

# VIETNAM

*Magazine*

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## FROM OUR READERS

I was very much interested in your article "VN Horoscopes" in your last issue, particularly in the predictions of fate based on the compatibility of the five natural elements — water, wood, fire, earth, and metal — and what the author said were called the earth's "12 stems" represented by 12 animals.

In these days which see a revival of interest in the occult and fortune telling, we in the West have much to learn about the mystic ways of the seers of the East. Ancient books tell us, for instance, of the Chinese practicing the art of fortune-telling many centuries ago.

The Vietnamese are not alone in putting much reliance on seers. All around the world more and more people are finding it hard to dismiss what the stars and the zodiac have to say about a man's fate. If as some people say, all this is nonsense, this is entertaining nonsense, what with the troubles that plague the world today.

JACQUES CORVILLE  
Paris, France

I have been reading much about current exploration efforts in the search for oil in your country which, according to experts, hold much promise. It is to be hoped that these efforts as well as those in other countries known to be non-producers of oil will prove fruitful.

The recent energy crisis occasioned by the oil squeeze imposed by Arab countries with deleterious consequences on the economy and the food situation in many countries of the world emphasizes how precious this commodity is.

The world must not only find new sources of oil, but also buy at prices within the reach of developing nations. The added financial burden imposed on countries who cannot afford to pay exorbitant prices of oil could well mean a matter of survival of the peoples of many of these have-not countries.

KARAM MARCHAND  
Calcutta, India

I enjoyed reading your article "The Sea Swallows' Nest." The painstaking efforts of these birds to build such nests and the zealotness in the care of their young gives way to the poignant when the article states that they suffer a high mortality rate, often during storms while winging their way to havens where they produce the gastronomic delight that are their nests.

ROBERT SY  
Zamboanga City  
Philippines

# VIETNAM *Magazine*

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Cover: Timber for export at woodlog park in Cam Ranh harbor.

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Watch for further announcements on the date of availability.

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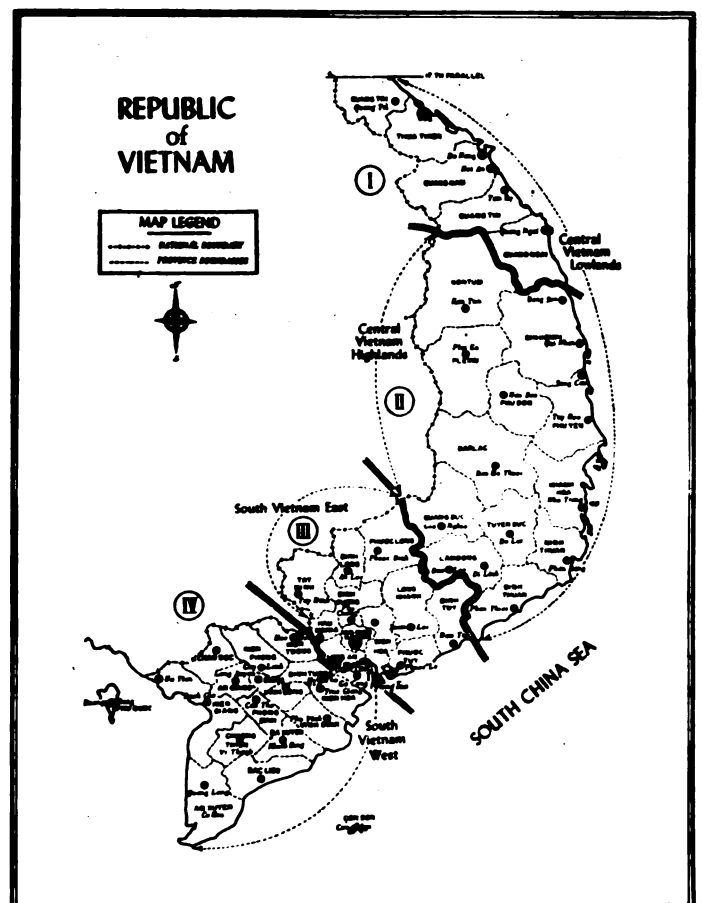
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# The Vietnamese Way

# Of Names and Food

By JOSEPH R. DONAHUE

Of all the problems faced by the Occidental in Vietnam, the matter of names is the most difficult to understand. Vietnamese names have three distinct parts, given in this order:

1. The family name, *ho*.
2. The intermediate name, *chu lot*.
3. The personal name, *ten*.

The family name never changes. The intermediate name usually denotes sex, but may be only ornamental—*van* for male and *thi* for female. This intermediate name is often changed by the owner at adulthood, but not if it denotes kinship.

## Poetic Appellation

Desiring more than just the male or female appellations, the Vietnamese will adopt a more poetic name to go with the personal name. An example is the author's assistant and translator who added "Lan" to her intermediate name, becoming Nguyen Thi Lan Huong, or "A girl of the Nguyen family with the perfume of orchids."

The Westerner may find it easier to understand North and Central Vietnamese names, as the intermediate name is often omitted. Family name and personal name are all that is used. Unlike Western culture that allows for personal names to be used from one generation to the other, it is extremely bad manners to name a boy after his father, grandfather or other male member of the family.

Female personal names denote flowers, seasons, trees, birds, and precious objects like jade, gold, etc. Male personal names favor abstractions such as loyalty, fidelity,

ty, brilliance, etc. But there is no hard and fast rule. Abstractions and objects are used for both sexes.

Some peculiarities about names should be mentioned here. The Tran dynasty overthrew the Ly dynasty in 1225 A.D. and to eliminate any pretenders to the throne, the Tran dynasty made everyone with the family name Ly change it to Nguyen. Thus over 50 per cent of the population are named Nguyen. The family name Nguyen, also Le and Ngo, are derived from the Chinese, having been the names of ancient Chinese areas.

In some places the children use the number of their place in the family as a personal name, the eldest being number one, *ca*, etc. However, in South Vietnam it is very important to call the eldest number two, *hai* in order to confuse the evil spirits. The spirits are looking to harm number one, but since the number is never used, they must keep looking.

## Earthy Way

Personal names in peasant families are earthy. You are named after a fruit, vegetable or grain. Like all societies the Vietnamese have pet names for babies. An author or artist also has a *nom de plume*, thus sparing the family loss of "face" for unpopular works.

"Women's Lib" could learn something from the Vietnamese. When a woman marries, she takes her husband's family, middle and personal name. However, if working or widowed, she normally uses her maiden name.

Successful men, usually after retirement will add a virtuous idealistic name to their identification. A posthumous name, *thuy*, is

not used till death, though chosen by the individual while he is alive or by the family after his death. Used on the funeral tablet and during the ceremonies, it usually summarizes his best qualities.

Titles at present are of the military and governmental types used in the United States: general, colonel, senator, etc. Until Emperor Bao Dai abdicated in 1945, there were titles of nobility. These corresponded, European-wise, to duke (*cong*), marquis (*hau*), count (*ba*), viscount (*tu*), and baron (*nam*). All were of Chinese origin.

## Food and Drink

Everything to do with Vietnamese food begins and ends with a concoction called *nuoc-mam* which is made of whole fish laid alternately between layers of salt.

Large wooden barrels are used as fermentation vessels to which salt water and sugar is added. The fish can be fresh or dried. The dried fish takes longer to ferment. This fermentation requires from three to six months. The liquid formed filters through a charcoal bed at the bottom of the barrel.

The first batches are poured through the barrel and this continues till a first grade sauce is obtained. Second and third grade qualities, which are mixed with first grade before selling, follow, and finally the poorest qualities are taken and used for cooking. This last variety is the one which most foreigners find hard to withstand. However, the good quality *nuoc-mam* is used to spice food. As it is not heated, the odor is less pungent and it goes well with shrimp, rice and some of the special dishes.

The most popular of these dishes is *cha gio*. This is a mixture of



Indispensable to Vietnamese cuisine is nuoc mam sauce fermented in vats.

finely chopped crab meat, pork, noodles, and vegetables, wrapped in rice paper and cut to two-inch lengths then fried until crisp. It is served hot and dipped in *nuoc-mam* that has sliced onion, garlic, carrot, and red peppers added. Excellent with cold beer! In fact, all Vietnamese food seems to have been invented for the beer guzzler.

### "Sub" Sandwiches

*Banh phong tom* is large shrimp chips fried. Also good with lager. Soups are sold on the street and just everywhere. Chinese soup is most common, with noodles, beef broth, onions, lettuce, cabbage, tomatoes, and some red peppers to spice it up. Large "submarine" sandwiches are sold till the curfew closes the stands. The contents are meat, either a liverwurst or bologna type, with lettuce, tomatoes, red peppers and cucumbers in French bread cut lengthwise. The French taught the Vietnamese to bake a fine crusty French bread that is sold everywhere. French fried potatoes and other fried meats and fish are prepared very well by the Vietnamese.

Shrimps and clams are inexpensive and fried with French fried potatoes, resulting in a good meal. Most of the year lettuce, tomatoes,

beans and all vegetables are inexpensive. A pound of tomatoes transported from Dalat to Saigon, a distance of 185 miles, sells for the equivalent of four U.S. cents retail.

