

Vietnam courier



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● POLITICS

● ECONOMICS

● CULTURE

● SOCIETY



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AT THE 1981
POPULAR ART
FESTIVAL
IN
HANOI



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Front Cover:

— *The One-Pillar Pagoda Built in the 11th Century*

**Vietnam
COURIER**

11 — 1981

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

FOLLOWING the peace initiatives put forward by the Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese countries at their Conferences in Phnom Penh (January 1980), Vientiane (July 1980) and Ho Chi Minh City (January 1981), another important proposal was made by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos, Phoune Sipaseuth, on behalf of his country, Vietnam and Kampuchea at the United Nations General Assembly on September 28 last. It was a proposal on the principles governing the peaceful co-existence between the two groups of countries — Indochina and ASEAN — for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in Southeast Asia. (See full text in this issue).

At present, the situation in Southeast Asia is tense and potentially explosive. This instability results from a situation which has lasted forty years, the origin of which, in our opinion, is the intervention and aggression of countries outside the area: West European colonialist countries, then the United States of America, and lately China — with American connivance.

For a long time, China has seen Southeast Asia as a choice area in which to carry out her policy of hegemony and expansion, capitalizing on the presence of fairly numerous Chinese residents and of Maoist parties. However, Beijing's ambition has been checked by Vietnam and 1979 witnessed two painful events for China: her loss of Kampuchea — an important bridge from which to threaten the Indochinese and other Southeast Asian countries, and immediately after that her defeat in her aggression of Vietnam.

Beijing's activities took place just at the time the USA wanted to play the China card against the Soviet Union and world revolutionary forces. That was the origin of a new conjuncture in

Southeast Asia, at utter variance with the atmosphere of friendship and co-operation which had prevailed from 1976 to 1978, marked by many reciprocal visits between the leaders of Vietnam and Laos on the one hand, and those of the ASEAN countries on the other, as well as by the documents signed on these occasions.

The hottest spot has been the Kampuchea-Thailand border. Deeply influenced by both the USA and China, the Thai rulers took little account of their national interests: they let the Pol Pot remnant troops use Thailand as a sanctuary and receive Chinese weapons, in an effort to reverse Kampuchea's historical trend. Bangkok, and also Singapore, have been used as gathering places for the Kampuchean reactionaries egged on by Beijing, in order to oppose the Kampuchean patriots and the Phnom Penh Government.

In this month of October, Thailand took a series of dangerous steps: Thai Premier Prem Tinsulanond went to the USA and received a pledge from the Reagan Administration to increase its arms aid in 1982 by 60% compared with 1981 and to boost it in the future, in exchange for Thailand's commitment to let the USA reactivate the military bases of Sattahip, Korat, Ubon and Udon which they had been compelled to close in 1975. After that, Thai and US troops carried out joint exercises of sea landings in the Gulf of Thailand, at the same time as the manoeuvres of US-Japanese troops, of US-British-Australian-New Zealand troops, and the arms build-up at Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean. In the context of the Reagan Administration's arms drive and tension-building in the world, does Thailand's policy aimed at stepping up the "return" of the USA in Southeast Asia fully conform to Beijing's taste?

A misapprehension about the cause of tension in Southeast Asia has led the ASEAN countries to promote an "International Conference on Kampuchea" which was doomed to failure and only brought grist to the mills of two countries outside the area: the USA and China. However, even during the process of this undertaking those ASEAN countries with a sense of reality can see that China's aims go against their immediate interests. China wants to restore the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea by military means, to destabilize and separate the Southeast Asian countries for China's own benefit, while the ASEAN countries need peace and stability and many of them abhor the Khmer Rouge executioners.

A Thai politician argues that China is a long-run threat to Southeast Asia but not for many years to come: the direct threat comes from Vietnam. This flies in the face of reality. Facts show

that even in Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang's tour of Southeast Asian countries, China refuses to cut off her relations with the Maoist parties in these countries. Facts also show that China keeps up her territorial claims against her neighbours: witness her refusal, for many days, to grant an entry visa to a member of an Indian delegation only because he represents an Indian State that China claims as belonging to her!

On the other hand, it is a matter of fact that Vietnam has many times reiterated her proposal to sign a treaty of non-aggression between Vietnam and Thailand, and warmly supported Phnom Penh's proposal to establish a demilitarized zone between Kampuchea and Thailand. These proposals have all been rejected by Thailand.

Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries only hope to have peace and stability in this area so as to devote their energies to rehabilitating their war-torn countries. To say that they want territorial aggrandizement is but a reflection of the Beijing rulers' expansionist ambitions. The solidarity between the three Indochinese countries is an indispensable requirement proved by history and a legitimate aspiration of the peoples of the three countries. It does not harm any countries in Southeast Asia or any other country.

Those are some basic points in our view of the situation in Southeast Asia which we hope the ASEAN countries will share. As Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos Phoune Sipaseuth has pointed out, the Indochinese and the ASEAN countries may appraise differently the cause of the present tension in Southeast Asia, and that is precisely why the two groups of countries should continue their dialogue to better understand each other and bring their viewpoints nearer.

Southeast Asian affairs must be settled by Southeast Asians without pressure or threat from countries outside the area, which should respect their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. For their part, the latter shall not let any country use their territory as a base for direct or indirect aggression and intervention with regard to other countries. If all the Southeast Asian countries have a common voice in this matter, that will stay the hands of the countries outside the area which nurture expansionist, interventionist or aggressive designs against them, and they will have many prospects to further mutual comprehension and join hands to build Southeast Asia into an area of peace, stability, friendship and co-operation.

25 October 1981

PRINCIPLES

governing the peaceful co-existence between the two groups of countries — Indochina and ASEAN — for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in Southeast Asia

The following text was delivered by Phoune Sipaseuth, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, head of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, at the 36th session of the UN General Assembly on 28 September 1981 with the consent of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

OVER the past forty years, there has never been peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The present tense and explosive situation poses a threat to peace and stability in the region and is a grave cause for concern for a great number of countries in the world.

Since the end of the second Indochina war in 1975, the countries in the region, particularly those of the two groups of Indochina and ASEAN, have made various efforts to promote relations of friendship and co-operation on the basis of peaceful co-existence between States with different political and social regimes. This is a positive trend of development which responds to the aspiration of the peoples in the region and to the interests of peace and stability in the region and the world.

However, there still exist a certain number of differences between the two groups in assessing the cause of the tense and explosive situation in Southeast Asia and over the measures to be taken to remove this. Only further dialogue between the two groups of countries can promote mutual understanding and trust in order to eliminate the differences and jointly seek a settlement to remove the cause of the threat to the independence and sovereignty of States, and in general for peace and stability in the region.

Moves in such a direction are in conformity with the final declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi in February 1981 calling on "all States in the region to start a dialogue which would lead to the resolution of differences and to the establishment of durable peace and stability in the area as well as to an end of involvement and threats of intervention by outside powers".

With a view to achieving peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in Southeast Asia, the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries should agree upon the following principles:

1. To respect each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; non-aggression, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence between the two groups of countries—Indochina and ASEAN—for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in Southeast Asia.

- To respect the right of the people of each country to choose and develop freely their political, social, economic and cultural systems, to decide freely their domestic and foreign policies in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the UN Charter.

- The internal and external affairs of each country in the two groups of Indochina and ASEAN shall be

decided by its own people; no country shall have the right to interfere individually or collectively, directly or indirectly.

2. To solve disputes and differences in relations between countries belonging to the two groups as well as the other countries in the region by peaceful means through negotiations and in the spirit that the problems of Southeast Asia should be settled by the Southeast Asian countries themselves. The principles of equality, friendship, mutual respect, comprehension and taking into account each country's legitimate interests, by mutual agreement and without imposing one party's will on the other and without outside interference, force or threats to use force in their relations—this is the basis of negotiations.

- To respect the right of each country of Indochina and ASEAN and the other countries in the region to individual or collective self-defence in accordance with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN Charter: not to allow any country to use collective self-defence treaties to serve its particular interests and oppose other countries in the region

3. To pursue and develop bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the economic, technical, scientific, cultural, sporting and tourism fields between the two groups of

countries as well as the other countries in Southeast Asia on the principles of equality, mutual benefit, with a view to strengthening mutual understanding and trust, friendly and good-neighbourly relationships and in the interest of the national construction of each country according to its own conditions.

The countries concerned will co-operate in the exploitation of the Mekong river for their respective economic development and for the common prosperity of the region.

4. To respect the sovereignty of the coastal countries of the South China Sea over their territorial waters, their sovereign rights over their exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

To ensure favourable conditions for the land-locked country in the region regarding transit to and from the sea, and guaranteeing maritime rights and advantages to the same country, in accordance with international law and practice.

To solve disputes among the coastal countries of the South China Sea over sea areas and islands through negotiations. Pending a solution, the parties concerned undertake to refrain from any actions that might aggravate the existing disputes. The countries in the region will act together to seek ways of co-operation among themselves as well as with other countries inside and outside the region in exploiting sea and seabed resources on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, preservation of the maritime environment against pollution, guaranteeing international communication lines and freedom of sea and air navigation in the region of the South China Sea.

5. The countries outside the region must respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries within the region and end all forms

of pressure and threats from outside which create tension and hostility among the countries in the region.

The countries in the region shall not allow any country to use their territory as a base for aggression and intervention, direct or indirect, against others.

They will express their readiness to co-operate with other countries outside the region and international organizations, to receive aid with no political conditions attached.

Bilateral or multilateral co-operation between the countries of the two groups of Indochina and ASEAN, as well as the other countries in the region, with countries outside the region shall not, under any circumstances, be detrimental to the security and interests of other countries in the region or directed against a third country.

6. To ensure an efficient implementation of the above-mentioned principles, a standing body in charge of the dialogue and consultations between the two groups of countries—Indochina and ASEAN—possibly with the participation of Burma will be established. This body, the composition of which is to be agreed upon by the two sides, may consist of one or several representatives of each group (with formula 1:1 or 2:2) and hold annual meetings to solve the problems raised concerning relations between the members of the two groups, or extraordinary meetings in case of emergency or crisis.

7. The above-mentioned principles shall constitute a basis for the current dialogues and consultations aimed at concluding agreements or some other form of commitment between the two groups of countries of Indochina and ASEAN which are ready to invite the other country in the region to take part in such dialogues and consultations.

Hanoi's Viewpoint

A DESPICABLE SLANDER

BEGINNING a new campaign of slander at the 36th session of the UN General Assembly, the United States claimed that the Soviet Union and the socialist community have used chemical weapons long banned by mankind. Its aim was obviously to confuse public opinion and discredit the Soviet Union and the whole socialist community in the eyes of the world.

Significantly enough, this brazen calumny was made exactly at a time when the Reagan Administration is frantically intensifying its production of nuclear and strategic weapons. It is therefore also intended to divert public opinion which is indignantly condemning the United States for deliberately provoking tension in the world and reviving the atmosphere of the cold war. In fact, the decision of the Reagan Administration to go ahead with the production of the neutron bomb has touched off a mighty movement of protest across the globe. Like-wise, the US plan of deploying medium-range missiles in Western Europe has deepened public resentment in the area. The huge military budget proposed by the Pentagon is meeting with strong censure right in the United States itself. This new campaign of slander unleashed by the Reagan Administration obviously is intended to palliate popular anger and cover up its criminal war preparation plans, at the same time

providing an excuse for the US plan of stepping up the manufacture of the most inhuman weapons, including chemical ones.

This campaign is also a manoeuvre of the Reagan Administration to reject or shy away from truly constructive talks with the Soviet Union with a view to reducing tension and achieving practical measures conducive to international détente, disarmament and a limitation of strategic and nuclear weapons.

Another aim of this slander campaign is to cover the US increased collusion with the Beijing expansionists and lend credence to its current increase in moral, material and military assistance to the reactionaries in Afghanistan, the remnants of Pol Pot-Ieng Sary forces and the other Khmer reactionaries.

Ironically enough, those who are now slinging mud at the Soviet Union, Vietnam and the socialist community are actually the very same people who have used chemical weapons in Southeast Asia and conducted a bacteriological war in Korea and more recently in Cuba. It is the United States which has used toxic chemicals in Vietnam and the other countries in Indochina throughout its aggressive war against these countries. This chemical war has left incalculable consequences for the peoples of Indochina and also to thousands of US veterans.

The fabrications vociferated this time by the imperialists whose hands are still stained with blood of the peoples of Indochina are of the utmost impudence. Together with the friends of freedom, progress and justice throughout the world we are determined to step up the struggle for peace and international arms reduction, and to demand that the United States and the other warlike imperialist forces abolish all their barbarous weapons including neutron bombs and chemical and bacteriological warfare.

NIHAN DAN

9 September, 1981

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT MORALLY QUALIFIED TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF CHEMICAL WARFARE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Professor TON THAT TUNG

RECENTLY the US State Department declared that it had evidence of the use of chemical weapons by the Soviet Union, Vietnam and Laos during military operations in Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Laos. It specified that these chemicals are mycotoxins derived mainly from nivalenon and the T2-toxin.

Nivalenon was discovered in 1968 by a Japanese named Takashi Tatsumo and reported in *Cancer Research*—a publication in the United States—in the same year. Its origin was traced back to the poisoning of 25 young Japanese after they had eaten mouldy wheat which caused vomiting and dizziness. A Japanese researcher, Tsunodo, later found a poisonous fungus called *Fusarium nivale* belonging to the *Fusarium* Sp. species in this mouldy wheat.

The toxin secreted by *Fusarium nivale* is named Nivalenon of which the chemical nomenclature is not yet known. Some believe it is a Butenolide which can be detected by the method of thinlayer chromatography or gas chromatography and may be used in the form of acetate or hydronivalenon. The lethal dose for mice is estimated at 40 microgrammes for every ten grammes of weight.

T2 is the toxin found in a large number of fungi of the *Fusarium* Sp. species such as *F. Equisiti*, *F. Scirpi* and *F. Tricinctum*. It was discovered by J.R. Bamburgh in 1968 and his findings were published in the United States in "Bio-technology and Bio-engineering" magazine in the same year. The T2-toxin belongs to the group of Scirpene whose chemical formula was discovered by Wisconsin University.

It is extracted from the T2 of the *F. Tricinctum* fungus which lives on the leaves of maize and if fed to animals causes diarrhoea and loss of weight. Ironically enough, this substance is classed as a state secret while it can be bought easily in the United States at 75 dollars a bag.

