Michigan 4th March 1956

To: Dr Wesley Fishel

Michigan State University Group in Viet-nam
26 Gia-Long Street, SAIGON

Dear Dr Fishel,

I hope that Mrs Fishel and you arrive in Saigon not too tired after the long voyage, with so much luggage and so many children.

In the College life, there is nothing new since your departure. The Project always progresses fastly. We just have a meeting with Mr Sheinbaum to plan our next trip to TVA. It seems to be a very good trip; we will have among us Thu and The(regulars) and another Vietnamese student in Dam-Engineering residing outside Michigan. We also received a word from Saigon notifying vaguely that the payment of the remainder of our salaries by the Embassy of VN in Washington, has been accepted "in principle". But the Embassy still ignores that, and they are still waiting for orders from the Foreign Ministry in Saigon, like in a vicious circle. We also learnt that Dr Traywich too busy with his department, will leave us next month.

I just cast a glance on my paper before turning it to Mr Shannon and I am ashamed to give you a paper so full of spelling mistakes, and to begin with, the "restAURation of VN" (which would suggest the idea of "Restaurant"). If somebody from the Project reads it, he will think that they are wasting their scholarships for me. So, I enclose here some new sheets with more complete information to replace those in chapter II(page 17), chapter III(page 21 & following) and the Conclusion chiefly.
And I do apologize many times for this trouble I should not make you.

Please transmit my respects to Mrs Fishel, and receive my best wishes for complete success and a delicious time in Viet-Nam,

Sincerely yours,

NGUYEN DIEN

126 Fern street, EASTLANSING (Michigan) U.S.A.
and kapok-seds. Most of the factories work with very primitive machine-equipments, because of the high cost of electricity in Saigon-Cholon. These oils plus various imported chemical-products (which could be got at much lower price, if we have cheap electricity) supply the industry of soap in Saigon-Cholon.

Finally, a fish industry should have a high place in a country like ours, which has more than half of its border on the Ocean. The surveys of the National Oceanographic Institute of Nha-trang revealed that Vietnamese-waters are abundant in fish-bands of every kinds. The Japanese always aware of these facts have applied for a fishing-privilege in Tourane-coasts in 1955.

In our country the consumption of fish should be increased to eliminate or reduce the consumption of meat (beef), to avoid the importation of cattle from Cambodia (as like as we did in South V.N) or the slaughtering of domestic animals which are so needed for the fields, in newly recovered provinces of Central Viet-nam (such as Quang-ngai, Phu-Yen, Binh-dinh where the Government had to supply with (very few) buffaloes imported from Thailand and the Philippines).

The demand of fish-consumption in Dalat or Saigon market represents many tons a day. These fish frozen fish are despatched to those places by airplanes or trucks from Cap StJacques, Phan-Thiet, Phan-Rang or Nha-Trang.

But fishes are not only used for household-consumptions they supply the material for many foodstuff-industries: Many kind of very small fishes are used in the manufacture of "mam" (salted fish), others are used in the fabrication of the famous"Nuoc-mam" (fish-sauce). The medium-sized fishes are consumed with rice, larger sized-fishes (such as the "ca-map" (or sharks), the "ca-duoi" (or)) are salted and fumed or dried, and their entrails (long-bong) as well as their scales (Vi-ca) are dried, and both constitute very expensive foodstuffs, which are demanded by the Chinese-Restaurants of Cholon, in Saigon.

Fishes, and some other secondary products such as "San-No ( ) and "Xa-Cu" ( ) and swallow-nests** without counting the exploitation of Sea-weeds so abundant in Nha-trang and the possibility of a caned-fish-industry in Nha-trang, are some interesting resources that we can profit from the "free"Ocean.

Large funds could be usefully invested in the modernization of fishing-equipment in Tourane, Nha-trang, Phan-thiet and Cap StJacques. This branch of economic activity if adequately organized, will help many groups of refugees to settle, it will also help the poor people of the coasts enjoy a higher standard of living in the new Republic of Viet-Nam.

* Fabricated at Nam-O (Quang-Nam), Phan-Thiet, Phan-Rang and Phu-Quoc.
** In Quang-Nam each year first quality swallow-nests output:
150 kilos; price 6500/keilo (100$US/pound), exist also in other places like Paracel-Islands and in the South.
*** Nha-trang: most of the fishing-equipment are sailing-junks (less than 18 tons) and some motor-boats (22 tons).
ration deficitary. The main obstacle which handicapped it in its competition with automobiles is that trains are not made for short distances. There, automobiles are faster and more maniable for the passengers. Only long distance travels with a good average speed, more safety, more room and low costs are the domains where the train can prosper.

