** EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a written statement by Ngo Van Ha, a 16 year-old orphan who recently arrived to the United States from a Hong Kong refugee camp. As part of Ha's testimonies, the statement was submitted to a Congressional hearing on Indochinese refugees. Staff members at the Legal Assistance for Vietnamese Asylum Seekers, or LAVAS, assisted and consulted with Ha on the drafting of the statement.

PREPARED STATEMENT

By Ha Van Ngo
At the Hearing on Indochinese Refugees,
House Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs,
Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Representatives

Tuesday, April 26, 1994

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before the Committee today.

My name is Ha Van Ngo and I am a 16 year-old Vietnamese orphan. I arrived to the United States exactly two weeks ago, after being detained for nearly four years in detention centers in Hong Kong. First, I would like to acknowledge my appreciation to Congressman Matthew Martinez, a member of this committee, and hundreds of caring people who have intervened on my behalf with the Hong Kong Government, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the US Consulate in Hong Kong. Without the help of these kind individuals, I would not be here today.

I landed in Hong Kong by boat on August 24, 1990. I es-

caped from Viet Nam alone because both of my parents were deceased and my two brothers and sister were not able to come with me. One of my brothers had also fled Viet Nam in early 1990. He is being detained in the Philippines. He has not been approved for reunification with me and my relatives in this country.

Since my father was a military officer in the former government, my family was discriminated

against and targeted for political and economic retribution. My father was held in a reeducation camp for a year. After his release, he was forced into hard labor. I had to flee my country because the communist government blacklisted all former officers and their family members, preventing them from being full and productive citizens.

When I arrived in Hong Kong, the authorities detained me in a closed camp called Green Island. A closed camp is similar to a prison. There are curfews, food rations, barbed wire fences, and armed security guards. Green Island was also a crowded, dirty and unsanitary place with shortages of food and water. After

twenty days there, I was moved to Whitehead for much of the same. After two months, I was moved again to Saikong. My six-month detainment here was the most unforgettable experience of my life. Life in the camp was hard without the pooled resources of a family. Because I had no family, I had to fend for myself. I remember the days were hot,



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and the nights were filled with mosquitoes. Since mosquito nets were not provided, for protection, some of us unaccompanied minors took empty carton boxes, taped up the holes and tears and put them over our heads for coverage. We wrapped our bodies with blankets even though the weather was hot. In the morning, we still woke up with swollen faces from the mosquitoes that had managed to get through the boxes and blankets anyway. After Saikong, I was moved to Tai A Chau and detained until earlier this month when I was taken back to Whitehead, to await repatriation to Vietnam.

In September 1992, I found out that I was rejected for resettlement and was put on a list of people to be forcibly repatriated to Viet Nam. I was shocked at this news because I never went through a formal screening process. When I brought this up to the authorities, they reminded me of my conversation with a UNHCR field worker five months earlier, which, they insisted, was the screening. This conversation consisted of nothing more than a few questions about my deceased parents and aunt and uncle in Viet Nam. I filed for an appeal but it was also rejected.

Despite my aunt and uncle's refusal to accept me back to Viet Nam, the UNHCR, whose mandate was to protect unaccompanied minors like myself, used subterfuge and coercion to get my uncle to sign for my repatriation. In one incident, a UNHCR staff member lied to my uncle that I already arrived in Hanoi and that he must sign some papers to pick me up. My uncle refused while knowing all along that this UN agency was resorting to tricks to have me sent back. Learning of this incident, a Hong Kong television station, Asia Television Limited, sent a crew to Vietnam to conduct an investigative report on my case. The ATV correspondent discovered that the UNHCR in Viet Nam repeatedly intimidated and lied to my relatives about my intentions.

When this report was aired on Hong Kong TV, it caused an uproar against the UNHCR. I have the tape here and would be happy to show it to any member who wishes to watch it.

In my case, which was classified as a "vulnerable unaccompanied minor", the policy for the UNHCR to follow under refugee law was to consider an alternative that would best serve my interest. Although it was made abundantly clear that my aunt and uncle in Viet Nam refused to receive me, UNHCR officials ignored this fact as they tried to force me back to an unaccepting family. Obviously it was not in my best interest to return to Viet Nam. In fact, another aunt and uncle of mine who reside in San Gabriel, California, have filed papers to sponsor me since May 1991. My relatives in California were willing to take me in and assume financial responsibility for my stay in the US. The UNHCR refused to take this application into account and grant my wish to be resettled with them. It coldly applied its ruling while knowing full well that the humane alternative for me was to be in the US.

I did not want to return to Viet Nam. The UNHCR and the Nordic Assistance to Repatriated Vietnamese (NARV)representatives did everything to convince me to go back. I was promised computer training, money and land to build a house if I didn't want to live with my relatives. I was told that my return to Viet Nam would entail staying in nice hotels and driving around in nice cars. When I refused their offers, a NARV representative deemed me stubborn and threatened that the guards would come and take me anyway. I took the threat seriously and went into hiding.

With a toothbrush and a change of clothing, I moved from section to section in the camp. People in the camp would hide me in their living spaces and would warn me when guards were approaching. I often had to hide under bedding or behind curtains. On occasions, I had to just run away, sometimes without time to slip on my shoes. I lived in hiding for almost four months.

Fortunately, I was able to secretly meet with some lawyers working at the camp. When one took on my case, I felt safe and no longer feared the danger of being forcibly repatriated. However, one day just as my lawyer left the camp, two guards grabbed me, gagged my mouth and pushed me into a truck. They brought me to an office where four men pinned me down on the floor. I feared for my safety, so I struggled to get away. In the struggle, I hit my head against a hard surface and suffered a minor injury. Only then did they let me go and send

me to the infirmary.

However, while still in the infirmary, a UNHCR representative approached me with a notification of my pending repatriation date. I thought everything was lost when I saw the UNHCR seal on the document. I knew that if the document was issued by the Hong Kong government, I would still have hope of UNHCR's intervention. The UNHCR seal meant that there would be no more hope because there was no one left to intervene. I was handcuffed and sent to Whitehead.

Fortunately, the international community took interest in my plight. Politicians, lawyers, community leaders, and citizens, including refugees in the camps, have come together to pressure the UNHCR and the Hong Kong Government to let me reunite with my relatives in the US. Only intense pressure from the world community did they reluctantly change their course and permit me to come here.

