

REUNIFICATION PALACE



HO CHI MINH CITY
Year 2000



Pictures of the Indochina Governor General's Palace (Norodom Palace) built by the French. Photo taken in 1973.



The Reunification Palace (former Norodom Palace) bombed on 27 Feb. 1962.

The front hall of the Palace.



SKETCH INTRODUCTION TO THE REUNIFICATION PALACE

According to historical records, on 23 Feb. 1868, Lagrandiere, a French Governor in South Vietnam, laid the first stone in a large land area in the center of Saigon city to build the Palace for the Indochina Governor General with the name of Norodom Palace.

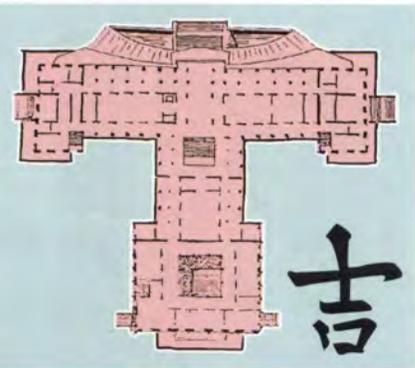
The palace was built under the Western classic style mixed up with some romantic features of the 18th century and was completed in 1870.

On 07 May 1954, the French colonialists after having suffered heavy defeat in Dien Bien Phu campaign, had to sign the Geneva Accords and withdrew from Vietnam. The US Administration looked for way to engage in order to carry out their intention to occupy Vietnam. Vietnam was temporarily divided into 02 Regions. The North was ruled by Democratic Republic of Vietnam Regime while the South by Republic of Vietnam Regime.

On 7 Sept. 1954, the Norodom Palace was handed over between the French Government representative, General Paul Ely and the Saigon Government representative, the Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem who changed the name as Independence Palace. Since then the Independence Palace became the residence of the family of President Ngo Dinh Diem and the Palace witnessed several political events. On 27 Feb. 1962 two pilots related to Saigon Army's coup d'état group, Nguyen Van Cu and Pham Phu Quoc flying AD6 war-planes had bombed and destroyed completely the left wing of the Palace and the re-construction was impossible, Ngo Dinh Diem had given order to destroy the former Palace and build a new one under the design of Architect Ngo Viet Thu, prize winner of

the Roman Grand Prix for design.

Through the buildings and structure, we may realize that the Architect has used the traditional rituals blended with modern architecture. The overall façade of the Building has been made in such a way to express "CAT" 吉 Chinese character, meaning good fortune. The Building Center has been destined to the "Room of Credentials Submission". On the summit there is a pavilion named "Tu Phuong Vo Su Lau" (Peace in all directions Building) with a Chinese character "KHAU" 口 in order to highlight education and freedom of speech. Combined with national flag pole's vertical stroke to form a Chinese character "TRUNG" 中. This means that if you want to have Democracy you must be consistent. Particularly, the Tu Phuong Vo Su Lau (Peace in all directions Building) has not been designed for the reception or common entertainment. It is arranged simply, four directions are clear. It is only used for the Head of State for meditation to give any decision on State's destiny. The horizontal stroke is formed by a roof of Lau Tu Phuong, honour balcony, the verandah leading to the front Hall form a character "TAM" 三. According to the concept, Democracy must have three "know others, know oneself, know art of fighting". That means a prosperous nation must have persons meting 3 factors composed of "others - oneself art of fighting". These three horizontal strokes are connected by a vertical stroke forming Chinese character "VUONG" 王 and there is a dot on the top of this character forming "CHU" 主 representing the power of the nation. The facade of the Palace is composed of balcony of 2nd floor and 3rd floor combined with the verandah to main entrance together with two columns covered with wood forming a Chinese character HUNG 興 meaning the nation to be prosperous for ever.



Plan of the Independence Palace and Chinese character CAT.



Chinese character TAM.

The beauty of the Palace is still presented by a flower stone curtain bearing shapes of bamboo joints surrounding 2nd floor. The stone curtain is imitated from door of Place of ancient Capital. It doesn't only increase the beauty of Palace but also has affect to receive sunlight from the East.

The Reunification Palace has a usable surface area of 20,000 m² composed of basement, ground floor, 3 main storeys, 2 mezzanines and 01 patio with 95 rooms different decoration to comply with the purpose of use of each room. Raw materials for construction works are composed of 12,000 m³ concrete, 200 m³ of precious wood, 2,000 m² glass used for doors and 4,000 lamps of all kinds. Besides the purpose to highlight the subject of works, the Architect still creates combination between works and nature in the area of surface area 12 ha.

