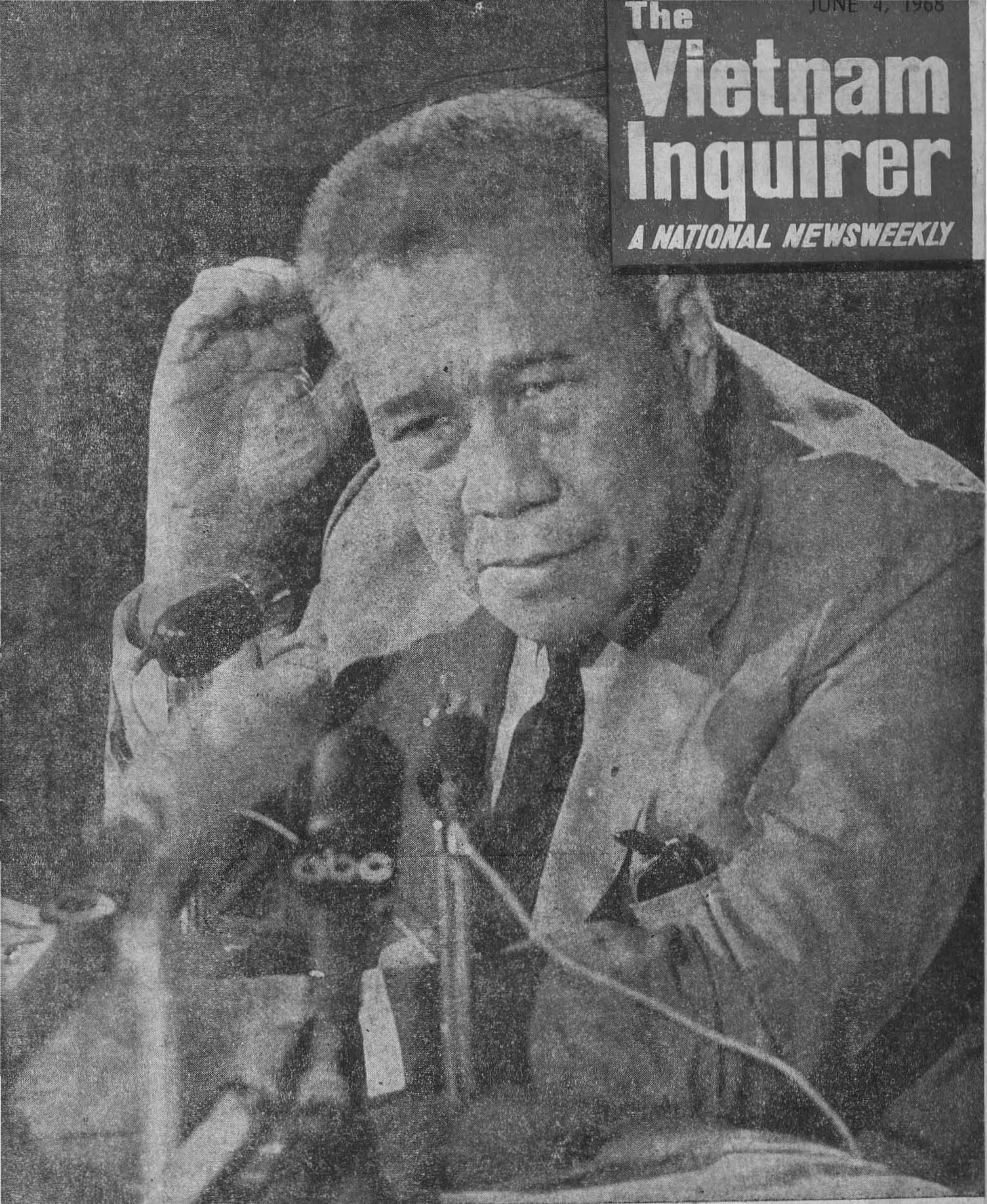


JUNE 4, 1968

The  
**Vietnam  
Inquirer**  
*A NATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY*



No. 7

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### US PRESENCE AND VN MORALS

Trang Huyen Lan's article, «US Presence & VN Morals» (*The Vietnam Inquirer* April 16, 1968) provides a basis from which a more intense examination ought to be made. He mentions the irreparable damage caused to our prestige by irresponsible and pleasure pursuing Americans. Fairly, he also includes the connivance of the Vietnamese fairer sex. Clearly, his points are well made and we'll take. Still, I believe it is possible to focus more clearly on the root factors behind the pernicious aspects of the American presence.

One must remember, that to some extent, Americans are the prisoners of their own system. After all, half a million soldiers did not volunteer to come to a strange land ten thousand miles from home. Products of a highly technological, urbanized and mass educated society, most young American G.I.'s have not acquired the ability to adjust, in order to meet the needs of a rapidly changing social order in the United States or anywhere else. They are still reacting in Vietnam to the overriding power of centralization and establishment methods of American society.

The American Government set out on the Vietnam war adventure filled with commitment but no genuine reasons. In the absence of adequate reasons, they plug in military technology, policy statements, and morale builders. Obviously, these clumsy tactics are unable to generate a sense of sacrifice and commitment. Forced to man the systems developed war, which speaks of body counts, kill ratios, search and destroy missions, hunter-killer methods — all incidental to the value of human life — the G.I. is never the less, prevailed upon to act responsibly; to conduct himself with decency and respect.

In addition, there is no doubt Americans are made to feel superior to the Vietnamese. There is a tendency to regard the underdeveloped

people as not quite persons and try to shape them up by generous assistance in their own style.

When after long and arduous effort nobody gets anywhere, they tend to become embittered. The Vietnamese then become the «gooks» and just another extension of what the transplanted soldier was unable to cope with at home: anomie, alienation, riot, pollution, congestion, urban blight, «great societies» and empty institutions.

Is it any wonder there is civil disobedience, draft card burning, sit-ins and in Vietnam, under the pressure of war and violence, a complete abandonment of restraint and control?

GERALD BEN WOLF  
Long Xuyen, Vietnam

### VC SHELLINGS

The series of wanton bombardments of Saigon by the Communists in celebration of the 78th birthday anniversary of their leader, Ho Chi Minh, cannot but arouse the indignation of everyone. The picture of a Vietnamese mother wrapping the charred body of her child after her house burned under Viet Cong rocket fire in Khanh Hoi, which was published by a Saigon daily newspaper last week, should make Uncle Ho particularly happy. He certainly will go down in history as a master of terror tactics perhaps equalled only by Hitler and his blood thirsty SS.

The Communist mortar and rocket attacks on Saigon and other cities were perpetrated for one very obvious purpose: create hysteria among the city population, calculated to destroy the will to fight and thus pave the way for widespread demoralization of the entire country.

But such terrorist attacks, in my opinion, will only harden our determination to hasten the time when we can lead our lives in freedom and prosperity. I am sure many of our fellow countrymen believe as I do that the rockets and shells that landed in the heart of Saigon were

VOL 1, NO 7 — JUNE 4 1968

# The Vietnam Inquirer

A NATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY

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53-55, Cao Thang Saigon  
Vietnam — Tel 92401

Editorial manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor. They should be typed or legibly written in long-hand. All manuscripts will be given careful consideration but the Editors cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage. Only manuscripts accompanied by self-addressed envelopes with sufficient postage will be returned.

Signed articles published do not necessarily reflect the view of the Vietnam Inquirer editorial board.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

VN\$ 40 per copy. In Saigon-Gia-Dinh area (home delivery) : VN\$ 800 six months. VN\$ 1,600 one year. In the provinces : VN\$ 900 six months. VN\$ 1,800 one year. In the United States : Sea mail US\$ 8 six months, US\$ 14 one year; Air mail US\$ 20 six months, US\$ 39 one year in Europe : Sea mail US\$ 8 six months; US\$ 14 one year; Air mail US\$ 17 six months, US\$ 33 one year. In Asia : Sea mail US\$ 8 six months, US\$ 14 one year; Air mail US\$ 11 six months US\$ 21 one year. Subscriptions are payable in advance.

Change of address : One week notice essential to assure delivery.

Published weekly by The Vietnam Inquirer Publishing Company. Printed in Vietnam by the Tran Huu Trieu Printing House 53-55 Cao Thang Street Saigon, Vietnam — Tel 92401

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the very indications that the enemy is now hopeless in gaining a military victory were desperately trying to exert pressure on the Paris talks.

As a girl student, I can't do much else than to pray that Mr. Harriman and the U.S. delegation will be able to keep a firm stand throughout the talks so that any peace accord, however "honorable" it may turn out to be, shall not constitute an act of betrayal vis-a-vis the thousands of Americans and Vietnamese, who have died for the freedom of this country,

Miss VU THI LIEN  
Saigon, Vietnam

#### MORE NEWS

You called yourself a newsweekly but as I see it the range of news events your publication has been covering still is not wide enough to embrace all fields of the nation's activity. Apart from political and military news, of which your staff has turned out a remarkable coverage, there remains much to be reported each week about what happens on the country's economic, cultural and social fronts.

I know your means are limited and the commendable efforts you have been making to put out an informative magazine. But I hope that it would not be asking too much if I suggested that you devote a few more pages each week to report, dissect and analyze topical events other than political and military developments.

I also would like to see more news pictures in your magazine. Only two of your first six issues had a pictorial center spread. Why don't you make it a regular weekly feature?

HOANG SINH  
Cholon, Vietnam

*LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,* with writer's name and address, should be sent to: THE VIETNAM INQUIRER 53-55 Cao Thang Saigon, Vietnam. To enlarge the scope of this reader's column, letters addressed to us in Vietnamese will be translated and printed if they are considered interesting enough for the general public.

## A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

New York Times correspondent Douglas Robinson dropped in on our offices last week in search of material for a story on censorship in Vietnam. He was interested in the difficulties imposed by censorship on newspapers here, particularly on English language publications. As editor of both *The Saigon Post* and *The Vietnam Inquirer*, we cited two specific examples typical of the multitude of technical and editorial difficulties against which we daily bang our head.

The first barrier that hinders all genuine efforts to put out a decent English language newspaper here under the prevailing censorship setup is the lack of adequate knowledge of English on the part of the censors. A few days ago, both Saigon English dailies, the *Post* and the *News*, carried a story released by the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) entitled "Pacification Hardly Touched By Viet Cong's May Attacks." The story, as indicated by its headline, could not have been more favorable to the national cause. The censors, however, elected to cross out the words "Hardly Touched By Viet Cong's May Attacks." They did not say why they did so, but obviously it was because to them "hardly touched" could have meant "hard hit!"

That men with such a deficient knowledge of the English language are entrusted with the task of implementing government information policy does wreck havoc on the good will of the few Vietnamese engaged in English journalism as a profession here—men who have spared no efforts through the years to raise the standard of their journals up to the required international level.

The second difficulty—less visible but more appalling—is the deadline for submitting page proofs for censorship. Both Saigon English dailies

come out on the streets at around 5:30 p.m. but editorial work must be closed at 1:00 p.m. because it usually takes hours for the censors to read through the proofs before editions are allowed to roll off the presses. Anything that occurs between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. no matter how earth-shaking, thus will never see the light of print in the evening newspapers—for instance, a major Viet Cong terrorist attack, the assassination of a VIP, a peace breakthrough, or the formation of a new cabinet. How could these newspapers defend themselves if they appear "underdeveloped" in the eyes of their international readers?

Countless words have been mouthed by our leaders on their willingness to help private enterprises in their quest for progress, but how to assist in the progress of national journalism has thus far been ignored by our successive governments. By setting up a rigid, incompetent and slow censorship machinery, the government has actually created a monstrous obstacle against the development of the press, and in particular of English publications, daily or otherwise.

It is our hope that the new cabinet of Prime Minister Huong with a former English language newspaper editor as Information Minister, will give the matter different treatment. Mr. Ton That Thien, the new Information head, was a victim of censorship himself when he was editor of *The Vietnam Guardian* which was closed by the government two years ago. Let us hope that the bitter experience will give him enough strength and wisdom to lift censorship—not partially but completely—and give back to the press of Vietnam the freedom it deserves, if not the assistance it needs.

