

# History of the Church of Korea

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Volume 1 Part 2

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## Volume 1, Part 2

From the introduction of Christianity in Korea to the erection of this kingdom into an Apostolic Vicariate. 1784 – 1831

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Book 1: From the first conversions, until the arrival of Fr. James Zhou, a Chinese priest, sent by the Bishop of Peking. 1784 - 1794

Chapter 1: Invasion of the Japanese in Korea in the 16th century. — Korean neophytes and martyrs in Japan.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, forty years after the death of Saint Francis Xavier<sup>1</sup>, when the flourishing Church of Japan already numbered millions<sup>2</sup> of children, while China had been evangelized from the sixth century<sup>3</sup>, evangelized again in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, had finally just reopened for the third time to the zeal of missionaries, the kingdom of Korea, whose very name was unknown in Europe, had never heard Jesus Christ preached.

At that time, one could hope for a moment that the day of mercy had arrived for this country. Taiko-Sama<sup>4</sup>, having become absolute master of all Japan, had conceived the project of conquering China. To clear his way, in the year 1592, he invaded Korea with an army of two hundred thousand men, who defeated the Koreans and the Chinese who came to their aid, seized five provinces out of eight, took the capital, made an immense carnage, and sent as slaves, in Japan, a considerable number of prisoners.

Most of these Japanese soldiers were Christians, for Taiko-Sama, who had secretly resolved to make the religion of Jesus Christ disappear from Japan, had mainly employed Christian princes and lords for this expedition. He intended, if they were victorious, to give them lands in the conquered country, and to transplant there, willingly or by force, all the Christians of his empire; if they were vanquished, to abandon them without help and thus get rid of them without giving himself the odiousness of open persecution.

As the war dragged on in Korea, the Christian princes and lords, and especially Augustine Arimandono<sup>5</sup>, king of Bingo<sup>6</sup> and grand admiral of Japan, the principal and most zealous among them, urged the superior of the mission of Japan to obtain a priest for him. Towards the end of 1593, the vice-

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552) died December 3, 1552, on Shangchuan Island, Jiangmen, China. He was one of the first Jesuits to reach Japan, on 27 July 1549. He left Japan in 1551.

<sup>2</sup> This is a gross exaggeration. At the most, the number of Christians in Japan in 1614 is not thought to have reached 300,000.

<sup>3</sup> Nestorian Christians had reached China by 635, the date indicated on the Nestorian stele discovered in 1625 and today preserved in Xian. Then in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Mongolian threat to Europe prompted the Pope to send Franciscans to evangelize China. Giovanni da Montecorvino (1247-1328) was an Italian Franciscan missionary, traveler and statesman, founder of the earliest Latin Catholic missions in India and China, and archbishop of Peking. After spending some time in what is now called Chennai (Madras) he reached China in 1294, built two churches in Beijing, translated the New Testament and the Psalms into the Uyghur language used commonly by the Mongol ruling class of Yuan China. He died in Beijing and the mission he established continued for some 40 years. The modern evangelization of China began with the arrival of Matteo Ricci and other Jesuits in Macao in 1582. Ricci was appointed as an imperial scholar in Beijing in 1601, while many missionaries from various orders entered China clandestinely and established Catholic communities in a number of provinces.

<sup>4</sup> Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣 秀吉, 1537–1598). Dallet calls him “Taiko-Sama.” Taiko 太閤 is an honorific title meaning ‘father’ that Hideyoshi adopted toward the end of his life, ‘Sama’ being an honorific suffix.

<sup>5</sup> The Japanese Catholic 'daimyo' Konishi Yukinaga (小西行長 1555-1600).

<sup>6</sup> Bingo Province was a province of Japan on the Inland Sea side of western Honshū, comprising what is today the eastern part of Hiroshima Prefecture.

provincial of the Society of Jesus for Japan<sup>7</sup> sent them Fr. Gregorio de Cespedes<sup>8</sup>, and a Japanese brother named Foucan Eion. This Father and his companion were forced to winter on the island of Tsushima<sup>9</sup>, whose prince, a zealous neophyte, was himself serving in Korea. They baptized a large number of pagans there, among others the four principal advisers of the lord of Tsushima. Finally, at the beginning of 1594<sup>10</sup>, after a rather long and dangerous voyage, they arrived in Korea and reached the fortress of Gomgae<sup>11</sup> where Augustine resided<sup>12</sup>.

For nearly a year, Fr. de Cespedes exercised his ministry among the Japanese troops with indefatigable zeal. He went from fortress to fortress, fighting against disorders of every kind, reforming abuses, strengthening the Christians by the administration of the sacraments, and baptizing numerous pagan soldiers. But he was suddenly arrested in the middle of his work. A pagan general, jealous of Prince Augustine's great fortune, denounced him to Taiko-Sama, claiming that his efforts and those of Fr. de Cespedes, for the propagation of the Christian faith, concealed a vast conspiracy against the power of the emperor. Warned in time, Augustine immediately sent the priest back to Japan, and returned there himself shortly afterwards, to clear the accusation brought against him. He easily succeeded in justifying himself, and the affair had no unfortunate consequences.

The annual letter (to Rome) from the mission of Japan, which gives us these details, also tells that the prince of Tsushima sent to his wife Mary, daughter of Augustine, two young Korean slaves, one son of a secretary of the king of Korea, and the other also from a very noble family. The princess, touched by their misfortune, gave them to the Church, immediately sent the eldest to the seminary of the Jesuit fathers, and kept the other at home until he could be sent there in his turn<sup>13</sup>.

In his letter of the following year, Fr. Louis Froës still speaks of the Koreans, "This year," he says, "many Korean slaves have been educated, both men and women and children, who live here in Nagasaki, and exceed, they say, the figure of three hundred. It is two years since they were baptized for the most part, and the greater number went to Confession this year. It is clearly seen by experience that it is a people very disposed to receive our holy Faith; they are very affable, receive baptism with joy, and are happy to see themselves become Christians. They love to confess, and in a very short time, the greatest number learned the Japanese language with such ease that almost none of them needed an interpreter to do so. On Good Friday, as soon as night fell, while the church was being prepared, the doors being closed, while the baptismal font was being prepared for the next day, a Father and a few Brothers who were directing the preparations, heard a great noise from outside, near the door of the church. They opened a window and asked what it was. Some men, kneeling with great humility, answered: 'Father, it is the poor Koreans. Because we are slaves, we were not ready yesterday for the procession, but here we are now, all together, to ask God for mercy and forgiveness for our sins.' As they said this they lashed themselves cruelly, and all who heard them and saw the rigor of their penance shed tears. This nation unites good judgment with great simplicity, and it seems to be in no way inferior to the Japanese. It has pleased God

<sup>7</sup> Fr. Pedro Gomez.

<sup>8</sup> Gregorio de Cespedes (1551–1611) was a Spanish Jesuit priest who arrived in Japan in 1577.

<sup>9</sup> Islands belonging to Japan located between Japan and Korea, known in Korea as Daema-do.

<sup>10</sup> In fact he seems to have arrived in Korea on December 27, 1593 (cf. Ralph M. Cory, "Some notes on Father Gregorio de Cespedes," *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 27, Seoul 1937, pp. 1-55)

<sup>11</sup> Gomgae refers to a fort in the town of Ungcheon 熊川 in what is now Ungcheon-dong, Gimhae, South Gyeongsang Province.

<sup>12</sup> (Dallet Note 16: Annual letter from Japan, from March 1593 to March 1594, written by Fr. Pedro Gomez to Fr. Claude Acquaviva, general of the Society of Jesus — Milan, 1597, — p. 112 ff.) (This footnote must in fact refer to *Lettera annua del Giappone del marzo del 1593, sino al marzo del 94*. Milano: Pacifico Ponte, 1597.)

<sup>13</sup> (Dallet Note 17: Annual letter from Japan for 1595, from P. Louis Froës to P. C. Acquaviva. — Rome, 1598, — p. 32 ff.) (This must refer to *Copia d'una lettera annua scritta dal Giappone nel 1595*. Roma: Zanetti, 1598.)

Our Lord to take these first fruits of the kingdom of Korea, on the occasion of this war, for the greater good of their souls. The common opinion, in the talks they have with each other, is that if the preaching of the Gospel law once penetrated into Korea (which seems not to be difficult by way of Japan), it would be very much there. easily received, and could take in this kingdom of great developments<sup>14</sup>.”

These fine hopes were not realized. In 1598, Taiko-Sama, feeling himself dying, sent to his troops the formal order to abandon all their conquests, and to return immediately to Japan. His son’s guardians urged the immediate execution of this order, and all of Korea, except for the military post of Busan on the southeastern coast, found itself free under the authority of its own king without firing a shot.

Did the Japanese troops, on leaving Korea, leave there some germs of Christianity, and must the true origin of the Korean Church be traced back to this expedition? It has been said and repeated in recent times; but this assertion does not bear a serious examination.

During his stay in Korea, in the year 1594, Father de Cespedes had seen no other natives than the prisoners of war<sup>15</sup> who were sent to Japan to be sold there as slaves. The letters then written by the Jesuits of Japan to their Father General prove that it had been impossible for him to enter into contact with the people of the country. Indeed, the tactic of the Koreans was to isolate the Japanese, by completely devastating the country around the fortresses which they occupied; most of the inhabitants had fled to the northern provinces; the others retreated before the invaders, and, on their approach, sought refuge in the woods and mountains. After the departure of Fr. de Cespedes, the Japanese army remained in Korea for more than three years, but the zealous missionary could not return there, and no other priest was sent in his place. The Christian Japanese were no more able than he to get in touch with the inhabitants; besides, the innate hatred of the Koreans for all that is foreign, the natural exasperation of a conquered people against its conquerors, would certainly have caused the failure of any attempt at proselytism. The Koreans taken to Japan as prisoners of war therefore had, among their compatriots, the opportunity to know the Christian faith, and we have seen that, thank God, a great number took advantage of it. A few years after the Tayko-Sama expedition, there began, in Japan itself, that persecution<sup>16</sup>, so long, so bloody, so glorious, which seemed destined to extinguish Christianity there, and it is easy to understand that the missionaries of this country could no longer dream of Korea, and made no attempt to enter it.

In this great persecution, a number of Korean neophytes<sup>17</sup> shared with their Japanese brethren the honor of confessing Jesus Christ before the executioners. Their life and their martyrdom belong to the Church of Japan, but, by birth, they are the first fruits of the Church of Korea. This is why we reproduce here, in chronological order, what we know of their names and their history<sup>18</sup>.

Michael<sup>19</sup>, a poor Korean plowman, had been baptized in Nagasaki. He was singularly charitable towards lepers, invited them to his house, made them sit at his hearth, served them with his hands, saying to them: “You are my brothers, and your infirmity obliges me to honor you more.” They hung him from a pitchfork, then squeezed his legs and cut off his hocks. He expired in this ordeal, November 22, 1614.

<sup>14</sup> (Dallet Note 18: Annual letter from Japan for 1595. — Rome, 1599. — p. 136 ff.) (This must be *Lettera annua del Giappone dell'anno* 1596. Roma: Zanetti, 1599.) Dallet gives French titles although the books were published in Italian.

<sup>15</sup> The Koreans in question were not captured soldiers but various kinds of craftsmen who were kidnapped and taken to Japan to work as slaves there, potters for example, and others.

<sup>16</sup> The main persecution began in 1614, culminated in 1622. After 1635 Catholicism was strictly forbidden in Japan.

<sup>17</sup> The word “neophyte” is often used by Dallet when he simply means “Catholic believers.” The implication is that all are recent converts with only a limited knowledge of the faith.

<sup>18</sup> [Dallet Note 19 Fr. Charlevoix, *Hist. of Christianity in Japan*, passim. — M. Léon Pagès, *Hist. of Japan*. Volume III, passim. — The family names of the Korean martyrs quoted by these authors are Japanese names, either because the captives were given new names or because their Korean names were purely and simply translated into Japanese.] More accurately: Fr. de Charlevoix, *Histoire du Christianisme au Japon* (1715) and Léon Pagès, *Histoire de la religion chrétienne au Japon depuis 1598 jusqu'à 1651* (1869).

<sup>19</sup> Michael : see Léon Pagès *op. cit.* 291-2.

After his death, his head was cut off, and his body was chopped into pieces.

The same day was also martyred Peter Djincouro<sup>20</sup>. He had been a slave to the pagans from the age of thirteen until he was thirty. Omitted from the list of denounced Christians, because he was only the tenant of a shop and had no house of his own, he made strong complaints and obtained to be registered with them. He bravely endured the tortures, and as he never ceased to invoke the holy name of Jesus, he had his lips and mouth split open, was pierced with a dagger, and finally beheaded. He was thirty-three years old.

On November 18, 1619, Cosmas Takeya<sup>21</sup> was burned alive in Nagasaki. Three years later, his wife Ines<sup>22</sup>, aged forty-two, suffered martyrdom in her turn. She had her head cut off. It was September 2<sup>23</sup> 1622, a forever glorious day for the Church of Japan, which was enriched at a stroke by fifty-two martyrs. Five of them were Koreans: Ines, whom we have just named, Antony<sup>24</sup>, who was burned alive, Mary, Antony's wife<sup>25</sup>, and their two children, John, aged ten, and Peter, aged three, who were beheaded.

On September 4<sup>26</sup>, 1624, Sixtus Kazayemon (加左衛門) and his wife Catherine were beheaded at Semboku (仙北).<sup>27</sup>

On November 5 of the same year, the young Korean Caius<sup>28</sup> was burned alive in Nagasaki<sup>29</sup>. His story vividly proves that God would perform a miracle rather than forsake an infidel who follows the lights of his conscience, and seeks the truth with an upright and docile heart. Born some time before the Japanese invasion, he felt from an early age an extreme desire to achieve true happiness, that is to say, a happiness that had no end. He withdrew into solitude to meditate more at his ease on this bliss he sought. His only dwelling was a cave, which he shared with a tiger which had occupied it before him. This ferocious animal respected its guest; it even ceded the cave to him some time later, and retired elsewhere. The young solitary, with the sole aim of preserving his innocence, practiced all sorts of mortifications; he abstained from all that was not absolutely necessary for life. One night when he was in meditation, a man of majestic appearance appeared to him, and said to him: "Take courage; in a year you will cross the sea, and, after much work and fatigue, you will obtain the object of your desires." That same year, the Japanese entered Korea, and the young hermit was taken prisoner. The ship which was transporting him to Japan having been shipwrecked near Tsushima Island, Caius escaped to the coast; those who were in it probably perished in the waves. Anyway, he regained his freedom. Seduced by the austere life of the monks, he thought he had found what he had been looking for for so many years, and retired to one of the most famous pagodas in Meaco<sup>30</sup>. But he was not long without realizing his mistake; these religious idolaters were far from perfect men.

This mistake caused him such great grief that he fell ill. During his illness, he seemed to see the

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<sup>20</sup> Peter Djincouro : Léon Pagès *op. cit.* page 293.

<sup>21</sup> Cosmas Takeya : Léon Pagès *op. cit.* pages 384-519 *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Ines : Born 1580 in Korea.

<sup>23</sup> The current official date is September 10, 1622.

<sup>24</sup> Antony : Léon Pagès *op. cit.* page 517.

<sup>25</sup> Mary : Listed as having been born in Japan.

<sup>26</sup> This should be August 4.

<sup>27</sup> Sixtus Kazayemon : Léon Pagès *op. cit.* page 666 (no mention of a wife but his 3 sons were slowly burned on September 4, then he was beheaded on September 10.)

<sup>28</sup> Caius of Korea : born 1571 in Korea, died November 15, 1624.

<sup>29</sup> The text about Caïo/Caius is taken almost verbatim from *Notice sur l'état du Christianisme en Corée* published by Bishop Brugière in *Annales* Vol 6 (1833) pp 547-9. The original source is Charlevoix *Histoire* p. 351-3.

<sup>30</sup> Meaco : A late medieval name for Kyoto.

pagoda all on fire, then a child of ravishing beauty appeared to him and consoled him: “Do not be afraid,” he said to him, “you are on the eve of obtaining this much desired happiness.” He was not yet cured when he gave up monkhood. The same day, he met a Christian to whom he related his sorrows and his adventures; the latter took him immediately to the Jesuit college, where they taught him the mysteries of the Religion<sup>31</sup>. As his heart was already prepared to receive the divine seed, he believed without hesitation, tasted without difficulty the holy morality of the Gospel, and immediately asked for baptism. It was not thought necessary to subject him to a longer trial, and the grace of the sacrament produced admirable effects in such a well-disposed soul. While he was being instructed, one of the Fathers showed him a painting representing Our Lord: “Oh! behold,” he cried, “behold the one who appeared to me in my cave, and who foretold to me all that has happened to me.” He followed the missionaries and devoted himself to caring for the sick, especially lepers. There is no virtue of which this predestined soul did not set an example: almost excessive mortifications, charity for the unfortunate, eager care for the missionaries, whose labors and dangers he shared, zeal for the salvation of souls, etc. Nothing was beyond his strength, when it was necessary to show gratitude for a God who had bestowed on him so many graces, even before he could know and appreciate his gifts.

In 1614, he followed to the Philippines Ukandono<sup>32</sup>, general of the armies of Japan, who was exiled for the faith. After the death of this great man, he returned to Japan, and resumed his duties as a catechist. The persecution taking on a more frightful character every day, he thought himself obliged to redouble his fervor; he multiplied his austerities and his prayers. God rewarded so many virtues with a glorious martyrdom. The neophyte having gone one day, according to his custom, to visit the confessors of the faith, declared himself a Christian and a catechist; he was arrested on the spot and taken to the prisons of Nagasaki, where he suffered much. He was condemned to be burned by a slow fire, a horrible torture which he endured with admirable constancy.

Vincent Kouan-Cafioïe<sup>33</sup>, who in 1626 suffered martyrdom with several Jesuit fathers, was the son of one of the chief officers of the King of Korea<sup>34</sup>. This lord, going to fight the Japanese, had entrusted his son to a reliable person, to lead him with all his family to an inaccessible castle; but God, who wanted to make Cafioïe a Christian and a martyr, allowed him to get lost on the way and happen to find himself fairly close to the Japanese army. Far from being frightened by it, the young Cafioïe, who was barely thirteen years old, wanted, out of a curiosity quite natural to his age, to see it more closely; and, without thinking what he was exposing himself to, he went straight to the tent of Augustine, king of Bingo, general-in-chief. This prince felt moved with compassion at the sight of the young orphan, took him in affection, and charged one of his relatives to take care of him until the end of the war. He then entrusted his education to the Jesuits, who instructed him in the Religion and baptized him. Young Cafioïe, as much from affection as from gratitude, no longer wished to separate himself from those who had begotten him in Jesus Christ; he always accompanied them in their apostolic journeys, and was finally arrested and

<sup>31</sup> Dallet very often uses the term ‘religion’ when he means ‘the Christian Religion.’ He occasionally refers to Buddhism as ‘the religion of Fo’ and we also find the term ‘the religion of the scholars’ to refer to Confucianism and its rites. The isolated ‘religion’ can be confusing to modern readers. We have therefore decided to use ‘the Religion’ when Dallet is referring to the Christian Religion, in order to clarify the meaning.

<sup>32</sup> Justo Takayama Ukon (ジユスト高山右近), born Takayama Hikogorō (高山彦五郎, 1552-1615), a Japanese Catholic daimyo who died in exile in Manila.

<sup>33</sup> Saint Vincent Kaun (ビセンテ・かうん): a professed cleric, Jesuit, born c. 1579 in Korea. He was brought to Japan in 1591 as a prisoner of war and was subsequently converted to Christianity. Entering the Jesuits, he studied at the Jesuit seminary of Arima and worked for three decades as a catechist in both Japan and China. Seized during the persecution of the Church, he was burned alive at Nagasaki on June 20, with Blessed Francis Pacheco. The name Cafioïe is derived from his Japanese family name Kahei 嘉兵衛.

<sup>34</sup> The text about Vincent is taken almost verbatim from *Notice sur l'état du Christianisme en Corée* by Bishop Brugière published in *Annales* Vol 6 (1833) pp 549-552. The original source is Charlevoix *Histoire* p. 356-7.

taken with them to the prisons of Chimabara. However frightful this prison was, the holy confessors still added voluntary austerities to their sufferings. The most brutal guards had been chosen, to increase the harshness of their detention; but the angelic life of the prisoners, their patience, and the air of holiness which appeared on their persons, imperceptibly softened the ferocity of these satellites. They began by admiring a religion which raises man above himself, and often ended by embracing it. As soon as any feelings of humanity were perceived in them, other jailers were substituted for them, who soon found themselves vanquished in their turn. In the end, the furious governor committed the care of the confessors to an officer among his relatives, who was more like a wild beast than a man. His hatred against Christianity knew no bounds; however, as soon as he had seen the prisoners, he was moved, and at the end of a week declared himself a Christian. The governor, as surprised as he was irritated by this conversion, spared neither reproaches nor threats to bring the neophyte back to the worship of idols. This officer answered him invariably: “You can strip me of my jobs, take away my property, even take away my life; but you can’t do anything about my spirit, I will live and die a Christian.”

The governor seeing that the rigor of the prison was useless, resolved to torment the confessors, but separately, so that they could not encourage each other, He began with Cafioë; believing that an outsider would be defeated more easily. He summoned him to his house, showered him with friendship and caresses, made him the most seductive promises, and threatened him at the same time with the most horrible punishments if he did not obey. The Korean neophyte replied simply: “I am a Christian and I will never renounce my religion.” At once, he exposed him naked to an icy wind, and forgetting at the same time the character of a judge with which he was clothed, he was not ashamed to exercise the function of executioner. He tore with his own hands at the holy confessor, who only laughed at such a horrible torture; then he made him swallow a drug, which the patient spurted out with streams of blood. This torment caused him to faint, but he immediately regained his senses and his strength. From that moment, he no longer felt any pain other than a slight numbness in his feet and hands. The tortures continued for several days, without ever being able to tire his constancy. Finally, they sent him back to prison, to a hovel open to all the winds; he spent twenty-four days there, exposed to the insults of the air and deprived of all food. He was still breathing when the Emperor gave orders to transport him to Nagasaki, to be burned alive as a Christian, with the illustrious companions of his prison and his sufferings. Before dying, he asked Father Pacheco<sup>35</sup>, provincial of the Jesuits, to admit him into the Society; the Father granted him this grace, and received his vows on the very spot where they were both going to consummate their sacrifice<sup>36</sup>.

About the same time, a young Korean, named Julia Ota<sup>37</sup>, gave a similar proof of courage. Descended from illustrious blood, she was brought up at the court of Cubo-Sama<sup>38</sup>, and very dear to that prince, who wished to marry her to one of the greatest lords of the empire. It was first a matter of changing her religion; Julia refused, and immediately made a vow of virginity. Then, not content with appearing in public with all the exterior marks of her faith, she began to frequent the houses where the Christians held their assemblies, an extraordinary thing in Japan, where women of quality never go out unless accompanied by the greatest procession, and still very rarely. She wanted thereby, at whatever price, to force Cubo-Sama to grant her the palm of martyrdom; now, it was a question of nothing less than being condemned to the fire, or to other tortures much crueller still. Cubo-Sama, tried by all sorts of means to

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<sup>35</sup> Father Pacheco Born in Portugal, he served as Jesuit provincial from 1622.

<sup>36</sup> On June 20, 1626, together with 3 priests including Fr. Zola.

<sup>37</sup> The text about Julie Ota is taken almost verbatim from *Notice sur l'état du Christianisme en Corée* published by Bishop Brugière in *Annales* Vol 6 (1833) pp 552-3. The original source is Charlevoix *Histoire* p. 176-7

<sup>38</sup> Dallet is confused. In fact, Julia was at first part of the family of a leading Japanese general, a Catholic, Konishi Yukinaga. After the downfall of Konishi Yukinaga at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Julia was made to serve Yukinaga's vanquisher Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康 whom Dallet calls Cubo-Sama) as a lady-in-waiting.



shake her constancy, and at last, seeing that caresses and threats were equally useless, he deported her to a distant island<sup>39</sup> where some poor fishermen lived, who had no other dwellings than miserable huts. Her exile and her sufferings lasted four years, that is to say as long as her life; but if human consolations failed her, she was fully compensated by the abundance of favors from heaven. Her only sorrow was not having shed her blood for Jesus Christ. She found the opportunity to write to a Jesuit missionary about it; the missionary replied that the Church also regards as martyrs those who have been exiled for the faith. This answer filled her with joy, and dispelled all her fears.

In 1629, on July 31, the governor of Nagasaki had sixty-four Christians of both sexes, among whom a Korean neophyte, named Isabella, brought to the sulphurous ponds of Oungen (雲仙)<sup>40</sup>. The confessors had been warned that they would not be put to death, but that their torture would be prolonged, for several years if necessary, until their apostasy; for the judges, knowing that Christians regard it as a great happiness to die for Jesus Christ, did not want to grant this consolation to their victims. The waters of Oungen are so corrosive that they cover with wounds the parts of the body on which they are poured. The confessors had been divided into five groups, and the wives had been separated from their husbands. Every day they were sprinkled with this burning water, and after a while most of them weakened. Isabella, almost alone, remained intrepid until the end, “Your husband has apostatized,” they told her. “What do I care?” she replied, “I have an immortal spouse in heaven, and it is to him first that I owe obedience.” They made her stand for more than two hours, with a stone around her neck, stones in her mouth, and another on her head, telling her that if the latter fell, it would be a sign of apostasy. “No, it is not in my power to prevent this stone from falling, but even if I myself fall to the ground, my will will not change.” The stone did not fall, and the following night a heavenly vision came to console the courageous Christian. The next day she was sprinkled again. “We will continue for ten years, twenty years, if necessary,” repeated the executioners. “Ten years, twenty years, even a hundred years, if it were given to me to live them, are a very short interval, and I will consider myself happy to spend my whole life in torture, to remain faithful to my God.” Isabella’s patience ended up by tiring her persecutors. After thirteen days, they dragged her, exhausted and bruised, before the governor of Nagasaki. They took her hand by force, and with this hand they signed a declaration of apostasy, then without letting her utter a word, they sent her away.

Such were the principal Korean martyrs who, the first of their nation, went to intercede with God for the conversion of their unfortunate compatriots.

The Japanese invasion had disappeared from Korea without leaving any trace of Christianity there, and, in the designs of God, two more centuries were to pass before faith could penetrate into this kingdom which the jealousy of Hell held so completely closed. The only thing worth mentioning during this long interval is the introduction into Korea, on various occasions, of some Christian books in the Chinese language. This took place through the embassies that the King of Korea sends to China each year. It is conceivable, in fact, that the Korean ambassadors and the lords of their retinue could not be entirely unaware of the official existence at Peking of the missionaries. On the other hand, the Jesuits fixed at the imperial court, however embarrassed they were in the exercise of their zeal, certainly did not miss such opportunities to enter into contact with the representatives of a pagan kingdom not yet evangelized.

In a Korean collection of curious documents, we read<sup>41</sup> that in the year *sin-mi* (1631), the

<sup>39</sup> The Izu Islands (伊豆諸島, Izu-shotō).

<sup>40</sup> The volcano Mount Unzen looms over the Shimabara Peninsula in southwestern Japan, with bubbling, sulfurous hot springs. These were used for the execution of Catholic martyrs from 1627 onward. The story of Isabella’s torture is taken from Léon Pagès *op. cit.* page 703.

<sup>41</sup> This is the point at which Dallet begins to follow closely the text of his main source, Bishop Daveluy’s ‘Notes pour l’histoire des Martyrs de Corée,’ now preserved in the IRFA Archives as 5C-MAR/070 (Volume 4), one of a set of 8 volumes of copies mostly made in 1887 of the original documents used by Dallet. The originals vanished without trace after

ambassador Jeong Du-won<sup>42</sup> saw in Peking<sup>43</sup> a European named John Niouk, aged ninety-seven<sup>44</sup>, and still enjoying perfect health. “He seemed,” he said, “to be one of the blessed *sin-seon* (the blessed immortals of the sect of Lao-tse).” He was undoubtedly one of Fr. Ricci’s first companions. The ambassador received from him many books of science, made by Europeans, and also curious objects, such as pistols, telescopes, spectacles, clocks, &c.

(Ni<sup>45</sup>) Yi Su<sup>46</sup>, nicknamed Ji-bong (芝峰), one of the ancestors of the martyr Charles Yi Gyeong-do (李景陶), and one of the most famous scholars in Korea, mentions in his writings the work of Fr. Ricci, entitled: *Cheonju-sir-ui*<sup>47</sup>, or *True principles on God*, of which he gives a fairly exact analysis. He also speaks of the constitution of the Church under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff.

In the year *gyeong-ja* (1720), the ambassador Yi I-myeong<sup>48</sup> also saw several missionaries at Peking, and held conferences with them on religious questions. He relates that he found the Christian teaching on the mortification of evil instincts and the purification of the heart, quite similar to the theories of the religion of the scholars; he believes he sees in the mystery of the incarnation one of the doctrines of Fo (the Buddha), and assures us that this new religion should in no way be placed on the same level as the sect of Lao-tse.

Yi Ik<sup>49</sup>, nicknamed Seong-ho, also talks about the Religion in his books. According to him, the God of the Christians is none other than the *Sang-je* “God” of the Korean scholars (the 上帝 *shangdi* of the Chinese). The doctrine of Paradise and Hell seems to him borrowed from the system of Fo<sup>50</sup>. He also has a few words on the seven virtues, opposed to the seven capital sins.

The reading of a few Christian books, the necessarily very rare and very limited relations of ambassadors with missionaries of Peking, had, as we see, been able to give the Koreans only a very vague idea of Christianity. It was enough, however, if Korean traditions are to be believed, to convert a man of good will. This man named Hong Yu-han<sup>51</sup>, or Sa-ryang, was born in 1736, of an honorable family whose members had often filled important offices. He lived in Yesan, and in his youth had taken lessons from Yi Ik, of whom we have just spoken. In 1770 he encountered Christian books, read them with joy, abandoned all other study, and gave himself up to the practice of the Religion. Having neither calendar nor prayer book, and knowing only that the feasts followed each other every seven days, he began to religiously rest on the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th of each month, leaving aside on those days all the business of the world, to give himself entirely to prayer. As he did not know the days of abstinence, he made it a

the copies were made.

<sup>42</sup> 정두원 Jeong Du-won 鄭斗源 (1581-?)

<sup>43</sup> In fact, during a diplomatic mission to the Ming Emperor in Peking in early 1631, Jeong stopped at Dengzhou (now Penglai) on the northern coast of Shandong. There, he met with the province's Christian governor, Ignatius Sun, who introduced him to the Jesuit interpreter João Rodrigues Tçuzu (1561-1633). He made a personal gift of his telescope to Jeong, which became the first such device known in Korea, as well as Jesuit texts on astronomy and other sciences, and some kind of firearm.

<sup>44</sup> Actually 70.

<sup>45</sup> Dallet systematically uses this spelling for the Korean family name 李 / Yi / 李.

<sup>46</sup> 이수광 Yi Su-gwang 李睟光, (1563-1628)

<sup>47</sup> In Chinese pronunciation *Tiānzhu shìlù* (天主實錄, The Veritable Record of the Lord of Heaven)

<sup>48</sup> 이이명 Yi I-myeong 李頤命 (1658-1722)

<sup>49</sup> 이익 성호 Yi Ik Sangho 李瀾 星湖 (1681–1763) was a leading Neo-Confucian scholar, early Silhak philosopher and social critic.

<sup>50</sup> The Buddha

<sup>51</sup> 홍유한 Hong Yu-han 洪儒漢 aka 사랑 Saryang 士良 (1726-1785).

rule always to deprive himself of the most delicate dishes, giving as a reason to those who remarked to him that natural greed is bad in itself, and that one must, as much as possible, tame it.

Several edifying traits are told of him. One day when he was traveling on horseback in a muddy road, he saw an old man laden with a heavy burden. Touched with compassion, he dismounted, made this man mount in his place, and walking on foot led him himself. Another time, having learned that a field sold by him had just disappeared under a landslide, he returned the price to the buyer, and despite his refusal, forced him to accept it. It is said that Hong Yu-han spent thirteen years in the mountains of Baek-san, giving himself up unhindered, in solitude, to contemplation and prayer. He died in Yesan, having probably never received any baptism other than baptism of desire. We do not see that he sought to convert anyone, and at his death he left no disciples.

## Chapter 2: Origin of the Church of Korea. — First conversions.

In the year of Jesus Christ 1784, the day of salvation finally dawned for Korea. Then God, in his mercy, implanted the Christian faith there in a definitive manner; then began this glorious Church, which since then has not ceased to grow and to strengthen itself through the persecutions and the vicissitudes of which we are about to trace the moving history.<sup>1</sup>

The main instrument used by Providence to introduce the Gospel into Korea was Yi Deok-jo<sup>2</sup>, also known as “Byeok 藥”. He descended from the Yi family of Gyeongju, and among his ancestors, already in dignities under the Goryeo dynasty, there were a large number of personages who had distinguished themselves in letters, and had been honored with the highest public functions. For two or three generations, this family had turned exclusively to the career of arms, and its members had obtained important military ranks. Byeok being endowed with the finest qualities of body and mind, his father wanted to apply him, from his childhood, to the exercises of the bow and horsemanship, which could later make his advancement easy. But the child stubbornly refused, going so far as to say that, were he to die, he would not give himself up to it. By this he lost, in part at least, the affection of his father, who gave him the nickname of Byeok (wall), to designate the tenacity of his character.

With age, Byeok became a man of tall stature and prodigious strength. He was, say the Korean relations, a height of eight feet<sup>3</sup>, and with one hand could lift a hundred pounds. His imposing exterior drew all eyes to him; but he shone above all by the qualities of the soul and the talents of the mind. His easy speech could be compared to the majestic course of a river. He applied himself to studying all questions in depth, and in the study of the sacred books of the country, he had made a habit, from his youth, of always digging into the mysterious meanings hidden under the text. Not content with studying books, Byeok sought to bond with all educated people who could guide him and help him in the acquisition of science. He was fond of joking, and cared little for the complicated and minute laws of Korean etiquette; but, although he did not always preserve that air of stilted dignity which, in this country, distinguishes professional masters, there was naturally in his manner of acting something noble and grand. Such happy dispositions promised him a brilliant future in the world, when God condescended to cast upon him a look of mercy.

In the year *jeong-yu* (1777)<sup>4</sup>, the famous doctor Gwon Cheol-sin<sup>5</sup>, accompanied by Jeong Yak-jeon<sup>6</sup> and several other nobles desirous of acquiring knowledge, had gone to an isolated pagoda<sup>7</sup> in order to engage together, without obstacle, in in-depth studies. Byeok, having heard of it, was filled with joy, and immediately formed the resolution to go and join them. It was winter, snow covered the roads everywhere, and the pagoda was more than a hundred li away. But these difficulties could not stop such

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<sup>1</sup> At this point Bishop Daveluy’s history of the origin of the Korean Church begins in Volume 4 of his archive. He says that his account of the first years closely follows a set of notes made by Jeong Yak-yong 丁若鏞, the great scholar, who was one of the first to be baptized, together with his brothers. These notes have not been preserved among his papers.

<sup>2</sup> 이벽 Yi Byeok 李藥, (1754-1785) aka as 덕조 Deokjo 德祚.

<sup>3</sup> (Dallet Note 20: The Korean foot is smaller than the French foot. In this connection, it is good to remind the reader that the memoirs of Bishop Daveluy on this primitive period, are most often only the literal translation of the original Korean documents, which explains the completely oriental emphasis of certain descriptions of men and things.)

<sup>4</sup> Almost certainly the study sessions began in 1774 but the study of books about the Western Learning only began in 1779.

<sup>5</sup> 권철신 Gwon Cheol-sin 權哲身 (1736-1801) aka 녹암 Nok-am 鹿庵 Ambrose.

<sup>6</sup> 정약전 Jeong Yak-jeon 丁若銓 (1758-1816). Andrew.

<sup>7</sup> They met in a hermitage not far from Jueosa 走魚寺, a temple in the hills near Gwangju, Gyeonggi Province, destroyed later.

an ardent heart. He leaves at once, he advances resolutely along impassable paths. Night surprises him at a short distance from the goal of his journey. He could not make up his mind to wait any longer, and continuing on his way, finally arrives around midnight at the pagoda. What is not, then, his disappointment on learning that he has taken the wrong path, and that the pagoda he is looking for is located on the opposite side of the mountain! This mountain is high, it is covered with snow, and numerous tigers have their lairs there. No matter, Byeok makes the monks get up and has them accompany him. He takes an iron rod to defend himself against the attacks of the ferocious beasts, and, continuing on his way in the midst of darkness, finally arrives at the desired place.

The arrival of Byeok and his companions first spread fear among the inhabitants of this isolated dwelling, lost in the middle of the mountains. One could not imagine what motive brought so many guests at this undue hour. But soon everything was cleared up, joy followed fear, and in the first outpourings that this happy meeting gave rise to, they hardly noticed that day had already dawned.

The conferences lasted more than ten days. During this time, the solution of the most interesting questions about Heaven, the world, human nature, etc., were sought. All the opinions of the elders were recalled and discussed point by point. They then studied the moral books of great men; finally, some treatises on philosophy, mathematics, and religion, composed in Chinese by European missionaries, were examined, and every possible care was taken to study their meaning. These books were those which the Korean ambassadors had brought back from Peking on various occasions. A certain number of scholars had heard of them, because in the literary compositions that it is fashionable to exchange between Koreans and Chinese, during the annual embassy, we see, around this time, that reference is often made to the sciences and religion of Europe.

Now, among these scientific works were a few elementary treatises on the Religion. They were the books on the existence of God, on Providence, on spirituality and the immortality of the soul, and on the manner of regulating one's morals by combating the seven capital vices by contrary virtues. Accustomed to the obscure and often contradictory theories of the Chinese books, these upright men, eager to know the truth, immediately glimpsed what is great, beautiful and rational in Christian doctrine. They lacked explanations to acquire a complete knowledge of it; but what they had read was enough to move their hearts and enlighten their minds. Immediately they began to practice all they could know of the new religion, prostrating themselves every day, morning and evening, indulging in prayer. Having read somewhere that, out of the seven days, one must devote an entire day to the worship of God, the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of each month, they left all other business to attend to meditation, and on those days observed abstinence; all this in the greatest secrecy, and without telling anyone. It is not known for how long they continued these exercises, but the sequence of events suggests that most were not faithful to them for long.

A precious seed had thus been planted in Byeok's heart, but he felt how insufficient these first notions of the Religion were, and all his thoughts were directed to China, where were to be found the more numerous and more detailed books necessary to complete his education. Obtaining these books was a very difficult thing and several years passed in fruitless attempts. He was not discouraged, however, and missed no opportunity to deepen and discuss Christian doctrine. We read, in one of the first reports written by the Christians, that at the beginning of the summer of 1783, on the tenth day of the fourth lunar month, after having stayed some time at Majae<sup>8</sup>, in the Jeong family, on the occasion of the anniversary of his sister's death, Byeok boarded a boat with the two brothers Jeong Yak-jeon and Jeong Yak-Yong<sup>9</sup>, to go to the capital. During the trip, their usual philosophical studies were the subject of their conversations. The dogmas of the existence and unity of God, of the creation, spirituality and immortality of the soul, of punishments and rewards in the future age, were examined and commented upon in turn.

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<sup>8</sup> 마재 Majae village, the home of the Jeong family, is now part of Namyangju city in Gyeonggi province, to the east of Seoul.

<sup>9</sup> 정약용 Jeong Yak-yong 丁若鏞 aka Dasan 大山 茶山 (1762-1836) John.

The passengers, who heard these beautiful and consoling truths for the first time, were surprised and enchanted. It is very probable that similar conferences were often be repeated, but no other details have been preserved for us.

God finally allowed the realization of the ardent wishes of these upright souls who sought the truth with such zeal. During the winter of that same year, 1783, Yi Dong-wook<sup>10</sup> was appointed third ambassador to the court of Peking. His son Seung-hun, one of Byeok's close friends, was to accompany him on this journey. Let us say a few words here about the latter who, for several years, was to play an important role in the history of the Korean Church.

Yi Seung-hun<sup>11</sup>, also called Ja-sul, was of the noble Yi family of Pyeongchang. His ancestors often held important offices as civil mandarins, and his family enjoyed a high reputation. He was born in the year *byeong-ja* (1756). By the age of ten his precocious ability had already revealed itself, and by the age of twenty he had made a name for himself among the literati. Wanting to follow in the footsteps of the saints of his country, he became friends with the men most famous for their knowledge and their virtues. He applied himself to regulating his morals as much as to perfecting himself in letters and sciences. At the age of twenty-four, in the year *gyeong-ja* (1780), he obtained the degree of doctor, and his reputation increased daily.

Byeok was overjoyed when he learned that Seung-hun was to follow his father on the embassy to Peking. He immediately went to visit him; and here, according to the documents of the time, is the remarkable speech he made to her; “Your journey to Peking is an admirable opportunity that Heaven provides us to know the true doctrine. This doctrine of the true saints, as well as the true way of serving the Supreme Emperor, creator of all things, is in the highest degree among Europeans. Without this doctrine we can do nothing. Without it one cannot regulate one's heart and character. Without it, one cannot deepen the principles of things. Without it, how can we know the different duties of kings and peoples? Without it, there is no fundamental rule of life. Without it, the creation of heaven and earth, the laws of the poles, the course and regular revolutions of the stars, the distinction between good and bad spirits, the origin and the end of this world, the union of soul and body, the reason for good and evil, the incarnation of the Son of God for the remission of sins, the reward of the good in Heaven and the punishment of the wicked in Hell, all this remains unknown to us.” At these words, Seung-hun, who did not yet know the books of the Religion, was moved with surprise and admiration. He asked to see some of these books, and having looked through those Byeok had in his possession, overjoyed he asked what he should do. “Since you are going to Peking,” said Byeok, “it is a sign that the supreme God has pity on our country and wants to save it. On arriving, run immediately to the temple of the Lord of Heaven, confer with the European doctors, question them on everything, study the doctrine with them, inform yourself in detail of all the practices of the Religion, and bring us the necessary books. The great affair of life and death, the great affair of eternity is in your hands: go, and above all do not act lightly.”

This speech of Byeok shows us that he was more thirsty for the Religion than for science. The grace of God prepared his heart; the great affair of salvation became more and more, for him, the only important one. His words penetrated deep into Seung-hun's soul. He received them as the word of the Master, and promised to make every effort to realize their common desires.

Seung-hun therefore left for Peking in the last months of the year 1783. Arriving in this capital, he went to the Church of the South<sup>12</sup>, where he was received by Bishop Alexander Tang 湯, to whom he asked to be educated. — It was the famous Alexandre de Govea<sup>13</sup>, a Portuguese, of the order of Saint-

<sup>10</sup> 이동욱 Yi Dong-wook 李東郁 (1739-?)

<sup>11</sup> 이승훈 Yi Seung-hun 李承薰 aka 자술 Jasul 子述 (1756-1801) Peter.

<sup>12</sup> (Dallet Note 21: There were then four churches in Peking, one at each of the cardinal points.) It was actually the North Church that he visited, where he met the French priest who baptized him.

<sup>13</sup> This is mistaken, de Govéa had been consecrated Bishop in Portugal in 1783 but had not yet reached Beijing. Yi Seung-

Francis<sup>14</sup>, one of the most learned and greatest bishops of whom the Church of China can boast, and one of those who have most worked to bring Chinese Christians back to the strict observance of the decrees of the Holy See concerning rites<sup>15</sup>. — The Korean accounts also say that Seung-hun saw in Peking the European Sak Deok-cho<sup>16</sup>, over ninety years old, still in good health and with a very affable appearance, and a young man named Niang. In the four churches of the city were about sixty people. Seung-hun zealously studied Christian doctrine, and was soon able to receive baptism. This sacrament was conferred on him before his departure, and as it was hoped that it would be the foundation stone of the Korean Church, he was given the name Peter<sup>17</sup>. Here is how M. de Ventavon<sup>18</sup>, missionary in Peking, writing on November 20, 1784, announced this happy event to his friends in Europe:

“You will no doubt learn with consolation of the conversion of a person whom God will perhaps use to illuminate with the lights of the Gospel a kingdom where no missionary is known to have ever entered; it is Korea, a peninsula located to the east of China. The King of this country sends ambassadors every year to the Emperor of China, of whom he regards himself as a vassal. He loses nothing; for if he makes considerable presents to the Emperor, the Emperor makes him still more considerable gifts. These Korean ambassadors came, towards the end of last year, they and their retinue, to visit our church; we gave them religious books. The son of one of these two lords, aged twenty-seven and a very good scholar, read them eagerly; he saw the truth in them, and, Grace acting on his heart, he resolved to embrace the Religion after having learned it thoroughly. Before admitting him to baptism, we put several questions to him, which he answered perfectly. We asked him, among other things, what he was resolved to do, in case the King should disapprove of his step, and wish to force him to renounce the faith; he replied, without hesitation, that he would suffer all torment and death rather than abandon a religion of which he had clearly known the truth. We did not fail to warn him that the purity of the evangelical law did not suffer the plurality of women. He replied: I have only my legitimate wife and I will never have another. Finally, before his departure to return to Korea, with the consent of his father, he was admitted to baptism which M. de Grammont<sup>19</sup> administered to him, giving him the name of Peter; his last name is Ly<sup>20</sup>. He is said to be related to the royal family. He declared that on his return he wanted to renounce human

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hun was baptized by Fr. Jean-Baptiste Joseph de Grammont (1736–1812) who had arrived in China in 1770 to serve as a court scholar. In 1785 de Grammont left Beijing and lived in Guangzhou between 1785 and 1791.

<sup>14</sup> He was not a Franciscan, only a member of the third order.

<sup>15</sup> Pope Clement XI first condemned the Chinese rites and Confucian rituals, and outlawed any further discussion in 1704, with the anti-rites decree *Cum Deus optimus*. Further, the 19 March 1715 Papal bull *Ex illa die* officially condemned the Chinese rites. Clement XI's decree was reiterated in the bulls of Pope Benedict XIV *Ex quo singulari* (1742) and *Omnium sollicitudinum* (1744).

<sup>16</sup> The Portuguese Jesuit Jose-Bernardo d'Almeida (Chinese name 索德超 Suo De Chao) who arrived in Peking in 1759 and was made president of the Astronomy department in 1783. He was the last survivor of the Portuguese Jesuits in China. He died in 1805, so could not have been so old, probably about 57.

<sup>17</sup> The Christian names given to the Koreans, whether here in Peking or once back in Korea, were those in use in China, usually composed of two Chinese characters imitating to some extent the sound of the Latin names of saints. Dallet does not attempt to reproduce this and uses the standard French forms. Apart from a few names without obvious English equivalent, in this translation the names are given in the standard English forms.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Mathieu de Ventavon (1733-1787) was a Jesuit who arrived in Beijing in 1766. Trained as a clockmaker, he constructed mechanical curiosities for the Qianlong emperor. The French Jesuits in Beijing attached to the imperial court had continued to live at the North Church 北堂 after the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773.

<sup>19</sup> The French Jesuit Jean-Baptiste-Joseph de Grammont (1736-1812?) arrived in Beijing in 1768 and was admitted to the court of the Qianlong Emperor.

<sup>20</sup> (Dallet Note 22 : Ly is the Chinese pronunciation of the Korean word Ni.) In this English translation of Dallet's text, the standard modern romanization is used for Korean personal names and geographical names, whenever possible, Dallet's Ni becoming Yi, which has long been the standard romanization of the family name 李.

grandeur, and retire, with his family, to the countryside to attend solely to his salvation. He promised to give us news of him every year. The ambassadors also promised to propose to their sovereign to invite Europeans into his states. From Beijing to the capital of Korea, the journey by land is about three months.

“As for the rest, we can only converse in writing with the Koreans, their characters and the Chinese characters are the same, as to figure and meaning; if there is any difference, it is slight; but their pronunciation is quite different. The Koreans wrote down what they wanted to say: by seeing the characters, we understood the meaning, and they also immediately understood the meaning of those that we wrote to them in response<sup>21</sup>...”

In the spring of the *gapjin* year (1784), Peter Yi Seung-hun returned to the capital of Korea, bringing a large number of books, crosses, pictures and some curious objects which had been given to him at Peking. He immediately sent Byeok part of his treasure. The latter was counting the days and awaiting the return of the Embassy with the liveliest impatience. As soon as he had received the books sent by his friend, he rented a secluded house and shut himself up there to devote himself entirely to reading and meditation. He now had in his hands more numerous proofs of the truth of the Religion, more complete refutations of the superstitious cults of China and Korea, explanations of the seven sacraments, catechisms, commentaries on the Gospels, lives of the saints for each day, and prayer books. With this he could see roughly what the Religion is, as a whole and in its details. So as he read, he felt a new life enter his soul. His faith in Jesus Christ grew, and with his faith also grew the desire to make known the gift of God to his compatriots. After some time of study, coming out of his retirement, he went to find Seung-hun and the two Jeong brothers, Yak-jeon and Yak-yong: “It is really a magnificent doctrine, he said to them, is the true way. The great God of heaven has pity on the millions of men in our country, and he wants us to involve them in the benefits of the redemption of the world. It is God’s order. We cannot be deaf to his call. We must spread the Religion and evangelize everyone.”

For his part, he immediately began to announce the good news. He addressed himself first to some of his friends, of the middle class, distinguished by their knowledge and their good conduct. Many yielded almost immediately to his lively and penetrating words; these were, among others, Choe Chang-hyeon<sup>22</sup>, Choe In-gil<sup>23</sup>, and Kim Jong-gyo<sup>24</sup>. Byeok also preached the Religion to several nobles who embraced it. Faithful to his mission, he never gave up; he went this way and that everywhere announcing the Gospel. His successes caused enough noise to arouse the susceptibility of pagan scholars, who instinctively understood that the new doctrine undermined their national beliefs from the bottom up. Several of them first tried to convince the preachers of the Gospel of error, and to bring them back to the religion of the scholars. The first to make this attempt was Yi Ga-hwan<sup>25</sup>. Coming from a distinguished family, he numbered, among his ancestors and relatives several famous doctors, and he himself, although still young, already had a great reputation. Hearing of the rapid spread of the Religion, he said, “It is a very great affair here. Although this foreign doctrine does not appear unreasonable, it is not, however, the doctrine of our scholars; and since Byeok wants to change the world by this, I cannot stay silent. So I’ll go and bring him back to the right way.” The day of the conference was fixed. The friends of the two doctors and a crowd of curious people gathered at Byeok’s home to witness this solemn discussion. Ga-hwan first tried to bring Byeok back from what he called his mistakes. He believed himself sure of victory, but each of his assertions was taken up by his adversary who refuted them article by article, and who, pursuing them down to the smallest details, destroyed and reduced to powder the whole edifice of his

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<sup>21</sup> (Dallet Note 23 : *Nouvelles lettres édifiantes*. — Paris, 1818. — T. II, p. 20.)

<sup>22</sup> 최창현 Choe Chang-hyeon 崔昌顯 (1759-1801) John. Blessed.

<sup>23</sup> 최인길 Choe In-gil 崔仁吉 (1765-1795) Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>24</sup> 김종교 Kim Jong-gyo 金宗教 (1753-1801) Francis. Blessed.

<sup>25</sup> 이가환 Yi Ga-hwan 李家煥 (1742-1801)..



reasonings. In vain did he wear himself out raising it, all of Byeok's blows hit the mark. Always in agreement with himself, he advanced nothing without proving it. His clear and lucid speech, say the Korean accounts, carried light everywhere; his argument was bright as the sun; it struck like the wind, and cut like a sword.

The many spectators of this special combat then enjoyed a beautiful spectacle. It was one of the leaders of the old school, a champion of the shadowy Chinese doctrines, at grips with a defender of the evangelical light. But the latter, leaning on the truth, remained unshakable, while the other, in spite of his flexibility, was knocked down and rose only to fall again. The Christian faith triumphed in this eminent theater. It conquered a great number of upright and sincere souls, and strengthened its empire in the hearts of neophytes. One day was not enough, however, to make Byeok's adversary surrender. The discussions were resumed for three days; but their only result was to show more and more the beauty and solidity of the new doctrine. Then Ga-hwan, entirely defeated, having no more arguments to put forward, said these memorable words: "This doctrine is magnificent, it is true; but it will bring misfortunes to its partisans." What to do? He withdrew, and from that time no longer opened his mouth on the subject of the Christian Religion, and paid no attention to it<sup>26</sup>.

Byeok took advantage to make new conversions of the glory he had just acquired, but soon a new adversary, learning the results of the famous conference and the progress of the faith, also wanted to enter the lists with its defenders. It was Yi Gi-yang<sup>27</sup>, no less remarkable for his scholarship than for the high position of his family. Byeok, strong in the truth he was announcing, was not a man to avoid this encounter. He developed the origin of heaven and earth, the beautiful order of the world in all its parts, and the proofs of Providence. He explained the nature of the human soul and its different faculties, the admirable harmony of future punishments and rewards with the acts of each during his life: finally he demonstrated that the truth of the Christian Religion is based on unassailable principles. Gi-yang, unable to sustain the discussion, remained silent. He seemed to believe in his heart, but he couldn't bring himself to admit it frankly. Also, when he had withdrawn, Byeok said, speaking of these two doctors: "These two do not know what to answer; but as they have no desire to practice the Religion, there is nothing to be hoped for."

Byeok, however, in order to favor the rapid propagation of the Gospel and to firmly establish the Christian Religion in his country, dreamed of giving it for support some personages whose knowledge and reputation could command respect and captivate minds. No longer relying on those mentioned above, he cast his eyes on the Gwon family of Yanggeun<sup>28</sup>, who had previously shown good dispositions. This family, already in honor at the time of the Goryeo, had, at the time of the change of dynasty, been one of the first to rally to the new King, and since then its credit had only increased. Gwon Cheol-sin, surnamed Nok-am, the promoter of the pagoda lectures mentioned at the beginning of this story, and one of the most famous doctors of the time, was then the chief. He was the eldest of five brothers, all renowned for their learning and good conduct, among whom the third was especially distinguished, Il-sin<sup>29</sup> also known as Jik-am. The five Gwon brothers had a large number of followers, who came from all parts of the kingdom. Byeok therefore thought that it would be very useful to convert these scholars and make them the propagators and supporters of the Religion.

In the ninth lunar month of that same *gapsin* year (1784), he went to their house at Gamsan, in the district of Yanggeun. As soon as he arrived, the lectures on the Religion began again, and soon the truth shone in all its light. The eldest, Cheol-sin, about fifty years old, who had spent his life studying the

<sup>26</sup> Dallet is preparing for the irony by which in March 1801 both Yi Ga-hwan and Gwon Cheol-shin died in prison, although the former had never accepted the faith, and the latter apostatized.

<sup>27</sup> 이기양 Yi Gi-yang 李基讓 (1744-1802).

<sup>28</sup> 양근 Yanggeun 楊根 (Now Obin-ri, Yangpyeong-eup, Yangpyeong-gun, Gyeonggi-do.)

<sup>29</sup> 권일신 Gwon Il-shin 權日身 aka 직암 Jik-am 稷庵 (?-1791) Francis-Xavier.

philosophy and morals of the sacred books of the Chinese, hesitated at first. Without resisting the light of the Gospel, he could not make up his mind to lose in an instant all the fruit of the immense labors which had made his reputation. It was only a little later that he embraced the Religion, and was baptized under the name of Ambrose. His constant faith and his holy life earned him a beautiful crown, as we shall see later. But the third brother Il-sin converted immediately, and soon his extraordinary fervor, his enlightened zeal, fully justified Byeok's hopes. Not content with practicing himself, he began to instruct all the members of his family and began to preach the faith to his friends and acquaintances, with all the success assured to him by the authority of his name, his science and his virtues. God blessed his efforts so much that the Yanggeun district can rightly be considered the cradle of the Religion in Korea.

It was about this time that Peter Seung-hun, who had received baptism at Peking, himself conferred this sacrament on Byeok and on Il-sin. The choice of baptismal names was not made indifferently. Yi Byeok had begun the work of converting Korea: he had thus prepared the way for the coming of the Savior. It was decided that his name would be John the Baptist. Gwon Il-sin, wanting to devote himself to the preaching of the Gospel, took Saint Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the East, as his patron, in order to make him his model and his protector. It is by this name that we will refer to him from now on.

These three men, Peter, John-Baptist and Francis-Xavier walked with equal steps in the noble path they had traced, and took advantage of every opportunity to shine the light of faith in the eyes of their compatriots. Until then the preaching of the Gospel had been done openly and without hindrance, but already it was easy to foresee that the truth would not spread without combat. Contradictions began to arise. The well-known prejudices of the Korean government and people raised fears of future violence. These predictions did not discourage our three preachers. They continued to proclaim Jesus Christ, and the faith showed great progress. Xavier Gwon especially, either by himself or through his disciples, obtained prodigious successes.

The preaching had begun in the capital, and in the adjoining province; but soon the Word of Life was carried to other parts of Korea.

There was then in the house of Xavier Gwon a young man named Yi Dan-won or Yi Jon-chang<sup>30</sup>. He was born in the village of Yeosaul<sup>31</sup>, in the district of Cheonan, province of Chungcheong, on the limits of the great and fertile plain of Naepo, and belonged to an honest family of farmers. Having received unusual talents from nature, he at first gave himself up to the study of letters at home, but soon the desire to learn more completely gave birth to the thought of going to study with some famous master. The Gwon doctors were then in great reputation. Dan-won went to them and made himself their disciple. Xavier Gwon was charmed by the good spirit and fine qualities of his new pupil. He had been caring for him for some time, when he had the good fortune to become a Christian. He immediately introduced Dan-won to the Religion, applying himself to teaching him not only the principal articles of faith, but above all the duties of Christian life, and the manner of fulfilling them. He succeeded beyond all hope. Yi Dan-won was baptized under the name of Ludovico de Gonzaga, and received from his master the mission to return to his home to preach there in his turn. He therefore returned to his province, and in a very short time converted his family, relatives, friends, and a multitude of people whom his reputation for knowledge and virtue attracted from all quarters. Thus were laid the first foundations of the famous Christian community of Naepo, which has always since been a nursery of fervent Christians and illustrious martyrs.

To Xavier Gwon was also to come the glory of establishing on solid foundations Christianity in the province of Jeolla, in the southern part of the kingdom, by converting Yu Hang-geom<sup>32</sup>, who was

<sup>30</sup> 이존창 Yi Jon-chang 李存昌) or 이단원 Yi Dan-won 李端源 (1752-1801)

<sup>31</sup> 여사울 Yeosaul 餘村 (Now 예산군 신암면 신종리 Yesangun Sin-ammyeon Sinjong-ri)

<sup>32</sup> 유향검 Yu Hang-geom 柳恒儉 (1756-1801) Augustine. Blessed.

called Augustine at baptism. Augustine belonged to one of the lowest classes of nobility, but his personal merit and his great fortune gave him much influence. He lived at Chonam, in the district of Jeonju. Having heard of the new Religion, he was attracted by the reputation of the famous men who had embraced it, and wanting to examine things for himself, he came to the Gwon family. Scarcely had he known the principles of the Christian Religion than his upright soul surrendered, and he wanted to begin to practice it immediately. Returning home, he immediately instructed his large family, and also announced the good news to his friends, neighbors and acquaintances. His fervor, his zeal and his constancy can make him look like the cornerstone of the Christendom of the southern provinces. Around this same time. Paul Ji-jong<sup>33</sup>, residing also in the province of Jeolla, in the district of Jinsan<sup>34</sup>, received the faith by means of Kim Beom-woo, of whom we shall speak later.

In the regions closer to the capital, we must point out the Jeong family, as having contributed much to the propagation of the Gospel. This family, long celebrated, was a native of Naju, and then lived at Majae, district of Gwangju, province of Gyeonggi. It was to it that belonged the two brothers Yak-jeon and Yak-yong, who took part in the first conferences of Byeok. It also had several other respected members<sup>35</sup>, who admirably supported the religious movement at that time. We must also mention the noble family of Luke Hong<sup>36</sup>, aka Nak-min. Both brothers were in public office. They were all instructed and baptized by Peter Seung-hun.

In the middle class, those who worked hardest to spread the Religion, from the beginning, were Mathias Choe<sup>37</sup>, Saba Ji<sup>38</sup> and John Choe<sup>39</sup>. Mathias Choe In-gil, from a family of performers, was educated by Byeok. Saba Ji aka Jang-hong (?), from a family of court musicians, presented himself for instruction. Naturally simple, respectful and diligent, after having studied the Religion well, he applied himself fervently to loving God, and his only desire was to be able to die for him. So he exposed himself with joy to dangers, privations and sufferings. John Choe, known as Chang-hyeon, and better known by his nickname Gwan-cheon, also belonged to a family of performers. He was an active and tireless man. As soon as he had embraced the Religion, he copied with his own hand all the books which dealt with it, and thereby rendered immense services. His reputation as a copyist became so great that all Christians who wanted books turned to him for them. He is credited with the Korean translation of a Chinese book<sup>40</sup> explaining the Sunday and Feast-day Gospels.

To fully understand this rapid diffusion of Christian doctrine, it is useful to remember what we said in the introduction, on the nature of the usual relations of society in this country. The apartments of the women, among the nobles and the rich, being inside and entirely separated, the relations between men are all the freer and more multiple. The front of each house, where the master usually resides, is like a reception room, always open, where all, friends or strangers, known or unknown, can enter, sit down, drink tea, smoke, and take part in the conversation. The Koreans, naturally strollers and talkers, are continually on the move. Those who have nothing to do at home, go from living room to living room, in

<sup>33</sup> 윤지충 Yun Ji-chung 尹持忠 (1759-1791) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>34</sup> Dallet writes Tsin-sou but Daveluy's text had Tsin san, which should be Jinsan 珍山. but that is located in Geumsan-gun in Chungcheong province.

<sup>35</sup> Above all the third brother, 정약중 Jeong Yak-jong 丁若鍾 (1760-1801) Augustine, who alone did not apostatize but was a leading member of the Church, died a martyr, and is Blessed. His son, Jeong Ha-sang, was martyred in 1839 and is a Saint.

<sup>36</sup> 홍낙민 Hong Nak-min 洪樂敏 (1751-1801) Luke. Blessed.

<sup>37</sup> 최인길 Choe In-gil 崔仁吉 (1765-1795) Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>38</sup> 지황 Ji Hwang 池瓚 (1767-1795) Saba. Blessed.

<sup>39</sup> 최창현 Choe Chang-hyeon 崔昌顯 aka Gwan-cheon 관천 冠泉 (1759-1801) John. Blessed.

<sup>40</sup> Both had the same title, 聖經直解, pronounced in Chinese as *Tian zhu jiang sheng* and in Korean as 상경 직해 *Seongyeong Jikhae*. It was originally composed by Manuel Dias the Younger, a Portuguese Jesuit (1574-1659).

search of news. Concerned little or nothing with politics, they talk about science, literature, communicate the results of their studies, compare their literary works, etc. It is easy to imagine how much the Christian doctrine, so strange and so new to them, and preached by such renowned doctors, must have struck public curiosity, and how many people spoke of it and heard of it, as soon as it appeared in Korea.

Besides those whose names we have given, many other neophytes then worked to make the light they had received shine in the eyes of their compatriots. We cannot name them all here. We have only made known the most famous, whose names will often recur in the course of this story.

### Chapter 3: First tests. —Relations of the Korean Church with the Bishop of Peking.

A few days before his death, Our Lord Jesus Christ said: “If the grain of wheat that falls to the ground does not die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life will keep it for eternity.” These divine words are true for all men, everywhere and always. The faith of every Christian takes root and lives only through mortification and suffering; the faith of each people takes root, grows and develops only when watered with the blood of martyrs.

The new Church of Korea was soon to experience this. But the merciful God who proportions trials to our weakness, at first permitted only the beginnings of persecution, enough to warn the neophytes, and show them what they should expect, not enough to discourage them. Their number increased daily, but the number and violence of their enemies grew even faster. The King, however, had hitherto taken no part, and the affair of which we are about to speak seems to have taken place without his co-operation.

At the beginning of the year *eul-sa* (1785), scarcely a year since the Gospel had been introduced into Korea, the Minister of Crimes, Kim Hwa-jin<sup>1</sup>, wanted to block its progress by some blow brilliant enough to strike terror into people’s minds. Not daring to attack directly the well-known leaders of the Christians, he had Kim Beom-woo<sup>2</sup>, named Thomas at baptism, seized and brought before his tribunal.

Thomas, born in the capital, belonged to one of the main families of interpreters. Applied to studies and a friend of science, he had become friends with Yi Beok, and it was through him that he was instructed in the Religion in 1784. Responding immediately to the call of Grace, he began to practice with fervor, educated and converted, not only his whole family, but also a certain number of his friends, especially in the class of interpreters.

Called before the Minister of Crimes, and summoned to renounce his religion, Thomas, supported by divine grace, steadfastly refused to apostatize<sup>3</sup>. He was subjected to various tortures: but he did not yield for a single instant. Xavier Gwon, having learned what was happening, thought it unworthy of him to abandon his faithful co-religionist. Accompanied by several other Christians, he went before the minister: “All of us,” he cried courageously, “we all profess the same religion as Kim Beom-woo. We want to share the fate you have in store for him.” The minister did not think it prudent to attack such powerful and distinguished personages. He had them dismissed, without listening to them, and nevertheless continued to persecute Thomas. After various tortures, the details of which are not known, being unable to triumph over the Christian’s faith and constancy, he condemned him to exile in the town of Danyang, at the eastern end of the province of Chungcheong. In the place of his exile, Thomas Kim continued to practice his religion publicly. He said his prayers aloud, and instructed all who wanted to

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<sup>1</sup> 김화진 Kim Hwa-jin 金華鎮 (1728-1803)

<sup>2</sup> 김범우 Kim Beom-woo 金範禹 (1751-1787) Thomas.

<sup>3</sup> Dallet’s source did not explain that in 1785 the servants of the ministry of justice had raided a Catholic meeting that was being held in Thomas Kim’s house, in the area named Myeongryebang (明禮坊), having seen a number of people gathering and assuming they were gambling illegally. This is known in Korean as the 을사 주조적방 사건 ‘*Eulsa chujojeokbal sageon*’ 乙巳秋曹摘發事件. Embarrassed at finding that all the main figures in the group were *Yangban* who were not gambling but studying and praying, they sent them home since they had no other jurisdiction over them. But Thomas Kim was only a *Jungin* 中人 (‘middle-class’) so he was made to suffer harsh punishment, perhaps out of spite. At that time ‘Catholic’ was hardly a known term and the authorities could probably not recognize at first the religious aspect of the group. Thomas was sent into exile in Danyang but had been beaten with such violence that he died a few months later. His house stood somewhere near where Myeongdong Cathedral was built around 1900.

hear him. His courage and patience did not waver for a moment. He died of his injuries a few weeks after his arrival in Danyang, according to some, or according to others, two years later. Such was the end of the first martyr who, on the land of Korea, gave his life for Jesus Christ.

This case had no further consequences. But it was sufficient to show Christians that it is necessary not only to profess the Gospel by mouth, but also to be ready, if need be, to sign one's profession of faith with one's blood. Immediately terror spread, especially in the capital and the surrounding area. The Tae-hak-saeng<sup>4</sup> (太學生 scholarly tutor<sup>5</sup> to the king), with Jeong Suk 鄭淑 then published a violent circular against the Christians, engaging their relatives and friends to break openly and completely with them. This document, dated to the third lunar month, 1785, is the first known public document that officially attacks Christianity. Several families made every effort, by prayers and threats, to obtain the apostasy of those of their members who had embraced the Religion. There were then glorious confessions, but there were also deplorable defections, even among those who seemed to be the pillars of the new Church. Peter Yi Seung-hun and John-Baptist Yi Byeok were designated by the public voice as the principal leaders and promoters of Christianity; therefore, those of their families who had not embraced the faith, terrified by the torture of Thomas Beom-woo, did everything possible to make them renounce a religion which was going to bring misfortunes on them and on their family. They succeeded only too well in their fatal design.

Seung-hun's younger brother, called Yi Ji-hun<sup>6</sup>, showed above all a violent hatred of the Religion. He used every means to discourage his eldest brother and make him change his mind. Pushed to the limit by these daily domestic persecutions, Seung-hun finally gave in. He burned his religious books and wrote a piece to justify himself to the public for having been a Christian.

Byeok's father, a fiery man, had never wanted to hear about the new doctrine. He made incredible efforts to tear the faith from his son's heart. Unable to succeed, he fell into despair, and one day passed a rope around his neck to kill himself. Byeok, shaken at the sight of such scenes, felt his courage weaken. However, he did not yet surrender. A Christian, unworthy of the name, came to him to complete his ruin. He employed all the ruses, all the lies imaginable, until finally, tired of vexations, deceived by the apostate, troubled by the sight and by the words of his father in despair, Byeok yielded. Recoiling from manifest apostasy, he used double meanings to hide his faith. His heart had failed; God no longer had the first place there, and God rejected him, because it is written: he who loves his father or his mother more than me, is not worthy of me. Since that time, surrounded by his relatives and his pagan friends, he could not have any relationship with the Christians. Korean reports say that he was horribly persecuted by remorse. He became dull, silent, melancholy. Day and night he shed tears, and often he was heard to utter painful moans. He could no longer indulge in sleep, he no longer even took off his clothes. If he ate, it was without appetite, without taste and without profit for his body. Gradually, however, the agitations of his conscience subsided; the last efforts of Grace were barely felt. His health recovered, and it is even said that the desire for dignities entered his heart. Anyway, he didn't have time to receive any. In the spring of the *byeongo* year (1786), he fell ill with the plague then raging (the Chinese *io-ping*, a kind of typhus), and died at the age of thirty-three, after eight days of illness. It was impossible to know for certain how his last moments passed. It is claimed that Christians were able to reach him, to exhort him to regret his crime, but this tradition is not supported by any authentic document.

Let us nevertheless hope that God will have shown mercy to him whose zeal and great qualities served so much to introduce and propagate the gospel in Korea, and that at the supreme moment, he will have granted him the grace of repentance.

However, the faith of the little flock, shaken for a moment, was not destroyed. If Christendom

<sup>4</sup> 이용서 Yi Yong-seo 李龍舒

<sup>5</sup> He was not a teacher to the king but an advisor.

<sup>6</sup> 이지훈 Yi Ji-hun 李致薰 (1759-1822)

was in mourning on the occasion of the apostasy of some of its members, it was at the same time consoled by the constancy of the greatest number in the midst of domestic persecutions, often more difficult to bear than those of judges and executioners. Conversions multiplied. Ludovico de Gonzaga Tan-won<sup>7</sup>, the disciple of Xavier Gwon, continued to preach the Gospel in the plain of Naepo. His great talents, joined to a particular gift of captivating souls, attracted new listeners to him every day, and very few resisted his preaching. Also the number of Christians increased considerably in this province. It was no longer just families of nobles and scholars who embraced the faith; farmers, workers, people of the lower classes, the poor, also received the gift of Jesus Christ. They came from afar, in crowds, to hear the good news, and often stayed several days, fed and lodged by the Christians. One of the latter, named Won Dong-ji<sup>8</sup>, who later received the crown of martyrdom, has remained famous for his generous hospitality. He gathered and welcomed a large number of Ludovico de Gonzaga's listeners at his home, and it was then that the popular saying was born: "We go to seek knowledge in the house of Yi Tan-won as we go to seek food in that of Won Dong-ji."

For his part, Francis-Xavier Gwon Il-sin, who was still very actively engaged in preaching, felt the need to retire for a while to solitude. He had understood at the school of the Holy Spirit, who was in this his only master, that above all one must sanctify oneself, if one wants to be useful to others. For this purpose, he formed the resolution to make a proper spiritual retreat, and to more easily execute his design, he momentarily left his family, and retired secretly to a deserted pagoda situated in the Yongmun-san 龍門山 mountains. Only one of his friends, Justin Jo, known as Dong-seom (趙東暹), accompanied him. Arriving in the pagoda, they agreed not to say a single word to each other during the entire time of the retreat. They spent eight whole days there, solely occupied with the spiritual exercises suggested to them by the desire to imitate Our Lord and his saints. A practice so in conformity with the true spirit of Christianity certainly obtained abundant graces from God for them and for those whom they instructed after their retreat. The following year, *jeong-mi* (1787), the clamors against the Religion gradually calmed down, the contradictions were less lively, and several of those who had yielded to the storm, expressed their repentance. Peter Yi Seung-hun, among others, who had succumbed through weakness, returned<sup>9</sup> again to find Francis-Xavier Gwon and the brothers Jeong, Yak-yong and Yak-jeon. They received him with open arms.

It was around this time<sup>10</sup> that, to promote the propagation of the Gospel, and to confirm the neophytes in the faith, Francis-Xavier Gwon, Peter Yi Seung-hun, the Jeong brothers and other influential Christians formed the plan to establish among themselves a sacred hierarchy. This thought, however strange it may seem, was nonetheless quite natural. Not having the happiness, like the Christians of China their models, of having pastors come from the West, the Christians of Korea nevertheless understood very well that a church cannot subsist without a leader. In their ignorance of the nature of the priesthood, of its transmission by an uninterrupted chain which goes back to the Sovereign Priest Jesus Christ, they thought they could do nothing better than to create for themselves bishops and priests.

Peter Yi Seung-hun had seen the Catholic hierarchy in action at Peking: the bishop, the priests and the other lower clerics. He had attended the holy mysteries in the church of this city. The sacraments had been administered in his presence. He recalled all his memories, and with the aid of the various explanations which are found in liturgical or dogmatic books for the use of Christians, a complete system of organization was decided upon, and pastors were elected immediately.

Francis-Xavier Gwon, whose position, knowledge and virtue placed him in the first rank, was

<sup>7</sup> 이존창 Yi Jon-chang 李存昌 (1752-1801) aka Tan-won 檀源 端源. Ludovico de Gonzaga.

<sup>8</sup> 원동지 Won Dong-ji 元同知. Dong-ji was merely a nick-name for a low-class old man.

<sup>9</sup> Although he seems to have withdrawn briefly in 1785, he was still active in the community later that same year, so that this talk of a return in 1787 seems unlikely.

<sup>10</sup> Dallet seems to mean 1787 but in fact the eucharistic celebrations had begun in 1786.

appointed Bishop<sup>11</sup>. Peter Yi Seung-hun, Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi Dan-won, Augustine Yu Hang-geom 柳恒儉, John Choe Chang-hyeon 崔昌賢 and several others<sup>12</sup> were elected priests. It is not known whether there was any ceremony resembling a consecration or ordination. Each immediately went to his post, and they began a sort of administration of the Christians, preaching, baptizing, confessing, giving confirmation, celebrating the holy mysteries, and distributing communion to the faithful. These sacraments are the only ones that we find mentioned in the memoirs of the time. The baptism given by these pastors was evidently valid, and conferred the grace of regeneration. The other sacraments they administered were obviously void. Nevertheless, it is certain that their ministry rekindled fervor everywhere, and gave a new impetus to the propagation of the faith throughout the kingdom. People still speak of the enthusiasm of the Christians, of their holy ardor in attending the ceremonies and in receiving the sacraments. The grandmother of the famous martyr Andrew Kim, Korea's first indigenous priest, related that Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi, her uncle, by whom she had been baptized, used a golden chalice to celebrate the Sacrifice. Sacred ornaments were made with rich silks from China. They did not have the shape of our chasubles, but they were similar to those which the Koreans use in their sacrifices. The priests wore the cap used in China, in the ceremonies of Catholic worship. To hear the confessions of the faithful, they placed themselves on a seat raised on a platform, and the penitents stood before them. Ordinary penances were alms, and for the most serious faults the priest himself struck the culprit on the legs with a rod. Accustomed, according to the laws of Korean etiquette, to shun the sight of women of rank, the priests at first refused to confess them; but their entreaties were so lively that it was necessary to consent to it. They did not visit Christian communities, but people came to them to ask for the sacraments. They traveled on foot, and always endeavored to avoid pomp and pride.

In the capital, John Choe Gwan-cheon 崔貫泉 rented a house for the administration of the sacraments. Full of energy and endowed with great insight, he regulated all affairs, receiving the priests and preparing the Christians. Day and night he was busy with this ministry, fearing neither embarrassment nor fatigue; he was like the general catechist of Christendom. His father, although not practicing the Religion, was far from opposing the numerous meetings which took place at his house; he protected them, on the contrary, with all his power.

This improvised Korean clergy thus continued its functions for nearly two years<sup>13</sup>, with great success and in perfect good faith. But in the year *gi-yu* (1789), certain passages of the books of the Religion, examined more minutely, gave birth in the minds of the priests and the bishop to serious doubts as to the validity of their election and their ministry. They concluded that it was necessary at once to renounce all administration as a rash enterprise, and took the resolution to write to the bishop of Peking to consult him on this subject. Having thus advanced before all Christendom, it must have cost them a great deal to immediately abandon their position, at the risk of exposing themselves to public ridicule. But their intentions were right, their faith sincere, and they would not, under any pretext, expose themselves to profane holy things. They therefore immediately resumed their place among the simple faithful, and occupied themselves only with instructing the new Christians, and preaching the faith to the Gentiles.

The consultative letter to the Bishop<sup>14</sup> of Peking having been drawn up by Peter Yi Seung-hun and Francis-Xavier Gwon, means were sought to send it safely. The annual embassy provided a natural

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<sup>11</sup> It seems that in fact the title 'Bishop' was not used.

<sup>12</sup> It is not certain that there were so many others.

<sup>13</sup> The exact timing of these events is not completely clear. The celebrations might have stopped in 1787 or 1788, but they seem to have continued for a while even after doubts arose. There was probably also delay in contacting Beijing because of the community's poverty as well as the persecutions.

<sup>14</sup> Written probably in 1789, the letter was addressed to the French missionaries in the North Church in Beijing, not the Bishop. A French translation exists in the archives of the Propaganda in Rome.



occasion. But it was necessary to find a capable and devoted man who was willing to accept the perilous mission of establishing necessarily secret relations with the Church of China. There was no Christian in the embassy: one had to be brought in without the knowledge of the pagans. Eyes were cast on the catechumen Paul Yun Yu-il<sup>15</sup>, for this important role. Paul Yun descended from a noble family in the district of Naju. He had been a disciple of the Gwons, and Francis-Xavier had instructed him in the truths of the Religion. His gentle and affable character and his great discretion made him suitable for the projected enterprise. He accepted the mission entrusted to him, took charge of the letter to the Bishop, and disguised as a merchant, left for Peking in the tenth lunar month of that same year, 1789.

The road from Seoul to Peking is three thousand li, more than three hundred leagues. This long journey, made during the winter, in a foreign country, is very painful and presents real dangers. It is not uncommon to see several people from the embassy succumb to illnesses contracted en route. Ordinary fatigues were much greater still for Paul who, applied from childhood to study, and accustomed to a sedentary life, had no experience of travel, and found himself isolated in the midst of unknown companions, without any human support. However, he had to make the journey on foot, like all those whose profession he simulated, and finally, despite a thousand difficulties, supported as he was by the almighty Grace of God, he arrived happily at Peking. He immediately went to the Bishop<sup>16</sup>, handed him the letter he was carrying, and told him in the greatest detail all that had happened in Korea, the joys and the tribulations of the budding Religion. Paul's unexpected arrival caused great joy in the Peking church. The presence of this Christian, who came from a kingdom where no priest had ever preached the name of Jesus Christ, and explaining how the faith had spread there in such an admirable way, was the sweetest spectacle for the missionaries. and especially for the bishop, Mgr. Gouvea, who hastened to write a pastoral letter to these new flocks that God was giving him.

In the spring of the year *gyeong-sul* (1790), Paul followed the embassy back to his fatherland. He had received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation at Peking<sup>17</sup>. Strengthened by these celestial aids, he was enabled to extricate himself skillfully from all difficulties, crossed the frontier without arousing suspicion and returned to the capital, without having incurred any misfortunes.

The bishop's answer was written on a piece of silk, so that Paul could more easily hide it in his clothes, and introduce it into Korea in a safer and easier way. It was addressed to Peter Yi and Xavier Gwon. The prelate began by exhorting the neophytes to render immortal thanksgiving to the most good and great God, for the inestimable benefit of the vocation to faith. He urged them to perseverance and to employ the means necessary to preserve the grace of the Gospel. Then came an abridged exposition of Christian dogma and morality. Peter and Francis-Xavier were reproached for having recklessly adopted the priestly ministry. The bishop explained to them that they could in no way celebrate the holy mysteries and administer the sacraments, with the exception of baptism, because they had not received the sacrament of Holy Orders; but that they had chosen an action very pleasing to God in instructing and encouraging the Christians, and in converting the infidels. He exhorted them to persevere in this conduct.

This response, so long awaited, left no doubt. It was received with complete submission, and everyone congratulated themselves on the prudence they had shown in interrupting the functions of the holy ministry<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> 윤유일 Yun Yu-il 尹有一 (1760-1795) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>16</sup> He went to the North Church where he met Fr. Nicolas-Joseph Raux, the head of the Lazarists, who had arrived in Beijing in 1785 to replace the members of the Jesuit order (abolished in 1773).

<sup>17</sup> (Dallet Note 24: Paul was baptized in Peking by Fr. Raux, superior of the French Lazarist missionaries in China, on February 5, 1790. (The former Jesuit) Fr. Giuseppe Panzi was his godfather, and painted his portrait which was sent to Saint-Lazare. — *Nouvelles lettres edificantes*, volume V, p. 321. — This brother, a watchmaker and skillful mechanic, is named Paris in other documents. — *Annales*, volume X, p. 127.)

<sup>18</sup> In the Archives of the former Propaganda Fidei in Rome there are French translations of three letters, originally written in Chinese characters but now lost, which offer a slightly different account. The first is a letter sent by Augustine Yu Hang-

However, Korean Christians had a strong desire to receive the sacraments. Fired by the stories of Paul Yun who told them of the churches he had seen in Peking, of the European missionaries who had come from the ends of the earth to spread the Gospel, of the interviews he had had with them and of the sacraments he had received they resolved to send a new letter to the Bishop of Peking, entreating him earnestly to send them priests who could instruct them by preaching, and strengthen them by the administration of the sacraments. The occasion was favorable. An extraordinary embassy was about to leave to congratulate the Qianlong 乾隆 Emperor, who celebrated, in the month of September 1790, the eightieth year of his age. Paul Yun Yu-il therefore went back to China. He was accompanied on this second journey by a catechumen named Woo 禹, an officer of the King of Korea, charged by that prince to make some purchases in Peking. Our two deputies arrived without accident, and handed the Bishop the letter from their compatriots.

Besides the urgent prayers of the neophytes to obtain a pastor, this letter also contained several questions on the contracts of their country, on superstitions, on the worship of ancestors, and on some other difficult points. After having taken on matters of this importance the opinion of learned and zealous missionaries, the Bishop answered the questions of the Koreans, promised to send them a priest, and to let them know at what time and in what manner this priest would appear at the border, so that they could prepare and facilitate his entry.

The catechumen Woo was baptized<sup>19</sup>, and received the name of John the Baptist. He was given a chalice, a missal, a consecrated altar stone<sup>20</sup>, ornaments, and all that was necessary for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. He was also taught how to make wine with grapes, so that everything would be ready when the missionary arrived.

Paul and John-Baptist left Peking in October. They arrived happily in their country, and returned with the bishop's letter and the objects entrusted to them. The nascent Church quivered with joy, in the hope of soon having a priest, but the decision on superstitions and the worship of ancestors was, for many, a stumbling block and a cause of apostasy.

Until then the Korean neophytes, assiduous in the Christian observances they knew, had none the less continued the superstitious worship rendered to deceased parents. Ignorance and good faith could excuse them, but from that moment any participation in such practices, sacrifices, ceremonies, prostrations, etc., became impossible. The Church declared to them through the mouth of the Bishop of Peking that the worship of ancestors is contrary to the worship of God. This declaration, made public, must have offended all classes of the population, because in Korea, the religion of the scholars or the worship of the ancestors, is the religion of the State. Any infraction of this worship is met with violent revulsion by public opinion throughout the country, and the omission of the required ceremonies severely punished. These traditional customs, whose origin goes back very far, and which have been transmitted faithfully from generation to generation, are in the eyes of all the basis of society, the foundation of the State, the fulcrum of all natural relationships; and woe to him who has the audacity to attack them, even in words! It was therefore easy to foresee the storm which was about to break, and the advantage which

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geom to Yi Seung-hun telling him that he had read in the book *Seong-gyo Jeolyo* 聖教切要 (the French translation calls it *Cheng kiao Iva yao*) about the need for ordination to bestow priestly "character" and that since he had not received it, they had no right to celebrate the sacraments. This letter was sent by Yi Seung-hun to the priests in the North Church in Beijing, telling them that they had immediately stopped the celebrations of sacraments by their "improvized hierarchy" and asking how they could ever be forgiven. The third letter is written by Yi Seung-hun after Yun Yu-il returned from Beijing with the priests' seemingly rather comforting reply. It indicates that Yun is about to leave again for Beijing and asks for him to be allowed to withdraw from his current leading position.

<sup>19</sup> As usual, by the French missionaries in the North Church.

<sup>20</sup> Traditionally, the altar where Mass is celebrated should include a consecrated altar stone in which some fragmentary relic of a saint has been sealed.

the enemies of the Christians were going to derive from their conduct to destroy and annihilate the nascent Church.

Some weak Christians were terrified, and from that day ceased to practice the Religion. Among them, we have the pain of counting Peter Yi Seung-hun, whom fear had already brought down so deplorably a few years earlier. He retired to his home and no longer had any contact with the Christians. Moreover, yielding to the ambition of dignities, he successively obtained various public offices<sup>21</sup>, which, in this country as in China, necessarily entails a frequent participation in idolatrous worship. From now on, we will only see him appear from time to time, pursued, despite his defection, by the contempt of the pagans themselves, and unable to manage to cleanse himself before them of the crime of having introduced the Religion into Korea. This is, in the eyes of the Gentiles, a kind of original sin that they still blame today on his descendants. Despite this second fall of an influential leader, the faith of the neophytes does not appear to have been shaken, and the great majority, subject in mind and heart to the decision of the Church, continued to practice with fervor, and renounced all superstitious acts.

Xavier Gwon Il-sin, who remained alone of the first three founders of Christianity, redoubled his zeal to strengthen, direct and increase the little flock. He was marvelously assisted in this by John Choe<sup>22</sup>, nicknamed Gwan-cheon, then thirty-something years old. On their side, Louis de Gonzague (Yi Jonchang 李存昌) in Naepo, and Augustine Yu Hang-geom in the province of Jeolla, were not discouraged, and continued to work with all their strength for the progress of the Gospel.

It was in this year (1790) that the conversion of Choe Pil-gong<sup>23</sup>, called Thomas at baptism, took place. Thomas Choe was born in the capital, from a middle-class family. His ancestors had been employed as doctors by the government; but at that time he was reduced to great poverty, because he had no protector to obtain a job. His poverty had even prevented him from getting married. Frankness and generosity formed the basis of his character, so he embraced the Religion as soon as he heard of it. From the first day of his conversion he showed great fervor, thinking only of spiritual things, and even forgetting to provide for the necessities of the body. This holy enthusiasm did not grow cold with time. Inaccessible to fear, he never ceased to publicly preach Christianity, and he sometimes happened to stop in the streets, in the middle of the crowd, and exclaim aloud: "It is necessary to serve the great King of heaven and earth. How not to serve the great Lord of all things?" Also, although he was a new Christian, he was soon known everywhere as one of the most fervent.

This conversion, and a certain number of others on which we unfortunately have no details, served much to revive the courage of the Christians of Korea, and to fortify them in advance against the persecution which could not be long in breaking out.

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<sup>21</sup> In the tenth lunar month 1790 he was appointed an *Uigeumbu Dosa* 義禁府都事, in the second lunar month the following year he was appointed *Seo-bu* (western Seoul) *Dosa* 西部都事.

<sup>22</sup> 최창현 관천 Choe Chang-hyeon Gwancheon 崔昌賢 冠泉 (1759-1801) John. Blessed

<sup>23</sup> 최필공 Choe Pil-gon 崔必恭 (1744-1801) Thomas. Blessed.

#### Chapter 4.: Persecution of 1791. — Martyrdom of Paul Yun and James Gwon.

After the martyrdom of Thomas Kim Beom-woo, the clamors of the enemies of the Religion had calmed down a little, but their hatred was not extinguished. They were always hatching new plots to ruin the Christians, and they only prepared their batteries in secret to make them more formidable. Two men above all showed themselves the bitter adversaries of the Gospel. They were Hong Nak-an<sup>1</sup> and Yi Gi-gyeong<sup>2</sup>. The first had, in 1787 and 1788, published violent letters against the Christians, and addressed a petition to the King, to obtain an edict of persecution. The second, a friend of Peter Seung-hun and his fellow student, had at first made common cause with the faithful, but had soon retired, and, in 1788, had gone to swell the party of Hong Nak-an. Constantly seeking out anything that might favor their project, these two individuals spied on the conduct and words of Christians, and only waited for a favorable opportunity to stir up persecution against them. This occasion presented itself in the year *sin-hae* (1791), when, on the death of Yun Ji-chung's mother, this Christian refused to make the usual sacrifices.

Paul Yun Ji-chung<sup>3</sup>, also called Wooyong, descended from a noble family from the island of Haenam. His ancestors had often occupied distinguished places, and several of them had made a name for themselves in letters. His father, after having devoted himself successfully to the study of medicine, had come to settle in the village of Janggu-dong<sup>4</sup>, district of Jinsan, province of Jeolla. This is where Paul Yun<sup>5</sup> was born in the year *gi-myo* (1759). From childhood, he stood out by his intelligence and good conduct. He quickly acquired a reputation for science, which grew even more, when in the year *gye-myo* (1783), at the age of twenty-five, he obtained in public examinations the grade called *jinsa* 進士 (graduate). During the winter of the following year, having made a journey to the capital, he found at the home of Thomas Kim Beom-woo, two books of the Religion which he took away and took copies of: but he was not yet practicing. It was only about three years later that, instructed by his first cousin Jeong Yak-jeon, on the whole of the Christian Religion, he embraced it definitively and began with fervor to fulfill its duties. When the persecution of Christians began, he burned some of his books out of fear, but nevertheless continued to practice the Religion in secret. We do not see that he had much public relationship with the Christians, nor that he worked for the conversion of the infidels. The letter from the Bishop of Peking forbidding sacrifices and other superstitions in honor of deceased parents did not shake his courage. He immediately obeyed, and burned the tablets, which, according to the custom of the country, were kept in his family home. In the meantime, in the summer of the year *sin-hae* (1791), his mother, named Gwon 權, died.

The position was tricky. The news of this death would attract Paul's relatives and friends to pay him their compliments of condolence and to witness the sacrifices. He had to violate his faith and deny his God at least outwardly, or else be ready to face reproaches, insults and curses. His noble and upright soul did not waver on which side to take. He put on the robe of mourning, wept sincerely for his mother, and did all that enlightened and well-meaning filial piety might suggest in such circumstances. Nothing was lacking in what a son's love for his mother and outward proprieties require, only there were no sacrifices. Immediately the murmurs broke out. Nothing was said of anything but this hitherto unheard-

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<sup>1</sup> 홍낙안 Hong Nak-an 洪樂安 (1752-?)

<sup>2</sup> 이기경 Yi Gi-gyeong 李基慶 (1756-1819)

<sup>3</sup> 윤지충 Yun Ji-Chung 尹持忠 우용 Wooyong 宇庸 1759-1791 Paul. Blessed.

