

# Spiritual Human Yoga - Belgium

## Profile

### 1. Structure of the movement

The School of Spiritual Human Yoga (SHY) was founded in the United States in 1989 by Mr Luong Minh Dang, also called Master Dang, born Vietnamese but now a naturalised American. The movement is represented in 67 countries and each national centre is completely autonomous. In 1992 a non-profit making association, the "International Human and Universal Energy Research Institute" (IHUERI Europe) was set up in Belgium. The Monitor of 20<sup>th</sup> January 1994 noted that the organisation would henceforth be known as "Human and Universal Energy - Belgium" (HUE Belgium). On the 2nd October 1997, a new modification was made to the Monitor, changing the name to "Spiritual Human Yoga - Belgium" (SHY Belgium).

There are also fifteen or so sub-centres in Flanders and the French-speaking part of Belgium. These are legally and administratively independent non-profit making associations.

### 2. Recruitment of new members

SHY Belgium does not advertise nor proselytise.

### 3. Entry into the movement

Does not apply in this case.

### 4. Membership of the movement and another religion

Does not apply in this case.

### 5. Members' financial obligations

The only financial obligations are course subscriptions for a previously agreed duration. The tariffs for 1999 are:

Levels	Duration of Course	Price (Belgian Francs and us Dollars)
1 & 2	4 hours	1300 BEF/35 US\$
3 & 4	2 days	7200 BEF/190 US\$
5	5 days	500 US\$ (has not been organised in Belgium)
5.1	3 days	11,000 BEF/300 US\$
5.2	5 days	500 US\$ (has not been organised in Belgium)

## **6. Voluntary leaving of the movement**

Does not apply in this case.

## **7. Procedure to exclude a member, priest, bishop or supreme leader**

Does not apply in this case.

## **8. Social and family relationships**

The courses contribute to personal development and promote good family and society relations.

## **9. The movement and medicine**

SHY does not claim to reject official medicine. The giving or transferring of energy, which is one of the fundamental elements of its philosophy, is a complement to traditional medical treatments and not a substitute. Such processes are not reserved for a spiritual "elite", but a person must have reached Level 4 of the course to be able to practice.

The energy transfer sessions can take place either in the presence of the person or from a distance (by telephone or by thought), and are free. They consist of sending positive thoughts towards a person who is physically or psychologically suffering, and can be compared to Christian prayers. The aim of this process is to heal the sick. Scientific verification of the effect of these energy transfers has never been carried out.

## **10. Members' information on the financial running of the movement**

The members of the non-profit making association are the founder members. They are informed of the financial management during the annual general assembly but have the right to consult the accounts at any time. Course teachers are remunerated.

## **11. Religious activities**

Does not apply in this case.

## **12. Life within the community**

Does not apply in this case.

## **13. List of allegations about the dangerous nature of the movement**

Fraud and illegal practice of medicine.

#### **14. The movement's official position in the face of such allegations**

- A. Spiritual Human Yoga - Belgium has never been found guilty of fraud.
- B. Energy transfer through thought is not a medical practice and does not pretend to replace medical treatment. It is carried out free of charge.

#### **15. Legal actions against the movement or its clergy in French-speaking regions or countries on the basis of one of the allegations mentioned in point 13. Sentences.**

None, except in Belgium. On the 14th January 1999, during a seminar organised at Brussels with Master Dang, Mrs Vo Thi Minh Hiep, secretary/treasurer of the non-profit making association Spiritual Human Yoga was arrested and questioned by the anti-terrorism section of the gendarmerie and placed under arrest by Mr Damien Vandermeersch, the Brussels examining judge. She spent 22 days in prison. During and after her detention, the non-profit making association's accounts and her husband's personal accounts were blocked. Her release was subject to two conditions; her ceasing to dispense Master Dang's teachings in return for payment and organising training seminars following the method of teaching of Master Dang Luong Minh. At the same time, Master Dang was arrested under similar conditions. He spent 65 days in prison and was freed after payment of an exorbitant bail. The reasons for these legal actions: suspected fraud and illegal practice of medicine. Since these events, the Belgian authorities have requested Interpol to monitor Master Dang's activities abroad.