We, who were the first to study the effects of US chemical warfare in Vietnam, cannot but wonder at the inconsideration with which the White House has concluded on chemical warfare by basing itself only on a few samples of mycotoxins it had gathered hastily, leaving unanswered the following fundamental questions:

1. In what areas have these toxins been dropped and what are the clinical symptoms and toxicological analyses on the victims?

2. Is there any proof that these toxins do not exist in nature and by what means and from where have they been dropped?

3. What are the results of the studies on these fungi in the sprayed regions?

4. What have been their effects on the environment and the flora and fauna in the sprayed areas?

5. What are their effects on man?

6. Since these toxins are freely circulated on the market, how can one guarantee that the collection of samples has been scientifically correct?

This is why, we, as well as a number of American scientists, are deeply shocked by the statement of the White House. In fact, it has used some very dubious samples to formulate conclusions on a very complicated question.

What is more, we declare that the US Administration is not morally qualified to raise this question because the United States has been universally condemned for its brutal chemical warfare for eight years on end in Vietnam. We have been able to demonstrate (and our conclusions have been substantiated by many scientists in Europe and America) that the herbicides sprayed by the United States on Vietnam have:

1. Caused extensive damage to the forests, crop fields and nature in Vietnam;

2. Left dreadful effects on the civilian population: miscarriages, stillbirths, abortions, deformities, nervous complaints and cancer. Ever since 1970 the successive US Administrations have contended that these herbicides did not affect man's health nor the environment, even though only recently the US Department of Health has declared that the number of Vietnam veterans in the United States affected by the defoliants is many times bigger than the previously published figure of 1,000.

On the other hand, we wish to draw public attention to the fact that the current intensified US campaign of slander against the Soviet Union about chemical warfare may be designed to cover the US efforts to considerably increase its stockpile of chemical weapons and particularly the new weapon called "binary weapon". This is a kind of gun using ammunition consisting of two chemical bottles which, when fired, would mix up to form toxic gases like VX, sarin and soman, especially directed against the human nervous system.

Peace on earth cannot be built on lies and threats but only through mutual understanding, meetings and negotiations. Still less can it be achieved by means of chemical weapons and neutron bombs. The present nuclear arsenal is well stocked enough to have a destructive power equal to that of one million atomic bombs of the type dropped on Hiroshima, that is enough to completely wipe the human race off the face of our planet.

AN evening spent in this commune of Hai Hau coastal area (1) sounded just like other communes, but it had a "music" of its own. Amongst the discordant notes the children of the Hai Van co-op manager recognized those emitted by their father's motorbike which they had been hearing for a year now. "That's my dad's bike!" boasted a boy rushing out of the house. Amid mounting noise and flashes of light on the clump of bamboos surrounding the house, a Honda motorbike suddenly loomed up. On seeing us under the light Mr Nhu handed the vehicle to his son and said, all in one breath:

"Why are you so late in coming? I would have been home sooner but for those depredatory brown planthoppers which kept me working at plans to kill them tomorrow. The co-operative would be doomed if the crop was lost... I am sorry for having kept you waiting but I am entirely at your service now."

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It was a fairly long time since we had last met him in the early seventies. Hai Van now ranked among the advanced co-operatives of Hai Hau district and many people were attracted by its cultural life. It is an 85-per cent Catholic commune but there is no conflict between Catholics and Communists as François Houtart, a visiting Belgian sociologist, remarked. Now Hai Van is also known for its strict production management, its

A SECOND VISIT

TO A CO-OPERATIVE

IN THE RED RIVER

DELTA

good intensive rice farming, its rapidly improving standard of living, and its creative application of the Party's line and policies, particularly in setting the contract system (See *Vietnam Courier* Nos. 2 and 3, 1981 on contractual incentives in agriculture). For the Hai Hau district Party committee, Hai Van now was a perfect co-operative, one of the standard-bearers of the district's 42 co-operatives.

Mr Nhu bore his years well — the same short haircut, bright eyes, healthy complexion and strong build of a sailor rather than a peasant. Through his tale we visualized Hai Van progressing steadily in the few years during which a man, a leading collective and nearly six thousand people had continually struggled against nature and the land to wrest a comfortable life. Indeed, this advance had not been smooth sailing.

Early in the sixties, while many co-operatives in North Vietnam were already model advanced ones, Hai Van only grew scanty crops and had to be supplied with 50-70 tonnes of food during pre-harvest days. Many people took to trading, "leaving their fate to God". It was a harsh struggle against Nature and Man.

Nothing was easy going. In contrast to its muddy lanes which "made one reluctant to go out", Hai Van now has twenty kilometres of criss-crossing cinder-cum-cement roads. Most impressive was the campaign to do irrigation work and field improvement. Some people feared that the land would not requite their efforts. However, rice yield jumped from 1-2 tonnes to 7-8 tonnes per hectare for years on end. In 1980, while storms and floods wrought havoc in many places, Hai Van kept on reaping 7-8 tonnes of rice for both the summer and the autumn crops. This year it planned to harvest 9 tonnes (5-3 tonnes in the last spring crop, among the best in Hai Hau district).

In 1967 the rate set by the State was 70 tonnes of duty paddy, but it was only half-fulfilled that year and not achieved until three years later. In 1974, however, Hai Van was able to deliver to the State 200 tonnes, and in peak years 300 tonnes. With people formerly unused to raising pigs, Hai Van now boasted about 2,000 pigs including 400 in the co-operative's pig farm. Mr Chi in Team Seven and Mr Tan in Team Eight reared from 8 to 10 pigs each.

Relying on land labour, Hai Van thus solved the difficult "problem of food" fairly well. In so short a time each kilogramme of paddy or meat required so much sweat and energy from everybody in the commune. With 1,113 families of nearly 6,000 people and 1,916 farmhands Hai Van managed to produce enough rice for its own consumption as well as developing subsidiary food crops and animal husbandry. Of course, it did not content itself with "little fish and many vegetables" and made a bid to provide sufficient meat, fish and fruit for the years to come.

Material benefits are widespread in Hai Van: 70-80 per cent of the houses are tile-roofed, one-storeyed, and built to the same pattern. Six hundred families have pendulum clocks, three hundred have old-designed cupboards with mother-of-pearl marquetry and most families have highly-polished ironwood beds. This rapid wealth is due to the co-op's bumper harvests over the past years. It is also due to the vigorous development of family economy. Every family has at least one sao (2) of orchard with plants like banana, tea and sugar-cane, as well as other edible or ornamental plants all around. This sideline accounted for half the family income. Mr Cong in Team Seven, the best vegetable grower of the co-operative, has a trellis of loofahs overhanging a pond in front of his house so replete with fruit that one could not see a person at the other end. He also plants other vegetables in the back-garden and many kinds of turnips and kales as nurselings in another plot near the trellis. Around the garden grow a lot of taro to feed the pigs. Mr Cong would be able to complete the building of a two-storeyed house after one or two vegetable crops, said Mr Nhu.

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Most interesting was the contractual incentives used in the past two harvesting seasons which differed from other co-operatives in the system of reward. The Hai Van co-op manager stressed "Reward is not really an apt word. If I put in more capital and labour to overfulfil the rate set by the co-operative, the surplus produce cannot be called reward. Therefore, we do otherwise. Whoever produces less than 200 kilogrammes of paddy above the rate receives two kilogrammes of nitrate. Whoever gets more than 200 kilogrammes of paddy receives four kilogrammes. We give nitrate so as to boost production. In the last crop the co-operative distributed 1,400 kilogrammes of nitrate." Some people wanted a graduated reward but the manager preferred having "many people overfulfilling a little than few people overfulfilling much". With this contractual system Hai Van production management was more or less stabilized. The co-operative took charge of five basic activities: tilling, irrigation, seed production, fertilizer handling, and pest prevention (3). During several past crops the co-operative had big wooden trunks made to store seeds. The day of our visit at Hai Van we saw 47 people from various production teams killing planthoppers for the whole co-operative — afterwards they enjoyed a good meal because of their unpleasant work. Now heads of production teams are busier than in the past. Should the water run dry or the crop turn bad they have to remind the responsible people. Should a field lack fertilizer they ask the co-operative to sell it to the interested family. However, if somebody wanted to manure an already good

crop they would not agree, lest it overeat. A family which did not fulfil its rate meant a loss of yield for the production team. That is why the co-op members although entrusted with three tasks could not transplant or tend as they liked. In the last spring crop, of the 720 families which overfulfilled the contracted work, 362 surpassed less than 100 kilogrammes, while only 14 exceeded more than 500 kilogrammes.

* * *

At Hai Van we also noted the care of the co-operative for children. Each production team has a crèche drawing nearly all the children of appropriate age. Old people and thirty retired cadres are also looked after: in the home for elders in the centre of the co-operative live 64 old folks, among them five with no relatives. Not content with its small library of 3,000 books, Hai Van is building a new one with three storeys. The 300-seat meeting-hall of the co-operative complete with loudspeakers is both a place for cultural activities and a wedding-room. Fatima drummers and singers' troupes were re-organized to cater for the people's cultural life. Thousands of people have attended galas, performing self-composed and self-acted pieces praising the new life and the new socialist people, or criticizing the negative manifestations in everyday life.

The 30-bed medical station in the centre of the commune was provided with a garden of medicinal plants of more than half a hectare

supplying a dozen kinds of medicine catering for 70 per cent of patients. A system of public address daily, conveys production orders. A new decision of the management, a good deed in the cooperative, or bad behaviour which needed to be criticized or pointed out, was thus also made known to every family. Cultural life was improved: 95 per cent of houses were fitted with the "three sanitary works" (4) and 950 out of 1,113 families were recognized as new-culture families.

Inexhaustive as these facts might be, they did make a strong impression upon us. Land tilling is only beginning to be mechanized. 96 buffaloes still ploughed 200 hectares and hoes were still used when work was pressing. Co-op members worked untiringly with self-discipline and diligence.

Hai Van thus sets a good example of self-reliance and fair solution of the three interests: more comfort for the co-op members, more products for the State and more investment for the co-operative. However, it is not yet content with its achievements nor indulges itself in subjectivism. And the entire leading collective of the co-operative was candid when they recognized that "we have not always done well and have to do still more."

VU KIEM

(1) Ha Nam Ninh province, 80 km south of Hanoi.

(2) 360 square metres.

(3) Entrusting the co-op member with three other tasks: transplanting, tending and harvesting.

(4) Well, bathroom and septic tank.

VIETNAM'S OCEAN SHIPPING

TO build up its merchant fleet a country usually needs a well developed ship-building industry which in turn requires extensive heavy industry.

In Vietnam, however, neither heavy industry and ship construction are developed, while there is a growing demand for the transport of imports and exports.

With the liberation of southern Vietnam efforts were made to build up a merchant fleet by putting to full use existing shipyards and repair docks and buying ships from abroad. The fleet, with the exclusion of ships owned by the General Transport Department of the Foreign Trade Ministry, now comprises several dozen ships most of them with a carrying capacity of ten thousand metric tons. Total tonnage has gone up eight times since 1975, and fixed capital has increased by three times.

A number of the ships have been chartered by foreign countries. The crews of the Ben Hai, Dong Nai, Song Duong and Hau Giang have saved a lot of money by carrying out repairs themselves and by a thrifty use of fuel. Some of the ships are beginning to make a profit after only five years of exploitation.

The Cuu Long Ol, a 20,000-ton freighter, made a 100,000-kilometre journey to Europe and returned safely to Haiphong in 1975. Since then Vietnamese ships have been seen more and more frequently on the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea, and at many Asian and African ports.

Vietnamese sailors have gained more experience. The crew of the Chuong Duong has crossed the Equator ten times. The Hau Giang and the Thai Binh have made many trips across the Bay of Biscay in strong gales.

Most of the original sailors were seconded from coastal vessels, and there were, at the beginning, only about two hundred people with formal training in foreign languages and maritime law.

Great efforts, therefore, have been made in training, and more than five hundred captains, chief engineers, chief electricians, and officers have graduated from

courses held by the Vietnam Ocean Shipping Agency. Crewmen who had completed secondary education have also acquired university training. In 1975 there were 205 university graduates, now the number has increased to 500. There has also been an increase of fifty percent in the number of sailors of secondary-school education.

As a result Vietnam has become less and less dependent on foreign shipping expertise.

MINH SON and NGOC MINH

A STORMY JOURNEY

THEY were ten men—cadres and members of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Union—sent to London by the VIET-FRACHT (General Transport Company, of the Foreign Trade Ministry) to bring home a freighter and a cargo. Vietnamese crews had many times joined hired foreigners in bringing home ships bought from abroad, but most of those ships were new and big, and the journeys short. The freighter at London was an old one with a carrying capacity of only 2,650 metric tons. Moreover the trip would be long and would take the crew through many dangerous regions. The services of a foreign forwarding company could be asked for, but that would

cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. So it was suggested that a Vietnamese crew should go to London to take possession of the ship, sail it to the German Democratic Republic for a consignment, and head home. This would save on cost and would also provide a good occasion for training.

"We'll take on the job and make it a success as a practical way to greet the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party," declared a warrant officer with a long record of overseas trips. "Of course we'll have to hire foreign navigators, but that'll be about the only help we need."

The crew left for England on 25 April 1981.

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The ship took on a number of Bulgarian officers and crewmen and sailed from Newport. Crews on other vessels wondered how it was going, without telecommunication equipment, to cross the Bay of Biscay and three oceans.

From Southern England to the GDR across North Sea the trip was uneventful, and the crew were pleased to learn that by taking on a cargo on the way home they would save 375,000 dollars not to mention the duties which a delay in the GDR would involve.

The seven hundred miles across the Bay of Biscay, however, were a big test. The small ship tossed about like a cardboard box and everyone came down with seasickness.

Past the Mediterranean the ship entered the Suez Canal and was presented with a bronze Egyptian sculpture to commemorate its first passage across. Then a tube in the cooling system burst and the engine room was flooded. Water rose swiftly to within twenty centimetres of the machines. All hands were mobilized to bail, even those who were sick, and the ship went on (to stop in the canal would incur heavy fines). More than two hours later everything was shipshape again, and everyone sighed with relief.

