

CAM RANH BAY

Motoring Through Japan's Newest Foothold

BY MARIE MORNAND

"ROUTE MANDARINE"

The "Route Mandarine" connects the two most important cities of Indo-China—Hanoi and Saigon. This motor-road, completed in 1936, travels its whole length of eleven hundred miles through beautiful and extremely fertile country. Moreover, after Vinh it skirts the coast almost continuously. Much labor has been put into it, as parts of it lead through low-lying flood-districts. Even the raised embankments on which it runs in stretches cannot prevent the road being closed, sometimes for several days, during the rainy season because of floods.

The first place of interest, about midway between Hanoi and Saigon, is Tourane, a center of the French administration with an important harbor and airfield. Its museum is famed for its treasures of the Cham civilization, the oldest known civilization of Indo-China, examples of which are also impressively preserved in a nearby grotto-temple. Away from the main-road lie the great ruins of Dong-Duong and Mison. Quinhon is a sea-side resort with a good beach and some famous Cham towers. In the neighborhood of the small town of Song Cau the country becomes covered with white salt as far as the eye can see, and attractive Cape Varella has a bay famous for its three picturesque rocks.

NHATRANG

As far as scenery is concerned, one of the most beautiful spots of Indo-China is Nhatrang, the favorite sea-side resort of Saigon. During the school-holidays in April and May even the smallest room in Nhatrang is occupied. The almost white sand, which in the sun reflects an intolerable glare, makes the sea here seem even bluer than elsewhere. The public grounds are well kept, and there are charming private

houses standing in big gardens. The *Musée Océanographique* shows in its aquariums the denizens of the Bay of Nhatrang, among which are fish of incredible colors. At the end of the town two red-brick towers of a ruined Cham temple stand on a granite rock. The walls of these towers, which have long lost their ornamentations, are now covered with lianas. High up in one of them, in the so-called "cellule obscure," Po Nagar is enthroned, the many-armed merciful goddess so deeply revered by the natives.

We were always very comfortable at the Grand Hotel de la Plage in Nhatrang, famous for its excellent cuisine. As a special favor we were given the "Apartment de l'Empereur," in which the present Emperor of Annam used to stay. (He now owns a beautiful villa in Nhatrang, from which he sometimes goes on shooting-parties in the neighborhood.) This suite has a delightful terrace, where from our long chairs we used to enjoy the sunset, and then lie late into the night, waiting for a cooling breeze.

CAM RANH BAY

From Nhatrang it is only a short drive to Cam Ranh Bay. It is a bay of tremendous extent and of a quiet beauty. Seventeen miles long, it is surrounded by wooded hills averaging thirteen hundred feet and affording perfect protection against storms. The water is anywhere from forty-five to sixty-five feet deep, and the bottom of sand and mud provides good anchorage. Moreover, the Bay possesses two important influxes of fresh water, the analysis of which shows a very low calcium content. This is an advantage greatly appreciated for technical reasons, as the water will then not foul ships' boilers to any great extent. The mouth of Cam Ranh Bay is within

three to seven miles of the commercial shipping route between Singapore and Hongkong.

In the coconut-palm groves near the beach there are a few huts built by fishermen. The beach is of fine sand and washed by clear, deep blue water. These quiet surroundings were the scene of a tragic accident, when, in the middle of June, 1939, a French submarine did not return to the surface from a diving practice. All attempts to save the crew of nearly a hundred French officers and men were in vain.

We never wished for a prolonged stay at this beautiful bay. The lodging facilities in the little hamlet situated on the beach away from the road are exceedingly primitive, and the warm lemonade cannot be considered a refreshment in this very hot place.

ANNAMITES, FRENCHMEN—AND JAPANESE

From here to Saigon the road first passes through palm forests interspersed with great fertile rice-fields, a picture of immeasurable natural riches. Further south we drive for hours along the beautifully cool and shady asphalt road through the rubber plantations of

Cochin-China, where in parts the road is agreeably darkened by the high, closely planted rubber-trees, till we reach Saigon.

The entire coastal region we have passed through is densely inhabited. There is one village after another, and many Annamites, especially women in their characteristic pointed straw hats, can be seen working in the rice-fields and rubber plantations. So great are the throngs of people on the road that we had to buy an extra loud horn for our car, for with the standard one we could make no headway at all.

White people are rarely seen. Here and there in the villages there are small military posts, and even in the towns the number of Frenchmen is insignificant. It is usually composed of the highest French administrative official, the so-called Resident, with his assistants; the doctor; the hotel-proprietor; and the postal official.

Since the end of July things must have greatly changed along this coast, and especially in Cam Ranh Bay. An entirely new element appeared when this territory was occupied by thirty thousand Japanese soldiers and many units of the Japanese Navy.

IN SEARCH OF POMPEI

BY CATHERINE LENNARD

Dalat is a mountain station in French Indo-China, high and cool even in summer time. It is a favorite resort for the people of Saigon, although it stands in the very heart of the wild and hardly explored hill-country of the Mois. The Mois are nomads living in unattainable mountain regions. They have very little contact with civilization and are one of the savage tribes anthropologists like to study.

John had been quite ill and for his convalescence we had gone to Dalat. When he felt better, we decided to explore the countryside. According to rumors there existed a Moi village with the peculiar name of Pompei some 25 miles away, but it had not actually

been seen by anyone we knew. Although we had had no previous experience with expeditions, we decided to search for Pompei.

We were able to find out on which path to start, but no more. We could not ask the Mois, not knowing their language. Although one saw them mending the roads leading to Dalat, or wandering through the village on their way to the market place, where they barter their oranges and dwarf mountain orchids for other necessities, they never stay long enough in any one place for one to become acquainted with their customs. I had often seen them, walking along in single file, their black bodies doubled up under the weight of