

Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore and Traditional Culture Vol. IX
Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Symbols
Animals Vol.I



TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON

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Animals Vol.I TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON

National Folk Museum of Korea

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Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Symbols
Animals I : Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon

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Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore and Traditional Culture Vol. IX
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
KOREAN FOLK SYMBOLS
ANIMALS I
: TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON

Foreword

Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Symbols (Multilingual Edition) Animals I : Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon

The National Folk Museum of Korea has developed the Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture series to compile Korean folk culture and facilitate accurate communication and understanding of its various aspects. To date, the museum has published encyclopedias on topics such as seasonal customs, literature, folk beliefs, daily rituals, farm music, folk theater, clothing, housing, and food culture.

In East Asian cultures, including Korea, twelve animals are traditionally associated with the zodiac and the year of one's birth. This volume focuses on the tiger, rabbit, and dragon, exploring their cultural symbolism and significance. It provides fascinating insights into the ecology, folktales, rituals and ceremonies, artifacts, symbols, songs, idioms related to these animals, supplemented with photos and other resources to deepen the understanding of Korean perspectives and traditions.

In recent years, Korean culture—including drama, film, music, and literature—has garnered increasing global interest. The Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture serves as a valuable resource for satisfying the intellectual curiosity about Korean traditions, offering authentic insights into Korean culture and folklore.

Looking ahead, the National Folk Museum of Korea aims to continue publishing encyclopedias and operating online dictionaries to disseminate its extensive research and knowledge about traditional Korean culture worldwide.

We extend our gratitude to the contributors, advisors, reviewers, collaborating organizations, and our dedicated staff, whose efforts have made this publication possible.

Jang Sang-hoon / 蔣尙勳

Director General
of the National Folk Museum of Korea
December 2024

Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Symbols Animals I : Tiger, Rabbit, and Dragon

Notes

- This encyclopedia is a translated publication that compiles the contents on tigers, rabbits, and dragons from the *Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Symbols: Animal Edition*, which is being published as part of the Comprehensive Korean Folk Encyclopedia Project undertaken by the National Folk Museum of Korea.
- The Animal Edition of the *Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Symbols* is being published on the twelve zodiac animals, which hold an important position in Korean folklore, and it contains their ecology, folkloric interpretations, roles as literary motifs, related objects, and their symbolism in language.
- Headwords are mainly presented based on the pronunciation of Korean words, with corresponding terms in the target language included, and some headwords are presented in sentence form.
- Photographs, charts, and illustrations that help in understanding the content are included, with their sources or holding institutions specified.

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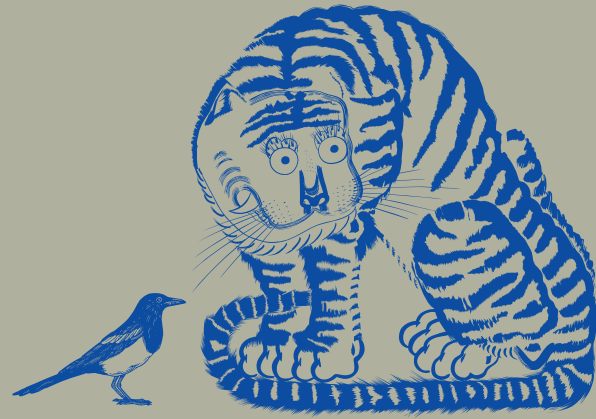
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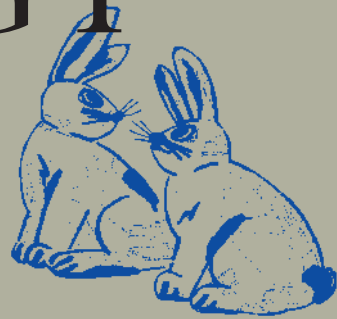
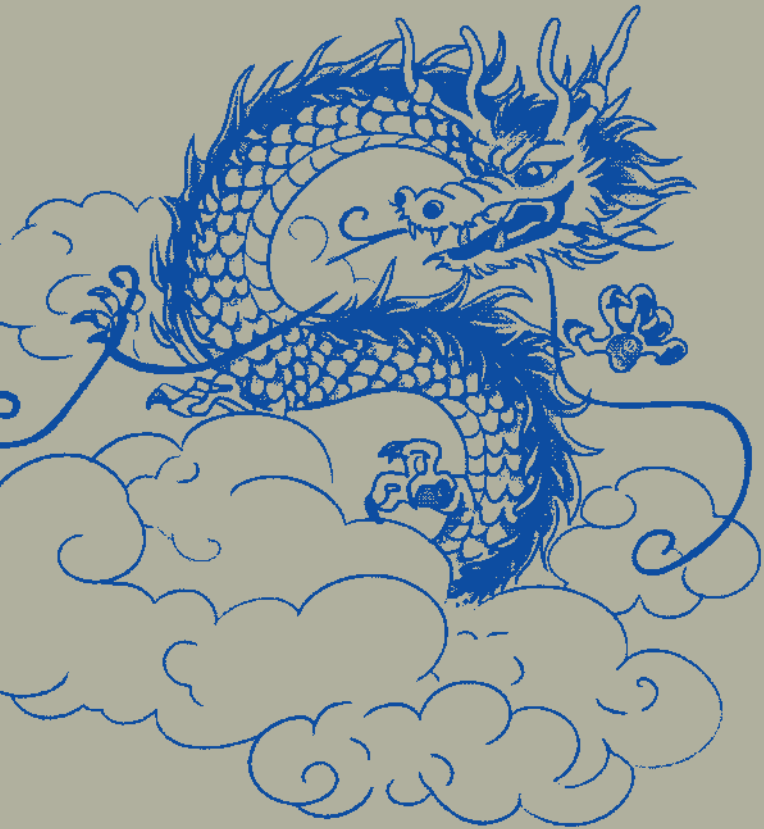
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ECOLOGY

생태



Baekdusan Horangi
백두산 호랑이

Gultokki
굴토끼

Mettokki
멧토끼

Rabbit Meat
토끼고기

Yongoreum
용오름

Tiger

Baekdusan Horangi

백두산 호랑이

A subspecies of tiger

A subspecies of tiger that has historically inhabited Korea and Northeast Asia around Baekdusan.

Baekdusan Horangi is a subspecies of tiger that once lived across the regions now known as Korea, Northeast China, and Far Eastern Russia. Its academic name is *Panthera tigris altaica*, but it is known as *Baekdusan Horangi* in Korea. Today, a population of approximately 500 survive around Primorsky Krai (Yeonhaeju), Russia, and the borders between China, North Korea, and Russia.

The term *horang(i)* (“tiger” in Korean) is a combination of the Sino-Korean characters “*ho*” (beom) and “*rang*” (*iri* or “wolf”). *Horang(i)* was originally a generic word referring to a scary animal. Over time, however, it was used to refer specifically to *beom*, a Korean word used to refer to the tiger as a single species of animal and sometimes the tiger and the leopard. *Beom*’s cubs are called *gaehoju* or *galgaji*, and the Sino-Korean characters of *daechung*, *byeongpyo*, and *sangun* are used as the tiger’s nicknames.

Tigers have lived alongside people in Korea for at least 100,000 years. The tiger bones found in the Durubong Cave Site in Cheongwon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do (now Cheongju, Chungcheongbuk-do), mid-west of Korea, are estimated to be at least 120,000 years old. Tigers began to disappear in Korea only in the late 20th century. While it is well known that the *haesuguje* policy (a policy to remove harmful animals) during the Japanese colonial rule played a critical role in the disappearance of

tigers in Korea, the *poho* policy (a policy to reduce harm caused by tigers and leopards) held for 500 years during the Joseon Dynasty (from the 14th to the 20th centuries) before Japanese colonial rule also had a significant impact on the decline of the tiger population in Korea.

Baekdusan Horangi is the only subspecies of tiger that has adapted to the cold, snowy, and tough climate of northern Asia. It is known to be the largest of all subspecies and has a lighter fur color and longer fur during the winter. However, the Bengal tiger from India is larger than the Amur tiger in some cases. Males are 190–230 cm in length and 180–300 kg in weight, while females are 160–180 cm in length and 100–170 kg in weight.

As tigers are ambush predators that use their surroundings, such as trees and bushes, to sneak up on prey or attack prey unexpectedly in the middle of its path, tigers must be able to hide. Therefore, tigers do not live in open places, unlike lions, which hunt in groups in grasslands in Africa. While *Baekdusan Horangi*’s main prey includes the wild boar and medium to large deer, it also hunts smaller animals, such as *neoguri*, Asian badgers, and wild dogs.

Preventing harm by tigers was not the only reason why tigers were actively hunted during the Joseon and Japan periods. Occasionally, tiger hunting was a form of military training and a means of obtaining expensive tiger skin and medicinal ingredients, including tiger bones and meat. Additionally, during the Joseon Dynasty, tiger hunting was an important way to gain success or earn money when there was no war. Although there was a rumor that Japan killed tigers to take away the energy of the Korean people, it was not confirmed. Nevertheless, the Japanese used tiger hunting in Korea as a means of propagating their imperialist ideology.

Meanwhile, tigers were featured in Korean culture in rock paintings as early as the Bronze Age and, later, in folk paintings, ornaments, stone statues, proverbs, and legends, including the Four Guardian Deities in the murals of the tombs of Goguryeo, an ancient kingdom in Korea. Koreans have lived with tigers for thousands of years while fearing and envying their tremendous physical power and loving their strength and bravery. Tigers were respected as sacred animals and even worshipped as a mountain spirit. Choe Namseon (1890–1957), a Korean cultural activist, once said, “No country has as many stories about tigers as Korea.”

Although tigers have disappeared in Korea, their symbolism in history, folktales, language, and culture holds significance in Korean society. A study showed that more than three-quarters of Koreans consider the tiger an animal that represents Korea. The tiger was also the mascot of the Seoul Olympics (1988) and the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics (2018).

Rabbit

Gultokki

굴토끼

A subspecies of rabbit

A species of rabbit native to Europe, which was introduced to Korea. This species is called a “house rabbit”.

Gultokki (*Oryctolagus cuniculus* or European rabbit) is the origin of today’s house rabbit in Korea. In general, *gultokki* is smaller than the Korean hare (*Lepus coreanus*). The back of *gultokki*’s neck is reddish-brown, and its belly is white and gray. They have a habit of running



Gultokki(a rabbit subspecies) | 2016 | Seo Mun-hong

with their tail up. *Gultokki*, which is native to Europe (including Spain and Italy) and North Africa, was introduced in Korea as a domesticated animal. Unlike the Korean hare, it has a habit of digging a burrow. *Gultokki* also breeds in a burrow. Newborns are hairless. Cubs do not open their eyes until about two weeks after birth, and they are raised under the protection of their mother for a long time.

While *gultokki* mates and breeds throughout the year, most of its babies are born between February and August. A female *gultokki* born in early spring reaches her sexual maturity at 3.5 months and can breed that same year. The gestation period of *gultokki* is short—28 to 33 days—and they usually give birth to 3–12 babies. A mother *gultokki* looks after her babies for about 28 days after they are born. However, she has a habit of only looking after them for approximately five minutes once a day as a strategy to protect them from predators.

The burrow of *gultokki* is also known as warren. The size of the burrow varies depending on the size of the *gultokki* population. A more complex and systemic burrow is built for a larger population, while a simpler burrow is built for a smaller one. Their burrows are 1–2 m long and include nests covered with *gultokki* fur and dry moss. Burrows are located on sloping hill-sides or well-drained areas. The entrances of the burrows are 10–50 cm in diameter. In general, while males are active across a larger territory than females, *gultokki*'s territory is not considerably large, averaging 0.004–0.02 km².

Gultokki is a social animal that lives in a group around a warren (a burrow with multiple holes). Each warren is home to one to three adult males and one to five adult females. The males and females have their territories and hierarchies. In particular, male *gultokki* are extremely defensive and protective of their babies when other females approach, as they may attack or harm the babies.

Rabbit

Mettokki

멧토끼

A subspecies of rabbit

A species of the genus *Lepus spp.* that currently lives in Korea.

Mettokki (*Lepus coreana*, Korean hare), also known as the mountain hare, is a species unique to Korea that inhabits the entire country except for Jeju Island. *Mettokki* live in grasslands, farmlands, hills, forests, mountains, and coastal areas. *Mettokki* are different from other species of rabbits; they are distinguished by broad noses and



Mettokki(a rabbit subspecies) | 2022 | Yi Yun-su



Excretion of Mettokki(a rabbit subspecies) | 2005 | Seo Mun-hong

small white spots on their foreheads. In terms of size, they are of a small to medium build. *Mettokki* have red eyes—their retinas have no pigment, making the blood vessels visible. *Mettokki*, which must escape threatening predators such as foxes, leopards, and martens, have large ears and long hind legs that enable them to hear relatively well and run considerably fast.

Unlike *gultokki*, which dig burrows, *mettokki* nest under tree limbs or in shrubs or areas covered with grass. *Mettokki* give birth to babies in depressions in the ground. Newborns have fur, open their eyes quickly, and may be active right away. *Mettokki* are sensitive and wary as they have many different natural enemies. They have evolved to escape quickly from predators and can run up to 80 km/h even in the mountains. They also have a habit of running all over

the place when chased by other wild animals and returning to their original place when they think it is safe to go back. In the past, poachers have taken advantage of their tendency to return to their original territory by setting traps along their main pathways.

While the “met” in *mettokki* means mountains, *mettokki* tend to prefer to live in mountain grasslands (meadows) over relatively low altitudes rather than at the highest points of mountains. They mainly live in wild mountains around 500 m above sea level. While some live higher up in the mountains—over 1,000 m above sea level—their populations are less dense in these regions. They have a habit of nibbling on tree bark and even tree roots when there is not much to eat during winter. Accordingly, as snow builds up or melts away, we may see barks gnawed by *mettokki* at certain heights.

Mettokki breed two to three times a year. During the breeding season, the males lift their front legs and fight each other like boxers to compete for female mates. Sometimes, they attack each other with their hind legs. The winner can mate with multiple females. Pregnant females usually give birth to two to four babies. Further, their feces are round, and *mettokki* have a habit of eating and digesting their feces.

Rabbit

Rabbit Meat

토끼고기

A food

Lean meat obtained from slaughtering a rabbit.

Rabbit meat is pale peach in color, tender and fine, low in fat, and savory in taste. Its elasticity

when chewed gives it a nice texture. Owing to its strong binding properties, rabbit meat is used as a binding agent in sausages. Rabbit meat is most commonly used to make rabbit soup.

Other rabbit dishes include grilled rabbit meat and rabbit hotpot. To make grilled rabbit meat, rabbit meat is first trimmed and steamed; once cool, the meat is divided into different parts, chopped, seasoned, marinated, and grilled. To make rabbit hotpot, boneless rabbit meat is cooked in a broth with chopped carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

A recent study on the nutritional value of rabbit compared to chicken reported that rabbit meat is slightly lower in protein than chicken breast. However, rabbit meat has more collagen (which supports healthy skin) and polyunsaturated fatty acids (which is good for cardiovascular health) than chicken and contains 4.6 times more linolenic acid (a type of unsaturated fat) than chicken. Although rabbit meat has proven benefits, its use as a protein is not well recognized today compared to beef, pork, and chicken.

Meanwhile, Korean ancestors traditionally ate rabbit meat after *jesa* rituals; this took place in the royal palace and the homes of commoners. Recipes for such dishes have been passed down in some texts, suggesting that rabbit recipes were developed early on in Korean history, rabbit meat was widely eaten as a supplementary food in Korea, and the benefits of rabbit meat, which differ from those of other meats, were recognized.

Dragon

Yongoreum

용오름

A waterspout

A waterspout due to strong winds. This waterspout is named *yongoreum* because it looks similar to a dragon ascending to the sky.

A waterspout often occurs due to fierce winds on land or at sea. In particular, when a waterspout reaches the surface of the sea, it sucks up water, which looks like a dragon ascending to the sky. The Korean word for this phenomenon is *yongoreum*. This word has the same meaning as *waterspout* in English.

The weather conditions in Korea are gen-

erally stable and do not frequently lead to the occurrence of powerful and destructive *yongoreum*. This phenomenon, which has the capacity to pull in surrounding objects, is not commonly observed in Korea when compared to other regions of the world.

In Korea, *yongoreum* are sometimes observed off the coasts of Ulleungdo and Jeju. However, reports of waterspouts, figured as ascensions of dragons, appear frequently in records and folktales. In 1436, an official on Jeju reported that “five dragons ascended simultaneously in Jeonguihyeon, Jeju, and one of them returned, whirled around the forests, and went back up.” More broadly, folktales of “a dragon ascending to the sky” are passed down across many parts of Korea. Even a few towns and waterfalls are

named after this phenomenon.

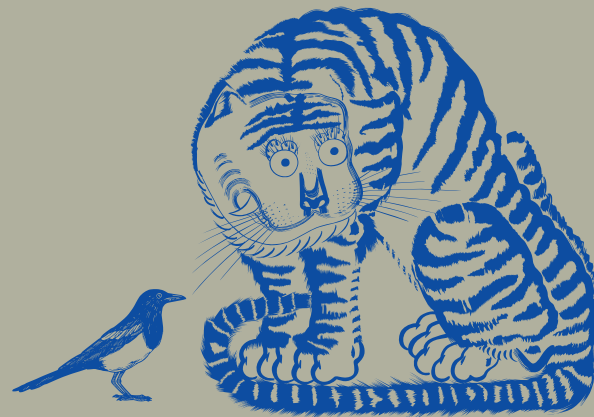
The strange phenomenon of fish falling from the sky after a strong rainstorm has been reported in many parts of the world. While this “rain of fish” is not a common weather event, it has been said that it can result from a waterspout sucking up fish—and even turtles—from under the water. Accordingly, it was believed in Korea that this phenomenon was linked to the ascension of a dragon.

Further, in Korean belief systems, the dragon is assumed to be able to change its appearance at will and show and hide itself as it wishes. Notably, the dragon’s physical transformations are not only quantitative (i.e., it can make itself larger or smaller)—it can also transform into other beings. For example, the dragon has been portrayed as transforming into fish, reptiles, mammals (including humans), plants, and mountain streams. Moreover, dragons are believed to possess the ability to create clouds and rain and move freely on the earth and in the sky. It was believed that the dragon could get as small as a pupa if it wanted to be small and sufficiently big to cover the sky if it wanted to be big. It was also believed that the dragon could soar above the clouds.

Stories about witnessing dragons share a focus on the dragon’s ascension to the sky. Furthermore, these stories usually describe the dragons as showing up with rainstorms, destroying things on the earth, and causing it to rain fish. Together, these narratives may have led people to perceive waterspouts, which seem to connect the sea and sky, as dragons ascending to the sky; thus, they are named *yongoreum*.

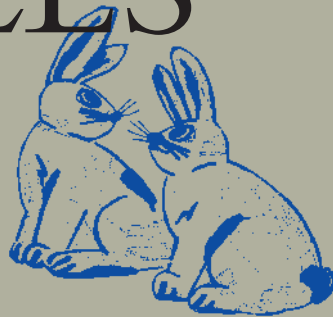
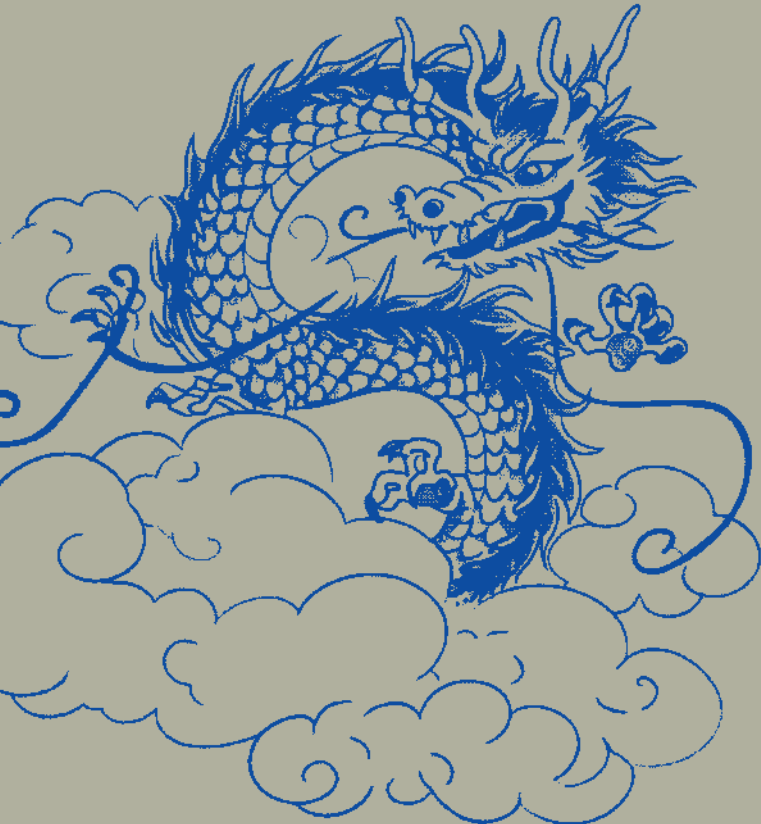


Yongoreum(Whirlwind of a dragon ascending to the sky) | Gimjae, Jeollabuk-do | 2021 | Korea Meteorological Administration · Kim Yong-cheon



FOLKTALES

설화



**Folktale about a Man Who
Turned into a Tiger**

호랑이로 변신한 남자 설화

**Folktale about a Rabbit Who
Killed a Tiger for a Magpie**

까치를 위해 호랑이를 죽게 한 토끼 설화

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토끼가 간을 탐하는 용왕을 속인 설화

**Folktale about Imugi, Who
Failed to Become a Dragon**

용이 되지 못한 이무기 설화

**Folktale about Imugi, Who
Helped People and Turned into
a Dragon**

사람을 돕고 용이 된 이무기 설화

**Folktale about the Female
Tiger Who Loved a Man**

사람을 사랑한 암컷 호랑이 설화

**Folktale about the Man Who
Escaped from the Tiger's
Stomach**

호랑이 뱃속에서 탈출한 사람 설화

**Folktale about the Man
Who Got into the Middle of a
Dragon Fight**

용들의 싸움에 끼여든 사람 설화

**Folktale about the Tiger Who
Married a Man**

남자와 결혼한 호랑이 설화

**Folktale about the Tiger Who
Repaid a Favor**

은혜 갠 호랑이 설화

**Folktale about Why the Rabbit
Has Red Eyes**

토끼의 눈이 붉어진 유래 설화

Folktale of Gimbudaewang

김부대왕 설화

Folktale of Muwang

무왕 설화

**Folktale of the Grandmother
Who Made Patjuk and Defeated
a Tiger**

호랑이를 물리친 팔죽 할머니 설화

**Folktale of the Hare and the
Tortoise**

토끼와 거북이의 경주 설화

**Folktale of the Rabbit Who
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재판으로 호랑이를 물리친 토끼 설화

**Folktale of the Tiger and the
Daughter-in-law Who Helped
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서로를 도운 며느리와 호랑이 설화

**Folktale of the Tiger Who
Became a Brother and
Demonstrated Filial Piety**

형제가 되어 효를 행한 호랑이 설화

**Folktale of the Tiger Who Was
Afraid of Dried Persimmons**

말린 감을 무서워하게 된 호랑이 설화

Folktale of Wonseongdaewang

원성대왕 설화

**Folktales of a Tiger Who
Carried a Filial Son on His Back**

효자를 태우고 다닌 호랑이 설화

Founding Folktale of Buseoksa

부석사 창건 설화

Founding Folktale of Gameunsa

감은사 창건 설화

**Founding Folktale of
Guryongsa**

구룡사 창건 설화

**Founding Folktale of
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황룡사 창건 설화

Founding Folktale of Seonunsa

선운사 창건 설화

Founding Folktale of Tongdosa

통도사 창건 설화

Founding Folktale of Unmunsa

운문사 창건 설화

Manpasikjeok

만파식적

Myth of Dangun

단군 신화

**The Legend about the Pond
Where a Dragon Lives**

용이 사는 못에 관한 전설

Tokkigol

토끼굴

Yongduam

용두암

Tiger

Folktale about a Man Who Turned into a Tiger

호랑이로 변신한 남자 설화
A folktale

A legend about a man whose family name was Kim. The man turned into a tiger and caught a dog to cure his mother's illness. However, he could not turn back into a human.

Once upon a time, a filial son lived with his mother near the southern coast of Korea. His family name was Kim. One day, his mother fell sick. He was too poor to buy her medicine. A spirit appeared in his dream and gave him a book, saying that she needed to eat 100 dogs to be cured. When he awoke, there was a book at his bedside. The son read the book, turned into a tiger, and bit and brought home a dog every night. One night, after the son had transformed into a tiger and went out to catch a dog, his mother burned the book. With the book destroyed, the son could not turn back into a human. He went into the mountains, lived in a den, and ate animals. The den came to be known as "Tiger Kim's Den."

There are many versions of this story. Most versions depict a son demonstrating filial piety in serving his mother. However, in some versions, the son serves his father or both his parents. In the versions known as "Tiger Kim's Den," the protagonist is only identified by his family name, Kim. Meanwhile, other versions depict the protagonist as Hwang Paldo. Additionally, the character that burns the book differs across versions—sometimes it is the protagonist's mother and sometimes his wife. Versions also differ in terms of the fate of the son: in some, he turns into a tiger and goes into the

mountains; in others, he is killed by a poacher or villagers.

In this story, the protagonist practices filial piety by turning into a tiger to cure his ill mother, but he fails. His method of practicing filial piety is so strange and cruel that his fate is tragic. Ultimately, the story teaches that one should not compromise on human integrity even for filial piety.

Rabbit

Folktale about a Rabbit Who Killed a Tiger for a Magpie

까치를 위해 호랑이를 죽게 한 토끼 설화
A folktale

A folktale about a rabbit who used his wits to kill a tiger that ate baby magpies.

Tigers and rabbits are often featured together in Korean folktales.

A magpie had six babies. A tiger came up to her and said that he would eat them all if she did not give him one. The magpie gave him one of her babies, but the tiger kept coming back and asking for more. Left with only one baby, the magpie cried of sadness. A rabbit who was passing by heard the magpie's cry. The rabbit said, "Don't give the tiger your babies. He cannot climb trees." When the tiger returned, the magpie did what the rabbit told her to do. When the tiger asked who had advised her, she told the tiger the truth.

Angry, the tiger tried to eat the rabbit alive. The rabbit bargained with the tiger, saying he would help him eat several birds if he let him live. The tiger agreed. The rabbit took the tiger

to a silvergrass field, sat him down in the middle of the field, and said, "If you stay here with your eyes closed and your mouth open, I'll fly birds into your mouth." The rabbit set fire to the field. Upon hearing the silvergrass burning, the tiger opened his mouth even wider, thinking more birds would fly in. In the end, the entire field burned, killing the tiger.

After the tiger had died, the rabbit tried to eat his body. But the rabbit did not have a knife or chopping board. He borrowed these tools from an old man in the neighborhood, promising to give him some tiger meat in return. However, the rabbit ate all of the meat. With nothing left for the old man, he picked the meat stuck in his teeth and gave it to him. When he saw the old man eat it gratefully, the rabbit laughed and told him, "You are eating the meat that was stuck in my teeth." Upon hearing this, the old man became upset and threw a knife at the rabbit, cutting off the rabbit's tail. It is said that the rabbit has since had a small tail.

The *Folktale about a Rabbit Who Killed a Tiger for a Magpie* is a good example of a portrayal of a rabbit as a trickster. The rabbit in this folktale tricked the tiger and the old man—but in different ways. The tiger tried to eat the rabbit for helping the magpie; in turn, the rabbit killed the tiger. Conversely, the old man helped the rabbit; nonetheless, the rabbit pulled a trick on him, for which he lost his tail. The story shows that the rabbit, while wise, is fundamentally a trickster and teaches that bad intentions have tragic consequences.

Frequently, a cunning rabbit tricks a dumb tiger into getting into trouble. Such tales convey that the weak can defeat the strong using their wisdom and intelligence. Accordingly, these folktales may give listeners and readers hope that the weak can emerge victorious over the

strong, including strong but unreasonable social structures.

Rabbit

Folktale about a Rabbit Who Tricks and Violates a Bear

곰을 꾀로 이긴 토끼 설화
A folktale

A folktale about a sly rabbit who tricks and violates a bear.

As far back as ancient times, Korean folktales have characterized rabbits by their trickery and wits. It demonstrates that tricks and wits have been recognized as the elements that embody the rabbit's mental characteristics since very early days in history. This story of a rabbit who violates a bear has been passed down orally and in written texts. This folktale—an animal fable—highlights animal wisdom.

Once upon a time, a male rabbit inadvertently entered a bear den. Only cubs were inside the den—not their mother. The rabbit told the cubs, "If your mother were here, I would have violated her. It is a shame she is not." Subsequently, he left.

When the mother bear returned home, the cubs told her what the rabbit had said. The mother bear became angry, saying the rabbit had sexually humiliated her and that she vowed to swallow him if he ever came back. She hid and waited for him to show up.

The rabbit returned and told the cubs the same thing he had said before. The mother bear ran to get hold of him. The rabbit panicked, quickly ran away, and hid his small body in the

bushes. The big mother bear chased him into the bushes and became entangled and trapped in arrowroot vines. Seeing this, the rabbit came out, violated the bear, and ran away while mocking her, crying "See, I told you so."

Given this folktale's extremely lewd elements, the story would have been passed down only among adults. It is more entertaining than didactic, and it is somewhat unusual compared to more typical animal fables. However, by juxtaposing the bear's strength and the rabbit's stratagem, the story may have served as a reminder that mental wisdom is more important than physical strength.

Tiger

Folktale about a Tiger and Filial Son Who Helped Each Other

서로를 도운 호랑이와 효자 설화

A folktale

A folktale about a tiger who helps a filial son, falls into a dangerous situation, and is saved by the filial son.

In Korea, there was a custom in which children who had lost a parent built and lived in a hut next to their late parent's grave for three years. This custom is called *simyo*.

Once upon a time, a man with the family name of Choe performed *simyo* after his father passed away. He was grateful for a tiger, who protected him. One day, Choe heard a rumor that a tiger had been captured. When he went to find it, he saw people fighting over the tiger, wanting to skin and sell it. When Choe looked closer, he saw that it was the tiger that had pro-



Tiger Tomb | Miryang, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2010 | Bae Do-sik

tected him. He told the people that he would pay them whatever they wanted and asked them to let the tiger go. The villagers were scared and did not want to open the tiger's cage, saying they did not know what would happen if they released him. Choe went into the cage, took the tiger out, and returned it to the mountains. As he did not have the money the people had requested at that moment, he promised to pay them later. Upon hearing this, the village magistrate paid the people for him and set up a filial pavilion.

In folktales, tigers can be good and evil. However, folktales often describe tigers in a more negative light than myths and legends. Nevertheless, in terms of ethics, folktales depict tigers in a positive light as helping loyal officials, righteous people, filial sons, filial daughters, and virtuous women. Tigers show up as benevolent and righteous animals that extend kindness and grace to those who are just and unwavering.

This folktale shows the wisdom of Koreans in overcoming their fear of tigers and depicts tigers as teaching ethical lessons to the people.

Rabbit

Folktale about a Tiger Tricked by a Rabbit into Cutting Off His Tail

토끼의 꾀로 꼬리가 잘린 호랑이 설화

A folktale

A folktale about a dumb tiger tricked by a rabbit into putting his tail in a stream during winter and having it cut off.

A tiger was hunting for a rabbit to eat in the middle of winter. Finally, he stumbled upon a rabbit. The rabbit proposed an enticing offer: he would allow the tiger to eat lobsters until his stomach was full. The tiger went to the stream with the rabbit and put his tail in the water as the rabbit had instructed him to do. The rabbit pretended to drive lobsters in for the tiger. The tiger sat back and waited, looking forward to his feast. When the villagers showed up next morning, the tiger rushed to stand up and escape. In doing so, his tail—which had frozen under the water—broke off.

Old Korean tales often feature a tiger and a rabbit together, juxtaposing them like light and darkness. Researchers suggest that these tales situate the rabbit as shrewd and the tiger as foolish. Some regard the tiger as a symbol of a ruler or powerful leader and the rabbit as a sym-



Tiger and Rabbit(Artwork of Novel) | 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

bol of the common people; such interpretations position the rabbit's victory over the tiger as a victory of the common people over an unfair ruler.

Tiger

Folktale about Defeating the Tiger Who Turned into a Man

사람으로 변신한 호랑이를 물리치는 설화

A folktale

A tale about defeating a tiger who transformed into a man.

A poacher went into the mountains to catch a tiger. He spotted a large tiger with white fur and shot it. However, he missed the shot, and the angry tiger jumped on and killed the poacher. Upon learning about the poacher's death, the poacher's son began practicing shooting to avenge his father. After practicing for a long time, the son put his skills to the final test. He attached a coin with a hole to a bucket of water that his mother was holding on her head and shot the bullet through the hole of the coin. Having passed this test, the son believed his skills were sufficiently good to avenge his father. He embarked on a journey to find the tiger. He climbed several hills and went deep in the mountains, where he fell asleep as the sun set.

A magpie, who seemed to be a reincarnation of his father, showed up, woke him, and took him to a house with a roof made of fired clay tiles with twelve doors in the mountains. When the son called for the house's owner, a maiden came out to greet him. The son said he wanted to stay there, but the maiden refused. She told

him that there had been 48 people in her house, but all of them had been eaten by the tiger, and that the tiger would return that night to eat her. The son told her that he had come to catch the tiger. The son and the maiden set up a plan to defeat the tiger.

Meanwhile, the tiger asked a monkey and a rabbit to tell his fortune. Although they told him that his fortune would be bad, he bluffed, saying no one could harm him. The tiger turned into a man and went to the maiden's house. The poacher's son, who was hiding in the closet with his gun ready, saw the man enter. However, he could not bring himself to shoot him. The tiger asked the maiden to bring him a drink. The maiden told the poacher's son to shoot the tiger as he drank. She gave the tiger a poisoned drink. The son waited for the tiger to take a drink and then shot and killed him. Writhing in pain, the tiger died.

There are two versions of this type of shape-shifting tiger story: in one, a tiger turns into a man; in the other, a man turns into a tiger. The former includes stories such as *Caught by a Tiger Disguised as a Man* and *Tricked by a Tiger Disguised as a Woman*. The latter includes a story about a filial son who turns into a tiger to take care of his parents. In a local folktale in Haenam-gun, Jeollanam-do (southwest of Korea), a bride prayed to become a mountain spirit and then transformed into a tiger. There is also *Tiger Eyebrows*, in which a tiger disguised as a monk removes and presents his eyebrows. He looks like a tiger with the eyebrows on and a monk without them. Across these tales, the tiger usually transforms into an old monk and surrenders when he runs into a hero and extraordinary man. Similarly, the tiger can transform into a man, and a man can also transform into a tiger. Nevertheless, after a man transforms into a

tiger, he cannot turn back into a man and tragically ends his life. In such folktales, the tiger causes harm, which recalls the fact that people were harmed by tigers for a long time.

Rabbit

Folktale about How the Rabbit Tricked Yongwang, Who Wanted His Liver

토끼가 간을 탐하는 용왕을 속인 설화
A folktale

An animal story in which a rabbit uses trickery to avoid death.

The plot of *How the Rabbit Tricked Yongwang*,



Rabbit among auspicious animal paintings on a folding screen | Onyang Folk Museum

Who Wanted His Liver is similar to that of the folk song *Sugunga*. More specifically, the plot unfolds as follows: *Yongwang* falls ill. As it is said that he can live if he eats the liver of a rabbit, he sends a terrapin, one of his vassals, to bring him a rabbit. The terrapin goes to the mountains, finds a rabbit, and tells the rabbit that he will be given a significant position if he goes to the water palace. The rabbit falls for the terrapin's trick and rides on the terrapin's back to the water palace.

When they arrive at the water palace, *Yongwang's* vassals capture the rabbit and try to remove his liver. The rabbit tells them that he left his liver on land and that he would have brought it with him if the terrapin had told him he needed it. *Yongwang* does not believe the rabbit. In response, the rabbit shows *Yongwang* his underside and tells him, "There is one hole for peeing, one for pooping, and one for taking the liver in and out." When *Yongwang* sees three holes, he believes the rabbit's words and sends the terrapin back to land with the rabbit to retrieve his liver. Upon arriving on land on the terrapin's back, the rabbit swears at the terrapin for fooling him and runs off into the mountains, saying, "How on earth can you take your liver in and out?"

While rabbits in folktales are usually weak, they are also extremely cunning and use their wits to avoid threats from strong creatures, such as tigers and humans. *Rabbit's Liver* is a story about a weak being who uses a trick to overcome a crisis without giving in to the strong. Notably, the story features animals or imaginary animals, such as *Yongwang*, a terrapin, and a rabbit, which correspond to certain types of people in feudal society. More specifically, *Yongwang*, the terrapin, and the rabbit represent a ruler, a vassal, and a commoner, respectively.



Rabbit and turtle | Kim Baek-seok | Width: 51 cm, Height: 60 cm | after 2000 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Hare's Liver(Children musical) | Width: 32 cm, Height: 32 cm, Diameter: 30 cm | after 1945 | National Museum of Korean Contemporary History

In light of this symbolism, this story reflects a dysfunctional society in which the ruler sees the commoner as someone to be exploited, and his vassal directly engages in that exploitation for his gain; this dynamic notably contrasts with that of an ideal society in which a king gives

orders to his vassals to take care of commoners, and the vassals help the king. Therefore, this folktale originates from perceptions of the feudal system as a dysfunctional society and reflects related criticisms and wishes to bring it down.

Dragon

Folktale about Imugi, Who Failed to Become a Dragon

용이 되지 못한 이무기 설화
A folktale

A folktale about *imugi*, a dragon who tried to ascend but failed due to do so after a man interfered.

Once upon a time, there was a poor *yangban* (a member of the ruling class in Korea a long time ago) who studied a lot but failed to get a government position. One day, his wife weaved a hemp cloth and handed it to him, telling him to buy food. He sold the cloth but did not buy food; instead, he tried to go back home with the money. On his way home, he saw a group of people gathering to kill a rat snake. The *yangban* asked them not to kill the rat snake because it was also a living being. However, the people threatened him, telling him not to interfere. On the condition that they would not kill the rat snake, he bought the people drinks with his money from selling the cloth. His family starved.

His wife obtained and gave *paecheol* (a compass used to determine the location of a grave or house) to her husband, telling him to perform *pungsu* (a theory that predicts human fortune based on topography and orientation).

Although he knew nothing about *pungsu*, he went out anyway—he had no other option.

The *yangban* noticed a funeral in a house and headed toward it. The family was looking for someone who practiced *pungsu* to determine a good location for the grave. Although he was in the house, the *yangban* did not know what to do as he knew nothing about *pungsu*. As he was eating rice in the house, a poor child walked in. The *yangban* shared his rice with the *child*.

The child had supernatural powers. He turned the *yangban*—who knew nothing about *pungsu*—into a top *pungsu* expert. The *yangban* became incredibly rich. The child told the *yangban* that he was the rat snake he had saved



Ulliyongdo(Cloud and dragon) | 15th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

earlier. He said that the people had broken their promise and had tried to kill him. He also told the *yangban* that he was *imugi* (an imaginary animal that fails to become a dragon, sometimes represented as a rat snake in folktales), and that was why he had failed to transform into a dragon. The child said that he had come to return the favor to the *yangban* and that there was nothing else the child could do to help the *yangban*. Subsequently, he left. The *yangban* lived rich and well owing to *imugi*.

For *imugi* to turn into a dragon, it must be assisted by a man or, at least, not interfered with by a man. It is common for *imugi* to retaliate if it fails to ascend as a dragon due to interference by a man. Nevertheless, this folktale is characterized by *imugi* giving back to the one who helped him and not retaliating against those who killed and interfered with him.

Dragon

Folktale about Imugi, Who Helped People and Turned into a Dragon

사람을 돕고 용이 된 이무기 설화
A folktale

A folktale about *imugi* who helped the poor and ascended as a dragon.

Once upon a time, there was a man who was so poor that his entire family barely had food. One day, after considering many options, he left his wife and children and walked away aimlessly. He walked deep into the mountains at night. As he was looking for a place to stay for the night, he came across a fancy house with a shining light.

He walked into the house. He was welcomed by a beautiful maiden—it was almost as if she had been waiting for him. The maiden served him considerably well, preparing bathwater for him and offering him good food and clean clothes. They slept together, played *Go*, and enjoyed their time together without realizing how days passed by.

They lived like that for three years. The man suddenly became worried about the family he had left behind and wanted to return home. He could not bring himself to tell the maiden this. However, the maiden already knew and had prepared clothes for him. She told him to go back. The night before he went back home, the man found a rat snake tail on the maiden's body while she was asleep.

