

Vo Le Hong

DALAT

ĐC 200/02 Langbiang

2nd edition



Vo Le Hong
Dalat Langbiang

Lam Dong Tourist Company

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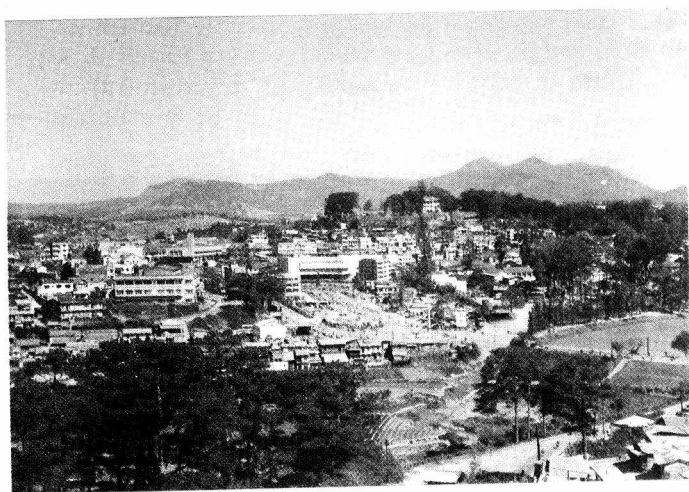
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***D**ALAT is much more than just a beautiful, scenic city in central Viet Nam. DALAT is also a way of life. A way of life that has evolved from a rich and colorful past. This book will help you to further experience DALAT by providing information and insight about its curious blend of cultural diversity. It's this blending of the past that produces what DALAT is today. Its beautiful landscape and its natural beauty haven't changed much over the years. But its cultural atmosphere continues to emerge today, offering the lucky visitor wonderful samples of its past. Ms VO LE HONG explains the cultural, political and social influences that make up the city, and way of life, of DALAT.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Leven". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "Leven" clearly distinguishable.

GREG LEVEN
AMERICAN WRITER

* The Legendary Land



The City Centre

Photo MPK



The Source of Living

Statue by Pham Van Hang

STRETCHING over rolling hills, Dalat is blessed with a unique charm which evokes a mystic wonderland. According to legend, it was the incarnation of A Beautiful Lady whose exquisite figure with its bewitchingly graceful lines gave shape to this lovely mountain city.

This dream - like land with all its fine and harmonious lines like the beautiful notes of a sweet melody or the magical touches of a nude relief, is itself a sublime work of nature and is respectfully and admiringly called Mother Lang Biang.

With an altitude of over 2.000 metres, the two majestic Lang Biang peaks look like her full breasts against the immense blue sky overlooking her alluring wasp waist. It is believed that the very milk streaming from this sweet source has made Dalat a lovely land with pure air, beautiful scenery, friendly people and a world of flowers and delicious fruit...

"Come to Dalat, and you are entering a legendary land". Such is the resounding sweet call from Mother Lang Biang.

Summary of The Legend of Lang Biang Highland (*)

In former times, this upland region was shared between two tribes, the M'Lat and the Chill. They lived within their own territories, separated by only a few streams and hills ; but there existed between them a traditional feud. Never had peace literally prevailed on this chilly land.

Lapbe, the son of the Chill tribe is a hero, extremely well built and strong. A white elephant is always on guard beside him. One day, Lapbe goes out hunting and comes across a peerlessly beautiful girl. She is Lang Biang, the daughter of the chief of the M'Lat tribe, Lieng Hot Kiut. Unlike other mountain people who have a tan skin, Lang Biang is endowed with a fair complexion, her cheeks rosy and her figure slender and well-proportioned. She has the appearance of the daughter of Yàng (God) from heaven. As naturally as the earth is attracted by the sun, the hero and the beautiful girl fall in love with each other.

Lang Biang leads Lapbe to her village and asks her father for permission to capture (to marry) him. Since he has promised to capture K' Moat, the tribe's sorcerer, for her husband, and, moreover, Lapbe is the son of the enemy tribe, Chief Lieng Hot Kiut tries to break off their passionate love.

The white elephant carries Lang Biang and Laphe into the jungle to take refuge. After troublesome but futile hunts for the couple, K' Moat gives order to set fire to the jungle. A sea of blazing flame is encircling and swallowing up, little by little, the narrowing shelter of the couple. From the outside, K' Moat stretches his bow and shoots a poisoned arrow at Laphe. Realizing that death is rushing at her sweetheart, Lang Biang can not but shield him with her own body and falls down on the blazing ground. In extreme sorrow, Laphe holds her tightly to his heart. The white elephant kneels down to her feet. They cry and their tears flow into the Da Nhim Stream ("The Stream of Tears" in the K' Ho dialect). The sorrowful bellows of the elephant instantly darkens the sky. Thunder-storms rage wildly, turning them into eternal mountains. As for Lang Biang, her fine body with fresh, silky skin suddenly expands boundlessly, covering the burnt-out hills and mountains, and in the end, changes into a wonderland. Her beauty pervades far and wide. Her rosy cheeks redden cherry blossoms. Her hair turns into whispering pine leaves. Her eyes give the emerald lake a glittering surface. Her breath perfumes the flowers... And her breasts rise into the Lang Biang peaks.

Thereafter, the Chill and the M' Lat, aware of the love of life, have nearly merged into one.



(*) Extracted from "The Queen Orchid" (by the same author).

A Brief History of The Foundation of Dalat

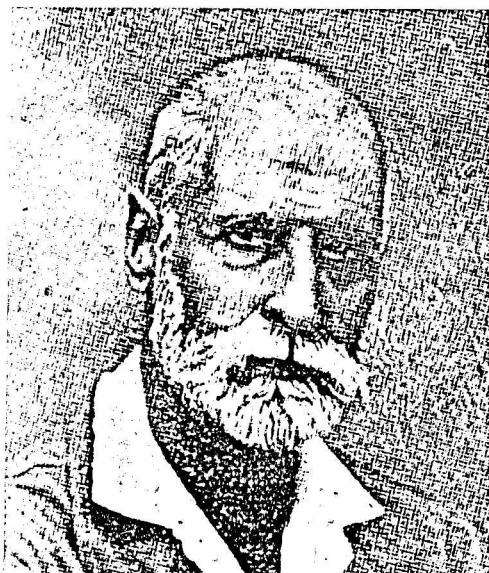
A beautiful young city, Dalat came into early contact with Western civilization. Although it is a part of a country of more than four thousand years of civilization, Dalat was discovered only about one hundred years ago. This is a city with many historical, geographical and cultural characteristics...

It is on records that:

On June 21.1893,Alexandre John Emile Yersin, a 30-year-old Frenchman of Swiss origin, discovered Dalat and helped found this beautiful city.

Mr. Yersin worked as a doctor for the Messageries Maritimes shipping company. It seemed to him, however, that life on the drifting sea was too peaceful. Therefore, when his ship was sailing along the southern coast, looking through his telescope, he saw the southwestern part of the Truong Son Range in the distance and was so much enraptured by its mysterious appearance.

In July 1890, when the ship from Saigon called at Nha trang port , he asked for permission to go ashore and found a guide to lead him up to the highlands by the native trails. After a whole day climbing under a heavy rain,he arrived at Tam Bo hamlet in the Djiring area. He spent the night at a watch-hut in the field and another day walking without rest until he came back to PhanThiet in time to catch the ship on the following day. It was in this first adventure that he got serious malaria and was confined to bed for quite a long time.



Dr. Alexandre Yersin

(1863 - 1943)

De 200/02

However, difficulties could not damp his love for adventure. Besides, when knowing his intention, Captain Cupet of the Pavie mission, (*) encouraged him to go on with his exploration, for this, in fact, agreed with the French need for territorial control in Indochina.

Between 1890 and 1894, this highland was a mysterious region. No one had ever set foot on this wilderness except some ethnic minority tribes. Nevertheless, Dr. Yersin, himself a foreigner, took the risk of plunging into this malarious and desolate jungle area, regardless of the possible danger of being killed by wild animals or aborigines. What an extraordinary adventurous spirit !

In 1893, during his exploration in the Dran area, he was attacked by the Thonk gang. They cut off his left thumb and dealt several stabs in his chest, which drove him near

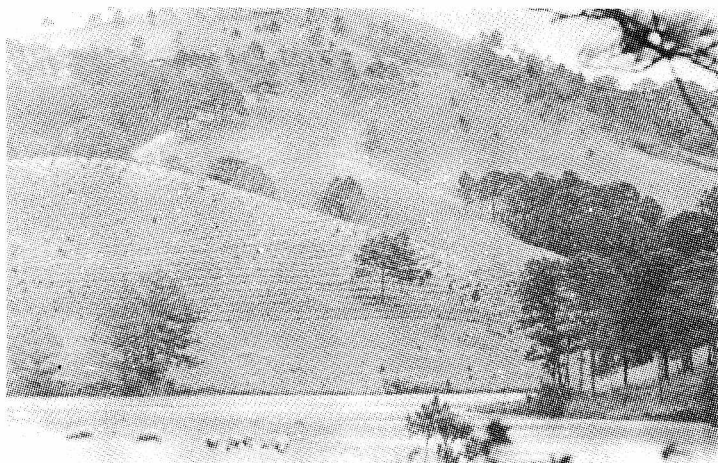
(*) Pavie Mission: One of the French expeditions under Auguste Pavie for exploring and controlling the lands by the Mekong river in the late 19th century (Footnote by translator).

to death. In danger, he asked some people to carry him to Phan Rang in a hammock to get first aid that night. On the way, they encountered a herd of elephants moving towards them. The hammock carriers were so much frightened and ran away, leaving him alone in the jungle. Exhausted and unable to move, he resigned himself to death. Fortunately, the elephants turned away. Even in the face of death, he did not give up his cherished ambition. Every where he went, he noted down his observations on the geographical location of rivers and streams, the customs and economic potentials of each area.

After three successive explorations, the last one starting on the road from Nha Trang up to the mountains, then following the track through the Valley of the Da Nhim river to Don Duong, and crossing Fimnom to reach Prenn Pass, at 15:30 on June 21, 1893, Dr. Yersin stopped, stupefied by the breath-taking and wild setting of Lang Biang Highland. The rolling ridges looked even more splendid than the waves of the sea. Against the horizon in the north stood the impressive Lang Biang peaks, which enhanced the grandeur of the whole beautiful scenery. As if wandering into a fairyland, he forgot all his fatigue and *raced up and down the hills at full speed like a little school boy*. Then he met the M'Lates tribe by a small stream in a verdant valley. The name Dalat took its origin from this stream (Da comes from Dak, "water, river, or stream", Lat from M'Lates. Dalat means the Stream of the Lat) What an interesting coincidence! It is said that Dr. Yersin was fluent in Latin. He described Dalat in Latin as "*Dat Alias Laetitiarum Alias Temperiarum*" (She gives pleasure to some, freshness to others). It was truly wonderful when he discovered that the initials of this phrase could combine into a name for this fairyland.

After this exploration, Dr. Yersin submitted to the French Governor General Paul Doumer a proposal to establish a health resort in Dalat. In December 1897, Governor Doumer sent an expedition led by Artillery captain Thonard and Mr. Cunhac, land surveyor, to examine Dalat. In 1899, after the road from Nha Trang to Dalat had been completed, Mr. Doumer himself came to visit the site and immediately decided on a budget for building the first establishments of a future resort center.

A large-scale project was designed by Architect Hebrard with a view to build up Dalat into the capital of the Indochinese Federation. Important offices were gradually moved there. Governor General Decoux ordered the construction of his summer palace.



The Road to The Golden Stream

Photo: Tran Ngoc Hiep

Emperor Bao Dai also had his private residence built.

The Second World War saw the most prosperous period in the development of Dalat. Due to the war, the French in Vietnam were deprived of the means to go home for their holidays; therefore, they flocked to Dalat instead. Goods and other necessities could not be brought to them from France. The French government in Indochina decided to adopt the self-sufficiency policy. Moreover, vegetables and fruit brought from France grew very well in Dalat. Dalat was then considered as *The Little Paris* (*La petite Paris* in French), *The Crown Land* (*Domaine de la Couronne*). It became an exclusive land for the French and members of the royal family as well as high ranking mandarins of the Hue Court, and enjoyed the status of a separate kingdom. Anyone who wanted to come there had to get a passport as if to go abroad. Actually, the establishment of the Crown Land was only a disguise, while the French aimed at turning the highlands into a colony under their direct rule. This upland region is particularly important from the strategic and economic viewpoints. Strategically, it is situated in the middle of the three countries : Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia - a position of rare advantage. Economically, many of its resources and mineral deposits have not yet been discovered and exploited.

After the Geneva Agreement, the French left Indochina. The population of Dalat was growing rapidly with a large number of refugees from the North. The business district in the city centre was rebuilt and looked nicer and more spacious. A number of place names and street names were changed from French into Vietnamese... Dalat began a new stage.

Geography

Dalat is an ideal vacation land and health resort. It covers an area of 417 sq km, and is divided into 12 quarters and 3 villages, with a population of about 116,000.

The city of Dalat is located on the Lang Biang Highland, north of Lam Dong province, bordering Duc Trong and Don Duong districts. It lies amidst high mountains such as the Lang Biang (2,163m), the Voi (Elephant - 1,800m) in the Southwest, the North Lapbe (1,732m) in the North and the South Lapbe (1,707m) in the Southwest.

Dalat is situated at latitude $10^{\circ}57'$ N and longitude $108^{\circ}20'$ E, its average altitude is 1,600m above sea-level. The highest place is the Museum (1,532m) in the city centre, and the lowest place is the Nguyen Tri Phuong valley (1,398.2m). Dalat is 90km from Thuan Hai coast as the crow flies, 108km from Nha Trang by National Highway 11, 250km from Ho Chi Minh City in a straight line or 305km by National Highway 20.