Several national centres (Thailand, Venezuela and Brazil) have been visited by their country's police. In Belgium currently, the fifteen sub-centres that dispense Master Dang's teaching feel threatened by the Belgian anti-terrorist brigade.

#### **16. Legal actions against the movement or members of its clergy in other countries on the basis of one of the allegations mentioned in point 13. Sentences.**

None.

#### **17. Complaints from members of the movement regarding intolerance, discrimination on the basis of their convictions or obstacles to their freedom of expression before the publication of the parliamentary reports on sects.**

None.

#### **18. Complaints from members of the movement regarding intolerance, discrimination on the basis of their convictions or obstacles to their freedom of expression after the publication of the parliamentary reports on sects.**

Mrs Vo complains of abusive imprisonment, infringement of her right of association and freedom of teaching, rights guaranteed by the Belgian constitution and international instruments.

The non-profit making association is no longer operating. The lease of the premises where the courses were held had to be given up before its expiry, resulting in heavy expenses.

### **19. Legal actions taken by the movement. Results**

None

### **20. The movement and human rights.**

The teaching of Spiritual Human Yoga is not in contradiction with the human rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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This profile will be updated in relation to new pertinent elements to be brought to the attention of "Human Rights Without Frontiers".

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## **Interview of Master Dang, Founder of *Spiritual Human Yoga*, imprisoned in Belgium during 65 days in 1999**

***Mr. Luong Minh Dang inspired and founded the movement known under the denomination of "Spiritual Human Yoga" (SHY). His movement is spread out in 60 countries around the world and is represented through hundreds of teaching centers. However, he is not a member of any board of directors of the aforementioned centers nor does he work for any of them. Arrested in Belgium in January 1999 on the charges of swindling and illegal practice of medicine, he spent 65 days in prison before being released under bail.***

Mr. Dang was born in Vietnam in 1942 in a middle class trading family. He achieved secondary schooling in My-Tho. Due to the war between North and South Vietnam, he anticipated the draft by joining the South Vietnamese army. He declares to have served in the Marine from 1961 until 1975 and to have been as an officer. When the South became communist, he did not get imprisoned but was placed under surveillance during two years and marginalized from the new society. In 1985, thanks to the help of the United Nations, he could freely leave to the USA with his wife and children.

**HRWF : *Before January 1999, you visited Belgium on several occasions. Did you ever get into trouble with the Belgian police or justice?***

**Mr. Dang :** During the last ten years, I very often came to Belgium and I never had any problem.

**HRWF : *When you were summoned by the police in January 1999, did you have any idea about the reason?***

**Mr. Dang :** Not at all. The only thing I was ever told was that they needed to ask me a few questions.

**HRWF : *In what language did the interrogation take place at the police station ?***

**Mr. Dang :** In Vietnamese. A translator from the police assisted me.

**HRWF : *How long did it last?***

**Mr. Dang :** Eight hours, with a few breaks. The investigators were courteous.

**HRWF : *What kind of questions were you asked ?***

**Mr. Dang :** They started by asking me if my name was Dasira Narada. I told them that name was a religious name given to me by my students but which I objected to because it was not my official name. The police tried to force me to acknowledge that name but I did not accept. It is not the name that is written on my passport.

**HRWF : *What were the other questions after the identification issue?***

**Mr. Dang :** They were about the contents of my courses and about my earnings from those courses in Belgium and in other countries. They asked a lot of questions about money.

**HRWF : *What did you answer with regard to those financial questions ?***

**Mr. Dang :** The accounts are established as follows. After having paid the incurred expenses as well as the Value Added Tax (VAT), there is an amount left from which I give a part to the Belgian non profit-making association SHY and the rest is for me. I use that money to support charitable organizations. The newspaper *Le Soir* even accused me of having earned 18 millions as a remuneration for the January 1999 seminar. In fact, I never received anything because the Belgian justice blocked the SHY-Belgium bank accounts.

