

VIETNAM

Magazine *PH*

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FROM OUR READERS

I am a L/Col of the 2nd Signal Regiment in Melbourne, a citizen's Military Forces unit which specializes in radio communications. I am currently compiling a military thesis on Indochina (1960-1974) for about four years and the officers of our unit call on me for information.

Working in our Orderly room and with a little knowledge of the Vietnam situation, I give lectures from time to time. Through subscriptions to your **Vietnam Magazine** and **Vietnam Report**, you have given me a great deal of reference material.

During our last army parade, I brought along a recently-received copy of **Vietnam Magazine** for one of our officers to look at. A number of soldiers got hold of it and I never saw it again. It was very popular with them. Some inquired about subscriptions to either **Vietnam Magazine** or **Vietnam Report**.

Would it be possible to receive about six complimentary copies of **Vietnam Magazine** and **Vietnam Report** for me to distribute to interested soldiers of our unit? I dare not take another of my copies for fear of non-return. I am sure you will gain future subscriptions from these soldiers, some of whom have served in your beautiful country.

If possible send the above and any other military literature to me. It would greatly assist me in my lectures and thesis. I would also gladly swap articles, yours for ours. I would also appreciate corresponding with Vietnamese pen friends. Enclosed you will find a list of back issues of **Vietnam Magazine** which I would like sent to me and their corresponding cost.

BRIAN R. HODGE
45 Hillside Road
Rosanna, 3084
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia

Thank you so much for the magazine, and enclosed is US\$8 dollars for another one-year subscription.

I enjoyed the article concerning travel to Vietnam and the information concerning the hot and cool months in various parts of the country. The information helps me to plan my tour of your country in the future.

My best wishes to all of you for peace in the future.

Ms. CAROLYN HIATT
312 S. 22nd St.
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VIETNAM *Magazine*

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Cover: "Start the day right with a smile," says Miss Thien Huong, a member of Saigon's Song Ngoc vocal group. An attitude which, no doubt, complements author E.P. Patanne's strong feeling about Saigon being a city with a certain smile (see page 11).

BUSINESS IN VIETNAM

A revised edition of *Doing Business in Vietnam*, a book dealing with every aspect of business in Vietnam (establishment, investment, privileges, taxation, repatriation of earnings, etc.) and other subjects of special interest to foreign investors, has been completed by the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations.

The revised edition is now available at US\$5.00 or equivalent.

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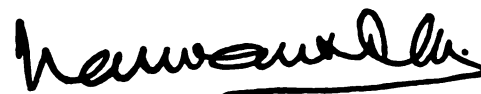
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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

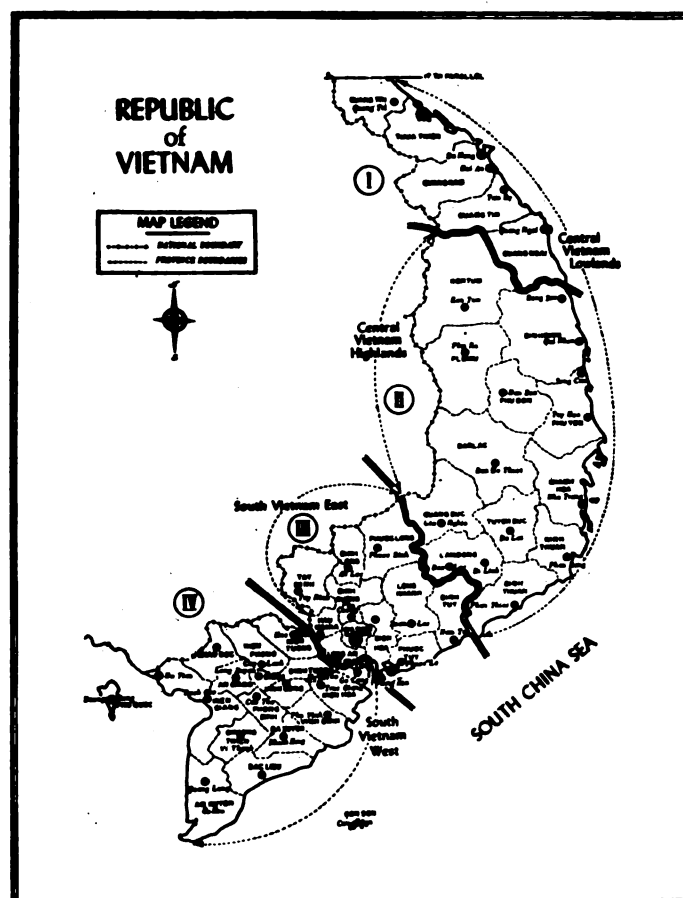
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If you would like to learn more about our activities, we indeed would be pleased to hear from you.



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At the former imperial city of Hue a girl poses beside statue of mandarin at the Plain of Tombs.

A VISIT TO VIETNAM

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

By YOSHIMASA YOKOYAMA
(*Travel Times, Tokyo*)

"What? You're not going to South Vietnam? There's still a war on there, you know. You've got a family to support; you'd better be very careful"

"Ordinary travel insurance doesn't cover war risks, you know. I think Lloyds has a special cover, but the premium is fairly high."

This was some of the advice which friends of mine gave me

when they heard about my plans for a one-week fact-finding tour of South Vietnam with Air Vietnam.

I began to get a little worried myself, after hearing such advice. I thought it would be safe in Saigon, but was a little worried about going to Hue, so I thought I'd better check into the insurance schemes available. My insurance broker told me that a ¥10 million

policy including war risk clauses had a premium of ¥125,000. At those prices, I decided go to Vietnam minus insurance.

Later, traveling through Saigon, Hue, Dalat and Vung Tau, I found myself wondering why I had been interested in insurance. I was quite enslaved.

Those places were full of tranquility and presented such peace-

ful and pastoral scenes. Most wonderful of all was the heart-warming hospitality of the Vietnamese people.

I was really in love with South Vietnam.

Quiet Hue

"It is so quiet that it seems as if the songs of cicadas could penetrate rock." This is from a poem by Basho, an ancient Japanese poet, written about the Ryoseki temple in Japan. The song of cicadas also dominates the Imperial city of Hue. Everything there is under a veil of deep peace.

Once, this city enjoyed pomp and glory as the seat of the Nguyen dynasty. But in 1968, Hue became the theatre for fierce battles between the Viet Cong and U.S. troops and it remains a ruined city of tiles and pebbles even today, with very few people. The Vietnamese people living there are all engaged in restoration work with U.S. government aid.

Hue came into the Nguyen family in the 17th century under the Emperor Gia Long (1802) who built his castle there in the style of ancient Chinese architecture, surrounded by moats and walls which had gates in the north, south, east and west. Standing near the moat, surrounded by the bright red blossoms of the glories of the Nguyen dynasty, I felt that the song of the cicadas sounded as graceful as court music.

The Perfume River

I stood on the balcony of the Hotel Huong Giang, which used to be the military officers' club house, and looked at the sampans and a ferry boat moving slowly along the Perfume River which runs through Hue. It was so quiet that I felt as if I were the only person there.

The wind blowing over the river brought with it a sweet, romantic odor. Everything was so peaceful, it was difficult to believe that savage battles had been fought there by the Viet Cong and the U.S.

After supper, I spent some time on board a sampan on the river and thoroughly enjoyed its subtle elegance.

The sampan cast out its anchor in the center of the Perfume River, which is about 200 meters wide. There was only a small oil lamp on board, so it was difficult in the dark to identify each other. Sipping tea, and eating fruit, I listened to the folk songs and love songs of Hue being sung by a trio on board—two men and a woman. There was no accompaniment other than the sound of waves touching the sides of the sampan.

The voice of the old man sitting in the bow of the sampan sounded mournful. Most impressive was his love song which lasted about an hour, and although I don't understand Vietnamese, judging from the melancholic and romantic tone of the song it seemed to be a song about a tragic love affair.

In Hue there are many spots for sightseeing—in fact, Hue is often compared with Tienmai in Thailand. The senior high school girls who passed by my hotel on the way to school were all beautiful.

Dalat Resort

After I had enjoyed the customary two-hour Vietnamese

siesta, I boarded a DC4 plane for Dalat, Vietnam's summer resort. About 1,650 meters above sea level, Dalat is the Karuizawa of Vietnam. Having just flown from Hue where the temperature in the daytime is over 30 degrees, I felt rather cool here.

Dalat was developed as a resort by the French, and there is something distinctly European about the place even today. On a hilltop, which commands a view of the lake, there is a beautiful hotel called the Dalat Palace, which has an atmosphere preferred by the French.

Dalat is known for its production of vegetables (cabbages, cauliflowers and carrots) and fruit (strawberries, pineapples and oranges). The produce is not only sent to Saigon but is also exported to neighboring countries. The marketplace, located in the heart of Dalat, is full of fruit and vegetables and people gathering to buy them.

Yachting can be enjoyed on the lake and there is a golf course nearby, but unfortunately, because of the rainy season, I was not able to play.



Structures at the Hue citadel destroyed in 1968 have been repaired.

South Vietnam looks

The minority Montaral tribe lives in the highland areas near Dalat and in order to provide protection for this racial group, the Dalat Ethnic Minorities Research Center is located there. Displays of hunting devices, musical instruments and clothing used by the Montaral people can be seen at the center together with a model of one of their houses, which are built on stilts. The center is a sightseeing "must" in Dalat.

In the suburbs, the Pren and Gougah waterfalls, which are superb picnic areas, are also popular attractions.

Little Paris

I flew from Dalat to Saigon by DC4 in about an hour. Dalat's average temperature is 15 degrees, and having come from the highlands, 1,650 meters above sea level, I felt rather warm. The tree-lined streets of Saigon look like green tunnels and present a very pleasing scene. They spread their big,



A birdseye view of a section of the Port of Saigon near downtown area.



Tet, the lunar year festival is the gayest among the Vietnamese. Here crowds watch a dragon dance.

to tourism as a postwar industry

leafy branches over the streets to make a beautiful contrast with the scarlet of the flame trees.

Through the tunnels run Honda motorcycles. "It is not an exaggeration to say that the city of Saigon runs on Hondas," says Takeshi Kaiko, a Japanese writer, in his book "A Holy Cross in Saigon" (Published by Bungoi Shunju). Mr. Kaiko was in Saigon during 1968. He goes on: "All kinds of people ride Hondas—university girls, Buddhist priests, Catholic priests, "cowboys" (delinquents), "dinky daws" (crazy guys), etc.

As well as Hondas, there are the following types of transport available: "bimicro" (an automated bicycle with a seat on the front), "seram" (a passenger-carrying tricycle), "cyclo" (a passenger-carrying bicycle), taxis and passenger cars. With such a variety of vehicles, the streets are busy—especially in the morning rush hours and between 3 and 6 p.m.

Although it is very busy and noisy on the streets, it is very quiet and peaceful in the zoological garden. In the spacious garden, there are many pleasant sights: girl students, family groups and lovers strolling around the gardens, all looking very happy.

