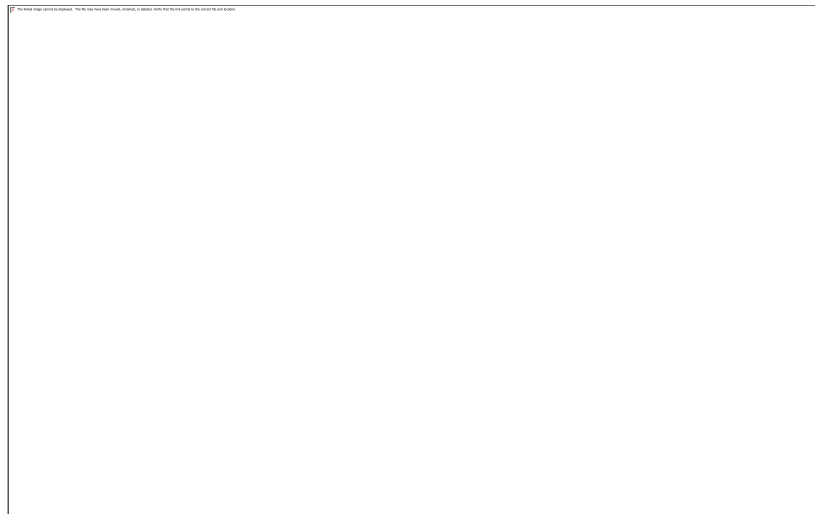


A Chat with DTU President Le Cong Co

The Youth Publishing House is in the final stages of publishing the first five books about the wartime Student Movement in South Vietnamese cities. The first conferences on the Movement, entitled “Smashing All the Chains” will be held this year in cities including Hue, Danang and Saigon.

This series of events is result of ministerial research conducted in 2011 with a total budget of two billion VND. The research covered the large-scale patriotic Movement, which strongly influenced the outcome of the Vietnam War in 1975.



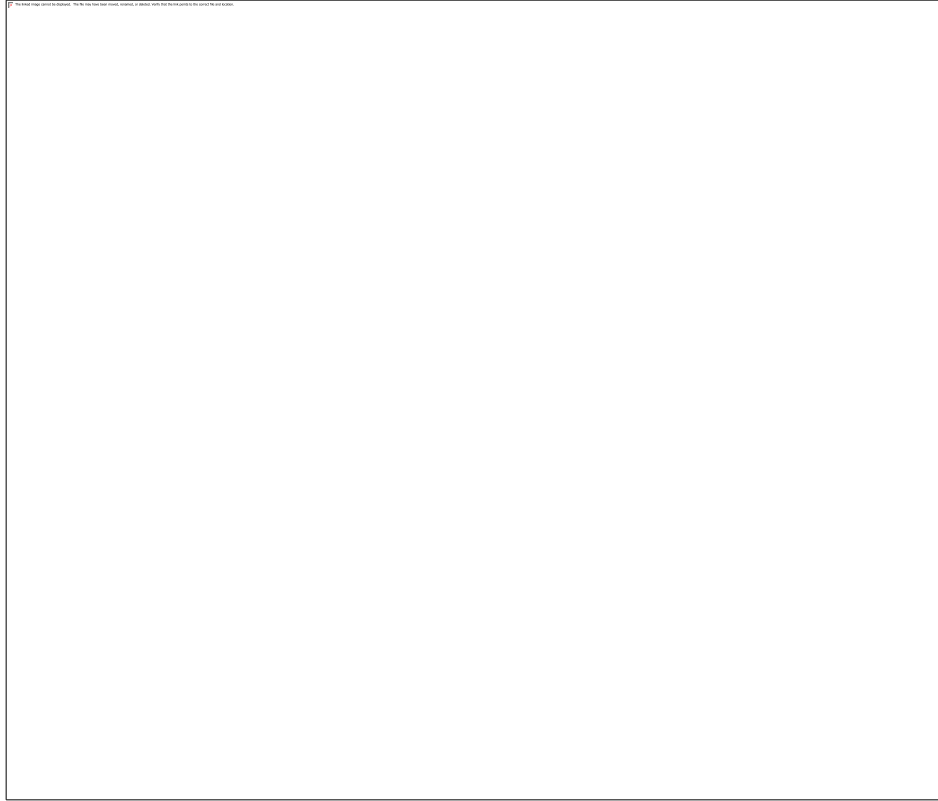
Mr. Le Cong Co, DTU Chairman and Rector

We interviewed Mr. Le Cong Co, DTU Chairman & Rector about this topic.

