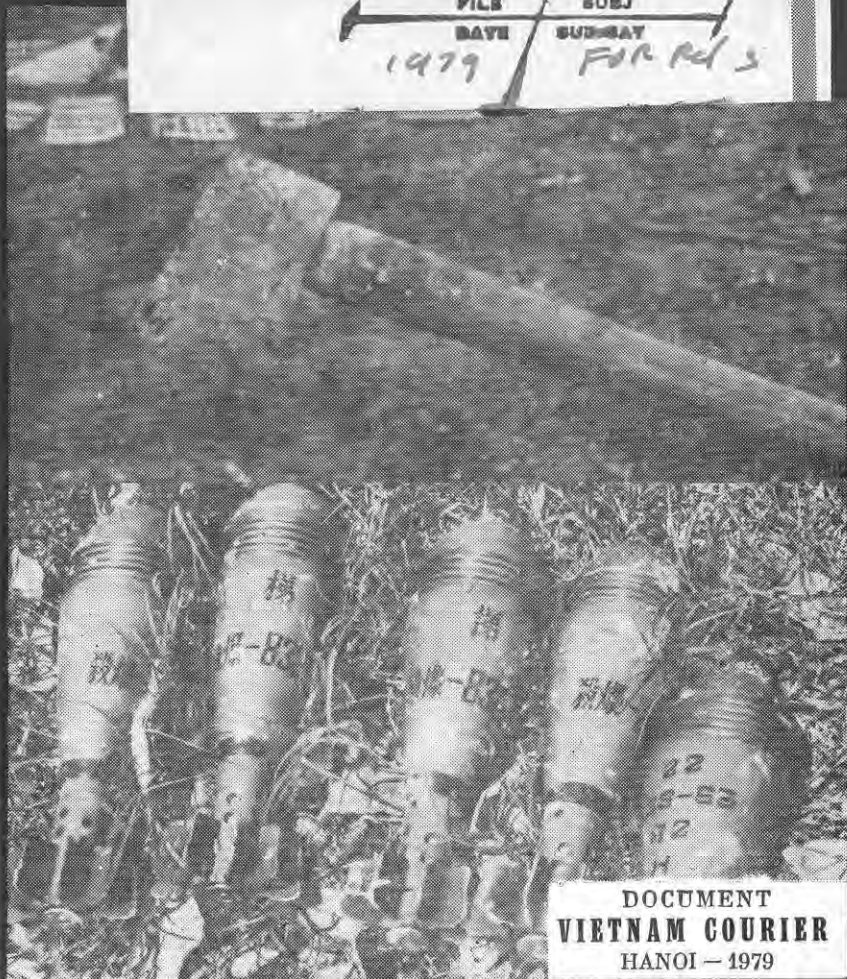


# CHINESE WAR CRIMES in Vietnam

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**TO:**

# **CHINESE WAR CRIMES IN VIETNAM**

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## **A MONTH OF EXPLOITS OF THE GREAT ARMY OF CRIME**

During the US war of destruction against North Vietnam from 1965 to 1972, Peking proclaimed itself many times as a "reliable rear area" for Vietnam. Yet, more than once, it also repeated the ambiguous statement: "Leave us alone and we'll leave you alone. If you attack us, we'll attack you."

To an untrained ear, the repeated, formularized words uttered by the Chinese leaders and propaganda may sound bombastic and devoid of any real meaning. But properly decoded, as Washington took pains to do, they are only too clear. When the US Air Forces escalated the war from the 17 parallel to the northern mountain areas they savagely bombarded the remotest areas, including Dien Bien Phu. Yet, short of the Chinese border, they left a sufficient margin to assure the Chinese leaders.

Then, on 17 February 1979, Peking threw off its mask, and turned loose its troops along the whole 1,460 km of the border with Vietnam. It said it was conducting defensive counter-attacks with border forces. But the fact was that the attacks involved as many as eleven army corps and many unattached divisions, totalling 600,000 troops, together with

hundreds of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, and thousands of pieces of artillery. This army, huge in number and equipment, was however checked in its advance to the Red River delta. It laid waste to an area of 10,000 square kilometres over the six border provinces of Quang Ninh, Lang Son, Cao Bang, Ha Tuyen, Hoang Lien Son and Lai Chau — the very area spared by the US Air Forces in return for Peking's tacit complicity. In the month from 17 February to 16 March, the Chinese "People's Liberation Army" completed the large-scale destruction that the US imperialists left unfinished seven years ago.