President Ngo Dinh Diem decided to start the building of Palace on 01 July 1962. However on the inauguration day 31 October 1966, the person presiding the ceremony was Nguyen Van Thieu.

Since then, the Independence Palace becomes the leading Organ of Saigon Administration. It witnessed the military interference of foreign country causing a tragic war in Vietnam. It is a place where many policies were born against Vietnamese people by President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Anything has to happen will come. With Ho Chi Minh historic campaign, on 30 Apr. 1975, the tank of Liberation Forces bearing plate 390 hit off the main gate, tank 843 hit and inclined the auxiliary gate of Independence Palace to move backwards. At 11:30 P.M of the same day, 1st Lieutenant Bui Quang Than, Commander of tank 843 lowered the flag of 3 red stripes and raised the flag of the Liberation Front of South Vietnam. This flag has flown vividly on top of the Palace concluding 30 years of hard and heroic war of Vietnamese people, carrying out the wish of President Ho Chi Minh : People of North-South Regions have been reunited.

In November 1975 the Political Consulate Conference for reunification of country was held here. The Independence Palace became "The Reunification Hall" to be called also the Reunification Palace. The spirit and will of the Vietnamese people have a final victory which is National Independence, Democracy and country reunification.

Today the Reunification Palace becomes a place recorded for Cabinet meeting, reception of foreign Chiefs of States and it is a famous historic culture vestige dealing with domestic and foreign tourists.

THE EDITORIAL STAFF.



Chinese character CHU (maining façade of the Independence palace).



Chinese character HUNG.



Chinese character TRUNG.

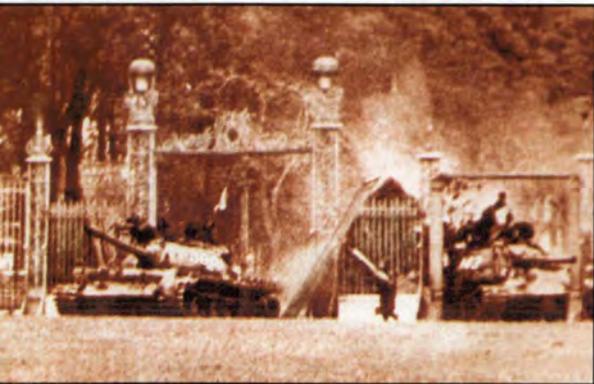


Chinese character KHAU.

