

VIET NAM

Magazine

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FROM OUR READERS

As one of those who was there during the height of the war prior of the Paris cease-fire agreement, I thoroughly enjoyed reading about your article on Saigon's Continental Palace.

Many were the afternoons and nights that I and many other foreigners whiled away time on its ground floor restaurants providing a vantage point from which to view the passing parade of people and events.

In a way the fabled landmark of Indochina that is the Continental reminds me of your brave people, resilient, adaptable to change, confident of the future.

I cannot help but think that if only more people had a similar vantage point, then a kinder and more comprehensive understanding of your people's aspirations and problems would be available for those abroad who give aid and comfort to the aggressors of your country and the rest of Indochina.

The human story, as we gathered from our seats in the Continental—we talked with Vietnamese friends, waifs, orphans, intellectuals and the lowly—is always touching, if not compelling in all its reality. The desire for peace abounds in the Vietnamese heart.

It is a pity that the forces of aggression and greed will not allow such true peace to materialize, short of realization of their nefarious and selfish ends.

Let the world pray for peace in Vietnam. You deserve it after the protracted years of suffering, deprivation, and war.

RUBEN VILLA
Manila, Philippines

Congratulations on your series on Vietnamese art by Chau Kim Dinh. He has focused attention on the masters of the brush and pallet in your country and that interesting medium that is lacquer. Oriental art has always fascinated me and Mr. Dinh's articles goad me more in my interest in Asian painting in general and now, Vietnamese art in particular.

I have never been to Vietnam, but now hope to visit your country in the near future, lured by Vietnamese art as Mr. Dinh sees it.

And may I add that Vietnam Magazine similarly attracts me to visit your scenic places and sites of ancient royal grandeur.

H. DORRIENDORF
New York City
U.S.A.



VIETNAM
Magazine

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Cover: Image of male god Paramasivam in Shiva temple in Saigon. Paramasivam has four arms and in addition to a golden trident holds green cobras. (See story on page 14).

BUSINESS IN VIETNAM

REVISED EDITION

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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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.



President
TRAN VAN LAM



A TOURIST ATTRACTION

THE COCONUT MONK



Dao Dua, a retired engineer, better known as the Coconut Monk.

By VU TRINH

Phoenix Island, S. Vietnam. On a floating pagoda near this lush island on the great Mekong River there lives a strange man with many names and hundreds of followers. He is known to some as Cau Hai (Uncle Hai) and the Prophet of Concord. Others regard him as one of the world's unique living tourist attractions. Most everyone who has heard of him knows him as Dao Dua, or the Coconut Monk.

Followers regard him as a saint, or at least a holy man. Detractors regard him as a crank, an impostor or a mad monk. In the past he has invited world leaders to the con-

ference hall on his floating Christ-and-Buddha pagoda to settle the problem of peace in Vietnam. His airy abode is located near My Tho in the Mekong Delta, about two hours by car from Saigon over a good highway, but world leaders haven't shown up yet. When the Paris Accord was announced in 1973, the Coconut Monk invited the Joint Military Commission to his conference hall so that "peace will come three hours later." The helipad on his sunny pagoda was ready to receive the JMC helicopter with American, Communist and Saigon dignitaries, but for un-

disclosed reasons the Joint Military Commission did not arrive.

The Coconut Monk, appearances notwithstanding, is not the product of an Oriental fairy tale. In fact he is a former well-to-do French-educated engineer. (His floating pagoda is a pleasant and very clever construction). Since his retirement from engineering he has been especially attracted to publicity, Jesus, Buddha and the meat and juice of coconuts. It is believed that he subsists, as a coconut vegetarian, on nothing but coconuts.

Followers

According to an official estimate, the Coconut Monk has 3,516 followers in the Mekong Delta's Dinh Tuong Province. (The estimated Protestant population there is 3,512). Of his 1,000 disciple monks, most are young "deserters from both sides," according to Dao No, a brown-robed young monk. The floating pagoda is recognized as a sanctuary, and the Government has maintained a hands-off policy. The young monks who leave the pagoda, though, are liable to find themselves exchanging their brown robes for olive-drab fatigues. Most of them seem content to remain here.

The man responsible for it all, the Coconut Monk, was born Nguyen Thanh Nam sixty odd years ago. In 1971, during the national elections, he decided to run for the Presidency of South Vietnam. But he did not make much headway. Today, despite his strange statements, he is allowed complete freedom, so long as he remains on his floating pagoda in the fertile Mekong Delta.

Our press contingent arrived too late for a spoken interview with the Coconut Monk. He observes a daily two-hour period of silence from noon till two o'clock, but

will give written replies to questions.

The young brown-robed monk, Dao No, led us to his master. From My Tho we had reached the floating pagoda and Phoenix Island by motorized launch. The green-brown waters of the great Mekong glittered in the tropical sunlight. Aboard the pagoda Dao No guided us through a pop-art maze of towers, pennants, Christian crosses, Buddhist swastikas and colorful ornaments. It resembled a kind of Delta Disneyland with religious overtones.

Thwarted Mission

Dao No informed us that in 1969 the old Coconut Monk set out on a one-man peace mission to Hanoi, by bicycle. He pedaled up through the Mekong Delta, continued north of Saigon and got as far as the highlands, about 300 kilometers from his floating pagoda. In the highlands a tribe of Montagnards intercepted him and he was forced to turn back.

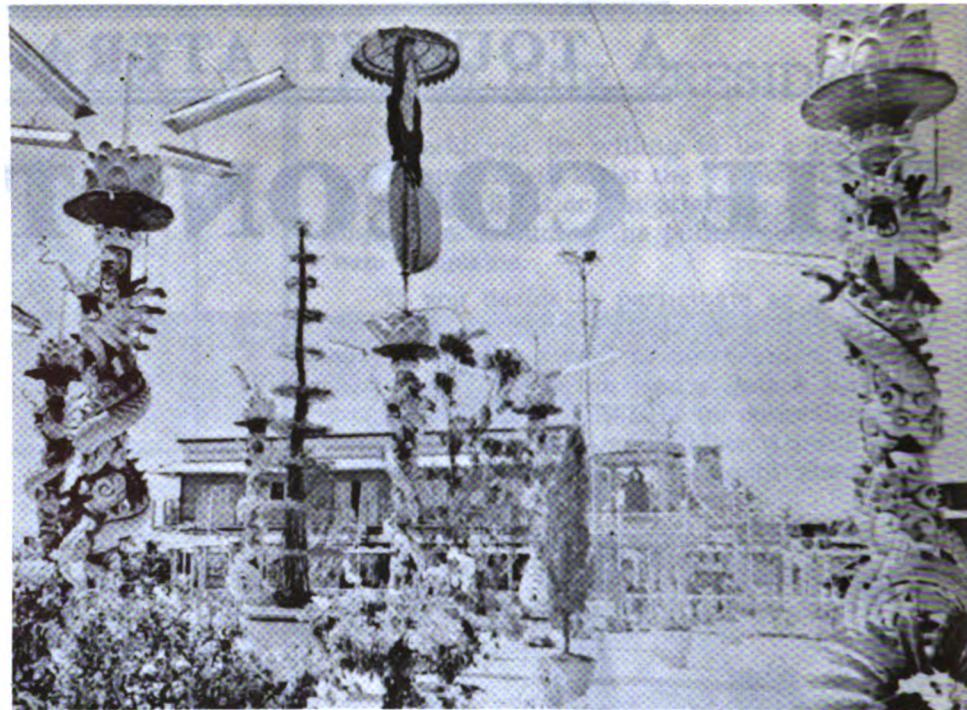
The monk's self-assigned peace mission to Hanoi was thwarted, so he decided to make the trip symbolically. Dao No showed us two towers rising from the floating pagoda. One represents Saigon, the other Hanoi.

"Now in his small world he can go from Saigon to Hanoi."

Dao No said that his master makes these Saigon-Hanoi-Saigon round trips often.

We arrived in the breezy open-air reception room. The wizened little Coconut Monk was sitting on a raised dais designed with dragon motifs of Vietnamese lore. In greeting he thrust an index finger skyward. A humorous sparkle crossed his eyes. In front of him stood a wood carving with huge buffalo horns which he hoped to present as a gift to President Nguyen Van Thieu.

On sheets of paper His Coconutship penciled replies to questions. Dao No agreed that the monk had nothing new to say. To achieve peace and a satisfactory ceasefire it was still necessary for the hostile parties to hold direct negotiations under the Coconut Monk's auspices. But the Prophet of Concord made one concession. He



A view of Coconut Monk's floating pagoda. Below: newsmen interview monk.



seemed willing to hold the peace parleys within the framework of the Joint Military Commission provided by the Paris Accord.

So far, the Joint Military Commission has not announced an appointment with the Coconut Monk.

We asked for details on how peace would come if the Joint Military Commission agreed to convene here beneath the tall painted figures of Jesus and Buddha.

The Coconut Monk picked up his writing pad. Bright pennants fluttered in the Mekong winds on the sunny deck and helipad which is ready to receive a JMC helicopter.

In an airy cage to the monk's right a fine-looking baby bear and white-haired ape were co-existing peacefully.

Dao No read the written reply.

"The Coconut Monk has a plan but cannot reveal it yet."

After bidding farewell we left the floating pagoda and coasted by launch past green Phoenix Island and back to the languorous Delta town of My Tho where they serve excellent shrimp and prawns.

Many of the town folk say that the monk is mad. But they seem to agree that it's a gentler madness than some other kinds afloat today.

NEW LOOK ON THE MEKONG

BOAT AND FISH PEN

By LOUIS L. SHIELDS

There is a big difference between a small woven basket full of fish and a whole houseboat full. The big difference in South Vietnam today is that fish farmers are investing in "houseboat fish pens" and are raising preferred species such as catfish and perch in the rivers and non-stagnant canals—thus substantially increasing their own incomes and helping to meet the country's need for protein.

A houseboat? Yes, a houseboat that is also a fish pen. Large numbers of these strange looking craft are appearing in several sizes on the rivers in the Mekong Delta. Like recreational vehicles in the USA, new styles seem to be coming out each season, as people experiment with different requirements of the fish they wish to raise, and as model improvements are made.

The average structure is basically a 50 by 20 foot raft (some are smaller, some larger) which is made of a variety of teak woods and supported by 50 gallon sealed oil drums and bamboo poles. The simple living quarters have attractive thatch roofs and are built around the well of the raft. The larger models also have space on deck for pig or chicken pens.

Huge Wire Pen

Beneath the entire raft, extending 10 feet down into the water, is a huge wire pen which accommodates up to 25,000 fish. Less than 3,000 of these are lost in the 10 to 11-month rearing period, and the remainder will grow to an approximate weight of two and one-half pounds. Constant movement of the water and frequent feeding makes this density possible.

These ingenious floating fish cages "cum pad" are natural for South Vietnam, since from Saigon south to the tip of Ca Mau and

west to Cambodia there is a great maze of rivers, canals, and waterways in which to park them. The living space over the pen tends to discourage would-be poachers.

The Vietnamese are a water people. Every rice farmer in the Mekong Delta must own some kind of a boat to harvest his floating rice in the flood season, to get his produce to market, and to bring needed supplies to the farm. The waterways have always had a large population of sampan dwellers who usually keep a woven basket or some sort of fish cage in which live fish are kept and fed until needed for dinner. So naturally many of these people are very interested in this new development in fish culture.

Mr. Tran Van Tri, Director of Fisheries, said that 7,000 floating pens of different varieties have been launched in the Chau Doc area alone in the past year. The

number keeps increasing because raising fish is profitable in Chau Doc. The neighboring provinces offer some of the richest inland fishing in the world. The long course of the Mekong River above these provinces, the natural incubator and brooder that the Ton Le Sap Lake in Cambodia provides, plus the huge Delta flood plain that is covered with water several months each year, combine to make a perfect habitat for a large number of complementary fish species and adequate nutrient for the rapid growth of fresh water fish.

