

*Celebrating a
Korean
First Birthday*

Dol



In the past, due to a lack of medical information, Korea's seasonal temperature differences, and many childhood related diseases, the death rate for children was extremely high. Many children died before their first birthday. After the age of one year, the survival rate steeply increased, making this milestone a very happy one for the child's parents. It has also been a custom to celebrate a child's 100 day birthday (*baek-il*), but in most areas this birthday is less important than the *Dol* and any celebrations are smaller in scale.

Dol has two meanings in Korean. The most common meaning is a child's first birthday. It can also be used as a generic description for birthdays: *Chut-dol* (first birthday), *Du-dol* (second birthday), *Seo-dol* (third birthday), etc.

Traditional Dol Celebration

The traditional celebration had four major components:

1. Praying and giving thanks
2. Making and wearing the birthday clothes
3. Preparing the table and performing the *Doljabe*
4. Sharing the food with guests and neighbors

Asian Korean Supermarket
Shop 10, Village Walk
52-54 O'Sullivan Rd,
Glen Waverley, 3150
Ph; 9886 4266

Oriental grocer
117 Koornang Road
Carnegie, 3163
Ph: 9572 2341
(Between Kimichi Rest and Comm bank)

Asian grocer
4/23 Koornang Road
Carnegie, 3163
Ph; 9563 6277
(open 7 days)

Daesung Kim Club
11-13 Bunnett street,
North Sunshine, 3020
Ph: 9312 0399 (check hrs before visiting)

Korean Groceries

Seoul Video and Grocery
Shop 3 15 Bank Street,
Box Hill, 3128
Ph: 9899 8197

Korean Deli
1D Bank Street,
Box Hill, 3128
Ph: 9897 1411

Tokyo Mart
60 bridge Rd,
Richmond, 3121
Ph: 9428 8383

Jireh Groceries
7/309 Clayton Rd,
Clayton, 3168
Ph: 9543 6902

City Mart
Cnr Elizabeth and Victoria streets
Melbourne
(opposite Queen Vic Mkt)

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In modern times, due to the improvements in medicine, the influence of western culture, and modern industrialization, the Shamanistic reasons for the *Dol* celebration have been reduced. However, the event is still celebrated as a time of congratulations for the parents and family.

In the modern *Dol*, taking pictures is an important part of the event. As many Korean homes are very small, many families rent a room in a banquet hall. The modern celebration includes the child's parents greeting guests, lighting candles on birthday cake, the *Doljabee* event, and a toast.

Other Celebrations

Saei-rye (21-day celebration)

This event involved little ceremony. The baby and mother were still recovering from the birth, so people were not allowed to see them. However, close family members met and prayed for the healthy recovery of the baby's mother on this day.

Baek-il (100-day celebration)

Similar to the *Dol*, the *Baek-il* event has 2 aspects. First, family members give thanks to *Samsin* (the three gods who take care of the baby's life while growing up).

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Second, they pray for *jae-ak* (wealth), longevity, and *chok-bok* (original luck). The food differed from extensive table prepared for the *Dol*, mostly comprising 4 types of Korean foods: *baekseogi* (for longevity, representing cleanliness freshness), *susupo-tteok* (to prohibit bad things), *injeolmi* (for patience), and *songpyeon* (for thought).

Praying

Traditionally, Koreans would pray to *Sanshin* (a mountain god) and *Samsin* (a birth god, also called *Samsin-halmuni* “grandmother”) on certain days following a child’s birth (birth 3-7 days after the birth, and 100 days after the birth). They believed that *Samsin* resided in the cloth surrounding a baby.

To prepare the praying table, the parents placed a bowl of steamed white rice, sea mustard soup (*miyeok-guk*), and a bowl of pure water on the table. Next to the table they placed *samsin siru* (layered red bean rice cake). This rice cake was not shared outside the family because they believed that sharing this particular item with people outside the family would bring bad luck to the child.

Korean Rice Cakes

Deaun Mart Co
279 Huntingdale Road,
Oakleigh
Ph: 9562 7032

Myung Ji Enterprise P/L
1903 Dandenong Rd
Clayton, 3168
Ph: 9543 1514

Hanboks

Custom and ready made Korean traditional clothes for Children
and Adults
Ph: 9776 2902
Mobile: 0400 332 113
Email: uri_hanbok@hotmail.com

Cha-soh Jun *Vegetable Croquettes*

1 large potato
2 carrots
1 large onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/4 cup water
1 tbs soy sauce
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 cup flour

1. Grate potato, carrots, onion and garlic in food processor or hand grater. Mix together.
2. Combine eggs, water, soy sauce and salt together until thoroughly blended, then gradually fold in the flour until the mixture forms a smooth batter. Stir in the vegetable mixture until well blended.
3. Heat oil in frying pan, when hot, carefully arrange the mixture in heaped tablespoons and fry, browning on both sides.