**HRWF : *Have the investigators asked you the names of the charitable organizations to which you gave donations ?***

**Mr. Dang :** Yes. I had told them that that money was mine and I could give it to anybody I wished. I have helped the poor and the sick in Vietnam as well as in other countries, in Eastern Europe.

**HRWF :** *Have the investigators asked any questions regarding the way in which you received the money earned in Belgium and in other countries, i.e. in cash, by check or by money transfer to a bank abroad ?*

**Mr. Dang :** Yes. They asked lots of questions regarding that matter.

**HRWF :** *When and how were you informed that you were under arrest ?*

**Mr. Dang :** After 8 hours of questioning, the policemen told me that I was under arrest and that I was to be introduced to the judge (1). I was then handcuffed. When I met the judge, I told him that I was an American citizen bearing an American passport and that I was expected to meet with a few thousands of people at a congress in Switzerland the following day. The interview lasted for about 15 minutes and the judge accused me of being a sect. He was nervous and very aggressive. I could not understand the reason why he was so furious at me.

**HRWF :** *How did you spend your two months of imprisonment ?*

**Mr. Dang :** I spent my first night of my detention in a cell at the police station. Then, I was transferred to the prison of Forest. There, I had to take off my personal clothes and had to wear a prisoner uniform. At first, I was alone in my prison cell; later on, I had to share it with a Romanian. The hygiene conditions were satisfactory : there were a toilet and a sink. The cell was heated. There was a radio, but for the television set, one had to pay for it. As for my walk hour, I was submitted to special rules. I was not allowed to have my walk at the same time as the other prisoners, but after them. This walk hour was done in a special courtyard covered with a corrugated iron roof so that I could not escape, while the other prisoners were allowed to walk together in an open-air courtyard. I did not have any possibility to talk to anyone, but in any case nobody could speak Vietnamese. Around three weeks after my arrest, I was examined by a psychiatrist by the name of Yves Crochelet. He was assisted by an interpreter. He declared me to be psychologically healthy.

**HRWF :** *Was the American embassy aware of your arrest ?*

**Mr. Dang :** My family informed the embassy about the situation. A delegation of two representatives from the consulate visited me twice at the prison. They asked me if I had been ill-treated during my questioning and I answered them by the negative.

**HRWF :** *What was your reaction when you were informed that you could be released providing a 50 million Belgian Francs bail ?*

**Mr. Dang :** I was very surprised. I asked my children if they could gather up such an amount. And if it was not possible, I did not want them to do any borrowing. In the meantime, the news of my arrest had spread out to my students in the whole world and they took the initiative to lend me money for my bail. The amount that was claimed was gathered at my lawyer's. As the bail was to be paid in full cash in Belgian Francs, my lawyer brought that astronomical amount in a suitcase under special protection. Once freed, I did not feel at ease because my release had been bought for a high price, and I did not feel that I had committed something illegal. Furthermore, I was not allowed to leave the territory for one month. I spent that time at the Hilton hotel in Brussels, nearby the Law Courts. Under this period of

time, a Swiss letter rogatory came to Belgium. During the questioning, the three Swiss investigators really put the pressure on me and were rather aggressive. The Belgians were on the contrary much more amiable.

**HRWF : *Did you have access to your bank accounts to pay for your hotel expenses ?***

**Mr. Dang :** No. My expenses were covered with the loan from my students.

**HRWF : *Where is now the procedure regarding the two charges brought against you, i.e. swindling and illegal practice of medicine ?***

**Mr. Dang :** I do not know anything about it. I don't have any news and I object to the swindling charge. Moreover, I do not practice medicine. I teach techniques to preserve health and to avoid stress. By the way, nobody ever asked me if I did any diagnosis, nor if I prescribed any medication, nor if I asked any remuneration for my consultations. They just accused me. I must say that I travel around the world and that Belgium is the only country which makes such accusations against me.

