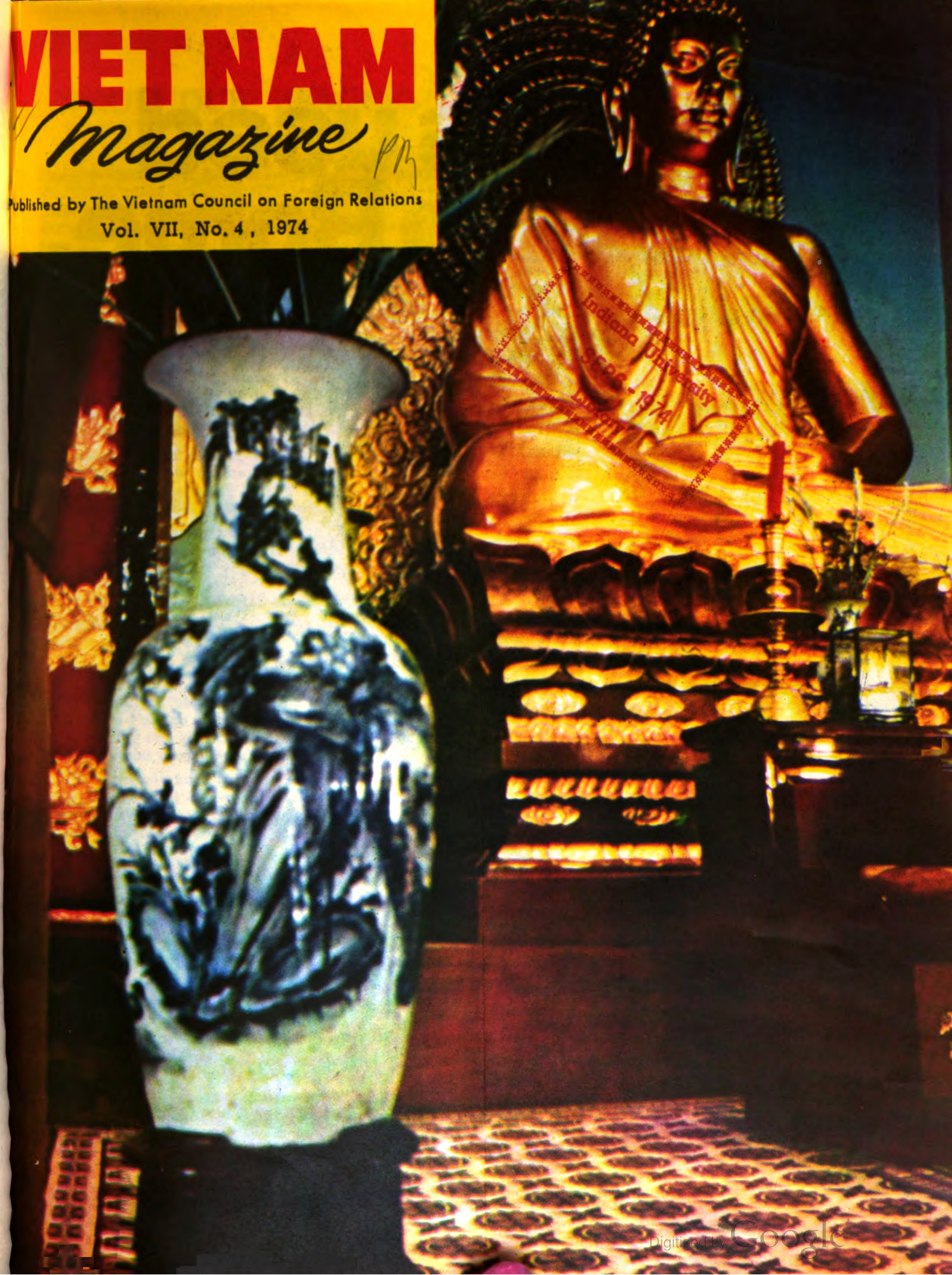


# VIETNAM

*Magazine* PM

Published by The Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations  
Vol. VII, No. 4, 1974



Indiana University  
1974

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## FROM OUR READERS

At a recent committee meeting of the New Zealand-Vietnamese Association it was decided that we should make a \$100.00 (N.Z.) donation from our Welfare Fund to a deserving orphanage on the outskirts of Saigon. Naturally, none of the committee members has personal knowledge of any of these institutions, and least of all the skill to judge which one is most deserving.

On behalf of my committee I should be most grateful if you would be kind enough to pass on the enclosed bank draft (expressed in U.S. dollars) to a needy institution which cares for orphan children, together with the best wishes of the New Zealand-Vietnamese Association. A subsequent acknowledgement from the institution you have chosen would be much appreciated.

We regret, of course, that the donation is not larger, but in view of the fact that our Association is (numerically) a small one, I feel sure that you will appreciate our good intentions.

Thank you very much for your letter of 8 February last in which you informed me of my acceptance as a member of your Council.

**WILLIAM A. MARTIN**  
President, N.Z.V.A.  
The Terrace  
Wellington 1 N.Z.

We shall be pleased, indeed, were the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations to act as intermediary in presenting our gift to the School of Blind Girls in Saigon, as you so graciously suggested.

We sincerely hope that this sum—made available to us as a bequest by our late friend, Mr. Ferdinand Spott—will serve as a means to bring a good measure of joy into the lives of the girls.

**Mrs. HOWARD ROBB**  
4306 South Compton Ave.  
St. Louis, Missouri 63111  
U.S.A.

I love your fine people and nation! And always will! I tried to do my duty, as an American civilian, well and honorably in Vietnam in 1967-69, and again in 1972. Buddha and God bless you.

Please send me a one-year subscription to **Vietnam Magazine** and also VCFR reference publication **Education in Vietnam**. This totals \$6.50, and I'll allow \$2.00 for mailing purposes which totals \$8.50. Enclosed is my personal check for \$8.50.

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Cover : Golden Buddha at the Xa Lot pagoda in Saigon.

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

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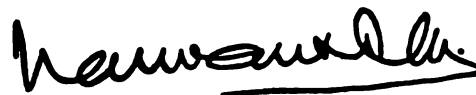
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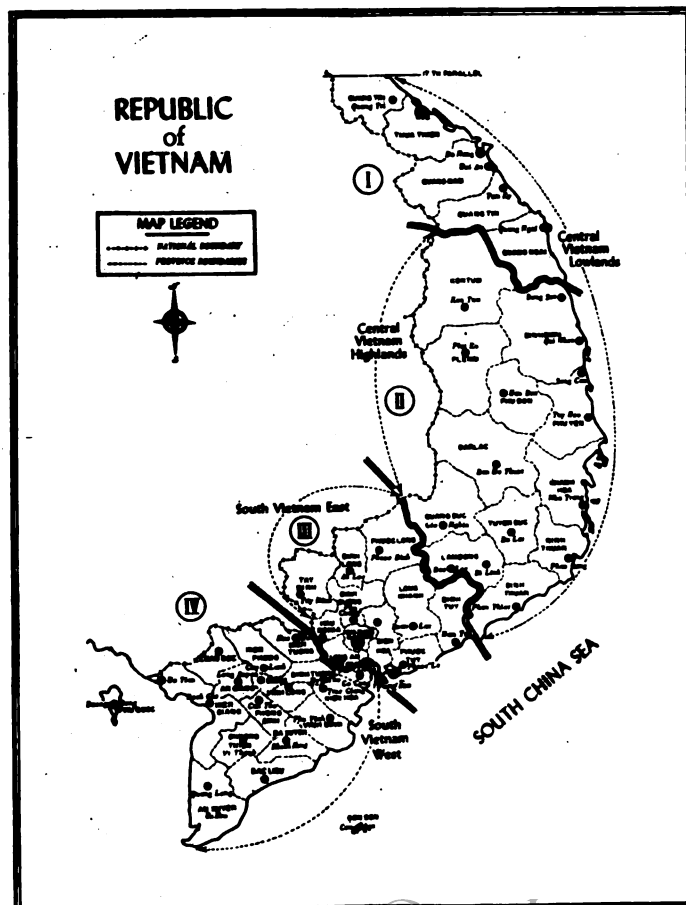
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# German Tourists Sample Saigon

By WOLFRAM RUNKEL

Quietly the courteous and efficient customs and immigration officials went about their tasks as the arriving German tourists were processed at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport. What made an otherwise routine arrival noteworthy was the smell of Mother Kanderske's German cake and hot coffee provided especially for the first arrival of a German tour group, happily milling around graceful and lovely Air Vietnam ground hostesses and stern, impassive policemen in uniform.

Actually, it was not Mother Kanderske's birthday, but in a manner of speaking, the birthday of German mass-tourism into Vietnam. The German travel agency of Neckerman had recommended in its latest Far Eastern catalog a brief visit to Saigon—a fascinating city of contrasts. In Bangkok, a tour group of twelve Germans decided on a three-day excursion trip to Saigon. They were happily welcomed with coffee and German cake by the Vietnamese Five Oceans travel agency as a token of Vietnamese hospitality.

## Misconceptions

Tourism in Vietnam has to overcome some popular misconceptions in Europe, where a visit to this country is often still considered as a picnic in a graveyard. But as a Vietnamese representative of the Ministry of Social Welfare explained: "We do not want to be known only as a country of constant strife and conflict. Admittedly, much has been destroyed but our land has still a great deal to offer the foreign tourist and our people look forward to meeting foreign guests."

And, as an after-thought, he added that Vietnam also requires foreign exchange.

In spite of a shaky cease-fire which was concluded about a year ago, refugee camps, hospitals, orphanages and still visible scars of warfare, Vietnam is also a land for the tourist. Even during the war, American tourists could be found on the beach at the resort of Vung Tau.

## Tourism Effort

Today, Vietnam does a good job selling itself as a tourist market. The newly established Commission for Tourism produces new and elegant brochures on Hue, the archeological town, the beautiful and romantic marble-mountain near Dalat and Vung Tau, the beach resort town near Saigon. In those places there are no problems with renewed Viet Cong hostilities. A government spokesman also points out: "We do not want the crowded tourism activities of Bangkok."

Aside from the few maverick visitors who board local trains and busses in search of adventure in Vietnam, the standard Neckerman tourist trip is limited to a group of twelve to fifteen visitors every fortnight to Saigon for three days, although occasionally the trip extends to five days.

The visitor whose visions of Saigon consists of newspapers reports of the 1968 Tet offensive, will be just as surprised as the Asian movie stars who came here last September for the all Asian Vietnam film festival. Their reaction was: "Surely, we have landed in the wrong place! This can't be Saigon!" For here, beyond the airport,

is a great, clean city with an Asian atmosphere, Asian faces with a touch of French charm and, as a first impression, little American influence.

Actually, the results of French colonialism are more evident in the city than what has been left behind by the Americans. The influence of the Americans is only noted after a second look when mutilated men beg for fifty (25 Pfenning) piasters or when patient and most likely black marketeers whisper a dollar exchange rate, or when in a gaudy bar, a faded beauty with wrinkles and heavy makeup offers you in a thick Texas accent a Budweiser beer.

