

VIET-NAM

1966

Elected in July 1964, the Committee of twelve members carries on in the third and last year of its term. The members of the Committee continue steadily the Theosophical work and I am glad to mention here these workers.

At the end of this third consecutive term the General Secretary decided not to stand for re-election on December 25th, 1966. She withdraws to offer an opportunity to other eager workers.

In a country where people have to fight for their life and their freedom, it is sometimes difficult to arouse interest in abstract Theosophy. Nevertheless, we try to diffuse Theosophy as wide as possible and to realize some social welfare work.

Theosophical Diffusion.—Weekly lectures are given at the Headquarters. Basic knowledge and ethical teaching form the subjects. The public is interested when Theosophy deals with actual problems of living and offers some adequate answers.

At the request of earnest students, Mrs. Nguyen-thi-Hai (with the collaboration of Mr. F. Mylne) has formed a study group on *A Study in Consciousness*

by Annie Besant. The study continues steadily after two years of laborious activity. Now we have another study class on *The Masters and the Path* by C. W. Leadbeater. This course is conducted by Mr. Nguyen Huu Kiet. Many members and sympathizers show interest in these studies.

Some of the Theosophical Lodges at Saigon contribute with success to the diffusion by ways of public talks, members' meetings and the publication of pamphlets, most of which are translations from Theosophical literature.

Meanwhile, Theosophical study has taken a new step with *The Secret Doctrine* study class. It is organized each Sunday at the Headquarters and is the first of that kind. Materials for study are the original works of Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, through translations in French and Vietnamese. Mrs. Nguyen-thi-Hai gives life to the study with the knowledge she has acquired when visiting many study classes abroad, specially in Australia.

Theosophical Welfare Work.—In a country where troubles of warfare have weakened its life for 20 years, every

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citizen has but one desire: to stop the bleeding wounds. In our field, we try, each year, to raise properly about one hundred orphans, victims of war, flood and poverty.

With the increasing cost of living, with the continuous flow of misery, the Theosophical Orphanage has to meet the highest expenses since its foundation in 1953. During the year under report, we have to cover the total expenses of more than one million VN piastres. This does not include the cost of milk, baby food, clothes, bed clothes, toys and necessary materials given by UNICEF, the Catholic Relief, the Government's Social Service and other civilian and military welfare groups in Saigon. From time to time, we also receive some donations from the Welfare Service in Australia.

We are pleased to mention the steady enthusiasm of the devoted staff of the Orphanage. Mrs. Vu thi Dung, Director and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Vien, Manager, are always ready to give loving care to the orphans. They also show their ability in meeting higher and higher expenses without deficit. They deserve the praise of the Section.

The feminine working class in Saigon is not so bad as some superficial foreigners have reported. Many of them have the courage to earn an honest living, while temptation of an easy life is not scarce. For example, nearly one hundred young girls, living near the Headquarters of the Section, have nightly attended our two sewing classes. Assisted by an instructor from the Ministry of Works Apprenticeship Service, every good pupil is granted a diploma of aptitude at the end of her study. These workers can find easily a good job. Our social activity is like an order of service which constitutes a testimony of Theosophical fraternity.

Membership.—As communications with remote places become more and more

difficult, we have lost contact with numerous members. Work in Lodges in the provinces is scanty as in previous years, so the number of incoming members is only 42. The best results come from various active Lodges in Saigon.

With one resignation, one death and 34 lapsings, the total membership for the year under report is now 732, an increase of 8.

When it is possible, particularly during commemorative meetings such as Founder's Day, White Lotus Day and at the Annual Convention, we are able to come into close contact with members. We exchange points of views about Theosophy, arousing enthusiasm for Theosophical ideals and giving means to future capable and devoted workers.

A good number of members like to attend fraternal meetings organized at the Headquarters at the end of each month. There are also sessions for common meditation and discussion which always end in a happy vegetarian meal. It is the most joyful meeting of the month.

For the welfare of the members who want to take a rest or a spiritual retreat, we have established a Theosophical centre at Dalat (on the mountain). At this centre, members can enjoy cool weather, healthy air, quiet atmosphere. This centre is a contribution of numerous members who give funds to build an apartment. Some of the furniture comes from the most welcome help of the Theosophical Order of Service in Australia. It also gathers together several houses of members who wish to make a long stay or to live there.

Lodges.—Most of the active Lodges form study groups. This is most necessary because study and discussion help towards a better understanding of Theosophy.

Kiem Ai Lodge takes as base *In the Outer Court* by Annie Besant; Phung Su Lodge has *Practical Theosophy* by C. Jinarajadāsa; the other Lodges: Tu-Bi, Minch

Triet, Duoi Chon Thay and Long Xuyen focus their aims on *Talks on the Path of Occultism, Vol. I, At the Feet of the Master* by A. Besant and C.W. Leadbeater.

The Lodges Kiem Ai (at Saigon) and Chon Ly (at Hue, Central Viet-Nam), have organized regular meetings for public talks.

Some publications are issued by various Lodges, such as: *Anh Dao* by Lodge Kiem Ai, *An Giang* by Lodge An Giang, Lodge Tu Bi, with the contribution of various members, has published Vietnamese translations of *In His Name* and *Flowers and Gardens* by C. Jinarājadāsa and *On the Threshold* by a Disciple. Booklets on basic Theosophy that come from public talks are also put in circulation by devoted workers to help sympathizers who wish to get some glimpses of Theosophy.

Conclusion.—In closing this last report after nine years in the office of General Secretary, I wish to express here my gratitude to our President Mr. N. Sri

Ram, to Miss Katherine A. Beechey, to Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Hodson, to Miss Helen V. Zahara and to all my colleagues who have encouraged, inspired and helped me in my work. From many points of view, my responsibility was so great that I feel that if left alone I would have not been able to carry it. I am also thankful to all my co-workers, especially Mr. Nguyen van Huan and Mr. Francois Mylne, who have been devoted to Theosophical ideals and were willing to share with me the responsibility in making fraternity warmer and Theosophy brighter in the hearts and minds of my fellow-members and my compatriots.

My last reverence goes to the Masters of the Wisdom, who, since the Foundation of the Society, have promised that as long as we are trustful and unselfish in the Theosophical work, Their help will never fail us.

NGUYEN-THI-HAI,
General Secretary.

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