

# LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN



adapted by  
Jason Rainey  
from  
*A Dragon Child:  
Reflections of a Daughter  
of Annam in America*  
by  
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My mother tended a garden around our home.



YOU CAN BARELY SEE OUR HOUSE!

My favorite thing in the garden was an Areca tree. One day my mother told me an old folk tale about the tree.



ONCE THERE WERE TWIN BROTHERS IN LOVE WITH THE SAME WOMAN FROM THEIR VILLAGE.



HOWEVER, FOLLOWING CUSTOM, SHE MARRIED THE OLDER ONE.

BUT ONE DAY THE WOMAN MISTOOK THE YOUNGER TWIN FOR HER HUSBAND.

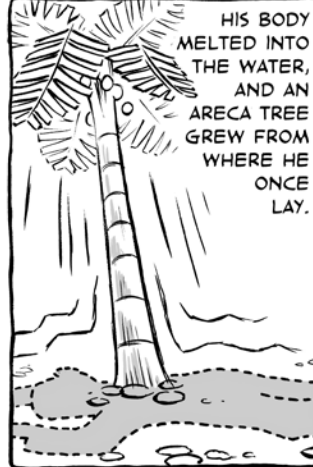


BECAUSE HE STILL LOVED THE WOMAN, HE FELT UNABLE TO RESIST HER.

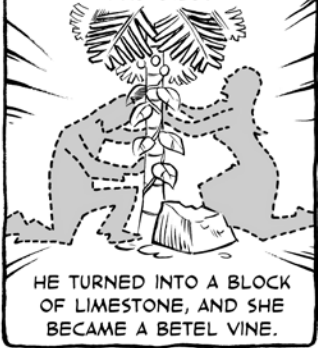
ASHAMED OF HIS BETRAYAL, THE YOUNGER TWIN WANDERED IN GRIEF UNTIL HE CAME TO A BROOK AND DIED.



HIS BODY MELTED INTO THE WATER, AND AN ARECA TREE GREW FROM WHERE HE ONCE LAY.



FIRST THE OLDER TWIN AND THEN HIS WIFE SET OUT TO SEARCH FOR THEIR BROTHER. EACH RESTED AT THE TREE AND DIED.



HE TURNED INTO A BLOCK OF LIMESTONE, AND SHE BECAME A BETEL VINE.

LATER, THE VIETNAMESE EMPEROR PASSED BY THIS SPOT AND LEARNED WHAT HAPPENED.

BRING ME A NUT FROM THE TREE, BETEL LEAVES AND LIME FROM THE STONE.



THE EMPEROR CHEWED THE THREE ITEMS AND FELT A SENSE OF EUPHORIA.



FROM THEN ON, CHEWING BETEL BECAME A SYMBOL OF LOVE.

My mother knew many tales like this and shared them with me often.



Near the garden was my father's stable.



One day, I followed him when he went out to get his horse.

When he arrived at the stable, he did something that surprised me!



Why would he do such a thing? Eventually I summoned the courage to ask him.



WELL, ONCE I ACCIDENTALLY HIT MY HEAD ON THE BEAM OF THE STABLE

BECAUSE OF THE PAIN, I CURSED THE STABLE...



...BUT IMMEDIATELY, I REALIZED THIS WAS THE WRONG THING TO DO.

A PROPER MAN SHOULD BE IN CONTROL OF HIS EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOR.



SO I PRACTICE BY HITTING MY HEAD AGAINST THE STABLE.