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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Daylight Robbery

There once lived a greedy man in the Land of Jin. One day he went to the market, and while there started grabbing everything in sight, at the same time saying: 'I'll eat this, I'll wear this, I'll have this, I'll use this'. As he was carrying the goods away, the stall-holders ran after him, demanding payment, to which the man replied: 'Greed blinded me. I thought they all belonged to me instead of you. But never mind, now I've got them why not let me keep them, and later on, when I grow rich, I'll pay you for them?'

The market superintendent thought that the man was an idiot, so he gave him a caning and ordered him to return the goods to their rightful owners. Everybody in the markets laughed at the greedy man, but he retorted: 'There are people in this world far more greedy than I am, who resort to all kinds of surreptitious tricks to steal other people's belongings. Despite my greed, at least I took your goods in broad daylight. Surely then, in comparison to those others, am I not the better man? By laughing at me, you have only proven that you have not given the matter much thought.'

(Excerpts from *Essence of Classics*)

PREFERRED TRANSLATION

ORIGINAL TEXT

Lấy của giữa ban ngày

Nước Tấn có kẻ hiếu-lợi, một hôm ra chợ gặp cái gì cũng lấy. Anh ta nói rằng: 'Cái này tôi ăn được, cái này tôi mặc được, cái này tôi tiêu được, cái này tôi dùng được.' Lấy rồi đem đi. Người ta theo đòi tiền. Anh ta nói: 'Lửa tham nó bốc lên mờ cả hai con mắt. Bao nhiêu hàng hóa trong chợ, tôi cứ tưởng của tôi cả, không còn trông thấy ai nữa. Thôi các người cứ cho tôi, sau này tôi giàu có, tôi sẽ đem tiền trả lại.'

Người coi chợ thấy gàn dở, đánh cho mấy roi, bắt của ai phải trả lại người ấy. Cả chợ cười ò. Anh ta mắng: 'Thế-gian còn nhiều kẻ hiếu-lợi hơn ta, thường dùng thiên phương bách kế ngấm ngầm lấy của của người. Ta đây tuy thế song lấy giữa ban ngày, so với những kẻ ấy thì lại chẳng hơn ru? Các người cười ta là các người chưa nghĩ kỹ!'

(Trích *Cổ Học Tinh-Hoa*)

ORIGINAL TEXT

APPENDIX 2

Production of Fake Pharmaceuticals

Recently, the world has had to face the disturbing reality of the spread of fake products throughout the pharmaceutical market. This has resulted in the untimely deaths and disablement of many innocent victims, some of these being children.

For example, recently in Nigeria, 109 children died as a result of having been given fake medication by the staff of a Children's Hospital, believing it to have been manufactured in Holland. In Mexico, the Ministry of Health launched an investigation, and uncovered a range of fake pharmaceuticals just in time. Consequently, the Government confiscated up to 17 thousand types of various medications, many of which were mixed with coffee powder, sawdust and even soil.

In various villages throughout Burma, hundreds of people took fake anti-malarial drugs which only caused their illness to become worse. In Europe alone, millions of tablets used in the treatment of cardiac disease were found to be fake and lacking quality control.

Last March, in particular, an Iranian chemist in America was sentenced by the legal authorities for the manufacture of fake Naprosyn, a drug used in the treatment of arthritis. According to informed sources, these organisations responsible for the manufacture of fake pharmaceuticals have a highly sophisticated network with many branches throughout the world. These organisations have netted over \$US 150 billion during the past decade.

Amongst the fake pharmaceuticals on the market are the most popular ones such as Zantac, Selokeen, Andriamicin, Fansidar, etc...Generally speaking, all the fake medications replicate the genuine ones which makes it very difficult for the lay person to differentiate between them.

PREFERRED TRANSLATION

Tình-trạng chế-tạo thuốc men giả

Trong thời gian gần đây, thế-giới đứng trước một thực-tế đáng lo ngại về tình-trạng lan tràn những loại thuốc giả trên thị-trường y dược, khiến cho nhiều người, trong đó có cả trẻ em, phải chết một cách tức tưởi oan ức, cũng như nhiều người bị tàn tật.

Cụ thể là mới đây tại Nigeria, 109 trẻ em đã bị chết vì uống phải thuốc giả, sau khi nhân-viên bệnh-viện nhi-đồng đã cho các em uống một loại thuốc tưởng là thuốc được chế tạo tại Hòa-lan. Tại Mỹ-tây-cơ, Bộ Y tế đã tiến-hành điều-tra và khám-phá kịp thời một loạt thuốc giả trên thị-trường. Kết-quả là chính-quyền đã tịch-thu trước sau 15 ngàn loại thuốc giả mạo khác nhau trong đó có nhiều loại được pha lộn với bột cà-phê, mật dưa, và thậm chí cả đất cát.

Tại Miến-điện, hàng trăm người tại nhiều làng mạc đã uống phải những loại thuốc rét giả khiến cho bệnh tật gia-tăng gấp bội. Riêng ở Châu Âu, người ta đã khám phá ra hàng triệu viên thuốc dùng để trị-liệu bệnh tim được chế-tạo giả mạo không đủ phẩm chất.

Đặc biệt là tại Hoa-kỳ vào tháng ba vừa qua, các cơ-quan tư-pháp đã tuyên-án một dược-sĩ người Ba-tư về tội trạng chế-tạo thuốc chữa bệnh tê-thấp Naprosyn giả. Theo một nguồn tin đáng tin cậy thì những tổ-chức chế-tạo thuốc giả có một mạng lưới chế-tạo cực-kỳ tinh-vi với nhiều chi-nhánh trên thế-giới. Những tổ-chức này cũng đã thu về trong thập-niên vừa qua một số tiền lên đến trên 150 tỷ Mỹ-kim.

Trong số những loại thuốc chế-tạo gian lận trên thị-trường, người ta ghi nhận có những loại thuốc rất phổ-thông như Zantac, Selokeen, Adriamicin, Fansidar ... Nhìn chung toàn bộ những loại thuốc giả đều có hình-thức như thuốc thật khiến cho người thường khó có thể phân-biệt được chân giả.

(approx. 250 words)

Saigon News, 28th June 1991.

APPENDIX 3

Collocational Competence Test

1. My sister is always complaining that her breasts are as flat as a _____.
2. We've been drinking all night, but let's just have one for the _____ before closing time.
3. He had been through many highs and _____ in his marriage before he finally divorced.
4. Even though I've tried all kinds of diets, I'm afraid, I'm not winning the battle of the _____.
5. It was a case of a stitch in time saving _____, when I repaired the roof tile before the heavy rains started.
6. I'm not sure of the price, but _____ the top of your head, what would you say it could be worth?
7. The soccer team is on a _____ this season, because no other team has beaten it.
8. I found it difficult to concentrate on the _____ and flow of the teenagers' conversation because of the slang they used.
9. You must make sure you have the house looking _____ and span before the visitors come.
10. '_____ up' said the footballer to his team as he poured the beer down his throat.
11. My friend said 'long time, no _____' when I met him again after about an absence of two years.
12. He was lying _____ drunk in the gutter, so we picked him up and put him under a cold shower to revive him.
13. As a matter of _____, that's the first time I had heard about his divorce.
14. When I went to get up I found that my arm felt as though it had pins and _____ in it, because I had slept on it.
15. She is always making the wrong decisions and putting the cart before the _____.
16. I'm sure you _____ a rat the same as I do about the way he always seems to have large amounts of money.
17. I'm thrilled that you want to marry me, because I thought you'd never _____.
18. The morning peak hour traffic going into the city was _____ to bumper until well after 11 o'clock.
19. Just because he's very quiet, he's also very wise. It's a case of _____ waters run deep.
20. His child was like a chip off the old _____ in that he liked to play tennis.
21. Politicians try to lead us up the _____ path when they tell us lies in order to hide the real truth.
22. You can't use your credit card to buy goods here because it's a cash and _____ store.

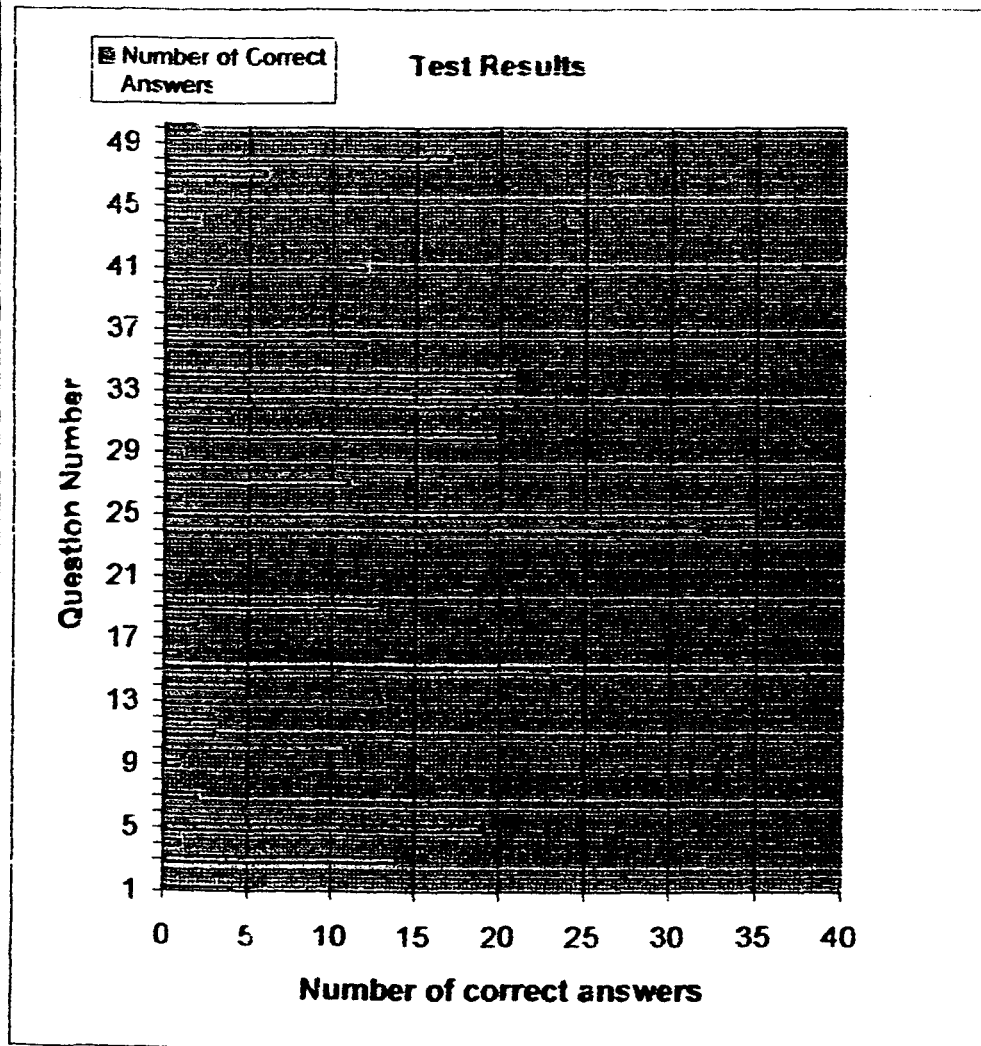
23. Before you get married I will have to let you know about the facts of _____ if you don't want to get pregnant straight away.
24. You know that every fairy story in English starts off with 'Once _____ a time'.
25. I shouldn't have to explain it to you, when it's written there clearly in _____ and white.
26. Women have ways and _____ of getting whatever they want from men.
27. If you go out with that criminal you will be playing with _____, because he could involve you in his activities .
28. He wants the back yard tidied up so I will take these odds and _____ to the tip.
29. Obtaining the services of that man for no charge at all is a real feather in your _____.
30. My decision to stay here rather than leave meant that I jumped from the _____ pan into the fire because the cyclone blew the house down and I was injured.
31. I've told you before that I don't want you to rush your work and not do it thoroughly. More haste, less _____ please.
32. Her boy friend was a real man of the _____ in that he knew all the best restaurants and all about sophisticated living.
33. Whether things are good or bad, I'll still stick with you through thick and _____.
34. The compere kept stopping to introduce the artists, and he didn't know how to keep the ball _____, so he lost our attention.
35. I've talked about the problem to you all in this auditorium, now I open it up to the _____ so that you can discuss it or question my speech.
36. Mum told me to give Grandma a _____ hand because she couldn't get out of the car on her own.
37. I'll say it again son. If you don't jump to _____ right now and clean up your untidy room, I'll stop your going to the pictures.
38. Would the owner of this dog please come _____ and claim it before it's taken to the pound?
39. The vagrant was wandering the streets, and as he had no _____ address it was difficult to deliver his mail.
40. I hate being given things to do at such short _____, because it disrupts my organisation.
41. She is always wearing a _____ when you meet her because she is such a charming person.
42. The teenager told me she had seen the pop star in the _____ when she went to the airport to see him arrive.
43. When people are faced with a problem you can soon sort the _____ from the goats amongst them, by the way they respond.
44. I've had enough of your telling me how you are so clever at sewing. Why don't you just _____ up or shut up?
45. He is a person who always remains _____, calm and collected, no matter how bad the situation may be.

46. When my father died, I was glad that my husband was there as a _____ to lean on during my grief.
47. She would love to be teenager again but now she is fifty, it's too late to turn the _____ back.
48. A lot of water has gone under the _____ since we were all young children in our home village.
49. No matter how hard I try to be as clever as my father I have never been able to fill his _____.
50. I can't be sure of what the future _____ for me because we are living in a war zone.

APPENDIX 4

Collocational Competence Test Results

Question	Number of Correct Answers
1	4
2	0
3	14
4	1
5	19
6	7
7	2
8	0
9	1
10	11
11	3
12	3
13	13
14	5
15	23
16	1
17	0
18	2
19	13
20	0
21	1
22	0
23	0
24	32
25	35
26	1
27	11
28	10
29	1
30	20
31	4
32	21
33	21
34	21
35	0
36	12
37	1
38	0
39	0
40	3
41	12
42	0
43	0
44	2
45	0
46	1
47	6
48	17
49	0
50	2



APPENDIX 5

A sample of English regular items

aboriginal activist	[người tranh-đấu mạnh-mẽ cho thổ-dân]
absolutely necessary	[vô cùng/tối cần thiết]
acknowledge the crowd	[giơ tay đáp lễ lại đám đông hoan-hộ/tán thưởng mình]
acute embarrassment	[ngượng chín người]
adopt the attitude	[tỏ/chấp nhận thái-độ]
adoption agency	[cơ-quan nhận/xin con nuôi]
advanced pregnancy	[có thai sắp đến ngày sanh]
alive and kicking	[khoẻ mạnh tỉnh táo/sống-động linh-hoạt]
aloof image	[hình ảnh/thái độ xa cách]
apologize profusely	[xin lỗi hết lời]
arcane reasons	[lý do thâm-kín]
arse-end of the world	[tận cùng của thế-giới/vũ-trụ]
baby boomer	[người/trẻ em sinh ra/ra đời trong thời-kỳ ngay sau Đệ-nhị Thế-chiến, lúc vợ chồng đoàn-tụ]
back of one's mind	[trong óc/trí nhớ/đầu]
backstairs diplomacy	[chính-sách ngoại-giao cửa hậu]
bark vigorously	[sửa dũ đội/âm ỉ]
battery hens	[gà công-nghiệp]
battle of the bulge	[trận giặc chống phi mập; ăn kiêng khem để giữ eo]
beads of perspiration	[những giọt mồ hôi]
bear a resemblance	[trông giống ai]
beat shyness	[tránh/chữa thẹn thùng/ngượng-ngùng]
believe genuinely	[tin tưởng thực tình]
biological parents	[cha mẹ ruột]
blame squarely	[trách cứ/đổ lỗi thẳng thừng]
blended family	[gia đình vợ chồng có cả con anh con tôi sống chung; vợ chồng rở giá cạp lại]
blood parents	[cha mẹ ruột]
boat capsizes	[tàu đắm lật úp]
boom gate	[cổng xe ra vào có chắn bằng thanh ngang tự động nâng lên hạ xuống]
boomerang effect	[hiệu quả dội ngược]
boots squelch	[giày ủng/ống lội kêu ọc ạch/lồm bồm]
booze bus	[xe hơi cảnh-sát chặn người lái xe bắt thử hơi rượu]

border dispute	[tranh-chấp biên-giới]
branch-stacking war	[cuộc tranh-đấu chiêu-mộ đảng-viên để họ đề-cử mình ra tranh cử cho đảng ở một đơn-vị bầu-cử nào]
break and enter	[đập/phá cửa vào nhà ăn trộm]
break the fall	[đỡ/cản vật gì đang rơi/người nào đang ngã từ trên cao xuống]
brick of cocaine	[cục bạch phiến]
brisk walk	[đi bộ nhanh/thoăn thoắt]
bullet-proof vest	[áo giáp tránh đạn]
burning issue	[vấn-đề nóng bỏng]
business tycoon	[tay tài-phiệt kinh-doanh]
button eyes	[mắt tròn nhỏ]
callous killing	[giết người không gớm tay]
cap rents	[chặn tăng tiền thuê nhà]
capture one's attention	[thu-hút sự chú ý của ai]
carrot-and-stick policy	[chính-sách cây gậy và củ cà-rốt/nhử mồi]
carry a grudge	[mang mối giận hờn]
cash and carry	[trả tiền trước lấy hàng sau; tiền trao cháo múc]
cat and mouse	[mèo vờn chuột]
cateract blindness	[mù do bệnh cườm mắt gây ra]
catwalk queen	[hoa hậu trình-diễn kiểu mẫu thời-trang/nữ siêu-mẫu thời trang]
celebrate hugely	[cử hành/ăn mừng vĩ đại/tưng-bùng]
celebrity photographer	[nhiếp-ảnh-viên chuyên chụp những tài-tử/nhân-vật nổi tiếng]
charitable organisation	[tổ-chức từ-thiện]
cheat death	[thoát chết]
chemical castration	[trích cho tội-phạm chuyên-trị hiếp-dâm bằng những hoá chất để khiến cho họ không còn thấy hứng tình nữa; diệt dục/thiến bằng hoá chất]
cherished memories	[những kỷ-niệm dấu yêu/hàng áp ủ]
Christmas revellers	những người ăn mừng Giáng-sinh
clean and decent	[trong sạch đàng hoàng]
coat of paint	[lớp/nước sơn]
colossal debt	[món nợ khổng-lồ; nợ như Chúa Chổm]
come and go	[đến rồi đi]
come-from-behind victory	[chuyển bại thành thắng]
communication gap	[cách biệt về tuổi tác, trình-độ học-thức khiến không thông-hiểu được nhau]
compassionate leave	[phép nghỉ vì được chủ-nhân thông-cảm cho hoàn-cảnh éo le]
compulsive gambler	[tay nghiện cờ bạc]

