

*Année*  
**VIETNAM**  
*Magazine*  
Published by The Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations  
Vol. V, No. 10, 1972



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## FROM OUR READERS

Our little community here is shocked by the atrocities inflicted upon your people by the Communists on top of the dislocation they have forced upon hundreds of thousands of people of South Vietnam.

We understand how your people feel because not too long ago, our people experienced the same thing although to a lesser extent, by the Communists in our land.

We hope that even if our government decided not to send soldiers to Vietnam to fight our common enemy, our medical team there is doing its bit to alleviate the sufferings of these poor victims of the war.

A dental officer now assigned with the Philippine Contingent in Hau Nghia is a native of our town and in the past, several medical and welfare workers have been to your country.

We appreciate your articles on the refugees—their stories are so touching, and we hope that your magazine will continue to publish accounts like that so that the world will not forget.

Please send us complimentary copies of your magazine, care of the Municipal Library of our town.

(Mrs.) CRISPINA V. MORALES  
Asingan, Pangasinan  
Philippine Republic

I enjoy reading your pieces on the women of Vietnam and the legends which form part of the history of your country.

Your June issue contained a portrait of Madame Binh which I equally appreciate for revealing the true facts about that often-quoted Viet Cong spokesman which should be known to everybody.

Now we are no longer surprised or skeptical about reports of Communist atrocities in your country since it turns out that Madame Binh herself, according to the article, is an expert in terror. I am sure nobody had even suspected that such a woman would be capable of the things she has said or done and now we know better.

Being a woman and a strong believer in women's lib myself, I should be proud but the contrary feeling overwhelms me.

(Mrs.) PRISCILLA V. QUISOL  
South King Road  
San Jose, California  
USA

# VIETNAM *Magazine*

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Cover : Ralliers to the national cause via the RVN's  
'Open Arms' program are familiar with Miss Nguyen  
Thi Ngoc Oanh, who entertains them with her songs.

With the conflict in your country hugging the news spotlight for these past many years, I can fully appreciate the great service **Vietnam Magazine** renders readers all over the world by keeping them informed about historical, cultural, and social aspects as well as current developments.

I pray that the wide gulf that divides your people is breached soon so that the blessings of peace be yours and the protracted sufferings of your people brought to an end.

**MARCELINO LOS BANOS**  
Madrid, Spain

The moving portrayal of the plight of refugees, their hopes, their dreams by your magazine underlines the need for attention for these unfortunates wherever they may be found the world over.

It is heartwarming to note that many countries have rallied to extend assistance to your refugees. They deserve the highest of praise in the name of humanitarianism.

**HENRY YOUNG**  
Bangkok, Thailand

I keep following your country's determined and continuing struggle to repel the invasion from the North that seeks to impose its will on the South.

I am confident that you will defeat the aggressors in time. The recent victories by your armed forces in flushing out the invaders from district towns is a tribute to their competence and the spirit of your people who have proven in the face of much suffering and death that Hanoi's Communist scheme for the whole of Vietnam will never be accepted by the South Vietnam.

It would be well were the leadership in Hanoi to realize this soon. Peace, not invasion, is the way.

**BERTRAM LEEDS**  
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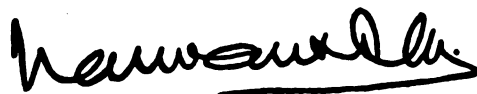
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## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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President  
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# Classical and Reformed THEATER

The classical Vietnamese theater was originally called *Hat Bo* or "song with gestures." Later, the theater was known as *Hat Boi* or "songs with show dress."

Presenting tragi-comedies and comic operas, the classical theater is an original synthesis of songs, dances and dramatic acting whose interpretation aims at the essential, at the concentration of effects, and the stylization of gestures, while at the same time serving an educational purpose.

The origins of the classical Vietnamese theater can be traced back as far as the bronze age when the *Lac* — ancestors of the Vietnamese people — founded an independent state based on a hierarchical and feudalistic society.

Every spring, on the occasion of the beginning of the planting season, a great festival was observed. The custom persisted up the recent past although in less colorful form in the "Thai" area of the North Vietnamese highlands and in the Red River delta. Numerous forms of entertainment were organized, among them dances, comic pantomimes, singing, etc.

During the war against the Chinese invaders, Tran Hung Dao captured an entire Chinese theatrical troupe led by Ly Nguyen Cat, a talented performer. The troupe was composed of twelve actors and actresses who could play the role of either warrior, honest and faithful mandarin, traitor or servant.

Ly Nguyen Cat was entrusted with the task of training young Vietnamese selected by the Imperial Court as dancers in Chinese operas. The best artist trained by Cat was Lieu Thu Tam who distinguished himself in a play entitled *Vuong Mau Hien Dao* (Offering the Divine Peach).

Enriched by the addition of Chinese talent, the *Hat Bo* rapidly became an art form greatly appreciated by the public. Poets and scholars contributed their share by providing the *Hat Bo* with a considerable repertoire of new material.

Thanks to their vitality and their ability to assimilate, the Vietnamese were able to adapt foreign influence to their own talent and from the Chinese theater, they created a national art form remarkable for its vigor and originality.

In the course of the last centuries, a continuous process of modification and innovation enabled the *Hat Bo* to exert a profound influence on the people as an instrument of civic and moral education.

## Patron Saint

Like any other art, the *Hat Bo* has its patron saint — an earthen statuette garbed in brocade and which accompanies troupes in their peregrinations. This statuette of a young boy is placed in carved

wooden niche behind a base in which offerings of joss sticks are placed.

Before appearance on the stage, each actor prostrates himself four times before the patron saint known as Ong Lang in order to avoid losing his memory and voice.

Legend has it that Ong Lang was a prince whose favorite entertainment was the theater. For fear of punishment from his father, the king, he attended performances on the sly.

One evening, the actors played so well that the delirious public invaded the stage to acclaim them. Under the sudden weight, the stage — a frail scaffolding of wood and bamboo — collapsed and pinned the prince to death. His soul, however, survived to protect the guild of comedians. He is credited with breathing inspiration into them, giving them good voice and facilitating their improvisations on stage.

The men of the theater eventually canonized him, after having miracles accomplished for their benefit.

## Stage and Gestures

*Hat Bo* capitalizes on suggestion. One has in fact to rid himself of the limited confines of the stage and employ a great deal of imagination. Thus, a few chairs may represent a mountain range; an overturned chair, a hill; a chair on a table, a throne. A silken screen stretched between two staffs may represent an impenetrable bulwark; a table, a court room, counter or restaurant; and a branch may substitute for a forest. The staging poses no real problem for the spectator, however, since the symbolism is standardized.

The absence of scenery and the lack of accessories and technical equipment compels the actor to adopt a set of unvarying, conventional gestures which are either noble and rhythmic or affected and grandiloquent, to picture the feudal society of olden times.

Some stylized gestures have a symbolic significance as, for instance, the showing of a chrysanthemum, which is meant to indicate the splendor of autumn with its blue skies, moonlit nights, silver waves on the lakes, and magnificent twilights. Showing an orchid twig represents renewal of its blossoms and perfume. The lotus is used to symbolize purity, plenitude, nobility, and liberty.

Each gesture has its own meaning and for each sentiment there is a corresponding motion. To ex-



Bich Son and Bich Thuan are classical theater luminaries.

# Behind motion a sentiment

mes and hair styles. Costumes are virtually identical with those which would be worn by the character in real life, although some embellishments may be added to accentuate the effects of stage lighting. Moreover, some costumes and head-gear are invariable.

The King at the Imperial Court, for example, always wears a long, silken tunic of yellow color with very large sleeves, decorated with red or gold dragons. In addition, the costume required of a king calls for a hat called *quan mien*, decorated with nine dragons in gold thread, inlaid with glass jewels. A red belt fitted with copper plates, and black leather boots shaped like the prow of a gondola must also be worn, but with the trousers wrapped around the legs and tucked into the boots, and an apron embroidered with dragons worn over the tunic.

The Queen wears a long tunic of yellow or white silk with narrow sleeves embroidered with a phoenix and a hat decorated with nine phoenixes set in sparkling stones, bordered by pendants and trinkets. A decorated apron is also worn over her trousers.

Civilian mandarins wear long tunics embroidered with unicorns, with large sleeves having silk balancing flaps, considered full dress at the Imperial Court. A belt embroidered or inlaid with turtle scales, black leather boots, high black hats and red pompons complete their costume.

Military mandarins wear the same costume as the civilian, except for the hat. A red hat is used to indicate a mandarin who has received the "First Doctor of the Nation" degree; and a red and blue hat indicates a recipient of the highest award in military competition. A tunic in blue or red with narrow sleeves and a simple belt is also part of the military mandarin's costume.

press sadness, for example, the actor — whether he is playing the role of a beggar, pirate, prince or priest — automatically executes the proper gesture corresponding to the emotion in question. There are, moreover, gestures appropriate to each character and particular to each scene which the actor must learn by rote and accomplish faithfully in undeviating order. One thus understands why the training of an actor sometimes requires many years.

Initiated devotees follow the representations carefully and anticipate the gestures. Woe to the apprentice who through negligence or forgetfulness omits one word, one movement, or one gesture of pantomime. He is immediately booed, challenged, and often fined by the leader of his troupe.

## Makeup, Costumes

In the Hat Bo, the artist resorts to many artifices of makeup, the function of which is to transform the actor into standardized character types. The colors thus applied indicate the character's temperament and customary behavior pattern.

The art of makeup is in itself highly demanding. One needs an excellent memory to recall the masks of several hundred characters. The painter's hand must be steady and really skillful for the reproduction of strange arabesques on the actors' faces and done with lamp-black and assorted colored powders.

Generally speaking, each actor is responsible for the preparation of his own makeup. With the exception of *Tho Dia* (God of the Earth), who wears a real mask, all masks are painted on the faces of actors.

If the makeup is applied under strictly conventional rules, great concern is given for correct costu-

## Orchestral, Choral Effects

It has been said that the classical Vietnamese theater is a kind of opera. Indeed, all the plays are accompanied by songs, and are characterized by the alternation of arias and recitations. A small orchestra, usually located in the wings to the right of the stage, accompanies.