Vietnamese Twist

Mr. Tri said, "it is not certain how the idea of the large pens got started. It is thought that some Cambodian refugees built the first ones." Of course, in all of the Southeast Asian countries people practice aquaculture, and many kinds of cages, nets, and ponds can be found. However, this type with living quarters is a uniquely Vietnamese twist, and seems to present a better way to produce the type of fish the public wants at the time they want it.

Mr. Tri thinks that these floating pens are not only good for use in Vietnam but that the technique should be interesting to all countries where there are large rivers



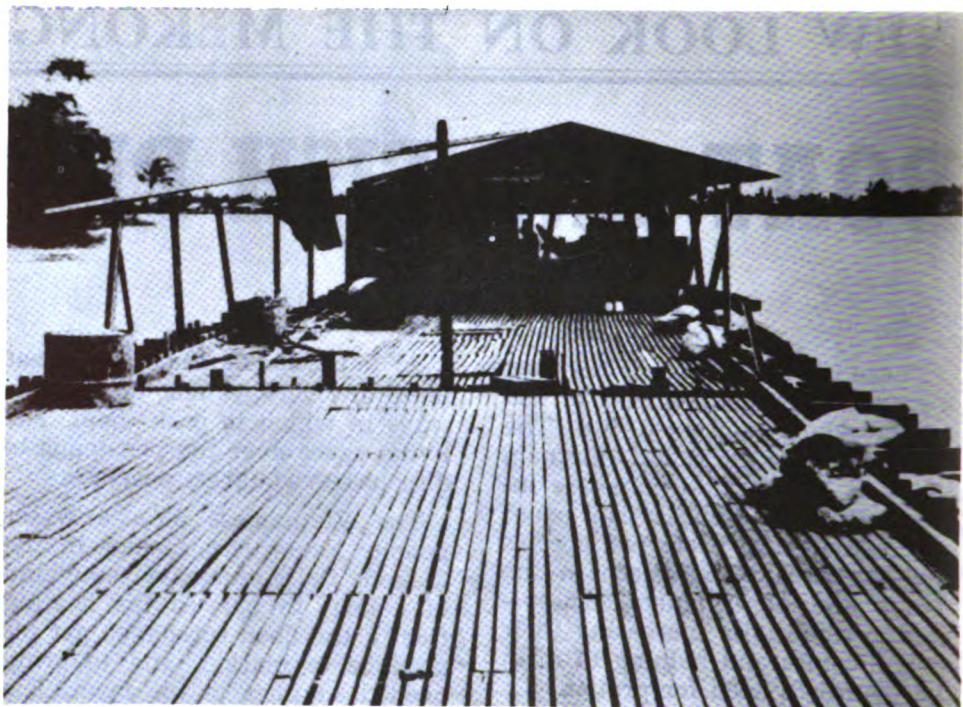
Golden carp swarm up to be fed when door to houseboat fish pen opens.

in which the pens can be placed and the need for protein is pressing.

The Directorate of Fisheries is encouraging the spread of houseboat fish pens by helping private fish farmers to set up demonstration pens. The Agricultural Development Bank of Vietnam (ADB) has made hundreds of loans to these cage fish farmers. The Directorate also furnishes free blueprints for building the pens and information on care and feeding of the fish, and is working on increasing the number of fingerlings available at the government hatcheries. USAID has supplied funds to upgrade the hatcheries and to provide loan capital for the ADB.

A Good Decision

Mr. Le Hoang Thao, a retired military man, owns a demonstration pen near Bien Hoa close to Saigon and enthusiastically explains his operation to visitors. He said that when he retired he had planned to go into farming but after hearing about and seeing the fish pens he decided that there would be less risk and more profit in raising carp. His decision was a good one, and he has been so successful with the fish harvest that a group of eight friends decided to



Le Hoang Thao's large houseboat. Under the deck are 25,000 golden carp.

follow his lead and build pens. The group now has eight pens on the river and two under construction. Others are becoming interested and they expect to have 50 new pens in their vicinity by the first of the year.

Mr. Thao's group is raising Ca Chep (carp) which is highly prized by the Vietnamese and is called the golden fish. It is not native to South Vietnam but came originally from China to North Vietnam, then was gradually brought south by fish breeders; it was even exported to Europe in the 16th century. An old but not proven belief is that eating the golden carp liver mixed with cock liver will have an aphrodisiac effect and strengthen the kidneys. Another legend says that during Tet (Lunar New Year) the carp has the important job of carrying the kitchen god to and from Heaven where he makes his yearly report of the families affairs to the Emperor of Jade. At any rate, while not exactly Madison avenue type promotion, it brings top price in the market place!

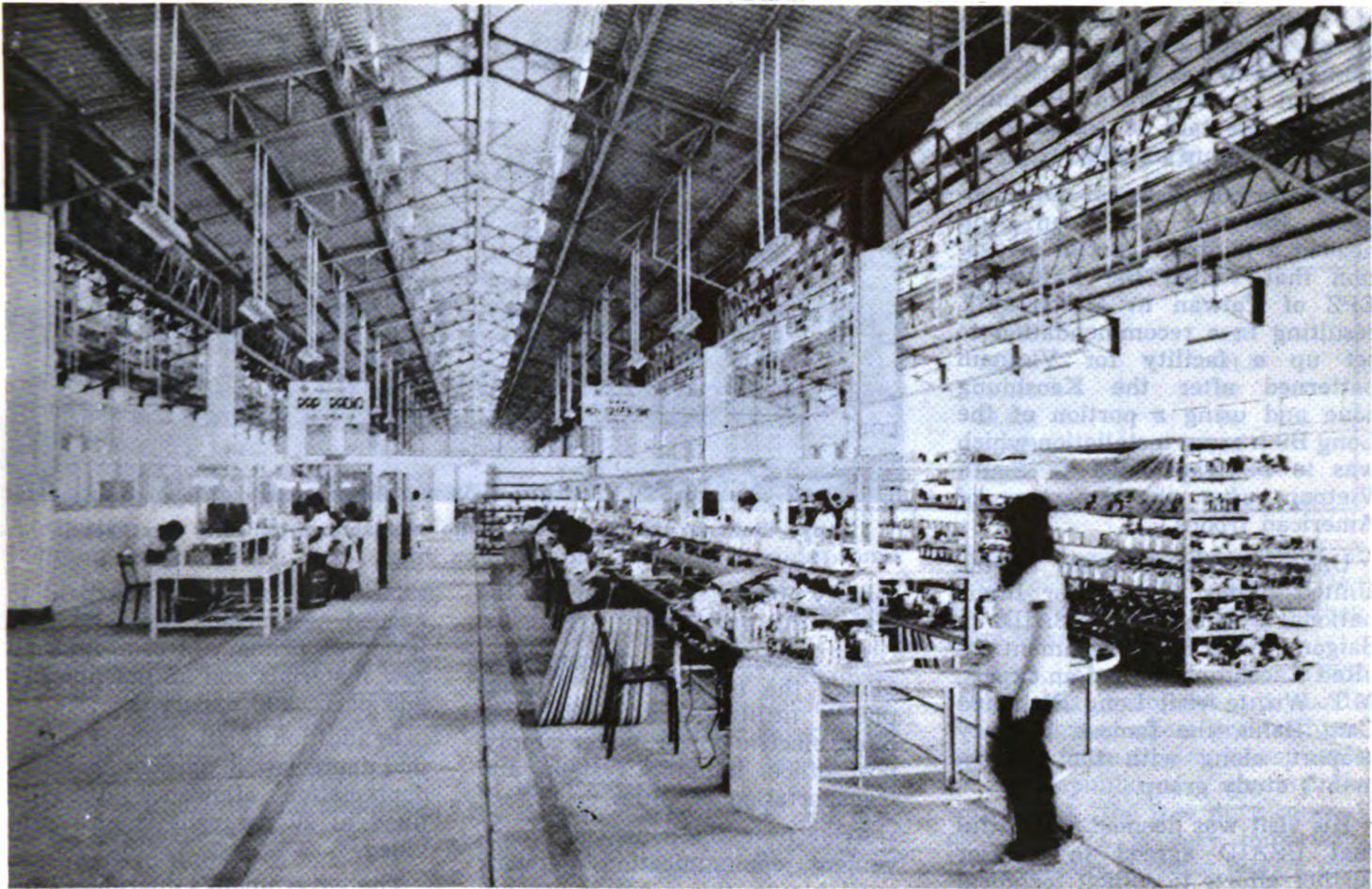
The group in Bien Hoa is now also planning to organize a small cooperative feed mill which will supply all the pens, thus reducing the time and money spent by each owner in preparing fish feed. Mr.

Thao said, "We can find plenty of feed right here in Vietnam and do not need to import anything... Sorghum is one of the grains we will use... We expect to amortize our US\$4,000 per pen investments over a ten year period and realize a substantial profit each year."

Advantages

M. Everett G. Walters, USAID fisheries chief, said that "it costs far less to build a pen than it does to construct a pond that produces the same amount of fish." Other advantages of the floating pen include not having the expense of installing water pumps; the fish receive some nutrient from the river; and the space which a pond would occupy can be planted in rice. The latter is important in a small country like Vietnam where cultivatable land is limited.

Technical assistance for Vietnam's aquaculture is included in USAID's planning for 1975-76 and will consist of an extensive program of hatchery renovation, construction of a small experimental fish pellet plant, technical and advisory and extension assistance to the fish farmers. Also the agricultural credit program will continue to make loan funds available to the fish farmers through the ADB.



Sanyo-Vietnam Company radio assembly plant (above) will move to SEPZ in joint venture with Hong Kong firms

EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE

'SEPZ' TAKES SHAPE

Among the eloquent examples of the South Vietnamese government's efforts to build a viable economy after the devastating years of war, is the establishment of the Saigon Export Processing Zone.

Foreign assistance and investment in the SEPZ, established in May this year, have been dealt with extensively by Vietnamese envoys abroad in conferences with foreign government and business circles in Saigon as well as abroad.

In the Republic of Vietnam where nearly one million unemployed workers, or one eighth of the labor force, are seeking jobs,

By HOANG NGOC NGUYEN

and nearly one billion dollars are needed yearly to cover the huge import bill of development, the enthusiasm over the SEPZ is understandable.

The idea of an export processing zone is no novelty to economic planners, especially those of less developed countries: it is an economic "sector" where industrial producers can import raw materials free of duty and process into finished products with domestic manpower for re-export.

As the founding of the zone has drawn enthusiasm and excitement

from local as well as foreign capitalists, several cautious businessmen are thinking that for the first time they have found the right place to put in their money.

Short History

In the face of the crucial task of rehabilitating a war-torn country in the postwar period, Vietnamese economic planners since the end of the sixties have looked to neighboring countries for inspiration. Many have been impressed by the "marvelous" success of export processing zones in Korea and Nationalist China.

In September 1971, the Ministry

of Finance proposed the formation of an Export Processing Zone study committee. The Ministry of National Development Planning assumed the task of coordinating efforts to set up an EPZ.

Minister of National Development Planning Le Tuan Anh headed a joint ministerial delegation that visited the Kaoshiung EPZ of Taiwan in March 1972, resulting in a recommendation to set up a facility for Vietnam patterned after the Kaoshiung zone and using a portion of the Long Binh army installation which was to be transferred to South Vietnam after the departure of American troops.

Under the sponsorship of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Saigon, the RVN government invited Kaoshiung to send an expert, M.T. Wu, to visit Long Binh and Cam Ranh, the famous military seaport, along with the government's study group.

His visit was deemed so fruitful that USAID agreed to sponsor further efforts to sollicit technical expertise from the Republic of China for the same purpose.

In a series of laws approved late in 1972 and designed to provide the legal framework for postwar economic development, the "Law for the Establishment of Export Processing Zones" came into being, setting into motion the first such project in the republic.

Tan Thuan Dong, however, was chosen as the site of the first EPZ of the country, instead of Long Binh.

Ideal Site

Located on the bank of the Saigon river and only two miles away from the heart of the capital, the SEPZ at Tan Thuan Dong is considered the "most favorable and ideal place for the first experiment."