Saigon, capital of South Vietnam, was founded by the French in the days of colonial rule. There is something refined about the city which is unlike others in Southeast Asia. Spacious boulevards and elegant white buildings make it look like parts of France. That is why Saigon is referred to as "Little Paris." It can be imagined how beautiful it must have been before the Vietnam war.

Vung Tau Resort

A modern highway, looking like a runway, goes from downtown Saigon to Vung Tau, a resort near the sea. You can reach Vung Tau in less than two hours, which means the highway is really very good.

Vung Tau used to be called Cap Saint-Jacques in the days of



Along Nguyen Hue boulevard in Saigon, a commercial center.

French rule, it is a beach resort which is reminiscent of the French Riviera. There are several good hotels there including Palace Vung Tau (80 rooms), Vung Tau Hotel and Grand Hotel. There are not many people there on weekdays, but a large number of swimmers visit the resort on weekends.

There are many other beach resorts in South Vietnam—Nha Trang is another place that looks like the French Riviera. There, king size lobsters and oysters as large as a man's hand are served.

Tourism Stressed

There exists, regrettably, no peace in South Vietnam yet. But the general atmosphere prevailing in South Vietnam could rightly be described as "peaceful." There are many pastoral scenes in the country side where cows are grazing in the fields—in fact, it is reminiscent of Japanese farm villages. This is Vietnam's special attraction, together with the heart-warming hospitality of the people.

The tranquility of Hue is sometimes broken by a patrolling helicopter, driving along the roads in

the suburbs of Hue and Dalat, we often come across military trucks and armored soldiers. At the entrances to important bridges, there were checkpoints surrounded by sand bags where soldiers with guns stood. These scenes were shocking to me as a sightseer intoxicated by the romantic mood.

It is true that it will be long before a perpetual peace is established in Vietnam. But I never experienced "danger" as it is imagined in Japan. Born in 1940, I have no experience of war as far as I remember. When I saw a frigate at anchor in the Saigon River near the Majestic Hotel where I stayed, I thought of a scene in a war movie. Vietnam seems to be in peace since the peace treaty was signed in Paris in January last year.

"Tourism is a passport to peace." This is an old, popular slogan, but it was not until I was in Vietnam that I fully realized the true meaning of this slogan.

South Vietnam is now looking to "peace industries." That is shown by the moves of Air Vietnam. South Vietnam's national

carrier. Air Vietnam recently set up a new Tourism Department headed by Nguyen Xich Hao to promote its own tourism aside from the Government's promotional effort .

Package Tours

An example of Air Vietnam's new promotional effort is the "AVN Jet Tour," a domestic package tour program suitable for "fit" customers and small groups. The program includes seven tours including a four-day visit to Saigon and Hue, from where you travel along highway No. 1, called the Highway of Terrors, to visit Quang Tri which was reduced to ruins in the war and then to Nha Trang before returning to Saigon. The total all-inclusive fare is US\$172.

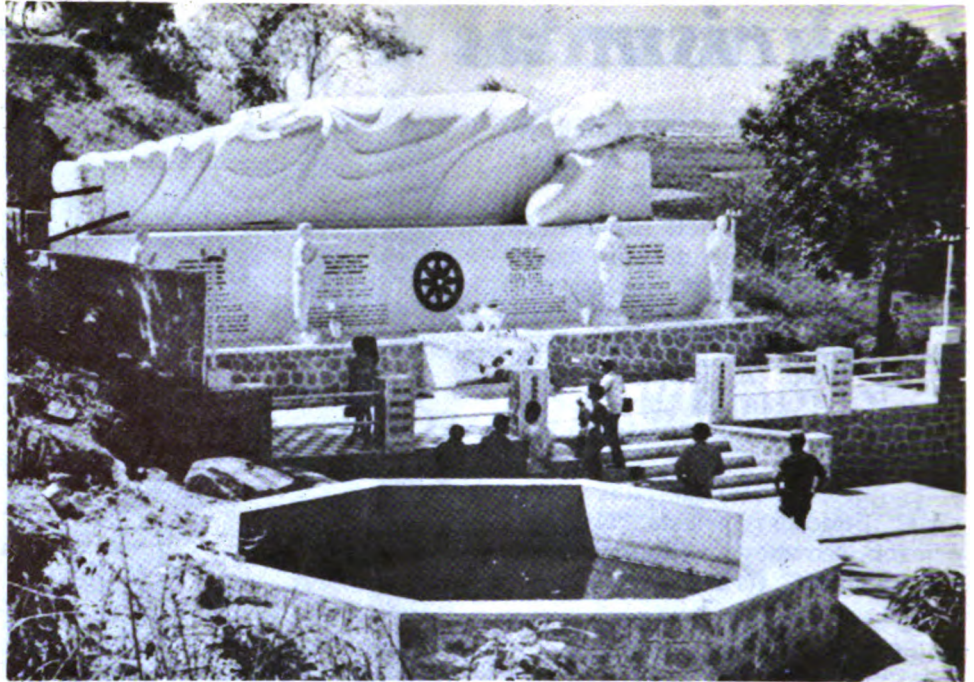
The AVN Jet Tour section has eight charming young female guides dressed in orange Ao Dai uniform who speak English, French and Chinese to take care of guests. This tour plan is very popular not only with Vietnamese but also with foreign tourists. "This was officially started in March, but there are many tourists on this plan," says Mr. Trang of the Tour Travel Office.

Air Vietnam owns two B-727s and one B-707. It will replace its two DC-6s with one Caravelle plane leased from Air France and one Viscount leased from CI. In the future an airbus A300B will also be put into operation.

According to an announcement by the South Vietnamese Finance Ministry, the number of foreign visitors to South Vietnam was 40,000 a year until 10 years ago, dropped to 29,000 a year between 1962 and 1968, hit 70,000 in 1970 (when EXPO 70 was held in Osaka) and declined to 62,000 in 1972.

Those figures look very small, as compared with the number of Japanese visitors alone in 1973 to Korea (410,000 persons), Hong Kong (360,000), Thailand (68,000) and Singapore (33,000). (Source: Immigration Control Office of the Japanese Government).

This means that South Vietnam is still a "virgin land" from a tourist point of view.



A statue of a reclining Buddha in Vung Tau, a city of temples.

Major Hotels

Major hotels in Saigon are: the Caravelle (120 rooms), Majestic (100 rooms) and Palace (100 rooms). There are no other big hotels. The total number of hotels in Saigon is 184 (5,832 rooms); 69 (1,416 rooms) in central Hue and Da Nang; 45 (718 rooms) in Dalat; and 166 (2,871 rooms) in the southern Delta area.

According to Air Vietnam, the total number of hotels across the country is 491 (10,832 rooms). This figure is extremely small as compared with 14,000 rooms of hotels registered with the Government. As South Vietnam is progressing toward peace, the hotel situation is also improving. Good news is that Hyatt will build a large-size hotel, Hyatt Regency Saigon, with 500 rooms. This plan is based on the 50-year land-lease contract signed between Saigon International Hotel (headquartered in Hong Kong) and the RVN Government. The new hotel will be open in the late 1976.

"Erotic animal" behavior of Japanese tourists in Korea, Taiwan, Bangkok and Manila, together with their arrogant attitude toward Southeast Asian people (this reflects Japanese people's inferiority complex toward Europeans),

is being frowned at and laughed at. As compared with those countries and cities, South Vietnam which is not over-sophisticated with foreign tourists is full of attractiveness.

Mr. Masamichi Ogawa, Japan branch manager of Air Vietnam, says: "We do not want to make Vietnam another Taiwan or Manila. It is not bad if there is an unsophisticated country like South Vietnam in Southeast Asia. Carrying passengers as far as Saigon means more revenue in Japan. We do not want to sell South Vietnam as a destination for night life enjoyment alone."

I agree with him. Saigon should not be another Manila or Bangkok. Saigon has many spots for sight-seeing, and tourism should be stressed.

A Chance to Return

Though this was a one-week trip, I fell in love with the charm of South Vietnam. This is a case of falling in love at first sight. One week is not long enough for me to understand her deep mental scars and worries. But I love her so much that I shall not be able to bear her becoming famous in the future and being visited by many tourists. If I have a change I do want to visit her again. ●

THE IMMORTAL PHAN KHOI

FOE OF OPPRESSION

By VAN LANG

Eighteen years ago, Vietnam lost a famous literary man and one of the most courageous anti-Communist combatants with the death of Phan Khoi in Hanoi.

To the Vietnamese people, from both North and South, Phan Khoi was known as a writer and revolutionary. Furthermore, he had always fought colonialism and Communism, oppression and tyranny.

Freedom Fighter

Phan Khoi became immortal when he led a revolution of the North Vietnamese intellectuals against the Communist regime in early 1956. For many months, Hanoi writers and newsmen valiantly fought the Communist Party and aroused great hope among the freedom-thirsty people above the 17th parallel.

To the Communists, the intellectuals' revolution was far more important than other signs of revolt—like the ransacking of a Hanoi police station by soldiers regrouped from the South, and the bloody riots in Quynh Luu sometime before. They had good reasons to think so, because the opposition movement was led by such a famous name as Phan Khoi, a man who had been cited by Ho Chi Minh himself as a scholar and greatly respected by all North Vietnamese intellectuals, whether from the traditional school or of Western background.

In fact, the literary men's opposition to the Hanoi regime existed long before the 1956 "revolution." It was like a time bomb awaiting the right moment.

Sometime after the Communists had marched into Hanoi, newsmen began to criticize the Communist regime indirectly but got only

lukewarm response from the population. Then 68-year-old writer Phan Khoi launched a veritable anti-red campaign.

He began by making the Communist leaders' ignorance and submission to Red China look ridiculous. Entrusted by the Hanoi authorities to transcribe a French book into Vietnamese, the old scholar translated the French word "pomme de terre" as "horse-bell potato," arguing that was what the Chinese called it.

On Feb. 20, 1956, following the downgrading of Stalin by Khrushchev, anti-Communist writers in Hanoi moved forward with more and more critical articles against the Communist Party line. Then, on May 26 of that year, Mao Tse-Tung proclaimed his policy of "One hundred flowers" which allegedly encouraged all shades of literary opinion to flourish. Taking advantage of the situation, on August 28, Phan Khoi wrote a lengthy "Critique on the Leadership of Arts and Letters," in which he showed how the Communists "pushed" red scribblers and buried deserving non-Communist authors.

"100-Kilo Bomb"

Phan Khoi's bitter article was described by Hanoi newspapers as a "100-kilo bomb" exploding right in the heart of the capital.

The anti-Communist campaign launched by Phan Khoi was in full swing at the beginning of September 1956. While the old newsman published a magazine called "Nhan Van" (People's Letters) with the help of two other well-known journalists, Nguyen Huu Dang and Tran Dan, Hanoi University students printed another anti-Party

paper called "Dat Moi" (New Land.) Both skipped no chance to criticize the government policy, ridicule Communist cadres and particularly hit hard at those self-proclaimed intellectuals who were actually slaves of their red masters.