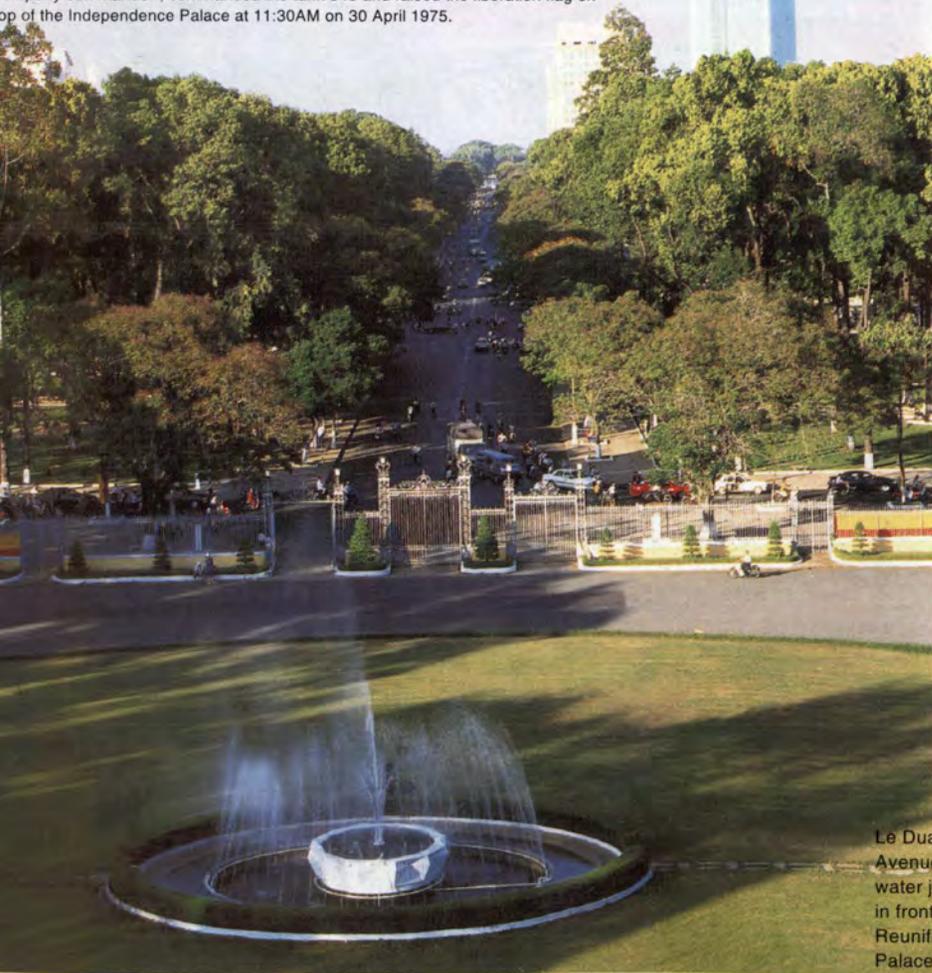


A relief painting is a masterpiece expressing form of the national traditional culture, having high value of decoration, connecting windows of top side and below side forming a block to increase beauty of the Palace.





390 and 843 are first tanks of the 203 Tank Brigade moving up to seize the Independence Palace. The tank 390 hit off the main gate, 1st Lt. Bui Quang Than, company commander, commanded the tank 843 and raised the liberation flag on top of the Independence Palace at 11:30AM on 30 April 1975.



Le Duan Avenue and water jet Tower in front of the Reunification Palace.



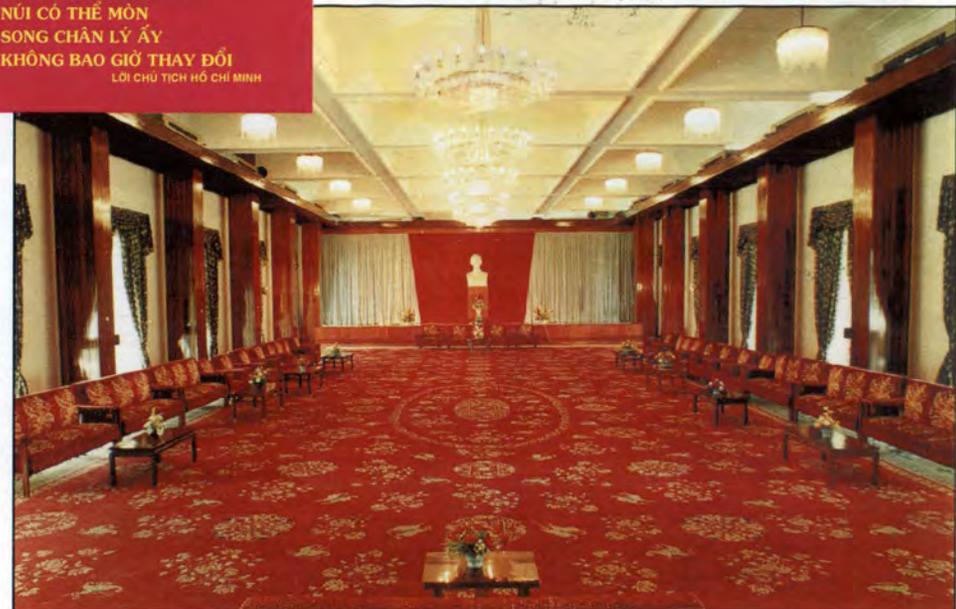
Cabinet meeting room.



Dining room.


NƯỚC VIỆT NAM LÀ MỘT
DÂN TỘC VIỆT NAM LÀ MỘT
SÔNG CÓ THỂ CẠN
NÚI CÓ THỂ MÒN
SÔNG CHÂN LÝ ẤY
KHÔNG BAO GIỜ THAY ĐỔI
LỜI CHÚ TỊCH HỒ CHÍ MINH

◀ The President Ho Chi Minh's words after 1975 are affixed in the Conference Hall.
 "The country of Vietnam is one, the people of Vietnam are unique.
 Rivers may be dry, mountains may be worn out, but that Truth should be unchanged for ever."



The Conference Hall.



The map room.



The office of the President of Republic of Vietnam.



A pair of ivory displayed at the President's international reception room.



The President's international reception room.



The President's national reception room.



The Vice-President's reception room.



Credentials presenting room.



