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NEWS

The newsletter of Vietnam and Friends
No.5, 1st April 2012



Dear friends



Dear friends

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Dear friends,

We are delighted to see you again in Newsletter No.5 of the VAF. Each newsletter is an opportunity for us to talk about all the various and recent activities that are taking place here.

After long holidays for the Lunar New Year, all daily activities returned to normal routine. A new year with new hopes and a new project encourages us to work harder. In Hanoi, spring has gradually given way to summer. The northeast monsoon has finally passed and the first rays of summer have arrived. April is one of the nicest months of the year. The weather is very beautiful. You can clearly feel the transition between the two seasons. The air is fresh and many species of colorful flowers bloom brilliantly. Specifically, April in Vietnam is characterized by pure white lilies. Many merchants are selling lilies in the streets and bring many memories for everyone. Summer is coming up, which means that many exciting activities are going to start especially for students.

For two months, VAF has also a lot of activities. The teaching activities at the Nguyen Dinh Chieu Blind School are still continuing. In the framework of the SOB project, SOB and VAF has organized a picnic with the children to Bat Trang, a famous pottery village. The trip was very interesting. VAF also responded to Earth Hour in Hanoi as well as in other cities in the world. In particular, the VAF has spent so much effort for MICC project. The preparation has almost been completed, both teams are eager to begin a journey full of surprises.

In this newsletter, we will continue to meet Mr. Huu Ngoc with an article about rain in Viet Nam. You will know more about relation between climate and Vietnamese culture. This article will satisfy your curiosity.

Let VAF share with everyone.

Best regards,

Dang The Lam 🌈

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Activities



Earth Hour 2012

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Earth Hour 2012

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Earth Hour now has become a familiar annual event in Vietnam. On the 31st of March, together with many major cities in around the world, Hanoi and other cities of Vietnam such as Hoi An, Ho Chi Minh City have organized Earth Hour event.

Earth Hour event attracted great attention of the people and the media in Vietnam. The Vietnamese, and especially the youngster were eager for the event months before it took place for months. Many activities took place in response to Earth Hour. Many young students were involved in the volunteer's team program. Many students had exciting activities such as: cycling, making flyers or leaflets to help people understand and participate in this program. Joining Earth Hour is a one way to express one's understanding about environmental protection of each person.

The Earth Hour event was held on 8:30 pm on the 31st of March in the 19th August square before the Opera House. The Square is full of people. In For an hour, the lights were turned off and the youngster had a great time together with lots of fun activities. The bustling groups sang together and also the couples had unforgettable memories. Many well-known singers also participated in the program, which made the atmosphere very lively. People held or were holding hands and sang or were singing aloud. At this moment, everybody felt great and excited. Enjoyed the moment very much

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VAF's members also joined join with Earth Hour in Hanoi. They Not only just participate in organized the events but also actively participated with actions everyday. Through VAF projects, volunteers also helped the children understand more about the practical meaning of those activities. With very simple actions, everyone can consciously protect the Earth and make our life become much better. 🌟

Preparation for MICC Project

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Preparation for MICC Project

After that, VAF participated to the meeting to prepare plan for MICC in Berlin in early January; we spent a lot of time and put a lot of effort to have the best preparation for this project.

The selection process involved that the students union was carried out fairly and thoroughly. Eight students from different schools from Hanoi were selected over the challenge round. The participants were chosen according to find a qualification and overcame a lot of different challenges. Even though the students' schedule was very tight, every participant managed their time to get ready and be the best. The students worked very hard on the theme that was given by the organizers and went deeper into the subject by working on every aspect of it.

VAF held meetings with the group to learn more about the MICC project. We watched the short film about the course that took place during the premises of MICC.

The children were very excited because of the course style, and especially about the trial with the role-playing.

All the students were very excited but also very stressed out as it was the very first time they are participating in a trip to Europe. VAF also met the students' parents in order to have the students well prepare.

The trip will certainly be an opportunity for cultural exchanges with other delegations from many countries around the world. And in order to introduce Vietnamese culture to other friends from different countries, the students prepared a lot of activities

All preparations are now completed and the members are ready to take on the plane. Let's wish for VAF members who are participating at MICC that they will take a successful and fun trip. 🌟

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A Trip to Bat Trang village with children in SOB project.

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A Trip to Bat Trang village with children in SOB project.

