

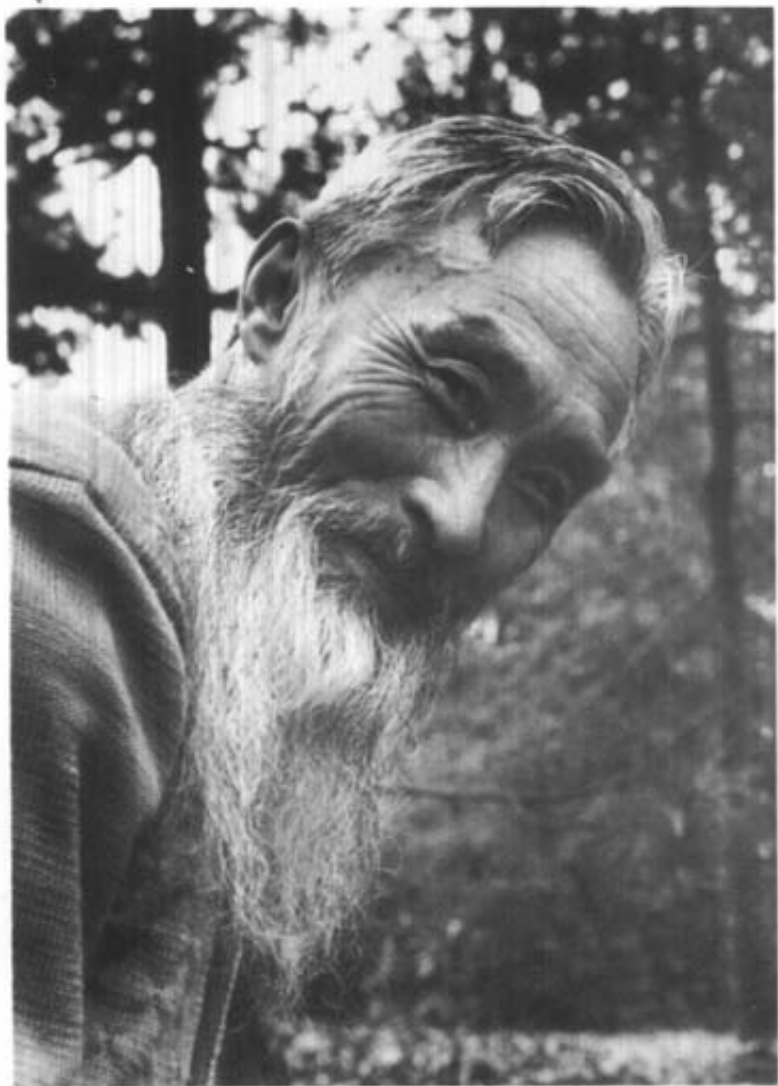


**KICKED
BY
GOD**

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SOK HON HAM

THE WIDER QUAKER FELLOWSHIP OF THE FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE
AMERICAN SECTION AND FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL



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“KICKED BY GOD”

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INTRODUCTION

SOK HON HAM is member of Seoul Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Korea. He has been a kind of Korean Gandhi, an independent prophet who has inspired many of his countrymen and has kept his contact with the youth of his country. He is a writer and teacher and knows the great Chinese and Japanese classics as well as the Bible and is a moving interpreter of them. In this pamphlet which is being published by the Wider Quaker Fellowship, he has told in an utterly frank way the story of his inner pilgrimage; of the thrust that has come again and again in his life when he has been "kicked by God" into another stage of existence; and it is concluded by convincing testimony that the journey is not over and will never be over as long as he draws breath. It is an oriental poem lifted from the heart of a beautiful spirit. Two years ago I attended a birthday party in Seoul that was given to him by his friends at the turn of his 66th year and discovered that we were both born in 1901, and therefore were "brothers", but his birthday's coming in March and mine in August made him insist that he be called the "elder brother!" I commend this unusual miniature spiritual autobiography of my "elder brother" to all pilgrims of the way.

DOUGLAS V. STEERE

Haverford, Pa.
19 October, 1969.

“KICKED BY GOD”

Since becoming a member of the Society of Friends I have been asked, now and then, “Why did you become a Quaker?” Upon each occasion I reply only with a warm, knowing smile, like the ancient poet who said, “I smile warmly without answering, because my heart is free.” What does it matter, whether or not I have become a Quaker? In either case, there is no problem.