As the Chinese residents of the Saigon-Cholon area are primarily from South China, the chief dialect is Cantonese and naturally the cooking is that famous Cantonese

style. Korean, Japanese and Indian restaurants are available but not in great numbers.

It is interesting to note how persons living in the same area will adopt each other's eating habits. I have never known a Vietnamese who would not eat Indian curry or any Korean dish. Korean and Filipino food is rather new to the Vietnamese, but they like the spicy flavor or certain dishes, *Kim chi* (Korean) being the hottest and best liked.

Wines are available from abroad, most French, Algerian and Portuguese. The native types are strawberry, blackberry, and last but not least, rice. All wines and brandies are drunk but very seldom by the women.

The strongest rice drink is *ruou trang*, a "white lightning" that can really knock one out. It's also very inexpensive. A fifth in an old U.S. whiskey bottle costs about 16 U.S. cents. The only liquor the Vietnamese have adopted from the West-erners is French brandy and Scotch whiskey.

There are two well-known brands of beer in the Saigon area, *Ba Muoi Ba*, which means "33," and "Larue," both produced by French brewers. "33" comes in a small bottle. "Larue" comes in a large bottle and is almost exclusively used for home consump-



Crusty French style bread such as shown above is available everywhere.

tion. However, the bars and sidewalk cafes sell both.

*Bo Bay Mon* is the "Seven Dishes of Beef." The entire meal has beef: diced, ground, sliced, minced and in patties with various vegetables added. A good street "seller" is *Chao Tom*, a stick of sugar cane around which has been rolled spiced shrimp paste which is grilled by the vendor when you make the purchase.

There are street drinks of coconut milk, the nut opened and a straw inserted, and the buyer has a drink in its natural shell and later can eat the meat. Orange, vegetable drinks, sweet beans and lemonade in a plastic bag with a straw is another favorite.

In Saigon, it appears that one half of the people feed the other half. Roving peddlers, their foodstuffs in two big containers, one in the back and one in front, balanced on one shoulder by a *don ganh* balance pole, are usually refugee women. Their products are wholly native. The permanent and rolling snack bar also serves native food.



Typical Vietnamese foods are available at thousands of sidewalk restaurants.

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## Small Man, Great Diplomat

# MAC ĐÌNH CHI

By DOAN BICH

Mac Dinh Chi, among Saigon's quietest avenues where the Vietnamese-American Association (VAA) is located, is named after an outstanding diplomat of the 14th century who was honored by the Chinese Emperor as "the greatest diplomat of two nations."

Mac Dinh Chi was known for his extreme intelligence that surprised the Imperial court of China when he represented Vietnam in negotiations with the Chinese on a non-aggression treaty between the two countries.

In Nanking, he easily answered many hard questions posed by high Chinese mandarins whether it was in the form of literary work, poem to be composed or a diplomatic letter to be replied. His great talent quickly made him a revered friend of Chinese scholars or statesmen.

### Funeral Oration

The oration he delivered at the funeral of a Chinese princess won him the admiration of the entire Chinese imperial court and the most honored title of *Luong Quốc Trạng Nguyên* (The Greatest Scholar of two nations) granted him by the Chinese Emperor himself.

At that time, the only daughter of the Chinese Emperor suddenly died after a brief illness. Her death was mourned by the entire kingdom and the Emperor ordered magnificent funeral services to which foreign ambassadors in the capital were invited.

With the intention of testing the intelligence of Mac Dinh Chi, the Chinese mandarins elected him their representative at the ceremony to deliver a funeral oration.

This, indeed, was a great honor for Mac Dinh Chi. But when he opened the large scroll in front of the Princess' bier, the Vietnamese Ambassador saw only four Chinese characters, *Nhat*, meaning "One."

A very quick-witted man, Mac Dinh Chi calmly delivered in a moving voice the following oration:

"In the immaculate blue sky, a cluster of clouds wanders.

"In the midst of the red-hot hearth, there is a point of snow.

"A flower blooms in the Imperial Garden.

"A piece of the moon is reflected in the Celestial Lake...

"Alas! the cloud vanishes, the snow thaws, the flower withers and the moon wanes!

"The Emperor's heart is broken,

"The entire people mourn!"

The idea that Mac Dinh Chi wished to evoke in his eulogy was a young lady: cloud, snow, flower, moon. And in his verse the death of the Princess was portrayed in a truly poetic manner.

The audience was moved by Mac Dinh Chi's literary prowess, demonstrated spontaneously in the somber atmosphere of a funeral. For a long time, the improvised oration of the Vietnamese Ambassador impressed the Chinese imperial court and literary circles.

A native of Lung Dong village, Chi Linh district, Hai Duong province (North Vietnam), Mac Dinh Chi obtained his doctorate degree in 1304 A.D. under the reign of Tran Anh Ton. Unfortunately he was not blessed with good looks, having a small body and long arms. Because of this, King Tran Anh Ton disliked him and gave him

only a minor position in the royal court.

Dr. Chi presented to the King a long poem in which he described himself as a lotus flower growing at the bottom of a waterwell that only special people could appreciate for intrinsic value.

His intelligence won over the esteem of King Tran who immediately appointed him Minister at the court.

Several years later, relations between Vietnam and China fast deteriorated after a series of military clashes along the border. The Chinese appeared set to take advantage of the opportunity to invade Vietnam.

King Tran then appointed Mac Dinh Chi as Minister Plenipotentiary in charge of negotiations with China for a non-aggression pact between the two countries.

### 3 Cups of Wine

At an audience in the Chinese imperial court, Mac Dinh Chi eloquently portrayed to the Ming Emperor his country's position, giving emphasis to the indomitable spirit of the Vietnamese, but at the same time, employing flowery speech to sway the Chinese. Emperor Ming was so glad that he congratulated the Vietnamese Ambassador and granted him the rare privilege of drinking on-the-spot three cups of imperial wine.

The wisdom and profound knowledge of Mac Dinh Chi was subjected to a test in many circumstances, either at meetings of scholars or in social gatherings, such as at the funeral of the Chinese princess. And each time Ambassador Chi succeeded in winning the admiration of all with his clever but modest utterances.

After several months in China, Mac Dinh Chi returned to Vietnam and was welcomed with full honors right on the border.

Thanks to the quick wit of Mac Dinh Chi, our country enjoyed a long period of peace. His great literary talent made him one of the greatest statesmen of Vietnam.

# ĐOÀN THỊ ĐIỂM

The story happened some time in the 18th century under the Le dynasty. A Chinese diplomatic mission was heading for Vietnam—then called Annam—under the pretext of presenting gifts and thanks for the tributes the Annamese had offered to the Chinese emperor. The very task of the Chinese special envoy was to observe the over-all situation of our small country just in case the Great Chinese Empire decided to expand its southern border.

When the Chinese envoy entered the Annamese land, the first thing he saw was a roadside inn where a very beautiful woman was reading near a pile of books. The scene did not please the haughty mandarin who told his retinue with a burst of insolent laughter:

“An Nam nhất thon tho, bat tri ky nhan canh.” (In Annam, how many tillers have ploughed this single inch of land?)

Of course, the Chinese envoy wanted to insult the young lady, for his phrase also wickedly meant, “How many men have passed over that lewd woman?”

## No Exception

To his great surprise, the woman inn-keeper immediately answered with a broad smile, “Bac Quoc dai trung phu giai do thu do xuat.” (In China, all the great men have come out of there.) With this reply she wanted to remind the Chinese envoy that however rich or powerful a man might be, it was a woman who had given birth to him.

Thus, the Chinese diplomat was bitterly defeated in his first dialogue with a humble woman inn-keeper by the road in Vietnam. But he never knew that the “countrywoman” was one of the most famous scholars of Vietnam of that

time. She was Doan Thi Diem, disguised as an inn-keeper by order of the Vietnamese king to teach the Chinese mission chief a good lesson in diplomacy.

Doan Thi Diem, pen-name Hong Ha, was born in 1705 in Bac Ninh province, North Vietnam, to a noble family. Although well-known the country over as great literary men, both her father, Doan Doan Nghi, and her brother, Doan Doan Luan, preferred to run school in their village to teach young men instead of seeking wealth and honor as mandarins at the royal court.

When her father died in 1729, Doan Thi Diem continued to help her brother in his job as a teacher. Nevertheless, her intelligence and profound knowledge of the literary arts and medicine had made her a famous figure all over the country. Many mandarins at the royal court such as Nguyen Cong Thai and Nhu Dinh Toan, both valedictorians of the royal doctorate competitions in 1715 and 1736, respectively, wanted to marry her. But she categorically turned them down.

A third suitor, Vu Diem, graduated doctor in 1739, experienced a harder situation. During a visit to the poetess, the young doctor was presented by a servant with a quid of betel nut and a sheet of paper where the first “leg” of a parallel was written. According to the customs of the time, the young man had to answer with a second “leg” of a parallel, which must contain phrases entirely matching the first “leg” in both words and meaning. This was a means for girls to “sound out” the literary capacity of their suitors.

