts of beautiful examples of local craftsmanship.

This day will be spent photographing the market and its guests.

In the evening, we work on our photography.

DAY 7: Ty Village

#### ■ LEGENDARY RICE FIELDS

One of the most beautiful rice fields can be found by Y Ty Village. By private 4x4, we move through the beautiful scenery, stopping when we feel like it by small villages or scenarios we pass by - such as for instance a wedding.

However, the highlight is Y Ty Village, from which we have a view of the magnificent rice fields.

DAY 8: Ty Village - Private transfer to Hanoi

#### ■ BACK TO HANOI

We journey back to Hanoi by private bus. This day trip takes us through lush rice fields and small villages. We'll have lunch locally.

Back in Hanoi, we spend the night by Hanoi Train Street, eating local food right by the traintracks running through the districts, hence the name.

DAY 9: Halong Bay Cruise

#### ■ BEAUTIFUL HANOI BAY

From Hanoi, it's a drive of a couple of hours towards the coast where we'll arrive at our ship. For the next two days, we'll sail around the magnificent Halong Bay, and you'll have excellent photography opportunities from your own private cabin of the more than 1600 limestone islands dotting the horizon.

Halong Bay, situated in the Gulf of Tonkin, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site easily recognizable for its emerald blue waters and over 1600 islands littering the coastline. Small junkers dart around the myriad of islands and create a stunning scenery found nowhere else in the world.

The source of inspiration to many a movie, this location is like something lifted from a fairytale, and the pictures practically shoot themselves against this truly marvelous backdrop.

After dinner: Constructive criticism of images taken during the day.

DAY 10: Halong Bay Cruise

#### ■ KAYAKS AND CLOSEUPS

Today, we journey by kayaks and smaller boats through the mazes of limestone islands in the bay. Once the lighting is right, we return to the deck for the best view of the majestic scenery.

DAY 11: Halong Bay Cruise and Departure Flight

#### ■ RETURNING HOME

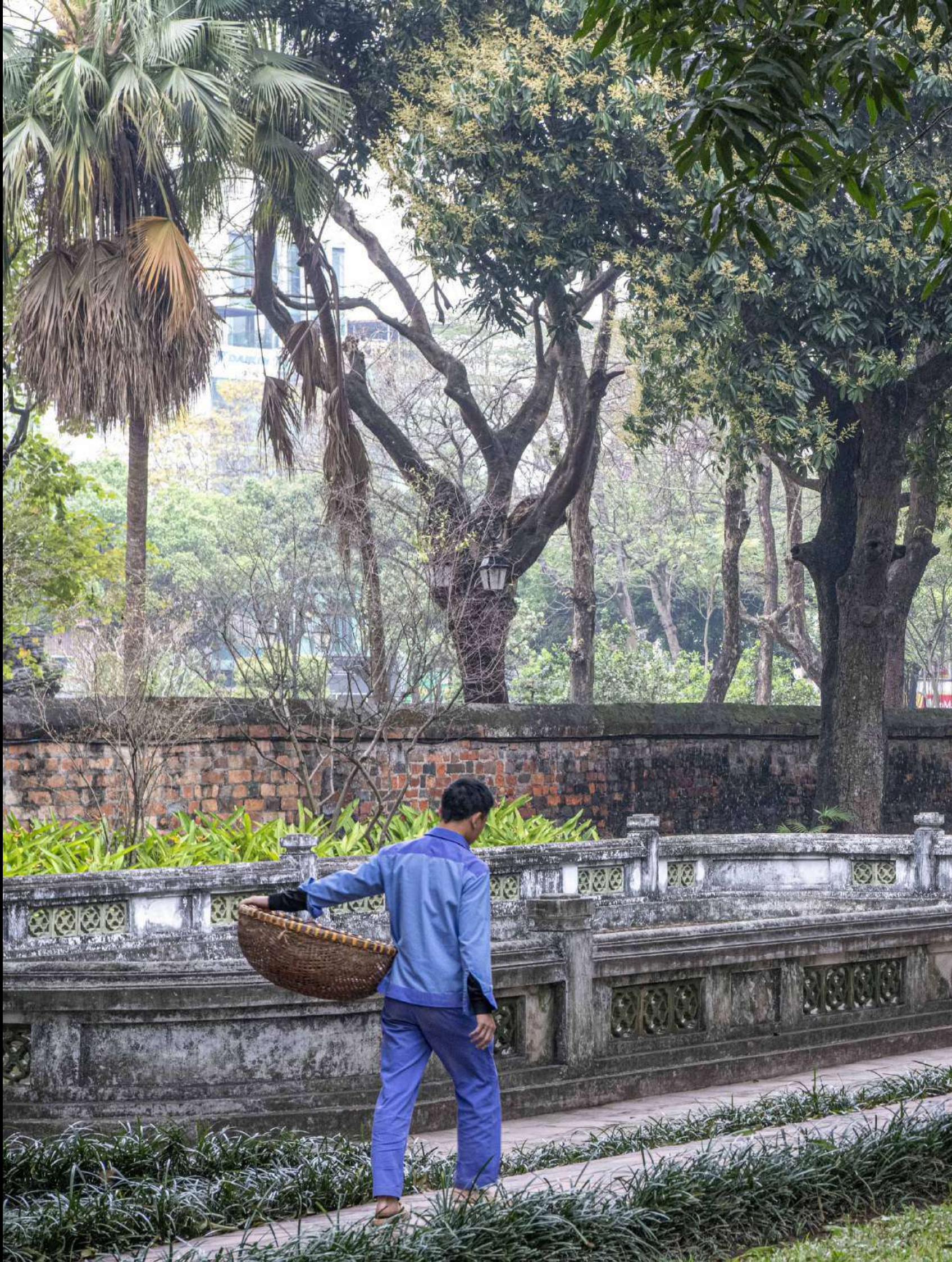
It's a tradition to practice Tai Chi at sunrise on our ship. Therefore, we invite you to an hour of Tai Chi whilst watching the sun rise over the scenic limestone islands in the bay.