Anti-Red Drive

Meantime, at Phan Khoi's instigation, revolutionary writers attempted to bring the large majority of Hanoi intellectuals into their anti-Communist campaign. Newsmen refused to write articles ordered by the Party, and if compelled to do so, deliberately wrote it as poorly as they dared.

Another tactic consisted of seemingly praising the Party line, but actually pointing out its shortcomings or ridiculous claims.

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PLEASE WRITE FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION

He sparked a strong anti-red wave

This literary campaign led by Phan Khoi soon created an atmosphere of turmoil not only in Hanoi but throughout North Vietnam. While anti-Party papers sold like hot cakes, Communist magazines remained in the bookstores, faded and dusty.

Reds' Reaction

Hit in their Achilles' heel, Hanoi leaders could find nothing to say. Ho Chi Minh himself remained completely silent.

But weeks later, the Hanoi authorities began to counter-attack. Government-run shops were ordered not to sell newsprint to anti-Party papers, readers were advised not to buy "reactionary" magazines, and printers told not to work for the "pro-Western" publishers.

All these tricks, however, failed lamentably because newsmen under Phan Khoi leadership bought newsprint on the black market while university students sold their magazines door-to-door, and printers said they didn't need their comrades' advice.

Finally, in their last attempt to smash this nation-wide literary campaign, Hanoi authorities closed the opposition papers and arrested a large number of intellectuals on the charge of being "imperialist agents."

More than 300 journalists and writers were sent to be brain-washed at labor camps, while Phan Khoi was put under house arrest at 73, Thuoc Bac Street in Hanoi.

A Noble Family

Born in 1887 in Central Vietnam's Quang Nam province, Phan Khoi came from a noble family. His father was a mandarin at the Imperial Court and his mother was the daughter of Governor Hoang Dieu, the national hero who committed suicide when defeated by the French at Hanoi.

Phan Khoi passed the "Tu Tai" examination at the age of 19, but

soon left his books to participate in the anti-French revolutionary movement called "Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc." Encouraged by his "comrades and masters" Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh—both famed revolutionists—Phan Khoi began writing news articles in Hanoi and became one of the most incisive pens of the "Dang Co Tung Bao" Magazine, published by the secret movement.

When "Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc" was broken up by the French, Phan Khoi returned to Quang Nam to join another revolutionary organization led by Huynh Thuc Khang.

3-Year Detention

He was arrested during an anti-government demonstration and was released only three years later, in 1914.

Phan Khoi then went to Hanoi and worked for "Nam Phong" but could not long stomach the pro-French publisher of that magazine. Later, he left for Saigon and collaborated with the "Luc Tinh Tan Van."

In 1920, he returned to Hanoi and worked for the "Thuc Nghiep Dan Bao" and the "Huu Thanh" papers. In 1928, both were closed by the French. Phan Khoi went to Saigon where he contributed to many newspapers and periodicals, including the "Than Chung," "Phu Nu Tan Van," and "Dong Phap Thoi Bao." His reputation as a columnist soon spread throughout the country following protracted polemics between him and the red journalist Hai Trieu.

In 1931, Phan Khoi once again returned to the northern capital of Hanoi to write for the "Phu Nu Thoi Dam." Five years later, fed up with being an employee, the veteran journalist published his own review, "Song Huong" in the imperial city of Hue. When "Song Huong" was closed in 1939, Phan Khoi returned to Saigon where he wrote the famous novel "Tro Vo Lua Ra."

Phan Khoi was living in his native province of Quang Nam when the Communist Viet Minh took over in 1945. He immediately protested the Communist dictatorial reign of terror, but thanks to his cousin, who was then Deputy Interior Secretary, Phan Khoi was not arrested. He was later invited to Hanoi by Ho Chi Minh and forced to collaborate with the Communists. During the nine long years of the resistance war against the French, Phan Khoi was given the task of translating many French and Chinese books into Vietnamese. Though disappointed, he did his work conscientiously, and was respected by Ho Chi Minh himself.

In fact, Phan Khoi endorsed the resistance against the colonialists, but thoroughly disliked the Communists. In 1951, he wrote a short poem comparing the resistance to a rose, and the Communists to thorns.

When the war was over, Phan Khoi returned to Hanoi at the end of 1954, and his hatred for Communism once again blazed up. In 1956, he led the North Vietnamese intellectuals in a literary campaign to expose the Communist Party to scorn.

Slow Death Term

As publisher of the "Nhan Van" magazine, Phan Khoi successfully created a strong anti-Communist wave throughout Vietnam and his reputation tremendously soared. His success became more spectacular when the Communist-led "Van" review—which succeeded Phan Khoi's—soon turned against the red regime.

After his paper was closed and he was placed under house arrest, Phan Khoi was entirely cut off from the outside world—even his relatives were not allowed to see him. The Hanoi authorities had given him a slow death sentence.

Suffering from isolation, illness and sorrow, Phan Khoi died a few months later, at the age of 70. ●



SAIGON: City with a certain smile

By E. P. PATANNE

When you really come down to it, tourism is not package tours, lower air fares, temples and monuments, hotel accommodations, exotic sights and sounds. It's people.

And people come in all shapes and sizes, temperaments and moods, biases and virtues. There are in this world, to be sure, good people and bad people.

The experiences of tourists all over the world can range from one of pure delight to pure horror. Still, impressions are lasting, especially to those who only have time to walk down a few blocks, do a little shopping and a little sightseeing.

And from Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport to a down-town hotel and maybe a short stroll down Tu Do street, if it's not raining, the



tourist gathers his first indelible impressions of the place and the people. It's always the people, how they look like, how they react, how they go about doing things—that makes for an instant behavior study. And it doesn't take a degree in behavioral science to "know" people. And it does not take very long for a tourist in Saigon to catch its mood.

Saigon is a city with a certain smile.

Warm, Intriguing

People smile, laugh, cry all over the world. In Saigon, it's the smile that often breaks on a pretty girl's face upon catching your look or your stare that can keep the sun shining through monsoon clouds.

It's a smile that flashes by from a roaring cyclo (scooters and mo-

torbikes), a pedestrian standing on the curb, the sidestreet vendor of cigarets or what-not, the sales-girl, the waitress, the promenader. It is not an open smile that comes with recognizing a familiar face.

It is not the smile that expresses self-amusement or some ironic sense of humor. It's a smile that always says, "Welcome, stranger." Flitting, intriguing, warm, provocative.

But it's not simply the smile but the very totality of that facial communication that hits you. One must consider the face and the smile.

Or, is it in the eyes?

It is the beaming smile that one often catches tug a corner of the mouth, and where in Hawaii tourists watching the hula are asked

to watch the hands, in Saigon, it could be watch the eyes.

The eyes look you straight and look past, while the smile never quite breaks wide open, just so faint and just so-so. But it's a certain kind of smile that you keep wondering about. It's a smile that leaves you smiling, musing and feeling alive.

Much of these smiles come from young, pretty faces. There are smiles, too, that come from matronly faces, even older faces. But the smile from the lovely young ladies of Saigon ("We are one-hundred per cent pretty," so a nice, young Vietnamese girl chirped, and we believed her) is something delightful and relished for a long time.

Of course, there are dour smiles that can be caught everywhere, but these are smiles better forgotten. One knows too well the sorrows of the land, but to catch that certain Vietnamese smile is to catch the spirit of a great people.

If there is any one segment of the Vietnamese population that has

suffered more, it is the Vietnamese womanfolk: the mothers, the wives, the sisters. And to see that certain smile break upon a Vietnamese woman or girl's face, in spite of everything, is seeing a nation smiling through, or a brave nation rising above its vicissitudes.

One recalls Bernard Fall's book, *Street Without Joy*, which is perhaps an apt description of Vietnam after a generation of conflict. And the world knows only too well of the sadness etched upon the Vietnamese landscape. But when one walking down a street in Saigon sees people smile and hears the laughter of children and the young, one immediately can tell the Vietnamese are a people who shall prevail.

Spirit and Soul

And when one catches a fitting smile that has quickly turned round a corner, one begins to understand the spirit and the soul of Vietnam. One can only stand in awe and wonder.

One looks around and, in spite of a continuing war, one sees a nation trying very hard to move forward; one also sees a people trying very hard to live lives as normal as those lives lived in countries enjoying peace. The war in Vietnam has a subconscious quality, and this is probably what makes the smile and the laughter in Saigon acquire a certain feeling.

All this is a foreigner's impression of Saigon and Vietnam, perhaps as fitting as the smile that flashed by. But as the observer is an Asian and Asians can "read" faces, what he reads on the smiling faces of Saigon's beautiful people is an indomitable spirit and charm that has endured for centuries.

There is something about the smile that one catches on a pretty face in Saigon that is as benign and as enchanting as the immortal figures in *ao dais* done in lacquer or glazed upon a vase or celebrated in Vietnamese poetry or song in centuries gone by.

That certain smile is magic.

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LADY DEFIES DECAY

AN UNOFFICIAL SAINT?

By ERIC CAVALIERO

TAN QUI DONG, South Vietnam—They have come to pray for a dying child. They have lighted candles.

And their eyes reflect the fervor of their reverence, veneration—and their faith in a Wishing Shrine dedicated to an unofficial saint whose body, thousands of Vietnamese believe, has been “miraculously” preserved from decay.

Outside the plaque-draped building, the translucent mid-morning sunlight brushes back and forth across the devout faces—all teak and streaked with weathered lines—of other believers who have assembled to pray tribute to Ba Thanh Anna, otherwise known as Ste. Anna Si.

Xom Chieu Cemetery

Over the years, the scene has been repeated many times at the relocated Xom Chieu Cemetery here in Saigon's district No. 4. The shrine stands well back from the road and the ardent pilgrims pick their way along a well-worn path past heavy, ornate marble tombstones to a dusty patch of cement-hard ground where the one-story brick structure squats behind a bamboo curtain of window blinds.

Little is known about Ste. Anna, whose real name was Nguyen Thi Si. (It's not unusual for Vietnamese Catholics to be given a Western name as well). She was born in 1840, but when the lid was raised on her coffin in 1967—61 years after her death—she was found to be almost perfectly preserved.

“She looked as though she had just fallen asleep,” said her 70-year-old granddaughter, Nguyen Thi Canh. “We could see her hair, her fingernails, her tongue and her

old-fashioned burial robe. Her remains were so pliable that we were able to change the robe quite easily.”

Why was she disinterred in the first place?

The graveyard where she originally was buried was moved seven years ago so that houses could be



Nguyen Thi Si before death.

built on the site,” Mrs. Canh recalled.

“Others who were buried close to her, including her husband, were no longer intact in the way that she was. She was re-buried immediately in the re-located Xom Chieu Cemetery, but this time the ground was muddy and the coffin must have leaked because her flesh was damaged and stained.”

Miss Canh, who has lived all her life in the Xom Chieu area, made her comments through an interpreter, Pham Dang Long, local sales representative for an American company.