Nevertheless for those who do not understand me and who persist in asking, my reply is “yes, and no.” If I have become, I have become. If not, so be it.

Indeed what is it that becomes? I have nothing more or less to become than my own self. I am what I am. Thus there is no problem. It is not by my own effort that I have become. Rather, without having achieved, it has been given to me to be.

Yet I struggle to be. He who possesses no goal or effort to be is not a man. Indeed man is he who strives relentlessly to become. To take what cannot be and to strain, moment by moment, to make it be, is this not life?

It is true that I have become a member of the Society of Friends. Yet I have not become a Quaker. Would one dare claim that one can become a Quaker by trying? Were this to be true, I probably would not have become one. What cannot become, this is the problem. A Quaker is that which becomes in the process of struggle to make become what cannot be.

We ask “why”, but in the deepest sense there can be no “why.” Of course thinking man must seek to discern cause, for in doing so he actually becomes man. Yet who will answer when asked of the real reason? That which can be answered cannot be the real reason, that which is the reason cannot be shown to be the answer. Who is he who knows the cause of life? Who knows the cause of death? If we thus cannot know the reason for the beginning and the end, how then can we know about that which transpires in-between? Then should we not inquire into cause? No. We cannot avoid the question. But merely asking

does not guarantee that there must be an answer. Likewise the answer does not depend on the prior existence of a question. There is an answer without a question, and there is a question without an answer. The real question is the one which cannot be answered, the real answer is the one which is not preceded by a question. Does not man answer by asking, and does not he ask by answering? Is this not indeed Truth?

When I reflect on the course of my life to this point I am left with a kind of self-judgment: I am a man of failure. Many are the things attempted, none the achievements attained. It was not my will to become so; nevertheless I am only what I am. I am not at all a man devoid of ideas. Yet I do not know how to actualize the idea. On the contrary perhaps I know only too well the problems that can arise out of the actualization of an idea. Gazing all too clearly at the great gap between the inner essence and the outer actuality, I hesitate. Thus I am driven by circumstances surrounding me and forced to follow the course of my destiny. In retrospect I see that it was an inevitable journey. Yet it is not I who have gone. I am a man who has been "kicked" by God, just as a boy kicks a ball in the direction he wants it to go. I have been driven and led by Him. That I have become a Quaker, also, is a consequence of my failure rather than of my success. I feel clearly a sense of having been "kicked" in a direction not my own. A blending of fear and peace, of sorrow and thanksgiving, shame and courage. . . .

Indeed there is a reason, but it does not need to be explained. It is my reason and cannot belong to another. Belief originates in the "holy of holies" of the soul. There one finds no words, only the sacrificial burning, in silence, of the incense of life. In this "holy of holies" there can be no poetry. How, then, can there be explanation? Explanation belongs to the world of the phenomenal. What word can a man speak, who has been "kicked" by God? Yet because I live among neighbors I am forced to speak. Like Zechariah when he came out of the holy of holies, by describing in a faltering manner the course of my life as it has been "kicked" by God, I can only answer to that of God in every man.

* * *

I was born in a small village beside the Yellow Sea in the extreme northwest corner of Korea on March 13, 1901. Korea at that time was in a state of political and economic bankruptcy, and there was no religion to offer deliverance to the people. Confucianism, Buddhism and Sŏn Do (similar to Taoism) had been present for centuries, but rather than a creative vitality they offered only a hardened orthodoxy and lifeless form. Such a society was filled with ignorance, superstition and corruption, and its people abandoned themselves to despair. No one dared to hope or had the will to rebuild his society or himself.

In the midst of this general disillusionment I had the good fortune to study the "new education" from early childhood. This was because Christianity, which was just beginning to be propagated in Korea, entered my village. My province of P'yŏngan was known as Korea's "heathen Galilee," and for centuries its "people of low birth" had been the object of scorn and contempt. People of our village, especially, like "Zebulun and Naphtali," were referred to as the "scum of the sea." Thus we lived amidst scorn and shame. However this misfortune became our fortune. Being at the bottom level of society, there was peace even among the prevailing political chaos. Just as we accepted scorn and disdain so also we were quick to accept new things and new ideas. Indeed we stood at the frontier of a new age. Thus I was born among the "people who sat in the shadow of death", yet I was able to set sail on the sea of life in the midst of the "Great Light."

