



Kodomo ni Kataru Asia no Mukashibanashi I

Folk Tales from Asia for Children Everywhere I, published under the Asian Copublication Programme*1



Translated into Japanese by Matsuoka Kyoko and published by KOGUMA Publishing Co., Ltd. in 1997
(Original version in English published by ACCU)

This book is a collection of 13 stories from various countries around the world. *The Crow and the Sparrow* (Bangladesh) is a story about a greedy crow that wants to eat an honest sparrow and finally ruins itself because of its greediness. *The Crow and the Fox* (Iran) tells of a game of wits between a crow that tries to protect its eggs from an evil fox and a clever magpie. *The Adventures of King Suton* (Malaysia) is about a king who goes on a great adventure to retrieve his wife. *The Fisherman's Daughter* (the Philippines) is the tale of a fisherman's daughter who is kidnapped by the god of sea but finally returns home to her waiting family. *The Royal Journey to Heaven* (India) is a cynical story about the destinies of a foolish king and a clever but wicked minister. *The Story of the Betel and the Areca* (Vietnam) is an impressive story about the deep bond of trust between brothers.



Some of the stories in this book are very similar to Japanese and South Korean folktales, and some come loaded with lessons like *Aesop's Fables*. The tone of the stories varies greatly: some are exciting, others funny and others leave a strong impression. Although I began reading the stories for my child, I became absorbed in them myself, so absorbed, in fact, that I read all the stories in one sitting.

Through reading these stories, I came to remember that the books and stories all over the world share common essential elements, even though they all have their roots in local myths and folktales. All the old stories in this book have an interesting theme, an effective structure that includes repetition and allows for emphases, imaginative ideas and humour. I was quite inspired by the power of the stories, which traverse cultural, linguistic, historical and national boundaries to speak to the reader.

*1 Children's book co-publication project led by ACCU. Under this project, an English version is published first by ACCU, then translated by UNESCO member states in the region into their own languages, published and distributed. Shown above is the digest in Japanese, based on *Folk Tales from Asia*.