Doan Thi Diem’s question contained only seven words, “Dinh tien thieu nu khuyen tan lang,” literally meaning “At the front

yard, the areca tree fluttered in the breeze.” But the words “thieu nu” (breeze) also meant “a young girl” and the words “tan lang” also meant “new bridegroom.” Thus, in a figurative sense, the above phrase should be understood as “At the front yard, the young girl invited the new bridegroom.”

Of course, this was a very difficult question and the suitor had to be extremely quick-witted to offer quite spontaneously answer of quality. Despite his talent as a doctor in letters, Vu Diem had no ready answer and quietly withdrew.

A few years later, her brother Doan Doan Luan suddenly died and was survived by many young children and a helpless wife. Doan Thi Diem tried her best to assist her sister-in-law. Beside her usual occupation as a teacher she opened a medical clinic and began to treat patients in the entire province. She soon became famous all over the country for her medical abilities and was invited to the capital to teach the young ladies at the royal court.

## Mandarin Husband

Doan Thi Diem got married at the age of 37. Her husband, Nguyen Kieu, a high mandarin at the royal court, was ordered by the king in 1743 to head a Vietnamese delegation to bring tribute to the emperor of China. It was during this period that Doan Thi Diem published her most famous work entitled *Chinh Phu Ngam* (Complaints of a Soldier's Wife) portraying the anxieties and sorrows of a young woman whose husband was fighting on the frontlines in the service of the homeland. This masterpiece of great literary and moral value is compulsory reading for all Vietnamese students.

*Chinh Phu Ngam* is in fact the free translation of a book written in Chinese by another Vietnamese poet named Dang Tran Con. However, the sublime literary style of Doan Thi Diem in the translation made her better known than the author himself.

Take for instance the first verses of *Chinh Phu Ngam* which depicts the sorrow of the soldier's wife on

hearing the news of the order for departure to the frontlines issued by the royal court:

*When the whirlwinds raise clouds of dust,*

*How unlucky are the young women!*

*Oh! Lord Almighty who reigns over the azure skies.*

*Why amuse yourself to create such misfortunes!*

In her loneliness at home, the warrior's wife dreamed of the day when her husband would return:

*The day will come when the flags are removed from the frontier fortresses,*

*And when songs of victory resound over the routes leading back to the capital.*

*A stele bearing your glorious name has been erected on the mountain top.*

*And you shall come to report to the King your famous exploits,*

*Then, I shall relieve you of your armour,*

*And I shall remove the dust and dew covering it,*

*To you, I shall offer a golden cup full of wine,*

*For you, I shall make up my face and perfume myself.*

In 1748, Nguyen Kieu was appointed to serve in Nghe An province. Doan Thi Diem who was asked to join her husband at the new post, died suddenly during the exhausting voyage, at the age of 48.

Besides the translation of *Chinh Phu Ngam* which made her a famous poet, Doan Thi Diem also authored many other books such as *Yen Anh Doi Thoai* (Dialogue Between a Golden Oriole and a Swallow) *Hoanh Son Tieu Cuc* (The Chess Game at Mount Hoanh Son), *Hai Khau Linh Tu* (The Legend of Che Thang Goddess), *Van Cat Than Nu* (The Legend of Princess Lieu Hanh).

A quiet and spacious street in Saigon has been named after Doan Thi Diem since Vietnam regained its independence in 1955 in honor of one of the most famous literary women of the country.

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# Jade Popular In Vietnam

The average Vietnamese woman will invariably choose jade in making her first purchase of a precious stone. This choice is influenced by the long years of contact with the Chinese people who from ancient times have associated jade with extreme beauty and magical properties.

Jade or "yu" as the Chinese commonly call it, is cut from two minerals: jadeite which is the true jade, and nephrite which is a solid variety of amphibole.

Dealers call jadeite jewel jade and link it to the emerald. The Chinese call it "fei tsui" and to most buyers, this alone means jade.

Nephrite, the less valuable variety of jade comes in nine classical colors: brilliant opaque, white, clear water, moss green, indigo blue, kingfisher feathers, yellow, cinnabar red, blood red, and jet black.

## Stone Age Discovery

Jade was discovered about the time of the Chinese stone age some 4,500 years ago. Chinese nomads fashioned tablets, batons and axes of jade as a symbol of authority. Ordinary tribesmen used implements of common stone.

So fascinated with these glossy rocks were the Chinese ancients that they called them "the distilled essence of stone" transformed into delightful perfection by nature and eons of time.

They also claimed jade to be the ultimate in purity and auspiciousness; consequently, the mineral was attributed with magical properties. It was cut and carved into various adornments and worn on the body to ward off misfortune,

guard against evil spirits, insure the birth of male heirs, safeguard health, and mysteriously, prevent deterioration of the body after death.

The early Chinese never practiced embalming the dead. Since jade was credited with the power to prevent decomposition, it became an indispensable burial item for the noble and the rich. One of the earliest burial jade articles is the stylized figure of Yuan Ong-chung, a famous warrior of the third century B.C. A number of them have been found, mostly done in white and brown jade.

It was also the fashion among Chinese women in the past to attach to the waist bands of their skirts jade pieces of different shapes, sizes and colors delicately cut and carved, ingeniously engraved and polished.

With each step, the wearer caused a series of tinkling sounds. Well-bred girls were taught the proper gait to insure that every movement brought forth the right "music." A hasty or improper step would produce discordant sounds which jarred the senses.

Up to the Christian era, jade stones were quarried in Shensi and Honan provinces. Nephrites came from the Khotan-Yarkand region of southwest Turkestan, now Sinkiang province. Later, Yunnan mines came into production, yielding jadeite. The famous Burma jade is a "glassy" emerald-like species, while Yunnan "yu" is less translucent, but richer in color.

It is difficult to distinguish between jadeite and nephrite, and with the "glassy" kind between true and imitation pieces. A good jade is silky in texture with an oily appearance on the surface. It

cannot be scratched with a pointed steel instrument. If a drop of water is applied to its surface, it will stand out like a crystal bead, whereas a similar drop will spread on glass.

Jade is a fascinating study. There is yet no mass production. Each piece that comes into the lapidary's hand is carefully examined and considered for its particular shape and characteristic texture.

A good artisan will bring out the best that is in the stone with no part of it wasted. The adept hands will transform the natural patina of a lump of previous mineral into the utmost radiance. Each piece is worked entirely by abrasives and there is never an exact replica of the finished product.

Some jades are dull and lusterless, while others glow with life and sparkle. Some are opaque and darkish, while others are crystal clear and bright. Some are free of impurities, others marked with imperfections. The immense variety of gradations and shades presents difficulties and problems to the ordinary buyer. It is only by discriminative comparison that one can distinguish the one from the other, the better quality from the inferior.

## Reviving the "Dead"

Antique jades are full of imperfections. Very old specimens from tombs are mostly roughened by the action of chemicals in the soil and lose their sheen. These "dead" pieces can be "revived," often revealing amazing delicacy and beauty of craftsmanship.

In Vietnam these facts about jade are well known. There is not any jewel collection of note that does not boast of good jade. It is preferred even by the poor. As one woman put it, "When the need arises, it is not hard to pawn jade, much less sell it."

Jewelry stores in Saigon and its suburb of Cholon abound with jade, particularly the Chinese variety. Family heirlooms of old jade, however, command higher prices, the Vietnamese believing they get better in beauty and as talisman with age.



# Come to Vietnam

## Beauty, contrasts

# Land full of relics: a link to legend



Po Nagar sanctuary brings back splendor of former Kingdom of Champa.

Vietnam is a land of varied attractions for the tourist. Travellers will be impressed by the astonishing variety of places and people, the proximity of ultra-modern buildings to relics of early civilizations, and the contrasts of climate and vegetation.

Vietnam has a strange fascination both for visitors and those who live under its spell. It is easily accessible: Saigon, the capital, is a turntable between India, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, and Japan. Tan Son Nhut airport is one of the busiest in the Far East and the port of Saigon along the banks of the river of the same name is open to ships from all over the world.

Beyond the coast the ricefields stretch as far as the eye can see—a green mantle protecting and nourishing the country. From horizon to horizon not a valley or

hill blocks the eye, even the rivers are lost in the plains.

Beyond are the tree-clad mountains which mark the beginning of jungles, a chaos of wild and splendid beauty, exotic flowers and wildlife.

Human art contributes yet more splendor. The land is full of temples, pagodas, funeral monuments, fortresses and citadels. Even deep in the country are monuments to the memory of sages and emperors. Their sad simplicity reflected in deep dark pools where flaming flowers wilt beneath a summer breeze is a link to legend.

### Relics of Glory

How can one remain unmoved by admiration for this land so rich in monuments to former glory, for people worthy of their ancestors and temples, for a race whose scholars are more honored than

soldiers, and the poetry of the past echoes in every prayer?

### Saigon and Cholon

Whether he arrives by sea or by air, the traveller will first notice while drawing close to Saigon the spires of the Catholic cathedral which rises in the heart of the city. Saigon is the outlet to a vast and densely populated rice-growing hinterland to which it is linked by long stretches of good roads and navigable canals.