concerted effort
construction hat

Continental breakfast

couch potato
crime wave
criticize trenchantly

crux of the problem
culinary skills
cult leader

curtain calls

dampen one's spirit
day of shame
dead and buried
die unnecessarily
dispel the rumours
disperse the crowd
divide and conquer
divulge the secrets
dollar dips
double life
dream evaporates
dressing table
drink driver
drought-stricken farmers
duck and weave
dull and lifeless
dustbin of history
dwindling hope
eat and run
eclipse one's targets
eligible bachelor

eligible virgin
empty gesture
encumbered vehicle

endangered species

[nỗ-lực kết hợp]
[mũ/nón an-toàn đội khi ở công-trường xây cất]
[bữa điểm-tâm nhẹ gồm có bánh mì hay bánh sừng bò ăn với mứt utor, uống cà-phê hay trà]
[lực-sĩ ghé bành]
[làn sóng tội-phạm]
[phê bình/chỉ trích đánh thép/sắc bén/mạnh-mẽ]
[chủ chốt của vấn-đề]
[tài nấu nướng]
[lãnh-tự/giáo-chủ giáo-phái thường là tà giáo]
[khán-giả tán thưởng vỗ tay vang dội nên màn sân khấu đã đóng phải kéo lên nhiều lần để diễn-viên ra chào đáp lễ]
[làm nhụt tinh-thần]
[ngày ô nhục]
chấm dứt
[chết vô lý/lãng nhất]
[bác bỏ tin đồn]
[giải tán đám đông]
[chia để trị]
[tiết-lộ bí-mật]
[đồng đô-la hạ/xuống giá]
[cuộc đời hai mặt]
[mộng ước tan theo mây khói]
[bàn phấn/trang-điểm]
[tài-xế uống rượu lái xe]
[nông-gia bị nạn hạn-hán]
[tránh né]
[tê nhạt tầm thường]
[thùng rác lịch sử]
[hy-vọng mong manh]
[vừa ăn vừa di chuyển]
[gần đạt được mục-tiêu]
[thanh-niên độc thân có đầy đủ yếu-tố để đáng được chọn làm chồng/đẹp trai vui tính chưa vợ/đẹp giai học giỏi con nhà giàu]
[con gái nhà lành]
[cử-chỉ suông/rỗng tuếch]
[xe mua trả góp chưa trả hết tiền, còn thuộc quyền sở-hữu của cơ-quan tài-chánh cho mượn tiền]
[thú vật có nguy cơ bị tuyệt chủng]

enjoy immensely	[vui chơi thỏa thích; vô cùng thích thú]
exclusion zone	[vùng cấm địa]
exhaust emissions	[hơi khói do xe hơi nhả ra]
expert witness	[nhân-chứng được mời ra toà làm chứng về những vấn-đề trong phạm-vi chuyên-môn của người ấy]
fame and fortune	[danh vọng tiền tài]
farcical marriage	[hôn-nhân giả-tạo]
fast and loose	[nhanh nhẩu ẩu đoảng]
fast lane	[cuộc sống buông thả/đầy truy-hoan]
financial irregularities	[lem nhem tài-chính/tiền bạc]
fire fighter	[lính/người cứu hoả]
fit and proper	[thích hợp và đúng cách]
flagging economy	[kinh-tế suy-sụp]
flame licks	[lửa tấp]
flash of arrogance	[thoáng hiện vẻ kiêu căng]
flippant question	[câu hỏi cợt nhả]
float the idea	[đưa ra ý kiến cho mọi người suy nghĩ/thảo-luận]
flood of calls	[điện-thoại gọi đến tới tấp]
fly-by-night operators	[những kẻ làm ăn lừa đảo chạy làng]
food stall	[quầy/quán bán thức ăn]
forget and forgive	[quên và tha thứ/xóa bỏ hận thù]
form a wedge	[làm thành vòng đai chặn]
form of identification	[giấy tờ tùy thân/thẻ căn-cước]
formidable opponent	[địch-thủ đáng ngại]
forwarding address	[địa-chỉ chuyển thư]
fountain of wealth	[núi của; giàu nứt đổ đổ vách]
fountain of youth	[suối nguồn tươi trẻ]
fulsome praise	[khen quá lố]
fund-raising concert	[buổi văn-nghệ gây quỹ]
funeral parlour	[nhà quàn người chết]
galloping inflation	[lạm-phát phi-mã]
gauge the chances	[lượng-định cơ may]
gem world	[thế-giới châu báu/đá quý]
gesticulate wildly	[múa tay loạn xạ trong lúc nói]
getaway car	[xe hơi đậu đợi sẵn để tẩu thoát]
ghost writer	[người viết truyện/sách cho các chính-khách mà không đề tên mình]
give and take	[cho và nhận; có đi có lại]
give generously	[rộng lòng cứu giúp, mở lòng từ-bi giúp tiền bạc cho nhiều]
glean the information	[thâu thập tin-tức/thông-tin]
glittering future	[tương-lai sáng lạn]
gloom and doom	[buồn bã ảm đạm]
grant someone bail	[cho ai tại ngoại hầu tra]

gratuitous violence
gun-running mission

hail of bullets
halt the bloodshed
hard and fast
hard-won freedom

harrassment victim

harsh reality
hatch a plot
heap praise
heart and soul
hearts-and-flowers journalism

here and there
high and dry
high and mighty

high-powered delegation
hit and run
hit the headlines
hit-and-run accident
hitch-hiking backpacker

hurl abuse
idealistic prank
immense damage
immunity deficiency
imperial wife
impose an embargo
inconsolable grief
inflict wounds
insult intelligence

intensely loyal
invasion of privacy
jig school
joint of marijuana
judge harshly
kick the habit
knock-out gas

Lady Luck
landslide victory

[bạo động không cần thiết]
[sứ-mạng buôn bán vũ-khí bất hợp pháp]
[làn mưa đạn]
[ngăn chặn cuộc đổ máu]
[chặt chẽ/chắc chắn]
[tự-do phải đấu-tranh cam-go mới có được/khó tìm]
[nạn nhân bị khủng-bố tinh-thần/tinh-dục]
[thực-tế phũ-phàng]
[lập một âm-mưu]
[lên tiếng khen ngợi]
[tâm hồn; cả tâm lẫn trí]
[loại bài viết trong báo chí chuyên nói về những chuyện vui vẻ lãng-mạn]
[đây đó/đó đây]
[ngõ ngàng]
[kiêu căng cao kì/cao ngạo/lên mặt thầy đời]
[phái-đoàn đại-biểu hùng hậu]
[đánh rồi rút; đụng rồi bỏ chạy]
lên hàng tít lớn trên báo
[đụng xe rồi bỏ chạy]
[khách du-lịch ba-lô thường đứng bên đường vẫy xe hơi/xe vận-tải xin đi quá giang]
[chửi bới/lãng mạ]
[trò chơi răn đời]
[thiệt hại lớn lao]
[liệt-kháng/thiếu miễn-nhiệm]
[cung phi]
[áp-dụng biện-pháp cấm vận]
[niềm đau khổ khôn nguôi]
[gây thương tích]
[coi thường/sỉ-nhục trí thông minh/hiếu biết]
[hết lòng trung thành]
[vi phạm riêng tư]
[trốn học]
[mẫu cần-sa]
[phán xét nghiêm-ngặt/khắt-khe]
[cung phụng thói quen/tật xấu]
[khí clô-rô-phooc hoặc một loại khí nào làm cho người ta bất tỉnh]
[Thần Tài]
[chiến-thắng/thắng-lợi vẻ vang]

lashes of the cane	[(đánh cho) vài gậy/đòn/hèo]
launch a book	[ra mắt cuốn sách]
launch an attack	[mở cuộc tấn-công]
lie massively	[nói dối khủng-khiếp/như Cuội]
lift an embargo	[bỏ cấm vận]
link inextricably	[liên hệ chặt chẽ/không thể tách rời]
lip of embankment	[mép/rià đường đê]
load guilt	[dồn tội lỗi (cho ai)]
long-stated goal	[mục-tiêu đã nói đến từ lâu]
lose one's love	[thất tình]
lose one's respect	[mất đi/không còn kính trọng như trước]
love affairs	[ngoại tình]
lovers' lane	[nơi thanh vắng trai gái hẹn hò tình-tự, thường ngồi trên xe hơi]
malignant tumour	[bướu độc]
manage a household	[lo việc trong nhà; tề gia]
match-making agency	[văn-phòng giới-thiệu hôn-nhân]
material urges	[mong muốn/thôi thúc vật-chất mãnh-liệt]
mental instability	[bất-ổn tinh-thần/đầu óc lộn-lạc]
meteoric rise	[lên nhanh như điều gặp gió; thăng quan tiến chức lẹ]
midlife crisis	[khủng hoảng lúc tuổi sắp về già; tuổi hờn xuân]
mile-wide grin	[cười toe toét]
Miss Universe	[hoa hậu hoàn vũ]
monumental novel	[tiểu-thuyết dài tràng-giang đại-hải]
mortally wounded	[tử thương]
most likely	[rất có thể]
mountain of debt	[nợ chất thành núi]
movie preview	[buổi chiếu phim đầu tiên dành cho báo chí và giới/nhân vật tai mắt]
mudslinging match	[cuộc tỉ-thí bôi tro chát trấu/vấy bùn vào mặt nhau]
musty odour	[mùi hôi hám/ấm mốc]
narcissistic leader	[vị lãnh-đạo đầy tự-mãn, thần-phục mình quá đỗi, chỉ nhìn thấy sở-trường mà không thấy sở-đoán của mình]
narrow escape	[thoát hiểm trong đường tơ kẽ tóc]
neck and neck	[sát nút/khít khao]
nice and easy	[tốt đẹp gọn nhẹ/dễ-dàng thoải-mái]
no-fly zone	[vùng cấm phi-cơ bay vào]

no-frills airline	[hãng hàng-không chỉ bán vé máy bay chứ không cung-cấp dịch-vụ nào khác trên chuyến bay]
nocturnal habit	[thói quen sinh-hoạt về đêm]
nuisance call	[cú điện-thoại chọc giận/phá bình]
odds-on favourite	[người/vật có rất nhiều hy-vọng thắng/thành-công trong một cuộc chạy đua/tranh-tài nào]
off-screen husband-and-wife	[vợ chồng thật ngoài đời]
off-screen partner	[bồ bịch thật ngoài đời]
oil glut	[sự thừa mứa dầu]
open fire	[nổ súng; khai hỏa]
opposite number	[giới chức đối-nhiệm]
orthopaedic injuries	[thương tích ở khớp xương hay tủy sống]
ounce of cynicism	[đôi chút hoài nghi]
outwork agreement	[hợp-đồng gia-công]
overturn the decision	[thay đổi quyết-định]
pall of dust	[khối/uống cát bụi]
palliative care	[hình-thức chăm-sóc sức khoẻ cốt làm giảm đau chứ không chữa lành được bệnh vì căn-bệnh thuộc loại bất trị, bệnh-nhân chỉ còn có nước nằm chờ chết]
parent-teacher night	[buổi họp giữa giáo-viên và phụ-huynh học-sinh; một buổi tối phụ-huynh học-sinh được mời tới trường gặp thầy/cô giáo để họ cho biết/bàn kết-quả học hành của con em mình]
peace initiative	[sáng-kiến hòa-bình]
peal of church bells	[tiếng chuông nhà thờ đổ hồi]
pearly whites	[răng trắng như ngà]
personal best	[thành-tích cá-nhân]
pet fish	[cá kiểng]
picket line	[hàng rào cản của nhóm đình-công không cho công-nhân vào làm việc]
piercing whistle	[tiếng huýt gió đình tai]
pillion passenger	[hành-khách/người được chở/đèo đi, ngồi đằng sau xe đạp/gắn máy]
pin one's hopes	[đặt hy-vọng]
plant a kiss	[đặt một nụ hôn]
plum offer	[đề-nghị béo bở]
pod of whales	[đàn cá voi]
poignant occasion	[biến-cố thương-tâm/đau buồn]
poke fun	[trêu chọc]
policy holder	[người có đóng/hợp-đồng bảo-hiểm]
pop the question	[ngỏ ý kết/cầu hôn/lấy ai làm vợ]

popularity sags	[không còn được dân-chúng ưa chuộng như trước; uy tín/tiếng tăm bị sụt giảm]
possess drugs	[sở-hữu/oa trữ xì-ke ma túy]
pot belly	[bụng ông/phệ; bụng như thùng nước lèo]
praise effusively	[khen nức-nở]
precocious daughter	[đứa con gái mà trí-tuệ phát-triển nhanh hơn thể-chất/khôn ngoan trước tuổi; bà cụ non]
press the flesh	[bắt tay xã-giao]
profoundly deaf	[điếc nặng]
quell the fire	[dập tắt ngọn lửa/đám cháy]
'Quit for Life' campaign	[chiến-dịch 'Cai thuốc để sống đời']
raise the alarm	[báo động/nguy]
rave review	[bài điểm sách/điểm phim đầy lời khen-ngợi/tán-tụng]
read voraciously	[đọc ngấu nghiến]
red carpet treatment	[đón tiếp long-trọng, trải thảm đỏ đón chào]
red-nose day	ngày đặc biệt người ta mua mũi nhựa plastic màu đỏ đeo vào mũi để quyên tiền/yểm-trợ cho công-cuộc nghiên-cứu Hiện-tượng Trẻ em Chết trong Nôi']
refuse flatly	[từ chối thẳng thừng]
regain one's consciousness	[hồi tỉnh sau khi bị ngất xỉu]
reject categorically	[bác bỏ thẳng thừng]
release the venom	[nhả nọc độc]
relinquish one's leadership	[từ bỏ chức lãnh-đạo/thủ-lãnh]
remove threat	[dẹp mối đe dọa]
retaliatory action	[hành-động trả đũa]
rice harvest	[mùa/vụ gặt lúa]
rim of the ocean	[rià biển cả/đại dương]
ring of artificiality	[nghe có vẻ giả tạo]
risque jokes	[chuyện tiểu-lâm]
road toll	[số tử vong vì tai-nạn xe cộ]
rock fishman	[người câu cá ngoài biển đứng trên tảng đá thả câu]
rowdy behaviour	[hành-vi ồn ào/náo động]
rugged coastline	[bờ-biển khúc-khủy/hiểm-trở]
rumours fly	[tin đồn bay/lan truyền]
run-of-the-mill hotel	[khách-sạn bình-dân]
sadly missed	[vô cùng luyến tiếc]
safe and sound	[bình an/an lành]
safe seat	[khu-vực ứng-cử an-toàn của một đảng chính-trị nào, đảng-viên ra]

sale clearance
say tartly
scale the fence
scare-mongering tactics

scathing letter
scream obscenities
sea of paparazzi
search and destroy

security cordon
seek refuge
senseless death
serial killer

sex drive
shed tears
shoestring budget
shoot-to-kill order
shopping spree
shoulder-length hair
silent number

skeleton staff

skip classes
smoke inhalation
society heir

soft-porn actress

solemn music
speed camera

speedway accident

spirits soar
split-second decision
squirrel mentality

staggered shifts
stash of cigarettes
state funeral
state-of the-art technology
stop-gap measure

tranh cử là chắc chắn sẽ thắng cử;
an-toàn khu]
[bán tổng bán táng để dẹp tiệm]
[nói lời cay độc/day nguyền]
[leo hàng rào]
[chiến-thuật gây cho mọi người lo
sợ]
[lá thư đầy giọng chỉ-trích]
[la ó chửi bới]
[rừng phóng-viên nhiếp-ảnh]
[truy diệt/truy lùng và tiêu diệt
(địch)]
[vòng đai an-ninh]
[xin lánh nạn]
[chết lãng nhách/vô nghĩa lý]
[tên sát nhân hoạt kỳ, lâu lâu lại
giết một người, đập khuôn theo một
kiểu nào đó]
[hứng tình]
[khóc/rơi lệ]
[ngân-sách giới-hạn/eo hẹp]
[lệnh bắn chết bỏ]
[mua sắm thỏa thích/thả dạn]
[tóc để chấm/xoã ngang vai]
[số điện-thoại không ghi trong điện-
thoại niên-giám]
[số nhân-viên lèo tèo/tối thiểu còn
lại để điều-hành công việc]
[trốn học]
[bị ngạt thở vì hơi khói]
[người thừa-kế nếp sống giàu
sang/thanh-lịch]
[nữ tài-tử chuyên đóng phim có màn
làm tình khiêu gợi]
[nhạc trầm buồn]
[máy ảnh đặt ở ngã ba/ngã tư đường
chụp xe chạy quá tốc-độ qui-định]
[tai-nạn trên đường đua xe hơi chạy
tốc-độ]
[tinh-thần lên cao; lên tinh thần]
[quyết-định trong tích-tắc]
[tinh-thần tích tiểu thành đại, làm
ăn ky cóp dành dụm]
[ca làm việc thay đổi thất thường]
[chồng thuốc lá]
[quốc táng]
[kỹ-thuật hiện-đại]
[biện-pháp cấp thời]