<sup>4</sup> 장구동 長久洞 Janggu-dong (Now 전라북도 금산군 복수면 구례리 North Jeolla Geumsan-gun Bogosu-myeon Gurye-ri)

<sup>5</sup> 윤지충 Yun Ji-chung 尹持忠 (1759-1791) Paul. Blessed.

of attack, especially on the part of a noble child. The news of it spread far and wide, and soon, pointed out as impious by all that he held most dear, pointed out by his neighbors as a man who had denied all the feelings of nature, reviled, threatened with being handed over as a rebel against his King, Paul found himself almost ostracized from society.

But nothing could overcome this generous soul. Paul had for support his calm conscience which reproached him for no crime. He had the example of the divine Savior, who was the first to be pursued by insults and calumnies. Above all, he had the grace of his God, a grace all the stronger the more terrible the ordeal, and he persisted in his courageous profession of faith.

This news reached Hong Nak-an's ears, and nothing could please him more. He immediately petitioned the then all-powerful Prime Minister Chae<sup>6</sup>, asking for nothing less than capital punishment against Paul. At the same time he wrote to the mandarin of the district of Jinsan, named Sin Sa-won<sup>7</sup>, to urge him to make searches and arrest the culprit. It appears that the minister, on his side, gave similar orders to the governor of the province. The mandarin of Jinsan therefore went to Paul's house. A visit to the home of a noble is, in Korea, a very delicate and often dangerous expedition, but the mandarin was too well informed to have anything to fear. He was, however, somewhat taken aback when he found in Paul's house the box used in the country to enclose the tablets. The box was opened, and found to be empty<sup>8</sup>. Sa-won immediately gave the order to arrest Paul Yun Ji-chong and his cousin James Gwon Sang-yeon<sup>9</sup>, one the son, the other the nephew of the deceased. As they had retired, one to Gwangju and the other to Hanju, probably according to some secret notice of the mandarin's arrival, the latter took Paul's uncle as surety.

James Gwon Sang-yeon<sup>10</sup>, whom we have just named, belonged to a family originally from Andong, in the province of Gyeongsang, but established for some time in the district of Gongju. Without being of the first nobility, it nevertheless counted among its members some distinguished personages. Gwon had devoted himself to the study of letters and morals, when he was instructed in the Religion by his cousin Paul. He embraced it immediately, and never ceased to practice it faithfully. When his aunt, Paul's mother, died, he imitated his cousin's courageous conduct. Like him, he made no sacrifice. He bore with him the reproaches and insults of his relatives and friends, and was enveloped in his disgrace, or rather, shared his happiness.

As soon as they learned of the warrant for their arrest, and the arrest of Paul's uncle, they set out together, to deliver themselves into the hands of the Mandarin Sin Sa-won, and by traveling night and day, arrived at the prefecture of Jinsan on the evening of the twenty-sixth day of the eleventh<sup>11</sup> lunar month of the year *sin-hae* (1791). The interrogations began immediately. Here they are<sup>12</sup>, as told to us by Paul himself, in notes which he wrote in Chinese, and which were later translated into Korean. We reproduce these documents in their entirety because they are the first of their kind which have been

<sup>6</sup> 채제공 Chae Je-gong 蔡濟恭 (1720-1799)

<sup>7</sup> 신사원 Shin Sa-won 申史源 (1732-1799)

<sup>8</sup> (Dallet Note 25 : It is strictly forbidden for Christians to keep and display this box of tablets, even when it is empty. But, at that time, the greatest number of neophytes were unfamiliar with this prohibition, and, once the tablets were destroyed, saw no inconvenience in leaving the box in its usual place.) At this point in the narrative found in Daveluy's Archive Volume 4, Daveluy has a footnote saying: "Everything has to be redone since the capture: see the notice sent to France that includes all the interrogation and defense of Yun Ji-jung which were sent separately." The extensive account of the interrogations that follow in Dallet are to be found in Daveluy's Volume 5 ff. 2-12.

<sup>9</sup> (Dallet Note 26 : Some accounts give the latter the name of John. But it seems certain to us that he had been called James at baptism.)

<sup>10</sup> 권상연 Gwon Sang-yeon 權尙然 (1751-1791) James. Blessed.

<sup>11</sup> Dallet's mistake. This should be the tenth lunar month (see the letter below).

<sup>12</sup> This text comes from the archives of Bishop Daveluy Volume 5 ff. 3-13. In the middle Dallet has introduced the text of the Defense that Daveluy had sent later and which was found in his correspondence.

preserved for us, and because they will make clear, better than any explanation, the ideas of the Korean people on the worship of ancestors, and their terrible prejudices against the Christian Religion.

“Towards the evening of the twenty-sixth day of the tenth lunar month (1791), I arrived at the prefecture of Jinsan, and immediately after supper I was summoned before the Mandarin. “How do I see you,” he cried, “and how have you come to this?” “I don’t quite understand what you are asking me,” I replied. “I say that very serious rumors are circulating against you. Could they be founded? Is it true that you are lost in superstitions?” “I am by no means lost in superstitions; only, it is true that I profess the Religion of the Lord of Heaven.” “And isn’t that a superstition?” “No, it’s the true Way.” “If that is so, then everything that has been practiced from Fuxi<sup>13</sup> to the great men of the Song dynasty is all a lie?” — “In our Religion, among the commandments, is the one that forbids us to judge and condemn others. As for me, I content myself with following the Religion of the Lord of Heaven, without thinking of criticizing anyone or making comparisons.” “You refuse to offer sacrifices to the ancestors; but does not the animal *Sirang*<sup>14</sup> itself show gratitude towards the authors of its days! Some birds also know how to make sacrifices; with all the more reason man must act thus<sup>15</sup>. Have you not read the passage from the books of Confucius where it is said: He who, during the life of his parents, served them according to all the rules, who, after their death, made their funerals according to all the rules, finally offered the sacrifices according to the prescribed rites, only he can say that he has filial piety.” “All this,” I replied, “is not written in the Christian Religion.” — Then the Mandarin, citing other passages from the sacred books of Confucius, urged me to change my conduct, and said to me with a sigh: — “What a pity! For so many generations the fame of your family has been growing up to you; here it is completely ruined. You yourself had the reputation of a scholar full of talent; but your mind lacking in maturity and reflection, you have come to the point of abandoning the worship of your fathers. If I had known earlier that you were acting like this, I would have gone immediately to urge you, to make you open your eyes, and I would have prevented you from coming to this end. However, all is not lost. There have been, in the past, great men who have returned, after having been led astray for a long time by the doctrines of Fo (Buddha) and Lao-tse. If therefore, right now, you are thinking of changing, you can still walk in their glorious footsteps.” “If there was still a possibility for me to change, I would have done so first, and I would not have come here.” “So there’s nothing left to try to bring you to better feelings? As for me, I neither want to decide your fate, nor to question you minutely. Once before the criminal court, you will have to account for all your conduct. This body that you received from your parents, do you madly want to make it suffer torture and death? Moreover, you are the cause of your uncle being imprisoned in his old age; is this fulfilling the duty of filial piety?” — “To acquire virtue in spite of torture and death, is that to lack filial piety? As soon as I learned of my uncle’s incarceration, without even stopping at night, I ran to deliver myself into your hands; is this not fulfilling the duties of piety?”

“The Mandarin then ordered me to be treated according to the law, and immediately they put a heavy cangue around my neck, then he said to me with a sigh: — “In what a get-up you are! To die under the cangue and in irons is to die a criminal.” He had me taken to prison; but the room which was intended for me being in ruins, and not having yet been restored, I was deposited in another room. Thus ended the day.

“The 27th passed without any remarkable incident. On the 28th, at lunchtime, I saw my cousin James Gwon enter the prison. He had just undergone his interrogation. He had been asked the same

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<sup>13</sup> Fuxi 伏羲 (복희 Bokhui in Korean pronunciation) a hero in Chinese legend and mythology, credited along with his sister and wife Nüwa with creating humanity and the invention of music and other domestic arts.

<sup>14</sup> A wolf or wild dog.

<sup>15</sup> (Dallet Note 27: An old Korean proverb, no doubt based on some fabulous story.) Not a proverb but a mistranslation of a quotation from the classics: “wolves being wild animals make offerings then devour birds” 豹乃祭獸戮禽.

questions, and he had answered them in the same way as me. At noon the Mandarin sent for my uncle; and, after having addressed him long condolences: “Couldn’t you then,” he said to him, “do like such and such, whom you know, and prevent these young people from giving themselves up to evil practices?” — My uncle did not answer a single word, left the tribunal; and was, I believe, immediately released. Towards the end of the day, we were summoned again, my cousin and I; the big cangue was taken from us and was replaced by the little one: “You are going,” said the Mandarin, “to leave for Jeonju, residence of Jeong Min-si, governor of the province. But how do you behave? not to follow, with the doctrine of the scholars, a way of pleasures, and to bring oneself misfortunes, what does that mean?” — Then, looking at my cousin Gwon, he said to him: — “You who lived among all your relatives, did you spread these superstitions among them?” — We both kept silence, and the Mandarin, receiving no response, sent us away. We were accompanied by the praetorian in charge of criminal cases, a satellite and a jailer. They had received the order to make us leave on time, but it was already dark when we left the tribunal, it was impossible to set off, and we slept with the correspondent of the canton<sup>16</sup>.

“On the 29th, at the first cockcrow, we were on our way. We made a first stop at the Singeoreon<sup>17</sup> inn for lunch, and later a second, at Gaepawoo<sup>18</sup>, to feed the horses. At nightfall, after passing by the dignitaries’ travel hostel at Andeok<sup>19</sup>, and crossing a small mound, we met the satellites of the criminal court coming to fetch us. Numerous valets were on their feet and advanced, uttering loud cries, and making such a din that our capture resembled that of notorious thieves. We were taken to the prefecture, outside the southern gate, and, as the darkness was already complete, and the night advanced, torches were lit on our right and on our left, and we were placed near the tiered seats of the court. The criminal judge asks us: what are your first and last names? - We decline them. “Do you know the crime of which you are accused?” “I don’t know what this is about. Our governor having sent us to the judge, we came on his order, and against all expectation, we were, on the way, seized like thieves.” “What are your usual occupations?” “I devote myself to study.” — “What studies?” “To the study of the Religion?” “Where did you each retire separately?” “I have been at Gwangju,” I replied; “and I at Hansu,” said my cousin James Gwon. “Having learned, each on our own, your order, we returned immediately, without even stopping for the night, to deliver ourselves into your hands.” — We answered thus frankly. Shortly afterwards, a large cangue weighing eighteen pounds was passed round each of our necks; they also attached an iron chain to our necks, and with a wooden hook they fixed our right hand against the edge of the cangue.

“The judge having given the order to take us to the prison. we were taken there. There we sat down on the floor outside the door. Then, when everyone had retired, we were taken to the room where the thieves were, and we were obliged to take our place among them. Fortunately, the jailer came soon after to bring us into the guards’ room. This apartment had the inconvenience of being not far from the thieves’ prison, but on the other hand it was high and the floor a little heated. It was like an ordinary room. We spent the night there, sometimes lying on the ground and dozing, sometimes sitting.

On the 30th, at daybreak, we were again told to change our dwellings, and when day was quite up, we were taken to the prison of the governor, who summoned us to his bar after noon, and made us undergo the following questioning: “Which one of you is called Yun? and who is the one called Gwon?” — Each of us answered by declaring his name. “What is your usual occupation?” — “In my youth,” I answered him, “I applied myself to literature in order to pass the examinations. For some time I have

<sup>16</sup> (Dallet Note 28: This is the name of the representative that each inferior mandarin, or mandarin of a canton, must have in the capital.)

<sup>17</sup> 신거런 Singeoreon: now 전북 완주군운주면 가전리 North Jeolla Wanju-gun Unju-myeon Gajeon-ri 싱그랭이 Singgeoraengi

<sup>18</sup> 개바우 Gaebawoo: now 전북 완주군 충진면 용흥리 구암 North Jeolla Wanju-gun Chongjin-myeon Yongheung-ri Guam 狗岩

<sup>19</sup> 안덕 Andeok: now 전북 전주시 우아동 Jeonju-si Ua-dong.

devoted myself to studies which regulate the heart and conduct of man.” “Have you studied the classic scholarly books?” “I have studied them.” “If you want to regulate your heart and your conduct, aren’t our sacred books enough, and why go and lose yourself in superstitions?” “I’m in no way lost in superstition?” “And the so-called Religion of the Lord of Heaven, isn’t that a superstition?” — “God is the supreme Father, creator of heaven, earth, angels, men and all creatures; can his service be called superstition?” “Give me a simple summary of this doctrine.” — “The place where we are is suitable for examining criminal cases and not for developing a doctrine. What we practice boils down to the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues.” “Where did you get your books from?” “I could well point it out, but when they lent me these books, the King’s prohibition did not exist, and therefore the one who lent them was not guilty. Today that there is rigorous prohibition, so if I designated him, he would be exposed, without any guilt on his part, to violent tortures; how could I solve it? it would be breaking the precept which forbids us to harm our neighbor, so I cannot denounce him.” — “It is not so; even if you declare it, this man who lent you these books before prohibition, will certainly not become guilty of it. So do not be held back by this vain fear. The King having ordered to make exact information, if you do not declare anything, how can I make a report? This would be in violation of the King’s order, which, without a doubt, is not permitted. So declare it and do not wait for torture to do so.”

“I remained for a long time in complete silence, and, as my cousin James urged me to answer, I said first: “It is something that dates back a long time and it is difficult for me to remember it well.” Then I added: “In the winter of 1784, I went by chance to Kim Beom-woo, of the middle class, and finding these books there, I borrowed them, copied them, and returned them at once to their owner. When then I learned of the King’s prohibition, I burned what was on Chinese paper and washed what was on Korean paper. It has been several years since the two treatises on the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues are no longer with me.” “The king’s order is that if there are books, they must be burned. If therefore you have any other, it is right to deliver it at once.” “The mandarin of my district has visited all my house, and has not found a single page there.” “You are guilty of a sin that heaven and earth could not contain, and the King’s order to examine things thoroughly, these are questions you must answer frankly, item by item.” Then the governor laid before us a list of questions, the contents of which are roughly as follows. “You who do not follow the true Way and foolishly believe deceitful words, you infatuate the world, and debauch the people, you destroy and distort the natural relations of man. So declare which books you study, and who you do it with. Despite a severe prohibition, you dare to indulge in a great license of ideas, and you join practice to theory even more madly. It is a great impiety. But this fault would be relatively slight. It says in the King’s dispatch that you no longer make the sacrifices. That’s not all: you burn the tablets and prevent visitors who come to pay their duties to the deceased from entering your home. Finally, you do not even pay your parents the honors of burial, and that without blushing and without wishing to return to better sentiments. This conduct is worthy of a brute. Deliver your books immediately, and declare all your co-religionists. Moreover, it is said that there are among you bishops who direct you in secret, and spread this religion; you cannot not know them, so declare everything, without disguising anything.”

“After having read this indictment to the end, I replied: — “I have, it is true, omitted the sacrifices, I have also destroyed the tablets, but I received the visitors who came to offer their condolences, and did not prevent them from entering. I also paid my father and my mother all the honors of burial. For the books, I have just explained what concerns them; I have none to deliver. I also have no companions to declare. As for the bishops, this very name does not exist here. In Europe, this dignity exists, and they are said to deal with the affairs of the Religion. If you want to ask about them, it is in Europe that you have to do it. Finally, in the Religion, there is no master or disciple, in the sense that we attach to it here.” — The Governor then turning James Gwon: — “And you,” he said to him, “what books have you studied?” — “I have studied the book of the true notion of God, and that of the seven cardinal virtues.” “Where did you get them from?” — “I read them with my cousin Yun Ji-chong who had borrowed them.” “Did you copy them too?” — “I did not.” “Did you also omit the sacrifices?” — “I omitted them.” “And burned the tablets?” — “I still have at home the boxes that the mandarin noted during his visit.” — The governor



then questioned him about his relationship with various personages, and continued: — “One of your relatives in the capital has spread the rumor that you burned the tablets, what are we to believe?” “Since I omitted the sacrifices, my relatives regard me as an enemy, and reprimand me saying, ‘That being so he will surely burn the tablets.’ Their words of blame, as they spread, made a noise, and it was thus that it was doubtless concluded that I had destroyed them<sup>20</sup>.” — The governor addressing me again said: — “Do you know Hong Nak-an?” “I know him by name, but I have never seen him.” “Hong Nak-an and his friends reported to the minister against you, and he sent me orders. This is the cause of this whole affair. But the rumor that goes around that you didn’t bury your parents must have some basis; how could one say such words in the air?” “I really don’t know what’s causing these noises. At the time of the burial, the plague was in my house, my relatives and friends did not come, and not being able to have relations with outsiders, I made all the funeral ceremony with the men of the village only. Is that where the noise came from? I really don’t know the cause.” — “Among you, there are certainly masters with whom you discuss and whom you question, who are they? — “In the Religion, as I have already said, there is neither master nor disciple, as we understand it here; with all the more reason in this kingdom, where no one has been able to do anything but read a few books, who would dare to boast of having best studied the doctrine and would like to call himself a master?” “What an amazing being you are, to know without having learned?” “As I know a few characters, it is enough for me to have opened a book and read it.” “Are you a licensed *jinsa*?” — “I am.” “What year did you become one?” — “In the spring of the year 1783.” — Then, after having questioned me about my relationship with various persons; he said to me: — “It is said that in your religion, you rejoice in sufferings and tortures, and you like to die under the sword; is it believable?” — “To desire to live, and to fear death, is a sentiment common to all; how could we be as you say?”

“We were sent back, and when we arrived at the prison, it was already dark.

“On the 1st of the eleventh lunar month, at daybreak, our own mandarin called us, made us sit in a kind of vestibule, and commanded a praetorian to make us recite the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues. We recited them; he took our words in writing and sent them to the governor. Shortly after, this mandarin called us back and, after some exhortations, he told us; “What you said yesterday is not the truth and is not enough to pass judgement. And then, this religion, in spite of its Ten Commandments, does not contain the relationship between king and subject. This is called a doctrine without a king, or which ignores the king.” “It is not so,” I replied, “the King is the father of the whole kingdom, and the mandarin, the father of his district; we must therefore render to them the duties of piety; now all this is included in the fourth commandment.” — “If so, you must put notes to this effect in the fourth commandment, and present it annotated. The religion of Europeans is in our eyes only a superstition. But, you others, if you follow it because you believe it to be true, and because you know that it is not similar to that of Fo who ignores the parents and the king, what reason have you not to erect the tablets, and not to make the sacrifices to the parents? Even if you don’t offer food, you probably have some other way to show your filial piety. If all this exists among you, it must be indicated in detail. Moreover, yesterday you said that the desire for life, and the fear of death, are sentiments common to all; it is therefore right to reflect and, in making your declarations, to put forward the principles of fidelity to the King and filial piety, in order to find by this means the means of preserving your life.”

“The mandarin of Impi<sup>21</sup>, charged with examining the affair, also came near me, and spoke to me in a calm tone, and by way of advice. I replied: - “Everything you tell me is in line with my wishes, only

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<sup>20</sup> (Dallet Note 29: Here, as well as in the two written defenses that follow, the confessors affect to hide the fact of having burned the tablets of their ancestors, before burying them. It was a passing act of weakness, caused no doubt by a remnant of misunderstood respect for the prejudices of their nation. Further on, we will see them courageously confessing that they burned them, and going to execution as a result of this confession. These passages from Paul's account, to his disadvantage, show how faithfully and accurately he relates what happened.)

<sup>21</sup> 임피 Impi 臨陂 Now 전북 군산시 Gunsan-si 群山市

I cannot explain everything clearly in person. If you will give me a praetorian and some brushes, I will have everything written down in detail.” So he took me to another apartment, with orders to write a defense and present it. I sat down, and dictated the following<sup>22</sup>.

“For the cause of the accused Yun. Early in the morning, I gave myself up to work to prepare myself for the examinations, with the thought of fulfilling public offices. My humble desires were limited to trying to satisfy the duties of devotion to the King, of piety towards my parents, and of friendship towards my brothers. In the spring of the year *gye-myo* (1783), I obtained the diploma of licentiate *jinsa*. The following year, having traveled to the capital during the winter, I happened to go to the middle-class man Kim Beom-woo in the Myeong-ne-bang-gol district. There were in this house two books entitled, one: True principles on the Lord of Heaven, and the other: The Seven Capital Virtues. Going through them, I saw that the Lord of Heaven is our common father, creator of heaven, earth, angels, men and all things. He is the one that Chinese books call *Shang-di*. Between heaven and earth man was born, and although he receives flesh and blood from his parents, in fact it is God who gives them to him. A soul is united to his body, but the one who united them is still God. The basis of devotion to the King is the order of God, the basis of piety towards parents is also the order of God. Comparing the whole thing with the rule given in the sacred books of China, to serve the *Shang-di* wholeheartedly and with the greatest care, I thought I saw a great deal of conformity there. The practice is contained in the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Capital Virtues. The ten commandments are: 1° Worship one God above all things. 2° Do not take the name of God in vain to make false oaths. 3° Observe feast days. 4° Honor father and mother. (The gloss says that the king being the father of the whole kingdom, and the mandarins, fathers of the peoples of their district, they must also be honored.) 5° Not to commit homicide. 6° Not to commit impurity. 7° Do not steal. 8° Do not bear false witness. 9° Do not desire your neighbor’s wife. 10° Do not unjustly desire the goods of others. These ten commandments relate in short to two points which are: to love God above all things, and to love all men as oneself. The seven capital virtues are: 1° Humility, to combat pride. 2° Charity, to combat jealousy. 3° Patience, to fight anger. 4° Generosity in alms, to combat avarice. 5° Temperance, to combat gluttony. 6° The repression of concupiscence, to combat lust. 7° The assiduity to good, to fight laziness. All this being clear, precise and easy to help in the practice of virtue, I borrowed these two books, I put them in my sleeve and, when I returned home, in the provinces, I copied them.

“In the spring of the year *eul-sa* (1785), I sent them back to their owner. It was only three years later that, having studied and meditated on these books, I began to practice them seriously. Two years later, I learned that this doctrine was strictly prohibited, I burned or washed these volumes and did not keep them at home. I have therefore learned the Christian doctrine from no one, just as I have communicated it to no one. But, having once recognized God for my father, I could not avoid following his orders. However, the tablets in use among the nobles, being prohibited by the Religion of the Lord of Heaven, since I am of this Religion I could not do otherwise than to conform to what it prescribes. The fourth commandment commanding us to honor our father and mother, if in fact our parents were really in these tablets, every man who professes the Religion should honor them. But these tablets are made of wood. They have no flesh, blood, or life relationship with me. They had no part in the labors of my birth and education. The soul of my father or my grandfather once out of this world, can no longer remain attached to these material objects. Now, the denomination of father and mother being something so great and so venerable, how could I dare to take an object made and arranged by a workman, make it my father and my mother, and really call it so? It is not based on right reason, so my conscience could not submit to it; and even if I should, by that, according to you, derogate from my nobility, I do not want to make myself guilty towards God. So I buried my tablets under the floor of my house. The rumor spread that I

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<sup>22</sup> The text of the Defense was added here by Dallet. It was sent to Paris separately in 1859 and is in Volume 6 of Daveluy’s Archive (Letters). In the text of Volume 5 Daveluy had written: “the copies (of the Defense) that I have seen are inexplicable in several places, I must therefore wait until new research makes it possible to translate it.”

had burned them, but the Religion not giving us a formal precept on this subject, I do not know which lips formulated the accusation, and which ears heard it.

“As for the offering of wine and food to the dead or their tablets, it is also a thing forbidden by the Religion of the Lord of Heaven, and those who follow it must conform to its laws. Indeed, when the Creator arranged the different species of creatures, he wanted material creatures to use material things, and immaterial creatures to use immaterial things. This is why virtue is the nourishment of the soul, as material nourishment is that of the body. Were one to have excellent wine and delicious dishes, one could not nourish the soul with them, for the reason that an immaterial being cannot be nourished with material things. The ancients said, “The dead are to be served as when they were alive,” and you agree that this is a basic maxim in the books of this country. Now, since during life their soul could never nourish itself with wine and other food, with all the more reason it cannot after death. However pious a man may be to his parents, he does not offer them food while they sleep, because sleep is not a time for eating. So much the more, when they are asleep in the long sleep of death, to offer them food would be a vain thing and a false practice. Now, how could a child bring himself to honor his deceased parents by vain and false practices? Thus, putting aside the use of foods which have no real flavor for the parents, one should apply oneself with all one’s strength to the practice of virtue in order to bring its effects to them, and at the same time, nourish our soul, that is the true way, the right doctrine. And, I repeat, even if, in professing it, I derogate from my nobility, I do not want to render myself guilty towards God. Moreover, consider that the common people who do not erect the tablets, are not therefore in opposition to the government, that the nobles who, because of their poverty, do not make all the sacrifices according to the rules, are not treated in a harsh manner. It therefore seems to me, in my humble thought, that not to erect tablets and not to offer sacrifices to the dead, while practicing in my house the faithful observance of the Religion of the Lord of Heaven, is in no way a violation of the laws of our kingdom.

“I am also accused of prohibiting condolences after the death of parents. To make and receive visits of condolence in such cases is a duty of humanity. How could a well-born child resist it? If you don’t believe me, there are people who have come to pay me visits of this kind, you only have to order an information, and you will recognize the truth of what I say.

“It is added that I did not bury my parents. My mother died this year in the fifth lunar month, and I performed the burial ceremonies on the last day of the eighth lunar month. As for what concerns the burial, the coffin, the tears, the mourning clothes, etc., the Christian Religion recommends us to do everything with the greatest care. I did these ceremonies and chose a suitable place, as all others do. The plague being then in my house, I was not able, it is true, to contact outsiders, and my relatives and friends were not all able to attend the funeral, but all the people of the village, big and small, came and took part in it. Here again you only have to take information to see that the widespread rumors are false and slanderous. This word: Christian Religion, is an instrument which people use to raise all blame. One speaks of it to another, this one to a third; one lie spreads to another, and so little by little it has come to be said that I refuse to receive the usual condolences, that I don’t even bury my parents. The accusation of having burned my tablets is also made in the air and without proof; they use it to charge me and accuse me again. They claim, moreover, that I am a bishop of the Christians. In all the kingdoms of Europe there is, it is true, the dignity of bishop, but it is not given to children or novices, even less would it be given to me who live in a secluded place, in the depths of a province, who have neither seen nor heard anything, who alone, by means of two or three volumes, have worked for my personal sanctification, who have received no lessons from anyone, and have had no share in propagating this doctrine. To say that I am a bishop is too ridiculous, and I have no answer. Born of noble parents, having at last more or less discovered the origin of heaven and of man, and the commandments of devotion to the King and of filial piety, my feeble desires were limited to cultivating virtue, and to trying to serve God properly. Beyond that, I have nothing more to expose.

“As for the accused Gwon. Being first cousin of Yun Ji-chong by his mother, and residing in the neighborhood, I saw at his house, and I borrowed from him the books entitled: True principles on God and Treaty of the seven capital virtues. That was many years ago. This was before Ji-chong had burned

or washed these books, I did not copy them and only read them. I have, it is true, ceased to offer the sacrifices, but I have neither burned nor destroyed the tablets, the boxes are still with me, and the Mandarin of Jinsan having noted everything in the inventory that he made, there is no need for me to say more about it. From the moment I started to practice the Religion, all my relatives looked upon me with displeasure, and poured out all kinds of blame on me. Then, seeing that I no longer made the sacrifices, they all said with one voice: ‘Since he no longer makes the sacrifices, the tablets have become useless, and he will certainly end up burning them.’ To this word thrown into the air, each one added again and spread it everywhere, and that is why I am a prisoner today. Moreover, having lost my father and my mother at an early age, I have not had the opportunity, since I practiced the Religion, to perform the burial ceremonies for my parents. Apart from that, all I could say is no different from what Tsi-tsiung-i said, and I have nothing more to expound.

“By means of the praetorian, I had these two defenses presented to the Mandarin of Impi. He read them carefully, put them into his sleeve, and went to the governor’s criminal court, giving orders that we should be kept waiting at the door. It was around noon, and we sat down to wait. A long time later we were called, and the governor said first to James Gwon: “Have you really kept the tablets? Just now you said you had them, and yet the mandarin of Jinsan, in his report, said that he only saw four empty boxes and no tablets; what is that about?” James replied: “When I came from Jinsan, to the governor, I was told that everything had to be declared, as was stated in the mandarin’s report. Fearing therefore, if I said too much, that the mandarin would be wronged on this occasion, I simply told the governor that the boxes of the tablets were still at my house; but, in fact, my tablets are no longer there, I buried them.” “Where did you bury them?” asked the governor. James indicated the place, but added that a landslide having taken place since, we could probably not find the place. “You didn’t bury them alone, I imagine; there was a man who dug the earth, he must serve as a witness.” “As, in this affair, I feared to be seen by any one, I called no one, and buried them with my own hands.” The governor, addressing me, said: “And you, how did you act?” “I have declared everything in my written defence, please don’t question me any more.” “Did you bury the tablets whole, or only after burning them? Depending on whether you burned them or not, your guilt will be more or less serious. In any case, it will take me a few days to find out what is going on, what advantage will you have?” “I burned them, then buried them.” “If you honored them like your parents, you might go ahead and bury them, but to burn them! Can this ever be done?” “If I had thought they were my parents, how could I have brought myself to burn them? But knowing very clearly that in these tablets there is nothing of my parents, I burned them. Besides, whether they are buried or burned, they always return to dust; there is therefore nothing that makes one of these acts more serious than the other.”

“The governor, after ordering us to come up and sit on the torture board, made us sign our judgment and said to me: — “Do you acknowledge that you have been condemned justly for having burned the tablets of the dead?” “If I had burned some tablet, thinking that the parents are locked up there, the tortures would be just; but as I have done so, knowing very clearly that there is nothing of my parents there, what fault can I have committed?” “If you were in Europe, your words might be right, but being in our kingdom, you must be punished according to the law.” “In our country, after five generations, everyone, even the nobles, buries the tablets, do you punish them severely for this?” — “According to the decision of the saints, it is after five generations that the duties of kinship end for man.” At these words, the governor having ordered me to be beaten, I received ten blows. The governor then said: “You who are noble, are you not suffering in this torture?” — “How could I not suffer, since I am of flesh like you?” “Have you no regrets?” “As the Christian Religion does not specifically order the burning of a tablet, I might, if need be, regret having done so lightly; apart from that, I have nothing that I can regret.” The governor orders another valet to beat me, and they give me another ten blows. Then the governor said to me: — “Were you to die under the blows, you must abandon this religion.” “If I were to deny my supreme Father, alive or dead, where could I ever go?” “If your parents or the King pressed you, would you not yield to their voice?” To this question I made no answer. “As for you, you know neither parents nor king.” “I know both parents and king very well.” “

Here ends Paul's account. We have noticed that he did not answer the penultimate question: it was in no way out of hesitation, but so as not to offend the customs of this country which do not allow a negative answer when the King is involved. For the rest, his silence was well understood by the judges. So the governor gave him ten more blows; which was the thirty strokes fixed by the law.

After that, Paul and James were brought back and locked up in the prison. Night had already come. Following these interrogations, the governor sent his report to the king.

The King of Korea was then Jeongjo<sup>23</sup>. He was forty years old, and he had governed the kingdom for fifteen years. History represents him as a wise, moderate, prudent prince, a friend of science and a just appreciator of the merits of his subjects. He received the Governor's report, but he seemed in no way disposed to press matters to an extreme. However, the enemies of the Christian Religion showed themselves more and more threatening: from all sides came addresses to the King, petitions to ministers, demanding the punishment of the culprits and the eradication of this new doctrine, which overthrew all the foundations of the society. More<sup>24</sup> than thirty pieces of this kind appeared from the ninth to the twelfth lunar month of this year. Frightened by these demonstrations, Prime Minister Chae, although far from being personally hostile to the Christians, entered into the views of the most violent accusers, and urged the King to condemn Paul Yun and James Gwon to capital punishment. This conduct surprised many people, for the minister belonged to the Nam-in party, like the leading Christians, and moreover, he was related by blood or friendship with most of them. But the fear of losing his credit and perhaps his dignity, the desire to preserve his fortune and that of his family, made him a persecutor. We will see later that the justice of God punished him, even in this life, for his cowardice.

Yielding to the entreaties of his minister, the King finally consented to sign the decree condemning Paul Yun and James Gwon to be beheaded. Their heads were to be exposed in public for five days, in order to frighten the neighboring populations, and to prevent them from following the new Religion. The decree, bearing the royal sanction, was dispatched to the governor of Jeonju. On receiving the sentence, the two confessors were immediately led from the prison to the place of execution. A huge crowd of pagans and Christians followed them. James, weakened by the blows he had received, contented himself with pronouncing from time to time the names of Jesus and Mary. Paul, more robust, advanced with an air of joy, going to death as to a feast, preaching Jesus Christ with so much dignity that not only the Christians, but the pagans themselves were delighted to admiration.

Arriving at the place of execution, the presiding officer asked them if they would obey the King, return the ordinary worship to the tablets of their ancestors, and renounce the foreign religion. On their negative answer, the officer ordered Paul Yun to read the death sentence, confirmed by the King, and written on a board, according to the custom of the kingdom. Paul immediately took it and read it aloud. He then laid his head on a large block, repeated several times the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and, with the greatest coolness, signaled to the executioner to strike. The executioner cut off his head with a single blow. Then came the turn of James, who also never ceased to invoke Jesus and Mary. He had his head cut off immediately after his cousin. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, on the thirteenth day of the eleventh lunar month of the year *sin-hae* (December 8, 1791). Paul Yun was thirty-three years old, and James Gwon forty-one.

The King, however, repented of having yielded to the entreaties of his minister. He foresaw that, according to the mores and customs of the country, this first act would become the law of the State, and that thereafter they would continue to put to death those who followed the new religion. An extraordinary courier was hastily sent to the governor of Jeonju to have the execution stayed. But it was too late; Paul Yun and James Gwon had already obtained the crown of martyrdom.

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<sup>23</sup> 정조 King Jeongjo 正祖 (1752-1800), known until 1899 as Jeongjong 正宗

<sup>24</sup> In fact, far more than thirty.

As the King had foreseen, the enemies of the Religion have always relied on this sentence ever since, to have the death sentence of Christians considered as a law of the State, and the first public execution was the main and often the sole cause of many of those which followed. The bodies of the two martyrs remained unburied for nine days. To intimidate the Christians, satellites were placed at the place of execution to guard them day and night. On the ninth day, the relatives who had obtained permission from the King to bury them, and their friends who had come to their funeral, were greatly astonished to see the two bodies without any mark of corruption, vermilion and flexible as if they had been beheaded the same day. Their astonishment redoubled when they saw the block on which they had had their heads cut off, and the board on which the sentence of death was written, sprinkled with liquid blood and as fresh as if it had been spilled a moment before. These circumstances seemed all the more surprising since in the month of December, the excessive severity of the cold, say the Koreans, causes all the liquids to freeze in the vases which contain them. The pagans, full of admiration, cried out against the injustice of the judges and proclaimed the innocence of the two confessors. Some even, touched by the prodigy which they had carefully examined, were converted. With eyes bathed in tears of joy, the Christians blessed the Lord. They soaked a large number of handkerchiefs in the blood of the martyrs, and sent some fragments to the Bishop of Peking, with the circumstantial history of what had happened. The neophytes claim that a man abandoned by the doctors and close to death was cured in an instant, after drinking the water in which the plank sprinkled with blood had been dipped. They also report that several dying people, who were made to touch a handkerchief stained with this same blood, were instantly cured<sup>25</sup>.

The example of Paul and James had a tremendous influence on the early Christians in Korea. Their names have remained famous, and Paul especially is, even today, in great veneration among the faithful. He left a thirteen-year-old daughter, who temporarily retired to the house of Thomas Kim, Praetorian, a former disciple of her father. During the day she hid in the garden, and at night she came into the house. Later she was able to be married, according to her condition, into the Song 宋 family, at Soutpang<sup>26</sup>, district of Gongju. Her mother followed her to her husband, and continued, it is said, to practice the Religion. Since that time Christians have had no further contact with this family.

A few days after the ordeal of Paul Yun and James Gwon, the Korean government displayed their sentence and the news of their death, in all the towns and villages, in order to frighten the people and prevent new conversions. But God delights in foiling the plans of his enemies. This official publication gave a very great sensation to the trial of the two confessors, made known the Christian Religion to many men who did not even know its name, and contributed much to the propagation of the Gospel. Today as always, in Korea as in the rest of the world, this word is still true: *Sanguis martyrum semen christianorum*. The blood of martyrs is a seed of Christians.

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<sup>25</sup> (Dallet Note 30: *Nouvelles lettres édifiantes*. — Paris, 1820. — Tome V, p. 274.) (The French text of the *Relation* from Mgr Gouvea of 1798).

<sup>26</sup> 숯방이 Soutpang

Chapter 5.: Continuation of the persecution. — Defection of some influential Christians. — Martyrdom of Peter Won.

While the Christian Religion was so gloriously defended before the first tribunal of the southern part of the kingdom, several other Christians were also called to confess their faith, in the capital and in the neighboring provinces.

Francis-Xavier Gwon Il-sin had not been troubled in 1785, despite his courage and his public complaints. But in 1791 he could no longer escape the envy of his enemies. All knew very well what great influence his name, his knowledge and his continual efforts exercised for the propagation of the new doctrine. Also, on the occasion of the affair of Jinsan, Hong Nak-an, Mok Man-jung<sup>1</sup>, and several others, presented an accusation against him, designating him as the main leader and perpetrator of the Christian Religion. Francis-Xavier was therefore arrested and brought before the court of crimes, in the eleventh lunar month of that same year. Unable to obtain his recantation, the mandarins put him to the torture several times, and employed extraordinary torments to overcome his perseverance. But Xavier stood firm. He clearly made his profession of faith under the iron and the whip of the executioners: “It is impossible,” he said, “not to serve the great God, creator of heaven, earth, angels and men. For nothing in the world can I deny him, and rather than fail in my duties towards him, I prefer to suffer death.” The tortures had soon reduced his body to a horrible state. However, the King, who knew Xavier Il-sin, and had a great esteem for his fine qualities, could not, despite the complaints of the enemies of the Christian name, bring himself to sign his death sentence. He wished, however, to change his feelings, and commanded them to employ all imaginable means to win him over. According to his orders, a new attack, more dangerous than the preceding ones, was made on the confessor. Caresses, flatteries, promises, insinuations, were successively employed, with all the resources that friendship and compassion can suggest; but without result. They then returned to tortures and torments, and the generous confessor triumphed over suffering, as he had triumphed over the perfidious caresses of the enemy. Weary of the fight, the King, who could not make up his mind to kill Xavier, condemned him to exile on the island Jeju (Quelpaert), and the governor of this island received the order to put his prisoner to the question, three<sup>2</sup> times a month, until he made his submission.

Xavier Gwon therefore remained victorious from these first and terrible assaults from Hell. His faith was intact. He was released from prison, and as the state of his wounds gave cause for concern, he was allowed to stay a few days in the capital, before leaving for his place of exile. He went to live in the house of Yi Yun-ha<sup>3</sup>. There, busy tending to his wounds and getting ready for his long journey, he scarcely expected, perhaps not sufficiently, a final and more violent temptation which was still to assail him. At the King’s instigation, some officials from the criminal court came to tell him that his elderly mother, then eighty years old, could not live long. Once at Jeju, beyond the sea, how could he bear the remorse of having left her alone, and of having deprived her of the presence of her son in her last moments? They insisted on this harrowing picture, and without speaking to him of apostasy, which he always rejected with indignation, they only urged him to make a slight submission to the King, in order to obtain a commutation of sentence, and to be exiled to a less distant place. Xavier, deeply moved by this thought, felt himself weaken. Some say that he made a sign of submission with his hand. Others claim that one of

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<sup>1</sup> 목만중 Mok Man-jung 睦萬中 (1727-1810), a scholar.

<sup>2</sup> The government records says twice a month.

<sup>3</sup> 이윤하 Yi Yun-ha 李潤夏 (1757-1793).

the assistants, seeing him weaken, hastened to make this sign in his name. A third version reports that he wrote the following incomplete and ambiguous sentence: “The doctrine of the Europeans very different from the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius, bad and false.” It was pointed out to him that the middle of the sentence lacked a character necessary to complete it and make it intelligible. Xavier is said to have replied: “Leave me alone, do what you want.” A character was immediately added, so as to give the sentence the following meaning: “The doctrine of the Europeans is very different from the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius: it is bad and false.” Be that as it may, an express message was sent to the King to announce Xavier’s submission. The place of his exile was immediately changed, and he was ordered to go to the city of Yesan. Alas! he didn’t even have time to get there. He had hardly started when illness, caused by his injuries, forced him to stop on the way, and he died in an inn.

We would like to be able to tear from our history this page that the truth has forced us to write. This man whom we have seen so great in his life, so great in the midst of torture, thus branding his last moments with cowardly weakness, what a sight! but also what a lesson! Undoubtedly, the lack of precision of the documents does not allow us to appreciate exactly the scope of his act of submission, and to qualify it as open apostasy, but instead of recounting a triumph, we must remain with a sad heart, in the face of an insoluble doubt. Happy if, after having refused the crown of martyrdom, which the angels were already holding suspended over his head, Xavier Gwon was able, by an act of sincere repentance, to find favor before the God whose worship he had propagated and whose glory he had preached, with so much zeal and success. This is the second example that we encounter, of falls caused by a love for the parents that is too natural. We will find others. Filial piety is a sacred duty, no doubt; but there are still more sacred duties for man, and among the first Korean neophytes, a large number were not sufficiently aware of this.

Peter Yi Seung-hun, whom we have seen retire so shamefully before the fight, was then a magistrate (*hyeongam* 縣監) in the town of Pyeongtaek. Despite his defection, well-known to the public, Hong Nak-an and his followers presented a petition to the court, in which they named him as the leader of the Christians, adding that he had been seen at the prefecture reading books of this sect. They demanded that he be brought before the courts and judged according to the laws. He was also accused of not making the usual prostrations at the temple of Confucius. The facts could not be proven, and Seung-hun, on his part, instead of openly confessing the faith, published a letter exonerating himself from what he called slander.

In this petition of Hong Nak-an against Peter Yi, we read the following sentence: “Among the dignitaries of the kingdom and the most important personages, already seven or eight out of ten have embraced this doctrine. Where will this end?” The exaggeration of these words is obvious, but they clearly show that at that time the Christian Religion had spread greatly in Korea, and that its enemies feared that it would soon invade the whole kingdom. The frightened government had searches made everywhere. On the proposal of Kim Sang-jip<sup>4</sup>, Minister of Crimes, the King ordered that those who did not deliver their books of religion within twenty days, would be prosecuted according to the rigor of the laws. In another royal decree of the 9th of the eleventh lunar month, four days before the martyrdom of Paul Yun and James Gwon, it was said that in the trial of the two cousins, it was not a matter of funerals, but that the two nobles had been put on trial for having dared to attack the tablets of their ancestors. If one endured such a crime, what should one not endure? The King then ordered to lower the rank of the prefecture of Jinsan, where the evil had originated, and to put it below the fifty-five other prefectures of the province of Jeolla. The mandarin of this prefecture was to be censured for not having himself taken the initiative in time to punish the culprits. It was necessary to invite scholars throughout the kingdom to study more deeply the true principles in the classics. In the examinations of each province which were to take place, a more conscientious choice of candidates was to be made, and suspicious individuals carefully eliminated. Finally, all the functionaries were urged to display the greatest possible zeal to

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<sup>4</sup> 김상집 Kim Sang-jip 金尙集 (1723-?)



annihilate the new doctrine. We understand, therefore, how many were the arrests.

We have related above the conversion of Thomas Choe Pil-gong<sup>5</sup>, this courageous man who never stopped preaching the faith, in the streets and in the public squares. He was too famous to escape. Brought before the court, and questioned about his religion, he replied boldly: “Every man must follow the law of the Lord of Heaven, and as for me, I am disposed to always fulfill its duties.” The tortures to which he was subjected after this answer did not shake him. In an ever even voice, he kept repeating the same profession of faith, speaking with such simplicity, frankness and conviction that all the spectators were in awe. The King himself shared this sentiment, and touched with pity for Pil-gong, wished to preserve his life. To this end, he ordered every effort to be made to obtain from him, employing gentleness, a few words of submission. So they set out to seduce Thomas. Tricks, caresses, promises of fortune, everything was employed, but everything was useless. By the orders of the King, the aged father<sup>6</sup> and brother of Thomas were summoned, and by their tears and supplications endeavored to move his generous heart. Thomas was deeply impressed; all the feelings of nature revolted in his soul. He did not surrender, however, and kept repeating that, despite everything, he could not bring himself to deny God, his true king and his true father.

This last attempt having failed, all that remained was to pronounce judgment according to the rigor of the law. Several times the Minister of Crimes asked for the King’s assent, but he was never able to obtain it. Finally, the minister, himself touched with compassion, announced to the King that Pil-gong had made a simple submission, and the prince immediately, highly praising his good spirit and his obedience, had him given a fine place, one of those that can be fulfilled by families of physicians. On another occasion, he again congratulated himself on having restored Pil-gong to better feelings. Had he really yielded to fear, as some claim? or had he only had the weakness not to protest at once and with energy against the words that were falsely attributed to him? We do not know. Be that as it may, he wept bitterly for his fault, resumed his former fervor, and applied himself with more zeal than ever to all his Christian duties. Later we will find his name in the list of martyrs.

Many other Christians arrested about the same time delivered themselves from persecution by apostasy. We can cite among the main ones: Choe In-cheol<sup>7</sup>, Jeong In-hyeok<sup>8</sup>. Son Gyeong-yun<sup>9</sup>, Yang Teok-yun<sup>10</sup>, Choe In-gil<sup>11</sup>, Choe Pil-je<sup>12</sup>, etc., all of whom later had the happiness of suffering martyrdom.

In Naepo we encounter the same examples of weakness. In the district of Gwangju, apostasy of Marcellinus Choe<sup>13</sup> and his numerous companions in prison; in the district of Hongju, apostasy of the family of Seong-hwa; in the district of Dangjin, apostasy of Francis Bae 裴 and many others. Marcellinus Choe and Francis Bae later washed away this fault in their blood. Finally, the saddest defection, the most humiliating for the Christian communities of Naepo, was that of their apostle, Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi Tan-won. Known to all, pagans and Christians, he could not long avoid the pitfalls of the persecutors. He

<sup>5</sup> 최필공 Choe Pil-gong 崔必恭 (1744-1801) Thomas. Blessed.

<sup>6</sup> Actually his father was already dead, it can only have been his younger brothers.

<sup>7</sup> 최인철 Choe In-cheol 崔仁喆 (?-1801). Ignatius. Blessed.

<sup>8</sup> 정인혁 Jeong In-hyeok 鄭仁赫 (?-1801). Thaddeus. Blessed.

<sup>9</sup> 손경윤 Son Gyeong-yun 孫敬允 (1760-1802). Gervase. Blessed.

<sup>10</sup> 양덕윤 Yang Deok-yun 梁德潤 (Dallet mistakenly writes ‘Sang’)

<sup>11</sup> 최인길 Choe In-gil 崔仁吉 (1765-1795). Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>12</sup> 최필제 Choe Pil-je 崔必悌 (1770-1801). Peter. Blessed.

<sup>13</sup> 최창주 Choe Chang-ju 崔昌周 (1748-1801). Marcellinus. Blessed.

was taken and imprisoned at Gongju. We do not know the tortures he had to endure; but it seems certain that he allowed himself to be shaken. A letter from the governor of Gongju, Park Jong-ak<sup>14</sup>, of the 2nd day of the twelfth lunar month, announced to the King the submission of Tan-won. “He apostatized,” says this document, “in the most formal way, testified his pain at having been drawn into bad doctrine mixed with magic, and undertook with an oath to go and dissuade all those he had indoctrinated, in order to bring them back to the true path.” The King replied with an order not to release the culprit until after a positive and complete return, for his conversion was quite recent. However, he was released on the 5th of that same month, and was able to return home. The report of the governor of Hongju is obviously imbued with a monstrous exaggeration. Whatever may have been the faults of Ludovico, his weakness could not have gone so far as to undertake by oath to cause the Christians to apostatize. The best proof is that as soon as he was released, he began to practice all the duties of the Religion. But as he was too well known in Naepo, he decided to emigrate to be less exposed to new perils. On the night of the last day of that year (1791), he bade farewell to his elder brother. Not only more than thirty families of his kindred who lived in this place, but also all the inhabitants of the village, composed of more than three hundred houses, had gathered around him. It was he who had introduced them to Jesus Christ, he who had converted and baptized them; so it seemed that everyone lost a father, a brother, a friend. His departure was a heartbreaking scene. He went to settle in the district of Hongsan, and began to work again in the preaching of the Gospel, although with much less pomp and publicity. We will later have the happiness of recounting his martyrdom.

God, who had, in his secret designs, permitted so many falls, did not want, however, that the enemies of his name should be able to flatter themselves with a complete triumph. Great and glorious examples of faithfulness came to console the nascent Church of Korea. In the district of Myeonjeon, where the arrests had been very numerous, Lawrence Park<sup>15</sup>, seeing the Christians imprisoned for several months, had had the courage to go often to console them in their dungeons. One day, while the prisoners were taking their morning meal, he went and knocked at the mandarin’s door, entered boldly, and, standing in front of this master, cried out: “Beating innocent men, keeping them in prison for months, isn’t that a horrible crime?” The mandarin angrily asked who this man was. He was told that he was an inhabitant of Hongju, brother of Park Il-deuk<sup>16</sup>, then in prison on account of the Religion. Lawrence was arrested immediately. They put a heavy cangue around his neck and beat him violently. Far from letting himself be shaken, “this wooden cangue is too light,” he said to the mandarin, “have me put on an iron one.” The mandarin’s position was becoming difficult: the whole town was in turmoil and murmurs were beginning to be heard, for Lawrence Park was very popular. Not daring to condemn him, he got rid of him by sending him elsewhere. Lawrence appeared successively before the criminal courts of Haemi and Hongju. In the latter, he was subjected to a cruel flogging, but his courage did not fail. He had been imprisoned for a month and a few days, when a dispatch from the court arrived ordering his release.

Kim Pius<sup>17</sup>, the ancestor of Korea’s first indigenous priest, the Venerable<sup>18</sup> Andrew Kim, showed the same constancy before the judges; nevertheless, he could not obtain the crown of martyrdom.

Peter Won Si-chang<sup>19</sup> was happier. He was a native of the village of Eung-jeong-ri, in the district of Hongju, and descended from an honest family enjoying a good fortune. The savage violence of his

<sup>14</sup> 박종악 Park Jong-ak 朴宗岳 (1735-1795)

<sup>15</sup> 박취득 Park Chui-deuk 朴取得 (1769?-1799). Lawrence. Blessed.

<sup>16</sup> 박일득 Park Il-do 朴一得

<sup>17</sup> 김진후 Kim Jin-hu 金震厚 (1739-1814) Pius. Blessed.

<sup>18</sup> 김대건 Kim Dae-geon 金大建 (1821-1846) Andrew. Saint. Martyred in September 1846, was recognized by Rome as having shown “heroic virtues” entitling him to be termed “the Venerable” in 1857. He was among those beatified in 1925 and canonized in 1984.

<sup>19</sup> 원시장 Won Si-jang 元—(1732-1793) Peter. Blessed. His story is taken from Daveluy Archive Volume 5 f. 89.

character had made him nicknamed “the Tiger”. In 1788 or 1789, he was over fifty-five years old, when he heard of the Christian Religion. By an extraordinary grace of God, he converted instantly, but without telling anyone, and one day he left his house, saying: “I have lived in vain for more than fifty years, when I return, you will know the cause of my departure. Do not worry and above all do not wait for me.” He left immediately, and for more than a year there was no news of him. Finally, Peter having reappeared, his family and his friends ran up to him, asking him a thousand questions, to which he replied with a smile: “For more than fifty years, I almost died many times, but now I have medicine which ensures life for thousands of years, I will explain this to you tomorrow.” The next day, indeed, he called together all his relatives, and began to explain to them the origin and the end of this world, the existence of a God creator and preserver of all things, original sin, the Incarnation, the Commandments of God, Heaven and Hell, finally, everything he knew about the Christian Religion. “Here,” he added, “for anyone who has a good will, is the way to live forever. O all of you, receive my words as my testamentary vows, and embrace this divine religion like me.” Grace accompanied his words, all promised to place themselves, from that day, at the service of the great King and common Father of all men.

But what, more than all the speeches, gave Peter a converting force was his good example, it was the triumph he had won over himself. When he returned home, he had completely mastered his character, and showed in the various circumstances of life an unalterable gentleness. People also admired his ardent zeal to relieve the poor by sharing his goods with them, and to exhort the pagans of his acquaintance, of whom he converted more than thirty families. His fervor was so great that, even in the presence of pagans, he always performed his religious exercises. About two years after his conversion, the rumor that his family was entirely Christian, reached the ears of the Mandarin. He sent satellites to seize a cousin of Peter named James; but, on the advice of his friends, James had fled. The satellites addressed Peter: “Where did your cousin go?” “He hid himself for fear of death; how do you expect me to know where he is?” “We have orders from the Mandarin to arrest him as a Christian; but, since he is not here, we will take you in his place.” “Very well,” answered Peter, and immediately he was taken and led to the courtroom before a junior officer who said to him: “Where did your cousin go?” – “I do not know.” “They say your cousin practices the Christian religion; do you practice it too?” – “I practice it.” “Promise not to practice it any more, deny God, and I will warn the Mandarin that all these rumors are pure slander, you will be released immediately.” “I cannot deny God”. They locked him up in a room, and for several days they kept urging him to apostatize. But Peter still refusing, the angry officer sent him to the mandarin. “Is it true,” said this magistrate, “that you follow the Religion of the Lord of Heaven?” – “It is true.” — “Deny your God, denounce your accomplices, and tell me that you will no longer follow it. I will release you immediately.” “Deny God! never! Nor can I denounce other Christians.” “Won’t you denounce your accomplices and declare the books you have at home?” “It is impossible for me.” The furious mandarin subjected him to the torture of bending the bones, and had him beaten seventy blows with the thieves’ board. But Peter suffered everything patiently, never ceasing to expose the true doctrine, on God, on the duties of man towards God and parents, on the vanity of pagan superstitions, etc... Sent back to prison, he appeared again the next day, and to the same questions from the judge, made the same answers.

He suffered again the torture of the bending of the bones and was struck, more cruelly than the day before, with the thieves’ board. His flesh was in shreds, his two shoulders broken, and the bones of his back, all bruised, remained bare. It was in this sad state that he was taken back to prison. Despite his suffering, his face breathed contentment and joy. He began to preach to the jailers, praetorians and satellites, and a few days later, a Christian having come to see him in prison, he received baptism from him, for until then he was only a catechumen. However, the mandarin having made a report to the governor of the province, received the order to kill Peter under the blows. At the third interrogation before the criminal judge, a formidable device was deployed, and a large number of satellites were placed around the confessor to frighten him. The judge said to him: “The desire to save your life has made me use all means to make you return to better feelings; but as you would not listen to anything and that you persisted in wishing death, I informed the governor, and I have received the order from him to make you perish under the blows; know then that this time you are going to die.” Peter replied: “It is my most ardent wish.”

At these words, they tightened his bonds, and they began to subject him to dreadful tortures which lasted all day. Peter endured them courageously, but his body was so crushed that he could no longer use his limbs. They had to take him to the prison, and put in his mouth the food he could no longer take himself.

At last the criminal judge and the mandarin, united, made a last effort to win him over, speaking to him of his children, who were constantly waiting for him and calling him. “This touches me deeply,” replied Peter, “but it is God himself who is calling me, how could I not respond to his voice?” So they had him given the ordinary meal of those condemned to death. Then they began to beat him with more rage than before, so as to kill him as quickly as possible. But he didn’t die. The mandarin, the satellites and the executioners, exhausted with fatigue, said to themselves: “This culprit does not feel the blows, there is no way to end it.” — “I feel the blows,” answered Peter, “but God is there who speaks to me and strengthens me himself.” Hearing these words, the mandarin said: “That rascal has the devil no doubt at his command,” and he struck harder, but in vain. In the end, despairing of killing him thus, the mandarin ordered him to be bound and exposed covered with water to the cold of the night, to freeze him. Peter was therefore tied with a thick rope and water was poured all over his body. Soon he was completely covered in ice. In this torture, he thought only of the passion of the Savior, and repeated: “O Jesus, scourged for me all over your body, and crowned with thorns for my salvation, see the ice with which my body is covered, for the honor of your name.” Then he offered his life to God with thanksgiving. At the second cockcrow, he breathed his last. It was the 17th of the twelfth lunar month of the year *im-ja* (January 1793). Peter was then sixty-one years old.

About this time the persecution lessened much in activity and rigor, especially in the capital. The King, of a naturally moderate character, was averse to measures of violence. He preferred to see caresses, promises, seductions of all kinds used among Christians, and too often this system succeeded in bringing about apostasies, especially among the nobles. In the provinces, things were left almost to the discretion of the governors, who pursued the Christians or left them in peace, according to their whims or their personal prejudices. Also, while some Christian communities enjoyed almost complete freedom, in others, like Naepo, neophytes were always persecuted and abused. In 1794, we find a new persecution in Hongju, without being able to specify the violence and the extent of it. Paul Park Hyeong-hwa<sup>20</sup> then had the misfortune to apostatize. We shall see him gloriously repair this fault in 1827<sup>21</sup>. Paul Hwang<sup>22</sup>, who did not obtain the crown of martyrdom until 1813<sup>23</sup>, was more generous. He was born at Je-un, in the district of Cheongyang, and had long been practicing the Religion fervently, when he was arrested and brought before the mandarin. “Deny your God,” he said to him, “curse him, and I will allow you to withdraw.” — “Insult God?” answered Paul, “that is what the animals themselves could not do. How dare a man who has a spiritual soul?” He was beaten violently with the thieves’ board, but did not falter for a moment and, after a long flogging, was carried back to prison dying. The care given to him by the other prisoners, however, brought him back to life. The mandarin, astonished to learn that he was not dead, condemned him to perform the job of executioner-castigator. Three months later Paul was released. Of the twelve Christians arrested with him, it seems that not one had the courage to imitate him. All extricated themselves from difficulty by words of apostasy.

There is also talk of some acts of persecution in other places. But these were probably only local vexations, of little importance, and only a vague memory has been preserved.

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<sup>20</sup> 박경화 도향 Park Gyeong-hwa Do-hang朴—(1757-1827) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>21</sup> Dallet Volume 1 Book 4, Chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup> 황 바오로 Hwang Paulo (1754?-1813?)

<sup>23</sup> Dallet Volume 1 Book 4, Chapter 1.

Such was the first persecution that the Church of Korea had to undergo, such was the baptism of blood and tears which consecrated this nascent Christianity. When one thinks that, by a particular disposition of God, unique perhaps in the history of Christianity, this Church had been founded, grew and strengthened itself without the help of any pastor, the courage of its martyrs, the constancy of her confessors, the perseverance of her children, her very existence, become a dazzling prodigy.

Undoubtedly not all knew how to confess their faith. The first converts, the most famous propagators of the Gospel, saddened us with the spectacle of their cowardice. Perhaps as a punishment for some secret pride caused by the success of their word, they fell, and dragged many down with them. But it is not the defection of a few that should surprise us, what is truly amazing, which shows a manifestly divine work, is that not all of them apostatized. They had only a very incomplete knowledge of the Religion; they had no other masters than the few Chinese books introduced in secret, possessed only by the most educated; and above all, they had no help from the sacraments. We see every day what are, even with this supernatural help, so many Christians who often receive them. What should be expected of those poor neophytes who hardly knew its name!

And yet, by the unique power of the grace of God, we count, among these neophytes, martyrs, confessors, zealous preachers of the Gospel. Ten years after the baptism of Peter Yi Seung-hun at Peking, we find, despite the persecution, despite the defection one after the other of the most illustrious leaders, more than four thousand Christians in Korea. We find among them the practice of the greatest virtues, charity towards one's neighbor, mortification, chastity, all things so unknown to the pagans and so inexplicable for them. Yes, the finger of God is there.

Relative peace followed the easing of the persecution. Christian communities took advantage of this to draw closer together, to strengthen themselves in silence and prayer, and even to make new conquests. The eminent leaders had disappeared. There remained, in truth, Ambrose Gwon, eldest brother of Xavier, and the illustrious family of the Jeongs, but by character they interfered little in the affairs of Christendom, and we do not see that they ever directed it. Those whom we then find at the head are: John Choe Gwan-cheon<sup>24</sup>, and Mathias Choe In-gil<sup>25</sup>, zealous and capable men of the middle class. They had on their side neither the renown nor the high birth of their predecessors, but the progress of the Religion suffered in no way from it, and although less striking in the eyes of the pagans, was more real and more solid. One would say that Providence, after having made use of these scholars and these nobles, to produce the first shock, let them disappear almost immediately, to show that the Gospel has no need of them, and to make the Korean people understand that it was not a question of one of those philosophical sects to which the name, the position and the science of the adepts give a factitious life for a few days, and which die with their founders. *Non multi sapientes secundum carnem, non multi nobiles... ut non evacuetur crux Christi.* Few wise according to the flesh, few noble, so that the cross of Christ does not lose its power. — I Cor. i, 17.

Here is the portrait that Korean accounts draw of John Choe Chang-hyeon. Head catechist John Choe was one of the first to embrace the Religion. He was a calm, prudent, enlightened man with a generous and resolute heart. He explained the truth precisely and gently. His word was unadorned, and yet all listened to him with satisfaction and great benefit to their souls. Humility, resignation to the will of God, were natural to him, and, although there was nothing extraordinary in his conduct, never was a man more esteemed and more loved by Christians.

The first concern of John Choe and his companions was to seek to obtain a priest. The difficulties born of persecution were almost smoothed out, and the desire of the faithful to possess a minister of God was more ardent than ever. It was therefore decided that Paul Yun Yu-il, who had already twice made the

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<sup>24</sup> 최창현 Choe Chang-hyeon 崔昌顯 aka 관천 Gwan-cheon 冠泉 (1754-1801) John. Blessed.

<sup>25</sup> 최인길 Choe in-gil 崔仁吉 (1765-1795) Matthias. Blessed.

trip to Peking, should put himself at the head of the expedition, and that Sabas Ji Chang-hong would accompany him with some others. During their absence, a house was to be prepared in the capital to receive the priest, and the care of this house was to be entrusted to Mathias Choe In-gil.

The courageous deputies therefore left, following the embassy, towards the end of the year 1793. God protected them on the way, and they arrived happily at the end of their journey.

Book 2 : From the entry of Fr. Zhou into Korea, until his glorious martyrdom.  
1794-1801.

Chapter 1.: Entry of Father Zhou into Korea. — Martyrdom of his introducers. — Works of Father Zhou.

We have seen that in 1790, the Bishop of Peking had promised the representatives of the Korean Church, Paul Yun and John-Baptist Woo, to send them a pastor soon. He kept his word to them, and in the month of February 1791, John dos Remedios, a secular priest from Macao, appointed by him as a missionary in Korea, left Peking<sup>1</sup>. Every year, when the Korean embassy returns to the kingdom, a fair is held on the borders of China and Korea, and a large number of merchants from both nations go there to trade. It had been agreed with the Korean envoys that the priest would come to that year's fair. Korean Christians, who would be recognized by certain signs, would also be there, to receive him and to introduce him to their country. After twenty days of walking, John dos Remedios arrived on the borders of Korea, but the Korean Christians, prevented by the persecution that was so violent then, did not appear<sup>2</sup>. Ten days passed, the fair ended, the embassy returned to Korea, and the zealous missionary, full of sorrow at the failure of his enterprise, was obliged to return to Peking, with the Chinese who accompanied him.

After sending Fr. dos Remedios to Korea, Bishop Gouvea wrote to Pope Pius VI, telling him the news of the wonderful establishment of the Church in that country. His letter arrived in Rome in 1792. Great sorrows were then afflicting the Sovereign Pontiff, and it was in the midst of the anguish of this terrible time, that he learned that at the extremity of the East, new sons had been born to the holy Roman Church, and that our Lord Jesus Christ already had witnesses, in a country where until then his name had not been preached. Reading this letter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ shed tears of joy, and from the bottom of his soul gave a first blessing to this nascent church. Cardinal Antonelli replied to the Bishop of Peking: "Our excellent Sovereign Pontiff has read with the greatest avidity the history which you have traced of this very happy event. He shed very sweet tears and experienced an ineffable pleasure in being able to offer to God these first fruits from such distant lands." Further on, he added: "His Holiness loves with paternal tenderness these new children, these illustrious athletes of Jesus Christ. He desires to grant them all kinds of spiritual goods. Although absent in body, he sees them with the eyes of the spirit, embraces them tenderly, and imparts to them with all his heart the apostolic blessing." Finally he announced to the Bishop of Peking that the Pope, pastor of the universal Church, entrusted to his care and direction this new church, daughter of that of Peking.

After the return of Fr. dos Remedios, the bishop was three whole years without any news from Korea. This prolonged silence was a bad omen. Moreover, a few words uttered by people accompanying the embassy in 1792, had made him suspect that Christians were being persecuted, and to understand why none of them had come to receive the priest. It was only a year later, with the arrival of Paul Yun<sup>3</sup> and Sabas Ji<sup>4</sup>, that he was able to know all the details of this first persecution. It was obvious that it was necessary at all costs, and as soon as possible, to help this desolate Church. The bishop understood this, and immediately conferred with the couriers on the means of sending a priest to their country. John dos Remedios, the first designated missionary, was dead. To replace him, the bishop cast his eyes on a young

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<sup>1</sup> Where he had been ordained a priest four years earlier.

<sup>2</sup> It seems that in fact it was the priest who failed to appear at the appointed time and place.

<sup>3</sup> 윤유일 Yun Yu-il 尹有一 (1760-1795) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>4</sup> 지황 Ji Hwang 池瓚 (1767-1795) Saba. Blessed.

Chinese priest, the first fruits of the episcopal seminary of Beijing. His name was James Zhou<sup>5</sup>, and he was a native of the great town of Suzhou, in the province of Jiangnan. The Portuguese have always referred to him as Fr. James Vellozo<sup>6</sup>. He was then only twenty-four<sup>7</sup> years old; but his great piety, his skill in Chinese literature and in the ecclesiastical sciences, his countenance quite similar to that of the Koreans, decided the Bishop of Peking to choose him for this beautiful and perilous mission.

Father James Zhou, provided with all the ordinary and extraordinary powers to exercise the apostolic ministry, therefore left Peking in the month of February 1794. After twenty days of walking, he arrived at the borders of Korea. Christians were waiting for him to introduce him and take him to the capital; but as the surveillance was then very severe, in consequence of the orders given during the persecution, it was agreed that the attempt should be deferred until the month of December. While waiting for the appointed time, the missionary visited the Christian communities of Tartary, neighboring Korea, as the Bishop of Peking had given him the commission to do, in case he could not enter Korea immediately.

In the month of December, Fr. Zhou returned to Pien-men, where Sabas Ji and other Christians had gone to serve as his guides. The priest changed his clothes, arranged his hair in the Korean style, and, towards the middle of the night of December 23, 1794, crossed the Yalu river, the terrible barrier which separated him from Korea. Other Christians were waiting for him on the Korean bank of the river, at Uiju, opposite Pien-men, and guided him to the capital, where he arrived at the beginning of the year 1795. His arrival caused inexpressible joy and consolation to the Christians who received him as an angel descended from heaven.

Fr. Zhou was lodged in the house prepared by Mathias Choe in the northern quarter of the city. He began by having everything necessary prepared for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and devoted himself entirely to the study of the Korean language, in order to be able, as soon as possible, to exercise the holy ministry. On Holy Saturday, he baptized several adults, supplemented the ceremonies of this sacrament for a few others, and received a certain number of confessions in writing. Finally, on Easter Sunday, for the first time in Korea, he had the happiness of celebrating Holy Mass and giving Communion to the people he had confessed the day before.

All was well until June. The Christians, at the height of their desires, all wanted to see the priest and receive the sacraments. Soon the crowds were overwhelming. Father Zhou, unacquainted with the customs of the country, easily received all those who presented themselves, and no one thought of taking the precautions required by prudence. In the meantime, a bachelor named Han Yong-ik (韓永益), of noble family, who had only been a Christian for a few months and had only a weak faith, managed to get himself introduced to the priest. This interview gave birth to a perverse design in his heart. He went to find Yi Byeok's brother, a declared enemy of the Religion, and then in favor at court. He informed him that a Christian priest, Chinese by nationality, resided in the capital, introduced him to the house where he was hidden, and gave him his description. The Prime Minister and the King himself were soon informed of everything. Orders were given to the great criminal judge (chief of police), Jo Gyu-jin (趙奎鎭), to immediately send satellites to seize the foreigner quietly. It was June 27. Fortunately, the Christians, who mistrusted the traitor a little, had spied on his proceedings, and had been able to learn in time his denunciations and the orders of the court. Father Zhou, warned, immediately took refuge with another Christian. Mathias Choe In-gil (崔仁吉) was left alone to guard the threatened house. He might have sought his salvation in flight, but in order to place the priest entirely in safety, he formed the generous resolution to pass himself off as the Chinese man they were looking for. As he was from a

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<sup>5</sup> Father Zhou Wen-mo 周文謨 (Korean pronunciation 주문모 Ju Mun-mo) (1752-1801). James. Blessed.

<sup>6</sup> There was a custom of Chinese priests attached to Macao taking Portuguese names.

<sup>7</sup> A mistake was made in copying texts at some point. Fr. Zhou was not 24 but 42 at this time.



family of interpreters, and spoke Chinese, he hoped in this way to succeed more easily in his purpose. So he cut his hair to better impersonate the foreigner, and peacefully awaited the arrival of the satellites. When they arrived at the house, they rushed at him, shouting: "Where is the Chinese?" "It's me," replied Mathias calmly. He was immediately seized and dragged before the judge. But it didn't take long to realize the mistake. The Chinese priest had been reported as sporting a fairly full beard, and Mathias lacked it. The search for the priest was therefore set afresh, and he would probably not have escaped prosecution for long had not the King, who feared to cause many innocent people to suffer, ordered that the matter be proceeded with more carefully with moderation.

However, Paul Yun and Sabas Ji, the two introducers of Father Zhou, had also been taken the same day, and reunited with Mathias Choe. The very night of their arrest they were taken to court. Their firmness and the wisdom of their words disconcerted the judges. Clear and generous professions of faith were the only answer they made to all questions about the foreign priest, his arrival and his stay in the capital. In order to extract compromising confessions from them, they were tortured several times, they were overwhelmed with blows, their arms and legs were dislocated, their knees were crushed, but nothing could weaken their courage or tire their patience. A celestial joy flooded their hearts and spread even on their faces. Finally, the King, yielding to the repeated complaints of the enemies of the Religion, signed their death warrant. The sentence was executed that very night in the prison, and the bodies of the martyrs were thrown into a river. It was the 12th day of the fifth lunar month (June 28, 1795). Sabas Ji was twenty-nine years old, Paul Yun was thirty-six, and Mathias Choe thirty-one.

Such was the magnificent reward which God gave to these three generous Christians who had, at the risk of their lives, introduced a priest into Korea, and who, by their piety, deserved this fine eulogy from the Bishop of Peking. "The Church of Peking and I," he wrote in 1797, "were witnesses to the piety and devotion of Paul Yun during the two visits he made to Peking in 1790. There he received the sacraments of Confirmation, of Penance and Eucharist, with such striking fervor that many of our Christians could not restrain their tears, in the joy and admiration they felt to find in this neophyte, the modesty, the words, the exemplary virtues of an old Christian consummate in the practice of the Gospel. In 1793, we also witnessed the piety of Sabas Ji, during the forty days he spent in Peking. The faithful of this city were edified by his devotion, his great fervor, and the outpouring of tears with which he received the sacraments of Confirmation, Penance and Eucharist. As for Mathias Choe, we were not eyewitnesses to his faith, because he did not come to Beijing, but I learned from the Korean missionary that this Christian was one of the first catechists, and that he distinguished himself by his fervor, his piety and his zeal to spread the glory of God<sup>8</sup>."

Five other Christians had been arrested with our three martyrs, and accused like them of having introduced the foreign priest into Korea; but they maintained, with reason, that they had taken no part in his coming into the kingdom. They wanted to make them apostatize. They refused, and confessed their faith in the midst of the most cruel tortures. After fifteen days of torture, they were set free, and went away joyful, praising and blessing God. As for the whistleblower Han Yeong-ik (韓永益), he reaped no profit from his betrayal. In the fall of that same year, he died miserably, far from his family and his home. It is said that at the time of his death he kept moaning and shedding tears. May he, by a sincere repentance, have obtained from God the forgiveness of his crime!

While those who had introduced him into Korea were being put to death, and searches were being made on all sides to seize him, Father Zhou was hidden in the woodpile of a Christian woman. This courageous neophyte, who thus risked her life to save him, was called Colomba Gang Wan-suk<sup>9</sup>. As she played a great role in the history of Christianity at this time, we will relate her life in some detail. She

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<sup>8</sup> (Dallet Note 31.: *Nouvelles Lettres édif.* Vol. 5.)

<sup>9</sup> 강완숙 Gang Won-suk 姜完淑 (1761-1801) Columba. Blessed.

was born in Naepo, of a pagan family of semi-nobles, or, according to the Korean expression, noble bastards. This is the name given to families resulting from a misalliance. From her childhood, Colomba showed a remarkable penetration of mind, joined to an upright, firm and courageous heart. She did not indulge in bad deeds, and bore her mother's cantankerous character with great patience. Her lofty soul was already longing for something great. She applied herself to practicing the maxims of the religion of Fo (Buddha), and had even formed, it is said, the intention of leaving the world, to devote herself entirely to the religious exercises of this sect.

Colomba was married to a demi-nobleman from the district of Deoksan, named Hong Ji-yeong (홍지영 洪芝榮), who had lost his first wife. He was a man of extreme simplicity, entirely devoid of the qualities of intelligence, with whom Colomba found it very difficult to live in good harmony, and who caused her much grief. Nevertheless, she made every effort to please him, and by her kindness and gentleness, she knew how to win the affection of her mother-in-law, whose character was rather difficult. Colomba had been married for some time, when for the first time she heard a relative of her husband, named Paul, speak of the Religion of the Lord of Heaven. This word struck her. "The Lord of Heaven," she said to herself, "must be the Lord of Heaven and earth. The name of this religion is right, and its doctrine must be true." She asked for books, and as she read them, her heart understood the greatness and beauty of Gospel truth. She attached herself to the Religion with all the powers of her soul and, from her first steps in Christian life, aspired to heroic virtues. Her assiduity in fulfilling all her duties, her fervor, her mortification were admirable. She immediately applied herself to converting her household, her parents and her friends; and his zeal extended to neighboring villages. Her husband was the principal object of her solicitude. When she exhorted him to become a Christian, he said: "It is true, it is true," but when the enemies of the Religion afterwards decried it, he shook his head in approval, and gave full credence to their words. If his wife reprimanded him, he would shed tears and regret his wrongs, then if bad friends came to see him, he acted as before. Colomba, despite all her efforts, came to nothing, and she saw clearly that she would never be able to get him to practice the Religion seriously.

She also applied herself to converting her mother-in-law. The latter began to serve God and to recite the Christian prayers, but she could not bring herself to give up the worship of the ancestors. Colomba constantly exhorted her, and above all addressed fervent prayers to God, to obtain her complete conversion. Her prayers were finally answered. One day when the mother-in-law was sweeping the hall of the ancestors, a horrible crash was suddenly heard, the beams and columns of the room were shaken. Seized with fright at this strange noise, the cause of which it was impossible to discover, this woman ran to throw herself into the arms of her daughter-in-law and abjured her vain superstitions. After this victory, Colomba further converted her father and her mother, who both died in an edifying manner.

In 1791, when the persecution broke out, Colomba helped the confessors of the faith, preparing their food and carrying it to them in the prisons. She was arrested and brought before the governor of Hongju. We do not know the details of her interrogation, but it seems that she was released without having had to endure any torments, and without having uttered a single word of apostasy. Shortly after, she separated from her husband to whom she entrusted the care of her lands, and accompanied by her mother-in-law, her daughter and Philip Hong, a son whom her husband had had from a first marriage, she came to reside in the capital. The motive which led her to act in this way is not well known to us. Some say it was the desire to live in continence; others assert that she sought only to find herself in the midst of more devout Christians; finally, according to the sentence rendered later against her, she is said to have been chased away by her husband himself. The latter, in fact, frightened by the persecution, and having no desire to practice the Religion, could have ordered her to withdraw from his home. This last explanation is much more probable.

Colomba was therefore in the capital when Father Zhou arrived there. She had even helped Sabas Ji and his companions in their perilous enterprise. The priest quickly distinguished her among all the Christians he could see. Delighted with joy to find, as soon as he arrived, such a devoted auxiliary, he baptized her and gave her the function of catechist in charge of all that concerned the education of women, a job which she discharged with as much activity as intelligence. When the missionary was betrayed and

pursued by the satellites, Colomba, warned in time, conceived the generous idea of saving him. She hid him in the woodpile of her house, and fed him there for three months without anyone knowing, even her mother-in-law and her son Philip. She was, however, greatly distressed at not being able to offer the priest a more convenient shelter, but she dared not confide in her mother-in-law, whom she saw far removed from her own generous dispositions. However, she proceeded to touch her heart. She began to cry and moan almost continuously: she hardly ate and slept. Her mother-in-law, fearing to lose her, wanted to know the cause of her grief. Colomba said to her: “The priest came here, at the risk of his life, to save our souls, and we did nothing to recognize his benefits, and today he is without shelter. Unless I am made of stone or wood, how could I not be deeply distressed at the thought? So I’m going to dress like a man, and travel the country to try to find him and help him.” — The mother-in-law answered, weeping: “If you act thus, who will I have for support! I will therefore follow you and I will die with you.” “Venerable mother,” resumed Colomba, “I am very consoled to see to what degree of virtue you have arrived. I would certainly not be afraid to risk my life to save the missionary, but in such difficult circumstances we could not find him, and we would risk our lives unnecessarily. The Lord of Heaven who knows everything, and who penetrates the hearts of men, sees our good will, and he will perhaps allow the Father to come near us. If he presented himself, would you dare to receive him? If you give me the assurance of your consent, your daughter will immediately have peace of mind. She will resume her first joy, and will fulfill towards you until death the duties of filial piety.” — The mother answered: “I don’t want to part with you, do whatever you want.” Colomba, quivering with joy, immediately ran to the priest’s hiding place and ushered him into the hall of honor. It was there that Father Zhou, protected by Korean custom which prohibits outsiders from entering noble houses, made his habitual residence for three years.

In the month of September 1796, Father Zhou wrote to the Bishop of Peking, to let him know his position and the state of Korean Christianity. The continuous searches by the police, and the redoubling of surveillance, especially at the borders, had prevented him from doing so the previous year. Thomas Hwang Sim<sup>10</sup>, born in Yongmeori<sup>11</sup>, Deoksan district, and one of those who had waited for the priest on the frontier in 1795, was chosen as courier. He had to buy for money a job as a servant to one of the members of the embassy. Having carefully hidden in his clothes the two pieces of silk on which were written the Latin letter of Father Zhou, and the letter of the Christians in Chinese characters, he set out, and on January 28, 1797, arrived at Peking. Bishop Gouvea passed from extreme anxiety to the most lively joy, while reading the letters of the missionary and of the Christians. In his letter, the priest spoke of ways to bring peace to the Korean Church. The best thing in his eyes would have been to ask the court of Portugal for an ambassador who would come to salute the King of Korea, and make an alliance with him. With this ambassador, learned priests in mathematics and medicine would have been sent, who could have established themselves in the country, and whom the Korean government would have treated favorably, out of regard for the King of Portugal. We do not know if the request for this embassy was made. What is certain is that no one was ever sent.

As soon as Fr. Zhou sufficiently knew the Korean language and customs of the country, he took care of the administration of the Christians, but with the greatest precautions. When he was going out Colomba alone knew where he was going. All his dealings were carefully concealed; he had relations only with the most reliable Christians, and the greatest number, especially in the provinces, hardly suspected that there was a priest in Korea. He did not even show himself to all the members of the families who received him, and several times even Christian servants could only guess his presence, which was not publicly acknowledged by anyone. The following excerpt from a letter written by a Christian of the time will give us an idea of the rigor with which the secret was kept.

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<sup>10</sup> 황심 Hwang Sim 黃沁 (1757-1801) Thomas.

<sup>11</sup> 덕산 용머리 Yongmeori (Bishop Daveluy’s note) (Now 충남 예산군 삽교읍 용동리 Chungnam Yesan-gun Sabgyo-eub Yongdong-ri)

The author of this letter is Peter Sin Tae-bo<sup>12</sup>, martyred in 1839. He wrote it in his prison in 1838, on the orders of Fr. Chastan<sup>13</sup>, who carefully collected all the memories of the old men concerning the first times of Christianity in Korea. John Yi Yeo-jin<sup>14</sup> who is mentioned here, is the same person whom we will see later renewing communications with Peking.

“My relative John Yi Yeo-jin and I had been Christians for five years, but not very fervent. We very much wanted to see the priest, and for a long time I had been tiring a Christian friend of mine, a public functionary, with questions. One night I slept with him, and in the morning, in response to my entreaties, he got up, took a pair of children’s stockings from his closet, and gave me these stockings, telling me to put them on. Having looked at them, it seemed to me that a child himself could not put them on, and quite astonished I said: “That is a bad joke. Why do you ask a grown-up to put on children’s stockings?” He answered me: “The Religion being very equitable, there is, vis-a-vis it, neither great nor small, neither noble nor commoner. It’s a bit like those stockings which, flexible and elastic, fit large feet as well as small ones. In the Religion, with fervor, you can see the priest, just as these stockings with a little effort fit well, even a large foot.” Indeed, I managed to put them on. They were stockings from Europe which, made of wool, stretched as wide as you wanted. I multiplied my questions, but uselessly, I did not get another word. I came back ten days later, I questioned other Christians, I sent John Yi in his turn. Absolute silence everywhere. In short, John Yi and I successively finished seven or eight visits to the capital, from which our residence was a hundred and forty li away, and always without success. John Yi even left his family to come and settle in Seoul in order to more easily seize a favorable opportunity... Despite everything, we never had the consolation of seeing the priest. The news of his death reached us later, and only increased our regrets.”

How many other similar steps must have been taken, at the same time, by a great number of souls who were hungry and thirsty for the graces of God! and what a lesson for so many Christians who, living amid the help of the Religion, think so little of profiting by it! We must not, however, blame these severe precautions as exaggerated. The presence of the priest in Korea was known to the government, the searches were continuous, the arrests followed one another every day. Could too much care be taken to retain the sole pastor, on whose head the salvation of the whole flock seemed to rest?

Fr. Zhou being surrounded by such mystery, it is not surprising that the Korean tradition teaches us almost nothing about his apostolic work. We only know that in the capital he sometimes went to see Augustine Jeong Yak-jong<sup>15</sup>, Alexander Hwang Sa-yeong<sup>16</sup> and Antony Hong An-dang<sup>17</sup>. He also visited the Yangje-gung<sup>18</sup> or Pyeol-gung palace several times, and probably stayed there for some time. This palace belonged to a bastard brother of the King named Yi In<sup>19</sup> or Il-wang-son<sup>20</sup>, whose son Dam<sup>21</sup> had been put to death, as guilty of conspiracy. The nobles also wanted the father to be put to death, but the

<sup>12</sup> 신태보 Shin Tae-bo 申太甫 (1769?-1839) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Honoré Chastan (1803-1839) entered Korea late in 1836. He was martyred with Bishop Imbert and Fr. Maubant in 1839.

<sup>14</sup> 이여진 Yi Eo-jin (?-1830) John. Martyr.

<sup>15</sup> 정약종 Jeong Yak-jong 丁若鍾 (1760-1801) Augustine. Blessed.

<sup>16</sup> 황사영 Hwang Sa-yeong 黃嗣永 (1775-1801). Alexis. Martyr.

<sup>17</sup> 홍익만 Hong Ik-man 洪翼萬 (? -1802). Antony. (안당 Andang 安堂 is the Chinese form of Antony). Blessed

<sup>18</sup> 전동磚洞의 양제궁 Yangje-gung 良娣宮(Located in what is now Seoul’s Jongro-gu Susong-dong A ‘detached palace.’

<sup>19</sup> 이인 Yi In 李裨 은언군 (Prince) Eun-eon-gun 恩彦君 (1754-1801) (his father was Crown Prince Sado Seja 思悼世子 )

<sup>20</sup> 일왕손 Il Wang-son 逸王孫

<sup>21</sup> 이담 Yi Dam 李湛 (?-1786)

King would not allow it, and contented himself with banishing him to the island of Ganghwa. There had remained in his Pyeol-gung palace only two women, the wife of the exiled prince, and his daughter-in-law, widow of Dam. A Christian, having pity on their misfortune, spoke to them about the Religion around the year 1791 or 1792. Misfortune had prepared their souls, they were converted, but no one dared to have anything to do with them on the pretext that it might attract trouble. Only the generous Colomba had no such fear; she went to see the two princesses, even took the priest to their house, and made them receive the sacraments. Yi In's wife was Mary Song 宋, and her daughter-in-law Mary Sin 申. They both became very fervent, converted several of their slaves, and joined the Myeongdo brotherhood 'of Christian instruction.' They were happy to receive the priest in their palace. When he was there, he was hidden in a separate room, adjoining the house of Hong An-dang, and communicating with the latter by a hole secretly made in the wall. The exiled prince knew what was going on in his palace, and put no obstacle in their way. However, he himself never became a Christian.

Father Zhou also made several tours in the provinces. He went to the district of Yeosu, to the family of the martyr Paul Yun, his introducer. He resided for some time with Augustine Yu Hang-geom<sup>22</sup>, in Chonami<sup>23</sup>, Jeonju district, Jeolla province. We also know that he passed through the districts of Gosan, Nampo, Gongju, Onyang, and Naepo. But at what precise time did he make these different excursions? with what success? we do not know. The memoirs of the time have left us no details. What is certain is that most of the faithful could not then participate in the reception of the sacraments, because of the inviolable secrecy which everywhere protected the missionary, and other difficulties of all kinds caused by persecution.

The Christians are, moreover, unanimous in praising Fr. Zhou. They represent him to us as indefatigable at work, barely reserving the time necessary for eating and sleeping. At night he exercised the holy ministry; by day he translated books or composed new ones. He fasted, mortified himself, and sacrificed himself entirely to his duty. It even seems that God wanted to enhance by miracles the brilliance of the virtues of his servant. A respectable tradition relates that one day, during his stay in the capital, a fire broke out in the Changgol district. The fire had been burning for twenty-four hours, when the priest, sorry for its frightful ravages, and unable to go himself to the scene, sent the young Song, son of Philip Song, with orders to throw holy water on the flames. The young man acquitted himself of the commission, while Father Zhou remained in prayer, and almost immediately the wind changed, and pushed the flames to the side where only ruins remained.

The prudence of the priest, say the Korean reports, his talents, his zeal, his virtues, placed him above the common run of men. He was surrounded by dangers; nevertheless, similar to the Gyu<sup>24</sup> whose angles have been successfully concealed by surrounding it with a hundred different points, he was able, by dint of precautions and expedients, to save himself from all bad steps. When he entered Korea, the holy Religion of the Lord of Heaven was still in its infancy. The luster of the doctrine was as it were veiled by the great ignorance of Christians. To remedy these evils, he was not satisfied with composing books, and spreading instruction himself, but he corrected abuses with a firm and wise hand, and succeeded in ensuring that all faithfully observed the practices of the faith. He instituted, on the model of a similar association long established at Peking, the Myeongdohoi 明道會 or brotherhood of Christian instruction, which we have mentioned above. The purpose of the associates was to encourage and help people first to gain a thorough knowledge of the Religion themselves, and then to spread it among their Christian and pagan friends. Augustine Jeong Yak-jong<sup>25</sup> was made president of this brotherhood. Father

<sup>22</sup> 유항검 Yu Hang-geom 柳恒儉 (1756-1801) Augustine. Blessed.

<sup>23</sup> 초남이 Chonami (Now 전북 완주군 이서면 남계리 Jeon-buk Wanju-gun Iseo-myeon Namgye-ri)

<sup>24</sup> (Dallet Note 32: The Gyu 圭 is a piece of ivory with which the mandarins of the ancient dynasties are distinguished.)

<sup>25</sup> 정약종 Jeong Yak-jong 丁若鍾 (1760-1801) Augustine. Blessed.

Zhou then designated the places in the city where the assemblies were to be held, named the chiefs who were to preside over them, ruled that the men would attend them separated from the women; in a word, he regulated everything with weight and measure. Excited by his zeal, all the confreres hastened to come and receive the notes which the chiefs distributed month by month to each of the members, assigning to them as patron one of the saints honored by the Church during that month; it was called the note of the patron. This practice gradually spread throughout the kingdom, and produced marvelous fruits.

In all his efforts, the priest was very effectively assisted by Colomba Kang. Inside her house, she took care of the priest, and provided him with everything he needed; outside, she was involved in all important affairs, and God blessed her enterprises by always making them successful. As she joined to a solid education, a great facility of elocution, she converted many people of her sex, among whom a certain number of women of the highest nobility. The law of the kingdom not inflicting any torture on noble women, except in the case of rebellion, these neophytes did not worry about the prohibition of the government.

Colomba also brought together a large number of young girls and instructed them solidly. She was helped in this good work by the virgin Agatha Yun<sup>26</sup>, who had come to join her and of whom we will speak later. These young girls, after their marriage, became so many zealous apostles, preached the Christian faith in their new families, and often converted their relatives and acquaintances. Gifted with extraordinary energy and activity, aided by a special grace from on high, Colomba animated and directed all the works of charity. All Christians loved and admired him. "She exhorted everyone," they say, "with as much firmness as prudence, and disposed of everyone, so to speak, as she pleased. Although there were many devout Christians among men, all willingly submitted to her influence, and conformed to her views with the same precision as the sound of a bell follows the stroke of a hammer. She won hearts by her ardent charity, as fire kindles straw. In complicated cases and great difficulties, she cut through with the same dexterity as a sure hand cuts and divides a tuft of intertwined roots." So we must, in all fairness, attribute to her a large part of the progress that the Religion made at this time. This progress was very considerable, and we can sum it up in a word. Before the arrival of Fr. Zhou, the Christians of Korea numbered about four thousand; a few years later their number rose to ten thousand.

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<sup>26</sup> 윤점혜 Yun Jeom-hye 尹占惠 (?-1801) Agatha. Blessed.

Chapter 2: Partial persecutions. — Martyrdom of Yi Do-gi, of Francis Park, etc. — Death of the king.

We have just summarized the little that is known of the apostolic works of Fr. Zhou during his six-year stay in Korea. Before recounting the glorious triumph which crowned the life of this holy missionary, we must make known the names and acts of the confessors and martyrs who bore witness to Jesus Christ during this period.

The death of the three introducers of the foreign priest did not entirely end the persecution. The enemies of the Religion urged the King to order new prosecutions against the Christians, and this prince, in spite of his moderation, thought himself obliged to give some satisfaction to their resentment. Jeong Yak-Yong<sup>1</sup>, who had a high position at court, was disgraced and sent as guardian of the gates of Geumjeong 金井. He had already apostatized once, and when he arrived in his government post, he had the cowardice to torment some Christians, the better to wash away the crime of being a Christian himself. Pursued in spite of all this by his adversaries, he ended up presenting an address to the King in which his defection was clearly expressed, which allowed him to breathe a little.