The city is sophisticated. Its roads bustle with activity. Its main street, Tu Do (formerly Rue Catinat), equivalent to Paris' Rue de la Paix, is a center of shops displaying a wide variety of goods for the visitor, a fusion of East and West. Old-style public buildings constructed about 1900 contrast strongly with the clean facades of new buildings. This

# *The quaint and the modern in harmony*

combination of the old and the new is itself one of the charms of Saigon.

Many places of worship such as the Vietnamese pagodas of Truong-Thanh and Phat-An, the Indian temples of Chettys, and the Chinese pagodas beckon to the visitor with their charm of style and setting.

The Botanical Gardens are of special interest. They contain one of the most comprehensive collections of orchids and equatorial plants in the world. There are specimens too of the wild life of the peninsula, its tigers, leopards, elephants, etc.

## **National Museum**

The National Museum (formerly Blanchard de la Brosse), the fruit of the labors of the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, houses a unique collection of relics and artifacts of every phase of the history of civilization in the Indochinese peninsula.

A boulevard two kilometers long links Saigon with the suburb of



**Along the streets of Saigon are sold metal candlesticks, bells, gongs.**



**The National Museum (formerly Blanchard de la Brosse) has relics of Indochinese civilization.**

Cholon. Truly lively and picturesque, this veritable Chinatown is a particular delight at night when its brightly-lit streets are crowded with people of every race. Restaurants are a source of pleasure and entertainment with northern and southern Chinese and French cuisine vying for the approbation of the gourmet.

Singers with strange instruments add spice to dining. Clad in multi-colored costumes, doll-like and gracious, these performers are experts in the ritual of traditional courtesy. Cholon also abounds with pagodas that must be visited.

Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian and Western cultures thrive together under the warm and happy spell of Saigon and Cholon.

### Gia Dinh

Leaving Saigon by the suburb of Da Kao, one passes through Gia Dinh, the ancient Khmer capital.

Here there are several funeral monuments that deserve a visit. A good example is the tomb of Marshal Le Van Duyet, who served under Emperor Gia Long, the architect of the unification of Vietnam.

Destroyed by Emperor Minh Mang in 1831, it was rebuilt by his successor, Thieu Tri. The oaths of the court of justice on the altar were used a long time.

Further on, is the tomb of the Bishop of Adran which bears an inscription recalling the friendship between the French prelate and Emperor Gia Long.

On leaving Bien Hoa, a pretty little town 32 kilometers from Saigon, on the banks of the Dong Nai, the famous hunting regions beckon to the visitor—the Cum Tien plateau or the Lagna Plain.

In the Buu Son temple at Bien Hoa can be seen the 15th century granite statue of Cham origin which was hidden for several centuries inside the trunk of a tree.

One may visit the School of Pottery and Bronze Art where to traditional skill of the Vietnamese artist is added the impetus of modern technique.

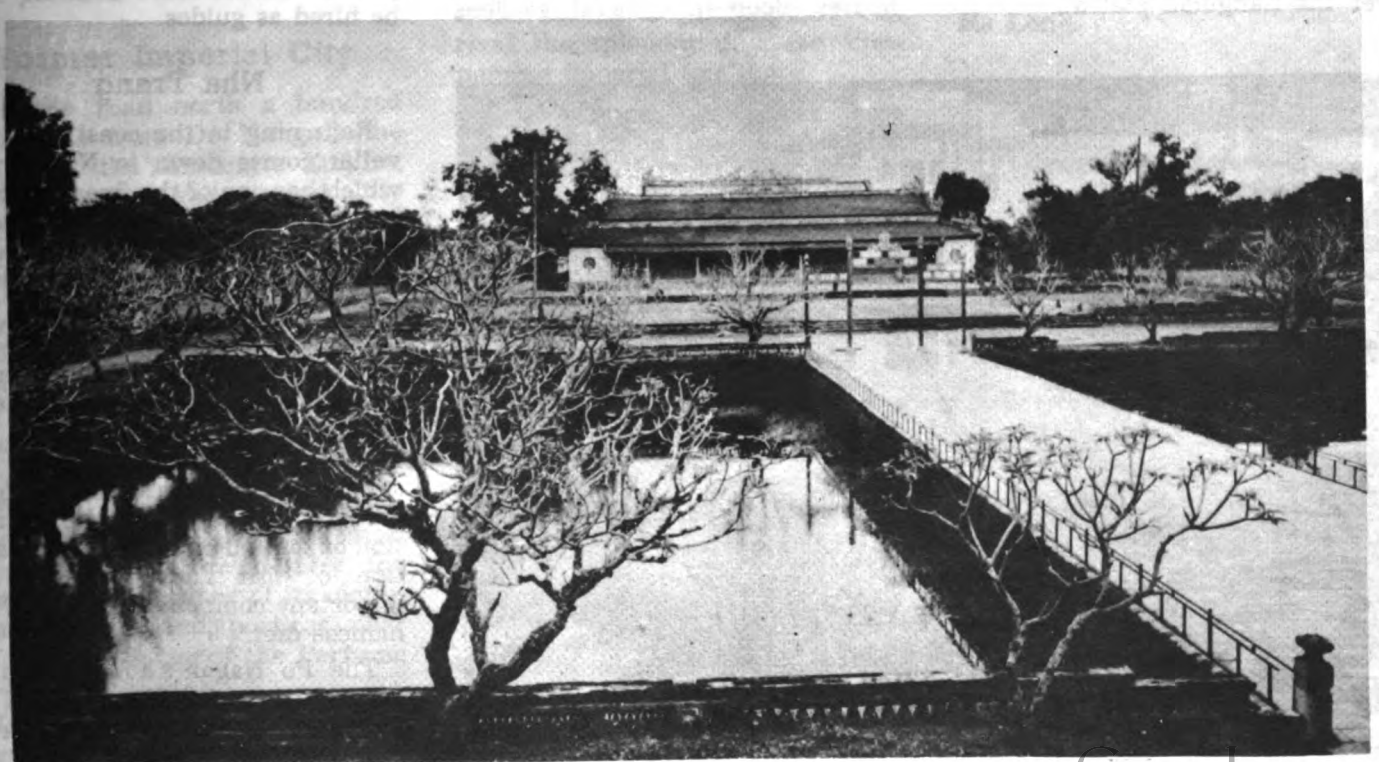
On the same Dong Nai river, 68 kilometers from Saigon are the



In what appears to be a conspiracy between man and nature to provide beauty, Vietnam offers the tourist much to see. It is a land full of temples and scenic wonders. Clockwise from top left: Golden Buddha in Xa Loi pagoda in Saigon (center), temple of Marshal Le Van Duyet in Gia Dinh, a structure in the Citadel, seat of the former imperial court in Hue, and Prenn waterfall in Dalat under which is a foot span.







Tri An waterfalls which are well worth a visit. In the dry season the falls are eight meters high and 30 meters wide. In the rainy season they spread across the whole ridge and the volume of water is 100,000 cubic meters a minute.

A visit to South Vietnam would be incomplete without a holiday at the seaside resort of Vung Tau. It can be glimpsed by the sea traveller before entering the river mouth at Saigon.

One of the most impressive journeys that can be made in Vietnam is by road to Nha Trang via Dalat.

The traveller must pass Blao on leaving Saigon and head for Bien Hoa. Crossing the Lagna, he climbs the Blao col between the mountains, lush with tropical vegetation (bamboo fronds and tree ferns, and tress with tall smooth trunks of fifty meters or more), skirt the Bobla falls (32 meters high) and on to Djiring, and the forests where tigers are found.

### Dalat

From Djiring the road crosses the Danhim, to the right of Bongour falls which are among the most beautiful in Indochina, and on past the Gougah and Lien Khanh falls. Here there are pine trees on the mountain slopes. At Dalat there is a magnificent view over the Langbian plateau.



Traditional fishing boats on Lai Son island off southwestern coast of Vietnam.

The second route, through Phan Thiet, provides wide panoramas of the country, showing the transition from tropical vegetation to the high mountains.

The site where Dalat now stands was discovered in 1893 by Doctor Yersin, the famous follower of Dr. Louis Pasteur. Today there is a gracious and stately city surrounded by flowering gardens and pine woods. Everywhere are charming houses, deep in colorful gardens

with trim lawns. There is a big artificial lake created for water sports, tennis courts, and one of the best planned golf courses in the Far East.

Above all, it is a paradise for hunters. Less than two hours away is true hunting land, seething with game: stag, roe deer, peacock and pheasant, wild board, black bear, wild ox, panther, tiger, and elephant. Professional hunters can be hired as guides.

### Nha Trang

Returning to the coast, the traveller comes down to Nha Trang which has one of the finest beaches in Vietnam. The bay encircles coral reefs which can be viewed from glass bottom boats which open the whole sea bed to the traveller like a vast aquarium.

The Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries studies the general conditions of fishing along the coast, draws up catalogues of submarine creatures and perfects modern processes for the extraction of fat and oil, and the preparation of fish flour which is an important component of the Vietnamese diet.

The Po Nagar sanctuaries, dominated by a 23-meter high tower, bring back the splendor of the Cham civilization, wiped out



The Hotel Palace in Dalat, famed summer resort and city of pines.

# Mystery and elegance of past recalled

by Vietnamese conquest. They date back to the 7th century. The coast from the Hai Van Pass, 31 kilometers from Da Nang, is an exquisite curve of beach that has been compared to the Bay of Naples.