## Land of Contrasts

Vietnam is a land of contrasts. One finds on the streets cars, motorcycles, busses, bicycles, trishaws in a totally undisciplined traffic pattern. But, as if guided by an unseen hand, traffic runs peacefully, not aggressively. It has an Asian patience about it, yet a typical French tempo.

Girls, in their traditional Vietnamese dresses with conical hats sit on modern Honda scooters and with apparently unending equanimity, weave a path through taxis, cars, trishaws and pedestrians. Suddenly you notice a flash of French influence when their solemn faces light up in an aggressive and inviting smile. And yet the smile is as inscrutable as the beauty on the Honda.

## City of Contrasts

Saigon is a city of contrasts — Asian and western. Vietnamese, French and American. Checking into the old and pleasantly decaying Hotel Continental, the receptionist looks at you stupidly when you ask him — in plain English — if there is a free room. Then he replies — in Sorbonne French — with a flow of information. You notice the reverse with a waiter who looks blank at every French word addressed to him and later tells you, in English, the story of his life.

The principal contrast, however, is in the twilight zone of war and peace. Although the 30-year war

has yet to come to a conclusive end, this twilight zone of war and peace does not seem to affect the city life of Saigon. For here one lives in a city of trade and business, a city which deals with the whole world, a city which displays a certain remoteness to the rest of the country.

If you are lucky, you may be invited by a Vietnamese family, somewhere in Pham Ngu Lao Street, which you reach by going through many small alleys. In the living room of your host, there are three or four adults and six or seven children. There are two stools for the guests. On the floor four children play a noisy Vietnamese game, while two other children are pulling at the legs of the guests trying to get them join the children on the floor. The master of the house, oblivious of the children's activity around him, sits cross-legged and meditates with his soul at peace. When the meal is served on the table, quick fingers seize small lumps of spicy meat wrapped in rice paper.

### Places To Go

One who does not have the good fortune of experiencing a Vietnamese meal at a local home, should try *cha gio* at the Le Lai Restaurant which is located near the railway station or eat at the Floating Restaurant on Bach Dang Street. Owing to the advantageous rate of exchange one can eat Vietnamese or Chinese delicacies or French lobster and crab dishes (*tôm* and *cua* specialities) for five to ten mark.

One can go by taxi — at a pre-arranged price from ten to twenty mark, or go by foot through Saigon streets and parks and visit the pagodas.

Besides the pagodas, one should visit the Botanical Garden which houses the greatest collection of orchids in the world, and the National Museum which contains documents and historical curiosities of Vietnam and other Asian countries. One should also see Kennedy Place, the Catholic Cathedral, the Presidential Palace and other government buildings. Also worthwhile is Chinatown in Cholon at night. Whatever you do,

said a Vietnamese girl, go and visit the sights with open eyes and an open heart.

The majority of Germans, by the way, contrary to Americans and Japanese, are interested in visiting refugee camps and hospitals. After this first success with the Saigon tour group, the Neckerman travel agency would like to expand the Vietnam program. This would include, for instance, a visit to Vung Tau, 110 kilometers from Saigon on the China Sea. On week-ends, thousands of Saigon citizens, in busses, cars and on Hondas pass through small villages, plantations and hills, past abandoned American military camps towards Vung Tau. There they bask in the sun and swim in the 82 degree warm waters of the China Sea. And as anywhere in the world, when people are on beaches, there are also colored parasols, cheerful restaurants with squid and seafood specialities, flirting youths, watching parents and laughing children.

There, for a moment, one forgets Vietnamese reality until my travel guide explains with a laugh that the white boat in front of us, in which children play, is a former bombing target. The Park Hotel, where one can spend the night for less than twenty mark, is not

luxurious but very charming. In the sea one watches fishermen catch fish in ways dating back centuries. One can swim to a little island where hidden in the green vegetation stands a small temple — a picturesque sight.

A holiday on the beach in Vietnam? This must be a weird idea even to Mr. Neckerman himself. While in Frankfurt the idea of a Vung Tau excursion is still considered with skepticism, the Commission for Tourism is already offering flights (for about 15 mark) to the old imperial city of Hue, where the damage of the 1968 Tet offensive is said to be less than reported in the press. Another tour destination is the hill-town of Dalat surrounded by the beautiful Highlands.

If the Vietnamese remember their current guests in time to come, they may say: "The Chinese gave us their culture; the French have planted trees and left us a bit of their culture and the Americans have left tree-stumps and abandoned houses — what will the Germans leave behind?" Meanwhile, in Bangkok, the Germans are as unpopular as the Americans. But in Vietnam, however, at least for the time being, the Viet Cong still block effectively a German mass invasion.



German tourists with Five Oceans' official (fourth from left, front row).

## The Immortal Poet

# NGUYỄN DU

By DOAN BICH

On the 10th day of the 8th lunar month 147 years ago, Nguyen Du, the poet who revolutionized the Vietnamese language, departed from this world, leaving to the country's intellectual heritage one of the greatest works of all time: *Kim Van Kieu*.

The originality of the theme as well as the refinement and perfection of its style have made the narrative poem *Kim Van Kieu* so popular that no Vietnamese—whether humble peasant in a remote hamlet or the most educated city intellectual—can ignore it.

For more than a century, it has been an ideal subject for historians, commentators, translators and educators who have found it to be a national masterpiece in concept and language.

### Literary Pioneer

Nguyen Du's greatest achievement in *Kim Van Kieu* was not the masterful manner in which he described the sentimental adventures of the lovely girl Thuy Kieu, but his unmatched talent for elevating *Chu Nom*—Vietnamese written with modified Chinese characters—to literary status. *Kim Van Kieu* was the first Vietnamese literary work of its kind liberated from Chinese influence, opening the way for other literary works, assisting in the development of the national literature by the end of the 19th century.

Nguyen Du was not only famous as a writer. Twice appointed ambassador to China, he was one of the greatest mandarins of old Vietnam and gained both popular esteem for his integrity while managing government affairs, and the respect of foreigners for his intelligence and profound learning.

Nguyen Du—also known by the literary pseudonym *To Nhu*—was

born in Ha Tinh province in Central Vietnam in 1765. He came from one of the most aristocratic families of his time. His father, Duke Nguyen Nghiem, was a great mandarin of the Le dynasty. All his uncles and brothers held high positions at the imperial court of Hue and were famous for their culture. This showed that his family background exerted great influence on Nguyen Du's life and work.

Thanks to a sound education that started very early and a natural gift for poetry, Nguyen Du passed the *Tu Tai* examination at the age of 19. However he was prevented from pursuing further studies because of war.

In 1788 the Le dynasty collapsed when the throne was taken by Emperor Quang Trung of the Tay Son family. Nguyen Du joined a resistance movement whose goal was the restore the Le. When it failed, the young scholar retired to his native village to show his loyalty to his king.

### High Chancellor

After Emperor Gia Long defeated the Tay Son and reunified the country, Nguyen Du was invited to join the government and was promoted in 1812 to the rank of High Chancellor at the Court. The following year he was named ambassador and was entrusted with the mission of bringing the traditional tribute to the Court of China.

In 1820, the first year of Emperor Minh Mang's reign, Nguyen Du was again appointed ambassador to China, but he fell ill before his departure and died at the age of 56.

During his life as a mandarin, Nguyen Du showed much sadness as if veiling some deep secret. This

melancholy was discerned by many and his discreet and reserved attitude during the Court's sessions often caused remarks from Emperor Gia Long. To understand this sad and weary spirit of this famous writer, one has to consider the troubled period in which he lived—one of the darkest in Vietnam's history.

In the north, the ruling dynasty was on the decline, all power was in the hands of the Trinh lord. In central Vietnam, the Tay Son defeated the Nguyen lord and, pushing northward, also crushed the Trinh lord who was manipulating the strings of the puppet Le emperor.

King Le Chieu Thong fled to China and asked for the help of Peking. Chinese forces invaded Vietnam and occupied the northern capital of Thang Long (Hanoi), but Tay Son Emperor Quang Trung launched a lightning attack and wiped out the invaders.

All these tribulations greatly influenced the national cultural life. Nguyen Du, a literary man descended from a great family loyal to the Le dynasty, had like many other intellectuals of that period striven to preserve his moral integrity, but was compelled to work for the Nguyen emperors.

### Unhappy Man

That explained why Nguyen Du was an unhappy man. He feared his countrymen would misunderstand him and regard his collaboration with the Nguyen as flagrant disloyalty. Nguyen Du's brooding made him a true poet. In Thuy Kieu's eventful life and her feelings, he exposed his inner self.

While Nguyen Du authored many other literary works, both in Chinese and *Chu Nom*, it was *Kim Van Kieu* that made him famous.

The poem containing 3,254 verses and 22,778 words was based on a story Nguyen Du brought back from China. He completely rewrote the story and made it a kind of autobiography.

This literary masterpiece tells of the vicissitudes of a young girl of China, Thuy Kieu, who because of



filial piety, sells herself to save her father, the victim of a slanderous accusation, from prison.

Thus begins a series of hardships and sentimental adventures. The young girl is twice sent to a house of prostitution. She later marries a famed brigand who helps her avenge her father and herself. On Kieu's advice, he agrees to surrender to the imperial forces, but falls into a trap and dies heroically. Thuy Kieu is captured and forced to marry a local official. Bitterly disillusioned with life, she throws herself into the Tien Duong river but is saved in the nick of time by a Buddhist nun.

Thuy Kieu has a lover named Kim Trong who leaves to attend his uncle's funeral at Lieu Duong (Manchuria) before misfortune swoops down on the girl's family. When Kim Trong returns to Thuy Kieu's house, he finds his beloved gone. In deference to a wish expressed by Thuy Kieu before she leaves home, Kim Trong marries her younger sister, Thuy Van.

### Lovers Reunited

Later, as mandarin of the imperial court, Kim Trong perseveres in the search for Thuy Kieu. He comes across the Buddhist nun who rescued her from a watery grave. The nun takes him to Thuy Kieu and thus the two are reunited after 15 long years.

For the sake of eternal and chaste love, Thuy Kieu tells Kim Trong they shall remain mere friends.

The main idea Nguyen Du intended to convey in his masterpiece was the *Nhan Qua* (Karma) doctrine of Buddhism—the principle of atonement through reincarnation. In this life an individual receives blessing equivalent to the good he has done in other lives and pays for as much harm as that he has caused.

In Nguyen Du's poem, Thuy Kieu's karmic debt was so heavy that she was able to atone for it only after 15 years of suffering. This main theme of *Kim Van Kieu* may be summed up in the following two verses:

*Thien can o tai long ta  
Chu tam kia moi bang ba chu tai*

(The source of good lies in our hearts, and goodness is worth three times more than talent.)

The Buddhist teaching in the poem is not, however, the sole factor that makes it famous. It is Nguyen Du's descriptive prowess and his skillful use of metaphors that make him the peer of the greatest writers and poets of all time.

Witness his description of a landscape in spring:

*Co non xanh don chan troi  
Canh le trang diem mot vai  
bong hoa*

(The green and tender grass undulates to the foot of the heavens, while the branches of the pear tree are adorned by a few blossoms.)