**HRWF : *According to some newspapers, you have made quite a number of apocalyptic predictions. Here are some of them. You supposedly incited your students to sell their homes and not pay their bills any more because, by January 29, 1999, they were all to go to another planet. Another fateful date : August 11, 1999, the day of the total eclipse of the sun in Europe. You supposedly announced that the sun and the moon would stick together and very high temperature would provoke the melting of the ice-pack.***

**Mr. Dang :** These are journalists' inventions. I never made such predictions.

**HRWF : *You also supposedly said in your teachings that the Universal Energy could change the trajectory of missiles (2).***

**Mr. Dang :** This is absolutely false. I never said such things.

**HRWF : *Dr. Berliner, a member of the Medical Doctors' Association and the representative of the Association of victims of illegal practice of medicine blames you for having treated with alternative medicines an infant diseased with hereditary muscular atrophy. It is however the only case he has heard of concerning you (3). The grandparents of the infant are said to have filed a complaint.***

**Mr. Dang :** I have never met this little girl, or anybody else. The Belgian police have not asked me any questions regarding this case either.

**HRWF : *In your teaching, what do you understand by the term Higher Beings ?***

**Mr. Dang :** They are God, Jesus and Buddha, ...

**HRWF : *Do you consider yourself as an intermediary between the Higher Beings and the Humans ?***

**Mr. Dang** : When I meditate, I receive messages, teachings and instructions from the Higher Beings. I then share them with my students in my teaching.

**HRWF** : *Have the Higher Beings clearly told you that they chose you as their intermediary for mankind?*

**Mr. Dang** : At the beginning, I did not receive such a message but it is only later that I was chosen by the Higher Beings as their intermediary.

**HRWF** : *Are you the only intermediary of these Higher Beings ?*

**Mr. Dang** : I do not know.

**HRWF** : *Are your teachings compatible with Christianity, Islam and Buddhism ?*

**Mr. Dang** : I always recommend my students to keep their religion.

*Interview by Willy Fautré*

*in Washington on September 28, 1999 (4).*

**Footnotes :**

(1) Since 1990, the Belgian prosecutor's office department has conferred a particular mark (number "57") to all cases regarding "sects". Following the recommendations given by the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Sects, each prosecutor's office has a special judge in charge of "sects" cases.

(2) Newspaper " La Libre Belgique", January 17, 1999.

(3) Questions have been asked on a series of predictions attributed to Master Dang. The answers have been recorded and can be listened to at the Headquarters of HRWF.

(4) The interview was given in Vietnamese and French with the help of an interpreter.

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**SPIRITUAL HUMAN YOGA**

## **AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MRS VO THI MINH HIEP, MOTHER OF FOUR, IMPRISONED FOR 22 DAYS**

From January 6<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> 1999, the non-profit making SHY Belgium association organised a level 6 seminar at the "Chateau du Lac" hotel in Genval on the outskirts of Brussels. Taking part was Mr Dang, a spiritual master whose teaching inspired the creation of the Belgian association. His teachings have been translated into many languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Hungarian, Macedonian and Byelorussian). At the end of the seminar, Master Dang and Mrs Vo Thi Minh Hiep, the association's treasurer, were arrested for fraud and illegal practice of medicine. Surprisingly enough, Master Dang had been coming to Belgium each year for the last ten years with no problems at all. He also went regularly to Great Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland and was never bothered by the authorities. Mr Dang spent 65 days in prison and Mrs Vo 22 days. Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) has begun a counter-inquiry and met with Mrs Vo. Married to a Swedish engineer, she has four children, aged between 4 and 22 years. The eldest is studying at university. Both have lived in Belgium for 27 years. Within the association, Mrs Vo teaches the spiritual techniques of Master Dang, an American citizen of Vietnamese origin who arrived in the USA in 1985 with the help of the United Nations.