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A soldier of the Chinese Army Corps 41, captured in Cao Bang on 23 February 1979, confessed: "We saw two Vietnamese children. They were cutting across a field towards the forest. One of them was about eight years old and the other about four. One of my mates pointed his gun at the kids, but was stopped by the unit's political commissar. 'Comrade Li Chun,' the commissar said, 'Do you hate the little Vietnamese hegemonists?' 'Yes, I do,' my mate answered. The commissar made a gesture, and Li Chun ran after the kids. He stood them face to face and then bayoneted them to death."

What was characteristic of the Chinese troops was their utter cruelty. Their barbarity was on a medieval scale and the means they used were modern.

Their instruments of destruction were of a wide variety — 130 mm, 122 mm and 75 mm cannons, mortars of all calibres, twelve-barrel H.12 rocket launchers, conventional infantry weapons, flame-throwers, grenades, mines, TNT charges, bayonets, daggers, knives, etc. Everywhere they attacked with utter brutality, levelling large areas, gunning down whole groups of refugees, grenading shelters, dynamiting caves containing hundreds of people. And, to remove all evidence, they took care to destroy their victims' bodies with TNT or napalm.

There were innumerable examples of Chinese barbarity, many were witnessed in the very first days of hostilities.

At dawn on 17 February, a bus was leaving Lang Son for Cao Loc. At Dong Dang, it was hit by a cannon shell. As the forty passengers were stumbling out, they were gunned down by the invading Chinese troops. An ambulance met the same fate at the same place at around 10 a.m. The car, number plate 12A-04-25, belonging to Lang Son provincial hospital, rushed to the aid of the wounded, but all three occupants — the driver, a woman doctor called Nguyen Thu Thuy, and a nurse called Nguyen Thi Sam — were shot dead by Chinese troops. In the provincial town of Lao Cai, close to the Chinese province of Yunnan, the aggressors levelled the hospital and killed all those staff and patients who were unable to escape.

Many Chinese units, guided by traitorous Vietnamese of Chinese origin, were disguised as Vietnamese soldiers, border guards, lumberjacks or mili-

tia. They cut across the jungle and made surprise attacks on many State farms and villages, killing with utter indifference. At many lumber sites in Quang Ninh, Lang Son, Cao Bang and Hoang Lien Son provinces, male workers were killed straight away, while the women were raped before being killed or taken to China. Many families were almost completely wiped out. The aggressors killed six of the seven members of the family of Mr Nong Viet Quan — a Nung national from Bao Lam commune, Van Lang district, Lang Son. His mother was killed by a shrapnel, his father shot dead when Chinese troops entered the commune, and his wife and three children were massacred in a nearby mountain cave, by machine-gun fire and grenades. In Thanh Loa commune, Cao Loc district, the aggressors pushed their victims — mostly women, children and old people — into ponds and then shot them down.

Mass killings were committed in many other places. Refugees in a ravine near the Cao Lau lumber site, Cao Loc district, were burnt to death with flame-throwers. It is impossible to establish how many they were. Only twenty people survived a massacre in a field near Na Rua, a short distance from Cao Bang town. They had been in a group of 283 refugees from the Pac Bo area where President Ho Chi Minh set up the revolutionary headquarters in 1941. Forty-three bodies of women and children were discovered at Tong Chup hamlet, Hung Dao commune, Hoa An district, Cao Bang. The victims had their heads smashed in or their bellies slit open. And so on.



If we take a look at some of these cases, the mentality of their perpetrators becomes evident. In Lai Chau, the murderers smashed the heads of children against rocks or trees. A child in Phuc Hoa district, Cao Bang, was dismembered and left to bleed to death. Traps were made by placing mines and grenades under corpses. Wells and foodstuffs were poisoned.

The crimes against the Vietnamese people perpetrated by the Chinese "People's Liberation Army" are comparable only to similar "exploits" by the "Khmer Rouge" army which has just been crushed under the wheel of history. It is easy to discover the ideological similarity of these two self-styled revolutionary armies.

