



A WOMAN SELLS oranges on the streets of Hanoi as flocks of motor scooters zip down the boulevard.

Hanoi holds traditions



HO CHI MINH'S TOMB dominates the central square in downtown Hanoi. The mausoleum was under repair when a group of American publishers visited the old French city, but tourists strolled the broad walks in front. The Presidential Palace and Uncle Ho's humble cottage are behind the tomb.

Old city centers around lakes

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It's hard to imagine being cramped in a giant Airbus 340, but Air Vietnam seems to know how to pack people in for the Saigon-Hanoi shuttle, where the huge aircraft pretty much live up to their name.

The plane may be big, but most American carry-on luggage won't fit in the overhead bins, which are Asian-sized. So are the seats. Be prepared for a tight fit and plenty of hassles getting your bag on board.

More than just 700 miles separate the two cities. Saigon, the bustling, more capitalist former capital of the south, sprawls in every direction from its French Colonial center. Its 6 million to 8 million people seem all to be on motor scooters going somewhere.



GARBAGE often is just thrown to the curb, even near sidewalk cafes.

Smaller Hanoi — about 2 million — seems older, more developed, more traditional, but still the scooters. On

each block, it seems, there's a sidewalk cafe where people sit on tiny stools at tables a foot or so off the pavement.

In downtown Hanoi, old colonial buildings house most of the government, from the presidential palace to the army barracks. In the era of capitalism under a nominally Marxist government, businesses cluster together, with knockoff luggage shops along one boulevard, cell phone dealers on another.

The city is built around lakes that lend beauty and tranquility. Men and boys spend hours catching tiny perch and flinging them into pails. If there are larger fish, we don't see them in an hour's stroll around one of the lakes. (See HANOI on Page 6B)



A PEOPLE'S POLICE officer (right) stood guard outside our hotel, where North Korean Premier Kim Yong Il was staying. Dummies (above) represent communist prisoners shackled to their beds in the old French prison, which later housed American fliers. During the "American War," it was known to U.S. servicemen as the "Hanoi Hilton," but today a real Hilton hotel rises nearby



Photos by Steve and Cynthia Haynes