



**NGUYEN FAMILY
2008 in Viet Nam**

Ong Nôi and An Nôi

**[Binh]
Cathy**

**Thúy and Sy
Chien (Cookie) and Truong (Mike)**

**An and Hằng
Alisa (Hoa Nhi) and Travis (Khang)**

Liệt

**Tri & Nga
Connie and Tristan**

**Thúc and Trang
Tila**

**Second Cousins:
Huyen & Toi
Tang and Bé**

2008 Trip to Viet Nam

Dedicated to Tila Nguyen who died October 3, 2008 in Viet Nam of brain cancer

Itinerary

June		Long Son Pagoda, Hon Chong Promontory, GMC Disco, Po Nagar Cham Towers, Bao Dai's summer house, National Oceanographic Museum
24	Arrived in Saigon	Evening at the beach
25	Visited Hang's Aunt's restaurant in District 7	10 Waterfalls expedition
26	Toured the Reunification Palace in Saigon, lunch	11 Party hosted by Thuy
27	Shopped at the market	12 Dinner hosted by Tri's in-laws
28	Linh and Kim visited in Saigon	13 Fireworks on the beach
29	3 cousins from France arrived. Night sleeper bus to Tuy Hoa	14 Miss Universe finale Birthday party dinner for An, Liem, Tri and Hang
30	Arrived at Tuy Hoa at 6:30 a.m.	15 Day sleeper bus to Saigon
		17 Trip to Vinh Long, Co Chien River and the Mekong Delta
July		18 Anniversary dinner on a boat in the Saigon Harbor
2	Shopped at the market. Swam at the Tuy Hoa pool	19 Taxi to Tay Ninh. Evening motorcycle trip and fruit treat
3	Visited the rice field and the cemetery	20 Black Lady Mountain and the Cao Dai Temple, back to Saigon
5	Trip to the beach north of Tuy Hoa	21 Packed
6	Grandma's 70 th Birthday party	22 Left Saigon
7	Traveled to Nha Trang	23 Arrived in the Twin Cities
8	Lunch at the family of a worker of Liem's. Vin Pearl trip	
9	Kids' tour of Nha Trang:	

One.

We arrived - all planes pretty much on time. Total time here was 23 hours. Airport time was 6 hours 45 minutes. Air time was 16 hours 15 minutes. We flew Minneapolis to Seattle, Seattle to Taipei (11 hours) and Taipei to Saigon.

The time here is 11 hours different and they do not have daylight savings time, so we left our watches on CDT which was the same here.

I could not believe all of the people waiting for passengers at the airport!!! I felt like I was some movie star coming into Saigon. Actually, families usually come out in force to meet people arriving in Viet Nam. I think that there were only three Caucasians on the plane from Taipei to Saigon.

At the airport we all piled into a van for the trip to Thuy's (An's sister) house where we sort of unwound. Hang unpacked boxes and started dispersing the things that they brought for relatives. An's parents were at the house - his Mom is not feeling well and came to see a doctor.

That night we ate a restaurant, a big restaurant that seemed to specialize in groups and had several birthday parties going. After supper we went to a coffee shop. Both places were under a roof, but open to the outside.

The coffee shop had a wall with water running down it as a decoration.

We are staying at the home of Hang's Mom. Her house was built in the mid-1990s as a tin-covered shack. She built the current house a little later and just recently re-modeled it. The first floor has a small living area with couch and chairs, dining table with 6 chairs (looks like teak), kitchen with marble counters and a Toshiba fridge with ice maker, etc. There is a bathroom just off the kitchen. On the second floor are two bedrooms and two bathrooms and a/c. There is also a 3rd floor area that doesn't seem to be used. Ceilings are high and they have many fans to circulate the air. We leave our shoes at the door. The floors are tile and Hang's Mom washes the floors daily.

They get Disney on TV - sound is in English with Vietnamese subtitles. So I am not getting away from Hannah Montana!