"God and nation", these two words aptly describe the education which I received during my childhood. We referred to it as the "new enlightenment", but in reality it was a Sphinx with two faces, Christianity and nationalism. At that time, at least secularly, this was precisely what Korea needed. For this was the period when this "hermit nation" was groaning to be freed from its old, obsolete shell of feudalism in order to enter a new age. There are many reasons for the rapid spread of Christianity in Korea, but one which cannot be forgotten is the fact that Christianity rode the crest of nationalism into this nation. Salvation of the soul was indeed an appealing offer to those who heard it for the first time, but many were the new converts to the faith

who held the conviction that only by professing the religion of the Western developed nations could they drive off the oppression of the Japanese and secure national independence.

As the denomination to which I belonged was Presbyterian, the education was almost puritanical, with severe adherence to strict creeds. To this day I am grateful for this background. If we had not received such Christian education in this critical period of national destruction, the conscience of our society surely would have collapsed. The Church in this hour was truly the lighthouse of hope. Until the age of thirteen, I considered myself to have been a simple Christian young man.

At nine years of age, when our country completely collapsed into the hands of the Japanese, I remember the terrible shock to my young mind of hearing the wailing and lamentations of my peers gathered together in the Church building. But through faith I did not fall completely into despair. Later, with the ambition of becoming a doctor, I swallowed my pride and left for the city in order to attend the public school which taught all subjects in the Japanese language, which heretofore I had despised. From this time on I began to lose my childlike purity, and as I began to study science I came to embrace many doubts about the Bible.

Some years later, through the March 1st Independence Movement, I began for the first time to achieve a deep sense of self-awareness. The March 1st Movement was a nationwide non-violent protest against the forcible oppression by Japan, and it was influenced by President Wilson's proposal of "national self-determination" at the Paris Peace Talks immediately following World War I. Planned and supported by the followers of Christianity, Buddhism and Ch'ondo Gyo (an indigenous Korean religion), the March 1st Movement played an important role in the self-awakening of the Korean people, and it left an indelible influence on the lives of every young person of the nation. On the surface the Movement was, of course, a failure. It was begun in the belief that the great nations of the world, with their strong sense of justice, would come to our side. But this was a false hope. Nevertheless, even though we failed to attain our long awaited independence, the newly awakened masses did not lose

heart. The Movement became instead an internal movement of self-enlightenment. A cultural movement on a nationwide scale was begun, resulting in the creation of newspapers, magazines and books, and the establishment of lectures and schools. I also was influenced greatly by this movement. After participating in it I was forced to stop my studies at the middle school in P'yöngyang and to return to my home village, where for two years I wasted away in agony. In 1921 I entered Osan School in order to continue my studies.

This school was established by Lee Süng-hun, the leader of the March 1st Movement. Becoming an orphan at an early age, he began to work at odd jobs in factories from the age of eleven. Through his sheer zeal and determination, he "pulled himself up by his own bootstraps" until eventually he became well known as the director of a large import and export firm. Upon sensing the national crisis, he became convinced that "education is essential for national survival" and decided to radically change the course of his life. He devoted his entire property and the remainder of his life to Osan School. The education which he espoused was a thorough, spiritual education, composed of the Christian faith, humanism and nationalism. This school, in which teacher and pupil alike ate and slept together in a corporate life, became one of the centers of the movement for national enlightenment. Because of his leadership in the March 1st Movement, he eventually was arrested and put into prison, and his school burned, by the Japanese military police. Nevertheless his friends revived the school. When I entered the school it had lost its original appearance and students were studying in shabby thatched roof houses. Nonetheless I had the distinct feeling that here I was to receive a real education. I gave up my former ambition of becoming a doctor and for the first time I began to ask the question, "What is Korea?" It was at that critical period in my life, too, that I began actually to examine deeply the meaning of life itself. This was due to the influence of the Osan principal, Yu Young-mo. It was from him, also, that I first learned the teachings of Lao-tzu.

From this time on, I began to be dissatisfied with simply believing what others believed and accepting blindly the ordi-

nances of established religions. I began to search instead for a faith more real and vital. But I was unable to find the object of my search in the Church.

