



The origin of Watermelons

I Am Tcd
Retold Fairy Tales

re-told Vietnamese legend

Once upon a time, there was a young man named Mai An Tiem, and he was one of the favorite men of the King. The King favored An Tiem a lot, and let him marry his daughter. Literally, he had everything: luck, wealth, a beautiful wife,... therefore, An Tiem had many haters.

After a long time of peace, a rumor appeared: An Tiem said all of his wealth and luck was made by himself. This rumor offended the King, and as the consequence, An Tiem and his family went into exile on a remote island in the South, where no one had lived before.

The island was totally deserted and the soil was as dry as sand. An Tiem and his family could not find anywhere to grow rice. Every single day was a challenge to them.

One day, An Tiem suddenly saw a flock of birds wandering around in front of his hut. He came towards the birds. They were eating an exotic kind of fruit with thick striped dark-green rind, watery red flesh, and black seeds. The birds eagerly ate the flesh of the fruit, then flew away, leaving the little seeds. Mai An Tiem thought: 'If birds can eat this fruit, then so can us human', and as his thoughts flew through his mind, he decided to collect the seeds and find somewhere to grow the fruit.

An Tiem and his wife worked hard to grow the exotic fruit. The day of harvest came, and the whole family was so anxious when An Tiem took the first bite. The flesh was as sweet as sugar and as cool as ice. 'What a fortune!' – said An Tiem's wife. They had finally found a way to maintain life on that deserted island. First, they let the fruit, which has been named 'Western melon' (the birds had flown from the West, bringing the melon to their island) float on water after writing his and the island's name onto each one. The sailors saw the floating green fruit, ate them, and followed the remote island's direction exchanged rice, meat, and vegetables for these melons. Therefore, An Tiem and his family could live as peacefully as they had before...

A year passed. An Tiem's melons became popular in the country. Soon, the King had heard of the Western melons and wanted his people to tribute the melons to him. And soon, the King loved the melon as he had used to love Mai An Tiem, and of course, the King saw An Tiem's writing on them...

The King considered for days, and weeks, and months... Finally, he decided to forgive An Tiem and his family. An Tiem, his wife and his sons came back to the country, and they brought the Western melons with them. The people of the country had named them 'Dua hau' or 'Watermelon' in English.

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