Wednesday (6/26) we took a taxi to Hang's Aunt's restaurant south of the main part of Saigon (District 7). Took movies as we drove. Lots of motorbikes, very nice new cars (Lexus, Mercedes, Ford, etc.), a few bikes and very few cyclos. People were hauling all sorts of things on their motorbikes: a window, TVs, lumber, metal construction beams, family, bricks, etc. The cars and taxis are continually honking - not in anger at someone, but more to warn motorbikers. They often honk with a lighter honk and with a pattern. Like HONK honk honk

honk..... There are few trucks during the day - more in the evening. None of the traffic moves very fast.

The electrical lines are something else. The power poles have many, many lines strung from them. Sometimes there are cut lines hanging down and sometimes rolls of wires are hanging from the poles. I saw a worker on a bamboo ladder working on the line.

Hang and I had our hair washed and dried at the shop at the end of the alley and I had my nails done - \$6.00 for everything.

The day sounds are fun. Taxis and cars and truck and buses honking, people calling out what they are selling or collecting and unique bells or sounds for other vendors.

On Wednesday on our trip to the Aunt's restaurant I saw one blond on a motorbike. We saw about 6 Caucasians walking downtown. Women came into the Aunt's restaurant selling lottery tickets. One of those women kept looking at me. I'll bet she thought I had money and could be persuaded to buy some tickets.

Yesterday we acted like tourists. We took a taxi downtown and toured the Reunification Center - the government building used by South Viet Nam before 1975. Much in the building was the same in 1975. Parts of the building were closed to us. At noon everything was locked up and the water in the big fountain even turned

off! They had an old tank, helicopter and airplane on the grounds (old N. Vietnamese).

We rode in cyclos to the restaurant - sort of across the road and down the street. There were 4 cyclos to carry all of us. The restaurant we ate at was started about 4 years ago by a U.S. person. He contracted with various street vendors to set up shop around the perimeter of the restaurant compound. Each vendor specializes in a certain food which you can order from the menu. Hang, of course, ordered a variety of food for us.

We've been on several taxi rides – I've been watching the scenery. Along the streets the first floor of the buildings are occupied by small shops that specialize in a product - like shoes, children's clothing, purses, metal clothes racks, etc. The owner often lives above the shop. We saw lots of men sitting in front of the shops - while the women seemed to be busy cleaning, etc.

Today we are going to go to a super market to look for things for the kids' restaurant and then tomorrow my daughter-in-law is coming to town with the latest grandchild. We will visit there, if it works out, the next day.

Two, Part 1.

Backup a little. My adopted daughter Hang and her husband An invited me to join them this summer on their trip to Viet Nam. Their children, Alisa (13) and Travis (11), are the two that I babysit on week-ends. The first week we stayed in Saigon - the five of us stayed at Hang's Mother's house on Hem Alley. Other relatives of An's stayed at another house - a house that belongs to a family that came to the US four years ago. The second week we are staying with An's parents in Tuy Hoa on the coast and on July 5th will be celebrating his mother's 70th birthday. The week following that we will be in Nha Trang and staying at the hotel, Ba Tu, run by An's brother Thuc. The last week we will be back in Saigon to shop and run errands.

I will try and attach at least one photo - of the house on Hem Alley in Saigon. This is the house that belongs to Hang's Mother. The alley forks at the house with alleys running along either side of the house. The alley is off a small street that I would also call an alley, although I did see a small bus going down the main alley. The Hem alley is too small for cars, so only motorbikes, bicycles and pedestrians are on that alley. The noises are different because you don't have the honking of cars and trucks and motorcycles. The noises there included: children talking and laughing and sometimes crying, occasional dogs barking, vendors and their noises, pigeons cooing and sometimes even sparrows. One vendor sang a sweet song like "qua-dah" with the first

sound a little higher than the second. However, most vendors sing out in a nasal tone. One guy made a noise like castanets - clicking a metal utensil against a bike part; most of the time he didn't have a rhythm, but every once in a while he'd throw in a beat. And, I am positive that I heard someone sweeping the street in the early hours of the morning.