Peter Yi Seung-hun had long since abandoned the Religion, and made known his apostasy by a public writing. He was nevertheless sent into exile in Yesan, where he remained for a year. There he again published an apology for his conduct, protesting that he had broken with the Christians, and denied their doctrine; but he was so despised because of his weakness, that no one wanted to believe his words. Yi Ga-hwan<sup>2</sup> himself, leader of the Nam-in party, former minister of public works, was also disgraced and appointed *moksa* 牧使 of the city of Chongju. He is the one we saw, in the early years of the establishment of the Religion in Korea, entering into conference with Byeok, acknowledging the truth of the Religion, but refusing to convert. Yi Ga-hwan was never among the faithful. On the contrary, he had made himself their persecutor when he was *yusu* 留守 at Ganghwa<sup>3</sup>, and in his new post as governor of Chongju he followed the same line of conduct. It is said that he chose the days of abstinence for Christians, to bring together the scholars at his house, and that he had meat served to them, in order to recognize whether or not they practiced the Religion. The three towns just named, Gimjeong, Yesan, and Chongju, had been intentionally chosen for the residence of these disgraced dignitaries. It was known that the Christians there were comparatively very numerous, and they wanted to frighten them and put an obstacle to the conversion of the pagans.

The disgrace of these three influential men, including two apostates and a pagan, shows very clearly that the enemies of the Christians wanted, not only to destroy the new religion, but also to overthrow the Nam-in party, in the person of its principal leaders. As to the King's conduct on this occasion, it is explained to us as follows, in the memoirs of the martyr Alexander Hwang.

“The late king, he said, was not without fears on the side of China. The presence of a priest of this nation in Korea could cause him difficulties with the court of Peking, difficulties all the more serious since it would have been impossible for him to claim his ignorance of the fact, since certain proofs of it had been given in court. On the other hand, he was reluctant, by character, to violent measures. He had never wanted to consent to a general persecution, and it was only by dint of entreaties that they had forced

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<sup>1</sup> 정약용 Jeong Yak-yong 丁若鏞 aka 다산 Dasan 茶山 (1762-1836). John the Baptist.

<sup>2</sup> 이가환 Yi Ga-hwan 李家煥 (1742-1801). As already noted, he was destined to die with the martyrs in 1801, but was not a Christian and therefore not a martyr.

<sup>3</sup> He never held such a position, he was only *buyun* at Yeocheon 驪川府尹 and *moksa* at Chungcheon 忠川牧使

him, in a few particular cases, to sign the death sentences. He would have liked to get rid of the priest quietly, and lead the Christians to apostasy by seductions or threats, rather than by torture. He was very good at unraveling the political hatreds which, among his ministers, disguised themselves under the appearance of zeal for the national religion, but he had not the strength to resist them, and most often closed his eyes on the excesses committed in his name against the Christians, by the different mandarins of the provinces. Most of these, feeling supported at court, gave free rein to their rapacity and their grudges.”

One of their first victims was Thomas Kim, also known as Kim Pung-heon<sup>4</sup>, (a name meaning: township chief or tax collector). Born in the province of Chungcheong, in the district of Cheongyang, of a family of the middle class, he had received some education. His upright and firm character had won him the esteem of his fellow citizens, and it was at the request of the people that he had been made chief of the canton. Having become a Christian, he continued to exercise his office. He fervently practiced the Religion, devoted himself assiduously to prayer and pious reading, carefully instructed his family and lived in perfect harmony with everyone. In the year *pyeong-jin* (1796), he was arrested and taken to the prefecture of Cheongyang where he had to endure the most violent tortures. They went so far as to burn mugwort leaves on his anus, but nothing could make him deny his faith. A plowshare was reddened in the fire, and he was ordered to take off his shoe and step on it. He was about to obey when they stopped him, saying he was mad; it was the holy folly of the Cross. Thomas was sentenced to death. Three days before the execution, they smeared his face with lime, and made him walk around the market three times to the sound of the drum. In the meantime, the mandarin of Cheongyang having been dismissed, the affair was postponed until the arrival of his successor, in spite of the entreaties of Thomas who demanded the execution of the sentence. The new mandarin, after having examined the documents of the trial, released the confessor from prison, placing him on bail in the house of a private individual, and a few days later ordered him to leave the territory of his prefecture. Thomas, sorry for not having been able to obtain the crown of martyrdom, went away moaning, and repeating to everyone, that he had had no happiness, and that henceforth, country, house, family, were nothing. for him. He lived successively in the districts of Puye, Geumsan and Gosan, applying himself to the instruction of Christians, and living in complete destitution of all things. If the faithful gave him new clothes or shoes, he said that beautiful clothes keep up pride, and changed clothes with the first poor person he met. He often had only one meal a day, and his food was of the crudest kind.

In the year 1801, the persecution having become more violent, Thomas led his family into the mountains: “Wait there,” he said, “for the order of Providence. As for me, I always have in my heart the regret of not having suffered martyrdom. The opportunity is beautiful, I will give myself up.” It was represented to him that without him his whole family would die of hunger, and that, moreover, he too must wait for the order of God. It was with great difficulty that they managed to hold him back. He still held out hope of obtaining the grace of martyrdom, but God granted his wishes in another way. A few days later, in the seventh lunar month of that same year, 1801, he fell ill at Angogae, in the district of Yongdam. The day before he died, he predicted that he would die the next day. The moment having come, he had himself carried into the courtyard of the house he lived in, knelt down, and in this humble posture, peacefully breathed his last.

Not all Christians, however, showed such great courage. In 1797, Luke Hong Nak-min<sup>5</sup>, who held a fairly high rank at court, was assigned to present a report to the King on the affairs of the Religion. He was weak enough to write it in ambiguous terms, and without deciding either for or against, but he had no reason to congratulate himself on his cowardice. The King, who knew him to be a Christian, reproached him for his lack of uprightness and frankness, adding that a public dignitary must always

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<sup>4</sup> 김풍헌 Kim Pung-heon 金風憲. Dallet writes P'ong-heu. Pung-heon is not a proper name but the title for an unpaid local policeman.

<sup>5</sup> 홍낙민 Hong Nak-min 洪樂敏 (1751-1801) Luke. Blessed.



speak to the prince according to his thoughts. Instead of receiving these words as a warning from God, Luke Hong, in his reply, went so far as to repeat to the King<sup>6</sup> the odious calumnies spread against the Religion, and to beg him to prosecute the Christians. The King was very displeased, and subsequently did not miss an opportunity to make the apostate feel his displeasure and contempt. We will see later that Luke had the happiness of obtaining from God his forgiveness and the grace of martyrdom.

In that same year, 1797, Han Yong-hwa<sup>7</sup>, *gamsa* 監司 of the province of Chungcheong, residing in Gongju, ordered all the *suryeong* 守令 (officials) of his province to imprison the Christians and to annihilate at all costs their religion. This violent measure resulted in many arrests, but God alone today knows the names of those who then suffered for his glory. The memories of time have preserved for us the name and the story<sup>8</sup> of only one of these martyrs, the one who has remained the most famous, Paul Yi Do-gi<sup>9</sup>.

Paul, born in the district of Cheongyang, province of Chungcheong, had not studied letters, but at the school of the Holy Spirit he had learned the love of God and the sincere practice of the Christian virtues. His small fortune was entirely employed by him in the conversion of the pagans. His zeal having drawn upon him the attention of the enemies of our holy Religion, he had five or six times to change his residence, and each of the places to which he retired soon became a fervent Christian community. Finally, he settled in a pottery factory in the district of Jeongsan<sup>10</sup>, and lived there from a small trade. Now all those around him were pagans; he applied himself to making them know the true God, and succeeded so well that in a short time the whole village was converted. When the governor's order appeared, a pagan named Kim, who lived nearby, threatened to denounce Paul as the leader of the Christians. His wife, frightened, urged him to flee, but he refused, for fear of going against the will of God and scandalizing the neophytes who had put their trust in him. Only, he hid his books and religious objects, and waited.

On the eighth day of the sixth lunar month (1797), he was at home occupied with his work, when suddenly armed men appeared, asking through the hedge of his garden, if he was at home. "I am here," he replied, "who is calling me?" Immediately he went out to meet them, brought them into his house, made them sit down, and inquired about the motive which animated them. "We are," they said, "people from the praetorian, busy looking for a slave from the prefecture who has run away. Having learned that you have a calendar, we wanted to see it to facilitate our searches." The Chinese calendar, which is used in Korea, contains superstitious words for finding lost objects. Paul answered: "I do have a calendar, but it only indicates the sequence of time; and he brought it. "Read for me," said the head of the satellites. — "I can't read Chinese characters." "So you only know how to read the books of the Religion of the Lord of Heaven?" And, without waiting for an answer, he gave orders to arrest him. Immediately a dozen men threw themselves on him and bound him tightly. They searched the house, where they discovered a crucifix and some books. They dragged him into a nearby wood, and while they were scourging him, the chief interrogated him, to learn from him of the priest's hiding place and to compel him to denounce the Christians, but it was in vain.

When night came, he was taken, along with other Christians, to a poor inn, whose master, touched with compassion, obtained the release of their bonds, which made them suffer greatly; but when they reached the city, he and his companions in suffering were loaded with irons.

After examining the crucifix and the books, the Mandarin summoned the prisoners and first

<sup>6</sup> This seems to have happened in 1795, not 1797.

<sup>7</sup> 한용화 Han Yong-hwa 韓用和 (1732-1799)

<sup>8</sup> This account derives from a letter by Fr. Daveluy dated February 22, 1855 sent to Fr. Barran, Superior of the Seminary of Foreign Missions, Daveluy Archive Volume 6 ff. 184-196.

<sup>9</sup> 이도기 Yi Do-gi 李道起 (1743-1798) Paul. Blessed. All that follows is taken from IRFA Archive Volume 577 ff. 1137-47.

<sup>10</sup> 정산 Jeongsan 定山 Now 충남 청양군 정간면 South Chungcheong Cheongyang-gun Jeongsanmyeon.

questioned Paul: “Where is your dwelling place?” — “I first lived in Cheongyang, I now live in Jeongsan.” “Who taught you and who are your disciples?” “I have neither masters nor disciples.” “You are a being worthy of death. If you have neither masters nor disciples, where do these books and this image come from?” Paul said nothing. He was led back to prison with his hands and feet chained, and the cangue around his neck. His companions did what the mandarin wanted, except for one who was also put in prison.

The next day the Mandarin threatened to have them both taken to the market, which was held six *li* (about three quarters of a league) from the town, and to expose them to all the outrages of the multitude. “It is for the cause of Jesus Christ,” answered Paul, “we can never sufficiently acknowledge such an honor.” “The doctrine of Confucius,” said the Mandarin, “or that of Mengja (Mencius), or that of Fo, are true. For you, refusing to learn from them, where did you go to get this false doctrine that you follow, and why do you want to infect the whole country with it? Your sect knows neither king nor parents; you give yourself up to the most monstrous inclinations, and you follow this doctrine, in spite of the king’s prohibition. This is a great confusion, and you are worthy of death.”

“Ignorant as I am,” replied Paul, “I do not know the doctrine of Confucius nor that of Mencius, which are reserved for scholars only. That of Fo (Buddha) concerns only the Buddhist monks. But the Christian Religion is made for all men; your servant will tell you something about it. In the beginning God alone existed; it is he who created everything that exists. After creation, there were spouses and families, then kings and subjects. Fo, Confucius, Mencius, kings and subjects, are posterior to the creation of heaven and earth. God is the true King of heaven and earth, the master and preserver of all things, the true Father of all peoples, the true source of filial piety and fidelity to princes. Filial piety and fidelity to princes are ordained by the fourth of the Ten Commandments. Why then reproach us so unjustly for not knowing either the parents or the king?” “If it were so,” resumed the mandarin, “the King, the court and the mandarins would know it, and it is from them that the people would learn it; on the contrary, they prohibit your religion because it would bring bad luck to Korea. And you, stupid people, who refuse to obey and denounce your masters, you deserve death.” — “To die for God,” said Paul, “is to assure one’s soul of eternal glory.”

They were then taken out of court. The satellites overwhelmed them with insults, slapped or kicked them, covered them with spit, or laid their weight on the cangues of the confessors. Some said: “Today, after showing you around the market, you will be killed.” “These rascals are going to ascend to heaven,” cried the others. Finally, they smeared their faces with lime; an inscription was attached to their heads, and an enormous drum laid on their backs. The mandarin mounted his horse, and with whips the two confessors were forced to run ahead of him to the market. During the journey, a considerable crowd pressed on their way, attracted by the cries of the satellites, and the repeated beating of the drum. It was around nine o’clock in the morning. When they arrived, the Mandarin spoke: “These two wretches,” he said, “are Christians, and their crime is that of rebels. They do not serve the King, do not respect their parents, and break natural law. When they have gone around the market, they will be put to death.” He then gave them ten blows with the plank, commanding them to apostatize. “I have already answered all your accusations,” said Paul, “I have nothing to add.” They hit his sides with the tips of several sticks at once, repeating the same order. “Should I die ten thousand times,” resumed the courageous Christian, “I cannot apostatize.” — The people admired his firmness and said: “Certainly, that one will not abjure.” It was seven o’clock in the evening when they were brought back to prison, after a torture of more than twelve hours. The satellites again tried to shake Paul, representing to him that if he did not obey the Mandarin, he could not avoid death. He only replied that he knew that. “What a stubborn rebel!” said the soldiers resentfully.

Four days later, the jailer came to tell them that the Mandarin had ordered a big meal for the next day in the public square. The apostates were to take part in it with him; the confessors, on the contrary, if they persisted in their resolution, were to be put to death. Paul’s companion, not understanding these words well, believed that peace would perhaps be restored to the faithful. “It is not so”, he said. “Let us not give way to a vain hope, which would make our tortures more painful. For me, I want to stay in

prison, and if the Mandarin forced me to leave, far from fleeing, I would stay in the city.” His companion, seized with fear, hid his head in his hands, and kept silent. “What’s the matter?” asked Paul. “Really, I don’t know how to bear the tortures; what am I to do?” “It is true that I, too, suffer a great deal, and as I am older than you, my age makes the tortures even more painful to me; but can Heaven be bought at a low price? Suffering is the currency with which we buy eternal happiness. Take courage and suffer for a few more moments.”

The next day they were taken back to the marketplace. There stood a large tent, and under this tent the tribunal of the mandarin, surrounded by several seats, where the apostates were seated, dressed in fine clothes. The feast began, while the two prisoners stood at the place of execution. The mandarin said to them: “The real paradise is to have good food, beautiful music and everything you want here. You who want to climb to Heaven, how will you manage to climb the thirty-three floors? Abjure and you will be treated like these; if not, I will refer you to the grand tribunal, and you will be put to death.” “I have already answered,” said Paul, “but I will add one more word: God is the only master of everything, of life and of death; how could I deny him?” But his companion, less courageous, dared not resist the judge, and had the weakness to make a sign of apostasy. Encouraged by this success, the Mandarin then said: “Come on! you too, insult the Lord of Heaven.” “When the King passes a law,” resumed Paul, “it is transmitted to the people, and you, far from violating it, you watch over its execution. How dare you today order the people to curse their true Father? We don’t usually curse our parents.” The mandarin, angry, ordered the books seized from Paul to be burned, and the crucifix to be circulated in the market, saying: “This man makes his God of the one you see; isn’t it awful?” It was noon then. Suddenly, the weather becomes dark, thunder rumbles, the wind, blowing violently, demolishes the tent and almost overturns the Mandarin. The apostates who rejoiced and feasted are frightened and flee. The people are moved, and say that they would do well to release the Christian. But the mandarin, furious at this setback, has the confessor struck again. It was not until evening that he was taken back to prison, so exhausted that he fell to the ground and had to be carried; which did not prevent him from being loaded with a heavy cangue. Despite so many tortures, he was calm and never stopped praying.

In the autumn, he underwent a new interrogation, and was again struck with the plank. Those who saw him said, “He will die under the blows.” — “To die under the rods or under the plank,” said Paul, “everything comes from the order of God: may he be blessed in everything!” And he continually asked for the grace of martyrdom.

He often suffered from hunger, and his clothes having worn out, the cold still increased his pain. His wife collected some money, and brought him wine and meat; he refused at first: “The Blessed Virgin,” he said, “having placed me on the cross, it is not proper for me to eat this. Of course, I heard that Jesus, on the cross, had nothing but suffering, but I did not see that he took anything delicate. I too am on the cross, I must do like him.” He had to give in to her entreaties, however, and accept this relief. Ordinarily seated or lying down, he thought incessantly of God, and received from him abundant consolations. One day, he heard a voice saying to him these words of the angelic greeting: “The Lord is with you;” and he felt full of joy. (The Korean text implies, without actually saying so, that it was a miraculous voice.) He also seemed to have received supernatural intelligence, and relished the beauty of Christian prayers better than the most educated. During the bitterest cold of winter, his wounds made him suffer greatly, and on Christmas day, having undergone a cruel interrogation, he was seized with a burning fever: “Behold,” he said, “the Lord, by a special favor, send me this so that my soul does not grow cold, but warms me by blows.”

After the New Year, he was questioned three times. The third time, the Mandarin said to him: “If you want to abjure, I will give you rice, I will have your wounds treated, and I will get you a place as district chief, which will be enough to put you back at ease.” — He replied: “Even if you gave me the whole district of Jeongsan, I could never deny God.” — “You claim,” added the Mandarin, “that Christians honor their parents, but your four children haven’t come to see you once since you’ve been in prison. Have we ever seen such denatured hearts?” “To obey one’s parents,” replied Paul, “isn’t that to honor them? However, I have repeatedly recommended to my children not to come near me, for fear that

it would be more harmful than useful to one and the other: it is this prohibition which prevents them from coming.”

During the fifth lunar month, the satellites often came to see him, and did not guard the door much, seeming to invite him to flee: but he would not do so. When they urged him, he replied: “It was the mandarin who had me put in prison, I can only leave it on his order.” Some Christians came to see him, and told him that since the conduct of the satellites could only be dictated by the mandarin, he should have no scruple about running away. He thought a little and answered: “If we allow ourselves to be ensnared by the devil, we run the risk of losing our soul, with all the merits it has acquired. My house is so poor that it is not difficult for me to stay in this prison, where I am at peace. Everything my people do for me pains me.” Then he said to his wife: “All those who pray for me, if they do so to make me still enjoy the things of this world, must stop their prayers: but if they pray for my soul, for my eternity, so that I do not forget the sufferings of Jesus Christ and his merits, recommend me to them, so that they pray without ceasing. I hope that’s the way my family prays for me. As for my food, bring me, according to your means, a bowl of rice a day or every other day, and when you cannot, do not worry about it. If I can’t get out of here, my corpse will get out fine. From now on, when you are asked to tell me something, even from Christians, if it tends to shake me, do not tell me: my heart could be weakened.”

From that day on, when his wife came to bring him something, he refused to see her, and contented himself with saying a few words to her from afar. A few days later, the Mandarin said to him: “You have been deceived: in China, Ni-Matou<sup>11</sup> seduced the people by his knowledge; how can you not see that these are tricks?” “Ni-Matou,” resumed Paul, “is a man like the others; but the doctrine which he has spread in China and elsewhere is not his own; it is that of the great King of heaven and earth. If one must publish and listen with scrupulous attention to the orders of the kings of the earth, with all the more reason the orders of God which are more terrible, more formidable and more lovable at the same time as those of the kings of this world. He is the Almighty, the Most High; he is ten thousand times more admirable than all the princes. When he commands, how could one preach the Religion carelessly, receive it coldly, learn it with indifference? This is why, supported by grace, I must bear and I will patiently bear all the torments, but I will never consent to apostasy.” The mandarin had him beaten more than usual, and sent him back to prison.

Two days later, that is to say on the third day of the sixth lunar month, his wife came to the prison to inquire about his condition, and the things he might need. “I am not in pain,” he said, “I am not hungry; I don’t know how many times they hit me. It will be enough for me to have provisions until the 10th of this month.” He explained himself no further; but it is easy to understand that he had received from above the knowledge of his coming martyrdom.

On the 8th, the Mandarin had him brought and repeated to him the orders he had received to put him to death if he persisted in his refusal to apostatize. “For the many years that I have known the Religion,” replied Paul, “I have known that it is right to die for God; so don’t expect me to give it up.” They tortured him and he was taken back to prison. The next day, his wife and three or four Christians having come to see him, he begged them to withdraw, lest their presence should make an impression on his heart which he dreaded. As they remained, he insisted. “Why don’t you do as I tell you? If the Lord sustains me, the most cruel torments are easy to bear; if he abandons me, the slightest suffering is unbearable. If I were left to my own weakness, it would be impossible for me to stand firm; but Jesus and Mary supporting me, nothing scares me. I beg you to leave me.” They withdrew then, so as not to distress him.

On the morning of the 10th, the satellites came to warn him that the day of his death had arrived; he quivered with joy, and his face seemed radiant. “It is astonishing,” said the people in the courtroom, “since this man has been in prison, when he is not tortured he is thin, pale and dejected; on the contrary,

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<sup>11</sup> (Dallet Note 33 : This is how Koreans pronounce the Chinese words Ly Mateo, the name of Father Matthew Ricci, the great apostle of China.)

the torments seem to bring him back to life, and today that he is told of his death, he seems more radiant than ever.” It was the anniversary of the day he had been taken around the market. They put a small cangue on him and he advanced towards the square, surrounded by satellites who carried the instruments of torture, and followed by the Mandarin. The latter dismounted, and ordered him to be tortured; then they laid him flat on his stomach, his head restrained by his long hair, and his two arms bound to a large stone. They squeezed the cangue until it suffocated him, and several executioners struck him with a triangular piece of wood, a sort of ax, each blow of which makes a wound. The mandarin asked him again if he did not want to apostatize. Exhausted Paul could not answer. Then a satellite approached and said to him: “If you want to abjure, there is still time.” The martyr gathered up what strength remained to him to cry: “Never!” His lips were black and parched, he barely seemed to have a breath of life left in him. A few minutes later, he raised his head, looked at the sky, and said: “Hail Mary,” then he fell back as if dead.

However the pagans said: “It is because of him that the drought desolates us, and that we die of hunger; he must be finished with kicks.” The crowd pressed around him. His wife wanted to approach to relieve him; shouts arose against her, and repulsed, ill-treated, beaten, trampled underfoot, she was carried off fainting. Paul having regained consciousness, the Mandarin had him beaten for the third time. His legs had been broken below the knee; you could see the broken bones bare, and the marrow flowed to the ground. When he was untied, he lay motionless. Without removing his cangue, they threw him on a mat, and four satellites brought him back to the prison, which was carefully closed. The Mandarin said: “If anyone gives him so much as a glass of water, I will kill him like him.” For two days the martyr received no relief, and no one could tell whether he was dead or alive. On the 12th, towards evening, the Mandarin told his people: “Go to the prison, take this Christian out, look at his face, feel his pulse, and if he is still alive, finish him off, and come to inform me.” The satellites carried out this order, and with stones and sticks put him in such a state that, except the palms of the hands, no part of the body was without injury; however, he still had a breath of life left. The executioners told the Mandarin, who angrily replied, “If you don’t finish him, I’ll knock you all unconscious.” So they returned to the prison, and this time did not set limits to their fury until the soul of the martyr had flown away to Heaven. However, the Mandarin, fearing that he might come back to life again, continued the torture on the corpse. One of the satellites rested the end of the cangue on his breast, and mounted it; ribs cracked and blood flowed. The body no longer had human form. They covered it with a mat, and guarded it overnight. The next day he was buried by order of the Mandarin; but seven or eight days later, some Christians from about ten leagues away came to fetch him to bury him honorably in their place. Paul was 56 years old. His martyrdom came in the year of Jesus Christ 1798, the 12th day of the sixth lunar month. To console his widow, the jailer said to her: “Do not be too distressed, for on the 12th, during the night, I saw a great light surrounding your husband’s body.”

Around the same time, but in another province, Lawrence Park<sup>12</sup> gave the faithful an example of the same courage and the same perseverance. We have seen him, during the persecution of 1791, boldly intervening in favor of Christians, and suffering a flogging for his faith. In 1797, when persecution broke out again in the district of Hongju, the order was immediately given to seize him. Lawrence, by a humble mistrust of his own strength, first hid himself. But his young son having been taken captive in his place, his mother said to him: “Now you cannot avoid giving yourself up.” He saw in this word the will of God, and, relying on help from on high, went himself to the prefecture on the 19th day of the eighth lunar month. The mandarin reproached him for having fled, but Lawrence replied: “I left before your order reached me. At the news that you had had my son seized, and on my mother’s order, I came; What is it about?” “Why,” said the Mandarin, “are you following a bad doctrine, prohibited by the King and his

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<sup>12</sup> 박취득 Park Chui-deuk 朴取得 (1769?-1799) Lawrence. Blessed. Dallet adds the story sent by Mgr Daveluy in a letter dated 1857 (Archive Daveluy Volume 6 f. 243 ff. published in the *Annales* Vol. 31 1859 pp 392-400.)

mandarins?” — “It is not a bad doctrine, I only observe the ten precepts of the true Religion, which teaches us to worship God, creator of all things, I honor this God, then the King, the mandarins, my parents and other superiors; I love my friends, my benefactors and my brothers, and all other men.” “Do you have parents and brothers? It is also said that your whole village follows the Christian Religion, denounce everything to me exactly.” “I have only my mother and no younger brothers; in the whole village, I am the only one to practice the Religion.” “You fail to respect your parents, the King and his mandarins, you abuse other people’s wives, you waste your wealth in trivialities, and do not make sacrifices to parents; why thus violate all natural principles?” Then, turning to the satellites: “Bind this man,” cried the mandarin, “strike him and put him to the question.” “The fourth precept,” replied Lawrence, “orders us to honor our parents, our superiors, the King and the mandarins, and to love our brothers and our relatives: are these not the true natural principles? But since our parents, after their death, are no longer able to come and eat what is offered to them, we do not offer them food, because the true doctrine rejects vain things and clings only to realities. For the rest, we bury the dead according to all the rules and proprieties. The sixth commandment forbids us all kinds of impurities, and the ninth even forbids us to desire our neighbor’s wife. The little I have, I use to relieve those who are naked or in need; this is not dissipating my wealth in trivialities. »

The Mandarin ordered his people to put the cangue on him, and said: “By whom have you been instructed? who copied your books, and who are your accomplices?” “I was educated by Ji Hong (池洪 Saba), from the capital, who was beheaded for the Religion. It is also from him that my books came to me, it is only right that I should die.” “Would you, by any chance, want to die like Ji Hong? What is so beautiful about dying?” “God has showered me with boundless blessings, and my sins are without number; it is only right that I should die.” “What sins have you committed?” “I have not kept the Ten Commandments in their entirety.” The Mandarin then had him taken back to prison. The jailers, to extort some money from him, put his feet in shackles, laid him on pieces of tile, and made him suffer all kinds of insults. Lawrence replied that he was ready to die for justice, but that if he had been willing to give money, he would not have come to prison. These words increased the rage of the executioners, and he was overwhelmed with blows.

At the second interrogation, the Mandarin had him placed on the torture board, then flogged, then tugged with pliers. “Will you still persist in failing to respect parents, King and mandarins? Burn your books, crosses, medals and pictures, all these things are bad.” — “Even were I to die,” replied Lawrence, “how could I burn such precious books?” He added a few words on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, on the merits of his passion, on his resurrection, his ascension and his second advent, which earned him a volley of blows on the legs.

He had been wearing the cangue for three months, when Christians from different places, having come to see him, obtained from the jailer, by paying money, that it be taken off in prison. The third interrogation, like all the others thereafter, began with death threats. Then the Mandarin said to him, “You, child of Korea, why do you persist in doing what all our saints and famous men have never done? What do you have to gain by breaking the law of the kingdom? Your behavior is unreasonable.” “The King,” replied Lawrence, “may well be master of the body, but God alone is master of the soul; he established rewards and penalties after death, and no one can avoid them. If I must die, what do I care? Isn’t this life like the dew that evaporates? Life is a pilgrimage, death is only a return to the homeland.”

Seven months later, the fourth official interrogation took place, on the arrival of a new Mandarin. The latter said to Lawrence: “Why, after such violent torments, do you persist in your obstinacy? Besides, your mother is still living, so how can you want to die? decidedly, you have become insane.” “Death,” replied the confessor, “is of all the miseries of this world the greatest; the desire for life and the horror of death are sentiments common to all. But God being the first Father of all men is the sovereign master of all things, should I die, I will not deny him.” “There is nothing to do with such a person,” said the Mandarin, and he had him beaten cruelly, then sent to Haemi Prefecture.

Before this new tribunal, to the same ridiculous accusations from the judge, Lawrence gave the same answers; to tortures of all kinds, he continued to oppose an inflexible patience. “Who is this God

of whom you speak,” asked the Mandarin, “where is he? What is he doing? Can you know him, you, when our scholars ignore him? If this doctrine were true, would not the King, the court and his mandarins follow it?” — “God is in heaven, whence he makes known his orders; if you execute them, he will make you come up close to him; if you resist him, he will throw you into Hell. It is a punishment a million times stronger than one can imagine here on earth. No being is outside of his benefits; but since a poor creature such as myself has received more than all my superiors, even if I should die, I will not deny him.” — “After your torture, your mother will also be put to death because of you.” — “After my death, my mother will remain in your hands, but she too was created by God, God will think of her.” “Is it for fear of Hell that you do this?” “Yes, it is for fear of Hell; but, in any case, I cannot renounce my God.” The judge had him beaten fifteen blows with the big plank, then taken back to prison.

In the next interrogation, Lawrence developed with more energy the Christian doctrine of Heaven and Hell. “Since you want to put me to death this very day and you treat my religion as a vain superstition, I cannot be silent. Know it then: at the end of the world, after the annihilation of all the kingdoms, all men of all ages, great and small, kings and peoples, will be gathered before the Son of God, who came down from heaven and was carried away on the clouds, and he will judge men of times past and present. The good will be carried up to Heaven with the Lord Jesus and his saints, and will enjoy a happiness ten million times greater than all the glories and all the pleasures of the world. The wicked will be swallowed up in Hell, by the earth which will open under their feet, and will suffer pains ten million times greater than the pains of this world, immersed in a blazing fire that will never be extinguished. At that time, any regret will be late and unnecessary; each will receive according to his works. Since you want to kill me, turn over my body now, and, striking me on the throat, kill me immediately.” “You will die under the blows of the thieves’ sticks,” replied the Mandarin, who had him struck twenty times.

At the sixth interrogation, the Mandarin exclaimed: “It is because of the scoundrels who follow this bad doctrine, that famine and drought are raging in the kingdom, and that all the people will perish. Declare the places where you gather to practice your religion, make known the leaders of Christians. They are said to be gathered in the mountains, denounce everything.” “We have no leaders; that the Christians are in the mountains, I do not know; if you know, why ask?” The furious mandarin addresses an executioner: “Break the bones in that rascal’s leg, and beat him to death so he doesn’t get out of here.” This order was immediately carried out, and then they dragged him to prison.

A few days later, the governor of the province, whose orders the Mandarin (守令 *suryeong*) had requested, replied: “The doctrine of the Europeans is dirty, bad and horrible: hit these people on the legs, and if, at the fourteenth blow, they still don’t surrender, defeat them by killing them.” This edict was read to Lawrence in full court, in the midst of all the instruments of torture. Then the Mandarin added: “Don’t you want to see your mother? What’s so good about dying?” “My desire to see my mother is inexpressible; but, were I to die, I cannot apostatize. Do what you want, I have nothing more to say.” “But the other Christians obeyed the King.” “I don’t know what others have done: I don’t have to scrutinize their actions. I only answer for myself.” The Mandarin made him suffer horrible tortures. For several months he was brought back to the Mandarin every eight or ten days and questioned. The cruelty of the satellites contrived to increase his sufferings, and more than once they left him naked and bruised in the mud, exposed the whole night to the cold and the rain.

It was around this time that he found a way to write the following letter to his mother: “To my mother, I Lawrence, ungrateful son, from my prison, I send you the expression of my feelings. I had always resolved to be devout to God, pious to my parents and brothers, and to carry out God’s commands in all my thoughts, words, and deeds. But unfortunately, I have sinned against God, and I have not fulfilled all my duties towards my parents and my brothers. Not having been able to overcome our three enemies (the three lusts), my sins are without number. My mother, forgive me my disobedience; my uncle, my brother, my sister-in-law, forgive me for not having treated you better, and pray God to forgive me my sins and to save my soul; thereby God will also forgive you all your sins. Spring and autumn pass like the course of the waters, time is like the spark which springs from the pebble under the blows of the lighter; it is not long. Above all, be on your guard, and faithful to the orders of God. About two months

after my arrival in prison, I was looking for what I should do to obtain God's grace. One day, while I was sleeping, I glimpsed the cross of Jesus, who said to me: Follow the cross. This vision was a little confused, nevertheless I could never forget it." On the 25th of the second lunar month of 1799, he wrote again: "I am worried that my mother, my wife and my children will find it difficult to conform to the order of God. If you follow it well, I myself will be happy."

However, the hour of triumph was approaching for Lawrence. Two days after writing these last lines, at his fifteenth or sixteenth interrogation, he was beaten again with fifty strokes of the plank, and to hasten his death, the mandarin had water poured over him while he was beaten. It is a refinement of torture that is said to be unbearable. His body was in a terrible state. He had received in all more than fourteen hundred blows from a plank or a stick, and for eight whole days he had not taken a drop of water. The jailer thought him dead, and after carrying him on his back to the prison, stripped him of his clothes, washed his back with cold water, and threw him outside.

Lawrence, however, was not dead. During the night, Christians were able to approach him in secret and make him take some food, without the jailer objecting. The next day, the 28th of the second lunar month, another appearance before the mandarin, and another flagellation. The judge, the executioners, the spectators were amazed to see him alive. They took him away fainting, unconscious and motionless. Eleven Christians who were then locked up in the same prison, saw him a few hours later get up alone, take off his cangue himself, enter the room and go to bed. The furious jailer heaped insults on the Christians, believing that they had helped him. But Lawrence said to him: "I will not die of hunger or beatings, I will be strangled."

The next day, the judge, having learned that Lawrence was still breathing, had the jailer beaten and threatened to have him killed himself. The latter, helped by his son, returned to strike the martyr, until believing him dead, he dropped from fatigue and fell asleep. While he slept, the Christian prisoners approached Lawrence, and what was their astonishment when he began to talk quietly with them. All his wounds were miraculously healed, you couldn't even see a trace of them. He tried to go out for a moment, and the jailer having woken up, ran after him, seized him, and to put an end to what he believed to be magical power, strangled him with a straw rope. It was eleven o'clock in the morning on the 29th day of the second lunar month of the year *gi-mi* (1799).

Thus died, at the age of about thirty, this glorious servant of Jesus Christ. During the eighteen months that his martyrdom lasted, each of his days was marked by some torture, each of his steps left bloody traces. It seems impossible that a human body could withstand torture for so long. But God, by motives worthy of his wisdom and mercy, wanted to set a great example, and, in fact, the place where Lawrence suffered has always remained one of our most fervent Christian communities. His blood was literally a seed of Christians.

Lawrence Park had three close friends, named James Won 元, Peter Jeong 鄭 and Francis Bang 方. The tradition reports that all four, in a burst of unenlightened zeal, had promised to denounce each other mutually, in order to be martyred together. It does not appear, however, that they did so; but God, to reward their good will, allowed them to fall into the hands of the mandarins one after another, about the same time, though in different districts, and all four had the honor of gloriously shedding their blood for the faith. We collect here what the memories of time and local traditions have preserved for us of their history. It is very probable that they suffered in this same year, 1799, and this is the date which we have adopted. However the fact is not absolutely certain, because the first Christians of Korea who took great care to mark the exact day of the death of the martyrs, in order to celebrate their anniversary, did not observe the same exactness in the designation of the years, which sometimes causes a certain confusion in the sequence of the most authentic facts.



James Won<sup>13</sup> was the older first cousin of Peter Won<sup>14</sup>, martyred in 1793. They lived together in the village of Eungjeong-ri<sup>15</sup>, district of Hongju, and both were at the same time instructed in the Religion. James was gentle, easy, upright and open, and, in such good ground, faith quickly brought to life all sorts of virtues. As soon as he became a Christian, he swore to devote his fortune, which was considerable, to the relief of the needy, and his daily occupation was to seek them out to do them good. In order to atone for his former sins of gluttony, he fasted every Friday. His zeal to spread the Religion among the pagans led him to go and find them here and there to preach to them. Not content with this, on Sundays and feast days he had food prepared in large quantities, and invited everyone to take part. When we were together he said: “Today is the day of the Lord, we must celebrate it with holy joy, and also thank God for his gifts by sharing the goods he has given us.” From that he took the opportunity to explain various articles of the Religion.

His reputation soon spread, and in 1792 the Mandarin sent satellites to seize him. But he had had time to hide, and this time managed to escape. When he learned of his cousin’s martyrdom, his fervor redoubled, and, regretting not having been a martyr with him, he said to himself: “If I practice my religion publicly, the Mandarin will soon get wind of it, and will have me arrested.” He therefore began to make his prayers and devotional exercises in the midst of the pagans, either by day or by night, for several years; he even went and installed himself on the main road. The satellites knew it and sometimes even saw it, nevertheless he was not troubled.

Having heard of Father Zhou’s entry into Korea, he immediately went to find him and expressed his desire to receive the sacraments. The priest said to him: “Any man who has two wives is rejected by the Church, get out immediately and do not present yourself before me again.” James went out and, for three days and three nights, he did nothing but cry and moan without wanting to take food. They went to inform the priest, who allowed him to enter, and said to him: “As soon as you return, will you dismiss your concubine? On your formal promise I could give you the sacraments; otherwise, you won’t even be able to see me.” James answered: “In truth, I did not know that it was forbidden by Christian law to have a wife and a concubine; since your orders inform me of this, I promise to send my concubine away immediately on my return; please grant me the sacraments.” He received them, and when he returned home, he said to this woman: “A Christian cannot have a concubine, and a Christian cannot be a concubine.” And immediately he repudiated her.

A close friendship united him to Lawrence Park; they visited each other and incessantly excited each other to the practice of the virtues and to the desire for martyrdom. James had spent several years in this way, when in 1798 he was seized by the satellites of Deoksan, and taken to prison, where he remained for more than a month without being questioned. Thinking then that it was the fault of the satellites, he strongly urged them to bring him before the Mandarin or release him. Finally cited in court, to this question from the Mandarin: “Is it true that you practice the Religion of the Lord of Heaven?” — “Yes,” he replied, “I do indeed practice it, in order to serve God and to save my soul.” — “Denounce your accomplices.” “There are,” he went on, “three other people animated like me by the desire to serve God and to lay down their lives for him.” James spoke thus, in accordance with the mutual promise that he, Lawrence Park, Francis Bang and Peter Jeong are supposed have agreed to denounce each other, in order to suffer martyrdom together. However, we do not see evidence that James made a very positive denunciation. “Explain yourself more clearly.” “Though I should die ten thousand times, I cannot say more”. The judge then subjected him to the various tortures of the spreading of the bones, the puncture of the sticks and flagellation, but in vain. James was then transferred to the criminal court of Hongju, where he repeatedly developed the truths of the Religion, and underwent terrible tortures two or three

<sup>13</sup> 원시보 Won Si-bo 元—(1730-1799) James. Blessed.

<sup>14</sup> 원시장 Won Si-jang 元—(1732-1793) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>15</sup> 응정리 Eungjeori (Now 충남 당진군 합덕읍 성동리 South Chungcheong Dangjin-gun Hapdeok-eup Seongdong-ri) Dallet mistakenly writes Eug-trien-i.

times. He was sent back to Deoksan, where he was again badly beaten, and had his legs completely broken.

Finally, on a special order from the governor, he was sent to Cheongju, the military capital of the province. The day he left, his wife, children and some friends followed him crying. He called them near and said to them: “When it is a question of the service of God, and the salvation of the soul, we must not listen to natural affection; endure well all the pains and the sufferings, and we will meet again in joy, with God and the good Virgin Mary. Your presence can only shake me and be very harmful to me. So therefore, be reasonable, and show yourselves no more before my eyes.” Then he dismissed them. His former concubine also sent him a message, asking to see him one last time, but he refused, saying: “Why do you want to make me fail the great affair?” Arriving at Cheonju, he underwent another interrogation. The judge wanted to make him apostatize by promising him life, but James replied: “I have wanted to die a martyr for God for nine years.” The angry judge made him suffer cruel tortures all day long. The next day they started again, and so on every day, for nearly a month. The rods, the sticks and boards of torture, the spacing of the bones, everything was implemented, until he died under the blows, the 13th day of the third lunar month of the year *gi-mi* (1799). He was then seventy years old. After his death, his body seemed enveloped in an extraordinary light. A crowd of pagans witnessed the prodigy, and nearly fifty families were converted on this occasion.

Peter Jeong<sup>16</sup>, born of an honest family in the district of Deoksan, was, before his conversion, feared by all because of his violent character and his extraordinary strength. He had the good fortune to become a Christian and to receive baptism from the hands of Father Zhou; from then on, he became humble, gentle and affable. It is believed that he remained for some time in the service of the priest. Later, appointed catechist in Naepo, he showed himself assiduous in prayer and pious readings, constantly occupying himself with instructing and exhorting those entrusted to his care. In the year 1798 or 1799, he was arrested and taken to the city of Deoksan, where he had to undergo many interrogations and tortures; he confessed God generously, and signed his sentence without letting the slightest emotion show on his face. In the prison, he encouraged the Christians, his companions in captivity, and, on the day of the execution, when the meal of those condemned to death was brought to him, he invited them to share it with him, saying: “For the last time, we must eat with thanksgiving the food that God created for man, and then we will go to heaven to enjoy eternal happiness.” He had his head cut off. It is believed that he was then between fifty and sixty years old.

Francis Bang<sup>17</sup>, born in the village of Yeo, district of Myeon-cheon, was *bijang* 裨將, that is to say intendant of the governor of the province. How and when he converted is entirely unknown. He was distinguished by an extraordinary fervor, and strongly desired martyrdom. In the year 1798, he was taken to Hongju, and had to undergo, for six months, very numerous tortures, the details of which have not reached us. It is only reported that there were then in the prison two other Christians like him condemned to death, who, when the last meal of the condemned were brought to them, according to custom, began to shed tears; but Francis, with a face beaming with joy, thanked God and the Virgin Mary, and said to his companions: “Is this not also a blessing of Providence; why are you sad and dejected? This is a temptation of the devil. If we lose such a great chance to gain Heaven, what other opportunity can we expect?” God made effective his exhortations and encouragements; his two companions, regretting their weakness, soon shared the holy joy of his heart. They were all three martyred in the same city of Hongju. It is not known if Francis died under the blows or was strangled. It was the 16th day of the twelfth lunar month. (January 1799.)

Following Lawrence Park and his three friends, let us mention another martyr who suffered at the same time and in the same province.

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<sup>16</sup> 정산필 Jeong San-pil 鄭山弼 (1739?1749?-1799 Peter. Blessed.

<sup>17</sup> 방 프란치스코 Bang Francisco 方—(?-1799) Francis. Blessed.

Francis Bae Gwan-geom<sup>18</sup>, born in the village of Jinmok<sup>19</sup>, district of Dangjin, had embraced the Religion as soon as it was preached by Byeok. Arrested for the first time in 1791, he had, as we have said, the weakness to apostatize before the Mandarin. But soon after, touched by sincere repentance, he returned to serving God with fervor. Forced to leave his district, he had first retired to that of Seosan. Later, in the company of other Christians, he came to settle in Yangje<sup>20</sup>, district of Myeoncheon, and it was there that in 1798 he and his companions prepared an oratory, in the hope of receiving the priest. Some time later, an apostate, named Jo Hwa-jin<sup>21</sup>, betrayed them to the Mandarin, and himself brought the satellites into the village. Francis Pae was arrested on the 3rd of the tenth lunar month, and taken to Hongju. They wanted to force him to make other Christians known and to hand over his books of the Religion; but the most violent tortures could not extract a denunciation from him. For several months he was frequently questioned, then he was transferred to Cheonju, the military and criminal capital of the province, where he shared the sufferings of James Won and the other Christian prisoners. There are no details of the last months he spent in prison. We only know that he bore the tortures with heroic patience. All his flesh was tattered, his limbs broken, and the bones bared. He finally expired under the blows, at the age of about sixty. The tradition of his family fixes the date of his martyrdom on the 13th of the twelfth lunar month of the year *gi-mi* (1799).

It is to this same year, we believe, that we must also assign the martyrdom of Francis Yi Bo-hyeon<sup>22</sup> and that of Martin In Eon-min<sup>23</sup>, who died under the blows, on the 15th day of the twelfth lunar month. .

Francis came from an honest and wealthy family in Hwangmasil<sup>24</sup>, Deoksan 德山 district. From childhood, his firm and somewhat obstinate character made him noticeable among his companions. The death of his father, whom he lost while still young, leaving him master of his will, caused him to let go of all his passions, and he became so violent that no one could constrain him. But at the age of twenty-four, instructed in the Religion by Thomas Hwang, he converted and arrived in a very short time to reform himself so much and to tame his natural temperament so well, that his calm and regular conduct made soon the edification of all. Although he himself had no desire to marry, he nevertheless did so in obedience to his mother.

From day to day his fervor increased, and he applied himself with zeal to the exercises of penance and mortification. It is even said that he left his home for some time to go to the mountains; and there, living on vegetables, he repeated: “To serve God and save his soul, one must either practice continence or give one’s life by martyrdom; it is the only way to become a true child of God.”

When the persecution of Christians began, Francis, far from having any fear of it, never ceased to exhort his family and the Christians of his village. He discoursed every day on the passion of Our Lord, and urged them not to miss such a fine opportunity of confessing the faith, and of gaining Heaven. Anticipating that he would not be left at peace for long, he one day had a large quantity of wine prepared;

<sup>18</sup> 배관겸 Bae Gwan-gyeom 裴— (1740?-1799) Francis. Blessed.

<sup>19</sup> 진목 Jinmok (Now 충남 당진군 석문면 장항 South Chungcheong Dangjin-gun Seokmun-myeon Janghang)

<sup>20</sup> 면천의 양제 Myeoncheon-ui Yangje (Now 충남 당진군 순성면 양유리 South Chungcheong Dangjin-gun Sunseong-myeon Yangyu-ri)

<sup>21</sup> 조화진 Jo Hwa-jin 趙和鎭

<sup>22</sup> 이보현 Yi Bo-hyeon 李步玄 (1773-1800) Francis. Blessed.

<sup>23</sup> 인언민 In Eon-min 印彦敏 (1737-1800) Martin. Blessed.

<sup>24</sup> 덕산 황마실 Deoksan Hwangmasil (Now 충남 예산군 고덕면 호음리 Chung-nam Yesan-gun Godeok-myeon Hoem-ri)

“It is,” he said, “to make a last party, and to entertain the whole village, but it must be done quickly.” Two days later, the satellites actually came forward and asked him: “Are you a Christian?” “Not only am I,” he replied, “but for two days I have been waiting for you to arrive to arrest me.” Then he treated the satellites liberally, after which he was arrested and taken to the mandarin. “Are you a Christian,” asked the latter, “and what country are you from?” “I’m a Christian, originally from Deoksan.” “Who was your tutor, who are your accomplices, and what books do you have in your possession?” — My master and my co-religionists are in my country. As for the books, I have quite a few, but they all deal with very important things, and I cannot give them to you.” “What is this thing so important that you can’t show me these books?” “As they speak of God, the Sovereign Master of all things, I cannot inconsiderately place them in your hands.” Offended by this answer, the Mandarin had him beaten violently, then taken back to prison.

However, the *gamsa* having received notice of this affair ordered them to transfer Francis to his native town, and he was taken to Haemi, whose Mandarin (*yeongjang* 營將) then managed the two prefectures. This new judge said to him: “For what reason, abandoning your parents and the tomb of your fathers, did you go to settle at 500 *li* in another district? Why also do you do what the King forbids, following this detestable doctrine?” Francis replied: “Why do you so insultingly qualify a holy religion, which the King and the mandarins do not know? Where do men originate from? If it is God who, in the beginning, gave them being, how can we fail to honor Him who is our supreme Father and our great King?” “Are the King and the mandarins worth less than you to say they are ignorant? And then, why follow a foreign doctrine? If it were good, the King and the mandarins, who are as good as you are, would practice it. You are only a great rebel who misunderstands the principles.” Then, having the servants approach and prepare the various instruments of torture, he repeated in an angry tone: “Denounce everything without disguise;” and on his refusal, had him tortured with the puncture of the sticks. “Everywhere,” said Francis, “there are masters and disciples, but if I denounced them, you would treat them like me; even if I should die myself, I can say nothing.” In vain the executioners, urged on by the furious judge, redoubled their cruelty and subjected him to the splitting of the bones several times; Francis remained firm. “No, a hundred thousand times no,” he repeated, “I don’t want to denounce anything.” For more than half a day, all imaginable tortures were implemented, and many times Francis lost consciousness, but without letting himself be overcome. At last they loaded him with a heavy cangue and led him back to prison. Although his whole body was but a single wound, he had a happy and joyful heart, prayed, exhorted the other prisoners, and, as usual, explained to them the mystery of the passion of Jesus Christ.

During the second interrogation, the Mandarin, who had deployed a frightening apparatus of torture, said to him: “This time, you cannot escape, therefore denounce everything and deny the God of the Christians.” “Why do you still say such words to me?” replied Francis; “if a subject denies his king, do we impose punishments on him, do we give him rewards? You Mandarin, paid by the King, treat me according to law.” Amazed at such consistency, the mandarin reported to the criminal judge, asking what should be done. The latter replied to kill François under the blows, if he persisted in not denouncing anything. The confessor was therefore led again to the tribunal, and again underwent the whole series of tortures. Finally, being unable to win anything over him, the Mandarin presented him with his sentence, which he signed with such a satisfied air that all those present looked at each other, mute with astonishment. He was taken back to the prison and the next day he was served the meal of the condemned, which he happily took; then, after leading him around the market, they began to beat him. The executioners, having each tied a coarse mat in front of himself by way of an apron, exerted themselves for a long time to strike; then, as their victim was slow to breathe his last, they turned him on his back, drove their sticks into his natural parts, and finished him off. Francis was then twenty-seven years old. A few days later, his body was collected, and all the inhabitants of the village could see with their own eyes that his face was very fresh and smiling. Many pagans, it is said, converted on seeing this.

Francis had a worthy companion in his triumph in Martin In Eon-min<sup>25</sup>, a young nobleman who lived at Jurae<sup>26</sup>, district of Deoksan. Of a character both gentle and firm, Martin had had a fairly good education, and had become friends with the licentiate Alexander Hwang, who instructed him in the Religion. No sooner was he converted than he enclosed the tablets of his ancestors in a vase and threw them into the water. Then he went to the capital, where he was baptized by Fr. Zhou. He left with the priest his eldest son, named Joseph, and married his second son into a family which then had a great reputation among Christians; then, abandoning his house and his possessions, he emigrated to the district of Gongju. His pagan parents not being able to understand the reason for such strange behavior, he frankly declared it to them, and explained the Religion, without succeeding in winning their hearts. Arrested by the satellites of the Mandarin of Gongju, he declared bluntly that he was a Christian and wanted to give his life for God. Sent to Cheonju, he suffered such violent tortures that he was unable to walk. Sent back to Haemi criminal court in his native district, he had to be transported from relay to relay on government horses. His constancy was not contradicted for a single instant, and the judge, pushed to the limit, condemned him to die, like Francis, under the blows. He was served the usual meal, then about twenty satellites took him and proceeded to carry out the sentence. During the ordeal, Martin repeated several times: "Oh! yes, it is with a good heart that I give my life for God!" At the end, one of the executioners, seizing a huge stone, struck him several times on the chest. The lower jaw was detached, the bones of the chest were crushed, and the holy confessor expired in this torture, at the age of sixty-three.

However, in spite of these and other executions which bloodied various Christian communities in the provinces, it can be said that there was no official and general persecution in Korea during the reign of Jeongjo Daewang. As we have already noticed, this prince, of a rather moderate character, did not want to shed blood. He held a few illustrious Christians of the Nam-in party in high esteem, and knowing that many eminent men were embracing the new Religion, he wanted to examine the facts for himself, and calmly. Several times he personally presided over the interrogations of Christians. The martyr Peter Sin<sup>27</sup>, quoted above, has preserved for us, in his letters, a curious fragment of one of these interrogations, probably that which Thomas Choe Pil-gong had to undergo, in the third lunar month of the *gi-mi* year (1799). Here is the literal translation.

The King. "I too have read the books of the Religion, but how does this doctrine seem to you, compared to that of Fo (Buddha)?"

The Christian. — "The Religion of Jesus Christ should not be compared to that of Fo. Heaven, earth, men, all that is, exists only by a blessing from God, and is preserved only by another blessing, that is to say by the Incarnation and the Redemption of this same God most high and very great Father and Governor of the universe. How dare to compare with this religion a doctrine devoid of meaning and principles. Here is the real way, the real science.

"But how," said the King, "was he, whom you call the very good and very great Lord of all things, able to come into this world, to incarnate himself there, and what is more, to save it by the infamous death that the wicked subjected him to? This is very hard to believe."

"We read in the history of China," continued the Christian, "that King Cheng Tang<sup>28</sup>, seeing all his people reduced to death by a drought of seven years, could not remain indifferent to it. He cut his nails, shaved his hair, clothed himself in straw, and retired to the Sang-lin desert. There he began to weep and do penance, then, singing a prayer he had composed, offered himself as sacrifice and victim. His

<sup>25</sup> Dallet mis-spells his name as Eun-min. It should be 인언민 In Eon-min 印彦敏 (1737-1800) Martin. Blessed.

<sup>26</sup> 덕산 주래 Deoksan Jurae (Now 충남 예산군 삽교읍 용동리 South Chungcheong Yesan-gun Sapgyo-eup Yongdong-ri)

<sup>27</sup> 신대보 Shin Dae-bo 申大甫

<sup>28</sup> Tang the Perfect (Cheng Tang 成湯), personal name Lü 履, was the founder of the Shang dynasty (17th-11th cent. BCE).

prayer was not finished, when a heavy rain fell over a space of more than two thousand *li*; it is since that time that the people in their gratitude, called him the holy king.”<sup>29</sup>.

« Now, how much greater is the blessing of redemption? All ancient, present and future peoples, all things in the world are imbued with this redemption, and subsist only by it. That is why, sire, I cannot understand why you find this hard to believe. But Fo’s doctrine, too, should not be treated lightly. The name of Fo meaning the one who knows and understands everything, is a name without equal, how dare you speak of it with contempt? If it weren’t for that name, what could he have covered himself with? So he stole it. But in fact, this king Sakya, whom you call Fo, is only a man, son of King Jeongban<sup>30</sup> and the lady Maya. He said, pointing to the sky with his right hand and the earth with his left hand: ‘I alone am great.’ Isn’t that ridiculous pride? What virtue, what sanctity has he had that it is a crime to despise him?”

“Truth,” resumed the King, “sustains itself, and everything in the end turns to the true side; we will see more.” Then, without deciding anything, he had the Christian escorted back to his prison. Before a lower court, this confessor would have expiated his frankness by a severe flogging, perhaps even by the last torture, but the King rejected the addresses of the ministers who wanted to have him condemned to death, and, some time later, had him released.

During the summer of that same year, 1799, the *Daesagan* 大司諫 Sin Heon-jo 申獻朝 presented a petition against Ambrose Gwon Cheol-sin and Augustine Jeong Yak-jong, whom he represented as the leaders and supporters of the Christians. The King became angry with the author of the request, broke his dignity, and forbade to follow up on this affair. These facts and several other similar ones gave many Christians the hope of finally making the truth triumph. Notwithstanding the secret opposition of the ministers, and the cruelty of some provincial governors, the Gospel spread among the pagans; conversions multiplied, especially in the capital. But the sudden death of the King soon left the field open to the persecutors. This prince died of a tumor on his back. A lancet thrust in time might have saved him, but an inflexible law of Korean etiquette forbids touching the King’s body, even in case of illness, and to cure it. This tumor degenerated into a large wound, and he expired on the 28th day of the sixth lunar month of 1800, after twenty-four years of reign.

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<sup>29</sup> (Dallet Note 34 : Perhaps this is the Emperor Suen-vang, of whom it is spoken in the Chi-king (= Book of Odes). — Duhalde, volume III, p. 13.)

<sup>30</sup> 정반 淨飯, the Chinese name for Suddhodana, the father of Siddhartha Gautama, better known as the Buddha.

Chapter 3: Regency. — General persecution. — Martyrdom of John Choe, Augustine Jeong, Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi, etc...

The death of King Jeongjo was a misfortune for the whole kingdom, which lost in him a wise, moderate prince, friend of his people; but for the Nam-in and the Christians, it was a true disaster. They saw suddenly disappear the last obstacle which could oppose the rage of their enemies. Here is how Alexander Hwang<sup>1</sup> describes the respective position of political parties in Korea at that time:

“For a long time the nobles were divided into four parties (factions) named No-ron 老論, So-ron 少論, Nam-in 南人 and So-buk 少北. The two main ones were the No-ron and the Nam-in. Towards the end of the last reign, these parties had each split into two camps or two factions. Those of the various parties who were sincerely devoted to the King and disposed to second him in his views were called Si-pa 時派. Those, on the contrary, who, attached to their particular ideas, were always ready to oppose, were named Byeok-pa 僻派. All the most bitter enemies of the Christians were Byeok-pa. The Nam-in Si-pa were few in number. It was among them that the Religion first spread, and though many had renounced the Gospel to preserve their lives and jobs, yet they were not fundamentally hostile to Christians. The leaders of the Nam-in Si-pa were Yi Ga-hwan 李家煥, Yi Seung-hun 李承薰, Jeong Yak-yong 丁若鏞, etc. The Nam-in Byeok-pa fraction had Hong Ui-ho 洪義浩 and Mok Man-jung 睦萬中 as leaders.”

The King feared the Byeok-pa who were numerous and powerful, and whose ranks were growing every day. On the contrary, he favored the Nam-in Si-pa, who were almost all men of great merit. Yi Ga-hwan was the first scholar in the kingdom; Jeong Yak-Yong had extraordinary talents as a scholar and a statesman. The King had them in particular affection, and both, before 1795, were often honored with the highest dignities. The Byeok-pa hated these two men and their followers, so, as we have seen, they used the pretext of the Christian Religion to destroy them, and they succeeded. After the entry of Father Zhou into Korea they had them removed from the court as suspects. It was then that they were deprived of their functions and relegated to lower positions. Nevertheless, the King always protected them, and rejected all the charges brought against them.

But on the death of this prince, his son and successor being too young to govern, the regency devolved by right to his great-grandmother Queen Jeongsun (Kim), second wife of Yeongjo, the father of the late king. She immediately took the conduct of affairs in hand and lowered the gate (that is to say the bamboo blind behind which she had to attend the council of ministers, for, although named by all Great Queen and Mother of the People, she could not, according to custom, be seated near the men). All of her relatives belonged to the No-ron and Pyeok-pa party, and had been removed from public office during the previous reign. They prepared to take advantage of the absolute power that unexpectedly fell into their hands, and to satisfy their political and religious grudges, by ruining both the Nam-in party and the Christian Religion.

The storm, however, did not unleash immediately. Korean law, out of respect and superstition,

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<sup>1</sup> 황사영 Hwang Sa-yeong 黃嗣永 (1775-1801) Alexius (Daveluy and Dallet mis-name him Alexander) wrote a long account of the persecutions in Korea on silk, his 백서 *Baekseo* 帛書 Silk Letter, destined for the Pope, but it was discovered by the Korean authorities.

forbids taking care of important business before the burial of a deceased King. However, the time marked between the death and the funeral of the Emperor of China being seven months, the King of Korea, who is his vassal, only has to wait five months, while for members of the high nobility the interval is three months. For five months, therefore, various ceremonies had to be performed every day in the presence of the body of the deceased, and they could only attend to the immense preparations necessary to give him burial according to all the rules.

The funeral ceremonies barely over, towards the end of the eleventh lunar month, the Regent demoted all the dignitaries of the Si-pa party, and dismissed all the ministers hitherto in office. The latter were replaced by Yi Byeong-mo<sup>2</sup>, Kim Gwan-ju<sup>3</sup> and Sim Hwan-ji<sup>4</sup>, all three of the No-ron party. This sudden change was a coup, because according to Korean law one cannot improvise ministers at will. The dignity of minister is for life, that is to say that they always keep the title, even when they are no longer in office, and only those can be made ministers, by a simple royal decree, who have already fulfilled this task. To create new ones, it is necessary to observe a host of rules, ceremonies, long and meticulous formalities, which require a considerable amount of time. But the Regent paid no heed to laws and customs, and overcame all these obstacles in order to have agents devoted to her party at hand. A few days later appeared, in the name of the young king and the regent, the impious decree which prohibited the Christian Religion throughout the kingdom, declared all its adherents outlaws, ordered all public functionaries to seize them, and gave full power to judge them without mercy<sup>5</sup>.

Ancient letters, printed in Europe, show that a minister then had the courage to defend the Christians in full council, and that he received the palm of martyrdom in reward for his generous apology. But all our research has so far been unable to find traces of this fact, and we do not see who it could be.

No sooner had the persecution decree been issued than the arrests began. The first to be seized was Thomas Choe Pil-gong 崔必恭, the same who, the previous year, had upheld the cause of the Gospel with so much talent and courage, before the King himself. A few days later, on the 19th day of the twelfth lunar month, the feast of the Purification<sup>6</sup>, Peter Choe Pil-je<sup>7</sup>, first cousin of Thomas, was taken in turn. He was praying at dawn with a few other Christians in a pharmacy overlooking one of the main streets of the capital. Police agents heard in passing these neophytes beating their chests, and believing they recognized the sound of a prohibited card game, broke down the window, rushed into the apartment, searched everyone present, and found, not cards, but a Christian calendar. As none of them could read, they immediately took it to more educated comrades, and learning that it was a religious writing, returned in haste to seize the delinquents. All had fled, except Peter Choe Pil-je and Stephen O Hyeong-dal 吳玄達, who were taken to the Mandarin and locked up in the same prison as Thomas Choe.

Two noble Christians, of the party of the Nam-in, were captured during these same days, one in the district of Yanggeun, and the other in the town of Jeongju. The first was the same Jo Dong-seom<sup>8</sup>, whom we saw formerly engaged in the exercises of the spiritual retreat with Xavier Gwon. He was immediately thrown into prison. The other, named Yi Gi-yeon 李箕延, escaped prison through apostasy and was exiled.

<sup>2</sup> 이병모 Yi Byeong-mo 李秉模 (1742-1806)

<sup>3</sup> 김관주 Kim Gwan-ju 金觀柱 (1743-1806)

<sup>4</sup> 심환지 Sim Hwan-ji 沈煥之 (1730-1802)

<sup>5</sup> This might not in fact have been a formal order.

<sup>6</sup> February 2 in the Church's calendar, the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Candlemas.

<sup>7</sup> 최필제 Choe Pil-je 崔必悌 (1770-1801) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>8</sup> 조동섬 Jo Dong-seom 趙東暹 (1739-1830)



Searches multiplied on all sides; all suspicious houses were searched by satellites and often devastated. Terror was spreading among the Christians when, at the end of this twelfth lunar month, the celebrations of the Korean New Year procured them a reprieve of a few days, and gave more time to get themselves and their families to safety.

The year which was beginning, the *sin-yu* year (1801), was to be forever memorable among all for its disasters. It is engraved in bloody characters in the annals of Korea. It was then above all that this nascent Church acquired citizenship in the Catholic Church; it was then above all that the faith of Jesus Christ planted in this unfaithful land roots that Hell could not tear up and that time will never destroy. The New Year celebrations were barely over when, on the 11th day of the first lunar month, a new royal decree 윤음 綸音 was published in the name of the Regent, the text of which is as follows:

“The late king often said that if one applied oneself to making the right doctrine shine, the perverse doctrine would extinguish itself. Now I hear it said that the unregulated doctrine is maintained, and that from the capital to the depths of the provinces, especially in the Hochong, it is spreading day by day more; how could I not tremble? Man becomes truly man only by the observation of natural relations, and a kingdom finds its life only in instruction and true doctrine. Now, the disordered doctrine in question recognizes neither parents nor king; it rejects all principle, it lowers man to the rank of savages and animals. The ignorant people allow themselves to be more and more penetrated by it, and stray into a false path; it is a child who runs to the river and drowns in it. How could my heart not be touched? and how could I not take pity on these poor wretches?

“The *gamsa* 監司 and *suryeong* 守令 of the cities must therefore open the eyes of the ignorant, ensure that the followers of this new religion sincerely mend their ways, and that those who do not follow it are strongly enlightened and warned. By this, we will not trample underfoot the instructions which the late King so generously endeavored to give, and the lights which he caused to shine. After this strict prohibition, if there are still beings who do not return to remorse, they must be prosecuted as rebels. Consequently, the mandarins of each district will establish, each within the whole extent of his jurisdiction, the system of the five houses in solidarity with each other. If among the five houses there are some who follow the bad doctrine, the chief in charge of their surveillance will warn the mandarin to have them corrected. After which, if they still do not want to change, the law is there; let them be exterminated in such a way as to leave no germs. Such is our will; that it be known and executed, both in the capital city and in the provinces.”

This bloody edict was only the echo of the cries of death uttered on all sides by the enemies of the Christian name, for during the whole course of the first and second months a crowd of addresses to the king was published, petitions to ministers, circulars from nobles, etc., from all parts of the kingdom. We had before us a collection which, although very incomplete, shows how high the spirits had risen, and proves by itself that no human force could stop the persecution.

As always happens in such circumstances, Hell raised up among the Christians themselves some traitors who sold their brothers. Among these unfortunates, one above all acquired a sad celebrity by the disasters he caused. It was Kim Yeo-sam<sup>9</sup>, from Hochong district, Chungcheong province. His three older brothers, having left their home to escape persecution, had come to settle in the capital. Yeo-sam followed them there. But he soon lost himself through association with bad company and, despite the advice of his brothers, fell into the greatest excesses. Reduced to poverty, he first extorted some alms from a Christian acquaintance of his, a native of the same province, named Yi An-jeong 李安正. Then, he not being able or not wanting to satisfy his requests, he dedicated a relentless hatred to him.

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<sup>9</sup> 김여삼 Kim Yeo-sam 金汝三

Yi An-jeong frequented the sacraments, Yeo-sam, who knew it, said to himself: “If the priest exhorted him to give alms, he could not help giving it, and if he doesn’t do it, it’s because the priest isn’t pushing him.” In order to get revenge on the priest, he went to make a statement to the leaders of the satellites. Those who, since the entry of the priest in Korea, had not yet been able to penetrate the secrets of the Christians, were transported with joy and said to him: “If the affair succeeds, we will get you a generously remunerated position. Just try to find out where this man is now.” The priest was staying with Colomba Gang at that time, and Yeo-sam promising to let them know of the priest’s retirement. But he fell seriously ill, and his plan failed. Father Zhou, secretly informed, withdrew elsewhere.

In vain Yi An-jeong tried to bring this unfortunate man back by giving him, on various occasions, quite considerable sums. Kim Yeo-sam, always greedier, bound moreover by his antecedent declarations, returned to his sinful habits, and became more involved than ever in the plots against the Christians. It was he who, two days before the second decree of the Regent, led the satellites to the head catechist, John Choe Chang-hyeon<sup>10</sup>. To escape persecution, John Choe had first retired to live with other Christians, but an indisposition forced him to return home for treatment. He was arrested in the middle of the night and thrown into prison. Shortly after, he had to undergo a first interrogation, received thirteen blows from the plank, and although lying motionless on the ground, regained enough strength to explain to the judge the Ten Commandments of God, and the vanity of ancestor worship.

Many other Christians were arrested, especially common people, the poor, the ignorant and women. One would have said that the new government dared not immediately attack persons influential by their nobility or their fortune.

Meanwhile, a very unfortunate accident occurred. A crate containing books and religious objects, as well as letters from Father Zhou and other compromising objects, had been deposited in a house believed to be safe. When the new edicts of persecution appeared, the terrified trustee wished to have it returned to the owner, and as a precaution wrapped it in fir branches, hoping that the whole thing would pass for wood bound in bundles. A Christian named Thomas Im Dae-in 任大仁 agreed to take it. But the strange shape of this burden made a policeman suspect that it might well be an ox killed by fraud. He therefore stopped the carrier and led him to the town hall. The box was opened in front of the mandarin; everything it contained, books, religious objects and letters from the priest, was confiscated, and Thomas immediately sent under escort to the court of thieves. It was oil thrown on the fire, and the agitation became extreme. This was on the 19th of the first lunar month. This box, according to Alexander Hwang and the Christians of the time, belonged to Augustine Jeong Yak-jong, and the mandarin of the town declared it so in his report to the chief of police Yi Yu-gyeong 李有慶. The latter, either because he had doubts or because he was frightened by the seriousness of this affair, did not undertake to collect any further information for the moment.

In the first days of the second month, this chief of police was removed and replaced by Sin Dae-hyeon 申大顯, who, it is not known in what intention, immediately released all the apostates with whom the prison was full, and kept chained only four faithful Christians: Thomas Choe Pil-gong 崔必恭, Peter Choe Pil-je 崔必悌, John Choe Chang-je 崔昌悌, and Thomas Im Dae-in 任大仁. Some say that he wanted to kill them under the blows, others that he thought of sending them into exile. At the same time, Sin Dae-hyeon stopped the arrests; but the enemies of the faith immediately concerted, and, in an address to the Regent, demanded that the Christians be treated as rebels, and that the chief judge be punished like them for having shown them too much indulgence. The furious Regent deposed Sin Dae-hyeon, annulled all his acts, ordered the recapture of all those whom he had set free, and had the four Christians transferred to the prison of the court called *Geumbu* 禁府.

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<sup>10</sup> 최창현 Choe Chang-hyeon 崔昌顯 (1759-1801) John. (Dallet writes T’soi Koan-t sien). Blessed.

According to Korean law, only public officials and individuals accused of lèse-majesté or rebellion are subject to the *Geumbu*. The court of thieves deals only with crimes against property. For other kinds of offences, there is the court of crimes, to which not only the common people are amenable, but all the nobles who do not exercise any public function. Christians had hitherto been sent to the court of thieves. To transfer them to the *Geumbu* was to accuse them of rebellion in order to be able to punish them accordingly.

First of all, as we have noticed, only men of the people or of the middle class were arrested. The new ruling party was trying its strength. Soon it felt powerful enough to strike a decisive blow, and on the 9th day of the second lunar month, a warrant of arrest was issued with all the necessary formalities against Yi Ga-hwan, second-rank minister, John Jeong Yak-Yong, dignitary of the fourth degree, Peter Yi Seung-hun, ex-mandarin, and Luke Hong Nak-min, high official. They were all four taken to the *Geumbu* prison. On the 11th of the same lunar month, Ambrose Gwon Cheol-sin and Augustine Jeong Yak-jong were taken in turn. On the 14th, Francis-Xavier Hong Gyo-man<sup>11</sup> was arrested with his son Leo<sup>12</sup>; but the latter was sent to the prison of Pocheon 抱川, the town where his family resided.

Neophytes of all conditions and of all ages were sought out and thrown into prison. The Christians detained in the towns of Yeosu and Yanggeun were even brought to the capital, to be tried there by the *Geumbu* tribunal. The comings and goings of the satellites in all the neighborhoods continued day and night. The *Geumbu*, the two divisions of the court of thieves, the prison of the court of crimes, everything was overflowing with prisoners. Such numerous arrests caused a great stir in the town. Everyone was terrified; the Christians especially were in consternation, and their fear was heightened when, on the 24th, the satellites were seen, in violation of all the customs of the country, no longer to spare even noble women, to force the house of Colomba Gang, and seize her with her slaves. This first step once made, on the same day and the following days, many other noble women were also thrown into prison.

Most of these important characters have been mentioned often in this story; we add a few words here to let others know.

Ambrose Gwon Cheol-sin 權哲身 was the elder brother of the famous Francis-Xavier Gwon Il-sin 權日身 and the head of the Gwon family, whom Yi Byeok chose to firmly establish the Religion in this country. We have already said what a reputation for science and virtue he had acquired. When he heard of the Religion, he found it hard to believe at first, and it was only after carefully and prudently probing the various points of doctrine, that he resolved to embrace it; but once he made up his mind, he never contradicted himself. With his parents he practiced the duties of filial piety; in his social relations, he managed by his liberality and his devotion to win the confidence of all, and all had the greatest respect for him. The authority of his name drew many pagans to the gospel. "Since this man regards the Religion as true," people said to themselves, "how could we not believe in it?" However, he made no direct propaganda, and never interfered in the affairs of Christendom. He always remained at home occupied with his studies and his religious practices, not worrying in any way about the insults heaped on him in circulars and public writings, nor about the calumnies with which they often sought to blacken him before the King.

Hearing of the acts of apostasy wrung from Christians by torture, he said with a sigh: "Poor people! what a pity! they thereby render useless the labors of half their lives, and lose the crown due to their sufferings." Taken himself and brought before the judges, he made a courageous apology for the Religion and its practices. In the tortures, his face did not change and he answered with calm and tranquility, to

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<sup>11</sup> 홍교만 Hong Gyo-man 洪教萬 (1738-1801) Francis-Xavier. Blessed.

<sup>12</sup> 홍인 Hong In 洪鎭 (1758-1802) Leo. Blessed.

the point that one of his bitterest enemies, whose function obliged him to be present when he was questioned, said on leaving those whom he met: “During the interrogations, the other culprits are quite beside themselves, but for Gwon Cheol-sin, he looks like a man quietly seated at a feast.”

One of Ambrose Gwon’s principal companions in captivity was Augustine Jeong Yak-jong, a descendant of the illustrious family of the Jeong of Majae, of whom we have often spoken, and one of John Jeong Yak-Yong’s elder brothers. Of an upright character, of a sagacious and profound mind, he applied himself early to studies and obtained success in letters. He enjoyed the company of serious and educated people, and became the friend of the famous Yi Ga-hwan, and of the most famous scholars then in existence. Considering the literature of the examinations as too light, he abandoned it entirely and, by that very fact, renounced in advance the dignities to which access was moreover so easy for him, in order to devote himself without obstacle to the researches of philosophy and morality. For some time he applied himself to the doctrine of Lao-tse, to obtain the immortality which it promises to its adepts; but he soon recognized the emptiness and the ridiculousness of this theory. He also studied medicine and acquired a great reputation there.

As soon as the Religion spread in Korea, he was instructed in it, but did not immediately surrender. He often repeated that Yi Byeok was deviating from the true path, and it was not until four or five years later that he yielded to the solicitations of Grace; and recognizing in his hesitations something resembling those of Saint Augustine, he wished to take this saint as his patron at baptism. Having become a Christian, he no longer looked back and practiced his religion with a fervor and perseverance beyond all praise. In 1791, the disastrous example given by his brothers and so many other of his friends who apostatized miserably, did not shake him. He was no more moved by the persecutions of his family. His father not only had refused to practice, but he also decried the Religion and strictly prohibited it to his children. Augustine, while continuing to show himself a pious and devoted son, remained faithful to all his religious exercises, and endured all ill-treatment with unflinching patience.

He had been married, but his wife died very young, leaving him a son named Charles<sup>13</sup>, whom he carefully instructed in all the duties of a Christian. Yielding to the entreaties of his family, he remarried shortly afterwards, with the intention of living in continence with his wife. The Christians dissuaded him, and he had several children of whom we will speak later.

Alexander Hwang, who had known Augustine intimately, draws this portrait of him; “Not concerning himself with the affairs of the world, he took pleasure above all in the study of philosophy and the Religion. If a point of doctrine was obscure to him, in the ardor of his research he forgot food and sleep, and gave himself no rest until he had clarified it. On the way or in his house, on horseback or in a boat, he never stopped his deep meditations. If he met ignorant people, he took all his pains to instruct them, and however tired he might be, you did not see in him either laziness or boredom in doing so; he succeeded marvelously in making himself understood by his listeners, however rude they were. He composed two volumes in Korean entitled: *Principal Articles of The Religion*<sup>14</sup>, where he brought together what he had seen in religious books, adding a little of his own and striving above all to be clear. It is a valuable book for new Christians in this country, and the priest approved it. When Augustine met Christians, after the first usual compliments, he spoke immediately of doctrine, and all day long one could not say a useless word. If he was given the solution of some difficulty which he had not been able to penetrate, his heart was filled with joy, and he warmly thanked his interlocutor. When lukewarm or stupid people did not willingly hear the truths of salvation, he could not contain his pain and sadness. He was questioned on all kinds of subjects and, thanks to the admirable precision of his mind, thanks to his simple and clear speech, he strengthened faith and warmed charity in the hearts of all. His virtue was perhaps less great and his reputation less brilliant than those of the head catechist John Choe, but he was superior to the latter in talents and knowledge.”

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<sup>13</sup> 정철상 Jeong Cheol-sang 丁哲祥 (?-1801) Charles. Blessed.

<sup>14</sup> 주교 요지 *Jugyo Yoji* The Essentials of the Lord’s Teaching.

Besides the book that Alexander Hwang has just quoted, Augustine, in concert with Josaphat Kim Geon-sun<sup>15</sup>, occupied himself with composing a complete treatise, showing all the truths of the Religion in their order and methodical sequence. They had barely written it halfway when the persecution overtook them. A work of this kind, written by men of the country, would certainly have been much more accessible to the peoples of this kingdom; unfortunately there are no remains of it.

During his stay in the capital, Augustine had very frequent relations with Father Zhou, received him many times in his house, and was appointed by him president of the Myeongdo brotherhood. It is reported that shortly before his arrest, a friend of his, a Christian of the interpreter class, came to find him. saw on his clothes a thousand little crosses resplendent with light, and asked him what it was. Augustine, without answering directly, adroitly turned the conversation around, but the Christians saw in it an omen of the sufferings he was soon to endure, and their predictions were not deceived.

On the 11th day of the first lunar month, returning on horseback from Majae to the capital, Augustine met on the road a mandarin from the Geumbu tribunal. He had already passed him when, suspecting that this mandarin was going to arrest him, he sent his slave to him to ask whom he wanted to seize, adding that if it was himself, there was no point going any further. The mandarin was indeed going to fetch him; Augustine was therefore arrested on the spot, and led straight to prison. In the interrogations, he nobly made his profession of faith, developed the truths of the Religion before his judges, and declared clearly that he would never consent to deny his God in order to save his life.

Regarding the box of religious objects, taken on the 19th of the first month, he declared that it belonged to him, but then questioned about the letters which were contained therein, he remained silent. The judge, unable to get anything out of him, took it into his head to send to Augustine's house and have his family told: "If your father would only indicate the name and residence of the priest, there would be no reason to kill him; but he prefers to suffer violent tortures rather than open his mouth. You, his family, his children, think about it, and to save your head's life, confess everything frankly." The family replied that they did not know what he was talking about.

Augustine was accused not only, like other Christians, of having violated the law, but of having committed the double crime of *lèse-majesté* and rebellion. In advocating the Religion, he had said that it should not be prohibited. This was to accuse the King himself of injustice, since it had just been proscribed in his name; it was therefore a crime of *lèse-majesté*. Moreover, in his book: *Principal Articles of the Christian Religion*<sup>16</sup>, he had mentioned the world, the flesh and the devil as the three great enemies against which the faithful must constantly fight. But this expression: the world, being capable of signifying the government of the King, the rebellion was evident. The court accepted and consecrated this ridiculous interpretation. We should not be too surprised, because in Korea, as everywhere else, any word or objection against the Religion will find all the more believers, the more inept, the more foolish and the more stupid it is. We have in our hands<sup>17</sup> a refutation of Christianity<sup>18</sup>, composed by a mandarin of the same period, where it is said: "This religion commands to hate one's parents, since it commands to hate the body which the parents have begotten; it orders to treat the King as an enemy, since it denounces as an enemy the world which the king governs; finally it wants to annihilate the human race, since it teaches that virginity is more perfect than marriage." This sentence was written seriously, and even today it is regarded by most pagans as a complete summary of the Gospel.

<sup>15</sup> 김건순 Kim Geon-sun 金建淳 (1776-1801) Josaphat.

<sup>16</sup> The book *주교 요지 Jugyo Yoji 主教要旨* written by Jeong Yak-jong offered a summary of Catholic teaching written entirely in Hangeul, the first such book. There is no mention of the Three Enemies in it, but something of the kind was found in his confiscated diary.

<sup>17</sup> The 'we' here is Daveluy, not Dallet. This text is mentioned in Daveluy's Volume 4 a few lines later, after the discovery of the chest of books.

<sup>18</sup> An Jeong-bok 安鼎輯 (1712-1791) *천학 문답 Cheonhak Mundap 天學問答*.

The other prisoner, Francis-Xavier Hong Gyo-man<sup>19</sup>, better known among Christians as Hong from Namyang, was also descended from a noble family of the Nam-in party, long honored with important offices. Devoted early to study, Francis-Xavier was a *jinsa* or a licentiate, and his serious and thoughtful character, as well as the extent and variety of his knowledge, had won him general esteem. After residing for some time in the capital, he went to settle in the district of Pocheon, eight or ten leagues away, where he heard of Christianity, probably through the family of the Gwon of Yanggeun, to whom he was related. He did not embrace it immediately, but later, enlightened and pressed by his son Leo, he recognized the truth of it, began to practice it with fervor, and received baptism from the hands of Father Zhou. Although in a fine position, he no longer had any thoughts of human grandeur; he ceased his relations with his numerous pagan friends, without troubling himself about the reproaches which this conduct brought upon him. Entirely devoted to his duties and to the instruction of his family, he endeavored to warm the lukewarm and to propagate the Religion, and frequently spent the evenings exhorting the Christians of the country, assembled at his house for this purpose. When the edict of persecution was published, Francis-Xavier Hong went into hiding for a few days, then seeing that he could not escape his enemies for long, he decided to return home, accompanied by his son, and wait for God's order. On the road itself, he was met by the satellites, who stopped him and took him to the capital.

The trial of all these outstanding men was not to last very long, their fate was decided in advance. Few details remain of the interrogations and the tortures they underwent<sup>20</sup>, but some fragments of the civil acts<sup>21</sup>, which we have in our hands, show them all accused of being followers of a foreign and depraved religion. Augustine Jeong alone was also accused of lèse-majesté and rebellion. Before the end of the proceedings, on the 21st of the second lunar month, Ambrose Gwon died in prison, at the age of sixty-six, dead, according to some, as a result of his wounds or of starvation, according to others<sup>22</sup>.

Four days later, all the prisoners were sentenced to death. Augustine's two brothers, John Jeong Yak-Yong and Jeong Yak-jeon, who already, in a similar circumstance, had given a sad example of weakness, again had the cowardice to trample underfoot the exhortations, the prayers, the tears and the noble examples of their brother, and to redeem their lives through apostasy. The death sentence for them was commuted to a sentence of exile. Let us immediately add that John Jeong, pardoned a few years later, made a long and sincere penance for his crime, that he consoled the Christians by his exemplary fervor and mortification, and died a very edifying death. He left several religious writings, and mainly memoirs on the introduction of the Gospel in Korea, where most of the facts related so far in our history are collected<sup>23</sup>.

Yi Ga-hwan, whose only crime was to have been one of the most illustrious leaders of the vanquished party, was condemned to death as a Christian, and shut up, without food, in a room where he expired after seven days of suffering. He knew the Religion very well, but, like so many other scholars, he loved the glory of men more than that of God, and never gave any sign of conversion. Did he enjoy, at some hour of his long and solitary agony, the happiness of recognizing and adoring this Christ, for whose name he was being put to death? This is God's secret. Be that as it may, many of the descendants of this unfortunate minister are today devout Christians.

The six other condemned, namely: Peter Yi Seung-hun, Thomas Choe Pil-gong, John Choe

<sup>19</sup> 홍교만 Hong Gyo-man 洪教萬 (1738-1801) Francis Xavier. Blessed.

<sup>20</sup> Actually there is a full record in the court records known as the *Gwansun Girok* 官邊紀錄 and the *Sinyu Chu-an* 辛酉推案.

<sup>21</sup> Especially the *Byeokuipyeon* 關衛編 record.

<sup>22</sup> A record by Jeong Yak-yong (*Yeoyudang* 1-15, 34a) says that he died on the 25<sup>th</sup> as a result of beatings.

<sup>23</sup> Bishop Daveluy refers to these 'memoirs' at the start of his Notes pour l'Histoire (Daveluy Archive Volume 4) but they have never been identified.

Chang-hyeon, Francis-Xavier Hong Kyo-man, Luke Hong Nak-min, and Augustine Jeong Yak-Jong, were beheaded outside the West Gate<sup>24</sup>, on the 26th of the second lunar month (April 8, 1801). Peter Yi Seung-hun was then forty-five years old. Here is the official text<sup>25</sup> of his sentence:

“The bad books of the West are a monstrosity unexampled in ancient and modern times. By lying words they preach a certain Jesus, and deceive the world. What they call Heaven and Hell is only a clumsy imitation of Fo’s doctrine; what they call Spiritual Father is only the annihilation of the natural relations of man. They say that property and women can be shared, and that torture and death need not be feared. All their words are deceitful, disorderly and impudent; the saints must reject them, and the people reject them. Despite this, the accused received baptism, bought these books, brought them from a distance of ten thousand li, scattered them among their relatives and allies, in the capital and in the provinces, near and far. Not only that. He communicated with foreigners and bonded with them; he hatched with Yun Yu-il (Paul Yun) evil and secret plots, and united in culpable proceedings with Yak-jong (Augustine). When the King had had the law posted, the accused saw as if in a mirror the evil spirits who had directed him; on the outside he pretended to change, but inside his heart continued to be lost and blinded. In this deceitful clique and this disgusting race of Christians, there is no one who has not looked up to him as the head of the Religion, and has not called him father. How, after such faults, could he be supported between heaven and earth? All the proofs are revealed, all his crimes have come to light; the law of heaven shines brightly, the law of the King is justly severe. I recognize this.” These last three words, which are found at the end of all similar documents, are the usual form of acquiescence, which all the condemned are made to sign willingly or by force.

The death of Seung-hun was even sadder than that of Yi Ga-hwan. Never, perhaps, had a finer and easier opportunity for repentance been offered to a sinner. Christian or not, he had to die; even apostasy could not save his life, while a simple act of return to God could change this inevitable torment into triumph. But his defections, his repeated and persistent cowardice seem to have exhausted the patience of God, and he expired without retracting his apostasy, without giving the slightest sign of contrition. He, the first baptized; he, who had brought baptism and the Gospel to his compatriots, walked to death with the martyrs and was not a martyr; he had his head cut off as a Christian and died a renegade. O my God, how just and terrible are your judgments!

This terrible death appalled the pagans themselves. The body of Seung-hun, having been carried back to his house after three days, no one dared to go there to pay the usual visits of condolence. Only one of his relatives and friends, Sim-yu 沈湊, went there dressed in mourning, but his conduct excited the murmurs of the people.

Since that time, among the numerous relatives of Peter Yi Seung-hun, there are only very few faithful, and the greater number of his relatives have always distinguished themselves by their hostility against the Christian Religion. He left three sons, who were the stock of as many families, only two of whom today profess Christianity.

Let us now turn our eyes away from these sad scenes, and return them to the precious death of our martyrs. Thomas Choe Pil-gong 崔必恭, whose upright character and noble frankness had won the late King’s sympathies, marched resolutely to execution. The executioner, still inexperienced, could not cut off his head the first time. Thomas, laying his hand on his wound, withdrew it all bleeding, and staring at it attentively, exclaimed: “Precious blood!” Precious, indeed, for it was the price of Heaven, the doors of which a second saber cut immediately opened for him.

<sup>24</sup> Dallet writes simply ‘porte de l’Ouest’ but Daveluy (Volume 4 f. 108) writes ‘la petite porte de l’Ouest’, which is correct. Most executions were performed on an open space outside the Small West Gate (서소문 Seo-so-mun 西小門) which was located some way to the south of the West Gate.

<sup>25</sup> Daveluy (Archive Volume 5 from f. 242) gives translations of many death sentences, this being the first.

Then came the zealous catechist John Choe Chang-hyeon 崔昌顯. In one of the interrogations undergone at the court of thieves, he had had a moment of weakness; but God came to his aid, and Grace soon regained the upper hand. As soon as he arrived in the higher court, he courageously retracted his ambiguous words. He did more, as we see from the text of his sentence; he then even composed a written apology for the Christian Religion, presented it to the judges, and the next day sealed it with his blood. He was forty-three years old.

Francis-Xavier Hong Gyo-man 洪教萬 was sixty-four. We have no details of his final moments; but the judges themselves gave a magnificent eulogy of his perseverance, by inscribing in his death sentence these words: "He dares to say impudently that it is a happiness to die for this religion. His stubbornness is stronger than wood and stone. For him, all tortures are too light."

Luke Hong Nak-min having, a few years earlier, publicly and repeatedly renounced Christianity, the court pardoned his life. He was therefore condemned to exile, and, according to custom, he first received a heavy beating on the legs. This is where God was waiting for him. During this torture, faith, repentance, generous feelings awoke in his soul, and raising his head, he said to the judges: "All that I have done in the past was only to cowardly preserve my life. Now that I am still being beaten and dishonored, I prefer to tell you frankly all that is on my heart, and die with courage. The God I serve is the sovereign Lord of heaven, earth, spirits, men and all things. Mathew Yi (Korean name of Fr. Mateo Ricci, the apostle of China), and the other missionaries, are admirable men of doctrine and holiness; all their words are true. I therefore now desire to die for God, and thereby confess the truth of the Christian faith." The prime ministers who presided over the tribunal were both irritated and surprised at the words of the confessor of the faith, and a great noise arose in the whole assembly. A message was immediately sent to the Regent to inform her of what had just taken place, and the latter, furious, sent the order to subject Luke to cruel torture. His body was shattered from beatings. Sent back to prison, he said, while washing the blood that flowed from his wounds: "Now I am happy, and my heart is at ease." If the sentence is to be believed, Luke seems also to have said that he suffered death with joy, as a punishment for his former apostasies. When he got on the cart to go to execution, his face beamed with happiness. With his eyes raised to heaven, he kept exhorting the people. He died like this, at the age of fifty-one.

The contemporary author who has preserved these facts for us, adds a few words well worthy of attention: "After having been firm at the beginning," he says, "many give way at the end. To rise again after the fall, and to become a martyr after apostasy, is not a common thing, nor easy. Luke Hong, it is said, recited his rosary every day; even in the midst of his public functions, and the crowd of guests and friends who flocked to his house, he never omitted it for a single day. It is undoubtedly this practice that will have earned him such extraordinary grace." — We are happy to find this touching reflection from the pen of a neophyte. This is further proof that everywhere and always, true Christians have, so to speak instinctively, the same unshakable faith in the all-powerful intercession of Mary, Mother of God,

Augustine Jeong Yak-jong's last moments were worthy of his life. When they led him to execution, his face seemed quite luminous. During the journey he called the driver and told him that he was thirsty. The assistants having reprimanded him, he replied: "It is to imitate my great model that I ask for a drink." An indefatigable preacher in prison and before the court, he made the theater of his martyrdom a very eloquent pulpit. Seated in front of the instruments of torture, he contemplated them with happiness, then, raising his voice so as to be heard by all the people, he exclaimed: "The supreme Lord of heaven, of earth, and of all things, self-existent and infinitely adorable, created you and preserves you. All of you must convert to your first principle; do not foolishly make him a subject of scorn and ridicule. What you regard as a shame and a reproach will soon be the subject of eternal glory to me." They interrupted him, telling him to put his head on the block; he placed himself so as to see the sky, saying: "It is better to die looking at the sky than looking at the earth." The executioner trembled and dared not strike; but finally the fear of punishment prevailing over admiration, with an unsteady hand he gave the first thrust of his saber. The head was only half severed, Augustine straightened up, ostensibly



made a great sign of the cross, and peacefully replaced himself in his first posture to receive the mortal blow.