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The CPLA, before becoming an army of repression and an instrument of the Chinese expansionists, had a glorious historical achievement. Its policy of "living off the land" was decisive for the Chinese revolutionary war. But when they use it in Vietnam today, the policy is reduced to the "war to feed war" policy once practised by the Japanese fascists in China.

Liu Fei, 23, was a tank driver of Division 80. He was taken prisoner near Cao Bang town on 20 February. He said that he had been issued food rations for only four days. Afterwards he would have to fend for himself. Captured militia also said they had

been given each 750 grams of emergency rations, with instructions to steal from the population to feed themselves.

Chinese troops behaved like bandits, looting whatever they could — State store houses, cooperative and individual property. They brought with them a legion of civilian porters leading long trains of pack horses and mules for plunder. The troops seized food, clothes, blankets, mosquito nets, household utensils and personal belongings. Lorries carried away rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, textiles, paper, bicycles, hospital equipment, industrial machinery, even rails and railway sleepers. The aggressors claimed they were only taking back what China had given. What they could not take away, they rendered useless. They slashed upholstery and broke crockery and cooking utensils with their bayonets.

In one month, the Chinese aggressors obliterated four provincial towns — Lang Son, Cao Bang, Lao Cai and Cam Duong — and thirty townships, among them Dong Dang, the town of the railway junction linking Hanoi to Peking, Ulan Bator, Moscow and Berlin. Everywhere the enemy vacated appeared to have been devastated by an earthquake. TNT charges were used to blast bridges, public offices, stores, hospitals, schools, crèches and kindergartens, cinemas, theatres, libraries, stadiums and residential areas. Eighty-one industrial enterprises, most of them built with foreign aid, were destroyed. These include the Cam Duong apatite mine in Hoang Lien Son province, which produced hundreds of tons of chemical fertilizer a year. Also with meticulously

weighed TNT charges, the aggressors felled every single electricity pole. Just one look at those mangled poles and tangled cables amidst the ruins will show that speedy restoration in the years ahead is impossible, especially in view of Vietnam's present economic condition.

Destruction to the countryside was equally extensive. The aggressors deliberately set fire to 320 communes, that is tens of thousands of houses. They did not spare seeds and farm implements. Many newly-built irrigation and small hydro-electric projects were destroyed. About 80,000 hectares of crops were devastated, and moreover, thirty thousand head of cattle as well as numbers of smaller domestic animals and poultry were either killed or herded to China. Hundreds of hectares of valuable industrial crops such as anise and cinnamon were ruined, and some twenty thousand hectares of forest were burned in Hoang Lien Son province alone. Many State farms and forest centres were laid waste, and their equipment dismantled and taken away.

The Chinese army also practised vandalism against pagodas, churches and historical monuments. The most serious of these was at Pac Bo where, upon his return from abroad on 8 February 1941, President Ho Chi Minh set up the headquarters of the revolution and where the Central Committee of the then Indochinese Communist Party held its eighth plenum to decide on the conduct of the insurrection

which led to the victory of the August 1945 Revolution. The Coc Bo grotto, which had sheltered the President, was dynamited and its entrance collapsed. The museum dedicated to the late President and the nearby guesthouse were thoroughly ransacked.

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The crimes committed against the Vietnamese people by the army of the Chinese expansionists were clearly aimed at complete extermination and destruction, and the resulting losses of lives and property will seriously affect all aspects of life for a long time to come. Material losses are put at several billion dollars by some observers. It is still too early for complete statistics but it is already clear that the three and a half million Vietnamese in the six provinces bordering China have had an unprecedented experience. One and a half million are now homeless, without any means of subsistence. They have been deprived of their earnings of the first years under socialism. One wonders if the self-styled revolutionaries in Peking were trying to carry out the threat of US General Curtis LeMay many years ago: to bomb North Vietnam back to the Stone Age.

Even in the old days, the Vietnamese people could see through the policy of Chinese expansionism pursued by Chinese emperors. The young revolutionary administration also had first-hand knowledge of the Chiang Kai-shek's voracious hordes.

But none of this compares with the present-day Peking expansionists' lunacy and brutality.

A new pestilence, that of Peking's hegemonism, has made its appearance and threatened the whole world and first of all the Chinese people. So, the warning of the dangers of Nazism which the Czech humanist Julius Fucik gave the world half a century ago is appropriate again :

"Mankind, be vigilant!"