Thousands of Vietnamese asylum seekers in Hong Kong and elsewhere in Southeast Asia are not as lucky in that they have suffered so much injustice without the knowledge or assistance of outsiders. They also need help, and in many cases, much more deserving of assistance than me.

Repatriation of boat people against their emotional and physical will is both inhumane and counterproductive. On April 7, five days before I arrived to the US., 1,200 Hong Kong security members came into Whitehead and lobbed 500 tear gas canisters into a crowd of 1,400 refugees who were conducting a hunger strike against forced repatriation.

I was also a victim of tear gas attack by the Hong Kong police in 1991. I knew first hand how these people must have suffered as they tried to maintain their breath and stay conscious. The police indiscriminately aimed at people, giving no regard for the safety of the women and children. As conditions in the camps worsen, the Hong Kong Government is resorting to violence and brute force to remove the refugees.

There are still approximately 26,000 refugees in Hong Kong. The refugees cannot escape the atrocious living conditions because they are not free, nor do they have any access to the media to tell the

world community of the abuses. For nearly four years, I was one of them, wasting away in a so-called detention camp that is nothing less than a maximum security prison.

I come here to speak about the injustice that I have suffered in Hong Kong. I also want to take this opportunity to publicize about the tragic consequences of forced repatriation as currently pushed by the Hong Kong Government and supported by the UNHCR via their indifference. The situation for these people looks bleak. Camp conditions are deteriorating. It is sadly ironic that these people fled Viet Nam in search of freedom only to be detained and repatriated for their attempt.

Mr. Chairman, as an eyewitness to and a victim of UNHCR abuse in Hong Kong, I respectfully request that your committee open an immediate investigation into the operations of the UNHCR, relating to its handling of unaccompanied minors like myself. The Committee should also conduct inquiries into the policy of forced repatriation as it affects Vietnamese refugees. The UNHCR's behavior toward the refugees is shameful.

As leaders and elected representatives of the United States, you can help the boat people by ensuring that they are being treated fairly, and that they should not be forced back against their will. I urge all of you to intervene on behalf of the Vietnamese asylum seekers as a humanitarian gesture of a great Democracy. I ask for your compassion for these helpless people. All they want is a chance to live free and exercise their right as normal human beings.

Mr. Chairman, I again thank you for the chance to testify today. I hope that by sharing my experience with you, the Committee will see fit to take real action to help the Vietnamese people. □

There I lay in the dumpster of life Half dead ... half alive Body so light as if I were drifting on air Eyes closed or not (?) Everything seems so white as ... patches of white clouds in the sky white bed linens fresh cleaned out of the wash sea foams rushing in with the ocean waves Click clacks, people moving, talking, instructions Tic toc..... "time's awasting" Not knowing what tomorrow's like Trapped in a state of confusion Awaken

Caught between two cultures I am called by so many names Vietnamese for one Then there's "nip"

"new waver" "gangster" "bastard" "fob"

even ... "chink" "chinaman"

"americanized"

etceteras etceteras etceteras...

But what am I really???????

Who are they to label what is and what not??? Don't even know what the hell am I here for?!?

What's the purpose of life

When there seems none to begin with?!?

"Do this....Do that....That's what's good for ya!" Is it really??????

Would someone tell me who I should listen to? Parents? Teachers? Friends? Relatives? Shrink? or my own stupid instincts?

Confused

Dazed

Exhausted

The journey of life seems so long

The hardships I've endured compare to many's like

"a needle in a haystack"

So why.....why?

Tough question.....tough answer!

or stupid question.....answer not needed!

So there I lay on the bed of life

Grasping for perhaps the last minutes of it

Thinking for the first time.....

So many things in life I've not yet done!!!!

NON SÔNG

Bit Late

(identity crisis)

Answers not yet acquired Knowledge not yet learned Be content of knowing Life is just life itself! "Live and let live" Get drowned in the field of dreams Be drowned in dreams of pleasure Do whatever the heart desires 'Cause now ... now ... By the look of things I won't be doing anything!!!! Except fade away into the memories of others Be a passerby among passersby Of no importance whatsoever Unless people here's able to Pull me back from the other world If not, maybe in the next life I'll know better!!!

• TL (SFSU) 05/94

Comprehension

One night

I saw your heart through you dark black eyes Sweet but dismal as the late Autumn time As air vaguely drowsed, as stars hazily glittered In the Fall evening, the late sunbeams drowned all over the sky

One day

I saw your deep blue eyes looked like the sky azure The wavering lashes contouring your eyes as dull as the Fall amour Covered over yours eyes was the thinly brownish hair veil Blended with sympathy that makes yours eyes more beloved

Always

The hues of the Fall were your colored eyes' reflection Multicolored leaves condensed into one the black medium Your emotional eyes transposed the hues of every Fall Into your sentiment in accord with the Fall impression

Day after day later

I met the light of yours eyes through yours heart Our souls crossed we both closed with each other We know inside ourselves the way of our thought Exchanged between us the Love we together preferred

Lê Đức Thường Thủy

The Tide

Hải Âu (N.C.)

It was two months after my grandmother died of cancer when I stood on the sand of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, gazing into the beautiful sunset sky hand in hand with my boyfriend. As I walked along the beach, I faced a fact which I had been neglecting to face. While I looked out upon the pink ocean, I thought of her, now absent from this earth, society, and family. Realizing this, I wept and slowly staggered to the edge of the water.

The beach displays a serene setting which causes me to often think about the world and the unknown while I am here. That night, as I pondered about what life and death really mean, I noticed things that I never had before. The eve of this dawning, there were more tears in the sky than I had ever seen, or perhaps, ever noticed. I stood for a moment with my head toward the world above and wanted to reach out to my grandmother to tell her I missed her and loved her.

An extreme feeling of guilt overcame me after hearing her death because I was not there at her bedside. She was not a poor person yet not rich neither; she loved and adored her family but would only accept her own views of life. Nothing nor anyone could alter them. She was the type who would stay and say thing longer than intended just to get under your skin. She was active and health therefore, her death came as a blow to me. In fact, I didn't know she was hospitalized for a month or so before her death.