From here, we'll share our thoughts and experiences about the workshop until lunchtime. You'll be back in Hanoi in time for your late-evening flight departure towards your home destination.



PRICE & BOOKING







Temple of Literature / Van Mieu, Hanoi.

# Quick guide

We wish you to travel with the greatest possible comfort and to know that you have received as much information as possible.

## ■ GETTING THERE

All international flights arrive at Hanoi (Noi Bai) Airport.

## ■ VISA

Terms for getting a VISA vary from point of departure. We suggest you contact your embassy or travel agency to find out your particular details.

## ■ WEATHER

Most of Vietnam has tropical climate. Due to differences in latitude and the marked variety in topographical relief, Vietnam's climate tends to vary considerably for each region.

During the winter or dry season, extending roughly from November to April, the monsoon winds usually blow from the Northeast along the Chinese coast and across the Gulf of Tonkin, picking up considerable moisture.

The average annual temperature is generally higher in the plains than in the mountains, especially in southern Vietnam compared to the north. Temperatures vary less in the southern plains around Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta, ranging from between 21 and 35 °C (69.8 and 95.0 °F) over the year.

In Hanoi and the surrounding areas

of Red River Delta, the temperatures are much lower between 15 and 33 °C (59.0 and 91.4 °F).

Seasonal variations in the mountains, plateaus, and the northernmost areas are much more dramatic, with temperatures varying from 3 °C (37.4 °F) in December and January to 37 °C (98.6 °F) in July and August.

During winter, snow occasionally falls over the highest peaks of the far northern mountains near the Chinese border.

## ■ LANGUAGE

Vietnamese is the official language of Vietnam, and the primary language of instruction.

## ■ CURRENCY

The Vietnamese monetary unit is the Vietnamese đồng (K).

## ■ QUICK GUIDE

### **Explore the Old Quarter in Hanoi:**

It's an exciting area packed with traditional Vietnamese shops, art galleries, cafes, and street food vendors. The Old Quarter is also where you can see the ancient architecture that the city is known for.

### **Visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum:**

This is an important historical site where the preserved body of Ho Chi Minh, the leader who declared Vietnam's independence from France in 1945, is kept.

### **Stroll around Hoan Kiem Lake:**

Also known as the "Lake of the Returned Sword," it's a peaceful place to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city.

### **Explore the Dong Van Karst**

**Plateau Geopark:** Located in Ha Giang province, this geopark is another UNESCO World Heritage site, known for its stunning limestone landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

### **Discover the Trang An Landscape**

**Complex:** Another UNESCO World Heritage site in Ninh Binh province. It's famous for its boat cave tours, ancient temples, and majestic limestone karst peaks.

### **Try Pho and Other Local Cuisine:**

Pho is Vietnam's national dish, a noodle soup with beef or chicken. Also try other local specialties like Bun Cha (grilled pork and noodles), Banh Mi (Vietnamese sandwich), and Egg Coffee when in Hanoi.

Remember, each place you visit in North Vietnam and Hanoi offers a unique perspective on the country's history, culture, and natural beauty, so take your time to enjoy each experience to its fullest.

PRICE & BOOKING





This man creates poems at the Tempel of Literatur for the local people and visitors like Christian Nørgaard.

# Equipment

Whether this is your first trip or your "hundredth" workshop with us, it's always helpful to have a rundown of what items you may want to pack so you have a travel checklist. Bookmark this packing list, because you'll want to refer back to it to make sure you've thought of everything you might want to pack.

## ■ CAMERA

The camera list is for inspiration, since you know better than anyone what equipment you prefer.

- Bring your own laptop computer and storage medium
- Camera bodie(s)
- Tripod
- Lenses, If you are working with a 24x36 mm camera system, lenses from 16 mm to approx. 90 mm is obvious. And a "long lens" such as a 180 mm. If you are working with a medium format camera, lenses from 28 mm to approx. 80mm is obvious. And a "long lens" such as a 300 mm.
- Bag for all camera gear
- Light bag for easy hiking with camera bodies and accessories
- Cleaning kit for cameras and lenses
- Rain/dust covers for cameras and lenses
- Charger for batteries
- Spare batteries
- Standard power converter
- Raw processing software
- Memory cards and card wallets
- Memory card reader
- USB key to exchange images

## ■ NICE TO HAVE

- Lens extenders
- Camera straps for ease of changing from one camera to another
- Graduated filter set
- Filter holder
- High quality polarizing filter
- Lens belt

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN NØRGAARD

Portrait of a local and beautiful woman in the mountains north of Sa Pa.





It is a tradition to dress up as a Quin or King In (loan) royal dress on Sundays





A beautiful mind  
and woman caught  
in a silent moment.

PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN NORGGAARD





An easy day in one of Hanoi's exotic parks.

# PHOTOGRAPHY WITH PASSION



Established in 2011 by the acclaimed photographer, Christian Nørgaard, Better Moments has grown into a beacon for photographic exploration and innovation. Embark on your creative journey with Better Moments, and come home with more than just memories – create moments captured in time, telling your unique story.