Thus died, at the age of forty-two, one of the most remarkable men and one of the greatest martyrs that the Christian Religion has counted in this country. His body was carefully collected and taken to the town where his family resided for burial. His relatives and allies, both pagans and Christians, claim that several miraculous healings took place at his tomb. Augustine had been accused of the crime of rebellion; all his property was accordingly confiscated by special order of the government. It is probable that his enemies thereby wanted to prevent the rehabilitation of his family forever, and to make revenge impossible for him.

On the same day, the 26th of the second lunar month, another death sentence was passed. It was that of Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi Dan-won, the apostle of Naepo. After his apostasy in 1791, touched by sincere repentance, he fervently resumed his religious practices. He was able to see Father Zhou, and even stay with him for a while. The priest often repeated to him: "After having committed so many faults, after having administered the sacraments without authority, after having scandalized the faithful by your apostasy, how could you do enough penance? Martyrdom alone can make you be forgiven." So he thought constantly of preparing for it. Arrested by order of the governor of the province, towards the end of the year 1795, he had to suffer cruel tortures, but he did not weaken and was sent back to Cheonan, his native town, to be put there in the rank of castigators. This punishment, frequent in Korea, is very shameful for a person of honest condition; but the mandarin did not make him perform this vile function, and contented himself with placing him on bail with a private individual. He remained thus under police surveillance for about six years, until his trial was resumed in 1801.

The order had been given to put him to the question, the 1st and the 15th of each month. It is probable, however, that the praetorians did not cause too much suffering to a man who had won their esteem, and had devoted himself to the education of their children. He remained firm during this long ordeal. He constantly practiced his Religion in full view of the world, and by his words as well as by his example did great good in the country. Having one day obtained permission to visit his family in Ye-sa-ol, he inquired there about the state of the Religion. He then learned that, yielding to fear, the Christians had collected and burned all their religious books in the village square. At this news, he could not restrain his tears, and his heart filled with bitterness, he asked if any volume had escaped the fire. They brought him two, secretly removed.

When, after the death of the King, the persecution redoubled in severity, he was transferred first to Cheongju<sup>26</sup> to undergo the question there, then to the capital, where he was condemned to death with John Choe, Augustine Jeong and their companions. In order to frighten the people, the government ordered his execution at Gongju, the chief town of the province where he had for a long time preached the Gospel. It was there that he was beheaded, two days after the martyrs of the capital, on the 28th of the second lunar month (April 10, 1801). His head did not fall, it is said, until the sixth blow of the saber. He was then over fifty years old. Some of his relatives had witnessed the execution, but it was not until several days later that they were able to recover his precious remains and transport them to his family's tomb. It is said that when they collected the body, the head was firmly attached to the neck, with no other trace of the torture than a circular scar, which looked like a whitish thread.

Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi Dan-won, despite his weakness during the first persecution, is, without a doubt, one of those who worked hardest for the propagation of the Gospel in Korea. Many of our Christians today are descendants of those he converted then. His memory is therefore in veneration in Naepo and the neighboring districts. By a rather singular coincidence, the first two Korean priests were from his family: Fr. Andrew Kim, grandson of one of his nieces, and Fr. Thomas Choe, grandson of one of his nephews. His direct descendants are now extinct.

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<sup>26</sup> In fact to Gongju, not Cheongju.

Fifteen days after the triumph of Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi, another Christian, little known, took place in the same town of Gongju. The few details which follow were related by an old man in his eighties, whom circumstances had then brought near the prison, and who distinctly heard all that passed there. Yi Jong-guk, whose family and baptismal name are unknown, had been taken from Cheongju to the provincial capital. On the eve of his death, towards the middle of the third lunar month, the moon being in all its brilliance, he stood all night long, leaning on the threshold of his prison door, reciting his prayers. At daybreak, he half opened the door and, looking towards the East, he cried out several times: "Why does the day take so long to appear?" Then, hearing a shotgun fired, he got up full of joy and said: "That's a good sign, they won't be long in calling me," and he resumed his prayers with redoubled fervor.

A few minutes later, another shot was heard, the door of the prison opened, and the jailers brought him the meal of those condemned to death. Yi Jong-guk sat down to the table, thanked God for a long time for having created such an abundance of good in the world, then tasted each of the dishes presented to him, and, sending the table back, sat down again to pray. Suddenly, a shout was heard, "Bring out Yi Jong-guk." He rose immediately and calling by name each of the Christians who were prisoners with him, he said to them: "As for me, by the infinite mercy of God and the help of Mary, I am now going to enjoy the happiness of heaven; you all, don't lose faith, do like me." He was thus exhorting them warmly and aloud, when the soldiers urged him to leave. They placed him on a horse, his face turned towards the tail. His face beaming with joy, he was led to the place of execution, and beheaded, in the twenty-seventh year of his age.

Chapter 4: The six martyrs of Yeosu. — Martyrdom of Barbara Sim, of Alexis Hwang, etc. — Martyrdom of Father Zhou.

We have said above that the government of the Regent had transferred to the capital, to be tried there by the *Geumbu*, the Christians detained in the prisons of Yeosu and Yanggeun. Those of Yeosu, arrested at various times before the King's death<sup>1</sup>, had already undergone long tortures when this order was carried out. We are going to give here the few details preserved by the Korean traditions on the principal of these confessors.

Martin Yi Jung-bae<sup>2</sup>, of the branch of the Jeonju Yi, was born in the district of Yeosu, of a family attached to the Si-ron party. He stood out for his straight, but violent and irascible character, for his knowledge of medicine, for his extraordinary strength and courage, and for his excessive ambition. It is said of him that in all his travels, even the shortest, he had a mania for resting during the day and walking only at night, and that he frequently committed, without the slightest scruple, acts of violence and injustice. He was brought to faith by his close friend, Josaphat Kim Geon-sun<sup>3</sup>, Augustine Jeong's collaborator in the composition of the treatise on the Religion, which could not be finished. The two friends became Christians and were baptized together. From then on Martin was a new man. He succeeded in taming his character, and retained only his uprightness and his firmness. Filled with courageous fervor, he openly professed his faith, and, with his father and his wife whom he had converted, performed his religious exercises without hiding from anyone.

His cousin John Won "Sa-sin"<sup>4</sup>, of the town of Yeosu, had also been converted by Josaphat Kim, with whom he was very intimate. His whole family had followed his example and practiced the Christian Religion.

In the third lunar month of the year *gyeong-sin* (1800), Martin and John went to spend the Easter holidays with one of their friends, Jeong Jong-ho<sup>5</sup>. The latter, whose baptismal name is unknown to us, received them with joy in the midst of his family, which was entirely Christian. A dog was killed, wine prepared in abundance, and on the day of the feast the family and their guests met with some faithful neighbors on the side of the road. There, all recited aloud the Alleluia and the *Regina coeli*<sup>6</sup>, then sang their prayers to the sound of the calabash. They then made a meal of the meat and wine they had brought, and when the meal was over, the singing began again. The day was thus passing away in exercises of piety and in a fraternal feast, when the Mandarin, warned by pagans of what was happening, sent satellites to seize them. They were all arrested and taken to prison. During the journey they passed in front of the house of John Won, and his old mother, all in tears, threw herself in front of the satellites, imploring them to allow her to see her son for a moment before taking him away, but she was not listened to, and the prisoners continued on their way. Arriving at the tribunal, the Mandarin said to them: "Denounce your accomplices and those who seduced you, and deny God." John answered in the name of all: "It is strictly forbidden for us to denounce anyone; and should we die, we cannot harm anyone. As for denying God,

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<sup>1</sup> In 1800.

<sup>2</sup> 이중배 Yi Jung-bae 李中培 (1751?-1801) Martin. Blessed. (Daveluy calls him 'Tsong pai' and Dallet calls him 'Tsong-po-i'.)

<sup>3</sup> 김건순 Kim Geon-sun 金建淳 (1775-1801) Josaphat. Martyr.

<sup>4</sup> More correctly 원경도 Won Gyeong-do 元景道 (1774-1801) John. Blessed.

<sup>5</sup> 정종호 Jeong Jong-ho 鄭宗浩 (?-1801)

<sup>6</sup> This is the prayer recited during the Easter season each morning, midday and evening in place of the prayer popularly known as the *Angelus*.

the thing is even more impossible.” The angry Mandarin put them through bone-splitting and stick-puncturing. But supported by the courage and exhortations of Martin Yi, all were firm in these violent tortures, which were renewed several times in vain. They were then locked up in the prison.

About this time there lived at Jeomdeul<sup>7</sup>, in this same district of Yeosu, a nobleman named Im Hui-yeong<sup>8</sup>, of the branch of the Im of Pongcheon. His father, his mother, his brothers and sisters were devout Christians. He alone persisted in remaining pagan, and gave the excuse that it was something beyond his powers, “Since,” he said, “to practice the Religion faithfully, one must have neither eyes nor ears, nor any other sense.” To all his father’s exhortations, to all his reproaches, he never answered a single word. On his deathbed, his father summoned him and said to him: “If before I died I saw you as a Christian, I would no longer have any regrets when I left this world.” The son remaining silent, “I have to die tomorrow,” resumed the father. “By the way you look, I suppose that after my death you intend to make the usual sacrifices for parents. During my life you hardly listened to me, well! listen now: if after my death you make the sacrifices, I no longer regard you as my son, and I forbid you to wear my mourning.” Such words are, among all Orientals, but especially in Korea, the most terrible of anathemas. Here again Hui-yeong said nothing.

Two days later, his father being dead, he gave unequivocal signs of his desolation, put on the clothes of mourning, but made none of the customary sacrifices. All his relatives and allies, all his acquaintances looked at him with surprise, and did not conceal either their displeasure or their murmurs. In the spring of the year *gyeong-sin* (1800) came the first anniversary of the death, and then again he made no sacrifice. Soon after, the Mandarin of Yeosu, who had been watching him, sent satellites and summoned him to his tribunal. “I know clearly,” he told him, “that you do not follow the religion of the Lord of Heaven, but you are accused of not making sacrifices to deceased parents. If this is true, I will be forced to put you to death.” Hui-yeong remained silent as before his father, and was taken to the prison where Martin Yi, John Won and their companions were already, to be judged and condemned with them.

Two Christians had been taken from Hui-yeong’s house at the same time as him. They were Jo Je-dong, and his son Peter Jo Yong-sam<sup>9</sup>. This Jo Je-dong was a noble of the district of Ianggeun, of the branch of the Jo of Anyang. Having become a widower and fallen into poverty, he had left his native country, where he could no longer survive, and had taken refuge with his two sons with Hui-yeong, who for some time had been granting them generous hospitality. Peter Yong-sam, the eldest of the sons of Jo, was of a weak and sickly temperament, of a very unattractive exterior, and of an absolute ignorance of all the things of this world, which, together to the poverty of his family, had prevented him from finding a match. Although he was thirty years old, he had not yet been able to take the hat<sup>10</sup> and get married. Everyone laughed at him, only Augustine Jeong had been able to recognize a great soul in this puny body. He treated him with great respect, and never ceased to praise his faith and his virtue. When the satellites came to arrest Hui-yeong, Peter and his father were seized along with their host, but Ho-sam, Peter’s brother, managed to escape.

On the way, Jo said to his son: “This time, I have decided to give my life for God, and I will certainly be a martyr. For you, what will you do?” Peter replied: “No one can trust his resolutions or his strength; how dare I, weak and miserable that I am, promise myself martyrdom?” They were taken to the Mandarin, and from the first interrogation the father was punished for his foolish presumption and, for having relied too much on his own strength, suffered a deplorable fall. The Mandarin said to Peter: “You

<sup>7</sup> 여주의 점들 Yeosu Jeomdeul (Now 경기도 여주군 금사면 금사 2 리 Gyeonggido Yeosu-gun Geumsa-myeon Geumsa2ri)

<sup>8</sup> 임희영 Im Hui-yeong 任喜永 (?-1801). Martyr

<sup>9</sup> 조용삼 Jo Yong-sam 趙龍三 (?-1801). Blessed. The son of Jo Je-dong 조제동 (?-1801)

<sup>10</sup> (Dallet Note 35. In Korea, young men are not allowed to wear hats before their marriage. They go bareheaded, with their hair hanging down, and tied into a single braid. Only at the time of marriage do they lift them up and tie them at the top of their heads.)

too renounce your religion.” “I cannot do it,” replied Peter. — “What! when your father wants to keep his life, would you like to die? Is this not a lack of filial piety?” — “Not at all. If the parents come to deviate and the children continue to fulfill all their duties, will it be said that the children are lacking in filial piety? Everyone, it is true, must honor and serve his father and his mother according to nature, but there is, before them and above them, the great King and common Father of all the creatures of heaven and earth; it is He who gave life to my parents, it is He who also gave it to me, how could I deny him?” The irritated mandarin subjected him to two or three more interrogations accompanied by more cruel tortures than usual, in which he had a broken knee and detached from the leg, and the whole body covered with wounds. Peter had to endure a more formidable ordeal. The mandarin seeing the uselessness of exhortations and tortures, called the father and said to him in the presence of the confessor: “I am forced to put you to death because of your son. Speak to him then, one of your words can save the life of both of you; it’s all up to you, urge him to repent.” At the same time, he had him beaten cruelly in front of his son. Peter, defeated, exclaimed: “I cannot break with the feelings of nature. I don’t want my father to die because of me, save us both.” Then he made his submission, and the Mandarin, rejoicing in his success, had them released and dismissed immediately. But Peter, on leaving the tribunal, met Martin Yi Jung-bae 李中培, who reprimanded him sharply for his weakness, and exhorted him to prompt penance. He had yielded only to a blindness of filial tenderness, and the law was still alive in his heart. Frightened by his fault and touched by sincere repentance, he spent the night in tears, and the next morning appeared before the judge: “What I did yesterday,” he said to him, “is now for me the cause of mortal regret. I hope that the mandarin will be good enough to put the son to death for his own fault and to treat the father according to his wishes, because it would be unjust, for the fault of the son, to have the father also killed, surely? To each according to his works.”

The mandarin, all the more vexed because he had imagined that Peter’s puny appearance would easily overcome his obstinacy, had him locked up very tightly. Then, at each interrogation, he did not fail to have him beaten longer and more violently than the other Christians. But all was useless, and Peter, protected by his humble contrition as well as by divine grace, remained steadfast.

The same mandarin had also had John Won’s father-in-law, Marcellinus Choe Cheong-ju<sup>11</sup>, vulgarly called Yeojong, arrested. He was a noble from the district of Yeosu, who practiced the Religion with his whole family. In 1791 he had escaped persecution by apostasy. But, since then, he never ceased to do penance for his fault, and to ask God for the grace to wash it away in his own blood. When the first rumors of persecution arose, he replied laughingly to his wife who urged him to flee: “Don’t worry, when I am no longer, you will live all the same.” His mother also urged him on, and out of respect for her orders, he left the house and set out for the capital. But barely on the way, he changed his mind and returned home. That very evening, the satellites sent from Yeosu seized him and dragged him to court. “From whom did you learn the Religion,” asked the Mandarin, “and who are your accomplices? Denounce everything.” “Religion,” replied Marcellinus, “forbids me from harming anyone. I have nothing to declare.” The mandarin had him questioned, had him beaten, and finally seeing that he remained firm in his faith, had him thrown into the same prison where his son-in-law John Won, Martin Yi, the few confessors were already of whom we have just spoken, and quite a large number of other Christians.

For more than six months, the prisoners had to appear, once every two weeks, before the Mandarin, there to be interrogated and subjected to increasingly cruel tortures. It is said that John Won’s body, torn to shreds by these repeated tortures, was miraculously healed on several occasions. John’s family tried several times to shake him, and an old slave often came to give him the saddest picture of the desolation of his mother and his wife. One day, when he seemed more moved than usual at these stories, Martin Yi came to his aid, and cast such a terrible look at the old woman that she fled in terror and dared not return.

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<sup>11</sup> 최창주 Choe Chang-ju 崔昌周 (1749-1801) Marcellinus. Blessed.

Martin, for his part, had to undergo a formidable temptation. His old father came, all in tears, to find him in his prison and, taking his hand, said to him: "Do you want to die and abandon your white-haired father?" "Father," replied Martin, "I do not forget the duties of filial piety. No doubt, my behavior seems very ungenerous, but you are a Christian like me, and we must see things from above. Would it be right, in yielding to natural affections, to deny our Father who is in heaven? Judge for yourself."

God seemed to reward this heroic faith with the gift of healings. Indeed, although Martin had a certain knowledge of medicine, it is difficult to naturally explain this fact, attested by eyewitnesses, that all the patients who came to consult him in his prison returned cured. His reputation had spread far; the sick arrived in droves, so much so that the prison gate looked like a marketplace. The mandarin dared not oppose it, for several of his own servants had been healed. Josaphat Kim Geon-sun 金健淳, questioned about the cures effected by Martin, replied even then, so as not to make too much noise, that out of ten cripples eight or nine were cured; but he has since confessed that the cures were ten out of ten, a hundred out of a hundred, and that not a patient left without a complete cure. The jailers asked to see his medical books, Martin replied: "I have no formula of my own, only I serve the Lord of Heaven. If you want to study medicine, you must first start like me by believing in God." "But you claim to have burned all your books, how could we learn?" Martin said with a laugh: "I have in my heart incombustible books which are amply sufficient to instruct you, and to teach you to practice the Religion."

Tired of their long detention and the continual tortures that they had to undergo, several Christian prisoners let themselves be won over little by little by indifference and discouragement. Martin Yi, always on fire with zeal, never ceased to exhort and encourage them. "We were taken at the same time," he told them. "What happiness if all of us could die the same day for God!" But his efforts and the prayers of his fervent friends were not entirely successful, and a number of their companions in captivity purchased deliverance by pronouncing a formula of apostasy. To console those who remained, God permitted one of the jailers, touched by grace, to be converted at that very moment, and to become a devout Christian.

In the tenth month of the year 1800, the confessors were summoned before the governor of the province, who at first tried to win them over by gentleness, saying that a single word of apostasy would immediately set them free. Marcellinus answered in the name of all: "After having had the happiness of knowing and serving the true God, King and Father of all men, we cannot deny him. We prefer to die." Seeing all his attempts useless, the governor had them beaten on their legs, pronounced a sentence of death against them which he had them sign, and then sent them back to prison. They received this sentence with holy joy, and from then on redoubled their fervor in their prayers and the practice of all their duties, in order to obtain the grace to remain firm until the consummation of their sacrifice.

However, the pagan Im Hui-yeong 任喜永 had regularly undergone two interrogations a month with the Christians, without ever uttering a word. Like them, he had suffered violent tortures, and always without uttering a cry, or even opening his mouth. The amazed judge said to him several times: "You who are not a Christian, only promise to make the usual sacrifices and I will send you back immediately; but if you refuse to do so, I will put you to death." Hui-yeong was still silent. Finally, after the interrogation of the tenth lunar month, his fellow Christians said to him: "For you who do not worship our God, the torments you are enduring are quite useless. It would be much better to submit and save your life." Only then did he reply: "My father at the hour of death, declaring his last wishes, said to me: If you make the sacrifices for me, you are no longer my son, and I forbid you to bear my grief; now that I have mourned, how could I, to preserve my life, promise to make the sacrifices? If they kill me, I will be free to die; but make the sacrifices, never!"

This respect for the commands of a dying father, this unshakeable resolution never to break them, may seem quite extraordinary, especially in a pagan. But, when one knows the spirit of this people, whose whole religion is summed up in the honor and obedience that children owe to their living or dead parents, the astonishment diminishes. All missionaries can affirm, having seen it, that analogous occurrences are not rare in this country.

The Christians, seeing Hui-yeong so determined, worked to exhort and instruct him. They made

him understand that since his father had died a Christian, and had forbidden him sacrifices out of respect for the true Religion, it would be to obey him much more completely, and to procure the only chance of seeing him again one day in heaven, to become a Christian like him. The grace of God aiding their words, Hui-yeong sincerely converted, and formed with them one heart and one soul. It is believed that he was baptized in prison.

The governor, however, let things drag on, and did not dare to have the sentence of death he had pronounced carried out at once. The King's personal feelings were known to him, and he was afraid of compromising himself. But as soon as the edict of persecution had been published by the Regent, he summoned the confessors again, and ordered them to be cruelly tortured. It was during this interrogation that Peter Jo Yong-sam replied: "There are not two Lords in heaven, and man does not have two hearts. My only desire now is to die for God. It is useless to question me further, I have nothing more to say." He was then castigated in such an atrocious way that a day or two later, on the 14th day of the second lunar month, he breathed his last, after having been baptized in prison, for he was only a catechumen.

It was soon rumored that fire was appearing on the spot where his body had been laid. The satellites and a large number of curious people went to make sure, and saw, not fire, but a strange light above the tomb. The Christians of this province have retained a great veneration for Peter, and often we still hear them speak of him with extraordinary respect and confidence.

The other prisoners were taken to the capital. The *Geumbu* tribunal immediately confirmed the death sentence, and in order to strike terror into the population, ordered that they be taken back to their own district of Yeosu, to be executed there. On the 13th of the third lunar month (April 25, 1801), all five of them were beheaded outside the walls of this city. John Won was only twenty-eight; Marcellinus Choe was fifty-three; Martin Yi and Jong Chong-ho were about fifty years old; we do not know how old Im Hei-yeong was. Five soldiers had been given the task of cutting off the heads of the martyrs. But when the time came, four of them refused this office, and only the fifth consented to kill them all. A few moments later, this unfortunate man, pursued, he said, by the bloody shadows of his victims, threw himself into the river, and drowned there.

That same day, April 25, the city of Yanggeun also had its martyrs, whose sentence, in all probability, had been ratified by the supreme tribunal at the same time as that of the confessors of Yeosu. The main ones were Yu Han-suk<sup>12</sup> and James Yun<sup>13</sup>.

The first, also called Sa-gyeom, belonged to a family of semi-nobles from the village of Dongmak-gol<sup>14</sup>, in the district of Yanggeun. The story of his life and his martyrdom has not reached us. Nor do we have any details about James Yun, younger brother of the Paul Yun, who was martyred in 1795, for having introduced the priest to Korea. And we should not be surprised if the records of James' trial could not be collected, because this family was almost wiped out by the persecution. His father and one of his uncles were deported to the islands; another uncle by the name of Andrew Yun Gwan-su<sup>15</sup> died under torture, and we will soon see the glorious end of Agatha Yun, first cousin of Paul and Jacques.

The most authoritative tradition puts the total number of Christians martyred at Yanggeun during that month at thirteen<sup>16</sup>. They are in great veneration among Christians, though the names of nearly all are now forgotten.

All these executions, far from satisfying the thirst that the persecutors had for the blood of Christians, only irritated it more and more. The *Geumbu* court functioned with diabolical activity. Every

<sup>12</sup> 유한숙 Yu Han-suk 俞汗淑 (?~1801). Martyr

<sup>13</sup> 윤유오 Yun Yu-o 尹有五 (?-1801) Martyr

<sup>14</sup> More correctly Dongmak-dong 東幕洞.

<sup>15</sup> 윤관수 Yun Gwan-su Martyr.

<sup>16</sup> Official records only mention 7.

day, new trials and new tortures. On the 2nd day of the fourth lunar month (May 14), six confessors were condemned to death and executed. They were: Charles Jeong<sup>17</sup>, Peter Choe<sup>18</sup>, Jeong In-hyeok<sup>19</sup>, Yi Hap-gyu<sup>20</sup>, and two women, named Un-hye and Bok-hye. These last four are known to us only through the official text of their sentences<sup>21</sup>, as preserved in public documents; we do not know their baptismal names. Here are some details on the other two.

Charles Jeong Cheol-sang, son of the glorious martyr Augustine Jeong, having lost his mother at an early age, was instructed in the Christian faith, and trained in the practice of the Religion, by the words and examples of his father. At such a school he made rapid progress, and despising the honors to which his birth seemed to give him such easy access, he proposed only one goal: to serve God with all his strength, to love him with all his heart, and thereby ensure the salvation of his soul.

He was about twenty years old when the persecution of 1801 broke out. His father and uncle having been imprisoned in the *Geumbu* prison, Charles followed them as usual, and remained outside, near the prison, to try to render them some service, and soften their captivity. He did not leave this post until the death of his father. While he was there, the judges several times sent down orders to make known all that he knew of the affairs of the priest, and to declare the place where he was hiding, adding that it was the only way to save his father's life. The temptation must have been very violent for a heart like Charles's, but he did not allow himself to be drawn into it. In vain they put him to horrible tortures; in vain they subjected his father and his uncle to other tortures before him, he remained immovable, and said not a word which might compromise the priest or Christendom. Emerging victorious from this ordeal, he continued to stay near the prison, and when his brother had obtained the crown, he was himself arrested and brought before the court of crimes. He did not falter for a moment, showing only one desire, that of following his father and, like him, of dying for God. His captivity lasted a little over a month, during which this young man, brought up in abundance and delicacy, had to weave straw shoes in order to obtain food.

When the day came, he marched resolutely to execution and joyfully presented his head to the executioner. His body, collected by his family, was buried with that of his father at Majae. Augustine had left a widow and three children; Charles also left a young widow and a son. Their house and their goods having been confiscated, all remained destitute, and their relatives, for fear of death, seemed afraid to come to their assistance. However, an old friend of Augustine having taken these poor abandoned people back to Majae, they did not have the courage to chase them away, and they began from then on a life of poverty and hardship, which Providence returned, as we shall see later, very abundantly in the fruits of salvation.

Peter Choe Pil-je, first cousin of the martyr Thomas Choe Pil-gong 崔必恭, also seems to have taken a great part in the affairs of the Religion in Korea. He was one of those who, arrested in 1794, redeemed themselves through apostasy, but soon resumed the practice of all their religious duties. His father's continued efforts to detach him from Christianity met with no success, and only served to test his virtue in the crucible of domestic persecutions, often more dangerous than official interrogations and tortures. Peter was seized and imprisoned with his cousin Thomas.

The latter having been decapitated, Peter asked permission to leave the prison to go and bury him.

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<sup>17</sup> 정철상 Jeong Cheol-sang 丁哲祥 (?-1801). Charles. Blessed.

<sup>18</sup> 최필제 Choe Pil-je 崔必悌 (1770-1801). Peter. Blessed.

<sup>19</sup> 정인혁 Jeong In-hyeok 鄭仁赫 (?-1801). Thaddeus. Blessed.

<sup>20</sup> 이합규 Yi Hap-gyu 李鶴逵 (?~1801). ?. Martyr.

<sup>21</sup> These were judged by the *Hyeongjo* 刑曹 police court, not the *Geumbu* 禁府.



These last duties of children towards their parents, or members of the same family towards each other, are something so essential, so sacred in the eyes of Koreans, that prisoners for civil offenses are almost always momentarily released in such cases. and that it is not uncommon to see even serious criminals and those sentenced to death obtain leave to be absent for a few days. The history of our martyrs offers several analogous examples. Peter therefore received this permission, and the official by whom it was granted, touched with commiseration, insinuated to him that he should take advantage of it to escape by flight from an inevitable death. But the generous confessor was careful not to follow this insinuation. "I want to avenge myself on the devil," he said to some friends, "I want to repair my former apostasy, and my greatest happiness will be to give my head, for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Consequently, the burial ceremonies over, he returned of his own accord, at the appointed time, to reconstitute himself a prisoner, and a few days later was beheaded. He was then thirty-two years old.

It was also at the beginning of the fourth lunar month that a young virgin, named Barbara Sim<sup>22</sup>, of the district of Gwangju was put to death. Touched by the great examples she had encountered in the lives of the saints, she had resolved to renounce marriage, and to consecrate her virginity to God. She lived withdrawn in her family, and practiced the Religion with exemplary fervor. Her brother, Sim Yo-san<sup>23</sup>, having been arrested as a Christian, she said one day to those around her: "My brother is waiting for me, so that we may both be martyrs together." This word did not attract attention, but that very day, the satellites appeared, saying that they had come to fetch the young Christian who was there. They were told that they were certainly mistaken, that there was no one, etc.; but they were too well informed to let go, they persisted and came to threats. Barbara, hearing them, said to her mother: "Don't be too sad, and let me obey the will of God." Immediately, leaving the women's apartment, she presented herself before the satellites, and clearly made her profession of faith to them. On their order, she prepared to follow them, changed her clothes without being moved, allowed herself to be arrested and taken to the capital, where her constancy in faith earned her, after only twenty days of trials, to go and receive the double crown of martyrdom and virginity. She had her head cut off at the age of nineteen. His body was recovered by her family, and it is said that her face had not changed at all, and that her limbs retained the flexibility and freshness of life.

The following martyrdom, which in all probability took place almost the same day, is of particular interest to us. Among Christian peoples, we are so accustomed to recognizing the equality before God of all men, whatever they may be, great or small, noble or commoner, rich or poor, that we are tempted to regard this notion as natural. We too easily forget that it was Jesus Christ alone who revealed this equality to us, by teaching us that we are all called to be children of God. But in all the infidel countries, today in Korea as formerly in Rome and Greece, what is natural is the contempt of man for man. Christian equality, on the contrary, is now as of old, the dogma of the Gospel most revolting to the pride of the pagans. Also, for the instruction and edification of the neophytes of Korea, God deigned to show his sovereign independence in the distribution of his gifts, by choosing one of his most glorious martyrs from the lowest and most degraded class. from the country.

Alexis Hwang Il-gwang<sup>24</sup>, born at Hongju, in Naepo, was of the caste of ox-slaughterers, a caste so despised in Korea that those who belong to it are placed below slaves. They are regarded as degraded beings, apart from humanity; they are forced to make separate dwellings, far from towns or villages, and cannot have the ordinary relations of life with anyone.

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<sup>22</sup> 심아기 Sim Agi 沈阿只 (1783-1801) Barbara. Blessed.

<sup>23</sup> 심요산 Sim Yo-san or 심락훈 Sim Nak-hun 沈樂薰.

<sup>24</sup> 황일광 Hwang Il-gwang 黃日光 (1757-1802) Simon (Dallet following Daveluy wrongly calls him Alexis). Blessed.

Alexis's childhood and youth were spent in his family, amid insults and rejection from everyone, a sad heritage that those of his condition inherit from generation to generation. Providence, as if to compensate him, had given him a remarkable intelligence, a lively mind, an ardent heart, a character full of gaiety and frankness. No sooner was he instructed in the Religion than he embraced it wholeheartedly, and to practice it more freely, left his home with his younger brother, and went to settle far away, in the province of Gyeongsang. There, hiding his origin from the pagans, he had more facility to communicate with the Christians. They knew his origin well, but far from reproaching him, they hastened out of charity to treat him as a brother. Everywhere, even among the nobles, he was received inside the apartments, on the same footing as all the faithful; which made him say jokingly that, for him, there were two paradises, one on earth, because of the too honorable way in which he was treated, considering his condition, and the other in the life to come.

From Gyeongsang he later passed on to the capital, and was received into the house of Augustine Jeong, where he lived on the ordinary footing of a servant, rendering the usual services to the master of the house. His fervor, far from diminishing, increased day by day, and excited the admiration of all. In the spring of that year, a few days before Augustine's arrest, he had gone out to buy wood, according to his office, when, met by the satellites, he was caught and taken to prison. He was not intimidated and, in a jovial tone, said to those who drove him: "You are transporting me from the prefecture of Namwon<sup>25</sup> 南原 to that of Okcheon 沃川, which is a place of delights, I am very grateful to you for this signal benefit." In the Korean language, *namu* means wood, and *ok* means prison. By naming these two prefectures, Alexis alluded to the fact that instead of buying wood, as his master had ordered him to, he found himself thrown into prison.

In the various interrogations which he had to undergo, he always answered nobly and with a holy freedom to all that the judges opposed to him, and these, irritated because a man of so low a condition did not fear them, and refused the life offered to him at the price of apostasy, made him endure terrible tortures. Alexis bore them not only firmly, but with heavenly joy. "Even if I suffer ten thousand times more," he cried, "I will not deny Jesus Christ, do with me what you will." After having him beaten so cruelly that one of his legs was left broken and crushed, they condemned him to death and sent him to be executed in Hongju, his native town. Carried on a straw litter, because he could no longer walk, he retained, on the road, in spite of horrible suffering, all his natural gaiety. His wife and son followed him to serve him until the last moment, but for fear that they might be the subject of some temptation for him, he would never let them approach. The very day of his arrival at Hongju he was beheaded. He was then forty-five years old.

The rare virtues of Alexis, which formed such a touching contrast with the baseness of his extraction, made his name popular among Christians, and they still cite him today with respect and admiration, as one of their most illustrious confessors. But the pagans of this country, and especially the nobles, laugh scornfully when they hear that a man of this class is the honor of the Religion. *Gentibus autem stultitiam*; the wisdom of God has always been and always will be folly to the nations.

Four Christians from the district of Gwangju, denounced by apostates, had been seized at the same time. They were: Park Jung-hwan<sup>26</sup>; Park Yun-hwan<sup>27</sup>, elder brother of the preceding; Sim Yo-san<sup>28</sup>, the brother of the virgin martyr Barbara Sim, and Jo Chae-jo. After having been interrogated and questioned several times by their own mandarin, they were, like the other Christians, sent to the capital.

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<sup>25</sup> Dallet mistakenly calls it Namon-an.

<sup>26</sup> 박중환 Park Jung-hwan 朴重煥 (1768?-1801). Martyr. He was in fact the older of the two.

<sup>27</sup> 박윤환 Park Yun-hwan 朴允煥 (?-1801). Martyr.

<sup>28</sup> 심요산 Sim Yo-san aka Nak-hun 沈樂薰

But, although they had remained equally firm in the tortures, the first alone had his head cut off<sup>29</sup>; the other three, for reasons which have remained unknown to us, were exiled separately to the most remote provinces of the kingdom. A tradition says that a great drought having occurred then, the people murmured against the cruelty of the Regent, accusing her of provoking the wrath of heaven by so much bloodshed. The frightened Regent reportedly commuted the death sentences, just hours before they were to be executed. But this explanation is inadmissible, because, after as before the trial of these four Christians, the persecution continued with the same fury. Be that as it may, Park Jung-hwan, happier than his three companions, was beheaded<sup>30</sup> on the 18th day of the fourth lunar month, at the age of thirty-three.

The next day, the 19th, it was the turn of Fr. Zhou, whose story we must take up from a little earlier.

Since the entry of the priest into Korea, the police had not ceased to make searches to discover the place of his hiding. One can imagine how, after the edict of persecution issued by the Regent, these searches became more active. Hell seemed to have revealed to the enemies of Christianity this word of the Holy Scripture: "I will strike the pastor and the sheep will be scattered," so relentless they were in seizing the only pastor of the Korean neophytes. Also, seeing that his position was no longer tenable, that every day they multiplied the tortures to have him denounced by the Christians, Father Zhou took the resolution to return momentarily to China, in order to let the storm pass, hoping that, his departure once known, the persecution would cease, or at least lessen in violence. We do not know when he set out, but it seems certain that he went as far as the town of Uiju, on the bank of the river which separates Korea from China, opposite Pien-men. Having arrived there, by a secret inspiration of divine grace, he abandoned his project, and resumed the road to the capital.<sup>31</sup>

His situation and that of those who gave him asylum, becoming more and more critical, a courageous Christian went to the provinces to prepare two safe hiding places for him, and returned to beg Colomba Gang<sup>32</sup> to warn the priest, taking it upon himself to lead him beyond the reach of the persecutors. Colomba replied that it was useless, that the priest was too well concealed to have anything to fear. This Christian repeatedly made new requests, always without success, and was himself obliged, a few days later, to abandon his house and flee with all his family.

Augustine Jeong, in the various interrogations, having declared nothing about the priest, Colomba and Philip<sup>33</sup>, her husband's son, were interrogated in their turn, and subjected to cruel tortures; but both of them, determined to die, made no denunciation either. Then the judge put to the question one of the slaves of Colomba, who, overcome by suffering, declared the whole truth, and at the same time made known the age, the face and the bearing of the priest. The judge then said to Colomba: "Your slave having denounced everything, it is no longer possible for you to hide the truth; therefore declare the place where this man is hiding." She replied, "It is true that he stayed with me, but he has been away for some time, and I do not know where he is now." Accordingly, posters were put up everywhere indicating the rewards promised to whoever would take the priest, and his portrait and description were given and circulated even in the distant provinces.

In this extreme peril, the priest had all the less chance of escaping, as his enemies, unscrupulous in the choice of means, worked above all to stir up traitors even among Christians. It is said that a

<sup>29</sup> He was not beheaded but flogged to death.

<sup>30</sup> He was killed in prison, beaten to death.

<sup>31</sup> According to his own testimony, after hiding in the detached palace in Seoul on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the second lunar month, he only headed North for 2 days before returning to Seoul.

<sup>32</sup> 강완숙 Gang Wan-suk 姜完淑 (1760-1801) Columba. Blessed.

<sup>33</sup> 홍필주 Hong Pil-ju 洪弼周 (1774-1801) Philip. Blessed.

mandarin pretended to convert, and succeeded in knowing his retirement. Be that as it may, Fr. Zhou did not give him time to come and fetch him. He was then in the palace of which we have spoken, or in the adjoining house. On April 28, the 16th day of the third lunar month, a little after the sound of the bell which allows circulation in the city, he took the clothes of a Christian of this house and put them on. They asked him where he wanted to go, but he replied that it was useless to follow him, and went out absolutely alone. A Christian was following him from afar to find out what he was going to do, but the priest noticing it, waved him with his fan to turn back. The Christian, however, continued to follow him, although from further away; and soon the crowd circulating having made him lose sight of him, he returned home.

Father Zhou went straight to the *Geumbu* prison. The servants of the court having asked him who he was and what he wanted: "I too," he told them, "I practice the Religion of the Christians. I have heard that it is strictly prohibited by the government, and that every day innocent people are killed in large numbers; as my life would henceforth be useless, I come to ask you for death. It is I who am this priest whom you seek in vain everywhere. It seems that in your kingdom there is not a single clever man, since until now they have not been able to discover me." He was immediately seized and put in prison. The president of the court asked him why he had come to Korea, he replied: "I had only one reason when I entered it, that of preaching the true religion, and thereby saving the souls of this poor people."

During his trial, he had a countenance worthy of his good life, answering everything with gravity and prudence, without letting a single word escape that could compromise anyone. He even composed in writing<sup>34</sup> a long and eloquent apology for the Christian Religion, which would no doubt have made an impression on his judges, if they had not been blinded by passion and prejudice.

Alexander Hwang, in his letter, speaking of the imprisonment of Fr. Zhou, expresses himself thus: "They only put shackles on his feet, and they subjected him to interrogations without torturing him in any way. It is said that there were many dialogues between him and his judges put in writing; I could not see them, only I learned that the pagans said: He who gave himself up called himself a European. When six Christians were first put to death (those executed on the 26th of the second lunar month), they were accused of the crime of rebellion; but it seems that in his prison, the priest made it clear that Christians are not rebels. It is also reported that the European did not want to die immediately, but that he asked permission to say everything he had to say first, only after which would he be put to death. All these reports seem not to be completely false.

The revelations of the slave of Colomba had made known the relations of the priest with the palace. Also, the day after or two days after the day on which Father Zhou gave himself up (April 29 or 30), without trial, without interrogation, without any legal form having been observed, the Regent pronounced against the princesses who had given him asylum, a death sentence, the express terms of which are as follows:

"In the case of Song 宋, wife of the culprit In 禰, imprisoned in the city of Ganghwa, and that of Sin 申, wife of Tam 湛, son of the said culprit In.

"It appears that the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law are both lost in the wrong religion; that they have communicated with the infamous race of foreigners; that they saw the foreign priest and, without fearing the severity of the prohibitions, shamelessly hid him in their house. Considering such serious faults, it is obvious to all that they cannot be left even for a single day between heaven and earth. So let them be given the poison, and put to death together."

This order was carried out immediately, and a few hours later the poison was brought to the two Christian princesses. Tradition relates that they refused to take it themselves, so as not to be guilty of the sin of suicide, and that force had to be used to make them swallow it. Thus perished, victims of their faith

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<sup>34</sup> He did not feel confident speaking Korean so wrote in Chinese characters.

and the generous hospitality they had given to the persecuted priest, Mary Song and her daughter-in-law Mary Sin. We have no other details on their edifying end; and the palaces here are so closed, so sequestered from all external relations, that one should not be surprised. The long misfortunes of these unfortunate princesses were, in the secret designs of Providence, the cause of their conversion and their eternal happiness, for God is often pleased to choose those whom the world rejects. They had the merit of being constantly faithful to Grace, and of giving, by their fervor and their resignation, as well as by their name and their dignity, a great encouragement to nascent Christianity.

Their deaths naturally involved that of several servants of the palace, who with them had embraced the faith, and had devoted themselves to the service of the priest. They suffered the same condemnation, but, according to tradition, they had to go and receive the poison in a house reserved for this purpose outside the Small West Gate. Their number and name remain unknown. It is certain that there were at least two martyred; some even increase the number to five.

The condemnation of the princesses led, in turn, to that of Prince Yi In, husband of Mary Song, already exiled to Ganghwa as a result of his son's alleged rebellion. His enemies claimed that the priest's relations with the princesses could have no other purpose than the machination of some monstrous plot against the security of the State, a plot of which, without a doubt, Prince Yi In was the secret driving force. They published this odious calumny in an address presented to the Regent, and framed in these terms: "The wife of the rebel In, and the wife of the rebel Dam, retired in the depths of the palace, have communicated with an evil race. After having first prepared the way, by means of several infamous slaves, each night they came and went: they became intimately linked with guilty beings; then, hiding and sheltering people who have escaped justice, they have made their dwelling a den of rebels. Their designs and their dark projects were to culminate at last in an inexpressible monstrosity. But how could this be the work of only two women? The engine and agent of these infamous plots is certainly In himself. The order to put In's wife and Dam's wife to death was undoubtedly motivated by a holy virtue which wants to confirm the general principles, and destroy the plots of the wicked. But if we leave In, even a quarter of an hour, between heaven and earth, the position of the rebels will remain the same as before; wherefore one humbly asks that the poison also be given to In, and that he be put to death."

The Regent was careful not to come to the defense of this unfortunate, calumniated prince, and soon afterwards, although he was the brother of the deceased King, and had never practiced the Christian Religion, he received the poison officially sent from the court. and had to take it with his own hands.

Let us return to the trial of Father Zhou. It appears that the ministers held several councils on this subject, before taking a final resolution. Some were of the opinion that he should be sent back to China, and placed in the hands of the Emperor, according to an international convention stating that "any subject of one of the two kingdoms, who shall be found in the territory of the other, must be returned to his own sovereign." Despite this formal text, the greatest number, unable to resign themselves to leaving unpunished the head of a religion which they pursued with rage, voted to put him to death, and obtained the consent of the Regent. Here are the terms in which she had the sentence drawn up.

"The 19th day of the fourth lunar month. Case of the culprit Zhou Wen-mo, of the dreadful race of foreigners. He calls himself Master of religion and spiritual father. Carefully concealing his shadow and the tracks of his footsteps, he surprised and deceived a multitude of men and women, and established the rule of conferring baptism. Everything he says is a series of vain and lying words. For seven or eight years he has diverted the minds of the people in a false way, and, like an ever-increasing flood, his doctrine, as it spreads, has become a disquieting calamity, for those who follow it must necessarily arrive to a state far below that of savages and animals. But now, by a happy fate, Heaven being responsible for pursuing him, the culprit has delivered himself today. Having escaped the satellites a few years ago, he has since continued to spread his false doctrines around him and far away; now that he has been imprisoned, the people of the capital and the provinces can easily recognize his delusion. Considering his condition, he is only of low and contemptible origin; his conduct is uniquely that of a deceiver and

an artful wretch. For his punishment, we think it proper to apply military law to him. He will therefore be taken to the military tribunal, so that he may be executed according to the usual forms, and that his execution may make an impression on the crowd. We charge the general of the post named O Yeong-cheong 御營廳. This is our will.”

This general, we do not know for what reason, did not want to undertake such a mission. He feigned an illness which prevented him from going out, and another general was appointed to replace him. At the moment of leaving the prison, the priest received the beating on the legs, according to the constant custom in similar circumstances. Then he went with joy to the place of military executions called Nodeul, or Saenamteo<sup>35</sup>, located one league from the city. Carried in a litter, he towered over those around him, and as he passed through the marketplace, he gazed peacefully at the whole crowd of onlookers, then said he was thirsty and asked for wine. The soldiers gave him a cup and he drank all of it.

When he arrived at the place of execution, arrows were fixed in his ears, and the summary of his trial was presented to him, with the sentence, so that he could read these various documents. Although this writing was very long, he read it entirely with the greatest calm, then raising his voice, he said to the assembled people: “I die for the Religion of the Lord of Heaven. In ten years your kingdom will experience great calamities, so I will be remembered.” He was paraded three times, according to custom, around the assembly; then, the general commanding the desired evolutions, he knelt down, joined his hands, bowed his head happily, which soon fell under the sword. It was the 19th day of the fourth lunar month (May 31, 1801), the day of the Holy Trinity, at the hour called *sin-si* 申時, that is to say from 3 to 5 o’clock in the evening. Father Zhou was then thirty-two<sup>36</sup> years old.

During the long preparations for the execution, the sky, previously pure and serene, was suddenly covered with thick clouds, and a terrible hurricane broke out on the place of execution. The violence of the wind, the repeated rolls of thunder, rain mixed with hail and falling in torrents, thick darkness furrowed by lightning on all sides, all contributed to chilling with terror the actors and spectators of this bloody scene. But no sooner had the soul of the holy martyr flown to God than a rainbow appeared, the clouds dispersed and the storm suddenly subsided. One would have said that the sun, after having veiled itself so as not to witness the crime of the executioners, resumed all its brilliance to celebrate the triumph of their victim. The spectators, pagans and Christians, saw in this strange coincidence, a proof of the holiness of the missionary. “Heaven is not indifferent to the fate of this condemned man,” said the pagans, struck with amazement, “since it reveals such frightful signs.”

The head of the martyr remained suspended, and his body exposed, at the place of execution, for five days and five nights, and during all this time the approaches were strictly guarded, without anyone having permission to enter. It is claimed that every night rainbows, or bright lights appeared on the body. Whatever these facts may be, it is certain, and it is a unanimous tradition of Christians and pagans recorded in several memoirs of the time, that extraordinary phenomena then took place, with which many pagans were strongly impressed. Many Christians say it is not uncommon to hear about it, even today. Finally, the general gave orders to bury the body, and they continued to guard it as before. The Christians had noticed the place, with the intention of soon transporting the remains of the martyr elsewhere; but the guards, bored with their continual vigils, went to bury him secretly in another place. Since then, the Christians have searched for him, but until now we do not know the place where the precious relics of the first missionary of Korea rest.

The memory of Fr. James Zhou is still alive in the hearts of the Korean faithful, who only speak with deep veneration of his zeal, his prudence, his mortified life, his labors and his death. The Bishop of

<sup>35</sup> Dallet mistakenly writes Mi-nam-to.

<sup>36</sup> As already noted, Dallet’s source had mistakenly written 24 instead of 42 as the age when Fr. Zhou entered Korea. He was in fact 50 when he died.

Peking had said when he sent him that he was losing his best subject; and, indeed, Father Zhou joined to great talents, and to a profound knowledge of Chinese characters, a science of the Religion, and an uncommon virtue. He did, in everything and always, honor to the Religion in this country. His dignified exterior, his noble countenance and his great benevolence had won him all hearts. First condemned for several years to absolute retirement, and at the end, obliged to hide all his steps with the greatest precautions, he had occasion to acquire numerous merits before God, and, by his fidelity, to obtain the grace of martyrdom.

The tradition of the Christians assures that he predicted almost at the time of his death, that, in thirty years, priests would return to Korea. It was only after thirty-two years of waiting that the Christians received new missionaries.

There remains a work composed in Chinese, and translated into Korean, which has always been attributed to Father Zhou, and which seems truly to have been composed by him. It is “A Guide for Lent and the Season of Easter,” in which are explained in a clear and very precise manner, the arrangements that must be made for the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist: this book still today serves the Christians in Korea.

The clothes, the priest’s hat, and two images that had belonged to him were long preserved with jealous care by neophytes. Peter Sin Dae-bo 申大甫 says, in his memoirs, that several times these relics escaped fire, in a way that is prodigious; today, following the last persecutions, we no longer know what has become of them.

To avoid difficulties with China, the Korean government had, at the time of the execution of Fr. Zhou, spread the rumor that he was a native of Jeju (island of Quelpaert). Later, as we shall see, in the letter written to the Emperor, in the name of the King, it was confessed that he was Chinese, while protesting that his origin had not been known until after his death, by the subsequent declarations of his accomplices. Care was taken to accompany this confession with the sending of a large sum of money intended to calm the Emperor’s anger, and the affair had no consequences.

### Book 3: From the martyrdom of Fr. James Zhou, until the end of the persecution. 1801-1802.

#### Chapter 1: Martyrdom of Jehoshaphat Kim. — Martyrdom of Colomba Gang and her Companions.

The death of Fr. Zhou was a great calamity for the Church in Korea. She lost in him her only pastor, and it seemed humanly impossible that he could be replaced for many years. Undoubtedly circumstances had not permitted all the neophytes to see the priest, to hear his instructions, and to receive the sacraments from his hand. Only a few of them had had this happiness. But at least, he being present, there was a common center, a meeting point for the various Christian communities; there was a single direction in important affairs; and above all there was the frequent celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and the blood of Jesus Christ, source of all grace, often flowed over this unfaithful earth.

By giving himself up, Father Zhou had hoped to wear out the rage of the persecutors on himself, and thus prevent the misfortune of his flock. The enemies of the Religion, on their side, imagined that after the death of the priest, the Christians, demoralized like a leaderless army, would be easily led to apostasy, and their worship annihilated. It did not happen. God permitted the hopes of the priest to be disappointed, and the persecution to increase in violence; but at the same time he baffled all the calculations of the impious, by inspiring in his faithful a firmer courage, a more indomitable patience, and by multiplying his martyrs. We will give some details about the main ones. The history of the Church offers few such glorious pages.

Father Zhou had been beheaded on May 31, 1801. The next day, June 1, Josaphat Kim Geon-sun<sup>1</sup>, of one of the most illustrious families of the No-ron party, and several of his relatives, obtained the same triumph by the same torture. Here naturally comes an important remark. Although party grudges had much to do, as we have explained, in the issuing of the edict which outlawed the Christian Religion, the first and chief cause nevertheless was, in Korea, as everywhere and always, the eternally active hatred of Hell against the Church. Now, there were Christians in the other parties as well as in the Nam-in party, for the Religion is never subservient to any caste or faction. In fact, however, the great personages condemned to death since the accession of the Regent, almost all belonged to the Nam-in, which gave the persecution a character of political revenge, and could, in the eyes of the pagans, alter and diminish the glory of the martyrs. In order therefore to show clearly to all that, for the greater number of the victims, the profession of Christianity was the sole cause of condemnation; in order to restore to the death of the confessors its true character. God permitted the persecutors to be forced by circumstances to immolate several prominent members of their own party.

Josaphat Kim Geon-sun was descended from a younger branch of the Kim family of Andong, which was then a leader of the No-ron party, and is now Korea's first family. He was adopted from childhood by the principal descendant of the eldest branch, and thus found himself placed at the source of dignities and honors; his adoptive father lived in the town of Yeosu. Jehoshaphat distinguished himself by an extraordinarily precocious intelligence. From the age of nine, say the Korean accounts, he wanted to apply himself to the doctrine of Lao-tse, which is said to open the way to immortality to his followers. In his house there was a book, a kind of introduction to the study of the true Religion, composed in Chinese, in an attractive and popular form, by the old missionaries of Peking. Jehoshaphat read it with great pleasure, when he was ten or twelve years old, and soon began to discuss Heaven and Hell, the

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<sup>1</sup> 김건순 Kim Geon-sun 金健淳 (1766-1801). Josaphat. Martyr



necessity of their existence, and other matters dealt with in this book. It was said of him, from then on, that he would attain the rank of minister. Growing up, he devoted himself to vast studies; the sacred books, history, the doctrines of Fo and Lao-tse, medicine, geoscopy, even military art, nothing remained foreign to him.

He soon had an opportunity to show his talents. In fact, he was only eighteen years old when his adoptive father died. However, legal mourning, in Korea, was then done with the ceremonies of the time of the Song dynasty<sup>2</sup>, neglecting the older rites. Jehoshaphat, who had doubts on this subject, consulted the famous doctor Ambrose Gwon Cheol-sin, who was not yet a Christian, and having, by means of him, recognized that certain practices were not based on the sacred books, he rejected them as erroneous and abstained from them on the death of his father. The scholars, frightened by this breach of custom, protested strongly. Immediately Jehoshaphat, to justify his conduct, wrote a long apology, in which quotations and proofs flowed in such a learned and happy manner that Yi Ga-hwan, who was then considered the leading scholar in the country, confessed that he couldn't do anything like it.

At home, Jehoshaphat stood out for the seriousness of his character, his filial piety, his fidelity and his generosity. His family being rich, he took a real pleasure in spending all he had on alms, while for his own clothes and food he limited himself to the barest necessities, and treated himself like a pauper. If he went to the capital, the chairs and the horses lined up at the door of the house where he was staying, because everyone wanted to have the satisfaction of seeing him and talking to him, at least once. It is said that with Martin Yi and some other friends, he had conceived the project of crossing the sea, to go to Peking to consult European scholars, to acquire from them much useful knowledge, and to return to spread it in his country.

Hitherto Jehoshaphat had heard of the Religion only very indirectly, and had no exact idea of it. Together with some friends, among whom was Gang Yi-cheon<sup>3</sup>, he had begun to study it, expecting to find in it magic secrets and extraordinary processes. This Gang Yi-cheon was a renowned scholar of the Seo-buk party, with a wicked and cunning mind. Imagining that there would soon be a change of dynasty, he sought out wondrous recipes, and studied the magical arts, to be ready in time and to make his way.

Jehoshaphat, in bonding with this man, was far from knowing the bottom of his ideas, because for himself, besides the natural curiosity to learn something unknown, he really had the sincere desire to deepen the doctrine of the Gospel. Also, not finding any eminent Christians in the No-ron party, to which his family belonged, he resolved to have recourse to members of the Nam-in party, and asked Ambrose Gwon to have some conferences with him on religious matters. The noble Christian consented with joy, but as the hereditary enmities of the two families did not allow them to see each other publicly, Josaphat went by night to the house of Ambrose. From the first interviews, he had no difficulty in believing the existence of God and the mystery of the Holy Trinity; but the simple statement of the mystery of the Incarnation upset all his ideas, and he remained sad and dejected. For several days he refrained from returning, believing that he who had spoken such a word could not fail to be struck down, or struck with some other heavenly punishment. Then, seeing that God had not destroyed him, he examined again, and the grace of the Holy Spirit working on his heart, he confessed himself defeated, submitted his reason to faith, and firmly embraced the Religion. Father Zhou heard of the uprightness of soul of Jehoshaphat, and wrote to him to make known to him the true spirit of the Gospel, and to make him lay down all ideas of marvelous things and magical powers. Jehoshaphat, moved, surrendered with joy, broke definitively with the studies to which he had devoted himself, and began to walk in the way of salvation. He was then twenty-two years old.

Almost all his friends followed his example. Among this number were the glorious martyrs,

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<sup>2</sup> (Dallet Note 36. The Song dynasty is the nineteenth dynasty of China. It counted eighteen emperors, in the space of 319 years, from the year of J.-C. 964 to the year 1283. It was the last national dynasty, to which succeeded the various Tartar dynasties.) Dallet completely forgets the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) which was equally a 'Han' dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> 강이천 Gang Yi-cheon 姜彝天 (1768-1801)

whom we have seen beheaded in the town of Yeosu, Martin Yi and John Won. Gang Yi-cheon alone did not believe, and remained more sunk than ever in his ambitious reveries and his chimerical researches. Scarcely two months had elapsed when the projects of the latter and his family were unveiled, and the government, believing to see in their conduct a tendency to revolt, and the danger of stirring up troubles among the people, had them seized and prosecuted. It was in 1797. Jehoshaphat was naturally compromised, because of his previous relations with Gang Yi-cheon. Fortunately his good qualities and his righteousness were already known to the King, who having given him all his esteem, knew how to protect him and save him from the bad consequences of this affair. Soon after, Jehoshaphat was baptized by the priest, and his fervor received a great increase. He was not afraid to show himself publicly as a Christian, instructed his relatives and friends, exhorted them to do good, and never ceased to preach the Gospel on all occasions. A large number of pagans in the district of Yeosu and the surrounding area owe him, after God, the blessing of faith.

His father, however, saw him practicing Christianity with difficulty, and made every effort to keep him away from it. For many years Jehoshaphat had to continually endure very painful domestic persecutions, but he triumphed over all the difficulties, and continued the faithful practice of his duties. When he learned of the defection of John Jeong who, to avoid death, had signed a form of apostasy, he was deeply moved by it, and testified to all the pain he felt, but was not shaken by it. Although involved, by birth and social position, in many worldly and courtly affairs, it does not appear that Jehoshaphat ever took a great part in the direction of the affairs of Christendom. We even see that he kept himself a little aloof, when the clamors of the nobles of his party, who had suddenly come to power, were preparing and announcing the persecution. It was probably then that, together with Augustine Jeong, he worked to write a complete and methodical work on the Religion. We have said above that they could not finish it, and that the Christians did not succeed in saving any fragment of it.

Jehoshaphat's conduct had always been, since his baptism, firm, grave, and blameless. His humility equaled his merit; also he was loved and respected by all Christians, and the brilliance of his virtues pointed him out in advance as a victim of persecution. It is difficult to form an idea of all the efforts that his relatives and friends made in these circumstances to obtain from him a word of weakness, which would shield him from prosecution. It does not appear, however, that the noble athlete of Jesus Christ failed in his duty, and, in fact, a warrant of arrest was issued against him, probably in the course of the third lunar month. They went to look for him at his own father's house in the capital; the latter was then taking his meal, and without stopping, he said to the agents of the *Geumbu*: "My son went to the examinations today; he must be seated under such and such a tree, you will recognize him by such and such a sign. Fulfill your duty, without anyone noticing." As he said these words, he changed neither tone nor color. Jehoshaphat was therefore arrested and placed in prison.

We know that everything was done to prevent his condemnation. His powerful family, whose honor was about to be compromised by the criminal trial of one of its members, had arranged everything so that, without formal apostasy, the noble prisoner would be released on some small sign, indifferent in itself. As he was necessarily due to be confronted with Fr. Zhou, it had been agreed with the judges that, if he tried to pretend not to know the priest, he would be immediately released. What battles must not have been waged in the heart of Jehoshaphat at the sight of all his relatives and the nobles of the kingdom, who were deliberately allowed to circulate in the prison to shake his constancy, and who threw themselves in tears at his feet, conjuring him to at least have pity on his own and avoid the total ruin of his family! He was doubtless a little affected, for when he was brought before the priest and asked if he knew this man, he hesitated for a moment to answer. Father Zhou, understanding his temptation, tried to stimulate him by saying: "Ah! you too will show yourself a small man of a small kingdom." The pride of the noble Korean was piqued at this reproach, and, with grace accompanying this word from the mouth of an apostle laden with irons for Jesus Christ, the confessor took courage and boldly confessed his faith<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> This account seems inaccurate. On the 17th day of the third month, brought face-to-face with Fr. Zhou, he denied ever

During the interrogations, Jehoshaphat made several eloquent apologies for the Religion, and brought, to confirm it, a multitude of texts taken from the sacred books of the country. The judges said to him, "How can a man of such a noble house speak and act like this? You want to use our sacred books to confirm a perverse doctrine, you are worthy of death." Jehoshaphat answered: "I desire that all the court and the great ones of the kingdom practice this Religion, to make the happiness of the people, and to assure long years to the King." All expedients having been exhausted, and the constancy of the confessor no longer leaving any hope, he was condemned to death.

On the 20th day of the fourth lunar month (June 1), he was taken to the place of execution, outside the Small West Gate. His nobility, his virtue, his reputation, had gathered there an immense crowd of all classes and all conditions. During the journey, Jehoshaphat kept his calm and his dignity, and arrived at the place of execution, he said to the gathered crowd: "The honors and the glory of this world are illusory and false. I too have some reputation, and I could obtain great dignities, but knowing them to be vain and false, I did not want them. Only the Christian Religion is true, and that is why I am not afraid to die for it. All of you, think about it and follow my example." Then he bowed his head and received the blow that secured him blessed immortality. He was only twenty-six years old.

In the capital, there was no one who did not lament and regret his death. According to law and custom, his near relations should have lost their places, and the number of those who were thus compromised was very considerable, even among the highest dignitaries of the kingdom. But the family of the deceased, almost all-powerful, managed to have this principle admitted for this time, that the acts being personal, the parents do not have to answer for them, and, by this, all the relatives of Jehoshaphat could maintain their dignities. In order to remove, as much as possible, the stain of infamy with which this death stained the main branch of the Kim family, a petition was addressed to the government, to have the adoption of Jehoshaphat quashed. The Regent consented, and another was officially substituted for the martyr, as a descendant of the elder branch.

On the same day, and at the same place, several of Jehoshaphat Kim's relatives shared in his triumph. The best known of them is Kim Baek-sun<sup>5</sup> who, being still only a catechumen, does not have a baptismal name in the acts. Cousin of Jehoshaphat, we do not know to what degree, he lived in the capital, in great poverty, and thought only of getting out of it, and clearing the way to honors and public functions. One of his ancestors, who was a minister in 1636, when the Manchurians arrived near the river which separates Korea from China, had refused to submit to the Barbarians, and had burned himself. This act of devotion to his country and to his king caused to be erected, and his descendants also were allowed to erect for him, a monumental gate, two honors which become for the posterity of the one to whom they are granted, titles permitting a rapid promotion.

Baek-sun therefore, full of ambitious views, applied himself to the ordinary studies of the scholars. But God, who had merciful designs upon him, gradually inspired him with the desire for true glory and true happiness. To achieve this, he began to read the philosophical writings of great men, but their obscurities, their contradictions gave rise to doubts in his mind, and he no longer considered them entirely worthy of belief. Having seen in the writings of Lao-tse and others, that dying man is not annihilated, he created new doctrines and a new system, which he soon explained to some friends. "Your words are very astonishing," they replied, "no doubt you have drawn all that from the European religion." This observation struck Baek-sun very much, and he said to himself: "Seeing things that surpass our intelligence, everyone says that it comes from European doctrines, there must be something very great, something extraordinary in this religion." Accordingly he began to associate with Christians, and after having examined, discussed, and studied their doctrine for two years, he felt convinced, firmly believed, and gave himself wholeheartedly to the faithful practice of all the duties which the Religion imposes.

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having seen him. It was only on the 23rd that he admitted having seen him in the house of Hong Ik-man 洪翼萬 but still denied having been baptized.

<sup>5</sup> 김백순 Kim Baek-sun 金伯淳 (? ~ 1801). Martyr

His mother, instructed and exhorted by him, also embraced Christianity, but his wife, of a narrow, stiff and ambitious character, who had always coveted honors for her husband, suddenly seeing her hopes disappointed, allowed herself to be carried away with anger and spared him neither reproaches nor insults. Baek-sun made no secret of his conversion. One of his relatives questioning him one day about the Religion, he answered aloud: "It is the true doctrine; it is a great doctrine; every man is bound to follow it; do like me." Another day, his maternal uncle came to find him, tried to seduce him by all sorts of means, and not being able to make him listen to him, ended up saying to him: "If you do not comply with my words, I will break with you." Paek-sun replied calmly: "Even if I break with my uncle, I cannot break with my God." From then on, his friends agreed not to have any more relations with him, and his relatives took the resolution to drive him out of the family. Our courageous neophyte saw all this with an indifferent eye, and contented himself with saying: "Since I have known God, my heart is not moved by anything; it is like a mountain."

In the spring of 1801, denounced by an apostate, he was thrown into prison. The details of his interrogations have not reached us<sup>6</sup>. If his sentence is to be believed, the tortures would have wrung from him, for a moment, a few words of weakness. But soon he retracted them loudly, and to the end showed rare courage and firmness. He was condemned to death and executed<sup>7</sup> along with his cousin Jehoshaphat, at the age of thirty-two. We do not see that he was baptized in prison; it was therefore a baptism of blood that made him a Christian and gave him entry into the triumphant Church.

We must again mention Kim Yi-baek<sup>8</sup>, also a relative of Jehoshaphat, but of a bastard branch. His sentence is joined to that of the latter, and he must have died with him. However, as there is no mention of religion in this act, and as no other document indicates him as a Christian, we dare not, despite all the probabilities, give him the title of martyr.

Luke Yi Hui-yeong<sup>9</sup>, a close friend of Josaphat Kim, also found himself reunited with him in the same confession of faith, and shared his martyrdom<sup>10</sup>. He first lived in the city of Yeosu. It was there that he was instructed in the Religion, and began to practice it. Later, he emigrated to the capital, where his faith and fervor only increased. Having practiced the art of painting in his youth, he painted a number of religious subjects, which was one of the pretexts for his condemnation. It is joined to that of Kim Baek-sun, and dated the 29th of the third lunar month. It appears, however, that his execution was postponed until June 1, and that he was beheaded with the other confessors of whom we have just spoken.

There were perhaps still other victims that day; for a contemporary memoir tells us that, among the relatives, allies, and friends of Jehoshaphat, some twenty were taken, among whom he could not know exactly those who showed themselves faithful, or had the misfortune to weaken. We were unable to find more detailed information. But whatever the number of Christians in this family was then, there is not a single one today. However, the general spirit of its members is not hostile to the Religion. It was to this family that the Queen belonged, the wife of King Sunjo, who died in 1857 and was always favorable to Christians, without however daring to defend them openly. The present Queen<sup>11</sup> has the same origin, and the principal governors who, even in our days, have saved Christians many vexations, are mostly relatives of Jehoshaphat.

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<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, they are recorded in the *Yi Ga-hwan Chuan* 李家煥推案 etc.

<sup>7</sup> They were executed on the 29th day of the third lunar month.

<sup>8</sup> 김이백 Kim Yi-baek 金履白

<sup>9</sup> 이희영 Yi Hui-yeong 李喜英 (1756-1801). Martyr.

<sup>10</sup> They were not executed together but only tried together.

<sup>11</sup> It is not clear which Queen is meant. When Dallet was writing the Queen was from the Min clan, yet he seems to be talking of the branch of the Andong Kims to which Kim Geon-sun belonged.

A month later, on the 23rd day of the fifth lunar month (July 3), nine more martyrs were led out of the West Gate and beheaded. Five of these martyrs, by a violation of Korean law, which only the fury of the enemies of the Religion can explain, were women of noble condition<sup>12</sup>. At the head of this glorious troop, we meet the devoted auxiliary of the priest, Colomba Gang, of whom we spoke above. Immediately after her arrest, the judges, wishing to extort from her the secret of the priest's hiding place, had made her undergo up to six times the dreadful torture of the separation of the bones; but in the midst of these torments, she remained mute and as it were insensible, to the point that the servants who saw her said to one another: "She is a spirit, and not a woman." Far from giving the slightest sign of weakness, she continued her apostolate in the prison, and even before the judges, unceasingly proclaiming the divinity of the Christian Religion, and bringing to the support of her word proofs drawn from Confucius and the other famous philosophers. In their admiration, the mandarins only called her the learned woman, the unequalled woman, and said that she took their breath away, a Korean expression which marks that kind of stupor produced by extraordinary astonishment. They only became the more desperate to obtain her apostasy and employed against her all the tortures that the most refined cruelty can invent; but always they were overcome by the supernatural patience of their victim.

Colomba's faith triumphed no less gloriously over her maternal love. Her son-in-law Philip, arrested with her, but imprisoned in another prison, had seemed to weaken in the torments. She learned of it, and having seen him from afar one day when she was going from the prison to the tribunal, she cried to him in a loud voice; "Jesus is above your head, and sees you; can you blind yourself and lose yourself like this? Take courage, my child, think of the happiness of Heaven." This generous exhortation saved the soul of the young man who, strengthened by these words, received, a few months later, the crown of martyrdom.

In her prison. Colomba learned of the death of Father Zhou. Then tearing off a flap of her dress, she wrote on it the history of the missionary's apostolic work. This life of a saint, written in irons by a saint who knew him so well, was unfortunately lost through the negligence of the Christian woman to whom the roll of silk had been entrusted.

The fervor of Colomba and her companions in captivity had changed their filthy prison into a place of prayer. Faithful to their exercises of piety, they mutually supported and encouraged each other, and only sought to make themselves worthy of their celestial husband who, in return, covered them with manifest protection. The closer the moment of the sacrifice approached, the happier they were; especially on the eve of their death, they seemed drunk with joy. Finally dawned the day so long awaited, so ardently desired, the day of triumph and reward. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the fifth lunar month (July 3), Colomba and four of her companions mounted the chariot and were taken to the place of execution. During the journey, they did not stop praying, exhorting each other, and singing the praises of God. The crowd saw with astonishment a holy joy shining on their faces. Arrived at the place of execution, Colomba turned to the mandarin, who was presiding, and said to him: "The laws prescribe stripping of their clothes those who are to be tortured, but it would be improper to treat women in this way; warn the superior mandarin that we ask to die dressed." Permission was granted, to the great satisfaction of these holy spouses of Jesus Christ. Colomba then made the sign of the Cross, and was the first to present her head to the executioner. She was forty-one years old.

Let us mention here, anticipating events a little, the martyrdom of Philip Hong Pil-ju<sup>13</sup>. He was, as we have said, the son of Colomba's husband, by a first wife; but, according to the usage of the country, he was always called the son of Colomba. He remained constantly with her, followed her to the capital, and always treated her as his mother. When they had received the priest in their home, Philip took advantage of his presence to become an excellent Christian. Every day he answered Mass for him, and

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<sup>12</sup> Only one was of *yangban* origin, one was *jung-in* and two were court women.

<sup>13</sup> 홍필주 Hong Pil-ju 洪弼周 (1774-1801) Philip. Blessed.

assiduously rendered all the services his difficult position demanded. Taken at the same time as Colomba, he was separated from her in her prison, and subjected to violent tortures, which he at first endured with great courage, without letting out a compromising word. He seemed to be weakening, however, when his heroic mother revived by a few words his faith and his confidence in God. Since that day, he no longer contradicted himself, and stronger than torture, gave his head for Jesus Christ, on the 27th day of the eighth lunar month (October 4). He was only twenty-eight then.

The four women beheaded with Colomba are said to be: Gang Gyeong-bok 姜景福, Mun Yeong-in 文榮仁, Kim Yeon-i 金連伊 and Han Sin-ae 韓新愛. We do not know who these blessed martyrs are<sup>14</sup>, for women in Korea do not have personal names, and the acts of the government have not designated them by their surnames, but by chance names, imposed only for the trial, as is often done in the case of people sentenced to death or infamous punishments. They were palace women, that is to say attached to the personal service of queens and princesses. Their sentences, almost similar, state that they were instructed and baptized by Father Zhou, that they had served as go-betweens in matters of religion, that they several times caused Christians to escape prosecution, and that they kept hidden in their homes various religious objects, pictures, books, etc.

Numerous searches having led us to think that one of them is very probably Vivian Mun<sup>15</sup>, we give here the details that tradition has preserved for us on this holy martyr.

Vivian came from an honorable middle-class family; her father and uncle had minor positions. The third of five sisters, she was only seven years old when they came to choose girls for the king's palace. Her father kept the two eldest children hidden, and did not worry about Vivian, whose young age seemed to protect her from searches. But the emissaries of the palace having seen her, were struck by her precocious intelligence, and her uncommon beauty, and took her away with them. She was therefore brought up in the palace. At the age of fifteen, her hair was lifted<sup>16</sup>, and as she wrote admirably well, she was entrusted with responsibility for writing. Her father was a pagan, but her mother, a devout Christian, was sorry to see her daughter at the palace, almost unable to find her salvation. When Vivian came from time to time to her father's house, her mother and her elder sisters strongly urged her to practice the Religion. She answered: "Practice it well, you who can. For me, who am captive in the palace and involved in a thousand superstitions, it is too difficult for me now. I will practice it when I am old, and there will be a way out of it."

The custom of the girls of the palace is to meet in the evening, to pass the time in laughter, conversation, smoking and taking refreshments. One evening, as she was retiring, Vivian, as if struck suddenly by a stick on the head, felt her brain troubled, lost consciousness and fell suddenly. She was immediately picked up and given all possible care, but as the disease worsened, she had to be sent back to her family. Her mother, seeing her dangerous position, urged her more strongly than ever to convert, and as Vivian already had the desire to do so, and her position alone had held her back until then, she readily consented and was swayed. The next day she found herself completely cured, and immediately began to diligently learn the prayers and Christian doctrine.

This sudden healing was already a very extraordinary grace; it soon became a manifest miracle. Every day or every other day doctors and medicines were sent to her from the palace, and often several girls even stayed to care for her. Now, since her baptism, although she had been entirely rid of her illness at any other time, as soon as any person from the palace came into the house, Vivian saw one of her arms

<sup>14</sup> Apart from Mun Yeong-in, all the names are mentioned in the *Sillok*.

<sup>15</sup> 문영인 Mun Yeong-in 文榮仁 (1776-1801) Vivian. Blessed.

<sup>16</sup> (Dallet Note 37. Young people of both sexes let their hair hang down, and they are only raised at the time of marriage. Although the girls of the palace are legally condemned to perpetual celibacy, they are given the same ceremony, to signify that they are emerging from childhood and must henceforth occupy themselves with serious matters.)

and one of her legs stiffen and become as if dead. . She had, therefore, to undergo acupuncture a hundred times, and to swallow a great number of medicines. She submitted to the operations and took the drugs calmly; and no sooner had the people of the palace gone out than she got up again without any pain, thanked God, and laughed out loud, saying: “How many remedies wasted! How many acupunctures unnecessarily lavished on a healthy body!”

Solely occupied in reading and praying, she fled with the greatest care even the shadow of sin, and the reputation of her fervor quickly spread among Christians. She tried to imitate the saints whose lives she read, often spoke of their generosity towards the executioners, and testified to the desire to follow them to martyrdom. For three consecutive years, all the care of their art was lavished on her by the official doctors who, in the end, seeing no longer any way to cure this strange disease, had her removed from the list of the palace women. Thenceforth they ceased to pay her monthly salary. Vivian, entirely reassured, returned hearty thanksgiving to God for his shining protection, and thought only of applying herself to the practice of her duties, and to the exercise of all the Christian virtues.

Three years later she entered the service of Fr. Zhou, together with Susan Kim Seom-a, mother of the catechist Kim Seung-jeong, and for several years she carried out her duties with exemplary devotion and piety. When the persecution was on the point of breaking out, the priest having retired elsewhere, Vivian returned to her mother, awaiting the moment of martyrdom, and as no one seemed to think of her, she was distressed, repeating: “Does God not want me?”

Susan Kim, having come to see her one day, forgot under the mat in the bedroom, where she had placed it on entering, a paper on which were written various prayers. The satellites having presented themselves, some time later, at Vivian’s house, had searched everywhere without finding any suspicious object, when, at last, lifting the mat, they seized this paper, and said to Vivian: “Are you too a Christian?” “Certainly I am,” she answered without hesitation. They immediately declared her a prisoner, and urged her to depart; but the Christian virgin, remembering the examples of the saints, wished first to exercise her generosity towards them, and made them take refreshments, with which they were all satisfied. Then, bidding farewell to her mother, and consoling her as well as she could, she left and was taken to the mandarin. She was then twenty-six years old.

The mandarin, seeing her youth, said to her: “How can a young person like you, so well brought up in the palace, follow a bad religion, prohibited by the King? Do you want to die in torture?” “I desire with all my heart,” replied Vivian eagerly, “to lay down my life for the God I serve.” After having vainly tried all the means of seduction he could imagine, the Mandarin, furious to find such a stubborn resistance in a weak woman, had her put to the torture. They beat her violently on the legs; the blood spurted from them, and, if we are to believe a respectable tradition, was immediately converted into flowers, which rose into the air. At the sight of this prodigy, the Mandarin was struck with amazement, and he forbade, under the most severe penalties, to all those present, ever to open their mouths on what they had just seen.

Vivian had to endure many other tortures, but nothing could shake her constancy, and she finally heard the death sentence pronounced, which she had so long desired. On going to the place of execution, she said to the soldiers who were repelling the onlookers: “Let them watch at their leisure, we watch the animals being killed; why don’t we watch men being killed? A Christian, whose father had been an eyewitness to Vivian’s execution, often repeated that when she was beheaded, milk-white blood flowed from her wound, which the executioners looked on with admiration. God thus deigned to renew for the Korean virgin and martyr, the prodigy that he had done in Rome in the past, for Saint Martina, virgin and martyr.

Four confessors of the faith accompanied to death the five heroines of whom we have just spoken. They were: Choe In-cheol<sup>17</sup>, brother of Mathias Choe In-gil<sup>18</sup>, martyred in 1793, for having received the

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<sup>17</sup> 최인철 Choe In-cheol 崔仁喆 (?-1801) Ignatius. Blessed.

<sup>18</sup> 최인길 Choe In-gil 崔仁吉 (1765-1795) Matthias. Blessed.

priest in his home on his arrival in Korea; Yi Hyeon<sup>19</sup>, nephew of Yi Hui-yeong 李喜英, one of Josaphat Kim's fellow prisoners and martyrs; Hong Jeong-ho, close relative of Philip Hong, Colomba Gang's son-in-law; and finally Mathew Kim Hyeon-woo<sup>20</sup>, the seventh brother of Thomas Kim Beom-woo, who was the first to have the honor of confessing the faith in 1785.

It is said that Mathew Kim, at the time of his arrest, saw a large luminous cross appear, which advanced in front of him and showed him the road to prison. Let us note, in passing, that in this Kim family there were eight brothers, only three of whom were Christians. All three obtained the grace of martyrdom, because Barnabas Kim Yi-woo<sup>21</sup>, third brother of Thomas, brought as a Christian before the court of thieves, died there under the blows, during this same persecution, we do not know exactly on what date.

We have no details of the trial and the sufferings of these four confessors<sup>22</sup>. The text of their sentence, filled with the same inane banalities, which are repeated in all the official documents against the Christians, teaches us nothing in particular. The nine bodies remained exposed for several days, at the place of execution. It was very hot, and it had rained heavily. However, when the order to bury them arrived, they were astonished that they bore no trace of corruption. The flesh was healthy, the faces ruddy, the blood as fresh and as liquid as if it had flowed from their wounds a few minutes before. This marvel deeply touched the Christians and a large number of pagans who witnessed it.

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<sup>19</sup> 이현 Yi Hyeon 李鉉 (?-1801) Antony. Blessed.

<sup>20</sup> 김현우 Kim Hyeon-woo 金顯禹 (1775-1801) Matthew. Blessed.

<sup>21</sup> 김이우 Kim Yi-woo 金履禹 (?-1801) Barnabas. Blessed.

<sup>22</sup> Their interrogations in *Geumbu* and *Hyeongjo* are recorded in the chapter *Jeongbeop joiinjil* 정법죄인질 正法罪人秩 of the *SahakJingui* 사학징의 邪學懲義.



## Chapter 2: Martyrs in the provinces from the fifth to the eighth lunar month.

The nine martyrs we have just mentioned were not the only ones condemned on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the fifth month (July 3). Several other sentences of death were signed the same day, but could not be carried out until the following days, because the tribunal, by virtue of a system already mentioned, had the confessors transported to the different towns of which they were natives, in order to frighten the populations of the provinces, by the spectacle of their torture.

We first meet Jeong Sun-mae<sup>1</sup>, sister of Jeong Gwang-su<sup>2</sup>, a native of the district of Yeosu. Desiring to consecrate her virginity to God, and fearing the clamor of the pagans, she claimed to have been united in marriage to a man whom she said was called Heo. She raised her hair herself, and thanks to this ruse, was able to remain alone, and devote herself to all the good works that her piety inspired in her. Her sentence says that she received baptism at the hands of Father Zhou. Subjected to cruel tortures, she showed a courage beyond her sex, was condemned to death, taken to the city of Yeosu, and beheaded on the 25th day of the fifth month, two days later than her companions in the capital.

A second woman, called Jeom-hye<sup>3</sup> in the documents of the government, accused among other crimes of having remained a virgin while calling herself a widow, was beheaded the same day at Yanggeun, her native town. A constant tradition, and the various documents that we have had in our hands, have convinced us that this Jeom-hye is none other than the famous virgin Agatha Yun. Agatha was the first cousin of Paul Yun Yu-il<sup>4</sup>, who made the trip to Peking three times, brought Fr. Zhou to Korea, and was martyred in 1795. Descended from a family of demi-nobles or bastard nobles, she lived in the district of Yanggeun. Hardly had she known the Christian Religion than, desiring to consecrate herself to God without reserve, she made a vow of virginity, then, fearing to encounter in her family obstacles to her pious resolution, she secretly made herself men's clothes and fled to one of her uncles. Her mother thought she had been devoured by a tiger and did not stop crying for her, until after a long absence, Agatha returned to her. Neither the prayers nor the whispers of her family, who understood nothing of her heroic determination, could touch her heart. On the contrary, she only became firmer in her plan to belong entirely to God, and more zealous to procure for those around her the benefits of faith.

In 1795, she came with her mother to live in the capital. She was not yet baptized when her cousin Paul was seized, tried and put to death, as an introducer of the foreign priest. She herself, forced to hide, had much to suffer. After the death of her mother, she retired to Colomba Kang, and eager to help her as much as was in her in the exercise of good works, she devoted herself to the instruction of the little girls whom Colomba gathered together in her house. Tireless for the salvation of others, Agatha worked with even more fervor for her own sanctification. To a very austere life, to frequent fasts, to rigorous mortifications, she united continual prayers and meditations; therefore, her progress in the paths of perfection was rapid. God even condescended to reward the noble efforts of his servant with several extraordinary graces. Her mother had died without having been able to participate in the sacraments, and Agatha was very grieved. One day she saw her in the company of the Blessed Virgin. Fearing to be the victim of a dream or an illusion of the devil, she revealed this apparition to the missionary, who

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<sup>1</sup> 정순매 Jeong Sun-mae 鄭順每 (1777-1801) Barbara. Blessed.

<sup>2</sup> 정광수 Jeong Gwang-su 鄭光受 (?-1802) Barnabas. Blessed.

<sup>3</sup> 윤점혜 Yun Jeom-hye 尹占惠 (1778?-1801) Agatha. Blessed,

<sup>4</sup> 윤유일 Yun yu-il 尹有一 (1760-1795) Paul. Blessed.

interpreted it favorably, and restored rest to her soul. Another time, she had a vision of the Blessed Virgin. The Holy Spirit seemed to her to descend on this Queen of Heaven, and to rest on her heart. In her deep humility, Agatha dared not believe in the reality of these divine favors, and she would have rejected them, if the priest had not calmed her fears, by showing her an image exactly conforming to what she had seen. She had a very special devotion to her patroness, and tried to inspire this same devotion in the people around her. “How happy I would be!” she often said, “if only I could be a martyr, like Saint Agatha!” Her wishes were granted.

From the first days of the great persecution, towards the end of the second lunar month, she was arrested with Colomba, and for three months, shared her prison and her sufferings, underwent the same interrogations, and had to endure the same tortures. However, these two great souls, who understood each other so well and were so tenderly attached to each other, did not have the consolation of going to martyrdom together. Their sentence was pronounced the same day, and Colomba immediately sprinkled with her blood the soil of the capital where her zeal had been exercised; but Agatha, transferred to Yanggeun, did not obtain the palm until two days later. Her intrepid courage, her peace and the serenity of soul which she preserved until the last moment, greatly edified the Christians, and produced on a great number of pagans a lively and salutary impression. It is said that God gave to the virginal innocence of Agatha the same testimony as to that of her companion Vivian and that when her head fell, the blood which flowed from the wound seemed white as milk.

There were at that time many other martyrs in Yanggeun, for if we are to believe the accounts of the old men of the country, who were still living a few years ago, this city was flooded with blood by the cruelty of its mandarin Jeong Ju-song, whose name is quoted with horror by the pagans themselves. Unfortunately, we have no contemporary documents on these facts. Let us mention only a few names which have been collected from the mouths of eyewitnesses.

A noble family by the name of Yi, branch of Jeonju, who lived in the village of Baeseok-gol, gave the Church four martyrs: Yi Jae-mong<sup>5</sup>, fifty-five years old; his younger brother Yi Gwae-mong<sup>6</sup>, also called Jung-gin, about fifty years old, plus two young people, daughters of one of the preceding, aged between twenty-five and thirty, and who had consecrated their virginity to God. Arrested all together on the 20th of the fourth lunar month, they were put to the torture; and on their constant refusal to apostatize, died under the blows, or were beheaded in the course of the fifth lunar month. Kim Won-seong<sup>7</sup>, of noble family, living in the village of Jiyeoul, was taken and executed with them, at the age of forty-five to fifty years.

We must add to this list the illustrious virgin Agatha Yi, daughter of Yi Dong-ji 李同知, of the Gwangju branch, and distant cousin of the catechist Augustine Yi, martyred at the beginning of 1839. This young person lived with her parents in the neighborhood of Yanggeun. Early in life, she consecrated her virginity to God, but soon unable to hold out any longer against the threats of the pagans, she came to terms with one of her relatives, Yu Han-suk<sup>8</sup>, whose martyrdom we have related, and he helped her escape secretly, and led her to the capital, to the home of Agatha Yun. In this retreat, sheltered from the clamor, she was able to freely devote herself to prayer and the exercise of good works, and to prepare herself piously for the last combat. We regret all the more that we cannot find the details of her life, as her memory is blessed in a very special way, even today, by those who speak of her.

Finally, among the condemned on the 23rd day of the fifth lunar month, we find Go Gwang-

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<sup>5</sup> 이재몽 Yi Jae-mong (1747-1801)

<sup>6</sup> 이괘몽 Yi Gwae-mong

<sup>7</sup> 김원성 Kim Won-seong 金源星 (?)

<sup>8</sup> 유한숙 Yu Han-suk 兪汗淑 (?~1801).

seong<sup>9</sup>, Yi Guk-seung<sup>10</sup>, and probably also Hwang Po-su<sup>11</sup>, about whom we still have to say a few words. Go Gwang-seong was born in Pyeongsan<sup>12</sup> district, Hwanghae province, to an honest family. We do not know the circumstances of his conversion and the details of his trial<sup>13</sup>. Thrown into one of the prisons of the capital, he had unfortunately fallen into apostasy, when God permitted Yi Guk-seung to be brought to this same prison. The latter strongly reproached him for his fault, urged him to retract, and, to facilitate his means, indicated to him the words he was to use. “Tell the mandarin that it is not you who apostatized, but that it is the devil who deceived you and spoke through your mouth.” Thus pushed, Gwang-seong retracted himself appropriately and then underwent three new interrogations, without showing any weakness. He was sent to Pyeongsan, his homeland, to be beheaded there, which was done not with the ordinary instrument of torture, but with an ax. His death, given the distance from the capital to Pyeongsan, did not take place until the 27th or 28th of this same lunar month.

Providence, whose ways are admirable, thus made use of the wickedness of the persecutors, to glorify the Religion in places where it was not previously known. Such, indeed, was the district of Pyeongsan, which heard of Christianity for the first time, on the occasion of the sentence and courageous death of our martyr. Such was also the district of Bong-san<sup>14</sup>, in the same province of Hwanghae, where the confessor Hwang, surnamed Po-su, from the name of the company of skirmishers, of which he belonged, was beheaded. Hwang had come to the capital to join his regiment, when he had the good fortune to hear about the Religion and to convert. Arrested at the beginning of the persecution, he refused with unshakable firmness to give the slightest sign of apostasy, was condemned to death, and transported to his district of Bong-san, there to be executed. It is reported that, when he went to his execution, one of his young slaves followed him; and as the confessor, completely occupied with heaven, refused to look at her, the slave flew into a rage and overwhelmed him with insults which he joyfully bore.

[Peter] Yi Guk-seung<sup>15</sup>, also called Seong-gyeom, was a native of the district of Eumseong 陰城, province of Chungcheong, from where he had emigrated to the district of Chungju. Having heard of Christianity, he went to Yanggeun, to the Gwon brothers, to learn it thoroughly, and, touched by Grace, immediately began to practice it. When he returned home, his pagan tutor used all his eloquence to change his mind, but was unsuccessful, and Peter was untouched by all his sophistry. First taken in 1795, he freed himself by a word of apostasy, which he sincerely regretted later, and for which he made a long penance. His parents wanted to marry him, but thinking that a wife and children would probably be an embarrassment to him in the practice of the Religion, he stubbornly refused, and to avoid continual obsessions, went to live in the capital. Full of zeal for good works, and having no family embarrassment, he could easily devote himself to the instruction of others. So he gave himself entirely to this work of charity, and his word produced many fruits of salvation among his fellow Christians and pagans.

Arrested during the great persecution, he had, from the very moment of his entry into prison, the opportunity to exercise his zeal, by exhorting Go Gwang-seong, who had just apostatized, to repentance. He succeeded, as we have seen, and helped earn him the palm of martyrdom. But soon, put himself to the test of torture, he let slip a word of apostasy. The judge stopped the torture, and he was about to be set free, when, touched by a sudden repentance, he exclaimed that as soon as he was released, he would

<sup>9</sup> 고광성 Go Gwang-seong 高光晟 (1798-1801). (?). Martyr.

<sup>10</sup> 이국승 Yi Guk-seung 李國昇 (1772-1801) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>11</sup> 황포수 Hwang Po-su 黃砲手 (?). Martyr.

<sup>12</sup> 황해도 평산 平山 Hwanghae-do Pyeongsan.

<sup>13</sup> This is not in fact the case, records exist.

<sup>14</sup> 봉산 Bongsan 鳳山

<sup>15</sup> 이국승 Yi Guk-seung 李國昇 aka 성겸 Seonggyeom (1772-1801). Paul (Daveluy/Dallet say Peter). Blessed.

again practice his religion just as before. The same scene of apostasy, followed by immediate retraction, seems to have repeated itself several times; and we are not too surprised, because Peter had all the faults, at the same time as all the qualities, of his temperament. Of a quick, ardent character, full of fire and zeal, he was also mobile and inconstant, and had shown, on several occasions, an unfortunate thoughtlessness. God, however, who knew the bottom of his heart, did not abandon him, and, after allowing these repeated falls, to completely rid his servant of all pride and all self-confidence, he gave him the strength necessary to persist in a firm confession of faith, and conquer his sentence of death. He was sent to Gongju to be beheaded. It is said that on his way to execution, he said several times to the crowd of onlookers who accompanied him: "You seem to take pity on me, but it is you all who are truly worthy of pity." Peter had his head cut off on the 26th or 27th of the fifth lunar month; he was then thirty years old: his body was buried by his nephews at Gongju.

