

Phu Vinh Village (Bamboo & Rattan)

I. Overview of Phu Nghia commune

1. The geographical position

Phu Nghia commune is located in Chuong My District. It is 5 km away from the district center, 15 km away from the province center and 27 km away from Hanoi center. The national road number 6 linking Hanoi Capital and Hoa Binh province and Northern West mountainous area also goes through Phu Nghia commune.

With all these advantages, Phu Nghia plays an important geographical role for political and economic security. The length of Phu Vinh commune is up to 3.5km.

- Phu Nghia borders Tien Phuong commune, Chuong My district to the east
- Borders Dong Phuong Yen commune, Chuong My district to the west
- Borders Ngoc Hoa and Truong Yen communes, Chuong My district to the south
- Borders Dong Quang commune, Quoc Oai district to the north

2. The area

The total area is 810.56 hectare, in which:

- Farm land is 475.8 hectare
- Land tenure is 56.9 hectare
- Land for industrial use is 54.3 hectare
- Land for irrigational and transportation use is 214.2 hectare
- Land for cultural projects is 6.2 hectare
- Spare land is 3.16 hectare

3. Population and labour: (data updated on 31st December, 2004)

There are 2,028 household with 4,935 persons out of 9,251 are in the labour age.

4. Population distribution

There are 7 hamlets and 10 complex which is divided into 10 administrative hamlets. They are Dong Tru, Nghia Hao, Khe Than, Quan Cham, Phu Huu 1, Phu Huu 2, Phu

Vinh. Phu Vinh hamlet is divided into 4 small parts: Thuong, Ha, Go Dau and Dam Bung.

5. Households producing rattan products for export

The households producing rattan products for export occupy 85% of the total number. Those households contribute to create more jobs, and to improve the living standard of the local population. At present the poor household have decreased to 5.34%, the rich households are account for 37.5% and 57.16% occupies the medium-income households.

6. Companies, enterprises and cooperative groups in the commune

- a. Companies and enterprises: 25 companies limited, enterprises and cooperative groups in which 17 enterprises and cooperative groups take part in producing rattan and bamboo for export, 8 enterprises do business on farm produce etc.
- b. There are 15 enterprises operate in rattan and bamboo products for export.

7. Handicraft trade village development

All of 7 villages in Ha Tay provinces were recognized as handicraft trade village by the People Committee of Ha Tay in October, 2004. Phu Vinh was recognized to be a traditional handicraft trade village in 2000. There are two cultural villages which were recognized twice, and two communal houses were reckoned as historical monument of Ha Tay province.

8. Health and education

There is one medical station located in the center of the commune. There are one secondary school, primary school and one kinder garden-national standard in the commune.

9. Social activities

There are many associations in Phu Nghia commune with a lot of social activities.

II. Economic Development - Investment for Infrastructure and Handicraft Trade Village

1. Total Income of Four Years (2001- 2004) and the First Quarter of 2005

No.	Details	Unit	2001	2002	2003	2004	1st quarter of 2005
I	Total annual income	Billion VND	38.0	45.5	52.0	58.0	15.0
		USD (thousand)	(2,399)	(2,873)	(3,283)	(3,662)	(947)
1	Industry	Billion VND	12.5	13.5	15.5	17.0	1.2
		USD (thousand)	(789)	(852)	(978)	(1,073)	(75)
2	Small scale industry	Billion VND	17.0	22.5	26.0	30.5	9.5
		USD (thousand)	(1,073)	(1,420)	(1,641)	(1,926)	(599)
3	Trade, tourism, service	Billion VND	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	4.3
		USD (thousand)	(536)	(599)	(663)	(726)	(271)
4	Annual income per capita	Million VND	4.5	5.2	5.8	6.2	-
		USD	(284)	(328)	(366)	(391)	-

1VND=0.00006315USD (25 May, 2005: <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>)

The annual economic growth rate of Phu Nghia Commune is 10%. The small scale industries play an important part in the economic growth and the stable development of the commune.

2. Investment for Infrastructure in the Past Few Years

Funds for building concrete roads for the handicraft trade village for tourism development purposes was approved by the People Committee and the Tourism Department of Ha Tay province. The total funds are 1 billion VND. The length of the road to be invested in is 1km from the office of agricultural cooperative group to Phu Vinh and to the national road 6A. The investment financial source of the commune comes from the emblem on public land and the contribution of enterprises located on the commune. The commune also invested in building the road from the national road 6A to Dong Tru and to Dam Bung, with a length is 1,274 meter, width is 4 meter,

total investment is about 1.3 billions. Moreover, one showroom for the handicraft village was invested with the total cost of 150 million VND.