— TRAN NHA

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# TELEGRAMS

## ■ MILITARY GOVERNOR

President Nguyen Van Thieu has just re-created the post of military governor for Saigon-Gia-dinh whose holder will be entrusted with the defense of the all important Capital Military District. So far, the task of ensuring the security of the 2,000,000 inhabitants of Saigon has been one of the responsibilities of Major General Le Nguyen Khang, the commander of the Third Corps Area who concurrently also head the Marine Corps. In the face of rising criticisms of the way Saigon is defended, especially at both Houses of Congress, General Khang has been asked to relinquish one of his three functions. Khang complied.

Since the new job has an important political overtone, sources said its holder will be made directly responsible to the Prime Minister instead of to his superiors in the military hierarchy. Major General (ret.) Pham Van Dong, who held the job during Premier Tran Van Huong's previous term as Prime Minister, it was learned, stands a good chance of staging a quiet comeback after nearly three years of retirement from the political scene. Dong, a hard-driving officer of the old school, was excluded from the junta in 1965.

## ■ SORCERER OR DIPLOMAT

NVA Colonel Tran Van Dac, alias Tam Ha, who recently rallied to the Government, last week disclosed that Hanoi's chief delegate to the Paris conference had been for many years a wandering sorcerer-charlatan, earning his living by going around the countryside dispensing medical advice to whoever might listen to him. According to Dac, whose roommate in Hanoi some years ago was one of Xuan Thuy's closest assistants, the chief of the North Vietnamese delegation earned the trust and confidence of Ho Chi Minh by working as a liaison man peregrinating throughout the land. "The sorcerer-turned-diplomat can, thus, be said to have literally many tricks up his sleeves," a Vietnamese remarked when he was told the story.

## ■ COMMUNIST THRUSTS

Vietnamese intelligence sources have been lately reporting that the Communists are presently making a triple-military effort to create the impression they are unbeatable and, thus, to convince public opinion in both America and South Vietnam that there is no point continuing an unwinnable war. With the first front located at the general area of Hue and Thua-Thien provinces, the second front around Kontum and Pleiku, and the third front in the Capital Military District, the Communist High Command is presently seeking to lure as many allied troops away from the populated areas for a main thrust at Saigon. Their efforts in the first and second corps areas can easily

be explained as they are near their base areas and can stage important operations at any time of the year. The Communist effort around Saigon, it was also said, is in direct support of their stand in Paris where the U.S. North Vietnam has entered a deadlock that may only be solved by a clear military victory for either side.

## ■ PREMIER'S VISIT

Australian Prime Minister John G. Gorton is to officially visit Vietnam in the near future after his present trip to the United States. In the course of his visit to this embattled nation, the Australian leader will seek to assess the situation as it is with a series of talks with the nation's paramount leaders. He will also visit the Australian contingent in Binh-tuy Province where his troops are doing a magnificent job routing out Communist agents at village and hamlet levels, keeping their TAOR relatively free from the Viet Cong threat.

## ■ U.S. JOURNEY

President Nguyen Van Thieu is understood to have decided to make his official visit to the United States of America sometime this month. By the time this paper reaches the reader, an advance party will have left for the U.S. to put the finishing touch to a two-week presidential tour of America that will look more like an electoral campaign than an official visit. Indeed, after a three-day stay in Washington, Thieu will spend at least one weeks crisscrossing the United States, in the words of one of his assistants, "trying to sell the Vietnamese cause to the average American."

The President will make many speeches and meet as many people as possible. Ghost writers at the Presidency have been working overtime to present the Chief Executive with dozens of speech drafts Thieu may want to read from San Francisco to San Diego.

## ■ MANPOWER INCREASE

The Regional and Popular Forces will soon include 400,000 men, it was learned last week. The dramatic increase was decided after recruitment problems for these two organizations were solved satisfactorily. Indeed, after the treacherous Viet Cong offensive marking the Tet holidays, voluntary enlistment recorded a dramatic upturn. It was learned that each of the past three months some 10,000 young men had joined the Popular Forces and a similar number of youths had become Regional Force troops. Should the trend be maintained, there will be enough manpower to boost the PF and RF strength to 4 million by the end of this year.



# THE HUONG CABINET

## NEW TIMES, NEW MORES

The nation last week had a preview of the new political mores when a large portion of the 15 million South Vietnamese saw 64-year-old Tran Van Huong, the new Prime Minister, present his newly-formed cabinet to President Nguyen Van Thieu at a glistering ceremony at Independence Palace.

Instead of the self-effacing and business-like manners of former Premier Nguyen Van Loc, TV viewers Saturday saw *ong gia*

*gan*—or, literally, the old muscled man, as Huong is popularly called—advance to the middle of the hall, glance at the audience, nod his approval, and declare his willingness to put «my name, my remaining days at the service of the country and people.»

In reciprocation, Huong demanded that he be given «the enlightened leadership of the President, the understanding of both Houses of Congress, and the warm support of the entire nation, the Civil Service

and the military organization for the policies enunciated by the President.»

Two days later, Huong took over as Premier from Attorney Nguyen Van Loc. At the difference of previous such occasions, the new Premier showered his predecessor with compliments, claiming simply that the new junctures of the nation's history demand a new government set-up. Huong even went so far in expressing his consideration for the outgoing man as to accompany him home.

**Huong Era.** The Huong Era was, thus, ushered in with exquisite politeness, reflecting the man's character, his education and his background. The week before, he had sought a meeting with Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky and secured Ky's approval although he was not constitutionally required to take such a step.

In his encounter with Ky, Huong was reported to have succeeded in allaying the Vice President's fear about a predominance of separatist elements in the new cabinet. And

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Cover Photo By Lo Vinh

true enough, when the composition of the new government was announced such leading members of the Movement for the Restoration of the South (MRS) were conspicuously absent from the list.

Huong might have learned something from his previous stint as Premier. Instead of the uncompromising attitude that brought about his overthrow in January 1965, Huong presented the nation with a well-balanced cabinet at least half the members of which are considered good if not the best ministers this nation may expect at the present moment.

The new premier also seemed to have learned another lesson of political realism. In his first address to the nation on TV, instead of making many untenable promises, Huong simply presented a four-point program that aims at the restoration of the powers of the State, a general clean-up of the administrative apparatus, the normalization of the nation's economic life, and many diplomatic moves to give South Vietnam the initiative on the peace front.

**The Man.** For all these innovations, Huong remains what he has been for the past four decades—an incorruptible and highly principled teacher whose Confucian background may constitute both his strength and weakness.

Born of poor parents in the Mekong town of Vinh-long—Huong likes to describe himself as the son of a coolie—Huong earned a scholarship through hard work and graduated from the

Hanoi Teacher's College in 1926. For two decades, he earned his life as a teacher and an inspector of primary schools in Tay-ninh.

Huong had his first taste of political powers in September 1945 when political and mass organizations in Tay-ninh province elected him Chairman of the Administrative Committee, a position similar to that of province chief he held for two months, until the French restored their puppet administration in the area.

Then followed a period of military service in the course of which Huong commanded a small group of badly armed resistant fighters who, nevertheless, gave the French many a sleepless nights in areas bordering on what are now referred to as War Zones "C" and "D". Huong, however, said "No" when he was invited by Ho Chi Minh to go to Hanoi to serve in the Communist-dominated National Assembly.

#### NO, NO, NO

**«No» Man.** As in the case of Ngo Dinh Diem, who later was to become his principal political foe, Huong's fame continued to rise not on the basis of what he had done but on the basis of what he had not done. He continuously said "No" to the French and to Bao-dai, the former Emperor, who wanted men of his caliber to enlarge the popular basis of the hopelessly unpopular administration.

When Diem became Premier in 1954, Huong again was approached to become a minister. To Diem, too, Huong said "No". But the stubborn Diem did not take that as an answer and, a few months after he completed forming his first government, Diem again invited Huong to become Government Representative for the Southern provinces. Huong, once more, declined the invitation.

Only when Diem proved himself an uncompromisingly courageous leader by openly seeking the elimination of the French in South Vietnam and by demanding the disbandment of the private armies of the Hoa-hoa and the Cao-dai sects as well as the semi-piratic Binh-xuyen organization, did Huong agree to become Mayor of Saigon-Cholon.

The friendship between the two strongwilled men, however, did not



PREMIER HUONG

last. Five months after stunning City Hall workers by coming to the office on an old and rusty bicycle, Huong resigned. He was to leave the political arena for eight years in the course of which nothing out of the ordinary happened to him except a brief five-month period spent in jail after the abortive coup d'état of November 1960.

Although having severed all ties with the Diem regime, Huong did not immediately join the opposition. He devoted, instead, his time to the Vietnamese Red Cross of which he became Secretary General in June 1956. He served in that capacity for many years, living in the meantime in a humble little house reading books and tending flowers in his spare moments.

#### OUT OF RETIREMENT

The new Prime Minister, it can be said, was somewhat forced out of retirement. After the November 1, 1963 coup which resulted in the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem and the collapse of a nine-year-old political set-up, the new leaders sought to give their administration a semblance of democracy by the creation of such assemblies as the Council of Notables.

On the insistence of friends, Huong agreed to head the Political Committee but the role of the Council of Notables being of a consultative character, Huong found his new assignment totally uninteresting as he told a friend at the time.

A few months later, after General Nguyen Khanh had to leave politics to the civilians, Huong was invited to form the Govern-



FOREIGN MINISTER THANH

# THE CALL OF DUTY

PRIME MINISTER TRAN VAN HUONG'S SPEECH AS DELIVERED  
SATURDAY 25 MAY 1968 AT INDEPENDENCE PALACE

Mr. President

Mr. Vice-President

Distinguished Guests.

At this very moment, when the nation, in my opinion, is faced with innumerable difficulties of all sorts—in the military and political realms as well as in the economic and social fields—and is about to enter a decisive stage of its history, I have made the decision to accept the President's invitation to form the new Cabinet.

By saying so, it is not my intention to explain later developments or find a ready excuse for possible failures in the coming months. The truth must be found elsewhere. What made me forget all about my long-standing aspiration to live simply the remaining days of my life by staying home, reading and gardening, is the particularly difficult situation of the land and the call of a citizen's duty at a moment when the nation is in danger.

Mr. President,

I have decided to give you a helping hand simply because the situation does not allow me to adopt another attitude. My purpose in joining your administration is crystal clear, my intention in doing so definitely irrevocable : my name, my integrity, my remaining days are the nation's. I have decided to give the country these and more—with all my heart.

Let me also tell you that, in my view, flood water has reached where we are now standing and that if all of us do not join strength to prevent it from breaking the dam, it will certainly carry away whatever may be on its way, our physical presence included.

It is with that in mind that I have the honor to present to you, Mr. President, the Cabinet I have just formed. Also with the sincere belief that if this nation were to live on or to perish and if its destiny were to be marked by happiness or sorrow, it all depends on the Honesty, Talent and Goodwill of those in responsible positions. I have made the choice of my collaborators on the basis of these factors, disregarding their political affiliation, their religious allegiance, and their geographical origin.

I know, of course, that one has to wait and see how the Cabinet performs to assess its worth. Whatever we may do, of course, depends on our will to serve but it will also depend to a large extent on your enlightened leadership, Mr. President, on the understanding of both Houses of Congress, and on the warm

support of the entire people, the military circles and the Civil Service for the various presidential policies.

As Prime Minister, I will consider myself fully responsible before the Chief Executive and the People for all the deeds of the Cabinet and for all that it may achieve. Whether this may be good or bad or may correspond to the people's aspirations or not, will depend on our ability to bring about the rule of law, by which term I mean our unreserved respect for the Constitution and the implementation of the same set of laws for each and every one of us.

That being said, I should like to introduce the members of my Cabinet :

1. Mr. Tran van Huong, Prime Minister, concurrently Minister of Revolutionary Development.

2. Dr. Phan Quang Dan, Minister of State, concurrently Minister of the «Open Arms» Department.

3. Mr. Mai Tho Truyen, Minister of State, concurrently Chairman of the Board of Censors.

4. Professor Vu Quoc Thuc, Minister of State.

5. Senator Tran Chanh Thanh, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

5. General Tran Thien Khiem, Minister of the Interior.

7. General Nguyen Van Vy, Minister of National Defense and Veteran Affairs.

8. Attorney Le Van Thu, Minister of Justice.

9. Dr. Nguyen Van Tho, Minister of Cultural, Education, and Youth Affairs.

10. Dr. Tran Lu Y, Minister of Health, Social and Relief Affairs.

11. Mr. Au Ngoc Ho, Minister of Economy.

12. Mr. Luu Van Tinh, Minister of Finance.

13. Mr. Ton That Thien, Minister of Information.

14. Engineer Truong Thai Ton, Minister of Agrarian Reform and Agriculture.

15. Engineer Luong The Sieu, Minister of Public Works and Communications and Transports.

16. Mr. Dam Si Hien, Minister of Labor.

17. Mr. Paul Nur, Minister of Montagnard

Development Affairs.