In the same fifth lunar month, we do not know what day, there was again executed in the same town of Gongju, a poor slave, named Mun Yun-jin<sup>16</sup>. After having served in one of the houses where Father Zhou took refuge, she fled to the provinces to avoid persecution. She was taken, however, and her constancy earned her the grace of martyrdom. Unknown everywhere else, she was pointed out by an old Christian, who had some friendly relations with her, followed her into the town of Gongju, and saw her pass when they were leading her to execution.

Korean records do not record any executions during the course of the sixth lunar month. The rage of the enemies of Christianity was not quenched, however, and for a long time to come our history will be but a list of martyrs. On the 13th of the seventh lunar month (August 31), a sentence of death was passed on five other confessors: Andrew Kim Gwang-ok<sup>17</sup>, and Kim Jeong-deuk<sup>18</sup>, of the province of Chungcheong; Stanislaus Han<sup>19</sup>, Mathias Choe<sup>20</sup>, and Andrew Kim Cheon-ae<sup>21</sup>, from the province of Jeolla.

Andrew Kim Gwang-ok, born in Yeosa-ul, in the district of Yesan, in Naepo, of an honest and wealthy family, exercised for a long time the functions of canton chief. Although he was endowed with excellent natural qualities, his excessively violent character made him feared by all who knew him. At the age of about fifty, he was instructed in the Religion by Ludovico de Gonzaga, who was from almost the same village, and to the great astonishment of all, he immediately embraced it, and began to observe its practices with great fervor, ostensibly, without worrying about the pagans. He did more, he converted his family, many of his friends, and other people in the village. Every day, whatever the season, all gathered to recite the morning and evening prayers together. Often also Andrew explained the doctrine, and he knew how to create in the soul of his listeners an ardent faith. During Lent, he observed a rigorous fast, gave himself up to various practices of mortification, and, by great assiduity in the exercises of the various Christian virtues, he finally succeeded in mastering his character so much that he was said to have become like a child at the breast.

When he saw the persecution of 1801 rising with such violence, he retired to the mountains<sup>22</sup> of Gongju; but having been denounced in the first lunar month, he was soon seized by the satellites of his

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<sup>16</sup> 문윤진 Mun Yun-jin

<sup>17</sup> 김광옥 Kim Gwang-ok 金廣玉 (1741?-1801) Andrew. Blessed.

<sup>18</sup> 김정득 Kim Jeong-deuk 金丁得 aka 대춘 Daechun (?-1801) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>19</sup> 한정흠 Han Jeong-heum 韓正欽 (1756-1801) Stanislaus. Blessed.

<sup>20</sup> 최여겸 Choe Yeo-gyeom 崔汝謙 (1763-1801) Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>21</sup> 김천애 Kim Cheon-ae 金千愛 (1760-1801) Andrew. Blessed.

<sup>22</sup> To the mountain known as 무성산 Museong-san 茂城山.

own city. "It would have been very imprudent of me," he said then, "to wait sitting in my house, for I am weak, and would have seemed to trust in my own strength. So I had to flee and avoid danger, but, deep down, martyrdom is my greatest desire. Today that I am taken, only by the order of God, I am very happy." And indeed, this inner and celestial joy was clearly manifested on his face and in his walk, to the point that the satellites and other witnesses were amazed.

The mandarin immediately put him to the question, reproached him for having run away like a coward, and commanded him to denounce his accomplices and to exhibit his books of the Religion. Andrew replied: "I have many co-religionists, but if I made them known to you, you would treat them like me, so I cannot give you any information. As for my books, they are too precious for me to place them in your hands." The angry mandarin redoubled the tortures, and Andrew lost consciousness; they nevertheless loaded him with a heavy cangue and led him back to prison. In a second interrogation, the mandarin showed the same cruelty, Andrew the same courage. "All your promises," he said, "as well as all your threats, are useless. Do not ask me again, a faithful subject does not serve two kings, a faithful wife does not give herself to two husbands. Would you, mandarin, violate the King's orders? would you dare deny them? I don't want to break God's orders. No, ten thousand times no, I cannot deny my great King and my Father. With regard to kings and parents, there are many circumstances in which outward acts are not in harmony with the sentiments of the heart; but our God seeing the most secret thoughts, feelings and intentions, one cannot sin before him even internally. I told you, do what you want."

In vain did the Mandarin beat him with the stick and the thieves' board, until the executioners fell exhausted with fatigue; in vain did he repeat the same series of tortures at a third and a fourth interrogation. God, who is stronger than the malice of men and of Hell, supported his servant. "But what do you think is so good in dying?" said the judge, amazed; "you have a wife, children and fortune; you have only to say one word and you will return to enjoy it; why do you persist in succumbing to torment?" "Life and death are far from being indifferent to me," replied the confessor, "but I cannot think of denying my God. Each man is in his condition; you, mandarin, paid by the King, you must follow his orders, I only expect you to carry them out. Should I die under the blows, my decision is taken; were I to die ten thousand times, I have nothing else to answer, act as you will, I am ready for anything."

The furious mandarin had him overwhelmed with blows, then ordered him to sign his death sentence, which he did with a face beaming with joy, thanking God and the Virgin Mary for his happiness. Sent back to prison, day and night he ostensibly said his prayers, and when he had the opportunity, explained to the pagans the truth of the Religion.

Some time later, Andrew was sent to the tribunal of Cheongju, the military capital of the province, and from there to the capital, where his final sentence seems to have been pronounced. The court having ordered to have him executed in the town of Yesan, in his native district, he set off accompanied by Kim Dae-chun, his relative, sentenced the same day as him, and who was to be put to death in Daeheung, a district bordering Yesan. The two confessors exhorted each other during the journey, and arriving at the fork where the two roads separate, they bade each other farewell, agreeing to meet in the heavenly homeland the next day, at noon, the hour when they were to, each on their side, have their heads cut off. How edifying these last conversations must have been! How touching are these farewells, with a rendezvous in the bosom of the Savior Jesus!

The next day, after seven months of detention and suffering, Andrew was carried on a litter of straw to the place of execution. On his way there, he recited his rosary aloud, and the curious said: "It is very singular; he is happy to die, he goes to his execution singing." Andrew, hearing this remark, answered them: "It is because today I will be close to God, to enjoy endless happiness there." When he arrived at the place, he said: "I have not finished my prayers, wait a little;" then he knelt down, finished them aloud, and himself placing under his head the block which was to support it, he bowed. The executioner having struck falsely, only hit the shoulder. André got up, wiped off the blood with his handkerchief, and got back into position, saying: "Be careful, and cut off my head with one blow," then with the greatest calm he received this last blow which consummated his sacrifice. It was the 17th day of the seventh lunar month (August 25). Andrew must have been about sixty years old.

The second confessor, condemned on the same day as Andrew, is designated in the official acts under the name of Jeong Deuk. But it is almost certain that this Jeong Deuk is none other than Peter Kim Dae-chun, whom we have just mentioned, when relating the martyrdom of Andrew. As we have already noticed, these changes of names, when it is a question of culprits condemned to infamous punishments, are quite frequent. Peter was a native of the district of Daeheung, in Naepo. Brought first to the tribunal of Hongju, then soon afterwards transferred to the military headquarters of Cheongju, he was, for several months, subjected to frequent and cruel tortures. His companion in prison was his relative Andrew Kim. Like him, he remained firm in the tortures and constant in his faith; with him, he was transferred to the capital, from where they both set out together to gather, each in his own country, the palm of martyrdom. Peter was beheaded in the city of Daeheung, on the 17th day of the seventh lunar month, at the same time as Andrew in Yesan.

Among the three confessors from the province of Jeolla, sentenced to death on the same day as the previous ones, we first find Stanislaus Han Jeong-heum<sup>23</sup>. Stanislaus belonged to a poor, though noble, family in the district of Gimje, in this province. Distant relative of Augustine Yu<sup>24</sup>, of whom we will speak soon, he usually lived with him, and fulfilled the function of tutor to his son. He learned the Religion there, embraced it wholeheartedly, practiced it with zeal, and when he was caught, towards the third month, with Augustine, did not allow himself to be shaken by tortures, nor by promises and seductions. He nobly confessed his faith, first at Jeonju, then at the capital. Stanislaus was in no way implicated in the case of the alleged plot for which the Yu family was accused, but only condemned for his obstinate attachment to the Christian Religion. Sent to be put to death in his own district, at Kimje, he was beheaded there on the 18th of the seventh lunar month, at the age of forty-six.

Andrew Kim Cheon-ae, a slave of the house of Augustine and instructed by him in the principles of the faith, knew how to practice it with a generosity beyond his condition. Taken at the same time as his master, he never consented to redeem his life by apostasy, courageously suffered the question at Jeonju, then at the capital, deserved to be condemned to death there, and was executed at Jeonju on the 19th or 20th day of the seventh lunar month (August 27 or 28). He was forty-two years old.

Mathias Choe Yeo-geom<sup>25</sup>, born of parents who had some small title of nobility<sup>26</sup>, in the district of Mujang, had, when still young, vaguely heard of the Christian Religion, and wanted very much to know it, without being able to do so. Having married in the district of Hansan, in the southern part of Naepo, he soon learned that there were many Christians in the vicinity, went at once to them, was instructed by them in the principal truths of the Gospel, and, on his return to Mujang, began to practice it with great fervor. His piety and his zeal to spread everywhere the knowledge of the faith, and to communicate the grace he had received, were such that he converted a great number of pagans. Persecution having broken out with violence in his own country, Mathias retired to his wife's relatives in Han-san. But soon a large number of Christians were arrested there, including twenty-eight of those he had converted. Some of them betrayed him and informed the mandarins of the place of his retreat. He was caught there on the 13th day of the fourth lunar month, and taken first to the prefecture of Han-san, where he had to undergo interrogation before the mandarin. The latter having had him tortured several times to no purpose, gave notice of this capture to the governor of the province, who ordered him to be led, the cangue around his neck, to the mandarin of Mujang. There, new tortures awaited him, but nothing

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<sup>23</sup> 한정흠 Han Jeong-heum 韓正欽 (1756-1801) Stanislaus. Blessed.

<sup>24</sup> 유항검 Yu Hang-geom 柳恒儉 (1756-1801) Augustine. Blessed.

<sup>25</sup> 최여겸 Choe Yeo-gyeom 崔汝謙 (1763-1801) Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>26</sup> But Hwang Sa-yeong's Silk Letter says he was a *pyeongmin* 平民 commoner.

could dampen his courage, and the mandarin, pushed to the limit, sent him to the court of Jeonju, capital of the province, where his sentence of death was pronounced. Still having his mother almost octogenarian, Mathias asked permission to see her once, in order to die without any regrets; this permission was refused. As they threatened to kill him under the blows, he feared for a moment that thereby something was wanting in his sacrifice, and became sad for several days; but soon God granted the wishes of his servant, and allowed him to be transferred to the faithful confessors Stanislaus Han and Andrew Kim. Great was his joy and that of his generous companions when they saw themselves reunited. At last the supreme court rendered a final sentence, and Mathias was taken to the Gaegap<sup>27</sup> market, in his own district of Mujang, and beheaded on the 19th day of the seventh lunar month (August 27), at the age of thirty-nine. .

Let us add here the names of some confessors of this province of Jeolla, of whom there are no details, and who very probably suffered at the same time, although the exact date of their martyrdom has not been clearly preserved. They are: Yi Hwa-baek<sup>28</sup>, noble of the district of Yeonggwang, pupil of Mathias Choe<sup>29</sup>, beheaded in his native town; Choe Il-an, commonly called Geum-no, nephew of the same Mathias, who, after a glorious confession, died as a result of torture in the province of Jeonju, at the age of forty; a Christian named O, noble of the village of Pok-san-chi, in the district of Yeonggwang, beheaded; finally another Christian named Won, taken at Sol-tei, district of Geumsan, and beheaded at Jeonju.

We know the names of only two of the confessors who were put to death during the eighth lunar month: Philip Hong, the son-in-law of Colomba Kang, whose martyrdom we have related with that of his mother, and Kim Jong-jo or Jo-hoi<sup>30</sup>. The latter, little known to Christians because of the obscure life he had led since his baptism, was from a family of doctors. He embraced the Religion as soon as it spread in Korea. With a cold and unprepossessing face, a shy character, belonging moreover to a very poor family, he had little access to the great, and therefore little chance of obtaining appointments. On the other hand, he had a taste for serious studies, and Yi Byeok, full of esteem and affection for him, often repeated that Chi-hoi was a man as astonishing as he was little known. In 1791<sup>31</sup>, he redeemed himself by apostasy, like almost all the neophytes of that time, but soon he regretted his weakness, and resumed his religious exercises with more fervor and assiduity. During the persecution of 1801, denounced as a relapsed apostate, he was thrown into prison, where he first generously confessed the name of Jesus Christ. If his sentence is to be believed, he had a moment's hesitation in the court of thieves, then retracted himself almost immediately in the court of crimes, and since then did not allow himself to be intimidated. He was sentenced to death and executed on the same day as Philip Hong, the 27th of the eighth lunar month.

It was also during the eighth lunar month that Thomas Jo, son of Justin Jo<sup>32</sup>, of Yanggeun was seized. The latter had been condemned to exile by the supreme tribunal<sup>33</sup>, on account of the Religion, and the mandarin of Yanggeun, his personal enemy, furious at not having been able to have him put to death, had sworn to avenge himself on the son, since the father had escaped him. The thing was rather

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<sup>27</sup> 개갑 Gaegap 장터 marketplace (Now 전북 고창군 공음면 석교리 North Jeolla Gochang-gun Gongeum-myeon Seokgyo-rii)

<sup>28</sup> 이화백 Yi Hwa-baek 李和白

<sup>29</sup> 최여겸 Choe Yeo-gyeom 崔汝謙 (1763-1801) Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>30</sup> The reason for Dallet's hesitation is uncertain, Daveluy Volume 4 says that his name was 김종교 Kim Jong-gyo 金宗教.

<sup>31</sup> In fact this happened in 1795.

<sup>32</sup> 조동섬 Jo Dong-seom 趙東暹 (1739-1830) Justin.

<sup>33</sup> He was sentenced by the *Gyeonggi Gamyong* (provincial office) not the *Uigeumbu* 義禁府.

difficult, because Thomas, having accompanied his father to the depths of the northern province, found himself in a territory beyond his jurisdiction. The mandarin presented several requests to the ministers, and at last, thanks to the credit of some powerful friends, obtained the necessary powers.

From his childhood, and before becoming a Christian, Thomas had distinguished himself by his excellent character and his filial piety; also, after his conversion, he soon became, by his virtue and his punctuality in all his duties, a model for the Christians of the place. When his father was arrested in 1800, he followed him and came to live a league away from the prison, making the trip to town twice a day, to bring him his food and console him with all his power. Justin having been transferred to the capital, Thomas followed in his footsteps, never leaving him day or night, and then accompanied him to the place of his exile, about 150 leagues north of Seoul. They had barely arrived there when Justin, overwhelmed by age, by the consequences of his wounds, by the fatigues of so painful a journey, fell dangerously ill. Thomas, always near him, served him with inexpressible devotion, so much so that the pagans of this district, struck with admiration, loudly proclaimed that they had never seen such filial piety.

Justin recovered, and father and son were consoling themselves together for the bitterness and privations of exile, when, on the eighth lunar month, the satellites of Yanggeun arrived. The first moment of surprise passed, Justin said to his son: "Well! what are you resolved to do?" Thomas, forced to leave his old father alone, was heartbroken, but submitted above all to the orders of God, and not wanting to impress his father too much, by letting him see his deep sorrow, he replied calmly: "My only thought is to follow the cross of Jesus Christ step by step." "Very well," resumed Justin, "now I see you leaving peacefully and without regret," and they parted, never to see each other again in this world. When Thomas arrived at Yanggeun, the Mandarin said to him: "Do you know of your father's crime?" Thomas replied, "How can you misunderstand natural principles enough to ask me such a question? what did my father do wrong? The position he is in today is my fault, not his." The exasperated mandarin subjected him to cruel tortures, summoning him to apostatize, but Thomas endured everything with constancy. For nearly two months, almost every day, he was summoned before the court and questioned, without ever feeling a moment of weakness. But his body finally succumbed to these repeated tortures, and in the first days of the tenth lunar month, Thomas died in prison. He had been preparing for martyrdom for a long time. It is reported that, for several years, he took advantage of the moments when he was alone to beat his arms and legs violently, in order to accustom himself to endure the tortures, if God allowed him to be taken. It was perhaps as a reward for this generous mortification that God granted him the palm of martyrdom.



Chapter 3: Trial of the Yu family. — Martyrdom of John Yu and his wife Lutgarda Yi. — Letters of Lutgarda.

From the martyrdom of Paul Yun Ji-chung<sup>1</sup>, in 1791, until the great persecution of 1801, the province of Jeolla had enjoyed profound peace, and the Christians there had become very numerous. The one who contributed the most to this rapid spread of the Gospel was Augustine Yu Hang-geom<sup>2</sup>; so he was one of the first enveloped in proscription. As of the third lunar month, he had been seized with several other members of his family, and taken to the prisons of Jeonju, capital of this province, of which Kim Dal-sun<sup>3</sup> was then governor. We do not know the details of the interrogations they had to undergo, but it unfortunately seems quite probable that Augustine had the weakness to apostatize.

One of his natural brothers, Yu Gwang-geom<sup>4</sup>, carried cowardice further. Not only did he yield to the tortures, but he showed himself ready to make all the denunciations that the judges demanded of him, and to reveal more than was asked of him. The governor did not fail to profit from such a good opportunity, and to exploit the fright of this unfortunate man. He put before his eyes the desperate state of his whole family, making him hope at the same time that a great frankness in declaring all that he knew would be the means not only to avoid death, but to save himself, attract the good graces of the court and obtain the highest dignities. Gwang-geom, blinded by fear and ambition, fell easily into the trap. He began by burning all his books, and made a long list of the Christians he knew. It was used immediately. In a few days, the districts of Jeonju, Geumsan, Gosan, Yeonggwang, Mujang, Gimje and others were criss-crossed by the bands of satellites, and more than 200 persons, says a memoir of the time, were thrown into prisons and subjected to terrible tortures. Sadly, most of them did not have the courage to remain faithful to their God. Several even made very compromising confessions about the comings and goings of the couriers who had been sent to Peking on various occasions, and things became strangely complicated. Gwang-geom especially seems to have completely lost his mind.

A fragment of the acts of his trial teaches us that he made the following declarations before the court: “To practice the Religion, one absolutely needs priests; without them, one cannot receive the seven sacraments; this is why we had to bring Fr. Zhou, and hide his presence in Korea with all the precautions imaginable. Moreover, to administer the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, holy oils are needed, and these holy oils must be renewed every year; we have therefore had to send someone every year to fetch them from Peking. In 1797, Hwang Sim went there, later one of the Kims of Gosan... But these journeys offering so many difficulties, the situation remained too precarious. To remedy all these inconveniences, a project has been formed to call to the coasts of Korea European ships which could treat with the government, and have freedom of religion granted...” Gwang-geom then denounced some of those who he said had provided money to defray the expenses of carrying out such a plan.

Among these names, one is surprised to find that of Yi Seung-hun who, when the priest entered Korea, had not practiced for a long time, and that of Yi Ga-hwan, who never had dealings with Christians. We are inclined to believe that Gwang-geom, in order to spare the living Christians, wished to cast upon these men already executed all the odiousness of the facts which he related or which he invented, or, what is even more probable, that baseless accusations were extorted from him at will, as often happens in trials in this country.

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<sup>1</sup> 윤지충 Yun Ji-chung 尹持忠 (1759-1791) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>2</sup> 유항검 Yu Hang-geom 柳恒儉 (1756-1801). Augustine. Blessed.

<sup>3</sup> 김달순 Kim Dal-sun 金達淳 (1760-1806).

<sup>4</sup> 유관검 Yu Gwan-geom 柳觀儉 (1768-1801).

Several of the principal Christians executed on the 26th of the second lunar month were also included in this denunciation. The affair thus taking a more and more serious turn, the apostates were quickly released or exiled, while a certain number of the most influential or compromised accused were sent to the capital, there to be judged by the Supreme Court. Of this number, we only know Augustine Yu Hang-geom, his brother Gwang-geom, Yun Ji-heon<sup>5</sup>, Kim Yu-san<sup>6</sup>, Yi Woo-jip<sup>7</sup>, Stanislaus Han<sup>8</sup>, Mathias Choe<sup>9</sup> and Andrew Kim Cheon-ae<sup>10</sup>. These last three, however, were not accused of having taken part in the plot to bring in the foreigners, but only of practicing the Christian Religion; so their trial was over much more quickly. We have, above, recounted their martyrdom.

The other five prisoners were further charged with conspiracy against state security. The investigation of their trial dragged on, and the debates and interrogations were multiplied accordingly. All the people were in agitation, awaiting the outcome of this important affair. Enemies of the Religion and enemies of the Nam-in, all moved at will to make a great show. Finally, it was decided to treat the accused as rebels, and on the 11th or 12th of the ninth lunar month, their sentence was definitively passed. They were convicted of following a wrong religion, of communicating with foreigners, and of conspiring to call European ships to force the will of the government. Orders were given to conduct all five of them to the town of Jeonju, capital of their province, to be executed there before the people. Augustine Yu Hang-geom, his brother Yu Gwang-geom and Francis Yun Ji-heon, were to be beheaded and cut in six. This torture consists, after cutting off the head, in cutting off the four limbs, which, with the trunk, form six pieces. Kim Yu-san and Kim Woo-jip only needed to have their heads cut off.

They were therefore dispatched at once to the town of Jeonju, and on the 17th day of the ninth lunar month (October 24), the governor executed the sentence point by point. Moreover, the family of each of them was placed under the ban of the law, and, according to the custom in such cases, their houses and all their property were confiscated. Yu Gwang-geom was then thirty-four years old. Had he, before dying, the happiness of retracting his apostasy, and of imploring the forgiveness of God for all the evils he had just caused? We do not know. We have said that, according to common opinion, Augustine Yu Hang-geom, his eldest brother and the head of the family, once so zealous in practicing the Religion and spreading it throughout the province, had had first, as well as the other three, the weakness of giving a sign of apostasy. However, we like to hope that their sufferings will not have been useless, and that God will have given them, at the last hour, the grace to wash away their sin in their blood. Augustine died at the age of forty-six.

Francis Yun Ji-heon was the younger brother of one of our first martyrs, Paul Yun Ji-jeong<sup>11</sup>. After the death of his brother, he had left his native country to retire to Jegu-ri, district of Gosan, where he continued to practice the Religion sincerely. During the trial, he declared the place where his books were hidden, and it was this circumstance above all that cast doubt on his perseverance in the faith. The violence of the torments also made him confess that the Christians wanted to bring in the European ships, as Gwang-geom had declared. At the time of his ordeal, Francis was thirty-eight years old. His wife was exiled to Geoje Island, where she died around 1828. His three sons were also exiled to various islands, and it is claimed that one of them still lives today. Woo-jip, (whose family name and baptismal name are

<sup>5</sup> 윤지헌 Yun Ji-heon 尹持憲 (1764-1801) Francis. Blessed.

<sup>6</sup> 김유산 Kim Yu-san 金有山 (1761-1801) Thomas. Martyr.

<sup>7</sup> 이우집 Yi Woo-jip 李宇集 (1761-1801)

<sup>8</sup> 한정흠 Han Jeong-heum 韓正欽 (1756-1801) Stanislaus. Blessed.

<sup>9</sup> 최여겸 Choe Yeo-gyeom 崔汝謙 (1763-1801) Matthias. Blessed.

<sup>10</sup> 김천애 Kim Cheon-ae 金千愛 (1760-1801) Andrew. Blessed.

<sup>11</sup> 윤지충 Yun Ji-chung 尹持忠 (1759-1791) Paul. Blessed.

not known to us<sup>12</sup>), was related to the family of Augustine Yu. We don't know anything about his life. Finally, Kim Yu-san was a man of the common people, who went this way and that in the service of the Yu family and other Christian families. He also made, it seems, several times the journey to Peking, to take or bring back letters. This is why he was involved in the alleged plot. It is likely that his name was Thomas. He was forty years old<sup>13</sup> when he was beheaded.

If we must now state our opinion on this whole affair, we think that on a true basis, a scaffolding of calumnies has been built. What is true is that the Christians desired and solicited the peaceful intervention, by means of ambassadors, of the Christian powers of the West, to put an end to the persecution. We have seen Fr. Zhou himself develop this plan to the Bishop of Peking. What is false is that Augustine Yu and those who were condemned as his accomplices had ever plotted the ruin of the Korean government, by a foreign invasion. There is absolutely no evidence against them, and the many details that have been gathered from the mouths of eyewitnesses cannot leave the slightest doubt about it. The money in question was intended for the personal expenses of the missionaries and for the expenses of the Christians who, from time to time, were sent to Peking. As for the various confessions and denunciations extracted by beatings or other tortures, it would be puerile to attach any value to them.

Before moving on to the story of other facts, that is to say other trials and tortures, it will be better to complete here the history of the Yu family, although part of the events that we are going to tell did not take place until a few months later.

Augustine Yu, on dying, left behind his very old mother, his wife and six children. The eldest, John Yu Jeong-cheol<sup>14</sup>, had married Lutgarda Yi; the second, a girl recently married, but not yet sent to her husband's house; the third, John Yu Mun-cheol<sup>15</sup>, unmarried; the last three were one nine, the other six and the other three years old. Moreover Mathew, son of a brother<sup>16</sup> of Augustine, who had died before the Religion spread in Korea; this young man, aged fifteen or eighteen, then bore the name of Gangju-doryang. (He is the one whom the *Lettres édifiantes* call Wonju.) Finally, the mother of Mathew and the widow of Gwang-geom. This large family was distinguished above all by its fervor and its attachment to the Religion; but we must particularly mention John's wife, Lutgarda Yi. Here are some details about this young woman, one of our dearest martyrs and one of the most touching figures in this story.

Lutgarda Yi<sup>17</sup> was born in the capital, of one of the most illustrious families in the country. Her father was called Yi Yun<sup>18</sup> and her mother Gwon; she herself also received the name of Yu-hui<sup>19</sup>. She was younger sister of Charles Yi, martyred that same year *sin-yu*, in the twelfth lunar month, and elder sister of Paul Yi, whom we shall see, in the persecution of 1827, following in the glorious footsteps of her brother and sister.

Lutgarda had inherited from heaven a resolute character, a loving and enthusiastic heart, a superior intelligence; in a word, she was endowed with all the qualities of body and mind, qualities which

<sup>12</sup> His family name is now known to be Yi.

<sup>13</sup> In fact he was 41.

<sup>14</sup> 유중철 Yu Jung-cheol 柳重哲 (1779-1801) John. Blessed.

<sup>15</sup> Not Mun-cheol but 유문석 Yu Mun-seok 柳文碩

<sup>16</sup> Named 유익검 Yu Ik-geom 柳益儉

<sup>17</sup> 이순이 Yi Sun-i 李順伊 aka 유희 Yu-hui (1782-1802) Lutgarda. Blessed.

<sup>18</sup> 이윤하 Yi Yun-ha 李潤夏 (?-1793) Matthew.

<sup>19</sup> It seems unclear if she was called Yu-hui or Yu-hye.

an education suited to her rank could easily develop. Her father died while she was still an infant, and probably without ever having heard of the Religion<sup>20</sup>. Her mother, happier, learned the Christian faith, and devoted her life to raising her children in piety. Lutgarda responded faithfully to the care of her virtuous mother; all her thoughts were for the salvation of her soul, all the love of her heart for Jesus Christ, and she felt no desire for the grandeurs and pleasures which her high birth would have easily procured her. She was about fourteen when she had the opportunity to meet Father Zhou, who had just entered Korea. The Christians of those days were generally so little instructed in the dogmas of the faith that Lutgarda at first seemed too young to be admitted to the sacraments, but already she understood the value of these heavenly gifts. She shut herself up alone in a room for four days, solely occupied in preparing herself there, and the priest having judged her capable of receiving them, she was at the height of her wishes. Her only concern from then on was to preserve well the fruit of the Holy Eucharist, her only desire to adorn her soul with all the virtues, and soon afterwards, eager to attract the good graces of her divine Spouse without sharing, she resolved to consecrate her virginity to him. But great difficulties stood in the way.

In Korea, as we have already remarked, it is, in all classes of society, an unheard-of thing for a young girl not to marry; but in families of a distinguished rank, it is almost an outrage, and it would be dangerous to defy public opinion on this point. The Savior himself came to the aid of his beloved servant, and prepared for her a husband according to his own heart. Father Zhou who had, after careful consideration, approved Lutgarda's project, knew a young man who also wanted to remain celibate in order to give himself entirely to God. It was John Yu, eldest son of Augustine. John's family, although noble and very wealthy, was nevertheless of a condition much inferior to that of Lutgarda, and moreover, John lived at Cho-nami<sup>21</sup>, near Jeonju, province of Jeolla, that is to say at a considerable distance from the capital, in a region where large families hardly ever settled. However, Father Zhou managed to arrange things to unite these two hearts under the veil of marriage, and allow them to live as brother and sister, according to their mutual desires.

The widow, mother of Lutgarda, willingly gave her consent, and the marriage was concluded.

Great was the anger of the heathen family members when they heard what had happened. They burst into murmurs, into recriminations, and united their efforts to break a contract so unseemly in their eyes. Lutgarda's mother held firm against their clamor. She gave as pretexts the difficulties of her position as a widow, the advantage for her of obtaining a son-in-law of great fortune, etc. Gradually the storm subsided, the wedding took place in 1797, and the following year, on the ninth lunar month, the young woman went to her husband's family, where they both made the vow of virginity. We shall shortly hear Lutgarda herself give us touching details on this point and on a few others, in the letters written from her prison. After as before her marriage, Lutgarda, constantly applied herself to the practice of Christian virtues, showed herself respectful and submissive towards her new parents, modest, charitable and exact in all her duties. Of admirable gentleness and complaisance, she never had the slightest misunderstanding with any of the members of this numerous family and, according to the Korean expression, she perfumed with her presence and her good example not only her house, but the whole neighborhood. Her husband John also had a frank and open piety, a solid faith, a fervent charity. Diligent in his duties, regular in his life, despising all the vanities of the age, he was considered, despite his youth, as a serious and mature man. How happy was this union of two noble hearts in the bonds of chaste love! how beautiful in the eyes of the angels! But, because John and Lutgarda were pleasing to God, it was necessary that suffering come to test and perfect them.

In the spring of 1801, John was arrested with his father Augustine and a few other members of the family. One can imagine what a terrible blow this was to Lutgarda's heart. She soon learned that her husband had remained a prisoner in the town of Jeonju, although the others had been transferred to the

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<sup>20</sup> He had probably heard of it from Gwon Il-sin etc.

<sup>21</sup> 초남이 Chonami (Now 전북 완주군 이서면 남계리 North Jeolla Wanju-gun Iseo-myeon Namgye-ri)

capital. Throughout the summer, John's younger brother, also named John, continually went to town to bring provisions to his brother, but he could not succeed in getting him clothes. The confessor therefore had, in the midst of the great heat, to keep wearing the heavy winter clothes which he was wearing at the time of his arrest, and soon their dirtiness, the odor which emanated from them and the vermin which spawned there, became a real torture for a man brought up in luxury and delicacy. We do not know what tortures he had to endure. We only know that during the whole time of his stay in prison, he was day and night loaded with the cangue, and that it was not taken from him until the moment of execution. Moreover, John did not allow himself to be shaken and knew how to keep his faith intact until the end.

Around the 15th of the ninth lunar month, probably a day or two before the execution of Augustine Yu and his companions. Lutgarda was arrested in turn, along with the rest of the family. Shortly after, three of the women were released, viz.: Augustine's mother, whom her great age no doubt spared; her newly married daughter, who was no longer supposed to be part of the family, and one of her two sisters-in-law, possibly the widowed mother of Mathew Yu. But the house of Augustine being confiscated, they had to leave it and were deposited all three, without any resources, in a wretched cabin nearby.

Hardly arrived in the prison, Lutgarda thought of consoling her mother, that the news of her arrest had just plunged into pain. She wrote to her, and succeeded in having a letter delivered of which here is the translation as literal as possible<sup>22</sup>.

“To my mother.

“In the midst of the emotions caused by the events that have happened to me, I think of you, my mother, and I want to let you know my feelings since our separation four years ago. It is impossible for me to report everything. I am only addressing you a few lines. Although I find myself on the point of death, do not distress yourself too much, and, without resisting the merciful order of God, please submit yourself in peace and calm to his designs. If I obtain the favor of not being rejected by him, thank him for this favor. If I remained in this world, I would never be anything more than an inconstant girl, a useless child; but if, by a signal grace, the day to bear fruit appeared, on the one hand my mother could say that she had really borne a daughter in her womb, and on the other, all regret would be superfluous.

“On the eve of leaving you forever, and no longer having the opportunity to fulfill the duties of filial piety towards you, how could I repress all natural feeling? But I tell myself that time, which passes like a spark from a pebble, is not of long duration; I say to myself that I, your child, am going to open to my mother the door of Heaven and eternal happiness, and give in advance for her the price of eternal joys; and this thought of approaching death, although naturally bitter and difficult to bear, is immediately converted into sweetness and becomes a very sweet pleasure. You are not unaware of all this, it is true, but by remembering the words of your daughter at death's door, you will love yourself in order to preserve yourself, and you will truly practice virtue. Apart from this ardent wish to see the souls of all my relatives eternally enjoying the sight of our common Father, what other desire could I experience now?... You, my sisters, how are you? Many words of affection would serve no purpose; I address only two words to you: Have a fervent love, nothing touches the heart of God so much; the fulfillment of all desires is, moreover, something that does not depend on us, but on him. — Let the slaves do their duty, and thereby they will become members of the family; from the small and useless children that they were, they will become real and precious children, I dare to hope a thousand times.

“Do not distress yourself too much, my mother, and suppress all your worries. See this world as a dream, and, recognizing eternity for your country, be always on your guard. Then when, after having followed God's order in everything, you come out of this world, I, vile and weak child, my head girded with the crown of endless happiness, my heart flooded with all celestial joys, I will take you by the hand and introduce you to the eternal homeland.

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<sup>22</sup> In addition to the translated text which Dallet has copied from Bishop Daveluy's Volume 5, there exists a copy of the letters in Korean. There are places where Dallet's text is fuller and places where the copy provides a fuller text.

“I hear that my brother Charles, detained in the capital, courageously confessed his faith. Truly what grace! what protection! How can we thank God enough for this? My mother, I praise your happiness. Separated from you for four years, I have suffered greatly from no longer being able to communicate to you all the feelings of my heart; but that itself is an order from God. He gave us to you, he takes us away, all that is regulated by his Providence, and to be too moved by it would be for Christians a weakness worthy of mockery. In eternity we will bind the mother-daughter relationship together and make it entirely perfect; I dare ten thousand times to hope so.

“My sister-in-law, don’t be too sad. Were my brother to die, we can say that you have truly met a husband. I congratulate you in advance for being the wife of a martyr. In this world united by the ties of blood or marriage, in eternity placed in the same rank, mother, son, brother, sisters, husband, if we manage to enjoy eternal joy, will it not be very beautiful? After my death, please do not sever relations with my husband’s family, but do as when I was there.

“When I arrived at my husband’s house, I easily obtained what was the object of all my anxieties, and the concern of all my days. I found myself with him at the ninth hour; at the tenth, we both swore to keep our virginity, and for four years we lived as brother and sister. In this interval, having had a few temptations, a dozen times, all was nearly lost; but, by the merits of the Precious Blood, which we invoked together, we avoided the pitfalls of the demon. I tell you this lest you worry about me.

“Please receive this scrap of paper with joy, as if you were receiving my person. —Before I have done anything yet, it is very light of me to send you my thoughts and my writing in this way, but I wish to dissipate my mother’s anxieties, please find some consolation in it. — While Father James Zhou existed, he recommended that I note in detail the persecutions suffered by the whole family; that is why, when I arrived here, I sent some papers through John; what happened to them<sup>23</sup>? I tell you again, repress every kind of sorrow and trouble, think that this world is vain and deceitful. I would have a thousand things to add, but I cannot write everything, I will stop here. Sin-iou year, the 27th of the ninth lunar month (November 3, 1801).

“Your daughter, Yu-hui.”

Augustine Yu having been condemned and executed as a rebel, the government, as is customary in such cases, gave orders almost immediately to put his two eldest sons to death by strangulation. On the 6th day of the tenth lunar month, a mandarin, attached to the court of *Geumbu*, was sent from the capital to carry out this sentence, and on the 9th of this same lunar month (November 14), John Yu Jeong-seon and his brother John Yu Mun-cheol were strangled in the prison of Jeonju.

At the same time, and probably by the same sentence, the surviving members of his family were condemned to exile. Mathew and Lutgarda demanded: “According to the laws,” they said, “Christians must be put to death; we ask to be executed promptly.” Was this zeal indiscreet? We dare not think so. Doubtless the laws of the Church do not allow confessors to provoke judges; they even formerly impose severe penalties on those who act in this way. But our neophyte prisoners were unaware of these wise regulations, and, in the simplicity of their faith, they only followed the impulse of their hearts. The history of the martyrs of the primitive Church offers several examples of a similar zeal, inspired or at least approved by God himself, and the Church, always enlightened by the Holy Spirit, has known how to discern deviations from pride and passion.

At first the judges had no regard for these complaints, and our four confessors, frustrated in their hopes of martyrdom, reluctantly took the road to exile. But hardly had they gone a few leagues when the order came to bring them back to prison, to be tried again. We do not know what motivated this new order; one point, however, seems beyond doubt. If the first sentence had been rendered under the legal provisions against the children of the rebels, it is evident that this new judgment could have had no other

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<sup>23</sup> (Dallet Note 38 : No trace has been found of these documents.)

cause than their persistence, as Christians, in the profession of the Religion of Jesus Christ, and the glory of their martyrdom remains perfectly intact.

Let Lutgarda relate these various events to us herself, in a long letter, written from her prison to her two sisters, that is to say to her own sister and her sister-in-law, wife of Charles Yi, who was then in prison, in the capital. This letter is rather, properly speaking, a diary of her emotions, her thoughts, her fears, her memories, her hopes; is it a series of fragments written stealthily, despite the jealous surveillance of the jailers? Here it is in its entirety, according to the copies carefully preserved in various Christian families. Never have faith, chastity, simplicity, the love of Jesus Christ, spoken a more beautiful language; and when one remembers that the young girl who writes thus had been able to receive only a very limited religious instruction, that she had been able to participate only two or three times in the sacraments, one admires all the more the direct action of the Holy Spirit on this beautiful soul. We feel with happiness that he alone was able to create in this virginal heart feelings of such exquisite delicacy, and to put to the pen of this young neophyte words which recall the most touching stories of the primitive Church.

“To my two sisters.

“I take up the pen and see nothing to say. Is my poor brother dead or alive? I had heard from him indirectly, in the first days of the ninth lunar month, but since then, having been taken myself, I have sat locked up without any news being able to reach me. The thought of my brother oppresses me and makes my heart ache. If he has signed his sentence, everything must be over now, but before his death he cannot come into possession of happiness. And yet, what a position for the whole family! How will my mother and my sister-in-law be able to resist it? It seems to me that they should not have a single heartbeat left. When I think of this, it is only worries and anxieties, and what words could convey what I feel! How will you have endured all the upset of his death? and then, if the denouement has not yet taken place, how will Charles be able to hold out in his cold prison? Whether he’s dead or alive, my mother’s entrails can only be parched by it!

“For me, my sins are so heavy, the horizon that surrounds me is so dark that I don’t know how to put everything in writing, and find nothing to say. I have arrived on the grounds of death, and I do not know what terms to use, and yet I want to say a few words to you about what happened, and to bid you farewell from this world as I set off for eternity. This year, when my entrails were already torn as a result of so many irremediable calamities, I still had to see myself separated from what remained of my family. From then on no desire to live remained in my heart, and I only thought of laying down my life for God while the occasion was good. I took this resolution in myself, and, meditating on this great affair, I tried to prepare myself well for it.

“Suddenly, when we least thought of it, many satellites came in and I was taken; it was while I was worrying about the lack of opportunity, that everything happened according to my wishes; thanks be to God for this blessing! I was happy and joyful, but at the same time worried and troubled. The satellites urged me, cries of pain to shake heaven and earth were heard around me; I must leave forever my mother, my mother-in-law, my brothers and sisters, my friends, my neighbors, my country; and nature not being entirely extinguished in me, I make this farewell in the midst of trouble, and my eyes bathed in tears; then, turning around, only one desire remains to me, that of a good death.

“I was first shut up in the place called *Siou-kap-t’ieng*<sup>24</sup>; then, less than an hour later, transferred to another prison, where I met my mother-in-law, my aunt and two of my brothers-in-law. On both sides we looked at each other, there were tears and not a word, little by little the night was falling. It was the 15th of the ninth lunar month, under a clear and serene autumn sky. The moon was full and bright, and

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<sup>24</sup> It is not clear what *Sugeupcheong* refers to. Daveluy Archive Volume 5 F. 201 writes “Siou kap t’ieng” which Dallet copies. Modern Korean editors of the letters suggest 水汲婢 수급청 *Sugeupcheong* but this normally refers to low-class women who draw water whereas Lutgarda clearly means to refer to a room or place.

its light reflected against the window; you could see what each of us was thinking and feeling. Sometimes lying down, sometimes sitting, what we ask in silence, what we desire, is the grace of martyrdom. Soon our hearts are overflowing, everyone speaks up, and all five of us, as one voice, promise each other to be martyrs for God, we form a resolution as solid as iron and stone. This mutual confidence having shown that our desires are the same, our affection becomes more whole, our intimacy more complete, and naturally all regret and all idea of affliction are forgotten. The more one advances, the more the blessings and graces of God accumulate; spiritual joy increases in our souls, we become heedless in all matters, no concern seems to remain.

“And yet, my thoughts and affections were constantly directed to John, my husband, locked up in another prison in the same city. How could I have forgotten him for a moment? When I was still at home, I had written to him: “What happiness if we could die together and on the same day!” but the occasion not being sure, I delayed a little in sending him this paper, and I had not yet been able to send it to him, when relations were strictly forbidden, and all means of communication cut off. Nevertheless the object of my secret prayers, my desire, my hope was always that we could die together, the same day, martyrs for God. Who could have guessed the adorable designs of the sovereign Master? On the 9th of the tenth lunar month, my brother-in-law, called John, was taken away from us, I did not know for what purpose. “So where is he going? I asked. “It is the Mandarin’s order,” replied the jailer; “we are going to take him to the big prison, and lock him up with his brother.” I was as if cut in two, as if pierced by a thousand swords. They took him away. “God’s will be done,” I said to him, “go and be with him; let’s not forget ourselves. Then I advised him earnestly: “Tell John that it is my wish to die with him, the same day.” Two and three times I repeated this recommendation; then, letting go of our hands, I turned away.

“There were four of us left, bewildered, and having no support except in the protection of the Lord. A quarter of an hour had not elapsed when the news of their death reached us. The blow dealt to the feelings of nature had only the second rank with me; John’s happiness filled me with joy. However, I felt some anxiety in the depths of my soul. “Oh my God, what happened to him?” I said to myself; Was he well prepared for such a sudden death? Ten thousand swords seemed to tear my heart, and I didn’t know where to turn my thoughts. About an hour passed like this, and I felt a little calm return. “Wouldn’t that kind of death even be a favor from God?” After all, he did have some merits; could it be that God, so good, so merciful, had rejected him? My heart was less agitated, but my thoughts kept turning to him. I questioned one of our relatives who said to me: “Don’t worry, he had made up his mind beforehand.” At last a letter arrived from home; it said: “We found in John’s clothes a note addressed to his sister (that’s how he always called me); this note was thus conceived: ‘I encourage you, exhort you and console you; let’s meet again in the kingdom of heaven.’ Only then were all my worries dispelled. In fact, when I think of all his conduct, there is nothing to regret; he had stripped away the spirit of the world, and one could call him a true Christian. His assiduity, his fervor, his righteousness, had won him general esteem.

“When we realized together what I had wanted for many years, he revealed to me the bottom of his heart, and told me that he too had had this same desire before our marriage. Our union was therefore a special grace from God that approved the realization of our projects, and that is why both of us wanted to recognize this great benefit, giving our lives for the faith of Jesus Christ. We had mutually promised each other that when the day came when the administration of the house and the goods would be handed over to us, we would divide it into three or four parts, one for the poor, another very large one for the younger brothers, so that they could take good care of our parents, and if the days became happier, we had to separate and, with the rest, live each of us apart. Finally, we made a commitment never to violate this agreement.

“Last year, it was the twelfth lunar month, a most violent temptation made itself felt; my heart trembled, like someone walking on ice about to break, or on the edge of an abyss. I asked earnestly, eyes raised to heaven, the grace of victory, and, by the help of God, with great difficulty, with great difficulty we triumphed, and we kept ourselves as children. Our mutual trust has become as solid as iron and stone, our love and loyalty unshakable as a mountain.

“Since this promise to live as brother and sister, four years had passed, when, this year, he was



taken in the spring. During the four seasons, he could not once change his clothes. Imprisoned for eight months, he was not released from his cangue until he was dying. “Will he not come to renounce God?” I thought day and night with concern; and I hoped to go and join him to encourage him and die with him. Who could have thought? who could have known that he would take the lead? This is an even greater blessing from God. Down here, whichever way I turn, I see nothing that can henceforth captivate my affections and preoccupy me. If a thought arises in my mind, it is towards God; that a sigh rises in my heart, it is towards Heaven.

“On the 13th day of the tenth lunar month, I was by sentence of the tribunal placed in the rank of slaves of the prefecture, and condemned to a distant exile in the city of Byeokdong. I presented myself before the mandarin and made a thousand complaints to him: “All of us who honor the God of heaven, according to the law of the kingdom, we must die; I too want to die for God, like the other people in my house.” He dismisses me immediately and orders me out. I approach closer, I sit down in front of him and say to him: “You who receive a payment from the governor, how do you not follow the orders of the King?” and a thousand other things, but he doesn’t even pretend to hear me and has me thrown out by his satellites. Having no more resources, I set out; along the way I redoubled my earnest prayers to God, and we had hardly made a hundred *li* when I was called back and arrested again. This is a signal favor, a grace above all graces. How could I ever be grateful enough? Even after my death, please still thank God for this benefit<sup>25</sup>.

“We had passed through four villages, I thought of the four neighborhoods that Jesus passed through to go to Calvary, and I said to myself: “Could it be a small resemblance that God wants to give me with this divine Savior?” I saw the satellites again with indescribable joy, and as if I had met my own parents.

“At the first interrogation that followed, I declared that I wanted to die honoring God; they immediately hurried to the King, and when the answer arrived, I was again brought before the criminal judge; my sentence was passed, I signed it. The judge had me bastinadoed on my legs, the cangue was passed to me, and I was put back in prison. My flesh was scratched, the blood flowed; Scarcely had a meal passed than I was no longer in pain; they are graces upon graces, all unexpected; four or five days later, everything was cured: who could have thought?

“Since this ordeal, about twenty days have passed, and I no longer feel the slightest pain. The others say that I am in pain; the expression is not only inaccurate, but directly contrary to the truth; I say that I am in peace and well-being. What man could be, in his own house, as quiet and as happy as I am here! When I think about it, I am even disturbed and in awe; is it that God does not want me? couldn’t I bear violent tortures? I tremble and am filled with confusion. Since they sent to the King, more than twenty days have passed and no news; moreover, certain rumors report that there would be a chance of life; I have no hope except in the help of the Lord, who I am sure will not want to reject me entirely. Let the answer come very quickly, very quickly; I only hope for death. In the meantime, seated and without occupations to distract me, I can barely deceive the eye of the guards, and stealthily seize a few moments to bid you farewell for eternity, on a sheet of paper that you will receive, as it were, the representation of my own face, and which, I hope, will bring you some consolation. But there are so many things to say, and having to do it hastily, I speak indiscriminately, and without follow-up. If you follow me in thought, read these lines as if you saw me present and before your eyes.

“When we left, we agreed to meet the following year, and that is four whole years ago. Who would have ever thought of it, even in a dream? But can we ever say anything in advance about the things of this world? A separation of four years seemed difficult to us, what will a separation be like without return here below? and how much will you not have the heart afflicted, because of a good-for-nothing little sister? However, my eldest sister, having a heart as big as the sea, and being wise and prudent, will she not be able to bear everything well? Yes, you will be able to do it calmly, and I lay down all my

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<sup>25</sup> (Dallet Note 39 : The next two phrases are lacking in some copies of this letter.)

concerns. Despite this, when I think of you, dear sister, I cannot help worrying about useless thoughts. The love of loved ones is such a natural thing that you can only get rid of it with life. “Yet,” I say to myself, “if I had a little fervor, would I tire of useless worries?” and I blame myself for all these thoughts. Your heart will suffer much over me, no doubt; but in the end, if I have the happiness of being a martyr, is there cause for sadness? So do not grieve, but congratulate yourselves.

“As I think of the pain and affliction that will overwhelm you, my mother and my sisters, I send you these last wishes as my testament. Please do not reject them. When you hear the news of my death, I dare to hope ten thousand times, don’t be too sorry. I, vile and miserable girl, I, stupid sister and without any good feelings, if I can become the child of the great God, take part in the happiness of the just, become the friend of all the saints in heaven, enjoy a perfect bliss and partake of the sacred banquet, what glory will it not be? If we wanted to obtain it from ourselves, it would be impossible. That a daughter or a sister only becomes the object of the good graces of the prince, we are rightly congratulated; but if a child becomes the object of the love of the great King of heaven and earth, in what terms should we not congratulate ourselves? They argue to obtain the favor of the king; to receive it without having sought it, is that not an even greater benefit?

“In all the universe, I am the greatest sinner. Vis-à-vis the world, I no longer have the means of ever erasing the shameful title of slave of the prefecture of Pyeokdong: vis-à-vis God, I have a hundred times by my sins denied this divine Master and his benefits; however, if, ending well, I should become a martyr, in an instant all my sins will be erased, and I will enter the bosom of ten thousand happinesses; is there anything to grieve about? Between the title of sister of a prefectural slave and that of sister of a martyr, which smiles on you the most? And you, my mother, if you are called mother of a martyr, what will you think of this title? If I manage to be a martyr, will it not be an incomparable prodigy? For the other saints, it is becoming and well deserved; but that such a high honor should be given to a wretched creature such as myself, is there anything more capable of confounding?

“Look at my death as real life, and my life as real death. Don’t grieve for my loss, but grieve for the loss of God in the past, and fear losing him again. Save any kind of regret to mourn the past, and strive to erase it and redeem it. Leaning on the Blessed Mother and putting your hearts at peace, strive to become the throne of the Lord. If you peacefully submit to this command of God, you will thereby follow his intention which is to purify you through pain, and he himself will cherish and console you. You have there a beautiful opportunity to obtain his most precious graces and to acquire merits. If, on the contrary, afflicting yourselves needlessly, you came to offend this same God, would there be anything more deplorable?

“In all things therefore, submit yourselves to his providence, and with a calm heart take advantage of your affliction to fully satisfy his justice. Give yourself up to the practice of good and the acquisition of merits; however slight a fault, avoid it as a great sin, and regret it likewise; for the practice of good, on the contrary, however small it may seem, do not neglect the opportunity to do it. Lean entirely on the help of God, often ask for the grace of a good death; strive always to produce acts of fervent love. Should you have no love, no contrition, strive to bring them to birth; when they are asked for insistently, God gives them. If you have relaxed for a few moments, wake up immediately; and if you seek God earnestly, little by little you will come closer to him. If God, fulfilling my desires, makes me enjoy his presence, and if brothers and sisters, mother and daughters, we all meet with him, will it not be very beautiful? Each must, indulgent towards the others, examine herself severely, and always strive for harmony; thereby my mother will become, in her old age, entirely united to the divine will, and my sisters will become loving and submissive daughters.

“My sister-in-law, if my brother is put to death, do not grieve too much, without any profit; but, with a calm heart, thank God for this benefit. He will support you from above and help you in the midst of difficulties. Apply yourself to contrition, make every effort, and employ all the faculties of your soul to follow in the footsteps of my brother.

“Here, my aunt is with her son, the only child she had. They want to give their life for God with us, they have suffered the same tortures and are also detained, they are perfectly resigned and calm.

Model yourselves on them, and, imitating our good mother the Virgin Mary and all the saints, do not set your affections on useless things. My sister-in-law and my brother-in-law are also in a very difficult position to bear, but, to advance in virtue and acquire merits, such occasions are excellent; and so far they have shown admirable patience. But if it is good to begin well, it is even better to finish well; therefore always be on your guard, do not lose past merits. If you have extreme pains, accept them wholeheartedly; think of the order of God, and have faith in future retribution. If you reject all the too quick movements of nature, even painful things will lose what is painful about them. It seems to me that it would be very advantageous to keep our hearts always in this disposition. All virtues are good to ask for, but faith, hope and charity are the main ones; if they are really in the soul, the other virtues follow quite naturally.

“How is my brother-in-law now? When I think of my sister’s position, it pains my soul. Although you may not be in perfect harmony, try to follow his desires gently for all that is not sinful, and at least not to lose good harmony. John and I, married for five years and having lived four years together, we have not had a single moment of disagreement; with all the people in the house I never had any dissatisfaction.

“I would still have a thousand things to say, but outside there is a dreadful noise and I can only write with great difficulty, so I will not do it separately to my mother. I would like to write to you at least the ten thousandth part of what has happened in the past four years, but every time someone shouts to bring someone from the prisoners, it always seems to me that it is me who they call, and I stop writing; then, starting again, I stop again. My sentences are without sequence and perhaps incomprehensible, but thinking of making you happy by a few lines of my hand, I try to seize the moments and say a few words. By the infinite goodness of God, if, not rejecting me entirely, he grants me the grace of martyrdom, and my brother also obtains it, you will have two children who will precede you; could it be that we are not leading you to your destination? Although I die, could I forget my mother and my sisters? If I obtain the object of my desires, one day I will see you again; but having no merit, one must not speak too loudly before having had a good death.

“My sister-in-law, if my brother should die, please don’t just listen to nature and grieve too much. The spouses no longer forming a single being, let one of the parties ascend to heaven, he will easily lead the other there; therefore do not be a coward for the good, do not sadden your heart unnecessarily to cause pain to God and to my brother. Dong-wan being the only offspring of my brother’s blood, he is more precious than any other; take good care of his body and his soul, and when he grows up, marry him and try to make him and his wife a holy couple.

“As for me, during twenty years of life, having passed no day without weakness, and having never again fulfilled my duties as a daughter, here I am on the point of leaving without leaving any trace of filial piety; my sister, take care of my mother all the more, and still do in my place what I should have done. Godliness to the body is good, but godliness to the heart is even better. Having lived, too, near my father-in-law and my mother-in-law, I have seen that what satisfies them more is to enter into all their views and feelings. If, being poor, you cannot treat my mother entirely according to your wishes, at least enter into all her intentions and console her well; often wake up her darkened intelligence, and if by chance she was in some small wrong, don’t content yourself with addressing a few good words to her, do it again with a cheerful and serene air. If she is in sadness, disguise yours well, even play the child with her, and, by some agreeable or pleasant word, force her to recover. After the death of my eldest brother, my younger brothers have no support except in you; combine the office of brother and eldest sister, raise them in virtue, try to establish them, preserving the family and making them fervent Christians.

“If my brother is martyred, and I too, by the grace of God, die a good death, I dare to hope to find you in the next life. Above all, help my mother to spend the rest of her years well and to obtain the grace of a good death, so that mother and children, brothers and sisters, husband and wife, we can meet in joy; I recommend it to you a thousand times. I know you will not act recklessly, but thinking about my recommendations, you will do it twice as well. He who has his parents must not indulge in sadness and will indulge his own affliction, think about it. I say this not out of distrust of your goodwill, but because

I know that you are too prone to give in to grief.

“As for John, people call him my husband and I call him my faithful friend: if he could reach the kingdom of heaven, I think he will not forget me. Here below, he had so much regard and kindness for me; living in the abode of happiness, my cries, in the midst of fears and pain, cannot escape his ear, and he will not forget our promises; no, our friendship cannot be broken. Oh! When then, leaving this prison, can I meet our great King and common Father, the Queen of Heaven, my beloved parents and my faithful friend John, to enjoy joy with them! But being nothing but sin and having no merit, I dare to hope, it is true; but can my desires be fulfilled anytime soon?”

“Here, there are many people immersed in affliction, how to express everything? My sister-in-law, brought up in abundance and opulence, after having lost her parents, her brothers and all her possessions, was again obliged to leave the big house; she retired to a ruined cabin with one of her aunts and her grandmother, overwhelmed with old age. Recently married, she had not yet been taken to her husband’s house, and it is said that her father-in-law no longer wishes to receive her, because of the misfortunes of her family. What a deplorable position! what terms could describe it! My brothers-in-law, aged nine, six, and three, are all three separately exiled to Heuksan-do, Sinji-do, and Geoje-do Islands; how can I endure such a terrible spectacle? My mother-in-law, my aunt and Mathew, my husband’s first cousin, have only one heart and one thought with me. They too were questioned and had to undergo cruel torture. They are imprisoned here; I hope they all end well.

“My eldest sister, among the five brothers and sisters that we are, cherishes me above all with a very special affection, for the reason perhaps, she says, that she carried and raised me in her arms. Certainly it is the same on my part, and I dedicated her a very lively affection, but all the more reason for you not to grieve for my death. If, by the grace of God, I have the happiness to reach the kingdom of heaven, when, after having assiduously acquired merits, you will have a good death, I myself want to draw you there and lead you by the hand. Having taken up my pen to bid you eternal farewells, I would like to omit nothing of what I have to say, and yet, not being able to write everything I think, I am obliged to abbreviate. I sincerely hope that you will practice good and collect merits; keep your body healthy and your soul pure, so that you can ascend to heaven, so that we may enjoy eternal joys together. After my death, I will ask for it urgently and without ceasing. But if by chance my wishes were not fulfilled, if I were condemned to live, ah! that would be a terrible thing! But no; I trust in my sweet savior Jesus Christ.

“After my arrest, fearing that my trial would be over immediately, I wrote a few lines to my mother; read them, and after having read this letter also, please send it to the other members of the family, so that in reading them they will imagine seeing me once more. This is a very long letter and many words. Having no virtue myself, I had the audacity to exhort others; really, am I not like those wooden figures standing by the side of the road, who teach the way, without ever taking a single step themselves? However, as it is said that the words of a dying man are upright, perhaps mine will not be too faulty; read them with indulgence.

“Yu-hui.”

We do not find the date of this letter, but, according to the facts mentioned therein, it must have been written in the eleventh lunar month of this year *sin-yu*.

Lutgarda and the other confessors, recalled to prison when they were already on the road to exile, had to undergo new interrogations, the details of which have not been preserved. It is only reported that after their death sentence, their toes were broken without their feeling any pain.

Finally came the day of triumph. During the journey from prison to the place of execution, Mathew preached to the people with great fervor; Lutgarda for her part revived and exhorted her two companions, especially her mother-in-law, whom the memory of her three exiled grandchildren had plunged into trouble and desolation. Our heroic virgin knew how to restore her confidence in God, to restore her courage, to detach her heart from earthly affections, and to turn her thoughts towards heaven

whose doors were about to open. The executioner wished to strip them, according to custom; but Lutgarda pushed him away with a few words full of modesty and dignity, then she herself took off her outer garment, did not allow her hands to be tied, and was the first to present her head calmly to the axe. The other three also had their heads cut off. It was the 28th day of the twelfth lunar month (January 31, 1802). Lutgarda was then twenty years old; Mathew was between fifteen and eighteen years old, he had not yet been married; Augustine's wife and sister-in-law could have been between thirty-five and forty years old. The three young children, exiled separately to distant islands, died there leaving no posterity but a daughter who, it is said, was still alive a few years ago. The ruin of this family was therefore complete, and it is not surprising if today not a single Christian member remains.

Chapter 4: Martyrdom of Alexander Hwang. — His letter to the Bishop of Peking. — Letter from the King of Korea to the Emperor of China, and the Emperor's reply.

On the 29th of the ninth lunar month, eleven days after the execution of Augustine Yu and his companions, Alexander Hwang Sa-yeong<sup>1</sup>, whom we have already had occasion to quote, was arrested in the territory of Jecheon, and brought as a prisoner to the capital.

Alexander Hwang, despite his youth, was then considered, and with good reason, to be one of the most influential leaders of Korean Christianity. His birth as well as his personal merit, his rare talents as well as his virtues, had won him general esteem. He belonged to one of the great families of the Nam-in party, distinguished in the country by its nobility and by the high offices which several of its members had often filled. Endowed with the finest qualities of body and mind, he stood out from childhood among all his companions for his rapid progress in letters and sciences. At the age of seventeen, he was crowned in the public examinations and obtained the degree of licentiate (*jinsa*). The King, having heard of his extraordinary talents, had him introduced to him, conversed with him for some time, treated him with remarkable kindness, even shaking his wrist as a sign of friendship, and saying to him as he left him: "When you're twenty, come back to me quickly, I want you in my service at all costs."

This was a signal favor, especially in this country where the kings see no society, have relations only with their families, and with the ministers for the affairs of the State, and never allow themselves any of those familiarities, even dignified and reserved, that our usages entail. So Alexander always had to wear a silk cord around his wrist ever since, to signify that ordinary men were no longer allowed to carelessly touch this hand honored with the touch of the royal hand.

Everything therefore presaged a brilliant future for him, when he was married to the daughter of one of the Jeong of Majae, that famous family whose history we have related, and heard for the first time of the Christian Religion. He immediately embraced it with ardor, no longer wanted to know any other science than that of the saint, repudiated the world and its dangerous pleasures, and, understanding that he had to communicate to others the light which he himself had received, became a zealous catechist.

His parents and pagan friends overwhelmed him with reproaches and mistreatment, without being able to shake his constancy. Animated as he was by a loftier ambition, the King's favor and promises no longer made any impression on him. When the latter learned of Alexander's conversion, he was saddened by it, but did not worry him in the least, so much did he esteem his rare qualities; perhaps he was even touched to see in a young man this heroic contempt for the grandeurs of the earth. Alexander had a soul worthy of serving a greater master. Admitted to the reception of the sacraments, he no longer set any limits to his fervor, and worked with all his power to assist the priest in the exercise of his ministry, and in all sorts of other good works.

In 1798 and 1799, he came to live in the capital, in the district called Aeogae. There he occupied himself in teaching letters to some young Christian men, and in transcribing pious books. He often lodged Father Zhou in his home, either to hide him or to have other faithful receive the sacraments. Denounced by name from the earliest days of the persecution, he remembered the Savior's counsel, "When you are persecuted in one city, flee to another," and took action accordingly. In order not to be recognized, he first cut off his long and beautiful beard, a virile ornament rather rare in Korea, and of which the possessors are naturally very proud; he put on mourning clothes, the shape of which is perfectly suited to disguise people, then, understanding the insufficiency of these precautions, left the capital, around the 15th of the second lunar month.

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<sup>1</sup> 황사영 Hwang Sa-yeong 黃嗣永 (1775-1801). Alexius (wrongly called Alexander by Daveluy and Dallet, although Daveluy initially writes Alexis). Martyr.

He stayed for some time in the district of Yecheon, province of Gyeongsang, then on the limits of the province of Gangwon, and finally settled in a pottery factory, in the village of Baeron, district of Jecheon. All the workers were Christians. A kind of subterranean chamber was prepared to receive him, the entrances of which were covered with all the large earthenware vases that were made in the establishment. Even the Christians of the village were unaware of his presence for a long time; the master of the house was alone in the secret, with his wife and Gregory Han's mother, who often came to see him. Alexander had two trusted men near him: Peter Kim Han-bin 金漢彬 and Thomas Hwang Sim 黃沁, who constantly went to one side and the other to inquire about the news, kept him informed of the progress of the persecution, and related to him the principal events which interested Christendom.

Peter Kim, a native of the district of Hongju, in Naepo, had been, during his stay in the capital, enlisted as a soldier, whence the name of Kim Posu (砲守 Posu means 'gunner'), by which he is sometimes referred to. On the eighth<sup>2</sup> lunar month, he first fell into the hands of the satellites, but managed to escape.

Thomas Hwang was from Yong-mari<sup>3</sup> village, Deoksan district, Naepo. Descended from an honest family and married to the sister of Francis Yi Bo-hyeon<sup>4</sup>, martyr in 1799, Thomas seems to have devoted himself entirely to the service of the priest. He made the trip to Peking several times, and always acquitted himself with prudence and fidelity of the various commissions entrusted to him by Father Zhou.

It was in his retreat at Baeron that Alexander Hwang wrote a long letter addressed to the Bishop of Peking. This document, valuable in all respects, has fortunately been preserved<sup>5</sup>. Alexander first tells there, in all its details, the story of the first martyrs of this persecution. His information is generally accurate. On a number of points, however, he himself admits that he did not have sufficient information; and many times, in writing this history, we have had, after examination and comparison of other documents, to reject facts which he had advanced too lightly on mere hearsay. In the second part of his letter, he exposes the sad state of Christianity, and makes an eloquent appeal to the bishop to take pity on their fate, and to endeavor to bring the Korean Church out of its ruins. We quote here a long fragment, which will make known the physical and moral position of the Christians, towards the end of the persecution.

“The priest having been denounced by a traitor, as soon as he entered the country, and the late king having known of his presence, it was necessary to be constantly on his guard, and to take the greatest precautions. Hence, many could not take part in the sacraments, and of those who received them, half were women. Among the Christians of the province and the people of the capital, a large number, although very fervent, were not admitted. All had endured great sufferings, and hoped for many years in secrecy; but since they saw the priest become the prey of the wicked, and his head publicly exposed, all the sufferings and all the efforts of ten years are found in an instant to become useless. Body and soul,

<sup>22</sup> This happened in the 6th lunar month, rather than the 8th.

<sup>3</sup> More correctly known as Yongdu-ri 龍頭里.

<sup>4</sup> 이보현 Yi Bo-hyeon 李步玄 (1773-1800) Francis. Blessed.

<sup>5</sup> Dallet is referring to the partial translation made by Daveluy found in the IRFA archive volume 579. The original version of Hwang's Letter had been preserved in the *Uigeumbu* 義禁府, the criminal justice agency. During the Gabo Reforms (1894-5), the government discarded the old documents when moving from old offices to new ones. All the materials were to be incinerated, including Hwang's Letter. Before the incineration, one bureaucrat found the Letter and gave it to his Catholic friend Yi Geon-yeong. Bishop Mutel obtained the original version from Yi in 1894, a translation by him was published in 1925, then the original silk letter was taken by him to Rome and given to the Pope. The letter, written in Chinese characters, gave for the first time the Chinese characters for the full names of many of the main figures in the Church's early history.

everything is inclined to ruin; during life and at the moment of death, there they are without any support; also their heart weakens, their ideas are all upset, and they no longer know what to do. We tell them, to console them, that the priest having come for the sole purpose of saving souls, no doubt wanted to spread everywhere and save them all, but that great obstacles having been encountered, he had to repress his affection for them, and not let it appear outwardly; that now that he has been martyred and is near God, his protection must be stronger than when he was on earth; that we must have full confidence in God, hope more than in the past in his infinite mercy, and not give way to temptations of despair. Some believe us, others are in doubt; some are discouraged, others seem a little consoled; never at any time was there such a terrible position?

“In Europe, the ancient persecutions may well have been more violent than that of Korea, but the priests having succeeded one another there without interruption, the Religion could not be annihilated, and souls always found their salvation. Here in Korea, the situation is quite different, and we cannot have the same hope. If feeble lambs lose their shepherd, there remain means of feeding and rearing them; if a child at the breast loses its mother, there is still hope of seeing it survive; for us, no matter how much we think about it, really no hope of life remains to us. Born in a remote country, and happily become the children of God, we had the firm intention of devoting all our strength to the glorification of his holy name, we wanted to try by this to pay at least the ten thousandth part of his benefits; who would have thought that halfway through we would fall into such a sad state?

“We have of course heard that the blood shed by martyrs is a seed of Christians, but our kingdom unfortunately has as a neighbor, to the east, Japan which, by its cruel executions, destroyed the Religion, and the projects of our government are to take it as a model. How could we not be alarmed? It is true that in Korea, the men being naturally weak, and the legislation less rigid, they will not want to go about it as violently as in Japan; but today, among us, there remains, so to speak, no more capable and firm man. The ignorant, the low class, the women and children may still number several thousand here, but with no one to direct them, no one to instruct them, how could they be preserved for long? Even if there were no more persecutions, still within ten years, Christianity would of itself be reduced to nothing<sup>6</sup>. What pain! But as long as we are alive, how could we thus see the complete ruin of The Religion?

“Having escaped the misfortunes of this year, we are still very moved and trembling by it, and while giving thanks to God for the benefit which preserved our life, we are saddened not to have, like our brothers, been judged worthy of martyrdom. At least, during this rest of our existence, we really desire to bear all the pains and brave all the difficulties to serve the cause of God, but not only are our expedients exhausted, our resources also are exhausted. Must our desolation accompany us to the grave? In the midst of all these misfortunes, who will have pity on us? who will console us? We would like to lay down our tears and our requests at the feet of your goodness, but prevented by the distance, we can only make wishes and nothing more. How sad! what anguish! what will become of us?

“When we learned that the priest had given himself up, in addition to the shock and the pain caused by such a sad event, we conceived another cause for fear. When all that has just happened becomes known in Beijing, will this not be a cause for abandonment for our Church? If this were so, no hope would remain for the Religion in Korea. It is this imminent danger, and not our personal peril, which is day and night the subject of our fears and anxieties. If, fortunately, no subsequent searches are made, the rest of us being still alive, and John<sup>7</sup> also having been preserved, as you will no doubt remain in charge of Korea, we will do our utmost to restore relations with you, and thereby share in the blessings of God;

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<sup>6</sup> (Dallet Note 40. The Korean government fully understood the truth of these considerations; also, as Alexander remarks elsewhere in this letter, it always sought to put to death Christians of the upper class, men who had given themselves up to the study of letters or philosophy, all those, in a word, who might have directed affairs in the absence of the priest. As for the ignorant and the common people, on the contrary, the tactic was to ignore them as much as possible, or else, if they were arrested, to treat them in general with much less rigor.)

<sup>7</sup> (Dallet Note 41. Probably John Choe.)



deign then to listen to our words and reflect on them deeply.

“Korea is the poorest kingdom in the world, and the Christians there are the poorest of all. Among them today we can barely count ten families who do not have to suffer from hunger and cold. In 1794, when we received the priest, nothing could be prepared in advance. It was only after his arrival that the most necessary things were hastily arranged, and then in a very mean and incomplete manner. This comes partly, no doubt, from our inability and ignorance of business, but the cause was also in our poverty; our forces could not suffice. Later the number of Christians having increased, we were less embarrassed, however we could not arrange things suitably.

“After this year’s persecution, everyone is completely ruined. Even those who wanted by apostasy to avoid death came out of prison naked and despoiled, retaining only the breath of life. Our poverty is therefore even greater than in 1794, and even if we had some good expedient, we could not put it into execution. Despite all the disasters of Christianity, if we had some resources, it seems that we could now try something. Here’s why. Since 1795, there had been two continual causes of persecution: one, that the late King, suspecting and fearing the priest, absolutely wanted to find him; the other was the hatred that drove the No-ron to annihilate the Nam-in. Now, on the one hand, the priest having been seized, and, on the other hand, the Nam-in, pursued by the No-ron, having seen all their most remarkable men perish, we can henceforth hope for a little calm. It is true that the law on the five houses in solidarity with one another still lasts, but it is only carried out in the quarters where the Christians were; in other places, it only exists in name, everything is quiet there, and we can go and settle there.

“As regards the roads, in the provinces of Gyeonggi, Chungchong and Jeolla where there were many Christians, and in those of Gyeongsang and Gangwon where the fugitive Christians withdrawn for a few years, the travelers are, at all times, subject to searches. But in the provinces of Hwanghae and Pyeongan, where there were no Christians before the persecution, and where no one has since sought refuge, nothing is spoken of, and suspicions are not awake. At Pien-men itself, on the frontier of China, although a fairly rigorous surveillance is still being exercised, in a year or two everything will be over, and we can risk some attempt. We will also have to change our way of acting. Until now, the main effort had been to spread the Religion among the pagans, and to make it free; now that it has become impossible, we must try to preserve it by prudence. We must apply ourselves to strengthening all those who practiced Christianity, to instructing well those who were only beginning, and as for the others, praying to God in secret for their conversion, and waiting in silence. In this way, we can preserve ourselves without worry.

“In 1795, the Christians, rejoicing at the arrival of the priest and congratulating themselves on their happiness, did not know how to fear and did not take sufficient precautions. But now, learning by experience and using the past as a mirror, they will take all proper precautions, and there is no reason for persecution to arise again. We cannot wait for death without doing anything, but nothing is possible without resources. It is hard to believe that the existence and ruin of the Religion in a kingdom, the life and death of souls, depends on the mammon of iniquity, and yet for lack of resources, Christianity in Korea will be destroyed, and the souls are condemned to death.

“This is why we dare to ask you, and we hope that you will be good enough to implore help in all the kingdoms of Europe for us, although we are only miserable sinners, in order to support our persecuted Church, and to provide us with the means to save our souls. On our side, we will arrange ourselves, will form our plans, and after having prepared everything surely, we will ask you for the benefit of a second life; please have mercy on us. We know that there is a kind of imprudence in making such a request. Nevertheless, considering that without your help we are doomed to eternal death, we now dare to open our mouths, and if, after asking, we get nothing, at least we will not take to the grave our regrets at having tried nothing. Isolated and without any support as we are, we implore you earnestly, deign, following the example of the all-good and all-merciful God, to think of us poor, miserable and weak children, and to revive our hopes by fulfilling our wishes. What greater good for the Church? what greater good for us than to open the way to a second life?

“On our side, we will try to reply; but these are not things that can be done in a few days or a few months. Nothing can be done in less than two or three years. The entry of a priest into Korea encounters

two great difficulties, hair and language<sup>8</sup>. Hair can grow quite easily, but language doesn't change that quickly. If the priest could speak well, the greatest difficulty would disappear. In our humble thought, it would be good to send a Korean to Peking in advance, to teach the Korean language to the priests you have appointed. If you would allow it, we would secretly agree on a sign and we would prepare for the passage, either of winter or of spring, according to which it would be more convenient for you. It would also be very advantageous for a devout and faithful Chinese Christian to come and settle secretly at Pien-men. He would open an inn to welcome travelers, and our communications would become much easier."

Next comes the detailed exposition of various plans that Alexander, in his solitary hiding place, had devised to secure freedom of religion for his persecuted brethren. The first would have been to have the Pope write to the Emperor of China, ordering him to leave the Christians in peace, and to receive the missionaries. The naive faith of the neophyte could not imagine that a potentate, whatever he was, even a pagan, would dare refuse to listen to the voice of the Sovereign Pontiff, Vicar of God on earth. Freedom of religion once granted in China, quite naturally, as a result, it was also to be granted in Korea; and if the Korean government made difficulties, it would be easy for the Chinese Emperor to compel it by force of arms. Finally, in the event that this plan encountered insurmountable obstacles, Alexander proposed to the Bishop of Peking to appeal to the Christian nations of Europe, to beg them to send an army of sixty or seventy thousand men to conquer Korea, and if it were impossible to assemble so many troops, to try at least with seven or eight thousand, a figure which, in his opinion, would have been sufficient in a pinch. The letter ends as follows:

"For us, days are like years. We would like to do something, but it is currently impossible for us; we can only hope. We earnestly desire that you have pity on us, and come to our assistance without delay. After the violent persecution of this year, few Christians have escaped, and all must stay hidden, and make it appear that they are utterly annihilated. It's the only way to keep the remnants of Christianity here. Some have become itinerant merchants, others, forced to emigrate, find themselves on the roads; we ask dispensation from fasting and abstinence for all those who are traveling.

"Year of Jesus Christ 1801, October 29, the day after the feast of the apostles Saint Simon and Saint Jude, we sinners Thomas and others salute you again sending these details."

This letter was written on a piece of silk, with sympathetic ink, which one could not read without knowing the secret<sup>9</sup>. Thomas Hwang Sim<sup>10</sup> wanted, to take it to Peking, to employ a Christian from the province of Pyeongan, named Ok Cheon-hui<sup>11</sup>, who had also made the trip to China several times for the letters and commissions of Fr. Zhou. He had been there again during the winter of 1800 to 1801, and having learned, on his return, that the persecution had just broken out with violence, had immediately returned to Pien-men, on the Chinese frontier, to try to inform the Christians of China of the true state of affairs.

Thomas succeeded in finding Ok Cheon-hui, brought him to Alexander to confer with him, and both promised to leave at the end of the year, with the annual embassy, to deliver the letter into the hands of the bishop of Beijing. But Providence had decided otherwise, and the letter was not to reach its

<sup>8</sup> (Dallet Note 42. It is known that the Chinese shave their heads, except the crown, and wear pigtails. But the Koreans never wanted to admit this reform, introduced by the Manchurian Tartar emperors. They keep all their hair and tie it on their heads, as was practiced a few years ago by the insurgents in China, to distinguish themselves from the Imperials.)

<sup>9</sup> This is untrue.

<sup>10</sup> 황심 Hwang Sim 黃沁 (1756-1801) Thomas.

<sup>11</sup> 옥천희 Ok Cheon-hui 玉千禧 Jean.

destination. It was dated October 29; on November 2, Thomas Hwang was arrested.

Terrified beyond measure to see himself in prison, imagining that, once seized, no Christian could escape, hoping perhaps, by confessions, to put an end to the persecution, he revealed the place where Alexander was hidden. Many Christians claim that he had received the order from Alexander himself to denounce him, if things came to such an end. The satellites arriving in haste at Baeron, could not find the person they were looking for; Finally, the dull noise made by the large earthenware vases when they walked over the cellar, attracted their suspicions and he was found. Alexander saw them come to him without being frightened. He ordered them not to touch the hand that the king had formerly shaken, and where was still the cord sign of the royal favor, and this order was respected. They took him, loaded with irons, to the capital, and the famous letter was found on him, rolled up in his clothes<sup>12</sup>. We do not know how the judges were able to read it. A tradition relates that a Christian, threatened with death, offered to give the key, which was accepted; but this fact is far from being proven. Be that as it may, the letter was read, and terrified the court. The plot to call the Europeans into the country, to the aid of the Christians, was evident; they had the authentic proof in hand, it took ten times less, with a government as suspicious and as jealous of foreigners as the Korean government, to have the prisoners treated as State criminals.

At the same time, and probably on the indications provided by Thomas Hwang, the two other associates of Alexander, Ok Cheon-hui and Peter Kim Han-bin<sup>13</sup> were seized and thrown into the same prison. A fifth Christian was soon added to them, of the class of interpreters, named Hyeon Gye-heum<sup>14</sup>, or Hyeon Sa-su, the father of the catechist Charles Hyeon<sup>15</sup>, beheaded for the faith in 1846.

Hyeon Gye-heum had at first taken refuge in the provinces, but all his relatives having found themselves compromised, and exposed to continual vexations on account of his flight, they wrote asking him to surrender, which he did. He was accused of having gone on board a European ship which, in 1799<sup>16</sup>, had anchored for some days in the roadstead of Dongnae, and of having reported that a single ship like that could easily destroy over one hundred Korean warships; which, in the eyes of the judges, clearly proved his participation in the conspiracy. He was therefore rightly or wrongly implicated in the trial of Alexander. All these defendants had to bear extraordinary tortures, and all did so as heroes. The thought of denying their faith did not occur to them for a moment, and they were soon condemned.

Here is the official text<sup>17</sup> of Thomas Hwang's sentence, those of his companions are similar.

“The 24th of the tenth lunar month, court of Geumbu.

“The culprit Hwang Sim, a vile and despicable being, lost in the wrong religion, roamed the capital and the provinces, devoted all his strength and took much trouble for the impious and despicable sect. Having been secretly in a foreign country, he received a name in the Church of Europeans. He made various trips for Zhou Wen-mo (Father Zhou), and transmitted his letters. In all that the followers of bad religion have plotted, there is nothing that he did not know in advance. He bonded in life, in death, with Sa-yeong (Alexander Hwang), then having learned that the latter, to evade justice, had gone to Jecheon, he deliberately went to find him there; they shared the same pillow, and during the night he read with his eyes his dreadful letter, which, in its atrocity, has nothing equal under the sky in ancient or modern times.

<sup>12</sup> The letter was rather found when Thomas Hwang was arrested.

<sup>13</sup> 김한빈 Kim Han-bin 金漢彬 (1764-1801) Peter.

<sup>14</sup> 현계흠 Hyeon Gye-heum 玄啓欽 (1763-1801) Florus. Blessed.

<sup>15</sup> 현석문 Hyeon Seok-mun 玄錫文 (1797-1846) Charles. Saint.

<sup>16</sup> This should be 1797.

<sup>17</sup> Archive Daveluy Volume 5 f. 262.

The pen refuses to write its horrors, because nothing similar has ever been seen or heard. He shamelessly plotted with him, and pledged to send this letter to foreigners, to bring in the great ships, and endanger the kingdom. But his dark designs have been discovered. He is a rebel, a villain. Let him be led out of the West Gate; let him be cut in six, and beheaded.”

On the 24th day<sup>18</sup> of the tenth lunar month (November 29), Thomas, who had signed the letter, was beheaded and cut into six pieces, according to the sentence. Peter Kim Han-bin<sup>19</sup> accompanied him to the execution, but was only beheaded. Thomas was then forty-five, and Peter thirty-eight. On the 5th day of the eleventh lunar month (December 10) came the turn of their three companions. Alexander Hwang condemned as author of the letter, denatured monster, guilty of divine and human lèse-majesté, was decapitated and cut in six. The other two simply had their heads cut off, like ordinary criminals. Alexander was only twenty-seven years old; Ok Cheon-hui was about thirty-five years old, and Hyeon Gye-heum thirty-nine. At the same time Alexander’s house and property were confiscated, his mother exiled to Geoje Island, his wife to Jeju (Quelpaert) and his son Gyeong-heon to Juja Island, where he still lived a few years ago.

A few days later, two Christians from Baeron were put on trial, who, for having hidden Alexander Hwang in their house, had been seized and imprisoned with him. One was condemned to exile, probably after apostasy; the other, named Kim Gwi-dong<sup>20</sup>, showed more courage. Born in the district of Naepo, he had, in order to practice his religion freely, left his possessions, his family, his country, and retired to Baeron, where he earned his living by making pottery. After long tortures, the judge promised him his freedom if he would apostatize; but he constantly refused, and declared that he wanted to die with the other Christians. He was, it is said, sent to the town of Hongju, his own district, where he was beheaded on the 30th day of the twelfth lunar month (February 2, 1802).

Thus ended this affair, unfortunately too famous, and the consequences of which have been so unfortunate. That the projects born of the exalted imagination of Alexander Hwang were chimerical, especially at that time, is obvious. That they were reckless, dangerous, we willingly admit. That the political passions, the irritations of the vanquished Nam-in against the victorious No-ron had something to do with this call for foreign intervention, is probable. But that at bottom his intentions were right, that he had in view principally the deliverance of Christians, the triumph of the Gospel over paganism, of God over Hell, that seems to us beyond doubt.

For the rest, judge as you will, the letter in which he sets out his plans is a personal fact to him and to the three companions of his retreat. None of the Christians of that time knew of it, nor could have known of it, since the dates prove that it was barely written when its authors were seized. The Korean government claimed to see in this document the manifest proof of a general conspiracy of Christians. It published everywhere that they had already collected the necessary money, and enlisted a large number of soldiers. But the facts belie these accusations. The small sums collected by the Christians were in no way intended to support a foreign invasion, since they were barely enough to meet the expenses of the priest and his employees, since, in this very same letter, Alexander notes, on several occasions, the poverty and destitution of his co-religionists. The charge of raising troops is even more ridiculous, since Alexander, hidden in his underground chamber, could not have had the time or the means to form even a band of ten people. It was only then, in his retirement, at the very time when he wrote his letter, that he thought of imploring the support of Europeans, and the proof is that never before had any Christian heard of an armed intervention. They thought so little of it that at the time of the trial, and until recently, they were unanimous in seeing in the imputations only an odious calumny, invented by the judges. The

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<sup>18</sup> Actually on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> 김한빈 Kim Han-bin 金漢彬 (1764-1801) Peter.

<sup>20</sup> 김귀동 Kim Gui-dong 金貴同 (?~1802).

European missionaries themselves were only able to find out what was going on after having obtained, with great difficulty, an authentic copy of the letter.

Be that as it may, the effect produced was deplorable. To the two causes of persecution hitherto existing, and which we have explained above, namely: the instinctive hatred of the pagans against Christianity and the bitter grudges of political parties, came from then on to join a third, as powerful as the others: the feeling of national independence. Since then, Christians have always been regarded as the natural enemies of the country and of the dynasty. This opinion, skillfully maintained by the enemies of the Religion, has been the pretext, if not the cause, of numberless persecutions and vexations; and unfortunately, in our days, various abortive interventions have only served to confirm the jealous fears of the government, and to cause the floods of Christian blood to flow, more abundant than ever.

While the supreme tribunal was instructing the trial of Alexander Hwang and his companions, the time came for the departure of the annual embassy for Peking. The events which had just taken place were too considerable, the executions of great personages had been too numerous, for it to be possible to pass them entirely in silence. It was also necessary to mention and excuse the sentence of death passed and executed against a Chinese subject, without the knowledge of the Emperor. The usual artifices and lies of diplomacy came to the aid of the Regent, to give the facts the desired color. Here is the text<sup>21</sup> of the letter written in the name of the young King, and dated from the sixth year of Jiaqing<sup>22</sup>, the 20th day of the tenth lunar month (November 25, 1801)<sup>23</sup>.

“The King of Joseon (朝鮮, Korea) respectfully exposes to His Imperial Majesty the origin and the end of the troubles, which the little kingdom<sup>24</sup> had the misfortune to experience from a sect of brigands, to which he did justice by putting them to death.

“Your Imperial Majesty knows that since the day when the remnants of the army of the Yn<sup>25</sup> passed to the East, the little kingdom has always distinguished itself by its punctuality in fulfilling all that the rites prescribe, the justice and loyalty, and in general by his fidelity to duties. It is a justice that has always been rendered to him by the Middle Court (the court of China). This kingdom, which has always preserved the purity of its morals, esteems nothing so much as the doctrine of the Iou (the doctrine

<sup>21</sup> Here Dallet is transcribing IRFA Archives Vol. 577 ff. 137-145 (-151), a French translation, with explanatory notes that Dallet uses, of the king's letter and of the emperor's response, made (probably) by a French priest in Beijing, with an accompanying letter in Latin sent by the bishop of Beijing to Giambattista Marchini, Procurator of Propaganda Fide in Macao from 1786 to 1823. The letter explains that the Chinese texts were originally published 'in gazeta Pekinensi.' Korean personal names are mostly identified in parentheses to avoid overloading the footnotes.

<sup>22</sup> 嘉慶 Jiaqing (Chinese Emperor) reigned 1796-1820.

<sup>23</sup> (Dallet Note 43. This letter having been written in Chinese, the proper names of persons or places are found there with the Chinese pronunciation, very different from the Korean pronunciation, to such an extent that several names are quite unrecognizable. We have bracketed the Korean pronunciation for the most important ones.) N.B. In this English version we have not maintained the Chinese-style spellings found in Dallet. The translation was made by a French priest knowing only the Chinese pronunciations, but as a Korean text the standard Korean pronunciations should be used for the Korean names. True, the Korean authorities at times expressed their hostility by deliberately distorting the names of the Christians.

<sup>24</sup> (Dallet Note 44: “Little kingdom” here means “my kingdom,” politeness wanting that an inferior calls everything that concerns him small, when he speaks to his superior.)

<sup>25</sup> (Dallet Note 45: Ky-sse (Kei-tsa, Gija), whom Chinese and Korean historians regard as the founder or the legislator of Korea, had been exiled by his nephew the Emperor Zhou-wang (紂王 King Zhou, the last ruler of the Shang 商朝 / Yin 殷代 Dynasty), the Nero of China, who saw in this wise uncle nothing but a censor of his crimes. But Ou-ouang (武王 King Wu) having delivered the empire from its tyrant and put an end to the Shang (Yin 殷) dynasty, recalled Gija from exile, restored him as king of Korea, where the new sovereign went, in the year 1122 BC, along with the rest of the troops that had served the Yin Dynasty. It is to this historical fact that the King of Korea alludes here.)

of the scholars). All the books other than those of Tchou-cha<sup>26</sup>, Ming<sup>27</sup> or Lo<sup>28</sup> have never been admitted by the scholars and mandarins of this kingdom; with all the more reason, they never had currency among them. Even the women and children of crossroads and cottages are not unfamiliar with the five fundamental duties and the three great cables, supporting society<sup>29</sup>, and who do not make them the ordinary rule of their conduct. All other doctrine is foreign to the little kingdom, and error has never entered it.

“But for about ten years, there has appeared a sect of monsters, barbarians and infamous people, who display themselves as the followers of a doctrine, which they say was brought from Europe, who blaspheme against Heaven, affect only contempt for the wise, revolt against their prince, stifle all feeling of filial piety, abolish the sacrifices of the ancestors, and burn their tablets; who, preaching a paradise and a hell, fascinate and lead in their wake the ignorant and imbecile people; who, by means of a baptism, erase the atrocities of their sect; who conceal books of corruption, and with spells similar to those of the Fou-tchan<sup>30</sup> (Buddhist monks, followers of Fo), gathering women from all parts, live like brutes and barnyard birds. Some claim to be spiritual fathers (priests), others claim to be devoted to religion (Christians). They change their names to give themselves titles and nicknames like the brigands Pe-ling and Houang-kin<sup>31</sup>. They indulge in divination, spreading error and disorder in a frenzy from the capital to the provinces of Chungcheong and Jeolla. Their doctrine is communicated with the rapidity of fire, their followers have multiplied in a fearful manner.

“The deceased Jeongjo-dae-wang (the previous King, 正祖), having taken an exact knowledge of all these disorders, and foreseeing the consequences, gave the most severe orders, and took the most effective measures to stop the course of evil. In the *sin-hae* year of Qianlong (1791), (Paul) Yun Ji-jeong and (James) Gwon Sang-yeon, with others, having suppressed the sacrifices and destroyed all the objects which were intended for them, were all punished with death. While still very young, I received the appointment to succeed him<sup>32</sup>. These corrupt brigands, stifling all feeling of respect and propriety, said to themselves that the moment was favorable. From then on, between them grew a more active and more regular correspondence, a closer union; soon it is a torrent that overflows, a fire that ravages everything. Their accomplices grow daily in number in the same way as a bud, which, coming out of a tree, itself gives birth to several others, which, producing in the same way, in a very short time multiply to infinity.

“At the third lunar month of this year, we intercepted at Hanseong (漢城, another name for Seoul), a city of the first order, the letters of these corrupting brigands, as well as the books of their perverse doctrine: it is according to these documents that we began their trial.

“Then I assembled, to deliberate on this matter, the nobles of the Uijeong daeshin 議政大臣

<sup>26</sup> 朱熹 Zhixi (1130-1200), the main inspiration of Neo-Confucianism.

<sup>27</sup> 孟子 Mengzi Mencius (372-289 B.C.)

<sup>28</sup> 老子 Lao-Tze, the founder of philosophical Taoism (Dallet note 46: The books of Tchou-cha, of Ming, of Lo signify the doctrine of Confucius. Tchou-cha is the place where this philosopher taught; Ming and Lo are two famous commentators of his doctrine, Tchong-tse and Tcheou-tse, under the Sung dynasty.) Dallet seems confused in what he writes here.

