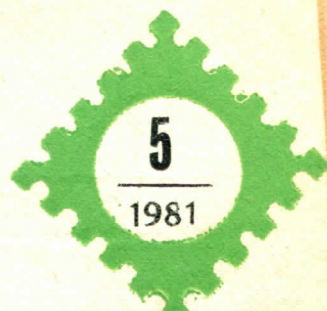


Vietnam courier



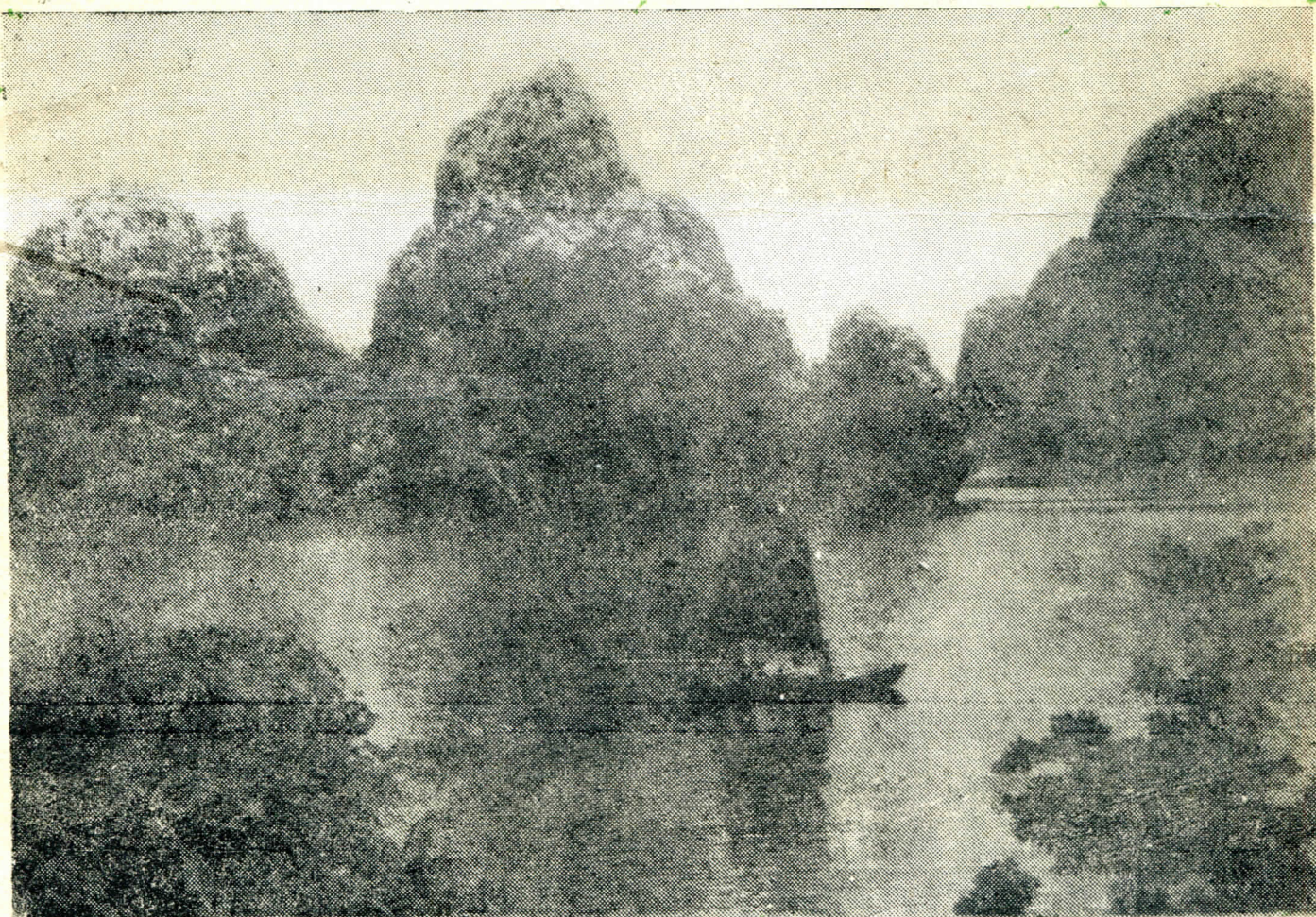
VOLUME 17
A MONTHLY REVIEW

● POLITICS

● ECONOMICS

● CULTURE

● SOCIETY



- EDITORIAL OFFICE: 46 Tran Hung Dao, Hanoi, SRV.
- DISTRIBUTED BY: Xunhasaba 32 Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi, SRV.

LANDSCAPES IN HA LONG BAY



1. Ga Choi (Fighting cocks) rock.
2. Dua (Chopsticks) rock.
3. Monkey Island.

Photos: PHAM TUE



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Front Cover:

- The entrance of Thuan Luon cave (Ha Long Bay)

Photo: HOANG DUC THU

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

GENERAL elections will be held in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam this April and in the People's Republic of Kampuchea, in the coming weeks. These general elections testify to the political strength of the two countries.

The economic resurrection of Kampuchea is undeniable. This country with vast and fertile lands is steadily building a life free of want for its people and is now busy developing other branches of the economy: handicrafts, industry, communications and transport, home and foreign trade.

The enemies of Vietnam continue to predict its economic collapse, especially as some targets of the 1976-1980 five-year plan are far from having been reached. But the evolution of the situation during the last few months prove that they are mistaken.

True, Vietnam has been facing many economic difficulties created by objective and subjective causes, which this journal has often dwelt upon. In similar circumstances, other governments may indeed have collapsed. Vietnam faced much greater difficulties in the early days of the revolution and in the two subsequent wars of resistance, but nevertheless managed to hold out. We fully realize that there is a long way to go before Vietnam achieves economic prosperity, owing to the terrible scars left by thirty years of war, by colonialism and neo-colonialism in both the North and the South. However, we are improving our grasp of what measures to take to improve economic management. Especially since the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee, the policies put forth are better adapted to the early stages of the transition to socialism and are best suited to the country's realities. These policies have helped to stimulate productivity by laying stress upon both the personal and the collective interest, while serving the whole of society. The first encouraging results of those policies give us confidence that the economic situation of Vietnam will now gradually improve.

As far as Southeast Asia is concerned, the most unstable country is certainly not Vietnam, as proved by the recent unsuccessful coup in Bangkok.

The Indochinese countries also include the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, besides Vietnam and Kampuchea. Observers are at one to conclude that in both the political and economic fields, this country is markedly progressing.

Historical events led to the division of Southeast Asia into two groups: the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries, as in Europe the Western and Eastern countries. Here as in Europe, the differences in the political and social systems should not interfere with peaceful co-existence, especially with economic and cultural cooperation between the two groups of countries.

The so-called "Kampuchean problem" was caused by the Chinese leadership which cannot swallow the bitter pill of defeat by the three Indochinese countries standing united in self-defence. It has nothing to do with the relations between the Indochinese countries on the one hand and the ASEAN countries, primarily Thailand on the other. Haven't the Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese countries many times repeated that the three Indochinese countries are ready to sign non-aggression and peaceful co-existence agreements with Thailand and other ASEAN countries? Hasn't the Kampuchean side suggested the establishment of an internationally supervised demilitarized zone between Kampuchea and Thailand?

Is it necessary to repeat that Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, during his visit to Thailand in 1978, openly stated that Vietnam strictly respects Thailand's independence and sovereignty, that it will not interfere in Thailand's internal affairs or support subversive groups in Thailand? On the contrary, Deng Xiaoping still obstinately refuses to withdraw his support to Maoist elements there.

Vietnam has no intention of permanently maintaining its forces in Kampuchea. Twice previously, Vietnam withdrew its troops once the common enemies of the two countries had been defeated. Once again Vietnam will withdraw its troops as soon as China stops threatening the independence of the three Indochinese countries and agrees to sign peaceful co-existence agreements with these countries on the basis of strict respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and

mutual benefit, good neighbourliness; and settling all disputes by peaceful means—as proposed by the Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese countries at the Conference held last January in Ho Chi Minh City. Such an agreement should stipulate that China stops supporting the Pol Pot regime and puts an end to all border clashes with Vietnam and Laos.

In Vietnam's opinion the ASEAN countries are unrealistic to blindly stick to their guns and demand an international conference on the "Kampuchean problem" in accordance with an erroneous UN resolution, despite the fact that Kampuchea, Vietnam, Laos and many other countries, have flatly rejected and refused to attend such a conference.

We sincerely put it to them that if they really aspire to peace and stability in Southeast Asia, they should use their influence to demand that China sign the above-mentioned agreements with the Indochinese countries.

It is heartening that an increasing number of people in the ASEAN countries realize that the present unstable situation is due to the contradictions between China and the Indochinese countries, not between these countries and the ASEAN countries. It is all the more heartening that there still is a trend for dialogues between the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries. That the Foreign Minister of Laos has been invited to visit Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in the coming days comes as an encouraging piece of news. It should be recalled that the conference of Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese countries held in January 1981 suggested convening a regional conference between the Indochinese countries and the ASEAN countries aimed at discussing questions of common concern for the benefit of peace, stability, friendship and cooperation in Southeast Asia. To this effect, there should be a preparatory meeting between a representative of the Indochinese countries and a representative of the ASEAN countries. The three Indochinese countries, on their part, have appointed the People's Democratic Republic of Laos as their representative at such a meeting.

There have been hopeful though belated signs that the measures proposed in Ho Chi Minh City to achieve peace and stability in Southeast Asia will eventually lead to a settlement.

25 April 1981

THE HOA PEOPLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1. Numbers and origins of the Hoa people in Southeast Asia

It is almost impossible to reach an accurate figure for the number of Hoa people in Southeast Asia at present. First of all as yet there has been no overall census simultaneously conducted in all the countries in the region. The latest figures available were recorded in 1930 in the book "The Chinese in Southeast Asia" by Victor Purcell and published in London in 1951. Secondly, the term "Hoa" is often misleading. It may refer to anyone who bears Chinese nationality and may also encompass those who have some blood relations with the Chinese but bear the nationalities of their countries of residence. That is why even the surveys recently undertaken in a number of Southeast Asian countries cannot determine the exact number of

they varied greatly, with differences of over ten million between extreme estimates: 25 million according to the Soviet paper *Izvestia*, 23 million according to Andreyev, 22 million according to S. Fitzgerald, and only 14.5 million according to the magazine *Asiaweek*. An official account published by China during a population census in 1953 gave the figures of 11.7 million overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. But this figure has also become obsolete. For a reliable estimate of the Hoa in Southeast Asia, we may use the total population figures for the Southeast Asian countries in 1975 and the percentages of the Hoa populations published by Stephen Milne in 1974, to reach the following table:

Population of Southeast Asian countries	Percentage of Hoa people	Number of Hoa people
Vietnam		
North : 25,000,000	0.5 %	125,000
South : 24,000,000	5.5 %	1,320,000
Laos : 3,260,000	2 %	65,200
Kampuchea : 7,300,000	6.5 %	474,500
Thailand : 42,000,000	11.3 %	4,746,000
Indonesia : 129,000,000	2.5 %	3,725,000
Malaysia : 11,100,000	34 %	3,774,000
Philippines : 11,200,000	1.5 %	618,000
Singapore : 2,200,000	75 %	1,650,000
Burma : 28,800,000	1.5 %	432,000
Total :		16,929,700

Hoa people in the region. Lately, in an article on the Hoa in Southeast Asia published in 1974, R. Stephen Milne had to rely upon the same Purcell figures. In 1978 when the Hoa struck the headlines, a series of figures about the Hoa people were published. But

These figures, for each country, almost coincide with those published by the Far Eastern Economic Review in June 1978. Thus, it can be assumed that there are approximately 17 million Hoa in Southeast Asia, more than 80% of whom live in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

These Hoa, however, do not constitute a homogenous ethnic grouping. Linguistically, they are divided into five main communities: Fujian, Chaozhou, Guangzhou, Xia and Hainan. The Hoa of Fujian origin live mostly in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines while those of Chaozhou are to be found mostly in Thailand, Kampuchea, Laos and Malaysia. The Xia live mainly in Indonesia and Thailand. The Hoa in Southeast Asia are also differentiated into two categories according to their birthplace: those born in their countries of residence and those born in China. The former category is estimated at 80% of the total, the rest having migrated to Southeast Asia early this century. The latter category is gradually declining as time goes by.

2. Major migrations of the Hoa to Southeast Asia

The Hoa people began migrating to these parts a long time ago. It can be assumed that the first migrations took place in the third century B.C. But their comings and goings became more frequent from the 15th century onwards. They came mostly by land to trade with, invade or settle in neighbouring countries. Under the Song dynasty (10th-12th centuries) and the Yuan (13th century) Chinese began trading with the Indonesian archipelago but trading did not really flourish until the 14th and 15th centuries under the Ming who decided to build a powerful naval fleet. A big wave of migration and resettlement by the Hoa started in 1664 when the Qing overthrew the Ming in China. Repression by the Qing of the popular uprisings in the southern provinces of China, where the movement to resist the Qing and restore the Ming rapidly grew, and the state of war there, were the main reasons for this first large-scale migration by the Hoa. The second wave occurred in the 18th century along with the growing presence of Western powers in Southeast Asia. With the East Indies falling under the control of

Holland this region became a trading and resettlement centre for the Hoa people. The Malay Peninsula's turn came when Penang (1785), Wellsley (1800), Singapore (1819) and Malacca (1825) became British colonies.

The Hoa arrived behind the British flag in Malaysia, Sarawak (1841) and North Borneo (1881). By 1871 about 100,000 Hoa had already settled in the British colonies in the Malacca Straits, from which they moved to other countries. In Thailand alone, the Hoa population was estimated at 1.5 million in 1850. The third major wave of migration took place in the early years of the Qing dynasty when the Western imperialist powers began to establish their colonies throughout Southeast Asia. The Hoa migrants constituted a huge labour force with which to exploit the riches of these colonies. Whereas the previous migrations chiefly involved traders, from 1850 onward most migrants were labourers and impoverished peasants recruited from Fujian and Guangdong provinces. This migration was facilitated by the Taiping uprising in China (1850-56), by the abrogation, under Western pressure, of the Qing's ban on emigration, and also by the encouragement of immigration by the colonial powers in Southeast Asia.

A major feature of this third migration, especially from 1920 onward, was the growing number of women among the migrants. This brought about a gradual balance between the number of men and women in the Hoa communities abroad and a gradual decrease of inter-marriage between the Hoa and the local people. In Thailand, there were 205,470 men as against 54,724 women in a Hoa community in 1919. But in 1947, a survey of another community counted 319,196 men and 157,386 women.

Mention should be made of further migration during the Chinese civil war which opposed the Communist Party to the Guomindang, and in 1949 after the Communist Party took power in China. No figures concerning this wave of migration are available but it was no doubt substantial, especially in capitalist circles.

According to C.P. Fitzgerald, the migrations of the Hoa to Southeast Asia, spontaneous from

the start, have continued throughout the past 200 years and more. They involved traders, religious people, adventurers, political refugees and peasants. They were effected in disregard of the policies of the settling countries and sometimes in spite of bans and restrictions.

The newcomers usually depended on their linguistic communities for a living in the first years. Most of them adopted the professions already practised by their communities. For instance, the Xia went in for farming, the Hainan people for coffee trading, the Chaozhou people for grocery trade. More often than not they took up trades rarely practised by the local people, such as commerce in Thailand. At present, 70 per cent of the retail trade network in Indonesia is controlled by the Hoa for reasons mentioned above and also because the Dutch colonial administration banned them from farming and public office and kept them in a separate community or used them as economic intermediaries between the colonial capitalists and the local people. Hence, typically the Hoa in Southeast Asia are thought of as merchants, financiers, retail dealers... in short, as people who know how to handle money. Nevertheless, in countries with high proportions of Hoa people, they also practise other trades. For instance, in Malaysia, the Hoa own 20 per cent of the coconut and tea growing areas and 26 per cent of the rubber plantations.

Even in Indonesia where the Hoa had long been denied land ownership, they now form a high proportion of the farming population in East Sumatra.