Diggings by the Ecole d'Extreme Orient at the Cham towns of Mi Son and Tra Kieu have revealed the existence as far back as the 6th century of highly advanced culture from which eventually sprang the Khmer civilization. Many interesting and beautiful relics can be seen at the Museum of Da Nang which is called by most the Cham Museum.

## Kingdom of Champa

The Chams were believed to have migrated from India. They established four principalities with Indian names—Amaravati which is now Quang Nam; Vijaya, now Binh Dinh; Khautara, now Nha Trang, and Panduranga, now Phan Rang.

At the zenith of its power, the Kingdom of Champa extended from Binh Thuan in the south to Quang Binh province north of the 17th parallel.

## Former Imperial City

On the road north a hundred kilometers from Da Nang is the capital of the Annamite Empire, the aristocratic and elegant City of Hue. The beauty and grace of Hue's women is proverbial.

Here in the former Imperial City can one savor Vietnamese civilization. At Vauban rises the walls of the mighty citadel, two and a half leagues long. In the citadel resided the Emperor and his thousands of courtiers and servants.

Behind another fortress wall the Imperial Palace hides the mystery and elegance of its monuments, courts and porticos near the tranquil banks of the Perfume River.

Not far from Hue is the Plain of Tombs over which brood two hills



An imperial tomb in the Plain of Tombs, between two hills near City of Hue.

artificially linked to defend the city against evil spirits.

An ancient Cham pyramid dominates the scene.

Many a visitor has remarked that not even the renowned tombs of the Ming and Tsing emperors of which China is justly proud can rival the splendor of these Vietnamese imperial tombs.

The six most famous are those of Emperors Gia Long, Minh Mang, Thieu Tri, Tu Duc, Dong Khanh, and Khai Dinh.

The charming city of Than Hoa, former necropolis of the pre-Gia Long emperors of Annam, is worthy of a visit. It has many tombs of early dynasties.

The chalky earth of the surrounding region has been strangely shaped by erosion; the famous inland Bay of Ha Long is one of the resulting phenomenon: an archipelago of islands and islets covering an area of 2,500 square kilometers.

If you imagine a vast mountainous region of peaks and summits, suddenly sinking and being half submerged by the waves; if

you imagine the waves slowly eroding rock and shore: great islands with rugged shores, steep islets, rocks carved into pyramids, towers, isolated columns, monumental arches and giant doorways, all piled together in chaotic disorder, then you have the Bay of Ha Long.

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# Timing Your Vietnam Tour

Most tourists usually think of conveniences and entertainment in the countries they plan to visit and forget the climate factor that directly affects the daily life of human beings. As a result, many foreign tourists to Vietnam have experienced inconvenience due to disregard of prevailing weather.

A European tourist last year intended to make a tour of the imperial tombs at the ancient capital of Hue but was forced to return to Saigon after two weeks in his hotel room. The reason was simple: it rained 25 consecutive days during his visit.

Another foreign traveller planned to visit Nha Trang Beach

which was described as an ideal place for swimming and sight-seeing. Tourism guide-books said the climate here was wonderful: a light breeze blowing throughout the day under an immaculate blue sky and sea water just like crystal. Radiant scenic spots in a permanently cool atmosphere that gave the visitors the impression he would be transported to some fairy land, etc. But when he arrived in that coastal city of Central Vietnam, what he saw was a blazing sun that seemed to scorch without end and the hot white sand at the beach was simply too much to bear.

The following day, rains and storms unexpectedly swept

through the city and nobody could go outside.

Vietnamese tourists also run into unpleasant experience in disregarding weather conditions during their travels.

A newly-wed couple spent their honeymoon in the mountainous resort city of Dalat in the Central Highlands. Although they enjoyed wonderful moments in their hotel, they were unable to walk through the pine-woods and go sight-seeing in the environs because of intermittent rains that poured for days in that part of the country during that season.

Some knowledge about weather conditions at the places to be visited is thus necessary.

## Ideal in Spring

The most propitious time for tourism in Vietnam is spring (January to March). During this season, it is rather cold in Hue (about 10 degrees C) and Dalat (around 15 degrees C) and it provides the coolest months in Saigon as well as in Nha Trang.

As is pointed out in travel brochures, this is the ideal time for

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# Know your weather for ideal sojourn



Temple dancers perform for visitors at courtyard of former imperial city.

During fall, it's still hot in Nha Trang and Saigon but frequent showers in the afternoons render the atmosphere cool. Yet, it is not a time for tourism since extreme humidity may affect your health. Particularly, it is the rainy season in Dalat and Hue. One can only imagine the boring effect of persistent rains in these two resort cities.

In winter, rain becomes less frequent in Vung Tau as well as in Phu Quoc. It is a good time for a tour of these two tourist centers.

There is no more rain in Dalat which affords in December all the ideal conditions for a tourist.

The following table summarizes the usual weather conditions of some tourist spots in Vietnam that may be useful to foreign travellers:

tourists to visit Nha Trang which is an excellent place for rest and sight-seeing with a cool breeze, azure skies and no rains.

If you want to spend your honeymoon or enjoy some cold weather in this tropical country, don't miss to go at that time to Dalat.

Generally speaking, it becomes hot throughout the country with the beginning of summer.

In April and May, both Saigon and Hue reach 35 degrees C. at noon while Nha Trang and Dalat are cooler with an average temperature between 29 to 31 degrees C.

## Rains and Storms

Meanwhile, Hue and Nha Trang may be hit by bad weather during this period of the year with unexpected rains and storms.

A practical advice for teachers and students: Nha Trang is the only tourist center for a summer vacation. Don't go to Vung Tau or Phu Quoc Island (off Ha Tien coast, in the Gulf of Thailand) since it is hot in these two resort places as in Saigon.

Tourist center	Hottest month	Coldest month	Most rainy month
Saigon	April	January	June
Nha Trang	August	February	November
Dalat	May	February	September
Hue	June	January	October
Phu Quoc	April	January	June



While such occasions are rare, floods can spoil a visit as seen above.

# *Vietnam plans for the future*

## **DRIVE FOR VIGOR**

By **Mendy L. PURUGGANAN**

The wheels of peace grind slowly in its return to Vietnam, but the Republic of Vietnam girds to face the problem of postwar reconstruction and development programs to assimilate the vacuum created by the war. The drive to move forward in the attainment of economic stability and self-sufficiency is the overriding objective and responsibility of the government — to infuse vigor through new and definite investment and industrial development reforms.

The age-old system which caused economic stagnation must be replaced with positive ground rules and with greater stress on foreign investment. This will mean providing incentives assuring profitable and fair treatment in line with the enunciated government policy of attracting foreign investors.

### **Best Incentives**

Basically, the best incentives for foreign investment depend largely on the character of the national economy itself — the size of the available market, both domestic and foreign, military security, political stability, the quality of the Vietnamese labor force, and businessmen to assume greater roles in the accomplishment of objectives.

The promulgation of the new investment law of Vietnam, Law No. 4/72 "Regulating Investment In Vietnam" on June 2, 1972, replacing Decree-Law 2/63, sets the legal framework and clearly reflects this republic's attitude toward investment in general and foreign investment in particular. For the first time, Vietnam now has a definite investment program

which contains certain basic rights and guarantee for all investors. It outlines how to generate much-needed capital resources and skill, not only from foreign investors, but also from domestic investors. The Vietnamese investors tend to be timid and prefer to wait for someone to pioneer and venture into a new type of business and once it becomes successful, all swarm into the same field of investment.

### **Improvement**

In addition to Law No. 4/72, domestic laws must be liberalized to induce foreign and local investors, in order to attract greater inflow of capital, financing, advance technological and managerial expertise. Local enforcement agencies must provide viable service to promote better cooperation and understanding. Conditions in Vietnam need improvement for the efficient functioning of a market economy. A maze of bureaucratic regulations tend to inhibit investment. Once this crucial problem has been solved the dramatic change is bound to provide a new outlook for the government's development reforms. In this respect, Vietnam can offer attractions to foreign investors and perhaps be the peer of any other country in Southeast Asia.

However, the road toward the immediate attainment of a highly mobilized economy depends on several factors. This task is burdened by a standing army of some 1.2 million men which imposes a great strain on the national economy. To think of substantial demobilization is to think of the security problem. It is regarded that military security and econo-

mic expansion are essentially complementary, and the former cannot be jeopardized to achieve the latter. The problem is compounded by war refugees who need substantial government funding such time as they are economically secure. Furthermore, thousands in the labor force have been laid off as a result of the disengagement of Allied forces in the war effort in Vietnam.

These problems impede development in the face of economic mobilization and industrialization. Despite all these difficulties, the South Vietnamese government is resolved that reconstruction and development reforms must move forward.

Since Vietnam has many natural advantages as an area of foreign and local investment, it is within this context that postwar rehabilitation must be exploited to the fullest extent. The excellent natural harbors and modern airport facilities can play a major role in international trade and commerce. Its infrastructure in communications, inland transport and developed highways is more extensive than that typically found in developing countries.

