

A POCKET GUIDE TO VIET-NAM

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NAVMC 2593



ARMY UNIFORMS OF VIET-NAM

OFFICERS



CAPTAIN



GENERAL



MAJOR
TO COL.



CAP INSIGNIA



SECOND
LIEUTENANT



GENERAL
OF THE ARMY



BRIGADIER
GENERAL



MAJOR



LIEUTENANT
GENERAL



COLONEL



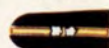
CAPTAIN



MAJOR
GENERAL



LIEUTENANT
COLONEL



LIEUTENANT



STUDENT OFFICER



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

OTHER ARMY RANKS



SERGEANT



CAP INSIGNIA



MASTER SERGEANT



CORPORAL
FIRST CLASS



SERGEANT



CORPORAL

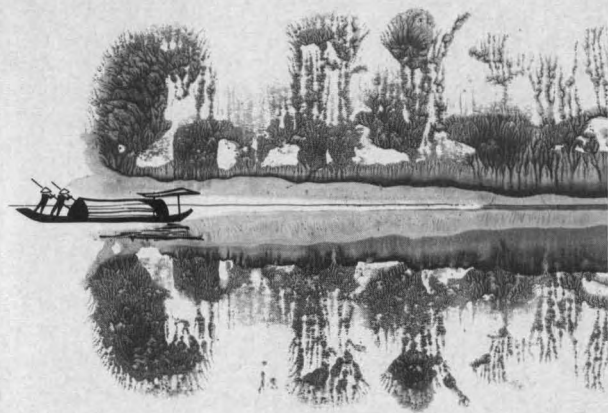


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ARMED FORCES INFORMATION AND EDUCATION • DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Việt Nam





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See fine examples of Eastern architecture in towns.

OPPORTUNITY UNLIMITED

If you are bound for Viet-Nam, it is for the deeply serious business of helping a brave nation repel Communist invasion. This is your official job and it is a vital one.

The dangers of ambush and raid will make sight-seeing impossible in some places; but, when security restrictions permit, be sure to see something of the lovely country you are visiting and get acquainted with the charming—and tough and courageous—people who call Viet-Nam home.

You will certainly have a chance to explore the colorful markets and shops of Saigon and Cho Lon. You may be able to visit the traditional capital of Hue or cool, hill-encircled Dalat. You may even get in some good swimming or deep-sea fishing from the quiet beaches of the South China Sea or a hunting trip on the high plateaus inland.

Wherever you go, remember that Viet-Nam is a land of dignity and reserve. Your good manners, thoughtfulness, and restrained behavior will be appreciated by the Vietnamese. You will benefit, as will the country you represent, in terms of friendship built on a solid foundation of mutual respect and admiration.

Viet-Nam and the Vietnamese are prepared to welcome you officially and unofficially. Meet them

halfway and you'll be glad you did. By helping the people of this proud new nation repulse the aggression of the Communist Viet Cong, you will strike a telling blow for democracy. By doing it in a spirit of friendship you will be adding greatly to the strength of the bonds that unite freedom-loving people throughout the world.

A NEW REPUBLIC

The Republic of Viet-Nam is a study in contrast:

The brown waters of the canal between Saigon and Cho Lon versus the sky-blue Perfume River as it flows past the imperial tombs in the city of Hue. Rice in the delta; coffee, tea, kenaf, and ramie on the high plateau. Water buffalo dragging plows through mud paddies on the plains; elephants toting bundles in the highlands. Fragile girls in colorful *ao dai* costumes strolling gracefully along city boulevards; loin-clothed tribesmen with ivory plugs in their earlobes trotting along forest trails. The grey threads of incense in a Buddhist temple and the red joss sticks in a jar in front of a spirit house on a lonely mountain curve. . . .

Boys drying black fishnets suspended from bamboo frames three stories high, and fishermen straining to beach their boat after a day at sea. Militiamen armed with muskets and tribesmen carrying crossbows. French pillboxes; Cham towers. Pagodas and modern

shops and stores. The new steel and concrete bridges on the Saigon-Bien Hoa Highway, and the pontooned planking across the Tra Khuc River in Quang Ngai. Pedicabs on the roads and jet-liners on the runways. Sampans decorated with painted eyes; ocean-going freighters unloading military equipment and powdered milk along the quay.

Picture the Land

When you reach South Viet-Nam, you will be in a country with a civilization that predates the birth of Christ but which, since 1954, has been a divided nation, like Korea. North of the 17th parallel and Ben Hai River lies Communist-controlled North Viet-Nam and south is the free Republic of Viet-Nam.

The Republic of Viet-Nam is somewhat less than half the size of California and long and narrow like that State. It occupies the southern-eastern section of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia, and borders the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam. Near neighbors to the west are Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. Beyond Communist Viet-Nam to the north looms the vast territory of Red China.

The southern section of the rugged Annamite mountains forms a spine down to the Mekong Delta region around Saigon. In places, mountain spurs jut out to the sea, dividing the coastal plain into sections.



Colorful river community lies close to modern city.

Sand dunes 10 to 60 feet high are common along the long coastline.

The country is narrow up near Hue—so narrow that only a 30- to 50-mile strip lies between Laos and the South China Sea. Here the coastal rice fields very quickly give way to the uncultivated foothills of the mountains. In the past, lowland Vietnamese preferred to leave the mountains to tribespeople, wild animals, and evil spirits.

Southward from Hue toward the beach resort of Nha Trang, the country widens to make room for high plateaus, 1,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level. In the southern part of the country—around the Saigon-Cho Lon area—the many mouths of the Mekong River join a dense canal network to fan out across delta plains and nourish the fertile paddies of a bountiful “rice basket.”

South Viet-Nam has a typically tropic climate of two seasons: hot and dry and hot and rainy.

In the southern delta region, the rains usually begin in late May and continue through September. April and early May are the hottest and most humid months of the year.

Along the central coast, the rainy season begins in October, causes periodic floods through December, and continues with drizzles from January to March. July and August are the months when heat and



Dramatic beauty wreaths falls in Dalat hill country.

humidity reach their peak. In pleasant contrast, the highlands are usually cool at night regardless of the season.

Like other tropical countries, Viet-Nam has the usual variety of bugs, flies, mosquitos, and other insects. It's S.O.P. to sleep under a mosquito net.

Rice in the Deltas

This is an agricultural country with a soil-and-climate combination ideal for growing rice. The South



A typical scene at rice-planting time near China Sea.

Vietnamese produce enough rice to meet their own needs and still have plenty left over for export. You will find the paddies mainly in the Mekong River Delta and lowland areas of central Viet-Nam.

Its abundant rice crop, locally-grown vegetables, and fish from the richly-stocked seas at its door make the country largely self-sustaining in food.

Topping rice as a money-making export is rubber, much of it from the red-soil belt in the south. Although war ravaged the large rubber plantations and some of this acreage has not been reclaimed, rubber is still a very important product.



More precious than gold—white grains from the deltas.



Fat bags of rice on way to market over canal system.

Lacquer from Viet-Nam has always been highly prized on the foreign market. It is used for mixing with other lacquers to improve their quality. The trees cultivated for extraction of lacquer are called *cay son*. Previously grown only in the north, the trees are being successfully experimented with in the southern highlands.

Kenaf is extensively grown, too. After India and Thailand, Viet-Nam is becoming the world's largest producer of this fiber plant used for making gunny sacks in which to store rice.

Relatively new as commercial products are palm oil from the plant formerly regarded by the Vietnamese as ornamental rather than useful, and peanuts which had been grown for home consumption but now are being exported in quantity both whole and as oil.

Tea, coffee, and quinine are grown in the high plateaus, which also produce cinnamon, timber, raw silk, vegetables, and vegetable dyes. Other Vietnamese products are corn, sugar cane, copra, tobacco, and mint oil.

The country has some cattle but more pigs and poultry. Water buffalo are used primarily as draft animals, especially in the rice paddies, and only occasionally for meat.

No scene is more typical of rural Viet-Nam than a farmer and his water buffalo at work in a rice paddy.



Water buffaloes are the indispensable work animals of the country. Thousands were killed during the long years of war but efforts are now being made to increase their numbers and improve the stock.

In the plateau and hill regions the elephant remains the primary work animal, especially in timber production. Wild elephants are sometimes hunted, as are stags, roe-bucks, wild boars, bears, wild oxen, panthers, and tigers and, in the rivers, lizards and crocodiles for their skins. Viet-Nam has the usual variety of tropical snakes, including cobras.

Mineral resources are few: a coal-bearing region near the city of Da Nang (Tourane), south of Hue; a small gold mine, and scattered deposits of molybdenum and phosphate.

Industry is steadily expanding, though its scope is limited at present. New enterprises such as weaving, fish processing, and pharmaceuticals and plastics manufacture have been added to the traditional rice milling, lumber production, and manufacture of salt, beverages, soap, matches, and cigarettes.

Picture the People

The population of the Republic of Viet-Nam is about 14 million, four-fifths of them farmers. (North Viet-Nam has an estimated 16 million people.) The majority of the people of South Viet-Nam are ethnic Vietnamese.



Age is respected and learning is honored in Viet-Nam.

There are over half a million tribespeople; about the same number of Chinese (most of whom now hold Vietnamese citizenship); just under half a million ethnic Cambodians, and a few thousand each of French, Indians, and Pakistanis.

Compared with most Asian nations, South Viet-Nam is uncrowded. But the population density varies from 19 per square mile throughout the six high plateau provinces to 43,100 people per square mile in Saigon, the capital. Saigon is the largest city, with nearly a million and a half people. Da Nang runs a distant second with about 110,000.

The Vietnamese are small and well-proportioned people, with dark, almond-shaped eyes and black hair. The slender, small-boned women move gracefully in their national dress of long trousers under a long-sleeved tunic slit from hem to waist.

Most non-laboring Vietnamese men wear Western clothing on the street, but you will see an occasional Chinese in traditional Mandarin dress. Workmen and peasants dress in loose black trousers and short black or white jackets. Often a black turban tops the male costume.

Somewhat reserved and very polite, the Vietnamese are warm and friendly with people they like, and they are very cooperative and helpful. They have great respect for virtue and knowledge and honor older

people. Many of their customs are conditioned by religious beliefs.

In the urban areas, French and English are second languages. Children study one or the other in school and increasingly English is their choice. But when you leave the cities, you may encounter even telephone operators who speak only Vietnamese.

2,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

A Dragon and a Goddess

Viet-Nam has one of the world's oldest living civilizations. It dates back to hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, with roots in Asian religions and philosophies.

Legend has it that from the union of a dragon and a goddess came the hundred venerable ancestors of all Vietnamese. Belief in their common origin united the people and gave them a symbol around which to rally in the face of foreign invasion. Until 1955, the Viet-Nam coat-of-arms displayed a dragon carrying the country on its back.

The Viets originally occupied southern and south-eastern China and the east coast of the Indo-Chinese peninsula almost as far south as Hue, the old capital of Viet-Nam. In 111 B.C., their kingdom of Nam Viet

was conquered by the Chinese who renamed it Annam ("pacified country to the south"). The Chinese controlled the country almost continuously for the next thousand years.

At times the Viets rebelled—usually unsuccessfully. A revolt led by the Trung sisters drove out the Chinese for a time and is still celebrated with an annual festival. The history of this revolt is reminiscent of Joan of Arc's story. Mounted on elephants, the two Trung sisters led 80,000 of their countrymen against the Chinese governor who had beheaded the husband of the elder sister when he asked for reform of the regime of terror. But the Chinese were vanquished only temporarily. In a few years they came back and the Trung sisters committed suicide by throwing themselves into the river.