Describing the loss of Thuy Kieu's virginity to Ma Giam Sinh, the poet wrote:

*Tiec thay mot doa tra mi,  
Con ong da to duong di loi ve.*

(Poor camelia flower! The bee has opened its way in and out of it.)

This was how Nguyen Du often watered down shocking images which might offend intellectual sensivity. The poet, moreover, wished to avoid using Chinese phrases and expressions. Thoroughly he replaced them with pure Vietnamese words in more than 3,000 verses. Only two can be entirely written in Chinese characters:

*Ho cong quiet ke thua co,  
Le tien binh hau khac co tap  
cong.*

(Lord Ho decided to take advantage of the situation and was determined to use strategem; following his presents were troops in ambush who would attack at H-hour.)

Meanwhile, the romance contains very many verses in popular Vietnamese that cannot be written in Chinese characters. As an example, the following:

*Nay chong, nay me, nay cha,  
Nay la em ruot, nay la em dau...*

(Here is her husband, here her mother, here her father. Here is her own brother and her sister-in-law.)

### Great Skill

How could Nguyen Du make a literary work like *Kim Van Kieu* so popular? Through great skill in the use of old sayings, proverbs and quotations from a large number of classics that greatly enriched, developed, and varied the Vietnamese means of expression. A young farmer, for instance, who wants to declare his love to a country girl but who cannot find words, has only to quote some verses from *Kim Van Kieu* and the girl would understand him at once.

Thus, by making the national language an apt vehicle for the people's thoughts and feelings, Nguyen Du amply deserves the title of "Immortal Poet" bestowed on him.

## ADVERTISING RATES

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## Grandma's stories

# Teardrop in a cup

By NGHIEM XUAN THIEN

When I was a boy, I used to spend my summer vacations at grand-mother's house in my village, 10 miles away from Hanoi. She was from a family of scholars and had a good traditional education. With the coming of the French, my grand-parents and the rest of their family encountered great hardship, from which they could extricate themselves only by hard work, patience and some measure of good luck. It was a great pleasure for me, a boy of ten at that time, to listen to her in the evening with my many little cousins and beg for a story of the days of old.

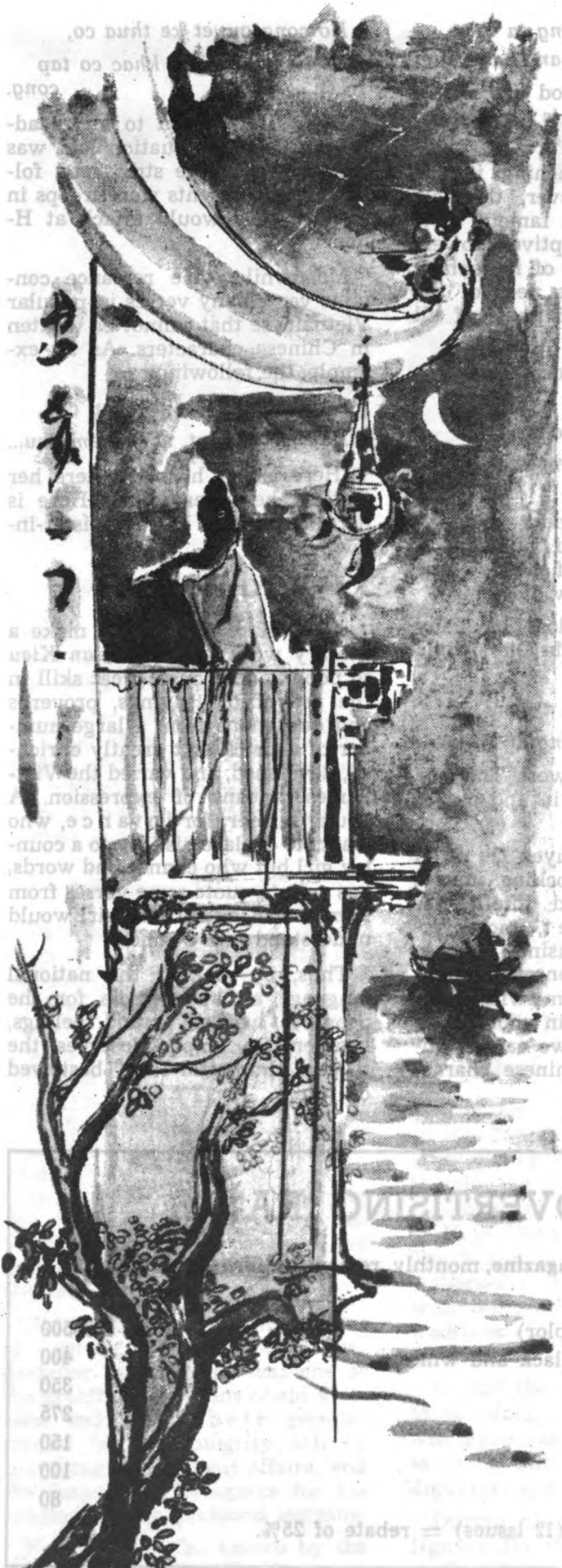
She died some 25 years ago, and was buried in a rice-field, a field we loved with all our heart, the kind of love one has for one's fatherland. Many are the times, when we think of her and other members of our family, who are sleeping in eternal repose in this land. Under tragic circumstances, I had to leave, a few years after her death, for the South to start a new life. The memories impose a heavy burden on my heart. Her image appears alive in my memory, and one by one, I remember her stories told by the flickering light of a kerosene lamp in that thatched house of hers, that I learned to love more than any abode, more comfortable, more modern I have lived in, in later years.

I shall relate those stories here, successively, in the same order as they return to memory.

### A Love Lost

That summer was particularly hot. Prime Minister Hoang said to his wife: "My dear Lady, you need not wait for me to go with you to our Palace by the river. The Emperor still has plenty of problems to study, and I cannot leave the Capital before the end of next month. I am sorry to tell you to go to the riverside with our beloved daughter Ai Lien without me, but really it is too hot there."

Lady Hoang looked up from her embroidery. The Prime Minister was garbed in a beautiful red silk court robe—the color of which was an attribute of his rank—ready to go to the Imperial Palace for the daily meeting of the Council of Ministers with the Emperor presiding. He was in his late forties



but still looked very young and very handsome. He enjoyed the reputation of being a great scholar and the Emperor, well aware of his great merits, appointed him Prime Minister a few years earlier, and since then, he had fully demonstrated that he deserved the honor. The Hoangs had been married for 20 years and had only one daughter, sixteen years old. But Nature seemed to do her best to redeem her parsimony towards them by being over generous with Ai Lien on whom she lavished her most enviable gifts. Ai Lien was as beautiful as a rose in the morning of a sunny spring day. And when she smiled the sky seemed bluer, the air brighter, the flowers redder, the song of birds sweeter, and her entourage happier. And indeed, happier was Lady Hoang who was very proud of the heavenly beauty of her daughter. Ai Lien played music wonderfully, so wonderfully that at the sound of her music, men stopped working, children stopped crying, women stopped gossiping, and all listened, lost in dreams and ecstasy.

### Joys on a River Bank

Lady Hoang looked up at her husband, and thought of her beloved daughter. If her husband had a palace built on the riverside, it was because of Ai Lien. Had Ai Lien not, one day last year, expressed the desire to be able from time to time to go out of the imperial town where she had lived ever since she was born, and to spend her holidays on the riverside? "It must be wonderful, she said, to live on the banks of a river, for a change from the monotonous life at home. There I can see plenty of beautiful things I cannot see here. I like the great junks with their immense sails that swell in the wind, such as those that are seen on the paintings. I like the fishermen's small boats that glide on the surface of water. And how sweet to listen to the rustle of the reeds that grow on the river banks, and to the lapping of the waves coming and receding. They always seem to tell an unending fairy tale to ears that understand them."

"And you can understand them my darling!" said Lady Hoang, greatly amused at the prolific imagination of her daughter.

"Oh, yes, mother, I do understand their strange music and their still stranger language!" and she laughed. That laughter sounded like the tinkling of a crystal bell. Lady Hoang heard it now, as she looked up at her husband. And she smiled and said, "I am sorry that you are unable to join us. Our daughter Ai Lien is impatient to spend the summer holidays on the riverside. She loved the Palace the first time she saw it after completion. She has chosen her room, which is in the front part overlooking the river. I had it furnished to suit her taste. Now as you allow me to take her there, I shall tell her the news; surely she will be very happy. But I pray you, do all everything possible to join us, as soon as you can."

Prime Minister Hoang smiled at his wife and proceeded to the royal court.

## A song in the air captivates a maid

The journey was hard even though it covered only a dozen of miles. The palanquin was borne by six strong men, who seemed to compete with the wind in their pace. In order to prevent them slackening their speed, the bearers were changed every two miles.

That evening, Ai Lien retired to her chamber, after bowing respectfully to her mother. She felt



that she could not stand on her feet. She flung herself on her bed, abandoning herself to the maids for a change of attire. Hers was a very sound sleep, and beautiful was her dream. She found herself in the midst of a party of young fairies, as light as air, and as beautiful as dawn, who danced in a trance on the riverside. Instinctively she joined them, and whirled with them in the air, ran with them on the surface of the river, flew with them to the moon and the stars, and came back with them again. The fairy dance went on and on, and when exhausted by their gambole, the fairies and Ai Lien stopped, sat down on the grass, gasped for breath, and rested.

Suddenly, the fairest of them rose to her feet, and sang. Ai Lien had never heard so beautiful a voice. The song flew into the air, inundated the space, and sounded like a cascade of silver. It charmed the ears, captivated the soul, and petrified the audience with ecstasy. Then the singer resumed her dance, whirled in the air, ran over the surface of the river, flew to the moon and the stars, and the other fairies followed suit.

Ai Lien wanted to do the same, but her feet seemed to be fastened to the ground and in the violence of her movements to liberate herself, she collapsed. She uttered a scream, and woke up. She rubbed her eyes, rose on her elbows and sat up on her bed. Through the lattice of the window facing the river, the pink light of dawn filtered into the room. And she told to herself: "So, it was only a dream! But what a beautiful voice I heard. It is a great pity that I shall never hear it any more!"

And she put her beautiful head on the silk pillow of her bed, ready to sleep again. But hark! what was that? The beautiful voice she thought gone forever seemed to fill the air, and reached her ears. It came from somewhere on the riverside, and slowly but steadily, it drew nearer and nearer. Ai Lien, still drowsy, wondered whether she was dreaming. This very voice which came into her room with the first light of the day, seemed to be like that she had heard in her dream, the most beautiful voice on earth. The beautiful fairies of her dream were all gone, but it seemed that this voice still lingered and here it was, coming from the river, filling her room with magical music, and throwing her soul into a rapture she had never felt before. It stirred her heart, upset her mind. Was it dream or reality?

### Voice from a Boat

She sprang from her bed, ran to the window, flung it open, and feverishly cast a look on the river. The rosy sky reflected itself on the water gently wrinkled by the morning wind. Here and there small sail-boats went down the river. They were fishermen's boats, as could be seen by the nets they dragged behind. But one of them sail down, went faster than the rest, leaving a long wake, which slowly spread, fanlike, from the middle of the river to its banks thick with reeds. As it passed her palace, she clearly heard a wondrous voice singing an extraordinary song, every note of which resounded in her heart which beat faster and faster. And then gradually the voice diminished, faded and died away, as the small boat slowly, very slowly merged with the glare of the morning sun reflected on the water.