The orchestra includes a vertical violin (*nhi*), a guitar with silken strings (*don kim*), a flute (*sao*), a trumpet (*ken loa*), a clarinet (*ken tau*), and a long, narrow drum (*trong com*). The music consists of popular tunes arranged according to the maestro's inspiration. The bass is a large tam-tam, given to a spectator whose social rank or personal competence

# 'Cai Luong' supplanting 'Hat Bo'

make him deserving of the honor. The person so honored is expected to indicate his approval of any part of the performance by beating on this drum.

The orchestra, however, only accompanies the songs, which hold the greatest interest for the spectators. To show their satisfaction or enthusiasm, the spectators throw coins on the stage, which are picked up by a supernumerary for distribution to the cast. The audience does not applaud as in the West.

## Duy Tu, the Writer

The representations necessarily begin with a prelude dedicated to the King or First Notable. This prelude is a kind of liturgical song expressing wishes for prosperity and longevity, sung by the best actor of the troupe and punctuated by the orchestra.

There are two main series of tunes which are used in the Hat Bo: the *Hat Khach* or "songs of the North," and the *Hat Nam* or "songs of the South." The songs of the North, or Spring songs include melodies expressing a cheerful exaltation and promises of happiness and peace. They are five or seven-line poems. The songs of the South are plaintive ballads, characterized by sadness, nostalgia, despair and lassitude.

The Hat Bo also presents dances, such as the lantern dance, the fan dance, and the libation dance, in which the artists execute choreographic figures, often very original.

## Classical Repertoires

The repertoire of Hat Bo is very diversified and includes works which are real masterpieces. Written in a polished style, and according to certain rules of versification and composition, the Hat Bo plays are adaptations of famous episodes in the history of China or Vietnam. The author refrains from any invention himself, and must follow exactly the outlines of the anecdote, the novel, or the legend. Formerly, it was in the tradition of the best authors to remain anonymous; but with the simultaneous rebirth of literature, Buddhism, and the classical theater in the 16th century, poets began to sign their works.

## Prelude for the King

The most famous writer of the time was Dao Duy Tu (1572-1634), an eminent scholar and strategist, native of Thanh Hoa province in Central Vietnam. Banned from the literary competitions for being the son of a comedian, he emigrated to the South. Fortune did not smile on the young man immediately, however, and he began his life in this new country as a common buffalo-boy for a nobleman.

He composed a long poem called *Ngoa Long Cuong* (The Hill of the Reclining Dragon) which was a kind of profession of faith, hinting at the existence of a man of great learning and virtue, who awaited his hour. The poem was widely circulated among the local peoples, who believed that they saw in the author the reincarnation of Khong Minh, the great Chinese strategist of the Three Kingdoms Era. Dao Duy Tu's reputation as a literary man soon came to the attention of the provincial governor, who rewarded the poet with his daughter's hand in marriage.



Bach Tuyet and Thanh Tu (seated) in Cai Luong play.

Dao Duy Tu later became First Counsellor to the Lord of Nguyen, built the famous Dong Hoi Wall, and contributed greatly to the defeat of the northern attackers. It was Dao Duy Tu who initiated the South Vietnamese into the techniques of the classical theater, the sole entertainment which he enjoyed during his exile. At his death, he was elevated to the rank of Marquis, and buried in Binh Dinh province, the birthplace of many highly reputed actors.

The most noted successor of Dao Duy Tu was Dao Tan, one of the former's descendants. Born in 1846, Dao Tan received a "licence en lettres" degree and started his life as an author in 1872. A talented



dramatist, he bequeathed to posterity a large number of plays. He died in 1908, to the great sorrow of theater lovers, who erected a sanctuary in his memory at Viet Thanh, and another on the Chinese island of Hai Nam.

### Reformed Theater

The revival of the classical theater by Dao Tan at the end of the 19th century did not last long. Paralleling the political upheavals of the time, Vietnamese society was subject to profound disturbances resulting from the impact of Western influence and modernization. The classical theater was gradually losing ground to a new type of theater known as *Cai Luong*, the reformed theater, which originated in South Vietnam where Western influence was more pronounced.

The principal supporting song in the reformed theater was and is *Vong Co* — literally, "Nostalgia for the Past" — which was first sung in 1919 in Bac Lieu province. Its author was a musician named Cao Van Lau, better known as Sau Lau. The song was primarily an adaptation of a song called *Hanh Van* (Wandering Clouds), a very popular classical tune of the north.

The reformed theater was born one year earlier, in 1918, with a play written by Tong Huu Dinh. This play entitled *Van Tien* was a kind of operetta in which one of the principal melodies was *Tu Dai* (The Four Generations) — itself derived from the song *Tu Dai Canh* (Scenic Views of the Four Generations), a classical song from the former Imperial City of Hue.

After a rather indifferent start, Tong Huu Dinh, encouraged by his friends, formed a troupe and presented to the public a four-act play on the theme "National Loan." Later, he received the assistance of many other artists and together, they founded an itinerant troupe which was warmly received throughout Cochinchina in the prewar period. Their success was greatly enhanced by the introduction of the phonography in 1923.

### Competition of Movies

After a golden age during the years from 1930 to 1945, the reformed theater faced the formidable competition of motion pictures and modern music. Great efforts were made to maintain the popularity of the reformed theater, however, and the success of this effort can be judged by the ever-increasing numbers of large theatrical troupes and the enormous popularity enjoyed by the stars.

Unlike the Occidental theater, where all subjects are freely treated, the Vietnamese theater remains rooted in the old traditions, thus maintaining its educational role both in civic virtues and family morals. A real "school of great souls" dedicated to the exaltation and illustration of the permanent values of the nation and the people, this theater bears within itself the reasons which preclude any doubt as to its future vitality.



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# VN FISHING GOES MODERN



Traditional Vietnamese fishing boats on Lai Son Island. Chinese advisor and RVN fisheries officer examine carp.



Small wooden boats still dot the waters off the coast of Vietnam, as they did centuries ago, but they are being joined now by newer vessels as Vietnamese fishermen seek better ways to tap the sea's potential.

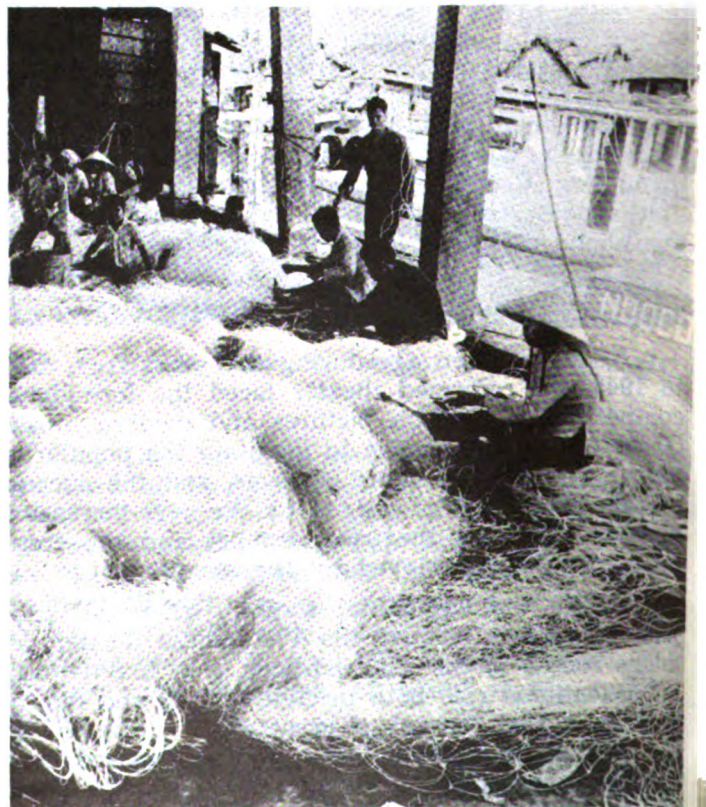
Though South Vietnam's fishing industry remains primitive by world standards, the modernization process has begun, offering brighter prospects to the many thousands of Vietnamese who earn their living from fishing or related industries.

Changes now underway in boats, equipment, and processing techniques are expected to substantially increase the annual fish catch, which last year went up 25 per cent, to more than 577,000 tons.

Simply motorizing his boat, for example, enables the average fisherman to increase his catch three to four times, and in recent years about 7,000 South Vietnamese a year have secured engines for their boats.

Last December the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a \$2.5 million loan to Vietnam for fisheries development, and the West German government is considering a major loan of about \$1.7 million to the country's fishing industry.

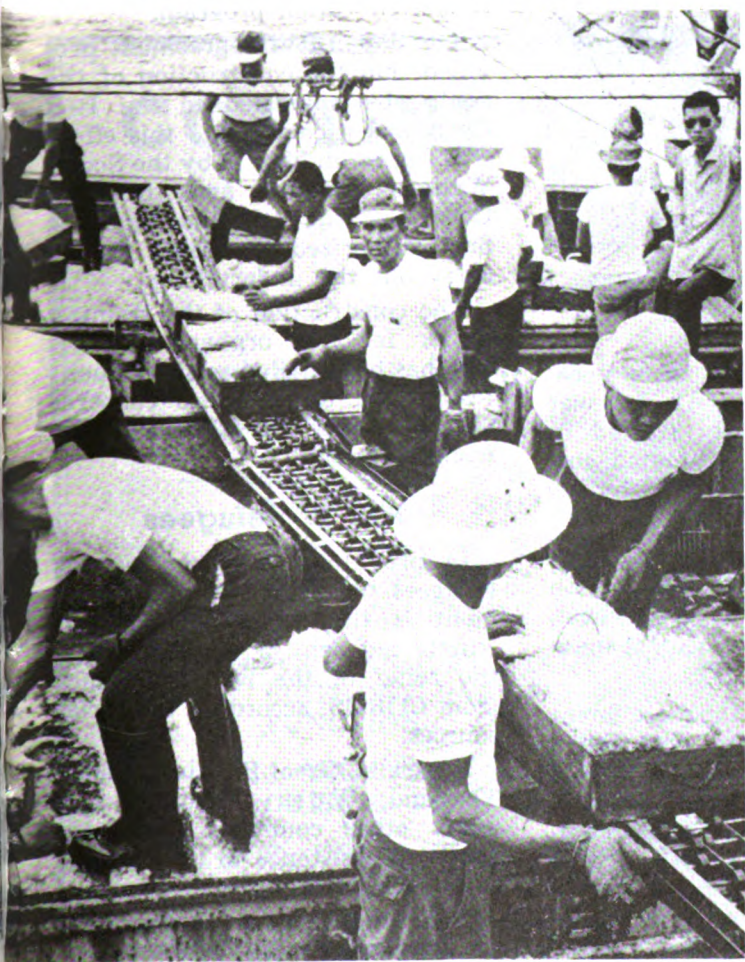
In 1970 private businessmen invested more than three million dollars in fishing-related ventures, ranging from importation of large Japanese trawlers to starting a fish meal plant. The "investment" by fisheries and oceanographic studies, seeking dividends of knowledge, of course cannot be measured in financial terms.