After the table was prepared, the child's mother or grandmother would pray with two hands together.

Rubbing her palms together, she would ask for her child's longevity, wish luck to the mountain god, and give thanks to the birth god. This was accompanied by repeated bowing. Male family members were not allowed to join in this ceremony. Only female family members were allowed to participate.

Seoulites perform this ceremony early in the morning on the child's birthday. Residents of some other areas do it the night before the birthday.

What is a hanbok?

Hanbok is traditional Korean attire that embodies the harmony of straight lines and curves. Women wear a short cut top and a large skirt, while men wear a basic top and pants accompanied by a vest and jacket. Many years ago most Koreans were referred to as the white clad folk; therefore, white was the basic colour for the hanbok up to the early 20th century. But colour, form, and textiles vary from season to season, and social class.

The history of the hanbok

The history of the hanbok goes back to the era of the three Kingdoms—Koguryo, Pakeche, and Shilla. The first trace of hanbok was found from the wall paintings in Koguryo tombs of Kings and nobles. It was said that Koguryo's clothes had been influenced by the clothes and Buddhism of the dang era of china. Latter, by the clothes of Yongan era entered Korea and possibly affected the development of hanbok.

Ol-bok

The clothes worn for the *Dol* (*dol-bok*) are colourful, dressy clothes. They differ depending on the child's sex. Both boys and girls wear a *dol-jumuni* (pouch) for luck. Silk cloth is used to make the *dol-jumuni*, folded at the top with a colourful thread pull-string to open and close. For the child's longevity buttons are not used. The family puts a skein of threads of five-colors and three coins in a pocket and hangs onto the baby's clothes wishing for long life and prosperity for the baby.



Rice Fritters

1 cup cooked rice
2 beaten eggs
3 tbs sugar
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 cup flour
1 tbs baking soda
Pinch of salt
1/2 cup shredded coconut
Oil for frying
Confectioner's sugar

Combine the rice, eggs, sugar, vanilla, flour, baking soda, salt and coconut. drop by Tbsp into oil for frying. When brown, remove to paper towels for draining and sprinkle with confectioner's sugar.
Serve cooled.

Hwach'ae
Fruit Punch

1 cup of sliced fresh fruit
1 cup sugar
4 cups water
2 tbs pine nuts
Powdered cinnamon

1. Mix 1/4 cup of sugar with the fruit and allow it to stand for 30 minutes.
2. Boil the remaining 3/4 cup of sugar with the water for 5 minutes and allow to cool.
3. Mix the fruit and syrup and serve ice-cold, with pine nuts and cinnamon sprinkled on top.

Putting on a Girl's Hanbok

1. Place the “chima” (skirt) on the child with the opening in the back. Make adjustments to the shoulder straps, if necessary, so that the chima hangs directly under the arms.
2. Cross the ties in back of the child. Wrap around and tie in front.
3. Put on the ‘chogori’ tie the ribbon as instructed below.
4. If a vest is included it is worn over the chogori. The hat is worn with the tassels hanging on the forehead. This will leave a hole on the top of the head.

How to tie the Goreum—the front ribbon of the hanbok

1. Hold the shorter ribbon (right side) with your left hand while holding the longer (left) with your right hand. The shorter should be on the top.
2. Use the ribbon in your left hand to loop under, then over the other ribbon.
3. While holding the ribbon in your left, fold the ribbon in your right hand to make half the bow. Wrap the half bow with ribbon in your left hand by looping over the top of the half bow.

4. Pull the ribbon through to hold (tie) the half bow in place.
5. Tidy the ribbons and bow by allowing the ribbons to fall neatly (pulling the material flat).



Putting on a Boy's Hanbok

1. Pants are put on first and should contain ties for wrapping around each ankle and the waist.
2. The top pieces are usually folded in the order they're put on. Shirt, Vest (optional), Jacket
3. The hat is worn with the ties tied at the nape of the neck. Often the boy's hanboks will contain pink.

Many market areas, especially Tongdaemun Market in Seoul sell pre-made clothes. However, these items tend to be more modernized. Real traditional clothes need to be custom ordered or tailored.

