

beverly deepe  
101 cong ly  
saigon

pagoda --1

tuesday midnight jeepfuls of steel-helmeted combat police, truckloads of marines, paratroopers and army regulars with bayoneted M-1 rifles moved through streets of Saigon towards Buddhist pagodas.

~~atukampā~~

"There goes Ka Loi," said one elderly man hawking ~~vegetable~~ soups from wicker basket.

At 12:30, combat police and troops ~~arrived~~ had "staked out" the pagodas and stormed them. At Ka Loi, the pale yellow building in heart of old French Quarter which had served as headquarters for Buddhist activities in Saigon, hundreds of troops and police scaled the barbed wire fence and spiked blackgate, which the Buddhists had put up weeks ago to defend themselves. In a fell swoop, they nabbed the core of the Buddhist leadership.

One young novice, about to sound large wooden drum for alert, crumpled ~~had~~ at the blast of tear gas grenade. Two monks escaped over the wall into the carparking compound of the US AID mission; a third attempting to run there was shot down.

Amid shouts and yells from Buddhist monks, the police and troops, later reinforced by truckloads of marines, were thrown into trucks and ambulances and carried away. <sup>UNT 3:30 AM</sup> (Some were seen being driven to the navy yards and speculation arose they might be sent to Poulo Condor--the island prison, where ~~thousands~~ of political oppositionists are being held.)

At this time, there's no estimate of number that have been arrested; how many killed or injured.

(Suggest using wire copy and New York Daily News copy for much better eyewitness stuff--the none of the reporters were closer than half a block to it. I'll not add to eyewitness stuff.)

deeps

pagoda-2

At 6 a.m. in Saigon, marines, ~~par~~ paratroopers in mottled green and brown camouflage outfits, and army regulars moved rapidly through the city; they stood in small clusters of 3-4 at key intersections; ~~guards~~ guarded all the key pagodas in the city; scrutinized traffic into Tan Son Nhut airport and closed cable and post office. Half dozen tanks and armored cars whizzed through the city and environs.

Proclamation of President Ngo Dinh Diem was pasted onto corner bulletinboards near campaign posters for the Aug. 31 elections to the National Assembly (national legislative body)—elections that will probably never be held.

Clusters of cycle drivers, hawkers, shopkeepers and students gathered to read the news: *(official translation)*.

Proclaiming martial law over the entire country.

The President of the Republic of Viet Nam,

Considering the Constitution of the Republic of Viet Nam, specifically the Article 44 of the Decree ~~124~~ 124-TTP dated 28 May '61 prescribing the composition of Government,

Considering the actual requirements necessary to preserve security and public order;

Decree/et

(More)

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pagoda--3

Article 1: Martial law is established over the entire territory of Viet Nam as of the date of the publication of this decree until further order.

Article 2: The laws which suspension is deemed necessary will be suspended temporarily.

Article 3: The Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam have complete responsibility for public security and are given the following power throughout the period that martial law is in force:

- conduct search of civilian houses at any time, arrest those people considered harmful to public security.
- restrict freedom of press, control the radio ~~broadcast~~ broadcast system, control movies and plays.
- forbid storage, circulation of printed publications, documents, leaflets considered harmful to public security.

Article 4: All matters concerning public order are within the jurisdiction of Military Tribunals.

Article 4: The Secretaries of State and the Chief, Joint General Staff are responsible, each in his field, for the execution of this decree.

The Decree is published in compliance with the emergency procedure.

Saigon, 20 August 63

The President of the Republic of Viet Nam--Ngo Dinh Diem.

(End of official decree).

Insert:

37.

While cluster of 2 dozen people stood around reading the decree from bulletinboard, a blueuniformed paramilitary man came up and scattered them. "You have no right of assembly," he told them.

(Occurred while I was reading decree with interpreter).

deeps

pagoda--54

The raid of on Buddhist pagodas took place in other cities in the provinces where situation even more tense than in Saigon. In Hue, police and troops raided Tu Dam Pagoda, the main one, where Thursday (tomorrow) was scheduled the funeral of the fifth bonze that burned himself alive, on August 16, 71-year-old Thich Tieu Dieu. They seized Buddhist leaders there, killing at least one, and snatched the charred corpse of the monk. (Unknown what happened in other cities where situation had been critical--but another journalist is scheduled to arrive from there Thursday night and I'll include details in my Friday aaaaa cable).