I didn't realize that daylight hours at this part of the globe are only from 6 am to 7 pm. So the day always seems so short.

We've been shopping (or just looking) at different types of shops. There are the street shops that the family buys food from. We went to covered mart that is much like the Merchandise Mall at the State Fair. All kinds of merchandise with each little stall selling their one product: fabric, clothes, purses, shoes, gift items, food, raw fish and meat. I bought a "Prada" purse (about \$8.00) to carry my camera and spare battery and a little money.

Another shop was like a super Target in that it sold food and also kitchen and other home accessories. The family from Tuy Ninh bought 2 packages of aluminum foil because they said they couldn't get it at home. That store had a food court where we could get Vietnamese food and also KFC, pizza and hamburgers.

The other shop was more like an upscale department store that sold electronics, bedding, brand name toiletries

and clothes. It also had a food court and a video arcade and bowling alley.

I was not feeling very well on the day that we went to the upscale store. I thought that An could get a cab for me and send me on my way. But, he came along because he said I would not be able to explain where we were staying - at the house on the Hem alley.

Two, Part 2.

Notes 2 - Part 2 My granddaughter, daughter-in-law and her sister-in-law and niece came for a short visit. Of course, we all held the baby. She has this wide-eyed look. Travis kept saying "She doesn't blink!" And she didn't blink much. She is now about 6 months old and very happy to be held by others, which was nice.

Saturday another relative of my son-in-law came in from France and that evening we left for Tuy Hoa, a small town on the ocean - north east of Saigon. We went in a bus that had bunks rather than chairs. There were 3 rows across and 2 levels high. Each seat or sleeping area was a little raised under the head so that the person's feet in back of the seat could slide under the person in front. The trip took about 11 hours - from about 7:30 pm to 6:30 am. Each person had their own pillow and blanket. Hang brought Vietnamese sandwiches and fruit and drinks that we ate.

We were driving along the coast at daybreak. It reminded me of the North Shore with rocky hills on one side and the ocean on the other. At one point the road was so narrow we had to take turns driving on it. We saw small rice fields - few people in the fields, only one buffalo, a dog and small horse running in a front yard, houses tucked into small areas along the road.

The town of Tuy Hoa is really not small, but it is so much smaller than Saigon. The roads are much wider and there is much less traffic so you don't hear all the honking. In addition, there are more bikers and people walking. And a few carts pulled by oxen or cows have clogged by.

An's parents' house is where we are staying, It is between two hotels, and you might as well call this a hotel, too, because of the people coming and going and staying here. The first floor has a front area for motorbikes to park, then a sitting area with very nice wood chairs and a hammock, then beautiful curved stairway, and the kitchen with large table in the back. The kitchen here, like the Hem alley house, has nice wood cupboards and granite counters. My bedroom is on the second floor in an a/c area. There is another living area past my room that they put foam pads on so the kids could sit and play game, listen to music and then sleep on last night.

Yesterday afternoon we walked about 4 blocks to the ocean. Only Travis got in the water, while the other 10 of us watched. The water was a little cold so when it's really hot it would feel good.

Yes, there are beggars here particularly at the open markets. The upscale department store didn't have beggars outside. There are also people selling lottery tickets. They are quite persistent!

Here in Tuy Hoa I feel that I am more of an oddity. I have not seen any other Caucasians. Children often say hello to me. Adults often look twice when they see me. I did not feel so conspicuous in Saigon.

Yesterday most of us went to the new amusement park where they have rides and swimming pools. The first pool we saw was a form of a "wave" pool. Travis and cousin Mike (17) got in right away. An soon joined them. They swam toward the back and the next thing we knew An was yelling for help. Brother Thuc and Grandpa (73) and I ran into the water. I went to the only floating thing I could see. Thuc (30) got out to An very quickly and relieved him. There was a very strong undertow that An said was so strong he could not stand up. Travis had tried swimming diagonally across it - I had earlier told him about ocean undertows and he was trying to follow my instructions. Grandpa ended up losing a toe nail and was taken to the hospital - and released right away. Thuc gave the owner an earful. Bottom line, we almost lost Travis and maybe An. Hang was shaking and in tears.

