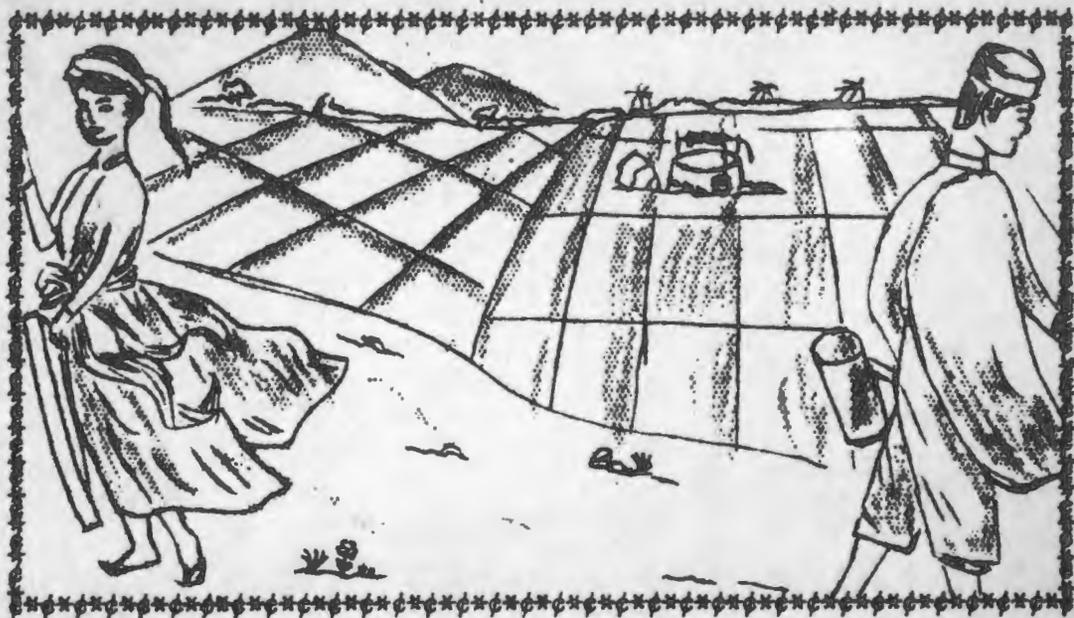

VIETNAMESE LEGENDS COLLECTION



THE BLIND SON-IN-LAW

THERE WAS once a handsome young man who had been blind from birth, but because his eyes looked quite normal, very few people were aware of his affliction.

One day he went to the home of a young lady to ask her parent for her hand in marriage. The men of the household were about to go out to work in the rice fields, and in order to demonstrate his industry, he decided to join them. He trailed along behind the others and was able to do his share of the day's work. When it came time to finish for the day all the men hurried homeward for the evening meal. But the blind man lost contact with the others and fell into a well.

When the guest did not appear, the future mother-in-law said: "Oh, that fellow will be a fine son-in-law for he puts in a full day's labor. But it is really time for him to stop for today. Boys, run out to the field and tell him to return for supper."

The men grumbled at this task but set out and looked for him. As they passed the well, the blind man overheard their conversation and was able to clamber out and follow them back to the house.

At the meal, the blind man was seated next to his future mother-in-law, who loaded his plate with food.

But then disaster struck. A bold dog approached, and began to eat the food from his plate.

"Why don't you give that dog a good slap?" asked his future mother-in-law. "Why do you let him eat your food?"

"Madam, replied the blind man, "I have too much respect for the master and the mistress of this house, to dare strike their dog."

"No matter," replied the worthy lady. "Here is a mallet; if that dog dares bother you again, give him a good blow on the head."

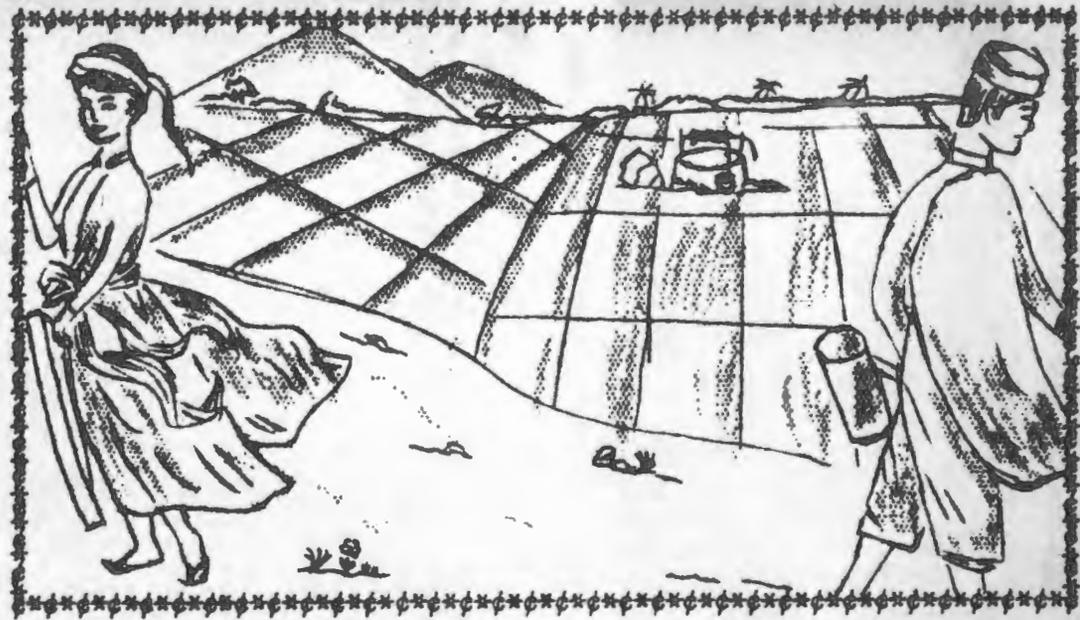
Now the mother-in-law saw that the young man was so modest and shy that he seemed/afraid to eat, and would take nothing from his plate. She wanted to encourage him and selected some sweetmeats from a large platter and placed them before him.

On hearing the clatter of the chopsticks against his plate, the blind man thought that the dog had returned to annoy him, so he took up the mallet and gave the poor woman such a fierce blow on the head that she fell unconscious.

Needless to say that was the end of his courtship!

Vietnamese Legends
Adapted from the Vietnamese by
George F. Schultz

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