street kids	[trẻ em bụi đời]
stretch of road	[đoạn/quãng đường]
strike gold	[chiếm được/bắt được vàng; thành-công lớn; trúng mánh]
strip and search	[khám lột trần truồng; khám truồng]
stroke of luck	[cú/chút may mắn]
subversive literature	[tài-liệu chống phá chính-quyền]
superbly rich	[vô cùng giàu có]
surrogate mother	[người đàn bà mang thai để giùm; thế mẫu]
sweet revenge	[trả thù đích đáng]
tabloid terrorism	[lấy báo chí làm phương-tiện khủng-bố]
tall-poppy syndrome	[hiện-tượng trâu buộc ghét trâu ăn]
tears of happiness	[nước mắt hạnh-phúc, vui mừng đến rơi/nhỏ lệ, khóc như thiếu-nữ vu-qui nhật]
tempestuous weather	[trời mưa gió bão bùng]
there and then	[tức thì]
thick accent	[giọng lai đặc]
thong-free zone	[khu-vực cấm mang dép, muốn vào phải mang giày]
ticker-tape parade	[cuộc diễn-hành tổ-chức chào đón những người chiến-thắng/tạo thành-tích vẻ-vang cho xứ sở trở về nước]
tie the knot	[kết hôn; se tơ kết tóc]
time bomb	[bom nổ chậm]
tooth and nail	[hết mình]
touch of class	[một chút/thêm vẻ sang trọng/quí phái]
traffic snarl	[kẹt xe/tắc-ngheñ lưu-thông]
train of thought	[luồng/giòng tư-tưởng/ý tưởng]
trial and error	[thử thách và sai lầm]
tuft of hair	[chóm/chùm tóc]
tug-of-love victim	[con cái/nạn-nhân trong vụ cha mẹ ly-dị giảng co xem ai được quyền nuôi/giữ con]
turn the table	[lật ngược tình thế]
tyre mender	[người vá lốp/vỏ xe]
umbrella organisation	[cơ-quan ô dù/đầu não]
unassailable fact	[sự thật rành rành]
undergo an operation	[bị/phải giải-phẫu]
underworld figure	[tay anh chị; thành phần xã hội đen]
unknown eatery	[tiệm ăn không tên tuổi/tiếng tăm]
violate grossly	[vi-phạm trắng trợn]
vote overwhelmingly	[dồn phiếu (cho ai)]
wage a war	[nuôi dưỡng chiến-tranh]

wedded bliss
wee-small hours
weep openly

weigh an anchor
well and truly
wet nurse
wetting and soiling
whiplash injuries
whirlwind romance
white trash
whiz kids
wobbly tooth
wool grower

workout scene
yell threats

[hạnh-phúc lứa đôi]
[hai ba giờ khuya/sáng]
[khóc không còn che dấu nỗi/không
cảm lòng được; khóc nức nở]
[nhổ neo]
[thật sự/nhất định]
[vú em]
[đái dầm ỉa đùn]
[bị thương ở gáy, trên cột tuỷ sống]
[con lốc ái tình/cú sét ái tình]
[bach-quý]
[thần đồng]
[răng lung lay]
nhà nông/người chăn nuôi cừu để lấy
lông]
[cảnh tập thể-dục]
[la ó đe dọa]

APPENDIX 6

A sample of Vietnamese regular items

ăn bám	[to be a parasite/dole bludger]
bài trừ tội ác	[to eradicate/wipe out crime]
bàn tay bụ bẫm	[chubby hands]
bàn tay xinh xinh	[delicate hands]
bay thấp thoáng	[to flit (of birds)]
bô lão gật gù	[elders nod their heads]
bỏ thói quen	[to break the habit]
bôi nhọ cá nhân	[to smear one's reputation]
bóp méo sự thật	[to distort the truth]
bùa hộ mệnh	[(life-protecting charm); magic charm/ talisman/amulet]
buồn mồm	[(idle mouth)/feel like wanting to have something to chew]
bưng biền Cộng-sản	[Communist outposts/marquis]
bồi bút	[journalistic lackeys]
bộ ngực nở nang	[well-developed breasts]
bộ ngực vạm vỡ	[well-built chest]
bốc lên nghi ngút	[to billow (of smoke)]
bắn chết	[to shoot someone dead]
bắp chân	[calves of one's legs]
bắp thịt nhão	[flabby muscles]
cá kiểng	[pet fish]
cảm giác nôn nao	[anxious/foreboding feeling]
canh ba	[third watch (of night)]
cảnh sống	[lifestyle]
cảnh-sát 'quần'	[to be 'grilled'/interrogated by the police]
cây cối khô héo	[wilted trees]
cây cối xác xơ	[bare trees]
cây gỗ lim	[mahogany tree]
cây mây gai góc	[thorny rattan trees]
chết ngay	[to die instantly]
chân tướng	[the true picture/image]
chém liên hồi	[to hack into someone without stopping]
chia sẻ niềm vui	[to share one's happiness]
chinh phục trái tim	[to capture/win someone's heart]
chọi gà	[cock fighting]
chơi khăm	[to play tricks on someone]
chối tai	[it jars/aggravates on someone]
chống cự ác liệt	[to fight back fiercely/ retaliate strongly/fight to the death]
coi trọng	[to have a high regard]

con công múa	[dancing/prancing/strutting peacock]
con hổ tinh khôn	[clever/cunning tiger]
con sâu quằn quại	[worm squirms/wriggles]
con sói mồi	[sacrificial wolf]
con sói tru	[wolf cries/howls]
con vắt nhéo	[jungle leeches]
công việc nương rẫy	[farm work]
cuộc sống nghèo túng	[poverty-stricken life]
cuộc sống thoải mái	[comfortable/high/good life]
cư-xử hào-hiệp	[to behave extravagantly/treat people generously]
cười khẩy	[to snigger; a sniggering laugh]
cười phá lên	[to burst out laughing]
cười sằng sặc	[to burst out cackling]
cười vang	[to roar with laughter/laugh uproariously]
cưỡi ngật ngưỡng	[to totter/ teeter]
cắt đường	[to take a short-cut (of distance)]
dịch nguyên văn	[to translate verbatim]
dồi dào sức khỏe	[in the best of health/in perfect health]
dở chứng	[to go beserk/bananas; turn nasty]
dấu chân thú	[animal footprints]
đập nát nồi cơm	[(to smash one's pot of rice); to ruin one's bread and butter]
đám tang cử hành	[to hold a funeral/funeral held]
đàn sói	[pack of wolves]
đảng-viên ma	[phantom party members]
đau đớn điên cuồng	[excruciating/unbearable pain]
đêm hợp-cần	[(wedding feast night); wedding/nuptial night]
định thần	[(to adjust one's look); to take a second look/to look carefully]
đôi mắt đục	[glazed eyes]
đôi tay chai sạn	[calloused hands]
đôi đũa	[pair/set of chopsticks]
đóng chặt	[to closely/tightly shut]
đũa mun	[ebony-black chopsticks]
đường công-danh	[(road to fame); career path]
đắm máu	[saturated/covered in blood]
đều tăm tắp	[even/well-aligned (of teeth)]
đứng lom khom	[to stand with one's back bent/ be bowed]
đứng tần ngần	[to stand perplexed]
đời oanh liệt	[glorious/illustrious life]
đơ lưỡi	[tongue-tied]

đầu gối chùn xuống	[knees are sagging/go from under one]
đầu gối quy xuống	[weak in the knees/ become weak-kneed]
đầy bạc	[full of silver/money]
đầy ắp	[full to the brim]
gan ruột cào xé	[to burn the insides/guts out]
giết đẫm máu	[to cold-bloodedly kill]
gió hú	[wind howls/ howling of the wind]
gừng già nhỏ	[ground ginger]
ham sống	[to love life]
hành vi tham nhũng	[corrupt behaviour/practices]
hành-quyết tàn-nhẫn	[to execute brutally]
hí vang	[to give a loud neigh]
hiếu lơ mơ	[to understand vaguely]
hoa cúc dại	[wild chrysanthemums]
hoa mắt	[to be bedazzled; be over-awed]
hoàng-đế vi-hành	[emperor walks/mingles with/among his people]
hội viên ma	[phantom club members]
hổ gầm	[tiger roars]
hổ rình rập	[tiger stalks]
im thin thít	[dead silence; one's lips are sealed]
ít nắng	[little sunshine]
kết-án vội vã	[to prematurely condemn]
kẻ hà tiện	[penny-pinching person]
khai thác kỹ lưỡng	[to investigate/explore carefully]
khai tâm bậy	[to make a false statement]
khát vọng mãnh liệt	[strong thirst/desire; great ambition]
khóc sục sùi	[to sob/weep/cry openly]
khóc thét	[to cry one's heart out; sob uncontrollably]
khóe mép	[corners of one's mouth]
khôn ba năm, dại một giờ	[(three years of wisdom you have gained guarding your virginity, and in one hour of vulnerability you lose it); five minutes of fun and nine months of worry]
khắc khoải đợi chờ	[to wait anxiously/in agony]
ký ức sống dậy	[memories stir up]
lật úp	[to tip over (of boat)]
liệt hai chân	[paralyzed/immobile from the waist down]
lòng phơi phới	[light-hearted/carefree]
lưng ong	[(wasp's waist); hour-glass figure]
lương tâm cắn rứt	[conscience pricks (somebody)]
lương tâm nhẹ nhàng	[clear conscience]

lượng tâm thanh thần	[relaxed conscience]
lượng vàng	[(tael of gold); ounce of gold]
lưỡi rìu	[(axe-tongue); axe-head; axe-blade]
lưỡi rìu quần	[(axe-tongue buckled); axe-head blunts]
lầu xanh	[(green pavilion); house of ill-repute]
lừa dối lộ bịch	[ludicrous lie/cheating]
lừa dối trắng trợn	[extraordinary/blatant lie/cheating]
ma ám	[possessed by demons/evil spirits]
ma chài	[under the spell of evil spirits]
mái nhà sàn	[the roof of the house on stilts]
mạng nhện chăng	[spider spins a web]
mây xà xuống	[clouds descend/gather]
miếu nhỏ	[small shrine]
miệng nhay nhay	[to gnash one's teeth]
mò sông	[to dredge the river]
mùa đông khủng khiếp	[terrible winter]
mũi nở	[well-developed nose]; flared nostrils]
mưa bất thần	[to rain suddenly; sudden/unexpected rain/downpour]
mưa tạnh	[rain lets up/stops]
mồ hôi vã ra	[to sweat profusely/copiously]
mặt rỗ	[pock-marked face]
mặt trái xoan	[(Japanese lilac-fruited face); oval-shaped face]
một sải tay	[an arm's length]
mắt long lanh	[twinkling/sparkling eyes]
mắt ti hí	[slitty eyes]
mắt trợn ngược	[one's eyes rolled back]
mắt đỏ hoe	[red eyes]
mắt đỏ ngầu	[blood-red eyes]
nằm kín đáo	[to lie hidden/secreted/concealed]
nằm liệt giường	[to be bed-ridden/be confined to bed]
nằm lim dim	[to lie half-asleep]
nằm lẫn lóc	[to lie neglected/unloved]
nằm phục	[to lie in ambush]
nằm rạp (xuống mặt đất)	[to slink low (on the ground)]
nằm vất vưởng	[to lie uncared for/be unloved]
nghe văng vẳng	[to hear something from afar]
ngọn cây xào xạc	[rustling of the branches/tree tops]
nguồn tin động trời	[(heaven-shattering news); earth-shattering news]
người chánh trực	[trustworthy/honest person]
người chồng gầy guộc	[thin gaunt husband]
người cầm trịch	[the leader/helmsman/conductor]

người cổ lỗ sĩ	[old-fashioned person]
người hiền lương	[honest person]
người ta đồn	[rumour has it that; it is rumoured]
người từng trải	[worldly person]
người vợ âm thầm	[unassuming/timid wife]
người đầy bất trắc	[unpredictable/unstable person]
ngượng miệng	[to be shy in speaking up]
ngồi thu lu	[to sit hunched up with one's arms around one's legs]
ngồi thụp xuống	[to squat on your haunches]
ngựa hí	[horse neighs]
nhập lậu	[to smuggle/import illegally]
nhai ngấu nghiến	[to chew away voraciously]
nhân vật nổi tiếng	[well-known identity]
nhát tính	[cowardly nature/disposition]
nhe răng	[to bare one's teeth]
nhò không hạt	[seedless grapes]
nhò xứ nóng	[hot climate grapes/vines]
nhẹ dạ	[easily deceived; gullible/naive]
nhảy xổ	[to lunge]
nói năng hoạt bát	[to be articulate]
nói thách	[to bring up the price in anticipation of a bargaining]
nước dãi nhỏ ra	[saliva drips]
nước mắt ràn rụa	[tears welled up]
nước mắt ròng ròng	[tears streaming/running down (one's face)]
nơm nớp lo âu	[constant sense of fear]
nốc bí tử	[to be staggering drunk]
nợ sách đèn	[(the debt of books and lamp); the debt owed by those who have not completed their studies]
nỗi tuyệt vọng đắng cay	[bitter despair]
ông chủ ma túy	[(narcotics boss); drug lord/baron/ringleader]
ông lão lụ khụ	[stooped old man]
Ông Xanh	[(Mr. Blue); God; the Creator]
ổ phân-phát	[pockets of distributors]
phường săn	[hordes/scores of hunters]
quãng đời	[a certain period of one's life]
quên bẵng/khuấy	[to forget completely]
quẩy tú tung	[to swish around hither and thither]
râu quặp	[(bent whiskers); drooping whiskers]
run bắn (cả người)	[to shudder/shake/quake with fear]
rủ chẳng chịt	[entirely covered in pock marks]

say khướt	[to be dead drunk/totally intoxicated/ inebriated]
suôi tai	[it sounds right to the ear]
sẵn giọng	[to speak rudely/ be insolent]
sống bứt rứt	[to live anxiously]
sống cô đơn	[to live alone/be lonely]
sống giản-dị/chất-phác	[to live a simple/monastic-type life]
sống hòa-thuận	[to live harmoniously/in harmony]
sống lang thang	[to live a vagabond life/live the life of a wastrel]
sống lầm lũi/thui thủi	[to live desolately]
sống nghèo túng	[to live in poverty]
sống quanh quẩn	[to live within the confines of (the local area)]
sống sung-túc	[to live comfortably/be well-off]
sống vui vẻ	[to live happily]
sống đau khổ	[to live a miserable existence/in misery]
sừng rượu	[horn of liquor]
tạ thịt	[100 kilograms of meat]
tên viết thuê	[journalistic lackeys]
tên đê tiện	[mean/despicable person]
thân hình còm cõi	[skinny body]
thân hình lẳn chắc	[firm body]
tháng Tư Đen	[Black April (April, 1975 when Saigon fell to the Communists)]
thanh lâu	[red-light district; brothel]
thịt sấy	[smoked/dried meat]
thua sạch túi	[to lose all one's money (from gambling)]
thức trắng đêm	[(to stay awake throughout the night); to stay up all night]
tiếng tăm vang dội	[fame spreads widely/fame renowned far and wide]
tin đồn bay	[rumours fly/abound]
tình người	[human compassion]
tòa tha bổng	[the court set (him/her) free; to be acquitted]
trả hậu hĩ	[to pay generously]
trái tim rung động	[heart skips/misses a beat]
trán cao	[high/broad forehead]
tràn trề ánh sáng	[suffused with light]
trang nhất (tờ báo)	[(first page); front page (of a newspaper)]
trơ xương	[skin and bone]
trời trở chứng	[weather goes berserk/turns nasty]
tuần trăng	[phase of moon]
tám ngực trần	[naked/bare chest]

tự nguyện dấn thân

vết cào cấu

vết chân hổ

vẻ đẹp hiếm có

viên đạn oan nghiệt

vị thuốc thần

vùng chạy

vợ chồng luống tuổi

vỗ (cánh) uể oải

xác còn queo

xác thối rữa

xé rách trán

xương cốt mủn nát

ướt sũng

[(to volunteer to bring oneself into something); to sacrifice personal gains for the common good by doing something]

[claw marks]

[traces of the tiger]

[rare beauty]

[(cruel bullet); fatal bullet]

[(miraculous cure); miracle/wonder drug]

[to free oneself and quickly run off]

[elderly/ 'Darby and Joan' couple]

[to flap (one's wings) languidly]

[hunched-up corpse]

[decomposing/rotting body]

[(to tear off one's forehead); to tear off one's skull]

[rotten and decayed bones]

[soaked to the bone/wet to the skin]