The second motive is that this line is very useful for military purposes. Experiences in the past showed that by boats transportation along the coast is not easy; as for automobiles their potentialities are reduced by the high price of petrol and the low tonnage they can transport (an Army C.M.C. Truck is not supposed to transport more than 2 tons and half). Besides, the Highway No.1 in its portion from Touroune to Kha-trang with its many high passes, is a very hard access to war-machines. In the rainy season, it is usual that a high flood submerging this highway, makes it impracticable (even though it is in good conditions which is not the case now).

It is remarkable to note that at its beginning, the construction of the TransIndocinese-Railroad had also to be financed by bond-issues totalising to 30 millions of francs in 1896.

Viet-Namese Railroads are one meter large, the minimum radius for curves is 120 meters and the slopes are always less than 1.5 %, ties are made either of metal or of wood, and the average speed is situated between 30 and 40 km per-hour for trains, and 40 to 50 km/hour for Micheline-coaches or Autotrails.

The cost of the restauration of the Railroads represents the setting of some 700 km of rail and the repairs of about thirty bridges, some of which are minor.
At the present time this portion of railroad is under construction, but it advanced very moderately, because of lack of financial means.

It is obvious that the Railroad is necessary in Viet-Nam, and there is no reason why we could not achieve our Railroad since in the North, the line between Vinh and the Chinese border has been achieved several months ago.

Waterways & Harbours: A word should be reserved for waterways and harbours in this chapter.

In matter of waterways nothing needs to be done right now, except that most of the canals in the area surrounding Saigon as well as the Channel leading from Cap St Jacques to Saigon harbour need to be dragged to keep the required depth for boats.

As for harbours, the Program should consider the possibility of developing and using some other harbours than the unique harbour of Saigon the access of which is so difficult and requires so much time that some boats could not afford to have enough time to stop in (at least ten hours to go from the sea to Saigon).

To avoid the transit by our port of Saigon, the Cambodians planned to spend their millions of dollars for a port at Ream, and build a road to communicate it to Phnom-Penh. We are more lucky than they are, when we compare our Can-Banh Rade (see map 11) with that desert and unclestered place.

The Rade of Can-Banh is not only a picturesque spot for the nice resorters from Phatrang beach to admire. It is one of the most perfect sea-ports in the world (it's the op-
with the city of Qui-Nhon by the Viet-Minh, and should be restored now to its normal life.
CHAPTER IV: SOCIAL WELFARE AND EDUCATION

A complete restoration of the economy in Vietnam supposes also an action in the field of Social Welfare and Education.

Alike the program of improvement of the standard of living for the people in the villages, the program of Social Welfare and Education is very important.

At first, it seems that the program of Social Welfare must include a housing program for the poor and a system of adequate Hospitals to receive the sick.

In the cities of Vietnam the problems of housing is a hard one. With the war, a large crowd of people flowed from the villages into cities to seek for more safety; this exod from the campain had created a serious problem of housing. Besides, the migration of the Refugees from the North, added to that, many more difficulties.

A good effort in trying to find a shelter for people has been done by the Ministry of Reconstruction which built houses in Saigon-Cholon, at Dalat, Hue and Can-tho with the funds collected from the Lottery of National Reconstruction. The funds collected from that Lottery are a kind of loan, and are used in the construction of several kinds of homes ranging from a 18,000 piastres-home (at Phu-tho) to a 128,000 piastres-home (at Phu-nhu). These houses are made available through a system of instalment-sale. Ex: for a house of 128,000$ the purchaser (mostly a fonctionnaire) has to pay 20,000$ down, and monthly 1,000$ (approx 33$\%$). The amounts of money got from these down payments are used in the construction of new buildings... and so forth...

Although the lowest class of laborers and coolies are not yet able to profit of these construction$, however these houses were very beneficial for the lowest class of fonctionnaire$. 
and did help very much in the solution of the housing problem.

The new Program of Welfare should have higher ambitions. It should provide houses built in cheap-local or imported-material, in sanitary-conditions, and made available to the poor labor class for a monthly-rent. And as soon as these new houses will be available, the "slums" on the surrounding-suburbs of Saigon-cholon should be destroyed, and let room to new constructions.

In the field of Education, it is obvious that the urgent needs are the foundation of a Library and the extension of the present University.

Vietnamese

The only library in Saigon is too small. A new and modern library is a urgent need for the intellectual in the Capital of the New Republic.

The New University of Viet-nam doesn't dispose of much room, and its teaching-equipment is very poor. The project of transferring the University to Dalat for the sake of having larger space is also a very good idea. But it should have more funds to move more quickly, if it will have really to do so.

More than anywhere else, SOCIAL WELFARE & EDUCATION are the fields of predilection where USAid could be usefully "invested".