For me it was so unreal. The pool had no life guards, no ladders out, no rescue apparatus, no depth markings and no emergency off switch. And, I don't think the pool was built right as it was making angry waves in one corner instead of rolling breakers. I do not think we will swim again while we are at Tuy Hoa.

We (4 females) went and had our hair washed two days ago. While I was waiting a truck backed into the alley across the street and unloaded about 10 pigs. On the way home we saw a very large snake being held by two people on the back of a truck. They had a loud speaker apparently advertising a show and they were being followed by people on bikes and motorbikes. A few blocks later we saw two monkeys in the back of a truck being advertised the same way. And then on the way to the swimming pool there were three ox carts in a row coming down the main road. They go by the house once in a while, too.

Three.

We are now in Nha Trang. 24+ of us drove down from Tuy Hoa in 3 vans - about a three hour drive. I have never seen so many cattle and oxen. All colors (a white grey, warm brown, dark grey) and so many sizes (calves to the big bulls). I can't tell the difference between a young oxen and a young steer. We were on highways 1 and 1A, the main highway that runs north and south. At times the road was a nice two lanes, other times where it was more hilly and road would be more narrow. We had to slow down for a herd of goats in the road and a small herd of cattle. There were three buses and trucks with innards on the road in the hilly section; people were working on them right there.

The Miss Universe 2008 pageant is here in Nha Trang this year - this week. The hotels are full and there is a lot of advertising for the pageant. It is taking place at the Diamond Bay resort, a short distance north of Nha Trang. Hang and some of the relatives her age have tickets to the final event next week.

Last night we were guests at the home of An's sister Thuy (twee). She and her husband, Sy (see), just took turns staying in the U.S. and helping at the Orchid Restaurant. When Thuy was in the U.S. their house was remodeled - completely torn down and rebuilt. The house, like most here, is one room wide and two deep. The first floor has a general living area (night-time motorcycle parking) and kitchen. The second floor has a

living area with stereo, etc. The next floors have bedrooms - they have two sons. The top floor, the fifth floor, has another kitchen and an unenclosed area that has a wonderful breeze and a great view of the city.

The food last night was over-whelming. I think there were seven courses: fish, beef, chicken, soups, French bread, vegetables and fruit. The alcohol was Heineken beer and Hennessy cognac (a family tradition), and the non-alcoholic was Coke. The preferred beer is Heineken. Coke is bottled here and tasted different, but is just fine if you are not a Coke aficionado. For some reason there is not much advertising for Coke, but a lot more for Pepsi.

The day before yesterday we took a taxi bus ride to some waterfalls about an hour's drive away. We were in a new bus of some sort - it had the Apple logo on the front - whatever that meant! The falls have pools you can sit in or swim in - looked much like some of the waterfalls on the North Shore. Except, the water was warmer. There were 28 of us, I think. They brought food, a charcoal grill, cartons of beer and Coke, and a big jug of water. It was a normal noon-day meal, except we were on the side of the waterfalls. The guys spread a tarp on a rock in the falls and commenced to play cards (their version of Poker). People exchanged places during the game as they ate and swam between turns. A lot of beer was drunk - primarily by my son-in-law and the men his age. Photographers were wandering around wanting to take your picture. A group of young women were there for a while posing - they were perhaps from France?

This area had been open and free until a few years ago. Now they have small electric open trams that take you to the falls. When we left one of the trams was running out of juice and barely made it over the hill. They have added some concrete rocks. There is an interesting contrivance that bangs rocks together using water to run it. So there is a constant bonging in the background. At any rate, it reminds me of the Apple River in Wisconsin that used to be free and a do-it-yourself amusement water ride. This too is now commercialized. They are planting flowers, adding statues, etc.