The land of Dalat is constituted of an ancient rock mass, composed chiefly of granite, rhyolite, mica, schist, etc, which, through geological changes, were transformed into layers of kaolin and clay.

Climate

Although located in the south of the Asian tropics,

Dalat enjoys many characteristics of the temperate zone owing to its high altitude and surrounding pine forests. The air is pure and fresh all the year round. Sunshine is abundant and moderate, even on rainy days. The average temperature ranges between 18°C and 21°C , the highest never over 32°C and the lowest never below 5°C .

Dalat has two distinct seasons : the rainy season from May to October and the dry season from November to April. In the rainy season it often rains in the afternoon and sometimes there are hails. The landscapes are at their best during the late months of the year. Although it is foggy in the morning,

when the sun rises, the sky becomes clear with abundant sunshine and wind. This is an ideal season for sightseeing and camping.

The average annual rainfall is 1,562mm and humidity is 82%.

Typhoons never reach Dalat, only strong winds owing to storms from the sea, for there are no mountains to shield the East of the city.

Transportation

In the past, to serve the resort centre of Dalat, every means of transport was fully exploited, despite obstacles in topography.

BY LAND

The first road to be noted was the trail made by the walking of the natives which led Dr. Yersin from Nha Trang up to the mountains through the Valley of the Da Nhim river to Don Duong (Dran), then via Fimnom up Prenn Pass to Dalat.



Picturesque View Pass

Photo Tran Na x Men

In October of 1897, Governor General Doumer sent an expedition under Artillery Captain Thonard and Mr. Cunhac to survey Dalat. By 1899, the road from Phan Rang to Dalat was completed. It is a steep road winding amidst a spectacular view, with the 20-km Ngoan Muc Pass (Picturesque View Pass or "*Passe de Bellevue*" in French), and the 10-km Dran Pass... (National Highway 11 from Dalat to Nha Trang is 219 km long).

Not until 1932 was the road from Saigon to Dalat via Bao Loc completed, which is now National Highway 20. In February 1943, the road from Prenn waterfall to Dalat was improved, the old one being abandoned and a new one built on another mountain-side. The new road had the advantage of being shortened to 8.6 km instead of 14 km long as it was. By 1970, National Highway 20 and the section 21b, which linked the former from Fimnom Fork to Dran, were rebuilt into highways. Besides, one could go to the other highland provinces by a route via Fyan or Djiring to Ban Me Thuot or Quang Duc.

At present, the unique means of transport to Dalat is by land.

BY AIR

Dalat has air routes which connect it with other places through Cam Ly and Lien Khuong Airports.

CAM LY AIRPORT

Cam Ly airport is 5km to the west of Dalat. Formerly, it served as a military airfield. During the escalation of the war, there were continuous flights for military purposes. It was also used as a commercial airport for vegetables.

LIEN KHUONG AIRPORT

The airport is about 30 km from Dalat. It came into operation in 1933 after three years of construction. The 700-metre runway was paved with earth and could only take aircraft with a carrying capacity under 2 tons.

In 1945, Japan started war in Southeast Asia. Lien Khuong airport was repaired to serve their war purposes. The runway was then macadamized for the use of Japanese fighters. Between 1960 and 1975, because of the war, land transport was interrupted and unsafe. The number of air passengers was increasing rapidly. To meet the need, the airport was enlarged. Its runway

was asphalted, stretching 1,480m in length and 40m in width, available for aircraft under 35 tons. As compared with Tan Son Nhat and Da Nang Airports, Lien Khuong Airport occupied a very humble position : a second-class airport.

BY RAIL

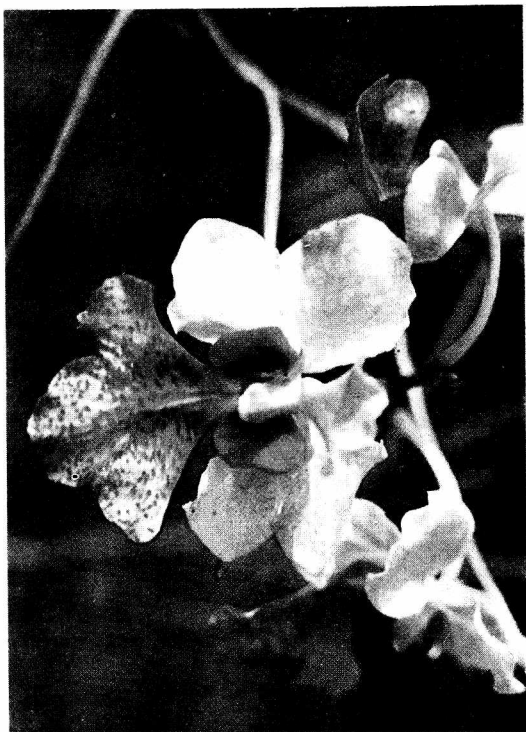
Formerly, if you wanted to enjoy the mystic scenery of mountains and forests of the highlands, you could go to Dalat by train. You would get a strange feeling when you were on a long, winding train plodding its way up the steep slopes. The impressive mountains and forests slowly passed before your eyes, leaving you unforgettable impressions of an interesting experience. From time to time, your train had to creep through a dark and awesome tunnel. But now, alas, how could you have a chance of enjoying the experience of a journey on the Thap Cham (Cham tower, or "Tour Cham" in French) - Dalat rail-line!

This line was 84 km long, designed by Swedish engineers. Sweden is a country of numerous slopes and experienced in building rack-railways ("Chemin de fer à crémaillère" in French). The first train service to Dalat started in 1933.



Dalat Railway Station

Photo : Dang Van Thong



Orchid

Photo : Viet Thai

TOURIST SERVICE After the Sixth Party Congress, Dalat has gradually regained her liveliness. Besides a network of state-run hotels and restaurants and others run by the Provincial People's Committee, the Youth Union, the Trade Union, joint state and private organizations, etc, Dalat also has private hotels and boarding houses. This is an effective measure for investment in the city's tourism, for the number of visitors coming to Dalat during the year is not steady. This is the most difficult problem to Dalat tourism. At times, a large number of hotels are empty but at some other times, tourists can hardly find any accommodation. The permission for every household to do tourism business has partly solved this unsteadiness and has evidently changed the face of the city.

Culture

Dalat has achieved a high level of culture. Formerly, it was a cultural centre where a lot of schools were established. Besides Vietnamese schools, there were many famous French institutions like Lycée Yersin, Couvent des Oiseaux, Adran, etc, and several cultural centres such as the French Cultural Center, the American Cultural Center and Dalat University. It was also in this city that a great number of officers were trained at the National Military Academy of Vietnam, the Political Warfare College, the Command and Staff College, and numerous Catholic priests were educated at the Pius X Seminary, a national religious institution which trained and supplied priests of high cultural level for the whole country.

Dalat is the largest Catholic centre in South Viet Nam. Although the majority of its population are Buddhists, the Catholic spirit has a certain influence upon the cultural life of the city, possibly because most of the schools, from kindergartens to high schools and colleges, were run by Catholic monks and nuns.

Formerly, thanks to its good climate, most affluent families in Saigon and other provinces sent their children to Dalat for study. Consequently, Dalat became a city of schools with thousands of students and intellectuals. The students' patriotic movement also showed its distinctive features. All of these particular characteristics have shaped the cultural aspect of this upland city.

At present, Dalat has a rather big contingent of scientific and technological researchers, especially in the field of Nuclear Physics.

LAMĐONG TOURIST COMPANY

Address: 12 Tran Phu Street, Dalat

Telephone numbers: 2125, 2304

Fax

Representative office in Ho Chi Minh City:

470 Ngo Gia Tu Street, District 10

Telephone number : 50973

Fax

- We run a number of hotels and villas, and a fleet of vans and cars, offering convenient, experienced service to tourists. Guides speaking English, French, German, Russian available.

- We are ready to engage in joint venture projects with domestic and foreign firms or with individuals: hotel business, tourism, golf, hunting, and other entertainment services.

SIGHTSEEING TOURS

1. Dalat - Ninh Chu - Nha Trang	2 days, 4days
2. Dalat - Nha Trang - Da Nang - Hue	8 days 10days
3. Dalat-Hue - Ha Noi	12 days, 15 days
4. Dalat - Vung Tau - Ho Chi Minh City	4days, 5days
5. Dalat - Ho Chi Minh City - Can Tho	3days, 4days
6. Ho Chi Minh City - Vung Tau - Dalat	4days, 5days
7. Ho Chi Minh City - Nha Trang - Dalat	5days, 6 days
8. Ho Chi Minh City - Dalat	3 days, 4 days, 5 days

HOTELS AND VILLAS

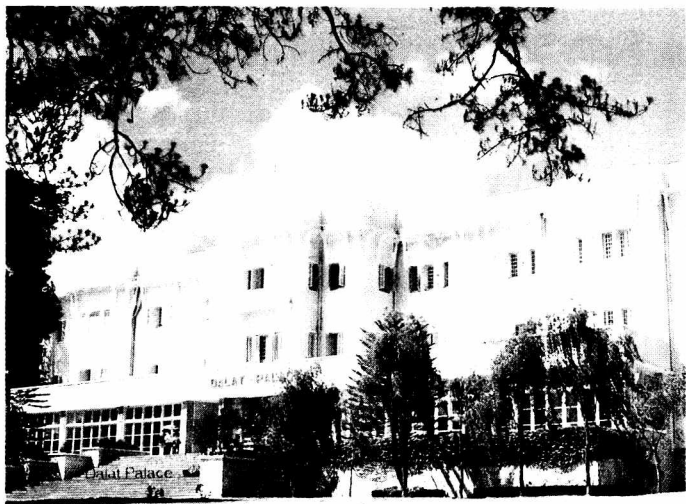
1. Hotel Palace	2. Tran Phu Street	Tel 2203
2. Hotel Dalat	7. Tran Phu Street	Tel 2363
3. Hotel Duy Tan	83 - 3/2 Street	Tel 2216
4. Hotel Anh Dao	50-52 Hoa Binh Square	Tel 2384
5. Hotel Ngoc Lan	42 Nguyen Chi Thanh Street	Tel 2135 - 2817
6. Hotel Lam Vien	20 Hung Vuong Street	Tel 2507
7. Hotel Lam Son	5 Hai Thuong Street	Tel 2362
8. Hotel Huong Son	27 - 3/4 Street	Tel 2124
9. Villa Tran Hung Dao	15-35 Tran Hung Dao Street	Tel 2208
10. Mini Hotel Xuan Huong	4 Tran Quoc Toan Street	Tel 2047
11. Villa Hanh Phuc	29A Tran Binh Trong Street	Tel 2133
12. Hotel Bao Loc	Bao Loc District	Tel 4101

TOURIST TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

2 Tran Hung Dao Street - Dalat - Tel 2356

COLOUR PHOTO SERVICE (MINILAB)

45 Hoa Binh Square - Tel 2395



Religion

There are twelve different religions and beliefs in Dalat among which Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Caodaism have the most numerous followers.

BUDDHISM

There existed four sects : An Quang, Tinh Do, Khat Si and Hoa Tong (which mean literally Sealing the Mind with Light, Pure Land, Mendicant, and Lotus, respectively).

The An Quang sect had the most numerous followers. Afterwards, these sects were merged into one, known as Unified Buddhism. Dalat has large pagodas such as Linh Son, Linh Phong (a convent), Chinese Pagoda, etc.

CATHOLICISM

Following Rev. Robert, superior of the Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris en L'Extrême Orient (Far East Mission Society of Paris), who accompanied Dr. Yersin on his last exploration of Dalat, Catholicism has been introduced into Dalat very early, with large buildings and fine architectural works such as the Dalat Cathedral, the Redemptorist Monastery, the Franciscan Abbey, the Domaine de Marie Convent, the Pius X Seminary, etc. After the immigration from the North in 1954, Catholicism in Dalat greatly developed with 38 orders (20 for females and 18 for males) and a considerable contingent of learned priests of whom one hundred were trained in Advanced Theology in Italy, France, Germany, and England.

PROTESTANTISM

In 1929, through American missionaries, Protestantism began its operation in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. The Protestant missionaries contributed to the social modernization of ethnic minorities by teaching them their latinized languages, improving their customs and habits, introducing Western music, etc. As a result, a lot of native youths were attracted to Protestantism. During the 1930s, Protestant Societies began their operation in Dalat.

CAODAISM

The followers include more middle aged people than young people. Caodaism consists of two sects : the Tay Ninh and the Ben Tre.

Some Aspects about The Lat and The Chill Tribes

Of the birth of Viet Nam, legend has it that, in the ancient time, *King Lạc Long*, the incarnation of the Dragon, married *Lady Âu Cơ*, the embodiment of the Fairy, who gave birth to a pouch of 100 eggs which hatched one hundred children. Afterwards half of them followed their father to the coastal regions and became the ancestors of the Kinh (ethnic Vietnamese). The other half followed their mother to the mountains and became the forefathers of the present ethnic minorities. Dalat is one of the meeting places of the descendants of these Dragon and Fairy ancestors.

Formerly, the area which is now Xuan Huong lake was a valley where the Lat tribe inhabited and the area near Cam Ly Waterfall was the dwelling place of the Chill tribe. Later on, these two tribes gradually withdrew to the outskirts of the city. The Lat moved to Lat village at the foot of Lang Biang Mountain. The Chill are now scattered round Dalat, Ta Nung district, and Duc Trong district.

The Lat and the Chill belong to the K'Ho group and are ethnically and culturally closely related. Therefore, they have similar customs and habits.

