

The Nung Ethnic
and
Autonomous Territory
of
Hai Ninh – Vietnam



Chief Editor Tran Duc Lai
Translated by Ngo Thanh Tung



**The Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration
Alumni Association-Vietnam**

The Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh – Vietnam

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*In memory of and grateful
commemoration to our late leader Vong A
Sang, the Nung Warriors who sacrificed
themselves for the nationalist cause, and
all the compatriots and their relatives who
lost their lives on their journey to freedom.*



Map of the Nung Autonomous Territory (Northeast Region)



Insignia of the Nung Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory.



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Alumni Association*

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CONTENTS

Forewords (<i>Linh Quang Vien</i>).....	I
A Few Thoughts (<i>Hoang Gia Cau</i>)	V
Forewords (<i>Chau Cam Sang</i>)	VII
Preface (<i>Tran Duc Lai</i>).....	IX
PART ONE	1
Chapter 1: The origin of the Nung ethnic group, Hai Ninh Province	1
Chapter 2: The formation of the Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory.....	20
PART TWO	36
Chapter 1: Geography	36
Chapter 2: Humanities	42
A. Population	42
B. Organization and Activities	45
1. Administrative Management.....	45
2. Justice Organization.....	48
3. Transportation	49
4. Economy	52
5. Education and Information.....	59
6. Public Health and Sports.....	68
7. Security and Military.....	68
Chapter 3: Districts' Characteristics	77
- Moncay District	77
- Ha Coi District.....	88
- Dam Ha District.....	99
- Tien Yen District	102
- Binh Lieu District	111

- Dinh Lap District	116
- Ba Che District	118
- Van Hoa District	119

PART THREE: The Mass Evacuation to South Vietnam (From Hai Ninh) 124

Chapter 1: Resettlement in the Song Mao Region, Binh Thuan Province 128

1. Location of Hai Ninh District and the Town of Song Mao 130
2. Climate and Weather..... 134
3. Culture..... 135
4. Economy 135
5. Military and Politics..... 136

Chapter 2 : Career Establishing at Saigon-Cholon 156

- a. Political Achievements..... 156
- b. Military Achievements..... 164
- c. Administrative Achievements 171
- d. Social Achievements..... 173
- e. Business and Trading Achievements 180

PART FOUR: After April 30, 1975 205

Chapter 1: Tragedy of Situation of South Vietnam Society 211

- A. Tyrannical Governing Policy 211
- B. Vietnamese Gulags..... 214

Chapter 2: Those Who Fled and Those Who Stayed..... 220

- A. The Boat People 220
- B. Those Who Stayed..... 224

Chapter 3: Living Overseas 229

- A. Resettlements in Canada and Elsewhere..... 229
- B. Resettlements in the USA..... 234

APPENDICES

Colonel Vong A Sang:	
- Leader of Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory	263
- Republic of Vietnam Senator	
Vong A Sang's Biography	265
Lt Colonel Vong A Sang with Nung Warrior Traditional	
Beret.....	267
The Third Division March	268
Addendum 1:	
List of Students of the Military Cadres School.....	272
Addendum 2:	
List of Students of the Junior Military Academy...	274
Addendum 3:	
List of Students of the Teachers' School	280
Addendum 4:	
List of Students of the School of Public	
Administration	283
Addendum 5:	
List of Students of the National Military	
Academy	285
Addendum 6:	
List of Nung Officers	288
Addendum 7:	
List of Military, Public Administration Personnel,	
Former Prisoners of Communist Prison Camps,	
Overseas Resettlement.	294
Bibliography.....	303
Speech of Professor Nguyen Ly Tuong.....	306
Translator's Notes.....	318
List of Contributors.....	320

FOREWORDS

First of all, I would like to briefly introduce the Hai Ninh Province to our readers. On the map of Vietnam, Hai Ninh is a black dot at the easternmost Sino-Vietnamese border.



Comparatively small, the province of Hai Ninh has experienced many ups and downs. Originally under the Nguyen Dynasty, it was named “Phu” (large district) Hai Dong. Under the French rule, it was elevated to “Dao”, small province Hai Ninh, then “Tinh” (province) Hai Ninh.

Under the French, provinces having common borders with China were directly under the command of French Army officers ranking full colonel or higher, who held both administrative and military authorities. Therefore, Hai Ninh had another title: The First Military Territory of Hai Ninh (Premier Territoire Militaire de Hai Ninh).

The most glorious historical period of Hai Ninh Province was from 1947 to 1954. During those 8 years, Hai Ninh became the Nung Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory (NHNAT) under the brilliant leadership of Colonel Vong A Sang.

Regretfully, when Vietnam was partitioned in two parts, the map of Vietnam was modified by the Communists. Hai Ninh was demoted to the status of a small district, a subordinate part of Quang Ninh Province.

To the Vietnamese people and the Nung ethnic group in particular, Hai Ninh Province has always been recognized as a strategic strongpoint protecting the Vietnamese frontier. Facing the political situation of 1947, the people of Hai Ninh Province proved themselves able to provide security and prosperity for the territory during the entire 8 years, due to their capacity, man power and resources, while the whole country from North to South was engulfed in the flame of war.

Those achievements resulted from the work of the brilliant Nung leader of the Territory, Colonel Vong A Sang; the solid cooperation of soldiers and local residents buttressed his leaderships, but above all, from the anti-communist spirit of the tribal of people from all walks of life.

In regard to the residents, the military and civilian elements of the Territory were closely tied to the Nungs, a tribe of strong anti-communist spirit. Although the tribe inhabited three fourths of the total territory population, the Nungs lived in harmony with other ethnic groups.

With blood and tears, they had written their dramatic pages of history, since their immigration by waves from South China to Hai Ninh. They had to continuously confront oppression, threats, robberies, pillages, as well as in the later years, when they had to work together to build the autonomous territory, without being entangled into the fratricidal war for many years.

When the 1954 Geneva Accord partitioned the country into two, a million North Vietnamese left behind the Communist regime, determined to resettle in the South. More than 50,000 Nung people, one third of the Territory population (a large proportion compared to the total number of North Vietnamese evacuees), followed their leader to the South by their own means. Most of them then resettled at Song Mao, Binh Thuan Province (SVN). They set up a new district and bestowed it with the traditional name Hai Ninh.

During this trying stage, the Nung had to cope with economic and political adversaries, while actively contributing to the prosperity of the South. Numerous achievements have been recorded in the domains of politics, military and administration of the First Republic (1954-1963), especially of the Second Republic (1963-1975) of Vietnam.

Finally, in what became known as Black April, 1975, South Vietnam was occupied. Over 3 million Southerners had to pay an exorbitant price for their freedom. The Nungs, with their inherent solidarity and struggling determination once more succeeded in resettling in foreign countries, especially in the United States of America, the Los Angeles area, in particular. The Nung community not only stabilized their living conditions, but also had effective plans to secure the future of their descending generations here.

Such has been my impression after having the honor to read “The Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai

Ninh – Vietnam” written by a group of Nungs notables who have patiently worked for many recent months.

This was a complete research on the Nungs of Hai Ninh, beginning with their start-up as settlers until their territorial self-governing and before their evacuation to the South. Thereafter they were fleeing the country by boat, in the grandest exodus in Vietnam history. Every stage of activities in each district has been recorded in a lively, truthful style with concrete details. Therefore, we believe that the book is a valuable and useful work for those who wish to research the Territory history, particularly for younger generations.

With great honors, we would like to introduce this book to you.

Linh Quang Vien,
Lt General (rtd)
Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces



A FEW THOUGHTS

I am greatly moved and happy after reading the historical summary of the Nung ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh, Vietnam written by the editors of the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association. I am



really moved by the huge information on the Nung group and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh. The book offers details on the origins and geography, humanity, customs and habits of the Nungs. It contains important historical data on the development and *raison d'être* of the Territory, which Emperor Bao Dai officially promulgated at Hanoi in 1949. The book also summarizes the living style and activities of the Nung communities and associations all over the globe. I am also very pleased to see that the book constitutes a map of standing points and a compass needle to determine the direction of progress of Nungs in the world community.

The book records the heroic past and bloody achievements and sacrifices of the Nungs since the establishment of the Nung Autonomous Territory to date. Undergoing painful events, the Nungs still boldly exist in the world. Together with the younger generations, we strive to sustain our struggle in order to cope with changes of the new world while preserving the spirit of solidarity and promoting traditional diligence and mutual assistance.

I sincerely thank the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association for having sponsored the publication of this valuable documentary.

This is also a valuable research resource for other communities who wish to study about the Nung ethnic group and the Territory.

Sincerely,

Hoang Gia Cau
Colonel (rtd)
Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces



FOREWORDS

After many years of impatient awaiting for the work of The Nung Ethnic and Nung Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory Vietnam (Vietnamese and Chinese versions) has officially published by the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association.



As president of the Association, I am honored to express my admiration to my senior and chief editor Tran Duc Lai, senior secretary Gip A Dzieng, senior Vietnamese to Chinese translator Slen Cam Hong as well as other seniors in the Board of Editors who have contributed labor and brain to complete this priceless historical documentary.

In the task of documentation, the Board of Editors made an effort to collect information from various sources of material, records, and history books.

They gathered many memoirs from related elderly personalities. Next, the Board had to gather, compare, analyze, and select every single fact, event, then sum them up in time and space perspectives.

Therefore, the documentary text faithfully reflected the process of constructions and developments of the Territory and its multi-cultural activities. It was born rather late, but was a necessary need for existing and younger generations. Although not professional historians, you senior edi-

tors have performed your task with a serious attitude and in an objective manner. You have depicted historic episode full of turmoil suffered by a proud race with lots of misfortune.

This documentary book is a dramatic and legendary epopée, a compressed history of the tiny ethnic and other minority groups in contemporary history of Vietnam. Reading the book, the young Nungs would clearly comprehend the historic route which was full of obstacles and hardships, covered with blood and tears. It traces continuous struggles against natural disasters, and human catastrophes in order to blaze the trails, to move mountains and fill up the oceans by a hardworking, peace loving race that was stubborn and indomitable.

With the pride of a tribe, we are confident that the Hai Ninh youths will benefit and inherit the inherent legacy of their forebears. They should not stop elevating themselves in the pursuit of education and career. They should co-exist peacefully, in unity and mutual assistance among themselves in order to honor the Nung Community all over the world.

*Hai Ninh autonomy persists with history,
Military and civilian unanimously repay nation's
blessings.*

Los Angeles, Fall 2007
Chau Cam Sang
Association President



PREFACE

*My intention to compile the annals for the Nung community bud-
ded from the Hai Ninh Veterans and
Public Administration Alumni Associa-
tion who had resettled in the U.S.A...
By the end of 2003, the Board of Edi-
tors was formed with the purpose of
drafting a summarized history of the ethnic-building process
and developments of the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh,
Vietnam. Finally, the title *The Nung Ethnic and Autonomous
Territory of Hai Ninh, Vietnam* was selected to include all
the stages of evacuation to South Vietnam then leaving Viet-
nam to live abroad.*



*We were lucky to meet Colonel Chamouton, former
lieutenant and director of the Military Cadres School and the
Junior Military Academy of Moncay towards the end of the
1940s of the last century. He lent us a few typed documents
of high quality on Hai Ninh province at his possession. The
research for materials proceeded at the Centre d'Archives
d'Outre-Mer at Aix-en-Provence, France and at the Service
Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Chateau de Vincennes,
Paris suburb. Supplementary to those materials were articles
written by experienced elderly Nungs, interviews with
French, Vietnamese and Nung personalities who had served
many years in Hai Ninh. We also relied on the Official Ga-
zette of the Republic of Vietnam (1949-55) filed at the Na-*

tional Library of Paris to recover basic documents. Unfortunately, the gazettes had been rotten, so the project to turn them into microfilm has not been materialized.

Right from the beginning, we on the Board of Editors, intended to maintain faithfulness and objectivity in the document compiling process. Consequently, each article upon completion was passed through the Board, and sometimes through the advisors as well, for editing or modification if necessary. This cautious procedure caused the delay so far.

On behalf of the Board of Editors, I deeply appreciate all of those who have contributed at any level to the completion of this work. As chief editor, I sincerely thank all editors of the board. I appreciate all the advisors for their guidance and encouragement, and especially thank translator Slen Cam Hong for his Chinese translation.

If this documentary partly responds to the expectation of my Nung compatriots in their wishes to honor their contribution to the country; to the building of mutual understanding of other communities and local people; and to help our descendants to be well aware of the heroic struggles of their ascendants, such achievement would be precious rewards to the Board of Editors.

While we have been guided by good will, truthfulness and effort, we are not professional researchers or writers. Thus we may have committed some imperfections in this text. We wish that intelligent readers be generous to help us im-

prove this work. We remain in appreciation of you, the readers.

Summer, 2007

Tran Duc Lai



PART ONE



THE ORIGINS OF THE NUNG ETHNIC GROUP AND THE FORMATION OF THE HAI NINH AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN OF THE NUNG ETHNIC GROUP

Once upon the time, on the land where the Hai Ninh Province would later be founded, many ethnic groups came to resettle. There were tribes who had been here long ago, and there were those who drifted to this land over the course of a few centuries. Some brought with them substantially different original cultures. Others had cultures that were closely related, enabling an easy integration after years of mutual contact.

A. Various Principal Ethnics Composing the Nung Population

The original residents in Hai Ninh were the “**Tsin Lau**” (peasants). They spoke the “Tsin Va” dialect (1). Until mid-20th Century, small remnants of this dialect remain at villages such as Tan Mai and Vay Khay.

A more populated group, the **Ngai** (in Chinese Ngai means far and dispersed) (2) It scattered in South China from Phong Senh district and had settled in Hai Ninh for generations.

Another group, the “**San Diu**” coming from Guang Dong and Guang Tsi, moved to the mountainous area north and northeast of Vietnam since the 16th Century. (3)

The San Diu gathered in large number at Xuan Lan, Quat Dong, Quat Doai, Thin Nong, Dong Ngu, Tien Yen, Ho Dong, Ha Gian, Ha Vuc and Ke Bao. (4)

An ethnic group that had just resettled in this area since the late half of the 19th Century in a special circumstance was the **Hac Ca**. They came from the basin of the Yangtze River. They had migrated to Guang Dong due to overpopulation. Local people called them Hac Ca, meaning “visitors coming from afar”. This mass of Hac Ca participated in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement led by leader Hong Xiuquan who had fought against the Manchurian dynasty (1848-1863). The movement also advocated the expulsion of foreigners from China and introduced revolutionary reforms which were very popular.

Thanks to these successes, the Hac Ca could take control of more than 10 provinces of South China with Nanking as the capital. Later on, because of their degradation and internal conflicts, they were defeated by the Manchurians. The Hac Ca population was pushed towards the common border areas between Guang Dong and Guang Tsi and

Vietnam (1860). From this area, they invaded the Hai Ninh region, beginning with Ha Coi, Dam Ha and Moncay districts. (5) Local folks named them “Lau Man” meaning drifters, vagabonds.

The Hac Ca invasion drove the Tsin Lau, Ngai, and San Diu to unite against them, (leading to the battles of Tan Mai, Ma Te, and Pho Tai Mun of the Ha Coi region). Facing this strong coalition, the Hac Ca surrendered. Later on, due to the development of a set of common interests, all of these groups live together in harmony. Gradually, intergroup matrimony reconstituted all of them into a large extended family residing on this beloved land. With large farmlands and many river streams favorable to growing crops and plants, the great majority of dwellers lived by farming. As time went by, they naturally formed the Nung ethnic group, meaning “*nong nhan*”, or farmers, in Cantonese. (6)

Some argue that the term *nong nhan* stands more for occupational activities than for racial origin or for an ethnic with particular characteristics. In reality, the formation of the ethnic Nung stemmed from a natural historic background. There are factual evidences supporting this statement:

1. In history, a community of foreign origin that move to a land and lived for a long period of time with people of different culture might eventually become a new ethnic group embracing new habits and traditions. Such cases can be cited: the Ethnic Cambodians living in the Mekong Delta consider themselves Vietnamese; the Minh Huong (Vietnamese of Chinese descents) whose forefathers had fled China for

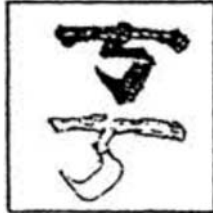
Vietnam when the Ming dynasty was overthrown by the Manchurians, who were living in Ha Tien and Rach Gia provinces, no longer consider themselves Chinese; people of the United States, most of them from Great Britain, do not identify themselves with the British but as Americans.

It is logical for Chinese settlers in Hai Ninh, who have absorbed Sino-Vietnamese culture over the course of generations, to eventually re-identify themselves as Nung, a new group. For a long time, they have fulfilled obligations and enjoyed the rights of Vietnamese citizens. Therefore, no one can deny the fact that the Nungs are an integral part of the Vietnamese people, especially when none of them intend to return to China (7) but rather mean to stay in Vietnam for good. This motivation was symbolized by the title “Batallion des Becs d’Ombrelle” (Umbrella Beak Battalion), dubbed by Colonel Vong A Sang. This was the first Nung military unit entirely composed of the Nungs (Part 2, Chapter 2), who were determined to cling to their land in order to defend their welfare as an umbrella.

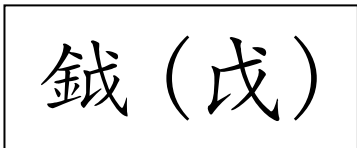
Another event that eloquently denotes their wish to become a separate entity was their plan to form an autonomous territory of the Nung community since July 1947 (see the following chapters).

2. In the Sino-Vietnamese relationship, a solid precedence has been established on the nomination “Viet”. In the book “Nguon Goc Ma Lai cua Dan Toc Viet Nam” (the Malaysian Origin of the Vietnamese People) (Reprinted by Xuan Thu, USA, pp 154-156), the author, Mr. Binh Nguyen Loc quoted:

“The name Viet – the Chinese used to name the new comers by their peculiarities. Seeing the barbaric Dong Di with tattoo on their bodies and their teeth dyed in black and the emblem depicting a slanted axe made of brass with short wooden handle (for throwing), they called the axe ‘Viet’, so they called the new comers the barbarian “Viet”. That means barbarians having the axe ‘Viet’ as a weapon”.



In their pictographic written language, the Chinese drew a picture of the slanted axe to represent the original name of Viet. It consisted of a long bar (handle) under which they drew a hook (slanted axe) in order to represent a blade and also indicate the people who used it as a weapon (bar and hook). In the Chu dynasty (1122-256 BC), the Chinese stopped using such an original Viet name. They used a combining system putting the set “metal” (金 indicating all metals) with the set “thick” (戍 indicating all axes). The two were put together forming the new name of Viet, replacing the original Viet as mentioned above. This still indicated the ethnic who utilized the slanted axe as weapon. (The word in the parentheses is ‘thick’).



Thus the Chinese had based on a peculiar tool with the name Viet in order to name its users, the Viet ethnic. According to this precedence, those ethnics whose particular characteristics of farming logically became Nung (Nong Nhan, farm person). (Nung from the word NONG, pronounced in the Cantonese sound) seems to be the past of current history.

Are there differences between the Nung of Hai Ninh and the Nung of Cao Bang, Lang Son provinces?

In the history of Vietnam there were events in which the Nong of Lang Son province, the Nong of Tuyen Quang province, both rebelled sometimes against the Annam Kingdom (Vietnam Monarchy) in the 11th and 19th centuries (Viet Nam Su Luoc, Tran Trong Kim). They belonged to the Nung ethnic (the family name Nong pronounced in Vietnamese; Nung is pronounced in Cantonese). Both belonged to the group of Bach Viet ethnic, a large tribe residing for a long time in the Luong Quang (Guang Dong and Guang Tsi) and Yunnan and also the northeastern region of Vietnam (Tuyen Quang, Thai Nguyen, That Khe, and Ha Giang). They gathered in large numbers in the Lang Son and Cao Bang provinces. (8) This group of Nung ethnics shared a dialect belonging to Tay-Thai. They usually could communicate in this dialect with the Laotians, the Thais and the Choangs in China.

It seems impossible to rely on any statistics regarding the size of this particular Nung group, but they must certainly have been more numerous than the Nungs of Hai

Ninh. As to their culture, the Nung of Lang Son and Tuyen Quang provinces of northern Vietnam highlands were more like Vietnamese while the Nungs of Hai Ninh and Moncay were more influenced by Chinese customs and habits.

B. The Nungs of Hai Ninh- Religion and Customs

The Nungs of Hai Ninh were mostly residents of farming plains from coastal regions to the forest borders. Their clothing, living quarters, customs and habits were not different from those of the Cantonese on the other side of the common border with China. They were basically faithful, hospitable and helpful. They led a peaceful lifestyle and were successful in many respects.

The most popular tongues of the Nungs were the “Ngai” dialect, then Cantonese (as a transitional dialect), and the “Hac Ca”, and the “San Diu”. The Ngai dialect speakers communicated comprehensively with the Hac Ca counterparts. The two were close in pronunciation and some words are different. That is why both are called the Hac Ca-Ngai dialect. Only the “Tsin Va” vanished from usage.

In religion, similar to almost all ethnics in the region, the Nungs are inundated in the collective teachings of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism in different degrees depending on the circumstances. Mostly these three religions combined into an indiscernible belief called “Tam Giao Dong Quy” (The Three Convergent Traditional Religions).

Basically, the Nungs practiced the cult of ancestors. Filial piety must be the first human virtue of all. Filial assistance towards one's parents, grand-parents, were specially manifested on ceremonial occasions including showing gratefulness by mourning (from one to three years) and offerings for the spirits of one's dead relatives to be liberated from worldly ties (for example the 7 offerings every 7 days, the 100th day offerings); having sorcerers conduct memorial services (ta chai) for one night or one day and two nights.

The practice of filial piety manifested in the wedding whose main purpose is to reproduce in order to carry on the lineage. Through the many stages of the wedding ceremony from match making, engagement, to bride welcoming in which the bride sat on a sedan chair covered with flowers, all drowned in the sound of firecrackers, drumbeats and wind instruments creating a radiant atmosphere for both sides of the wedding. Before leaving for the groom's family, the bride practiced the custom of "hoc chiu", consisting of crying and lamenting for 5 to 7 days. The bride performed this ritual by crying and lamenting in early morning and in the evening. In the two sessions, the bride cited her gratitude towards her parents, and mourned her absence and inability to remain at home to help her old parents (this custom has been abolished).

The wedding of the Nungs engendered a unique exception compared to common practices. If the bride's family had no male sibling, the groom would stay with the bride's family in order to assist her parents as they aged. The couple

would continue the cult of her ancestors when her parents passed away.

This exceptional practice came from an old tradition whereby “There are three filial impieties, the gravest is failure to have a male inheritor (the other two committing wrongdoings that dishonor one’s parents and failure to nurture one’s parents)”. So there is the custom of the newly married couple living in the bride’s family if she had no male sibling in her family.

By the same token, the “fong-sui” belief of the Nung also belonged to the tradition of filial piety. One must attend to the ancestors’ tombs in order to boost the prosperity of younger generations. To do this job, the Nungs relied on geomancers to find terrains of specific shapes, locations of divine atmosphere where all the spirits of mountains and rivers concurred (usually called flourished land or prosperous sites). The Nungs would bring their relatives’ remains or corpses to bury at the selected plots in the hope that their offspring would succeed in their wealth, luck or fame in literature.

Far from being devoted Buddhist practitioners, the Nungs worshipped the Goddess of Mercy with great reverence. This Goddess is a great Bodhisattva in Buddhism. There was a pagoda to worship the Goddess in each village as a guardian spirit of the whole area to save the villages from distress and misfortune. The Goddess is believed to be an efficient supernatural power. Facing an imminent danger, the Nungs who piously chanted the prayer of the Goddess for

protection usually escaped the challenges unscathed. In the occasions of New Moon and Full Moon, followers of both sexes came to pagoda to worship in great number.

At the beginning of the lunar year, people bought offerings and brought them to the Goddess shrine (A Plo Meu) praying for their peace, luck, and successes. This act is called “hy phoc”. At year end or whenever a prayer is fulfilled, there was a thanking worship called “van phoc”. The Goddess Commemoration Day (Cun Dam Tan) on the 19th day of the 2nd month of lunar calendar was a solemn occasion. People launched fireworks on this special Holiday (See Siu Pha Plao at Ha Coi District).

The Nungs believed in the popular teachings of Taoism. They believed in the deity, saints and the Jade Emperor (God King) and his Court in Heaven; the God of the Soil in charge of all lands; the Kitchen God in charge of each household; the Tutelary God of hamlets and villages; Guan Yu, the sainted general under King Liu Bei of the Shu Kingdom (in the romance of Three Kingdoms), was worshipped due to his bravery, fidelity and deified with miracles. These gods and saints were worshipped together in the Goddess pagodas and shrines for individual gods. In front of their altars, offerings were placed, incense sticks were burned in a perfumed and smoky atmosphere, the Nungs prayed and made obeisance, and at times, consulted the oracles (khau cao pui) (khau tsim) to ask the saints and Buddha to witness their devotion or to pray for guidance and advices.

The religious rites of the Nungs took place all year round according to the four seasons, the eight festivals and their farming agenda.

1. Tet- Lunar New Year Day

“Tet” is the most important and greatest holiday of the year. Both Chinese and Vietnamese observe this Lunar New Year Day in a similar manner. It is the beginning of Spring. The Earth and Heaven are renewed. All beings are reborn. The Yin and the Yang are in harmony. Tet is prepared on the 23rd day of the 12th month in the Lunar calendar when the Kitchen God returns to Heaven (9). It lasts at least 3 days. People clean their homes, decorate them with parallel scrolls or couplets of Tet or large scriptures of meaningful famous statements written on bright-red paper, standing for joy and luck. On the 30th day of the 12th month in the evening, no matter how far away one was, he would try his best to be home for a family reunion to worship his ancestors and enjoy the reunion dinner.

During the three days of Tet, firecrackers explode noisily to chase out the ugly spirits and to welcome the New Year. Children well-wish their parents, grand-parents, teachers, friends visit each other and exchange wishes among themselves. Presents are exchanged. Poor or rich, one tends to eat at ease. Children are the happiest group. They wear new clothing, merrily receive small envelopes of gift money, enjoying yearly maturity (10). Tet is an occasion to observe special customs, consulting fortune tellers on future events (11); abstaining from tabooed actions to avoid bad luck in the new year. The most meaningful abstinences are from ob-

scene language, getting upset or quarreling. Everyone tries to stay calm and courteous to all for the whole year.

2. The Third Month Festival or the “Tet Thanh Minh” (TTM)

In the Third Lunar month there is the “Tet Thanh Minh” when people visit their relatives’ graves (cleaning and decorating graves) called “*tao mo*”. People believe that keeping the graves of the deceased clean and nice would bless his or her children and grandchildren with good health and prosperity. Thus keeping good care of the graves is an important custom of the ethnic Nungs, Vietnamese and Hans (Chinese).

One tends to bury one’s relatives on mountains or hills. Therefore, a tomb visit, worshipping then eating food offerings on the spot afterward seems a picnic party nowadays. There is also an occasion to a spring escapade when the weather starts to warm up.

3. The Fifth Month Festival “Đoan Ngọ” or the Double-Five on the fifth day of the Fifth Lunar Month, people prepare “*bánh tro*”, or ash cake for offerings on the altar. They also hold a boat race, the so-called *long chau festival* (12), and go to harvest medical herbs. Because it is the time of seasonal climate change, a favorable condition for epidemics means that people have to get rid of unwanted insects to protect the crops and human health.

4. The Ullambana Festival (Le Vu Lan) on the 14th day of the 7th Lunar Month, is originally one of the principal

Buddhist rituals praying for souls of the deceased particularly those who suffered violent deaths. The main events are scheduled for the 15th day, but they take place from the afternoon of the 14th and continue to the morning of the 16th. Beginning with the evening of the 14th, the monks show up at the yard where the home's master piles up heaps of *vang ma* (votive papers) symbols of gold bars, houses, appliances, utensils, vehicles made as an offering to the dead. They observe the burning of the symbolic offerings while praying. By practicing the rituals, homes owners would feel happy and assured that they have done good deeds.

At Quan Am Pagoda, besides offering ritual services and burning paper gold bars for the dead in the Netherworld, people also give free foods to the living persons on Earth. Needy people and burglars may visit those sites to enjoy foods donated by kind-hearted contributors. (13)

5. The Mid-Autumn Festival occurs in the evening of the 15th day of the 8th Lunar Month, at the middle of Autumn with bright moonlight and cool air. It is the festival of children, with "*nhit peng*" (*moon cake*), a procession of lanterns, exhibition of image rotating lanterns with all kinds of drawings and colors. It is time for adults to drink wine, chanting poems, watching the Moon and relishing tea. It is also exciting time for healthy young men to play lion dance, perform martial arts, and shoot firecrackers.

6. The Double Nine Festival or "Trung Duong", on the Ninth day of the Ninth Lunar Month. The festival originates from a story of a Taoist, who found their way to the

mountain to stay away from an epidemic. People of following generations kept the tradition, so-called *hoi dang cao* or festival on the heights to visit the mountains, or to pay tribute to the graves of recently deceased relatives, the practice they were unable to perform in the time of Tet Thanh Minh.

7. After the Tenth Month harvest when rice filled up granaries, it is time to survey the year's harvest and to celebrate the Dong Chi (Winter Equinox) Festival in the 11th Lunar Month. People enjoy fresh rice crop (*xec slan*) and rice dumplings (*xui in*) with a bit of raw ginger for stomach warming. It is also time for some rest to be ready for the coming Tet celebration.

Another tradition that the Nungs held in high esteem is the *ta tai-phan*. They raise altars when epidemics rendered heavy losses to humans, animals or to crops. The altars are established in perfect orders.. The ritual usually lasts 4 days and 5 evenings, when the monks conduct exorcist sessions in order to welcome Buddha and Gods descending onto those altars to bless living creatures and help the villagers live in peace.

Ritual altars are on clear ground with large buildings and gates whose front sides are decorated by parallel scrolls of verses. The inside walls are covered with a great many pictures of the Saints and Buddha. The ceremonies follow well-organized orders, from the opening ritual under all kinds of banners, palanquins, to boisterous horses... On the third day, there come official rites such as welcoming the

ghost soldiers, beheading oxen and pigs to entertain the troops.

The fourth day is reserved for the most important religious events. The most marvelous scene is climbing *the hill of knives* that belongs to the *martial platform* (of Taoism). Two round columns of 5 to 6-meters long join in a trapeze form or in separate vertical poles. There are 12 large sharp knives embedded on each column, pointing upward. After blessing from the senior monk, two young monks or *khieu su*, slowly climb the columns on bare feet stepping on the sharp knives to reach the pinnacles.

The monks open the books, praying to the saints and the ghosts in loud voices for forgiving humankind, for calmness of the Netherworld and happiness of the earthly world, for the peaceful nation and the welfare of the people, and for moderate weather and climate. The monks usually carry with them women's and children's decorations offered by male and female worshippers to the top of the hill to have them absorbed of divine spirits, believing that the spirits would help those who wear them to get rid of devils.

After the ritual, the monks step on the sharp knives again to descend, removing a knife after planting the foot on the next knife as they descend. They reach the ground with their feet unharmed while the crowds are cheering them to the echo. In accordance with formalities, there are times when drums and trumpets burst forth along with resounding horns as if to summon the forsaken souls and ghosts to gather around the altars awaiting departure for Nirvana.

In the fourth evening, there is special *fire training* from the *literal platform* (of Buddhism). Coals are burned in an arrangement of 10 meter long. After the senior monk's blessing, two worshippers play the role of commanders, holding banners and running over red hot coals barefooted without being burned. Following them are relatives of those who had suffered violent deaths. The relatives also run the fire with trained barefoot while carrying ancestral tablets on their hands. In this ritual, the dead souls are believed to have left the mundane world for a blissful land. They would be worshipped with incense sticks along with their ancestors and would be freed from worldly sufferings.

During the altar display, numerous shops, stalls and booths are set up all around. People get together to eat and drink, joining games, watching conjuring tricks and enjoying humorous folk songs. It is the great festival for people in the area. (16)

Generally, traditions have been somewhat changed as time goes by. Because of life evolution and modern conditions of life, a number of traditions fell into oblivion and stopped being practiced.



Notes:

1. Habitants des coins reculés: Petite Histoire du Territoire Nung de Hai Ninh, Vong A Sang (abbr. VAS), p. 3.
2. Eloigné, VAS. p.3.

3. There are still debates concerning the origin of *San Diu* people. Some documents maintain that they were from *Muong* ethnic group in North Vietnam midlands and were assimilated by *Ngai* people (VAS, p. 45. Géographie Sommaire du Territoire de Hai Ninh, - abbr. GFO, p.60) Others maintain that they have the same origin with the *Dao* (see records of the Board of Editors' expanded meeting on Dec 21,2003, and Bulletin d'Information of Association Lycée Albert Sarraut #152, pp. 18, 19).
4. VAS, p7.
5. Dragon Magazine 7+81/2004, pp. 76-77. VAS pp. 21-22.
6. VAS, pp. 22, 45
7. They voluntarily registered their names on the list of legal inhabitants of the villages they had just arrived. (see Doctrine des Minh Huong de l'Indochine et des Nung du Tonkin, Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer – CAOM, et Notice sur le 1er Territoire Militaire – abbr. N, p14.
8. Ho Thi Thuc Khanh. Study and Design of the Ethnic Nung people, pp. 14, 20-23. Particularly, this Nung history also contain the legend of the *Mother of 100 Children* with different titles that resembles the story of Lady “Au Co”, who gave birth to children in 100 eggs. Similarly, is the story of Thuc Phan, who occupied the state of Van Lang and founded the state of Au Lac, then claim

the royal title King *An Duong Vuong*, with Co Loa Thanh (Co Loa Fort) as capital. Id. Pp.16-17.

9. In order to submit a letter to the Jade Emperor, reporting all activities the head of the family and other people on Earth have done last year.
10. Like Vietnamese and Chinese on Tet celebration, people wish each other one more year in life. They were not afraid of old age, as old age signified accumulation of wisdom and high respects from inside the family and the outside society.
11. A special type of fortune telling was to look in the chicken legs. When boiling young chicken, at the point where water began bubbling, the chicken legs were moved to the bowls of cool water on the altars. At the conclusion of the ritual services, the chicken legs were brought to an old wise villager to be examined and future fortune as well as chances and health of every family member were predicted – the group of San Jose Personages (Feb 24, 2005). p.2.
12. After the story of Khuat Nguyen, a personage from the state of So (ancient state of the old China) in the state group called Dong Chau. As his King refused to accept his advice, he committed suicide in the Mich La River on the 5th day of the 5th Lunar month. In memory of a faithful mandarin, people of subsequent generations held memorial services on that river, offering him cakes decorated by five-colored threads.

13. The San Jose Personages – Feb 24, 2005, p.2. Supplementary article of Mr. Vong Chan Senh with combined arguments.
14. People believed that fake articles (paper money, gold and silver bullions, household utensils) after being burned would become real objects that the dead could use.
15. A mid-autumn cake was round, representing the Moon, according to the legend of Chinese Emperor Duong Minh Hoang (Tang Dynasty) visiting the Moon and watching the Rainbow Dance.
16. From *12 Vietnam Traditional Festivals*, But Viet Daily, Houston, Texas, Jan 16, 04.
17. See Hai Ninh Chi Quang of author Lieu Nguyen and Vong Chan Senh's supplementary article on Dec 26, 03.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FORMATION OF THE HAI NINH AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY

A. UNDER THE NGUYEN DYNASTY

In the early 19th Century when the Nguyen Dynasty claimed the throne, the district of Hai Dong, a part of Quang Yen Province was renamed Hai Ninh. This new district was larger than today's Hai Ninh Diocese (Hon-Gai to the West, Cap Bach Long to the East) (1) and had two sub-districts:

- Sub-district Van Ninh consisted of sub-districts Moncay, Ha Coi, Dam Ha in years later

- Sub-district Tien Yen consisted of sub-districts Tien Yen, Binh Lieu and Dinh Lap in years later. (2)

The 19th Century was the era of disturbances. Pillages by Chinese and Vietnamese gangs were rampant everywhere, particularly in Ha Coi and Dam Ha. One gang after another, they robbed crops and domestic bovines, kidnapping girls and women and sent the captives to their dens planted deep in the Chinese inner lands. The Nguyen royal army strived to destroy the gangs. Sometimes military forces followed the sea lines into the area to chase them, but the area lived in peace only for a short time. People did not have a good time in attempting to make their living. It was a time of misery (3).

The most remarkable gang member was Le Duy Phung. He declared himself descendant of the Le monarch, and he would reinstate the dynasty. He launched his military effort in Quang Yen (1861), sending his troops to overrun Hai Ninh, employing Hai Ninh as a base to reach the delta areas, besieging Hai Duong while his men attacked Bac Ninh province.

The King in Hue appointed Nguyen Tri Phuong as commander to fight the rebels. Many battles were fought on land and on sea, rendering heavy losses to both sides. Later on, owing to the co-operation of the Chinese Chin soldiers from Kham Chau, China, the Vietnam royal army routed the rebels, retaking control of Hai Ninh (1865). During those 4 years, the district people were undergoing extreme hardships and hunger. It was time when ethnic Hac-Ca people taking advantage of the troubled situation to invade Hai Ninh and resettled there (4).

B. UNDER THE FRENCH RULE

After the Giap Than (1884) Peace Treaty, the French began to establish their ruling power and signed the Thien Tan Accords (1885) with the Chinese to determine the common borderline. The Bac Luan River, north of Ha Coi and Moncay, became the natural border between the two countries (5).

In 1887, Hai Ninh District was elevated to the status of a *Dao* (nearly equivalent to a province), headed by a *Quan Dao*. In 1905 “dao” Hai Ninh was elevated to the statute of

province. In 1912, Hai Ninh became the First Military Territory (1re Territoire Militaire). (6).

Under French rule, people in the province enjoyed an undisturbed life, although at times there were some attacks by robbers and rebels.

** In November 1885, when most of local military forces joined the French Envoy inspection party visiting Cong Plenh area (then a part of Hai Ninh), a band of Vietnamese and Chinese rebels launched a surprise attack on Moncay, killing a member of the Borderline Determination Committee. At the same time, Hac-Ca rebels attacked the forts of Ha Coi and Dam Ha. Not until January 1886 did the French reoccupy Moncay.

** In 1895, a group of rebels from Tong Henh (Dong Hung) slipped into the center of Moncay at midnight and killed a Frenchman who was the chief of the Customs Department. They kidnapped his wife and daughter, locked them up at Ma Thau San near the common border with China, and only released them for ransoms 6 months later.

** In 1896, with even more audacity, the rebels infiltrated as far as Ke Bao Island, captured a Frenchman and his sister and held the two siblings at their lair in the border area of Pan Ai. Because the rebels set too high a ransom, French authorities decided to launch an important operation from March to June to destroy the lair. However, the rebels successfully fled to China along with the hostages. Later, owing to the tactful intervention from a Chinese army general of the

Guang-Dong and Guang-Tsi region, the two French citizens were set free in the Guang-Tsi area. (7)

** During World War I, most intensely in 1915, from Tong Henh, Germany helped mount an important plot to seize Moncay. The plotters would conduct bomb attacks to kill the French at a meeting, poisoning French soldiers, destroying telegraph lines, seizing rifles and ammunition and release prisoners, with a number of soldiers at Moncay and other places collaborated as moles. The plot was prematurely revealed, and the plotters and their conspirators were executed by firing squads (8).

** In November 1918, soldiers of Chinese origin at Binh Lieu rebelled against difficult living conditions and harsh discipline measures by the French Fort Commander, organized a mutiny (under the command of Sergeant Lo Sap Dat and Corporal Lien Dinh Phong), and killed all commanding officers. They took control of the fort and seized the weapons. They invaded Hoanh Mo, then Choc Plai San and Dam Ha. French soldiers, efficiently supported by the Nung Rangers (9) had to concentrate the forces and to fight several months before they could retake these sites (10).

** In 1923, about 400 rebels commanded by Vong Tai Ngau attacked Fort Pac Phong Senh, but failed. Following the death of Sun Yatsen (1925), the Nationalist-Communist war in China spread to the border area that begot a reform movement headed by Sam Cam Say (the above-mentioned Lo Sap Dat was under his command). They were to expel the French to liberate North Vietnam. In March

1927, this group with about 300 persons, began to attack Hoanh Mo but failed. In November, their strength increased to 700 or 800 gunmen who infiltrated Nam Si but they were expelled to the other side of the border (11).

What must be taken into account was the resistance of the patriotic volunteers against the French colonialists after France established their ruling in the North of our country.

- On the night of November 24, 1886, the volunteers attacked Moncay Citadel. After 3 days, they were reinforced with greater strength, cutting off the French resupply lines and intercepting French reinforcement, thus forcing the French to withdraw.

- On January 7, 1915, the troops of Viet Nam Quang Phuc Hoi (Vietnam National Restoration League) set up plan to attack the city of Moncay. The French had to reinforce the city with combat seasoned troops for the defense.

- In 1917, people of Dam Ha, Ha Coi, and Binh Lieu continued their fighting against the French Colonialist forts (12).

Moreover, as happened all over Indochina in World War I and World War II, the French government recruited Nung soldiers to serve France in Europe. A number of them sacrificed themselves in battlefields, while others were taken prisoners (13).

C. THE PERIOD OF JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND THE ERA OF REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

1. The Japanese Army and the Coup-d'Etat on March 9, 1945

Germany invaded France in 1940. Despite signing the accords of alliance with Germany and Italy, Japan still allowed the French to maintain their administration in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Japanese forces gradually moved into Indochina and stationed at many places.

In 1943, the Japanese started their base camp constructions at Ha Coi and tried to control all activities in the province. On March 9, 1945, they suddenly attacked Ha Coi, Tien Yen, and Moncay. After days of holding the grounds, the French defending units had to withdraw to China along with many Nung soldiers (14). It was this Nung group that returned, retook Hai Ninh in late 1945, and founded the autonomous Nung territory that lasted until the 1954 Geneva Agreement which partitioned Vietnam in two states.

The Japanese officially took control over Hai Ninh on March 22, 1945 retaining the old administrative apparatuses and officials with the collaboration of the “Dai Viet Quoc Gia Lien Minh” (Dai Viet National Alliance, a pro-Japanese party). To maintain public order, they recruited security guards from undisciplined rascals who used to harass local residents.

The Japanese occupation of Moncay was interrupted for nearly 2 weeks on July 8, following a successful surprise

attack of the Viet Nam Cach Menh Dong Minh Hoi (National Revolutionary Alliance League) an armed militia commanded by Vu Kim Thanh. On July 18 the Japanese maneuvered their troops from Ha Coi to re-occupy Moncay (15).

2. The Japanese Surrender and an Era for Revolutionary Forces

After the Americans dropped two nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan had to unconditionally surrender on August 14, 1945. The Chinese Nationalist Army was assigned to disarm the Japanese forces in North Vietnam from the common border with China to the 17th North Parallel. The Hai Ninh province was under the control of consecutive revolutionary forces.

*** The Vietnam Cach Menh Dong Minh Hoi (shortened; Viet Cach) Era*

After being disarmed, the Japanese army withdrew from Moncay on August 24, 1945. The Viet Cach Third Army followed the Chinese Army under the command of Vu Kim Thanh seized Moncay on September 1st. He also represented the Vietnam Republic Provisionary Government led by Nguyen Hai Than, and appointed a delegation to negotiate with the Viet Minh without any success.