18. Mr. Huynh Van Dao, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office.

19. Colonel Hoang Van Lac, Secretary of State for Revolutionary Development.

Mr. President, Mr. Vice-President, Distinguished Guests, thank you.

ment under Chief of State Phan Khac Suu. But Buddhist opposition soon forced him to seek refuge at the residence of the British Ambassador. From then on, Huong lived as « special guest » of the Government at the sea-side resort of Vung Tau.

Once more, last year on the insistence of friends, he came out of retirement to seek the presidency of the Republic. But, except for Saigon and some provinces in South Vietnam where he came ahead of the Thieu-Ky ticket, Huong was beaten by the General Nguyen Van Thieu by a considerable margin. Without waiting for the proclamation of the official results, Huong went to Vung Tau decided « to read books and tend flowers for the rest of my life. »

Ever since his election last September, Thieu had more than once sought to enlist the support of the Huong forces, reportedly on U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker's suggestion, but Huong had continuously replied by the negative.

Only after the Viet Cong treacherous Tet attacks on the cities of South Vietnam that Huong really thought the moment had come for him to do something for the country « otherwise flood water may sweep everything on its way, our physical presence included. » He, then, said « Yes » to President Thieu after receiving the assurance that he will have full presidential backing in whatever he may attempt to do.



INTERIOR MINISTER KHIEM

#### FIRST DIFFICULTIES

**Young or Old** The first difficulties encountered by the Premier were from his own followers. After acquiescing to head the new Cabinet, Huong originally wanted the assistance of Nguyen Van Bong, Rector of the National Institute of Administration and theoretician of the radical wing of the Movement for the Restoration of the South (MRS).

Bong and such associates as Vo Long Trieu, Ly Quy Chung and Nguyen Ngoc An, however, were too radical to join a government of national union of the type agreed upon by Huong and Thieu. Not that these cub politicians had ideologically anything incompatible with Huong's stand but their great impatience with the *status quo* and their open suspicion of anything military might have made Huong's position untenable in the present set-up in which *la grande muette* (the great mute or the Armed Forces) still has a thunderous voice.

Huong dropped Bong and Co. Instead, he relied more and more heavily on Huynh Van Dao, a conscientious civil servant whose diligent and honest life has made him the favorite Director of Cabinet of all Vietnamese defense ministers. Dao will also be able to help Huong as a precious contact with the military circles whose confidence Huong has not had the time to win.

Huong's difficulties were not over, however. He tried to con-

tact such local leaders as Ha Thuc Ky, a Dai Viet leader with strong following in the Northern provinces and Ky was reported to have given his agreement to serve as Deputy Prime Minister. When a name arose in a conversation between the two men Ky immediately withdrew his name.

A few days later, reminiscing these difficulties, the Minister was to confide to reporters : « Some of those I have contacted for ministerial posts were quite difficult to deal with. Their it's-me-or-the-other - man - it - can't-be-both-of-us attitude made my task really difficult. » Added Huong : « Most difficulties were of that sort. »

**New Cabinet.** Huong, however managed to complete the formation of his cabinet only one week after Attorney Loc resigned gracefully when it became clear to him that President Thieu wanted his replacement. But for the connoisseur, the Huong Cabinet is less of a national union government than a government of good technicians whose names have not been irretrievably lost by past associations.

Observed one of the students of Vietnamese politics : « This is much better than the Loc Cabinet but it still is a long way from the notion of national union favored by all of us. »

Except for Phan Quang Dan, Mai Tho Truyen and Paul Nur, and Huong himself, who can be said to be representative of certain regional or confessional interests, the other members of the government are rather technicians than anything else. The re-emergence of Senator Tran Chanh Thanh and Journalist Ton That Thien—both of them good technicians in their own fields but more or less identified with the regime of President



INFORMATION MINISTER THIEN

## NOTICE

For technical reasons beyond our control, *The Vietnam Inquirer* could not come out last week. We sincerely apologize to our readers and advertisers.

THE VIETNAM INQUIRER

Ngo Dinh Diem—can also be considered as wrought about to facilitate a reconciliation among South Vietnamese of all political trends,

The other ministers, including Generals Tran Thien Khiem and Nguyen Van Vy, are natural candidates for the jobs they were offered. And such personalities as Vu Quoc Thuc, Le Van Thu, Au Ngoc Ho, Luu Van Tinh, Luong The Sieu would have been the first choices for their new or old assignments for any Premier-designate. (See «Document» page 10).

#### PROGRAM OF ACTION

**Four Points.** Premier Huong apparently knows the limits of his powers in the new constitutional arrangement and in the present political context of the nation. That is why instead of the expectedly long speech he would make to the nation, Huong spoke rather briefly Tuesday night to his countrymen.

He simply promised to devote his time and energy to realizing only four points of a limited program of action, indirectly telling his collaborators to feel free to act the way they deem fit in their areas of responsibility. For the average Vietnamese, however, Huong's promises to restore the powers of the State, eradicate corruption, stabilize economy, and keep the initiative on the diplomatic front represent a good beginning.

Huynh Van Trang, a sergeant usually critical of the civilians, noticed after watching Huong on TV Tuesday: «The old man sounds realistic enough. Should he be able to keep his promises, say, within a period of six months, this nation would be in a much better form to face the rapidly changing situation. »

The thirty papers of Saigon also took the same line. Even the *Chanh - dao* the official mouthpiece of the Buddhists who overthrew Huong three years ago, accorded Huong a fair treatment. The most vigorous criticism of the new government came from Ton That Dinh, a former major general now serving as a senator and the publisher of a newspaper, the *Cong-luan*.



#### MINISTER OF STATE DAN

Wrote Dinh on May 29: «The replacement of the Nguyen Van Loc cabinet by that of Tran Van Huong is aimed at the crystallization of a stronger popular following for the administration. But when its composition was announced, it became clear to each and every one of us that no progress

was realized in that direction.»

**Huong's Chances.** Huong's chances to lead the nation toward less troubled waters, of course, depend on many factors, not all of which are under his control.

The man is known for his stubbornness and incorruptibility. And if these two qualities should be enough to make a great Prime Minister, Mr. Huong undoubtedly will, however, become one of the greatest. In the context of Vietnamese politics, more should be needed to bring about the results every Vietnamese on this side of the barrier is hoping for.

Remarked Trinh Van Be, a self employed tradesman in Saigon: «Huong's chances? The first three months will be critical for the Premier—as a politician and a statesman. But if he should be allowed to outlive the first hundred days, the chances are pretty good that he may become the Premier the nation needs.»

## Vietnam Point of View

Because in the main, opinions on Vietnamese affairs in foreign publications emphasize too clearly the foreign point of view often gained through brief trips to the country and superficial contacts with the people, we maintain a «home-made» English language newsweekly conveying the Vietnamese side on what is at stake in Vietnam will go a long way toward a better understanding of this land of pain and puzzle.

If you are interested in what the average Vietnamese thinks of his government, how he reacts to Communist promises of «liberation», why he often laughs despite the scenes of death and destruction around him, where he turns to for answers as to the many barriers that hinder his quest for happiness and tranquillity—in brief, if you want more facts and views about this nation and its problems, try *The Vietnam Inquirer*, the magazine on the scene.

#### THE VIETNAM INQUIRER

A National Newsweekly  
For International Readers

53 - 55 Cao Thang, Saigon  
Tel. 92.401

# LETTER TO UNCLE HUONG

BY THUONG DUC

Dear Mr. Prime Minister :

This letter has been written to you in the hope that you will read it and consider it as reflecting to some extent the current trend of public opinion vis-a-vis your own person, the tasks that will be yours to fulfill, and the many things the common people expect you may do to steer the nation out of its present predicament.

I am sure to state a fact of popular psychology when I daresay that by merely accepting your new responsibilities, you have given the average Vietnamese a good reason to hope. That a man of your reputation and age has renounced his ambitions to lead a simple life to assume the charges of power with all that it implies of hard work and inherent worries, makes all of us wonder repeatedly whether we have done all we can for the country and demand less insistently what the country has done and will do for us.

But politics, especially Vietnamese politics, being what it is, you cannot and should not expect the people to be kinder to you than they usually are to other politicians. The contrary may and should be expected, instead, for in seeing in you a more brilliant ray of hope, they will be all the more expectant of good results and they will tend to be all the more impatient with things left undone or donea not to their liking.

This, of course, is no rason to dismiss them as immature children incapable of understanding what is good for themselves. Ngo Dinh Diem tried his best in his own way to serve his people. He was overthrown and killed. Only five years after his death has one come to begin to comprehend the necessity of some of his autocratic measures. The late President, however, was not allowed to live and see the vindication of his policies. He died, in the popular belief, an inconsolably chagrined soul.

But also like tots, the people are capable of great deeds to which they would consent without demanding anything in reciprocation. All they need is some concrete and vivid evidences of their rulers' preoccupation with their welfare and dignity although in some circumstances they may also need to be reminded of their duties the way children sometimes force their parents to. In short if you can convince them, by a clever combination of force and persuasion, of the immensity of the tasks confronting you, they will give you the time to solve them and grant you the means to do what you set out to. Of course, the people cannot be expected to tell you what they specifically look forward to. You

yourself have to tell them what they may expect of the new cabinet. Otherwise, popular expectations may go far beyond what you may give the people. In this undertaking, you have the assistance of a good ministerial team whose professional qua'ifications are as good as can be expected. Even the most pessimistic observers of the Vietnamese scene have recognized the high caliber of most new Cabinet members and conceded that should they be led properly, they may achieve something worth mentioning in the coming years. But they have never worked together and the chances of your righ thand not knowing what your left hand is doing,are very great indeed. There lies your first test as Prime Minister.

In the present political set-up of the country, where the Prime Minister is less of a policy-maker than a chief executive of the policies sketched by Congress and enunciated in detail by the President, you may find their implementation very difficult especially when you do not to'ally subscribe to them. The easiest and most natural reaction would be « to go home and attend to one's garden » but I am sure that you will resist such a temptation and do your very best to reach compromise solutions that would be satisfactory to yourself and others. There lies your second test as Prime Minister.

But the third and most important test you have to pass if you are to enter history with flying colors is to give the people, within a reasonable, period of time the guidance and leadership they usually expect from their Premier. If you should be able to lead them through the present predicament toward better days by giving them a reason to believe and an example to emulate, then half this nation's many ills will have been cured, and the road to Victory — or whatever else you may call it — opened wide and large.

In the three initial tests all of us will watch you take with growing interest, you may have an incomparable ally in the people if you should be willing to share with them some of the worries a father would with his children. This nation's mass media, however inadequate they may be as compared to those in other countries, are good enough for a Prime Minister to tell his people about his problems and the solutions he may propose to solve them.

Your God-given eloquence and your highly dramatic but natural comportment will also help if you should be willing to use them,more often than not, bring them to the humblest homes and humbly ask for help from the humblest citizens.

*Bon courage, Mr. Prime Minister !*

# TALK OF THE TOWN

BY TO GIANG

## BE QUIET, SENATORS

Not a few Vietnamese were shocked last week by a petition signed by 34 members of the Senate soon after the formation of the Tran Van Huong cabinet was officially announced. The petition strongly protested against the appointment of Senator Tran Chanh Thanh, chairman of the Senate Information and Foreign Affairs Committee as the new Foreign Minister. Its signatories claimed that Sen. Thanh as foreign minister «could not provide strong leadership particularly at this crucial time when Vietnam's destiny is being decided in Paris where we have been ineffectively represented from the view point of diplomatic personnel.»