After the maiden realized the man had discovered her true identity, she told him not to worry and to close his eyes. Subsequently, she asked for a few favors. As one of the favors, she told him to dress up, go back home, and soak the cloth string on the front of his clothes three times in *jang* (a traditional Korean condiment made from grain) while doing a *jesa* ritual. She also told him to keep the string soaked in *jang* and give it to her. The man did as instructed by the maiden. On his way back home, the man met an old man who had transformed into a man from a centipede. The old man asked him to give him the string soaked in *jang*. The man told him it did not exist. Afterward, he went back to the maiden and gave it to her. The maiden received the string and thanked him. The rat snake maiden, who was actually a daughter of the Jade Emperor, could ascend as a dragon owing to the man. The man who had helped the rat snake went back home and lived well with his family.

This folktale features the relationship be-



Ulyongdo(Cloud and dragon) | Width: 150 cm, Height: 178 cm | 15th century | Busan Museum

tween a poor human and *imugi* (an imaginary animal that fails to become a dragon, sometimes represented as a rat snake in folktales) who wishes to ascend as a dragon. The protagonist suffered from terrible poverty that he could not overcome on his own. Unable to break through poverty, the protagonist eventually reached a point where he ran away from home and thought about killing himself. At that moment, the rat snake maiden showed up as a savior—his encounter with the rat snake maiden served as a turning point in his life during a hopeless situation. Meanwhile, although the maiden was doing well financially, she suffered from a different kind of deficiency: she wanted to end her life on earth and ascend to heaven. Nonetheless, she had been exiled to earth for her sins against the Heavenly Emperor in heaven. To ascend again, she had to spend a certain amount of time on earth doing good things for humans and being recognized by humans for such kind acts.

The encounter between the poor protagonist and the rat snake maiden, who wanted to ascend as a dragon, was complementary. The protagonist became better off financially with the help of the rat snake maiden, and the rat snake maiden ascended as a dragon with the help of the protagonist. During this process, they were tempted by the antagonist; however, they resisted, remained faithful to the end, and achieved their goal. In the end, while this folktale seems at first glance to feature the protagonist helping the rat snake ascend and escaping from poverty, a deeper analysis reveals that it highlights the honorable spirit of mankind through its portrayal of the confrontation and conflict between man and animal, instinct and reason, and economics and ethics.

In folktales, depictions of poverty mostly

highlight the poverty of the common people. The saying, “Poverty cannot be saved by heaven” suggests that it is not easy for common people to lift themselves out of poverty. Hence, people must have wondered and imagined how they could escape hunger. One of the results is the *Folktale about Imugi, Who Helped People and Turned into a Dragon*. When a dragon ascends, it always brings a considerable amount of rain, satisfying wishes among the people to end droughts.

This tale was often developed into a story about an individual overcoming poverty. In this type of folktale, *imugi* does not bring a man unconditional happiness. If a man wants to be happy, he must behave in particular ethical ways for *imugi*—the man and *imugi* have an implicit contract. Notably, the man holds the key to solving the problematic situation presented to the man and *imugi*.

Tiger

Folktale about the Female Tiger Who Loved a Man

사람을 사랑한 암컷 호랑이 설화

A folktale

A folktale about a female tiger who fell in love with a man.

Once upon a time, a man with the family name of Seong walked around a pagoda earnestly seeking to get married. One day, he found a pretty young woman walking around the pagoda ahead of him. When he finished his walk, he told the woman that he had walked around the pagoda to get married and asked her why she walked around it. She said she did so to make

amends; she had committed murder. Seong asked her to marry him. In response, she took his hand and led him into the forest, symbolizing their union.

Although she initially dissuaded him, he followed the woman and arrived at her home. Upon hearing the story, the woman's mother put Seong in a small room in the back of the house. Soon, three or four men entered the house. A voice from heaven said, "As you have committed many sins, one of you must die." Upon hearing the voice, the woman looked up to heaven and begged for her brothers' lives to be spared and hers to be taken instead.

When the man came out of the small room after his brothers left, he saw the stunningly beautiful young lady. She told Seong not to love her because she was not human. Seong said he did not care whether she was human; he would love her until he died. She replied, "Go back to the village, and if there is an announcement on the wall that offers a government job to anyone who catches a tiger, you should say you will do it." The next morning, the village posted an announcement on a wall, offering a bounty for anyone who caught a tiger. Seong saw the announcement, went to the village chief, and told him that he would catch the tiger.

On his way up the mountain with his spear and sword, Seong met the woman again. She told him that the standing water next to the temple in which they had met earlier could heal wounds if applied. She took Seong's sword and stabbed herself. Subsequently, the beautiful woman turned into a huge tiger and died. Seong received a bounty for capturing the tiger and started his government career. He built a temple for the woman.

There are three versions of this story, which differ based on their endings. The first version

closes with a happy ending. In this version, the tiger is male and loves a woman, and they live happily ever after. The second version involves a happy and tragic ending, in which a female tiger sacrifices herself but stays married to the man through her soul. The third version features a tragic ending; in this version, the tiger, who may be either male or female, loves a human but is betrayed by them or their family and meets a tragic end.

In the versions of the story with a happy and tragic ending, the female tiger loves the man and follows Buddhism. In other words, by giving her body over for the Buddha's teachings and the man she loves, she is placed in the center of divinity. Death by self-sacrifice is a path to a higher level of divinity.

As such, this type of story of a tiger, who proves their divinity by dying, is distinct from other types of tiger stories. As a spiritual being, the tiger loves the man beyond something strange and romantic. The tiger, who is placed at the center of divinity through their death, implies fear and attraction, softness and ferocity, and gentleness and fierceness and symbolizes the sacred power to transform a disorderly world into a harmonious universe.

Tiger

Folktale about the Man Who Escaped from the Tiger's Stomach

호랑이 뱃속에서 탈출한 사람 설화
A folktale

A comical folktale about a man who was eaten by a tiger, survived in his stomach, got out alive, and captured the tiger.

Dragon

Folktale about the Man Who Got into the Middle of a Dragon Fight

용들의 싸움에 끼여든 사람 설화
A folktale

A legend about a man who got into a fight between dragons living in a pond, helped one dragon defeat the other, and was rewarded with wide fields.

Once upon a time, a man named Kim who was good at archery lived in a village in Hwanghae-do, located in the mid-west region of Korea. One day, a yellow dragon appeared in Kim's dream. The yellow dragon told him that a blue dragon from the West Sea was trying to take over the pond he had protected for hundreds of years. The yellow dragon asked Kim to come to the place where he would fight the other dragon the following day and shoot the blue dragon down with arrows. The next day, Kim went to the pond and saw the yellow and blue dragons entangled in a fight. He was extremely afraid and could not bring himself to shoot any arrows.

The yellow dragon reappeared in Kim's dream and asked him again to perform this favor. The next morning, when Kim went to the pond, the two dragons were again entangled in a fight. This time, Kim shot and killed the blue dragon. That night, the yellow dragon showed up in his dream and told him that he would return the favor. The dragon said he would give him water from the pond where he lived and told him to turn the village's large wasteland into a rice field. Kim started clearing the land with other villagers. One day, lightning suddenly struck, creating a large hole in the rocky moun-

Once upon a time, tigers harmed many people. The government said it would reward the person who killed the biggest tiger with a government position. A small man went into the mountains to catch a tiger. Upon finding a tiger, he offered it medicine that would compel the tiger to eat him alive. Once inside the tiger's stomach, the man slashed and ate the tiger's liver several times with a knife. The tiger went on a rampage out of pain and bit all the tigers around him to death. Subsequently, the small man cut the tiger's stomach open with a sword to escape. He received the government position. While there were once many tigers, they have become extinct due to this incident.

There are many stories of a single poacher, grandfather, or small man going into the stomach of a tiger to capture it. In some versions, multiple people enter the tiger's stomach and work together to escape. These stories show such characters using many tools used to catch a tiger, including knives and guns. Methods to escape from the tiger's stomach include slashing the tiger's stomach with a knife, exiting through the tiger's anus, or pulling the tiger's tail through the stomach to turn the tiger inside out.

As the title of the folktale suggests, the tiger's stomach is an uncharted area that evokes curiosity and imagination. Exploration and adventure into uncharted worlds are essential rites of passage when growing up. Accordingly, this story, which deals with hardship in a joyful and playful way, is loved by children. Today, this folktale is published in many story books and picture books.

tain that blocked the wasteland. Water from the pond poured into the hole and transformed the wasteland into a large rice field. Since then, the pond from which the dragon emerged has been called Yongso, the cleared field Yongjeongbeol, and the village Yongjeongni.

This story portrays a fight between a dragon living in Seoneodae and a dragon living in Imha. It is similar to the story of the blue dragon and the yellow dragon. Sometimes, dragons in such a fight are associated with good and evil. In the above folktale, a good dragon shows up in front of a man and asks for help. The man helps the dragon by intervening in the dragon fight and gets what he wants in return. The end of the legend, in which the protagonist receives land, speaks to a common wish to own land among readers of the time, many of whom were farmers.

The Folktale about the Man Who Got into the Middle of a Fight between Dragons has been passed down in connection with a “legend about a pond where dragons live” from different regions. Yongso, where a ritual was held to pray for rain, is a place so deep that the thread could go into it endlessly. It is also the site of dragon fights and a “pond protected by dragons.” This type of legend, however, belongs to the category of mythological legends, as it is based on mythological motifs, including a “dragon fight” or “hero killing an evil dragon.” Notably, the field or rice paddy with which the hero is rewarded in this type of legend expands beyond the individual to the village community. This shows the mythical nature of this legend, as it emphasizes the importance of strengthening the community spirit.

Tiger

Folktale about the Tiger Who Married a Man

남자와 결혼한 호랑이 설화

A folktale

A folktale in which a man, Kim Hyeon, meets and falls in love with a tiger maiden, who sacrifices herself to repay him for spared her brothers.

A man named Kim Hyeon walked around a pagoda, worshiping the Buddha. While walking, he met and fell in love with a maiden—but the maiden was a tiger, not a human. The maiden saved Kim when his life was threatened by her brothers (who were also tigers). The maiden asked Kim to kill her instead of her brothers and build a temple when she intentionally harmed people.

The next day, a tiger showed up in the village. When Kim tried to catch it, the tiger turned into the maiden he had met the previous day. The maiden took her own life. Before she died, she asked Kim to apply doenjang (soybean paste) from Heungnyunsa (a temple in Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do) to the wounds of people with injuries and play the nabal (an old wind instrument made of brass). Kim became a government official, built a temple, named the temple “Howonsa Temple” in honor of the tiger, and told the story on his deathbed.

The above story features a fantastical theme in which an animal turned into a woman and had a relationship with a human. Some interpret it as a metaphor for the king and those against the king. The tale is also associated with miraculous efficacy in Buddhism, and the tale ends like a Buddhist story, featuring communication with the uncommunicable, the sacrifice

of an animal, and the construction of a temple in honor of the animal.

Tiger

Folktale about the Tiger Who Repaid a Favor

은혜 갚은 호랑이 설화

A folktale

A folktale in which the protagonist helps a tiger complaining of trouble or pain, and the tiger repays the favor.

Once upon a time, a man went into the mountains to get some wood. A tiger sat in his way with his mouth open so that he could not get through. The man was not scared. He realized that the tiger was in pain and took out *binyeo* (a traditional Korean hairpin) stuck in the tiger’s mouth.

While the tiger ate people, he knew he owed the man and went away, shedding tears of gratitude. The man was a poor old bachelor who lived with his widowed mother. One night, the man heard something outside and went out to look. He found a bunch of wood left for him by the tiger. Another day, the man heard something again. When he went out to look, he found that the tiger had brought him a pretty maiden. The maiden was the daughter of a wealthy chancellor. The tiger had knocked her unconscious and carried her away by the tiger. Upon realizing that there must be some reason for her situation, she married the bachelor and lived with him.

They looked after the man’s mother, had a son, and lived happily with the help of the tiger. One day, the tiger came by and told them that



Painting of *Kkachihorangi* (Tiger and magpie) | 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

his death was drawing near. The tiger told the man to catch him when he goes on a rampage in the village. Subsequently, the tiger went to the village and frightened people with his ferocious behavior. The man shot and killed the tiger and received a government position and money, making him rich.

This folktale is characterized by a complementary relationship between the protagonist and the tiger. The tale shows a tiger repaying a man who helped him. When the tiger makes up for what the man lacks, he seems like a supernatural being. The tale gives the tiger a personality, highlighting Korean beliefs of valuing nature and learning from even little things.

Rabbit

Folktale about Why the Rabbit Has Red Eyes

토끼의 눈이 붉어진 유래 설화

A folktale

An animal folktale that explains why the rabbit has red eyes.

A story about a tiger and a rabbit explains the origin of the rabbit's red eyes. Historically, it was said that the rabbit's tail was long, and the tiger's tail was short. When the rabbit showed off his long tail in front of the tiger, the tiger begged him to share it. The rabbit suggested tying their tails together. After doing so, the tiger and rabbit traveled together with their tails tied.

One day, the rabbit wanted to visit a place and tried to move toward it. The tiger, however, did not budge. The rabbit pulled the tiger as hard as he could. As he pulled, his eyes turned red and a part of his tail fell off; he was left with only a short tail. He fell forward and hit his face on a rock, ripping his mouth into three. Meanwhile, the tiger's tail gained the part of the rabbit's tail and grew longer.

Many Korean folktales depict a small and seemingly weak rabbit that tricks the strongest and most fearsome tiger. Such stories about the rabbit, which represents weakness, overcoming the tiger, which symbolizes the "one in power," were intended to be entertaining and cathartic.

However, this story about why the rabbit has red eyes develops differently from other traditional stories about a rabbit and a tiger. The portrayal of the short-tailed tiger as begging the long-tailed rabbit to share his tail suggests that a long tail on an animal symbolizes power. Even after tying his tail with the rabbit's, the tiger did not listen well to what the rabbit said. Although

the rabbit asked the tiger to go somewhere, the tiger did not budge.

Most stories about the origins of animals are about how they gained their appearance. This story focuses on the tiger and rabbit's tails (specifically, why the tiger has a long tail and the rabbit a short one) and the rabbit's eyes, which are uniquely red.

In folktales, animals often serve as metaphors for people; thus, their behaviors are used to convey ideas about human behaviors. This folktale about the rabbit failing to defeat the tiger and losing most of his tail and developing red eyes after trying to move the tiger reflects the ideas that powerful individuals try to take away whatever the underdog has and that the underdog is often powerless.

Dragon

Folktale of Gimbudaewang

김부대왕 설화

A folktale

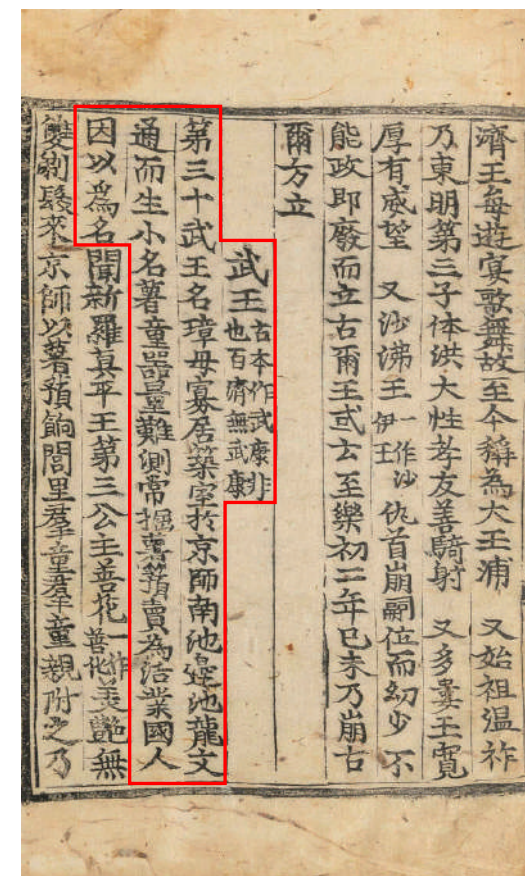
A folktale about the last king of Unified Silla, the first unified kingdom in Korea, and his son.

There are many islets near Ulleungdo, Gyeongsangbuk-do, southeast of Korea. A long time ago, Japanese pirates used the islets as a base and stayed there, often invading the mainland and bullying people in Korea. In response, Gyeongsunwang, also known as Gimbudaewang and the last king of Unified Silla, promised to become a dragon and destroy the islets when he died.

Shortly after Gimbudaewang's death, a large serpent appeared. People said the serpent

was just a snake. Yugeumi, a young child on his grandmother's back, saw the snake and called out, "Lord Dragon!" The large serpent turned into a dragon and destroyed the islets. When the dragon tried to destroy Ulleungdo, he was stopped by a voice from heaven. "That island is a sacred place," the voice said, "Do not destroy it." When the dragon destroyed the islets, he also destroyed some inland mountains, creating a plain. This plain was named "Yugeumi Field" after the child who called out "Lord Dragon!"

The takeaway of this folktale is that the dragon could not do anything when people called him a snake but awakened and showed his powers as soon as he was called "Lord Dragon." The story is interpreted to suggest that a king will not be able to accomplish anything regardless of his good intentions if people do not recognize and support him. It also serves as a metaphor for Gyeongsunwang, who accepted the people's will and gave his country to the Goryeo Dynasty (which came after Unified Silla).



Story of Muwang | Samguk yusa (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) | Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies

Dragon

Folktale of Muwang

무왕 설화

A folktale

A folktale about Seodong, who was born from the union of a widow and a dragon, married Princess Seonhwa of Silla, became Muwang of Baekje (an ancient kingdom in Korea), and founded a temple called Mireuksa.

Muwang served the thirtieth king of Baekje and was the son of Beobwang, the 29th king, and the father of Uijawang, the last king of Baekje. It was said that Muwang of Baekje was

born after his mother built a house by a pond south of the capital and mated with a dragon in the pond. His original name was Jang, and he was called Seodong, which means the child who sells yams—when he was a child, he always dug and sold yams for a living.

Upon hearing rumors that Princess Seonhwa, the third daughter of Jinpyeongwang of Silla, was beautiful, Seodong traveled to Seorabeol, the capital of Silla, where he handed out yams to children and told them to sing a song he had written. A children's song about Princess Seonhwa having a secret relationship with a man named Seodong spread throughout the capital. All the officials in the palace urged

the king to send the princess to a distant rural area. The princess received gold from the queen to cover her travel expenses and set out for the countryside. However, Seodong showed up as the princess was leaving and offered to escort her. While the princess was accompanied by Seodong, she learned his name and realized how smart he was.

Princess Seonhwa came to Baekje with Seodong and planned to live off the gold she had brought with her. Seodong said, "There is plenty of gold piled up like dirt in the place where I used to dig for yams." The princess was surprised and told him that gold is extremely valuable, and he should send it to the palace where her parents lived. Seodong agreed, piled up the gold like a hill, and asked a monk how to send it. The monk used his supernatural powers to send the gold to the palace in Silla overnight. Seodong earned the peoples' hearts with the gold and became King—as King, he is known as Muwang.

Later, Muwang traveled with his wife to the place where the monk lived. As they approached a large pond, Maitreya appeared in the middle of it. His wife wished to build a big temple there, and Muwang talked about it with the monk. The monk used his supernatural powers to bring down the mountain overnight and fill the pond. Mireuksa was founded in that place, and Jinpyeongwang of Silla sent engineers to help build the temple.

Meanwhile, *mireu* is a Korean word that refers to a dragon. Mireu sounds like Maitreya, one of the bodhisattvas in Buddhism. This suggests that Muwang is considered the son of a dragon and an incarnation of Maitreya. In this folktale, Muwang seems to use the sacred nature of the dragon and the influence of Buddhism to unite a divided nation.

Tiger

Folktale of the Grandmother Who Made Patjuk and Defeated a Tiger

호랑이를 물리친 팔죽 할머니 설화

A folktale

A folktale about a grandmother escaping the threat of a tiger with the help of multiple animals and objects.

An old grandmother lived alone in the mountains. One day, she was planting red beans in a field when a large tiger showed up and tried to eat her alive. The grandmother told the tiger to wait until she had finished farming the red beans so that the tiger could eat *patjuk* (a porridge made by boiling red beans for a long time). She told him this time would come around December 22. As the promised day grew closer after the summer and fall, the grandmother cooked *patjuk* and wept. Chestnuts, a terrapin, an awl, dog poop, and a *jige* (a traditional Korean pack frame) appeared in front of the grandmother and asked for *patjuk*. They received and ate a bowl of *patjuk* and promised to help her defeat the tiger.

When the tiger came down from the mountains at night and asked for *patjuk*, the grandmother told him to go to *bueok* (a kitchen in a traditional Korean house) and eat it. After entering the kitchen, the tiger was punched in the eye by the chestnuts and blinded and bitten in the nose by the terrapin. He then slipped on the dog poop, was stung on the awl, and was hit and killed by *jige*. The dead tiger was thrown into a deep river.

There are different versions of this story. Sometimes the tiger tries to eat the grandmother alive, or the grandmother loses a red



Tiger and old woman (Artwork of Novels) | 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

bean picking a bet. After boiling *patjuk*, the grandmother wept because she was about to be unfairly killed. The presence, method, and order of the things that help the grandmother differ slightly in different versions.

The tiger who tried to take the grandmother's life in exchange for the red beans she worked hard to grow symbolizes a greedy individual in power, while the animals and objects that saved the grandmother symbolize weak commoners. This folktale teaches that regardless of how insignificant and weak we are, we can overcome any challenge if we gather our wisdom and work together.

Rabbit

Folktale of the Hare and the Tortoise

토끼와 거북이의 경주 설화

A folktale

A moral tale about a hare and a tortoise running a race. The hare, who was in the lead, took a nap during the race, while the slow tortoise ran diligently; in the end, the tortoise won the race.

This story is one fable within a broader collection of fables written by Aesop in ancient Greece, known as *Aesop's Fables*. A fable is a story that teaches a lesson through an anthropomorphized animal. The stories in *Aesop's Fables* were published and introduced in elementary school textbooks in Korea for educational purposes. This story, called *The Hare and the Tor-*

toise, first appeared in a textbook published by a private organization called the Korean National Education Association in 1906.

Based on the biological characteristics of the fast rabbit and the slow tortoise, the story has a fun twist: the rabbit lets his guard down and takes a nap, and the tortoise wins the race. This twist teaches that one should not be arrogant even if they are fully skilled for the task at hand and that anyone can succeed if they work hard consistently. Like many of *Aesop's Fables*, this story was introduced in Korea to teach children a lesson.

Notably, a story can also be reinterpreted or recreated depending on the period and context; this holds true for *The Hare and the Tortoise*. Today, the story is interpreted from diverse perspectives: some say that the race between the fast hare and the slow tortoise was not fair in the first place, while others feel that the tortoise was not honorable for not waking the hare from his nap and continuing the race alone. The deeper point here is that this story is occasionally recreated to teach different kinds of values.

Rabbit

Folktale of the Rabbit Who Defeated a Tiger by Trial

재판으로 호랑이를 물리친 토끼 설화

A folktale

A folktale about a rabbit who tricked an ungrateful tiger back into a trap by trial.

Once upon a time, a man met a tiger who was caught in a trap. When the tiger saw the man, he begged him to save him, promising he would

return the favor if he did. The man opened the door of the trap and saved the tiger. Turning on the man, the tiger told him that he was going to eat him alive.

The man responded that this would be unfair and told the tiger that they should go to trial. The tiger accepted the offer but only agreed to conduct the trial with someone who would rule in his favor. First, he went to a boulder for the trial; the boulder, who disliked people, ruled in the tiger's favor. Next, he went to a rabbit for the trial; the rabbit suggested going back to the trap into which the tiger fell. Upon arriving at the trap, the rabbit asked the tiger to go back into it so that he could see how he fell into the trap. The tiger did as the rabbit said and went back into the trap. When the rabbit saw that the tiger was back in the trap, he told the man to close the door of the trap. After the rabbit conducted this wise trial for the man, he left.

This story serves as a literary tool for teaching children a lesson through the tragic ending of the selfish tiger and the selfless behavior of the rabbit. With the ungrateful tiger symbolizing an exploiter and the weak but wise rabbit representing the common people, this story is also interpreted as showing the victory of commoners over an exploiter. Along these lines, from a social perspective, the weak rabbit represents the common people's wish to defeat the strong using wisdom in unjust situations.



Yeongmodo(Two rabbits) | National Folk Museum of Korea

Tiger

Folktale of the Tiger and the Daughter-in-law Who Helped Each Other

서로를 도운 며느리와 호랑이 설화

A folktale

This is a folktale about a woman who refused to remarry despite her family strongly pushing her to do so. Instead, she served her father-in-law. This touched the heart of a tiger, who was, in turn, inspired to help her.

Once upon a time, a woman lost her husband early in her marriage. Her family kept asking her to remarry. However, she did not remarry, and when her father-in-law became widowed and fell ill, she took care of him.

Regardless of how often her family asked



Tiger Tomb from the Tale of the Tiger Who Helped His Daughter-in-Law | Ulju, Ulsan | 2012 | Bae Do-sik



The daughter-in-law's Stele in the tale of the tiger that helped her daughter-in-law | Ulju, Ulsan | 2012 | Bae Do-sik

her to return, she refused. In response, her family lied to her, telling her that her mother had died. When she returned home, she realized her family had lied to her to get her to remarry. She was upset and decided to go back to her father-in-law the same day.

The path back was dark, and she could not find her way. Out of nowhere, a tiger showed up and carried her on his back to her father-in-law. After that day, the daughter-in-law cared for her father-in-law even more sincerely. One day, she dreamed that she saw the tiger dying in a trap. After waking up, the daughter-in-law went to the place in her dream and saved the tiger.

In this story, a daughter-in-law serves her father-in-law even under difficult circumstances. A tiger, deeply touched by her devotion, offers her help. Later, she returns the favor. Approximately 20 old texts focus on similar stories of a tiger helping a devoted daughter-in-law. In some versions, the father-in-law is blind; in others, a blind mother-in-law is featured instead of the father-in-law. In other versions, the daughter-in-law's husband is alive; sometimes, he is paralyzed from the waist down. With the help of the tiger, the blind character regains their sight, and the paraplegic character can stand up. Meanwhile, in another notable version, the daughter-in-law removes a hairpin stuck in the tiger's throat and receives help from the tiger in return. In all variations of this folktale, the tiger is not a harmful animal or beast that hurts people but a spirit that recognizes and helps a person who displays deep filial piety. For example, in some versions of the story, the tiger carries a devoted daughter-in-law on his back or cures blindness or paraplegia.

Tiger

Folktale of the Tiger Who Became a Brother and Demonstrated Filial Piety

형제가 되어 효를 행한 호랑이 설화

A folktale

A folktale about an older tiger brother who demonstrated filial piety to his younger human brother and parents.

Once upon a time, a woodcutter suffered from poverty and decided to be eaten by a tiger. He went into the mountains and found a tiger. Frightened by the real tiger, the woodcutter said, "My big brother! My mother told me that I had an older brother who died and became a tiger, and that is you!" The woodcutter said that his mother missed him and asked him to go see her right away. The tiger believed the woodcutter but refused his request, replying, "I cannot do this as a tiger." However, the tiger often caught pigs and brought them to the woodcutter's home, and the woodcutter and his mother became rich and lived well. The woodcutter also married a maiden brought to him by the tiger.

After the woodcutter's mother died some years later, the tiger stopped bringing pigs. Wondering what happened, the woodcutter went to the den where the tiger lived and found cubs with white cloth tied to their tail. When he asked why, the cubs replied, "My grandmother is human. After she passed away, my father did not eat anything and also died. That is why we tied white cloth around our tail." This act symbolized their grief. Touched by the tiger's filial piety, the woodcutter buried him in a grave next to his mother.

This story subtly reveals that even an animal should demonstrate filial piety to its parents.

Further, the story draws a humorous contrast between a human who uses his wits to get out of trouble and a foolish tiger. In this folktale, the tiger is portrayed as weird and silly to increase its connection with the human.

Tiger

Folktale of the Tiger Who Was Afraid of Dried Persimmons

말린 감을 무서워하게 된 호랑이 설화

A folktale

An animal folk fable about a foolish tiger who mistakenly thinks a dried persimmon is scarier than he is and runs off.

One night, a tiger came down to a village and hid in a house, where he overheard a mother soothing her crying child. The mother said, "The tiger is here. Don't cry."

However, the child continued to cry. This caused the tiger to believe that the child was bold and not afraid of him at all. Nevertheless, when the mother told the child about a dried persimmon, he stopped crying. This made the tiger believe that the dried persimmon was scarier than he was.

At that moment, a thief trespassed onto the property to steal a cow. He mistook the tiger for a cow and hopped on its back. The tiger mistook the man on his back for the dried persimmon and ran off as quickly as he could. Realizing he was on the tiger's back, the thief worried he would be eaten alive if he fell off. He held on for dear life. After the sun rose, the thief hopped off the tiger's back and hid. The tiger breathed a sigh of relief and ran off.

Later, the tiger met a bear. The bear told the tiger that what he had believed had been a dried persimmon was only a man. He encouraged the tiger to get the man. The thief pulled the balls off of the bear, and the bear died. Then, the tiger ran off again.

This folktale features a foolish tiger as the protagonist and humorously represents the idea that a strong being can be defeated by its own foolishness, while the weak can emerge victorious by using wit.

Dragon

Folktale of Wonseongdaewang

원성대왕 설화
A folktale

A folktale about the succession and achievements of Wonseongdaewang associated with dragons in Silla, an ancient kingdom in Korea.

Kim Gyeongsin, a member of the royal family, became the 38th king of Silla after defeating his rival Kim Juwon, who was ahead of him in the line for the throne. As a king, Kim Gyeongsin is known as Wonseongdaewang.

When Kim Gyeongsin was behind Kim Juwon in the line for the throne, he had a dream in which he took off *gwanmo* (an official hat worn by individuals who held a government position), put on a white *gwanmo*, and went to the well of the temple with the 12-string *gayageum* zither.

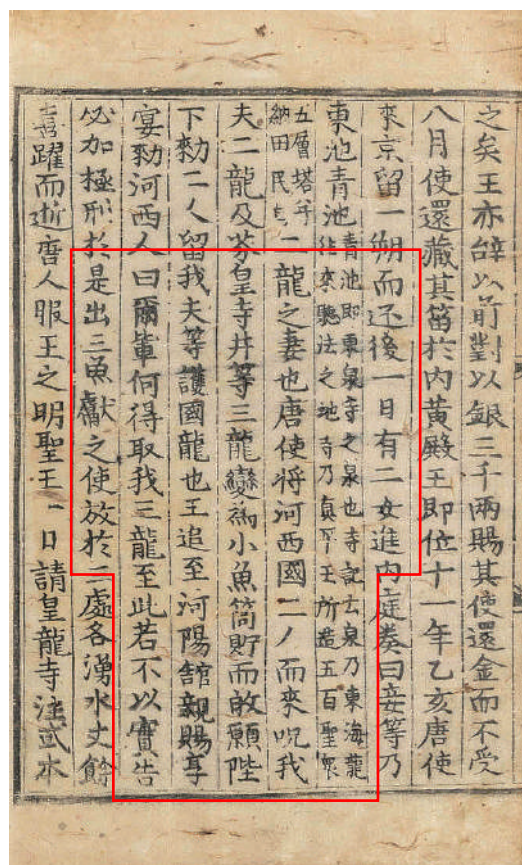
Upon hearing about this dream, one fortune teller became worried, advising "It is a sign that you are going to lose your government position and end up in jail."

However, another fortune teller said, "Taking off *gwanmo* means that there is no higher person. A white *gwanmo* is a sign that you will become a king, entering the well of the temple means entering the palace, and the 12-string *gayageum* means that the throne will be passed down to your twelfth generation."

In response, Kim Gyeongsin asked, "How can I become the king when Kim Juwon is before me in line for the throne?"

"Go to Bukcheon, a stream in the north," the fortune teller replied, "and conduct a *jesa* ritual for the deity there."

Kim did as he was told. Later, when the king of Silla died, the late king's courtiers tried to accept Kim Juwon as the new king. Nevertheless, Kim Juwon could not cross Bukcheon due to



Wonseongdaewang in *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) | Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies

sudden floods and rising waters. Kim Gyeongsin entered the palace first and became king.

Upon becoming king, Kim Gyeongsin's father gave him a legendary flute called Manpasikjeok, which had been passed down for a long time. According to legend, the flute has "supernatural powers to defeat enemy armies." When the king of Japan heard this rumor, he asked Wonseongdaewang to trade his flute for 50 gold *nyang* (a unit of weight).

Wonseongdaewang replied, "I don't know where it is now."

Nonetheless, the king of Japan sent an envoy again the following year with 1,000 gold *nyang* with the message that the king of Japan "just wanted to take a look at the flute."

Wonseongdaewang refused the offer and kept the flute elsewhere.

In the mythology of Silla, the well was where the king's ancestors and wife were born and through which *yongsin* traveled. In this context, entering the well in a dream was interpreted as a sign that one was destined to become the king. *yongsin* is considered the deity of Bukcheon, for whom Kim Gyeongsin held a *jesa* ritual. Owing to his powers, Kim Gyeongsin was recognized as the legitimate king in Silla.

Meanwhile, the legendary flute is regarded as a treasure that can solve all sorts of national problems when played. When Wonseongdaewang received this flute from his father, he rose to the throne. He sought to rule the country peacefully with music. Meanwhile, Wonseongdaewang demonstrated political skill in overcoming crises related to Korea's relationship with Japan and protected the sacred flute.

This folktale portrays the dragon as related to the legitimacy of the king of Silla and the king's commitment to defending his royal au-

thority. Furthermore, in this folktale, the king demonstrates his outstanding ability and divine majesty through the dragon to communicate internationally and divinely with various worlds in Buddhism.

Tiger

Folktales of a Tiger Who Carried a Filial Son on His Back

효자를 태우고 다닌 호랑이 설화
A folktale

Folktales about a tiger who was touched by a son's filial piety and carried him on his back.

Once upon a time, there was a filial son who lived in a village and was so poor that he could not put food on the table for his mother. The son collected some food from a family he worked for, came home on the back of a tiger, and looked after his mother.

Once upon a time, a filial son traveled a long distance to find medicine for his father, who had fallen ill. A tiger showed up and carried him on his back.

Once upon a time, a filial son was performing *simyo* (living next to his parent's grave). A tiger carried him on his back and protected him as he lay next to the grave.

Once upon a time, a filial son braved the cold winter to procure some strawberries for his mother. When his mother passed away, he performed *simyo* with a tiger. Additionally, the tiger also helped him get married.

In these folktales, a tiger carried a filial son on his back as a reward for showing a high level of filial piety toward his parents. At a time when

filial piety was considered the highest human virtue, such folktales affirmed filial piety by showing that even the tiger is impressed by this practice.

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Buseoksa

부석사 창건 설화
A founding folktale

A legend that explains the founding history of Buseoksa.

Uisang, a monk from Silla (an ancient kingdom in Korea), went to study in the Tang Dynasty (a unified dynasty in China from the 7th to 10th centuries). During his studies, he stayed in the home of a Buddhist. Seonmyo, the daughter of the Buddhist homeowner, fell in love with Uisang. However, Uisang rejected her affection. After finishing his studies, he returned home.

Belatedly realizing that Uisang was heading home, Seonmyo packed robes and other supplies in a box and rushed to the shore from which Uisang was leaving. Nevertheless, by the time she arrived, his ship had already departed. Seonmyo threw the box into the sea and prayed

that she would “turn into a dragon and serve the monk to help him fulfill his path in Buddhism.” Seonmyo then turned into a dragon and supported the bottom of Uisang’s ship to help him return home safely.

Upon returning to Silla, Uisang found a temple where he wanted to stay and preach Buddhism. Nonetheless, another group of monks already lived in the temple. The dragon (Seonmyo) who always followed Uisang transformed into a boulder in the middle of the air and almost fell on the temple. Upon seeing this, many of the monks panicked and fled. Eventually, Uisang entered the temple and began to publish the Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra (the text that describes Shakyamuni’s enlightenment) and named the temple Buseoksa, which means “stone in the air.”

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Gameunsa

감은사 창건 설화
A founding folktale

The site of the legend of Gameunsa, Yongdang-ri, Yangbuk-myeon, Gyeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, southeast of Korea.

Sinmunwang of Silla, an ancient kingdom in Korea, built Gameunsa on the coast along the East Sea for his father, Munmuwang. According to historical records, Munmuwang began building the temple to defeat foreign enemies. However, as he could not succeed in his endeavor, his son, Sinmunwang, completed the work. Therefore, the temple was named Gameunsa, which means “grateful for benevolence.”



Muryangsujeon Hall of Buseoksa Temple | Yeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2020 | Korea Heritage Service



Gameunsa Temple Site | Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2023 | National Folk Museum of Korea · Choi Ji-hyeon

This name conveys that Sinmunwang finished the temple to thank Munmuwang for protecting the country, which he continued to do as a dragon after his death. Notably, the east side of the temple included an opening designed to allow Munmuwang to come in and out of the temple as a dragon. According to his will, Munmuwang’s body was buried in the sea under Daewangam in front of Gameunsa.

Today, only two huge stone pagodas remain in the old site of Gameunsa. The two pagodas are three-story stone structures built during Unified Silla (7th to 10th centuries AD), the first unified kingdom in Korea. The site was designated as a national treasure of Korea and is currently protected. While it is not known when the temple was lost, it is believed to have survived until the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the

20th centuries AD).

Notably, this folktale recalls the Buddhist concept of reincarnation, with Munmuwang reborn as a dragon after death. Further, this portrayal of Munmuwang situates him as “a dragon protecting the country”—reflecting the common cultural belief in Korea that dragons serve as protectors of the nation.

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Guryongsa

구룡사 창건 설화
A founding folktale

The legend of the founding of Guryongsa in Wonju, Gangwon-do, Korea.



Guryongsa Temple Daeungjeon Hall | Wonju, Gangwon-do | Korea Heritage Service

Uisang, a monk in Unified Silla (the first unified kingdom in Korea), wanted to build a temple on a pond. However, he could not do so because nine dragons lived in the pond. Uisang and the dragons made a bet to determine who would own the pond.

The dragons brought down excessive rain with thunderbolts, flooding the surrounding mountains. Uisang placed a fulu in the pond where the dragons lived, causing the water to boil. The dragons could not stand the hot water and left the pond. After the dragons left, Uisang filled the pond with dirt to build Daeungjeon and named the temple Guryongsa (the Temple of Nine Dragons).

The head monk of Guryongsa managed *namul* (a variety of edible grass or leaves) from Chiaksan in Wonju. *Namul* was a specialty offered to the king. People tried to bribe the head

monk to resell *namul* at a higher price. While the temple grew wealthy, its monks became lazy in their practice of Buddhism.

An old man told them, “Cut off *hyeol* [(the center of energy)]—this phenomenon is due to the turtle rock at the temple entrance.” They drilled a hole in the back of the turtle rock to cut off *hyeol*. However, the temple subsequently began to decline. A monk showed up and said, “This is because you cut off the turtle’s *hyeol*.” To reconnect *hyeol* through the turtle rock, a letter *Gu* (龜), which means a “turtle,” was put in the place of *Gu* (九), a letter with the same sound meaning “nine,” and the temple’s name was changed from Guryongsa (九龍寺) to Guryongsa (龜龍寺).

This founding folktale of Guryongsa, which features dragons and includes a letter meaning “dragon” in the temple’s name, was based on the

idea of a dragon god. Furthermore, the turtle rock element of the folktale incorporates the idea of pungsu. Therefore, the folktale of Guryongsa was born from a mixture of two ideas: the tale of the nine dragons and the tale of the turtle-shaped rock.

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Hwangnyongsa

황룡사 창건 설화

A founding folktale

A folktale related to the origin of Hwangnyongsa, a temple in Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do, southeast of Korea.

During Silla, an ancient kingdom in Korea, the king attempted to build a royal palace south of *Yonggung* Palace. When he did so, a yellow dragon appeared. The king found this strange. He turned the palace into a temple and named it Hwangnyongsa, which means a temple to serve a yellow dragon.

During Silla, a monk returning from Danggara (the Tang Dynasty in China) asked the king to build a nine-story wooden pagoda to defeat foreign enemies. In response, the king ordered a craftsman from abroad to build the pagoda with wood and stone. However, the craftsman dreamed that his country had been destroyed and stopped working. One day, the earth shook. The craftsman saw an old monk and a strong man emerge from the darkness and set up pillars for a pagoda before disappearing. After seeing this, the craftsman changed his mind and completed the pagoda. The nine-story pagoda was meant to prevent an invasion by

neighboring countries, such as Japan and China. Later, the pagoda was struck by lightning several times and was repeatedly repaired. In 1238, it was lost to a fire.