The Viet Cach Army was made up of 3 divisions: the 7th Division, commanded by Vy Van Luu in Moncay area; the 1st Division, whose commander was Chieng Ung Khiu and Lau Slui Long, was advancing from Than Plun and Ho-

anh Mo to Tien Yen (16). The 8th Division controlled Ha Coi and Dam Ha. A number of Viet Cach soldiers who had been vagabonds, joined the group of commandos coming from China, often extorted and robbed people at public squares, especially after the defeat following their clashes with the Viet Minh. At last, Vy Van Luu joined the “Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang” forces and overthrew Vu Kim Thanh on May 1st, 1946. (17)

**** The Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (or Viet Quoc) Era**

After seizing power, the Viet Quoc forces consolidated their administrative and military state of affairs. In the Moncay area, the villages of Tra Co and Binh Ngoc refused submission, raising the Viet Minh flag, and calling the Viet Minh from Dam Ha and Tien Yen to send their reinforcements. On May 7, 1946, the Viet Quoc forces in Moncay sent a delegation to Tra Co for negotiation with the Viet Minh. However, at that same night, Viet Minh forces deployed, besieged Moncay, and opened fire, killing a Chinese officer, causing the Chinese regular army from Tong Henh (Dong Hung) to move over for intervention. After that, Nim Cam Sang, with the title of Supreme Commander of the border-guard forces in North Vietnam, appointed by Ha Noi since November 1945, took command of the Viet Quoc forces and expelled the Viet Minh out of Moncay and Tra Co on May 25, 1946.

The Viet Quoc forces took advantage of the successive period to reorganize the administration, eliminating some of the bad military commanders. Later on, Nim Cam

Sang deployed his organic units, reinforced by a Chinese battalion (156th Division of General Lau Chan Tsieng), heading for Ha Coi, driving back the Viet Minh at Dam Ha, then advanced to Tiên Yên. On July 23, 1946, his forces reached the Tien Lang village (on the opposite side of the Tien Yen River). From this location, he realized that French forces had occupied the town since early morning. His forces had to withdraw (18).

There was another special event that must be emphasized. General Lau Chan Tsieng went along with Nim Cam Sang troops to Dam Ha then returned to Moncay on July 24, 1946. The following day, he held a conference with all Vietnamese and Chinese officials (including Chinese military authorities and Tang Pac Khy, the commander of Chinese Aliens Self Defense Group) in which he proposed the creation of the Hai Ninh Autonomous Commission so that Hai Ninh could be a neutral area near the frontier. The Vietnamese authorities remained undecided on the proposal; but at last the Commission was established, with General Luu Van Chan (Vietnamese name of Lau Chan Tsieng) as Chairman and Nim Cam Sang as Vice-Chairman. On August 18, 1946 the Commission was dismissed and replaced by the Viet Minh Provincial Administrative Committee with Nim Cam Sang as supreme advisor (19).

** The *Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi* (abr. *Viet Minh*) Era

In early August 1946, Vu Dinh Duc, a special envoy from Viet Minh central government arrived in Tong Henh to

negotiate with General Lau Chan Tsieng, Nim Cam Sang and a representative of the Viet Quoc. Later on, three Moncay representatives were sent to Ha Noi to negotiate. Consequently, Moncay was assigned to the Viet Minh administration.

On August 16, 1946, Vu Dinh Duc founded the Hai Ninh Province Administrative Committee and he himself became its chairman. Later on, the Viet Minh ordered the elections of administrative committee members at village and town levels.

In order to have the Hai Ninh Administrative Committee, the Viet Minh had to make several concessions:

- * In the economic sector: the Chinese Aliens' Colonies had the right to collect taxes on all casinos, slaughter houses, and opium shops.

- * In military matters: the provincial committee might employ only 30 policemen to ensure public security in town; military strong points in Moncay were controlled by militias of different Chinese colonies (Va Khiu Chi Vay Tui). However in the following few months, the Viet Minh could recruit a battalion of volunteers, stationing at Tra Co.

When French troops approached Vinh Thuc, Nui Ngoc, the Viet Minh militias moved to southern suburbs of Moncay, and withdrew towards Than Plun on the night of March 9, 1947. Later on, a half of them moved to Thai Ngu-

yen, the other half moved to Tong Henh then to Thai Binh by sea.

When the Viet Minh had left the town, Moncay was experiencing a remarkable transitional period of a few days. The 4 Chinese colonies' Self Defense companies were the only force holding control over the town. To make it legal, Vy Van Luu was allowed to provide various administrative services. The Viet Quoc flag was streaming again in the wind. But in less than 24 hours later, Vy Van Luu, along with his confidants and most of the Chinese Self Defense militias fled to Tong Henh. His remaining forces disbanded in Moncay.

At noon sharp on March 13, 1947, the tricolored flag was hoisted on the Hill Top Post (Don Cao) of Moncay city. (20).

D. THE FOUNDING OF THE HAI NINH AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY

After the Japanese coup-d'état against the French colonial power on March 9, 1945, almost all Nung troops serving the French army withdrew with the French together with their Nung commanding officers such as Vong A Sang, Nguyen Van Vy, Pham Van Dong, and Doan Van Quang. This force stationed in the jungle area of "Thap Van Dai Son" (Hundred-thousand Big Mountains) on the common border of the two provinces of Quang Dong and Quang Tsi.

After the Japanese surrender, this force, commanded by a French lieutenant-colonel with Captain Vong A Sang as his deputy, moved to Phong Senh (Guang Dong province) in October 1946 and nearly 300 new soldiers were recruited. A few months later, the force moved from Phong Senh in two deployments on sailboats. One under the command of Lieutenant Nguyen Van Vy, landed and occupied Co To Island, while the other, under Captain Vong A Sang and Aspirant Pham Van Dong, was heading for Van Hoa, using this landing location as a bridge-head to re-occupy the entire province of Hai Ninh. This date marked that the Sailboat image symbolizes the spirit of Restoration, and subsequently the Sailboat in the Insignia incarnates the Birth of the Nung Autonomous Territory.

Around mid-1946, Ly Mao, who had served the Viet Cach forces in Tien Yen, led his 40 soldiers with weapons to Van Hoa to surrender to the French authority. At the same time, Chenh Chi Lan from Dam Ha, Tien Yen and his about 40 armed men also surrendered. In July 1946, while the Viet Minh troops were engaging in fighting against the Viet Cach which were supported by Chinese regular army in the Dam Ha and Tien Yen area, Capt Vong A Sang moved his infantry men, reinforced by the new troops under Ly Mao and Chenh Chi Lan, advancing in the road of Tsa Lan (Point Pagode), the gate into Tien Yen, then attacked the Viet Minh and controlled the town. Exploiting this victorious opportunity, the Nung forces, within a month, advanced and seized Dam Ha, and Ha Coi. Along their advance, hundreds of young men joined the troops. In February 1947 the military

campaign to re-occupy Moncay began and complete victory ended in mid March (21).

Finally, the people in the coastal territory from Tra Co – Moncay to Ba Che – Van Hoa, to the highland areas of Binh Lieu, Dinh Lap, found peace again after years of sufferings from warring turmoil and destructions. They had been living in a period of existence of desperation and uncertainty, and under the mercy of many rulers, the one replacing the others. Now they seemed to regain confidence in a brighter future.

To pacify the Territory and to win the people's hearts and minds, the French had wisely handed ample authorities to Captain Vong A Sang, the emerging leader of the region, and awarded Hai Ninh Province vast practices of autonomous statute since July 1947. As the situation of the time required, Emperor Bao Dai himself had to acknowledge that the formation of Thai and Nung military forces in the north-west and northeast regions of North Vietnam brought him assured peace of mind. (22).

On July 14, 1948 the Military-Administrative Council solemnly voted to pass the autonomy statute. The bill was officially approved by Chief of State Bao Dai on July 17, 1949 in Ha Noi. On this occasion the Nung delegation representing the Nung Hai Ninh Territory took the oath of loyalty to the Emperor (23).

The autonomy was defined by the April 4, 1952 Ordinance concerning the land administration, the management

of services in the domains of administration, judiciary and military. This recognition was also mentioned in the Ordinances of April 15, 1950 and that of April 24, 1952 concerning the Royal Territory statute (24).



Notes:

1. VAS, pp. 9, 32
2. VAS, pp. 32, 33
3. VAS, pp. 22 – 26
4. VAS, pp 18-22. Viet Nam Su Luoc (abr. VNSL). Vol. 2, pp 269-271
5. See Hai Ninh Chi Quang, author Lieu Nguyen: Géographie sommaire du Territoire de Hai Ninh (abr. GEO) page 2. At the time, a number of villages previously belonged to Vietnam such as Vinh An, An Lang (also called Cong Plen) were annexed to China (VAS, p. 4).
6. VAS, pp. 32, 33. Three other military sectors were Lang Son, Cao Bang, and Lai Chau.
7. VAS, 29-32.
8. Notice sur le 1er Territoire (abr. NOT), p.5.
9. Phong On Henh achieved the greatest merit. He was from the Ngai ethnic group in Ha Coi area and the first to

be promoted to Master Sergeant and granted French citizenship.

10. NOT, pp. 5 – 7.

11. NOT, p.7. VAS, p. 36.

12. Nuoc Toi Dan Toi (abr. NTDT, My Country My People) Publisher Dong Tien, p125.

13. VAS, pp. 36 – 37.

14. VAS, pp. 37 – 39.

15. Truong Van Vinh, Rapport sur La Province de Hai-Ninh (abr. TVV) pp. 7 – 23.

16. In the end of 1945, Tien Yen was occupied by Viet Minh forces.

17. TVV, pp. 25 – 38.

18. TVV, pp. 38 – 43.

19. TVV, pp. 43 – 45.

20. TVV, pp. 45 – 65.

21. Hoang Gia Cau, pp. 1 – 4.

22. Bao Dai, Con Rong Viet Nam (Le Dragon d'Annam; Vietnam, the Dragon), pp. 398.

23. VAS, p. 42.

24. Bao Dai, *Le Dragon d'Annam*, appendices 5, 6, and 7.

PART TWO



GEOGRAPHY AND HUMANITY OF THE NUNG AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY

CHAPTER ONE

GEOGRAPHY

A. FORMATION.

The Nung Autonomous Territory was in the eastern-most location of North Vietnam, in rhombus shape, with its longer diagonal runs northeast-southwest. It shared the common border with Chinese Guang Dong and Guang Tsi in the North and with Lang Son and Bac Giang provinces in the West. The Quang Yen province of Vietnam was in the South and the East Sea, or the Pacific Ocean in its Southeast.

General surface: 4,500 square kilometers

Its terrain has two distinct parts:

1. The **jungle and mountainous** part, thinly populated, took up 4/5 of the whole Territory which was the entire northwest part of Hai Ninh Province. This part consisted of two areas: one, treeless mountains with thin vegetation such as Dinh Lap, Na Thuoc, Binh Lieu, and Hoanh Mo (ex-

tending to *Thap Van Dai Son of China*); the other, mountains with dense forests such as at Ba Che, Tien Yen, Dam Ha, Choc Plai San, Tan Mai, and Pac Phong Senh or with thin forests as at Ha Coi, Than Plun...

The highest mountain in the province was Cong Nam Chau Leng (1,507 meters), southwest of Pac Phong Senh. Mountains higher than 1,000 of meters were Cau Lim San (1,330 m), Tai Vong Mo Leng, and Slay Vong Mo Leng, the lower were Pac Sec Leng, Pan Ai San, Ma On San, Ma Thau San, and Than Plun Leng (404 m). People could reach those jungle areas by many mountain passes, the note-worthy of them was Lang Tu Pass (735 m) connecting Cong Nam Chau Leng with Cau Lim San on the right bank of Tien Yen River beside Binh Lieu.

2. The **delta and coastal** areas, highly populated, took up 1/5 of the Territory land, stretching from Cape Loc Lam (north of Moncay) all along the seashore including the principal residential districts of Moncay, Ha Coi, and Dam Ha, to Dong Ngu, the west gate of Tien Yen. This strip of land was 15 kilometers wide at some places but only 5 km at the others. Though some of the islands had mountains and forests, all were considered as parts of the delta area (1).

B. CLIMATE

The general climate was warm and humid although all four seasons existed. Thanks to the fact that the delta area lied next to the sea, its climate was moderate and the air was clean, particularly at Moncay Central. According to the solar

calendar, the average temperature from May to October was 30 to 40 degrees C, and cooler in the rest of the year. In particular during winter (November to January), it somewhat turned cold. (After Routard, Vietnam, 2004).

Similar to the rest of North Vietnam, the Hai Ninh region was affected by the monsoon. From April and May to October and November, wind from the south often brought heavy rains. In the remaining months of the year, it carried dry air from the continent and blew in the opposite direction.

Drizzles usually lasted long days in spring time (in February and March). In particular, hurricanes in the Gulf of Tonkin from August to October could be dangerous to travelling ships (2).

C. RIVERS (See the map of Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory)

The Nung Autonomous Territory was bordered by three large rivers:

1. The Ka Long Ho (3): length 80 kilometers, north-east of Hai Ninh province, originated from Thap Van Dai Son (Ten-thousand Great Mountains) going around the east side of Cong Nang Chau Leng, passing Pac Phong Senh, Nam Si, Pac Si, Than Plun, Loc Phu and Tai Van. At Moncay, the river divided into two branches: the upper branch continued eastward through Loc Lam to the sea, making it the natural common border with China from Nam Si to Tra Co; the lower branch ran south, filling the Moncay lowlands

before blending with the Gulf of Tonkin (at Cape Ngoc). At Xuan Ninh village, the river branched off to Lai Khiu Canal then met the sea at the estuary beside PhoTai Mun (4).

2. The Ky Cung River at the Northwest, originated from Dinh Lap district's northeast area near the frontier, flowing to Na Thuoc through Ban Quyen, reaching Lang Son province then entered China. It got through Nam Ninh where it was confluent with Chau Giang River through Quang Chau City before it blended with the sea (4).

3. The Luc Nam River at the West, originated from northwest of Dinh Lap District, flowing along National Highway 4 before turning southwest to An Chau (Bac Giang province). It filled the Thai Binh River at Phu Lang Thuong.

Besides rivers surrounding three sides of Hai Ninh, 6 other major rivers could be mentioned. They were in the inner lands of the province spanning from East to West, all running into the Gulf of Tonkin:

1. The Vai Lai River (25 km) emanated in Pan Ai San, streamed along the foot of Vai Lai Mountain to Trang Vinh, intersected National Highway 4, and north of Quat Dong Nung. At this downstream, lived a large population of oysters (hau lay, or ho lay in Cantonese dialect). Local people often came digging for oysters (*teng ho lay*). Therefore, the river segment was also called *Ho Teng Cong* (4).

2. The Tan Mai River (40 km), rose in Cong Nam Chau Leng, running through Tan Mai (where it was conflu-

ent with the Na Pat River) and intersected with National Highway 4 at northwest of Quat Doai (or Nam Dong) before reaching the sea (4).

3. The Ha Coi River (45 km), the joint of 2 tributaries: one in the east rose from Cong Nam Chau Leng; one in the west began at Ai Cuoc Pass. The joined body ran by the side of Choc Plai San then passed Lang Khe Nung and filled water into the lowlands of Ha Coi. It converged with the Tai Ky River before joining the sea.

4. The Dam Ha River (25 km) had its source at Tai Vong Mo Leng. It flowed along Slay Vong Mo Leng Valley passing Dam Ha East, Moc Bai, and carried water into Dam Ha lowlands. It intersected National Highway 4 to Dam Buon before joining the sea.

5. The Tien Yen River (90 km, the longest in the province), rose in Cong Nam Chau Leng and ran northward to Hoanh Mo to become a portion of the Vietnam-China common border. Then it ran around the west of Cau Lim San before turning southward to Binh Lieu, Phong Du, and Tien Yen where it joined with the Pho Cu River before dumping water into the Tsa Lan estuary.

6. The Ba Che River (70 km), originated from the Minh Cam range, west of the district to Pho Ba Che. At Dong Rui (Tong Lui), the river broke off into 2 branches: its northern branch connected to the Tien Yen area near the firth of Tsa Lan; the southern branch became the Voi Be River going to the sea.

All of these rivers were only navigable for ships and boats in their low courses. In dry seasons, people could wade across the rivers at many places. In rainy seasons, water levels rose at high rate and the current moved swiftly, causing problems in crossing the rivers. In the coastal area, the sea-shore from Tra Co beach in the east to Tien Yen was flat, but beyond that, many beaches were rough and covered with rocks (5).



Notes:

1. Géographic sommaire du Territoire de Hai Ninh, abr. GEO, pp. 1 – 5. NOT, pp. 9 – 13

2. GEO, p. 5

3. This river was named after King Gia Long's royal title since the Vietnam-China common border line was officially determined in 1885. Previously, people used to mistake it for the Bac Luan River. Actually, the Bac Luan River was in Chinese inland, running past Na Lieng and was confluent with the Ka Long River at Than Plun (4).

4. NSSJ – 15/10/05.

5. GEO, pp. 2 – 5. NOT, pp. 10 – 11.

CHAPTER TWO

HUMANITY

A. POPULATION

Besides the principal tribes Tsin Lau, Ngai, San Diu and Hac Ca that made up the Nung ethnic group (part 1, chapter 1) of 72% Hai Ninh's population (map of Hai Ninh area, distribution of Nung and San Diu groups), many other groups also lived in the land of this Autonomous Territory. They are "Thai" and "Tho" (6 %); Vietnamese (13%); "Man" (6%); and Chinese aliens (3%) who constituted parts of the province's population of 150,000 (1).

1. The Thai and Tho

The Thai came from Yunnan. They gradually pushed the Tsin Lau and the Ngai to the coastal areas. There were many bloody battles at the confluence of Tien Yen River and Pho Cu (Cau Cai) River where thousands of people were killed. The Tsin Lau suffered heavy losses, so they allied themselves with the Ngais, a more populous tribe, to fight against the Thai. Unable to get accustomed to life in the sea-side region, the Thai moved back to inland areas upon reaching the coast, leaving a number of their relics at some villages with Thai names such as Na Sin, Na Pac of Moncay District, and Na Pa of Dam Ha District.

Unlike the Thai, the Tho came later from the Guang Tsi region. They fought each other when the Thai found their ways to move inland. At last, the Thai flocked into the val-

leys of rivers Tien Yen and Pho Cu. As time passed, the Thai and the Tho were living together, presently in Dinh Lap in particular. Traditions and habits mingled, and they were all considered Tho, including the Binh Lieu area with villages of Thai immigrants. Tho were different from Chinese and Nung on clothing and language. They lived solely on farming (2).

2. The “Kinh” (or pure Vietnamese, were called Anamnese at that time). They were fishermen from Hai Duong, and Quang Yen who had moved to and lived in Hai Ninh for generations. They were not acclimatized to the environment of mountains and jungles, so they only lived in lowlands and along the coast from Tra Co to the towns of Moncay, Ha Coi, Dam Ha, Tien Yen and Vinh Thuc, and Château Renaud islands.

Moreover, a number of mandarins or soldiers were appointed by the Court to serve the areas, and these soldiers stayed and lived there for multiple generations. The Kinh specialized in farming and fishing, but they were generally not as dynamic as the Nungs. Most of the Kinh had a hard existence.

By the end of the 13th Century, when the Chinese Yuan Army seized Thăng Long (Hanoi), King Tran Nhan Ton had to flee to Tien Yen and Ba Che before escaping to Thanh Hoa province. At the end of the 16th Century, the army of the Mac dynasty was chased by Lord Trinh’s forces in the region of Moncay, but was also able to get out of danger thanks to the Lai Khiu Canal (3).

3. The “Man”, (also known as “ Man Sanh Ly” or “Man Meo”)

The majority of the Man originated from the Ten-Thousand-Great-Mountains region in China. A small number came from Tuyen Quang province (North Vietnam). They lived sparsely in highlands from Pac Xi (Moncay), Po Hen (Ha Coi) to Binh Lieu, Tien Yen, then to Cao Troi (Ba Che) and lived on hillside farming.

Projects to assist them acquire permanent residence and settled agriculture were planned by a number of public services but all failed. The Man, like other children of jungles, were well aware of the habitats and could move about easily in mountainous and jungle areas.

There are 3 groups of Man: Pan Y, San Chi and Thanh Y, speaking different dialects and clad in different styles of dress. Most of them could speak Cantonese and Ngai to communicate with the Nungs (4).

4. Chinese Aliens.

Most of Chinese aliens in Hai Ninh came from Guang Dong and a smaller number of them from Fukien. They still had Chinese nationality. They were working in the commercial and industrial sectors (in pottery, coal pits or in various jobs such as proprietors, contractors, porters and manual workers). They were living in urban quarters and aggregated in Chinese Colonies' Associations, such as those in

Moncay, and minor associations in Ha Coi, and Tien Yen (5).

Despite the fact that people in the province were from many ethnic groups, spoke different languages, and had different traditions and habits, they dealt with one another easily, and living together peacefully in harmonious development (6).

B. ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

In principle, the administrative management of the province of the pre-1945 years was retained. The mandarin, chief of province, who had been appointed by the Royal authority in Hue, was replaced by the Territory leader, Captain Vong A Sang. He had good foresight and was vested with extended power and successfully established the Territory's jurisdiction in all aspects. Naturally, laws and directives from Vietnam national government were always respected and abided by.

1. Administrative Management (7)

As of July 1949, the Nung Territory consisted of 8 districts: Moncay, Ha Coi, Dam Ha, Tien Yen, Binh Lieu, Dinh Lap, Ba Che and Van Hoa (8). Each district had several cantons and villages (Chapter 3). In particular, Ha Coi District had a Chinese colony of Co To, like Tong Lui (Dong Rui) colony in Ba Che District, and Ha Vuc colony in Van Hoa District (9).

The Vietnamese village governing organization was maintained in the Autonomous Territory and the governance was performed in accordance with local traditional practices.

** The highest village official was the Village Chief (10). He was assisted by a deputy, Secretary, Registrar, and Treasurer. Specially, the Chief of Village Militia was in charge of village order and security. Moreover, the Chief of Village Council was acting as advisor, and arbiter to settle disputes.

** At canton level, there were Canton Chief and Deputy Canton Chief. Public Security Affairs were in the responsibility of the Chief and the Deputy Chief of the Canton Militias who controlled and commanded the Canton Militias.

** Each district elected a District Council of Representatives whose permanent senior secretary was appointed by the Territory Leader. Besides, there was the District Board of Management consisting of a Chairman, Vice Chairmen, and permanent senior secretary as mentioned above.

** Over the whole province, the Territory Leader had a general responsibility of the administrative system. He was police chief, cumulating the Court of Appeals Magistrate, with the assistance of the French Envoy (Mr. Bochet was one of the envoys), along with technical advisors and the assistants of the two local councils:

- *Territory Representatives Council*, consisting of chairmen and vice chairmen of the districts, representatives of ethnic groups.

- *Territory Management Board*, a summary board, consisting of:

- * The Territory Leader;

- * The Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Territory Representatives Council (Chau Lieng Denh and Cao Nguyen To);

- * Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of District Councils.

- * Deputies of ethnic groups were not yet represented.

The public affairs operations of the province were the responsibility of 5 agencies:

- The Secretary Service (Lam Phat, Service Chief) was responsible for drafting regulatory documents, staff planning for the whole Territory including:

- ** Treasury Office (Vong Senh Chieng, Office Chief);

- ** Nung language Editorial Office (Lau Chi Phan, Chief).

- Administrative Service (Chieng Venh Senh, Service Chief, commonly known as Mr. Senh), consisting of:

** Personnel Office (Van Cong Minh, Chief);

** Accounting and Taxes Office (Ho Nhoc Lin, chief);

** Retirement Pension Office (Tran Dinh Di, chief).

- Education Service (Tang Tsong Cong, chief) consisting of:

** Information Office (Nguyen Van Can, chief);

** Press Office (Lo Chi Chi, chief, in charge of the Chinese character sections in Nung language newspapers;

** Office of Management and Supervision of all private schools in the province.

- Justice Service (Cao Van, chief. See the justice organization below).

- Forestry Service, located at Tien Yen town instead of Moncay (Vong Phu Dan, chief).

2. Justice Organization (11)

The justice institution in the province operated in 3 echelons:

Court of Justice, First Instance: at district level, presiding judge was cumulated by the chairman of the District Managing Board (District Chief). Its Vice Chairman and senior permanent secretary were jury members.

Court of Justice, Second Instance: at provincial capital, presided over by a titular judge. The Territory Representatives Council elected the presiding judge (Thong Cun Sang actually held the seat). He was assisted by two jury members who were nominated by the Territory Leader.

The Court of Appeal was the supreme judiciary institution of the Territory, cumulated by the Territory Leader, with the assistance from the French Envoy and representatives of ethnic groups (Cao Van was in charge of special issues).

This court is of highest instance to general administrative cases, reviewing sentences of the second instance courts and acting as arbiters in disputes between ethnic groups.

In principle, litigants might appeal the verdicts of the Court of Appeal by submitting their appeals to the Court of Cassation in Hanoi, but such action had never taken place.

3. Transportation (12)

Beside the system of rivers, the Territory inherited a nearly complete net of land roads that included:

* National Highway 4 to the Northwest, starting at Nui Ngoc passing by the towns of Moncay, Ha Coi, Dam Ha, Tien Yen, Dinh Lap to the provinces of Lang Son and Cao Bang.

* National Highway 18 leading to the delta region of North Vietnam, linking Moncay to Hai Phong after getting through Mong Duong, Hong Gai, and Quang Yen.



Nung Personalities (Photo BB)

* Inter-province highway 13, connecting Dinh Lap with An Chau (Bac Giang).

* Provincial Highway 10 pointing North from Tsa Lan to Hoanh Mo, passing by Tien Yen and Binh Lieu.

Moreover, there were trails between coastal cities and highlands towns, linking the two highlands districts Binh Lieu and Dinh Lap, especially connecting cities that had common borders with China, from Loc Phu to Hoanh Mo passing by Than Plun, Pac Xi, Nam Xi and Pac Phong Senh (see map).

As most of principal towns were located in coastal areas, the seaway was a convenient means of transportation that allowed the maintenance of commercial exchanges between those towns as well as between these areas and South China ports (like Pac Hoi) or ports located further south such as Hai Phong, and Thanh Hoa by classic sailboats or coastal steamboats.

It should be clear that in the 1930s, the Public Work Office of the province had made plans to construct a bridge at Quat Dong and Quat Doai, and another bridge crossing the river on National Highway 4. The project was not realized probably because of reduced construction budget.

In the domain of air transportation, there was only one short airstrip in Moncay assigned to military operations, and was also used as an emergency landing site for airlines from Hanoi to Hong Kong, Tokyo, or to Quang Chau Van.

4. Economy (13)

41. *Agriculture*

** Food Plants

Growing rice was a principal occupation of the Territory residents. Rice was grown all over the valleys and alluvium flat lands of Ha Coi and Dam Ha, the granaries of the province. Half of the rice fields yielded 2 crops a year in the 6th and the 10th months (of the Lunar calendar). Other food plants were corn, manioc, sweet potatoes, taro, millet, green vegetables, and beans.

* Industry plants

Main industry plants were anise, cinnamon, sugar cane, and peanut. Plants of less importance were sesame, tobacco, tea, and coffee.

42. *Livestock*

The large beasts mainly raised for farming were water buffaloes which were seen everywhere. A smaller number of bovines were grazing in the Moncay area. Few horses were noticed, they were seen in the Dinh Lap area where there were many pastures. Pigs and poultry could be found everywhere; capons were the most favorable food and were exported to the delta areas.

All villages raised silkworms, spinning silk threads for household use. The "Man" tribes cultured bees and produced high quality honey.

43. *Industry*

* Earthenware and ceramics were the most considerable industry of the Territory: There were 15

bowl kilns gathered in Moncay and one in Ha Coi, and producers of water jars, bricks, and tiles scattered in the four coastal towns.

* Textile and wooden clogs factories were in Moncay and Ha Coi.

* The kilns producing coals from logs at Tien Yen, Ba Che were located in the vicinity of the forest region.

* The manufacture of votive papers and incense sticks was located at Dam Ha, Ha Coi, and Tien Yen.

* The manufactures of wooden suitcases, matches, and chalks for blackboard were in Moncay.

* The large-scale manufacture of bulk paper was in Moncay, Ha Coi, Dam Ha, Tien Yen, and Ba Che.

* Producers of cane sugar, and casting brass locks.

Furthermore, we should take into account that:

* The Moncay electric company had been operating since Feb. 1932;

* The sand pits at Vinh Thuc were exporting sand to Japan to manufacture glass;

* The plumb pits in Dam Ha, and antimony pits in Tan Mai and Than Plun had not been excavated.

44. Forest products

Forest lands of the Territory, particularly Tien Yen, and Ba Che, provided many valuable woods such as “lim” (iron wood), “gie” for house construction, furniture; “bodhi” trees (also called boh trees, *ficus religiosa*) for matches and pine wood for wooden clogs and suitcases. Moreover, there were bamboo, mushroom, cat’s ears mushroom (also called Job’s ear), especially many medical plants or herbs in Than Plun, Dam Ha, Tien Yen, Tan Mai, and Choc Plai San.

The projects of planting trees and growing forests had been carried out since the 1930’s in Ha Coi with pine trees, in Tien Yen with mangroves.

45. *Fishery*

Fishing was very popular in Tra Co and in the islands of Vinh Thuc, Chateau Renaud, Cô Tô, and Ke Bao. It assured the supply of fresh sea products to people’s daily meals, or to produce salted fish and dry-sand worms, or to make fish sauce.

Particularly, salt fields at Quat Dong/Moncay and Ma Te/Ha Coi produced fine grain sea salt that was highly favored.

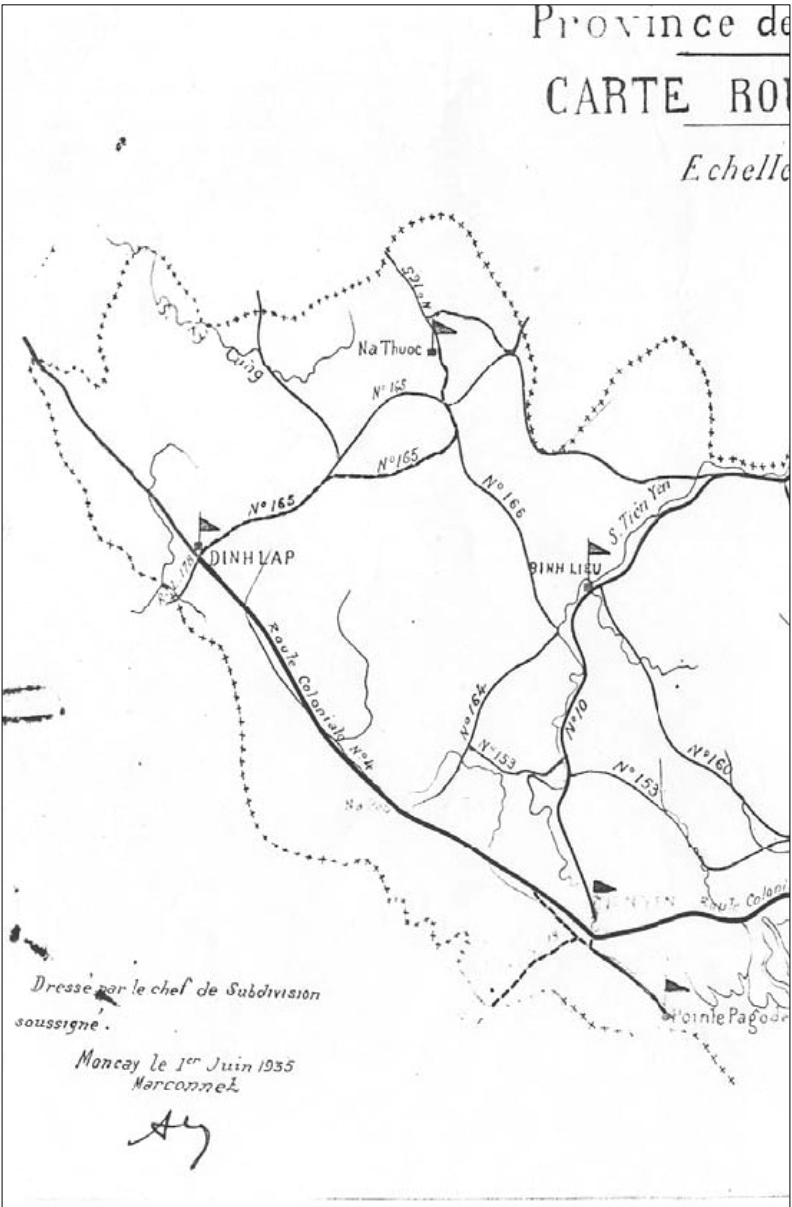
46. *Commerce*

A channel of commerce with relative prosperity was established between the province and outside loca-

tions such as Tong Henh, An Chau, Lang Son, particularly between coastal towns and the ports in the delta (to the southwest) or in China (to the northeast).

For imports, Hai Ninh had to buy:

* foods such as rice, corn, beans, beverages, and canned foods;

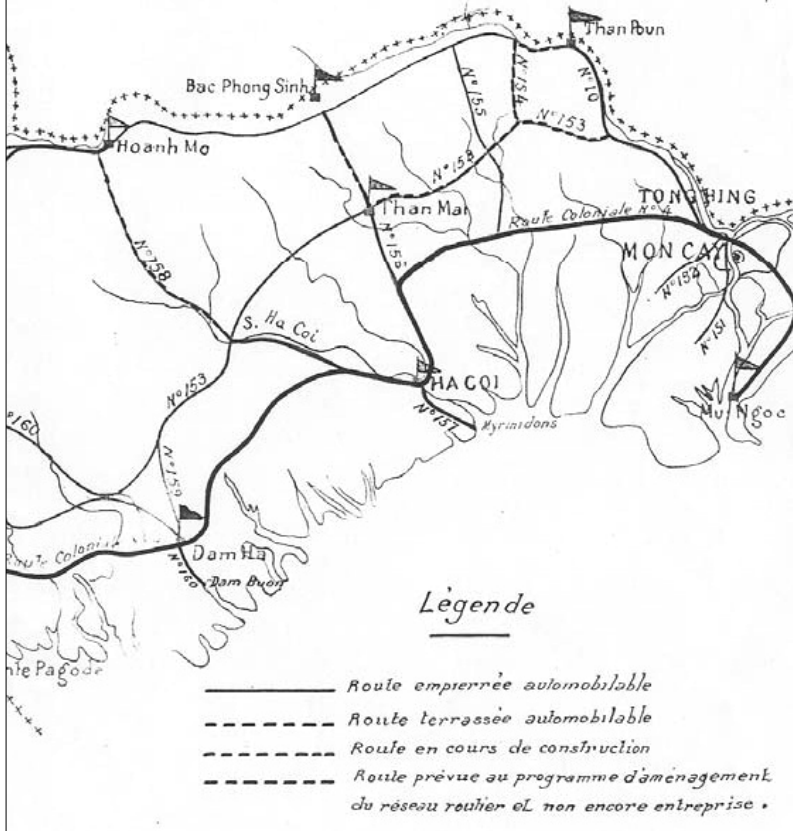


Hai Ninh province – Roads – West side

Province de Hai Ninh

ROUTIERE

Échelle : $\frac{1}{400.000}$



Hai Ninh province – Roads – East side

* raw materials and energy: kerosene, gasoline, lime, charcoals, cement, and textiles;

* production material such as metal ware.

For exports, Hai Ninh sold:

* foods, poultry, suckling pigs, honey, beeswax, mushrooms, cat's ears, cane sugar, peanut oil, and salted fish;

* industrial products: clothing, pottery, and water containers;

* forest products: bolted papers, votive papers, sandalwood powder for incense stick manufacturing, lumber, bamboo, anise, cinnamon and medical plants.

47. Finance

The Territory had its own budget. In principle, the central government would financially support Hai Ninh in the case of a deficit.

To consolidate the economic policies and to raise funds for public affairs operations in the Territory, the Tax Office of the Service of Administration was in charge of tax collection of the whole province. (As a special privilege, the people of the Territory were exempted from direct taxes on real estate such as transactions of housings and farming lands). The Service specially controlled the exchanges of merchandise along the frontier.

The control of traffic and transportation of various products on the coastal routes was assigned to customs service checkpoints at Nui Ngoc, Ha Coi and Van Hoa under the supervision of the Moncay Tax Office (14).

5. Education and Information

51. *Education* (15)

Being well aware of the importance of education and training, since the Territory birthday, Mr. Vong A Sang had great concerns on the development of this domain, in order to elevate popular intellect and to quickly train talents for the Territory government in civilian and military activities.

As far as language is concerned, common people spoke Vietnamese or Chinese while French was used on official documents. Therefore, more than 60 Franco-Vietnamese and Franco-Nung tuition-free primary schools were running at many areas of the province.

Furthermore, the Editor Nung written language conducted a study and made a plan for the introduction a writing system called Nung Language. This language employed Roman alphabet characters and Vietnamese grammar to transcribe the *ngai* dialect into the Nung's, easily and conveniently. (For example: the phrase “đi chợ mua gạo nấu cơm ăn” would become “hi cai mai mi chu fan sit” after Nung Language). The book “Nong-Vun Slu Tien”, or “Nung

Van Tu Dien” or Nung Language Dictionary of the Editor’s office was completed but not published.

In the chief town of Moncay, many special training centers were built. They included the Military Cadres School, the Teachers’ School, the Junior Military School and the Public Administration School.

511. The Military Cadres School (Ecole des Cadres)

Urgent demands in pacification and security of the Territory firstly resulted in the establishment of the School in July 1947 to train military leaders at squad and platoon levels. The junior high school general education curriculum was also enlarged, which would last 3 years. A student was paid the salary of a private soldier (150 piasters/month).

In the first year, Captain Vong A Sang directly supervised the school, with teacher Dang Van Quang in charge of general education and Sergeant Ly Pat teaching military subjects. In 1948, Aspirant Linh Quang Vien (later a 3-star general) was appointed principal; Mr. Lap (Aspirant Vien’s friend) was teaching cultural classes along with Captain Le Roy’s wife. In the early 1951, Lieutenant Chamouton (later a colonel) took over the seat of principal and Master Sergeant Vong Van Thong (later Lt-colonel) ran the military training. In the years that followed, Lieutenant Boureau and Lieutenant Bernard headed the school consecutively.

In August 1950, the first class graduated with 5 aspirants; they were Truong Thang Chuc, Duong Phun Sang, Lai Van Chu, Chieng Denh Quay and Vong Kim Sinh. The rest were sergeant or sergeant first class.



Nung Officers and French Resident Bochet

512. Teachers' School (Ecole Normale)

As educational development was one of the top priorities, the Teachers' School was established to train teachers for Franco-Nung schools all over the Territory.

During the 3 years of schooling, students were provided with a junior high school curriculum with additional courses in pedagogy and child psychology. They were provided with housing and food expenses, as well as uniforms. After graduation, each received a salary of 600 to 800 piasters.

The Leader of the Territory was the official director of the school, which was directly managed by the first principal, Mr. Lau Vay Phong, succeeded by Lam Tai Long; teaching Vietnamese literature was Mr. Pham Van Vuong, French by Mr. Dieu Quang Luyen (headmaster of a Franco-Vietnamese school), and Mr. Ly Trong Phuc (Doctor Ly Ngoc Duong's father). The military instructor was Sergeant Diep Tien Bao (Lt-colonel Gip San Canh's father).

The five classes of this school graduated more than 150 male and female teachers (see Appendix).

513. The Junior Military Academy (Ecole d'Enfants de Troupe)

As the Leader of the Territory was himself a former graduate of Nui Deo Junior Military Academy (Quang Yen), he had a clear perception about the value of forming the descendants of military and civilian public servants into

future talents serving the province. This resulted in the birth of Moncay Junior Military Academy.

In the first phase of establishment, the officers listed below took charge of the Academy: Aspirant Linh Quang Vien (1947-49), Lieutenant Chamouton (1951-52), followed by Lieutenant Boureau, Lieutenant Bernard, and Captain Lai Quoc Phuong. Their assistant NCOs were Sergeant Tsan Y Pan, Sergeant Vong Ca Senh, Sergeant I Pac Lam, Sergeant Vong Di, and Corporal 1st Class Vy Van An. All of them took care of military instruction. For the general primary education up to 6th and 7th grades, there was the cooperation from civilian teachers such as Quang, Cao Hong, Lap, Lam Tai Long and Hoang Van Lien (director of Moncay Electric Power Company).

In its first year (1947), the school enrolled 70 students. Some of them joined the Military Cadres' School (junior cadets left the Junior Academy when they came of age, so there was no graduation). The school situated on the city main street beside the Leader's official residence, almost in front of Ong Dao ferry dock leading to the ferry boat to Ninh Duong on National Highway 4 before heading for the town of Ha Coi.

Not before 1953 did students receive salary as "pocket money" in accordance with his or her year-end performance scores, by brevet ranks (private: 30 piasters; next higher rank; plus 15 piasters; top rate was sergeant 1st class: 105 piasters).

Years later, many of those cadets became well-known talents, serving at important positions in military services and corps, in parliament, and in the administration (see list in Appendix Section).

514. The Public Administration School. (Ecole d'Administration)

This school was established in 1952 under the official title “Administrative Cadres Section” (Ecole des Cadres/Section Administrative). One year later its name was changed to The School of Administration.

The class was planned for two years, and at the start of the second year, the school sent its students to different offices and services for a 3-month on-the-job-training course, (during which a student earned a salary of 3,000 piasters/month, equal to the payment of a regular army second-lieutenant).

Class #1 enrolled 17 students, including 5 teachers graduated from the Teachers’ School, 6 graduated cadets, 2 public servants and 4 civilian candidates. Class #2 in 1953 enrolled 19 students consisting of 5 teachers who had been graduated years ago and 5 newly graduates from the Teachers’ School, 5 graduated cadets and 4 civilian candidates.

When the class had started for 1 month, four members of this class were transferred to the National Institute of Administration (NIA) at Dalat (Nong Cun Sang, Y Hoc Lieng, Pham Van Phien and Gip A Dzieng). The re-

maining 13 students of Class #1 attended the solemn graduation ceremony on July 14, 1954 before reporting to various districts and provincial offices for service (see list in Appendix).

With innate foresight, Mr. Vong A Sang was not pleased with such favorable achievements in education and training mentioned above. Therefore, more selected students went studying overseas one after another in order to attain national education level or higher.

* Infantry Application Officer School at Coetquidan (France), from August 1950 to September 1952: Lieutenant Hoang Gia Cau (alias Vong A Nhi, son of the Territory Leader), Aspirant Truong Thang Chuc, Aspirant Vong Kim Sinh (later all three were full colonels).

* Yersin High School at Dalat: Slen Slau Phy, Chenh Phat Sang.

* National Institute of Administration at Dalat: The four students mentioned above and Vong A Ung (son of the Territory Leader).

* Albert Sarraut at Hanoi: Tran Duc Lai, Ly Ngoc Duong, Vong Phat Sang, and followed later by Vong A Ung, Hoang Gia Ky (sons of the Territory Leader), Chieng Say Slui, Slen Slau Phy, and Chenh Phat Sang.

* Dalat Military Inter-Arms School (later Vietnam National Military Academy): at a large number, nearly 60 cadets from Class #3 to Class #30 (see Appendix).



Cadets from ethnic minority groups of the National Military Academy and students of Highlands section, National Institute of Administration, with Prince Vinh Du (front rank, second from right) and the Leader of the Thai Autonomous Territory, Deo Van Long (first from right), taken in 1953 in Dalt. This picture includes Hoang A Sam, Lau Venh Dzenh, Hau Cam Pau, Gip A Sang, Phan Van Kim, Ly Duc Quan and Pham Van Phien, Y Hoc Lieng, Nong Cun Sang, Gip A Dzieng from the Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory.

(Photo MAT)

52. *Information* (16)

As mentioned in the section on administrative management, the information and press activities were entrusted to the Service of Education. In Moncay city, there was weekly mobile information broadcasting by a public address system on a car with Miss Dan Tac Lay as announcer. The press service published the Nung Thanh monthly magazine written in French, Chinese and Vietnamese.

In the domains of education and information, it is worth noticing the positive effect of the emblem of the Nung Territory. Its paramount illustration is the Sailboat overriding the waves in a square frame with pointed base and harmonic colors. Below the image is the motto “Loyalty – Filial Piety” (Trung – Hieu) in Chinese characters.

