

## No. 11 Newsletter Part 1: Uncle Ho and his City – May, 2014

Yes, that is how Ho Chi Minh was known, Uncle Ho. He did seem to have a kind of uncle-ish look to him....

Ho Chi Minh City is not a very interesting place to the visitor but it offered us an opportunity to do something in Vietnam. Many years ago, with a Vietnamese nun, I gave wheel chairs and sewing machines but never visited. This was my chance.

We set off to stay near a Korean friend, Hae-yong Kim who has been there for over 10 years. As she was only free on Saturday and Sunday and had limited Vietnamese ability, she asked one of her colleagues, Ms. Huynh Thi Thuy Trang, to join us. (Actually the two of them had done quite extensive research before our arrival.)

Hae-yong rented a car and driver for each of the days. You would have to be an extraordinary driver to attempt the streets of Ho Chi Minh City. Even though the traffic only moves at 20 to



Young Visitors

30 kilometers per hour; the sheer pressure of unruly motor cycles leaves one breathless.

Our goals were an old age nursing home in a temple, a girl's orphanage, a boys orphanage and two babies homes – babies are still left on the steps of the temple.



The things arrive...



and are sorted..

First we went to Chua Lam Quang. This kind of temple is total chaos because there are so many people running around looking after the 137 mostly bed-ridden elderly women who have nothing and so are totally at the charge of the temple. The great joy was

all the young people visiting because they wanted to. Not just girls but boys also!

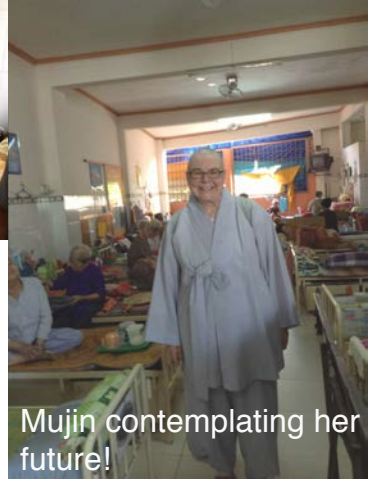




Dojoon Sunim offering



We asked the head nun about their needs and discovered that 50 of the women need diapers (called protection in French



Mujin contemplating her future!

= a little more elegant?) and so they need 100 a day = 9 packages at about 70,000 dong = USD3.50.

Then they requested Ajino-moto (they use a lot -- what to do???) and sugar. Off we went to buy the things and decided on a towel and soya milk for each person.

And then we all went around distributing to each of the women.

Next was an orphanage for boys and another for girls followed by a temple that had been newly built and in front of which, much to the surprise of the head nun, babies of all ages were being dropped off. At present there are 13!



Can you imagine what 13 babies looks like? It is totally wild! The babies range from new borns to about 3 years of age at present. Most of the people looking after the babies are volunteers, thank goodness because they need 2 tins of milk a day at USD10 a tin (the older ones have fresh milk.)



So we went out and bought 100 tins of milk, 50 bottles baby bathing stuff, toothbrushes (of course) for the older ones and tooth paste (of course) and a huge bag of toys (they had been playing with the milk boxes.)

I asked the Head Nun what she would do if more babies came. She said that somehow they would accommodate them. "And for how long?" I asked. "Until they are 18 or so."



Here is the Head Nun with Dojoon Sunim and the things we bought.

We had a good look around and everything seemed fine until we went to use the toilet. Disaster! And now they have three or four women to be with children 24 hours a day...

So we asked for a proposal to improve the toilets.... Let's see what they come up with. And so a fruitful visit to (hot)Vietnam ended...



Portraits of unwanted babies — what does their future hold????





## Newsletter 11 Part 2 Canada 2014

Hello Everyone! "My home and native land.." as the anthem goes. But I hadn't been to my native land for 45 years and it is not my home! However, I felt proud to be Canadian when I saw and met so many warm, friendly, honest, simple people in this world of greed and chaos.



Maybe it is because the population is small, maybe because life is hard (the cold) and so each must help the other, maybe it is because they are just warm, friendly, kind people.

The aim of the trip was to meet friends and try to do something in my native land -- even if just once! Alberta is beautiful. Edmonton was amazing and my dear friends, Caroline and Bob, of long, long ago (we hadn't met for 45 years) were a delight to be with. In fact it was too marvellous to describe!

On deciding to come I had asked Caroline to look for a project for the Foundation. She in

turn had hunted around and came up with all kind so things. However, dear to her heart are the homeless, who must make it through those cold winters and so we decided to give a bunch of good stuff to two of the main distribution centers, one for food and one for clothing.

So off we went to Costco's. We hunted up and down the aisles and found plenty of food for homeless people to give to the Food Bank. They need easy-to-prepare, non-perishable things. We were sure that no-



one ever brings nuts! So we bought lots! Then off to the Food Bank. According to Caroline, it is a life-line for many and i must say i felt sorry to see so many families waiting for their share. People were peaceful and kind -- and this was the summer!!!



Then we loaded up on clothes. We found some wonderful socks (I was sure that is one thing no-one ever brings). We thought about underwear but decided against it and then we saw the most





marvelous hooded thick warm tops with a zip up the front. So we loaded up with all the sizes we could find (and even went back for more!!!)

Then off to the delivery. The volunteer was thrilled with our offering as most people bring old clothes and some awful (to be thrown away) ones at that.

Caroline and Bob then invited me to Jasper, the Canadian Rockies. We spent three days in that Wonderland (see the bear and



Caroline and Bob at our little cottage at Jasper

geese above!)



St. John's

Farewell and off to Newfoundland! Another marvel (please do visit if you can...) Heather, my only Newfoundland friend, took me to her hometown of Corner Brook and then we drove and trekked until we reached a First Nation, the Mi'kmaq,



They have a beautiful school (with a leaking

settlement, Conne River, that she had chosen near St. Alban's. They are on the way to creating their own self-governed community there, which i found very exciting. The view from the road was beautiful and i was happy we had come.



That's me with Rod Jeddore's two sons...

It had been decided (with them) to take some materials for art projects. So off we went to Walmart (the third biggest employer in the world after the US Defence Dept!!!!) and bought a large selection of



things for these artistic children to use. Different kinds of paper, pencils, crayons, glitter, something for all ages.

Please visit Canada if you ever get the chance, it is truly an experience worth the flight!

All the best to each and everyone of you!

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