The general feeling among a cross section of the population interviewed by the *Inquirer* was that either our Senators had been overcome with overzeal—if not with overzealousness—or they did not know what they were doing was within or beyond the call of their duty. That such a hasty and vague resolution was issued even as the larger sections of the community were greeting the new government with obvious signs of confidence and high expectations becomes all the more deplorable when one considers that its signatories include such respected figures as Senators Huynh Van Cao and Tran Van Don.

Said Ngo Manh, a university student on guard duty as member of the Student Division on the Saigon waterfront: «I really don't know what role our Senators think they are playing in the political scene of Vietnam. In attacking the appointment of Minister Tran Chanh Thanh, they have made the same mistake many politicians of Vietnam have in the past, that is to indulge in the pleasure of protesting against anything that goes against their selfish interests. I think that as senators they should have been wise enough to give the new foreign minister a chance to put out some performance before levelling any charges against him.»

Do Van Tu, a company employee commented: «The senators who signed the petition merely forgot that as chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Senator Thanh had been their leader as far as foreign relations are concerned, and it was they themselves who had put him in that position. How could they now complain that Thanh lacks experience and knowledge in the field of foreign relations?»

The sharpest blast came from Tran Van Tai, a taxi-driver: «I have been profoundly disappointed by the way our elected legislators run their business, in this and other matters. I am fed up with their petitions and bickering among themselves. In fact I regret having voted for them.»

Another student, Le Minh Tuan, volunteered: «Judging from what they have said and what they have done during the past six months, I think what most of our legislators need now is a refresher course in political science.»

Vu Ngoc Lan, a Saigon civil servant had this to say: «Legislators are supposed to be impartial in their judgements of the executive work, but our parliamentarians appear to be full of prejudices. A great deal of their words and deeds seem to have been motivated by personal or partisan considerations rather than by the national interest. The petition against Minister Thanh and the vague ground on which it was based is no exception.»

## LONG-HAIRED ARMY

With the Communists attempting their «third wave» on Saigon, people were talking again last week on what is called the Viet Cong's «long-haired army» meaning female Communist military, terrorist and civilian proselytizing cadres believed to have been infiltrated into the capital area by the VC high command.

One report said the female Red agents are operating under the personal command of Nguyen Thi Dinh, a pistol packing mama who is believed to be the «deputy commander in chief» of the Vietcong forces. Other sources said the dangerous women have three particular signs to recognize each other: they wear watches on their right wrist, dark blue outer garments with no bras underneath.

The same reports said a number of Saigon girls in dark blue *ao dai* and conspicuously without bras had been stopped by police in the streets for identity check and some of them had been taken into custody for further investigation.

This strikes one as curious since as far as bras are concerned, the tendency has always been to investigate the truth beneath those arrogant devices rather than their failing to show up. In any case, if the story was true, the Communists should have given the police of Saigon a most pleasant task amid many more arduous ones—watching the contours of women while trying to reshape the course of events.

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**STRENGTH FOR THE FUTURE**

# LABOR IN VIETNAM

In Saigon's oriental medicine shops, do the workers dispensing leeches and ginseng care anything about labor contracts or strike votes? And those Vietnamese who gather swallows' nests for making soup—do they know anything about seniority, picket lines or bread-and-butter unionism?

Their collective bargaining power may be small at the moment, but these workers do have a stake in the Republic of Vietnam's labor movement. The gatherers of birds' nests, all 60 of them, and the oriental medicine workers are among the smallest groups in the Confederation of Labor, known as CVT (Confederation Vietnamienne du Travail). Alliance with CVT gives them strength, for CVT is the largest non-governmental mass membership organization in the country—close to half a million members out of a work force of about seven million men and women.

Independent, and strong enough

to withstand pressures from both the left and the right, CVT has been headed for 19 years by Tran Quoc Buu, a man who has proved himself adept at obtaining the cooperation of such diverse types as Khmer (Cambodian-descent) countryfolk, city-wise Saigon clerks and former Hanoi industrial workers. In a nation of 17.2 million people where regional, political, religious and factional rivalry is the tradition, CVT has been successful in cutting across inbred prejudices while remaining nonpartisan. It has refused to be intimidated by Viet Cong terrorism, militant Buddhist propaganda, or the tactics of rival unions subsidized by the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem.

CVT has instituted welfare programs in a country sadly deficient in welfare facilities. It has been instrumental in keeping the materials of war as well as goods for the nation's economy flowing through the ports. It has provided distribution channels for such essential com-

modities as rice, fuel oil and fertilizer.

## STORY OF SURVIVAL

CVT's head man also is president of the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unions (BATU, the regional branch of the IFCTU). He has survived a multitude of changing governments in Saigon and a total of five years' imprisonment to weld together a federation which holds much promise for Vietnam's future. The story of Buu's survival is, in effect, the story of labor in Vietnam.

"The future of Vietnam lies with the people," says Buu. "To communicate with the people, you need some sort of organization. And there it is: CVT, the one nonpartisan group that has survived Vietnam's political crises, that has been stable in the face of Vietnam's shifting political and social scene."

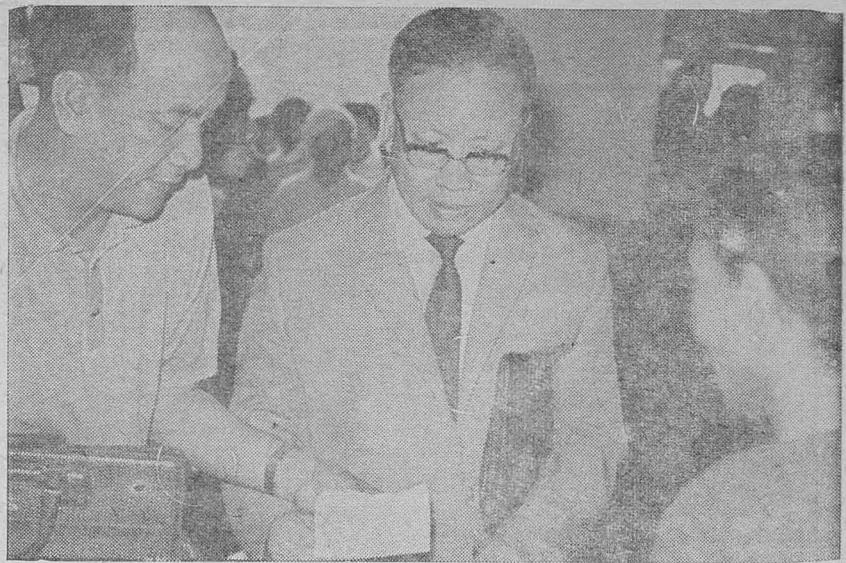
On such a bewildering scene, the relative strength of labor is remarkable. Still, most of the work

force in Vietnam remains unorganized. Some unions, like the construction workers, are small and weak. Many are not affiliated, although they work closely with CVT. Others are handicapped by enemy action.

In Vietnam, labor problems are diverse—pregnant longshoremen, for instance, or disgruntled pedicab operators. Women do much of the heavy work, not only as longshoremen, but laboring on road gangs, laying concrete foundations, building bridges, or learning to operate American-imported mechanical monsters. And pedicab operators, the "cyclo" drivers who pedal bicycles propelling cushioned chairs, are among the 21,557 members of a Federation of Transport Workers which also embraces drivers of horse-drawn wagons and pony carts as well as groups of jet-age airline employees. Yet in December 1967 the airline employees were striking for benefits as small as a daily rice allowance. And as recently as mid-1966 the Plantation Workers union measured success in terms of a daily basic wage of 57 piasters (US\$0.48). But at that time labor scored a major break from the colonial past, negotiations eliminated the word "coolie" from the Plantation Workers' contract.

Such battles with tradition must be carried on simultaneously with the battles generated by communist aggression. Most of Vietnam's males between 18 and 38 are in the military forces, or soon will be. Some 800,000 Vietnamese are under arms and 135,000 more are due to be conscripted. So the work force is continually changing. As many as one-fourth of the workers in a single plant may be called up in one three-month period, with perhaps half of them being replaced by newly arrived refugees from the countryside. And most of these newcomers must first be taught the very names of the tools they will use.

There are more jobs open than workers to fill them, but money still trickles into the worker's hands very slowly. The girl at the loom or the man on the dock are not concerned about closed shops or fringe benefits or sophisticated cost-of-living clauses; they are more in-



CVT PRESIDENT TRAN QUOC BUU (CENTER)  
*He survived a multitude of crisis*

terested in a guarantee of 100 to 120 piasters a day. And the union has difficulty in collecting even its meager two-piasters-a-month dues, especially from members in insecure areas of the country.

The Vietnamese labor scene is unusual in another respect. While farmers, fishermen and plantation workers in most countries are notoriously reluctant to organize, three of CVT's major affiliates represent such workers, because from 75 to 80 percent of the work force is engaged in extracting food and fiber products from the country's lands and waters. The largest union in South Vietnam is the 130,000-member Federation of Tenant Farmers. The Federation of Fishermen represents another 64,600, while the Federation of Plantation Workers, despite continual Viet Cong harassment, numbers 16,141.

Typical of Vietnam also are small "unions" like those embracing the owner-operators of such retail enterprises as noodle carts. Their avowed purpose is to help members deal with the police on one hand and with racketeers on the other. And there is a pattern of small, one company unions, such as those representing workers in an alcohol factory or a boat-building yard. Others band together in industry-wide unions such as those in sugar and beer plants.

#### FARM AND FACTORY

The water buffalo and the cog form CVT's symbol, stressing the two essentials of today's labor picture—not only agriculture, with its roots in the country's past, but industry, with its hope for the future. At present, however, industry is represented mostly by small groups of workers engaged in light manufacturing. There is as yet no heavy industry in Vietnam.

The largest industrial complex today is the government's naval shipyard in Saigon, which has an untapped potential that many observers believe will one day reshape the economy of Vietnam. In the words of U.S. Navy Commander Robert Rossman, planning and design adviser to the Vietnamese Navy: "The GVN Naval Shipyard is the great hope of Vietnam, industrywise. It could be a training area for home-building, for building-and-grounds work, for metalwork. But above all it offers the nucleus for auto and ship repairs, and for the whole range of heavy industry." So far, however, no way has been found to exploit fully the training potential of these facilities. The shipyard is operating at only 25 percent of capacity because of a personnel shortage. An on-the-job training program now is underway. Eventually this program might be expanded; one day thousands might be trained at the

naval yard as welders, machinists and metal-workers, and from there thousands might go out into the provinces to help bring agrarian Vietnam out of its colonial, non-industrial past.

CVT's president Buu began working to organize labor in the colonial period when the French were still in Vietnam. France in 1939 extended her labor laws to overseas territories—but the benefits went only to French nationals. Unions for Vietnamese workers were forbidden, but a few clandestine «benefit societies» emerged to help such workers in Saigon. In 1949, a Ministry of Labor was created. In that same year, French unions helped organize the first two Vietnamese unions—for workers in rice mills and on river junks. It was not until 1952—two years before French withdrawal—that unions received official approval and a Labor Code was drafted. And it was not until 1964 that the misleading word «Christian» was dropped from the union's original name, «Vietnamese Confederation of Christian Labor.»

Buu, a 53-year-old Buddhist and a former teacher, likes to say that he is guided by the principles of Jesus Christ and of Mohandas K. Gandhi though he stresses his organization's freedom from any religious affiliation. Visitors to his office cannot

ignore two prominent paintings on his walls; one of the Indian, Mahatma, and one of a burdened worker next to the figure of Christ, similarly burdened with the Cross of Calvary.

#### NEUTRALITY WANING

There are signs that the neutrality that has accompanied labor's independence of religious, political and regional factions may be undergoing a change. At the time of nationwide elections in 1967, CVT nullified its constitutional prohibition against political activity. Unions urged their memberships to vote. A CVT slate of Senatorial candidates was put up, but it was disqualified by the Constituent Assembly. Buu, with the wisdom that has enabled him to outlive many governments, refused to be drawn into comment on that action.

The Federation of Tenant Farmers provides an example of the tenacity of Vietnamese labor in the face of political and social upheaval. The union launched a movement in 1952 that eventually was instrumental in lowering land rents from 60 percent to 25 percent of yield. It helped bring about improvements in the land tenure system, and it helped to limit landlord exploitation of tenant farmers. But its campaign induced President Diem's government to stop granting licenses to new provincial unions of the Tenant Far-

mers. Government pressure forced many farmers to join the newly organized, Diem-sponsored Farmers Association. By the end of 1963, membership in the Federation of Tenant Farmers had fallen from its 1957 peak of 330,000 to a mere 40,000. But three years after Diem's downfall membership rose to 80,000 and in less than five years it has climbed to 130,000.