<sup>29</sup> (Dallet Note 47: The five fundamental duties are those: 1° of the prince and of the subjects; 2° the father and the children; 3° of the eldest and of the younger; 4° husband and wife; 5° old men and young people. — The three great cables are: the authority of the prince, that of the father and that of the husband.)

<sup>30</sup> 符讖 Fuchen in Chinese Bucham in Korean, are in fact magical fortune-telling methods.

<sup>31</sup> (Dallet Note 48: Houang-kin is the name of a sect of rebels which appeared under the Han dynasty; Pe-ling, the name of a secret society that has troubled China until recent times.) 黃巾 Huangjin are the Yellow Turbans; 白蓮 Bailian are the White Lotus.

<sup>32</sup> (Dallet Note 49. In the original, there is not: I received, etc. The king, as inferior, speaks of himself only in the third person: He who rules, etc.)

Uijeongbu, Deliberative Council of Ministers), the mandarins of the Uigeumbu (義禁府), the Saheonbu (司憲府), the Saganwon (司諫院 the Saganwon). We began by reviewing the books. We found that they were composed by (Augustine) Jeong Yak-jong (丁若鍾); however, according to the testimony of the latter, (Peter) Yi Seung-hun (李承薰), returning from an embassy following his father Yi Dong-wook (李東郁), had brought back books which contained a European doctrine; he had received these books from the Europeans of Peking, with whom he had become intimate during his stay in that capital. He first communicated these books to Yi Byeok (李襲), then to Yun Ji-chung (尹持忠), to his brother, to Jeong Yak-jong (丁若鍾), Jeong Yak-yong (丁若鏞), Yi Ga-hwan (李家煥) and others. They studied these books, discussed them together and made them the rule of their conduct. As a result, they renounce their own parents to make a sect and disciples, thinking by this means to change the customs of this kingdom; but the laws being very strict and severe, their resentment exhales in murmurs, they curse, blaspheme, resist face to face, meditate nothing less than a revolt. It has been a while since Yi Byeok died, but the depositions of Jeong Yak-jeon (丁若銓), Jeong Yak-yong, Yi Ga-hwan, Jeong Yak-jong, Yi Seung-hun, all agree perfectly.

“However, Yi Ga-hwan, being very skillful in literature and the liberal arts<sup>33</sup>, had become a second-degree mandarin; so these sectarians took him for their support and were subject to him in everything. He put into vulgar language the corrupting books that Yi Seung-hun had brought, and was at the head of all to spread them far and wide. Jeong Yak-jong’s main accomplices were Hong Nak-min (洪樂敏), Kim Geon-sun (金建淳), Choe Chang-hyeon (崔昌顯), Yi Hui-yeong (李喜英), Hong Pil-ju (洪弼周), Choe pil-gong (崔必恭) and others. All their depositions are clear and agree. Besides these men of letters and of great family, a few hundred and more of an inferior rank, among the merchants and the common people, had joined the party. All bend and fold, intertwine together like the serpent, and tie together like a rope. On the other hand, the women seduced and drawn into the party are headed by (Columba) Gang Wan-suk (姜完淑), mother of (Philip Hong) Pil-ju (洪弼周).

“Already before Yi In (李愐), prince of the royal family, had been guilty of treason and revolt. The deceased king, out of affection and benevolence for a member of his own family, could not bring himself to put him to death; he was relegated to an island. However, the family of Yi In and all his people secretly agreed with Gang Wan-suk to spread this perverse doctrine, and together they weaved the fabric of their criminal projects. At the same time, Yi In escaped from the island under cover of the night. When the affair was about to break out, the *ping-chen* year of *Kien-Iong* (乾陸 *Geon-yuk*, 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Jiaqing) (丙申 *byeong-sin* 1776), Hong Nak-im (洪樂任), subject allied to the royal family and nephew of Hong In-han (洪麟漢), guilty of treason, revolt and robbery, agreed with Hong Gye-neung (洪啓能) and others to bring about a rebellion, but the deceased king, seeing in them only misguided relatives, dissembled to pardon them. However, Hong Nak-im only became more determined to pursue his criminal schemes; he bonded more closely than ever with Yi Ga-hwan (李家煥), and both had the same end. Yun Haeng-im (尹行恁), Minister of State, favored with all his power the crimes of Hong Nak-im, dragged out the trials and, in formal opposition to the laws of the kingdom, endeavored to disturb everything and to deceive the multitude. It seems that these corrupting brigands, having stifled all natural feeling, wanted

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<sup>33</sup> (Dallet Note 50. The six liberal arts of the Chinese are: civility, music, calculation, archery, writing in beautiful characters and driving a chariot with skill, especially in combat.)

to rise openly against the State. Already for a long time had been preparing, in secret, the terrible ferment which was to produce the explosion; contenting themselves with parading their perverse doctrine outwardly, they concealed their disastrous designs inwardly, adorning themselves with fine rules of conduct, which were only means of stirring up trouble; and Yi In was their marvel and their treasure.

“It was long after that this sect obtained and received by common accord Zhou Wen-mo (周文謨 Father James Zhou), whom they qualified as spiritual father. Gang Wan-sun’s house served him as a cave in which to hide. Asked about his name and his residence, he answered only with equivocations and tergiversations, wrapping himself in a thousand different forms to hide his crimes. Although he was beaten several times, nothing could overcome his obstinacy to procrastinate. Now, this Zhou Wen-mo was at the head of all their plans, the center of their correspondence; they all rallied around him and would have liked to die all together for him alone. We still tremble at the thought of the danger that the kingdom has run, placed thus on the brink of its loss, and having only a breath of life left.

“There was no time to waste in remedying the evil and rooting out its root. Yi In, Hong Nak-im, Yun Haeng-im were allowed to strangle themselves<sup>34</sup>; Zhou Wen-mo had his head cut off, along with Jeong Yak-jong, Yi Seung-hun, Hong Nak-min, etc... Yi Ga-hwan was beaten to death, Jeong Yak-jeon, Jeong Yak-yong and others, were punished according to the part they had taken in the crimes.

“As for the web of plots and intrigues hatched by these brigands, one of their number, called Hwang Sa-yeong, held the thread. Anticipating the storm, he had escaped from the pursuit of the mandarins. It was not until the ninth lunar month that he was taken and questioned for the first time. Now, according to his depositions, after Yi Seung-hun had brought the doctrine back from Europe, these brigands continued to correspond with the Europeans of Peking. Kim Yu-san (金有山), Hwang Sim (黃沁), Ok Jeon-hui (玉千禧), etc discharged this commission at each embassy that went to Peking. They drew from it plans of corruption and means relative to their ends.

“The one they call Zhou Wen-mo, having taken the costume of a common man, had an appointment on the frontiers, and after walking day and night, he entered this kingdom furtively in the spring of the year *eul-myo* (1795). He remained hidden there for several years, as master and leader of the party. Zhou Wen-mo is from Suzhou, a city of the first order in the province of Jiangnan. They seized one of his letters written on silk, which Hwang Sim and Ok Cheon-hui had agreed to carry secretly to the Europeans by sewing it into their clothes; but it was taken before their departure. Hwang Sim, who was in charge of it, called himself To-mo<sup>35</sup>. This letter contained two atrocious projects proposed to the Europeans to overthrow the small kingdom. The first consisted in writing to all the kingdoms of greater Europe, proposing that they come by sea, with a few hundred ships, carrying fifty to sixty thousand men, big guns and other terrible weapons, to conquer and destroy the small kingdom.

“The second project was to introduce on the frontiers a man of their religion, who would establish himself there under the pretext of commerce, would pass the letters, and would be a sure channel for communicating the plans and the results of the deliberations of the party. The depositions of Kim Yu-san, Hwang Sim, Ok Cheon-hui and others agree on these two articles. Moreover, according to the depositions of Yu Han Geom, Yun Ji-hyeon, and other members of this perverse sect, there was a plot to invite a European fleet. It was an irrevocable plot; Yi Ga-hwan and others were charged with the expenses necessary to bring about the revolt in secret. This is also what Hwang Sa-yeong submits. Alas! the kingdoms of Europe have no relation of hatred or benevolence with the little kingdom. If we consult reason and the ordinary course of things, is it possible that they had the heart to come across the seas, from ten thousand leagues away, to overthrow the little kingdom?

<sup>34</sup> (Dallet Note 51. It is the custom of this country for criminals of very high rank. Commonly the executioner follows the rope that is sent to them, and helps with the execution.)

<sup>35</sup> (Dallet Note 52. To-mo was his Christian name Thomas, pronounced in Chinese. By chance these two characters: To, mo, mean: many views, many projects.)



“Thus this determination undoubtedly comes solely from the fact that the brigands, in despair of finding themselves without resources, reduced to seek help at the end of the world, conceived the plan of inviting European armies beyond the seas, proposing to open the gates themselves and deliver the kingdom to them. I, my mandarins, my people, seized with fear, all trembling, indignation in my heart, were penetrated to the bone, and I immediately had Hwang Sim; Kim Yu-san; Ok Cheon-hui; Hwang Sa-yeong; Yu Han-geom decapitated.

“However, considering that the little kingdom, a contemptible country, situated at a corner of the sea, showered with the benefits of His Majesty, offers him the customary tribute each year, as if he were in the very interior of the empire; considering that, when any great affair arises in any realm, servants must immediately leave to communicate it faithfully to His Imperial Majesty; considering that the kingdom has just been purged of those brigands who precipitated it to the brink of its ruin, that it has escaped this terrible danger, and now enjoys peace and tranquility; considering, moreover, how His Majesty’s genius penetrates everything, embraces everything, I present to His Imperial Majesty the details of this affair.

“Although all these brigands have been exterminated, it may be that others will attempt to raise up this downcast sect. One cannot help, therefore, but take precautions for the future, lest they hide and evade the search of the mandarins. If some of these corrupting brigands passed stealthily through the frontier gate, His Imperial Majesty is entreated to order the mandarins to seize them and return them. By granting me this grace, the Imperial Majesty, who by itself inspires fear and respect, will be employed to consolidate peace and tranquility among the vassals of the empire. Full of confidence in the great benevolence of His Majesty, of whom I regard myself as the little child, I take the liberty of molesting him by these details. This entreaty to send back the defectors, importunate and contrary to the respect due to the Emperor, whose Majesty it offends, was prompted by an excess of fear and shock.

“As for Zhou Wen-mo, during the course of his trial, nothing appeared that could allow him to be recognized as a foreigner. His clothes, his language, his whole appearance announced nothing that could distinguish him from the men of this country. So they saw in him only a leader of corrupters, and it was as such that he was judged and executed.

“As for the depositions of Hwang Sa-yeong, they are not absolutely certain, perhaps we will have lacked the penetration and the sagacity necessary to distinguish the true from the false. But whether the words of the man from the upper realm (of the missionary who was Chinese) are true or false, as well as the depositions of all these brigands, it is no less certain that, according to the rules of prudence, seeing the reasons which the little kingdom has to fear, I could not expose myself to leaving these brigands unpunished, just as, in my capacity as vassal prince of the empire, I could not avoid informing the Emperor.

“Though all this verbiage seems to announce importunity and disrespect, it is straightforwardness and frankness itself. Facing north, I hold my eyes fixed on the cloud-shrouded sky, which I hope will be favorable to what is below<sup>36</sup>.

“Such is the origin and the end of the unfortunate disturbances which took place in the little kingdom on the occasion of a sect of corrupting brigands who were punished with death.

“I send, as is the rule, one of my great mandarins, called Jo Yun-dae (曹允大), who is in charge of the Panjungchubusa (判中樞府事). The second is called Seo Mi-su (徐美修); he is in charge of the Ijopanseo (吏曹判書 the Ministry of the Interior). They will go to the mother capital, carrying these despatches which they will pass on to the honorable tribunal, begging it to communicate them to the Emperor.

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<sup>36</sup> (Dallet Note 53. Facing north, means: prostrate before the imperial throne, because the throne facing south, the subject, when talking to the emperor, looks north. Heaven means Imperial Majesty; the emperor calls himself a son of Heaven. These clouds allude to the severity of the ruler, whose benefits, on the contrary, are gentle rain, etc.)

“Addressed to the Court of Rites, the sixth year of 嘉慶 Jiaqing, the 20th<sup>37</sup> of the tenth lunar month.”

To this letter the Emperor made the following reply:

“The Court of Rites represented that the Korean ambassador called Tsao-youn-ta (Jo Yun-dae), and other mandarins of the embassy, having come to Peking to bring tribute, were charged with a petition, from which this same court drew a copy, which was presented to me.

“It appears from this writing that the king who was appointed by me to govern as a vassal of the empire, being still very young, evil subjects of this kingdom wanted to take advantage of this opportunity, and tried to incite troubles. The king having immediately placed himself at the head of his mandarins, got rid of the leaders, extinguished the fire and restored peace. No sooner was this affair over than he was here to tell me about it, explain to me the origin, the end and the way in which it was handled. All of this is in order. But as to what he says of Kim Yu-san, Hwang Sim, Ok Cheon-hui and others, that at each embassy they communicated secretly with the Europeans, from whom they derived means of corruption, that is false. The Europeans have been placed in the mother capital, because commonly they understand the calculation and that one applies them to counting the time and observing the sky: they have their job at the court of Mathematics; they are not allowed to communicate with foreigners. These same Europeans crossing the seas to get to Peking, all know how to submit to public order and obey the laws. Over a hundred years that they have been here, they have never stealthily preached religion, and no one was ever deceived by them.

“As for what this king says that the bad subjects of his kingdom, coming here at every embassy, drew from it the religion which they preached: it is a calumny, without a shadow of doubt. These evil subjects, having drawn from elsewhere books and a doctrine of corruption, will have spread it by all sorts of intrigues and ploys; and after being discovered, they invented this slander to avoid telling the true origin of their sect. Certainly, there is nothing worth believing. The king must use severity to impress on his mandarins and his people the attachment and respect they should have for the true doctrine. Error then having no hold among them, he will thus stifle even the germ of corruption.

“As for what he adds that, perhaps, the kingdom not being completely purged of these bad subjects, it is to be feared that they will pass furtively the borders, in this he thinks well. Therefore the great mandarins of the frontiers have orders to agree among themselves to seek them out severely. If these brigands are found, let them be seized and returned to their king to be judged.

“In this way I give a shining testimony of my clemency and my protection.

“This edict will be handed over to the tribunal of the Rites, to be communicated to the said king.”

These two diplomatic documents are very curious, and give us a fair idea of the governments and nations of the Far East. We see in all its light that indelible character of the Asiatic peoples, the fearful servility, the artful deceit of the weaker, as well as the insolence of the stronger and his superb disdain for truth. There is only the Chinese government in the world that so brazenly denies proven facts known to all; to dare to pretend that there were no Christians in the empire, even though it persecuted them in all its provinces, in full view of its hundreds of millions of subjects.

We were surprised not to find in the Emperor's reply a single word on the execution of Father Zhou, a Chinese subject, who, according to the law, should have been sent back to Peking. Undoubtedly, the Korean government, before making this letter public, will have edited out various passages. Christians have always been convinced that the Emperor gave the King of Korea a strong warning on this subject, and that he added threatening words. The Regent and her ministers, stricken with terror, hastily sent to

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<sup>37</sup> This should read 27.

Peking a very considerable sum of money, which naturally appeased the wrath of His Imperial Majesty. We dare not vouch for the authenticity of these facts, but nothing could be more likely. China would not have been China, if the Emperor had lost such a fine opportunity to ransom his vassal.

Chapter 5: Royal proclamation concerning the Christian Religion. — Last executions. — Summary.

On the occasion of the half-political, half-religious trials of Augustine Yu and Alexander Hwang, the enemies of the Religion and of the Nam-in party, dissatisfied that several important personages had only been exiled, and that the families of the martyrs had not been entirely annihilated, resolved to make a new attempt.

They therefore presented a request to the Regent, asking that all these exiles be brought to trial again, that the women and children of the great families whose heads alone had been put to death be prosecuted, and finally that the houses and property of all the condemned without exception be confiscated. The government made no response at first. Without being discouraged, the petitioners, among whom were several people honored with the highest public offices, assembled a great number of times to agree on the best means of arriving at their object, and of forcing the hand of the Regent and to her ministers. But an unforeseen obstacle suddenly stopped them. The young King, only twelve or thirteen years old, and who had no part in the administration of the kingdom, was informed of their plans. He complained bitterly that all the nobles of the kingdom, instead of seeking to save the lives of his subjects, never ceased to plot their death; then, as king, he absolutely forbade anyone to reconsider the judgments already rendered, and henceforth to take new steps to obtain their revision. This brilliant act disconcerted the authors of the request, and saved from complete ruin the remnants of several great families, who to this day retain a deep gratitude for the royal generosity.

It was in the course of the eleventh lunar month, the very day, it is said, of the martyrdom of Alexander Hwang. After this act of vigorous initiative on the part of the young king, the persecution could hardly continue officially. So the Regent reluctantly gave the order that no further prosecutions be brought, and the extraordinary tribunal was dissolved. At the same time the ministers prepared, in the form of a proclamation or instruction to the people, an account of the persecution and an apology for their conduct.

Here is this document<sup>1</sup>, which was promulgated on the 22nd day of the twelfth lunar month (January 25, 1802):

“Instruction Against Bad Religion, drawn up by the Daeje-hak<sup>2</sup> (master of ceremonies and high priest) Yi Man-su<sup>3</sup> by order of the government.

“Thus says the King: By the secret protection with which heaven and our glorious ancestors surround our kingdom, the root of the evil having been uprooted, and its principal chiefs finally overthrown, we make it known to all the court and to our people. It is a good which the eight provinces should congratulate themselves on; it is for all future generations the assured development of natural and social principles. The kingdom conceded to Gija<sup>4</sup> had enjoyed great peace for four hundred years

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<sup>1</sup> The translation cited by Dallet here can be found in the Daveluy Archive Volume 5 ff. 266-276. Its official Korean title is *Shinyu Cheoksa-yuneum* 辛酉斥邪綸音. Most of Dallet's notes for this text reproduce the notes inserted in Daveluy's text.

<sup>2</sup> 대제학 Daejehak 大提學

<sup>3</sup> 이만수 Yi Man-su 李晩秀 (1752-1820)

<sup>4</sup> (Note in the text of Mgr Daveluy: Gija is a Chinese remarkable, it is said, for his virtue, who fleeing from China with a few thousand men came to settle in Korea and founded a kingdom, which was confirmed by the Emperor of China as his

throughout the extent of its territory of two thousand li and more. Its people are made up of scholars, farmers, artisans and merchants; its classic books are the *Si-jeon* (詩傳 Guide to the book of Odes) and the *Seo-gyeong*<sup>5</sup> (Book of Documents) then the books of civility, rites and music. What is presented for the study and imitation of the people are the teachings of Yao<sup>6</sup>, Shun<sup>7</sup>, Wu<sup>8</sup>, Tang<sup>9</sup>, Wen-wang<sup>10</sup>, Confucius<sup>11</sup>, Mencius<sup>12</sup>, Zhuangzi<sup>13</sup> and Zhu-zi<sup>14</sup>. The foundations of its morality<sup>15</sup> are the relationships of king to subject, father to son, husband to wife, old man to young man and friends among themselves.

“During the long succession of the kings of our kingdom, the virtues of Ju-nam<sup>16</sup> and So-nam<sup>17</sup> stood out particularly, the principal foundations of virtues and morals were in honor, and by means of a crowd of men wise and famous, the meaning of the sacred books was brought out, and the sentiments of a thousand saints were transmitted to one another. How great was our late king during the twenty-four years of his dazzling reign! Having in mind only the right doctrine, he protected morality and attached himself to the religion of the scholars; he brought to light the writings of Zhu-zi; he remained faithful to the Emperor, and repelled the barbarians; he put into practice the great principles of the book *Spring and Autumn*<sup>18</sup> (春秋 *Spring and Autumn Annals*). To make filial piety flourish throughout the kingdom, he practiced it himself, and spreading abroad everything with which his heart was richly imbued, the four seas turned to good. Everywhere in his footsteps arose peace and harmony; wherever it appeared,

vassal, in the year 1122 BC.)

<sup>5</sup> (Dallet Note 55. These are two historical works, in verse and in prose, arranged in the form of Morality in action.) *Si-*

*jeon* 詩傳 = Guide to the Book of Odes 시경 詩經 . *Seo-gyeong* = 書經 서경 The Book of Documents.

<sup>6</sup> King Yao 堯, traditionally c. 2356 – 2255 BCE, extolled as the morally perfect and intelligent sage-king

<sup>7</sup> King Shun 舜, traditionally lived sometime between 2294 and 2184 BC, successor to King Yao. Yao and Sun were often seen as a united pair of sage kings.

<sup>8</sup> Emperor Wu 武 of Han (156–87 BC) considered one of the greatest emperors in Chinese history.

<sup>9</sup> Cheng Tang (Chinese: 成湯) was the first king of the Shang dynasty.

<sup>10</sup> Wen-wang 文王 1152–1050 BC, the Cultured King), one of the sage rulers, praised by Confucius. It was his son Wu who conquered the Shang following the Battle of Muye, Count Wen was posthumously honored as the founder of the Zhou dynasty and posthumously titled King. Many of the hymns of the Classic of Poetry are praises to the legacy of King Wen.

<sup>11</sup> Confucius 孔夫子 Kǒng Fūzǐ in Chinese, Gong Fuja in Korean pronunciation.

<sup>12</sup> Mencius 孟軻 372-289 BCE. inherited Confucius' ideology and developed it further.

<sup>13</sup> Zhuangzi 莊子 369-286 BCE. Zhuangzi is traditionally credited as the author of at least part of the work bearing his name, the Zhuangzi.

<sup>14</sup> (Dallet Note 56. Emperor Io did not bequeath the empire to his own children, but to Sioun, because of his eminent virtue. Ou was also called to the throne for his virtue. Tang and Moun-oang are equally famous emperors; the latter, however, did not really reign, for he refused by conscience, it is said, to take the kingdom of others; but his son, Moun-oang, less scrupulous, having become emperor, followed the custom of this country by giving his father the honorary title of emperor. Tsiang-tsa and Tsiou-tsa are scholars of great reputation who have greatly completed the part of the Rites, and whose institutions are in use to this day in Korea.) Zhu Xi 朱熹 1130- 1200 was a founder of Neo-Confucianism.

<sup>15</sup> (Dallet Note 57: The emperor Io did not give the empire as an inheritance to his own children, but to Sioun, because of his eminent virtue. Ou was also called to the throne for his virtue. Tang and Moun-oang are equally famous emperors; the latter, however, did not really reign, because he refused out of conscience, it is said, to take the kingdom of others; but his son, Mou-oang, less scrupulous, having become emperor, followed the custom of this country in giving his father the honorary title of emperor. Tsiang-tsa and Tsiou-tsa are scholars of great reputation who have greatly completed the part of the Rites, and whose institutions are in use to this day in Korea.)

<sup>16</sup> Junam 周南 : the first part of the 詩經 *Book of Odes*, the “Odes of Zhou and the South” about virtue.

<sup>17</sup> Sonam 召南 : a chapter of the 詩經 *Book of Odes*, the “Odes of Shao and the South”.

<sup>18</sup> (Dallet Note 57 : One of the books of Confucius.)

admirable effects were felt. Who could have foreseen that from the depths of the West a corrupt and poisonous air, secretly introduced into this civilized kingdom, could have come to defile the purity of its territory?

“What the followers of this evil religion worship are genie snakes and genie oxen, and they had infected almost half the world. They speak of a hell and a paradise. Those whom they call spiritual fathers and bishops, they revere even more than the Si-tong 尸童 were formerly<sup>19</sup>. What they call the Ten Commandments and the Seven Capital Virtues are lies analogous to those of those books which claim to teach the art of prophecy and sorcery. The love of life and the horror of death are sentiments natural to man, and yet they regard the saber and the saw as a delightful bed. To give thanks to parents for the life one has received from them is a law drawn by heaven itself; despite this they see in the offering of sacrifices only a vain and futile thing. Could the spirits of their ancestors not die of starvation?<sup>20</sup>

“Finally, the disorder of their morals is something even more shameful. Fallen families and a few scum nobles, harboring a grudge against the government, bonded with bands of lost people, and through some external apparatus, sowed their venom among the crowd; they called to them people of the merchant class; they recruited among the farmers and among the women; then destroying and disturbing the order of the different classes of society, and have corrupted all uses. By means of two or three Chinese characters<sup>21</sup> they give each other a secret name to recognize each other. With a few dishonest painted sheets, they secretly adorn their holes and lairs. In the middle of the night, and in secret apartments, crowding head to head, they recite their books and preach; and sometimes also, appearing in broad daylight, they wave the fan in the midst of the assembled crowd. They have thus multiplied, much more than the band of the rebel Gang I-cheon<sup>22</sup>, lately dissipated. That one day something breaks out, how could it not be more serious than the affair of the troubles of Hwang-ji<sup>23</sup>?

“Seung-hun following the embassy of Peking, bought and brought back depraved books and, going to the temple of the Europeans, became the disciple of this foreign race. Yak-jeong (Augustine Jeong), with all his household, with his older brother and his younger brother, was seized with the contagion. Cheol-sin (John Choe), bastard remnant of the rebel Hei<sup>24</sup>, made a reputation for knowledge and learning there, Nak-min (Luke Hong), who enjoyed an elevated dignity at court, made himself general of the militia, and abjuring the benefits of the King, refused until the end to change his perverse ideas. Even more corrupt than Chang-hyeon and Pil-gong, overthrowing the temple of his ancestors, and destroying natural relations, he also surpassed the inveterate malice of Chang-hyeon and Pil-gong.

“Alas! even in a family brilliant for its fidelity, it is Geon-sun<sup>25</sup> who abandons the rites received, studies depraved books, has his forehead touched (baptized), receives an unknown name, diverts the

<sup>19</sup> (Dallet Note 58 : Before the invention of the tablets, to offer the sacrifices to the parents, they brought in a child, grandson of the deceased, and they offered him the sacrifice. This child, in whom the spirit of the ancestors was supposed to come, took the name of Si-tong. The text therefore means: They revere them more than the tablets of the ancestors.)

<sup>20</sup> (Dallet Note 59. The double purpose of these sacrifices to parents is to repay them for the benefit of the existence that one has received from them, and to nourish their souls with the smoke of the offerings.)

<sup>21</sup> (Dallet Note 60. The baptismal name)

<sup>22</sup> Gang I-cheon (姜彝天 1768-1801) was an ambitious scholar exiled to Jeju in 1797 as a potential rebel. He is mentioned by Dallet in connection with Josaphat Kim Geon-sun in Book 3 Chapter 1.

<sup>23</sup> (Dallet Note 61. These last two sentences allude to some partial troubles caused by misery in the preceding years, but of little political importance, since there were neither influential chiefs nor a serious plot.) (Hwang-ji is a locality in Gangwon-do)

<sup>24</sup> (Dallet Note 62. This is a purely gratuitous insult, because John Choe did not belong directly or indirectly to Hei's family.)

<sup>25</sup> (Dallet Note 63. This is Josaphat Kim, who, as we have noted, was from one of the main families of the No-ron party, then in power.) 김건순 Kim Geon-sun (金建淳 1776-1801).

meaning of books sacred to confirm a false doctrine, and finally persists in wanting to bow his head under the sword of the law.

“Ga-hwan, covered with the many benefits of two kings, dishonored by his imprudence his dignity of the second degree; although he had the reputation of a great scholar, his mean talent ended by producing only shameful and dishonest pamphlets. Besides, his wasp’s eyes and his wolf’s voice could not allow him long to hide the corruption and wickedness of his nature. The real leader was his sister’s son, the rebellious Yi Seung-hun who, to propagate and spread evil, joined efforts with those of his friend Byeok. All this race of true barbarians are his disciples.

“The contemptible Ju-chang (Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi), with all his band, played his tongue like a clarinet and secretly protected Ga-hwan’s dreadful projects. He showed himself to the public and made himself noticed by all, and, although the king, by an indulgence as wide as heaven and earth, deferred his execution by pardoning him, he had seen well by his perspicacity, as lucid as the sun and lunar month, the bottom hidden under this deceitful and devious exterior. At the same time Zhou Wen-mo (Father Zhou) presented himself to support the doctrine of the Europeans. Having first for some years forwarded his news over the northern frontiers, he came from Jiangnan (province of China) ten thousand li from here, and deceived the surveillance of the customs at Pien-men. It was a poisonous wasp that entered the sleeve. The individuals Hwang 璜 (Sabas Ji) and Il 一 (Paul Yun Yu-il) lent him a strong hand from the front; behind him, Sim 沁 (Thomas Hwang) and Hui 禧 (Ok Cheon-hui) were his messengers; Wan-suk (Gang Wan-suk 姜完淑 Columba), a naturally deceitful and corrupt woman, became the mistress of his house, and In-gil 仁吉 (Matthias Choe) was bought to be delivered to death in the place of the head of the evil religion. The rebel Yi In, wanting to make his way to the throne, made the rebel Im<sup>26</sup> a rampart on the outside, and, stripping off in some way the coarse envelope of the body, he knew, although hidden in the mountains, how to communicate with the people remaining at his house, and, from his retreat at Ganghwa, on the shores of the sea, secretly got in touch with the rebels who remained in the interior, and knew the state of things.

“When the dreadful plans of these wicked people began to unfold, it was dared to say, by a false allusion to the annals of China, that the innocents slandered were more numerous than in the case of the conspiracy under the Tsong dynasty<sup>27</sup>. The rebels, taking advantage first of all of the moment when we ascended the throne at a tender age, were able to stir themselves, and, since the death of the late King, their audacity only increased. Alas! a germ of trouble existed, everyone pointed to the danger, and soon the revolt reached such a point that everything was hanging by a thread. It’s frightening! A being like Sa-yeong (Alexander Hwang) with the heart of a tiger, the face and the eyes of a jackal and weasel, relying on the reputation he had had in magic art and sorcery, dared take flight, and, to try to save his little existence, had the audacity to take a piece of silk and write on it the details of three dreadful stratagems. Really! How could he have had the idea of opening the gates of the three hundred districts of this kingdom entirely devoted to the beautiful religion of the scholars, to deliver them to foreign brigands? How could he have summoned the ships of the West from eighty thousand li, and agreed on the day to invade this country? His hatred and his rebellion are a hundred times above those of Yak-Jeong.

“Relations with foreign countries were made by agreement with Hwang Sim; Hyeon Gye-heon was stirring up trouble in the province of Jeolla; Hang-geom made his preparations, went into action, and sowed thousands of taels; so all battalions of the wrong sect were organized and fixed, it was a done deal to end on one battlefield. We can thus see the bases and the extent of this horrible plot. In truth, the famous four rebels, Koal, Ien, In, and Liang (适, 璉, 麟, 亮), could never have conceived such thoughts;

<sup>26</sup> (Dallet Note 64. This individual was a pagan compromised in the affair of the exiled prince.)

<sup>27</sup> (Dallet Note 65. Under this dynasty, there was an attempt at revolt in China, repressed with unexampled barbarism, the memory of which is preserved in the memory of the people, because of the great number of victims whose innocence was later recognized.)

the conspirators Gwal, Ryeon, Rin and Ryang (活, 琏, 麟, 亮) could not have done so; and you, a being living between heaven and earth, how could you want such things? From all the ancient Tanggun, Gija, Silla, Goryeo dynasties, until today, no one ever heard of such atrocities.

“But our merciful and holy Regent, having no other thoughts than those of the late King, seeking her tranquility only in that of the whole kingdom, divined their plot, and similar in this to Queen Yeowa (女媧 Nüwa), who had the merit of repairing the vault of the sky<sup>28</sup>, she knew how to thwart their malice. She casts blame and gives her orders with imposing majesty. Her administration recalls the reign of Queen Ma (舜 Shun?), who was worthy of being assimilated to the great Emperor Yu (堯 Yao)<sup>29</sup>. Killing and punishing with fairness, she shines true principles in the eyes of all future races. Scattering rain and dew with one hand, throwing down hoarfrost and snow with the other, it places government on the ground of doctrine and true justice. Seriously worried, and seeing the danger of the position, she emits lucid views like the sun and the stars. This is why, on the third lunar month of this year<sup>30</sup>, she gave her orders to the Geumbu tribunal, ordered the sitting of an extraordinary chamber to judge this affair, and thereby everything was settled.

“Already Ji-chung, Sang-yeon, In-gil, Yu-il, and Hwang had, for several years, undergone the severity of the law; but, from then on, the wife and the daughter-in-law of the rebellious prince In perish by poison; Ga-hwan and Cheol-sin die under the blows; Zhou Wen-mo undergoes the torture of military execution, to attract all eyes; Seung-hun, Yak-jong, etc., etc., in a word, all the principal chiefs of this insane league, are condemned and put to death. On the eighth lunar month<sup>31</sup>, Sa-yeong was taken and dealt with according to law, together with Hang-keom, Ji-hyeon, Hwang Sim<sup>32</sup>, Jeon-hui and their accomplices. Those who had infatuated the people were sent to their respective provinces to be executed. The ministers and dignitaries of the palace uniting their efforts, and all with one voice repeating that to destroy evil it must be taken at its base and its root, an order was given, at their urgent entreaties, to despoil Minister Chae of all his dignities<sup>33</sup>. Thus, for not having let go of the celestial thread and having held to natural principles, Emperor Xia Yu<sup>34</sup> raising the enormous pot, the evil spirits could not escape; it is thus that, having been very enlightened on the doctrine of heaven, the Emperor Heon-won<sup>35</sup>, advancing in a mysterious chariot, dissipated all the dark and malignant vapors with which his enemy surrounded him<sup>36</sup>.

“All those turbulent loins having been tamed, and all those disordered throats having been cut, the foundations of evil have passed away, and the whole horrible sect has been annihilated. Women or

<sup>28</sup> (Dallet Note 66. In the ancient stories of China, it is said that Queen Nuwa 女媧 having fought with 共工 Gonggong, the latter seized one of the pillars of heaven, knocked it down and thus made a hole in the celestial vault. The waters flowing through this hole, the flood threatened the whole universe. Fortunately, Nüwa knew how to find a precious stone, managed to fix it to the vault to plug the fatal hole, and thus rendered humanity a service for which all the races of the Far East thank her from generation to generation.)

<sup>29</sup> (Dallet Note 67. This is Emperor Dae Yo 堯; that is to say Yo the Great, the one who, by digging canals, delivered to agriculture an immense expanse of land previously covered with marshes.)

<sup>30</sup> (Dallet Note 68. This date is incorrect; the edict of persecution is dated the 11th day of the first month.)

<sup>31</sup> (Dallet Note 69. This date is also incorrect. Is it deliberate? and for what purpose? We do not know.)

<sup>32</sup> 황심 Hwang Shim 黃沁 (1756-1801) Thomas. Martyr.

<sup>33</sup> (Dallet Note 70. This minister, once accused of rebellion, had been dead for some time when this posthumous order was issued against his memory.)

<sup>34</sup> Xia Yu 夏禹 the legendary Yu the Great “who controlled the waters.”

<sup>35</sup> 현원 Heon-won = Xuan Yuan 軒轅, the mythical Yellow Emperor

<sup>36</sup> (Dallet Note 71. Allusion to some ridiculous legends of Chinese history.)



scholars, big or small, all the vile agents of the band have received the wages of their crimes. But without the protection of the spirits of heaven and earth and the spirits of our ancestors, could the kingdom have remained on its feet until today? As for me, I have always heard that the material sky is called heaven, and he who governs it, emperor, and in everything I adhere to pure orthodox doctrine. But these ugly rebels speak falsely about this and that, and mislead in all kinds of matters.

“Moreover, their doctrine is very deceitful, very artful, and very shallow; their acts are very imprudent and very corrupt; all their words are vain and futile. What they say about spirits is only a collection of the dregs of Shakyā (doctrine of Fo), and the mixture they make of it is quite similar to the language of sorcerers. As for the books by which they deceive the people, destroy natural relations and all principles, under the reign of the most flourishing dynasties, one could only have delivered them to fire or water, but for those who henceforth would adopt one single article, one should know that they are well below dogs and swine. They carry their blindness to the point of wanting to die, how could that not be contrary to common sense? All things considered for many years, it seems certain to us that they have at the bottom of their hearts some other hidden purpose. On the outside they rely on magic, and on the inside they hatch ugly plans. First, they put forward the word sublime religion, and secretly they weave a web that would rise to heaven. Finally, they regard kings and parents as enemies; they want to freely carry out their plots which turn to general ruin.

“Being the father of the people, how could we not get out of our chariot and feel like crying? You, our people, you must understand the purpose of our prayers, and what is our purpose in opening the net to let you escape. All of you, listen attentively to our voice, so that all, having returned to goodness, may strive to practice virtue; may the subject think of fidelity, the son of filial piety, the woman apply herself to weaving, the man given to the cultivation of the fields think at the same time of honoring the king and of being useful to the people; may he love his parents and respect his superiors; according to the writings Cho-ja<sup>37</sup> and Pu-yei<sup>38</sup>. The rites consist above all in the sacrifices, so let your vases and your clothes conform to those of our public establishments of instruction. Do not lose the virtue we have received from heaven; do not stray from anything that has ever been in use among us. Curiosity is, it seems to us, a mania which blinds modern ages; we get agitated to scrutinize names and things, and then we come to want to turn our backs on the old scholars, and we argue. Led by example, we become infatuated with all that is extraordinary, and we spread strange things. All this reveals only very light tongues. First people come to singular acts that incline towards evil, then in two or three turns, how could they not fall into superstition? This state is very frightening. We must therefore reject everything that is not in the rules of the six fine arts and in the doctrine of Confucius; there alone is the true foundation of the five natural relationships and of the legitimate rites and ceremonies. It is by this that we know heaven and earth, and that we enlighten the will of men; it is by this that the true doctrine is made to shine and raises the authority of kings.

“From that day, the 22th of the twelfth lunar month, thunder and rain began to have their effects on the people; a great peace returns to heaven and on earth, it is a happy event such as we did not experience in all antiquity. The greatest of attributes being to give and preserve life, it would have been necessary to forgive everything, but in truth, with this bad doctrine, finding no way to change its followers, it was absolutely necessary to strike them with death, to destroy the seeds of their madness. Alas! if something was transmitted in families, the law would still be there. We hope that will not be necessary. A new air begins to blow; it is a sign that the sky is once again favorable to us. A solid foundation for ten thousand years has been set up again, spirits have been renewed, and the destinies of the kingdom now appear unshakeable like rocks and mountains. The words of the King must be brief, why extend more? The bottom of the sea having cleared, we hope that the change for good will continue more and more, such is the purpose of the instructions which we present, and we believe that everyone will know how to

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<sup>37</sup> Chuci 楚茨 a poem from the *Classic of Poetry* (no. 209)

<sup>38</sup> FuYi 鳧鷖 “Wild Ducks” a poem from the *Book of Odes* (詩經 no. 248)

understand them.”

May the reader forgive us for having quoted completely this indigestible and stupid rubbish<sup>39</sup>. As it stands, this text is one of the most important in our history, not only because the Koreans see it as a masterpiece of style, and an unanswerable refutation of the Christian Religion, but, what is much more serious, because it has become the fundamental law of the state, because it has fixed the legislation against Christians, and it is almost impossible, without a complete revolution within, or without sufficient external pressure, that it should ever be repealed. This law of proscription is applied with more or less rigor according to the circumstances, but it still exists, and each of the persecutions that we will have to relate has been motivated by it. Moreover, the Koreans, like all Asians, or, to speak more accurately, like all pagan peoples of the past and of today, invincibly confusing what is of the political order and what is of the religious order, the belief that Christianity is inherently hostile to the state, as well as to the national religion, has become an article of faith. It is this prejudice, now entrenched, that most opposes the spread of the gospel.

We will not waste time refuting all the different accusations accumulated here against Christians, but it is good to note the resemblance or rather the identity of the calumnies, which all the persecutors, from the pagan emperors of Rome to the princes of China, Tongking, or Korea, have always put forward to justify their cruelty. It is always a question of magic, witchcraft, hidden mysteries, debauchery, violation of the laws of nature, etc. And yet the Regent of Korea and her ministers certainly did not dream of copying the decrees of Nero or Diocletian; but, like these, they wrote under the dictation of the same spirit of falsehood, which has always used, and always will use, the same weapons against God and his Church.

The official proclamation was sent to all provincial governors, so as to be published on New Year's Day; and at the same time orders were given to the courts to immediately execute the sentences already rendered, to terminate in all haste, before the end of the year, the trials of Christians still pending, and to commence no further prosecutions. Consequently, two executions took place in quick succession, in the capital; one on the 26th day of the twelfth lunar month (January 29, 1802); the other two days later. The latter is that of Luthgarda Yi, her sisters-in-law<sup>40</sup> and her cousin Mathew. We have told it above. Let us now say a few words about the first in which, according to the testimony of eyewitnesses, eight Christians obtained the palm of martyrdom.

The leader of this glorious troop was Charles Yi Gyeong-do<sup>41</sup>, elder brother of Luthgarda. Born in the capital in the year 1780, he was, in the twelfth or fifteenth generation, the main descendant of a natural son of King Tae-jo, founder of the now reigning dynasty. His family, ennobled under the name of Gyeong-ryeong-gun<sup>42</sup>, had not counted among the princes for several generations; it had nevertheless retained a very distinguished rank in the kingdom, and was at the head of the Nam-in party. Of a gentle, generous and serious character, Charles, from childhood, had no light conversations. He early stood out for his unusual natural talents, and for his progress in letters. At the age of seventeen he was married according to his condition, and three months later, his father having died, he found himself, as the eldest, at the head of a rich and numerous family. It was difficult for him, on the occasion of his father's death, not to participate in the superstitions so numerous in such cases, especially among the nobles; however,

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<sup>39</sup> By contrast, Bishop Daveluy (Archive Volume 5 f. 276) writes: “apart from the bad spirit that dictated it, and the slanderous insults that blind hatred has heaped upon it, this composition is quite well known, and the style is very beautiful, everyone here admires it and with some reason; for that very reason it is very difficult to translate, and we do not dare to assure that we have always grasped the author's meaning...”

<sup>40</sup> Not her sisters-in-law but her mother-in-law and her mother-in-law's sister.

<sup>41</sup> 이경도 Yi Gyeong-do 李景陶 (1780-1802) Charles. Blessed.

<sup>42</sup> 경녕군 Gyeong-nyeong-gun 敬寧君 (Prince Gyeong-nyeong). (1395-1458)

by dint of prudence and firmness, he succeeded in keeping himself free from all illicit participation. Already for a long time, in order to keep himself aloof from the world, and to avoid the daily temptations which cannot fail to assail a young man in his high position, he affected to be a hunchback, and urged God to send him this infirmity. He never walked except by bending over, and seeming to drag himself with great difficulty. Little by little his disturbed spine bent forward, his legs weakened, and he became so crippled that later on they had to carry him to court for interrogation.

Head of a large household, he applied himself to leading it properly, regulated everything there, instructed his subordinates, and allowed nothing to be seen except in conformity with Christian gravity. He never went out to visit his relatives and friends, and in no way got involved in futile conversations and amusements. Such a modest and retired life could not fail to bring him many blames and reprimands; he received them humbly, but changed nothing in his resolutions. It was even worse when his sister Luthgarda married John Yu; a veritable storm of murmurs and protests arose against him, but determined to do everything for his own salvation and that of his family, he let the storm pass undisturbed.

Arrested in 1801, he seems to have had a few moments of weakness at first, but soon his faith regained the upper hand, his resolution became firm and did not waver until the day of execution. We do not know the details of his trial. He was accused neither of conspiracy nor of revolt, but condemned purely and simply as a Christian. Here is the letter<sup>43</sup> he wrote to his mother the day before he died.

“I, your son, am writing to you today for the last time. Although I am the greatest of sinners, the Lord, by an extraordinary blessing, deigns to call me to himself in a very special way. I should be filled with contrition and love, I should try, by my death, to repay this favor somewhat; but the mass of the sins of all my life, reaching up to heaven, my heart, like wood and stone, does not yet let tears flow for this signal grace. When I consider the infinite goodness of God, how could I not be ashamed, and not fear his terrible punishments? However, when I reflect, I say to myself: My sins, it is true, are without limit, but the mercy of God is also without limit. If with his merciful hand he wants to take me to himself, should I die ten thousand times, what do I have to regret and what can my worries be about?

“Weak as I am, unable to make a courageous determination, I have often said to myself: If by a special grace of God death became inevitable for me, what happiness it would be for me! And behold, today God is serving me according to my desires; isn’t that the greatest benefit? As long as I have been in this world, I fear that I have not been able to fulfill my duties as a son and have not shown you all the submission that I owed; this is the subject of my sorrow and my regrets. Do not separate from each other, and I hope to see you soon again forever, in heaven. I will not forget my son Gwi-pil; dear child, be very obedient, stay with all the others without ever moving away from them, and when the time is right, come and find me. I would have many things to say, but I cannot say them at length. Above all, don’t be too sad, and after keeping body and soul here below in good condition, let’s meet again forever.

“*Sin-yu* year, the 25th day of the twelfth lunar month,

“Charles Yi.”

The next day, the martyr had his head cut off at the usual place of execution. He was twenty-two years old.

One of Charles Yi’s companions was the catechist Son Gyeong-yun<sup>44</sup>. From an honest family in the capital, he converted before the entry of the priest. Having then been established as a catechist, he carried out his duties with great diligence and zeal. He had bought an enormous house, the front of which was laid out like an inn, and where he sold wine to a number of pagans. Effectively protected by these

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<sup>43</sup> Daveluy Archive Volume 5 ff. 212-3.

<sup>44</sup> 손경윤 Son Gyeong-yun 孫敬允 (1760-1802) Gervase. Blessed.

noisy exteriors, he brought together in the rear a very large number of Christians to instruct and exhort them. Denounced at the beginning of the persecution, he first fled; but all his family having been seized in his place, he thought he had to give himself up to have them released. He had, it is said, to suffer terrible tortures, but, supported by grace, he emerged victorious from all trials, and received the crown at the age of forty-two.

Simon Kim Baek-sim<sup>45</sup>, also born of an honest family in the capital, showed the same courage and the same perseverance. Having been a servant for some time in a house where the priest lived, he knew how to take advantage of this happy opportunity to strengthen himself in the faith, and practice the virtues. Wanted in the spring of 1801, he escaped and remained hidden for a long time, then having learned that his father was being held captive as surety, he went and presented himself, and boldly confessed Jesus Christ. The judge, who had secretly received money to release him, sent him to spend three days with his family, thinking thereby to undermine his constancy. When Simon came back, he said to him: “Very well, have you changed now?” “Yes,” replied the confessor. “Very well,” resumed the judge; “henceforth, you will no longer follow this evil sect.” “I have changed a great deal,” replied Simon, “but it is by taking a firm resolution to practice better than in the past, by converting myself more completely to the law of God.” The judge was amazed at this answer, and Simon, unwilling to hear of even the slightest concession, was condemned to death and executed with the others.

The fourth of these generous confessors was Antony Hong<sup>46</sup>, better known as An-dang. We have not been able to find any details on the place of his origin, his kinship, or the circumstances of his life. We only know that he lived for some time in the house next to the palace, and had frequent relations with Father Zhou.

Next was a Christian woman named Seol-ae<sup>47</sup>. The main accusation brought against her was that she had made a mourning dress for Alexander Hwang, to help him evade searches. The other three companions of these five martyrs have remained unknown.

Philip<sup>48</sup> and James<sup>49</sup>, the two sons-in-law of Antony Hong, to whom various testimonies also add his wife, followed him closely to the execution; we do not know what day. We also do not know the precise date of the martyrdom of the three other Christians: Byeon Deuk-jung<sup>50</sup>, the dyer Kim Gyeong-seo, and Park, whose son Park Myeong-gwan was martyred in his turn in 1839. We know only that they suffered in the capital, about this time.

By government orders, a number of executions also took place in the provinces during the last days of that year.

In Jeongju, we have to cite the martyrdom of Francis Kim Sa-jip<sup>51</sup>. Born in the village of Bebanggoji, district of Deoksan, of an honest family, Francis had devoted himself to letters, and had acquired in a short time sufficient knowledge to compete honorably in public examinations. But hardly had he been

<sup>45</sup> 김백심 Kim Baek-sim 金百心 Simon.

<sup>46</sup> 홍익만 Hong Ik-man 洪翼萬 aka 安堂 Andang (?-1802) Antony. Blessed. (Andang is the Chinese form of Antony.)

<sup>47</sup> 최설애 Choe Seol-ae 崔雪愛

<sup>48</sup> 홍필주 Hong Pil-ju 洪弼周 (1774-1801). Philip. Blessed.

<sup>49</sup> 이현 Yi Hyeon 李鉉 (?-1801) Antony. Blessed.

<sup>50</sup> 변득중 Byeon Deuk-jung 邊得中

<sup>51</sup> 김사집 Kim Sa-jip 金— (1744-1802). Francis. Blessed,

converted to the Christian faith, than he left aside the human sciences, to concern himself only with religious studies. Prayer and reading were his delights. An exemplary conduct, joined to his natural prudence and his rare talents, soon procured him much reputation and authority in the neighborhood. He took advantage of his influence to spread the Religion, exhorting the weak, explaining the doctrine to the ignorant, and his words were all the more welcome because he was the first to put them into practice. He gladly gave alms. If he procured new clothing, he immediately gave to the poorest the one he took off. He solicitously aided the needy in his village, and if he heard that a woman in childbirth or some poor cripple could not procure the necessary little reliefs, he sent them to her at once, so that all the unhappy and abandoned looked upon him as a father. No less devoted to his parents, he never failed to perform his duties to them minutely, and at their death strictly observed abstinence for the whole time of mourning, that is to say two whole years. Skilled in calligraphy, he copied many religious books, and gave free of charge the most necessary to Christians who could not afford to buy them.

Thus, through a life full of good works, Francis worked to obtain the grace of God. At the persecution, many of the books copied by his hand having been seized, he was first reported to the mandarins. Two traitors, pretending to be attracted by his reputation, came to examine his house on the pretext of buying some books, and soon after, brought the satellites to arrest him. Francis was first taken to his own town of Deoksan. The judge promised to release him immediately if he wanted to apostatize; but he replied, "I who serve the great God of Heaven, how could I deny him?" The Mandarin inflicted some torture on him, degraded him to the rank of satellite, and sent him back to prison. Cited again, Francis showed the same constancy under the blows, and was condemned to the degrading office of fustigator; but he did not allow himself to be shaken and wrote to his children: "Relying on the assistance of God and of his holy Mother, try to spend your lives as Christians, and do not think of seeing me again." It was because his decision was made, and his sacrifice already consummated in his heart.

On the tenth lunar month, transferred to the criminal court of Haemi, he received ninety blows from the thieves' board. The tortures not being able to overcome his constancy, he was, on the twelfth lunar month, sent back to Cheongju, the military chief town of the province. This journey was for him a cruel torture. In severe cold, laden with a heavy cangue, and while his wounds were not yet closed, he had to walk the space of 480 *li*. His white hair was scattered over his shoulders, the blood flowed from his wounds, wet his clothes and stuck them to the skin, so that each step, each movement, caused him acute suffering. This horrible journey lasted three days, during which Francis' resignation and calm never left him for a single moment. He was immediately condemned to death, and on the 22nd of the twelfth lunar month (January 25), after having been made a spectacle in the market and struck with eighty-one strokes of the plank, he gently gave up his soul to God. Until the end, say eyewitnesses, his faith, his hope and his charity seemed most lively, and his heart firm as iron and stone. He was fifty-eight years old.

With him was also executed a Christian named Colomba, wife of a noble named Yi, who lived in Byeol-am, district of Deoksan; we have absolutely no reliable details of her life and death.

Five days later, in the district of Pocheon, it was the turn of Leo Hong<sup>52</sup>, who, arrested with his father Francis-Xavier Hong Gyo-man<sup>53</sup>, on the 14th day of the second lunar month, had been sent back to the prison of Pocheon, while his father was kept in the capital. Of a gentle and tranquil character, Leo had passed his youth in this district, dreaming for the future only of human grandeur, of which his birth and his position cleared the way for him. But hardly had he known our Holy Religion than he embraced it with zeal, and immediately forgot all other ambition than that of serving God and propagating his law. Filial piety made it a point for him to begin with his father, who, though educated in Christianity, was reluctant to embrace it. Leo was able to clarify his doubts, fix his irresolution, he managed to strengthen

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<sup>52</sup> 홍인 Hong In 洪鎭 (1758-1802) Leo. Blessed.

<sup>53</sup> 홍교만 Hong Gyo-man 洪教萬 (1738-1801) Francis Xavier. Blessed.

him solidly in faith. His zeal then turned to the other members of his family whom he instructed assiduously, to the lukewarm Christians whom he excited with patient energy, and to the pagans of whom he converted a large number. His humility above all was admirable; he spoke of himself only in the most modest terms, and took pleasure in pointing out the qualities, talents, and good deeds of others. He was therefore esteemed and loved by all.

First imprisoned with his father, then brought back to his native town, he had to undergo frequent tortures, but the thought of the glorious death of this father whom he himself had converted, and the desire to follow in his footsteps, upheld him marvelously, and his courage more than once won the admiration of the satellites. Ten months of imprisonment, in the midst of all sorts of sufferings and trials, could in no way shake his faith; and he finally deserved to be condemned to death, for Jesus Christ. He was forty-four years old when he was beheaded at Pocheon on the 27th day of the twelfth lunar month (January 30, 1802). After his death, for several days, a bright light surrounded his body, which retained all the appearances of life. The satellites and a great crowd of pagans witnessed this wonder.

The same day, in Yanggeun, where the blood of so many Christians had already flowed, took place the martyrdom of Sebastian Gwon Sang-mun<sup>54</sup>, second son of Francis-Xavier Gwon, and by adoption son and heir of Ambrose Gwon. The name he bore, the reputation which his talents and good qualities had already acquired for him, his fervor in practicing the Religion, were more than sufficient causes of proscription. He was therefore taken, and incarcerated first in the prison of Yanggeun, where he suffered such atrocious torments, that his heart weakened for a moment, and let out a word of apostasy. But transferred before the courts of the capital, he recanted, and in the midst of the tortures which were not spared him, again confessed the Christian Religion. After about ten months of detention, he was sentenced to death and sent back to Yanggeun to be executed. On the 27th of the twelfth lunar month (January 30), his head fell under the sword; he was then in the thirty-third year of his age.

Also on the same day, in the great city of Cheongju, once the capital of the province of Chungcheong, the faith of Jesus Christ had new witnesses.

The first was a nobleman named Yi Gi-yeon<sup>55</sup>, who had been exiled, after apostasy, at the end of the previous year. Called back from his exile, he underwent more courageous new interrogations, and had the happiness, this time, of being condemned to death. He was beheaded at the age of sixty-three.

Three other confessors, whom Yi Gi-yeon had himself converted and instructed in the truths of the Religion, accompanied him to execution; they were Yi Bu-chun<sup>56</sup>, Yi Seok-jung<sup>57</sup>, and a woman named Yi Agi-nyeon<sup>58</sup>.

Yi Bu-chun, praetorian of this same city, a man of a certain education, of great facility of speech and of an advantageous exterior, had always shown himself very attached to his faith, and faithful to observe its practices. Yi Seok-jung was the son of the preceding and, like him, a fervent Christian. Although he exercised the profession of merchant, a very dangerous profession in this country for the conscience, he knew how to put above all else the interests of his soul, and busied himself with gaining heaven, much more than with gaining perishable riches. The father and the son had been arrested at different times, but their constancy was the same in the tortures, and they astonished the pagans who did not yet know the wonders that divine grace works in the hearts of the faithful. They were beheaded together. The first was sixty-eight, and the second twenty-nine.

<sup>54</sup> 권상문 Gwon Sang-mun 權相問 (1769-1802) Sebastian. Blessed.

<sup>55</sup> 이기연 Yi Gi-yeon 李箕延, (1737-1801). Martyr.

<sup>56</sup> 이부춘 Yi Bu-chun 李富春 (1773-1801). Martyr.

<sup>57</sup> 이석중 Yi Seok-jung 李石中 (1773-1801). Martyr.

<sup>58</sup> 이야기련 Yi Agi-nyeon 李阿只連

Yi Agi-nyeon, daughter of a Praetorian, was married in this same class, and lost her husband after having had two sons. Although they refused to practice the Religion, the Christian widow was none the less a model of assiduity in her duties and in her exercises of piety. Never, it is said, was the slightest coldness or laziness felt in her; so God deigned to reward her noble perseverance. He allowed her to be arrested as a Christian and, in horrible tortures, her calm and her courage did the honor of the Religion. She had her head cut off, along with the other martyrs we have just named, on the 27th day of the twelfth lunar month (January 30).

Finally, at Gwangju, province of Gyeonggi, we have to point out two martyrs. The first is Woo Deok-un 禹德運, on whom we have no details. His sentence, moreover, very clear, shows us a determined man, who often took care of the burial of the martyrs, and, in various circumstances, publicly and energetically reproached the apostates for their cowardly weakness. He was beheaded on the 28th of the twelfth lunar month (January 31, 1802), at the age of fifty.

The second is Thomas Han Deok-won<sup>59</sup>. Born of a noble family in the district of Suwon, province of Gyeonggi, he had emigrated to the territory of Gwangju. He was an austere, devoted man, assiduous in prayer and pious reading. He loved to bring Christians together to instruct and exhort them, and then, say the memoirs of the time, his words were firm and cutting like his very heart. His principal application was to conform in everything to the will of God, and he did this with unvarying constancy. Seized in 1801 by the satellites of Gwangju, he was brought before the judge, who wanted at all costs to obtain denunciations from him. Thomas refused to make any, and endured the tortures with holy joy, without changing his expression. Subjected, some time later, to new tortures, he said to the mandarin: "If you had to give rewards to those whom I would designate, I would do it immediately, but, far from it, you would have them seized, would press their necks to strangle them, and as they came in you would cut off their heads; I cannot therefore denounce anyone to you." His death sentence was sent to the capital and confirmed in the King's name. He went joyfully to the place of execution, himself supported the block on which he rested his head, and, gazing fixedly at the executioner, said to him: "Cut off my head at one blow." The latter, seized with fear and trembling, struck falsely, and his head did not fall until the third blow. It was the 30th day of the twelfth lunar month (February 2, 1802). Thomas was in the fifty-second year of his age.

In concluding the history of this dreadful persecution of 1801, let us mention a few other martyrs who have not been indicated in our account, because the place or the date of their execution have not been found. These names are forever glorious in heaven, and it would be unfair to let them fall here below into complete oblivion.

The first is Mathias Bae, a zealous Christian, who employed all his strength and all his resources for the general good, and rendered important services to the Church of Korea. He was the younger brother of Francis Bae<sup>60</sup>, martyred in 1799. Since the day of his conversion, Mathias' great desire had been to bring priests into Korea at all costs. Consequently, he offered to make the perilous journey to Peking, indeed went there several times, received the sacraments there and, in all probability, was part of the group which introduced Father Zhou. The uprightness of Mathias, his devotion, his fervor, had won him general esteem, and Christians liked to follow his advice. The persecution having broken out, he went into hiding, still continuing to exhort his brethren, to celebrate the courage of the martyrs, to publish, as

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<sup>59</sup> 한덕운 Han Deok-un 韓德運 (1752-1802) Thomas. Bienheureux.

<sup>60</sup> 배관겸 Bae Gwan-gyeom 裵—(1740?-1800) Francis. Blessed.

an example and an encouragement, the story of their suffering. He himself was preparing for battle, bearing with joy the pains of life, renouncing all pleasures, and living with his wife in absolute continence.

He was arrested, and showed great courage in torments. Four or five months of continual tortures could not shake him, and the judge, despairing of overcoming his prisoner by the ordinary means, tried a more perfidious means. He involved the family of Mathias, and some of his companions in captivity, unworthy Christians who had renounced their faith. God, who wanted to purify his martyrdom of all leaven of pride, allowed Mathias, yielding for a moment to the voice of nature and the insistence of his friends, to let out a word of apostasy. He was immediately set free. But he had barely passed the threshold of the prison when faith and grace regained the upper hand; he returned immediately, shedding tears, uttering groans over the crime he had just committed, and invoking aloud the holy names of Jesus and Mary. "Are you crazy?" cried the judge, "It has only been a minute since you gave it all up." "Yes," said Mathias, "I was mad to utter such a word, but now my reason has returned to me, and even though I should die, I profess loudly the faith of my God." He was immediately condemned to death, and strangled in prison. He was then thirty-three years old.

A Christian from the district of Boryeong, whose very name is unknown, had traveled to the capital to buy religious images. He was caught, taken to prison, and put to the torture. As he persisted, after a long detention and repeated tortures, in showing an unusual firmness, he was condemned to death. Satellites were sent to tell him to put the noose around his neck; he refused to do it himself, and was strangled by them. God allowed a Christian prisoner to be in the next room, and heard very distinctly all that passed between the victim and the executioners. It was this Christian who, released from prison, told his family this edifying fact.

Another martyr, John Yi Ik-un<sup>61</sup>, also called Myeong-ho, showed the same courage, and died in a manner less glorious perhaps in the eyes of men, but no less meritorious before God. Descended from a noble family of the Nam-in party, Yi Ik-un was governor of Gyeonggi province before and during the persecution of 1801. Having embraced the Religion, he worked to suppress his overly lively character, and to regulate all his actions after the examples of Jesus Christ and of the saints. He continually mortified himself in his meals, no longer frequented society, and lived alone in a secluded apartment. On Sundays only, he went out to join a few Christians, and devote himself in their company to prayer, to pious readings and conversations. His father, alarmed at the danger that such conduct posed to the whole family, neglected nothing to make him abandon the faith, but without success. The danger was becoming more and more imminent, and the high position of his house did not permit John to escape it by flight. He therefore waited with resignation for the orders of Providence, when his father, blinded by fear and anger, ordered him to take poison. John refused to do so; but several people having united with his father, they seized him violently, and succeeded in making him swallow it by force. He died after a few hours.

In the town of Yeosu, a young widow named Yi, of the branch of Wansan, a devout Christian, is reported to have been taken and executed with one of her relatives.

In the district of Byeokjeong, province of Chungcheong, a nobleman named Choe, better known to Christians under the name of Choe-pan, after having separated, to become a Christian, from a concubine whom he loved dearly, and having given for many years an example of fervent punctuality in all his duties, was taken and beheaded.

Thomas Kim, a native of the district of Deoksan, who had accompanied Father Zhou on his

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<sup>61</sup> Dallet says that 이익운 Yi Ik-un 李益運 is the same person as 이명호 Yi Myeong-ho 李明鎬. This is not correct. Daveluy Volume 4 clearly says that the martyr John Yi Myeong-ho was the son of Yi Ik-un (1748-1817), who was a magistrate for Gyeonggi-do responsible for executing several martyrs.



errands as the driver of his horse, also had his head cut off.

Paul Yun, of Jurul, district of Deoksan, and Thomas Han of Olguji, district of Chuncheon, were both martyred in the city of Hongju.

At Gongju, a man and a woman of the Won family were executed.

Finally, Sin Gwang-seo<sup>62</sup>, a native of Hantui, in the district of Cheongsa, who had emigrated near Jeonju, was brought before the tribunal of that town, and was beheaded there, in the company of Yi Guk. and two or three other confessors.

This list of victims of the 1801 persecution, long as it is, is far from complete. The man best able to know the events well, Jeong Yak-Yong, puts the number of martyrs at at least two hundred. Alexander Hwang assures us that, by the end of October, the pagans estimated that three hundred executions had taken place, in the capital alone. Never had such butchery bloodied the courts of the country. Unfortunately, many of the original writings have disappeared. The European missionaries, who arrived thirty years later, had, on entering Korea, something else to do at first than to collect the ancient traditions about the martyrs; and when, long afterwards, Bishop Berneux, who had become Apostolic Vicar, was the first to collect all the authentic documents<sup>63</sup>, a large number of eyewitnesses to the persecution had died, and had taken with them to the tomb memories that had been lost forever.

We therefore have many edifying details to regret, many examples of heroic charity, which will only be known and glorified in heaven. We have to regret above all the impossibility in which we now find ourselves of noting in a legal manner a large number of miracles, of which only a vague memory remains. In the course of the narrative, we have noted those only which have a certain character of authenticity; but, if the general tradition is to be believed. God made many others to glorify the confessors, and to protect their precious relics. It is a fact beyond doubt that the pagans, as well as the Christians, still believe today in the frequency and the reality of the wonders which took place at that time.

The pagans, as well as the Christians, also noticed the striking punishment of some of the persecutors. Minister Hong Nak-an<sup>64</sup>, a bitter enemy of Christians, always the first to raise his voice against them, was, for some reason, exiled to the island of Quelpaert, where he died after twenty years of detention.

The brother of the apostate Peter Yi Seung-hun, named Yi Ji-hun, who had also been very hostile to the Religion, died in exile on the island of Geoje-do.

Jeong Ju-seong<sup>65</sup>, mandarin of Yanggeun, who took a barbarous delight in tormenting and massacring the Christians, became blind, lost his only son, and saw, before dying, his house entirely ruined. It is said that the remnants of this family still vegetate today, in the greatest misery, in the district of Cheongju, abhorred by the pagans themselves, who point them out as a race accursed from heaven.

Peter Yi Seung-hwa tells in his memoirs, as a fact known to all, the story of an unfortunate apostate who, in agreement with the satellites, troubled, denounced, plundered Christians. Later sent into exile for some crime, he hanged himself in despair; his body, burned by accident, remained unburied; his family lost everything they owned, and his descendants are now reduced to begging.

<sup>62</sup> 신광서 Shin Gwang-seo 辛光瑞

<sup>63</sup> Much of this work was done by Bishop Daveluy on orders from Bishop Berneux.

<sup>64</sup> 홍낙안 Hong Nak-an 洪樂安 (1752-1812)

<sup>65</sup> 정주성 Jeong Ju-seong 鄭周誠.

In Naepo, a traitor, named Jo Hwa-jin<sup>66</sup>, who by his accusations had caused the death of several Christians, continued after the persecution his life of villainy and robbery, until, pursued by the courts, he took the law into his own hands by committing suicide.

Another, named Gang Dong-ok, having been guilty of various crimes, was sent into exile, where, by his insolence, his bad faith and his swindles, he so exasperated the people of the country, that they set fire to his house, and burned him alive. His parents, having come to fetch his body to bury it, deposited it during the night near a river opposite the inn. Heavy rain came unexpectedly, the river overflowed, and the corpse was carried away without any trace of it being found; a terrible punishment in this country, where, as in China, deprivation of burial is considered a more terrible punishment than death.

Similar facts took place in other provinces, but these suffice to prove that in Korea as well as elsewhere, God almost always punishes, even in this world, the enemies of his Christ and of his Church.

According to the precise orders of the government, the bloody executions ceased with the *sin-yu* year; the royal proclamation was displayed all over Korea for the New Year celebrations, and, the prisons being empty of Christians, the executioners were able to rest for a while. The success of the persecutors seemed assured. Their political grudges and religious hatreds were equally satisfied, and the double campaign undertaken by them ended at last in a double victory.

Politically speaking, the result obtained was complete. The Nam-in party crushed, almost annihilated, could never recover from the blow struck then. It has scarcely a breath of life left in the country, and its influence has entirely disappeared. The No-ron party has continued to maintain power; it increases and grows stronger every day, and there are no longer any rivals to dispute its omnipotence.

From a religious point of view, the Regent and her adherents also believed in a definitive triumph. The only priest there was in Korea had been killed; all the leaders of the Christians, all the influential men among them had disappeared. The surviving neophytes, plunged into misery, dishonored in the eyes of their fellow citizens, banished from the law, could not give the slightest umbrage to the most jealous power, and certainly, if the Religion of Jesus Christ was the work of man, it should then have perished in Korea. But God is more powerful than governments, he delights in bringing good out of evil, and the fury of the persecutors had results for Christianity which his enemies hardly foresaw. The edicts, the proclamations, made known the Gospel in the remotest corners of the kingdom, in a more rapid and universal way, than any preaching could have done, no matter how active and zealous it was. The courage of the martyrs in the face of death, in the districts where there were Christians, in other places, the patience of the exiles, were a revelation for this idolatrous people immersed in materialism. The fact several times quoted in the official acts, of men commendable by their science, their virtue, their social position, who had sacrificed everything to follow the new doctrine, this fact, even, we say, became an eloquent apology. Finally, the persecution had a result still more precious in the eyes of faith. Heaven was peopled with new elect, the Church of Korea had before God a legion of powerful intercessors, and if later, despite all the obstacles, the word of the missionaries was fruitful in the fruits of salvation, it is thanks to the prayers of the martyrs.

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<sup>66</sup> 조화진 Jo Hwa-jin 趙和鎭.

Book 4: From the end of the persecution of 1801, until the erection of Korea as an apostolic vicariate. 1802-1831.

Chapter 1: Deplorable state of Christianity. — Letter from the Christians of Korea to the Bishop of Peking. — Their letter to the Sovereign Pontiff. — New Martyrs.

The last day of the year *sin-yu* had again been bloodied by the torture of several Christians; with the year *im-sul* (1802), began for the Church of Korea an era of relative tranquility, which allowed the neophytes to breathe a little. It was not peace, much less freedom, but the violence of the persecution was diminished, the judges and the executioners had, for a time, ceased to function.

It would be difficult to fully expose the state of disorganization, misery, and ruin, in which Christendom found itself after the persecution. All the eminent men, capable of directing, of exhorting, of reviving their brothers, had been put to death. In many large families, only women and children remained. The poor, the common people, whom the rage of the enemies of the Religion had disdained to pursue, remained isolated, without relations among themselves, in the midst of hostile pagans, who, strong in the law and in public opinion, spared no vexation, and treated them as slaves. The great number of apostates who had denied the faith only with their lips and still preserved it in their hearts, trembled to resume their religious practices, and limited themselves to repeating in secret a few timid prayers. Almost all the religious objects, almost all the books had been destroyed, and the little that remained was buried underground, or hidden in holes in the walls. Many neophytes, still not firmly established in the faith, deprived of any education, of any moral support, became discouraged, and often ended up abandoning a religion which was for them the cause of so many evils.

The fate of those who had been exiled by the courts, or who had voluntarily emigrated to the wilder parts of the remote provinces, was still sadder. We cannot explain it better than by giving the account<sup>1</sup> left us of his ordeals by Peter Sin Tae-bo<sup>2</sup>, this courageous Christian who made so many futile efforts to approach Father Zhou and receive the sacraments, and who later obtained, as we shall see, the crown of martyrdom. You will find there, feature by feature, the picture of the sufferings of thousands of other Christians, at the same time, and in the same circumstances.

“The persecution was finally appeased, it is true, but we were isolated and we had lost the prayer books. How to practice? I learn by chance that the survivors of some families of martyrs live in the district of Yongin, I do my best to find them, and finally I meet them. There were only women already advanced in years, and a few young men barely out of childhood; in all, three houses linked by kinship. They were without support and without resources, hardly daring to open their mouths with strangers, and no longer breathing for fear when people began to talk about the Religion. They did have a few volumes of prayers and the explanation of the Gospels, but the whole thing was hidden with the greatest care. When I asked to see them, I was cut off, they waved their hands in sign of silence; I didn’t want to insist. However, these poor women were overjoyed when they learned from their children of the presence of a Christian, and since propriety did not allow them to see me, they wanted at the very least to converse with me<sup>3</sup>. I

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<sup>1</sup> Archive Daveluy Volume 4 ff. 214-7

<sup>2</sup> 신태보 Shin Tae-bo 申太甫 (1769?-1839) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>3</sup> (Dallet Note 73. In such cases, to satisfy the requirements of etiquette and preserve decorum, they place themselves in adjoining rooms, and communicate through a grid or a canvas, much like cloistered nuns do.)

told them a little of the latest events, of the state of the Religion, and of our common position, in which we could neither serve God nor save our souls. They were deeply touched; some even shed tears, and testified the desire that we would communicate to each other frequently, to support one another.

“I lived forty *li* (four leagues) from there, and since that time, every eight or ten days, we made reciprocal visits. Soon our mutual affection was as lively and as sincere as if we had been members of the same family. We began to resume reading our books, and doing the exercises for Sundays and holidays. These people had received the sacraments from the priest, and when I heard details of him and his exhortations, I seemed to see him himself. Joy and happiness spread in my soul; it was as if I had found a treasure. I loved all these Christians as angels, but on both sides we dwelt among the pagans, and on all sides their eyes were always upon us. I had to do the forty *li* at night and in secret, to avoid them. Shortly after the neighboring pagans wanted to know my name, then the place where I lived, and with whom I was related. All this displeased us, and we conceived the plan to emigrate all together, and go somewhere to form a small separate village. For me, I had only my son and my daughter; but our five families together made a number of more than forty people, and each one having only debts for their fortune, the sale of the houses would not, the debts once paid, so much as provide only the viaticum necessary for the journey, because the place I had in view was in the depths of the mountains of the province of Gangwon, where there were hardly any traces of men. Nevertheless, whether the thing would succeed or not, emigration was decided upon.

“Two families had their houses completely empty, not knowing in the morning what they would eat in the evening. The other three sold their houses with the furniture, and got barely a hundred *nyangs* (about two hundred francs), out of which they had to pay a lot of debts. When we wanted to set the day of departure, each in the five families claimed to leave first, and had only one thought: to get out of this hell to go find a paradise. We argued to the point of coming to words of misunderstanding and discord. Good Lord! what trouble I had to make them listen to reason! As for me, I entrusted my son and my daughter to the care of my nephew, and it was decided that the departure of one of the families would be postponed for some time. But without speaking of the children, there were five women who absolutely could not be delayed, and who, either because of their age or because they had never been used to walking, could not go on foot. So I bought with great difficulty two horses, then a third, which exhausted our small funds, and having no more resources, I went to find two rich friends of the village, who were good enough to have five litters prepared, and lend me two horses. We left in this. The horses were good, and the grooms did their job well; and yet the first day passed with difficulty. Our appearance was very suspicious. It was not a procession of nobles, nor of commoners; but especially the horses were attired in a bizarre manner. From the second day it was necessary to change the system. We left the five litters, and the women, wearing skirts over their heads as cloaks, had to go on horseback. The appearance of our caravan had become more or less that of the ordinary people of the province, or rather of the mountain dwellers, and yet passers-by and innkeepers always said that we were from the capital. Some even repeated with a malicious smile: “Those are certainly families of Christians.” We feared at every moment that we would be recognized and arrested.

“After eight days of very difficult walking, we finally arrived at the desired goal. New embarrassment! No home, and no knowledge. We managed to borrow a hovel to lodge everyone, and, five horses becoming embarrassing, I immediately sold mine to procure provisions, and to buy a hut where my legs could scarcely stretch out. We had to send back the two borrowed horses; but, for lack of money, we had to keep them for a month, and their food consumed almost the price of a horse. However, we managed to send them back, and on the way back, we brought the family left behind. Without our knowing it, the time for cultivation was passing, and winter having come, the snow piled up and made all the roads disappear<sup>4</sup>. In the surroundings, no knowledge; impossible even to communicate with our

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<sup>4</sup> (Dallet Note 74. In the province of Gangwon, the snow falls with frightful abundance. Not only the roads are blocked, but often people cannot have relations between houses of the same village. Those who have no provisions starve; if continual

neighbors, and more than forty of us were exposed to starvation. The horse we had left had gnawed and almost devoured his enormous wooden trough; the children cried incessantly, asking for food; grown-ups themselves were worried and impatient.

“We were almost out of provisions; the future looked darker every day, and we succumbed to the temptation to murmur, to hate our faith which was the cause of these terrible sufferings, to curse ourselves for having believed in God.

“Finally, by a miracle of divine mercy, we survived, without being able to say how. Winter passed, and the snows once melted, it became possible to circulate and cross the mountain. Learning that a rich bachelor<sup>5</sup> named Choe lived about seventy *li* from us, I went to his house, stayed there two days, and having given him a picture of the horrible misery in which our families found themselves, I could, through him, obtain about twenty hectoliters of unhulled rice. To reduce the price of transport, I went to ask the inhabitants of the country, who lent themselves to it with great complaisance, to hull the rice for me; then I sold part of it and had the rest transported in two or three days. All this grain was payable at a fixed time. Having thus ended this affair, I tried again to console all our people, and only then was I listened to; joy and fraternal charity reappeared. Our various loans already amounted to more than a hundred *nyangs*, but I had not the courage to mention them; for when I spoke of being on our guard and sparing provisions, all faces looked gloomy and desolate.”

Such was the fate of almost all Christians who had sought refuge in the mountains and forests, especially in the northeast of the kingdom. The same fatigues, the same miseries, and also, we hasten to say, the same protection from God. The fate of the exiles was even more deplorable, for they were deprived of their freedom, placed under the surveillance of a suspicious police, and sometimes even violently separated from those of their relatives who had followed them to alleviate the sufferings of exile. And yet, in the designs of Providence, these exiles, these refugees were, perhaps without knowing it, apostles. Their homes grew into villages, their families grew into large and flourishing Christian communities, and spread the gospel to the remotest corners of Korea.

We have almost no details of the years following the persecution. The government left the neophytes more or less alone, quite convinced that their religion was over, and that the new sect, drowned in blood, would die out on its own in a short time. However, a few arrests are mentioned in the provinces. In 1804, Jo Suk<sup>6</sup>, one of Justin Jo Dong-seom 趙東暹’s relatives, was seized in the district of Icheon. In 1805, other Christians were imprisoned in Haemi. The latter were released some time later, it is not clear how. But Jo Suk, taken to the court of Yanggeun, was condemned to death. In his torments, he had at first had the weakness to apostatize and to denounce John Yi Yeo-jin, cousin of Peter Sin Tae-bo 申太甫, of whom we have just spoken. John Yi was seized on this denunciation, but Peter, who feared the same fate, rushed to the capital, and did so much by his steps, by presents given at the time, that he succeeded in obtaining the release of John; God thus allowing it, no doubt, for the greater good of Christendom, to whom John was soon to render important services. Before leaving the prison, John forgave Jo Suk, and succeeded in inspiring him with deep regret for his fault, and in restoring to him the courage to die for the faith. It is said that when Suk went to the place of execution, John Yi found himself on his way, and with a glance showed him the sky; the martyr replied with a sign that he understood him. He was beheaded at Yanggeun.

This isolated execution having had no other consequences, the Christians began little by little to

precautions were not taken, the dwellings would be buried under the snow, and people would perish there by suffocation.)

<sup>5</sup> One who had passed the first level of state examinations and received the degree of *josi* 初試.

<sup>6</sup> This might or might not be the 조숙 Jo Suk 趙淑 (1786-1819), Peter, aka Jo Myeong-su, who was the brother-in-law of Francis-Xavier Gwon Il-sin 權日身 1751-1792).

come out of their stupor, and to resume their religious practices. For a long time, they had not dared to meet, or even to speak to each other, and they hardly greeted each other from afar when they met in the streets or on the paths. They then began to renew relations, to look for each other, to count each other, to get together; it was a feast for them when they met a brother they had thought dead or in exile; when relatives, acquaintances who had lost sight of each other in the midst of the disasters of persecution, met again. They comforted each other; they told each other the scenes of horror or edification which they had witnessed; they helped each other to find a few books, a few religious objects; they encouraged each other to resume old practices with a new fervor.

All knew how to draw from their poverty some help for those of their brothers who were in absolute destitution; widows and orphans were taken in, and never, it may be said, was fraternal charity greater than in those unhappy times. The old men who witnessed it assure us that all the goods were really put in common. The more learned among the neophytes made it their duty to teach the prayers, the fundamental truths of the Religion to the ignorant of their families or of the neighborhood. Finally, some more devoted, taking advantage of the influence that their science, their character, or their reputation had acquired for them, obeyed the impulse of divine grace, devoting themselves entirely to the difficult work of the reorganization of the Korean Church.

Among the latter, we must first mention John Gwon Gi-in, nephew of the martyr Ambrose Gwon. He had hidden himself during the persecution, but without leaving the capital, secretly helping the prisoners with his money and, as much as he could, looking after their affairs and those of their families day and night. The persecution over, he struggled with all his might against the general discouragement, going this way and that to exhort the Christians, shake off their apathy, dissipate their fears, and bring them back to their exercises of piety.

In the province of Naepo, Maurus Choe Sin-deok<sup>7</sup>, of the Choe family of Darae-gol, an educated, fervent and resolute man, exercised the same ministry of charity. Not content with re-establishing communications between the Christians of the various villages, he multiplied with his own hand the copies of religious books, in order to provide everyone with the means of instructing themselves, and contributed more than any other to re-establish this important Christendom.

Let us also mention, as having taken an active part in this movement of renovation: John Yi Yeo-jin, his cousin Peter Sin Tae-bo<sup>8</sup>, Hong Woo-song, son of Luke Hong Nak-min, and John Jeong Yak-Yong, who had had the weakness to apostatize during the persecution, but who, touched by sincere repentance, worked to expiate his crime by devoting himself with all his might to the common task. Their efforts were not in vain. Not only did the Christian communities reform themselves little by little, not only did the very great number of apostates come to repentance, but the propagation of the Gospel resumed a new vigor; the conversions of pagans recommenced, and new believers soon filled up, and beyond, the voids left by persecution.

This first step once made, the great thought, the principal desire of all, was to obtain from Peking a new pastor. Those who had formerly had the happiness of participating in the sacraments, remembered the strength which the soul draws from them, and the consolations which it experiences there. Those who had never been able to enjoy this favor, pressed by a holy jealousy, wanted, in their turn, to obtain the forgiveness of their sins, and to take their place at the banquet of the Lord. All, in a word, strongly felt the need of a priest, and called for his arrival with all their wishes. The business was in great difficulty. John Yi offered himself to take the chances and suffer the fatigues of the journey to Peking. He resolved to disguise his rank as a nobleman, and to mingle with the merchants or valets who accompanied the embassy, despite all the snubs and ill-treatment which he must have expected in consequence. Made more

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<sup>7</sup> Dallet spells his name Sing-tok, Daveluy Volme 4 spells the name Sengt'ok, which might mean that his name was Choe Seong-deok.

<sup>8</sup> 신태보 Shin Tae-bo 申太甫 (1768-1839). Martyr.

cautious by the disasters and betrayals of previous years, the leading Christians contrived to conceal the plan and details of this new attempt from the majority of neophytes. But money was needed, and the money was lacking. At first an attempt was made to procure it by placing some funds in a commercial enterprise which promised large profits; but this enterprise failed, and the advances were lost. Appeals were made to the generosity of Christians in the capital and in the provinces, and finally, after interminable delays, everything was ready to send letters to the Bishop of Peking towards the end of 1811<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to the influential Christians named above, the following are cited as having taken a large part in this affair: Justin Jo Dong-seom<sup>10</sup>, who contributed to it from the depths of his exile, and Thomas Han, of the district of Myeon-cheon 沔川 in Naepo, who provided relatively extensive material support.

Two letters were therefore written, one to the Bishop of Peking, telling him all that had happened, and begging him to send a priest to help his children in Korea, and the other to the Sovereign Pontiff. It is believed that it was John Gwon who wrote them in the name of all Christians. They are signed: Francis and others..., probably an assumed name, to confuse the searches of the mandarins in the event that these letters were seized on the way.

Charged with these dispatches, John Yi, accompanied by another Christian whose name we do not know, set out after the embassy, and arrived happily at Peking. But he did not know where to find the Christians, and dared not ask anyone. Remembering then that the method of preparing tobacco had been introduced into China by the missionaries, and that in the beginning it was Christians who traded in it, he went in search of a tobacconist. Providence allowed him to come across one of these shops, on the door of which were painted no superstitious characters. He entered it with confidence, and after a short conversation discovered that the merchant was a Christian. He had himself recognized as such, and asked to be taken to the bishop.

Bishop de Gouvea had died on July 6, 1808. Several years earlier, Bishop Joachim de Souza-Saraiva had been consecrated bishop of Tipase, *in partibus*, and coadjutor of Peking; but the persecution having come on in 1805, it was impossible to obtain permission for him to go to that capital. Also, although he had become titular bishop of Peking by the death of Bishop de Gouvea, he could never enter his episcopal city, and died in Macao on January 6, 1818. On the other hand, Bishop Pires, Portuguese Vincentian, a missionary in Peking, who had been consecrated Bishop of Nanjing by Bishop de Gouvea, was never able either, because of the persecutions, to go to his episcopal city of Nanjing. He was obliged to remain in Peking, where he exercised the episcopal functions, and whose administration he received from the Holy See, after the death of Bishop de Souza-Saraiva. Bishop Pires lived until November 2, 1839. It is he who, in the rest of this story, is often referred to by the title of Bishop of Peking. It was to him that our courier was conducted, and to whom he delivered the following letters:

Letter<sup>11</sup> from the Christians of Korea to the Bishop of Peking.

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<sup>9</sup> (Dallet Note 75. Bishop Daveluy is inclined to believe that there is an error here, and that the letters written towards the end of the year *gyeong-o* (1810-1811) arrived in Peking at the beginning of 1811. In this he is mistaken, for not only are all the existing copies of these letters dated from the year *sin-u* (1811-1812) but the arrival of the two neophytes from Korea is only mentioned in the letter written in December 1812 by M. Richenet, French Lazarist, to M. Chaumont, Superior of the Missions-Étrangères seminary. A letter from the previous year, from the same to the same, does not mention it.)

<sup>10</sup> 조동섬 Jo Dong-seom 趙東暹 (1739-1830). Justin.

<sup>11</sup> The letters were written in Chinese in 1811 and received by the bishop of Beijing in 1812. Two Chinese translators translated the letters into Portuguese, and the translated letters arrived at Lisbon in 1814. The letters were sent to Rome in 1816 and translated again into Italian by D. Giovanni de Cettlem. They were published in French in *Nouvelles lettres édifiantes des missions de la Chine et des Indes Orientales*, Volume 5 (1820) Pages 299-344. The original of this French translation by Fr. Lamiot in Beijing is in IRFA Archive Volume 577 ff. 163-190. The original letters to the Bishop and the

“I, Francis<sup>12</sup>, and other Korean Christians, although we are only miserable sinners, nevertheless, heartbroken with grief, foreheads on the ground before the episcopal throne, we respectfully present our writing to the Master of Religion.

“The enormity of our sins is at its height; we have lost the holy grace of the Lord. O desolation! oh pain! our crimes are the cause of the death of our spiritual Father! Sadness and affliction have dispersed in some, extinguished or weakened in others all feeling of religion. It is already eleven years since we lost all those whose zeal and talents were of any resource. The rigor with which we are constantly watched has prevented us from sending you our humble supplications sooner. All that is said of the saints of antiquity who sighed so long for the coming of the Messiah, all that holy tradition teaches us of the goodness with which Our Savior is willing to condescend to the ardent wishes of his saints; all this sufficiently proves to us that, as in the animal economy, there exists an exact and infallible relation between aspiration and respiration, so a fervent prayer, which proceeds from the bottom of the heart, is a sure means of touching the Lord and to be granted.

“As we reflect on the enormity of our sins which have reached their peak, we humbly recognize that they have closed the door to the effects of God’s mercy, that they have stopped its course. His justice has burst out in such a terrible way, that we have become like a child who, surprised by lightning, is seized with fear and cannot find where to hide, like a herd attacked, who, deprived of its shepherd, flees, gets lost, remains without resources and without any means of salvation. Alas! what can be the cause of our disasters, if not our iniquities? Our heart is cruelly squeezed, our spirit is crushed by the violence of our pain; it has penetrated to the depths of our entrails, it has made us shed tears of blood. Nevertheless, however great our sins, God’s mercy is infinitely greater. Oh! if only the Lord deigned to suspend the blows of his justice, to endure us still, to expect penance from us! Oh! if only it would please him to lend us a helping hand to help us out of the deplorable state to which we are reduced. This is what we ask him day and night, without being able to contain our tears and our sobs. If we wish to escape a near death, it is only to have the happiness of assisting at the holy sacrifice and of confessing our sins; were we to die immediately afterwards, we would be satisfied and transported with joy.

“Besides, when we think that the Holy Mother of God once deigned to make herself favorable to a sinner who had signed his apostasy with his blood, and when we remember the striking conversion of the impious prince who was miraculously touched by the presence of the Blessed Sacrament<sup>13</sup>, however great sinners we may be, we also hope that the Mother of Mercy will little by little appease the wrath of God, and temper the effects of his justice, so that we can participate in the blessing of the seven Sacraments, and find secure asylum in the five wounds of the Savior. Prostrate at the feet of our pastor, who is invested with the authority of God himself, we hope that, reflecting on the formidable job with which he is charged, he will allow himself to be touched by the pain with which the sight of our sins penetrates and overwhelms us and that, by an extraordinary effect of compassion, he will soon procure for us the help of the holy ministry. For this we trust in the holy grace of redemption, common to all mankind; we hope so by the holy name of God and the glory of the martyrs of our kingdom. So be it.”

Next comes an abbreviated account of all that had happened since the King’s death in 1800, and

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Pope were written in Chinese characters. Dallet only prints a portion of the first letter. A copy of the Chinese text by Yu Siding 俞斯定 (1813) has survived, but the original texts have not. The letter to the bishop of Beijing is appended to the back of the letter to the pope, which Yu combined into one letter. The copy is now held in the collection of Academia Sinica in Taiwan. The front page of the copy is stamped with a seal of “bibliotheca major Xujiahui 徐家匯,” the Jesuit library in Shanghai.

<sup>12</sup> This may not be the name of a particular individual but a name used to conceal the identity of the writers.

<sup>13</sup> (Dallet Note 76. Allusions to the conversion of Saint Theophilus and that of Saint Guillaume, Duke of Aquitaine, which are recounted in a Lives of the Saints, translated from Chinese into Korean.)



a short notice of each of the principal martyrs. After which the letter continues as follows:

“There are still many others who, striving to correspond to the grace of the Lord, have, by his help, also consummated their merits by martyrdom. Their families have collected what concerns them. When a missionary comes to the East, we can make a collection of everything, starting with Paul Yun Ji-chung<sup>14</sup>, (martyred in 1791).

“Jesus Christ said: ‘My Father, you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent of the age, and you have revealed them to the little ones (St. Matthew xi, 25). This holy word must be fulfilled to the letter, from generation to generation. It is now verified in our homeland. Among the long-celebrated great and noble families, among the descendants of the mandarins, or those now in office, there are a number of men well-disposed in favor of the Religion; but they are restrained by the desire to achieve, to advance in the world, or by the fear of exposing themselves to ridicule. Among the rich, it is the thirst for gold that stifles the voice of conscience. Those who turn to the Religion and seek justice are those people who are overwhelmed by poverty and misery, who lack all resources. Besides, according to the customs of the country, almost all kinds of commerce and associations are full of superstitions or injustices. Christians who would like to engage in it for a living are thereby excluded. Also rich Christians have become poor; the poor are reduced to begging, to wandering in all directions without finding asylum, they have all the trouble in the world to subsist. However, we hear them neither murmur nor complain. They are happy to wander and suffer, so that they can observe the Religion. Is it not a very special favor from the Lord that animates and sustains us? We are undoubtedly indebted to the protection of the angels, the saints and the whole Church who intercede for us.