In recent years when the Southeast Asian countries began to industrialize, more and more Hoa have invested money as well as manpower recruited among their own communities in industry. At the same time, the number of Hoa industrial workers has risen constantly.

Due to their occupations, the Hoa in Southeast Asia, except those engaged in farming, are usually concentrated in major towns or industrial centres. This gives foreign visitors the impression that they lead a life quite apart from the local population. In fact, they have been assimilated to the local society to various extents

depending on the duration and location of their residence. This assimilation was somewhat easier before 1920 than now, probably due to the fact that before 1920 women accounted only for a very small proportion of the migrant Hoa, whence the more frequent inter-marriages between the Hoa people and the local population. This can be clearly seen in the case of the Hoa dubbed "Baba" in Malaysia or in the "Peranakan" community in Indonesia. These communities actually consist of descendants of Hoa people who settled there long ago and married local women. Many of them were converted to Islam. They speak the local dialects, adopted the local nationalities and in most cases have no intention of returning to China. Nevertheless, they are not one hundred per cent Indonesian or Malaysian. Besides these "territorial communities" there are also the "Totok" (thoroughbred) communities comprising those Hoa immigrants whose settlement in Indonesia is relatively recent. They usually live in the same area and marry among their own communities. They are usually more enterprising and hard working than the locally born Hoa.

Nowhere probably have the Hoa assimilated more deeply with the local population than in Thailand. This is because they were able to penetrate the ruling circles of Thailand which always escaped Western colonisation. Such a process was not possible in other countries where the rulers were British, French or Dutch colonialists. In Thailand, granting high posts in Court to Hoa immigrants dates a long time back, probably to the 15th century. In the 17th century, many Hoa were appointed governors or chief judges. Also in the 17th century joint business ventures between the Thai Court and Hoa traders were vigorously encouraged, especially under King Prasat Thong. These connections led to many marriages between upper class Hoa families and the Thai aristocracy — marriages of money and power. By the very fact of their appointment to important posts in the Thai Court, the upper class Hoa became somewhat alienated from the rest of the Hoa communities. Worse still, they did not let any opportunity pass to exploit their own compatriots. Then, in 1910, after his coronation, King Vajiravudh launched an anti-Chinese campaign in Thailand, regarding the Chinese as "Eastern Jews". This campaign

went to such lengths that a scholar stated that: "Thai nationalism takes its source from the hostile attitude to the Chinese ethnic minority." By 1920 when Hoa women began their massive immigration into Thailand the Hoa there had already established the foundations on which could develop a community of their own. Meanwhile, the alignment between the upper class Hoa families with the Thai ruling circles continued. Thus, it can be safely concluded that the assimilation of the Hoa in Thai society occurred mainly among the upper classes. The rate was negligible among the working people even though by 1976 only 309,941 Hoa had registered as foreign residents. Clashes between

3. Political attitudes of the Hoa people in Southeast Asia towards China

Whether or not they have taken the local nationality and whatever the extent of their assimilation, the Hoa in Southeast Asia still feel the need to maintain some relations with mainland China. These relations are expressed in a variety of ways, from total political loyalty to a vague notion of cultural affinity.

Political loyalty was first expressed when the Manchu overthrew the Ming to establish the Qing dynasty in China. The resistance movement against the Qing and for the restoration of the Ming in Southern China spread to the pockets of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, through the Chinese fleeing abroad to avoid Qing repression. They formed the first support bases for the anti-Qing resistance and provided political asylum for the resistance forces. Even after the anti-Qing resistance died away in 1680 anti-Qing feelings still lingered and were institutionalised in the clandestine organisations of the Hoa communities in Southeast Asia. When the nations in Asia awoke to nationalism, the Hoa communities in the region also began to turn their attention to political events in China. This awareness was most manifest in the movement amongst the Hoa to learn the "national language". At the same time, with their economic might they also became an important base for the 1911 Xinhui revolution. From then onwards they focussed their political and cultural attention upon China. Accordingly, before the outbreak of World War II, responding to the appeal of the Chinese authorities,

the Hoa and Thai communities continue until today.

In Indonesia such assimilation is hardly noticeable since over a long period the rulers were Dutch, not local. Interestingly enough, no inter-marriage has ever been recorded between the upper class Hoa there and the Dutch. Among the other circles, the extent of naturalisation is also much less than in Thailand. Up to 1977 there remained 972,000 Hoa workers in Indonesia and about 800,000 Hoa bearing no nationality among a total of nearly 4 million Hoa in this country. In the Philippines, about 300,000 Hoa (out of a total of 620,000) refused to adopt the local nationality.

the Hoa in the Southeast Asian countries gave their full backing to the boycott of Japanese goods. Culturally, they eagerly accepted anything imported from China, especially the new education system introduced by hundreds and thousands of teachers from the mainland.

Their loyalty to mainland China was also expressed in the money they sent back to their homeland. Before World War II these sums amounted to 100 million US dollars a year, China's second most important source of foreign exchange after foreign trade. It began to decrease only after the outbreak of the conflict between the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang. The Hoa in Southeast Asia went through a period of uncertainty in their political allegiance until the Chinese Communist Party took power in China. Thereafter, both Beijing and Taiwan exerted themselves to win their political support. But in the end Beijing got the upper hand. According to E. Williams in the book "The Future of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia" (McGraw Hill, New York, 1966) in the 50's among the Hoa communities in Southeast Asia, 10% were for Beijing, 10% were for Taiwan while 80% remained uncommitted. In the 60's, however two-thirds were for Beijing and one-third for Taiwan. In Thailand, according to Andreyev, at present about 60% of the Hoa people support Beijing, 30% support Taiwan and 10% are uncommitted. In the Philippines where the majority of the Hoa were pro-Taiwan in the 50's and 60's, the Taiwanese em-

bassy has now been moved to a small house named "Pacific Economic and Cultural Centre".

But even with regard to Beijing, political loyalty varies in degree from one group to another among the Hoa communities. According to a study by the AP Bureau in Southeast Asia, many Hoa in the region refuse to side completely with Beijing and are too concerned with getting rich to fully yield to Beijing's pressure. An official of the Hoa Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines said: "We are not afraid (of Chinese pressure). We need not worry about it. We are Filipinos." Former Thai Foreign Minister Phichai Rattakul, a fourth-generation Hoa, once declared: "If Thailand turns communist I strongly believe that there will be massive departures by the Hoa. But they will not move to China because most of them are businessmen who believe in free enterprise."

However, whereas the Hoa in Southeast Asia are highly differentiated in their political affiliations to China, culturally and sentimentally they retain a complete Chinese identity, within both the working masses and the capitalist circles. According to Donald E. Willmott, a distinction should be drawn between "cultural nationalism" on the one hand and "political nationalism" on the other. There may be a number of Hoa in Southeast Asia who are not politically loyal to Beijing but have always nurtured feelings, however vague, towards China as their homeland and are proud of being Chinese. Some whose families have been living in Southeast Asia for eleven generations now continue to regard themselves as having been born and having grown up in some obscure village in Southern China. To quote a young Hoa owner of a journal in Southeast Asia: "Anti-communism is meaningless to us provided the communists leave us alone. Don't forget that for us the most important word in this world is 'homeland'. As soon as our children begin to babble we teach them the sentence: 'We are Chinese.'"

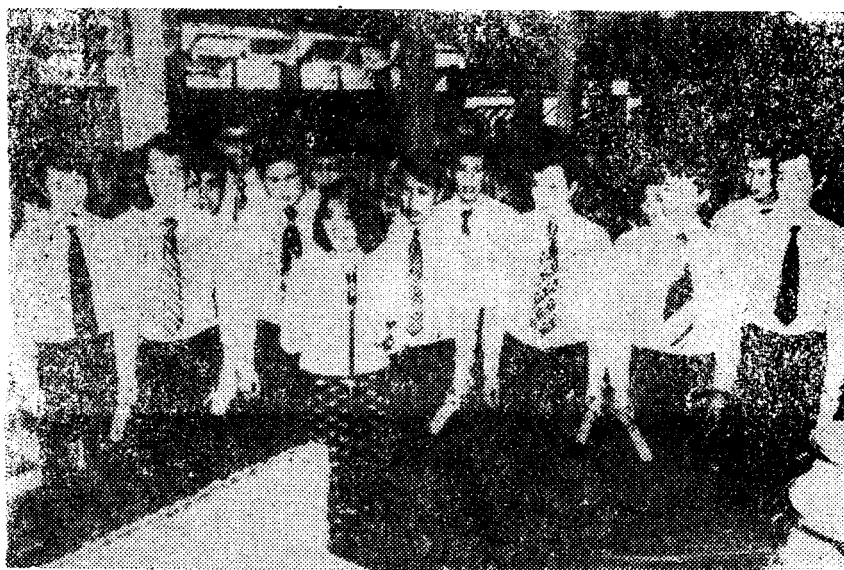
In many instances, the link between the overseas Chinese and their homeland is felt only as a cultural link even though they may be very vague about the nature of Chinese culture. A Hoa intellectual in Indonesia

(Continued on page 25)

Kampuchea:

MEDICO-SANITARY ACHIEVEMENTS

(1979-1980)



At the first graduation ceremony for medical doctors under the new regime.

TWO years have elapsed since Pol Pot's genocidal regime collapsed. Observers of all political complexions have testified to the country's rapid recovery. The medico-sanitary efforts deployed have played a central role in this process, and are all the more impressive that they took place within the context of a society shaken to its very roots.

Upon liberation the population suffered from denutrition and grave deficiencies resulting from four years of forced labour and acute food shortages. Cases of cholera were reported in several

provinces. Malaria and tuberculosis were rife.

All maternity homes, all the country's 62 hospitals and research centres had been left to waste, and their buildings and equipment smashed. The same was true of the Medical and Pharmacological Faculty, and all the secondary medical schools. There were practically no stocks of medicines. Teachers, doctors and nurses had suffered the same fate as the rest of the population: some were massacred right at the beginning, and the others, driven out of the towns and forced to do hard la-

bour, were killed or died of disease and exhaustion. The breakdown of survivors in January 1979 was as follows: 56 doctors, 28 dentists, 29 pharmacists, 249 midwives and 716 State nurses. Not a single one of the country's 19 "agrégé" lecturers had escaped the massacre. All the survivors were spread throughout the countryside.

Pol Pot only tolerated "barefoot doctors", trained in three months. Indeed he claimed, in a report to the cadres of the Eastern provinces, that "to know how to read, to know French are not necessary; social origin alone is important. Cultural levels are of no significance, as they will not help us cure people". As a result, 80% of patients died in these "hospitals".

These are the ruins on which Kampuchea undertook to build a new medico-sanitary system which now covers the whole country, with the aim of serving townspeople and country people alike. To this end the people's energies were mobilised around the surviving medical personnel, while the international aid was used to best effect.

Very rapidly hospitals were restored and re-opened in Phnom Penh and all the provincial and district centres. Phnom Penh has 8 centrally-run hospitals, including one specialising in paediatrics and another in tuberculosis. Some provinces, such as Koh Kong, Battambang, Kompong Cham and Pursat, even have two hospitals each. 90% of the villages (1,148 out of 1,286) have infirmaries and maternity homes. Not counting the latter, the country now has 6,000 hospital beds (1).

Emphasis has also been placed upon training hospital staff.

The survivors were immediately dispatched to the various hospitals by the Health Ministry. By July 1979 a central nursing school had opened in Phnom Penh to train auxiliary staff. One year later, 256 nurses graduated there. Provincial schools were also opened. After one year's preparations, the Medical and Pharmacological Faculty re-opened on 7 December 1980, attended by the surviving students: 506 medical students and 222 pharmacology students, spread amongst the various years, up to the 6th in medicine and the

5th in pharmacology. In June 1980, 8 doctors of medicine and 9 pharmacists graduated, and 27 and 18 respectively in January 1981. The teaching medium was French. A commission was set up to elaborate a curriculum in the Khmer language for the first year of the coming academic year.

In 1981 Kampuchea has 160 Doctors of Medicine, dentists and pharmacists. All included, there are about 10,000 medico-sanitary staff at all levels.

Three pharmaceutical factories have been restored. Production in the first two years reached 150 tonnes of injectable serums, of various medicines in the form of ampoules, pills, syrups, eye-washes, etc. The provincial hospitals try to produce serums and medicines themselves. The pharmaceutical departments set up have processed 2,500 tonnes of international medical aid in medicines and equipment.

The medical staff has got down to the job of restoring the population's health with truly revolutionary ardour. Ten million cases have been dealt with and prescrip-

tions given. The hospitals have admitted several tens of thousands of patients. Mass vaccinations prevented a cholera epidemic in May 1980. Measures to counter malaria were taken right from the start. Following the initial emergency measures, a national, long-term programme was launched with the help of Vietnamese experts. Anti-tuberculosis teams were organised, and are working with help from the WHO.

The measures, achieved in record time, are all to the credit of the Kampuchean staff, of the leadership of the National United Front and the People's Revolutionary Council, without ignoring the crucial role of international aid, of Vietnam, the USSR, the other socialist countries, and of international organizations such as UNICEF, ICRC, OXFAM, etc. In particular, right from the start, the Vietnamese Ministry of Health sent medicines, medical equipment and, above all, a sizeable contingent of doctors and technicians to help their Kampuchean colleagues treat patients, stop epidemics, restore hospitals, train personnel and organize the medico-sanitary network.

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However, two years are not enough to eliminate the consequences of a regime such as Pol Pot's. Social diseases are still rife: malaria, tuberculosis, trachoma, psychic ailments, etc. Everywhere present, the medico-sanitary network must nevertheless be further consolidated. Pharmaceutical production is far below the levels required.

Kampuchean cadres are busy consolidating the network and expanding it with centres of epidemiology and prophylaxis, of malaria and tuberculosis prevention, while constantly seeking to improve the personnel at all levels.

Prophylaxis and general hygiene are emphasized, along with protecting the mother and child. The aim is to progressively eliminate malaria, to get tuberculosis and other social diseases under control and take steps to prevent them. The manufacture of drugs from local raw materials is encouraged, as well as the study of traditional medicine.

The Kampuchean people is courageously confronting these difficult and complex tasks. And doubtless the international community will continue to provide a much needed and appreciated help.

LE VIET CHUNG



A mobile medico-sanitary team in Kompong Chhnang province.

Photos: SPK

1. In 1968, the most prosperous year, for a population estimated at 7 million, there were:

— 60 hospitals, health stations and treatment centres, public and private, with a total of 600 beds.

— 500 medical doctors, 90 pharmacists, 50 dentists, 1,200 midwives and 2,700 nurses.

The total medico-sanitary staff was about 7,000 strong.

HIS MANY NAMES AND TRAVELS

RESearch on the many identities Ho Chi Minh assumed in his revolutionary activities abroad is far from complete. It will probably continue for quite some time.

*
* *

Ho Chi Minh was born on May 19, 1890 at Hoang Tru, his mother's native village, in Kim Lien commune, Nam Dan district, Nghe An province. His father came from Kim Lien village, in the commune of same name.

When he was a child his parents called him *Nguyen Sinh Cung*. *Cung* is pronounced *Coong* with the local accent.

In 1901 he changed his name to *Nguyen Tat Thanh*.

Early in 1901 Thanh gave up his studies and left Hue for Phan Thiet, where he taught at a private school named Duc Thanh. He stayed at the job for only a short while before moving to Saigon, where he worked as a labourer waiting for an opportunity to go abroad.

At noon on June 2, 1911, Thanh applied for a job on board the *Amiral Latouche Tréville*, a liner of the French company *Chargeurs Réunis* (United Shippers), anchored at Nha Rong Quay, Saigon. His application was accepted.

The following day Thanh, now known as *Ba* (ba, in Vietnamese, means third, or the third child), began his work on the ship. His wage book was made out in his new name, *Van Ba*.

The ship set sail on June 5. *Van Ba* was on his way.

The ship called at Singapore on June 8, Colombo on June 14, and Port Said on June 30. Throughout this journey *Van Ba* worked as both stoker and cook's boy.

The ship then called at Marseilles (July 6) and Le Havre (July 15). As the ship had to stay at Le Havre for repairs *Van Ba* was employed by the ship's captain as a gardener at his home in Saint Adresse, a small town near Le Havre.

