



Symposium on Vietnamese Music at Southern Illinois University

Vietnam **BULLETIN**

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political & military news

PRESIDENT THIEU on NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Following are excerpts of a major address delivered by the President of the Republic of Viet-Nam to a Joint Session of the National Assembly on November 15, 1971. The President drew up a new vista of national economic development with special emphasis on promotion of investment and export.

Agriculture

" The development of agriculture," the President said, "should be the foundation of the economic development and social reform program. Consequently, as the country still possesses countless potentials yet to be explored, the Government is pushing a Five-Year Plan aiming at increasing agricultural, fishery, forestry, and animal husbandry production to about the double of the present gross income obtained from the agricultural sector."

Industrialization

" Along with the development of agriculture, we will carry out a strong industrialization program aimed at two basic objectives: 1) to create employment for more people, and 2) to improve the foreign trade balance by reducing the dependence on imports and develop exports."

" The ultimate goal of the economic program will be the building of a spirit of self-sufficiency and self-support in the country at large."

Liberalized trade and attractive investment conditions

" To create a favorable environment for development, I suggest two important reform measures: 1) to liberalize the trade with other countries, and 2) to rationalize the exchange rate. To achieve this end, the Government will submit to the National Assembly two bills requesting 1) authorization to establish a free exchange system, and 2) simplification and reduction of import and export taxes."

Elaborating on the Government's industrialization policy, the President requested that the Senators and Deputies

" ... give priority to and complete the discussions on the new investment bill. The Government is setting up an economic development funds with an initial fund of ten billion Vietnamese piasters, to provide medium and long-term credits to new investment projects."

An effective and more equitable tax structure

In expressing gratitude to the United States Government and people for their generous aid to Viet-Nam, "it can never, nor should it be allowed to, replace entirely the efforts by our Government," the President said, "to contribute to the nation-building process." The President further appealed to the people to spend less and save more.

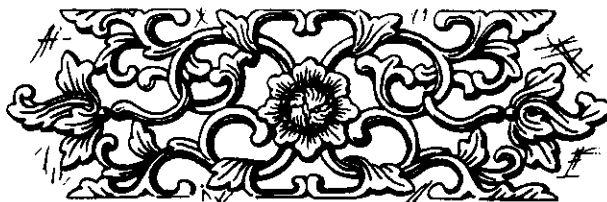
Eliciting his deep concern for the needy people, the President requested that the National Assembly pass the bill on family allowances deductions and the exemption from salary tax of those private and government employes with a low income. To this end, the President will submit to the National Assembly a new income tax bill. He also declared that the Government is determined to obtain a clean and efficient tax machinery.

" Regarding soldiers on the battlefield and policemen, an interministerial committee is being established to examine and propose allowances or special incentive pay. This will also help stimulate the newly recruited and military personnel in good health, presently in the support sector, to volunteer for service in the various battalions to maintain the national fighting potential to its maximum. To this end, the Government has established a special allowance of 4,500 VN piasters per month for each military man in the 133 infantry battalions, 57 ranger battalions, nine marine battalions and nine airborne battalions, and 2,000 VN piasters per month for each military person in the 46 mobile regional forces battalions.

" As for the policemen and personnel responsible for the collection of resources for the national budget, monthly special allowances or incentive pays will be granted on a selective basis, in order to stimulate better service."

Lastly, the President appealed for the legislators' support in "the correct implementation of the profound economic reform programs" proposed:

" This is not a revolution with empty slogans, neither is it a revolution inspired by hatred. This is a social welfare revolution."



Top Politician Assassinated

One of South Vietnam's top politicians, Professor Nguyen Van Bong, 42, was killed last week when terrorists exploded a powerful plastic charge under his car, killing the mild-mannered man and one of his bodyguards and wounding another ten persons. The explosion took place when the professor's vehicle was locked in a traffic jam in the rush hour of Wednesday and instantly killed him.