As I sat there wondering there she was and whether or not she was thinking good thoughts about me while lying on her death bed, the tide rushed in. It softly caressed my toes, my arches, the my heels. There had been a very low tide the entire late afternoon so when that epiphanous moment occurred,

my life was alter forever. As the dark, mysterious salt water encompassed my feet, the primary thought that entered my mind was that my grandmother, hand in hand with Providence, was in the heavens reaching out to comfort me. At this instance, my hand lost grasp of my boyfriend's warm touch and I began to walk alone looking up and out into the darkness.

The tide moved with me, striving to reach for me, wherever I was along the beach. The tide was a soft touch that consoled me. The tide allowed me to forgive myself and rid myself of the guilt I had felt upon her death. The tide was transformed from being only a fraction of the wondrous ocean to a warm being with open arms always there and extended to me for comfort and embrace. I then accepted that my grandmother did love me despite all the sorrows and heartaches I had caused her during her lifetime. I also hoped that she knows that I love her too. That moment ensured me that we do have a wondrous father who is watching over us day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. He is there with the tide to hold our hands as we experience the joy and sadness of life. □

Đọc & Cổ Động:

Non Sông
Non Sông
Non Sông

Tiếng nói của tuổi trẻ Việt Nam hải ngoại

Identity is important since it provides a coherence to the past. Identity offers a contrast in the present: Interestingly, knowing who we are, what kind of identity one is necessities the indication of what one is NOT. To be someone is thus possible only through not being someone else. The creation of identity is thus symbolically related to the creation of the "other." And identity provides a channel for the future: Having defined who we are also mean that we can then also better know what we should/ could I will/can do (and conversely what we should not do). Once an identity is defined, the person is launched into certain directions and not others.

Before analyzing identity, it is important to understand the difference between biological sex and gender. Biological sex refers to all those biological and physiological differences characterizing men and women. Theoretical assumptions abound about what certain biological differences mean in terms of gender psychological dynamics, but those are questionable (for example, is the male hormone testosterone really related to more aggressivity?, is

a woman biologically really predisposed to motherhood?)

By comparison, gender refers to the social and cultural conventions members of a society associate with these biological differences. As such, gender varies immensely in time and space and is never really fixed. The "gender" category is composed of gender identity and gender roles. Gender identity refers simply to the "sense of being man or woman," whereas gender roles refer to all these activities, choices, behaviors we associate with the gender identity.

If being a man or a woman was once a fixed enterprise, it has been seriously challenged and redefined in the past century which has been the blurring of gender categories, gender lines, and gender social segregation in various social settings (living arrangements, schools, clothe, mothering, workplace). There has been an unmistakable destabilization and trivialization of an old, fixed, authoritarian traditional world and the emergence of a more fluid, open, mutable one. Similarly, identity has become partially trivialized and weakened From being absolute, essential and fixed, identity is becoming relative, plural and fragmented. From being firmly rooted in a community, family, and geographical space, identity has become uprooted and sent afloat in the media landscape. From being given and closed, identity has become the object of self-awareness, selfconsciousness, challenge, change, and re-construction. This shift in identity formation can be perceived as the "democratization of personhood," although this might be as a bit optimistic.

At the end of the 20th century, we find ourselves not only at the end of a century but at the end of a millennium. There is thus a strong sense in academic and elsewhere that we are entering a new world which will dramatically change the way we live and define who we are. If Case-Studies of Modern Identities, and Cohort Identities, indicated the destabilization and trivialization of various dimensions of identity, then we should ask ourselves whether these trends of destabilization/trivialization will continue and increase (and if this is so. where will that lead us) or whether we are moving into totally uncharted territories of the

self. Is it conceivable that, given these trends, we are moving into a world of people without identities? If this is so, how does it feel like?

Let's look at the decade plot: the MTV identity and its characterizing events illustrates the idea that different cohorts have experienced these events different ways. Thus, growing up in the 1960s has shaped one's identity differently than, say, growing up in the 1930s or 1980s. The cohort one belongs to and the historical events associated with it are not merely "events" or "dates" but reference groups forming a generational consciousness. We will carry these with us (mentally, emotionally) for the rest of our lives. Today, increasingly, social scientists are talking about the "MTV generation" or an age-cohort which has experienced MTV. Now MTV is important not only because it broadcasts rock music, violence, and sex, but more importantly because of the WAY it communicates its messages. As we all know, the MTV world is a world of 30 seconds blips and bytes — or less. MTV format is thus built around the rapid movement from one story to another, by the blurring of spatial locations and historical periods, by the blurring of fiction and reality, etc. But MTV is the most extreme example of tendencies of viewing the world through television. These tendencies are also evident with the simple use of a remote control enabling the viewer to visually "jump" rapidly from one-story to the next, from one historical period to another, from one area to the next, from

Thoughts of You



So here I sit with thoughts on my mind though many are ambient, there exists only of one mind. It's the kind that brings out an expressive smile on someone's face after going that extra mile.

It's the kind of thought that brings joy to a little girl's face on a rainy day, to help her forget all her problems and see beautiful blooming flowers of May.

There are the same thoughts that warm an old man's heart on a cold winter night. The very exact thoughts that bring Mother Nature to Dawn's early light.

These are thoughts that have all so often make me Love's fool; These could be nothing else, but the very thoughts of you.

• C.P. (UCSB)

one another, etc. The MTV worldview (and remote-control TV in general) thus presents a reality where time, space, and scenarios collide on the screen without necessary order, center, or logic. What we should also take into consideration is that the ability of individuals growing up zapping through channels also shape these individuals' consciousness whereby they become now able to "hold" different stories in their heads at the same time (even though attention span has dramatically decreased).

In conclusion, different decades thus encourage different types of identities, depending on the cohort we belong to, the reference groups we identify with, and the social historical events characterizing them. We define who we are from within the web of meanings, symbols, stories, etc. in which we find ourselves, this web has been overwhelmingly defined by men. Historically, for instance, women have had to define themselves and construct their identities within a male web of meanings Again, build an identity using props, significant others, generalized others, powerful others, reference groups, memories, vocabularies of motives, and histories, we must ask ourselves what are the gender-dimensions of these identity markers. We see ourselves, our gender-identities through reflections and definitions of others (whether generalized, significant, reference groups, etc.), as those change, so will our identities.

• JT (UCSB)

The Cries of Poetry

I speak from this sheet of paper The scent given off is my ribbon ink's vapor. I came into existence with a touch of a button, then printed

My only purpose to others from head to feet.

on this sheet.