Chinese Domination Ends

For part of the period of domination by China, the Chinese provincial governors let local feudal lords govern the people, and even collect taxes, which the Chinese then extracted from the lords. Later they began paying more attention to their subjects and introduced Chinese civilization into Vietnamese life. The Viet people were such apt pupils that by the year 950 they had developed enough strength to rid themselves of the Chinese yoke.

The Viets made another courageous stand for survival as a free nation when, in 1284, they repulsed the Mongolian hordes of Kublai Khan. In the next century they pushed southward to conquer the once-great kingdom of Champa which occupied much of what is now South Viet-Nam. They also met the Khmers (Cambodians) on the field of battle and forced them to retreat to their present boundaries.

The Kingdom of Champa

The Chams were an Indonesian people to whom a Hindu civilization had been brought from India as early as the 2nd century. They were seafarers, trading in spices, aloe wood, and ivory. Their kingdom survived for more than 1,000 years with capitals first at Indrapura, (near Da Nang) and later at Vijaya (near Qui Nhon).

Champa never recovered from its defeat by the Viets at Vijaya in 1471, and it disappeared from history during the 1700's. However, about 25,000 Chams who have never been assimilated into Vietnamese life still cluster in their own villages near Phan Rang, about midway down the coast. They follow a way of life scarcely distinguishable from that of unadvanced tribespeople in the area, and speak only their native Cham language.

As you travel along the coast of central Viet-Nam,

you can still see the decaying acorn-shaped towers of the lost Kingdom of Champa. Like the Khmer towers at Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Siamese towers at Ayutthaya in Thailand, they reflect ancient Hindu architecture and religious influences.

Viet-Nam's Golden Age

Under a dynasty founded in the 15th century by Emperor Le, Viet-Nam enjoyed a period of brilliant progress. Arts, crafts, agriculture, and commerce flourished. The code of laws developed during this time remained in effect until almost modern times.

Government service was recognized as the highest calling a man could pursue. Nine grades of civil and military positions were established and literary competitions were held to determine which one a person qualified for. The competitions and civil service examinations based on the ancient Chinese model were still conducted in the former capital of Hue as late as the early 1900's.

Emperor Le's dynasty went through periods of strength and weakness. Two powerful families, the Trinh and the Nguyen, finally reduced the Le regime to puppet status and divided the country between themselves. The Trinh controlled the northern region, and the Nguyen controlled the central and southern regions of Viet-Nam.

In 1802 the last scion of the original Nguyen family—Gia Long—managed to gain the throne and unite all Viet-Nam under a single government administration and set of laws. China granted the nation formal recognition and no longer insisted on the age-old payment of tribute by the Vietnamese. In this enlightened era, there were schools in most villages, and foreign trade was encouraged and carried on through settlements of Dutch, Portuguese, French, and Japanese merchants in several towns.

The French Take Over

Conflicts between the Viet-Nam people and French missionaries are said to have sparked the French military action that resulted in the takeover of the province of Cochinchina by the French in 1863. Before another decade had passed, the other two regions, Tonkin and Annam, also went under French rule. From that time until World War II, the country was part of French Indochina.

Although their administrative policies led to deep resentments by the Vietnamese, the French did much to advance the standards of living of the country. They built roads and railroads, canals, dikes, churches, hospitals, and scientific institutions, and sent many Vietnamese to France for advanced education. The

famous Pasteur Institutes, established in various cities to aid in public health problems, were largely instrumental in stopping the recurrent outbreaks of epidemics of smallpox, cholera, and other diseases which had plagued the nation.

But after the fall of France in 1940, the Japanese occupied French Indochina. This occupation continued until 1945 when Japan granted Viet-Nam independence under a puppet emperor, Bao Dai.

Meanwhile, by the time of the Japanese occupation, a group of expatriate, anti-French Vietnamese had formed in South China. One of these was Ho Chi Minh, a dedicated Communist, who entered Hanoi secretly in 1944. A year later, after Japan's surrender to the Allies, Ho's forces became the "Vietnam Liberation Army" and the shadow government set up by Japan under Emperor Bao Dai soon fell before the Communist leader's well-organized onslaught. The emperor abdicated, handing over his powers to Ho Chi Minh. At the same time, a "Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam" with seven Communists among its nine members, took control of Saigon.

Communists Show Their Hand

Like many other colonial people, the Vietnamese wanted national independence above all. That is why many followed Ho Chi Minh and the Communist-

directed Viet Minh which pretended to be a league for the country's independence.

When the French tried to regain a foothold in Viet-Nam in 1946, Viet Minh forces attacked them on a wide front, supported by many people who had only one purpose in mind; that was, national independence for their country. So began the costly 8-year Indo-China war that ended with the division of Viet-Nam at a Geneva conference table in July 1954. The southern part of the country struck out as a free nation—the Republic of Viet-Nam—under leadership of Ngo dinh Diem, with Saigon as its capital. The northern part of the country became the Communist-controlled Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, with Hanoi as its capital.

A Free Nation Emerges

The legality of the present Republic of Viet-Nam Government was confirmed in October 1955 by a referendum which offered the people of the nation a choice between Emperor Bao Dai as chief of a state patterned on the old regime, and Ngo dinh Diem as chief of state of a republic. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the latter, and the Republic was proclaimed with Ngo dinh Diem as President.

The Republic of Viet-Nam has been recognized diplomatically by most of the established nations of the world which are either neutral or oriented toward

the West. While not a member of the United Nations, it is represented on several specialized agencies of that body and regularly sends observers to United Nations meetings and to meetings of the Colombo Plan nations. It also participated officially in the Bandung Conference in 1955. Though not a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, Viet-Nam is regarded as within the treaty area and its security is a direct concern of SEATO.

South Viet-Nam's progress irked the North and, during 1959, Communist guerrillas began an intensified campaign

STRATEGIC HAMLETS

The foundation for future social, economic, and civic strength is being laid in the "strategic hamlets" set up by the Vietnamese Government. Instead of living in isolated villages where they were prey to the Viet Cong guerrillas, the people are being gathered into fortified and well-guarded hamlets. There is work for everyone and improved health and education facilities. With the help of U.S. technicians, the people are being trained in use of farm tools, medicines, modern health practice and, most important of all, in defense.

of terror in the remote countryside of South Viet-Nam. Village, district, and province chiefs, policemen, people's defense militiamen, civil guardsmen, school teachers, malaria eradication workers, and Government officials were assassinated; roads and trains were destroyed; and bridges and schools were burned. The tactical objective of the Communists was then and still is to destroy the people's confidence in their Government and its ability to protect them. By sabotaging the nation at its roots in the rural and mountain areas, they hope to achieve the strategic goal of toppling the Government and turning the south to communism.

Help for a Sister Republic

Stirred by word of increasing numbers of Viet Cong guerrillas infiltrating into South Viet-Nam through Laos and by sea, the United States in 1961 pledged itself to furnish the aid so seriously needed and to strengthen South Viet-Nam's defense against the Communist guerrilla aggression directed by the North.

Our relations have been close right from the beginning of the young republic's history, and we have supported its economic development and national stability.

In 1950 an agreement was made between the governments of the United States, France, Laos, Cambodia,

and Viet-Nam which provided military assistance to Indochina. This initiated the first Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP) support through the Military Assistance Advisory Group, (MAAG), Indochina.

After the Geneva Accords of 1954 which divided Viet-Nam, MAAG Indochina became a MAAG Viet-Nam and a MAAG Cambodia. The mission of MAAG Viet-Nam, then and now, is to assist the Vietnamese Government raise the military capabilities of its armed forces through the Military Assistance Program and provide advice for the armed forces on all matters of a military nature.

In 1962 the United States and Viet-Nam announced an intensified program of additional American economic aid directed toward training government administrators, improving rural health, building more schools, controlling pests and insects that ravage rice crops, constructing new roads in rural areas, expanding industry, and improving the living conditions of the mountain tribespeople.

In the same year, a United States Military Assistance Command was established in South Viet-Nam and American military advisers redoubled their efforts to help the South Vietnamese preserve their freedom and independence.

South Viet-Nam found itself in economic chaos at



Sawmill equipment purchased with American aid funds.

the time of her rebirth in independence. So, along with military help, the U.S. also sent economic aid. The bulk of our help went to finance essential work which Viet-Nam's war-disrupted economy could not afford. Between 1955 and 1960, the United States spent some \$166 million to help the Vietnamese wipe out malaria, construct highways and canals, train teachers, build schools, diversify crops, dig wells, and carry out other useful projects.

Almost half of this sum went to improve rail, highway, water, and air transportation facilities. Nearly 70 concrete bridges had been destroyed on the 850-mile-long rail line between Saigon and Dong Ha, near the Ben Hai River below the North Viet-Nam border. With American help, the Vietnamese were able in 1959 to reopen through passenger and freight service on this line for the first time in 12 years.

Fresh Fish for the Highlands

American engineers trained and supervised Vietnamese technicians in building several major roads and helped in advisory capacity on others. One of these highways is Route 21, running some 90 miles from Ninh Hoa on the central coastal delta up a series of switchbacks to the highland town of Ban Me Thuot. It generally follows the path of a road built years ago under French supervision but which was deteriorated

by war and torrential rains. The new all-weather highway completed in 1960 cuts traveling time from virtually all day to about two and a half hours. Result is that bus fares from coast to highlands have been cut almost in half and traffic has increased from about 10 vehicles a day to several hundred. Goods impractical to transport on the old road can be easily and swiftly—and more cheaply—moved on the new one. For example, fish is a staple food and when the road was finished it arrived in Ban Me Thuot in much greater quantity, with much less loss from spoilage, and at much lower prices.

The new road also has important military applications. Troops can be moved quickly by truck to relieve an outpost under attack or to conduct defensive operations against the Viet Cong guerrillas inland.

Education and Health

A National Institute of Administration to train future province, district, and government bureau chiefs, and a National Institute of Statistics were also set up with American help.

Over 200 Vietnamese came to the United States for teacher training, and American aid contributed to the building of almost 3,000 new classrooms in South Viet-Nam. The social and economic results of these public administration and education programs may not

show up for years but they should greatly benefit the Vietnamese people as time goes on.

Since the malaria eradication program got underway in 1959, several million homes, principally in the highlands where the disease was most virulent, have been sprayed with insecticide. Fewer children now have distended bellies from spleens swollen by the malaria parasite.

Almost 3,000 village health stations were built and stocked with thermometers, bandages, cotton, and basic medicines, and staffed by villagers who had been given



Respect for education is instilled at an early age.



Government provides medical services for villages.

two-week's training courses in first aid. Since the nation suffers from a great shortage of doctors, midwives have been trained to staff maternity clinics in almost a hundred villages. Further, many Vietnamese hamlets never have had clean, safe drinking water. The people have depended on rainwater during the wet season, and stagnant water during the dry. One new American aid project aims at digging 5,000 wells to provide pure water throughout South Viet-Nam by 1965.

GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES

The Republic of Viet-Nam came into existence as a result of the 1954 Geneva Conference which set the 17th parallel as the northern boundary of South Viet-Nam. On 26 October 1956, just one year to a day after President Ngo dinh Diem proclaimed the new republic, a national Constitution was adopted.

Under this Constitution, largely the handiwork of the President, a good start was made toward showing what a determined nation can accomplish under dedicated leadership. In spite of the chaotic condition of the war-ravaged country and the continuing terrorism and sabotage carried on by Viet Cong guerrillas, the new nation made great progress. There is general suffrage and free elections. Economic, health, and educational



Battle-tested Vietnamese soldiers are tough, wiry, and well-trained.



Free elections assure a "Government of the people."

programs are underway to improve conditions for individuals and the country as a whole. The United States has been giving its support to these efforts and to the serious and potentially explosive matter of resisting the Communists.