Ai Lien could not believe her ears, and less her eyes. She slowly returned to her bed, sat down and thought. Suddenly she sang. A maid came in, stood respectfully by her side. Ai Lien looked up, hesitated, and finally asked; "Did you hear that voice... that wonderful voice just now?"

The maid shook her head. "I pray my young lady forgive me. I am so busy in the morning that I notice nothing. Maybe, somebody has sung, down there on the river, as fishermen usually do when they go to work."

In an irritable mood, Ai Lien dismissed her, and when alone again, resumed with her thoughts.

The day wore on, very long, it seemed to Ai Lien. Lady Hoang noticed something very unusual in her daughter's behavior: she was absent-minded, and



spoke only when talked to. Even the food left her indifferent, though the servants had cooked excellent dishes for her.

"You are perhaps tired, my darling," said Lady Hoang, "the journey has been very taxing, indeed, and my back aches because of the swinging and shaking of the palanquin. I already am an old lady, but if I were as young as you are, I am certain that a good night's sleep would make me as lively as a sparrow. Perhaps you are not yet accustomed to this palace, or are thinking too much of your good father, who cannot be here with us, at least for the present time."

Ai Lien made an effort to smile: "I apologize, mother," she said "if my company is too dull for you. But, I do not feel quite well, perhaps because I am not accustomed to travel, and it is dreadfully hot."

When night came, Ai Lien, after taking leave of her mother, retired to her chamber. Her mind was haunted by the beautiful voice that had stirred her soul so deeply, and she longed to hear it again.

"Who is he," she said to herself, "who was so wonderful a voice? I should like to see him one day, though he is only a fisherman. If I believed in fairy tales, I should think that he is some angel come to earth to mingle with human beings in their terrestrial world."

### Recollection of Legends

And she recalled all the legends that her nurses used to tell her, when she was a child, in which beautiful fairies, male or female, came to earth to live with humans, performed supernatural deeds, and finally married the girls or men they loved. Had not one of them saved the Empire from the invasion of barbarian hordes? She could not decide whether the story was true or not, but a splendid temple had been erected in his honor, a few miles from the Capital. Her mother had taken her there, one day, a long time ago, on a pilgrimage she used to make in springtime, when the weather was warm, and the sky cloudless and uniformly blue. She remembered

that she had uttered cries of terror, in front of the colossal statues of the Guardian Spirits, in charge of the security of the Temple.

Preoccupied by all these thoughts, she tossed on her bed restlessly, and fell asleep only in the wee hours.

When morning came, she was awakened by the very voice that she heard the previous day, singing a wonderful song, every note of which stirred her heart and make it beat faster. She sprang to her feet, ran to the window overlooking the river, flung it open. In the pink light of dawn reflected on the water, a small boat went down past the palace. And on the boat, the figure of a young fisherman, wearing a conical hat, stood clear against the background of the glaring horizon. His voice filled the morning air with marvellous notes, captivated the ears, stirred the heart and enchanted the soul. It was clearly heard for a few minutes, then it died away, as the small boat and the singer slowly but steadily disappeared in the dazzling light of the flaming river.

And every day, at the same hour, when dawn began to tinge the eastern sky, the same melodious voice wakened Ai Lien, stirred her soul, assailed her mind, and left her in great distress, when it died away.

Weeks, months passed. The beautiful voice wafted by the morning wind into her room had become part of her life. She lived for it, was happy when she heard it, and was greatly disturbed when it faded and was heard no more.

### Longing and Visualizing

And the slim figure of the unknown singer, standing on his boat with a conical hat on his head, had become so familiar to her eyes that she could visualize it, whenever she longed for the song.

Gradually, the weather cooled, and autumn came. Her father, Prime Minister Hoang, sent word telling Lady Hoang that he could not join them contrary to what was expected. So if they chose, they could come back any time they liked.

When she had to leave her summer palace, Ai Lien felt her heart breaking. The wonderful voice, that had been her good companion for months, was going to be heard no more. It would be hard for her to live without it, when it had become part of her life, even of her soul.

It was a completely changed Ai Lien who came back to her father. The young girl full of life, singing or playing music all the time was no more. In her stead was another girl, austere, absorbed in dreams and thoughts. Her gaiety was gone, and a tinge of vague sadness made her look more mature and rendered her beauty somewhat majestic.

Then she fell ill, and no physician could cure her, not even the most celebrated of the Empire. Her mother spent most of her time at her bedside. But Ai Lien was so weak that she rarely spoke to

## A fruitless search before death comes

her. In her anxiety, Lady Hoang often wept silently. She would give all the gold she had to any one who could restore her daughter's health. Sometimes she went to the pagoda, and for hours knelt before the Goddess of Mercy, praying, imploring, crying, and making the vow that she would give up her earthly life to devote herself entirely to Buddha worship in a nunnery, if her daughter were saved from the strange illness that threatened her life. But it was to no avail: Ai Lien, like a flower plucked off a tree went on withering away.

### A Mother's Appeal

One day, Lady Hoang, taking advantage of a moment when Ai Lien was quite awake, repressed a sob, and said: "My darling, what ails you? I guess you have a secret. Why don't you confide in your mother who loves you more than anything else on earth? Tell me what weighs on your heart, and I will do anything for you."

Ai Lien shook off her lethargy, slowly raised her languid eyes towards her mother, and after a moment's hesitation, said, "Forgive me, good mother, for all the trouble I am giving you. But my mind is so haunted by a fisherman's songs that it leaves me no peace, and I wish I could hear again that wonderful voice that sang every morning by the riverside last summer. It has become part of my soul, I have tried my best to forget it, but as you see, my good mother, I cannot."

Happy to know about the source of her daughter's gnawing pains, Lady Hoang hastened to send for the young fisherman with the wonderful voice. But nobody could find him. He had left his hut in the early days of autumn, and nobody could say where he had gone to. He was a bachelor and had no relatives. Indeed he had a wonderful voice, and many a girl had been thrilled by his songs, and fallen in love with him. But he was interested in none of them and left them all broken-hearted. His hut was still there at the foot of the great tree by the riverside, but he had left with his boat.

### Death and Despair

The news of the fisherman's disappearance greatly affected Ai Lien. She never recovered her gaiety and health. Then one day, she died, leaving her mother and father in great despair.

Three years passed. According to a custom of long standing, Ai Lien's remains were removed to another tomb. And to the astonishment of her parents and relatives, in place of her heart, a lump of transparent stone as red as ruby was found. Prime

# A lump of stone produces a marvel

Minister Hoang, overcome by sorrow, picked up the stone, and kept it as a fervent reminder of his beloved daughter.

One day, an old friend examined the stone, and suggested that it be given to a famous jeweller to be cut into a set of tea-cups.

It must be said, that in the old times, connoisseurs drank their tea very hot, in cups as small as thumbs. Actually, it was not the tea proper they imbibed, but its perfume. And the color of the tea was also of great importance. Good tea must be ambered.

## Strange Tea-Cups

The set of tea-cups made from the stone, was very strange indeed: when tea was poured into them, a tiny figure of a man, wearing a conical hat, was seen standing on a small boat that kept moving slowly round and round the cup, and at the same time, a melodious song was heard, faintly, yet distinctly. It seemed to come from afar, but it was unmistakably distinguishable.

Prime Minister Hoang kept those wonderful tea-cups with the utmost care. Only intimate friends and visitors of high rank had the privilege of being offered tea in them.

Everyone admired those wonderful cups, and never tired of gazing at the tiny figure standing on the small boat that kept on moving in circles. And every one listened in ecstasy to the beautiful song which seemed to come from very far, and many guests were so absorbed in wonder that they let the cup cool in their hand, and forgot to appreciate the tea.

The fame of those cups spread over the whole Empire, and the Emperor himself went to the Prime Minister's palace to see the marvels. The story of Ai Lien upset him to such an extent that, forgetting his royal dignity, a tear came to his eye as he was listening to it.

## A Persistent Young Man

Years passed, the story of Ai Lien seemed to be forgotten by all men, except her parents and relatives. But one day, a man came to the Prime Minister's palace. He looked young, very young. He was handsome, too, though his rather dark complexion told of his hard life in the open, battling with rain, storm and sunshine. He asked to be introduced to the Prime Minister. The guards drove him away, and even threatened him with their halberds. But the young man, far from being frightened, insisted on seeing the Prime Minister "on an

urgent private matter." He said he would not go away without meeting him, even if he were cut to pieces by all soldiers of the Empire. His strange behavior and reckless language so impressed the guards that they reported to the Prime Minister of the young man's desire.

Prime Minister Hoang was alone in his garden, among the beautiful flowers gardeners cultivated with art and love for his delight. He was not angry for being disturbed in his solitude. Moreover the young man's attitude intrigued him, so he gave orders for him to be admitted.

The young man said that he had heard of the marvelous tea-cups, and asked for the privilege of seeing them. Such a bold demand from a modest citizen actually was a great offense and subject to severe punishment. But the good-natured Prime Minister had become more lenient since the tragedy of his daughter's death. Besides he wanted to find out what the young man was up to, so he led him into his drawing-room and ordered his servants to offer tea in the magical cups.

The young man seemed to be greatly moved at the sight of these cups, and holding one of them in his hand, he saw, as was expected, on the surface of the amber-colored tea, the figure of a man, with a conical hat on his head, standing on a small boat, moving around the brim of the cup. His face was distorted with pain when he heard the supernatural voice singing a beautiful song. Suddenly in a vision, he saw himself standing on his fishing boat, going down the river past the majestic palace, that somebody told him a great mandarin had ordered to be built for his daughter to spend her summer holidays on the river bank. He remembered how he used to sing when going to work. He knew that he had a wonderful voice, many girls in the fishing village had told him so, but this had left him quite indifferent.

## Remembrance of a Girl

He sang because he was happy, and he sang for himself, not for anybody else. He remembered also that whenever he rowed past the palace, the bang of a window flung open resounded in the morning air and caused him to look up and see the delicate figure of a girl looking down. He never saw her closely and could not tell what she was like. But rumor ran among the folk living on the riverside that she was the Prime Minister's daughter and that she was the most beautiful girl one could ever see on earth. But it never occurred to him that such a girl could love his songs so passionately that she could not live without them. She must be an over-sentimental or pathologically sensitive girl. It was a great pity that a beautiful girl from a great family, destined to fortune, honor and happiness, had died so prematurely, her soul tortured and torn to pieces by despair. This was all his fault. Had he known the tragic agony she suffered in the depths of her heart, he would have come under her window and

# A tormented soul finds peace at last

sung for her, as long as she wished. Now she was no more, but here was the relic that spoke of her deep love, and the storms that had buffeted her soul, all recorded faithfully by the supernatural power of her will to remind posterity of her unfortunate passion.

## The Tea-Cups Melt

Lost in his thoughts, the young fisherman forgot that he was in the Prime Minister's presence, and in a moment, his painful emotions were so deep that, unaware, he shed a tear that fell into the tea-cup held so close to his eyes. Then suddenly he let out a scream: the magic cup melted into a streak of blood along his hand, carrying away the image of the fisherman and the melody of his songs. His scream was followed by the Prime Minister's. The other cups of the whole set, laid on a golden tray, one after another shared the same fate and melted completely.