Talgyl Shigumch'imari *Egg and Spinach Rolls*

2 Eggs
1 tsp cornstarch
1/2 tbsp water
250g spinach
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp sugar
1 tsp sesame oil
2 tbsp soy sauce

1. Whisk the eggs well.
2. Scald the spinach lightly in boiling salted water. Squeeze out the water and season the spinach with the soy sauce, sugar and sesame oil.
3. Dissolve the cornstarch in 1/2tbsp water and mix it with the beaten egg, sugar and salt.
4. Fry the whisked eggs on one side only in a thick square pan. Place the scalded spinach on the egg sheet, roll it up and finish cooking. Make the other rolls in the same way.
5. Place the rolls on a board and cut them diagonally with a sharp knife. Serve with soy sauce for dipping.

Hint: Do not put too much spinach on the egg sheet, and the rolls will look prettier when cut.

Pa Jon
Home-Style Scallion Pancake

1 cup flour
1 tsp salt

1 1/2 cups cold water or enough to ensure a moderately thin
batter

90grams ground beef

4 scallions, root ends trimmed, cut into 2-inch julienne strips

Corn oil for frying

1. Mix together flour, salt, water and beef. Add the scallions and peppers and mix thoroughly but gently.
2. Heat an 8-inch pan, add oil. Then add half the batter mixture, which should make the pancake about 1/4 inch thick, and fry on both sides for 3-minutes. Slip the pancake onto a cutting board and cut into 3-inch pieces. Or present the uncut pancake, which is then divided at the table.

Dipping Sauce

2 tbsp soy sauce

1/4 tsp Korean sesame oil

1/2 tsp toasted sesame seeds

1 tsp thinly slice scallion

1/2 tsp dried hot red chilli flakes.

Combine all ingredients, serve with the pancakes.

Wearing a hanbok appropriately
(older children and adults)

Hairstyle: Women should wear and up-style so the hair doesn't touch the collar.

Courtesy: The basics are neatness and behaviour.

1. When walking or ascending steps: Be careful not to drag the hem of the skirt by gently lifting it.
2. After getting dressed make sure the edge of the outer skirt comes to the left.
3. Wear Korean socks inside your shoes.
4. When sitting down, be cautious of wrinkling your dress; sit down folding your legs and place your hands neatly on your knees.

Birthday Table

The parents prepare a special *Dol* table to celebrate the child's birthday. The main food includes *ddeok* (rice cakes) and fruits. Over 12 different kinds of *ddeok* are prepared, including *paekseolgi* (white steamed rice cakes), *susu-kyongdan* (rice cakes coated with rough red bean powder), *chapsal-ddeok* or *chal-ddeok*, *mujigae-ddeok* (rainbow colored steamed rice cake), *songp'yeon* (half moon shape rice cakes), *injulmi* (coated glutinous rice cakes), and *gyep' I-ddeok* (puffed air rice cakes).

Among these, *paekseolgi* and *susu-kyongdan* are always included.

Fruits can vary according to the season of the birthday. Different colors of seasonal fruits can be prepared and displayed in a row. Also, a bowl of rice, sea mustard soup and many other various foods can be displayed.



Along with the food, other items are needed for holding the *Doljabeo* event. Items such as large bundle of thread, a brush, a Korean calligraphy set, pencil, book, money (10,000 won bills), bow and arrow (needle scissors, and ruler for girls) are arranged on the table to predict the child's future.

Gogi Chun *Bean Curd and Pork Patties*

250g ground/minced pork

1 square of soft bean curd (tubu) mashed, then dried on a towel to remove excess water.

1/4 tsp salt

1 garlic clove, crushed

1 egg, lightly beaten

2 tbsp corn oil for pan-frying

1. Mix everything together except the oil. This can be done in a few moments in a food processor. Prepare the patties about 2 inches across and 1/4 inch thick.
2. Heat oil in a pan and over a moderate heat lightly brown the patties on both side for about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towel.
3. Serve warm with a soy dipping sauce.

Makes 6 patties.

Some Korean recipes

These recipes are not specifically for the *Dol* celebration but may be useful. I have included those that are fairly easy to prepare and would be ideal to include at a *Dol* celebration if you are having finger food.

Taech'uch'o Stuffed Jujube Balls

15 Jujubes (red dates)
2 tbs honey
1/2 tsp cinnamon
3 tbs pine nuts

1. Soak the jujubes for 30 minutes, and steam them for half an hour.
2. Pit the jujubes and then chop them finely, then mix with the honey and cinnamon.
3. Shape into balls, about 1cm in diameter. Roll them in chopped pine nuts.

