



Inu to Neko (South Korea)

The Dog and the Cat



Written by Seo Jeong-Oh based on an oral narrative and illustrated by Shin Min-Jae

Translated into Japanese by Otake Kiyomi and published by Mitsumura Educational Co., Ltd. in 2007

The book begins in a manner similar to the story of *Urashima Taro*, a Japanese folktale: a poor old woman saves a turtle and is invited to a lavish castle under the sea. The old woman in this tale, however, is given a magical cobblestone that makes the owner's dream come true as a souvenir, rather than a treasure box. From here the story picks up the pace, with the woman becoming very rich thanks to the stone. Another greedy old woman who lives across the river envies the rich woman and obtains the stone by tricking her. The first woman, who is good-hearted, becomes poor again, and a dog and a cat decide to save her.



I was dissatisfied with the ending of *Urashima Taro*, in which *Urashima Taro* opens the treasure box he was given, although he was told not to, and faces unreasonable consequences. Compared with this Japanese folktale, the South Korean story was straightforward, reasonable and quite satisfying.



Kasa Dorobo (Sri Lanka)

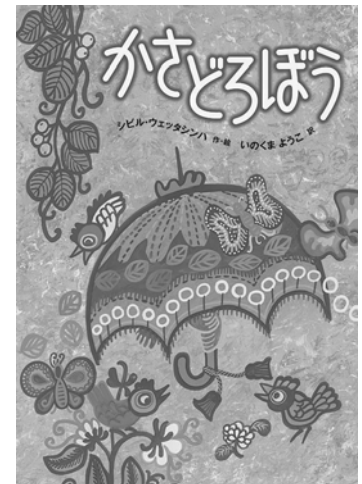
The Umbrella Thief



Written and illustrated by Sybil Wettasinghe

Translated into Japanese by Inokuma Yoko and published by Tokuma Shoten Publishing Co., Ltd. in 2007

A man named *Kiri Mama* sees umbrellas being sold for the first time in his life and is enchanted by how attractive and useful they are. He buys one and takes it home with him to his village. While he is drinking coffee, however, the umbrella is stolen. So the man goes back to the town and buys another umbrella, but it is also stolen. After repeating this process again and again, the man works out a plan to catch the thief and eventually gets back several dozen of his stolen umbrellas. But who is the thief?



This story of an easygoing man going to town, buying an umbrella, and having them stolen again and again brings an easy smile to the face of the reader.

After reading this story, my six-year-old second son said to me, “He would not have had his umbrella stolen if he had not been drinking coffee.”