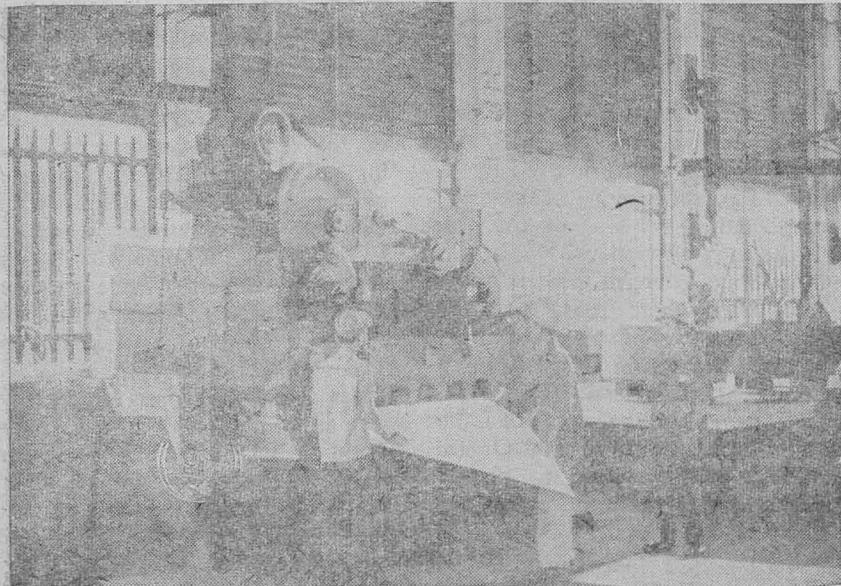
Much of this gain was scored in 1967 when the Tenant Farmers attracted many new members of a CVT program to get fertilizer to farmers at the lowest possible price. During the 1967 crop year CVT sold 55,000 tons of fertilizer to farmers in every region of Vietnam farmers previously victimized by fertilizer black-marketing and price fixing. Although the farmers were not required to join CVT to buy its fertilizer, thousands of them did become members as a result of the contacts they made with representatives of the Tenant Farmers union.

The Plantation Workers union also has displayed tenacity in overcoming periodic social changes. Organized in 1954, the transition period between French and Vietnamese rule, the union lost membership in 1956 and 1957 because of the suppressive tactics of various armed forces, but enjoyed a period revival from 1958 to 1960. Then war's insecurities caused another decline in its membership. Nevertheless, the union retained sufficient strength to write a good contract in 1966, the year the word «coolie» was eliminated.

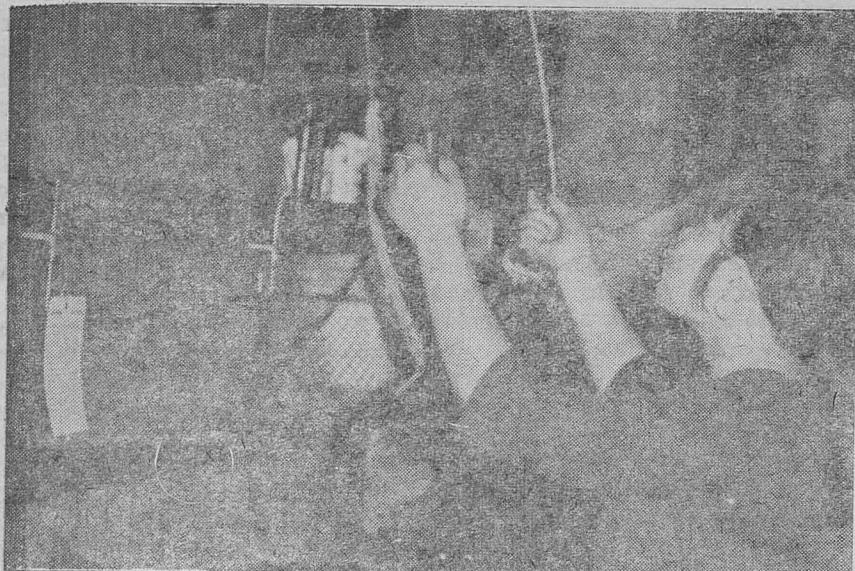
The Fishermen, organized five years ago with an initial membership of 40,000 also suffered a decline because of security problems, particularly in the dark days of the war in 1964 and early 1965. But with increasing security following the U.S. commitment of fighting troops, coupled with a CVT campaign of assistance to the Union, the Fishermen grew to a membership currently nearing 65,000.

#### UNION OPPOSITION

CVT unions from their inception have been vigorously anti-communist and have done much to maintain what social stability has persisted through decades of



STEEL FABRICATION SHOP AT SAIGON NAVAL SHIPYARD  
*The Nucleus of Vietnam's Heavy Industry*



## A TEXTILE WORKER AT WORK

*Small but important gains*

unrest. Yet even today, while most officials of the central government recognize that CVT is a force for unity and strength in a society moving towards democracy vestiges of colonial anti-unionism still persist in some quarters. Provincial police, for instance, arrested a woman organizer of the Textile Plant union at the Nam Hoa plant in Gia Dinh and ordered a blockade of food supplies to starve out sympathy strikers. But the then Prime Minister (now Vice President) Nguyen Cao Ky stepped into the picture, ended the blockade; released the union organizer and suspended the erring police chief.

Such incidents remind Saigon's labor leaders of the unhappy past. Under the Diem regime, for instance, many unions besides the Tenant Farmers suffered government harassment or were declared illegal. Of the Diem-sponsored unions—many obviously formed to destroy the vocal CVT groups—the majority did not survive the fall of Diem's regime. A number still exist in name, but few if any can show the political and social accomplishments of CVT.

CVT remains vigilant in its efforts to curb overzealousness on the part of government personnel involved in labor disputes. In its 1968 Labor Day statement (May 1), CVT pointed out that Articles 16 and 29

of the Republic's Constitution guarantee the worker's right to strike and cautioned against the tendency to detain union organizers or members whenever a dispute arises with an employer.

Instances of discrimination continue to arise, but organized labor no longer can be shunted aside. In recent cases in which management has ignored grievance procedures, the government's own Ministry of Labor has stepped in to mediate. And labor's political power is growing. Dr. Phan Quang Dan, prominent political leader (now Minister in charge of the Chieu Hoi Program) told a New York press conference on May 1 (1968) that CVT now is «being courted by political figures» because of the democratic voting system that took root in the 1967 elections. CVT, he said, is gaining strength, particularly in rural areas where it is organizing associations of farmers. And he credited a training program instituted by U.S. officials of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) with helping to provide Vietnam with more and better qualified labor leaders.

CVT's Buu in recent years has been consulted by many government leaders, even on the appointment of labor ministers. Labor's increasingly strong voice in the

affairs of Vietnam also can be seen in the November 1966 invitation extended to labor leaders to discuss with Constituent Assembly delegates what they thought should be included in the nation's new Constitution. The labor leaders voiced ideas on national needs ranging from a Supreme Court to a social security system.

Many labor leaders have been outspoken in their criticism of communist suppression of labor organizations and of the neglect of workers' welfare in North Vietnam. In a pamphlet published in 1966 (*The Vietnamese Confederation of Labor Speaks to the Free World*), CVT leaders attacked Hanoi's insistence on «free» overtime and the failure of North Vietnam's so-called unions to meet workers' social and economic needs.

President Buu and Secretary General Tran Huu Quyen of CVT vigorously denounced the February 1968 Tet offensive launched by the communists and appealed to all CVT members to close ranks behind the government. Yet illustrating labor's continuing problem of overcoming patterns of anti-unionism carried over from the past, police held Quyen in «protective custody» immediately after the Tet attacks. He was quickly released, however, when protests mounted.

In spite of their vocal anti-communism, Vietnam's labor unions are strong enough to continue functioning in many Viet Cong controlled or contested areas—but the cost in casualties suffered by union organizers is often high. To Thanh Tuyen, chairman of the Saigon-Gia Dinh CVT Council, was wounded when the VC attacked his home with grenades and bullets. A Plantation Workers member who opposed a VC payroll tax was beheaded. The president of the Phan Thiet Tenant Farmers union, his wife and four children were murdered during the Tet offensive when their village of Xom Moi was overrun by the communists and reduced to rubble.

## SOCIAL WELFARE

It is not only in resistance to communist terrorism and in resis-

tance to vestiges of colonial antiunionism that the strength of labor in Vietnam shows itself. It also is displayed in the area of social welfare.

Vietnam is a country still without a social security system, a country where most social welfare efforts follow the Confucian pattern: family members care for one another. To help meet pressing welfare needs, CTV has established a unique program financed in part by a percentage of members dues and in part by a two-piaster-a-month contribution from those enjoying benefits of the CTV welfare fund.

That fund also has been augmented by a number of unusual projects. In 1965, for instance, some provincial towns were unable to get such vital communities as rice, medicines and diesel oil because the Viet Cong had cut a number of rail lines and highways. Without oil, diesel generators could not produce the electricity needed for water supply. The CTV Fishermen's union contracted with U.S. AID to make its members' fishing junks available to haul vital cargo. Junk skippers in Da Nang entered into the first such agreement, and were soon followed by the organized fishermen of Saigon and Phan Thiet. The Fishermen's union agreed to take 10 percent of gross income earned in the cargo-carrying

project and place it in a union welfare fund. This fund provided the seed capital for the establishment of a national fishermen's credit union. Fishermen traditionally are lifetime debtors, so a credit union to them was the means of freeing themselves and their families from the village moneylender who had long dominated their lives.

The emergency cargo-carrying project also provided the funds for the union's establishment of three social welfare centers in the Phan Thiet area. There are 20 CTV centers in Vietnam now. They offer adult and primary education, help for the sick, funeral expenses, canteens, and sewing lessons, along with hamlet social service projects and branch credit union facilities in some areas.

Of the eight centers in the Saigon Gia Dinh area, one of the busiest has its headquarters in the Theravada Buddhist Temple. On land donated by Son Thai Nguyen, president of the Theravada Buddhists, in a building financed by CTV, U. S. AID, various American unions and other international groups, kindergarten classes meet daily. In the shadow of the pagoda, laborer's children of Indian, Khmer, Buddhist and Chinese ancestry study their lessons. Here the union provides Saturday afternoon clinics and a

part-time nurse whose services are available to any of the area's needy families, union and nonunion alike. Recently CTV donated two tons of rice for distribution to war refugees temporarily housed in the pagoda.

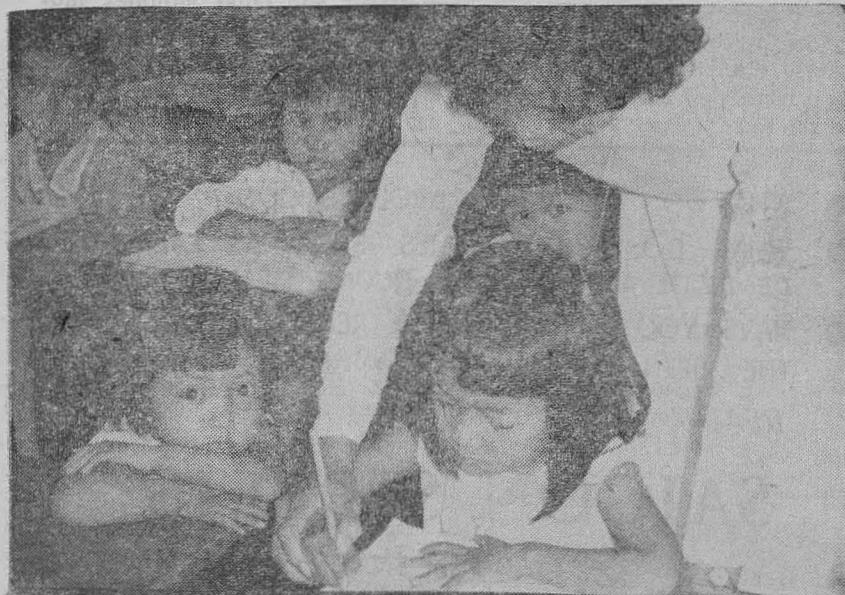
In Saigon's port area, the Khanh Hoi welfare center caters to members of the Saigon Dock Workers union. The children of many of these members lack the birth and registration documents necessary for public school enrollment, so the schooling given the youngsters at the center may be all they will ever receive. Most members are unable to forgo their 100-piaster-a-day wage that would have to be sacrificed if they were to absent themselves from the docks long enough to take their youngsters to the city's regular clinics, so the center's medical facilities are well patronized.

