

VIETNAM

Magazine

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FROM OUR READERS

I have enjoyed your articles on Vietnamese art by Chau Kim Dinh as well as legends under the heading "Grandma's Stories" by Nghiem Xuan Thien.

Mr. Dinh's articles have provided me with an insight into the evolution of Vietnamese art, the influences that have contributed to its development and the lasting flavor of the native that has defied the onslaughts of Western nuance on local color.

I have noted with much respect the diversity of talent by your well-known artists, regaling in their mastery of medium, canvas, silk, lacquer, etc. I do wish their works reproduced in your magazine were done in color.

Mr. Nghiem's retelling of legends, I dare say, should help in the foreign reader's arriving at a better understanding of the Vietnamese in a fashion similar to comprehension of say, the Chinese and the Japanese, through a study of their customs and traditions steeped in the mist of legends.

Thank you very much for these interesting reading treats.

JOSE DE LOS SANTOS
University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City

I have read with much interest the article "Immense Food Source" in your Vol. VII, No. 7 issue which tells on the wealth of sea products off Vietnam's 1,660 kilometer coastline.

In the midst of so much starvation and lack of food in so many nations of this world, I cannot help but imagine the important role that Vietnam could play as a great fishery exporter and agricultural producer.

One reads so much about typhoons wreaking havoc on the agricultural crops in Asian countries who are your neighbors, I know that your country is relatively free of such destructive forces, rendering it ideal for agricultural and fishery development.

It is with confidence that I view Vietnam, not only as self-sufficient in food resources, but also as a vital cog in a world-wide endeavor to feed the less fortunate peoples of nations plagued by famine and starvation.

I fervently hope that the hostilities which continue to rage in your country end so that the blessings of true peace come to your long-suffering people.

FRANK CHEN
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

VIETNAM *Magazine*

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Cover: A scene on the Vietnamese countryside as portrayed by one of Vietnam's oldest and most respected artists, Nguyen Sien, who has instilled on his students the sense of Oriental mysticism, traditional beauty and serenity. (See story on page 7).

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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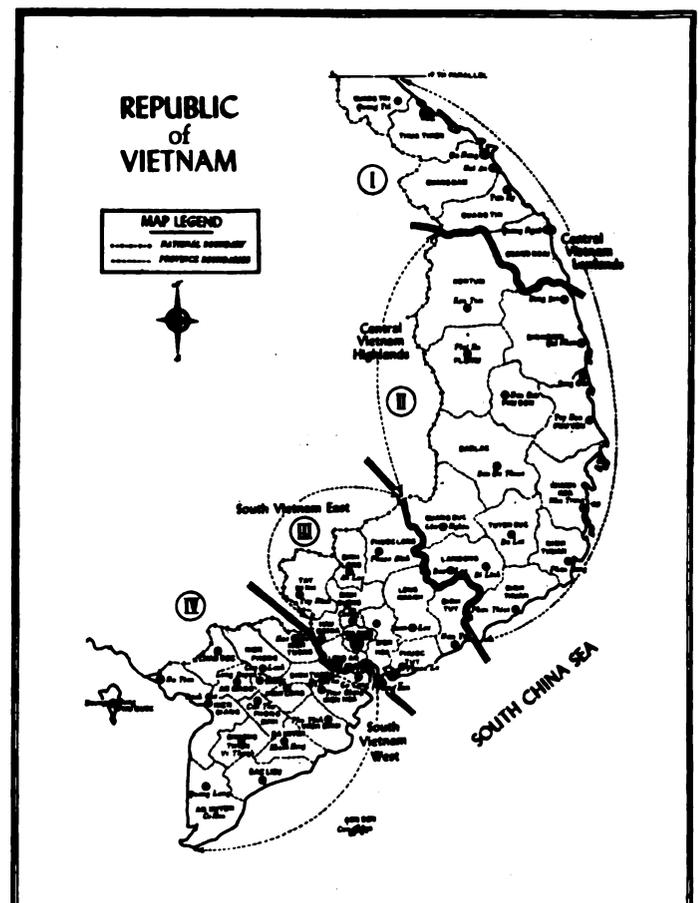
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President

TRAN VAN LAM



HOW TO ENJOY YOURSELF IN SOUTH VIETNAM

By ELLSWORTH B. MICHAELSON

Editor's Note: *The author is an American who has lived in Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia. His tips and advice are for foreigners contemplating a stay or prolonged visit in South Vietnam.*

PART I

For the Married

Step #1. Positive thinking. Don't be negative. Don't think you can't have a good time here because of the ceasefire problems or your spouse. Remember, even during the height of the war a number of people managed to enjoy themselves very well here. If you are contributing something of yourself to the country, don't feel guilty about enjoying everything that it has to offer, and as much of it as possible. The Vietnamese are xenophobic—like the English, French, Americans, Germans, etc.—but they know how human you are.

Step #2. The wife problem. There are advantages in bringing a wife here. There are also advantages in leaving her home. A man who brings his wife to Southeast Asia is usually either (1) in love with her or (2) a missionary. But he, too, can have a very fruitful time. Air-conditioning will help.

Step #3. The husband problem. A wife who brings her husband here probably needs no further advice.

Step #4. The basics. Give some thought to the following:

Culture

Almost in the way that an American or German will respect a pasteurized, homogenized bottle of milk, the Vietnamese respects a sign of cultural refinement. If

you read poetry, don't be afraid to admit it. This isn't Chicago. In the event that you are truly uncultured, there is still plenty of hope for you. Take a Vietnamese friend to a *hat boi* (Chinese-style opera) and sit respectfully through the first hour. At this point feign a sudden attack of gout or erysipelas, and he will very politely evacuate the theater with you. Remember the words of old Seneca: *Omnes factotum cunilinctum*.

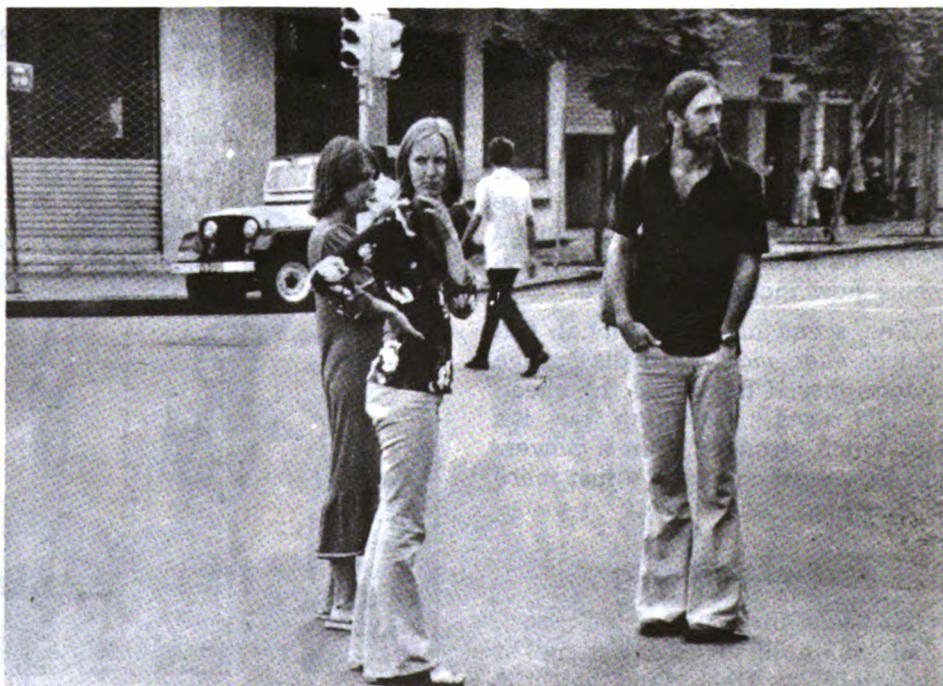
Clothes

The climate favors near-nudity. Vietnamese tradition, however, does not. You may dress lightly and informally almost anywhere here, but you have to be clothed from top to bottom. Men should not wear short pants unless they want to be pedicab drivers or coconut vendors. Forget about India. Confucius still counts here,

to a degree. It is well known that Confucius and other high mandarins never wore Bermuda shorts. One exception, for men, is the tennis court. You may wear shorts at tennis. This is a post-Confucian activity. Even Vietnamese women wear trousers. But there's been a certain break-through, in recent years, in the form of mini-skirts, hot pants and bikinis. This is only a minor revolt, though, and not a large-scale revolution.

Work Schedule

Did you have inhuman half-hour lunch breaks back home? Oriental physicians discovered thousands of years ago that anything less than two hours is not good for you. It's not fun either. History books tell us that the short break was originated by capitalist fanatics in northern Europe and unfortunately adopted by the innocent Americans. Over here you can take a more humane lunch break. Do. Most everyone else does.



Foreigners may dress lightly and informally almost everywhere in Vietnam.

... it's easier than you think

Language

Can your wife spell *nuoc mam*? Put her to work studying the language. Let her slip you bits of it at breakfast, etc. (If your wife is not here, consult Part II).

Recreation

You don't have to be immoral. There are opportunities for swimming, boating, poker, weightlifting, modified Chinese opera, karate, golfing, etc. If you want the kind of neon nightlife that flourishes in Bangkok or Manila, flights leave regularly from Tan Son Nhut airport. One tangible result of the ceasefire proclamation has been the lifting of the cease-dancing ban in Saigon. Cease-dancing had been in effect for many years because of the war. Today, tangos and discotheques are back.

Food

If you like Chinese food, Vietnamese cuisine won't kill you. Go to a Vietnamese restaurant with a Vietnamese who likes to eat. Let him (or her) order. If your friend speaks your language, you'll have the added enjoyment of knowing what you're eating. Good descriptions always help.

A wide variety of fresh tropical juices are available at sidewalk kiosks everywhere, but most foreigners feel safer with canned juices. These are available, too. Fresh food is so common that many well-to-do Vietnamese have taken to eating imported canned food, as a status symbol, and to show how modern they are.

The scent of the national fish sauce, *nuoc mam*, will discourage a foreigner if he smells the cheap variety used in cooking, but it's not much stronger than a powerful European cheese. It's just more widespread.

Sight - Seeing

Go see Vung Tau seaside resort, cool, mountainous Dalat, some of the rich flat Delta land and the great Mekong River, the brilliant

white sand beaches and great natural bays like Cam Ranh. Picture this fine real estate 50 or 100 years from now. You probably won't blame Hanoi for wanting to control it.

PART II

The Bachelor

All of the above applies to the bachelor, too, in revised form. A bachelor may have special opportunities for getting to know the country. *Ça dépend*. He ought to begin by picking up some rudimentary knowledge of the language. The moment he learns to say "Thank you" and "How are you?" he will meet many Vietnamese who will tell him how well he speaks the language. The people are very polite.

The bachelor may want to pattern his activities either on the classical English or the classical French approach in Asia. Historically, the English built their comfortable clubs and living compounds and socially fenced themselves into these enclaves. The French, though not against elitism and clubs in principle, generally were not quite so exclusive.

Today it's the bachelor's temperament rather than colonial rules that will help determine how much of an "enclaver" or "adapter" he becomes.

As for relations between the sexes, romance is possible. There are known cases. A foreigner's youth, good looks, charm and money will go far in this direction, but are not absolutely necessary. There are known cases. At bottom, the Vietnamese woman wants what women everywhere want.

If you are no longer a gay blade of two and twenty, the Vietnamese will understand and sympathize. A girl's smile here can reassure even Methusaleh of his masculinity. Now that the foreign soldier boys have left, this is even truer today.