*Hanoi, April 1979*  
**Vietnam Courier**  
Editorial Board.

## TONG CHUP: A CHINESE LESSON ON ATROCITY

by VU CAN

Tong Chup is a hamlet in Hung Dao commune, Hoa An district, Cao Bang province. It is on the Bang River, less than ten kilometres southeast of the provincial town of Cao Bang.

Legend has it that nine young men in the region once competed for the hand of the princess and the royal throne. One volunteered to go out at night to gather rice seedlings from across the mountains and plant all the fields in the hamlet. At day-break when a drum roll ended the competition, the boy had covered all the fields with seedlings except a patch the size of a conical hat. He lost, and the hamlet was named Tong Chup, which means "field of the hat", in his memory.

The district of Hoa An has been known as a prosperous area and as a cultural centre for the eight hundred thousand Tay nationals who form Vietnam's second biggest minority ethnic group after the Hoa. The Tay language spoken in Hoa An and that of Trang Dinh district in the neighbouring province of

Lang Son was chosen for the standard Tay-Nung script, which was made official in 1960. The story of Tong Chup is recorded in the folk literature of both the Tay and Nung, two peoples of the same origin and culture and speaking the same language.

Now the Chinese have brought the legendary name of Tong Chup back into currency. The shocking massacre perpetrated there recalls Oradour, Lidice, Son My, or the mass murders by the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique in Kampuchea. Its authors were the officers and men of an artillery unit of the Chinese Army Corps 42. It was committed in the afternoon of 9 March 1979, one day before the aggressors' withdrawal from the area.

Mr. Luong Ich Son, an assistant doctor at the provincial branch of the Federation of Trade Unions, was the first to know of the mass slaughter. Returning home after the enemy had departed, he saw that the well near his house was covered by a bamboo panel, which was rather unusual. When he took off the cover he was assailed by a horrible stench. He looked down, saw human bodies in the water, and in terror alerted other returning villagers. Together they discovered two other caches of corpses within a distance of one hundred metres.

An investigation team from the province was immediately sent in, headed by Dr Lam Tin, the chief medical examiner. Fifteen corpses were lifted from the well, nine others discovered in Na Luong brook, and nineteen in the area of Con Cat. All were women and children. Most had head wounds

caused by pickaxes and the rest had been disembowelled. Not one showed the marks of any bullets.

I arrived on the scene three weeks later, together with a group from the Commission for Investigation of War Crimes of the Chinese Aggressors. Our guide was Dr Lam Tin, who had examined all forty-three victims.

We went past two large but roofless brick houses whose walls were charred and bullet-ridden, crossed a rice field, and came to another house, or rather the remains of a house — a single smoke-blackened wall. Nearby was the well itself, two metres in diameter and the same in depth, fed by a stream a short distance away. It had been disinfected, but was still giving off a nauseous smell. By its side lay a bamboo stick more than two metres long and thick as someone's arm, one end smeared with dried blood with a few human hairs sticking to it. We were also shown a blunt pickaxe of the type the villagers used to chop wood, also covered with dried blood.

"This must be the butchers' main weapon," Dr Lam Tin said. "Thirty-seven of the victims died from jagged head wounds, the rest bore knife wounds or gashes in the abdomen. There were twenty-four women, all of child-bearing age, and nineteen children, the oldest aged twelve and the youngest only eight months. Eight of the women still had babies clinging to their backs, and one was clutching her baby to her breast. We also found seven women three to seven months pregnant. To Thi Yen, 36, had four knife wounds in her stomach. Her breasts were



slashed off, her genitals cut about, and her right leg splintered. Nguyen Thi Hai, 32, was killed together with her four children, Nong Vinh Kao, 10, Nong Vinh Kien, 7, Nong Thi Bien, 6, and Nong Thi Thuyen, 3. The mother's head was smashed. The children were disembowelled, two by the stomach, two by the side. Most of the victims were blindfolded. Some were tied up. The same methods of killing were used at all the three places."

We wanted to know how the victims had been identified.