Table Setting

The birthday child will be placed at the table so that the other guest can face him or her. Parents often sit the child on the *bolou* (Korean traditional mattress) and several *bangsuk* (Korean cushions). Since the child is small, this allows for getting better pictures. For the background, a Korean traditional screen is used at the hotel or other banquet hall.



Doljabee Event

In this event, the birthday child goes around the table and picks up items that attract him or her. The child's future is predicted according to what he or her grabs. After placing the child in front of the table, the child's father becomes the guide for the child to go around the table and grab whatever he or she wants. The first and second items the child grabs are considered the most important. If the baby grabs rice or money, the baby is going to be rich. A skein of thread or noodles means the baby will have a long life, while grabbing a book or writing brush means the baby will be a scholar. On the table of a baby boy, the family places a bow and arrow, which foretells that the baby will become a brave soldier of high position. As for the baby girl, a bow and arrow are replaced with a ruler, which represented the desire that she will be good at sewing. A lot of parents put their favourite item right in front of the baby hoping that the baby will grab it. Other than the Dol-Jab-E stuff, they prepare rice, brown seaweed, green cooked potherbs, and fruits on Dol Sang or Dol Table. The numbers and amount of food is much greater than that provided at the one hundred day party.

It's my child's birthday
But someone, somewhere, is feeling emptiness inside.
I'm sure she is wondering
Who he looks like
If he is big or small.
Wondering if he laughs much.

It's my child's birthday
And in the midst of this blessed day that was given to me
I have a prayer...

*Oh God, that I may never forget
that someone suffered so much to give life to my
child.*

*That someone loved my child so very much
that she gave him the right to live.*

*May I never forget for a moment
and especially now, today, to offer a prayer of
thanks*

*for that someone
and that you, dear God, will always be there for
that someone to help her
through the hurts she will have
when she stops to think that today is
"my child's birthday"*

A birthday

It's my child's birthday
He just went dashing by
His eyes are sparkling with the excitement meant only for today.
Presents, kisses, hugs cake and ice cream
It all seems so natural.
It's a day of looking back and looking forward.

It's my child's birthday
But there is something different happening inside me.
This should be a day of complete joy
A day for thanksgiving
But in the midst of all this excitement
I pause, because my thoughts are about someone else for the
time.

It's my child's birthday
I have no memories of his life growing inside me
and fighting to be released.
Another someone was there
Another someone suffered for my joy.

- **Bow and arrow:** the child will become a warrior
- **Needle and thread:** the child will live long
- **Jujube:** the child will have many descendants (red dates)
- **Book, pencil or related items:** the child will become a successful scholar
- **Rice or rice cake:** the child will become rich
- **Ruler, needle , scissors:** the child will be talented with he or her hands
- **Knife:** the child will be a good cook.



The list of items included for the *Doljabee* table varies amongst sources. Here is another description.

On a low table-preferably an eight sided one for good luck—the following items are arranged: rice, rice cakes, biscuits, money, thread (this is a large hunk of thread, white for boys and one each of red and blue for girls), books, scissors and ruler, paper, a calligraphy brush and a bow and arrow. The first and second items chosen by the child are said to be predictors of their life's path.

The child is taken to the table by the parents and walked around the table, while the other adults enjoy predicting the child's future. The child is then encouraged to select from the items:

- **Money** for wealth
- **Rice** for prosperity
- **Food**—biscuits or fruit—for service in the public office
- **Thread** for life
- **Books** for learning
- **Calligraphy** for writing or historian
- **Bow and arrow** for protector
- **Scissors** for planner and keeper of information.

Patchwork Quilt

Our family's like a patchwork quilt
With kindness gently sewn,
Each piece is an original,
With beauty of its own,
With threads of warmth and happiness,
It's tightly stitched together,
To last in love throughout the years
Our family is forever.

-Author Unknown-

Adoption

You first came to us in an envelope
With letters, forms and such
Just two tiny little pictures
With nothing warm to touch.
You grew in our imagination
In our hearts and in our minds.
You brought us greater joy
Than we ever thought we'd find.
A phone call started labor pains
Which lasted 'till we met
Strangers brought together
A day we won't forget.
You bloomed as you were planned
In our hearts, our lives our homes.
Our child of chance, of plan, of will
You're now our very own

-Author Unknown-

Sharing

After the *Doljabee*, the parents share most of the *Dol* food with the guests and the relatives. It is a Korean custom when the guest and neighbours receive the food they say kind words and wish for the child's longevity and good fortune. They also give presents such as a gold ring, clothes, or toys.