The bachelor with spiritual needs will find friendly Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Christian houses of worship around Saigon. (Sorry, no synagogues at this time).

Devoting some time to charitable work can be interesting. Outside of being poor or knowing the language, it's one of the best ways of gaining insight into the country.



Foreigners (two at right) tripping the light fantastic in a Saigon club.

Family Planning Is Her Concern

By NGUYEN DUY LIEU

She is a familiar figure in the slum sections of Saigon, this small and comely woman with a face always beaming with *joie de vivre*.

Her name is Mrs. Nguyen Van Bong, widow of the prominent leader of the National Progressist Movement and Rector of the National Institute of Administration who was killed by terrorists in 1971.

Accompanied by friends, she makes frequent visits to crowded residential areas on the waterfront of Nga Tu Bay Hien in the northern section of the city. She and her colleagues in the Protection of Family Happiness Association (PFHA) chat with the wives of workers, distribute contraceptive pills and brochures, explaining all the while the family planning program being implemented by her organization since 1968.

"South Vietnam is not confronted by any imminent threat of overpopulation," she told this reporter in an interview. "However, our organization is trying to help in the social and economic development of the country."

Mrs. Bong said that an uncontrolled population growth, particularly in this war-torn country with a harassed economy, can only increase the already heavy burden of the people.

Mrs. Bong is Deputy Chairman of the PFHA which became affiliated in 1972 to the London-based International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and from which it receives financial and moral support.

The PFHA was not the first to introduce the concept of family planning in South Vietnam. As early as 1967, the Ministry of Public Health entrusted a commission with the task of conducting a survey of population problems and laying the ground-

work for a family planning program.

The commission was created by the ministry which was concerned by the growing rate of abortions, some of which had occurred even in government maternity clinics. In 1968 doctors who were members of the commission formed the nucleus of what is now the PFHA, whose major aim is to help "protect the life of mother and child, and improve the family's living conditions."

Elaborating, the 33-year-old lady said that in 1973, with financial assistance from the IPPF, the PFHA opened an office and a clinic at No. 260 Truong Minh Giang in Saigon. The association trained 25 "motivators" whose work consists of touring the crowded and poor areas, calling on homes and explaining to residents how to implement the family planning program for their own benefit.

During the first eight months of last year, she said, a total of 18,000

women, mostly from the Tan Dinh, Da Kao and Gia Dinh sections of Saigon, went to the PFHA clinic to receive medical care and contraceptive pills and listen to birth control advice by doctors of the association.

These women, Mrs. Bong said, continue to receive pills periodically in their homes from motivators who pay them visits.

100 Pilot Centers

"We are not competing with the government; we are rather complementing its work in this field of family planning," Mrs. Bong said.

She added that since 1969 the government has set up some 100 pilot centers all over the country to propagate the concept of family planning. This work, however, has been carried out in low-profile because people in this country are still very much influenced by a French law enacted in 1920 which forbids talk about birth control, the use of contraceptives, and abortions.

She said that this law, applied in Indochina in 1933, was repealed in France in 1967. "It is rather odd that we of this independent country still have to reckon with it," Mrs. Bong observed.

She refuted the idea that the PFHA contributes to illegal abor-



Mrs. Nguyen Van Bong discoursing on family planning before civic group.

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tion, explaining that the distribution of contraceptive pills by no means indicate propagation of abortion.

The government-run pilot centers are integrated into the Mother and Child Health Program under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Public Health, she said.

This year the PFHA has set up three more clinics in Saigon, An Giang and Da Nang. These clinics are open to interested parties daily after office hours, i.e. 4 p.m., after government centers close. Assistance provided at the PFHA clinics include medical checkup by doctors, advice by motivators, and giving of contraceptives, condoms, injectible preparations, etc.

The women are told they have a choice between pills or natural methods of birth control, but "our clinics do not provide intrauterine devices which is the work of government doctors," Mrs. Bong said.

Mrs. Bong who is also Director of Cultural Activities of the Vietnamese-American Association (VAA), said that the Republic of Vietnam does not need a rigid national policy on family planning as is the case in many Asian countries now.

"Floating" Policy

She suggested a "floating demographic policy" under which the government would not force the population to adopt a strict three or two per cent growth in a given number of years. This does not also mean a free escalation of the growth rate.

"The floating demographic policy," she said, "leaves a family free to determine the number of children it wants in accordance with its own living conditions and its concept of family planning."

Mrs. Bong said the family planning program is not confined to merely providing means for limiting growth rate to an acceptable level benefitting both people and nation. It also means "art de vivre, a renovation of family life to make it properly conform to the realities of life in a world now being strangled by rising inflation and other problems." ●

A SENSE OF MYSTICISM

THE ART OF NGUYEN SIEN

By CHAU KIM DINH

Nguyen Sien belongs to the breed of rare artists with a passion for beauty since infancy, who have practiced their art in the prime of youth, and who persevere in devoting their mature talent and highly creative spirit, despite advanced age, to the service of the Motherland, universal concord and international understanding. With their peace-loving spirit, freedom of expression and continuous cultivation of art they have often served as effective cultural ambassadors of Vietnam in many an art exhibit or fine arts show at home and abroad.

Nguyen Sien impresses me as a gentle, discreet artist and as a versatile painter who not only masterfully handles his brush and palette in oil and aquarelle painting, but also excels in lacquer, silk, and fresco (mural) painting. As a former teacher of painting in his charming native province of Kien Hoa (Ben Tre), he shaped many an artistic career, instilled the sense of Oriental mysticism, traditional beauty and serenity in hundreds of students, and taught the Western concept of balanced composition, harmony of colors, delight in minute details and magic of color and design to thousands of disciples at the Gia Dinh School of Advanced Fine Arts and Applied Arts.

Although Sien's colorful brush has treated us to a festival of willow beauties garbed in flowery *ao dai*, with wonderful composition, the artist seems to be haunted by the recollections of his art student days in North Vietnam. Thus, the silhouette of sacred Mount Ba Vi looming on the horizon of his paintings of Son Tay, graceful and industrious female peasants carrying baskets of rice home after a bumper crop, and girls playing heart shaped *ti ba* or 16-string guitar, convey to art lovers a lasting image of the mystic, poetic

landscape of North Vietnam and the graceful and charming features of Vietnamese beauties.

Nguyen Sien also seems to be haunted by the intricate decor of *hat boi* classical theater as shown in some of his paintings. The artist was a renowned decorator and art director during the heydays of the *cai luong* for such famed theatrical troupes as the Nam Phi, Phung Hao, Nam Chau, Song Moi in the thirties and early forties. Perhaps, it was connected with his first love of a stage beauty, the budding but desperate admiration of a talented actress for a promising artist.

Memorable Event

The most memorable event in Nguyen Sien's life was his contribution to the pavilion of Vietnam at the Osaka International Fair in 1970—a giant lacquer painting depicting the cultural heritage of Vietnam and the customs of the country completed in the record time of one month in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Another memorable event was his exhibit in 1970 of some 15 oil paintings on imperial, poetic and traditionalist Hue, including a worshipping scene at Hon Chen Temple on picturesque Belvedere Hill and the stately and serenity-inspiring gate at the royal tomb of Tu Duc. The exhibit at the National Library of Saigon of some 70 paintings was opened by President Nguyen Van Thieu. It was sponsored by the late Minister in charge of Culture Mai Tho Truyen and attended by ranking government officials and art circles of Saigon.

One of the artist's happy recollections of his one-month stay in Japan was that moment when a pretty Japanese girl student from Kyoto University told him in halting Vietnamese, "I have great

admiration for you." The Japanese beauty apparently wanted to show her admiration and appreciation of the cultural heritage of Vietnam after viewing the art works of Nguyen Sien at the Vietnamese pavilion at the Osaka International Fair.

In a sad tone, Nguyen Sien told this writer how a sudden gust of wind had carried away his sketch of a Paris scene while he was painting on the banks of the Seine. Mournfully he said, "The Seine has buried deep in her heart one of my favorite creations." He was also gravely affected by the loss of a thick roll of some 100 crayon and charcoal sketches of Paris scenes at the Foyer des Etudiants, near the famed Panthéon monument. The thought of these two unhappy incidents lingers and visibly marred his otherwise happy, and memorable 6-month perfection course at the Higher National School of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1963.

Adverting to his days in La Ville Lumière, he recounts how he was awarded 2,500 francs for decorating "La Pagode de Jade" with purely traditional Vietnamese motifs, using clouds, dragons, phoenix, cranes, etc. This *de luxe* Vietnamese restaurant was situated in the heart of the bustling Quartier Latin. Nguyen Sien is as proud of this work as Chagall was of his decoration on the ceiling of the famed Paris l'Opéra. Nguyen Sien belongs to the neo-impressionist school. Most of his works bear a profound imprint of Vietnamese traditional spirit from subject composition to expression and atmosphere. After more than thirty years of a long and fruitful artistic career, Nguyen Sien has hundreds of oil, aquarelle, lacquer, and silk works all over the world which are dearly treasured by art collectors.

Sien's works were displayed at the Chicago Fair in 1937 and at

an art exhibit at Tokyo in 1941 when he was a student of the Hanoi Fine Arts College. In 1950, he participated in the art exhibit at the Vatican in Rome. He was awarded the silver medal for an art show at the Alliance Française, Saigon, in 1955, and won the gold medal for his exhibit during the observance of the Cultural Week sponsored by the government in Saigon in 1956.

The former professor of the Gia Dinh Advanced School of Fine Arts is also famed for paintings of a religious and traditional character. He seems to be deeply influenced by the old days of heroic, religious, and independent Vietnam as shown in many paintings of ancient, mystical pagodas, thoughtful turbaned letters, "ong do" masters, lotus and fruit offerings by pretty pilgrims, worshippers bowing or prostrate before Buddha or divinities. But the artist's favorite subjects are

peasant girls carrying paddy, women planting rice, beauties playing the guitar, mothers breast-feeding babies. In a world torn by economic strife and ideological dissension, the subjects of the artist, especially girls, seem to dream of heavenly bliss and move and live in universal concord, in peace and harmony. The artist has achieved all this with his fine composition, richness of color, profusion of details and careful, happy choice of subjects.

A Comforting Oasis

In short, one may say that Nguyen Sien's art works are gratifying to the eye—a kind of comforting oasis in the hot, dreary, and strifetorn world we live in.

The artist was born in 1916 at Ben Tre (Kien Hoa), graduated from the Gia Dinh School of Decorative Arts in 1940, and from the Hanoi College of Fine Arts in 1945. Nguyen Sien first taught art

in his native province at the Ben Tre High School from 1955 to 1957 and served as art professor at the School of Applied Arts of Bien Hoa for over two years. From 1959 to June 1972, the artist taught at the Gia Dinh Advanced School of Fine Arts and Decoration.

He was a member of the jury in the Spring Art Festival organized by the Cultural Affairs Committee in 1959, member of the board of judges at the painting competition in the National Library and art contest sponsored by President Nguyen Van Thieu in 1971. In 1970, he was awarded the second class Medal of Culture and Education by the late Secretary of State in charge of Cultural Affairs Mai Tho Truyen.

Nguyen Sien has retired from active teaching but continues his creative art work in lacquer, oil, and water color in his modest home in front of the Cau Bong Parish Church in Gia Dinh.





VITAL FOR THE



"Male and Female" (above) and "Thai Mieu Royal Court in Hue" (below) are samples of Sien oil art. "Countryside," "Angkor Ruins" and "Vung Tau" are lacquer works.



