

**THE DEMOCRATIC  
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## VIET NAM ON THE PACIFIC COAST

Casting a glance at the world map, you will see Viet Nam with an area of 329,000 square kilometres lies in South-east Asia between longitudes 100 and 110° and latitudes 5 and 25°. On the North is the great People's Republic of China, on the East and South, the immense Pacific Ocean, and on the West are the Laotian and Cambodian kingdoms.

In speaking of their country, the Vietnamese people immediately think of two granaries. The rich alluvial plain of the Red River and the Thai Binh River as well as the delta of the Mekong River in south Viet Nam supply various kinds of rice well known all over the world. If the two ends of Viet Nam are two granaries, the central region has plains scattered like heaps of paddy from Thanh Hoa, Nghe An to Phan Rang and Phan Thiet provinces. Viet Nam is really the Paddy Land.

Viet Nam has been described by a foreign friend as a country of bamboo-trees. This description is very apt. Bamboo-trees are to be seen everywhere. Slender and flexible but very tough trees they grow in all villages and hamlets. Viet Bac is thick with forests of bamboo-trees of all varieties.

Besides the bamboo there are immense forests of precious woods — Lim, Sen, Trac, Tram, Tau, etc. Mountains, forests and highlands occupy four-fifths of the area, chiefly in Bac Bo (north Viet Nam) and Trung Bo (central Viet Nam). The highest mountains are the Fansipan (3,142 metres) in North-west and the Pia Ouac in North-east of Bac Bo. The beautiful Ba Vi and Tam Dao mountains are two very good summer centres. Truong Son, as shows its name, is a long mountain range. Beside these chains of mountains and between the forests, various kinds of industrial crops are grown. Among these are tea and coffee. Therefore, Viet Nam is not only a country of plains and of paddy but also a country of mountains and forests with their precious forest products.

In speaking of Viet Nam, one calls to mind the mineral resources, the ores and metals of good quality and of abundant reserve. Anthracite which is in great quantity in the Hong Gai, Cam Pha and Uong Bi coal-mines is among the best in the world. Various metals such as iron, tin, lead, zinc, manganese, chrome, tungsten, amiantus, etc. have been and are being exploited. Viet Nam has huge reserve of phosphate, lime, and kaolin. Geologists in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam are discovering more mineral resources. With its wealth in minerals and metals, the socialist industrialization of Viet Nam is capable of a rapid advance.

The Red River and the Thai Binh River in Bac Bo, and the Mekong and the Dong Nai River in Nam Bo are not only the source of supply of water to rice-plants but also good lines of communication. These rivers will become in the near future sources of abundant hydro-electric power. In north Viet Nam, the Hanoi-Yunnan, Hanoi-Haiphong, Hanoi-Lang Son, Hanoi-Thanh Hoa and Hanoi-Thai Nguyen railway lines have contributed greatly to the economic restoration and development, and cultural develop-

ment. Asphalted or macadamized roads from Hanoi to the provinces, link province to province, district to district, town to countryside.

The Vietnamese coast is 2,500 kilometres long and has many ports: Haiphong, Cua Ong and Ben Thuy in the North, Da Nang, Cam Ranh and Saigon in the South. Fish is in an inexhaustible supply and a great source of profit for Viet Nam's economy.

Together with these advantageous natural conditions, Viet Nam is also situated in the tropical zone whose climate is favourable to vegetation which is always green and of rapid growth. Many kinds of delicious fruits abound: banana, orange, grape-fruit, longane, coco-nut, etc. Somebody has rightly said: Viet Nam is a country of greenness and freshness with multi-coloured flowers blooming all the year round.

North Viet Nam has four distinct seasons. Warm spring, the temperature being from 15° to 22°C. when rice-plants are beautifully green and trees bud under the light spring showers. In summer, the average temperature is as high as 30°, the heat helping the ears of rice to ripen quickly. The heavy summer rain which formerly often caused floods and water-logging, will, in the future, with irrigation networks, be conserved to enable the peasants to make good preparations for autumn crops. Autumn is a very poetic season, the freshest season of the year. The temperature in winter is between five and 15°C., when flowers still bloom and trees still sprout. It is the harvest-time of autumn rice and ploughing-time for the next summer crop.

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The population of our country is about 30 million. According to the census of March 1960 north Viet Nam has 15,916,000 habitants.

