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A childhood friend from Ha Tinh came to Paris and gave me the book "Loan - From the life of a phoenix" by Isabelle Muller, a French woman of Vietnamese origin, living in Germany. I read the 400-page book straight through the night without sleeping.

A childhood friend of mine from Ha Tinh gave me the

Book "Loan – From the Life of a Phoenix" by the author Isabelle Müller, a Vietnamese French woman living in Germany. The 400-page book I read it in one night without a break.



Book cover with image of Mrs. Loan (Dau Thi Cuc) in traditional Vietnamese ao dai
Male

The book cover with the photo of Loan (Dau Thi Cuc) in traditional Vietnamese
Try.

The book is about Loan's mother, whose real name is Dau Thi Cuc, born in 1929 in a village near Ha Tinh town - now Ha Tinh city, and died in 2003 near Tours city, French Republic.

The book is about her mother Loan, whose name is Dau Thi Cuc. She was born in 1929 in a village in the district of Ha Tinh (now the city of Ha Tinh) and died in 2003 in Tours, France.

The book attracted me first of all because of the story of a woman from my hometown and it is a rare book that recreates the context of Ha Tinh during the French colonial period. According to the scattered descriptions at the beginning of the story, the place where Loan spent her childhood was a Central Vietnamese village of farming and hunting, with a river flowing through it, not far from the jungle where Loan's father used to go hunting and not far from the Lao border. It was also near the main road (National Highway 1A) and very close to Ha Tinh town (now Ha Tinh city), enough for a 6-year-old girl to walk every day carrying a basket of taffy to stand and sell on the street.

in front of a cinema (during the French colonial period, Ha Tinh town had a private cinema called Tai Phan), near the market and near the old French guard post.

The book first attracts me because of the story of a woman who comes from my homeland.

It is also the only book that portrays Ha Tinh during the French colonial period.

Based on the descriptions in the first section of the book, the place where Loan childhood, a small village where the inhabitants are mostly farmers or hunters. There

a river flows through it, not far from the forest where her father hunts, near

from the Laotian border. It also borders Highway 1A and Ha Tinh commune (now

the city of Ha Tinh), close enough that a six-year-old girl can walk to the

Entrance of a cinema (the Tai Phan cinema at that time, near the market and the French guard post) to sell sweets.

I was curious to ask the author more about that village, but she did not know clearly which district that village was in,

because she only imagined and recounted it according to her mother's story.

I was curious to learn more about the village from the author, but she herself knew

nor exactly which community it belonged to, because everything is based only on the stories of their mother was based.

Loan had a peaceful childhood, although the grievances had been hidden in her since she was little,

but those were still the beautiful days before she had to leave her family and homeland to seek

freedom for herself. Loan was a restless woman, determined not to give up. From a very young

age, she realized the injustice of a male-dominated society, in which, according to her, women

Annam is worthless compared to the Annamese man (but in the semi-feudal, semi-colonial period,

compared to a European, the Annamese man is as worthless as a

woman, in her ironic comparison).

Loan had a wonderful childhood, although she often talked about the fight for

This is a peaceful time before she decides to leave the family and

to leave her homeland to be free herself. Loan is a woman who never gives up. As a small

As a girl, she recognizes early on the unequal treatment of the sexes in the Vietnamese

Society in which women are disadvantaged compared to men ("in the

colonialism and feudalism, an Annamite is compared to a

Annamites nothing, but compared to a European he is as worthless as a woman," she says ironically.)

In the family, the father and the eldest brother can suddenly find a reason to brutally beat their daughter or sister without mercy because they have that right, and can sell their daughter or sister in exchange for a field and two pigs. Women do not have the right to go to school, they only have the duty to take care of the family. housework, serving the men in the family with resignation.

In her family, the father and brother can suddenly look for a reason to or to hit the sister without pity, because they think it is their right, even the To sell daughter or sister to get a piece of land and two pigs.

The women have no right to go to school, but they have to stay at home to take care of the household and serve the men without being allowed to complain.



One page in 400 pages of book about Mrs. Loan

One of the 400 pages of the book about Loan

Loan's mother is a typical example of such women. Loan had a "rebellious" mindset since childhood against that unreasonable order: She stole her brother's books to learn to read and write and endured beatings when he discovered her but still refused to give up, dared to steal small things in exchange for learning to read and write from the boys in the neighborhood, and the biggest "rebellion" was running away from home, from Ha Tinh to Hai Phong to protest the marriage, or more accurately, a marriage arranged by her father, and then her eldest brother. Not accepting the injustice and mistreatment, she ran away to be free to decide her own destiny.