“Those of us who had business talents all died in the great persecution. Those who have escaped the tortures, and those who are hidden, are seized with fear; terror has paralyzed their souls. Having lost all their patrimony and all that they possessed, their only resource is begging. There is not one that can be self-sufficient. Moreover, so much suffering has changed the disposition of many who have become fearful and suspicious. But ten years have passed since that violent storm; circumstances have changed, and the crisis is less violent. Little by little spirits can revive, things resume their course. If we had the grace of the sacraments, the Religion could soon shine with a new luster. But we no longer have talented men; we are left with only simple and coarse men. We form many desires, but we have no means at our disposal; even if we met someone who could transact business, our houses being empty, our purses without money, not knowing where to stretch out our hand, what could we do but weep, groan and grieve?

“That is the reason why, for ten years, we have not sent anyone to Beijing. In vain we raised our heads, we stood on tiptoe; in vain we looked to the north, we wept, and we cried out. We would not have been stopped by the difficulty of the roads; the danger to our lives would not have alarmed us; but we could only collect a few hundred taels for the viaticum of the deputies. In the beginning, guardhouses had been built on all sides to watch over the country. The sentries were as close together as the trees in a forest. The smaller villages on the borders were guarded as towns in time of war. For some time now people have relaxed from this severity; the state of things allowed us to act: but on the one hand our poverty left us without resources; on the other, being scattered far and wide, we could not come together and follow our desire. Heartbroken with pain and filled with bitterness, we could only moan without knowing what to do.

“The whole kingdom took part in the great persecution; it was the subject of all conversations. The excellent doctrine and good example of the Christians filled every eye and every ear; their pathetic speeches touched all hearts. People were surprised to see how much the Religion is superior to the science of the world; the charity of Christians was admired; almost all hearts were moved by it. The death of those who are no more is condemned as unjust; people have compassion for those who remain. No, the light of heaven cannot be extinguished, the cry of conscience cannot be stifled. This sentiment is common

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<sup>14</sup> 윤지충 Yun Ji-chung 尹持忠 (1759-1791) Paul. Blessed.

to all men; but, for want of the help which the sacraments procure, nothing within excites and animates the will. Scorned, vilified, constantly having death and torment before our eyes, we are on the outside under oppression. The heart is always the same, but one is afraid of deciding imprudently; we want to hear, but no one tells us what to do; it is truly a state worthy of compassion. However, the present occasion is favorable; you will not refuse to procure such a great good for us.

“We heard that in 1804 there was a violent persecution in Peking; that the entrance to churches was strictly forbidden; that many Christians were put to death, and the European missionaries imprisoned. This news spread among us the greatest consternation, and caused us the most bitter pain. So far, we have not been able to ascertain the truth of these rumors; this puts us in the greatest concern. We beg you to enlighten us on this point; it will be a great consolation to us. The church of Peking being itself very rigorously supervised, and our external affairs exacting the greatest secrecy, please tell us what is best to do in the present circumstances. We implore the help of the Lord, and we implore you to think of finding an effective way to get us out of the dreadful state in which we find ourselves.

“Since the Great Persecution, everything concerning the Religion, its laws and its doctrine, has been known throughout the kingdom. In vain would one wish to hide or dissimulate the laws which forbid sacrificing to ancestors and idols. Those which prescribe fasts and abstinence also make Christians recognized. But as for the first commandment of God and what the Religion strictly prescribes, even if it costs our life, it is never permitted to break it. It is not the same with the laws which prescribe fasts and abstinence; we have seen that it is often dispensed with. Could a general exemption be granted to travelers and servants?

“The devotional books and objects that were taken to the lower courts were engulfed in flames. What was in the Geumbu was locked up to be preserved, it was the same for the writings of the missionary and of Alexander (Hwang) of which we spoke; all this is in the king’s palace. The Christians have not been able to preserve almost any of the books of the Religion intact. Today, only shreds or separate leaves are found. The pictures of the father, his books, his chalice, everything has disappeared. Of his books, only two small volumes remain which are in the hands of a Christian. The books printed in China, which we have seen, are in large format, and therefore difficult to hide. If you had them printed in small format, you could send them to us more easily, and it would be easier for us to hide them. We ask you to consider this request.

“Now that we have no means of receiving the sacraments, it is a very unfortunate thing for us to lack help at the point of death. If we could have holy things, to which were attached plenary indulgences, they would serve to animate us and to strengthen in us faith, hope and charity.

“As, for ten years, we have not been able to have any communication with you, we do not know the name of the Sovereign Pontiff; for how many years he has governed the Church; we also do not know what concerns the priests of the Peking Church; how many there are, besides the bishop; what is the progress of the Religion in China; how many kingdoms there are in the East where the Religion is preached and practiced publicly. Please give us some details on these different points.

“None of us who have survived the persecution are well acquainted with the matters which were transacted secretly in the *gyeong-sin* year (1800). Simon Kim and Yu Jeon-si<sup>15</sup> wrote to us, it is true, from their prison; but they told us only general things, and dared not enter into any detail. They informed us that at the end of ten years a great vessel was to come; that the numerous sectarians of Nanking were causing great trouble. They gave us the assurance that the priests of the Peking Church had resolved to come to the East to work for the salvation of our souls. But the great persecution prevented us from going to receive these missionaries; we have felt the bitterest pain for them, and we are inconsolable for not knowing what has become of them. If the Lord has kept them safe and sound, when they see the deputies we are sending to Peking, they will no doubt think of fulfilling their promise. We beg them with the

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<sup>15</sup> (Dallet Note 77. These were the last two envoys sent to China by Fr. Zhou. They were seized on their return from Peking, and the bishop's reply was found upon them.) The exact Korean names are unknown.

liveliest entreaties; we desire them with as much ardor as a child longs for the breast. Prostrated on the ground, we implore above all the mercy and infinite goodness of God, who is our only support. We hope from the virtue and zeal of the fathers that the words of salvation will reach us with the rapidity of a shooting star, and will restore us all to life. If the shop which was near the door of one of the houses that the Europeans have in Peking was repaired, it would be easier for us to communicate with the church of Peking. We humbly request that you provide us with this convenience.

“In the *sin-yu* year (1801), after the priest and a large number of Christians had been put to death, our government informed the Emperor of China. The Peking church will no doubt have learned something from it. Since that time, it has happened several times that some of our compatriots, pretending to be Christians, have gone to spy. They are apostates, traitors to the Religion, who pretend by this means to show loyalty, to obtain some reward. We hope you will have discovered their malice, and that you will not have been fooled. If communication between you and us is impeded, would it not be appropriate to agree on a Christian house in the city, in which the meeting would be held?”

“Our King is very seriously ill; the life seems to be spent in him, and the remedies have no effect. We pray to our own church (the Beijing Church) to ask God to protect him and restore him to health.

“In writing to the Sovereign Pontiff, we have greatly exceeded the limits of our condition. Forced by the unfortunate circumstances in which we find ourselves, we could not do otherwise. We ask that you translate our letter and send it to him. It is a slight testimony of the affection that, in our lowliness, we present to him who on earth is the vicar of God and the cause of our happiness. We wish our case to be communicated to him and faithfully detailed, in the hope that he will be touched with compassion for us.

“We would still have to say an infinity of things that we cannot put on the silk. The bearer will be able, up to a certain point, to make up for it.

“We beseech you to think of us, to take action as soon as possible, and to give us your blessing, by the holy name of God and the merits of redemption. So be it.

“The 3rd of the eleventh lunar month of the year *sin-mi* (December 18, 1811).”

In their letter to the Pope, the neophytes expose their sad situation, and solicit spiritual help, in an even more energetic way.

Letter from the Christians of Korea to the Sovereign Pontiff.

“Francis and the other Christians of Korea prostrate on the ground, beating our breasts, offer this letter to the Head of the whole Church, Father most high and great.

“It is with the greatest earnestness, the liveliest ardor that we beg Your Holiness to have compassion on us, to give us proofs of the mercy which fills your heart, and to grant us as soon as possible the benefits of redemption. We live in a small kingdom, and have had the good fortune to receive holy doctrine, first by books, and ten years later, by preaching and participating in the seven Sacraments. Seven years later, a persecution arose, the missionary who had come to us was put to death with a large number of Christians, and all the others, overwhelmed with affliction and fear, gradually dispersed. They cannot meet for religious exercises, everyone hides. We have no hope left except in the very great divine mercy, and the great compassion of Your Holiness, who will be good enough to help and deliver us without delay; it is the object of our prayers and groans. For ten years we have been overwhelmed with sorrows and afflictions; many died of old age or various diseases, we do not know the number; those who remain do not know when they will be able to receive holy instruction. They desire this grace, as in a brilliant thirst one desires something to quench one’s thirst; they call for it, as in a time of drought, one calls for rain. But the sky is very high, it cannot be reached; the sea is very wide, and there is no bridge by means of which we can go in search of help. We read something from the holy books. Holy Religion has been preached throughout the world; it is only in our eastern kingdom that it has been announced

without a missionary and only by books. However, several hundred martyrs gave their lives for God, before and after the arrival of the missionary, and the converts, currently existing, are no less than ten thousand.

“We, poor sinners, cannot express to Your Holiness with what sincerity, with what ardor we desire to receive your assistance. But our kingdom is small, remote, situated in a corner of the sea, there come neither ships nor carriages by means of which we can receive your instructions and your orders, and what is the cause of such deprivation, if not our lack of fervor and the enormity of our sins? That is why now, beating our breasts with deep fear and sincere pain, we most humbly pray to the great God who became incarnate, who died on the cross, who has more concern for sinners than for the righteous, and Your Holiness who stands in the place of God, who cares for all, and truly delivers sinners. We have been redeemed, we have left the darkness; but the world afflicts our bodies; sin and malice oppress our souls. We have no way of receiving the blessing of baptism<sup>16</sup> and confession; we cannot participate in the sacrifice of the Most Holy Body of Jesus Christ; our desire is great, but when will it be fulfilled? Our tears and our groans, our afflictions are of little value, but we consider that the mercy of Your Holiness is without limit and without measure, that therefore it will have compassion on the flocks of this kingdom who have lost their pastor, and that you will send missionaries to us, as soon as possible, so that the benefits and merits of the Savior Jesus may be announced, that our souls may be rescued and delivered, and that the holy name of God may be glorified everywhere and always.

“1°. Formerly, we had heard nothing said of what pertains to other nations, but, for some years, on the occasion of the propagation of the Holy Religion, we have had knowledge of things in Europe. We have had much pleasure talking about it among ourselves. Our whole kingdom admires the science of Europeans in mathematics, and the skill of their artists. Moreover, for some time the population had increased, and consequently poverty, famine, and misery. Except a few stubborn doctors, enemies of the Religion; excepting a few equally obstinate proselytes of Fo, everyone, tired of so many calamities, groaned and longed to be instructed in the holy Law. However, due to natural weakness and lack of means, the Religion had not made much progress, when suddenly the great persecution arose. All the most educated and the most virtuous were put to death. The affliction that others feel shows that their feelings have not changed, but the legal prohibition, the torments, the death with which they are threatened, and of which they have seen terrible examples, frighten them. If a man of courage appeared to animate them, it seems certain that they would hasten to practice the Religion; they would go there with ardor, like the waters which, descending from the mountains, rush into the valleys,

“2°. Our kingdom, bordering the empire of China of which it is a tributary, is located at the end of the world; it has particular morals to which it is very attached. Exit and entry are strictly forbidden, especially since the persecution; the sentries watch with a hundred times more attention than before. We also learned that there is also a persecution in Beijing. If therefore we want to deliver our souls, the remedy must be sent by sea, there is no other way on which we can count. Our kingdom is accessible by land only to the North, the other three sides are surrounded by the sea. From our shores to the province of Chang-tong in China, there are not a hundred leagues, so that when the wind blows from this part, we could almost hear the cocks crow. The southern part of our kingdom is only a few thousand *li* (a few hundred leagues) from the province of Nanking, and therefore only three or four hundred leagues from Macao, where Holy Religion is public. If a vessel were sent from Macao to pass between the province of Nanking and the island of Ryukyu, heading north, in a few days it could reach our southern coast. From there to our capital, there is no more than ten leagues. Although this western sea is shallow, small ships can pass through it; we can therefore only expect help from this side; that is why we humbly beg Your Holiness to deal promptly with the subject of our request.

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<sup>16</sup> (Dallet Note 78. Here it is obviously a question of solemn baptism.)

“3°. When heavy weather forces some foreign ships to touch our coasts, they are not allowed to stay there. Care is taken not to leave them alone; they are continually watched over; and they are forced to leave as quickly as possible. That is why the ship we are asking for should have a prudent, capable, experienced man, who knows how to write Chinese characters well, so that we can, by this means, come to an understanding with him. Moreover, it is fitting that the Sovereign Pontiff and the King<sup>17</sup> send presents and letters full of honesty to our King. They will do well to say in these letters, that their only intention is that only one God be adored, that Holy Religion be announced, that all men be free, that kingdoms be preserved, and that peace reign among the peoples. It would also be necessary to explain very clearly the doctrine of Christianity, and to persuade with all sincerity and in the best possible manner, that the priests do not seek to conquer the kingdom, but that they come only to exercise charity. Perhaps, by this means, our compatriots would open their eyes, feel their suspicions dissipate, and see the truth. They have long known that Europeans excel in the arts, sciences, prudence and other talents. They are careful not to measure themselves against them, or to offend them. They know very well that European preachers travel all over the world, without any of them thinking of seizing foreign kingdoms. But our little kingdom is filled with suspicion and fear. It will not be able to determine itself; certainly it will send to Peking, to warn the Emperor and receive his orders, in order to ensure the protection of the said Emperor, and in order to avoid being punished. Now, how could the Emperor oblige our government not to receive someone who comes to compliment him and give him presents? Our King and his ministers will therefore have nothing to fear, and will not fail to welcome this envoy.

“4°. In the southern sea of Korea, which is near the province of Nanking and not far from Macao, one finds many islands, which belong to no one, and which are cultivable and habitable. Our kingdom has no communication with other countries, either by land or by sea<sup>18</sup>; that is why we are coarse and weak. Having little talent and knowledge, we do not undertake to navigate to distant countries. It is even a proverbial curse among us to say to someone, “Go to sea.” A ship could therefore be sent from Macao to examine these abandoned islands, and settle in some of those which are the most suitable; or, if a few inhabitants are found there, convert them, and make them Christians. By this means we might perhaps succeed in getting out of our sad position; but this is a hopeless remedy, because it takes far too long. The best thing is to send a ship directly and promptly to us.

“5°. We have in this kingdom very little capacity, very little intelligence. We are far from having the talents of other peoples; the things most necessary for procuring subsistence, such as implements of agriculture and weaving, are worthless; our poverty is extraordinary. Neither the nobles nor the people have assured resources that can provide them with food and clothing when, as a result of droughts or floods, a year of famine occurs. As for the Christians, because of the persecution, they run in confusion sometimes to the east, sometimes to the west; they cannot remain in peace anywhere, nor profit from the resources such as they would have elsewhere to subsist. Therefore, they are almost all reduced to the state of begging. Ordinarily the soul governs the body, and the body helps the soul; this correlation is natural. But now, our bodies lack the necessary means to preserve life, our souls lack the indispensable remedies to revive the virtues. Those who were learned and had the gift of speech, all died in the persecution, and there were not converted others able to replace them. There are only women, children,

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<sup>17</sup> (Dallet Note 79. The King of Portugal on whom Macau depends.) The King of Portugal ruled not only over Macao but the entire Chinese Catholic mission. He had the right to appoint the bishops of Beijing who were at this time responsible for the Church in Korea.

<sup>18</sup> (Dallet Note 80. China is not excepted, because communications between her and Korea are very limited. They are limited, as we have seen, to a few official embassies, and to one or two fairs a year, on the frontier, during the passage of ambassadors.)

and men so ignorant that they cannot distinguish between the two letters lou and you<sup>19</sup>. However great the number of Christians, they are not sufficiently instructed; they know that there is a God, a soul, a reward and a punishment; for the other articles of the Religion, they hardly know them; they can neither teach them nor explain them. Moreover, they are restrained by fear of persecution and human respect. Tormented by hunger and cold, overwhelmed with work, they cannot help each other; they are scattered like sheep who have lost their pastor, they have fled everywhere, they cannot meet for the exercises of the Religion, but all hope that the Lord will have mercy on them and will not abandon them.

“6°. We have heard that as a general rule when there are more than a thousand Christians in a place, a priest must be sent there, and that when there are more than ten thousand, a bishop must be sent there. It is true that we are little instructed in the Religion; we only know how to fast and say prayers, and, verily, we are unworthy to be called Christians. However, we are more than ten thousand who know God, and we have not yet obtained to be governed by a bishop. We are overwhelmed with grief, thinking that the object of our hope is so distant. We ask with the greatest earnestness through the mercy of Jesus Christ, that Your Holiness send us as soon as possible a spiritual master to deliver our souls.

“7°. It was not twenty years since we were converted to the faith; and it was not seven years since the missionary arrived, when the great persecution arose. In those which preceded, we had had few martyrs. But that which began in 1801 caused a great stir, and Holy Religion appeared with more brilliance. There were then more than a hundred martyrs<sup>20</sup>, nearly four hundred exiles. The spiritual benefit of the Sacraments and the increase of divine grace had given them strength. As for the prisoners who had little education, and who had said few of the prayers, as they were rude people, it was judged that it did not matter whether they were or were not Christians, and they were set free. They came out like fish one after another; we do not know the number. We also do not know the number of those who, having had no personal relationship with the missionary, and having not been denounced, fled, hid, and are still wandering, without a home, without a family. Have pity on so many souls who, deprived of any means of salvation, have only death to await. If in Europe they don't have compassion on us, if they don't send us help, and if we can't expect it from Peking, we will fall into despair, and all will be over. If help is delayed one day, we suffer one day; if it delays two days, we suffer two days; if we do not see a ship arrive from Europe, it will be the precept of Jesus Christ, to teach and baptize all nations, it will be the words of the Holy Gospel on love of neighbor and zeal for salvation souls, it will all be like an old hat and a useless rag. We will lose all hope, like the man who, having fallen into the water, first tries hard not to drown, in the confidence that someone will come to his rescue, and finally sees himself deceived in his expectation. We beg Your Holiness to forgive us these inappropriate cries, these disorderly words, this bewilderment which the sight of peril causes us. Like those who fall into water or fire, we are no longer masters of ourselves and we lose our minds.

“8°. The state of permanent persecution obliges us to write this letter on silk, so that the wearer can hide it in his clothes. The danger of losing his life is, for him, ten thousand to one. This is why we cannot send voluminous books to Your Holiness. We only send the acts of the martyrdom of the missionary, of the catechist Colomba, and of a few others, about ten in all; with the names and surnames of forty-five who have distinguished themselves the most. Their acts fill several volumes which we will humbly take the liberty of sending to you at the first opportunity; for our martyred fellow citizens,

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<sup>19</sup> (Dallet Note 81. Proverbial expression to signify great ignorance, for it is very easy to distinguish these two letters from one another.)

<sup>20</sup> (Dallet Note 82. We have seen above that the real number was much more considerable, and amounted to at least two hundred. In the state of dispersion and isolation to which the Christians were reduced, it is easy to explain why the authors of this letter could not then have known the exact figure.)

although from a poor foreign kingdom, have had the happiness of being admitted into the Holy Religion, their names and their merits are written in the book of those who have died for justice. They are truly pleasing to God; they are loved by the Blessed Virgin, and by the holy angels; they will be no less pleasing to Your Holiness than they are to God. By the merits of our martyrs, we hope to receive as soon as possible the spiritual help that we ask for with a thousand and ten thousand tears of blood.

“The 24th of the tenth lunar month of the year *sin-mi* (December 9, 1811).”

Reading these letters from the Christians of Korea, the story of their martyrs, the account of the sufferings of the neophytes, their earnest pleas to obtain a pastor, the bishop and the few missionaries who were still with him shed abundant tears. Unfortunately, it was impossible to satisfy these ardent desires of the Koreans, and to send them a priest. The church of Peking itself, deprived as a result of the French Revolution of almost all help from Europe, the object of the persecution which overthrew the churches, massacred or exiled the missionaries and native priests, and had just destroyed the seminary, the church of Peking, we say, could hardly suffice; and the bishop, heartbroken, had to dismiss John Yi Ye-jin, without even making him any promise for the future.

The journey, however, had a happy result. Relations with China were re-established, and precautions taken to make them henceforth more regular and easier; this alone was an encouragement and a hope for the poor faithful of Korea, whom absolute isolation would have reduced to despair. On his return, John Yi took with him a large number of rosaries, medals, images and other religious objects, which had to be sold at a very high price, to cover the costs of the trip, and to pay the debts contracted for this purpose. It was even impossible to make a present of some of these objects to those who had contributed in advance to the expenses of the expedition, and man being always man, several had the weakness to find themselves offended at not receiving this little reward which they had well deserved, and gave way to annoying murmurings and regrettable quarrels.

The Bishop of Peking sent to Europe the letter addressed to the Sovereign Pontiff by the Koreans, and the Pope received it in his prison at Fontainebleau. Who will tell us of the painful feelings that tore his heart on reading this touching appeal from his most distant and most abandoned children, and seeing himself unable to come to their aid? The domain of Saint-Peter had just been confiscated; the clergy of France had barely begun to be recruited, and the numerous voids left by the scaffolds, the pontoons, and exile, were far from being filled; almost everywhere the religious orders had been annihilated; the redemptive work of the Propagation of the Faith did not yet exist; missionary vocations only arose from time to time; in a word, throughout the world, the Church suffered the terrible repercussions of the Revolution, and seemed threatened even in its very existence. What could the Vicar of Jesus Christ do, except to pray, to appeal to God, and, from the depths of his prison, to pour groans into the heart of Jesus crucified and abandoned. It is written that the prayer of one who humbles himself penetrates heaven; much more the prayer of one who is crushed by misfortune, who suffers persecution for justice. So God answered the prayer of his Pontiff. He multiplied his graces to the neophytes of Korea, so that their Church, formerly formed and enlarged without the help of priests, could be reconstituted and developed on its own, without external support, by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. He did more, and to make manifest to all that the propagation of the Gospel in this country is his work, and that this work is indestructible, he allowed, as we shall soon see, that new storms came to strengthen it rather than to shake it.

The two or three years which followed the sending of the letters to the Bishop of Peking and to the Sovereign Pontiff, were comparatively quiet enough. There was no general persecution. However, as the proscription laws against Christians had not been revoked, the fate of the neophytes remained left to the discretion of the local authorities, and there were a few martyrs in the various provinces. God wanted to remind the faithful that the rest they had enjoyed for ten years was only a truce, that they should consider themselves an army in enemy territory, always exposed and harassed, and be ready accordingly.

In 1812, at Hongju, the martyrdom of Paul Yi Yeo-sam<sup>21</sup> took place. Exiled for the faith in 1802, he had just obtained his pardon and returned to his native country, when, for reasons unknown to us, the mandarin seized some of his relatives. These denounced him, and one of them even led the satellites to the village of Gaejigi, district of Geumsan, province of Jeolla, where Paul had taken refuge; it was the third time that he had fallen into the hands of the persecutors. His will held firm in the tortures; he courageously answered the various questions of the mandarin, and the latter, seeing that he could not make him apostatize, condemned him to death. No details have been preserved of the various tortures he had to undergo during the six months he was in prison at Hongju. Several times his pagan friends urged him to preserve his life by a few words of submission and complaisance; but he constantly replied that he was determined to die for God. At last, on a market day, during the eleventh lunar month, the mandarin resolved to get rid of him, and ordered two vigorous castigators to beat him with the triangular stick. After a long beating, Paul lying motionless, the Mandarin said to see if he was still alive; the executioners replied that he was almost dead. But suddenly, to everyone's great surprise, Paul got up, sat down properly on his heels, as is customary for a solemn ceremony, and asked for water, which was brought to him at once. Then, as he was still only a catechumen, he made a great sign of the cross, and poured water on his head to confer baptism on himself<sup>22</sup>. After which, turning his eyes towards the amazed mandarin, he said to him: "I am a great sinner, and if you only beat me as you have done, my death is still far away; if you want me to die, strike here," and with his hand he pointed to a point on the side of the body. Two blows given as he had indicated, were sufficient, and he breathed his last. He was then about forty-three years old.

It is said that at the moment when he consummated his martyrdom, three young people, passing not far from there, saw a brilliant light which rose to the sky. They said to each other, "What is this? But it's not fire. It is unique!" and they continued on their way. One of them, who was a Christian, returned home, three days later, heard the news of Paul's death, and, calculating the day and the hour, he recognized that the appearance of this light coincided exactly with the martyrdom, and in his joy, he began to praise God for this wonder. Paul's pagan relatives and friends removed his body to give him the honors of burial; but they were much surprised to see that this scourged and torn body had no trace of wounds, and on the contrary seemed quite radiant. One of them, struck by this strange circumstance, converted, and from then on became a devout Christian. An eyewitness to the light that appeared at the time of Paul's martyrdom still lives today, as do several others who heard about it that very day, and there was recently received the testimony of a pagan whose father and mother had seen the body intact when it was buried. The name of Ye-sa-mi long remained proverbial among the satellites of Hongju. They said to the Christians in the executions: "You must bear the blows like Ye-sa-mi;" and after the death of the confessors, seeing no extraordinary light, they repeated: "This one, no doubt, is not worth Ie-sa-mi."

The following year (1813<sup>23</sup>), we find, in the city of Gongju, three new martyrs.

The first is Paul Hwang, who had the glory of confessing the name of Jesus Christ for the first time in 1794. It is said that even before that he had already suffered severe persecution in his own house. His father, a staunch enemy of the Christian name, went so far as to put burning coals between his fingers, and on the most sensitive parts of his body, without being able to obtain his apostasy. Paul Hwang was

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<sup>21</sup> 이여삼 Yi Yeo-sam 李汝三 Paul (?-1812). Martyr.

<sup>22</sup> (Dallet Note 83. It is needless to point out here that this so-called baptism was void, and that one cannot baptize oneself. But Paul was in good faith. He could not manifest more vividly his desire for the sacrament, and the Church teaches us that, in the case of absolute impossibility, the desire alone suffices. All the more so when baptism of desire is joined by baptism of blood.)

<sup>23</sup> Actually this persecution occurred in 1812.



arrested in the district of Boryeong, on the 15th of the fourth lunar month, and brought to the tribunal of Haemi. Many other Christians were caught around this time and imprisoned with him. Asked by the mandarin about his religious teacher and his accomplices, he replied: "He who taught me the Religion is dead, and those whom you call my accomplices are all here with me." Not satisfied with this answer, the mandarin urged him to denounce the Christians he knew, and subjected him, three times, to the torture of the spreading of the bones of the legs and the puncture of the sticks. In this horrible torture, he stood firm and generously confessed his faith. He was therefore deposited in prison, and, after some months of suffering, was, in the eighth lunar month, transported to the governor's tribunal at Gongju. In the prisons of Gongju, he met several other Christians, including Peter Won and Mathias Chang.

Peter Won was from the village of Deokmeori<sup>24</sup>, in the district of Gyeolseong. He lived from his work in a pagan pottery of this country, when he converted with his elder brother. In order to be able to practice the Religion more freely, the two brothers first emigrated to the district of Hongju, to another pagan factory where they were seized by the mandarin and put to torture. Then, having been released, they took refuge in Euisil, district of Yeonsan, in a Christian pottery. The persecution having broken out, and the Christians of this pottery having been denounced, the two brothers fled to the district of Jincheon. There they were arrested again, taken to the prefecture of Yeonsan, and after a first interrogation, sent to the criminal judge of Gongju. The eldest had the weakness to apostatize and was condemned to exile; but Peter Won, brought before the governor, suffered cruel tortures in three interrogations, without weakening for a single instant, and died gloriously in prison, the night which followed the last question, about fifteen days after his arrival at Gongju, in the first days of the tenth lunar month.

Mathias Jang Tae-won<sup>25</sup>, was also from the village of Deokmeori. His parents were very poor, and when he lost them, being still a pagan, he first entered as a servant or laborer in different houses; then, tired of his misery, ended up joining a troupe of itinerant actors. But having had the good fortune to embrace the Religion, he immediately left his licentious life, renounced his bad habits, particularly drunkenness, and went to work at the Christian factory of Solti, in the district of Geumsan, where he practiced for some time with great fervor. He then fell into relaxation, he even took a concubine without however entirely ceasing his religious practices, when his legitimate wife having died, he married his concubine, and zealously returned to the exercise of daily prayer, doing a severe and continual penance for his past aberrations. He was captured, about the eighth lunar month, at Euisil, district of Yeonsan, whither he had fled, and taken to Gongju. He bravely endured violent tortures, and although the tortures of hunger and thirst had torn from him, for a moment, some signs of apostasy, he retracted almost immediately, thanks to the exhortations of his companions in captivity, and became firm as ever.

Reunited in prison with Paul Hwang, he shared the same sufferings, and both deserved to be condemned to death together. When they went to execution, the crowd pursued them with sarcasm and gross jokes; but Mathias, without changing color, and without losing his calm, answered them aloud: "You should not laugh, but rather cry, for it is your fate and not ours that is really miserable." Both were beheaded together on the 19th of the tenth lunar month of the *gye-yu* year, 1813. Paul was fifty-nine years old.

To these three names must be added that of another confessor of the faith, to whom God did not grant the palm of martyrdom. Yun Saeng-won 尹生員 from a noble family, who was just beginning to practice the Religion, and had only learned the Angelus, was also arrested at the same time, in the district of Yeonsan, and transferred to Gongju. No punishment could wring from him a word of apostasy, and he

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<sup>24</sup> 덕머리 Deokmeori (Now 충남 홍성군 은하면 덕실리 덕머리 마을 South Chungcheong Hongseong-gun Eunha-myeon Deogsil-ri Deokmeori maeul)

<sup>25</sup> 장대원 Jang Dae-won (1754-1812) Matthias.

should have shared the fate of the preceding ones; but as he had made a name for himself by an altogether extraordinary filial piety, the governor had, according to the customs of the country, to diminish his sentence, and condemned him only to exile in a northern province. He remained there until 1832; on his return he learned the true doctrine thoroughly, and practiced it faithfully until his death.

All the other Christian prisoners having been released or exiled, this affair had no further consequences.

The lack of success of the preceding journey to Peking had afflicted the Christians, without depriving them of hope, and the principal among them wished, at the following embassy, to make a new attempt. But, several people who had contributed to the first, this time refused their assistance, and the difficulty of procuring funds caused a considerable delay. However, by knocking on new doors, both in the capital and in the provinces, they managed to collect enough to meet the expenses of a second expedition, and John Yi Yeo-jin, once again exposed himself to fatigue and the perils of this long journey. He left at the end of the year 1813, and this time again, by a special protection of God, he arrived without accident in Peking. But the desires of Korean Christianity could not be satisfied. The Bishop of Peking was still in the same difficulties as before, and not only could he not send a priest, but he did not even dare to promise one later.

After his return from this journey, John Yi Yeo-jin no longer appears prominently in the history of Christianity. He had had the honor of renewing relations with the Church of China. There, it seems, his mission ended, and from now on he only helped his brothers by his examples and his exhortations. God, to increase his virtue, allowed him to be cruelly tried in 1815, where he lost one after the other, in the space of three months, his mother, his wife, his brother, his sister-in-law and a nephew. He died quietly in 1830, at Eugi<sup>26</sup>, Yangji district.

John Gwon Gi-in, who had also taken so many steps, taken so much care, and undergone so much fatigue to procure new priests for Korea, was deeply affected by the failure of this second trip. "It's my fault," he often said; "I am too great a sinner, I cannot attract the favorable glances of God, and he refuses to listen to my continual prayers." He had gone to settle in the mountains, in order to be able more freely to occupy himself with the affairs of Christendom. Some time after John Yi's return, he said to those who were close to him: "I am not far from my last hour." In fact, he soon fell seriously ill, and died in the third lunar month of the year *gap-sul* (1814), at the age of forty-seven.

That same year, Pius Kim Jin-hu<sup>27</sup> ended his stormy career. Born in Solmoi<sup>28</sup>, in the district of Myeoncheon, of an honest family, he devoted himself passionately to superstitions, magic, and geoscopy. He was about fifty years old when he first heard of the Christian Religion; but his heart, desirous only of the honors, riches and pleasures of this world, was then deaf to the voice of Grace. Having obtained a small function close to the governor of the province, he resisted for a long time the solicitations of his own son. In the end, however, his soul was won to Jesus Christ; he resigned, broke with his pagan friends, and began to practice fervently. Brought before the courts for the first time in 1791, he courageously confessed his faith. Having then escaped, no one really knows how, he was successively recaptured and released four or five times, and had to undergo interrogations and tortures at Hongju, at Jeonju and at Gongju. It is believed that during the great persecution he only avoided death by uttering the formula of apostasy.

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<sup>26</sup> This may be Euni, in Yongin, south of Seoul.

<sup>27</sup> 김진후 Kim Jin-hu 金震厚 (1739-1814) Pius. Blessed.

<sup>28</sup> 설모 Solmoi: now 충남 당진군 우강면 서산리 South Chungcheong Dangjin-gun Ugang-myeon Seosan-ri.

Sent into exile at this time, he was, shortly after his return, arrested again in 1805, and taken to the prefecture of Haemi, where this time he behaved like a true Christian. He was not sentenced to death, but the cases dragging on, he remained in prison, without trial, for an indefinite term. His grave and dignified character earned him the respect and esteem of the praetorians and jailers, and he practiced his Religion in full knowledge of everyone. Finally, after ten years of seclusion borne with exemplary patience, he died at the age of seventy-six, on the 20th day of the tenth lunar month. It is unclear whether he succumbed to disease, starvation, or beatings; but the long persecutions which had preceded his death made his memory dear to all Christendom. Among his descendants we will count several martyrs, among others the first Korean priest Andrew Kim.

Let us also mention the edifying end of Simeon Yu Geun-myeong<sup>29</sup>, a provincial nobleman, originally from Soyak-gol<sup>30</sup>, in the district of Myeoncheon. His character was naturally gentle and good. He spoke little, and never had useless and worldly words in his mouth; also he was called the excellent man, or, again, the pious son, because of his fine behavior towards his parents and the assiduous care he lavished on them. After their death, on the days marked for the sacrifices, he redoubled his zeal, and all the neighbors said: "There is no one to fulfill, like him, the duties of filial piety." Having emigrated to Hwang-mo-sil<sup>31</sup>, district of Deoksan, he was there instructed in the Religion and embraced it, at the age of fifty-nine<sup>32</sup>. From that day on, he abandoned pagan superstitions, and only knew how to serve and honor God. Baptized by Ludovico de Gonzaga Yi Dan-won 李端源, who was then serving as a 'priest' at Naepo, he always showed himself the model of his brothers, sharing all his income with the poor and the unfortunate. He gave freedom to his slaves, and made it his principal occupation to instruct and exhort the many Christians who came to his house. He was taken on the fifth lunar month of the year *sin-yu* (1801), and put to torture several times, which he endured with constancy. Later, he had the weakness to declare where his books of the Religion were; but he would never denounce any Christian, and refused until the end to give the slightest sign of apostasy. Sentenced to exile in a distant province<sup>33</sup>, he remained faithful to his exercises, only showing regret at not having any more religious books. Finally, after long and courageously endured suffering, he died while saying his prayers, on his knees, sitting on his heels, to the great surprise and admiration of the inhabitants of the place. He was eighty-two years old.

Such is the story of the thirteen years following the first general persecution. In this interval, the Church of Korea reformed; the faithful, almost annihilated, rose to their feet; they began to educate themselves again, to organize themselves; they gave heaven new martyrs; they renewed relations with the clergy of China, and with the Holy See; finally they conquered new brethren and firmly established the Gospel in provinces where it was previously unknown, in Gangwon, and especially in Gyeongsang. This last province, one of the richest in the country, often called by the natives the base and foundation of the kingdom, is at the same time the home of ancient superstitions, born of the mixture of ancestor worship and the practices of the doctrine of Fo (the Buddha). In the designs of God, the time had come for these new Christendoms to receive the baptism of blood; also, while in 1801 the persecution had taken place in the three provinces of Gyeonggi, Chungcheong and Jeolla, which were then the principal centers of the Christians, this time we are going to see the violence of the storm fall especially on the neophytes of Gangwon and Gyeongsang.

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<sup>29</sup> This should probably be Gwon-myeong.

<sup>30</sup> Not Soyak-gol but 쇠악골 Soiak-gol. Now 당진군 송악면 가아리 Dangjin-gun Songak-myeon Gaa-ri.

<sup>31</sup> 황모실 Hwangmo-sil (Now 충남 예산군 고덕면 호음리 South Chungcheong Yesan-gun Godeok-myeon Hoeum-ri)

<sup>32</sup> This should be 49.

<sup>33</sup> When he was already 68.

## Chapter 2: Persecution of 1815. — The martyrs of Daegu and Wonju.

Food shortages are quite frequent in Korea, and as this country, obstinate in its old traditions of absolute isolation, has almost no commercial relations with other peoples, and can therefore receive no help from outside, they are very murderous, especially among the pagans. We say: especially among the pagans, because either by the special protection of God, or because of the greater charity which reigns among Christians, it is a proven fact that, all things considered, the latter die of hunger in far fewer in numbers than their idolatrous compatriots. However, the harvest of 1814 having failed almost completely, a terrible famine, such as in living memory had never been seen, devastated all the provinces of the kingdom. The little grain that had been collected was consumed during the winter, and in the spring the whole country presented a frightful spectacle. Many perished at home in the torments of hunger, and many also fell and died on the roads where need had led them to venture.

In the midst of so many evils, a wretched traitor named Jeon Ji-su, took it upon himself to live at the expense of Christians. Going from village to village in the province of Gyeongsang, he begged for money, clothes and food. The faithful gave him as much as they could, and probably a lot, considering their misery. But soon all resources having been exhausted, the alms diminished, and not satisfied with what he received, Jeon Ji-su conceived the plan to denounce the Christians, as much for revenge as to be able to plunder them with impunity, and appropriate their few assets without hindrance. He knew very well that famine gives more strength to all bad instincts, and felt sure in advance of finding support among the satellites whose cupidity would not fail to be excited by the bait of considerable and unpunished plunder. He therefore went to make his denunciation, which was received with great joy by the mandarin and his people, and as everyone knows the custom of Christians to return to their homes to celebrate the great feasts, it was decided that the first blow would be struck unexpectedly on Easter Day, which this year fell on the 22nd day of the second lunar month.

When that day arrived, while the assembled Christians were chanting together aloud the usual prayers, the traitor placed himself at the head of the satellites, and they suddenly invaded the village of Morae-san<sup>1</sup>, in the district of Chongsong. The Christians who had no expectation of persecution were completely taken by surprise, and, believing at first to have to do with brigands, began, under the leadership of Joseph Go<sup>2</sup>, an agile and vigorous man, to repel force by force; but as soon as they learned that these men were satellites officially sent by the Mandarin, all resistance ceased, and Joseph Go himself, having become gentle as a lamb, let himself be seized first. A large number of Christians were taken in this expedition, and conducted to the tribunal of Gyeongju, on which their district depended. A few days later, other satellites fell unexpectedly on the village of Meoru-san<sup>3</sup>, district of Jinpo, and took many prisoners, who were deposited in the criminal prefecture of Andong.

This sad news soon spread everywhere. Terror fell among the Christians, and as always happens in similar circumstances, some fled and sought asylum in other provinces; the others, not having the means of fleeing, remained in their villages, awaiting in continual dread the hour of their arrest, passing the day in the forests or on the mountains, returning furtively to their homes during the night to prepare some food, and immediately returning to the retreats of the wild beasts, less formidable in their eyes than the satellites of the mandarins. On all sides numerous seizures were made, and soon the prisons overflowed with Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> 모래산 Morae-san (Now 경북 청송군 현서면 고모길 (백자동) 모래실 North Gyeongsang Cheongsong-gun Hyeonseo-myeon gomogil (Baekja-dong) Moraesil). However some records call it Norae-san.

<sup>2</sup> 고성운 Go Seong-un 高聖云 (?-1816) Joseph. Blessed.

<sup>3</sup> 머루산 Meoru-san village (Now 경북 영양군 석보면 포산리 North Gyeongsang Yeongyang-gun Seogbo-myeon Posan-ri)

In Gyeongju, the tortures and the hunger brought the apostasy of many neophytes who were, consequently, released immediately. But their companions showed more courage, and boldly confessed the name of Jesus Christ. Tradition relates that seven of them, consumed by hunger, or killed by torture, died in prison during the course of the third lunar month, before they could be transferred to a higher tribunal. They were: Paul Park, father of Park Chun-cheong<sup>4</sup>; John Park Gwan-seo, his first cousin, who, a widower and newly converted, was baptized only during the persecution; Gosan Kim Seo-bang, Paul's maternal uncle, so called because he came from the district of Gosan; Kim Sa-il of Gyeongsang Province; and three others whose names have not been preserved. However, as there are neither eyewitnesses nor written documents, concerning what happened then in this remote part of the province of Gyeongsang, we dare not affirm anything positively. The prisoners who, constant in their confession of faith, survived starvation and torture, were soon sent to the great city of Daegu, the chief town of the province. They were Andrew Seo<sup>5</sup> with his wife Barbara Choe<sup>6</sup>, and his son-in-law Francis Choe Yeo-ok<sup>7</sup>; Alexis Kim Si-woo<sup>8</sup>; Peter Go<sup>9</sup> and his younger brother Joseph Go<sup>10</sup>; and finally Agatha-Madeleine Kim<sup>11</sup>. Let's say a few words about each of them.

We know nothing about Andrew Seo, maternal grandfather of the Park of San-gol<sup>12</sup>, except that after having endured the tortures with unshakable constancy, he died in prison before the execution of the capital sentence brought against him. His wife Barbara Choe, better known to Christians as the Widow Seo, was said to be from Hannaejang-beol<sup>13</sup>, district of Hongju. She had a pleasant exterior, a gentle and patient character, and was noted for her unusual virtue. Converted before 1801, she lost her first husband and married Andrew Seo for the second time. Taken on Easter Sunday, she had, at the very moment of her arrest, to endure violent torture, which she bravely did. A little later, she was so horribly ill-treated by the blows of the triangular stick, that, on returning to the prison, she seemed to weaken in her resolve, and lean towards apostasy. Her son-in-law Francis Choe then came to her aid, consoling her, urging her not to miss such a beautiful opportunity, speaking to her with emotion of the happiness they would have in giving their lives together for God. He did so well that all temptation disappeared, and that from that day she remained firm in the midst of various tortures. She was transferred to Daegu with the other confessors.

Francis Choe Yeo-ok, known to many as Jin-gang, his childhood name, was the son-in-law of the above spouses. A native of Daraegol in the district of Hongju, he converted with his mother, and from then on came to live in the mountains of Museong-san 茂城山. When he learned of Father Zhou's stay in the capital, he went there with his mother and sister; his mother was able to participate in the sacraments, and receive Extreme Unction at the hour of death. His sister then stayed in Seoul, with Augustine Jeong, while he retired to the provinces. He had originally intended to live in celibacy, but the

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<sup>4</sup> This should probably be Park Chun-seong.

<sup>5</sup> 서석봉 Seo Seok-bong 徐碩奉 (?-1816) Andrew. Blessed.

<sup>6</sup> 최성열 Choe Seong-yeol 崔性悅 (1776~1816) Barbara. Martyr.

<sup>7</sup> 최봉한 Choe Bong-han 崔奉漢 aka 여옥 Yeo-ok (1785?-1815) Francis. Blessed.

<sup>8</sup> 김시우 Kim Si-woo 金時佑 1783-1816 Alexis. Blessed.

<sup>9</sup> 고성대 Go Seong-dae 高聖大 (?-1816) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>10</sup> 고성운 Go Seong-un 高聖云 (?-1816) Joseph. Blessed.

<sup>11</sup> 김윤덕 Kim Yun-deok 金允德 (1765?-1815). Agatha Magdalen. Blessed.

<sup>12</sup> This should probably be Son-gol.

<sup>13</sup> 한내장벌 Hannaejang-beol (Now 충남 예산군 고덕면 대천리 South Chungcheong Yesan-gun Godeok-myeon Daecheon-ri)

example of his first cousin, and the exhortations of some other relatives made him change his mind, and he married the daughter of Andrew Seo. Since then, he often regretted not having persisted in his first project, which in no way prevented him from living on very good terms with his wife and all his family. When he was arrested, he told his companions to blame everything on him in the interrogations that the mandarin was going to put them through, and was, as a result, tortured more violently than the others; but always humble and firm, he did not contradict himself for a moment. Taken to Daegu, he had to endure, one after the other, tortures so atrocious that several times he lost consciousness, without his fervor and his courage being shaken. He had been condemned to death, but before the day set for the execution, he died in prison from beatings, or as a result of his wounds, during the fifth lunar month of the year *eul-hae* (1815). He was a little over thirty years old.

Alexis Kim Si-woo<sup>14</sup> or Si-woo-jae, of the Kim branch of Yeonsan, was from a noble family in the district of Cheongyang. He had a good and patient character, and practiced the Religion with remarkable fervor, but having the whole right side paralyzed, he lived very poor and could not marry. He went this way and that to the Christians who supported him with their alms. Quite educated and full of skill, as he could not write with his right hand, he used his left to copy books, and thus procure some resources. Not content with explaining the truths of the Religion to Christians whenever he could, he instructed and converted many pagans; also he enjoyed in the country a great reputation for piety and science. He had followed the Christians to Meoru-san, and witnessed the arrest made on Easter Day, but not having been caught himself, he began to weep. “What have you to mourn?” said the satellites to him. “I’m a Christian too,” he replied, “but because I’m crippled, you don’t want to take me away. This is what makes me shed tears.” – “Oh!” resumed the satellites, “if that is your wish, come with us too.” And immediately he followed them with a cheerful air. Brought before the tribunal of Gyeongju, he had, in spite of his state of illness, frequent tortures to endure, and his constancy won the admiration of the judges. Transferred to Daegu, he was cited first before the criminal judge, then before the governor who said to him: “They claim that you adore Jesus; but this Jesus, what is he but a man who died under the blows of those who crucified him? Now, what reason to adore a man killed by others, and what is so beautiful in his death?” Alexis answered, “During a flood of nine years, King Ha-woo-ssi<sup>15</sup> kept wandering about the country, and made many attempts to save his people, and, passing before the door of his palace three times, he refused to enter. Will it be denied that this conduct was admirable? Also this king, who, after all, had in view only the material salvation of his subjects, has remained famous in all ages. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died to save the souls of all men in all parts of the universe. Would he who would not serve such a benefactor deserve the name of man? So you too, Governor, must thank and worship Jesus, and embrace his Religion.” The confused governor, outraged with anger, ordered silence to be imposed on him by breaking his jaw, and redoubled the tortures.

Alexis, faithful in the confession of his God, was condemned to death, signed his sentence, and returned to prison to quietly await the day of execution. Not being able, like the other prisoners, to make straw shoes, he was soon destitute, and as he had nothing to give to the woman who brought the food, she reproached him for it and left him without anything. Weakened by torture and devoured by hunger, he died in prison, about two months after his arrival at Daegu, in the fifth or sixth lunar month of this year 1815. He was thirty-four years old. His infirmity, his skill, his talents, his courage in defending the Gospel before the judges, and above all his state of virginity have made him dear to the Christians of this country, and they still cite his name as one of the glories of their Church.

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<sup>14</sup> 김시우 Kim Si-woo 金時佑 aka 시우재 Siwoojae (1783-1816). Alexius. Blessed.

<sup>15</sup> One of the sage-kings in Chinese mythology 하우씨(Xia Yu Shi 夏禹氏). and the legendary founder of the so-called Xia 夏 dynasty, the putative oldest dynasty in China. According to legend, Di Shun 帝舜 passed the throne to him because of his reputation for moral conduct and his great contribution to the control of the great flood.

The two brothers Joseph Go Yeo-bin<sup>16</sup>, and Peter Go Seong-il, were from the village of Beoram<sup>17</sup>, district of Deoksan. Instructed in the Religion by their parents, they practiced it from childhood; but Peter had a rather violent character, and everyone feared him, while his brother was generally loved for his good nature. Both, moreover, were equally remarkable for their uncommon filial piety, and during the eight months that their father's illness lasted, they prayed for him every day with great fervor. Their good harmony, their assiduous reading and exhortation, edified all Christians. Peter Go, arrested for the first time in 1801 at Jeo-guri-gol<sup>18</sup>, in the district of Gosan, and taken to Jeonju, after first having courageously confessed his faith, succumbed to the temptation to save his life, apostatized and was set free. After that he deeply regretted his fault and often repeated: "I need a blow from a saber to do penance for this enormous crime." Afterwards he emigrated with his brother to Norae-san<sup>19</sup>, where they were both taken on Easter day, as we have reported. Unshakeable in the tortures, they were sent together to Daegu, and deserved by their constancy to be condemned to death for Jesus Christ.

Agatha-Magdalen Kim<sup>20</sup>, sister-in-law<sup>21</sup> of Paul Park of whom we have spoken, was born in Eun-jae<sup>22</sup>, district of Sangju, province of Gyeongsang. After her conversion, she took refuge in Norae-san 老萊山, where she was arrested in the company of the other Christians, and underwent, on several occasions, with remarkable courage, interrogations and tortures. "Ignorant that you are," said the Mandarin, "why do you want to die?" "There is no one," she replied, "however vile and ignorant he may be, who can disregard the benefits of the Creator God, and dare to deny him." Her perseverance not being contradicted, she was transferred to the tribunal of Daegu, with the other confessors.

To sum up, among the Christians seized at Norae-san on Easter Day, and brought to the tribunal of Gyeongju, if many have afflicted us by their weakness, we have had the consolation of finding a certain number of faithful servants of Jesus Christ. Several have already finished their career of suffering, and only four remain in Daegu, all condemned to death, but not knowing when their sentence will be carried out. New companions will be added to them.

It has not been forgotten that a few days after the capture of the neophytes of Norae-san, those of Meoru-san had been arrested in their turn, and dragged before the mandarin of Andong. Their history offers a similar spectacle. Besides numerous and deplorable apostasies, we also meet courageous confessors, whose constancy seems enhanced by the fall of their brothers.

First there was Kim Myeong-suk, a native of the district of Hongju, a convert before 1801. His poverty then forced him to emigrate to the district of Yeon-pung 延豐, near the Christians; but these having been arrested and taken to the capital during the great persecution, Myeong-suk fled to the district of Jinbo. It was there that he was living in 1815. His wife had long since died, and he had with him only his son Jin-bok 眞福, aged nineteen, not yet married, and a daughter who had barely reached marriageable

<sup>16</sup> Dallet is confused here. Go Yeo-bin is more correctly known as Go Seong-dae 고성대 高聖大 and his baptismal name was Peter. Go Seong-il is more correctly called 고성운 Go Seong-un 高聖云 and his name was Joseph. Both are Blessed.

<sup>17</sup> 벌암 (Now 충청남도 예산군 고덕면 상장리 South Chungcheong Yesan-gun Godeok-myeon Sanjang-ri)

<sup>18</sup> 고산 저구리 Gosan Jeo-guri-gol (Now 전북 완주군 운주면 산북리 North Jeolla Wanju-gun Unju-myeon Sanbuk-ri)

<sup>19</sup> 노래산 Norae-san 老萊山 (Now 경북 청송군 안덕면 노래 2 리 North Gyeongsang Cheongsong-gun Andeok-myeon Norae2ri)

<sup>20</sup> 김윤덕 Kim Yun-deok 金允德 (1765?-1815). Agatha Magdalen. Blessed.

<sup>21</sup> Not sister-in-law but maternal aunt.

<sup>22</sup> 은재 Eunjae (Now 경북 문경시 가은읍 저음리 North Gyeongsang Mungyeong-si Gaeun-eup Jeoeum-rii)

age. Full of fervor, the father and the son liked to give a lot of alms, and to practice all kinds of good works. When the satellites arrived, the three members of this family were found together and taken to Andong. Shortly after, the young girl was abducted by a praetorian, and never since has anyone been able to know what became of her. Myeong-suk and his son joyfully underwent the tortures, and their faith was not belied for a single moment. Consumed in a short time by hunger and torments, they both died, in this same prison of Andong, around the third lunar month of the year 1815. Myeong-suk was then fifty-one years old. These two confessors having been baptized only during the persecution, their baptismal names are unknown. It was therefore a custom among Christians to baptize, at the time of persecutions, nearly all catechumens, so as not to leave them exposed to die without this sacrament; and we see that in this same year, 1815, the catechist Ambrose Kim, of whom we shall speak later, gave baptism to all who asked for it, whether or not they were instructed in the truths of the Religion.

We must also mention the two Choe brothers, Andrew and Martin. Andrew Choe was the first to be arrested, in the district of Jinpo, by the satellites of that town. He remained a month in that prison and underwent there four or five times the torture of the question, without failing in the fidelity which he owed to God. Transferred then before the criminal judge of Andong, he showed the same constancy and, after atrocious tortures, was carried back almost dying to the prison by the jailers. It was then that his younger brother Martin, who out of devotion had taken a vow of chastity, learned of his arrest, and came to find him to console and serve him. Andrew was supposed to receive from the prefecture a ration of ten handfuls of rice a day; but because of the scarcity, everything was taken away by the satellites and the jailers, and almost nothing reached him. Martin, to preserve the life of his eldest brother, presented himself before the mandarin, informed him of the frauds of which his brother was the victim, and obtained that the designated ration be given to him exactly. The satellites, furious at seeing themselves thus defrauded of their illicit profits, said to Martin: “You have robbed us, unhappy rascal; because of you, we will not survive; but wouldn’t you be a Christian also by chance?” Martin replied affirmatively; the satellites then said to each other: “Since he is a Christian, why not get rid of him? We risk nothing.” And they began to beat him with their feet in an atrocious manner, and for a very long time. This happened in the evening, during the third lunar month; towards the end of the night, Martin expired. He was fifty-six years old. Andrew, who remained in prison, endured there with admirable courage sufferings and privations without number, and died there<sup>23</sup> of hunger, towards the eleventh lunar month of that same year.

It is also asserted that a Christian, named Park, was, at this time, arrested with his wife in this same district of Jinpo, that both resolutely confessed the faith, without allowing themselves to be shaken by the tortures, and from tribunal to tribunal reached that of Daegu, where they died in prison. But we know nothing of their life, nor of the circumstances of their death.

Let us now make known the principal confessors who from Andong were sent to Daegu to join their brothers of Gyeongju, and later had the honor of sharing their triumph. They are: Anne Yi, Francis Kim, James Kim and Andrew Kim.

Anne Yi<sup>24</sup>, was from Nopeun-moi<sup>25</sup> village, Deoksan district. She was descended from a noble family, and we shall have to speak later of her father Yi Seong-sam<sup>26</sup>, who died in 1827 in the prison of Jeonju. Endowed with the finest qualities of body and mind, she practiced the Religion with uncommon

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<sup>23</sup> Probably he had already been moved from Andong to Daegu with the others.

<sup>24</sup> 이시임 Yi Si-im 李時壬 (1782-1816) Anne. Blessed,

<sup>25</sup> 높은뫹 Nopeun-moi (Now 충남 예산군 고덕면 몽곡리 South Chungcheong Yesan-gun Godeok-myeon Monggok-ri)

<sup>26</sup> 이성삼 Lee Seong-sam 李性三 was Anne’s older brother, not her father.



fervor, and had resolved to keep her virginity. But the fact was soon noticed by the pagans; they complained, and her family no longer able to hold out against the thousand vexations which were aroused about her, she resolved to flee and retire to a distant house, where some virgins lived together in a kind of little community. A Christian boatman, named Park, undertook to take her there. But when she was in his power, he did violence to her, and, as he was unmarried, he married her by force. Despite her desolation, Anne resigned herself. She had a child by this marriage, whom she named Jong-ak, and a few years later, being widowed, she continued to fulfill all her duties faithfully. Arrested by the satellites of Jinpo in 1815, she was questioned in that city, then, thanks to her constancy, sent to the superior tribunal of Daegu. There, after courageously enduring new tortures, she was sentenced to death.

We may be surprised that Anne has thus consented to live with a poor boatman. But apart from the fact that we do not know all the details of this abduction, we will point out that there is in this country an odious proverb, based on morals, and passed into national usages, stating that any woman who is not under the power of husband or parents belongs to the first comer. Now, Anne having left the paternal house, found herself in this case; the boatman had made her his possession, and a trial would have come to nothing. It would have been necessary, to escape from this man, to undergo severe ill-treatment, to expose oneself perhaps to death; and then, out of there, where to go? Along the way she would have fallen prey to some other bandit. She therefore thought that after having lost her honor and her virginity, the best thing for her was to be silent, and to contract marriage with this Christian, since she could do so licitly. Moreover, in Korea, as in all non-Christian countries, where the debasement and contempt of women are, so to speak, a natural right, the women themselves share the general opinion. They believe they have neither rights nor responsibility, and in cases analogous to this, they really regard themselves as chained, and do not conceive of the possibility of freeing themselves. The examples are numerous. Needless to add that these customs and these ideas are no longer current among the faithful, and we have seen a certain number of Christian widows, kidnapped by pagans, brave even death, and succeed, by their relentless resistance. , to evade the kidnapers.

Francis Kim Gyeong-seo<sup>27</sup> was born into an honest and wealthy family in Yeosa-ul village, Yesan district. From his youth, he applied himself to the study of letters, and his father, Andrew Kim Gwan-ok 金光玉, a fervent Christian, himself gave him a very solid education. Andrew having been caught in the persecution of 1801, took advantage of every opportunity to recommend to his family to follow in his footsteps, to practice charity towards God and neighbor, to live in good harmony among themselves and with neighbors, and to serve God and save their souls by the practice of mortification; after which he was beheaded, as we have seen above. From then on, Francis' fervor only increased day by day. Animated by a holy emulation to follow the example of his father, and despising all temporal things, he abandoned his possessions and retired to the Ilweol-san mountains, to the village of Godeun-jang, district of Yangyang, Gyeongsang province. Having arrived there, he lived on roots and acorns, and since that time kept a perpetual continence. Every year, during Lent, he observed a rigorous fast, and gave himself up to all the practices of mortification. He tried so hard to tame his naturally hot temper that he soon became a model of gentleness and patience.

In the third lunar month of the year 1815, the traitor Jeon Ji-su, accompanied by the satellites of Andong, came unexpectedly to arrest him. Francis was then on the mountain working; the satellites having shouted to him to descend, he said to his son Mun-ak: "As for me, I must surrender, it is the order of God; but you, don't come with me. Watch over the whole family, and above all take good care of your grandmother." Then he descended joyfully, treated the satellites and the traitor himself generously, bade farewell to his mother, begging her not to grieve too much, and consoling her with kind and gentle words. Then, addressing his wife, he recommended that she be well submitted to her mother and take good care

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<sup>27</sup> 김희성 Kim Hui-seong 金稀成 aka 경서 Gyeong-seo (1765-1816) Francis. Blessed.

of her, educate her children well, and finally follow in his footsteps. After which, he followed the satellites with a cheerful and smiling air. Arriving at the town of Andong, he underwent a first interrogation there, and a few days later, was taken to Daegu. His courageous perseverance in the tortures disconcerted the judges, and he was soon condemned to death.

James Kim Hwa-jun (金若古排 Kim Jacobo), of whom few documents remain, was from a family of Sudanri<sup>28</sup>, Cheongyang district. Of a gentle and resigned character, he nevertheless knew how to show great energy when it was a question of the service of God and the salvation of his soul, and, a faithful observer of the rules of the Church, stood out for his assiduity in prayer and pious readings. Arrested, we do not know where, in 1815, he was taken to the prefecture of Andong, where, resisting all the solicitations and all the promises of the mandarins, as well as the violent tortures inflicted on him, he deserved to be sent to Daegu, and condemned to death.

Finally, Andrew Kim Gye-won, also named Jeong-han, was from the village of Solmoi, in the district of Myeoncheon, and son of Pius Kim, whose life we have related. Obedient to the instructions of his parents, he learned from childhood to serve and honor God. The continual persecutions to which his father was subjected for more than twenty years, trained his young heart in the school of misfortune, and detaching him from all that is attractive in the world, strengthened his faith, developed the germs of virtue which he had received from heaven, and prepared him for the hard trials which were in store for him. Andrew, whose family was thus pursued and proscribed, soon saw himself obliged to leave his parents, his friends, and the tombs of his fathers. He therefore went to settle in an unknown country, deep in the mountains, at Uryeonbat<sup>29</sup>, district of Andong, province of Gyeongsang. There he remained hidden for seventeen years, devoted solely to works of charity, assiduous in prayer, in pious readings and in all his duties. In Lent, he habitually fasted every day, not to mention the other ordinary mortifications he imposed on himself. His usual food was cooked millet seasoned with salt, and when he couldn't get it, he contented himself with tree leaves, acorns, roots or wild vegetables, without ever bothering to look for anything more solid and more palatable. Always equal to himself, always filled with a holy joy in the midst of the pains of life, his main occupation during the day was to transcribe books of the Religion, in order to distribute copies of them everywhere, and in the evening, he devoted himself to the instruction of Christians with such great zeal that he often prolonged his talks beyond the middle of the night. Jealous also of spreading the faith among the infidels, he instructed and converted a large number of them, as much by the effectiveness of his prayers and his examples as by the force of his words.

Such was Andrew, when he was arrested by the satellites of Andong, on the 23rd of the fourth lunar month, and brought before the mandarin of that city. The latter first endeavored to obtain from him a word of apostasy; but, having failed, he had him imprisoned, then, two days later, by order of the governor, had him bastinadoed on his legs, and sent him to Daegu. Andrew was arriving at the door of this tribunal, when he met a Christian woman who was coming out of it, and was going away alone and free. Astonished at this sight, he asked her what it was; she replied that she had just apostatized to avoid death. It was Agatha-Magdalen Kim whom we saw so firm in the tortures at the tribunal of Gyeongju, and who, arriving at Daegu, finally overcome by the violence of the torments, had had the weakness to deny her faith. Andrew said to her with a sigh: "You are losing a great opportunity, and what are you waiting for in not wanting to die now? You are leaving, but how many years do you have to live?" She answered: "I am free, it is true, but how can I know if I will not die today or tomorrow?" "If that's the case," resumed Andrew, "isn't it a thousand times better to have a good death now?" Then he continued to exhort her with energetic words, so that, touched by Grace, her eyes opened, and she returned immediately with him. In vain the satellites insult her, strike her, repel her, and make every effort to

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<sup>28</sup> 수단리 Sudanri (Now 경기도 청양군 남양면 신왕리 Gyeonggi-do Cheongyang-gun Namyang-myeon Sinwang-ri)

<sup>29</sup> 우련밭 Uryeonbat (Now 경북 봉화군 재산면 갈산리 North Gyeongsang Bonghwa-gun Jaesan-myeon Galsan-ri)

prevent her from penetrating to the mandarin. Agatha, seizing a good moment, slips past, arrives in front of him and sits down. He recognizes her and says to her: "I released you, why are you still coming back?" She replies: "Just now, too weak to bear the tortures, I denied my God, but in this I committed an enormous crime, I repent of it and I return before you. Kill me if you want, but I'm more Christian now than ever." The Mandarin called her mad and had her chased away, but she managed to come back to him, and again retracted, aloud, her apostasy. The mandarin, irritated, had her bound and beaten so atrociously that, the flesh falling to shreds, all the bones were soon exposed. Agatha, having lost consciousness, was transported to the prison and died on entering. It was at the beginning of the fifth lunar month. She was nearly fifty years old.

Questioned in his turn, Andrew replied calmly and firmly. In vain the Mandarin had him questioned and cruelly castigated, the constancy of the martyr was not contradicted, and the judge, seeing that he was wasting his time and his trouble, sent a dispatch to the government. The answer was that it was necessary, at all costs, to obtain his submission, and on his refusal, he was castigated for the third time. Still steadfast, he was finally condemned to death, and took the place of Agatha whose words had just made her gather the palm; thus the original number of seven was again completed. These generous confessors, all under the weight of a capital sentence, awaited each day the moment of their execution. But God, in his secret designs, allowed there to be, we do not know on what occasion, an indefinite respite, and from that time they began, in the prison, a new kind of life. They were no longer put to torture since their sentence was final, but they had to bear in exchange deprivation, hunger, and vexations of all kinds. For nearly two more years, we will admire them in this dying life, in this long daily martyrdom.

Mass arrests do not appear to have been repeated after the fifth lunar month of this year. Most of them had taken place in the great province of Gyeongsang, the first focus of the fire, but the denunciations wrung from the unfortunate Christians by torture caused many people to be seized also in the province of Chungcheong, and some even in the province of Gangwon. If now we consider that, in addition to the Christians released almost immediately as a result of apostasy, or who died in the various prisons of the province of Gyeongsang, there were at the same time more than one hundred incarcerated in Daegu its metropolis, it will be easy to conclude that the number of arrests brought to more than two hundred by the documents of the time, is far from being exaggerated. The letters that Andrew Kim wrote from his prison, together with another eyewitness account, give us the comforting assurance that a great number of the prisoners remained faithful to Jesus Christ until death. Several of them are also reported as having made with talent and courage the apology of the principal articles of our Holy Religion, before the various courts. Most of them died miserably in prisons, amid the horrors of hunger, which is easily understood when one knows the prison regime in these countries. Certain rations are, it is true, assigned by the prefecture to those prisoners who have no resources; but they pass through many hands; each subtracts some part at will, and what reaches the poor prisoner is reduced to a few grains of rice insufficient to sustain his existence. With all the more reason, during a famine as terrible and as general as that of 1815, the subordinate employees, satellites, praetorians, jailers, castigators and others, had to steal almost all the food given for the Christians, and that in all impunity, for Christians were regarded by idolaters as degraded beings and unworthy of being part of the human race.

Many neophytes, caught in the province of Chungcheong, were sent back to be finally judged and punished in their own prefecture or province. Witnesses of the time assure us that at least twenty of these unfortunates, after dragging themselves painfully along the roads for a few days, perished of hunger or of the consequences of their wounds, some on the side of the roads where the conductors abandoned them, the others in the inns where the lack of money did not allow them to procure anything. Finally, many others yielding to temptation, redeemed their lives by a shameful defection. These apostates were either released purely and simply, or sent into exile in the various provinces of the kingdom; so that, towards the middle of the summer, there were only a few confessors left in the prisons of Daegu.

Besides those of whom we have already spoken, we may also cite An Cheom-ji<sup>30</sup>, sometimes called Chi-ryong, a native of the district of Boeun. Having been condemned to death with the others, he died in prison, of hunger or of the plague, before he could undergo his sentence. He was about fifty years old.

Yi Yun-jip, of Geonsama-gol, being still only a catechumen, was caught in Uryeon-bat with Andrew Kim, and without having apostatized, died, it is said, of hunger and exhaustion.

In these same prisons of Daegu, still others won heaven by the same kind of martyrdom, but their names, forgotten by men, are no longer known but to God.

At Wonju, capital of the province of Gangwon, the one who most gloriously confessed the name of Jesus Christ was Simon Kim<sup>31</sup>. Here, on his life and his sufferings, are the few details that remain to us today.

Simon Kim Yeo-saeng (others say Yeo-seong), was from an honest family in Seosan district, Chungcheong province. He had a noble and courageous character, and possessed a considerable fortune. Having been instructed in the Religion before the arrival of Father Zhou, he almost immediately abandoned all his possessions and his slaves, left his country, his parents, his friends, and retired with his younger brother Thaddeus, to the district of Gosan, in the province of Jeolla. It was there that he had relations with the priest, near whom he stayed several times. In the persecution of 1801, he was pointed out as one of the principal leaders of the Christians, and numerous satellites were launched in pursuit of him. They circulated in all directions, carrying with them his description, and during the more than a year that the search lasted, it would be difficult to report all the privations and sufferings which Simon had to endure to escape their searches. His wife had been arrested, and she was not released until a year later, on the strength of the money.

To take better shelter, and support his existence, Simon decided to become a traveling merchant, and having associated himself for this purpose with pagans, he had the courage, at the height of the persecution, to preach the gospel to them; he even managed to convert some of them. But not being able to find, in this position, the time and freedom to devote himself to the practices of piety, he soon abandoned it, and retired to Meoru-san, in the province of Gyeongsang, to devote himself to culture. He was followed there by some of his proselytes who, emigrating with their families, formed with him a small Christian village. Simon's zeal made him effect a few more conversions in the neighborhood; but, forced to emigrate again several times, he finally went to settle in the district of Uljin, province of Gangwon. Persecution having arisen in the province of Gyeongsang, he was denounced at Andong by a Christian who had been a servant in his house, and the satellites of that town came to seize him, carrying off at the same time all that they could of its effects. It was in the fourth lunar month of the year 1815.

Simon, arriving at the prison, found there many Christian prisoners, who, in this time of famine, suffered horribly from hunger. He had the thought of asking the mandarin for the numerous effects that the satellites had plundered. The latter, either out of compassion or to save the funds of the prefecture, had what could be found brought back, and Simon distributed the whole to the prisoners, thus relieving for a time their cruel position. After several interrogations in which he was unwilling at any price to submit, he was transferred, in the fifth lunar month, to the tribunal of Wonju, capital of his province, with his brother Thaddée. They found themselves reunited there with six or seven other Christians, no doubt taken with them, or in the vicinity. It was the first time that Christians had been held captive in this city, and that they had been summoned before its tribunals. Simon showed himself firm and resolute. He resisted all the tortures inflicted on him, as well as all the solicitations by which they tried to make him

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<sup>30</sup> 안치룡 An Chi-ryong aka 첨지 Cheom-ji (1766?-1816?).

<sup>31</sup> 김강이 Kim Gang-i 金綱伊 aka 여생 Yeo-saeng. Simon.

bend, and did much honor to the Christian name by a noble and frank confession of faith. He did not even allow himself to be shaken by the deplorable defection of his brother Thaddeus, whom he saw go into exile as a reward for his cowardice. The ardor of his faith and his patience in torments draw the admiration of all. He was finally sentenced to death, and signed his sentence as usual. This sentence, sent to the king to receive his confirmation, was in fact approved; but when the answer came, Simon was gravely ill from the consequences of his wounds joined to violent dysentery. The execution was stayed, and a few days later, Simon, without having been able to receive the glorious saber-thrust he desired, died in the prison of Wonju, on the 5th of the eleventh lunar month, 1815, after eight months of detention, at the age of more than fifty years.

We don't know anything else about the persecution in the province of Gangwon. In the documents of the time, which we have been able to find, there is no question of the fate of Simon Kim's companions in captivity. Let's hope that they will have imitated his courage and his patience until the end<sup>32</sup>.

Let us now return to the generous confessors who, gathered in the prison of Daegu, awaiting each day the moment which was to put an end to their sufferings. During their long captivity, they were, not only for their brethren in the faith, but for the pagans themselves a subject of admiration. Abandoned without resources in the dungeon, during the day they were almost all busy making straw shoes to support themselves, and God allowed that they no longer had to suffer too much from hunger; at night they lit a lamp, and went about together reading pious books, and reciting their prayers, which they said in common and aloud. The townspeople who heard them were surprised. A large number came to contemplate this strange spectacle with their own eyes, and returned amazed. The joy, tranquility, harmony of these pretended culprits, pursued by human justice, were for these pagans an incomprehensible marvel. Not an argument, not a rude word, not a word of impatience. Is this then, they said to themselves, the den of criminals? The prison was indeed changed into a school of virtues; it presented the spectacle of a family admirably united, and regulated in all its deeds and all its words.

Praetorians and satellites often came forward to find out what the Christian Religion was. They sent the best educated and ablest among them to enter into discussions on the fundamental points of the new doctrine. Andrew, the ablest of the seven prisoners, gladly accepted these opportunities. He expounded to his antagonists the principal articles of faith, exposed to them the beauty of the commandments of God; then answering their captivating questions, he followed them article by article, refuted all their arguments, elucidated each matter in detail, so that on withdrawing they said to one another: "Truly, there is no scholar, however learned he may be, who can stand up to him, and his speech can be compared to that of the most famous orators." Andrew in fact had only an incomplete education, but accustomed to discourse with Christians on matters of religion, he could easily defeat, in such matters, the eloquence of any praetorian. Moreover, grace always supported him in these controversies, which were not without a certain importance, for the reports of the Praetorians then circulated in the city and throughout the province.

The traitor Jeon Ji-su, was also imprisoned around this time, for some serious misdeed. The governor had ordered to starve him to death, but the Christian prisoners saved his life by giving him a daily portion of their small ration. Later, when he was delivered, and thrown almost naked out of prison, they gave him clothes to cover himself, thus showing all the pagans how true charity knows how to take revenge.

The stay of the confessors in the prison therefore served a great deal to make the Religion known in this great city of Daegu, and if the fruits are long in coming, we nevertheless have the firm confidence that they will not fail to occur one day. It appears that in the course of this year and that following, they

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<sup>32</sup> They almost certainly apostatized.

were subjected to two or three more interrogations, the details of which are unknown to us. As they all persisted in their firm resolution to die for the faith, the king was informed again. This time again, the answer was long overdue, and we see in Andrew Kim's letters that he and all his companions attributed this delay to their sins, and trembled at not obtaining the crown of martyrdom.

We quote here some of these letters<sup>33</sup> which deserve to be preserved. They are one more proof of the marvelous action of the Holy Spirit on the souls of neophytes; for it is impossible to explain otherwise than by the efficacy of divine grace, how pagan men yesterday, having received no sacrament but baptism, living in the midst of idolaters, without priest, without sacrifice, almost without religious instruction, were thus able to speak the supernatural language of Christian resignation and divine love.

Andrew's first letter is addressed to his older brother.

"I start, putting aside all the usual formulas. When I least expected it, I was stopped by satellites from Andong. In the first interrogation, the criminal judge of this city wanted, at all costs, to make me apostatize, but, God helping, I held firm until the end, and I was put in prison. After ten days of detention, he gave me a volley of blows on the legs, and took me in all haste to the criminal prison of Daegu. There, the mandarin tried by a thousand tempting means to obtain my submission, but having been unable to do so, he had me administered a new beating on my legs, and hurried to the governor to warn it of the state of things. The answer was that I should be forced to apostatize, and I received another beating.

"In this province, more than a hundred people, men, women and children, had been arrested. Of this number, some died of hunger, either in the prison of their own town, or along the roads on their way to the chief town of the province; the others were weak enough to submit, and today there are only thirteen of us left. All this is an order of Providence and a benefit for which we must thank her; but the body being so weak, it is difficult to bear everything with a happy heart; every moment is sadder than I can express. As for me, a poor sinner, having nothing that can make me deserve the favor of martyrdom, I rely solely on the help of all Christians; pray and ask without ceasing, and I trust that my desires can be fulfilled."

In a second letter, Andrew said to his brother:

"Without further preamble, I am writing you two words in haste. For a long time, because of the distance, all communication with you was interrupted; I had heard from you only indirectly, and during this year of famine my anxieties grew more serious day by day. Against all hope, I finally receive your handwriting; I seem to be with you alone, is it a dream? is it a reality? Feelings of joy and sadness crowd together in my heart; my chest is oppressed; tears are flowing from my eyes. When I lost my father, I could not assist him in his last moments; I retained a deep regret and I said to myself: could I at least attend the anniversary of his death! This desire cannot now be realized, I am all the more distressed. On the other hand, I am happy to hear that during this dreadful year, you are doing as usual, and that the whole family is at peace. The news of my sister-in-law's death at the beginning of spring is very unfortunate, it is true; but no one can avoid dying. The main point, the only important one, is to make a good death; for, in this world, why was man born? His great business is to serve God, save his soul, and obtain the kingdom of heaven. If one does not fulfill these great duties and wastes time uselessly, what good is life?

"After coming into the world without thinking about it, if a man returns in the same way, it would be better for him not to have been born, and he finds himself in a worse condition than that of the brute himself; for when the animal dies, it returns to nothingness. For man it is not so, if he does not save his soul, it falls into eternal death. Death! this word is frightening! but if the body, which must necessarily die, is frightened of death, how much more must the soul, which is made to live forever, dread it? If once

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<sup>33</sup> Daveluy Archive Volume 5 ff. 234-241

you enter Hell, you can never get out of it; one lives there without truly living, one dies there without being able to die; had we spent thousands of years there, it is still like the beginning. Alas! alas! never to be able to catch a glimpse of the clarity of the sky and the day! always be plunged into a dark abyss! when you think about it it makes you shudder. But also when we think of the sufferings of Hell, the sorrows and sufferings of this world are only a shadow. The illnesses and misfortunes here below are no longer regarded as painful. Moreover, if one knows how to take advantage of them, they serve salvation. The body finds enough to preserve life, how could the soul not do it too? The things of this world are in themselves neither good nor bad; do we use them well? they are good; are we using them wrongly? they are bad. They are like a ladder that also serves to go up and down, and each can help us avoid sin and gain merit. In everything act with joy and for Jesus, and you are a chosen one. But since everything depends on good or bad will, even if you have enormous difficulties, bear them with patience for Jesus, and they work the salvation of the soul and obtain the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, as you go through this world of pain and tribulation, seek only the glory of God. Tear down the mountains of pride, lust and anger; walk flying to eternal happiness.

“As for me, having been in this place of suffering for a year already, and by a very special blessing, having preserved my health, I thank God for this favor. I am on the road to martyrdom, I almost dare to hope for this last benefit, but I am too unworthy to receive it. Things drag on, and no decision comes; I’m terrified of it. The body is more at ease, but the soul becomes all the more sick, and in this living body the soul is as if dead. If I cannot obtain this signal favor, how henceforth can I resist the three terrible enemies? When the body is weak, the soul becomes stronger; and if the soul is weak, the body takes over. Time does not return twice; if I lose the present opportunity, I will never be able to find it again; and the more I think about the state of things, the more I fear I will miss the right moment. To hope without foundation would be folly; so, above all, I hope in a completely free grace from God, secondly, I count on the prayers of all Christians. Pray therefore and pray with all your heart and with all your strength; pray every day, so that I bear fruit, and not become like the trees of the forests.

“I had a first time received some objects, but without any letter, and I did not know by whom it was sent; this time reading your post, I understood everything. What happened to me on this second occasion will be very useful to me in the extreme cold. A thousand and a thousand thanks. In the midst of the general embarrassment, I thus find myself a burden to many people. God grant that I arrive at the goal that my sighs so ardently call for!”

Finally Andrew Kim wrote to the Christians Yi and Yu, recommending his wife to them.

“Time flies, it’s been more than a year since we met, and on both sides our pain is probably equal. Occasionally I learned of your news; God be blessed that in this terrible winter you were able to survive so much hardship. For me, I now have to endure imprisonment for the faith. It is, it is true, a beautiful position, but unfortunately I still only have the beautiful name of martyr, and because of my sins, everything has remained at a simple beginning; the outcome does not come, and things drag on. I am like the trees of the forest that bear no fruit; if everything remains there, of what use will it be to me? Time is a treasure; if you lose it once, it can never be found again. If I don’t make my efforts right now, how long will I wait to make them? Even in the affairs of the world, if the favorable opportunity is missed, it is difficult to regain it; a fortiori, in the matter of the salvation of the soul.

“For me, in embracing the Religion, I had no other goal than the service of God and the salvation of my soul; the position in which I find myself today is therefore nothing but natural, and my heart is not too discouraged by it. But on learning of the sad situation of my wife, I am saddened and sorry. It is said that during the rigors of winter she has no place to retire to, and although in the village where she is, all are our relatives or acquaintances, because of my present condition, no one wants rescue her. Everyone uses fear of compromising himself as a pretext, and she is reduced to seeking refuge elsewhere. How can harshness and insensitivity be brought to this point? We Christians, as soon as we embrace the Religion, we leave our country to serve God and save our souls, and we retire far away to places where we know

no one. We make all the sacrifices for our salvation; we regard everything, adversity or prosperity, as the order of God; but if all the pains that come to us from men are an order from God, whether joy or pain, everything becomes a means of salvation when we use it well, is it not a better work still to relieve those who are alone and without support?

“So take care of my wife, who has no place to shelter. If you receive her into your house, if you regard her as a relative and try to preserve her body and her soul, you will thereby work for your own salvation; so I recommend her with confidence. I do it all the more freely because your own daughter is a prisoner with us, and, although I do not know how many years we must share the same sufferings, as long as I live I will not cease supporting her with all my might; in this way, there will be compensation. With charity, what shall we not do? God himself wanted to found this world on charity; if mutual love disappeared from it, how would the world be preserved? The Church is one body, heaven and earth are one whole, the world itself is one whole. What is not based on union and love? In a body there are many members, which is the member that we do not like, which is the one that we would like to reject? We only live by the help we give each other; the body must help the soul, and the soul the body; there is no other way to preserve life. Although each man is a separate being, the head of the church is God, the neck is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the members are all of us; even if we do not hurt the head directly, to hurt the limbs is to hurt the head, and likewise, to love the limbs is to love the head. According to this, if we love God, we will love men, and if we love men, we will love God too...”

Andrew and his companions thus spent about twenty months in prison, rousing themselves to fervor and patience, purifying their virtue in the crucible of tribulations. During this time, Anne Yi had the pain of seeing her son Jeong-ak perish in her arms, but she must have been greatly consoled by the thought of his happy fate. Indeed, this young child, not yet at the age of unreason, had followed his mother to prison, the only support he had left on earth. He endured with her the horrors of hunger, shared all the privations and sufferings of these dreadful dungeons, and preceded her by a few days in heaven. His baptismal name is unknown to us,

In the end, new orders arrived from the court, and the execution of the confessors was decided. We do not know exactly what happened at the time of their martyrdom. Here, according to a notice written at that time, is what we were able to gather from the people of the city who witnessed it. When they arrived at the place of execution, Andrew Kim, who had always been considered their leader, had to go first. The executioner, a novice in his trade, felt then without strength and as if paralyzed; the martyr's head did not fall until the tenth stroke. Everyone present was amazed at the calm with which Andrew endured this nameless ordeal. Witness to this dreadful spectacle, Joseph Go said to the executioner: “Be careful and cut off my head at once.” His wish was granted, and suddenly his head fell; then the three other men were beheaded. After which, the Mandarin, addressing himself to the two women, still wanted to try to shake them and said to them: “These men have just been put to death, but you women, why do you want to die? Compared to theirs, your fault is slight. Come, there's still time, just say a word, and I'll have you set free.” Anne answered: “How can you so misunderstand the principles? According to you, men should honor God their supreme father, and women should not honor him! Many words are useless. I only expect you to treat me according to the law.” Then both of them, as if with one voice, exclaimed: “When Jesus and Mary call us and invite us to ascend immediately to heaven with them, how could we apostatize, and, in order to preserve this fleeting life, lose true life and eternal happiness?” Immediately the order was given, and they also had their heads cut off. “From which one can see,” adds the author of the notice, “that although belonging to the weaker sex, they knew how to show a quite virile firmness, and, by the offering of their life, to bear a dazzling testimony to the glory of God.” Thus was consummated the long martyrdom of these illustrious confessors. It was the first of the eleventh lunar month of the year *byeong-ja* (1816), in Daegu, capital of the province of Gyeongsang. Francis Kim was fifty-two years old; Anne Yi, thirty-five; and Barbara Choe, forty years old. We don't know the age of the others.



By order of the mandarin, the bodies were carefully buried in the neighborhood of the place of execution, and covered with a rather light layer of earth; each with its inscription. The parents of the martyrs and other Christians living far from there, agreed together to have them transported to a separate place, and on the 4th<sup>34</sup> of the third lunar month of the following year, a dozen of them went to the place. They wanted to do the transfer at dusk, and were afraid of being seen by the inhabitants of the neighborhood. At that moment, by a peculiar effect of God's protection, a black cloud covered the side of the city where the bodies were. The sky seemed to be lowered, and the fog was so thick that, although the lamps gave sufficient light to the workers, the people who lived nearby could not see them. The bodies were uncovered. Barbara Choe's had been taken and devoured by some animal. The other six were whole, uncorrupted, and appeared to have been lifeless for only a few moments. The little odor which emanated from them, when the pits opened, disappeared as soon as the bodies were taken out of the ground. The clothes themselves were well preserved, and without humidity. All Christians admired it. These precious remains were transported to a more suitable place, and they are buried in four pits only.

The execution of these seven martyrs in the great city of Daegu, the second perhaps in the kingdom, caused an immense stir in the neighboring provinces, and contributed not a little to making the name of Jesus Christ known to many idolaters.

This is the place to remark several important differences between this persecution of 1815 and the great persecution of 1801. The persecution of 1801 had been general; Christians had been pursued wherever they existed in greater or lesser number; that of 1815, as we have already said, broke out with much more violence on the newly formed Christian communities of the provinces of Gangwon and Gyeongsang. In the first persecution, political passions, party rivalries had played a considerable role; this time it is out of the question, and neophytes are imprisoned only as Christians, put to death only as Christians. The first persecution had begun with a solemn decree, and ended with a royal proclamation announcing to all that the work was finished; this time there was no need for new edicts, for the earlier laws against the Religion were and still are in force. Nor was there an official term, for it continued and continues still, diminishing or increasing in intensity, according to the whims of the mandarins, local circumstances, and popular passions.

Finally, in 1801, we see only a few Christian women seized, and those from the most eminent families and, by this very fact, the most compromised in the eyes of the government. Most of the other women were neither arrested nor prosecuted; they only had to bear the repercussions of persecution; they were ruined by confiscation and pillage, but almost all of them were able to retire with their children to other places. In 1815, the satellites, left to their own devices, often indiscriminately took control of everything they encountered, and, proportionately, the number of women imprisoned and put to death seems much greater. This fact clearly shows the direct influence of Hell, for nothing is more contrary to the spirit and customs of this country, where women are almost never compromised in trials, where they can even give themselves up with impunity to much violence, injustice, and other abuses which would be heavily punished if committed by men. But, when it comes to Christians, there are no longer any laws, customs, or usages; it is a cursed race, everything is permitted against them, and it is serving the State to contribute to their complete extermination.

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<sup>34</sup> Daveluy Archive Volume 5 says that it was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the 3rd lunar month.

Chapter 3: New visits to Peking. — Martyrdom of Peter Jo and his wife Theresa, in 1819 — Persecution of 1827: the confessors of Jeonju.

In the midst of the anguish and dangers of persecution, the Christians of Korea felt more keenly than ever the necessity of obtaining priests, and multiplied their attempts to attain this so desired end. Seeing the sacrifices they imposed on themselves, the efforts they never ceased to renew, efforts and sacrifices so long useless, we cannot compare them better than to the faithful Jews calling with all their desires for the coming of the Messiah, and finding in this expectation the sole consolation for the evils which overwhelmed their country. Like them, the Korean neophytes understood that salvation could only come to them from the messenger of God. Although uneducated, they knew enough the Religion to know that the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ are necessary to form and maintain true Christians; and this alone explains to us their invincible perseverance in demanding pastors, whom the misfortune of the times did not allow to be sent to them. Towards the end of 1816, they managed to prepare a new deputation to the Bishop of Peking, and Paul Jeong<sup>1</sup>, bearer of the supplications and wishes of his brothers, assumed, for the first time, this office of ambassador that he was then so frequently to fill. We have already had to cite some of those courageous Christians who, at the risk of their lives, before the arrival of Father Zhou in Korea, during his stay, and after his martyrdom, maintained or renewed communications with the Church of China; but none of them remained so popular as Paul Jeong, who, for the salvation of all, devoted himself to this work with indomitable zeal and energy. Here are some details about his history.

Born in 1795, Paul descended from one of the most illustrious families in Korea, and his ancestors had often been honored with the great dignities of the kingdom. But his finest title of nobility was to be the son of the famous Augustine Jeong Yak-jeong<sup>2</sup>, and the younger brother of Charles Jeong<sup>3</sup>, who had both, in 1801, suffered death to bear witness to Jesus Christ. By this time, Augustine's wife and children had been imprisoned. Set free later, they were escorted back to Majae by a pagan, a distant relative of Augustine. There, abandoned without resources, without food, they<sup>4</sup> were rescued by a man of the people, to whom, later, Paul was able to pay his debt of gratitude. When his father and brother died, Paul was only six or seven years old; his young age had made him be spared, or rather God reserved him for the execution of his designs. Baptized in his childhood by Father Zhou, and covered, so to speak, with the blood of martyrs, he persisted with his mother and his sisters in the faithful practice of his religious duties. But the Jeon family, which the persecution had proscribed and ruined, and of which several members were still in exile, trembled at the very name of Christianity, and could not forgive them the thought of wanting to continue similar exercises. It therefore made every effort to prevent Paul and his family from henceforth serving God. Bitter reproaches, threats, contempt, derision, even ill-treatment, everything was put into play. Paul held firm, however, against these unworthy actions, and persevered against all odds. It was necessary that misfortune and contradictions come to test and strengthen this elite soul whose whole life was to pass in pains and sacrifices.

However, there was no longer any religious book left in the house, and Paul could only acquire a very superficial instruction, through the oral explanations of his excellent mother. All communication

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<sup>1</sup> 정하상 Jeong Ha-sang 丁夏祥 (1795-1839) Paul. Saint.

<sup>2</sup> 정약종 Jeong Yak-jong 丁若鍾 (1760-1801) Augustine. Blessed.

<sup>3</sup> 정철상 Jeong Cheol-sang 丁哲祥 (?-1801) Charles. Blessed.

<sup>4</sup> Jeong Ha-sang's mother Cecily Yu, his younger sister Elizabeth Jeong Il-hye 丁侗惠, the wife and son of his martyred older brother Charles Jeong Cheol-sang were all living there.

with Christians being strictly forbidden to him, he groaned in silence, thought of ways to educate himself, and above all, prayed fervently. Arrived in adolescence, he could, despite the ruin of his house, easily find some honorable match, at least among the families who had been proscribed like his own; and the fine qualities of mind and body with which he was endowed would have enabled him to provide easily for his needs, while providing for the salvation of his soul. But his great heart was far from dreaming of marriage; his noble inclinations carried him higher; his only thought, his only ambition was to work for the introduction of priests, and, by saving himself, to procure, whatever the cost, the salvation of his brothers in the faith.

Unable to bear the vexations of his family any longer, he made up his mind to escape, and leaving his mother and sister for the moment in the care of God, he retired to the home of two poor Christians, with whom he led for some time an excessively painful life. Without any resources, without clothes, often even without rice, like his generous hosts, he made rapid and serious progress in the practice of Christian mortification. He then wanted to go and find, in the place of his exile, at Musan, Justin Jo Dong-seom<sup>5</sup>, whose great heart, talents and virtues he had often heard praised, in order to study a little with him, learning Chinese letters, the knowledge of which was necessary for the execution of his projects. It was no less than a distance of a thousand *li*, and the last part of the route lay through almost desert country. Paul was not yet twenty years old; he had never travelled; he was alone, without friends, without money, without a guide. The difficulties, the dangers of this enterprise would have terrified a heart less resolute than his. But his extraordinary physical vigor seemed to allow him to dare anything, and counting on God's help, he set off. After untold fatigue and suffering, he arrived happily at the city of Musan. Generously received by the noble exile, whom he had come to find from so far away, he remained with him for several months, devoting himself tirelessly to the study of the Religion and Chinese literature. Then, encouraged by him in his grand designs, he returned and immediately put himself in touch with the Christians of the capital, to obtain the means of making the journey to Peking. It found an echo in all hearts, and the preparations were completed by the end of the year 1816.

Despite his extreme youth, Paul was already a mature, prudent man, capable of succeeding in anything he undertook. Like his predecessor John Yi Yeo-jin, he had to hide his titles of nobility, and putting himself at the service of the interpreters, as a simple valet, he left on foot, and happily made the trip, there and back. The details of his expedition are not known to us; but, this time again, the Church of Korea obtained neither a priest nor a positive promise for the future<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, the way was open to Paul; he had, by the reception of the Sacraments, confirmed himself in his resolution; he had carefully studied the way, and we will see him, for many years, renew his attempts, and obstinately pursue the realization of this project, which he considered his special vocation.