“The remains were unearthed for the second time so that the shrine could be built,” Long explained. “This was done at the suggestion of people who witnessed the original disinterment and who were convinced that the Lady's permanent and natural embalming was a miracle.”

Long said the Roman Catholic Archdiocese has not given official sanction for open supplication at the shrine.

“They feel, of course, that there's nothing wrong with offering up prayers,” he said. “But I think their sentiment is that worshippers would be more reverent in the quiet atmosphere of a church.”

Catholic Approach

The Rev. Henry Forest of Montreal, Que., who has lived in South Vietnam for 14 years, said the Catholic Church traditionally is very cautious in its approach to such manifestations.

“It's obvious that she already is a saint in the minds of many people,” he said, “but saints can't be proclaimed by popular sentiment. The church's investigative procedures are stringent, scientific and painstakingly judicious.

“The Congregation of Rites must examine and approve two miracles attributed to any candidate to be beatified (proclaimed blessed),” added Father Forest, who is a staff member of the Papal Apostolic Delegate's Office in Saigon. “In a case where healing is ascribed to the candidate's miraculous intervention, the cure has to undergo the scrutiny of a physician.”

He said beatification is the first step toward canonization. Beatified persons bear the title of "blessed" and are allowed public veneration.

Father Forest isn't the only Westerner to take an interest in the shrine.

"The mythology, psychology and cultural traditions implied in this whole story have haunted me ever since I first heard about it from one of my students," said William R. Wermine of Agana, Guam, a professional photographer and former English teacher at Saigon's London School.

"I greeted it at first with a very healthy skepticism because I thought the whole thing was steeped in mysticism—a mixture of animism, witchcraft or sorcery, and superstition—a sort of darkly pagan streak in the Vietnamese character, seeking a fulfillment the conventional church cannot satisfy.

"But many of the worshippers who visit the shrine are educated people—they don't believe that there are any magic vibrations emanating from the Lady's follicles or anything like that.

"I once asked an old woman if she believed there was some kind of holy spirit at the shrine that could drive away evil spirits, and she said, 'Oh, no—this is just a sacred place where I come to pray to God.'

Foreign Visitors

"If you study the messages that grateful supplicants have left at the shrine you will see that they are in English, French and Japanese as well as Vietnamese. The shrine attracts people of all nationalities and religions. It's not unusual to see a Catholic making the Sign of the Cross standing at the altar next to a Buddhist offering 'xa' (a reverential Buddhist gesture with palms pressed together).

"Everyone knows that the mummified head of Pharaoh Ramses II can be seen in Egypt's National Museum in Cairo," he said, "but I didn't know until recently that there are centuries-old mummies on display in glass cases in the northern Filipino town of Kabayan."



The remains of Ba Thanh Anna disinterred 61 years ago.
(Photo by William R. Wermine)

Wermine said he discovered that, unlike the Lady of Xom Chieu, the Kabayan mummies had been eviscerated, treated with salts, oils and unguents.

Another historical precedent cited by Wermine was the case of the so-called "Bog People" of Denmark, some delicate-featured cadavers, dating back to the beginning of the Christian era and discovered in the peat-bogs of Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein.

"My research indicates, however, that the Bog People had been preserved in the area's ideal soil conditions," he said. "But it has been established that this did not happen at Xom Chieu. Nor was the Lady eviscerated and prepared like the Kabayan mummies.

"I can find nobody who can explain why her remains—and only hers—should have been preserved. However, I realize that this alone does not constitute a miracle."

Nevertheless, the tiny, dimly-lit chamber where she has been laid to rest in a glass casket is packed each weekend with worshippers who overflow through a narrow entrance way hung from floor to ceiling with plaques of every size and shape.

Thank-You Message

The tablets are inscribed with signatures and messages which usually read something like, "Thank you Ste. Anna for curing me." In the doorway is a formica-topped table covered with candles, fruit and flowers.

"I once saw a whole roast pig laid out on that table as a gift of thanks to the Lady," said Long, who doubles as an unpaid, unofficial janitor at the shrine, where he recently painted the interior walls.

"It's dark inside the building because there's no electricity in



Thank-you tablet





Thank-you shrine and candle offerings below.



Ng. Thi Canh, deceased's granddaughter, & an interpreter.

(Photos by Daniel Rodill)

the area," he said, "but I don't see any reason why it has to be gloomy. I did the decorating as my way of saying thank you to the Lady for the help she has given me in my business and domestic life.

"This certainly is not superstition with me. I'm a hard-headed businessman, and I was not born a Catholic—I'm a convert from Buddhism. Now, when I come to the shrine, I pray and the Lady conveys my prayer to God.

"I know of cases where the Lady's intercession has cured seriously sick people, as well as one incident involving a soldier who was reported missing in action during the Tet Offensive in 1968. The soldier walked into his parents' house after they had prayed at the shrine. He said he had been captured by the Viet Cong and had escaped.

"Some people I know have been

helped in matters concerning money and corruption. Others have prayed successfully for a fruitful bet at the racecourse, and others still come here to find out if it will be an auspicious time to take an important step like getting married. My brother received aid from the Lady when he had a problem connected with the military draft. And others in my family have benefitted through her."

Candle Offering

In recognition of these favors, Long always places a candle at the altar when he visits the shrine. (There invariably is a horde of pint-sized candle-vendors there—as well as a number of lottery ticket-sellers who cater to gamblers seeking to "borrow luck" from the Lady).

If the Lady is accepted by the Church as a candidate for beatification, Long said, a postulator

(the church official who presents the plea) will have to produce testimony and documentation of her "heroic virtues."

"We know that she was a devout Catholic and that she led a very hard life," he said. "Her family was very poor and she had to grind the rice meal to make flour so that she could bake cakes and sell them. She married a playboy and she had a lot of trouble with her husband's family who were very difficult people, but she bore these things humbly and uncomplainingly."

Long said a sister of Mme. Thieu, wife of South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu, recently visited the shrine.

"I don't know what she prayed for," he said. "In fact, I only discovered who she was because of all the security precautions that were taken.

"Perhaps she, too, came to borrow luck from the Lady." ●

ASEAN and the Vietnam War

By E. P. PATANNE

While the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), composed of the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, are considering a proposal for a non-aggression pact that would pave the way to a "zone of peace, freedom and neutrality," they should never lose sight of the fact that as long as the Indochina war festers, the region shall know no real peace.

The political geography of the region although constituting quite a spectrum of governments and leaderships, nevertheless shares many common social and cultural characteristics. Southeast Asia belongs to the Third World of developing nations whose peoples are buoyed by common aspirations. It is one region on this earth, however, that has awakened in the postwar morning of freedom with an awful hangover from a heavy colonial past. It suffers from a hang-up, so to speak, which it has not completely overcome. Yet, it is also a region which in the centuries before the imposition of Western colonial rule, had known glory and grandeur.

Internecine Conflict

Southeast Asia as the seat of a civilization as ancient as those which flowered in the Middle East, India and China, has also known a long history of internecine conflict. That conflict, it seems, has raged across this vast landscape in one form or another, in small or broad scales. If the region were not internally torn by internal factional strife, it was involved in a tangle of international conflict. To be sure, its modern history has been one series of commitments to causes where one country after another has been played a pawn in the power game of the Big Powers.

Southeast Asia straddles a corner of this world whose cultural

geography would delineate a region extending as far west as Bangladesh, as far east and south as the Philippines and Indonesia and within its compass are found the countries of Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, the two Vietnams, the seas around and between them, thus finding farther extensions into the insular world of Indonesia, the Philippines and even Taiwan. It is perhaps one of the richest regions in the world in terms of natural resources, and in terms of potentials for development. It also happens to form a major market for the products of the more advanced, industrialized nations.

Common Objectives

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations to date, is one in a series of attempts by some nations in the region to bind themselves together in the pursuit of common objectives. Of the odd 10 countries in the region, ASEAN's membership only counts on five nations and governments. Somehow, the countries of the region are able to find themselves sitting together in such organizations as the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), the Asian Development Bank, the Mekong Authority, and other United Nations Agencies, like FAO, WHO, the Southeast Asian ministers groups (SEAMES, SEAMEO, etc.) and professional associations.

While it can be said that Southeast Asian nations have been able to find many reasons to get together, there are equally as many reasons that have kept them apart. The politics of the region with its intense nationalistic fervor and loyalties arising from past colonial associations as well as ideological persuasions, have worked against the broad formation of a grouping of Southeast Asian countries.

Vietnam's Senate President Tran Van Lam, former foreign minister, in tracing the early history of ASEAN, has behoved the fact that the member countries of the association has never quite found consensus among themselves to consider the membership of South Vietnam. ASEAN has talked about greater cooperation, common economic strategies, even common problems and a common desire to establish a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, yet has never seriously considered taking on the big issue of the Indochina War. And for as long as neighbors in a common backyard cannot act and move together to douse a fire within its own vicinity, that neighborhood is not likely to have peace of mind.

If ASEAN indeed seeks more than a larger and stronger aggruppation, it should first address itself to the larger and more serious problem confronting Indochina. Diplomacy, however, has kept ASEAN aloof of the war in Indochina, bothering at best with its own internal problems of insurgency (in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines), eschewing the deeper and greater danger to the region of an Indochina war spilling beyond the confines of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Yet, it may not be too far fetched to presume that the insurgencies in the ASEAN borders are linked to the greater insurgency in Indochina.

A Grand Conference

ASEAN has lately been concerned with the problem arising from the use of its inland seas and straits, with intra-regional cooperation, with intra-regional strategies for development. The bigger problem of Indochina has been left to the Big Powers to settle. It is, indeed, ironic that a domestic squabble should be left to other people to settle.

But it is not likely that the Indochina war will go away. Nor is it

likely that the Big Powers can find it among themselves to bring final peace to this troubled heartland of Southeast Asia. It behooves, therefore, the ASEAN member countries to initiate a move to bring Asia into a grand conference to take up the problem of Indochina.

The machinery for this has been suggested by the Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos in the *Asian Forum*. The forum as envisioned is an informal channel whereby the more serious problems affecting the region can be aired and solutions sought. It is idle, in our thinking, for ASEAN to talk of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality with a conflagration in its backyard.

If ASEAN does not move, thereby simply allowing the Big Powers to come in and rescue Indochina from its predicament, there is once more a surrender of interest, an abandonment of a real pursuit of peace in the region. And once more, by keeping itself aloof of the problem, the region admits of intervention by the Big Powers.

A Start in the UN

The convening of an Asian Forum that shall deal with the Indochina war, may begin with informal talks at the United Nations. This should be initiated by ASEAN representatives to the world body, whereby the governments of the warring states in Indochina may be contacted and apprised of the intentions of the forum. A lot of groundwork would be needed; a lot of personal diplomacy would have to be activated to get the show on the road. A venue for the big conference shall have to be selected, at least, on Asian ground. The leaders of Asia, not just some, but all, should be seated around a large table.

