



THE VIETNAMESE SECTION

GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES:

The Republic of Viet-Nam came into existence as a result of the 1954 Geneva Conference which set the 17th parallel as the northern boundary of South Viet Nam. On 26 October 1956, just one year to a day after President Ngo dinh Diem proclaimed the new republic, a national Constitution was adopted.

Under this Constitution, largely the handiwork of the President, a good start was made toward showing what a determined nation can accomplish under dedicated leadership. In spite of the chaotic condition of the war-ravaged country and the continuing terrorism and sabotage carried on by Viet Cong guerrillas, the new nation made great progress. There is general suffrage and free elections. Economic, health and educational programs are underway to improve conditions for individuals and the country as a whole. The United States has been giving its support to these efforts and to the serious and potentially explosive matter of resisting the Communists.

MONEY:

Viet-Nam's unit of money is the "piaster" or "dong". Notes are issued in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 piasters or dong. The rate of exchange fluctuates. For a tourist or visitor, the present rate is seventy-five (75) piasters or dong to a United States dollar. Another rate of exchange is used for official transactions and it is currently thirty-five (35) piasters to the dollar.

VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE GUIDE

TONES CHANGE MEANING:

Vietnamese is not a monosyllabic language though it appears so because each syllable is written separately. Often two or more syllables are joined to form new words, as in place names like Sai-gon and Ha-noi.

Also Vietnamese is tonal. In other words, the tone or level of your voice changes the meaning of a word. The word "ma" for instance, has many different meanings, depending on how you say it, and symbols are used to show the differences.

<u>WORD</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>TONE</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
ma	none	level or middle	ghost; to rub
ma		high	mother; cheek
ma		low	but; that; which
ma		waving or rising	clever; tomb
ma		interrupted	house; appearance
ma		heavy	rice seedling

The northern dialect has these six tones. The southern combines the waving and interrupted tones by pronouncing them in the same way and thus has only five tones. With one exception, tone symbols are placed above the principal vowel of the syllable. The heavy symbol () is placed under the principal vowel.

T O M O R R O W : Use of the different tones when talking.

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