The President Family's daily life area.

Gifts of President. ▼



Helicopter landing platform on terrace.

The fighter F5E (flown by 1st Lt. Pilot Nguyen Thanh Trung) dropped 2 bombs which hit the Independence Palace at 8:30AM on 8 Apr. 1975.



Projection and recreation room. ▲



Banquet room of President's family.

◀



Gifts of President.



Entertainment room.





Top floor is "Tu Phuong Vo Su Lau" (Peace in all directions Building)



Basement used only for military activities.

MẬT	
QUÂN-SỨ ĐỒNG-MINH TẠI VNCH	
29.6.1968	
HÒA-KỶ	541.933
. LỤC-QUÂN	363.801
. HẢI-QUÂN	33.664
. T Q L C	83.960
. KHÔNG-QUÂN	60.235
. DUYÊN-PHÒNG	443
UC	7.378
TRUNG-HÒA	31
ĐẠI-HÀN	50.355
TÂN-TÂY-LAN	523
PHI	1.825
TÂY-BAN-NHÀ	12
THÁI-LAN	2.423
TỔNG CỘNG	604.481

Secret monitor sheet of the Allies Armed Forces in Republic of Vietnam



Office of combat staff.



On duty combat office of the President.



Fixed transmitter-receiver radio station.

Temporary relax room of the President.



The spare radio station.



Basement section leading to radio station.



Adjustment office.





Preparation for the Seminar on Hino truck.



Room displaying pictures related to the Reunification Palace at ground floor.

Activities in the Reunification Palace

In 1990, the Reunification Palace was opened officially to welcome visitors coming from local places and foreign countries. Million and million of people had made their way over here to contemplate and study about the Palace history with original architecture designed by Architect Ngo Viet Thu, First Laureate Roma Prize. You shall be warmly greeted by the team of guides, from 7:30 11:30AM, and 13:00 16:00PM.

With a wide ground floor, rooms and halls, and a surrounded space of hundred thousand sqm where governmental meetings and important ceremonies have been held overhere, the Place has also made conditions for domestic and foreign units to organized seminars, receptions in different domains. The Opening and Inauguration day of a big work or high class decoration ceremony of the State, have been lit up by thousand electric lamps at night.

Overhere, everybody recognize the new life strength of a country which had strived to catch up with advanced people after its resistance war to secure independence and freedom, keeping pace with world-wide development through the name of Vietnam.

The Unification Palace has a constructional area of 4,500m² on a ground floor of 120,000 m². Besides the used yard area of 20,000 m², the Unification Palace also disposes two concrete grounds for exhibitions with an area of 2,000 m² guest house area of 45 rooms, 1 reserve generator with an output of 700 KVA, and various service items such as, the tennis court, the Highland house on stilts, in minitature, park of trees and flowers, canteen, shop of souvenirs, artistic painting room.

THE EDITORIAL STAFF



The Highlands culture house in minitature.



Examination for Laureate of Doctors Luong The Vinh's Prize.



Shop of souvenirs at 3' floor.



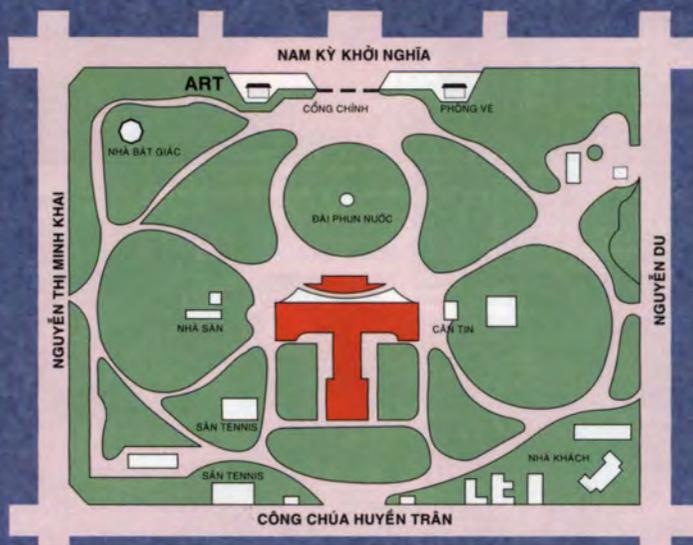
Overview of the Reunification Palace seen from above.



Comfortable guest house located in the Palace area.



Octagonal pavilion on the hill.



Scheme of the whole ground floor of the Reunification Palace.