This folktale shows how Hwangnyongsa, which was founded in connection with traditional dragon god beliefs, gradually transformed into a Buddhist holy place under the influence of Buddhism.

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Seonunsa

선운사 창건 설화

A founding folktale

The founding folktale of Seonunsa Temple.

Jinheungwang of Silla grew old, abdicated his throne, and spent a night in a cave in Dosolsan. He dreamed that he saw the Buddha cutting open a rock from the inside and coming out of it. Subsequently, the king named a temple after the queen and his daughter. This is the founding folktale of Seonunsa, a temple currently located in Gochanggun, Jeollabuk-do, Korea.

Meanwhile, Geomdanseonsa, a monk,



Daeungjeon Hall of Seonunsa Temple | Gochang, Jeollabuk-do | Korea Heritage Service

founded Seonunsa. Specifically, “The site of Seonunsa was originally a large pond where a dragon lived, but Geomdanseonsa kicked out the dragon, filled the pond with stones and charcoal, and built Seonunsa.” While filling the pond with charcoal, he used his supernatural powers to infect villagers with an eye disease and told them to throw charcoal into the pond to cure the illness. In response, the villagers threw charcoal into the pond, which quickly filled up.

The founding folktale of Seonunsa by monk Geomdanseonsa has been passed down along with the folktale of the origin of salt production in Geomdalli. It is said that after building Seonunsa, Geomdanseonsa taught the villagers how to make salt and, in return, the villagers brought salt to the temple every spring and fall.



Daeungjeon Hall and Ordination Platform of Tongdosa Temple | Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2015 | Korea Heritage Service

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Tongdosa

통도사 창건 설화

A founding folktale

The founding folktale of Tongdosa, a temple in Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do, Korea.

A monk in China practiced Buddhism in front of a clay statue of Munsubosal (one of the four bodhisattvas in Buddhism). Subsequently, the monk dreamed that the Buddha touched his head and told him Buddhist precepts. The next day, a mysterious monk appeared, explained the precepts, and gave the monk a robe to wear over his shoulder and the Buddha's ashes.

After the mysterious monk's visit, a divine person appeared from a place called *Taehwaji* and told the monk that if he built a nine-story pagoda at a temple and enshrined the Buddha's

ashes, he could prevent an invasion by foreign enemies. The divine person further explained that the dragon responsible for protecting Buddhism in the temple was his eldest son and that he would perform a favor if the monk built a temple for him.

The king of Silla, an ancient kingdom in Korea, asked the emperor of the Tang Dynasty in China to tell the monk to come to Silla. The monk was living in a temple located southeast of Korea, was favored by the king, built a nine-story pagoda, and divided up and enshrined the Buddha's ashes he brought from China in staircases and other parts of Tongdosa. He also taught the precepts to the people in the country and enriched Buddhism. Every year, an increasing number of people wanted to become monks, and Tongdosa was built with stairs to accommodate people from across the country.

This folktale is a mixture of various folktales and captures the interactions between a *yongsin* (Sea god) and Buddhist beliefs, including how such beliefs changed over time. Furthermore, the folktale explains how Tongdosa was founded, which holds significance in understanding changes in belief systems and the history of Buddhism.

Dragon

Founding Folktale of Unmunsa

운문사 창건 설화

A founding folktale

The founding folktale of Unmunsa, a temple located in Cheongdogun, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Korea.

Unmunsa was rebuilt on the site of an old tem-



Daeungbojeon hall of Unmunsa temple | Cheongdo, Gyeongsangbuk-do | Korea Heritage Service

ple by a monk. The monk built Unmunsa after returning home to Korea from China, where he had learned Buddhist teachings. As the monk reached the West Sea on his way back to Korea, a dragon invited him to Yonggung, made him recite Buddhist scriptures, and gave him a robe of golden silk. The dragon told his son to escort the monk home. Subsequently, he told the monk, “Return home with my son and build a temple in a place called Jakgap, and you will be able to avoid enemies. A king who protects Buddhism will come around in the future and conquer the three kingdoms.”

When the monk returned home and reached the valley, an old monk appeared out of nowhere. The old monk gave him a box for storing stamps and disappeared. The site for the temple was confirmed by the appearance of an illusion of a five-storied pagoda and a flock of magpies, which pecked at the ground. The monk remembered the dragon's words and built the temple, which he named Jakgapsa. The monk lived at the temple.

Shortly after, the king of Goryeo, a dynasty in Korea, donated a field to Jakgapsa that had previously belonged to five temples and named it Unmunseonsa. The dragon's son, who escorted

the monk, lived in a small pond near the temple and helped the monk with his supernatural powers.

Dragon

Manpasikjeok

만파식적

A folktale about a flute given by a dragon

The legend of Manpasikjeok, a mysterious bamboo flute that Sinmunwang, a king in Unified Silla (the first unified kingdom in Korea), obtained from a dragon in the sea.

A vassal reported to the king, Sinmunwang, “A small mountain is floating on the water and coming toward Gameunsa.” Subsequently, a fortune teller told the king, “It is a sign that the dragon god Munmuwang and the heavenly god Kim Yu-sin will give a great gift.” The king went to Gameunsa, and the vassal who had gone out earlier under his order came to the king and said, “The mountain is shaped like a turtle with a single bamboo pole on top, which splits into two during the day and merges into one at night.” The king stayed at Gameunsa,

and the next day, the bamboo merged, sending vibrations across the sky and land, blowing strong winds, and bringing rain. It was dark for seven days. On the sixteenth day, the winds ceased, and the waters calmed. As the king sailed his boat to the island, the dragon said, “Take this bamboo and make and play a flute, and the world will be peaceful.” Hence, the king donated gold and jade to the temple, and a royal envoy took the bamboo down and brought it from the sea. The king returned to his fortress, made a flute out of the bamboo, and kept the flute. When the flute was played, it dispelled the enemy, healed diseases, brought rain during drought, ended the rainy season, stopped the winds, and calmed the waves. The flute was named “Manpasikjeok”—“a flute that quiets turbulent waves”—and cherished as a national treasure.

This folktale is related to Buddhist patriotism, a faith unique to Korea where Buddhism was recognized as bringing prosperity for the nation, including the royal family. In terms of politics, this faith was historically applied to tackle domestic and international issues and legitimize the royal family. Ideologically, Buddhist patriotism is a Confucian political ideology that highlights etiquette and music. Regarding music, it is also a story symbolizing the process of creating Silla’s new music.

Tiger

Myth of Dangun

단군 신화

A founding myth

The myth of Dangun, the founder of Gojoseon, the first kingdom on the Korean Peninsula.

Once upon a time, Hwanin realized that his son, Hwanung, was interested in the human world below heaven. Hwanin gave his son a copper mirror, sword, and bell (or drum)—symbols of a ruler—and told him to go down and rule the human world. Along with the ministers of wind, rain, and clouds, Hwanung descended to the top of Taebaeksan (a mountain in Gangwon Province, Korea), where he ruled over 360 affairs of the world, including grain, life, disease, punishment, and good and evil.

At that time, a bear and a tiger, who lived in the same den, prayed to become humans. Hwanung gave them 20 bulbs of garlic and some divine mugwort. He told them, “If you eat them and do not see sunlight for 100 days, you can become a human.” The bear complied with the taboo and became a woman, Ungnyeo. The tiger failed to observe the taboo and could not become a human. Ungnyeo prayed to conceive a child under a sacred tree, but she had no one to marry. Hwanung turned into a man, married Ungnyeo, and had a son, Dangun.

Dangun set up the capital in Pyongyang, northwest of Korea, and named the country Joseon. As another country named Joseon was founded in Korea approximately 1500 years later, history books refer to Dangun’s Joseon as Gojoseon (Old Joseon). Dangun’s Joseon is viewed as a new community formed by the alliance between the community brought by Hwanung and the tribe worshipping the bear. It can be inferred that the community led by Hwanung were outsiders: they were described as descending to the human world from heaven and as an agricultural group who worshiped a sun god and engaged in agriculture, leading grain production. Meanwhile, the group represented by Ungnyeo was characterized as an “indigenous group worshipping the bear,” who was

brought under the rule of Hwanung (the group led by Hwanung transformed the bear into a woman).

The Myth of Dangun is Korea’s first founding myth. More specifically, the den where the bear observed the taboo is recognized as a place of transformation of the bear to undergo trials, while the mugwort and garlic represent drugs with shamanistic properties. The period during which the bear was required to stay away from sunlight can also be interpreted as a time required for rebirth. In summary, these features highlight ancient rites of passage in Korean society.

Dragon

The Legend about the Pond Where a Dragon Lives

용이 사는 못에 관한 전설

A folktale

A legend about *yongso*, a pond said to have been created while a dragon lived or ascended in the area.

The legend of *yongso*, a pond where a dragon is believed to have lived or ascended, is passed down in various forms across different parts of the country. For instance, some stories present the geographical features of the pond where the dragon lived, the geographical features created when the dragon ascended, *yongso* as a place for *giuje*, predictions of a good or bad harvest based on the cracks in the ice of a pond, and a dragon fight.

In particular, legends associated with *yongso* usually describe the area’s geographical features or briefly explain the origin of its formation.



Igyeondae pavilion | Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2023 | National Folk Museum of Korea · Choi Ji-hyeon

Rabbit

Tokkigol

토끼굴

A geographic folktale

Additionally, such legends often follow a description of a geographical feature created when a dragon lived or ascended in the location with an explanation of its use as a place for *giuje* or details relevant to farming.

Broadly speaking, there are three types of *yongso* legends.

First, the most common type is the story of a geographical feature where a dragon lived. This type of legend highlights the depth of a pond; thus, it emphasizes the size of the pond and the amount of water it holds. This geographical feature is linked to folk beliefs that regard the dragon as a sacred animal, reflecting the human desire to live in areas associated with revered creatures.

Second, stories about geographical features created as a result of a dragon living or ascending in the area portray dragons as ascending in large ponds and creating ponds through their ascensions. These foci demonstrate the connection between water and dragons. The water in *yongso* created through the abovementioned process is deep and abundant; further, this water is associated with many symbols.

Third, *yongso* is also used as a place to hold *giuje*, during which people paint dog blood on rocks to contaminate them and compel rain. This act is predicated on the belief that dirtying a sacred space, which is supposed to be clean and pure, encourages rain to come to wash away the unclean blood. As dragons are believed to control rain, this act is completed at *yongso*, a place where a dragon is believed to live.

Yongso are associated with the archetypal image of water and the symbol of the dragon. Hence, the legend of *yongso* offers a clue into religious, livelihood, and cultural imaginations based on long-standing folk beliefs and archetypal symbols associated with the dragon.

A geographical term for a particular kind of valley. This term is based on the shape, ecological environment, and meaning of the rabbit.

Tokkigol is used to refer to a valley related to the meaning of the rabbit in folklore, which is related to ecology and the moon. As a place of *yin*(negative), the valley is associated with women and the moon. In other words, *tokkigol* refers to an area that combines the productivity associated with women and the symbolic meaning of the moon. Some *tokkigol* in Gangwon-do, Korea, were named after the many *santokki* (mountain hares) that lived there in the past. In general, however, *tokkigol* is used to refer to a geographical area—a valley—to express wishes for human wisdom or hope, a practice associated with the rabbit's symbolic relation to the moon.

In Korea, rabbits have historically been recognized as smart animals based on their quick and agile behavior. Additionally, given their high fertility rates, rabbits have been closely associated with production in agrarian societies in Korea, including growth, prosperity, abundance, and fertility. Rabbits were used in paintings of the moon to reflect the feminine principles related to the moon—the moon symbolizes reproduction and abundance, and a rabbit with a moon symbolizes reproduction, vitality, and prosperity.

Dragon

Yongduam

용두암

A geographic folktale

A folktale about a rock that resembled a dragon's head on the coast of Yongdam-dong, Jeju.

Yongduam, a rock formation shaped like a dragon's head on the coast of Yongdam-dong, Jeju (an island located southwest of Korea), has long garnered attention for its strange shape. Yongyeon (a pond where a dragon lived), located east of Yongduam, looks like a dragon and is a place where people conduct *giuje* for the dragon god. Yongyeon, located right next to Yongduam, was a popular tourist destination in Jeju during a period in which natural landscape-based tourism was increasingly popular.

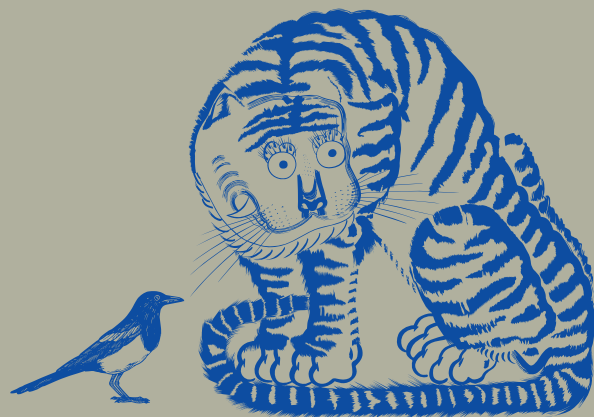
There are a few legends about Yongduam. The notable story of *Dragon Head* is as follows. Once upon a time, there was a white horse in a coastal village in Yongdam-dong who wished to become a dragon. As a rumor spread widely that a white horse would show up in the village, a strong man who ate considerably well and was physically powerful planned to capture the horse. When the white horse saw the man, it hid under the water. The man set up a scarecrow, waited for the white horse to let its guard down, and quickly grabbed the white horse by its neck. The white horse screamed at the sky, and thunder, lightning, and rainstorms struck. A moment later, the white horse's body was submerged under the water, and its head hardened above the water, transforming into what became known as Yongduam.

Another similar story that has been passed down is called *Horse Head*. Once upon a time, in Yongdam-dong, Jeju, there lived Jeong Se-



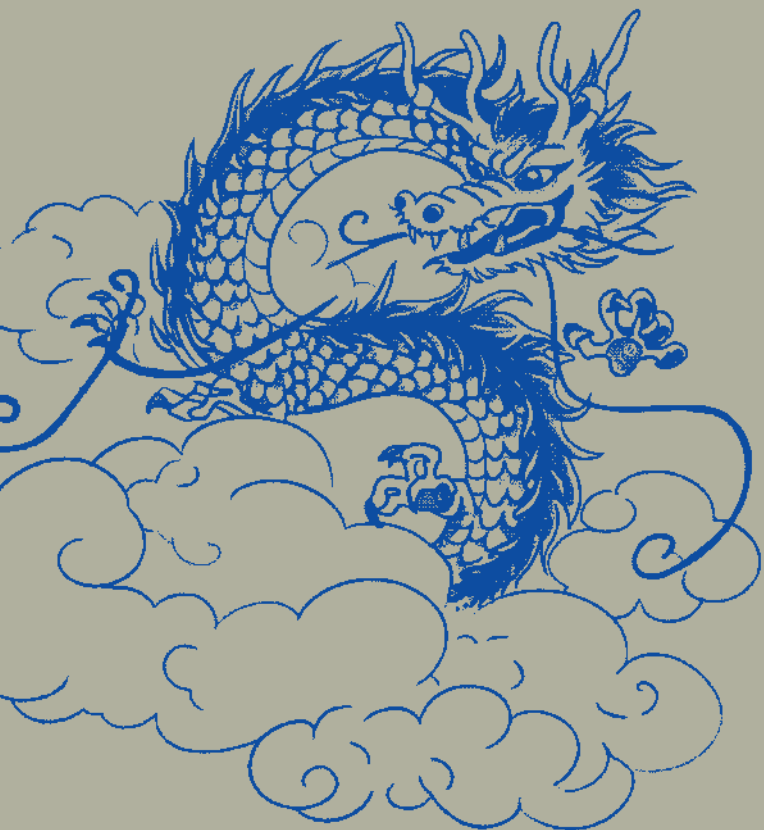
Byeongdambeomju (painting of boating on lake) | 17th century | Jeju World Heritage Site

obang, a strong man who ate considerably well and was physically powerful. He was always hungry because his family was poor. When the government office looked at Jeong, they thought he was a danger to the country and tried to kill him. When the government office asked Jeong to present himself, he realized that he would be killed. He said that he wished to eat as much as he wanted before he died. The government office fed him a bag of rice and a cow. Jeong was satisfied and told them how to kill him, advising, "Tie large rocks to my arms and legs and throw me into the sea." After Jeong died, a white horse stuck its head above the sea, cried three times, and went back under the sea again. The place where the horse stuck out its head and went back underwater is called Malmeori (a horse's head).



RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

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Tiger

Aeho

애호

A custom

A custom of putting up a tiger-shaped fulu made of mugwort.

This custom involves making a tiger-shaped fulu with mugwort to drive away evil spirits on the Korean holiday of Dano (May 5 on the lunar calendar). The custom connects Dano, mugwort, and tigers. *Aeho*, a tiger made of mugwort, combines the purifying power of mugwort and the bravery of a tiger to create a wall object twice as powerful as these entities would be alone.

Dano marks the beginning of summer. During this time, it is common for venomous snakes, spiders, scorpions, and centipedes to enter houses to escape the heat. Once inside, they may harm inhabitants. People hung plants with strong scents, such as mugwort, garlics, and acorus, on their gates or put bunches in the corners of their homes to ward off these creatures. Notably, mugwort was used due to its potent antiseptic properties and strong scent.

Meanwhile, tigers are often featured in wall objects to chase away evil spirits. Many families put a picture of a tiger on their doors or walls at the beginning of a new year. According to folk customs, putting a picture of a tiger on your door during an outbreak of malaria or cholera would cure the disease. Tiger bones were also hung on doors according to the belief that a tiger, the king of animals, can scare away evil spirits. When people created a new door or bought new furniture, they carved or wrote the Sino-Korean character of the king on it, which was a symbol of the tiger rather

than the actual king.

Although people do not hang up *aeho* today, they used to hang it on their gates to prevent evil spirits and bad energy from entering their homes. People relied on the purifying power of mugwort and the bravery of the tiger to prevent bad events.

Tiger

Changgwí

창귀

Ghosts of the victims of tigers

A ghost of a dead man or woman eaten by a tiger.

In the old days, Koreans believed that a person eaten by a tiger would become a particular kind of ghost called *changgwí*. *Changgwí* becomes a slave to the tiger and roams around next to the tiger, serving the tiger by finding it food and providing it with directions. *Changgwí* can only escape the tiger's possession and control after the tiger eats another person—when that happens, the role of *changgwí* is passed on to the new victim. Therefore, *changgwí* are always looking for other people for their tigers to eat. *Changgwí* find neighbors, friends, and anyone else they know and call them out to be eaten by their tigers.

Changgwí like sour plums and conchs. When they eat these foods, they forget to escort their tigers. *Changgwí* always weep and sing sad songs. Accordingly, people who sing sad songs and cry for no reason are believed to be possessed by *changgwí*.

When a tiger eats a human, it leaves the head and some of the other body parts behind.

Dragon

Chimhodu

침호두

A ritual

A ritual to pray for rain by submerging a tiger's head in the river.

Chimhodu is a ritual in which a tiger's head is placed where a dragon lives to trigger the dragon to ascend. The ritual is intended to make it rain based on the belief that "clouds may rise when a dragon moves, and rain will fall when the clouds form."

The methods used to trigger the dragon to move included luring the dragon with the things it favored, threatening it with the things it did not like, and corrupting the place it lived. *Chimhodu* is considered a way of intimidating the dragon with the tiger, a hostile beast that the dragon does not like. A Chinese text states that a lion was hung from a tree next to a well where a dragon was sleeping and offered to the dragon. While the tiger and lion could have been used as an animal to intimidate the dragon, the head of a tiger was traditionally used in *giuje* in Korea.

During the Joseon Dynasty, *chimhodu* was held in the Han River. Later, it was held in other locations. In the early Joseon Dynasty, *chimhodu* was an official part of the national *giuje* and practiced in lands, ponds, pools, and swamps across different regions where dragons were believed to live.

While the tiger's head used in *chimhodu* was an object used to threaten *Yongsin*, it was considered a sacrifice sincerely prepared from the perspective of Confucianism. Although many other *giuje* rituals were reduced or revised in the late Joseon Dynasty, *chimhodu* continued to be



Tiger attacked a village house | Le Petit Journal | 1909 | Korea National Arboretum

Historically, when bereaved family members found the corpse of a relative eaten by a tiger, they cremated the victim, piled stones on top of the body to form a grave, covered the grave with *siru*, and stuck an iron skewer (used for a spinning wheel) into the grave to break the vicious cycle of possession by *changgwí*. It is forbidden to approach this type of grave; people are advised to sever ties with the victim and need not remove weeds from their graves. The round-shaped *siru*, symbolizing the sky, serves as a tool for killing living beings and confines *changgwí*; meanwhile, the iron skewer, which symbolizes thunder, represents being stuck like a spinning wheel, which only rotates in the same place.

used as a method for overcoming drought in national and regional *giuje*.

Tiger

Fulu Featuring a Tiger

호랑이를 그린 부적
Fulu

A *fulu* made to drive away evil spirits, prevent various disasters, and pray for good luck, well-being, and blessings.

This *fulu* features a painting of a ferocious tiger. It was created in the hope that the tiger's bravery and ferocity would ward off disasters, bad spirits, and ghosts and subsequently prevent related suffering.

According to old texts, there was a custom of putting up a picture of a tiger on the gates of both palaces and private houses on January 1 in the lunar calendar. This custom was based on the belief that the strength of the tiger would

prevent bad spirits from entering the house.

While most *fulu* include characters or unintelligible pictures, *fulu* featuring tigers include clear images of the tigers. Such tigers are represented in various ways; for example, these *fulu* may depict a tiger alone, a tiger in a bamboo forest, a tiger lying on its stomach, a tiger with a dragon, a tiger with the imaginary animal called Hyeonmu, or a tiger with a three-headed hawk on its back.

A *fulu* is usually drawn in red because it is believed that ghosts do not like red. As such, depictions of tigers on *fulu* were also in red. *Fulu* with hand-drawn tigers or engravings of tigers were used more as charms to protect against evil than shamanistic tools to pray for good luck and were attached to doors, worn on the body, and, sometimes, burned and eaten.

A tiger is considered "the animal of *yang* and the king of all animals." A tiger *fulu* was believed to catch, break, and eat ghosts and goblins—beings of *yin*. In other words, the tiger symbolized bravery and absolute power, and Koreans had an almost religious belief that the tiger could drive off evil spirits. Based on this perception, a tiger was drawn to ward off evil spirits, and the body parts of a tiger, such as its whiskers, claws, and teeth, were hung as ornaments and used as *fulu*.



Width: 35 cm, Height: 62 cm



Width: 45 cm, Height: 59 cm

Tiger painting on Talisman | National Folk Museum of Korea

Dragon

Giuje

기우제
A ritual

A ritual to pray for rain to overcome a drought.

In traditional societies without water supply



Giuje(Ritual for rain) | Seosan, Chungcheongnam-do | National Folk Museum of Korea | Ki Kkaburgi



Giuje(Ritual for rain) | Seosan, Chungcheongnam-do | National Folk Museum of Korea | Firing

facilities, people held various types of *giuje* to overcome droughts. Although droughts are a natural climate phenomenon, they were traditionally attributed to the ruler's lack of virtue.

Specifically, some ancient tribal nations in Korea blamed the king by responding to a poor harvest due to drought with sayings such as "The king should be changed or killed." Even if the people did not change or kill the king, they believed droughts were due to the king's lack of virtue and poor politics. They prayed for rain through various *giuje* rituals to compensate for his wrongdoings.

A *giuje* is held to pray to a dragon, a god of water. The people of the Goryeo Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 9th to 14th centuries) made dragons out of clay or painted dragons to pray for rain. During this time, *giuje* were held at rivers or ponds where dragons were thought to live. Later, the people of the Joseon Dynasty (from the 14th to the 20th centuries) threw tiger heads into the Han River for dragons, hoping to encourage rain. They also performed shamanistic rituals (for which they caught and

harassed lizards, which look like dragons), hoping that a dragon would make it rain. Additionally, common people held rituals at ponds where they believed dragons may live and sometimes coated surrounding rocks with the blood of dogs, which were considered evil, believing the dragon would bring rain to wash away the blood.

Giuje were held multiple times until it rained. Further, many different types of *giuje* were often held simultaneously under the belief that more *giuje* would increase the likelihood of rain.

Tiger

Hosallyanggut

호살랑굿
A ritual

A ritual performed in Hwanghaedo, a place in central-west region of Korea, in the form of a play to appease the spirits of those eaten by tigers.



Art of Hosallyanggut(Shaman performance) | 2004 | Kim Eun-hee



Offering dedicated for Hosallyanggut(Shaman performance) | 2004 | Kim Eun-hee

Tigers are known to be featured in various old texts and myths. While these tigers were considered majestic beings, they were also feared for the potential harm they could cause. *Gut* (a kind of shamanistic Korean ritual), such as *hosallyanggut*, seemed to have been conducted as one of the measures taken to prevent tiger attacks.

Hosallyanggut was held to console the spirits of victims killed by tigers and prevent future accidents at a time when there were many tigers in the country. Among other rituals performed in Hwanghaedo, *hosallyanggut* was very special. It is specifically intended to pacify the spirits of those who died because of tigers. *Hosallyanggut* is the final step conducted outside the house as part of a ritual performed by a family or village that had ancestors killed by tigers.

What is important in *hosallyanggut* is not the people killed by tigers. Although *hosallyanggut* is believed to pacify the spirits of those bitten to death by tigers, it is a ritual to appease the spirits of tigers and pray that they will not harm people.

The main character in *hosallyanggut* is a tiger. By embodying the tiger's perspective, depicting its behavior, and being treated as a tiger, future tiger attacks can be prevented. As part of this process, dog meat is prepared as a special offering.

Another thing to note regarding *hosallyanggut* is that sounds and behaviors are more important than words during the ritual. Specifically, the ritual dedicates a great deal of time to mimicking the sounds and behaviors of a tiger, including crawling with the gait of a tiger and making noises that scare other living beings.

Hosallyanggut reflects a specific view of animism, recognizing animals as a part of nature, just like humans, rather than something to be

defeated. The tiger is portrayed as deserving of respect. Further, *hosallyanggut*'s focus on behaviors is unique in that it stems from a desire to represent the tiger from its own perspective.

Tiger

Hoseonang

호서낭

A spirit

A deity enshrined in a house after a person or cow had been harmed by a tiger in Ganghwado, Incheonsi in the central-west region of Korea.

Tiger attacks occurred once in a while in traditional societies. While the tiger is a beast of prey, it was also conceptualized in Korea as a mountain spirit or a messenger of a mountain spirit. These beliefs influenced particular ideas and rituals related to tiger attacks in Korea, such as *Hoseonang* family beliefs. The emergence and worship of *Hoseonang* is not a coincidence in terms of family religion.

A hat worn by a soldier and clothes worn by a soldier are used as the divine symbol of *Hoseonang* and placed and sealed outside the house or outside the wall. As it involves a tiger deity to be worshiped and feared, *Hoseonang* is feared by worshippers and even shamans and given special treatment, unlike other deities. For instance, when food is brought in from outside or special food is prepared in a house, it is necessary to inform *Hoseonang* before eating it.

When a shaman is called to conduct a ritual for family deities, families who worship *Hoseonang* sacrifice a dog. They put on hats and clothes traditionally worn by soldiers as a divine symbol of *Hoseonang* before enacting a symbolic

play. In general, tigers and dogs are at odds with each other. The relationship between the tiger and dog can be inferred by the fact that tiger statues were set up to prevent tiger attacks and dogs were sacrificed in villages while conducting rituals for tigers.

In Ganghwado, *Hoseonang* has four characteristics. First, there is the perception that a family that worships *Hoseonang* is rich. Second, *Hoseonang* it is commonly believed that *Hoseonang* follows women who are about to be married and that, when *Hoseonang* follows married women into their in-laws' home, it may conflict with the in-laws' family deity and cause misfortunes in the family. Third, *Hoseonang* is feared in the context of marriage. Sometimes, *Hoseonang* acts as an obstacle to marriage for a daughter in a family that worships *Hoseonang* because the potential groom's family may fear that worshipping a different deity could conflict with their own family's traditions, potentially leading to misfortunes or disharmony. Therefore, when the bride's family sends her away to marry, they conduct a ritual to prevent *Hoseonang* from following the bride. Fourth, *Hoseonang* is also no longer worshipped when a grandson is born in a family that has been harmed by a tiger. This may because the family uses the birth of the grandson to cut off the fearsome deity.

Tiger

Sansin

산신

A spirit

A spirit of the mountains.

As Korea's natural environment is covered with



Sansin(Mountain god) and Tiger | National Folk Museum of Korea

many mountains, the mountains have been worshiped since the early days. Tigers are the most popular divine embodiment of a mountain spirit.

The encyclopedia, *Ojyeonmunjangjeonsango*, written by a scholar during the Joseon Dynasty states, “the tiger was called the ‘king of the mountains’, and shamans performed rituals.” There are many different names for tigers in Korea, including the following: *sansin* (a spirit who rules the mountains); *sallyeong* (a spiritual being who presides over the mountains); *sangun* (a king of the mountains); *sansinhalmal* (a divine grandmother who rules the mountains); *sanjunghogeol* (an outstanding and distinguished hero who lives in the mountains). These terms show that the Korean people have historically recognized the tiger as the master of the mountains.

Choe Namseon, a scholar in Korea, points out, “By performing rituals for tigers, people regarded them as a spirit. People have performed these rituals for a long time. In Joseon, a dynasty in Korea, this was a folk custom. It is no wonder that the tiger, who is the top beast in the food chain, was considered the most sacred animal in Joseon.” Further, Choe detailed, “The tiger has great power as the king of animals. Owing to its tremendous power, people believed that the tiger could overwhelm anything, win, and ward off bad energy.” He also added, “Mountains are the most sacred places on earth, where the one presiding over heaven embodied his image on earth. The tiger is called a spirit of the mountains, which suggests that the tiger, the master of the mountains, is also the one presiding over heaven.”

As such, the Korean people considered the majestic appearance of the tiger to reflect its beauty as the king of the mountains, master of the mountains, and symbol of the mountain spirits.

The spirituality of the tiger is also commonly found in everyday life. When a bride was married, tiger skin was placed over her palanquin to prevent her from bad luck. Meanwhile, the groom wore tiger claws around his waist. These traditions represented the common belief that the tiger’s power would defeat evil spirits and bad energy. Government officials believed that tiger skin would secure their positions in the government by staving off evil spirits. Owing to such fears of and reverence for tigers and their power, people regarded tigers as sacred beings. Today, the spirits of the mountains are recognized as manifesting in Taoist priests, and the tiger is described as an assistant to these spirits.

Tiger

The Day the Tiger Gets Married

호랑이 장가는 날

A custom

An alternative term for Dongji, one of the 24 periods in the lunisolar calendar.

The phrase “the day the tiger gets married” came from the tiger’s biological characteristics. In folklore, a tiger was associated with heat. Therefore, it was believed that male and female tigers would mate during Dongji, a period during which the weather was cold and the nights were long. This day during Dongji on which tigers were believed to mate was called “the day the tiger gets married.”

In Korea, married couples are advised not to engage in sex on this day. It was believed a couple would have fewer children if they had sex on that day because tigers mate on this day and have only one cub in their lifetimes. Historically, this custom was passed down in only one region, and its meaning has changed a little over time. Specifically, the reference to the biological characteristics of the tiger has been lost; “the day the tiger gets married” is now simply recognized as a day on which sex should be avoided. Notably, the reason for avoiding sex has also changed. As Dongji is the period during which the longest night of the year occurs, ghosts are said to be most active on this day. Sex is believed to bring bad luck and even sudden death to a man on this day because it is believed that it may make the ghosts harm him out of jealousy.

Dragon

Umulje

우물제

A ritual

A ritual for *yongsin* at the well.

Umulje is a popular custom in agrarian societies. Historically, it was common for families to set up food at a well and pray for abundant water. However, *umulje* was also sometimes conducted at the village level. As a deity of water believed to live underwater and create or drive rain and wind, the dragon was considered a deity of *umulje*.

Villagers believed that *yongsin*, who is inseparable from water, protected the communal well and played an important role as a village deity. As *yongsin* was originally related to an



Playing farm music to start *Umulje*(Well ritual) | Naju, Jeollanam-do | 2003 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Altar for *Umulje*(Well ritual) | Naju, Jeollanam-do | 2003 | National Folk Museum of Korea

abundance of water, his functions were expanded to include overseeing agricultural fertility in agrarian societies. *Yongsin's* other multi-layered functions as a deity include governing well-being and fertility in the family.

As *umulje* is held as part of dragon god beliefs, it can be held anywhere *yongsin* can be served. Therefore, the well ritual is not simply a location with a spring, but a significant aspect of the *yongsin* faith, performed in a place where *yongsin* can be worshipped in connection to water.

Dragon

Yongaltteugi

용알뜨기

A custom

A custom in which women wait for a rooster to crow and then race to the well to fetch water on January 15 (*Sangjinil*) on the lunar calendar.

In Korea, 12 animals are considered the guardian deities of the land; these animals include the rat, cow, tiger, and rabbit as well as the dragon, which is an imaginary animal. Each animal is associated with 1 day in a 12-day cycle. *Sangjinil* refers to the first day of the dragon of the



Purified water for dragon day | Danyang, Chungcheongbuk-do | 2003 | National Folk Museum of Korea · Kim Jun-gi



Yongaltteugi(Seasonal customs on first dragon day of the year) | Width: 13 cm, Height: 19 cm | 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

year. This day falls between January 1 and 12 on the lunar calendar, varying from year to year.

Yongaltteugi (which means “scooping dragon eggs”) is a folk custom performed on January 15 or *Sangjinil* in the lunar calendar. During this custom, women wait for roosters to crow at dawn and race to a well to fetch water. It is believed that the dragon descended from the sky to the site of the well the previous night and laid eggs and that getting to the well first to scoop the dragon’s eggs would bring good luck to one’s family, such as a good harvest. The moon on January 15 also resembles the shape of a round egg. Depending on the region, the first person who went to the well left a bundle of straw floating in the well or threw in a clump of rice to indicate to others coming to the well that she had already taken the water.

Notably, *yongaltteugi* is associated with water for farming. The custom is rooted in beliefs that the dragon symbolizes rain and a well that never runs dry. In ancient societies, springs or wells were considered sacred, with spirits that foretold the fate of the country sometimes showing up around wells. Further, the round moon, which looks like an egg, connects this secular belief in the dragon and its eggs to shamanic symbols of production and fertility under the principle of *yin*, which is related to water, the moon, eggs, women, and the earth.

Dragon

Yongdanji

용단지

A folk belief

A jar depicting a dragon or Yongwang.

For a long time, there was a belief in Korea that “many deities reside together in a house.” These deities dwell in certain parts of a house. *Yongdanji*, a type of jar, is one of these deities. As a jar, *yongdanji* is a deity itself or a place where a deity dwells. While one or three *yongdanjis* are sometimes placed in a house, two *yongdanjis* are used in most cases. *Ssalyong* (a rice dragon) symbolizes a woman and is a jar inside which rice is placed. *Ssalyong* is also known as *anyong*. Meanwhile, another type of jar, *kkeochilyong*, symbolizes a man and is also known as *geonyong* or *teoyong*.

Although *yongdanji* itself is not changed every year, the grain inside it is replaced annually. If *yongdanji* is accidentally broken, a new one may be consecrated; however, people can make a wish without *yongdanji* to a deity in the place

where *yongdanji* used to be.

Certain rituals are performed to consecrate *yongdanji* at its first use. Occasionally, a housewife performs these rituals herself; at other times, a priest, such as a shaman, consecrates it in the home.

A housewife may buy an earthenware jar to worship Yongwang (a dragon ruling over water, including the sea). To do so, she will go to a market, pick the first thing she sees, and pay whatever the jar seller asks without any discount. When praying with *yongdanji*, the housewife takes a bath, and her family members act with caution. When a shaman organizes a ritual to consecrate *yongdanji*, the housewife sets up offerings, and the shaman blesses them with the words, “Dear Yongwang, we bring offerings with sincerity to where you are.” The housewife prays sincerely next to the shaman.

A dragon is also brought in to consecrate *yongdanji*. To bring in the dragon, it is necessary to pick a good date to do so, go to a large pond, and greet the dragon. While this is sometimes performed by a shaman, it can also be conducted by the housewife herself. If a housewife greets the dragon herself, she will gather offerings, such as white rice, seaweed soup, and fruit, and go to a river. She will set up her offerings in a place called *yongmeori* (a ceremonial space symbolizing the dragon’s head) and greet



Yongdanji(Dragon pot) | Andong, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 1998 | National Folk Museum of Korea

Yongwang while praying. After she greets the dragon, she will wrap it up in *hanji* (traditional Korean paper) and return home. Once home, she will place the dragon in the jar with rice and close the lid. Subsequently, she will put *hanji* on top of the lid and press it down with a stone.

If the Bodhisattva greets the dragon, the housewife will attach money to a thread, float it in the water, and pull it back up at the time of the greeting. The thread will be extremely heavy because the dragon is being dragged along with it. Next, the housewife will pound and put rice in the jar and add water. The following day, when the rice in the jar is soggy with water, it is believed that the dragon sits in, and the housewife will begin to worship *yongdanji*. *Yongdanji* is usually passed down by housewives, and as it is usually worshipped by a female adult in the family, such as a mother-in-law or grandmother-in-law, a new daughter-in-law will continue to worship it.

Yongdanji is not meant to be seen by just anyone. Accordingly, a housewife may be extremely reluctant to allow others look at it. Thus, she may be careful about letting other people enter her house. While rituals for *yongdanji* vary across families, they are typically performed during the major holidays and October harvest of the lunar calendar, like rituals for other family deities. People offer a bowl of rice and a cup of clear water. Some families perform a simple ritual of grinding the grain in *yongdanji* when the first barley emerges in the spring and grinding it again in the fall when new rice emerges. Additionally, rituals are performed in the spring to pray for a good harvest, and temporary rituals are conducted with *yongdanji* during prolonged droughts or severe flooding to pray for rain or control rainfall.

In summary, *yongdanji* is considered a family

deity that increases a family's wealth, including through farming, protects the house, and promotes peace within the family. As it is also a deity of wealth, especially grain, its location is significant. It is commonly said that *yongdanji* should be served in a "place where the dragon sits." The "place where the dragon sits" is a place that involves and protects fortune. Therefore, *yongdanji* is usually placed in the kitchen or shed (where the grain is handled), in the backyard, under the eaves, or along a fence. The placement differs slightly depending on the structure of the house. Notably, these placements of *yongdanji* highlight the nature of its deity—the placement of *yongdanji* at a site of wealth implies that it is a deity associated with fortune.

Dragon

Yongjuldarigi

용줄다리기

A folk game

A tug of war folk game played on January 15 in the lunar calendar with a dragon-shaped rope made out of rice straw.

In Korean, a tug of war—during which people take sides and pull a thick rope to see who wins—is called in *juldarigi*. One of many folk games in Korea, *juldarigi* is documented in written records. A geography book published around 1530 states that "a game of pulling a rope was played by men and women on August 15 in the lunar calendar." Based on written records, *juldarigi* was likely played even earlier than the Goryeo Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 9th to 14th centuries).



Holding a Yongjul(Rope) and walking around guardian tree | Gochang, Jeollabuk-do | 2010 | Song Hwa-seop



Wrapping Yongjul(Rope) around guardian tree | Gochang, Jeollabuk-do | 2010 | Song Hwa-seop



Guardian tree wrapped with Yongjul(Rope) | Gochang, Jeollabuk-do | 2010 | Song Hwa-seop

Juldarigi includes *oejuldarigi*, *ssangjuldarigi*, and *gejuldarigi*. *Juldarigi*, which is associated with a dragon, comprises *oejuldarigi* (using a single rope) and *ssangjuldarigi* (involving two teams using separate ropes that are connected). In both these types, the front of the rope is shaped like a dragon's head, while the tail of the rope resembles a dragon's tail.

Yongjuldarigi is divided into several steps. First, the villagers make *yongjul* (a rope shaped after a dragon) out of rice straw to bring the dragon to the village. Next, they walk around the village with the rope; subsequently, the villagers pull the rope. Finally, the villagers wrap the rope around *dangsannamu* (a tree worshipped as the village's guardian deity).

Korea used to be an agricultural country, with livelihoods generally predicated upon rice

farming. The key factors in rice farming include "timely rain and gentle winds." With the dragon regarded as the god of rain and wind, farmers have believed that a dragon in the sky creates harmony and brings rain favorable for farming. Hence, farmers living in plains conducted *yongjuldarigi* with a dragon-shaped rope as part of a new year's ritual to pray for a good rice harvest. *Yongjuldarigi* is considered traditional Korean *juldarigi*.

