

Tell Tall FolkTales

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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2010

① Why the frogs cry when it rains (Korean folktale)

Long, long ago a little green frog and his old widowed mother lived in a small pond in a tiny fishing village. His name was Chung Kaeguri and though he loved his mother wholeheartedly, he was always making trouble.

Chung Kaeguri always did the opposite of what he was told. Once Mother Kaeguri said, "*Kaegul, kaegul*. There are some snakes slithering around in the area. Stay close to home today." Promptly, Chung Kaeguri hopped to his friends and said, "*Kaegul, kaegul*. Let's go for an adventure and find some snakes to dodge."

Mother Kaeguri was always distressed with her son's lack of respect for elders and she often wondered, "Why can't my son be like other frogs?" and she reprimanded him to no avail. She scolded, coaxed and cajoled but the little green frog did as he pleased and blissfully ignored his mother's wise words. She often wondered how he would manage when she was no more to take care of him.

Being old, Mother Kaeguri worried herself sick over her son's behaviour. Knowing that she had only a few precious moments of her life left to live, she called her son to her bedside.

Chung Kaeguri waited by his mother's side for her words with forlorn looks and a bowed head. Finally, Mother Kaeguri said, "My dear son, I don't have much longer to live. Promise me that when I die, do not bury me on the mountainside instead bury me on the bank of the river." She knew that her son would not mend his ways and wanting a decent burial, she decided that she would ask of him to bury her in the mountainside fully knowing that he would do just the opposite of what he promised.

Tears flowed down his face and he pleaded with his mother, "*Kaegul, kaegul*. Please don't die momma. I will do whatever you ask of me." But his words were too late as his mother had already left for her heavenly abode. With a heavy heart, he remembered all the times he had troubled his mother and decided that he would repent for all the bad things he had done.

Chung Kaeguri resolved that starting from now, he was going to follow his mother's instructions to the letter. He knew that his mother's last wish wasn't a very prudent one but he did just as she had asked him to and buried her by the river.

Soon, the rains arrived and he looked up at the sky and prayed for the river not to be

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flooded as it did after a downpour. That summer, the rains were torrential and the river swelled and rose very high, flooding the banks and washing away his mother's grave.

Chung Kaeguri saw the rushing water washing his mother's grave away. He sat by the riverbank in the pouring rain and mournfully began to cry.

He cried and cried. "Kaegul, kaegul", he called over and over.

To this day, the green frogs cry when it rains. In Korea, That is why people who do the opposite of what they are told are called Chung Kaeguri.

Make a Chung Kaeguri to tell your tale:

- Frog Bean Bag
- Origami Hopping Frog
- Frog Marionette

Recommended Reading:

- Green Frogs: A Korean Folktale
- Korean Children's Favorite Stories
- Tales of a Korean Grandmother, 32 Traditional Tales from Korea (Tut Books, L)

POSTED BY TELL TALL TALES AT 10:42 AM

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ABOUT ME

TELL TALL TALES

I'm a young educator with a strong creative streak who believes that education and literacy are NOT one and the same. I received a conventional education and along my journey found Waldorf education. I love learning languages (recent foray into Korean) and my blog is about languages and enduring customs that were shared around fires and grandmothers' laps across the world. Illustrations are watercolours/pencil drawings that I used in my own main lesson books. You will also find nature crafts and some of the healing meditations for workshops I conduct. I create handmade books - fully illustrated and written in by me for a very reasonable price. Please contact me if you want one made for your child. I ship worldwide.

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Ancient Egypt How the Camel Got Its Hump

Did you ever wonder how the camel got that big hump on its back? If so, here's a story that you might find interesting.

There once was a camel that didn't want to do any work. He was so lazy! All the other camels worked hard all day long carrying heavy loads on their backs. They often asked the lazy camel for help, but he always **refused**¹. He said he was too busy.

"Busy doing what?" the other camels would ask angrily. But the lazy camel just rolled his eyes and turned his head.

One day a young girl **appeared**² looking for some help. She had a large jug of water that she couldn't carry any further. She asked the lazy camel to help, but he rolled his eyes, shook his head and refused. The young girl got down on her hands and knees. She begged and begged for the camel's help, but still he refused.