The object of the conservation work is to preserve the types in an area which the potential of what plant rice farmers are using. It is possible that some obscure forms found in hereditarily

VITAL FOR THE FUTURE

A RICE GERM PLASM

South Vietnam will soon have a rice germ plasm or seed bank. An extensive nationwide field collection of rice seeds for the bank will take place from late November 1974 through February 1975.

A seed bank is a room where many varieties of viable seeds can be kept under controlled humidity and temperature for three to ten years.

New high yielding rice varieties have been accepted at such a rapid pace in Vietnam that it is feared that if the collection is not made this year, many traditional varieties might be lost.

In July, Dr. A. T. Perez, field advisor for the International Rice Research Institute's (IRRI) world collection; Dr. R. P. Bosshart, agronomist and team leader for IRRI's Cooperative Vietnam Rice Research Project, and Truong Phuoc Nien, chief of the Rice Service, RVN Ministry of Agriculture, started the wheels rolling by making a survey trip to various government research stations and province offices.

They discussed details of the collection plan with local Agricultural Services chiefs and others who will take part in this monumental task. Germ plasm collection is not haphazard; it is a highly systematic operation, and entails cooperation of farmers, scientists, and government officials.

Plasm Objective

The objective of germ plasm conservation is to preserve all rice types in any designated area, including those of unknown genetic potential. Scientists do not know what plant characteristics future rice generations may need.

It is possible, for example, that some obscure low-yielding variety found in Vietnam may have hereditary characteristics which

appear useless now but could be of great value to farmers in other countries or to meet future needs in rice plant breeding. In fact one Vietnamese rice type, "Trang Tep" which is resistant to blast disease was one of the plants used in the breeding program which produced IR-20 rice.

It is thought that varieties brought from China hundreds of years ago are still being planted in South Vietnam. One thing that Vietnamese refugees bring with them, no matter what else is left behind, is rice seeds. Therefore, some varieties are being planted today that were brought from North Vietnam when farmers fled south as refugees.

Refugee resettlement officials assisting in the collection will identify villagers who have been resettled. They may be planting seeds from remote provinces which have never been previously classified.

Special Lookout

Field collectors will be on special lookout for strains that can tolerate certain conditions such as salt, deep water, cold, acid or alkaline soils, those that have resistance to pests or diseases, or that have desirable eating qualities and aroma.

If rice varieties with these genetic traits are preserved and used in plant breeding programs they can help meet the world's increasing good demands. The collectors will ask the farmer who provides a variety why he grew it, thus obtaining first-hand information on the specific traits of that variety.

Vietnamese farmers have been planting high-yielding varieties of rice since 1968. This has increased their yield and profit, but at the same time some traditional and wild varieties are being wiped out.

When a rice strain disappears, the invaluable germ plasm, which carries hereditary traits from one generation to the next, obviously vanishes.

Collecting seeds for research is not a new idea in Vietnam. For at least 25 years the Rice Service and various other organizations and individuals have been collecting and multiplying seeds.

Plant Pathologist

Since 1969 one person who has been especially active in seed collection is Miss Tran Thi Le Chi, plant pathologist for Vietnam's Rice Research Institute.

During an AID-sponsored training course in the Philippines, one of Chi's professors was Dr. T. T. Chang, who is responsible for IRRI's world collection of rice varieties. He carefully instructed her on all aspects of rice-seed gathering. After returning to her homeland, she rekindled interest in Vietnam's existing seed collection.

The ever present war and heavy fighting did not deter Chi and her staff. They continued to add to the existing collection and even managed to get several rare upland rice specimens from resettled Montagnard or mountain people.

A seed collection of over 800 varieties is being maintained every year in research plots. In the past, the majority of seeds collected for study were, of course, the best producers available. In this new systematic collection all varieties, including poor yielders, will be gathered.

Nationwide Effort

At least 100 people will be involved in South Vietnam's nationwide endeavor. The government agencies which will cooperate in giving assistance to the project



Dr. A.T. Perez, Dr. R.P. Bosshart, and Mr. Truong Phuoc Nien discuss seed collection at National Crops Research Training Center in My Tho.

include the Ministry of Agriculture, Rice Service, Institute of Agricultural Research, Plant Protection Service, Ministry of Education, University of Can Tho, and USAID-sponsored IRRI contract personnel. In addition, the Korean Agricultural Technical Mission may participate. Fifty-seven fourth-year agriculture students from Can Tho University will gain field experience by helping the regular staff in field work and in classifying the many seeds.

The actual collecting for the bank will be done by special cadres from each village or hamlet of the 44 provinces of Vietnam. After gathering the seeds from the farmers, the cadres will dry the panicles under the sun for four to five days, thresh the seeds, and place them in paper bags which have been specially printed with identification data; insecticide will be added to each sample. Plastic bags cannot be used because the moisture in the seeds might cause them to germinate. The cadres will then deliver the bags to the province Agriculture Service chief and ultimately they will arrive at the Research Institute where the genetic stock officer will process and register them. They will then

be placed in the seed bank for storage.

As a precaution, samples of all varieties collected will be sent to the Philippines to the IRRI world germ plasm bank for safekeeping. Similar collections have been started in Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand, Nepal, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh. It will take at least two years to complete the collection, depending on the response obtained.

Evaluation

Dr. Perez will return to Vietnam in December and spend two months assisting in the mechanics of field operations and advising on the evaluation and maintenance of this valuable germ plasm. Dr. Bosshart, who has been working with the Ministry of Agriculture on an AID-sponsored program designed to develop a trained staff for plant breeding and research, will also help in coordinating the collection work. Dr. Bosshart said that the seed bank will be invaluable in the future when students studying plant breeding outside of the country return.

The AID program calls for six people to receive advanced training in 1975. It is hoped that the present research program will be expanded to a full-fledged plant breeding program by 1980.

Dr. Perez said that everyone he and Nien contacted was very enthusiastic about the seed bank. After the rice harvest in December, they expect to have many helping hands from all over the country to make the seed bank a reality.

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An Actress with a Tradition

By NGUYEN DUY LIEU

Not many in South Vietnam are unaware of Miss Kim Cuong, the famed stage and film actress who first appeared on stage when she was seven.

Born 37 years ago in Saigon, Miss Kim Cuong is what she proudly describes as "the product of a family composed entirely of stage performers."

"My grandmother owned a theater here, my father was the



Actress Kim Cuong comes from a long line of performers on the stage.

director of the now defunct Phuoc Cuong "Cai Luong" (Vietnamese renovated theater) troupe. My mother, Bay Nam, although now in her sixties, still performs on television programs and films," Miss Kim Cuong said in an interview.

She, however, forgot to mention her aunt, the renowned Cai Luong actress Nam Phi who was invited by the French government to perform in Paris during an international trade exhibition in 1933.

"I have it in my blood," she said over a glass of coke. "And once

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you have it you hardly can get rid of it."

Recently married to a young journalist from Hue, Miss Kim Cuong finds it a duty to keep working hard because "acting is something you must practice almost continually if you do not want to be rejected by audiences and relegated to oblivion."

She added, "You cannot trust much on memory and you must studiously learn the script before you enter the stage."

Although fame and fortune are her lot, Miss Kim Cuong remains as modest and simple as many of the 50 dramas she has written and played, either on stage or over the national television. That is what has won her a large audience all over South Vietnam where her popularity continues to grow, particularly in the rural areas.

Water-Hyacinth

Simple dramas? Miss Kim Cuong gives main focus to love—love between wife and husband, love among friends, love of the countryside and above all, maternal love.

Two young people meet, then love. But they cannot get married because they are not of the same social level (Or the man is forced by his parents to marry a rich girl next-door). Then the abandoned woman leaves town, seeking solace after her broken love in the countryside where she lives in misery and later gives birth to a child begotten of her lover. But in the end they are reunited and happiness comes to them, true lovers.

Kim Cuong also gives prominence to maternal love, a favorite theme of many novels in ancient or contemporary Vietnam. For Kim Cuong, the mother must be something like an angel for whom no sacrifice is great however harsh to give her children happiness. Slavery, imprisonment, hardships of all kinds do not scare her in her maternal duties.

Almost all of Kim Cuong's plays end in beauty and the knot, often too simplistic and unrealistic by Western standard, often moves the spectators—particularly women

ones—in such a way that, in some instances, they weep along with Kim Cuong who often portrays dramatic characters.

Asked why she limits her talent to writing only such simple plays, Kim Cuong said her concept of the performing art is to try to convey to audiences "the simple feelings, the secret aspirations that they harbor in their inner-selves which they cannot express through deeds." For traditional Vietnamese society the good must be rewarded and the bad punished.

"We try to act like the water-hyacinth, which floats as high as the water level," Kim Cuong said.

Besides playing the leading role in some 50 stage dramas, Kim Cuong also has starred over 30 films, five of them produced by her own firm—the Kim Cuong Film Company.

One of these films, "Chiec Bong Ben Duong" (The Silhouette by the Roadside), a color feature running 90-minutes, was presented at the Seventh Asian Film Festival in Taipei last May. The VN\$ 24,000,000 film won her the "Best Actress" award and the film got the "Best Dialogue" title.

It is the story of two women who love an army officer—one is his wife and the second his lover whom he meets while serving in an outpost in the Central Highlands. The lover, portrayed by Kim Cuong, later abandons the

officer "out of honesty vis-à-vis the wife," not knowing that she is pregnant by him. The officer is reunited with his wife who also gets a child from him. Ten years later his lover meets the wife in Saigon and the animosity between the two women persists. Only after the officer is killed in battle and only when both rivals visit his grave do they realize reconciliation is best for their grief.

The film, which Kim Cuong said she is "very proud of," was a financial loss, however, because it brought in only a gross VN\$28 million, half of which had to be paid to exhibitors.

Social Worker

Not content solely with show business, Miss Kim Cuong is engaged in social work and this, through a column in the Dien Tin (Telegram) daily newspaper of Saigon.

Through this column—"Gia Dinh Tinh Thuong" (The Family of Love) Kim Cuong communicates with her fans, mainly young high school students across the Republic, with whom she discusses her films and plays, or social problems. She has formed a group of fans with whom she visits orphanages and hospitals in Saigon or surrounding provinces on week-ends. Through her intervention, some 40 doctors have been providing free consultation services for an average of 200 poor patients a week. ●



Kim Cuong in a scene from Asian Festival winner "Chiec Bong Ben Duong."

A LANDMARK OF INDOCHINA

SAIGON'S "CONTINENTAL"

By DANIEL CAMERON

Saigon's Hotel Continental Palace, a living landmark of Indochina, has survived at least three wars, two cease-fires, one emperor, street demonstrations, a long array of diplomats, tourists, foreign correspondents and elements of at least half a dozen foreign armies.

Monsieur Philippe Franchini, who became the hotel's *propriétaire* in 1966 when his father died, explains the Continental philosophy in a word: adaptation.

"The Continental is always adapting itself to changing times," he said.

