

**Global Perspective Consulting (GPC) and Saginaw Valley State University's  
Osher Institute of Learning in Retirement (OLLI)  
Global Glimpse-Vietnam March 2010**

**Global Glimpse 2**

Following the return to Hanoi from Sapa, the group enjoyed a cyclo ride (pedaled bike) ride through the bustling Old Quarter of Hanoi. Small, crowded streets with all types of shops set in French Colonial buildings constructed at the turn of the century characterize this charming part of the capital.

A trip to Vietnam would not be complete without a visit to the World Heritage site, Halong Bay. A 160KM drive east from Hanoi to Halong Bay brought the group to their embarkation point for the Halong Bay Junk cruise. The luxury junk or Asian style cruise boat departs from the city of Halong Bay for the overnight visit to see a sample of the 3000 limestone formations found throughout the Bay. The limestone formations represent the tops of mountains formed thousands of years ago before the actual bay was formed. This cruise offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy the service of the staff aboard the junk, visit a floating fishing village by kayak or traditional reed boat, and explore a cave while experiencing the unique limestone formations of the beautiful bay.

A return to Hanoi and a flight from the capital city to Hue brings the group to the former imperial city of Vietnam. The unique combination of culture, education and architecture, make this city one of Vietnam's most beautiful cities. Its history beauty has placed it on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Hue was the city from which the 13 Emperors of Vietnam ruled the country from 1800 to approximately 1945 Religion also plays an important role in this city and the group was able to visit the largest Buddhist pagoda, located along the Perfume Rive flowing through the middle of the city.

A special cultural event for the trip was a lecture, visit and Hue style imperial dinner at the home and dinner of Mr. An. Mr. An's wife was the granddaughter of a princess who married an influential mandarin. He was the Minister of Defense who served under the last two reigning emperor's of Vietnam's monarchy before its fall. Mr. An is a respected author and expert on various aspects of Hue's culture and architecture. The dinner featured 9 courses of Hue specialties prepared by his wife and family. Additional highlights of the evening included a tour of the beautiful gardens and viewing family collectibles.

The transit from Hue to Vietnam's third largest city, Danang and then to Hoian is via bus along Highway 1. This scenic ride through the mountains and along the coast includes a stop to visit a Viet Cong War Memorial Cemetery. The 70 mile transit includes many sites of battles and struggles during the Vietnam conflict. Danang is also the home of the famous China Beach where major USA military installations were located during the conflict. The city also is the home of the Cham Museum which chronicles the Cham culture of the central coast of Vietnam.

Hoian's unique architecture, food and shopping and proximity to beautiful beach resorts provide visitors with an opportunity to relax while still enjoying the cultural aspects of this region.