Prof. Bong, who served as Rector of the National Institute of Administration and thus had an incomparable influence on the nation's administrative cadres, was also Chairman of the politically moderate "Cap Tien" (Progressist) Party, possibly the only political organization with grass roots in the countryside. Prof. Bong's party performed extremely well in the recent House elections and now boasts about 25 Representatives in the Lower House of Congress.

Although no definite version has been given of Prof. Bong's death it appears that terrorists had planted inside the car an explosion charge which they connected with a timing device some sources said Police had recovered. At any rate, Dr. Bong was burnt beyond recognition and had one of his arms broken in a terror case that shook the nation's conscience, bringing about its condemnation by everyone.

In a letter to Mme Bong, President Nguyen Van Thieu saw in the death of Mr. Bong "a great loss for the nation's intellectuals and administrative students and personnel." Representative Tran Van Tuyen claimed to see in it the "sacrifice of a nationalist fighter." The militant Buddhist Church was even more eloquent, seeing in it "a great political loss, for Dr. Bong was a greatly talented man." More simple and moving was a statement by Dr. Bong's students, who said "all of us mourn our teacher and guide."

Dr. Bong was mentioned lately as a possible candidate for premiership and some Saigon newspapers claimed to see in this rumor the reason for the professor's death. But probably nearer to the truth was an editorial in the Chinh Luan daily, which concluded: "Is this the most visible indication of the 'political struggle' which starts the 'peace restoration process'?"

An agregé of the Paris School of Law, Professor Bong is survived by his young wife and three children.

2,320 POW's Released

SAIGON, November 5 (VN)-- In an unprecedented "humanitarian" gesture, the South Vietnamese government released on the occasion of President Nguyen Van Thieu's inauguration, 2,938 Communist prisoners of war. All those freed on this occasion are natives of South Vietnam since the North Vietnamese regime has constantly refused to accept any of its men captured on southern battlefields.

According to a government communique, 681 of the released prisoners were to be made full-fledged citizens while the remaining 2,257 were considered as "returnees" or former enemy personnel under the supervision of the "Open Arms" Ministry until their total reintegration into society. A breakdown of the number of released POW's showed 2,726 to be able-bodied and 212 disabled persons.

It was the largest batch of Communist prisoners of war ever set free by the South Vietnamese government. They represented about seven percent of the POW population, which is held in some ten major prison camps throughout the Republic. The largest of these camps is located on the island of Phu Quoc, where about half an estimated 38,000 prisoners of war are being detained.

U.S. Defense Secretary's Visit

November 5 (VN)-- U.S. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird last week visited South Vietnam for an assessment of the Vietnamization program before President Nixon announces a new phase of U.S. re-deployment from the war zone. Mr. Laird visited this war-torn land in the company of top Pentagon officials, including Admiral Thomas Moorer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Although nothing has been officially said of the contents of the discussions Mr. Laird and Admiral Moorer had with Vietnamese officials, a government source in Saigon disclosed last Friday that the U.S. and South Vietnamese governments had agreed to the reduction by half of the American contingent at present still in Vietnam. This would mean another withdrawal order involving this time the repatriation of some 100,000 American troops.

According to the same government source, President Nguyen Van Thieu had apparently been prepared "for whatever number Washington may wish to withdraw" and he only drew Mr. Laird's attention to the necessity of continued massive U.S. material assistance so that the Vietnamese may completely shoulder the task of defending their own land in the coming months.

Other sources also said President Thieu called Mr. Laird's attention to the massive Soviet and Chinese assistance North Vietnam is presently receiving. This, the sources said, can be estimated at US \$3 billion, at least. Indeed, according to the newest aid agreement signed by Soviet and North Vietnamese leaders, Russian assistance to Hanoi amounts this year to US \$300 million in economic aid and US \$1.6 billion in military hardware. Peking's aid for Hanoi has not been publically announced but is considered equally as important.