The drive to the water falls was interesting in that we started out in Nha Trang with the substantial houses; gradually the housing (and the road) got poorer and poorer. Here in town you usually see motorcycles parked by the houses. The front of the house has a small ramp that you can use to drive your motorcycle up and then into the house. The houses further out didn't have those ramps and I didn't see any motorcycles. The area is fairly hilly and there were crops planted going up hills that you would not normally plant. The corn would obviously have to be hand picked. In the gully or ditch along the road there were rice paddies - they used the natural water. Every 50 to 100 feet there would be an earthen dam and then another rice paddy. They could control the water using those dams.

The family I am visiting has relatives from Viet Nam, the U.S. and France. There are about 8 from France - 2

speaking some English and the rest only French and Vietnamese. Those of us from the U.S. speak Vietnamese (very, very little on my part) and English. The relatives in Viet Nam only speak Vietnamese with the exception of "Mike" and "Chez" who are learning English in school. Sometimes I know what is being said, but usually not. It can get very interesting if you want information; I might have three people translating my question and trying to come up with an answer. We use a lot of gestures!

The place where we are staying is the "Ba Tu" hotel which is a family hotel. We have many of the rooms, but there are also paying guests in a few of the rooms. The hotel is two blocks from the ocean and in an area full of hotels. Taxis are continually on the street picking up and delivering people. My room is on the third floor and has a small balcony where I can sit (when it's cooler) and watch the street.

Across from the hotel someone is building a tall building so during rather normal work hours they are over there pounding away. I can't really figure out what they are nailing as the structure is mainly concrete. They are up about six floors; it's double wide. This building is loosely wrapped in netting, I suppose to catch debris. Some of the buildings use a red, white and blue fabric to wrap the construction; it looks like a huge bed sheet wrapped around the building.

Four.

I forgot to tell about a situation one night in Tuy Hoa, the second town we visited. One evening most of us walked down the street – for more food. Street vendors put up shop in areas where there aren't houses – such as along side a rice paddy. The vendor where we stopped was selling snails, roasted spring roll wraps and Heineken beer. So that is what we ordered. We were given small plastic stools to sit on and the table was not much bigger than a kindergarten table. We hadn't been there long when someone came down the street saying that the police were checking vendor licenses. Of course, none of the vendors had a license. There was a mad rush to carry the unprepared food, drinks and ice, and the hot charcoal stoves across the street. The bushes in the center island were full of vendors and their wares. A little while later some else came by and said it was a false alarm and the vendors all returned to their spot on the street.

Someone asked where we should put the empty shells. We were told to drop them on the sidewalk.

This part of Tuy Hoa will soon be developed into a small inland lake. For now there are rice fields and squatters living in very ramshackle housing on the edge of the road.

Various things are used for “napkins.” Sometimes rolls of toilet paper are put on the table; the paper is a smaller width than in the U.S. and sort of a crepe type of paper. Sometimes a box of “Kleenex” is put on the table. One brand was labeled “Bless You!” The sidewalk vendors might give you nothing or put out small squares of paper. Nicer places will give each person a damp wash cloth sealed in a plastic wrap. The kids got a kick out of popping the plastic wraps.

In Tuy Hoa we visited the Nguyen family sites in the cemetery. There were weeds to be cleaned up; a group of boys showed up to help. After cleaning the area, some of the family burned incense, burned “lucky” money (U.S. on one side and Vietnamese on the other), and gifts of candy and fruit were left. There were two sites we visited. When we left the boys came to be paid. Hang paid the younger boys because they had done all the work. Just as we were getting in the car to leave two of the young boys came all sad faced. They had the candy in their hands, but the money had been taken by the oldest boy. So, they were paid some more and told to go home.

