



Shim Cheong, the Devoted Daughter

(Korea)

Once upon a time, there was a girl, Shim Cheong. Her mother died when she was born. Her father did not have a job because he was blind. So from her childhood, Shim Cheong had to work to make money.

One day, Shim Cheong was late coming home from work. So her father went out for her.

While he was crossing the bridge, he fell into the river. "Help me, I'm drowning," he shouted in panic.

A monk passing by saw him and jumped into the river to save him. "Are you okay?" asked the monk. He was surprised that he was blind.

The monk advised him, "If you offer Buddha three hundred seoks of rice, you will regain your eyesight."

Shim Cheong's father was very glad to hear the news, so he promised to give Buddha three hundred seoks of rice. Soon he realized that he could not afford to buy all the rice.

When Shim Cheong came home, she saw her father looking very sad. "What's wrong, father?" she asked.

He told her everything that happened and what the monk had said.



“Don’t worry, father,” Shim Cheong reassured him, “I’ll try to get all the rice.”

One day, a woman said to Shim Cheong, “Did you hear the news? Some sailors want to buy a girl for an offering to the Sea-God. They will pay as much as she wants.” When Shim Cheong heard that, she knew where she could get the money to buy 300 seoks of rice.

Shim Cheong went to see the sailors who wanted to buy a girl and asked them to buy her. “I need 300 seoks of rice for my father to regain his eyesight,” Shim Cheong explained.

The sailors bought Shim Cheong and were amazed at her and said, “She is the most filial daughter in the world.”

Finally the day came when she had to leave. “Father, today I’m going to be the Kang family’s step-daughter,” she lied to her father. “To adopt me, they will give three hundred seoks of rice to the temple. Then, you will be able to see again.”

“That’s great! I won’t be a blind man anymore!” her father said happily.

Now, Shim Cheong was on the boat with the sailors. After sailing for several days, the ship reached a deep part of the sea. Suddenly, a strong wind rose

and the sea roared. So the sailors wanted Shim Cheong to jump into the roaring sea to be the sacrifice.

When she woke up under the sea, she heard beautiful music. She had no idea where she was. "Am I dead or alive?" Shim Cheong said to herself.

At that moment, she heard a voice saying, "Wake up, now. This is the sea palace. The Sea King was touched by your story. He sent me to save you."

Shim Cheong stayed at the Sea King's palace for a few days. One day, a maid came to Shim Cheong. "The Sea King has ordered that you return to land," she said. Shim Cheong was put into a big lotus blossom. Finally, the lotus blossom floated to the surface.

The sailors who bought Shim Cheong found the lotus blossom. It was spotted at the same place where Shim Cheong had jumped into the sea. The sailors were surprised and lifted it out of the sea to bring it to their king. When the king touched the blossom, suddenly it opened and a beautiful girl walked out. The king loved her very much and made her his queen.

As the king's wife, Shim Cheong's life was very happy, but she could not forget her father. One day, the king found Shim Cheong looking very sad.

"Why are you so sad?" he asked. "Please tell me."

Shim Cheong told him the whole story. After the king heard her story, he wanted to help her to find her father. So he threw a party for all blind people in the country.

Meanwhile, Shim Cheong's father was still blind despite the offering of 300 seoks of rice. He heard from other people in the village what Shim Cheong



did for him to regain his eyesight. He regretted the loss of his daughter.

One day, a neighbor informed Shim Cheong's father that the king prepared a party for blind people.

When the party began, Shim Cheong was looking for her father. But she could not find him. On the last day of the party, Shim Cheong was just about to give up hope. Then, she saw a tired and shabby old man enter the palace. She was overjoyed when she found her father. She ran to him.

"Father, I'm Shim Cheong, your daughter!" she cried.

"My daughter?" said the surprised old man.

"Is it a dream? Let me look at your face!" At that moment a miracle happened. The old man opened his eyes!

The king was so pleased to see his wife and her father reunited. He ordered the party to be continued for another week. And all the people cheered.

Shim Cheong and her father lived happily ever after.



Supplementary information

- Used in the old days, **seok** is a Korean unit of measurement for rice. 300 seoks is around 48,000 kilograms or 1,763 bushels of rice.
- The term **filial** refers to a child's unconditional loyalty and respect for his or her parents.