Economic Aid and Troop Cuts

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 20-- The U.S. supporting assistance program, which provides economic aid to friendly countries with heavy defense burdens, has been "a good investment for the peace and stability of the world," a USAID official declared today.

Robert H. Nooter, Deputy Coordinator of the Bureau for Supporting Assistance of the U.S. Agency for International Development, told the 28th annual meeting of the National League of Insured Savings Associations in Montreal that such support, in addition to military aid, not only has helped such countries defend themselves against external threats or internal subversion, but also has played an important role in setting the stage for longer term economic growth and self-sufficiency.

The AID official pointed out that the largest part of the U.S. economic aid to Vietnam finances a wide range of imports such as steel products.

"While the cost of our economic aid to Vietnam is substantial," said Nooter, "it is far less expensive to provide support of this kind than it is to keep U.S. troops there. For example, the Vietnam war cost the United States \$29 billion in the fiscal year of 1969; that cost dropped to \$14 billion in the fiscal year of 1971, is expected to be about \$8 billion this fiscal year, and will decline further as our troops continue to withdraw. Thus, U.S. assistance to Vietnam is reducing the cost of U.S. involvement there to tolerable proportions, while still giving the Vietnamese an opportunity to maintain their independence from the North."

Nooter said the peak requirement for economic aid to Vietnam should be next year, with a gradual reduction after that.

APU Council Meeting in Saigon

SAIGON, November 11 (VP)-- Nearly 70 delegates of the Asian Parliamentarians Union (APU)'s nation-members attended Thursday morning the opening ceremony of the 10th APU Executive Council meeting at Hoan My international conference hall under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Luu Vien.

Present at the three-day meeting were APU delegates from the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, the Khmer Republic, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Republic of China, and Japan.

Aussie Base to RVN Army

The major Australian base in Vietnam was turned over to the South Vietnamese Army early this month. Situated at Nui Dat, some 40 miles southeast of Saigon, it had been the headquarters of the Australian task force in Vietnam for over five years. At the height of the Australian commitment here, Australian strength was approximately 8,500 troops with about half of them based at Nui Dat.

As things are now, just over 3,000 Australians are still in Vietnam with most of them stationed at Vung Tau. They will return home before Christmas or immediately afterwards. After this, there would be left only a little over 100 advisors serving with South Vietnamese territorial forces, especially in the province of Phuoc Tuy.

2,563 Reds Rally In Week

SAIGON, November 9 (VP)-- Within the scope of the "Nguyen Trai 4" Campaign, Open Arms services throughout the country last week welcomed 2,563 communist cadres who rallied to the national cause.

The figure included 2,296 communist prisoners-of-war authorized to enjoy returnees' status.

Since early this year to date, 18,606 communist cadres rallied to the national cause, thus bringing to 191,670 the total number of returnees since the promulgation of the Open Arms policy in February, 1963.

RVN Statement on Withdrawal of ROK Troops

SAIGON, November 6 (VP)-- The Foreign Ministry Saturday issued the following statement on the announced pullout of ROK combat troops:

In the light of the progress achieved in the development of the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and in consideration of the general improved security situation, the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the Republic of Vietnam have, in recent months, held discussions on the program of gradual withdrawal of the Korean Troops from Vietnam.

The two Governments have agreed that 10,000 Korean soldiers, including the troops of the Second Marine Brigade, would be redeployed back in Korea during the period beginning December 1, 1971 and ending June 30, 1972.

The withdrawal of the remaining Korean Forces will be subject to further consultations between the two Governments.

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam wishes to convey its warmest thanks and appreciation to the Government and People of the Republic of Korea for their great contribution to safeguarding freedom and democracy in the Republic of Vietnam. During their tour of assignment in Vietnam, the Korean soldiers have discharged their duty in the finest traditions of the valiant Korean Armed Forces.

cultural news

Symposium On Vietnamese Music

SAIGON, November 11 (VP)-- A symposium on Vietnamese music was conducted at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale last Friday by three Vietnamese musicologists who are also performers, sources from the University reported.