***HRWF: Mrs Vo, tell us how the seminar you and Mr Dang were arrested, interrogated and imprisoned after, went.***

Mrs Vo: The seminar went without any problem, except for a few external incidents. On January 8<sup>th</sup> 1999 at around 1 pm, Mr Phillippe Roussel from RTL-TV1 asked me for an interview but I had to refuse because I was far too busy with the seminar which around 1000 people were attending. Without being notified, I was filmed and the short footage was presented during the evening news on a TV channel. The following day at about 8pm, two agents from the *Brigade Surveillance Recherche* (BSR, the Intelligence branch of the police force) came to the hotel and asked the hotel manager for a meeting with Mr Dang. I was very busy with the interpreters, but since the agents insisted, I took them to Mr Dang's room. As Mr Dang only speaks Vietnamese, and I am his official interpreter, I translated the exact words spoken. The agents asked him to accompany them to the police station in Nivelles for an interview. Mr Dang refused to go there immediately, as he did not understand the reason why the Belgian authorities needed him so badly and so unexpectedly, and also we had very busy seminar days with a tremendous amount of work. However, he agreed that he would comply with their request on the day after the last day of the seminar. Mr Dang and I received an official convocation asking us to be present at the BSR, rue Croix de Fer in Brussels at 10 am on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

***HRWF: So you were also involved?***

Mrs Vo: Absolutely. I contacted my lawyer, Mr Herveg, to explain the situation. I had previously contacted him to ask if it was possible to get SHY Belgium removed from the list of the 189 organisations suspected of being harmful and dangerous cults. I was supposed to give him a complete file, but as I was busy with my professional activities and numerous travels abroad, I did not have time to pursue it. Besides, I

really thought that there was nothing illegal done within our school, and genuinely and naively thought that with time, people would realise that nothing justified our inscription on that infamous list. So I left the subject as it was. My lawyer recommended that I see Mrs Veronique Laurent, a lawyer who specialised in criminal law, whom I met on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

***HRWF: What did she think about the situation?***

Mrs Vo: She advised me to go to the BSR without worrying and agreed to defend SHY Belgium if needed. It was also agreed that the process of getting SHY Belgium off the list of dangerous cults be continued.

***HRWF: And now to the famous interview with the BSR...***

Mrs Vo: Arriving at the BSR with Mr Dang, I was absolutely stunned to see journalists in front of the entrance to the building. While we tried to find a way through the group of journalists, camera flashes were going off in our faces. Ten minutes later we were led separately to different offices. The gendarmes told us that the interview would last no longer than 2 hours. At noon, a policeman offered me a sandwich, which I refused, thinking that the interview was coming to its end. At 3 pm we were still there. My husband who had been waiting since 10 am decided to go and pick the children up at school and bring back all the files left at the hotel. At 6 pm I had the clear impression that something was going wrong. This was confirmed when a policeman told me that I had to meet the judge after my questioning had been typed up. At around 7 pm Mr Dang and I were taken to the Court. We were strictly forbidden to speak to each other.

***HRWF: What happened during the interview with the judge, Mr Damien Vandermeersch?***

Mrs Vo: The judge seemed very nervous. He asked me rapid-fire questions about the classes I taught and the registration fees. Even though I speak French very well, there were legal terms that I didn't understand. Every time I asked for an explanation of the meaning of a word, it annoyed him. I had the feeling that I was just a number. I felt that my dignity was being compromised, and that I had been deceived about their intentions. I was just a toy to them. At the end of the interview I was really surprised to see a group of armed gendarmes in the hallway. I had never imagined that they were there for us. At around 9 pm Mr Dang and I were handcuffed like common criminals. We were then informed that we were to be put into detention at the police station before being transferred to prison the following day. Surprisingly we were never informed about the charges being brought against us, nor allowed a lawyer present to assist and defend us. Imagine how amazed we were when they handcuffed us! Imagine my bewilderment when they refused me the right to call my husband to inform him of my arrest. Later I was informed that during this time the police searched our house and then the association office, which was sealed off.