Nylon nets have become very popular in recent years.



**A Vietnamese woman selects family dinner at one of South Vietnam's thriving fish markets. Scientist at Oceanographic Institute in Nha Trang examines fish samples. Below: Crewmen load ice aboard boat.**



**Modern equipment like this fishfinder has hiked catch.**

# Hands across the sea

# Aid for the Orphans



Assistance from many countries eases the lot of these orphans of Vietnam.

One of the main efforts of the government of the Republic of Vietnam is directed at assisting approximately 250,000 war orphans of which only about 20,000 are living in various orphanages throughout the country.

The urgent needs of the emergency relief program for 700,000 refugees in the current North Vietnamese offensive and its limited financial resources has led the Ministry of Social Welfare to appeal to benefactors locally and abroad to lend a helping hand to these young victims of the war.

Among the first countries to respond to the appeal was Japan, through the Matsuda Foundation, a charitable organization. As a re-

sult, the construction of a vocational training center for war orphans was recently started in Bien Hoa with an estimated cost of VN\$220 million defrayed by the Japanese government.

The project, initiated by T. Matsuda, former Japanese Education Minister and a member of the Diet, was approved by over 300 Japanese legislators.

An agreement on Japanese financial aid for the project was signed between the governments of the Republic of Vietnam and Japan on Nov. 2, 1971. With the agreement, the Japanese government provided VN\$220 million for the construction and equipment of the Bien Hoa training center for war orphans.

Upon completion, expenditures for administration of the center and training equipment will be shouldered by the Matsuda Foundation of which former Minister Matsuda is chairman.

## Cornerstone Laid

The cornerstone for the center was laid last Aug. 2 in a ceremony over which Social Welfare Minister Tran Nguon Phieu presided. Construction of the center is expected to be finished within a year. The center will accommodate 400 war orphans who have completed their primary education. They will undergo basic vocational training in accordance with a junior high school education program.

The Japan-RVN agreement provided that the construction of the center be entrusted to the Itoh Corp. and a contract to this effect was signed on May 13 by the Social Welfare Ministry and the Itoh Corp. Subsequently the Japanese firm authorized the Eiffel Co. to carry out the undertaking.

The construction of the training center for war orphans in Bien Hoa has been hailed as an eloquent testimonial to the close cooperation between the RVN and her friends abroad.

## Aid to Refugees

In providing assistance to war refugees, the United States government is the largest contributor. Ninety per cent of the budget for the relief of the refugees comes from CORDS, according to official sources.

Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Thailand, West Germany, and many other countries have also provided assistance in the form of cash donations and relief goods.

Such international cooperation has enabled the RVN government

to alleviate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of refugees and war orphans.

### Scholarships

The Australian and New Zealand governments will award 75 scholarships on the university and advanced study levels to outstanding students from the Republic of Vietnam during the 1972-73 academic year, according to Education Ministry sources.

Sixty-five of the scholarships will be granted by the Australian government and 10 by the New Zealand government.

Applicants for the scholarships must either be war orphans or children of needy civil servants, military men or private employes.

Applicants must hold a Baccalaureate II degree or equivalent diploma, be 18 years of age if male and 19 if female, and be fluent in English. Each student is eligible to only one scholarship.

To qualify for advanced scholarships, applicants must possess a Bachelor of Arts, Engineering or equivalent degree.



Young orphans at orphanage in Dalat being taught to wash clothes.

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Famed in legend and rising majestically some 3,000 feet over Tay Ninh province is Nui Ba Den, Black Woman Mountain.

## Rich in folklore and history:

By QUANG MINH

# Tay Ninh

Coming into Tay Ninh, less than 2 hours by road or 40 minutes by chopper from Saigon, one cannot fail to note the province's most prominent topographical feature, Nui Ba Den or Black Woman Mountain.

It rises abruptly some 3,000 feet from the flat surrounding countryside, its top almost constantly wearing a halo of clouds—mysterious and majestic. One of the most noteworthy mountains in South Vietnam, it is enveloped both in religious legend and the turbulent military and political history of the country.

Tay Ninh being a border province with Cambodia and itself once a part of a big Khmer empire, its legends have to do with guarding the frontiers from foreign invaders.

According to a mountain people's legend, there was once a Monta-

gnard S'Tieng tribal god named Giang. There were also, in a region to the northeast, two young women named Lom and Gieng. The two women led entirely different lives so the god Giang decided to send them to two different places. Lom was sent to live on Nui Ba Den in Tay Ninh while Gieng was posted at Ba Ra mountain in Phuoc Long in the north. The god Giang entrusted to them the task of observing the borders for foreign invasion.

The people of the S'Tieng tribe are darker in complexion than the ethnic Vietnamese and from this came the name "Ba Den" or black woman in the legend.

In the few periods when compa-

native quiet reigned in the area, people used to make pilgrimages to the mountain. Pilgrims, especially the young girls had to wear brand new clothes, footwear and other habiliments, to find favor in the eyes of the lady of the mountain.

### Love Story

The foregoing was the mountain people's version of the legend of Nui Ba Den. The more popular version however is the love story of Ly Thi Thien Huong and Le Si Triet.

In the old days, the legend goes, Nui Ba Den was called Mountain No. 1. On its summit was a stone statue of Buddha about which

# Black Lady a legendary figure

many mysterious happenings were rumored such that many people wanted to see the statue. At that time however, the road leading to the mountain's summit was dangerous; it was precipitous and many wild animals lurked in the brush.

In Trang Bang, there lived this girl Huong who was well-versed in literature. Being adept in the arts of self-defense, she often went to visit the statue without fearing for her safety.

Although Huong was dark-skinned, she was graceful and lovely and it was not long before a young and talented but impoverished man in the village, Triet, fell in love with her. Unfortunately, the son of a mandarin also saw Huong and wanted to marry her. The mandarin's son was so smitten that when he failed to seduce Huong with gold and money, he sent his followers to kidnap the girl as she was visiting the statue of Buddha.

Huong, with her knowledge of self-defense and with the help of Triet, was able to fight off the would-be kidnapers and was able

to return home unscathed. She was impressed with Triet's courage and she told her parents about it. They consented to have Triet marry her and the lovers were very happy.

Their happiness, however, did not last very long as Triet had to go to war. Being a good man, he could not shirk his duty to his country. On his departure, Huong told him she would wait for him until he finished his military service.

When Triet was away, Huong used to visit the stone Buddha and pray and to gain comfort from her loneliness. One day, as she was returning home from the mountaintop, she was again accosted by the followers of her rejected suitor, the son of the mandarin.

## Suicide

Preferring death to a life without Triet, Huong committed suicide by jumping off a high cliff of the mountain. It was the only way she could fulfill her promise that she would await his return.

Her death was not discovered until three days later when a monk

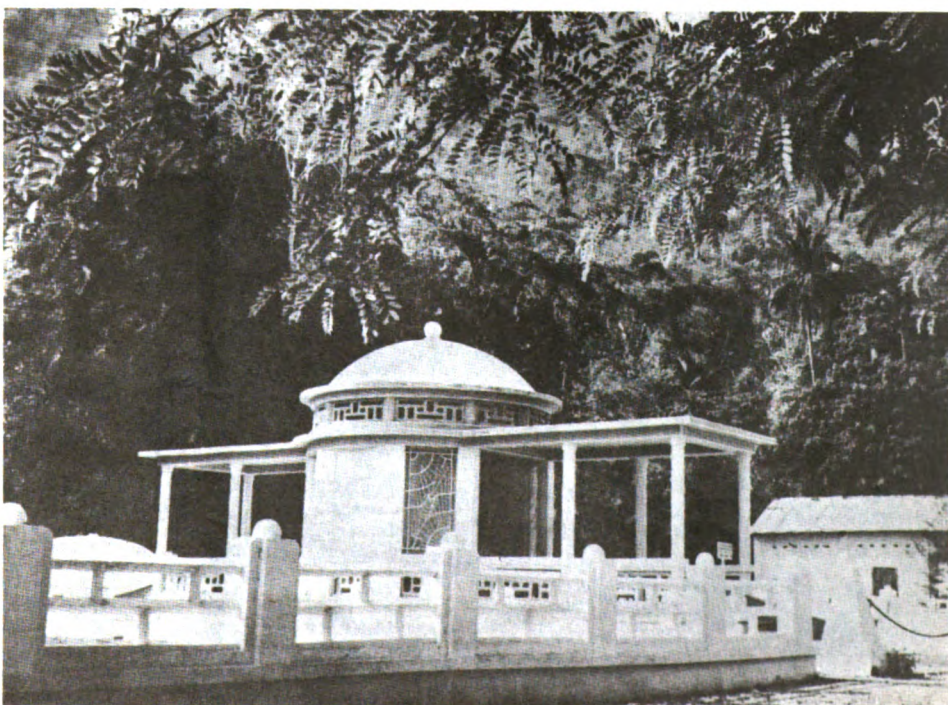
who lived in a temple on the mountain was suddenly confronted by a black-skinned but graceful girl who told him: "I am Ly Thi Thien Huong, 18 years old. I killed myself to keep my promise to my loved one. Due to my good works in life, my soul became immortal. My corpse is still in good condition so please go down to the south-eastern foot of the mountain and recover it."

Following her instructions, the monk descended and found the body of Huong. Later, the monk buried her in a tomb he made.

Many years later, this strange story was heard by Marshal Le Van Duyet, a ranking mandarin. He did not believe the story at first so he went to the mountain to verify it. When he reached the mountaintop, he said aloud: "If the soul of Huong still exists, please make an appearance."

He barely finished speaking when Huong appeared before him and greeted him. The girl identified herself and related her sad story to the mandarin.

Huong also predicted the mandarin's future, saying that after his death, his tomb would be destroyed.



Gen. Trinh Minh The, Tay Ninh hero, and his tomb at foot of Nui Ba Den.