One morning in Tuy Hoa Travis, Mike and I were taken on a tour to a rice field and to see the boats in the harbor. After walking about three blocks Travis said he was hot and wanted to take a taxi! We wound through a neighborhood where An had grown up, going through porches and a small market to the harbor. The harbor would have been where An and his uncles and cousins

left when they escaped. We also saw the house where An lived as a young child. The house was taken over by the government and is being used as a maternity ward. We went back stopping at a relative's house for a cold drink. Travis put ice on his head because he was so hot. And we did take a taxi home.

Another day in Tuy Hoa we went to a beach north of the town, a place where An and his family went when he was growing up. The beach was clean, but there were a few plastic bags floating in the water. Families have set up large covered areas with tables and beach chairs and serve a limited menu and cold drinks. There were two men with oxen hauling sand from the beach. Another group of men came by in a contraption that looked like it could have been a jeep at one time.

The family celebrated An's mother's 70th birthday. The set up was much like a wedding, observed Travis – outside tent, tables with table cloths, fans to keep us cool, drinks and lots of food. However, we didn't clink glasses or dance. Each family did present flowers and a gift to An's mother.

While we were in Nha Trang, the third city we visited, we took cable cars to an island in the harbor to VinPearl, a Disney-like amusement park. The owners are Vietnamese and Ukrainian. The kids went on some of the water slides and then went on a Midway-type ride. It didn't finish its normal cycle, stopping halfway up and

then coming back down. When it stopped Mike rushed off and threw up in the bushes!

Another day in Nha Trang we hired a van to take some of us on a tour – all the kids, me, and an adult cousin. We went to two pagodas, the Bao Dai's summer house, a promontory that has an old fairy tale connected with it, a discothèque, and the oceanographic museum.

All the time we were eating and eating – various types of noodles, soups, rice, chicken, pork, all kinds of sea food with a variety of appropriate seasonings.

A law was passed not too long ago that adults on motorcycles have to wear helmets. So people have been creative as helmets can look like a bowler, an army helmet (probably is), cap, or even a sunhat with a wide brim. To go with that many of the women cover themselves completely so that they don't get exposed to the sun. They wear socks and long sleeved gloves and a face mask that is more than just a bad-air mask.

We left Nha Trang after about a week. We took a sleeper bus again, this time making the trip during the day, from Nha Trang to Saigon. My bunk space was on the top right behind the driver. Very interesting and sometimes scary. One time the bus driver pulled into the oncoming lane to pass another vehicle and coming at us was a truck. If we'd been going 60 mph we would have had a head-on crash. Our driver pulled over pushing a car off the road, from what I could tell. He slowed down

and eventually stopped. A short while later a car came by with someone hanging out the front window yelling. Our driver slowly pulled back on the road and kept way behind that car. Another time, the on-coming truck pulled over onto the shoulder so the bus could continue in the wrong way lane. I tried to keep my comments quiet as I didn't want to disrupt the driver! The drivers have some signals that they use – blinking lights and hand signals to indicate if there is a speed trap and I think to even indicate who can take the road. I didn't sleep for all the action and from watching all the scenery.

From Saigon we took a day trip to the area in the Me Kong delta where Hang lived from about age 3 to 10. We drove 2+ hours to a city where we boarded a small wooden boat which took us up one of the canals. The family has fruit trees so we toured the orchards and ate fruit. And, we had another many course meal at noon. This family has a small cemetery in their back yard with a small covered pavilion and enclosed graves.

An and Hang threw a party on a boat in Saigon to celebrate their 16th Wedding anniversary. Good food, white table clothes and a variety of entertainment including a fire dancer and a magician.

I took a taxi to Tay Ninh to visit Linh and granddaughter Kim for two days. The town is about 60 miles from Saigon, but it took two hours to get there. Linh took me on a motorcycle ride in the evening to get a fruit drink. Sunday we took the tram up Black Lady Mountain and

rode the slide down. At noon she took me to the Cao Dai Holy See to observe a service. She knew people so we stayed and visited a little. The Cao Dai religion incorporates a combination of Sun Yat-Sen, Victor Hugo, a Vietnamese poet and even Jesus. That afternoon Linh and Kim rode with me back to Saigon so we could have a little longer visit. While I was there we watched Kim learning to crawl and she drank water from my cup. She's a real cute chubby baby who gets a lot of attention from aunts and uncles.