Has the Leadership

This is no doubt a grandiose undertaking, but if ASEAN is going to be worth its salt, it cannot but take the initiative in setting into motion the machinery of peace in the region. We do not doubt that Southeast Asia has the leadership to bring this about.

There has been a precedent to all this in the Afro-Asian convocation

held in Bandung some years back. This time, however, as the problem of Indochina is basically a problem of Asians, then let there be a meeting of Asian minds.

What we are simply suggesting is nothing more than a beginning or the first round of talks towards the eventual settlement of the Indochina war. A beginning has to be made.

What sanction or sanctions can an Asian Forum impose? To speak of sanctions other than moral suasion is to speak of retaliatory action, Asia is much too loose a grouping of nations to find it among themselves to put a lid, so to speak, on the cauldron that is Indochina. It is much more important that the leaders of the warring states and groupings in Indochina find it among themselves to bring peace to their peoples, and stave off a sapping of their very vitality as nations. A way must be found to bring Indochina's leaders to sit and talk peace. The way may be found by the leaders of ASEAN through the Asia Forum.

Peace in Indochina has been the intermittent subject of talks at La Celle St. Cloud in Paris, with the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS) composed of Indonesia, Iran, Hungary and Poland, already on the field in Vietnam, paving the way towards the eventual implementation in full of the Paris Accords of 1972. The work of the ICCS however, has not been easy.

The Indochina problem appears to be an impossible tangle, but as marked, "This cannot go on for-

ever." A generation of war becomes meaningless measured against the general striving of nations to solve the problems of food supply and rising populations, to mention just that. The further prolongation of the war in Indochina becomes a mindless adventure.

In hoping for peace to dawn in Vietnam, Senate President Tran Van Lam in his address to the Lions Club in Saigon last March (see *Vietnam Magazine* N° 4, 1974), echoed the deepest sentiments of his people, when he declared: "...in expressing humanitarian feelings my speech will voice not only my personal aspirations, but the aspirations of our people. It may seem somewhat surprising to you that I find it logical to have faith not only in God, and in The Path, but also in miracles. It is this faith—and hope—that I wish to share with you."

Faith and Hope

In this same speech, Tran Van Lam saw the ultimate reconciliation of the two Vietnams, affirming his faith in these words: "I firmly believe that the traditional patriotism and gallantry of this nation will play the decisive role in achieving first of all a reconciliation among all inhabitants of South Vietnam and subsequently a reunification of North and South Vietnam."

Such a high hope, in spite of everything, is alive and certainly shall be kept alive until a way can be found to bring peace to Vietnam, Indochina—and the region. ●

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2.5 MILLION ADHERENTS

Christianity in Vietnam

By VAN NHAN

Christianity is the second most important religion in Vietnam. It has about 2 million and a half adherents.

Before the 1954, Geneva Agreements partitioning Vietnam into two regions, North and South, there were about the same number of Christians in these two regions. But after the 1954 Geneva Agreements, more than half a million Christians left Communist North Vietnam, and came to the South, where there is freedom of faith.

Most of the Christians in Vietnam are Catholics, a small number are Protestants.

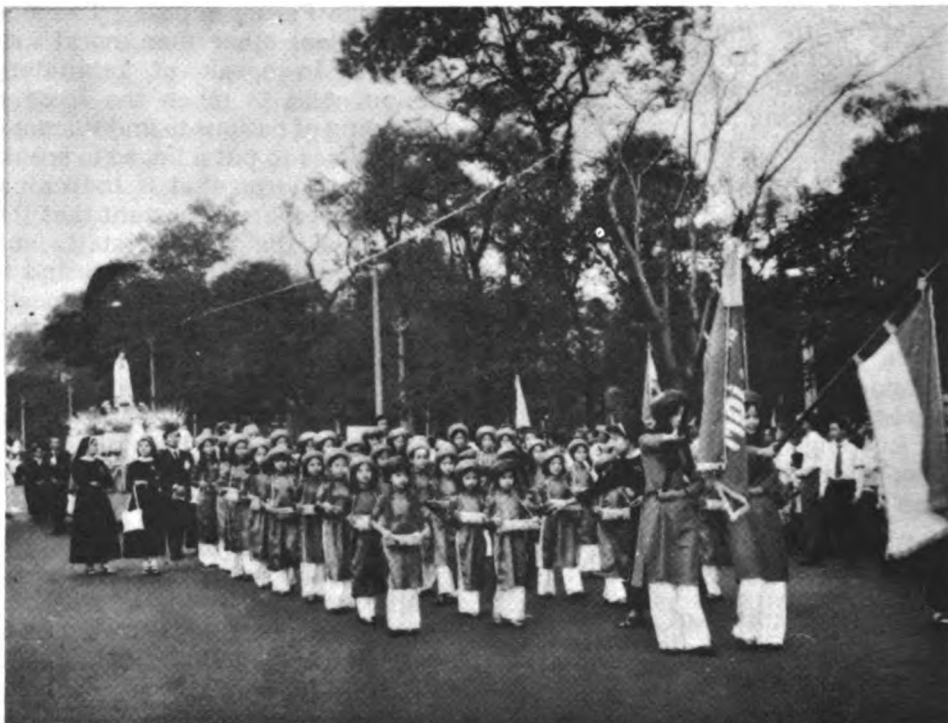
As Christianity is the best organized religion in the whole world, and as its teachings are well and profusely propagated by scholarly priests, and its principles rites being well known throughout the whole world, it is superfluous to give here an analysis of this religion. It suffices to say that Christian teachings are the foundations of Western civilization, and promote as well as practice justice and charity, without which no civilized world can exist.

It is based on what is generally called "the ten commandments" that God himself dictated to Moses on Mount Sinai, after leading the people of Israel out of Egypt (about 1400 or 1200 B.C.). These commandments are reproduced in the Ancient Testament, in the second book of Moses, or Exodus, Chapter 20:

"And God spake all these words, saying:

— I am the Lord thy God, who has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

— Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,



Catholics in Saigon pay homage to Lady of Fatima with a procession.

— Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth,

— Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

— And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

— Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

— Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,

— Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work,

— But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

— For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

— Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

— Thou shalt not kill.

— Thou shalt not commit adultery.

— Thou shalt not steal.

— Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

— Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's."

These commandments constitute the foundations of justice. They are completed by Jesus himself who taught (St. Matthew, Chapter 19): "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

And this is the foundation of Charity.

Justice and charity are as has been said above the cornerstones of Western civilization.

Now, the interesting question for us all is how and when Christianity came to Vietnam.

To answer this question, it is necessary to make a survey of the history of the contact of Asia and Vietnam with the West.

For most of the Asian countries—except Japan—this contact was made first through trade, and religion and then conquest by armed forces. The superiority of the West over the East in technique and organization made all these successive operations quite easy.

The survey of this history we give below is a compilation from:

1. Le Vietnam, (The Vietnam), by Le Thanh Khoi, in French,
2. Vietnam Quoc Su (Vietnam National History) by Tran Trong Kim in Vietnamese.

Contact with West

Sea routes have existed since ancient times, connecting the Mediterranean countries with the countries of Eastern Asia.

The conquest of Eastern Europe and of Asia Minor by Genghis Khan, the great Mongol, opened up land routes from Europe to Asia.

Marco Polo was one of the rare Europeans who could live at the Court of the great Mongol from 1275 to 1291. He had been in Champa and probably had seen Poulo-Condore Island. In his wake, many Catholic missionaries landed on China.



Catholic cathedral in Saigon and Jean d'Arc's church in Cholon (below).



The Italian Franciscan Oteric de Pordenone left Venice in 1314 for Asia. He landed in Malabar (India), visited Ceylon, most of Indonesia, then came to Champa, between 1318 and 1324. He landed in Canton later, crossed China from South to North, and when going home, visited Turkestan and Tibet.

In the 16th century, European trade was very active in Asia, thanks to the progress made by the Portuguese in the art of maritime navigation. In 1498, Vasco de Gama passed the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), arrived in Aden and then in Calicut (Madras, India). Admiral Albuquerque from Portugal in 1510 seized Goa, in India, made a colony out of it to get spices. In 1511, he took Malacca. The same year he sent a delegation to Siam (former name of Thailand). Three years later, Portuguese ships arrived in Canton, and opened up the road to Asia. Since

then many European ships came to Asia with merchants, missionaries and then soldiers.

After being in Canton, the Portuguese came to Dai-Viet (former name of Vietnam).

In 1535, Antonio de Faria arrived in Tourane (Da Nang), and Faifo (Hoi-An). On his advice and information, the Portuguese began in 1540 to trade with South Vietnam whose name at that time was Cochinchina (given it by the Portuguese).

In 1546, the Portuguese poet Camoens, who had been for a long time in Goa and Macao, was shipwrecked at the mouth of the Mekong River. He escaped unhurt with his poem *Lusiades*, in which he wrote: "I see the Mekong flow in the middle of Cambodia. I see the coasts of Champa whose forests are adorned with fragrant wood. I see Cochinchina, still very little known, and the ignored bays of Annam."

Trade at Faifo

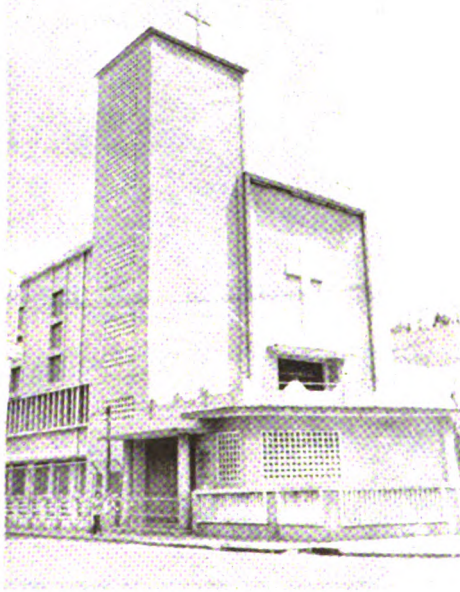
"Goods were exchanged at Faifo (Hoi An), a beautiful port to which converged all foreigners," wrote Father Borri who landed there in 1618. That port had actually been for a long time used by Japanese and Chinese who traded with Cochinchina.

By the end of the 16th century, Japanese trade was encouraged by Hideyoshi, the Regent of Japan, who in his expansion policy issued an edict authorizing trade and travel abroad. Later, the fear that Christianity might be a source of plots from the feudal lords against the Shogun government, and a means of European penetration, preparing a further conquest, induced him to take severe measures. He then banned Christianity and forbade travel abroad. Japan was then closed to foreigners, and her commercial relations with Dai-Viet (Vietnam) ceased completely. But the Japanese settlement in Faifo survived.

The Portuguese benefitted from the weakening of Japanese competition. From Macao, where they got an establishment in 1557, their ships regularly, with the monsoons, came to Vietnam by the month of December or January and left by

September. But at the beginning of the 17th century, they had to compete with the Dutch, who in 1602, created the Company of Oriental India in Amsterdam. The port of Batavia (Djakarta, Indonesia), they founded in 1619, served as a starting point for their progressive conquest of the Archipelago.