The country potentially is in a favorable position in relation to its Asian neighbors. Its land resources are superior to those of Japan, Taiwan and Korea. Its cost of labor is cheaper and could become a source for labor supply in the region. Soil and climate are suitable for agricultural production; its coastline contains silica sand and along the south, central and Mekong delta inland shelf possible oil deposits loom large. Its forestry products are partially exploited. The fish and shrimp industry, already reaping dividends, awaits further exploitation.



Vietnamese farmers await turn to receive land under Land-to-the Tiller law.

# Problems tackled to spur progress

## Agricultural

Considering the fact that agriculture has always been the mainstay of the country's economy and the promise of self-sufficiency, the government has initiated the reconstruction of war ravaged areas to restore the channels of production. Social and agricultural reforms instituted by President Thieu's "Land-to-the-Tiller" program have curbed a downward trend that stagnated the economy and infused dynamism on the village level. To fulfill the basic goal of ameliorating the lot of the farm tiller, economic growth must be diffused for the benefits of the citizenry.

President Nguyen Van Thieu's eight-year Plan of Economic Development (PED) proclaims "agricultural rehabilitation and development a matter of national priority." The primary objective of the

plan is to raise agricultural productivity to meet domestic demand, rather than continued reliance on help from external resources.

However, in the face of massive postwar reconstruction, a substantial flow of support from external resources is needed to play a vital role on the road to development.

Other countries have experienced similar problems, such as Korea, which despite its successes in development, still has a large external deficit. Taiwan has just achieved independence from external resources after 25 years. Incidentally, both these countries have successfully combined economic and military security.

## Rice Production

This is an agricultural country with a soil and climate combination ideal for growing rice. The

lowland areas of Central Vietnam and the rice paddies along the Mekong Delta River in the south with 77,000 kilometers of vast, flat and alluvial plain hold for Vietnam bright prospects of a viable economy.

This country's arable land areas presently under cultivation extend to over 3 million hectares and another 3 million hectares will soon be cleared and developed. As peace conditions continue to improve, it is anticipated that rice production will reach 7.8 million tons by 1977.

To carry out this target production, new agricultural technology should be introduced. Liberal agricultural credit facilities must be made available to farm families. In this respect, establishment of more rural banks, such as those established in the Philippines—which provide credit facilities to farm families with low rates of interest, should be encouraged.

## 44 Rural Banks

Presently, there are forty-four private rural banks in South Vietnam, aside from the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), and the Industrial Development Bank (IDB), which financing institution provides major inducements to assist economic and industrial development programs.

The real impact of any postwar reconstruction and development must be made in the rural areas for increased production so that local and foreign developers will have ready available raw materials for the development of selective industries. The administration's approach in the policy of giving more positive assistance to farmers and fishermen and domestic investors for granting loans at smaller interest for production will greatly enhance rapid agricultural development.

In the mid and late 1930's annual rice production exports approximated 1.6 million tons. Vietnam then was the third largest rice exporter in the world, after Burma and Thailand.

## Rubber Production

At the outset of the conflict, rubber plantations in the country suffered crippling set-backs. Rubber

production was reduced from the former output of 80,000 tons per annum to 30,000 tons in 1971. With many plantations damaged due to the fighting and defoliation, the government pushed through planting of some 60,000 hectares of rubber trees in addition to the 60,000 hectares still considered productive but not in maximum operation. Areas greatly devastated by the war and in need of immediate rehabilitation are in the province of Binh-Long.

The government envisions promotion of the rubber processing industry so that finished goods will be exported instead of only latex. Technological assistance are wide open for this particular development and foreign investors are welcome to participate in this endeavor. Given peaceful conditions, rubber could once again become a major export product.

### Forestry

An eye opener for foreign investors is the constructive plan of the government to raise timber production to about 3 million cubic meters per annum by 1977. The establishment of two forestry concessions of 100,000 hectares each to be covered by long-range-term contracts will provide new outlook for the industry instead of the present quota system.

Since the government has provided clear-cut government poli-



Fishermen's wharf at Phan Thiet. Fishing offers bright export possibilities.

cies on foreign and domestic operation in the development and manufacture of forestry products, it is anticipated that greater inflow of foreign capital and technological know-how will contribute to the success of this program.

The government intends to develop the timber industry with the creation of five new plywood plants, two paper and pulp mills, five modern sawmills, with wood processing facilities and processing factory for special products. Every

year, 1,000 kilometers of forest trails to allow speedy transportation of timber and replanting of 17,000 hectares of forest land will be effected.

### Feed Meal

Feed meal grain production should be developed since the country is ideal for poultry, livestock and animal husbandry projects. Presently, there are some 300,000 hectares planted to sorghum and about 670,000 hectares of corn fields. The development of these projects will make the country self-sufficient in the much-needed feed meal grains which can be another export product earner.

### Fisheries

Under the PED development projects, modernizing the fishing fleet, developing storage and processing facilities and raising production to about 1 million tons by 1977 are the goals. The deep sea fishing ground of Vietnam provides rich resources that could become one of the major exports by 1980. In order to carry out effectively this phase of the projects, the government has the following objectives:

1. Provide relief aid to 112,000 fishermen affected by the war.



The government is clearing large areas for planting of forest trees.



# Search for oil is under way

2. Rehabilitate the 16 fishing farms of the Ministry of Agriculture.

3. Rehabilitate fishing ports, building ice making plants and cold storage facilities in six major fishing centers in Military Regions I and II.

4. Make in-depth research on coastal fishing resources.

5. Train boat captains and crews in the operation of fishing boats.

6. Establish new shipyards.

7. Develop the offshore fishing industry.

8. Promote production of fishnet and fishing gear.

All of these projects await the prospective investor in Vietnam, either in private direct investment or joint ventures with Vietnamese investors. The field is wide open for investment and the healthy prospect of successful operation is very encouraging.

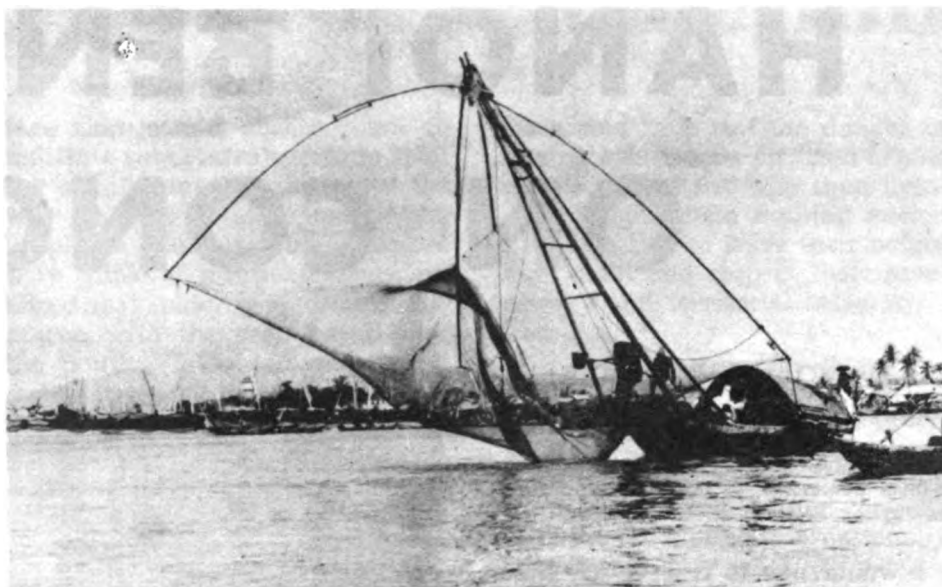
## Oil Exploration

Of great interest to international investors are offshore oil deposits believed in existence. Geologists have singled out several areas in the south, central and Mekong continental shelf where oil deposits are expected to be found in large quantities.

The government, through the Petroleum Board, offered eight of 18 blocks for bidding on July 3, 1973. Of seven companies and consortiums, four were granted exploration rights on the south continental shelf. The winners were Shell Oil, blocks 3, 7 and 11; Sumingale, blocks 21 and 22; Mobil Oil, blocks 4 and 8, and Esso, block 10.

The exploration and exploitation of oil deposits in the country will open new avenues for employment and job opportunities for the Vietnamese. Included in the package deal is an appropriation of US\$300,000 for scholarship grants with emphasis on geology. Local personnel trained for executive positions will eventually take over in this job classification.

The government will likewise receive immediately US\$16.6 mil-



A shrimp trawler. Vietnam already exports shrimps to nearby Asian countries.

lion from these four companies after the signing of the contract termed as "signature bonus." Royalties in the amount of US\$10 million will be paid immediately if oil is found on all eight blocks. Furthermore, the government will receive 12.5 per cent of the oil produce as "royalties" and 55 per cent as income tax.

Aside from the eight blocks already awarded for exploration, the Petroleum Board will conduct more biddings this year. On the table will be 40 blocks on the southern continental shelf of Vietnam. The rest will come from the central continental shelf and in-

land Mekong Delta, plus the coastline bordering Thailand which is still controversial.

If the foreign and domestic investor is assured of continuing internal security and political stability of the country, the post war reconstruction and development program will create a climate of certainty and restored confidence in the basic health of the economy. This dual problem, if solved, will enable President Thieu's administration to develop institutions conducive to economic, social and industrial policy reforms in line with his eight-year Plan of Economic Development.