Artist-Owner

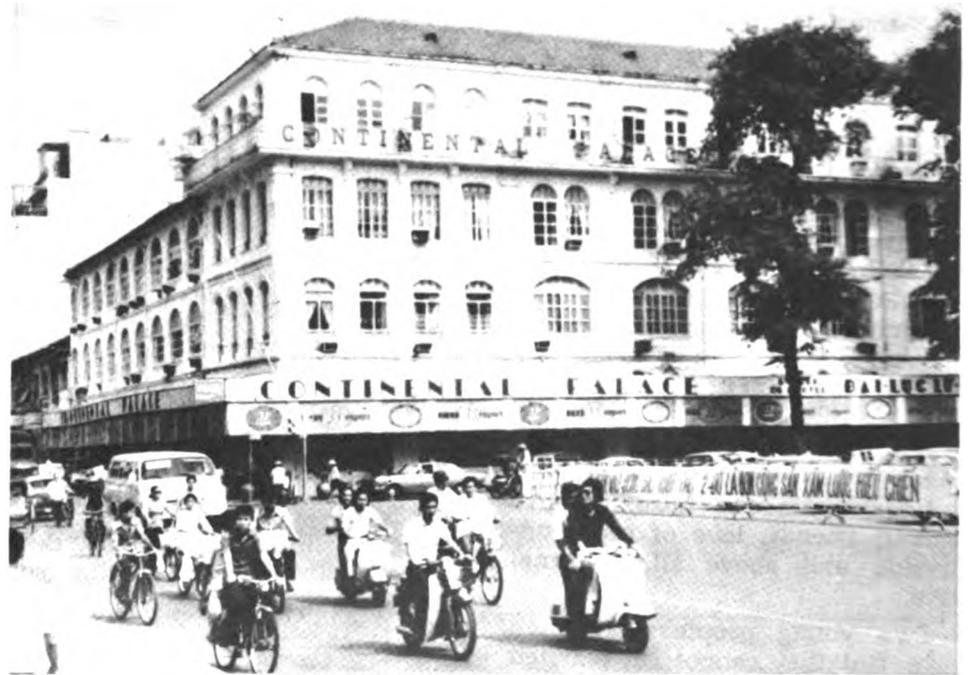
Monsieur Franchini, a man of French nationality and Eastern vision, is able to adapt like his Corsican father did before him.

"We must scent the new conditions, the dangers and so forth," he said.

Monsieur Franchini is also an artist and has encouraged young Saigon painters to show their work in his La Dolce Vita restaurant gallery next door to the hotel. A young, urbane 40, he exudes old-innkeeper friendliness, enjoys giving personal attention to guests, and takes pride in his old hotel. He visits Paris for his painting exhibitions, but does not plan to reside there.

"I was born in Vietnam and want to stay here. My mother is Vietnamese and my wife is Chinese."

Hotel director Le Huu Loi, 66, has seen more of its history than any other living member of the staff. Born in Hanoi, he directed the Continental's restaurant from 1928 until 1966 when he became



The Hotel Continental Palace in downtown Saigon, a story of durability.

partowner of the establishment. Even today the rotund Mr. Loi can be seen inspecting the premises, hands behind his back, always wearing a tie, white shirt and white trousers. Passers-by usually take him for the owner.

The Société des Grands Hôtels Indochinois built the Continental Palace back in the *Belle Époque* days of 1885. The Continental became part of its chain that included the Hotel Royale (today the Hotel Phnom in Phnom Penh), the Angkor Hotel and other hotels in Vung Tau, Hue, Qui Nhon and Hanoi. In 1932 the Société went bankrupt. The father of Monsieur Franchini acquired the Continental and also the Hotel Majestic in Saigon.

The hotel may be an anomaly in the era of jets, ferro-concrete and Mr. Hilton, but it still attracts

sophisticated visitors. The modern executive will find hotels more up-to-date and suitable for his needs, even in relatively undeveloped Saigon, but people who have the time and desire to savor the leisurely atmosphere of an older Indochina still go to the Continental, where Graham Greene or even Somerset Maugham would not look at all out of place. A number of foreign correspondents, world travellers and French writers are especially fond of the Continental.

Monsieur Franchini reminisced about the old days.

"Corsican Club"

"They called the Continental a Corsican club in my father's day," he said, laughing.

Corsicans like Monsieur Fran-

chini's father settled here because of their island's poverty and their adaptability.

"Corsicans are something like the Chinese in their ability to adapt. And if they know a grave is waiting for them in Corsica when they become old, they are peaceful and quiet. They want to be buried in Corsica."

Corsicans, he said, like theater, and the French Theater (today the National Assembly Building) was right across the street from the Continental. Corsicans among the French community were also stigmatized with Mafia connections, in the way that Italian-Americans are in the United States.

"When my father and his friends, including the mayor and the judge, drank *pastis* together at the Continental, some people seemed to think they were con-ning and plotting. Actually they were only discussing the horse races."

Monsieur Franchini said that a type of Corsican Mafia did arrive here, but not until the 50's and 60's, long after the arrival of his father's generation.

"These Corsicans brought French prostitutes with them."

But this Corsican service to the French cause ended when the French went home. The Mafia types, he said, went home too.

During the past quarter century Saigon has known terrorist incidents, but the Continental has never taken the obvious security measures.

A Place To Be Free

"Here is the city's only open-air terrace and restaurant which has never had grenade screens. My father wanted to keep free. This was the only place to be free. He was suspected of giving money to many sides, of course."

Saigon was a *ville de province*, a small town by megalopolitan standards, though events have thrust it into the global stage.

"In 1945 and '46 the Vietminh led big anti-French demonstrations on the street outside the Continental, but they never went inside."

In 1945 the Continental staff went on strike in a show of sympathy with the anti-French demonstrations. This left the French guests with no alternative. The guests ran the hotel.

"It was amazing," Monsieur Franchini said. "You saw the French working in the kitchen and cleaning the rooms."

For fifty years the hotel has had an annex across the street, the Annexe Perchoir. Graham Greene, British author of the most famous Vietnam novel yet published, "The

dellos away from downtown Saigon. The idea was to keep this central area respectable. With bordellos away in the background, the French stressed other amenities in the downtown area. Those were tango days.

"The roof of our Annexe Perchoire offered a restaurant and dancing. It was very formal."

Monsieur Franchini's La Dolce Vita restaurant is located next door to the Continental. This restaurant used to be a combination dancing cabaret and tea *salon*.



The Continental's Lotus Garden reminds the visitor of the countryside.

Quiet American," lived in the Annexe.

"Later he moved into an apartment near here, close to Hai Ba Trung Street."

During the colonial war, the French military authorities permitted no soldiers in the Continental Terrace. Only officers, with or without their courtesans, were allowed at the tables.

During the recent war, bars with American G.I. customers proliferated in downtown Saigon. But the French approach to soldierly needs differed from the American.

"The French concept was organized brothels instead of bars."

The French erected their bor-

As a cabaret it operated from 10 p.m. till 2 a.m. The clientele, on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 4 to 6 in the afternoon, gathered for tea, French pastries (*gateaux*) and dancing.

"It was very amusing, and the decor was very pretty, with many parrots."

This tea-dancing ended during World War II, with the Japanese occupation.

On the sidewalks during the French colonial war tourists often got an extra bonus, viewing brawls between French navy men and Foreign Legionnaires.

"Those *légionnaires* were tough guys, you know. As a precaution-

... an old and sentimental staff

any measure the bar in La Dolce Vita was made of cement."

One can still see cement bars in various French establishments around town today.

Although Monsieur Franchini has exhibited his paintings in Paris, Italy and the United States, he gives no exhibitions in his gallery at La Dolce Vita restaurant. Standing beneath an anti-war collage he once exhibited in Hong Kong, he explained, "during my more controversial days."

"Members of the Young Vietnamese Painter's Association like to exhibit here. They are nationalist painters and feel free here. I don't want to be a big brother."

Monsieur Franchini frequently shows Saigon to French writers and other visitors.

"The French never forget Indochina. Many writers still come here."

For the French, he believes, it is "une histoire d'amour."



Director Le Huu Loi.

Asked to comment on the cease-fire agreement and its aftermath, Monsieur Franchini expressed cautious, non-political optimism.

"I think the Vietnamese have a change. It is hard to say. Predictions are very difficult. So many things could happen. You begin to understand this country if you are prudent."

He has received an interesting offer for the hotel, but "my old employees are very sentimental and did not want me to sell."

Monsieur Franchini seems content to remain *propriétaire* of the Continental Palace.

"For me it's the atmosphere. Newsmen find it that way, too. Eighty per cent of the guests here are my friends. The staff is like a big family. The directors, servants and secretaries have been here a long time, even their sons have come..."

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Grandma's stories

A GENIE GUARDS A TREASURE

By NGHIEM XUAN THIEN

He was born in the Year of the Cock. Because his father was an illiterate and unimaginative peasant, unable to find for him a respectable name in Chinese words, as was the custom in old Vietnam, he was given the prosaic name of Dau, which was simply the name of the year in which he was born.

His mother was my newly-born sister's wet nurse, and for this, enjoyed many privileges that few servants could dream of. My baby sister was so used to her, because she sucked her milk, that she did not stop crying day and night, whenever her nurse had to go for family reasons to her home for a few days. When the nurse was with us, she constantly held my sister in her arms, and thrust her breast into the baby's little mouth any time she cried for whatever reason. This was very efficient in calming her, because with a mouth crammed with her nurse's breast, my baby sister was unable to cry, and given a little time, infallibly dropped off to sleep. I did not know whether my mother was aware of this little trick, but she seemed to have no objection to it, because it shut up my sister and spared my mother of concern over my sister's cries.

The Nurse's Son

As she was indispensable to the family peace, the nurse was allowed, at her request, to bring her little boy Dau to live at her side. This was a way of inducing her to stay in my mother's service as long as she was needed.

Dau was a boy of 10, and he was exactly my age. Quickly he became my playmate. Not only did I like him. I actually admired him, because though not older than myself, he knew plenty of things and games of which I never had an idea prior to his arrival. He could make a kite and fly it. Sometimes he attached a small whistle to it, and it was a won-

derful thing for me to hear its monotonous sound as it soared into the air. He could make dolls out of clay from the border of our fish-pond and I was fascinated by the elephants and the horses fashioned by his hands. He could climb to the top of a tree to get birds' nests, sometimes full of little eggs as large as my small thumbs. What pleased me most was when he caught a big toad with a small ball of tobacco dropped near our house: the ugly amphibian swallowed it, fell half-conscious and was easily seized and put under a large earthen bowl that, at his suggestion, I pirated from my mother's cupboard.

One day, with the nurse's consent, Dau was put to work to be worth his daily rice. He was to take care of our two buffaloes that were idle because the tilling of our rice-fields was over. For the job, he was given an additional monthly pay of 2 piasters, which was a handsome amount about 50 years ago, when a hundred kilos of rice cost about 3 to 4 piasters, instead of the 20,000 or 25,000 it now costs. His mother was pleased with his job and the money given him which, added to her monthly salary of 5 piasters, sufficed to support her family.

Every morning, when dawn began to cast its light over the pastoral world, Dau got up, quickly breakfasted with 3 bowls of rice and small pieces of salted fish, drank his large cup of hot tea, went to the stable and slowly drove the buffaloes to the field. There, he let them graze on the grass-covered piece of land bordering the rice-fields. In the meantime, he would join other boys, buffalo tenders like him, and play all sorts of games popular among country children of his age. Sometimes, they were so absorbed in play that they were not aware of their beasts having trespassed into the rice-fields and eaten rice-seedlings until some passer-by raised cries of alarm, bringing the boys back to their job. All play stopped and the beasts were driven back to their grassy knolls with bamboo branch whips.

At noon, when his buffaloes had eaten their fill, Dau took them to the nearby village pond where they wallowed and drank the muddy water under a scorching sun. There they stayed till late afternoon, when Dau would take them to the grazing ground again to feed until sunset.