Throughout the week, the situation had "deteriorated" in the provinces. In the "Holy City of Hue"--where the Buddhist crisis began on May 8--government authorities dismissed Uni. of Hue rector, a Catholic Priest, and students demonstrated in protest, <sup>ADULT PROFESSORS RESIGNED</sup> during past week, city was at times under martial law and strict curfew with complete curtailment of economic and social life. Thursday was scheduled the funeral of fifth bonze to burn himself alive.

In Nha Trang, series of demonstrations ~~announced~~ on Friday and Saturday produced a government order that all government employees remain in their offices over the weekend. (Unconfirmed reports that martial law was imposed there and in ~~Indochina~~ mountain resort city of Dalat). Nha Trang is 200 miles north of Saigon, a famous beach resort, on South China Sea, and 12 miles from Ninh Hoa (Ngo Dinh Nhu's constituency for Aug. 31 elections--he was unopposed), where the Buddhist <sup>DI-QUAY</sup> man burned herself alive on August 14. The government had blockaded the pagodas there; which caused Buddhist leaders in Saigon to send letter of protest to U. S. head U Thant. (More)

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pagoda--5

The buddhist affair started as an accident on May 8th when riot ensued over ~~insurrection~~ flying of Buddhist flag ~~insurrection~~ and nine persons were killed by government soldiers. This occurred in Hue, the old Buddhist cultural center of Viet Nam, hometown of President Ngo Dinh Diem, headquarters of his brother, Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc, and another brother, Ngo Dinh Can, who has no official title, but rules northern one third of the country like a viceroy. Vietnamese consider ~~it~~ Hue, the old imperial capital of country, a romantic city with its gingerbreaded French mansions and old walled imperial court skirting the Perfume River.

From there, the Buddhist problem jumped to Saigon, where it continued to mushroom. President Diem's first policy was that of force and violence; peaceful demonstrations turned into bloody riots; then five days after first bonze ignited self (they're called bonze-fires in Saigon), government signed a joint communique covering Buddhist grievances. (See last week's file). Diem--under American pressure--officially announced policy of "extreme conciliation" but there was consistent "undercutting" of it--most noticeably by his sister-in-law, Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, who publicly, vociferously and ~~six~~ "extravagantly" accused Buddhists of being communists in yellow robes. Day before ~~Heating~~ U. S. Ambassador Frederick BEE. Nolting Jr. departed country he pleaded with Diem for 20 minutes for Diem to publicly state Madame Nhu was not speaking officially for government. Diem never did. (I witnessed this session--was pathetic).

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pagoda—6

the small, but influential ~~San Lee~~ party of  
Less conspicuous, ~~his~~ brother and political advisor, ngo dinh nhu,  
staged counterdemonstration of war wounded in front of Ka Loi pagoda.

~~But~~ the most inconspicuous, but most serious (and hardest to  
verify) infractions of Diem's policy of "extreme conciliation" was  
taking place in the provinces. (Buddhist government employee in Saigon  
told me his young sister who participated in buddhist demonstrations  
in Phan Thiet was worried that provincial officials would not allow her/  
to graduate from school and enter next grade.) Other infractions  
were taking place without knowledge of Buddhist leadership in Saigon—  
two weeks ago, government secret police entered small pagoda on outskirts  
of Hue, took down banners and shot the caretaker. (Confirmed by American  
Consulate in Hue).

The government's reply to infractions was that provincial and local  
authorities were acting without knowledge of the pres—<sup>1954</sup> that diem was  
ill-informed on the situation and that "we have not one, but a dozen  
governments here."

At the ~~minimum~~ opposite of Diem's "extreme conciliation"  
policy was to do as Madame Nhu advocated—snatch the leadership. Brother  
Ngo Dinh Nhu is known to have toyed with the idea "in a whimsical way"  
(one American official explained) to initiate a ~~xxxxx~~ false coup d'etat  
whereby government troops would capture diem and nhu, raid ka loi  
pagodas, then in need of leadership, would ~~xxx~~ install nhu as leader.

