



from the Sea to the Sky

Today's show re-tells two traditional Vietnamese stories, The First Dragon and Why the Monsoon Comes Every Year.* The First Dragon tale is often associated with the child centered mid-autumn festival, Tết-Trung-Thu (tet-troong-thoo). The story is a metaphor for the rewards of hard work and dedication. Through practice and perseverance, a regular person (the fish) can excel into a hero (the dragon).

Why the Monsoon Comes Every Year is a tale that offers an explanation for the rainy monsoon season in Vietnam. The story

puts a very human spin on the actions of the climate, attributing violent weather to a jealous rage. The monsoon season is most prevalent in the tropical south of the country, but in general most of Vietnam has a warm, wet summer with high rainfall. Natural phenomena, including unpredictable weather, are popular subjects for folktales from many different cultures.

**Depending on scheduling or staffing constraints, the show may be abbreviated to one story.*

Fun Animal Facts

The animal puppets in today's show all represent species indigenous to Vietnam. Here are a few fun facts about some of the animals:

- In the late 90's, a new kind of Monkey with distinctive grey fur was discovered. The Grey-Shanked Douc Langur is only found in Vietnam. This monkey is endangered.
- A single Bat can catch 600 mosquitoes in just one hour. Contrary to popular myth, bats are not blind and rarely infect people with rabies. In fact, more people get rabies from their pets every year than have ever been infected by bats in all of recorded history.
- The Blue-Spotted Stingray is related to the shark. Most rays are ovoviviparous, meaning that the eggs hatch inside the female so she gives birth to fully formed babies.
- The Octopus has three hearts and can change the color or pattern on its body at will. They are also talented escape artists: An octopus one foot long can compress itself through a one-inch hole!
- The Carp is the largest member of the minnow family and is a bottom feeder similar to the catfish. The Carp is considered a good luck symbol in many Asian countries.

Sources

<http://www.kidcyber.com.au/topics/langurs.htm>

http://www.arkive.org/species/GES/fish/Taeniura_lymma/more_info.html

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<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/carp.aspx>

<http://gooner365.blogspot.com/2006/08/fun-octopi-facts.html>

http://www.batworld.org/myths_facts/myths_facts.html

<http://www.familyculture.com/holidays/tettrungthu.htm>

Happily Ever After: Children and Folktales

Folktales are a great way to connect children to their cultural heritage or to explore other ethnicities. However, sometimes traditional stories contain violent imagery or gender stereotypes. Make sure you are comfortable with the content of a story before you read it to your child. Some stories have scary elements, but since they also usually contain fanciful aspects (like animals talking) or distant historical settings (like kingdoms),

most children do not perceive fairytale dangers as directly threatening. However, be reassuring if your child expresses worry or fear. Even with their antiquated or aggressive aspects, folktales offer examples of common human challenges and value systems. Folktales can prompt meaningful discussions about making choices or cause and effect. Most importantly, folktales encourage imagination and creative thinking.

Try a Taste of Vietnam

Look for the ingredients in the international section of supermarkets, or in Asian markets.

Fresh Vietnamese Spring Rolls

2 ounces rice vermicelli
8 rice wrappers (8.5 inch diameter)
8 shrimp—cooked, peeled, deveined, and halved
3 Tbs. fresh basil leaves
3 Tbs. fresh mint leaves
3 Tbs. fresh cilantro leaves
2 leaves lettuce, shredded

Dipping Sauce

Mix together:
5 tablespoons hoisin sauce
1 Tbs. peanuts, minced

Boil a medium saucepan of water, add rice vermicelli, cook 3 to 5 minutes. Drain and let cool. Fill a large flat dish with warm water. Dip one rice wrapper into water for a second or two to soften. Lay wrapper flat on a plate. Across the center of wrapper, place 2 shrimp halves, a handful of the vermicelli, and a few basil, mint, cilantro and lettuce leaves. Leave about 2 inches open on each side. Fold sides inward, then tightly roll the wrapper up (like a skinny burrito). Repeat until all ingredients have been used and serve with dipping sauce.

Recommended Reading:

Children of the Dragon Sherry Garland

Why Ducks Stand On One Leg Sherry Garland

Toad is the Uncle of Heaven Jeanne M. Lee

Beyond the East Wind Duong van Quyen

The Wishing Pearl and Other Tales of Vietnam Jon and Kay Nielsen

Ten Mice for Tet Pegi Deitz Shem

Surprise Moon Caroline Hatton

Sing 'n Learn Vietnamese Nguyen /Yoon

To Swim in Our Own Pond: A Book of Vietnamese Proverbs Ngoc Dung Tran

The Wall Eve Bunting

Please note: This book describes a man's pilgrimage to honor his father at the Vietnam war memorial with his young son.



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