APPENDIX 7

A sample of English non-regular items

a leopard can't change his spots	[chó đen giữ mực]
a stitch in time saves nine	[dùng để nước đến chân mới nhảy]
above/below one's station	[môn đăng hậu đối]
all brawn and no-brains	[vai u thịt bắp]
all in the same boat	[đồng hội đồng thuyền]
all the best	[chúc bình an vô sự]
as easy as a pie	[dễ như bỡn; dễ như chơi]
as easy as falling off a log	[dễ như bỡn; dễ như trở bàn tay]
as flat as a pancake	[dẹp lép như đồng hồ omega]
as old as the hills	[xưa như trái đất]
ask and you shall receive	[con có khóc mẹ mới cho bú]
bell the cat	[xỉa răng cợn; làm anh hùng]
bite the hand that feeds you	[vô ơn bạc nghĩa; ăn cháo đá/đái bát]
carry coals to Newcastle	[chở củi về rừng]
charity begins at home	[ăn cơm nhà vác ngà voi]
cop it sweet	[lãnh đủ]
couch potato	[lực sĩ ghé bành]
crime does not pay	[thiên bất dung gian]
dress in borrowed plumes	[của người phúc ta]
drop a brick	[phạm lỗi]
escape by the skin of one's teeth	[thoát trong đường tơ kẽ tóc]
familiarity breeds contempt	[yêu chó chó liếm mặt]
five minutes of fun and nine months of worry	[khôn ba năm đại một giờ]
getting off at Redfern	[mưa ngoài quan ải]
give someone the green light	[bật đèn xanh/cho phép cho ai làm cái gì]
have a heart of gold	[có tấm lòng vàng]
have cold feet	[sợ hãi; ớn lạnh xương sống]
He drinks like a fish	[uống rượu như uống nước lã]
He drinks like Bacchus	[uống rượu như thần Lưu Linh]
he who hesitates is lost	[trâu chậm uống nước đục]
he's waited on hand and foot	[hắn được (vợ) hầu cơm bưng nước rót]
he has the luck of the Irish	[hắn may mắn/đỏ lạng]
hit the jackpot	[trúng lớn]
hold a seance	[lên đồng bóng]
take pot-luck	[thử thời vận]
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again	[thua keo này bày keo khác]
It's not over till the fat lady sings	[chuyện đâu đã đến hồi chung cuộc]
jump out of the frying pan into the fire	[tránh vỏ dưa gặp vỏ dừa]
kick the bucket	[chết; cúp bình thiếc]
laugh till you cry	[cười ra nước mắt]

laughing on the outside, crying on the inside	[ngoài cười nụ, trong khóc thầm; cười ra nước mắt]
leave someone in the lurch	[đem con bỏ chợ]
life hanging by a thread	[tính mạng treo trên sợi tóc]
life wasn't meant to be easy	[chuyện đời đâu có dễ dàng (như mình nghĩ)]
like a Greek God	[(đẹp)nghư tượng/nghư Phan An, Tuấn Ngọc]
lips as red as cherries	[môi đỏ như son]
lucky at cards, unlucky in love	[đen bạc đỏ tình]
make a mountain out of a molehill	[bé xé ra to]
make hay while the sun shines	[phải biết lợi dụng thời cơ; phải biết nắm lấy cơ hội; cớ đến tay ai người ấy phất]
more haste less speed	[dục tốc bất đạt]
play with fire	[chơi/đùa với lửa]
pop the question	[cầu hôn]
press the flesh	[bắt tay xã-giao]
rats desert a sinking ship	[cháy nhà ra mặt chuột]
red sky at night. shepherd's delight	[ráng mỡ gà thì gió,
red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning	ráng mỡ chó thì mưa]
send someone to Coventry	[tẩy chay ai; cho ai đi chỗ khác chơi]
smell a rat	[thấy có cái gì đáng ngờ/không ổn]
spick and span	[sạch sẽ gọn ghẽ]
standing there like stunned mullets	[đứng như trời trồng; đứng ngẩn người ra]
still waters run deep	[tắm ngầm tắm ngầm mà đánh chết voi]
strike while the iron is hot	[cớ đến tay thì phải phất]
the marriage/relationship is on the rocks	[cơm không lành canh không ngọt]
the marriage/relationship went sour	[cơm không lành canh không ngọt]
the stars are against me	[số tôi xui]
the stars must be in the wrong place	[số xui]
they can move mountains	[thuận vợ thuận chồng, tát biển Đông cũng cạn]
time and tide wait for no man	[thời gian nhanh tựa thoi đưa]
turn a blind eye/to turn a deaf ear	[cháy nhà hàng xóm bình chân như vại]
wait for something to fall into your lap	[há miệng chờ sung]
walk like Charlie Chaplin	[đi chân chữ bát]
waste not want not	[phí của trời mười đời không có]
What star were you born under?	[anh tuổi gì?]
What's your star sign?	[anh cầm tinh con gì?]
you can't be serious!	[sai mười mươi rồi ông nội ơi! (lời John McEnroe chê trọng tài quần vợt quyết định nhầm)]
you can't have your cake and eat it too	[được voi đòi tiên]

APPENDIX 8

A sample of Vietnamese non-regular items

ăn cháo đá/đái bát	[to bite the hand that feeds you]
ba cọc ba đồng	[meagre wages/earnings]
bán quán buôn quanh	[to trade within the confines of the local area]
bước đi bước nữa	[(to take another step forward); to remarry (of a woman)]
cháy nhà ra mặt chuột	[rats desert a sinking ship]
chó cắn áo rách	[to add insult to injury]
chó ngáp phải ruồi	[to wait for things to fall into your lap]
cong xương sống, cồng xương sườn	[a back-breaking task]
cười ra nước mắt	[laugh till you cry; laughing on the outside, crying on the inside]
cơm bưng nước rút	[(she) waits on (you) hand and foot]
cơm không lành, canh không ngọt	[the relationship went sour]
đàn ông rộng miệng thì sang	[the man with a wide mouth looks imposing]
đàn bà rộng miệng tan hoang cửa nhà	[the woman with a wide mouth will break a happy home]
đen bạc đồ tình	[lucky at cards, unlucky in love]
đen xin như mực Tàu	[as black as Indian ink]
đi với Bụt, mặc áo cà-sa;	[If you go with Buddha, wear a monk's robe; if you go with a ghost,
đi với ma, mặc áo giấy	wear a paper tunic]
đi đêm lắm cũng có ngày gặp ma	[like someone who goes out in the dark often enough, they will, sooner or later, come face to face with a ghost]
được voi đòi tiên	[you can't have your cake and eat it too]
giận cá chém thớt	[don't kill the messenger!]
gần chùa gọi Bụt bằng anh	[familiarity breeds contempt]
im lặng như hoá đá	[stony silence; silence as a stone]
im ru như mặt nước hồ thu	[the silence is deafening]
khác nhau ở chỗ là	[the only difference is]
khỏe như voi	[as strong as an ox/mallee bull; as fit as a fiddle]
không thầy đố mày làm nên	[without the teacher I bet you will never be successful in life]
khổ một nỗi là	[the only problem is]
lên xe hoa	[to walk down the aisle]
lưng như lưng kiến vàng	[an hour-glass figure]
lục sĩ ghế bành	[couch potato]

ma cũ bắt nạt ma mới	[the old hand pushes the new hand around]
miệng còn hơi sữa	[(the smell of milk still on one's breath); a young, inexperienced person]
mưu sự tại nhân, thành sự tại thiên	[Man proposes, God disposes]
mẹ tròn con vuông	[both mother and baby are doing well/fine]
ngậm cười nơi chín suối	[to be happy in Hades/ after death]
ngòi bút phun nọc độc	[(the pen tip releases poison); poison pen]
ngu si hưởng thái bình	[ignorance is bliss; ignorance prevails]
nhà ngói cây mít	[(a tile-roofed house with jackfruit trees); superly rich]
như đêm với ngày	[like night and day; like chalk and cheese]
nối giáo cho giặc	[to give a spear to your enemy]
nợ sách đèn	[(debt of books and lamp); a moral debt to oneself for not having completed their academic study]
ông nói gà, bà nói vịt	[(He talks about chickens, she talks about ducks); irrelevant talk]
ông ăn chả, bà ăn nem	[extra-marital sex; adultery; love affair]
phi cao đẳng bất thành phu phụ	[no university, no marriage]
phòng bệnh hơn chữa bệnh	[prevention is better than cure]
ruộng cả ao liền	[fountain/mountain of wealth]
răng đen hạt huyền	[teeth as black as custard-apple seeds]
rộng đường dư-luận	[for the scrutiny of the public; as a matter of public interest]
sáng vác ô đi, tối vác về	[(someone carries an umbrella out in the morning and carries it home in the evening); a good-for-nothing male person]
tai nghe mắt thấy	[to eyewitness; to see with one's own eyes]
thao trường đổ mồ hôi, chiến trường bớt đổ máu	[more sweat in training means there'll be less blood spilt on the battle field]
thua keo này, bày keo khác	[If at first you don't succeed, try, try again]
thuận vợ thuận chồng, tát bể Đông cũng cạn	[they can move mountains (of a happily married couple)]
tiên học lễ hậu học văn	[first comes manners, then come literacy]
tiền trao cháo múc	[cash and carry]

trâu buộc ghét trâu ăn
trâu chậm uống nước đục
tầm chương trích cú
uống rượu như thần Lưu-linh.
uống rượu như uống nước lã.
xiả răng cộp
xuôi tay nhắm mắt
yêu chó chó liếm mặt

[the tall-poppy syndrome]
[he who hesitates is lost]
[to dig deep into the books]
[(He) drinks like Bacchus]
[(He) drinks like a fish]
[to bell the cat]
[at the end of one's time on earth]
[familiarity breeds contempt]

APPENDIX 9

Vietnamese Source Text

Bạn Đọc Viết

Sau một hồi gián đoạn mua báo Thế kỷ 21, có lẽ đến cả một năm trời, tôi được người bạn ở Stockton, gần San Francisco, đặt mua báo tiếp tục dùm. Vì vậy mà tôi đã được đọc lại báo Thế kỷ 21 kể từ số 124, tháng Tám 1999. Hai bài tôi để ý đọc trong số báo này và thấy ‘hay’ là ‘Bạn Hiền’ của Lê Tất Điều viết tưởng niệm Lê Đình Diểu, và ‘Sàigòn, Tháng ngày trời nổi’ của Trần Doãn Nho viết về cuộc sống lam lũ, khổ sở của người dân miền Nam sau ngày ‘giải phóng’. ‘Bạn Hiền’ thì cảm động, chan chứa tình; ‘Sàigòn, Tháng ngày trời nổi’ thì nhiều tình tiết lạ, tủi nhục tràn đầy thân phận kiếp người. Nhiều người đã viết về Lê Đình Diểu, nhưng có một điều mà tôi chắc, ngoài anh và tôi ra, không có ai biết, và đó là một kỉ niệm vui, khi chúng tôi còn học tập quân sự trong trường Võ Khoa Thủ Đức vào năm 1969. Mà nếu nhắc lại thì may ra chị LDD, người đã có thời dạy chung tại Hội Việt Mỹ Sài Gòn với tôi, có thể nhớ ra ‘cái đêm hôm ấy đêm gì?’

Báo số 125, tháng Chín. Tôi để ý đọc bài ‘Đạo kính tổ tiên, điểm gặp gỡ chung cho tín ngưỡng Việt’ của LM Trần Cao Tường và thấy là cao kiến, có ý hướng tốt, vì vấn đề thờ cúng tổ tiên, thường được người miền Nam gọi nôm na là Đạo Ông Bà, đã được nhắc nhở tới, mà đặc biệt được nhắc nhở tới bởi một vị linh mục. Có điều là văn vẻ, lối diễn tả, những đoạn tác giả trích dẫn, tôi thấy có nhiều chỗ hơi khó hiểu, nên mất bớt đi cái hay của bài viết. Nhưng đó cũng có thể là lỗi tại tôi.

Báo số 126, tháng Mười. Khi đọc bài ‘Một vài trao đổi với LM Trần Cao Tường’ của Nguyễn Hùng Vũ, tôi mới thấy toát mồ hôi hột. Không ngờ thái độ ‘ngu si’ của mình, không được ngồi bút sắc bén, tư tưởng vững vàng, lí luận đanh thép, phong cách trí thức của tác giả Nguyễn Hùng Vũ cho ‘hưởng thái bình’. Ông Vũ ‘không’ cho rằng ông Tường có ý hướng tốt, mà chỉ muốn ‘vơ về một mối’ cho mục đích tôn giáo của mình. Thế mới là lạ! Sau khi nói tới một thứ khoa học về tâm linh, ông Vũ đã viết một đoạn mà tôi cho là hợp ý: ‘Niềm tin vào một chủ thuyết của một tôn giáo nào đó là một vấn đề cá nhân, tôi không muốn đụng chạm, nhưng đối với tôi, quan trọng hơn những gì tôi tin là khả năng tự suy ngẫm và xét lại những gì tôi đang nghĩ là tôi tin.’ Tôi còn thích hơn nữa đoạn ông Vũ viết sau đây: “Khi tâm con người đã được phát huy đến độ đâm bông kết trái, thì vấn đề ‘tôn giáo của tôi, tôn giáo của anh’ sẽ không còn nữa, sẽ không còn biên giới, không có vấn đề đúng, sai, không có vấn đề ‘người ngoại đạo’ nữa, và một tín đồ với tất cả những giá trị của một tín đồ sẽ biết kính trọng tôn giáo của người khác như tôn trọng tôn giáo của chính mình.”

Ông Vũ viết hay đã đành, nhưng có chỗ lập luận về “Trời hay Thiên nhiên hay Định mệnh?” của tác giả, có thể cũng là hay đấy, để phản bác lại tác giả họ Trần về một số ví dụ liên quan đến ‘Ông Trời,’ thì tôi chưa thực sự cảm thấy ngấm, vẫn còn đợi tiêu hóa. Nhưng đó cũng có thể là lỗi tại tôi.

Cũng trong số báo 126 này, tôi đặc biệt để ý đến bài ‘Cuốn từ điển tái bản tám lần’ của Đặng Trần Huân, trong đó tác giả nhận xét về quyển “Từ Điển Việt Anh” của Bùi Phụng. Quả là ‘vải thưa không che được mắt Thánh!’ Tôi thật không ngờ vị cựu Chủ nhiệm

Khoa Tiếng Việt. trường Đại học Tổng hợp Hà Nội, lại để cho thiên hạ được dịp ‘bới lông tìm vết’ nhiều đến thế! Giáo sư Bùi Phụng, nếu tôi nhớ không lầm là cháu cụ Bùi Kỳ, tôi đã được gặp mặt vài lần tại Hà Nội vào những năm đầu thập niên 1990 qua những lần tôi từ Úc-đại-lợi về tham dự Hội nghị Giáo dục tại quê nhà. Tôi đã tình cờ được dự một hội nghị về ‘Nghiên cứu Văn học Bắc Âu’ tại Hà Nội vào năm 1993 và tôi hơi thất vọng khi được nghe Giáo sư Bùi Phụng phát biểu quan niệm vô cùng tiêu cực của ông về việc dịch thuật--một việc làm, theo ông, là vô vọng, đặc biệt là khi phải dịch tục ngữ. thành ngữ. Ông người cao lớn, béo tốt, đeo kính cận dày cộm, tính tình vui vẻ, dễ mến, thích ăn nhậu. Tôi mến ông, chúng tôi thích cho nhau nụ cười, và vì thế, tôi còn muốn gặp nhau lần nữa. Tuy giống như nhiều người, ông mong có thu nhập cao cho các sản phẩm trí tuệ của mình, nhưng có lẽ ông không nghiêm túc lắm về chuyện chữ nghĩa, tiếng Anh tiếng Việt, đem in ấn, xuất bản. Riêng về ‘Cuốn từ điển tái bản tám lần’ của ông, tôi đang nghĩ xem có cách nào hay nhất để chuyển đến tay ông những lời ‘vàng ngọc’ của tác giả họ Đặng hay không? Mà lần này, nếu có, sẽ không phải lỗi tại tôi: người đưa thư (the messenger).

Nhà soạn từ điển họ Bùi, người mà vào đầu thập niên 1980, nếu tôi nhớ không lầm, đã co công sáu tháng ‘tầm chương trích cú’ tại Trung tâm East-West Center thuộc Đại học Hạ-oai-di, Hoa Kỳ, chắc phải hiểu câu nói của người Mĩ ‘Don’t kill the messenger!’ nghĩa là gì? Và như thế, nếu có dịp gặp lại tôi, tôi chắc ông sẽ chỉ cười ‘khà.’

Trịnh Nhật (Sydney, Australia)

APPENDIX 10

English Target Text

Readers' Opinions

After a break in subscribing to *21st Century* magazine, at least over a period of one year, a friend in Stockton, near San Francisco, continued to subscribe to it on my behalf. Consequently, I had a chance to keep in touch with your magazine, starting with Issue No. 124, August 1999. The two articles which attracted my attention and which I found interesting were 'A Good Friend' by Le Tat Dieu, written in memory of Le Dinh Dieu, and 'Saigon: Days and Months of Uncertainty' by Tran Doan Nho, writing about the wretched and miserable lives of the people of South Vietnam after the so-called Liberation Day. 'A Good Friend' is moving and full of love; 'Saigon: Days and Months of Uncertainty' has many strange aspects, full of the fine details depicting the humiliation of the human condition. A great deal has been written about Le Dinh Dieu, but, I am sure, there is one thing which no one knew about, except Le Dinh Dieu and myself. And it was a fond memory we shared when we were training in the Thu Duc Military School in 1969. If her memory were to be jogged, then hopefully, Dieu's wife, who had once taught with me at Saigon's Vietnamese-American Association (VAA), may remember as to 'What sort of a night was that?'

Issue No. 125, September 1999. I paid attention to the article 'Ancestor worship, the common meeting point of Vietnamese beliefs' by Father Tran Cao Tuong, and thought it a brilliant idea with good intentions, because the issue of ancestor worship, which is commonly called by people from Southern Vietnam 'Ancestor Religion', was mentioned, in particular, by a Catholic priest. The only problem is the style, the way of expressing ideas and the quotes inserted by the author, I found, in many places, a little difficult to comprehend, thus more or less diminishing the quality of the article. However, this could just be my fault.

