

Chanthone Seng interview

Story 1

Jun: My father and mother told me stories about ... A person who was a tiger, they took the skin of the tiger and wore it as a ... Taking the skin of the tiger and put it on the shirts. Prints of the tiger on the shirt. So they said long time ago that the people who put the pieces of the skin of the tiger onto their shirts end up becoming a tiger.

Story 2

Jun: The one that is about the young lady that smells like a flower.

Jun: No. The hair that smells nice. So she was born with beautiful-smelling hair.

Interviewer: Why do you like that story?

Jun: Because it's a story about the mother that was ... She was an orphan. Her mother and father died, and she had to take care of herself. And she has one child. So that's what happened.

Jun: She had to go and forage for food in the forest. So she searched for mushrooms and bamboos and plants so that she could eat.

Interviewer: Because and why do you like that story?

Jun: It helps people understand to be patient and persevere ... like a survivor. Resilient. So that they can learn how to find food and survive in the jungle.

Story 3

Jun: There's a story about the family that had seven kids. The mother and father are poor and they don't have money. So they let the kids go and let them live in the forest. So now they turned into gorillas in the jungle and they're not human. So they finally were able to farm and get some food so that they went back to get their kids. But the kids have all grown hairy. They no longer know how to speak like humans. So the mom and dad cried because they've lost their children. So they would get food and throw it at the bottom of the tree where their children, who are now monkeys, live. And that's the end of the story.

Story 4

Jun: The second story I would tell you is the story about the girl who was born with the pretty-smelling hair. The mom and dad birthed a beautiful daughter that had long, flowing hair that smelled very beautiful. They don't have much money so they collected charcoal to sell. They would sell the charcoal to buy food and water, or nourishment for their one daughter.

Jun: The daughter went to school, but one day the mother and father died, and then she was left alone by herself to grow up alone. So she did what her parents did. She went and foraged in the forest and found food to eat there and found charcoal to sell to make a living.

Jun: But one day she had a child, and then the villagers would ask, "This is strange, how can a woman have a child without the father? Where is the father?" The mother had a secret. The child would ask, "Where's my father?" as she was growing up. As she grew up, the mother kept the secret of her father's heritage until she was growing old and almost about to die.

Jun: Her daughter was 18 years old when she told him. So she started this story. So she's dying and so she tells the daughter that, "When I was younger I went to the forest and I drank from this water fountain that was a magical water fountain." The water was a hot spring that came from the rock." So when she drank from the springs that came from the rock, she became pregnant with the daughter. When she was there by herself, there was no human. "There was just an elephant. It was the king of the wild elephants. So if you wanna know your father, go into the forest where there is the water from the rock, and you will find your father."

Jun: She said that the father was in the mountains by the rock side. So she went there and she saw this elephant who was sleeping there. So she asked him, "Are you my father?" The elephant replied, "When were you my child? When did I beget you?" She told the story about what her dying mother said, saying that she had come here and that when she drank the water she saw no one. So she said, "Yes, you're right. I did pee on that rock and your mother drank my pee."

Interviewer: Oh, God.

Jun: So the elephant is gonna test her to see if he's the real daughter. "So the test to see whether you're my child or not," said the king elephant, "is I need for you to walk out into that ledge and cross between these two rocks. Between the two rocks is a cliff that falls. A true daughter of mine can walk over the rocks without falling over. But if you're not my daughter, you'll fall over to your death."

Jun: So she was able to walk over to the other side of the rock cliff. So that validated that yes, he was her father. Then she just stayed and lived with her father for the rest of her years.

Interviewer: So why do you want that story known?

Jun: This is a story about the heritage and to know where you're coming from. So you never forget your father. Never forget who your father is. It's like your DNA. The story of your heritage, where you come from, from your father and your mother. So the father took care of her. So this is the story to tell children to remember who their parents are and who takes care of them.