

STORY 1

God of the Mountain and the God of the Sea

So the story I'm going to tell is about the God of the Mountain and the God of the Sea. During the time of King [Honban], the 18th, he had one of the princesses is the most beautiful lady. So when she came of age, the King wanted to marry her off, so he's been looking for a male with all kinds of . . . or like wealthy, handsome.

So they tried to get him the most suitable to marry her. So one day, there are two gentlemen appear and they both fit perfectly for the princess. So once he introduce himself as the God of the Mountain, which is something, it's spelled S-O-N and then the . . .

SON, N as in Nancy. Son mean mountain. Tinh mean God. So he say, "I'm the God of the Mountain." I own all those on the land, trees, animals, all kind of good things there, and he had a lot of powers too. So the king was like, "I really like you." And then the other man was like, "I'm the God of . . . I'm Thuy Tinh. I'm the God of the Sea, so I own all kind of things that's under the sea. I have power, he was handsome, and I own all the wealth down under the sea. So the king was like, "I only have one daughter. I would love to have you both as my son-in-law, but since I only have one, so who ever gather sort of like what you call . . . When you asking someone to marry you have to bring all kind of gift.

The dowry is for the girl, the offering. All kind of gift offering. So whoever comes back with the offering first, I will give my daughter to that person. So the next day, Son Tinh, which is the God of the Mountain, came back first and so the king marry off his daughter. The God of the Sea came an hour later and heard that the God of Mountain already married the princess. He got very upset. He was so aggressive, so he use all his power. He raises the sea level up and he make wind, he make the rain came, the sea rise.

Tsunami.

Yeah, it rise and what he wanted to start the war with the Mountain God, so he could take back the princess. The God of Mountain doesn't want to move the princess that easily. So as the water raise, he also raised the mountain. So both had been fighting for days, lives were lost. But after a while they both get tired, so the Sea God settled down, calm down, everything came back to normal. So what they say is that once in a while when the God of the Sea get upset, and he still want to take back the princess so he keep fighting, so that's why people say there's tsunami, there's some other . . . So that is my story. Every time they fight, the Sea God lost.

In this one, I think just explain why we have the tsunami, the flooding.

The mountain was just raised up. Yeah, I mean like almost every year they have either flooding or . . . A rematch. But every time they fight, the Sea God lost.

STORY 2

The Mercury Balance. Or scale.

This story was my favorite story when I was a little kid. My parents told me about it, and I also read it from books for moral teaching. I don't remember all the details, but the main idea is there was a couple who was in the business of selling and buying things to earn a living. But they was not very honest, so when they make the balance, of mercury in the middle, the bar for the balance. It's empty in the middle.

In the middle, there's an empty tube, and they put mercury in it. There's a hollow tube. So they put the . . . and mercury was the metal that has the highest density. So when they buying something, they would try to make that it would weigh less so that they don't have to pay more. They use that . . .

And when they sell things they would try to tip the scale to the other side so that will weigh more, so the mercury will . . . It can flow easily. Remember mercury . . . It's a liquid metal, right, so . . . It flows.

After a while, they got rich real quick, they bought houses and they had two sons. They was good, but it got to the point that they got so rich and then they knew that they was not being honest. And they tell each other that maybe because in ancient culture they believe in whatever deed you do, if you do bad deed, bad thing will come to you. Therefore, they say maybe now we are so rich, maybe we should stop doing that. So they decided to get rid of that scale. They chop it in half and inside they found a drop of blood. Not a drop but it's like a clump of blood. They were so terrified. After a while, the two sons dies. One die first and then the other one die too. One after the other. So they felt so bad for a few months. You know fairy tale, so they cry for a long time. They mourn.

The good fairy appeared to them and say it seem like because they'd been crying for months, after their two sons die. They'd been crying and they were very sad for two months. So afterwards the good fairy appear to them and say, "Now I can see that you really feel sorry for what you did. And don't worry about it, the two sons that you lost, actually they are the evil children that was sent to you. Now don't worry, just continue being good and then you will have other children." And they did. So the moral story behind it is that they teach people to be honest.

