

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.

## 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 a 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;  
August, celebrate the lantern festival;  
At the return of September, sell persimmons with the others;



*Tet Nguyen Dan (New Year) is observed quietly by some.*



*Tet Nguyen Dan is celebrated boisterously by others.*

October, buy paddy (unhulled rice) 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 1966—which is the Vietnamese year 4603—is designated by the combination of wood and horse, but you will commonly hear it referred to as “Year of the Horse,” just as 1965 was called the “Year of the Snake.”

## Annual Festivals

The chief Vietnamese festivals by the lunar calendar are:

- The New Year, *Tet Nguyen Dan*, 1st through 7th day of 1st 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 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 happy man with a good name like *Phuoc* (happiness) is preferable to a sad man or 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 pub-

lic 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!

## Religion Can Be Plural

Instead of saying 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.

Religion has been a significant factor in the Vietnam 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.



*Religion is important to the Vietnamese.*



*Buddhist rites are ages old.*



*Procession before Saigon's Catholic Cathedral.*

To get along in Vietnam 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 person 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 poor light by Vietnamese who follow the traditional ways.

Religion is an important element in the political views most Vietnamese have, and religious leaders in recent years have played an increasingly active role in Vietnamese politics.

**Confucianism.** Confucianism, a philosophy brought to Vietnam 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, the most important being 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.

**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. Buddhism was introduced into Vietnam about the 2nd century B.C. by Chinese and Hindu monks. 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 (Mahayana)* form has more followers than the *Lesser Vehicle (Theravada)* in Vietnam, as also 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 temples.

Lesser Vehicle believers follow the teachings of Gautama and regard him as the only Buddha. In the southern delta provinces of Vietnam, particularly in Vinh Binh, 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.

Pagodas, originally established as Buddhist monasteries and monastic study centers, now often serve also as social welfare institutions, and may include schools, orphanages, medical dispensaries, public libraries, and youth clubs.

Although the number of devout, practicing Buddhists in South Vietnam is relatively small, the great majority of the people have some sense of identification with Buddhism. In recent years, leading Buddhist priests (*bonzes*) have become increasingly active in political affairs and influential in the rise and fall of South Vietnamese governments.

**Christianity.** Christianity reached Vietnam 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 Vietnam are Catholics. This is the highest proportion of Catholics in any Asian country except the Philippines.

American Protestant missions have been in Vietnam 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 help in theological training.

**New Religions.** In addition to the religions and philosophies brought to Vietnam from other countries, new ones were developed there.



*This elaborate Cao Dai temple is near Tay Ninh.*

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.

At one time Cao Dai claimed a following of 3 million. Now the religion is less widely practiced, but you may still see Cao Dai temples throughout Vietnam. 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.

Hoa Hao is an offshoot of Buddhism that came into being in An Giang province in southwest Vietnam in 1919. 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 1947 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 the 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 officials who were chosen on the basis of education alone. The aristocracy of learning was the only aristocracy of any continuing importance in old Vietnam. 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.

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.

**Public Schools.** The present school system 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 and 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, 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 required for admission to the 5-year university program or to the advanced technical schools.

**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, other specialized governmental technical schools, and a school of applied arts, where the traditional fine arts of Vietnam are taught. These include goldsmithing, lacquer work, cabinetwork, and pottery making.

The National University of Vietnam in Saigon is the most important institution of higher education. There also are universities at Dalat and Hué, and several technical schools of university rank, including the National Institute of 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 Vietnam, and at least 1,000 to 1,500 Vietnamese students will be abroad in any year.

**Youth Movements** such as Boy Scouts, sports clubs, and sectarian organizations of the Christian and Buddhist youth have had a strong revival. A Cabinet-level agency under the Government is responsible for encouraging and supporting youth activities.

Since 1963 high school and university students have become increasingly interested and active in political and social matters. Their community services have included massive participation in relief operations after the disastrous floods of 1964 as well as many smaller assistance projects. Efforts are now underway to get Vietnamese youth even more involved in the vital task of preserving national independence.

## 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.

The painting, sculpture, and other arts of Vietnam 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.

The country is known for its woodcarving, mother-of-pearl inlay, lacquer and metal work. You can see the artistry of skilled metal-smiths 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.

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 Vietnam. Traditional mat decorations include the symbol for longevity,



*Dragons guard war memorial entrance in Saigon.*

and often the design includes bats or butterflies in the corners of the rug to signify happiness.

### Theater and Music

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 uses colorful costuming and scenery, and the plays are very tragic and dramatic. The modern theater,

which came into being around 1920 cuts to a minimum scenery, costumes, and stage effects, and the stories are less heroic and more realistic.