Formerly the site of a huge logistics base of the U.S. Army, the SEPZ only requires a relatively small capital investment for its construction. With minor "adjustments" of warehouses and facilities left behind by the U.S.,



Sanyo-Vietnam expects to sell radio sets abroad by early next year.

factory operations can start by the end of this year.

Its proximity to Saigon also allows the utilization of various public utilities the capital can offer: electric power, water supply, post office, banking system, and transportation facilities.

Aside from the benefit of a convenient communication network available to this location, within walking distance are Khanh Hoi and Tan Thuan Dong, two "ghettos" of Saigon, which abound with workers and unemployed who can provide a labor pool for the zone.

Incentives

Planners of the SEPZ have conceived all incentives possible to attract the eye of investors. In addition to existing privileges all foreign and Vietnamese investors may enjoy by virtue of the Investment Law, the SEPZ also offers further inducements relative to taxation, mortgage, guarantees and money transactions with a view to "making investors in the SEPZ feel that it is here that their money can be most productive."

An approved enterprise is exempted from payment of registration fees and stamp duties, taxes and fees related to the acquisition of real estate, business license tax, fees for mortgaging fixed assets, urban land and building tax, corporate income tax (five-year tax holiday), tax on income from transferable securities, taxes on royalties and patents, taxes on

salaries and remuneration paid to needed technicians, tax and fees levied on primary or semi-finished raw materials and on machineries and parts, and export tax.

In addition to allowance for normal depreciation, another "special" depreciation allowance officially fixed at 20 per cent is also provided.

The government's guarantees include non-nationalization of enterprises in the SEPZ and non-competition by the government with these enterprises.

Other privileges include the opening of accounts in the appointed banks by Vietnamese nationals to deposit their profits in foreign currency and foreigners to deposit their own currency.

Quest for Investors

In the words of an economist, the idea of an export processing zone is a "modest scheme of a developing country realizing her constraints in embarking on an ambitious industrialization plan."

While development planners of the old days dreamed of attracting foreign investors to their countries to "exploit their capital, superior technical know-how and profits" through heavy taxation on business income, today's economists only hope to contribute their countries' "surplus labor" as "added value" to foreign ventures. They invite foreigners to "freely" come with their capital, machinery and raw materials not subject to

Low-cost labor provides appeal

any tax or government "harassment," employ local workers in their plants and export or re-export their products. The limited objectives are to ease the unemployment pressure and earn some foreign currency as rewards to the "value added."

Even a modest plan is to be widely brought to the attention of potentially interested partners.

The government has set up the Saigon Export Processing Zone Authority, an autonomous establishment empowered to assist local and foreign investors with its "one-door service" motto on every phase of their investment. The SEPZA which will soon be moved into the zone, has prepared itself to be a "most efficient agency not only to administer and follow activities of those enterprises in the zone but also to lend a helping hand whenever trouble prevails anywhere in the SEPZ."

Improvements

The government has budgeted some 3.7 billion piasters for projects to improve conditions in the SEPZ, including a "security" fence surrounding the whole zone, the dredging of some canals running through the zone, a system of warehousing stevedoring and transportation, which should provide "tremendous external economy for enterprises in the SEPZ."

As Vietnam is adopting an "export-oriented" economic policy, local producers and exporters are being actively requested to study implanting their business in the SEPZ. For a local businessman, the SEPZ has really provided "an unprecedented opportunity to operate in a great, and yet promising, atmosphere," said a producer of garments with an eye on the SEPZ, taking into consideration the benefits bestowed on him once he could move his firm from a suburb of Saigon to the zone.

The first foreign sponsors of the SEPZ plan were the Chinese, working for Taiwan's export processing zones. Actually, the Re-

PROJECTED NUMBER OF ENTERPRISES IN SEPZ

YEAR	Number of Enterprises	Employment	Export value (US\$ million)
1974	4	1,800	
1975	13	5,200	12
1976	28	11,200	31.5
1977	48	19,200	57
1978	72	28,800	90
1979	96	38,400	126
1980	120	48,000	156

public of China still provides some advisory technical assistance to the SEPZ and receives employees of the SEPZ for training.

In the yearly Sino-Vietnamese Economic Cooperation Conference, the South Vietnamese government always stresses on the importance of the Chinese help to the SEPZ in its embryonic phase, and also calls upon the Chinese government to invite her people to invest in the SEPZ.

The Korean government has also been requested to assist the SEPZA to prepare a project study to establish a warehousing and stevedoring system. Korea, which is reputed for her successful free export zones, has agreed to provide training to the SEPZA staff.

The annual Korean-Vietnamese Economic Minister's Conference is studying the feasibility of Korean-Vietnamese joint ventures in the SEPZ.

Courting Japan

A most important mission was courting the interest of the Japanese government and businessmen in the SEPZ. "In the absence of such an interest," one businessman says, there is little chance that this venture could prosper quickly. "To the Japanese, we should prove that the SEPZ promises to be a most lucrative business venture."

Recently, for this reason, a Vietnamese delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Tran Van Don, in charge of inspection of national development plans, and in-

cluding Commissioner-General of State of Planning Nguyen Tien Hung and Finance Minister Chau Kim Nhan, visited Japan.

There, Don said "the SEPZ which has been set up inside Saigon harbor offers great advantages for those making investments in the Republic of Vietnam." He added that "the free duty concept of the SEPZ is very important. If a Japanese investor buys a plot of land in this zone, he can bring in equipment and spare parts from Japan without paying any duty or taxes. It is just as if he were processing in Osaka or Okinawa. He only pays us the margin, the taxes, when he exports."

Certainly, the appeal does not lie merely in lower taxes in Vietnam, which are quite "interesting" for tax-weary foreign businessmen, but also in the cheap labor Vietnam possesses. A recent survey, as shown by the SEPZA, has proven that of 12 countries in the Far East and the Pacific, Vietnam ranks first in low-cost labor, apart from its abundance.

"Cheap labor can be employed for processing and re-export. This will make the export price very attractive, especially at this time when labor has become very expensive in Japan," the Japanese were told.

Response

Since its opening up to now, three enterprises have officially entered the zone, set up their plants pending operations "as soon as possible." By the end of the

Initial response is promising

year, it is expected that two more firms will move to the SEPZ, and a dozen more are waiting for the new year to transfer to the new industrial complex.

All enterprises applying for entry into the SEPZ should fall under one of the following manufacturing categories: electronics products, ready-made garments, knitted and woven goods, handicraft products, plastics products, leather products, cosmetics, wooden household decors and furniture, rubber products, toys, confectionery, printed matters, paper containers, precision machinery and instruments, optical products, metal products, electrical appliances and products, machinery, chemical products, yacht building, and sporting goods.

First Company

The first company to enter the SEPZ was LEAD, producer of ready-made garments and handbags for export. Truong Bich, general manager of the company, said LEAD would be ready for production by December 1974, two months after it was admitted to the SEPZ.

Bich, also head of the JBM



Ready-made garments and handbags will be produced by LEAD in SEPZ.

company which manufactures garments in Xom Cui, Saigon, said LEAD would have an investment cost of VN\$340 million, one half contributed by Vietnamese and the other by Hong Kong JBM. He

plans to equip his new venture with up to 1,000 sewing machines, compared with the 200 machines now in use. "But we even don't know whether we can meet the demand of our market or not,

ENTERPRISES AUTHORIZED TO ENTER SEPZ (as of October 31, 1974)

Enterprises Fields of business	Capital, sources of investment	Annual sales markets	Date of construction	Date of exporting
Lien Chau Industry Co. furniture, wooden sports facilities	US\$436,000 VN, US, Japan	US\$4,100,000 Japan, US	Nov. 1974	May 1975
International Vietnam Industries Knitting clothes	US\$700,000 UK, US, ROC, Japan	US\$1,920,000 HK, Europe	Nov. 1974	Jan. 1975
Leading Garments Factory Vietnam Ready made garments	US\$570,000 VN, ROC	US\$4,870,000 US, Europe	Nov. 1974	Jan. 1975
The Best Knitting Co. Ltd. Knitting clothes	US\$250,000 ROC, VN	US\$773,000 HK, Japan, US	Nov. 1974	Jan. 1975

because this is an international market."

LEAD, which would share the market with JBM, already has buyers for its products in Canada, the United States, West Germany, France.

Joint Venture

Tran Huynh Long, general manager of Sanyo-Vietnam company, said he and ten electronics companies in Hong Kong are planning to set up a radio assembly plant in the SEPZ with a daily production of approximately 1,500 sets.

He said his new company has acquired all the necessary machinery and equipment needed for the new plant and by the start of the new year, "we will have sold our first products to Europe, America and Hong Kong."

Other interested companies include the International Vietnamese Industries SA., a Japanese-Hong Kong joint venture in garment

manufacturing, this company plans to spend nearly half a million dollars as investment and employ some 400 workers even during the initial phase.

Le Trong Muu, director of the SEPZA, estimates that by the end of this decade, there will be 100 companies operating in the SEPZ, employing about 40,000 workers

and earning annually US\$120 million for the national economy.

These objectives seem modest, he said, but "we have been taught by experience that planning with modest but solid objectives would bear good and heartening results rather than indulging in inflated assumptions and reap a very bad harvest eventually." ●

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"The Embattled Garden" as danced by Eric Newton, Diane Gray, Phyllis Gutelius, and Mario Delamo during Saigon performance.

MARTHA GRAHAM DANCERS AN ARTISTIC TREAT

By NGUYEN DUY LIEU

A magical blend of light, music and movement transformed the stage of the Quoc Thanh Theater into a fairy scene where 24 members of the Martha Graham Dance Company recently provided the most delightful entertainment the Saigon public has ever seen.

The 48-year-old American dance troupe's two performances enthralled audiences, including high ranking government officials, with an intensity that they will long be remembered as a "lasting artistic influence," art critics said, and their "tremendous appeal" may take years to duplicate in Saigon.

The two performances were jointly sponsored by the Education, Youth and Culture Ministry and the American Embassy.

Madame Nguyen Van Thieu, the First Lady, attended the first show

and presented flowers to the performers before curtain fall.

For two hours the dancers cast a spell over an overflow audience, leaving it breathless with a scintillating treat.

Miss Martha Graham, 80, director of the troupe who choreographed most of the dance numbers, was not present as expected. She was indisposed and had to remain in Bangkok, the company's stop before Saigon. In a cable the lady, probably America's greatest modern dance choreographer and theater personality, apologized for her absence and sent greetings to the Republic of Vietnam.

Three Dances

The curtain rose and Eve (Phyllis Gutelius) danced enticingly around

Adam (Eric Newton) as the Stranger (Mario Delamo) watched with resentment from a tree.

The dance was entitled "The Embattled Garden" (Choreography by Martha Graham, music by Carlos Surinach, set by Isamu Noguchi, and lighting by Jean Rosenthal). Accompanied by taped music the four characters—two males and two females—through their expressive dances, conveyed to the audience the theme of the number. The set was not large and was adorned with some green sticks representing a forest and a black tree. The four dancers moved graciously under a dim light. Their lithe and elegant motions reminded one of leopards. The men, their torsos sweating profusely, showed great physical strength.

The second dance, "Cave of the Heart," is Martha Graham's dramatization of the legend of Medea. The action focuses on the legend's central theme—woman's destructiveness and jealousy. There were four characters with Medea, the sorceress, played by Japanese lead dancer Takako Asakawa. The Chorus, portrayed by Janet Ellber, who, foreseeing impending tragedy, vainly tries to prevent it, and suffers its deepest meaning.

The third number, "Diversion of Angels," is a lyric ballet about the



Japan's Takako Akasawa.

loveliness of youth, the pleasure and quick sadness of being in love for the first time. Twelve dancers—six men and six women—performed this ballet which tells no story. But like a lyric poem, it expresses the *joie de vivre* and the need to love and be loved.

At the end of each number, the audience broke into loud cheers that at times lasted up to three or four minutes, marking so great an enthusiasm which a member of the company told this reporter he had "never seen" in the course of the current Asian tour of the group.