The three men, Tran Van Khe, director of research at the National Center of Scientific Research in Paris; Nguyen Vinh Bao, retired professor of music and performance practice at the National Conservatory of Music and Drama, in Saigon; and Pham Duy, composer and professional performer of the "new music" of Vietnam are visiting professors at SIU, serving as consultants on the University's ethnomusicology research program.

A number of ethnomusicologists attended the symposium, among them Bruno Nettl, president of the American Society for Ethnomusicology and the widely-acclaimed team of performers, Addiss and Crofut, who recently performed at SIU.

The symposium is sponsored jointly by the Center for Vietnamese Studies and the University Museum's ethnomusicology research program.

Messrs Khe and Bao are authorities and performers of the classical, traditional music; Duy is a composer and collector of Indochinese folk music.

The morning session, 9 to 11:30 a.m. was devoted to a general introduction to the musical traditions of Vietnam, from the earliest history to the present. At the afternoon session, 1:30 to 4 p.m., the speakers presented an in-depth discussion of the structure of Vietnamese music, its heritage from China and other Eastern traditions, various deviations, and "new music" developments.

Further, an evening concert, 7:30-9 p.m., was presented in the Home Economics Auditorium.

Mr. Bao, who is the inventor of a new system of music notation for recording the traditional, largely oral, music of Vietnam is also a maker of Vietnamese instruments and the inventor of a new instrument, a 21-string zither. He is teaching a course at SIU in classical Vietnamese instruments.

Mr. Khe is the author of several major works on Vietnamese music and has a reputation as a scholar in this field.

Mr. Duy, author of a new book on Vietnamese folk music, is regarded as the foremost collector of Indochinese folk music, recorded on tape during his 25 years of foot travel throughout Southeast Asia.

Restoration of Old Imperial City

UNESCO is planning to assist the Republic of Vietnam in the restoration of the old imperial capital city of Hue. The Executive Director of UNESCO has approved US \$8,000 to finance an on-the-spot study of the historic site this month. The team in charge of this study includes Architect Woolrige Brown Morton and Professor Bunji Kobayashi of Waseda University in Japan. When the study is completed UNESCO plans to launch a fund-raising campaign throughout the world to finance the rehabilitation of Hue.

Historic monuments and palaces of the former imperial capital, some several centuries old, have suffered heavy damage by hostile activities. A substantial portion of the royal treasures including priceless pieces of antique China has been stolen or brought away by unidentified individuals during the past few years.

Located in an attractive natural setting with the beach barely ten miles to the east, Hue can become a prosperous tourist center.



economic news

Investment and Export Promotion

Following is the translation of a declaration made by the President of the Republic of Vietnam on November 15, 1971 regarding investment and export promotion:

"I hereby declare the determination of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to promote the rapid economic development of this country. The Government will provide encouragement and assistance for the expansion of investment and exports.

1. The economic development policy of the Government of Vietnam rests on the principle of private ownership and free enterprise. The Government believes that only in a healthy business environment can the private sector contribute most effectively to economic and social progress.

Private initiative and entrepreneurship are called upon to play the leading role in all sectors of the economy.

2. Within the framework of the national development strategy, the Government warmly welcomes foreign investment in Vietnam. Foreign investors shall enjoy all privileges and incentives made available to Vietnamese investors as prescribed by the law.

3. A new and progressive investment law will be enacted to provide generous privileges and guarantees to investors, both domestic and foreign.

4. Expansion of exports is an objective of the highest priority in the national endeavor to achieve economic independence.

5. All necessary measures will be undertaken to foster an invigorating business climate and lay the foundation for a growing and healthy industrial sector capable of meeting the challenge of domestic and international competition.

6. The Government will implement a program of fundamental reforms to eliminate irrationalities and inefficiencies in the exchange, trade and tax system, and to promote a viable and dynamic economy.

...