The music of Vietnam 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 classical 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 Vietnam's high plateau. They formerly lived along the coast of north and central Vietnam. About the time of Christ's birth, powerful nations like Funan and Champa forced them out of their coastal villages into the mountains. They are estimated to number almost 800,000.

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," which is understandably resented by them. Two terms much more acceptable to them are *dong bao thuong*, meaning "highland compatriot," and *nugoi 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 differ-

ences. Depending on the tribe, their skin color varies from extremely dark to slightly bronzed white. Some are tall and well-built, 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*, *Steing*, *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 missionaries 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.



*Rhade girls carry water home in gourds.*

## The Spirit World

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

First of all, superstitions 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.

## 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.

The drink 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. There are no partitions and you can see from one end to the other.

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.

## GETTING AROUND

For a small country, South Vietnam has a great variety of attractions. Saigon offers fascinating shops and markets; Hué, great sight-seeing possibilities. There are many beautiful white sand beaches along the country's thousand miles of coastline. Some are always accessible. Access to others depends on the military situation.

### Saigon—Cholon

Saigon is the capital and largest city of Vietnam. With its predominantly Chinese city of Cholon (meaning "big market"), it lies



*National Assembly meets in white building (left).*

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 ocean-going vessels as well as assorted small boats, junks, and fishing craft. On the city streets the 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 (Freedom Street), the fashionable shopping center, theater, and cafe area. 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 Saigon Central Market. 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 Cholon 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 Cholon you will find Chinese delicacies such as sharkfin soup and Szechwan duck.

## Hué

Hué, the former royal capital, is located at the other end of the country near the North Vietnam border.

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 Vietnam 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-



*The former imperial Palace in Huế.*

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.

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 singers' 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.

Hué'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 Hué's most famous landmark.

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 built by Minh Mang, with its many frangipani and flowering almond trees, and curving, lotus-clogged ponds.

## Da Nang

Da Nang is a coastal town 60 miles south of Hué, separated from Hué by a finger of the mountains that juts into the sea. The road between the two cities, which is not always secure for travel, 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.

## Nha Trang

On down the coast lies Nha Trang, about 198 statute miles northeast of Saigon. 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 Vietnam. 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.

The town is the home of the National Military Academy, the Armed Forces Command and General Staff College, and the Geographic Institute of Vietnam.

It is the center of a small sightseeing area of mountains, lakes, 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.

## 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 French name of Cap St. Jacques. It is about 50 miles from Saigon and its beaches are excellent.

### SERVICE WITH SATISFACTION

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 experience 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 Vietnam—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 South Vietnamese people. This can be done only through day-by-day association with them on terms of mutual confidence and 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 will find that life in South Vietnam can be frustrating, tense, and at times full of danger. But you will also find that it brings great rewards.

## APPENDIX

### Time

Vietnam is 13 hours ahead of our Eastern Standard time. For example, when it is 12 noon, EST, in New York or Washington, D. C., it is one a.m. the next day in Vietnam. Also, when it is midnight in New York or Washington, it is one p.m. the same day in Vietnam.

### Money

South Vietnam'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.

U.S. military and civilian personnel serving in Vietnam are paid in Military Payment Certificates (MPC's), issued in the same denominations as U.S. currency. The MPC's, also called "scrip", can only be used in official facilities, such as exchanges, commissaries, clubs, and messes.

Piasters may be purchased at official exchange points at the rate of 118 piasters for 1 dollar.

### Weights and Measures

The international metric system of weights and measures is used throughout Vietnam. 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
Miles.....	.6	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	76.8
Gallons.....	1	2	3	4	4	10	15	20

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## 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
- ộ—"uh" as in bud
- u—"oo" as in coo
- ụ—"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 "ch" or "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 a monosyllabic language. Each syllable expresses a distinct idea and therefore is a word in itself. Often two or more syllables are joined to form new words, as in place names like Sai-gon and Ha-noi.

Vietnamese is also 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.

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

ma	~	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	chi

### 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.

Please speak a little more  
slowly.

Please say it again.

Chào ông.

Ông mạnh giỏi chớ?

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?	Ông nói tiếng Anh được không?
No I don't.	Tôi nói không được.
Can you understand me?	Ông hiểu tôi được không?
Yes, I can.	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?	Cái này là cái gì?
It's a mango.	Cái này là trái xoài.
Which one?	Cái nào?
Either one.	Cái nào cũng được.
Who's there?	Ai đó?
It's me.	Tôi đây.
It's only me.	Chỉ có một mình tôi.
What does it mean?	Nghĩa là gì?
It has no meaning at all.	Không có nghĩa gì hết.
What kind of person is he?	Ông ấy là người thế nào?
He's a good man.	Ông ấy là người tốt.