This was never seriously considered and the risks would have  
been great. Last night's seizure of Buddhist leadership was only  
~~xxxx~~ a similar alternative, with a reduction of risks. And it was  
within the confines of the constitution and the decree-making  
authority of the president. (More)

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pagoda--7

The full-scale raid of Buddhist leadership was in itself not surprising; Buddhist leaders had consistently told reporters "tonight government agents will arrest us." Reporters made frantic checks on the pagodas--particularly couple of weeks ago when they were blockaded after bloody riot. Government ~~xxx~~ employees also thought that arresting of Buddhists were imminent.

One American official was told ~~xxx~~ Monday that Buddhists <sup>seriously</sup> ~~seriously~~ concerned about being arresting and they were saying if this happened they would believe it was done with approval of CIA. American replied that CIA was in no position to approve of move of this kind and if arrests happened Washington might disassociate itself from Diem. (Hence, urgency of Washington bureau checking State Department).

However, the shocker--even to government employees--was ~~that~~ the institution of martial law. <sup>The terms are severe, and so vaguely worded</sup> that people can be arrested for almost any ~~xxxxx~~ reason. It was a "smooth transition" to military rule--but still under the dictates of Diem. The alternative, had he waited longer (but situation in the provinces developed too quickly and ~~xxx~~ violently), was a coup d'etat in ~~a~~ conjunction in with the military--which would have toppled Diem.

Historically, Diem had used his own military to crush the dissident armies of dissident religious sects Cao Dai and Hoa Hao in mid-50s; but in this case, he was fighting, if not non-violent, at least unarmed Buddhist leaders. The Buddhist leaders themselves had never <sup>seriously</sup> been considered



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pagoda--8

pre-communist or under dictates of communists, despite madame Nhu's screams. (American sources). They ~~sxxx~~ themselves were after religious goals--to force government publicly and officially to adhere to policy whereby buddhist religion could operate without fear of arrests, and reprisals. The ~~diffusion~~ leadership differed on ways to achieve this: the old-timers ~~sxxxx~~ were interested only in religious aspects; the ~~xx~~ "young turks", militant monks in 30s and 40s, had two approaches: one to force diem to make accommodations, the other to get religious ends only through getting rid of diem. these last two agreed on tactics: use of demonstrations, rallies, youth meetings and bonze-burnings. some buddhist leaders known to have been meeting with ~~xxxxxx~~ military and political oppositionists.

(I'll attach a memo I wrote you last night before this all happened about the coup--now the plans are vague and up in the air; will probably never materialize).

In arriving in Viet Nam, Lodge will ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ have to weigh the words of one American official: "The problem of counterinsurgency here is working with a hostile friendly government."

The least problem Lodge will have is explaining his name. Vietnamese are puzzled why he has two last names--Cabot and Lodge. And they are --or were--joking "Diem will have no use for Cabot". Vietnamese, who like puns, were ~~sxxx~~ implying french word for Cabot (check spelling), which means contraceptives. They are banned in Viet Nam.

(More)

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pagoda--9

Diem has appointed Maj. Gen. Tran Van Don as chief of the Joint General Staff--making him the Maxwell Taylor of Viet Nam and supreme military commander responsible for enforcing the new decree. I've interviewed him twice; speaks fluent French and good English; has a charming, polished wife. When he was commander of I Corps, the northernmost military region on North Vietnamese border which includes city of Hue, he was known not to be completely trusted by Diem. In Dec, 1962, with making of four corps areas, he was transferred to Saigon as commandant of land forces, which most people considered a demotion. He had no troops to command and little power--a figurehead post. He was considered a "good guy" and "popular with the troops."

(My personal opinion is that Don was thought to be involved in planned coup and Diem made some accommodations with him and other military leaders to establish military rule without toppling Diem.)

(A major general is three-star).

The military commander of Saigon is Brig. Gen. Ton That Dinh, formerly commander of III Corps, north of Saigon.

(The biographical data on Gen. Don is attached; but I have none on Ton That Dinh.)

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Sorry this is so jumbled; am trying to get this to airport to see if US military pilot will carry it to US.)

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