As days pass and nights gone, So must I remain with the promise of dawn. Tears of sorrow as raindrops fall, Here I am to swallow them all.

Times of lost when no one cares,
I'll be with you if no one dares.
If ever you need comfort and joy,
You can be my Shirley and I can be your Roy.

But with the gift of life exists the chance for death, I can easily be crumbled and laid to rest.

As you can see, my life is dependent on others, I exist only if someone acknowledges me, for I have no mother.

So please I must ask a favor from you,

Read me, remember me, so that I may not be thrown out like an old shoe.

And if you will. Please hang me on your wall, so that I may see how you grew so tall,

And how beautiful you would look for the winter ball.

I came to life for only one purpose, now I ask for only one favor.

Allow me to ease the pain of human labor.

Let me see, experience, and share a moment of happiness, For we all forget to truly live, out of carelessness.

I ask of you, please pin me and those that would follow me to your wall,

And forever devoted to you, we'll be on called. Allow us to protect you from all that brings harm, Like the picket fence around a fairy-like farm.

Let us warm your heart and comfort your soul, We'll never be apart, and let's make new of what is old.

• CP 92

THE FLY



Everyone in the village knew the usurer, a rich and smart man. Having accumulated a fortune over the years, he settled down to a life of leisure in his big house surrounded by an immense garden and guarded by a pack of ferocious dogs. But still unsatisfied with what he had acquired, the man went on making money by lending it to people all over the county at exorbitant rates. The usurer reigned supreme in the area, for numerous were those who were in debt to him.

One day, the rich man set out for the house of one of his peasants. Despite repeated reminders, the poor laborer just could not manage to pay off his long-standing debt. Working himself to a shadow, the peasant barely succeeded in making ends meet. The moneylender was therefore determined that if he could not get his money back this time, he would proceed to confiscate some of his debtors' most valuable belongings. But the rich man found

no one at the peasant's house but a small boy of eight or nine playing alone in the dirt yard.

"Child, are your parents home?" the rich man asked.

"No, sir," the boy replied, the went on playing with his sticks and stones, paying no attention whatever to the man.

"Then, where are they?" the rich man asked, somewhat irritated, but the little boy went on playing and did not answer.

When the rich man repeated his query, the boy looked up and answered, with deliberate slowness, "Well, sir, my father has gone to cut living trees and plant dead ones and my mother is at the market place selling the wind and buying the moon."

"What? What in heaven are you talking about?" the rich man commanded. "Quick, tell me where they are, or you will see what this stick can do to you!" The bamboo walking stick in the big man's hand looked indeed men-

acing.

After repeated questioning, however, the boy only gave the same reply. Exasperated, the rich man told him, "All right, little devil, listen to me! I came here today to take the money your parents owe me. But if you tell me where they really are and what they are doing, I will forget all about the debt. Is that clear to you?"

"Oh, sir, why are you joking with a poor little boy? Do you expect me to believe what you are saying?" For the first time the boy looked interested.

"Well, there is heaven and there is earth to witness my promise," the rich man said, pointing up to the sky and down to the ground.

But the boy only laughed. "Sir, heaven and earth cannot talk and therefore cannot testify. I want some living thing to be our witness."

Catching sight of a fly alighting on a bamboo pole nearby, and laughing inside because he was fooling the boy, the rich man proposed, "There is a fly. He can be our witness. Now, hurry and tell me what you mean when you say that your father is out cutting living trees and planting dead ones, while your mother is at the market selling the wind and buying the moon."

Looking at the fly on the pole, the boy said, "A fly is a good enough witness for me. Well, here it is, sir. My father has simply gone to cut down bamboos and make a fence with them for a man near the river. And my mother...oh, sir, you'll keep your promise, won't you? You will free my parents of all their debts? You really mean it?"

"Yes, yes, I do solemnly swear in front of this fly here." The rich man urged the boy to go on.

"Well, my mother, she has gone to the market to sell fans so she can buy oil for our lamps. Isn't that what you would call selling the wind to buy the moon?"

Shaking his head, the rich man had to admit inwardly that the boy was a clever one. However, he thought, the little genius still had much to learn, believing as he did that a fly could be a witness for anybody. Bidding to the boy goodbye, the man told him that he would soon return to make good his promise.

A few days had passed when the moneylender returned. This time he found the poor peasant couple at home, for it was late in the evening. A mast scene ensued, the rich man claiming his money and the poor peasant apologizing and begging for another delay. Their argument awakened the little boy who ran to his father and told him, "Father, father, you don't have to pay your debt. This gentleman here has promised me that he would forget all about the money you owe him."

"Nonsense," the rich man shook his walking stick at both father and son. "Nonsense, are you going to stand there and listen to a child's inventions? I never spoke a word to this boy. Now,



tell me, are you going to pay or are you not?"

The whole affair ended by being brought before the mandarin who governed the county. Not knowing what to believe, all the poor peasant and his wife could do was to bring their son with them when they went to court. The little boy's insistence about the rich man's promise was their only encouragement.

The mandarin began by asking the boy to relate exactly what had happened between himself and the moneylender. Happily, the boy hastened to tell about the explanations he gave the rich man in exchange for the debt.

"Well, the mandarin said to the boy, "if this man here has indeed make such a promise, we have only your word for it. How do we know that you have not invented the whole story yourself? In a case such as this, you need a witness to confirm it, and you have none." The boy remained calm and declared tat naturally there was a witness to their conversation.

"Who is that, child?" the mandarin asked.

"A fly, Your Honor."

"A fly? What do you mean, a fly? Watch out, young man, fantasies are not to be tolerated in this place!" The mandarins' benevolent face suddenly became stern.

"Yes, Your Honor, a fly. A fly which was alighting on this gentleman's nose!" The boy leaped from his seat.

"Insolent little devil, that's a pack of lies!" The rich man roared indignantly, his face like a ripe tomato. "The fly was not on my nose, he was on the house pole..." But he stopped dead. It was, however, too late.

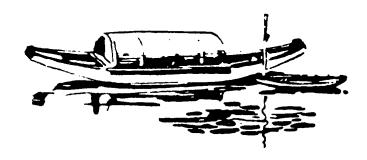
The majestic mandarin himself could not help bursting out laughing. Then the audience burst out laughing. The boy's parents too, although timidly, laughed. And the boy, and the rich man himself, also laughed.