Press Conference

Meeting the press earlier in the day at the Vietnamese-American Association (VAA), three members of the famed dance company spoke of what they called the "ageless" theater of Martha Graham who founded the troupe 48 years ago in New York.

Quoting Walter Terry, a dance critic for the New York Herald Tribune, they said this theater symbolizes "a threshold from which audiences in every land may step forth to discover a new world of self-adventure within that magical frame, the proscenium arch of the theater."

Tim Wengerd, replying to a question, said he joined the troupe because he likes dancing and because "we realize there is nothing that makes us better fulfill our life than dancing."

"We Must Dance"

Diane Gray said, "we dance because we must dance, something like a *raison d'être* for the entire troupe, although you must produce continued effort, determination and dedication and real physical strength." She said, it sometimes takes up to 10 years to become a really good dancer (Miss Gray joined the M. Graham troupe six and a half years ago).

The troupe's manager, Tom Kerigan, said in 53 years of her life, Martha Graham has "created, inspired..." the world of modern dance in the U.S. Through her school in New York and her dance



Madame Nguyen Van Thieu, wife of the RVN President, Education Minister Ngo Khac Tinh, and US Charge d'Affairs W. J. Lehmann lead the audience.

company, she has passed on to others the opportunity to perform, to enjoy dance as she has created it. In all she has choreographed more than 147 ballets and modern dance numbers—not including the works she deems poor and rejected.

Diane Gray said, the Vietnamese



William Carter, Phyllis Gutelius.

dances she and her colleagues had witnessed earlier at the VAA Little Theater were "very beautiful." She said Vietnamese women can very well perform Western modern dances which do not demand "any special physical type."

The primary condition, she added, is that one must be physically healthy. Daily intensive training is needed and after ten years you are physically and spiritually mature to be able to dance.

Tim Wengerd said the Martha Graham modern dances can be accepted by any audience—young or old, people of high or low education. They deal with the people's feelings and very often depict their relations in daily life.

Diane Gray said these dances are mainly based on biblical stories or Greek legends and Martha Graham has seen to it that "music, stage design, costume... all have equal weight." And the combination of all these elements have helped in the success of the company.

A TOUCH OF INDIA

SHIVA IN SAIGON

By TRAN MY

"Come to Vietnam and see an authentic Shiva temple."

Sound absurd?

South Vietnam, everyone knows, is a land of Buddhists, Christians, Confucianists and animists. Shiva reigns in Hindustan. But a wide variety of sects and religions flourish in this country, and Shiva himself is worshipped everyday in Saigon temples. His devotees are both Indians and Vietnamese.

Mariammane Temple

The next time you're in Saigon and want a genuine touch of India without going there, take a taxi or pedicab down to the Central Market and stop at 45 Truong Cong Dinh Street. We did, and found that the crowd of worshippers outside were mostly women. There's a reason for that. Of the three Southern Indian temples in Saigon, this one, Mariammane Temple, is for women.

Sculptured Indian deities, perched high on the facade of the temple, were looking over the Saigon street scene of cyclo drivers, coconut carts, a woman astrologist and kiosks selling beer and soft drinks. Inside the temple was C. Vellaichamy of Madras State, an ash mark between his eyebrows. He stood in a white cotton *wasthi*, surrounded by his gods and the sensuous, aromatic flavors of burning incense and sacramental *malkai* flowers.

"Every day about 2,000 people come for prayer, every day," he said. "Seventy percent are women."

The women we saw were mostly Vietnamese, and they looked devout. They had come for *prarthani* (prayer) and to worship the virtues of Shiva in his manifold reincarnations. One of these re-



Vietnamese women worshipping at Southern Indian temple in Saigon.

incarnations included the supreme *lingam* of the god, potent phallic symbol of fertility and everlasting reproduction. In a scene not unrelated to one of the scenes in D.H.



Mariammane temple in Saigon.

Lawrence's novel, *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, the women were placing sweet-scented flowers on the immortal organ of Shiva. The ritual seemed very charming, naive and deeply human. It did not smack of the hard, automaton pornography that flourishes in certain urban areas of the modern world today.

Vellaichamy stood under a picture of Mahatma Ghandi that was framed and draped with a garland of flowers.

"Many beggars also come to Mariammane Temple," he said.

Vellaichamy arrived here in 1970 from Southern India.

"I am temple accountant. I also buy bananas and coconuts for the gods."

Mariammane temple, named after a very large temple in India, was built by Indian craftsmen about 80 years ago. Of the two other Southern Indian temples in Saigon, the one on Cong Ly Street was built about 100 years ago and



the one on Ton That Thiep Street is 60 years old.

"These two temples are for men. Only Mariammane is ladies' temple."

Advocates of Women's Lib might find some objectionable images in the temple. Vellaichamy was standing beneath one of them, or rather two of them: The male god, Paramasivam, located next to his wife, Parvathi. Parvathi was holding one of their two sons, Murgan. But Paramasivam was decked out far more splendidly than his wife. In addition to a golden trident and a variety of lively green cobras, he was equipped with four arms. His wife Parvathi, however, was equipped with fairly plain dress and only two arms.

But the faithful still come to the temple. Of the more than 1,000 Indians in Saigon, many are Muslims who attend the local mosque. Vellaichamy estimates that 450 are Hindus. This indicates that most of the ladies who come to the gods at Mariammane Temple are Vietnam-

ese or Chinese. They are drawn to the jasmine-scented aura of Shiva, Vishnu and the female entourage that includes the golden-skinned Valambigal, Kanniga, Kammatchi, Amman, the two-armed Andal and

Vishnu, friend of Shiva (above). Mariammane officials and priests pose before main altar.



Birman, the lady goddess of three faces.

"All Hindus come here. Buddha people come too, come for the prayer. They like the Mariammane. Indian Muslim no come because only have one god, named Allah. But Buddha people, like Hindu, have *beaucoup de gods*."

The artistic riot of graven images around the temple bears witness to this polytheistic profusion. The gods are everywhere. The temple, drenched with incense, seems almost drunk with them.

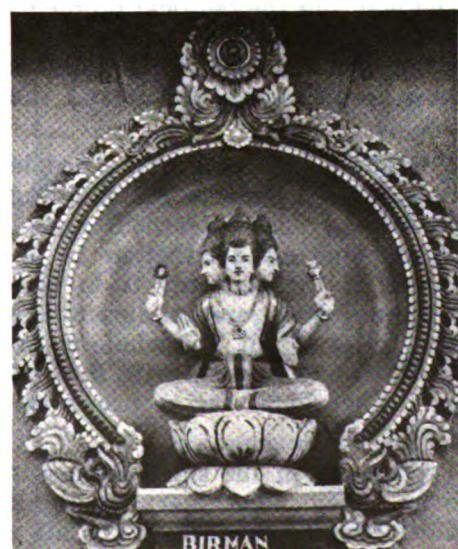
"In South India we have many lady gods, many man gods. We have 1,000 temples, 200 gods. Shiva the number one god, main god."

And who was Vishnu and the blue-skinned Krishna?

"Krishna best friend of Shiva. Vishnu same as Krishna, in different form."

The guru of the temple is Vaithinata Iyar, 65 years old.

"He comes every morning at 9 o'clock, every evening at 6 o'clock, to lead the prayer."



Birman, goddess of 3 faces

For the first time in several years, the Merrell family is preparing to spend Christmas in the United States.

And the head of the household—the Rev. Rondal Dan Merrell—already has made a New Year's Resolution for 1975: to write a book based on his 10 years in Vietnam.

Merrell, pastor of Saigon's Trinity Baptist Church, currently is on a year's Stateside leave.

The Oklahoma-born minister, who already has authored an unpublished treatise on an earlier chapter of Indochinese history, already was mulling over ideas for the story when he left here to start his leave.

He arrived in Vietnam in June 1964, two months before the Tonkin Gulf incident and nine months before the Communist attack on Pleiku which led to the U.S. decision to evacuate American Government dependents from this country.

Tulsa-born Merrell, who has kept his Oklahoma drawl, began his ministry as a student pastor in 1951 at First Baptist Church in Tupelo Ark. He drove there on weekends from Arkansas Polytechnic in Russellville until he was graduated in 1955 with a B.A. degree. He later attended New Orleans Seminary and received his M.A. degree from the University of Tulsa. His thesis subject was U.S. involvement in French Indochina 1940-1954.

From 1960 to 1964 he served at First Baptist Church of New Iberia, La. He now has an application at Tulsa for a Ph. D. in history, but he'd like to return to Vietnam and do the thesis here.

Why the burning desire to return to this war-ravaged country?

"We've invested too much time and education here to want to start over somewhere else," he said, "and besides, we've grown very fond of the Vietnamese people."

While in the United States, he will do some research for his book.

"Some people may wonder what I could add to what has already been written," he said, "but I don't

RESOLUTION: A BOOK ON VIETNAM

By ERIC CAVALIERO



The Rev. and Mrs. Merrell.

think the story has been told fully or accurately, even in books like 'Fire in the Lake' (by Frances Fitzgerald).

"Much has been written about the war and the political problems involved, but there is not much published material which tells us how to help and understand the people.

"Right now, I think the people need a basic boost as far as living conditions are concerned, and I think they need inflation to go down. If the economy is to continue revolving around agriculture they need to put this whole country in rice to keep up with the rest of the world as far as prices are concerned.

"The day of the small farmer is over. They must start to think about large cooperatives. It's all a question of where they want to fit in—what their relationship will

be with progressive countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Japan."

Merrell said his book also will explore the hopes and aspirations of the people, their philosophy and their social and family life.

The 46-year-old minister has shown himself to be extraordinarily able, affable and diplomatic during his Vietnam years which began with an 18-month stint at the Missionary Language School, Dalat, studying Vietnamese five hours a day, five days a week. Both Merrell and his attractive wife, Betty, now speak the language fluently.

"In 1964, there were no political pressures, no big Communist push," he said. "Since then, we've been amazed at how well the Vietnamese in the cities are bearing up under the stress and strain of all these years. But we've seen a lot of devastation in the countryside."

He said Saigon's population has tripled since he first arrived.

"There were no Hondas then—just bicycles, cyclos and a few cars," he said. "Between noon and 2:30 p.m. you could go anywhere at 60 to 70 m.p.h. knowing nobody would be on the streets. You certainly couldn't do that today."

The Merrells have seen atrocities in such cities as Danang, where they had a friend who was a village chief. His house was mortared and he was shot after moving his whole village to the government side. U.S. military members of the Merrells' congregation were ambushed.

Danang, some 400 miles north of Saigon, was their home during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Most American families had been moved to Bangkok, but they couldn't get out. However, the U.S. Marines kept a firm perimeter around the city and the V.C. never got in.

"The Marines gave us a lot of sandbags," he recalled. "But there were V.C. leaflets all around town and there was the tension of not knowing what was going to happen."

Said Mrs. Merrell: "What hurt was knowing we could go home and leave the war, but our Vietnamese friends couldn't."

Merrell is fairly tall with strong features and the strapping build of a former football player. ("I was a right-end in intra-mural football at school. I could have played college ball, but I dropped out to pastor churches at weekends. I now play regular golf with a handicap of six"). Despite his simple relaxed charm, he holds strong views on moral issues, is a staunch upholder of the church's evangelical mission, and tends to be hawkish in his comments on the war.

"I don't think the war has been as unpopular as it was made out to be," he said. "The press slanted their reports. Most U.S. military men did not hate Vietnam. A man who was in the audience at a meeting I addressed in the States said, 'That's the first good thing I've heard about Vietnam'."

In Saigon, Trinity Baptist Church has four Vietnamese member churches and one English-speaking congregation. The latter is attended by some Vietnamese and Koreans in addition to Americans, most of whom are government workers. There are about 50 member churches throughout South Vietnam. Some don't have buildings yet.

Before last year's cease-fire the English-speaking congregation was top-heavy with U.S. military men.