# Prophecy about a great

ed and his name erased from the headstone. Le Van Duyet was impressed and upon his return to the royal court, he told the story to the king, Nguyen Anh.

It reminded Nguyen Anh of the time when he was defeated in battle and escaped to Nui Ba Den and was saved because he followed the Black Lady's advise to flee to Thailand. To show that he was grateful for the Black Lady's help, Nguyen Anh gave her the title "Lady of Linh Son Fairy Cave."

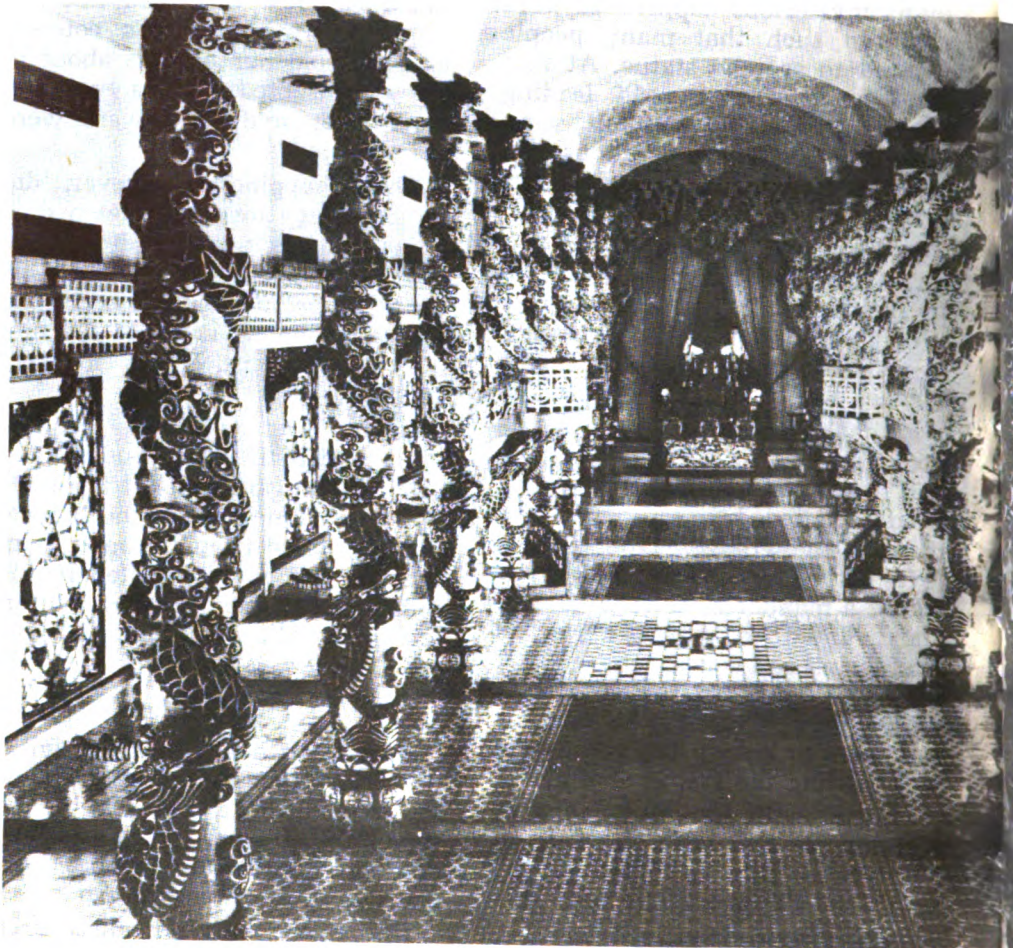
As we know from history, Nguyen Anh's son, Emperor Minh Mang, eventually destroyed Le Van Duyet's tomb but it was also restored by his successor. It was a fulfillment of the Black Lady's prophesy.

Today, Nui Ba Den has become a shrine where pilgrims from all over Vietnam burn incense to the Lady of Linh Son Fairy Cave.

## A "Robin Hood"

Local soothsayers also prophesied that one day a "genius general of God" would come and live on the mountain. In the war against the French, the mountain was a refuge of the Viet Minh and Cao Dai armies. Today, there are still pockets of Viet Cong on the slopes although the top and the base are securely in government hands.

The prophecy was fulfilled, in the belief of many people, with the



**A view of interior of the cathedral of the Cao Dai sect in the province. Religion claims a following of about 2 million. Veterans village (below).**

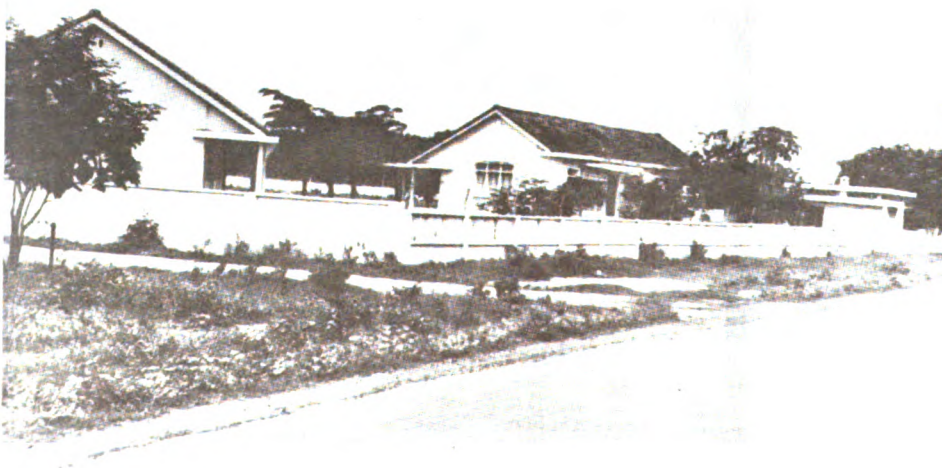
rise in the 1960s of the legendary rebel leader Trinh Minh The who made Nui Ba Den his stronghold.

To many Vietnamese, The was a Robin Hood, a patriot who yearned for national independence, who fought the French and the Communists and brought a measure of social justice to the farm communities in his zone of operations.

He was a Cao Dai Army chief of staff before he broke off to form his own independent force. Later, he was to die a hero's death while fighting the Binh Xuyen as a member of the infant Republic's armed forces.

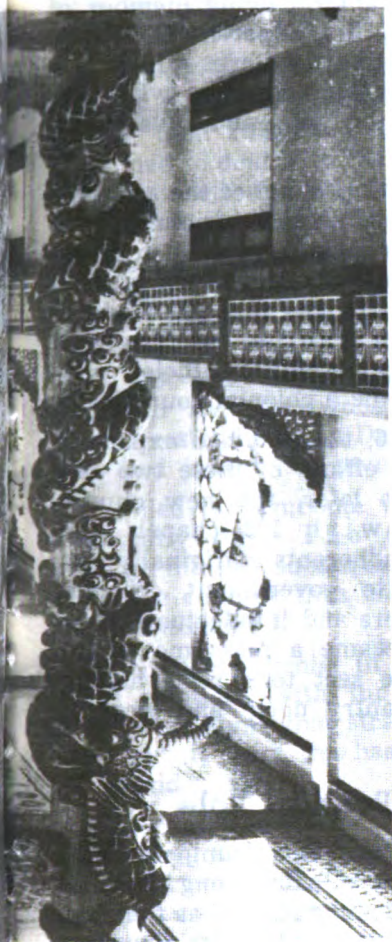
## The Land

The distinctive geographic feature of Tay Ninh is that roughly two-thirds or 250 kilometers of its border is shared with Cambodia. On the south and east, it is bound-





# general is fulfilled



ed by Hau Nghia, Binh Duong and Binh Long provinces.

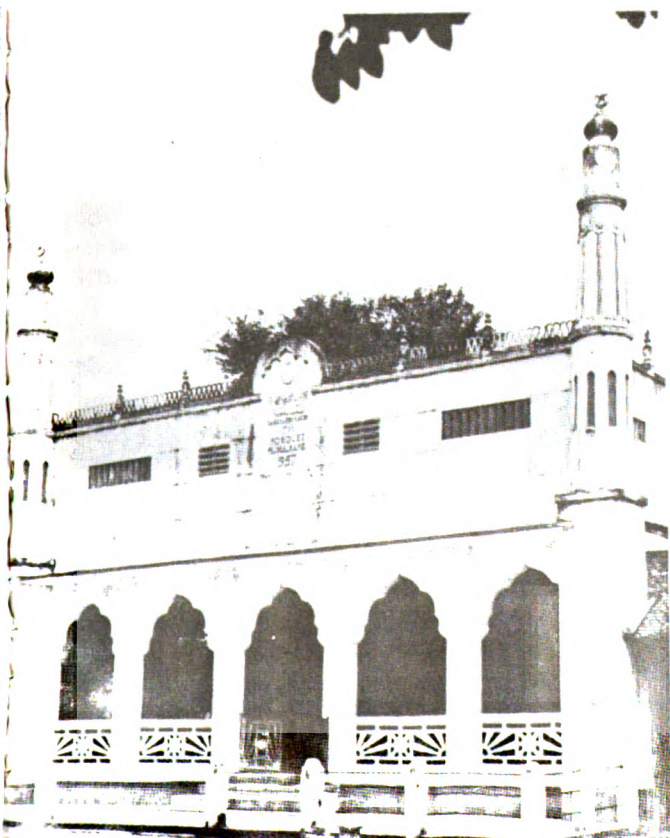
While it is not classified as a delta province, Tay Ninh has many of the topographical characteristics of the delta including flat land which is flooded during the rainy season and is excellent for rice agriculture.

Most of the province is less than 10 meters above sea level. The Vam Co Dong river flows from Cambodia through the western part of the province. The eastern border of Tay Ninh is bounded by the Saigon river.

The province has two distinct seasons, the wet or monsoon season and the dry season. During the monsoon season, the rice fields are flooded and planted and during the dry season, the fields lie fallow or are planted to vegetables that require little or no water. The monsoon lasts usually from May to December and the dry season from January to April. The temperature ranges between 70 and 90 degrees Centigrade, making the climate quite pleasant and the



Memorial to Hope in Phuoc Dien.



Cham school children chant the Koran inside mosque shown at left.

# Once the 'Garden of Elephants'

nights cool enough for comfortable sleeping.