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Hardly out of the Red Sea with a permanent temperature of 50°C requiring a very thrifty use of

fresh water, the ship ran full tilt into high seas in the Indian Ocean. From the bridge one was haunted by the idea that the ship would disappear at any moment between two mountainous waves. The ship was set on an easterly course, cutting across the southerly wind. The greater part of the crew fell sick within the first day, but the ship plodded on stoically. K. Primov, the Bulgarian Captain, maintained that it would be advisable to continue rather than turn back and seek shelter in some harbour. It would take many days for the weather to change in the Indian Ocean at this time of year, he said. So he took the ship along the coast of East Africa, seeking a more manageable course. Three days went by and the whole crew collapsed. The captain, however, did not give in, not even after radio communication with shore had been severed.

On the fifth day the wind shifted and the captain said it was now possible to turn back and cross the Indian Ocean in safety. The ship headed for Singapore.

The General Transport Company in Hanoi lost touch with the ship for twenty days. Then came a message c/o a foreign ship: the freighter "Thanh Nien" (Youth) would arrive at Hai Phong soon.

The ship entered Chua Ve Harbour on July 22. Two days later, bedecked with streamers and bunting, it welcomed on board a shore delegation to which the crew reported that their mission had been completed.

PHAM HO THU

For the sake of industrialization.

Set up in March 1956 in the period of economic restoration following the victory in the war against the French colonialists, in the first five-year plan (1956-1960) the Hanoi Polytechnic trained thousands of engineers for factories, workshops, construction sites and agricultural farms. In the past 25 years, it has trained 18,000 engineers, 30 per cent of them trained on the job, 700 engineers in refresher courses, 108 second class researchers, and 120 post-graduates. Since 1976, the college has held examinations for the degree of candidate of science. But what is most important is the position held by the engineers who have graduated from the college.

At the beginning, the college was installed in a few buildings of the former Indochinese students' hostels with 30 teachers who had graduated in the country, 4 engineers and 900 young people studying in 4 departments, 10 sections and 24 disciplines. Today the college occupies an area of 35 hectares in which huge buildings are erected with a vast lecture-hall, a library furnished with 600,000 books, 4 workshops and nearly 90 laboratories (including one for micro-electronics equipped by Holland under the charge of Vu Dinh Cu, D. Sc.). The eleven departments of the college are: engineering, electricity, dynamics, chemistry, metallurgy, economics, textiles, foods, mathematics and physics, electronics, and an in-service training course begun in 1960. In all, there are 61 sections, 72 disciplines and over 8,000 students. The staff totals 927 teachers including 231 doctors of science and candidates of science, fifty per cent of whom have been trained in the Soviet Union. Two professors and 40 associate professors were promoted in the first intake.

THE HANOI POLYTECHNIC CELEBRATES ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY

This year, we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of two colleges: the Hanoi Polytechnic and Hanoi University. The Hanoi University was presented to our readers when it was 20 years old (See *Vietnam Courier* No. 50, old series, 1976), so in this number we introduce the Hanoi Polytechnic.

It is worth remembering that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam now has 84 universities and colleges with a teaching body 17,250 strong; 16 universities and 26 scientific institutes have been entrusted with the task of preparing post-graduates since 1976. At present the contingent of scientific workers in Vietnam amounts to 260,000 graduates, including 3,600 post-graduates. The following article is based on a talk with the director of the college.

Token of Soviet-Vietnam friendship

Associate professor Ha Hoc Trac, director of the school and a former-head of the electricity department, has a rich experience in teaching. He is deputy to the 7th National Assembly, standing member of the Scientific-Technical Commission of the National Assembly, vice-president of the Hanoi Scientific Commission and administrator of many important scientific programmes. A congenial man, he told us of the efforts made by the teachers and students of the college in the last academic year and informed us of a com-

prehensive programme of educational reform and a policy on science and technology applied in the new academic year (1). Particularly he stressed the significance of the new equipment supplied by the Soviet Union to the school.

"Let us remember that more than twenty years ago our school was built and equipped for the first time with the help of comrade Doronov, engineer-in-chief, now deputy-director of the Institute of Planning of Soviet universities, and other Soviet technicians to the value of 50 million *dong* (25 million for construction and 25 million for equipment). It was inaugurated in 1965 in the

thick of the war against the American aggressors, in the presence of comrade U.P. Elutin, Soviet Minister of Higher Education and comrade M.P. Senko, director of Kharkov University, bound to our school by ties of sworn friendship. Now our college has received 400 tons of equipment such as computers EC 1022 and modern machine-tools such as automatic lathes, electromicroscopes... The shipment of this equipment, amounting in value to 5 million roubles, began immediately after the invasion of our northern frontier by the Chinese expansionists and will be completed in 1982. Then our school will be able to play its full role as an important scientific institute serving the whole country.

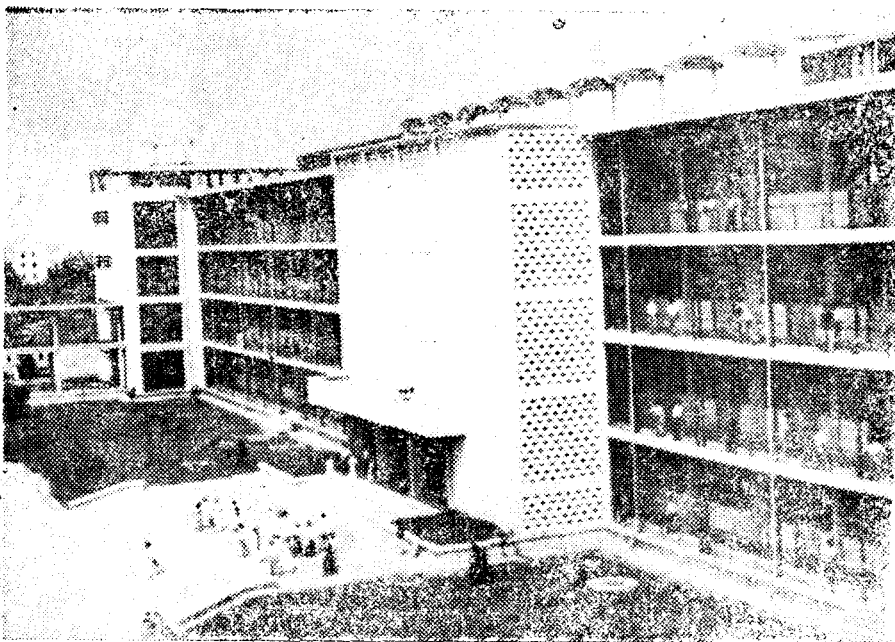
Unforgettable days...

Ha Hoc Trac told us of former directors of the school: Professor Tran Dai Nghia, Professor Ta Quang Buu, Hoang Xuan Tuy, Vice-Minister of Higher Education and Vocational Secondary Education, and Professor Pham Dong Diem who had the longest service at the school, being its deputy director in 1959 and director from 1966 to 1980. Trained at a Technical University in the Soviet Union as far back as 1951, he was one of the first professors to teach at the school.

The college museum displays a photograph showing President Ho Chi Minh who, during his visit, recommended the teachers and students to "teach well and study well". At its 6th congress held in 1962 the Party Committee of the school adopted this resolution:

The Hanoi Polytechnic.

Photo: VNA



"The school must become an educational establishment training scientific workers who have a close relationship with production." The teachers take their knowledge through scientific research, field work, and further training abroad. They do their best to equip their students with "most basic, most practical and most advanced knowledge." In order to graduate, besides attending courses in the lecture theatres, conducting experiments in laboratories and working at the school workshops the students also carry out field work for ten weeks. Every year over 50% of the graduation theses deal with practical problems, showing the fruit of the students' labour and the pedagogic efficiency of the teachers.

Ha Hoa Trac added: "We shall never forget the days when the students took part in the construction of the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Complex and the Bac Hung Hai irrigation work, when, during their evacuation to Lang Son forests, they helped embank river dykes in the 1971 typhoon, engaged in military drills, participated in artistic festivals and took part in the de-activation of magnetic bombs under the guidance of their teachers."

Up to now the Hanoi Polytechnic has been awarded more than 500 decorations; 25 of its researchers have successfully studied 426 subjects at school level, 144 subjects at ministerial level and 86 subjects at national level. Scientific research not only serves production, defence and the people's life, but contributes to improving the quality of teaching and study. The college's practical work is organized more rationally and centers on scientific activities and the invention of prototypes. Up to today 50% of the teachers have studied 69 scientific subjects of national level and hundreds of subjects of ministerial and school levels.

MAI THIANG

1. See Resolution of the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Vietnam on Educational Reform in Vietnam Courier, No. 10-1979.

See also Resolution of the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Vietnam on Policy on Science and Technology in Vietnam Courier No. 8-1981.

Vietnam Advances

SECOND CONFERENCE ON MARINE SCIENCE

THE second conference on marine science was organised by the Vietnam Institute of Science in Nha Trang town (Phu Khanh province) from September 21 to 25, 1981.

The conference was attended by nearly 300 scientists and researchers from 15 institutes and 10 colleges in the country.

138 papers were presented at the conference, twice as many as at the first conference held in September 1977. The content of the papers was also more diversified and more elaborate. The conference unanimously noted that marine science in Vietnam has made substantial progress in the four years since the first conference.

Some of the papers made deep inquiries into specific questions and provided initial solutions to some of the most important questions regarding the natural conditions and maritime resources of Vietnam. They have a major bearing for both economic build-up and national defence, on theoretical as well as practical planes. The scope of the studies is also broader, touching upon questions concerning the far-off sea and the continental shelf of Vietnam. Some of the projects have proved to be very helpful to economic planning on both national and regional scales, in particular with regard to fisheries and the raising of marine products, maritime navigation and construction of maritime projects, and more particularly the prospection and exploitation of natural gas and oil on the continental shelf.

The conference also discussed and reached unanimity of views on the limitations and shortcomings of the marine science of Vietnam, especially with regard to the vital questions posed by the production and national defence programmes. The conference noted a still deficient contingent of scientific workers and the slowness with which the research projects have been conducted due to snags in the administrative and managerial systems.

The conference pointed to the following four major questions to be intensively studied in the years to come:

- To promote further the basic survey and investigation of the natural conditions and the evaluation of the marine resources of the Vietnamese sea and continental shelf and to work out timely plans for the rational use of these resources.

- To give priority to questions directly related to the technology of prospecting and exploiting natural gas and oil, maritime production, maritime navigation and defence of the national territorial waters.

- To study biological questions and apply the results of modern science to solve such questions as breeding and the technique of raising marine plants and animals to quickly develop production in the littoral waters.

- To study the structure of the marine ecosystem and the littoral area, and work out directions and measures to protect the sea resources and environment.

AT Binh Trieu New Youth School, a centre for the curing of drug addicts in Ho Chi Minh City, we have carried out investigations on 2,500 patients, and obtained the following results: 98.2% of the addicts are young people, but some of them took to drugs 45 years ago, and others, at the age of 12 or 13, and their arms are pocked with injection marks. Some addicts have made use of opium and morphine, others, of LSD, marijuana, heroin, sedatives or other stimulants.

These addicts usually contracted such social diseases as syphilis (27.2%), T.B. (3.7%), malaria (30%), hypothyrepsia (30%), purulent scabies (61%). Most of them have committed delinquencies or crimes (theft: 100%; banditry: 50%; murder: 2%; drug trafficking: 40%; prostitution: 80% of the female addicts).

How can we solve the problem of drug addiction in the social and medical field? This was one of the primary concerns of the authorities in Ho Chi Minh City, shortly after liberation. The main difficulty is how to cure all the hundred thousand addicts in the city in a short time. Even if all of them are gathered for treatment, every year, five thousand people can be cured at the most. Thus twenty years would be needed, so disease would never disappear if we relied only on therapy. To solve the problem, we have divided the addicts into two categories: most of them are treated at home, the others are taken in for treatment.

Those belonging to the first category are addicts who are not so corrupted as to be harmful to society and can still work, although they are handicapped by their addiction. Accounting for 90%, they are cured in their own homes by social methods.

The second category comprises corrupt addicts, who, apart from contracting social diseases, lived a perverted life harmful to order and security and easily fell into criminal practices. They account for 10% of the addicts and need to be concentrated for long treatment and reform.

The addicts in the first category (about 90,000) are cured by society, while those belonging to the second category (about 10,000) are gathered together for treatment. Ninety per cent of the patients

treated by social methods have their disease cured by means of receiving smaller and smaller doses of drugs until complete recovery.

These methods prove to be effective thanks to the following measures:

1. The revolutionary authorities cut all sources of drug supply and the quantity consumed is visibly reduced.
2. The authorities and inhabitants in the city educate hooligans and step up the new life movement, so the drug addicts feel they are out of their element and consequently reduce the use of drugs.
3. The economic difficulties in post-war days have lowered the living standard of the people and

compelled the addicts to curtail the consumption of drugs.

4. The drug addicts do not like to be "hospitalized" for a long-term transformation and make strenuous efforts to cure themselves.

The results of the drug reduction method are most heartening. The basic investigations made in the five inner districts of Ho Chi Minh City by the drug curing centre have revealed that there remain only 629 drug addicts in 73 wards of 583,717 inhabitants. Thus the number of addicts for the whole city is now about 3,000 (or 1.07%) compared with hundreds of thousands of addicts before liberation.

With regard to the inveterate addicts who are usually corrupt, we concentrate them for a long

CURING DRUG ADDICTS IN HO CHI MINH CITY

reatment and transformation. After being weaned from drugs, they are enabled by means of study and work to become useful to themselves, to their families and society. In this respect we have achieved two important results in therapy and education.

Formerly in Southern Vietnam and other countries the following methods were used to cure drug addiction:

1. Method of substitution: the addicts take Methadone, a light drug to replace opium or morphine.
2. Method of dose reduction: the addicts use opium in a smaller and smaller dose together with another sedative or anodyne.
3. Sleep cure: the addict is given an artificial sleep of 3-7 days by swallowing a strong dose of sleeping pills.
4. Method of violent cure: the addict is confined in a room and prevented from using drugs; he is left to torture himself by violent

convulsions and his craving for drugs vanishes gradually.

5. Electroshock: electricity is used to eliminate the convulsions of the addict.

6. Psychosurgery of the frontal lobe of the brain: destruction of the region of the brain which gives the sensation of pleasure to drug addicts.

Those classical methods are time-consuming and most expensive, and are sometimes violent and harmful to the health of the addicts.