"We do a lot of counseling work now, especially with families," Merrell said. "With the GIs the problems were mostly loneliness and domestic problems back home. We had many GIs in our house. For them it was like a home away from home."

According to Merrell, a rising tide of nationalism sweeping across Africa and Asia has forced changes in Christian missions.

"We feel people ought to be proud of their cultures, but that nationalism shouldn't become what the Nazis made of it," he said. "We have stressed Vietnamese culture in our education. Baptists have capitalized on nationalism to help structure churches."

The Merrells like to tell story of the Vietnamese woman who told them:

"You could love us when we could not even love ourselves." ●

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THE LADY IN THE PORTRAIT

By NGHIEM XUAN THIEN

In old Vietnam, during the reign of the Le (1428-1788) there lived in the Bich Cau section of the royal capital of Thang Long (now Hanoi) a student about 20 years old.

His name was Tran Uyen, but because he was a Bachelor of Arts graduate, his friends called him Tu Uyen (in Vietnamese Tu means bachelor). He was orphaned at the age of 15 and lived alone in the big house he had inherited from his parents.

Bich Cau (Green Water Stream) was renowned as the residential section where many great scholars, poets and artists resided.

Tu Uyen had a reputation as a good poet and spent much time in the company of literary men, particularly during visits to places made famous by history and poetry. Despite his fame as a poet, Tu Uyen's greatest ambition was to be a Doctor of Arts. As such, he hoped to get a high official position and thus honor his parents and himself.

Dream Realized

In time, Uyen realized his ambition. It must be said here that in old Vietnam even a poor man could aspire to a high official position if he proved qualified for it. Sometimes a poor student who had proven his mettle by dint of hard work and assiduous study could marry a Prime Minister's daughter or even a princess. There were only two classes then, the educated and the illiterate. Through education, those from the latter class were absorbed into the former class. Confucian ethics regulated such a society and assured its stability. Material wealth was of minor consequence.

Because of his educational attainment and talent, Tu Uyen was admired and respected by all. Besides, he was a man of handsome features.

A voracious reader, Tu Uyen, while still a young man, had read the classics and great books. He admired fairy tales, ghost stories and tales about the supernatural, but did not believe in them.

"These," he told friends, "are merely beautiful stories which bring relief from the drudgery of daily existence. I have no time to waste, as many scholars have, going to the forests or high up on the mountains in the quest of immortals who supposedly could give me the secret of eternal youth. It is enough that I live until 80 and possess health, wealth and honor."

He said he believed in the immortality of the soul just like the rest of his countrymen and that this was the reason why he worshipped his father, mother and ancestors. He also accepted the existence of genies and gods, but considered nonsense the belief that genies or immortals sometimes took the form of human beings and lived in this material world.

Tu Uyen said that such a belief was better left aside in accordance with the suggestion of the great master Confucius who said that genies and demons are sacred things that must be respected but from which one had to maintain great distance.

Challenge Unheeded

Cousins and friends, who affirmed having seen a ghost wandering at night in gardens or on the banks of a river only to disappear at the early crow of a cock, elicited derisive laughter from Tu Uyen. Accusing them of either having a hallucination, a severe case of indigestion or an alcoholic toot, Tu Uyen would offer a gold or silver ingot to any one who could show him a ghost for even half a second. While his attitude shocked many, no one, not even those who claimed ability to conjure spirits, took up his challenge.

Then came the New Year. As today it was celebrated for three full days. However, the whole of the first lunar month was devoted to festivities and recreation, especially gambling. With the harvest over and seeding time yet to come, it was time to rest and enjoy before a return to the hard work required by rice growing. It was also an ideal time to visit pagodas, temples and scenic spots.

Spring came with the New Year and while traces of winter lingered, fine rains fell for days on end, helping the plants grow and flowers blossom. The poor in their thin and shabby garments shivered with the cold rain, but the rich found this time occasion to don their woolen finery, embroidered silk or colorful brocade. Lads and lasses vied for the honor of "best dressed" or "most attractive." Daughters from rich families who most of the time were confined to their rooms found this time propitious to visit friends and places of worship in the hope of catching the eye of young men in the search for a wife.

On the 15th day of the first lunar month, Tu Uyen, in the course of visits to temples to while away time and to draw inspiration for his poems,

Tu Uyen meets and loves an immortal

arrived late in the afternoon at the Ngoc Ho pagoda, popularly called the Ba Ngo (Mrs. Ngo) pagoda and situated at the present Binh Tu road in Hanoi.

In an atmosphere heavy with smoke from candles and incense burning since early morning, Tu Uyen elbowed his way through the dense crowd, mostly women and young girls, to the altar. He made the four customary bows before Buddha. After a short while, he felt suffocated and slowly made his way out. Refreshed by the cool air outside the temple, he turned his attention to the coming and going of beautiful maidens.

Suddenly, he noticed a piece of paper fluttering in the air. Quickly he caught it. Written on it was a poem expressing awe at Nature adorning itself for the celebration of the coming of Spring. Tu Uyen marvelled over the poem. He looked around in search of its author, but saw only people absorbed in conversation.

He thought of the many poems he had written and which had drawn admiration, yet this one he felt was superior. Was it a gentleman or a lady who was its author? The paper with flower designs suggested a she, in fact there was a slight trace of perfume in it, perhaps lotus. But he could not rule out the possibility that a man had written it.

Tu Uyen decided to wait for someone to claim the piece of paper. What a worthy person to exchange poems with, he thought. He paced the street in front of the pagoda. Twilight was coming. The last of the worshippers were leaving; it was not safe to stay out at night in the unlighted streets where robbers prowled.

A Vanishing Group

As the moon began to rise, Tu Uyen noticed the last group to leave the temple, a beautiful girl and six other young girls who were chatting and laughing merrily. He greeted them but they were curt and grudging in their replies. Fascinated by the beautiful one in their midst, he followed them. He tried to engage her in conversation to no avail. After a walk of about a hundred yards, the group vanished into thin air, leaving Tu Uyen half perplexed and half scared.

He pinched himself to be sure he was not dreaming and with the pain tried to rationalize. Were those girls ghosts, genies or immortals? He had never believed they could come to the world of human beings. He was convinced that the barrier between the human world of Yang and the spirit world of Yin could never be traversed by either side. "Could it be that what I have just witnessed is proof that I am wrong and that I must confess that in the universe of sun and stars there are also

supernatural beings who come in flesh and blood to our material world?" Tu Uyen mused as he plodded his way home.

By day and by night the memory of the beautiful girl haunted Tu Uyen, first like a shadow then an obsession. By day he seemed to see her as he had first seen her outside the pagoda—talking, laughing, her eyes sparkling like jewels. By night she turned up in his dreams, lovely as always, exasperatingly haughty, unwilling to grant him a kind word.

"She is an immortal," he told himself. For had he not seen her and her friends dissolve in air? "To be sure, I cannot see her other than in dreams," he thought. And then he believed that it was she who made that poem brought to him by the wind, a poem designed to tease, challenge and torture him with doubt and despair. "How cruel she is," he muttered. "Her image does not leave me. Awake or asleep I see it and yet I know I shall never meet her again."

Genie's Help Suggested

He often wondered if he was not foolish enough to be in love with an image that appeared as suddenly as it vanished before his eyes. He yearned, he despaired. Then, having abandoned his work and neglected to eat, he was taken seriously ill. He was on the verge of death when a good friend, Van Quang, paid him a visit.

The friend counselled drugs and food. "As long as you live there is hope to see that immortal again. In death all shall be over," said Van Quang. Before leaving, Van Quang suggested that Tu Uyen go to the Bach Ma (White Horse) Temple to implore the help of the genie worshipped there, the Protector of the Royal Capital.

Bach Ma Temple still exists today in Hanoi and is situated on Sails street that has become the Chinese merchants' quarter.

A fortnight later Tu Uyen recovered and proceeded to Bach Ma temple where he prayed that the genie grant him advice. He stayed the whole night before the altar, sleeping on a wooden bed before it.

The genie appeared before him in a dream in the form of a very old man, dressed in white and riding on a white horse. "Go tomorrow to the Eastern Bridge and your wish shall be satisfied." Tu Uyen proceeded to the appointed place upon waking up. He waited the whole day without nothing happening. When twilight came all his hopes vanished and gave place to despair and anger. Could it be that the genie was mocking him, he wondered. If so the people of the capital of whom he was supposed to be the protector were indeed unfortunate, he told himself.

He had just finished that soliloquy when he suddenly saw an old man with a painting in his right hand. A few steps away from him, the old man stopped and they looked at each other. Tu Uyen greeted the old man, told him it was rather late

His cook was lady from the painting

for a man of his age to be walking on the streets and asked him where he lived.

Similarly, the old man asked Tu Uyen what he was doing on the street when night was about to come and whether the young man was waiting for somebody.

"The reason I am still walking around town is that I have not yet found a buyer for this painting," the old man said.

Tu Uyen asked to have a look at the painting and nearly fainted when he saw it. After a moment, he exclaimed: "But it is her! She is the lady I saw a few months ago at the pagoda of Ngoc Ho."

With some astonishment and amusement, the old man said: "You do seem to know her, but I never thought there could indeed be a girl of flesh and blood who was the model for this painting."

Assuring the old man that the painting was a life-like portrait of a friend, Tu Uyen offered to buy it.

A Present From Old Man

The old man replied: "If I am wicked as you think, I could ask you for a thousand ingots of gold. It is worth that. But I know you cannot afford that sum, so I shall give it to you if you promise to take good care of it. It has plenty of surprises in store for you."

Handing over the painting, the old man walked away.

Tu Uyen told himself: "There goes a strange old man indeed! Why did he give me the painting for nothing? And why did he say that I thought him wicked?"

Suddenly recalling the unpleasant words he had said about the Genie of the Bach Ma Temple when he saw nothing after waiting the whole day, Tu Uyen concluded that the old man was the genie himself. He fell to his knees and made four genuflexions in the direction of where the old man walked away. He implored the genie's pardon and expressed gratitude for what was given him.

Once back in his house, Tu Uyen hung the painting on the wall and lighted many candles to give him clearer vision. The painting was wonderfully made. It was a perfect harmony of colors, shades and light. The young and beautiful girl was life itself, a lovely smile on lips red as carmine, eyes sparkling with intelligence, wit and humor. Her black hair was wound into a great chignon behind her head and a long golden pin was attached to it, a little obliquely, with a blossoming flower at the upper end.

Tu Uyen never tired of looking at the immortal with whom he was so desperately in love. She appeared to him as about to speak to him, her eyes following his every movement. He regarded her as a living person and at meal time, he had a tray with two bowls, two pairs of chopsticks, two portions of rice and viands. He would sit on a chair facing her and then invite her to dine with him. A servant who had served Tu Uyen for many years thought him mad and left his service.

Left alone in his large house, Tu Uyen prepared his own meals, never forgetting to invite the girl in the painting to share them with him. One day, he left early in the morning and could only return in the afternoon. To his surprise he found on his dining table a complete and well prepared meal.

Tu Uyen looked at the painting. The girl was there, but her smile was friendlier and the golden pin was not on the same angle. It appeared as if it had been taken out and then put back across the chignon. Again he invited her to dine with him.

He found the meal very tasty. It was evidently prepared by skilled hands. He could not help but think that it was the young girl in the painting who prepared it. And he thought of the genie who had told him that plenty of surprises were in store for him.

"The meal I had today certainly is one of those surprises. The girl left the painting to cook for me these marvellous dishes. This is not strange because she is an immortal. I have seen her fly into the air and vanish like a vision. It must be careful not to offend her lest she disappear again. That will be the death of me," Tu Uyen told himself.

The idea of her leaving him filled Tu Uyen with fear, but his curiosity was stronger than that fear. He had to know what happened in his house while he was away. One day, he left the door ajar and watched. He saw the girl putting steaming dishes on the table. The painting was there on the wall, but without the girl.

Back in The Painting

He wanted to surprise the girl and in his haste bumped against a window, disclosing his presence. The girl was no longer in the room. She was back in the painting, smiling as usual, but the folds of her beautiful red robe were not the same as before. And the golden pin in her hair was not in its normal position.

