

* Summary of the Legend (thanks to ticketvn and unedited)

In the second century BC, Việt Nam was a country named Âu Lạc ruled by King An Dương Vương whose name prior to coronation was Thục Phán. He had only one daughter, whose name was My Châu. The State's capital was located at Cổ Loa where the King built a fortress and ramparts. Yet, whatever was built in the day was subsequently demolished at night by evil spirits. The King held a religious ceremony and begged Heavens for assistance. There upon, a golden tortoise came and gave guidance to the King on how to do away with the malfeasance of evil spirits. As a result, the fortress and ramparts could be completed. In bidding farewell, the golden tortoise presented the King with one of its claws. The King turned the claw into the trigger of his crossbow, a single arrow of which could shoot thousands of enemy troops. The crossbow was thus called as the Magic Crossbow or Tortoise Crossbow.

By then, a rebel Chinese General, Zhao To, established in Southern China a Kingdom called Nam Việt. He tried to conquer Âu Lạc State, but his military adventures ended in failure because of the magic Crossbow. Resorting to a different strategy, Zhao To sought peace and requested Thục Phán to give consent to marriage between Trọng Thủy, Zhao To's son, and My Châu, Thục Phán's daughter. Thục Phán gave his agreement that Trọng Thủy could, as son-in-law, stay in Âu Lạc Kingdom in keeping with the practice of uxorilocality with bride service.

Taking advantage of his wife's deep feeling of love and credulity, Trọng Thủy stole the secrets of the magic crossbow. Thereafter, he sought permission from Thục Phán to return home for visiting his parents. In departing, Trọng Thủy said to his wife, "In case war breaks out between our countries some time in the future, how can I find you?" His thoughtless wife replied, "I've got a coat made of goose feathers. I'll take them out and scatter them wherever I go."

Thereafter, Zhao To launched a new war of aggression against Âu Lạc. Being overconfident in his magic crossbow, Thục Phán did not make adequate defense preparation. When enemy troops surrounded the Cổ Loa Fortress, Thục Phán started his crossbow but found it useless. He had barely time to put his daughter on horseback and ride away at full gallop to the south. When he came near the sea coast, the golden tortoise appeared. The King asked "Oh, Golden Tortoise, why have I lost my Kingdom?" Immediately the Tortoise replied, "Your enemy is just behind you." As the truth suddenly dawned on him, the King drew his sword and killed his daughter, and then followed the golden tortoise into the sea. The sea waves brought the corpse of My Châu to Cổ Loa, and when the villages brought it ashore it became a big stone which is still kept and worshipped in a small temple near an old banyan tree. Trọng Thủy also suffered from the loss of his wife. One day, he came to a well in front of the former palace of King An Dương Vương. As he saw the face of My Châu on the surface of the water of the well, he plunged into the well and died. The blood which poured from My Châu's body into the sea - as the result of the cut from her father's sword - was swallowed by oysters and shelves which subsequently produced pearls. Popular imagination even went so far to assert that if the pearls were washed in the water of the well where Trọng Thủy died, they would become much brighter.