We are now applying a new method recognized by the health service, known by the name of Binh Trieu, the first centre for curing drug addiction in Ho Chi Minh City.

Almost all the addicts in Vietnam use opium, heroin or morphine, and we deal with these drugs only.

As far as the symptoms of the crisis are concerned, we divide them

according to five functions of classical medicine:

1. Increase of movement: the patient fidgets, twists in convulsions; sometimes he suffers from insomnia, his heart beats precipitately; his blood pressure increases; he coughs, perspires profusely and feels nauseous; his genitals are excited.

2. Increase of temperature: the patient feels hot in his chest, and his face flushes while respiration is heavy because of the rush of blood; his tongue, eyes, nose, are red; he has a headache and sometimes his lungs, stomach and ears bleed.

3. Increase of secretion: abundant secretion of urine, sweat, tears, mucus, saliva; uncontrolled ejaculation of sperm, leucorrhoea (in women).

4. Reduction of assimilation: it causes dysentery, abundant secretion of sweat and urine, chest complaints, dyspnoea.

5. Weakness of the reserve function: the patient does not retain liquids; he is easily frightened, fears cold and water, has a poor memory. The symptoms are: abundant discharge of urine, ejaculation of semen, leucorrhoea, hair falling, ear buzzing, failing eyesight.

According to traditional medicine, the intensified functioning of the organ emitting heat is the root cause of the syndromes of drug addiction. This function is determined by two forces in an antagonistic partnership one emits heat and the other prevents the propagation of heat. As drug addiction is a chronic disease causing asthenia, the loss of heat does not show that the patient has an over-abundant source of heat, but that the force checking its propagation is so weak that no control is possible.

These symptoms occur in the heart and kidneys which are related by two corresponding systems. At the touch of the hand, the sensitive points of these systems give a traumatic sensation.

To summarise, drug addiction is the sequel of the weakening of the organ checking the emission of heat. If this organ is brought under control, the syndromes of drug addiction disappear; its functioning can be improved by acupuncture and medicines (Acupuncture is performed on the sensitive points of this organ).

Besides, the following methods are applied:

— Oriental gymnastics and profound respiration to improve the physical and mental strength of the addicts.

— Psychological treatment to dissipate the despair stored in the mind of the patient. Affection and respect for the dignity of the addict play an important role.

— Labour cure, a precious method applied after the patient has recovered his health, to help him find joy in his work.

The results of these methods are most encouraging:

1. Acupuncture helps shorten the cure and quickly restores the strength of the patient; he has no more convulsions within a few minutes; all the crises disappear after four days, and the patient's health is improved after a week.

2. Acupuncture and oriental medicine are inoffensive methods.

3. Isolated from his surroundings, the patient will not easily have a relapse.

4. Economically speaking, these methods are not costly. In light cases, acupuncture and oriental gymnastics — profound respiration — are sufficient. In more serious cases, the use of medicinal herbs is to be added.

After the cure, the patient will be retained for some time for study and to do manual work. This difficult job will be tackled by the War Invalid and Social Affairs Service and the Youth Union at the New Youth School at Binh Trieu and the New Life Building Youth Schools at Xuyen Moc and Vinh An. Many addicts have mended their ways and live a useful and healthy life: they take part in the Shock Youth Brigade, join the armed forces, work in State farms or return to their families. However there are cases of relapse, and energetic measures must be taken by the drug curing centre to keep an eye on the addicts after they have returned to normal life.

Dr. TRUONG THIN

A battle had to be fought in H Chi Minh City in the early part of last summer to wipe out all traces of reactionary, decadent culture.

This was not the first time such action was taken, and people may ask why this problem surfaced again after six years of building a new socialist life.

The answer could be found at an exhibition of seized literature held at Vo Van Tan Street, in the centre of the city. It left no doubt about the necessity of such a drastic move.

First there were the papers, all written in the Vietnamese language but published in the United States. In number alone they could vie with Saigon journalism in its "best" years under US occupation. Their names were catchy: *Que Huong* (Homeland), *Hon Viet Nam* (Vietnamese Soul), *Vuot Tuyen* (Across the Border), *Que Me* (Motherland), *Nho Nguon* (Longing for the Source), *Hoai Viet* (Longing for Vietnam), *Ly Huong* (Far From Home), *Lac Hong* (Forefathers), *Tam Ca* (Song of the Heart), *Dan Toc* (The Nation), *Lap Truong* (Stand), *Tien phong* (Vanguard), *Dan Than* (Involvement), *Chan Troi Moi* (New Horizon), *Viet Bao* (Viet Journal), *Trang Den* (Black and White), *Chuong Saigon* (Saigon Bell). Obviously these papers were not restricted to a readership of several hundred thousand "Vietnamese-Americans" in the States but were aimed at a much larger audience for a very sinister purpose. Their "information" on Vietnam was designed to discredit the revolutionary administration by drawing a gloomy picture of the country. Some of them went so far as "reporting" on activities of a "new government" without mentioning its whereabouts. One does not have to dig deep to find the people who are financing these papers. What is certain is that the exile organisations that run them cannot yet afford to have them distributed free.

Even greater in number were the books, all printed abroad. Their titles speak volumes: *Chieu*

"GIFTS" FROM ACROSS THE SEA

Lanh (A Cold Afternoon), *Mua Thu La Bay* (Fallen Leaves in Autumn), *Duong Guom Phan Boi* (Sword of Betrayal)... And there were hundreds of calendars for 1981. One featured a nude and a striped flag of the former Saigon regime. The caption reads "*Van hanh dien la nguoi Viet Nam*" (As Proud As Ever to be Vietnamese). As for pornographic pictures, they were not exhibited for the sake of decency.

These publications had been sent to authentic addressees in the city, tucked inside parcels of clothes, medicines and food. In many cases the addressees had not made any contact abroad but even so they received parcels of these ubiquitous papers, books and calendars. In other instances exile literature was directly brought in from mysterious ships lurking off the coast. One such smuggler has been arrested and brought to justice.

Music has played the most important role of all because of its popularity and diversity. One of the composers is none other than Pham Duy, well-known for his contributions to modern music in Vietnam, but also notorious for his psychological warfare activities under the Saigon regime. It was he who in 1970, when the people were demanding an end to the US war of aggression, put on a diversion programme on Radio Saigon and was rewarded with tomatoes and eggs. "We kneel and pray to God in Heaven..." wails one of his old songs. His recent ones, taped in the United States, are titled *Ngay Tro Ve* (Return), *Vinh Biet Saigon* (Adieu to Saigon), *Hat Cho Nguoi O Lai* (To Those Who Remain)... Pham Duy is joined by other songsters, some quite obscure, who all write

in the same vein as *Qua Cho Que Huong* (Gifts to the Old Country), lamenting the fate of exiles while urging people to leave Vietnam.

This kind of music is also to be heard on the *Voice of America*, in its Vietnamese-language broadcasts. The man who presents the programme is no stranger either. He is Le Van, or Do Ngoc Yen, formerly secretary-general of Summer Programme, an organization set up by the US Embassy in Saigon and financed by USAID.

A few words must be said about the way this type of literature was circulated. It could be obtained at the many second-hand bookshops and newsstands in the city. Customers had only to ask the right questions and would get what they were looking for—newspapers and magazines carefully wrapped up, or books put between innocuous covers. A paper of recent issue was hired for 5 dong a day plus a deposit of 50 dong. A pornographic book could be had for 20 dong a day against a 300-dong deposit.

One of the most active peddlers was Vinh Su at Do Thanh Nhon Street. In former Saigon Su called himself a songster, although the only thing he ever wrote was a short song, *Trai Tim Trinh Nu* (A Virgin's Heart). But he did a thriving business as a "talent-scout." A search of his house revealed 20,000 decadent books, many of them published abroad after 1975. At the stand owned by Bui Dinh Ha on Dang Thi Nhu Street, First District, 232 similar books were found hidden among manuals on dress-making, television and motorbike repair, etc. Nhu, a former paratrooper, also

engaged in "literary creation", writing such filth as *Cuoc Noi Loan Giua Hai Mau Da* (Revolt of Two Races), *Mot Phut Khoai Lac* (A Moment of Pleasure), *Doi Trinh Nu Muoi Tam Tuoi* (A 18-Year Old Virgin), etc.

Coffee houses acted as the main agents for decadent music, making a lot of money in the business. A cup of coffee "with music" cost 10 dong, three or four times the normal price. Entertainers were paid generously: 20 or 30 dong for an old number, 100 for an anti-government song and 300 for one freshly imported. Special nights called "Yesteryear" were organized by one coffee house in the First District.

After the withdrawal of the US forces and the collapse of the Saigon regime great efforts were made to rid the city of the cultural vestiges of neo-colonialism. Then, after a short lull, "gifts" started coming from the United States, and they keep coming, with persistence. The same tactics were used by the US Expeditionary Corps in former South Vietnam: distributing pornographic photos to Vietnamese children, sending parcels of publications with no senders' names... One wonders if the senders are all motivated by humanitarianism.

VU DAO

UNKNOWN CULTURAL FIGHTERS

A downtown street, tree-lined and busy with crowded restaurants and bars.

Behind it, however, is a different scene: small houses—some with two storeys—strung along narrow lanes, or jerry-built huts straddled along catwalks raised on either side of Cau Bong Canal. This is the quarter of the poor, who make up almost ninety per cent of the population of Ward 3. The 8,000 inhabitants earn their living by driving pedicabs, carts or three-wheeled vans. There are also carpenters, brick-layers and fishermen. But most of them are street hawkers. There is a hand-to-mouth existence. Before 1975 the area was alive with thugs and muggers and was given a wide berth by the Saigon police. A number of neighbourhood cadres were also attacked there in the first days of liberation.

Ward 3 has steadily changed for the better over the past six years. The local authorities have done everything, including waging a continuous campaign against decadent music, to ensure a stable, healthy life for the working people. Such efforts often went unnoticed...

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From 1969 to 1975 Tran Dinh Cuong worked as a school teacher and journalist. Following liberation he returned to his old place in Ward 3, where he took part in every community activity. Late in

1978 Cuong was given charge of culture and information and early in 1980 he was elected vice-chairperson of the People's Committee. Although he has to get up very early—at two or three in the morning—to help his wife make cakes to sell at the market, Cuong manages to pay frequent visits to other inhabitants to see how they are living. He has taken upon himself the task of giving night classes to the many poor children who have to supplement their parents' incomes by selling cigarettes or cakes, or running errands. Now most of the school-age kids can read and write fluently, and about a hundred of them are sent to basic general schools every year. The credit for this success goes both to the parents and to the neighbourhood administration.

Adult education is the department of Ngo Van H., formerly a Saigon army officer. Before his mobilization H. had also been a teacher, but his present job has very little in common with what he used to do. His pupils are pedicab drivers, street vendors, and housewives, who only go to school by dint of persuasion. Moreover, classes cannot be fixed but must be suited to learners' spare time. Pedicab drivers, for example, can snatch an hour or two early in the evening before going out to take fares again. Constant supervision, therefore, is necessary, and this is assiduously assumed by Nhi, the Chairperson of the People's Committee. At the moment seven courses are in operation, two of them elementary.

Among the teachers are university students and pensioners. One of them is Nguyen Quang Tuan, now in retirement after teaching literature for thirty years, ten of which as headmaster of a "model school". His private library consists of rare collections published early this century. He was writing papers on *Han-Nom* (Chinese characters and demotic script) and on his tour of Japan in 1974, when he was asked to teach a night course for adults. To questions about his "involvement" Tuan said it was not for "fame" but out of good will towards his fellow-countrymen. "People need me and my experience. I cannot fail them" he said.

Tran Dinh Cuong, the young teacher, and Nguyen Quang Tuan, the old one, are inseparable. They can be seen together at the neighbourhood library, at a craft training course, or paying calls on needy families. Cuong has also won the assistance of most of the old-regime intellectuals who, a few years ago, rarely ventured into this poor area. These same "high-brows" now mix freely with their poor neighbours and are welcomed by the latter any time in their humble homes.

A visit to the neighbourhood Cultural House can be very instructive. It is housed in a converted communal hall (all the better buildings have been built into crèches and kindergartens). There one can meet members of the "Book-Lovers' Club"—students, intellectuals as well as former loafers. The programme for July included the following items: July 4, art competition for children; July 5, picnic for children; July 6, opening of summer courses; July 14, book review for women; July 18, story-telling competition; July 25, talk on morning drills; July

26, folk music and guitar solos... That night a talk on Tan Da (1) was being given by Tuan. Among the audience were a university professor, some secondary-school teachers, a retired businessman, and a retired Foreign Ministry official, the rest was largely made up by young people.

The Cultural House was only founded in mid-1980, but it has become the real cultural hub of the neighbourhood. Its "pillars" include an old widow, a native of Hue, and her daughter, a spinster. Well versed in the traditional music of Central Vietnam they often perform to a packed house. They are also giving a course to some of the most gifted children. A course on book-binding is run by the owner of a bookstore. There is also a drawing course, an embroidery course and a course to train TV and radio repairers. All of them are free of charge. The teachers will only accept token fees paid out of the community funds.

A city-wide struggle has been waged against decadent culture. Decadent music has been silenced and shops selling banned books under the counter have been closed down. Some people may complain about the drabness of the city, but life has become positively healthier in Ward 3, thanks to the good intentions of its inhabitants, who have had a firsthand experience of decadent culture, and who, therefore are determined to get rid of it for their own good and for the good of their children.

DAO HUNG

1. Tan Da (1888-1939), a famous poet and writer who contributed to the birth of romanticism in Vietnamese literature.

Vietnam Advances

PROTECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN VIETNAM

ON the occasion of the International Year of the Disabled, the Vietnamese Ministry of Health recently organised in Hanoi the second conference on mental illness to review the accomplishments in the past five years and set forth the tasks for the coming five years (1981-1985). 150 psychiatrists, researchers and teachers of psychiatry from all mental institutions, both civilian and military, throughout the country attended the conference.

Vietnam now has, in addition to the Central Psychiatric Hospital in Hanoi, 37 other smaller mental establishments with 4,600 beds. In the past five years they have treated more than 50,000 in-patients. In many of the mental institutions like the ones at Bien Hoa, in Ho Chi Minh City the Central Psychiatric Hospital, the psychiatric departments of Army Hospital No. 103 and of the Bach Mai Hospital (Hanoi), the patients, after emergency treatment, are given occupational therapy through such light employment as basket-making, embroidery, leaf hat-making, cardboard box-making...