Three Arms of Government

The Viet-Nam Constitution, like ours, provides for separation of powers in the national Government, but in practical application chief authority lies in the ex-

ecutive branch. The President and Vice President are elected for 5-year terms.

Below the President is the Cabinet Council made up of the Ministers of the Executive Departments and other officials. The National Assembly is a unicameral body composed of deputies elected by vote of electoral constituencies.

The administration of the courts and interpretation of law are handled by the Department of Justice as part of the Executive Branch. The country's code of laws is under revision to bring it up-to-date.

Provinces and Districts

Viet-Nam has 40 provinces and four cities with provincial status—Saigon, Hue, Dalat, and DaNang. (Tourane). Within the provinces are districts made up of several cantons which, in turn, are each composed of several villages, called *lang*. The villages are made up of hamlets (*ap*) which may be from a hundred yards to several miles apart. To at least eight out of every 10 Vietnamese, "the Government" is the administrative group that runs his village.

An old Vietnamese proverb states that ". . . the power of the Emperor comes only to the bamboo hedge of the village." This is indicative of the traditional dislike of interference from higher authority in village affairs. Village government is administered by a Council

of Notables who elect their president, the Huong Chu, to act as village representative.

The Armed Forces

The Vietnamese have a long history of successful fighting against stronger and better equipped forces. They drove the Chinese from their land several times, repelled three Mongol invasions, and reduced the once powerful Champa Kingdom to nothing but a memory. One of their most famous generals, Tran Hung Dao, wrote a manual on military doctrine which has been a national classic on warfare for 600 years.

South Viet-Nam has three military forces: The regular Armed Forces, the Civil Guard (*Boa An*), and



Viet-Nam's Rhade tribespeople live in communal longhouses.

the People's Defensive Corps (*Dan Ve*) or Self Defense Corps (SDC).

The regular Armed Forces consist of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, with the Army by far the largest of the four. The Civil Guard includes troops belonging to any one of Viet-Nam's 40 provinces, and may be likened to the National Guard in the United States except that the Civil Guard is on perpetual active duty. The People's or Self Defense Corps is made up of villagers. Its members guard district headquarters, villages, and hamlets throughout the country, and have borne the brunt of Viet Cong guerrilla attacks in isolated areas. They could be compared to American minutemen during the Revolutionary War. Armed in many cases with single-loading, 19th century French rifles, they have repelled long and continuous assaults by well-armed Viet Cong guerrillas. Now they are being supplied with up-to-date weapons and field radios. The radios have filled a big communications gap. With them, help can be summoned fast or news of an impending attack flashed to the critical area.

During the recent hostilities there have been cases of a small village militia, armed with a few obsolete rifles and perhaps one Browning automatic, fighting for days against superior guerrilla forces—and vanquishing them—to save their rice harvest. But these same militia might not see the importance of jumping in to help

a neighboring village under similar attack. Efforts are being made to instill greater pride and esprit de corps in men attending the Viet-Nam Military Academy, and to renew traditions that will link the present forces with those of the country's military past.

The President is both Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Secretary of State for National Defense. The regular Armed Forces consist of an Army Command (the Vietnamese National Army), an Air Command (the Vietnamese Air Force), and a Sea Command (the Vietnamese Navy.) The United States Military Assistance Advisory Group provides training and technical advice and material to all three.

The Army

Army strength is about 200,000, most of the men volunteers. Late in 1957, conscription was initiated and now all physically fit young men of 20 and 21 are required to fulfill two years of military service.

The Navy

Operating forces of the Navy consist of three major commands: the Sea Forces; the River Forces operating in the Mekong Delta Region; and the Marine Corps Group. A part of the shore establishment is the Junk Force, organized by Presidential decree as a paramilitary force and an inshore patrol force. It is manned

in part by naval personnel with Vietnamese fishermen providing the bulk of the force. Though small, the Navy is developing into a highly efficient organization. The Navy shipyard in Saigon is the largest of its kind between Singapore and the Philippine Islands.

The Air Force

About 5,000 officers and men—all volunteers—staff the Air Force. The force occupies four bases and consists of transport, fighter, helicopter, and liaison squadrons, with necessary supporting units.

YOUR LEGAL STATUS

All official United States personnel are accorded diplomatic immunity by special concession of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam. Since military personnel are subject to U.S. military law, any local incident involving our military people is reported to Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, for appropriate disciplinary action. This arrangement has worked out very well. Vietnamese Government officials have expressed their satisfaction with the prompt and fair way the few incidents that have occurred have been handled.



Quiet home celebrations also mark the New Year (Tet).

AT HOME WITH THE VIETNAMESE

You will find many areas of common interest with the Vietnamese: their regard for their families . . . their historic struggle for national independence . . . their wish to allow people individual freedom within the framework of laws made for the good of all.

But there are many differences between their culture and customs and our own and you must be prepared to deal with them in a way that will make you an acceptable friend of the Vietnamese.

Some of the differences are small things, like the way a Vietnamese seems to be waving goodbye when he is actually beckoning you to come toward him. If you use a typical American motion to signal to a Vietnamese you should not be dismayed if he does not respond. He is probably just as confused by your gesture as you are by his.

More important differences are attitudes toward older people, manual labor, display of emotion, and time. For instance, the average Vietnamese is less compulsive about time than the average American, and regards punctuality with less reverence. Therefore, you should not consider it a personal affront if people arrive late for an appointment or even if they don't arrive at all.

Moderation should be practiced in all things and the moral code of the people you are among strictly ob-

served. For instance, if the rule is "no dancing," don't try to demonstrate your version of the twist either publicly or privately. Or, knowing that trouble breeds in situations where a person has one drink too many or forgets to show the utmost respect and courtesy toward women, make it a special point to avoid getting even close to the fringes of this sort of trouble.

Family Loyalty

The Vietnamese are justifiably proud of their culture and national identity but their primary social outlook revolves around their family and village. These claim first allegiance. Members of a family, for instance, have an absolute obligation—to be violated only at the risk of serious dishonor—to care for their relatives and to prevent any of them from being in want. Even after a girl marries, her love and respect for her parents traditionally continue to overshadow her love and respect for her husband.

The traditional family unit includes living and dead members and members not yet born. On festival days and in family ceremonies the ancestors are invoked and revered, and at all times there is thought of the grandsons and great-grandsons yet to be born who will carry on the family name. A family without male heirs is assumed to have disappeared.

The importance of family is evident in the many

terms used to denote family relationships. In addition to the usual ones like father, mother, brother, sister, the Vietnamese have terms to show relative age, the father's side of the family versus the mother's, and other niceties of relationship. In keeping with the lesser importance of younger people, there is only one term for a younger brother or sister. Either is *em*. But *anh* means elder brother and *chi*, elder sister.

In the Confucian tradition, older people with their accumulation of a lifetime of experience are the wisest members of society and therefore are accorded the highest standing. If you are invited to a Vietnamese home for a meal be sure to let the older people begin eating before you do. Be solicitous about helping them to things on the table. Older Vietnamese, by the way, will usually not shake hands but will greet you by joining their hands in front of them and inclining their heads very slightly. Responding with the same gesture will show them that you know and appreciate this respectful custom.

Woman's Place Is at Home

Since the purpose of marriage is to continue the family line, the parents believe that the selection of a proper wife for their son is their personal responsibility, a duty they owe both to their ancestors and to their son and his future children. Usually with the help of



DANGER



DANGER



CAUTION



MAIN ROAD AHEAD



LEFT CURVE



RIGHT CURVE



SHARP TURN



TAKE EITHER ROUTE



PARKING



NO VEHICLES



NO MOTOR VEHICLES



WEIGHT LIMIT
5½ TONS



GUARDED RAIL-
ROAD CROSSING



UNGUARDED RAIL
ROAD CROSSING



NO ANIMAL-
DRAWN TRAFFIC



SPEED LIMIT



OPEN CULVERT
(DIP)



Signs showing place at
which a first-aid station
can be found.



NO WAITING



NO PARKING

INTERNATIONAL ROAD SIGNS

a "go-between," they search for a girl who is skillful at housework and who will be a good mother to many children. Beauty is not as desirable as good character. In fact, beauty is sometimes considered a disadvantage because the Vietnamese believe that fate seldom is kind to beautiful women.

The traditional position of women is totally subordinate to men and their social life is limited. At the same time, wives often exercise a great deal of influence in the family, particularly in connection with financial affairs and, of course, in selecting a marriage partner for their sons and daughters.

People of upper-class families, as well as people living in villages removed from big city and Western influences continue to follow time-honored traditions and customs. Among others, the customs have been considerably modified. Women are assuming a new and important position in the life of the nation, and young men and women are breaking away from tradition to choose their own marriage partners.

The Professional Man

The Vietnamese have always felt that a deep division exists between manual and "intellectual" labor. Traditional Vietnamese who have achieved positions with the Government as a result of long and patient study, or who have become doctors, teachers, and so on, avoid

using their hands for tasks they feel they have graduated beyond. It would be unusual, for example, to see such a person washing his car, helping his wife clear the table, or working in his garden.

Another thing, a Vietnamese might avoid looking a superior in the eye when talking to him. This does not mean the man cannot be trusted. It means he is being polite by not "staring" at a person of greater standing.

At your first meeting with a Vietnamese he might ask: "How much money do you make?" This is a natural question in the sequence of "Are you married?" and "How many children do you have?" It simply expresses polite interest. If you feel uncomfortable about replying, you can avoid a direct answer by stating that you are paid in American dollars and don't know what the equivalent would be in Vietnamese currency. Your indirect reply lets the other person know you do not want to answer and have told him so politely. The matter is thus dropped without embarrassing anybody.

If you want to ask a favor, you should remember that hinting and indirection are preferable to making an outright request. Also avoid launching too quickly into a new topic or disagreeing too vehemently. Exercise moderation in your conversation. At a first meeting, it is often best to stay on safe topics like families or the weather.

Politeness and Restraint

Even among the most sophisticated Vietnamese, manners have not become lax or social customs unrestrained. Manners are conditioned by age-old religious teachings and are deeply ingrained in the life of the people.

Public display of emotion is almost always considered in bad taste. Raising the voice, shouting, or gesturing wildly are most impolite. Tied in with the view that marriage is primarily for continuance of the family line is a feeling that display of affection should be confined to the privacy of the home—and even there, not practiced before guests.

The Vietnamese regard men and women who walk arm-in-arm as vulgar. But you may occasionally see two boys or men walking down the street hand-in-hand. This is an ordinary mark of friendship common to many Asian and other countries.

If you follow the general practices of good manners and courtesy, and observe those that are particularly important to your Vietnamese hosts, you will be a welcome guest in Viet-Nam. This is vital to your mission there. You will fulfill your duty as a responsible representative of the United States best by remembering at all times that you are in a land where dignity, restraint, and politeness are highly regarded.

Town and Country

The architecture of homes in the cities and towns shows French and other Western influence, and decoration and furnishings also have a decidedly Western touch. But in the rural districts and mountain villages you will find thatched roofs, mud walls, pounded dirt floors, and little furniture. Some of the more pretentious rural houses have tile roofs, wooden walls, and floors of tile or flat brick squares set in mortar.

A feature of most homes is the family altar containing a tablet bearing the names of the family's ancestors going back at least to the great-grandfather. Veneration for the family's ancestors is perpetuated through the eldest son who is expected to succeed his father in caring for the altar. The altar may take up as much as one-sixth of the entire floor space of the house, excluding the kitchen. The kitchen is customarily built adjoining but separate from the living quarters.