The social conscience of Vietnam's labor embraces more than union members. When 100 nonunion workers of the Pacific Company were injured and 20 killed in an accident at Cam Ranh Bay, the union offered compensation to the suffering families as a goodwill gesture. Throughout Vietnam, refugees are housed in CTV-owned buildings. Now CTV plans to develop communities of workers' houses in new areas, along with schools and dispensaries.

Immediately after the communists' Tet offensive, CTV demonstrated its organizational strength along with its social conscience when it moved 250 tons of rice out to areas where it was in short supply, thus helping to bring prices down to normal. With all its facilities, the government had to charge 26 piasters per kilo for rice sold at its outlets in the provinces, but CTV managed to sell its rice for 24 piasters.

#### EDUCATING WORKERS

Modest gains in educating and upgrading the skills of Vietnam's work force already have been made, notably by some American firms working in Vietnam. The recently formed EDCON (Education Consultants, Ltd.), a non-profit organization under contract to U.S. AID, provides training in



KINDERGARTEN CLASS FOR LABORER'S CHILDREN

*Combining organizational strength and social conscience*

selected skills for certain groups of workers. During its first year, EDCON's Vietnamese-American staff accepted more than 4,000 trainees. These included *Hi Chanh* — former Viet Cong who turned their backs on communism and rallied to the government side — and war refugees ; both these groups were trained for the construction trades. Also included were technical trainees ranging from air-conditioning and refrigeration to welding and generator operation.

EDCON's participation in the training program at the GVN Naval Shipyard in Saigon is another project especially important for the future development of Vietnamese industry. Foundry work, machinist skills, welding, air conditioning and refrigeration are offered, with an apprentice program instructed by H.L. McDowell.

«Such on-the-job training and upgrading,» says EDCON's director, Dr. Lawrence Davenport, «helps Vietnamese labor break loose from the old craftsman's lifetime of indentured labor and offers new dignity and strength in the industrial future.»

The American presence in VN has naturally had its effect on the local labor scene. According to a recent survey, 127,418 Vietnamese workers are directly involved with the U.S Forces or with U.S. firms, mostly in construction. About 80 percent are blue-collar workers, many of them doing essential work in the reconstruction of war-torn roads and other economic assets of the country.

Organized labor in the United States also is playing a role in the Vietnamese labor scene, in addition to the leadership training programs cited by Dr. Dan. In March 1968, a U.S. labor delegation arrived in Vietnam «to establish a relief program for war victims, and to assist CVT in operating programs developing a free and democratic labor movement, in accordance with a decision voted the December 1967 AFL-CIO convention and February 1968 Council meeting.» AFL-CIO relief fund have been distributed through CVT unions at Hue, Quang nam, Phan Thiet and eight other

areas attacked during the Tet offensive. An American labor official, Fernand Audie, meanwhile is remaining in Saigon as permanent AFL-CIO representative.

Other labor organizations throughout the world also have contributed goods and money for the relief of war refugees in Vietnam. And the National Maritime Union in the United States sent its Far Eastern regional director, James F. Paterson, from Tokyo to Vietnam with \$2,000 for reconstruction of the labor center at Hue, badly damaged in the 25-day battle for the old imperial city.

#### LABOR'S GAINS

CVT's Buu maintains that the primary purpose of labor in today's difficult times, in addition to standing firm against communist aggression and threats, is to aid war refugees, improve conditions for all workers, and build for the future of Vietnam.

Gains to date may seem small — as small as the elimination of the word «coolie» from a labor contract, or as a cost-of-living allowance totaling 29 piasters day. It may not seem like much of an advance when brickmakers gain a small adjustment in piecework wages, or when construction material workers get a free canteen, two uniforms each and time - and - a - half for night work. But these gains are important in a country where dock workers, semi-skilled laborers and factory hands average from 100 to 120 piasters a day, and

where an electrical union including skilled technicians reports members' incomes as ranging from 3,000 to 9,000 piasters a month. Each contract negotiation raises incomes a little. And many workers are enjoying the benefits of their first collective agreement — like the fish workers, now guaranteed a fair share of the catch, paid holidays, medical care and even severance pay.

In addition to bread-and-butter unionism, labor takes seriously its role as a stable and well-organized force helping to build the future Vietnam. To benefit all the people, not just union members, labor cooperates with U.S. aid mission agencies and other organizations in distributing papaya and coco-palm seedlings, poultry and pigs. CVT goes beyond its welfare-center program of primary and adult literacy education. It encourages the people to raise secondary crops, to upgrade their talents, to become literate and to learn new skills.

Nor is labor in Vietnam so obsessed with its objective of securing gains for union members that it loses sight of its ultimate goal of improving the well-being of all the people. When the Saigon port was tied up by labor troubles, it was CVT that stepped in to help settle the dispute and get essential war materials and relief supplies moving out to the provinces again.

In Tran Quoc Buu's words : « It is with labor that Vietnam's greatest strength for the future lies ».

- WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SAIGON ?
- WHAT DO STREET NAMES SUCH AS *TAN DA' DE THAM* AND *HO XUAN HUONG* MEAN TO YOU ?
- HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO REALLY UNDERSTAND THE VIETNAMESE ?

READ :

## SAIGON STREETS

BY DOAN BICH

CO-AUTHOR OF « SAIGON IN THE FLESH »,  
COMING OUT SOON

# PEOPLE & EVENTS

## WACL MEETING

The Executive Board of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) met in Saigon on May 27, 1968 and decided to hold the Second Conference of the League in the Vietnamese capital next December. Representatives of all WACL Board members attended the meeting which was presided over by WACL Chairman Ku Cheng Kang, of the Republic of China. The Republic of Vietnam was represented by Dr. Phan Huy Quat, chairman of the Vietnam Chapter.

Following are excerpts from a communique issued after the two-day meeting:

«The WACL Executive Board met at a most crucial time in the history of the world. The Board took cognizance of the increasing seriousness of the Communist menace all over the world. It was therefore, with great dismay, that the Board viewed the movements for appeasement set afoot in some sectors of the globe to secure immediate albeit temporary peace.

«The Board considers all appeasement measures contrary to the best interests of the Free World.

«Vietnam has been the coveted objective of Viet Cong offensives for total conquest and annihilation by Communist hordes from the North, but these inhuman and senseless attacks have been decisively frustrated. For its courageous defense of its freedom, the Republic of Vietnam merits our boundless admiration and support.

«The World Anti-Communist League was formally inaugurated in Taipei last fall. At that, the first conference of the WACL, the foundations for this world organization of free peoples determined to establish a new order of Freedom under Law were laid by representatives of more than 60 nations united in the cause of peace with honor and liberty with justice.

«This League is deeply aware of

the perilous situation of the world brought about by the relentless march of the Communists. We, therefore, condemn in unmistakable terms the present inhuman and reckless acts of direct and indirect aggression by the Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese and Russian Communists. We wish to underscore the mounting danger which has been generated by the increasingly daring and repeated acts of aggression of the North Korean Communists against the Republic of Korea.

«We want to point out to the people of the world the danger of a Communist take-over of the originally justified reform movement of the students in many countries and transforming it for Marxist expansionist purposes into an uprising.

«With regard to the Paris talks, we stand four-square behind the Republic of Vietnam in her uncom promising position that these negotiations must lead to the true independence and freedom of Vietnam. We assert, too, that these talks must result in the victory of democracy over Red totalitarianism in any form, and that final agreement must guarantee the faithful ful

ment of the covenants prescribing nonaggression by the Communists

«At the conclusion of the WACL Executive Board meeting, we, therefore, appeal to the Free World to take a more militantly united stand against the dark forces of Communism.

«The Republic of Vietnam is the principal party in the peace negotiations.

«We call upon the participants in the Paris negotiations to respect the just demand of the Republic of Vietnam that the so called «National Liberation Front» should never be recognized as a party to the peace talks, and that there should never be a coalition government as a possible solution to the Vietnam war.

«There is today, as never before, an urgent need for collective security for Asian nations. We urge that at the meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council in Australia next July this goal will be pursued with sincere dedication and that the United States of America will give this guarantee of Asian self-conservation its whole-hearted support.»

## ALLIED PSYOP

Shortly after the enemy's unsuccessful Tet offensive, Le Vinh Can, senior surgeon of the 1st NVA Division rallied to elements of the



PRESIDENT THIEU (L) WITH WACL'S  
KU CHENG KANG AND PHAN HUY QUAT

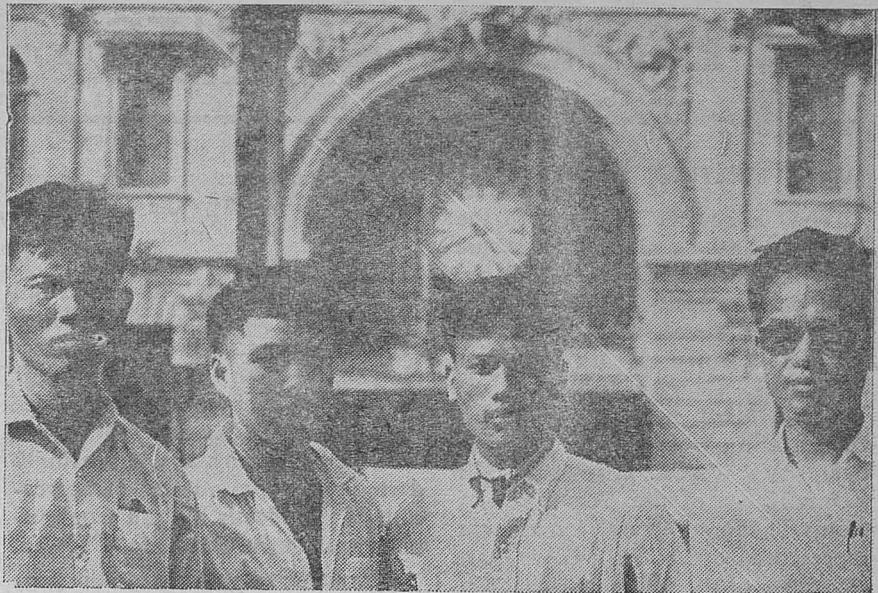
4th Infantry Division operating near Pleiku, and has found himself playing a very active role in PSYOP programs.

Dr. Can had become disenchanted with the communist cause and expressed a desire to share his views with his former comrades. The 4th Infantry Division asked the 4th Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Group to plan and produce a "quick reaction" leaflet. Early on the morning of February 11 the Group received a photo of Dr. Can and his handwritten letter to the men of the 1st NVA Division. Less than four hours later, an eight by ten inch, four page leaflet was coming off the presses at the Group's Saigon printing facility.

On March 2, Senior Captain Vu Nhu Y, a 1st NVA Division battalion commander rallied to the 4th Infantry Division. He carried a copy of Dr. Can's leaflet. To halt further defections, NVA propagandists claimed that ralliers were exploited by the Allies, then executed. The 4th PSYOP Group was requested to prepare a follow up appeal from Le Vinh Can. He readily agreed, wrote another letter to his former comrades, and was photographed at two Saigon locations. This leaflet was quickly printed and air dropped over known 1st NVA positions.

On April 21, the Group received word that two 1st NVA NCOs had rallied. Both had seen Dr. Can's leaflets, but had been told that he and Captain Y had been executed.

Le Vinh Can, Captain Vu Nhu Y and the two NCOs met in Saigon's John F. Kennedy Square on May 3. Another leaflet, picturing the reunion of the four ralliers is being prepared. Captain Capers G. Barr III, plans officer for the 4th PSYOP Group's Psychological Operations Development Center explained, "This appeal should serve to counter VC and NVA propaganda claims that ralliers are treated badly. Showing Dr. Can with two recent ralliers will definitely fix the time of this appeal, proving that he is happy and being well treated—that he has been accepted into the GVN's free society."