Late in 1912 *Van Ba* got a job on a French freighter plying the African coast. He was thus able to see

Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Guinea and Dahomey (now Benin). The French-language Congolese paper *Le Combat* on September 12, 1969 reported that early in 1913 *Van Ba* visited many places in the Congo including Pointe Noire in Central Congo, which later became Congo-Brazzaville. The route followed passed through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Atlantic.

In late 1913 he crossed the Atlantic and arrived in the United States. He stayed in New York for some time and worked at various jobs in Brooklyn. In a talk in Hanoi in 1961 with a Black American peace fighter, Robert Williams, and his wife, Mabel Williams, Ho Chi Minh recalled that while in New York he once went to Harlem to attend a Black meeting. He had also visited San Francisco.

From the United States *Van Ba* returned to France. In early 1914 he went to Britain where he stayed until the end of 1917. In Britain he was known as both *Nguyen Tat Thanh* and *Van Ba*, but usually signed *Tat Thanh* in his letters to Phan Chu Chinh, a well-known Vietnamese patriot. In Liverpool Thanh got a manual job. In London he was variously hired to clear snow at a school, sweep the underground, or serve in a hotel. He joined the Union of Overseas Labourers in a movement in support of Ireland's patriotic struggle.

Thanh returned to France on February 3, 1917 with the intention of taking a direct part in the movement of Vietnamese residents and the French workers movement. To earn his keep he tried many jobs, improving and enlarging photographs, painting doors and shop-signs, drawing for a Chinese antiques shop, etc.

In 1918 he joined the French Socialist Party and helped reorganize the *Hoi nhung nguoi Viet Nam yeu nuoc* (Association of Patriotic Vietnamese), a consciousness-raising group for expatriate Vietnamese.

In 1919, on behalf of the Vietnamese residents in France he sent his *Ban yeu sach cua dan toc Viet Nam* declaration, an eight-point petition demanding recognition of democratic rights and equality for Vietnam, to the Versailles Conference. He became well-known with his new *nom de guerre*, *Nguyen Ai Quoc* (Nguyen the Patriot).

Nguyen Ai Quoc read Lenin's "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", and opted for Lenin and the Russian October Revolution. At the 18th Congress of the French Socialist Party held in

the city of Tours in December 1920 he took an active part in the debates, voted for the Third International, thus becoming a founder of the French Communist Party. He was responsible for the founding of the *Union intercoloniale* in 1921. In 1922 he published the French-language paper *Le Paria*. He also wrote regularly for the French Communist Party paper *L'Humanité* and for *La Vie Ouvrière*, the central organ of the *Confédération Générale des Travailleurs*. His most famous work at that time was his *Procès de la colonisation française* (Indictment of French Colonial Rule). This, and most of his other writings were signed under the pen name *Nguyen Ai Quoc*.

In May 1923 Nguyen Ai Quoc travelled to Germany.

On June 30, he left Berlin for the Soviet Union. The name he used on his passport was *Tran Vuong* (Chan Wang). With the help of French and German workers he was able to get through the imperialist blockade, and arrived in Petrograd (now Leningrad) in July the same year. This first visit to the land of the October Revolution was to remain an unforgettable experience. After a month's stay in Petrograd he travelled to Moscow, the capital of the world's first socialist country. Unfortunately he was not able to see Lenin, who was then seriously ill.

Pending the Fifth Congress of the Communist International Nguyen Ai Quoc studied the Soviet system and the experiences gained in building the Communist Party. At the Tenth Congress of the Peasants' International held on October 12-15, 1923 where according to some sources he was also known as *Song Man Tcho*, Nguyen Ai Quoc was elected to the Presidium of the Central Committee.

Lenin died on January 21, 1924. Nguyen Ai Quoc paid his final respects to the great leader and published many articles dealing with his thoughts and achievements, in *Pravda* (January 27, 1924), *Le Paria* (July 27, 1924), the *Workers of Bakinski* (No. 16, 1925), *The Siren* (January 21, 1926), etc. All these articles were published under the name Nguyen Ai Quoc.

Nguyen Ai Quoc attended the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow from 17 June to 8 July 1924, and was elected executive member of the Eastern Bureau. Later he participated in conferences of the Women's International, the Youth International, and the Red Relief International.

Nguyen Ai Quoc arrived in Canton, China, in late 1924, where he was variously known as *Ly Thuy*, *Vuong* or *Nguyen Hai Khach*. To earn his living he sold newspapers and cigarettes. Later he worked as a reporter for the Soviet news agency *Rosta*. In his reports to the Executive Committee of the Peasants' International he used the aliases *Lou Rosta* and *Lee Rosta*. Writing in the Chinese-language *Canton Daily* he signed himself *Vuong Son Nhi* and *Truong Nhuoc Trung*. In an open letter he wrote on April 9, 1925, in which he strongly attacked Nguyen Thuong Huyen as a "pseudo-revolutionary", he used the initials *L.T.*

According to a British author, Nguyen Ai Quoc also called himself *Vuong Dai Nhan* (Wang Ta Gien) in his contacts with foreigners in Canton.

Nguyen Ai Quoc had two missions in Canton: to build revolutionary movements in Southeast Asia as instructed by the Eastern Bureau of the Communist International, and organize the peasantry in various Asian countries including China—an assignment from the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Peasant's International on July 31, 1925.

He also helped found the *Union of Oppressed Peoples in Asia* and was in contact with the Secretary of the *General Federation of Trade Unions in the Pacific* and the *Union against Imperialism for Independence and Freedom*.

To lay the foundations for a political party of the Vietnamese working class he opened a school to provide political training to cadres, set up the *Viet Nam Thanh Nien Cach Mang Dong Chi Hoi* (Vietnam Revolutionary Youth League), published a pamphlet entitled *Duong Kach Menh* (Path of Revolution), and ran a weekly, *Thanh Nien* (Youth).

Nguyen Ai Quoc was the name he used in most of his reports, letters and documents sent to the Central Committees of the Communist International and the Peasants' International. He occasionally used the aliases *Nilovsky* or *Nilovsky (N.A.K.)* instead. Nguyen Ai Quoc also used *Nilovsky* as an address in Canton. One report on a conference of workers and peasants dated May 2, 1925 in China bore the signature *Howang T. S.*

Following Jiang Jieshi's (Chang Kai-shek's) betrayal in April 1927 Nguyen Ai Quoc found it impossible to continue his stay in Canton. Together with Borodin he moved to Hankow and then to Hong Kong and Shanghai. In May he made a second trip to the Soviet Union.

Nguyen Ai Quoc worked in Moscow for some time before being sent to Berlin by the Communist International to help form a union against imperialism in Germany. He used the occasion to study German. In a report to the Executive Committee of the Peasants' International on a document about the movement of the Chinese peasantry sent from Berlin on February 3, 1928, he signed the alias *Louis*. Later he travelled with Numzunberg, a German comrade, to Brussels for an international conference against imperialism held at Chateau Edmond. While in Brussels he stayed at *Le Vegetarien*, an inn near Chateau Edmond. It was there that he wrote a book condemning colonialism in the Congo, which was widely circulated in Belgium.

Soon after the conference Nguyen Ai Quoc left Brussels and began a tour of Switzerland, Italy and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), which ended with his secret return to France.

In the Autumn of 1928 he went to Thailand. He now called himself *Chin*, and was addressed by his compatriots as *Thau Chin* (Thau, in Thai, means Old Man). During his many trips in the country he hid his identity under many pseudonyms, such as *Nguyen Lai*, *Tho*, *Nam Son*, *Tin*, *Tran Chinh*, *Tong*, *Thau Chin*.

engaged in diverse activities, from setting up a school for Vietnamese children to agitation within the Vietnamese community. He wrote his song *Tran Hung Dao*, which runs: "As long as a Vietnamese remains, Vietnam's mountains and rivers will still live on."

Towards the end of Autumn the following year Nguyen Ai Quoc left Thailand for Hong Kong where he called a conference to merge the three communist organizations then existing in Vietnam into a single party, the Communist Party of Vietnam. He sent out the delegates' credentials under the pseudonym *Vuong*. The founding conference, presided over by Nguyen Ai Quoc in his capacity as a representative of the Communist International, was held from February 3 to 7, 1930, in the small room of a worker in Kowloon, Hong Kong.

On February 25, 1930 he wrote a letter to his comrades in the Soviet Union asking them for materials with which to write a book on the Soviet Union. He told them to address their reply to *Victor Le Bon*. The book, *Nhat ky chim tau* (Diary of a Shipwreck), was completed later that year. It is an introduction to the socialist regime in the Soviet Union and an appeal to the Vietnamese people to follow the path of the October Revolution.

On February 27, 1930 he wrote to the German Bureau of the Communist International, applying for a press card made out in his new alias, *L.M.Wang*, as a correspondent of *Die Welt*.

The following day he wrote to the Union against Imperialism, asking for materials to be sent to Mr. *O Lee*, Hong Kong. He also requested the International Office of the Communist International to contact him and send him materials. He gave his name as *Paul*, Hong Kong.

Following the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam in February Nguyen Ai Quoc made a second trip to Thailand in March. The next month he went to Malaysia. On May 1, he arrived in Singapore. He returned to Hong Kong to supervise the merger of Vietnam's communist organizations and help provide leadership to the revolution inside the country. In October that year he presided over the first meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, held in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, on February 19, 1931, under the pseudonym of *V*, he sent a report to the Communist International entitled "*Red Nghe Tinh*" in which he praised the heroic struggle of the workers and peasants of Nghe-Tinh provinces during the 1930-31 revolutionary upsurge.

He carried out his activities and wrote articles under such pseudonyms as *Tong Van So*, *Tong Thieu To*, *Victor*, *Victor Le Bon*, *V*, *K.V.*, *K.V.V.*, *Wargon*... Hounded by the police, he was arrested on June 6, 1931 at his house, No. 186, Tam Lung Street. Thanks to the devoted intervention of the lawyer Loseby, he was released in Spring 1933, and left Hong Kong for Macao and Shanghai.

In Spring 1934, he left Shanghai for Vladivostok then took the train to Moscow. This was his third visit to the Soviet Union. On October 1, 1934, under the name of *Linov* and introduced by the Communist International, he attended courses at Lenin Univer-

sity, a Party school to train leaders of various communist and workers' parties throughout the world.

While studying at Lenin University, under the pen name of *Lin*, he wrote a letter on January 16, 1935 to the Eastern Bureau of the Communist International proposing that the study of Marxism-Leninism be organized for cadres and party members in colonial countries.

Also under the name of *Lin*, he attended the seventh Congress of the Communist International held from July 25 to August 21, 1935 in Moscow, as a delegate of the Eastern Bureau.

In Winter 1938, he went to China in an attempt to find a way to return to Vietnam. At the end of 1938 under the name of *Ho Quang*, he travelled to Xi'an, then Yanan and Guilin.

From China, in 1939, he sent nine articles which were published in "*Notre Voix*" (Our Voice), the organ of the Vietnamese Communist Party, under the pen name of *P.C. Lin*.

Early in 1940, he left for Kunming, to try to get in touch with the Party Central Committee and seek a way of returning home. In this period, he bore the names of *Ho Quang*, *comrade Tran*, *comrade Vuong*, *Lin*, *P.C. Lin*.

After thirty years abroad, on February 8, 1941, he set foot once again on his native land at Pac Bo (Cao Bang province) and under the names of *Gia Thu* and *Thu Son*, worked with the Party Central Committee to lead the national liberation and revolutionary movement.

In August 1942 (1), under the name of *Ho Chi Minh*, he went to China to get in contact with the Vietnamese revolutionary forces there. However, as soon as he crossed the border, he was arrested by Jiang Jieshi's forces. He was detained for over one year in thirty prisons in thirteen districts. It was then he wrote his famous "*Prison Diary*".

In September 1943, as no proof could be produced against him, he was released from prison and returned to Pac Bo in July 1944.

In May 1945, under the name of *Ong Ke*, he travelled from Cao Bang to Tan Trao (Son Duong district, Tuyen Quang province).

On August 25, 1945, from Tuyen Quang he moved to Hanoi.

In May 1946, under the pen name of *Q.Th.*, he wrote a long article stretching over several issues of the newspaper *Cuu Quoc* (National Salvation) on military strategy.

On May 31, 1946, he left the country for France at the invitation of the French Government. He left France on the morning of September 18, 1946.

From October 25, 1946 to December 13, 1946, under the name of *Q.T.* he wrote six articles on military matters, published in *Cuu Quoc*.

Then the French began to show their true intentions. The war broke out throughout the country. Early in 1947, together with the Party Central Committee and the Government, Ho Chi Minh left Hanoi for Viet Bac to continue the struggle.

Despite his huge responsibilities, he always paid attention to building a new society, a new people. Under the name of Tan Sinh he wrote a pamphlet entitled "*Đoi Song Moi*" (New Life).

In June 1947, under the name of A.G., he wrote the article "Good and bad cadres" printed in the newspaper *Su That* (Truth).

Under the pen name of X.Y.Z., he wrote the pamphlets "*Improving our Style of Work*" in October 1947, "*Against Boasting*" in December 1949, and "*There is no Painless Remedy*" and five articles in 1950.

His article "Against Excessive Use of Slogans" was carried in *Su That* on March 15, 1949 under the name of G.

Between May 30, and June 2, 1949, under the name of *Le Quyet Thang*, he wrote four articles for *Cuu Quoc* entitled "The Meaning of Industriousness", "The Meaning of Thrift", "The Meaning of Integrity" and "The Meaning of Fairness?"

On June 14, 1951, under the pseudonym of C.B., he wrote the article "The Great Soviet Union" for *Nhan Dan* in which he spoke of the heroic struggle of the Soviet people against fascism. Between March 1951 and March 1957, he contributed many articles to *Nhan Dan* under the name of C.B.

In 1951, under the pen name of *Nguyen Du Kich* (Nguyen-The Guerilla), he translated "*Underground Obkom*" by Federov, an interesting book reviewing the experiences of guerilla warfare in the Soviet Union.

Also in 1951, he used the pen name D.A. to write the article "Which Side Is Strong, Which Side Is Weak!" for *Cuu Quoc* in which he affirmed that the socialist camp would eventually win, along with other articles for *Cuu Quoc* and other papers.

In October 1953, he published his article "The Hydrogen Bomb" in *Nhan Dan* under the pen name of C.N.

In November 1953, under the initials D.X. he wrote the article "The Japanese People in their Struggle against the US Imperialists" in which he praised the fighting spirit of the Japanese against the American occupation of Japan.

After nine years of resistance, North Vietnam was liberated; from Viet Bac he returned to Hanoi on October 11, 1954.

Under the pen name of H.B., the June 29, 1955 issue of *Nhan Dan* printed his article "Ngo Dinh Diem's Democratic Liberties" in which he exposed Diem's repression of the South Vietnamese people.

In June and July 1955, he led a delegation to the Soviet Union, China and Mongolia.

In 1957, as head of a Party and State delegation, he visited Korea, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Romania and Albania.

Signing the initials H.L. he wrote in the December 30, 1957 issue of *Nhan Dan*, the article: "Families against Communism, an Organization for the Division and Repression of the South Vietnamese People".

In the May 15, 1958 issue of *Nhan Dan* using the initials L.T., he penned the article "The Economic Situation of South Vietnam" in which he attacked the artificially induced prosperity of the South under the US-Diem regime.

In October 1958, in his article "A New Failure of the US Imperialists", signed T.L., he argued that imperialism in general and US imperialism in particular and its lackeys was declining and doomed to failure.

In 1958, under the pseudonym of *Tran Lua* he wrote various articles and pamphlets, in particular the pamphlet "*Revolutionary Ethics*".

In February 1959 he led a Government delegation to Indonesia.

In November 1957 and November 1960, he headed the Party delegation attending the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow.

In September 1959, *Nhan Dan* published, under the pen name of Ph. K.A., his article "A 23,000-kilometre Vacation", a digest of his diary depicting the land and people of the Soviet Union as he had seen them in his long trip there in 1959.

On April 27, 1960, under the pen name of *Tuyet Lan*, he translated from the French the article "Three Bottles of Champagne" by Jean Fort, member of the French Communist Party, relating Nguyen Ai Quoc's activities in Paris in the period 1920-1921.