- In their history, they had a hero named Yagut, who led the tribes to fight against foreign invaders. At present there is still a street in Dalat bearing his name.

- *Bon* (village) is the residential unit of the Chill and the Lat. A "Bon" comprises 4 or 5 long houses. Each house is inhabited by members of an extended family and includes several hearths. Each nuclear family has a hearth for cooking and domestic activities. The hearths are only a few metres apart. The limits between them are customary, that is, not clearly defined by any partitions or norms.



A Part of The 100-roof House

- The Chill and the Lat are matrilineal tribes. When a girl is marriageable, she initiates her marriage. In the wedding ceremony, the bride's family must offer some property to the groom's in order to be allowed to *capture* the man for a husband. The man's status is expressed by this Chill proverb :

Um m̄ h'ru chil chao

Um m̄ bao chil n'dī

(When you live with your sister, you are a man

When you live with your wife, you are a slave.)

- Costumes : Formerly, men wore a loincloth, women were dressed in a skirt. Their bodies are dark brown and vigorous from exposure to weather and nature. Only when it is very cold do they need a blanket to wrap round themselves

- Filing teeth and stretching earlobes : It is a common practice of the Lat and the Chill to use a hard object to file down their teeth and to insert a wooden plug in their earlobes to stretch them. When the teeth are worn or the



A Lat woman

Photo: Tran Van Chau

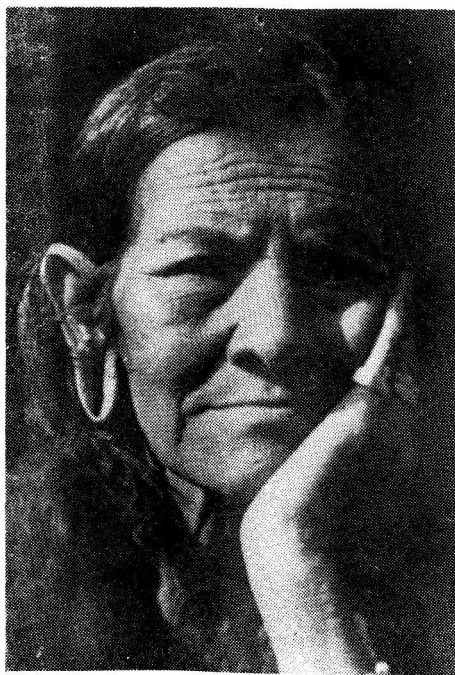
earlobes break, they will hold a celebration. This was considered a beautiful feature by ethnic minorities, which is now found only among old people.

-Ornaments include brass necklaces, strings of beads, wild beasts' claws.

- Gongs, jars, beads, etc are valuable property symbolizing a person's wealth and power. The more numerous and ancient his gongs and jars, the more aged his wealth. Each set of gongs includes six pieces and can be exchanged for scores of buffaloes. Old jars and beads are also of great value.

- The farm implements of the Lat and the Chill include the matchet, a useful tool in slash-and-burn farming, which is always carried by their sides, the stick to dig holes for sowing seeds, the cross bow and arrows for hunting and the bamboo basket on their backs.

- They mistreat persons who are suspected of being *O-Ma-Lais*. Ethnic minority people believe that the *O-Ma-Lai*



Deep in Meditation



Happiness

can draw his head out of his body and fly about at night in search of human excrement for food. People whose excrement is eaten by the *O-Ma-Lai* will loose their bowels and die.

- They live in equal relationships under the direction of the *Kuan Bon* (Village Chief), who is a man respected by the villagers for his talents and virtues.

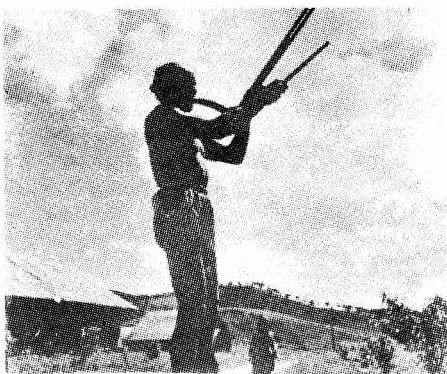
- Sorcerers and witch-doctors (*Pô dâu*, *Thang bô*, *Krou*, etc) are religious practitioners versed in making sacrifices and worship, communicating with spirits, curing diseases with spells and incantations, and telling fortunes. *Pô dâus* usually know very well the traditional customs of the village and have many experiences in farming, selecting hillside plots, forecasting weather etc. They can participate in the settlement of disputes in the *bon* and help the *Kuan bon* make judgment on the honesty of an inditree by putting boiling lead in his palms or having him put his hands in boiling water. Therefore, religiously they enjoy a certain position in the *bon*.

- People who are over 60 years old and have prestige, virtues and wisdom are called village elders. They are the élite of the tribe as they have accumulated a lot of experiences in life, fighting and farming. Village elders are often consulted for important matters of the village.

- The Lat and the Chill worship many Yàng's (gods) especially *Yang Koi* (the God of rice). The Norsarpu, (the buffalo-sacrifice ritual) is lavishly celebrated to worship Yang before the transplantation season begins and after the harvest is completed.

On the day of the ceremony, all the villagers gather at the village square where an elaborately carved *nêu* pole (a ceremonial bamboo pole to drive away evil spirits) is erected, on which are hung many musical instruments. These instruments strike against each other at a breeze, producing fantastic sounds. A buffalo is tied at the foot of the pole. The ceremony begins after a fire is made. The sorcerer (Pô dâu), with a long spear in his hands, a rather big knife in his mouth and another on his waist, dances wildly to the sounds of all kinds of gongs, then, suddenly thrusts the spear into the buffalo... The buffalo head is cut off and hung on the *nêu* pole as an offering to Yàng. After that, everyone dances and sings and rushes at the buffalo to cut up its meat and feast with jars of *cần* wine (*)nearly.

(**) *Cần* wine : a kind of rice wine very popular among ethnic minorities in Vietnam



A Lat man playing the *khen* (A Wind Instrument)

Dalat People

Dalat is a little melting-pot of Viet Nam. Only the Lat and the Chill are the genuine natives of Dalat. Other people came from different parts of the country due to coolie recruitments and immigrations, among them the most numerous were from Hue, Quang, and the North. They regarded Dalat as their home land.

Life in a cultural city together with its social and geographical conditions has given Dalat people a particular character. They are gentle, relaxed, courteous and reserved but friendly and hospitable. These are not only the characteristics of intellectuals but they have also taken deep roots in working people. In a casual meeting with a salesgirl, a driver, a photographer, a repairman, etc you may happen to find that they can speak French or English, and you will be surprised to know about their backgrounds. So many events of the country have sealed on each fate!

Dalat people speak with a particular accent, which is a blend of the tones of North, Central and South Vietnamese. Their customs and habits are also very diverse. A number of families of Western education have a Western way of living, but most of them still retain customs of their native places. Some harmonious combination of the characteristics of the East and the West can be found in Dalat people. They are a synthesis of rich and colorful features.

When going to other places, if a person is known as Dalatian, he will receive special affection. It seems that he carries with him the wonderful and fresh air of a fairyland.



AN ARCHITECTURAL WONDER OF DALAT

AULAC HOME (THE 100-ROOF HOUSE)

By Architect Lu Truc Phuong
9 Dinh Tien Hoang Street - Dalat

You will keep unforgettable impressions of what you have seen in this wonderful architectural masterpiece. The house, which seems both large and small, immense but cosy, is truly a superb representation of the embodiment of immensity in limited space... You are warmly invited to come and stay here, and to enjoy its amazing atmosphere to your own pleasure!

****The City of Flowers**

Pine - Hills

Lakes and Waterfalls



Mountain Ridges

Photo Ba Trung

Dalat Flowers

Dalat is the kingdom of flowers. Flowers of thousands of species bloom all the year round. How can one distinguish wild flowers from cultivated ones? Well, every flower is just beautiful and sweet-smelling. Flowers are the language of nature, the signals of the world. Peach blossoms foretell the coming of Spring. Golden wild sunflowers overshadowing the ground herald the arrival of the sunny season. Pink tuberose covering pine-hills announce the beginning of the rainy season. And other flowers, such as Japanese daisies, apricot blossoms, geraniums, etc are always in bloom as if Dalat Spring were eternal.

Whoever knows how many kinds of flowers there are in Dalat? There are so many, especially in Spring. No one can have a full collection of all kinds of flowers. Orchids apart include nearly a thousand species, each having its own perfume, grace and shape. Flowers in this city are so abundant and so various, even in their origins and legends. Forget-me-nots serve as a reminder that lovers should not forget each other. Pansies, which look like colorful butterfly-wings, are fondly pressed between pages of pupils' note-books, cherishing a world of dreams and hopes of the school-days. Mimosas bear the shape of glittering drops of sunshine. Poppies symbolize the wind. In addition, there are cotton-rose hibiscuses with their ephemeral one-day beauty. Even more perishable are



Lilies

Photo: Ba Truong



Rose

Photo : Studio Liksin

Ti Ngo flowers(*) Which live only a few hours. On the contrary, orchids are among flowers which try to attain eternal beauty. Some orchids can live more than a month.

Besides, there are also flowers which represent virginity and innocence such as white lilies, marguerittes, but there are others embodying the eeriness of wild beasts like Drosedas with their hairy petals to catch insects or Nepentheses (**) which emit perfume to attract insects to come near, then grasping and eating them.

(*) Ti Ngo flowers : flowers which blossom only at midnight (Ti the hour of the mouse) and die at noon (Ngo: the hour of the horse), hence their name.

(**) ** Nepenthes: the Nepenthes often grows clinging to the cracks of rocks or on parched land. Its shape is like a bag with a cover on top. The flower usually opens its cover and emits perfume and nectar to attract insects. When an insect flies in, it immediately closes its cover and will reopen it to wait for another prey after the insect inside has been killed. These insects are decomposed into nourishing substances to feed the flower.

And there are Roses (of the Rosaceae family), the symbol of love, with various species: Yellow Rose (also called Josephine), White Rose, Powder Rose (also called Grace de Monaco), B.B.Rose (so named because it has the same color as the lipstick used by Brigitte Bardot, famous French movie-star). These flowers bring happiness to the giver as well as the receiver.

And have you ever watched *"flying flowers"* They are butterflies with their vividly colorful wings.

Oh, how I can properly talk about Dalat flowers? For that is a boundless field. If you love flowers, please come to Dalat. Then, with your sensitivity, you can enjoy so many wonderful things.

The Flower Garden

The Dalat Flower Garden is located in a valley of 22 ha, surrounded by the Golf Hills, Dalat University and the Nuclear Research Institute, and facing the upper part of Xuan Huong Lake. The Garden covers an area of 11 ha where different kinds of flowers are grown and there is a section with rich varieties of orchids. The rest of the garden, which lies deep inside, is reserved for planting lilies for export, a flower of very high economic value.

The Flower Garden is under the care of the local Tree and Park Authority. Besides the Garden, this organization also takes care of about 3,303 ha of trees. During the past year, it planted 60,000 pine trees and cherry-trees all over the city.

When coming to Dalat, tourists should not miss a visit to the Flower Garden, a repository of innumerable flowers of the city. Everyday, it receives an incessant flow of visitors.

It is hoped that in the near future, the Flower Garden will be re-planned to really become a cultural and artistic spot which can satisfy the eagerness of tourists.

Pine-hills, Lakes and Waterfalls

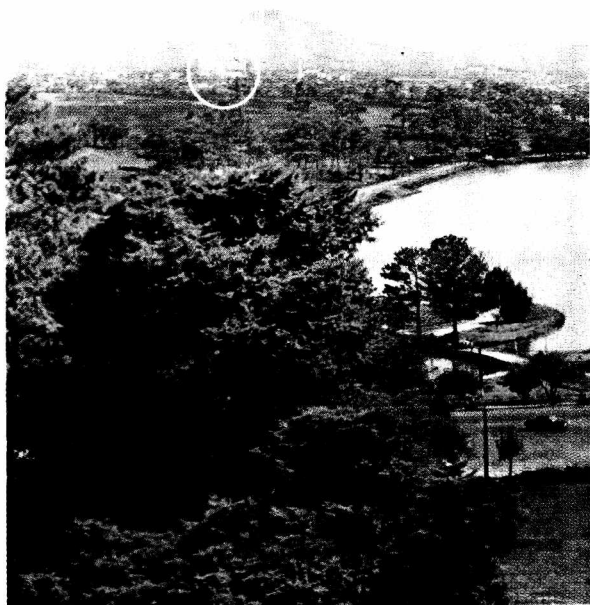
Dalat is surrounded by immense pine-hills and mountains (42,000 ha). Most of the pine-trees in Dalat belong to the trifoliate variety (*Pinus Khasya Royle*) and grow wild. What is the origin of this tree-leaved pine? So far, no one has given a proper answer to this question.

Dalat is the land of pine-trees. Besides their economic value, pine-trees also make the city's air fresher and purer and its scenery more romantic.

In other places, people can see some pine-trees in luxurious restaurants only once at Christmas time, with their branches adorned with golden threads and twinkling lamps, but in Dalat, they can admire immense pine forests at any time.

In the early morning, if you don't mind the cold you can climb up a hilltop to gaze at the sun just rising above the mountains. In the mist, lushly green pine leaves are covered with tiny dew drops glittering in the early morning sunshine. In this setting, you will not know whether you are living in reality or in dream. Everything before your eyes seems to be imaginery. All is looming through the veil of mist illuminated by fragile but brilliant sunbeams. The air is pure and scented with the perfume of pine-trees

Dalat has as many hills and mountains as its streams. The streams now flow leisurely, forming romantic mirror-like lakes with crystal water, now tumble violently, creating silky waterfalls singing endlessly in the wild forests.