With one hand on his stomach, the mandarin waved the other hand toward the rich man:

"Now, now, that's all settled. You have indeed made your promises, dear sir, to the child. House pole or no house pole, your conversation did happen after all! The court says you must keep your promise."

And still chuckling, he dismissed all parties. □

ESCAPE



BANG...BANG...BANG! It was everywhere! The silence of the midnight air was now filled with the roaring of the savage guns and the whimpering of the Vietnamese villagers running for refuge in a small fishing boat set to sail for freedom.

"Mom! Mom!" I cried. "Where are you?"

"Run...child...run...," insisted Mr. Lan. I wouldn't budge.

"Ngung!" screamed a distant yet familiar voice.

"Mom?...Mommmmm!"

"Ngung...go to the boat!" instructed the familiar voice.

BANG!

A scream. The familiar voice was no more.

"MOM!"

"Ngung, are you all right, child?" asked a vague voice. The image of the one who spoke looked blurry. Loudly, he asked me again. His every word rattled clamorously against my

aching head. I couldn't and didn't answer. Perhaps sensing my pain, he left. I lay there dreaming. The sweet familiar voice echoed through me again and again. I reached out my hand and...BANG! BANG! I screamed. A firm hand grabbed hold of mine. I opened my tearful eyes and saw that it was Mr. Lan.

"You'll be all right, child," Mr. Lan assured. He gave me a cup of water. I greedily drank up every drop of it. I thank him, encircled my arms around the knees, and slept.

The next morning I was awaked by a "gurgling" noise. I peered up from my encircled arms and vaguely saw a thin girl vomiting digested food. The stench disgusted me. I stared at the thin girl and realized that I was beneath the deck of the boat with ten other people. The space was about six feet across. We were cramped in like sardines in a can. I searched about for the opening to the deck. A gleam of light

that fought its way through a crack caught my attention. It was the opening to the deck. I slowly reached up to open it, but the muscles in my body wouldn't allow it. It was too comfortable in its position to move. For a while, my muscles and I battled it out. Finally, it gave up, and the opening to the deck was waiting for me to ascend it. Carefully, I ascended from the sardine can. The sun was rising across the horizon. From miles around, all I could see was the vast blue sea. No more could I hear the roaring sound of the savage guns nor the horrid scream of the loving familiar voice. The deck opening creaked and Mr. Lan descended.

"Are you feeling better, child?" he asked. I nodded. The sun was now at its highest point. The sun's array of light reflecting on the water seemed like melting gold. I looked and marveled at the wonder before me. It elevated my spirit and bestowed peace within me.

"How did I come aboard the boat, Mr. Lan?" I asked. "I can't remember...my head hurts."

"Here, take it." He handed me a white tablet. "It'll make you feel better."

I took the tablet and swallowed it dry.

"It was Tuan," he continued, "who carried you onto the boat. You fainted after those 'dogs' killed your mom."

Tears rolled down my cheeks. The familiar voice echoed in my aching head once more. I covered my ears and pleaded for it to stop; but it stubbornly refused.

"No! Stop!" I cried hysterically. "Stop! Please make it stop."

Mr. Lan drew me near; and I nestled in his arms like a new born baby. He rocked me back and forth, until I fell asleep.

Later that day, I was awaked by a frightening shriek.

"It's the Soviet ship! Quick, keep your heads down!" shouted a harsh voice.

My heart beat wildly. I remained as still as the dead. After a few minutes, the harsh voice announced that the seventy of us were safe. I opened my weary eyes. It was night. I was lying on the deck. The moon and its many shinning companions were venturing about the boundless sky. There was a lantern hanging on the edge of the boat's cabin. The night air was cool and breezy. I sat up. It's been two days; and I was very hungry. I wanted to walk to the boat's cabin where I was sure the supplies were kept; but I'd have to step on the many bodies that covered every available surface of the boat. Besides, I'd lose my spot on the deck and have to sleep in the sardine can below. I squeezed into my spot on the deck and cried myself to sleep.

The next morning, I was too weak to move. I lay on the deck as still as the dead. Since I couldn't move without trembling, food was fed to me by Mrs. Lan. I was given rice with sugar and a teacup of water. We were short of supplies; there-

fore, I was given only a small portion of rice and water. A few minutes after the consumption of the food, I vomited it all out. Mrs. Lan gathered up the digested food and fed it to me again.

"Eat it up, child," she said "You can't afford to waste it."

Too weak to oppose, I painfully swallowed it, while Mrs. Lan tearfully fed it to me. Afterwards, she took me into her arms.

"Your mom would've been proud!" she said.

The sky was getting darker. There wasn't much to do on the boat except sit, sleep, groan, or hope we might reach land soon. It was toward the end of the fourth day. We were out of food and water. We had a few cans of milk, but it lasted us for no more than a day or two. We had no net to catch fish, and by now one baby, a ten-year-old boy, and a woman of forty had died. We said a prayer for the dead and released the corpses into the majestic sea. On the fifth night, the boat was still pondering the endless blue see. Everyone on the boat was very ill and weary. They didn't speak much. It was too tiresome. I was sitting near the boat's cabin with my arms encircled around the knees. I was staring blankly at the edge of the sea. Suddenly, I saw a light.

"There's a light!" I shouted. It woke everyone.

"Where?" they each asked.

"Over there, see!" I said, pointing.

They all looked in the direction that I'd pointed and saw the light. When we were near it, we saw that it was a Thai fishing boat which was about three times bigger than our boat.

"It's a Thai boat! Quick, every girl and woman make yourself as dirty and ugly as you can! Quick...quick!" shouted Mr. Tien, the owner of the boat. Without hesitating, I obeyed him. My hands trembled as I unsteadily applied dirt on my face and hair. My blood curled up in fright.

Our small boat tried to get away, but it lacked the power. The Thai boat approached ours. A man threw us a rope, pointed a gun at us, and signaled us to tie it to our boat. All of a sudden, several men jumped onto our boat, carrying guns and sticks in their hands.

"They're going to rob and kill us," a frightened woman cried.

One of them signaled us to give him everything on the boat; while others teased the women and rampaged the boat for valuables. I'd covered myself with an old rice bag and moved away from the light.

"Leave me alone!" screamed the thin girl. A Thai man had found her beneath the deck and was savagely caressing and unclothing her against her own will.