The mental service attaches special importance to out-patient treatment and the monitoring of the patients at their homes. In Hai Hung, Ha Bac, Ha Son Binh and Bac Thai provinces, the psychiatric service has established its consulting rooms in the provincial towns as well as in each district town. In addition, 84 communes have begun treating their patients at home. The number of persons receiving out-patient treatment during the past five years totalled nearly 40,000. Thanks to close surveillance and assiduous treatment, the incidence of relapse requiring hospitalisation has dropped markedly. Nevertheless, there remain many shortcomings: the leadership of different organs and services and

localities has not yet given adequate care to the detection and treatment of mental illness, and the personnel, equipment and medicines for this purpose still fall short of the needs.

In the five years to come the psychiatric service will extend further—down to the district and commune level—the network of consulting rooms and treatment centres for in-patients as well as out-patients, increase equipment and medicines to ensure that all patients are attended to.

Also in Hanoi, the Ministry of Health organised a conference to review the investigations into mental illness in the country.

The conference heard the Ministry of Health report on some of the newest achievements in world psychiatry and the situation of mental illness in Vietnam. It also heard several case studies in various localities such as the Cua Nam ward (Hanoi), Tu Hiep commune (Hanoi outskirts) and Hoa Binh commune (Ha Son Binh province).

In the coming period, in order to ensure better treatment of mental illness in the country and to take a more active part in the activities of world psychiatric organisations, particularly in the Western Pacific area, the conference has decided to found a National Coordinating Committee for the Protection of Mental Health. In the immediate future, the committee will step up its basic survey and research in order to work out appropriate measures for the prevention and treatment of mental illness, particularly among neurotics, the chronic depressants, longtime drug addicts in the South, and the mentally disabled people.

The Vietnamese Art of *TUONG*

THE Vietnamese art of *Tuong*—a form of musical drama similar to Western opera in some respects—developed from folk-performances from times immemorial, images of which can still be found on the bronze drums in the Hung Vuong era (second millennium B.C.—*Ed*). Under the Ly—about one thousand years ago—this art had become a type of performance with a piece of music called “*Dai Van*” (Big Cloud) with an old man narrating fairy tales and real actors appearing. In the “*Dai Viet Su Ky*” (*Dai Viet Annals*), it was noted that “on conferring a Fine Letters title on an actress named Dao Hoa as (Nang Dao), the King also officially awarded the title of (Quan Kep) to an actor”. Since then actors are popularly called “*kep*” and actresses “*dao*”, and the terms “*dao*” and “*kep*” are usually confined to performers of *Tuong* only.

Under the Tran (13th and 14th—centuries A.D) the art of *Tuong* developed strongly. At every festivity at the Court, there were performances of *Tuong*. From that time also, twelve types of roles were established in *Tuong*: loyal subject, martyr, pious offspring, honest official, villain-baiter, scolder of slanderers, dismissed official, orphan, god's head, devil's face pleasure-seeker and courtesan.

The art of *Tuong* reached its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries. This period could be called the enlightened age of *Tuong*. It was performed everywhere in the country, from the royal court to the countryside. Between four and five hundred *Tuong* plays are still preserved in our theatrical archives.

They include long plays of a dozen volumes to be performed in a hundred nights or so, written by such authors as Dao Tan, Truong Quoc Dung, Ngo Quy Dong, etc. However, in the same period, censorship was severe under the Nguyen, and the authors had to borrow Chinese stories as a vehicle to express their ideas, in the same way as Nguyen Du wrote his famous “*Tale of Kieu*” from the Chinese story of “*Doan truong tan thanh*” and just as Shakespeare wrote his “*Hamlet*” from an old Danish story.

Most of the *Tuong* plays based on Chinese stories were modified by Vietnamese authors to reflect the reality of Vietnamese life at that time, therefore spectators would feel they were watching plays about Vietnamese events. In some plays where Vietnamese stories reflected the acute contradictions in Vietnamese society at the time, the authors had to change the names of people and places to avoid censorship.

Besides dramas and epic tragedies, comedies were also popular in *Tuong* style. While the themes of most dramas and tragedies were mainly along the lines of “the King dies, a villain courtier prevails, then is killed, and a new capital is established”, *Tuong* comedies abound in criticisms of the old society—unjust and bureaucratic with corrupt officials, well-known for their incompetence, ignorance, flattery and oppression of the people—that is why these comedies are so popular.

The acting in *Tuong* is combined with dance, song and musical accompaniment. It differs from

the Western opera and operetta in Europe in that the performer sings or speaks according to the authors' verses and tunes, and never depends on the orchestra, because she can change the rhythm according to the feelings of the role she plays and also according to the spectators' responses.

Nevertheless, the music is also of great help to the performers, when they have to express the depth of a character. Besides, the music also contributes to creating a dramatic atmosphere on situation, e.g. a storm, a battle, the still of the night, etc. In this respect, the drum plays a most important role.

The art of *Tuong* is based mainly on the principles of stylization convention and symbolism. The stage is therefore free of settings and represents no definite time and space. The performers should create the appropriate temporal and spatial dimensions by their acting and gestures. In moments, night can become day, a river can change to mountains, and a court can be transformed into a battlefield.

Based on principles of stylization and convention, the performing accessories also have their symbolism. An oar symbolizes a boat, a rattan rod a horse, while the performer acts to suggest rowing or riding. But when she stops doing so, an oar or a rod can be just a dancing accessory. Even a beard or a sleeve can become a performing accessory for a *Tuong* actor. A loyal subject strokes his beard in a different way from a flatterer, while a flatterer cries or laughs in a different way from a loyal subject. The old artiste Nguyen Lai has learned from tradition and created thirty-six ways of laughing for thirty-six different situations.

In short, these forms have derived from everyday life and have been stylized and formalized by

Ta Kim Hung, a character in a *Tuong* drama entitled *Ngon Lua Hong Son* (The Flames on Hong Son Mountain).



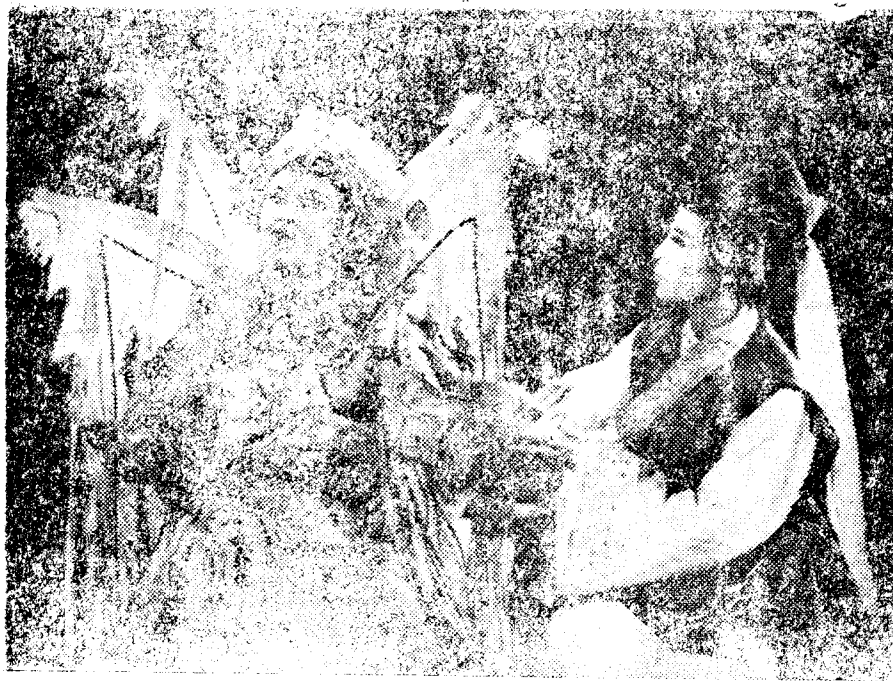
generations of artistes into acting patterns, so that spectators instantly understand the meaning of each gesture performed on stage.

Using the same principles of convention and symbolism, the *Tuong* performers can express a complex situation. For example a character, whose head has been cut off by the enemy puts his head on again as a result of moral strength and turns himself into a torch to lead his comrades through the dark night. Or a female character is thrown into the pangs of childbirth while being pursued by the enemy: she just makes gestures suggesting she is in labour, then "delivers" the child on the very stage, the spectators believe the story and find aesthetic value in this original performance.

Space in *Tuong* is also an interesting question of artistic aesthetics. The art specifies that when the performer makes three rounds of the stage while singing three verses, the space is changed: it may be from the South to the North, or from Hanoi to Moscow...

Also on this conventional stage, two performers moving round in opposite directions means that they are travelling on different roads. As the stage has no sets, the performer has to raise his steps to signal entering a room, or to mime closing or opening a door, and this should be understood instantly by spectators. In this respect, the pantomime element in *Tuong* has reached a high level.

The art of stylization and conventionalization in *Tuong* is also expressed through make-up and costumes. As a rule, loyal characters have red faces and long beards, and flatterers have striped faces and short beards. There are exceptions however, e.g. Truong Phi and Tiet Cuong are loyal characters but they have striped faces and short beards, because they were known to have had ugly appearances in real life, and to be ill-tempered and intrepid like lions. Khuong Linh Ta, Thuy Dinh Minh are heroes of a just cause, but their faces are not red, but are painted with white or black circles, red spots or green stripes... which represent not only their fierce temper, uprightness and intrepidity but also their



A scene From the 'Tuong drama entitled " Dao Tam Xuan Loan Trao" acted by Dam Lien and Kim Cue.

environment. For example, a "mountain" actor has green stripes, a "fishing" actor has the blue of the ocean, etc. Also by stylization, the wrinkles of the old loyal patriot Ta Ngoc Lan become stripes, but these do not represent a bad character. This should be understood in combination with costumes and acting gestures.

In short, *Tuong* is a most original and outstanding form of national musical drama in Vietnam. Through thousands of years of development, it has absorbed the finest of folk-songs, folk-dances, from the music, dancing and singing in the Court and temples. Added to this are the stock of gestures and tunes created by hundreds of generations of artistes, all combining to make what is regarded nowadays as the most complete and typical form of Vietnamese theatre.

It should be said here that there has been a mis-understanding that

Tuong was a form of theatre called *kinh kich* (Peking opera) imported from China which does have some similar aspects. The contention is groundless. The history of Chinese theatre noted that only under the Qing (17-19th centuries) did *kinh kich* come into being. Thus it was born centuries later than *Tuong*. Besides, Vietnam's *Tuong* is based mainly on the principles of convention, stylization and symbolism, which supposes that the unreal be taken as real. The Chinese art of *kinh kich* is based on naturalism and formalism, in which highly externalized beauty is created by emphatic acting and elaborate settings.

The highly popular art of *Tuong* did not prosper under the French colonial regime. It was even about to disappear in some regions. After the liberation of North Vietnam in 1954, many artistes from all over

the country gathered in Hanoi, and thus the Vietnam *Tuong* Ensemble was created with the participation of most of the nationally known artistes such as Nguyen Nho Tuy, Nguyen Lai, Ngo Thi Lieu, Muoi Chuong, Du Luoc, Van Phuoc Khai, Minh Duc, Bach Tra, Quang Ton, Ba Tuyen, Duc Nha, Ngoc Phung, Ngoc Nhu, etc. The National *Tuong* Ensemble has now a repertoire of 50 pieces and a personnel of 200 performers musicians and artistic workers. It has also trained eight classes of young performers who successively replenish the performing teams. Many stage-managers and artistic workers of the Ensemble have been trained in regular universities at home and abroad. Since the liberation of the South (1975) the "spirit of *Tuong*" in Central and Southern Vietnam has been awakened and this discipline is ever more popular and stronger. The National *Tuong* Festival held at Qui Nhon in mid-1976, for the first time, was a great artistic event, where artistes of the National *Tuong* Ensemble had opportunities to meet and share experiences with well-known artistes such as Chanh Pham (in Quang Nam-Da Nang), Ngoc Cam (in Nghia Binh), Nam Do (in Ho Chi Minh City), etc., from whom they learned some excellent performing skills. One may say that the Vietnam *Tuong* Ensemble is progressing on the basis of the art of *Tuong* that is being restored and developed throughout the country.

HOANG CHUONG

Stage-manager
Deputy Director, Vietnam
Tuong Ensemble.

KAMPUCHEAN MEDICINE

AND THE REBIRTH OF THE NATION



Dr. Yit Kim Seng

Dr. Yit Kim Seng, who studied medicine in Saigon and Phnom Penh before going on to further instruction in Canada, the United States and Japan, was entrusted with high responsibilities in pre-Pol Pot Kampuchea. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, he was forced to do hard labour, then made a cowherd in a commune in Takeo province. Now he is a deputy to the National Assembly, Minister of Health, and President of the National Peace Council of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Recently he granted an interview to our deputy editor-in-chief Vu Can in Phnom Penh. We give below a translation of the full text of the interview, which was conducted in French.

Editor

Question: *The Kampuchean revival is being closely watched by the whole world, either with admiration and profound sympathy, as is the case with the socialist countries and other friends of the Kampuchean people, or with unconcealed hostility, in the case of the men in Beijing and their accomplices. To that miraculous resurrection the medical workers of the People's Republic of Kampuchea have made a praiseworthy contribution, all the more so since the medical corps has just been rebuilt on the ruins of the former health organization, which had been wrecked by the Pol Pot - Ieng Sary - Khieu Samphan regime. Will you please, Mr Minister, give us a broad outline of the efforts made and the results achieved in this field which has been entrusted to you and your colleagues?*

Answer: Perhaps I should first tell you where we began our endeavour. The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan regime, while claiming to build socialism, has in fact conducted an extremely reactionary and demented policy which drove the Kampuchean nation to unprecedented disaster. This included in particular the total ruin of our health organization. By the time the Khmer Rouge yoke was broken, our network of hospitals, maternity homes, dispensaries and infirmaries had been completely smashed. Most medical workers had been massacred: nine-tenths of the advanced-level scientific and technical personnel, including all 19 college professors and about 550 doctors of medicine, pharmacists and dentists, and two-thirds of the nurses; more than 2,000 people in all. After liberation, the National Union Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea and the People's Revolutionary Council gathered together all health workers who had survived the genocide and, with material and technical assistance given by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in those early days of our people's State, a new health organization was set up. The orientation we followed right from the beginning was entirely different from what had guided our medical system in former times: the pursuit of patronage. At its peak, in 1968, that system

comprised 60 hospitals, both State and private, including those of the army, 700 maternity clinics and just over 500 consulting rooms. There was then one hospital bed for every 15,000 inhabitants and one physician for every 10,000. This was not much, and besides, the emphasis was laid on the towns, whereas Kampuchea was an essentially agrarian country. Under our people's regime, the foundation has been laid for an omnipresent health network—in a mere two and a half years. Of our 1270 *khoms* (communes), 1,148, i.e. 90%, possess an infirmary, maternity home. Each of our *sokhs* (districts) has a district hospital. Our 19 provinces are served by 24 hospitals of 100-400 beds. At the centre, in Phnom Penh, we operate eight hospitals. Country-wide, we have at present 6,000 hospital beds, for a population of 6,500,000, i.e. about one bed for every 1,000 people. Our three pharmaceutical plants turn out various serums and medicines in the form of injectable medications, tablets, capsules, syrups, eye-drops, etc. The College of Medicine, Pharmacy and Odonto-stomatology has been reopened, while each province runs a school for training junior personnel. At present, our medical corps comprises 11,274 members, more than in 1968.