Xuan Huong Lake

Xuan Huong Lake

Right in the centre of Dalat lies an immense mirror-like lake embellishing this lovely city. The lake, formerly called Grand Lac (Big Lake), was created in 1939 by the **Initiative** of Mr. Cunhac, the first Resident (*) of Dalat, and Mr. Labbe, a civil engineer. To make the lake, a dam had to be built to hold back the stream flowing through the valley which was once the land of the Lat tribe. In 1923, another dam was built below the old one, which formed two lakes. In March 1932, both dams were broken after a downpour. Not until 1934 and 1935 was a stone dam constructed below the former two. It has been known as the Cau Ong Dao dam (Ong Dao Bridge Dam - so named

(*) Resident: a provincial governor under French rule. This position was held by a Frenchman (Footnote by translator)

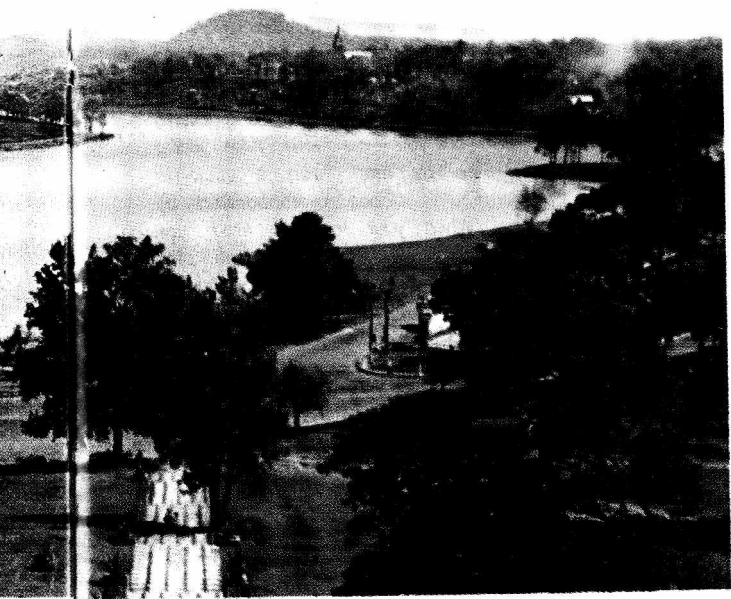


Photo : Nguyen Ba Mau

because the place before the bridge was once the residence of Administrator Pham Khac Hoe). The 4.5 ha lake is circled by a 5-km road, which gives a romantic touch to the scenery.

Because of land clearing for growing vegetables and forest fires and lumber exploitation in Da Thien, Co Giang and some areas round the Military Academy, the lake was gradually filled up. In 1984, a project for dredging Xuan Huong Lake was carried out with the participation of every inhabitant in the city to recreate its beauty.

Xuan Huong Lake is recognized as class A among 464 national beauty-spots. The name Xuan Huong may come from the fact that the lake is most beautiful in Spring (Xuan) when it picks up the pink shade and fragrance (Huong) of cherry blossoms or that its beauty is as romantic and unique as that of Ho Xuan Huong, a famous Vietnamese poetess who lived in the troubled 17th century.

Conquering The Langbiang Peaks

The Lang Biang Mountain towers high like a symbol of challenge. Conquering its peaks is the pride of those who come to Dalat.

The extended Phu Dong Thien Vuong Street leads you to Lat village, a village of the Lat at the foot of Lang Biang Mountain, where you get out of your car and hike along the track to the mountain. Step by step, with a stick in your hand, you pass perpendicular slopes overshadowed by masses of huge pine foliage. When your feet are tired, you feel like throwing yourself down at the foot of some pine tree for a long sleep. But the call of the peak won't let you rest. The silent but powerful call seems to be an invisible string pulling you upwards. A vague feeling in your heart makes you realize that if you got slightly discouraged, the pull would immediately vanish, the invisible string would break, and then you would give up!. The proud peak seems to turn its face high up and you could never reach it. That's the feeling of a climber who is half-way up a mountain slope. Below him, the fathomless depth; above him, the towering height. The starting point is passed but the destination is still too far ahead.

A cool breeze scented with pine fragrance quickly dries up your dripping sweat. The rustling pine trees create an unending harmonious symphony. The atmosphere is still, airy and clear. From high above the sun is filtering through glossy pine leaves, dazzling your eyes. At the moment you feel your endurance is full up, and your feet about to collapse, the destination is within your reach. How powerful is its temptation!. With your remaining worn-out strength you try to move forward, hesitating and staggering.

Have you ever enjoyed the thrill of a climber who just conquered a mountain top? You breathe out with relief! All the fatigue disappears, giving place to an unusually exhilarating feeling. You stand straight and breathe in deeply the cool wind coming from the four corners of the world. The wind howls in all its notes, following invisible streams in the immense sky. At this height, you can have a panoramic view of the verdant rolling hills far below, which looks like a lovely cradle where rests The Beautiful Princess Dalat in her sound sleep. Further away are other mountains, ridge after ridge. At some distant corner is the vast waving sea...

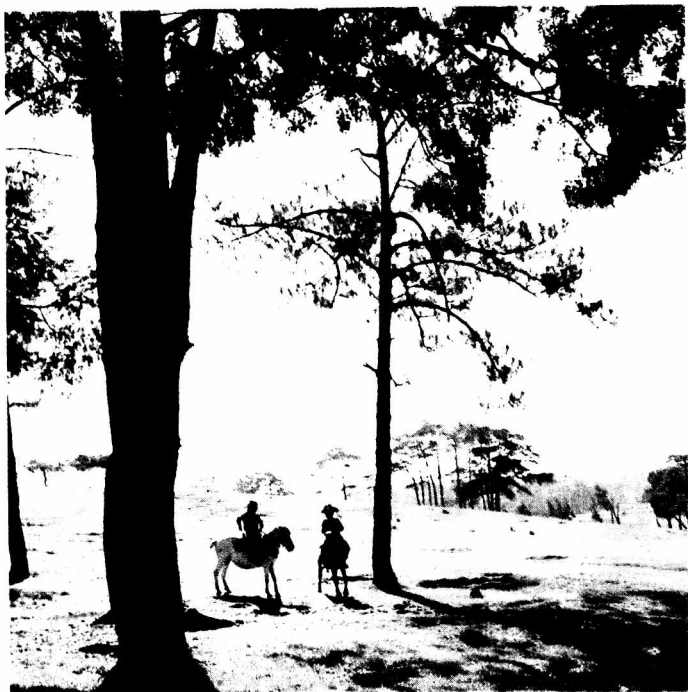
If your feet are still longing for long hikes and towering peaks, the Lang Biang Mountain will invite you to continue conquering other tops nearby.

Standing at some altitude, you will have a chance to enjoy a freezing chill coming from nowhere as a cloud of fog gently falls down and embraces you. It will be an unexpected meeting, and you will be sunk in the wonderful impression of being lost in a legendary world.

At the foot of the mountain are immense jungles which shelter deer, gaurs, wild oxen, boars, elephants, etc. These jungles were once a rare natural zoo offering so many wonders to those who had conquered the Lang Biang peaks.

Golf Hills

Lying by Xuan Huong Lake, these gently sloping hills are covered with immense carpets of soft green grass, creating a lovely steppe amid the city. Regretfully, the soft



Early Morning Sunshine on Golf Hills

Photo Nguyễn Hà

greenness quickly disappears when the dry season comes. In the future, when investments to build Dalat into an ideal tourist city are made, there should be a watering system to preserve the evergreenness of Golf Hills in order to satisfy the wandering feet of travellers.

Formerly, Golf Hills was a 9-hole golf course designed by an English architect, and was one of the attractive golf courses in Southeast Asia. When could this sport be practised again on these romantic hills?

Golf Hills are the rendez-vous of golden sunshine and sweeping wind. There you feel as if the sky were very close, within your reach and you could touch the horizon at a run to the hilltop nearby. The snow-white clouds often gather into a variety of fantastic formations or spread out like streaks of silk yarns bobbing in the sky. Lying on the grass, you may think there were nothing but yourself and the immense firmament high above...

Lake Of Sighs

The Lake of Sighs is 6km towards Chi Lang from the city centre. It was originally a small natural lake. Because of its high location, it is supposed that the lake is the vestige of a volcano crater but examination has shown no sign of its volcanic origin. The lake bottom is constituted by an altered rock, the micashist, below which is a bedding of granite.

The present lake is an artificial one formed by a dam where there is a water-pumping station which used to supply water to the city. Afterwards, since the nearby hill was cleared for growing vegetables, the lake has been polluted and lost its natural stillness and quiet. The Lake of Sighs is almost gone and is only a relic of past memory.

In times under French rule, the lake was named Lac des Soupirs. After 1975, it was renamed Suong Mai Lake (Lake of Morning Mist) but people still call it Lake of Sighs because it is associated with many sad romances.

The Legend of The Lake of Sighs

In times long past, by the blue lake amidst rolling pine hills was the rendez-vous of a handsome young man and a beautiful girl. He was Hoang Tung and she Mai Nuong, who were both of noble birth. However, because their forefathers could not bear the severity in their native land, they led their descendants to the mountains and mixed with mountaineers, leading a free life in the wilds. Although free from worries, they still felt nostalgic of their homeland. One day, there was an appeal to everybody for fighting foreign invaders. Hoang Tung had to part with his lover by the lonely lake. At that time Cherry blossoms were just beginning to come out. Their wedding ceremony was to have been celebrated but for the sake of the country, they had to sacrifice their own happiness.

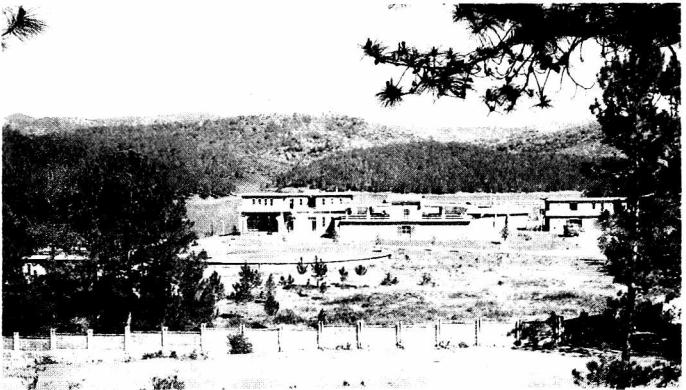
After Hoang Tung departed, Mai Nuong was waiting anxiously day and night. In response to her waiting was bad news: Hoang Tung was killed in battle! Too sorrowful, Mai Nuong threw herself into the blue waters, wishing to follow her fiancé.

Some time later, Hoang Tung came back in victory. The old place was still there but his lover was gone! In extreme grief, he felt that fame and glory were only ephemeral and life too meaningless when his lover was no more.

The blue lake where Mai Nuong drowned herself to relieve her grief now embraced the body of Hoang Tung and immortalized their faithful love. Thereafter, the pine-trees by the lake have often murmured as if they were moaning in praise of the couple's eternal love and the lake has been known as Lake of Sighs ever since.

The Golden Stream

The Golden Stream (Suoi Vang) is north of Dalat, 12km from the city centre. The stream flows over brick-red rocks glowing like gold, hence its name. The romantic and quiet area around the stream with its immense grass hills was the place where Dr. Yersin proposed the establishment of the centre of a resort city. After examination, however,



The Golden Stream Waterworks

Photo MPK

this location was found unfavourable, for it was near the foot of a mountain where humidity was high and the atmosphere not so airy as that of Dalat. Therefore, this area has remained wild until now.

Recently, however, there have been a number of projects for converting the Golden Stream area into a second tourist site besides Dalat. This beautiful area with its mist-hanging lake has attracted innumerable tourists. By the lake is a verdant wood of young pines rising above rolling hills and stretching far to the foot of Lang Biang Mountain. These hills may be ideal golf courses in the future.

The Golden Stream includes a waterfall and two large lakes : the Ankroet in its lower part and the Dankia in its upper part. These lakes are created by two dams of the same name, built across the Da Dung River (a river originating from Lang Biang Mountain). Their capacities are about 21 million cubic meters of water, which are used to run the generator of the Ankroet hydroelectric station. This project was built in two stages : 1945 and 1953, with a design capacity of 3,100 kw/h. However, the capacity has recently reached only 2,400 kw/h due to machine wear.

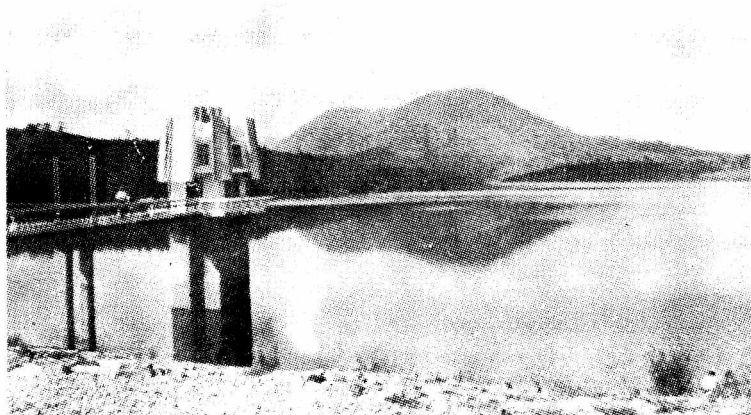
After the Liberation in 1975, Denmark carried out a contract signed with the former government for the construction of a water filtering system. The clear water of the Golden

Stream is brought to the city through a conventional pumping and filtering system but with fairly modern equipment. As regards the sanitary standard, this water is regularly examined by the local Prophylactic Medicine Center and is confirmed up to international standard. However, because the piping, which was put in French time, is so old that there spring many leaks. As a result, the purity of the water is uncertain in some places.