In recent times, SOB projects is continuing with many activities. In the framework of the project, SOB and VAF organized for the children to participate a picnic in the Bat Trang village. Bat Trang is a famous traditional handicraft village in Vietnam that specializes in making pottery. In Bat Trang, pottery has a few hundred years ago and now have applied even more advanced technology but this village still retains the traditional method of making pottery. Bat Trang pottery has become a famous figure culture of Vietnam and attracts many international tourists.

The volunteers and the children are eagerly for waiting this trip. At Bat Trang village, the children not only learn about the process of making a product but also they can make pottery by themselves. The children had been guided each stage of making a product such as making soil, baked, painted and glazed products by Bat Trang artisans. Each child and all the international volunteers who first came here felt very excited to be involved in the process of making pottery. 🌟

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Rain

Huu Ngoc



Rain

Huu Ngoc



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Việt Nam is a country of rain. The hydro-meteorological gauge varies between 80 and 100 degrees. There are two distinct seasons in the year- the dry and cold season and the rainy and hot season, which correspond to the monsoon periods of the Northeast and the Southeast. The Northeast monsoon brings cold and rain while the Southeast monsoon brings warmth and thundershowers, often typhoons. The Cloudy Pass (Đèo Hải Vân) which separates Thừa Thiên Huế from Quảng Nam constitutes an important climatic barrier; the Northeast monsoon is stopped there by the high ranges of mountains so that the provinces south of the pass have the tropical climate of the south while the north is subject to the subtropical climate.

Rain is an important factor in the life of a rice-growing people like the Vietnamese.

No surprise then that the Vietnamese folklore has been haunted by rain and the phenomena that accompany it: clouds, lightning and thunder.

First, popular beliefs dating from time immemorial are studied with rain-related stories. It is even believed that the dragon, the fabulous animal which watered rice fields with its waterspouts, came from its prototype, the crocodile or the crested serpent (thuồng luồng) in the swamps of Southeast Asia of which Viet Nam is a part.

Together with the dragon, the very old cult of fertility also honours the goddesses of Rain, Cloud, Lighting and Thunder which were to be annexed by the Buddhist Olympia. The introduction of Confucianism has undoubtedly regulated this cult by solemn ceremonies including the invocation of rain (lễ cầu đảo) in dry years.

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Numerous proverbs and popular songs refer to rain. The people have their own meteorological concerning rain.

Mưa chẳng quá Ngọ, gió chẳng quá Mùi.
(The rain does not last beyond midday, there will always be a lull at 3 o'clock in the afternoon);



*Mưa tháng ba, hoa đất
Mưa tháng bảy bẻ gãy cành thơm
Mưa tháng tám, máu rồng
Mưa tháng tư, hư đất
Mưa dầm lâu cũng lụt*

(Rains in the third lunar month make the soil blossom with bountiful crops Rains in the seventh lunar month accompanied with violent winds break branches of canariun The rains of the eight lunar month are as beneficial to the rice fields as the blood of the dragon Rains in the fourth lunar month spoils the summer crop Prolonged rains, even if they are not very heavy showers, finally cause inundation)

People distinguish two kinds of special rain: mưa rươi (the Nereid rain) and Ngâu rain. The former is characterized by showers that fall toward the ninth and 10th lunar months and announce the season of nereids, the edible white worm. The Ngâu rain is characterized by waves of long lasting showers which fall during the seventh lunar month. According to a Chinese legend, Chức Nữ, a heavenly princess, fell in love with cowherd Ngưu Lang. Angered, the gods separated them but allowed them to meet once each year, in the seventh month, on a bridge of the Silver River (Milky way) formed by crows aligned side by side. The tears which they shed then fell down in the form of rain. Vợ chồng Ngâu (the Ngâu couple) designates a married couple who constantly live far from each other.

There is also a kind of rain called Mưa bóng mây (rain caused by the shade of a cloud) – the fine, passing autumn rain. Hence the phrase khóc như mưa bóng mây, weep very little like a mưa bóng mây. Numerous proverbs refer to rain to speak of human behavior and moods. Thus, “ mưa lúc nào mát mặt lúc đấy” (whenever the rain falls it always refreshes the face, or, for a poor person all donation is welcome); “ mưa thì mưa cho khắp” (if it rains let water fall everywhere, or , favours should be dispensed to everybody). In the literary language, mây mưa (cloud and rain) may mean copulation or a fit of temper. 🌈