Food Carrier for Dau

It was me who, after long and patient supplications with my mother, was given the pleasant job of bringing food and drink to Dau at noon-time. I was very proud to be given a bamboo basket full of his ration for the day: 3 bowls of rice, bits of salted fish, vegetables, and a bottle of hot tea. After lunch, I would start on my little trip to the rice-field, my basket of provisions under my arm, and happy to be with my friend and companion. I must say that I missed him very much the whole morning, and always waited impatiently the moment when I could go to him.

He was accustomed to see me coming to him, when near the rest-station (a small brick-house built by the village in the middle of a road bordering the rice-field, allowing people shelter and rest when

Dau offends genie in a nightmare

needed) the shadow of a centenary tree was round—as peasants say—i.e. when it was the shortest and lay around the foot of the tree. This was for him an unmistakable sign that his lunch-time had come.

Standing in front of the doorless house, he would greet me with a broad smile, showing his white and even teeth, run towards me, relieve me of my basket, and ask me questions about my mother's mood, his mother's appetite, and my sister's behaviour. We would enter the rest-station, he would sit on the long brick bench, open the basket and invite me to share his lunch, but on my refusal he would start to eat. I would stay in the front part of the house, face to the rice-field and enjoy the pleasant breeze that almost always blew over the countryside.

I was allowed to stay with him till dusk, when he took the buffaloes home. In the meantime, after he had lunched, I played with him the games he had taught me. When we were tired, we sat down on the brick bench and he would tell me terrifying ghost stories he had learned from his village elders who took pleasure in scaring him out of his wits with all sorts of stories about demons and ghosts, some of them with tongues of fire as long as bamboo poles, some with teeth like boar tusks. Sometimes, his stories so frightened me that I slept badly at night. Once I had a nightmare in which I saw a demon with long horns and fangs who attacked me and licked me with his long tongue of fire. Often I woke up the whole house with screams and clung to my mother, who would rush to my bed and calm me while I panted, perspired and shivered. It did not take long for my mother to know the cause of my nightmare, and Dau was spanked for having told me ghost-stories that frightened but pleased me. This did not stop his relating such stories when the opportunity demanded.

Dau's Nightmare

One day, he had a nightmare. It was a little before dawn. Everybody was fast asleep. Suddenly he screamed, wept, moaned, and uttered incoherent words. His mother who slept on a bed nearby, woke up, startled. She dashed to his bed, shook him and tried to calm him down. She did not succeed in awakening him, until the moment my mother inquired what was the matter. Dau woke up, panting and sweating. He brushed his tears with the back of his right hand, and after a while, explained he had seen a ghost, a Genie to be exact, who appeared to him as a beautiful young girl, dressed in red silk. The Genie had taken him by the hand, led him to a garden, and shown him a spot where, she said, a fabulous treasure had been hidden for centuries. "I am a Genie entrusted with safeguarding a treasure,"

Dau reported her words, "and for many centuries nobody has offered me incense and food. The owner of the treasure went back to China and has not returned. He must have died because nobody no longer cares for me. I have gone hungry for hundreds of years. If someone were to offer me regularly incense, flowers, fruits and candlelight every 1st and 15th day of the lunar month, he will relieve me of an uncomfortable situation. In return, I shall pay him something that will generously compensate him for his time and expenditures. This is a message for all you know. Do not forget it."

Dau paused for breath, then continued: "After these words, the girl let go my hand and went away. I was so captivated by all she had said, and was eager to check on it. So as soon as she turned her back, I took a spade that somebody had left on a flower-bed and began to dig the spot she had pointed to me, when suddenly I felt a sharp pain on my shoulder. I turned round and saw the girl. She had struck me with a rod. She looked daggers at me and in an angry voice berated me for seeking the treasure without her permission. Then she struck me again with that terrible rod that cut into my flesh and made me cry with pain and terror. You came in time to save me from her fury when you woke me up."

My mother was silent. She was upset by Dau's story. Fear and anxiety were in her eyes. After a long while she said: "Dau, you have angered the Genie by attempting to desecrate her domain. You must implore her pardon. Today your mother must prepare an altar on which she will offer on your behalf flowers, fruits, incense and candle-light to appease her wrath. If you do not, she may kill you in a short time."

Dau's mother, terrified by my mother's words, hastily made the offering. This did not prevent Dau from being ill for three days, during which his mother assiduously prayed morning and night before an altar in our garden, imploring the Genie's pardon. Only on the 4th day did Dau recover. Then his mother had him kneel before the altar and humbly thank the Genie for her compassion.

One evening, while I was at my grandmother's house, Dau's story came to my mind. I related it to her and asked how was it that the Chinese could have their treasures guarded by Genies, till "called for."

Appease the Genie

My grandmother remained silent a long while. She seemed to be making an effort to recollect what she knew about the stories of hidden treasures, then looking affectionately at me, said:

"My dear child, I am not astonished by what happened to Dau. On the contrary, it confirms what I heard in my youth about treasures that I am sure exist in our country. You know, many Chinese merchants have grown very rich in Vietnam. They are hard-working, clever, thrifty, and many of them are versed in witchcraft and magic. They come from the strange 'Middle Kingdom' or 'Empire of the Middle

Grandma's cousin tells of a genie

Flower.' They are said to know plenty of mysterious things and are able to conjure ghosts, spirits and demons and have them follow their orders. Nevertheless, this is not performed without some danger to them and, like tamers who can command wild beasts but who sometimes are devoured by the beasts, they also may be destroyed by these supernatural beings who at times rebel against them."

Grandma said when she was about my age, she had a female cousin who used to go very early in the morning to the central market, three miles away from our village. This cousin brought there the products of her orchard and poultry yard. In turn, she bought pork, vegetables, and clothing for resale at the village market. She was grandma's senior by half a dozen years, but she was as clever as a woman ten years older.

One day, she set out on her daily trip, carrying on her shoulder a long bamboo pole, to each end of which was suspended a large basket full of products for sale.

Darkness still lingered over the whole village, but she was so accustomed to her route that she walked sprightly, balancing her two baskets which emitted squeaking sounds in cadence. Once out of the village, she could make out the dark outlines of large trees in the distance. Some faraway villages appeared as large serrated black blots on the horizon lightly tinged with orange and red hues. This was a sign that the weather would be fine, the cousin thought, especially after a pleasant breeze blew gently, producing ripples on the village pond that reflected the half-light coming from the sky.

Girl and Flock of Ducks

Suddenly, her attention was attracted by something that looked like brilliant small specks running one after the other on her right, and following these dots was a large and luminous yellow mass. Amazed, she hastened her pace towards those strange things that kept moving toward the path she was taking. And lo. when she got near enough, they turned out to be life-size ducks running one after the other as fast as they could, some forcing their way through the dense crowd of their fellow-creatures, noisy with characteristic quacking. And what stupefied her was all of them were of solid gold, yellow and fascinatingly brilliant! Behind this concentration of golden ducks, walked a beautiful young girl in a red robe and white silk trousers. Her sandals were of yellow silk, embroidered with silver threads. In her hand was a flexible rod and from time to time she goaded the ducks to a quicker pace. Her gait was graceful, supple, and she seemed to walk on air, a few inches above the ground.

Astounded and frightened, grandma's cousin hid herself behind a large tree, holding her breath in order to avoid notice by the beautiful girl, who, she was certain, must have come from the other world. She had heard people say that genies, gods and goddesses used to strike death on any mortal who happened to see them and who might divulge their secrets.

The ducks were now only a few meters from her. There were hundreds of them, all glittering gold. She could see the young girl close enough to guess that she must be about sixteen. She was of fascinating beauty, very rare in this world. On her neck, was a pearl necklace to which hung a small purse of blue brocade. It took the whole group about an hour to disappear from sight and when the quacking of the ducks died in the distance, dawn was coming, and the sun slowly appeared in the crimson horizon.

Three Gold Feathers

Grandma's cousin heaved a sigh of relief. But she wondered whether she was not the victim of a hallucination, or worse, of a spell of witchcraft she had often heard about from peasants telling ghosts stories or fairy tales. A few moments later, she shook off her consternation and fright, and resumed on her way to the market. When she reached the path taken by the gold ducks, she saw something glittering in the grass. She picked it up. It was a feather of solid gold. Her heart beating like a drum, she followed in the wake of those wonderful birds and picked up two more gold feathers.

Overexcited by her find, she hastily returned to her home. She rushed into her mother's room. The old lady was still in bed.

"Mamma, look at what I found this morning, on my way to the market!" She handed her the three gold feathers and, trembling with emotion, related what she had seen. When she finished, she added: "Mother, the girl was so beautiful, so lovely, so graceful that I believe she must have emerged from one of those marvelous Chinese paintings I have seen on the streets of Hanoi, when Tet (New Lunar Year festival) was coming."

Her mother took the three gold feathers, trying to estimate their weight in her right hand and lost in thought. After a long while she said: "These feathers are of solid gold. And you have met a genie, created by witchcraft, to whom a great treasure has been entrusted. When I was of your age, my mother often told me the story of fabulous treasures owned by very rich Chinese, and entrusted to the safe-keeping of genies created from virgins about 16 years old. Be seated, my child. I shall tell you one of these stories, that has so impressed me which I always have in mind."

In Hanoi, the capital, a long time ago, there was a very wealthy Chinese, she began. His house was an immense palace, surrounded by a very large garden, enclosed by tall stone-walls. He had scores of servants, men and women. With him lived his

wife and eight children, as well as three brothers and their families. One day, he got a message from his father in China who wanted all of them to return home because their mother was dying. In Asia, it was a pious and imperative obligation for children to be at their parents' death-bed and to attend their funeral. When the children were faraway, the funeral was delayed for many months to await their arrival.

So the Chinese rich merchant and his kin made preparations for their return to China, keeping the motive of their journey secret and to be disclosed only long after they were gone.

He bought a beautiful girl about sixteen years old from a modest family of peasants, who believed that she would become his concubine. But they were mistaken. The girl was given a very comfortable room in her buyer's home. She enjoyed respect and consideration from everybody in the family. She was offered the best of food and clothes. Nobody was allowed to enter her room, except two maids specially assigned to her service.

A special altar was set up near her room, and daily, in the morning and evening, incense was burned on it, and prayers and incantations were said by the Chinese himself, who was known in the neighbourhood as a great magician. This lasted 50 days. During this time, the Chinese sent his agents throughout the country to buy all the gold they could find. He had this gold melted and cast in the form of ducks.

Brought to a Cave

Then on the 50th day (in countries influenced by Chinese culture, the number 50 is important in many operations at night fall), the Chinese and his brothers took the girl and the gold to a secret cave. At dawn, they returned to their house without the girl and the gold. It was rumored subsequently that they had left the girl and their gold in the cave, and using magic, had converted the girl into a genie endowed with supernatural powers and whose duty was to protect their fabulous treasure, until their return from the long journey to China.

Since then, it was believed that when the weather was fine, people who accidentally benighted in the rice-field could see the spirit of the girl, now a genie, strolling about the countryside, driving a herd of gold animals entrusted to her care, allowing them to breathe fresh air they did not have in the stuffy cave.

The mother continued: "My child, it was certainly she, or one of her kind you saw last night. I must tell you not to keep these gold feathers without her permission. She will kill you if you do. Genies of her kind are merciless to anybody who dare offend them. Make an altar in our garden, facing the direction you saw her, put flowers, fruits, meat and burn incense on it. Then pray, imploring her pardon for picking up what was hers, and then ask her to allow you possession of these feathers. One way or another, she will let you know her decision. No doubt about this, inasmuch as she already appeared before your own eyes last night."

My cousin did what her mother told her. But she was so agitated and frightened that she was restless the whole day. That night, she constantly tossed on her bed.