Issue No. 126, October. When reading the article, 'A Few Exchanges with Father Tran Cao Tuong' by Nguyen Hung Vu, I found myself breaking out in beads of perspiration. Surprisingly, 'my ignorance' was not permitted 'to prevail' because of the sharp pen, the logical argument, and the intellectuality of the author. Vu 'did not' believe Tuong had good intentions, other than 'to put all his eggs in one basket' for his own religious purposes. What a strange idea! After referring to a so-called science of spirituality which is emerging, Vu wrote a paragraph with which I agreed: 'The belief in a particular religious doctrine is a personal matter which I do not want to confront, but for me, the more important thing other than my own belief is my ability to question and re-assess what I think I believe in.' I like even better the following paragraph that Vu wrote: 'When the heart of a human being has developed to such an extent that it blossoms and bears fruit, the question of 'my religion, your religion', will no longer exist. There will be no boundaries, no question of right or wrong, no question of 'non-believers', and the believer, with all those values that go with that belief will be able to respect the religion of others, in the same way as he or she respects his or her own religion.'

Nguyen Hung Vu writes magnificently, there is no doubt, except for his argument about 'Heaven, Nature or Destiny?', which is probably interesting, as a counter to the writer

Tran Cao Tuong about a number of examples regarding 'Heaven' I am still waiting to totally absorb his reasoning. It hasn't been fully digested yet. However, it could be my fault.

Also in Issue No/ 126, I particularly took notice of the article 'The dictionary which has been published eight times' by Dang Tran Huan, in which the writer commented on the 'Vietnamese-English Dictionary' compiled by Bui Phung. 'You can't cover the eyes of a saint with a fine cloth', as they say in Vietnamese. In fact, I was flabbergasted that the former Head of the Vietnamese Language Department of Hanoi University gave people the opportunity 'to nit-pick' to such an extent. Mr. Bui Phung, if my memory serves me correctly, is the well-known and well-respected Bui Ky's nephew, who I met several times in Hanoi in the early 1990s, when I made a return trip from Australia to attend education conferences in my homeland. Coincidentally, I had a chance to attend a conference on 'Scandinavian Literary Studies' in Hanoi in 1993, and I was somewhat disappointed when I heard Mr. Bui express his extremely negative viewpoint on translation--an undertaking, which according to him, was one of hopelessness, particularly when rendering proverbs, sayings and idioms. He has an imposing, well-built stature, wears thick-lensed spectacles, has a pleasant and likeable nature, likes wining and dining. I like him. We like to make each other laugh, and because of this I would like to meet up with him again. However, like the majority of people, he expects good return for his intellectual activities, but probably he has not been serious enough about the way he has dealt with words and their meanings in both English and Vietnamese, particularly those that have been seen in print. With regard to Mr. Dang's comments on the eighth edition of Mr. Bui's Vietnamese-English Dictionary', I am wondering which is the best way to convey to the book writer the 'pearls of wisdom' of the book reviewer. If this somehow happens, it would not be my fault this time.

This lexicographer Bui Phung, who in the early 1980s, if I am not mistaken, undertook six months of intensive work 'digging deep into the books' at the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii in the USA, must have understood the American expression: 'Don't kill the messenger!' And so, when we meet again, I believe, he will get a good laugh out of my doing him such a service.

(1000 words)

APPENDIX 11

Translation of Nhật Tiến's short story

What Color Rose will we wear for Mom?

The following is a translation of a short story by the celebrated Vietnamese writer, Nhật Tiến. The story first appeared in a Vietnamese magazine published in California in 1983 at the time of the Vu-Lan Festival, Ullambana, which is the Buddhist Wandering Souls Day celebrated at the time of the full moon of the 7th lunar month. On this day Mahayana Buddhists commemorate and pay homage to the devotion of one of the Buddha's chief disciples, Maudgalyayana, (Viet: Mục Kiền Liên) who, according to legend, refused to enter Nirvana until his sinful mother had been saved from the suffering of Hell. Maudgalyayana visited his mother in Hell and with the help of the Buddha's other disciples saved her. Buddhists believe that on this day the wandering souls can enter the world of Man and partake of the offerings provided. Because of the legend Vietnamese Buddhists also use the day to show particular respect to their mothers and go to the pagoda to pray and make offerings. Those whose mothers have died wear a white rose, while those whose mothers are still alive wear a red rose. - Ed.

The world of Thin, widow of the late school teacher, has now been whittled down to two small spaces: the narrow strip of land running along the garage wall and that corner of her mind where her fading memory conjured up a jumbled host of fond reminiscences: a sign of approaching old age.

One must admit that the narrow strip of land is the result of perfect care. Its width is about 1.20 meters and its length about 7 meters. Most of the time in her day is swallowed up in cultivating the garden. There are chilli bushes, as well as patches of coriander, sweet leek, perilla, mint and spring onions. There's always enough to provide a full plate of vegetables any time the family sits down to enjoy *bò nhúng giấm*¹ or *gỏi cuốn chấm mắm nêm*². It is only at times like this that the family fully appreciate the work Thin puts in watering and fertilizing the garden.

Tuan said, 'Now that you eat the vegetables you don't think Mom's garden is a waste of time do you? You keep insisting that we should just race down to the supermarket and buy the vegetables but I haven't yet seen either of you willing to get off your backsides and do that.'

Thuy looked at her brother, pursing her lips, she said, 'It's all very well for you to criticize us but I don't see you going to the supermarket.'

Thu joined in, 'If you're not prepared to help with the cooking and shopping, what's going to happen when you marry Huong? Will you just sit there while she pours your drinks and serves you meals.'

'Why wouldn't I? I'm marrying a Vietnamese girl not an American girl,' retorted Tuan.

Thu's eyes stared in amazement as she looked at her brother, 'Ha! So you believe that if you marry a Vietnamese girl you will be able to force her to be your slave and she will do your bidding. No way! I can't see that happening.'

'Go and ask Mom if you don't believe me. The most important things a Vietnamese girl learns is submitting to three in life: Father, Husband, and Son. She also

¹ fondue-style beef

² seafood salad rolled in rice-paper and dipped in fish pickles

must learn four virtues: proper work, proper demeanor, proper speech, proper conduct. Isn't that true, Mom?' he replied.

Thin just looked at her children, not saying anything. Ever since the day she arrived in America, she had given up voicing her opinion. To Thin everything around her was bewildering and beyond her understanding, completely severing her from the experiences gathered in a lifetime. That is to say, when confronted with anything here she was bewildered and confused. Everything she said was wrong and she had become a child in her own household. Everywhere she went she had to be taken by the hand and in anything she wanted to do she had to first ask her children's opinion. Even when her children were gathered trying to explain something to her she still couldn't make head or tail of what was going on. The day Tuan got a regular job, he replaced the old TV with a brand new one. Tuan had said, 'This set has *remote control*, Mom. If you want to watch TV, whatever you do don't touch any buttons on the TV itself. Everything is set up, so all you need to do is sit on the sofa and press the buttons on this thing.'

Tuan had handed the remote control to the old lady. She took it timidly as if it would break the minute she touched it...

He continued to explain, '...This is the *on* button, this is the *off* button and this is the *volume*. This one here is to change the channel and this one is the *mute* button; so if the telephone rings while you're watching you can pause the sound.'

Her brain was totally confused and couldn't take everything in. When she handed it back to Tuan, she had said impatiently, 'That's too complicated and anyway I don't like TV very much, it talks a lot of nonsense and I don't understand any of it.'

'Then just listen to the music Mom.'

'I don't like the modern music, it seems to punch at my ears and my head starts to ache.'

In the end her entertainment was confined to a few cassette tapes of Vietnamese classical theatre which she had listened to time and time again on her ancient cassette player. She didn't mind the cassette player as it was simple and easy to operate. The only trouble was that when she listened to the tapes, Thuy didn't seem to mind, but Thu would grumble anytime the tapes were on.

Thu would say, 'Switch it off please because I get a headache from that droning, nagging sound. I don't know how you can listen to that.'

There were times when Tuan felt a bit sorry for his mother and thought his sisters were being a bit cruel. He shouted at them, 'This is the only enjoyment Mom has, why don't you let her listen to her music.'

Thu would retort, 'Why doesn't she wait for us to go to school and then she can listen all day if she wants to.'

Naturally, Thin never wanted to become the cause of her children's arguments so she reached out to press the button to stop the tape. She looked at her children through sad eyes and opened the back door to go and stand in the backyard. She stared at the wall on the other side of the lawn. The wall, painted in a dark pink lime wash, reflected the hot June sunshine and the glare hurt her eyes. She thought about her own tiny world, the little garden plot, 1.2 meters by 7 meters, with its shallots, mint, coriander and perilla.

A few weeks ago she had met *Old Phong* at the shopping centre, who promised that the next time Thin came to visit her she would pull up some *róp cá*³ plants and give to Thin. Thin had happily announced this piece of news to her children and had suggested timidly, 'When someone can spare the time, would one of you drive me to *Old Phong's* place so that I can pick up the *róp cá* plants to put in the garden here.'

At this, Thuy had shrugged her shoulders and stuck out her tongue, 'Yuk! *róp cá*, no way. I give up. I feel like fainting just thinking about it.'

Thu said, 'Me too! How on earth can you like such a vegetable?'

Again Tuan intervened on behalf of his mother, 'Mom likes to eat it even if you don't. Why don't one of you drive her there so she can get the plants.'

'I'm busy this week because I'll be helping Lieu to plan her birthday this Saturday and on Sunday one of your friends is having a party and I'm invited', Thuy replied.

Tuan turned to Thu, 'Then Thu, why don't you drive Mom to *Old Phong's* place? What are you doing this weekend?'

Thu shot back defiantly, 'And what are *you* going to do?'

Tuan stared at her defiantly jutting chin. Thin hurriedly intervened, 'It's alright, if everyone's too busy this week, next week will do.'

But the next week had passed into a month. The subject of *róp cá* had come and gone in minutes and was immediately forgotten except by Thin. She was still waiting for the chance to drop in to see *Old Phong*.

Back in Vietnam, Thin had been addicted to the habit of rubbing her teeth with tobacco and chewing betel. When her husband was alive, out of affection for her he had planted a vine of betel next to a trellis in the backyard of their spacious house in Saigon. The plant had grown gradually covering the overhead trellis. In the corners of her mind the memory which stood out the most was the image of the trellis of betel leaves but not simply because she was so addicted to chewing betel at the time but it reminded her of all the love and care her husband had for her. When her husband died, the trellis had been covered in luxuriant green, and many a time, as she stood by herself picking the leaves, she allowed herself to sob, hidden by the trellis. Her eyes would still be red when she went back into the house. At that time, her children had been young and innocent. Thu had only just turned 5, Thuy was 8 and Tuan, a boy of 12. She then devoted her days to love and care for the children. As they got a little older, Thu and Thuy enjoyed helping her fold the betel leaves around a mixture of tobacco, areca nut and lime. She smiled to herself as she thought about their small chubby hands awkwardly filling the leaves and finally stabbing with a betel stem to hold it all in place. The results were often less than neat and very lopsided but it was a happy time and Thin remembered feeling happy and at peace watching them solemnly completing their task.

Ever since arriving in America both Thu and Thuy had been in agreement suggesting their mother stop her betel chewing habit. Thu explained, 'Chewing betel is not done in this country. If your mouth is covered in blood-red they think we are savages.'

Thuy added, 'You see! There's not a soul in the whole of America who chews betel. If you chew betel in this country everyone will stand and stare at you.'

³ an aromatic herb which has a distinct fishy smell
(*Saururaceae* = 'Lizard Tail').

Although more sympathetic Tuan was inclined to agree with his sisters and said, 'Why don't you let them buy you some chewing gum if you want to keep your mouth busy. Thu! after school this afternoon can you drop in somewhere and buy some of that cinnamon-flavoured gum, which might be more to Mom's taste.'

It was the first time Thu had agreed to any of her brother's suggestions. All three of them had joined together as one to break Thin's betel chewing habit. So Thu energetically went about the task of bringing home many varieties of chewing gum; long flat pieces, small white squares, as well as the cinnamon-flavoured *Dentyl* gum that Tuan had suggested.

When Thin realized the amount of money spent on the gum she had said emphatically, 'No! No! Why on earth did you buy so much gum? If you want me to stop chewing betel, I will. I don't need chewing gum...'

She continued in a sadder tone, '...When in Rome... Now I live in a different place I will conform.'

Indeed, Thin stopped betel chewing for good. She never ate any of the gum Thu had brought home. Her habit had been crushed but the memory of a trellis of lush green betel leaves would stay with her forever. There were days when the children were out that Thin would sit on the sofa with her arms wrapped around her knees, looking at the glass window which became blurred in the glare. She looked so thin and small curled up on the immense sofa looking like an old lost cat. Only a few years had passed since coming to America but already her hair had gone completely white. As her eyes blinked from the glare, her heart was in the tiny living room in Saigon looking out into the yard where the betel leaves climbed over the trellis. With his own hands her husband had made the bamboo trellis. The sounds of the street on the other side of the wall reached her and she thought she could hear the sound of a motor-pedicab as it passed the street beside the market. She heard once again the sounds coming from the public water tap and those of peddlars shouting out their food wares as well as the train from Bien Hoa chuffing past the level crossing. Her homeland was far away and out of sight and could only exist now in a corner of her mind. Her thoughts drifted back to when the four of them first arrived in America. They would all sit down together to a meal eagerly competing with each other to talk about something they remembered about Vietnam. Such fond memories of her late husband, Saigon, school, streets, relatives and friends. These occasions became more and more rare until it was only Thin who was left telling the stories. They hardly ever ate as a family anymore. At noon, the children had lunch at school and in the evening they arrived home at different times. Thu was usually the earliest and the hungriest. She would go to the kitchen and heat a bowl of vegetable soup (ready made in a cellophane bag) and eat it with several slices of bread.

Thin would implore, 'Only eat a little bit, not too much, wait until the evening when the whole family can eat together.'

Eating together! That was the one small dream Thin still held for this household. It was only on very rare occasions now that the whole family ever sat down to a meal together; perhaps occasionally on weekends. By the time Tuan arrived home at night, Thu and Thuy had already retired to their room and closed the door.

Early evening would often find Thin, sad and lonely, dozing off in the chair waiting for her children to come home. The dishes she'd laid out on the table for their meal, grew cold. There might be pickles, meat cooked in fish sauce and vegetable broth.

Some nights Tuan would sit down to the food out of kindness to his mother. He wasn't really hungry but he would scoop half a bowl of rice instead of a full bowl. After that he would continue his meal by making up some packet noodle soup. Tuan was absolutely addicted to noodle soup. He never seemed to grow tired of it. At other times, Tuan would carry a big bowl of noodle soup into the living room and eat it while he watched TV. So a pot of nicely cooked white rice would often be left sitting on the table. Thin never threw anything out. After she cleared the table she would put the leftover food in the refrigerator to re-heat for her lunch the next day. Many a time Thin added a little bit of water and made herself a bowl of rice soup from the leftovers of the night before. As time passed, her lunch of rice soup became an established habit. For the whole of her life Thin had a horror of throwing anything away. Even, in Saigon, at a time when she was quite comfortably off she never believed in waste. Her children had often heard her use the expression: 'If you waste what is given by God, you won't have it again for another ten generations'. Thin lived her life as though the eyes of Heaven or Buddha were always looking down. So she worried even if she spilled as much as a grain of rice on the floor. That's why any leftover food was always put in the fridge, even if it was only salted fish sauce, salted prawn heads or crumbed fish that had been simmered in fish sauce.

Thuy had once shouted, 'Mom, there's plenty of food in this country, but you spend your life eating food that's off.'

Thin retorted, 'Damn you! It's good food and it's not off!'

Thu joined in, 'If it's not off then you keep re-heating it all week. If you don't throw the food out, I will!'

Thuy was as good as her word. She would wait until her mother was absorbed in the garden and set about cleaning out the fridge. Out would go rice soup, old cooked rice, fried Chinese cabbage, cooked shrimp paste, and something 'blackened' which looked like neither meat nor fat, intermingled with some shrimp barbel. The clean fridge would last about a week then Thin would be back to her old habits again, storing leftover food. Eventually the children didn't bother any more and let her free to adhere to her own eating and drinking habits, just as her children each had a favourite dish. For Thu it was the vegetable soup, Thuy loved rice vermicelli with barbecued pork and Tuan sat with his bowl of noodle soup as he watched T.V. After each of them had finished eating they would head for their separate rooms and shut the door. The image of the shut door in American homes left Thin with the feeling of horror; she was not only shut out of their rooms but out of their lives. She had no idea what her children did behind their doors. Sometimes she stood out in the corridor under the weak yellow light. In reality she was only a few feet from each of them but in loving closeness she was at a great distance. They would never know, there were many a day when she would be so overcome by emotion that she would lay her head against the wall and sob.

In the past she could have a thorough knowledge of her children's daily activities. She would be able to tell whose piece of garment it was, which of Tuan's trousers had been mended, which of Thuy's or Thu's tops had a split seam or needed a button. She could also tell if Thu had scratched her hand, when the wound had healed or when the scab had eventually dropped off. She could even tell what tooth of their comb had broken, which of their sandal straps had come unstuck and whose handkerchief had been stained with purple ink. In those days she'd known her children as well as she could read her own palm.

Now she was barely allowed to step through the doors of their rooms. If she wanted any of them she had to stand outside and knock on the doors. Sometimes, when Thin wanted to speak to one of the girls, Thu and Thuy might open their wooden doors a fraction, just enough to put their heads out and exchange a few words with Thin and then the door would be snapped shut again. Thin had come to realise that in every way the children had flown out of her reach. Each of them now had his or her own world both in its strict and figurative sense of the word.