Mother Loan is a typical example. As a child, Loan already had the rebellious idea to fight against the unjust order. She steals her brother's book to learn.

Although she is punished terribly by her brother afterwards, she does not give up and steals continues to exchange little things with other children in exchange for learning vocabulary.

The most important decision to leave her home secretly is finally made when her father and then her brother wants to "sell" her.

She not only opposed the injustice in Annamese society, but when she went to France with her husband, she also opposed the racial discrimination that occurred in French society in the mid-20th century. I saw in Loan the character of a person from Nghe An: hard-working, studious, unyielding and always carrying within her a spirit of fierce resistance against injustice and oppression in everyday life, refusing to surrender no matter what difficulties she encountered, the will to survive.
strong.

She not only fights for equality in Vietnamese society, but also against discrimination in French society when she lived there with her husband. In Loan, I see the typical characteristics of a person from Nghe Tinh: hardworking, eager to learn, never resigned, with the constant willingness to accept inequality in everyday life fight, and with a strong will to continue to exist.



Mrs. Dau Thi Cuc (Loan) when she was young (Photo: Isabellemueller.de)

The young Dau Thi Cuc (Loan) (Photo: Isabelle Müller)

History is retold from the perspective of an ordinary citizen who is not interested in war and politics. Loan is not a historical figure but she was caught up in the vortex of history. Her life has gone through the turbulent periods of the country and was directly affected by those turbulent periods: A country with a king and under French rule, the looting of Japanese fascists, terrible famine, the war against France and Japan of the Viet Minh, the defeat of France in Cao Bang and Dien Bien Phu, the migration to the South, the withdrawal of French troops...

The story was told from the perspective of an ordinary citizen who had no interest in Politics. Loan is not a historical figure, but she is a part of it. She has the historical periods in Vietnam and was influenced by the country's changes in Over time, directly influenced: a country with an emperor, controlled by the French, the invasion of Japanese troops, the famine, the fight of the Viet Minh against the French and the Japanese, the defeat of the French army at Cao Bang and Dien Bien Phu, the immigration to the south, the retreat of the French...

Loan is not a person with high aspirations, doing great things. Her only wish is to survive first, then to be a normal woman, to have the right to choose her own happiness, to be a normal mother taking care of her children. But her life is always surrounded by poverty, by war, by bad customs, by bad habits and even the cruelty of the people.

human.

Loan is also not a person who particularly wants to do anything extraordinary. She wants to survive first and then be an ordinary woman who has the right to decide for herself to decide her own happiness and who wants to take care of her children. However, Poverty, war, evil and human cruelty always shaped their lives.

In her life, Loan has experienced countless ups and downs, challenges of life. Many times she felt like she had come back from the dead. However, after each time she was crushed, after each misfortune, she became stronger, thanks to her rare will and determination, her love for life, her faith in the future and her predestined destiny.

In her life she has overcome many difficulties and has also won the Fight against death. Thanks to her extraordinary will, her love of life, her Hope for the future and her belief in her certain destiny, she was

every misfortune becomes stronger and stronger.

The book mentions many elements of fate. It seems that Loan's life is a series of elements arranged by fate. She has escaped death by a hair's breadth many times, seemingly thanks to lucky coincidences, "in misfortune there is fortune", or thanks to a special intuition. Loan's life seems to be reborn many times, when she was stabbed in the stomach by a Japanese soldier, when she was

Her brother was beaten to death, when she had an accident and thought she was dead, when her aunt tricked her into selling her to a brothel, when she was bitten by a rabid dog, when her fiancé betrayed her, when her house was burned down, when she was tortured in prison, when she lost her first daughter...

This book is very much about fate. Loan's life is probably a series of events guided by fate. She has a lot of luck and overcomes several times death because of her special ancestors. Loan seems to be reborn several times, as Japanese soldiers wounded her in the stomach with a sword when she was almost killed by her brother. She is beaten to death when her fiancé cheats on her, when she loses her first daughter, ...

When she went to France to reunite with her husband, fate still did not let Loan go: the terrible war in Algeria, the poor life of providing for a family of 5 children while her husband was still in the army or when she could not find a suitable job, the coldness and discrimination in a foreign country... From Dau Thi Cuc (birth name) to Loan (daughter's name) was a transformation.

From here on she became a different person, stronger.



Author Isabelle Muller

The author Isabelle Müller

Even when she lived in France with her husband, her fate still haunted her: the terrible war in Algeria, the poverty of her family with 5 children, while the husband in Military or unemployed, the discrimination of people in France ... From Dau Thi Cuc (Maiden name) became Loan, a different and stronger woman.

