

June 22, 1957

Letter from Choi Duk Shin to Park Chan Il

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin explains the system of naming in Vietnam, and the appropriate way of addressing important Vietnamese officials such as Ngô Đình Diệm.

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Saigon, June 22, 1957

Dear Mr. Park:

Your note dated June 4 was received in Seoul and I believe I have already orally answered your question on the correct writing and pronunciation of the name of the President of Vietnam. However, I would like to illustrate the name in more details as follows:

The full name of the President of the Republic of Vietnam is:

His Excellency Ngo-Dinh-Diem

His family name is NGO and all his brother have the same second word of name DINH, the difference in the names of his brothers occurs in the last word of the full name. I shall list below the names of the four brothers:

H.E. Ngo-Dinh-THUC Vicar Apostolic of Province
of Vinh Long, Vietnam

H.E. Ngo-Dinh-DIEM The President of the Republic
of Vietnam

H.E. Ngo-Dinh-LUYEN Ambassador of Vietnam in
London

H.E. Ngo Dinh NHU Counsellor to the President

Therefore, it is only logical to use the last word of the name in the family between family members in order to distinguish the difference.

However, in public life I believe the calling of the family name should be the correct one and I would like to recommend that the full name be used i.e. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem. This is more suitable and leaves no room for misunderstanding.

For the same reason I believed it is better to call the Vietnamese Minister to our country by his full name as DUONG-VAN-DUC.

CC *Evans*
28/9


I might for your information mention one more fact:

(I) the Vietnamese writing of the name is exactly
NGÔ-DĨNH -DIÊM

However, because there are no suitable signs such as ^ , ' , ^ , in the English typewriter, therefore, it is written as NGO-DINH-DIEM.

I hope the above illustration will assist you in clarifying the question you had in mind.

Respectfully,


Choi, Duk Shin

Mr. Park Chan Il
Office of the President