***HRWF: How was your stay in prison?***

Mrs Vo: We spent the first night at the police station. I was cold, but at midnight a gendarme came to give me a blanket, two wafer biscuits and some fruit juice. In the morning I was taken to the Berkendael prison. I filled out the formalities -

fingerprints, paperwork etc. My personal belongings were taken away and I was given a towel and some soap for the shower. Afterwards I was led to my cell. It was about 11 am. I got my first meal of the day only at noon. I continued to sleep because I was still in shock from all these unexpected events. My husband came to visit me that day and told me about the search warrants. I was allowed to see my lawyer only two or three days later.

***HRWF: What about visiting conditions?***

Mrs Vo: Only my family could visit, not friends. During those visits I was in a booth protected with a double layer of glass. I spoke through a microphone but the sound wasn't very clear. I was allowed a full hour visit every morning, except Sundays, without being put under surveillance.

***HRWF: During your imprisonment, what were your days like?***

Mrs Vo: I spent the first week alone in my cell. Afterwards I shared it with a Chinese woman who could only speak in her mother tongue. Nobody knew her name. I think she was arrested because she worked in a restaurant without a work permit. In the morning I would wake up very early, about 5 or 6 am. Coffee was served between 6.30 and 7 am. In my cell I had two plates, a coffeepot along with a little cup. I was normally given four or five slices of bread and some jam for the morning and evening. For lunch I had a hot meal. In the evening around 5 pm we were given a bowl of vegetable soup and some cold meat to have with the leftover morning bread. Before dinner, between 4 and 5 pm I was allowed to have a walk. I would walk around in the prison courtyard. In the beginning I didn't know anyone, then I started talking to the other prisoners. Some of them were being detained temporarily while others had been sentenced for murder. There was a radio but no television. The first week I couldn't receive any books to read or food from my family. For the first two days I had to wear the clothes I was arrested in. Afterwards I was allowed to give my husband a list of clothes and other things for him to bring me. After the second week I was allowed a weekly order of fruit and other things. There was also an option of renting a television or fridge. The only problem was that we had to open an account with the prison's administration. Unfortunately my husband's bank account and mine had both been blocked and we couldn't get to our own money. This lasted for two months, during which I couldn't order anything. I had nothing to do to fill up my days. I just had some paper and a pen so I spent my time drawing whatever I could see.

***HRWF: What happened during the interview?***

Mrs Vo: Whilst my police station interview was going on, the police went to the office at 83 rue Vilain, Brussels XIV and to my home in Rhode-Ste-Genese. The search lasted between 9 pm to midnight. But as they still hadn't finished, a few policemen came back to my home the following day where they stayed from the morning until 5 pm. They searched everywhere, even in the children's bedrooms. My husband, still in shock from my imprisonment, asked them to avoid scaring the children by removing their weapons. This they graciously did. They took away all the documents, the transcripts of my courses, the list of people attending our courses as well as my computer. On my release from prison, the key to the office where the locks were changed was returned to me. One of the rooms containing course transcripts that they were unable to take with them had been sealed up.

***HRWF: Are you the owner of that office?***

Mrs Vo: No, I was renting it. Because I cannot continue my activities I had to terminate the lease on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1999. I then had to ask the gendarmes to remove the seals so that the owner could get back into the office.

***HRWF: Did they take away your account ledgers?***

Mrs Vo: Yes, they took them all. I don't understand why nobody asked me for them before the interview and signing my order of arrest. During my 22-day imprisonment they could have looked through the documents they took.

***HRWF: When were you released from prison?***

Mrs Vo: February 4<sup>th</sup> 1999

***HRWF: When were you told about the charges against you?***

Mrs Vo: On January 15<sup>th</sup> when I was in prison. I was not informed orally either by the police or the judge, I read about it when I leafed through the copy of my file in prison.

