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The Vietnamese Women Weekly
And The Work Of Information And Propaganda
Among Women In The Whole Country

By

Nguyen Thithan Hong
THE 'VIETNAMESE WOMEN' WEEKLY AND THE WORK
OF INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA AMONG
WOMEN IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY

There is only a periodical for women, on the national level, in our country: the "Vietnamese Women" periodical. It's a weekly newspaper with a circulation of 150,000 copies at present, and of 150,000 copies by early 1988. Although there is a great demand for the weekly, we can only meet one-third of the demand owing to shortage of newsprint. There are altogether 42 provincial towns in the whole country, but only in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City—a large city in Southern Vietnam—has the Vietnamese Women branch had its own locally-based newspaper.

The Vietnamese Women weekly is the organ of the Vietnam Women's Union. The Vietnam Women's Union is a broad woman organization having a front character. It unites all women from 16 years of age upwards who display patriotism and love for socialism. It has a membership of 10 million.

The weekly is sent to all parts of the country, even to the remotest border areas. That is why distribution work must be assumed by a State-run organ, for this organ is in a position to make use of all means of communications, such as air-planes, trains, cars and buses for the transport of newspapers, and has a very large contingent of employees and workers from the central to local levels. The Editorial board of the Vietnamese Women weekly has to pay 22 per cent of the price of a newspaper to the distributor. As we have not got our own printing house and we must have our weekly printed at large printing houses in Hanoi.

There is no private newspaper in Vietnam. All periodicals and newspapers belong either to a political party, mass organization, a professional organization or a ministry.
For example, there are newspapers of the Communist Party, the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, the Vietnam Women's Union, the Vietnam Youth Union, the Trade Union, the Peasants' Association for National Salvation, the Association of Writers, the Association of Journalists, the Ministry of Home Trade, the Ministry of Communications and Transport, etc. From the central down to the local levels, there are 250 periodicals and newspapers. The editorial boards have their own budgets, and cover all the expenses including salaries for their employees and workers. The editor-in-chief is fully responsible for the political content of the newspaper and must abide by the constitution and law. There is no censorship in our country.

Our weekly was born on the 8th of March 1943, nearly 40 years ago. We regularly inform our reader, through our Weekly, of the major political events at home and abroad — especially those relating to women. We write about talented women in all spheres of production, work and life, women who have rendered great services in the fields of science and technology, literature and art. We encourage women to overcome all difficulties to occupy social positions equal to men. As you know, in Asian countries which were ruled over by feudalism for too long a time, this is no easy job.

We reserve as much as two-thirds of our pages for problems vital to women as members of the family, wives and mothers. The weekly also has columns on education of children in the family, including articles written by scientists, pedagogues, and a number of experienced parents. The column on marriage and family deals with knowledge and experience on building democratic, harmonious and happy families, starting from how to seek for one's partner for marriage and how to get to marriage. There are articles written by couples, whose gold weddings have
been celebrated, for young readers on how to organize their family's life. Our weekly also deals regularly with bringing up children, preventing and treating diseases, family planning, cooking, sewing and how to keep a good house...

As far as we know, readers in our country, including male readers, particularly like these columns of our Weekly, since they supply them with knowledge and experience very indispensable for organizing, building and preserving conjugal happiness.

Another great task of our weekly is to struggle for defending women's interests, against all manifestations of unequal treatment of women in all fields. We, for example, have criticized one office for its discrimination against a woman applicant for a job: she was refused the job which was given to a male applicant while like the latter, she had graduated from the university with honours and had applied for the job some time before him. In one issue last September we sternly condemn a district court for its unfair settlement of a case regarding a woman: the latter had to get a smaller share of the heritage simply because she is a woman. After the article was published, the court had to reconsider the case. As a result, the woman has finally become the owner of the house she legally inherits from her parents. It is now a rule in our country that all State organs and offices rightly criticized by the press have to reconsider what they have done and set right all the errors they have committed, and make them public.

There are few women journalists and reporters in our country, especially those who have to go to various localities for on-the-spot investigations and for writing reports. Altogether there are about 560 women journalists and reporters. This is due to our present economic difficulties,
to the shortage of means of communications, to the health conditions of women who have to take care of their families and bring up their children. As an example, I can cite my case. I have been working as a journalist for the last thirty years. I have only two children and have won full understanding and great assistance from my husband. Yet, I had to endure many years of difficulties.

However, to stir up the country's women movement, great importance should be attached to strengthening the contingent of women journalists and reporters, and favourable conditions should be created for them to work and study. For nobody can better understand women than women themselves. To write about women, to help women of all ranks acquire more information, knowledge and experience in order to become modern women, good workers, enjoy a happy life and sex equality, there must be talented and experienced women journalists, who devote heart and soul to the cause of women, to the Motherland. In our editorial board, there are nearly 20 women correspondents, all of them have graduated from universities and colleges. They all have maintained good contacts with the masses of women. They all love their profession. The leading body of the editorial board have set themselves the task of paying attention to helping women cadres by all means: raising their profession level, providing them with means of work and improving their livelihood. All this to help them perform their functions well and become good women correspondents.

By Ms. Nguyen Thithan Huong