Once Tuan had been ill and lay in bed for three days. Thin had then found herself rejuvenated. She bustled about the kitchen making hot rice soup, chopping onions, squeezing orange juice, soaking hot face towels and preparing condensed milk and gathering Tuan's dirty laundry and washing and hanging it to dry. During this time she was able to come and go from Tuan's room as she pleased without knocking. She gave herself up to the luxury of sitting at the end of his bed for hours. Sometimes she would put her hand to his forehead or stroke his feet or simply pull the covers around him. At other times she would straighten the bed clothes or listen attentively to his laboured breathing. She was so busy and full of love but it only lasted three days. In the evening of Tuan's first day back at work, Thin hesitantly approached Tuan's tightly closed door. She knocked softly.

Tuan called out, 'Who's there?'

'It's Mom.'

'What do you want Mom?'

'I just wanted to know if you're feeling alright today.'

'Fit as a fiddle. No worries! Mom,' replied Tuan loudly.

Thin stood thoughtfully by his door for a moment and turned and walked away. Intermingled with the joy she felt at Tuan's recovery, was an indescribable feeling of anxiousness that she had lost something precious. She again went to sit on the sofa, curling up like an old sick cat. She looked through the glass window into the deep hollow of the dark sky thinly dotted with stars. As if from afar the sound of music reached her vaguely, echoing from behind the doors of her children's rooms. She immediately regretted her very foolish thought, 'Thu, Thuy, I have never ever seen them sick!'

(California, 1983)

APPENDIX 12

Translation of Nguyễn Huy Thiệp's short stories

The breezes of Hua Tat

In the North West region there was a small village populated by the minority black Thai, and lying about one mile from the foot of Chieng Dong Pass. The village was called Hua Tat.

Hua Tat village was located in a long and narrow valley, surrounded on all sides by high mountains. At one end of the valley was a small pond, the water of which never ran dry. At autumn time, wild yellow chrysanthemums bloomed around the pond, the colour of which dazzled your eyes.

One could leave by many different ways from the valley of Hua Tat. The main route was covered with small stones and just wide enough for a water-buffalo to pass through. Both sides of this route were lined with bamboo, mangosteen, mango trees and hundreds of types of climbers the names of which were unknown. The footprints of many people were imprinted on this road, amongst these reportedly being, those of an emperor. Hua Tat valley received little sunshine, so all year round there was a kind of haze hanging over the village which caused people and animals to become blurred images the eyesight. This created a kind of mystical atmosphere.

At Hua Tat old stories were told in every little nook and cranny, in much the same way as the small yellow wild flowers grow. It was believed that if a man held this kind of wild flower in his mouth whilst drinking, he would never get drunk. This flower was much like the small white pebble streaked with red lines as fine as thread, which lay hidden at the bottom of the stream. Women liked the pebbles. They took them home and put them in their camisoles for a hundred days. When they made their husbands' beds they hid the pebbles in the bedding. There existed an old wives' tale which said that when a husband had lain on such a bed he would never think of other women.

Hua Tat was a small, isolated village and the village people led a simple but honest life. The farm work was arduous and tiring, as was the hunting; however, the people were always very gracious and hospitable.

When arriving in Hua Tat, a visitor would be invited to sit by the fireside, and to drink alcohol from an animal horn whilst eating the dried meat of jungle animals. If a visitor was a fair and honest person, the host would offer to tell an old story. Possibly many of these stories recounted human hardships, but because we understood about those hardships, it evoked in us a clear sense of morality, forgiveness and human compassion.

Nowadays, the characters of these old stories live no longer. At Hua Tat they have become as dust and ashes. However, their spirits are still lingering around the totems on the roofs of the huts. They are like as the breezes.

The tiger's heart

There was once a girl named Pua who lived in Hua Tat village. Her beauty was unsurpassed throughout all the other villages. Her skin was as white as alabaster, her hair was long and smooth and her lips were red as cherries. The only problem was that Pua was paralysed from the waist down, so all the year round she was confined to one place only.

When this story took place Pua was 16 years old. At this age she was considered to be at threshold of the discovery of romance--in the Spring of her life. One may have many romances, but a girl can experience Spring only once in a lifetime. At the age of 16, it is considered to be the beginning of Spring for someone, but when one turns 19, that is when Autumn is believed to have set in.

Spring at Hua Tat was filled with the sounds of music from bamboo pipes which enveloped the surroundings of the village girls' houses. The grass below the stairs leading to the huts could not grow. In its place lay a flattened silvery coloured area of earth. At the stairs of Pua's hut there was no music because nobody wanted to take a girl who was paralysed as his wife. Men took pity on her, even children pitied her. People prayed that the evil spirits would leave her body, and they searched to no avail for a cure for her affliction. Her legs remained lifeless.

That year Hua Tat endured an horrific winter. The weather went berserk. Trees and plants dried out, withered and died because of the extreme frosts. Water froze into ice. That winter, in the jungles of Hua Tat, there appeared a fierce tiger who stalked around the village all day and night. The village became deserted. Nobody dared to go into the fields and terraces to work. In the evenings the bottoms of the staircases leading to the huts were barricaded with thorny branches and doors were tightly shut. In the mornings, the footprints of the tiger could be seen around every hut. The whole village lived in a constant state of fear.

It was rumoured that the tiger had an extraordinary heart. Its heart was thought to be as small as a pebble and transparent in colour. The heart was also considered to be a magic charm as well as a miracle drug, for whoever received that heart, would be blessed with good luck and wealth all their life. That heart, if preserved in alcohol, would be able to cure all fatal diseases. Surely if this drug were to be taken by Pua it would cure her paralysis.

Rumours quickly spread, like a bird on the wing, throughout the valley. In the kitchen, by the fireside, by the water's edge and streams, in the fields and on the terraces, everywhere, people talked about this tiger's heart. Rumours spread as far as the lowlands where the Kinh people lived, and to the top of the high mountain abodes of the H'mong people. Rumours that come from simple-minded people, strangely enough, are more amusing than those which would usually only be expected of worldly people.

Many people hunted the tiger. Amongst these were the Thais, the Kinhs and the H'mongs. Some people wanted to hunt it for its heart to use as a magic charm, whilst others wanted the heart as a cure for disease. How could you blame them? In one's life, who has never once sought to pursue a dream? Among the hordes of hunters, the largest group were the young men of Hua Tat village. They wanted to capture the tiger's heart in order to cure Pua. The tiger hunt lasted till near the end of winter, however, as if there was something supernatural, the cunning tiger knew how

to avoid ambushes. The true fact was that the hunters themselves were being hunted by the tiger. More than ten people were killed by the ferocious tiger and the sound of people's moaning mixed with the howling of the wind, lingered throughout the village. People gradually became discouraged. The number of hunters diminished as fast as ripe fruit falls from a tree, until finally, only one hunter was left. That was Kho.

Kho was a young man from Hua Tat village, an orphan living like 'con dim'-- an animal who lives in isolation avoiding human contact. Kho never took part in any village gatherings or festivals, partly because he was poor, and partly because he knew that he was ugly. He had once had chicken-pox and his face was covered entirely in pock marks. His body was deformed, in that his arms reached down to his knees, and his legs were spindly. He was always hurrying, just like 'con dim', who is known never to walk, but always to run.

When the villagers knew that Kho had joined the hunt, many were astonished. They were even more astonished when, they found that Kho was going to hunt the tiger, not for the sake of the magic charm of its heart which would bring good luck to him alone, but for a cure for Pua. Every nightfall they saw Kho standing furtively at the foot of the stairs to Pua's hut with a forlorn love-sick look on his face.

Hua Tat villagers did not know where Kho was looking for signs of the tiger. Neither did the tiger know where to look for signs of an 'animal' like Kho. The tiger knew of the danger, so he changed his lairs and his trails. Kho and the tiger stalked each other hour by hour.

One night, when people were sitting on the floor of Pua's hut, telling stories, they heard the sound of a gunshot. The noise resounded like a clap of thunder. There was an ear-splitting roar from a tiger which echoed throughout the mountains. The tiger was dead! Kho had killed the tiger, for sure! The whole village was panic-stricken, and a hustling and a bustling arose, like a storm in a jungle. People yelled with excitement and many of them cried out aloud, with tears in their eyes. The young men of the village lit their torches and went into the jungle to look for Kho.

However, they did not find Kho and the tiger's body till it was nearly dawn. Both of them had fallen down a steep abyss near the stream. Kho had broken his back and his face was covered in the tiger's claw marks, whilst the tiger had been shot through the head. The bullet had torn off most of the tiger's forehead, and continued through to his brain.

However, the strangest thing was that the tiger's chest had been slashed open and his heart was longer there. The cut made by the knife was still fresh, and the blood covering both sides of the cut was dripping continuously and bubbling. Someone had stolen the tiger's heart! All the young men of Hua Tat village grew silent, their heads bowed low for they were angry and bitter. More than ten people had been killed during the Winter because of this ferocious animal, and now two more people were dead because of the tiger. That was Pua as well as Kho.

The people of Hua Tat village buried the tiger on the spot where he was killed. Nobody ever spoke of the miracle of the tiger's heart. They forgot about it just as they had forgotten many other distressing things that had happened in the world. This was how it was! Nowadays, very few people remember this story.

The biggest beast of all

Those days in Hua Tat there lived a family, but the people were unaware from which village they had come. They built their house on the outskirts of the village near the mysterious jungle. Only an elderly couple lived in the house and everywhere they went, they were inseparable. The wife was always quiet and unassuming, never saying a word all day. The husband was tall and skinny with a miserable look on his face, and his nose was like the beak of a bird. His eyes were hollow and glazed, and glowed with a cold and fearful burning. The husband was also a skilful hunter, and with a rifle in his hand, jungle birds and animals rarely escaped death. His rifle seemed to have a will of its own. At the back of his house, feathers from birds, and bones from dead animals piled up. The piles of strewn bird feathers looked as black as Indian ink, whilst the piles of chalk-white animal bones were mottled with traces of smelly yellowish-coloured fluid. These piles were as huge as a grave. The old hunter was like the God of Death of the jungle. Birds and jungle animals feared him and the hunters of Hua Tat were both jealous and angry with him, for he did not spare any animal within range of his rifle. Someone even said that he had seen with his very own eyes, the old hunter kill a dancing peacock.

The story went that the dancing peacock had a head gracefully arched like a blade of paddy-rice, its tail displayed in a half-circle of myriad hues, and the rays of the sun reflected the fire-light glittering like gold from its feathers. It cleverly moved around with circular motions. Only love could have prompted it to move in such a delicate and precise fashion. The dancing peacock had been alive, and then, 'bang!' the rifle jerked, spouting a tongue of red fire. The peacock collapsed, its wings coloured with the five colours of the rainbow were saturated in blood. Then the hunter's wife had arrived with her dark, dried-up, skinny body, and had silently picked up the peacock and put it into the basket strapped to her back.

However, all his life the old man only hunted the everyday birds and beasts of the jungle. He had never hunted down any beast weighing three tonnes or more. His rifle had only shot small dumb animals, and this aggravated, as well as upset him.

All of the village people of Hua Tat shunned them. Nobody associated with them or wished to talk to the couple, and if they crossed their path, the villagers automatically turned away to avoid meeting them. Because of this the old hunter, together with his unassuming wife, lived a lonely life.

By the end of the year, the jungle was almost devoid of foliage, birds disappeared and hid themselves, and there were no traces of any animals whatsoever in the jungle. Never before had the people of Hua Tat experienced such a difficult time, and it was even rumoured that Heaven was punishing them.

The old hunter also experienced difficulty in seeking food. His wife wandered in and out of the jungle. It was the first time in his life that he had found himself in such a situation. During the first three phases of the moon, his rifle had never been fired. The old man arose when the cock crowed, set off armed with his rifle, and did not return until it was completely dark. His elderly wife no longer had enough strength to accompany her husband. So she stayed home by the fire and waited for him. The flame of the fire that she kindled seemed as if it was possessed by a ghost, for it did not glow red, but burnt with a pale blue light like the eyes of a wolf.

On this particular occasion, the old man had been away the whole week. He was exhausted, and his knees were sagging with fatigue. His muscles were flabby to such an extent that when he pinched them it felt as if he was pinching blood-sucking leeches. He had to drag himself around painfully, but could find nothing; not even a tiny bird nor a butterfly. He was bewildered and panic-stricken. Was this Heaven punishing the world, as had been rumoured by the people?

Eventually, the exhausted old man dragged himself home and as he approached the stream on the outskirts of the village, he stopped and looked towards the direction of his home. There was the fire-glow, burning pale-blue in colour. He thought that his wife would still be awake, waiting up for him. He tightly closed his glazed and hollow eyes and for a short time he reflected on this, then he decided to return to the jungle. His nose had sensed the scent of an animal. Luck was really with him this time! He sighted the animal. It was the peacock dancing, its legs moving delicately towards the right, its tail fanning into a circle towards the left. The bright emerald green colour on the tuft of its head was so glorious! The old man raised his rifle and 'bang!' The shot rang out. He heard a high-pitched cry, and he rushed towards the fallen beast. It was his wife! She had gone into the jungle to wait for him. She was still holding a clutch of peacock feathers in her hand. The old hunter lay down on his stomach with his face buried in the pools of blood which were flowing on to the rotting vegetation, the smell of which was nauseating, like the stench of a dead rat. He cried out suddenly in despair, like the cry of a wild boar and lay there for a long time. Black clouds descended and the forest darkened and became as hot as someone with a fever. Near dawn, the old man sprung up, as quickly as a gibbon, for he had conceived an idea to use his wife's body as prey to hunt for the biggest beast he had ever caught in his life. He lay in the bushes at arm's length from his wife's decomposing body, waiting in agony, but Heaven had punished him, for no beast came. Only Death came to him!

Three days later people dragged his hunched-up corpse from the bushes. A trace of a bullet-hole was on his forehead. At last he had gunned down the biggest beast in his life.

A woman called Bua

At Hua Tat there was an extraordinary woman called Lo Thi Bua. When she walked out in the streets nobody greeted her. People would say: 'She is an evil witch. Don't get close to her!' Mothers warned their children against her and wives gave warnings to their husbands. Bua was a charming woman. She was tall and well-built with strong hips and a firm body. Her breasts were smooth and well-developed. She always smiled and was full of life with a radiance that attracted people to her.

She lived alone with her nine children, however, nobody knew who the fathers of the children were. Even Bua herself did not really know who her children's fathers were. At times many men had lived with her, but in the end they dumped her. Youths, with the smell of mothers' milk still on their breath, and lacking experience as fathers, older, more experienced men, brave hunters and penny-pinching men. Each came into her life in many different ways, and when they left, they did so again in many different ways. With regard to romance, the male sex is usually crafty and irresponsible, whilst the female is often too trusting and devoted. Bua welcomed all the men who came to her and was also indifferent when they left her. Her fatherless children were raised solely by Bua, for Bua had no strong attachment or connection to

any men in the village. She lived in a way which showed that she had nothing to hide. Whether she cared about what people said or not, who knows?

Her large family lived happily, harmoniously, and in poverty. Women in the village became incensed and they often sneered and screamed abuse at her. However, deep down they were frightened because the men in the village joked about their lust for her. They sat around the fireplaces, their eyes grew bright and sparkling, and drooled about the thought of her.

At Hua Tat everyone led a normal family life according to tradition. A wife had a husband, children had a father. Indeed, there had never been such a weird family situation as Bua's. A wife without a husband, children without a father, and nine children who didn't even resemble anyone or even each other. Evil rumours spread like an epidemic throughout the village. The gossiping of the women spread quickly, like chicken fever through a fowl-yard. The women regarded these rumours more seriously than the men, so they forced the men to try and find a solution to this situation. In other words, the men were obliged to either ask Bua to leave, or the women would find out who the fathers of the children were. How could such a family be allowed to stay within Hua Tat? These children would become young adults, both male and female, and they would break with all the old traditions. There were many times that the men in Hua Tat village tried to hold a meeting, but it was to no avail. Many a man felt guilty for having been part of it, and their conscience pricked them. They did not dare to publicly admit to fathering the children. They were scared that their naive and faithful wives would spread the true story; and felt that this would be even worse than living a poverty-stricken life.

That year, nobody knew why, but in the jungles of Hua Tat, countless numbers of yams sprung up and the people were able to dig up huge roots without any effort at all.

When cooked, these yam roots became crumbly in texture with a sweet aroma and a rich taste, and on eating them one was left with a lingering piquant taste on the palate which was very satisfying. Bua and her children flocked to the place where the yams were growing, for the jungle was generous and welcomed everyone with open arms.

One day, after following the growth pattern of one particularly large root, Bua and her children dug up a chipped porcelain jar, the colour of which, because of its great age, resembled the skin-colour of an eel. Bua scraped a layer of dirt away from the mouth of the jar, and was surprised to find that the jar was full of glittering gold and silver ingots. Bua trembled and shook with excitement, she felt weak in the knees, and tears of joy welled up in her eyes. Her children rushed to surround her, looking in fear at their mother. Suddenly, in an instant, this poverty-stricken woman who had been looked down upon by all, became the richest woman in the village.

The planned meeting of the men of Hua Tat village to discuss Bua was no longer necessary. Men, one by one, readily came to Bua's hut to admit to fathering her children. The naive and faithful wives urged their husbands to go and accept their children and bring them home. It turned out there were not just nine fathers, nor even twenty. As many as fifty men came. However, Bua did not recognise any of these men as the fathers of her children, but they came, and when they did, all received a present to keep their good wives happy.

At the end of that year, Bua married a gentle widower who was a hunter and was also childless. Perhaps this was finally her true love, because she shed tears of joy and happiness on her wedding-night. She had never felt the same with other men.

