Once Upon a Time
in Korea
Preface

This textbook is to aid students learning Korean as a second language to enhance their language skills and also to develop an understanding of Korean culture. For many years, I taught Korean to American students from kindergarten to 12th grade at The New Hope Academy, a private school in Landover Hills, Maryland. These students had neither been to Korea nor had any opportunities to encounter Korean culture. Therefore, I attempted to devise the most effective and exciting method to teach students the language together with the culture. Consequently, I have written this book as a tool for students with limited knowledge of Korean to begin their exploration of Korean culture. It is designed for students whose language level is equivalent to completing one year of an intensive Korean language course.

Included in this book are Korean stories, legends, and folktales, that I think are among the most interesting. I have rewritten them to suit the students’ level of Korean, using simple sentence structures and everyday vocabulary while preserving the original meaning. I have used the same simple sentence structures and vocabulary repeatedly so that students can enhance their language skills unconsciously. The vocabulary list and the explanation of idioms also make it easy for beginner level students to understand the stories.

In comparison to other existing Korean or bilingual reading texts, this book has the following unique aspects:
1. Sentence structures are very basic and everyday vocabulary is used repeatedly to allow easy learning of the material. Other books that use complicated sentence structures and difficult vocabulary result in students losing interest and incentive to read. When reading bilingual texts, students naturally concentrate on the English version, which overrides the purpose of learning.

2. At the end of each story is a list of vocabulary, verb tenses and stems, and the usage of idioms translated into English to enable fuller understanding of the sentences used in the stories.

3. Drills and exercises are not included because this book can be used in various ways to suit the user’s purpose of reading: for pleasure, material for composition or reading comprehension in class and so on. Even when used as a textbook in school, drills should be designed in accordance with the level of each student using the book. Therefore, each instructor should provide exercises appropriate for the students.

4. The selected material is not only to help students improve their language skills but also to allow them to begin to understand Korean culture. Several of the twenty three stories in this book are based on historical facts.

5. Included in the back of the book is an appendix with the usage of irregular verbs and idioms to help students understand the grammar.

6. “Cultural Notes” are also included to introduce Korean culture so that students can broaden their overall understanding of Korea.

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**Introduction**

Korea is a resilient country that has undergone five thousand years of tumultuous history, during which it suffered numerous invasions. Yet, it has never attacked another country. Because of such a history and the polite nature of the people rooted in its culture, Korea has been called “The land of politeness and civility” of the East. The Korean language and culture have been preserved and passed down from generation to generation through legends, stories, myths, and folklore. When Korean culture reached a high level of sophistication and development around the sixth and seventh centuries, much of it was transmitted to the neighboring islands of Japan. Unfortunately, this highly developed civilization suffered a series of attacks through various foreign invasions. Consequently, many historical documents were burned, destroyed, and in some cases stolen. Fortunately, “Sam Guk Sa Gi,” written by historian Kim Pu Shik in 1145, and “Sam Guk You Sa,” written by a Buddhist monk, Il Yun, in 1281, remain intact as prominent records of Korean culture and history.

The ideal of the first Korean kingdom of Gojoseon (established by King Dan Gun in B.C. 2333) still remains deeply rooted in Korean culture. Gojoseon upheld the ideal of “Hong Ik In Gan,” meaning “devotion to the welfare of mankind.” Moreover, throughout Korea’s long history, the beliefs and religions which Koreans adopted from foreign cultures, i.e. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, have influenced its own culture, and these influences can be found in its legends, myths, and folklore.

I have selected twenty three stories from “Sam Guk Sa Gi” and “Sam Guk You Sa,” which I consider to be the most interesting and reflective of Korean traditional values. These stories are funny and
intriguing while conveying significant morals. The underlying messages in these stories are: punishment awaits greedy, jealous and lazy people, and reward is given to kind and honest people. Historic legends are also included in this collection of stories.

Among the twenty three stories, the one which reflects Korean traditional values the best is “The Filial Daughter, Shim Cheong”. Shim Cheong, is the virtuous daughter who sells herself to the crew of a merchant ship as a sacrificial offering to the sea so that she can help her blind father see again. When the ship crews offer Shim Cheong to the sea, the Sea King is so impressed and moved by her piety that he sends her back to the human world. Shim Cheong is then reunited with her father, whose vision is restored, and then marries the king of the human world. The central theme of this story is “Hyo,” which means filial piety. Koreans have always taught their young ones about “Hyo” and they often use traditional tales such as “Shim Cheong” as educational materials to illustrate this ideal.

I believe that the stories I have chosen for this book will serve as an ideal medium for students of Korean language to encounter Korean culture. I hope that by reading this book, students will develop a deeper interest in Korean language and culture, and begin to understand Korea better.