In 1961, under the pen name of T. Lan, he wrote his book "*Discussions on the Move*".

On August 5 of that year, *Nhan Dan* carried his article "Inquiry Made to the International Commission of Control and Supervision", signed Th. Lan.

The February 4, 1963 issue of *Nhan Dan* published his article "Greeting Our Party's 33rd Birthday", signed *Le Thanh Long*.

For the June 26, 1963 issue of *Nhan Dan* he wrote the article "The International Women's Congress" under the pen name of *Thanh Lan*.

Under the name of *Chien Si*, he wrote the article "The US-Diem Regime Will Be Defeated, Our People Will Win" in *Nhan Dan* in September 1963, and other articles from June 15, 1963 to June 22, 1968.

In January 1964 *Nhan Dan* published under the pen name of *Dan Viet* (Citizen of Vietnam) his article entitled "Open Letter to the British Foreign Secretary".

Under the pen name of *Le Nong*, he wrote an article on agricultural production on June 2, 1964 and five others between September 15, 1964 and June 23, 1966. Almost all his articles signed *Le Nong* dealt with agricultural matters.

In the April 30, 1966 issue of *Nhan Dan*, he wrote the article "Reply to US Senator Mansfield" under the name of *Le Ba*.

And in *Nhan Dan*'s August 10, 1966 issue, he wrote the article "President Johnson Is Guilty of Heinous Crimes" signed *Le Lap*.

Under the pseudonym of H.C., *Nhan Dan* of January 14, 1967 published his article "The Giant Is in A Dilemma".

This was perhaps the last pen name he used before he passed away on September 3, 1969.

THE LAP and THANH NAM

1. According to some documents, he used the name of *Ho Chi Minh* as early as 1940.

HO CHI MINH'S COMPLETE WORKS

A great leader of the Vietnamese working class and nation, an outstanding figure of the international communist and workers' movement, one of the world's most experienced national liberation fighters, Ho Chi Minh has bequeathed the Vietnamese Communist Party and people a treasured heritage — his writings.

Carrying out Resolution No. 07, NQTW dated 7 January 1978 of the Vietnamese Communist Party's Political Bureau, *Su That* Publishing House together with the Ho Chi Minh Museum and the Commission for the Study of Party History have made arrangements to edit and publish Ho Chi Minh's complete works under the guidance of a specially formed Council headed by Truong-Chinh. The book comprises ten volumes covering Ho Chi Minh's writings and speeches from 1920 to 1969.

All his works are pervaded with the central thought that "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom".

An ardent patriot inspired by Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh soon grasped the essential character of his epoch — the epoch of proletarian revolution ushered in by the Russian October Revolution. Meanwhile, he understood that the proletariat of the colonial powers and the peoples of the colonies have a common enemy, imperialism, which, to be defeated, requires a revolutionary struggle in both the colonial and the colonized or

dependent countries. These revolutionary movements are closely interconnected, but national liberation revolutions may take place independently from the revolutionary movements in the colonial countries; which they profoundly influence. Part and parcel of the proletarian revolutionary movement throughout the world, the national liberation movement must follow the path of proletarian revolution — the path of the Russian October Revolution — to gain a decisive and lasting victory.

In propounding these views, Ho Chi Minh greatly contributed to the spread of Marxism-Leninism in the colonies, and blazed the trail for the liberation of oppressed nations throughout the world.

Having shown the way to national emancipation, Ho Chi Minh tirelessly struggled to set up a Vietnamese working class party so as to seal the unity of the Vietnamese and proletarian revolutions.

Upon the Party's foundation (1930), Ho Chi Minh mapped out an overall strategy for the Vietnamese revolution. In his writings, he argued that the Party should wage a new-type democratic revolution aimed at overthrowing the colonialist rulers and their feudal puppets, establishing national independence and distributing the land to the tillers, then advancing to socialism and eventually reaching the ultimate goal — communism — in Vietnam.

This strategy highlights the close relationship between the national and socialist movements in the specific conditions of our country, a semi-feudal colony.

In order to make it possible for the movement to seize power, Ho Chi Minh and our Party had to find solutions to such important strategic and tactical problems as establishing the leadership of the Vietnamese working class, forging the worker-peasant alliance, while carefully distinguishing friend from foe in each revolutionary stage; setting up a national united front; organizing the people's armed forces; co-ordinating political with armed struggle, and leading the movement for national salvation to a general insurrection to take power in the whole country.

Together with our Party, Ho Chi Minh called for a national, popular and determined resistance against French colonialist aggression, mainly relying upon our own forces. He simultaneously advocated resistance and national construction — gradually redistributing the land and creating the conditions to advance to socialism.

When the North of our country was liberated and the South was still dominated by the US imperialists and their stooges, Ho Chi Minh helped to map out the dual strategy of national people's democratic revolution in the South and socialist revolution in the North. He stressed the relation and interaction between these two tasks, which thus had to be carried

out simultaneously and focus upon achieving national reunification and completing the national people's democratic revolution nationwide.

Regarding the socialist revolution in the North, President Ho Chi Minh emphasized: "The North must advance to socialism. The major characteristic of the transition period is advancing with a backward agriculture straight to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development."

Proceeding from this, he set forth the basic tasks of socialist construction in the North of our country: "We must gradually take the North to socialism, with a modern industry and agriculture, an advanced culture and science; we must strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat to achieve the historic tasks of the revolution, thoroughly liquidate human exploitation, develop socialist production relations, build socialism and advance to communism; we must simultaneously carry out the three revolutions: revolution in production relations, scientific and technological revolution, and ideological and cultural revolution; we must transform our economy and build a new one—construction being the key and long-term task; we must carry out socialist industrialization and fully grasp that our most important task is to build the material and technical base for socialism."

Ho Chi Minh stressed the point that socialism and communism are built by the working people, and that the working people's collective mastery must be fully brought into effect. Ho Chi Minh's concept of collective mastery lies at the very heart of the new regime—the regime of socialist collective mastery presently advocated by our Party.

Ho Chi Minh also stressed the importance of forming new, socialist people: "To build socialism, first of all we must have socialist people." These new socialist citizens are revolutionary workers fully committed by their qualities and capacities to the tasks of national construction and defence.

Ho Chi Minh also held definite ideas about the need to develop a new Vietnamese culture—a culture inheriting and promoting the fine traditions of the nation, while also assimilating the leading cultural and scientific achievements of our time

Ho Chi Minh's works reflect his profound concern for all things relating to the victory of the revolution. In particular, he always considered building the Party an extremely important task, a decisive factor in all circumstances. In this respect he adopted a creative attitude always in keeping with Marxist-Leninist principles and the strategic tasks of each revolutionary stage.

Ho Chi Minh's opinions and his special concern for Party building were decisive in moulding our Party along true Marxist-Leninist lines, worthy of leading the Vietnamese working class and nation, and a staunch component of the international communist and workers' movement.

Together with building a working class party of a new type, Ho Chi Minh also provided imaginative insights into other basic problems of the revolution, such as the peasant question and the worker-peasant alliance, building a national united front, establishing the revolutionary power, the question of revolutionary violence and the people's armed forces; the relationship between patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

Ho Chi Minh's complete works also reflect his views on revolutionary virtues. He constantly promoted the qualities required for our Party, our people and our army, regarding them as an important aim for a revolutionary: "Revolutionary virtues consist in fighting for the Party and the revolution throughout one's life. That is the basic point." All should strive for industriousness, thrift, integrity, public spiritedness, self-reliance, uphold collective mastery, discipline and solidarity

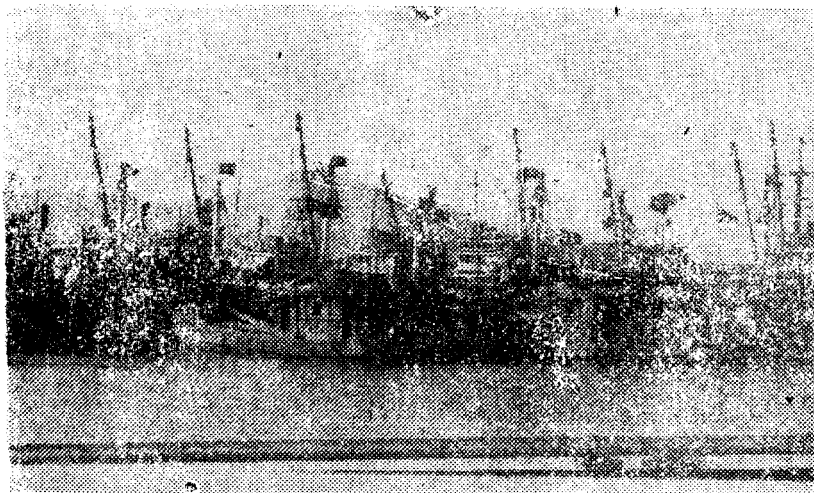
Ho Chi Minh always linked the training of revolutionary virtues to the Party's political tasks in each revolutionary stage, to the constant heightening of the cadres', Party members' and people's ability to serve the revolution.

Ho Chi Minh's complete works do not only reflect his theoretical thinking but are also of great literary value. They symbolize our nation's patriotic and revolutionary literature. Many of these works have become models of socialist realist literature.

Ho Chi Minh's complete works are a treasured collection of great theoretical and practical value. Serving as a beacon for the oppressed peoples of the world, they light up the road to national emancipation and revolution in Vietnam and elsewhere, while also standing as a major contribution to the theoretical treasury of Marxist-Leninist thought.

PHAM THANH

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AT THE CON DAO FISHING COMPANY



Fishing boats of the Con Dao fishing company.

MANY people still remember Con Dao (Poulo Condor) as an ill-famed penal detention centre for political prisoners set up by the French colonialists. Its notorious "tiger cages" built under the US-puppet regime once shook public opinion throughout the world. These islands have now become a thriving fishing centre. The Con Dao fishing company has attracted the attention of the whole country for over a year as an advanced and rationally organized enterprise.

Significant figures

The Con Dao fishing company was set up in 1976 soon after the liberation of the South, when the Con Dao archipelago was still a district of Saigon City. It started its activities with 13 old boats and a modest capital of 300,000 *dong*. It was joined by six private fishing-boat owners. After three years of operation, it had 40 wooden boats of a total net tonnage of 2,250 tonnes, propelled by outboard motors totalling 8,500 HP. Its property amounted to 11,400,000 *dong* and it employed 400 workers.

In its first year, 1976, the company in fact registered a loss, catching only 870 tonnes of fish. Nevertheless, this was already a great achievement, since in the first quarter of that year, when the company was still run by a production collective, the fish net-

ted only amounted to 20 tonnes, while expenditure was very high. The losses had many causes: bad labour organization, low working morale, losses of fish and petrol through theft. But only one year later, the fish caught rose from 2,860 tonnes in 1977 to 4,370 tonnes in 1978 and 7,060 tonnes in 1979. Total output value increased from 230,000 *dong* in 1976 to 7,600,000 *dong* in 1979, nearly 27-fold. Profit in 1979 amounted to 1,800,000 *dong*, 6 times the initial capital. In 1979, one kilogram of fish was netted for every *dong* invested, and the monthly income of a worker was 645 *dong*.

These are heartening figures, as formerly nearly all State fishing enterprises worked at a loss, including those set up twenty years ago.

However, the Con Dao fishing company is no different from other State production units in that all the means of production belong to the State, except those contributed by the six private fishermen working jointly with the company; it functions according to State plans, selling most of its products to the State at controlled prices, and sends its profits to the State. So what is the secret of its high profits and productivity, of the good living conditions it guarantees for its workers, of the abundant wealth it produces for society?

Labour and labour organization

The first workers employed by the company had worked for private boat-owners before liberation. They were tough and skilful, and were quite sympathetic to the socialist system. However, they were prone to bad habits left by neo-colonialism: seeking personal gain by any means open to them including theft, then squandering their money without any care for their future.

The company set itself the task of helping these workers understand their shortcomings and display a new attitude towards their work, and to realize that they no longer were hired labourers but masters of their own enterprise, that they had the right to participate in management and the duty to build their enterprise. Conversely, the company created conditions for them to enjoy a decent material and cultural life despite the hard times and to raise their cultural standards. Little by little, the enterprise recruited other workers among the youth, less affected by the old regime and more responsive to change. Many have proved their skill and their qualities as new workers: industriousness, honesty, public mindedness. They now form the nuclei of the company and many of them have been chosen as skippers, the youngest being only 17 years old.

To select the skippers, the company first sounds out the opinions of the workers; when the skippers are appointed, they are free to choose their crew. Each fishing boat has as small a crew as possible, and each crew member does many jobs concurrently: this lightens the boat and gives it more space to the catch. A list of regulations is posted up on each fishing boat calling for solidarity, co-operation and mutual assistance, while also insisting upon discipline and the skipper's rights. Such regulations are a novelty in a society whose economy is one of small producers. Naturally of course, such regulations are meaningless if not accompanied by material guarantee of their application.

Cost accounting and material incentives

The Con Dao fishing company soon introduced a cost accounting system. Before each fishing trip, the consumption of fuel, ice and food of each boat are estimated. On behalf of the crew the skipper signs a contract to receive the money advanced. After each trip, accounts are settled, including the expenses incurred such as depreciation and repairs, before wages are paid to the crew.

From the start, the management of the company looked for ways of improving the wages and bonuses system and introducing material incentives alongside ideological education to link the workers to their produce. But the problem was how to implement such measures. As an experiment, the Con Dao company signed contracts with the skippers and their assistants, while continuing to apply the system of wages and bonuses stipulated in the standard regulations. The result was that the skippers looked for ways of improving production and urged their crew to work according to regulations. But production still remained low, and the workers were not paid according to the labour they contributed.

After sounding out the opinions of the workers, the company introduced a new system of remuneration, according to which the workers share out their production surplus among themselves.

After every trip, from the value of the catch each boat deducts 15% for maintenance fees, 3% for management costs, along with other expenditure incurred such as fuel, ice, salt (for storing the fish) food, purchase of new equipment, boat maintenance and repairs, fishing tackle... The remaining money is split into half, one half going to the State budget, another being divided up amongst the crew according to the following ratios: 20 points for the skipper, 15-17 points for his deputy, 12-14 points for the mechanics, 10 points for each crew member; the apprentice sailors get one-third or half the income of a worker.

This kind of remuneration which binds the workers to what they produce has had many repercussions. The crews have been reduced: 6-9 men for a boat below 250 HP, 10-15 for a larger boat; all the crew members have a clearly-defined job and work 15-17 hours a day during each trip to sea. The boats only carry whatever fuel, food, ice and salt are required for each trip.

This method has enabled the Con Dao fishing company to improve its economic efficiency: for each tonne of fuel five tonnes of fish are caught, while other enterprises get only one tonne of fish per tonne of fuel. The work on the boat has been rationalized: for example the fish caught early on in the trip is dried to lighten the boat, and only the later catches are kept fresh in store rooms. The fish is also handled more carefully: the workers use their hands instead of shovels or rakes to fill the baskets so as not to spoil the fish. The boats now work in closer co-ordination with one another: when one breaks down, its fuel, ice and salt are transferred to the others which continue to fish, and share their income with the damaged boat which is used for storage.

This method of work encourages the crews to work. Trips by each boat doubled, from 140 in 1977 to 289 in 1979. Due to the increase in fishing trips, the quantity of fish hauled in went up very rapidly. The company has begun to sign contracts for engineering, carpentry, boat building or repairs, and the workers of these departments have seen their pay increase as a result. As the company's income grew, it introduced a bonus system to increase the productivity of workers on fixed wages, who now sometimes double their wages. According to the economists, the present wage structure still has many irrational features, but pending future improvements, this method of remuneration has been proved to be the most efficient.

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Preparing the fishing nets for a new trip.

Photos: DUC TRUONG

The two fishing enterprises based at Con Dao and Vung Tau merged into the Vung Tau - Con Dao State fishing company in early 1980 after these two areas were joined to form the special Vung Tau - Con Dao area placed under direct central administration since 1979. The new enterprise is 1.5 times larger than the former Con Dao company and has 62 outboard motor boats and over 700 workers. It continues to work according to the line charted by the Con Dao company and in 1980 caught 13,100 tonnes of fish worth 15 million dong. It is expected that in 1981, the Vung Tau - Con Dao fishing enterprise will catch between 18,000 and 20,000 tonnes of fish, worth over 20 million dong.