Dragon

Yongsin

용신

A spirit

A spirit that governs *sahae*.

In Korea, the dragon that rules over water, including the ocean, is called *yongwang* or *yongsin*. The earliest Korean records of *yongsin* are mostly in founding myths. For example, the founding myth of Goguryeo, an ancient kingdom in Korea, features dragons pulling the chariot of Haemosu (a legendary figure who was the son of a god); along these lines, this chariot is referred to as *oryonggeo*—a chariot pulled by five dragons. This founding myth also features a dragon as the animal that Jumong, the founder of Goguryeo, rode when he ascended to heaven after his death. Meanwhile, in the Bak Hyeokgeose myth of Silla, another ancient kingdom in Korea, Allyeong, the national mother, was born from the body of *gyeryong* (a mythical animal with the head of a chicken and the body of a dragon), which showed up in a well.

These examples illustrate that the myths were intended to enhance the divinity of the king by establishing a connection between *yongsin* and the king's rule, as seen in the attempts to link the royal lineage with sacred animals like the dragon in various ancient Korean national origin myths. As *yongsin* is a deity who rules the sea and can travel to and from heaven, *yongsin* is considered an ideal being to deify the king's political authority.

Worship of *yongsin* grew notably during the Silla period, manifesting, in particular, in dragon-related beliefs associated with protecting Buddhism and the nation, which were often combined. For example, during the flourishing

of Buddhism in the Silla period, one legend suggests that "When Munmuwang, the thirtieth king of Silla, heard about the invasion of the Tang Dynasty, he ordered a monk, who went to Yonggung and learned a secret technique, to sink the Tang Dynasty's ships." "According to Munmuwang's last will," in which he stated, "I will become a dragon after I die and will worship Buddhism and protect the country," he was buried in rocks in the East Sea, and afterward, he performed miracles as a dragon protecting the country." "Sinmunwang, the forty-fifth king of Silla, received a jade rod from the dragon, which could defeat enemy soldiers, bring rain during drought, and calm the waves."

Meanwhile, people in folklore worshiped the dragon god as a god of water and believed it had divine powers over rain. In *Samguk yusa*, a book that describes the story of the three kingdoms of Korea from the 4th to the 7th centuries, Imok, a son of a dragon, followed a monk named Boyang into Silla. Boyang instructed Imok to bring rain for farmers without asking permission from the heavenly gods. Boyang also tricked the messenger of the gods, who had come to punish Imok, to save Imok. This story is a notable example of a portrayal of *yongsin* as a god of water, particularly in its association with Buddhism. The aspects presented above highlight the intertwining of *yongsin* belief with Buddhist practices and ideals.

This belief in *yongsin*—especially in his role as a god of water—is currently associated with the inland provinces of Jeolla-do and Chungcheong-do. In these provinces, *yongsin* is considered to live in village wells or springs, where various rituals are accordingly performed. Furthermore, legends about ponds and wells associated with the dragon state that the dragon brought rain and made the land fertile to return

a favor. These legends closely associate *yongsin*—as a god of water—with agriculture.

In terms of the sea, *yongsin* is considered to serve divine functions related to good catches of fish, winds, and waves. Further, *yongsin* is also assumed to reside in Yonggung, a place of exotic treasures.

In shamanism, *yongsin* is also worshiped for governing good catches of fish and being closely associated with individuals who drowned and died. In terms of household deities, the well in a house is connected to Yonggung, and *yongsin* is represented as a deity who governs wealth. These examples show that the vitalizing power of water has been further embodied and expanded through *yongsin* in folklore.

Yongsin is a deity that combines the dragon gods of Buddhism and Taoism along with ancient beliefs in a god of water. Rituals were held for *yongsin* as a deity at the Buddhist and national levels to protect Buddhism and the nation and the shamanic and household levels to pray for a good harvest, good catches of fish, and favorable weather and wind conditions. *Yongsin* is currently worshipped under various names in shamanistic and household traditions.

The name of the related deity situated as most important in Korean culture and literature is Sahaeyongwang. *Sahae* refers to imaginary seas in the four directions of east, west, south, and north, with the eastern, southern, western, and northern seas ruled by Gwangdeongnyongwang, Gwangniyongwang, Gwangtaengnyongwang, and Gwangyeonyongwang, respectively. This perception of Yongwang as responsible for different directions is influenced by the systematic hierarchy and functionality of deities in various religions, such as Buddhism and Taoism.

Dragon

Yongtteok

용떡

Ceremonial food

A dragon-shaped food used as an offering for *yongwang*.

Koreans enjoy certain foods during holidays and important occasions. One of these foods is *tteok*, a rice cake steamed or boiled with grain flour. Historically, a separate table was set up and offered in a shamanistic ceremony devoted to *yongwang* (a deity of family harmony, long life, abundant harvests, plentiful fish catches, and safe travels). Dragon-shaped rice cakes called *yongtteok* were also made. *Yongtteok*, prepared with rice flour just like *jeolpyeon* (rice cakes pressed into squares or rounds with a patterned plate), are shaped like dragons by hand and coated with food colorants. Typically, two *yongtteok* and two rice cakes (of different colors) are made and offered on the table. The size and shape of *yongtteok* are not fixed or standardized; they may vary from one year to another, even when made for one ritual within a single region. Therefore, while *yongtteok* are shaped to look like a dragon, this shape is not fixed.



Yongtteok(Dragon rice cake) | Pohang, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2017 | Hong Tae-han



Yongtteok(dragon rice cake), Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits) | Mapo-gu, Seoul | 2005 | Hong Tae-han

Today, *yongtteok* is used in two rituals: Seoulgut and Donghaeangut. The *yongtteok* used in these rituals are shaped like dragons but otherwise have nothing in common in terms of their shape. Despite their potential differences in shape, anyone can easily recognize that the rice cakes in these rituals are *yongtteok*.

Meanwhile, a rite of passage in Gyeong-sangnam-do, which was studied in 1972, states that *yongtteok* was served at a wedding. In other words, *yongtteok* was also used for ceremonies ingrained in daily life until the 1970s. However, as its shape during this time was not documented, guessing its appearance would be difficult.

As it is made in the shape of a dragon, *yongtteok* is considered sacred. While people may share other types of rice cakes after a ritual, they may not share *yongtteok* as it is an offering to and a representation of *yongwang*. As *yongtteok*

is considered sacred, it is placed at the top of the ritual table.

While *yongwang* is an imaginary being and is usually embodied by a dragon (which is itself an imaginary being), placing *yongtteok* on a ritual table suggests that *yongwang* may show up in real life. Hence, *yongtteok* is not merely a rice cake but a sacred object.

Although many tools and flags symbolize divine beings, it is unusual for a food to symbolize a divine spirit as *tteok* does. *Yongtteok* is the only rice cake, among all those mentioned in historical records, that imitates the shape of an animal.

Dragon

Yongwang

용왕

A spirit

A god of family peace, family longevity, good harvest, good catches of fish, and safe voyages.

A dragon is a divine being commonly featured in Korean history. In the myth of Jumong, the founding myth of the ancient Korean kingdom of Goguryeo, dragons pull the chariot of Haemosu, a son of the god. Furthermore, Jumong rides a dragon to the sky after his death. Allyeong, the national mother of the ancient Korean kingdom of Silla, was born from the body of *gyeryong* (a mythical animal with the head of a chicken and the body of a dragon). Additionally, Muwang, the thirtieth king of Baekje, another ancient Korean kingdom, is described as a descendant of a dragon. One of these dragons is *yongwang*—the Korean name for a dragon that lives in the sea, controls rain and water, and protects Buddhism.

In folklore, beliefs in *yongwang* are formed at three levels. The first level comprises village beliefs. At the beginning of the year, fishing villages hold *punggeoje* rituals to pray for well-being and good catches of fish. The most important part of a *punggeoje* ritual is the *jesa* ritual, which is dedicated to *yongwang*; indeed, *yongwang* is worshiped as the most important deity at various *punggeoje* rituals across the country. In shamanism, *yongwang* is also closely associated with governing good catches of fish and those who drowned and died. In household belief systems, *yongwang* is worshipped as a deity who presides over family peace, family longevity, a good harvest, good catches of fish, and safe voyages.

Various rituals exist for *yongwang*. The most common ritual, held by housewives at the family level, is called *yongwangmeogigi*. During *yongwangmeogigi*, a housewife serves food to *yongwang* and makes a wish. The day on which *yongwangmeogigi* is performed varies by family. It is most frequently held in January in the lunar calendar. In some cases, it is held on specific dates, such as January 3, 6, 7, 13, 14, and 15 in the lunar calendar. Some people do not associate *yongwangmeogigi* with a specific day but believe that it should be held roughly within the month of January or no later than January 15 in the lunar calendar.

Across regions, the main purpose of *yongwangmeogigi* is to pray for family peace and health. The ritual is focused on praying for good luck and health for everyone in the family during the year and preventing bad luck. In fishing villages, people working on the sea pray for safety at sea and good catches of fish. In rural areas, people pray for good harvests for the year.

Notably, *yongwangmeogigi* is also known as *nongsayongwang* in rural areas. *Nongsayongwang* rituals are held in January and October in the lunar calendar. *Nongsayongwang* in January is to wish for a good harvest, while *nongsayongwang* in October is to express gratitude for a good harvest from the year. In other cases, people may perform the ritual to wish for the recovery of an ill family member or wish for the safety of a traveling family member.

The location in which *yongwangmeogigi* is held in the house is fixed—people rarely change the location in which they perform *yongwangmeogigi*, except when a regional development or natural disasters destroy the site of the ritual. It is generally considered a bad thing to change the location. Hence, daughters-in-law often hold *yongwangmeogigi* in the exact locations

where their mothers-in-law did.

More specifically, *yongwangmeogigi* can be held in three places. The first is the well; however, this is only possible if the house has a private well, which is relatively uncommon. The second place is the communal village well. Some people intentionally avoid this well because it is used by many others. Meanwhile, some families hold rituals at the communal well and fetch water from the well to conduct *yongwangmeogigi* in their kitchens or *jangdokdae* (a place used to store or ferment food). The third place is the waterfront around the village—the most common site of *yongwangmeogigi*. Indeed, in principle, *yongwangmeogigi* is conducted outside of the house if possible. The specific location varies depending on the village's geography. People in fishing villages go to nearby beaches, including sandy beaches, to conduct the ritual, while those in villages close to mountains go to nearby valleys or streams with clear water. In villages adjacent to ponds, people conduct the ritual near a pond.

Water is the source of all life, including human life, and the archetype of purification and vitality. Perceptions of the properties of water formed the background for beliefs in a god of water, embodied by *yongwang*. Therefore, families relied on the divinity and power of *yongwang* to solve their real-life problems. In particular, religious beliefs of housewives, who were responsible for the health of their families through their use of water, were most closely connected to *yongwang*.

Dragon

Yongwangje

용왕제
A ritual

A ritual in which individual or community wishes are made to *yongwang* at a place where water is present, such as at a well, spring, stream, valley, river, or sea.

In Korea, the dragon is worshiped as a god of water. A deified dragon is called *yongwang* or *yongsin* in Korean. Various rituals are held for such dragons, such as *yongwangje*. The history of *yongwangje* can be traced back to the histories of *yongwang* or *yongsin* and shrines dedicated to them.

In Korea, dragons have been worshiped since ancient times, and various rituals for *yongwang* have been documented from Silla (a kingdom in Korea from 57 BC to the 10th century) to Joseon (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries). *Yongwangje* has been conducted widely across different periods and is passed down today in many parts of the country.

Yongwangje includes *gosa* (a *jesa* ritual for a family deity to wish away bad luck and hope for prosperity and good luck) and is conducted at the individual or family level at a well, valley, or riverside. Broadly, *yongwangje* is a shamanic ritual performed by people associated with boats or fishing ground to pray for the safety of sailing crews and good catches. This ritual is also performed to pray for the release of animals at temples. *Yongwangje* is also held as part of a village ritual.

The table prepared with food in *yongwangje* is called *yongwangsang*. When presented collectively in a village, *yongwangsang* is colorful and

rich and features a combination of shamanist, Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian elements. Meanwhile, when prepared by an individual family, *yongwangsang* is considerably modest. At the family level, *yongwangsang* may involve rice, dried pollock, *namul* (a variety of edible grass or leaves), chestnuts, dates, and liquor, depending on what the family can afford; in particular, raw uncooked rice is typically offered. At the end of *yongwangje*, a small portion of the offering is removed and thrown into the sea to perform *yongwangmeogigi*.

Yongwangje is a ritual observed nationwide—across plains, mountains, and coastal areas. The fact that this ritual has been passed down across the country suggests that dragon beliefs are universal. Notably, dragons are associated with water, which is required for human life but can also be terrifying. Accordingly, people have prayed to *yongwang* or *yongsin* for peace, peacefulness, misfortune prevention, abundance, childbirth, and longevity without disease. Based on dragon beliefs, *yongwangje* is a cultural ritual that reflects human consciousness about the ecological and natural environment. It continues to be passed down today.

Dragon

Yongwangmeogigi

용왕먹이기
A ritual

A ritual for *yongwang*, a deity who rules over water, or an offering to *yongwang* made during a ritual.

In Korea, the dragon that rules over water, including the ocean, is called *yongwang*. A ritual



Fish shaped flag | Gangneung, Gangwon-do | 2022 | Yun Dong-hwan



Residents and shamans pray to the Sea | Uljin, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2018 | Kim Hyeong-geun



Ritual for Yongwang(Sea god) | Geoje, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2022 | Kim Hyeong-geun



Yongwangje(Ritual for sea god) | Geoje, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2022 | Yun Dong-hwan

for *yongwang* takes different forms depending on its origin. Some rituals are held by the village community as a whole, while others are organized by housewives. Hence, the form and size of rituals vary significantly. A ritual hosted by an individual or family is called *yongwangmeogigi*. In a community ritual, an offering to *yongwang* is called *yongwangmeogigi*. *Yongwangmeogigi* refers to “feeding *yongwang*”—making an offering to *yongwang*. As a community ritual is not conducted only for *yongwang*, the part of the ritual specific to *yongwang* is called *yongwangmeogigi*.

While *yongwangmeogigi* means a ritual for *yongwang*, it more broadly refers to an offering made to *yongwang* as part of a community ritual for the peace of the village. In a narrower sense, it refers to an individual ritual conducted for the peace of a family and the longevity and health of the family’s children. While a community ritual is often held near a sea or river, an indi-

vidual ritual is held near a stream or spring or in *jangdokdae* with water scooped from a source. All these rituals commonly serve *yongwang*. However, individual rituals are more closely associated with the act of “feeding” him. More specifically, while a community ritual may only include some elements related to *yongwang* and, more broadly, worship different spirits associated with the community, an individual ritual focused on *yongwangmeogigi* only worships *yongwang*.

Yongwangmeogigi is conducted through *yongwang*, who receives an offering of food, and the worshipper, who holds the ritual to make a wish. *Yongwang* and the worshipper are connected through the offering. The worshipper expresses a specific wish to be fulfilled through the act of feeding. While offerings in a community ritual are usually extravagant, offerings in individual rituals for *yongwangmeogigi* are



Ritual for Welcoming *Yongwang*(Sea god) | Suyeong-gu, Busan | 2018 | Hong Tae-han



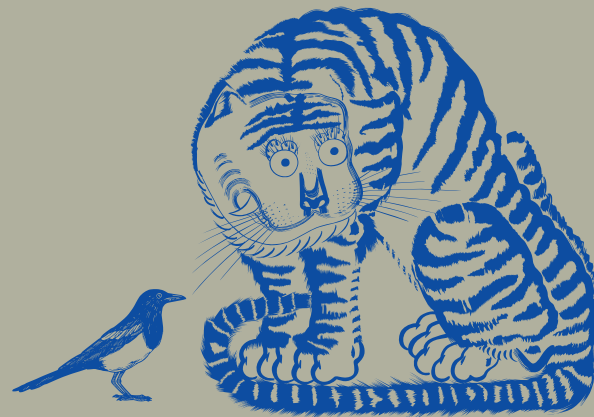
Offering *Yongtteok*(dragon rice cake) to *Yongwang*(Sea god) | Pohang, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2017 | Hong Tae-han

and most individual rituals have disappeared. Meanwhile, community rituals are often conducted as part of larger performances. It is hard to find *yongwangmeogigi* with the same meaning the ritual held in the past.

typically modest and prepared according to an individual’s financial situation. After the ritual, some portion of the offering is thrown into the water to symbolize feeding *yongwang*.

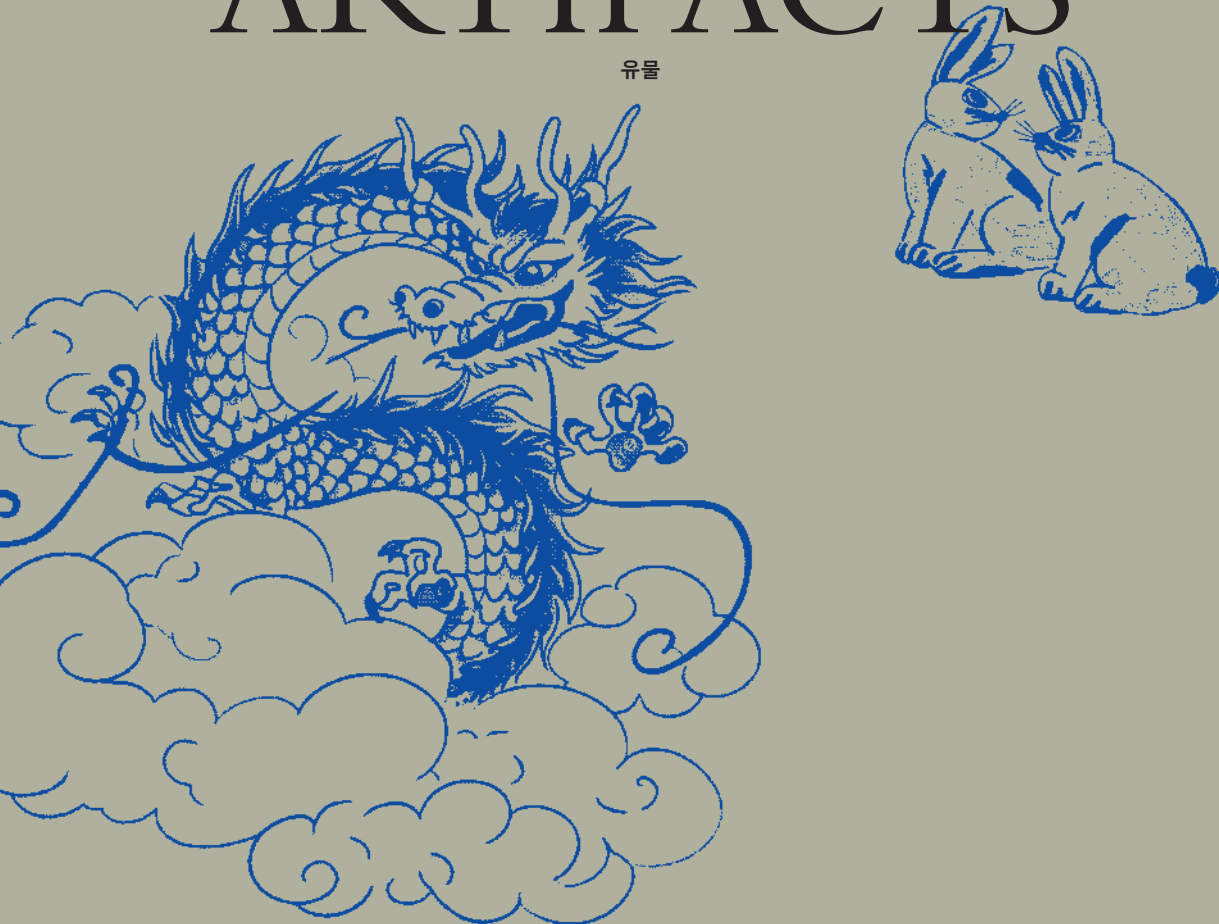
Water, governed by *yongwang*, is the source of all life—nothing can live without it. Therefore, *yongwangmeogigi* is associated with a desire to obtain the life force of water. Thus, people praying to *yongwang* make a wish and feed *yongwang* to receive something in return. While worshipping *yongwang* is a way for people to overcome their weakness before a transcendent being, it also represents an equal relationship between a god and humans, evidenced by the belief that people can receive something in return for feeding *yongwang*. Although people make an offering and pray to *yongwang*, this is not a passive act—they are working to attain something they want. As such, *yongwangmeogigi* is a way for people to serve an absolute being.

Today, attention to *yongwang* has weakened,



ARTIFACTS

유물



A Rabbit-shaped Water Dropper
토끼 모양 연적

A Tiger-themed Mural
호랑이가 주제인 벽화

Baekhogi
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Clothes Made of Rabbit Fur
토끼털로 만든 옷

Eo
어

Eobyeonseongnyongdo
어변성룡도

Gollyongpo
곤룡포

Hoeungbaktodo
호응박토도

Hogeon
호건

Hoja
호자

Hopi
호피

Hosu
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달과 토끼무늬 수막새

Ssangtodo
쌍토도

Tiger Claw Norigae
호랑이 발톱 노리개

Tiger Hyungbae
호랑이 흉배

Ullyongdo
운룡도

Yongdaegi
용대기

Yongdu
용두

Yonggi
용기

Yonghomunbaedo
용호문배도

Yongwangdo
용왕도

Rabbit

A Rabbit-shaped Water Dropper

토끼 모양 연적

A water dropper

A rabbit-shaped water dropper made of white porcelain.

This white porcelain rabbit-shaped water dropper is shaped like a rabbit crouching with its front paws gathered neatly together. The rabbit in the water dropper features exaggerated buck teeth and large ears. The rabbit's eyes and lips and the bell around its neck are painted to create dimension. The rabbit's slightly raised head, lowered ears, raised tail, and bell make it look familiar.

In East Asia, people wrote letters with *meok* grinded on *byeoru*. Water must be poured into *byeoru* using a water dropper, which is a container that holds water. While many water droppers from the Joseon Dynasty are shaped like animals, such as frogs, toads, chickens, and carp, it is extremely rare to see a rabbit-shaped one. Nonetheless, the rabbit was not a favorite among literati, who valued *ren* (humaneness) and *yi* (righteousness), as it was perceived as a cunning animal.



Rabbit shaped white porcelain water dropper | Bottom diameter: 9 cm, Height: 6 cm | 15th century | National Museum of Korea

Tiger

A Tiger-themed Mural

호랑이가 주재인 벽화

A mural

A mural featuring a tiger.

In Korea, tigers were painted in murals for various purposes. First, tigers were featured as prey in hunting murals. Second, some murals show the tiger deity, Baekho (one of the Four Guardian Deities), guarding a dead body. Third, murals on the outside walls of temples may feature a tiger as a guardian of Buddhism. Fourth, murals of a tiger are also painted to ward off bad luck.

The earliest known mural featuring a tiger is a prehistoric petroglyph. Korean petroglyphs portray tigers as human prey, along with whales, turtles, deer, and wild boar. These petroglyphs seem to have been painted during the hunter-gatherer era as shamanic rituals to encourage secure and plentiful hunts. Although the figures in these murals are simple outlines, they remain vivid.

Later, tigers were also featured in tomb murals. For example, Baekho was featured in a tomb mural from Goguryeo, an ancient kingdom in Korea. Specifically, this painting featured the Four Guardian Deities—Cheongnyong in the east, Baekho in the west, Jujak in the south, and Hyeonmu in the north—as well as Hwangnyong in the center. These deities are believed to be guardians for people with high statuses, such as kings, rather than prey. Meanwhile, in a tomb mural from the 5th century (when folk-style paintings were popular) a small image of Baekho was painted on a beam; in this image, Baekho's body is rigidly portrayed with straight lines. Baekho was also



Suryeopdo (Painting of hunting tiger) | Muyongchong (Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Goguryeo Kingdom) | 5th century

featured as a deity guarding the western wall in the paintings of the Four Guardian Deities that became increasingly popular in the 6th and 7th centuries; notably, in these paintings, Baekho was portrayed in a fluid and dynamic way.

During the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to 20th centuries), a painting featuring the Four Guardian Deities was painted in a mural in the royal tomb. The style of the mural differed from that of the one depicted on stone coffins in previous periods. While the insides of royal tombs have not been disclosed, their appearances are described in old paintings and books. A mural of the Four Guardian Deities was also identified in a noble

tomb during the Joseon Dynasty. On the western wall is a painting of a tiger worth noting for its humorous style, which recalls the folk paintings of the late Joseon Dynasty.

In the late Joseon Dynasty, tigers were painted in murals on the exterior walls of temples as guardians of Buddhism. Tiger paintings were also commonly attached to gates on January 1 in the lunar calendar as a folk custom to prevent bad luck and invite good luck for the year. In the 19th century, folk images favored by the common people were incorporated into Buddhist paintings and murals and tiger murals were often painted in temples to boost the finances of struggling temples. While these tigers were depicted as fearsome and majestic to ward

off bad luck, they were also influenced by folk paintings and thus often depicted in a humorous way.

Tiger

Baekhogi

백호기

A flag

A ceremonial flag featuring a white tiger symbolizing the king.

The Sino-Korean word for a white tiger is *Baekhho*. *Baekhho* is one of the Four Guardian Deities; specifically, it is the deity that governs the West (among the five directions) and the season of fall. The Four Guardian Deities, including *Baekhho*, were conceptualized between the end of the Warring States Period (a transitional period from 403 BC to 221 BC) and the Former Han Dynasty, an ancient kingdom in China. In Korea, *Baekhho* was first identified on the wall and ceiling of Muyongchong, a tomb in the ancient kingdom of Goguryeo.

In the East, tigers were considered the kings of animals. It was believed that when a

tiger reaches the age of 500, its fur turns white, and it becomes *Baekhho*, a divine entity. *Baekhho* was considered a deity of war and was often depicted with clouds behind it. It was typically paired with Cheongnyong, with wind following behind *Baekhho*. It was depicted with the clouds following Cheongnyong and the winds following it. It was also believed that *Baekhho* would emerge when a ruler governs benevolently or *Taepyeong Sungdae* (a peaceful period) arrives.

This idea of *Baekhho* is reflected in the *Baekhogi* ceremonial flag. This flag was confirmed as a ceremonial flag in the emperor's protocol in *The New Book of Tang*, a history book of the Tang Dynasty in China. In Korea, it was featured in *Goryeosa*, a history book of the Goryeo Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 9th to 14th centuries). One of five flags that symbolize the king, *Baekhogi* was for the king's parade and when the king commanded and trained troops. There is a saying about *Baekhogi* in the military: "A flag is seen by the eyes and heard by the ears."

Baekhogi featured *Baekhho* and clouds against a white background and included four colors (blue, red, yellow, and white) and a flame-shaped decorative cloth. The flagpole was painted black, and its bottom was decorated with iron. After *The Veritable Records of King Sejong*, a book written during the reign of King Sejong (the fourth king of the Joseon Dynasty), this form of *Baekhogi* was institutionalized in *Gukjooryeui*, a book about the five rites of the Joseon Dynasty, and remained in *Daehanyajeon*, a book published during the Korean Empire (a monarchical state established in Korea in the 19th and 20th centuries).

Meanwhile, since ancient times, *Baekhho* has been used to refer to mountains or a spirit of the West in *pungsu* (a theory that predicts human



Baekhogi(White tiger flag of royal procession) | Length: 189 cm, Height: 176 cm | late 15th century | National Palace Museum of Korea

fortune based on topography and orientation).

Rabbit

Clothes Made of Rabbit Fur

토끼털로 만든 옷

Clothing

A type of clothing made of fur removed or shaved off of a rabbit.

Teoljeogori is a traditional Korean *jeogori*, which is a top lined with rabbit fur. The National Folk Museum of Korea holds traditional garments made of fine silk woven with multiple patterns and lined with yellow-brown rabbit fur as well as winter gear made of pure white rabbit fur. The Peabody Museum in the United States also has winter gear made of rabbit fur. Most traditional garments made of rabbit fur that have survived until today were made between the early and mid-20th century.

Until the 1970s, it was popular to produce rabbit fur at home. Along these lines, lifestyle magazines published information about rabbit breeding and fur-handling techniques.

The fur of the Angora rabbit, which used to be bred for the mass production of rabbit fur, is light, warm, soft, and white in color. It is lighter



Baeja(Rabbit fur vest) | Chest: 50 cm, Length: 39 cm | after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Rabbit fur children's wear | Chest: 23 cm, Length: 34 cm | 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea



Pungcha(Rabbit fur hat) | Depth: 36 cm, Length: 38 cm | after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea

and warmer than wool and absorbs moisture six times more than cotton fibers. However, it is difficult to extract threads from Angora rabbit fur, and products made from it can shed easily and are prone to generating static electricity. Therefore, wool, silk, or cotton is often mixed with this fur.

Tiger

Eo

어

A percussion instrument

A tiger-shaped percussion instrument used in the performance of *aak* ritual music as early as the Goryeo Dynasty.

The *eo* is a Chinese percussion instrument from the Song Dynasty. It is also known as *gal*. Since the Goryeo Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 9th to the 14th centuries), *aak* (music of the court) was used in ritual and annual ceremonies, in which *aak* instruments like *eo* were accordingly used. Currently, *eo* is used in Jongmyojeryeak (music used to perform rituals at Jongmyo, a royal shrine of the Joseon Dynasty, which extended from the 14th to the 20th centuries in Korea) and Munmyojeryeak (music used to perform *jesa* ceremonies at a shrine dedicated to Confucius).

Aak instruments can be divided into eight categories (metal, stone, silk, bamboo, wood, leather, gourd, or soil) based on their materials. *Eo* is made of wood. The instrument consists of three parts: a body shaped like a tiger lying on its stomach, a base, and a stick used for performance. The part of the instrument that comprises the part of the body shaped like a tiger's back includes twenty-seven teeth. The stick is used to



Eo (Tiger shaped royal court music instrument) | Length: 10 cm, Depth: 33 cm, Height: 42 cm | National Gugak Center

scratch these teeth or hit the part of the instrument shaped like a tiger's head to make sounds. As noted above, *eo* is also known as *gal*, which recalls the sound made by scratching the teeth, similar to the Chinese pronunciation of the Sino-Korean character *gal*. The stick used to play *eo* is called *jin*, reflecting that *eo* is an instrument requires pause and restraint to play. Currently, the body of *eo*, which is a preserved artifact in the National Gugak Center, is white. The white coloring may have been adopted because it symbolizes the white tiger, believed to be the god who protects the west. Originally, this part of the instrument might have been yellow.

Dragon

Eobyeonseongnyongdo

어변성룡도

A folk painting

A painting of a carp transforming into a dragon.



Yangnido, From fish to dragon | 15th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

The correct name of *Eobyeonseongnyongdo* is *Eoribyeonseongnyongdo*, but it is more commonly known as *Yakrido*. *Eobyeonseongnyongdo* is an old painting based on an ancient story. In Korea, the patterns decorating the surfaces of ceramics, such as *Goryeocheongja*, predated the paintings that have survived to this day. As such, paintings featuring this motif were likely created as early as the Goryeo Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea extending from the 9th to the 14th centuries). However, the presence of this motif is more clearly evident in folk paintings created during the late Joseon Dynasty in Korea. Specifically, these paintings feature *Yakrido* or *Eoribyeonseongnyongdo*, which means “jumping carp.” Nevertheless, the motif was a favorite component of paintings more generally before these folk paintings. While few examples remain today, this motif remains evident in the works of some literati artists of the late Joseon Dynasty. Some types of *Eobyeonseongnyongdo* are also observed in the patterns of white porcelain dishes from the late Joseon Dynasty (i.e., during the 19th century).

The word *deungyongmun* is often used in Korea and China. The term means passing through a difficult stage and becoming significantly successful. It originates from a story about a carp climbing and jumping against *yongmun*, a rapid current upstream of the Yellow River in China, to turn into a dragon. Artworks related to this topic include early crafts and paintings from China and Korea.

Yongmun is the name of a canyon upstream of the Yellow River. As the water in this area flows extremely quickly, it is rare to see fish jumping against the current. According to a legend, the fish that swims successfully against this current will transform into a dragon. The expression “climb *yongmun*”—captured in the

term *deungyongmun*—means overcoming all odds and becoming successful.

The opposite of *deungyongmun* is *jeomaek*. *Jeom* means getting hurt, while *ae* means the forehead. Fusing these terms, *jeomaek* refers to a fish that fails to climb *yongmun*, hits a rock, cracks open its forehead, and floats away while bleeding. The term is used to refer to a loser in a competition for survival.

Eobyeonseongnyongdo was favored as a painting topic as it symbolized success and enabled various forms of expression. It was often used to decorate places for celebrations, rooms for newlyweds, and men's chambers.

Dragon

Gollyongpo

곤룡포

A king's robe

Clothes worn by kings, crown princes, and royal grandchildren when they are in office.

Gollyongpo is a royal robe worn by kings, crown princes, and royal grandchildren. It features a dragon pattern embroidered on the front chest, back, and shoulders. The dragon is a classic symbol of a king. Under King Sejong's reign during the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries), a pattern of a dragon with five claws was used for the king, and a pattern of a dragon with four claws was used for the crown prince. Before the reign of King Gojong during the Korean Empire, the kings of the Joseon Dynasty wore *gollyongpo* with three claws.

The appearance of a dragon embroidered on *gollyongpo* changed over time during the Joseon dynasty. The *gollyongpo* of King Taejo,



Yeongchinwang hongnyongpo (King Yeongchin's Red royal robe with cloud pattern) | Length: 120 cm | National Palace Museum of Korea

who founded the Joseon Dynasty, includes a flying dragon twisting in an S-shape (the pattern highlights the dragon's dynamic movement) with auspicious energy coming out of its mouth. The pattern seems to convey the strong energy of the king who founded the country. Meanwhile, the dragon in the *gollyongpo* of Yeongjo, the 21st king of Joseon, faces forward; this posture conveys stability rather than activity. Notably, this forward-facing dragon reflects the nation's economic and cultural progress and stability during this period.

Rabbit

Hoeunbaktodo

호응박토도

A painting

A painting of an extremely tense scene in which a quick, fierce hawk captures a rabbit.

Paintings featuring a hunting hawk are categorized into two types depending on what the hawk is hunting. One type depicts a hawk targeting and capturing birds, such as pheasants and magpies. The other type shows a hawk capturing a rabbit.

Hoeunbaktodo falls into the latter category. One notable *hoeunbaktodo* features a rabbit captured by a hawk near the rocks around a waterfall at the center of the painting, surprised magpies bustling around a pine tree at the top, and a pair of seemingly indifferent pheasants at the bottom. This painting effectively conveys the tension characterizing the scene.

Hoeunbaktodo were not well received by collectors, who associated these paintings with the potential for tense and bad events, like a



Portrait of King Gojong of Empire of Korea | 19th century | Width: 104 cm, Height: 180 cm, Depth: 9 cm | National Museum of Korea



Hoeungbaktodo(Rabbit hunted by falcon painting) | Width: 35 cm, Height: 42 cm | 18th century | National Museum of Korea

rabbit being caught by a hawk.

Hoeungbaktodo is an independent topic with a long tradition, especially in East Asian cultures. Most of the surviving *hoeungbaktodo* paintings in Korea are from the 18th century or later and feature scenes of rabbits captured by hawks and other birds. This style was carried over into the Joseon dynasty and, subsequently, modern times. Furthermore, the style was applied in folk paintings.

Tiger

Hogeon

호건

A hat

A tiger-shaped traditional cloth hat for boys.

Hogeon is a type of hat that was historically worn by boys in upper-class families in Korea. This kind of hat is shaped like a tiger's face. During Korean holidays, boys were dressed in *durumagi* (a traditional overcoat) and *hogeon*. Dressing a boy in *hogeon* was a way to wish for him to emulate the bravery and wisdom of a tiger.

The outside of a *hogeon* is usually made of black thread and silk, while the inside is lined with blue or red fabric. The part that covers the forehead is embroidered with white and red thread in patterns resembling a tiger's eyebrows, eyes, whiskers, and teeth. A tassel is placed where the tiger's nose would be with white thread. There are two ears on top of the hat with red or yellow lining. The tiger's expression may be unique, reflecting the maker's skills. The tiger's cheeks are made separately and tied at the back of the head with a string. The edge and



Hogeon(Tiger shaped headgear for children) | Diameter: 19 cm, Length: 50 cm | 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea



Hogeon(Tiger shaped headgear for children) | 20th century

strap of *hogeon* are often gilded with meaningful quotes or wishes for longevity.

Tiger

Hoja

호자

A porcelain bowl

A bowl shaped like a tiger and used to contain or pour liquids.

Hoja refers to a type of bowl shaped like a crouching tiger with its head raised and its mouth open. An old Chinese text says that *hoja* originated when a tiger was killed with a single arrow, and its head was cut off and used as a urinal. Another old text states that a tiger crouched and opened its mouth so that an imaginary animal, presumably *Girin*, could urinate into its mouth. Nonetheless, some records from earlier periods suggest that it was used as a water or liquor bottle rather than as a urinal. Thus, the true intended use of *hoja* remains unknown.

In China, *hoja* are made of a variety of materials, including wood, bronze, and ceramics. In Korea, *hoja* are made of earthenware and porcelain. Many *hoja* artifacts were uncovered at



Hoja (Ceramic Bowl) | Diameter of top: 5 cm, Length: 26 cm, Height: 20 cm | Gaeseong | 4th century | National Museum of Korea

historical sites in Baekje, an ancient kingdom in Korea; this suggests that Baekje may have been a kingdom of international status at the time. Even after the unification of the three kingdoms in Korea, *hoja* were used by aristocrats and monks; however, their design gradually simplified, and the tiger-like features faded over time.

Tiger

Hopi

호피

Tiger skin

A tiger's pelt placed on *gama*, a traditional Korean litter in which a bride rides on her way to her in-laws. Accordingly, *hopi* is a wedding item.

Hopi is a transcription of the Sino-Korean characters for a tiger's pelt into native Korean characters. In Korea, *gama* ridden by the bride on her way to her in-laws after the wedding ceremony was marked by wrapping three of its sides (all sides except for the front door) with cheesecloth in an X shape or covering its lid with *hopi*. *Hopi* was considered to have the same power as a tiger in defeating evil spirits.

This symbolism stemmed from the tiger's biological characteristics. The tiger's fierceness inspired the idea of protection, leading to a recognition of it as symbol for the conflicting concepts of majesty and protection.

Hopi was also used as a rug for the seats of royal families and other highly respected people, such as authors and scholars. Based on this practice, people wrote the phrase "under *hopi*" after the recipient's name when writing a letter

Tiger

Hosu

호수

A decoration

Tiger whiskers or ornaments shaped like tiger whiskers traditionally attached to the red hats worn by Korean government officials.

Hosu is an ornament on *gwanmo* (an official



Palanquin cover with tiger skin design | 1920 | National Folk Museum of Korea

to recognize the recipient as a valued person. Valued for its practicality as a sign of high status, inherent symbolism, and shamanic connotations, *hopi* has become precious and deeply ingrained in Korean culture.

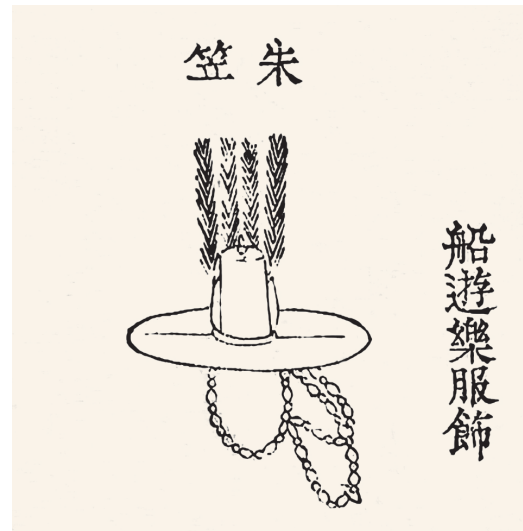
This tradition of *hopi* continues even today, although it is rarely noticed. While *hopi* can no longer be found in Korea due to the near extinction of tigers because of national policies to reduce tiger attacks, a variety of products featuring *hopi* patterns—such as blankets, jackets, and skirts—are still traded for their symbolic significance.



Hat with Hosu (Decoration) | Depth: 8 cm, Length: 46 cm | 1950s | National Folk Museum of Korea



Hat with Hosu (Decoration) | Diameter of bottom: 42 cm, Height: 15 cm | 1950s | National Folk Museum of Korea



Hat with Hosu(Decoration) | 1902 | National Palace Museum of Korea

government hat) worn by the head of the royal guards for the king. Originally, *hosu* was made with barley ears. The dictionary definition of *hosu* is a stiff beard that is similar to a tiger's whiskers. *Hosu* that survive are made of white feathers or thin bamboo.