In 2004, the Industrial department of Ha Tay province signed on the project called "Combine Tourism and Handicraft Trade Village Development". The increase of the tourist number to Phu Nghia commune is as follows:

- Year2001: 2,300 tourists, in which 125 is foreign tourists
- Year2002: 2,800 tourists, in which 175 is foreign tourists
- Year2003: 3,400 tourists, in which 237 is foreign tourists
- Year2004: 4,200 tourists, in which 280 is foreign tourists

In the first quarter of the year 2005, there are 725 tourists, which include 47 foreign tourists.

3. The Formulation and Development Process of the Handicraft Trade Village

The Phu Nghia, rattan and bamboo handicraft trade village was born 300 years ago. The village was tossed back and forth along with Vietnamese history.

Before 1960 - the age of cooperative associations, when Phu Vinh households were active in creating different patterns and making rattan and bamboo products to sell at streets in Hanoi for both the local people and the foreign tourists. After the establishment of handicraft cooperative associations, all the rattan and bamboo products produced in Phu Vinh were bought by the State. The production was developed dramatically. After 1986, when Phu Vinh handicraft cooperative associations were dissolved, production was limited within the household and cooperative group scale. People had to run their business themselves and received no more subsidy and protection from the government. In order to survive in the market, producers had to find partners and to look for markets for their output. Severe market competition forced the producers to produce high quality but low price products. So far the rattan and bamboo handicraft industry has developed not only in the number and quality of products but also in the number of households that participate in the production.

The demand from customers with regards to the quantity of rattan and bamboo products is increasing day by day. More and more handicraft and trade villages are recognized by the People Committee of Ha Tay province like Phu Vinh (in 2000),

Quan Cham and Khe Than (in 2001), Phu Huu 1 and Phu Huu 2 (in 2003) and the two remaining villages, Dong Tru and Nghia Hao were recognized in October, 2004.

In 2001, Ha Tay people committee and tourism department chose Phu Nghia to be the main tourism spot to be develop. Together with this decision, the total investment of 30 millions VND was put into the showroom of Phu Nghia village. III. Phu Vinh Handicraft Trade Village and Its History

1. How was the Name of Phu Vinh Born?

According to Mr. Nguyen Trong Giam, a former librarian of Phu Vinh commune, Phu Vinh used to be called Phu Hoa Trang. There is an old story that once upon a time, one of the wives of King Le Hien Tong, madam Vu Thi Phuong visited the villages. She made a donation to build village's communal house, using the local skills of traditional handicraft rattan and bamboo weaving.

Local residents collect available materials such as Giang (One kind of rattan; smaller but more elastic), Uot (another kind of rattan), Co (palm tree), to make daily products for consumer in the region and neighborhood. When the demand for rattan goods increases, the focus was shift from simple daily products to more sophisticated ones. The outstanding skills are clearly showed in the pictures of four seasons and four supernatural creatures made of rattan and bamboo.

Phu Vinh used to be called Phu Hoa Trang. However, it was officially renamed to Phu Vinh when the new province chief, Mr. Thuong Chay, was inaugurated. He explained that Hoa, meaning flower, would not remain long but Vinh would sound long-life fame and remain forever. Phu Vinh integrated Phu Huu 1 and Phu Huu 2, together with two sub-villages in the Phu Nghia Commune.

The word "Phu" which is included in all names of villages names represents a beautiful meaning, good fortune. "Vinh" means "Glory", "Phu" means "Rich", "Nghia" means "Righteousness" and "Huu" means "To have all things". Among the villages in Phu Nghia commune, Phu Vinh is the center with the largest number of skilled workers and artisans of traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo weaving.

The traditional handicraft have been developed since 18th century. Many trade fairs were initiated by the Kings and the person with rewarded product would be honoured in the communal house of the village. In 1712, there were 8 artisans presented with the

award of *cửu phẩm*(They were recognized as the head-masters of the traditional handicraft village):

Nguyễn Văn Luận

Cửu Mai

Nguyễn Trọng Trí

Trần Văn Giải

Nguyễn Văn Sắc

Cửu Tân

Trần Văn Thạnh

Cửu Lăng

2. Current Situation of Phu Vinh Handicraft Trade Village

Phu Vinh has become the most attractive place in Phu Nghia commune for visitors of handicraft trade village tours. Tourists coming to Phu Vinh were attracted by the history of over three centuries of traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo weaving. Nowadays, thanks to modern technologies for raw material processing, skills and techniques of the traditional handicraft are more enhanced and improved. Phu Vinh village is administratively divided into four hamlets: Dam Bung, Go Dau, Ha and Thuong. As the traditional handicraft has employed 99% of 605 households in the village, tourists coming to the village show great interests in the introduction on the handicraft industry from local residents who are all the time busy with weaving products.

However, there are some problems which need to be considered. In many families, artisans do not teach the non-family members or people from other villages. Outsiders could learn some techniques but only basics skills of the handicraft weaving. Thus the workers in the villages dare not to take high volumes of orders from buyers, especially during the harvest season because of a lack of the skilled workers.