When Christianity first entered Korea, the amalgamation of faith and nationalism possessed a certain strength and was welcomed, but gradually the defects of such a mixture became more and more evident. When the hope of liberation was very much alive, the Church spread remarkably fast. But when the rule of Japan began to appear to be permanent and when the Japanese consequently began to apply more generous and humane policies, at least superficially, former Korean patriots began to compromise with the Japanese government, and religion became nothing more than hardened creedalism far removed from reality. I disliked this intensely and began to be critical of the Church.

In 1923 I left for Tokyo to pursue university studies, and in September of that year there occurred a great earthquake which destroyed two-thirds of the entire city. At this time the Japanese government feared a revolution on the part of the socialists, who began to grow in numbers and power by taking advantage of the ensuing period of depression. Thus in order to control the masses, the government deliberately propagated a rumor that the Koreans in Japan were planning to revolt, and set about massacring thousands of Korean people. I entered a period of great agony. Could Christianity really save my people? Under the circumstances it appeared that only a socialist revolution could provide the answer. But I could not bring myself to forsake my faith and join in the socialist movement which totally disregarded all sense of morality. For a long period hence I was in agony over the conflict between Christianity and socialism.

In the midst of my agony I came to meet an unexpected light. In 1924 I entered the College of Education, having decided that education was the most urgent need of my country. Winter came, and I endured the bitter cold of Tokyo in which it was scarcely possible for a Korean to find room and board. The next spring, happy at having entered the College of Education, I met a classmate, Kim Kyo-shin, who introduced me to a Bible study group

led by the famous Uchimura. I had heard of him previously from Yu Young-mo while at Osan School in Korea, being greatly moved by the famous anecdotes concerning Uchimura while he was working at the school for mentally retarded children in Philadelphia.* However at that time he was no more than a far-off figure in my imagination. What joy, what surprise now to hear his name again! Naturally when I first heard his name I knew nothing of his beliefs or thought but simply accepted him unconditionally because my teacher, whom I admired, introduced him to me. Thus from this time I began to attend his "Non-Church Movement." A graduate of Hokkaido University he was converted to Christianity under the influence of the famous William S. Clark. Uchimura studied theology at Amherst College in the U.S., and worked in the Japanese Church upon his return to Japan. But the rigid Uchimura, who had a burning zeal for freedom and justice, was unable to endure the empty formalism and hypocrisy of the Church. Thus he left the Church and began to propagate the Gospel in his own way. For this reason he is known as the founder of the Non-Church Movement. The special feature of this movement is its complete lack of form and ritual, its simplicity of worship and its emphasis on a strict orthodox faith stressing atonement through the Cross, and on Bible study. During his lifetime he published many books and trained as his disciples many of Japan's contemporary spiritual leaders.

Jeremiah was the subject of his lecture on the day I first attended his Bible study. Uchimura, a staunch patriot, pointed to Jeremiah and said, "This is real patriotism", and stressed the importance of faith. Whether or not it was a direct result of this first day, at least during the time I participated in his Bible studies my inner agonies were gradually solved and I made a firm determination to live as a true Christian. I developed the confidence to be able to say "This is real faith", "This is the way the Bible must be read!" I esteem Uchimura to be of such stature that at times I would venture to say that the knowledge of this one man alone is more than enough to compensate for my thirty-six years of servitude under the Japanese people.

*In Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Upon graduation from the College of Education I returned to Korea and taught at Osan School for ten years. When I first began to teach I regretted the fact of having become a history teacher, because what we call history is completely filled with lies. No one can deny the misery and shame that pervades our nation's history. How was I to teach this kind of history? If I were to teach our history as it really happened the young minds of my students would be filled with disillusionment and despair. Yet my conscience would not permit me to exaggerate and adorn our history as did the other teachers. I pondered the matter deeply and came to the conclusion that there are three things which I cannot forsake: First, I am a Korean and cannot give up the tradition of my nation. Secondly, I believe in God, thus I cannot live without faith. Third, I have studied science. Moreover having carefully read H. G. Wells' *The Outline of History*, and having been influenced greatly by his ideas of cosmopolitanism and of the role of science, I consider it cowardly to disregard the principles of science for the sake of faith. If a scientist, who sacrifices his personal life and affairs in his struggle for truth, is condemned to hell on the mere grounds that he is not a member of the Church, then I determined to have nothing to do with such a religion. How, then, was I to preserve these three essentials in my life as I taught history? Then one day, in some strange manner the following thought came to mind: "If the suffering Messiah is also the Messiah of glory, cannot the history of suffering become also the history of glory?" In this way I determined to apply the principle of the Cross to my nation. Receiving new courage I continued to teach, and it was out of these experiences that I developed the idea of "history as suffering." Taking suffering to be the keynote of Korean history, I interpreted all events in its light.