How To Use This Book

This book can serve various purposes: to improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, as well as to better understand Korean culture. Following are some suggestions for using this book, especially in a classroom setting.

1. When the book is used for beginner level courses, allow students to become familiar with the vocabulary before they start reading the text. Have students read each new word aloud. Teachers may choose to read only parts of the story and then have students read the other parts, employing a role-play exercise (reading exercise).

2. Have students read each paragraph and then discuss the content. Alternatively, teachers or parents may read aloud, pausing in between paragraphs to ask students to repeat what happened in the story. Then, students can read the whole story and summarize aloud what they just read (listening and speaking exercise).

3. Copy each page and cut the story into segments. Have students arrange the pieces and put the story back in the correct order (reading comprehension).
4. Tell only the first half of the story to students and have them predict what will happen in the second half (listening and speaking skills).

5. Ask students to come up with a title after reading the whole story (reading comprehension).

6. Have students read the entire story or half of it, and then answer the questions posed by the teacher (listening and speaking skills).

7. Have students change the ending of the story. Halfway through the story, the teacher may ask students to finish it using their own imagination or to create a different ending (writing skills).

8. Act out the stories with role-playing. Ask students to write a script and then play the parts (all four skills of language).

9. When teaching the stories, such as "Stupid On-Dal and Princess Pyeong-Gang" or "The King Has Donkey’s Ears," which are based on actual historic events, it is helpful to teach Korean history along with the text so that students may obtain a broad cultural education. In this way, students will be able to learn about the historical background and the society on which the stories are based. "Stupid On-Dal and Princess Pyeong-Gang" is set in Goguryeo during the reign of King Pyeong-Gang (AD 559~590). "The King Has Donkey’s Ears” is set in Silla during King Kyeong-Soon’s reign (AD 927~935). In addition to the stories, students can also study the Three Kingdom Period, which consists of Goguryeo (BC 37~AD 668), Baekje (BC 18~AD 660), and Silla (BC 57~AD 935) (interdisciplinary studies).

10. Let students compare the stories with folktales or legends of other cultures that they already know. Students can compare and discuss the stories with fairytales or legends with similar themes or morals, or do a group project and present it. Have them do the project in English. One example is to compare and contrast the plot, characters, and themes of the Korean and western versions of Cinderella (all four skills of language).

11. Ask students to write a response after reading each story (writing skills).

12. Ask students to compose their own creative stories (creative writing skills).
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그 사이에 소는 잡이 들었습니다.
아침이 되었습니다. 소는 몸이 열리자마자 소의 등에서 뛰어 내렸습니다. 쥐가 제일 먼저 집 안으로 들어왔습니다. 쥐는 신령님께 절을 했습니다. 다음에 소가 절을 했습니다.
그 뒤에 호랑이, 고양이, 백두다람도 변하며, 양은, 황표, 단수, 개를 그리고 돼지를가 차례로 절을 했습니다. 모두 열두 마리 동물들이었습니다.
그 때까지 고양이는 계속 쥐를 키우지 않았지만 쥐는 오지 않았습니다. 결국 고양이는 혼자 신령님께 가리로 했습니다. 그러나 고양이가 신령님이 사는 곳에 도착했을 때는, 열두 마리 동물들은 이미 다 상을 받았습니다. 또 신령님이 빠도 정했습니다. 고양이는 화가 났습니다.
아, 쥐가 나를 속였구나!
이 때부터 고양이는 쥐를 미워하기 시작했습니다.

**Cultural Note:**

1. 고양이 cat
2. 쥐 mouse, rat
3. 미워하세요 does (or) hate! / 미워하다 – to hate
4. 신령님 divine spirit
5. 며 (someone) / honorific form of 에게
6. 신부름 errand
7. 급행 soon
8. 무슨 일이 있었어요? what happened? / 무슨 (what) + 일이 있다 (to happen, to take place)
9. 왜 이렇게 how come? why so…?
10. 빨리 quickly / 빨리하다 – quick
11. 말씀하시는 said / 말씀하시는 – honorific form of 말하다
12. 동물 animal
13. 신날 New Year’s Day
14. 세월하리 to greet / 세월하리 (to greet + 리 (in order to)
15. 상 reward
16. 순서 order
17. 피 zodiac signs
18. 정하겠다 will decide / 정하다 (to decide) + -겠다 (will)
19. 그림 then / shortened form of 그림
20. 새벽에 at dawn
21. 같이 together
22. 그러니 like that
23. 찬성합니다 agreed / 찬성하다 – to agree
24. 다른 other

