

Letter from Nguyen Minh Binh

To: Tinh Thuong Foundation

My name is Minh Binh, a current resident of Cho Lach in Ben Tre. I was extremely happy and touched upon receiving your gift of \$150 Australian dollars. Therefore I wanted to express my family's gratitude through this letter.

At the end of the war I returned home as a cripple. Both my legs remained on the battlefield. I struggled within myself to overcome all the hardships to build a livelihood that was largely restricted by my crippled body. I was able to work as a fisherman catching prawns and net fishing. Through the years, although the work was very hard, I have to admit my efforts did help provide for my wife and children.

Time passes by so quickly! So much so that I have now joined the aged and my health is no longer what it used to be. I do not have the financial capacity to tend to my health therefore my old wounds have relapsed and each step I take is becoming harder than the last. I have had to give up working on the river. Looking back my occupation casting nets had been filled with sadness and happiness. Please indulge me by allowing me to tell you about an incident close to my heart.

One time I was prawn fishing at Han Luong river, when suddenly a rip appeared. I rowed as fast as I could to towards the river bank but my efforts were thwarted by a huge wave that turned my canoe upside down. My catch and my tools all floated away downstream. Without legs to swim to shore, I clung tightly to the upturned canoe. Luckily the waves pushed me towards the roots of a tree by the shore. I was able to hold onto those roots until the rip subsided. When the water calmed and the winds stilled, I had to dive into the river to retrieve my tools. My wife and children were terrified when they learned of my ordeal. If not for pure luck, I might have drowned without leaving a trace. Even now I startle myself each time I think back to that day.

After this incident I considered changing my occupation. My children were still quite young so I needed find some kind of work that enabled me to provide for them. However with my disability what work could I get? In the end I was forced back to casting nets.

These are personal thoughts I wanted to share with you. As this the first time I am writing to you, I'm not sure what more I should say. I just wanted you to know my family and I sincerely thank and appreciate the assistance you have given us. I wish everyone at Tinh Thuong Foundation unceasing good health, and thousands of happy encounters. We pray for your happiness and the continued love you have shown to those of us who have suffered such misfortunes.

Once again I sincerely wish you all much happiness.

Yours Sincerely,
Nguyen Minh Binh
(Translator: Nguyen Tuong To Uyen)