Another interesting feature of a Vietnamese home is the plank bed. Often made of costly wood with inlaid mother-of-pearl, the bed may be as large as eight by five feet. Except for a mosquito net there is generally no bedding. The Vietnamese feel that in their hot climate it is more comfortable to sleep without bedding.



Family shreds homegrown tobacco; lays it out to dry.

Village Life

The Vietnamese village, *lang*, is an administrative unit rather like a county in the United States. It is made up of a number of scattered hamlets or *ap*, each set against a backdrop of bamboo thickets and groves of areca (betel nut) and coconut palms. Located at the seat of government in a *lang* are a school, athletic or parade field, and a meeting hall. Instead of a Christian church there is a Buddhist temple. Some

villages also have a dispensary and a maternity building containing a couple of beds and staffed by a trained midwife.

An "information" booth displays Government notices. Saigon newspapers may be kept here for public reference. The *dinh*, or village communal temple, houses a decree naming the village guardian spirit.

There's also a village market. On market day, which is once or twice a week, people file out of the hamlets to follow the narrow paths or rice paddy banks to the marketplace. They come to sell, to buy, or just to gossip. Some balance baskets of tempting fresh fruits and vegetables on their heads.

You can buy live chickens or duck eggs, conical hats to ward off the sun and plastic coats to keep away the rain, or Chinese herbs and Western aspirin. You can even buy a brightly colored scarf in which to carry home your purchases.

A popular feature at the market is the man with a portable stove-and-bakery suspended from the ends of a bamboo pole balanced across his shoulders. From this ingenious double-duty device the merchant offers noodle soup on one side, papaya and red peppers on the other.



Groaning board features great variety of tasty foods.

What's for Supper?

The average Vietnamese consumes less than two-thirds the calories the average American puts away every day. Problems of starvation seldom exist but the basically vegetarian diet sometimes lacks proteins, vitamins, and minerals.

Most middle-class families have ample meals consisting of four types of foods: one salted, one fried or roasted, a vegetable soup, and rice. The soup (*cahn*) is an important part of the meal and may contain bits of fish or meat along with the vegetables.

Rice is the staple food and its preparation is a grave responsibility for the women of the household. When a young bride comes to live with her husband's family her cooking skill is judged by her success with rice. It's a bad omen when the rice is overboiled or half-burned. And a girl's failure with rice reflects unfavorably on her mother who will be accused of having neglected her daughter's education.

All girls are supposed to have cooking as an essential part of their education. During the Moon Festival they prepare their best dishes so that the eligible bachelors may see how well they can cook—particularly *banh trung thu*—the special Moon Festival cakes.

Fruits and Vegetables

The fruits and vegetables of Viet-Nam include many kinds familiar to you and others you may not know much about. Bananas, apples, pears, plums, oranges are among the familiar fruits; pomegranates and papayas, among the more exotic. Here you find the jujube—a sort of thorn tree with a fruit that flavors some of our candies—and the litchi which is a fruit known in its dried form as “litchi nut.” Among the vegetables are common ones like potatoes, turnips, carrots, onions, and beans; eggplant disguised under the name *aubergine*, and water bindweed, a herb that comes from the same family as our morning-glory flower.

Avoid eating raw vegetables or unpeeled fruit and drinking water that is not boiled or otherwise purified.

The Fish Is Good

When the meal extends beyond vegetable and rice dishes, fish is generally served. More than 300 edible fish come from the sea and the inland waterways of Viet-Nam. Sole, mackerel, anchovy, tuna, squid, sardine, crab, and lobster are only a few. The tiny shrimp and oysters from the China Sea are particularly luscious, as are soups prepared from turtles caught on the beaches and in coastal waters.



Giant nets bring in succulent, varied catch of fish.

The Vietnamese excel at preparing fish. Sometimes the fish is sautéed with onions, mushrooms, and vermicelli; or it may be slowly cooked with tomatoes, salted bamboo shoots, carrots, and leeks. Carp are often fried with celery. Eels make a banquet dish when sautéed in a sauce made of sugar, vinegar, rice flour, and sour-and-sweet soybean sauce. Another specialty is eel wrapped in aromatic leaves and grilled over charcoal, or boiled with green bananas, vegetables, saffron, and onions.

A fermented sauce made of fish and salt—*nuoc mam*—is almost as much a staple of diet as rice. It is served almost everywhere and with almost every meal. Many Westerners develop quite a taste for it.

If you want to try a superb bird's nest soup that the Vietnamese relish, there is the sea swallow version. The nests are golf-ball size—white, pale green, or grayish, made of entangled fibers of a hardened gelatinous substance similar to the jelly from seaweed.

Meat Dishes

Although Buddhism condemns the killing of living things, animals and fowl are killed for food. Pork is more commonly found on the average family's menu than beef. It is roasted or sautéed with various vegetables and herbs. Lean pork baked in a crisp loaf with various seasonings, including cinnamon, is a tasty dish known as *cha-lua*.

A popular beef dish is made by cutting raw beef in thin slices and pouring boiling water over it, then promptly eating it with a dressing of soybean sauce and ginger. "Beef in seven dishes" is much appreciated by visitors as well as local people. One of these is a beef soup; in another beef is cut into chunks or sliced, or else ground and formed in little balls or patties. Each has its own delicious sauce.

Hens are prepared to a gourmet's taste by stuffing

with aromatic vegetables, seasoned with salt, pepper, garlic, and basted with coconut milk while roasting. Or, after boning, by filling with meat, chestnuts, mushrooms, and onions and basting with honey while baking.

Cha-gio is an egg roll with many things besides eggs in it—seafood and meat, vermicelli, mushrooms, and vegetables all finely chopped and blended.

Most of these probably are more tempting to Western appetites than another Vietnamese favorite which consists of fresh coagulated pork blood eaten with specially prepared chopped meat, liver, heart, etc.

Tea at All Times

Tea is the principal Vietnamese beverage in the morning, afternoon, and evening—for any occasion or no occasion at all. At mealtime it is usually served after the meal rather than with it. Chinese tea is much appreciated, particularly when flavored with lotus or jasmine. But it is too expensive for most people. They use the local teas: dried (*che-kho*), roasted (*che-man*), or dried flowerbuds, (*che-nu*). Tea, incidentally, is an acceptable gift under almost any circumstance.

When coffee is served, it is generally offered with milk as *café au lait* in the morning, or black as *café noir* for an after-dinner demitasse.

In towns and cities you can generally get cognac, whiskey, French wines, and champagne.

Alcoholic beverages produced locally are principally beer and *ruou nep*, made from fermented glutinous rice. *Ruou nep* flavored with lotus flowers is called "*ruou sen*," and flavored with chrysanthemums, "*ruou cuc*."

Festivals and Lunar Calendar

Outside of the larger cities and the relatively few Christian areas, the routine of work goes on day after day without pause on the seventh. From dawn to dark the father tills the fields or casts his nets for fish; the women and all but the very young children help in the paddies or tend to household duties. Only when there is a national holiday or religious festival does the daily routine of "work, eat, sleep" come to a temporary halt.

The following poem expresses the ritual of Vietnamese life and festivals:

January, celebrate the New Year at home;
February, gambling; March, local festivals;
April, cook bean pudding;
Celebrate the feast of *Doan Ngo* at the return of
May;
June, buy *longans* and sell wild cherries;
At the mid-July full moon, pardon the wandering
spirits;



Village ushers in the New Year with traditional fete.

August, celebrate the lantern festival;

At the return of September, sell persimmons with the others;

October, buy paddy and sell kapok;

November and December, work is finished.

All of the festivals mentioned in the poem are based on the lunar calendar. This causes the dates to vary from year to year by our calendar, like our Easter.

The Vietnamese lunar calendar, like the Chinese, begins with the year 2637 B.C. It has 12 months of 29 or 30 days each, totaling 355 days. Every third year or so an extra month is slipped in between the third and fourth months to reconcile the lunar calendar with the solar calendar. An advantage of the lunar calendar (at least to moon-minded people) is that you can count on a full moon on the 15th day of each month.

Instead of centuries of 100 years each, the Vietnamese calendar is divided into 60-year periods. Each year in one of these periods is designated by one of five elements and one of 12 animals: Wood, fire, earth, metal, water, and rat, buffalo, tiger, cat, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, chicken, dog, and pig. The year 1963—which is the Vietnamese year 4600—is designated by the combination of earth and cat, but you will commonly hear it referred to as “Year of the Cat,” just as 1962 was called the “Year of the Tiger.”

Annual Festivals

The chief Vietnamese festivals (*tet*) by the lunar

calendar are:

- The New Year, *Nguyen Dan*, 1st through 7th day of 1st month;
- The Trung Sisters, *Hai Ba Trung*, 6th day of the 2nd month;
- The Summer Solstice, *Doan Ngo*, 5th day of the 5th month;
- Wandering Souls, *Trung Nguyen*, 15th day of the 7th month; also celebrated on the 15th day of the 1st and 10th months;
- Mid-Autumn, *Trung Thu*, 15th day of the 8th month;
- *Tran Hung Dao*, 20th day of the 8th month; and
- *Le Loi*, 22nd day of the 8th month.

The Tet Nguyen Dan, or New Year, often called “Tet” is the big event of the year. It marks the beginning of spring, and by the solar calendar usually falls toward the end of January or in early February. All work usually stops for the first three days, and most shops are closed.

Vietnamese tradition attaches great significance to the first visitor of the New Year. He is thought to influence the happiness or well-being of the family during the entire year. If a rich man or one with a lot of children or one of high social position is the first to cross the threshold, the family's fortunes will be

correspondingly affected. A man with a good name, like *Phuoc* (happiness) is preferable to one named *Cho* (dog). In fact, some families go out of their way to invite a propitious first guest, and to discourage all others from entering before him.

Eating the New Year's cake, *banh chung*, is another means of insuring prosperity. The cake consists of a combination of sticky rice, pork, and soybeans wrapped in green bamboo or rush leaves, and then boiled.

At the time of the New Year, new clothes are in order and old debts are settled.

The festival begins with veneration at the family shrine and public worship with people carrying lighted candles and incense. There are presents for the children, feasts, and gay, noisy public celebrations. Firecrackers are forbidden during wartime, but there is always the sound of gongs and cymbals and the traditional unicorn dance. The unicorn brings luck, especially to those who hang money from their windows for the unicorn to eat!

Fetes Honor Heroes

The festivals of the Trung Sisters, of *Tran Hung Dao*, and of *Le Loi* all commemorate Vietnamese heroes. The two Trung sisters led a revolt against the Chinese governor of Viet-Nam between the years 39 and 43 A.D. Tran Hung Dao was the general who commanded



Colorful March festival honors Vietnamese heroines.

numerically-inferior Vietnamese forces that repelled two Mongol invasions, one in 1284 and the other in 1287. Le Loi was a rich landowner turned general who forced the Chinese out of Viet-Nam in a 10-years' war that ended in 1428. After the war he proved himself an enlightened first emperor and founded the Le Dynasty.

The object of celebrating *Doan Ngo* is to avoid the diseases and other evil influences brought on by summer, the year's hottest and most unhealthy season.

The Feast of Wandering Souls is dedicated to those dead who have no living family to pray for them. The Mid-Autumn Festival is both a children's celebration and an auspicious time for engagements and marriages.

The principal Vietnamese holiday by our calendar is National Day, 26 October. It commemorates the proclamation of the Republic of Viet-Nam's Constitution on that date in 1955.

There are also local or regional holidays such as the holiday of the Village Spirit, *Ong Than Lang*, or the festival in honor of the Spirit of the Fields which marks a turning point in the yearly round of work of the farmer. Special rites are observed at spring planting time, when rice shoots are transplanted, at the time of the rice-plant flowers, and harvest. Other occupations, such as fishing, also have their special festivals.