The Sailboat, beside its recollection of transportation for deployment of French and Nung forces from Phong Thanh (Phong Senh), China to the bridge-head landing at the shore of Co To and Van Hoa and their victorious drive to re-occupy the entire Hai Ninh province in March 1947, is also the symbol of the indomitable spirit and iron-will-power of the Nung people. The colors of the insignia also illustrate several meanings: red, standing for fervor and courage; black, for endurance and patience; yellow, for fortitude and friendship; green, for sincerity and hope; blue, for power and ardor. The two Chinese characters Loyalty and Filial-Piety illustrate the quintessentially moral quality in the traditional legacy of the Nung ethnic group. “Loyalty” is fidelity to one’s country, leader, superiors, and it also implies “faithful-

ness” in all transactions, and relations. It implies courage, unflinching will in spite of difficulties and danger, to employ all capabilities to fulfill entrusted responsibilities. “Filial-piety” towards one’s relatives, is to treat one’s parents wholeheartedly, and furthermore to remain grateful to teachers. Parents and teachers are those persons who deserve the credit to one’s birth, nurture, and adjudication towards one’s existence as a responsible citizen.

6. Public Health and Sports (17)

As far as public health was concerned, each district had a dispensary. There were French Army doctors serving the Moncay city hospital and the Tien Yen town clinic. Besides those Western medical installations, local healers did good help in public healthcare. Chinese and indigenous herbal medicines were still popular.

Organized sports were in full swing with soccer matches between military and civilian teams from districts, and competitions of volley ball, basket ball in particular, at the schools.

7. Security and Military (18)

Each district had a company of regional guards to maintain internal security and order. The five frontier outposts were responsible for border area security. Each of them co-operated with an opposite outpost across the border line on China (according to the agreements of both sides since May 7, 1896). The first outpost was at Moncay (paired with

Tong Henh), then the 11 next 4 northwestwards at Than Plun (with Na Lieng), Pac Phong Senh (with Than Slan), Hoanh Mo with (Lang Dong), and Na Thuoc (with Na Ly). The last 3 of them were important locations as they were in the areas of dense jungles, high mountains, and trails frequently used by bandits.

As far territorial matters were concerned, the “Mo Du” (umbrella hook) Battalion (Bataillon des Becs d’Ombrelle, BBO) along with French Coastal Forces was responsible for the security of the Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory. The battalion was a force where the Nung ethnic people were rallying to defend the land that their ascending generations had contributed much of their efforts to establish and to protect for the livelihood of their compatriots.

From the first year of its existence, Mo Du Battalion consisted of 7 companies of nearly 900 soldiers (19). In early 1951, its strength increased to 10 companies and nearly 1,300 troops. As the political situation was fluctuating in March 1951, the battalion officially became First Battalion of the Umbrella Hook, an organic unit of the French Coastal Forces. (However, all commanding officers of the battalion were Nung, except for the only French NCO, in charge of administrative matters). In July, 1952, it changed again to 57th Vietnamese Battalion under the Third Military Region (headquartered in Hanoi) (20).

Nung warriors were courageous and tempered by ordeals. The most glorious battle took place in Than Plun,

Moncay District adjacent to the common border with China in late Autumn of 1950.

Our defending troops included only two platoons, commanded by Sergeant Major Gip Man Loi (later Captain) fighting against a Viet Minh battalion of about 600 soldiers freshly trained and equipped by China and just returned to Vietnam.



The Nung Warriors in a Drill (Photo AC)

Over the course of 3 days and 3 nights surrounding and attacking the stronghold with artillery supports, the enemy launched waves of assaults under the sound of bugles, drums and megaphones. They worked to break the defending troops' will, but the would-be invaders were killed or repelled. They raised ladders to climb onto bunkers, but hand grenades cut them down. Sometimes invaders found ways to reach the Nung position and used explosives to blow up a

corner of the Nung fortification. The Nung soldiers moved some rocks and lumbers to seal the opening and continued fighting.

The soldiers' dependents quarters were inside the barrack, so the wives of the defenders also helped move ammunitions to their husbands. Major Vong A Sang himself led the reinforcements to counter attack.



The Nung Warriors in an Operation

After the battle, people in Na Lieng reported that about a hundred Viet Minh troops had been killed and a number of the wounded were evacuated by their comrades.

A few weeks later, this Viet Minh battalion launched another attack against the Tan Mai outpost of Ha Coi district

after it had been re-manned and re-equipped. Tan Mai was defended by only two platoons.



*Major Vong A Sang Reviewed his Troops before a Parade.
(Photo AC)*

The battle proceeded violently, similar to the attack at Than Plun. With bravery and high willingness to fight, our troops once again inflicted heavy casualties to the enemy. This time, Aspirant Chieng Denh Quay commanded a company to reinforce Tan Mai outpost. Sorrowfully, the outpost commander, Sergeant Major Hau Loc fell in the fighting. His son was Hau Cam Pau, then a junior cadet would become a lieutenant-colonel years later.

After those two hellish battles, it was reported that the enemy was forced to recognize that the Nung warriors' audacity and spirit were invincible even as they fought against an opposing force ten times stronger. Consequently, after the two bloody battles of his "Autumn-Winter" cam-

paing, the enemy shifted their military actions to other target areas and conducted no more harassing operations against the Nung Territory (21).



Notes:

1. GEO, p.6. La Question Nung (LQN), the History Department, French Army HQS, p. 2. There were differences in the proportion of population especially one related to the ethnic Vietnamese. According to “Notice sur le 1er Territoire Militaire” (NOT, p. 15), ethnic Vietnamese shared 32% of the Territory population in the 1932 census. But after “Géographie Sommaire du Territoire de Hai Ninh” GEO, p. 6, the figure was 13% when Van Hoa district had not been founded. Meanwhile, the book “Petite Histoire du Territoire Nung de Hai Ninh” (1949) quoted Vong A Sang as saying, the ethnic Vietnamese constituted around 20% the Territory population (VAS, p. 44).

Therefore, in 1932-1933, the Hai Ninh Military-Administrative sector had not included the districts of Dam Ha, Ba Che, and Van Hoa and its overall residents totaled 79,100, and 32% of them were ethnic Vietnamese. Sixteen years later (GEO 1948) this proportion went down to only 13% and became a controversial issue

whether because the 1945 famine (Year of the Rooster) or due to the chaotic situation in China when Chinese-war refugees joined the large number of Nung population. This ratio would be 20%, according to a rough estimate of Mr. Vong A Sang.

2. GEO, pp. 6, 7. Vong A Sang, pp. 5 – 6, 46 – 47. NOT, pp 16 – 17.
3. According to legend, the Mac Dynasty forces were hunted and impetuously chased by the Trinh succeeded in digging the Lai Khiu canal within one night time and safely escaped to China (Vong A Sang, pp. 8-9, 43-44).
4. GEO, p. 7. VAS, p. 47. NOT, p. 17.
5. GEO, p.7. NOT, pp. 17-18.
6. According to a source, a peaceful group of Muong tribe, originally from North Vietnam expelled by ethnic Vietnamese, took refuge in Hai Ninh region and lived in jungle and mountain areas, later on assimilated by the Nungs (San Diu).
7. GEO, p. 12. NSSJ, Jul 31, 2003. NSSJ amended Sept 28, 2004 and Aug 6, 2006. Gip A Dzieng, (GDZ in abbreviation) Aug 2003, p.3.
8. VAS, pp. 33-34.
9. “Bang”, sub-district was a distant area from the district town, entrusted to a sub-district chief (pong pan). This

function was appointed by the Territory Leader, but it was under the district jurisdiction (NSSJ, July 1, 2006).

10. At some places in Ha Coi under the term of district chief Ho Tac Tsoi, this was an elected position (Lau Chi Phan), Oct 2, 2006.
11. GEO, pp. 12-13. NSSJ, July 31, 2003. GDZ, Aug 2003, p. 3.
12. GEO, pp. 14-15. NOT, pp. 28, 52.
13. GEO, pp. 15-17. NOT, pp. 21-27. NSSJ, Nov 11, 2003, Aug 6, 2006, May 15, 2007, p. 2.
14. NOT, pp. 31-32. Gip A Dzieng, Aug 2003, p. 4.
15. GEO, p. 13. GDZ, Aug 2003, pp. 5-10. Lieu Nguyen (LNG), Nov 2003, pp. 2+4. Tsu A Cau (TSC), Nov 2003. Chamouton (CHA), Aug 2006. NSSJ. Combined suggestions, May 15, 2007, p. 2.
16. NSSJ, July 2003, p. 4. GDZ, Aug 2003, p. 4.
17. NOT, pp. 37-39, 51+52. LNG, Nov 11, 2003, pp. 2, 4, 5
18. GEO, pp. 13-14. NOT, pp. 41, 42, 48. GDZ, Aug 2003, p. 4.
19. Specially, this battalion had an excellent band. Every Saturday morning, the band led a parade on the streets of Moncay. The most attractive unit was the Junior Cadets

with their wooden rifles and shorts, in Summer or Winter.

20. R. Monluc, Sept 2002.

21. NSSJ, supplemented Mar 12, 2007. Chuong A Kieu, Mar 24, 2007.

CHAPTER THREE

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS

Let us observe the overall socio-political aspects of the Autonomous Territory with its many districts as its vital administrative elements. The districts had a common denominator as parts of the Territory but also had their respective and distinctive characteristics uniquely associated with each of them. These individual traits were abundant and inherent to respective regions.

Moncay District (1)

Moncay was located in the highlands of North Vietnam and adjacent to the Sino-Vietnamese border. This bordering region had the administrative district name “Chau” especially bestowed to all highlands near China which had been minority lands. After the political promotion of the region to Autonomous Territory statute, Chau became “Huyen” or Large District led by a District Chief. This position was assumed in chronological order by Messieurs Vong Henh Senh, Vong Chenh Po, and Slen Slau Khan, who later became a major in the South Vietnamese armed forces.

Moncay had four cantons (tong) or inter-villages.

1. Van Ninh; 2. Bat Trang; 3. Ninh Duong; and 4. Ninh Hai. These cantons consisted of 11 villages: 1. Xuan Lan Nung; 2. Xuan Lan Nam; 3. Tra Co; 4. Doan Tinh; 5. Loc Phu; 6. Than Plun; 7. Trang Vinh; 8. Quat Dong Nung;

9. Quat Dong Nam; 10. Vinh Thuc Nung; and 11. Vinh Thuc Nam.

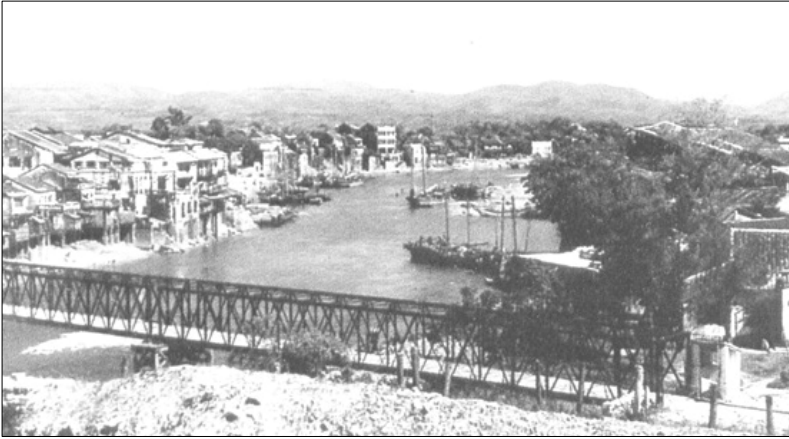
Moncay was an autonomous City-District entity out of all the above District administrative jurisdictions. It was led by a City District Chief, Mr. Ho Tac Tsoi who held this position until late 1953. Moncay had three villages under its jurisdiction: 1. Xuan Thu; 2. Hoa Lac; and Tho Xuan.

The quadrature (squaring) extent of east to west was 27 km; north to south 16 km; resulting in 432 square km.

This was the “City-capital” of the Territory where the elite and talented people converged, the most economically prosperous operations emerged and best of all, the happy blending of three cultures and civilizations, including the old Chinese legacy, Europe’s trendy cultural movements, and Vietnamese morals and customs. It was located close to China resulting in the migration of a large Chinese population living at the heart of the city, along the river bank where the Chinese high school Khoan Denh (Quan Anh in Vietnamese) had been erected. This was also the seat of the Chinese Club. The two other schools Franco-Vietnamese and Franco-Nung were located in better locations and had larger student bodies.

The Moncay District was also a harmonious inter-religious center. At the center of the city, lied the Confucian Temple of Literature whose annual commemoration festivity took place on lunar August 20th. Not far from the Temple and on an imposing location, the Ninh Duong main cathe-

dral, a large Catholic church, was built at the tri-river intersection (Slam Tsa Cong). There was another majestic construction, the Tra Co church where construction materials had been transported from Hai Phong, Saigon, and France including magnificent taint glasses.



International Bridge Connecting Moncay (Vietnam) to Dong Hung (China) (Photo BB)

Van Xuan village had a Buddhist pagoda. The Linh Son temple, a local deity shrine, was constructed on km 4 en route to Ha Coi where Mr. Plun Phong Dong was worshipped. The Pluns had been hereditary father-to-son leaders of this region for many generations. Mr. Plun Phong Dong crushed the bandits and brought back peace for the local people. He treated the people like his own children. He built pagodas, temples, roads, and bridges for the public with his own money. As a result, the whole local residents of various ethnicities elevated him as the region “Safekeeping Divinity” (On Sau Cong Cong meaning An Thu Cong Cong) a divine

being of mighty power to, not only eradicate evil spirits, bandits, but warring hostilities as well.

A soldier came to pray here before a military operation. He burned incense sticks, prayed, and designated another soldier to tie a tiny red flag to the burning incense sticks which were inserted in the barrel of his rifle. He prayed for his safety, blessing, and triumph in the coming battle. Consequently this shrine became “Sen De Meu” (Mr. An Temple) whose rituals have continued up to now. Mr. Plun temple actually stood at the northern foothill near National Route 1, about 4 km from Moncay.



*A Boat-race on Moncay River on Long Chau Festival
(Photo BB)*

More spectacular was the story of the Nam Quat village whose residents from both banks of the village river Ho Tenh Cong, all worshipped the same divinity being, Lady Ma Hau, in two separate pagodas. According to an ancient legend of thousands of years ago, a censer was drifted against the tide and landed here at the Nam Quat village river

'bank. The villagers believed in sacred divinity of this censer which chose this location to bless the village. They built a pagoda to worship it at one bank. Much less raids by brigands and rebels against the villagers resulted. In addition one of the Tsans was promoted District-Chief which reinforced the belief that Nam Quat had been effectively protected and blessed by censer divinity being.



*The Goc Khe Port and Hill Top Post (Don Cao) Moncay
(Photo GDZ)*

However, District Chief Tsan wished to move the censer pagoda to Nam Dong village at the west bank, opposite to the original pagoda and a few km away. This decision was met with strong protest from the east bank villagers. Finally Nam Quat was split into two villages. The east bank was Quat Dong village (which later on consisted of two villages, Quat Dong Nam and Quat Dong Nung. The majority of the Quat Dong Nam population was Vietnamese while that of Quat Dong Nung was Nungs). The west bank became Quat Doai village. Both Quat Dong and Quat Doai had their

own pagodas worshipping the same censer divinity being with the belief that both pagodas' villagers be equally blessed. In the beginning of lunar January the two villages took turn organizing a five-day divinity-offering ritual. Worshipping guests from nearby villages came to join in the rituals and fairs. Even the native people who were working in remote places remembered this sacred occasion and came home to join the commemoration festivity. Besides religious rituals there were cultural performances, feasts, and lavish partying.

When writing about the Moncay province one should not forget to mention the river that ran along the town. This was the southern branch of the Ka Long River flowing towards the ocean via the Mui Ngoc (Jade Cape) estuary (also called "Nui Ngoc" meaning Jade Mountain). Its current, fresh from mountain streams, was limpid and clean. People used it as potable water with good hygiene and health security. It also provided with a fresh-air conditioner and added a romantic brush to the province. In summer, people bathed in the river and swam across it to sandy beaches on the other bank. There was room for sun bath and promenade along the river banks. This town was calm, easy-going, and active. In the monsoon or rainy season floods sometimes inundated the streets.

Another distinguishing mark of Moncay was the international iron bridge which connected Moncay of Vietnam to Dong Hung city (Tong Henh as pronounced in Chinese) of China. Prior to the communist take-over of China in 1949, trade between the two countries had been flourishing due to

free movement and travelling between the two. Exchanges of culture (entertainment, tourism, and inter-racial marriages) had been common-place.

On the Vietnamese side of the bridge, also south of Moncay city, was the Goc Khe zone consisting of a busy market hall and the Goc Khe pier where ships were docking or leaving for other coastal cities or sailing southward to Thanh Hoa, or Hai Phong.



Small Red Bridge (Hong Kheu Chay) Moncay (Photo LN)

Near the Goc Khe pier and the bridge was a zone of many pottery makers producing earthenware and ceramics of sophisticated techniques which were well-liked and in great demand. A large quantity of potteries and ceramics reached many delta cities and as far south as Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces. At the peak of its economic production, a record of 26 ceramic factories operated. When transportation

to China was cut off (in 1949), 15 factories survived. The trade interruption with China also caused great difficulties in the industrial sectors which had been the largest economic potential of the district. China used to provide raw materials for industrial production. Fortunately Moncay factory owners combined their researches and discovered rare-earth mines at Na Sin village (Quat Dong), and Tin Vong village (Doan Tinh) both within the district. The above difficulties were adequately solved.



The Goc Khe Pier, Moncay (Photo BB)

The Moncay district was blessed by nature to have a remarkable tourist attraction: the Tra Co beach extended 16 km of fine sand beach and mild slope toward the ocean. This was one of the best beaches nationwide and attracted large numbers of tourists in summer. Tra Co also possessed a de-

parture port for heavy-tonnage shipping of commodities to far away destinations.

Incidentally, the history of Moncay still recorded a sorrowful day for its people. March 27, 1949 was that day. Let us summarize the article “A Day Hard to Forget” authored by Mr. Lieu Nguyen.



The Tra Co Beach (Photo LN)

A Day Hard to Forget

It was a fresh sunny Sunday afternoon on March 27, 1949 of Moncay. At the city stadium a large crowd gathered to watch a friendly match of soccer between the Sec Kep selection team and a Vietnamese youth team. Groups of three to five people converged at the stadium to support their

teams of choice, also to enjoy individual skills of many soccer players.

The match began its lively development with some intrigues while all spectators were riveted to the players. Suddenly a gust of gunfire burst out and someone fell down. In front of the tribune, the military medical doctor, Major Mailorde got hit and slumped to the ground. Everyone was stupefied, and panicky, and ran off in chaos. The time was 4 pm.

A group of Chinese communist guerrillas from the remnant of military units that had been chased out and defeated by nationalist forces in Kham Chau, Phong Thanh, and Thuong Tu, took refuge in the Hundred-Thousand-Great-Mountains region (China). They had been suffering from lack of food, supplies and ammunition.

Under these miserable conditions, their commander and the regional communist party decided to launch a surprise attack against the strategic location of Moncay across the border. Their aim was to capture weaponry, ammunition, and supplies. They had studied the objective and known that the defense had been loosened, especially on holidays and on Sundays when most officers and NCOs participated in sporting events while troops were playing around, drinking alcohol, and gambling, and only returned to their garrisons at night. A golden opportunity facilitated their scheme. The French army started recruiting new enlisted men for their units. The communists bought IDs from villagers with the assistance of some communist agents already infiltrated in

French regional forces. They had conducted reconnaissance on the topography of the region, the terrain, troops' routine habits, defense positions, and supply and ammo depots. And they were prepared for action.

Prior to the attack, the communists sent groups of guerillas to many locations as dispersion elements, ready to block our reinforcement and defensive elements. Many guerilla groups, equipped with light and short weapons, folded-stock sub-machineguns, moved from villages to the Moncai Stadium, and to the vicinity of military garrisons as if they came to see the soccer game.

After the starting salvo at the stadium as the opening signal, these groups swiftly moved to the Hill Top Post "Don Cao" to pin down the guards, and occupied the ammo depot. Meanwhile other enemy troops hiding on the other side of the river crossed the stream to reinforce the existing elements at the fort location. Then under covering darkness, the enemy troops were deployed as war porters transporting ammo, supplies, and bounties across the waterfall to the opposite riverside, at a site downstream from the Colonel's Mansion. Their night movement back to their base in China was completed.

The French lost a significant amount of weaponry. Hundreds of weapons and machineguns, hand grenades, and ammo were lost. It was regrettable not to be able to recall the casualties of both sides. A great loss was the death of the French major medical doctor, a humanitarian benefactor of the province who had saved many lives and commanded the

love and gratitude of the whole population. He was missed with great mourning by all.

During the seven years of peace, the above brutal communist attack was a frightful day, “a Day Hard to Forget” to the people of Moncay.

Ha Coi District (2)

Prior to the French invasion of Indochina (colony), Ha Coi had been part of the Tan Mai region, land of the “Ngais” an autonomous zone of this ethnicity. Among the indigenous leaders of the Ngais, the most notorious family was the Vongs headed by Vong Tac, the most talented leader of the Ngai and “Tsin Lau”, who had militarily opposed against the Thais, the San Dius, and lastly against the Hac Cas. In 1896 there was a unified security operation to eliminate the bandits on the Pan Ai Mountain, the Vong family participated in this battle with hundreds of partisans to accomplish the pacification.

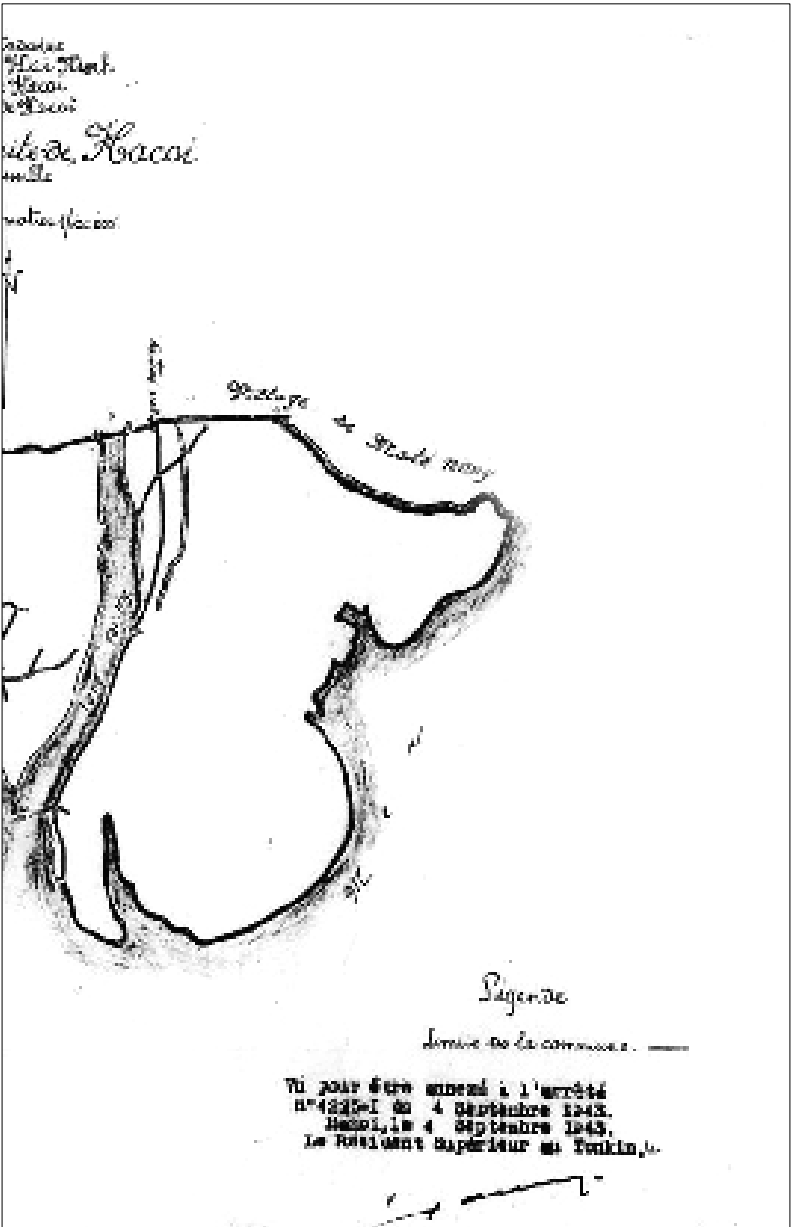
Before 1945, Ha Coi was originally a “Phu” (an administrative unit larger than a district “Huyen” or “Chau”, smaller than province). When the Autonomous Territory had been established, Ha Coi was demoted to “huyen” (district). Its most popular district chief was Mr. Cao Nguyen To who was subsequently promoted to Vice Chairman of the Autonomous Territory Representative Committee, cumulating Vice Principal of the School of Administration.

The Ha Coi District comprised three cantons, 1. Ha Coi; 2. Ma Te; and 3. My Son. These cantons consisted of 16 villages:

Phuong Ha Coi, Ha Coi Nung, Ha Coi Nam, Choc Plai San, Lang Khe, Dai Dien Nam, Dai Dien Nung, Dai Lai, Ma Te Nam, Ma Te Nung, Lap Ma, Quat Doai, Tan Mai, Po Hen, My Son, and Cai Chuyen. There was an additional Sub-District (Bang) Co To, a group of islands within the district jurisdiction consisting of 4 villages: Giap Nam, Giap Trung, Giap Tay, and Giap Bac.



Map of Ha Coi (West)



Map of Ha Coi (East)

The successive District Chiefs were Messieurs Vong Tong Phan; Vong Senh Chieng; Plang Henh Lenh; Vong Lap Ho; and Ho Tac Tsoi.

Ha Coi was a naturally resourceful region. It was adjacent to Moncay in the east at about 40 kilometers, to Dam Ha in the west; to the Sino-Vietnamese border of Guang Dong (now Guang Tsi) in the north, with a chain of Tan Mai mountains rich in timberland products; and to the Gulf of Tonkin in the south, abundant in all varieties of seafood. Between the mountain chain and the sea lay immense rice plains irrigated by two large rivers Ha Coi and Vang La. One should not be surprised to see 80 to 90% of the people of the region were farmers or agriculturally related turning Ha Coi into a huge rice silo of Hai Ninh province.

A minority of dwellers (mostly Vietnamese) were fishermen. Lumbers and bamboos were cut from Cau Lim and Tai Chi mountains then tied into floating platforms downstream to Ha Coi docks then en route to the port of Hai Phong for sales. Pottery items such as disks, bowls, jars, and vases were plentiful for local consumptions and belonged to exporting merchandise together with rough papyrus (giay suc) and incense powder for religious worship. Ha Coi produced a special forest by-product called “hong san mui”, a tree-barb, which if crushed and chewed with betel, leaves and areca nuts, yielded a fragrant flavor, a luxury for Red River delta people.

A unique and permanent festivity involving both Ha Coi and Dam Ha was the dual fair for produce buying and

marketing. The fair in Ha Coi opened on the third, sixth, ninth, thirteenth, sixteenth, nineteenth, twenty third, twenty sixth, and twenty ninth of every lunar month. The Dam Ha fair opened on the first, fourth, seventh, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth, twenty first, twenty fourth, and twenty seventh of the same monthly time table.

This business practice used the lunar calendar and was repeated year round. Exchanges of produces across the border promoted local businesses. (Sea products such as salt, shrimp, and fish from Vietnam went to China. Traditional pharmaceutical substances (herbs), clothing, and textile materials etc. went from China to Vietnam), automatically so called “Na Lieng”, a market place in China, was established just over the border to counter balance and look over the fort of Than Plun, Moncay, Vietnam. This market opened according to two calendars, the fair calendar and the short-day calendar. On the fair calendar, the market opened the second, fifth, eighth, twelfth, fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty second, twenty fifth, and twenty eighth of every month. On these days all the local people came to do business for the entire day. On the short-day calendar the market had fewer attendants and only lasted for a few hours in the morning.

Culturally wise there were many intellectuals in the local districts. There were scholars and sinologists of high caliber who won many poetry competitions in the region. Since 1948 the majority of teachers of the Chinese School (the predecessor of France-Nung School) had been invited from China resulting in highly academic standing of the student body.

It was remarkable that, at the heart of Ha Coi city, there was a Pagoda of the Goddess of Mercy by the name of “Ho Quoc Mieu” (State-Protection Temple) erected on a piece of land of more than an acre. The pagoda’s architecture was patterned after traditional Chinese style. Its façade was majestic. Its interior decoration was artistic and meticulously beautiful especially with a two-meter tall statue of the Goddess of Mercy brought over from China hundreds of years ago.

The statue was fully covered with golden and silvery medals offered by grateful worshippers. It was placed on a tall pedestal at the center of the shrine and constantly worshipped with burning incense sticks and colorful lights in a radiant atmosphere. On the fifteenth day and first day of the lunar month, worshippers of all generations flocked to the pagoda especially on the Goddess Commemoration of lunar February Nineteenth which was the most solemn occasion. Besides all rituals there was fireworks burning (called *siu pha plao*) which was meaningful and exciting.

Fireworks were ordered from China. The total amount of fireworks used on this occasion was 10. Each of them was 30 cm long, of 15 cm radius, and tied on a bamboo circle. It obtained a firework-class number and a complimentary slogan such as super-lucky, super prosperous, wealthy, honored, healthy... wrapped around its trunk.

In the morning of the holiday, at the stadium where the ritual took place, the organizers set up three stands, one in front of the stadium, and two stands along both sides of it.

The stands were made of bamboos and were about 3-meter high, just for launching the fireworks. At noon sharp, when all the spectators from remote areas finally gathered at the stadium (some years about nearly ten thousand people attended), an announcer declared that the opening ceremony began in front of regional officials.

The fireworks were launched to the sky hundreds of meters high, one after another, together with their circles and logos. These bamboo circles would fall back to the ground after the fireworks terminated their trajectories. All young people fought to obtain them. They tried to pick up the circles having the “old” best logos which had been the best competition the year before, because these logos had brought luck to the winners during that year. All were trying their best to pick the bamboo trophies. The competition was fierce. If it rained, the spectacle was even more exciting with fighting competitors whose clothes and faces were covered with mud. They looked funny like camouflaged warriors in a battlefield.

The winner was worthy of the trophy. He was honored as a champion. The bamboo circle was to be brought back to the pagoda for comparison with its old proof, a “plao-san” (in Vietnamese Phao Son) a kind of religious tablet was delivered to the champion inside a frame covered with glass. This would be put in an altar for worshipping. The tablet was moved to the champion’s quarters or district in a procession escorted by musical bands. Upon arriving at its destination, a party was organized to celebrate the trophy in the community whose families would take turn to worship

it at individual home, sooner or later, a worshipping schedule must proceed according to the amount of money donated to the pagoda. The champion's family was the first to worship it and might receive additional awards.

At year's end, all tablets were returned to the Pagoda, ready for the next year's festivities. The "phao-son" returning was a festivity in which the community had a party to celebrate the occasion.

After the evacuation from the North to South Vietnam in 1954, the worship of tablets was carried out through auctions for each tablet (plao san). Whoever offered the highest price would win the right to worship it at his/her residence. Obviously plao sans with the highest bids this year were more valuable than the ones with lower bidders the following years.

With a view to praying for peace of the region, calmness of civil society, and favorable wind, rain, and weather for regional agriculture, the Ha Coi Pagoda organized on a yearly basis a long and solemn festival lasting two days and two nights, the "Vu Lan" ritual. In Buddhism, Vu Lan is a festival to celebrate filial piety towards one's parents alive or deceased. In Ha Coi, people shifted the emphasis to donation and praying for abandoned souls under punishment in the other world. The purpose of this shift was to facilitate the passing of souls in hell in order for the souls in the living world to prosper. The Vu Lan officially commenced at the Pagoda from noon time of the lunar Fourteenth day until noon of the Sixteenth day. To show respect and preparedness

to the ritual, a team of monks started their pre-ritual prayer at the Pagoda right from the 10th of the month. They formed small groups of monks to stick sacred talismans on the front door of each house. The talisman was a golden paper with a sheet-fish's tail with four words on it "thanh tam trai gioi" meaning "sincere abstinence", from this time on, one tried his best not to commit violations against the rule of abstinences such as anger, and passion, in order to cleanse oneself for the ritual. The Fourteenth lunar night was the apex of the ritual. All households got ready to burn many sets of votive papers as offerings for abandoned souls. Rich households might have stacks of votive papers higher than human height. Each stack was three-meter wide. People waited for the team of monks to approach each residence with the musical band consisting of trumpets, drums, and gongs then the monks sprayed sacred liquid on the votive papers while they sang incantations then burned the offerings. The burning of votive papers lighted up the whole region in the night. All residents were happy in spite of their expenses for the ritual, thinking of the good deeds offered to the poor souls in the Netherworld.

There were other special rituals in this region.

- The Fifteenth day of lunar July (a Buddhist Holiday aiming at offerings and prayers for pardon for neglected souls) was an occasion to show gratitude toward kind-hearted residents in town (the ten most generous donors to Pagoda were chosen). A team of monks came to each of their homes in order to perform a special mass for the proprietor's ancestors.

- At three a.m. on the Sixteenth day, these monks brought cooked foods (meat, fish, sweat rice, cakes etc). to the river shore for a mass praying for neglected souls. After the mass, all attendants were invited to eat together at an opportune time when everyone was hungry.
- At 6 a.m. on the same day, all bamboo votive effigies were burned. The effigies had been decorated with colorful papers and worshipped since noon on the Fourteenth day. They were hell guards with human bodies and buffalo-or-horse heads with weapons. Some were crying souls waiting to be pardoned and freed especially the effigy of “slan thai nhin” (a mountain-giant-man which could be two-meter and a half tall while sitting). The giant’s role was to direct the souls toward the direction of freedom (to be reborn).
- All the monks performed the ritual mass until noon of the sixteenth day. The ending was a big lunch party celebrating the success of an important religious ritual.

During the above ritual celebrations all people from neighboring towns came to join the festivities. There were the opportunities for food merchants, entertainment booths, games and gambles such as “Tai-xiu” (great-small); “hot me” coin game; card games, dices; “bau cua”(southern 3-dice game having six betting squares, the wine gourd “bau” and the crab “cua” are two of those six images). There were competitions of javelin throwing, and ring throwing on ducks as trophies etc. All activities and eateries were around the

Pagoda and could extend many kilometers in radius. This was indeed a very important Nung festivity.

Dam Ha District City (3)

Dam Ha District was located on the east-west route connecting Ha Coi and Tien Yen Districts. It consisted of a unique city prefecture (Tong) and ten villages. There were Dam Ha City, and Dam Ha Village. The nine other villages were Tan Binh, Moc Bai, Na Pa, Dam Ha Dong, Duong Hoa, Dai Binh, An Thanh, Tan Lap, and Thanh Y. The District Chiefs were Messieurs Van Cong Menh, and Tsan Menh Tsin.

The Thanh Y Village was special in the sense that all its dwellers were “Thanh Y” or “Thanh Phan” (who belonged to the “Man” ethnic). In the Dam Ha Dong Village there was a mixture of many ethnicities: Ngai, San Diu, and San Chi living together. Ever since the Autonomous Territory was promulgated, all Nungs and Vietnamese, lived next to one another peacefully. As a result children education was well preoccupied by all.

Dam Ha had a church in its district. The City of Dam Ha built for itself another church to which not too many worshippers came. It was deserted and gradually ruined. The city had a large pagoda by the name “Nhi De Mieu” worshipping the two Kings: Guan Yu and Northern Divinity while the

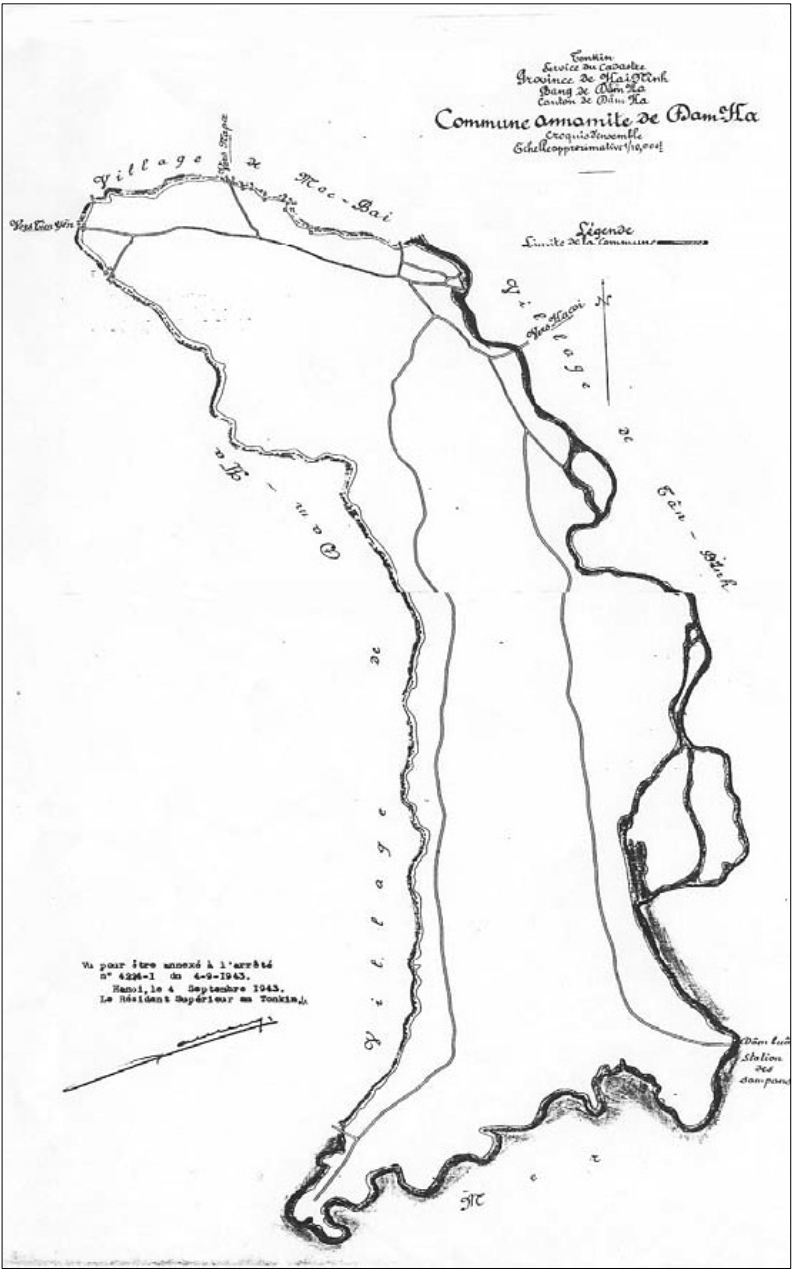
Goddess of Mercy Temple was even larger but was located out of the city.

The City of Dam Ha was located in the center of its district where National Road 4 passed through. Both sides of the road were filled with merchant shops and businesses. Two ranges of trees were planted along the road providing fresh shades for people. In the middle of the city and beside Road 4 was a large market of all varieties of merchandise and food. During the “fair” schedule as mentioned earlier (in Ha Coi,) the market started very early in the morning with very busy activities of sellers and buyers. Even the elderly population came here for eating, drinking, and talks.

The Port of Cung Dam (also called Dam Buon), was located 7 kilometers south of the city. This port and deck provided an important milieu in the sea transport of the region where fishermen operated and furnished sea products to the whole district. Its location was not close to the district. The seven-kilometer distance in the south was somewhat far for business and not convenient to the flow of merchandise.

Dam Ha consisted mainly of plains with some mountains. Its outgoing produces were papers, made of bamboos, to be sold in the delta region and Hai Phong.

It was a small district with small production of agriculture, forest products, and fishery but its population was hard working and consequently everyone was well-to-do and led a peaceful and satisfactory existence.



Map of Dam Ha
 Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh-Vietnam 101

Tien Yen District (4)

To describe Tien Yen of today, one must go back in time to the Village of Yen Than, (usually called Cau Cai or Pho Cu) about 7 kilometers north west of the today Tien Yen District. The two ethnic groups: Tsin Lau living together with San Diu, under the control of the Nim family (Nghiem) for many generations.

When the Vietnamese ethnics moved in to this area, they settled at the intersection of two rivers, one running down from Binh Lieu and the other, Khe Tu River, near a low valley by the name of Hai Lang. They named this place “Tien Yen” (in Cantonese, Tien Yen is pronounced “Slin On” or “Slan Cai” meaning “New Street”).

When the French came as colonial rulers they enjoyed the cooperation of Nim Tit Tsoi, a Nung leader at the region of Cau Cai, in their pacification of Tien Yen. As a result Mr. Nim was appointed District Chief of Tien Yen in 1887. At that time, Tien Yen was combined with Van Ninh to form the government prefecture (Phu) of Hai Ninh. Later on, the Hai Ninh District was upgraded to “Dao”, or administrative province, a little smaller than a regular province; Mr. Nim was promoted Dao Chief or “Quan Dao” (in Cantonese “Tau Thoi” or “Tau Thoi Cong”) of Hai Ninh until 1901.

The French evaluated Cau Cai, which was populated but not an ideal military location. They chose Tien Yen instead and developed it into an important military base. Mili-

tary defense installations were built. Its road system was improved. Civilian constructions and businesses were encouraged to fill in. As a result we have the Tien Yen City of today.

Geographically, Tien Yen was the center location of the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh. From this center, one could travel eastward to Dam Ha, Ha Coi, and Moncay (88 km); northward to Binh Lieu (33 km); to Hoanh Mo at the border of China; northwestward to Dinh Lap (40 km); to Lang Son (93 km); westward to Ba Che (18 km); to Quang Yen and Hai Phong; southwestward to the ocean along the river to Tsa Lan (10 km) currently named Cai Mat (having a deep port for 1,000 ton ship- docking).

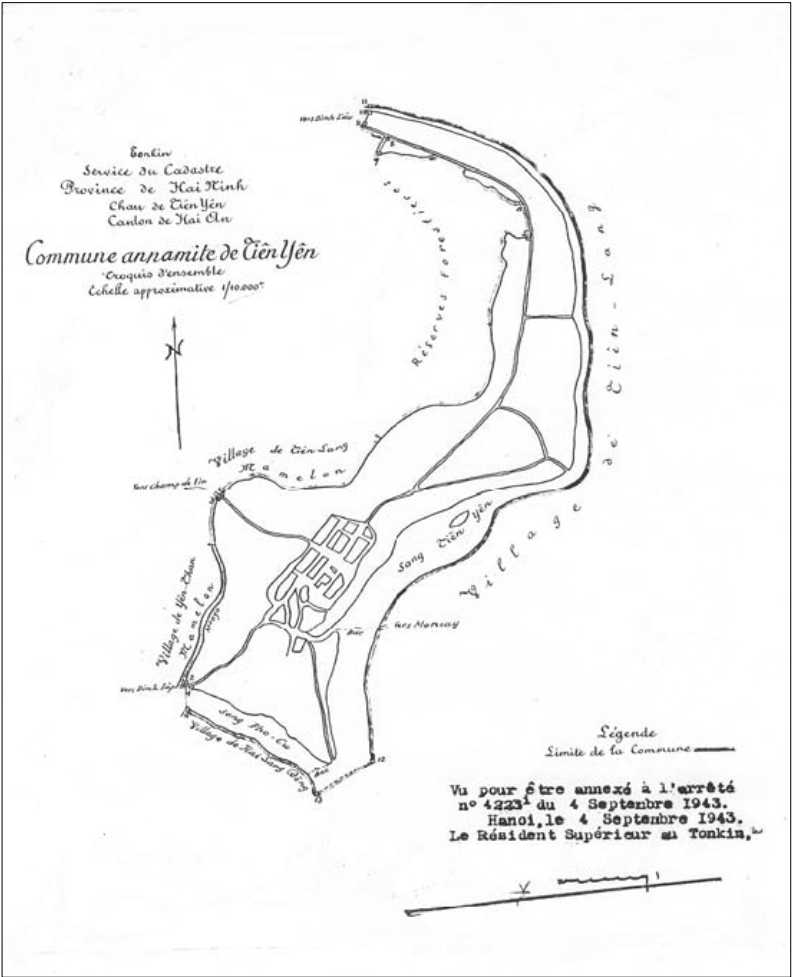
The Tien Yen District had three cantons (tong) Hai An, An Thanh, and Bac Lang. These cantons contained 14 villages (Xa) 1. Yen Than; 2. Hai Lang Dong; 3. Tien Lang; 4. Dai Duc; 5. Dong Ngu; 6. Duc Yen; 7. Dai Duc Dong; 8. Phong Du; 9. Ha Lan; 10. Dien Xa; 11. Chau Son; 12. Bac Lang; 13. Khe Mong; and 14. Khe Man.