The fairy is a Buddha thing. It's like the . . . In Vietnamese, they call it But. Good fairy. Male.

STORY 3

A Big Pot of Gold.

In the old days, there was a husband and wife who lived in a countryside. They are very poor but they have good heart. And then one day when the husband went to the field, and he have a field of—they grow paddy, rice, and when they plough the soil . . . paddy rice. Then when they plough soil in his land, he found a big pot of gold. Then he just put it back, and that night when he went home he tell his wife that I found a big pot of gold. And the wife said, "Where is it?" He said, "I put it back in our field." And then the wife said, "Why don't you bring it home? If somebody take it then we lose it." And he answer in a calm

voice, "If that's the gift from Gods, then it will be ours." And if it not, and if it fall to other people hand, then that's okay too. And during that time there's a thief who stand in the corner of the house. They listen to the husband and wife conversation. After the husband and wife went to sleep, they go straight to the field and looking for the pot of gold. He found it and bring it to his home. And then the next day . . .

This person is a thief. They overheard the husband and wife story. Then the next day, the husband went to the field, but he couldn't find the . . . the thief took the pot home and then when he open it he saw lot, lot of snakes, big snake crawling in the pot. So he just took the lid and cover it up and put it away. Then the next day, the husband went to the field and he could not find the pot of gold. That night he went home and talked to his wife and said, "Somebody took it. I could not find it." And the wife said, "I told you to bring it home and you didn't listen." And the husband still answer in a calm voice, "It got took, the gold. It's okay too."

Then at that time the thief is also listen to the couple. And he talk to himself, "This man must be a blind person because there is only snake, not gold." So he said that I will bring the pot of snake back to this field. And then the next day the husband went to the field and he found the pot again. He open it up, yes there's a lot of gold inside. He left it there and went back home, talked to his wife. "I found it again." And the wife said, "but why don't you bring it home?" And the husband said, "If it is a gift from God, then it should follow us home. Don't be worried. It will find home." At this time the thief also stand in the corner of the house and he said, "Oh my God, this man is so crazy. He must be very blind. Okay, I will bring the pot of snake to his home. So the snake will bite both of them to death."

So the thief go to the field and carry that pot, and put right in front of his house. The next morning the husband wake up and when he went out of his . . . , he found the pot right there. He's very happy, and he open it, he saw there's gold inside full to the top, and he called his wife. "Honey, come here. Here I told you, can you see the gift from God. It find its way home." And then from that time they become rich and they help out other poor people. That's the end of the story.

The moral behind the story is if you've done good deeds, or if you are a good person, it's become like the . . . You have the rewards. You get the rewards, but the thief is not a good person. He only want to steal from the couple, so he could not find anything good in that pot.

STORY 4

The Golden Star Fruit Tree.

The star fruit tree.

The fruit tree. But also they put the golden in front, that's why it has some gold in this story too. This one very rich man, very rich, who live in the village, he die. He have two sons.

The two sons inherit a lot of money, gold. But two sons are very different. One, the older, the older one was greedy. The younger one was very kind.

Moderator: The elder one was what?

Greedy. So the older one sat down with the all of the fortune that is his, and left for the younger only a tree, the star fruit tree. They all have wife. So the older one is all set up about that, so he don't worry anything, but the younger one very worry, so he have to base on the tree for living. So he take care of the tree and make the tree and day after day it get bigger and had a lot of fruit. And one day the raven come and eat a lot of fruit from his tree. And he feel very sad. He say, "Why you eat?" The raven didn't say anything, but the raven keep coming every day and eat that. So finally, he had to say, "Raven, please don't eat my fruit because that the only thing I have." So the raven said, "Don't worry. I will pay you back with gold." And the raven also said, "Okay, prepare for bag about 60 cm long and wide about three pounds. And wait for tomorrow morning, I will come back and bring you to get the gold."