"The corpses were bloated, and some were beginning to rot. Some were recognized by their identity cards, others by their clothes. Most of the adults had worked at the Duc Chinh pig-breeding station in the nearby village of the same name. They were running for cover in the mountains when they were captured and imprisoned inside the Hung Dao agricultural cooperative's crèche for over a week before being killed. Six of them — three women and three children — are unidentifiable. We have taken the pictures of all the victims and had them buried in a separate graveyard.

We followed Dr Tin up a hill to where the victims were buried. The graves were crudely marked by wooden boards with names painted in black, and they were covered with sleeping mats. On each child's grave a bamboo branch was planted at one end, on which was placed a child's bonnet. I was reminded of the massacre conducted by Pol Pot's troops in Tan Lap near the border with Kampuchea,

the site of which I had visited in 1977. There the same methods had been used, with the same ferocity.

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At the Duc Chinh pig-breeding station we met those who were the last to see the massacre victims alive.

Nong Van At, the manager, was the husband of Nguyen Thi Hai and the father of Nong Vinh Kao, Nong Vinh Kien, Nong Thi Bien and Nong Thi Thuyen. The tragedy that had happened to his family and friends had aged him terribly, and although he is only forty he now looks past fifty.

"My wife was plains Vietnamese while I'm Tay," Nong Van At said softly with a vacant look. "We were happy. My wife was a graduate from the fourth year of general education school and worked very hard. My eldest son, Vinh Kao, was in the second form. He was very good at sums. Vinh Kien, the second boy, was in the first year. He was always full of curiosity. Bien, my third child, was about to start primary school, the youngest, Thuyen, my pet, used to attend the village crèche. Nothing is left of my family now. My brother, Nong Van Lay, was also shot dead by the Chinese troops in Cao Bang and his body left to rot on the road."

Nong Van At then began to talk of the station's former employees, "We carried on working even after Chinese troops had occupied most of the

surrounding communes. Only when Chinese artillery started pounding our commune did we turn loose the pigs, so that they wouldn't fall into the aggressors' hands. On 27 February, we set out for the mountains. We came to Khuoi Chin ravine, where we spent the day. Late in the afternoon, together with two other people, I went ahead to reconnoitre, telling the others that we would return before nightfall. As soon as we reached a summit which we meant to use as an observation post we heard sustained machine-gun fire from the ravine. We clambered to the other side of the mountain and stayed there about an hour. Back at our post, we saw electric torches flashing in the valley and knew that the enemy was searching for the refugees. Our only hope was that the people would be spared, as they were all women and children. Two weeks later, after the enemy had gone, I began searching for my family and the others. In Hung Dao commune, I found the bodies of some people I know — Nong Van Minh and two girls — Trieu Thi Bam and Nong To Phuong. They were each tied to a chair, and riddled with bullets. On the ground I counted twenty-eight automatic rifle cartridges. Then, three days later, on 19 March, the Tong Chup massacre was discovered. I went there and found the bodies of my wife and children, and identified many other workers at the station and their children."

Most of the victims were women, four of them technicians. There were two members of the Communist Party and many members of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union. There are clues which

would seem to show that they were betrayed by a Vietnamese of Chinese origin who had gone to China in 1978 and became a guide for the aggressors, and also that the victims had been abused all the time they were detained in the hamlet, in the presence of their children. The case of To Thi Yen, whose breasts were slashed off and whose genitals were mutilated, shows how desperately she had struggled against the Chinese troops who, to defend their "national honour" and "army honour", had killed off their victims to remove all evidence of their bestial acts.

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What happened at Tong Chup hamlet had been called the "new Son My" by many of the foreign journalists who were present when the corpses were being gathered for burial. The name is appropriate, but we should point out that it is the third Son My, the second being the mass killing at Tan Lap. The first was perpetrated under the Stars and Stripes, the second under the three-tower flag of the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary regime. This one was committed under the Peking rulers' five-star red banner, which once led the liberation of China.

It is hard to believe that such a horrible crime could have been perpetrated by the Chinese "People's Liberation Army", which describes itself as a revolutionary army.