"Get off my daughter, you bastard!" screamed the father.

He pushed the Thai away from the thin girl. They

struggled.

BANG!

"DAD!"

The thin girl was fatherless. She turned to the Thai that had killed her father and plugged straight into him like a wild bull. He caught her, laughed, and continued his barbarous work.

One by one, the women and girls became part of the Thai pirates' brutish feast; while the men on the boat became punching bags for those who weren't satisfied by the feast.

It was almost daybreak. A Thai approached me. I was paralyzed. I felt all the blood draining out of my body. I was my turn. He lifted up my face. Something made him hesitate. I pulled my face away; but he grabbed it back violently and fiercely ripped open my old clothes. Ravishingly, he indulged himself upon me like a hungry beast. I kicked and screamed; but it was useless. No one listened. No one could do anything but watched.

As if afraid of the light, the beasts took our valuables and fled to their dark taverns before the sun rose over the horizon. The women cried and the men looked upon their wives and daughters with mournful eyes. As I peered up from my encircled arms, I felt a sudden gush of freshness in the morning wind. The sun was rising again over the horizon. SERENITY prevailed.

Anonymous (UCI)

TẨM BẬY TẨM BẠ

(bài của một cậu freshman đang học lớp Việt Ngữ của "thầy" Tuấn)

Biết bao giờ mình sẻ ra trường Ngày nào củng như ngày đó Ăn song ròi đi học Học song ròi đi ăn Ăn ròi thì đi ngủ Ngủ dậy ròi đi cầu Đi cầu song ròi đi học Thật là cháng vô cùng

Quen mấy anh chị trong VSA Đem lại niềm vui về Rất là cám ơn nhiều Nâm nay nhiều anh chị ra trường Ai củng vô được med school Thật là giối quá! Còn mình ngỗi tại đây Không biếy tương lai xể tới đâu Rất là lo lắm

ổ trong dorm củng tạm được Bạn bè thì củng có Nhưng mà đồ ăn dổ như điên Ngày nào củng nhớ Nhớ chai nước mấm Phú Quốc Thèm ơi là thèm

Thời gian troi qua như nước Mới đây thì đá mười nâm ròi Củng còn lang thang đi học Không biết chừng nào xẻ sông Học quài học quỉ củng cháng Thôi mà kệ nó, cho nó tới đâu thì tới

Tương lai vẫn còn đợi chờ Niếu bổ họf thì uổng quá Trịu khó bây giờ thì sâu này Thân mình sẻ nhờ Thôi mà ráng học Học sông rời tính sâu.

• CÁ HỒNG 1/28/94 (Trích ĐS Xuân Lên Đường, UCI)

30 Tháng Tư

30 tháng tư? 19 năm rồi kể từ 30 tháng tư năm 1975. Còn âm hưởng gì không?

Tôi đã bị cảm mấy ngày qua. Hôm nay cũng chưa thấy khỏe nên phải đi bác sĩ xin thuốc. Và thế là người tôi cứ lừ đừ cả ngày vì ảnh hưởng thuốc.

Khi tỉnh táo được một chút thì chợt nhớ lại ngày hôm nay là ngày 30 tháng tư. Mấy hôm nay tôi dự tính ngày này về Santa Ana xem biểu tình. Tham dự hay chỉ bàng quang đứng xem? Không biết được? Quốc Hận rồi Quốc Kháng. Quốc Kháng xong lại Quốc Hận. Và ngày nay thì hình như người ta đã không còn hận nữa. Nguôi ngoai hay không nhớ? Thôi nhớ hay cố quên? Người ta về Việt Nam ào ào, hàng ngày như cơm bữa. Tình cảm dành cho chính đồng bào tỵ nạn mình cũng dần dần nhạt nhẻo, dửng dưng, xa lạ. Không còn mấy ai quan tâm đến những số phận đó.

Bây giờ thì mình làm gì ta? Có hai cái party, hôm trước và hôm sau ngày 30 tháng tư. Ai cũng muốn quên phứt đi ngày đó cho rồi, nhưng lại phải kiêng tránh ngày này như không muốn chạm đến một mụt mủ lâu ngày dai dẫng không chữa được và vẫn còn gây trở ngại, bất tiện.



Tôi nhớ lại nhiều năm về trước, mỗi độ tháng tư về là khắp nơi tại hải ngoại lại sôi nổi khí thế đấu tranh. Ở mọi đại học, hội sinh viên Việt Nam đều tổ chức văn nghệ đấu tranh, tưởng nhớ quê hương,

đêm không ngủ, v.v... Gần 20 năm đi qua, những buổi đấu tranh ấy nay chỉ là điều hy hữu trong các sân trường. Lửa hờn căm đã tàn, niềm tiếc nhớ đã dịu — cho dù thống khổ, tù ngục, đọa đày trên 70 triệu dân Việt vẫn còn nguyên đó. Vòng xiềng xích đỏ tanh hôi kinh tởm đã được sơn sửa, tô phết, đánh bóng lại để che dấu, đánh lừa con mắt và sự cảm nhận của con người, cả trong lẫn ngoài nước.



Hãy bình tâm nhìn lại: Hai mươi năm qua, chúng ta, nhất là tuổi trẻ, đã làm và để lại được những gì? Bao lý tưởng cao đẹp cho quê hương ta, cho dân tộc ta đâu cả rồi? Nhìn quanh chúng ta thấy gì: báo chửi bới báo, hội đoàn đả kích hội đoàn, H.O. kình H.O., đảng phái, mặt trận, người trước đâm người sau, người sau lụi người trước — toàn những nhát chí mạng.

Tôi chắc rằng giờ này có một bọn người đang nở những nụ cười nhan hiểm đắc chí. Ngón đòn ly gián — hòa hợp hòa giải, đổi mới dân chủ ấm no, giao lưu văn hóa, đầu tư xây dựng — thật quá lợi hại, thành công vượt bực chỉ tiêu. THÀNH CÔNG, THÀNH CÔNG, ĐẠI THÀNH CÔNG. Miệng hô hào dân chủ, một tay bốc hốt đô la, tay kia lăm lăm búa liềm, chúng đang bán dần đất nước ta: Phú Quốc, Côn Sơn, Vũng Tàu, Cam Ranh,... và sẽ còn nhiều nữa. Đã có ai trong chúng ta nhận ra hiểm họa chưa?