So the next morning the raven come back and put him on his back and fly over the sea to the island, to the cave, something like that, and get a lot of gold. And the younger one fill with gold, come back, and he fly back to home. And when he get home, he now he . . . So he very happy and now he remember his brother. So he contact his brother and invite him to his house. And his brother say, "No. I don't want to go." Because his brother say, "This guy poor. I don't need to go there." But he keep inviting him and say, "I have something for you." So finally, the elder come and then he surprised to see his brother now very big house, have a lot of things in the house, and very healthy. So he asked him why he got that. So the younger one tell him the truth, they have the tree and then the raven come and like that. So the other elder one say, "Okay, now I want to do that."

So he want to trade the tree with my property. So then he trade that and then he give his . . . he waiting now, he have the tree. And then everyday he come and wait for the raven coming. The raven will finally come and eat a lot of fruit. He say the same thing, "Raven, don't eat my fruit." The raven say, "Okay, I will pay you back with gold. Prepare a bag with three pounds and 60 cm something. I will pick it up and you will get the gold." But we know the elder one is very greedy, so he doesn't make the bag pounds, he make it six. So bigger, so he can get more gold. So next day the raven come, carry him, fly over the sea, get to the island to get the gold. And he filled with gold.

He put the gold in the pocket and everywhere.

He just filled up and loaded with gold. He climbed up to the back of the raven and fly back over to the land, to his house. But, when he fly to the sea and go for a couple minutes, it too heavy, overweight for the raven. So the raven have to be gone down and leave him off the back, and he dropped to the sea. And died there. He don't get gold, because he say, "Let go, let go." He don't want to let go of the gold. He keep going, get heavy, and then he fall down.

And then the younger one waiting for his brother, and saying, “Why is it so long he’s not come back?” And day after he met the raven and asked the raven why he not come back, and raven tell him the story. He keep the gold and then he fell down.

So the moral is the same, when you grab all things, then you lose everything. Don’t be greedy.

STORY 6

King An Duong Vuong

It’s a legend, Vietnamese long time ago, back then there’s a king named An Duong Vuong. I will show you all the names later. And actually, my husband will tell the story, not me. We happy now. Okay, now you start, honey.

I think the story has been passed down for a long, long time, many generations. This is one of them. I think has some meaning, after the story I will talk a little bit about that. King An Duong Vuong, he had a dream to build a city in the shape of a . . . a seashell.

You only can go in by one way to get inside, like a spiral to come in. But during the time he tried to build up the city, the wall keep coming down all the time. After he build it up, the next day it collapse. He build it again, it keep collapse. So one day the God, the turtle, we call Kim Qui, is the God of the Turtle, appear and give him one of his claw and tell the king to use that to make the trigger for the crossbow. As soon as he make that he can find one arrow, it kill a thousand of enemies. So that is the magic of the trigger using his claw. So the neighbor, one of the country next to An Duong Vuong, which is called Au Lac at the time. Trieu Da is the king of another country next to it, he want to take over Au Lac. His strategy is have his son to marry the daughter of An Duong Vuong. The prince, his name is Trong Thuy, married the princess, which is the daughter of An Duong Vuong. So they both happy, however Trong Thuy want to know the secret of how he defend his city. And no one can overcome it or defeat it. My Chau is his wife tell him the story.

She showed him the trigger and the crossbow. So Trong Thuy asked other people to make an imitate one, and put that into the crossbow, and he took the real one.

And then he came back home. But before he came back home, he told his wife . . . is that the one thing about the coat?

He came home. And his father’s armies started to surround the city of An Duong Vuong. An Duong Vuong no worry, because he have crossbow, he can kill anybody. So he just naive. No, no, but you forgot one thing. Before Trong Thuy, the husband, leaving his wife and he said that, “If anything happen to you, then wear a coat with fur. It’s made by swan feather.” Swan feather. Then just pull the feather and put along the way, so he can find where she is. Marking the way wherever she goes, so he can trace her.