During the first two years since the establishment of the Autonomous Territory statute, a notable personality, Mr. Lau Siu Denh was appointed City-district Chief. After his term of office ended, his assistant, Mr. Ly Trong Phuc was elected to replace Mr. Denh. This was the first time the City-District Chief was elected in this way.

The City-district of Tien Yen had a special geographic location. It looked at a river in its front and had

mountains in its back. Its administrative City Hall and hospital were built on the river bank on top of a crab-shell terrain (hill) covered with flame trees of flamboyant red in summer. On its left, there was a small cornice mountain protruding over the water like a “claw” where a post office and a customs office were built. On the right, there was another cornice hill where a large garrison was built and named Camp Lieutenant (Don Quan Hai). In the back of City Hall was the Hill Top Post (Don Cao), a large installation and compound of French military headquarters, or Military “secteur” (sector) whose commanding officer was a French full colonel.

Tien Yen was the vital military-command-headquarters (while Moncay was a military sub-sector whose commanding officer was Lieutenant-colonel Vong A Sang, the Autonomous Territory Leader cumulating Commanding Officer). During the period of 1947-1950, the Hanoi-Lang Son Route was blocked (by the communists). Basic supplies for Lang Son province were shipped by sea to Tien Yen then transported by trucks to Lang Son. The sight of this animated period in Tien Yen and its busy docking and land-transported supplies would remain in people mind. Tien Yen was then the sea port of Lang Son province, also the business summit period of the city history.

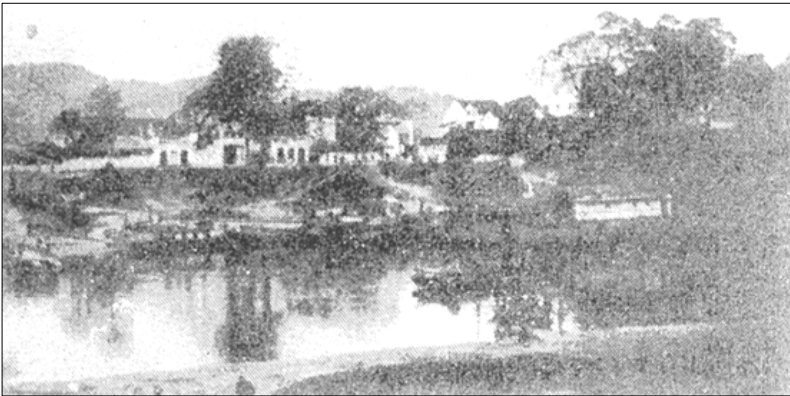


(Map of Tien Yen) (CAOM)

The jungles were good grounds for hunting. Tigers, leopards and deers were plentiful.

The Tien Yen people were familiar with marine motors and hydraulic devices for economic production. On the Tien Yen and Khe Tu Rivers, people built dikes to direct the water towards moving of hydraulic wheels made of bamboos to produce papers or to run rice mills. Several kilns or baking ovens manufacturing bricks, tiles, and pottery were built on the river bank for easy transportation.

Besides commerce and business, Tien Yen was surrounded by jungles which were favorable for the lumber industry and timberland businesses such as logging, firewood coals, bamboos, (for paper manufacturing) and brown-tuber roots (cu nau) for dyeing of textile products.



City Hall and Port of Tien Yen (Photo of LN)

In agriculture in particular, the Tong Va City and its northern adjacent area obtained an irrigation system resulting in good crop yields. In the beach region people erected dikes to prevent the influx of sea water, paving the way for rice cultivation but the lack of fresh water remained unsolvable.

Beginning the Forties, the French authority planned to build a dam at two kilometers upstream on the Tien Yen River to irrigate hundreds of acres of rice fields at Tien Lang village. Unfortunately, for unknown reasons, this plan has never been launched. Consequently Tien Yen had to import rice, usually from Hai Phong.

After Moncay, Tien Yen was the second most important center for Nung culture and education of the Autonomous Territory. The Franco-Vietnamese (public) School was built there as a serious institution since the Twenties. The private Franco-Chinese School had been institutionalized at “Mieu Quan De” (Guan Yu King Temple) since 1935. In 1947, the Franco-Vietnamese school was requisitioned for the military hospital. At the same time the Franco-Chinese School became Franco-Nung School. All schools were redistricted into a new educational center near the Forestry Camp. In 1949, a Chinese high-school class was set up at Quan De Temple but could only operate for one year and was disbanded.

Due to its importance as the second city in the Territory, Tien Yen was planned to duplicate Moncay province in all administrative echelons. In 1952, the separate and independent City of Tien Yen was created. A city election resulted in a City Council of 5 representatives and Mr. Tsan Hy Tac was elected Mayor. (5) The City Hall was established at “Mieu Quan De” Temple. It should be noted that the administrative power of Tien Yen, Binh Lieu, Ba Che, and Van Hoa was vested in Mr. Vong Phu Dan, Vice- Leader of the region (Chef d’Annexe) with the assistance of the

Vice-Administrator who was the French Envoy. Out of those Vice-Administrators there was Mr. Achard.

A nightmarish event occurred in late 1950 shaking the peaceful lives of the Tien Yen dwellers upside down. The memoir of Lieu Nguyen described this important event as follows.

Getting Through a Nightmare

In September 1950, the military situation in the Sino-Vietnamese border area especially along Route 4 (later on, National Route 4) became boiling. The Dong Khe Camp at 30-kilometer southeast of Cao Bang city was overrun by the Viet Minh. In early October, the French reinforcement that had been sent from Lang Son province, withdrew along with the French and regional forces of Cao Bang province. A total of 7,000 troops were intercepted by 30,000 Viet Minh forces and suffered heavy casualties. Two weeks later, the French garrison at Lang Son province withdrew from the city. The French-controlled Route 4 was abandoned to the communists. (6)



Tien Yen City Viewed from a Western Hill (Photo JM)

The news of Viet Minh's imminent attack on Tien Yen forced the Nung authority to order the evacuation of the people of Tien Yen out of the city. The moving order was terrifying for everyone. The term "evacuation" was communicated from mouth to mouth in coffee shops, on the streets, and in the market place resulting in a vital question "go or stay?" If one stayed, the communists would come, there would be fighting and how would anyone survive? In the event of military defeat, what would life become under the Viet Minh? If one evacuated, the majority of people were small businesses, and small proprietors, what would become of him? All one's wealth and properties- the long-time fruits of their sweat and labor- were in rice fields, farms, houses, and shops. How to bring them along? besides ancestors' tombs and native memories. The scenario of an empty-handed refugee without a professional skill, with large families resettling in new regions was a tragic outlook and

frightening uncertainty. Once out of Tien Yen, what would be one's chance of returning home?

As to war experiences, the people of Tien Yen had been through warring periods. After Japan surrendered to the Allied on August 15, 1945 and withdrew their troops from Tien Yen, the Chinese troops (62nd Army Corps) moved in and stationed at Hill Top Post "Don Cao". The First Division of Viet Cach (Viet Nam Cach Menh Dong Minh Hoi, an alliance of all nationalist factions) under CO Chieng Ung Khiu (Truong Ngo Kieu) was stationed at Hai Lang. There was a group of Chinese guerrilla troops annexed to the First Division. These troops had been engaging in skirmishes against the Japanese rear-base and under the command of Lau Slui Long (Nung). A group of the Viet Minh troops stationed at the Forestry Camp. Another group of Communist Chinese under the shadow of the First Viet Cach Division was stationed at Khe Tu. These Viet Minhs rent a boat to go to Uong Bi and fell in the ambush of the combined Chieng Ung Khiu and Lau Slui Long troops. When their boat reached the middle of the river, all four sides of the combined ambush opened fire killing most of them, together with the innocent family members of the boat owner.

Looking back at that period of events, one was still chilled. Many people sadly moved. Those with means moved to Hai Phong or wherever and whoever relatives residing far away and willing to help. Those with limited resources just moved to Van Hoa and temporarily waiting there, hoping for an early end of hostility.

In December 1950, Binh Lieu fell to the enemy. (7) The northern part of Tien Yen was open without defense. When Christmas approached, the troops of the Dinh Lap Camp withdrew. (3) The situation was tense, even more so. On December 29, the front forces of Viet Minh occupied the Chau Son Village. The enemy was only 16 kilometers from the city. Besides the responsible authority officials such as the Administrative Advisor, Chief Police, District Chief, office clerks, all was waiting for a new order. The civilian population was very thin. The streets were deserted.

In this desperately vulnerable situation there was a new order from General de Lattre de Tassigny, the newly appointed High Commissioner and Commander in Chief of Expeditionary French Forces of Indochina: "Stop the Tien Yen and Moncay evacuation. Beef up military forces for counter offensive". Everyone exhaled a sigh of relief. People returned home in mass. After a nightmarish calamity, the city gradually resumed normal activities. Life became active and busy as usual.

Binh Lieu District (8)

Originally the Binh Lieu District had been a northern region of the Tien Yen District. It was detached and formed a separate district in 1919 as the highest-altitude region of the Autonomous Territory. Some of its lands were over a thousand meters higher than sea level. However its climate

was temperate. Winter mornings were foggy as if in a fairy land. Fog slowly dissipated with sunrise.

The Binh Lieu District consisted of two cantons: Binh Lieu and Kien Duyen. These cantons were comprised of 7 villages: 1. Luc Hon; 2. Tinh Hoc; 3. Vua Ngai; 4. Tinh Hoc Dong; 5. Hoanh Mo; 6. Dong Tam; and 7. Dong Van.

The route leading to Binh Lieu was winding with rough and bumpy segments, with uneven-surfaced roads, hilly, and mountainous terrains. The part of the road adjacent to the Tien Yen District was narrow and dangerous because of perched mountain walls on one side, and bottomless abyss on the other. There was a large pond on the high mountain with a flat rock as a platform for two sitting fairies playing chess as in China's legend. The pond was full of water all year around and the overflow created a fall and inundated the road. The local people named this overflow "Ma Xe Neu" "Urinating Horse". The strange shapes of mountain rocks and an air of sequestered locations, and high altitude weather earned its name "Devil's Pass", (Qui Mon Quan).

The Binh Lieu Market was the city business center. The market was surrounded by streets full of businesses, eateries, and combined residences and family businesses in one location. All kinds of products and produces were brought here via all imaginable means of transportation: shoulder-carried, bicycles, and saddle-horses. The merchandise were from neighboring villages or districts or remote places. It was a typically highlands-related market place.

The silk worm family industry, honey-bee business, anise and cinnamon extractions were special productions of Binh Lieu. High quality and delicious sugar cane was famous export products in the delta region. In the southern part of city, jackfruits were another good Binh Lieu produce.

Sixteen-kilometer north of the Binh Lieu Market was the city of Dong Mo near the border fort by the name of Hoanh Mo whose small river formed a natural border between the two countries. On the other side of China there was a counterpart village named Tong Chong. Standing on the Lang Tu Pass (Vagabond Pass) adjacent to Ha Coi District, a tourist might enjoy the whole breath-taking panorama of Ha-long Bay. The highlands region of the Sino-Vietnamese border from Than Plun (Moncay) to Hoanh Mo (Binh Lieu) offered majestic landscapes (10) for tourism.

If the “Siu Pha Plao” was a huge festivity of the Ha Coi District, its counterpart of the Binh Lieu District was the “O Po festivity”. For days during this yearly holiday, Binh Lieu people enjoyed it to the full. The Siu Pha Plao was heavily religious with a competition of intelligence and resourcefulness among youngsters while the O Po was a selected opportunity for young men and women to meet and start their romantic relationships leading to marital unions.

On the late spring Third Day of lunar March at the return of warm weather and merry climate, and in early morning of foggy mildew, groups of young men gathered at the

Binh Lieu Market place. People from Hoanh Mo and Tong Chong (China) participated in this festivity as well. This occasion and location attracted many groups of young women also. Both sexes were dressed in colorful traditional outfits. The two opposite sexes met and poems and songs of self-introduction and evaluation from both sides were heard in a give-and-take process. Most exchanges consisted of individual information on family and social statuses, riddles solving, and all facets of life of the concerned subject. Couples might discover their prospective partners and exchanged gifts, set up meetings or went to covered corners or bushes for more amorous talks.

The market area had been prepared for this occasion for days ahead. Colorful flags and decorations were raised and hanged everywhere. Theatrical troupes and comedy groups came to entertain the aged population. Other games and tricks for prizes such as knife-throwing, dart-throwing, and ring-throwing (on ducks) attracted children and youths. There were eateries and snacks and partying activities everywhere. Friends met or reunited with each other in a joyful ambiance.

However, the center of attention remained boys meeting girls and the exchange of songs. It should be noted that the majority of local people were “Tay” and “Tho” ethnics. The Tay dialect on the “O Po” holiday was “Hang Slam” meaning March Market. The Nungs and Mans were minorities. No matter what dialects the songs, lyrics, and their meanings were universal, courting. All ethnicities lived with each other in peaceful co-existence. Their musical voices

resonated in distant forests. Their harmony and lyrics lingered in the setting sun until moonlight fully glowed. Most parents who were usually strict with their kids would make liberal exceptions on this occasion and allow them to go with their new friends and lovers.

After three active days of the entire holiday, the O Po festivity was finally terminated. Everyone returned to his/her routine agricultural activities. Young men and women reluctantly said good-bye and promised to meet again next year.

Compared to all the other districts of the Territory, Binh Lieu was the district whose population suffered the most of loss of human lives and properties. It was many times the location of bloody battlefields. Its population endured many years of brutal persecution under the communist rulers.

During a border campaign of the enemy in December 1950 thousands of Vietminh troops had been trained and equipped by the Chinese. These forces infiltrated to Ngan Chi village and attacked Binh Lieu which was defended by only a company. Facing an enemy of far larger fighting unit, the defenders pushed back many assaults for four days but finally withdrew to Tien Yen.

The result of this attack was shocking. The communist corpses were blocking all fortress loop-holes. The enemy force ordered the villagers to hastily bury the cadavers in shallow graves that looked like rows of potato beds.

The Vietnamese communists also mobilized local people to transport captured weapons and ammunitions to the Chinese as offerings. The Chinese exercised their inherently greedy character by moving the national boundary stakes deep into Vietnam's territory.

In February 1953, Lieutenant-colonel Vong A Sang personally led the 57th battalion (formerly Nung BBO battalion) to recapture Binh Lieu. His unit quietly moved up through Choc Plai San and attacked the enemy's weak point at Ma Xe Neu (Master Sergeant Vong Chay Nam died in this battle). The regional company of Second-lieutenant Chenh Chi Lan alias "King of Mountain" (San Tai Vong) was the unit with most fighting trophies. They recaptured Binh Lieu.

A segment of the local population, including Mr. Sang's mother-in-law, took this opportunity to evacuate her family and livestock of cows and buffalos out of the district. The enemy had mistreated the local people under his iron fist. After three days of liberation the offensive force withdrew, leaving a small regional defense group which later on, had to withdraw as well because of the enemy's pressure and supply difficulties. The local people of Binh Lieu fell back to a hard existence.

Dinh Lap District (11)

National Route 4 connected Moncay to Tien Yen and if one continued moving northwestward, Route 4 led to the Dinh Lap and Loc Binh Districts before coming to the Lang Son province.

The Dinh Lap District had been detached from the Tien Yen District in 1940. Dinh Lap had two cantons, Hau Co, and Dinh Lap, and five villages: 1. Binh Xa Man; 2. Binh Xa Tho; 3. Dinh Lap; 4. Kien Moc; and 5. Ba Xa.

Dinh Lap was lower in altitude than Binh Lieu but was part of northern highlands. It was located in a favorable transportation route even to An Chau in the west towards the plain at the gate of the Bac Giang province. Below was a poem by journalist Ly Trong Phuc on the newspaper Nung Thanh describing the landscape of the wilderness and mountains of a village in this region: (12)

*“Riding on horse carriage to Na Peo,
Deep on the deserted forest road,*

.....

*A few ethnic Man dullards gather by the spring
Some aggressive leopards stay on the hill
Whoever wants to play in the “then”, * please go ahead.
Go up there to enjoy the event to the full”.*

(* “then” was the ritual or dance of the “Tho” ethnic).

The majority of the people of this region were Tho ethnics. They were peasants or farmers working in a primitive economic environment in addition to military hostility. Life was hard. In spite of the lack of security, they still survived due to their stoic endurance and hard-working character. It should be noted that Dinh Lap was the unique region of the Territory where horses were raised and traded for transportation business due to its natural large pasture. Na Thuoc, north of the district, was a water-buffalo breeding

land for exporting some quantity of the animals on the yearly basis.

It was specially recorded that the local dignitaries always put strong emphasis on children's education even in difficult times. The district Franco-Nung Elementary School was set up appropriately and well built. There was a stadium for sports activities that supplemented class-room studies.

Similar to the Binh Lieu District, the Dinh Lap District had been abandoned to communist take-over since December 1950. Up to the date of massive evacuation in 1954, the district had never been recaptured from the enemy.

Ba Che District (13)

The District City of Ba Che was located at National Route 18 connecting Tien Yen to Hai Phong, passing through Cam Pha, Hon Gai, and Quang Yen. The streets of Ba Che were built on a flat hill surrounded by mountains in three directions.

The Ba Che River ran through the city before heading for the sea, and at times, its overflow caused serious flooding damage to the crops.

The Ba Che District originally belonged to Quang Yen province. In 1946 it was administratively detached from it and annexed to Hai Ninh province. It consisted of two cantons; Thanh Dac and Thanh Binh; and 11 villages: 1. Nam Son; 2. Don Dac; 3. Tam Tri; 4. Khe Kha; 5. Quan Man; 6. Thuy Co; 7. Khe Lam; 8. Thanh Lam; 9. Luong Mo; 10.

Minh Cam; and 11. Dap Thanh. Besides, it contained a remote sub-district (Bang) Dong Rui, a remote marsh land located in rough mountains and unhealthy climate but whose crabs were large and delicious.

Ba Che dwellers were mostly farmers, earning their living on farming and fishing. A segment of them got high earnings through logging and bamboo-cutting. This group of wood-cutters burned small lumbers for coals and exported bamboos and large woods to Hai Phong or delta provinces.

Bamboos and large trunks of log woods were well fastened together into solid lumber rafts that could resist ocean waves and securely drifted downstream of rivers towards the ocean. A hut was built on the rafts and contained all the foods, potable water, kitchen apparatuses, ropes, and tools for platform maintenance. It provided a resting area for the crew. At the middle of the raft, a tall sail mast was erected. The crew carefully calculated the timing of high and low tides, and wind, and monsoon seasons, and when to raise sails to head for the ocean, taking advantage of wind and currents. Usually a raft trip took twenty days to a month to reach its destination.

Van Hoa District (14)

Van Hoa had been the island of Ke Bao belonging to Quang Yen province. In 1946 it was detached from Quang Yen and annexed to Tien Yen. Afterward it gained separate district statute in 1948. This island was located in the waters of the Tien Yen District, at about 10 kilometers from the

District City. Its location was the compulsory gate to approach Tien Yen. It earned the island of Van Hoa another name “Tien Yen Gate” (Slin On Mun).

Van Hoa consisted of the Van Hoa Port, and three villages: 1. Cai Tai; 2. Ha Nua; and 3. Dai An Nung; and Ha Vuc (sub-district).

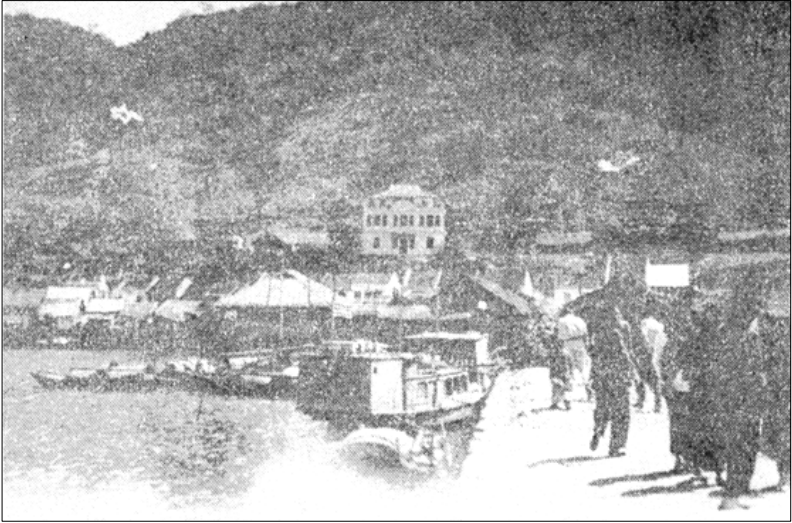
Van Hoa was an important island guarding a zone of territorial waters. It was the base of an active patrol fleet. A maritime check point was established there and operated with customs officials of the District. Out-going and incoming passengers and merchandise had to go through this rigorous customs check-point.

There was a special practice regarding ships entering Tien Yen. The ships had to be checked by customs, then usually had to dock at this check-point to wait for the next high tide that would allow them to sail through a fall by the name of “Hieng Sui Than” (Watery Sound Fall), and would eventually dock at Tien Yen. Most ships were there for a period of time. Their passengers had time to eat in local restaurants and taste fresh sea food. Therefore ship docking created good local business.

Besides normal businesses associated with a flourishing district, the local population earned their living by fishing and farming. In years past, the French had authorized coal mine exploitation in Ke Bao Island. In 1929 there was a world economic crisis which had brought up the mining cost of Ke Bao coal too high compared to that of Hon Gai and

Cam Pha. Ke Bao mining enterprise had to close down but the industrial docking and coal transportation platform prepared by this aborted business had been set up. This docking area became deserted and served as an arc alley for visitors' sight-seeing tour. The landscape was beautiful with its natural wilderness and oceanic surroundings.

Van Hoa was also a waterway entering the famous Halong Bay. Its landscape was breath-taking. The island high mountain water-falls washed down on the surrounding lands and created a belt of green forest and verdant vegetation for the island. The local people had the pleasure enjoying the radiant sunrise on the ocean. At sunset, fishermen's housewives accompanied by their children, looked forward to seeing their returning husbands after their daily catch. This would remind people of the image of "Hon Vong Phu" "Husband-Longing-Wife Rocks" along the remote coast of Vietnam. (a symbol of the legacy of warriors and their wives who were constantly separated by wars).



Port of Van Hoa (Photo by L.N.)



Notes:

1. NSSJ 11/03, Comments 060812, Supplement 070312. VAS pages 15-16. GEO, page 5. NOT, page 51. LNG 8/10/06.
2. NSSJ, 31/7/03, Supplement 070312. VAS, page 12. GEO, pages 8-9. Article by Mr. Truong Thang Chuc, 4/03. NSSJ, Combined Comments 15/5/07, page 3.
3. LNG, 11/03 pages 3-4. GEO, page 9. NOT, page 46. Article by Mr. Loc Vay Lieng (LVL) 12/03.
4. Article by Mr. Moc Menh Va (MMV) 3/04. LNG 11/03. VAG pages 12-16. GEO page 10. NOT pages 43, 50.

- NSSJ, Supplement 07/03/12. Ly Ngoc Duong 13/4/07.
Nguyen Hoa An, 14/4/07.
5. District Chiefs of that time were called “Quan Chau”. They were in chronological order, Messieurs Lau Siu Denh, Ly Trong Phuc, Tsan Menh Tsin, and Vong Phu Dan.
 6. To Vu, pages 45-54 Chin Nam Khoi Lua, Nine Years of War, pages 172-176.
 7. Article of Mr. Quy Ngoc Duong (QND 1/2004).
 8. LNG, 11/11/03. Quy Ngoc Duong (QND,) 11/04. GEO, pages 10, 11, 15.
 9. According to Nuoc Toi Dan Toi (My Country My People) Dong Tien Publication, page 163, in the Van Dai Loai Ngu author Le Quy Don did mention this Devil’s Gate (Qui Mon Quan) but this author mentioned that there was a place in Lang Son having the same name.
 10. Nuoc Toi Dan Toi, page 126.
 11. LNG, 11/11/03. GEO, pages 11, 15. NOT, page 23. VAS, page 33. NSSJ, Supplement 070312.
 12. Narrated by Mr. Lieu Nguyen (8/10/06).
 13. LNG, 11/11/03. GEO, pages 11, 16. VAS, page 34.
 14. LNG, 11/11/03. MMV, 8/11/06. VAS, page 34.

PART THREE



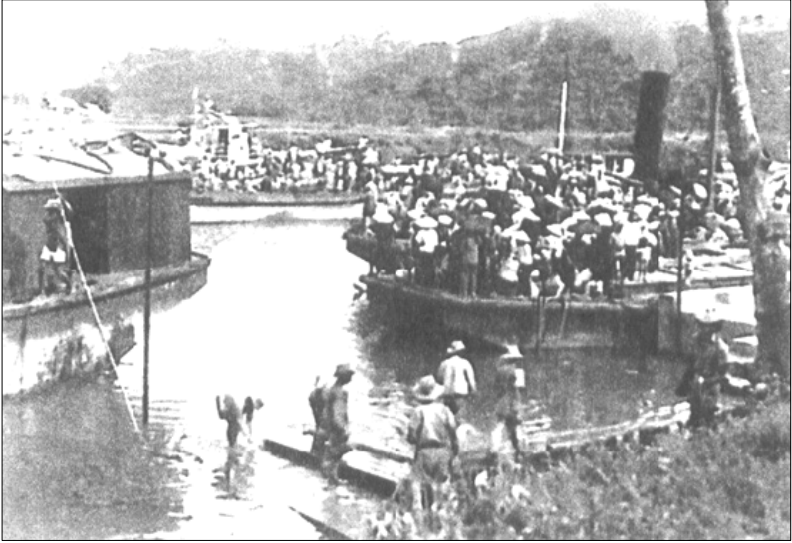
EVACUATION TO SOUTH VIETNAM

..... *Mang* River is mourning over the Red River;
Darling, take a good look at the effusing Mekong River
waves.*

Since the administrative establishment of the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh up to 1954, the people of the region had been prosperous in their pursuit of a peaceful existence and content with their occupations. Besides a few battles at Than Plun and Tan Mai near the end of 1950, and the clashes at Binh Lieu in December 1950, and in February 1953, all sporadic small groups of armed-bandit activities in the whole region were swiftly crushed by Nung troops. As a result, the regional economy kept flourishing, education was progressing, and civil development and business activities were stably promoted. The protectorate government of Vietnam was happy with the country's northeastern frontier security well protected by its solid administration and military apparatuses. It saved the rest of its energy and time to cope with other current security and political difficulties at the time. However, human kind would never escape historical calamities that fell on the country's destiny.

The Vietnamese communists had been strongly backed by China and the Soviet Union resulting in a serious threat coming from the north western front, an opening

breach on Vietnam's territory. Dien Bien Phu fell after a 55-day siege. On July 20, 1954 the Geneva Agreement was signed to divide Vietnam in two partitions, Communist North and Nationalist South of the 17th Parallel. Each of the two Vietnams had 300 days to regroup its populations to its respective designated half of Vietnam. Hai Ninh was located at the north easternmost Sino-Vietnamese border and only had six (6) days to move its people down to Hon Gai (near Hai Phong), the rendez-vous point for embarking and shipping to South Vietnam. (SVN)



*Nung Civilian, Administrative, and Military Personnel
Evacuation after the Geneva Agreement (Photo JM)*

With limited means of communications at that time, the formal and official evacuation announcement was disseminated in a flashy manner. Instantly people remembered

the fresh experiences of living under brutal and oppressive communist rules (Viet Minh) in Binh Lieu and Dinh Lap. They were vivid and terrifying. For the Nung people of Hai Ninh, the simple truth was so clear and convincing: “living under communism is impossible for all”. Consequently not only did the personnel and families related to military units or administrative agencies immediately depart but the vast majority of the civil population decided to abandon their ancestor’s tombs, their lands, houses, rice plains, fruit gardens, and their beloved property in order to evacuate as well. With their own means, about 40 thousand people regrouped to Hon Gai and Bai Chay (Halong Bay) within the dead-line for evacuation.

After this massive first evacuation, additional waves of individuals continued to join their predecessors in their own times due to their remote departing locations which were deep in far away regions. They tried their best to leave in spite of communist prevention. Many failed to escape and had to remain there in misery. Only a few hundred people succeeded to slip through the communist check points and arrived at the embarkation station in August 1954. Up to March 1955, an additional of over 10 thousand Nungs successfully joined the first group. More than 50 thousand Nungs moved to the south in this historic exodus, one third of the total Nung ethnic population. Compared to the cross section of one million of all ethnicities and Vietnamese groupings of evacuees, the Nung ethnic group had the highest ratio of evacuees to its respective population of North

Vietnam. (NVN) All moved south and “voted by their feet” for freedom.



Notes:

* Mang Nhai was the Vietnamese phonetics of “Moncay”. These two verses were written by an anonymous poet during the historic southward evacuation of 1954. They implied the people of remote frontier regions and those from the Red River delta sadly left their beloved father lands to the Promised-land in the south with the welcoming hands of the kind Mekong River, a region of sweet fruit and blessing lands.

* La Question Nung (LQN) Service de l’Histoire de L’Armee de Terre de France. Pages 2, 3.

CHAPTER ONE

RESETTLEMENT IN THE SONG-MAO REGION- BINH THUAN PROVINCE

*“Here is Song Mao, the land of wild jungle,
Where constructive hands are rising
And fighting for a Free Vietnam”.*

On August 20, 1954 Mr. Vong A Sang was freshly promoted full colonel and appointed Commanding Officer of the Maritime Zone from Hai Ninh to Quang Yen provinces. The colonel led a team of reconnaissance looking for a resettlement region for his people with the permission of the nationalist regime. The selected region was a location between Phan Ri and Phan Thiet. It consisted of: Song Mao, Chau Hanh, Song Luy, Suoi Nhum, and Long Thanh, all were in the Binh Thuan province. This region was at the southernmost limit of Central Vietnam, and the northernmost limit of Southern Vietnam.

Although the assigned settlement region seemed poor and arid, there were many reasons for this choice of second home for the Nung ethnic of Hai Ninh.

* The region contained a large wilderness area for domestication, plantation, and agriculture.

* It was close to the Pacific therefore fishing and good-transportation by sea would be prospective and promising.

* The existing local population had been very thin.

* National Route 1 ran through it and the trans-national railroad did likewise and stopped at many stations in the region: Song Mao, Chau Hanh, Song Luy and Long Thanh.

The first wave of Nung refugees arrived in Saigon in early September 1954. They were stationed at Hanh Thong Tay (Go Vap) for a few days then moved to settlement locations by train. The majority of Nung refugees finally settled in Song Mao by November 1954. Their transportation from Hai Phong to SVN was funded by France. Their move to settlement locations was defrayed by the United Nations Refugee Commissioner's Office.

Though colonel Sang had assigned his men to arrive at Song Mao ahead of time for receiving people but due to: the shortage of supplies and reliefs; lacking of housing accommodation; thousands of refugees kept coming; hygiene and sanitation conditions were poor; and the weather was arid and unhealthy all resulted in unexpected hardships during this beginning period of settlement. Everyone had to manage to survive. Each family had to build a hut to accommodate his/her relatives away from the sun and rain. This situation was aggravated by a health calamity during which, small pox, cholera, and dysentery struck old people and children while medical supply was short, and medical teams were absent. In a period of a few weeks, dozens of refugees died. Fortunately International Red Cross came to remedy on time with medicines and nurses to stop the medi-

cal crisis. In just a very short time, all diseases were contained at last.

In late 1954 an administrative district was set up, the Hai Ninh District. Song Mao (a quasi-province) was the seat of the City District. Civilians, administrators, and military troops assisted the refugees to build the settlement and housing units while Binh Thuan province supplied financial assistance and construction materials.

Bulldozers operated day and night. A crisscrossing road system was designed and, residences, businesses, stores, market hall, school, medical dispensary, and other public agencies were built or planned. Gradually Song Mao was stripped of its thatched and muddy construction and replaced them with bricked and tiled housing units which flourished like fertile mushrooms. Song Mao became a prosperous business and residential center. (2)

1. *The location of the Hai Ninh District and City of Song Mao (3)*

(Hai Ninh was a transplanted name from NVN. Song Mao was the real existing name of settlement. Mr. Sang insisted on the old name to remind his people of their origin).

The new Hai Ninh District (SVN) was located west of Tuy Phong District (Binh Thuan province). The Di Linh District (Lam Dong province) was north of it. On the south, there were the two adjacent districts of Phan Ri Cham, and Hoa Da (Binh Thuan province).

Hai Ninh consisted of 4 villages. 1. Hai Xuan village was south of Song Mao. It included the Song Mao train station and district office. 2. Hai Lac village was in the center of Hai Ninh. 3. Hai Thuy was north of Song Mao. 4. Song Luy was 10-kilometer in the west. The Song Mao city district, where most of people resided (nearly 20,000 military and civilian personnel and their families), was 70 km north-east of the Phan Thiet province capital. (Please see maps at end of Chapter). The position of the District-Chief was successively assumed by Messieurs Chieng Venh Senh, Tsan Menh Tsin (Tran Minh Toan), Captain Ly Siu Cong, Major Ha Van Lau, Lieutenant-colonel Gip San Canh, and Major Slen Cam Vo.



Map of Hai Ninh Administrative City-District (East Side) (SH/AT)

2. Climate and Weather (4)

Song Mao had two seasons the year round. The monsoon or rainy season lasted from May to October. The dry season lasted from November to April. During January and February, frequent and violent whirlwinds caused massive sand and dust winds sweeping through the region and damaging roofs.

The dry season was hot and dry. The day temperature was 32-33 degrees Celsius. The two rivers, Ma O at the heart of district, and Ca Giay northwest of it, both were dry. People had to get water from Cho Lau, 4 km away, near national Route 1 for their daily use. Mr. Sang and his reconnaissance team had come here at the end of the monsoon when both rivers had had much water. They had not imagined that the rivers could be that dry. For farmers and gardeners, the four survival factors consisted of: water first; fertilizers second; labor third; and seeds last. The water shortage was a big blow to people living on agriculture. Their rice field perimeters were limited. The first rice crop yielded as late as November 1955. There was only one crop a year due to water shortage.

This situation drove a segment of the Song Mao population towards other regions such as Xuan Loc of Long Khanh province; Tung Nghia and Don Duong of Tuyen Duc province; and Di Linh of Lam Dong province where agricultural conditions were better. Some business people moved down to the Saigon-Cholon area, looking for better opportunities.

A general blessing was the basic and regular salaries of 8,500 Nung military personnel plus small petty businesses in Song Mao kept the refugee families afloat financially for the moment. Gradually all difficulties were eradicated. Nung potential abilities were expanded. New lives and occupations settled.

3. Culture (5)

Religious rituals and temples were rapidly established in Song Mao. A catholic church was built in 1956. The Bach Van pagoda was erected in 1957. In particular, the Goddess of Mercy pagoda (Quan Am) was the fruit of a noisy fund raising campaign heartily backed by all. It was the first well-designed religious construction to be built in 1955. It was crowded with male and female worshippers whose incense and candles smoke offerings occurred all the year round. The Goddess commemoration festivity on lunar February 19th was organized at a reduced scale with fireworks and the rest of its rituals still observed.

Each village had an elementary school that taught Vietnamese in accordance with public standard requirements. The Hai Xuan village also had a Chinese school and Hai Ninh Song Mao High School (formerly Da Minh high school) of standard Vietnamese education.

4. Economy (6)

The main natural resource of Hai Ninh District had been precious timbers: rosewood, ironwood, and dipterocarp

(cay dau). Due to security conditions, logging had been limited. In the Hai Ninh District, agriculture and vegetable cultivation was possible in the areas of Le Nghi, Ka Long, north of Song Mao, and Ca Giay, west of it. A number of Nungs cultivated their farms in the areas of Song Khieng, north of Song Luy and Suoi Nhum, south of National Route 1. Fishing was resumed at the Phan Ri estuary, Hoa Da district, 10 km south of Song Mao.

Song Mao had two market halls. The main market was at Hai Xuan Village; and the supplementary market was at Hai Thuy Village. A cooperative for supplies of rice and basic needs for the people had been set up by Colonel Sang since the first stage of settlement. He used Nung financial funds for this fundamental service. The official cooperative service sold basic needs at low prices. Mr. Sang also built an electric generator plant and a weaving factory to provide employment for his people.

In no time businesses in Song Mao multiplied in the busiest manner. Shopping and commerce flourished due to the north-south railroad connecting Saigon and remote provinces in central Vietnam via Song Mao. Merchandise were transported swiftly corresponding to the increase of business transactions in provinces which expanded to other businesses and created an optimistic economic trend. The business summit period of the Hai Ninh District and Song Mao region spanned from late 1955 through 1958.

5. *Military and Political Problems (7)*

51. Groupement Nung (unit) and the Sixth Division

After the Cease-fire in July 1954, the French Supreme Command decided to unify all regular units including secondary units composed of Nung and other minority troops. The new unit was named “Groupement Nung” which was under the command of Colonel Vong A Sang.

This unified “groupement” comprised of 8,400 troops from three large units: the 34th, 35th, and 36th Regiments. These units in turn comprised of:

*the Vietnamese battalions (Bataillons Vietnamiens or BVN) 32nd, 57th, 71st, 72nd, and 75th battalions, formed in the past;

*the Vietnamese battalions (newly formed) comprised the 56th, (later became 86th;) 87th, 88th, and 89th battalions which were the secondary units under training that the General Commander of the 4th Military Region of Vietnam had decided to form in early August pending the official decree of the Ministry of Defense;

*the Old Headquarters Company of Coastal Provinces.

In reality, the creation of Groupement Nung had been started before the general evacuation to SVN (1954). Prior to that date, many Nung officers had been assigned to take command of the 32nd battalion at Hon Gai; the 72nd bat-

talion at Uong Bi; and the 75th battalion at Cua Ong (Cam Pha Port). All had been in the Quang Yen province.

When the Nung settlement in Song Mao was completed, the government and its general headquarters discovered an intricate and sensitive reality: this large Nung unit had been formed in a delicate transitional period without the knowledge and approval of the Vietnamese administrative and military authorities.

There were many reasons on the part of the Vietnamese government and the Joint General Staff in showing their unhappiness over the integration of the Groupement Nung into the national armed forces. The main reasons of this unhappiness were:

- Colonel Vong A Sang had been and remained a French officer not yet integrated into the Vietnamese armed forces. There were many French troops in Groupement Nung.
- The troops of Groupement Nung entirely consisted of minorities (the majority of them were Nungs. The rest were Tay, Muong, Man, and Thai ethnicities). This composition created a difficulty in the Vietnamese pacification strategy in the countryside.
- The unit equipments and supplies were being provided for by the newly named “French Mis-

sion” (formerly France Expeditionary Corps Headquarters).

- Maintaining Nung units would create unfavorable reactions from the (armed) religious sects at that time.

In that political setting, the government of Vietnam mistrusted Nung units because they might have been created and maintained in existence by the French as a form of political leverage. In reality, the French authority itself had intentionally maintained them solely due to their ethnically unmixed quality and anti communist capability. (There was not a single deserter in these Nung units compared to their desertion-infested unmixed Vietnamese counterpart at that time).

On November 16, 1954 the Ministry of Defense issued a decree to officially establish 4 Nung Battalions. However this military reorganization plan was set back by another plan to reduce the armed forces. Not a military unit of this category could be maintained in existence. Even newly formed units only existed as “light infantry elements” (for high mobility).

Fortunately this fear of forced reduction was dissolved by the critical tension between the new cabinet of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem and various armed religious factions at that time. All decrees on military reduction were abolished. Finally on April 1st, 1955 there came the first steps to implement the setup of the first Nung Division, the

6th Division, (after the Ministry of Defense had enacted this decree nearly two months earlier). There were new conditions associated with this setup. The Division had to re-admit not only former Nung personnel of various specialties but also other minority troops from the former French Union armed forces whose units had been dissolved. It had to admit newly transferred Vietnamese officers also. These conditions led Colonel Vong A Sang, the Division CO to reluctantly discharge nearly 2,000 Nungs with meager punitive damages to be paid to them. However the formation of this Division boosted the self-esteem image of Nung combatants who had the merit of being the first great military unit of a newly established nation.

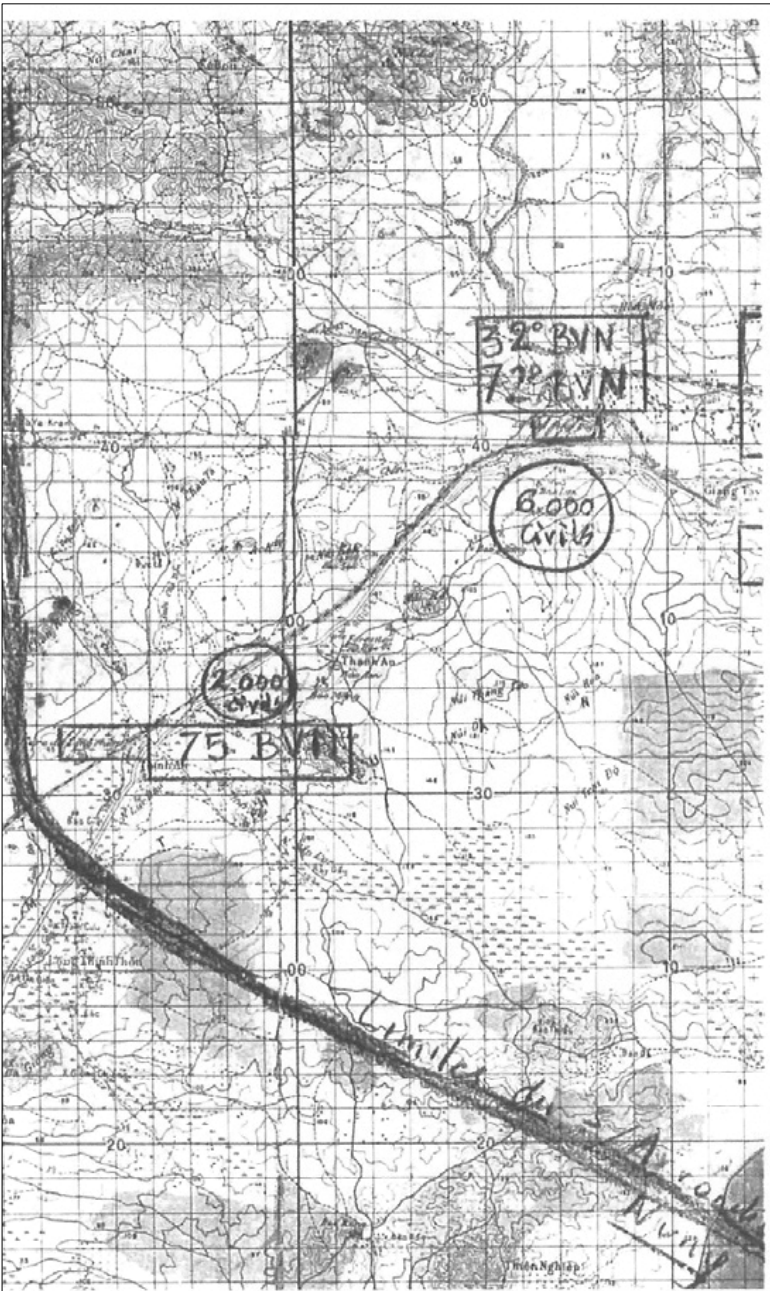
The above-mentioned 6th Division, later on, renamed Third Field Division, was supplemented by an additional 105-millimeter Artillery Battalion, renamed Third Artillery Battalion under the command of Captain Phang Cong Phu (subsequently promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, then elected congressman of House of Representatives or Lower House). Other specialized companies were added such as Signal Corps Company, Reconnaissance Company, Engineer Company, Ordnance Company, and Transportation Company.

