In 1926, Nhat Linh (Nguyen Tuong Tam) left his bureaucratic job to study art in Hanoi.

The next year, with the help of his instructor, he received a scholarship to study in France.

Linh immersed himself in French art culture. After 3 years he returned to Hanoi creatively invigorated.

He put this energy to use when he was made editor of "Customs", a struggling periodical.

Nhat Linh gathered friends and like-minded writers to fill the magazine's staff.

This literary group transformed "Customs" into a satirical magazine - targeting old traditions and politics. They also highlighted new writing, fashion other trends and ideas.

The poetry and writing of these authors further advocated individualism and challenging social mores.

"You are a person and I am a person! Neither of us is any better or any worse than the other!*

*FROM 'BREAKING THE TIES'

Over time, French colonists saw the group's work as "potentially disruptive." Linh started up a second, milder magazine in case "Customs" was shut down.

Phong Hoa

Ferme

Ngay Nay

(WHICH WOULD HAPPEN IN 1936!)

"Our nation, for better or worse, is a place where Eastern and Western cultures have met..."

Following either path has advantages and disadvantages, and it is not yet certain where the truth lies...

We can only place our hope in Western civilization, although we do not yet know where that civilization will lead us...

*FROM 'CUSTOMS', OCT. '32

Our only destiny is to go into the unknown, to keep changing and progressing."

TEXT EXCERPTS AND BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FROM UNDERSTANDING VIETNAM BY NEIL L. JAMIESON, AS WELL AS GREG LOCKHART'S INTRODUCTORY ESSAY TO Nhat Linh's GOING TO FRANCE, WHICH IS AVAILABLE AT VIETNAMLIT.ORG