

Discussion Questions for *Tale of Kieu*

1. How would you classify the genre of *Tale of Kieu*, and why? Does it remind you of any Western literary work?
2. Discuss Kieu's belief system. What is her religion? Does her motivation seem bewildering? When is the one time she lets herself be corrupted?
3. Are there inconsistencies in the narrative? In Kieu's decision-making? For instance, why doesn't she try to return home during her periods of freedom?
4. What surprised you as you read the *Tale*? Was it difficult to understand the metaphors and references?
5. Who seems to be narrating the *Tale*? What is his point of view? Is he a reliable narrator?
6. Why do you think Kieu is childless? Did you notice any children at all in the story? What was your understanding of women's roles in the *Tale*?
7. How do you think this poem was received by the public in 1813? Why has it continued to be so popular?
8. Which man in the story was the most unlikeable? Which woman?
9. Did the ending seem believable? Which characters seem universally understandable and which are culture-bound?
10. How is Kieu the personification of Vietnamese culture?