The Third Division Headquarters was stationed at Cho Lau. It moved to Song Mao with its organic specialized units and Headquarters Company. The renamed Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Regiments (formerly 34th, 35th, and 36th Infantry Regiments) were deployed as follows (Please check map at the end of this chapter).

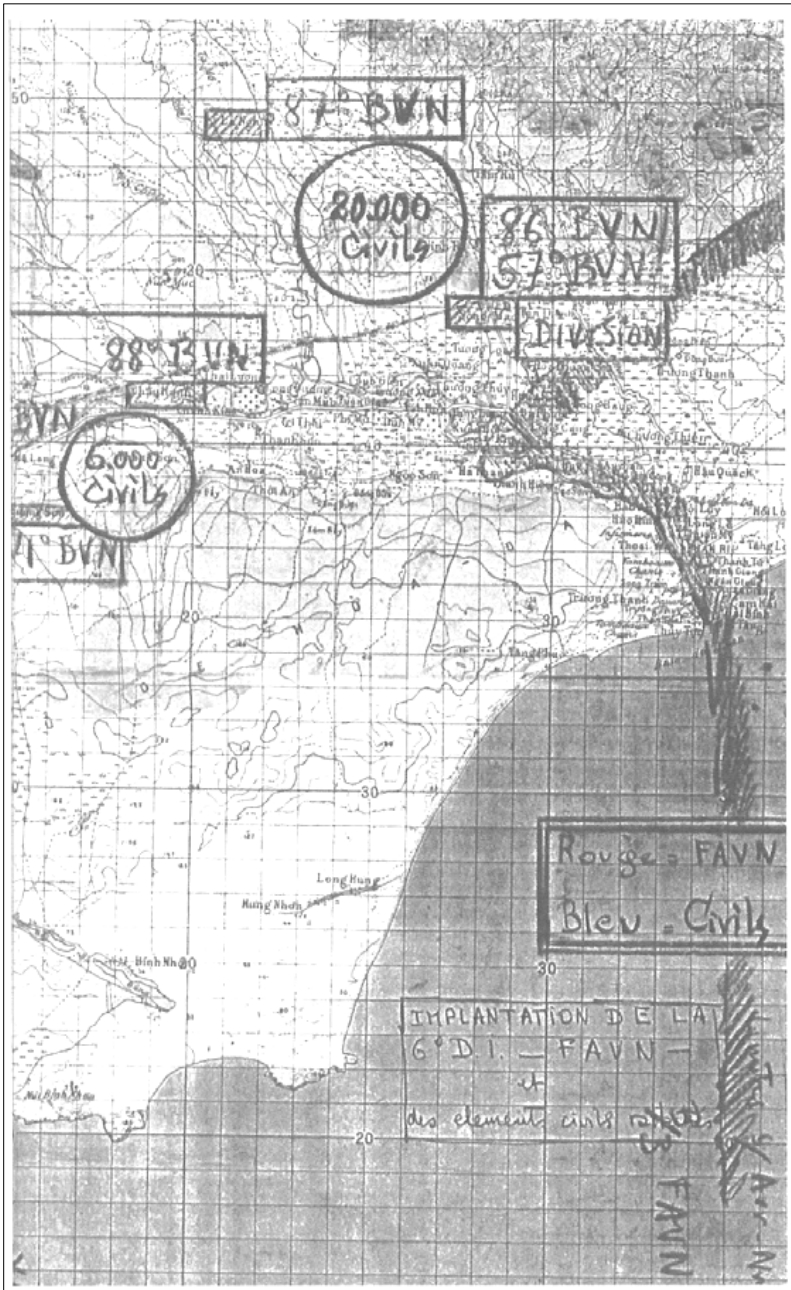
*The Headquarters of the 7th Regiment and its units, Battalions 1/7 and 2/7 (former 57th and 86th Battalions) were stationed at Song Mao. The Battalion 3/7 (formerly 87th Battalion) stationed at Le Nghi, 3 kilometers northwest of Song Mao.

*The Headquarters of the 8th Regiment and its Battalion 1/8 (formerly 72nd Battalion) was stationed at the ancient citadel (fortress) of Song Luy. The Battalion 2/8 (formerly 75th Battalion) stationed at Long Thanh. The Battalion 3/8 (formerly 89th Battalion) stationed in West of Chau Hanh. (Mao Plen)

*The Headquarters of the Ninth Regiment and its Battalion 1/9 (formerly 32nd Battalion) was stationed at Suoi Nhum. The Battalion 2/9 (formerly 71st Battalion) was stationed at Luong Son. The Battalion 3/9 (formerly 88th Battalion) was stationed at east of Chau Hanh.



Military Map of the Hai Ninh District (West)



Military Map of the Hai Ninh District (East)
 Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh-Vietnam

52. The Division Training Center (TTHLSD, Centre d'Instruction Divisionnaire CID)

In spite of the preoccupation on the fate of many Nung units as mentioned earlier, Colonel Vong A Sang took a keen interest in forming and training new and old cadres and personnel to fill and replace his troops effectives and improve the leadership quality of his Nung commanding staff. Owing to the forceful assistance of French military authority, a special Division Training Center was set up in November 1954 at Luong Son, pulling in 560 students for leadership courses from platoon leaders to the upper echelon of command. The Center also included specialized courses involving the training of heavy weapons, book-keeping etc. The inaugural completion of the military officers training course consisted of 4 second-lieutenants and 14 aspirants (8) whose individual files were hand carried by Mr. Sang himself to the Ministry of Defense. Upon his recommendation all graduates received their commissions. In addition to the above, some 300 Nung military personnel of all ranks were sent for training courses in other French and Vietnamese forces training centers on specialized courses such as signal, transportation, and other leadership training of higher military echelons such as company commanders, battalion commanders, regiment commanders, and command staff of higher echelons. Up to July 1955 some 70% of specialized positions were filled. The rest of vacant positions were gradually occupied by able personnel. Colonel Sang was very pleased with the above results.

53. Politics

In June 1954, Emperor Bao Dai appointed Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem Prime Minister with full administrative and military power. Mr. Diem had succeeded in resettling military units and the refugees from North Vietnam in the South. When he tried to unify the military strengths and all nationalist factions he ran into the oppositions of many religious denominations such as the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao as two religious sects, and the “Binh Xuyen” as a para-military faction led by General Le Van Vien (aka Bay Vien) who was the head of the police of the capital-city of Saigon-Cholon (Cholon was a sister city of Saigon). The Binh Xuyen had been exclusively operating gambling casinos and organizing and running large brothels with the support of France. This intricate and thorny political situation placed the Nung ethnic leader, Colonel Sang, in a delicate position which was elaborated by his report entitled “The Nung Ethnic Problem”. (Van De Nguoi Nung). The report would light up the mysterious intricacies which might slightly open to the public the subsequent future destiny of the Nungs. (9)

According to this report (10) the fundamental stand of Colonel Sang, an ethnic minority leader, remained one of a categorical opposition to communism and absolute faithfulness towards the anti-communist goal. However in the face of internal conflicts among nationalist factions, he remained neutral. This position prevailed during the affair of General Nguyen Van Hinh’s opposition against the government (of Diem) and he remained non-committal in the military campaign sweeping the Binh Xuyen forces out of Saigon-Cholon. But when Emperor Bao Dai shifted the power

of supreme command of the national armed forces to General Nguyen Van Vy, Colonel Sang was obliged to choose a mutually exclusive stand. He had a legacy of faithfulness to the Emperor and to the legitimate origin of General Vy's order. President Diem himself at that time also disregarded the Emperor's order that he be personally convened to France. Diem refused to obey this order under the pretext of being too busy seeking solutions to mediate with the rebels in Vietnam (11).

Consequently in the early morning on Sunday May 1st, 1955, the Nung 34th Regiment, while under training at the Training Center of Quan Tre (later on Quang Trung Training Center), received an order from General Vy's Headquarters, to moved to the Saigon-Cholon area in order to "engage" (against Prime Minister Diem). General Vy- via the intermediary of Tran Van Don- anticipated that he would be in control of the situation. Therefore he ordered the Nung Regiment to stop advancing to the capital and stationed at its current location (between Quan Tre and Saigon).

Imponderable events always unexpectedly happen in politics. The news of General Vy's sudden exit of the theater threw Colonel Sang into complete embarrassment. He flew back to Phan Ri. At his position and under such an inextricable situation, his attitude seemed commonly humane. Though being a talented military commander, he probably failed to visualize the changing political landscape and the circumstance under which he was, was no longer normal.

The following days after the event, Mr. Sang had many contacts with Mr. Diem, and eventually obeyed the

Prime Minister's convocation. He came to see him. (He subsequently obeyed his orders and supported him on many occasions thereafter). The Prime Minister did not put any emphasis on the past military movement of troops against him. He only reminded him that the right military duty is to comply with the orders from higher officials. In addition, he gave rewards and promoted a number of Nung officers to higher ranks. These shrewd steps of Mr. Diem temporarily calmed down Colonel Sang but one would anticipate other possibly extraordinary measures from the government vis-à-vis the colonel himself and his unmixed and combat-experienced Nung troops, an effective force to cope with the North. (12)

54. The First Nung Representative of the National Assembly (13)

After restoring civil order at the capital of Saigon owing to the support of the Revolutionary People Council whose composition was from nationalist parties and factions, Prime Minister Diem successfully initiated "a revolutionary people movement" to dethrone Emperor Bao Dai by a referendum on October 23, 1955. He became President after this event and founded the First Republic of Vietnam.

The election to establish the National Assembly was determined on March 4, 1956. One seat of this legislature was reserved for the Nung ethnics. This was an extremely important opportunity for the Nungs to send their representative to the legislature to win the confidence of the government and to safeguard the interests of the Nung community.

Mr. Lam Phat, an in-law relative of Mr. Sang's was nominated to be the candidate for the National Assembly. Being the only candidate in this election, Mr. Lam Phat did not need leaflets or campaign trips to advocate his position and policy. He was elected with the absolute majority of all the Nung military personnel and their families as well as the rest of the related Nung voters of the Nung Division who had received the instruction to vote for him.

It's regrettable that Mr. Lam Phat was not a well known personality in political circles, nor did he have the savvy in dealing with current events. He was fluent in French but not in Vietnamese (which had become the single official language at the time). All he could do was briefly taking notes in French on matters emerging from the Assembly plenary session agenda, including what had been debated. Obviously his participation in the Assembly debates was limited.

Currently the government had an unfavorable perception towards the Nung ethnic block. In addition, the commander of the 4th Military Region, General Thai quang Hoang, continued in his periodic reports that the commander of the 3rd Field Division, Colonel Vong A Sang, "was a French sympathizer, and needed to be observed and tracked" (while the last French soldier had left the country since April 28, 1956). Under the circumstance, Mr. Lam Phat was in a favorable position to possibly save the situation, but he did not have the ability to connect and cultivate the mutual friendship and confidence between the government and Colonel Sang. Therefore, whatever happened afterwards would beget no surprise.

55. The Third Division Moved to Repair National Route 14 and Colonel Sang Forced to Retire (14)

In early June, 1956, The Third Division received order to move to the province of Kontum (highlands) to repair National Route 14. The Division Headquarters, Seventh and Eighth Regiments were assigned the responsibility to repair the segment from Kontum to Dakgle. The Ninth Regiment and Third Artillery Battalion were to repair the segment from Mo Duc (Quang Ngai province) to Gia Vuc which belonged to the newly founded Quang Tin province.

In reality this route–repair job was just a diversion (provoking the tiger to leave its den) with the intention of spreading the Division personnel thinly, away from its base, which was an important strategic location. At the same time, this detached the Nung military forces from their ethnic supporting community. All these preparations had the purpose of implementing a plan to force Colonel Sang to retire prematurely.

According to the new status in Vietnam, the retiring age of the rank of colonel was 57 years of age (instead of 59 according to the French status). On the other hand, Colonel Sang still belonged to the French Union Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defense (Vietnam) had notified that all former French Union personnel must reapply to be integrated into Vietnam's Armed Forces. Colonel Sang did submit his application before the dead line but the bureaucrats used an administrative trick to wait for the promulgation and implementation of the Vietnam's status which took effect first,

then Mr. Sang's application was received and dated next to it. At this time, he had reached his retirement age.

In addition, there was a tacit agreement according to which, all officers from the French Union, once transferred to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, would individually be promoted one rank. On this, Colonel Sang must have been promoted to the rank of General, consequently his new rank would have placed him out of the above status of retirement at 57 years of age. A few times he was convened to meetings at the Joint General Staff, all the protocol officers called him general. Even his seat had the written etiquette "General Vong A Sang".

In late 1956 Colonel Sang received an order to report to the President. The colonel and his staff inwardly rejoiced, hoping for a promotion. At his arrival, the president's secretary notified him that he had just been discharged by the government and the president had the intention of assigning him the new function of Assistant General Commissioner of Land Development Program and he should report to the General Commissioner immediately. There was no need to meet the president. He realized that the whole scheme was intended to deceive him, and had been orchestrated by the president. Saddened and disillusioned at the president's unappreciative treatment, Mr. Sang did report to the General Commissioner Bui Van Luong but refused to take the assigned position of Assistant General Commissioner.

In order to calm down all military and civilian Nungs, Mr. Diem appointed Colonel Pham Van Dong, a

“son-in-law” of Hai Ninh, being loved by the Nungs, to replace Colonel Sang as Third Division CO; at the same time he appointed Colonel Sang’s son, Lieutenant-colonel Hoang Gia Cau, Third Division Deputy Commanding Officer. In early 1957, the Third Division returned to its base in Song Mao.

56. Scattering Nung Officers to Different Units and the Song Mao Situation Afterward (15)

After a while, Major-General Ton That Xung replaced Colonel Dong as Third Division CO. Thereafter a scattering policy aiming at transferring Nung officers out of the Third Infantry Division starting with Lieutenant-colonel Hoang Gia Cau and Major Truong Thang Chuc.

In 1959, the Third Division (then renamed Fifth Infantry Division) was moved to Military Region 3 in order to implement the strategy of “search and destroy” the Viet Cong (Communists) in their War Zone D. After that the Division rear base, its troops, and their families were moved to Bien Hoa, closing down the Nung community at the Hai Ninh District.

Facing a bleak and uncertain future outlook, the Nung community started to disperse and resettled all over South Vietnam. If in 1955 there had been a small group of Nungs leaving their community in search for planting fields, this time, beside the previous locations, the Nungs moved as far as Dinh Quan, Bau Ham, Cay Gao, and Bao Loc. Those with business skills or handicraft experiences moved to the

Saigon-Cholon and adjacent areas. Part of the remaining groups continued their agricultural jobs in Song Mao, and Song Luy. Part of them practiced other plantation jobs, all clung tightly to their second homeland. They witnessed all the historic and changing tragedies of the land. As to Mr. Sang, he survived with his rice vending business at Hong Bang Boulevard, District 5, Saigon. His dream of returning to the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh was dissolved.

After the departure of the Fifth Division, Hai Ninh District became the camp of the following army units, one after the other:

- * Military Region 2 Training Center until 1966;

- * The 44th Regiment camped at Song Mao until 1971;

- * In 1972, the 595th Regional Force Battalion-group headquarters and one of its battalions stationed at Song Mao; the Second Battalion at Luong Son; the Third Battalion at Long Huong, Tuy Phong District (north of Binh Thuan province).

Similar to other areas in South Vietnam, the communists were always on the lookout for opportune moments to attack especially when it came to targeting the Nungs whom they bitterly hated. In early February 1969 the communists attacked the Hai Ninh District. They started by shelling mortar rounds and sending sappers to infiltrate the defense perimeter, then they assaulted in order to occupy their targets with overwhelming regional forces. After hours of fighting

they suffered heavy casualties and were obliged to withdraw carrying with them their comrades' corpses.

In early April the following year, the communists gathered strong elements with a sapper unit from their Military Region 6 to attack Hai Ninh once more. As usual they shelled their targets with rocket launchers and 82mm mortars. Then they attacked with sapper units combined with two regional battalions aiming at taking over our defense positions. After many waves of assaults repelled by our defense, they ran away towards the jungle leaving over a hundred cadavers, weapons, and ammunition. Once more the communists suffered a shameful defeat due to the heroic fighting spirit of all civilians and military personnel of the Hai Ninh District.



Note:

1. Third Division March, music and lyrics by Vu Duc Nghiem.
2. LQN, pages 3, 4 GDZ 25/8/03, pages 10, 11. Slen-Cam-Hong (SCH) 29/4/03, pages 2-4. San-Canh Cun-Sang (SC/CS) 30/7/03, pages 2-7. NSSJ, supplement 07/03/12.
3. SC/CS pages 3-4 LQN page 4, GDZ, page 12.
4. SC/CS pages 2, 4, and 5. SCH, pages 2, 3. LQN, page 4.
5. SC/CS, page 5, SCH, pages 3, 4. GDZ, page 11.

6. SC/CS, pages 6, 7. SCH, pages 3, 4. GDZ, page 11.
7. LQN, page 5-8. GDZ, page 12. SC/CS, page 9, 10, Phat Dieng+ San Canh, March 10, 2007. Lau-Chi-Phan 26/3/07.
8. Four first-lieutenants were: Truong-Van-Nhut, Tran-Duc-Lai, Hoang -Ngoc-Phuong, and Chi-Venh-Dzenh. Fourteen warrant officers were: Lo-Hong-Chan, Slen-Slau-Khau, Chenh-Chi-Lan, Ly-siu-Cong, Tsan-Slui-Pho, Tsan-Chu-Tsenh, Cay-A-Loc, Che-Menh-Senh, Slen-Cam-Vo (9 officers would be promoted major) Vong-Chi-Phan, Vong-Sap-Nam, Thong-Senh-Pau, Lu-Tac-Nong, (these four officers would be promoted captain) and Chi-Thenh-Ky. GDZ 25/8/03, page 11.
9. Document “La Question Nung” (Subject The Nung Ethnic) “Archive Le Bureau de l’Armée de Terre” undated but its content indicated the writing date was in late July, 1954. The author was anonymous but he/she must be a knowledgeable scholar on the Nung community and in close relationship with them.
10. LQN, pages 10, 11.
11. Hoang-Lac+Ha-Mai-Viet, South Vietnam 1954-1975 (NVN,) page 53.
12. ‘La Question Nung’ the author concluded with a suggestion to study the possibility of evacuating the Nung population of Hai Ninh to resettle in Madagascar or the New Caledonia in case the communists would win the election

to unify Vietnam in July 1956 as stipulated in the Geneva Agreement.

13. NVN, pages 54, 55. GDZ 25/8/03, pages 13, 14.

14. SC/CS, pages 11-13. GDZ, pages 14, 15.

15. GDZ, page 15. SC/CS, pages 13-15. SCH, pages 7, 8.

CHAPTER TWO

CAREER SETTLEMENT IN SAIGON-CHOLON AND ELSEWHERE

Born with the combatant spirit, hard-working, dedication, and resourceful characters, the Nung ethnic groups had risen out of adverse situations and beautifully succeeded in many domains of Vietnamese society especially in the Second Republic of Vietnam.

A. Political Achievements (1)

1. *Joining Political Organizations*

Messieurs Phang-Cong Phu, Ly-Ngoc-Duong, Vong-Chan-Senh, Gip-A-Sang, and Gip-A-Dzieng and numerous Nung notables joined the Great Viet Nationalist Party (Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang) and some became members of the Central Committee of the Party Political Bureau. (Dai-Viet was one of the two largest political parties of extended legacy of operations in Vietnam). At the same time they were sympathizers of the Progressive Nationalist Movement (Cap Tien) led by Professor Nguyen Van Bong, President of the National Institute of Administration.

When a Dai Viet candidate ran for President (engineer Ha Thuc Ky) and other candidates ran for the Senate from the Dai Viet party and from the Progressive Nationalist Movement, the Nung community supported them with fer-

veny and campaigned for them in a systematic and noisy manner within the capital of Saigon. (2)

2. Being Elected in the Legislature

The National Constituent Assembly

The National Constituent Assembly of the Second Republic started in June 1966. Mr. Sang won a seat of the minority ethnic of Binh Thuan province. Owing to his presence at the Assembly and the effective struggle of assemblyman Dam Van Qui (a Tho ethnic Colonel on active duty, also a close friend of Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, currently Central Executive Committee Chairman, an equivalent Prime Minister), a special policy to treat minorities with preference in order for them to catch up with the advancement process of their Vietnamese compatriots, all was written in the Constitution.

The Constitution was completed in December, 1966. Next were the elections of the Executive and Legislative Branches of government.

Senate Election, First Term (1967)

Two Nung candidates were Mr. Vong A Sang and Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu. Mr. Sang joined the “Rising Sun” slate headed by General Huynh Van Cao. This slate was elected and Mr. Sang served as a senator for three years. The tenure of the office of senators was six years. For this first term only, half of the senate seats would be re-elected every three years. In this First tenure, all 60 Senators

drew lots to see if he/she would be in the group of 30 senators of three-year terms to be terminated and replaced by the three slates of 30 newly elected senators. (Senator Sang was among these 30 outgoing Senators). Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu joined the “Rice Stem” slate headed by Dr. Ho Van Cham. This slate lost the election. The Dai Viet party offered (40 candidates) four slates; but only one slate (of 10 senator candidates) won the senate election.

The tenure of senator Sang was uneventful. There was one occasion he declared to the media that President Nguyen Van Thieu discriminated against the Nungs. No one knew the real motive of such accusation. Through this statement, one realized that he did not support Mr. Thieu. He sided with Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky. He suffered the lack of information and did not know that at this stage, President Thieu was totally trusted by the United States. His position was as solid as a dolmen.

Under the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem, Mr. Sang had designated a politically weak representative, Mr. Lam Phat to the legislature to represent the Nung ethnic groups. This personality had failed to untie difficult knots detrimental to the Nung community. Now again, Mr. Sang miscalculated statement against Mr. Thieu, inadvertently created a blocking iguana (stumbling rock) to the promotion of Hoang Gia Cau, his son. Being a senior ranking officer Colonel Cau had been a candidate for brigadier general and so proposed by the Joint General Staff many times and repeatedly rejected by President Nguyen Van Thieu. Probably Mr. Thieu was discontent at Mr. Sang’s attack against him in

his above statement which resulted in Cau's promotion denial. On the other hand, there were other occasions on which Mr. Thieu showed his strong confidence towards the Nungs.

House of Representatives (Lower House) First Term
(1967-1971)

The Nungs had one Representative elected for the First term, Mr. Phu Nang Khin. Mr. Khin offered his candidacy for Representative reserved for Nung minority in Binh Thuan province. Owing to the support of Mr. Truong Gia Ky Sanh aka Truc Vien, a politician of who opposed the government in the province, Mr. Khin won the seat without effort. The voters were under the influence of anti-government propaganda, and voted for Mr. Truc Vien and Mr. Khin under his sponsorship.

Due to his lack of political experience, and distant attitude toward political circles at the capital, Congressman Khin did not voice his opinions or show any activity to promote the legitimate interests of the Nung community during his tenure of four years.

At the same time, Captain Gip A Sang, Brigade A Commanding Officer, Quang Trung Training Center (TTHL Quang Trung) ran for Representative of the Lower House, District 5 of the Capital of Saigon and lost. The vote count was strenuous. The candidate's representatives had to stay up all night to tally the results because the preliminary vote count showed that candidate Gip A Sang was only 12 votes less than that of the front runner, Mr. Truong Vy Tri. Colo-

nel Van Van Cua, Mayor of Saigon, partly an acquaintance of Mr. Sang, partly in fairness to both candidates, ordered a recount. Unfortunately for him and for the Nung community in general, candidate Gip A Sang still lost to his opponent by 27 votes.

House of Representative, Second Term (1971-1975)

Due to the fact that the seats legally reserved for all minor ethnicities were limited, a number of Nung notables intended to run as Vietnamese ethnics (on an equal footing with all Vietnamese candidates) in whatever districts they could win. To fight this scheme, Representative Diep Van Hung, District 5 of the Capital, anticipated that major Gip A Sang (newly promoted from captain) would run for this seat that he had been holding. Mr. Sang would be a dreadful opponent, a real threat to his re-election. Mr. Hung successfully pushed his colleagues to amend the Lower House Election Law to prevent all minority candidates from running out of their strictly minority-designated districts.

These amended articles aiming at restraining the minority candidates in the Lower House election were reversed by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. The person who initiated this court case was Mr. Dorohiem, a minority Champa ethnic, also a graduate of Vietnam's National Institute of Public Administration. A Nung who graduated from this Institute was Mr. Gip A Dzieng, Accounting Office Chief of the Institute (HV/QGHC). He approached Professor Nguyen Van Bong, President of the Institute cumulating Legal Consultant of the Supreme Court. Mr. Dzieng presented

this unrighteous scheme to Professor Bong, showed him the intention of the amended election law aiming at preventing minority candidates from running for public offices, and requested his intervention. Professor Bong agreed to assist Mr. Dzieng in this respect.

Owing to the decision of the Supreme Court, three Nung candidates won election to the Lower House:

- Major Ly Siu Cong won a seat (for minority in Binh Thuan province).

- Major Gip A Sang (Electoral District 3 consisting of City-Districts 5, and 10 of Saigon Capital-City); a regular seat for Vietnamese;

- Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu (Electoral District 4 consisting of City-Districts 6, and 11 of Saigon); a regular seat for Vietnamese.

Councilmen or Councilwomen for Capital, Province, and City Councils

During the same period, Nung candidates achieved important records in the elections for Capital of Saigon City-Council, and Provincial Councils. There were Nung candidates who won the term of 1970-1974, and others who won the term of 1974-April 30, 1975 (the fall of South Vietnam). There were those who were re-elected for the second term.

- *City Council of Binh Thuan Province, Lieutenant Ly Trong Phuc (father of Dr. Ly Ngoc Duong) two terms;

*City Council of Long Khanh Province, Captain Slong Chieng Chan, two terms;

*City Council of Gia Dinh Province, Lieutenant Ly Minh Khiem, First Term;

*Capital-City Council

a/ Joint Capital-Districts 10 and 11

- Mr. Vong Chan Senh, two Terms;

- First-Lieutenant Hoang Gia Ky, two Terms;

- Journalist Slen Cam Hong, second Term;

- School Teacher Lam Lien Phuong (female), second Term.

b/ Joint Capital Districts 5 and 6:

Mr. Gip A Dzieng, two Terms.

In the internal elections of Saigon Capital-City Council, Nung Councilors won many relatively important positions.

- Mr. Vong Chan Senh, Vice President, Saigon City Council;

- Mr. Gip A Dzieng, Chairman, Public Work & Transportation Committee;

- Mr. Hoang Gia Ky, Chairman, Litigations Committee;

- Mr. Slen Cam Hong, Chairman, Health-Social Services, and Labor Committee.

The 24 councilmen and council-women of Saigon Capital consisted of three groups: pro-government; anti government; and neutral groups. The four Nung councilmen's neutral votes constituted a decisive off balance when the Capital-City Council projects were brought to discussions and votes.

This period was marked by an open-minded political environment of the Second Republic under the leadership of President Nguyen Van Thieu (ex-Commanding Officer of the Fifth Infantry Division, formerly Third Field Division). A number of officials in the cabinet such as Lieutenant-General Linh Quang Vien, and Major-General Pham Van Dong were personalities having keen knowledge of and warm feeling towards the Nungs. This would allow the elected Nung representatives listed above to positively and boldly voice their struggle to protect the interests of Nung ethnics but of Chinese Vietnamese as well.

Their record of achievements could generally be listed as follows:

* They succeeded in creating an atmosphere of understanding, friendship, and mutual respect among minorities from highlands and their Vietnamese majority. The discrimi-

natory policy of Vietnamese against minorities and Chinese of the First Republic was totally evaporated.

* Private schools were permitted to flexibly develop their programs to teach Chinese.

* The Chinese Vietnamese had great confidence in Nung elected representatives who had the courage to voice their concerns and act accordingly and boldly whenever necessary to protect their interests.

* The policy to bolster minor ethnicities as stipulated in the Constitution was implemented. As a result, Nung children were deferred or exempted from military service in order to continue their education towards their professional goals. Nung students and candidates enjoyed increased bonus scores in national baccalaureate and college entrance examinations.

* Programs to improve living standards (road repairs, disposal waterways and pipeline clearing, back roads and alleys electricity connections...) in Saigon Capital were swiftly implemented to fully respond to the people's demands.

B. Military Achievements (3)

Besides the political achievements listed above, Nung officers from Hai Ninh, had undertaken training programs, accumulated valuable experiences, served and contributed to the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces through the following vital functions:

- Brigadier General Chieng Denh Quay: Regiment Commander; Deputy Commander then Commander of the 21st Infantry Division; Phong Dinh, then Chuong Thien Province Chief; 4th Army Corps/Military Region Chief of Staff.
- Colonel Hoang Gia Cau: 7th Infantry Regiment Commander; Deputy Commander of the 3rd Field Division, 2nd Infantry Division, then 5th Infantry Division; Commander of the 10th Infantry Division (later on renamed the 18th Infantry Division); Deputy Commander of the 3rd Army Corps; Chief of General Department of Regional and Popular Forces cumulating Deputy to the Joint General Chief of Staff; Chief of Territorial Inspection Service.
- Colonel Truong Thang Chuc: Commander of the 8th, 46th then 52nd Infantry Regiment; Chief of Staff then Deputy Commander of the 25th Infantry Division.
- Colonel Duong Phun Sang: Commander of the 9th Infantry Regiment; Deputy Commander of the 5th Infantry Division.
- Colonel Vong Kim Sinh: Commander of the 7th then 8th Infantry Regiment; Province Chief of Chuong Thien Province; Assistant to the Minister of Minority Ethnic Ministry.
- Colonel Vy Van Binh: Inspector of the Phu Yen Province Military Sector.

- Colonel Sliu Tsoi Cong: Commander of the 9th Infantry Regiment; Chief of the Bien Hoa City Garrison.
- Colonel Ly Duc Quan (posthumously promoted Brigadier General after he died of communist fire on his return from a victorious battle): Commander of the 7th Infantry Regiment, 5th Division.
- Lieutenant-colonel Lai Van Chu: Commander of the 7th, 42nd then 50th Infantry regiments.
- Lieutenant-colonel Chieng Slin Senh: Chief of Recruitment Center 2.
- Lieutenant-colonel Phan Van Kim: Chief of Staff cumulating Deputy Commander of Van Kiep Training Center.
- Lieutenant-colonel Quy Ngoc Duong: Chief Inspector General of the Long Khanh Province Military Sector (Xuan Loc).
- Lieutenant-colonel Ngo Thiem Thang: District Chief of Binh Duong City District, Binh Duong Province; Commander of the 50th Infantry Regiment.
- Medicine Lieutenant-colonel Ly Ngoc Duong: Medical Battalion Chief; 2nd then 3rd Army Corps Commander's Chief of Cabinet.
- Lieutenant-colonel Vong Dong Phong: Battalion Commander; Representative of Nung Ethnic at the Council of Ethnic Minorities.

- Lieutenant-colonel Lau Venh Dzenh: Deputy-Commander of the Central Administrative Center of the Joint General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.
- Lieutenant-colonel Lau Chi Phan: Chief of Unit Administration Service of the General Department of Finance and Military Audition, Ministry of Defense.
- Lieutenant-colonel Thau Man Slui: Special Service Chief of the National Police Headquarters.
- Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu: Artillery Battalion CO; Artillery Deputy-Commander of the 2nd Corps Tactical Zone.
- Lieutenant-colonel Chuong A Kieu: Deputy-Commander of Special Forces of the 4th Corps Tactical Zone.
- Lieutenant-colonel Ha Van Lau: District Chief of Hai Ninh District, Binh Thuan Province.
- Lieutenant-colonel Quy Ngoc Phuong: District Chief of Minh Long District, Quang Ngai Province.
- Lieutenant-colonel Gip San Canh: District Chief of Hai Ninh District, Binh Thuan Province; CO of the 1st Battalion of the 46th Separate Regiment; Deputy-Commander of the 49th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

- Major Tenh A Nhi: District Chief of Hai Long District, Quang Tri Province.
- Major Vong Chay Menh: Military Attaché of Republic of Vietnam Embassy to the Republic of China (Taiwan).
- Major Tran Duc Lai: Principal of Quang Trung Training Center's Military Education School; Deputy Chief of Quang Trung Training Center's Security Office; Deputy-Prosecutor of Nha Trang Permanent Court Martial; Military Prosecutor of the Permanent 1st Military Region Court Martial (Da Nang).
- Major To Phuong Chu: District Chief of Hoai Duc District (executed by the communists after April 30, 1975).
- Major Tsan Chu Tsenh: Deputy Commander of the 8th Battle Group, Technical Department, Joint General Staff.
- Major Dieu Quang Hiep: District Chief of Cai Lay District, Dinh Tuong Province (My Tho).
- Major Vong A Si: Commanding Officer, Airborne Ranger unit.
- Major Slen Cam Vo: District Chief of Hai Ninh District, Binh Thuan Province; Commander of the 3/322 Battalion of the Regional Forces.
- Major Vong Sy Dau: District Chief of Ben Luc District, Long An Province.

- Major Gip A Sang: Commander of the 15th Battalion, 9th Infantry Division; Quang Trung Training Center's Trainees Brigade Commander.
- Major Vong Lap Quay: Commander of the 345th Regional Forces Battalion of the Bien Hoa Province Military Sector.
- Major Lau Venh Quay: Commander of a Regional Forces Battalion.
- Captain Lai Quoc Thai: Commander of the 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment, 5th Infantry Division.
- Captain Ly Siu Cong: Chief of Hai Ninh District, Binh Thuan Province.
- Captain Hoang A Sam: Commander of the 2nd Marines Battalion cumulating Commander of the Cam Ranh Bay Special Sector.
- Captain Ly Moc Sang: Chief of Personnel Office, Artillery Command, Joint General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.
- Captain Ton Minh Chi: F5 Bomber-Fighter Pilot.
- First-Lieutenant Vong Chay Dan: Principal of Hai Ninh High School (former name Da Minh School), Song Mao.
- Mr. Ho Henh Phoc: National decathlon athlete of the Republic of Vietnam, later on martial art actor in Hong Kong.

In addition to the above, there were many more Nung officers and NCOs in all military branches rendering excellent services to the ARVN. (Please see the supplementary list of Nung officers in the Appendices).

All Nung military personnel had high morale and discipline, and always dedicated to the assigned duty and responsibility. They were very brave in the battlefield, and absolutely devoted to their superiors. Consequently they commanded respect and were assigned to fulfill important functions.

The bodyguards of President Nguyen Van Thieu consisted of almost all Nungs: (there were: marksman Slu Cam Sang, and taekwondo expert Ho Thenh Phat among the others in this team). The Presidential Palace Guard Unit consisted of a majority of Nung soldiers (Captain Ho Quay served in the Presidential military cabinet; First-Lieutenant Loc Quay Tsin was Commander of Presidential Palace Perimeter Security).

In 1963, after assuming the post of Commanding Officer of the Fifth Infantry Division which took part in the coup-d'état to topple the Ngo Dinh Diem's regime, Mr. Thieu was assigned to be the 4th Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) Commander. When he was promoted Minister of National Defense, Lieutenant-General Nguyen Van Thieu intended to establish the so-called Special-Mission Forces equipped with the most advanced and special weaponry.

Colonel Duong Phun Sang (a Nung officer) was convened to present his opinion on whether he would accept to command this special unit. Subsequently General Thieu could not implement his plan because of the American objection.

C. Achievements in the Administrative Branch (4)

After the partition of Vietnam in two states with the Nung refugees evacuating from the North to South Vietnam, all students be he/she a graduated or under training at the School of Administration of the Autonomous Territory, as well as all government employees serving at the administrative agencies at Hai Ninh, were integrated to serve the South Vietnam Armed Forces. Five persons were chosen to attend the Highlands Section of the National Institute of Administration. One student of this group, Mr. Pham Van Phien requested that he be returned to the North to rejoin his family. Another person from this group, Mr. Vong A Ung, a junior son of Mr. Sang, after a short term of service as Song Mao Police Chief, got discharged and regained his civilian status. The three remaining students became regular administrators of the government:

- Mr. Y Hoc Lieng, Vice District Chief of Cheo Reo District, Pleiku Province;

- Mr. Nong Cun Sang

- Chief of Tax Service, Kontum Province;

- Chief of Economic Affairs, Binh Dinh Province,
 - Chief of Secretariat, Quang Duc Province;
 - Chief of Office of Legal Service, Civil Self Defense General Department of the Ministry of the Interior; and
- Mr. Gip A Dzieng:
- Accounting Office Chief, the National Institute of Administration;
 - Administration and Personnel Office Chief, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Social Department;
 - Financial Service Chief, the Open Arms Ministry (Bo Chieu Hoi).

There were other government functionaries serving in the administrative branch at this period of time such as:

- Chieng Venh Senh, District Chief, Hai Ninh District, Song Mao;

- Tsan Menh Tsin, District Chief, Hai Ninh District, Song Mao;

- Slen Cam Hong, Translator, Press Review Specialist of Chinese Language Media, Office of the President;

- Lieu Nguyen, Office Manager, Chinese Press Censorship Office, Ministry of Information; and

- Le Van Quang, Chief of Open Arms Service (Chieu Hoi), Saigon City.

D. Social Achievements (5)

The Northern Highlands Mutual Assistance Association

With a view to maintaining communications and solidarity among ethnic minorities in order to mutually assist one another and to develop together, a group entitled Vietnam's Northern Highlanders Mutual Assistance Association was established in 1966.

Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu and Dr. Ly Ngoc Duong were the Association founders. Its office was originally located at Hong Bang Boulevard, Precinct 5, Cholon, (private residence of Mr. Vong A Sang). Later it was moved to Minh Phung Street, Precinct 11, (Lieutenant- colonel Phu's residence).

The composition of the First Term Executive Committee was:

- Association President, Mr. Vong A Sang;
- First Vice-President, Mr. Truong Van Vinh;
- Second Vice-President cumulating Treasurer, Mr. Vong Chan Senh;
- General Secretary, Mr. Gip A Dzieng;

- Standing Commissioners, Messieurs Phang Cong Phu, Ly Ngoc Duong, Gip a Sang, Lieu Nguyen, Sam Mu Hon, Doan Van Ngoc, Duong Hung Quoi, and Mrs. Tran Vu Bao.

- Advisors: Major General Pham Van Dong, and Mr. Hoang Nam Hung (a respectful revolutionary veteran).

The inauguration ceremony was organized with solemnity and attended by nearly a thousand participants at the Grand Restaurant A Dong in Cholon, under the auspices of Lieutenant-General Linh Quang Vien, General Commissioner of Security (Minister of the Interior).

In the beginning, the association was very active. Almost every week, there were meetings at the office to set up development projects to improve the association foundation and attract new members. In 1967, the association presidency was transferred to Mr. Truong Van Vinh for a period of time then its business was obstructed by its complex membership composition. The representatives of some ethnics showed their arbitrary activities, in disregard of common procedures. As a result, the whole Nung membership as well as their representatives in the Executive Committee, after careful analysis, withdrew from this Association.

The Nung Ethnic Mutual Assistance Association

In June 1969, Messieurs Phang Cong Phu, Ly Ngoc Duong, Vong Chan Denh, Tsan Y Pan, Gip A Sang, and Gip A Dzieng gathered a meeting at a restaurant called Bat Dat in

Cholon, with the participation of Mr. Vong A Sang and a large number of Nung personalities from military, civilian, and administrative agencies. The convention assigned Messieurs Vong Chan Senh, Tsan Y Pan, and Gip A Dzieng the duty of preparing an application to establish a purely Nung ethnic community under the title the “Nung Ethnic Mutual Assistance General Association”.

Upon receiving this application, the Ministry of the Interior (following consultation and exchange of opinions with the Ministry of Ethnic Minorities) requested that its name be changed to the “Nung Ethnic Assistance Association, Moncay, Hai Ninh Province”. The group of founders counter-proposed with “the Nung Ethnic Mutual Assistance Association, Moncay, Hai Ninh Province”, in abbreviation “The Nung Ethnic Mutual Association”. This final counter-proposal was approved by the Ministry of the Interior and the Association was officially established in early spring of 1970.

The First Term Executive Committee was composed of: (6)

- President, Mr. Vong Chan Senh, councilman, Saigon City-Council;

- Vice-President, Mr. Gip A Dzieng, councilman, Saigon City-Council;

- General Secretary, Mr. Ho Chi Va, Businessman;

- Treasurer, Mr. Tran Coc Pan;

- Permanent Commissioners: Messieurs Hoang Gia Ky, Councilman, Saigon City-Council; Mr. Ly Minh Khiem, Councilman, Gia Dinh City-Council; Mr. Slen Cam Hong, journalist; three business men, Slu Chec Sin, Ung Chenh Menh, and Phong Tau Xuong.

- Permanent Secretary, Tsy Slau Man;

- Supreme Advisors, Senator Vong A Sang, Father Nguyen Lac Hoa, Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu, Dr. Ly Ngoc Duong, and Major Gip A Sang.

The Association location was chosen to be number B25-27 Ly Nam De Street (District 11) Saigon City. This was a large piece of land (of 8.5 meter wide and 37 meter long). It was worth two hundred thousand piasters current price and was donated to the Association by Mr. Vong Chan Senh. Following a fund-raising campaign among the Nungs and their friends (which reached four million Vietnam piasters for only three months), a three story building was erected with fairly office-furnished equipment having a meeting auditorium of 500-person capacity.

The inauguration ceremony of the building at the same time introducing the Association Executive Committee was solemnly organized to the public and was attended by many Nung community personalities, and local government officials such as the Saigon Mayor, District Chiefs, Police Chiefs, and some politicians such as Professors Nguyen Van Bong, and Nguyen Ngoc Huy, the Inspectorate President,

and a number of Representatives of the Lower House, and Councilmen of the Saigon City-Council.

The Nung Ethnic Mutual Assistance Association favorably progressed. Its activities were vehemently supported by the Hai Ninh Community owing to a basic policy:

- encouraging the Nung younger generations to participate in the activities to retain their ethnic customs and habits and the legacy of Hai Ninh; and to strive to become responsible citizens of the community and country.

- stimulating all members to struggle in order to protect the interests of minorities as stipulated in the Constitution.

In addition, the Association conducted numerous social activities such as: visiting and offering solace to the refugee victims of the Communists; assisting fire victims... all these acts built a good reputation for the organization in the public.

There were two locations where most of former Hai Ninh dwellers resettled. They were the areas of Phu Binh and Phu Tho Hoa. Each area emerged with the highest records of achievement in the maintenance of religious beliefs and educational promotion.

At Phu Binh, (District 11 of Saigon) Mr. Vong A Sang donated without condition a 2-acre land in order to build a Quan Am Pagoda (Buddhism). The building expenses were contributed by the local Buddhist believers,

among them were the Nungs of Hai Ninh of all walks of life. There were the contributions from Chinese of good will. (The greatest contributors were Messieurs Ung Chenh Menh, Che Khai Tsin, Phong Tau Xuong, Ly Say Chi, Ung Ly Sang and Vong Phoc Cam).

The construction of majestic temple architecture was completed at this site in the late Sixties. Its inauguration ceremony and completion of the Goddess of Mercy (Quan The Am) statue were organized in unparalleled grandeur.

The annual Goddess of Mercy's Spirit (on February 19 Lunar calendar) was a great festival of multi rituals. There was the ritual of souls-emancipation-to-nirvana prayers for the deaths; there was prayer for prosperous state and peaceful inhabitants. There was a ceremony to favor contract-winning called flowered lantern for winning bidders. There were fireworks-commencement ceremonies, symbolizing good luck for those who got the prize of paying for the worship of the Goddess.

Day in day out, worshipers filled the pagoda with incense burners puffing up in big clouds. Worshipers' offerings and contributions were plentifully generous even after defraying all expenses. The executive committee projected future plans to build an elementary-high school and a dispensary at this location. Unfortunately the ill-fate of South Vietnam and its demise (in 1975) pulverized all the Hai Ninh people's ardor, fervor, and efforts into dust.