RELIGION CAN BE PLURAL

Instead of saying that one religion is right and all others wrong, the Vietnamese are more apt to take the position that one is right and another is not wrong either. For instance, a man who makes offerings in a Buddhist temple probably also pays reverence to the ancestral altar in his own home in keeping with the teachings of Confucius. You may even find Christ, Confucius, Mohammed, and Buddha all honored in the

same temple.

Consequently, it is not too meaningful to say that a certain percentage of the Vietnamese are Buddhists and another percent something else. The percentages may be made up of individuals who are both Buddhists and something else.

The national Constitution reflects the people's belief in religious tolerance. It provides for freedom of religion, and states that no single religion is designated as the country's official one.

Nevertheless, religion has been a significant factor in the Viet-Nam way of life throughout history. The present culture and customs of these proud and sensitive people are strongly conditioned by their religious beliefs. For example, feeling that the universe and man's place in it are essentially preordained and unchanging, they place high value on stoicism, patience, courage, and resiliency in the face of adversity.

To get along in Viet-Nam you must have some understanding of these traditional beliefs. If, for instance, you did not know that the parts of the human body are believed to possess varying degrees of worthiness—starting with the head—you would not see why patting a child on the head might be considered a gross insult. Or why it would be insulting for you to sit with your legs crossed and pointed toward some individual. Either of these actions could cause you to be regarded in a



A religious country . . . with free choice in worship.

poor light by Vietnamese who follow the traditional ways.

Confucianism

Confucianism, a philosophy brought to Viet-Nam centuries ago by the Chinese, not only has been a major religion for centuries, but also has contributed immensely to the development of the cultural, moral, and political life of the country. It establishes a code of relations between people; for example, the relation between sovereign and subject, father and son, wife and husband, younger to older people, friend to friend. Teaching that disorders in a group spring from improper conduct on the part of its individual members, achievement of harmony is held to be the first duty of every Confucianist.

When he dies, the Confucianist is revered as an ancestor who is joined forever to nature. His children honor and preserve his memory in solemn ancestor rites. At the family shrine containing the ancestral tablets, the head of each family respectfully reports to his ancestors all important family events and seeks their advice.



Statue of Buddha looms over priest at temple rites.

Buddhism

Confucianism goes hand-in-hand in many Vietnamese homes with Buddhism, a religion first taught in India some 26 centuries ago by Prince Gautama, also known as the Gautama Buddha. In Buddhism, the individual finds a larger meaning to life by establishing identity with eternity—past, present, future—through cycles of reincarnation. In the hope of eventual *nirvana*, that is, oneness with the universe, he finds consolation in times of bereavement and special joy in times of weddings and births.

The *Greater Vehicle* form has more followers than the *Lesser Vehicle* in Viet-Nam, as in China, Korea, and Japan. This branch regards the Gautama Buddha as only one of many Buddhas (Enlightened Ones) who are manifestations of the fundamental divine power of the universe. They believe that, theoretically, any person may become a Buddha, though those who attain Buddhahood are rare. Saints who earnestly strive for such perfection are known as *bodhisattvas*. Both Buddhas and bodhisattvas are recognized and venerated in Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) temples.

Lesser Vehicle believers follow the teachings of Gautama and regard him as the only Buddha. In the southern delta provinces of Viet-Nam, particularly in Ba Xuyen and An Giang where there are large groups

of ethnic Cambodians, you will often see the saffron-robed monks of the Lesser Vehicle. This branch is also found in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos—in other words, in those countries that had a dominant Indian rather than a dominant Chinese historical influence.

Taoism

Like Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism came to Viet-Nam from China centuries ago. Like Buddhism, its philosophy focuses on the idea of man's oneness with the universe. In modern Viet-Nam, Taoist priests are regarded as skilled magicians, adept at controlling the spirit world through intercession with Taoist gods. The priesthood is a family calling, taught by father to son.

Christianity

Christianity reached Viet-Nam in the 16th and 17th centuries, mainly through the efforts of Roman Catholic Spanish and Portuguese missionaries. As a result of persistent missionary efforts—frequently in the face of persecution by emperors who feared Western political and economic control—approximately 10 percent of the population of the Republic of Viet-Nam are Catholics. This is the highest proportion of Catholics in any Asian country except the Philippines.



Religious ceremony before Catholic Cathedral, Saigon.

American Protestant missions have been in Viet-Nam since World War I. At first their activities were mainly limited to the mountain tribes of the high plateaus. With the gradual rise of American assistance and influence, there has been an increase in Protestant activity in the lowlands. Baptist, Mennonite, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Seventh Day Adventist missions now exist in several cities, and some Vietnamese Protestant students are being sent to the United States for advanced theological training.

New Religions

In addition to the religions and philosophies brought to Viet-Nam from other countries, new ones were developed there. Chief among these were the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao.

Cao Dai is a blend of the three great oriental philosophies—Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism—set in an organizational structure based on that of the Roman Catholic Church. The head of the church, the “Superior,” fills a position similar to that of the Pope.

The words Cao Dai mean “supreme palace,” a term frequently found in Buddhist prayer books. This is a reference to the divinity’s dwelling place and, by polite indirection, to the divinity himself. The Cao Dai symbol is a large, all-seeing eye.

You can tell which branch of the Cao Dai religion



The Cao Dai built this elaborate temple near Tay Ninh.

a priest belongs to by the color of his robes. Those that are in the Confucian branch wear red; the Taoist, sky-blue; and the Buddhist, saffron. The Superior wears all three colors. Women may also become members of the clergy, rising even to become cardinals, but they all wear white.

Cao Dai morality is based on the duties of man toward himself, his family, society, and humanity. Its philosophy preaches the attainment of pure spirituality without seeking honor and riches.

The philosophy and practice of Cao Dai are examples of religious and ethical borrowing—organization and some ritual from Catholicism, reincarnation and not eating meat from Buddhism, man's obligations to society and veneration of ancestors from Confucianism, despising honor and riches from Taoism.

At one time Cao Dai claimed a following of 3 million. Now the religion is much less widely practiced, but you may still see Cao Dai temples throughout Viet-Nam. The cathedral near the city of Tay Ninh, about 55 miles northwest of Saigon, is the largest and best known. Built between 1933 and 1941 it is located not far from the revered Nui Ba Den, Mountain of the Black Virgin. The mountain is a holy place of the Buddhist faith, one to which pilgrimages have long been made.

In its peak period, Cao Dai had not only millions of

followers but also an army of some 15,000. For a time the Cao Dai troops opposed President Ngo dinh Diem, throwing their support to Communist Ho Chi Minh. With the defeat of anti-Diem forces in 1955, their leader went into exile in Cambodia and the sect, except for scattered remnants of its military, resumed purely spiritual activities.

Hoa Hao is an offshoot of Buddhism that came into being in An Giang province in southwest Viet-Nam in 1939. Its founder was a young man named Huynh Phu So, and he gave the new religion the name of his village of birth. He became famous as a teacher and miracle healer, preaching that temples, rituals, and priests were not necessary to the worship of God. This greatly appealed to the poor people and peasants. Some 20 years after its founding, Hoa Hao had a million and a half or more followers, though Viet Minh Communists murdered the founder in 1942 and no leader of comparable stature appeared to take his place.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Regardless of the changes the Vietnamese have passed through—from the rule of their own emperors to rule by French governors to their own present republican government—one factor that has remained constant is their inherent reverence for learning.

Under the Confucian social system, the scholar stood at the head of the occupational hierarchy. The scholar received the highest economic, social, and political rewards. The nation was governed at all levels of administration by Mandarins, who were chosen on the basis of education alone. The aristocracy of learning was the only aristocracy of any continuing importance in old Viet-Nam. Education, especially in Chinese philosophy and history, was not only prized for its own sake but was the main road to wealth, power, and social standing.

The civil service examinations were the goals of the educational system. Tens of thousands of students each year would attempt the first examination but only a few thousand were able to go to the provincial capitals for the finals. Even to gain the lowest of these degrees of recognition was a high honor that marked its recipient for life, and brought honor to his family as well.

With the coming of the French, the formal educational system changed considerably. Beginning in the 19th century, the French encouraged the Vietnamese to write their own language in the Latin alphabet. In the early years of the 20th century they changed the civil service examinations, making European rather than Confucian learning the requisite for success.

Schools Today

The present school system, administered by the Secretary of National Education, retains substantially the form of the French school system. In addition, the Government is attempting to raise the literacy rate among older people through evening classes.

Primary schools have a 5-year curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic, natural science, principles of morality, composition, drawing, manual training, physical education, and domestic science. The first three grades are compulsory for all children.

Secondary schools have two divisions with a 4-year course in the first, and a 3-year course in the second. The 4-year course is divided into classical and modern sections. In addition to basic subjects taught in Vietnamese, those choosing the classical course take Vietnamese literature and Chinese characters, while pupils in the modern section take history, French, and English.

The 3-year course continues the general pattern of the first, but gives students the option of continuing their language studies or of substituting programs of natural science or of mathematics and philosophy.

The goal of secondary education is to pass the stiff baccalaureate examinations. The baccalaureate is required for admission to the 5-year university program or to the advanced technical schools; it confers

upon its holder something of the status and respect formerly accorded the "Budding Genius," one of the highest levels of the Mandarin education system.

Private Schools, Universities

In addition to public schools at the primary and secondary levels, there are both religious and secular private schools. These schools follow the public-school curriculum and are regulated and subsidized by the Department of Education.

In addition, there are a number of normal schools which train schoolteachers; an industrial technical school, and other specialized governmental technical schools; and a school of applied arts, where the traditional fine arts of Viet-Nam are taught. These include goldsmithing, lacquer work, cabinetwork, and pottery making.

The National University of Viet-Nam in Saigon is the most important institution of higher education. There also are universities at Dalat and Hue, and several technical schools of university rank, including an Institute of Public Administration in Saigon.

Higher education in foreign countries is greatly sought after by advanced students. The Vietnamese Government grants passports for study abroad to students wanting to study courses not offered in Viet-Nam,

and at least 1,000 to 1,500 Vietnamese students will be abroad in any year. About half of them will be in France, a smaller group in the United States, and substantial numbers in Belgium, Canada, Switzerland, India, and Indonesia.

Youth Movements

Youth movements such as Boy Scouts, sports clubs, and sectarian organizations of the Christian and Buddhist youth have had a strong revival under President Ngo dinh Diem. A State Secretariat of Sport and Youth supervises the activities of young men and women and a National Youth Council provides liaison between government and youth organizations. Physical education is particularly emphasized.

One of the most popular organizations is the Cong Hoa. Membership is voluntary and open to men and women between 18 and 35, regardless of religion, political affiliation, or social status. Although members do not receive military training, they wear a light-weight blue uniform as a badge of distinction. Their oath of loyalty on joining is to build a new society based on justice and charity, and to comply with all instructions from the President of the Republic of Viet-Nam.



Dragons guard entrance to capital city war memorial.

A Rich Culture

The admiration and honor accorded scholars by the Vietnamese extends to writers, especially poets, and the literature of the nation is rich and sensitive. One of the most noted of its writers is Nguyen Du, author of an epic poem, "Kim Van Kieu" which many school children have memorized. Nguyen Du well expressed the philosophy of many of his countrymen when he wrote:

We must not be too quick to murmur against Heaven

For the source of Happiness dwells in our heart.

The painting, sculpture, and other arts of Viet-Nam are vigorous and imaginative, with lively motifs of dragons, tigers, elephants, unicorns, and horses. The fabled phoenix and other birds, the tortoise, bamboo, and exotic flowers also figure in the designs. Artists create most intricate designs, though the tools and materials they use are often very simple.