The next day he returned before lunch time and on tip-toe caught the girl in the act of cooking his meal. He grasped her hand and positioned himself between her and the painting.

"How cruel you are," he told the girl. "I have been waiting for you for months. You are here in my room, but always hiding from me."

Smiling at him, the girl replied: "I do not like your material world. It is enough that I visit it from time to time to see how humans live. The Genie of the White Horse told me you are very much in love with me and that once you nearly

Wife takes Tu Uyen to a better world

died because of that desperate love. On his advice, I came to comfort and save you."

Then she told him that she was Ha Giang Kieu, an immortal in the service of the Emperor of the Heavens. She had obtained a leave and was allowed to come to the world of human beings.

Tu Uyen begged her to be his wife and she consented. Thus began a new life full of happiness and free of all cares. Giang Kieu attended to his every need.

One day, in the course of a dispute, Tu Uyen struck her. Giang Kieu vanished into thin air and did not return. The desperate Tu Uyen tried to commit suicide. Giang Kieu appeared in time to prevent this. Full of remorse and shame, Tu Uyen threw himself at her feet and implored her pardon.

Giang Kieu resumed her marital life with him. However, she disapproved of his efforts to become a mandarin of the empire.

For An Eternal Life

One day, as they were discussing philosophical problems, she said: You are eager to pass your doctorate and be appointed a mandarin. Do you realize that all pleasures of this world of yours are transient? Suppose you are lucky enough to be rich and powerful, how long it can last? I must tell you one thing you certainly ignore: a century in this earthly world does not last longer than a year in the world I come from. There, we live an eternal life, remain forever young and healthy, enjoying light, perfumes, and heavenly fruits. And we are able not only to visit this earth, but also all the planets and stars of the other galaxies of the whole universe. Compared to our life up there, this earthly life is a mere cipher. Give up your selfish ambition suitable only for men from earth, and follow me to the world of the immortals and live there a much richer, and unending life full of marvels and celestial pleasures."

Tu Uyen, after a moment of deep reflection, said: "You are right. Thank you very much for opening my eyes to a superior life in a world unknown to me and of which I had never been aware. If you really can help me go into that world, I shall be most happy to accompany you there or wherever you take me."

Giang Kieu then looked up in the sky, made a sign, and quickly two white phoenixes came from above and stood on the yard in front of their house.

Taking Tu Uyen by the hand, she went to the phoenixes who greeted her and kneeled before her. She sat on the neck of one and said to Tu Uyen to climb up the neck of the other. Then the celestial

birds soared into the air, bringing them to the world of the Immortals.

Since then, sometimes they appeared in the Bich Cau quarter, helping men and women in distress or in danger.

The inhabitants of that quarter, in order to acknowledge their beneficent actions, built a temple on the very place of Tu Uyen's house, dedicated it to their memory and called it Bich Cau Dao Quan (Temple of the Stream of Green Water). It is said that vestiges of that temple existed in Hanoi until a few decades ago.

But their story did not end there, especially as far as Giang Kieu was concerned.

Le Thanh Ton and Girl

Half a century later, King Le Thanh Ton (1460-1497), a great man and a poet, in one of his excursions through the Capital, passed by Ngoc Ho Pagoda. He saw a beautiful girl, dressed in red, who handed him a piece of flowered paper on which a beautiful poem was written. The king saw that it was signed Ha Giang Kieu. He was captivated by her beauty, gracefulness and elegance. As he was a poet himself, he made a poem on the same pattern, handed it to her, then invited her to sit beside him on his chariot, on his return to the Imperial Palace. The girl accepted his invitation but upon arrival at Dai Hung Gate, she smiled, said good bye, and before the king could realize what she intended to do, soared into the air and disappeared.

In memory of that event that saddened him for months, the king ordered a temple built at Dai Hung Gate. This temple was called Vong Tien Lau (Palace Waiting for the Immortal), situated in what later became the Cotton Street of present-day Hanoi.

Le Hien Ton and Girl

About three centuries later, King Le Hien Ton (1740-1786) during one of the festivals organized on the banks of Kim Au Lake (Golden Pond), south of the capital, saw a lovely girl, dressed in red, watching a boat-race. Captivated by her beauty, the king sent for her. She gracefully came. Her name was Ha Giang Kieu, she said. But she refused to sit beside the king under a large gilded and red parasol. Then politely she bowed, soared in the air and vanished.

When the festival was over, the king ordered a temple built in the Immortal's honor, at the very place where he had talked to her. That temple was called Tien Tich Tu (Temple of the Immortal's Vestiges).

The Golden Pond disappeared long ago. Scholars said that its place is now occupied by the Hanoi Railways Station. As for the Temple of the Immortal's Vestiges, it is on the long road called Nam Bo Road (formerly Mandarin Road) going from Hanoi to the South.

THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By Dr. PHAN QUANG DAN

Vietnamese origins are shrouded in legends and mythology with contradictory dates and facts. However, the finds of archeologists and anthropologists led to the hypothesis that the first inhabitants of Vietnam originated from Polynesia and Indonesia and that the present ethnic Vietnamese element became involved at a much later date.

The earliest human beings who lived in Vietnam by the end of the Paleolithic period of the Stone Age had their remains found in Hoa Binh caves, 35 miles southeast of Hanoi, with crudely chipped stone axes and other cutting implements. The area, which these troglodytes populated, covered the western hilly parts of the provinces of Hoa Binh, Ninh Binh, Ha Nam, Thanh Hoa, and Quang Binh which did not yet have their deltas formed.

Finer stone implements along with bone tools were found in Pho Binh Gia, 96 miles northeast of Hanoi, at the northern edge of the Bac Son limestone hills in Lang Son province. Proofs of this Bacsonian civilization were also found in China, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Borneo, Java, Celebes, Timor, and Australia, following a sea recession caused by the impounding of huge quantities of water by the great glaciers.

Late Neolithic and early Bronze Age cultures were brought to Vietnam around 3000 B.C. by Indonesian groups who represent today most of the Montagnards populating the Highland: Mon-Khmers, Sedangs, Bahnars, Jarais, Rhadés, etc. Artifacts unearthed at Dong Son, Thanh Hoa province, and including jewels, ceramics and bronze weapons, vases and drums showed they were skilled workers and artistic potters.

Iron appeared around 500 B.C. Excavations in Sa Huynh tombs, Quang Ngai province, revealed earthen burial urns, red or black-coated vases jewels in cornelian and other precious stones, bronze and iron implements.

The First Vietnamese

The present ethnic Vietnamese arrived at the beginning of the Bronze Age. Chinese histories tell of tribes known as the Viets who lived south of the Yangtze River.

By the Fourth Century B.C., the Viets who had created several states in Southeast China, began to migrate into the Red River valley where they gradually fused with the Indonesians. Vietnamese

legends of the union of the races of dragons representing delta inhabitants and immortals representing Montagnards, apparently symbolize this racial mixture. The Vietnamese poetically still refer to themselves as descendants of dragons and immortals.

The Hong Bang (2897-258 B.C.) with 18 kings was the first Vietnamese dynasty. Vietnam was then known as Van Lang.

Thuc Vuong Phan took over Van Lang in 257 B.C. and changed its name into Au Lac.

Subdued by Shin Huang-ti of the Ch'in Dynasty in 214 B.C. Au Lac was conquered by Trieu Da in 208 B.C. and became the Kingdom of Nam Viet whose birth marked the beginning of Vietnamese recorded history.

The Trieu dynasty reigned until 111 B.C. when it lost Nam Viet to Chinese Emperor Wu-ti of the Han dynasty. Then began a long millennium of Chinese domination which was to last until 939 A.D. with short but repeated interruptions caused by Vietnamese revolts.

Pre-Independence Period

From 111 B.C. to 939 A.D. Vietnam was profoundly influenced by Chinese culture while Indian influence developed in the Kingdom of Champa to the south.

The Vietnamese learned to master the technique of rice cultivation through the use of iron plough-share, water buffaloes and better irrigation. They also learned Chinese characters and gradually adopted Confucianism, Taoism and the Chinese brand of Mahayana or Great Vehicle Buddhism. These three philosophies mingled together into a typical culture based on the laws of causality and nature's cycles and characterized by a high respect for life, a deep sense of self-restraint, moderation and compassion and equanimity in the face of the changing fortunes of life. The cult of ancestors was the most common religious practice while the most revered ideal was a simple and virtuous existence in harmony with one's natural and social environment.

Chinese administration was also applied, especially the selection of civil servants through the system of provincial and imperial examinations which took into consideration not social class appurtenance but personal merits.

The Vietnamese people retained however their

fundamental language unity, their strong village organization, and their ardent love of freedom and independence. Their patriotism was further stirred up by the cruelty and greed of the Chinese overlords.

Consequently repeated independence movements were organized against Chinese domination:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 40-43 A.D. | Revolt of the Trung Trac and Trung Nhi sisters. |
| 248 | Revolt led by Trieu Au, another woman leader. |
| 544-602 | Earlier Ly dynasty. Independence intermission with Ly Bi, Trieu Quang Phuc and Ly Phat Tu as kings. |
| 722 | Revolt led by Mai Hac De. |
| 791 | Revolt led by Phung Hung known as Bo Cai Dai Vuong. |
| 906-923 | Another independence intermission with Khuc Thua Du, Khuc Hao and Khuc Thua My as leaders. |
| 931-937 | Revolt led by Duong Dien Nghe. |
| 939 | Defeat of the Nam Han by Ngo Quyen at the Bach Dang naval battle. Beginning of Vietnamese real independence. |

Independence Period

From 939 to 1883, the year France succeeded in imposing her colonial rule, the history of Vietnam was dominated by three series of events: northern defense against China, southward expansion to subdue the aggressive and bellicose Kingdom of Champa, and internal divisions alternating with periods of national unity.

Ngo Dynasty (939-957). In 939 Ngo Quyen routed the Chinese Nam Han invaders, restored the old Co Loa capital of the Au Lac Kingdom 12 centuries earlier and ushered in the era of Vietnamese true independence. Upon his death in 944 Vietnam fell into anarchy with 12 feudal lords warring against one another.

The Ngo dynasty ended in 967 and was succeeded by 7 other dynasties until 1954 when Bao Dai, the last king of the Nguyen Dynasty, was dethroned and the Republic of Vietnam proclaimed.

Dinh Dynasty (968-980). Dinh Bo Linh, its founder, was known as a born-leader, highly feared and respected in his early age by the urchins in his Hoa Lu home village, Ninh Binh province. His image as a fearless child astride on a water buffalo and leading with a reed-flower flag large bands of kids to battle-games remains very popular among Vietnamese children. He sent diplomatic missions to China and in exchange for Chinese recognition paid tribute to the Sung dynasty, thus laying the basis for relations which became traditional between Vietnam and its northern neighbor.

Earlier Le Dynasty (980-1009). Le Hoan, the first king of the earlier Le Dynasty, defeated a Sung

invasion at Chi Lang in 981. He, however, concluded peace with China and maintained the diplomatic relations which had been established by Dinh Bo Linh. Following the imprisonment of Vietnamese messengers by Champa he also sent troops to attack this southern neighbor and force it to pay tribute to Vietnam.

Ly Dynasty (1010-1225). Its founder, Ly Cong Uan, better known under his imperial title Ly Thai To, transferred the capital to Thang Long where is located Hanoi today.

The Sung invasion of 1075-1076 was defeated by Ly Thuong Kiet in Nam Ninh and Bac Ninh.

Great efforts were devoted to building dikes along the Red River. In particular Thang Long city was protected against its floods by the Co Xa dike. Irrigation canals were dug, jungles cleared, swampy lands reclaimed in order to grow more rice. Mulberry-trees were also planted and silk-worms raised. Soldiers began to be employed in agricultural development and were allowed to share their time between military duties and farming. A national network of roads was constructed and a postal system established to bring the government's orders to every part of the country.