VIET CHUNG

IN Vietnam, the dragon is a symbol of royalty, both within the Court and amongst the population. Its name is used to convey beauty and nobility. Perhaps this explains why one of the most beautiful bays of our country is called Ha Long Bay (Bay of the Landing Dragon). Along its 3,000-kilometre coastline, Vietnam boasts of many picturesque spots, but none can quite compare with Ha Long Bay.

From Haiphong to Mong Cai the seacoast cuts a deep curve inland. For 200 kilometres strange rocks jut out from the sea surface, each with a particular shape. One stands erect like a pole, another is as large and flat as a sail, a third is shaped as a banana, another rises from the sea curved like an elephant's tusk; this one is as round as a ball of glutinous rice, that one looks like an incense-burner. Two other islets have symmetrically converging peaks like the beaks of two cocks poised to fight. From a distance, one rock looks like a statue of Buddha bowing his head. The visitor to the Bay discovers wonder after wonder, the scene unfolding before his eyes constantly changing as the boat moves

However the beauty of Ha Long Bay does not lie only in the shape of the islets but also on their positioning. Seen from afar each rock is like a pearl carefully placed upon a round and smooth pedestal: in fact their base has been worn away by the assaults of the waves. But nature's artistry is best exemplified by a big rock worn by the waves and standing perilously over at the slightest touch of the hand.

The further you go, the more secrets will be revealed to you. One rock is pierced by a long tunnel through which your boat can reach the other side. In it, the splashing of the oars sounds a deep melody. The dank and chilly cave

provides the strangest sensations. When you come out on the other side, the landscape has completely changed. This is one of Ha Long Bay's greatest marvels.

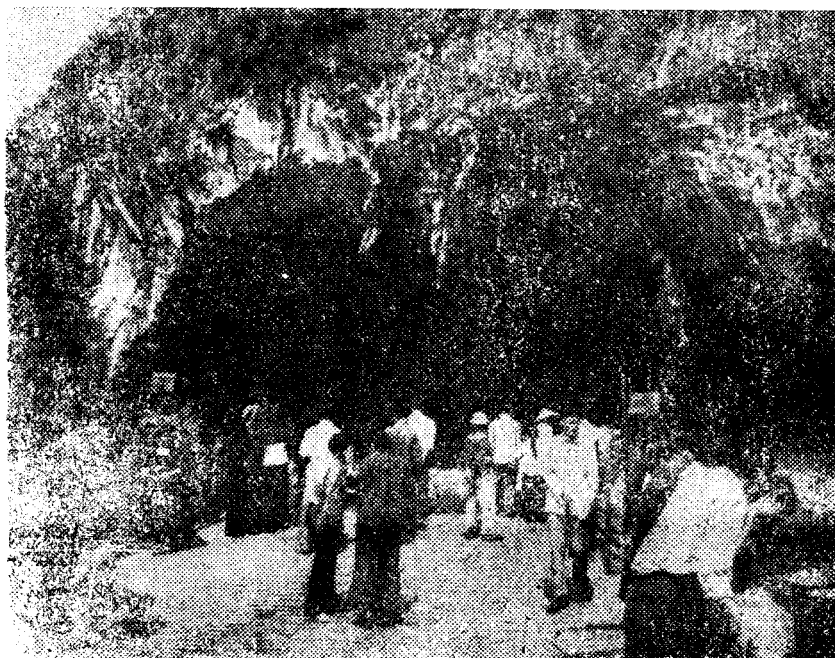
But what is more remarkable still is that you may pass through the tunnel on your way out in the morning, but on your way back, the cave and the pedestal are no more to be seen: they have disappeared under the rising tide. Quite amazingly, the entire scenery has changed. This is what makes Ha Long Bay such a mysterious place

On the islets, the vegetation is sparse and adds an exotic touch to the natural site. The trees are not tall as in forests; they do not stand erect but are dwarfed and crooked. They grow in all kinds of shapes as they have to weather storms and heavy winds all the year round, they look simple but strong, rigid but poetic, and are more beautiful than in any Chinese ink painting.

The beauty of Ha Long Bay lies not only in its outward appearance. Its caves bristle with magnificent

Historical sites and landscapes

HA LONG BAY



Visitors at the entrance of Bo Nau cave

Photo: DAN QUE

stalactites and stalagmites, their roofs supported up by solid natural columns. Bizarre shapes have been carved by nature, some looking like people or animals; others like plants or trees. Take Dau Go cave, for instance, one of the most marvellous caves. It is divided into three tiers: the main one, vast and high, glitters with stalactites and stalagmites. Looking around, you will feel dwarfed in this immense cave.

The rocks stand like steep walls past which the boat worms its way with difficulty, lost in a labyrinth from which it can hardly find a way out. Taking advantage of this maze of natural fortifications, six hundred years ago the Vietnamese people destroyed an enemy flotilla coming from the North.

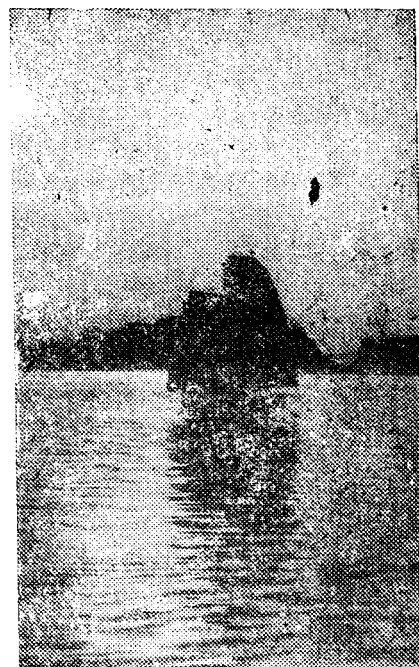
In beauty, the islets in Ha Long Bay can be only matched by the water. Though the open sea may be swept by strong winds, in the bay the water is often as calm as on a lake, the rocks acting as natural screens preventing the wind from ruffling the surface of the water, which is so limpid that you can see the seaweed growing on the bottom and fish and shrimps nosing about there. You may catch sight of coral reefs deep underwater.

You can visit Ha Long Bay at any time of the year. In spring, when the weather is fine, water vapour hovers over the surface of the sea and shrouds the islets. In summer, you can start your trip when the air is still fresh; in the afternoon, when the wind begins to blow, the fishing boats return to the shore, livening up the scene. In autumn, sky and water alike,

everything is blue in Ha Long Bay; at daybreak, at sunset, in moonlit nights, you may enjoy the most delicious moments of the day. In winter you can run about on the beach or sit quietly angling on a rock; if you like good food, you can try the wine with broiled fish or oysters which are special delicacies of Ha Long Bay.

Many islands are inhabited by farmers and fishermen; Ba Mun island has a primeval forest. The visitors to this island can enjoy the many varieties of plants and flowers, they may catch butterflies, listen to the birds singing and even see wild boars and deer. In particular, Reu island is where rhesus monkeys are bred for medical purpose. They organize their life under the leadership of a chief. At mealtimes, at the sound of a gong, they flock to a tiled yard on which the food is laid out. Sitting majestically on a platform, the chief supervises the meal with his round eyes. Those who try to get more than their share are duly punished. A scene in which confusion and discipline mingle, but most entertaining to watch.

Another attraction of Ha Long Bay is its shiny pearls, used as gems. It is also known for its mother-of-pearl which is much sought after for ornament, and many kinds of snails and conches whose colours vary from ivory-white to light pink. Ha Long oysters were highly praised by Tan Da, a famous poet before the August 1945 Revolution. Besides Ha Long Bay is also known for its abaloni, lobsters, cuttlefish — sea products greatly appreciated by tourists and also exported.



Sunrise over the Bay.

Photo: PHAM TUE

Such is the beauty of Ha Long. But the marvels of the bay have not been fully rendered in literary and art works. The photographer can compose a memorable photo album; it can be filmed at any time of the day, any season of the year, the painter can leave to posterity a rare collection of works depicting the wonderful islands, the writer and poet can find there an abundant source of inspiration.

LE TU LANH

SEA - SALANGANE NESTS

SEA-SALANGANE nests are difficult to find, and a most valuable product, used as a special dish in banquets, as a tonic for the old and an analeptic for the sick. They are extremely expensive, costing up to six thousand times as much as rice in times of scarcity.

Sea-salanganes are very pretty birds, covered in light black feathers. They are destined by nature to fly and not to walk: their legs are so short that they are unable to walk on the ground and can only clutch at crags. However, they fly very fast thanks to their strong, long and pointed wings. Constantly hovering, their home truly is the sky.

Sea-salanganes do not have hard and long beaks like other birds, because nature provided them with a wide mouth in which to seize insects in their flight.

They build their nests in crevices and caves along the coast and on off-shore islands. They like windy and deserted places near clear water. Salangane caves dot Vietnam's coast from Mong Cai southwards, but nests particularly abound in three of them: Hang Kho in Quang Nam-Da Nang province, Hang Ca in Nghia Binh province and particularly Hang Trong in Phu Khanh province. Some are broad and open, others' entrances are submerged at high tide, others still tunnel deep into the cliffs or bristle with stalactites.

Sea-salanganes build their nests in spring-time. While other birds collect litter and dead leaves, sea-salanganes, male and female alike, use their saliva, which they release like silk-worms, day after day, growing skinny in the process. Each afternoon, after searching for food they take turns to cling to the crags, their wings pressed

against their sides and their heads bowed. The poor creatures look pitiful, straining every muscle to discharge the tenuous thread.

Sea-salanganes know how precious these threads are and therefore hide them in places very difficult of access.

In mid-spring the nests are ready and look like lotus petals clinging to the cliffs. Their insides are soft for the fledgling to lie on while their rims are smooth to let them rest their delicate heads on. Large and thick, white nests belong to younger salanganes, whereas the older birds build smaller and thinner ones with a few feathers. Some nests have a light-pink colour. Others are bright red with a white rim and a rosy bottom - the most precious of them all.

Once the nests are built, the female sea-salanganes lay their eggs. Two tiny white eggs speckled with blue in each nest. The salangane nest-seekers set forth with their ropes and bags in late spring because the nests are then soft from the damp weather. Should they go later, the nests would harden under the heat of the hatching eggs and become friable.

As a rule, nest-seekers always enter the caves when the birds are out so as not to frighten them. After flinging their ropes up, they begin to scale the cliffs. In the case of underground caves, they lower their ropes and climb down. Each person has a bag slung over his chest, a water-bottle by his side, and a stick to guard himself against snakes.

Coming across a salangane nest, the hunter gently detaches it and carefully bags it. Each nest is sprinkled with water before it is picked off the rock.

In the laying season, salangane caves are dotted with myriads of nests. Laying hands on them, however, is no easy task. One has to climb up crags overhanging caves and sometimes fight off poisonous snakes. These snakes crane around and shoot out their black tongue at the sight of the men. Coiling their tails round a tree-trunk or a hold in the rock, they feed on the salangane eggs, pushing the nests off the cliff.

A nest-hunting expedition never lasts more than five days. One can get thousands of nests in a big cave. Thirty to forty nests weigh one kilogram. Dry caves give pretty white nests while damp ones yield humid and dark ones owing to the vapour from the waves clapping against the crags.

The nests are then cleaned and the feathers and moss are eliminated

After the expedition, the hunters attend to their usual business, while the birds once again release their saliva, build new nests and lay new eggs.

Forty-five days later, when the nests are finished the men once more set forth. This time the nests are fewer and less valuable.

But sea-salanganes do not give up. With remarkable resilience and survival instincts they once again release their saliva, build new nests and lay new eggs in deeper caves.

In May the hunters do not set out. They wait for the eggs to hatch and the fledgling to fly - a rest period for the salanganes. Knowing how to maintain their precious riches, the men take good care not to exhaust the birds.

The nests caught this time are not pretty, but must be bagged rapidly before the storms sweep them away

In summer the caves are full of fledgling. They do not chatter away like sparrows or magpies but quietly look at the men, then dart out to the open sea.

Next year they will give the hunters a new harvest of salangane nests

VU HUNG

MUSIC IN VIETNAM SINCE THE AUGUST REVOLUTION

Our country's age-old musical tradition with its specific national traits constitutes the best asset from which a musical style related to the revolutionary movement can be developed. Right after the August Revolution Vietnamese musicians sought to enhance the musical heritage, while assimilating the best of the world's musical culture. Never losing touch with everyday life, they took part in the struggle for national salvation by helping to mobilize the people against the French, American, then Chinese aggressors, while also promoting the national effort in socialist construction.

This revolutionary music embraces many genres with songs always predominating on account of their easy and rapid diffusion, their closely related words and melodies and the images they convey of the people's feelings and aspirations. Ever since the early patriotic tunes composed on the

of the August Revolution, popular songs have prominently featured at all points of the struggle against aggression and for socialist construction, promoting images of soldiers, workers, collective peasants, socialist intellectuals, of youth and its "readiness to accomplish its three patriotic duties", women always "equal to their three responsibilities", of children eager "to perform thousands of good deeds", etc., thus praising Vietnam's revolutionary heroism, patriotism, the socialist ideal and international solidarity. Contemporary Vietnamese popular songs have acted as a musical chronicle of the arduous but victorious path of the Vietnamese revolution.

By their growing artistic maturity and technical competence which have shaped a profoundly national musical language with many tinges of the vernacular, these songs actually stand as valuable experiments in musical expression

Some Vietnamese songs have gained popularity and are much appreciated abroad.

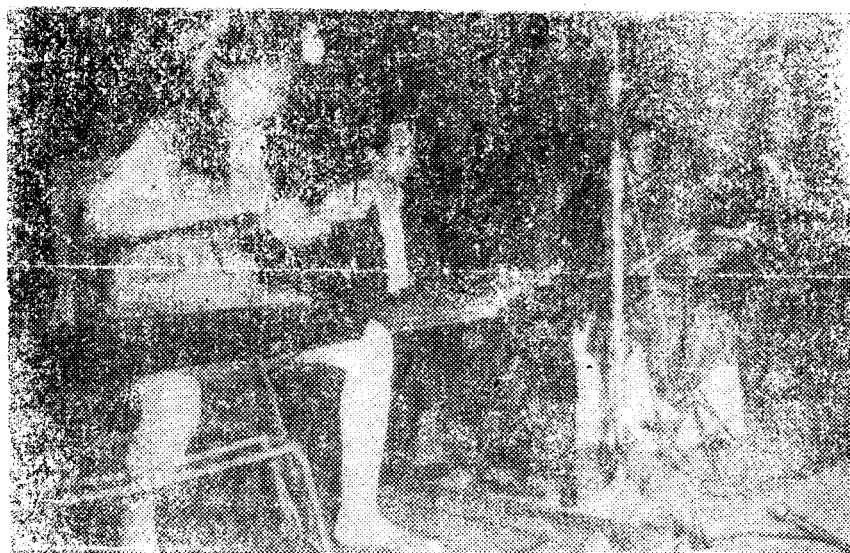
In the area of stage music the short pageants and sung tableaux performed during the anti-French resistance have developed into tens of musical plays dealing with the burning issues of the day; Vietnamese musicians are now beginning to write large operas on the main themes of each historical period.

As for instrumental music, while in 1945-46 only a few short pieces existed for solo and group execution, there are nowadays several hundreds of compositions in various genres for both symphonic and traditional instruments.

Vietnamese symphonic music, in its early beginnings achieved a peculiar profile and style while experimenting with various genres (symphonic suites, poems, pictures...). Much research has been undertaken regarding musical creation, especially the rehabilitation and use of folk music, the treatment of traditional modes, harmony and orchestration.

Music composed for films (both feature and documentary films) as well as for spoken theatre, puppet shows and traditional stage acts has greatly matured while remaining closely linked to popular traditions, and has proved extremely fruitful.