The news of the catastrophe spread at once in the whole Capital. Friends rushed to the Prime Minister's Palace, and found him and his lady utterly saddened by the sudden disappearance of their be-



loved daughter's relics. They comforted them by saying that Ai Lien's tormented soul had crystalized into these material cups to tell her misery to the world. Now her soul finally was appeased and in peace, because at the long last her silent and passionate love was known and understood by the man she cared for, who repaid her with a sincere tear, coming from the depths of his heart.

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## 650 Women and Children

# NO MAN'S LAND

By WILLIAM R. WERMINE

**Khu Gia Vien**—Last year's cease-fire—even if it had brought a real peace—would have been too late for the women of this little community, 20 miles northeast of Saigon on Highway One.

Known to Vietnamese as Lang Qua Phu (Widows' Village) this is a no-man's-land of 650 women and children.

"The only people allowed to own houses here are the widows of South Vietnamese Army men killed in action," said the Rev. Nguyen Quang Hien, who founded the hamlet in 1955 at the request of the Most Rev. Nguyen Van Binh, Roman Catholic Bishop of Saigon.

### Refugees

"The Bishop was concerned about the problems facing these lonely and bewildered women, all of them originally refugees from the North. He planned this community as a place where they could build new lives."

Like his parishioners, Father Hien is from North Vietnam. He came here in 1954 with 2,500 men and women, many of whom now live in the neighboring hamlet of Hanoi. Hien serves also as spiritual adviser to Hanoi, which was named after his home town in the North.

Nearly 18 months have passed since we—interpreter Nguyen Kim and I—first visited Khu Gia Vien in late 1972. We were surprised to find Widows' Village swarming with men.

"That's because you've arrived on a very unusual—and very important—day for us," Father Hien said. "The men are here to install a statue of Our Lady of Fatima



Two widows and children in front of Lang Qua Phu's general store.

which has been presented to us by the Blue Army."

(The Blue Army is a U.S.-based Fatima prayer movement. The parish of Fatima in the Portuguese Diocese of Leiria has been, since 1917, one of the most famous Marian shrines in the world and the destination of numerous pilgrimages).

The name Khu Gia Vien means "house and garden." In front of each house is a small plot of land.

"We had hoped that the women would be able to raise vegetables as a source of income," Father Hien said, "but nothing will grow here—the land is not fertile."

Father Hien retreated from the glare of the translucent Vietnamese sun into the shade of a hot, dark hut and doffed his peasant-style white conical hat.

"People from other countries read about the ARVN soldiers

who die, and feel sorry for their widows," he said, "but they do not realize that the widows need something more than sympathy."

"Until recently, most of these women worked at the big U.S. Army base at Long Binh," he said, "but now the base has been closed and they've all been laid off."

### One Solution

One solution that was being suggested at that time for Khu Gia Vien's manifest poverty: sewing and shoe-repairing.

"The ARVN have taken over Long Binh and they'll be looking for seamstresses," Father Hien said. "I think these women could do the job if we could get hold of some sewing machines. I'd also like to see a shoe-mending industry established here."

Father Hien, who is 47 years old, normally speaks softly and slowly.



# *Widow's village has problems; hopes high*



Clockwise, from top left: the oldest refugee in village; they are sisters and both are widows; two boys playing on top of grave behind church; a new structure under construction; visiting men install statue of Lady of Fatima.



# "... we must pray for peace and hope"

But when he discusses the plight of the widows, his anguish spills out in a gush of words:

"There is no drinking water here. The women have to buy water in 30-gallon jars that are brought here in trucks from Bien Hoa. It doesn't cost much, but most of these women have no money at all. There is a great need here for some water wells."

He pointed to a corner of a bleak dirt field where women were pounding a starchy plant called manioc in the gutted remains of what obviously had been a wooden barn-like structure.

"That used to be our market," Hien said. "But it was devastated by a storm three months ago. We also used to have an orphanage here, but it was destroyed in another hurricane."

Before leaving Khu Gia Vien we spoke to several of the widows.

Mrs. Lai Thi Vien, a plump woman in faded black pajamas, told us her husband was killed in Binh Duong Province in 1967 while serving with the South Vietnamese Armored Cavalry.

"It's been five years now," she said, "but I'm still not used to his being gone. Life here is lonely and hard."



Two widows manage to smile as they recount life of hardship in village.

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Mui, a native of Thanh Hoa, North Vietnam, was sitting in a hammock outside her one-room home. There was no running water in the room, nor did she have soap. She said she receives 20 pounds of rice a month from Caritas, a Catholic welfare organization. Father Hien is director of Caritas for the Xuan Loc area, 25 miles east of Saigon.

## War is Hardship

"If the war does not end now, it will become worse for the people," Mrs. Mui said that day 18 months ago. "War takes away the life of men. It means hardship for the widows."

We stopped for some cane-sweet cold tea at a hut with an open front which serves as the hamlet's snack bar.

Inside the unlighted room, Mrs. Tran Thi Tot stood in front of an outside picture of the Virgin Mary. Next to it was a colored photograph of Father Hien. A crucifix and a rosary hung on the wall between the two pictures. Some flowers had been placed beneath

a photograph of her son, Tran Van Minh, who was killed at Cu Chi in 1960 while serving as a soldier first class with the elite South Vietnamese Rangers.

"I had six children, but only two are still living," she said. "A rocket came during Tet Mau Than and killed my second daughter. She was pregnant at the time so it killed two people." (Mau Than is the Vietnamese word for monkey. It was during Tet in the Year of the Monkey—1968—that the Communists launched a nationwide offensive).

She said her husband and two other children all died in 1945. Her eldest daughter lives with her at Khu Gia Vien and a surviving son is serving with the South Vietnamese artillery.

Squinting into the sun, Mrs. Tot looked through the building's open front at the crane which was hoisting the top half of the statue of the Virgin Mary.

"We must pray for peace to the Mother of the Crucified One," she said. "Even though we are widows we must have hope."

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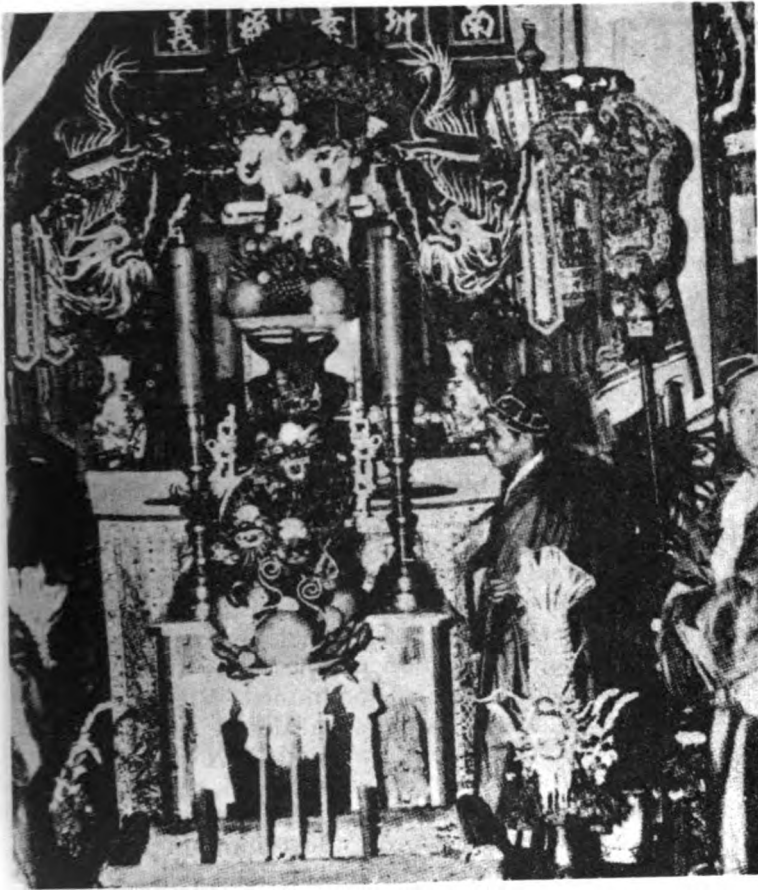


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Taoist temple altar (left) and the Emperor of Jade.

# Taoism in Vietnam

Vietnamese Taoism derives from the doctrine of Dao, or Tao, of Lao Tseu, based on man's participation in the universal order. This, admitted as reality, depends in essence on the equilibrium between the two elements Ying and Yang, which are simply the eternal duality of nature (repose and movement, liquid and solid, concentration and expansion, substance and spirit).

Since the material world is impregnated with these two principles, the Taoists believe that whoever succeeds in controlling them will be the master of the world. Hence the practice of magic by certain Vietnamese sorcerers.

The Taoist refrains from troubling the natural order of things; indeed, he conforms to it in every circumstance. He condemns all initiative that can be considered futile, from whence springs the

disdain he shows for active life (yem-the). Therein lies the basis of the doctrine of "non-action" (vo-vi) and freedom from concern (nhan) which has been adopted by many a Confucian scholar.

The restitution of seal and sword to the Emperor by retired mandarins, the wonderful encounters with fairies and immortals which are so often featured in Vietnamese poetic literature, are all of Taoist inspiration.

The supreme divinity is the Emperor of Jade (Ngoc Hoang) who, together with his two ministers of Birth and Death, rules the destiny of men. The system is supplemented by incantations, charms, amulets, etc., the sale of which is a prosperous concern, since sorcerers intervene on each and every occasion pertaining to human life. With the progress of education,

however, these practices are tending more and more to die out.

Among the popular cults related to Taoism, the following are worthy of mention:

1. The cult of Chu-Vi or spirits of the Three Worlds (celestial, terrestrial and aquatic), of whom the female divinities called Thanh-Mau are the most famous. The cult is administered by women mediums who assist the faithful to communicate with the gods.

2. A typical Vietnamese cult, Noi-Dao (local religion) whose divinity is a national hero: for instance, General Tran Hung Dao, who defeated the Mongols during the reign of the Tran, has become a genie. He affords protection against evil spirits. The priests of this cult are mediums who distribute favors and perform violent dances.

## *Reconciliation is inevitable*

# GOODWILL CAN PRODUCE PEACE

By **TRAN VAN LAM**

Late in 1972, a few months before the signing of the Paris Agreement I spoke for the second time before you about our desire for peace, and about the conditions necessary to ensure a viable peace.

Now, once again, I have the great honor to address this eminent audience of important personalities whose knowledge of national and international affairs, of historical events and technical problems is extensive. I shall, therefore, neither emphasize obvious facts, nor engage in propaganda. Instead, I wish only to tell you about the present situation which, of itself, is an immensely important topic and can be called, I hope, "The End of the Tunnel."

But before dealing with the main topic, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that, this time, I am here no longer as an appointed Minister, but rather as an elected representative of the people, with all the responsibility which that entails. Therefore 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.