That is one of the thing I forgot to mention. When the army of Trieu Da has surrounded the city, so An Duong Vuong start to take the crossbow out and using it. It not effect anymore, because no more magic trigger. So he gets surround and he had to find a way to escape. And he take his horse with the daughter in the back. And the daughter do what her husband tell her to do. She start to mark the way. Actually, he gave her the coat.

So because of that trail there, he'd be able to find An Duong Vuong. And at the time he had caught the Kim Qui, the God of the Turtle coming up and say, "Your enemy riding on your back." Which is his daughter. So that is a sad story is he killed the daughter.

The king killed the daughter. And then they put her onto the well. And then when her husband came to that well, she had already died. So he mourn her over there. I think later people worship her on that well there.

Actually, now today, they found the city, the . . . Yeah. So it's really true. They found the foundation. They just found that a few years ago.

The wall must be about more than 2,000 years, because we have a history Trieu Da is one of the king took over this An Duong Vuong. So in our history matching with the Chinese history, matching back to the date around hundred years before Christ. Around then. And then because of the history, I mean because of the excavation recently, they found the foundation. So it does have something . . .

Moderator: It's 3,000 times larger than what it is, because they were able to take a computer projection of the layering of the city. So I wonder if they used the same computer software to look at the foundation. That's how they're now doing archaeology is to look at based on these computer projections.

STORY 7

Lac Long Quan Au Co story

The Lac Long Quan Au Co story is the main story about . . . Very important story in our history.

It a part of our history, called . . . the word in Vietnam called Con Rong, Chau Tien. This mean Children of the Dragon and Grandchildren of Fairy. So that the Vietnamese is proud of that heritage which is son of the dragon and grandson of fairy. So the story go like this, Lac Long Quan is one of the son of the dragon from East Sea coming to the north. And met a lady which is the daughter of fairy of the mountain. So they got married. After that the Au Co, which is the name of the daughter of the fairy, not give birth, she laid a hundred eggs.

She laid eggs that hatch into a hundred sons. This is just a story, a hundred son. It's like the God of the Mountain and God of the Sea.

Then after they live with each other for a while, Lac Long Quan said to Au Co, "I am the son of the dragon, we live in the sea. You are the daughter of the fairy, you are the

mountain. We cannot live long together. So why don't we divide it? I take 50 sons going down to the sea. You take 50 sons, go to the mountain." So they separated. And 50 children . . . however when we separate, but we help each other. If there is any problem we will help each other. So the 50 son go with Lac Long Quan, that make the Vietnamese today.

I think because Vietnam was surrounded by the sea, so that's why they . . . I think the story . . . I mean today, a lot of people explain the story the way how our ancestors tell the story.

The 50 sons follow the father, make the country, we call Van Lang. And there are a lot of stories relating to those dynasty called Van Lang. Eighteen kings Van Lang. Many stories like banh chung, which is we make the rice cake, and the story how we eat the petal . . . the Asian, we eat the leaves and the... The beetle juice.. So many story relating to that 18 kings we call Van Lang. That is the pre-date to An Duong Vuong which is the story my wife said. So that is pre-date to that history.

This one is the 18 one also the princess . . .

Yeah, that is one of the story within the dynasty of 18 kings. However, the people today, they can explain the story the way how people back then think, and create that story for us. They think that there are many tribe back then. They live like a tribe, like here the Indians. They live by tribe. So they stand for a hundred tribes, different tribes.

So that's how they put the whole Vietnam.

In the northern part of Vietnam, so a hundred tribe just out of the wood, hundred, many. Just mean many, that's all. It doesn't mean a hundred, but mean many. Many tribes come together living in that area. Some from the sea coming up, some from the mountain coming down. But interesting thing is they explain that because of the people from the sea follow the father, which is the father is the head of the household. While the mother is a different type of tribe, what do you call that?

The mountain . . . The mother is matriarch, and the father is the patriarch. Yeah. Like the Hmong people. All of us know that story, maybe not new so much. But this one here, everyone knows.