Some of the greatest masterpieces of wood sculpture are hidden in lost pagodas deep in the jungle or mountains. But homes have carvings, too—on beams, windows, cornices, and on chairs, tables, and chests. The Vietnamese peasant may lead a frugal and monotonous life by our standards but he has an artistic tendency and love of beauty that he fulfills by decorating his home with whatever materials are at hand.

Besides wood carvings, the country is known for its mother-of-pearl inlay, lacquer and metal work. You can see the artistry of skilled metalsmiths in the beautiful bronze decorations in pagodas, temples, palaces, and public buildings, and in statues, perfume and incense burners, candlesticks and so on. Tin, pewter, and copper are also used to create art objects of long-enduring beauty and usefulness.

Pottery, another significant art form—is usually

finished without the name of the designer, although the piece may have an ideograph or symbol to indicate the manufacturer's trademark or firm name. Some of the best is the Tho Ha pottery.

Embroidery and mat weaving are crafts widely practiced. A grateful people even created a temple at Hai Thien in honor of Pham Don Le, the Mandarin who established mat weaving in Viet-Nam. Traditional mat decorations include the symbol for longevity and often the design includes bats or butterflies in the corners of the rug to signify happiness.

Music and Theater

Should you get a chance to go to the theater you may enjoy the *cai luong*, or modern form, more than the *hat boi*, or classical style. The classical theater cuts to a minimum scenery, costumes, and stage effects, and the plays are very tragic and dramatic. The modern theater which came into being around 1920 uses colorful costuming and scenery and the stories are less heroic and more realistic.

The music of Viet-Nam will be most strange to your ears until you get used to it. A scale of five notes and two semi-notes is used and the classical instruments are various stringed instruments, drums, and gongs. In the classic theater the acting is stressed with



laments from the strings and vigorous noise from drums and gongs.

MOUNTAIN TRIBESPEOPLE

Tribal people outnumber the ethnic Vietnamese at places on or near Viet-Nam's high plateau. They formerly lived along the coast of north and central Viet-Nam. But about the time of Christ's birth, powerful nations like Funan and Champa forced them out of their coastal villages into the mountains.

You may hear these people called "*montagnard*" or "*moi*." The first is a French word meaning "mountaineer." The second is a Vietnamese term meaning "savage" or "barbarian." Understandably, the tribespeople resent this. Two terms much more acceptable to them are *dong bao thuong* meaning "highland compatriot," and *nguoì thuong du* meaning "highland people." A good English word is "tribespeople," since it describes their way of life without uncomplimentary meanings.

Appearance and Language

Tribespeople of different villages quite often are unable to understand each other's language and also have marked physical differences. Depending on the tribe, their skin color varies from extremely dark to slightly bronzed white. Some are tall and well-built,



Careful buyer looks over produce at village market.



others short and slight. Their hair may be frizzy or straight; and their clothing may cover more of their bodies than your uniform does of yours, or consist of nothing more than a few beads and a g-string.

The more than a score of different tribes can be grouped in two broad classifications based on language. Those in the larger group speak languages of the Mon-Khmer linguistic family related to present-day Cambodian. Some of these are *Baru*, *Katu*, *Cua*, *Sedang*, *Hrey*, *Bahnar*, *Koho*, *Stieng*, *Muong*, and *Ma*.

Those in the smaller group speak languages of the Malayo-Polynesian linguistic family that are related to Cham. The principal tribes speaking languages of this family are *Rhade*, *Jarai*, and *Raglai*.

But even within a language group, people of one village sometimes cannot understand those of another. If 10 to 20 miles of matted jungle trail separate the villages, there is not much communication between them and language differences develop.

Languages of both these two linguistic families, Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian, differ greatly from Vietnamese in at least one major respect—they have no differing tones, while Vietnamese does. Since tones are usually difficult for Americans, tribal languages should be easier for you to learn than Vietnamese.

Also, none of these people ever had a written language of their own until French and American mission-

aries began devising them, mostly in this century. Comparatively few tribespeople know how to read, so if you want to study their language you do so by ear not by book.

Census Problem

Between 300,000 and 700,000 are the figures given for the number of tribespeople in South Viet-Nam, but the higher figure probably is more realistic. The estimates vary so greatly because even when tribespeople can be persuaded to submit population figures to village authorities, they frequently exclude older people no longer able to work and children. Other census problems are the inaccessibility of some villages and the fact that many of them move their entire village every few years when they feel the land they have been using for planting has worn out.

Finally, some tribes exist on both sides of international boundaries without knowing there are boundaries. The Baru, for example, live in the Ben Hai River area in both North and South Viet-Nam, and there are some in Laos. There are Stieng in Cambodia, as well as in the Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and Quang Duc provinces of Viet-Nam. Borders are often in mountainous jungle with no indication where one country ends and another begins. Villagers changing their location may cross a border without realizing it.

The Spirit World

Despite many differences, some basic characteristics are shared by almost all of the tribespeople.

First of all, superstition and fear play a heavy role in their lives. Although Christian missionary efforts have made some changes, the great majority of tribespeople are animists or spirit believers. Followers of this ancient Southeast Asian religion believe that practically everything has its own spirit—a rock, for example, or a tree. Most of the spirits are unfriendly, and tribespeople take elaborate precautions to avoid antagonizing them.

Casting one's shadow on a particular rock, for instance, may offend the spirit of the rock, and cause it to take vengeance on the careless human. On the advice of a witch doctor, a tribesman will sacrifice a pig or even a water-buffalo to appease an angry spirit. On a single day one Koho village near the town of Di Linh in Lam Dong Province sacrificed 42 water-buffalo to make peace with the spirits. That was the economic equivalent of taking 42 brand new air-conditioned convertibles and pushing them over the edge of a cliff.

Wealth in Jars

Every tribal home has its gongs and jars, chiefly used for ceremonies and festivals. The gongs, as you

guessed, are for making noise; the jars hold various household supplies and are used to brew an alcoholic holiday drink for community celebrations, like the arrival of strangers, a buffalo sacrifice, or any other likely reason. Sometimes Americans have been invited to attend these ceremonies only to find that the guest of honor is expected to pay a modest sum for the alcohol. So—be prepared!

The mixture is brewed by putting the branch of a special tree or bush in the jar, then alcohol, and then filling the jar to the brim with water from a nearby creek. You then sit with the male villagers in a circle around the jar. Each person, in turn, beginning with the village chief, takes a generous swig from the jar through a bent, bamboo straw that is often over six feet long (everybody using the same straw, of course). As each person drinks, a designated villager uses a dipper to transfer water from a nearby pot to the jar, being careful to refill the jar to the brim each time. Thus, the drinking may continue indefinitely, yet the jar always remains full.

After the first round, you can stop drinking without giving offense. The drink is not strong, and should affect you only if taken in great quantity. These drinking celebrations often accompany animal sacrifices.

Tribal Hospitality

Besides almost universal superstition and fear of unfriendly spirits, another characteristic most tribes have in common is open-handed hospitality to strangers. If you arrive in a Ma village, for instance, you will probably be offered sleeping space in the chief's house as well as food.

Ma houses, like those of practically all tribespeople except the Jeh and Katu, are single-story dwellings raised several feet from ground level by pillars or stilts. Raising the house provides a shaded refuge from the sun underneath the house and discourages night entrance by wild animals such as tigers. The roofs are low and have center peaks.

The Ma build their houses as long as the hillside will permit. Some, though only about six feet wide, are over 120 feet long and accommodate several families. Each family has a separate entrance—consisting of stairway, platform, and doorway—along one of the two long sides of the structure. Each family also has its own hearth. But there are no partitions and you can see from one end to the other. Since there are no windows, the dim interior light comes from the doorways and hearths, and up through the floor. The flooring is made of slender bamboo strips spaced about a half-inch apart. This makes a handy ashtray and wastebasket, because you can spread the bamboo apart with

your fingers, and drop what you don't want onto the ground below.

The family's jars are lined up in a rack along the lengthy doorless wall, and above the jars hang the gongs. There is no furniture. The ceiling is high enough to allow you to stand up in the center, but not along the walls. At night smudge fires burn in every hearth, filling the house with thick smoke. This keeps out mosquitoes and other insects and provides some warmth on cold highland nights.

If you plan to visit tribespeople in any region you will receive an even warmer reception if you bring gifts of medicine or salt. Local aspirin is quite inexpensive and salt is extremely cheap, but tribespeople prize both items highly because they have almost no money.

Don't be too handy with your camera, especially if it is the kind that produces a print on the spot. Before trying to take any pictures, explain about the camera and if there is some reservation on the part of the subject—don't shoot! Many Vietnamese, like many of us, would be flattered to have their pictures taken and given to them right away, but tribesmen, because of their spirit beliefs, may become quite upset. To them you have captured their spirit and imprisoned it in the picture. One well-meaning missionary who handed a tribesman such a print was arrested by the whole

village and only set free after he had agreed to pay for a sacrificial pig in atonement.

Woman Proposes

One of the most advanced groups of tribespeople is the Rhade, who live in the provinces of Darlac, Quang Duc, Phuoc Long, Phu Yen, and Khanh Hoa. You may be working with members of this tribe and it will help you to know something of their customs. Like other tribes that speak languages of the Malayo-Polynesian linguistic family, the Rhade have a matriarchial society. The woman proposes marriage to the man, and the eldest daughter inherits her parents' property.

The Rhade houses are long and narrow like those of the Ma (sometimes as long as 400 feet) but they are sturdier, higher off the ground, and have an entrance at each end instead of many along one side. Both family and guests may use the front entrance, but the rear entrance is reserved for the family only. Whereas a Ma house is set in any direction depending on the hillside, the Rhade house is always built running north-south.

A special Rhade taboo is sneezing, which they believe irritates the spirits. If you are leaving a Rhade house, and someone sneezes, or even an animal, it is best to delay your departure for a few minutes until the spirits recover from their anger. You may notice that

many Rhade, like most other tribespeople, have the four upper front teeth missing. Formerly, when a tribal youngster reached the age of 11 or 12, these four teeth were either knocked out or filed to the bone as part of an initiation rite signifying entrance into adulthood. This custom is beginning to die out, however.

The Rhade have an oral history and a code of laws, both in poetic form. Since there was no written language, the epic and laws were passed down through the centuries by tribesmen who memorized them in entirety.

The legal code is well thought out and especially well suited to the Rhade way of life. It prescribes penalties for hiding serious matters from the village chief and for starting fires in the village. It establishes procedures for selecting a new chief, and for isolating lepers so they will not spread contagion. It regulates marriage and divorce.

The code stipulates penalties for those who set animal traps without warning others where the traps are located with the result that a fellow villager is injured. It states that madmen who commit crimes cannot be held responsible in the same way sane men can, and provides punishment for one act which an American would be most unlikely to get involved in—borrowing somebody else's elephant, and working it to death.



Saigon street scene shows blending of East and West.

GETTING AROUND

For a small country, Viet-Nam has a great variety of attractions—none of them far away from wherever you are. Saigon offers fascinating shops and markets; Hue, great sight-seeing possibilities. There is tiger and elephant hunting in the high plateaus, and sunning and bathing at the quiet white-sand beaches along the country's thousand miles of coastline. You may be able to visit a tribal village in a remote mountain area, or skin-dive from an island in the South China Sea.



The Majestic Hotel—landmark on bank of Saigon River.

Saigon—Cho Lon

Saigon is the capital and largest city of Viet-Nam. With its twin city of Cho Lon (meaning "big market"), it lies about 50 miles inland from the South China Sea on the navigable Saigon River. It is a busy commercial port and has all of the hustle and bustle of a port city plus a lot of color and confusion uniquely its own.

