

# 11. TALE OF HUNGBU AND NOLBU

GRADES: 4-12

AUTHOR: Mellanie Shepherd

SUBJECT: Language and Literature, Social Studies

TIME REQUIRED: One class period (can be expanded)

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Have students retell the Korean *Tale of Hungbu and Nolbu* in their own words
2. Understand family relationships that apply to Korean tradition
3. Identify and discuss the folk tale's lesson or moral

## MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Copies of the Korean *Tale of Hungbu and Nolbu*
- Prepared handout of study questions

## BACKGROUND:

The teacher should review the Korean concepts of the Korean family and filial piety.

## PROCEDURE:

The unit can be taught in conjunction with the “legends” section of the curriculum.

1. Have students read the story aloud.
2. After discussion, students will work on study questions.
3. Students will be asked to tell how they think life in Korea differs from life in the United States in terms of family relationships.
4. Ask questions throughout the lesson in order to assess students’ understanding.
5. Guide students on their letters or poems that focus on the issues of the story.
6. Have students write and later share situations from the story that they feel would explain the differences and similarities in Korean and American life.

## EVALUATION:

Grades should be based on the students’ preparation in answering the questions, comprehension of the story, written assignments as outlined in this lesson, and a unit test that would include questions on the tale.

## RESOURCES:

- Yu, Chai-Shin, Kong, Shui L. and Yu, Ruth W. *Korean Folk Tales*. Seoul, Korea: Kensington Educational, 1986. ISBN: 0-9692005-0-3
- Han, Suzanne Crowder. *Let's Learn about Korea: Customs of Korea*. New York: Koryo Books Importing, 1992. ISBN: 1-565591-000-1
- Hyun, Peter. *Korean Children's Stories and Songs*. Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym Corporation, 1995. ISBN: 1-565591-065-6

## TALE OF HUNGBU AND NOLBU: GENERAL SYNOPSIS

Nolbu, a greedy brother, seized his father's entire fortune, leaving his good brother Hungbu in poverty. When Hungbu appealed to his brother for help in order to feed his family, the greedy Nolbu accused his brother of being lazy and refused to help him. Soon afterward, Hungbu and his wife rescued and tenderly cared for a swallow with a broken leg. When it recovered, the swallow flew away, only to later return to Hungbu and his wife with a gourd seed that grew gourd plants. Happy to be able to have the gourd pulp for *kímch'í* and the gourds as dippers, Hungbu and his wife were overcome with joy when they found the gourds were actually filled with gold, silver and precious stones. When Nolbu discovered that his brother had become a rich man, he went to his brother and asked him how he acquired such wealth. Hungbu told his brother what had happened with the swallow and the seed. Nolbu left his brother's house, went home and proceeded to hunt for swallows. Upon finding one, he purposely broke its leg, crudely cared for it and ordered it to return in the spring with a gourd seed. When the swallow returned with a gourd seed, Nolbu and his wife expected to become rich. But instead of growing gourds with gold, silver and precious stones, the gourds contained a shaman and a goblin. The shaman forced Nolbu and his wife to give up their money and their riches. Hungbu then nursed Nolbu and his wife, caring for them as though nothing bad had ever happened between them. Eventually Nolbu realized the error of his ways, and they all lived happily ever after.

## MORAL FOCAL POINT:

This story, which is set in a family situation, discourages greed and avarice. The tale assumes that the family is biologically inseparable unit whose members will care for one another and, in particular, for their elders. For centuries the family bond has been strongly emphasized by Koreans following Confucian teachings and ethics. Traditionally, someone like Nolbu was, in fact, shunned and ostracized. A Korean expression is derived from the *Tale of Hungbu and Nolbu*. It is Nolbu-shimsa, which means "thinking and acting like Nolbu," or being wicked, perverse, ill-natured, cross, etc.

## PRONUNCIATIONS/DEFINITIONS:

Hungbu (hung-bu)=good brother

Nolbu (nol-bu)=bad brother

Aigo (eye-e-go) or Aigu (eye-e-gu)=an exclamation

Oho (Oh-ho)=a generic exclamation that can take on many meanings

Olssigu (oll-ssigu)=an interjection used in Korean dancing

## FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING:

1. Ask students if they think Nolbu's experience changed him. Have them provide a statement from the story to support their opinions. Ask each student to write an essay describing an experience that he or she has had that really changed his or her life.
2. Discuss with the students the concept of helping a relative who is in need. Ask them to explain what criteria they would use to determine whether or not the relative is "in need," if they think this concept is important and whether or not they think that others notice when they help someone. Then have them write a short essay in which they discuss whether or not there should be guidelines or limits on how much help a person should give another.

## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

1. Create a collage depicting the scenes in the story, using headlines, pictures and photographs from magazines and newspapers to depict the plot.

2. Draw a timeline of the events in the story. Illustrate the timeline with pictures that are either drawn, computer generated or cut out of magazines and newspapers.
3. Create a series of pictures telling the story.
4. Construct a model of a Korean home.

**ENRICHMENT:**

- Ask students to research their own families' "disagreements" that had happy endings. Then have them report to the class on why their families fought and how the issue was resolved.
- Have students pretend to be either Hungbu or Nolbu and have them write an editorial for the local newspaper telling how the experience with the swallow changed them.
- Read additional Korean folktales and stories.
- Learn at least one traditional Korean song.
- Research Korean tales and legends on the internet and compare/contrast one or more of them with this story.

## HUNGBU AND NOLBU STUDY QUESTIONS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the names of the two brothers?
2. Who is called the greedy one?
3. Who is the oldest?
4. Which brother has a lot of money at the beginning of the story?
5. Which brother needs money at the beginning of the story?
6. How do Hungbu and his wife treat the injured swallow's wound?
7. What does the swallow give Hungbu when it returns in the spring?
8. What do they plan to do with the pulp from the gourd?
9. What do they plan to do with the outside of the gourd?
10. What three things come out of the gourd when it is opened?
11. How do they feel when they see the inside of the gourd?
12. When Nolbu learns about his brother's fortune, how does he treat the swallow he finds?
13. How many seeds does Nolbu ask the swallow to bring?
14. How much money does Nolbu plan to have when the gourds ripen?
15. What comes out of Nolbu's first gourd?
16. What does the shaman require Nolbu and his wife to do?
17. What comes out of Nolbu's second gourd?
18. What does the goblin do to Nolbu and his wife?
19. Who arrives to take Nolbu to his own house?
20. What does Hungbu say he would do for Nolbu and Nolbu's wife?
21. Are Nolbu and Hungbu ever reconciled? How do you know?
22. Which brother is saddened by their argument? Why?
23. What did you learn from the tale's moral?
24. Why is the tale meaningful today?