Six Korean students attended Uchimura's class together. Becoming close friends we decided to work together in the future by publishing a magazine called *Bible Korea* (We could not forsake either of these two things). After graduation the six of us all returned to Korea and published the magazine jointly for a brief time until it was taken over completely by Kim Kyo-shin. It was in this magazine that I published my articles on history

and other subjects, including the manuscript for my later book *Korean History Seen from the Viewpoint of the Bible*.

I was a faithful Christian in the Non-Church Movement, with its emphasis on the Cross, during my ten years at Osan School. However, having a strong distaste for denominationalism, we avoided the use of the label "Non-Church Movement", for this movement also began gradually to emphasize its own peculiarities and showed tendencies of becoming still another denomination. Moreover, in my great admiration for Uchimura, I detected within myself an attitude of potential idol worship. Thus as a reaction against this I gradually began to avoid imitation of him and set out to determine my own distinctive thought. At the same time I enlarged the scope of my reading, and as my thought began to deepen doubts also began to arise: As long as I myself also possess an autonomous personality, how can I accept the Historical Jesus as the object of my faith and cry, "Lord, Lord!" to him? How is the atonement of moral man, who possesses a free will, brought about? After much deliberation, I solved my doubts in my own manner: It is not the historical man Jesus whom I believe; rather I believe in Christ. He is the eternal Christ, who not only is in Jesus but who also by nature is in me. Atonement takes place through this Christ only when Jesus and I are no longer separate persons but experience oneness together. Thus I came to believe that gratitude to the historical man Jesus for bearing the burden of my sins amounts to nothing more than a sentimental feeling and that his act on the Cross cannot cleanse my sins. Of course this is different from the thought of Uchimura. However, I had no desire to impose this belief on others, nor did I want to disassociate myself from the Non-Church Movement because of this belief. Thus a few years passed.

While at Osan I always thought of education, faith and rural society as being inextricably related. Having no concern for politics I was convinced that the salvation of Korea lay in the revival of rural society through faith-centered education. I considered this as my mission and was determined to teach at Osan for the remainder of my life, and this was the view of others as well.

However, God's "kicking" already was beginning to lead me to another place. Japan's policy in the period 1936-37 became more and more cruel, and they vowed to remove all traces of national consciousness from the Korean people. It was my intention to refuse to surrender to this policy even at the expense of having to close the doors of our school, but as the school administration intended to compromise with the Japanese policy, I was left with no choice but to leave Osan School. I left my school, to which I had committed my life, in tears in the spring of 1938. But even though I left my school, I could not leave my students. I felt as if something essential had been taken from me as I left with empty heart. Finally I decided to remain in the city of Osan as a farmer and teach students through our Sunday meeting, which I did for two years. Then in 1940, upon hearing the news that someone in the outskirts of P'yongyang who had been operating a Danish style "folk school" desired to turn the operation of the school over to me, I departed for P'yöngyang. Upon arrival I was told that the founder of the school had been arrested on suspicion of having participated in the Independence Movement, and that I too was involved. Whereupon I was arrested and taken to prison. It was not that I had committed a crime. My only crime was that of being a Korean. When I was released a year later I learned that my father had passed away and that my home had been completely disrupted. I began to farm my land in order to pay off the debt left on our household, and another year passed. It was the following spring, 1942, that I was once again imprisoned, this time on charges of anti-Japanese activity through the magazine which we formerly published, *Bible Korea*. Japan's position in the Second World War was becoming increasingly weakened, and the Japanese militarists in Korea began to fear for their lives in the event of a Korean uprising. Thus they resorted to every method possible to block such an uprising. Under a policy of complete "Japanization", Koreans were prohibited from using Korean spoken or written language or wearing Korean clothes, and even names of all individuals were changed to Japanese names. Anyone suspected of having the least bit of nationalistic thought, or liberal thought, was arrested on any number of flimsy pretexts and placed in prison "to rot", as the Japanese themselves chose to express it.