### **Time to Look Back**

While we are here, guns continue to fire angrily. Yet the fighting has become somewhat less intense, perhaps due to certain concessions made by the parties involved in the Paris Agreement. I hope that, in this relatively favorable situation, peace will soon be restored to our beloved country, our people will be relieved of suffering, and our nation will be able to launch its reconstruction programs.

Over a year has elapsed since the Paris Agreement was signed. It is time for us to look back and see what the Republic of Vietnam and the Communists have contributed to the search for a genuine peace. Let us begin by looking at each side's basic stand toward the settlement of the Vietnam war.

The Communists' attitude indicates that their goal is still to rule the South though they have paid lip service to our right to self-determination. During four long years at the Kleber Peace Talks they persistently demanded that the Constitutional Government of the Republic of Vietnam be replaced by a tri-partite administration composed of the National Liberal Front, the pro-communist Vietnamese in exile, and some GVN personalities. I say some because they excluded other elected GVN leaders. They also wanted to see the Senate and the House of Representatives dissolved, and the 1967 Constitution abrogated. In other words, the Communists wanted to impose a dogmatic solution of their own upon the political future of 19 million South Vietnamese.

### **A Plan of Destruction**

However, military reverses and political blunders forced the Communists to sign the Cease-fire Agreement of January 27, 1973 to recognize the existence of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, and to set aside, though only temporarily, their demand for a Coalition Government. In fact, their proposed Coalition Government was their first attempt to control South Vietnam politically. For despite the text and intent of the earlier draft Agreement, during the 44 meeting Sessions at La Celle St. Cloud, the National Liberation Front meant to turn the tri-partite Council of National Reconciliation and Concord into a super-government. The Communists insisted on a general election, but refrained from fixing a date so as to allow this Council to extend its leadership, to take advantage of our open society in order systematically to destroy it.

The National Liberation Front also ignored, intentionally, the great number of North Vietnamese soldiers, whose presence in South Vietnam was at the origin of the war and hindered our right to determine our political future. Since the signing of the Paris Agreement, many new military installations have been built and more than 50,000 additional North Vietnamese regular troops, fully equipped, have infiltrated the South, invading our territory, killing our people, and attempting to sabotage economic development schemes conceived by the Republic of Vietnam all with a view to creating a "ghost country" in the South. Obviously, the Paris Agreement is being used

This is the text of an address delivered by Senate President Tran Van Lam at a meeting of the Lions Club Saigon (Central) on 11 March 1974.



Senate President Tran Van Lam addressing Lions Club.

by the Communists to shield their new attempt to take over the South.

### Free General Election

The Republic of Vietnam maintains that 19 million South Vietnamese must be allowed to determine their political future themselves, through a free general election, internationally supervised, in which all political and religious factions are able to participate as candidates as well as voters. The Republic of Vietnam has three times advanced a well-defined schedule for the General Election, thus hoping to hasten the time when her people can be relieved of suffering and begin a new and happy life. We have also suggested that talks begin on reunification of the country, starting with mail, cultural, and trade exchanges. But we are determined to fight all Communist attempts to split South Vietnam through the establishment of a puppet government, because such a government would obviously be North Vietnam's political tool. As such, it would adversely affect the chances of national reconciliation and concord, and would retard the reunification of the fatherland.

South Vietnam's efforts to restore peace through free and fair negotiations are blocked by persistent Communist attempts to gain control. Such attempts have brought the La Celle Saint Cloud political conference to a stalemate, while the Joint Military Committee meetings in Saigon have achieved only a few modest agreements on the exchange of POWs, be-

# The red dream prevents amity

cause the other side is not interested in negotiating a genuine cease-fire.

A year's trial has shown that the only effect of the Paris Agreement has been to help American and Allied Forces withdraw from Vietnam, and retrieve their prisoners.

Friendly nations are continuing to assist the cause of peace in Vietnam. However the Communists persist in exploiting the vague clauses of the Paris Agreement to prevent the South Vietnamese people from reaching a political solution and is thwarting attempts to bring the mutual destruction to an end.

### NVN Plan Persists

From the evidence to date, we note that the North Vietnamese Communists have not given up their attempt to turn Southeast Asia, especially South Vietnam, into a Communist region.

Because of the changed world situation—the emphasis on detente—and because of serious military defeats the Communist forces in Vietnam have become somewhat flexible in their strategy: On the one hand, they increase the military pressure on all battlefronts against ARVN units, and unceasingly endanger our people's daily living. On the other hand, they try to create economical problems and social disorders, which would affect all South Vietnam's reconstruction and development programs. By these methods, they hope to see the fall of the political structure of the Republic of Vietnam.

Obviously, the Communists have been mistaken because the RVN stands its ground, thanks to her people's endurance and perseverance, and to the assistance of the free world. The continuing aggression of the Communists naturally causes suffering and destruction in our country. It wastes human lives and delays the exploitation of our natural resources.

### World Powers' Effort

The North Vietnamese government chooses to ignore the fact, that the world powers are trying their best to get together, to shake hands, and to resolve their differences, through negotiations and diplomatic procedures.

Even the Chinese Communists, North Vietnam's most stubborn allies, are said to have realized that it is about time to end all interference in Southeast Asian countries. Therefore, we can see that the war in Vietnam, triggered and sustained by North Vietnamese Communists, is actually not favorable to their aims, because it runs counter to the international trend of reconciliation, betrays people's aspirations,

and weakens the nation's potential. It is, in fact, my firm belief that both sides earnestly wish to stop the war. I shall, if I may, refresh your memory about the period when the Trinh and Nguyen families, at the end of the 17th century, tried to kill one another on the issue of support to be given to Emperor Lê. After seven desperate battles in forty five years of fierce fighting, neither side saw its dream come true, so both had to agree to set a boundary on the Gianh River, and to retreat behind their respective lines for about a century so as "to live and let live," before rebuilding an indivisible nation.

I dare say such a principle should once more be adopted. But, hopefully, reunification can be achieved in a much shorter period.

### **Vietnam Must Be Unified**

For Viet-Nam must of course be unified. However, in order to succeed in this attempt, both sides must provisionally observe the boundary just as the Trinh and Nguyen families did. Northerners must remain in the North, and Southerners in the South, responsible for implementation of their respective programs of reconstruction, and for the well being of their own people.

In the long run, reunification of the country will be solved by itself, if not during our generation, then surely in that of our children. For God cannot but heed the cries of mourning and of sorrow. The people's will for peace is God's will.

If one wishes to survive, one must act accordingly to The Path. Acting against it, one will lose or die.

It is therefore time for us to struggle for peace, and not to "wait for the manna". On the one hand, we must maintain a position of strength, for only through strength can we convince the other side to choose Peace as the only alternative. On the other hand, we must create conditions that will promote mutual understanding, and harmonious brotherhood.

The prerequisites are:

- A determination to serve the country, preserve the territory bequeathed by our ancestors and improve the living conditions of our people.
- An end to North Vietnam's interference in the affairs of South Vietnam.
- A disassociation of the National Liberal Front from North Viet-Nam.

Only then can the South Vietnamese, living on each side of the boundary line, exert their intelligence, zeal, and skills in exploiting their rich potential resources. By doing so, they will fulfill the people's wish first to live in peace and security, then actually to take part in national development programs.

In addition to the above, social development and improvement, including the just repartition of income, will help the nation develop harmoniously.

Once able to live in peace and prosperity, the people will learn to know where their rights are and where their duties lie, and they will struggle for a

full social development. Only then can restrictions, imposed of necessity by war and insecurity, gradually be abolished.

Internal security and external harmony will help promote a comprehensive brotherhood, a friendly medium for national development, through friendly relations between people on both sides of the boundary. All prisoners, military and civilian, of both sides must be released, and authorized to go home.

Also, to improve the social atmosphere and encourage the people of all walks of life to participate in public service activities, regulations that were enforced in time of war must be revised, and amnesty granted to detainees who violated war time security regulations.

And again I repeat that in order to reach a lasting political solution, South Vietnam's self-determination must be strictly observed by holding general free election under impartial international supervision. Such election will help wipe out all hostilities, build national understanding and reconciliation and create favorable conditions in which South Viet-Nam can finally enjoy full independence and freedom as well as any developed country in the world.

I am sure you will agree with me that to stop the war in Viet-Nam, and to restore peace, are pressing necessities for both sides, North and South, which can only be met by a sincere and mutual understanding between opponents.

### **People's Aspiration**

I hope that the North Vietnamese administration will become aware of its real position and strength in this war, of its people's secret yet earnest aspirations for peace, and will loosen its party's grip, so as to give the Northern people and their representatives a chance actually to share the nation's responsibilities.

Once guns stop firing, political and economical activities can replace the military struggle. Also, participation of the two sides in regional and international activities will help wipe out differences and hostilities.

Last but not least, I want to emphasize my faith in the patriotism of the people of the Republic of Viet-Nam, who readily accept hardship and self sacrifice for the defense of our territory, the economic development of our nation, the improvement of our society, and the struggle for peace. It is our duty to improve their living conditions and to boost the economy so that our people may enjoy a much better life than our brothers in the North, and may retain their freedom. For there is no denying the fact that the overwhelming majority of the people of South Vietnam have repeatedly chosen, and fought for, their freedom — turning to our side, not toward the Communists.

In closing, may I say that 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.

By DOAN BICH

Catholics attending Sunday mass at hamlets and villages are invited to contribute some money to a fund raised by the local parish. The proceeds, however, do not go "to the poor" but to the central fund of COREV *Cooperation for Reconstruction of Vietnam*.

Since its establishment in early 1973, COREV has lent its support to the government of the Republic of Vietnam in development activities, particularly in the relief of war victims.

A non-political and non-profit organization, COREV was established by the conference of Vietnamese Bishops in response to an appeal by Pope Paul VI following the signing of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam on Jan. 27, 1973. It has cooperated with other private social institutions in the country and helped the government in the realization of various projects with contributions amounting to nearly 215 million piasters. Yet, helpful COREV is always in need of larger response from people everywhere to expand its activities.

### Serving the People

COREV has assigned itself the task of coordinating efforts by an individuals and organizations to serve the people, besides encouraging the Catholic faithful to make greater contributions to various national reconstruction endeavors in the spirit of true reconciliation.

It also conducts studies on multiple post war problems in South Vietnam so as to help the government implement reconstruction-development projects.

COREV Secretary General Bishop Nguyen Van Thuan says the organization is giving priority to the resettlement of war refugees now living in temporary resettlement centers set up by the administration across the country.

In this respect, COREV has carried out 89 projects, including 31 for reconstruction-development and 33 for the benefit of ethnic minorities. COREV assists war refugees at resettlement centers in their crop cultivation by providing them with seeds, ferti-

# COREV

## A helping hand for war victims



COREV provides aid to settlers who clear one hectare of waste land.

lizer and farming tools. A number of dispensaries, class-rooms, waterwells and housing units have also been built by the institution.

During the last six months of 1973, COREV spent VN\$214,618,000 for its activities in support of government reconstruction programs.

### Land Clearance

The institution is now carrying out a program of land clearance which consists of levelling waste landplots granted by the government to resettlers. This is a very useful work that helps peasants in their crop cultivation.