## History

Before the 17th century, Tay Ninh was part of Cambodia and was then known as Rodiemvary or "garden of elephants." Most of the area was dense jungle and wasteland and was sparsely populated.

At about the turn of the 18th century, the area was annexed by Vietnam. It had no status as a separate administrative unit until it became part of Gia Dinh province and was designated as a canton.

In 1871, Tay Ninh was established as a separate province with a full provincial administration and government. The capital was even then Tay Ninh City.

In 1959, five districts were established but in 1963, this was reduced to only four when one of the districts was taken over by Hau Nghia province to the south.

## The Cao Dai

Tay Ninh's history is closely identified with the Cao Dai sect whose establishment in the 1920s started extensive migrations into the province. The sect quickly expanded to become the largest indigenous Vietnamese religion, claiming a following of at least 2 million Vietnamese.

The Cao Dai doctrine draws heavily on Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism as well as on the moral teachings of Jesus. Its rituals show strong influence of Vietnamese folk religion and adopted some organizational features of the Catholic Church, improving upon it with the addition of female cardinals.

The Cathedral in Tay Ninh expresses the background of the sect in its structure and decor; its church towers are European in inspiration, the open sweep of its floor suggests a mosque and its wall decorations of plaster cobras and dragons are reminiscent of a Buddhist pagoda. Statues of Con-

fucius, Jesus, Buddha, Lao-tzu, Brahma, Siva and Vishnu are prominently displayed.

Dominating the great nave of the cathedral is a single staring eye—"the eye of God"—the supreme symbol of the religion. Ceremonies are held several times daily in the cathedral. During the midnight ceremony, the spirits are questioned and, according to believers, God speaks to them through a medium.

The Cao Dai claims several spiritual fathers who are believed to give guidance to the sect through a medium. Three of these spiritual fathers are Sun Yat-sen who overthrew the reign of the emperors in China and founded the Chinese Republic, Trang Trinh, a Vietnamese diviner whose prophecies are still highly regarded in Vietnam, and Victor Hugo, the French writer and poet.

The central organization of the sect consists of three main bureaus: the Executive Corps which controls administration and is headed by the Giau Tong or pope—not a living person but the sanctified spirit of the Vietnamese philosopher Ly Thai Bach; the Legislative Body in charge of religious affairs headed by the

highest ranking living member of the sect, the Superior Ho Phap, and the Charity Corps which is a welfare agency charged with caring for the poor and invalids of the sect.

The first prophet of the sect was Ngo Van Chieu, a visionary who spent his early days as such on an island on the Gulf of Siam in 1919. Later, he moved to Saigon where he fell in with Le Van Trung, a former government official who had become a colonial councillor.

By 1926, the sect had expanded with the efforts of these two and six years later, the new church counted with 128 chapels and 100,000 adherents. Originally restricted to government officials, landowners and intellectuals, Cao-daiism became a mass movement when the sect took roots among the peasantry north and west of Saigon.

## Political Role

In 1935, Le Van Trung was succeeded by Pham Cong Tac, a former customs official, as the new pope. It was under Tac's regime that the sect acquired its nationalistic and political coloration.



Cathedral (in background) and statues in sprawling Cao Dai compound.

Before 1956, the Cao Dai had established a virtually independent feudal state in Tay Ninh, facilitated by shrewd bargaining with the Japanese and the French and by a well-trained private army of some 30,000 men.

In his efforts to unify the fragmented South Vietnamese in the sixties, then President Ngo Dinh Diem had to deal with the politico-religious sects of the country, one of which was the Cao Dai.

Through negotiations, most of the military contingents of the Cao Dai had joined the government by 1955. Then in October of that year, Tac's 300-man papal guard was disarmed and his two daughters were arrested by a Cao Dai general who had joined the government.

Tac fled to Cambodia where he eventually died. The Cao Dai general himself subsequently fled from the country thus ending the sect's autonomy.

Until Diem's demise in 1963, the sect's relations with the government were somewhat strained but since recent years, this has improved considerably.

While the Cao Dai never regained their former independence and temporal power, the national government has judiciously respected the special position and prerogatives of the Cao Dai in Tay Ninh, where the military and civilian leadership is dominated by the followers of the sect.

### Major Battleground

Because of the province's strategic location and the political importance of the Cao Dai sect, Tay Ninh has been a major battleground during the recent, tumultuous history of the country.

War Zone "C", the area north of Nui Ba Den mountain, is relatively unpopulated and has been the scene of many battles involving American, ARVN and Communist forces.

The last American ground combat troops left the province in 1970. The border configurations "parrot's beak," "fish hook" and "dog's head" are still familiar military terms denoting places of combat even to this day.



Woman walks away from now deserted free market on RVN-Cambodia border.

### Trinh Minh The

No account of Tay Ninh's history would be complete without mention of Trinh Minh The. To the French, he was a treacherous opponent who murdered General Chanson in 1951 and blew up a vehicle in front of the Opera House in Saigon in 1953 but many Vietnamese regard him a legendary figure.

When he was 21, he left the family farm to join other Vietnamese training in guerrilla warfare at the secret camps of the Japanese Kempetai in Cambodia and Laos. In 1945, he was an officer in the secret Cao Dai military company formed in the Lichinan shipyard in Saigon and he took part in the Japanese-inspired coup against the Vichy French colonials in that year.

When French Union Forces returned to Vietnam after World War II, he joined the Cao Dai soldiers in the early days of the nationalist Viet Minh fight against the French. Then the Cao Dai, in disgust over the Communist betrayals and purges, left the Viet Minh movement in 1947 and formed a militia under French auspices to protect their religious communities. He became chief of staff of these Cao Dai forces.

The's first military success was against the Viet Minh forces in the Communist Eastern Zone led by

Nguyen Binh, his classmate at the Japanese guerrilla warfare school. Shattered by the defeat, Binh's forces never recovered enough and were subsequently betrayed to the French as part of a Communist purge.

Feeling that fighting for independence under French auspices was anomalous, The left the Cao Dai in 1951 and started his own political-military movement for independence which he called the National Alliance Forces. Many Cao Dai joined him, including his father who was a lieutenant in his son's forces, and four brothers. All of them were killed in fights against the Communists.

The moved his 2,500-man Lien Minh force to Nui Ba Den in 1952, enabling his men to move about freely in the region as the people were unequivocally for them. Eventually, his forces controlled a zone southwest down to the Plaine des Joncs and practically to the Mekong river.

It is said that in their affection for The and his men, the people used to bring the traditional rice cakes at Tet and huge mounds of these gifts were left at the edge of the forest for them. Vietnamese soldiers in the French Union Forces would leave supplies of cigarets and sugar and notes saying they were sorry they were fighting him.

The's guerrillas were finally in-



**Kilns for the manufacture of bricks dot the highway on way to Tay Ninh city.**

corporated into the government army in February, 1955 in appropriate ceremonies in Saigon. President Ngo Dinh Diem personally pinned The's rank insignia as a brigadier general and placed a Vietnamese general officer's cap on his head.

In May of the same year, a sniper's bullet hit him behind the ear as he and his men fought with retreating Binh Xuyen forces at the Tan Thuan Dong bridge south of the city. The's forces were given the task of cutting off the retreat of the Binh Xuyen forces in Nha Be but they were pinned down at the bridge by fortified enemy forces and three gunboats.

The was given a great public funeral ceremony in Saigon, followed by another public ceremony in Tay Ninh. He was buried with his men who also fell in battle, on the slopes of Nui Ba Den mountain.

### **Demographic Factors**

Although no complete census has been possible in recent years, Tay Ninh's population is approximately 370,000 with most of the people concentrated along the major highways and in the area of the Cao Dai Holy See and the Long Hoa market.

Of the four districts, Phu Khuong is the most populous and Khiem Hanh the least populated with

Phuoc Ninh and Hieu Thien ranking in between.

The vast majority of the population may be categorized as ethnic Vietnamese. The province's proximity to Cambodia gives it a substantial minority of Cambodians, numbering about 5,000 persons.

A group of ethnic Chinese, estimated at 1,500, are influential in the commercial sphere.

The most interesting of the ethnic minorities are the Chams, of whom there are about 3,000—the last remnants of the once powerful Kingdom of Champa which held sway over a vast territory that included Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Aside from the Cao Dai sect, the significant religions in the province include the Buddhists who number some 50,000 and the Roman Catholics totalling about 20,000. The Chams represent the Moslem community. There are also a sprinkling of Protestants, Animists and Confucianists.

There are a total of 46 Cao Dai temples in the province, 42 Buddhist pagodas, ten Catholic churches and one mosque.

### **Economy**

As in most provinces in the country, Tay Ninh's economic orientation is basically agricultural. Seventy per cent of the working

population is engaged in farming, primarily rice. Logging and timber milling account for ten per cent, light industry 4 per cent, rubber workers 2 per cent, merchants and civil servants 8 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively. Other occupations account for six per cent.

Some industries like timbering and brick making have been traditionally regarded as dry season work and employ slack farm labor following the rice harvest.

The introduction of miracle rice that can be planted throughout the year and the excellent market existing for lumber and bricks are starting to change the seasonal pattern, causing certain industries to bloom the year round while some less efficient ones feel the pressure of a tighter labor market.

### **Lumber Industry**

The greatest single resource of the province is timber and with improved security from the cross border and incursions into Cambodia by the ARVN during the last two years, Tay Ninh has become one of the major suppliers of lumber in the country today. Timber exports from the province in 1971 alone went up to 3,000 cubic meters, double that of the preceding year. It is estimated that over 90 sawmills are again active in the province.

The 80 or so manioc processing plants and 45 brickkilns operate at a less furious pace but, despite complaints of labor shortage, major brick manufacturers appear to be doing a brisk business as do the furniture makers and rice millers.

### **Rubber Plantations**

The four major rubber plantations are Ven Ven, Arnaud, Cau Khoi and Ben Cui, all of which are being worked today as are many of the smaller locally owned stands.

The large operators employ some 2,500 people but since most small plantations are family operations, no accurate estimate is available for the total persons employed in them. Rubber production in 1970 increased about 5 per cent to 3,500 tons. Renewed faith in the industry

# Goals of land reform exceeded

was demonstrated with the planting last year of 6,500 new trees.

## Self Development

The main thrust of economic development in Tay Ninh is in modernization and expansion of agriculture linked to a continuing concern for price stabilization.