In spite of Portuguese intrigues, the Nguyen lords, ruling over half of Vietnam, south of the province Quang Binh, welcomed their ships that came to Faifo between the years 1633 and 1654. But the Dutch directed most of their efforts to North Vietnam, under the rule of the Trinh lords one-half of Vietnam, north of the province Quang Binh. The Portuguese, as we have seen above, sent their ships to North Vietnam only with the monsoons.



Protestant chapel in downtown Saigon.

The Dutch got authorization from Lord Trinh Trang to found in 1637 a commercial center at Pho Hien, near today's Hung Yen town. Pho Hien through Dutch commerce attracted Chinese, Malays, Siamese and Japanese. It quickly became an important town with about 2,000 houses, second only to the capital. A few years later, the Dutch succeeded in getting authorization to establish themselves in the capital.

Then came the English. The first English delegate from the English

Company of India (founded in 1600), came to Faifo in 1613 and was killed by a local mob. Later attempts also failed, because of the opposition from the Portuguese and the Dutch. It was only in 1672, after the defeat of the Dutch in Europe that the Englishman William Gyfford was authorized to open a commercial center at Pho Hien, transferred later in 1683 to the capital, and settled next to the Dutch. But their trade did not prosper, and the English left the country in 1697, followed 3 years later by the Dutch.

As for the French their first object was to bring missionaries disguised as merchants. Their first ship went up the Red River in 1669. Their trade began only after the establishment of their apostolic vicariates. For them, religion and trade were so mixed up one with the other, that an English factory director established in Vietnam, once said: "The French have an office here, but we cannot find out whether it is for trade or for religious propaganda."

The French founded a commercial center at Pho Hien in 1680, but 2 years later the seizure of Bantam (Western province of Java, capital Serang), where the French had their only establishment, brought the ruin of their center in Dai Viet.

Very Few Needs

The European trade with Vietnam, begun in the 16th century by the Portuguese, continued by the Dutch, English and the French declined quickly in the last decade of the 18th century. This was due mainly to the fact that the local population was too poor, had very few needs, and very simple tastes. So the imported goods consisted mostly of rich material and luxurious products for the court and high ranking mandarins. They consisted also of arms and ammunition needed by the feuding Lords Trinh and Nguyen, ruling, respectively, in North and South Vietnam. As since 1672 till 1774, a tacit truce existed between them, because neither of them was strong enough to eliminate the other, and their needs for arms and ammunition became smaller. Besides, acts of violence and piracy from the European merchants induced the

First came merchants, then priests

Vietnamese authorities to impose restrictions more and more severe on their trade. On the other hand, new markets were found in India and Indonesia and trade with Canton increased. For all these reasons, European business offices in Vietnam were closed one after the other. Only the Portuguese went on making sporadic exchanges of goods with Vietnam.

European Attempts

In the wake of the European merchants came their priests. The first of these to come to Vietnam was a certain Ignatio (I-nê-Khu, in Vietnamese). He began to preach the Gospel in Son-Nam (Nam Dinh). Asia was then part of the half-world, East of the Azores Meridian, that Pope Alexander VI, in 1493, bestowed on Lisbon (Portugal). Therefore, all missionaries going to East Asia, should embark at Lisbon, on Portuguese ships. Their itinerary forcibly went through Goa, in India, where ruled absolute the Portuguese Vice-Roy and the Inquisition. Once arrived at their destination, the missionaries, in principle, could only work under the supervision of a Portuguese Superior.

Jesuit Missions

It was in the beginning of the XVII century that the first Catholic missions were installed in Dai-Viet by the Jesuits expelled from Japan, after the prohibition decreed by the Tokugawas. (Tokugawa was the family name of the Shogun, then the real master of Japan. The Mikado, or Emperor, ruled only by name.) It is important to note this fact, because it forboded the policy adopted later by the Vietnamese government towards Catholicism.

Actually, the first Jesuits who came to Japan were treated with tolerance and even with sympathy. The mission Saint François Xavier created in 1549 was very prosperous, and made many conversions. But in 1585, Spanish Dominicans arrived in Japan and



The International Protestant church at Tran Cao Van St., Saigon.

plotted against their Portuguese rivals, representing them as the scouts preparing for Portuguese conquest. Hideyoshi, a great statesman who came from the commoners and was the regent of Japan, always feared that Christianity might be used by the feudal lords to plot against the Bafuku or Government of the Shogun. He had sent emissaries to Europe to get information. He knew of the St. Bartholomew massacre of Protestants by the Catholics, of the inquisition fire-stakes, and of the slave-trade in Africa. He issued an edict banning the Portuguese missionaries, but not the merchants, whom he needed for Japan trade with China, for the manufacture of arms and ammunition, for the building of ocean-going ships. In 1597, a Portuguese ship, the San Felipe, was wrecked off the Japanese coast. The pilot, taken to Yedo (former name of Tokyo and capital of the Shogun Tokugawa), boasted of being a subject of the King of Spain, the most powerful king on earth. When asked how the King of Spain could conquer so many

countries, he answered: "By religion and armed forces. Our priests prepared the way by winning the local population through their conversions to Catholicism. Then it is child's play to submit them to our rule."

Before this incident, the Dominican Juan de Cobo, sent by Manila to Hideyoshi as an Ambassador from Spain, had proudly shown him on a map all the countries belonging to the Spanish crown.

Severe Measures

The San Felipe incident induced Japan to reinforce the proscription act, that up to then was mildly carried out. Then, in the beginning of the XVII century, the steady success of Christianity, the arrival of a Spanish fleet at Manila, the refusal of the Spaniards to sign a trade-agreement with Japan caused Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to take severe measures between 1612 and 1614, resulting in the disbanding of the Catholic mission in Japan.

At that very moment, the Portu-

guese merchants still trading in Dai Viet, drew the attention of the Superior in Macao on the possibility of evangelizing this country. In the early days of 1615, there landed in Tourane (Da-Nang) the Genoese Buzomi and the Portuguese Carvalho. They founded at Faifo the "Mission of Cochinchina," including in the beginning, mostly Portuguese and Italians. Cristoforo Borri arrived in the year of 1618 and was the author of a first book ever published on the country. In this book, he praised the riches of Dai Viet, the qualities of its citizens he considered as "superior to the Chinese by the intelligence and the courage," their kindness and hospitality.

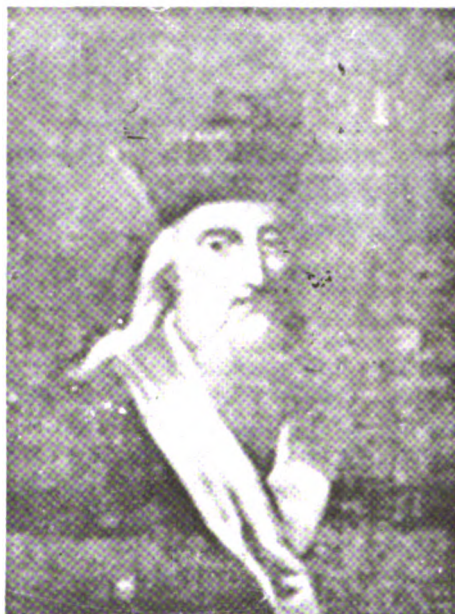
Tonkin Mission

The success of that mission encouraged the Jesuit Superiors to extend their propaganda to North Vietnam. They sent Baldinotti there in 1626. The latter's reports made them decide for the creation of a "mission for the Tonkin." Alexander de Rhodes, well-known for his aptitude for the country's language, was chosen as the leader of the mission. Alexander de Rhodes whose name is closely linked with the Vietnamese culture development in the 19th century, was born at Avignon in 1591. At the time, that town was a part of the Pope's domain till 1791, when it was united with France. De Rhodes arrived in Tonkin in 1627 and was received by Lord Trinh Trang who showed him some tolerance. By the end of 1629, he had christianized nearly 7,000 people, among them several princesses of the royal court.

But here, as in Japan and China, the same reactions were produced. The government was uneasy to see the new religion win some members of the noblest families, and the proselytes deny all doctrines, principles and rites that were the foundations of Vietnamese society. The social and political structure of the Dai Viet were based on the moral concepts of Confucianism, on the cult of the ancestors in the family and of the Emperor in the state. Christianity, with its teachings and rites com-

pletely devoted to God or Jesus Christ, was the absolute negation of the whole tradition of spiritual heritage. Not only did the faith of the Christians obliterate filial piety and faithful allegiance to the king, but their union and their blind obedience to foreign priests could make out of them a dangerous community. The government considered with apprehension the possible overthrow of the established social order and the birth of a new political body, supported eventually by foreign guns, as evidenced by events in India and Indonesia.

Soon in 1630, Alexander de Rhodes was expelled from North



Jesuit missionary Alexander de Rhodes

Vietnam by the Lord Trinh. In the South, the Lord Nguyen also issued edicts of proscription. But in fact, the missionaries were still tolerated, because through them, the Government could have profits from their commerce and supply of arms and ammunition. Rhodes took refuge in Macao, came back several times to South Vietnam, between 1640 and 1645, when he was banished for good. Then he was sent back to Europe to ask for other missionaries to replace him and for material aid

In the beginning of the XVII century, a new development took place: the emergence of Protestant Netherlands, that seized Malacca in 1641, and took away from the

Portuguese the control of the sea routes to China and Japan. With the decline of Lisbon, the Pope could not reasonably hope for an evangelization of Asia by the Portuguese alone. The "Congregation for Propaganda," founded in 1622 undertook this task and started an action against the corrupt practice and disorder of the missions. It appointed the first apostolic vicar for the Oriental India, i.e. a priest directly under its control, not subject to Goa's influence.

Alexander de Rhodes arrived in Rome in 1649. He laid before the Congregation for Propaganda a plan for establishing in Dai Viet the first episcopate, independent from Portuguese patronage. The task of creating an indigenous clergy, in the interest of the Christian Faith, would be entrusted to the Bishops, not titular, but only "in partibus infidelium," i.e. "honorary," or, to be more exact, "in countries occupied by the infidels." This was merely for dealing tactfully with the King of Portugal. During the long negotiations in Rome, the Congregation for Propaganda published Alexander de Rhodes' first works, including a Catechism in Vietnamese and Latin, and especially a dictionary Latin-Vietnamese (1651). For the first time, the roman alphabet was used systematically to express Vietnamese sounds, and this was also the first official beginning of the Quoc-Ngu or Vietnamese national writing, devised to replace Chinese characters, officially in use in Vietnam.

Actually, this remarkable invention had been prepared by Italian and Portuguese missionaries whose language was the most employed in relations between Vietnamese and all Europeans, whatever their nationalities. Gaspar de Amaral made a dictionary in Vietnamese and Portuguese, and Antoine de Barbosa a dictionary in Portuguese and Vietnamese. But Alexander de Rhodes had the merit of bringing to perfection the phonetic transcriptions. The invention of the Quoc Ngu originated from the needs of religious propaganda.