At present, the local waterworks authority is trying to improve the piping to bring clean water right to consumers. However, because the water is too far from the city and has to run through high terrain, the power consumption for each cubic meter of water to reach the city is two or three times as much as that of the level area.

Tuyen Lam Lake

Few people know that the lushly green 900-ha rice paddy and the 500-ha area of luxuriant crops in Duc Trong district are fertilized and irrigated by a clear stream flowing from a vast and romantic lake : the Tuyen Lam Lake. This lake was created by a dam built between 1982 and 1987. The funds for this project were given by the Ministry of Water Conservancy. The dam, which holds back the Suoi Tia stream in the upper part of the Da Tam river (a river originating from the Voi Mountain), creates a magnificent landscape. It is an immense blue lake of clear water with an area of



A Part of Tuyen Lam Lake

Photo: Nguyen Huu

32 sq km surrounded by impressive mountains, its deepest part being 32m. The lake is 4 km southwest of Dalat and about 2km off National Highway 20.

It surely is a regrettable loss for anyone who has come to Dalat without a visit to Tuyen Lam Lake. This is a landscape of diverse beauty. On a motor-boat gliding over the immense waters, tourists can admire the lake winding at the foot of mountains. Past each bent, the scenery seems to change miraculously and completely. It seems that nature is revealing her mysteries, which make tourists unable to restrain a word of praise of her beauty. Here are young pine-hills, there stand high mountains, forming immense mature forests. Not far away lie bare hills and mountains...All try to rise up, cutting their outlines against the sky and reflecting themselves flickeringly on the waters. It seems that, in this setting, the real and the unreal mix with each other. One cannot make out where the one ends and where the other begins.

There is Tran Dam (Dap Tran), a solid structure with 10 rock steps standing impressively amid the wooded mountains. If only some sculptor were kind enough to offer this place some statues of beauties, the landscape would look so lovely!

Further away is a small waterfall. By the falls is a nice thatch hut of a woodcutter. Just fancy that, in a moonlit night with fresh breeze amidst this wonderful landscape, you were sitting by the falls, fishing with some close friends. Then, you would have the impression of wandering in a fairyland, absolutely free from all earthly worries.

Valley of Love

The Da Thien Dam is the place where small streams gurgling down from high mountains meet, creating a transparent lake winding amidst a pine-shaded valley. This wonderful and romantic spot is named Valley of Love.

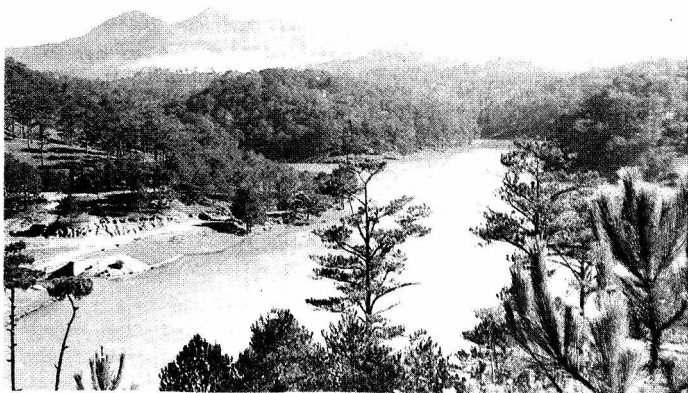
At one corner of the lake are moored a number of brightly coloured sailing-boats. On a motor-boat gliding smoothly over the glossy surface you will go with your lover far off to a lonely corner by the lake where you can put up a tent and enjoy all the spectacular landscapes for yourselves.



Valley of Love

Photo : Nhu Loan

It is so romantic when you are strolling on the carpet of soft grass at the foot of endless waving hills, and you will feel as if wandering in a cave of evergreenness. The valley is often illuminated by unusual light, which makes you stunningly expecting a miracle to happen in this mystic setting...Valley of Love is really a paradise for lovers.



Da Thien Lake

Photo MFK

Da Nhim Hydroelectric System

Da Nhim means "tears" in the dialect of local natives (see the legend of Lang Biang Highland). The Da Nhim River has an abundant flow of water and lies by a perpendicular mountainside. Therefore, there have been many hydroelectric projects on this rare natural location by well-known hydraulicians. On May 13, 1959, to implement the concord on indemnification for the damage to Viet Nam caused by the Japanese during World War II, the two governments agreed to use the indemnity of 39 million dollars plus a loan of 7,5 million dollars for the construction of the Da Nhim hydroelectric system.

This system was designed by a joint project between Sogreah (France) and Nippon Koei (Japan) aiming at carrying water of the Da Nhim River from Don Duong district to Song Pha (Krongpha) through pipelines, forming a 800-metre high waterfall. The water power from this height turns the turbines of the hydroelectric station located in Song Pha.

The system includes 5 units :

1. An artificial reservoir in Don Duong district with an area of 10sq km and a capacity of 160 million cubic meters of water, created by a 1,460-m long dam built across the Da Nhim River, regulating the flow of water needed for the hydroelectric station in Song Pha all the year.

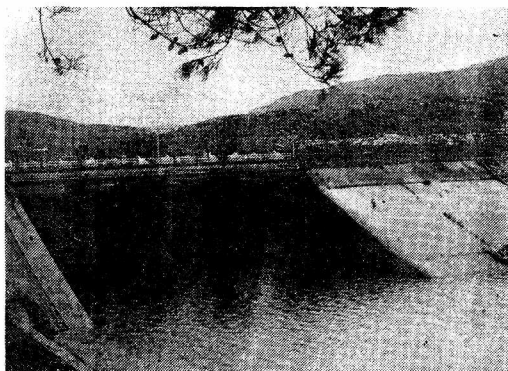
2. A 5-km tunnel through the mountain below Ngoan Muc Pass (Picturesque View Pass) and two 2,340-m hydraulic pipes at the mouth of the tunnel to carry water from the reservoir to the hydroelectric station in Song Pha.

3. The hydroelectric station in Song Pha run by the Pelton turbine which is driven by the water power of the hydraulic pipes.

4. A high voltage 230kv transmission line from the hydroelectric station in Song Pha to a power station in Thu Duc district.

5. The Thu Duc power station lowering the voltage from 230kv to 66kv and a medium voltage transmission line to supply power to Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces

Besides producing a total capacity of 160,000 kw and supplying water, which comes out after running the turbines, for the irrigation network of the 23,800 ha arid plain of Phan Rang City, the Da Nhim hydroelectric system also creates a beautiful reservoir in Don Duong district : the Da Nhim Lake, 50km northeast of Dalat. This is a romantic landscape with pine hills reflected on the water surface and an ideal place for hunting and fishing.



Da Nhim Hydroelectric Dam

Photo Tran Ngoc Hiep

Datanla Waterfall

Datanla waterfall is 5 km from the city centre, halfway of the road between Dalat and Prenn Pass. **Datanla** means "Rattan Stream" (Suoi May) in the dialect of minority people, for there used to be a rattan forest in the area around the waterfall. Although rattan in this area is almost extinct from exploitation, the scenery still retains the wildness and mysteriousness of nature. From a high cliff water falls down, splashing white foam, and forming a stream which cuts its way through rocks and flows into the deep forest, creating a series of cascades. It is said that in the old days, fairies from heaven used to bathe in the waterfall and dry their hair by its smooth and cool rocks, hence the waterfall also has the name Suoi Tien (Fairy Stream). Down below its gorge is a deep and horrible precipice, called **Death Precipice**. This is a rather dangerous spot where there have been a lot of accidents and suicides.

Camly Waterfall

Cam Ly waterfall lies on the Cam Ly stream, 2km from the city centre. The waterfall is named after a tribal chief, K'Mlay, which is later pronounced as Cam Ly. Since it is situated near the city centre, the waterfall receives a lot of visitors everyday. Water from Xuan Huong Lake flows over a gently sloping bed of granite, which, from afar, looks like a winding dragon. Cam Ly waterfall is beautiful only in the rainy season. In the dry season, it loses its liveliness because of lack of water.

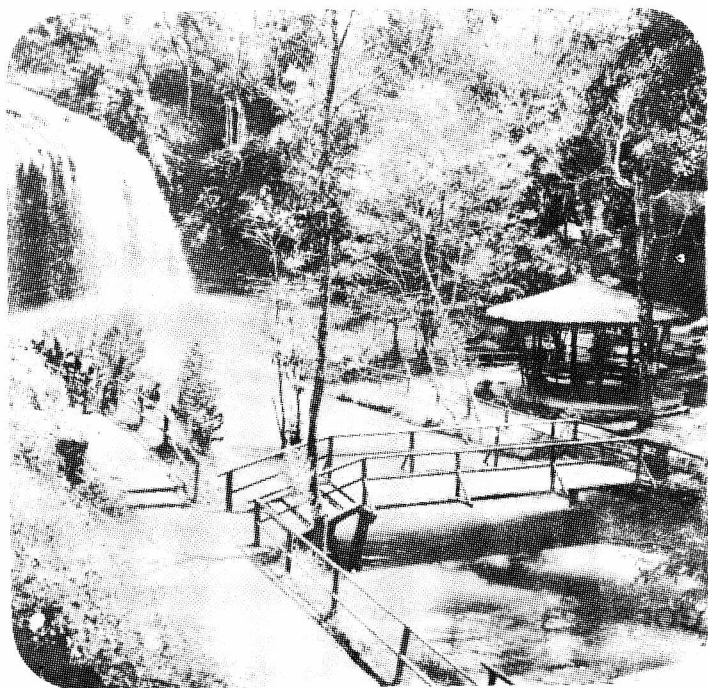


Cam Ly Waterfall

Photo Ba Trung

Prenn Waterfall

The waterfall, named after a tribe who used to live in its surrounding area, is located at the foot of Prenn Pass by National Highway 20, 10 km from Dalat. From a 6-m high wall of basalt, water pours down over a sandstone bed, creating a spectrum-like curtain of water gleaming in the sun. In the cave behind the waterfall spans a small bridge. Standing on the bridge among the echoes of the waterfall with its splashing sprays, tourists can admire the landscape through the splendid curtain of water, all inspiring



Prenn Waterfall

Photo: Tran Van Chau

in them an indescribably stunning feeling. Prenn waterfall is also called Thien Sa. By the falls is a nice restaurant welcoming tourists at the threshold of Dalat.

Lien Khuong Waterfall

Lien Khuong waterfall, also known as Lien Khang waterfall, originates from the Da Nhim river and is 30 km from Dalat on the left of National Highway 20. There used to be a lot of red ants in the area around the falls, which the K'Ho ethnic people tried to burn many times but could not extinguish. Later, water rose and washed them away. The waterfall is about 100m wide. Its water slowly flows over a rugged bed of basalt. In the sunny season, the falls dries up exposing its rock wall.

Gougah Waterfall

Gougah waterfall, also called O Ga (Egg) waterfall, is 37 km from Dalat, about 200m off National Highway 20 to the left. At the first step on the winding trail, tourists can hear the echoes of the waterfall spreading all over the mountains and forests. Gougah waterfall has a majestic beauty with a huge volume of water pouring down from a height of 20m, creating bright colours. The water split into two masses vertically, one running quietly with the colour of red soil, the other splashing about its snow-white sprays. Seen from afar, the waterfall with its red and white colours looks like the yolk and the white of an egg on a plate.

Pongour Waterfall

The mystic Pongour waterfall lies deep in the forest, 50 km from Dalat and 7 km off National Highway 20 to the right. The water tumbling down from a 30-m high beautiful cliff sounds like thunders. Pongour waterfall is a wonder of wild nature.



Pongour Waterfall

Photo: Tran Van Chau

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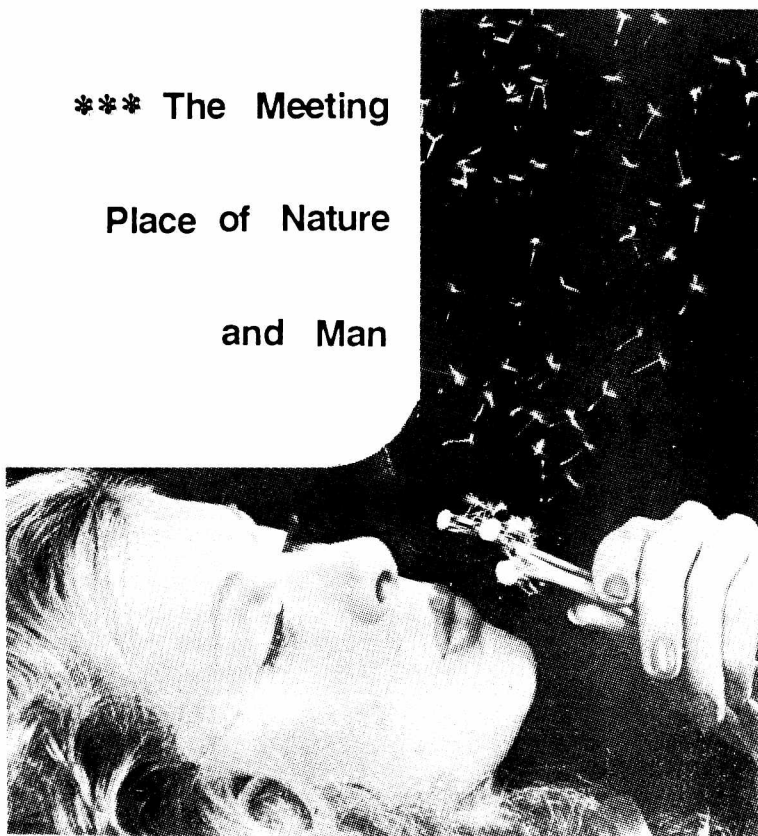


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*** The Meeting

Place of Nature

and Man



Afloat with the wind

The infinite beauty of Dalat has enchanted so many travellers and is an inexhaustible inspiration to writers and artists. Dalat is also known by different names : *The City of Flowers and Wind*, *The City of Mist*, *The Land of Cherry blossoms*, *The City of Thousands of Flowers*, etc. This city is not only famous for its pleasant climate but also a meeting place of the delicate man and wonderful nature. It is endowed with an original topography : hills after hills spreading endlessly with lovely villas of diverse architectural styles nestling amidst low valleys or scattered on gently sloping rises and slanting sides. On chilly days, wisps of gentle smoke are often seen rising from the nice, little chimneys of various shapes on the roofs of villas built in classical European styles. In these magnificent buildings, the fire-place is an ornament which is carefully designed. It is often built in nice and beautifully decorated living-rooms, which creates, literally as well as figuratively, a warm atmosphere.