A stable administration was instituted with a strong central government and a well-established hierarchy of nine degrees of civil and military mandarins.

A National College for the training of civil servants and an Imperial Academy for the promotion of letters and arts were created. The system of examinations to recruit mandarins was installed.

Under the reign of Ly Anh Tong the first Vietnamese geographic surveys were carried out in 1171-1172; mountains and rivers, cities and villages, land and water communications and the socio-economic conditions of the people were recorded.

Buddhism became the state religion while Confucianism was also highly revered. Temples were erected to commemorate Confucius and his 72 disciples.

Champa was invaded in 1044, The 3 Cham districts of Dai Ly, Ma Linh and Bo Chinh (now the provinces of Quang Binh and Quang Tri) were annexed to Vietnam in 1069.

Tran Dynasty (1225-1400). Tran Canh founded the Tran Dynasty by marrying Princess Ly Chieu Hoang, the last representative of the Ly.

Three successive Mongol invasions in 1257 and 1284-1288 were repelled by Tran Hung Dao who thereby made the Tran Vietnam's most glorious dynasty and became himself its most respected national hero.

In 1307 two more Cham districts, Chau O and Chau Ri (now parts of the provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien) were offered to Emperor Tran Anh Tong by the Cham King Che Man at his marriage with Vietnamese Princess Huyen Tran.

Under the Tran the first population censuses

were carried out village by village. Military services became universal and compulsory and a War College was created to train military leaders.

The system of examinations to recruit civil servants was upgraded. A National Education Institute was founded to develop letters and arts. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism became all three parts of the curriculums.

The Nom or Vietnamese writing was innovated. It was similar to Chinese characters and was based on the same ideographic and phonetic principles. It made it possible to write in Vietnamese vernacular language which has many words without equivalent in Chinese characters.

First Study of History

The first study of Vietnam's history was written in 30 volumes by Le Van Huu. There were other writers and poets of great renown: Tran Quang Khai, Pham Ngu Lao, Han Thuyen, Mac Dinh Chi, Nguyen Trung Ngan, Tran Nguyen Dan. The Address to Officers and Soldiers by Tran Hung Dao remains a Vietnamese literary masterpiece.

At the same time the tax and monetary systems were regulated. The dikes along the Red River were better maintained and developed with especially appointed civil servants and practical details such as payment of compensations to landowners who had their properties infringed upon by the construction of dikes.

Ho Dynasty (1400-1407). In 1400 the throne was usurped by Ho Qui Ly whose dynasty lasted only seven years. Many reforms were implemented. Meticulous population censuses were completed; all inhabitants above 2 years of age were registered. Universal and compulsory military services were strictly applied. High priority was given to the development of the Navy and of arms and munitions factories.

Mathematics were included in the curriculums of schools and examinations.

There was also a beginning of organization of medical services.

Taxes on land and trade were regulated. Paper money was used for the first time. Bills of different monetary values were printed with different designs: sea weeds, sea waves, clouds, turtle, unicorn, phoenix and dragon.

Land was distributed to civil servants and land ownership was limited to 10 Vietnamese hectares.

In 1402 the Cham districts of Chiem Dong and Co Luy (now Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces) were occupied.

But in 1406 Minh troops invaded Vietnam. Ho Quy Ly and his son Prince Ho Han Thuong were made prisoners by the Chinese in 1407.

Le Dynasty (1428-1788). Resistance movements were immediately organized against the Minh. However, it was not until 1418 that the Vietnamese

struggle for independence found the hero to lead it to victory. Le Loi, native of Thanh Hoa, started the resistance movement in Lam Son. After 10 years of tireless guerrilla warfare he forced the Chinese to surrender and in 1428 founded the Le Dynasty by proclaiming himself Emperor under the title Le Thai To. One of his most remarkable generals was Nguyen Trai, a great scholar well versed in military strategy, especially psychological warfare. His Proclamation of Pacification, *Binh Ngo Dai Cao*, rivaled in beauty and strength with Tran Hung Dao's Address. Many verses of his Song on Family Education, *Gia Huan Ca*, have become proverbs.

Under Le Loi land reform was promulgated and every peasant received his share. The troops were also allowed to farm their land by rotation one fifth at a time.

The 38-year reign of Le Thanh Tong was illustrated by unusual achievements. Abandoned land was recultivated and new land developed with soldier participation. The *don dien* or soldier farm system was greatly expanded. Medical and social services were organized to care for the sick and the needy people. Provincial governors were ordered to carry out geographic surveys and send reports to the Home Affairs Ministry where a Geography of Vietnam was compiled. Ngo Si Lien completed the Great History of Viet Nam (*Dai Viet Su Ky*), composed of 15 volumes beginning with the Hong Bang legendary dynasty and ending with Le Loi's reign. Libraries were created along with the Institute of Advanced Studies. Le Thanh Tong, a great poet himself, organized a Parnassian Club of 28 members which extolled the beautiful landscapes of Vietnam. He also wrote extensive memories on his expeditions against Champa and Laos.

Hong Duc Code

The Hong Duc Code represented an outstanding legal reform and remained in effect until the nineteenth century.

In 1471 the Cham Capital, Do Ban, and the surrounding district were annexed to Vietnam to become later Binh Dinh province. The remainder of Champa was divided into 3 states: Chiem Thanh, Hoa Anh and Nam Phan. Soldier farms were established in the newly-conquered areas to provide a self-supporting army of occupation. This use of the army, followed afterwards by the civilian population, to develop more land and cultivate more rice paddies has become the traditional pattern of Vietnamese southward expansion.

Internal Division. Soon after the death of Le Thanh Tong in 1497 the fortunes of the Le Dynasty began to decline. For the next three centuries its rule was merely nominal. Palace intrigues and political assassinations were rife until 1527 when Mac Dang Dung seized power and founded the Mac Dynasty for a weak and troubled interregnum of 65 years during which Vietnam was split into warring North and South. The country was ruled by the Mac from Son Nam up north while the Le support-

ed by Nguyen Kim and Trinh Kiem occupied the other half from Thanh Hoa down south. The Mac repeatedly invaded the South without success until they were finally defeated by the Le's General Trinh Tung who occupied Thang Long in 1592.

Vietnam, however, was far from being reunited. While Trinh Tung and his descendants grew increasingly more powerful in the North and established themselves as the Trinh Lords, the descendants of Nguyen Kim consolidated their control over the South and became the Nguyen Lords. Nguyen Hoang, the son of Nguyen Kim, firmly established himself in Thuan Hoa which was to become later the Nguyen Dynasty's Hue Imperial City.

From 1627 until 1672, again for almost half a century, the North and the South were opposed in a bitter war. It was the Trinh who most of the time invaded the South; each time however they were driven away by the Nguyen.

Emperor Reunites Nation

In 1672 peace was restored with Linh Giang, now Song Gianh River in Quang Binh Province, at the 18th parallel as demarcation line. North Vietnam and South Vietnam thus coexisted peacefully until 1788, the year when the Tay Son Emperor Nguyen Hue reunited the nation. Great progress was achieved in both areas during that period.

The Trinh reorganized the administration and established 6 ministries: Interior, Finance, Protocol and Foreign Affairs, National Defense, Justice and Public Works. Civil servants after being appointed were retested periodically to downgrade or remove the incompetent ones. The laws were made more lenient. Judiciary cases were differentiated into criminal and minor cases which could be both referred to several courts of appeal. The system of forced labor or corvee was abolished. Land, per capita and public service taxes were enacted. There were also taxes on transportation and production especially of salt, mineral and forestry resources. National foundries were set up to coin money. For the first time there was a national budget with inputs and outputs officially recorded.

Printing shops were created to popularize books and promote education. An Authentic History of Vietnam was compiled by Ho Si Duong, Le Hi and Nguyen Qui Duc in 1676. Their work was continued by Nguyen Hoan, Le Qui Don, Ngo Thoi Si and Nguyen Du in 1775.

Similar reforms were carried out in the South by the Nguyen Lords who also continued Vietnamese traditional southward expansion. In 1611 Nguyen Hoang annexed a new Cham area which was to become Phu Yen province. In 1653 Nguyen Phuc Tan occupied more Cham land and created Thai Ninh district, now Khanh Hoa province. In 1693 Nguyen Phuc Chu invaded the Cham state of Chiem Thanh, today's Ninh Thuan province. In 1697 the remainder of Champa was changed into Binh Thuan province. The Dong Nai and Mekong deltas were also gradually colonized.

Contact with the West began to develop in both North and South. In 1637 the Dutch opened a trade center in Pho Hien, near today's Hung Yen provincial city. At about the same time Portuguese merchant ships frequented the port of Hoi An. A Portuguese named Jean de la Croix assisted in constructing an arsenal in Hue in 1614; the construction area still bears the name of Phuong Duc which means arsenal.

First Christian Mission

Christianity was introduced. In 1596 the first Christian mission was founded in Hoi An. The Jesuit Priest Alexandre de Rhodes of the papal town of Avignon arrived in Hoi An in 1615. He published a Vietnamese catechism in 1650 and a Portuguese-Vietnamese-Latin dictionary in 1651. These were the first most important books in quoc-ngu or Romanized Vietnamese which was earlier innovated by Italian and especially Portuguese missionaries (Gaspar de Amaral and Antoine de Barbosa). This was a tremendous event which was going to revolutionize Vietnamese life in all aspects by giving the Vietnamese a writing of their own far more easy to learn than Chinese characters or Vietnamese chunom, thereby making it possible to popularize education among the Vietnamese labor and peasant classes.

Tay Son Uprising (1771-1802). Nguyen Nhac, Nguyen Lu, Nguyen Hue, the three Nguyen Tay Son brothers named after their home village of Tay Son in Binh Dinh province, started their revolt in 1771 against the oppressive regency of Truong Phuc Loan. They rapidly gained in strength. In the South they forced Nguyen Phuc Anh, successor of the Nguyen Lords, to flee to the offshore islands of Con Son and Phu Quoc. They occupied Thuan Hoa in 1786 and moved north to defeat the Trinh Lords and seize Thang Long in 1786. In 1788 Nguyen Hue, the most brilliant of the three brothers, proclaimed himself Emperor under the title of Quang Trung. In early 1789 he completely routed the invading Chinese troops of Emperor Kien Long of the Ch'ing Dynasty at the famous battle of Dong Da which is celebrated every year by the Vietnamese on the 5th day of the 1st month of the lunar calendar in a merry-making atmosphere of festivity. In contrast to his two ambitious and undisciplined brothers, Nguyen Hue was a military genius and an outstanding statesman. Abandoned lands were recultivated and the landless resettled. Internal and foreign trade was encouraged. There was neither religious persecution nor discrimination. In particular the Christians were free to proselytize. Most significant of all, chunom was made the official language, bringing the government and the intellectuals closer to the people. These measures were in many ways a liberal policy geared toward progress and friendly relations with modern nations.

Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1954). After Nguyen Hue's premature death in 1792 at the age of 40, the Tay Son rapidly lost their influence.

Prince Nguyen Phuc Anh started to fight the Tay Son in 1778, at the early age of 16. After some

initial success he was repeatedly defeated by the Tay Son and had to seek refuge either in Bangkok or in the Vietnamese offshore islands of Tho Chau, Kohkut, Con Son and Phu Quoc. He appealed to the Siamese for assistance. In 1784, 20,000 man strong Siamese troops were sent by King Rama I to the rescue of Nguyen Phuc Anh. They occupied Rach Gia, Ba Thac, Tra On, Sa Dec but were utterly defeated by Nguyen Hue at Rach Gam in My Tho province.

Then French Bishop Pigneau de Béhaine offered to request French assistance for Nguyen Phuc Anh. He, however, succeeded only to rally a small group of French adventurers.

In 1787 Prince Nguyen Phuc Anh reoccupied Gia Dinh which at that time covered both the Dong Nai and Mekong deltas. Great efforts were devoted to land development. A special Office of Land Development was created with 12 high-ranking mandarins called Dien Tuan Quan. Land was given free to voluntary settlers with enough credit to buy agricultural tools and draft animals which were to be repaid later in paddy at the harvest time. More *don dien* were organized with soldier participation. Thus the army as well as the civilian population were mobilized for agricultural development. Foreign trade began to prosper. Rice and sugar were exported in exchange for manufactured goods, weapons and munitions.