The water traffic on the river includes about 1,300 ocean-going vessels a year as well as assorted small boats, junks, and fishing craft. On the city streets the



National Assembly meets in this former opera house.

traffic is even more varied. There are motor scooters, pedicabs, bicycles, automobiles—and pedestrians in Asian or Western dress or something in between. From the sidelines, the relaxed patrons of the many sidewalk cafes sip their tea or beer and watch the world go by.

Saigon has museums where you can see relics of past civilizations, including the Cham. Or you may wander along Duong Tu Do (Liberty Street), the fashionable shopping center, theater, and cafe area.

The National Assembly and other offices of the Government are located nearby. At one end of Tu Do stands the post office and Catholic Cathedral. Not far from the Cathedral is the executive mansion, named Independence Palace.

A place you cannot miss is the Marché Central Saigonnais. Here, under a single roof of a clean-lined modern building, you can buy an amazing variety of things: Fish, brassware, vegetables, a length of cloth, and a hundred other necessities or luxury items.

The excellent restaurants of both Saigon and Cho



Traffic is varied, to say the least, at public market.



American girls say goodbye to beautiful Xa Loi temple.

Lon will tempt you. Try the specialties of the house but remember to be wary of raw vegetables or unpeeled fruits and *never* eat raw pork. Excellent French cooking vies with interesting Vietnamese dishes and in Cho Lon you will find Chinese delicacies such as sharkfin soup and Szechwan duck.

Hue

Hue, the former royal capital, is located at the other end of the country near the North Viet-Nam border. In the composed atmosphere of this traditional city you can learn a lot about the background of Vietnamese civilization and culture.

Be sure to examine the remains of the citadel built on the model of Peking. A moat surrounds *Thanh Noi*, the Interior City, and another encircles *Dai Noi*, the Great Interior, which once housed the emperor and his retinue. Nearly 100 buildings were clustered in this section until the Communists blew them up in 1945 in an attempt to sever Viet-Nam from its past.

The Government has restored a few of the buildings. You can see the Emperor's Audience Hall with its gilt throne and red, dragon-decorated pillars. A children's classical ballet troop, supported by the Government as a carryover from the royal ballet, still performs on festival days along the steps in front of the Audience Hall.



Moat-encircled palace at Hue dreams of past glories.

The Emperor's private apartments have been destroyed, but you can get an idea of what they were like by visiting the Queen Mother's compound, which remains fairly well intact.

In front of the royal citadel, sampans drift on the Perfume River as it makes its slow way to the nearby sea. On the night of a full moon, you can rent one of these sampans with its interior of costly wood and inlaid mother-of-pearl, hire a singer and four musicians, and float along the river to the music of the

singer's wails mingled with the twang of the instruments' strings. Small market-boats ply the river and will offer you bottled drinks, exotic fruits, and lotus buds freshly plucked from the imperial moat.

Hue's oldest building is a Buddhist temple, erected on the banks of the Perfume River by Nguyen Hoang in 1601 to commemorate a vision he had in which an old woman predicted that he would be the founder of a flourishing dynasty. He was 76 at the time, but the prediction came true. Later, in 1844, a seven-story tower, the Phuoc Duyen, was built in front of the temple. This is Hue's most famous landmark.

A pretty noontime picture in Hue is the girls of Dong Khanh High School gliding home for lunch. Dressed in white satin trousers and filmy white tunics, their black hair flowing to the waist in a loose queue gathered at the nape of the neck, they stream out of school with the fluidity of swallows.

The rolling hills south of the city contain thousands of tombs, including six royal ones. The latter are large park-like enclosures behind massive gates. Some have ponds, delicate trees, and even little temples. Many of the emperors began constructing their tombs long before death, and at least two of them, Minh Mang and Tu Duc, used them as a sort of summer palace for relaxing, contemplating nature, and writing poetry. Best preserved is the gracious enclosure of Minh Mang

with its many frangipani and flowering almond trees, and curving, lotus-clogged ponds.

Da Nang (Tourane)

Da Nang, formerly called Tourane, is a coastal town south of Hue, separated from Hue by a finger of the mountains that juts into the sea. The road between the two cities crosses a narrow pass where traffic flows only one way at a time. If you forget to time your trip with control of this traffic, you may find yourself caught in an hour or more delay.

The nearby beaches, across the Da Nang River, are wonderful recreation spots. China Beach has continuous surf; Spanish Beach is smaller and has no surf. The Cercle Sportif, a local private club at Da Nang, has three tennis courts for its members. Boats may be rented from their Vietnamese owners for river or ocean fishing. Sea bass, mackerel, and tuna are among the salt-water catches, while trout, perch, and pike are found in the river. Further inland lie the hunting areas where you may try for wild pig, deer, tiger, and rabbits.

Nha Trang

On down the coast lies Nha Trang, a resort popular with the Vietnamese. It is only about 280 miles north

of Saigon with good train or air connections, or about a 9-hour drive by automobile. Here you can enjoy all sorts of water sports—swimming, skin-diving, water-skiing—or make a trip to one of the offshore islands in the bay. You also can visit the aquarium and the Institute of Oceanography at Cau-Da, or see the old Cham tower, Thao Ba, now used as a Buddhist temple.

Dalat

Dalat is a small, exquisite mountain resort surrounded by pine-covered hills in central Viet-Nam. Situated at a 5,000-foot elevation it has cool nights throughout the year. But in the rainy season it's wet! By August the rains are falling almost continuously. Books, leather goods, food, and clothing mildew unless stored in a "hot closet" which has a light bulb burning constantly.

If you want to visit Dalat plan on it between November and April, to hit the dry season with its ideal weather and sun every day. You can get there from Saigon by auto in about a half a day's drive, or by bus, taxi, rail, or air.

Several hotels cater to tourists, all with adequate accommodations and prices somewhat less than you would pay for comparable accommodations in this country. The Dalat Palace Hotel is government owned

and operated. All rooms have telephones and private baths with hot water. Most of the other hotels do not have hot water.

The town is the home of the Vietnamese Military Academy, the Armed Forces Command and General Staff College, and the Geographic Institute of Viet-Nam.

It is center of a grand sightseeing area of mountains, lakes, and waterfalls, and has a lovely artificial lake of its own. Craftwork of the mountain tribespeople is on sale in the local markets. You can buy their baskets, jewelry, pipes, handwoven materials, and native musical instruments; even fresh orchids. As a matter of fact, Dalat is an orchid center. Some 1,500 varieties are grown in the spacious greenhouses of the town's many flower fanciers.

In Dalat you can hire a guide for a hunting trip, or for a trek to 7,000-foot-high Lam Vien Mountain. A jeep can make it up about three-fourths of the way. Then you test your climbing skill by finishing the trip afoot. The reward at the top is a panoramic view to the coast.

Vung Tau (Cap St. Jacques)

This interesting little town on the South China Sea is now officially called Vung Tau but is also still known by its former name of Cap St. Jacques. It is just a

hop, skip, and jump from Saigon and its beaches are excellent.

You can rent boats for fishing and there are good hunting areas to the north, where deer, wild pig, tiger, and elephants may be stalked. But get your license first from the Chief of Province in the area where you want to do your hunting.

Speaking of Beaches

Ha Tien, in the southwest corner of the country, has several fine beaches on the Gulf of Thailand. The architecture of this ancient Khmer town reflects Hindu influence but the boats in the bay are Chinese junks with batwing sails and the protective Cao Dai eye on the prows.

Many other good beaches are located along the central coast from Vung Tau near Saigon to Quang Tri, north of Hue. Nha Trang is a well known beach resort with a bay dotted with islands that provide hours of enjoyment for the skilled skin-diver. My Khe beach, outside of Da Nang, has the asset of a towering mountain to the north—guarding the entrance to the Bay of Da Nang—and the Marble Mountains immediately south.

Perhaps the loveliest beach of all is Dai Lanh about 50 miles north of Nha Trang in a spectacular cove

backed by high mountains. A small fishing village at one end of the cove is the only human habitation.

SERVICE WITH SATISFACTION

The Viet-Nam of today is not the Viet-Nam of the past nor of the future. As long as there is danger of Communist agents prowling its streets, Saigon necessarily is a tensely guarded "pearl of the orient," and until the last Viet Cong sniper has been smoked out of the bamboo thickets, much of the beauty of the provinces will be hidden from visitors.

But there are compensations. You who help the Vietnamese maintain their freedom will have many fine things to remember about the people and the country. You will have the satisfaction of sharing the experiences of a staunch and dedicated nation in a most critical period of its history. In a broader sense, you will be helping to block the spread of communism through Southeast Asia.

Your exemplary conduct—making a good compromise between the more informal ways of our country and the traditional ones of Viet-Nam—will do a lot toward bridging the gap between East and West. This is essential as the success of your mission requires that you build up a good relationship with the Vietnamese people. This can be done only through day-by-day association with them on terms of mutual confidence and



The art of Chinese lettering handed down from the past.

respect, both while doing your military job and in your off-duty hours. You'll find opportunity for recreation, but the Vietnamese will also appreciate a helping hand on local civic projects, such as improving sanitary, medical, or transportation facilities, and building a playground or school.

You won't find life dull in Viet-Nam if you stay tuned in on the wave length of people around you. You will see exotic places, build lasting friendships, and be of service to a young democracy—while fulfilling an important duty to your own country.

APPENDIX

Time

Viet-Nam is 12 hours ahead of our Eastern Standard time. For example when it is 12 noon, EST, in New York or Washington, D.C., it is 12 midnight in Viet-Nam. Also, when it is midnight in New York or Washington, it is noon, the next day, in Viet-Nam.

Money

Viet-Nam's unit of money is the *piaster* or *dong*. Notes are issued in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 piasters or dong. The rate of exchange fluctuates. For a tourist or visitor, the present rate is 75 piasters or dong to a U.S. dollar. Another

rate of exchange is used for official transactions and it is currently 35 piasters to the dollar.

Weights and Measures

The international metric system of weights and measures is used throughout Viet-Nam. Gasoline and other liquids are sold by the liter (1.0567 liquid quarts); cloth by the meter (39 inches); food and other weighed items by the kilogram (2.2 pounds). Distance is measured by the kilometer (0.62 mile); speed in kilometers per hour (25 k.p.h. equals 15 m.p.h.).

Distance and Speed Conversion

Kilometers	1	2	3	4	5	10	25	50	100	500
Miles6	1.2	1.8	2.5	3	6	15	31	62	311

Gasoline Conversion

Liters	3.8	7.6	11.4	15.1	18.9	37.9	56.8	75.8
Gallons	1	2	3	4	5	10	15	20

Auto Servicing

Both American and European automobiles can be purchased from authorized agents in Saigon, normally below stateside prices. Spare parts and servicing for most American cars are adequate. Prices for spare parts are about the same as in the United States, but the cost of labor is considerably less.

Driving in Viet-Nam, particularly in Saigon-Cho Lon, is extremely hazardous because of congested roads. Many Americans prefer to use commercial taxis rather than run the risk of accidents.

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Việt Nam

LANGUAGE GUIDE

VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE GUIDE

Some 27,000,000 people speak Vietnamese as their first language. The great majority of them live in Viet-Nam. Others are in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, France, and New Caledonia.

Vietnamese was first written in Chinese characters, then in the late thirteenth century, in a modified form called *chú nôm*. In the early 1600's, Portuguese and Italian Jesuit missionaries devised a system of writing Vietnamese with the Latin alphabet. Chinese characters and *chú nôm* continued in use through the early part of this century but were officially replaced in 1920 by Latin script. This is called *quốc ngữ* and consists of 12 vowel and 27 consonant forms.