Lying amidst lovely gardens, each villa is a beautiful poem, which seems to be a dramatic representation of a love story awaiting your appreciation if you know how to knock its doors.

Palaces

DINH 1 (Palace 1)

Located on Tran Quang Dieu Street, this villa was formerly used as a rest-place by South Viet Nam President Ngo Dinh Diem and later by the successive heads of state of the South Viet Nam governments. Dinh 1, with its ancient and impressive architecture, is situated in a secluded, quiet and romantic area. Since the Liberation of the South in 1975, this villa has not been repaired and become deteriorated, especially its surrounding pine woods, which have been alarmingly exploited.

DINH 2 (Palace 2)

This villa was formerly the *Summer Palace* of the French Governor General Jean Decoux. Its construction lasted from 1933 to 1937. Every year, from May to December, Decoux came and worked there. This is a magnificent palace located



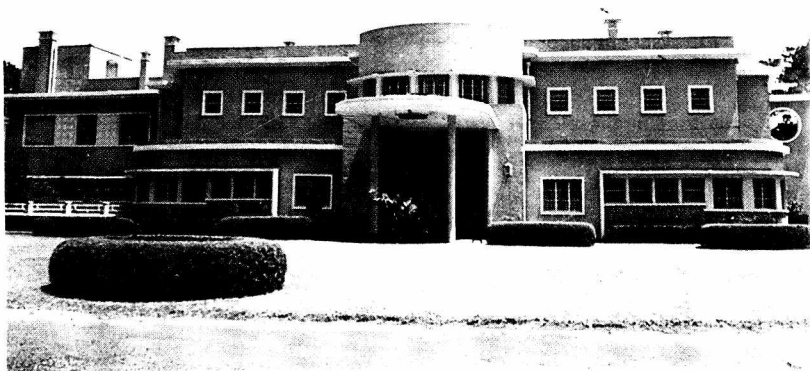
Palace 2

Photo MPK

on a pine wooded hill at an altitude of 39 m. From here, the surface of Xuan Huong Lake, about 1 km away, can be vaguely viewed through the pine-trees, beyond which are deep valleys and rising hills and mountains. The whole scenery is a beautiful picture. Later, under the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, this palace became the rest place of Ngo Dinh Nhu (his younger brother), and afterwards was reserved for South Viet Nam Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky.

At present, the palace is known as Hotel Dinh 2.
DINH 3 (Palace 3)

This palace was formerly the private residence of Emperor Bao Dai, the last king of Viet Nam. It assumes a majestic and warm air of the royal family, with the Emperor's office



Palace 3

Photo Nguyen Nhu

where his seals can still be found, the bed-rooms of Empress Nam Phuong , a beautiful and virtuous lady, of Prince Bao Long, of Princess Phuong Mai, etc. Dinh 3 is really an elegant villa amidst a romantic setting.

It seems to be a superficial opinion to suppose that *Emperor Bao Dai was just a king of pleasure , fond of formality and indulged in hunting and play, neglecting his mission as head of state.*

Dalat Palace

This is a magnificent palace located on a small hill overlooking Xuan Huong Lake. It assumes a quiet appearance like a historian absorbed in recording every event of Dalat. In 1916, the French Governor General Roume decided on the construction of a grand hotel with every convenience - the Hotel du Lang Biang Palace, opened in 1922, with the intention of turning Dalat into the capital of the Indochinese Federation. In 1930, an intelligence network under the disguise of waiters and cooks was established by the Viet Nam Communist Party. This was the first leading cell of Lam Dong province. Dalat Palace also received Vietnamese and French representatives who came for the Dalat Preparatory Conference, a preliminary step for the official conference in Fontainebleau, France.

After the reunification of the country, the Political Bureau and the Central Military Committee held at the palace the conference for summing up the Ho Chi Minh Campaign and the General Offensive of Spring 1975.

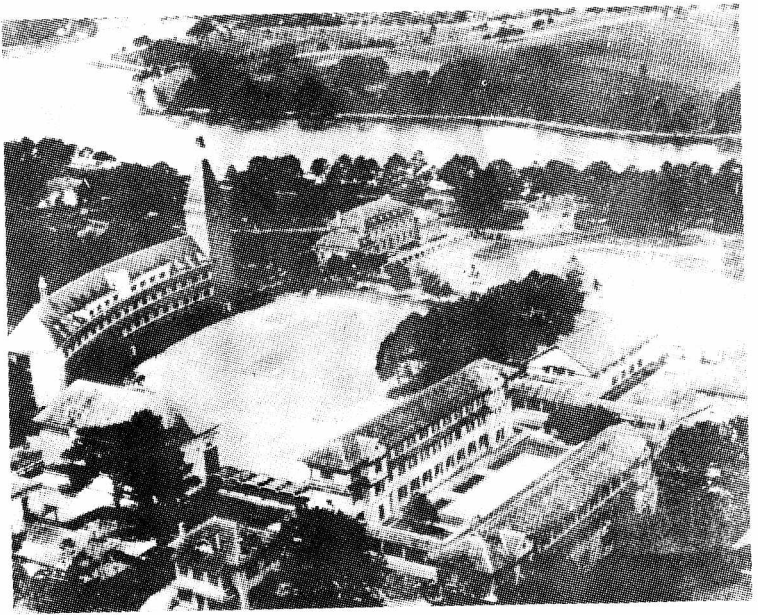
And what other events will take place ? Dalat Palace is looking forward to the future with great interest.

Lycée Yersin (Yersin High School)

Formerly, in memory of Dr. Yersin, the founder of Dalat, two big schools in the city were named after him.

- **The Petit Lycée**, built in 1927, covering a low hill at one end of Hung Vuong Street (which is presently 1 Hoang Van Thu Street). At the beginning, the school offered French curricula at the primary level and later became the French Cultural Center. Today, it serves as the office of the Lam Dong Information and Culture Service and the Lam Dong Cultural Center.

- **The Grand Lycée**, an original architectural work in Southeast Asia , completed in 1935. Its roof is covered with



The Grand Lycée

Photo: Tran Van Chau

beautiful slates. It was on this site that the Dalat Conference was opened at 9:a.m on April 19, 1946, in preparation for the official conference in Fontainebleau, France. Formerly, the Grand Lycée was a high school teaching French curricula. Later, it was turned into the Hung Vuong Educational Center and is now a Teachers' College.

Regretfully, both schools are badly deteriorating.



Domaine de Marie Convent

Photo MFK

Linh Phong

Pagoda



Linh Phong Pagoda

Linh Phong Pagoda, located in Trai Ham hamlet 4 km southeast of the city centre, stands amidst whispering pine-trees on a small, lofty mountain. Originally, in 1944, the pagoda was a simple Buddhist sanctuary built with a corrugated iron roof and plank walls, headed by the Most Ven. Thich Bich Nguyen. From 1948 to 1962, it was repaired and built into the present magnificent convent by the nun Thich Nu Tu Huong. The three-entrance stone gate is constructed according to the Buddhist philosophy of Three-Meditations (Void, Hypothesis and Middle Way), giving a majestic touch to the structure. The pagoda, 16m wide by 25m long, is divided into 5 halls following the architecture of the communal house of Central Viet Nam. Its curved double-tier roof is adorned with the four sacred animals (dragon, unicorn, tortoise and phoenix) performing their graceful dance amidst the beautiful mountain landscape.

In the sanctuary, a statue of Amitabha Buddha, 1.8m high, is worshipped. In front of the sanctuary, on both sides stand two shining bronze statues of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva. Behind the sanctuary are the altars of Patriarches and the dead. On the hill behind the pagoda stands a hexagonal three-storied stupa, which is to be the tomb of the present head nun when she passes away. On visiting Linh Phong Pagoda, visitors will meet the head nun Tu Huong, a slender, elderly woman of over 70. In the past, she was a beautiful girl from a high and wealthy family. At the age of 20, however, she left home and became a Buddhist nun, forgetting all the earthly worries in order to attain Nirvana.

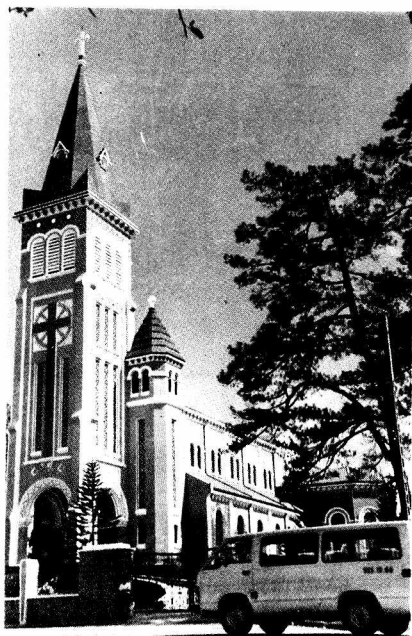


Linh Son Pagoda

Linh Son Pagoda is situated amidst a tea-garden on a hill of 4 ha, 1 km northwest of the city centre. The pagoda was built between 1936 and 1940 under the auspices of Mr.Vo Dinh Dung (*) and Mr.Nguyen Van Tieng and innumerable Buddhist devotees. Its architecture is in the oriental style with a slanting roof slightly curved at the top on which stand a pair of winding dragons in a symmetrical position. Near the pagoda stands an octagonal three-storied tower and not far away is the School of Basic Buddhist Studies, which add to the beauty of the structure. On the gateway in the front yard of the pagoda is the statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva standing on a high lotus pedestal among clouds of incense. Inclining down along both lateral edges of the staircase to the Main Hall lie two beautifully sculptured open-mouthed dragons idolized as the guardian deities of the pagoda.

On the altar is a bronze statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, seated in meditation on a lotus pedestal, weighing 1,250 kg and casted in 1952. Linh Son Pagoda assumes a harmonious and solemn appearance.

(*) Mr. Vo Dinh Dung came to Dalat in 1930, bare-handed. Some time later he became the wealthiest man of Dalat, with over 70 houses for rent at low prices in the city centre. As a well-known contractor, he undertook the construction of many buildings in Dalat such as the Bao Dai Palace, the railway station, etc. However rich, he led the frugal life of a home Buddhist, doing many kind deeds. The large local cemetery is also one of his donations to the city.



**Dalat
Cathedral**

Dalat Cathedral

Photo : Le Trung Thanh

In the centre of the city, towering high into the sky is the steeple of a big church, which is known as Dalat Cathedral since 1960 because it has been the office of the bishop of Dalat.. The Cathedral is the third church built on this site.

1. The first church, built in 1918, is presently the dwelling and working quarters of the priests.

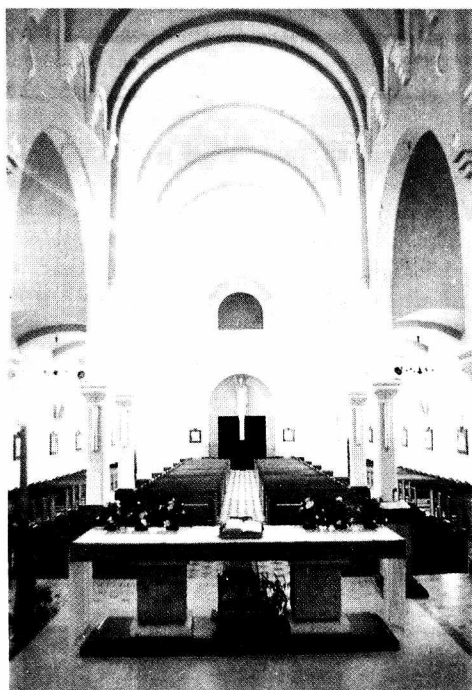
2. The second church, built in 1922, is now the site of Quang Trung School (former Tri Duc School).

3. The third church: The construction of this church started in 1935 by S.I.D.E.C and its inauguration was in 1942. This structure is 60m long, 14m wide and has 1 000

seats. Its surrounding walls and the vault are decorated with splendid, colourful stained glass windows representing saints, which were elaborately mosaicked in France. The funds for the construction of the church were raised continuously by the Catholic congregation from 1929 to 1942. The lists of donators were put in two iron boxes, the first being buried with the cornerstone and the second put under the cross on the spire.