Bua should have given birth to another child, her tenth, to her true husband, but this woman was not accustomed to giving birth amidst wealth, and in the traditional way. She unfortunately died in childbirth lying amidst cosy, comfortable piles of blankets.

The whole community of Hua Tat attended her funeral, men, women and children alike. They finally had forgiven her, and perhaps, she too forgave them.

A most amusing dance-party

Ha Thi E was the oldest daughter of the village chief, Ha Van No. Rarely was anyone as beautiful as E. She had an hour-glass figure. Her eyes twinkled like the stars above and her voice was soft, so that when she laughed her laughter was light and carefree. E was beautiful, there was no doubt, but her virtue was also unsurpassed. She was the pride of the villagers of Hua Tat, and the whole village hoped that she would one day find a worthy suitor. So did the village chief Ha Van No, and also the village elders. To give a beautiful girl such as E to an unworthy suitor, would be an offence to Heaven, because she was Heaven's gift to the village of Hua Tat. Who would be chosen? People openly brought up and discussed the topic of choosing E's husband at village meetings. Those who wished to become Chief Ha Van No's son-in-law were many. There were the young men from Hua Tat village, as well as other young men from outside the village. The elders of Hua Tat village stayed up all night drinking at least five jars of liquor, then they decided to hold a contest to choose someone who had honourable characteristics, even though this might prove to be a most difficult. Who would be able to fulfil all these virtues? Men gathered around fireplaces to discuss this and no one really knew how much meat and alcohol was 'downed'. It seems the younger generation nowadays cannot make a decision without drinking alcohol, instead of just plain water.

One day a young man who looked very impressive came to talk to the village chief and the elders, 'Bravery is the most precious but the most difficult virtue to find. I'm the one with this virtue.'

'Prove it then', the chief of the village said.

The man went into the jungle and returned in the late afternoon carrying across his shoulders a wild boar which he had killed. The beast weighed more than 100 kilograms, and its hair was coarse and spiky like a porcupine. It was already dead, but its bloodshot eyes still showed its final rage. He dropped the beast to the floor of the hut, his eyes were radiant and his body was surrounded in an aura. Everybody heaped praise on him.

The village chief asked his daughter, 'You see, this man is brave indeed. He has proved himself to have the virtue of bravery.'

E smiled. Her heart skipped a beat when she looked into the courageous eyes of her suitor. There was fire in those eyes. But as clever as she was, E knew that brave people are pre-occupied only with what they themselves can achieve in life.

E replied, 'Quite right, my father! This man has proved his courage. That virtue is really precious, but father, that virtue is not difficult to find because it only took him from early morning till this afternoon to prove it.'

The elders nodded their heads in agreement to what E said. The boar was slaughtered and the whole village danced all night in celebration of this precious but not difficult to find virtue.

Another time there was a young man who looked bright and intelligent, and who came to talk to the chief and the elders of the village: 'Wisdom is the most precious virtue, but also the most difficult to find. I am the one that has this virtue.'

'Prove it then', said the elders to the young man.

The young man went into the jungle. In the afternoon, upon his return he brought back a pair of live otters. Otters are the wildest animals in the jungle, for they are very cunning. and to trap them is a feat that is beyond most people. The young man smiled, his eyes were shining and his body was surrounded in an aura. Everybody praised him.

The village chief said to his daughter, 'You see, this man is clever indeed. He has proved himself to have the virtue of wisdom.'

E smiled. Once again her heart skipped a beat. The suitor's eyes were fiery and stormy. But clever people will always suffer hardship and even misfortune, and they know too much.

E replied, 'This man has proved his precious virtue, but father, that virtue is probably not difficult to find because it only took him from early morning till this afternoon to prove it.'

The elders nodded in agreement. They agreed to what E said. The otters were slaughtered and the whole village danced all night in celebration of this precious but not-difficult-to-find virtue, for all honest young men in the jungle need this virtue.

Another time, there appeared a burly young man riding on horseback into the village. This young man said: 'Wealth is a most precious virtue, but it is most difficult to find. I am a wealthy man.' He then threw numerous pieces of gold and silver on the ground. People were dazzled at the sight. The village chief and the elders sat in silence, because they had never before seen a man as rich as this.

'Wealth is something you do not need to prove!', said the burly young man.

The village elders nodded in agreement and so did the village chief. The burly young man smiled but his eyes were stormy and fiery, and full of darkness. His body was surrounded in an aura.

The village chief asked E: 'Well, my daughter, is wealth the most precious but most difficult virtue to find?' 'Difficult to find, yes.' E replied. 'Wealth is not a virtue, but deceitfulness is. One cannot be rich without being deceitful.'

The village elders burst out laughing, then they arranged an all-night party and entertained the man.

At last, a young man from Hua Tat village came to see the village chief and the elders. He was called Hac, an orphan, the most brilliant hunter in the village. Hac said to everyone: 'Honesty is the most precious virtue, but it is most difficult to find. I am the one that has this virtue.'

'Prove it then', everybody said. Hac replied: 'Honesty is not like a silver necklace that can be displayed and touched by everyone.' People started to talk about this noisily and animatedly and the village chief became enraged, his face was red with anger.

'You must prove it!', the village chief screamed out. He had noticed E's eyes looking lovingly at Hac. 'Who would believe someone like you? Who said that you have the virtue of honesty?', the village chief asked.

'Heaven knows!' replied Hac. 'I know it too!' E said solemnly.

'You fools!', the village chief roared. He looked to the village elders for support. He knew that elderly people always look for the simple solutions to every problem in life. Finally, one of the village elders said to Hac: 'Let's pray to Heaven then!' At present there is a drought. All the water sources from the mountains have run dry. If you really are honest, pray to Heaven for rain.'

The following afternoon, the Hua Tat villagers set up an altar in order to pray for rain. The atmosphere was sultry and stuffy. Hac stepped up to the altar solemnly looking to the sky and said: 'I live an honest life, although I know that being honest can often cause you to suffer and be disadvantaged. However, if honesty can gain forgiveness for sins and bring love to all the world, please, Heaven, let the rain pour down.'

At the time, the sky was clear and the air was still. Suddenly, as if from far away, an unexpected gust of wind blew up. All the treetops in the jungle rustled and small whirlwinds sprung up at ground level. In the afternoon, the sky was full of clouds, and at nightfall, rain came tumbling down.

Then the village people danced nearly all week to celebrate the wedding of Hac and E, the village chief's daughter.

This was the happiest party of all at Hua Tat village. The whole village was staggering drunk and even every house pole, and every tree in the garden was invited to drink a large horn of liquor.

The wolf's revenge

At Hua Tat there was a family with the surname of Hoang. They were a family of hunters. When it came to Hoang Van Nhan's generation their fame had spread widely throughout the village. Nhan was a sharp shooter and he was always the leader of the hunt for he had no sense of fear. This trait was the same as possessed by his father, his grandfather and his great grandfather.

Nhan had two wives, but both of them were barren. When he was more than 50 years old, Nhan married another woman, and fortunately this wife gave birth to a baby; a boy who was as beautiful as an angel. Nhan called him Hoang Van San.

From the time he was five years of age, he followed his father into the jungle as Nhan was determined to train his son to become a fine hunter. The village elders offered him advice, 'Just wait until San is over 13 years of age. That is the age when he will be fully mature, and he will not be harmed by the evil spirits that lurk in the jungle. You should have a healthy respect for the jungle and its terrors. If you let him go into the jungle at such an early age, it will not be good for him.'

Nhan replied, 'When I was five years of age, my father had already allowed me to follow him into the jungle.'

The village elders added, 'It is different now compared to the old days. Your father had four children but you have only one.' Nhan smiled sneeringly. Young people today sneer at the old people in the same way. We don't know that the old people's words are often like a portent of the future, because old people understand what fear means, even though the feeling of fear does not bring them joy.

San gradually grew up, and at eight years of age he could even trap wild fowl in the jungle. At ten years of age he could hit a target and score seven shots out of ten. Nhan realized that it was about time that he took his son to hunt wild animals, so when his son was 12 years of age, Nhan took him on a wolf-hunt.

On this occasion, as many as 30 hunters followed Nhan. Wolves are very cunning, and proud, jungle animals, as well as being cruel and crafty. When they are attacked by hunters, they scatter and some sacrifice themselves to ensure the safety of the leader of the pack. Nhan was an experienced hunter, so he allowed a number of hunters chase these sacrificial wolves, whilst he and others gave chase to the leader. He was not going to be deceived by the leader of the pack. It was an ageing female wolf with reddish-coloured fur. When she ran, she slunk low on the ground and dashed in a zig-zag pattern. Nhan was determined to stay in hot pursuit, pushing her to the very depths of her last stronghold, the lair.

San followed his father closely. He had been used to the sound of the cry of wolves. Nhan taught his son how to distinguish between the various sounds and signs made by wolves: the cry of command, the cry of calling, the cry of fear, and even the different meanings attached to the wagging of their tails. By the end of the day, the pack of wolves had nearly all been killed by the hunters.

The hunters cornered the female leader in her lair, a deep cavern in which there were limestone columns covered in dark-green moss. The female wolf was old, the coarse fur on her back was mottled and silver-grey in colour. Having been pushed into her lair she fought ferociously, her eyes were bloodshot, and one wondered what she was thinking at this time. For an instance, she stared at Nhan as if to imprint his image on her mind, then she flung herself into the depths of the cavern where her children were nestling together. No sooner had she grabbed one of her cubs in her mouth, then a shot rang out. Nhan kept firing rounds of shots into the wolf's back. The female wolf fell on top of her tiny cubs, biting hard into the top part of the cub's head. The hunters swarmed in and dragged the body of the wolf out, at the same time capturing the cubs. Young San prised open the mother wolf's mouth, picked up the cub and took it home. This was the finest cub in the litter.

The cub grew up with the dogs. He still bore the teeth marks on the top of his head; a scar upon which no fur grew. The cub was raised in Nhan's house and was used to humans. It had a dog's characteristics, only its eyes and its mannerisms were different. Its eyes were wild and its mannerism was sly. Nhan and also his son San did not like this wolf-cub. However, the wolf never showed that it disliked anyone or any animal in the house. It avoided any conflict and its compromising attitude was very disturbing. It did not compete with the other dogs for food and it did not cause any trouble to the horses, goats, pigs or chickens. It lived in isolation and seemed very understanding. However, it was apparent to the animal that everybody in the household disliked it.

Time went by, and soon San had turned thirteen years of age. Nhan set the date on which prayers would be offered up to the spirits on behalf of his son and he

ordered the members of the household to slaughter two pigs, as well as slaughter the wolf as a treat for the villagers.

On this day, when the members of the household were preparing for the ritual killing of the pigs, something horrific happened. San was sitting next to his father, wearing his best clothes made of satin. He had the distinguished look of a man of importance. Nhan asked his son to oversee the servants' work. San nodded his head and took three jumps down the gilt-edged wooden stairs, but unfortunately, the leg of his satin trousers caught the edge of the tread, and he fell to the ground right beside the wolf who was tethered with an iron chain. The wolf, lying half-asleep, was suddenly startled and jumped up. San hit his head on a stone lying beside the wolf. His mouth went against the iron chain which was attached to the neck of the wolf, and blood started gushing from San's mouth. The sight of the gushing blood stirred the subconscious mind of the beast, and reminded it of something in the past. It jumped up, baring its sharp white teeth and fangs, and bit right into San's throat where the faint traces of a recent ringworm attack still remained. Nhan's servants rushed in a panic to the scene, but the wolf was in a maddened frenzy and would not let go of the lad. It bit, scratched and tore into every piece of blood-covered flesh, tendon and ligament from San's throat. San died instantly, his eyes rolling up into his head. There was a gaping reddish-coloured hole in his throat from which spurted bubbling gushes of blood. The blood had spurted all over the wolf's head, making his dishevelled furry head red in colour.

With great difficulty the people managed to drag the wolf a way from the young lad. Nhan, holding an axe in his hand, approached the wolf, tears streaming down his face. People stepped aside to let him pass through. Nhan was quaking with shock. The wolf cringed down. The chain was wrapped around the base of the stairs. For an instant, Nhan stood still, and then he suddenly wielded the axe and repeatedly rained blows down on the iron chain. The axe-head became blunt from the blows, and the links of the chain came away. The wolf gave a few yelps and then dashed towards the jungle; on its neck still remaining a short, dangling piece of chain. People surrounded Nhan in disbelief, as he dropped to his knees next to the body of his only son. In anguish he ran his long, bony fingers through the blood-soaked ground.

The forgotten land

Lo Van Panh was a well-known old man in the village of HuaTat. He was more than eighty years old, however his teeth were even and as well-aligned like the teeth of a seventeen-year-old man. He needed to only use one arm to effortlessly lift up the stone mortar used to pound rice. He worked with the strength of three men, and his ability to drink alcohol was the same. He could take on many men at the one time in a drinking bout.

The young men of the village looked upon him with great respect. Mr. Panh had three wives, eight children and about thirty grandchildren. They lived together in harmony and in affluence. Families are just like coal-kilns. The burning coals radiate warmth towards each another, but, later on, the heat generated can burn each individual piece of coal to destruction. Aren't families the same as this?

This would not have happened if Mr. Panh had stayed within the confines of the Hua Tat valley. However, all of a sudden, he had the bright idea to go to Muong Lum to buy water-buffaloes. In fact, if only he had wanted just to buy water-buffaloes he

would not have had so much trouble. What he needed to do was to go to the Chi or Mat village. There Mr. Panh could buy the best buffalo for ploughing. But Muong Lum was where Mr. Panh lived in his youth, and memories of the past flooded into his heart.

Muong Lum was a remote and distant region, as far away as Chau Yen was. Muong Lum, in the minority Thai language, means 'The Forgotten Land'. Here there were mountains which had existed from ancient times, covered with abundant, lush tree-growth, and sheltering vast numbers of birds and animals.

On that particular day, Mr. Panh on horseback was nearing Muong Lum just as night fell. Suddenly, a violent hailstorm plummeted down. Mr. Panh looked around in order to find where to take shelter, but all he could see were hills covered in wild grass, the blades of which were as sharp as knives.

Hailstones came pouring down. His horse was so frightened he baulked. He neighed loudly and pawed at the ground.

Mr. Panh dismounted quickly from his horse cursing and swearing. He had never seen such a heavy downpour. The wind was so strong, and the hailstones hit his body with such force that they stung. The night closed in, and the roaring sounds of lightning made the earth tremble. The horse broke loose from its tether and dashed downhill. Mr. Panh was about to give chase when suddenly, a small black shadow appeared running towards him. He looked carefully to see what the shadow was. It was a girl who was coming back from working in the fields. She had come across the unexpected downpour and she was so frightened that she was stumbling and running, and at the same time crying out to Heaven for mercy. When she sighted Mr. Panh she was exhausted and she fell into his arms.

It was pouring rain. The hailstones were splattering like bullets on the ground. Mr. Panh stood shielding the lass, whilst the girl put her face in her hands and her whole body trembled. She confidently leant against Mr. Panh's strong well-built chest. Mr. Panh consoled her:

'Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid! the Heaven's anger will eventually pass.' They stood like that amidst the hills covered with wild grass, surrounded by the roaring of the thunder and the hailstones. Mr. Panh was overwhelmed by a feeling of something mystical happening to him. Through his life's experience he had never had such a feeling. He knew that this was what he had been thirsting for. It was more than romance, more than the women he had met; it was 'bliss'. When it had stopped raining, there shone from above, hazy, rose-coloured rays of sunlight. The lass took her hand away from Mr. Panh's hand in embarrassment. He had never seen anyone more beautiful! She quickly ran off, and he haltingly chased her, stumbling after her, and finally managed to grab her by the hand.

'What's your name?' he asked, 'I will come tomorrow and propose marriage to you. Do you find me pleasing?'. The lass was bashful for a short time, but after a while she mumbled: 'My name is Muon, from Muong Lum village'.

She pushed away from him and ran away down the hill, her lily-white, well-rounded calves flashing as she ran. Mr. Panh crouched down, sweating profusely and feeling faint. Happiness overwhelmed him. He lay stretched out on the wet grass, ignoring the huge black ants crawling all over his naked chest. He passed out until his

clever horse woke him by using its hot mouth to gnash at a big curly tuft of hair sticking out of Mr. Panh's ear.

The following afternoon he rode his horse to the village to look for Muong's house. He knelt down and offered the money he had intended for the buying of water-buffaloes to Muon's father. Being aware of the visitor's proposal, Muon's father roared with laughter. He called to his wife, his children and the villagers. Everybody joked and talked about it. Mr. Panh did not seem to mind the ridicule which was as sharp as the cut of a knife. Muon hid herself behind the door and peeked out through the chinks of the door. She found it amusing and thought it laughable. Indeed she had completely forgotten the hailstorm from last night, her tears, and their chance meeting on the hillside.

Adamantly, Mr. Panh repeated his proposal again and again. Everybody stopped laughing after a while because it had become too much for them to tolerate. Finally, Muon's father was obliged to set the following conditions:

'All right. If you want to become my son-in-law, you must be able to fell a mahogany tree which is the biggest on Phu Luong mountain, and bring the tree here. The lumber from this tree will be used later on for yours and Muon's house.'

Everybody again burst out laughing. They all knew that the diameter of this particular mahogany tree at its base was bigger than the arm-span of eight men. It grew on the top of a stony mountain which was so high that if one stood there looking down to Muong Lum village, you would think that the whole village was only the size of the roof of a hut.

Mr. Panh's reply was as quick as a knife going through butter, 'All right, providing you keep your promise'.

The following day, Mr. Panh climbed to the top of the mountain, and with just the first blow of his axe into the base of the mahogany tree he became exhausted. He finally died when his heart gave out.

