

VIET-NAM 1958

The Executive Council of the Vietnamese National Section, elected in July 1955, came to the end of its three-year term. This Council provided an effort worthy of praise in consolidating the fraternal link between the members, and in spreading Theosophical teaching not only to the members, but to sympathizers also. In conformity with the Statutes and internal Rules of the Section, a new Council of 12 members was elected on 27th July 1958, with Madame Nguyen-thi-Hai as General Secretary.

Activities.—The sixth anniversary of the National Section was celebrated on Easter Day, 6th April 1958. The following commemorative days were also arranged: Foundation Day, Theosophical Congress, Wesak, and White Lotus Day. On each of these occasions many members came and took part, and these cordial participants were relatively more numerous than in earlier years.

Taking advantage of last year's results, the new Council has elaborated a programme of action under three main headings, as follows:

1. The practice of compassion within the Section as well as in the Society.

2. The spread of the Wisdom teachings (Theosophy).

3. Attracting new members.

Membership.—This year we registered 143 new members and 7 former members rejoined. Two members died, 2 resigned and 69 lapsed. We have, therefore, a nett gain of 77 members over last year.

Lodges.—At present we have 12 Lodges, 7 of which we had when the Section was formed in 1952, 4 new Lodges spread over the period 1955 to 1956, and one this year. This last Lodge, named Dung Hanh which signifies "Fine Conduct," was formed on 8th December 1957 and is composed of a very active group of women members. Its programme of action is the study of Theosophy and the practice of qualities that are specifically feminine, such as compassion, gentleness, devotion. At present the membership of this Lodge numbers 52, of whom 26 are new.

Lodge Saigon continues its activities with a public course in Theosophy and the study of comparative religions twice weekly, thus furnishing its members and sympathizers with a solid knowledge of the Ancient Wisdom. The Lodge has at

present 128 members, some from the Capital and some from the provinces. The booklets giving this Lodge's course in Theosophy are much valued by the public; more than 7,000 of them were distributed during the course of this year.

Lodge Chon Ly, in the Capital of Central Viet-Nam (Hue) has done good work this year; it has organized 23 public talks, celebrated the festivals of Wesak and Asala, arranged three lectures for Buddhist monks who came from Saigon, opened a lecture hall that can hold 150 persons, opened an elementary school with three classes for children of families that are less fortunate, and taken part in social work for helping the needy in the Capital and its environments.

Lodge Phung Su (Young Theosophists' group) at Saigon has worked actively this year. Its weekly meetings and talks attract many sympathizers. The study group is always very friendly; it consolidates Theosophical teachings and encourages the spiritual research of each member. The effective membership is at present 19.

Lodge Kiem Ai (Universal Love) at Ban-co (Saigon) in its studies concentrates on "the mastery of the lower bodies with a view to acquiring virtues and being able to come nearer the Masters of the Wisdom". This Lodge, which has 18 members, has published for free distribution two Theosophical bulletins, each with an issue of 600 copies.

Lodge An Giang has published four quarterly bulletins of 600 copies each. Its meetings are devoted to a general study of Theosophy and it has 16 members.

Lodge Bac Ai at Tan-chau, with its 12 members scattered over the province, is not able to carry on ordinary work. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that this Lodge keeps constantly in touch with the Executive Council. Lodges Leadbeater and

Viet-Nam have not yet been able to reorganize their work.

The other Lodges in the provinces, such as Duoi Chon Thay at Vinh-long, Long Xuyen, and Nhon Ai at Soc-trang are inactive, although help is always available to them for their rehabilitation from the Council.

Propaganda.—Public lectures organized each first Sunday in the month at the Section Headquarters, draw an audience of about one hundred, who are for the most part members of the Society. The course in Theosophy (for members and the public) is carried on regularly each Sunday morning.

The Committee for Propaganda and the spread of Theosophical teachings has performed a work worthy of praise in publishing four brochures:

1. *What is Theosophy?* by G. S. Arundale, translated into Vietnamese by Mme. Nguyen-thi-Hai.
2. *Theosophy—The Reason for the Founding of the Theosophical Society*, by Mr. Nguyen van Huan.
3. *The Close Relationship between Theosophy and Buddhism*, by Mme. Nguyen-thi-Hai.
4. *The Mission of the Theosophical Society*, by Mme. Nguyen-thi-Hai.

For each of these booklets there was an issue of 3,000 copies, which were distributed free to members and sympathizers.

The review, *Tim Hieu Thong Thien Hoc* (For the Understanding of Theosophy), directed by Mr. and Mrs. Nguyen van Huan, serves as the Theosophical bulletin for the members and is the organ for the spreading of Theosophy to a wide public. The sympathy accorded to this review continues to grow. In addition, at every visit to the provinces, its faithful readers are always invited to take part in a friendly meeting. At present 6,000 copies of this review are printed. As a sequel to the study series, "The Universe

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and Man," there has appeared "The Phach" (The Etheric Double), and there is now in the press "The Via" (The Astral Body).

The little book, *At the Feet of the Master* ("Duoi Chon Thay"), translated by Bach-Lien, was reprinted with 3,000 copies for free distribution. Thousands of copies of this book have already been published. In the coming year we envisage the translation of standard Theosophical books, and will continue to issue new propaganda booklets. The Library, with its 700 books in French, English and Vietnamese, furnishes students with the necessary elements for the study of Theosophy, the religions and philosophy.

Social Work.—The Orphanage maintained by the Theosophical Society, with its 48 children, is under the active care of its director, Dr. Cao van True, and deserves praise for the work it does. It is maintained by Government grants, the Red Cross, and donations from benefactors. This year the Section also participated in works of benevolence organized by the Government. It is planning to organize a "New Year Tree," when 300 poor people will receive gifts of clothes, food and Theosophical books.

General View.—The Section's efforts, outlined in 1957, are being amplified.

The constitutional reforms necessitated by this progress have brought happy changes, materially, intellectually and spiritually, and the esteem of the Government, the public and religious organizations increases, but we still have much to do in this domain.

Conclusion.—Generally, the National Section in Viet-Nam has done good work, due to the efforts of the Lodges and the active members. However, it would be desirable for *all the Lodges and all the members* to participate in the Section's undertakings and be inspired by the single aim of *servng the Society*. We place great hopes in their active participation and their right understanding of the Council's programme, which will greatly increase the number of people who have a knowledge of Theosophy.

In July 1959 we are to be honored with a visit from Mr. Geoffrey Hodson, accompanied by Miss Sandra Chase. During his stay of three months, he will give us the results of his study and researches. This unique event will be of inestimable value to us and we feel sure that the entire Section will benefit, and that its future will be more brilliant than ever.

NGUYEN-THI-HAI,
General Secretary.

SOCIETY

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to Vietnamese by Mme.

"The Reason for the Theosophical Society," by Huan.

"Relationship between Buddhism," by Mme.

"Theosophy of the Theosophical Society," by Nguyen-thi-Hai.

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1 Hieu Thong Thien Hoc