

## Outbound - Vietnam and Cambodia 2009



What a wonderful experience. All ambassadors returned safely and well after our great adventure to the East. This exchange involved 13 ambassadors (6 from our Sunshine Coast Club, two from North Moreton, two from the Tweed Valley and one from Montana, USA). It was a great experience & enjoyed by all. The integration of Friendship Force members from Qld, NSW, and the USA was seamless with excellent camaraderie, open communication and great times enjoyed by all.

It was a privilege to visit both Vietnam and Cambodia and we all wished every member of our Friendship

Force could have come with us.

Vietnam, the country, is emerging in as an increasingly prosperous nation with a thriving tourism industry. New resorts continue to crop up all the time. Remote areas are not too difficult to access. But. How to cross the street????? Step out into the traffic and don't hesitate or stop suddenly and somehow you will reach the other side of the street in one piece.

Our visit to Vietnam was organised by the Vietnam, USA Friendship Society in conjunction with Friendship Force International. We were hosted for three nights by members of their organisation. Our guide, Giang, was fluent in English and a very helpful and caring lady.

This was an opportunity to meet the residents of the city and I am sure we have made long-lasting friends with them. In Hanoi we had several formal meetings with officials from the organisation.

There were many wonderful highlights of the trip. The great Ho Chi Minh complex in Hanoi, the magnificent temples, museums, the ancient cities of Hue and Hoi An, the unbelievable Cu Chi tunnels used in the Vietnam war, and the spectacular temples throughout the Cambodian area of Siem Reap including the Anchor Wat and Anchor Thom.



How many bottles of water did we drink? In Cambodia where we spent three days, it was extremely hot and we each must have drunk several bottles of iced water each day. Very hot work climbing up steps to the ancient temple ruins.

The six ambassadors from our club visited Hong Kong for three days at the end of our journey. Fortunately we didn't have to rent a container to bring back our purchases. We all had a great time and loved the experience.

ED: Helen