Suddenly her room seemed to be illuminated by thousands of candles, and pervaded by the scent of flowers and incense. Then a young and beautiful girl in a red robe wearing a pearl necklace to which was attached a small purse of blue brocade appeared. It was the same girl she saw in the previous night before dawn. The girl smiled and said: "Don't be afraid, my little sister. I come to you as a friend. You have great affinity with me, and you can, when needed, serve as my medium. I am a genie entrusted with the safekeeping of a fabulous treasure owned by an overly rich Chinese. He returned to China for family reasons."

Turned into a Genie

"I was bought from my parents, and kept in his house for 50 days. One night, he and his brothers took me to a cave, together with many life-size gold ducks. The cave was illuminated by many candles and by an enormous oil lamp. I was still blinded by the light reflected by that enormous amount of gold, when suddenly they held me by the body, and before I could utter a cry, stuffed a great quantity of ginseng in my mouth. Then they put me in an armchair, bound me to it, set an altar before me, and all of them knelt down before the altar, saying Chinese prayers and incantations which I could not understand. This lasted about half an hour. Then they genuflected four times before me, stood up, and the oldest of them said: 'The ginseng you have in your mouth will permit you to live exactly 50 more days. The oil-lamp will last that whole length of time. Then it goes out, and you shall die. But your spirit will become a genie endowed with supernatural powers. Your duty is to keep all this treasure for us, until we come back to claim it. Now I give you a name, *Thiên Huong*'."

Producing a pearl-necklace with a purse of blue brocade, he continued: "In this purse, there are certain words you have to commit to memory. When I or one of my brothers here come back from China, and want to collect the treasure, we will call you by your name *Thiên Huong*, offer you incense, fruits and flowers. We will say prayers, imploring you to give us our treasure. We will pronounce the catchwords to show you that we are the real owners, not intruders. On hearing our prayers and our catchwords, you will, by your supernatural power, open the stone door of this cave, allowing us to enter and take out our treasure. After that you can return to the immaterial world to which you will belong."

Saying this, he put the necklace with the purse around the girl's neck, stepped backwards, made four more genuflections and went out with his men, closing the heavy stone door and leaving her alone with the gold ducks, candles and enormous oil-lamp.

As the Chinese merchant said, the ginseng kept

Genie gives girl 3 gold feathers

the girl alive for exactly 50 days, after which she died and the oil-lamp burned out.

"Since then I become a genie, ready to deal death on any adventurer who dares open the door of the cave. Half a dozen bold thieves already have paid for their greedy attempts with their lives. All the owners of the treasure went to China at the time of a long civil war. They have died one after the other, and the treasure has become ownerless. I have to take care of it for an indefinite time. Sometimes, I feel too uncomfortable in the mouldy, humid and stuffy atmosphere of the cave. Then when the weather is fine, I take out my treasure at night and wander about the countryside, returning shortly before dawn. I cannot leave the treasure in the cave because in my absence it could be stolen.

"Now, as you are so kind to me, I allow you to make use of the three gold feathers in any way you like. I only ask you one thing: go on offering flowers, fruits and incense on the altar in your garden every 1st and 15th day of the lunar month and call me by my name, Thiên Hương. I shall come to enjoy all your offerings, and I shall reward you for them."

With these words, the girl disappeared and the room was dark again.

Grandma's cousin woke up and remembered what was told her. She recounted her dream to her mother who advised her to heed the girl's advice. "If you go to my cousin's home," grandma said, "you will notice a small altar in a corner of her garden. On this altar, incense still burns nowadays among fresh flowers and fruits, all offerings to the genie, guardian of a fabulous and ownerless treasure."

New Hidden Treasures?

Now, for stories about hidden treasures in recent times.

After the takeover on March 9, 1945 that made the Japanese masters of Indochina, they began to move to Saigon most of loot seized in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Though their ships were constantly strafed by American planes, owing to the relatively short distance between the embarkation and debarkation ports and because they sailed by night, most of their treasures arrived safely in the Port of Saigon. They knew they ran great risks if they sent those treasures to their own country. So, it is reported, they decided to hide them in the Truong-Son Range or Annamese Cordillera that runs along the border between Laos and Vietnam.

Nobody knows for sure the size of these treasures and the places in which they were hidden. But one of them is said to consist of ingots of pure gold put in identical wooden cases, each weighing one hundred pounds, allowing one man to carry it on his shoulders with ease. Ten trains, each with 10

trucks were used to carry those cases from Saigon to a town in Central Vietnam. From there, military vans took them to a place at the end of the Truong Son Range. A subterranean cave was dug in hard soil, the walls of which were made of logs of hard wood, uniformly 2 meters high, and 6 inches in diameter. A thick layer of cement strengthened the wooden walls, making another cement wall itself.

The cache is reported under rock with a long subway leading to it. When all the cases—a reported score of thousands—were deposited in the cave, all doors including those of the subway were sealed with reinforced concrete.

Rumor has it that the Japanese with the help of magic incantations cast a spell on the treasure, just as the Chinese did centuries ago, preventing anybody from approaching it.

In the month of August, 1945, Japan surrendered. Many of her army officers committed hara-kiri, among them those who knew the secret of the hidden treasures. Then in Vietnam, a revolution broke out followed by a war for independence. Nobody bothered about those treasures until the late 50's when a Japanese came to Vietnam and declared himself to be one of the officers studying the prospects of locating the treasure in the Truong Son Range. The story he related about the treasures was so fascinating that many men in power at that time ventured a search with the cooperation of the Japanese officer. The work was in progress when the latter suddenly died a mysterious death, stopping all operations.

A little later, a Vietnamese who claimed to have been a captain in the Japanese occupation army during the war, said that he was one of the few Japanese officers who knew the secret of the hidden treasure in the Truong Son Range. He got in touch with many Vietnamese army officers working in that area. Many of these agreed to help. Strange to say, those who interested in a search were either suddenly transferred to another place or killed in an accident or by enemy fire.

The story of hidden treasure continued to interest many Vietnamese officers and some persisted in searching for them. The last attempt was made in 1969 by a colonel who, with the help of a Vietnamese graduated from a foreign school of mining, made a detailed plan to locate the treasure. But when everything was set for action, the Vietnamese engineer was killed, his car blown up by a mine.

People say that a curse cast by Japanese officers in charge of the treasure was the cause of the sudden death of those who wanted to appropriate the treasure to which they were not entitled.

Do all these have any basis for likelihood? Or are they mere hoaxes as most of the stories of this kind are?

WHO WAS CONFUCIUS?

September 28 is the Birthday of Confucius. It is a national holiday in the Republic of Vietnam and the Teacher's Day in the Republic of China.

Few civilizations of the ancient world had a scholastic or historical figure comparable to Confucius. If anyone were asked to characterize in one word the Chinese way of life for the 2,000 years or more, the word would be Confucian. Just how it became so is not easy to explain.

Confucius and his teachings were little respected and rarely practiced by the people of his day. Only some 300 years later was Confucianism declared the official creed of the country, and his classics become the principal study of all scholars and statesmen.

Sagacious Master

From the 2nd century B.C. to the present day, Confucianism has been synonymous with learning in China. Confucius was revered by the illiterate millions who could not read his classics but nonetheless practiced what he stood for. He was referred to as *ta cheng chih sheng hsien shih*, "the all-encompassing, supremely sagacious late master." His temples can be found in every one of China's 2,000 counties.

Who was Confucius and what did he teach?

Confucius is the latinized name of Kungfutzü—his surname being "Kung" and "futzü" meaning master. He came from the state of Lu, in today's Shantung province, in the spring and autumn period (772-481 B.C.), when the Chou dynasty lost its control over the feudal lords who each held a part of the country.

Born on the 27th day of the tenth moon in the 22nd year of Duke Hsiang of Lu (551 B.C.), he was given the name of Chiu, meaning a hill, because there was

a noticeable protuberance on his head. His literary name was Chung-ni.

Confucius' father died when he



Statue of Confucius in Saigon.

was only three years old, and the boy was brought up by his mother. Confucius matured early. From childhood, he liked to play at performing sacrificial ceremonies and offerings as adults did. At 15, he made up his mind to become a scholar. Confucius used these formative years to learn from everyone and about everything.

Ritual Expert

When he got a job as a clerk in the memorial temple of the Duke of Chou, he attended all the ceremonies and would ask tirelessly about every detail of the ritual. Soon he acquired a reputa-

tion as an expert in ancient rituals and disciples started to flock around him.

Confucius' preoccupation with rituals requires explanation. The original word for "ritual" is *li*, which means a sense of propriety, the order of things. Some translate it as "moral and religious institutions (of the three dynasties)." In fact, Confucianism has been known in China through the centuries as *li chiao*, "the religion of *li*, or ritual."

This concept of *li*, meaning much more than mere ritualism, is Confucius' central theme for an ideal social order. Throughout his life, he sought to restore a social order based on love for one's kind and respect for authority, of which the social rites of public worship and festivities in ritual and music should be the outward symbols.

Leaders' Neglect

Confucius attributed all the ills of his day to the fact that the leaders of society had neglected the rites, were performing them incorrectly, or usurping the rites and ceremonies to which they were not entitled. He believed that the neglect and abuse of the rights reflected a deepening moral chaos and the beginning of spiritual darkness. Such was the state of affairs in his native state of Lu.

Only when he had reached the age of 50 was he able to put his ideals into practice. In 502 B.C. he was made *sau kou*, the secretary of justice and one of the six highest ranking official positions. In 497 B.C. he was promoted to prime minister. He was then 55 years old.

When signs of neglect and moral chaos again appeared, Confucius quit, and started on travels which took him and his disciples to many states for the next 14 years.

The wandering years bespoke better than anything else of the character of Confucius. He was not only a scholar, but a man of positive political ideals with a burning desire to see them materialize.

Many rulers sought his service, yet he would rather spurn their offer than grasp at any opportunity.

TRUNG NGUYEN DAY

Aside from human beings, superstition has it that Vietnam is peopled by wandering spirits and other disembodied vagrant emanations. These impalpable metaphysical ever present forces make the everyday life of any thinking human full of spiritual uncertainties.

There are good spirits: those from deceased mortals who lived a good life and who, having assumed ethereal form, protect the villages where they are duly worshipped and honored.

Much feared are the *ma quy* (evils) born from the drowned, orphans, prostitutes, and other unfortunate creatures. Nobody worships these anonymous souls and they have little else to do than play nasty tricks on humans. One of their favorite tricks is getting reincarnated in the wombs of pregnant women living in houses where there are no male heirs. They are also responsible for illnesses, poor rice crops, and business failures.

Spirits and Cults

Keeping away from the *ma quy* takes a good part of a man's life and money. Each kind of spirit requires a special cult. Truck drivers build small altars along roads to worship them while women beat drums around their houses to drive them off. Since evil spirits are believed to travel only in straight lines like bullets, peasants coil their roads like pythons and conceal entrances to pagodas with wall screens.

Taking care of souls is perhaps the greatest social pastime in Vietnam. In Communist North Vietnam, the peasantry remained terror-stricken by the wandering souls of landowners massacred during agrarian reform until the commissars allowed relatives to build graves and altars to worship their dead parents.

Once a year, on the 15th day of the 7th month, the Master of

Hell opens the gate to purgatory, granting a full day's leave to all the souls within. It is Trung Nguyen Day to the Vietnamese.

Since hell's food is no treat even for a poor soul, its inmates are very hungry, causing them to swarm down to earth like a noisy bunch of college student graduates in search of fun. During this once-a-year excursion to earth, the souls wander around the homes of hapless humans, debauching a pretty wife, bugging a car with inexplicable engine trouble or simply spreading plague and cholera far and wide.