The simple vowels are: a, e, i, o, u, and y. Modifications of these vowels add six more to the alphabet. The modifications are indicated by diacritical marks, like this: a, â, ê, ô, ó, ú. These diacritical marks are part of the letter and have nothing to do with word accent or tone quality.

The vowels are pronounced:

a—"ah" (long) as in pod

ă—"ah" (short) as in pot

â—"uh" as in but

e—"aa" as in pat

ê—"eh" as in pet

i/y—"ee" as in Pete

o—"aw" as in law

ô—"owe" as in low

ó—"uh" as in bud

u—"oo" as in coo

û—"u" as in "ugh"

Of the consonants, only the "d" has two forms. "D" with a line or bar drawn through it (Đ or đ) is pronounced like the English "d." The one without a line or bar is pronounced like our "z" in the north, and like a "y" in central and southern Viet-Nam. The president's name, properly written, has both "d's"—Ngô đình Diêm. The first is pronounced like our "d"; the second like a "z" or a "y" depending on which part of the country the speaker comes from.

Speaking Vietnamese

There is considerable difference between the way Vietnamese is spoken in various parts of the country. If you learn the southern accent, you may be able to understand people from the north but not necessarily those

from central Viet-Nam. Vietnamese in the central provinces of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An have an accent that even their fellow countrymen from other districts find difficult to understand. Hue, too, has its own geographically limited but highly specialized accent.

The sounds of many Vietnamese letters and letter combinations are familiar to English speaking people but a few others are quite difficult to learn, especially the initial "ng" and the vowel "u." To learn to make the "ng" sound, repeat our word "sing" several times, gradually dropping first the "s" and then the "si." To learn to pronounce the Vietnamese "u," say "you" and then broaden the lips as though about to smile, but without moving the position of the tongue.

An advantage of Vietnamese is that once you have learned the sound indicated by a given combination of letters, you know it wherever it appears.

Words beginning with "t" and "th" are pronounced alike except that there is an aspirated (or h) sound after the "t" in the "th." The same is true of words spelled with an initial "c" or "k" as compared with the aspirated "kh." The importance of knowing how to make this small but tricky distinction is plain when you understand

how greatly it changes the meaning of a word. *Tam* means three: *tham*, greedy. *Cam* is orange: *kham*, to suffer.

An "s" and "x" are both pronounced like the "s" in "soap" in northern dialect. But with a southern accent the "s" becomes "sh" as in "shot."

"Nh" is pronounced like the "ny" in "banyan."

Tones Change Meaning

Vietnamese is not a monosyllabic language though it appears so because each syllable is written separately. Often two or more syllables are joined to form new words, as in place names like Sai-gon and Ha-noi.

Also Vietnamese is tonal. In other words, the tone or level of your voice changes the meaning of a word. The word *ma*, for instance, has many different meanings depending on how you say it, and symbols are used to show the differences.

Word	Symbol	Tone	Meaning
ma	none	level or middle	ghost; to rub
má	´	high	mother; cheek
mà	`	low	but; that; which
mã	˘	waving or rising	clever; tomb

mã	~	interrupted	house; appearance
ma		heavy	rice seedling

The northern dialect has these six tones. The southern combines the waving and interrupted tones by pronouncing them in the same way and thus has only five tones. With one exception, tone symbols are placed above the principal vowel of the syllable. The heavy symbol (.) is placed under the principal vowel.

Here's how to use the different tones when talking:

Level tone is a monotone in the middle of the normal speaking range.

The high or high-rising tone starts above level tone and rises sharply.

The low-falling tone starts off in fairly low voice and falls rather slowly to the bottom of the normal range.

The waving or mid-rising tone starts at about level tone, dips very slightly, and then rises slowly.

The interrupted, or high-broken tone starts a bit above normal range, dips a little and then rises abruptly. During the rise the throat is constricted to cause a light, brief interruption of sound.

The heavy or low-dipped tone starts below the middle of the normal speaking range and very abruptly falls.

At this point an additional sound is produced by forcing air through the almost closed vocal cords.

Learn by Listening

You can't learn a foreign language, especially a tonal one like Vietnamese, from books alone. You learn it by listening to the way people around you talk and by speaking it yourself. Get a Vietnamese friend or someone else who knows the language well to give you lessons. Getting a good working command of Vietnamese is not easy, but the effort will reward you with a sense of accomplishment and a new feeling of confidence. Too, your ability to speak their language will win the respect of the Vietnamese people with whom you are associated.

USEFUL PHRASES

The word "you" varies in Vietnamese depending on the speaker and the person spoken to. The form used throughout this language guide is *ong*, but it means "you" only when addressing a man. Depending on the person you are addressing, you should replace *ong* with one of the following forms:

married woman	bà
---------------	-----

unmarried girl	cô
child (either boy or girl);	
girl friend; wife	em
close male friend;	
male servant	anh
female servant	chị

Greetings and Courtesy Phrases

Hello; Goodbye;

Good morning;

Good afternoon;

Goodnight.

How are you?

I'm fine.

I'm glad to meet you.

Please come in and sit
down.

Thank you.

Don't mention it;

It's nothing at all.

Excuse me, I don't under-
stand.

Please say it again.

Chào ông.

Ông mạnh giỏi chỗ?

Tôi mạnh như thường.

Tôi hân hạnh được gặp ông.

Mời ông vào ngồi chơi.

Cám ơn ông.

Không có gì.

Xin lỗi ông, tôi không hiểu.

Xin ông nói lại.

Do you speak English?

No I don't.

Can you understand me?

Yes, I can.

Ông nói tiếng Anh được
không?

Tôi nói không được.

Ông hiểu tôi được không?

Hiểu được.

Questions and Answers

Most of the following phrases represent highly idiomatic southern Vietnamese. You can compile your own list of nouns by asking the first question and getting the names of things you will most often need to know.

What is this?

It's a mango.

Which one?

Either one.

Who's there?

It's me.

It's only me.

What does it mean?

It has no meaning at all.

What kind of person is he?

He's a good man.

Cái này là cái gì?

Cái này là trái xoài.

Cái nào?

Cái nào cũng được.

Ai đó?

Tôi đây.

Chỉ có một mình tôi.

Nghĩa là gì?

Không có nghĩa gì hết.

Ông ấy là người thế nào?

Ông ấy là người tốt.

How do you work it?	
How do you do it?	Làm thế nào?
Any way.	Thế nào cũng được.
This way.	Thế này.
What else?	Còn gì nữa?
All finished; nothing else.	Hết rồi.
Who else?	Còn ai nữa?
You too.	Cũng có ông nữa.
What for?	Để làm gì?
Isn't that so?	Có phải không ông?
That's right.	Phải.
So I've heard.	Tôi có nghe nói như vậy.
Maybe.	Có lẽ.
I think so.	Tôi nghĩ như vậy.
I guess so.	Tôi đoán như thế.
What's the matter?	Chuyện gì vậy?
Nothing at all.	Không có chuyện gì hết.
I changed my mind.	Tôi đã đổi ý rồi.
I want to ask you a favor.	Tôi muốn phiền ông.
Dinner's ready.	Cơm dọn rồi.
You called the wrong number.	Ông gọi nhầm số.
What's new?	Có gì lạ không?

Nothing's new?	Không có gì lạ.
Who told you?	Ai nói với ông?
You yourself did.	Chính ông nói.

Miscellaneous Phrases

Let's go.	Đi thi đi.
Go away!	Đi đi.
Hurry up!	Mâu lên.
I'm just looking.	Tôi xem chơi.
That's fine;	
That's enough;	
I'll take it;	
Agreed.	Được rồi.

Quantity and Degree

How much is it?	Bao nhiêu tiền?
Not much.	Không bao nhiêu.
Only five <i>dong</i> .	Năm đồng thôi.
Five <i>dong</i> is too expensive.	Năm đồng mất lăm ông ạ.
I'll give you three <i>dong</i> for it.	Tôi trả ba đồng thôi.
They sell all kinds of fruit here.	Ở đây có bán đủ thứ trái cây.

I don't like to eat fruit
at all.

Time

What time is it?
It's four o'clock.
When did that happen?
Half a month ago.
August of last year.
When are you going?
In a while.
In a short while.
Soon.
Right now.
Which time?
Last time.
The first time.
Next time.
Do you go there often?
From time to time.
Every afternoon.
Whenever I can.
How long ago?

Tôi đâu có thích ăn trái
cây cà.

Mấy giờ rồi ông?
Bốn giờ rồi.
Việc ấy xảy ra hồi nào?
Cách đây nửa tháng.
Trong tháng tám năm rồi.
Chứng nào ông đi?
Một lát nữa.
Không bao lâu nữa.
Ít ngay nữa.
Bây giờ đây.
Lần nào?
Lần chót.
Lần đầu tiên.
Lần tới.
Ông đi đến đó thường không?
Thỉnh thoảng thôi.
Mỗi buổi chiều.
Lúc nào có dịp.
Được bao lâu rồi?

A long time ago.
A while ago.
Too long a time.
The other day.

Đã lâu rồi.
Hồi nãy.
Lâu quá.
Hôm nọ.

Location

Where do you live?
I live in Da Nang.
Where did you just come
from?
I came from Saigon.
Where do you come from?
I come from America.
Where are you going?
I'm going to the movies.
I'm going home.
Where have you been?
I'm on my way back from
the market.
Where is it?
Upstairs.
Downstairs.
Inside the house.

Ông ở đâu?
Tôi ở Đà Nẵng.
Ông ở đâu tôi?
Tôi ở Saigon ra.
Ông là người ở đâu?
Tôi là người Mỹ.
Ông đi đâu?
Tôi đi coi hát bóng.
Tôi về nhà.
Ông đi đâu về?
Tôi đi chợ về.
Ở đâu?
Ở trên lầu.
Ở dưới nhà.
Ở trong nhà.

Outside.
Over this way.
Over that way.
Way over there.

Ở ngoài.
Ở đây.
Ở đó.
Ở kia.

Military

general
lieutenant general
brigadier general or
major general
colonel
lieutenant colonel
major
captain
1st lieutenant
2nd lieutenant
soldier
sailor
airman

đại tướng
trung tướng
thiếu tướng
đại tá
trung tá
thiếu tá
đại úy
trung úy
thiếu úy
người lính
thuyền thủ
lính không quân

Days of the Week

Monday
Tuesday

Thứ hai
Thứ ba

Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday
today
tomorrow
yesterday

Thứ tư
Thứ năm
Thứ sáu
Thứ bảy
Chủ nhật
hôm nay
ngày mai
hôm qua

Numbers

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
20
25
100

một
hai
ba
bốn
năm
sáu
bảy
tám
chín
mười
hai mươi
hai mươi lăm
một trăm

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

6 December 1962

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NG: None.

USAR: None.

For explanation of abbreviations used,
see AR 320-50.

Navy: Special.

Air Force: S; X:

2d ADVON, APO 143,

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Marine Corps: Marine Corps List 7.

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OTHER NAVY RANKS



PETTY OFFICER
FIRST CLASS



WARRANT
OFFICER



CHIEF WARRANT
OFFICER



PETTY OFFICER
FIRST CLASS



PETTY OFFICER
SECOND CLASS



LEADING SEAMAN



LEADING SEAMAN



ABLE SEAMAN



SEAMAN

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CAPTAIN



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PILOT'S WINGS



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OTHER AIR FORCE RANKS



SERGEANT



CHIEF
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WARRANT
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MASTER
SERGEANT



SERGEANT



CORPORAL
FIRST CLASS



CORPORAL



AIRMAN
FIRST CLASS



AIRMAN
SECOND CLASS