Food Meanings

Each food type and other items on the table have specific meanings.

- *Paekseolgi* (white steamed rice cakes) symbolize a pure and divine clean spirit and longevity.

- *Susu-kyongdan* (rice cakes coated with rough red bean powder) are used to ward off evil spirits so that the child can grow without any disease. (Koreans believe that the evil dislikes red color). Koreans believe that if they prepared these two rice cakes for each birthday until 10 years old, the child would not fall down and would grow healthy.
- *Injulmi* (sticky rice cakes) and *chal-ddeok* (sticky rice cakes) are prepared to wish the child to be tenacious and strong due to the stickiness of the rice cakes.
- *Songp'yeon* (stuffed rice cake shaped like a half moon). Two different moon cake are prepared. One is left empty and the other one is filled. The empty moon cake means the child will grow with a big heart. The filled one means to grow to be wise.
- *Jujubes* and fruit are for the child's descendant to multiply and prosper.
- *Noodles* and thread represent a long life.

Presents

When Koreans are invited to the first birthday party of a child, they often present a gold ring to the parents. Friends and colleagues to by a gold ring. However, the rings are to for the child to wear. Instead the parents use then later to pay for the child's education or other needs. Other traditional gifts may also be given: thread, clothing, hat, sturdy shoes, money, spoons, chopsticks, bowls (8 sided made of pear tree wood), books and toys.

The day you took my outstretched hand,
A journey ended, but our lives began.
Still mesmerized by your sweet face,
Still warmed inside by your first embrace.

I promised to give you a happy home,
And a loving family all of your own.
A house you've now made complete,
With laughter, smiles and tiny feet.

A parent is one who guides the way,
Know I will be there everyday.
Rest easy as each night you sleep,
A lifetime of love is yours to keep.

Longing for a child to love,
I'd wish upon the stars above.
In my heart I always knew,
A part of me belonged to you.

-Teri Harrison-

The Chosen Heart

Longing for a child to love,
I'd wish upon the stars above,
In my heart I always knew,
A part of me was meant for you.

I think how happy we will be,
Once I adopt you, and you adopt me.

I dream of all the joy you'll bring.,
Imagining even the littlest things.
The way it will feel to hold you tight,
And tuck you in every night.

The drawings on the refrigerator door,
And childhood toys across the floor,
The favourite stories to read again and again,
And hour as of games with make-believe friends.

Happy Birthday Song

SAENG IL CHUK HA HAM NI DA

SAENG IL CHUK HA HAM NI DA

SA RANG HA NUN URI (CHILD'S NAME)

SAENG IL CHUK HA HAM NI DA

Adoption Poetry

Legacy of an adopted child

Once there were two women who never knew each other..
One you do not remember, the other you call mother.
Two different lives, shaped to make Your one...
One became your guiding star, the other became your sun.
The first gave you life and the second taught you to live it.
The first gave you a need for love, and the second was there to
give it.
One gave you a nationality, the other gave you a name.
One gave you a seed of talent, the other gave you an aim.
One gave you emotions, the other calmed your fears.
One saw your first sweet smile, the other dried your tears.
One gave you up...that's all she could do.
The other prayed for a child and God led her straight to you.
And now you ask me, through your fears,
the age old question unanswered throughout the years...
Hereditary or environment... Which are you the product of..
Neither, my darling..neither..
just two kinds of different love

-Author Unknown-

The Adopted Child

The Gift of Life

I didn't give you the gift of life,
But in my heart I know.
The love I feel is deep and real,
As if it had been so.

For us to have each other
Is like a dream come true!
No, I didn't give you
The gift of life,
Life gave me the gift of you.

-Unknown-

My Child

My child, I carried you in my heart before you were even born
And dared to dream that you were real.
My child, I carried your picture with me since the day I received
it,
And dared to love a child I was yet to meet,
My child, I carried you in my arms at last, and gazed in helpless
wonder at your face,
And dared to lose my heart to you.
And now, my child, a dream fulfilled, a prayer answered, a
Family created, I have dared to become a mom.
And so now, my precious child,
I shall carry you home.

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The Answer (to an Adopted Child)

Not flesh of my flesh
Nor bone of my bone
But still miraculously
My own
Never forget
For a single minute:
You didn't grow under my heart
But in it

- © Fleur Conkling Heyliger-