Animals. The dogs are usually small or even toy size. I saw a few Shepherd mixes and the two Rottweilers in Nha Trang belonged to a dive shop owner who was not Vietnamese. Somehow the dogs learn to stay in their small sidewalk section and don't venture into traffic. Some of the dogs are used as guard dogs as they are kept in an area inside the front of the house. In the farming communities there appeared to be more dogs. I saw very few cats and most were quite small. There were pigeons in Saigon, a few sparrow like birds and another similar sized bird with darker markings. I saw a few butterflies, but not many. All of the houses had geckoes. I had one in my bedroom in Saigon. Every once in a while he'd do a little chatter kind of noise. There were hens and roosters through much of the country. The coastal areas had more oxen while the area between Saigon and northwest to Tay Ninh had a lot of water buffalo.

I didn't take pictures of:

- Two oxen tethered in the shade of an Internet shop.
- Cattle grazing along and among life-sized zoo animals like giraffes and zebras.
- Trash on the west side of Highway 1. I finally figured out that the colorful stuff on the right side of the road was trash. The prevailing wind from the ocean blew all of the trash over the road to the west side of the road. In some places between Nha Trang and Saigon it was pretty bad.
- One evening we drove by a Christian church that was lit with neon lights along the roof line, around the cross and along the door arch. It was quite simple and actually quite effective.
- The road distance markers are like the ones you would see in "Mother Goose" – the rounded top stone painted in red and white. The only way I could determine where we were on the highway was by watching those stones so I would know the next town coming up. I never did figure out how drivers knew what the speed limit was.
- Two houses had dish washers – Electrolux washers. Grandpa Nguyen had one in Tuy Hoa which he ordered in Saigon and had to install himself. They were still figuring out how to use it. And, apparently it is the only one in town!
- Some houses had toilets that had two flush options – 3 Liters or 6 Liters!
- The ice delivery man had a small delivery truck that had ice blocks loaded in the back; he was standing on

the blocks of ice as he selected blocks to pull out. Who knows where his shoes had been!

References.

One of the people from France bought me the book "Catfish and Mandela" by Andrew X. Pham. He writes about returning to Viet Nam and his well-written descriptions of scenes were some of the scenes that we saw. She also bought me the book "The Girl in the Picture," the story of the girl running down the road with no clothes on after a napalm attack. That story takes place in the area around Tay Ninh.

Other.....

- Ford has a plant in Hanoi that manufactures the Ford Everest SUV; we had a borrowed one to use. The speedometer only had Km/ph.
- The land along the coast (Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang) was sandy so the farms were more hard-scrabble. The better farming land was in Tay Ninh and, of course, in the Mekong Delta. The farms along the coast had oxen for work animals and some would have small herds of cattle. The water buffalo were in the area near Tay Ninh, north of Saigon.
- There were no Harley Davidson motorcycles – they would have been too big for some of the streets. The motorcycles were all about the same size, a Honda or Yamaha, etc.
- The children begging were not necessarily homeless or orphans. Some families take their children to a

neighboring town to an area where begging would get them good money.

- All of the cars seemed really new. I only saw one older car, a Honda, that had rust and some wear and tear. I have no idea what has happened to the old vehicles. Many of the cars are owned by corporations for their employees to use; not many people own their own car.
- The mosquitoes in Viet Nam are very small and don't usually make their humming sound. But the welt they leave is as large as the ones the Minnesota mosquitoes leave!
- Showers are usually flexible hoses mounted on the wall with hot water from a small tank on the bathroom wall. Water pressure is usually pretty low. One bathroom had a pail and bucket arrangement because the bath hose was not mounted on the wall.

Pictures on www.Joan-Styve.net