Sir, why was the Student Movement in southern cities up to 1975 chosen as the subject of such meticulous research?

With the goal of reuniting our country, the Party defined a strategy focusing on the internal aspects of our military and political challenges and how these related to our interaction with our people and with our foes.

So far, we have collected all the military information, and the image of a tank smashing down the gates of Independence Palace could be considered as the best and final example. We have also reviewed evaluated and published information on several wartime events, especially the campaign of Ho Chi Minh.



President Le Cong Co, at the left in the front row

There has never before been a detailed account of the movement for many different reasons, although it is known that the public struggle preceded the political one, as Mr. Vo Chi Cong once said about those who took part the glorious victory.

From 1954 to 1975, the power of the Student Movement in southern cities evolved strongly. Students held peace rallies across Vietnam and the first of these took place in Hue.

Employing a variety of different strategies, students contributed a vital role in the fighting.

As a witness who survived after the war, I feel that we should do something special to commemorate the Student Movement. That is the reason why we decided to choose the Movement as the subject of our comprehensive study project.

Are there any changes in methodology conducting this project?

In fact, there have been a few other projects on this topic. Between 1983 and 1985, Cao Tien Le, Phan Tu, Hoang Minh Nhan, Thu Bon, Nguyen Khac Phuc and I held small meetings to share our experiences with the general public by discussions and singing patriotic songs all the way from Hue to Ho Chi Minh City. However, for many different reasons, those activities were limited in scope.

So, how long has this project been in progress? When will it be completed? And who are the participants?

This project began in 2010 and it is expected to be finished by the end of 2013, if there are no interruptions.

How will young people be able to access the results of your research?

This March, the Youth Publishing House will issue the first five books recounting the memoirs of certain special people. The actual stories in these books will recall vividly the heroic struggles in the Student Movement. A two-day seminar will take place at Duy Tan University, including a summarized introduction and a book of detailed information.

In addition, a film has been in production at the Thanh Nien Film Studio for six months now. Hopefully, with the support of the media, by listening, reading, and observation, the younger generation will be able to relate deeply to the patriotism of their elders.

Currently, each DTU student must complete 64 hours of study on History and Vietnamese traditions and it's good to know that three DTU postgraduates chose the Student Movement in southern cities for their Doctorate theses. Also, the DTU Humanities and Social Science Center are planning to study related topics.

As a soldier in the war, what do you most remember about that time you dedicated your life to saving our country?

At the age of twelve, I was lucky to be able to participate in the revolution to fight for the independence of Vietnam. In 1963, 1968, 1971 and 1972, I was assigned to lead the Student Movement. That was an opportunity for me to work in different places, such as Saigon, from 1954 to 1960 and in Hue and Central Vietnam from 1963 to 1975. I have lots of good and bad memories. Happiness, sadness and feelings of loss are some of those, when I witnessed my friends and families fighting for our country.

What concerns you most now? Are you concerned about the current educational reform programs?

During the years leading up to the creation of the Student Movement, my colleagues and I fought for the reunion of our country, to free Vietnam from oppression, poverty and disadvantage. The biggest concern of my life has always been social justice. In my opinion, we still lack adequate policies and opportunities for those who fought for our country. I am indebted to my friends and comrades for devoting themselves to winning the war.

Another concern of mine is how to inspire the younger generation by the way we fought to protect our country.

The ethics of the younger generation are being negatively influenced, and, in some ways, we don't understand that we are slowly losing their potential. What does this mean for the future of our society?

2012 is the year of education reform in Vietnam. What will the DTU Board of Rector do to follow the new Government policies?

The DTU Board of Rectors has spent lots of time defining our educational goal, is to teach and learn by following humanistic principles. DTU students are well-trained and skillful but they are also sympathetic and willing to help the unprivileged.

A seminar and another project on the Student Movement are coming soon. With our gratitude, we hope to play a part in the movement to reform the educational system.

Our generation defined that the country's freedom should be our guideline. In modern times, we think that it is necessary to clarify and preserve eternal values and, at the same time, reorganize the Party, as such actions will have an impact on the future education of our younger generation.

Thank you so much, Mr. Le Cong Co.