Land clearance has been carried out principally at farming centers in Long Khanh, Binh Tuy, Phu Bon, Darlac, Ninh Thuan, Vinh Binh province and Cam Ranh area.

Each resettler family is entitled to receive help from COREV in clearing one hectare of waste land.

The Catholic organization provides peasants with means for the work, including mechanized farming tools, and wages paid to laborers. The program has been progressing steadily and VN\$2 billion has been earmarked by COREV to complete the clearance of waste land for 175,000 resettlers living in 35 villages throughout the country.

### Post-War Efforts

In a broader aspect, COREV cooperates with the administration and other civic and social institutions in the settlement of various post-war problems, such as resettlement of more than 800,000 war victims, rehabilitation and vocational training for war veterans,

# Foreign sources give aid

improvement of living conditions at orphanages across the country, improvement of public health, and assistance to ethnic minorities.

Long-term programs of COREV include assistance to orphans who number nearly 300,000 at present, job finding for hundreds of thousands of the unemployed, and training peasants in agriculture co-operatives and rural development.

In order to carry out effectively its work, COREV has always sought to increase its funds and get more operational means. So far, its principal sources of funds come from contributions by its members, donations from benefactors and various civic and social organizations, and aids from international institutions. Charitable organizations in Australia, West Germany, France, Holland, the United States have actively assisted COREV in its noble endeavor.

Yet, as a helpful institution, COREV still needs help from everybody, especially from Catholics across the country.

## Executive Committee

COREV is under the direction of an executive committee headed by Msgr. Nguyen Van Binh, Bishop of Saigon, and concurrently the chairman of the Vietnamese Bishops Conference. Its members belong to all social strata without distinction of faith or political tendencies.

With its head office located at No. 123, Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, Saigon 3, COREV is always ready to welcome any projects for national reconstruction and development and has always striven to alleviate the sufferings of the underprivileged and war victims.

As COREV Secretary General Bishop Nguyen Van Thuan has stated, any contributions to this benevolent institution will help it carry out effectively activities, the results of which not only benefit the broad masses today, but also in many generations to come.

In the event of sudden emer-



Temporary houses for refugees being built with COREV assistance.



An elementary class under the auspices of COREV at a temporary center.

gencies, COREV is quick to participate in relief and welfare action. Recently typhoons Opal, Sarah and Thelma hit the central area of Vietnam, particularly Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh and Quang Nam, causing serious floods resulting in the death of 85 persons, 150,000 losing their homes, and 5,000 homes being destroyed. Eighty per cent of the crops were damaged and there was widespread loss of livestock.

Caritas Internationalis appealed to its member organizations and other Catholic voluntary agencies already contributing to Vietnam reconstruction and refugee re-

settlement programs, requesting that they divert available resources to bring relief to the typhoon victims.

Caritas relief work was immediately started in Quang Nam and Quang Tin with the aid of Caritas Germany and the Knights of Malta organization in Danang. More than US\$50,000 from reconstruction program funds were channeled for immediate relief pending receipt of contributions from CI member organizations.

The entire on-the-spot relief operation was coordinated by COREV.



By JOSEPH R. DONAHUE

The Vietnamese are very interested in television. It is satisfying them by replacing many of the theaters that formerly produced the ancient Chinese drama.

Ancient Chinese drama, *hat do*, is lengthy, running from three to four hours, with much singing and beautiful costumes as in Western opera. The plots are based on good and bad kings or mandarins, attempted revolts and hopeless love affairs. The music is classical Chinese. The instruments are the traditional Vietnamese 16-string guitar, *dan tranh*.

The Vietnamese dramas, *cai luong*, are more modern, incorporating comic relief but following the mainstream of the play which usually deals with Viet Cong insurgency, black market activity, and other moral problems. They do some teaching of old traditions.

### Music Appreciation

Music appreciation runs high. The French introduced classical music and the Saigon radio and TV stations air excellent programs by Vietnamese orchestras, string quartets and chorals groups. Modern American songs, U.S. western and country music, as well as a Vietnamese variation of the French cabaret style of singing is presented. There are a number of well-paid Vietnamese artists who are very popular.

Vietnamese literature for centuries had that Chinese Confucius "feel," but in 1933 a group of Vietnamese literary personalities formed a new group, *Tu Luc Van Doan* (Self-Sufficient Literary Group), emphasizing that writers should write of their own country for their countrymen. Khai Hung was one of the leaders of this movement and he wrote many short stories on farm life and hardships involved. In the late 19th century, Nguyen Khuyen extolled the virtues of an agricultural society, but other writers still continued with historical themes.

Tran Duc Rat, a professor of the Faculty of Letters, Saigon University, has done an excellent work on the proverbs, folk sayings and songs of Vietnam. Some were

# V. N. ARTS, SPORTS

originally *Tai Kinh*, the ancient Chinese collection; however, all have forceful, concise thought.

One type of art that the Vietnamese are really cultivating is painting in oil, water color and pastel. Many of the recent works show the horror and devastation of war. One of the most outstanding in oil is the "Burning Monk," by Quang Dai, depicting the immolation of a Buddhist monk during the later days of the Diem regime. Other excellent artists are Pham Co and Le Dinh Tan. Nhanh Chi is excellent in pastels, while Nguyen Tri Minh has a very active career. Huin Yo, a Korean-American now living in Saigon has developed some modern works that were exhibited here. Art is flourishing in the Saigon area.

There are many Vietnamese newspapers, an English-language paper, The Saigon Post, a French-language paper, and numerous Chinese-language papers.

Sporting events are well attended, especially soccer matches. Rivalry between areas, services and Asian nations is high and closely followed. The French influence is seen in the number of tennis clubs. Golf is rather new and quite American. Swimming and surf-bathing are popular. The

Vietnamese people are generally small for boxing. However, they do participate in judo and ju jitsu. A native sport is *Vovinam* which has similar techniques of Karate and emphasizes quick body chops, physical training, footwork, and an ethical code of conduct.

*Aikido* is the opposite of the aggressive *Vovinam*. Its purpose is to neutralize an aggressor without hurting him in order to have peaceful victory. Girls participate in this to learn the art of self-defense.

### Racing, Lottery

Boating and water-skiing are very popular with the affluent. Some bicycle clubs exist. Horseback riding is popular with the French community. Bowling was introduced by the U.S. Armed Forces and now has taken hold with the Vietnamese. Horse racing is popular with everyone. The horses are much smaller than European or American types but give a good show. The Vietnamese, like most Orientals, are gamblers and race-track betting is heavy.

The most common sport of all, however, is the national lottery, run by the government. Winnings are spectacular and honestly managed.



Vietnamese crowd watches Apollo moon mission launch on television.

# *Fulfilling a need:*

# MEKONG UNIVERSITY

The formal termination of the war in Vietnam fourteen months ago has not generated much certainty throughout the world about the future of that country. In various capitals, mention is frequently made of the possibility of renewed large-scale offensives by the Communist forces, and, consequently, of the high odds against the survival of all democratic governmental processes in South Vietnam.

Most debates of this nature usually end up, however, with one answer: the final outcome will depend largely upon the South Vietnamese themselves, upon the extent of their faith in the system which they, together with others, have so dearly paid to preserve, and upon their ability to consolidate around the idea of freedom in a society with enough resilience, enough vitality, enough initiative to withstand the tremendous trials of the present time;

for if they survive the storm, the human and natural resources available seem to warrant a great future for this nation.

Within the next two or three years, despite the always too real threat of resumed war, South Vietnam must achieve a mammoth reconversion of her war-time economy which is distorted by heavy injections of foreign aid into a normal economy of production to be increasingly self-reliant. This effort, already difficult in itself, will encounter innumerable obstacles stemming from the historical and social background of the nation. Indeed, reconversion from war will also require emancipation from obsolescent social contraptions and acceptance of the methods and practices of a genuinely modern and democratic society.

A clue to South Vietnam's vitality and resilience can be found in the founding of a new university

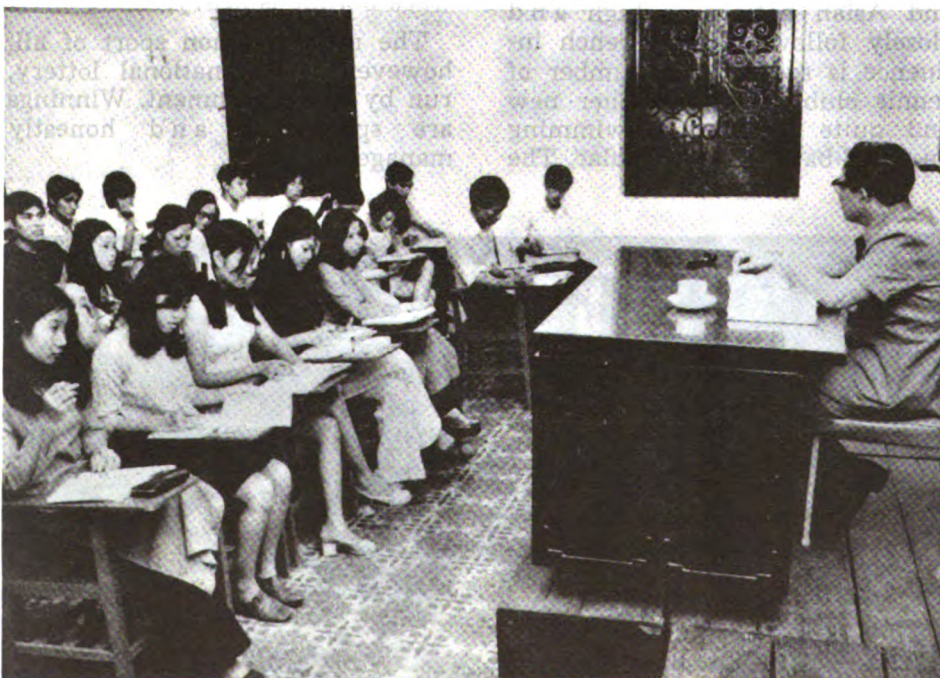
in Saigon by a group of young educators and technicians, most of them alumni of American colleges and universities. Planned and conceived two years ago, the Mekong University opened its gates to two hundred students for the Spring term of Academic year 1973-74.

## Main Preoccupation

"Our main preoccupation is to prepare people who can solve problems, says Nguyen Ngoc Linh, one of the University founders, because that is what our country needs the most at this time." Indeed, the influence of French humanism combined with a long tradition of Confucian elitism has contributed in making of the Vietnamese universities thus far centers of highly esoteric interests. Brilliant minds have emerged from those centers: Vietnamese students who move on to Harvard, Oxford or the Sorbonne usually earn high marks for their scholastic valor. Their training however rarely addresses itself to the immediate problems which their nation has to face.

## First of Kind

One field where immediate action must be taken to fill the vacuum is communications. To a modern society communications are as vital as the blood circulation system is to the human body; and the need to emancipate from the shackles of underdevelopment in Vietnam makes this even more evident. Democratic government rests upon the premise that all citizens are reasonably well informed; economic development also requires adequate knowledge by the people of the priorities and the opportunities facing them. Yet in Vietnam very little effort has been devoted so far to the systematic organizations of mass communications, and especially to



A Mekong University class. For every 20 students a tutor is provided.