A Sumptuous Meal

Because wandering souls are terribly hungry, a sure way of appeasing them is to set them up to a sumptuous meal.

During the seventh month—August to September by the Gregorian calendar—women prepare pig head roast, sticks of sugar cane, sweet pork, bowls of glutinous rice, and “chum chum” rice wine. Clad in black silk robes, the women with joss sticks in hand bow low before the food offering and politely invite to lunch their dead ancestors and peripatetic souls. There are special meals of rice wrapped in banana leaves for the souls of deceased infants who are not allowed by protocol to eat with grownups at the same table.

Souls, however, don't live on rice and pork alone, and many have other needs. After the bowing ritual, women burn brightly colored votive papers simulating banknotes or bullions and richly decorated paper clothes which are supposed to follow the souls to hell or to heaven.

On Trung Nguyen Day, Vietnamese pantheists, whoever they are, make sure that no itinerant soul returns to hell or to heaven without a proper feast. In any case, the soul worshippers do not.

The epicurean rite begins on

the last full moon day of August and lasts until mid-September. Organizing Trung Nguyen celebrations are entrusted to Vietnamese unions such as the newspaper and artists guilds.

The Land of the Small Dragon, as Vietnam sometimes is called in comparison to the Land of the Big Dragon that is China, is a spirit world where natives see occult celestial influences in every sequence of life. When a Westerner says he has bad or good luck—a purely agnostic thought—a Vietnamese sees the influence of some irreducible nucleus of psychic energy, evil of spirit emanating from an incarnated human.

The nightmarish fear of every Vietnamese male—Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian or even Christian—is departing from this world without being survived by a male heir or seeing to it that his wife will observe the appropriate cult to insure that his soul will not aimlessly and miserably wander through eternity.

Many Legends

Vietnamese elders have more than one legend to explain the origin of Trung Nguyen Day. Some are Buddhist or Taoist-inspired, but none goes beyond what seems to be pure mythology. There is too much of a coincidental similarity, however, between Christianity's “All Souls Day” to reject any idea of a common source.

In his book “Buddha and Buddhism” Maurice Percheron says: “It is impossible to imagine a spiritual movement isolated in time and space. Every fresh attempt made by man to get nearer the core of the question which concerns his own essence, origin, and development is a point in a sequence and, what is more, the culmination of millions of thoughts which went before.”

Since the Indo-Europeans became interested in the soul some six centuries B.C., Brahmanists, Buddhists, Christians and others developed the idea of the immortal soul. Nowhere else than in Vietnam are people more preoccupied with the survival of their immortal essence.

While this nation as a whole ponders the problem of reconstruction and economic recovery, a Vietnamese and his American friend in Vung Tau city have been making progress as entrepreneurs in the field of pork production.

"Pig business is good now," said the Vietnamese farmer, Mr. Tran Phuoc Thanh.

Mr. Thanh, 35, did not always live near Coconut Bay in Vung Tau (formerly Cap St. Jacques), which is on the coast of the South China Sea, 73 miles southeast of Saigon. But his parents were farmers in the Delta's Rach Gia Province, where he was born.

When Mr. Thanh came here in July, 1969, Vung Tau was still brimming with foreign soldiers on three-day passes from their base camps in the "boonies." Vietnam's most popular seaside resort had become a soldier's town, more or less. But all that is changed today. Today the visitors here are mostly families, lovers and tourists.

Piggery Growth

Mr. Thanh's piggery perspectives have changed too. In 1969 he started out with "twenty small pigs from Saigon," each pig costing him 9,000 piasters plus 1,000 piasters for transportation. In 1970 he also helped to set up a piggery for his American friend, Mr. Kent Sears, a manager with the U.S. firm, Pacific Architects & Engineers. Meanwhile, Mr. Thanh raised many pigs here and brought the surplus to Saigon. By 1973 he had become one of the area's leading pig farmers, with customers from Vung Tau, Saigon and neighboring Binh Dinh Province. His one-hectare farm is home for 28 sows, 22 pigs and "many piglets." A sow, he explained, after four months of pregnancy, gives birth to about ten piglets. Mr. Thanh sells the piglets after raising them for two months.

Mr. Thanh showed us around the farm, where workers were attending to the animals and hosing them down with fresh water. We noticed a big, tough-looking male pig in one stable.

"One boar takes care of forty sows," Mr. Thanh said.

THOSE PIGS CAN SPELL PROFIT

By TRAN MY



Henry Sears and Tran Phuoc Thanh.

We left this boar in his resting position. Mr. Thanh's knowledge of his business aids him in supporting some fish production in the piggery. Behind the pig house is an artificial pond dug by a bulldozer and loaded with catfish. Mr. Thanh feeds pig manure to the catfish. The pond is 120 centimeters deep in the dry season, two meters deep in the rainy season.

"Five thousand fish in this pond," Mr. Thanh said.

Mr. Thanh's re-cycling program is complete: He uses the fish to feed the pigs. This helps cut down on his need to purchase pig feed, and limits his imported items to corn and vitamins. He also sells his surplus catfish at about 200 piasters per kilo. Catfish, he said, is popular with soldiers.

We drove across town to his other farm. During the ride we discovered that Mr. Thanh, whose father lived to the age of 80, is philosophical about life. A man, he said, should live only as long as he has the physical power to enjoy life.

"No good to live too old," he said.

As we entered the stable of the second farm, a worker was hosing down healthy-looking pink pigs. These were not pigs rolling in mud. These were very clean animals who seemed to enjoy the water.

We passed a big pile of manioc. Because of the high price of imported pig feed, Mr. Thanh uses a special feed he prepares from leftovers of ground manioc. This special feed costs him about 1/3 the price of imported feed.

We wondered whether these pigs bite. Mr. Thanh smiled.

"American pig is tame," he said. "Vietnamese pig, if you get in the stable with it, may be he bites."

Mr. Thanh gets his water from a 40-meter well. Americans, he said, taught him how to drill the well. This water was "clean like rainwater." He demonstrated. Using an American pump, he filled a glass with the water and drank it.

"Water is very important," he explained. "If water is not clean, the pig gets sick. Bad water kills pig."

In the heat we found shade near a big pile of salted trash fish used for pig feed. Children of the Cambodian caretakers watched. Mr. Thanh brought us ice and beer.

"I do all vaccinations, injections myself," Mr. Thanh said. "I learned it from American doctors. I take care of baby pig too."

This farm had "three very good workers" and the Cambodian family of caretakers. The dark Cambodians looked harmless, but Mr. Thanh cautioned us.

"A man must keep his promise with them, or they might cut his head."

We drove about a kilometer to the American farm.

American Farm

Kent Sears, more accurately, is a gentleman pig farmer. Born in Maine near Moosehead Lake, he has spent eight years in Vietnam.

"He raised chickens here before," Mr. Thanh said. "All the chickens died. I advised him to buy pigs. Chickens die in Vung Tau. People

say there is too much wind from the sea."

Mr. Thanh sold Mr. Sears an acre of land and a number of pigs. At that time, 1970, a pregnant sow cost 60,000 piasters. Today's price is more like 100,000 piasters. On this one acre there are now 25 sows and 125 pigs. While we inspected half-breed Landrace-Yorkshire pigs, tall Kent Sears drove into his farm on the gravel path. He was friendly, with an earthy, tenor voice.

Sears gave his side of the chicken story. To replace the mother hen, he explained, you need heat from light bulbs. But this heat was n't always forthcoming in Vung Tau.

An Envoy Started A Trade

In the reign of Le Thien Phuc (981-1006), there lived a certain Pham Don Le. After serving as a Minister at the royal court, he retired in the district of Hoa Lu, in the province of Ninh Binh.

At one time during his career he was sent as ambassador to China. On his way there he was struck by the prosperity of the village of Ngoc Ho in the district of Qua Lam, whose inhabitants engaged in a single trade: making mats from reeds.

On making a study of the region, he noticed that it was covered with swampy land unsuitable for cultivation of any kind, but was most prolific in reeds. He spent three days learning everything connected with the manufacture of mats.

"You need a good supply of electricity. And a lot of chickens die if the vaccination schedule isn't followed. The vaccine has to be kept refrigerated. They make it in Saigon at the Pasteur Institute."

Sears proudly showed us a Yorkshire boar from the United States. He also petted a big sow who, he said, misbehaves.

"She has to be kept by herself," Sears said. "She likes to fight. She's whipped half a dozen of these pigs."

Did the farm make money?

"I haven't lost anything," he said. "A lot of the money is in stock."

With Mr. Thanh we later drove

to another part of town. Pig prices had been dropping lately, he said, but he saved on labor by doing a lot of the work himself. He was also careful not to let a sick pig infect the others. If he found a pig sick he killed it.

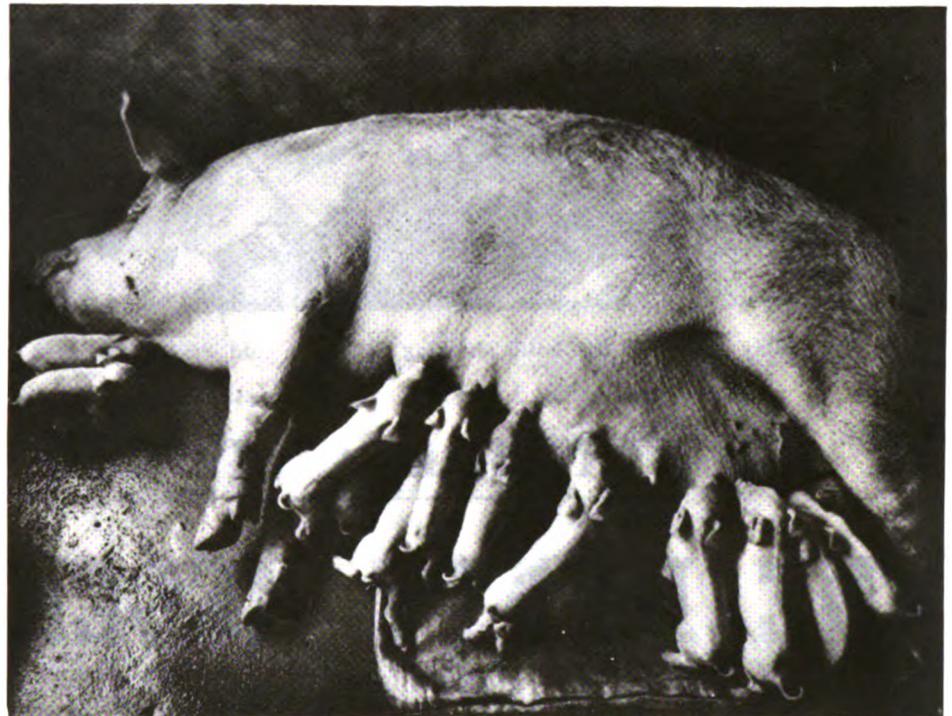
We passed a pig farm owned by an Army colonel. The colonel's farm was not prospering.

"I show them how," Mr. Thanh said, "but they still don't know how to run it."

In this business, he explained, you can't rest for two or three days. You have to work almost all the time.

Mr. Thanh was on his way see his sister.

"My sister has 700 pigs," he said.



One of Mr. Thanh's sows feeds 12 newly-born piglets.

Returning to his country, he asked for and obtained from the King permission to return to his village in order to teach this new craft to his compatriots.

