

**SOKDAM:
KOREAN ADAGES, FOLKTALES AND PROVERBS**

GRADE LEVEL: 6-8

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SUBJECT: Language Arts, Social Studies

TIME REQUIRED: 3-5 class periods (45 minutes each)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Read about and discuss some popular adages, folktales and proverbs from Korean culture
2. Identify some common characteristics between Korean and American adages, folktales and proverbs
3. Illustrate some common Korean adages, folktales and proverbs
4. Have students write their own creative American versions of ideas taken from Korean adages, folktales and proverbs

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Teacher-prepared common Korean adages, folktales and proverbs (see attached: **RESOURCES**)
- Books containing Korean adages, folktales and proverbs (see attached **RESOURCES**)
- Lined and unlined paper, pens, pencils, various art supplies

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The adages, folktales and proverbs of a people tell us much about their values, beliefs and culture. Koreans, through the years, have used many colorful descriptions and terms to refer to their own nation. For example, Koreans call their country a "prawn whose back has been damaged in battles between whales." They also refer to their homeland as "The Land of the Morning Calm (Freshness)" and as "The Hermit Kingdom." Throughout Korea's long unique history, several adages, folktales and proverbs have arisen that deal with thoughts, values and general truths that are common to many cultures. By comparing these Korean adages, folktales and proverbs with more familiar American expressions, students will be able to better appreciate similarities and common bonds with people from a seemingly different background.

PROCEDURE:

1. Begin by verbally sharing a well-known Korean proverb, such as "Fight Heat with Heat."
2. Display this short, four-word proverb on an overhead transparency, on the black board or give each student a copy on a half sheet of paper.
3. Have students write their own translation of what they think this old proverb means.
4. Share with students that Koreans eat a bubbling, hot soup, usually made of chicken and ginseng, that is believed to be an effective panacea to protect against physical weakness during the hottest season of the year. Compare this explanation with that of the students' translations.

- Continue on sharing adages, folktales and proverbs taken from **RESOURCES** or from the teacher's own readings and sources.
- Share the universal meaning that underlies each saying with a student's creative drawing.
- Have students write their own imaginative adage, folktale or proverb based on a common concept from a Korean adage, folktale or proverb.

EVALUATION:

- Students will be assessed based on the quality of their written and art work. Teachers may also choose to assess grammar, punctuation and spelling along with creative ideas expressed. The area of art may be evaluated subjectively or by an art teacher.

ENRICHMENT:

- Have students research other cultures' adages, folktales and proverbs. Share common truths that appear in such cultures (can be done independently or in cooperative group setting).

RESOURCES

Folktales

- Yoo, Yushin. "The Legend of Tan-gun." *Korea the Beautiful: Treasures of the Hermit Kingdom*. Golden Pond Press, 1987.
- Shalant, Phyllis and Soyoo Hyunjo Park (Illustrator). "The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon." *Look What We've Brought You from Korea: Crafts, Games, Recipes, Stories and Other Cultural Activities from Korean-Americans*. Julian Messner, 1995.
- Shalant, Phyllis and Soyoo Hyunjo Park (Illustrator). "The Sun and the Moon." *Look What We've Brought You from Korea: Crafts, Games, Recipes, Stories and Other Cultural Activities from Korean-Americans*. Julian Messner, 1995.

Adages and Proverbs

- "Over the mountains, more mountains." (refers to the many beautiful mountains that dominate the Korean landscape)
- "Eat Chinese mustard and cry." (Accept the bad along with the good.)
- "To begin is to be half done." (Getting started is half the job.)
- "If you eat a late breakfast, you will go to a closing market." (The early bird gets the worm.)
- "The dog at the village school will be writing poetry within three years." (intended to scold a lazy child by suggesting that even a dog could learn by paying close attention at school.)
- "Even a tiger will appear if you talk about him." (Speak of the devil.)
- "That's like going to Seoul to find Mr. Kim." (That's like finding a needle in a haystack.)
- "Wear a hat to meet disgrace." (A man with a fine hat or clothing can feel some pride even in failure.)
- "It takes the clap of two hands to make a sound." (It takes two to quarrel.)
- "Too many kitchen monks break the cooking kettle." (Too many cooks spoil the broth.)