Provincial authorities closely monitor the price levels of the local market and have established a commissary for civil servants to serve as a restraint on inflationary pressure. Development of the economy is more directly related to the province's priorities of modernizing agricultural methods and encouraging the establishment of agricultural industries such as sugar mills, rice mills and pea shellers.

## Mechanization

While most farmers still practice traditional farming methods, use of the 40-60 HP tractors is increasingly in evidence and the popularity of the newer 15-25 HP hand tractor indicates that many farmers have entered the mechanical age.

Along with mechanization, the increased use of fertilizer and pesticides for the miracle rice strains has become common. Rice is the principal crop, employing about 50 per cent of the cultivated land. Local varieties average less than two metric tons a hectare but the IR varieties double this yield and can be planted up to three crops a year as against only one crop for local rice.

During 1970, the province became self-sufficient in rice. Production of manioc and peanuts, suitable for drier and higher land, is also increasing. Mixed crops such as sweet potatoes, mung beans, sweet corn and fruits are grown mainly for in-province consumption. The higher standard of living is raising the demand for protein products. Not only are more hogs and poultry being raised but improved stock, especially swine is well received. More fish

ponds are being constructed, taking advantage of the national fish hatchery in the province. Some fingerlings were bought for propagation in 1970.

In land reform, the vast majority of Land-to-The Tiller applicants in the province applied for ownership of government land that had been cultivated but were never properly registered. Overall response has been excellent and the 1970 goals were exceeded by 200 per cent while the 1971 goals were achieved in midyear.

## Credit

A rural development credit program under the management of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) aims at improving the rural standard of living, making timely loans at reduced risk and enhancing the authority of village officials.

A program which ended last year loaned VN\$7,735,000 to 383 farmers. Twenty-three of the 26 eligible villages participated and for the 1971 program, a total of VN\$4,350,000

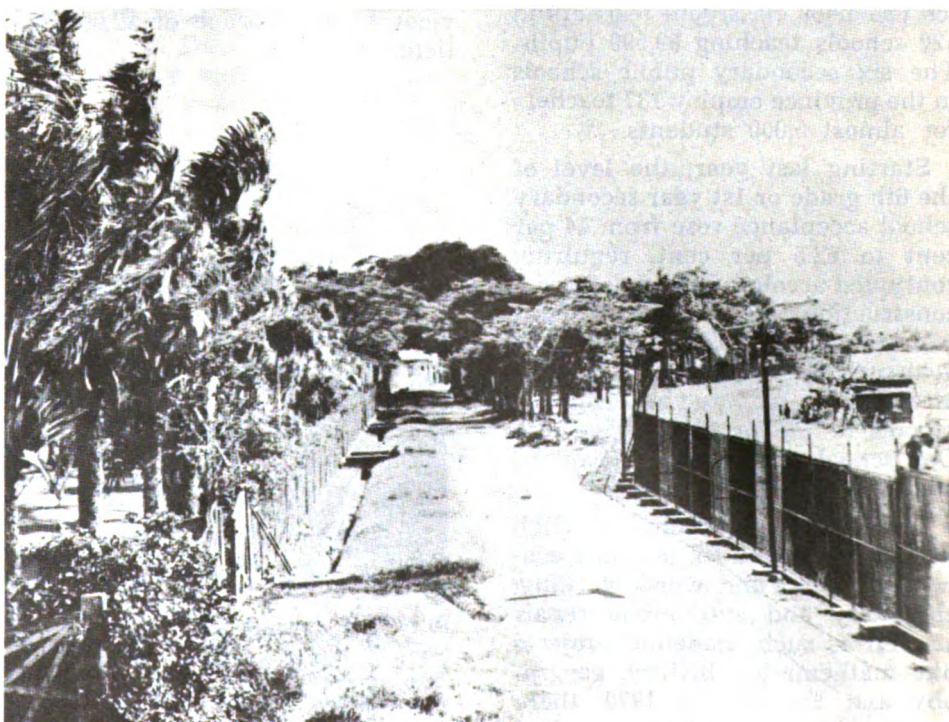
was reserved by 15 villages from their Village Self-Development Funds and in the case of two villages, from their budgets.

This year, the Tay Ninh ADB plans to lend VN\$120 million, an increase of 87 per cent over that of 1970. During the past two years, the rate of loan payment has been over 90 per cent.

There are two funds available for provincial development projects—the national fund for local development under the management of the Central Pacification and Development Council and the Provincial Council, and the Provincial Development Fund used solely for projects approved by the Provincial Council.

Projects under the first category last year included four roads, two public health and two irrigation projects along with a study of educational policies. Under the latter fund, which amounted to 21 million piasters, there were 26 projects budgeted.

In village self-development, good leadership and community spirit resulted in the participation of 23



Approach to the Ven Ven rubber plantation, one of four biggest in province.

of the province's 27 villages. This year, for the first time, only public utility projects were funded from the Ministry of Rural Development while the income producing projects were funded through loans from the Rural Development Credit Program. As of the middle of last year, some 59 public utility projects were undertaken, with the major projects consisting of 29 educational, four health, two community wells and nine road repair jobs.

With urbanization an evident trend countrywide, Tay Ninh introduced in 1971 a development plan which included the villages of Long Thanh, Hiep Ninh and Thai Hiep in Phu Khuong district and Thanh Phuoc in Hieu Thien district. The program, under the care of a provincial urban development committee composed of 13 service chiefs and ranking provincial officials started with some 49 public utility self-help projects.

### Education

Education is a serious concern of provincial officials and involve as many as 2,600 participants in Parent-Teacher organizations and the launching of 60 classroom construction projects in the 1970 program alone.

The elementary education service has 1,469 classroom teachers in 122 schools teaching 69,590 pupils. The six secondary public schools in the province employ 137 teachers for almost 5,000 students.

Starting last year, the level of the 6th grade or 1st year secondary school acceptance rose from 44 per cent to 62.5 per cent, requiring continued acceleration of classroom construction and teacher recruitment at the highschool level. A year earlier, some 1,600 students attended 10 private secondary schools in the province. Two Cao Dai schools represented over 60 per cent of these students.

The Tay Ninh Technical High School offers courses in home economics, metal and wood working, electricity and automobile repair as well as such academic subjects like mathematics, history, geography and English. In 1970, there were only 194 students enrolled but with the advance of the train-

ing to the 10th year level, the enrollment has doubled.

Only five years old, the Agricultural High School is expanding to grade 12 level with close to a thousand enrollment. Along with the usual academic subjects, practical instruction in crop and livestock production is given.

### Public Health

The provincial public health program ranges from emergency medical care to preventive disease control.

During the last few years, medical personnel and facilities showed a marked increase. The 350-bed provincial civilian hospital treats a monthly average of 16,500 patients with the help of three doctors, 42 nurses and technicians and 15 midwives plus a 12-man Philippine contingent of 12 doctors, nurses and technicians.

The provincial military hospital with a professional staff of 13 cooperates with the civilian health program and three districts have a joint utilization program where ARVN medical personnel work alongside ministry of health representatives.

Throughout the province, there are 28 district and village dispensaries and 84 hamlet health stations which provide medical services to an average of 22,000 patients a month.

The backbone of the rural health system is a staff of 45 midwives who are responsible for two-thirds of the deliveries in the province. The rural health service employs 109 district and rural health workers to assist in the immunization and education programs. These cadres are also in charge of the sanitary hamlet projects.

### Philippine Contingent

Any account of the province's public health service would be incomplete without mention of the role of Filipino medical, dental and surgical workers. In fact, the long history of Philippine medical assistance to South Vietnam is closely tied in with Tay Ninh.

It started in 1954 when a group of Filipino doctors and nurses volunteered for service in South Vietnam under the auspices of Operations Brotherhood. Tay Ninh was one of the provinces where these teams operated. The others, as at present, are in the provinces of Binh Duong, Hau Nghia and Dinh Tuong.

The medical workers under Operations Brotherhood were all civilian volunteers and it was not until ten years later, in July, 1964, that the Philippine Congress authorized the President to send economic and technical assistance to the Republic of Vietnam.

Accordingly, a 34-man contin-



Tay Ninh Technical High School enrolment has soared from 194 in 1970.

gent of doctors, surgeons, nurses, psychological and rural development workers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines arrived in RVN that year—the first Philcon V team. The civilian medical workers with Operations Brotherhood meanwhile had moved on to other parts of Indochina and are still in Laos today.

Yearly, up to the present, a fresh contingent is dispatched to South Vietnam numbering an average of 60 personnel. During the period 1966 to 1969 however, a separate and much larger group, the Philippine Civic Action Group (Philcag V) was sent over in addition to the Philcon V team. The present team consists of two surgeons, one dentist, three nurses and six medical and dental technicians. The team is headed by Maj. Alfredo Caballero, a dentist, and includes Capt. Ernesto Luis, a surgeon; Lt. Celso Tamayo, surgeon; Lts. Elena de Ramos and Eva Bonaobra, both anesthetists; Lt. Lydia Sawadan, a nurse and Sgts. Cirilo Casco, Benito Atutubo, Cesar Cadagat, Pamfilo Sison, Eduardo Romero and Saturnino Maurera, all technicians.

All dental cases, averaging 60 a day, are handled by the Filipino team as well as the 100 to 200 minor weekly and eight to ten major weekly surgical cases.

During the period July 1, 1971 to June 30, 1972, the team in Tay Ninh handled 1,477 medical, 11,750 surgical and 9,349 dental cases. Its technicians made 3,724 X-ray readings.

### Resettlement

As in almost every province in the country, Tay Ninh has its share of problems in the resettlement of war victims. In 1970, a total of 1,685 persons received resettlement benefits and some 25,000 Cambodians of Vietnamese descent who took refuge in the province chose to stay.

Besides basic relief like food, clothing and shelter, the government provides training courses in animal husbandry and vocational and handicraft arts as well as cleared plots for truck gardens, to help integrate them into the provincial life.

# RP civic action groups leave mark

At present, there are about 12,000 new refugees generated by the North Vietnamese invasion including 1,000 from Cambodia. The latter are resettled in Suoi Da hamlet in Phuoc Hoi village near the Nui Ba Den mountain some 15 kilometers from Tay Ninh City.

### Philcag's Thanh Dien Project

In 1966, the Philippines sent a 2,000-man civic action group to Vietnam, called Philcag for short. The group, commanded by Brig. Isem. Gaudencio Tobias was assigned to Tay Ninh province and was immediately given the Thanh Dien Refugee Resettlement project by the provincial authorities.