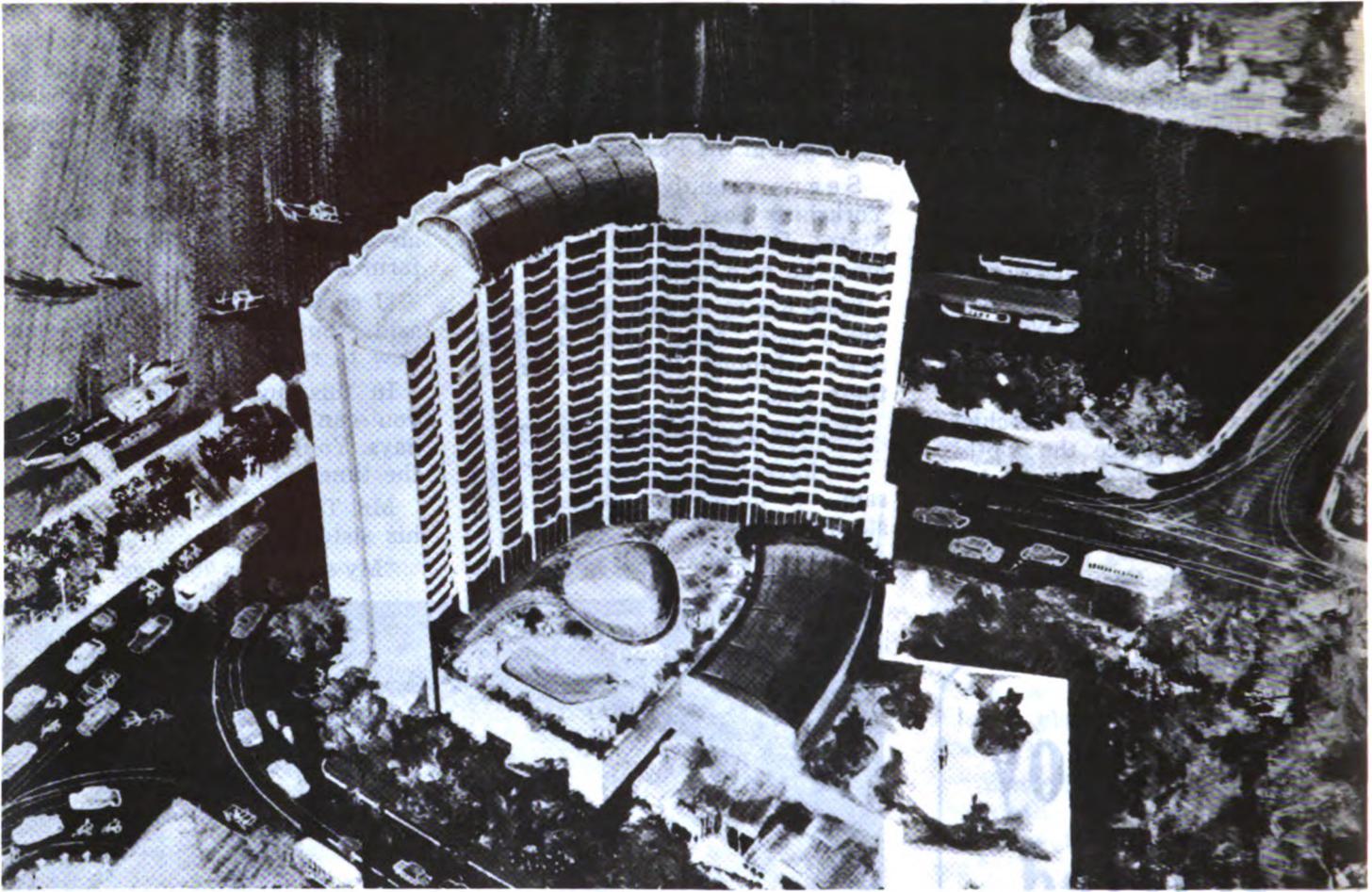
In the coastal region of Nam Dinh he found an immense district where the ricefields were submerged by seawater and therefore was uncultivated. The inhabitants of the area had been obliged to abandon agriculture in favor of fishing, leaving their fields a wilderness of reeds.

He summoned the villagers and

persuaded them to let him teach them how to make mats. The new craft brought prosperity within a short time to the whole population of Hai Thien and neighboring villages.

Temple in Memory

Pham Don Le returned to the royal court and again served as Minister of Rites. When he died, a temple was erected in his memory in the village of Hai Thien by order of the King.



A clay model of the hotel showing nightclub and restaurant area and swimming pool on terrace.

CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE

THE HYATT REGENCY SAIGON

The Republic of Vietnam will have a hotel meeting the highest international standards within two years with the completion of the Hyatt Regency Saigon on the Saigon waterfront.

The 22-story, 550-room ultra-modern hotel, with a large convention center, conference room, swimming pool, and a parking lot accommodating 75 cars, will occupy a 5,673 square-meter area at the intersection of Ham Nghi Blvd. and Chuong Duong Quay. From the restaurant and night club areas, tourists will look down on Saigon River and enjoy a panoramic view extending scores of kilometers.

By DOAN BICH

The US\$15.5 million hotel will have luxury suites and rooms, including "The President Suite" which will be reserved for heads of state and foreign dignitaries visiting the Republic.

Hyatt International Corporation will manage the enterprise owned by Saigon International Hotel, Ltd. comprised of American, British, Australian, Malaysian, and Chinese investors. J. Gerard Callahan Jr., managing director of Saigon International Hotel, Ltd., says Vietnamese businessmen and companies will join in the ownership. He expects Vietnamese nationals

to represent the majority interest in the corporation and project.

Four Stages

According to Callahan, the construction of the Hyatt Regency Saigon will involve four stages: demolition of old buildings at the construction site, prefabrication, ground levelling, driving of piles, laying of the foundation, and construction of the superstructure including installation of water and electrical facilities, equipping of hotel rooms with furniture, electronic devices, and ornamentation with paintings, sculptural works, etc.

A picture impression of Vietnam

Most of the work will be done by Vietnamese labor under the supervision of foreign companies.

The Hyatt Regency Saigon is being designed by *BEP Akitek* of Kuala Lumpur, a highly-reputed architectural agency in Southeast Asia, which has much experience in the building of ultra-modern hotels in the area. Interior design will be by Dale Kelle & Associates of Hong Kong, famous experts in design and ornamentation, which have done decor for many international hotels in Asia, including the Hyatt in Bali and the Hilton in Kuala Lumpur.

In the case of Hyatt Regency Saigon, Keller will cooperate with Vietnamese designers and artists to give the interior a distinctly Vietnamese flavor, from furniture and wall decoration to painting and sculptural work.

If everything goes according to schedule, the hotel will open its doors by January 1977, with four restaurants serving Vietnamese, Chinese, European, and American cuisine.

Building Tourism

One of the future activities of Hyatt Regency Saigon is to cooperate closely with the Vietnam Tourist Commission in the promotion of tourism in Vietnam. Inasmuch as the Hyatt chain of hotels is all over the world, it will help introduce Vietnam to foreign tourists and spur European and American travellers to visit the country.

Some may wonder how such a hotel can attract customers to its 550 rooms. Hyatt International has contracted help from large American and European travel agencies which especially use Boeing 747 jets for the transport of tourists to the major centers of Asia. Passengers who are customers of the hotel chain will pay very reasonable rates for their travels.

With regard to tourist lures in the Republic of Vietnam, Callaghan says that the mountain resort city

of Dalat in the Central Highlands, the seaside resort cities of Vung Tau and Nha Trang, the ancient imperial capital of Hue, and Phu Quoc Island off South Vietnam coast offer scenic beauty and are potential hubs of entertainment.

Saigon International Hotel, Ltd. and Hyatt International contemplate the building of hotels to service these areas.

Encouraging Foreign Investment

The building of Hyatt Regency Saigon may thus be regarded as a response to the Saigon need of having a hotel conforming to international standards. Besides its commercial activities which will boost the hotel and restaurant industry in Vietnam, Hyatt Regency Saigon will serve a purpose beneficial to the RVN economy.

The hotel will portray international confidence in the bright future of Vietnam and thus encourage foreign businessmen to invest in the Republic in the post-war era.

Callaghan said the project is more than merely the construction and operation of a hotel because "it is an active and essential gen-

erating element of a total development effort." He said they invited study and effort by local businesses to assist in "such a presentation of Vietnam whereby potential investors will begin to understand this country, appreciate its potential and invest now."

Callaghan said that through an analytical approach many layers of irrelevant psychological misimpressions and local attitudes were overcome to the point where investors "could see and analyze Vietnam for what it really is."

The Hyatt International Corporation, with headquarters in Chicago, U.S.A., though set up only in 1969, is among the leading hotel chains the world over. The most characteristic feature of Hyatt is the "revolutionary" architectural concept of its hotels that virtually turns upside down traditional architecture. Many of the Hyatt hotels not only are ultra-modern buildings but may also be considered an architecturally-inspired picture impression of the host country.

With all the above considerations, the Hyatt Regency Saigon looms as one of the most outstanding international hotels in Southeast Asia. ●



Demolition of structures is in progress at the site of future hotel.

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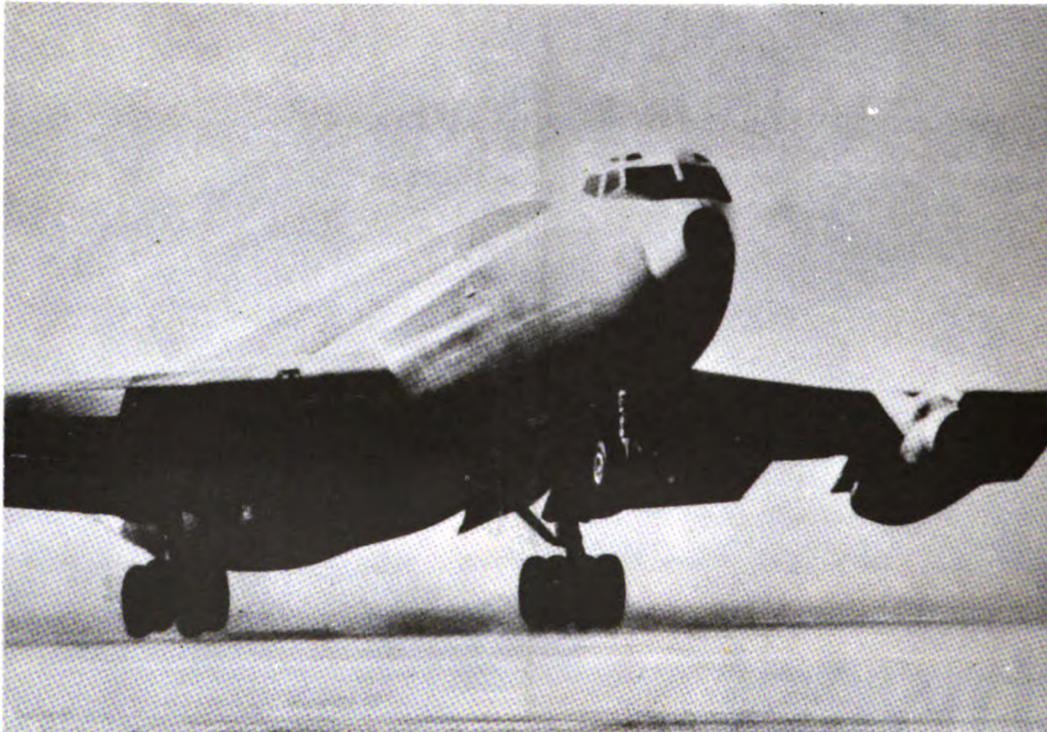


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