7. Along with the above reform program, the following measures will be undertaken:

A. Administrative procedures will be simplified and streamlined to remove all impediments to investors.

B. Agencies responsible for investment promotion will be reorganized and strengthened to assist investors with integrity and dedication.

C. Banking and credit institutions will be offered special inducements to expand the scope of their activities so that savings will be available for productive investment on favorable terms.

D. A capital market will be established to facilitate the mobilization of medium and long-term capital.

E. An economic development fund will be established with an initial capitalization of 10 Billion VN piasters to provide medium and long-term financing for investment projects.

F. Regulations and procedures on importation of machinery, spare parts, and raw materials will be simplified to the maximum in the spirit of free trade.

G. Unnecessay export control will be removed to permit businessmen to explore all opportunities for expanding exports.

H. A national council for export promotion with the participation of governmental agencies and representatives of the private sector will be established to plan, coordinate, and promote export activities.

8. In the effort to develop a healthy and viable economy, the Government will pursue a policy of flexible and rational protection which will provide domestic infant industries with favorable conditions for growth while enhancing the competitiveness of their products at home and abroad.

The protection policies of the Government will not support inefficient industries with no prospect for progress.

9. The export and production policies set forth in this declaration will be the guiding principles for all Government agencies directly or indirectly involved in the task of economic development.

I shall personally ensure that the above stated policies are carried out. I call upon my fellow citizens to dedicate themselves to the cause of national progress with the full confidence that the Vietnamese people will successfully meet the challenge of economic development.

RVN at ECAFE Seminar on Petroleum

A South Vietnamese delegation of petroleum experts and officials led by Lawyer Vuong Van Bac attended the ECAFE Seminar on Petroleum Legislation in Bangkok from October 18 to October 25, 1971. The meeting, the first of its kind, was attended by representatives from 18 countries including: Australia, Taiwan, Fiji, France, Indonesia, Japan, the Khmer Republic, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, the USSR, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Federal Republic of Germany attended as an observer.

The principal theme of the discussion was petroleum legislation, with particular reference to offshore operations. In his opening statement the ECAFE Executive Secretary U Nyun called on developing countries in the region to reach urgent agreement on common boundaries to facilitate development of offshore petroleum resources. He said the major aim of the Seminar was to help developing nations of the area with newly-established offshore prospecting operations in order to frame petroleum legislation based on the best existing models, define offshore boundaries and combat pollution hazards. Following were some of the main topics on the agenda:

1. Government revenues from oil and gas
2. Government authority in the administration of exploration, evaluation, and development of offshore oil and gas
3. Status of oil and natural gas legislation currently in force in countries of ECAFE region.

EEC Preferential Tariff

The Ministry of Economy, in a communique dated September 27, 1971, has informed the local business community that the European Economic Community (EEC) has just decided to grant a preferential tariff on goods imported from the developing countries, including the Republic of Vietnam. The EEC includes France, West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy and Holland.

To benefit from the preferential tariff, the exporter shipping to the EEC countries must furnish a certificate of origin for the goods exported. The certificates may be obtained from the Ministry of Economy (Directorate of Foreign Trade).

In 1970, France imported from South Vietnam US \$1.6 million worth of goods. This represents 80 percent of RVN's export to EEC countries.

ADB Loan Release

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has released the US \$2.5 million loan to the Republic of Vietnam. The Agricultural Development Bank of Vietnam (ADBV), which is the loan-receiving agency, has issued tender for the supply of the following equipment to be financed with the ADB loan:

Marine diesel motors with accessories and parts:

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| 30 HP rated brakes | 50 each |
| 40 HP " " | 100 each |
| 60 HP " " | 120 each |
| 75 HP " " | 50 each |
| 100 HP " " | 50 each |
| 150 HP " " | 14 each |
| 300 HP " " | 10 each |

124,000 hanks polyethylen thread for fishnet, 380D/400D 3 strand, dark gray or green, in 1 kg, 16,500 fishing floats

394 magnetic compasses
10 gyrocompasses
10 sextants
124 fish finders
24 winches
97 wireless phones
1,900 hank cable for fishing boats
10 anchors with cable
17 fire extinguishers

Machines and equipment with parts for 2 ice plants, capacity 100 tons ice and 70 tons cold store. Each plant is to be equipped with: 2 diesel power plants of 240 HP each; 1 diesel power plant of 165 HP; 2 alternaters of 15 KW each.