At Phu Tho Hoa, Tan Binh District the local population and affluent and philanthropic people succeeded to raise funds and build a high school by the name of Trung Dung (Happy Medium). This national standards school absorbed the majority of Hai Ninh children. Its principal was Mr. Ly Cun Pac, son-in-law of Mr. Vong A Sang. (He subsequently served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China or ROC (Taiwan)).

The Vietnam's United Ethnic Minorities Block

After being elected senator, First Term, 1967, Mr. Vong A Sang initiated a movement among other ethnic minority personalities to set up a political group under the title the "Vietnam's United Ethnic Minorities Block" formed in 1969 with its office located at Mr. Sang's residence, Hong Bang Boulevard, District 5, Cholon.

The Executive Committee consisted of:

- President, Mr. Vong A Sang;
- Vice-President, Messieurs Son Thai Nguyen, and Ton Ai Lien.
- Commissioners, Messieurs Hoang Gia Ky (councilman, Saigon City Council,) Lieu Nguyen, Gieng Henh Quay, Slen Slau Gi, Phong Tau Xuong, Tsan Senh Phong, and Chau Slui Slan.

As indicated by its name, this Block was a political grouping consisting of all ethnic minorities in Vietnam. In

reality, the high majority of commissioners of its executive Committee as well as Block's members were Nungs. The membership of other ethnic minorities was minimal. Therefore its aim of a really united Block of minorities was missing. Its political purpose, as envisaged by Mr. Sang, could never be fulfilled as a viable political body.

E. Business and Entrepreneurial Achievements

In the Saigon-Cholon Area

Many Nungs achieved remarkable business and entrepreneurial enterprises as follows:

Mr. Ung Senh Vay was one of the principal owners of the Vinatole and Dong Nai Tole roofing tiles and Ong Tho condensed milk factory.

Messieurs Ung Chenh Menh, Ung Chenh Nhin, Vay Phat Mau, Lieng Say Tac, Lau Sap Slam, Vong Phoc Henh, Ly Nhoc Slan, Lau A Sang, Chenh Lin Vo, and Gip Venh Vo etc. ran rubber-sandal manufactures of large scale production.

Mr. Che Khay Tsin ran two distributing dealers of artificial hide (simili cuir) and marketed a complete list of raw materials for the manufacture of leather-shoes and leather-sandals.

At the Region of Tung Nghia-Duc Trong District-Tuyen Duc Province (Dalat)

Messieurs Lau Nhi Vong, Vong Khi Tsieng, and Slu Ca Nip etc. invested in lumber. Besides their lumber business for the domestic market, they usually furnished cylindrical pine logs as electric wire poles in great quantity for export to Japan.

In sum, during a long period of twenty one years, from 1954 to 1975, the Nung people had been shouldered by and teamed over the people of Vietnam. They had been recognized as one of the ethnic minorities in the vast family of ethnicities of the state of Vietnam. They had advanced with others in Vietnamese society. They had shared the ups and downs of Vietnam's common history, the honor and dishonor of its fate as a state. Many of their children had died for the noble cause of freedom and their remains had rested side by side with Vietnamese in the mother land. If history had registered the glorious task of the Republic of Vietnam's combatants who tried to contain the advancement of communism, Nung people had contributed their efforts in all domains of national activities especially the records of their valiant combatants in the forefront of defense against the communists in order to protect the state, all of the above have always been their pride.

Besides the achievements in politics, in the military, administrative, social, and business domains as cited above, it is imperative to add a very extraordinary and heroic service by Nungs, that was the operation of "Special Forces teams over North Vietnam" (Biet Kich Nhay Bac, Special

Forces or Air-born Rangers operating in the North). These Special Forces candidates were selected among volunteer officers, NCOs, and soldiers from all military arms of which Nungs occupied a remarkable ratio, 36 to more or less 500 special-forces combatants. They were under the direct command of the Americans but they served the interests of South Vietnam in the national struggle against communism.

After strenuous training on intelligence techniques, special combat, survival and escape skills, they were parachuted into the North or landed on specific objectives, trying to “hang on locations”, mingle in local activities, collect intelligence, and report to base. (They were called air-born rangers). They demolished an objective if necessary then came to a rendez-vous point for pickup to return by boat to base but usually they “took off for no return”. Unfortunately for them, the enemy’s rigorous defense system plus the close-knit state security organization of the northern communists brought failure to these operations. But no one could deny the heroic and daring quality of these Special-Forces operatives in North Vietnam.



Let’s listen to an autobiographical adventure narrated by Mr. Moc A Tai himself, an outstanding Special-Forces operative (8).

“Our team consisted of 6 air-born rangers. I was the team leader. Our duty was to operate in the Hai Ninh area. Our first infiltration was in October,

1962. We operated for more than a month and returned to base. The second and third operations were similar to the first. Each operation was more than a month long. The fourth time we landed in Pho Tai Mun. The next day we approached Cai Gia (at the border of Dam Ha) we were captured. The Viet Cong had revealed our landing boat which had been concealed at the seashore. From there they followed and encircled us. We tried to escape but they narrowed the circle. We had a plan to commit suicides but we finally let them capture us. The date was July 16, 1963.

After a year of incarceration in Moncay, we faced trial in Dam Ha for Special Ranger espionage. The lightest sentence was on Man, 8 years. Next was Chenh A Slam (in charge of signal communication) who was sentenced to 10 years. Quay got 12 years. Cam 17 years. Vong A Ung 19 years. I was sentenced to death.

(In retrospect, I heard that my sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in response to a Viet Cong Nguyen Van Be who attempted to demolish the Bien Hoa bridge and whose sentence got reduced).

The enemy sent us to the most merciless prisons, Prison Camp Quyet Tien (Determined to Advance) Ha Giang province (near Yunnan and Burma).

In 1971 they moved us to Pho Lu, Lao Kai province, only a river to the Chinese border. Teammate Ung, just got better from an illness, could not endure a strict diet, died at this time, Cam died by an illness in 1969. In 1978, we were

moved to Phu Tho. Nearly two years later, they moved us to the Mai Xuan district, Thanh Hoa province, 10 kilometers to Laos.

In 1964, from prison camp Quyet Tien, I escaped with two prisoners of Tho ethnic who had been in prison since 1962. We arrived at Burmese territory. My two escapees were captured in Lang Son province in 1962). Eight days later we were captured by combined forces of our prison guards and Burmese police. The communists segregated me in an underground hole where I had to bend myself to get in. In the first two months they shackled me with metal fastenings on both of my ankles. Later they released one ankle. Each day I had two halves of rice bowls and two water bowls. Under this circumstance many prisoners only lasted 8 months to the maximum and died. I endured one year without body washing. All my hair fell. My head got elongated.

After the communists signed the Paris Agreements (1973) they moved us to the three large prison camps: the Hoanh Bo Camp (near Hon Gai), Lao Kai Camp, and Nghe An Camp, preparing for prisoners exchanges. At this stage we saw many American prisoners nearby and many ARVN officers but we were not allowed to meet with one another.

After all American prisoners were exchanged we realized that they would not release us. We tried to communicate among our three prisons (though the three camps were hundreds of kilometers apart). We determined a date of demonstration to voice our protest. The date and time came. The prisoners in all camps started their hunger strikes which

caused the VC confusion. After sometimes they crushed our strikes savagely and dispersed us into many prisons. They started to reduce our daily ration. Special-Forces spies' individual ration was down from 24 dong to 15 dong, an equal to a common-law prisoner. In the past, we had 24 dong a day as they claimed at the "right" level for a prisoner of war. Later we realized that the United States had destroyed all traces and records with regards to their involvement with Special-Forces operations in the enemy territory. (The US claimed that we have never been officially drafted and served in the US Armed Forces). They shirked their responsibility towards us. The Republic of Vietnam acted the same. We were totally rejected and denied as combatants. This was indeed our utmost desperate and enraged situation.

On the night of the Thirtieth of December of the Lunar calendar 1983 before Tet (New-Year Day), after the festivity, it was dark. Chenh A Slam and I took advantage of this opportunity to sneak out on a raft that we had secretly made earlier out of banana trunks which floated downstream. Three hours later we landed on Laotian territory. We travelled uphill and down dale southward, traversed Route 9 South of Laos, survived with whatever jungle food we could puff out, arrived at Nha Trang (Vietnam) after three months and ten days. We took the train to Saigon.

Two days later, my wife took me to Dinh Quan (in the direction of Dalat) for fear of getting caught if I stayed home. From there I tried to escape as a boat refugee through Bac Lieu province, disguising myself as a beggar but to no avail. A Slam and I ran into a prison guard in a bus in Sai-

gon. This guy seemed to stare at us suspiciously. Our experiences taught us that he was sent by the prison camp to capture us. We took advantage of a crowded bus-stop at Ben Thanh central market (Saigon), swiftly got off, and disappeared in a restaurant, asking for restroom then sneaked out by the back door to safety.

In July 1983 we were fortunate to meet a Public Security Lieutenant-colonel (VC) who organized an escape plot out of the country. My wife, A Slam, and I paid him three thousand dollars per head. We took off by boat and after four days and four nights in the ocean, we came to Singapore. The PS Lieutenant-colonel's wife, their son, and their nephew who had been a second-lieutenant of communist army, all landed on Singapore with us. They wished to be refugees applying for visas to enter the United States but were denied. They were accepted to settle in Europe.

Upon landing, I immediately managed to communicate with the United States Intelligence. Only three hours later, a first-lieutenant from Washington DC called me on the phone. We communicated with each other via password and secret number. Ten days later, we obtained complete travel documents to be transported to Georgia, USA.

After this event, we formed with a few ex-special-forces commandos already resettled here before us, a group of 12 persons. We started to find ways and means to liberate our fellow special-forces air-born rangers still in communist prisons. We were fortunate to meet our benefactor, retired Colonel Sedgwick Tourison who had been an intelligence

officer and whose wife was from Precinct 5 of Saigon. Mr. Tourison succeeded in collecting concerned documentations with regards to operations of special-forces teams to be parachuted beyond the enemy line (the so-called Projects OPLAN 34A and OPLAN 35). He helped us find a lawyer and claimed our salaries during our prison terms. It was an uphill struggle with lots of difficulties due to the earlier intention of the government authority in charge to have ignored us and washed their hands in total disregard of our misfortune and condemnation to be perished in misery in communist prisons. However, as time went by, there were increasingly more supporters from the political and media circles to our demands for justice and fairness.

As a result of our prolonged litigation, by 1995-1996 almost all special-forces commandos and air-born rangers previously abandoned in Vietnam have come to the United States, the land of freedom. They consisted of 197 combatants and their families all together they reached nearly a thousand people (A Quay, my teammate was among them). On June 20, 1996 the US Senate approved a law to indemnify to all of us a punitive paycheck. Nearly four months later, the President signed an Executive Order to implement the above indemnification law.

On the average, each of us would receive \$40,000 but we modify this by determining an amount of indemnity according to the individual prison seniority. A prisoner in excess of 20-year term received \$50,000. A prisoner having less than 20-year term received \$40,000. Regardless of ranks and functions, those still in Vietnam (nearly ten of them in-

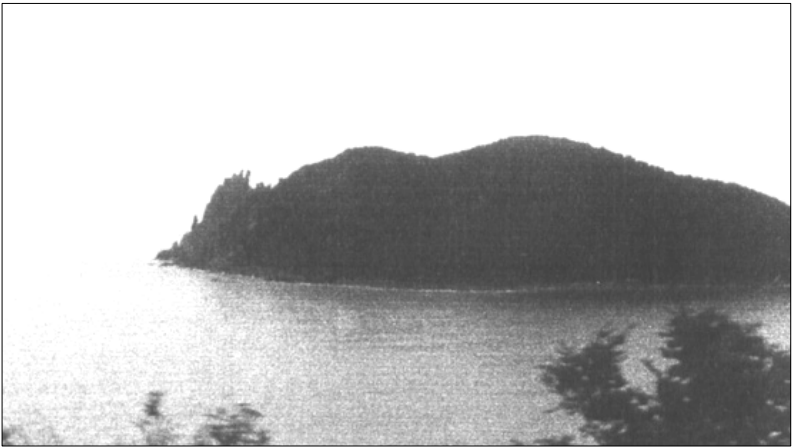
cluding A Man, my teammate) had an equal footing of indemnity with those in the United States. As to those who had died and had beneficiaries, we hand-carried the paychecks to each of their families personally. We excluded 32 traitors, either having been collaborating with the enemy or accepting his offer to remain in Vietnam for his service.

Every year since, special-forces and commandos (biet kick, or rangers) of the United States and Vietnam regularly organized a rowing type of conventions at different states. In July of this year we will meet in Philadelphia. This offers an occasion for all of us to relive our sweet and sorrow souvenirs and to share the honors and dishonors of our military careers which had been full of adventures and perils. What would prevail was our lasting team spirit for each other that remains in each of us forever.

Besides our exceptional special-forces records we would like to introduce to our readership the special battles in which outstanding Nung combatants took part. We would like to mention, first of all, Major Slen Cam Vo.

Mr. Cam Vo was born in Ha Coi, Hai Ninh in 1932. Being in love with an adventurous life-style in a warring period, he applied for the school of military cadres for three years of training though he had been a graduated teacher from the Autonomous Territory Teachers' School, Hai Ninh. After the resettlement of refugees from North Vietnam to South Vietnam (1954) he participated as a cadet in an officer training program at Luong Son Training Center. He graduated warrant-officer in 1955. He finished the Rangers Training Course. In 1963, he was sent to Malaysia to attend a special course on "Jungle Warfare". Besides his experiences

as commander of an Intelligence Reconnaissance Company, and Joint Reconnaissance Company, he was the Infantry Battalion Commander and Regional-Forces Battalion Commanders many times. His last position was District Chief of the Hai Ninh District, Binh Thuan Province. He was awarded many medals, 5th Degree National Medal of Honor, Infantry Medal, “Chuong My” Medal, 11 Crosses of Gallantry, and a Cross of Gallantry from the First Division, United States Army. After April 30, 1975, he was a prisoner for 7 years and migrated to the United States on the HO Program in 1993, resettling in Georgia with his family.



Rat Mountain (Lau Si San) in Offshore near Hai Ninh, on the Itinerary of Infiltration of the Special-Forces Air-born Ranger Teams.

We would like to let Major Slan Cam Vo himself narrate one of his special feat of arms through the writing of Mr. Phong Tit Chang, Honorary President of the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association (August 21, 2007).

The Phu Hoa Dong Meeting Engagement (1965)

During my nearly 24 years of service in the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces and in the Autonomous Territory, Hai Ninh Armed Forces, under the leadership of Col. Vong A Sang, I have been participating in numerous battles against the communists in the North as well as in South Vietnam. Among these, the Phu Hoa Dong battle was the most memorable one in my mind because it took the most casualties in my fighting career. Probably it was one of the terrifying campaigns when the enemy escalated his hostile activities at that period of time.

I was the commander of an Intelligence Reconnaissance Company named "Reconnaissance Company 5" under the direct command of the Fifth Infantry Division G-3/Tactical Operation Center. The Division Headquarters was located at Phu Loi Camp, Binh Duong province. My company effectives were 130 combatants of which 80% was Nungs who had been selected by me from the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Regiments when the Fifth Division was formed. This selection consisted of those comrades who had evacuated from the North to Song Mao SVN central region in 1954 under Colonel Vong A Sang, Commander of the Third Field Division. This was renamed the Fifth Infantry Division. They were the best and most experienced combatants whom I considered as my biological brothers belonging to the same family. Phu Hoa Dong (PHD) was an area west of Binh Duong province and 20 kilometers from Ben Cat. In the Northwest and adjacent to PHD was the enemy maquis (secret war zone) "chien khu Boi Loi" which was just on the

other side of the Saigon River. This enemy zone was full of rubber-tree plantations where the enemy served as logistic dump, furnishing ammo, and other military supplies and equipments for him to maintain his hostile activities in the neighboring zones. It was also a base for the communist 9th Division (Cong Truong or Work Camp, in communist jargon, Division) and 7th Division including the Regiment Quyét Thang (determined victory). These were two North Vietnam's well known combat-experienced units which showed their presence and harassed our defense perimeter at the time. The enemy was using Cambodia as a supply line to maquis Boi Loi via an interlaced trail system and underground passages to camouflage from our air and ground observations when we operated through the area.

I vividly remembered the time of winter of 1965. The sky was cloudy without a sun ray but clear with high visibility necessary for air support if needed. Lieutenant-colonel Le Nguyen Vy, 8th Regiment CO received an operation order to "search and destroy" the VC's maquis Boi Loi. My Fifth Reconnaissance Company had to reckon the zone and suggested tactical directions to and from it for the Regiment. I had a U.S. Captain, my advisor, two sergeants, a signal-corps NCO, and a bodyguard operating by my side. After three days of searching we did not meet any resistance or enemy trace. We decided to return to base. My company protected the right flank of the Regiment. When we proceeded at about 4 to 5 kilometers to PHD my point recon squad reported that they had just discovered the last night ambush location of the enemy. Many holes for anti aircraft guns had been well pre-

pared. They had been waiting for us to move to the ambush. I reported to the Regiment Command and suggested a change of moving direction and scattered deployment southwest through a dense and tall rubber-tree plantation.

After about over a kilometer of troop movement, we ran into a small group of about tens of VCs as close as tens of meters. They were equally as surprised as we were. In fact, they had been changing the ambush locations from west to east to intercept our troops by surprise when noticing our change of movement direction and they were surprised at our moving speed. At the enemy confusion, and based on our combat experience, we immediately assaulted first and open fire on the enemy troops to seize control of the situation. This was a “search and destroy” battle in which we open fire first, causing the enemy troops to lose their fighting spirit. We found later that this unit was one of the 4 battalions of the Quyét Thang Regiment, a strong and experienced unit outnumbering us four to one. Frankly our Nung brothers in the company were brave and fearless in addition to their combat experiences. They were calm, swift, and combined harmoniously among themselves to eliminate hot targets as they appeared.

After many assaults and massive attacks from my unit, the enemy was pressed into the rubber-tree plantation, withdrew in it, suffering serious casualties. I ordered my unit to evacuate the wounded and collect weapons of the battlefield but the enemy returned with massive reinforcements. They counter attacked us. We were a small unit, trying to defend and withdrew about 500 meters, pin-pointed the en-

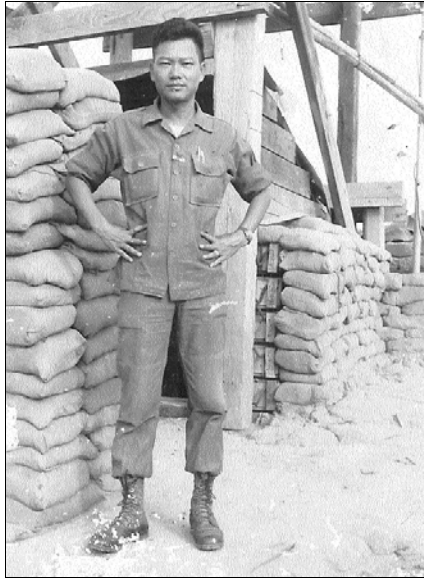
emy location by smoke, then requested our American advisor to call air bombing and helicopters rockets support. After this air support, we re-attacked and cleaned up the battlefield.

The battle started at about 9 am and ended at about 3 pm. Our Reconnaissance Company suffered casualties (KI-As) of 12 Vietnamese troops and our American advisor. Over twenty officers and soldiers were wounded. Such large casualties temporarily paralyzed my unit. The enemy left 80 corpses scattered all over the field, together with weapons such as automatic rifles, submachine guns from Czechoslovakia, red-stock rifles from communist China...In their withdrawal they must have carried a large number of dead and wounded comrades with them.

Later on, in a number of campaign operations in this area, we discovered 24 arms caches (8 meter long by 4 meter wide each) of all types of ammo (artillery shells, anti-aerial ammo. rockets...) and various military supplies. We made an effort to destroy all of them but the job was not complete. An air bombing on these caches was requested to complete the job.

A few days later, a defected communist troop reported that in this battle, among the KIA casualties there were a company commander and a deputy battalion commander. This intelligence included the resting base of the enemy. Consequently 10 days later, the Division CO ordered a mop-up operation conducted by the Ninth Regiment (Lieutenant-colonel Duong Phun Sang CO, and Major Lai Quoc

Thai Deputy CO) and the Seventh Regiment to follow up our victory.



Major Slen Cam Vo at Outpost Ben Sin, Dau Tieng District, Commanding Officer, Third Battalion/332/ Regional Forces, Binh Duong Military Sector, August 1st, 1971.

On this occasion I respectfully appreciated and felt grateful to the souls of my fallen comrades and those still alive who had once served under my command. From the above dreadful battles, our comrades emerged as capable combatants. Not only were they intelligent, bold, and calm in whatever fighting circumstances facing them, but they upheld the two Nung mottos “Faithfulness and Filial-Piety” as always. Owing to this, we never worried about an enemy’s

spy or infiltration into our unit. For this reason President Nguyen Van Thieu, once Commanding Officer of the Fifth Infantry Division, when elected President, asked me to select the 35 most talented and most confidential individuals of my unit to form the body-guard team for him.

Among these 35 selections, 34 were Nungs and a Vietnamese warrant officer who had been under my command many years, Mr. Nguyen Tan Phan who would become Major Phan, aide-de-camp to the President. I believe that without my comrades' absolute devotion and dedication to protect me in these battles, I would not have survived. Without them, my body would have been buried and pulverized in the motherland. I am saddened that the war had taken the precious lives of some of my comrades. The Northern communists had made a mistake to occupy South Vietnam by force causing million of casualties on both sides instead of unifying the country the German way, saving talents, manpower, and resources of the country.



Lt. Colonel Lai Quoc Thai

If the meeting engagement above showed some livelihood and captive offensive traits I would like to narrate a “resistance-to-one’s-death defensive” as below. Besides courage and daring as two qualities of Nung combatants, they also showed their creative and unexpected surprise initiatives in their defense tactics. Below

was the recording of Mr. Phong Tit Chang following the lively narration of Lieutenant-colonel Lai Quoc Thai.

The Nung Mobile Battalion's Deadly Defense at Go Dau Thuong – 1962

The Nung Mobile Battalion was the First Battalion, 9th Regiment, and 5th Infantry Division which had formerly been the 3rd Field Division or Nung Battle Group. Captain Lai Quoc Thai was, at that time, Battalion Commanding Officer; Captain Nguyen Van Thanh, was deputy CO; Lieutenant-colonel Duong Phun Sang was the Regiment Commander and the Division Commander was Major-General Tran Thanh Phong.

This Nung Mobile Battalion was a very special unit having five fighting companies including a headquarters company. Its effective strength was greater than a regular battalion. Three company commanders were Nung. Two company commanders were Vietnamese. The majority of NCOs and EMs were Nung. There were a few draftees of Chinese descent as replacement troops. At the beginning, these draftees were panicky when engaging with the enemy because they had no fighting experience. But after a few battles, with the guidance of Nung combatants, they got accustomed to the gun smoke and seized trophies, their morale heightened. They gained self-confidence and ardently assaulted in battlefields no less enthusiastically than their experienced comrades. This Mobile Battalion was a nightmare to the enemy causing him panic, miseries, and surprises through many ambushes and search-and-destroy operations.

The enemy suffered heavy losses and lost of prestige in his controlled area especially all his activities in the area from then on were under our control. Thus the enemy spread the rumor and distributed leaflets that he would face us in the battlefield and would utilize two Regiments to exterminate the Nung Mobile Battalion. His aim was to terrorize our troops' morale and instill pressure and diversion in our unit.

After 1954, Vietnam was partitioned in two territories, North and South. The Communists executed their plan to leave in the South covert elements and aimed at annexing South Vietnam to the North in the future. Consequently (before regrouping to the North) they succeeded in hastily establishing all over South Vietnam secret bases such as War Zones D, Boi Loi, Ho Bo, Le Hong Phong, Nam Son...to turn them into rear-bases for supplies to their fighting Divisions (by the name of Cong Truong). They terrorized the local population, occupied their lands, controlled the local dwellers, kidnapped and executed those who opposed them or refused to collaborate with them.

The northwestern area of Saigon had been one of the fiercest contested zones where the enemy gained territorial control the fastest. Though the government of Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem had sent nearby units and newly-formed Regiments to patrol the area, these units' lack of fighting experiences had caused their mission unaccomplished. In day time, if the government units patrolled, they were ambushed. At night time, if they stationed, the enemy surrounded them and attacked them. They suffered serious casualties and failed to

maintain an upper hand vis à vis the enemy. Their morale was low and desertions took place.

To reverse the situation and remove the communist pressure at these Saigon neighboring areas, the 5th Infantry Division received order in early 1959 to move from Song Mao, Binh Thuan Province (CTZ II) to Bien Hoa province (CTZ III) to patrol and search and destroy the enemy in this area. The Division Operation CP was stationed at kilometer 96, National Route 20 (Saigon-Dalat) at the 3-way intersection Vinh An, Dinh Quan district, Bien Hoa province. To improve the operation and control of the Binh Long and Phuoc Long provinces; as well as Hau Nghia and Bien Hoa provinces, the Division Headquarters was moved to Bien Hoa province in 1961. In 1964 it moved to Phu Loi, Binh Duong province.

The fighting quintessential of the Division was the Nung combatants and their abundant fighting experiences from frequent engagements with the enemy. These combatants were familiar with the enemy's habits, tactics and maneuvers. The 7th, 8th and 9th Regiments once assigned their new perimeters, instead of remaining in stationary and passive positions, they deployed outwardly. In day time, they patrolled and searched for communist pockets of resistance and eliminated them. At night time, they ambushed at sensitive crossroads where the enemy must go through. This tactics caused heavy losses to the enemy, hampered his activities, and stopped his expansion. The population in these villages started to appreciate our fighting ability and gradually rallied to our side.

Go Dau Thuong was adjacent to the Cambodian border, on the Vam Co River bank. The river marked the natural border between Cambodia and Vietnam. This relatively large river of 100-meter wide presented an impossibility of pursuit and a topographic disadvantage to our troops. The Communists took advantage of it, utilizing the territory of Cambodia to cross the river, infiltrated into Vietnam, played havoc into our infrastructure, and crossed it back, taking refuge in Cambodia whenever pursued and attacked. Currently the "strategic hamlet" strategy was in full swing (a regular hamlet surrounded by a bamboo or barbed-wire fence to control the population, denying enemy contact and supports with combat youth self-defense, and economic development). This strategy was quite effective in the beginning to stop the enemy's activities and influence among our rural population. Usually it took two to three weeks to establish a strategic hamlet. Go Dau Thuong hamlet was one of them. It had about 200 inhabitants whose majority were peasants working on farm lands.

The Nungs' First Mobile Battalion 1/9 was assigned to provide security for the building of Go Dau Thuong Hamlet (GDT). After this mission, the unit would be moved to provide security for another hamlet building. When the Battalion moved to GDT, it stationed at a large and flat terrain surrounded by rice fields with excellent visibility and the terrain had very few trees that could block the view. Due to repeated enemy's threats of attack, Captain Thai instructed his troops to dig and build solid defense trenches and stayed on the alert, ready to fight against a great offensive. In day

time, his fighting companies were deployed to search suspicious locations and scoop up the enemy's reconnaissance groups. At night, the Companies moved to their defense perimeter and to protect the hamlet.

What we had expected finally happened. The enemy thought that the time was ripe for a decisive confrontation, a favorable opportunity to eliminate Battalion 1/9. It was a rainy, starless, and moonless night. We heard unusually noisy dog barking from all over the villages, the barking was louder than in the previous nights. The order of alert was in force. All our troops were at their fighting positions waiting for further notice. When the enemy realized that we had been ready to fight him, he must attack immediately though his arrangement was not 100% ready. The communists took advantage of the tall near-ripe rice crop to approach at about 100 to 200 meters of our battalion defense perimeter, surrounded us from all directions and attacked.

The battalion had designed a good trench system, and fox holes, plus solid sand bags, and abundant ammo for a serious and long attack. Our troops were very calm and concentrated their fire power on hot targets and in locations where numerous moving head-silhouettes were seen. Captain Nguyen Van Thanh Deputy CO called for flares from airplanes and artillery support. At the same time our American Advisor, a Captain, also called for more flares from allied forces. A short moment later, two C-47s flew over our heads and dropped flares. In addition the regiment 155mm artillery shells fell on the enemy troops.

The communists did attack with a Regiment and intended to apply their “human waves” tactics to eliminate the First Battalion at all cost but failed. Captain Thai, during the fight, kept constant liaison with his companies, gave orders in Ngai dialect or Cantonese: “we should stay put, hold our positions and fire at all moving targets”.

The communists relied on their numerous effectives. In each wave of assault they shouted their heart out “xung phong” (assault) using the front-wave troops as sacrificed human shields for the next wave. Their commanders did not care about casualties or loss of lives. Their ultimate goal was to overrun our posts with their superior forces and overwhelming strength at any cost. We held ground through many fierce assaults, and were determined to defend to our deaths. As a result, all waves of assault were pushed back.

Usually after a failed wave of assault, the communists took some time to regroup their forces, waiting for the flares to die down then started the next wave of assault. Taking advantage of this enemy intermission opportunity, Captain Thai, gave his opponent a surprise, ordered all fighting companies to get out of their trenches and violently and impetuously counter attacked. This surprised tactic took the communists by shocking surprise causing them confusion, inability to react, and total chaos. The enemy’s morale was shattered. He tried to react but failed and withdrew swiftly through the rice fields. Our troops were right behind, pursuing and attacking them. When we reached the Vam Co River, the communists jumped on tens of sampans and boats which had been waiting there to transport them across the river.

The battle approximately lasted from 11 pm to 3 am. The two C-47 continued to drop flares until dawn so our troops could track and capture the remnant and wounded of enemy forces being abandoned on this side of the river. The next morning we cleaned the battlefield and witnessed nearly 300 communist KIAs scattered all over the rice fields and their weaponry of all sizes such as BAR rifles, Czechoslovakian automatic rifles, China's red-stock rifles etc.

The First Battalion had to mobilize the villagers to utilize six ox-carts to collect communist corpses for burials. Many communist KIAs were very young, less than 18 years of age who were probably enticed or obliged by the communists to serve as cannon fodder or human shields for Marxism. Our side suffered a few KIAs and 70 wounded. Our weapons were preserved, zero loss.

The enemy once more suffered a terrible defeat. The reason for his loss was threefold. He missed all three elements of victory. They are: natural opportunity – terrain advantage – people's concordance.

- On the natural opportunity: the enemy chose a rainy night but unusually loud dog barking warned us about their movement.

- On the terrain-advantage: the enemy had warned about their imminent attack with two Regiments causing us to carefully prepare our defense terrain the best way in waiting for the attack.

- On the people's concordance, our Nung combatants strongly believed in their solidarity, esprit de corps, determination of fighting together to one's death, and trust in their leaders' ability. In addition, the communists had miscalculated the defense capability of the Nung First Mobile Battalion and underestimated its CO, Captain Lai Quoc Thai. As a result, the communists had utilized a Regiment, three times larger than our Battalion and ordered many waves of assault but failed to penetrate our defense perimeter. Besides with the surprise of our counter attack, we went from defense to offense, an initiative accumulated from our fighting experiences and Nung fighting spirit.



Notes:

1. GDZ, page 15-20. SCH, pages 12, 13.
2. After the evacuation abroad (1975) Great Viet Party (Dai Viet) continued to function, and both Mr. Ly Ngoc Duong and Mr. Tran Duc Lai were elected, one was President, Central Executive Committee; the other was a member of Advisory Committee.
3. GDZ, pages 20-23. NSSJ, synthesis of all Comments May 15, 2007 page 3. GDZ, some Comments May 25, 2007, pages 2+3, Comments from 4 HT June 25, 2007, page 1.
4. GDZ, pages 23, 24.

5. GDZ, pages 24-27. SCH, pages 13-15. NSSJ, Synthesis of Comments May 15, 2007, page 4.
6. President, Second Term, was Mr. Tsan Y Pan, Third Term was Representative Gip A Sang.
7. NSSJ, Synthesis of Comments May 15. 2007, page 4. GDZ, page 39.
8. Moc A Tai, December 31, 2002. April 9+10, 2007.

PART FOUR



AFTER APRIL 30, 1975

Immediately after signing the Geneva Agreement (1954) the communists had plan to invade SVN. (Vietnam was partitioned in two, North and South). They built many armament caches and depots, and organized networks of political and military cadres along with spies to remain at their home towns in a plot called “nam vung” (lying at one’s region) in order to wait for an opportunity to cause turmoil.

The South Vietnamese government was legally established shortly after the Geneva Agreement. It did not sign the Agreement, and officially voiced its opposition to it many times. It had no obligation to implement it. (1) The communists did not wait for the date of “unification election” which would be July 1956 as stipulated in the Joint Communiqué of the Agreement. They started building the Ho Chi Minh (HCM) Trail in order to infiltrate troops and weapons to reinforce their cadres that they had left prior to 1954 before they regrouped to North Vietnam.

To deceive the public in Vietnam and the world, on December 20, 1960 they set up a puppet entity, the National Liberation Front (NLF) and started their invasion with a sudden attack against a South Vietnamese Regiment base in Trang Sup, Tay Ninh province. (2)

The hostilities increased with the enemy's infiltration capability via the HCM Trail and many supply debarcations along the coast. They sent large units and their military equipment to cause serious threat to the South. This prompted the United States to engage troops to directly fight the Vietnam War with its ally in May 1965 (3).

The United States had great fear over the possibility of intervention by the Communist Bloc, particularly by the Soviet Union and China which were the primary supporters of North Vietnam. It did not exert its full military powers, and only unhurriedly fought a war without determination to win. In July 1962, after Laos claimed its neutrality, the North Vietnamese communists (VC) nearly openly utilized this country as a springboard in their plan to conquer SVN. (4)

The so-called Tet general offensive by NVN in 1968, Lunar New Year of the Monkey, became a tragic corner stone of the Vietnam War. The communists violated the Tet-Lunar-New-Year truce and launched their surprise attacks against 28 provinces, and cities in SVN, and did repeatedly against other locations at the same time. In particular, Hue, the ancient capital of Vietnam, was under the communist occupation for 26 days. During that time, the communists executed over 3,000 people who were SVN military and administrative personnel, innocent civilians, women, and children, (including some German doctors of a humanitarian project and some French missionary). They were executed in the most brutal ways imaginable, by gun fire, by head blow, and by burial alive in mass graves. (5)

The result of this general offensive of many waves of attacks was a clear cut military defeat of the communists. All attacks were pushed back, including Hue. The communists lost 58 thousand troops at the battlefields. Most of their covert operatives and regional intelligence networks were compromised. Aside from the slanted coverage of the American media, they won in the psychological propagandizing front. The world press favored them. They helped the anti-war movement in the US. Under this world pressure and domestic opposition, the US was obliged to negotiate for an end of the war. (6)

After February 1972, President Richard Nixon met with Mao Ze Dong and won an agreement that turned China against the Soviet Union. The pawn of SVN with its role of an anti-communist outpost was no longer needed. Consequently the Paris Agreement was signed on January 27, 1973 with the detrimental article against the Republic of Vietnam (SVN): the “panther skin” cease-fire arrangement according to which American troops withdrew from their existing locations while the communist invaders had the right to remain at their zones of occupation (inside SVN). Further more the US stopped assisting SVN militarily and economically while the communist Bloc continued their supports to NVN in abundance.

The inevitable finally happened. In mid-March 1975, President Nguyen Van Thieu ordered his troops to withdraw from Military Region 2, then Military Region 1 with the hope that the US would intervene (as promised in writing by President Richard Nixon) but his wish never materialized.

These successive military withdrawals without engagement lacked preparations, and coordinations, played havoc on troops' morale. The troops' families, the population associated with them, and refugees escaping from communism, all were brutally slaughtered by the enemy fire. The casualties were huge and caused chaotic spots along the route of retreat.

Though a few CBU bombs were finally dropped on the communists at Xuan Loc killing the whole Regiment, in mid-April 1975, the enemy movements towards Saigon from many directions met no resistance. (7) On April 30, 1975, Mr. Duong Van Minh, the Three-Day President of SVN declared the surrender of SVN to the communists causing an implosion of indignation and bitterness among many elite units. Many SVN officers, NCOs, and troops, from the air-born paratrooper branch to regional combatants, especially the cadets at the junior military academy of Vung Tau etc. had been fighting in their individual pockets of vain and desperate resistance. (8) Many Generals, officers, NCOs, and troops of all ranks and many branches committed suicides to preserve their honors.

After this invasion of SVN by force, the so-called "liberation of SVN" turned into exploitation and robbery of systematic preparation whose victims were the population. (9) The communists practically turned SVN into hell with their policy of reprisal on all those who had worked for the former regime of the Republic of Vietnam. This is a violation against the articles of the Paris Agreement. The communist policy of reprisal and its flagrant military invasion of

SVN ironically met no protest whatsoever from any super powers including the states whose delegations had chaired the Agreement negotiation and guaranteed the implementation of this Paris Agreement.



Notes:

1. 45-54 “Chin Nam Khoi Lua” by To Vu, pages 227-232.
2. Nam Viet Nam, 1954-1975 by Hoang Lac & Ha Mai Viet (Abbreviation NVN) page 70.
3. NVN pages 146-147.
4. NVN pages 209-211, 69-70.
5. This was factual information with photos and witnesses as a genocidal crime comparative to the Soviet killing of 4,500 Poland officers in Katyn in WWII. The Soviet at first had blamed the German but finally admitted their responsibility. NVN page 93, Stephane Courtois, *Le Livre Noir du Communisme*, page 625. Stanley Karnov, *Vietnam* pages 324-325. Larousse Great Dictionary, Part 3, page 1744.
6. NVN, pages 346-347.
7. NVN, pages 85-94.

8. In Prison “kien giam” A-20 at Xuan Phuoc (Phu Yen) among a great number of party members of Dai Viet and Viet Quoc, we ran into many youths, students, and intellectuals who had independently joined the armed opposition against the VC on their own volition. They had fought against the VC in the front of Vinh Son Church and in the Nation’s Rescuing Front (Mat Tran Cuu Nguy To Quoc) in Tay Ninh. They were sentenced to 18 to 20 years of prison.
9. Temporarily translated from auto-colonialization from international journalist Pomonti who had been a communist sympathizer.

CHAPTER ONE

THE TRAGEDY OF SOUTH VIETNAM SOCIETY

*“Beloved Saigon, I lost you as you had lost your own name.
I lost every street which had lost its own name too”*

A. A Tyrannical Governing Policy

Immediately after taking control of SVN the communists started their “systematic” reprisal policy against different echelons of the former regime personnel. Their first victims were the most devout anti-communist people, those who had inflicted most casualties to them in the past (mostly in contested regions in the countryside). This category included some personal enemies of the newly “April Thirtieth guys”. (These groups were the covert communist residents who so self-revealed after April 30, 1975 for the purpose of identifying and apprehending the old- regime people). These victims were secretly or openly executed on the spot in the first few days of the communist takeover.

In their movements towards Saigon, the communists claimed that their troops would not touch “a needle or thread” of the people. In fact they aimed at much more valuable booties and trophies of war.

All military, civilian personnel, and government employees of the old regime who had acquired their residences and houses through mortgages or government programs, were kicked out of their homes with light bags of clothing, leaving the rest of their property to the victors.

Their vehicles, motorcycles, and property of all kinds were considered “special privileges and trophies” of the “rebels” regime to be recuperated.

Next was a trick that they bestowed a fancy name “Commercial-industrial Reforms” (cai tao cong thuong nghiep), plainly speaking, this meant “hitting the bourgeoisie compradors” (danh tu san mai ban) or “robbing southerners’ properties”.

Systematic preparations were planned to the smallest details. First, the communists spread government agents into all homes: what they called “dong chot” latch insert. (They sent their troops as agents to live together with their victims). These agents take inventory of all household items. Next, they invented an exorbitant tax that the owner had to pay in order to repossess his property. Obviously no one had these huge amounts of money for tax. Finally the government declared that his property was confiscated due to his inability to pay government tax. The property owner could not exit this brutal robbing scheme in one piece. He would be sentenced to prison for having assisted the Americans and the puppet regime in their fight against the Revolution. Many movie-theatre owners were imprisoned for a graver crime, “agents of propaganda for capitalism”. A sentence of 18 to 20 years of prison was common. Obviously their theatres and all properties were confiscated. In the middle of the night, a truck came to their homes and moved their wives and children by force to a remote jungle, the so-called “new economic zone”, and unloaded them there bare handed. No capital, planting tool or seeds were given.

The southerners were even more miserable due to the currency reform. A few months after the communist takeover, the new government announced a compulsory exchange of old SVN currency to new HCM currency which would be valid. The announcement was broadcasted at night after the curfew whereby the exchange would be the next day. Each household was allowed to exchange only 200 dong of valid currency. In a matter of a few hours, all the old regime currency became trash. Over a year later, the government repeated this exchange of currencies once more. Its aim was to impoverish the southerners and eliminate all attempts of opposition. Partly in this scheme, the government instituted the Household Registration system (Ho khau) according to which all food and nourishment items such as meat, rice, and the like were not allowed to be moved without special permit. Each family was rationed with limited amount of basic need items under the form of food stamps, and clothing cards. To purchase a small item such as papers or pens one had to make line for hours or a day, let alone rice which was on top of the most wanted food-list. Life of a southerner became oppressed and miserable beyond imagination.

The above situation was imposed by the communist government on the general population of SVN. For military and government personnel, their fate and degree of oppression were much worse. Their wives, husbands or relatives were classified “reactionary family”. No public schools would admit their children or relatives. No college would open to them either. Those related to them were not permit-

ted to practice any occupation or profession. (All occupations were regulated by the government). Especially commerce or a private business was condemned for “exploitation”. Any of these was no longer considered an occupation.

More sorrowful was the fact that while former government employees of the vanquished regime had been in prisons, their families in the outside world remained “reactionary elements”, but their young children, one after another, “were elected to fulfill international obligations”, to be drafted to serve as living shields for the Vietnamese communists in their ambitious conquest of Cambodia; what an ironic and monstrous scheme against the southerners.

B. Vietnamese Goulags (2)

Military and government personnel ranking from officers, service chiefs, managers, representatives, senators down to writers, artists, singers, and performers with anti-communist records, all were tricked to willingly report and to be slid into “re-educational camps”, in abbreviated jargon, “hard-labor-re-ed”(lao cai) a form of hard labor imprisonment in mass without a date of release.

Hundreds of thousands of people from the vanquished regime were detained in thousands of camps all over the country, north, central, and south; from plains to jungles; from highlands to islands, especially in areas close to the common borders with China and Laos.

In the first few weeks of incarceration, each prisoner had to write meticulous depositions on his own biography detailing past official services, in the army or government, back to three generations. This included his lineage, (and that of maternal, paternal, and in-laws families). In addition, he was forced to condemn his relatives and forebears according to the criteria of the Revolution (Communist Party) depending on how serious his bloody debt towards the “people” (also the Communist Party) had been. This debt had originated from his services to the French colonials, Japanese fascists, or the American imperialists.

Next were the “re-educational studies”. The instructors cited the accomplishments, and credit-records of the Communist Party, and the People’s Army in contrast to the crimes of the “nguy”, i.e. members of the puppet army or puppet government of SVN who were mercenaries, those living at the expenses of people, and felons who should have been executed but were pardoned at the clemency of the Party and communist government.

The next stage of instruction was hard labor physical work. With the exception of a small group of old and weak inmates being assigned to light jobs such as weaving floor mats and twisting ropes, the rest of prisoners were forced to plant manioc roots, cast bricks and tiles in ovens, collect bamboos and logs from the jungle with increasing outputs. They imposed the principle that a prisoner had to produce in order to nourish himself and to feed prison guards, (security and troops) as well. He had to produce to support the general management of the prison. At some pris-

ons, he was forced to pull plows and harrows to replace water buffalos and cows. In others, he must clear and remove mines from the mine fields with a bamboo chap stick or a piece of metal wire.