Viet Nam is a multi-national State. The majority are the Viets living in the plains from North to South. In the Viet Bac mountainous regions, on the Chinese and Laotian borders, and along the Truong Son mountain range, there are different nationalities: Thai, Meo, Tho, Nung, Man and Muong. In south Viet Nam, the minority peoples are Gia Rai, E De, Khmer and Cham. They number about three million. It is only under the leadership of the Party of the working class that all nationalities in Viet Nam are united in a monolithic bloc and act together to win back independence for the Fatherland. The building of socialism in the North as well as the liberation of the South are the common cause of all nationalities in Viet Nam.

There is no State religion in Viet Nam. About two million people are Catholics, the same number being believers in the Buddhist, Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religions. The remainder of the population follows no religion.

Viet Nam is divided into 65 provinces, the chief town of each being relatively large. Provinces are divided into districts whose chief towns are small. North Viet Nam has 27 provinces, two cities and two autonomous zones\*. Besides there are two special zones, the Hong Quang and Vinh Linh zones.

Hanoi, the Capital of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, is an ancient city on the Red River, with many historical points of interest and beautiful landscapes. The Literature Temple, One Pillar Pagoda and the Ngoc Son Pagoda were built in the 11th century

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\* Lang Son, Cao Bang, Bac Can, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Phu Tho, Son La, Lai Chau, Vinh Phuc, Bac Ninh, Bac Giang, Hai Ninh, Hai Duong, Kien An, Hung Yen, Thai Binh, Hoa Binh, Ha Dong, Son Tay, Ha Nam, Nam Dinh, Ninh Binh, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Hong Quang, Vinh Linh, Haiphong, Hanoi.

and are in good repair. The Restored Sword Lake lies in the very centre of the City. The Western Lake and the Truc Bach Lake, on the West of the Capital are scenic spots attracting the people of the city and foreign tourists, especially in the hot afternoons. With a population above 630,000 inhabitants the majority being factory-workers, public employees and peasants on the outskirts, Hanoi, like the other towns of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, is becoming a production centre. Formerly it was the principal market for imperialist goods and a place where debauchery prevailed. Now, Hanoi is the political, economic, and cultural centre of the whole country.

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## **A GLANCE THROUGH THE HISTORY OF A HEROIC PEOPLE**

### **I. VIET NAM BEFORE THE XIXth CENTURY**

Viet Nam has an ancient history. Old books often speak of more than 4,000 years of culture of the people.

What is the origin of the Vietnamese people? This is a problem along with others in the history of Viet Nam which still requires study. Without taking into account the legendary period of the Van Lang kingdom with the kings named Hung Vuong, the Au Lac kingdom, founded in 258 B. C., can be said to be the first in the history of Viet Nam. Half a century after its setting up, Au Lac was occupied by Trieu Da, a vassal of the Chin feudal dynasty in China. It was annexed to the territory of Trieu Da (now Kwantung province, China), and these two states were called Nam Viet. In 111 B. C. it was conquered by the Han feudal empire. The tract of land from today's Bac Bo (north Viet Nam) to Nghe An was divided into three zones and put under the domination of the various Chinese feudal dynasties : the Tung Wu, Tsin, Sui and Tang dynasties successively dominated our country:



Over one thousand years of slavery is over one thousand years of struggle for national independence by the Vietnamese people. The insurrections of the Trung Sisters (40-43), Lady Trieu (248), Ly Bon (544-602), Mai Thuc Loan (722) and Phung Hung (791) which mobilized the broad mass of people to oppose the domination of the aggressors, are well known. During more than 10 centuries, the struggle between the foreign feudalists attempting to assimilate the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese people united to win back their sovereignty continued without cessation. There were victorious uprisings in the whole country for a relatively long period such as those of the Trung Sisters and Ly Bon, and successful insurrections for a short period such as those of Lady Trieu, Mai Thuc Loan and Phung Hung. The Vietnamese people's will for independence in different generations and the confidence of the Vietnamese in their country were strong indeed. The name Van Xuan (Eternal Spring) given by Ly Bon to the country after its liberation (544-602), showed this strong and firm confidence.

The year 939 ended foreign feudal domination of more than one thousand years. Recalling this year, one remembers National Liberator Ngo Quyen, victor on the historic Bach Dang River, who opened a long period of independence for the country.

The characteristic of Vietnamese history from the 10th to the 16th century was that the people ceaselessly struggled against the foreign aggressors to safeguard independence, and at the same time built up their country. During that period, the self-defence wars against the Sung dynasty's troops (12th century), the Mongolian aggressors (13th century), the invaders from the Champa Kingdom (14th century) and the Ming dynasty's troops never ceased. The determination to defend national independence was clearly manifested in the defeat of the Mongolian troops three times, and the ten-year insurrection against the Ming troops. The names of the national