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

Nothing's new?  
Who told you?  
You yourself did.

Không có gì lạ.  
Ai nói với ông?  
Chính ông nói.

### Miscellaneous Phrases

Let's go.  
Go away!  
Hurry up!  
I'm just looking.  
That's fine;  
That's enough;  
I'll take it;  
Agreed.

Đi thi đi.  
Đi đi.  
Mâu lên.  
Tôi xem chơi.  
  
Được rồi.

### Quantity and Degree

How much is it?  
Not much.  
Only five *dong*.  
Five *dong* is too expensive.  
I'll give you three *dong*  
for it.  
They sell all kinds of fruit  
here.

Bao nhiêu tiền?  
Không bao nhiêu.  
Năm đồng thôi.  
Năm đồng mắt lám ông ạ.  
  
Tôi trả ba đồng thôi.  
  
Ở đây có bán đủ thứ trái cây.

I don't like to eat fruit  
at all.

Tôi đâu có thích ăn trái  
cây cà.

## 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?

Mấy giờ rồi ông?

Bán giờ rồi.

Việc ấy xảy ra hồi nào?

Cách đây nửa tháng.

Trong tháng tám năm rồi.

Chừng 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 tới?

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 này.  
Ở đằng đó.  
Ở đằng kia kia.

### **Military**

general	đại tướng
lieutenant general	trung tướng
brigadier general or major general	thiếu tướng
colonel	đại tá
lieutenant colonel	trung tá
major	thiếu tá
captain	dạ úy
1st lieutenant	trung úy
2nd lieutenant	thiếu úy
soldier	người lính
sailor	thuyền thủ
airman	lính không quân

### **Days of the Week**

Monday	Thứ hai
Tuesday	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	một
2	hai
3	ba
4	bốn
5	năm
6	sáu
7	bảy
8	tám
9	chín
10	mười
20	hai mươi
25	hai mươi lăm
100	một trăm

**THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

Washington

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## SOME DO'S AND DON'TS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

*Do* be courteous, respectful, and friendly;

*Don't* be overly familiar with the Vietnamese.

*Do* learn and respect Vietnamese customs;

*Don't* forget you are the foreigner.

*Do* be patient with the Vietnamese attitude toward time;

*Don't* expect absolute punctuality.

*Do* appreciate what the South Vietnamese have endured;

*Don't* give the impression the U. S. is running the war.

*Do* learn some useful Vietnamese phrases;

*Don't* expect all Vietnamese to understand English.

*Do* be helpful when you can;

*Don't* insist on the Vietnamese doing things your way.

*Do* learn what the South Vietnamese have to teach;

*Don't* think Americans know everything.

# NAVY UNIFORMS OF VIETNAM



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER



CAP INSIGNIA



MARINE INFANTRY  
INSIGNIA

## OFFICERS



ADMIRAL  
OF THE FLEET



ADMIRAL



VICE  
ADMIRAL



REAR  
ADMIRAL



COMMODORE



CAPTAIN



COMMANDER



LIEUTENANT  
COMMANDER



LIEUTENANT



LIEUTENANT  
JUNIOR  
GRADE



ENSIGN



ASPIRANT

## OTHER NAVY RANKS



PETTY OFFICER  
FIRST CLASS



WARRANT  
OFFICER



CHIEF WARRANT  
OFFICER



PETTY OFFICER  
FIRST CLASS



PETTY OFFICER  
SECOND CLASS



LEADING SEAMAN



SPECIALIST



LEADING SEAMAN



ABLE SEAMAN



SEAMAN

# AIR FORCE UNIFORMS OF VIETNAM

## OFFICERS



CAPTAIN



CAP INSIGNIA



PILOT'S WINGS



LIEUTENANT  
GENERAL



MAJOR  
GENERAL



BRIGADIER  
GENERAL



SUB-BRIGADIER  
GENERAL



COLONEL



LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL



MAJOR



CAPTAIN



LIEUTENANT



SECOND  
LIEUTENANT



ASPIRANT



AIR  
CADET

## OTHER AIR FORCE RANKS



SERGEANT



MASTER  
SERGEANT



SERGEANT  
FIRST CLASS



SERGEANT



CORPORAL  
FIRST CLASS



CORPORAL



AIRMAN  
FIRST CLASS



AIRMAN  
SECOND CLASS