Without any doubt, they will be warmly welcomed; and whatever shall be the Future of this Land of Asia, where various doctrines and contradictory Systems did not receive yet their final test of Efficiency, the HOSPITAL AND the SCHOOL always remain the Monuments of Human Civilisation, to which the people of the United States will be proud of having contribute their parts.
CONCLUSION

This Program, when fully realized, will bring a "New-Look" to South Viet-nam: the Economy will be stronger, and the peasants will enjoy a higher standard of living which will bring to their minds sounder ideas of Freedom and of the Free-World.

My conviction is that it will also contribute to bring a "New-Look" to the present situation in the whole Viet-nam and in South East Asia as well.

However the principle of a "Loan granted to Viet-nam" by the Federal Government, never heard before, might sound a little queer to politician-ears too particular about pure formalities. But never before there was a Cold War, and never before the Communist Danger was so large.

It is always the simple story of somebody who lends a hose to a neighbor in fire to avoid his own home to be destroyed; and the United States have spent thousands of billions dollars in lending-hoses to the peoples in the World, and the result of that sound investment is the Victory in World War II.

The danger of a big conflagration menaces the world at every moment; and fire gets easily in the heads of starving people under in the depths of despair, as "the seeds of Totalitarian regimes are nurtured by Misery and Want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of Poverty and Strife and they reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life had died" (Harry Truman).

The people of the United States are aware of these facts and they know how safe their home is, and how big and small the present world is. It is desirable that they will not be too much absorbed in the manoeuvres the Communists often have, which are
also fine traps to occupy the attention of the Western World.

On the International Forum, the fashion of to-day is to
talk about Peace and at the same time each "Big" has to run the
race for "Missiles", those giant "aircrafts-without-pilots" which
cost billions and billions dollars. (Read in Daily March 56)

The "Axis of the Earth" which passed formerly between
Rome and Carthage, has moved from the Mediterranean-Sea, this
"MARIS NOSTRUM" of the Roman, to the PACIFIC OCEAN on the borders
of which are swarming hundreds millions of people *; and the econo-
mic problems of these people who represent half of the po-
pulation of the Earth, are big Problems for the World.

How efficient could be atomic or Hydrogen-bombs to sol-
ve the problems of people who are turned against each other by a
propaganda which exploit their Misery?

In the Far-East in arrear in modern-weapons, Human par-
ticipation still plays the first role in the War, and very often
the Will of a people resolutely to fight for what they believe to
be their Juste-Cause is sufficient by itself alone, to change the
Fate of the Battle, and turn the Victory to their side.

During the past years, the USA had sent Aids to many
Nations of Asia, but if the expected fruits of these Aids were
long to produce, it was because the people were not consulted to
know the "proper" men, they could trust with their money.

In Viet-nam, US Aids before 1954 did not go directly
to Vietnamese-Government. We understand that International Policy
sometimes had "such reasons, that Reason doesn't know". But it is
time to repair the past, as an unique chance is offered to the
Free World to save South East Asia from Communism. And last year
some fourteen million of Viet-namese had shown to the World the
MAN they chose to be their Leader.
Footnotes:

"The Axim of the Earth..."(Le Centre de Gravité de la Terre a passé de la Méditerranée au Pacifique)........ Albert Sarraut in his book" l'Orient"

"Asia is the Center of the World. Geographically Europe is her annex, Africa a sub-continent, Australia her island..... of "Western civilization is but the culmination of a tradition /inventions and discoveries that is ultimately rooted in the Ancient East"........( Asia between the two world-wars by J.P.Normand)
The Job we just reviewed is immensely large, for Human work; but we work for the Real Happiness of the people, not for the sake of "Showing", as the Viet-Cong(VNCommunists) are doing in the North, when they forced thousands of people to labor for the Railroads to Chinese-borders, and forced thousands of school-children to leave classes to take part in well-sinking and ditch-digging, just to keep the country "looking-nice" to the eyes of their Masters from Moscow.

In Orient we still believe in extraordinary things. The Reconstruction of the Nation is immense indeed, but we trust in our Leader, the "BIGGEST LITTLE MAN IN ASIA"* who is capable of miracles; and this Summer he will have a New Miracle, as he did have last year.

We all believe that like MOSES in the PROMISED LAND, He will turn this ruined country into a fertile Oasis, and when millions of people believe, It becomes true.

Yes, we all believe in HIM and in His Ability, as we are sure, that To-Morrow a Brighter-Day will shine on this Land of Viet-Nam......

The End

*" The Biggest Little Man in Asia" Title of an article by O.K. Armstrong, in READER'S DIGEST of February 1956(page 144).