Hãy điều lại mũi gươm, hãy chỉnh lại họng súng. Đừng nhắm vào nhau — mà tất cả chúng ta hãy tập trung nhắm vào cùng một tiêu điểm: bọn đầu lãnh cộng sản đang ngự trị tại Bắc Bộ Phủ.

"BÁN!"

• Nguyễn Trần (WCU)

PHÓNG SỰ LIÊN TRƯỜNG:

MOORPARK COLLEGE, Moorpark, CA

Hôm 27 tháng 4, trường Moorpark College, một trong ba trường đại học cộng đồng ở Ventura County, đã tổ chức ngày Đa Văn Hóa (Multicultural Day). Tuy với một sĩ số ít ỏi không đủ để thành lập một hội sinh viên, nhưng các sinh viên Việt Nam tại trường đã cố gắng góp mặt vào chương trình với gian hàng triển lãm và một màn vũ dân tộc để giới thiệu đến các sắc dân khác về văn hóa của mình.

Vừa vào parking lot thì tôi ngạc nhiên khi thấy hai bóng áo dài trắng thướt tha đi qua. Vì hai người có vẻ bận chuyện gì, nên tôi không

chận hỏi và quyết định đi sâu vào khuôn viên, thì lại gặp hai tà áo dài khác. Hỏi thăm thì hai cô chỉ đến gian hàng của sinh viên Việt Nam. Tiến đến, tôi thấy các anh chị em sinh viên Việt Nam trong trường đang tụ tập quanh gian hàng của mình, sửa soạn cho phiên trình diễn.



Qua cuộc trò chuyện, tôi được biết là các bạn nữ trong trường đã vận động nhau cùng mặc áo dài đi học trong ngày Đa Văn Hóa, nên mới thấy nhiều tà áo thân yêu thấp thoáng trong sân trường như vây.

Những tà áo thướt tha và những chiếc nón bài thơ xinh xắn trong vũ khúc "Hát Hội Trăng Rằm" đã gây nhiều ấn tượng sâu đậm trong khán giả. Sau buổi trình diễn, một khán giả Mỹ đến hỏi, ngỏ ý muốn mua một chiếc nón, và đoàn vũ đã tặng không cho ông một chiếc. (Tôi thấy ông có vẻ hớn hỡ lắm khi ông đội chiếc

nón trên đầu.) Và khi một người khác đến hỏi về các ý nghĩa nằm trong những điệu múa, thì mọi người đều nhìn nhau, ngơ ngác. Một cô trong đoàn vũ đã nhanh trí giải thích đó là những động tác tát nước vào ruộng — lẽ dĩ nhiên với vật dụng khác, chứ không phải với chiếc nón.

Ngoài ra, chương trình còn có thêm sự tham gia của các chủng sinh từ Chủng Viện St. John, Camarillo, với ba nhạc khúc dân ca — bài "Trống Cơm", "Hò Lơ", và "Công On Sinh Thành" — trong thể điệu hát bè đuổi nhau thật điêu luyện xuất sắc, tạo nhiều ngạc nhiên thích thú cho

khán giả cả Mỹ lẫn Việt trong thể điệu la nầy.

Khởi đầu tôi dự định chuyến viếng thăm chừng hai tiếng đồng hồ; khi về xem lại thì đã gần bốn tiếng. Cảm tưởng của tôi về sinh viên Moorpark College là vì số lượng nhỏ nên các sinh viên VN tại đây rất gần gũi, vui nhộn, và

thân nhau như trong cùng một đại gia đình. Đa số là người trẻ mới qua theo chương trình ODP hoặc HO; ai cũng thật bận rộn với chuyện học hành và với cuộc sống. Với số nhân sự nhỏ nhoi và thời gian tập dợt eo hẹp như thế, sự hiện diện tích cực vào ngày Đa Văn Hóa quả thật đáng tán thưởng. Mong các bạn sinh viên VN tại Moorpark College sẽ tiếp tục dương danh, biểu dương văn hóa của mình, tiếp nối thành truyền thống trong nhiều năm tới.

Phóng Viên Non Sông

Sinh Hoạt Liên Trường

• Buổi Lễ Ra Mắt Tân Ban Chấp Hành THSV

Buổi Lễ Ra Mắt Tân Ban Chấp Hành THSVVN/ Miền Nam California đã diễn ra vào lúc 1 giờ 30 chiều thứ Bảy vừa qua, tại trụ sở của Cộng Đồng Việt Nam—Nam California. Có khoảng 100 quan khách đến tham dư, thuộc đủ moi giới trong công đồng như đại diện một số hội đoàn, đoàn thể, một vài nhac sĩ, ký giả, nhà báo, giáo sư, và nhân sĩ. Ngoài ra còn có một số anh chị em sinh viên đại diện các trường UCI, Pasadena City College, Los Angeles City College, Long Beach City College, Cal State Northridge, Cal Poly Pomoma, Cal State Long Beach, và Golden West College. Buổi lễ diễn ra trong bầu không khí thân mật. Một vài quan khách cũng như anh chi em sinh viên phát biểu cảm nghĩ, chia xẻ những kinh nghiệm và ưu tư về tương lai tuổi trẻ Việt Nam và Cộng Đồng Việt Nam. Ban Chấp Hành nhiệm khóa 92-94 chính thức bàn giao trách nhiệm lại cho BCH 94-96. Ban Chấp Hành (nhiệm khóa 94-96) gồm các thành viên sau đây: Chủ Tịch anh Hoàng Quốc Khánh, Phó Nội Vụ A. Lâm Huy Vũ, Phó Ngoại Vụ A. Nguyễn Hùng, Tổng Thư Ký chị Quách Ngọc Anh Đào, và Thủ Quỹ A. Nguyễn Thiết. Ban cố vấn gồm có Giáo Sư Phạm Cao Dương, GS Lưu Trung Khảo, GS Lê Tinh Thông, Bác Sĩ Vĩnh Thừa, và anh Nguyễn Đức Lập.

● Lớp Dạy Kèm Toán-Lý-Hóa và Anh Văn

THSV đang cần thêm một số tình nguyện viên dạy kèm cho các em trung học từ lớp 6 đến lớp 12, vào mỗi sáng thứ Bảy, từ 9 giờ sáng cho đến 12 giờ trưa, tại trụ sở Cộng Đồng miền Nam California, thành phố Westminster. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết, xin gọi số điện thoại (714) 893-3139.