Thus *Bible Korea*, which had been published all along with complete permission from the government as a magazine designed merely to foster its readers' faith, only now, years after the suspension of publication, ironically became the source of contention. Upon being freed from prison a year later, my future appeared to be very desolate indeed. I allowed my beard to grow fully at will, began to wear straw sandals and, assuming the bearing of an old farmer, began to await the curtain of the final chapter in the story of my life. The War ended, and Liberation came, two years later.

I view prison as the university of life. Many things which cannot be learned at school or in society are discovered there. This is because the teacher is not someone external to oneself, but rather is the true teacher within each man. My experiences in prison are many, always because I insisted only on remaining true to my convictions. This particular time in prison, my fourth, was the most significant. Here I continued my study of the Buddhist Scriptures and read more of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. Moreover I gained something of an experience of the mystical, and reached the conviction that all religions, in the final analysis, are one.

My impression upon being released from prison was that I was entering yet another prison cell, the only difference being that it was a little larger. Sitting in the middle of this cell called "Korea", or "home", and watching the flow of history, my thoughts centered on the following: This flow of history does not stop merely with the changes of national boundaries. It is the beginning of a world revolution in which the structures of human society are basically changing. The world must become one nation. The view of the state must be revised. The age of the Great Powers has passed. The view of the world is changing, and religion also will change. Will not it take on a form quite different from that of the present? The basic truth of religion cannot change, but every age demands a new expression of that which is eternal. Every age possesses its own keyword. What is the Word of the age to come? Who will accept it? Are we not crying out for a new Renaissance which can usher in a new period of religious reformation? If so then there must be a new

interpretation of the past. There must be renewed research into the classics. And since the Western classics have been "used up", we are forced to examine more closely our own Eastern classics. A renewed appreciation of the East will furnish the key to the revitalization of the stagnated Western culture.

However vague and rough these thoughts appear, I cannot but express them. Focus has been placed on "new religion" because this has been my main concern from start to finish. Contemporary organized religions are so deeply involved in nationalism that it will be extremely difficult for them to be free from it. Indeed one wonders whether contemporary religions will not end up along with faded cultures in the garbage can of history.

Such were my thoughts upon being released from prison. When Liberation suddenly came I found myself in a position of leadership. People had pointed at me with pride and said, "Going to prison is his occupation", and now I was chosen to lead these very people as the chairman of the temporary self-governing committee. This led also to appointment as Minister of Education for the interim government of North P'yöngan Province. Although I realized that to hold such positions was not in keeping with my personality, nonetheless I accepted them as being inevitable for the sake of social order in that crucial period of political vacuum. However, because of these positions I was imprisoned twice by the Russians and eventually was forced to flee to South Korea. Upon arrival in the South I sought out my old friends from the Non-Church Movement and, with their cooperation, established the Sunday Religious Lectures which I continued until 1960. Thus I presented my thought through lectures and through writings. The result was that I gained many sympathizers, especially among college students and non-Christians. However, the Church labeled me a heretic and even former friends from the Non-Church Movement began to avoid me. Their reasons were chiefly, "He has forsaken the Cross", or "He doesn't pray", or "He is too Oriental." But I do not deny the Cross. I only say that the Cross is not for us simply to adore and behold from a distance, rather we must strive to bear the Cross in our bodies. I do not neglect prayer. I only maintain that public prayer is all too often no more than formality and

the self-flattery of men and thus we should avoid public prayer insofar as possible. Finally, I am prepared to fight with conviction against the rejection of things Oriental by the Church. This is because most of the opposition to Confucianism and Buddhism is done only on the basis of narrow denominationalism without any understanding of their real meaning.