The project involved the clearing of about 600 hectares of the Thanh Dien forest for agricultural development and the development of 100 hectares for residential lots, construction of 41 kilometers of roads and one bridge to link Thanh Dien with Highway 22. The site was to be the home of some 1,000 refugee families.

Before its clearing and development, Thanh Dien forest was the haven of one regional VC company, two VC guerrilla squads and



Village chief Tan Pham Luc remembers fondly ready help by Filipino groups.



One of several bridges built in Tay Ninh by Philippine Civic Action Groups.

one VC special missions squad. The presence of these VC elements in the forest threatened Tay Ninh City, the villages and hamlets of Phuoc Ninh district along Route 13 in the north and those of Phu Khuong district along Highway 22 in the east.

Between December, 1966 when the Philcag started the project and August, 1968 when it was replaced by a second Philcag, the 1st Philcag was subjected to harrasing fire from small arms, grenade launchers and mortars; sniper attacks and mining incidents that took a toll of 7 killed and 35 wounded aside from two bulldozers and one APC heavily damaged and one tank and one grader slightly damaged.

By the end of March, the sub-division of the eastern half of the community site was completed and on April 4, 1967, the first 50 refugee families were resettled and living in duplex houses built by the provincial administration.

The settlement site also included community installations and facilities like a hamlet office and information center, a dispensary-maternity clinic and a ten-room schoolhouse. The province also constructed a public market and a powerhouse. Philcag meanwhile had erected a tall "Monument to Hope" in the center of the site.

Finally, in August of that year, the site was developed into a real new life hamlet and given the name Phuoc Dien hamlet. A Philcag special civic action team worked with a military-civil team organized by the province.

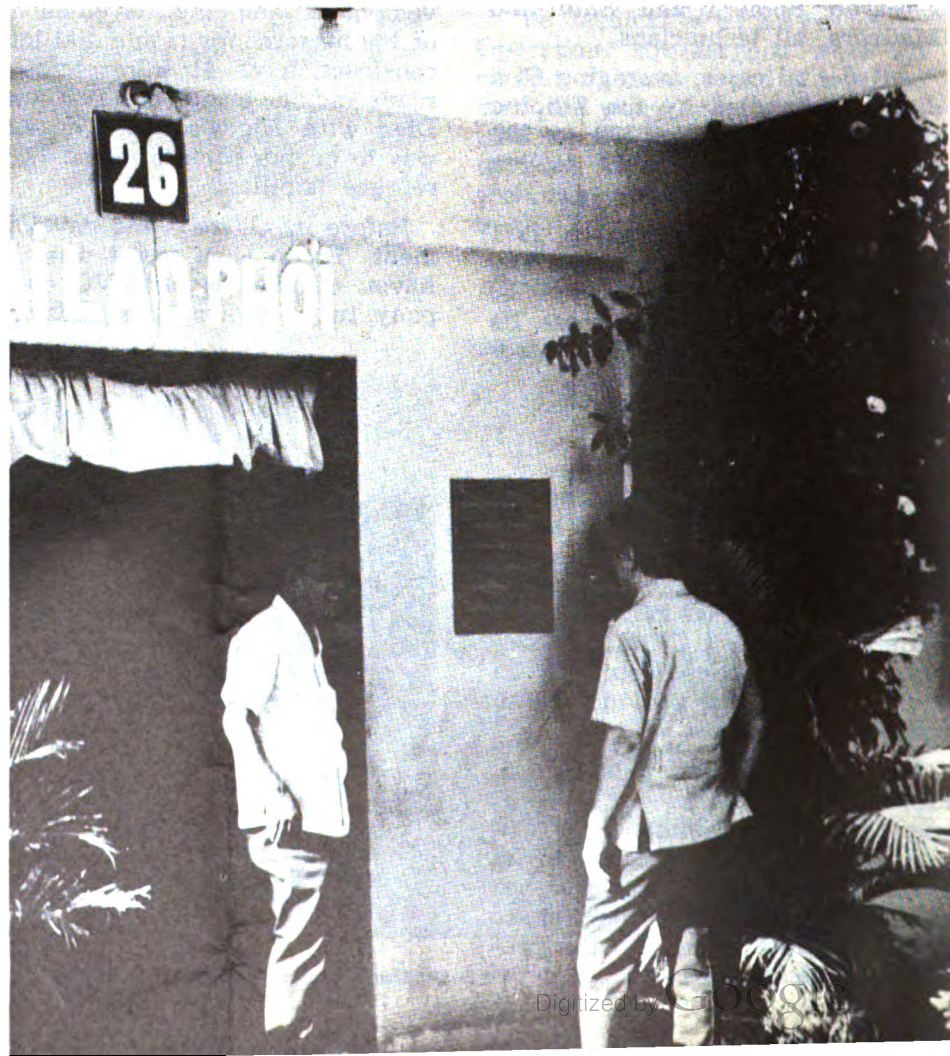
While the establishment of the Phuoc Dien resettlement site was the 1st Philcag's main accomplishment, it also completed hundreds of smaller construction projects like roads and bridges, hamlet offices elsewhere in the province, piggery and swine projects, improvement or repair of schoolhouses, market sites and refugee's houses.

In the Tay Ninh provincial hospital, the 1st Philcag constructed a TB ward which was not quite finished when its tour of duty was completed and a four-man team had to be left behind to complete the job.

In the Phuoc Dien site, the group also established a demonstration



Girls High School building in former Philcag village built as model one. Below: RP community workers D. Yabes and I. Gica at Filipino-built TB ward.





farm involving the high-yield rice varieties and an access road connecting the site between Highway 22 and Route 13 including the necessary bridges.

## 2nd Philcag

In August, 1968, the 1st Philcag was replaced by the 2nd Philcag commanded by Brig. Gen. Ceferino Carreon. This time, the group was down to 1,500 officers and men.

The group continued the work of its predecessor in the fields of engineering civic action, medical and dental civic action, miscellaneous environmental improvement and a "people to people" program.

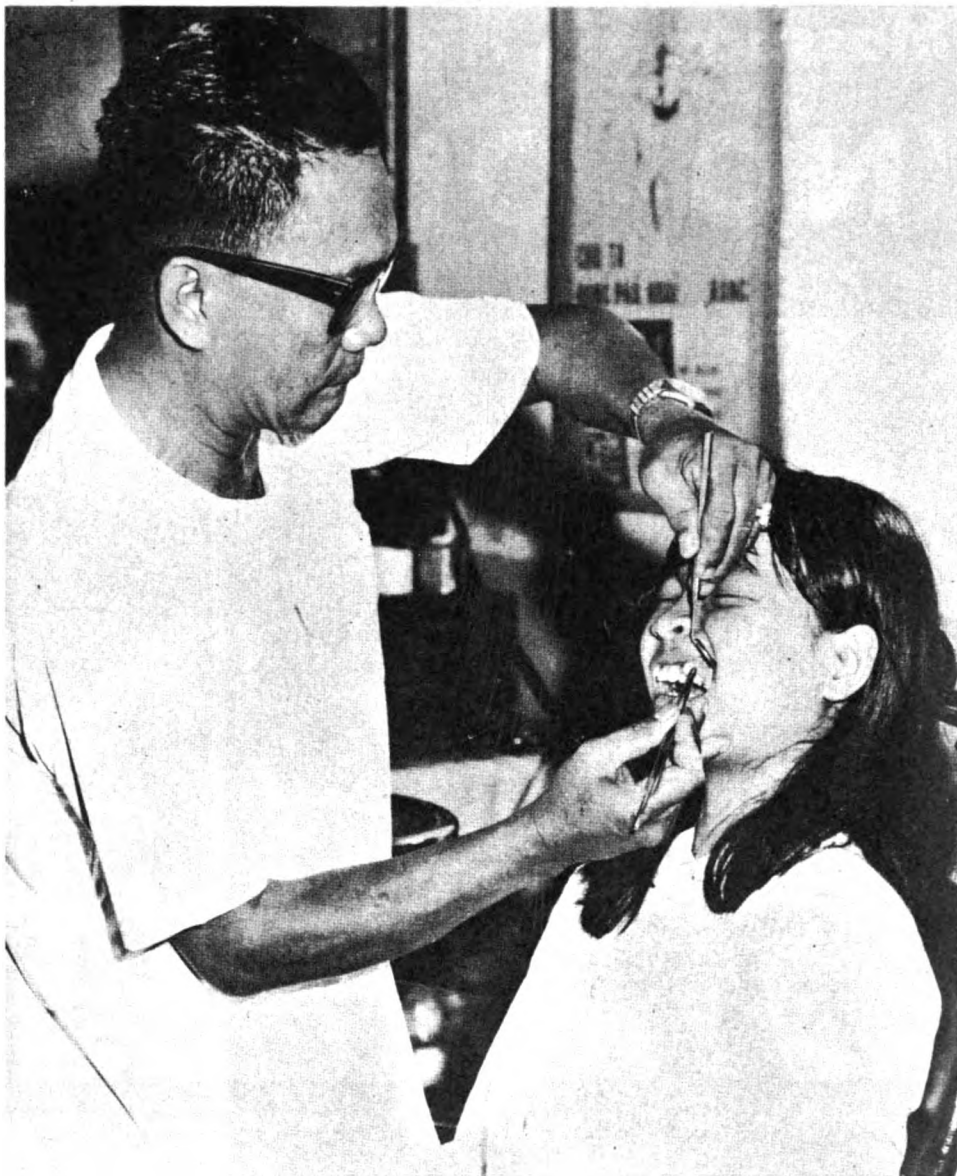
Among the accomplishments of the group were the construction of the Thai Xuan Girls High School, construction and repair of dispensaries, roads and bridges, and the Tay Ninh air strip; construction of refugee houses in Hiep Truong, levelling of the Buddhist churchyard and the Long Yen park, clearing of the Long Hai market, construction and repair of nine bridges in the province, levelling of the new Tay Ninh market site and the construction of a Cao Dai chapel in the Phuoc Dien refugee site.

In recognition of its work, the 2nd Philcag was awarded the RVN Presidential Unit citation upon completion of its tour of duty in 1969. By then, it has suffered a total of four killed and 22 wounded.

Today, a total of 1,076 families or 6,222 persons live in the Phuoc Dien hamlet, working the plots of land carved out of the forest by the Philcag.