Placing *hosu* on a government official's hat represents the idea of defeating evil by borrowing the power of the tiger's whiskers. Further, placing barley on their hats is a way of praying for a successful harvest.

There are various records about *hosu*. One notable article details that *hosu* was used as a bribe during the Joseon Dynasty, a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries; this suggests that *hosu* was a valuable object at that time. Another record reports that officials originally put barley ears on their official government hats and later decorated them with *hosu*. There is also a record of a shaman wearing an official red government hat decorated with *hosu* in the late Joseon Dynasty.

Tiger

Kkachihorangi

까치호랑이
A folk painting

A painting of a tiger and a magpie.

One of the most famous themes in Korean painting is the joint depiction of tigers and magpies. This theme originated during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties in China. More specifically, such paintings are rooted in older tiger paintings from the Ming Dynasty, which were introduced to the Joseon Dynasty around the time of the Imjin War (a war during the 16th century involving a Japanese invasion of the Korean Joseon Dynasty) and later established as the Korean painting of *Kkachihorangi*.

Tiger paintings changed significantly during the 19th century. In particular, the number of tiger paintings that featured a magpie in the background sharply increased. Furthermore, other paintings moved the magpie out of the background, foregrounding the relationship between the tiger and the magpie. The contrast between the tiger and the magpie became increasingly intense in some paintings. Notably, the relationship between the tiger and the magpie was eventually flipped in some paintings: the tiger is portrayed as ridiculous, while the magpie is portrayed as proud. This depiction abstracts recognition of the tiger as a predator and makes the tiger more approachable and friendlier.

In Korea, large tiger paintings were popular during the Japanese colonial period in the first half of the 20th century. These depictions of the tiger have been interpreted as attempts to intensify the national pride of the Korean people, who had been humiliated by Japan. The image



Kkachihorangi(folk painting) | Leeum Museum of Art

of the tiger is considered a warning that Japan had disturbed a sleeping tiger and a desperate effort to inspire the people who had been helplessly invaded by Japan.

In Korean culture, there is a general affinity for tigers, magpies, and pine trees, which make up the *Kkachihorangi* painting. Koreans have a warmhearted bond with the tiger. Meanwhile, the magpie is a favorite bird among Koreans because it is believed to bring good luck. Finally, pine trees are the most common type of trees in Korea. In the folk painting of *Kkachihorangi*, these symbols are juxtaposed with a story that satirizes the society of the time. The folk painting of the *Kkachihorangi* portrays a humane story in which the tiger and the magpie fight or reconcile. The tiger, a symbolic animal that chases away evil spirits, ends up being a “dumb tiger”; meanwhile, the magpie, an animal recognized as delivering news, becomes more confi-



Kkachihorangi(folk painting) | Kyonggi University Soseong Museum

dent.

Notably, these symbols are juxtaposed with a story that satirizes the society of the time. The tiger symbolizes a noble or powerful official, while the magpie represents the common people. In the painting, the magpie stands up to the tiger. This depiction may have been cathartic for common people who were unhappy with their status. In fact, the *Kkachihorangi Folktale* was popular among commoners at the time. In this tale, the magpie used her wisdom to trick a powerful tiger, giving voice to the injustices of the contemporary social hierarchy. The *Kkachihorangi* seems to reflect the social changes associated with the rising status of the common people.

Rabbit

Moon - and Rabbit - patterned Sumaksae

달과 토끼무늬 수막새
A roof tile

Sumaksae featuring a rabbit and a toad trying to open the lid of a jar.

In the old days, Koreans believed that rabbits and toads lived on the moon and that katsura trees grew there. This belief is shown in the old arrow quivers and bricks depicting “a rabbit pounding an elixir of life.” This belief is also reflected in the murals in the tombs of Goguryeo (an ancient kingdom in Korea), which feature rabbits, toads, and katsura trees on the moon. Notably, the style of rabbit found on “clay animal figurines” from Silla, another ancient kingdom in Korea, has long ears that seem larger than its body and a tense posture as if it is about



Sumaksae(Roof-end tile) with moon and rabbit design | Diameter: 13 cm, Depth: 2 cm | 8th century | National Museum of Korea

to jump.

According to myth, a legendary spirit rabbit believed to live on the moon, called *oktokki*, prepares an elixir of life and lives for 1,000 years. Meanwhile, katsura trees on the moon keep growing regardless of the number of times they are cut down. Thus, the katsura tree is associated with immortality. It serves as an ingredient in the elixir of life pounded by *oktokki* and a symbol of immortality itself.

A rabbit is also featured in the *Moon- and Rabbit-patterned Sumaksae* from Unified Silla (the first unified kingdom in Korea). *Sumaksae* is a style of roof tile. The *Moon- and Rabbit-patterned Sumaksae* features a rabbit on the right and a toad on the left with a jar between them. *Sumaksae* is in the form of a circle, representing the moon in and of itself. The rabbit and toad also symbolize the moon as animals thought to live on it. The jar may have been recognized as containing the elixir of life.

Rabbit

Ssangtodo

쌍토도
A folk painting

A painting of a pair of rabbits.

Ssangtodo depicts a pair of male and female rabbits. The rabbits are portrayed as if they are a good couple. *Ssangtodo* can be found widely in paintings across East Asia. Rabbits have been featured in paintings, sculptures, and crafts as far back as the BC period.

The earliest confirmed painting of a rabbit in Korea is featured on an arrow quiver. The quiver was found in a tomb from the Nangnang period (108 BC to 313 AD). In old paintings, the rabbit is featured in tomb paintings from Goguryeo, an ancient kingdom in Korea, and Buddhist paintings from Goryeo, a dynasty that came later and sought to carry on Goguryeo. Crafts include clay figurines from Unified Silla, the first unified kingdom in Korea, and incense



Ssangtodo(folk painting) | Ma gunhu | Width: 23 cm, Height: 27 cm | 15th century | Seoul National University Museum

burners and celadons from the later Goryeo Dynasty. The rabbit is also portrayed as one of the twelve animal guardian statues that have surrounded tombs since Unified Silla.

Ssangtodo is featured in paintings of flowers and birds and animals by famous painters from the 18th century. It is also frequently seen in folk paintings from the late Joseon Dynasty; these folk paintings are perceived as heartwarming and include a pair of rabbits pounding together and playful scenes of rabbits with a tiger.

Tiger

Tiger Claw Norigae

호랑이 발톱 노리개
Jewelry

A traditional type of decorative Korean jewelry shaped like a tiger's claw or paw.

Norigae refers to an accessory used to decorate traditional Korean clothing. There are many different types of *norigae* in Korea. It is not

known exactly who first put tiger claw *norigae* on their clothing or when and how they did so. Nevertheless, people believed that tigers had the power to defeat evil and achieve victory; therefore, they made and wore *norigae* in the hopes of protecting themselves. Although actual tiger claws were used for *norigae*, ivory or cow horns shaped after the claws of a tiger were also used.

A tiger is a brave and fierce beast with great strength and majesty. Historically, the tiger was considered a sacred animal in Korea that drove off evil spirits and ghosts. Ornaments embroidered after the shape of a tiger were placed on government officials' robes, and *gama* (a kind of litter) were covered with tiger skins for important ceremonies, such as weddings, to symbolize the defeat of evil. Tiger claw *norigae* were believed to prevent disease and bad luck, defeat evil spirits, and bring good luck, such as government positions and social success. Further, people carried *norigae* to stave off animal attacks when traveling long distances.



Norigae(Knotted pendant with tassels) made of Tiger's Claw | late 15th century | Sookmyung Women's University Museum



Norigae(Knotted pendant with tassels) made of Tiger's Claw | Length: 6 cm | late 15th century | National Folk Museum of Korea



Norigae(Knotted pendant with tassels) made of Tiger's Claw | Length: 15 cm | 20th century first | National Folk Museum of Korea

Tiger

Tiger Hyungbae

호랑이 흉배

A badge of rank with a tiger

A square-shaped ornament worn on official robes during the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries) to indicate status and rank.

During the Joseon Dynasty, tiger *hyungbae* began with *hyungbae* decorated to look like tigers and leopards. *Hyungbae* have been discussed since the beginning of the Joseon Dynasty. Notably, *hyungbae* have gone through several changes and over time more people wore *hyungbae*. During the Joseon Dynasty, *hyungbae* included patterns based on four animals: tigers, leopards, *haechi* (an imaginary animal), and *lions*.

Hyungbae from the late 16th century can be categorized into tiger and leopard designs. In the early 17th century, the yellow tiger was depicted in *hyungbae*; later, in the 18th century, the white tiger was used. Further, *hyungbae* featuring two tigers and a single tiger emerged in the late 18th century. Most surviving tiger *hyungbae* from the 19th and 20th centuries include a white tiger.

In general, the size of *hyungbae* gradually decreased over time. Until the 17th century, *hyungbae* were 30–40 cm in width and length—as big as a chest. By the early 20th century, their size had shrank to 16–18 cm.

In the early days, clothes were made from fabrics woven directly with *hyungbae* patterns. Up until the 16th and early 17th centuries, woven *hyungbae* were cut and used in clothing. Since the 17th century, *hyungbae* embroidered into fabrics have been used more frequently.



Hyungbae(Rank badge with tiger) | National Folk Museum of Korea



Hyungbae(Rank badge with tiger) | late 16th century | Gyeonggi Province Museum

In *hyungbae* decorated with a single tiger, the tiger was placed at the center of the *hyungbae*, sitting crouched with its back legs bent and its front legs straight to support itself and its head turned back. Its roaring, wide-open mouth; sharp claws; white eyebrows; and straightened whiskers highlight its bravery. The tiger occupied the center of *hyungbae* and was



Cloth with Hyungbae(Rank badge with tiger) | late 16th century | Gyeonggi Province Museum



Portrait of official of Joseon wearing robe with Hyungbae(Rank badge with tiger) | late 15th century | National Palace Museum of Korea



Portrait of official of Joseon wearing robe with Hyungbae(Rank badge with tiger) | National Folk Museum of Korea

used to indicate the rank of the person wearing it. Meanwhile, the tiger was surrounded by cloud patterns embroidered near the top of the *hyungbae*, which represented its divinity as a mountain spirit, and waves, rocks, and fish near the bottom. This layout was used with few modifications throughout the Joseon Dynasty.

Dragon

Ulliyongdo

운룡도

A painting

A painting of a dragon in the clouds.

Ulliyong refers to a dragon, a divine animal, in the clouds. This image has been widely used as a pattern for various crafts and Buddhist artworks since ancient times. During the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries), *ullyong* was passed down and used widely, including on the king's clothing and white porcelain. In particular, painters added this image using an ink-wash painting style to express harmony and awe.

Ulliyong reinforces the diverse divine symbols of the dragon and the clouds. A story about *ullyong* says, "While the clouds, a divine object in nature, were formed by energy emitted from the dragon, the divinity of the dragon cannot be represented in a celestial way unless the dragon rides on the clouds." Further, the text details, "The dragon as a king can nurture a dynasty with the loyalty of the clouds, his gentle courtiers, and the ascended dragon must create clouds to bring rain to grow all things."

Throughout their long history, dragon paintings have most commonly depicted *ullyong*. In



Ullyongdo(Cloud and dragon) | Width: 55 cm, Height: 98 cm | 15th century | National Folk Museum of Korea



Ullyongdo(Cloud and dragon) in *Sajeongjeon* Hall of *Gyeongbokgung* Palace | National Palace Museum of Korea

particular, *ullyong* was used as a symbol of the king and to drive away bad energy and invite

good luck. Notably, *ullyong* was often painted in ink and color. Color paintings from folk culture included a relatively high proportion of friendly clouds, with various shifting shapes creating a decorative style. This style is hard to find in other countries.

Dragon

Yongdaegi

용대기
A flag

A dragon-painted ceremonial or farm flag that symbolizes the authority of a royal family and a village.

Ceremonial flags during the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries) were defined in the texts and laws published at the time. Twenty-eight types of ceremonial flags were used by the royal family during the Joseon Dynasty to conduct important ceremonies, elevate the formality of an event when the king and other members of the royal family entered, and show the majesty of the main person at an event. There are four types of ceremonial flags with dragons painted on them, which are known as *yongdaegi*.

Hongmundaegi, a flag depicting a blue dragon against a red background, was placed at the left and right of the front of the king's procession to mark the beginning of the sacred area and the king's ceremony. *Gyoryonggi* is a flag with two yellow dragons crossing at the top and bottom and *yeouiboju*, a mysterious orb that makes wishes come true, at its center. In the early Joseon Dynasty, this flag was used in the military to train and command soldiers and

accompanied by banners and drums. Later, as early as the reign of Yeongjo (the twenty-first king of the Joseon Dynasty), it was used as a ceremonial flag to symbolize the king and his absolute authority, including his command of the military. Unlike other ceremonial flags, *gyoryonggi* could only be used by the king in power. Furthermore, *hwangnyonggi* and *cheongnyonggi* were ceremonial flags used during the Goryeo Dynasty before the Joseon Dynasty.

Based on texts and surviving records, it is estimated that *yongdaegi* appeared around the 19th century. Kim Yunsik, a 19-century bureaucrat and writer, was exiled to Dangjin, Chungcheongnam-do. In July 1891, he documented that he witnessed *yongdaegi* in a village's community activities. Nonetheless, *yongdaegi* was described as "a custom in the village for a long time," which suggests that it existed even before he documented it.

However, as a dragon was a symbol of the king's power during the Joseon Dynasty, it was impossible for the common people to use a dragon ceremonial flag. Thus, the flag used by the common people must have been different from the royal flag; this could have been ensured by adding elements from folktales and reflecting farmers' wishes for rain. This style may be evident in some of the surviving *yongdaegi* flags featuring a dragon as a god of rain, clouds, and water along with a turtle, a carp, Sinnongssi (a god of farming), and tools for controlling water. As the name of the country changed from the Joseon Dynasty to the Korean Empire (1897–1910) at the end of the 19th century, the flag's design changed from square to triangular.

Today, *yongdaegi* is used in folk art competitions and festivals in Korea. In some regions, it is set up at town halls or wells during village festivals. This is why *yongdaegi* is also known as

yongdanggi.

The royal and civilian versions of surviving *yongdaegi* have the same basic structure in terms of flagpoles, flag widths, and tassels. Paintings from the reign of Jeongjo (the twenty-second king of the Joseon Dynasty) show soldiers marching with the ceremonial flag symbolizing the king. The overall dimensions of the flag and the arrangement of the people are identical to the civilian versions of *yongdaegi* used among the common people. The only difference is observed in the decoration on the end of *yongdaegi*. Additionally, ceremonial *yongdaegi* feature a blue dragon, a yellow dragon, or crossing dragons depending on the occasion, while certain civilian *yongdaegi* feature a yellow dragon and a blue dragon on both sides. The date of creation of the flag is documented only on the civilian *yongdaegi*.

Yongdaegi means a "large flag painted with a dragon." Surviving flags are mostly found in Chungcheongnam-do and Jeollabuk-do. *Yongdaegi* was not observed in mountainous areas; it was used for community activities related to rice planting and weeding, and local residents reported that it was set up for *giuje*. Therefore, it is considered to capture farmers' wishes for water from a dragon.

Some civilian *yongdaegi* include details about the date of their creation, their sponsors, and their manufacturers and feature unique folklore-style paintings. Dragons, carps, and turtles on *yongdaegi* were depicted as deities with powers to bring and stop rain. The earliest record of a dragon image and a custom of praying for rain, observed in Samguksagi, is from 1145.

Yongdaegi represents village culture in the traditional era, during which farming underpinned everything in the world. Setting up a flag in a farming field indicates the start of a community's activity and spotlights the site

where members gather to perform farming activities under the command of their community. For this reason, *yongdaegi* were considered sacred in communities, and it was forbidden to lay them on the ground or knock them over. If someone held the flag on a slant or inappropriately when people moved along, he was yelled at. People were also extra careful about storing *yongdaegi*, even on a typical day.

Dragon

Yongdu

용두

A roof tile

A roof tile shaped like a dragon's head.

Yongdu is a decorative roof tile sculpted from high-quality clay and fired at high temperature in the shape of a dragon's head. The dragon is a god of water ruling over water, including the sea, and a symbol of defeating evil. *Yongdu*—a dragon's head—began to be made in the late Goryeo Dynasty in Korea, and it was also connected to the floor of wooden buildings. *Yongdu* was extremely popular during the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries).

During the Goryeo Dynasty, *yongdu* was portrayed as a terrifying figure with an open mouth (revealing its sharp teeth) and two bulging eyes. During the Joseon Dynasty, it represented the prestige of the palace building and the protection of this building, good fortune, and the defeat of evil. A few distinct types of *yongdu* emerged during the late Joseon Dynasty; specifically, these *yongdu* can be differentiated by the presence and type of horns on their

foreheads. The first type have no horns on their foreheads but exhibit a lifted upper lip (revealing their teeth), a clump of hair sticking up on the back of their heads, and two bulging, frightening eyes. The second type have horns on their foreheads but vary widely. Among this type, the horns are either curved or straight. The third type has bump-like *baksan* on their heads.

Yongdu looks frightening, guards a building's perimeters, is placed on each floor, embodies a god of water ruling over water to protect against fires, and represents the defeat of evil and majesty.

Dragon

Yonggi

용기

A flag

A large flag with a dragon emblem representative of an important event in a village.

Yonggi refers to a flag on which a dragon is depicted or engraved. It is unknown when *yonggi* was first used in *nongak* (farmer's music). Nonetheless, there are historical records of a flag representing and symbolizing a village in a rural area in 1749. Therefore, it is possible to assume that *yonggi* was already used around this time. In the Joseon Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 14th to the 20th centuries), *yonggi* was also used in royal processions, and *yonggi* with yellow and blue dragons were used to command assigned military units. While it seems plausible that *yonggi* used for *nongak* was related to *yonggi* used in royal processions, it is difficult to find specific evidence to support this idea.

Most of the oldest *yonggi* flags that remain



Yonggi (Village flag) of Gwangcheon | 2022 | Jeong Yeon-hak

today were made in the 19th century. For example, *yonggi* for the village of Gusudong, Hongseong-gun, Chungcheongnam-do, Korea was made in 1891. *Yonggi* for the neighboring town of Jugyori was made in 1824. Meanwhile, *yonggi* for the village of Jungpyeong in Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do, Korea, states, "Made in Eulminyeon," which refers to the year 1895.

Yonggi is one of many flags that represent and symbolize a village. *Yonggi* is assigned to the flagbearer group in *nongak*. The flag's fabric features a painting of a dragon and is called *yongdanggi* and *yongdaegi*. Some flag fabrics feature the Sino-Korean character for a dragon instead of a painting, while others include a painting of a tiger and a dragon.

Yonggi tended to be distributed throughout the western part of Korea, where there were many community activities.

Except for the painting of a dragon, *yonggi* is similar to other flags; in particular, it has a similar width as other flags and uses similar flagpoles and flagstuffs. The dragon shapes on the flag's fabric mainly comprise either a dragon alone or a dragon surrounded by other figures. The dragon image also varies by color. Yellow and blue dragons were the most common. The dragon was painted on the flag by professional painters, monks, or talented villagers. While some of these artists were identified by name, many were not.

The largest *yonggi* in existence today is that of the village of Jangsin, Buan-gun, Jeollabuk-do. This flag features a lone yellow dragon and cloud patterns and a yellow centipede foot along its edges. The flag is made of cotton cloth and spans 785 cm in width and 210 cm in length. The name of the village, the donor, and important

people in the village, as well as the date of creation, are written on the fabric. It is also said that this flag was painted by Jojungtae, a painter.

In an agrarian society, a dragon symbolizes a god of water responsible for controlling water and governing good agriculture. Therefore, although the shape of the dragon on *yonggi* slightly differs depending on the village, a dragon is commonly painted on *yonggi* to pray for abundant harvests through the control of water and represent the strength of a village community.

Dragon

Yonghomunbaedo

용호문배도

A folk painting

A painting of a dragon and a tiger placed on both sides of a gate on January 1 in the lunar calendar. This painting is placed here to drive

away bad luck and invite good luck for the year.

Munbae refers to writing or a drawing on a gate to ward off bad luck and invite good luck. If *munbae* is a painting, it is called *munbaedo*. *Munbae* is a type of *sehwae*, a folk custom. More specifically, *sehwae* refers to a painting used to celebrate the new year on January 1 in the lunar calendar.

Munbaedo, the folk custom of placing a painting on the gate on January 1 in the lunar calendar, has been passed down since Unified Silla, Korea's first unified kingdom. There are many different types of *munbaedo*. The most common *munbaedo* in Korea is *yonghomunbaedo*, a painting of a dragon and a tiger. Facing the gate, people placed a tiger on the left door and a dragon on the right door. Instead of paintings, people wrote the Sino-Korean characters for a tiger and a dragon on rhombus-shaped paper.

Tiger paintings were placed on a left door to drive away bad energy. Meanwhile, dragons



Dragon and tiger Bujeok(Talisman) attached on the gate | Andong, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2002 | National Folk Museum of Korea

were placed on a right door to bring good luck. Together, these paintings were believed to make a house a happy and peaceful place by driving away bad spirits on one side of the gate and inviting good luck on the other.

The tiger has traditionally been a symbol of defeating evil. Recalling this history, a scholar from the Late Han Dynasty in China recorded the following folktale:

"Two peach trees were set up in front of the gate of the house, and the deities named Sindo and Ullu checked all the spirits that entered the house. The spirits beneficial to people were allowed to pass through, while the harmful ones were tied up with reed ropes and thrown into a tiger cage next to the gate to be eaten."

The peach trees, deities (Sindo and Ullu), reed ropes, and tiger featured in this folktale are symbols that were believed to defeat evil spirits.

Meanwhile, the dragon is an imaginary animal that serves as a symbol for many things. During *giuje*, a dragon was painted and hung or molded out of clay, and a *jesa* ritual was conducted with this dragon to pray for rain amid drought. This folk custom recalls the recognition of the dragon as a god of water. Notably, the dragon also symbolized a ruler, king, or royal family member. Dragon-related characters were used for any object associated with the king or the body of the king, and the palace also widely utilized dragon patterns in architecture, furniture, ceramics, and clothing.

Therefore, it makes sense that *yongho*, a word that collectively refers to a dragon and a tiger, and *munbae*, a folk custom, were combined into *yonghomunbaedo* and gained popularity. Since the 19th century, *yonghomunbaedo* moved beyond realistic depictions, including paintings, of a dragon and a tiger to more humorous and comical representations that included elements

of storytelling, resulting in a unique style. A story satirizing the society of the time was incorporated into the legend of the dragon and tiger to symbolize good luck and triumph over evil. Examples of *yonghomunbaedo* were so diverse that dragons and tigers were even depicted in humorous ways outside their conventional forms.

Dragon

Yongwangdo

용왕도

A painting of a shamanistic spirit

A painting of a shamanistic spirit called *yongwang*, who rules the sea.



Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits) | 2016 | Hong Tae-han | Seoul



Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits) | 2016 | Seoul | Hong Tae-han



Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits) | Dangjin, Chungcheongnam-do | 2008 | Hong Tae-han

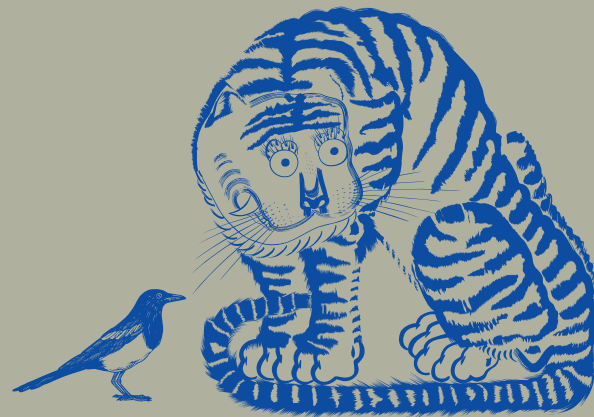
In Korea, the dragon that rules over water, including the ocean, is called *yongwang*. *Yongwang* is the absolute ruler of the sea, overseeing the safety of fisherfolk and good catches of fish. *yongwang* is depicted by various symbols, such as paintings and flags. Paintings depicting *yongwang* are called *yongwangdo* and *yongsindo*. *Yongwang* is considered a male deity and is accordingly depicted as a man in most *yongwangdo* paintings.

There are roughly three forms of *yongwangdo*. The first form comprises paintings that depict only a dragon without any human figures. This type of *yongwangdo* is often enshrined in village shrines near coasts. The second form comprises paintings featuring a man referring to *yongwang* without any connections to the sea. In this type of *yongwangdo*, it is difficult to recognize that the spirit is related to *yongwang* without an explanation from the enshrined man. The third form comprises paintings that combine the first and second types of *yongwangdo* and portray a human figure and a dragon together on the same canvas. This type of painting is considered *yongwangdo* not because of the human figure but because of the waves and dragon depicted below the figure—it is recognized as *yongwangdo* because of its

iconography, which reveals the characteristics of the sea, not the human figure. Most *yongwangdo* enshrined in village shrines or worshiped by individual shamans are of this third type. Indeed, most remaining paintings of shamanistic spirits are of this third type of *yongwangdo*.

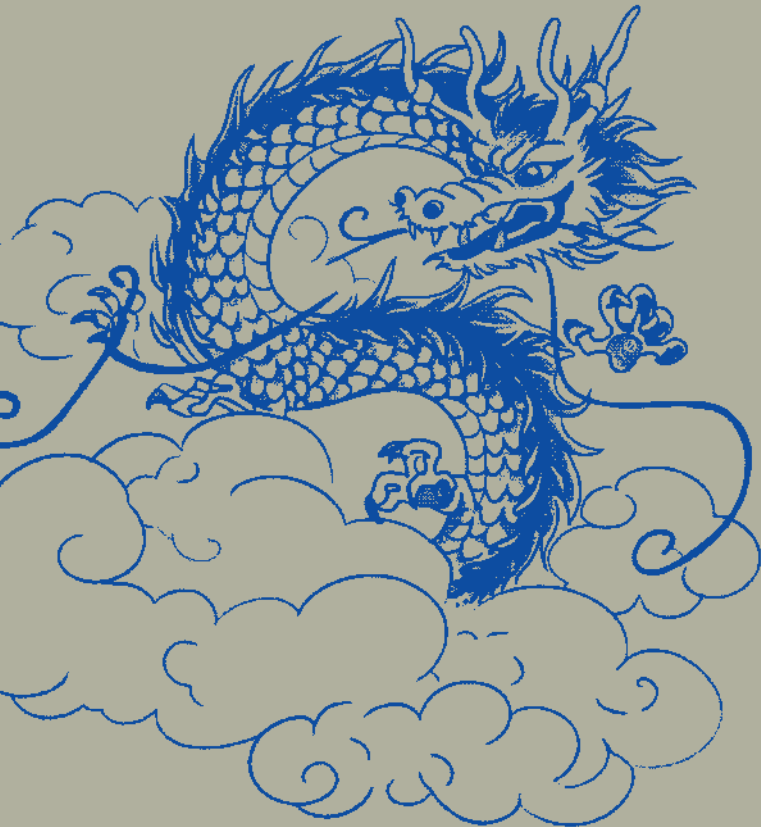
The most well-known representation of *yongwang* is undoubtedly the dragon. The dragon is sometimes placed alongside a human figure in a painting to situate the painting as *yongwangdo*. Earlier versions of *yongwangdo* only included a dragon; nevertheless, over time, the human figure was portrayed at the center of the painting. During this process, the dragon was naturally pushed to the periphery and accounted for a smaller part of the overall painting. Nonetheless, its presence clearly indicates that a painting is *yongwangdo*.

In defining *yongwang* as a divine spirit symbolizing the sea and enshrining him through painting, *yongwangdo* reflects the spiritual imagery of the Korean people, who considered the sea sacred.



SYMBOLS

상징



Baekho
백호

Baengnyong
백룡

Cheongnyong
청룡

Hobeomnyong
호범룡

Hodori
호둘이

Hogungnyong
호국룡

Horangikkum
호랑이꿈

Horangitti
호랑이띠

Hwangnyong
황룡

Imugi
이무기

Joseonpyosanghwa
조선표상화

Myosi
묘시

Myosin
묘신

Oryonggeo
오룡거

Sanginil
상인일

Sangjinil
상진일

Sangmyoil
상묘일

Soohorang
수호랑

Tokkikkum
토끼꿈

Tokkitti
토끼띠

Yeouijubo
여의주보

Yong
용

Yonggung
용궁

Yongho
용호

Yongkkum
용꿈

Yongtti
용띠

Tiger

Baekho

백호

A symbol of the white tiger

A spirit that governs and guards the west.

The Sino-Korean word for a white tiger is *Baekho*. *Baekho* governs western constellations in the sky and guards the west in tombs and coffins in ancient kingdoms in Korea. It is also located along the west gates of palaces, which it is responsible for guarding.

Baekhogi, a ceremonial flag used in the king's procession, commands the army on the right. To locate villages, lands, and tombs according to *pungsu* (a theory that predicts human fortune based on topography and orientation), *Baekho* is placed on the right side of the main mountain and surrounds the blue dragon on the left to protect *hyeol* (a place where good energy converges).



Baekho(Symbol of white tiger) statue in *Geunjeonggeon* | Jongno-gu, Seoul | National Folk Museum of Korea



Sarcophagus with *Baekho*(Symbol of white tiger) design of Goryeo | Width: 4 cm, Height: 6 cm | National Folk Museum of Korea

Dragon

Baengnyong

백룡

A symbol of the white dragon

A white dragon with an orientation to the West according to the Five Elements.

Among different colored dragons, blue and yellow dragons are most common. The white dragon (*baengnyong*) and the black dragon are less common. The founding folktale of the Joseon Dynasty, a dynasty in Korea, details that Dojo, King Taejo's grandfather, dreamed that *baengnyong* and a black dragon were fighting and that he killed the black dragon with an arrow before laying the foundation for the Joseon Dynasty. There is also a folktale about *baengnyong* defeating a black dragon in a battle and ascending to heaven. In historical records and folktales, *baengnyong* is the opposite of the black dragon according to the Five Elements (a theory that explains the creation of all things in terms of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements). Hence, *baengnyong* will always defeat a black dragon or vice versa. In Jejudo, death is likened to a black dragon, power to a blue dragon, and

the people to *baengnyong*. There is a related saying: "When the black dragon rises, many people die; when the blue dragon rises, it is good for those in power to live; and when *baengnyong* rises, it is good for farmers to live."

White is the color of the Korean people, the sun, and the sky. In Korean mythology, the emergence of white energy or a white animal associated with the sky or the sun means that the king will uphold the will of heaven. Therefore, white animals are considered sacred in Korea, and many practices or customs respect them as auspicious.



Nonggi(Village Flag) of *Yongso* | 20th century | The Museum of Agriculture by Nonghyeop Co.

Dragon

Cheongnyong

청룡

A symbol of the blue dragon

A blue dragon symbolizing the spirit that guards the direction of the east.

Along with *Jujak*, *Bonghwang*, *Baekho*, and *Hyeonmu*, which protect the directions of the south, west, and north, respectively, *Cheongnyong* is one of the sacred animals responsible for guarding a direction; specifically, *Cheongnyong* guards the direction of the east. *Cheongnyong* is also related

to the substance of wood.

In Korean history and culture, the dragon has higher authority than any other animals in legend or existence. As a deity of change and harmony, the dragon controls winds and causes clouds. Accordingly, the dragon's majestic rise and ascension are accompanied by rain, thunder, and lightning.

In tomb murals from Goguryeo, an ancient kingdom in Korea, *Cheongnyong* is an imaginary animal that guards the direction of the east, along with *Baekho* in the west, *Jujak* in the south, and *Hyeonmu* in the north. *Cheongnyong* is paired with the opposite deity of *Baekho*.

Symbolic meanings of the five colors

Color	Direction	Season	Five elements	Animal	Five guardian deities	Five emotions	Five virtues	Five tastes	Deity name
Blue	East	Spring	Wood	<i>Cheongnyong</i>	<i>Cheongjejanggun</i>	Joy	<i>In</i> (humaneness)	Sour	<i>Amyeong</i>
White	West	Fall	Gold	<i>Baekho</i>	<i>Baekjejanggun</i>	Anger	<i>Ui</i> (righteousness)	Spicy	<i>Geoseung</i>
Red	South	Summer	Fire	<i>Jujak</i>	<i>Jeogjejanggun</i>	Pleasure	<i>Ye</i> (ritual)	Bitter	<i>Chugyung</i>
Black	North	Winter	Water	<i>Hyeonmu</i>	<i>Heugjejanggun</i>	Grief	<i>Ji</i> (wisdom)	Salty	<i>Wugang</i>
Yellow	Center		Soil	<i>Bonghwang</i>	<i>Hwangjejanggun</i>	Greed	<i>Sin</i> (trustworthiness)	Sweet	



Cheongnyongdo(Painting of Blue Dragon) | Width: 61 cm, Height: 183 cm | National Folk Museum of Korea

An old text details that “*Cheongnyong*, *Bae-kho*, *Jujak*, and *Hyeonmu*, representing the east, west, south, and north, were painted on the four sides of the royal tomb and the place where the king’s coffin was placed.”

Dragon

Hobeomnyong

호법룡

A dragon in Buddhism

A dragon that serves as a guardian of Buddhist teachings.

In Korea, *Hobeomnyong* is associated with Pure Land Buddhism ideas that embody Buddhist ideals. Notably, the growing influence of Buddhism in Korea changed cultural beliefs about dragons. Specifically, the dragon transitioned from a deity responsible for rain and clouds to a guardian of the country and Buddhism. More broadly, the dragon has served as a mythological medium for the creation of many cultures.

Today, we can still see the stature of *Yongsin*, who protects Buddhism and is worshiped in many temples as a divine guardian of Buddhist teachings. One of the notable forms of *Yongsin* is *Hobeomnyong*. Indeed, halls and shrines are built to worship *Yongsin*. Further, *Yongsin* is invoked as a deity in rituals. Notably, sculptures and paintings—from those on altars for the bodhisattva to those on bridges and staircases—portray *Yongsin* as the protector of Buddhism.

A dragon in Buddhism plays the role of a guardian, leading the way to a clean world where the Buddha lives. Through Buddhist teachings in the past, the evil dragon, who plagued the people with its mysterious abilities



Dano Yongwangje(Ritual for sea god) in *Tongdosa* temple | Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2016 | Gu Mi-rae



Monk *Uisang* of *Josadang* shrine | Yeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 2015 | Gu Mi-rae

and dignity, was purified. The dragon’s mythical significance of protecting Buddhism and the state was established. In this environment, the role of *Yongsin*, which supported Buddhism and protected the country, was gradually enhanced. Therefore, the idea of “becoming a dragon after death to defend the country” was a unique aspect of Silla, an ancient kingdom in Korea in the sixth century.

Tiger

Hodori

호돌이

An Olympic mascot

The mascot of the twenty-fourth Seoul Summer Olympics in 1988.

Hodori is a friendly and adorable miniature version of a tiger that serves as the mascot for the twenty-fourth Seoul Summer Olympics in Korea. In 1983, the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee made the final decision to make the tiger the mascot of the 1988 Olympics through its Executive Board.

The Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee advised that it chose the tiger as Korea’s mascot for four reasons. First, the tiger is a familiar animal for Koreans due to widespread traditions of depicting the tiger in folk paintings, folk stories, and folktales. Second, the Committee believed that the tiger could raise the spirit of the nation with its inspiring, resilient, and thriving image. Third, images of the tiger can be manipulated to highlight Korean style and humor. Fourth, there is a high level of interest in Korean tigers in the Korean academic community.

For the mascot, the Committee selected Hodori, a tiger created by Kim Hyeon. Describing his design of Hodori’s basic form, Kim said that his main goal was to make Hodori



Hodori(Mascot of Seoul Olympic in 1988) | Depth: 21 cm, Height: 38 cm | National Folk Museum of Korea

look “tiger-like—but friendly instead of scary.” He also wanted to make this baby tiger look optimistic, innocent, and gentle. Further, Kim placed a medal around Hodori’s neck containing five Olympic rings (symbolizing the five continents) to symbolize the Olympics. To represent the image of Korea, Kim put a slanted *sangmoa* Korean hat with a feather or string attached so that it can be rotated on Hodori’s head and posted Hodori so that it looked as if he could use the string to rotate the hat.

A public contest was held to determine the name of the mascot, and Hodori was chosen. A female version of the mascot was also created, named Hosuni. After being named, Hodori was used in all Olympic-related projects and campaigns by the government. Hodori was also used on packages and advertisements for various products until 1988.

In Korea, the tiger was once considered a symbol of protection, authority, and bravery. Along these lines, it was a symbol of resistance to Japan when the country was under Japanese rule. More recently, Korean tigers have become extinct, and interest in tigers has also declined. Nevertheless, Hodori revived the symbolism of the tiger in Korea. This revival has continued with Soohorang, the white tiger, as the mascot of the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Dragon

Hogungnyong

호국룡

A dragon that defends the country

A dragon that defends the country.

Hogungnyong is a dragon that protects the

country and Buddhism. This dragon exhibits Buddhist beliefs, which evolved from the idea that a dragon protects Buddhism. In Silla, an ancient kingdom in Korea, Buddhism spread widely under national leadership. In this context, the dragon—which, as noted above, was believed to protect Buddhism—evolved into Hogungnyong. This is evident in the story of a king of Silla who built a nine-story pagoda in a temple home to a dragon that protected Buddhism to defend the country. Meanwhile, another king of Silla unified the three kingdoms in Korea and promised to become a dragon to protect the country. According to his will, he was buried in the sea and subsequently became Hogungnyong. Later, a folktale about a dragon defeating Japanese pirates was passed down.

Hogungnyong in Silla was based on the



Munmudaewangneung(Tomb of King Munmu) | Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do | Korea Heritage Service



Yongbieocheonga(Song of the Dragons Flying to Heaven) | 15th century | Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies



Part of Munmudaewangneung's tombstone | Width: 40 cm, Height: 66 cm | Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do | 8th century | Gyeongju National Museum

concept of *samsara* (the Buddhist idea of the cyclicity of all life, matter, and existence), the idea of a style of Buddhism that protects the country, and a belief that the dragon protects Buddhism. More specifically, this belief maintains that an individual is reborn after death as a dragon to pro-

tect the country and that this dragon protects Buddhism as a powerful force to expand its influence. Beyond the dragon’s role as a water god, Hogungnyong was also recognized as a symbol of the leadership and great power of a king. As such, Silla’s perception of Hogungnyong played a critical role in reinvigorating beliefs in the dragon as a defender of the country.

Tiger

Horangikkum

호랑이꿈

A dream about a tiger

A dream featuring a tiger.

In Korea, a dream featuring a tiger is considered good and bad. Such a dream may be considered good because the tiger is a symbol of bravery and divinity. Meanwhile, it may be considered bad because the tiger is fierce and careless. Broadly, Koreans have mixed perceptions of

tigers—the tiger’s bravery and agility compel feelings of terror and awe all at once. Hence, the tiger has contradictory meanings; it is feared yet admired.

As noted above, such mixed perceptions of tigers were applied when interpreting dreams featuring tigers. An example of a good dream about a tiger is a conception dream. When interpreted in a positive light, a dream featuring a tiger suggests that a child will be born with a noble status, high character, honor, and influence. Furthermore, dreaming of direct contact with a tiger, such as being bitten by a tiger or fighting and defeating a tiger, was also considered good. In addition, tiger dreams were also positively interpreted in relation to business. In particular, a dream featuring a white tiger entering a house or room was considered the most fortunate dream, portending high social status and honor or the birth of a valuable child.

Negative interpretations of dreams featuring a tiger reflect perceptions about the tiger’s ferocity and carelessness. A tiger rampaging in a dream was considered a sign that bad things will befall one’s family or oneself. Additionally, dreaming of being extremely frightened upon seeing a tiger was usually interpreted as a bad dream. Meanwhile, a daughter born after a conception dream featuring a tiger was believed to have a rough fate.

Tiger

Horangitti

호랑이띠

Year of the tiger

The 3rd of the 12 *tti* (animal deity symbols for different birth years).



Wooden board with tiger of Oriental Zodiac | Width: 37 cm, Height: 24 cm, Depth: 4 cm | late 20th century | National Folk Museum of Korea

In Korea, a particular custom deifies 12 animals—such as the rat, cow, tiger, and rabbit and the dragon, an imaginary animal—as protectors of the human world. These animals are positioned in a 12-year cycle, and it is believed an individual's fate reflects the symbolism of the animal of their birth year. The Korean word that captures this meaning is *tti*. The tiger is attributed to the third year in the 12-year cycle. People born in the year of the tiger have *horangitti*.

