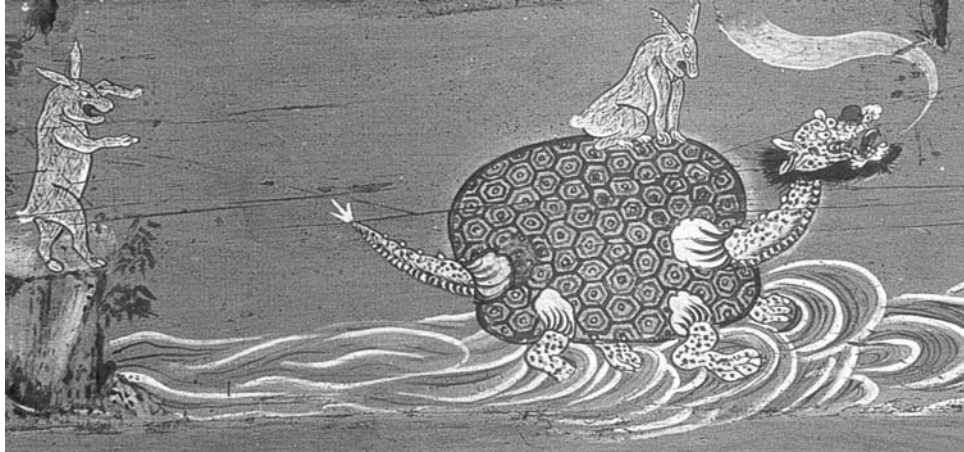


A Yang for Every Yin

Dramatizations of Korean Classics

Holstein, John. (2005). *A Yang for Every Yin: Dramatizations of Korean Classics*. Seoul: Seoul Selection. ISBN89-953760-4-X. 236 pages.



With this book the general reader gains access to a few of Korea's favorite classics. These plays are based on stories from Korea in the 17th and 18th centuries, and they are still being told in the twenty-first century, in their original form but also on TV, stage and film. Four of the five plays in this book are dramatizations of *pansori*, one of old Korea's most highly-developed performance arts. (You may already have heard about Chun Hyan, Hungbu and his brother Nolbu, Hare and Tortoise and the Dragon King, or Ong Go-jip.) The other play is based on the popular traditional short story, *Grandpa's Wen*.

To listen to all of the songs, [click here](#).

Read the Preface and Introduction.

Read the first act of:

Harelip (수궁가, 토끼전)

In the Palace of the East Sea the ten-thousand-year-old Dragon King is dying from a disease which can be cured only with the liver of a hare. The King's faithful thousand-year-old Chief Minister Tortoise makes the difficult and dangerous journey to land, where he succeeds (by playing on Hare's vanity) in luring her to the Sea Kingdom. When Hare discovers they want her liver she claims that she took it out that morning and hid it away for safekeeping. Tortoise reluctantly brings her back to land to get the liver, but Hare escapes and then, mischievously adding salt to Tortoise's wound, gets him to accept three of her foul-smelling "instant concentrated rabbit liver tablets" as a substitute for her liver. She bounces off into the forest laughing, leaving Tortoise to return to the Dragon King empty-handed. But hers is not the last laugh.

The Song Bag (혹부리 영감)

Grandpa Lopside, a poor woodcutter with a wen on his right cheek, is caught in the mountains by a cloudburst one day and forced to spend the night in a deserted shack frequented by goblins. Just as the goblins are approaching the shack Grandpa launches into a song to ward off the uneasiness he feels at being alone in the spooky woods at night. The goblins, who love good singing but are notoriously bad singers, burst in on him and demand more. At the end of Grandpa's song they offer him a sack of gold for the "song bag" on his cheek. He insists it's not a song bag; but they think he's just trying to keep it for himself. So they snatch it from him and leave him the sack of gold. Within a few days Grandpa's wen-bedecked friend "Grandma" Lopside (as tone-deaf as the goblins) hears that Grandpa has become rich, and in his greed schemes not only to get rid of his wen but also to get some gold. He goes back out to the shack and tries to deceive the

goblins. Meanwhile the goblins have discovered that Grandpa's wen is not really a song bag. So Grandma Lopside, instead of getting rid of his wen, ends up with Grandpa's wen on his other cheek. But this is not all he gets.

The Gourds' Rewards (흥부가, 흥보전)

Wealthy Father has died, and first son Nolbu has control of the entire inheritance. This mean and greedy Nolbu can't stand the idea of sharing the inheritance with his virtuous younger brother Hungbu. So he kicks Hungbu and Hungbu's whole family out of the house. They barely survive a year of hand-to-mouth existence. Then a swallow, whose broken leg Hungbu has fixed, returns the next spring with a reward of magic gourd seeds, and when Hungbu harvests them in the autumn they yield a cornucopia which makes Hungbu even richer than Nolbu. Nolbu and his wife hear about this and hunt down a swallow, then break its leg and fix it so they can reap the same reward. The reward they finally get, though, is not exactly what they had in mind. Virtuous Hungbu, of course, comes to the rescue, and Nolbu turns over a new leaf — in his own way.

Chun Hyang Song (춘향가, 춘향전)

Rich Miser Ong doesn't know it, but when he has the monk Hakdaesa thrown out of his house he is asking for trouble. And sure enough, trouble arrives for Ong the very next day in the form of a walking, talking, spitting image of himself, conjured by Hakdaesa to teach Ong a lesson. Phony Ong persuades everyone that he is the real Ong, and the *real* real Ong gets thrown out of his own house. Finally, after several months' wandering and begging he repents; Hakdaesa decides he has learned his lesson and tells Ong to go on back home. What is he going to find, though, when he gets there?

Read the first four scenes of:

The Money Bug (옹고집전)

When Mong Yong, the son of an aristocrat, falls into true love with Chun Hyang, the daughter of a gisaeng, there is no way that trouble is not going to happen. And it does. Chun Hyang's mother allows the two lovers to marry. Too soon, though, Mong Yong has to leave for Seoul to take the higher civil service exam. He vows his undying love and loyalty. When the unprincipled local magistrate Byon Satdo sets eyes on Chun Hyang, the term undying love takes on special meaning: she has to choose between Mong Yong and life.

To read the entirety of every play, order the book at the Web site of the publisher, Seoul Selection.

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Copyright ©1996 by Gary Rector: The Wonder Workers' Song, The Goddess's Song, Green, They Just Want To Get In, When You Begin to Sing

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