



Korean Ladder Study Note

세배 / 세뱃돈 / 덕담

What Actually Happens on Korean New Year Morning

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Culture Holidays	세배 / 세뱃돈 / 덕담 What Actually Happens on Korean New Year Morning

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-CULTURE-HOL-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mraU-CQCaWo>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my fear. I know 설날 is Korean New Year, but if I'm standing in someone's living room, when do I bow, what do I say, and is it weird to receive money?

좋은 질문이에요. 설날 아침에는 보통 어른께 세배를 하고, 새해 인사를 드리고, 어른은 덕담을 해 주세요.

중요한 건 세뱃돈이 목적이 아니라는 점이에요. The heart of the ritual is respect and blessing, not cash.

So the main event is not, "hello, please give me money." Good to know.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Alice	새해 복 많이 받으세요. —	Please receive many New Year blessings.
Junho	그래요. 올해도 건강하고 좋은 일 많길 바라요. —	Yes. I hope you stay healthy and have many good things this year.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	세뱃돈이에요. —	Here is New Year money.
Alice	감사합니다. —	Thank you.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
세배 → 덕담 → 세뱃돈 sebae → deokdam → sebaetdon	bow → blessing words → New Year money	좋은 질문이에요. 설날 아침에는 보통 어른께 세배를 하고, 새해 인사를 드리고, 어른은 덕담을 해 주세요.
존중과 축복 jongjung-gwa chukbok	respect and blessing	중요한 건 세뱃돈이 목적이 아니라는 점이에요. The heart of the ritual is respect and blessing, not cash.
새해 복 많이 받으세요 saehae bok mani badeuseyo	Please receive lots of New Year blessings.	오늘의 핵심 표현은 이거예요. 어른께 세배하면서 새해 복 많이 받으세요라고 말해요.
받으세요 badeuseyo	please receive	좋아요. 받으세요 is polite, so it fits when you speak to elders or hosts.
세배 sebae	New Year bow to elders	Now the word 세배. 세배 is the New Year bow you do to elders, usually with a very respectful full bow.
세배를 하다 sebae-reul hada	to do the New Year bow	한국어로는 보통 세배를 하다라고 해요. In English, we say “to do 세배,” or “to make the New Year bow.”
준비 → 세배 → 덕담 → 세뱃돈 junbi → sebae → deokdam → sebaetdon	get ready → bow → blessing words → New Year money	순서를 볼게요. 가족마다 다르지만, 보통 아침에 준비를 하고, 어른께 세배를 드려요.
집집마다 달라요 jipjimmada dallayo	Every household is different.	Some families do 차례, an ancestral memorial rite, before 세배. Some do it differently. So watch the family flow and follow the host.



Grammar / Structure Notes

세배 → 덕담 → 세뱃돈

세배 → 덕담 → 세뱃돈 — bow → blessing words → New Year money

Family customs vary, but this is the common flow.

존중과 축복

존중과 축복 — respect and blessing

세뱃돈 is part of the custom, not the whole meaning.

새해 복 많이 받으세요

새해 복 많이 받으세요 — Please receive lots of New Year blessings.

The standard polite New Year greeting.

새해 복 많이 받으세요

새해 + 복 + 많이 + 받으세요 — Please receive lots of New Year blessings.

In English, it sounds like “Happy New Year,” but literally it means “receive lots of New Year fortune or blessings.”

받으세요

받으세요 — please receive

Polite ending for an elder or someone you want to respect.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
새해 복 많이 받으세요	sae-hae bok mani badeuseyo
세배돈	sebaetdon

Self-Check

- 1 Say 세배 / 세뱃돈 / 덕담 three times: slow, natural, then inside a short sentence.
- 2 Write one original sentence that was not in the video.
- 3 Rewatch the YouTube lesson and pause when the same pattern appears.

Related / Subsequent Studies



Lesson	Why study it next	Link
설날 / 추석 Korea's Two Biggest Holidays	B1 Culture: compare 설날 / 추석 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-CULTURE-HOL-001
광복절 / 개천절 / 한글날 Korea's Modern National Holidays	C1 Culture: compare 광복절 / 개천절 / 한글날 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-CULTURE-HOL-002
단오 / 한식 Korea's Quieter Traditional Holidays	A2 Culture: compare 단오 / 한식 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-HOL-004
빼빼로데이 / 화이트데이 / 밸런타인데이 Korea's Couple and Candy Days	A2 Culture: compare 빼빼로데이 / 화이트데이 / 밸런타인데이 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-HOL-002

My Notes

Your ladder to fluent Korean. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.