Prince Anh Inches North

From 1790 to 1801 the Monsoon Campaign took place. By May-June each year, taking advantage of the Southwest-Northeast monsoon, Nguyen Phuc Anh sent his fleet northward for combined operations with land troops which also moved north in a well coordinated campaign. Enemy territory was occupied and military outposts organized. Then by October-November, when the Northeast-Southwest monsoon started to blow, the fleet returned south to go north again with the following monsoon reversal. Thus Nguyen Phuc Anh for 10 years kept inching northward slowly but surely.

In 1801 Nguyen Phuc Anh seized the port of Qui Nhon and shortly afterwards the city of Hue which was at that time the Tay Son Capital of Phu Xuan. On June 1st 1802 the Nguyen Dynasty was founded and Nguyen Phuc Anh took the title of Gia Long. The following month North Vietnam was occupied without a fight. On July 20 Gia Long entered the northern capital of Thang Long. Vietnam was finally reunified after almost three centuries of internal division into North and South. The administration was reshaped. The country was administratively organized into 23 provinces or *tran* governed by provincial chiefs and 4 special areas or *doanh* directly related to the Capital. As a rule local leaders were appointed to manage local administrations.

Taxation was regulated with special emphasis on production taxes and customs duties since handicrafts and foreign trade rapidly developed.

Population censuses were taken every five years.

Land surveys were carried out meticulously and land registration was revised also every five years. A system of weights and measures was officially created. National highways were built with 98 relay posts for travellers to rest. Dikes along the Red River were reinforced. Irrigation canals were dug especially in the Mekong delta. Security granaries were organized to store grains to be distributed to needy people in years of poor harvests. From 1811 to 1815 Nguyen Van Thanh supervised the compilation of the Gia Long Code which was to replace the Hong Duc Code in all of Vietnam.

Education greatly expanded with educational service in each province.

A Unified Geography of Vietnam (*Nhat Thong Dia Du Chi*) was completed by Le Quang Dinh in 1806.

Arts, Literature Flourish

Vietnamese arts and literature reached their highest peaks. The famous temples, pagodas and palaces in Hue were built. Nguyen Du (1765-1820) composed his *Kim Van Kieu* which until today remains the unrivaled masterpiece in Vietnamese poetry.

After Gia Long's death in 1819 Vietnam relapsed into extreme conservatism, isolation and stagnation. This was not the appropriate policy for Vietnam especially when Western colonialism was by then fast expanding.

In 1883 Emperor Tu Duc lost Vietnam to the French. From thereon his successors became merely nominal kings. In 1925 the only power left to Emperor Bao Dai was the celebrating of traditional rites and the granting of posthumous titles and genie certificates in Tonkin and Annam villages.

In August 1945 Bao Dai abdicated. He, however, came back in 1949 as Vietnam's Chief of State. It was not until October 1954 that the Nguyen Dynasty totally ended when Bao Dai was dethroned by Ngo Dinh Diem and the Republic of Vietnam proclaimed.

French Rule and Ensuing War

The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries quickened the pace of economic development in Europe. European nations were out in search of new sources of raw materials and new markets. They were served in their colonial enterprises by their more sophisticated battleships, rifles and guns.

On April 15, 1847 two French warships, La Gloire and La Victorieuse, in a surprise attack opened their guns on the Vietnamese fleet in the port of Da Nang. This unprovoked act of hostility worsened already difficult relations between France and Vietnam. Ten years later, on September 1st, 1858 a French fleet of 14 vessels under the command of Admiral Rigault de Genouilly attacked and seized the port of Danang. This was the beginning of a protracted war which was going to last until 1902 when at long last Vietnamese resistance was overcome by the French.

There were positive aspects to French colonial rule. Schools and hospitals were organized, though inadequate in both quality and number. Vaccinations eradicated smallpox epidemics. Anti-malaria campaigns were carried out by creating quinine distribution centers. The basis of a University was founded in Hanoi with a Medical School and a Law School.

Highways were developed, paved and asphalted with new concrete bridges. The Transvietnamese Railway was established, connecting Saigon to Hanoi and Hanoi to Lao Kay.

Rice cultivation was expanded and rubber introduced.

Compelling Colonialism

However, the logic of colonialism was compelling especially to the cartesian-minded French unfamiliar with pragmatic compromises. All posts of authority, either military or civilian and no matter how minor, were filled by the French. The Vietnamese strong village organization with elected village councils and village chiefs was abolished and replaced by a system of appointed village officials under French control.

The land was freely occupied by the French either to grow rice or develop rubber plantations with forced labor. The French also monopolized internal and foreign trade as well as local industries.

All freedoms were banned and the political parties ruthlessly suppressed.

Reform Requests Denied

The moderate Vietnamese patriots saw their requests for administrative reforms and liberalization of the regime turned down. Those who organized popular movements to press for policy changes were repressed.

In the early nineteen thirties competition in the struggle for independence between Vietnamese Nationalists and Communists was already strongly felt. But while the Nationalists, who got no international support, were suppressed by the French Security and Police, the Communists trained and supported by Soviet Russia had their operational bases abroad out of French reach.

The French, therefore, by systematically decimating Vietnamese Nationalist movements, unwittingly destroyed every chance of constructive cooperation with Vietnamese patriots and indirectly but most efficiently prepared the ground for a Communist takeover.

Shortly after France's occupation by German troops at the beginning of World War II, the Japanese moved into Indochina and without difficulty got all their requests for military advantages accepted by the French colonial authorities. Then on 9 March 1945 the Japanese coup de force ended the French rule in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

After World War II the French came back with a strong and well equipped expeditionary corps led by France's best generals. However, Vietnamese Nationalists and Communists alike joined the anti-

colonial struggle which the Ho Chi Minh Government adroitly turned to its advantage.

Geneva Agreement of 1954

Dien Bien Phu led to the Geneva Agreement of July 21, 1954 which partitioned Vietnam at the 17th parallel and created the Republic of Vietnam south of the demarcation line as an independent state distinct from the Communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam to the north.

On 26 October 1955 Ngo Dinh Diem proclaimed the Republic of Vietnam which received its Constitution the following year. President Ngo Dinh Diem created a unified national army, helped resettle 900,000 refugees who fled North Vietnam. He also began land reform. However, his totalitarian regime increasingly generated widespread popular resistance. In 1963 a strong Buddhist opposition movement led to the military coup of November 1st. Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Nhu were killed while being taken to military headquarters.

General Duong Van Minh became Chief of State but he was ousted by General Nguyen Khanh on January 30, 1964. After much confusion, several coups and counter-coups, the Constituent Assembly was elected on September 11, 1966. The second Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam was promulgated on April 1st, 1967.

General Nguyen Van Thieu was elected President in 1967 and again in 1971.

A stable government has been established, a strong national army organized. The most sweeping land reform has been successfully implemented. Over 1 million refugees are being resettled. Education, health and social welfare services are fast expanding.

Viable Young Democracy

The war is still going on. There are serious economic difficulties. There are also political problems. Excesses, weaknesses and mistakes are bound to happen in a young democracy, especially while peace is not yet restored. However the Republic of Vietnam has proved beyond doubt that it has grown into a free, independent and viable state.

Since after the Geneva Agreement of 1954 the war has taken on a completely new character. It became a direct confrontation between Vietnamese Nationalists and Vietnamese Communists with Communist North Vietnam supported by Soviet Russia and Communist China and the Republic of Vietnam supported by the United States of America.

The National Liberation Front created by North Vietnam on December 20, 1960 plays only a minor role. North Vietnamese troops invaded Laos, Cambodia and the Republic of Vietnam, especially from 1964 onwards. To counter this massive invasion supported by Red China and Soviet Russia, 600,000 American and other allied troops came to the assistance of the Republic of Vietnam. But in June 1969 they began to withdraw. Their withdrawal was

completed shortly after the signing of the Paris Cease-Fire Agreement of January 27, 1973.

In violation of the Cease-Fire Agreement the North Vietnamese Communists keep infiltrating troops and weapons into the Republic of Vietnam. Yet it should be clear to them that they have no chance of winning their war of aggression. Their unsuccessful Tet offensive of February 1968 and Easter General Offensive of 1972 should have convinced them of the futility of their efforts.

Let the Communists also look at the popular reaction to their invasion. Have they ever been welcome by the population? Have refugees ever moved to their areas? Is there any refugee resettlement site which could be visited by voluntary agencies or United Nations missions in Communist zones? The answer is a clear No. Over 1 million refugees have fled away from the Communists and are being resettled by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

This is a cruel and senseless war which only brings casualties and ruins to both Vietnams. The present situation is not unlike the situation at the time of the Trinhs and the Nguyens. There is but one difference. The big powers are deeply involved. A pact of non-intervention between them would go a long way in restoring peace in Vietnam. The United Nations which are beginning to participate in reconstruction and refugee rehabilitation could also play a useful role in consolidating the peace keeping process which the ICCS is now unable to insure efficiently.

Free elections in the Republic of Vietnam as stipulated in the Paris Cease-Fire Agreement and peaceful coexistence between the two Vietnams while waiting for national reunification—these should be the objectives of every Vietnamese, the fulfilment of which would bring to an end the long sufferings of the Vietnamese people and also contribute to world peace and stability.

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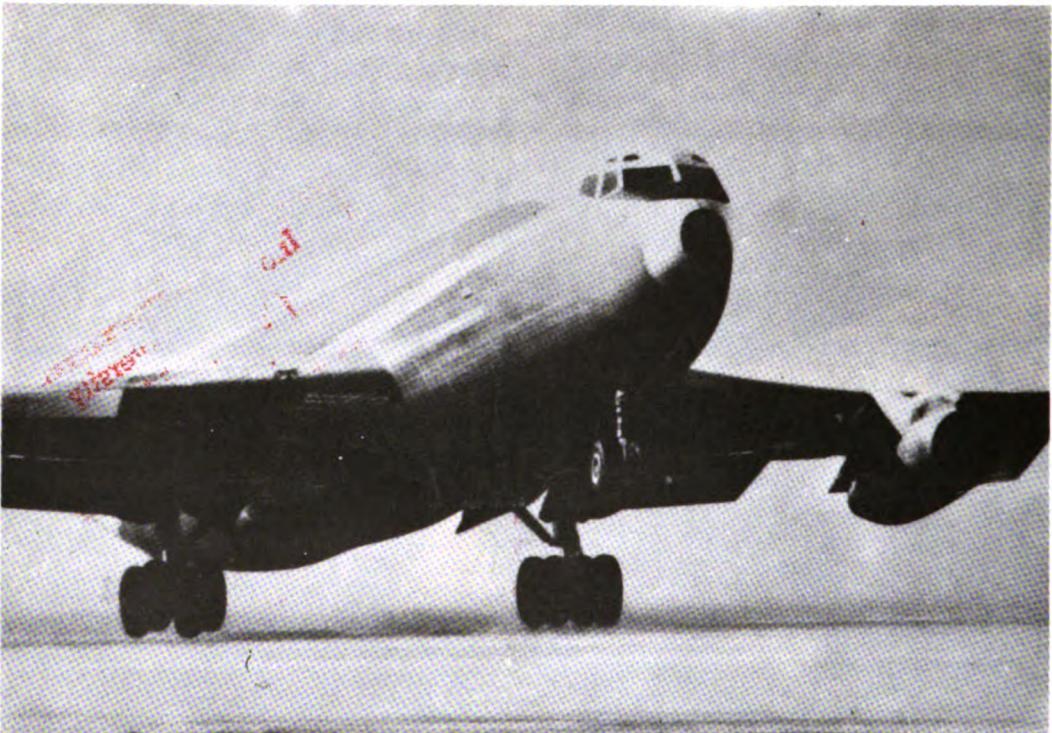
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