In Korea, it has long been believed that an individual's fate or character is determined by his or her *tti*. People with *horangitti* are considered to share the attributes of a tiger. In folklore, the tiger is regarded as the king of all animals and a symbol of bravery, wisdom, solitude, and seclusion. It is recognized as the guardian of a mountain spirit and as a divine animal that can lead one to a mountain spirit. Simultaneously, the tiger is regarded as a negative force because it is fierce, hasty, and impatient.

People with *horangitti* tend to be independent. They do not like to work under someone else and cannot stand to lose. This confidence gives them some room to accept others, and they are generally born with the ability to lead all kinds of people. They demonstrate majesty as

a leader, and are regarded as respected and responsible people. They are believed to move up the ladder faster than others. In folktales, the tiger is featured as an animal that is righteous and returns favors; accordingly, those with *horangitti* are said to be just and generous and always give back to others who have helped them.

Meanwhile, as tigers often lose the prey they are chasing, people born with *horangitti* are likely to be overconfident about their ability and fail. Owing to their impulsiveness and energetic nature, they tend to be impatient and have a strong desire to get things done quickly, which makes them fail in business more often than not. In addition, those with *horangitti* are often viewed in a negative light as being suspicious and hesitant.

Dragon

Hwangnyong

황룡

A symbol of the yellow dragon

A yellow dragon, symbolizing the spirit that guards the direction of the center.

The dragon is a supreme being and is of the highest authority. Among other dragons, *Hwangnyong* (the yellow dragon) plays the roles of mediating the relationships between the Four Guardian Deities so that they do not conflict and protecting the center.

A yellow dragon is often used to depict an emperor—the highest type of king. Emperors are said to ascend to heaven on a dragon; specifically, an emperor is said to ride a dragon named *Hwangnyong*. More broadly, *Hwangnyong* is also often featured as the animal ridden by Tao-

ist deities.

The first emperor and empress of the Korean Empire wore yellow robes (like the Chinese emperor). A dragon with five claws was embroidered on the emperor's yellow robe with gold thread to symbolize his royal status.



Portrait of King Taejo of Joseon (Wearing a dragon patterned robe) | Width: 151 cm, Height: 220 cm | 15th century | Royal portrait museum



Chiljoryong (Seven feet dragon) in Geunjeongjeon Hall of Gyeongbokgung Palace | Jongno-gu, Seoul | 2023 | National Folk Museum of Korea

Hwangnyong is also described as the guardian of absolute power and thus as a symbol of authority and harmony. As suggested above, in China, *Hwangnyong* symbolizes the emperor. *Hwangnyong* notably combines the cultural symbols of the dragon—which symbolizes the emperor—and the color gold—which represents the center.

Dragon

Imugi

이무기

An imaginary animal

An imaginary animal that fails to turn into a dragon and lives in water.

Imugi is an imaginary animal often featured in Korean folktales. Like the dragon, *imugi* is depicted as a divine being that rules over water and brings wealth to humans and a negative being that harms humans. While a dragon is typically represented in a positive light as helpful to humans, *imugi* is perceived as positive and negative. As *imugi* is an imaginary animal, its appearance has been described in various ways. Occasionally, it is represented as a big ratsnake in the real world.

Imugi usually lives in deep water, including a pond or swamp. In folklore, *imugi* rises to the sky and transforms into a dragon after spending 100 years underwater. This portrayal shows that *imugi* is perceived as an incomplete being before turning into a dragon. This perception weakens the divinity of *imugi* and figures it as a negative being. In this imperfect condition, *imugi* is a weak being that loses its supernatural powers due to trivial human interventions. Specifically,

if a human witnesses *imugi* ascend after a long time, *imugi* is forced to return to the water. As such, in oral tales, *imugi* is represented as a being that often fails to ascend due to human interference and holds grudges or harms humans.

In Korea, there are three main beliefs about *imugi*. First, *imugi* is recognized as a divine being that defends Buddhism and governs water, like the dragon; additionally, *imugi* is believed to protect humans. *Imugi* and the dragon have a father-son relationship, with *imugi* having weaker powers than the dragon. More specifically, *imugi* is an incomplete being with the potential to grow into the dragon. Second, as *imugi* is an incomplete being that has not realized the full powers demonstrated by the dragon, *imugi*'s divine traits are believed to be relatively weak compared to its human traits. Finally, *imugi* is considered a negative being when it harms humans and livestock; in this condition, *imugi* is recognized as having lost its divinity and humanity.

The idea of the dragon is believed to have emerged in Korea with the introduction of Buddhist culture. Meanwhile, *imugi* was recognized as a god of water in indigenous beliefs before the introduction of concept of the dragon in Korea. However, as Buddhism spread, Korean belief systems began to center on the dragon, and the divinity of *imugi* in indigenous belief systems weakened. This may be why *imugi* was demoted to the son of a dragon.



Historic Site of General Kim Simin | Cheonan, Chungcheongnam-do
| Korea Heritage Service

While Korean religious imagery related to *imugi* has weakened over time, *imugi* is recognized as a strange being with human elements. Compared to beings that live in realms beyond the human world (e.g., the gods in heaven or *yongsin* in the deep sea), *imugi* is more closely related to humans—*imugi* lives close to ponds and swamps near places in which people spend time in their everyday lives, intervenes in human luck, and practices the right values.

Tiger

Joseonpyosanghwa

조선표상화
A symbol

The tiger as a symbol of Joseon, a dynasty in Korea.

Many tigers used to live in Korea. Joseon was even called the *country of the tiger* owing to its significantly large tiger population. During the Joseon Dynasty in pre-modern times, the tiger was a symbol of divinity, majesty, authority, and protection against evil spirits. Indeed, the tiger eventually became a national symbol. However,



Imugi on the fan | Width: 95 cm, Height: 33 cm | 15th century | Ho-Am Art Museum

the tiger did not become a symbol of Korea due to the prevalence of tigers in the country.

In the early 20th century, a Korean historian described Korea as being shaped like a tiger, overlaying an image of a tiger across an image of the Korean peninsula to situate the nation as having an inspiring and energetic spirit. Furthermore, he published a series of seven articles called *Tiger* in a newspaper. These articles presented the tiger as a sacred animal of Joseon, arguing that the tiger was the divine embodiment of a mountain spirit and had been worshipped as a sacred animal even before the first country was founded in Korea.

In addition to collecting and systematizing tiger stories, the historian cited “the tiger in Joseon history and folklore, and [presented the tiger as] a symbol of Joseon that it has saved since the beginning of the founding of the country.” Notably, he defined the tiger as a “representation of Joseon.”

Korea was also described as resembling a tiger as a counterargument to a Japanese geographer's comparison of Korea to a rabbit. Although Japan designated tigers as harmful animals and implemented a policy to remove them, Koreans have presented the tiger as a sacred animal. Tigers have been revered in Korea for many years and serve as a symbol of protection and an alternate embodiment of a mountain god.



Tiger of Choe Namseon | 1926 | DONG-A Ilbo



Tiger shaped Joseon in newspaper | 1908 | National Library of Korea

Rabbit

Myosi

묘시
Time of the rabbit

The time of the rabbit extends from 5 am to 7 am.

Since ancient times, a day has been represented by Sipgan and 12 animals in East Asia. Sibisi, a day divided by twelve, is a method for keeping track of time by connecting time with 12 animals. In 104 BC, Emperor Hanmuje of the Han Dynasty, an ancient kingdom in China, established the official calendar, Taechoryeok, which divides time into 12 parts.

Specifically, Sibisi is divided as follows: Yaban refers to the period extending from 11 pm on the current day to 1 am the next day. Gyemyeong refers to 1 am to 3 am, and Pyeongngdan 3 am to 5 am. Ilchul refers to 5 am to 7 am, Siksi 7 am to 9 am, Ujung 9 am to 11 am,

Iljung 11 am to 1 pm, Iljil 1 pm to 3 pm, Bosi 3 pm to 5 pm, Irip 5 pm to 7 pm, Hwanghon 7 pm to 9 pm, and Injeong 9 pm to 11 pm. Time over the course of a day is accordingly categorized by these terms.

Myosi (time of the rabbit) corresponds to Ilchul, which extends from 5 am to 7 am. This is the time when all beings wake up and begin their activities for the day.

Rabbit

Myosin

묘신

Rabbit of the oriental zodiac

The fourth animal of Sibijisin, which represents the twelve animal deities who guard earth.

Sibijisin, which refers to the twelve guardians of earth in Korea, has long been featured in Korean culture. Myosin, a deified rabbit, is the fourth animal of Sibijisin. This rabbit is also referred to as Jeongmyosin and serves as a guardian against bad energy from the east.



Bronze Rabbit Statue of Oriental Zodiac | Height: 8 cm | 8th century | Gyeongju National Museum



Myosin(Rabbit of oriental zodiac) General Anjeora | Width: 70 cm, Height: 136 cm | after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea

In folktales, Jeongmyo symbolizes the moon with a katsura tree and is also associated with the shape of *octomangwol* (a shape like *oktokki* looking at the moon) in *pungsu* (a theory that predicts human fortune based on topography and orientation).

In Korea, the twelve animals of Sibijisin serve as guardians against bad energy coming from different directions, with the guardians responsible for different directions. For instance, the statues of Sibijisin are carved around stone

decorations in the Tomb of Seongdeokwang in Gyeongju (a royal tomb from Unified Silla, the first unified kingdom in Korea) and the Tomb of Kim Yu-sin (a tomb for General Kim Yu-sin of Silla, who led the unification of the Three Kingdoms). The bronze statues of Sibijisin discovered inside a tomb in Yonggang-dong, Gyeongju, which is believed to belong to a noble in Silla, may also have served to protect the tomb's owner from the twelve directions. The statues of Sibijisin carved around the tomb's stones are observed in royal tombs from Unified Silla and are considered unique to Korea, different from those in China.

In texts, the rabbit is described as "lush, meaning that all things are luxuriant," "lush and luxuriant," and "shaped after an open door, as all things emerge from the ground in February." In other words, the rabbit represents "all things emerging from the ground and growing lush and prosperous."

Ancient people in Korea sought to achieve safety and happiness by following the order and laws of the universe. One way of doing so was placing Sibijisin in specific locations. When placed in this way, Sibijisin acted as a medium for the gods, including the rabbit god.

Dragon

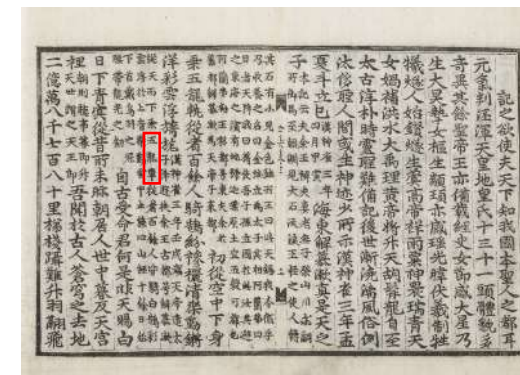
Oryonggeo

오룡거

An imaginary object

A chariot pulled by five dragons.

Oryonggeo is a chariot pulled by five dragons. It is said that it is driven by Haemosu, a son of the Heavenly Emperor. *Dongmyeongwangpyeon*,



Oryonggeo(Five dragon carriage) in *Donggukysanggukjip* | Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies

the story of Jumong (the founder of the ancient Korean kingdom of Goguryeo), states that Haemosu, Jumong's father, traveled with oryonggeo from heaven to earth and the sea palace in the realm of Habaek, Jumong's maternal grandfather.

In myths, dragons and horses connect heaven and earth and pull vehicles like chariots. Haemosu's *oryonggeo* plays a key role in enabling him to enter and control new realms by connecting and heaven and earth and the underwater realm. Like gods of the sun that ride chariots depicted in other cultures around the world, Haemosu traveled from morning to night in a chariot, wearing a crown made of raven feathers to symbolize the sun's power and a sword around his waist. Haemosu could freely summon and use his chariot and display his sword or whip, conveying his role as a physically powerful conqueror. Haemosu was also presented as coming down to earth in *oryonggeo* and offering benevolence, having the ability to communicate across different worlds, and an ideal leader who, like the sun, kept all things alive.

Tiger

Sanginil

상인일

A custom

The first day of the tiger in the lunar calendar.

The first day of the tiger, which falls between January 1 and 12 on the lunar calendar, is called Sanginil.

On Sanginil, it was forbidden for women to go outside early in the morning. Moreover, people were instructed to do nice things on this day. This was to promote vigilance to avoid being harmed by a tiger. It was believed that if someone went to someone else's house and defecated or urinated on Sanginil, one of the members of that family may be harmed by a tiger and possessed by a ghost, who would lead the tiger to food. Therefore, people stayed at home and refrained from talking badly about the animal on Sanginil. In Yeongdonggun, Chungcheongbuk-do, located at the center of Korea, people made and ate songpyeon (a rice cake shaped like a half-moon and made from steamed grain flour). People believed that doing so could prevent disease.

It was also believed that if Sanginil was close to January 1 of the lunar calendar, the year's cotton harvest would be remarkable. Additionally, a tiger's roar was associated with a great cotton harvest. People also believed that if they did not work on Sanginil and relaxed, they would be healthy throughout the year. There is also an old record stating, "some took a simple test on Sanginil to pave the way to a government position." In Jeju, people did not hold *jesa* (rituals) on Sanginil and refrained from worshipping spirits or making wishes to deities.

Dragon

Sangjinil

상진일

A custom

The first day of the dragon in the lunar calendar.

The first day of the dragon, which falls between January 1 and 12 on the lunar calendar, is called Sangjinil.

One of the folk customs on Sangjinil, which is known even today, is "scooping dragon eggs." During this custom, women compete to get



General Anbira (God of dragon) | Width: 70 cm, Height: 136 cm | after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea

water from the well at dawn on Sangjinil. There was a belief that a dragon would come down to earth from the sky at dawn on Sangjinil, or January 15 of the lunar calendar, and lay eggs in the well. Getting water from the well to cook rice was believed to bring luck and result in a good harvest that year. After waiting for roosters to crow at dawn, women rushed and competed to get water. If the first person who scooped the dragon's eggs left a straw in the well as a marker of their presence, the next person would notice it and try to find another well with the dragon's eggs.

Back in the agricultural era, the Korean people believed that they had to serve the dragon, a god of water, reasonably well to make it rain on time and bring a good harvest. Therefore, Sangjinil was considered closely related to a good or bad harvest year, and many events were held to pray for a good harvest.

Rabbit

Sangmyoil

상묘일

A custom

The first day of the rabbit in the lunar calendar.

The first day of the rabbit, which falls between January 1 and 12 on the lunar calendar, is called Sangmyoil. While it was common for women to refrain from going out between January 1 and 15, there was also a taboo that women should not be the first ones to open a gate during this time—and especially on the day of Sangmyoil. It was believed that the family would be lucky that year if the man got up before the woman and opened the gate. People also believed that it

would be best if the oldest man opened the gate. In Gyeongsangdo, a province located to the southeast of Korea, women only started working in the kitchen after the men had opened the gate and the lid of a pot in bueok, a traditional Korean kitchen.

Along with women, other people and wooden dishware were not allowed in the house. On Sangmyoil, people did not buy new porcelain or earthenware dishes, which they believed could be broken accidentally during this time. Additionally, people did not hire other people to perform work in their house on Sangmyoil, as it was believed that, in doing so, they would hire a careless and unruly servant or housekeeper.

People also did not work on Sangmyoil. In particular, people did not use knives, scissors, and plows, believing that rabbits and other animals would gnaw on the grain (the rabbit was considered an unruly animal). Further, in fishing villages, people did not set sail to catch fish on Sangmyoil.

Meanwhile, yarn newly spun on Sangmyoil is called *totsil* or *myeongsil*. Women sewed with this yarn. It was believed that wearing this yarn or making and wearing clothes made of it would extend one's life and stave off disasters. There was even a folk custom where people sat at a loom and weaved it (however, they only weaved a little).

Taboos on Sangmyoil are based on the rabbit's unruly and careless nature and attributes as one of the twelve guardians of earth. The rabbit represents the direction of east, the hours of 5 am to 7 am, wood (among the five elements), and the color blue. Examples of the taboos based on such attributes include "Do not work or urinate facing east," "Do not use wooden dishware," and "Do not dye the first woven hemp cloth blue." In particular, the custom of

believing that “a family will prosper that year if a man opens the gate first” seems to have originated from the Sino-Korean character of the rabbit, which is shaped as if it is opening the gate from the left and right.

Tiger

Soohorang

수호랑

An Olympic mascot

The name of the mascot for the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Soohorang was the mascot of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. This mascot was inspired by the white tiger, a traditional symbol of protection. The website of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics explains the rationale behind Soohorang's name as follows: “*Suho*, which means ‘protection’ in Korean, symbolizes



Soohorang (Mascot of Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in 2018) | Depth: 150 cm, Height: 170 cm

the protection provided to athletes, spectators, and other participants in the 2018 Winter Olympics. *Rang* is the middle letter of *horangi*, a Korean word for a tiger and the last letter of *Jeongseon Arirang*, a folk song in Gangwon-do. Soohorang symbolizes the spirit of challenge and passion and is a strong friend who protects athletes, spectators, and all participants in the Olympics.”

Soohorang's name comes from the symbolism of the white tiger. According to old texts, the divine entity who protects the west looks similar to a tiger; therefore, the white tiger has been recognized as the “guardian deity” of the west. Soohorang is considered to symbolize the white tiger—a tiger representing protection—and Hodori, the mascot of the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics.

Rabbit

Tokkikkum

토끼꿈

A dream about a rabbit

A dream featuring a rabbit.

Although the rabbit is small and weak, it is also agile and fertile. In Korea, the rabbit is considered a symbol of wealth, economic gain, and prosperity. As such, there is a belief that if an individual dreams about raising rabbits, they will become wealthier—indeed, the more rabbits reproduce in the dream, the more wealth the individual will have. Meanwhile, a dream about raising rabbits in a cage portends that one will gain wealth or a better livelihood by taking on something new. However, dreaming of raising rabbits that escape suggests that one will

lose wealth or employment; as the rabbit symbolizes wealth, such a dream could also be interpreted as predicting the arrival of an unexpected fortune. A dream about shaving or obtaining a rabbit's fur suggests that one will gain wealth in proportion to the amount of fur shaved.

Additionally, cultural interpretations of the rabbit sometimes associate it with a person or action. Dreaming of a rabbit using a pestle and mortar was considered a sign that one would achieve marriage or meet someone they like. If the individual who had this dream was not single or about to marry, the dream was interpreted as a sign that the individual would meet a meaningful person and spend good years with them or that they would soon conceive.

In some dreams, a rabbit appears with other animals. A dream in which a rabbit is chased by another animal means that one will leave the place where they belong or someone around them will leave. A dream in which a rabbit fights or fools around with other animals suggests that one may experience conflict with other people over spiritual issues, such as beliefs and ideas.

Rabbit

Tokkitti

토끼띠

Year of the rabbit

The 4th of the 12 *tti* (animal deity symbols for different birth years).

In Korea, a particular custom deifies 12 animals—such as the rat, cow, tiger, and rabbit and the dragon, an imaginary animal—as protectors of the human world. Each animal is attributed

to one year in a 12-year cycle, and it is believed that the animal of one's birth year shapes one's fate. The Korean word that captures this belief is *tti*. The rabbit occupies the fourth year in the cycle, and people born in the year of the rabbit are said to have *tokkitti*.

As noted above, it is a long-standing Korean custom to predict an individual's personality and abilities based on the animal attributed to their birth year, including the *tti* animal's appearance, personality, and habits. According to *tti*, the rabbit represents abundance and prosperity. People born in the year of the rabbit are expected to be wealthy throughout their lifetime. Those with *tokkitti* are associated with *yin* (of *yin and yang*, the two forces of everything in the universe), the character of a tree, and strong vitality. They are also seen as delicate, cautious, and good-natured.

Some of the cultural symbols and meanings associated with the rabbit are listed below:

Wisdom

In general, rabbits are considered tricksters. In Korean folktales, a weak rabbit is often represented as wise, while a strong tiger is often portrayed as foolish. The folktale called *The Cunning Rabbit and the Foolish Tiger* is a good example of such a depiction.

Abundance

Rabbits have long been closely associated with the moon. In many Korean and Japanese folktales, people imagined a rabbit on the moon pounding grain under a katsura tree, which is said to grow on the moon. This imagery leads to the moon and the rabbit being regarded as symbols of fertility and abundance. The moon symbolizes endless regeneration and eternal life due to its waxing and waning. Meanwhile, the



Rabbit woodblock of Oriental Zodiac | Width: 36 cm, Height: 18 cm, Depth: 5 cm | after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea

rabbit is a symbol of fertility and abundance, at least in part, because its upper lip is shaped like a woman's genitals. In folklore, rabbit-shaped letters or pictures were believed to increase a woman's likelihood of conception, increase love between a married couple, and improve a marital relationship.

Agility

The rabbit symbolizes quickness. This is evident in a common phrase in Korea: "running away quickly like a rabbit." Agile and quick, a rabbit plays the role of a trickster who fools other bigger and stronger but less intelligent animals.

Timidness

Other phrases derived from the behavior of a rabbit include "as if a startled rabbit," "with surprised rabbit eyes," and "the rabbit is surprised by its own fart." These phrases mean that one is behaving carelessly or is frightened when they are alone. The rabbit is often compared to the common people due to its innocence and good heart.

Loyalty

Owing to its agility, the rabbit is often represented in stories as an animal that runs errands or delivers messengers. From a Confucian perspective, this portrayal figures the rabbit as a loyal animal.

Longevity

In folktales, a rabbit is said to live on the moon and make an elixir of life, a concept rooted in Taoism, which emphasizes immortality and longevity. Therefore, the rabbit symbolizes a being that never dies and lives forever in Taoism.

Along with this literary symbolism, Korean folklore also includes beliefs about the character of people born with *tokkitti*. Specifically, people born in the year of the rabbit are considered to be hasty but agreeable, gentle, generous, empathetic, and loyal. While they are wise and disciplined, they tend to not always finish what they start; therefore, it is difficult for them to open and pass a big gate. They rarely face trou-

ble with clothing, food, and housing and live in abundance. Usually, people born with *tokkitti* tend to be good-natured and idealistic. They are sensitive and humorous and may show these talents in the entertainment industry. Agile and wise, the rabbit can simply jump over obstacles and improvise to get itself out of trouble.

Dragon

Yeouijubo

여의주보

An imaginary object

A treasured *chintamani* orb believed to have mysterious powers to make things happen as wished.

The concept of *yeouijubo* is mostly used in Buddhism, and the idea of *yeouijubo* is also widespread across folklore. It was often featured in folktales and proverbs as "the treasure that makes wishes come true and eliminates disasters."

This word seems to have originated from the ancient Indian word *chintamani*. In Sanskrit, *chinta* means a wish, and *mani* means a rare and precious orb. Combining these words, *chintamani* means "the treasure that makes wishes come true."

It is said that *yeouijubo* came from the brain of Yongwang (a dragon ruling over water, including the sea) or the head of makara, an imaginary fish from ancient Indian mythology. It is also said that the object belonging to Je-seokcheon, one of the many guardian deities in Buddhism, fell off when it was broken or that the Buddha's *sarira* turned into *yeouijubo*.

Among the many folktales about *yeouijubo*,

the story of the fox orb is notable. The story unfolds as follows. Whenever a child attending *seodang* (a private village school) walked past the hill, a fox disguised as a woman showed up. The fox kissed the child and put an orb in his mouth before putting it into her own to steal his soul. After consulting with the school principal, the child swallowed the orb. The fox died. The child grew up to become a scholar skilled in *pungsu* (a theory that predicts human fortune based on topography and orientation) because he followed the principal's words: "When you look up after swallowing the orb, you will know how things work in heaven; when you look down, you will know how things work on earth." Accordingly, he looked down at the ground.

Yeouijubo is widely known as a symbol paired with a dragon. In artworks featuring religious or mythological themes, a dragon is often depicted



Dragon with *chintamani* of dragon ship | Donghae, Gangwon-do | 2021 | Gu Mi-rae



Dapo(Dragon head decoration) of Tongdosa Temple | Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do | Korea Heritage Service



Baekjegeumdongdaehyangno(Great Gilt-bronze Incense Burner)
| Diameter: 19 cm, Height: 62 cm | Buyeo, Chungcheongnam-do |
6~7th century | Buyeo National Museum

ed with an orb in his mouth or claws. In some portrayals, it plays with the orb. The dragon is believed to be a god of water that lives in the sea

and ascends to bring clouds and rainstorms and govern all things. Based on this background, a saying related to the dragon emerged: “The dragon ascends to heaven when it obtains *yeouijubo*.” It is also said that if *imugi*, an imaginary animal that lives in the water without becoming a dragon, obtains *yeouijubo*, he can ascend to the sky and turn into a dragon.

From folklore to Buddhism, *yeouijubo* represents a symbol in the East. This universal meaning has been passed down over many years. In particular, it was believed that combining the two imaginary objects of the dragon and *yeouijubo*, which had mysterious powers, maximized the wishes of the people projected onto these objects. This belief has had a deep impact across many other areas, including myths and folktales, and enriched Korean culture.



Daejangjeon Hall of Geumsansa Temple | Gimjae, Jeollabuk-do | Korea Heritage Service

Dragon

Yong

용

A symbol

An imaginary animal featured in myths and legends of the East and West.

There are many different theories and arguments across the East and West about the origin of *yong* (dragon), which is called *mireu* in Korean, and no theory has yet been accepted definitively. Some of the most well-known theories include those that suggest that *yong* originated from the Indian snake god of *nāga* or from patterns of monstrous figures on ancient Chinese bronze artifacts, that *yong* emerged from meteorological phenomena, that *yong* originated from one of the tribal totems in ancient China, and that *yong* came from the dinosaurs.

It is hard to identify the origin of *yong* definitively. Unlike other animals, *yong* is imaginary; therefore, it has many different origin stories. The appearance of *yong* is described by the word *gusa*—the parts of *yong* resemble the parts of nine different animals. In particular, animals with long bodies or a large and unusual look are often associated with *yong*. Notably, the primary image of *yong* is its unique long body. Consequently, one can say that many images of *yong* are based on a snake. As its long body stands out more than its other physical features, a strong argument can be made that *yong* originated from a snake. Nevertheless, we cannot definitively say that *yong* was only based on a snake because *yong* is an imaginary animal and, thus, its appearance and origin were also imagined.

Nonetheless, the shape and characteristics



Portrait of King Yeongjo of Joseon | Width: 73 cm, Height: 169 cm |
17th century | National Palace Museum of Korea

of *yong* and the various environments in which it shows up are often described in detail in texts. A history book written during the Goryeo Dynasty (a dynasty in Korea from the 9th to the 14th centuries) also identified *yong* as a meteorological phenomenon. While this text simply states, “two *yongs* appeared in a well in Geumseong, which was followed by rain showers, lightning, and thunder on the south gate of the fortress,” this passage notably implies that the two *yongs* are closely related to weather events. However, some history books situate *yong* as an imaginary animal and anthropomorphic figure.

As *yong* was worshiped as a god of water controlling rainfall, it gave rise to beliefs in dragon gods. *Sahaeje* and *sadokje* in Silla (an ancient kingdom in Korea), *sadokje* in Goryeo (an ancient kingdom in Korea), and *yongsinje* and *giuje* in Joseon (a dynasty in Korea) were

all national rituals dedicated to *yong* and rooted in praying for an abundance of water—the source of life and an absolute requirement for agriculture. In particular, *sahaeje* was a ritual to pray for Yongwang (a dragon ruling over water, including the sea) in *sahae*. In the East, *sahae* referred to the four largest bodies of water, and rituals were held based on the belief that Yongwang was guarding each of them. The influence of these rituals can be found in *yongwanggut*, *yongsinje*, and *yongwangje*, which are carried on in some regions even today.

Giuje, a prayer to *yong* for rain, is considerably old and widely known. The common people held *giuje* in geographical locations with the character “*yong*” in their name or prayed for rain using various shamanistic methods. Believing that there would be a drought when *yong* slept, they threw a tiger—the enemy of *yong*—or a substitute for a tiger, like a cat, into ponds to

wake up *yong*. This relates to the belief that polluting a pond will cloud the sky and bring rain.

Meanwhile, *yong* is often depicted in the clouds, which visually represents that rain is hidden in the clouds, and *yong* can control rain hidden in the clouds. Additionally, fishermen worshiped *yong* as an integral part of their sea beliefs, believing that *yong* lived in a dragon palace under the sea as a king who ruled the sea. Their practices of worship included *jesa* rituals to pray for a safe voyage and an abundant fish catch under the protection of Yongwang. People who lived near water—especially those who rely on the sea—need a sea god, dragon god, or water god to protect them from rough waters.

Yong also symbolizes the authority of a king. Given its majestic and grand appearance and its ability to control water, *yong* was likened to a great being, such as a king, powerful ruler, or other mighty figure. This analogy led to the idea



Cheongnyongdo (Painting of Blue Dragon) of *Tongdosa* temple | Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2023 | National Folk Museum of Korea · Choi Ji-hyeon



Dragon decoration on ceiling of *Tongdosa* temple | Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do | 2023 | National Folk Museum of Korea · Choi Ji-hyeon

that *yong* governed the weather in the sky as a king-like figure with absolute powers for agricultural people. In light of this understanding, *yong* became a symbol for the king or throne, and the prefix “*yong*” was added to almost everything related to kings.

Yong also symbolizes a guardian deity in Buddhism. As Buddhism was introduced to China, the Chinese dragon, originally a product of imagination, was merged with *nāga*, an Indian dragon. *Nāga* is a dragon god that originated from Indian worship of a snake god. Various types of *yong*, including *nāga*, have become protectors of Buddhism after a long confrontation with it. In Buddhism, dragon kings and dragon gods serve as the deities that protect dharma. *Yong* is featured as a god of water in early Buddhist scriptures and represented as good and evil.

In Korea, Buddhism gained popularity as the country's unique belief system after the uni-

fication of the ancient kingdoms. As Buddhism evolved into patriotic Buddhism, which focused on realizing prosperity for the nation and the royal family through the power of the Buddha, *yong* was also characterized as a guardian of the country. Accordingly, *yong* was associated with prayers for the eternal power of the king and the protection of the country. The process that expanded the meaning of *yong* from a guardian of dharma to a protector of the country can be easily observed in old history books from Korea.

There are many different cultural understandings of *yong* in Korea. Since its origin, *yong* has symbolized a god of water. In ancient societies, agriculture was the most important industry, and people were extremely sensitive to droughts and floods. In the old days, people across regions believed that some beings controlled water and considered such beings considerably sacred; it is not surprising that an omnipotent *yong* with powers to manipulate

water was worshipped in this context.

The shapes and types of *yong* associated with Buddhism accounted for most of those currently found in Korea. Different forms of *yong* can be found in architecture, Buddhist artifacts, such as bells, temple murals, paintings, and objects symbolizing the royal family. While ancient and modern Koreans imagine *yong* in a similar manner, the concept and symbolism of *yong* has changed over the years. Nevertheless, *yong* remains sacred to modern Koreans.

Dragon

Yonggung

용궁

An imaginary place

An underwater palace where Yongwang lives.

Yonggung is a place where Yongwang—believed to be a god of rain, wind, and all waters in folklore—lives. Its specific location is usually under the sea; however, in some cases, it is located in a river or well. Common perceptions of Yonggung are embodied in texts and oral folktales. Yonggung is depicted as a place full of fancy treasures and delicacies and home to Yongwang and his sons and daughters. It is also described as a place that rewards virtuous behaviors by men and women, treats protagonists generously, and makes protagonists' wishes come true.

The earliest record of Yonggung in Korea can be found in *Samguk yusa*, which was written around 1282. The book tells a story of what Surobuin experienced in Yonggung after being kidnapped by a sea dragon, recounting, "The palace is decorated with seven treasures, the food there is sweet and fragrant, and it is not

human food. Surobuin's clothes smelled of a strange fragrance, which the world had never smelled before." These lines suggest that at this time, people perceived Yonggung as an other-worldly place with all kinds of fancy treasures.

The folktale of *Jakjegeon* states, "When Jakjegeon crossed the West Sea in search of his father, Yongwang of the West Sea asked him a favor, which was to shoot and kill an old fox that was bothering Yongwang. He did, and in return, Yongwang rewarded Jakjegeon with cloisonné and a pig and allowed him to marry his eldest daughter. The daughter came to Gaeseong, lived with Jakjegeon, dug a well outside her bedroom, and went in and out of Yonggung in the West Sea through the well." As the cloisonné symbolizes the fanciness of Yonggung and the pig represents delicacies or wealth in Yonggung, the well is considerably similar to the one described by Surobuin.

Meanwhile, in oral folktales, Yonggung is mainly a place of reward. In such tales, a fisherman or passerby rescues a carp or terrapin into which Yongwang's son or daughter have transformed; in return, the fisherman or passerby is invited to Yonggung, receives a treasure, and returns home. The most well-known version of this story is the folktale of the *Carp Repaying a Favor*. The plot of this folktale is as follows.

A fisherman caught a large carp. He looked at the carp's eyes and saw that it seemed to be begging to be let go. The fisherman released it. A few days later, the carp appeared as a man in the fisherman's dream and told him that he was the son of Yongwang and that his father wanted to invite the fisherman to Yonggung to repay the favor. Some days later, the fisherman went to Yonggung, was welcomed with great hospitality, and returned home with an orb that could make a wish come true, which made him

extremely wealthy.

As shown above, Yonggung is a place where a dragon god lives and an idealized place where humans' wishes are granted. These tales also show that beliefs that a dragon god may bring rain, and even winds were rooted in human needs in agrarian societies. While folklore establishes that the Jade Emperor or the Heavenly Emperor, who were worshipped as deities of heaven, controlled human destiny and longevity, it also suggests that the dragon god, as a deity of water (the most important kind of deity in agriculture), controlled well-being. Furthermore, considering that the protagonist of the folktale enjoys wealth and a good life as a consequence of the treasure he receives from Yonggung, Yonggung represents an ideal place that speaks to desires among the people of the time to escape difficulties.

Dragon

Yongho

용호

Dragon and tiger

Yongho is a combination of the words "dragon" and "tiger" and refers to geographical features on the left and right of a main mountain, such as other mountains, water, and roads, in *pungsu*.

According to *pungsu* (a theory that predicts human fortune based on topography and orientation), the mountain to the left of the main mountain (or flowing river) is called the blue dragon, and the mountain to the right (or main road) is called the white tiger. These geographical features are described as "the blue dragon on the left and the white tiger on the right" or

yongho for short.

Yongho originally referred to stars in the sky. An old Chinese text states, "stars in the east represent the blue dragon, and stars in the west represent the white tiger." The word *yongho* was later adopted in *pungsu*. *Yongho* aligns with the theory of *pungsu*, which states that "the shape of a mountain on earth exists in the shape of stars in the sky."

Geumnanggyeong, the book on *pungsu*, explains the specifics of *yongho*. Notably, the book highlights the importance of "choosing a burial place with the blue dragon on the left and the white tiger on the right." In this statement, the blue dragon and the white tiger, or *yongho*, refer to the mountains where a tomb is located. However, in *pungsu* for houses and villages, the meaning of *yongho* changes. In this context, *yongho* typically comprises a big road (white tiger) and flowing water (blue dragon) rather than the mountains. Furthermore, outside of *pungsu*, *yongho* colloquially refers to a dragon and a tiger together.

In *pungsu*, the white tiger represents wealth, art, and femininity, while the blue dragon represents honor, power, and masculinity. Both are also believed to influence the places where people live, including the luck of people living in a particular place. These beliefs reflect the idea that heaven, earth, and people are one organism. This idea spread through traditional Korean households, resulting in the folk custom of writing the Sino-Korean characters for "dragon" and "tiger" on the left and right of the front gate to stave off bad luck and bring good luck to the household.



Room where dragon dreamed of Ojukheon House | Gangneung, Gangwon-do | Korea Tourism Organization

Dragon

Yongkkum

용꿈

A dream about a dragon

A dream featuring a dragon associated with good conception; specifically, it suggests the birth of a great child and one's own success.

Koreans believed that dreaming of riding on a dragon's back or seeing a dragon ascend suggested that one would assume a high government position and command all people. Meanwhile, dreaming of becoming a dragon oneself was also viewed as lucky—it implied that one would be successful. *Yongkkum* (a dragon dream) refers to seeing a dragon in a dream and is listed in the Korean dictionary.

The saying "If you have *yongkkum* and have

a child, the child will grow up to be a great person" implies that *yongkkum* portends that one will give birth to a child whose name will be widely spread in the future. Here, a dragon is associated with greatness, recalling proverbs such as "If you fly in the sky on a dragon, you will be successful" or "If you fly in the sky on a dragon, you will be promoted and obtain a government position." Here, an ascending dragon is interpreted as portending success. Another saying states, "Even a muddy loach can become a dragon over time"—anyone can become successful if they consistently work hard.

In Korean culture, *yongkkum* is considered one of the luckiest of dreams featuring an animal (alongside those that include a pig). As the dragon is an imaginary animal that symbolizes the authority of a king, *yongkkum* is considered the best conception dream. Accordingly, drag-

ons were included on the blankets and folding screens used in the rooms of newly married couples to wish for *yongkkum*.

Dragon

Yongtti

용띠

Year of the dragon

The 5th of the 12 *titi*.

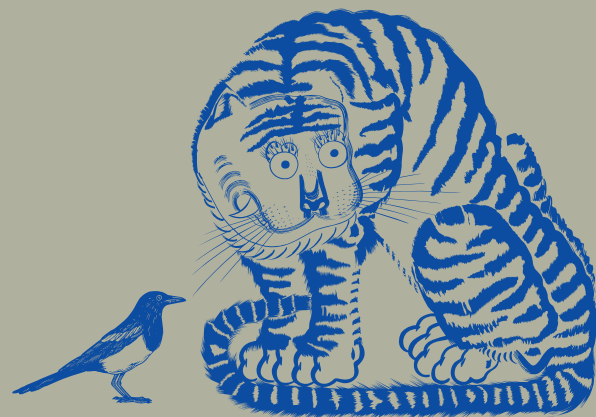
In Korea, a particular custom deifies 12 animals, such as the rat, cow, tiger, and rabbit, and the dragon (an imaginary animal), as protectors of the human world. These animals are each attributed to one year in a 12-year cycle, and it is believed that an individual's fate is determined by the animal of the year in which they were born. The Korean word *titi* captures the idea that an individual's fate is caught up with the animal of their birth year. The year of the dragon is the fifth year in the 12-year cycle, and it is referred to as *yongtti*.

As suggested above, it is a long-standing Korean custom to predict an individual's personality and abilities based on *titi*; for example, an individual's characteristics may be predicted based on the appearance, personality, and habits of the animal of their year of birth. Accordingly, people born in the year of the dragon are believed to have the characteristics of an ever-changing dragon. Notably, people with a certain *titi* may experience conflict or get along with people with other particular *titi*. Thus, *titi* are used to predict whether a man and woman will get along as a married couple.

The year of the dragon comes around once every 12 years. The year is often subdivided into

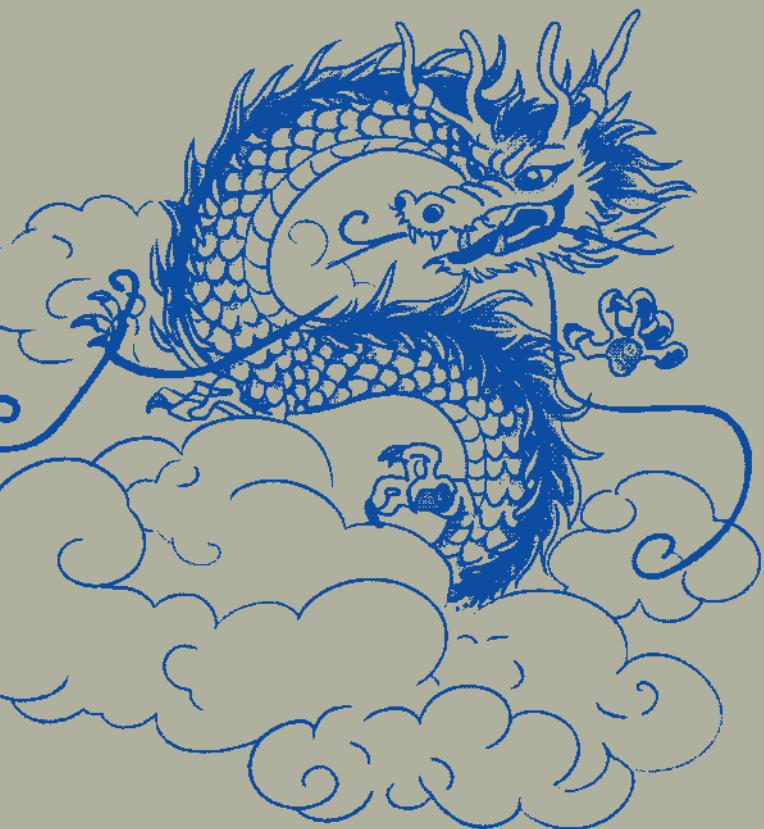
five types within a 60-year cycle: *mujin*, *gyeongjin*, *imjin*, *gapjin*, and *byeongjin*. The types further specify an individual's characteristics. For example, individuals born in *mujin* are tenacious and reliable; those born in *gyeongjin* are socially active and ambitious; those born in *imjin* think quickly and act dexterously; those born in *gapjin* are reserved, robust, and have a good ability to accumulate wealth; those born in *byeongjin* are flexible, independent, and larger than life.