DR. CAN (R) AND FELLOW RALLIERS  
AT SAIGON'S KENNEDY SQUARE

#### VC MAIL BOX

Reconnaissance Intelligence Platoon (CRIP), located in Tay Ninh City, recently caused quite a stir.

The 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade force of American and Vietnamese had captured three red and blue Viet Cong flags in an action. "Everyone was interested in the flags and we valued them as fine war trophies," stated Staff Sergeant Walter Cutchfield of Langdale, Ala.

"On that same day the Americans had just finished building a mail box outside the mess hall and as a finishing touch, painted it with traditional colors—red and blue," explained 1st Lieutenant John Scherban of Winchester, Mass.

Shortly, Warrent Officer Nguyen Hong Chau, leader of the Vietnamese contingent of the CRIP and a group of his men came to Scherban's CRIP leader for the Americans, quarters and confronted the lieutenant with a complaint.

"It sounded funny to us, but it was serious business to them," said Scherban. "They wanted to know why we put a Viet Cong mail box in front of the mess hall. It took a little explaining but we finally put them at ease."

"We promised not to let an VC use our mail box," smiled Scherban.

#### HANOI'S TROOP STRENGTH IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Studying captured Communist documents and statements by defectors and prisoners of war, military analysts have compiled a year-by-year record of troop movements from North to South Vietnam.

According to data from these sources, military infiltration from the north began a decade ago, but has substantially increased since 1964. Analysts report confirmation of the entry into South Vietnam of 116,848 North Vietnamese army personnel by mid-1967 (44,300 in 1966 alone), but note that incompletely verified evidence indicates that the actual total may have been over 200,000.

Despite heavy losses, especially during their 1968 offensives, North Vietnamese armed forces now in South Vietnam are officially estimated at 85,000, most of them serving in all-North Vietnamese units.

The North Vietnamese military contingents, assigned by units and in infiltration groups, have entered South Vietnam by crossing the demilitarized zone along the 17th parallel or by passing through Laos in violation of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Conference Accords.

Identity of the North Vietnamese established by photographs and other was first-hand evidence by some 500

defecting fellow-soldiers and from information revealed by approximately 2,500 army prisoners or contained in captured Communist documents.

This documentary evidence includes official North Vietnamese army directives and the diaries of North Vietnamese officers and soldiers many of these detailing their journeys southward from points in North Vietnam. Supporting evidence has come from Viet Cong defectors.

An indication of the detailed information obtained from these sources is given in the following compilation of southward movements from late 1964 to mid-1967 by specifically identified North Vietnamese regiments:

— The 95th North Vietnamese Army Regiment, 2,000 strong, arrived in South Vietnam in December, 1964.

— Eighteen hundred members of the 32nd Regiment, 2,000 members of the 101st Regiment and 2,000 members of the 18th Regiment reached South Vietnam in the period from January to April, 1965.

— Between September and November, 1965, six more regimental units arrived in the South. Totaling 10,000, they were identified as the 2nd, 33rd, 250th, 6th, 21st and 66th Regiments.

— Another six regiments crossed South Vietnam's borders in February and March, 1966. Their total strength was 11,000 and they included regiments 18B, 24, 95B, 141, 88 and 3.

— The 812th, 90th and 803rd Regular Army Regiments, each 1,500 strong, arrived in June 1966.

— The 165th and 52nd Regiments, comprised of 2,000 and 1,600 men, respectively, followed in July.

— The 1200-man 84th North Vietnamese Artillery Regiment reached the South in August.

— North Vietnamese regiments beginning to operate in South Vietnam during the first half of 1967 included the 5th, 29th and 174th, plus Regiment No. 95C and Artillery Regiment 368B. These five units had a combined strength of 8,950 men when they began combat activities.

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# A MATTER OF REALISM

**EDITOR'S NOTE :** Attorney Tran Van Tuyen, one of the leading members of the Vietnam Nationalist Party, recently was the target of much criticism, which turned really violent when it was rumored he was approached by Premier-designate Tran Van Huong to head the all important Department of Foreign Affairs.

Whatever the real cause of the criticism, Tuyen had on many occasions given the impression of advocating coalition with the Communist National Liberation Front (NLF) of South Vietnam as the only solution conducive to an early end of the Vietnam war. In many speeches delivered both here and abroad, Tuyen had presented the main points of a solution contained in a pamphlet entitled «A Solution for the Vietnam Conflict.»

In a letter sent to all Vietnamese-language newspapers last week, Tuyen claimed he had been misunderstood and quoted out of context. The letter was written as a reply to Senator Pham Nam Sach who earlier had denounced «a group of intellectuels déracinés» (uprooted intellectuals) for colluding with a foreign power to seek a coalition with the NLF.

In consideration of the actuality of the matter, Tuyen's letter is published in toto hereunder as translated by The Vietnam Inquirer's staff member Nguyen Nam Phong :

Dear Sir :

This morning, in reading *Xay-dung* daily dated 25 May 1968, I noticed in its parliamentary report a full paragraph dealing with «an attempt at collusion between a group of intellectuals and a foreign power.» It also appears to me that mention was made of a trip by a Vietnamese politician to the U.S. where the man distributed to U.S. peace organizations and a number of presidential candidates copies of a pamphlet entitled «A Solution for the Vietnam Conflict.»

The paper also said in its report that although no name was mentioned it was universal knowledge that I was the person in question and the U.S. presidential candidate was Robert Kennedy.

I should like to tell you that far from my mind is the idea of replying to groundless charges. In the recent days, I have successfully tried to ignore a ridiculously preposterous statement allegedly made by myself and according to which North Vietnam had agreed to come to the conference table simply because of the existence of a newly created front.

I cannot keep quiet, this time however, for the charges are no longer preposterous and they can only be made by someone who, either *en connaissance de cause* or unwittingly, wants to create misunderstandings concerning my political stand. The charges are also all the more serious because they were made by a person whom I have always considered as a serious-minded man. That is the reason of my denying them in order to prevent the repetition of such charges or the re-creation of such misunderstandings.

### THE KENNEDY ROUND

In the course of my visit to the United

States, I have met with many people. There were copper miners in Salt Lake City, there were religious leaders, there were government officials, there were members of Congress. But at no time did I meet with Senator Robert Kennedy.

As a fighter, a revolutionary, and a politician, I have my own ideas on many problems. Not only do I have my own solution for the present conflict but I also have my own approaches to such problems as war and peace, democracy or totalitarianism, and many other cultural and social problems. This my stand, I have had many occasions to present to the Vietnamese public on such newspapers as *Chinh-luan*, *Hoa-binh*, and last but not least, *Quyet-tien*, especially the column entitled «Vietnam's Destiny.»

«Peaceful Solution» is nothing but the last chapter of a long article on the problem of war and peace in Vietnam as published by the *Quyet-tien* daily. In America as well as in Vietnam, I have constantly based myself on that well-known document to defend that stand of the Vietnamese nationalists — not on the problem of peace only.

### PEACE SOLUTION

I am under the impression that my critics have not read or have paid too little attention to what I have proposed. They said I want a coalition with the Communists through an accommodation with the NLF.

I have simply said that if the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is undeniably a political instrument of the Communist Party in North Vietnam it is equally undeniable that the NLF controls parts of our territory and our population and that

it does possess a military organization. These, in my view, are political realities that it would be useless to deny.

It is also my view that to take part in conversation with the NLF does not imply recognition of it. At the 1954 Geneva conference, America agreed to have its representatives sit at the same table with those of Communist China without having to recognize the Peking regime. The Communist Chinese also sat at the same table with the Nationalist Vietnamese without recognizing us. (And now) the Republic of Vietnam is willing to enter discussion with North Vietnam although we still consider the North Vietnamese as «rebels.» Let it also be said that if we should have our six allies at the conference table with us, there are no reasons why we should not let North Vietnam have its acolytes in the NLF with it.

#### PROCEDURES

For peace-restoring procedures, I should like to suggest :

1. The convening of a military conference that should be conducive to a cease-fire throughout the national territory, thus putting an end to the mutual killing most of the victims of which are harmless civilians. While the truce agreement is enforced, troops of the two warring parties should keep to areas under their control with contested areas being given to the supervision of an international agency : the International Control Commission or the United Nations.

2. The convening of a political conference to solve such political problems as peace restoration in South Vietnam, re-unification, withdrawal of foreign contingents, guarantees for international assistance agreements, etc. This conference should not limit itself to the problem of Vietnam only but may also tackle problems relating to other Indochinese or Southeast Asian states. It ensues

that the composition of such a conference should include not only parties to the present conflict but also states that may have a stake in the stability of Southeast Asia such as Japan, Thailand, Communist China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, etc.

#### PEACE RESTORATION

So far as peace restoration in South Vietnam is concerned, I am of the opinion that the principles of self-determination and national reconciliation must guide our effort. By that, I simply mean the organization of new general elections. But I am also of the opinion that such a popular consultation must be under international control and that a preparatory period of three to five years must be agreed upon for South Vietnam.

I firmly believe that with peace restored, with all of us making an effort to get ourselves organized, with a new society a-building, and with the help and assistance of our allies, we simply cannot lose to the Communists.

I have never considered my view as absolutely right. I profess complete readiness to enter discussion with any goodwilling person so as to find a way out for the nation.

In many years as a revolutionary fighter and a politician, I have been used to threats and charges of all kinds but I must say that I found such epithets as *déracinés* and such expressions as « colluding with a foreign power to seek a coalition with the NLF » much more unbearable than death sentences often pronounced against me by the Communists.

I am, of course, saddened by such developments. But I am ready to meet with you or, for that matter, anybody else for an exchange of views on problems of concern to this our nation.

Respectfully yours.

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## THE LEGENDS OF VIETNAM

BY TRANG HUYEN LAN

THE Vietnamese are the descendants of fairies and dragons, so runs the legend. No doubt the sudden appearance of the Vietnamese people some 4,000 years ago made them turn to their surroundings for any answers as to their origins. It was this wonder at their fabulous environs that over the centuries was embroidered into a tapestry of national legends dependent more on fancy than on fact.

With their history tailing off in obscurity, the early settlers of VN conceived of a creator of the universe—*Ong Troi*—who fulfills the same function as ruler and arbitrator of human affairs as Zeus does in the Greek myths. His immortal realm was located on the ninth stratum of clouds where the god bickers with his wife and lords it over his help-meets, the gods of rain, thunder, wind and water.

Facts from the dim past survive today in the fanciful form of the Vietnamese legend. There is genuine historical relevance in many a tale handed down from father to son although the hard factual kernel has become obscured with the imaginative overlay of its transmitters.

For instance, the Vietnamese Sir Lancelot—an erstwhile speechless babe by the name of *Duc Thanh Giong*—has become the subject of many a fanciful tale as the savior of his country at the hands of the hostile *An* people.

Today, on *Soc Son* Mountain stands a temple at the spot where he and his firebreathing steed took off for heaven as testimony to a national hero whom the popular imagination conceived into a god.

Philosophical concepts, too, did not escape the fanciful turn of the Vietnamese mind. The Chinese opposites of *yin* and *yang*, standing for the complementary negative and positive elements that together rule the universe, play a whimsical role in Vietnamese legends. The concepts appear in Vietnamese folklore as the homely corollaries to two kinds of cakes which besides

their original meaning of filial piety symbolize heaven and earth in the form of the round *banh giay* and the square *banh trung* delicacies. The *banh giay* cake corresponds to the male element—the positive *Duong*—while the female *banh trung* cake signifies the negative element—the *Am* which together reconcile the realities of life and death.

Much of the Chinese influence in Vietnamese legends is often more coincidental than deliberate. The impact of both these cultures made itself long after the actual legends had sprung into being.