Suddenly, the young girl turned into an old, ugly witch. "Because you refused to help me, I will force you to carry a heavy load on your back for all eternity."

And with that, the witch pointed her finger at the camel's back. A large hump appeared. The **greedy**³ camel would carry the weight of his hump forever.

¹ **refused**: said no

² **appeared**: showed up

³ **greedy**: wanting more than your fair share

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Why the sun and the moon live in the sky
African Folktale

[REDACTED]

Ads

Many years ago, the sun and water were great friends, and they both lived on the earth together. The sun very often used to visit the water, but the water never returned the visits.

At last the sun asked the water why he never visited. The water replied that the sun's house was not big enough, and that if he came with all his people, he would drive the sun out of his home.

The water then said, "If you want me to visit you, you will have to build a very large house. But I warn you that it will have to be very large, as my people are numerous and take up a lot of room".

The sun promised to build a very large house, and soon afterwards, he returned home to his wife, the moon, who greeted him with a broad smile.

The sun told the moon what he had promised the water, and the next day, they began building a large house to entertain the water and all his people.

When it was completed, the sun asked the water to come and visit him.

When the water arrived, one of his people called out to the sun, and asked him whether it would be safe for the water to enter, and the sun answered, "Yes, tell my friend to come in."

The water began to flow in, followed by the fish and all the other water animals.

Very soon, the water was knee-deep in the house, so he asked the sun if it was still safe, and the sun again said, "Yes," so more of them came in.

When the water was at the level of a man's head, the water said to the sun, "Do you want more of my people to come?"

Not knowing any better, the sun and the moon both said, "Yes,". More and more of the water's people came in, until the sun and the moon had to sit on top of the roof.

The water once again asked the sun if it was still okay to keep coming in. The sun and moon answered yes, so more and more of the water's people came in.

The water soon overflowed the top of the roof, and the sun and the moon were forced to go up into the sky.

...and they have been there ever since.

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The Desert Creature

Retold from the Aesop's Fables by Brishti Bandyopadhyay; Illustration by Shinod AP

[REDACTED]

This happened thousands of years ago. Life was hard as people had to do all the work by themselves. A large number of people were nomads - they would travel from one place to another in search of food and shelter.

While travelling one day, a man arrived at the edge of a desert. He was walking in the sands, when suddenly, he came across a frightening creature - it had extremely long, thin legs, a giant hump and a long neck. It was this neck that he extended towards the

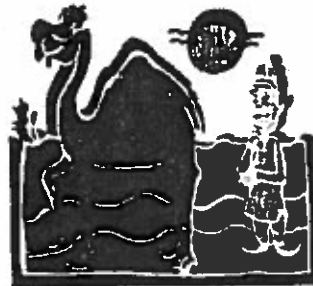
man, who, scared out of his wits, ran away from the spot.

The following day, he met the creature again. It was standing near a lake, drinking water. This time, the man was fascinated at what he saw - the creature putting its long neck into the lake and drinking water continuously.

Then suddenly, aware it was being watched, the giant creature looked up and stared straight into the eyes of the man standing across. But this time, an expanse of water separated the two, and the man did not run away. He stood and watched the animal, which made no effort to come closer.

In the following weeks, the man saw more such creatures, again and again. It seemed they were all over the desert, aimlessly walking about for miles on end. The man began to observe the creatures very closely. He saw that they were vegetarian. Moreover, despite their huge size, they were remarkably meek and gentle.

And what stamina the creatures had! They could walk the entire length of the desert without being exhausted.



Observing them the man thought - "What if I tame this creature and make it ferry all my stuff? I could then make the desert my home."

So, one day, while one of the creatures was dozing, the man went up to it and put a bridle in its mouth. Then he rode around in it, after placing an enormous amount of load on its back. After a little more time, the man even allowed his child to ride the creature all on his own.

With that, the taming of the camel was complete (for that was who the creature was). And ever since that day, the camel has faithfully lived up to its title of 'Ship of the Desert'.