The *titi* animals compatible with *yongtti* include the monkey, rat, and chicken. Meanwhile, the dog conflicts with *yongtti*. The pig and *yongtti* have a love-hate relationship.



SONGS

노래



Bandal
반달

Ongdalsaem
옹달샘

Santokki
산토끼

Sugungga
수궁가

Rabbit

Bandal

반달

A children's song

A children's song written and composed by Yun Geugyeong.

In August 1924, Yun Geugyeong (1903–1988) organized Daalliahoe, a children's choir, and began to write and compose children's songs. During his time in Daalliahoe, Yun composed many works, including *Bandal*, *Icicle* (lyrics by Yoo Jiyoung), and *Crested Ibis* (lyrics by Han Jeongdong). He also published *Bandal*, a collection of his children's songs, in 1926.

“On a blue sky, Milky Way, white sailboat / One katsura tree, one rabbit / No mast, no oar / Sailing well to the west / Across the Milky Way to the cloud country / Where do you go after the cloud country / Something emitting a beacon in the distance / It is a lighthouse; find your way.”

According to Yun's recollections, he saw a white slanted crescent in the sky during the day while staying at Ilseongdang. He saw the crescent upon hearing the sad news that his eldest sister had died at the age of 36. Together, the death of his sister, the sight of the moon in broad daylight, and the sad loss of his country inspired him to compose *Bandal*. He taught the song to members of Daalliahoe and printed and sent the sheet music to elementary school teachers in Seoul. This was how the song first gained popularity; it has remained popular to this day.

Bandal, first published in the children's magazine, *Children*, was composed to be sung slowly in seven and five letters, two stanzas of eight lines, and 6/8 time. The lonely boat, the katsura

tree, and the rabbit, which serve as the mediums of loneliness, can be considered objective correlates for his dead sister and Koreans, who had lost their country. In *Bandal*, Yun gave hope to the Korean people by depicting a lighthouse amid depressing circumstances. He fully dedicated his life to children's cultural movements and songs at a difficult time when the country was lost. Starting with Saekdonghoe at the age of 20, he was considerably active in Daalliahoe and Noraedongmuho. The children's songs he created until his death in 1988 brought comfort to children and adults.

Rabbit

Ongdalsaem

웅달샘

A children's song

A children's song written by Yun Seokjung and set to a foreign tune.

Yun published many children's song collections, including *Yun Seokjung's Children's Song Collection* (1932) and *Who Will Come to Drink Ongdalsaem in the Deep Mountain* (1999), wrote school songs, and edited several magazines. He founded Noraedongmuho in 1947 to promote the development and welfare of children's literature. He was fully committed to creating and composing children's songs and poems, disseminating children's songs, and engaging in children's cultural movements until he died. Yun also added music to over 800 children's songs and poems, creating most of the children's songs sung in Korea.

“Ongdalsaem in the deep mountain / Who

will come to drink / Rabbit wakes up at dawn / Rubs his eyes / Comes to wash his face / Drinks water only and goes away / Clear and clear ong-dalsaem / Who will come to drink / Roe deer at night with the moon / Plays hide and seek / Comes running when thirsty / Drinks swiftly and goes away”

Since its publication in 1958, *Ongdalsaem* has been considerably popular. According to an article dated December 29, 1981, in the *Dong-A Ilbo*, parents ranked *Ongdalsaem* as one of the top 10 children's songs. Yun's *Ongdalsaem* brilliantly encapsulates childhood feelings with its beautiful Korean lyrics, positivity, and imagination. *Ongdalsaem* represents an imaginary world in which a rabbit and roe deer living in the mountains come to the spring and drink water, highlighting the pure image of the animals through parallelism. The song was also made to be sung brightly and lightly in 3/4 time.

Rabbit

Santokki

산토끼

A children's song

A children's song written and composed by Lee Illae.

Lee Illae wrote and taught songs for children who received an education in music during the Japanese colonial period in Korea. *Santokki* is one of the children's songs he taught to children at Ilbang Public Elementary School by playing the pump organ himself. Regarding the background behind the song, he said, “One day during the fall in 1928, I was lying and looking

up at the sky at the skirts of Gojongsan with my young daughter Myeongju in my arms, and *Santokki* ran out of the forest without fear. I wrote a children's song while thinking about children and taught it in school. It began to spread worldwide.”

“*Santokki*, *Santokki*, where are you going / Hop-ping and hopping, where are you going / Over the mountain pass and pass / I am going to pick up plump-shelled chestnuts.”

The Collection of Joseon Children's Songs, Lee Illae's first collection of compositions, was published in 1938. On December 27, a commemorative event was held by the Masan Church Christian Youth Endeavour and the Masan Music Association. In the lyrics of *Santokki*, “shelled chestnuts” was changed to “chestnuts”—this version is sung by children even today. The song was popularized in the late 1920s, coinciding with the growth of children's songs and the loss of the country to Japan. It is hard to find any Korean—young or old or male or female—who does not know this song. In December of 1978, a monument for Lee Illae was erected before his death at Ibang Elementary School, where he worked.

Santokki is composed in 2/4 time and meant to be sung in an innocent tone. Furthermore, it is also sung in a question-and-answer format with fun expressions, such as phonetic symbols, and a simple melody, allowing anyone to sing. *The Collection of Joseon Children's Songs* shows a glimpse of Lee Illae's effort and perspective of how children's songs could be used to teach the Korean language to and instill innocence in children at a time when the country was lost.

Rabbit

Sugungga

수궁가

Pansori

A Korean folk song that satirizes society in the late Joseon Dynasty through the trickery of the rabbit and terrapin and a deceitful confrontation between them.

In Korea, there is a musical theater in which one *sorikkun* (storytelling singer) and one *gosu* (drummer) tell stories passed down from the past—this style of musical theater is called *pansori*. *Sugungga* is a *pansori* work. The plot of *Sugungga* is similar to other folktales and novels with the same storyline, such as *Rabbit's Liver* and *Byeoljubujeon*.

In this *pansori*, Yongwang (a dragon ruling over water, including the sea) suddenly fell ill. There was no cure for his disease, which made everyone sad. A monk showed up and said that he could be cured if he ate the liver of a rabbit. Yongwang gathered his ministers and looked for someone to go to the land to get the liver, but no one volunteered to do so. Subsequently, a terrapin stepped up, took the drawing of a rabbit, and left for the land. This terrapin was called Byeoljubu.

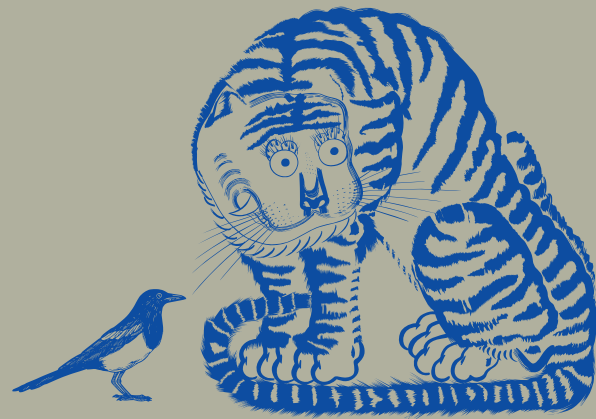
Byeoljubu met a rabbit and promised him social status if he followed him to the water palace. Tricked, the rabbit followed Byeoljubu to the dragon palace. When Yongwang told the rabbit to give his liver, the rabbit realized he had been tricked. He replied that he had left his liver back on the land. Yongwang told the rabbit to go back to the land and bring his liver to him. When the rabbit reached the land with Byeoljubu, the rabbit mocked Byeoljubu for being foolish and ran away into the forest. Byeoljubu

took the rabbit's feces to use as medicine, which saved Yongwang's life.

Sugungga is regarded as the greatest fable of its time. Notably, it is also considered a satirical literary work that exposed the political reality of the late Joseon Dynasty and the critical perception of the common people. The story illustrates how the rabbit, representing the weak, outwits the stronger terrapin to escape danger, thereby satirizing the foolishness of the powerful, such as politicians of the time. The story is passed down today in various forms, including *pansori*, novels, and traditional fairy tales.

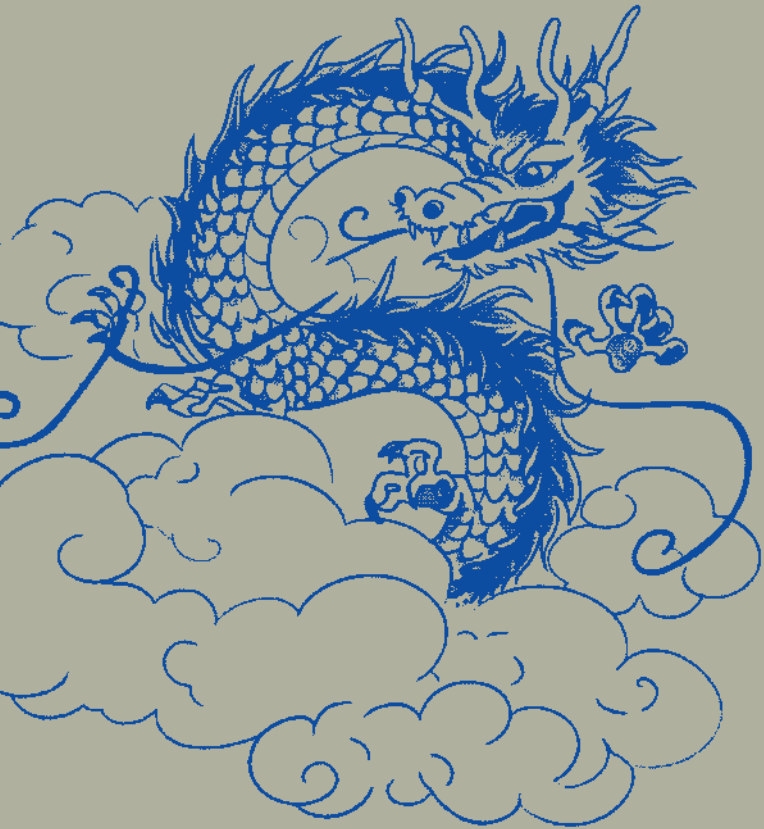


Eorakdo(one of two)(The pleasures of fishes) | Width: 30 cm, Height: 53 cm | National Folk Museum of Korea



IDIOMS

관용어



Hoyeolja
호열자

The Paper Tiger
종이호랑이

The Toothless Tiger
이빨 빠진 호랑이

Tiger Teacher
호랑이 선생님

Tiger

Hoyeolja

호열자

Cholera

Transliteration of *cholera*, an acute infectious disease that can result in death due to symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, and rapidly progressing dehydration.

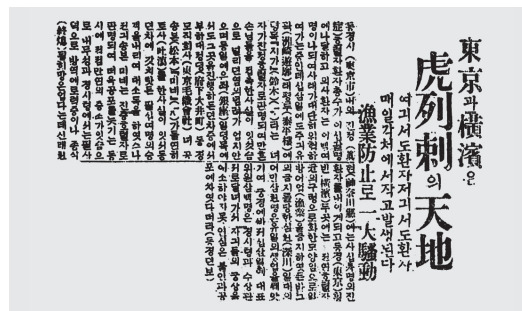
Hoyeolja, a Sino-Korean word, means “as painful as having a piece of flesh torn off by a tiger.” In 1879, a similar term was used for the first time in Korea in diplomatic documents and royal records to describe a cholera outbreak out in a region of Korea. Japan even built a hospital in the region to quarantine and accommodate infected patients to protect the Japanese people living there.

Cholera first became prevalent in 1821, causing tens of thousands of deaths between 1919 and 1920. The disease—called *goejil* (meaning “strange disease”) during its first outbreak—caused diarrhea, vomiting, muscle contractions, and sudden death. It was accompanied by severe body pain and affected everyone—male and female, old and young. *Hoyeolja* made its way to the northern part of Korea from China and then spread to other regions. The following year, it spread across the entire country.

In the early 18th and 19th centuries, *hoyeolja* was referred to as *jwitong* in folklore, a word



Group photo of the 14th batch of trainees in epidemic prevention and control education | Busan, Gyeongsangnam-do | 1946 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Newspaper Articles about *Hoyeolja*(Cholera) | 1925.9.15. | Dong-a Ilbo

meaning “pain caused by a rat.” Subsequently, a *fulu* depicting a cat catching a rat was placed on the gate as a shamanistic countermeasure. This reflects the old custom of putting a tiger painting on the gate to prevent evil spirits from entering a house.

In response to the *hoyeolja* outbreaks, the Korean Empire implemented disease prevention measures and treatments in national hospital and conducted *jesa* rituals across the country to console the spirits who had not been recognized by any previous rituals and to worship the deities who protected towns.

Tiger

The Paper Tiger

종이호랑이

An idiom

A metaphorical idiom for someone who looks strong and fierce on the outside but is powerless and hollow on the inside.

People have always been afraid of tigers. However, a tiger drawn on paper is nothing but a drawing. Regardless of its powerful and intimidating appearance, a tiger on paper cannot pose a real threat to people. The term “paper tiger”

comes from this idea.

Joseon, a dynasty in Korea, was known as the *country of the tiger* because many tigers lived there. Given their number, these tigers caused considerable harm.

As suggested above, a tiger on paper has no power—unlike a real tiger. Of course, a poet once looked at a tiger in a painting and said, “Although it is not real, it has a fearful majesty.” This expression does not mean that the poet is afraid of the tiger in the painting but that he recognizes this sense of the tiger in the painting. The poet’s words may also refer to the empty shell of a paper tiger, symbolizing a being that has lost its true abilities or represents something fake rather than a real tiger. As such, the tiger drawn on paper is a powerless creature that only has majesty as a beast and does not have the aggression or ferocity of a real tiger. Hence, “paper tiger” is an expression used to refer to someone who only resembles a tiger and does not have its ferocity.

Tiger

The Toothless Tiger

이빨 빠진 호랑이

An idiom

A metaphorical idiom for an incompetent person who has lost all their previous powers.

The Tale of the Tiger and the Leopard says, “Although tigers and leopards can eat people, they are also afraid of people. The only thing on which tigers and leopards rely are their claws and teeth. When they meet a wise and brave man, however, they cannot use their claws or teeth.” This tale highlights that tigers rely on their claws and teeth to scare people away.

Records about tigers can be categorized into those about real and imaginary tigers. People who have never seen a more terrifying animal than a tiger may say that a frightening animal “seems like a tiger.” The tiger is also used as a symbol for power and strength, especially in relation to deities.

Records depicting an imaginary animal or deity with features resembling a tiger facilitated a shared imagination among people who spoke the same language, reinforcing the idea of a god and king possessing the fearsome authority associated with tigers. Among other parts of the tiger’s body, its teeth and claws are often perceived as symbols of its authority, fierce nature, and bravery.

The expression “a toothless tiger” refers to a tiger that has lost its authority and fierce nature as a beast. Incompetent and powerless, a toothless tiger is no longer something to fear.

Tiger

Tiger Teacher

호랑이 선생님

An idiom

A figurative term to refer to a very fierce and frightening person.

The tiger is a scary and ferocious beast. Tigers were believed to stave off bad energy and symbolize authority and bravery. They were also loved by people for their beautiful patterns. Tiger skin was recognized as a symbol of authority and bravery due to the tiger’s majesty as the king of animals. The term “Tiger Teacher” combines the recognition of the tiger’s fierceness with the idea that the teacher is an authority and is used to refer to a feared, majestic, and beautiful teacher.

부록

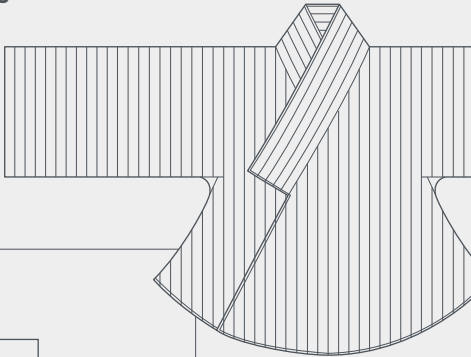
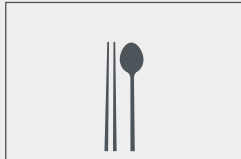
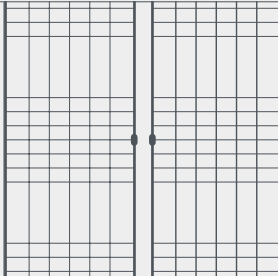
Appendix

호랑이 문화재

Tiger & Cultural Heritages

Tiger-related National Museum Collections

- Cheongju National Museum
Chuncheon National Museum
Daegu National Museum
Forest Museum, Korea National Arboretum
- Gimhae National Museum
Gyeongju National Museum
Jeonju National Museum
Jinju National Museum
- National Folk Museum of Korea
National Museum of Korea
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History

Culture and art p.156	Clothing p.167			
				
Food p.169				
				
Housing p.171		Industry/livelihood p.176		
				
Traditional sciences p.178	Social life p.179	Transportation/communication p.177		
				
		Religious beliefs p.181		
				



Culture and art

Wood tiger statue of Oriental Zodiac

Park Chansu
National Folk Museum of Korea
참고자료002099

**Tiger and Magpie**

Width: 38 cm,
Height: 60 cm
Jeonju National Museum
황1559

**Tiger and Bamboo by Chillihyangjidang**

Chillihyangjidang
Width: 30 cm,
Height: 133 cm
National Museum of Korea
본관8001

Tiger and Rock by Kang Giho

Kang Giho
Width: 77 cm, Height: 88 cm
National Museum of Korea
증7522

**Jakhodo(Painting of Tiger and Magpie)**

National Folk Museum of Korea
민속007496

**Jukhodo(Painting of Tiger and Bamboo)**

by Seoksan
Width: 31 cm,
Height: 115 cm
National Museum of Korea
본관8147

**People Print by Dureong Group**

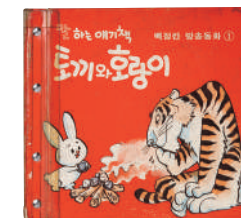
Dureong Group
Width: 53 cm, Height: 73 cm Depth: 3 cm
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
한박12487

Part of Tiger shaped Clay Figurines

Length: 6 cm
Daegu National Museum
상주778

**Record 'Tiger and Rabbit'**

Width: 22 cm, Height: 22 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속039347

**Maenghodo(Painting of valiant tiger)**

Width: 218 cm, Height: 222 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산1240

**Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger**

Width: 69 cm,
Height: 86 cm
Jeonju National Museum
황1618



Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger
Width: 63 cm,
Height: 97 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수14203



Tiger and Pine Tree by Kim Yanggi
Kim Yanggi
Width: 40 cm,
Height: 122 cm
National Museum of Korea
본관7976



Tiger Patterned Mould
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속030775



Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger
Depth: 50 cm,
Length: 72 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산1420

Songhodo(Painting of Tiger and Pine Tree)
Width: 30 cm,
Height: 30 cm
National Museum of Korea
동원2427

Songhamaenghodo (Painting of Tiger and Pine Tree)
Width: 121 cm,
Height: 44 cm
Jinju National Museum
진주1115



Stone rubbing tiger of Oriental Zodiac
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속051251



Songhodo(Painting of Tiger and Pine Tree)
Width: 86 cm, Height: 87 cm
National Museum of Korea
M6



Ceramic plate with tiger design of Oriental Zodiac
Width: 17 cm,
Height: 22 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속082751



Tiger Kite
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속004774



Maenghodo(Painting of valiant tiger)

Width: 55 cm,
Height: 96 cm
National Museum of Korea
M67


Tiger made by embroidery

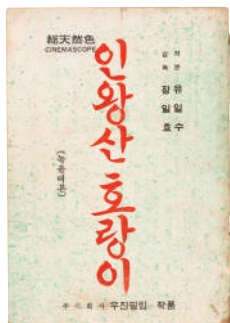
Hong Inseon
fabric
Width: 84 cm,
Height: 152 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속056451

Yonghodo(Painting of Double Tiger)

Width: 95~108 cm, Height: 73~156 cm,
Axis: 114 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수2300


Inwangsan Tiger(Tapescript)

Width: 18 cm,
Height: 25 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속074313


Jukhodo(Painting of Tiger and Bamboo)

Width: 32 cm,
Height: 96 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수16404


Jukhodo(Painting of Tiger and Bamboo)

Width: 27 cm,
Height: 75 cm,
National Museum of Korea
구4393


Chinjahodo(Painting of Mother and Baby Tiger)

Width: 40 cm,
Height: 107 cm
Jinju National Museum
진주1114



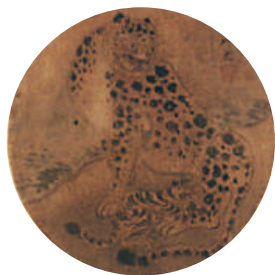
A Tiger
Width: 39 cm,
Height: 117 cm
National Museum of Korea
구4286


Minhwa hodo(Korean Folk Painting of tiger)

Depth: 81 cm,
Length: 110 cm,
Width: 54 cm,
Height: 82 cm
National Museum of Korea
증7520

Hodo(Painting of tiger)

Width: 23 cm,
Height: 23 cm
National Museum of
Korea
신수15904

**Hodo(Painting of tiger)**

Width: 87 cm, Height:
130 cm
Jinju National Museum
진주1113

**Hodo(Painting of tiger)**

Width: 70 cm,
Height: 192 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속081403

**Hodo(Painting of tiger)**

Width: 44 cm,
Height: 63 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속090325

**Haetae and Falcon/Tiger and Falcon**

Width: 65 cm, Height: 97 cm
National Museum of Korea
증7528

Hodo(Painting of tiger)

Depth: 60 cm,
Length: 121 cm
National
Museum of
Korea
남산2553

**Painting of tiger by Unpo**

Unpo
Width: 63 cm, Height: 75 cm
National Museum of Korea
본관4411

**Tiger Painting on Bujeok(Talisman)**

Width: 79 cm, Height: 58 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속038825

Tiger shaped wooden doll

Depth: 33~35 cm, Height: 28~30 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속070297

**Wooden tiger statue**

Height: 50 cm
National Museum of
Korea
남산2397



Stone Rubbing of Tiger

Width: 53 cm,
Height: 59 cm
National Museum of Korea
증525



Hodo(Painting of tiger)

Width: 37 cm,
Height: 55 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속007493



Tiger(Contemporary art)

Width: 61 cm, Height: 51 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속035005



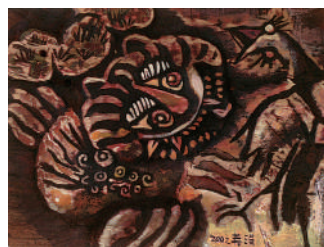
Tiger and Magpie

Width: 81 cm, Height: 135 cm
National Museum of Korea
동원2613



Tiger and bird (Contemporary art)

Width: 48 cm,
Height: 42 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속035007



Tiger and temple (Contemporary art)

Width: 62 cm,
Height: 52 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속035006



**Gyeokhodo(Battle with a Tiger),
Gyeongnyongdo(Battle with a Dragon)**

Yoon Dukhee
Width: 21 cm, Height: 28 cm
National Museum of Korea
본관2208

Horyeopdo(Painting of hunting tiger)

Total height: 170 cm, With: 50~56 cm,
Height: 124~125 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수15297

Horyeopdo(Painting of hunting tiger) Folding Screens(eight-fold)

Width: 32 cm, Height: 117 cm
Jeonju National Museum
전주5138



Woodblock with Tiger design
Width: 26 cm, Height: 39 cm
Forest Museum,
Korea National Arboretum
국립수목원140262



Tiger shaped earthenware
Height: 18 cm
Gyeongju National Museum
국은205



Growing Tiger(Comics)
Width: 19 cm,
Height: 26 cm
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속039313



Clothing

Danho(One Tiger)
Hyungbae(Rank badge)
Height: 22 cm,
Width: 20 cm
National Museum of Korea
증3321



Danho(One Tiger)
Hyungbae(Rank badge)
Width: 16 cm,
Height: 18 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수11466



Ssangho(Two tigers)
Hyungbae(Rank badge)
National Museum of Korea
남산797



Ssangho(Double Tiger)
Hyungbae(Rank badge)
Width: 17 cm,
Height: 18 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산798



Ssangho(Two tigers)
Hyungbae(Rank badge)
Depth: 21 cm,
Length: 23 cm
National Museum of Korea
고적29258



Bronze tiger face-shaped belt loop accessory
Depth: 3 cm, Length: 3 cm
Daegu National Museum
성주180



Norigae(knotted pendent with tassels) made of Tiger's Claw
Length: 28 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수16954



Metal tiger face-shaped belt loop accessory
Depth: 9 cm, Length: 7 cm
Cheongju National Museum
청주57997



Danho(One Tiger)
Hyungbae(Rank badge)

Width: 17 cm,
Height: 18 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산245



Tiger face-shaped belt loop accessory

Depth: 6 cm, Length: 13 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수1606



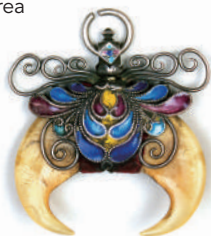
Tiger face-shaped belt loop accessory

Length: 17 cm
Daegu National Museum
경산4899



Norigae(Knotted pendent with tassels) made of Tiger's Claw

Length: 6 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속016947



Daegu(Belt loop accessory) with tiger face-shaped

Length: 11 cm
National Museum of Korea
홍산1014



Tiger face-shaped belt loop accessory

Length: 19 cm
Daegu National Museum
경산4523



Hyungbae (rank badge), Dress decoration with One Tiger

Width: 26 cm,
Height: 27 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수15978



White Porcelain jar with Tiger Design

National Museum of Korea
남산492



White Porcelain jar with Tiger and Pine Design

Diameter of bottom: 15 cm,
Height: 38 cm,
Diameter of top: 14 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산497



White Porcelain Octagonal Bottle with Tiger and Dragon Design

Diameter of bottom: 2~5 cm,
Height: 8 cm,
Diameter of top: 2 cm
National Museum of Korea
동원208



Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)

Diameter: 40 cm, Height: 27 cm
Chuncheon National Museum
수증260



Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)

Top of diameter: 37 cm,
Height: 25 cm
Chuncheon National Museum
수증654



Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)

Diameter: 39 cm, Height: 27 cm
Chuncheon National Museum
수증345

**Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)**

Diameter: 44 cm, Height: 23 cm
Chuncheon National Museum
수증655

**Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)**

Diameter: 47 cm, Height: 32 cm
National Museum of Korea
증9321

**Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)**

Depth: 69 cm, Height: 43 cm
National Museum of Korea
증9136

**Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)**

Diameter: 42 cm, Height: 24 cm
National Museum of Korea
증9322

**Hojokban(Tiger leg shaped Tray-table)**

Diameter: 41 cm, Height: 28 cm
National Museum of Korea
증9325

**Housing****Insang(Tiger statue)**

Depth: 9 cm, Length: 38 cm, Height: 14 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속066690

**Tiger**

National Folk Museum of Korea
민속046080

**Tiger design Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Pillow Decoration**

Diameter: 18 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수1298

**Dragon and Tiger design Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Papeterie**

Width: 72 cm, Height: 37 cm, Depth: 42 cm
Jinju National Museum
진주1136

**Tiger design Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Pillow Decoration**

Diameter: 21 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수498

**Chest with Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl**

Width: 13 cm, Height: 47 cm, depth: 15 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수15922



Bronze Round Mirror with Tiger Design

Diameter: 10 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수3924

**White Porcelain Pencil case with Tiger and Pine tree design**

Diameter: 14 cm, Height: 13 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수6400

Tiger Doll

National Folk Museum of Korea
민속048582

**Pillow decoration with Tiger design**

Diameter: 20 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수12517

**Brick with Baeko(symbol of white tiger) Design**

Width: 37 cm, Height: 11 cm, Depth: 6 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수33

**Tiger patterned Wall-mounted decoration**

Chest: 53 cm, Height: 22 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속039529

**Fan with Tiger and Magpie**

Depth: 36 cm,
Length: 49 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속071549

**Magnetic Inkstone with Magpie and Tiger Design**

Height: 2 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수6920

**Matchbox with a Film Advertisement 'Tiger loves Fresh Meat'**

Width: 6 cm, Height: 5 cm, Depth: 1 cm
Forest Museum, Korea National Arboretum
국립수목원160262-334

Bronze Mirror with Double Tigers Design

Diameter: 12 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수63

**Bronze Mirror with Tiger Design**

Diameter: 16 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수1690

**Double-sided Folding Screens with paint of Oriental Zodiac and Minhwa(Korean Folk Painting), Tiger and Magpie**

Width: 382 cm, Height: 49 cm, (piece)Width: 26 cm, Height: 44 cm
National Museum of Korea
구4988

Tiger Doll

National Folk Museum of Korea
민속048573

**Inlaid mother of pearl pillow decoration with tiger design**

National Museum of Korea
남산1551

**Inlaid mother of pearl pillow decoration with tiger design**

Diameter: 19 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산2371

**Tiger design Pillow decoration**

National Museum of Korea
남산2389

**Inlaid mother of pearl pillow decoration with tiger design**

Diameter: 19 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산1159

**Part of Giwa with Tiger and Deer design**

Depth: 17 cm, Length: 30 cm, Depth: 3 cm
Cheongju National Museum
청주946





Part of brick with tiger design
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속007556

Quadrant pencil case with tiger design
Depth: 13 cm, Height: 20 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산1645



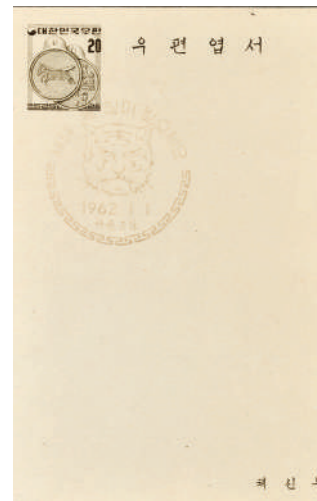
Industry/livelihood

Tiger shaped ink pot
Depth: 6 cm, Length: 13 cm,
Height: 5 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수1862



Transportation/communication

Postmark with Tiger design
Ministry of Communication
Width: 9 cm, Height: 14 cm
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
아고6700



Christmas Seal with paint of folk tiger tale
Korean National Tuberculosis Association
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
한박5298



Stamp with paint of Folk tale(The Sun and the Moon)
Width: 4 cm, Height: 2 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속086634



Stamp with paint of Folk tale(The Sun and the Moon)
Width: 4 cm, Height: 2 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속086635





Traditional sciences

Ceramic and stone seal with tiger shape
National Museum of Korea
신수1175



Bujeok(Talisman) board for tiger design
Depth: 1 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수9579



Wooden board with tiger of the Oriental Zodiac design
Width: 37 cm, Height: 24 cm, Depth: 4 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속028167



Social life

Tiger towel, celebrate the Seoul Olympic in 1988
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
한박4038



Wooden figure shaped riding a tiger
Height: 33 cm, Length: 19 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수14495



Sarcophagus with tiger design
National Museum of Korea
신수5883



Sarcophagus with tiger design
National Museum of Korea
신수1356



Sarcophagus with tiger design
National Museum of Korea
신수5880



Bronze tiger face-shaped belt
Width: 8 cm, Height: 4 cm
Gimhae National Museum
김해66143



Bronze tiger face-shaped belt

Height: 8 cm
Gyeongju National Museum
경주7531

**Bronze tiger face-shaped belt**

Length: 16 cm
Gyeongju National Museum
경주63022

**Bronze tiger face-shaped belt**

Length: 13 cm
Gyeongju National Museum
경주36698

**Bronze tiger face-shaped belt**

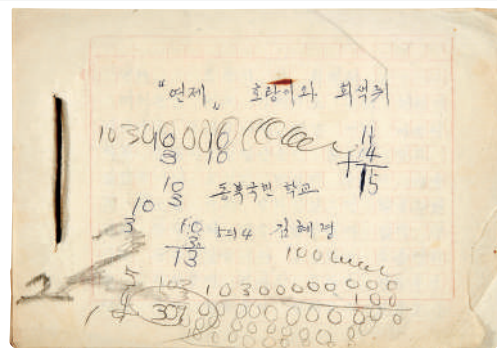
Length: 16 cm, Height: 6 cm, Depth: 1 cm
Gyeongju National Museum
사라2088

**Bronze tiger face-shaped belt**

Gyeongju National Museum
사라2095

Folk tale manuscript(Tiger and Gray Rat)

Kim Hyegyeong
Width: 26 cm, Height: 18 cm
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
구입3253

**Religious beliefs****Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger**

Depth: 25 cm,
Height: 38 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수9617

**Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger**

Height: 138 cm,
Depth: 100 cm,
Width: 70 cm,
Height: 106 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수15483

**Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger**

Width: 67 cm,
Height: 80 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속029057

**Sansin(Mountain Spirit)**

National Folk Museum of Korea
민속006238

**Sansin(Mountain Spirit) and tiger**

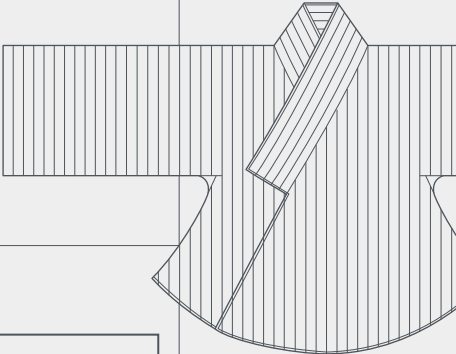
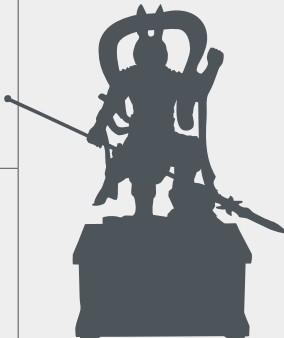
Total height: 146 cm, Length: 100 cm,
Width: 81 cm, Height: 110 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수15313

토끼 문화재

Rabbit & Cultural Heritages

Rabbit-related Museum Collections

- Busan Museum
Cheongnyangsan Museum
Daegu National Museum
Forest Museum, Korea National Arboretum
Goseong Mask Museum
Gyeongju National Museum
Hahoe Mask Museum
Korea Manhwa Museum
- Korea Minhwa Museum
Kyonggi University Sosung Museum
Mok In Museum Mok Seok Won
Namgaram Museum
National Folk Museum of Korea
National Hangeul Museum
National Museum of Korea
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
- National Palace Museum of Korea
Samcheok Municipal Museum
Seoul Museum of History
Seoul National University Museum
The Museum of Korean Modern Literature
Theme Museum of Korean Liquor
Traditional Museum
Wonju History Museum

Culture and art p.184	Clothing p.200	
		
Industry/livelihood p.198	Food p.204	
		
Housing p.205	Transportation/communication p.207	Religious beliefs p.208
		
Social life p.211		



Culture and art

**White Porcelain Incense Burner
with rabbit shaped legs**

Diameter: 8 cm,
Height: 9 cm
Korea Heritage Service

**Rabbit and Turtle decorated Wood seal**

Diameter: 5 cm, Height: 3 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속031111

**Fan decoration with rabbit pattern**

Diameter: 4 cm, Depth: 1 cm
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속002579

**Rabbit patterned seal**

Diameter: 5 cm, Height: 4 cm
National Folk Museum of
Korea
민속075687

**Munyangpan(Woodblock) with mortar-grinding
rabbit pattern**

Depth: 7 cm, Length: 7 cm
Seoul Museum of History
서울역사010201

**Jade rabbit decoration**

Depth: 3 cm, Height: 2 cm
Daegu National Museum
안동32

**Rabbit and turtle Ornament**
Mok-In Museum Mokseok-Won
한국목인1314**Rabbit mask of Oriental Zodiac**

Hahoe Mask Museum
구입147

**Rabbit design sketch for
Mother-of-pearl inlay**

Width: 28 cm, Height: 25 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속056861

**Rabbit mask of Oriental
Zodiac**

Width: 21 cm,
Height: 33 cm,
Depth: 8 cm
Goseong Mask Museum
고성탈9

**Rabbit shaped Ornament**

Depth: 5 cm, Length: 9 cm, Height: 13 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속066691

**Ssangtokkiyeon
(Double rabbit kite)**

Width: 40 cm,
Height: 57 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속008600



Rabbit and common kestrel
Jang Seungeop
Width: 60 cm,
Height: 189 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속075834



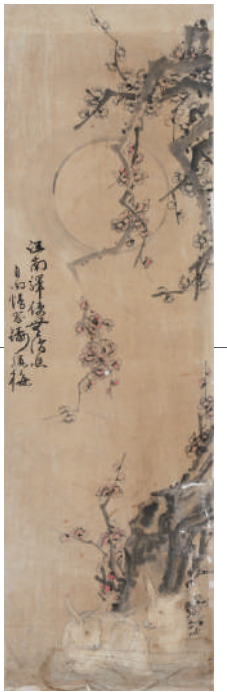
Double rabbits by Ma gunhu in Geunyeokhwahwi(Pictorial)
Ma gunhu
Width: 23 cm, Height: 27 cm
Seoul National University Museum
역643-54

Eungsissangtodo(Painting of double rabbit and falcon)

Kyonggi University Soseong Museum
경기대학교소성박물관1156



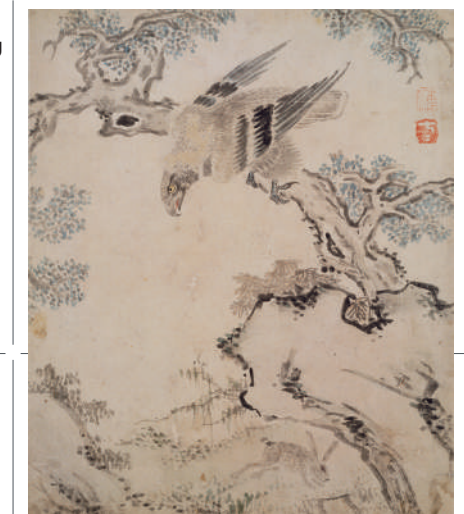
Maehwassangtodo (Painting of double rabbit and plum tree)
Korean Minhwa Museum
화조도31127



Hwajossangtodo(Painting of double rabbit, flowers and birds)
Korean Minhwa Museum
화조도31052



Common kestrel hunting rabbit
Shim Sajeong
Width: 54 cm,
Height: 115 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수5718



Rabbit hunted by falcon
Choi Buk
Width: 35 cm, Height: 42 cm
National Museum of Korea
동원2543



Folding screen with Caligraphy, Chi(恥, Shame)
Width: 288 cm, Height: 59 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속038617



Folding screens(one of eight) of Caligraphy, Chi(恥, Shame)
Width: 32 cm, Height: 98 cm
National Museum of Korea
신수13617



Folding screen with Caligraphy, Chi(恥, Shame)
Kim hyungyeong
Width: 52 cm, Height: 60 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속035010



Rabbit under Pine tree and Moon
Width: 33 cm, Height: 55 cm
Wonju History Museum
원주1386



Yeongmodo(Bird and Animal(Rabbit))
Width: 82 cm, Height: 120 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속039693



Folding screens(one of eight) of Hwajodo (Painting of flowers and birds)
Width: 308 cm, Height: 123 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속093355



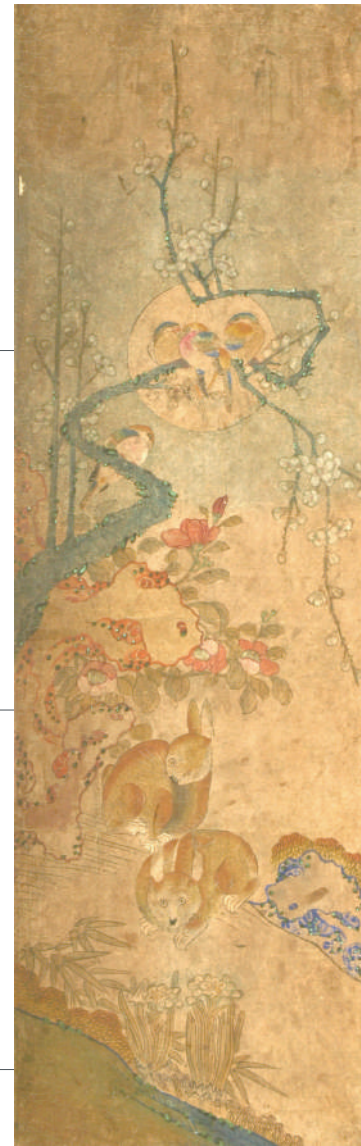
Eorakdo(one of two)(The pleasures of fishes)
Width: 30 cm, Height: 53 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속018609