Further details are available at the Agricultural Development Bank, No. 7 Ben Chuong Duong, Saigon.

Tu Thuc's Marriage To A Fairy



Adapted by George F. Schultz

In Viet Nam, when one sees a really beautiful woman, one may remark to one's friends: "Look at the wonderful beauty; perhaps she comes from the Land of Bliss." The reference is of course to the legend of Tu Thuc, who once had the good fortune to visit that land and there to marry a fairy.



This story is the ninth in the series of fantastic tales told by the writer Nguyen Tu (alias Nguyen Du) in his Truyen Ky Man Luc (Vast Collection of Miraculous Legends). Although the author lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the setting for the story is at least a century earlier.

Tu Thuc reflects the Taoist ideal that to a degree slumbers in the soul of every Vietnamese. Although of the privileged class he did not hesitate to sacrifice worldly honors in order to enjoy the inexhaustible pleasures of nature. Worthy of becoming an Immortal, the gates of Fairyland were opened to him. Unfortunately, the ex-mandarin was unable to rid himself of the memories of his family, and even his wife's love could not hold him he had to return to Earth only to lose everything.

The Version given is considerably abridged and all references to the Chinese classics have been omitted.

During the reign of the Emperor Tran Thuan Tong (1388-1398), there lived a young mandarin named Tu Thuc, who was chief of the Tien Du district. He was well-educated and owned a library of valuable books containing all the knowledge in the world except the location of the Land of Bliss; and that was what he longed most to know.

In the second month of the year Binh Ty (1396), during the Flower Festival, Tu Thuc happened to pass an old pagoda that was famous for its glorious peonies. At that moment, a young woman of radiant beauty and sweet face had lowered a branch to admire the blossoms; as she did so, it broke off in her hand. The priests of the pagoda detained the young woman, demanding that she pay a fine. Tu Thuc, who had observed this proceeding, generously offered his brocaded coat to the priests in exchange for the maiden's release; this offer was accepted. Bowing to him gracefully, the young wo-

man then left the precincts and disappeared. Those who had witnessed Tu Thuc's gesture, praised his conduct.

On returning to his office, Tu Thuc was advised that an inspector was waiting to see him. The latter was greatly dissatisfied with the manner in which the young mandarin had been conducting the affairs of the district.

"Your father was a conscientious, hard-working mandarin," he said without mincing words. "Why is it that you, his son, are so incapable of executing your simple duties?"

"Excellency," replied Tu Thuc, "I know my shortcomings; but I prefer my freedom to the few measures of rice supplied by my office."

Thereupon, he wrote out his resignation, surrendered the seal of office, and left. He then retired to the village of Tong Son, a place of many beautiful springs and splendid grottoes.

For several years, Tu Thuc spent his days wandering through the forests, taking with him only a gourd of wine and his lute. He composed many verses in praise of nature's wild, magic charms.

One day, on awakening early in the morning, he beheld a cloud of five colors that rose from the sea in the shape of a lotus flower. Enticed by this vision, he rowed his boat towards it and found there an island floating on the sea. Stepping ashore, he could find no sign of human habitation. He entered a grotto and the mountain opened in front of him. As he crawled into the tunnel, he felt the mountain close behind him. For some distance, the way was very narrow but then it widened. Crasping the jagged edges of the rocks, the ex-mandarin began to climb.

Near the summit, the air was perfumed with the scent of flowers. A crystalline spring flowed at his feet and he saw silver fish swimming in the water. A marble bridge traversed the stream, leading to a wonderful garden, where hidden fairies sang so softly and harmoniously that no human voice could have hoped to match their song. Tu Thuc felt lost as if in another world. But suddenly, the murmur of voices nearby returned him to reality.