The greatest obstacle to the diffusion of Christianity came, in fact, from the general Confucian education. In order to reach the masses, the missionaries had to launch attacks against Chinese culture and the ideograms or picture-symbols representing it. They were trying to give the population a means of doing without the dominant classical writing, and succeeded in devising a system of transcribing the Vietnamese language with the roman alphabet, accompanied by diacritical marks to express all Vietnamese tones. The Vietnamese converted to Christianity, who had learned the Quoc Ngu, could not read Chinese, in which public edicts and literature were written. It is easy to guess the political consequences of the new invention contributing to make the Vietnamese Catholics a group, separated for a very long time, from the national community. Armed conflicts occurred, even during the early years of the French rule, between Luong (non-Catholic) and Giao (Catholic) villages, so deep was the misunderstanding between them.

Death of Rhodes

Losing patience because of the slowness of the negotiations in Rome, slowness due to the fear of Portuguese protestations, Alexander de Rhodes went to Paris to recruit priests for the missions in Indochina. That was at a time when the French government began to be interested in overseas lands. Rhodes aroused sympathy from the French aristocracy and Church. The latter made an appeal to Rome for a quick decision favorable to Rhodes' demands. But Rhodes had to leave for a mission to Persia, without being satisfied. He died in Isfahan (ancient capital of Persia, now a town of second rank), in 1660. But his efforts were not in vain. The French nobility gave necessary funds to maintain overseas episcopates. And in 1658, Rome appointed 2 French apostolic vicars for Vietnam: Francois Pallu and Lambert de la Motte.

The maritime expansion should keep pace with the evangelization.



President and Mrs. Nguyen Van Thieu lead congregation at Saigon mass.

The powerful Company of the Sacrament projected the foundation of a "Company of China for the diffusion of the Christian Faith and the Establishment of Commerce." The current opinion of that time deemed it worthwhile to promote religious predication, the King's glory and the trade: missionaries and merchants should cooperate closely. A rich ship-owner in Rouen (France), Fernand de Faverly had a ship equipped to carry Pallu and his assistants to the Far East. But his ship was wrecked in a storm and his undertaking failed. But in 1664, when at Rue du Bac, in Paris, the Society for the Foreign Missions was founded, the French Premier Colbert created the Company of Oriental India. Pallu devoted all his efforts to direct the new company's activities to Indochina. From anywhere he had stayed, he sent to Colbert information about trade and the political situation. When his ship was wrecked by a typhoon off the Philippines coast, he was found with a "project for the establishment of the Royal Company of India in the Kingdom of Tonkin." Therefore, it can be said that until the end of the XVIII century, the French

trade in Dai Viet had no other representatives than the missionaries.

The proscription, first carried out with leniency, became more and more severe as the progress achieved by the expansion of Christianity increased.

In 1662, Lord Trinh Tac, in North Vietnam, had a direction for moral reforms published, reminding all citizens of the traditional disciplines: "Any citizen owes the State faithful allegiance and complete devotion." He explained that this was the essence of Confucianism. Then he had all books on Taoism, Buddhism and "the false doctrine" (i.e. Christianity) prohibited. In 1665, Lord Hien Vuong (in South Vietnam) had the Christians of Faifo executed. In 1696, Lord Trinh Can, in North VN, declared: "The Catholic religion is contrary to the natural principles of morals, it injures the reason and disturbs the people's mind."

Expulsion

Lord Trinh Cuong in 1772, and Lord Trinh Doanh, in 1754 in North Vietnam and Lord Nguyen in South Vietnam, prohibited the predication, had Catholic books

burned, and ordered the missionaries out of the country.

This did not prevent them from being very active, now overtly, in periods of leniency, now clandestinely, in periods of severe persecutions.

An open conflict existed between the missionaries from Rome and those from Lisbon. The latter did not recognize Rome's initiative and was determined to use Portugal's privileges throughout Asia, the more so because they suspected the former's (the French missionaries) intentions, and considered them as scouts sent by the Company of Oriental India, created by the French Premier Colbert.

Finally the conflict ended in 1689 by the confirmation of the apostolic vicars' (the French missionaries from Rome) authority. Then the Jesuits could come to Dai Viet. During the 18th century, some of them were given important functions at the Court of Lord Nguyen, in South Vietnam, just as their colleagues in China were, first at the Court of the Ming Emperors, then at the Court of the Ts'ing Emperors (Manchu dynasty).

Planning for Conquest

As the commercial markets in Vietnam were very limited, because of the population's poverty, all European countries turned their eyes to China who offered immense possibilities.

But the necessity of having bases between India and China for their commercial fleet induced the English and the French to make their first plan of conquest. Rivals in their colonial expansion, they both tried to get bases at Poulo-Condore Island, and in the Tourane bay.

In 1686, an agent from the French Company of Oriental India, Véret failed to convince his government on the necessity of seizing Poulo-Condore. In 1702, the English established themselves there, built a port, but their garrison rebelled and killed all Europeans. The English did not make other attempts to return to the island.

On their side, the French decided to have an establishment in

Tourane Bay. This was a central position between China, the Philippines and the Malacca Straits. They sent Friell, a nephew of Dupleix's Governor General of the French Company of Oriental India, established in India, where France and England were in open conflict. Friell began his career in Canton. His mission in Vietnam did not succeed, because of the armed conflict between England and France in their maritime and colonial expansion. The conflict raged for about 25 years, was resumed with the War of Succession in Austria. When peace was signed at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) in 1748, the French Company sent to Cochinchina Pierre Poivre (a predestined name for the job he was given) with mission of establishing there a commercial center, and of taking away from the Dutch their monopoly in spices, consisting mostly of pepper (or Poivre, in French.)

Poivre arrived in Tourane in 1749. Lord Vu Vuong of South Vietnam, gave him the authorization for commerce. But because of the population's poverty, he had great difficulties in selling his goods. Realizing the troubled situation of Vietnam at that time, and its material weakness, he wrote: "A company wanting to establish itself in Cochinchina and to take firm arrangements for a profitable commerce, must make itself known through strong means and impose respect and fear. The general situation of the country allows this, and Tourane Bay is easy to fortify." When he left the country, he kidnapped a Vietnamese interpreter he believed to be an obstacle to his success. Lord Vu Vuong retaliated by ordering the expulsion of all missionaries (1750). Dupleix hastened to order the release of the Vietnamese interpreter. As compensation, he obtained the return of the missionaries and authorization to open a place of business in Tourane (1752).

Other travellers confirmed Poivre's views, and soon the idea of an armed expedition against Cochinchina was born, first to compensate for the French loss in India, then to prevent the English from intruding.

But the French government recoiled before the enormous expenditure necessitated by the project, especially when the war for independence in North America offered it a more advantageous opportunity for sapping its hereditary enemy's maritime and colonial power. In 1778, when the French government decided to support the American revolution against England, the Viceroy of India, Warren Hastings, sent a delegate to Cochinchina, in an attempt to establish there a commercial office. The Tay-Son revolt against, first, Lord Nguyen in South Vietnam, and then against Lord Trinh in North Vietnam, and the appeal each party was making to foreign powers for aid, made him believe that the time had come for a European intervention.

But the Tay Son succeeded in overthrowing both the Lords Trinh and Nguyen and to unify the country after a great victory over the Chinese. Then the civil war between the Tay Son, master of the country and Nguyen Phuc Anh or Nguyen Anh, the descendant of Lord Nguyen of South Vietnam, who wanted to reconquer the throne of his ancestors, prevented Hastings from achieving his plans.

The Tay Son Emperor, Quang Trung who smashed the Chinese army occupying Hanoi in the year of 1789, was remarkably tolerant of the Catholics. During his short reign (he died prematurely at the age of 40, in 1792), Catholicism made appreciable progress.

Treaty with France

Nguyen Anh (who later become emperor under the name of Gia Long), when defeated and pursued by the Tay Son, took refuge in Phu Quoc island. He thought of asking help from the Europeans. He sent 2 Spaniards to Manila for this. But they were captured and executed. Formerly, he had met a French Bishop, Pigneau de Behaine, Bishop of Adran, who succeeded in convincing him to make an appeal to France for military aid. In the Bishop's mind, he wanted to create a christian empire in the Far East. Nguyen Anh entrusted to the Bishop's care, his

Survival after long persecution

son, Prince Canh, only 4 years old. Prince Canh was to go to France with the Bishop, and be introduced to the King of France. He made a great impression at the court of Louis XVI. A treaty of mutual assistance between the King of France and "the King of Cochinchina," as Nguyen Anh was called, was signed by the end of 1787.

According to this treaty, the King of France would send to the King of Cochinchina 4 warships and 1,650 men, all equipped with modern weapons. In exchange for this military aid, Nguyen Anh would give to the King of France sovereignty over Poulo-Condore island and Tourane. And the French would be allowed—to the exclusion of other Europeans—to practice commerce freely in Vietnam.

But, this treaty was not carried out, because of the French government's great financial difficulties, the fear of England's reactions, and also because a revolution was felt to be in the air.

Private Help

Pigneau de Behaine, was discouraged by the French government's hesitant attitude. But he learned also that Nguyen Anh had some military success in Cochinchina with the Siamese help. So he decided to organize military help for Nguyen Anh, with his own means. He left France and stopped at Mauritius, where with the help from rich French merchants and young volunteers from the French community, he succeeded in equipping 2 commercial ships with arms and ammunition. This handful of Frenchmen later helped Nguyen Anh to train his army and equip his soldiers with modern weapons. This contributed to Nguyen Anh's victory over the Tay Son, weakened by the death of Quang Trung.

Nguyen Anh ascended the throne in 1802, with the title of Gia Long. He recognized the superiority of European equipments and methods. So he had his army modernized with the help of the

French. But towards the Catholics, he, like most of the scholars of his time, had only distrust and contempt. Nevertheless, out of respect for the memory of his friend, the Bishop of Adran, who died in Saigon, in 1799 before witnessing his triumph, he tolerated them. The occupation of Singapore by the English confirmed him in his distrust, and on his death-bed, in 1820, he recommended that his son-Minh Mang treat the French well, but never give them preponderant positions.

French Leave

Minh Mang during his reign, refused to receive French, English, American missions asking for trade with Vietnam. Disappointed by his attitude, all the French officers who had helped his father in his fight against the Tay Son, left the country one after another. The French merchants did the same, so that finally the only Europeans, remaining in Vietnam were the missionaries. The latter's progress inspired anxiety in the Vietnamese court. As has been said above, Vietnamese society was based on Confucian ethics: on the severe duties of the citizen towards his King, of the son towards his father, of the wife towards her husband. The Christians, faithful to their priests' teachings abolished the cult of the ancestors, and rebelled against the obligations towards the King and the state. It was the desire to preserve Vietnamese society, and not religious fanaticism, that inspired the Vietnamese Kings when they issued edicts of proscription against the Catholics, the more so because very often, the missionaries, instead of limiting their activities to the propagation of their faith, were mixed up in politics: they incited rebellion against the ruling power, with a view to establishing a state favorable to Christianity. For this reason, most of the missionaries were condemned, not for propagating their religion, but under accusations of being spies and trouble-makers.