In her life full of suffering, there were encounters like fate meetings that gave her strength, friends, good people who helped and took care of her in difficult times like Mr. Huong, like Ms. Be, and also people who gave her new spiritual energy like Mr. Phan, and above all, her family, her children are an endless source of motivation for Loan to overcome all suffering and tragedy, firmly build a happy life and protect

my children

In her unhappy life she fortunately still had good friends or kind people who helped her to overcome difficulties, such as Huong, Be, also those who gave her spiritual strength gave, like Phan, but above all it was her family and her children who gave her boundless motivated them to overcome all difficulties and tragedies, encouraged them to protect them and to build life on strong foundations.



Author Isabelle Muller and former Vice President Truong My Hoa

The author Isabelle Müller and the former Vice President, Ms. Truong My Hoa

Former Vice President Truong My Hoa was the one who helped bring Isabelle Muller's book to Vietnamese readers. Ms. Truong My Hoa discovered the book during a business trip to Europe in August 2016, when he met Isabelle Muller in *Frankfurt* about the cooperation between the Foundation Vu A Dinh Scholarship chaired by her and Loan Fund of Ms. Isabelle Muller. She has the co-operation I have special feelings for Loan's story, admire an ordinary woman who has done extraordinary things, and think that this is a book that the young generation of Vietnam needs to read to understand the history of your country.

The former Vice President, Mrs. Truong My Hoa, who is the bridge “Loan – From the life of a Phoenix” to Vietnam, read the book during a business trip to Europe in August 2016 when she met Isabelle Müller in Frankfurt to discuss the collaboration between the Vu A Dinh Foundation, of which she is the founder, and the LOAN Foundation of Isabelle Müller. She was impressed by Loan's story, an ordinary woman who something extraordinary, and thought that the young people in Vietnam should read the book, to know the history of the country.

Isabelle Müller is Loan's youngest daughter. From the age of 6, she heard her mother's stories. At the age of 15, she began to record documents about her mother. Thirty years later, she began writing the book *Loan - From the Life of a Phoenix*. In 1990, she returned to Vietnam for the first time with her mother, and since 2016, she has been making regular trips to help children in the highlands of Vietnam.

Recreating her mother's life on the pages of a book, for Isabelle Muller, is a way to share a "family legacy" and also a way to bring her mother closer to her homeland, Vietnam.

Isabelle is Loan's youngest daughter. At 6, she had already heard her mother's stories and has been passionate about the idea of one day writing about her mother's life.

At 15 she began to write down her mother's story and 30 years later she began to

to write the book "Loan – From the Life of a Phoenix." In 1990, she first came her mother to Vietnam and since 2016 she has been visiting Vietnam more frequently to help children of ethnic minorities in northern Vietnam. Presenting her mother's life is her way of to share "the family legacy" and bring her mother back to her homeland Vietnam.

Her work was especially meaningful when she founded the Loan Foundation (Loan Stiftung), in which the entire All royalties from the book (the original German version published in Germany and the Vietnamese translation by Truong Hong Quang, published by Tre Publishing House in Vietnam) are donated to the fund to build infrastructure for students in the mountainous areas of Ha Giang and Cao Bang. From the experiences of two lives, her mother and herself, about the desire to understand and study, she is building and developing the Loan Fund with the message: *"If the ups and downs of life are the foundation for To develop our souls, education is the basis for a solid peace. Because Anyone who has seen the divine beauty of this world never allows it to be that beauty is destroyed".*

Your work will be even more meaningful with the establishment of the LOAN Foundation, as all proceeds from book sales (the original version was published in Germany and the Vietnamese version was translated by the translator Truong Hong Quang and presented at the Jung-Publisher) flows one-to-one into the LOAN Foundation fund to provide more infrastructure for students from Ha Giang and Cao Bang. The idea of the LOAN Foundation was born from the Essence of two lives: she and her mother Loan always have the strong desire for Education. That is why she founded the foundation and is developing it with the following teaching: *"Are the ups and downs of life are the core of our heart education, so education is the Foundation stone for sustainable peace. For whoever once sees the divine beauty of our earth with the heart will never allow it to be destroyed."*

The German work *Loan - aus dem leben eines phönix* was a top 5 finalist for the Kindle Storyteller Award in Germany in 2015. The book was also a bestseller on Amazon Germany in the categories Asian History, Young Adult Literature and Autobiography.

The book "Loan – From the Life of a Phoenix" reached the top 5 of the finals on Kindle Storyteller Award 2015 in Germany and is also on the bestseller list on Amazon (Germany) in the category "History of Asia".