# *Innovations brought to tradition-bound system*

the development of skills related to that field. First of its kind, the Mekong School of Mass Communications will train this year approximately one hundred specialists, including newspaper, magazine, radio and television reporters, writers and editors, printers, lay-out men as well as motion picture specialists.

Another area where a crash program of education is called for is management, which was never listed among the disciplines provided to the Vietnamese people under the colonial rule and was not developed in the national public education system in the ensuing period, probably due in part to the fact that the training of civil servants and government administrators was considered an overwhelming priority.

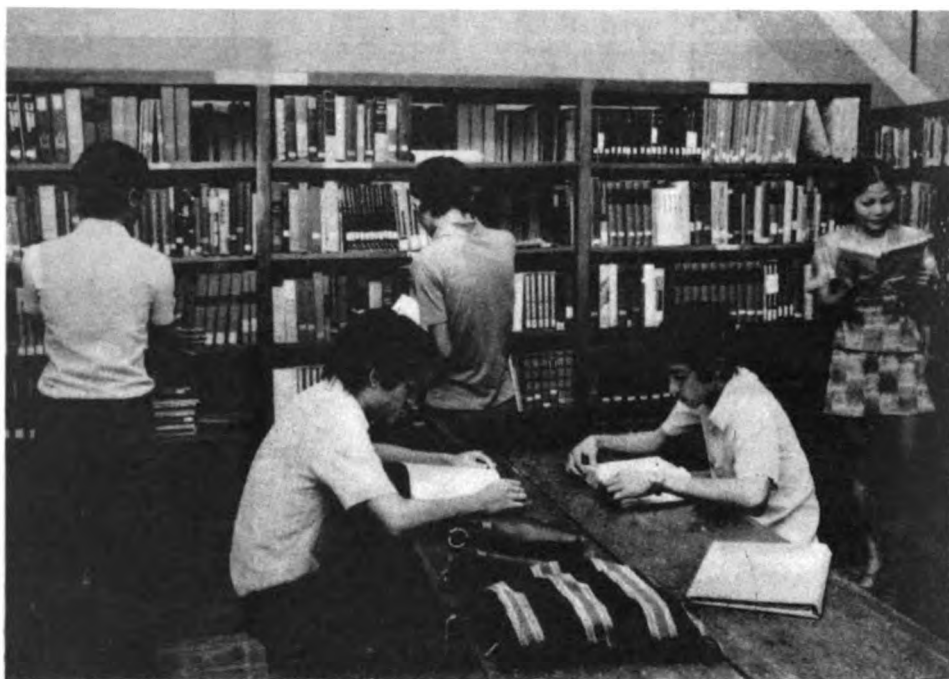
## **Managerial Skill**

As a result the Vietnamese economy has suffered a great deal from the lack of managerial skill in the private sector. Immense possibilities which were available during the past decade for the development of new areas of production or for the organization of services which are of great utility in a modern nation were left unexploited. Foreign firms with the managerial skills that the Vietnamese did not have, moved in to fill the vacuum to some extent, but of course they were uniquely profit-oriented and limited their activities to a few fields of high profit yield and which required minimal infrastructure investment.

The Mekong School of Management offers a four-year program leading to a Bachelor's degree; it hopes to graduate about one hundred middle level managers in the immediate future.

Supporting the two schools above is a Language Center teaching English, French, Chinese and Japanese, the four foreign languages that are most important to Vietnam. The Center also offers Vietnamese language courses to foreign students at the University.

The pride of the Mekong University founders, however, is the Institute of Vietnamese Studies. Unfortunately enough this will be



A 20,000-book library provides varied reading fare for students.

the first organized effort to promote research on Vietnam by a Vietnamese institution. Indeed practically all the serious works on Vietnam have been by French or American or other foreign scholars. The Institute of Vietnamese Studies should not be considered a departure from the practical approach of the university founders, for they think that to know Vietnam is to solve already half of her problems, paraphrasing Socrates' *Knoti seoton*.

## **Break from Tradition**

Mekong University, say its founders, is revolutionary in the sense that it brings many innovations to the tradition-bound university system of Vietnam.

First, it combines the good French system of lectures given by prestigious professors who impart to the students some of their erudition, with the greatly needed tutorial system of the British. Mekong uses one tutor for every twenty students. The tutor follows

the student's each and every step, making sure that he studies and makes the most out of his years at the university.

## **Course Manuscript**

Second, Mekong demands that each professor submit the manuscript of his course before starting to teach. The printing facilities of the university (provided by the Asia Foundation) print it into a textbook, to be distributed free to the students. In this way, the professor will have to devote a great deal of time and effort in conceiving and perfecting his teaching material. This is a major improvement on the present general situation in Vietnamese universities where not many textbooks are available.

Third, Mekong professors are more highly remunerated than at other universities. This helps them to concentrate more on teaching and research instead of having to worry about making both ends meet. Students pay a tuition fee of

# *From a modest beginning springs a promise of hope*

offices, a students union, and a 20,000-book library. Other supplies and equipment have come from the surplus left by the American army.

In spite of very conservative budgeting, the project still needs five hundred thousand dollars to carry all the basic expenditures of the University through the first two years, and probably a total of two million dollars will be needed for the following five years, in view of the increasing demand for higher educational opportunities in the country as the effects of war lessen. To date, private business and industry in Vietnam, especially the Mekong Group of Companies, have donated to the University about two hundred thousand dollars altogether. The patrons of the University are confident that their effort will meet the approval and support from the industrial and business *milieux* throughout the world, for in their own minds, nothing could appear so exciting and so full of promise than to help train the men and women who will become their partners and their counterparts in the business world of tomorrow.



Manuscripts of professors are sorted out for distribution to students.

about ten U.S. dollars per month, which is rather high for Vietnam, but Mekong offers tuition scholarships to fully one fourth of the student body. Besides Mekong gives part-time employment to its students which not only helps them financially but also contributes in fighting some of the traditional contempt for manual labor so common in Vietnam.

## **Financing**

Financing the Mekong university is also one aspect of the project where the founders have shown a great deal of realism. Instead of a multi-million dollar enterprise which may forever stay on the drawing board, they made do with whatever is available in post-war Vietnam. An old US Army Bachelor Officers Quarter was leased and renovated to include two small auditoriums, twenty classrooms,



Renovated Army Bachelor Officers' quarters houses Mekong University.



London surgeon Gordon Barclay holds orphan and toy truck.

# A Dose of Love, Play for Orphans

(Text and photo by William R. Werms)

In a small community on the outskirts of Saigon, it's not unusual to hear the lilting sounds of children laughing.

The laughter comes from Dieu Quang Orphanage in An Lac hamlet in Gia Dinh province.

It wasn't that way six years ago.

Before Mrs. Gordon Barclay, wife of a London surgeon, visited this country in 1968, few babies in orphanages here were given any special love or attention.

Perhaps equally important, they had no toys or other playthings.

To remedy that deficiency, Mrs. Barclay organized the Gordon

Barclay Fund. Today, 10 staff members work out of Saigon, providing toys to "play groups" at four orphanages—three Buddhist and one Roman Catholic.

That in itself is interesting, because Barclay Fund staffers are Quakers.

## Things in Common

"I think the Buddhists realize we are not interested in proselytizing or trying to convert them," said Dr. Barclay, husband of the fund founder.

"We even have certain things in common with Buddhism, including a constructive use of silence."

More than 100 orphans between the ages of six months and 10 years are served by the Barclay Fund at Dieu Quang Orphanage. Similar numbers of orphans are cared for at the other homes.

Dr. Barclay said that Vietnamese adults have little understanding of the value of play.

"They have no idea that play has a role in the development of a child, that it can increase his intellectual growth," he said.

Barclay said that because of play groups, "two, three, four-year-old children who had acted like six-month-old babies began to develop the normal skills like walking, eating and grasping."

## Development Spurred

"The little attention the play group gave them was enough to trigger their development, (which was) arrested by lack of love and attention. It seems apparent that play groups in this situation can help these children develop."

Barclay Fund staff member Peter Watson offered a comparison between the play groups and Western classroom situations.

"If they (the orphans) were in a formal classroom situation, they would be taught mathematics by laboriously copying and verbal repetition," Watson said. "There would be no understanding, because such young children are not able to think about abstract ideas."

"Through playing with concrete objects such as blocks, beads and other toys, they experience basic mathematical concepts, and can develop the understanding necessary before abstract ideas can become meaningful."

Barclay told of one little girl who did nothing but moan and cry when she first came to one of the orphanages.

"We could do nothing with her," he said. "She wouldn't even look at the toys."

"But the other day, she became so interested in a toy that it was hard to get it away from her when play time ended.

"That's progress."

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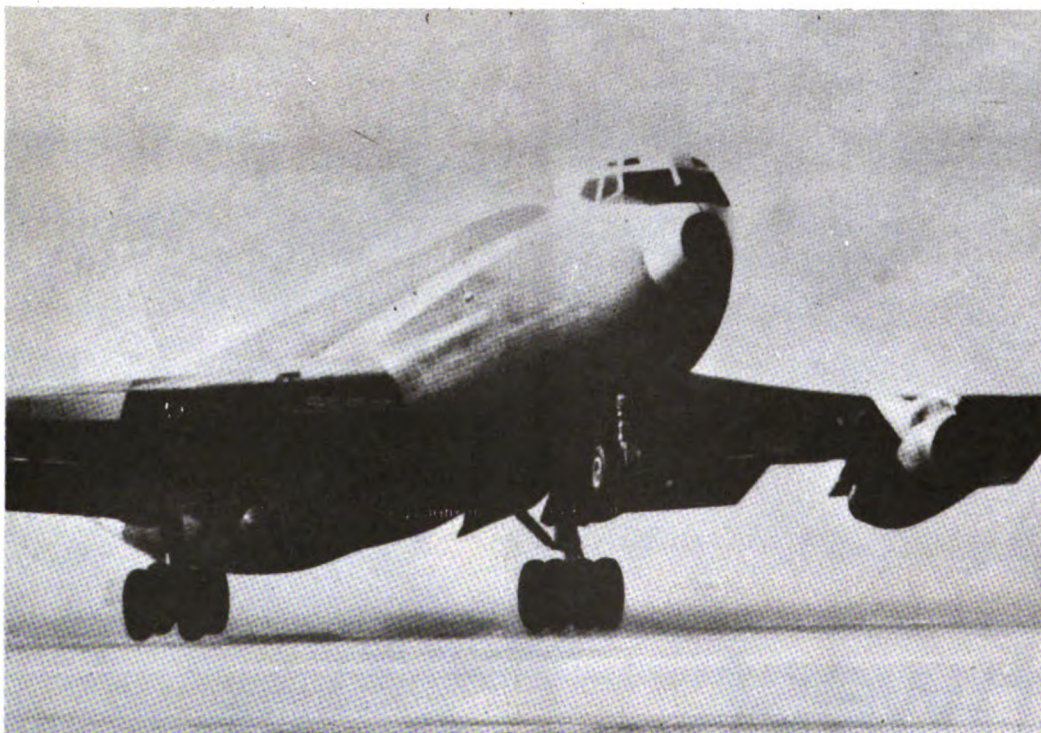
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