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## *Girding for offensive*

# HANOI BENT ON CONQUEST

By **HOANG DUC NHA**

*Minister for Information and Open Arms*

*This speech was delivered at the Sixth Annual Conference of the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations on March 30, 1974.*

I would like to reserve my first words to express my thanks to you and the Council for granting me the honor to address your sixth annual conference. All of you present here today have in one way or another shared in forging the spirit of brotherhood and the sense of dedication to national affairs which have long characterized your organization. As you gather to review your past achievements I sincerely hope you will advance further, and being conscient of all the problems our nations is now facing, project the image of a small, valiant and viable nation which having thwarted many Communist onslaughts is now ready to withstand another offensive.

As we sit here today, the war and its hideous paraphernalia are taking the lives of many more men, bringing along its wake ravages and destructions. The war in our land has not stopped; on the contrary, it is building up as time goes along, shredding in the process the very document by which the South Vietnamese people had hoped to have peace restored, the peace they have yearned for so long. There is not a single day the South Vietnamese population does not hear about Communist activities, be they assassinations, kidnappings, raids or open attacks against military outposts and shellings against civilian populated areas.



**Minister Hoang Duc Nha addresses 6th Annual Conference. At his right is Senate President Tran Van Lam. In foreground are Mrs. Nha, Ambassador Horst Von Rom of West Germany, Justice Minister Duong Duc Thuy.**

Gone are the days when those incidents can be regarded as sporadic actions by local Communist units, gone also are the days when hopes are still high for the goodwill of the North Vietnamese Communists to materialize, for their sincerity and willingness for peace to bear fruit even though they had so amiably and through great profusion of handshakes and smiles displayed them on the signing of the Paris Agreement.

Today, the North Vietnamese are entering the final stages of their preparation for a generalized offensive to try once again to "liber-

ate the South and unify the fatherland."

### **Ominous Signs**

The signs are very ominous indeed!

Much has been said about the all-time objective of the Communists which they themselves term as the last testament of Ho Chi Minh, and that is "to continue to struggle until the final victory." Indeed, the North Vietnamese Communist Party has recently issued Resolution 22 calling for the strict observance of the Ho Chi Minh testament, and that is "to complete the democratic people's

revolution in the South leading towards the reunification of the fatherland under the socialist regime."

This resolution in turn is reinforced by COSVN's Resolution 12/R in which the Communist issued what they term as concrete directives to their cadres to continue the fight militarily, politically and diplomatically. Hanoi now finds itself in a great dilemma. The war they have waged to supposedly liberate the South had only brought more destructions and ravages to North Viet Nam, to the point of setting it back a good quarter of century behind any developing nation. The young men that the leaders in Hanoi have sent South to supposedly liberate it have died by the hundreds of thousands on the soil which they were told is already theirs. The fathers, mothers, wives, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, cousins and relatives of these poor young men are still waiting for the return of those who already have shown by their death the futility of their leaders' quest for power and monopoly in the South.

### Quest Goes On

Yet this quest still goes on, and even with an agreement ending the war and restoring peace, the Communist still think in terms of conquering the South by force. The Communists have always professed that their endeavor to liberate the South is an arduous and long one. It is indeed an arduous and long one!

Having won the independence in 1945 they sought to eliminate the French from the political equation in Viet Nam. In 1954 the French left.

Having succeeded in this endeavor, they sought to extricate the Americans from the scene. The Paris Accords gave them the opportunity to face a South Vietnam left to its own means, without the help of the United States.

### False Hopes

The Communists had also hoped that the Paris Agreement would give them a coalition government and with that, a government struc-

# NLF fears defeat in free election

ture that would enable them to infiltrate subversive agents to spoil our countryside and thus pave the way for their total control of the people in the rural areas before they think of elections. They realized that under present circumstances, with the vast majority of the South Vietnamese population strongly against them, they had no hopes for victory in any kind of elections that they can think of.

Furthermore, what they thought as natural consequences of the Paris Agreement in terms of mass desertions of the ARVN and relaxation on the part of the population, never did materialize.

It was the strong discipline of the troops and the awareness of the population which prevented the Communists from taking advantage of the ceasefire and expand their areas of control. Having gained nothing from the Paris Agreement, the Communists find themselves in a great dilemma: either to abide strictly by the provisions of the Paris Accords or to throw overboard and seek better provisions through another agreement.

### Potential Danger

To abide strictly by the provisions of the Paris Accords will not hand them victory on a silver platter; on the contrary, they would risk the deterioration of the fighting morale of their cadres as well as the weariness of their own people back in North Viet-Nam. Their troops which have been pushed to fight and fight for over two decades, will be a potential danger for the Hanoi authorities once they know that the battle they fought for so long has been really in vain.

To abide strictly by the provisions of the Paris Accords would force them to withdraw their troops not only from South Viet-Nam, but also from the Khmer Republic and the Kingdom of

Laos, and thus run the danger of having idle troops on hand which do not understand why their fighting brought them nothing except the invitation to leave their neighbors quiet and respect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### No Chance To Win

To abide strictly by the provisions of the Paris Accords would compel their tools in the South, the NLF, to stand out and compete with the GVN in an internationally supervised free and democratic election they know they have no chance to win. Once they stood up for the election, the so called NLF will then no longer exist since it has to accept the results of the elections, and if they get some votes, have to function within the legal framework formed after the election. This is the real danger for Hanoi because it will be the eraser that will wipe out the NLF as a tool in Hanoi's war of liberation, "revolutionary war," "people's war," or whatever one may call it.

To abide strictly by the provisions of the Paris accords would provide the GVN with excellent opportunities to get the political process going and at the same time channel all its efforts in the rehabilitation of all that is ravaged by the war and in the development of the nation's economy.

It is the basic fear of the Communists, that, left to itself, the NLF would probably be willing to get into a political settlement with the GVN to avoid complete annihilation. It is this fear which has pushed the North Vietnamese to maintain all of their troops in the South. Another basic fear which has convinced the North Vietnamese to maintain their violations and thus systematically destroy the very agreement which they had signed, is that if the South Vietnamese people are given enough time to develop their econ-

# Red goal military victory

omy and thus acquire real economic strength, it will be their best weapon against any further subversion.

## One Option

Thus, in so far as the fate of their regime is concerned, the North Vietnamese have but one option: that is to seek a military victory in the South. A military victory and the ultimate annexation of South Viet Nam would not only help the North Vietnamese a great deal in terms of their revolutionary war, it will also enable them, within their own tanks, to say that finally they have reached the "promised land."

A military victory being their ultimate goal, the North Vietnamese are now paving the way for a generalized offensive in South Viet Nam.

## Military Front

On the military front, through intensive guerrilla activities and sharp localized attacks (as is the case of the Kontum battle which is going on right now), the North Vietnamese are shaping up for their dry season campaign. Recent clashes between governmental forces and Communist forces in Military Regions III and IV attest to the fact that the enemy is in bad need of manpower and rice supply for their next offensive. Their activities have become more and more blatant and, as world public opinion is still focused on other issues, a developing war is being waged in this part of the world where peace is supposed to have been restored already.

From open attacks like the siege of the Tong Le Chan Rangers camp in Military Region III to the seizure of Le Minh, Bu Prang and other hamlets around the provincial city of Quang Duc in the Central Highlands, the Communists are trying to open a new strategic corridor which goes from the DMZ all the way east of the Vietnamese Cordillera to the Central Highlands and reaching as far

down as Loc-Ninh. This new corridor, coupled with the Ho Chi Minh corridor, would provide them with a sanctuary from which they will attack the plains and coastal zones. Already infiltrations, introduction of more weapons, military equipment are being conducted practically in broad daylight through that corridor.

Fourteen months after the cease fire the military potential of the North Vietnamese in the South is greater than their potential at the time of the 1972 Easter offensive. Their main force units are composed of fifteen infantry divisions and more than one hundred mobile regiments including infantry regiments, Sappers, Artillery, Anti-Aircraft and Armored Regiments, more than half of that number in Military Region I, and a sizeable portion in the Central Highlands.

As for manpower they have since the cease fire infiltrated into SVN almost 100,000 fresh troops, thus raising their total number currently in the South to more than 400,000. They have also brought in more than 600 armored vehicles of all kinds, and more than 600 artillery pieces including the 130 mm and anti-aircraft guns.

## 20 Per Cent Larger

In brief, the total North Vietnamese strength in South Viet-Nam today is about 20 per cent larger than before the cease fire.

With this huge expeditionary corps, the North Vietnamese have launched an intensive program to modernize their main force units on one hand and on the other to mold their regional units into main force units, by completely replenishing them with modern weapons. As they launch this modernization program, the North Vietnamese are also carrying out a thorough retraining program for their troops based on the lessons of the 1972 Easter offensive.

In the meantime, the North Vietnamese are completing the new strategic corridor east of the Vietnamese Cordillera thus enabl-

ing three of their divisions in Southern Laos to infiltrate into SVN and operate in areas West of Military Region I and also West of Military Region II.