Great progress has been achieved in the quality and quantity of musical performances to meet the ever-increasing requirements of Vietnamese contemporary music. After the August Revolution and during the first resistance there were but a few armed propaganda units and small artistic groups whose repertory would include stage plays of all genres and musical items for solo or several instruments by amateur artists completely lacking in any professional training. Now individual and collective specialization has led to the



Hoang Anh Tu, fourth-year pupil of the Vietnamese Secondary Musical College (playing the mono-chord) with a traditional orchestra



A trio from Mechanical School No. 3 performing in the National Festival of Political Songs.

Photos: QUANG MINH

establishment of larger and more experienced ensembles whose talent and artistry have won them a reputation at home and abroad. These are the various national song and dance ensembles set up in the capital and provinces. Besides staging and performing musical works by Vietnamese composers they also help to introduce the classical and contemporary music of other countries into Vietnam. The numbers of musicians (singers and instrumentalists) possessing an academic degree run into thousands. Some have taken part in international competitions as candidates or panel members. The exceptional instance of Dang Thai Son winning the first prize of the 10th Chopin Piano Competition in Poland (1980) and that of Ton Nu Nguyet Minh, third prize winner at the 1980 Smetana Competition in Czechoslovakia illustrate the outstanding progress achieved in the field of musical performance.

There has also been a steady increase of theorists, musicologists and music critics, all graduated from regular music institutions in Vietnam and abroad. Several have received the title of Doctor of Musicology. A number of major research projects have

been undertaken on such topics as history of Vietnamese music, the specific characteristics of Vietnamese traditional folk music, traditional instruments and how to improve them. As a result of investigations into folk music tens of thousands of traditional songs have been collected, classified and restored, and several monographs have been published on various regional song lores (North West, Viet Bac, Tay Nguyen, *quan ho* songs...). The recent discovery of prehistoric lithophones in Vietnam is a precious contribution to the world treasury of folk instruments.

In the field of musical education several music schools have been set up at central and provincial levels. The Hanoi Conservatory under the Ministry of Culture and Information includes three levels: primary, secondary and higher. The music schools of Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, the Art School of the People's Army, should also be mentioned. Since 1963, 1,500 students belonging to 15 higher-level batches and 20 secondary-level ones have graduated from Hanoi Conservatory. Besides, the best students are sent abroad each year

to receive further training in the socialist countries

Vietnam now has many professors and lecturers in musicology; their rich experience in music teaching has helped to train many generations of qualified musicians

An obvious feature which stands out from the past 35 years of cultural development is the popularity enjoyed by music, which has become a real mass phenomenon. The patriotic songs formerly sung by the people's army soldiers during the anti-French resistance have blossomed into a widespread song movement with army units, factories, schools, cooperatives with a rich variety of forms: vocal and instrumental solos, male and female choirs, orchestral pieces for symphonic and traditional instruments.. The hard years of struggle against US aggression witnessed the growth of such mass movement as the "sing to drown the bomb blasts" movement. In US and puppet occupied areas of South Vietnam there were the "Sing for my compatriots". Such amateur activities helped many promising singers and instrumentalists to emerge and develop.

Regarding musical composition, the amateur movement which originated in the first resistance has also greatly improved: whereas only 200 songs or so were composed, barely 10 of which have stood the test of time; present non-professions compositions reach several thousand songs, hundreds of them enjoying wide popularity.

Looking back at the path travelled since the August Revolution, Vietnamese musicians and music lovers can indeed find cause for pride at the progress achieved by contemporary Vietnamese music, which holds even greater promise still for the years to come.

HUY DU

Myths and reality

OVER the years, Nguyen Khac Vien, doctor and writer, has produced many works. He has now turned to the cinema.

His film "The Land of Our Ancestors" (1) is a striking illustration of traditional Vietnam.

In his "History of Vietnam", Vien traced events back to their very roots. These origins are what he has chosen to put on film.

Before our eyes, the Red River spreads its alluvions over the 15,000-square kilometre delta dotted with bamboo-girt villages.

Here is the cradle of the Vietnamese nation, chosen by the cavemen when they left the hills and reached out for the plains.

Drawings, traditional engravings, landscapes, work scenes, village festivals: Vien artfully mingles myths and reality.

Here is the first of the legends, of the "Dragon", symbol of the snake which lurks in the swamps, and the "Immortal", the bird living in the mountains. A pair probably endowed with some totemic significance, which gives birth to a single hatch of one hundred eggs. From these emerge one hundred fine and healthy children. Fifty follow their father to the sea, fifty their mother to the mountains.

A legend steeped in reality, depicted with intentional naiveté to emphasize its symbolism: the people of the mountains and

plains are all "*dong bao*", compatriots, born of the same hatch.

Paleolithic flints, neolithic polished axes; pottery, bronze tools and the famous drums whose centrally engraved suns revolve on the screen: evidence unearthed by the archaeologists which establishes the existence, back in the second millenary before our era, of an original Viet civilization. An ancestral land, the memory of whose founders is still honoured in an annual pilgrimage to the Temple of the Hung Kings. There again Vien links present and past. Alongside the traditional palanquin and sequined mandarins walk the women which every day are to be seen in the villages, the ricefields and the old quarters of Hanoi.

The land of the Viets, which every year in the rainy season had to be defended against the excesses of a terrifying river. Once again Vien brings the myths to life with the struggle between the mountain and the water genies. The former having won the hand of the Hung King's daughter, the latter launches typhoons and floods to drown the land, thus symbolizing the annual monsoon cycle and the struggle against the rising waters. An age-old struggle, also depicted on the screen, to contain the river and build up dykes. A Herculean task which through some remarkable close-ups shows us an entire people straining in action.

Thus ricefields encroach upon the swamps, villages appear, and the capital, Thang Long, the city of the rising dragon, is born.

While Vien shows the people locked in struggle against the hostile forces of nature, he also portrays their permanent fight to repel invasions. For two thousand years the Chinese Empire spread its tentacles southwards, entailing





Two scenes from "The Land of our Ancestors".

Photos: FAFIM

yet another millenary struggle for independence and to defend the borders.

And once again legend toys with reality. Every river, every mountain, every valley and every estuary is steeped in history. Names evoked by the *ca dao*, or folk poems, and traditional engravings, or carved into stone steles: the Trung sisters, Ly Thuong Kiet, Ngo Quyen, Le Dai Hanh, Tran Hung Dao, and especially Le Loi and Nguyen Trai whose exploits have been recorded on the stele at Vinh Lang. Nguyen Trai, that great strategist and poet who advocated a liberation war based on the virtues of humanity and justice, and on winning hearts rather than citadels!

The Vietnamese people, who conquered their land over a hostile environment and defended it against all enemies, also made it prosper.

The ancient palaces having long disappeared, Vien and his team present a careful selection of pagodas: the One-Pillar pagoda and the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, the Tran Quoc and Pho Minh pagodas, the towers of Binh Son, Co Le... Details are picked out to illustrate artistic evolution, in particular the serpent-like dragon, quite different from the Chinese hieratic dragon.

Here are the 17th century communal houses, popular art mingling with classical art, everyday

themes with mythical or religious ones, as for instance those young women bathing in the nude, surrounded by dragons and phoenixes!

Vien retraces the village festivals, with mandarins and rich peasants wallowing in their plenty, and young people courting, exchanging verses as they sing. The quick wit of popular common sense is rendered by a scene of *Cheo*, the popular theatre, where a sprightly servant girl verbally trounces some local notables meeting to judge an illicit love affair: one is blind, the other paralysed and the third is only there for the feasting...

The film ends with a lightly swinging hammock, and the voice of the mother telling a story to put her child to sleep.

This is the last legend of the film told by the child-poet Tran Dang Khoa: the legend of the giant child of Giong village near Hanoi, who grows and grows, and mounting his iron horse, tears up bamboos from the forest with which to crush the invaders. And the child, lost in dreams, falls asleep.

Despite the present shortages, lacking funds, means of transport, equipment... but thanks to their talent and determination, Nguyen Khac Vien, director Luong Duc and composer Nguyen Xuan Khoat have given us a glimpse of the birth and history of Vietnam. A tough history, but one full of courage and wit and bright hopes, where the magic of the legends casts an additional spell over the beauty of reality and its images.

FRANÇOISE CORRÈZE

1. Dat To Nghin Xua, the Central Documentary and Newsreel Film Studio, 1981.

JUST PUBLISHED

KAMPUCHEA '81

(Eye-witness Reports)

By NGUYEN KHAC VIEN and FRANÇOISE CORREZE

Two authors well-versed in Kampuchean affairs bear witness to and give their impressions of the rebirth of Kampuchea.

From scenes of daily life and things seen and heard, along with more factual data, the authors draw some conclusions which provide a good insight into the present situation in Kampuchea.

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Distributed by XUNHASABA, 32 Hai Ba Trung Hanoi SRV.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN A DISTRICT OF HO CHI MINH CITY

IN the past, Ho Chi Minh City's 4th District lacked sports facilities such as foot-ball fields, volley-ball and tennis courts, swimming pools... A poor comparison with District 1, where many houses have private swimming pools on their roof tops. The reason was that District 4 had a population of 130,000 living within an area of only 3 sq.km. largely made up of poor dockers, Lambretta drivers, carters and small traders... Leading a very hard life, they had no time to spare for sports or entertainment. Gambling was rife and fights were daily occurrences. Recalling the former life, a cadre from the District Sports and Medical Service said: "Before liberation, people from outside the district never ventured here after dark, as they risked being robbed of their money or motorbikes, or getting involved in a punch-up..."

But today people there lead a normal and sound life and the district's physical education and sports facilities stand out among the best in the city.

The purpose of local Party and People's Committees in encouraging this development is simple: the aim is not to produce outstanding athletes or foot-ball teams, but to encourage the people to participate in physical exercise and go in for sports, and lead them to realize that sports and cultural activities can both improve their enjoyment of life and eliminate bad habits.

The campaign first started in schools and factories.

Daily physical exercise and running are very popular activities, since they can be readily and widely popularized and can be performed by anyone and anywhere, in a small yard in front of a workshop, on the deck of a ship, in the corridor of a school... And if space is really short one can still run on the spot.

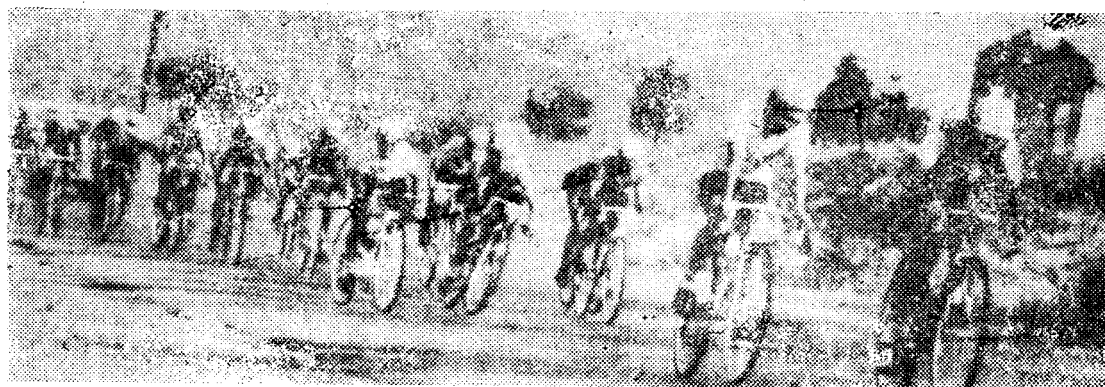
The determination of those taking part is quite remarkable. To encourage the movement, cadres and Party members set examples for others to follow. Every day activists from the District Sports Department go to the various enterprises and offices and help with organization and training. Besides, athletes, who under the old regime spent their time eking out a living and could not afford to go in for sports, have now been invited to serve as coaches. They are sent to different units to give suitable training. As a result, many factories in the district can join the movement without their production being interrupted. For instance, one group of workers might look after the machines while the others take some time off for physical exercise. In some factories workers start their work day by doing physical exercise. In this way, the movement develops smoothly and causes little disturbance and indeed contributes to the development of production

and the improvement of mass activities. Games are also encouraged and teams have been formed, with due attention to individual preferences.

In the past, very few athletes in the district took part in the city's sports competitions. Nowadays, some have come top in the cross-country races, in track and fields events and in the city's A-class table-tennis competition. Up to now, the title of "advanced sports unit" has been conferred upon 14 collectives, more than seven thousand persons regularly take part in running activities and another thousand in swimming. About half the total number of young people in the district go in for sports and physical education. Young people regularly visit their club for basket-ball, table-tennis, gymnastics and so on.

Every Sunday, there are sports fixtures in several places throughout the district. The most popular venues are the table-tennis club and the foot-ball stadium which is under construction. With the help of the local population, the district has decided to fill up some small ponds and lakes to build a sports centre. These initial efforts will help District 4 to succeed in developing its sports policy and improve the cultural standards of the population as a whole.

VU BAO



A bicycle race from Ho Chi Minh City to Vung Tau.

Photo: PHAN SANG

CONFERENCE ON FAMILY PLANNING

RECENTLY, the Ministry of Health, the Vietnam Women's Union, the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions and the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union organized a conference to assess the achievements of the family planning movement over the past five years (1976-1980) and work out a plan for five years to come (1981-1985). The conference was held in Hai Hung province, which has had remarkable success with family planning.

Over the past five years, the movement was extended throughout the country to convince our cadres and people of the need for family planning. Together with contraceptive measures, the birth rate has been gradually reduced; the population growth rate dropped from 3.2% in 1976 to 2.23% in 1980 (the rate in the North is 2.13%, and 2.35% in the South). By the end of 1980, 14 districts were recognized by the Ministry of Health as having satisfactorily achieved the aims of family planning. 862 communes have attained a population growth rate of less than 1.5%, 160 others vary between 0.6% and 1%. A new conception of the family has been widely promoted: in particular that two children are enough for each couple, whatever the children's sex.

However, the results of the campaign are not homogeneous throughout the country. In some areas, people don't pay enough attention to it. Generally speaking, our birth rate is still high in comparison with other countries and with our country's economic growth, thus causing difficulties in our social and economic life.

The conference unanimously approved the programme for the

next five years, to reduce population growth to 1.7%, by bringing down the rate by 0.1% or 0.2% every year. Each couple is advised to give birth to two children only and a campaign will be launched not to conceive a fourth child.

In his talk to the conference Prime Minister Pham Van Dong said: "The campaign for family planning is part and parcel of the ideological and cultural revolution. It directly serves the building of the national economy and con-

stressed: "These are reasonable targets. With our efforts, they will be achieved even earlier than 1985, as they have already been realized in certain areas. However, we have to pay attention to the specific conditions of each area: the South, the highlands and above all the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. In each area and in each zone it is necessary to adopt appropriate attitudes and measures. Especially in areas inhabited by small ethnic minorities where



An exhibition of contraceptive devices.

Photo: THU HOAI

forms to human aspirations for a good and happy life. We enjoy favourable conditions thanks to the valuable experiences accumulated from our activities in past years. In our society there are few prejudices and backward customs and habits to prevent this movement. The Vietnamese people are receptive to what is right and good."

On the targets proposed by the conference, the Prime Minister

there is a need for population growth not only should we not launch a movement to reduce population growth, but we must increase our all-round support to help women to give birth and take good care of their children so that the population in these areas actually increases. This conforms with our Party and State's attitude and policy concerning the ethnic minorities of our country."

(Continued from page 5)

A NEW STAGE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST LEPROSY

On April 16 and 17 a conference was held at Quynh Lap — the leprosy centre totally destroyed fifteen years ago by the US Air Force and now partially rebuilt — between leprosy specialists and media representatives from the press, radio and television. The purpose of the conference was less to discuss medical matters than to launch a vast movement to dispel the prejudices surrounding leprosy.

As soon as a case of leprosy is identified, the person's entourage reacts with horror; relatives and friends refuse to see him and care for him, the neighbours and the village demand that the authorities take him away. The unfortunate lepers, deserted by all, give way to despair, abandon all hope of recovery and stop caring for themselves, whence the horrible sight of them dragging themselves through the streets and in the markets on their festering and bleeding stumps, imploring the passers-by for charity, constantly hounded and eventually ending up in an asylum.

The horror inspired by lepers is based on two prejudices: that leprosy is incurable, and that it is exceedingly contagious.