Had it not been for an unfortunate incident I never would have left the Non-Church Movement, but eventually I was forced to separate myself from it because of a big mistake on my own part. I have been an admirer of Gandhi for a long time, having read his *Young India* while still at Osan School. However after his death in 1948 I became a more ardent follower, reading more of his books and even forming a small study group. Eventually some friends suggested establishing a community similar to Gandhi's "Ashram", and as land was made readily available in 1957 we decided to establish a farm in the small town of Ch'ŏnan, about thirty miles south of Seoul, where we could live together with selected young persons. The farm was named "Sial," which in Korean can mean not only "seed" but also "people" or "nation." When, in the beginning, my friends urged me to serve as the leader of the community, I refused not out of humbleness but because I did not feel that I had the necessary qualifications to direct such a community. However, under pressure I finally accepted the position, and this was the beginning of my wrongdoing. There came to me a temptation which I could not overcome, and I committed a sin which was totally indefensible. From this time my situation changed drastically. My friends all avoided me. My friends, whom I had never considered would reject me even in the face of the greatest wrong, forsook me. Not one man was near to touch my wounds and to restore me to health. I was alone and lonely. I would rather have endured being shot by Russian machine guns than to suffer the agony of being separated from my friends. The Cross, in which I had believed with my mind and by which I had been moved deeply in my heart, now seemed utterly useless, to me or to anyone else. It was only after I became a sinner that I came to realize that forgiveness of sins is the greatest thing that can happen to a man. It was in this period of trial that I came to know anew that

man cannot live alone, and that the greater wrong a man does the greater is his need for a friend. I described my feelings at that time in the following way:

“The Cross is only a lie,
Amitābul is only an empty word,
‘Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven
those who sinned against us’ is
only a useless phrase.”

With all my might I strove stubbornly to become Jean Valjean, but that which resulted seemed to be not Myriel but only Javert.

I no longer wept over my own self-destruction, over the falling of my own tower. Rather I was in agony upon seeing those remaining lofty spires high upon the hill, hiding from me the setting sun.

In this period of agony, when I longed for a friend, the Quakers appeared before me. It was in Osan School that I had first learned of the Quakers. Reading Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, I was deeply moved by the account of George Fox's "leather britches" and determined to read the biography of his life. In later reading I came across the names of other prominent Quakers but always regarded them with a degree of curiosity, as an outsider. My greatest interest in the Society of Friends came during the Second World War upon hearing of the large numbers of conscientious objectors among the Quakers. Still I had no particular thought of coming to know any one of them personally. But now the Quakers had come to me. Lee Yun-gu, who became the first Korean Quaker as a result of contacts with Western Quakers engaged in relief work in Korea immediately following the Korean War, was a member of my Sunday meeting. It was through him that I first came to know the Quakers directly. It was not that I had studied about the Quakers and had decided to become one. Rather, as a man with no place to go, and as a drowning man clutching at even a piece of straw, I attended one of the meetings.

That was in the winter of 1961. In the words of Arthur Mitchell, the first American Quaker I met, "You were already a Quaker before you became a Quaker." In 1962 I went to Pendle Hill* for ten months, and the following spring to Woodbrooke† for another three months, yet still I had no special desire to become a Quaker. Always I was as a monk who sleeps a night under the cool shade of the mulberry tree and then continues his wandering. Indeed it was not until 1967, when I attended the Friends World Conference in North Carolina at the invitation of the Pacific Yearly Meeting, that I made a firm resolution to become a member of the Society of Friends. Rather than being the result of a special act on my part, it was a decision arising from a sense of responsibility to the Friends who had befriended me.

Quakerism is not the "new religion" to which I aspire, but I embrace the hope that out of this form, sprouting from this seed, will come forth the religion that will bring newness to mankind. So I fix my eyes unchangingly "beyond the horizon", the horizon toward which I longingly gazed as I built castles in the sand, and then destroyed them, by the shores of the Yellow Sea, . . . the horizon beyond which I longed to see as I wept on the banks of the Nakdong River with the other refugees from the War, as I began to raise a pair of minnows and then watched them die. . . . Even now I set my face beyond the horizon, the horizon of eternity.

*At Wallingford, Pennsylvania

†At Selly Oak, Birmingham, England





THE WIDER QUAKER FELLOWSHIP
is a fellowship of persons of different races, creeds and nationalities desiring close association with the Religious Society of Friends without being involved in membership. It is part of the Friends World Committee, and since its founding in 1936 by Rufus M. Jones, some 4000 persons in over 60 countries have been members. Some have enrolled to have the spiritual foundation of their Peace Testimony strengthened; others, because they approve of Friends' social action; still others, because they know and understand the Quaker mystical approach to God. The Wider Quaker Fellowship welcomes such seekers for deeper religious and spiritual associations.

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