From behind a lacquered gate, he saw a group of lovely maidens, dressed in blue, their hair adorned with sparkling stars. They approached him confidently.

"Greeting to our handsome bridegroom," said one of them. "You are expected, my lord. Please accompany us."

Escorted by the maidens, Tu Thuc entered a magnificent hall adorned with heavily gilded doors and brocaded walls. A soft, gentle melody filled the air as harps sounded sweetly at his approach. A majestic lady wearing a snow-white, silken gown was seated on a throne of gold and jade. She motioned to him to be seated in a graceful chair of white sandalwood.

"Learned scholar and lover of beautiful sites," said the lady, "be welcome. Do you know where you are?"

"It is true," replied Tu Thuc, "That I have visited many wonderful mountains and forests. But poor mortal that I am, how could I know of this land?"

"You are on Mount Phi Lai," the lady said, smiling, "which is the sixth of the thirty-six paradises floating unattached on the sea. My name is Nguy and I am the Fairy Queen of the Nam Nhac summit. You have been permitted to come here because your destiny is inextricably bound to that of my daughter."

Then, with her eye, the Fairy Queen signaled a servant to call her daughter. A moment later, a young maiden who had not been there before entered the hall. Tu Thuc immediately recognized her as the young woman he had befriended at the pagoda.

"This is my daughter Giang Huong," continued the Fairy Queen. "The day of her distress, you were the only one who came forward to help her. We have not forgotten your noble action and are now able to show our gratitude. I offer you my daughter's hand in marriage; henceforth, her life will be bound to yours."

The wedding ceremony was to take place that very evening. While winged messengers were sent to invite gods and goddesses, the young man was shown to a chamber, where a perfumed bath and splendid garments awaited him. The ceremony was held to the sound of delightful music in the presence of a large number of Immortals. After that, everyone sat down to a great banquet.

Tu Thuc enjoyed many days of happiness in the Land of Bliss. It was a land of eternal spring, where the gardens were laden with beautiful flowers. His wife was everything that he had ever wished for. Still, as the months passed, the ex-mandarin began to feel a nostalgia for his native village. At night, he would often walk alone to the shore and gaze into the distance.

One day, while strolling with Giang Huong, he saw a boat gliding along the sea to the south.

"That vessel is probably going in the direction from which I came," he told his wife. "I cannot hide my feelings any longer. As I think constantly of my old home, would you understand if I were to return there for a visit?"

When Giang Huong hesitated at the idea of parting, even for a short while, Tu Thuc insisted.

"It would be a matter of a few weeks at most," he assured her. "When I have seen my family, I promise to return."

The fairy then consulted her mother.

"If he wishes to return to the world of toil and sorrow," said the Fairy Queen, "it is useless to try to keep him here. As his heart is still heavy with earthly memories, his wish shall be granted."

Tu Thuc entered a winged chariot and a moment later found himself in his native village of Tong Son. Although he recognized the pond and the little hill, he saw no one who looked familiar.

"Excuse me, venerable grandfather," he said to an old man, "my name is Tu Thuc and I am looking for the village of Tong Son."

"This is Tong Son," replied the old man. "When I was a boy, I was told that one of my ancestors named Tu Thuc had been chief of the Tien Du district. But he resigned

his office and left for an unknown destination. That was near the end of the Tran dynasty and we are now under the fourth Le emperor (Le Thanh Tong: 1460-1497)."

Tu Thuc then realized that he had remained in the Land of Bliss for the equivalent of one hundred years on Earth. Everyone that he had once known had been dead for many years, and he was bewildered by the ways of the new generations. He longed to return to the magic mountain as quickly as possible.

He went back to the place where he had left the winged chariot, but it was no longer there. Then he set off towards the mountains, hoping to discover the grotto and the tunnel again. No one knows whether he found them or was lost in the mountains and perished there.



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