



Tora to Hoshigaki (South Korea) The Tiger and the Dried Persimmons



Written and illustrated by Park Jae-hyoung based on an oral narrative

Translated into Japanese by Otake Kiyomi and published by Mitsumura Educational Co., Ltd. in 2006

This folktale originating in South Korea is about a tiger that sneaks into a small house to get a cow to eat. The tiger, however, tries to escape after hearing someone talking about something called “dried persimmons,” which seems to be much more dreadful than he is. A thief, who has also sneaked into the house hears about the dried persimmons and jumps onto the back of the tiger. The tiger then has to spend a night in fear with the thief on his back.



This story is similar to a Japanese folktale titled *Furuya no Mori*. Both tales are fast-paced comedies about characters experiencing fear in the darkness. Dried persimmons or leaking rain may not be scary for the readers but for the characters they are very scary and the stories go off in unexpected directions.

In the book, the tiger and the thief repeat the same phrase when they are surprised or talk to themselves. This phrase had made quite an impression on our family and we used it ourselves on frequent occasions for some time, although I am not quite sure if we were using it properly.

Words and expressions from books that impress us often find their way into our daily lives. We can use a familiar expression from a book, for example, when we are pulling something or when we cross over a bridge. Children can easily fall back into the world of the book when they hear these expressions. When I use such expressions, I try to reproduce the world of the books as much as possible, maybe with too much success: my child once began crying when I was trying to act out the story of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* under the bridge in the park. He was so absorbed in the story that it became too scarily real.