Both are totally unfounded. Leprosy is easily cured, with the right treatment (DDS, rifampycine). If it is treated soon enough, leprosy leaves no marks, and as the network of identification centres expands, the paralysed stubs and ulcers caused by leprosy will gradually disappear. Once cured, those affected can return to a normal life.

Leprosy is very little contagious. Only one case out of every five is contagious, and only for a short period. If treated with DDS or rifampycine, a leper is no longer contagious after a few months.

In fact, most people who come in contact with leprosy germs do not catch the disease thanks to their natural immunity. Thus the extreme isolation measures taken in the past are no longer necessary.

Leprosy can now be cured, like any other disease, without having to isolate those affected from other patients and human contacts. It suffices to send cases of detected leprosy to an ordinary dermatology centre, where they are treated and their progress is monitored. Contagious cases are hospitalized for a few weeks, after which they can continue their treatment at home, while returning to work. All medical and surgical operations on lepers can be carried out by any hospital. Once cured, the patients must be re-employed by their enterprises and offices. The medico-sanitary infrastructure set up to combat leprosy must thus be completely re-organised so as to make it much less costly and much more effective, much more human.

It can be expected that in a not-so-distant future, leprosy and the horror it generates will be a thing of the past. But to achieve this, it is necessary to overcome deeply rooted prejudices in our collective conscience, reinforced by a widespread culture of proverbs, legends, images, which affect even some medical circles.

Under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and the specialized departments, and with the collaboration of the media, of writers and artists, a vast campaign is to be launched to eradicate these prejudices. The national conference held at Quynh Lap has in this respect opened a new chapter in the fight against leprosy.

Dr NGUYEN KHAC VIEN

once declared: "If someone asks us what the Chinese culture is we can't answer. We can't define it properly. We only know that we love it and want to perpetuate it. Perhaps, partly because of the language. We think that our children in this country should attend the State schools but we also want them to learn Chinese. We want them to be loyal to Indonesia as much as to our homeland but we also hope that they will not forget the Chinese culture."

Apart from political loyalty and cultural and sentimental ties, there may be other reasons for the Hoa in Southeast Asia to turn to mainland China. In recent years, the role of China as a great power has become more and more apparent. This gives the Hoa in Southeast Asia cause for pride and also instils in them the vague hope that China would come to their help, especially in their economic interests, if they were subject to restrictions or persecution by the local authorities. In the last resort, they could always hope to return safely to China. There is another reason, an economic one: China's trade with the Southeast Asian countries is conducted mostly through the intermediary of Hoa companies there. Accordingly, the vision of high profits may also be a reason why some Hoa people look to the mainland.

However, the presence and attitude of the Hoa in Southeast Asia has not always been advantageous to China. Because of their great economic and political power in their countries of residence and because of their pro-Beijing leanings they have incurred mistrust and suspicion from the local administrations and populations. Hence under certain circumstances they may become an obstacle to China in its relations with the authorities in their countries of residence or may help to increase their resistance to Chinese influence. Even among the Hoa, not all have aligned themselves politically with Beijing to the extent that they can identify their interests with Beijing's, especially in capitalist circles. Faced with this complex situation Beijing has worked out a series of policies and measures aimed at advancing both its own interests and the interests of the Hoa communities in this region.

After LE VAN KHUE

A Short Story

A SONG OF TEARS

ANH DUC

THE wind was getting colder as the night wore on; it was the turn of the year. Little Toi led his father back to their dwelling-place earlier than usual. Every evening before entering the half-dark area of the market to reach the counter they slept on, he would stop in front of the crowded restaurants outside for his father to try his chance once again in the hope of earning a few more coins after a long weary day.

Understanding his little son's hint, Hai the Guitarist batted his empty eyelids, tuned his old guitar and, plucking a few chords, began singing an old melody.

"Since the day my native place
was liberated
Ricefields and rivers have
reddened.."

The words poignantly portrayed his life under the old regime, but the pathos deepened when he came to his present life, as if it had changed but not improved.

Day after day he and his son trudged the streets of Saigon to eke out their living as street singers. Despite his blindness he had followed the events surrounding the liberation in the spring of 1975 thanks to his son's des-

criptions. One afternoon he had heard the distant pounding of heavy guns, followed by the rumbling of tanks along the streets. Little Toi had shouted, "Oh, look! There's a liberation flag in every window!" In this way he was able to imagine everything around him. All remaining senses had woken up to the events about him. He had felt both the joy of anticipation and fear as new worries descended upon him. The gunfire and the last sounds heralding the end of the war had brought him back to the time when he was rounded up for military service and to his last days in the puppet army. His wife, who died of cholera, left him alone with their seven-year old son in the slum. When he was in the army he seldom dropped in to see his son. Then disaster struck as his unit launched a mopping-up operation in the forests of Tay Ninh province. For three days his unit suffered a bad trouncing: its toll amounted to four hundred, killed or wounded. The dead were left lying, while the wounded tried to make for a clearing to wait for helicopters to come to their rescue. Some of the soldiers had escaped unhurt but were exhausted or in a daze and crouched down among the blood-stained bodies of the dead. One

of these was Hai the Guitarist. He smeared his body with blood in the hope that he might be picked up by the helicopters. And there they waited and waited, until they heard a whirr in the air. Hai jumped to his feet. There were no helicopters in the sky, only an approaching biplane. It swooped down over the clearing, then disappeared. A moment later there was a thunderous roar as bombs suddenly rained down upon them. All he could do then was to lay flat on to the ground. After the first shower of bombs he and a few other survivors ran for their lives towards the forest. Half way to the trees more bombs exploded around him. He felt a searing blow over his right eye. Touching his brow with his hand he found it smeared with blood. Another survivor ran into the woods screaming "Oh my God, the B.52's are bombing us, it must be a mistake!"

It was the most pathetic yell he had ever heard in his life. The following day the eight survivors dragged themselves back to their outpost, thirty kilometres away, to be told that there had not been any mistake: "Good God, I thought you were all dead. The Yanks wanted to finish you off. I rang up the Command myself to

ask them to send the choppers to your rescue; but they said that you couldn't be saved, the captain in charge of the outpost told them. They stayed there a few days before being brought back to Saigon. Hai's right eye had gone blind from the bomb splinter. As for his left eye it was so painful that he only just managed to get back to his shack, where he found his little Toi. There in the slums, where other dwellers had taken care of his son, he lost the use of his left eye. At first he could not reconcile himself to the idea of him or his son going begging from door to door. He asked his neighbours to get him an old guitar, and began playing his old tunes again. He took pity on little Toi. His son had just turned seven when Hai returned, his eyes extinguished for ever. Willy-nilly his son became his guide as they tramped the streets to earn a living with his singing. Strangely enough the boy proved very strong-willed. Whenever his father was on the point of breaking down for some reason, little Toi steered his father to another subject. What humiliation and hardships they experienced from the day they began their wandering life! They could be seen in markets, restaurants, car parks, or on buses packed like sardines. Among the songs with which he entertained the passers-by, was a *vong co* which portrayed his own wretched life, from the time his family was torn apart and he became a soldier with all the dangers and ups and downs that life brought, to the fatal bombing which made him go blind: the song ended with the scene of a disabled soldier wandering here and there to gain a meagre live-

lihood by singing. That was his favourite song. It always moved his audience, and so he made a lot of money with it. But he had to be careful where he sang it. He would get into trouble if by chance a plainclothesman found him singing it. He relied on little Toi to decide whether it was safe or not. Once his son went wrong: he didn't notice a secret agent on the bus. When Hai had finished the song and collected a fair amount of money, the man kept silent. But as soon as the pair got off the bus he seized Hai by the throat and said, "Hey! You may be blind but we can still send you to rot in jail!"

After the liberation he no longer wanted to sing that song. Not that it was outmoded: he felt ashamed to. In the midst of all the rejoicing, what was the use of recounting his wasted life as a soldier that had led him to such a miserable plight? So the song "My Life" was put aside. In its stead, he set new words to old tunes praising the Revolution and the homeland. But he was not very happy with any of them.

It was now early November. *Tet* was only two months ahead. The first *Tet* after liberation of Saigon! Hardly had he felt the first signs of it when worry crept over him. For seven years, he had been afraid of *Tet*. How could you celebrate the new year with a market stand as a home? He had spent seven *Tet* in that hovel. Seven *Tet* without any food to prepare, compelled to slink back to their slum by the Y-shaped bridge.

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Hai had just finished singing "Since the Day My Homeland Was Liberated". He pricked up his ears to hear the coins drop into little Toi's tin. He waited and waited; but no sound could be heard. Disappointed, he urged:

"Let's go back to our place, son".

"But a soldier has just given us a handful of banknotes. Daddy," the boy said softly, hugging his father.

Hai was amazed. Bank-notes! And from a soldier! He asked his son in a low voice:

"Has he gone?"

"Not yet, Daddy... He's only got one arm!"

He looked very young. His left sleeve dangled over the amputated arm. He stood there hesitating, looking at them for a few moments. Then he came over and put his hand on Hai's shoulder.

"What would you say to a snack over there?" he suggested. Then without waiting for a reply, he led the pair to a restaurant nearby. He moved a couple of chairs over and ordered three bowls of *hu tieu*. Hai hesitated for a moment then sat down. He did not know what to say. It was all happening too suddenly.

"You look surprised," said the soldier. "Let me introduce myself. I've been demobbed. I was transferred to another job some months ago. It may concern you. But there's no hurry. Let's have our food first."

The three bowls of *hu tieu* had arrived.



Illustration: THANH CHUONG

"Help yourselves! Oh, sorry! What's your name?"

"Hai the Guitarist."

"And the little boy?"

"Toi."

The soldier introduced himself as Tu Tam. Hai was embarrassed

and slightly worried. He wondered what this armyman had to say to him. Re-education? Yes, that's what it was! But even for an invalid in his state?

Tu Tam seemed to have guessed Hai's anxiety.

"Don't worry, it's good news. I'm in charge of a training centre for disabled people. So far we've been getting on well, with carpentry, basket-weaving and other crafts."

Only then did Hai dare to pick up his chopsticks. His hands trembled. So that was it! He mumbled a few words of relief. The news of the centre aroused his curiosity. How useful it would be for little Toi to learn carpentry! He said to himself. He himself was an expert basket weaver. But still he was worried. "What would they do if they knew that I'd served in the puppet army? I'd do better to tell them right away. It would be better than to be dismissed," he thought. But he could not bring himself to.

Tu Tam stood up to pay the bill. He offered to accompany them back to their sleeping-place. Hai did not know what to answer. He hummed and hawed and finally let Tu Tam understand that they spent the night on a foul-smelling market stall, left vacant during the night. But Tu Tam insisted:

"It doesn't matter," he said. "I only want to know your place so that we can come and pick you up."

Hai unwillingly yielded and led Tu Tam to his "home".

The counter that the two usually slept on was at the far end of the market. Upon reaching it, Toi took off his shirt to sweep the litter off the counter so that they might have some room to sit. Tu Tam looked around. He shook his head.

"This isn't a wholesome place for you to live; you'd better quit it. Come and live in the centre," he urged.

"Thank you for your kindness. But... let me think it over."

"Why the hesitation?... Little Toi will learn carpentry and the

three R's. And you, Hai, you'll have a job there. Or else you'll entertain us on your guitar. What do you say?"

Hai the Guitarist was silent. Words failed him. The truth would have to come out in the long run.

"Well, Sir... Frankly speaking,..."

"Don't keep 'sirring me' now."

"Well, thank you. Frankly speaking, I'd like to, but the trouble is that previously I was forced to enlist in the army of the old regime..."

"Yes, I know that," Tu Tam said.

Hai began to recount his life, while Tu Tam listened in silence.

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* *

That night Tu Tam stayed with them till eleven o'clock. Before leaving, he remarked:

"I was deeply moved by what you told me. So much for American assistance... But to return to the present: make sure not to change your sleeping-place, so that we know where to pick you up."

Hardly had Tu Tam left the market when little Toi jumped down from the counter and followed in his steps. A moment later he returned and said to his father:

"Daddy, when that armyman reached the street, a jeep was there waiting for him. He jumped into it and it drove away at once. I'm worried, Daddy!"

"What's that?" snapped Hai.

"I'm scared that he made us talk in order to arrest us. People say that those who live homelessly like us will be herded into camps."

Hai kept silent for a moment

"I don't think so. If that's what they're up to they would have taken us right from the moment they met us. Judging by what he said I believe he's a decent man.

Who would have the heart to deceive such people as us?"

"They'll sweep us away just like they did the open-air markets, Dad."

Jumping down from the counter Hai answered, with a smile: "We're not like open-air markets, are we?"

Little Toi stretched himself out on the counter.

"You're going to follow him aren't you? And give up the guitar, too?" he asked his father.

Hai did not reply. He was thinking of the unexpected meeting. He kept recalling the simple words of the soldier when he told him that he had served in the puppet army:

"Yes, I know that."

The blind itinerant singer felt as if life had revived in him. Although he had only heard Tu Tam's voice, he imagined him to be a kind and friendly person. Toi soon fell fast asleep out of tiredness. Hai felt sorry for his little son in whom years of poverty had instilled a deep distrust of the world. One had to be careful, it was true. But this time Hai felt confident.

Little Toi was soundly asleep, while Hai kept tossing over his bed. He turned the soldier's proposal over and over again in his head. He saw in it an anchor to stop his drifting life.

Tu Tam came back as he had promised. He was waiting for Hai and his son the next day when they returned to their counter.

"Come over right away, won't you. The car is waiting in the street."

Hai hadn't thought it would all be settled so quickly. His trembling hands felt for Tu Tam's. He found Tu Tam's right hand, but in place of the other he only grasped an empty sleeve.

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That afternoon, at the Thu Duc welfare centre a Tet celebration was held for two hundred disabled people and street-urchins. It was their first decent Tet in years. At one end of the hall was a decorated altar and a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The tables were covered with cakes and fruit. Tu Tam addressed the assembly, outlining their efforts and achievements during the past four months and called on them to make the centre even more prosperous in the coming year. Half way through the party Hai the Guitarist got up and offered to sing a traditional *vong co* for everybody. He tuned his old guitar, directed his blind eyes towards the audience. After a long pause he said:

"This song isn't a new one. I used to sing it to earn a living. It is about my life from the day I was forced to join the army of the old regime to the moment I went blind. But I've just added a new stanza..."

As he finished speaking, Little Toi came from where the children were sitting. He stopped beside his father with a pair of black castanets and got ready to play.

Hai plucked a few chords and began to sing. It was his same old song with a few new lines about their encounter with Tu Tam and their arrival at the centre. The song rose up, moving and poignant, not through any mastery on the part of the singer, but from his innermost feelings which poured out, now convulsed in agony, now choked with injustice, or full of new vitality.

The song finally came to an end. Amidst the prolonged applause Hai stood there with the instrument in his arms when all of a sudden the audience saw tears from his eyes trickling down his cheeks.

December 1976

CHANGES IN A MOUNTAIN DISTRICT IN CENTRAL VIETNAM

SIX years ago, before the liberation of South Vietnam, the mountain district of Tay Son in Phu Khanh province was still a remote hostage of backwardness. For centuries, the local population of different ethnic minorities: Ede, Bana, Cham... lived in utter misery. Their plight was rendered worse still by the decades of war. They led a roving life, farming tiny plots of hilly land by primitive means.

Added to this was widespread superstition. It was enough for a *cu lan*, a kind of squirrel to cross a ricefield to panic all the villagers into hurriedly abandoning the village lest the fury of the *giang* (Heaven) should descend upon them. If a cow or a pig was suspected of being haunted by the *ri* (ghost), it was slaughtered there and then. The frequent offerings to "Heaven" decimated the livestock. Whenever a villager died, the whole village would leave for elsewhere. The worst superstition of all was the belief in the existence of the *ma lai* (man-eating ghost). Anyone and even any family suspected of harbouring a *ma lai* was killed by the villagers, and this caused many innocent victims among the population. Superstitions also generated hatred and mistrust between one man and another, between one hamlet and another and among ethnic groups.

But the revolution, like a hurricane, burst onto the scene and swept away all these scourges born of ignorance.