3. Biographies and Stories of Artisans in Phu Vinh Village

3.1 Nguyen Van Trung, Artisan (visiting his house in the field trip)

Mr. Trung, 48 year olds, has received many certificates, degrees and awards from both domestic and international organizations, such as the Certificate of Golden Hand presented by the Union of Vietnam co-operatives, the prize of Sophisticated Handicraft Skills presented by JICA, Japan. Now he is the most famous and prestigious artisan in Phu Vinh. In 1980, at the age of 24, Mr. Trung took an industrial art course. This talented man was chosen to travel to Cuba for further study on processing plants for handicraft production. He was selected to be the chief technician of Phu Vinh traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo weaving co-operative and he played a very important role in exporting art products to former eastern bloc nations and now to Taiwan, Japan and France. The most attractive product in his house is the Portray of President Ho Chi Minh woven by rattan which is hung at the most respectful place of his house. Although he is disabled, he always keeps the words of President Ho Chi Minh "T?n m? kh?ng ph?" in mind. It means that "disabled but still of benefit for the society"



Mr. Trung have traveled to and joined in many exhibitions in Cuba, Russian, France, Japan and Canada to introduce Phu Vinh's traditional handicraft products. Through him, people around the world get to know and understand more about Vietnam, the artisans and skillful workers of Vietnam. In 2004, Mr Trung received more than 50 groups of tourists who visited his family workshop. He and some other artisans in the village traveled to other villages like Hai Duong, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang to teach the locals rattan and bamboo weaving. His partners now refer to him affectionately as the "Artisan of the village".

He said, the ancestor of the handicraft in Phu Vinh was a resident in Thang Long (one of the old name of Hanoi Capital). However he was fined while being an official and he then escaped to Phu Vinh and learned the traditional handicraft. He also said Mr. Nguyen Van Xoi, the father of Mr Nguyen Van Luan who used to be a ninth grade of mandarin system, was a talented worker of the traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo

weaving in the village. Mr. Xoi traveled to China and won the prize of the most beautiful and skillful handicraft products. He also learned much experience from China to spread to the locals in Phu Vinh. Mr. Xoi was considered the ancestor of the Phu Vinh traditional handicraft village.

The handicraft workshop of Mr. Trung is one of the most successful workshop in the village. The total revenue of the year 2004 was approximately 400 millions VND, increased 20% in comparison with the revenue of the year 2003. Income per worker for each month is from 600,000 to 1 million VND. So the rattan and bamboo weaving is a good job for locals to do deal with. On the one hand, the salary can support their living expenses, on the other hand the workers can maintenance the traditional handicraft inherited from the ancestors.



3.2 Nguyen Trong Tan, Artisan (not included in the field trip)

Mr. Tan was born in 1919 and his business is now run by his son, Mr. Nguyen Trong Tuan. Mr. Tan has been with the traditional handicraft of bamboo and rattan weaving for 73 years. The latest product for introduce to the exhibition is the "Long Ban" (Bamboo dish-cover). This product was made in one month and was highlighted and appreciated by

visitors.

His decorative and sophisticated hand-made products are not only presented in the national exhibition but also in the international trade fair such as Macxey in France.

Through such shows, exhibitions and trade fairs, Mr. Tan has achieved many precious awards: gold medals 02; silver medals 02 and bronze medal 01. The products, at the moment, are sold to trading companies and their designs are produced by orders from import-export companies located close to the Phu Vinh villages and on the way Hanoi.

For the domestic consumers, Mr. Tan takes samples from plastic, ceramic, glass items in the supermarket as reference for his hand-made rattan bamboo weaving products.



Mr. Tan and his son are very interested in designing souvenir products for tourists who come to see the traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo weavings in Phu Vinh. However they have not launched the scheme for this system because of the small number of visitors. As mentioned by them, tour operators in Vietnam, especially in Hanoi and Ha Tay should pay more attention to conduct tours to Phu Vinh and inspire the tourists about the cultures and traditional handicraft in the village. His son, Mr. Tuan, is now seeking responsible and well known tourist companies to combine tourism with his handicraft village.

3.3 Nguyen Van Tinh, Artisan (not included in the fieldtrip)

Mr Tinh was born in 1963. He began weaving when he was 10 years old. His father was also an artisan who had the chance to meet President Ho Chi Minh in 1962 when the President paid a visit to Phu Vinh. His two sons inherited the traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo weaving. One of them is in the military service.

He now focuses on creating designs and his products which are sold directly to both domestic and foreign end-users. Therefore his output volume is low in comparison with other businesses.

One of the products that he likes best is the rattan dish cover made in 1987 for the art purpose, not economic purpose. He also received the gold prize in 1987 for this product. He still keeps it as a sweet memory.

He and other artisans opened some classes to spread the traditional rattan handicraft and bamboo weaving to other workers who are interested.