Dalat Cathedral is known as the Rooster Church by local people because on its spires stands a brass weathercock, 0.66m from comb to tail and 0.5m from comb to foot, bearing various meanings:

- The rooster replaces the arrow to show the direction of the wind
- The rooster, spelled "gallus" in Latin, homonymous with the word "Gaulois", is the symbol of the French.
- The rooster is a classic reference in the Bible, warning people against their pride and symbolizing Awareness



The Cathedral interior

Photo: Nguyen Ngoc Hiep

The Heroes' Cemetery

The Heroes' Cemetery started to be built on May 1, 1978 and was inaugurated on December 22, 1979. The 4-ha cemetery, designed by architect Tran Huu Tiem, is located near Cam Ly waterfall, 3 km from the city centre. It is a big project built after the Liberation (in 1975) in memory of those who sacrificed their lives for the country. The war memorial stands in the middle of the cemetery, with a height of 20m symbolizing the 20th century and four sides meaning that people from the four corners of the country come to live in Dalat and die for this city.

In 1951, the revolution broke out in Dalat and the French colonialists tried to suppress it. Twenty patriots in Dalat prison were killed without trial in the Cam Ly area on the night of May 11, 1951. The only survivor of the massacre was Mrs Nguyen Thi Lan, presently living in Cay So 4 (Milestone 4) Dalat.

Dalat Market

The first market of Dalat was built in Anh Sang Hamlet about 1923. In 1929, it was moved to the present site in Hoa Binh square and was called Cho Cay (Timber Market) because at that time the market and most of its surrounding blocks were built with timbers and roofed with corrugated iron. Afterwards, this area was burnt and rebuilt with bricks.

To meet the development of a tourist city, in 1958, a plan for the new market designed by architect Ngo Viet Thu was carried out. A huge amount of materials was used to fill up the swamp on which the foundation was built. The new market was completed in 1962. This is a 19.50m - high structure comprising 3 storeys, each with a floor space of 1,000 sq m. A reinforced concrete bridge, 53m long by 7m wide, connects the second storey with Hoa Binh square. With its original architecture, Dalat Market has a majestic appearance in the city centre.

Naturally, the market is a mirror reflecting the cultural and economic activities of a locality. From 1975 to 1986, however, Dalat Market was quite deserted. Most of the shops were state-owned where a lot of sample goods were on

display but not for sale. People had to spend at least half a day or, sometimes, several days standing in line to get their necessities such as rice, meat, cloth, etc. Recently, however, the situation of Dalat Market has gradually changed. The goods are more and more abundant and of every kind and size. The problem now is how to afford them. Regretfully, local specialities are still rather expensive in the full tourist season.

Dalat Nuclear Research Institute

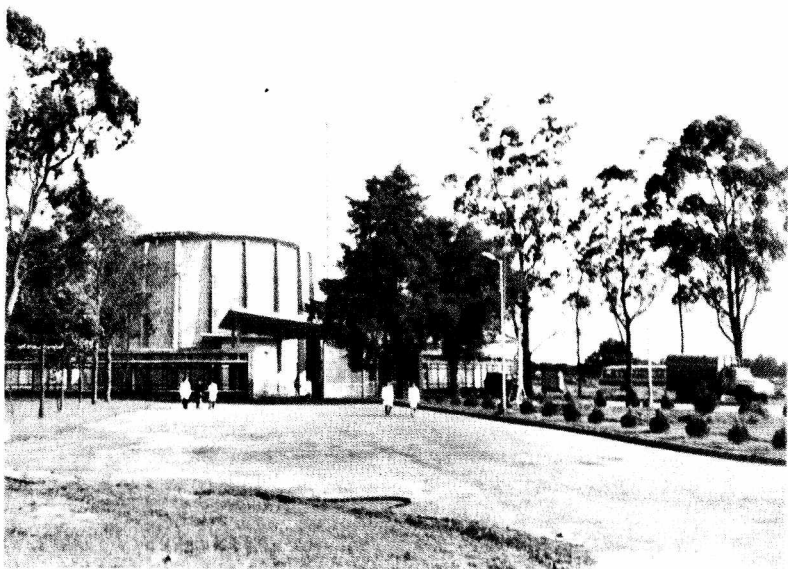
Dalat Nuclear Institute, formerly known as Nuclear Research Center, was established by Decree 507-TTP dated October 11, 1958 and took shape in 1962. The institute is located on a hill between Dalat University and the Army Academy (former National Military Academy). The nuclear reactor is housed in the central building surrounded by laboratories and glass walled corridors, which resembles an atomic nucleus encircled by orbits of electron clouds (following Architect Ngo Viet Thu's plan).

After the Liberation in 1975, with technical assistance of the Soviet Union, the reactor of Dalat Nuclear Research Institute has become unique of its kind in the world, in which the Soviet - designed core and control system is integrated into the structure of the former American TRIGA MARK II reactor, constructed by General Dynamics.

The reactor includes a core placed on the bottom of a cylindrical tank containing approximately 20 cubic meters of distilled water, and a graphite reflector. When in activation, the core emits a beautiful bluish glow under Cerenkov effect. The water absorbs heat and prevents radiation. The nuclear reactor contains nearly 3.5 kg of Uranium 235. When the reactor is made activated, the Uranium nuclei are bombarded with neutrons, which causes a chain reaction.

The nuclear fission is monitored by 7 control rods made of B4C, a neutron-absorptive material. The present nominal power of the Dalat nuclear reactor is 500 kw.

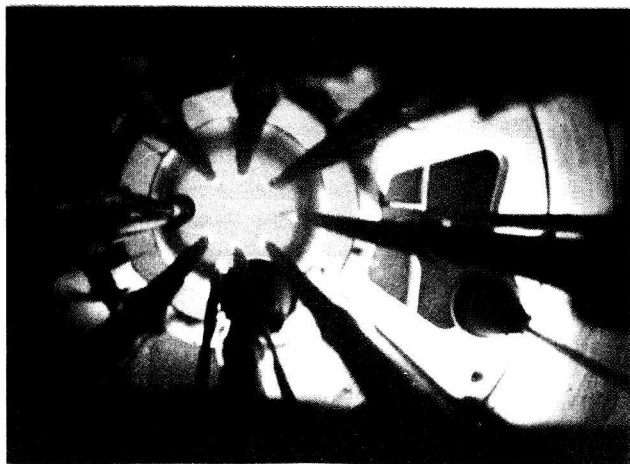
With the assistance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Soviet Union and through the scientific and technical co-operation with many organizations in and out of the country and with other countries in the region and the world over, Dalat Nuclear Research Institute has



The Facade of Dalat Nuclear Research Institute

produced radioisotopes for applications in various fields of the national economy:

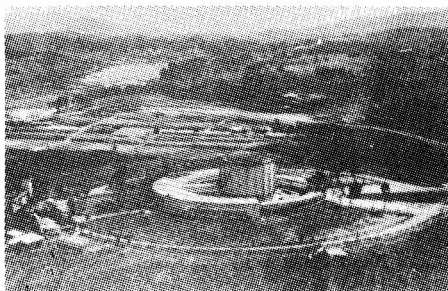
- In medicine: for diagnosis and treatment
- In industry: for the determination of optimal parameters of technological processes and for imperfection detection
- In agriculture: for studies on soil-plant-manure relations and on the physiological and biochemical characteristics of animals and plants. The radio - tracer is an effective substance for scientific researchers of various fields. Dalat



The Reactor Core

Photo: Nguyen Van May

Nuclear Research Institute also applies nuclear analytical and radiation techniques to general survey, mineral prospecting, determination of plant characteristics, qualitative analysis of inorganic materials used in industry and environmental investigation. Other applications of the radiation technique such as impurity mixing and radio treatment have been under experimentation and are producing good results.



A Panoramic View of Dalat Nuclear Research Institute

Photo: Tran Van Chau

Dalat University

Dalat University was established on a lovely hill of 38 ha north of Xuan Huong lake. The campus consists of more than 40 buildings nestling amidst the green shady trees of various kinds of highland vegetation. In Spring, the winding paths in the campus are rosy with cherry blossoms. Originally, in 1939, this was the area of the Ecole d'Enfants des Troupes. Later, it was turned into the campus of Dalat University, a private institution of the Viet Nam Council of Bishops. Dalat University officially started its academic pursuit in 1958. During the course of development until 1974, the University was enlarged into 5 schools: Pedagogy, Letters, Science, Theology and especially Government and Business, a relatively new faculty, which was considered the first and unique of its kind in Viet Nam at that time. The emblem of Dalat University was **Thu Nhan** (to grow people), meaning education. Its buildings and auditoriums also bore meaningful names taken from the Book of the Doctrine of the Mean and the Book of Poetry (of Confucius) such as *Don Hoa*, *Minh Thanh*, *Nang Tinh*, *Dat Nhan*, etc. (roughly translated as Promoting Reproduction, Comprehensibility and Sincerity, Constant Calmness, Attaining Humanity, respectively)

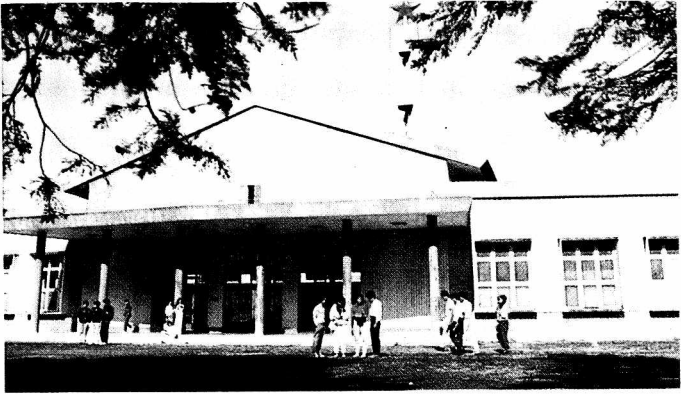


Photo : Ba Trung

Main Building

After the Liberation in 1975, Dalat University was reopened by Decision No.126/TTg dated October 27,1976 by the Prime Minister and officially began its first enrollment in the academic year 1977-1978. Presently it is one of the four major universities in Viet Nam (others are in Ha Noi, Hue and Ho Chi Minh City), and consists of 7 faculties: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Literature, History and English, under three systems: regular, in - service and extended. Its objectives are to train:

- 1- Researchers in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Literature, and History.
- 2- Teachers for universities, colleges, secondary vocational schools and high schools.
- 3- Scientists and technologists who are expected to acquire basic theoretical knowledge and to be able to apply scientific and technical know-how in the fields of agriculture, industry, forestry, national defense and other fields of cultural and social activities.
- 4- Students specialized in English.

The training objectives of the University are specially suited to the Central Highlands and coastal provinces. In 1987, it was awarded the Labor order, 3rd Class by the State Council.

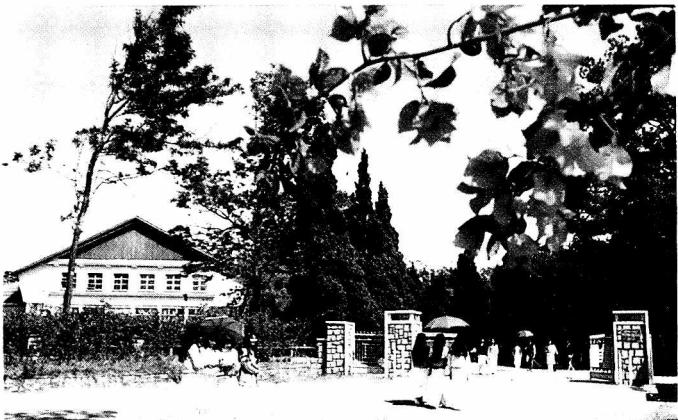


Photo : Ba Trung

University Gate



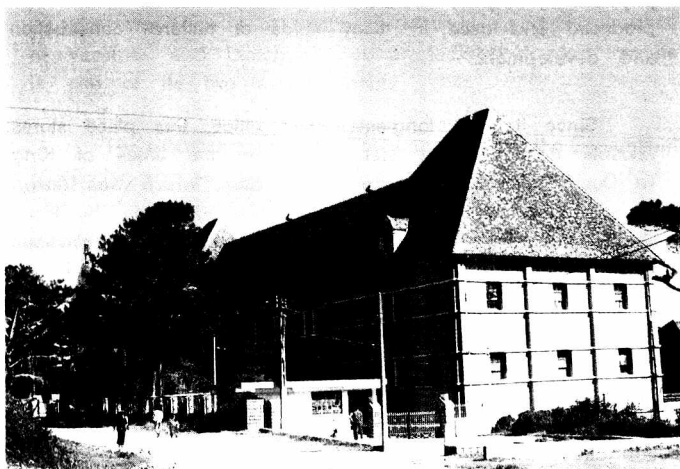
Auditorium

Photo : Ba Trung

Dalat University is blessed with an ideal and romantic setting, with its stream gently flowing under a little bridge, full of souvenirs of one's school-days, with its winding paths and shady trees cherishing so many intimate sentiments of studenthood, and with auditoriums alive with familiar faces of one's friends and teachers... All these lovely features have made Dalat University one of the most romantic beauty-spots of this beautiful highland city

Cartographic Branch 2

14 Thong Nhat street Dalat



Cartographic Branch 2

Photo MPK

Originally, the Geographic Service was the Topography Bureau of the French staff of Expeditionary Forces, established in Ha Noi in 1886 for purely military purposes.

On July 5, 1894, the Indochinese Geographic Service officially came into existence, its headquarters still in Ha Noi. During the Second World War, this office was moved to the South in 1940; its headquarters was temporarily located in Gia Dinh. By the end of 1944, it was moved again to its official establishment in Dalat. From 1946, the Indochinese Geographic Service became a branch of the French Geographic Institute.

In 1950, under an agreement, this office was dissolved and its property divided among the four countries, namely, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia and France. On April 1955, the National Geographic Service was established under the authority of the Defense Department of the Saigon Government. Vietnamese personnel gradually replaced the French in managerial offices of technical and administrative affairs.

