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LETTER FROM MASTER PHAN HOANG

THE TOWER OF PISA



The Tower of Pisa is famous. Why?

This year, our Autumn International Training Stage (17-18 Oct. 2009) will take place at Pisa, Italy. This will make history. I know this fascinating city better than Roma, Padova, Torino or Venezia because I have been there several times since 1976. Although I do not have any disciple or student there, I do have a spiritual friend: the mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci (c 1170-1250) whose formula of number sequence helped me to reveal some secrets of the Co-Loa Citadel, near Hanoi, which was built approximately 257 BCE. Today, the mysterious Co-Loa Citadel remains a subject of wonder. In 1973, at the Stage of Limoges (France), I named a training quyen of VO-VIET in the Vietvodao program by its name. In my opinion, the Pisa tower is less mysterious than Co-Loa, but you can find it so wonderful when you visit this fascinating city at different times of the day, and at different days of the week. The city changes its face, even its soul, depending on the time of your visit. It is one of the fascinating places in the world that one should see in ones lifetime. Pisa is not only the Tower of Pisa, but also encompasses a

whole world, an intriguing city standing up from “marshy land” since 600 BCE.

Why does the Tower of Pisa attract hundred thousands of visitors every year? It is just because no visitor needs to read any flyer to understand why this tower is unique. It is unique because it is leaning! Just seeing the tower or its picture any one can understand the message. It is leaning but not collapsing! Precisely this makes the Tower of Pisa special enough to attract people. I think the key of success in life sometimes seems so simple: BE UNIQUE AND MAKE PEOPLE NOTICE IT AND LIKE IT.

Now, why the story of the Babel Tower is famous? Because that tower does not exist! But the tale shows us a nice lesson from failure 🏆. In life, there are more failures than successes. When we fail in doing something we can always find a way to teach ourselves and to people around us by learning about the causes of our failure and how we could avoid making the same mistakes. Once asked why he failed eight times before successfully make the electric bulb, Edison, the inventor of electric bulb, quietly responded: "The way to my success has nine steps". The Leaning Tower of Pisa has 297 steps and it took 800 years of leaning to get its current aspect with five metres off the perpendicular line.



We know the reason why the Babel Tower had collapsed before reaching any respectable height. We can assume that, at that time, multilingual translators were limited and people lived in rather close societies, and probably with narrow mind, which would not be in favour for open communication. Nowadays, we enjoy



enormously the open world with all kinds of messages, communications, information and thoughts that are translated from one language to another. It becomes less important in what language the original version came from. Everyday translators around the world provide millions of hours of translating job to help us access to information in our own language each time we turn the T.V on or press a button on the Internet. We often enjoy reading or hearing information, news, stories, and research results in our own language without having a slightest thankful thought to the translators behind the scene, who, at some point in the process, provide helpful translation, without whom, we will miss to understand each others. History has proven that wars were often stemmed from

misunderstanding, and misunderstanding is partly a result of a lack of communication. Each time you read the VIET-CHI POST have your mind been put towards the translators who are helping to make it published in your language?

I ought to express my deep thanks to the VIET-CHI Translator Committee Members.

They volunteer their precious time to do a job that many others are also capable of doing as well, but lack the opportunity. I appreciate enormously the work of the translators and I will try to do something special for them. We always warmly welcome new members for the Translator Committee; if you like to be among these good people, please do not hesitate to contact Mariagrazia, Chair of this Committee of translators, at vovietmailbox@vovietjournal.org . You will discover many pleasant aspects and benefit of being a member of this respected Committee.

Phan Hoang, October 2009

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