Question: *The notorious regime of "Democratic Kampuchea" ceased to exist three years ago, but the problem of the "barefoot doctors" it trained still preoccupies those who feel concerned about the subject. Was that a real medical corps similar to that created by Maoist China? It has been said that 80% of the patients entrusted to it died as a result. Witnesses affirm that these "people's doctors" used their patients as guinea-pigs, on which some of them carried out major surgical operations without anaesthetic by way of experimentation. Friends in Kampong Cham told me, half a year after the flight of the Khmer Rouge, that Pol Pot medical workers, in their "struggle against social diseases", merely liquidated those they found affected by leprosy, syphilis and tuberculosis. How true do you think those stories are?*

Answer: Pol Pot himself said in a report to a conference of cadres of provinces making up the former Eastern Military Zone: "One must cast aside that outdated conception which recommends that cadres be recruited among people having attained a certain level of education in the old society. There is no need for them to know how to read or to have some knowledge of French. A good social background is enough. A certain level of culture is not essential; one does not cure patients with it. An illiterate person can perfectly learn medicine. Education is only secondary; what is important is one's political and ideological stand. This is the basis of technique". One would think this was a quotation from Mao, with some alterations. The same anti-intellectualism, the same voluntarism. One has every reason to believe that the Khmer Rouge leaders had taken from the Chinese the model of the "barefoot doctor", a son or daughter of poor peasants, barely literate, and trained by quacks in one or two months. The barefoot doctor's political and ideological stand almost invariably caused him to see his patients as lazybones who wished to escape work duty and to punish them by reducing their already pitiful rations. So only seriously ill people ever asked for medical care, which in fact consisted of some traditional herbal medicines claimed to be effective against all kinds of diseases. Pills were made from old wives' recipes, injectable medications were prepared with rain water and kept in unsterilized phials, injections were made without preliminary asepsis, and surgical operations were conducted without anaesthetic. Incapable of diagnosing an illness, the barefoot doctor contented himself with listening to what the patient told him and his prescription had to be strictly followed. Hence a very high mortality rate. Some sadists cut open their patients' abdomen or thorax simply to observe the functioning of their hearts or viscera. This is unbelievable, yet true. It is also true that Pol Pot doctors ordered the physical liquidation of lepers, "to cleanse the environment". Of a total of about 10,000 lepers, only 400 remain alive. Those affected by syphilis were also liquidated, but for a different reason: "to preserve revolutionary ethics". As for those suffering from tuberculosis and consequently unable to work, they were left to starve according to the motto: "Whoever does not work shall not eat". That was how Pol Pot doctors behaved. And yet they never failed to moralize upon the failings of the physicians of the old society. They had strange ways of reasoning. For instance they claimed that a doctor who took care to clean his hands with alcohol before touching a patient merely showed his fear of contamination and

his contempt of the people. Was it ignorance, hypocrisy, or both?

Question: *While hushing up the heinous crimes perpetrated by the Pol Pot genocidal regime, Beijing, Washington and Bangkok have recently tried to convince the world that gas and toxic chemicals have been used by the Vietnam People's Army against Khmer Rouge and other "resistance bases". How numerous and active are those so-called resistance bases? Being in charge of public health do you have anything to say about those alleged inhuman war acts and use of prohibited weapons by Vietnamese troops on Kampuchean territory?*

Answer: Following the Khmer Rouge takeover, I spent three and a half years in Takeo province where I was put to till the land then to look after buffaloes and oxen, then I was sent to Kandal where I did basketwork all day long until the Khmer Rouge were routed. Like all my companions in misfortune, I suffered from hunger and ill-treatment and lived in perpetual fear of a blow given on the back of the neck with the axle of an ox cart. We were liberated by Vietnamese troops. Although I was, above everything else, longing to be reunited with my family, I nonetheless carefully observed your soldiers. None of them made a show of the militarism which I abhorred. They were cheerful and light-hearted, and their officers were gentle and considerate. They shared their meagre rations with the local population, cared for the sick and the wounded, showed respect for the old. They behaved correctly with regard to the women, played with the children and treated their prisoners with humanity and leniency. To claim that that army committed atrocities is pure slander. Our Government has received no reports whatsoever of any use of gas and toxic chemicals by Vietnamese troops in any region of our country. No case of poisoning by chemicals has ever been treated in our hospitals, although we have competent specialists in that field. Indeed, bases held by Pol Pot or Son Sann forces are located in Thai, not Kampuchean, territory. Here remnants of the Pol Pot army have set up what can at most be called robbers' haunts, not resistance bases. Pol Pot, Son Sann and Sihanouk, far from banding together into a troika as their masters in Beijing and Washington would wish, are jockeying for prestige and material interests. What kind of resistance is that, that is being conducted by forces seeking to devour each other? The accusation made by Washington, Beijing and Bangkok against the Vietnamese troops is simply a smokescreen. To Washington I would like to say: "The Kampuchean people have

not forgotten the havoc wrought by defoliants sprayed over a large part of their country by the US aircraft during the last Indochina war." To Beijing: "Pol Pot is your monstrous creature. You are responsible in the last resort for the genocidal crimes he perpetrated on three million Kampuchean victims during the three years, eight months and twenty days of his reign". And, lastly, to Bangkok: "Be realistic! Don't support a lost cause, all the more so since it is an ignominious one, for there is retribution for everything in this world. Because you quote the Buddhist doctrine, act as Buddhists, stay away from crime, and don't forget the law of cause and effect." That is what I would like to say about the collusion between Beijing, Washington and Bangkok.

Question: I have visited several hospitals both in the capital and in some provinces, where I talked not only to Kampuchean doctors and nurses but also to Vietnamese specialists who had come to help put Kampuchea back on its feet following the flight of the Khmer Rouge. I also noted the presence of medicines, instruments and apparatus sent from Vietnam, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, or donated by various international humanitarian organizations. Has the assistance given Kampuchea in the health field been effective, on both the material and technical planes? What do you wish to receive from the international community during this period of national convalescence? What are your plans concerning co-operation with other countries?

Answer: Let me quote a few more figures first. In 1980, our health network did 10 million medical check-ups and cared for 300,000 in-patients. Those achievements, which did a lot of good to our people's morale, presuppose a fairly good organization, adequate staff, i.e. in sufficient numbers and professionally competent, a stock of medicines, and other factors. Precious aid has been provided by Vietnamese specialists, who actively participated in the setting up of our health-care network, in cadre training, in disease treatment and prevention, in the fight against epidemics, etc. We owe a great deal to their devotion and competence and, after three years of their close co-operation, I believe that as a physician trained under the old regime and having travelled in many regions of the world, I can affirm that the Vietnamese experience in the field of health care is extremely valuable for the developing countries on condition that they have at heart the interests and well-being of their toiling masses. This experience has inspired us in the charting of our present orientation: a mass line in which modern science is combined with

traditional values and top priority is given to prevention without neglecting treatment. We are also grateful to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Cuba, Poland, India and other countries, and to popular aid committees in France and Sweden as well as to international humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF, OXFAM, and ICRC for their generous and disinterested help on the material and technical planes, which has made possible our country's quick recovery. On the strength of the results achieved, we are braced for a large-scale struggle against social diseases, first of all malaria, which is endemic on three-quarters of our territory where three million of our compatriots live. Great importance is also attached to the fight against tuberculosis, for we inherited a high T.B. mortality rate from the Pol Pot regime. While conducting a wide-ranging struggle against epidemics we will promote environmental, particularly rural, hygiene. All those fundamental actions call for material and technical means which in the present circumstances are not available to us. Our targets can only be attained if we benefit from intensive international assistance. In particular we need that help for the supplies and equipment necessary for the operation and development of our young pharmaceutical industry. It is also high time we thought of co-operation with other countries and with international organizations for the common benefit of mankind. However, co-operation implies reciprocity. It is no secret that our country is still caught in serious difficulties due to our century-old underdevelopment, aggravated by the sequels of Polpotism and the hostile policy pursued by Beijing and world reaction. In the economic field for instance, we have a useful range of tropical products: rubber, coffee, rice, pepper, jute, precious woods, vegetable oil... Heirs to the brilliant Angkor Civilisation, we shall certainly continue to attract attention in the cultural field. Already in the days of Angkor, our forefathers gave a vigorous impetus to our traditional medicine and the country's health-care network comprised as many as one hundred hospitals. Like our Vietnamese friends, we will enhance that precious patrimony. We will promote the cultivation of medicinal plants suited to our soil and climate, the range of which is undoubtedly quite vast. By persisting in that path, our medical corps will, I believe, contribute its part to the common endeavour of the peoples of the world in the field of health care.

Phnom Penh
23 September 1981

"MUONTI TAMONN"

ANGKOR Chey is a small district of Kampot, about 120km south of Phnom Penh, on the road to the resort town "Kep-on-sea", an old haunt of the former smart "society" people of Kampuchea and nicknamed Kampuchea's Cape St Jacques (Vietnam's Vung Tau). In the Second Indochina War, after Lon Nol had overthrown Sihanouk, very fierce battles were fought here between the puppet Saigon - Phnom Penh forces on one side and the Vietnamese - Kampuchean liberation forces on the other. Late in 1972 the puppet forces withdrew. Then "the home-based leadership" of the Kampuchean revolution requested the Vietnamese liberation forces to withdraw from the area and hand it over to the Khmer Rouge administration. Thus, in 1973, two years

before entering Phnom Penh, the Khmer Rouge had already established a liberated area in Kampot province encompassing Angkor Chey.

The war and the terrible upheavals following it, practically obliterated all solid buildings, leaving the poor upland country thoroughly destitute. Angkor Chey district town was reduced to a thinly populated community lost among bare hills, and its people's revolutionary committee was situated in an old medical station of Sihanouk vintage, made desolate by the absence of fences and doors.

I was received by Mrs Chhim Samoeur, deputy head of the committee's secretariat; a woman of around 30, with a dark brown complexion, very clear brown eyes

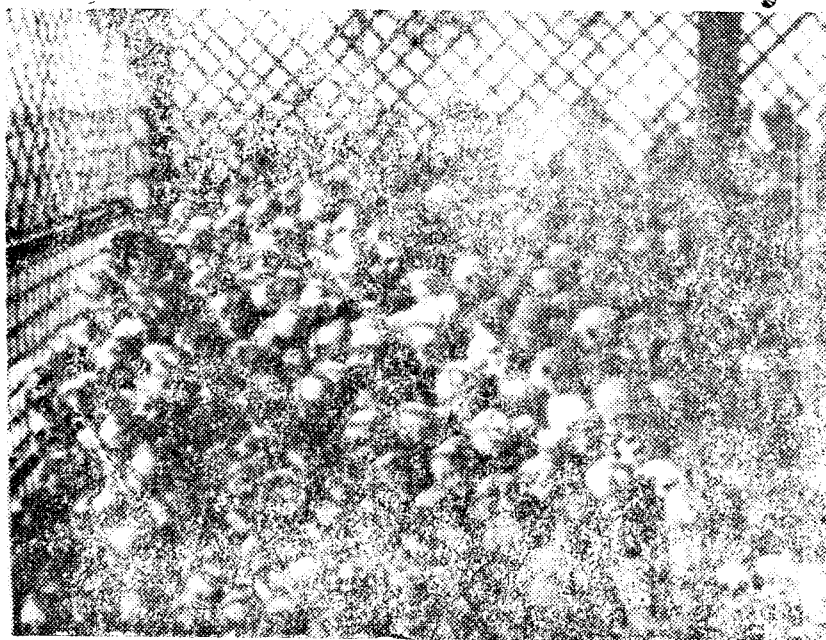
and a straight nose which set off the fine traits of an oval face. Her slender body was clothed in a narrow-waisted black shirt and a dark-green sarong. Graceful rather than beautiful, she spoke to me slowly in a good French accent. I produced my papers and explained my intention of visiting the Khmer Rouge mass graves just discovered by the administration. She then asked me to wait for the committee's president who was attending a meeting.

In the meantime I learnt that Chhim Samoeur had studied in Phnom Penh's Sisowath high school, passed the first part of her baccalaureate but failed the second part. She then married Nhien Samonn, a high school teacher, and had a daughter Nhien Sudane and a son Nhien Sudana. Driven out of Phnom Penh under Pol Pot the family settled in Prap Phnum commune, Angkor Chey district. The couple became "new peasants", tended the fields, dug canals, built dikes and ate only rice gruel to keep body and soul together. In 1977 her husband was framed as an officer in Lon Nol's army and thrown into Tamonn jail where he was killed later on. The same year both children died of starvation while Chhim Saman, Chhim Samoeur's elder sister, and Chhim Sareth, her younger brother, also died in Tamonn jail. Now she lives alone.

"The place you want to go," she told me, "belongs to Prap Phnum commune where the Khmer Rouge set up a jail called Muonti Tamonn."

*
* *

Mr Tuon Sai, the president of the district people's committee, spoke to me in French too—obviating the need for an interpreter. A graduate of the Phnom Penh National Pedagogical Institute he was formerly, the



principal of Kirivong high school in Takeo town. Angkor Chey district was dubbed District 106 under Pol Pot and Muonti Tamonn was a rather difficult term to explain.