In 1975, after the reunification of the country, the National Geographic Service was renamed Cartographic Branch 2 under the Map Department of the General Staff. This is the place where almost every kind of international standard maps, from topographical to other specific objects, such as physical, geological, tourist, transport, administrative, etc are produced and used in many fields of national construction and development.

Since it is a long-established office, this place stores valuable documents of Viet Nam from the times of King Tu Duc. Particularly, the map of An Nam, which was drawn by astronomic observation, boating, horse-riding, etc by Phan Huy Chu, a 18th-century Vietnamese scholar, is a precious document in the technical field as well as in the tradition of cartography and in the study of the territory of Viet Nam at that time, which included the islands of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa.

From the archives, one can study the cities of Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Nam Dinh, Sai Gon and the coastal regions of Viet Nam in the years from 1814.

Besides, the Cartographic Branch 2 is also a proper place for studying the administrative maps of the countries in Southeast Asia and all over the world. The maps made by this establishment since 1975 have been dependable for their information, currentness and accuracy.

The Cartographic Branch 2 has inherited and developed the achievements of Vietnamese cartography, and has been conscious of respecting and preserving its valuable documents and records. It can be said that this is a good place for the study, research and consultation of map making techniques, from primitive to modern ones.

Dalat Pasteur Institute

Dalat Pasteur Institute, located on Le Hong Phong Street near Dinh 3 (Palace 3) was founded by Dr. Yersin in 1936 and is now one of the branches of the Viet Nam Pasteur Institute. It carries out research and production of bacteria vaccines. After the reunification of the country, in order to meet the growing need of disease prevention, on November 23, 1978, the Ministry of Health decided to found the institute of Vaccines and Biological Substances. Dalat Pasteur Institute is one of its two establishments.

- The establishment in Nha Trang appropriated the Department of Vaccine and Serum Production of Nha Trang Pasteur Institute. This Institute, founded by Dr. Yersin in 1895, was once a big establishment to produce vaccines and sera in Viet Nam. Today, it becomes the main organ of the Institute of Vaccines and Biological Substances, producing viral vaccines, antitoxins and agglutinating sera, and carrying out the last stage in producing DPT vaccines.

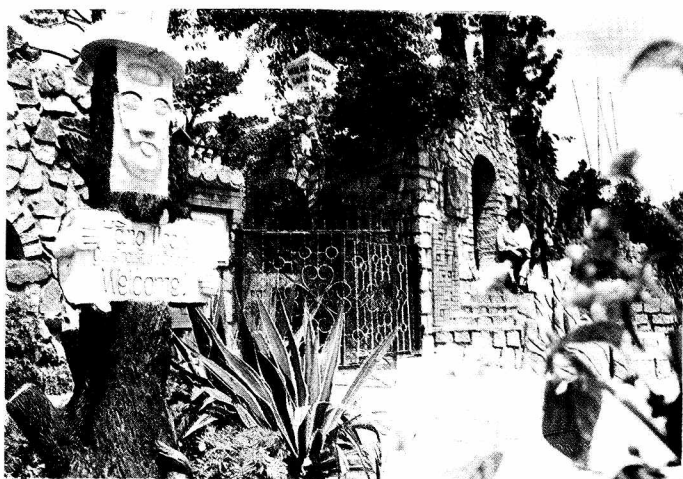
- The Dalat Pasteur Institute produces BCG vaccines, plague vaccines, tetanus anatoxin, diphtheria anatoxin and pertussis suspension. With the help of UNICEF, most of the equipment to produce vaccines on biological technology for the Extended Program of Immunization is installed here.



Dalat Pasteur Institute

Photo: Viet Thai

To serve the production needs, the Institute owns a breeding farm in Suoi Dau, 22 km from Nha Trang. The farm, with an area of 145 ha, founded by Dr. Yersin in 1896, breeds horses for the production of different kinds of antitoxins and other animals such as cows, sheep, guinea-pigs, white mice for use in production and quality control of vaccines.



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The Boarding High School for Ethnic Minority Students

Located near Cam Ly church is a school established in 1960 for ethnic minority youths in remote villages who were gathered here and given accommodation for study by Catholic priests. Boys were looked after by monks and girls were cared for by nuns. Since 1975, the school has been under the management of the Lam Dong Educational Service and become the only boarding high school for ethnic minority students in the province such as the Tay, Muong, Chill, Lat, etc

Lam Dong Library

Lam Dong Library is located on Tran Phu Street. It began operation on October 25, 1975 on the site of the two former establishments:

- **The National Library**, established in May, 1958 by the municipal administration.

- **The Abraham Lincoln Library**, established in 1961, belonging to the American Cultural Center.

Since the Liberation in 1975, the Library has taken an active part in local cultural activities. Besides organizing and managing its network in the districts and a number of other establishments, it also has travelling libraries to bring books right to the hands of readers in construction sites and remote areas where books are difficult to store. With a collection of over 100,000 books, of which one-third are in English and French, and 200 kinds of home and foreign newspapers and magazines, Lam Dong Library has attracted a large readership of students and researchers. Particularly, the Library has a fairly good monographic bibliography of Dalat, whose books are in wide circulation. In addition, it regularly holds meetings of readers' club with a rich programme of activities. The club is the meeting place of well-known scientists, artists, writers and local readers.

In spite of its deteriorating material conditions and the humble income of its staff, Lam Dong Library has tried to preserve the reputation of a respectable cultural establishment of the province.



Dalat University Library

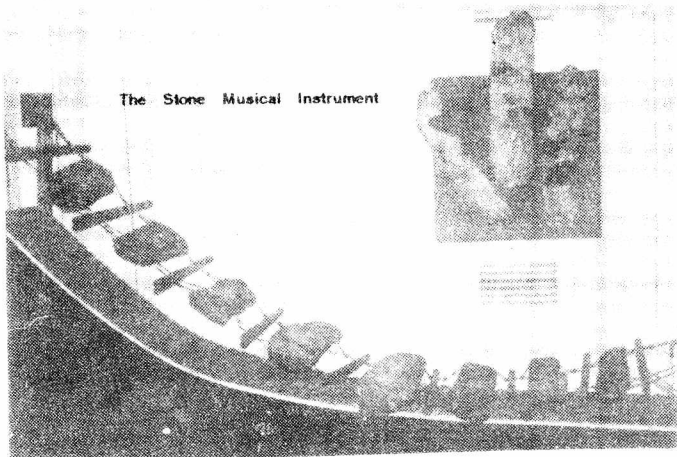
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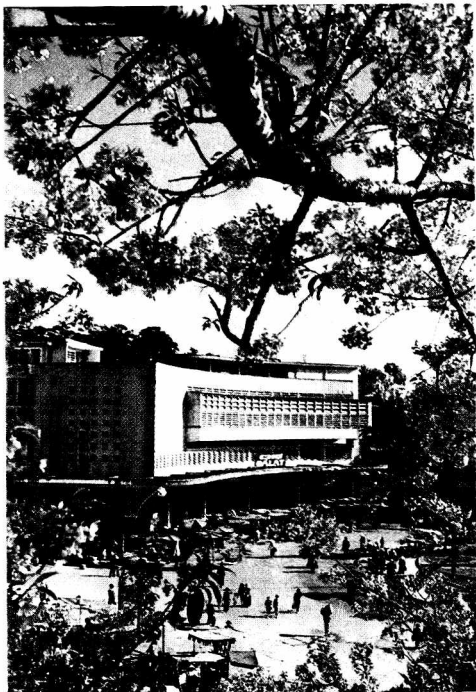
Lam Dong Museum

Lam Dong Museum is located at the end of a winding road shaded with lovely pine trees, formerly known as the **Road of Love**, which leads to the highest hilltop in the city centre. This location of the Museum is an ideal rendez-vous for those who want to admire the beauty of Dalat.

Before 1975, it was the Mayor's residence. On visiting the Museum, tourists will have a chance to see historical objects featuring local traditions and a collection of valuable artifacts representing the ancient cultures of ethnic groups in the south of the Central Highlands. Particularly on display is the Lam Dong stone musical instrument, which is made of bars of eruptive rocks capable of producing mystic notes...

The Stone Musical Instrument





Dalat Market

Photo : Ba Trung



Orchid

Souvenirs

It's a pleasure for tourists to take with them some souvenirs when leaving Dalat. The local specialities include:

-Flowers: roses, lilies, gladioluses, immortelles, etc. Rich varieties of flowers are on sale before the ground-floor of Dalat Market.

-Fruit: strawberries, persimmons, Trai Ham plums, avocados, apples, etc and various kinds of jams.

-Vegetables: carrots, lettuces, cauliflowers, artichokes, cabbages, etc.

And if tourists want to buy a tiny house on stilts tied to a little pot of orchid, a small bamboo basket, a bow and arrows, a hollow gourd for holding wine, a wood-block engraving with vivid touches featuring a beautiful landscape of Dalat, a scarf, a sweater, etc they will be satisfied when entering lovely kiosks around Dalat Market. These souvenirs will gently stir up in them a touch of undefinable feelings at the thought of Dalat.



A Tourist City

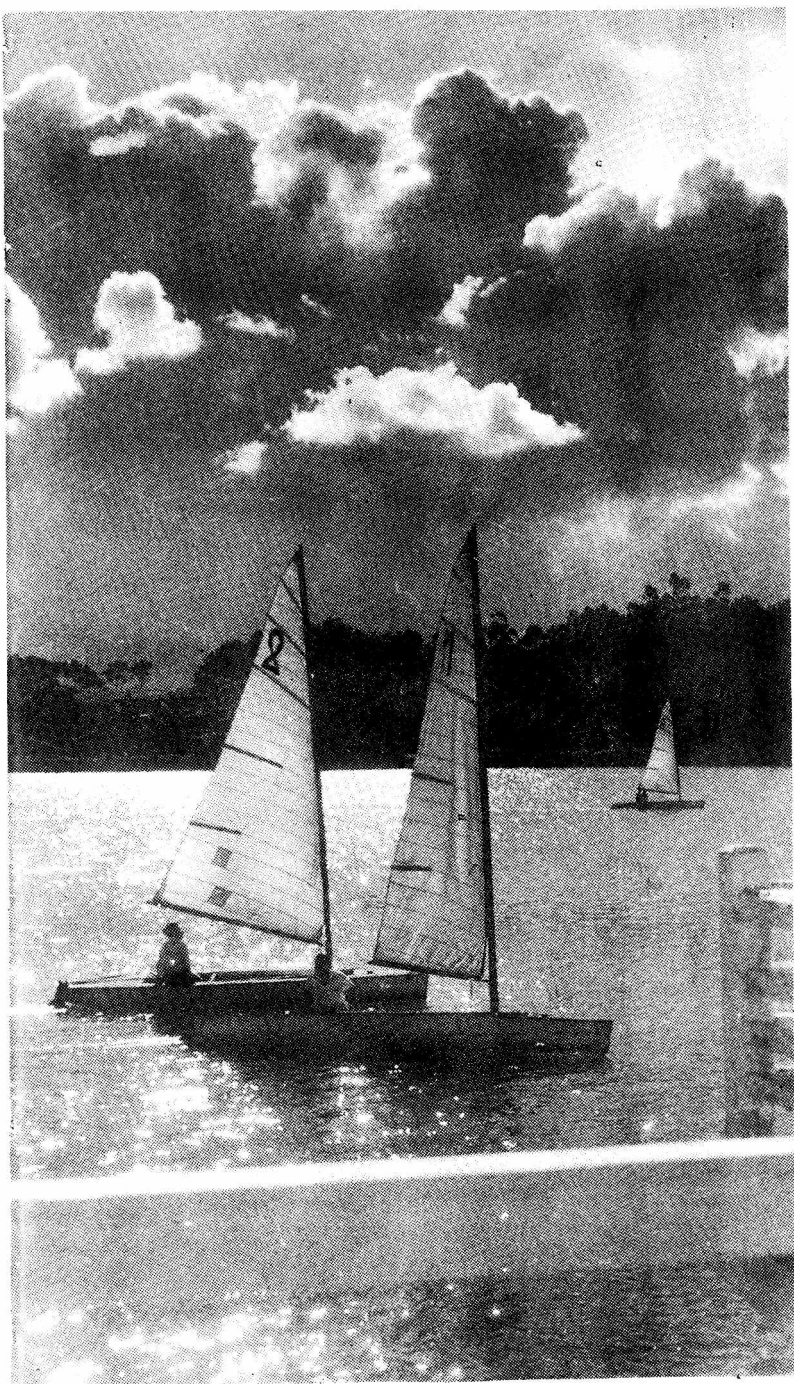
A. Berjoan, a French Resident Mayor, once remarked **"Dalat occupies a specially favourable position in the Far East. The pleasant climate, the beautiful landscape, and the potentials for development have offered this city a matchless advantage..."**(*). Another foreign tourist said that **"Dalat will be a Switzerland in Southeast Asia"**.

In reality, however, during the war, Dalat was not safe for the development of tourism. Since the reunification of the country, due to difficulties in diplomatic relations of Viet Nam, the tourist potentials of Dalat have not yet been exploited. Most of the customers of local tourism are domestic tourists; foreign tourists only make up a small percentage, in view of the powerful attraction of a tourist city.

The situation of Dalat is like A Beautiful Lady in misfortune, who suffers from poverty and backwardness, and from unconscious destruction. In her silent cry for help, she is waiting for the hands of A Gallant Knight from some corner of the world...

With proper investment in its tourism, Dalat will win the widespread reputation of A Mountain Fairyland...

(*) A. Berjoan, "Rapport sur la situation de la ville de Dalat et de la province du Langbian du 21 Janvier au 15 Aout 1944."



The Sails on Xuan Huong Lake



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