Muon did not attend Mr. Panh's funeral. On that particular day she had to go to Yen Chau market to watch the cock-fighting. In the afternoon on the way home, she again was caught in the rain, but this time there were no hailstones.

The forgotten horn

In the attic of the village chief Ha Van No there lay a horn which had lain there since time immemorial. The horn was made from the horn of a water-buffalo complete with silver inlays. It was cracked with age and covered with cobwebs, whilst inside the horn, wasps had made a nest. Nobody took any notice of it, so it lay there, neglected and unloved.

That year, in the jungles of Hua Tat there suddenly appeared a strange type of black worm. These worms were as small as toothpicks and clung together all over the branches and leaves of the trees. When you went into the jungle or out into the fields and terraces, you could hear the click-clacking of the contraction of their bodies as they moved, and the munching sound as they chewed the leaves. This made people shudder with fear. There were no leaves which those worms would not or could not eat; from blades of rice and bamboo leaves right down to the thorniest rattan leaves. They chewed away voraciously.

The chief of the village, Ha Van No, became thin and drawn with worry. He, together with the villagers, tried every possible way to eradicate these mysterious worms. They would shake and set fire to the trees in order to smoke them out, and the pour boiling water on them, or else a liquid made from the juice of special leaves, but all was in vain. The worms multiplied faster than ever, at a strangely unusual speed.

Hua Tat village looked as if it were desolate and plague-ridden. People discussed the possibility of evacuating Hua Tat to go and live in other places. The village elders pondered on the problem at a meeting, and everyone invited a spiritual healer to come and pray for the salvation of the village. The chief, Ha Van No, ordered water-buffalo and pigs to be slaughtered, and offered them up to the gods in order to receive their blessing. The spiritual healer said, 'The bones of the ancestors of the Ha family are rotten and decaying and turning into these worms. You must take these bones and expose them to the sun to cleanse them in order to rid yourselves of these worms.'

The village chief was taken aback by this statement. The Ha clan had a custom of burning their dead, and after the burning ritual, the bones were put in small earthen urns and hidden away. Of all the people in the clan, there was only ever one clansman who knew the whereabouts of the urn. Before his death, this person would choose another to succeed him. Tales were told that if a feud broke out, your enemies might find the bones, grind them up and mix them with gunpowder to shoot you. In this way, the whole clan could be exterminated. The Ha clan was not without many an enemy. If the bones were to be taken out to cleanse, the hiding place would be disclosed, and it was as good as giving your enemies a golden opportunity to destroy the whole clan.

The village chief pondered upon this, for he knew the enemies were stalking him every inch of the way, but how could he stand helplessly by watching the worms destroying his homeland?

One night at the end of the month, the chief awoke and called to his son Ha Van Mao to join him in searching for the bones. Mao was eighteen years of age with a face that was both handsome and intelligent, and he was cleverer than most other people. The chief and his son set off secretly. The hiding place of the bones of the Ha clan was in a deep cave high up on the top of a mountain, and the roots of a century-old tree totally covered the entrance to the cave. In order to gain entrance, the chief and his son had to push aside the thick trailing tree roots. After a great deal of hard work, they managed to retrieve the earthenware urn and bring it out of the cave, just as the first rays of sunlight broke through.

The chief of the village opened the earthen urn, displayed the bones on the ground and washed them with alcohol. The bones were intact, not rotten and decayed as the spiritual healer had foretold. Amidst the pile of bones there was a silver chain, exquisitely crafted. Mao asked his father, 'What's this chain used for?'. The answer was 'I don't know!'. The chief of the village wondered about this himself. 'Possibly, it may have been used to attach to a weapon.' 'I like it!' Mao said to his father, and he quickly attached the chain to his own body.

Both father and son left the cave and took the short-cut down the mountain side. When they approached a bend in the path, not far from the cave, they saw a group of strangers lying in ambush. The chief recognized his enemies and he told his

son to go ahead to the village and called the villagers to come to his rescue, whilst he himself would stay behind and stop the enemies in their tracks.

The chief of the village worked out a plan to try and trick his enemies into staying far away from the vicinity of the secret cave. In this one-sided situation, his fate was hanging in the balance, as if by a fine thread.

Mao went back to the village. He immediately called to the best sharp-shooters in the village to accompany him to the jungle to rescue his father. Sporadic shooting echoed through the jungle and made Mao's heart feel as if it were on fire. Not until noon were they able to locate the village chief who was tied to the foot of a tree at least ten miles' distance from the secret cave. His rifle was out of bullets and had been thrown down at his feet, and his enemies had cut out his tongue, because he would not disclose where his clan had hidden their remains.

Mao took his father back to the village. The chief did not die, but from that day onwards he was dumb and could not speak. The worm plague was still spreading and becoming more damaging, day by day. Mao became furious and ordered that the spiritual healer's tongue be cut out to avenge his father, then he ordered that preparations be made to evacuate the village.

On the day that he was packing, Mao found the horn in the attic. On the horn there was a little hole to which one could possibly attach a chain. He suddenly remembered the silver chain taken away from the ancestors' bones. So, he took it and attached it to the horn. The old horn, all of a sudden, looked as if it had new life. Mao held up the horn to his lips and hesitantly blew upon it. What a strange sound came from it! As soon as the horn sounded, the black worms on the trees suddenly squirmed and fell to the ground. Mao was amazed. He held on to the horn and tried to blow upon it several times. The black worms fell down like rain. He was so happy that he quickly ordered everybody to stop packing.

The whole village rejoiced and followed Mao into the jungle. All through the day the old horn resounded with its strange noise. Black worms kept tumbling down like rain, and the people scooped them up and destroyed them. The plague was over within the space of a day. After this the people of Hua Tat village had a big celebration and the old horn was placed solemnly on the altar.

From that day on, every morning in Hua Tat, the sound of the horn echoed throughout the village. The sound of this ancient horn was a reminder to all to remember their ancestors, and it heralded the peaceful time without the harmful worms.

That horn was always carried around by the old dumb man Ha Van No, and it looked just like an ordinary horn, with not the slightest bit of difference between it and any other horn that you may see. In fact, it even looked uglier and its sound was not as loud as an ordinary horn, even though it had worked wonders.

A man called Sa

The craziest person in Hua Tat village was Sa. He was the youngest son of Mr. Pach, a man who was the head of a large family, including eight children and nearly thirty grandchildren. Mr. Pach was a well-known identity throughout the Muong villages.

Since childhood, Sa had been playful and adventurous, and all his life he dreamed of achieving something extra-ordinary. Ignoring all good advice, he adamantly did anything that he wanted to do; for instance, drinking? Who was there that could down twenty horns of alcohol in one go? Try him! Hunting deer? Who could chase a deer to the point of exhaustion, for more than three days on end, till the deer collapsed beaten and broken? Try him! Who could wield a 'fighting stick' more quickly and cleverly than he could? Who could play the pan-pipes more beautifully than he could? And added to all this, who could capture a woman's heart more skilfully than he could?

On one occasion, the people of Hua Tat village had worked hard all day at catching fish which were then placed on a boat ready for distribution to all the villagers. Sa came along, and tipped over the boat. Ignoring the jeers and abuse from the villagers, he just roared with laughter and jumped in amongst the silvery mass of fish which were swishing around, hither and thither.

He was crazy as a loon, to the point that he would have jumped into a burning fire if someone had dared him to do so. To him, praise from a child or a woman was more precious than gold. However, the truth of the matter was that nobody in Hua Tat praised him. They did not even call him by his proper name. Instead they called him 'The Crazy Kid', 'The Lunatic Kid', or 'The Nutty Kid'. He was just like a strange animal living in the midst of human beings. Sa lived this way full of anxiety, and in misery, so much so that he became unsure of his intellect and talents. At a festival he would be happy one minute, and as mute as if he had been turned to stone the next. He would sit all day long, month in, month out, making different kind of toys or weapons, but when they were completed, he would throw them away. Nobody entrusted such an unpredictable young man with anything. Unbearable loneliness tore at his heart and his hunger for life and his intense desires put him apart from the everyday routines.

When he was thirty years of age, a salt trader from the lowlands induced him into leaving Hua Tat. As well as doing this, Sa left with the intention of achieving great things in another region. After Sa had left, life in the village became even more dreary. Fights were not as fierce as they had been before, women did not have as many affairs, there were no longer any all-night dance parties, the smiles were few and far between, and even the birds flying in the skies above Hua Tat flapped their wings languidly. People became grumpy and looked as if they were burdened down with a heavy work-load. Within a short time they realised that they were missing him and that they regretted his departure. News of Sa was sometimes carried back home by the salt trader, and the news amazed everybody. It was reported that he had taken part in the Save-the-King movement in the lowland area, and at one stage he had acted as an ambassador in a far-away and remote country. On another occasion, it was reported that he had been banished because of his involvement in a plot against the Royal Court.

Women started to use Sa as an example to hold up before their husbands. The people of Hua Tat village brought up his name when comparing the deeds of people of Hua Tat with those of other villages, and they went even further by mentioning things which Sa had not even done. The mere mention of his name gave them pride.

Time passed. People thought that Sa had probably died in a foreign land, but suddenly he reappeared. He was no longer young and exuberant. There he was, a

hunched-up old man resembling a forest dweller. One leg had been amputated and his old eyes were watery and weak. When asked about the remarkable life he had experienced, Sa replied hesitantly. Rumours previously spread by the salt trader had a certain amount of truth to them. The people of Hua Tat built a hut for Sa, and he lived an ordinary, everyday life like other people. When someone would start to talk about the stories of long ago he would avoid talking about them.

Sa married and the elderly couple had a son. He lived to the age of seventy before he died; however, it was rumoured that before his death, he recounted this story, 'The last period of the ordinary life I lived in Hua Tat village living like everybody else, was, in fact, my greatest accomplishment.'

Could this have been true? No one in Hua Tat ever discussed it, but Sa's funeral was held with all the solemnity giving to a person of royal blood.

The plague

At Hua Tat there lived a couple, Lu and Henh. They had been close since childhood, and when they grew up, they fell in love, married and had children. They were very familiar with each others' gestures and thoughts and were never apart. When it happened that a cholera epidemic broke out in Hua Tat, by that time the couple had been together for fifty years.

The epidemic originated in Muong La and Mai Son, and spread from there to Hua Tat on a day when the weather was strange and eerie: with both scorching sun and heavy, driving rain. The humid steam arising from the ground, together with the oppressing heat, was everywhere, and made people feel full of trepidation. Children died first, followed by the aged; poor people died, followed by the rich; the good died before the bad.

Within the phase of the half-moon, thirty people had died in Hua Tat village. People hastily dug holes to bury the dead and sprinkled lime on the bodies, and by the time night fell it was as if the God of Death was holding a dance-party under the reddish-glow of moonlight.

People of Hua Tat tried to control the epidemic by drinking hard liquor and eating ground ginger mixed with garlic and hot chilli. They even forced bowls of these mixtures into the mouths of bread-fed babies. The babies screamed and screamed because their insides were burning up. Who cared? At least if you are alive, you are still able to experience the burning sensation!

When the epidemic broke out, Lu was away from home. His habit of gambling and carousing, which he had had since childhood, had caused him harm many times over. However, this time his habit proved to be his saviour. Throughout the period of the epidemic, Lu was far away in Muong Lum busily pursuing his gambling habit. For ten days straight, Lady Luck was with him constantly, even when he went to the toilet, where he even found money there. His fellow gamblers suspected that he had a magic charm. On his last day, weighed down with all his bags of money, Lu left to go home, leaving the others in despair, and with feelings of bitterness towards him.

As he passed through Yen Chau market, Lu bought a horse, without even bargaining, which shocked the Kinh horse-trader so much that he hit himself for not having charged Lu more. Lu then went to an inn and drank so much that he did not realise that someone stole his winnings whilst he was drunk. Lu was teetering and

tottering on his new horse as he wended his way homewards. He felt very light-hearted.

When he arrived on the outskirts of the village he was shocked to see that green leaves had been stuck into and all over the fences. White lime lay everywhere. The totems on the roofs of the huts were swarming with fattened crows.

Lu was stopped from entering the village: instead he was directed to go into the mysterious jungle where his children had only just that morning buried their mother. Henh, his wife, had died and her newly-dug grave had been sprinkled with lime. Lu dashed into the jungle on his horse to the place where his wife lay buried. He prostrated himself before her grave wailing and sobbing pitifully.

'Oh, Henh!', Lu cried out. 'How can I live any longer without you? Who will boil the water for me to wash myself, after I have toiled in the fields all day? After I have been out hunting, who will make a special dish for my dinner? Who will share both my happiness and my sorrow?

Lu wept for a long time. Memories stirred within him causing him pain. He felt great sadness at the loss of his wife and he realized that he had been ungrateful and indifferent, whilst his wife had been generous, tolerant and long-suffering. The more he thought about it, the more he regretted what he had been, and the more intense was his love for her. Whether it be a small morsel of food or a beautiful piece of cloth, Henh would always let him have it. All these things were for him and the children. Henh was a sister, a servant and a mother to him; and him, what had he done for Henh over the past fifty years?

With his head bowed low before his wife's grave, Lu suddenly heard moaning coming from under the earth. It was Henh! He had known every breath that his wife made, so he immediately recognized it as her moaning. Brushing aside his initial shock, Lu hurriedly clawed at the earth, hoping deep down that a mistake had been made, and that she might still alive.

The more her dug, the more distinct the moaning became. Lu was overwrought with happiness. His hands were cut and spurting blood, but he did not feel any pain. At last, he managed to pry open the lid of the coffin. He noticed that Henh's breathing was shallow. Dragging his wife from out of the coffin, Lu quickly lay her across the saddle of his horse, holding tightly on to his bag of money, and rushed as fast as he could to Chi village to look for the doctor. He was stopped from entering the village, so Lu poured half of his money on the ground to give the guards. Finally, he and his wife were allowed to enter, on condition that he give the guards two-thirds of his money instead of half. Upon entering the village, Lu found his way to the doctor's house where he piled the remainder of the money in front of the doctor and begged him to try his best to save Henh.

Lu could not anticipate the disaster that was about to happen to him for he also contracted the disease. Both of them died that very night. The doctor took the money and held a funeral for them. Both were buried in one grave and when the grave was filled with dirt, it was sprinkled with lime as well as a bundle of white banknotes.

Under the three metres of dirt, Lu's spirit was probably happy in the netherworld. The plague in Hua Tat ended some time afterwards. The feelings of panic regarding the plague continued to linger on for many generations before they

were erased from memory. The grave in which Lu and Henh were buried was now a high mound of earth covered with thorny rattan trees. The old people of Hua Tat called it 'The Grave of the Faithful', but to the children it was just known as 'The Grave of the Victims of the Plague'.

The girl called Sinh

Sinh was an orphan girl living in Hua Tat village. It was said that in the olden days her mother had been beguiled by evil spirits, leaving her in the jungle to fend for herself. Sinh was an emaciated-looking girl. She had never eaten wholesome food nor worn beautiful skirts and blouses. She was low-class and lived a lonely life, hidden as does a quail.

At Hua Tat, on the way to the spooky jungle, there was a small shrine which was used to worship Kho, the man who had killed a fierce tiger in days of yore. In the shrine there was a small fist-sized stone which was laid upon a brick shelf. The stone was as smooth as polished marble. Deep inside the layers of stone there were red streaks as tiny as blood vessels. Whoever wanted to pray for something had to touch the stone, putting his or her mouth close to it, and confide their wishes to the stone itself. The stone had been there on the shelf of the altar since time immemorial, witnessing the lives and fate of many people. It became a mysterious, sacred object which at night time, glowed brightly as if it were on fire. The many miseries of life, and the prayers asking for favours accumulated deep in the heart of the small stone.

One day, a stranger came from the lowlands. He was big and tall and he rode a sturdy black horse. He called in to the village chief's home to visit the elders. Strolling around he became very much aware of the village customs. The villagers of Hua Tat guessed that he was either a trader in bone marrow, or in rare animal furs. He had vast amounts of money, and he behaved extravagantly and generously, in a most noble manner.

It so happened that the stranger passed by Kho's shrine and sighted the stone. He decided to pick it up and have a closer look, but strangely he could not lift the stone from the altar. Astonished he called the villagers to come and see what was happening. People gathered in huge numbers around the small shrine. The visitor let each person, one by one, try to lift up the supposedly immovable stone, but it was all in vain. The stone was too heavy.

'What was the mystery surrounding the stone?', he asked. 'In this village, is it possible that there is someone who has not tried to lift the stone?'

The people checked and discovered that Sinh was missing. They had completely forgotten about her.

The visitor asked everyone to go and ask Sinh to come. She was digging taro roots at the head of the river.

Sinh arrived at the shrine and everybody stepped aside to allow her to pass. He asked her to lift the stone. As if by a miracle, to everybody's amazement, Sinh was able to lift the stone like a breeze. Everybody yelled for joy.

Sinh handed the stone over to the visitor. The sun's rays shone upon her callused hands and her disfigured fingers. Sinh gently squeezed the mysterious sacred object, and the stone suddenly melted away into water, right in front of everyone's

eyes. The drops of water were as clear as teardrops, slipping through her fingers and falling to the ground, making star shapes in the dust.

The visitor stood dumbfounded, and then wept. He asked permission of the villagers to take Sinh away with him, and he presented her with a new skirt and blouse. Sinh suddenly became extraordinarily beautiful beyond belief.

The following day, the visitor departed from Hua Tat village. It was rumoured that Sinh was very happy after that for the visitor had been an emperor in disguise, travelling amongst his people.

At Hua Tat, the pebbled road leading out of the valley is narrow, just wide enough for a water-buffalo to pass through, and is fully lined with trees, such as bamboos, mangoes, etc. and hundreds of unknown climbers. This road is called the Sinh Road, and up to the present time it still exists.