The persecution was harder after Marshal Le Van Duyet's death. The latter was one of the most efficient of Gia Long's generals. He was appointed Governor-general of Gia Dinh, and enjoyed nearly complete independence vis-a-vis the Court of Hue. Minh Mang had to endure him because he was a close collaborator of his father. But at his death, Minh Mang ordered an inquiry about the doings of his assistants. The insolence of the imperial delegates, and the threat of being annihilated, induced Le Van Khoi, Le Van Duyet's adopted son, and the men in Le Van Duyet's former staff to revolt, in 1833. The Catholic community, that had supported Le Van Duyet's administration, joined the rebels. They captured the citadel of Gia Dinh and most of the provinces in Cochinchina. They massacred the imperial delegates and the chiefs of province. Minh Mang sent a strong army against them. The rebels made an appeal to Siam for aid. A Siamese army was sent to help them. But this army was completely defeated by the royal forces in 1834, after bloody fightings. The imperial retaliation was terrible. Two thousand rebels, among them many Catholics, were massacred and buried in a mass grave. Five of their leaders and a French missionary, Father Marchand, were captured and taken to Hue, where they were left to die a slow death.

Marchand Dream

The participation of the Catholics in the revolt confirmed Minh Mang's fears of the new religion. A letter found on a ship captured at Phu Quoc showed that Le Van Khoi had demanded the French apostolic vicar to come back to Gia Dinh. Those who made an appeal to the Siamese were Catholics. The Vietnamese priests had brought from Tra Vinh to Gia Dinh, Father Marchand, who dreamed of playing the role that the late Pigneau de Behaine had played with Nguyen Anh, with

the hope of creating a Catholic dissident state in Cochinchina.

Things were no better with Minh Mang's successor, Thieu Tri, though the latter had shown some leniency towards the Catholics when he ascended the throne. He had 5 missionaries released, and later, on the request of a French delegate, ordered the release of the French bishop Lefebvre. The latter then went to Singapore, but came back, in spite of proscription edicts. He was arrested on the Saigon River, but no harm was done to him. He was only expelled again to Singapore. But Thieu Tri's successor, Tu Duc, after the opium war in China, became more distrustful of the Europeans. He practiced an isolation policy, and was obdurate in a systematic refusal of applications for trade, presented by American, English, Spanish and French delegates whose ships anchored at Tourane, Qui Nhon and Quang Yen. After his brother Hong Bao's revolt, in which were involved European missionaries, he decreed the proscription against the latter. He proclaimed the banishment of Vietnamese priests. But the missionaries went on infiltrating into Vietnam, though most often they had to hide in mountains or forests.

In France, from 1852 on, with the second empire, a policy of colonial expansion was supported by the French clergy, and Napoleon III wanted to play the role of a protector of Catholicism in Asia.

Besides the industrial revolution and the birth of capitalism in Europe induced France to look for new markets, and her colonial expansion was made possible with an English alliance.

Under such conditions, a pretext was easily found in the execution of some French and Spanish missionaries, for sending an armed expedition to Vietnam. The superiority of French weapons and technique made the conquest of Vietnam easy. Many Vietnamese had died, defending their country, but this did not prevent the French from establishing their rule, first in the South, and then later, in the North Vietnam.



Catholic faithful pray for peace in Vietnam at open-air mass in Saigon.



Cao Daists honor Lady of Fatima.

During about one hundred years of French rule, about 2 million and a half of Vietnamese were converted to Catholicism. Protestantism began to make proselytes after the first world war; mostly by the work of American pastors.

The late President Ngo Dinh Diem being a Catholic himself, gave particular attention to the Catholic community. Under his rule many conversions were made, the more so because one of his brother was an archbishop.

The Christian community in Vietnam is well organized, disciplined, educated. It is very efficient in educational and social work, and also in the fight against the aggression by Communist North Vietnam.

It will have an important role to play in national reconstruction, especially because it has the support of the Catholics in the whole world, and because it is very active, dynamic, disciplined and well organized. ●

Artist Do Mai Lan



Artist Lan and her version of "Mona Lisa in the Guise of a Peasant Girl."

Tacked on the wall of a cluttered Cholon studio is an eighth century Chinese poem:

*I would not paint a face a rock
nor brooks, nor trees
Mere semblance of things, but
something more than these.
That art is best which to the
soul's range gives no bound.
Something besides the form,
something beyond the form.*

The poem is the credo of Do Mai Lan, 29, who is well-known in Saigon art circles for her surrealist landscapes and incisive character portrayals.

"I think of my paintings as representations of my emotions," she said. "I describe my emotions with my brush. The earth, the sky and the sea are the sources of my inspiration."

Miss Lan believes in traveling to seek these sources. Six years ago she went to the United States and Europe for what turned out to be a four-year stay. She drew on her experience to broaden her insight.

For All People

Miss Lan puts it this way:

"I like to think that my art is for all people. Through my art, I can

By WILLIAM R. WERMINE

open my heart to everybody. I lived for some time in Harlem where I witnessed the suffering of black people. I understand this suffering, and I think it is reflected in my work."

Miss Lan's overseas odyssey began in July 1968. She spent the first month in Hawaii, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Using models of wood sculpture that she saw in Hawaii, she began experimenting with wood, cement, clay and stone. She turned out a body of work that included a papier mache creation entitled "Cry



"Face in the Tree" and "The Buffalo."



"Cry of the Spirit," metal, cloth and papier mache, was done in New York.

of the Spirit." A papier mache face is decorated with thin copper strips. It has a wide, heavy mouth; large eyes; and contorted features.

In August 1968 she left for Washington, D.C., to study American masters and classical painters at such places as the National Gallery of Art.

She applied her classical techniques to American subjects and feelings. An example of this is her painting, "The Prospector," a work which symbolizes a search for gold, a hunger for money, which, she seems to suggest, is an American characteristic.

Miss Lan spent the months from September 1968 to January 1969 in Europe, traveling in Italy, France and Belgium. She visited some Vietnamese artists who had immigrated to France and were living in the Montmartre section. She also sold several "potboilers" to American tourists in Paris.

Mona Lisa Version

At the Louvre, she encountered—and reproduced—the Mona Lisa. But her Mona Lisa is a peasant girl carrying a bowl.

In January 1969 Miss Lan returned to New York City and took

an apartment on West 80th Street where she absorbed the Spanish culture. She began to make dolls and painted several large canvases with violent themes, including ship battles and bullfights.

She closed her New York studio in July 1970 and left for the Western states. Miss Lan chose Patagonia, Arizona, for a "retreat" and it was there she painted "The Prospector" and several other striking pictures.

While in Arizona she visited Indian communities and absorbed ancient Indian handicraft skills. Using these skills she created a number of Hopi Kachina dolls. She also carved statues from cottonwood.

A steel sculpture created at this time also reflects the Southwestern influence. It depicts a cowboy, about four feet high and covered with a red pigment to symbolize

blood, suffering, death and hardship in the development of the American West.

In July 1971 Miss Lan returned to New York and opened a large studio. She developed a print-making process using Oriental print-making and American subjects. (The Japanese call the process ukiyoe—a specialized process of Japanese printmakers turning out prints of every day life.)

Meeting With Dali

While in New York, she studied with Valerie Maynard and joined the Studio Museum of Harlem. Leader of the Studio Museum artists, Miss Maynard is a sculptress and printmaker who specializes in social themes, conflicts between blacks and white, landlord-pawnbroker exploitation, job inequality, discrimination. She is known as a powerful realist who

also uses African art as her basis. Miss Lan also met the world-famous surrealist and master of European modernism, Salvador Dali.

Her first New York display was with the Fruit of Islam at their annual exhibition in November 1971 at the 144th Street Armory. Her work had a very wide exposure as more than 40,000 persons attended the event. She sold several large paintings at the time. Miss Lan also had a show at the United Nations (Vietnamese Mission) during the Labor Day celebrations of March 1972.

Family affairs caused her to return to Vietnam in August 1972. She took many of her paintings off the stretchers and rolled them up for the long trip home. At present she is planning an exhibition of Hawaiian and Polynesian statues, and papier mache works, dolls and paintings. ●

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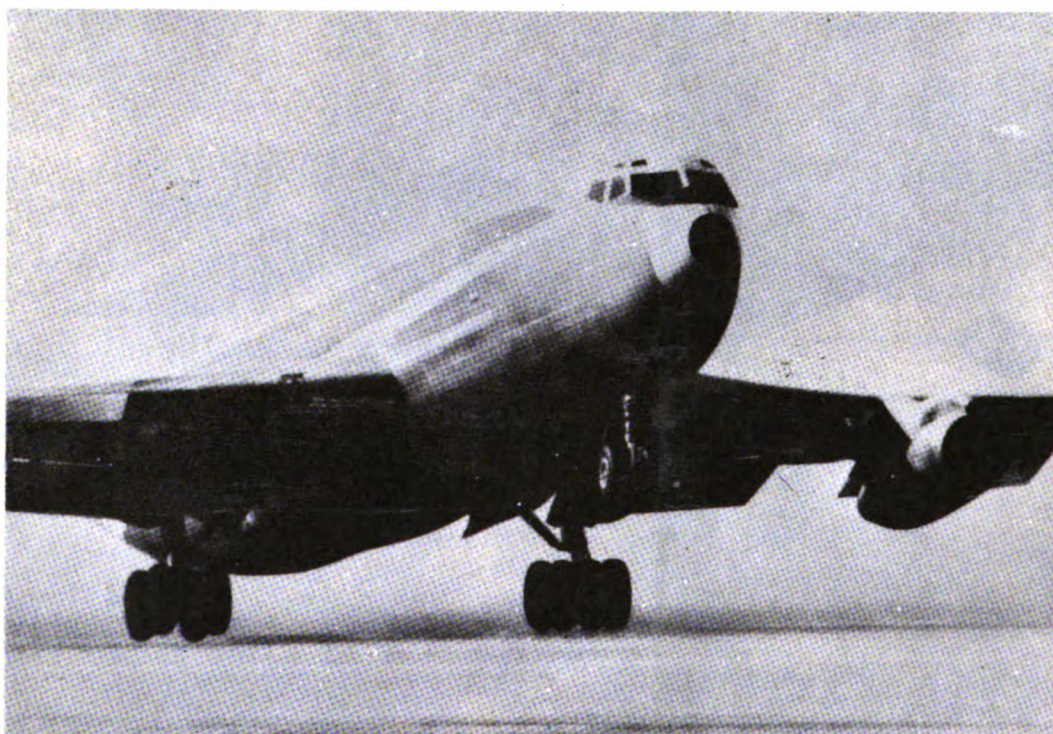
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