At the end of the month, production results were tallied. A critique session was held. An achievement rate list was voted by the prisoner group. Usually in each group of 20-30 prisoners, there would be a few excellent and some above-average inmates, the rest were average to below average. The redistribution of individual food rations would be based on the above evaluation. (Divide and rule was the communists' motto).

In prison, when food was scarce, individual rations became important. At the beginning of the communist takeover, SVN warehouses were full of rice. Prisoners were relatively sufficient in food. After this period, the newly implemented "agricultural cooperative system" was born causing food shortage. (Since all farming lands belonged to the cooperative, no one cared to produce). The strained relationship between Vietnam and China resulted in a halt of Chinese assistance. The shortage of rice worsened. Under the circumstance, at first, the prisoners had to mix rice with corn or yam. Then they had no rice, only sorghum for meals. (Sorghum was used as animal feed only and had to be ground into powder for digestion). Some manioc slices were used. (This manioc was used in the glue industry. It should be sliced and boiled to rid of cyanide to somewhat detox). The prisoners ate manioc with shrimp paste diluted in boiled water or just a salty solution. (Sea salt in form of crystals

was forbidden for fear of helping prisoners to escape). They miserably suffered from lack of green vegetable. They had to replace it by pennywort, and purslane. They ate anything that moves, insects, worms, snakes, centipedes. Frogs and toads nearly seemed extinct. (Grasshoppers and locusts were particularly favored as “flying shrimps” after grilled).

The unlucky prisoners to North Vietnam suffered an additional disgrace vis à vis the people at the beginning period of their arrival. During this period, the government had propagandized and slandered them as traitors, human-blood-suckers, and human-liver-eaters. As a result, wherever the stations the trains transported them through, a number of local people (threw rocks at them and) cursed them at will. As time went by, the general population realized that their government had lied. (They threw food to the prisoners instead). (Throwing rocks and food to prisoners were factual truths with lots of living witnesses and complemented by the translator).

If a prisoner committed an infraction and got punished and there were many reasons to be punished – his life would become miserable. He might be put in a metallic box shorter than his height. Daytime was hot, nighttime was cold. Each meal was two spoonfuls of rice dipped in salty water. There was no blanket or water. (Many times, he had to drink his own urine). After a few weeks, he might be released but only crawled out. There were other punishments such as: one leg shackle, both leg shackles, or legs and hands shackles. In the beginning, any prisoner who tried to escape was executed by firing squads at once. In spite of the harsh prison regime

many prisons had to cope with unflinching prisoners' oppositions especially among Women's Army Corps (WACs). Many escapes were spectacular. (3)

The state of imprisonment without prospect of freedom compounded by constant hunger, harsh prison regulations, fear and worry for family... played havoc on a prisoner's psyche and caused many diseases such as dysentery, tuberculosis, and stomach ulcers. Under this regime six respectable Nung warriors had died among 70-80 total Nung prisoners. They were Colonel Duong Phun Sang, Lieutenant-colonel Hau Cam Pau Lieutenant-colonel Ngo Thiem Thang, Major Tran The Anh, Captain Lu Khoan Nam, First-lieutenant Ly Cong Pau. (Please check list at Appendices).

If a prisoner could maintain his health, he was still a huge burden to his family in the outside world. His family had to save and collect enough money to visit him at his prison which might be in the remote jungle or frontier lands thousands of kilometers away.

In prison, he was constantly reminded that the purpose of labor re-education program was to transform him to an "honest person". (This implied that he had been a crook in the past). His vision of freedom would be equally bleak. If he was released after a prison term, it would be hard for him to find a job in cities. He would be settling in a remote forest and farming on lands in austere conditions. Therefore life in prison was tormenting. Life after prison seemed more disheartening and uncertain.



Notes:

1. “Saigon Niem Nho khong ten” music and lyrics by Nguyen Dinh Toan, performed by Nguyet Anh. After invading Saigon, the communists changed it to Ho Chi Minh City. This name changing have been rejected by a movement led by a catholic priest Father Nguyen Van Le who has been struggling to restore the old name Saigon to the city.
2. The title of the book “Archipel du Goulag” by A. Soljenitsyne denouncing the terror and oppression in the Soviet Union and describing the prisoners living in Siberia prisons, GDZ August 25, 2003, page 29. Comments of 4 HT June 25, 2007, page 2.
3. Please read Dai Hoc Mau by Ha Thuc Sinh; and Trai Kien Giam by Nguyen Chi Thiep.

CHAPTER TWO

THOSE WHO LEFT AND THOSE WHO STAYED

Facing brutal oppression as a matter of government policy and developing brutal and savage practices against inmates in prisons, a southerner had no alternative but to risk his life to seek freedom at all cost. Immersed in this popular trend of escape, the Hai Ninh people had to sadly abandon their second motherland, and embark in adventures in search for a foreign sanctuary.

A. *The Boat People*

If the Geneva Agreement of 1954 designated the regrouping locations, timing of troops' withdrawal and evacuation for both warring sides; the Paris Agreement of 1973 professed "union and reconciliation" i.e. both sides would remain at their respective locations. When realizing that it was impossible to live under the new regime, one might decide to flee the country. This created chaotic situations.

When the date of April 30, 1975 drew to a close, many lucky southerners escaped by planes and boats before the dooms day arrived. The sight of thousands of Saigonese creeping against one another in front of the American Embassy or climbing up building platforms hoping to be picked up by helicopters would remain forever in the mind of all Vietnamese. After the fall of Saigon, the US Seventh Fleet continued to stroll on the high sea off SVN for many days in order to pick up refugees from boats. These escapees were

later transported to Guam the vast majority of whom would reach the US mainland, their final destination.

Only later did “boat people” become a national movement after the communists turned SVN into terrestrial hell (with the implementation of a brutal and tyrannical policy on the southerners).

At first there were sporadic escapes from SVN by boats. As time went by, the need to escape out of the country became a gold mine for coastal security agencies. At the same time the communists wished to expel the rich Chinese in order to occupy their properties while Vietnam and China entered a thorniest stage of relationship. The escape movement by boats culminated to its apogee acquiring a semi-official statute with a view to collecting gold and property for the communists of all echelons.

Another route of escape by foot to Thailand through Cambodia was less costly but more risky and the number of escapees was insignificant compared to those boat people heading for Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, or Hong Kong. The public-security police in coastal towns organized “embarkation sales” or “dock sales” for leaving boats. Their price per head was 10 taels on an average. At times, because of conflicts of interests or unfair distributions, the organizers captured their victims and put them in jail. This caused an inflation of boat-people jails all over SVN. Some bad bandit-security-police groups even waited for the refugee boat to reach the ocean, then opened fire to sink the

boat with a view to robbing their victims the second time. Many women and children perished in these pillages.

Above were only the first challenges of a boat refugee (1). Many more were waiting for him in the horizon in this ocean adventure of uncertainty.

His boat might have engine trouble. There might be shortage of diesel fuel, food, or potable water. The weather might get rough. Most of boats were small and overloaded with people. But the most terrified misfortune was Thai pirates. The pirates robbed gold and jewelries from their victims and abducted women and girls away for good. In many brutal cases, they raped women nearly in front of their husbands and children... According to the United Nations statistics the number of perished victims in the Pacific could amount to a half million people (2). Many Nung families were among these statistics; each family suffered the loss of a loved one.

When a boat refugee, by pure luck, overcame the above series of challenges, he still had huge difficulty to be admitted to one of the refugee camps of Southeast Asia. (Many boats came this far but were pulled out back to the ocean by Thai or Malaysian navy, and sank or drifted to a remote and desert island without water and food. All refugees might perish. If they were lucky, an airplane or a maritime would rescue and bring them to another refugee camp. This data was added by the translator).

After successfully passing through all the obstacles, he would finally be admitted to one of the following islands or camps: Leamsing (Thailand), Poulo Bidong (Malaysia), Galang, Palawan (Indonesia); or Bataan (The Philippines), owing to help from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Then after interviews and acceptance from a host country representative, he would be allowed to migrate to a third country which was the last leg of his exodus for freedom. This tragic process in which all refugees (boat people) must go through had lasted until the early Nineties. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the phrase “boat people” entered the international jargon of distressed refugees from South Vietnam.

An important event occurred during this stage of leaving Saigon for a refugee camp. This was the heart-rending death of the supreme Nung Leader, Mr. Vong A Sang. Mr. Bui Trong Tieu, former Vice-Province-Chief of Quang Tin province, a companion of the Leader, made this statement regarding this death.

“Mr. Sang, his wife, and one of their son-in-laws, all left Saigon aboard the Truong Xuan ship. When the ship got to the area of Puolo Condore (SVN), it had engine trouble. Water started inundating the engine room. A Danish maritime came, rescued nearly three thousand refugees from the ship, and transported all of them to Hong Kong. For an unknown reason, Mr. Sang had been a single person abandoned and died at the ship”.

About a month later, this destiny Truong Xuan ship was drifted to Hong Kong territorial water. Mr. Sang's corpse was found on the deck of the ship. A Nung ex-officer, Major Lieng Hang, who had been living in Hong Kong, knew it through the local newspaper, claimed the leader's remains and cremated it. It was recorded that in Saigon, prior to the fall of SVN, a French general had offered to rescue Mr. Sang and his family. Mr. Sang requested that a long list of Nung compatriots be brought out of Saigon with him also. The political situation kept changing swiftly and his request would not materialize. In all eventualities, his spirit of solidarity towards his followers would be highly esteemed. His passing was a grand mourning for the whole Nung-Hai Ninh community all over the world and in Vietnam.

In 1991, Colonel Hoang Gia Cau, the second son of Mr. Sang moved his ash to rest at Rose Hill Cemetery, Los Angeles, California.

B. Those Who Stayed

The fate of those who could not escape, failed to leave by boat, and were obliged (condemned) to stay in the "Vietnamese Communist Paradise" was extremely pathetic. Sharing the same destiny with all southern compatriots, most Nung families had their fathers, husbands, and brothers serving the SVN government, all spent years in prisons. Their wives and families were chased out of their residences and brought to the countryside or jungle for labor work to build the so-called "new economic zones". Their children suffered destitution and were not admitted to public schools. But

compared to their compatriots who had stayed in Hai Ninh, North Vietnam after 1954, the Nungs in SVN were still a little better. Their counterpart in Hai Ninh was far more miserable.

After the communists' take-over of North Vietnam in 1954, the new government initiated a violent popular motivation campaign of "Land Reform" (Cai Cach Ruong Dat) in the delta area and Thanh Hoa-Nghe An region. Hai Ninh was saved and excluded from this initiation. But the government policy of "Agricultural Co-operative Movement" that followed the Land Reform Campaign, this time, imposed on the people of Hai Ninh and impoverished them badly. Most cultural and ethnic festivities such as "Siu Pha Plao" and "O Po" were no longer permitted. The communists replaced them with unpopular and meaningless propaganda ceremonies which attracted no one. Some local people showed discontent and passively opposed them were immediately brought to people's summary trial and received prison sentences.

But NVN's new turn of relationship hostility towards China after the fall of SVN in 1975 caught the people of Hai Ninh in serious conditions. The Nung ethnic group of Hai Ninh was categorized Chinese sympathizers or spies and could be maltreated and arrested any time. In 1978, as a result of such political persecution, a great number of Hai Ninh people had to abandon their lands and properties to seek sanctuary in China.

In February, 1979 a short war between China and Vietnam broke out at the frontier regions in North Vietnam. In places where large Chinese ethnic dwellers had resided such as Hanoi, Hai Phong, Cam Pha, Cua Ong (opposed to Ke Bao island) and other frontier towns, the government quietly sent leaflets to each and every Chinese home threatening their individual safety and life. At Binh Lieu in particular all the Nungs were expelled to China though many individual Nungs had married to Vietnamese or vice versa. Their lands and properties were confiscated.

Without any rendez-vous, both groups of Nung-Hai Ninh from North Vietnam and South Vietnam were regrouped in the China's south frontier region striving to survive and rebuild their new existence. China was fresh after a short war with Vietnam. In many Chinese southern regions the local authorities did not permit new comers or refugees. The Nungs had to camp out without roofs and reliefs, pending government acceptance and admittance. Many had to return to Hai Ninh, only to become boat people heading for Hai Nam Island or Hong Kong.

A regrettable event took place in Moncay City during the war. Due to a shelling on the city by the Chinese army as tactical diversion, the Moncay communist local authority applied "scorched-earth tactics" forcing the people to reduce their town to an inhospitable terrain preventing the enemy from utilizing it. It ordered the local dwellers to destroy their own homes and businesses "flat to the ground" before retreating to Quat Dong village. Not a penny was paid as indemnity. Neither supply nor relief of any kind was adminis-

tered. All historic vestiges of the Nungs' ancient town were destroyed. Moncay which had been once the ancient capital-city of the Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh, ceased to exist.

The total number of Vietnamese victims who fled to China in the neighborhood of two hundred thousand people. The most influential people amongst them were the Nung ethnic groups. They were adequately received and assisted by the Chinese authority to find jobs in collective farms, sylvicultural cooperatives, and workshops in Guang Dong, Guang Tsi, Fu Jian, and the Hai Nam Island.

As time went by, a great majority of them fled to Hong Kong and were gradually sponsored by their relatives, and migrated to western countries, mostly to the United States.
(3)



Notes:

1. A movie directed by Tran Ham on “re-education” and escape by sea being premiered in the US in April 2007.
2. According to the magazine *Tieng Noi Nguoi Viet Quoc Gia* (Voice of Vietnamese Nationalists) of France, issues of May, June, and July, 2005, page 8.
3. Article by Mr. Loc Vay Lieng, December, 2003. Article by Mr. Quy Ngoc Duong, January, 2004. *GDZ* August 25, 2003, pages 27-31. *SCH* April 29, 2003, pages 15-16. Comments by 4 HT June 25, 2007, page 2.

CHAPTER THREE

LIVING OVERSEAS

The pathetic fate of the “boat people” in the Pacific created a shock to world conscience. The merchant ships passing near the Vietnamese territorial waters usually lent a helping hand to rescue these refugees. Many volunteer agencies rent ships to sail to the Pacific in order to pick up the boat people. (1) Nearly 40 countries opened their benevolent arms to admit about three million Vietnamese refugees to their countries as immigrants. The United States was the most generous boat-people receiving country. (2) Joining these waves of refugees, the Nungs from Hai Ninh resettled in many countries such as France, Canada, Australia..., and mostly in southern California, USA.

A. Canada, France, and Australia (3)

Canada

A good number of Nung compatriot personalities resettled in Canada, Mr. Slen Cam Hong and Major Lau Venh Quay were in this group.

In 1996, Messieurs Slen Cam Hong and Le Trung Hoa led a Nung delegation to participate in the Nung Solidarity Convention in Los Angeles, California. Back to Canada, they wished to imitate their compatriots in the U.S.A. A referendum among Nungs in Edmonton Alberta was conducted and all wholeheartedly supported and contributed their manpower and funds to found an association of Nungs.

A founding committee was formed consisting of Messieurs Le Trong Hoa, Slen Cam Hong, Ung Y Dau, Diep Ho Hong, Hoang Phuc Cam, Truong Dieu Hung, and Diep Thanh Sinh. A name was suggested: the Hai-Quang-Ninh Community Association. (4)

In April 1997, the First Term Executive Committee was elected. Mr. Le Trung Hoa was President. Mr. Slen Cam Hong was one of the four Vice Presidents. Mr. Slen Cam Hong was subsequently elected President. The Second Term, Third and Fourth Terms President was Mr. Ung Y Dau.

The inauguration of the First-Term Executive Committee took place at the end of August that year with the participation of over 400 guests consisting of representatives of neighboring associations in a vibrant and enthusiastic atmosphere. Most encouraging of all was the presence of the two U.S.A. delegations of Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association, and the Hai Ninh Community Association led by Messieurs Gip A Dzieng and Thong Sieng Senh making the occasion more impressive.

After this ceremony the Hai Ninh people (Nungs) emerged as one of the most viable communities among minorities in Edmonton. From that time on The Hai (Quang) Ninh Community Association of Edmonton have positively contributed and supported all community activities initiated by Sino-Vietnamese groups as well as all humanitarian endeavors instituted by other minority groups.

There were Hai Ninh people settling at other cities beside Edmonton. Vancouver (of British Columbia province) for example had a group of Hai Ninh people whose representatives had participated in the U.S.A. Hai Ninh Convention but not yet succeeded in forming a Hai Ninh Community Association. All they had set up was a Goddess of Mercy Pagoda (Chua Quan Am) and an Executive Board to manage it. The pagoda offered a favorable milieu of meeting for all Hai Ninh people of this region paving the way for a possible association in the future.

France

After the initial evacuation from North to South Vietnam, a group of military units composing of ethnic minorities were transferred to the Vietnam's Nationalist Army. Another group of similar composition joined the French expeditionary forces and deployed in Laos. A good number of Nungs went to Laos in this occasion.

After the end of April 1975 these Nungs and their families were swiftly admitted to settle in France. As a result, they would be joined by other Nung refugees from Vietnam and other third countries later on, in a sporadic way. Brigadier-general Chieng Denh Quay, Lieutenant-colonel Vong Van Thong, Major Tran Duc Lai and First-lieutenant Vong Tat Gi were in this group.

The French army officers of whom many had been promoted Generals and Colonels after 1975 retained warm feelings towards the Nungs following their co-habitation

with them in Hai Ninh and in Laos. Consequently the Nungs in France enjoyed many privileges and special attention. The General Association of Nung Community was set up whose office and a Goddess of Mercy Shrine (Mieu Quan Am) was located at Chanteloup Township, a suburb north of Paris. The following 3-year-presidents were elected not in chronological order, Messieurs Vong Denh, Chieng Denh Quay, Tsan Nhan Vay, and Vong Chong. In 1994, under Mr. Tsan Nhan Vay's presidency, the General Association showed its strength of expansion. Six of its branches all over France were set up in: Marseille, Toulouse, Avignon, Lyon, Bourges, and Metz.

At Bonneville (near Genève, Switzerland) tens of Nung families succeeded in collecting funds to buy a shrine for religious ceremony where they could get together though an association of Nungs was not yet officially formed.

Regretfully, the Nung older generation will depart this life while the younger ones will not inherit the combatants' spirit of their forebears. The Nung Association activities have not been well maintained with the exception of the two locations at Chanteloup and Metz whose president was Mr. Chanh Chan Sang.



*The Fifteenth Anniversary Ceremony of the Founding Date
of the Organization (June 22, 2007)*

Australia

Since April 1975 we have not been able to collect all demographic data of our Nung refugee-compatriots in other countries and Australia. However we located in Australia many personalities: Major Lo Hong Chan, Major Hoang Tu Luong, Captain Lay Phat Dieng, and First-lieutenant Ly Dong Phoc.

Due to Australia's rich natural resources and her easy-going living conditions, the majority of Hai Ninh people fared well in many aspects and led prosperous lives.

In September 2006, the Hai Ninhs, in collaboration with their compatriots coming from Kham Liem, and Phong Thanh, organized a Compatriot Convention in Sydney, Australia. The Convention was successful with the participation of many delegations of Kham Liem people from the U.S.A., Taiwan, and Canada. The Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association had a delegation headed by president Phong Tit Chang.

B. The USA

The Hai Ninh people in the US consisted of those few who were evacuated by air prior to April 30, 1975 (the fall of South Vietnam); the boat people, and others. In 1980 the US government and the Vietnamese Communist authorities agreed to let those who had resettled in the U.S. to sponsor their relatives from Vietnam to America under the so-called Orderly Departure Program (ODP). The most enthusiastically received news was the US acceptance for migration of all released prisoners from “re-education camps” under the so-called “HO” (Humanitarian Operation). Program (see related appendix).

On October 12, 1991 for the first time in Los Angeles, a welcome ceremony and convention was organized with the participation of almost all famous personalities and Nung dignitaries from many states to welcome colonel Hoang Gia Cau, and many officers such as Lau Venh Dzenh, Lau Chi Phan, Vong Dong Phong, Vong Lap Quay, and others who recently resettled in the U.S. after many long years of communist imprisonment. The convention also commemorated

the late leader Vong A Sang and the deaths of their relatives in their escapes for freedom.



Welcoming Mr. Hoang Gia Cau at the Los Angeles International Airport

The convention aimed at three objectives:

*welcoming and honoring the Hai Ninh Community and all combatants having dedicated their lives to the noble cause of nationalism, and to their native country;

*providing a good opportunity for all the Hai Ninh people to consolidate their mutual love and assistance and their unity of actions in all eventualities.



*The Commemoration Ceremony to honor Our Late Leader,
Mr. Vong A Sang on October 12, 1991 in Los Angeles*



*showing to coming generations that the Hai Ninh people consisted of an ethnic group with talented members in all walks of life having a common legacy of piety towards their history and ancestors and setting a good example for future generations.

Many welcoming ceremonies took place after this one to greet the Hai Ninh refugees to reunite with their families in the following years.

Settlement Locations

In the beginning, the Nung refugees, once in the US, scattered and resettled all over the states. Later on, they gradually chose to concentrate and moved to California due to its warm and sunny climate all the year round and its favorably racial environment for Asians in general. (6) There were heavy concentrations of the Nungs in Los Angeles county, Orange county, (where Little Saigon, the refugees' capital was located) San Jose, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Oakland etc.

Occupations and Professional Careers

After a beginning period of lack of experience in the new US environment where one must adapt to a new language and customs, the Nungs slowly got used to it due to their hard-working character and enduring and energetic capabilities. In addition, they received ample assistance from the local government and familiarized themselves with their new lives.

A minority of them subsisted on welfare because no jobs were available. The majority were self sustained because they had jobs in the manufacturing industries. Those with some capital investments and working experiences, opened jewelry stores, restaurants, liquor stores, sewing ma-

chine shops, artificial florists, garment and sewing shops, plastic bags manufacturers etc. A remarkable case was Mr. Vong Sap Sli who greatly flourished in his thousands-of-acres-plantation of fruit trees, spinach, tilapia fish ponds not only to supply to domestic market but to export his produces to Canada as well.

Culture and Education

Owing to the American educational system which is well rounded and free (elementary to high school levels), Nung children enjoyed this system to its fullest. One found Nung students in all schools and colleges. Younger generations of Nungs certainly would be more educated and more skilled than their parents and grand-parents. We have witnessed a new generation of Nung professionals, doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, engineers, and technicians in a variety of specialties.

Social Activities

After moving to a location, finding a job, and resettling there, a Nung refugee would get together with his/her compatriots to form mutual-help groups or associations. In California the Nungs had the following important organizations which were founded and managed by themselves:

1. The America-Vietnam-Chinese Friendship Association

This Association was set up in November, 1976 by the following founders: Messieurs Phang Cong Phu, Vong Chan Senh, Ly Siu Cong, and Gip A Sang. At first, it had

been financially assisted by the government of Nationalist China (Taiwan) to purchase an office at Number 3220-3230 North Broadway Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90031. Its purpose was to strengthen the members' spirit as compatriots, encourage and develop mutual assistance among members for the common goods as a non-profit organization. Its membership reached 5,000 and was successively managed by Messieurs Phang Cong Phu, Ly Siu Cong, Ma Tchoc Chieng, Moc In Senh, Ma Chi In, Chiu Menh Khi, and Vong Tenh Khoan.

The Association established five organic structures:

*The Goddess of Mercy Pagoda (Chua Quan Am) a neat and splendid temple where all members, men and women cultivated their religious quality, improved their compassion for others, and exercised Buddhist rituals;

*The Sino-Vietnamese school, an educational institution to promote the best oriental legacy and morality where young students could absorb Chinese and Vietnamese cultures. At this writing, the school had 300 students whose principal was Mr. Tsan Tsan Sang;

*The Welfare Committee for Seniors to promote health activities for the aged and funeral services;

*The Meeting Hall or Palace (Unicorn-Dragon-Dance Team) where dragon-dance classes were offered. Activities related to self improvement, festivities, and enter-

tainments were originated. This Hall had a self-defense group of 1,000 students;

*The Youth Center to maintain and promote connection and good relationship among young people, to initiate social activities and entertainments, and to encourage and assist them to engage in public services and participate in community activities.



The Sino-Vietnamese Association and Goddess of Mercy Pagoda in Los Angeles (Photo by CSN)

2. *The Chinese Mutual Assistance Association of Santa Clara County - (Northern) California*

The Association was established on December 8, 1981. Its office was located at 1805 Lucretia Avenue, San Jose, California. Mr. Vong Chan Senh (ex President of The Nung Ethnic Mutual Assistance Association in Saigon; ex Vice

President of Saigon City Council) was the founder and Association President for three terms, second, fourth, and fifth.

The Association was a philanthropic organization of highest standing ever established by our people. Though its name implied “Chinese Mutual Assistance”, in reality, it welcomed all ethnicities: Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Nungs.

Owing to Mr. Vong Chan Senh’s talent and leadership, and his transparent management, the Association expanded swiftly. It had ten thousand members, established a school to teach Chinese language, a Health-Happy Center, a vocational class for youths, and a section to teach Tai Chi martial art (Thai cuc quyen).

The Reverence-for-Seniors Team (To Kinh Lao) an organic service of the Association purchased over 500 gravesites in order to re-sell to members at very low price compared to that in the current market. Once a member passed away, his/her next of kin was entitled to receive 7,000 to 14,000 dollars depending upon his/her membership seniority. The monthly funeral contribution of living members depended upon the quantity of deceased persons in that period. At the beginning, when there was a death, each member had to contribute \$20. When the Association accumulated ample funds this monthly contribution was gradually reduced to \$2. If a member reached 15 years of seniority his monthly fee would be zero. From this time on, he would only pay an annual fee of \$24 and receive full benefits.

After the purchase of its office building, its assets reached 3 million dollars.



*The Chinese Mutual Assistance Association of Santa Clara
(Photo VCS)*

3. *The Hai Ninh Community Association*

This Association was officially permitted to operate in 1996. In reality, it had been established on June 19, 1991. Its founders were Messieurs Gip A Sang, Ho Ky, Ung Senh Vay, Lieu Nguyen, Cam Sy Nhan, Nong Cun Sang, Mong Khay Phu, and Gip Phong Quay.

After 16 years of operations, the association had been successively managed by 6 presidents: Messieurs Ho Ky, Tom Thong, Vong Ky Xuong, Tsan Phu Quay, Lau Chan Ham, and Vong Sap Sli.

According to its bylaws, the purpose of the association was to promote the spirit of solidarity, strengthen and maintain the Hai Ninh compatriotic legacy.

During the very First Term of office, President Ho Ky succeeded in his funding campaign and collected nearly 300,000 dollars to purchase the building at 501-511 West Main Street, San Gabriel, California, 91801, for the Association's permanent office. A portion of the building was remodeled for the set-up of the altar of the Goddess of Mercy. This attracted many compatriots to come to worship, enjoy vegetarian food, and perform monthly rituals and other festivities according to our Nung customs. Due to its activities the Association maintained a regular and solid financial collection to defray operational expenses.

The Association had been the chief organizer of two meaningful events, the Convention of Hai Ninh Community Solidarity of 1996 (during Mr. Ho Ky's tenure as President) and the same Convention of 1998 (during Mr. Tom Thong's tenure as President). On both occasions a great number of Nungs from many states and delegations of compatriots from Edmonton and Vancouver of Canada participated in the first Convention, and a delegation of Edmonton was present in the second Convention. Their general participations denoted a positive spirit fulfilling the purpose of the Association.

The beneficial echo of these conventions gave birth to a number of sub-associations among them there was the Hai Ninh Community Association of Seattle, Washington state, led by President Che Khay Sin. Its commencement

ceremony to present the Executive Committee and to inaugurate the Goddess of Mercy Pagoda on May 12, 2001 was attended by a General Association delegation from the U.S.A.

Since the early Nineties, all refugees and boat people, once admitted to the refugee-camps in Southeast Asia, must pass a screening examination prior to their admittance as migrants to various host countries. The two gentlemen Ho Ky and Vong Ky Xuong had to intervene in refugee-camps in Hong-Kong to plead for Nung refugees and expedite the immigration process so they might be accepted in the U.S.A. In addition, Mr. Ho Ky, on behalf of his Association, called all Hai Ninh people for contributions to build schools in Song Mao and other locations in Vietnam where Nungs resided.



*The American Hai Ninh Community Association
(picture by CSN)*

4. *The Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association*

Founding and Organization

In mid-1990, most of the Nung people from the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh had resettled, had residences and stable jobs, a group of Nungs felt the need to form a mutual-assistance association whose members came from the same roots of geography, education, occupation, and politics, and especially from the same nationalistic ideal and struggle. There were meetings to discuss the above need. The participants, some of them had been in the South Vietnam armed forces, most of them had been cadets of the Junior-Preparatory Military Academy of Moncay, ex-administrators or ex-elected Representatives of the (former) Republic of South Vietnam. All agreed to name it The Hai Ninh Inter-Institutions of Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association, later, The Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association (HNV & PAAA). Its office was temporarily located at 429 South Curtis Avenue, Alhambra, California, 91803. Finally the HNV & PAAA was officially established in 1991 following the collective initiative of Messieurs Gip A Sang, Nong Cun Sang, Vong Ky Xuong, Cam Sy Nhan, Mong Khay Phu, Gip San Thai, Van Thenh Phong, Tsan Slui Tchou, Gip Tau Phi, Chau Bac Sang, Slen Slau San, and Gip A Dzieng... Legally Messieurs Gip A Dzieng, Chau Bac Sang, and Gip San Thai were signing the application for the Association. In 1996, its permit

was issued and the Association was officially born and in operations as a non-profit entity of social activity.

The purpose of the Association was to develop mutual help, and solidarity among members, as well as to provide a favorable environment for them to meet and join their efforts to promote welfare and constructive activities for their families and themselves.

Since its founding, the management of the Association has been chosen by an election every other year. The elected managers were: Mr. Vong Ky Xuong (two terms) successively thereafter; Messieurs Gip A Dzieng, Ly Moc Sang, Tsu A Cau, Phong Tit Chang (two terms) and currently at this writing, the incumbent manager (2006-2008) was Mr. Chau Cam Sang.

There were two categories of Advisors. The Supreme Advisors were ex-Lieutenant-General Linh Quang Vien, ex-Major-General Pham Van Dong, ex-Brigadier-General Chieng Denh Quay, ex-Colonel Hoang Gia Cau, ex-Councilman Vong Chan Senh, (Saigon city-council). The second group of Advisors was of the younger generation. They were Dr. Ly Chi Phuong (second son of Dr. Ly Ngoc Duong), and Lawyer Kimberly Diep, (second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gip San Thai).

The membership regulations stated that anyone whose spouse had been a student or graduate of former schools or institutions in the Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory

was eligible to join the Association. Those schools and institutions were:

The Military Cadres School, Junior Military Academy, Teachers' School, Public Administration School, French-Nung School, and French-Vietnamese School. Also eligible were those whose origins were from Hai Ninh and presented evidence of serving or struggling for the interest of the Hai Ninh people. As a result, the Association membership was worldwide including members from Vietnam. The number of good standing compatriots membership having registered addresses for receiving *the Association Periodic Bulletin* were 159 members.

Activities

Besides routine meetings for normal operations the Association initiated the following special activities:

*organizing the Tet festival so members and their families may come and celebrate Tet, and parents and elders give Good-Luck money (red envelopes) to children (li xi) as good wishes for growing up according to Sino-Vietnamese customs;

*organizing academic awards presentations and celebrations to encourage youths towards educational achievements;

*forming delegations to visit and offer solace to sick members; and organizing welcoming parties whenever friends or compatriots come from afar;

*campaigning for contributions or raising funds to help unfortunate compatriots in Vietnam;

*issuing the Information Bulletins on a trimester basis to disseminate Association news, also to maintain internal relationship among members and building bridge towards better relationship with neighboring associations of similar nature;

*organizing a ceremony every two years to present the newly elected Executive Committee, and administering symbolic and solemn salutations of the flag of the U.S. and that of the Republic of Vietnam (SVN), as well as a grateful and silent commemoration of the deceased relatives and generations of forebears in the past. The chorus performance of the Third Division March always marks the heroic and proud legacy of past history of our ethnic origin and the spirit of nationalist combatants faithful to our political ideology; and

*initiating the composition of this abridged history to generally record the origin of the Nung ethnic group and their antecedents, the process of racial building, and developing of the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh, Vietnam.

In the diplomatic front, the Association organized musical festivals to collect funds for helping flood victims in Vietnam; it also created fund-raising movements to assist disable veterans of the Republic of SVN, and offered a rear-base to assist friendly associations in their struggles for freedom and democracy in Vietnam.

The above activities through the years had accumulated a record which generated reputation and good feeling from other Sino-Vietnamese communities locally and nationwide (U.S.A.). As a result, the Nung ethnic groups have achieved a good standing among Vietnamese Americans.

If the Hai Ninh Community Association represented a larger gathering of Nung families, the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association served as the quintessential core of those families. The HNV & PAAA selected the best achievers, the excellent and most talented Nung “children” who have impressed others with their glorious trophies and achievements. The relationship between the two Associations could be paraphrased as that of “lips and teeth”. If the lips are leaked, the teeth are cold. Therefore both have to strengthen their brotherhood and to unite even more in order to promote Nung prestige among the multicultural environment of the U.S.

The most important advice that the elder Nung personalities have for younger generations is education. Only education would elevate the high prestige status of citizens to be worthy of continuing the legacy of historic and heroic combating spirit of their forebears. All Association Presidents always induce youths to participate in all the Association activities with a view to promoting the Nung reputation even further.

Below is the list and résumés of the Presidents of the Associations of all terms; Supreme Advisors; Operational Advisors; Honorary Advisors; the Executive Committee Eighth Term of the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association. These personalities have contributed their physical and financial resources to the Associations and Nung community out of Vietnam, and to provide means for the completion of this documentary work. The Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh-Vietnam.

Presidents



Vong Ky Xuong
1st & 2nd Terms



Gip A Dzieng
Third Term



Ly Moc Sang
Fourth Term



Tsu A Cau
Fifth Term



Phong Tit Chang
6th & 7th Terms



Chau Cam Sang
Eighth Term

Supreme Advisors



Linh Quang Vien



Pham Van Dong



Chieng Denh Quay



Hoang Gia Cau



Vong Kim Sinh



Truong Thang Chuc



Phang Cong Phu



Tran Duc Lai



Ly Ngoc Duong



Vong Chan Senh



Chuong A Kieu



Lau Venh Dzenh



Lau Chi Phan



Vong Lap Quay



Chenh Chi Lan



Lau Chan Ham



Tom Thong



Moc Menh Va



Gip T. Phong Mui



Vong Sap Si



Gip San Canh

Regular & Honorary Advisors



Ly Minh Khiem



Slen Slau Khau



Mong Khay Phu



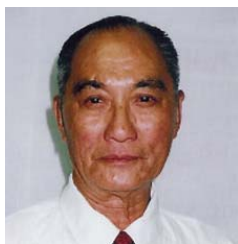
Tsan Slui Pho



Ho Quay



LS Kimberly Diep



Vong Phoc Henh



Bui Trong Tieu



Ly Chi Phuong



Chau Bac Sang



Slen Cam Vo



Quy Ngoc Duong



Slen Slau Phy



Slen Cam Hong



Hoang Gia Ky



Gip Tsieng Senh



Tsan Ky Chan



Tsan Chu Tshenh



Lau Say On



Truong Tien Chi



Quy Ngoc Phuong



Phu Chiu Di



Phan Van Kim



Banh Nai Oc

Current Executive Committee, 8th Term



Chau Cam Sang
President



Nong Cun Sang
Vice President



Gip Phat Piu
Vice President



Tsan Nhan Pan
Vice President



Vong Ly Chan
Vice President



Lieng Toi Piu
Vice President



Cam Si Nhan
Vice President



Vong Quay Lin
Vice President



Hoang A Sam
Chief Controller



Luu Tu Duc
Vice Controller



Gip Tau Phi
Vice Controller



Ho Ngoc
General Secretary



Tsan Phoc Khin
Gen. Service Chief



Giu Phong Chi
Deputy Gen. Ser-
vice Chief



Gip San Thai
Treasurer



Vong Man Denth
Chief of Finance



Ly A Sang
Deputy Chief of
Finance



Van Thenh Phong
Entertainment
Committee Chief



Ly Dan Lam
Entertainment
Committee Deputy
Chief



Loc Chan Lam
Information Com-
mittee Chief



Slen Slau San
Social Service
Committee Chief



Vong A Si
Social Service
Committee Deputy
Chief



Cam Phong Va
Women Committee
Chief



Ngan Sliu Tsin
Women Committee Deputy Chief

Below are some photographs of activities of each term of the Hai Ninh Veterans & Public Administration Alumni Association.

The First Term Inauguration Ceremony



The Second Term Inauguration Ceremony



The Third Term Inauguration Ceremony



The Fourth Term Inauguration Ceremony



The fund-raising campaign for flood victims of Vietnam during the Fifth Term of tenure



The Sixth Term Inauguration Ceremony



The Seventh Term Inauguration Ceremony



The Eight Term Inauguration Ceremony



Notes:

1. Organization “Medicins Sans Frontière” of France with its ship L’Ile de Lumière and Cap Anamur Committee of Dr. Neudeck (Germany) have rescued over 11,000 Vietnamese boat people (Tap chi Ban Tin Cao Nien Duc Quoc, Issues May and June 2007, pages 30-31.
2. According to American Community Survey of 2005, the Vietnamese in the US were 1,418,334 persons- Do Thai Nhien.
3. SCH April 29, 2003 pages 25-27. News, the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association, Issue 6, Seventh Term, pages 27-29 and Issue 7, and Issue 2, Eighth Term, page 7. Tsan Nhan Vay, June 16, 2007. Chenh Chan Sang, June 20, 2007. Ho A Duong, July 12, 2007.
4. After July 1954, Hai Ninh province was demoted to District (Huyen) and annexed to old Quang Yen which became Quang Yen province.
5. GDZ August 25, 2003, pages 30-39. GDZ, article July 25, 2006. SCH April 29, 2003, pages 15-25. NSSJ, Comments to Part Fourth, pages 1, 2. Ho A Duong, July 13, 2007.
6. According to US Census Bureau in 2005, Americans of Vietnamese descends were 275,000 out of Orange County total population of 2,988,072 persons - Do Thai Nhien.



Colonel Vong A Sang

Leader of the Nung
Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory
Senator of the Republic of Vietnam

Biography of Mr. **Vong A Sang**

- Date of birth: March 19, 1902 at Tan Mai village, Ha Coi district, Hai Ninh province;

- 1914: cadet of Nui Deo Junior Military Academy, Quang Yen province, graduated in 1920. Joined French army and promoted Master Sergeant in 1931;

- 1932 designated to attend the officer candidate school of Frejus, France; graduated in 1935 with the rank of Second-lieutenant;

- 1940 promoted First-lieutenant;

- On March 9, 1945 the Japanese overthrew French authority in a coup-d'état in Indochina, Lieutenant Vong A Sang and a group of Nung troops joined the French unit in the withdrawal to China and stationed at Hundred-Thousand-High Mountains (Thap Van Dai Son) in between Quang Dong and Quang Tsi;

- Promoted Captain on June 1st, 1945;

- In early 1946, assistant to a French Lieutenant-colonel Commanding Officer of a military unit from Phong Thanh towards Co To and Van Hoa, utilizing this bridge-head to launch an attack and re-occupy Hai Ninh province in August 1946; on March 13, 1947, this unit marched on Mon-cay.

On July 14, 1948 the Nung Hai Ninh Autonomous Territory was established; became the leader of the Nung

Autonomous Territory on July 17, 1949. The Autonomous Territory was officially recognized by Chief of State (Emperor) Bao Dai. It was integrated in the “Royal Dynasty Reservation Estate of Northern Vietnam” (Hoang Trieu Cuong Tho Mien Bac Viet Nam)

- Early 1949, promoted Major;

- Early 1951, promoted Lieutenant-colonel;

- On August 1st, 1954, promoted Colonel, assigned Commanding Officer of Coastal Region from Hai Ninh province to Quang Yen province;

- In late 1956, discharged due to age-limit of his rank, an application of a newly promulgated army regulation, as if intended by the government of Ngo Dinh Diem in a cleaning measure for suspicion of pro-French in politics;

- 1966, President, North Vietnam Highlands Mutual Assistance Association;

- 1966, elected Assemblyman, Binh Thuan province, National Constituent Assembly;

- 1967, elected Senator of The Republic of Vietnam; The Ethnic Minorities Solidarity Block;

- 1975, died aboard the Truong Xuan ship while escaping from communism after April 30, 1975;

(Documented by Mr. Hoang Gia Cau, the second son of Mr. Vong A Sang).



Lieutenant-colonel Vong A Sang with the Traditional Beret
of Nung Combatants

SỨ ĐOÀN BA HÀNH KHÚC

Loi & Nhạc: Vu Duc Nghiem (1956)
(108) 278-4009

Nhịp đi hùng mạnh



Chúng ta là đoàn trai xông pha phong sương
Nhờ chàng hồi Bình Liêu xông pha biên khu
Nòi đây quathũ tan tác chiêng công thiên



hùng. Chấn sa trường cưỡi vang coi kình dẫu huơng.
thu Nhớ chàng Đầm Hầm uốn quán reo xung phong
Non nước lăm nguy đoàn tạt tiến hành lên
Thả Phun Tiên Yên Công quán nạt tan hai



đường. Trong gian nan tiến lên đi Sứ Đoàn Ba.
hưng. Noi giông xla, tiến lên đi Sứ Đoàn Ba
Cửu quê hương lăm thài êm guy chi
Núi sông oi, công ghi lòng son rưng



sông. Sông Mạc, đày miến rưng hoang
dừng. Tim ta oan thù rên nung,
vườn lên bản tay kiến thiết Đấu tranh cho Việt Nam tự
Dâng cam hôn lên mũi sừng Quyết hy sinh diệt quân tàn

do hung. Ngày mai, một ngày đẹp, tuổi, Toan dẫn vang lời, ca
 Có bay ngang trời tung; Diệt quân sai, lang tan;
 Đoàn ta mừng reo chiến; Muôn dân mong chờ ta! Cùng nhau;
 Đi lên Sư đoàn 3! Đi lên Sư đoàn 3! Ca;
 Tiến lên oai hùng trong sương gió; Tiến lên Sư đoàn 3! Ca;
 vâng trên đường xa! Lam sao núi sông lừng danh Sư Đoàn Ba; Nhớ chàng..... Ba;
 Thưa ông Hồ! Giữ gìn Cái Chĩnh Bà; Vĩnh biệt 6/2/2000;
 Tên tôi: V.D.M. Kieu

The Third Division March

Music & Lyrics by VU DUC NGHIEM

I.

We are young men moving out through mist and wind. We set about and happily sing the home goodbye song. In battlefields we laugh in defiance of pains and wounds. The country is in danger, we have to depart swiftly. Amid difficulties, march forward, Third Division to save our wretched and endangered country despite of all risks. Third Division must go. Saving our country, we challenge hardships and dangers. From the wild jungle of Song Mao let's raise our constructive hands. We fight for Vietnam's freedom. Tomorrow will be a beautiful day. All the people will sing out loud cheerful songs. On the way Advance Northwards to save our country. We will crush all the evil wild beasts.

II.

Don't you remember the Binh Lieu fighting over the frontier area where the enemy was crushed in our victory of thousand years? Don't forget Dam Ha where thousands of our troops shout in assault. Thai Phun, Tien Yen where the communists were horribly routed. Repeat the time-memorial example! Move forward, Third Division! Mountains and rivers witnessed our loyalty and heroic souls. In our hearts, we nurture our animosity towards the enemy. Raise our rancor up to our rifle muzzle. We're determined to sacrifice ourselves to crush the brutal enemy. Tomorrow our troops will

return to the Capital. Our flag will be streaming across the sky. Thousands voices will sing out loud our song. Our troops yell to cheer victory....

Refrain:

Move forward, Third Division! All the people are waiting for us. Advance boldly together through mist and wind. Move forward, Third Division! Let's sing out loud in the long way. Let's act so our fame will reverberate over mountains and rivers, Third Division. Remember...

