



*Glorious
daughters
of Vietnam*

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GLORIOUS DAUGHTERS
of
VIET NAM

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FOREWORD

In the course of the centuries-old history of Viet Nam, the Vietnamese women have many a time risen up side by side with their entire people to struggle against foreign aggression and domination, for national salvation.

Thus, they brilliantly contributed to the triumph of the August 1945 Revolution and to the victory of the war of resistance against the French colonialists. Soon afterwards they had to face another enemy: American imperialism.

No previous aggressor had been so cunning, obstinate and barbarous. None had had such a global strategy, such a high war potential, such sophisticated techniques.

However, faithful to their tradition of patriotism and undaunted courage, resolved to defend their rights acquired since independence and thanks to the socialist regime, the women of North Viet Nam participated en masse in the struggle against the enemy. Shouldering the "three responsibilities", with all the strength of their hands, their brains and their hearts they fulfilled all tasks.

Young and old, peasants, workers, intellectuals, artists, they all gave to the country the best of themselves. Always present at their posts, in work and in combat, in the fields,

factories and laboratories, repairing roads and manning anti-aircraft guns, they showed incredible valour and stamina.

Braving all trials, they set remarkable examples of courage and sacrifice and displayed great revolutionary heroism.

In this booklet, we do not claim to depict all aspects of their activities. We merely try to present to our readers some among those daughters of Viet Nam who have contributed to the historic victory of our people over American imperialism.

MOTHER DIEM

One late afternoon in July, I found myself in Linh Son, a village of Anh Son district, Nghe An province. A fresh breeze was blowing in the foliage of jack-trees, and the plumes of areca-palms were gently swaying against the crimson background of the sunset.

Together with a few armymen, I was listening to Mrs Diem evoking memories of the past over steaming cups of green tea. As the story unfolded, we relived with her the joys and sorrows of her family, whose destiny was bound up with the underground revolutionary movement in the days of colonial domination. And we realized how much sweat, tears and also blood had been shed by older generations on this land. There was a note of regret in Mrs Diem's voice when we talked about the splendid achievements of the revolution, as though she was sorry our elders were no longer there to witness them.

"Forty-five years ago", Mrs Diem said, "Phan Boi Chau's patriotic movement was born here. My grandfather, Tran Dinh Thieu, was among the first to join it. In small secret groups, its members discussed ways of driving out the French and winning back independence for the country. Later, when the Association of Young Revolutionary Comrades, the forerunner of the Indochinese Communist Party, was set up, he was among the first members of its local branch. He was a teacher, and the Party assigned him the task of educating the young in patriotism. It was from him that I learnt to love country and people.

The movement spread. The colonialists strove to check it through terrible repression. Houses were burnt down, people massacred or arrested. Only a small number of our comrades managed to slip through their meshes. I was then three months pregnant.

Colonial police burst into my house :

"Where is your husband ? a policeman bellowed, You'd better tell us ; otherwise we're going to burn your hut down".

He gave me kicks in the face, the chest and the belly. Terrible pain shot through my whole body, but I remained obstinately silent. When he realized that I was pregnant, the policeman aimed his blows at my belly, shouting :

"I'll deprive you of all posterity if you don't own up !"

When I came to, the air was reeking with the smell of burnt flesh — animal and human. It was hell on earth. Several times later the police came back to try to extract information from me, but to no avail. I stood firm.

When my son, whom I named Tran Huu Kieu, was three, I learnt that my husband was arrested and shot at Can Loc. My sorrow was only matched by my hatred of the colonialists. I was then only 22. I decided not to remarry. I wanted to bring my child up so he could later avenge his country and his family. Eighteen years later, the August Revolution broke out, but very soon afterward the French staged a comeback. I encouraged my son to enlist in the army: "Go, my son, the country must be saved".

During the three years my son fought at the frontline, he won many distinctions for bravery, and news of this came to me through letters of the Command. I was elated. But then he fell in a fierce battle in Viet Bac. I wept a great deal, but pride in his brave conduct helped soothe my sorrow.

Kieu left a three-year-old son. His wife was still quite young. I urged her to remarry and undertook to bring up the boy.

My fellow-villagers and the local Party branch gave me great assistance. For my part I volunteered for all kinds of jobs for the Party and the co-operative. I worked untiringly, morning or afternoon. My grand-son was benefiting from all the advantages of our fine regime. You could watch him growing!

But no sooner had Tran Huu Diem, my grand-son, graduated from senior secondary school than American bombs and shells started raining on the region. Again destruction and mourning came to our village. My grand-son witnessed the crimes of the aggressors. One day he said to me :

“Grandma, I want to go and fight the Yanks.”

I looked at him for a moment. He was the only descendant of our family. But I realized that nothing could make me happier than his decision to tread in the steps of his father and grandfather.

Mrs Diem stopped and looked up at the decorations awarded her husband and son, and the diplomas of commendation won by her grandson. For 45 years, she had contributed through her labour to the achievements of three generations of her family in the service of the country. In her heart joy was mixed with sorrow. Anyhow, the American aggressors were still there. She felt she had to redouble her efforts to contribute to driving them out, as her husband and son had fought the French and her grandson was now fighting the Americans.

In our talks with the villagers, we learnt how active Mrs Diem was. She came forward for all difficult jobs. As head of a Party cell and a cadre of the Front, she persuaded the people to adopt new



agricultural techniques, new high-yield rice strains, advanced livestock breeding methods, etc. She always contributed her full share of work in the fields and helped solve difficulties arising from unfavourable weather conditions. Acting upon President Ho Chi Minh's recommendation: "The co-operative is the co-op members' family, and they are its masters » she always frankly and thoroughly criticized anyone, including her own kinsfolk, whom she found straying from the line set by the Party and the Government. Nobody ever bore her any grudge for this. On the contrary they always looked to her for advice in all delicate matters.

In the work done to encourage young people to join the armed forces and defend the country, she had no match in the whole village, according to Comrade Trang, the secretary of the local Party branch. Everybody trusted her, for she had seen husband, son and grandson off to the front. Besides, she knew how to talk to her fellow-villagers to kindle in them deep feeling for country and people.

The people here live in solidarity and share weal and woe. They show profound socialist consciousness. Mrs Diem is their worthy representative, Her aim in life is to work for the common good.

For her to fully enjoy the last years of her life, the local Party branch and people have rebuilt her house on its former site, where she had lived with her husband. A roomy house, with a red-tiled roof. Cadres and soldiers on their way to the frontline