With the help of the administration the ethnic minorities in Tay Son district have embarked on the path of collective production. Most of them have settled for sedentary farming. In some villages, such as Ca Lui, people have set up their own agricultural co-operatives. Those who had taken shelter in mountain caves during the American war have now returned to

the hills to build decent homes. From Cung Son, the district town, a jeep can travel straight to the premises of the People's Committee of Ca Lui village, 30 km away on a newly built road bordered on both sides by newly built houses on stilts dotted amongst orchards planted mostly with jackfruit and coconut trees. Many things which are taken for granted elsewhere have only just appeared in Ca Lui village. For the first time, there is a co-operative with up to eight hectares of ricefield. For the first time the farmers grow sesame for export. For the first time the villagers know how to tend orchards and raise cows and pigs in stables far from their dwellings. For the first time the people are being taught to read and write and enjoy medical care in case of sickness. A loudspeaker system has been extended to all homes. A primary school, a health station and a shop have been set up. Also for the first time, wells have been sunk for drinking water and people use latrines. All began just a few years ago when Ca Lui formed their agricultural co-operative.

However, the process of change has not been an easy one. Before 1978 nobody at Ca Lui had any idea of what a co-operative was. Having for generations farmed individually the inhabitants of Ca Lui could not but feel worried when they learnt that from then on they would work collectively and according to plan. The first winter-spring rice crop was a complete failure as a result of a long dry spell followed by devastation by insects and rats. After the accounts were drawn up each farmer was given only 400 grammes of paddy per workday. The villagers complained and the cadres were discouraged. But things began to improve with the next two crops as the farmers had more experience. The per capita

share of paddy in the 1979-1980 winter-spring crop rose to two kilos. There was also maize and cassava to supplement the rice ration. In addition, the co-op farmers earned some money from their sale of sesame to the export trade service. Ca Lui exemplifies the changes occurring throughout Tay Son district. The other villages look upon Ca Lui as an example. From Etron and Eba in the south to Krong Pa in the west and Son Hoi and Son Phuoc in the east, collective farming soon gained ground. Highway 7, from Cheo Reo to Tuy Hoa via Tay Son, which saw some of the bloodiest battles in Indochina six years ago, is now heavy with traffic. Link roads from this highway are constantly spreading to the distant villages. The district town of Cung Son which was almost completely destroyed by bombs and shells during the war has been rebuilt and is now a bustling centre with its State-run shops, its school, its hospital and production establishments. Tay Son was once reputed for its wild oxen and horses. Under the US-puppet regime, the horses were decimated and the indiscriminate slaughter of wild oxen brought these rare animals near to extinction. Today, Tay Son has worked out a plan to restore its herd of horses and has established wild oxen reserve on Hon Ong mountain, 5 km from the district town. The various ethnic minorities in Tay Son are taking their first steps in a life in independence and freedom. Difficulties and shortages still abound, but already everyone can eat their fill and gain an education. Tay Son is moving forward with confidence.

VU HONG

CHRONOLOGY...

(Continued from page 32)

April

1. *Nhan Dan*: The Government Council issues a directive on the new 12-year educational system, with nine years of basic general education followed by three years of secondary general education.

2. *VNA*: A motorbike and bicycle repair workshop built with aid from the GDR comes into operation in Quang Nam - Da Nang province.

- A Vietnamese Communist Party delegation, led by Nguyen Duy Trinh, Political Bureau member and Secretary of the Party Central Committee, leaves Hanoi for the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the 10th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

- *VNA*: Mr. Antoni Gregori (Italy) has recently donated 3,000,000 *lira* to Vietnam to assist in its national reconstruction. So far, he has given the Vietnamese people 20,500,000 *lira* and a quantity of clothes and other goods.

- Signing of an agreement on electronics cooperation between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia on the occasion of the visit to Czechoslovakia by a delegation from Vietnam's Ministry of Engineering and Metallurgy, headed by Vice-Minister Do Dai Loc.

3. A delegation from Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, headed by Minister Dao Thien Thi, paid a visit to the Soviet Union, begun on 25 March 1981. A cooperation agreement between the two countries was signed on 2 April.

4. The British charity organization OXFAM has decided to give Vietnam 220,000 pounds to buy 1,500 tonnes of rice for flood victims, 57,727 pounds for Ha Bac and Nghe Tinh provinces, and 5,300 pounds for the purchase of medical equipment for Nghe Tinh province.

- *VNA*: Inauguration in Vietnam of two Norwegian-built factories. They are an ice plant at Diem Dien (Nghia Binh province) and a refrigeration plant at Cua Hoi (Nghe Tinh province).

- The Indonesian paper "Observer" condemns the plans by Beijing and other reactionaries to form a "national united front" against the Kampuchean revolution.

7. A cheque of 30,000 *francs* is handed over by the France-Vietnam Association to the Vietnamese Embassy in Paris to help the Vietnamese in flood- and storm-stricken areas.

- *Nhan Dan*: A "National Anthem Committee" has been set up. It is headed by Xuan Thuy, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and is to select a new anthem.

9. A delegation of the Ministry of Education of Angola, led by Vice-Minister Artur Pestana, concludes its friendship visit to Vietnam.

- The Vietnam News Agency is authorized to deny a report in the Thai paper *Ban Myang* (The National) of 7 April. The report said that on 1 April Vietnamese forces intruded into the Aranyaprathet area.

- *VNA*: Signing of a plan for scientific cooperation between Vietnam and Hungary for the 1981-1985 period.

10. Prime Minister Pham Van Dong sends a message of greetings to the 15th conference of the National Council of Palestine asserting that the Vietnamese Government and people resolutely support the Palestinian people's just cause against the Israeli aggressors.

- Vietnam signs the UN Convention on the Prohibition or Restricted Use of Certain Conventional Weapons.

- The spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects claims by certain Western news agencies concerning the visit to Vietnam by Mr. M. Essaafi, special envoy of the UN Secretary-General. Claims are contained in a report alleging the "view-points of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Vietnam are converging towards political solution for Kampuchea".

11. Arrival of a Government delegation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic led by Energy and Telecommunications Minister Ha Moudi Ould Ahmed Baba.

- A delegation of the Vietnam-USSR Friendship Association leaves Hanoi for a visit to the Soviet Union. It is led by Nguyen Thi Thap, the Association's Vice-President and member of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee.

- Tran Vy, Chairman of the Hanoi People's Committee, leaves Vietnam for the 10th conference of major cities' mayors to be held in Milan (Italy), begun on 12 to 17 April.

12. On the occasion of Laos' traditional festival Boun Pi May, the Chairman of the Vietnam-Laos Friendship Association sends a message of greetings to his Lao counterpart.

- Pham Ho, poet and standing member of the Children's Literature Section of the Vietnam Writers' Association, attended the 5th International Conference on Children's Literature. It was organised by the Federation of Literature for Young Pioneers in Moscow from April 8 to 12.

13. In a message of greetings to the Nicaraguan Committee for Solidarity with Foreign Peoples the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity and Friendship with the Peoples of other Countries and the Vietnam Peace Committee voice their protest against the US authorities' suspension of loans and use of economic pressure against Nicaragua. They also affirm Vietnam's strong support for the Nicaraguan people and the other Latin American peoples in their struggle for independence, freedom and social progress.

- The executive director of the Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union, Ma Sao Oya, hands the Vietnamese Embassy in Tokyo a sum of 2,000,000 *yen* as relief to 1980 flood- and storm-stricken areas in Vietnam.

14. *VNA*: A delegation of the Supreme Control Board of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, led by its head Tran Huu Duc, visited Hungary. On 10 April a memorandum on cooperation between the control boards of the two countries was signed.

15. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam sends a message of greetings to the Cuban Communist Party on the occasion of its 20th founding anniversary.

CHRONOLOGY

(16 March - 15 April)

March

16. A delegation of the Kampuchean Ministry of Public Health, led by Minister Nu Beng, paid a visit to Vietnam from 9 to 16 March. A plan for medical cooperation between the two countries was signed.

17. A delegation of the SRV National Assembly, headed by Phan Anh, acting Chairman of the National Assembly's Laws Drafting Commission, attended the conference of interparliamentary delegations from the socialist countries held in Moscow on 17-18 March.

- VNA: Signing of an agreement on water conservancy cooperation between Vietnam and Kampuchea in Phnom Penh.

18. The People's Revolutionary Council of Kampuchea issues a decree on elections of delegates to the National Assembly.

- A TASS delegation, headed by its director general Serguei Lossev, pays a visit to Vietnam. A new agreement on professional cooperation between the agencies of the two countries is signed.

19. Decision of the Government Council concerning:

- the establishment of educational councils at all levels, from the provinces down to the communes;

- the modification of examination procedures in general education schools;

- the professional guidance in general education schools provided to all pupils graduating from basic and secondary general education schools.

- *Nhan Dan*: The Chinese authorities continue their armed provocations and incursions in the Northern border provinces of Vietnam, causing losses of lives and property to the local people.

- On the occasion of the International Day Against Racial Discrimination, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong sends a message to the UN Secretary-General and to the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid

- The spokesman of the SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a statement strongly condemning the aggressive policies and acts of South Africa against Angola and Mozambique.

21. The Bulgarian Red Cross donates gifts including 15 tonnes of medicines and 140 tonnes of food, cloths and fabrics to the Vietnamese Red Cross.

- *Nhan Dan*: Election to the People's Committees at street quarter and commune levels are held in Kampuchea.

- *Nhan Dan*: The FAO decides to send an emergency aid of 10,000 tonnes of food to help Vietnamese people stricken by storms and floods in 1980.

25. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* (the People's Army daily) condemns the slanderous campaign against Vietnam by the Yugoslav press. It also affirms that this campaign is aimed at concealing the crimes of the Chinese, the US and other reactionary forces.

- *Nhan Dan*: The conference of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Democratic Youth held in the capital of Lebanon strongly condemns the policies of the Chinese authorities against the socialist countries.

- On the occasion of its 50th founding anniversary, the Ho Chi Minh Order, first class, is conferred upon the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union.

- Mohammed Essâafi, special envoy of the UN Secretary-General arrives in Hanoi to "investigate the possibility of convening a regional conference" for peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese side reiterates its stand as mentioned in the 28 January 1981 statement of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the three Indochinese countries and states its appreciation of all efforts for peace, stability, friendship and cooperation in the region.

26. A delegation of the CPV led by Chu Huy Man, Political Bureau member of the Party Central Committee, leaves Vietnam for the 12th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

- The 13th session of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) held in Aden from 21 to 26 March adopts a joint statement expressing total support for the three Indochinese countries and the Afghan people.

- Signing of a plan for medical cooperation between Vietnam and the GDR for the period 1981-1983.

27. A Vietnamese delegation, led by Ambassador Phan Thi Minh, attended the 27th session of the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok.

- *Nhan Dan*: The Posts and Telecommunications School in Phnom Penh receives 300 telephones, a quantity of books, radios and other equipment donated by the Postal Service of Vietnam.

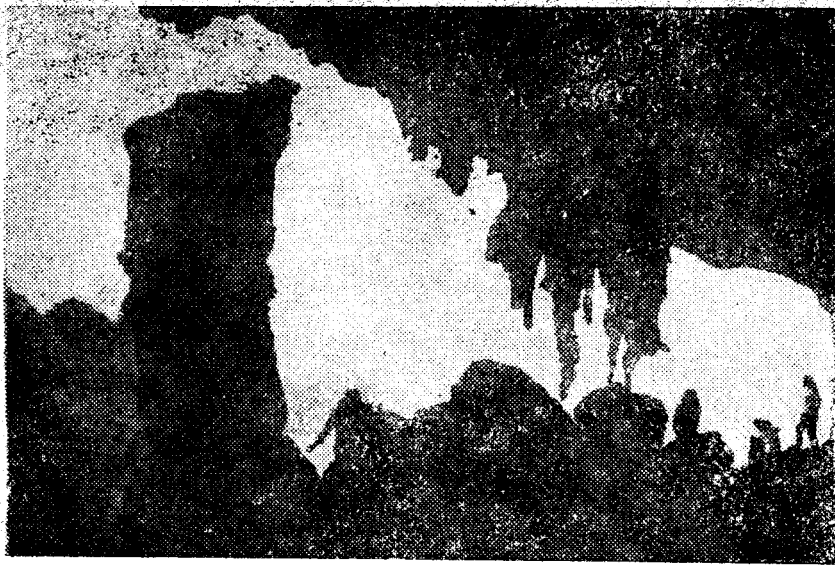
28. The daily *Nhan Dan* once again rejects the slanders by Thailand, China and some Western news agencies which claim that Vietnam has been using toxic chemical in Kampuchea.

30. A Vietnamese delegation, led by Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade Hoang Trong Dai, attends the 60th session of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) Standing Committee on home trade.

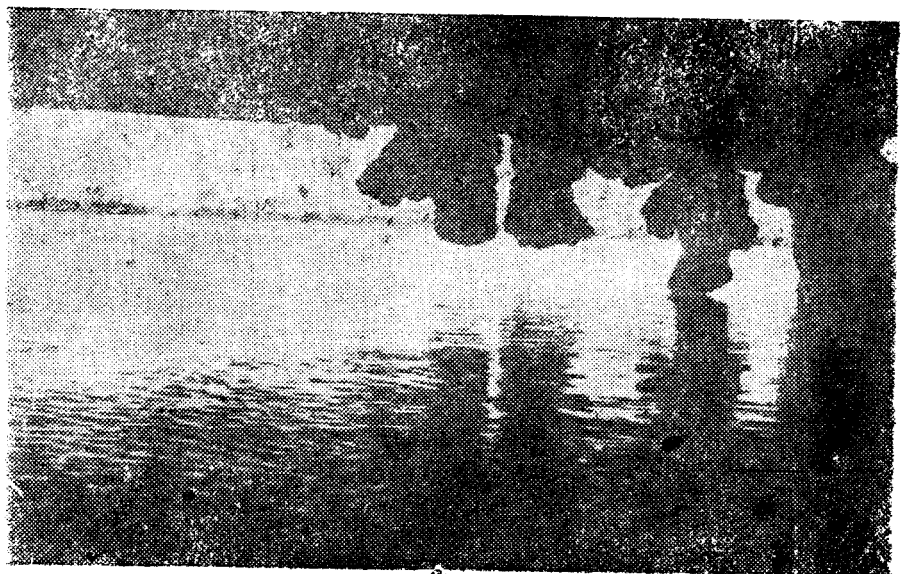
(Continued on page 31)

LANDSCAPES IN

HA LONG BAY



1. Trinh nu (Young girl) cave.
2. Trong (Drum) cave.
3. The entrance to Ba Ham lake.



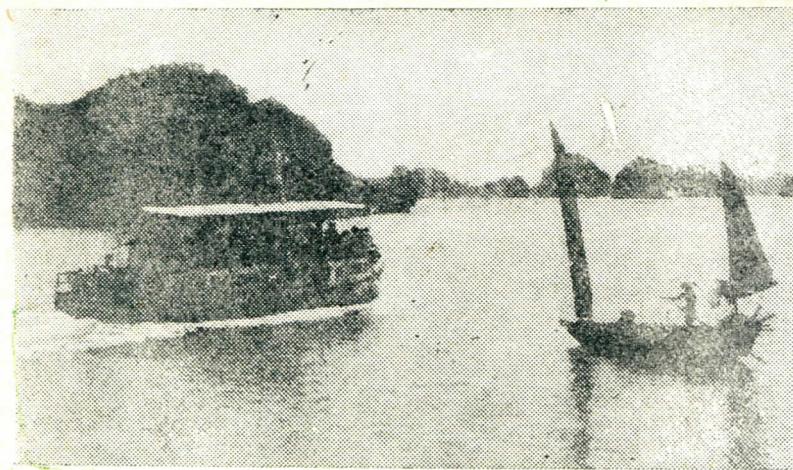
Photos :

PHAM TUE and DAN QUE



1. Ha Long Bay seen from the Tourist Hotel.

Photos: PHAM TUE and DAN QUE



LANDSCAPES IN HA LONG BAY

Vietnam
COURIER

Le courrier
du Vietnam

НОВОСТИ
ВЬЕТНАМА

El Correo
de Vietnam

Báo đối ngoại

TIN VIỆT NAM

Ra hàng tháng bằng các ngữ Anh, Pháp, Nga, Tây ban nha

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