Songeungdo(Rabbit, pine tree and falcon)
Width: 60 cm, Height: 194 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속090334



Horyeopdo(Painting of hunting rabbit Scene)
Width: 30 cm, Height: 108 cm
Seoul Museum of History
서울역사016079



Yeongsudo(Painting of auspicious animal(rabbit))
Width: 33 cm, Height: 105 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속029116



Folding screen(one of ten) of Hwajoyeongmodo(flowers and animals)
Width: 38 cm, Height: 154 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속090327



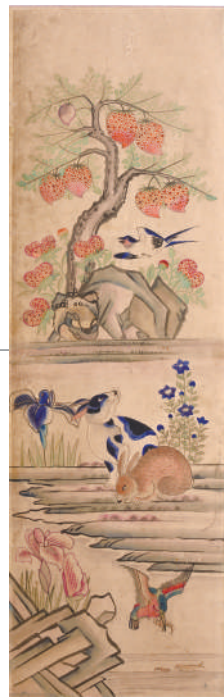
Folding screen(one of ten) of Hwajoyeongmodo(flowers and animals)
Width: 31 cm, Height: 120 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속030666

Tokki(Rabbit) painting on the fan

Kim hwagyeong
Width: 70 cm, Height: 55 cm
Namgaram Museum
회화11

**Wolhabaekdo
(Painting of Rabbit and Moon)**

Width: 30 cm,
Height: 36 cm
National Museum of Korea
동원2428

**Folding screens(two of eight) of
Hwajodo(flowers and animals)**

Width: 364 cm, Height: 181 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속017380

**Folding screens(two of ten) of
Sansudo(Landscape)**

Width: 32 cm, Height: 96 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속024184

**Mortar-grinding rabbit**

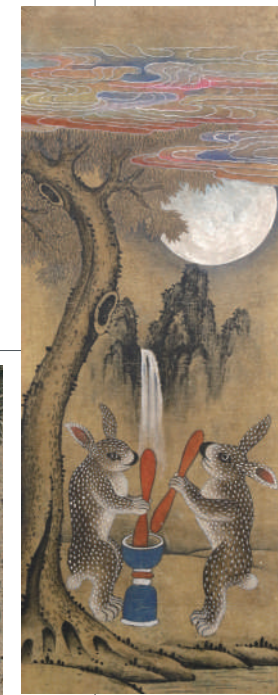
Width: 32 cm, Height: 82 cm
Samcheok Municipal Museum
삼척시립2408

**Tokki minhwa(Korean folk painting of
rabbit)**

Width: 33 cm, Height: 75 cm
Samcheok Municipal Museum
삼척시립2409

**Mortar-grinding
rabbit**

Width: 25 cm,
Height: 33 cm
Wonju History
Museum
원평4182

**Eungtodo(Painting
of two rabbits and
falcone)**

Width: 31 cm,
Height: 67 cm
Samcheok
Municipal Museum
삼척시립2318

**Folding screen(one of ten)
of Hwajoyeongmodo
(flowers and animals)**

Width: 452 cm,
Height: 95 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속047238

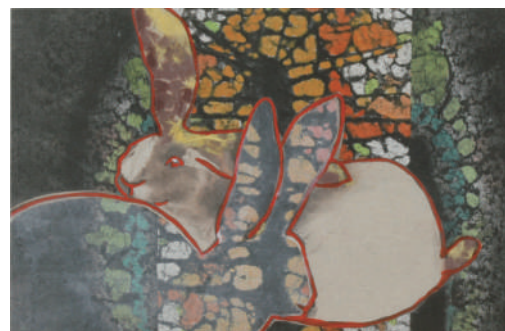




Mettokki(subspecies of rabbit)
Contemporary art
Mt. Cheongnyang Museum
청량산박물관1624

Rabbit on the snow

Cho hyundong
Width: 41 cm,
Height: 48 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속035008



Three rabbits

Width: 78 cm, Height: 37 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속055472



Rabbit(Contemporary art)

Park Taeil
Width: 46 cm, Height: 36 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속035011



Tokkimunui(Rabbit design sktech)
Width: 40 cm, Height: 28 cm
Wonju History Museum
일사1045

Rabbit and turtle

Kim Baekseok
Width: 51 cm, Height: 60 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속035009

**Artwork of Novel
(Tiger and Rabbit)**

Width: 17 cm,
Height: 11 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속035448



**Artwork of Novel
(The Tricky Hare)**

Width: 17cm,
Height: 11 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속035451



**Artwork of Novel
(Tiger with a Bell)**

Width: 17 cm,
Height: 11 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속035442



**Hyeokpilhwa(Rainbow
painting)**

Width: 22 cm,
Height: 95 cm
National Folk Museum of
Korea
민속020665



Tokkijeon
(Hare's Liver(Novel))

Width: 20 cm,
Height: 30 cm
National Museum of Korea
구4473



Jubu jeon(Hare's
Liver(Novel))

Width: 28 cm,
Height: 33 cm
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속075224



**Rabbit and
tiger**(Children
fairy tale)

Width: 22 cm,
Height: 22 cm
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속039347



Oktokki(Children fairy
tale)

Width: 13 cm,
Height: 19 cm
National Hangeul Museum
한구13646



Byeoljubujeon(Hare's Liver(Novel))

Width: 19 cm, Height: 30 cm
National Hangeul Museum
한구9376



Tokki Tokki(Rabbit
Rabbit(Comics))

Korea Manhwa Museum
단행본2662



**Rabbit, Clock and
Hoelsingok**(Words of
Blessing)

The Museum of Korean
Modern Literature
한국근대문학관100124



Hare's Liver(Children musical)

Width: 32 cm, Height: 32 cm, Diameter: 30 cm
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
한박9089



**Rabbit and
Tiger**(Children fairy
tale)

Width: 27 cm,
Height: 36 cm,
Depth: 1 cm
Traditional Museum
사회생활753



Singing rabbit(Comics),
Second part

Korea Manhwa Museum
단행본745



**Rabbit and
monkey**(Comics)

Korea Manhwa Museum
단행본6472



Kingdom of Rabbit and Bapu the hound(Comics)

Korea Manhwa Museum
원화3161

Industry/livelihood

Silheomyangtobeop
(Text book cover with raising rabbits)

Width: 14 cm,
Height: 13 cm
Korea National Arboretum
국립수목원150205



Cooking Rabbit(Leaflet)

Width: 11 cm, Height: 20 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속040905



4H How to Process Rabbit Skin

Width: 15 cm, Height: 21 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속040868



Scout handbook
(Rabbit rank)

Width: 13 cm,
Height: 19 cm
Depth: 1 cm
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
한박19450



Encouragement for Raising Exotic Breeds of Rabbits(Poster)

Width: 34 cm,
Height: 48 cm
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
구입2187



Raising rabbits and beekeeping

Width: 15 cm,
Height: 20 cm,
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
구입6601



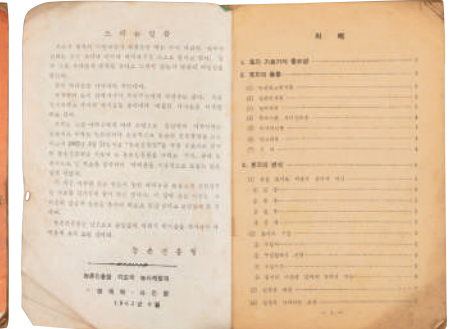
Easy Guide to Raising Rabbits and Goats

Width: 13 cm,
Height: 16 cm
National Folk Museum of
Korea
민속055462



Guide to Raising and Utilizing Rabbits(Guidebook)

Width: 15 cm, Height: 21 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속020575



Textbook cover with raising rabbits

Width: 15 cm,
Height: 21 cm
National Folk Museum of
Korea
민속054321



Textbook cover with raising rabbits

Width: 13 cm,
Height: 19 cm
National Folk Museum of
Korea
민속054232



Sebalchangnal(Pitchfork, rabbit hunting gear)

Length: 30 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속017146



Tokkideot(Rabbit Trap)

Width: 66 cm, Height: 72 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속004722



Clothing

Gasa(Monk's habit)
Length: 93 cm
Seoul Museum of History
서울역사009838



Gasa(Monk's habit) patch with rabbit and bird
Diameter: 8 cm
Seoul Museum of History
서울역사009696



Gasa(Monk's habit) patch with rabbit and bird
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속017185

Gasa(Monk's habit) patch with rabbit and bird
Diameter: 7 cm
Seoul Museum of History
서울역사009697



Rabbit shaped Norigae(Knotted pendent with tassels)
Length: 3 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속000640



Paecheolseonchu(Fan decoration with rabbit pattern)
Length: 44 cm
Seoul Museum of History
서울역사009408



Tokkiteol mokdori(Rabbit fur scarf)
Depth: 7 cm, Length: 81 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속038341



Tokkiteol tosi(Rabbit fur arm warmer)
Length: 22 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속017047



Rabbit fur Tosi(Arm warmer)
Length: 44 cm, Depth: 20 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속091617



Rabbit fur children's wear
Chest: 23 cm, Length: 34 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속038216



Rabbit fur Baeja(vest)
Chest: 34 cm, Length: 24 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속075609



Rabbit fur Baeja(vest)
Chest: 50 cm, Length: 39 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속050436



Rabbit fur Pungcha(hat)
Diameter: 18 cm, Length: 36 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속005150



Rabbit fur Pungcha(hat)
Depth: 36 cm,
Length: 38 cm
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속082896



Rabbit fur Nambawi(hat)
Length: 43 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속057816



Rabbit fur Pungcha(hat)
Length: 37 cm
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속001925





Food

Rabbit painted dish

Diameter of top: 11 cm, Diameter of bottom: 6 cm, Height: 2 cm
Busan Museum
기증5277



Green-glazed rabbit painting dish

Diameter of top: 9 cm, Diameter of bottom: 5 cm, Height: 2 cm
Busan Museum
기증5289



Rabbit painted dish

Diameter: 9 cm
Busan Museum
기증9053



Santokki design canteen

Diameter: 18 cm, Height: 8 cm
Theme Museum
Korean Liquor
대한민국술테마3405



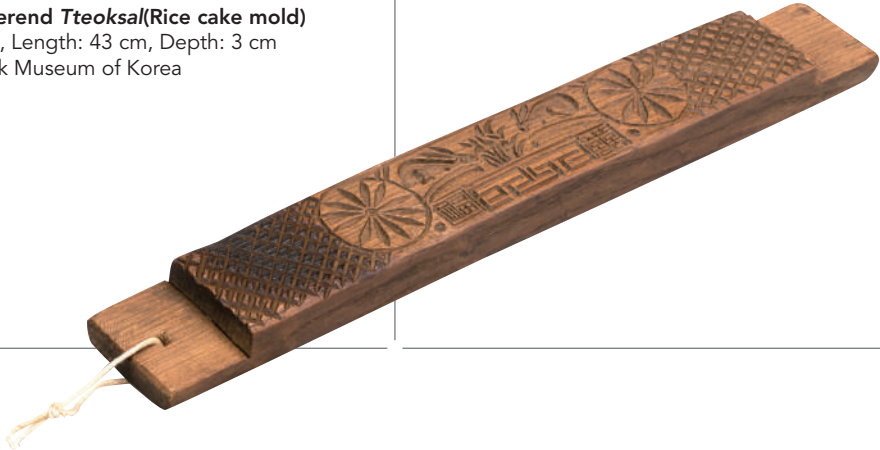
Animal shaped candy mold(Chicken, rabbit, fish)

Depth: 19 cm, Length: 5 cm, Depth: 1 cm
National Museum of Korean Contemporary History
구입7531



Rabbit patterend Tteoksal(Rice cake mold)

Depth: 6 cm, Length: 43 cm, Depth: 3 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속085259



Housing

Sumaksae(Roof-end tile) with rabbit and moon design

Diameter: 13 cm, Depth: 2 cm
National Museum of Korea
증3434



Sumaksae(Roof-end tile) with rabbit and frog design

National Museum of Korea
K100



Rabbit patterned pillow decoration board

Diameter: 15 cm, Height: 2 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속062595



Celadon Incense Burner with Openwork Auspicious-character Design Lid

Diameter: 12 cm Height: 15 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수2990



Rabbit shaped White porcelain Water Dropper

Diameter of bottom: 9 cm, Height: 6 cm
National Museum of Korea
수정291



Bronze rhombus shaped mirror

Diameter: 19 cm
National Museum of Korea
덕수5049

Rabbit patterned fulling-block

Depth: 46 cm, Length: 19 cm, Height: 11 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속093344



**Rabbit patterned
Irwollyeon(Moon
shaped inkstone)**

Width: 12 cm,
Height: 22 cm
Wonju History
Museum
원주1356



Rabbit shaped roof ornament

Length: 52 cm, Height: 19 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속024482



**Mangtaegi(String
bag) made of
Rabbit skin**

Width: 45 cm,
Height: 28 cm
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속005438



**Rabbit shaped oil lidded
bowl**

Diameter: 10 cm,
Height: 8 cm
National Museum of Korea
동원1657



**Ashtray with
oriental zodiac
pattern**

Depth: 18 cm,
Height: 2 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속043275



**Rabbit design Three layer closet with
Inlaid Mother-of-pearl**

wood, Width: 107 cm, Depth: 53 cm, Height: 193 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속040498



Transportation/communication

**Stamp with
Hare's Liver**

Width: 9 cm,
Height: 6 cm
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속094319



**Stamp
with Hare's
Liver(novel)**

Width: 9 cm,
Height: 6 cm
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속094320



**Stamp with
Hare's Liver**

Width: 9 cm,
Height: 6 cm
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속094321



**Stamp
with Hare's
Liver(novel)**

Width: 9 cm,
Height: 6 cm
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속094322



**New Year's Stamp with
rabbit painting in 1975**

Width: 3 cm,
Height: 4 cm
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
아고6711



**New Year's Stamp with
rabbit painting in 1975**

Width: 9 cm,
Height: 6 cm
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
한박1720



**New Year's Stamp with
rabbit in the Oriental
Zodiac**

Width: 3 cm,
Height: 4 cm
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
아고6712



**New Year's Stamp with
rabbit painting in 1999**

Width: 3 cm,
Height: 4 cm
National Museum of
Korean Contemporary
History
아고6713





Religious beliefs

Bronze Rabbit Statue of Oriental Zodiac

Height: 8 cm
Gyeongju National Museum
경주7532



Agmatolite rabbit statue of oriental zodiac

Height: 41 cm
National Museum of Korea
본관14628



Ceramic rabbit statue of Oriental Zodiac

Depth: 12 cm, Length: 10 cm,
Height: 42 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속084280



Rabbit design in Five-story Stone Pagoda at Gaesimsa Temple Site, Yecheon

National Folk Museum of Korea
아카이브00062588



Rabbit design in Square Tomb of King Gyeongdeok, Gyeongju

National Folk Museum of Korea
아카이브00062564



Stone rabbit statue of Oriental Zodiac

Depth: 6 cm, Height: 17 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속056390



Wood rabbit statue of Oriental Zodiac

Depth: 61 cm, Height: 99 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
참고자료002100



Stone rubbing rabbit of Oriental Zodiac in East Stone Pagodas at Wonwonsa Temple Site, Gyeongju

Width: 45 cm, Height: 82 cm
Busan Museum
기증439-4



Stone rubbing rabbit of Oriental Zodiac in the Tomb of Queen Jindeok

Width: 46 cm, Height: 62 cm
Busan Museum
기증440-4



Stone rubbing rabbit of Oriental Zodiac in the Tomb of Kim Yusin

Width: 49 cm, Height: 94 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속051252



Ceramic plate with rabbit design of Oriental Zodiac

Width: 16 cm, Height: 22 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속082752



Myosin(Rabbit of oriental zodiac) General Anjeora

Width: 70 cm, Height: 136 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속009718



Rabbit God of Oriental Zodiac

Width: 4 cm, Height: 4 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
아카이브00067081



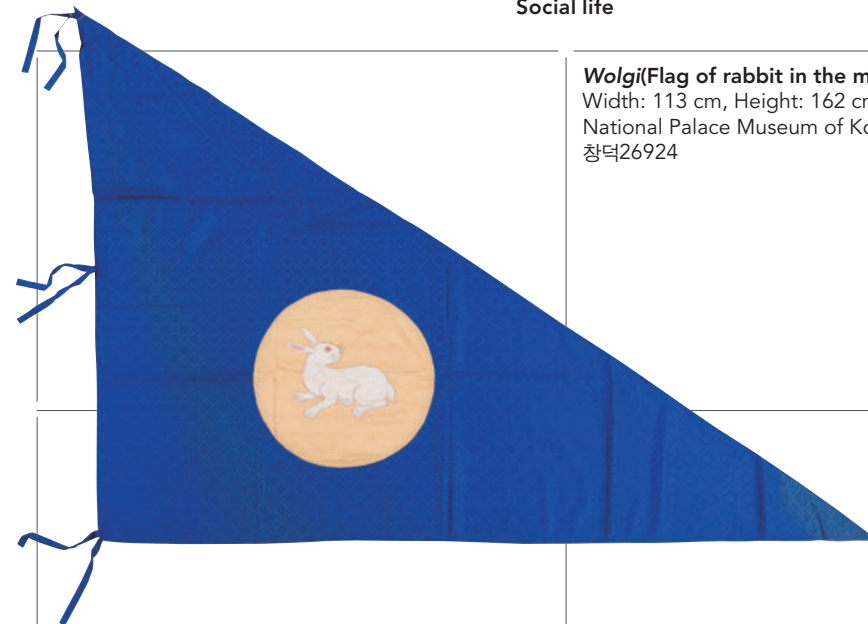
Rabbit God of Oriental Zodiac
Width: 36 cm, Height: 18 cm, Depth: 5 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속028168



Social life

Wolgi(Flag of rabbit in the moon)

Width: 113 cm, Height: 162 cm
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26924



Jeongmyogi(One of six ritual flags)

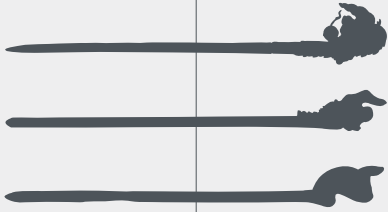
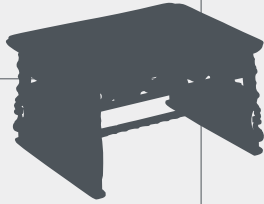
Width: 181 cm, Height: 206 cm
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26834

용 문화재

Dragon & Cultural Heritages

Dragon-related Museum Collections

- Buyeo National Museum
Gijisi Juldarigi Museum
Gyeonggi Province Museum
Gyeongju National Museum
- National Folk Museum of Korea
National Maritime Museum of Korea
National Museum of Korea
National Palace Museum of Korea
- Royal Portrait Museum
Sejong University Museum
The Museum of Agriculture

Folk beliefs p.214	Yonggi (dragon flag) p.220	Rites of passage p.228
		
Clothing p.231		Housing p.234
Folk games p.236		
		Folk arts p.237
		



Painting of shamanistic spirits



Haesindo(Painting of Sea god and dragon)
Width: 224 cm, Height: 131 cm
15th century
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속088948



Haesindo(Painting of Warrior and dragon on the sea)
Width: 51 cm, Height: 79 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속094345

Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits)
Width: 60 cm, Height: 90 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속000091



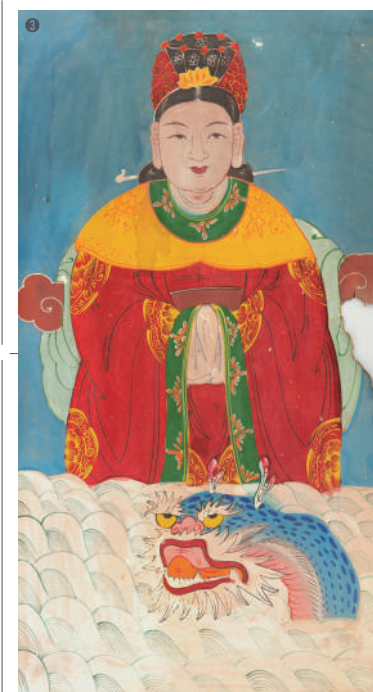
Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits)
❶ Width: 57 cm, Height: 93 cm | 민속045457
❷ Width: 40 cm, Height: 71 cm | 민속072781
❸ Width: 48 cm, Height: 79 cm | 민속067246
after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits)

❶ Width: 51 cm, Height: 84 cm | Hwang Chunseong
민속072642

❷ Width: 55 cm, Height: 78 cm | Hwang Chunseong
민속072761
after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Yongwangdo(Painting of Shamanistic Spirits)

❶ Width: 55 cm, Height: 87 cm | 민속072787

❷ Width: 56 cm, Height: 82 cm | 민속072798

❸ Width: 49 cm, Height: 90 cm | 민속077124
after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Yonggungbuindo(Painting of Sea goddess and dragon)

- ❶ Width: 51 cm, Height: 92 cm | Hwang Chunseong 민속000081
- ❷ Width: 51 cm, Height: 96 cm | Hwang Chunseong 민속072696
- ❸ Width: 52 cm, Height: 84 cm | Hwang Chunseong 민속072646 after 1945 | National Folk Museum of Korea



Yongtaebuindo(Painting of Three sea goddess on the waves)

Width: 77 cm, Height: 102 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속011355

Yonggungsambuindo
(Painting of Three sea goddess on the waves)

Width: 58 cm,
Height: 73 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속072606



Yonggungdo(Painting of Sea goddess and dragon)

Width: 71 cm, Height: 97 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속008033

Yonggung jeseokdo
(Painting of Indra in sea palace)

Width: 53 cm,
Height: 90 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속072592





Yonggi (dragon flag)

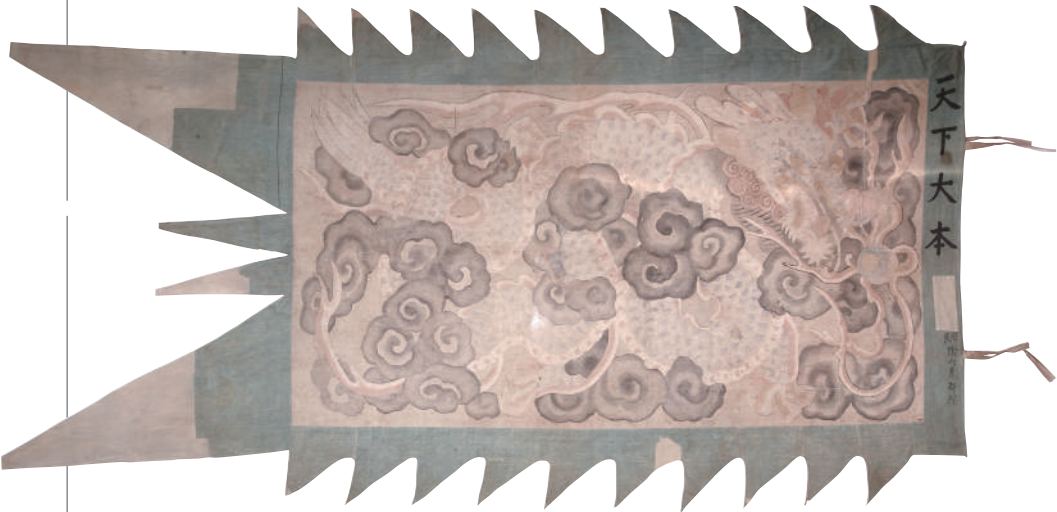
Nonggi(Village Flag) of Jangseon
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속029599



Nonggi(Village Flag) of Piam
early 20th century
National Maritime Museum of Korea
신해양140



Nonggi(Village Flag) of Dukjicheon
20th century
The Museum of Agriculture
농업77



Nonggi(Village Flag) of Anji
20th century
The Museum of Agriculture
농업78





Nonggi (Village Flag) of Pyeongang
after 1945
The Museum of Agriculture
농업79



Yongdaegi of Samung
Gijisijuldarigi museum

Nonggi (Village Flag) of Banchon
after 1945
Gijisijuldarigi museum



Yongdaegi of Bondang
Gijisijuldarigi museum

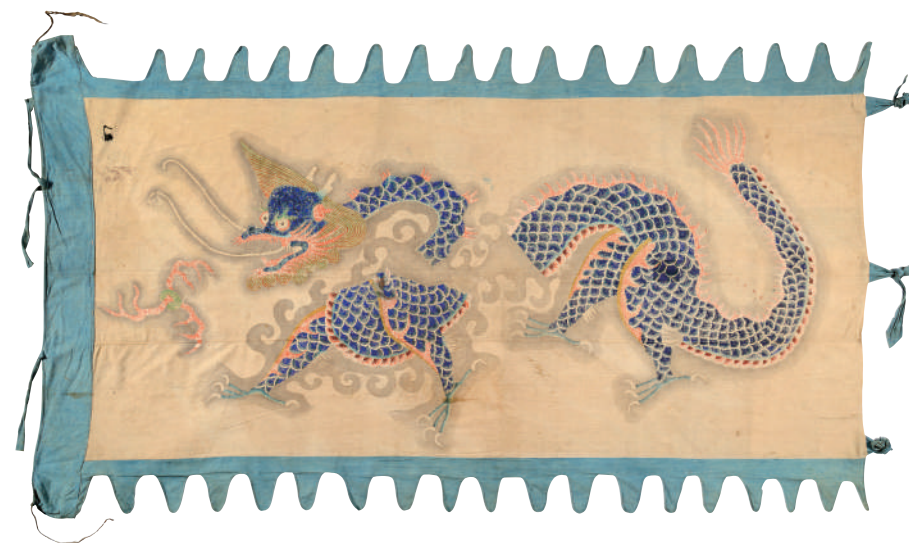
Nonggi(Village Flag) of Bondang
Gijisijuldarigi museum



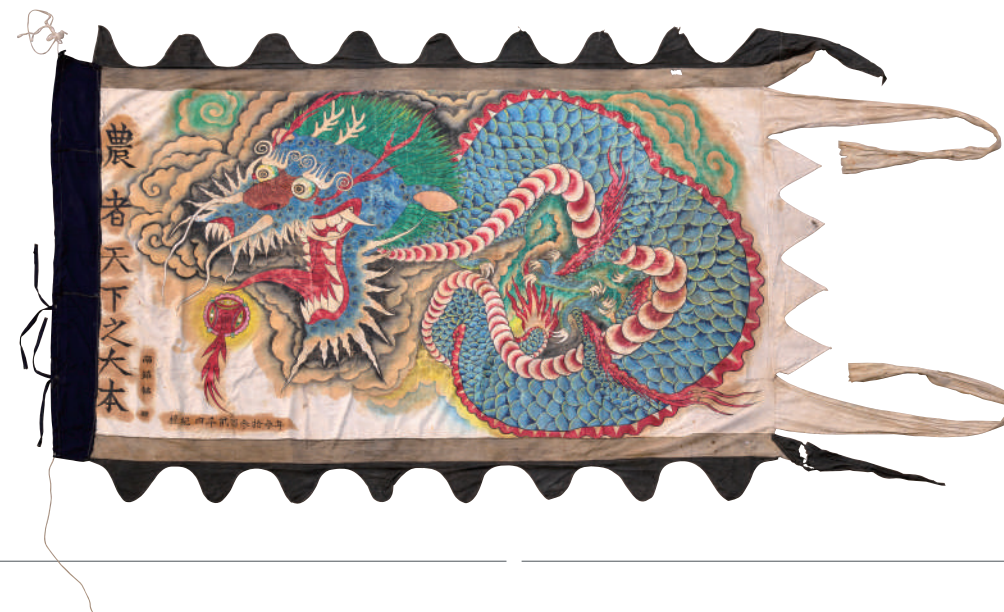
Yongdaegi of Doseong
early 20th century
Gijisijuldarigi museum



Yongdaegi of Hagungwon
20th century
Gijisijuldarigi museum



Nonggi(Village Flag) of Jeokseo
early 20th century
Gijisijuldarigi museum



Hongmundaegi(First flag of the royal procession)
15th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26879



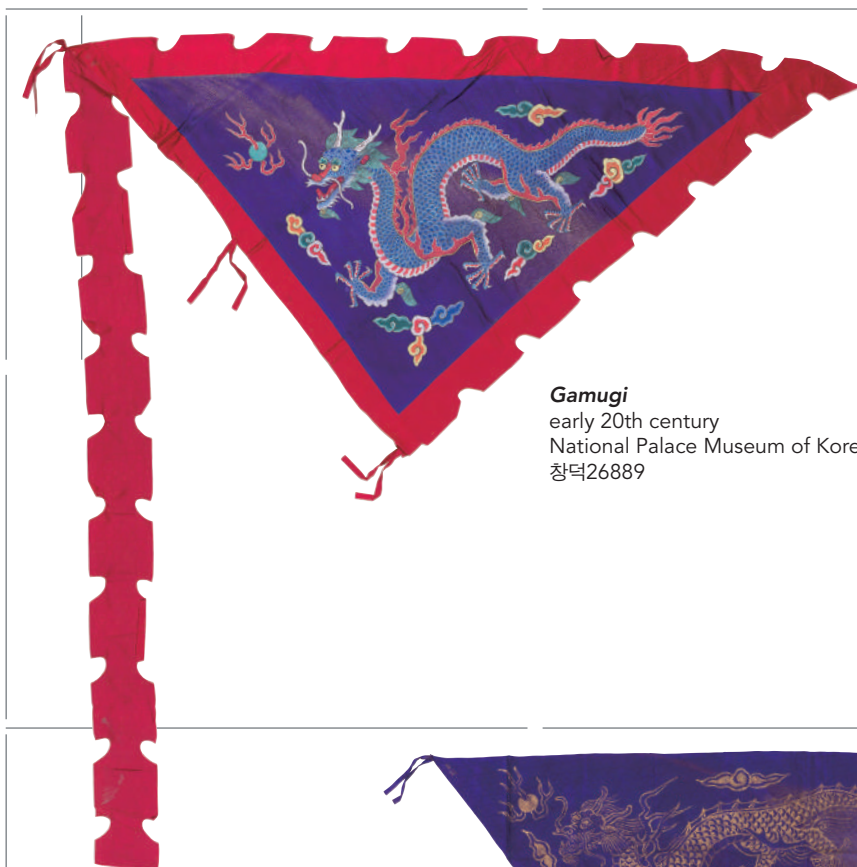
Hwangnyonggi(King's Flag of Military order)
15th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26876



Cheongnyonggi(Flag of the royal procession and military)
15th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26870



Gyoryonggi(Flag of King's Authority)
15th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26877



Gamugi
early 20th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26889

Cheongnyonggi
early 20th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26873



Osaekgeumnyongsogi
early 20th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕26883





Rites of passage

Sangjangnye(funeral ritual)

Ornament placed on the front, back, or top of sangyeo (bier), which protects and guides the deceased as they are headed towards the afterlife

**Ssangyong(Double dragon) bier ornament**

① after 1945 | 아카이브00167725
② Depth: 61 cm, Total height: 50 cm | 15th century | 민속024481
National Folk Museum of Korea

**Yong(Dragon) bier ornament**

Length: 53 cm, Depth: 16 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속044895

**Yongdu(Dragon heads) bier ornament**

Length: 59 cm, Height: 13 cm, Depth: 5 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속064356

**Jeongjayong
(T shaped dragon)
bier ornament**

Depth: 106 cm,
Height: 115 cm
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속064376

**Iljayong(Line shaped dragon) bier ornament**

① Length: 83 cm, Height: 27 cm,
Depth: 8 cm | 민속064374
② Length: 83 cm, Height: 32 cm,
Depth: 8 cm | 민속064375
③ Length: 177 cm, Height: 34 cm,
Depth: 8 cm | 민속064381
National Folk Museum of Korea

**Yongsupan(Dragon patterned) bier ornament**

① Length: 65 cm, Height: 38 cm | 민속024269
② Length: 62 cm, Height: 38 cm | 민속024476
③ Depth: 66 cm, Height: 40 cm | 민속064358
④ Depth: 64 cm, Height: 39 cm | 민속064363
National Folk Museum of Korea



Ritual



Hyangno(Bronze Incense Burner with dragon-shaped Lid)
Mouth diameter: 12 cm, Lid diameter: 13 cm, Diameter: 17 cm, Height: 32 cm
15th century
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속000711



Yongguji(Ceremonical ladle with dragon head design)
Length: 40 cm
15th century
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속000837



Gyoui(Memorial Altar Chair)
Length: 48 cm, Depth: 31 cm, Height: 144 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속005478

Clothing

Accessories

Binyeo (hairpin) decorated with the dragon's head

Yongjam(Binyeo(Hairpins) with dragon decoration)
❶ Length: 32 cm | 15th century | 민속001548
❷ Length: 35 cm | 15th century | 민속001146
❸ Length: 37 cm | 15th century | 민속003985
❹ Length: 30 cm | after 1945 | 민속011986
National Folk Museum of Korea



Clothes

Gatjip(Hat case)

Diameter: 50 cm, Height: 25 cm
15th century
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속051073

**Bottom of Gatjip(Hat case)****Seurandan(Textile designed with dragon and cloud)**

Length: 338 cm, Depth: 27 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속004217

Hyungbaepan(Dragon pattern Woodblock for Hyungbae(Rank Badge))

Diameter: 19 cm,
Depth: 3 cm
15th century
National Folk
Museum of
Korea
민속000789

**Yongbo(Dragon embroidery patch) on Portrait of King Taejo of 15th century**

17~18th century
Royal portrait museum

**Yongbo(Dragon embroidery patch) on Portrait of royal family of Joseon**

17~18th century
Gyeonggi Province Museum
소장품번호4963

**Yongbo(Dragon embroidery patch) on Portrait of King Yeongjo of 15th century**

early 20th century
National Palace Museum of Korea
창덕6363

**Yongbo(Dragon embroidery patch) on Portrait of Royal Women of Joseon**

Sejong University Museum





Housing

Wooden furniture

Najeonyongbongmuntakjajang(Furniture with Inlaid Mother-of-pearl dragon and Fenghuang design)

Width: 73 cm, Depth: 31 cm, Height: 128 cm

15th century

National Folk Museum of Korea

민속087699


Daemoicheungnong(Closet with Inlaid turtle shell dragon design)

Width: 80 cm, Depth: 39 cm, Height: 130 cm

15th century

National Folk Museum of Korea

민속039630


Yongmunsoban(Tray-table with dragon design)

Width: 45 cm, Depth: 35 cm, Height: 24 cm

15th century

National Folk Museum of Korea

민속016913

Decorative roof tiles

Ammaksae(Eaves-end tile) with dragon design

Width: 31 cm, Height: 5 cm, Depth: 2 cm

8th century

National Museum of Korea

증1919


Sumaksae(Roof-end tile) with dragon design

Diameter: 13 cm, Depth: 3 cm

early 20th century

National Museum of Korea

증2466


Nogyugwimyeonwa(Green-glazed roof tile with Dragon Face pattern)

Depth: 29 cm,

Height: 28 cm

8th century

Gyeongju National Museum

안압지1487


Sangyeonggwihyeongmunjeon(Brick with Dragon and mountain pattern)

Width: 28 cm, Height: 29 cm

4th century

Buyeo National Museum

부여223


Yongdu(Roof tile decoration with dragon finial)

Length: 51 cm,

Height: 40 cm,

Depth: 19 cm

15th century

National Museum of Korea

신수28809


Chimi(Finial for roof tile decoration)

Depth: 105 cm,

Height: 182 cm

6th century

Gyeongju National Museum

황룡99

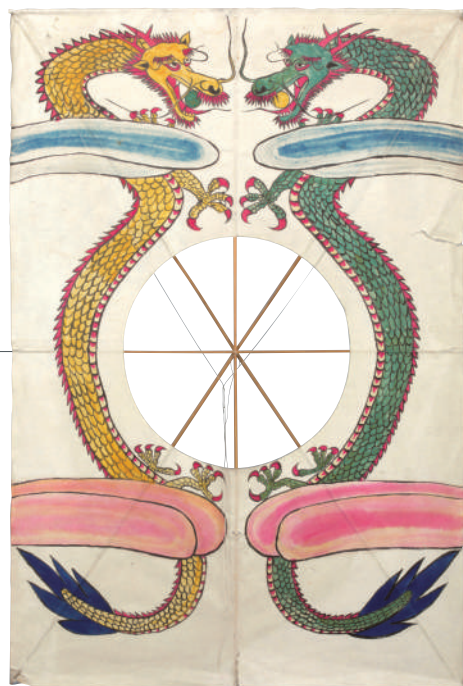




Folk games

**Yongtal(Dragon mask)**

Length: 189 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속034978

**Bangpaeyeon(Shield shaped kite) with double dragon**

Width: 60 cm,
Height: 90 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum
of Korea
민속034482

**Badukpan(Go board) with dragon design**

Width: 48 cm, Depth: 48 cm, Height: 32 cm
15th century
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속027306



Folk arts

Ulliyongdo

Painting of a dragon, which symbolizes the king, defeats evil, invites good fortune, and is prayed for rain.

Ulliyongdo(Painting of Cloud and Dragon)

① Width: 69 cm, Height: 102 cm | 15th century
민속039051

② Width: 66 cm, Height: 119 cm | 15th century
민속039052

National Folk Museum of Korea

**Ulliyongdo
(Painting of Cloud and Dragon)**

Width: 55 cm,
Height: 98 cm
15th century
National Folk
Museum of Korea
민속021330



Ullyongdo(Painting of Cloud and Dragon)
Width: 57 cm, Height: 73 cm
15th century
National Museum of Korea
증9975



Ullyongdo(Painting of Cloud and Dragon by Shimsajung)
Width: 51 cm, Height: 114 cm
after 15th century
National Museum of Korea
덕수5719



Ullyongdo(Painting of Cloud and Dragon)
Width: 69 cm, Height: 121 cm
15th century
National Museum of Korea
덕수2505

Cheongnyongdo(Painting of Blue Dragon)
Width: 217 cm, Height: 222 cm
National Museum of Korea
남산1241



Munjado - Chung

Calligraphy painting with the meaning of fish turning into a dragon

❶ Munjadobyeongpung (Folding Screen of Calligraphy, Chung(忠, loyalty))

Width: 33 cm, Height: 63 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속017464



❷ Munjado (Caligraphy, Chung(忠, loyalty))

Width: 43 cm, Height: 130 cm
15th century
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속040225



❸ Munjabyeongpung (Folding Screen of Calligraphy, Chung Sin(忠信, loyalty and sincerity))

Width: 40 cm, Height: 142 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속015131



Folding screens (one of eight) of Caligraphy, Chung(忠, loyalty)

Width: 35 cm, Height: 67 cm
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속029627



Folding screens (one of eight) of Caligraphy, Chung(忠, loyalty)

Width: 32 cm, Height: 98 cm
15th century
National Museum of Korea
신수13617



Folding screens(four of ten) of Sosang landscape, dragon and tiger

Width: 360 cm, Height: 73 cm
20th century
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속091143



Stone Rubbing dragon of Oriental Zodiac

dragon of the Tomb of Kim Yusin
Width: 49 cm, Height: 94 cm
after 1945
National Folk Museum of Korea
민속051253



Romanization Guide

1. Romanization of Korean vowels

Simple vowels										
ㅏ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅡ	ㅣ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡㅣ
[a]	[eo]	[O]	[u]	[eu]	[i]	[ae]	[e]	[oe]	[w]	

Diphthongs										
ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅠ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡ	ㅑ	ㅓ
[ya]	[yeo]	[yo]	[yu]	[yea]	[ye]	[wa]	[wae]	[wo]	[we]	[ui]

2. Romanization of Korean consonants

Plosive consonants								
ㄱ	ㅋ	ㆁ	ㄷ	ㅌ	ㅌ	ㅍ	ㅍ	ㅍ
[g, k]	[kk]	[k]	[d, t]	[tt]	[t]	[b, p]	[pp]	[p]

Affricates			Fricatives		
ㄷ	ㅌ	ㄷ	ㅅ	ㅆ	ㅎ
[j]	[jj]	[ch]	[s]	[ss]	[h]

Nasals			Liquid
ㄴ	ㅁ	ㅇ	ㄹ
[n]	[m]	[ng]	[r, l]

Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore and Traditional Culture Vol. IX

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
KOREAN FOLK SYMBOLS
ANIMALS I
: TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON

National Folk Museum of Korea