



Korean Ladder Study Note

허탈하다 / 착잡하다 / 아련하다

Bittersweet and Complex Emotions

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Vocabulary Feelings	허탈하다 / 착잡하다 / 아련하다 Bittersweet and Complex Emotions

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-EMO-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI5jZRBtnc>

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<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here is something I run into all the time. Say I work on a huge presentation for three months, and five minutes before the meeting, the whole project gets canceled. I'm not crying, and I'm not angry. I just feel like all the air went out of me. Or what if I hear an old friend is going through a rough time, and my chest feels heavy and complicated? Calling all of that simply sad feels way too flat.

맞아요. In Korean, we separate those exact emotional textures. Instead of using a general word for sad, we choose a word that tells the listener how that feeling arrived.

Let's meet our trio for today: 허탈하다, 착잡하다, and 아련하다. Each one paints a very specific inner landscape.

First is 허탈하다. 기운이나 긴장이 갑자기 빠져서 속이 텅 빈 것 같은 느낌이에요. It describes that sudden hollow, deflated feeling when all your effort or tension drops to zero.

Conversation Snapshot



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	어? 여기 단골 빵집 결국 문을 닫았네. 마지막으로 빵 사러 일부러 멀리서 왔는데, 진짜 허탈하다. —	Huh? This regular bakery of ours finally closed down. I came all the way here on purpose to buy bread one last time, so I feel really deflated.
Hana	그러게. 대학생 때 시험 끝나는 날마다 여기 와서 빵 먹던 기억이 아직도 아련한데. —	I know. The memory of coming here to eat bread after every exam back in college still feels so wistful and vivid in a hazy way.
Junho	사장님도 건강이 안 좋아지셨다던데, 정든 가게들이 하나둘 사라지는 걸 보니까 마음이 참 착잡하네. —	I heard the owner's health got worse too, and seeing places we're attached to disappear one by one leaves my heart feeling really heavy and complicated.
Hana	맞아. 세월이 흐르는 게 아쉽기도 하고 사장님 걱정도 되고, 여러모로 심정이 복잡하다. —	Right. It's sad how time passes, and I'm worried about the owner too—my feelings are complicated in so many ways.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
허탈하다 · 착잡하다 · 아련하다 heotalhada · chakjaphada · aryeonhada	deflated and hollow · heavy and conflicted · faintly nostalgic and wistful	Let's meet our trio for today: 허탈하다, 착잡하다, and 아련하다. Each one paints a very specific inner landscape.
허탈하다 heotalhada	to feel deflated, hollow, dazedly empty	First is 허탈하다. 기운이나 긴장이 갑자기 빠져서 속이 텅 빈 것 같은 느낌이에요. It describes that sudden hollow, deflated feeling when all your effort or tension drops to zero.
착잡하다 chakjaphada	to feel heavy-hearted, conflicted, emotionally tangled	Now let's move to our second word: 착잡하다. 여러 가지 감정이 뒤섞여서 마음이 무겁고 복잡한 상태예요. Instead of feeling empty, your mind is crowded and heavy with conflicting emotions.
마음이 착잡하다 / 심정이 착잡하다 maeumi chakjaphada / simjeongi chakjaphada	one's heart or state of mind feels heavy and complicated	So while the first word is like a balloon losing all its air, the second one is like a heavy knot of mixed feelings sitting in your chest.



Word	Meaning	Example
착잡하다 [착짜파다] chakjaphada [chak-jja-pa-da]	Bittersweet and Complex Emotions	Let's check the pronunciation of 착잡하다 before we go further. Notice how the final 기억 in 착 makes 잡 sound tense, and the final 비읍 in 잡 meets 히읗 in 하다 to become an aspirated 피읺 sound.
착잡해요 [착짜패요] chakjaphaeyo [chak-jja-pae-yo]	Bittersweet and Complex Emotions	Try listening to the natural flow: 착잡하다. 착잡해요. 마음이 착잡하네요. Smooth and connected.
아련하다 aryeonhada	faint and wistful, hazily nostalgic, tenderly distant	Now for our third word: 아련하다. 기억이나 감정이 안개 너머처럼 희미하면서도 애절한 느낌이에요. It means faint, hazy, and wistfully nostalgic.
아련한 추억 / 마음이 아련해지다 aryeonhan chueok / maeumi aryeonhaejida	a wistful, hazy memory / one's heart grows wistful and tender	그립다 means you actively long for something and wish you could go back or see them right now. 아련하다 is softer and more distant, like looking through frosted glass at a memory that is half-faded, giving your heart a gentle, bittersweet tug.



Grammar / Structure Notes

허탈하다 · 착잡하다 · 아련하다

허탈하다 · 착잡하다 · 아련하다 — deflated and hollow · heavy and conflicted · faintly nostalgic and wistful

Three C1 descriptive verbs (형용사) for layered emotions.

허탈하다

허탈하다 — to feel deflated, hollow, dazedly empty

Triggered when intense effort, tension, or expectation suddenly collapses.

몇 달 동안 준비한 행사가 취소돼서 너무 허탈해요.

몇 달 동안 + 준비한 + 행사 + 가 + 취소돼서 + 너무 + 허탈해 + 요. — Because the event I prepared for months was canceled, I feel so deflated.

Listen to how we use 허탈하다 in a real sentence: 몇 달 동안 준비한 행사가 취소돼서 너무 허탈해요. Because the event I prepared for months was canceled, I feel completely deflated.

큰 시험이 끝나고 나니 오히려 마음이 허탈했다.

큰 시험이 끝나고 나니 오히려 마음이 허탈했다. — After the big exam finally ended, my heart actually felt hollow and deflated.

Also used when a long buildup ends and your energy suddenly drains out.

어이가 없어서 허탈한 웃음만 나와요.

어이가 없어서 허탈한 웃음만 나와요. — I'm so dumbfounded that only a hollow laugh comes out.

Common collocation: 허탈한 웃음 (a hollow, deflated laugh).

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
착짜파다	chakjaphada [chak-jja-pa-da]
착짜패요	chakjaphaeyo [chak-jja-pae-yo]

Self-Check

- 1 Say 허탈하다 / 착잡하다 / 아련하다 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
억울하다 / 서운하다 / 벅차다 Nuanced Emotional Expression	C1 Vocabulary: compare 억울하다 / 서운하다 / 벅차다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-EMO-001
기분이 좋아요 / 기분 나빠요 / 심심해요 Talking About Your Mood	A2 Vocabulary: compare 기분이 좋아요 / 기분 나빠요 / 심심해요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-VOCAB-EMO-001
놀라다 / 걱정되다 / 신나다 Everyday Feeling Verbs Beyond 좋아요	A2 Vocabulary: compare 놀라다 / 걱정되다 / 신나다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-VOCAB-EMO-002
배고파요 / 목말라요 / 피곤해요 Everyday Physical Feelings	A1 Vocabulary: compare 배고파요 / 목말라요 / 피곤해요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-EMO-002

My Notes

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