## THE LEVELLING OF DONG DANG

by NGUYEN VINH LONG

Visitors coming to Vietnam by the Berlin-Moscow-Peking-Hanoi international railway used to have their visas stamped at Dong Dang, a township of about four thousand people, four kilometres south of the Huu Nghi (Friendship) Gate. Dong Dang is the meeting point of some very important communication lines — Highway 1A running through Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City in the south, Highway 1B linking up with Thai Nguyen, in Bac Thai province, and Highway 4 which runs parallel to the Vietnam — China border and ends at Cao Bang town (the well-known *Route Coloniale* 4 where 10,000 soldiers of the French Expeditionary Corps were routed during the Frontier Campaign in 1950). Dong Dang was a thriving centre, where forest produce was exchanged for consumer goods, a neat town whose calm was disturbed only by the coming and going of trains. Then came 17 February 1979, when Chinese troops swarmed into Vietnam.

Dong Dang has now been completely levelled. It was destroyed together with more than thirty other townships and provincial towns bordering on the People's Republic of China — thirty new Guernicas blotted out, not by a rain of bombs, but by TNT

charges set off by infantry troops. The enemy blasted every office building, every dwelling house, every lamp post. Weeks after their retreat, Dong Dang was still reeking with the odour of death — dead animals, but above all dead human beings.

The railway station was a heap of rubble among which were found notice boards written in Vietnamese, Chinese, English, French and Russian. The roadbed was levelled, and rails and railway sleepers had been taken away. The three bridges leading into the town on Highways 1A and 1B were also destroyed. Electricity poles and wire were strewn along the ground as if by an earthquake.

All other public facilities were heavily damaged. Not a room was left intact at the first-, second- or third-level general education schools. Desks, benches, cabinets and blackboards had either been smashed or taken away to build barricades. The ground was littered with shredded books. Nothing remained of the hospital, the post office, department stores, groceries or restaurants. Also ruined were the distillery and the confectionery factory which the local authorities had financed to create jobs for the local residents of Chinese origin.

All the streets in Dong Thiep, Lo Ren and Nam Quan areas were obliterated. The raiders had taken away furniture, bicycles, clothes, cotton quilts and mosquito nets. What they could not take they made useless. They even destroyed crockery, mirrors, etc.

That was how Dong Dang was destroyed by the Chinese aggressors, coldly, thoroughly and systematically.

## CAM DUONG — THE MINE AND THE TOWN

by NGUYEN YEM

Before the Chinese aggression, the Lao Cai apatite mine, about ten kilometres from the Yunnan (China) frontier, employed 7,000 workers, men and women, and produced half a million tons of fertilizers and several thousand tons of acetylene per year. With the modern equipment supplied by the Soviet Union as aid to Vietnam, the mine was one of the most important industrial centres in Socialist Vietnam. The fertilizers obtained from apatite were in great demand throughout the country, especially in the Red River and Mekong deltas. Vietnam's rice output partly depended on these fertilizers.

The mine employees and their families lived in the small town of Cam Duong which counted 20,000 inhabitants. This town, together with thirty other provincial and district towns in the North, had not been hit by US Air Forces planes during the US escalation war against northern Vietnam. Cam Duong boasted four residential quarters, a workers' club able to hold 1,500 people, a first- and second-level general education school, a hospital, a theatre and a library. The population led a simple but happy life dedicated to labour and study, most of the workers regularly attending evening classes.

Now both the mine and town have ceased to exist. They were pounded by Chinese artillery and razed to the ground by mines and TNT charges. The aggressors blew up the repair and ore-pounding workshops, the power station, ore-extracting equipment, the network of roads and railways and all the bridges. Nothing was spared. Public buildings and dwelling houses were destroyed. Even all the hospital equipment was looted and taken to China. Before they withdrew, Chinese troops mined the whole area.

Mrs Nguyen Thi Sam, 82, who could not be evacuated from Cam Duong for health reasons is one of the rare witnesses of Chinese crimes. She was intimidated and roughly handled at first, but was finally the object of the enemy's demagogic solicitude. Before they withdrew the Chinese brought her a large bag of rice which was then ceremonially presented to her by a soldier in front of photographers and cameramen.

A cable from the New China News Agency of 4 March 1979, reads:

"Chinese troops have distributed rice to the Vietnamese population, at the latter's request. Each household has received dozens of kg or even 50kg of rice. Our troops brought the rice quota to old women unable to leave their homes."

Another cable sent on 6 March, reads:

"As Chinese troops entered Cam Duong, they witnessed the most despairing scene of the town's destruction by Vietnamese troops before evacuation."