The Viet Cong still make occasional forays into the hamlet, as they did during the days of the Filipino civic action groups. The enemy finds it hard to yield what it considered its domain for 21 years until the coming of the Philcag but today the VC are faced and always beaten off by the Regional Forces stationed in the hamlet.

Tan Pham Luc, chief of the neighboring village of Thai Binh for the last nine years remembers how big a help the Filipino groups have been to him. "They were always ready to lend a helping hand,



Major Alfredo Caballero, Philcag team leader, works at free dental clinic.

whenever they learned I had a problem," he says.

Luc was one of 20 village chiefs who were sent to Taipei in November, 1971 to observe village development especially in the fields of agriculture, fishery and animal husbandry.

## Transport, Communications

Except for two routes, the major highways of the province are in good to excellent condition. Highways provide the primary means of travel for most private and commercial traffic.

Highways QL 1 from Go Dau Ha to Cambodia, QL 22 from the junction of QL 1 to Tay Ninh city and LTL 26 from Khiem Hanh to

Tay Ninh city carry the majority of commercial, military and private traffic. QL 22 north to Cambodia and LTL 13 west to Cambodia from Tay Ninh city serve as important supply lines for military operations in Cambodia. Sampans ply both the Saigon and Vam Co Dong rivers but commercial barge traffic is light because of the improved commercial highway transport system.

With the exception of limited PTT telephone and postal service, the bulk of the communications system in the province is military or paramilitary in nature. The village/hamlet radio network serves as a vital security link to the rural areas. Postal service, though limited, is available in all villages.

# Massacre on Highway 1

# 'NO ONE ESCAPED'



NVA draftee Le Xuan Thuy relates details of massacre at press conference.

By LE NGOC

He refused to hazard an estimate of how many were killed; there were "too many to count," he said. But he was positive no one was able to escape.

He is Le Xuan Thuy, a 22-year-old North Vietnamese Army draftee and he was speaking not of the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) soldiers his regiment did battle with in Quang Tri five months ago but of civilian refugees who lost out in their bid for safety in the North's invasion of the South last Easter.

The slaughter, he told a press conference in Saigon September 8, was the major factor why he decided to defect to the South. He made it last July 31 and for the first time, a skeptical Western press confirmed "from the horse's mouth," the

truth of the NVA massacres on Highway 1 heretofore treated only lightly as "unsubstantiated claims."

Defectors there have been, but none with as crucial a story as Thuy, a radio operator of the 4th Battalion, 2nd Regiment, of the North Vietnamese Army's 324th Division which executed the slaughter.

Allied officials, as early as August, protested both at the forum of the Paris peace talks and in official statements to the press, about the slaughter of "1,000 to 2,000" innocent refugees fleeing beleaguered Quang Tri but the charges were met with deafening silence by the North Vietnamese.

An unbelieving Western press abetted the situation and were it not for Thuy, the crime would

have been consigned to limbo. In part, it was probably the monstrosity of the slaughter, its magnitude, that prompted open skepticism even among the hard-bitten Saigon press corps.

## Ambush Set Up

Thuy, a short, medium built fellow who could not keep still as he faced the press, recalled that his division took up positions 100 to 150 yards from Highway 1 on April 28. Only a year earlier, he was drafted into the NVA.

The following day, his battalion commander told them that anyone moving southward from Quang Tri was "the enemy." From that date to May 3, just before and after the fall of Quang Tri city, many soldiers and civilians were pouring south out of the fallen city. It was then that the slaughter took place, according to Thuy.

"The people were moving on bicycles, motorbikes and buses," Thuy said. Then his unit poured 61mm and 82mm mortar and automatic rifle fire. "No one was able to escape," he said.

Thuy and some of his comrades went up to the highway after the barrage. "It was horrible...many were killed including old people, children and pregnant women... the dying were screaming and begging for water... Soldiers stripped the corpses, taking watches, rice, money and clothes."

## Mopped Up

Thuy recounted that his fellow soldiers dragged some of those who still showed signs of life from shelters along the road, ordered them to move out of the area then shot them as they ran.

To a question, Thuy said that ARVN soldiers and civilians were among the victims. They were travelling in bunches, sometimes the soldiers were by themselves



Villagers carry remains of North Vietnamese fire victim for field burial. Civilians crouch alongside ARVN soldier near road bank during firefight.

and sometimes mingled with civilians, he said.

But no distinction was made between civilians and soldiers because the orders were to shoot everyone moving south, according to Thuy.

He revealed that two NVA soldiers donned civilian clothes they found on the highway, got on bicycles and started riding towards Quang Tri City. When they reached an area which was covered by another NVA unit, they were also shot. Thuy could not explain the incident.

### Saw Executions

There were other outrages Thuy witnessed. He recounted that before the massacre on Highway 1, he also saw the execution of people in Quang Tri reported to be "servants" of the Saigon regime.

The first one, he said, was when NVA soldiers found a couple in a village whose name he could not recall. The woman was immediately shot by her captors and her husband was beheaded.

Shortly afterwards, an NVA unit seized another couple trying to flee from Quang Tri to Thua Thien. They were summarily shot, according to Thuy.



# Women of Vietnam



**Cai Luong (Vietnamese operetta) habitues find My Chau among the foremost in the art. A member of the "Kim Chung" stage troupe, she is also a radio and TV singer.**

**In the mezzo range Trang Dai, 22, has few peers among Vietnamese popular singers. Her flawless phrasing has endeared her to Saigon club and television audiences.**

# Totem, Emblem

# The Dragon In Vietnam

Perhaps the figure most used for decorative purposes in Vietnam is the dragon. It is to be seen in temples, on silverware, and cloth of all kinds, and next to the depiction of bending bamboo is perhaps the most familiar symbol of the land.

The dragon is the most important of the four symbolic animals of Vietnamese mythology. To the Vietnamese it symbolizes nobility and power and is believed to be immortal. It can live anywhere — in the air, underground, in water, etc., it is believed to possess such power that, when provoked, it can spit a deadly vapor which it can turn into either water or fire at will.

While in Western mythology the dragon is an evil beast, and best illustrated by the story of St. George and the dragon, in the East — particularly in mainland Asia — it has an opposite significance. The dragon is the totem, the palladium and emblem of Vietnam.

## Symbol of Man

It is the symbol of man in general, just as woman is represented by the phoenix, another of the four mythical animals of the land. When a dragon and phoenix are shown together either in cloth designs or carvings, a marriage is represented. Sometimes this is

emphasized by the addition of a Chinese character meaning joy, and greater emphasis is achieved by repeating the character.

The dragon may be a fanciful elaboration of the several varieties of common lizards of Vietnam, but its symbolic use seems to be of ancient Chinese origin.

According to popular belief, the dragon is a genie that presides over the creation of meteors and other cosmic activity, and belief in cosmic activity is exceedingly strong in Vietnam. In addition, it is often considered to be the god of the waters who lives in the sea and other bodies of water.

According to the Chinese tradition, which is still prevalent in Vietnam, the dragon has the horns of a deer, the head of a camel, belly of a crocodile, scales of a fish, and buffalo-like hair. Its hearing is in its horns rather than the ears. The neck of a serpent, eyes of a demon, and claws of an eagle complete a figure which is rather strange to the Westerner.

## Many Legends

There are many legends of the dragon with some being used to explain the origin of the Vietnamese people. One of these tells of a Vietnamese king named Lac Long Quan (circa 2,500 B.C.) of the dragon race, who obtained 100 eggs.

From these came a hundred boys, fifty of them taking after their father and becoming water genii. The other fifty took after their mother and became land dwellers. One of the latter founded the Hung Vuong dynasty.

While Vietnam had a dynasty and from time to time the ruler died, the Vietnamese did not say "The King is dead" but rather "The Dragon has gone up into the upper regions. A second proverb states, "When the Dragon (the ruler) is peaceful and happy, the fish (the people) swim freely."

## Blood in River

The reddish color of the Sai river is explained by the following legend. When the Chinese invaded Tonkin in ancient times, their general used explosives to break up the rocks blocking the river. This explosion wounded the dragon hidden in its depths and the wound, having never healed, continues to color the water with its blood. This is very similar to the Chinese legend that the dragons are found everywhere underground, and serious difficulties would result if a dragon were accidentally wounded. Its fury could result in untold catastrophes.

## Earth's Spirit

There are numerous other dragon tales which might be told, but they have a similar thought and seem to spring from the animistic concept of the earth having a "spirit" of its own which must be worshipped and appeased.

These legends have a present-day effect on the thinking of many common folk. To illustrate: a Chinese legend still current in Vietnam is that a three-year-old carp can be transformed into a dragon by certain rites. The Vietnamese, therefore, do not wish to eat large carp, particularly if they are black, as this may have dire consequences.

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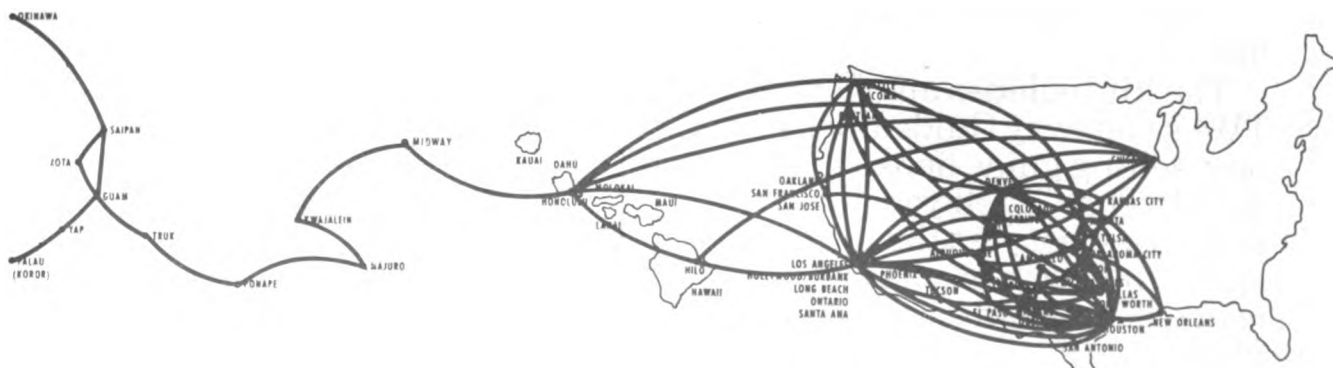
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