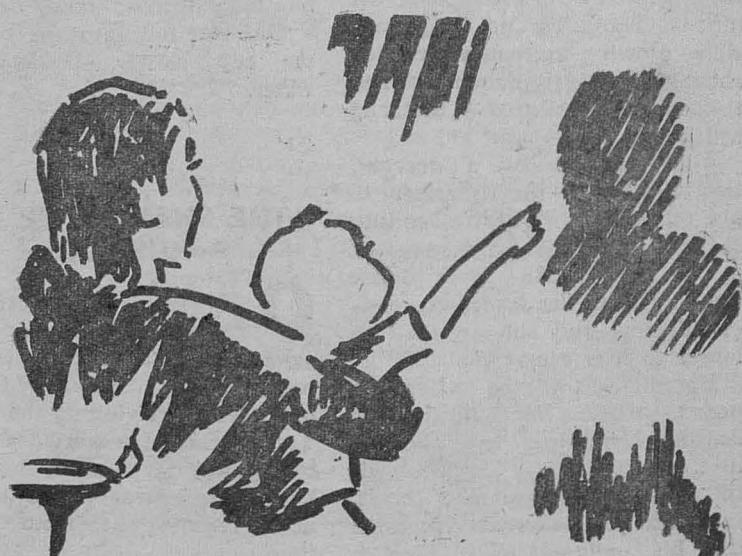
The Chinese concept of change as a cosmic condition finds its expression in Vietnamese legends that are known to have arisen long before the Chinese influence became evident in Vietnam. It is shown most dramatically in the story of *Loa Thanh* where supernatural intervention mingles with the basest and loftiest human passions to produce a final impression of man caught in the inevitable flux of life.

A marked Taoist conception of life is another pointed reference in the philosophical superstructure of the Vietnamese legend. Like the Chinese, the Vietnamese do not conceive a paradise for the

good after death. It is a place to be gained only by the select who are capable of parting with all earthly pleasures and thus can «see into the life of things with an eye made quiet by the power of harmony and the deep power of joy». Those who cannot meet such heavy demands can still find a heaven on earth and in their hearts, if they so desire.

However, the one most powerful element in the Vietnamese legend is the role played by Fate. As in the Greek myths, Fate is a capricious master who rules life with an inscrutable hand. It is not for man to question the how and why of his actions—man stoically accepts the blows and good fortunes without complaint. It is not for a mere mortal to stand up and fight the sway of such a powerful ruler—man tries to make the best of what is an indubitable fact of life.

The following legends are some of the best-known Vietnamese stories. They have been chosen to familiarize the reader with one of Vietnam's cultural heirlooms that aside from its literary value has stood for centuries as a safeguard against political and cultural invasions from outside the country's borders.



## THE CRYSTAL OF LOVE

**O**NCE upon a time there was a King who had a daughter of extraordinary beauty.

As all young girls of her position she lived in seclusion within the walls of the royal palace high in the mountains.

Much of the time, she sat at her window, reading or sewing fine embroidery. Every so often, she would look up from her work at the river below while dreaming of following it down to the plains.

Once in a while she would see a little fishing boat gliding along the calm water. The fisherman was very poor but he could often be heard singing as the tiny craft carried him down the stream past the King's palace.

The Princess was too high up to see the face of the fisherman and could only distinguish his movements with difficulty. But there was no doubt as to his voice which came clearly through the air up to her window. The voice was beautiful and the song was very sad. It is impossible to say what sentiments and what dreams the song and the voice gave birth to in the heart of the young girl. However, when suddenly one day the fisherman did not appear, the Princess missed the song and stayed by her window waiting for it till nightfall.

She waited in vain for days and soon fell ill.

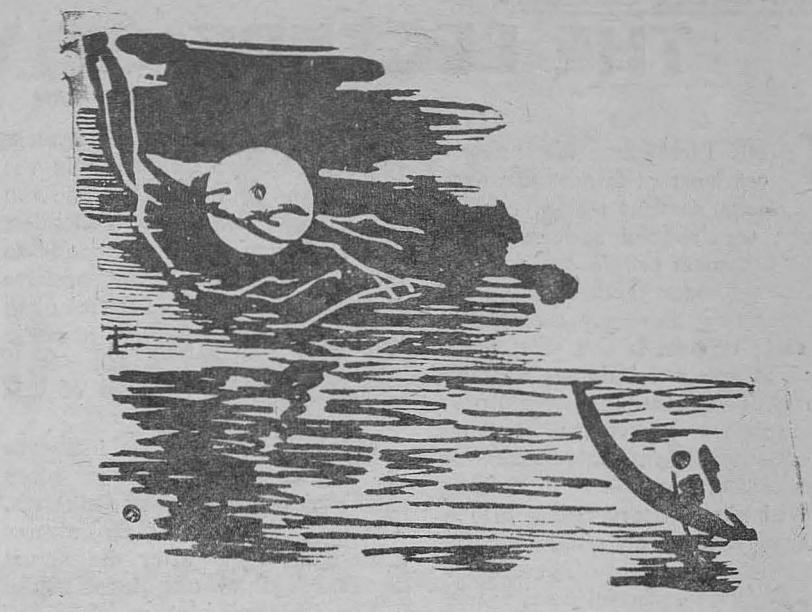
The doctors called in by the King were at a loss to explain her malady. The King and the Queen were growing extremely worried about their lovely daughter when suddenly she was cured — the song had come back.

Told of this by a servant, the King called the fisherman to his palace and had him taken into the presence of his daughter.

One glance at the ugly figure standing before her dashed her fondest dreams and she wanted no longer to hear his voice.

But this was not the end for the poor fisherman. He found himself consumed by a great and hopeless love and pined away in silence without telling anyone his secret.

Several years after the fisherman died his family dug up his body to put it at its final resting place in a



tomb. When they opened the coffin they found a magnificent crystal which they fixed to the bow of his boat.

One day a mandarin passed by and admired the precious stone. He bought it and ordered a workman to fashion a pretty teacup from it.

Each time tea was poured into the cup, the image of a fisherman in his boat appeared and moved slowly around the side of the cup. The Princess learned of this wonder and asked to see the miracle herself.

She poured a bit of tea into the cup and the image of the fisherman in his boat appeared. She remembered — and wept.

One tear fell into the cup and the cup slowly dissolved into water.



## THE SHADOW & THE HUSBAND

**O**NCE upon a time, a wife had a husband who was a soldier stationed in a frontier outpost, deep in "the country to which one goes by rowing up the waters". Transportation was hard to come by in those days and for three years he had been away with only scarce news reaching her from time to time.

One night while sewing by the

light of an oil lamp and with her baby sound asleep, a storm broke out. The wind blew out the light, thunder began to rumble, and the child woke up. He was very frightened. The mother lit the little wick dipped in oil, and showing her own shadow on the wall, she said: "Don't be afraid, my little boy, Dad is there, he is watching over you."

The child looked up and stopped crying.

The next night, before he went to bed, he asked for Dad. The mother smiled for joy, and put herself in such a way that her figure was obviously visible to the child. She told him to join hands before bowing to the shadow and to say:

"Good night, Dad".

It soon became a fixed custom and every night the ritual was repeated. Then, with the child in bed, she sat up late into the night, alone with her shadow.

Not long after that her husband came back.

She saw him and dared not look at him. She had no word or gesture to show her joy, but when he was at her side, he saw a tear sliding down her serene face.

Stealthily she washed it off, and he heard her endearing voice:

"We must offer a sacrifice to the ancestors. I go to do some shopping while you stay home with our child."

While she was gone he turned his attention to his child. But when he wanted the child to call him Dad, the child refused and said :

«No, you are not my father. I always bid good night to my father before going to bed.»

It was a fateful misunderstanding that hurt him deeply.

As soon as she came back she realized that misfortune had entered their home. Her most gentle words as much as her smallest gesture, could but exasperate her husband. He looked away without replying. He was even angry with his own silence, which he kept obstinately in spite of the temptation to speak and the hope of being mistaken.

He did not fail to kneel down before the ashes of the ancestors; but he immediately folded up the mat to prevent his wife from performing the rite after him. She kept back the humiliated tears which came to her eyes.

When she brought down the meal from the altar and served him with steaming rice he did not touch the chopsticks. The rice slowly cooled down in the bowl while she waited in silence.

Suddenly, the man stood up and left the house without a word.

For some time, she maintained a vague hope. Her grief was such that she threw herself into a river.

When her husband learned of his wife's death he was assailed by doubt and remorse.

When he came back to his home at night, he lighted the lamp which threw his shadow on the wall. To his great surprise, he saw his son join his hands and bow to the shadow.

Too late he realized his baleful error. He had an altar set up on the river bank and for three days and three nights he said prayers for the peace of the innocent soul. Afterwards there was nothing but to resign himself to the irreparable, while remaining till the end of his days faithful to the memory of his dead wife.

reign in our history, had a daughter named My Nuong. At the age of twenty, My Nuong had a rare beauty that attracted numerous young princes from different neighboring countries, but they were all refused by the King.

One day, two young man arrived at the Palace at the same time. One introduced himself as Son Tinh (God of the Mountain) and the other Thuy Tinh (God of the Water).

The king's embarrassment was great since the two suitors were equally handsome and powerful. After much thinking, he decided to grant his daughter's hand to the one who would arrive first the next day with his wedding presents.

Son Tinh the Mountain God was the first to arrive. He was weighed down with loads of jade, ivory, gold and silver works such as the King himself had never seen before. Keeping his promise, the King allowed Son Tinh to bring the Princess to his home in the Tan Vien Mountain, located in the province of Son Tay.

(North Vietnam).

When Thuy Tinh the Water God in his turn arrived, with no less precious objects, the beautiful Princess had gone. The angry Thuy Tinh swore to ravish the lovely young person from his adversary. And when a god, particularly a god of the water acts under the sting of jealousy, you know what can happen to things on earth. In his case, the elements burst out from everywhere, with whirlwinds sweeping the earth while rainfalls flooded immense areas. Amidst the fury, sea fauna suddenly turned themselves into soldiers marching against the Mountain of Son Tinh.

But the Mountain God was no less powerful. He transformed all of the highland fauna into warriors. Dreadful battles then took place to the detriment of men dwelling in the area, which is now the delta of the Red River. The number of victims of the gods were great and the damages to immense ricefields were uncalculable.

The war dragged out for weeks and there seemed to be no possible



## A CENTURIES-OLD LOVE CONFLICT

**K**ING Hung Vuong XVIII, of the first dynasty ever to

settlement since the higher Thuy Tinh raised his water, the higher Son Tinh raised his mountain. The former was finally discouraged and withdrew his forces toward the sea.

Unfortunately the grudge didn't fade from the heart of the Water God, and thus every year his floods and thunder continue to plague the people of the North Delta area.



### MILKY WAY : ROMANTIC SILVER RIVER

**W**HEN the evening is clear, looking up at the stars, you will see an immense whitish band stretching across the vault of heavens. It is the Milky Way, the Silver River inhabited on each side by a Ngau spouse because of their forcible separation by the Jade Emperor.

This is their story, sad and beautiful.

Chuc Nu, one of most beautiful daughters of the Jade Emperor, was the most clever and the most studious. Every morning she went to work with her loom on the banks of the Milky Way and till the evening her feet pushed its

pedals while her hands incessantly sent the shuttle back and forth. It was she who clothed all the *tien*, the fairies of the court, and this was why her loom never ceased to mix its steady hum with the song of the waves of the Milky Way.

Every day the shepherd Nguu Lang took the Emperor's cattle to pasture beside the river. Every day he watched the diligent Princess at her work, and never wearied of admiring the perfection of her face and the grace of her movements.

This young shepherd was a handsome man, so that Chuc Nu was not able to remain insensible to his glances for long.

It was difficult for Nguu Lang to believe in his good fortune.

When the Emperor of Jade perceived their mutual inclination, he did not thwart it but allowed them to marry, with the demand that they continue their respective trades after the wedding.

In the midst of their mutually shared delights Nguu Lang Chuc Nu forgot the Emperor's order.

The views of the skies offered the ideal setting for endless walks to the complete neglect of their former work.

Left to themselves, the herds roved about the celestial fields. The loom no longer produced its active song and cobwebs grew around it.

The Emperor of Jade showed himself as severe as he had been good. He separated the couple, and husband and wife had to resume their work, one on each side of the Milky Way. And since then they look out across the luminous path far apart, thinking of each other.

Once a year, they are allowed to meet, in the seventh month, which is thus called the Month of the Ngau or Nguu.

Each time they meet, Nguu Lang and Chuc Nu shed tears of joy; they weep again when the time comes to part. This is why rain falls so abundantly during the seventh month, the Ngau month. Also if you go to the countryside, the peasants will point out to you the disappearance of the crows. They have gone to the heavens to form the bridge which enables the couple to meet.

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