"Muonti," he said, "is a vague word. Any place where the Pol Pot agents worked, guarded by sentries with black pyjamas and chequered scarves, was called 'muonti', be it a military command post, a seat of administration, a pig-farm, or a jail... Therefore 'muonti' may be an office or a jail. Tamonn is a hamlet of Prap Phnum commune, 9 km from Angkor Chey district town, on Provincial Road 31 leading to National Highway 3 which links Phnom Penh to Kampot."

Tuon Sai drew a sketch of "Muonti Tamonn": about 20 rows of houses comprising detention rooms, stores, kitchen, offices... and four places of execution at Prey Takoy, Phnum Sromach, Phmur Kril and O Tapao. He informed me that all the houses had been removed by the local population, but the graves were intact. Following the indication of some witnesses, the district had unearthed more than two hundred graves, exhuming 50-60 corpses from the biggest, 20-30 from the medium, and a few from the smallest. A record of the victims had been kept by the executioners, but as in many other places they had destroyed it before withdrawing. However the evidence by many witnesses led them to conclude that 30,000-40,000 people had been killed in "Muonti Tamonn" from early 1974 to 1979 during the five years of Khmer Rouge administration in the locality.

"This July," the president said, "when we made an excavation at Prey Takoy, each stroke of the hoe hit human bones. At the 2,003rd skull, we stopped, partly because we did not have enough space to keep the victims' remains and partly to preserve the seat as an evidence."



Mrs. Lu Xa Phuon. Her husband and five children were killed in Tamonn jail.

Photo: VIETNAM TELEVISION

Tuon Sai then drove us to the place. We left Angkor Chey district town, followed Provincial Road 31 in the direction of Phnom Penh, passing poor hamlets newly restored under the clumps of coconut and sugar-palms. At km 9 we turned right, crossed a small wooden bridge over a canal and entered a large dirt road. "Muonti Tamonn" was seated here, along more than half a kilometre starting from the canal-four or five minutes of slow drive. We stopped where the last rows of houses had stood. At this place was a newly-built three-roomed brick house surrounded by walls of sugar-palm wood, of an ornamental value rather than for protection.

The sunlight filtering through the lattice showed a heap of human bones like firewood occupying nearly half of the house. Behind it on the left was a heap of skulls as half the house-column, and on the right a heap of rags with faded colours which had been the victims' clothes.

It was afternoon. A few score peasants returning from the fields then gathered around me - an occasion for me to hear many

witness accounts of the "Muonti Tamonn".

Mr Ing Set, 38 years old, living in Rsai Dam hamlet, was a tall, lean man with a chocolate brown complexion, and curly hair - a typical Khmer.

"Under the Pol Pot regime," he said, "my house faced the first row of the muonti houses, 300 metres away. I saw starving prisoners like bags of bones, many of them could no longer walk and had to crawl, some of them went on all fours out of the jail and ate grass. They were so exhausted that they could not offer any resistance and were easily killed by the soldiers. This was done in two ways: by smashing the victims' heads with a hammer or a stick, or by cutting their throats with a sharp knife. I witnessed many pitiful and dreadful scenes but had to feign ignorance and keep clear of the muonti. Later on the soldiers ordered me to move my house far from the place."

Mr Khieu Sien, 65 years old, a native of the same hamlet, was a small, toothless man with a yellow complexion.

"The Khmer Rouge," he said, "brought their prisoners to Tamonn on ox- or horse-carts. Once, I saw a family coming on an ox-cart, clothed like townspeople. The soldiers then grabbed a woman and beat her most brutally. A child whom I guessed to be her son was so frightened that he ran away into the rice-fields. Immediately the soldiers rushed after him and beat him to death with a stick. They detained and murdered people in 'Muonti Tamonn' ever since the Khmer Rouge 'liberated area' was established here. I myself had six sons arrested and executed under the charge of resisting an order to do heavy work owing to sheer exhaustion. My wife also died of starvation at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. Now I have only a daughter left who lives with me."

Miss Ui Then, 20 years old, a healthy, full-faced and ingenuous looking girl:

"The black-clad soldiers kept a very close guard on the 'muonti', letting nobody come near it. However, I lived only two hundred metres from it and could hear people screaming at night. Later on the soldiers ordered me to move else where. I had two elder brothers charged with an attempt to flee the 'liberated area' before the Khmer Rouge occupied Phnom Penh. They were imprisoned in the 'mounti' and liquidated there."

To help me better understand a Khmer Rouge execution some peasants re-enacted the scenes they had witnessed time and again. If I had not seen this with my own eyes, it would have been difficult to imagine such brutalities. Mr Khieu Sien took a rope with which he tied Mr Ing Set's arms behind his back above the elbows and around the wrists, then tied another man behind him in the same way with the same rope... "They tied prisoners by twenty or thirty," he said. "After that, they led them to a grave, ordered the first man to squat and hold out his head for a soldier to knock it with a hammer and push the man into the grave,

then did the same to the next, until the last." Then Mr Khieu Sien grasped a tussock of a squatting Mr Ing Set's hair with his left hand, rested his left knee on the "victim's" back then pulled on his hair to lay bare his throat. "This is their way to cut throats," he said. And he took a bar of wood as a knife then carried it over Mr Ing Set's throat.

After this gruesome drama, Mr Ing Set brought me back to the heap of bones and took out a pair of arm-bones with a rope tying them. Then he led me to the heap of skulls, pointed at these battered ones and told me to compare them with the intact ones. "The battered belong to those who had their heads smashed and the intact come from those who had their throats cut." This said, he showed me a heap of rusted iron-bars used to fetter legs, bellies and necks, but gave no more commentary about the fate of the prisoners in "Muonti Tamonn".

Before leaving, I asked about the wooden boards with poles heaped in a corner of the house.

"Those are ours," the president explained. "When exhuming a mass grave the excavator has to write down the number of skulls unearthed on a board and plant it near the grave for the men in charge to check it before gathering the skulls. We add up the numbers written on the boards and compare the total with the overall number to avoid a mistake."

Thus a method of archaeological excavation was applied here with a possibility of checking the result.

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District 106, that was the Angkor Chey district under the Pol Pot regime, was divided into six sectors. Apart from the "Muonti-Tamonn" which was the main jail, the district had six smaller jails, one in each sector.

"We cannot count precisely the number of victims," Tuon Sai went on. "However, it cannot be

less than 50,000, because there were people from other places besides the local ones. We have relatively accurate figures for the former Samleing sector. In 1974, the sector had 17,000 people. In 1975, 4,000 people were forced here from Phnom Penh, which made 21,000. After the establishment of people's power, the sector was divided into two communes: Samleing and Chompey with a total population of 10,983 in 1981. We don't know the number of Phnom Penh people who escaped death and returned to the capital. We have not yet made complete statistics of the babies born since liberation. However, if we compare the population in 1975 and that in 1981, the difference amounts to 10,017, that is nearly one half.

"Today Angkor Chey district has nearly 46,000 people living in 10 communes. All these have primary schools and the district has a secondary school. Total enrolment in the 1981-1982 school year amounts to about 13,000, that is nearly one-third of the population."

After visiting the vestiges of "Muonti Tamonn" and taking a photograph with the 2,003 skulls of the victims, in contrast I went to the secondary school of the district and the primary school of Phnum Kong commune nearby and took a photograph with the pupils and their teachers. The children studied in simple houses with sugar-palm leaf roofs and walls, sometimes without a partition at all between two classes. However, they were clad cleanly and neatly and their bright faces bore no more traces of the recent nightmare.

Nevertheless, whenever one asks after their families their expressions change, their faces cloud over: they are marked for the rest of their lives by the sinister memories of the "Muonti Tamonn" of Pol Pot.

Phnom Penh, October 1981

VU CAN

Mother and Daughter

The problem of war widows in the postwar period—public opinion—and their happiness. This is the subject of the following story, as delicately treated by Ma Van Khang, a widely read author.

UNLIKE her two children Duyen rarely used the looking-glass. She had no time for it, anyway always, having her hands full. As soon as she got up at a quarter to five in the morning, she started cooking. Then, after a hurried breakfast, she filled three canteens with food and, no less hurriedly, went to work on her bicycle. Quite often in winter she forgot to put on her scarf and gloves. As she lived a long way from the hospital where she was working, Duyen had hardly had any time left for herself.

Then, for no reason at all, Duyen took to inspecting her face in the looking-glass. She spent more and more time doing so, and one day discovered with satisfaction that she was not as old as she had believed. In the dream-like atmosphere of the room created by the early morning sunrays which passed through the fanlight and were deflected from the ceiling on to the blue tile floor, Duyen was startled at the sight of the oval-shaped face in the looking-glass. Whose could it be? Did it belong to the frail, young medical assistant at the Regimental Hospital, the girl whose black eyes had "bewitched" Phuc, one of the patients, 20 years before? Such a long time ago!

The moment of wishful thinking over, Duyen became reconciled to the fact that she was no longer what she used to be. She

was forty-two now. She had to put on a pair of spectacles when reading, and her hair and skin had lost the sheen of youth. Forty-two and in another phase of life. Yet she did not look her age, a gift given by nature to beautiful women. People often said she looked more like a sister than a mother to her son and daughter. Once when she came to the hospital in a red woollen coat her friends all marvelled at her. "You're wonderful, my dear," enthused the typist. "Just a little touch of mascara and lipstick and you'll be perfect." Duyen blushed at the praises and looked all the more beautiful.

Duyen tossed her head with a girlish movement and sang softly. "After the rain the sun shines again. A bright day with a new joy..." But she left the song unfinished to look through the bamboo blind into the other half of the room in which Hoa, her daughter, was sleeping on a single bed.

Duyen sat down on the edge of her own bed, still looking at the fullgrown girl.

Hoa's coming of age and the enlistment of Thuan, her son, had been marked by the partition of their only room. "This photo was taken of Dad and me, so it belongs to me," Hoa used to claim at the age of ten, and she had appropriated all mementos of her father,

dead for twelve years now, while Duyen was left with only the bitter-sweet memories of the years she had shared with her husband.

In her daughter's sixteenth year, Duyen was aware of a change in her relationship with Hoa. Back from work one day she was greeted at the door not by the little girl she used to know, but by one in the full bloom of youth, and she was speechless at the joy which suddenly filled her heart.

"Have some tea, mother," Hoa said to her. "You don't look quite well."

Duyen received the cup with an unsteady hand. So her daughter had become a different person with a mind of her own. The relation between mother and daughter, natural, unruffled so far, would have to be handled with care now. Hoa tended to keep to herself more and more, and Duyen missed the small talks they had had about almost everything—their food and clothes, the girl's friends and studies. Sitting in silence over their meals Duyen would try to find the cause of Hoa's reticence, wondering if it was the incompleteness of the family. Once she attempted to break the ice by asking her daughter if she had any problems, but the girl did not thaw. "You have to trust me, mother," she replied. "I can take care of myself



Illustration by THANH CHUONG

now." The answer was firm and logical, but Duyen did not feel at all relieved.

Hoa had been up for some time now and was working at her desk when Duyen came in through the dividing blind.

"We're going to a concert this evening," Duyen announced.

The girl laid down her pen and turned to look at her

"You've got the tickets, mother. Where will it be?"

"We're invited, both of us. So let's have dinner early."

"I can't go," Hoa said, and picked up her pen.

"You can't go? Why? It's Saturday evening. You don't want to deny me the pleasure, do you?"

The girl detected a note of urgency in her mother's voice. She

looked up again and was alarmed by her mother's beseeching eyes.

"Well, I've my homework to do," she explained.

"All right, if it's your homework then I'm not supposed to trouble you," Duyen said.

"Don't say that, mother," the girl pleaded, now at a loss. "I have to see granny, too," she added, turning back to her desk. "She sent word for you and me to come and see her."

Five years before Duyen who was a doctor, was transferred to Hanoi from a mountain province. She had been working for more than twenty years in remote areas, and the transfer was made in consideration of her mother-in-law who was living alone in the capital city on the allowance given her for her eldest son who had died in action, and on contributions by her three other children living in distant places.

That was reason enough for the transfer, but there was more to it than met the eye, and Duyen was the only person to know what had driven her to make such a decision: the pain inflicted on her by the sudden news of her husband's death, the lack of opportunity for her children to further their studies and, most of all, her loneliness.

The whole family looked forward to the move. The children could not wait to see the big city with its crowded streets, and their mother was picturing to herself a secure life for all three. Then, at the railway station, a friend who came to see them off whispered to Duyen: "They say you're going to remarry in Hanoi. I hope that's true. Only there can you have your pick of men. And you're quite pretty still, my dear." Duyen blushed to the roots of her hair. Fortunately her embarrassment escaped the children, who were too busy watching the puffing engine. To Duyen, those words had a frightening effect. But somehow they sounded like a potent prelude to a new chapter of her life.

Having left the provincial town Duyen missed the quiet, uneventful days she had lived there, the unpretentious houses, the familiar faces, a crowded atmosphere which allowed no privacy and in which the least happening was magnified to an important event, a life irritating at times but neighbourly on the whole.

People had known Duyen since she was a girl of eighteen who

wore her hair in two braids over her ears, and who used to walk a pack horse laden with medicines back and forth to the hospital of Regiment 246. They also remembered her husband, the youngest captain in the whole regiment, and often recalled both their wedding and the commemorative service held for Phuc at the Public Health Office during which the young widow had fallen unconscious.

In a small town one mixes completely with the community, whereas in a big city people are just anonymous entities lost among events taking place at a heady speed, and individual life is submerged by everyday care.

Duyen had remoulded her life to suit the big city. She renounced former habits, avoided company and sought comfort at home where she found peace of mind.

Duyen enjoyed the new life. She worked hard and conscientiously, and was trusted by her colleagues and respected by her patients. Her children did well at school and behaved themselves. Thuan, the son, joined up in his fourth year at Medical College, at the age of twenty. Hoa, in the tenth form of secondary school, had outgrown her childhood tantrums. Duyen did not ask for more.

Time went by without much happening, which suited Duyen well. But somehow she found her peace of mind too fragile to last. There were the broad hints dropped by her colleagues and the suggestions, well-meaning but at times not quite tactful, made by her friends, which combined to clear the wasteland of her soul for sowing. And a seed had finally been planted by chance.

Duyen was giving a checkup to an eight-year-old girl who suffered from arthritis and had all the symptoms of a bad liver. Her father was a greying major whose pale, long face was heavily lined by many years of hardship.