Thông Báo Của Ban Tổ Chức Trại Hè "Về Với Non Sông"

Vào mỗi dịp hè hàng năm, THSV tổ chức trại hè mang tên "Về Với Non Sông". Trại hè năm nay sẽ được tổ chức vào cuối tháng 7 hoặc đầu tháng 8. Ban tổ chức trại hè sẽ thông báo thêm chi tiết trong nay mai trên "Chương Trình Phát Thanh Tiếng Nói Tuổi Trẻ" hoặc trong báo Non Sông. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết về trại hè, xin gọi chị Bảo Hiếu (714) 538-6267 (sau 5 giờ chiều) hoặc chị Anh Đào (714) 956-9120.

• Triễn Lãm Tranh

Một buổi triển lãm tranh ảnh về người tỵ nạn Việt Nam do nhóm VRAC thực hiện sẽ được tổ chức vào ngày thứ Hai, 16 tháng 5 năm 1994 tại đại học UCLA. Các tranh triển lãm này do các họa sĩ Việt Nam vẽ trong các trại tỵ nạn Đông Nam Á. Ngoài phần triển lãm tranh, từ 12 giờ trưa đến 2 giờ chiều còn có phần thuyết trình của nhóm LAVAS, Project Ngọc. Tranh triển lãm sẽ được trưng bày trong Ackerman Grand Ball, trên đường Westwood Blvd.

• Cal State Northridge Với "ĐÊM QUÊ HƯƠNG"

Một đêm văn nghệ với chủ đề "Đêm Quê Hương" sẽ được tổ chức tại trường đại học Cal State Northridge. Chương trình gồm có múa dân tộc, trình diễn thời trang, và vở kịch "An Anthology of A Refugee's Experience". Vở kịch "An Anthology of A Refugee's Experience" đã từng được trình diễn tại nước Nhật, tiểu bang Hawaii và thành phố Sacramento, và đã được cựu thượng nghị sĩ John Seymor đã đề nghi lấy ngày 16 tháng 6 mỗi năm làm ngày

Á Châu. Đến với vở kịch "An Anthology of A Refugee's Experience", chúng ta sẽ tìm được câu trả lời "Tại sao người Việt Nam bỏ nước ra đi?" và "Làm thế nào nào để lấy lại quê hương?" "Đêm Quê Hương" sẽ được bắt đầu vào đúng 8 giờ tối, thứ Sáu tuần này, ngày 13 tháng 5,1994, tại Satellite Student Union, Cal State Northridge. Giá vé vào cửa là \$5.00. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết, xin gọi A. Hùng, số điện thoại (714) 662-5789 hoặc pager (714) 570-1971.

• Los Angeles City College

Cũng vào thứ Sáu tuần này, 13 tháng 5, tại trường đại học cộng đồng Los Angeles City College, có hội chợ Á Châu lúc 10 giờ sáng. HSVVN/LACC sẽ biểu diễn Múa Lân. Đây là lần đầu tiên sinh viên Việt Nam tại đây biểu diễn Múa Lân cho những người ngoại quốc xem.

UC Santa Barbara và Cal Poly San Louis Obispo

Hai hội SVVN trường UCSB và Cal Poly SLO sẽ cùng chung tổ chức một buổi picnic vào ngày thứ Bảy, 14 tháng 5, 1994, tại Laguna Lake Park, thuộc thành phố San Louis Obispo, từ 9 giờ 30 sáng tới 6 giờ chiều. Đây là một trong những sinh hoạt hàng năm của sinh viên Việt Nam giữa hai trường UCSB và Cal Poly SLO, nhằm mục đích để kết thân. Buổi picnic sẽ có phần thi đấu thể thao.

Cal State Los Angeles

Tại đại học Cal State Los Angeles, vào tối thứ Tư tuần này, sẽ có một đêm văn nghệ mang tên "Cultural Night". Chương trình gồm có ca nhạc, kịch, những điệu múa dân tộc, đặc biệt có "Fashion Show" áo dài và y phục thời trang và băng nhạc sống. Chương trình sẽ bắt đầu vào lúc 8 giờ tối, tại Student Union (lầu 2). Vào cửa miễn phí. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết, xin gọi anh Steven, số điện thoại (213) 240-2766 hoặc cô Cindy (213) 223-9182.

Cũng Tin Cal State LA

Tuần lễ Asian Pacific Heritage Week tại Cal State Los Angeles được tổ chức vào ngày 10 tháng 5, 1994. Tuần lễ Truyền Thống Thái Bình Dương Á Châu hàng năm tại đây đã thu hút khá đông các sinh viên Á Châu. HSVVN Cal State LA sẽ có gian hàng bán đồ ăn và biểu diễn điệu múa "Giả Gạo Đêm Trăng".

Cal Poly Pomona

Hội Sinh Viên Việt Nam Cal Poly Pomona sẽ có một buổi picnic tại Mile Square Park, từ 11 giờ tới 6 giờ chiều, ngày thứ Bảy, 14 tháng 5, 1994. Buổi picnic gồm có sinh hoạt ngoài trời và chơi bóng chuyền. Mọi người đều được hoan nghênh đến tham dự. Thức ăn tự túc. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết, xin gọi anh Bảo (909) 620-9035.

Long Beach City College: Thư kêu gọi đóng góp sách vở

HSVVN trường đại học cộng đồng Long Beach City College đã thiết lập tủ sách Việt Nam trong thư viện của trường. Để có đủ tài liệu cần thiết và đáp ứng nhu cầu hiện tại, chúng tôi thiết tha kêu gọi mọi sự đóng góp tài liệu tiếng Việt từ mọi giới đồng bào. Sự quan tâm của qúy vị là niềm khích lệ cho chúng tôi và góp sức duy trì văn hóa của dân tôc Việt Nam.

Tài liệu đóng góp xin gởi về:

Vietnamese Student Association Long Beach City College 4901 East Carson Street Long Beach, CA 90808

hoặc liên lạc A. Thuận (310) 428-1978

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Mọi chi tiết xin vui lòng liên lạc Tổng Hội Sinh Viên Miền Nam California, điện thoại (714) 893-3139