**I. Astrolgical Signs**

Korean Astrology, like that of some other Asian countries, consists of twelve signs that follow the lunar calendar in a twelve-year cycle. The story behind the origins of the astrolgical signs tells us that upon Buddha’s death, twelve particular animals were among many that came to mourn him. To honor these animals, people named the years after them, in the order of their arrival to Buddha’s deathbed. Koreans believe that these zodiac signs can predetermine personality and influence one’s destiny. The twelve animals in order are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig.
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<th>Korean</th>
<th>English</th>
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<td>25. 전했습니다                                           notified / 전하다 – to notify</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. 생각했습니다                                          thought / 생각하다 – to think</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27. 첫번째                                              the first</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. 받아아가다                                          should receive / 받아다 (to receive) + → + 아가다 (should)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29. 걷음                                                  walking, pace</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. 느리나가                                             since (I am) slow / 느리다 (slow) + → + 나가 (since)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. 먼저                                                 first, before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. 미나아가다                                          should leave / 미나다 (to leave) + → + 아가다 (should)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. 뒤                                                      back (body)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. 탔습니다                                             rode / 타다 – to ride</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>35. 약속                                                  promise</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36. 잃어버렸습니다                                       forgot / 잃어버리다 – to forget</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37. 출발했습니다                                         set out / 출발하다 – to set out, to depart, to leave</td>
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<td>38. 기다렸습니다                                       waited / 기다리다 – to wait</td>
<td></td>
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<td>39. 밤새                                                  all night long</td>
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<td>40. 걸었습니다                                            walked / 간다 – to walk</td>
<td></td>
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<td>41. 마지막                                                at last</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. 곳                                                     place, site</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43. 제일                                                  the first</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44. 도착했습니다                                         arrived / 도착하다 – to arrive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45. 아직                                                   still</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>46. 닦혀있었습니다                                       was closed / 닦히다 (to be closed) + → + 이 있다 (to be)</td>
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<td>47. 기다리다 말했습니다                                    had to wait / 기다리다 (to wait) + → + 아가다 (to have to do, must)</td>
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<td>48. 그 사이에                                             in the meantime</td>
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<tr>
<td>49. 잠이 들었습니다                                       fell asleep / 잠이 들다 – to fall asleep</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>50. 열리伊拉라한                                        as soon as (it) opened / 열리伊拉 (to open) + → + 이伊拉 (as soon as)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51. 떨어내려갔습니다                                     jumped down / 떨어다 (to jump) + → + 내려다 (to descend)</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. 점을 빼았습니다                                      bowed / 점 – big bow, greeting the elderly with respect</td>
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<td>53. 다음에                                               after that / 그 (that) + → + 뒤에 (after)</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. 그 뒤에                                               after that / 그 (that) + → + 뒤에 (after)</td>
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<tr>
<td>55. 호랑이                                               tiger</td>
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<td>56. 토끼                                                  rabbit</td>
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<td>57. 용                                                     dragon</td>
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<td>58. 뱀                                                     snake</td>
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<td>59. 말                                                     horse</td>
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<td>60. 양                                                     sheep</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. 원숭이                                               monkey</td>
<td></td>
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<td>62. 닮다                                                  rooster</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. 개                                                     dog</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>64. 돼지                                                   pig</td>
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<td>65. 채로                                                   in order / 채로 – order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. 아리                                                   counting unit for animal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>67. 계속                                                  to keep doing / 계속하다 – to continue</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>68. 기다렸지만                                          even though (it) waited / 기다리다 (to wait) + → + 지만 (even though)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. 결국                                                   finally</td>
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<td>70. 혼자                                                  alone</td>
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The Red Fan and the Blue Fan

71. 가기로 했습니다  
    decided to go / 가다 (to go) + -기로 하다 (to decide to do)

72. 도착했을 때  
    when (it) arrived / 도착하다 (to arrive) + -을 때 (when)

73. 이미  
    already

74. 받았습니다  
    received / 받다 – to receive

75. 화가 났습니다  
    got angry / 화가 낫다 – to get angry

76. 속았구나!  
    (you) tricked (me) deceived / 속이다 – to trick, to deceive

77. 미워하기 시작했습니다  
    began to hate / 미워하다 (to dislike) + -기 시작하다 (to begin to do)

또한 마음에 한 농부가 살았습니다. 이 농부는 절심히 일했습니 다. 그러나 농부
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‘아, 이것은 정말 신기한 부채다!’

농부는 집으로 돌아왔습니다. 농부는 아내에게 부채를 보여 주었습니다. 그러
자 아내는 이 부채로 돈을 벌고 살았습니다. 그래서 아내는 농부에게 말했습니다.

“여보, 집 부자야! 이제 가서 물래 빨간 부채를 부쳐보세요. 그 뒤로 집 부자의 코를
길게 만드세요. 그러면 집 부자는 코를 줄이기 위해서 많은 돈을 줘 거예요.”