

Vietnamese Focus Group, story 5

R: So we both have the story together, and this was something that we like. 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.

R: 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 . . .

R: Kingdom.

R: No, it's a type of shell.

R: A seashell.

Moderator: Like a conch?

R: That's right.

R: 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.

R: She showed him the crossbow.

R: 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.

R: This is drama.

R: That's why I like it. Tell me more.

R: And then he came back home.

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

R: 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.

R: 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."

R: Swan feather. Then just pull the feather and put along the way, so he can find where she is.

R: Marking the way wherever she goes, so he can trace her.

R: 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.

Moderator: Did you get that? The son told that if anything were to happen—son-in-law said to his wife that wear a coat of swan feathers. So I can find you.

R: So they can trace her.

R: Actually, he gave her the coat.

Moderator: Oh, he gave her the coat, the swan feather coat.

R: 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.

Moderator: Who killed the daughter?

R: The father because . . .

R: The king.

R: This is terrible.

R: 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.

R: Oh wow!

R: Actually, now today, they found the city, the . . .

Moderator: The spiraling shell city?

R: Yeah. So it's really true. They found the foundation. They just found that a few years ago.

Moderator: So it was a legend, that there was a kingdom. And he wanted to build a spiraling city in the shape of a shell, but he couldn't do it because the walls kept on falling. Then this magical turtle gave him . . .

R: How old is the wall?

R: This one 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: They have a new technology now with . . . Have you read about the Angkor Wat? How they now have been able to map the underground, so it's actually larger than the perimeter now.

R: Like laser . . .

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.

R: How long ago?

Moderator: That one was this past year that they found . . .

R: Two years I think.

R: And what is the moral of the story?

R: This one here? Just a legend. It's not a moral.

R: It's a legend.

R: Legend, not real.

R: Well, it has been tell the story like that for many years.

Moderator: Is there a statue of her now?

R: There is a place, I don't know what village, but they still worship her with a temple.

R: And I think that they have a temple of An Duong Vuong too. When we went to Vietnam, we want to see that place but we couldn't have chance to see it.

R: That's great.

R: We saw so many interesting in my country. When we went there we see, "Oh my gosh, there's a place here from history."