## Diplomatic Front

On the diplomatic front, the North Vietnamese along with the NLF have started an active diplomatic campaign aiming at getting more aid for the reconstruction of NVN and primarily at enhancing the standing of the so-called PRG leading thus to its recognition by many more countries.

Thus, we have witnessed from June to August of last year trips by Le Duan and Pham Van Dong to eight countries like Red China, Republic of Mongolia, North Korea, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria. Two days ago Pham Van Dong has just completed a six-day visit to Cuba. Other trips to Sweden, Algeria and Yugoslavia are also in the making.

We have also seen major efforts displayed by the North Vietnamese to help the so-called PRG get a standing in international conferences like the Geneva Convention on Human Rights. The North Vietnamese, with the help of Communist parties around the world, are also activating governments friendly to their causes the news media, antiwar organizations by means of so-called international conferences on this or that, like the one currently being held in Stockholm in order to boost up their sagging NLF and also to try to consecrate the so-called Third Force. Their ultimate goal is to try to convince world public opinion that there are two governments and three political forces in SVN. They also hope that such actions coupled with their own propaganda about their version of cease fire violations in SVN would make the world hesitant to partake in the reconstruction and development of SVN, and particularly would make the US Congress hostile to any request from the South Vietnamese people which would

enable them to really embark on an economic course towards take off.

### Political Front

On the political front, the Communists are paving the way for a general uprising which will follow their offensive in order to overthrow the government in SVN.

They are stepping up their activities in the countryside as well as the urban areas, aiming at exploiting our economic difficulties and inciting the people to make ever greater demands on the government resources. They also are increasing the tempo of their psychological warfare on the theme that only the strength of the revolution can bring victory. In this spirit they will not spare any efforts to wreck the governmental machinery, and to precipitate social unrest and disturbances in both the rural and urban areas of SVN.

Their claim about the so-called 200,000 political prisoners, as well as their assertion about the so-called repressive climate in SVN are but a clever diversion—clever in the sense that they have set up this complete and monstrous lie that exceeds even the wildest imagination in order to hide the fact that they themselves make a mockery of human values and human rights and to hide the fact that they even use the prisoners released by our side to form main force units to attack us again.

Their playing up the so-called PRG and Third Force is but a machiavellian scheme to convince those who are naive and foolish enough to listen to them and then believe that there are two governments and three political forces in SVN. They are doing that in order to conceal their real strategy which is to pursue the war in SVN until they liberate the South, which everybody understands to be the complete annexation of SVN, and also to conceal their tactics of the three-prong attack—military, diplomatic and political—in order to stage a final offensive in SVN.

### Delayed Offensive

The three-prong attack being underway, when will the general

# Third Force Scheme to mislead naive

offensive come. one may ask? As recently as four months ago many prominent authorities in Vietnam and abroad had forecast a North Vietnamese offensive around the beginning of this year. That offensive was to be under the form of a strategic punch, meaning a sharp localized attack in area. The fact that the offensive had not materialized does not mean that there will be no offensive at all. As a matter of fact the Communists have simply postponed their offensive as they hurt by the economic blockade put up by the GVN which had deprived them of the necessary rice and staple food supply required to sustain their offensive.

### Paving the Way

While the battles in Quang Duc province last November and December were considered as a tactical rehearsal for the projected strategic punch, the fierce battles going on right now in Kontum in the Central Highlands, in Duc-Hue, Hau-Nghia, at the junction of Tay-Ninh and Hau-Nghia provinces, and North and North West of Binh-Duong in Military Region Three, the intensive guerrilla actions in Quang-Nam, Quang-Tin and Quang-Ngai coupled with shelling West of the Tri-Thien area to pin down our Airbornes, and finally the series of high points in the Delta, namely at the junction at Kien-Phong and Dinh-Tuong province to battle for the rice, and the battles around Chau-Doc and Ha-Tien to try to move their military installations from the Khmer Republic into South Vietnamese territory because of the sharp clashes between North Vietnamese troops and the Khmer Rouges should not be discarded as simple violations. On the contrary, they should be regarded as well orchestrated actions paving the way for the generalized offensive.

### Terrible Dilemma

The men in the Hanoi Politburo must now be facing the terrible dilemma of when to launch that generalized offensive. To my judgement Hanoi's decision to unleash their generalized offensive must be weighed against the following conditions:

(1) The battle for rice must be won by the Communists. However, the economic blockade put up by the GVN has caused serious troubles for the Communists, and intelligence reports are mounting every day about their units not having enough to feed themselves. With an expeditionary corps of over 400,000 troops plus those of the NLF, this is indeed a big problem for Hanoi's Politburo. The problem is even bigger when Hanoi has to set as objective a large supply of rice and staple foods to sustain their generalized offensive. The problem may likely get out of their hands if, once the coalition government in Laos is formed, Hanoi decides to move all of their troops from Laos into South Vietnam.

### Stiff Resistance

The stiff resistance posed by the South Vietnamese people as well as the success of the economic blockade put up by the GVN will make the goal that Hanoi has set for itself unreachable.

(2) The continued supply of war material and equipment from Russia and Red China must be assured, and the more so after the offensive is launched. On this point Hanoi finds itself in great trouble. Hanoi has now begun to realize that for the cause of their ideological battle neither Russia nor China will be willing to help it on a large scale. Hanoi must have known by now that the help of either one of their big two comrades goes with a price tagged to it. Hanoi may find out that flattering their ego is not enough, that

# ...offensive imperils peace

it must prove that its strategic position has something to offer to both Russia and China in their ideological war. An assurance for continued supply of war material and equipment to sustain a generalized offensive might cost Hanoi an enslavement to either Russia or China. Enslavement to Russia would help the latter complete its geographical encirclement of Red China, and enslavement to Red China would help the latter break and destroy its geographical encirclement by Russia. The seizure through naked aggression of the Paracel Islands by the Red Chinese are a clear indication to Hanoi that their big comrade will do anything—including snatching a possession from somebody—to protect itself from the encirclement by Russia. The mute and almost terrified comment of Hanoi on the Paracels issue has also shown that Hanoi does realize that it is walking on a tight rope: a false move either way would mean immediate retaliation from its own allies.

(3) The aid of the United States to the South Vietnamese must be stopped, and the faster the better. Failing that, a major political crisis in the United States would make the prospect for more aid to SVN uncertain and thus would provoke a political and social commotion in SVN which Hanoi hopes to exploit to its advantage.

In this connection any political crisis in the United States would offer the Hanoi Politburo a magnificent chance to precipitate the social unrest and dislocations in SVN. We should not then be surprised if we are now witnessing major efforts being displayed by Hanoi and their allies to exploit every mode of mass communications to the detriment of South Vietnam.

(4) The current difficult economic conditions in South Vietnam should be magnified so as to make them unsolvable and thus plunging the whole South Vietnamese population into a state of dismay and uncertainty as to the future of the country. Together with the

current difficult economic conditions, the Communists hope to bring about serious social disturbances to really sap the morale of the ARVN and thus weaken its fighting potential.

Once those four conditions are met, Hanoi will then consider the chances of success to fully warrant the risk of launching their generalized offensive.

## Hanoi Fear

However, if those conditions are not fully met Hanoi still has to launch its generalized offensive and size it accordingly. For Hanoi still fears that if it does not launch the offensive soon enough, not only SVN will have recovered from the economic difficulties and set off on a strong national development course, world public opinion will also by then realize how far it has let itself duped by the Communist propaganda.

Hanoi knows well that time does not work in its favor. Time will not only help SVN become stronger militarily, politically and economically, it also will aggravate the difficulties which North Vietnam is now encountering. It will aggravate its shortage of manpower and resources in the South in order to carry out their aggression. It will also aggravate the serious rift between cadres and troops of Northern and Southern origin, thus weakening the fighting potential of their army.

Time will also make the current economic difficulties of North Vietnam even more staggering. Time will also see the increase in incidents between North Vietnamese troops and the Khmer Rouges, further thus revealing the serious rift which came into the open since mid-1973.

The moment is not far off when Hanoi realizes that if, along with its tools in the South, it does intend to abide strictly by the provisions of the Paris accords, then it will have to launch its generalized offensive during the coming dry season.

## Bad Faith

Peace in Vietnam is indeed quite fragile considering the bad faith of North Vietnam. The peace which the Vietnamese nation has yearned for so long may never come once the Communists launch another offensive. The basic conditions which the Paris accords have installed to achieve peace may be wiped out forever if the foolish ambition of the Hanoi Politburo goes unchecked.

The Vietnamese people think that it is time for world public opinion to realize that it has been duped by the North Vietnamese. It is time for world public opinion and all the freedom loving people in the world and believers in detente to wake up from the long sleep which the North Vietnamese have put them in through their propaganda and realize that the motives of the North Vietnamese are to annex this small and valiant nation rather than to contribute its share in the restoration of peace in this part of the world.

And this is also time for all of those people around the world who still believe that North Vietnam is detente minded to realize that, if detente ever means anything then the North Vietnamese are the last ones to understand it.

## The Future

I do not know whether,  
Three hundred years  
hence,  
Among the anonymous  
crowd there will be  
Any soul to understand  
my soul and weep  
for me.

— Nguyen Du

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