***HRWF: How did the case go?***

Mrs Vo: My lawyer told me that the Council Chamber would decide on my case on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 4 days after my arrest. I saw Mr Dang again there but was not allowed to speak to him. In spite of an excellent speech by the two defence lawyers, we were not released. It was decided then to go to appeal, and the appeal was set for January 27<sup>th</sup>. My lawyer said the charges only rested on one denunciation from a couple accusing Master Dang of treating their grandson. This was not true. Actually it was one of his students, a therapist, who applied the method of universal energy among other therapies during the treatment session that she gave to the child. No plaintiff was present during the appeal hearing. There was nothing else in our files but letters of dissatisfaction and denunciations. One of them was from a university professor who was doing research on AIDS. Other elements of the file related to a divorce of a Vietnamese woman who had left her Belgian husband. He had attended our courses a few years ago and accused Mr Dang of making his wife disappear, until the day she reappeared. In fact, she was living in Brussels, hiding from his harassment. It is on letters and complaints like these that the terrorist and cult activity section of the police based their inquiries into our activities. Finally the Court of Appeal rejected our appeal.

***HRWF: It seems as if information has been gathered and used against you and your movement with the sole aim of harming you.***

Mrs Vo: I don't know anything about that. It may be. All I know is that the Order of Medical Doctors was interviewed by Alain Lallemand and other journalists. The interviews were very negative.

***HRWF: On what basis were you finally freed?***

Mrs Vo: On the basis that I had been a resident of Belgium for 27 years, because I had never had any problem with the law in Belgium and there was no risk of me disappearing abroad as my husband works here and my children go to school in Belgium. Perhaps they investigated my bank accounts and finally realised that there was nothing wrong with them. Anyway I still don't understand why I had to stay so long in prison. I was freed with two conditions. Firstly I was forbidden to give courses for three months, and I had to report to the social services each month. That is what I did. At the end of that period I still had no news. The Ministry of Justice's social services department informed me orally that prohibition had not been renewed. That meant that I regained all my rights, including my right to teach the techniques of Master Dang. However my lawyer warned me that I was still at risk of being arrested again. Left in doubt regarding my personal situation, and fearing being sent back to prison, I decided to stop all activities. The bank accounts of SHY Belgium are still blocked, as far as my private account is concerned, it was "reopened" in March 1999. I still don't know what I can and can't do. I am still regularly being asked to meet the police to answer questions regarding the courses, their content and prices.

On the whole the interviews are fine. However on one occasion I was suspected of being linked with the white slave trade and I was threatened with a second imprisonment. I was shocked. I was told there was a letter supposedly signed by me and dated late February. It concerned 5 women from Byelorussia who were attending one of my seminars at the hotel Mowenpick in Belgium. The police thought I could be dealing with prostitution. I replied that I never organised any seminar at the hotel and since my arrest I had not organised any seminars. When I saw the letter I mentioned that it was a photocopy made with SHY Belgium's letter head, and that the signature was not mine. It was a fake document that just happened to be in the hands of the police. Who was behind that forgery and why?

***HRWF: What about Master Dang in all of this?***

Mrs Vo: It was terrible for him because he does not speak French and hardly speaks English. He just knows a few sentences, but cannot have a conversation. I don't know how he communicated with his lawyer. Because of the language barrier he couldn't communicate with anyone during his 65-day detention. He didn't even go out for his daily walk. The charges against him were the same as mine, i.e. fraud and illegal practice of medicine.

***HRWF: Why was he in prison for so long?***

Mrs Vo: I think the Belgian authorities were worried he would try to return to the USA and avoid the courts. This is the reason he had to pay a huge bail, 50 million Belgian francs after 65 days of imprisonment. According to his lawyer, this is the highest amount ever requested by the Belgian Justice department. At first Mr Dang refused to pay this amount and went back to his cell. His own family, some students and the centre in Holland finally managed to get the money together for his bail. It had to be paid in cash. In spite of that payment he still had to stay one more month in Belgium before being allowed to leave.

***HRWF: After all these misadventures, what is your conclusion?***

Mrs Vo: The more I think about it all the less I understand.