"We'll have to keep her here, I'm afraid," Duyen told the major and noticed that the man was looking at her with some interest which, out of politeness, he tried not to show.

The major promised to bring his daughter back for treatment at the hospital and added with some hesitation, "Excuse me, Doctor, it seems to me we've met somewhere before!"

"Not that I can recall, Major," Duyen replied, taking off the stethoscope from around her neck.

"Were you ever with Regiment 246?"

"No," Duyen said politely but firmly. She was lying but the man did not seem to notice at all. He only creased his forehead in puzzlement as if doubting his own memory. Then, picking the child up on his back, he left, the puzzled look still on his face.

Duyen felt somewhat guilty and looked forward to the major calling again. The major did not keep the appointment and so Duyen did something she had never done before: she called at his house where she met only his sick daughter and his mother, a very old woman blind in both eyes. Duyen learned from the old woman that the major had gone to the border, that of all her children he was the one with the toughest lot. He had spent most of his life at the front, in the northwestern region, in Laos, in Kampuchea. He had not been lucky in marriage, either. His only child was born very late, in the tenth year of his marriage, and his wife had died of cancer five years before.

Duyen took the child to the hospital, carrying her pickaback, exactly as the major had done. What followed was inevitable. The major wrote to her frequently thanking her for her kindness. She wrote in reply, at first only to inform him of his daughter's health, and later on to inquire after him. Thus, without knowing it, the two began to open their hearts to each other.

Came the day when the child was released. The major got leave for that special occasion. To Duyen that was a memorable day. She worked far into the night and the major saw her home.

The children had gone to bed but were still awake. Thuan got up as soon as he heard her. "Why are you so late, mother?" he asked. "We waited in vain for you. It's Hoa's birthday, you know?"

Duyen was shivering with cold. She sat down silently at the table while Thuan urged his sister to get up.

"Don't sulk. She had to work late, you know," he told the girl, jerking at the mosquito net.

"That's no reason for forgetting all about my birthday," the girl retorted angrily.

Duyen shivered again, this time with a feeling of guilt.

The relations between mother and daughter became strained and did not improve in anyway. The life of the close knit family was irremediably disturbed by the new factor.

Duyen was no longer quite herself, her heart was constantly a flutter with hope and longing which, she was sad to note, was unshared and out of place at home. Her daughter's estrangement she understood: the girl had not reached the age of reason yet. But the sharp drop of Hoa's marks at school was more than she could bear. Duyen was all the more worried after a talk with the teacher-in-charge, who told her that the girl seemed to be in some kind of moral trouble. "Her mind is elsewhere" the teacher observed.

Duyen confronted her daughter with the teacher's remark and the girl flared up. "Instead of blaming me you should do some soul searching yourself!" she retorted. Duyen was stung by the sudden insolence and, for the first time in her life, slapped the girl. Later, filled with remorse, mother and daughter hugged each other and wept through the night. Duyen found she had been neglectful in her duties towards her daughter and had forsaken the real happiness of a mother in pursuit of an affair of the heart quite inappropriate at her age. It was pure madness.

Duyen and the major were emerging from the concert hall. There was a moon and the street soon emptied of people.

"Let's get on the pavement, Duyen," the major said, his arm slightly touching hers.

Duyen's heart missed a beat at the familiar way the major addressed her by dropping the usual vocative word, "Duyen," the major said again. In the shifting light of the moon he looked as pale as a sheet. "Maybe I should tell you..."

"Don't say anything," Duyen broke in, shaking her head vigorously. She wanted to spare him

the awkwardness. This was no first love for both parties.

The major, however, went on: "We are not young any longer, and there is public opinion to consider, especially in your case."

Duyen came to a halt and looked up into his eyes. "Public opinion has nothing to do with us," she said. "What worries me is our children. I know a widower who remarried recently. All his four children were opposed to it. They went to see the woman and called her every name they could think of. Then, on the day of the wedding, they packed their own father off. Of course I've nothing to fear on the part of your family. But my son and daughter..."

Duyen was breathing heavily while the major remained silent. The two walked on towards an old pagoda and stood in the shadow of its curved roof.

"I asked Hoa to come with us tonight so I could introduce you to her," Duyen told the major. "But she refused. Perhaps she was aware of our relationship and did not approve of it."

The major sighed heavily. "I leave tomorrow. The situation on the border is very tense these days. Is your son still there?"

"Yes."

"Shall we walk some more?"

"No, not now. I've to go and see my mother-in-law."

"May I write to you again?" the major pleaded.

Duyen thought for a while and said, "Don't use my home address, please."

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"Did you see granny last night?" Hoa asked her mother.

"Yes. She sent you some dried carambola for your soup. She knows you liked sour soup."

"What did she talk to you about?"

"She asked about progress of the search for your father's remains and about preparations for his death anniversary."

Duyen was not pleased with her daughter's curiosity and could not

olerate the fact that Hoa had lied to her in order to avoid accompanying her to the concert.

"So you lied to me, didn't you?"

"No, I didn't. I was about to go to granny's when I was held up by an urgent matter?"

"What matter?"

"A friend of mine, Thuy, has dropped out of school," Hoa paused for effect before continuing: "Her father died during the liberation of Buon Ma Thuot and her mother remarried. She has no heart for studies any more."

Duyen caught her breath. Her eyes were burning and she felt feverish. Why did Hoa tell her that story? Did she make it up just to sound her out? If the story was true how could her eyes be so cold and deliberate to the point of cruelty? Duyen brought to mind the look of her mother-in-law. It had also been cold and cruel. Sobbing, the old woman lamented her son, repeating the same things Duyen had heard over and over again — his happy childhood, his intelligence, his courage in the army, his quick promotions in ranks, his many decorations, and so on. In conclusion she blamed him for leaving her with two fatherless grandchildren.

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Long were the days when Duyen had to wrestle with her personal problem. The major wrote to her every week, telling her of his love. He spoke with reason. No, he would not impose his sightless mother and his ailing child on her. They would be taken care of by him and his brothers and sisters. But he insisted that he needed her as much as she needed him, not only now but in their old age as well.

In her letters, which she never sent, Duyen always began by refusing his love. Then she would speak of her wish for marital bliss, only to end up in a tangle. Duyen burned all her letters. What a pity. How she wanted to enjoy life to the full, with so many years still ahead of her. Yet there was the realization that hers was not an isolated case considering all the sacrifices exacted by the thirty years of war. Moreover, there was the love of her children for her and her duties towards

them. She loved them with all her heart, and they did not want to share her with anyone. Love cannot be shared, and happiness, once lost, can never be regained. How sad that made her. "You cannot acquire peace of mind without losing something," Duyen consoled herself and tried not to think about the major anymore.

The major, who never received a reply to any of his letters, became less assiduous in writing.

Hoa was now preparing for her graduation examinations and Duyen spent much time helping her. Mother and daughter were brought somewhat closer to each other, but there remained a delicate gap between them. Meanwhile Hoa paid frequent visits to her grandmother, and the two seemed to have formed a secret alliance of some sort.

"What if we asked Granny to come and live with us?" Hoa suggested one day.

Duyen was completely taken aback, and her face stung sharply. "So they want to keep watch over me now," she thought bitterly. "I've asked her again and again," Duyen said, trying to keep her voice even. "But she would hear nothing of it. The reason she gave was that she was used to the neighbourhood."

"I cannot let her live all by herself, old as she is. The sight of her cooking her meal in a tiny pot moved me to tears."

Duyen realized she had misunderstood her daughter. "I assured her that her presence here would make our home warmer while we would be at hand to help her," she said, looking at Hoa with gentleness.

"Yesterday I also learned from Granny that when Grandad died she was only twenty-eight and that she brought up Uncle Dam, Aunt Loc and Aunt Lan all by herself. She is seventy-eight now. To think of those fifty long years of widowhood breaks my heart, mother."

"One can get used to everything," Duyen said just to keep the conversation rolling, but the truth of the statement seemed like bile to her.

"Nam Cao's right, one can be unhappy without realizing it," Hoa philosophised.

"Nam Cao who?"

"A pre-revolution writer. He said..."

"Well, that's before the revolution. What I meant was that one could adapt to almost any circumstances."

Duyen, in fact, was adapting to her own circumstances with time as arbiter.

The school year was drawing to a close and Duyen devoted herself to her daughter. They rarely had time to discuss other things than examinations. Only twice did they inadvertently tread on dangerous ground. The first time was when Hoa told her mother she had received a letter from Thuan at the border. The young man spoke about the fight against Chinese intruders and about his making friends with a major who said he knew his mother and whom Thuan liked very much. Another day Hoa referred to the friend who had dropped out from school. On both occasions Duyen steered clear of the delicate subjects, not wishing to break the truce between her and her daughter.

Hoa passed both the graduation and university entrance exams. She had no mind for anything else but the new life awaiting her, while Duyen, all her energy spent, was now faced with a vast void.

One late autumn afternoon a mellow sun in the sky, Hoa was arranging her books for opening day when Duyen returned from the hospital.

"We must celebrate, mother," the girl announced. "Two of my old friends are going to the university with me. They're Hien, the head of my old class whom you know, and Thuy."

"Thuy? Is she the girl who dropped out?"

"The same. We succeeded in persuading her to resume her studies."

Duyen gave a sigh. Her forehead was damp with perspiration. She wanted to ask about Thuy's mother but dared not.

Hoa turned on the electric fan, poured her mother a glass of water, and returned to her part of the room, humming softly. She got an "ao dai" from her case and put it on.

"Mother," she called, emerging from behind the bamboo blind.

"Good gracious," Duyen exclaimed. "You startled me"

Duyen set the glass down on the table. Hoa giggled and sat beside her.

"You know what Granny say yesterday? She asked if I would go and live with her if you should marry again"

Duyen had a sudden spell of dizziness. The room, the wardrobe and the bookcase were turning around. She clutched at the table for support and, instead of asking her daughter's opinion, she only managed to say: "What made Granny say so?"

"I don't know," Hoa replied holding her head in her hands. Then she ran her fingers through her hair and continued in a choked voice: "I don't know what you'd think, either. But I told Granny I'd stay with you. Mother, you don't have to keep things from me. There was a letter from the major to you, enclosed in Thuan's last letter... You must forgive me, mother."

Duyen sat stock still. Tears were streaming down her face. She could weep openly now. Her daughter had come of age.

Feb. 7, 1981

MA VAN KHANG

Just Published:

THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

Its History and Present Problems

The author, Vo Dong Giang, Vietnamese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, recounts the history of the Movement and analyses past trials and successes as well as the problems presently confronting it.

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PEACE AND STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

What is at the root of the explosive situation in Southeast Asia? Which is the way that will lead to peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in the area?

Published by VIETNAM COURIER, in English and French

Distributed by: XUNHASABA 32 Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi

CHRONOLOGY

(16 September — 15 October)

September

17. A spokesman for the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement refuting US Secretary of State Alexander Haig's allegation, made on 13 September in West Berlin, that Vietnam has used Soviet-supplied toxic chemicals in Laos and Kampuchea.

— The Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education organises a conference to review scientific research over the past years and work out measures to implement the resolution of the Party Political Bureau concerning the policy on science and technology. The conference was held in Hanoi from 14 to 17 September.

18. The 16th Conference on Archaeology opens in Hanoi.

19. The Ministry of Health opens the 12th National Conference on Pharmaceutics in Ho Chi Minh City. 120 scientific reports are presented at the conference.

24. A scientific conference to celebrate the 20th anniversary of scientific co-operation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union is held by the Vietnam Institute of Sciences and the Vietnam Committee for Social Sciences. In the coming five-year plan, these two bodies together with the Soviet Academy of Sciences will carry out a programme of co-operation comprising 73 research works on almost all important aspects of natural and social sciences.

25. Opening of a children's writing and painting competition named "We love our native fields". It is organized by representatives of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Hanoi and the Vietnam Committee for World Food Day, the Central Council in charge of the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers Organization, the Vietnam Committee for Children and Teenagers, and the *Thiếu Niên Tiền Phong* (Vanguard Pioneers) journal. The competition will close on 16 October 1981.

— 81 monographs on economic developments and national defence were reported at the 2nd conference on marine science held in Nha Trang (Phu Khanh province) by the Vietnam Institute of Sciences.

26. A seminar on "the role of Southeast Asian trade unions in national development" was held in Hanoi by the Liaison Office in Asia of the World Federation of Trade Unions from 21 to 25 September.

27. On the occasion of the International Year of the Disabled, the Vietnamese Ministry of Health organises the 2nd conference on mental illness in Hanoi. A National Coordinating Committee for the Protection of Mental Health has been set up.

28. On 28 September 1981, with the consent of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Phoune Sipaseuth, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, presented to the 36th session of the UN General Assembly a document entitled "Principles governing the peaceful co-existence between the two groups of countries — Indochina and ASEAN — for peace, stability, friendship and co-operation in Southeast Asia".

30. The Commission for Investigation of the Chinese Expansionists' and Hegemonists' War Crimes issues a communiqué stating that during the past 3 months (July, August, and September) the Chinese side constantly increased its intrusions and shellings of Vietnamese territory and violations of Vietnamese airspace and territorial waters, and stepped up its psy-war and espionage activities against Vietnam.

October

2. A scientific and technological conference on the Mekong River Delta held in Ho Chi Minh City has adopted a scientific and technological programme for the next five years (1981 — 1985). The delta is an important rice-producing area.

5. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Chad decide to establish diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level.

10. The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry sends a note to its Chinese counterpart "strongly condemning China's armed provocations and espionage activities against Vietnam" in the early days of October" and resolutely demanding the Chinese authorities to end their provocations and spying activities.

12. The Ho Chi Minh City — Sofia air link is officially opened.

14. The Council of Ministers gives instruction on strengthening cadres at district and grassroots levels.

— *Vietnam News Agency* and *SPK* (Kampuchean News Agency) sign a five-year co-operation agreement.

15. A PLO delegation led by President Yasser Arafat pays an official and friendship visit to Vietnam. A joint-communiqué was issued on this occasion.



AT THE 1981
POPULAR ART
FESTIVAL
IN
HANOI



Photos NGOC QUAN
TRAN AM

AI VAN,

Winner of the Grand Prix
at the 1981 International
Light Music contest in Dresden

(GRD)



AT THE 1981
POPULAR ART
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IN
HANOI

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