ADDENDUM 1

LIST OF STUDENTS SCHOOL OF MILITARY CADRES (Ecole des Cadres)

Chau Chong Can	Lai Van Loc
Che A Phoc	Lam Sin Thenh
Chenh Phat Sang	Lam Sy Ky
Chenh Slui Lan	Lau Venh Dzenh
Chieng Cong Phi	Lau Venh Quay
Chieng Cong Phu	Lay Phat Dieng
Chieng Denh Quay	Lieng Say Tac
Chieng Slin Senh	Liu A Sau
Chuong A Kieu	Liu Denh
Duong Phun Sang	Loc Lam Dieng
Giap Van Dat	Lu Khoan Nam
Gip A Cau	Lu Tac Nong
Gip A Sang	Ly A Pat
Gip San Canh	Ly Duc Quan
Ha Nhat Han	Ly Hoa Dinh
Hau Cam Pau	Ly Senh Dong
Hau Tsan Pau	Ly Venh Tso
Hoang Tien Tai	Ngo Thiem Thang
Hoang Tu Luong	Nguyen Van Binh
Hy Cun Hong	Nguyen Van Ty
Hy Cun Pau	Nim Tin Chieng
Lai Van Chu	Pham Coc Ky

Phan Van Kim
Plang Cong Nam
Plang Cong Tong
Quy Ngoc Duong
Quy Ngoc Phuong
Slen A Phat
Slen Cam Vo
Slen Slau Phi
Sliu Tsoi Cong
Tang Coc Dan
Tang Hin Dech
Thau Man Slui
Tran Duc Lai
Tran The Anh
Truong thang Chuc
Tsan Chu Tshenh
Tsan Nhoc Tsoi
Tsy Slau Phoc

Ung Chenh Nhin
Ung Nhin Mau
Vong A Si
Vong Chay Menh
Vong Coc Mu
Vong Dong Phong
Vong Kim Sinh
Vong Lap Chau
Vong Lap Denh
Vong Lap Quay
Vong Mau Quay
Vong Phat Dieng
Vong Phat Sang
Vong Sap Nam
Vong Sec Menh
Vong Si Dau
Etc.

ADDENDUM 2

LIST OF STUDENTS Jr. Military Academy (Ecole d'Enfants de Troupe)

CLASS 1

Chac Tsiu Phu	Lau Long Cong
Che A Phoc	Lau Moc Sang
Chenh Phat Sang	Lau Venh Dzenh
Dieng Phat Dieng	Lau Venh Quay
Emile Sauret	Lieng Thenh Long
Gip A Dzieng	Liu A Gieng
Gip A Lau	Liu A Sau
Gip A Sang	Liu Man Denh
Gip Tau Phi	Liu Moc Sang
Giu Phong Quay	Liu Pac Sang
Hau Cam Pau	Liu Vong Sang
Hau Tsan Pau	Lo Duc Tan
Ho Thenh Phat	Lo Ly Cong
Hy Cun Pau	Lu Tac Nong
Hy Cun Sang	Ly Ngoc Duong
Lam A Ma	Mong Khay Phu
Lau A Cau	Nong Cun Gieng
Lau Chan Vay	Nong Cun Sang
Lau Cun Gieng	Phong Man Long

Phong Man Menh
Phuong Van Bao
Quy Ngoc Dinh
Sam A Pau
Slen Slau Phi
Slen Slau Quan
Slong Ly Cong
Slu Nhi Cau
Tang Sui Tac
To Phuong Chu
Tran Duc Lai
Tsan Nang Quan
Tsan Phat Tac
Van Nam Gieng
Van Nam Sang
Vong A Kem

Vong A Nhi
Vong A Pau
Vong A Si
Vong A Ung
Vong A Ung (*Second
Son of Col. Sang*)
Vong Ho Sang
Vong Lap Mu
Vong Lap Thenh
Vong Mau Thong
Vong Mu Quay
Vong Phat Sang
Vong Si Dau
Vong Y Phi
Vy Van Ty

CLASS 2 & Subsequent CLASSES

Be Van Hai
Be Van Thach
Chang Hoi Lieng
Chau Bac Sang
Chau Di Senh
Chau Henh On
Chau Sin Man
Chau Sin Mau
Chau Sin Mu
Chau Sin Pau

Chau Y Cong
Cheng A Dieng
Cheng A Slam
Cheng Man Lan
Cheng Phat Denh
Chieng A Dieng
Chieng Coc Phu
Chieng Cong Mu
Cheng Cun Lan
Cheng Nhith Tac

Cheng Thong Ho
Chi Nhat Slau
Chieng A Sang
Chieng Ca Phong
Chieng Henh Mu
Chieng Ly Sang
Chieng Quan Dieng
Chieng Slin Slui
Chieng Thanh Sau
Chieng Y Quay
Chong Dau Senh
Chu Van Phu
Cong Khoay Phong
Cong Va Phong
Dang Ngoc Phuc
Dang Ngoc Tho
Duong A Phoc
Duong Chi Hong
Duong Chi Menh
Gip A Pau
Gip Tsan Thai
Gip Tsan Tsin
Giu Phong Chi
Ha Van Lau
Ho A Slam
Ho Giong Nhin
Ho Henh Phoc
Ho Henh Say
Ho Ly Cong (A)
Ho Ly Cong (B)

Ho Ly Sau
Ho Nhoc Va
Hoang Duc Thinh
Hoang Gia Thanh
Hoang Phu Sinh
Hoang Thim Huu
Hoang Thuy Binh
Hoang Trong Manh
Hoang Van Ban
Hoang Van Luc
Hoang Van Manh
Hoang Van Nam
Hoang Van Nong
Hoang Van So
Hoang Van Thanh
Hong A Cau
Hong Slau Phong
Hy Cun Nam
Hy Hin Nang
Hy Tau Phi
La Siu Anh
La Siu Phuc
Lai Ngoc Long
Lam A Sang
Lam Nhit Tac
Lam Sy Mu
Lau A Cau (little)
Lau A Sli
Lau A Ung
Lau Chan Ham

Lau Ly Sang
Lau Pho Sang
Lau Slau Tsin
Lau Venh Mau
Lay Lau Dieng
Le Duc Phong
Lenh Lap Thenh
Liu A Pau
Liu Hau Long
Liu Menh Phat
Lo A Chan
Lo Chiu Tsan
Lo Slau Phong
Lo Van Minh
Loc A Senh
Loc Chan Lam
Loc Quay Sam
Loc Sli Lam
Loc Tac Lam
Lu A Sau
Lu Chi Khieng
Lu Chi Nam
Lu Cun Pau
Lu Nhat Phi
Ly A Sang
Ly Cun Dieng
Ly Cun Sang
Ly Dong Phoc
Ly Dong Thai
Ly Minh Khiem

Ly Nhit Sang
Ly Thu Sang
Ly Van Sang
Ma A Sang
Mong A Slam
Ngo Van Pau
Ngo Van Soc
Nhin A Man
Nim A Pau
Nong Viet Pun
On Van Tai
Pham Canh Dinh
Pham Huy My
Pham Tac Chan
Pham Thong Vay
Pham Van Lieu
Phong A Slam
Phong Chan Nhi
Phong Cun Sang
Phu Nang Hoi
Phu Nang Senh
Phu Vay Di
Phu Vay Khin
Phu Vay Pan
Plang Cong Slay
Plun A Cau
Quach Quynh
Quoc Quynh
Slen Cam Chieng
Slen Cam Phan

Slen Cong Pau
Slen Slau San
Slu Chong Vay
Sy Ly Dieng
Tang Tsong Piu
Tenh A Nhi
Tenh Hong Ky
Thong Chan Dieng
Thu Thu Dieng
To Phuong Cuong
Ton Minh Chi
Tran Tieu Van
Tran Van Hoang
Tran Van Hung
Tran Van Le
Trinh A Dieng
Trinh Van Lang
Truong A Sam
Tsan Kin Nam
Tsan Phoc Mau
Tsan Phoc Senh
Tsan Slui Tsau
Tsoc Vong Dieng
Tsy A Pat
Tsy Khay Dau
Tsy Na Sang
Tsy Slau Man
Tu Cun Lin
Tu Nai Thong
Tu Thanh Phuc

Ung Ca Dech
Ung Chech Kin
Ung Ly Sang
Van Thenh Phong
Vong A Kem
Vong A Pac
Vong A Pau (Little)
Vong A Slam
Vong Ca Chi
Vong Ca Dan
Vong Ca Lap
Vong Ca Nam
Vong Ca Senh
Vong Cam Sang
Vong Chay Nang
Vong Chi Hong
Vong Chu Nip
Vong Cong Sang
Vong Cun Dieng
Vong Cun Sang
Vong Cun Sau
Vong Henh
Vong Khieng
Vong Ky Xuong
Vong Ly Chan
Vong Man Denh
Vong Man Quay
Vong Nhi Cau
Vong Nhi Sap Sli
Vong Phat Cong

Vong Phat Dieng
Vong Phat Pau
Vong Phat Sang
Vong Phu Lam
Vong Say Hong
Vong Sech Khieng
Vong Sech Lay
Vong Senh Tac

Vong Tac Quay
Vong Thenh Quay
Vy Van Khoa
Vy Van Lap
Vy Van Quang
Vy Van Tieu
Etc.

ADDENDUM 3

LIST OF STUDENTS TEACHERS' SCHOOL (ECOLE NORMALE)

CLASS 1

Chieng Thenh Ung	Tsan Dau Tong (female)
Chong Tsieng Denh	Tsan Nhan Vay
Gip Phong Pau	Tsan Slui Lam
Hau Siu Denh	Tsan Tac Phong
Lau Chan On	Tsy Slau Phoc
Loc Vay Lieng	Vong Phoc Henh
Ly Siu Cong	Vong Sap Nam
Moc In Lenh (female)	Vong Siu Phi
Plang Cong Tong	Y Hoc Lieng
Slen Cam Vo	Yn Chech Khieng
Slong Chieng Chan	

CLASS 2

Chau Dong Menh	Lam Sli Denh (female)
Chieng Phu Ninh	Lam Tau Khoan
Hau Man Denh (female)	Lieng Say Tac
Ho Hy Hoc	Liu Denh

Ly Senh Dong	Tsan Ho
Nim Chi Nam	Tsan Phoc Long
Pham Coc Chan (female)	Tsan Si Thenh
Pham Coc Ky	Tsan Slui Pho
Plang Cong Nam	Tsan Thin Dau
Plun Yn Phan	Tsy Phu Khieng
Slen Slau Diu	Ung Chenh Nhin
Slen Slau Vay	Vong Sech Di
Thau Man Slui	Vong Sech Dong
Thong Senh Slau	Vong Sech Sang
Tsan Doc Thong	

CLASS 3 - CLASS 7

After Class 3 there were four more classes. Unfortunately due to lack of records we have up to now collected only a few names in the student list below.

Cam Nhit Khenh (female)	Duong Mui Tsenh (female)
Cam Sy Khin	Gip Khi Sam
Cam Sy Nhan	Gip Van Denh (female)
Cam Tsoc Tsin	Ho Chi Va
Chenh Lin Chieng (female)	In Tsui Lin (female)
Chieng Thenh Phi	Lam Nhi Sang
Cun Coc On	Lam Sy Ky
Dan Tac Chieng	Lay Nhit Denh (female)
Dan Tac Lay (female)	Lenh Nhoc chan (female)
Diu Phong Slan	Liu Hau Khi

Liu Tan Chong
Lo Cong Sau
Loc Coc Pleng
Lu Va Phong
Ly Nhoc Chan
Ly Say Sam
Ly Van Loc
Moc Khin Chong
Moc Khin Menh
Phong Chan Tsieng
Phu Venh Cong
Poc Coc Nhi
Quan Slui Nhan
Sam Hong Plu
Sam Menh Khi
Sec Lay Chan (female)
Slen A Phat
Slen Cam Phan
Slen SLau Khieng
Slen Slau Lin (female)
Slin Slui Phong (female)
Slu Say Chan
Tang Chong Khanh
Tang Chong Lin (female)
Tang Slau Denh (female)

Tham Kit Penh (female)
Thong Slui Menh (female)
Thong Tsenh Dieng
Thu Chong Menh
Tsan Chu Tshenh
Tsan Dan Cong
Tsan Phoc Tsieng
Tsy Lay Denh (female)
Tsy Slau Pan
Tsy Vay Kin (female)
Ung Chech Nam
Ung Nhin Mau
Ung To Tsieng
Vong Ca Chan
Vong Ca Khenh (female)
Vong Chi Phan
Vong In Hang (female)
Vong Khay Menh
Vong Sec Menh
Vong Slu Nhoc (female)
Vong Tin Hip
Vong Tin Senh
Vong Tsoi Cam (female)
Yn Tsui Lin (female)
Etc.

ADDENDUM 4

LIST OF STUDENTS SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION (Ecole d'Administration)

CLASS 1

Gip A Dzieng	Pham Van Phien
Ho Henh Phong	Slong Chieng Chan
Hoang Van Dao	Tsan Phoc Long
Lau A Cau	Vong Ca Him
Lau Chi Phan	Vong Siu Phi
Lau Moc Sang	Vy Van Ty
Mong Khay Phu	Y Hoc Lieng
Ngo Tai Chieu	Yn Chech Khieng
Nong Cun Sang	

CLASS 2

Cam Sy Khin	Lu Va Phong
Gip Phong Pau	Ly Van Loc
Ho Quay Ninh	Mac Kim Pau
Ho Va Ninh	Phong Man Long
Lam Sy Ky	Thong Senh Pau
Lam Va Chan	Thong Tsenh Gieng
Lo A Cong	Tsan Ho
Loc Vay Lieng	Tsan Slui Pho

Ung To Tsieng
Vong A Pau

Vong Tin Hip

ADDENDUM 5

LIST OF STUDENTS NATIONAL MILITARY ACADEMY OF VIETNAM (ECOLE DES OFFICIERS INTER-ARMES DE DALAT)

CLASS 3

Duong Phun Sang

Vong Van Thong

CLASS 5

Chieng Denh Quay

Ngo Thiem Thang

Chieng Slin Senh

Quy Ngoc Duong

Lai Van Chu

Quy Ngoc Phuong

Lam Sin Thenh

CLASS 8

Gip A Sang

Ly Duc Quan

Hau Cam Pau

Phan Van Kim

Lau Venh Dzenh

CLASS 9

Hoang A Sam

Vong A Sang

CLASS 10

Che A Phoc
Lau Venh Quay
Liu Denh
Nguyen Van Binh

Thau Man Slui
Vong A Si
Vong Lap Quay
Vong Si Dau

CLASS 11

Chenh Phat Sang
Gip A Pho
Lai Van Loc
Lau Chi Phan
Mong Khay Phu

Slen Slau Phi
Vong Phat Sang
Vong Siu Phi
Vy Van Ty
Yn Chech Khieng

CLASS 13

Chau Chong Can
Gip Vong Sang
Hin A Sau
Loc Lam Duong
Ly Phuc Quang

Ngo Tai Chieu
Ngo Tai Duong
Tsan Nang Quan (Khoan)
Ung Phoc Sang
Vong Phat Duong

CLASS 18

Tenh A Nhi

CLASS 19

Ha Van Lau (young)
Hy Tau Phi

Quy Van Vong

CLASS 23

Hoang A Sang
Ly Van Phuc
To Phuong Nang

Ton Cong Minh
Ton Minh Chi

CLASS 26

Ly Cong Pau

CLASS 27

Diep Tac Diu
Hoang Van Toan

Quy Thien Quang

CLASS 28

Giap Quoc Bao

CLASS 29

Phong Tit Chang
Phu A Tai

Sy A Tau
Tsu A Cau

CLASS 30

Ly A Sang

ADDENDUM 6

LIST OF OFFICERS

Brigadier General

Chieng Denh Quay	Ly Duc Quan (<i>post-humously promoted after death in the battlefield</i>)
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Colonel

Duong Phun Sang	Truong Thang Chuc
Hoang Gia Cau	Vong Kim Sinh
Sliu Tsoi Cong	Vy Van Binh

Lieutenant-Colonel

Chieng Slin Senh	Lau Venh Dzenh
Chuong A Kieu	Ly Ngoc Duong
Gip San Canh	Ngo Thiem Thang
Ha Van Lau	Phan Van Kim
Hau Cam Pau	Phang Cong Phu
Lai Quoc Thai	Quy Ngoc Duong
Lai Van Chu	Quy Ngoc Phuong
Lai Van Loc	Thau Man Slui
Lam Sin Thenh	Vong Ca Ho
Lau Chi Phan	Vong Dong Phong

Vong Van Dinh

Vong Van Thong

Major

Cay A Lo

Che Menh Senh

Chenh Chi Lan

Dieu Quang Hiep

Duong Chi Hong

Gip A Sang

Hoang Ngoc Phuong

Hoang Trong Manh

Hoang Tu Luong

Hoang Van Dinh

Lau Moc Sang

Lau Venh Quay

Le Hien Ich

Lieng Hang

Lo Hong Chan

Luu Tu Duc

Ly Siu Cong

Mong Khay Phu

Nguyen Van Binh

Nguyen Van Doa

Nguyen Van Hoa

Nong Van Doan

Slen Cam Vo

Slen Slau Khau

Slen Slau Phy

Tenh A Nhi

To Phuong Chu

Tran Duc Lai

Tran The Anh

Tran Tu Minh

Tsan Chu Tshenh

Tsan Slui Pho

Vong A Sang

Vong A Si

Vong Chay Menh

Vong Lap Denh

Vong Lap Quay

Vong Phat Sang

Vong Siu Phi

Vy Van Ty

Captain

Chau Cam Sang

Chieng Quan Dieng

Duong Quang Ngu

Gip Man Loi

Ha Van Lau

Ha Van Xien

Hin A Sau

Ho Nhoc Lin

Ho Quay
Hoang A Sam
Hoang Van Minh
Hoang Van Phu
Hoang Viet Phong
Hong Quang Thai
Lai Ngoc Long
Lai Quoc Phuong
Lieng A Sli
Lam Nhan Tac
Lau Chan Ham
Lay Phat Dieng
Liu Denh
Liu Menh Phu
Lo A Cong
Lo Duc Tan
Loc Ca Lin
Lu Khoan Nam
Lu Tac Nong
Luong Van Dao
Ly A Hon
Ly Cun Sang
Ly Hoa Dinh
Ly Moc Sang
Ly Van Phuc
Ly Van Tran
Ngo Tai Chieu
Pham Coc Khin
Pham Thong Vay
Phung A Nhi

Phung Nhith Dieng
Quy Ngoc Nghiep
Slin Thin Sang
Slong Chieng Chan
Thong A Slam
Thong Senh Pau
Thu Venh Long
To Phuong Cuong
To Phuong Nang
Ton Minh Chi
Trinh A Duong
Trinh Van Lang
Truong The Tue
Tsan A Nhi
Tsan A Pac
Tsan A Sang
Tsan Y Pan
Tsy A On
Vong A Pau
Vong A Sang
Vong Ca Cong
Vong Chi Phan
Vong Lap Thanh
Vong Nhat Slan
Vong Phat Dieng
Vong Sap Nam
Vong Sap Slam
Vong Venh Chau
Zin A Ung
Etc.

First lieutenant

Chau A Dieng	Ly Cun Sang
Che A Phoc	Ly Dong Phoc
Chenh Phat Sang	Ly Long Pan
Chi Venh Denh	Ly Minh Khiem
Chu Van To	Ly Nhu Lan
Duong Ly Bao	Ly Van Sang
Ha Nhat Han	Mong Chenh Phu
Ha Van Chuong	Nguyen Sam Hai
Ha Viet Chay	Ninh Van Sang
Ha Viet Thoi	Nong Quan Loi
Hin Tac Cam	Phung Cun Sang
Ho A Slam	Quach Vong
Ho Henh Man	Sam A Sang
Hoang A Sang	Sam Mu Van
Hoang Gia Ky	Slen Slau Khy
Hoang Phu Sinh	Slin Chi
Hy Tau Phi	Slin Ly Sau
Lau A Nhi	Slu Tsan Tsenh
Lau A Ung	Tang A Tong
Lau Slau Dan	Thai Nhat Sang
Liu A Penh	Tsan Phoc Chau
Lo Vay Cong	Tsan Phoc Long
Loc Chan Lam	Tsan Phoc Mu
Loc Quay Tsin	Tsoi Gi
Lu Nhat Phi	Tsoi Hoi Phu
Luu Tu Hanh	Ung Dau Phat
Ly A Sang	Vong A Sang
Ly A Sli	Vong Chay Dan
Ly Cong Pau	Vong Henh Gi

Vong Lap Ho
Vong Senh Chieng
Vong Tat Gi

Vy Tien Luong
Yn Chech Khieng
Etc.

Second lieutenant

Cam Sy Nhan
Chau Sin Mau
Chenh Man Lan
Chi Nhat Slau
Chiu Tsong Hy
Giap Quoc Bao
Gip (Diep) Tac Diu
Gip A Dzieng
Gip Moc Sinh
Gip Phat Piu
Giu Phong Chi
Ho Cong
Hoang Van Luc
Hoang Van Nong
Hoang Van Toan
Lau A Cau
Lau A Nhi
Lau Venh Mau
Lieng Toi Piu
Loc Y Lam
Luong Cun Mui
Ly A Slam

Ly A Sli
Nim A Pau
Nong Cun Sang
Phong Tit Chang
Phu A Tai
Phung Tsan Pau
Quy Thien Quang
Quy Van Chuong
Quy Van Vong
Sam Mu Tsieng
Slen Slau Nhoc
Sy A Tau
Thong Cun Sang
Thu Thu Dieng
Ton Cong Minh
Tran Van Le
Tsu A Cau
Ung A Pau
Ung Ca Dech
Vong Sap Sli
Vong Tac Sau

Aspirant

Chau Bac Sang

Chau Y Pong

Chau Y Senh

Chenh Man Lan

Chieng A Dieng

Chieng Sieng Lim

Dan Venh Thai

Gip Tsieng Senh

Hin Tac Sang

Hoang Van Phong

Lam A Tse

Lay Khenh Man

Lieng Ly Mui

Loc A Dieng

Pham Vong Kiu

Phong Cam Pau

Phong Khoan

Plang Cong Tong

Tang Khin Dan

Vong Lap Tsenh

Vong Loc

Vong Y Phi

Etc.

ADDENDUM 7

**NUNG MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT SERVICEMEN RESETTLED IN WESTERN
COUNTRY AFTER RELEASED FROM COMMUNIST PRISONS.**

Y = years

M = months

D = days

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
Colonel Hoàng Gia Cầu	12 y 8 m	USA			x	
Colonel Trương Thắng Chức	12 y 8 m	USA			x	

¹ According to the State Department, listing beginning with the Letter H 01, 02 and so forth.

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
Colonel Dương Phú Sáng	died in jail	USA			x	1
Colonel Sĩú Tsôi Công	12 y 8 m	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Chương A Kiêu	12 y 3 m	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Gíp Sấn Cảnh	12 y 8 m	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Hầu Cẩm Pầu	died in jail				x	1
Lt Colonel Lâm Sìn Thành	9 y	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Lầu Chí Phấn	9 y	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Lầu Vãnh Dzénh	12 y 3 m	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Ngô Thiêm Thắng	died in jail				x	1
Lt Colonel Quy Ngọc Phương	5 y	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Quy Ngọc Đường	5 y	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Phan Văn Kim	8 y	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Thầu Mần Slùi	5 y 10 m	USA			x	
Lt Colonel Vòng Đồng Phóng	5 y 10 m	USA			x	

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
Lt Colonel Vòng Văn Thông	Evaded incarceration	France	x			
Major Cáy A Lộc	6 y 6 m	USA			x	
Major Chê Mênh Sênh	5 y 6 m	USA			x	
Major Dương Chi Hồng	8 y 3 m	USA			x	
Major Hoàng Tử Lương	7 y	Australia				2
Major Lòu Mộc Sáng	8 y 9 m	USA	x			
Major Lòu Vênh Quay	9 y 10 m	Canada			x	
Major Lò Hồng Chấn	5 y 10 m	Australia			x	
Major Lưu Tú Đức	10 y	USA			x	
Major Mông Khay Phu	5 y 9 m	USA	x			2
Major Siên Cẩm Vô	7 y	USA			x	
Major Siên Slau Khâu	6 y	USA			x	
Major Siên Slau Phí	6 y 6 m	USA			x	

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
Major Trần Đức Lai	6 y 8 m	France			x	1
Major Trần Thế Anh	died in jail					
Major Tsàn Chủ Tshénh	12 y 3 m	USA			x	
Major Tsàn Sлуй Phó	17 y 3 m	USA			x	
Major Vòng A Si	11 y	USA			x	
Major Vòng Lập Dénh	8 y 4 m	USA			x	
Major Vòng Lập Quay	9 y	USA			x	
Major Vòng Phát Sáng	8 y	USA			x	
Major Vy Văn Tý	Fled prison, suicide at home					1
Capt Chau Cam Sang	7 y 1 m	USA			x	
Capt Hồ Quay	6 y 6 m	USA			x	
Capt Gip Ly Pau (Lau Chan	7 y 6 m	USA		x		2

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
Ham)						
Capt Hoàng Văn Minh	8 y 6 m	Australia			x	
Capt Lay Phat Diêng	3+ y	USA			x	
Capt Lò A Công	5 y 4 m	USA			x	
Capt Lý Mộc Sáng	8 y 8 m 15 d	USA			x	1
Capt Lò Khoan Nàm	died in jail	USA			x	
Capt Lò Tác Nông	7 y 2 m	USA			x	
Capt Trương Thế Tuệ	7 y 2 m	USA			x	
Capt Thòng Coc Liêng	7 y	USA			x	
Capt Thòng Sênh Pầu	2 y 10 m	USA		x		
Capt Vòng Chi Phần	5 y 1 m 15 d	USA			x	
Capt Vong Sap Slam	7 y	USA	x			
Capt Lâm Nhân Tác	died in jail					2

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
1st Lieutenant Hoàng Phú Sinh	7 y	USA			x	
1st Lieutenant Lộc Chấn Lâm	6 y 6 m	USA			x	
1st Lieutenant Lý A Sáng	5 y	USA			x	
1st Lieutenant Lý Công Pầu	died in jail					
1st Lieutenant Lý Đồng Phúc	3+ y	Australia			x	3
1st Lieutenant Nguyễn Sâm Hải	6 y					
1st Lieutenant Tsôi Hối Phu	5 y 6 m	USA			x	
1st Lieutenant Ứng Dầu Phát	5 y	USA			x	
1st Lieutenant Vòng Chay Dần	6 y	USA			x	
1st Lieutenant Vòng Tật Gi	Not report for prison	France				
1st Lieutenant Vy Tiến Lượng	6 y 6 m	USA			x	
2nd Lieutenant Chí Nhật Slau	5 y 6 m	USA			x	
2nd Lieutenant Chiu Tsòng Hỷ	8 y 6 m	USA				2

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
2nd Lieutenant Gip (Diep) Tac Diu	2 y	UK		x		
2nd Lieutenant Giu Phòng Chi	5 y	USA			x	
2nd Lieutenant Hoàng Văn Lục	4 y 4 m	USA			x	
2nd Lieutenant Hoàng Văn Toàn	5 y 15 d	USA			x	
2nd Lieutenant Quy Văn Vòng	3 y	USA			x	
2nd Lieutenant Vòng Tác Sàu	6 y	USA			x	
Mr. Hoang A Sam, RVN Central Intelligence Agency	13 y 3 m	USA			x	
Mr. Lê Văn Quang, chief, Chieu Hoi Service, Saigon	9+ y	USA			x	4
Mr. Ho Nhoc Va, RVN civil servant, attached to ROC Taiwan Embassy	5 y 4 m	Taiwan			x	

Rank/Name	Prison Term	Resettled in	Fled by boat	By Visa of Exit with ODP help	Ex Political Prisoners' list¹	Notes
Mr. Slen Cam Hong, Saigon City Councilman	10 y 5 m	Canada			x	5
Mr. Gip A Dzieng, Saigon City Councilman	7 days in Saigon	USA	x			6

Notes (for addendum 7):

- 1) Whose wife and children were resettled through the H0 Program (Humanitarian Program).
- 2) Prior to the H0 Program.
- 3) Was shot to death at the prison gate he impassively walked out in total disregard of the prison guard's order to stop.
- 4) Was tortured to cripple in prison and died shortly after migrating to the United States.
- 5) After attending a 7-day the so-called "re-education" session, was arrested for being Reactionary journalist.
- 6) When reported to communist authorities for a 7-day of the so-called "re-education" session, he stated that he had been "Aspirant" (instead of Second-Lieutenant as he had indeed been). As a result, he was not classified as "officer", therefore he could avoid being sent to the hard labor camps for years.



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Remarks.

The interview mentioned at the end of each chapter under their respective names and dates.



**Speech of Professor Nguyen Ly Tuong
On the Occasion of the Book Commencement of
The Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory
of Hai Ninh - Vietnam**

Rosemead, California, January 5th, 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of Nung Ethnic Representative Committee (NERC)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of Nung Ethnic Advisory Committee (NEAC)

My Fellow Compatriots from the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association (HNV & PAAA)

Distinguished Guests;

A few days ago, I was approached by two gentlemen, the Chief - editor and Senior-editor of the documentary book entitled “The Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh-Vietnam”. (NEATHN-VN) They were Mr. Tran Duc Lai, former magistrate (now in France) and Mr. Gip A Dzieng, City Councilman of the City-Capital of Saigon (now in the United States). The two gentlemen assigned to me the task of introducing this documentary book before the General Convention of Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association of today.

This task was indeed a non-anticipated one, an honor for which I am immensely grateful. I feel that I am an outsider who has only a slim understanding of the Nung Ethnic and Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh-Vietnam (NEATHN-VN). This is the non-anticipated task to be the commencement presenter in front of an audience of famous personalities and (former) officials of the government of the Republic of Vietnam (Government of SVN) prior to 1975, as well as in front of many intellectual Vietnamese outside Vietnam. I am only a high school teacher of history and geography, a humble writer, a journalist, a researcher of history without an academic title or diploma or valuable works of research in this discipline. Thus I am like a humble person standing in front of a group of prominently knowledgeable personalities on the very subject of my presentation. So I am somewhat disrespectful to my distinguished guests. However, in retrospect I have been a good friend of my Nung brothers and sisters for nearly 50 years to date. Therefore, “being respectful to my friends would not be as good a behavior as being in compliance with their request to be the book presenter”. If whatever I opine today may be incomplete or unsatisfactory to you, please generously forgive me.

After reading this book, I have a few observations:

- 1) The province of Hai Ninh, as Lieutenant-General Linh Quang Vien wrote in the Forewords of the book (page 1,) was marked by a black spot at the easternmost Sino-Vietnamese border on the map of Vietnam. Now Hai Ninh is reduced to a district of the province of Quang

Ninh (currently Quang Yen and Hai Ninh were united in one administrative district location). Quang Ninh is a north eastern province of Vietnam at the Sino-Vietnamese border. In 1965, while I taught at the province of Nha Trang, I ran into some students whose birth places were “Mang Nhai”, Hai Ninh, North Vietnam. Frankly I did not know the geographic name of Mang Nhai. I also thought that most of the Vietnamese born in Central and South Vietnam certainly did not know this name Mang Nhai. This was a small province but in fact it was not “small” at all because it is the home of a “great” and heroic ethnic minority, the Nungs. Fifty years ago, I happened to accompany a Catholic priest to visit a refugee camp of the Nungs in Phu Lam (near Cholon, the sister city of Saigon). This led to my next trip in May 1965 to the province of Quang Tin. I was there to cooperate with Mr. Bui Trong Tieu (Vice Province Chief) to organize a demonstration to support the 9-Point Manifesto of the Greater Viet Revolution Party (Dai Viet Cach Mang, a political party prior to 1975). I was introduced to Dr. Ly Ngoc Duong, then First-lieutenant of the Medical Corps (RVN AF) stationed at Quang Tin. Dr. Duong was a fellow party member and a friend of mine, also an intellectual Nung. Gradually I was introduced to the others: Lieutenant-colonel Phang Cong Phu (from the Mutual Help Association of North Vietnam Highlands, Hoi Thuong Du Bac Viet Tuong Te,) Major Gip-A-Sang (Quang Trung Training Center, Trung Tam Huan Luyen Quang Trung). What I was most honored was my term as a congressman at the House of Representatives (1967-1971)

while Colonel Vong-A-Sang, former Commanding Officer of the Third Division of Nungs, was elected Senator (another legislator serving the same term as mine) in 1967. I had the occasion to visit Song Mao (in the province of Binh Thuan) which had a newly established district named Hai Ninh (after the former Hai Ninh in North Vietnam). I spent a night at Hai Ninh to visit Dr. Ly-Ngoc-Duong and see my former students of Nha Trang in 1965. After April 30, 1975 I was a prisoner in re-education camps and happened to sleep next to Mr. Hoang-A-Sam, a close friend of Lieutenant-colonel Pau (a large and tall Nung officer who died in prison). I conversed a lot with colonel Hoang Gia Cau. The above names were all high-ranking Nung military officers. They were all heroes in combat.

- 2) The two words Faithfulness (Trung) and Filial-Piety (Hieu) engraved in the Insignia of the Nung Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh exhibited the moral characters of the Nungs. The Nungs upheld Faithfulness toward the spirit of Nationalism and their anti communist belief; and Devoutness or Filial-Piety toward the political regime of their choice. From the French colonial era to the Republic of Vietnam, from Vietnam's Emperor Bao-Dai to President Ngo Dinh Diem, President Nguyen Van Thieu, the French and American authorities, all acknowledged the faithful quality of the Nungs and consequently assigned them important national responsibilities. The Nung population as a minority in South Vietnam (SVN) was not numerous compared to that of other minorities

but the Nung ratio of prominent personalities to their total population was very high. The Nungs had their ethnic representations in the legislature, the House of Representatives or Lower House, in the Senate, in the Capital-City-Council, and other Provincial City-Councils. They were commanding officers in all military echelons, division, regiment, and battalion. They served in the administrative and judicial branches. They reached all academic intellectual standings such as medical doctors, pharmacists, dentists, engineers, with many bachelor and Ph.D. degrees holders. From 1947 to 1954, the Vietminh (communists) could never transgress their Nung Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh which was famous for their “military-inviolable-zone” status. This merit was earned owing to the Nungs’ talented leadership, their iron discipline in combat, and especially their nationalist devotion. The communists tried very hard to connect and infiltrate their agents in the American security agencies and echelons which composed of Nungs and they failed miserably. Many heroes in the Special-Forces (Air-born Rangers) teams which infiltrated into North Vietnam were Nungs. (Please refer to page 182 of the autobiography of Mr. Moc A Tai, a Nung special-forces-operative infiltrating in the enemy territory of North Vietnam. He was captured on July 16, 1963 and was sentenced to death, then reduced to life. He tried to escape many times but was captured and recaptured and finally he successfully escaped to Laos after 20 years of incarceration. Then he returned to South Vietnam, and escaped with his family and migrated to the United States in July 1983. He was

the one who struggled on behalf of his fellow special-forces operatives who had been abandoned by the United States (in Vietnam) to die in communist prisons. Thanks to him, they finally gained the right to migrate to the United States with full benefits by the court of law. Please read page 190 on “the search and destroy battle of Phu Hoa Dong of 1965” as recalled by captain Slen-Cam-Vo, then Company Commander of a Reconnaissance Company...and his narration on his military life, his combat experiences and his anti communist ideal).

- 3) The Vietnamese patriots who had tried to liberate the people of Vietnam in revolution against the (French) colonials used to travel back and forth Haininh and to seek the support of the Nungs here. Historic records indicated that respectable patriots such as Phan Boi Chau, Tang Bat Ho, Nguyen Thien Thuat, Nguyen Hai Than, Vu Hong Khanh etc. all had taken refuge in this region. Most recently Dr. Nguyen Ton Hoan, Bui Diem, Tran Trong Kim used to take shelter here as well. The personality whom historic document referred to the most was Mr. Nguyen Kim Thanh (Viet Cach, Vietnamese Revolution, a nationalist political movement). He occupied the province of Moncay with his military forces and established an administrative apparatus prior to the political takeover of North Vietnam by the Vietminh (Communists). Later on he had to withdraw his troops into Chinese territory due to the offensive campaigns by both the French and Vietminh.
- 4) According to ancient history, the southern region of the Yang Tse River was the home of the “Bach Viet” ancestors. Bach Viet means “one hundred ethnics of Viets”. Especially the regions of Guang Dong, Guang Tsi, and

Yunnan had been home of the Bach Viets. King Trieu Da applied a colonial policy of the Chi'i in spreading his warriors and their families southward over the mountain chain of "Ngu Linh" (5 mountains). There they established the state of "Nam Viet" (an old name of Vietnam) which occupied a territory in opposition to the Hans. Trieu Da's subjects were the Bach Viets. Starting the X Century when the Tang dynasty was in decline. A personality by the family name of "Ly" moved south from the north. He was the forefather of "Ly Cong Uan", also King "Ly Thai To" who founded the Ly dynasty of Vietnam. Starting the XIII Century, a personality by the family name of "Tran" moved from the province of Fuk Kien (in China) to settle in the province of Hai Duong (Vietnam). He was "Tran Ly", the ancestor of Tran Hung Dao, the hero who defeated the Mongolian invaders in their military campaigns to occupy Dai Viet (an ancient name of Vietnam). In the XVII Century, when the Manchurians successfully occupied China's homeland after defeating the Mings, the Ming generals from the Guang-Tsi region such as Tran Thuong Xuyen, Duong Ngan Dich, Tran An Binh, Hoang Tien, Mac Cuu... escaped to Vietnam's southern region of Lord Nguyen and begged the monarch to accept them as immigrants. Granted, they subsequently deserved the credits to have developed their assigned territories, organized their administrative apparatuses and armed forces. Many of them have sacrificed their lives in Vietnamese military campaigns to show their allegiance to Lord Nguyen.

- 5) In 1954, the Nung community rejected the communist regime of North Vietnam and migrated to South Vietnam as refugees. A similar case was in the Special District of Hai Yen of the province of Camau under the leadership of a Catholic priest Nguyen Lac Hoa who became famous for his anti communist activities. The Nungs have upheld the two words 'Faithfulness' and 'Filial-Piety' in the history of the Vietnamese people. Due to the Hans' expansion, the Bach Viet ethnics had to gradually move southward. From the First to the XV Century, according to the ancient history books such as Whole Dai Viet History (Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu) (History of the Tran and Le Dynasties) Summary of Universal History of Daiviet by Order of the King (Kham Dinh Viet su Thong giam Cuong Muc) (History of the Nguyen Dynasty). These history books mentioned a number of Bach Viet geographic names now in the territory of China.
- 6) As we all know, there are now in the world many races living in one nation like the Unites States (united by many ethnics). Vietnam has more than 60 ethnics or minorities. The Anglo Saxon founded Great Britain, the Unites States, Australia, Canada, Ireland, and New Zealand. The Romans founded many countries in Europe. The Spaniards established many states in Europe and South America. The people of a common territory and history unite and build a nation. Especially the minority ethnics living in the Sino-Vietnamese border regions take refuge in the direction of Vietnam. They choose the state of Vietnam as their home state. They do not join China

which is a larger and more powerful nation. Why such choice? Probably in the past, the Hans occupied their tribes, took their lands, governed them, dominated them, treat them badly. I feel that although the Nungs are closer to the Cantonese in language and customs than the Vietnamese they are proud to be Vietnamese, not Chinese. Those are my opinions about the Nung ethnic. (The Mongolians identify themselves with the Russians. Not with the Chinese. The Tibetans identify themselves with the Indians. Not with the Chinese. The Uyghur people of Xinjiang, China, and the other long lost ten tribes in north western China always hate the Chinese and never identify themselves with the Chinese. All this could be for similar reason as above). Now let me comment on the book.

Among the minority ethnics of Vietnam, especially those minority refugees from North Vietnam, I found that the Nungs are the most intelligent, united, and talented ethnic. Not a minority ethnic has written a history book about their own legacy. (There is a book on the Champa minority but none on the Thai, the Tho, and other minorities in Vietnam).

This book is a research masterpiece of painstaking labor and integral content. It is a huge family register for all the Nungs and their families. It discovers historical facts and geographic, economical, political, administrative, and other official records. It registers the names of all military officers, civil officials, prisoners of re-education camps, those still living, or deceased, and their updated whereabouts. The toil

to unearth and maintain these data has not been easy. A few months ago, we organized a reunion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the Hue Faculty of Pedagogy (1957-2007). Though we were a group of professionals whose members were university graduates, we failed to establish a list of our living and deceased members. In spite of my class of only 15 graduates, some could not remember the names of 5 or 10 other classmates. The reason for this was no one is interested in communicating with the rest.

This book consists of two Parts: the Vietnamese language Part (242 pages) and the Chinese language Part (133 pages). I sincerely praise the Vietnamese chief editor (Mr. Tran Duc Lai). He is proof of an admirable level of the Vietnamese language standard. His orthography is correct. His style is effulgent, concise, and cohesive. Even among mother-tongued Vietnamese, if one does not give oneself the pain to study the language thoroughly, he will not be able to write properly. The Vietnamese language is not the mother tongue of the Nungs (who speak the Ngai dialect, or the Cantonese dialect). This book is written in a very unambiguous and correct Vietnamese. The Chinese language Part must be more arduous to write because everyone knows that learning Chinese is more difficult than learning Vietnamese. I am not able to read the Chinese- language Part but owing to some Chinese words I found the meaning of the names of the Nungs. For example the name of Mr. Gip-A-Dzieng, pronounced in Sino-Vietnamese phonetics Diep A “Duong” (cham soc, nursing). M. Hoang A Sam, in Sino-Vietnamese Hoang A “Sam”, dense forest, consisting of three words of

“tree” put together. The Chinese language Part was more difficult to write than its Vietnamese counterpart. The many generations of young Nungs born and raised in South Vietnam after 1954 must be good in Vietnamese due to their right to attend all public school levels, elementary, secondary, and college and be exposed to numerable books and newspapers. Those who studied Chinese were certainly much less in number. Now in the United States, American English is the main school language for them. I wonder how they manage to be able to write their history in Chinese. Even a 100% full-time Chinese individual born in the States would have the difficulty of writing Chinese. A Vietnamese, born and raised in the States would not know the Vietnamese language. Now you have succeeded to have two book-editors who write perfect Vietnamese and Chinese. They must be highly educated and talented and they command my deep respect.

My last observation is this. This is the first time I had the honor to be invited to the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association whose president is Mr. Phong Tit Chang. I am amazed and impressed at the Nungs’ spirit of solidarity. Not too many Vietnamese communities outside of Vietnam could organize such a crowded and costly gathering. To organize such a great gathering, any community must meet many conditions. There must be mutual love and shield to cover for one another. There must be financial generosity and contributions from all. There must be discipline and solidarity on all echelons. Everyone must execute instructions from their group leaders. The aspect that

moves me the most is the sight of young girls and high ranking ladies in their beautiful Vietnamese long dress AO DAI with the ornamental drawing of the “bronze drum”(symbol of Vietnam’s ancient civilization of thousands of years). The “bronze drums” proprietors in ancient time must be the minority ethnics, Vietnam’s ancestors from the mountainous regions of contemporary Vietnam). This ornamental image of “bronze drums” shows their passionate love for the origin and legacy of their origin. The Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association sang the “March of the Third Division” which reminded us of the brave spirit of the Nung combatants from the Autonomous Territory of Hai Ninh. The Nung ladies, young and old, remembered the old songs of the past Republic of Vietnam. Dr. Ly Ngoc Duong reminded the MC to speak Vietnamese (because, he said, we are Vietnamese). I had the feeling maybe many decades have passed, these people must have forgotten the Vietnamese language. But to my surprise, our young Nungs still speak Vietnamese. I wrote these observations which were in print in Vietnamese language newspapers in southern California. I think of all Vietnamese refugee Communities in the world, among them, it would be hard to find a community like the Hai Ninh Veterans and Public Administration Alumni Association with all its noble strengths as I have mentioned. Thank you.

Nguyen Ly Tuong

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Translation Team & Distribution Section.



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