Often, later, Paul recounted the very special protection of God, of which he was the object on his return from the first journey. His base, in the capital, was with Peter Jo Si-uk, and that's where he had to go when he arrived. Having taken beasts of burden from the city of Uiju, on the frontier of Korea, to carry his luggage, he was to reach Seoul in a fixed number of days. Chance, or rather Providence, would have it that one of these animals was wounded in the leg, which delayed his progress and his arrival for a day. Luckily for him, because, outside the gates, he met Christians posted to warn him that Peter Jo and all his family had been arrested the day before by the satellites. If he had come on the appointed day, he would inevitably have been the prey of the persecutors; his despatches and all his effects would have been seized with him, and he would, in all probability, have shared the fate of those confessors of whom

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<sup>5</sup> 조동섬 Jo Dong-seom 趙東暹 (1739-1830). Justin.

<sup>6</sup> This is not quite correct. Bishop Joachim de Souza-Saraiva, (the bishop of Beijing since 1808 although he never left Macao until his death in 1818) in a letter to the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome dated January 23, 1817, wrote that he has appointed two priests for Korea, Xin Vellozo (43) and Fr. Vam (29). Neither entered Korea although it seems from a letter written by Fr. Ribeiro Nunes the Vicar General of Beijing that Fr. Xin had died near the Korean border. Fr. Vam then returned to Nanjing where he died.

we must now speak.

Peter Jo Myeong-su<sup>7</sup>, better known by his legal name of Suk was born in the district of Yanggeun. He was of the noble Jo family, and close relative of the famous Justin Jo, whom Paul Jeong visited in his exile. Still young when the great persecution of 1801 broke out, Peter retired with his parents to his mother's family, who lived in the province of Gangwon, and lived there for several years. Growing up, he displayed remarkable talents, a kind and complacent character, and a seriousness beyond his age. But the lack of continuous instruction and of communication with other Christians, the continual fears which never ceased to assail the neophytes and to paralyze their good will, had weakened his faith, and made him neglect his habitual practices. Fortunately, his marriage having been concluded with Theresa Gwon, the exhortations of this fervent wife awoke him, and made him an excellent Christian.

Theresa Gwon<sup>8</sup> was the daughter of one of the first and most zealous propagators of the Religion in Korea, Francis-Xavier Gwon Il-sin<sup>9</sup>. Born in the district of Yanggeun, she received from childhood the blessing of religious instruction. At the age of seven, she lost her mother and, two years later, saw her father perish in the persecution of 1791. The germs of virtue, deposited in her heart, were already so developed that she knew how to moderate the violence of the impressions of nature, by bearing this double loss for God. Theresa was the oldest<sup>10</sup> of four children orphaned by Xavier's death. They lived together, supporting each other; and Theresa's gentleness, complacency and charity contributed a great deal to preserving an unclouded peace between them. With age, her fine qualities of heart and mind, joined to a rare beauty, made her noticeable by all; but she herself, despising these temporal advantages, thought from then on, in the fervor of her love for God, of consecrating her virginity to him; and her resolution grew still stronger when she had the happiness of receiving the sacraments from the hand of Father Zhou. Theresa was eighteen years old when, as a result of the great persecution, her brothers were sent into exile and her family completely ruined. However, she did not allow any complaint to escape, and, having no longer any support in this world, she retired to the capital with one of her nephews, still determined to refuse marriage. Soon her parents, seeing her without resources, and fearing the clamor of the pagans if she remained alone, made her consider the dangers of this state in the sad circumstances in which she found herself, and, in the end, she yielded to their observations although unwillingly.

She was therefore, at the age of twenty-one, given to Peter Jo, whom she knew to be a rather lukewarm Christian. The customs of the country not allowing her to speak freely to her husband at first, she prepared a written text in which she brought out the beauty of virginity, and urged him to keep continence with her. She gave him this paper as soon as they were alone in the nuptial chamber; extraordinarily, Peter, suddenly changed, acceded to her wishes, and they promised to live as brother and sister. Theresa saw there, and with good reason, a manifest proof of God's help, and never ceased to thank him for it. The two spouses living together in perfect harmony, Peter's faith was soon revived by the remarkable virtue and penetrating words of his pious wife, and in a short time he became a completely different man.

When tranquility was completely restored, he transported his family to the capital, where he continued to engage in all kinds of good works. Their poverty was great, and they often lacked necessities. Both, however, endured the privations with joy; and, by dint of economy, they still found means of giving alms to those poorer than themselves. Peter, devoted to prayer and meditation, often shed abundant tears at the memory of his sins. If he saw any Christian become lukewarm, he was sensibly distressed, and

<sup>7</sup> 조명수 Jo Myeong-su 趙明秀 aka 조숙 Jo Suk 趙淑 (1786-1819) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>8</sup> 권천례 Gwon Cheon-rye 權千禮 (1784-1819). Theresa. Blessed.

<sup>9</sup> 권일신 Gwon Il-sin 權日身 (?-1791) Francis Xavier.

<sup>10</sup> She was in fact the youngest.

hastened to awaken him by exhortations which God almost always rendered efficacious. He instructed and converted many pagans, and by his zeal to baptize infants in danger of death brought eternal salvation to many of these poor creatures. Christians and pagans were delighted to hear him, and constantly turned up in droves to take advantage of his lessons. Never meddling in any affairs of the world, he had application only in matters of the Religion, and his main object was to make possible the introduction of a priest into Korea. He worked at it for a long time with all his might, and when Paul Jeong was to make the journey to Peking, he undertook almost all the preparations. It would be difficult to recount the pains and the troubles he had to bear then, without ever showing the slightest impatience or the slightest discouragement.

Theresa, for her part, was no less assiduous in doing all the good that was in her power. Jealous above all of her spiritual advancement, she strove to procure it by various exercises of mortification; she habitually fasted twice a week, and very often mixed with her rice, in secret, ashes or dust. Almost always sickly, she bore her pains with joy, uniting herself to the suffering and crucified Jesus Christ, and applied herself to prayer with such fervor that she forgot all the needs of the body, and often thought neither to eat nor to sleep. More than once the people of the house had to call her back to herself. She gave only a few hours to sleep, and divided all her time between prayer, the reading of religious books, and the instruction or consolation of her neighbors. She was always ready to answer anyone who came to her for an explanation or some advice, and all who heard her went home satisfied, touched and edified.

The demon could not calmly see so much virtue and zeal. Therefore, during the fifteen years that Peter and Theresa lived together in continence, he aroused in them violent temptations to make them renounce their holy resolution. Peter especially was on different occasions on the point of breaking his promise; but, each time, Theresa knew how to bring him back to his first feelings by kind words; therefore both never ceased to render fervent thanksgiving to the Lord. They had thus prepared themselves for a long time by the exercise of all the virtues, when God permitted them to be put to the test of the great tribulations. Towards the end of the third lunar month of the year *jeong-chuk* (1817), when the return from Beijing of Paul Jeong was expected day by day, an ecclesiastical calendar was seized from Peter Jo, or according to others, from a new catechumen whom he was then instructing and who is said to have denounced him. Be that as it may, this calendar having been brought to the great criminal judge, he immediately dispatched his satellites to arrest Peter. Theresa, not wanting to be separated from her husband, nor leave him alone in such a critical and decisive position, followed him and made herself a prisoner with him.

Peter was put to the question, and, according to custom, he was asked to apostatize, to give up his books and to denounce his accomplices. He held firm in the midst of tortures, and did not allow a single word to escape which could compromise anyone. The judge wanted first of all by gentleness to induce Theresa to apostatize in order to save her life. It was little to know the great heart of this courageous woman. She replied calmly and firmly: "God being the father of all men and the master of all creatures, how can I deny him? One would not forgive anyone in the world who would deny his parents; with all the more reason we must not deny the one who is our Father of all." So they came to the tortures, but she endured them with joy; her face did not even change color, and the mandarin saw at once that he would not easily obtain her submission. In the interrogations addressed to the two spouses, she always answered first, without giving her husband time to speak, and for that she had to undergo more violent tortures.

God allowed that they had, during all this time, a faithful companion of their captivity and their sufferings, Barbara-Magdalen Go. She was of a family of the people, of the district of Choe-ryeong, province of Hwanghae. Being still a pagan, she had followed her husband condemned to exile to the city of Musan, and there met Justin Jo Dong-seom, by whom she was instructed in the Religion. Her husband having died in this city, Barbara, without being stopped by the distance and the difficulties, had his body carried to the tomb of his fathers; then, considering that nothing here below is comparable to the service of God and the salvation of the soul, she went to the capital where, after long searches, she finally found the house of Peter Jo, which she had seen at Musan, during his visit to his relative Justin. At the height of her desires, she remained close to him, as a servant, diligent in learning and practicing the Religion

with all her heart. When Peter and Theresa were arrested, in the third lunar month, she did not want to part with them and followed them to prison, where she had to undergo the same interrogations and the same tortures. She knew how to imitate their constancy, and shared their fate to the end.

However, the trial of these three confessors dragged on. The judge was in no hurry to pass sentence, and seemed to want to leave them to rot in filthy dungeons. They remained there for more than two years, consoling themselves by the faithful practice of their religious duties, and patiently awaiting the accomplishment of the divine will. It was then above all that Theresa showed her strength of soul and her ardent love of God. Always cheerful and happy, she took joy in suffering, kept a calm and serene face, and seemed to others a consoling angel. She often said: "To me, a sinner, God had already granted the too great favor of keeping my virginity, and now he deigns to call me again to the blessing of martyrdom. This is too much. How can I properly thank him?" One day her husband, in a temptation to discouragement, told her that such tortures were no longer bearable. Theresa immediately endeavored to revive him, with those energetic and insinuating words which she knew so well how to find in her heart. "If you miss this fine opportunity," she added, "and save your life, what can you hope for so fine in the world? Isn't it a thousand times better for us to be martyrs together, on the same day, for God?" Since that time, Peter was no longer shaken. He even wrote, from his prison, several letters full of the most beautiful sentiments of faith, and which greatly edified those who read them. Unfortunately, none of these letters have reached us. The detail of the tortures which the prisoners had to undergo at different intervals is also lost. We only know that, firm to the end, they deserved to give their lives for Jesus Christ and were all three beheaded, in the capital, on the 21st of the fifth lunar month<sup>11</sup> of the year *gi-myō* (1819), after twenty-seven months in prison. Peter was then thirty-three, Theresa thirty-six, and Barbara-Magdalen over sixty. A Christian who was still alive a few years ago saw Theresa's body after her execution; it bore the marks of three saber cuts, and seemed marvelously beautiful to her. The bodies of these martyrs could not be collected until a month later; only the bones remained. Theresa's hair, placed in disorder in a wicker basket, was kept at the home of Sebastian Nam, a martyr in 1839, and several witnesses have testified that when the basket was opened, a perfume came out that perfumed the whole room.

This is how the two spouses, Peter and Theresa, had the happiness of being united in death as in life, of joining the lily of virginity to the palm of martyrdom. This is the second time that we have come across this remarkable fact in Korea, which is rare in the history of the Church. What should we not expect from a people among whom the Religion, barely established, imperfectly known, without priests, without sacraments, without sacrifices, nevertheless produces such souls and works such wonders!

The three previous martyrs having refused to make any denunciation, no one was compromised in their trial, and there were no further arrests in the capital. But we have to mention some in the provinces. In 1817, in the tenth lunar month, the satellites of Haemi, we do not know on what occasion, suddenly appeared at the village of Baena-dari, district of Deoksan, and chained a certain number of Christians, whom they drove to Haemi. This persecution, which did not extend beyond a few neighboring districts, is not known to us in its details. The memoirs of the time are almost silent, and the testimonies that we have been able to collect leave something to be desired by their lack of precision. This is mainly because there was no capital execution; for Christians, in their written accounts, are generally much more concerned with the martyrs put to death by the hand of the executioner, than with those who perished just as gloriously in prisons or on the road to exile. Perhaps also the isolated position of Haemi and the relative lack of importance of the trials contributed to the oblivion into which this affair fell. Only about thirty Christians were arrested, and most immediately bought their freedom by apostasy. A few others remained firm, and had the grace to persevere until death. Here is the most certain thing we know about the main ones.

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<sup>11</sup> (Dallet 84.) According to the testimony of Bridget T'soi, their martyrdom did not take place until three weeks later, on the 13th day of the sixth month.

Peter Min Cheom-ji, a native of the district of Gyeolseong<sup>12</sup>, had always made it his principal occupation to instruct and exhort other Christians. After having lived for some years at Soiak-gol<sup>13</sup>, in the district of Mokcheon he emigrated to Paena-dari<sup>14</sup>, and immediately set himself, according to his custom, to catechize the people of that village. His charity and the example of his virtues soon won him the esteem and affection of all. Taken in the tenth lunar month, he let himself be shaken neither by the tortures nor by the defection of his companions in captivity. One of his sisters-in-law, named Anne, who had been widowed for some time, was arrested with him and imitated his courage. After about two months of suffering, both died of starvation in prison. They were both over sixty years old. A tradition reports that Anne had six fingers on one hand.

Joseph Song Cheom-ji, uncle of Philip Song Chun-hwa, was, at the time of his arrest, of a very advanced age. Poor and without a family, he lived as a servant with other Christians, loved by all who knew him, because of his gentle, simple and devoted character. He did not want to deny his faith, and also died in the prison of Haemi.

Another Christian, whose name is unknown, after having generously confessed Jesus Christ, awaited, in this same prison, the final decision of the Mandarin. The satellites, who sought to obtain from him the denunciation of one of his relatives, a very rich man, whose house they wanted to pillage, tortured him continually in secret. He resolved to escape, at all costs, from their mistreatment; and one day, flight seeming to him possible, he tore off the hand by which he was chained, managed to deceive the vigilance of the guards, escaped, and hid with a Christian family, where he did not die until a long time afterwards.

Joseph Son Yeon-uk, born in the district of Hongju, distinguished himself by his intrepidity in confessing the faith, as well as by his constancy in torture. He was a gentle man, humble, charitable towards his neighbor, and above all very exact in the practice of his religious duties. Often he testified to the desire to give his life for God. When he had been caught and taken to Haemi, the criminal judge summoned him and wanted to force him to denounce the Christians, to give up his books and to renounce his religion. He responded to these requests as a soldier of Jesus Christ should, and as a result was questioned. The tortures continued for several days, but his heart did not allow itself to be shaken, and no compromising word fell from his lips, which seemed to have no movement except to pray to God. The defection of many of his fellow prisoners made no more impression on him. On the contrary, he seemed to take the opportunity to revive his zeal and excite himself to repair, by his own fidelity, the unworthy outrage done to the glory of God. After long and numerous tortures, he was left in prison, with no hope of ever getting out, and settled there as if to spend his life there. Six or seven years thus passed, and his fervor, far from diminishing, grew stronger every day. In the end, he obtained permission to live with his brother, in a house next to the prison. He had been living there for only a few weeks when he died, in circumstances which greatly affected Christians. He did not appear to be afflicted with any illness, and no one foresaw his approaching end, when one day, after having spent the whole night in prayers and even reciting, it is said, the prayers of the recommendation of the soul, he went out in the morning, went to wash at the nearby fountain, then, sitting down on the edge of the fountain on a large stone, breathed his last, without the people who were near him noticing. His body exhaled a pleasant odor, and for several days retained all its suppleness. It was in the year *gap-sin* (1824).

Son Yeo-sim, father of Joseph, had also been arrested, three days after his son, and taken to the

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<sup>12</sup> 결성 Gyeolseong 結城 (Now 충남 홍성군 결성면 South Chungcheong Hongseong-gun Gyeolseong-myeon)

<sup>13</sup> 쇠악골 Soiak-gol (Now 충남 천안시 동남구 북면 남안리 South Chungcheong Cheonan-si Dongnam-gu Buk-myeon Napan-ri)

<sup>14</sup> 배나드리 Paenadeuri (Now 충남 예산군 삽교읍 용동 3 리 South Chungcheong Yesan-gun Sapgyo-eup Yongdong3ri)

prefecture of Haemi. He resolutely supported, on more than twenty different occasions, cruel tortures. It was rumored that in the end he had allowed himself to be shaken. It is certain, however, that he was consigned to prison and that he had spent at least ten years there, with other Christian prisoners like him, when he was attacked by a very dangerous disease. The mandarin sent him to his family, with orders to return after his recovery; but this order was useless, for he died soon afterwards, in the year *jeong-hae* (1827).

To the history of the year 1817 is attached a very edifying feature, unknown to most Christians. Yi Yong-bin, whose baptismal name is not known, who perhaps was never even baptized, lived at Gamtang-gae, in the district of Suwon. He had married a person of the Christian family of Jo Han-ji, and lost among the infidels, practiced the Religion alone with his wife. Having become a widower, he retired to one of his parents, who were all pagans, to find a means of existence there, and continued to fulfill his religious duties with fidelity and fervor. Already many murmurs had risen against him from his family, but he paid no attention to them, and thought only of serving God with all his might. One of his cousins, animated by more benevolent dispositions, seemed bound to listen with docility to a few words on the Religion. Driven by the desire to save this soul, Yong-bin explained to him, at length, what he knew of Christianity. Was his zeal crowned with success? we do not know; but his family, already badly impressed against him, fearing that he would infatuate several of its members with the fatal doctrine, and thus bring down great evils on the heads of all, resolved to get rid of him. They first tried to make him apostatize, and as he would not renounce his faith, they carried him away secretly and put him to death.

In the years that followed, we encounter no memorable events. Almost at each embassy, Paul Jeong left for Peking, in order to solicit the Bishop of this city to send a pastor to the neophytes of Korea, the most desolate part of his immense flock. But the day fixed by Providence had not yet arrived, and his renewed attempts always ended in the same failure. Nothing, however, could diminish his courage or extinguish his hope.

No persecution was reported at this time. The Christians lived almost in freedom, and their number increased every day. The Holy Spirit directly compensated, by the abundance of his graces, for the lack of priests and sacraments, and, for the benefit of all, sometimes granted singular favors to various members of Christendom. In the absence of sufficiently positive documents and testimonies, we abstain from qualifying the facts that the Christians relate, although it seems to us quite in the order of Providence, that God multiplied the extraordinary spiritual help, for revive and support these poor abandoned neophytes. We cite only one example, among many other analogues.

A child, born of Christian parents, and named James Yun, aged eleven, went every day to look for wood on the mountain, with his comrades. One day he returned early, exhausted and in pain, and said he was seized with a fatal illness. Then he added: "On the mountain, finding myself more than usually tired, I was resting, when an invincible inner feeling made me know that I would die on Ascension Day, at noon." They examined his body, and found no sign of disease; however, he grew worse, and soon his situation seemed dangerous. Three days before the Ascension, he earnestly requested baptism, which was conferred on him. On the eve of the feast, he had himself given clean clothes with which he wished to be buried, then distributed to a few comrades the objects which he usually used. On Ascension Day, nothing seemed to announce an imminent end, but he declared that it was his last moment, and at the hour of the Angelus, after reciting this prayer with those around him, he fell asleep in the Lord. Was it not his guardian angel who, by thus warning him of the hour of his death, had procured him the happiness of presenting himself before God, in the splendor of his baptismal innocence?

In the year *sin-sa* (1821), the sudden invasion of cholera caused many Christians, who were still only catechumens, to receive the sacrament of baptism, some at the very hour of death, some others in



advance, as a pious precaution, so as not to risk dying without having been regenerated. According to tradition, this terrible scourge, hitherto unknown in Korea, arrived there from Japan. What is told of its march and its ravages resembles what we have seen in Europe and other countries, when it appeared there for the first time. Koreans still talk about it with trembling. There was death everywhere, and almost always sudden death. No remedy could stop the progress of the disease. All the families were in mourning, all the houses contained corpses, often even the roads were strewn with them. After a few months, they thought they had found some remedies of at least doubtful effectiveness, or rather the scourge diminished in intensity, and finally disappeared. Since then, it has not reappeared as an epidemic, until the year 1850. But since that time, it seems to have taken root in the country, and on several occasions has claimed many victims, especially in 1858 and in the next four or five years.

However Paul Jeong, in spite of his youth, was in fact at the head of the affairs of Christendom. Charles Hyeon<sup>15</sup>, son of the martyr Hyeon Gye-heum<sup>16</sup>, Paul Yi Jong-hoi<sup>17</sup>, younger brother of the martyr Charles Yi Gyeong-do 李景陶, and several others, of whom we shall often have to speak in the period following the arrival of the missionaries, had been associated with his efforts. Each time Paul returned to Beijing, a few Christians accompanied him to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance and Eucharist. In 1823, our intrepid traveler must have been well consoled and strengthened by an entirely providential event which, by making communication with the Bishop of Peking much easier, seemed to announce that the time of mercy was approaching. We want to talk about the conversion of Augustine Yu Yong-sim<sup>18</sup>, a truly great man in his talents and his energy, even greater in his virtues and his patience in suffering.

Augustine Yu was from one of the main families of interpreters, and for several generations, his ancestors had held important positions. From childhood, he showed a great taste for study and devoted himself to it with such ardor and such success, that before the age of twenty he already had the reputation of a very learned man. Although he was rich and in a good position, he did not seek glory and the pleasures of the world; his only passion was for serious studies. He wanted to come to know clearly the origin and the end of man and of the world; and in the hope of succeeding in it, he studied thoroughly, day and night, for more than ten years, the books of the religion of Fo, as well as many others. It was said of him that he contained ten thousand volumes in his chest and that all the sciences, both ancient and modern, were found there united. But after such vast researches, Augustine had succeeded only in profoundly impairing his health by excessive work; he found no unshakable principles of truth anywhere, and his mind was less and less satisfied.

Too young in 1801 to hear about the Religion, or to understand what was said about it, he learned later that at that time many personages, famous for their learning and their virtue, had been killed as professing the Religion of the Lord of Heaven, and that they died with extraordinary joy. "Wouldn't that be the true doctrine?" he said to himself. And from then on he sought to meet Christians, or at least to obtain books of their Religion: but where to find these books, where to meet these men? There was a piece of furniture lined with papers printed in Chinese. Looking one day by chance at some half-torn sheets, he saw there these words: sensitive soul... vegetative soul... spiritual soul... Words so extraordinary for him aroused his curiosity; immediately he peeled off one by one, with the greatest precautions, all the sheets which covered the piece of furniture, and coordinating them, he had in his hands a part of the Christian book entitled: *True Principles on God*. He began to read it with all possible attention, but many things were unclear and incomplete, and he could not yet learn what he wanted. More eager than ever to have the complete solution of all his difficulties, he made new efforts to find Christians,

<sup>15</sup> 현석문 Hyeon Seok-mun 玄錫文 (1797-1846) Charles. Saint.

<sup>16</sup> 현계흠 Hyeon Gye-heum 玄啓欽 (1763-1801) Florus. Blessed.

<sup>17</sup> 이경언 Yi Gyeong-eon 李景彦 aka 종회 Jong-hoi (1792-1827) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>18</sup> 유진길 Yu Jin-gil 劉進吉 (1791-1839) Augustine. Saint.

and God, who saw the righteousness of his intentions, and the ardent thirst for truth which devoured his heart, finally permitted, after a thousand searches, that he should come across some. It was in the year *gye-mi* (1823), Light is easily made in souls of good will; so hardly had Augustine heard some oral explanations, and read the books procured by the Christians, than the Religion seemed to him clear and certain. After a few days of study, no doubt remained in his mind; God granted him the priceless gift of faith, and he immediately began to practice it diligently.

Such was the man whom Providence was to associate with Paul Jeong and his companions in their attempts to obtain pastors at last. As a government interpreter by function, it was easy for him to travel to Peking; his office put him above suspicion, and his official position gave him enough influence to cover the proceedings of others. In the year following his conversion, that is to say in 1824, Augustine made the trip to Peking as an interpreter for the embassy. Arrived in this city, he went with Paul Jeong to the bishop and the priests, asked for and received baptism, then, putting before their eyes the sad state of the faithful of Korea, like abandoned sheep, prey to fury of the wolves, he conjured them to provide for their salvation by all possible means. His enlightened zeal did not stop there; he thought, and with good reason, that a petition addressed directly to the Sovereign Pontiff, in the name of all Christians, his brothers, could hasten the realization of their common desires, and he wrote, that same year, according to some, or more probably one of the following years<sup>19</sup>, a letter to the Pope, in which, describing to him the miserable situation of Christendom, he conjured him to stretch out his hand to them, and to draw them out of the abyss.

We shall see later that this letter had its effect. For his part, the Bishop of Peking, touched by the constant efforts of these poor orphans, promised to finally grant them a priest the following year. It was Paul Jeong's fifth trip. Arrangements were made, and the time of the meeting was fixed at Pien-men, a frontier town of China. Christians received this promise with unspeakable joy. All the preparations were made with alacrity, and, at the appointed time, they went to Pien-men to receive and introduce the messenger of the Lord. But a new ordeal was to desolate the patience of our poor neophytes. Arrived at the fixed place, the couriers did not meet the priest: no one had come there. How to describe their disappointment and sadness? Paul Jeong, who was at their head, not being able to guess the cause of this mishap, continued on the road to Peking, and saw that the deplorable circumstances in which Christianity in China found itself at that time had made it absolutely impossible for the bishop to keep his promise.

Paul was not discouraged however, and in concert with Augustine Yu, he worked to facilitate more and more the annual communications, and to multiply for the future the chances of success. Their project was to associate themselves with some reliable and devoted man among the accustomed servants of the Embassy; but unfortunately none of them were Christians. After mature reflection they cast their eyes on Charles Jo<sup>20</sup>, then a pagan, whom they had known a little during the journey, and whose good, upright, firm and disinterested character seemed to promise a prompt and sincere conversion. He was from Hoeyang district, Gangwon province. At the age of five he lost his mother, and soon after, the small resources of his family being exhausted, he left his father's house, had his head shaved and was received among the (Buddhist) bonzes, with whom he spent a few years. Returning to common life, he placed himself first as a servant in various houses, then, at the age of twenty-three, he had himself admitted to the number of valets attached to the embassy of Peking, and succeeded in picking up a small nest egg, which he used to help his father and his brother. His good character made him conspicuous among all his companions, and had won him general confidence.

Charles Jo was about thirty years old when Paul thought of converting him. He was therefore summoned secretly to a Christian house, and Augustine Yu undertook to make the first overtures to him on the subject of the Religion. He was a little taken aback at first and understood nothing of what was

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<sup>19</sup> Probably in 1824 or 1825, since it was translated into Latin and sent to Rome from Macao on December 3, 1826.

<sup>20</sup> 조신철 Jo Sin-cheol 趙信喆 (1796-1839) Charles. Saint.

being said to him; but after a few days of following instructions, his mind was opened to the light of faith, and he promised to practice as much as possible. Some time later he set out with Augustine for Peking, presented himself there to the priests, and had the happiness of receiving Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. Back in Korea, he could not contain himself with joy, and stood out among all the neophytes for his humility, his patience, his ardent love for God, and his charity for his neighbor, whom he relieved by his alms as much as it was in his power. He made so many efforts with his wife that he succeeded in overcoming her repugnance, converted her, and made her an excellent Christian who did not contradict herself until her death. This truly devoted man rendered, in his humble condition, very great services to Christendom; he contributed a great deal by his activity and his zeal to the introduction of the missionaries, and his name can no longer be separated from those of Paul Jeong and Augustin Yu.

In this same year, 1825, we still find a few Christians tormented and imprisoned, without, however, the general tranquility appearing to have been seriously disturbed. Augustine Bae<sup>21</sup>, otherwise known as Jeong-mo, a native of the district of Dangjin 唐津, and son of Francis Bae<sup>22</sup>, martyr in 1799, had managed to hide for some time when his father was arrested; but having returned home, he was caught and taken to the tribunal of Cheongju where his father was detained. He was asked if he was a Christian, and on his affirmative answer he was summoned to apostatize and denounce his accomplices. He refused, was subjected to violent tortures which he endured intrepidly, wearying by his patience the fury of his judges, and was thrown into a dungeon separate from that of his father. When the latter was led to execution, the mandarin allowed Augustine to see him, and after the execution gave him the body, with permission to go and bury it. Augustine, after having buried his father, took advantage of the opportunity to flee, and in order to evade the search, he worked as a sailor for a year, then he hid for four or five years in the district of Gongju. The persecution being appeased, he went to settle at Gangmun, district of Myeonjeon, earning his living by carpentry work in which he excelled, and copying religious books for the use of Christians. He was always noted for his great fervor in the performance of his duties. He was recaptured, no one knows on what occasion, in the year *eul-yu* (1825), and taken to the tribunal of Haemi, where he was subjected to cruel tortures. Supported by the example of his father and true to his own background, he bore them with great courage. It is said that he was then condemned to death; but the fact seems unlikely. In his prison, he soon won the esteem and confidence of all, and obtained, after two or three years, permission to return home, on condition that he appear on the 1st and 15th of each month before the Mandarin. He died peacefully at the age of sixty-three, on the 26th of the sixth lunar month of the year *gi-chuk* (1829).

In this same prison of Haemi was the widow Barbara Ha, whose memory has remained in veneration among Christians. Born of pagan parents in the district of Dangjin, she was married in that of Myeonjeon, and her gentle and complacent character induced one of her husband's relations to introduce her to the Religion. She embraced it with joy, and was soon noticed by her virtues and fervent piety. When she became a widow, she busied herself in instructing and exhorting Christian girls and women, and having no other object than the service of God, traveled in all directions through the different districts of the plain of Naepo, exercising her ministry of charity and also converting many pagans. Her zeal and activity in fulfilling this function of catechist made her particularly dear to the Christians of this province, many of whom owe their knowledge of the Religion to her. God, to reward her faith and her labors, allowed her to have some share in the glory of the confessors. She was arrested at the village of Bandae-magol, district of Asan, on the third lunar month of 1825, and taken to Haemi, where she met Augustine Bae. Summoned to apostatize and questioned several times, she showed a quite virile strength and did

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<sup>21</sup> 배정모 Bae Jeong-mo 裴正模 aka 배손이 Bae Son-i 裴孫伊

<sup>22</sup> 배관겸 Bae Gwan-gyeom 裴— (1740?-1799) Francis. Blessed.

not allow herself to be shaken. She was later granted release from prison, on condition that she report to the Mandarin twice a month, and died of illness some time later.

The year 1826 presents us with nothing of interest. According to a rumor spread among Christians, the Emperor of Japan would then have written to the King of Korea to warn him that six Japanese subjects of the Religion of Jesus had fled in a small boat. "If they have come into your kingdom, please have them seized and send them back to me." We could not verify this fact.

Except for the few local vexations of which we have just spoken, the Church of Korea was at peace, and her enemies did not seem to think of attacking her again, when in the year *jeong-hae* (1827), the imprudence and the misconduct of many Christians became the cause of a horrible disaster. In 1815, we saw the storm raging over the province of Gyeongsang; this time, the principal theater of persecution was the province of Jeolla, so cruelly tested already in 1801. Long years of tranquility had caused a large number of Christians to emigrate there, to whom many new proselytes had gradually joined themselves.

In the village of Deoksil<sup>23</sup>, in the district of Gokseong, towards the south-east of the province, there was a pottery factory, all the workmen of which were Christians. A new convert, named Jeon, had established a wine shop there for the service of the village. Han Baek-gyeom, son of the famous martyr Thomas Han, a man too well known for the violence of his character and his not very exemplary conduct, was then living in this village, and by his acts, only too much justified the saying of the Christians: "Must such a noble martyr have left such a bad son?" One day when the earthen vessels were to be removed from the kiln, there was, as usual, a great crowd of people and, consequently, copious libations. Han Baek-gyeom, excited already by the fumes of the wine, complained strongly that his vases were too small, and after arguing with the innkeeper, he took it out on his wife, the insulted and beat her cruelly. The innkeeper, whose faith was not yet well consolidated, could not bear such an insult and resolved to take a dazzling revenge. He therefore took some religious books, and without thinking, no doubt, about the consequences of his approach, took them to the mandarin of Gokseong, denouncing as owners his enemy Han Baek-gyeom, and some other Christians of whom he thought he had something to complain about. It is sad to see this miserable quarrel between Christians become the cause of so many ruins, cause so many apostasies, and bring about the loss of so many souls redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ!

The Mandarin of Gokseong, having manifest proofs in hand, did not hesitate a moment, and immediately gave orders to seize the Christians. It was the second lunar month of 1827. Then again presented itself the harrowing spectacle of these poor faithful delivered up to the mercy of ferocious and greedy satellites; of men, women and children, brutally stripped of all their possessions, crammed into prisons, questioned and tortured mercilessly. Little by little, either as a result of denunciations wrested from weak Christians, or because a fire once lit naturally spreads to all that is nearby, the persecution spread from district to district, throughout the province.

Many Christians sought their salvation in flight; the others awaited at home, or on the surrounding mountains, the fate that God had in store for them, and neither one nor the other allowed them to avoid the satellites which penetrated everywhere and carefully guarded all the roads. Those who were disdained to seize, left by the looting without food, without resources, dared not congratulate themselves on having been spared, for there was nothing left for them but to die of hunger and misery. We have no details of the various interrogations undergone by the neophytes, in the various small prefectures where they were first taken. Some of the most cowardly apostatized immediately, but the greater number were transferred to the tribunal of Jeonju, the metropolis of the province.

During the course of the third lunar month, the whole of the north of the province was also invaded. In the district of Geumsan, among the Christians seized was a certain Gang who, for fear of not behaving bravely enough before the judges, killed himself on the way, in a fit of madness.

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<sup>23</sup> Probably now 전남 곡성군 오곡면 미산리 South Jeolla Gogseong-gun Ogokmyeon Misan-ri.

In the district of Gosan, a number of Christians were arrested, and nearly all were also taken to Jeonju. The captives were assembled in this city to the number of more than two hundred and forty, among whom were many women. Either because the prisons were too small, or rather that they wanted to prevent the prisoners from consulting among themselves and supporting each other, they were dispersed in different places in the city, even in private houses. Almost all of them were chained and had the cangue on their shoulders. Others were tied together with ropes that bound their necks and legs.

The governor of Jeonju was, at this time, Yi Gwang-mun<sup>24</sup>, of the branch of the Yi of Ubong. He followed a different system from that employed in previous persecutions. Perhaps he was personally less hostile to the Religion; perhaps also, seeing that all the Christians arrested were people of the people, and that there was not among them any important personage, he wanted to try to arrive at the same end by other means. Be that as it may, he avoided capital executions as much as possible, only condemning to exile even those who showed themselves to be firm under torture and refused the denunciations demanded; or else, when circumstances forced him to pronounce a sentence of death, leaving the victims to vegetate indefinitely in the prisons, and to die noiselessly of hunger and misery. This system succeeded beyond the hopes of the governor, for the Christians of the province of Jeolla had fallen into a great laxity; and we must confess that this persecution of 1827 was the most deplorable of all, for the number of defections it occasioned. Never, proportionally, were apostates so numerous. Some confessors, however, maintained the honor of the Religion by their constant firmness. We will name the best known here.

First is Magdalen Yi, the sister of Paul Yi from Janggi village. Born in a small village in Naepo, she was married to Andrew Yi at the age of seventeen, and God blessing this union, she had seven children whom she brought up and instructed with care, and whom she made excellent Christians, less still by her advice than by her beautiful examples. Arrested in the district of Gokseong, at the beginning of this persecution, she was brought before the criminal judge, whose every effort tended to make her denounce her brother's hiding place. But Magdalen, understanding how such declarations were contrary to the duties of the disciples of Jesus Christ, endured with firmness and patience the violent tortures to which she was subjected, and did not open her mouth. Seductions and promises made no more impression on her heart. The judge, unable to win anything, condemned her to exile, and she was sent to the town of Baekcheon, province of Hwanghae. There, new trials awaited her. The inhabitants of this place pursued her with jokes and sarcasms on the cause of her exile; she was spared neither vexations, ill-treatment, nor insults. Magdalen nevertheless continued the faithful practice of her Religion, and bore everything with invincible patience, accepting with a submissive and contented heart what the will of God permitted. As she could not read, she counted the days and kept silent about the Sunday exercises, without being able to observe the other holidays whose dates she did not know. She spent four years in this way, after which an illness of which she had been carrying the germ for a long time took hold of her with violence. Feeling her end approaching, she took her rosary beads, knelt in prayer, and rendered her soul to God in this position, on the 12th day of the eleventh lunar month of the year *gyeong-in* (1830), at the age of fifty-three years.

After this faithful servant of God, we will mention Andrew Kim Do-myeong<sup>25</sup>. Born in the district of Myeonjeon, of Christian parents, he was docile to their instructions from childhood, and made rapid progress in piety. Arrested in the second lunar month at Sincheok, Suncheon district, and brought to the criminal judge of Jeonju, he consistently refused to apostatize and denounce his brothers in faith, and despite torture and death threats, remaining steadfast until the end. It is not absolutely certain that he was

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<sup>24</sup> 이광문 Yi Gwang-mun 李光文 (1778-1838).

<sup>25</sup> 김도명 Kim Do-myeong 金道明 Andrew.

sentenced to death<sup>26</sup>. He was left to languish in prison, where he died without ever showing a sign of weakness and discouragement, shortly after 1832, at the age of fifty-something.

We then find John-Baptist Yi Seong-ji, of the Hampyeong Yi clan. Descended from a family of military mandarins, he lived in the village of Nopeun-moi<sup>27</sup>, in the district of Deoksan, and was not taught Christianity until the age of twenty-four. The eldest of three brothers, and in charge of the management of the house, he immediately understood that, in his own country, in the midst of his many pagan relatives, the cult of the tablets and other superstitions would be a great obstacle to his progress in the service of God. So he left with all his family and retired to the mountains, so that he could freely observe the precepts of the Gospel. His little wealth was in a few years completely exhausted, and the whole family had to suffer from hunger and cold. Also his father, who remained a pagan, never ceased to quarrel with him, to insult him, and to curse this religion which had plunged them all into misery. To obtain his conversion, John-Baptist multiplied his prayers and his exercises of penance. After more than ten years, his efforts were finally crowned with success, and his father became a Christian two years before his death. Forced to emigrate several times, John-Baptist had finally established himself in the district of Gosan, province of Jeolla, where his main occupation was to help the sick and destitute, and in the years of famine, to bury the dead abandoned on the roads.

It was in the exercise of these good works that he was arrested, on the 23rd of the third lunar month, by the satellites of Jeonju. Soon his two brothers and all the members of his family, thirteen in number, were seized and consigned, some to prison, others to private individuals on bail. John-Baptist appeared at the tribunal of Jeonju. “What did you do with your tablets?” the Mandarin asked him. “I buried them.” “So you don’t honor your ancestors?” “I may well honor my parents, but can a piece of wood cut on the mountain ever become my father and my mother?” — He was then asked for various denunciations, and on his refusal, he was subjected to the stretching of the bones of the arms more than ten times in succession; his arms were broken, he lost consciousness, and they carried him back to prison with the cangue about his neck. Three days later, cited again, he was again summoned to make denunciations and received more than three hundred blows with a stick. Eight or ten interrogations followed one another in this way, and each time new tortures were inflicted on him. At the end, the governor said to him: “Since you violate the law of the kingdom and remain stubborn in your ideas, would you perish ten thousand times, you are not worthy of compassion.” John-Baptiste was determined to die. However, there is no authentic evidence that his sentence was pronounced, he was left indefinitely in prison where, after nine years of suffering and eight months of illness, he died at the age of fifty-eight, on the 11th day of the fourth lunar month of the year *eul-mi* (1835).

With John-Baptist Yi had been seized the third of his brothers, named John Yi Seong-sam. This latter, in his youth, had, according to the desire of his parents, studied letters, while devoting himself to the work of the body. So he copied many religious books, which he sold or gave to Christians. He also occupied himself with the instruction of the poor faithful and, although his character was naturally violent and hot-tempered, he knew how to tame himself so well that he won all hearts by the gentleness and charity of his words. Arrested in 1827, he had already undergone numerous tortures before the criminal judge, when several prisoners denounced him as the copyist of the books taken from them. This new charge became for him the cause of much embarrassment and suffering. Treated from then on as a leader of the Christians, he was questioned many times, and had to endure such atrocious tortures, that he died in prison, on the 14th day of the ninth lunar month of that same year, at the age of thirty-three.

With him were imprisoned four other confessors whose martyrdom began at this time, only to

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<sup>26</sup> It seems likely that he apostatized but was not believed, so was kept in prison for further questioning. He then retracted his apostasy and died a martyr.

<sup>27</sup> 높은 뫼 Nopeun-moi (Now 예산군 고덕면 몽곡리 Yesan-gun Godeok-myeon Monggok-ri)

end thirteen years later. They were Paul Jeong<sup>28</sup>, Job Yi<sup>29</sup>, Peter Kim<sup>30</sup> and Peter Yi<sup>31</sup>, all from the famous plain of Naepo, the cradle and center of Korean Christianity.

Paul Jeong, whose legal name was Man-bo, but who is better known by his child name: Tae-bong, was from the district of Deoksan, and first cousin of Peter Jeong, martyr in 1801. Having lost his father and mother at an early age, he was brought up by a distant relative, and, as often happens in such circumstances, was treated like a real slave. His character, naturally gentle and complacent, made him endure these first trials with patience and resignation. Later, when he was able to support himself, he left Naepo, and retired to the district of Yongdam, in the province of Jeolla. He had been there three years, when the persecution of 1827 arose. Paul had always been a zealous Christian, making every effort to do his duties exactly, and so eager for instruction that when he opened a book of the Religion he could not close it until he had read it through. He felt in his heart a great desire for martyrdom and, from time to time, placing a block under his chin, he said: "If I received the saber cut in this position, perhaps I could save my soul." However, in order not to act too rashly, he first hid himself. But as he returned very often to his house, he was met there one day by the satellites, who presented themselves with a warrant of arrest issued by the tribunal on the denunciation of an apostate. This warrant bore a name other than his own, and it would have been easy for Paul to avoid it; but he was careful not to miss the favorable opportunity, and followed the satellites to the prefecture of Yongdam. After an interrogation, followed by beating on the legs, he was sent to Jeonju, the capital of the province. There, he had to undergo twice the tortures of the separation of the bones and the puncture of the sticks, and the mandarin seeing that he could not obtain from him either apostasy or denunciation, left him in prison until further notice.

Job Yi Il-eon<sup>32</sup> nicknamed Tae-mun, better known as Yi of Anui, was from the village of Daebol, in the district of Hongju. He was instructed in the Religion by his parents, and practiced it already before the persecution of 1801. At that time he was taken and, after a detention of which the length and details are unknown, was exiled to Anui, province of Gyeongsang. Arrived at the place of his exile, frowned upon by the Mandarin and the Praetorians, he was locked up in prison, which does not usually happen for exiles. Moreover, they only gave him food once a day, sometimes even every other day, and they went so far as to refuse him fire and water. Job thus remained confined in the prison for ten years, exposed to all kinds of snubs and ill-treatment. But as a true Christian, he seemed not to hear the insults, not to feel the outrages. His unalterable resignation managed to win over prejudiced minds, the jailers gradually became less cruel towards him and, in the end, he was allowed to go and lodge on bail in a private house.

In 1815, his wife was able to join him at the place of his exile, and they lived together in Anui, until the fifth lunar month of the year 1826. Job was then set free, and came to settle in the village of Daepan, in the district of Imsil, province of Jeolla. He had barely settled there when the persecution of 1827 arose. His wife urged him to flee, but he did not seem to hear her words. One day when he had disappeared, they looked for him everywhere, and finally they found him alone in a secluded place, sitting and weeping hot tears. Asked about the cause of his tears, he replied: "In the past I missed a great opportunity to be a martyr, and I deeply regret having allowed myself to be sent into exile. Now isn't it very sad for me to be in a secluded place and have no chance to lay down my life for God?" His sighs no doubt reached Heaven, for, three days later, the satellites of Jeonju came unexpectedly to arrest him. He followed them full of joy. From the first interrogation, the criminal judge, having known his antecedents, had him beaten more cruelly than usual; and, a few days later, seeing him determined, pronounced the

<sup>28</sup> 정태봉 Jeong Tae-bong 鄭太奉 (1796-1839) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>29</sup> 이일언 Yi Il-eon 李日彦 (1767-1839) Job. Blessed.

<sup>30</sup> 김대권 Kim Dae-gwon 金大權 (?-1839) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>31</sup> 이태권 Yi Tae-gwon 李太權 aka 만보 Man-bo (1782-1839) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>32</sup> 이일언 태문 Yi Il-eon Tae-mun 李日彦 太文 (1767-1839) Job. Blessed.

sentence of death. Job was small and had a puny appearance. But his constancy and his firmness in the tortures soon brought him to the notice of all the people in the courtroom, and they said to themselves: “We had misjudged him on his looks. This man is a true leader of Christians.” Job was therefore left in prison awaiting execution.

Peter Kim Dae-gwon was from a family originally from Sudani<sup>33</sup>, Cheongyang district, which had emigrated to Cheongna-dong<sup>34</sup>, Boryeong district. Elder brother of James Kim<sup>35</sup>, martyr in 1816, he had been instructed in the Religion from childhood, but hardly practiced it, and it was only after the death of his parents, that by a special grace of God, he became more exact in all his religious duties. Here’s how. Having established himself in the district of Gongju, where he worked in a pottery factory, he had very frequent disputes with his wife. One day when they had become furiously angry with each other, Peter went to sleep in the inner bedroom, while his wife remained in the kitchen to give herself up to rest. Peter was in his first sleep, when, thinking he heard the voice of God calling him, he got up with a start, and saw a tiger carrying off his wife in its mouth. He immediately pursued the animal, uttering loud cries, and succeeded in snatching its victim; she had a large wound in her leg. The next day he said to her: “This accident happened because of our disagreements, but since God allowed your life to be saved, we must first thank him for it, then, take advantage of this severe lesson as best we can, to correct ourselves, to do good, and until death to live in good understanding.” They kept their resolution, and from that moment both lived in the greatest harmony.

Every Sunday, Peter exhorted and instructed not only his family, but all the people of the village. At the Christmas feast, he did not fail to go to one of the neighboring mountains, and taking with him the Gospel and some other books, he passed the night in the exercises of piety. One day when he was praying on one of these mountains, a big tiger came and stood opposite him and began to roar. Peter, without being too frightened, remained where he was, said all his prayers as usual, then, when day broke, quietly went down to his house, while the tiger returned to its lair. During Lent, Peter was more assiduous than ever in prayer and meditation; he then had only one meal, took only half a bowl of rice, which he ate with cold water, with no other seasoning than a little salt; his bodily vigor was in no way impaired by this extraordinary mortification. He had in his heart a real desire for martyrdom, and, after the execution of his younger brother in 1816, having brought back the block on which his head had been cut off, he often placed it under his chin during the night, to think more effectively about death.

Peter had emigrated to the district of Gosan. When he learned, in 1827, that a persecution had just broken out, he urged others to flee to avoid it, but he himself waited in peace for God to manifest his will. A band of more than a hundred satellites<sup>36</sup> soon surrounded the village where he was, and rushed on the poor Christians. Peter, without being frightened, went to meet them laughing, and immediately, tied with the red rope like great criminals, was led by them to the tribunal of Gosan. He seemed to be going to a feast. “Do you follow this bad religion?” asked the mandarin. “I am not of a bad religion, but I adore only the true God of heaven and earth.” They had him put in the cangue, and they sent him to the criminal judge of Jeonju, who said to him: “You too are of this evil sect prohibited by the King and the mandarins; if you deny God, I will release you and your children, otherwise you will be put to death.” Peter then made, in a loud and intelligible voice, this admirable answer which was reported by eyewitnesses of his

<sup>33</sup> 수단이 Sudani (Now 충남 청양군 사양면 신왕리 South Chungcheong Cheongyang-gun Sayang-myeon Sinwang-ri)

<sup>34</sup> 청라동 Cheongna-dong (Now 충남 보령군 청라면 청라리 South Chungcheon Boryeong-gun Cheongra-myeon Cheongra-ri)

<sup>35</sup> 김화춘 Kim Hwa-jun aka 김야고배 Kim Jacobo 金若古排

<sup>36</sup> (Dallet Note 85. One will perhaps be surprised to see satellites without number on all sides. It is certain that there are plenty of them in the country. Moreover, this name is usually given to all those who follow them, because the satellites themselves often have under their orders, each one, two, three or four servants who accompany them. There are also other people who are recruited in case of need, to run from side to side, much like one would hire men by the day.)



trial: "Should I die under the blows, I cannot deny my God. These feelings have penetrated my flesh and bones. If my limbs were cut off, each piece would remain impregnated with it; were my bones to be crushed, each fragment would preserve them intact; no, ten thousand times no, I cannot deny my God."

Peter feared his judges no more than he had once feared tigers. The mandarin, furious to hear him speak thus, had him stripped of his clothes and beaten with rods as violently as possible. As the blood streamed from his body, Peter fervently invoked the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and kept a smiling and joyful face. From there, he was transported to an adjoining room, where he had to undergo even more cruel tortures from the servants and valets; but his resolution remained unshakable. The next day, he appeared again before the judge who asked him for his religious books, and summoned him to denounce his accomplices. On his negative answer, he was subjected to stick puncture three times. During this dreadful torture, Peter lost consciousness, and was carried back to prison. He gradually regained his senses and, seeing his whole body shattered, he said: "Can I repay the ten thousandth part of God's blessings in this way?" then, shedding abundant tears of contrition and gratitude, he quietly prepared to die. They brought his son, arrested like him, and putting a knife to his throat in front of the father, they threatened to cut off the head of his child if he did not apostatize immediately. Peter replied, "If my son has his head cut off for such a cause, it will be great glory for him and for me; no, I will not apostatize." The son was sent into exile.

After new attempts as useless as the first, the judge made him undergo, on several occasions, the torture of the separation of the bones, then sent him to the governor. The latter, surrounded by eighty valets, all sticks in hand, submitted him, that day and the next, to new interrogations. In the midst of the tortures, Peter preserved the same firmness, the same calm air, and always invoking the Lord; he said: "How to pay, at least by a hair's breadth, for the benefits of the Passion of Jesus Christ?" The mandarin, despairing of making him relent, sent him back to prison with the other confessors.

Peter Yi Seong-hwa, whose family and antecedents are already known, had continued, despite his first weaknesses, to live in the exact practice of the Religion. When the persecution of 1827 arose, he would have liked to take flight, but all the roads were guarded so carefully that he did not know where to take refuge; besides, with his aged mother, his wife, and his young children, it was almost impossible for him to set out on the road. He therefore decided to wait for God's orders and contented himself with having his younger brother escape through the mountains. The satellites were not long in appearing, and brought him before the criminal judge at Jeonju. It was the third time that he had fallen into the hands of the persecutors. After the ordinary interrogations, he had to endure new and more terrible tortures, in consequence of the denunciation of some Christians who declared that they had been instructed by him, and had received books copied by his hand. It does not appear that he apostatized, but he confessed afterwards that he had had the weakness, in the midst of torture, to promise to give a few books, and to denounce a Christian. Despite this stain from which he cannot be washed, he showed himself steadfast throughout the course of the trial, whether in the presence of the criminal judge or before the governor, and deserved to hear these words from the latter's mouth: "This being continuing to speak and act thus, it is impossible to let him live." Taken back to prison, he remained there with the other confessors, awaiting the outcome.

We must note here that these last four confessors, as well as the preceding ones, and also Peter Sin, of whom we will soon speak, were vaguely accused of having, at the beginning of their trial, let slip a few words of apostasy. We have just mentioned Peter Yi Saeng-hwa. For the others, the accusation, very improbable in itself, is positively denied by various eyewitnesses. Moreover, they always showed themselves resolved to die, even signing their sentence three times, and, during thirteen years of captivity, they constantly refused to redeem their lives by apostasy.

#### Chapter 4: Persecution of 1827: interrogations of Peter Sin and Paul Yi. — Letters of Paul.

However, new denunciations had been made, towards the middle of the fourth lunar month, before the judge of Jeonju, and several of the persons denounced lived in other provinces. Now, according to the law, the criminal courts cannot arrest an individual without the authorization of the civil mandarin to whose district he belongs; sometimes even the permission of the governor of the province is required. Nevertheless, they often dispense with this formality when it comes to ordinary people, and the accused is for the moment within the circle of their direct jurisdiction. As a result of these denunciations, satellites were sent from Jeonju, both to the province of Gyeongsang and to the capital, to seize various Christians, among others Peter Sin and Paul Yi, whose story we are about to relate.

Peter Sin Tae-po<sup>1</sup>, already well known to our readers, after having taken great pains for the collections relating to the trip to Peking, no longer interfered in the affairs of Christianity, and lived in retirement, solely occupied with the salvation of his soul<sup>2</sup>. His name, however, was well known, and the great number of books he had transcribed must naturally compromise him more than any other in time of persecution. After having lived successively in various provinces, he had finally established himself at Jatgol<sup>3</sup>, in the district of Sangju, province of Gyeongsang, where he lived apart, having very few relations with outside Christians. Nevertheless, when he learned of the progress of the persecution of 1827, he understood that he could not fail to be denounced, and made his preparations to bring his family and himself to safety. On the 22nd day of the fourth month, everything was ready, and they were to leave before daybreak, when that very night, at cockcrow, the satellites of Jeonju burst into the village, surrounded the house of Peter Sin, and declared him a prisoner. Peter, seeing that the police had letters coming from the prefecture of Jeonju, a province different from his own, at first refused to follow them, but he had to go with them to the district mandarin who, after examining the documents, delivered him to the satellites. They had to return to Peter's home, with praetorians from the town of Sangju, to proceed to the arrest according to the legal procedures.

On the way they met a band of their companions, sent to arrest the Christians of another village. As soon as they saw each other from afar, they began to jump and clap their hands, then congratulated themselves on the happy success of their expedition, and manifested their joy by copious libations. Night having come, it was necessary to stop along the road in a village. There they were given by threats and by force wine, rice, hens, etc., and passed the night in celebration, at the expense of the poor inhabitants. Arriving at the house of Peter, the satellites of Jeonju wanted to deliver it to pillage, but those of the place prevented them, and took note of all the objects which were there, in case there was a dispute about something. After which they set out, and on the fourth day they halted in the territory of Jeonju, not far from the town. While they were preparing to pass the night, a troop of Christians arrived in the same place, mounted on oxen or horses and escorted by satellites. They were poor prisoners who, when questioned, had admitted to possessing religious books. Since they could not walk, as a result of the tortures, they were sent in this way to fetch their books, to bring them to the tribunal. Peter passed the

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<sup>1</sup> 신태보 Shin Tae-bo 申太甫 (1769?-1839) Peter. Blessed.

<sup>2</sup> (Dallet Note 86. The Christians of the time have often told that Peter Sin, being still a catechumen, was tormented by several demons who would have appeared to him, and would even have removed him from the apartment where he was studying the Religion. They sought to dissuade him from receiving baptism. Peter resisted them, and told them that nothing in the world could prevent him from following the Religion; the furious demons threw him back in his place with such violence that he retained a pain in his limbs all his life.)

<sup>3</sup> 잣골 Jatgol (Now 문경 마성면 상내리 North Gyeongsang Mungyeong Maseong-myeon Sangnae-ri)

night with them, and while all the people from the courtroom were drinking, gambling, shouting, singing, and arguing in the courtyard, he inquired about the state of things, and learned that among the books denounced, many were written in his own hand. It therefore became useless for him to try to hide the fact any longer. The next day they separated, and soon after, arriving in the city, Peter was taken to the criminal judge.

It is he himself who informs us of all these details, in the memoirs<sup>4</sup> which he wrote later in his prison, at the request of a missionary, Fr. Chastan. Let him now tell of his trial.

“The judge first asked me: “Are you a noble?” — I replied: “Once here, the difference between noble and commoner is of little use.” “It is said that in three provinces you are spreading a perverse doctrine, and the people are infatuated with it: is this true?” — “I am not of perverse doctrine, but only the Religion of the Lord of Heaven.” “He does not mean a perverse doctrine! He says the religion of the Lord of Heaven! Well! by following the perverse doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, did you know that it is strictly prohibited?” “How could I not know that? What I did, I did knowingly.” “Having knowingly contravened the King’s orders, are you not worthy of death?” “I knew very well that I would be killed.” “Now that the King orders you all to be put to death, won’t you change your mind?” “He who, after having served his King in prosperity, would disobey him in adversity, would be a coward; he who professes the truth only when everything smiles on him, and who abandons it in difficult days is more cowardly still. Let the mandarin act according to the law, I will act according to my convictions.” “That rascal speaks badly,” resumed the judge. “He is undoubtedly one of the leaders of the sect. Well, since you want to be treated according to the law, you will be satisfied.” Then he ordered me to be put to the most severe question. I was therefore tied with my arms crossed behind my back, then a stick was passed between them and my back, which a valet was to operate. Moreover, with a horsehair cord, they tied my two legs together at the knees and above the ankles, and they inserted between the legs two large sticks on each of which a man was to weigh on each side. So when, drawing on one hand the stick fixed against my back, on the other they pressed hard on those crossed between the legs, it seemed to me that my body was suspended in the air, that my chest was going to burst and all my bones be broken. I lost consciousness, and the Mandarin, seeing that I could not answer the questions addressed to me, ordered the straps to be loosened a little. Little by little I regained the use of my senses; the rays of the sun seemed to me like burning torches, my arms and my legs seemed to no longer exist, my body was all on fire.

“Two servants pierced my sides with sharp sticks to make me talk. With great difficulty I could answer that I had been instructed by an old Christian who had been martyred a long time before, and that I had no disciples. “You villainous deceiver,” cried the judge, “are you waiting for new tortures to declare the truth?” “If it is yes, I say yes; if no, I say no. I’m already half dead, and if you go on for a bit more, I’m going to die completely. When dying, how could I deceive?” “No, no, you will not die of it, but you will have much more to suffer; only see a little. So they lifted my legs, and pressed hard on the two sticks. My body had no more life, all saliva was exhausted, the tongue was sticking out of the mouth, my eyes were bulging out of their sockets and sweat covered my whole body. “Declare everything,” the satellites were screaming. But I did not answer; I prayed to God to grant me death quickly. It was the last day of the fourth lunar month. Night having come, the judge said: “It is getting late. As it’s the first day, you only had a sample, tomorrow you will have real torments to bear. So try to reflect tonight, and take care to preserve your life.” They untied me, and two valets, passing a stick between my legs, carried me off to the prison, where soon I was served supper. But I could neither sit down nor use my arms: moreover, the smell of rice made me nauseous, and as I could not take anything, a bowl of cloudy wine was brought to my lips and I drank in small sips; only then did sanity seem to come back to me.

“It was already late in the night when the head of the satellites who had brought me to Jeonju came to tell me; “You are worthy of pity. The mandarin is convinced that Yi Yeo-jin is at your home, or

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<sup>4</sup> Archive Daveluy Volume 4 ff. 289-304

else, if he is no longer there, that you know where he is. Tomorrow you will have for this affair terrible tortures to endure. It would be better, it seems to me, to admit it frankly and save your life." I replied, "I do not know who this man is. If I saw him, I could perhaps tell whether he is known to me or not; he is neither my father nor my brother, what reason have I to hide him at the cost of my life? But you who have seen my house, you know what it is like. Was he hidden there? And besides, how could I know where he fled to now? It seems to me that in this matter everything depends on your words." He replied, "Because of this Ni, the Mandarin and the Praetorians accuse me of incapacity, for not having arrested him yet. I have nothing more to say: but you certainly know something about him. Act accordingly. I am also reproached for not having seized any book from you. I said that after having examined everything, you had none. You will also be questioned about it: answer straight away that you had none." After which he hung up the cangue with which I was loaded, so that it would cause me less pain. He called the guard and ordered him to give me the cleaning services that my position demanded, adding that he would take it into account, then finally made me take some wine. This behavior greatly consoled me, and I was deeply touched by these marks of compassion.

"Soon the door of the prefecture opened and servants arrived to transport me there. The judge said in a loud voice: "Think about what I told you yesterday and frankly make the confession requested." "Yesterday," I replied, "I lost consciousness. I don't remember your orders. As for making a confession, if I had one to make, I wouldn't have waited until now." "Ni Ie-tsin-i was certainly at your house, and you know his business; if you don't admit it, woe to you!" "I don't know who this Ni is, but even supposing I hid him then, how could I know where he is now? I can't tell you anything about it. He is neither my father nor my brother; would it be fair for me to be killed for him? If you want to put me to death, let it be for my own faults." "It seems that you found yesterday's torture light, and you want to taste more violent ones. Very well! so be it! At the same time he excited the executioners by saying: "This culprit, although old, is the most obstinate of all. Don't spare him." And he made them inflict the spreading of the leg bones again. They tightened the straps and I was already almost fainting, when by dint of pressing, a stick broke. At the noise, I thought my leg was broken and I looked at it, terrified. I heard words and could not answer. Wine was brought to me and put to my lips; but I couldn't swallow it. After a few moments of rest, it was presented to me again and, little by little, I was able to drink the potion. The judge said in a moderate voice: "You absolutely want to die for the business of others. I don't understand the principles." Then he had his escort prepared, mounted his horse, and went to the superior mandarin.

"As he had not untied me, I remained seated and exposed to the heat of the sun. However, I did not feel the heat, the air seemed cold to me. After quite a long time, the judge came back and said to me in an irritated tone: "Since you don't want to confess, you must die or I will lose my place. There is no middle ground. So start the tortures again." They obey; the sufferings were neither more nor less severe; only they varied the torments, but for me it was all one. When evening came, I was untied and taken to prison. I could not eat the rice: they gave me a cup of wine, and the night passed like that. In the morning, I heard again the cries for the opening of the doors of the prefecture. These cries hurt me, and I thought I was hearing the call of the accused. In fact, the valets were not long in coming to fetch me. They uttered insulting cries and, without any precaution or consideration, put me astride a stick, carried me away and laid me down opposite the judge, who said to me: "You can see that here there are many books written by you. You are said to be the head of three provinces, and to have supplied a number of books to other Christians. Admit everything frankly, and do not persist in dying in torture." "I did not have the strength to speak. They made me drink a little wine, and with great difficulty I could articulate a few words. During this interrogation, according to what the Christians I had met on the way had told me, I confessed to having copied a few volumes for them, adding that at home there were none, as the satellites that had searched my house could certify. "When I copied these books," I added, "it was in these Christians' homes and from old copies they had. "You are not telling the truth, and you are not telling everything; we will see the end." "Soon afterwards I was carried away, without having had to undergo any other torture.

“That night I was deposited with the praetorians. They gathered in large numbers around me and said to me: “You claim to be noble and yet you do not speak frankly in front of the mandarin. Since Yi Ye-jin<sup>5</sup> has not been caught, this affair cannot end. It is certain that he was in your village, and if he left, it was you who directed his escape. To say that you do not know him and also to deceive about the books is to expose yourself to still more cruel tortures. How will you hold out? Tomorrow we have to start the question again. Tell us everything here, and we’ll let the judge know.” I answered: “To desire life and to fear death is a sentiment common to all; and who, then, would gladly bring upon himself suffering? But you, you proceed only by torture, without paying attention to the bottom of things. Is this justice?” “Why do you want to take our words in bad part? we only act to save you suffering. Just denounce this Ni, and we won’t talk about anything else. We’ll take care of him. Why are you so stubborn?” “I have said all I have to say, and have nothing more to confess. If I die, it will all end there. If I am left alive, it is an order from God; but I have little desire to live. Take me back to where I was. All this had been suggested by the Mandarin himself.”

“I was taken back to the prefecture when the doors were already opening, and I was soon brought before the judge who said loudly and angrily: “I would like to finish this case, but you are making such confused statements that I can’t see things clearly.” Then, in a few words, he concludes that I was charged with having written all these books. What remedy could I bring to this? That was not all. Many images and religious objects, many of which came from foreign countries, had also been taken from Christians, who, to get out of trouble, had blamed me. The judge said: “You have no more means of justifying yourself. Explain where these images and other objects come from.” “I have declared the truth about the books. For the rest, please question those to whom these objects belong.” “They all blame you.” Not knowing what course to take, I remained silent. The judge again asked the Christian prisoners if all these objects came from me, and they answered in the affirmative. I then said: “I was told in the past that after the year *sin-yu* (1801) someone having bought the house of a person executed at that time, found, while demolishing it, some of these objects in the walls. They must have been shared and spread this way and that. That’s probably where they came from.” The angry judge exclaimed, “By going this far, we won’t get anywhere. First you have to torture these Christians.”

“They began to saw their limbs with cords, and then everyone blamed me, more insistently than ever. As I was preparing to speak, the judge subjected me to the same torture, shouting: “Squeeze, squeeze, we must get it over with.” The executioners thus excited were careful not to spare me, and yet, by a particular grace of God, I suffered less than before. “Won’t you finally make a full confession?” shouted the judge. – “I have said everything.” — “Who first received these different objects, and through whose hands did they then pass?” — “The people who lived in 1801 are almost all dead, and if there are a few left, they are not Christians now.” “Who got them first? Who did he give them to?” – “I do not know. These objects, like all the others, will have changed masters either by death, or by donation or purchase. Who could ever know through whose hands they all passed?” “Say what you know.” I then indicated four or five names among the Christians already dead, and I added: “As for the rest, it is impossible for me to know anything.” “Among so many, you only know four or five; it is a mockery.” They tightened my bonds again, so tight that I thought I was going to die. The judge gave a list of names to a praetorian, and I was ordered, as he pronounced them, to declare whether or not I knew the individuals named. Not being able to speak any longer, I answered with a nod, and I made a negative answer for everyone, known or unknown. The judge added, “Don’t you know Ia-So either?” I gave the same negative sign again. Evening had come, they untied me, but the cords being buried in the flesh, they could not be removed, and I lost consciousness during the operation. They took me back to prison, and, as I could eat nothing, they put me to bed, my head resting on my cangue.

“The dreadful cries of the court still lingered in my ears, pain prevented me from sleeping, and

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<sup>5</sup> (Dallet Note 87. It seems that Yi Ye-jin had not only been denounced as a Christian, but that his journeys to Peking had also been revealed. Otherwise, the fury with which he was being pursued would be quite inexplicable.)

when I came back to myself, I happened to think of these words from the judge: “Don’t you know Ia-So either? Only then did I reflect that the Chinese characters of the holy name of Jesus were pronounced Ia-So in Korean<sup>6</sup>. I began to tremble, to grieve, to lament what had happened. My heart ached and could barely breathe. They came again to urge me to take some food, but dejected, despairing at the thought that my thoughtlessness henceforth rendered death fruitless for me, I violently pushed back those who offered me the rice, and decided only, on repeated solicitations, to swallow a few sips of wine. Then I tried to console myself. I said to myself: “Although the judge wanted to designate Jesus, I only heard Ia-So. Will God forgive me?” And I resolved to retract myself clearly the next day; but having been brought from then on before the civil mandarin, I could not make this retraction, and regret remains imbued in me to the marrow of my bones.

“The next day, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, I was brought before the civil mandarin. At the sitting were the mandarins of Muju, Gosan, and Iksan. The latter, accompanied by a praetorian, came and stood near the balustrade and said to me: “If you only want to regulate your conduct according to the principles of sound morality, the books of Confucius, Mencius and the other saints are quite sufficient. Now, against the orders of the King, you follow a foreign doctrine, and you have been seized; is this not a crime worthy of death?” I immediately saw that I was no longer in the criminal court. The mandarin from my district looked irritated, but everyone else looked affable. They looked at me with compassion, and seemed to regret the terrible tortures to which I had been subjected. Their valets themselves did not utter vociferations, and spoke in moderate tones. It no longer seemed like a court, but a private house. I answered with all the more respect: “Our religion is forbidden for the sole reason that it comes from another kingdom. But everywhere I see in your houses objects from foreign countries: books, clothing, furniture, etc.” — “These are objects that are used in all countries, so there is no reason to prohibit them. But, in terms of doctrine, are not Confucius and Meng-tse sufficient?” — “For diseases of the body, when with the medicines of our country we do not obtain an effect, we have recourse to the medicines of China, which often effect the cure. Every man has the seven vices which are so many diseases of the soul. However, without our religion, we cannot cure them. It’s not that I don’t know the doctrine of Confucius and Meng-tse, but, you know it as I do, in the temples of these sages or others like them, people fight for a bowl of rice or a piece of meat, even uttering coarse insults; not only do they worry very little about the doctrine and actions of these sages, but they are often insulted, and their temples, instead of being schools of virtue, become schools of disorder. There are only a few people who know how to contain themselves, at least on the outside, and keep the proprieties a little, and even they, in the bottom of their hearts, they are none the less bad. Our doctrine, on the contrary, first regulates the interior, rectifies the seven passions, directs by means of the Decalogue the exterior as well as the interior. It is, in fact, the perfection of the doctrines of Confucius and others.” “If you are telling the truth, it would not be perverse, but since the King forbids it, will you say that the King is wrong<sup>7</sup>?” “As there is only one sun in the sky, you want there to be only one doctrine in the kingdom; it’s good. Now that alongside the doctrine of the scholars is that of the Lord of Heaven, the King is perhaps not wrong to temporarily prohibit it until a distinction has been made between the true and the false; but, on the other hand, he who follows our religion, which in fact is the only true one, cannot be wrong either.” “What are you saying there? A false thing is false, a true thing is true. Now, according to your words, the true and the false would meet at the same time for the same object.” — In everything, reason is the great master. However, when through reason we begin to want to distinguish between the true and the false, there is a moment when nothing has yet been decided. In discussions, some discover the true reason before others, and in matters of

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<sup>6</sup> (Dallet Note 88. The Chinese characters are pronounced Ie-sou in China, and the Christians of Korea have, by tradition, preserved this pronunciation; but the pagans, seeing only the characters, read Ia-so, according to the rules of Korean pronunciation. It is understandable that a poor patient would not have made this reflection, in such circumstances.)

<sup>7</sup> (Dallet Note 89. We have already pointed out that in this country, out of respect for the king, you can never say that he is wrong. This is why Christians, before the courts, always evade this question or similar ones.)

doctrine, a subject may well perceive the truth before the government has succeeded in knowing it. This is precisely what is taking place today in this kingdom.” “According to this, all of you who were executed according to the law, were they right?” — “The doctrine being true, they were right; if it was wrong, they would have been wrong.”

“The district mandarin then rose up in a rage, saying, “Such words are useless;” and he had the book of civil acts brought to him. After which he uttered a few words about the sentence which I did not hear. The mandarin of Muju read it, and said in surprise: “Would you then decide on execution?” “Yes,” he replied. “But,” resumed the other with a distressed air, “in this affair, there is no reason always to come to capital execution.” After which the mandarin of Iksan spoke to me: “Repeat everything you said before the criminal judge, and also explain in detail what you had started to say about the seven passions. I therefore repeated what I had said in the criminal tribunal, and I developed how each of the seven passions is cured by one of the seven opposite virtues. A praetorian took note of everything. “To see the tortures you have endured,” said the mandarin to me then, “to see the state in which you are reduced, I really believe that you have been made to suffer too much. It would be difficult for you now to read the summary of your case yourself, a praetorian will read it to you. Then he gave the paper to the praetorian who read it. That was pretty much the gist of it, but without any details. Their expressions had been softened, and they seemed inclined to let me live. I said: “It seems that you are moved with compassion, your judgment will be a triumph over the law itself.” The district mandarin then exclaimed in a tone of anger: “We would have done well to condemn him to death. They’re all that stubborn.” “From his words you would not be wrong,” said the mandarin of Ik-san; then, turning to me: “You have violated the King’s prohibitions, and I am delegated to judge you. Perhaps you would be excused elsewhere, but other countries, other laws; here in Korea, for your fault there is no remedy.” Then a watchman was called to hand me over to him, and I was taken to a private house. After a few days, I was able to get up, but I was unable to walk. My stomach refused all food, and I only took a little wine,

“A few days later, I was brought before the governor. All the Christian prisoners were gathered. I was waiting outside the door, seated and leaning on my cangue. The valets and the praetorians laughed at me; some struck the cangue with their feet; the most wicked climbed on it to make it weigh more; all had only insults for me. I appeared first. The governor said to me: “Are you noble?” I replied: “What does it matter! what is the difference here between noble and commoner?” “If you Christians want to follow this religion, why do you only do it in secret?” Then he ordered me to declare by name the owner of each book, image and other religious object. “During the interrogation,” I resumed, “all the prisoners having blamed me, I was pressed to confess, and if I said I did not know, the torture was redoubled, absolutely demanding that I take responsibility of all. Unable to bear it any longer, I accepted this responsibility. Now you want me to say who owns each object. How could I know?” “Do you have any tablets?” — “I do not have any.” “And why don’t you have any?” “Left alone from a ruined family, homeless and always wandering this way and that, not even having somewhere to place them, I have none.” “Don’t you make sacrifices to the ancestors?” — “On birthdays, I only prepare food according to my means, and I share it with the neighbors,” — “Do you eat then without even genuflecting?” “I don’t genuflect.” Then, without further questions, I was handed over to the jailer.

“The next day I was brought before the district mandarin; all the Christian prisoners were there. We appeared five by five, and we were beaten on our legs. But though one struck vigorously, it was nothing compared to the torture of the curvature of the bones. Then the accused were untied, the cangue was passed to them, and the irons were put on their feet and hands. My feet alone were not put in irons, because they were too swollen. When we were taken back to the prison, the mandarin, seeing my condition, told the praetorian to have my large cangue removed and replaced by a lighter one, and for the first time it was taken from me. My legs were so torn that you could see the bones, and I couldn’t sit down or eat rice. Every day I only had two or three bowls of wine. Gangrene had set in in my wounds, and an unbearable odor exhaled from them. Also, the room was full of worms and vermin, so no one dared approach me. Fortunately, a few healthy Christians supported me so that I could move around a bit, and were willing to clean my dungeon from time to time. How can we thank them enough for this

act of charity?”

Such was Peter Sin’s situation in the prison where he had to wait so long for the crown of martyrdom. We have related throughout the interesting particulars of his trial, for nothing can give a more just idea of the barbarous procedures used towards Christians, and of the prejudices nourished against them by idolaters. For the same reason, despite some inevitable repetitions, we are going to reproduce Paul Yi’s interrogation. These details show us how God, who knows how to draw good from evil, took advantage of the persecution itself to have the Gospel preached before the courts, to make known the Christian doctrine to the principal magistrates of the kingdom, and through them to a multitude of other people. This preaching in the midst of tortures was the first cause of the conversion of a large number; it will justify the severe condemnation of those who, having ears, would not hear, and, from human motives, obstinately closed their eyes to the light.

Paul Yi Jong-hui<sup>8</sup>, legally called Gyeong-byeong<sup>9</sup>, was the last of the brothers of Charles Yi<sup>10</sup> and Lutgarda Yi<sup>11</sup>, martyred in 1801. Like them, he received from childhood a truly Christian education. With a frail constitution and delicate, of a character at once gentle and firm, he shone with the finest qualities of heart and mind. His family, descended from the founding king of the current dynasty, had occupied, until the persecution, the highest dignities of the kingdom. But his brother and his sister having been beheaded in 1801, on account of the Religion, all his family were proscribed, and his house entirely ruined. Paul was only nine or ten years old then. Left with his widowed mother and his widowed sister-in-law, he lived in the capital in great poverty. When he was of age he was married off to a person of the middle class, and by God’s leave his wife was found to be of an intractable character, so that he had with her throughout the course of his life, pains without number, which he bore with exemplary patience. In 1815, his mother and his sister-in-law retired to the provinces with his elder brother, at Yeonpung 延豊; and Paul remained alone in the capital with his wife. Although he suffered greatly from an internal illness, the attacks of which were frequent and painful, he let no complaints escape, always kept a cheerful and affable countenance, and continually applied himself to reading religious books. He loved to spread himself among the Christians, of whom he might justly be called the guide and the father; he exhorted the lukewarm to fervor, worked by his speeches to instruct and excite all the others, and did not omit to give his attention to the conversion of the heathen. The day not being sufficient for his works of zeal, he devoted part of the nights to it, and in spite of the state of embarrassment in which he lived, he still endeavored to relieve those who were poorer than himself.

Always vigilant about himself, he asked others if he was not an occasion of sin for them. “If so, please let me know,” he often said, and these sentiments were so sincere in him, that we find in one of his letters to a friend, dated from his prison, these very remarkable words “Our mutual affection was far from an ordinary friendship; without you, no one would ever have told me about my faults. Now that I think about it, I really see what a treasure it was for me.” Whether he applied himself to prayer or meditation, his attention was so fixed on God that he did not know whether or not there was anyone near him. Full of distrust of himself, when talking to people of the other sex, he never stared at them, so he did not know their faces. Such fine examples could not fail to make an impression on all those who had the good fortune to know him, and he had such an influence over them that very few lukewarm Christians remained deaf to his touching solicitations. To support his existence, he busied himself with copying religious books and pictures, which he then sold to Christians, and even in his manual work, he knew how to find food for his fervor. He was one of those who contributed most to collecting resources for the

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<sup>8</sup> 이경언 Yi Gyeong-eon 李景彦 aka 종회 (1792-1827) Paul. Blessed.

<sup>9</sup> This should be corrected to 경언 Gyeong-eon 景彦.

<sup>10</sup> 이경도 Yi Gyeong-do 李景陶 (1780-1802) Charles. Blessed.

<sup>11</sup> 이순이 Yi Sun-i 李順伊 (1782-1802) Lutgarda. Blessed.



messengers who were sent several times to Peking; and the bishop of this city having ordered the choice of some catechists of both sexes, he worked with great ardor to form them, bringing them together at his house the first Sunday of each month, giving them subjects for meditation, and exciting them to true piety.

The following fact shows how strong Paul's virtue was. In this country where second marriages are dishonored, especially among people of high rank, many young widows, unable to bear their isolation, seek to be accepted as concubines by nobles. One day, an old woman came to Paul and presented him with a scroll that looked like a literary composition. He opened it: it was a letter from a rich young widow who told him of her desires and begged him to respond to them. The temptation must have been violent for him, so poor, and whom his wife had made so unhappy; nevertheless, without a moment's hesitation, he abruptly dismissed the matchmaker. The latter, without being discouraged, presented herself a second time, and he dismissed her again, with a harsh reprimand. She returned a third time, and Paul, whose feelings had not changed, thinking that he might perhaps preach and convert the young widow, pretended to give his consent, and followed the old servant. He came to her first, and soon learned that she was the widow's nurse. When night came, she showed him into a beautiful, large house where everything exuded ease and withdrew. Soon a young person dressed in white, the color of mourning that widows must always wear, appeared holding a lantern in her hand, opened the door and sat down not far from him. Paul's heart was calm. He spoke to her only of the truths of our Holy Religion, of God, of the Angels, of the soul and of sin, of the joys of heaven and the pains of hell. In a second visit, he instructed her in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption. In the meantime, the young widow sent him several times, through her nurse, articles of great price; but Paul refused to receive them, and commanded her to deposit them at his house. God, who saw the purity of his heart, rewarded him with the conversion he asked for. The young widow was applying herself to learning the main prayers, when suddenly she fell dangerously ill. She immediately informed Paul who, seizing a favorable moment, went to her house, completed her education, and conferred baptism on her. Three days later she died. Paul then told the old nurse to bring back to the house of the deceased the precious objects deposited with him, but as she found it inappropriate, he received them himself, sold them, then, under the pretext of returning a sum formerly borrowed, had the price paid in full to the heirs of this widow, thus saving both her heroic purity and her admirable disinterestedness.

Paul always harbored in his heart the desire for martyrdom and loved to take as a subject of meditation the agony of Our Lord in the Garden of Olives. He urged others to do the same, so that they would always be ready to suffer death for God. "Our blood must be shed," he said, "for the Religion to spread throughout our country." When persecution arose in the province of Jeolla in 1827, he was denounced in an interrogation to the court of Jeonju, for the books and images which he had distributed everywhere. The satellites of this city were therefore sent to the capital to seize his person. Before the judges, Paul faithfully followed in the glorious footsteps of his brother and his sister; like them, he courageously confessed his faith, and left to the Christians of Korea, and of the whole world, examples worthy of all our admiration. Here is how he himself recounts the adventures of his trial, in a letter<sup>12</sup> written from his prison, and the accuracy of which is guaranteed by all the eyewitnesses still alive.

"Often I had said to myself: "By martyrdom at least, can I really hope to satisfy for all my sins? When I was not expecting it, on the 21st of the fourth lunar month, at the beginning of the night, Kim Seong-jip and a dozen satellites, both from the province and from the capital, presented themselves to me, seized me and dropped me off at one of the police headquarters. They asked me if it was true that I had drawn religious pictures; at this question, I understood that everything was discovered. "That's true," I told them. The next day, the chief criminal judge called me and said, "Is it true that you follow the

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<sup>12</sup> Daveluy Archive Volume 4 ff. 308-317.

Religion of the Lord of Heaven?” – “Yes.” “Who did you learn it from?” — “My eldest brother having died for this Religion, from childhood I had heard a little about it; but, subsequently, I associated with Jo siouk, killed, he also, for the same doctrine; I practiced it for several years with him and filled my heart with it.” – “Even now if you want to desist, I will save your life.” “I cannot. “Is what you said yesterday true?” — “Yes, that is true.” And he had me taken back to prison. Three days later, the chief judge, after taking advice from the prime minister, handed me over to the satellites, and at nightfall we crossed the river. Since my arrest, bothered as I was by a thousand worries, I hadn’t been able to eat anything and I was exhausted. The night passed not far from there, and the next day, early in the morning, I left accompanied by Seong-jip and six satellites.

“Nature not being entirely dead in me, tears flowed from my eyes, when I saw this road that I was beginning. Then I thought to myself: “Jesus Christ has deigned to travel laden with his cross, so why should I refuse to make this journey? No, I want to follow Jesus step by step.” This thought gave me strength. We made a journey of 100 *li* (ten leagues) each day, and on the evening of the 28th I entered the police headquarters of Jeonju, where, after a few moments’ rest, I was brought before the judge. He was surrounded by about twenty servants, whose torches shed a bright light. This scene reminded me of Our Lord Jesus when he was taken from the Garden of Olives. They asked me only my names, first name, and those of some of my ancestors, and I was taken back immediately. The rice was served to me quite properly in a warm apartment, but after taking three or four spoonfuls of it, I could not continue. I stretched out on the ground to sleep, they inserted my feet and my hands between two iron bars, and put a large cangue around my neck, then locked me up. The night passed without sleep; my confused ideas could stop at nothing.

“The next day, when day broke, I was summoned to court and the judge said to me: ‘How many paintings have you drawn? How many books do you have and who are your accomplices?’ I answered bluntly. “I declared a few paintings delivered formerly to Jo Suk 趙淑, and two given to Seong-jip who denounced me. As for accomplices,” I added, “I have none. Left alone from a ruined family, my parents and friends have all abandoned me. Even the commoners despise me and spit in my face. So I have no more friends, how could I have what you call accomplices? Finally, as for the books: I was instructed entirely by word of mouth, and my books are only engraved in my heart. I don’t have any others.” – “You’re deceiving me. Among you the ignorant commoners each have themselves thirty or forty volumes, and you, you don’t have any? Beat him hard.” “Should I die under the blows, I have neither accomplices nor books.” Having then brought a quantity of pictures, glasses, paintings, Agnus Dei, and medals, he said to me: “Are these paintings yours?” I answered in the affirmative and they put me back in prison. The judge immediately went to the governor, and after some time I was shown into a room adjoining the tribunal. While I waited, the thought of my sister, judged and martyred in 1801 in this same city of Jeonju, came back to me. Yes, I said to myself, I will follow her. And really is it not she who attracts me to follow her? At the same time a joy mingled with sadness arose in my heart.

“I was soon brought before the governor who, accompanied by the judge, asked me a few questions which I answered as the day before. But the whole apparatus was ten times more terrible than before the criminal judge. “Are you really determined to remain a Christian?” asked the governor. – “I am.” “What is God?” “He is the supreme king and father of the whole universe. He alone created the sky, the earth, the spirits, men and all that exists.” – “How do you know?” — “On the one hand, examining our body, and on the other, considering all creatures, can we say that there is not a creator of these things?” – “Have you seen him?” “Can one believe only after having seen? Has the mandarin seen the workman who built this tribunal? What we call the five senses only enable us to perceive sounds, colors, smells, tastes and the like; but for principles, reason, and all immaterial things, it is the mind that makes them distinguishable.” After a few moments, he added: “Tell me everything you have learned.” “I know the ten commandments that must be followed, the seven sins that must be avoided, and the prayers that we address to God in the morning and in the evening.” “I have already heard about that, but in the end will you not retract?” “I cannot. A child who does not serve his father, a subject who does not serve his king, are impious and rebellious. How could I, being a man, not serve God?” “Aren’t you afraid of death?”

“Why shouldn’t I be afraid of it?” “If that’s the case, why don’t you give up this religion?” “The reason why I cannot give it up I gave you just now: please don’t ask me again. I will be glad to die.” I was taken back to prison.

“The next day, the mandarin of Jeonju as well as those of Gosan, Gokseong, Dongbok, and Jeongeup having sat down, and having dismissed all their followers, made me approach quite close to the bar, and the mandarin of Jeonju said to me in a very moderate voice: “You, child of a nobleman, you are not like these ignorant people. Besides, you are a handsome man, so how can you persist in following this bad religion?” — “When it comes to principles, there is no superior or inferior, noble or commoner, more or less advantageous countenance: it is only the soul that can and must make the distinction.” — “In this religion of the Lord of Heaven, what principle can there be?” After which, the Mandarin of Dongbok engaging me to say what were the dogmas of Christianity, I reported in abridgement what is expounded at length in the three parts of one of our books, namely: the knowledge of the true God, knowledge of human nature, and rewards and punishments. Then, as I was developing the Decalogue, the Mandarin of Jeonju said: “It is all nonsense, there is no soul; there is neither heaven nor hell; there is not even a God. And then you do not offer sacrifices to the ancestors. Among you goods and women are in common. Can there be a more distorted and ungodly doctrine?” “That we offer no sacrifices, it is true; but that among us goods and women are in common, that is not so. Sacrifices to the ancestors are a vain thing, which a right doctrine rightly prohibits. At the time of death, the soul of the good goes to heaven and the soul of the wicked goes to hell. After entering it they can never come out. Moreover, the soul being immaterial, how could it eat material things? and the tablets being simply the work of an artisan, is it not an insult to want to honor them like his parents? All this is based on reason and I firmly believe it. As for the goods that are said to be in common among us, if there were not in the world some communication of wealth, how would the poor live? Finally, as far as women are concerned, what is imputed to us is formally prohibited in the commandments, and is repugnant to all the feelings of nature. We are forbidden even to desire our neighbor’s wife. How could we have the principles that you attribute to us? And not being animals, how could we do that? It is an atrocious calumny and ten thousand times deplorable.” One of the mandarins resumed: “They say you still have your mother, and your wife and children as well; even now speak only one word, and leaving here you will find your mother, your wife and your children. Won’t that be good?” “To go find my mother, you want me to apostatize? But God being the great king and the father of all men, my mother herself having been created by him, how could I deny the Creator for one of his creatures?” After having thus conversed for half a day, I was taken back to the prison.

“Three days later I was summoned before the criminal judge who, surrounded by a terrible apparatus, said to me: “Denounce your accomplices, give your books and deny the God of Heaven.” Then he had me placed on the torture board, bound and beaten cruelly. My strength was exhausted, and although I had great difficulty in speaking, I still repeated: “I have neither books nor accomplices, and I cannot deny my God.” I was taken back to prison. The next day, same scene and same tortures during which I fainted. Several valets carried me to the top of the room and gently rubbed my whole body. When I came to, it was night. Two days later I was carried on someone’s back to the mandarin of the district. To see all the arrangements, I thought my last moment had arrived. The report to the governor and the address to the king were read to me, and the mandarin added: “You see, everyone is trying to save your life. The other Christians have all submitted to the King, why would you alone act stubbornly? Just say a word.” “I can’t.” After countless attempts, having nothing more to try, he made me sign my condemnation. It has been three days since this happened, and they say the criminal judge is to question me again. What will it be? During all these trials, although I relied only on God and his holy Mother, I had violent temptations, seeing myself between life and death. Day and night I was singularly tormented. Since yesterday, my heart is calmer. How great is this grace? How to thank God for it? How to answer it? I can only do so by my death.

“On the 6th day of the fifth lunar month, after having been taken to the criminal court, I was brought back to the mandarin of the district. He and several other mandarins brought together made me

appear three times before them, and used a thousand tender and subtle words to save my life. In the end, as I did not surrender: “To speak to him further is useless,” they said, and they sent me back to the prison, where, moreover, I was treated well enough. On the 13th, after more than fifty Christians had been subjected to interrogation, I was, around four o’clock in the evening, summoned myself and the judge said to me: “Finally, will you not come to repentance?” I answered in the negative, and, without further questioning, I was placed on the torture board. Alas! I have no fervor and am of weak constitution, but by a very special grace, while I was on this board, I thought only of the scourging and the crucifixion of the Saviour. At each blow, I invoked Jesus and Mary. After about twenty blows, feeling that I was losing consciousness, I said: “My God receive my soul into your hands.” When the required number was finished, they dragged me from the plank, put a cangue about twenty pounds around my neck, and dragged me to the door. The consciousness returning to me a little, I tried to walk, supported by two people, without being able to do so. A young man, one of the spectators, with a complacent air, loaded me on his back, and the chief of the prison supporting the top of my cangue, I was thus carried into a room of the prison.

“While this young man supported me lying in his arms, the head of the prison, some Christian prisoners and other people began to gently press all my limbs, and bandage my wounds. I opened my eyes, and I saw my legs in shreds and the blood running from all sides or curdling on the wounds. Alas! Jesus, whose body could not have been stronger than mine, spilled a sweat of blood in the Garden of Olives. He suffered the scourging, and carrying his cross, he walked more than a thousand steps to the top of a high mountain. No one looked on him with pity, and there was not a Christian to come to his aid. And I, a great sinner as I am, they bring me compassion and help in this way, they strive to bring me back to knowledge. What thanksgiving wouldn’t it be right to give? And yet, in my weakness I do not even know how to thank. Angels and saints of paradise, and all of you my friends, please give thanks to God, in my place, for this blessing! The more I advance, the more divine graces and favors increase. By the time a mealtime had passed, my pains had disappeared. Three days have passed since, and my wounds do not cause me too much pain. I cannot, it is true, make use of my legs, and the heavy cangue crushes me, but I take a little food, and my heart is very calm. If it were not for the help of God and Mary, how could it be so by my strength alone? I couldn’t even stand the bite of an insect! Really, I don’t understand it. On the 15th they sent a despatch to the King; the answer will come, it is said, around the 20th; what will it be? I await it anxiously. I put all my hope in God alone; but I am without merits and all covered with sins, so what will be his order on me? The closer the end, the more I fear death and the more I tremble at being rejected.

“On the 16th, when I woke up, my legs felt lighter and the pain had greatly diminished. I receive benefit upon benefit, how can I thank the Lord? A young Christian is near me, does all my errands and serves me tirelessly; isn’t that still a grace? Other Christians that I had never seen, that I had never heard of, come to me from time to time. Some give me some money, others console me. This is too much. It seems that all the favors have gathered on me alone. Should my whole body turn into lips, how can I sing the praises of God enough? All of you Christians, please, in my place, thank and thank the Lord again. I would still have a thousand things to say, but time is short; we will meet again in eternity.

“P.S. — On the 19th, I was brought back before the criminal judge, I signed my condemnation again, and after having had the cangue and irons put on my feet, I was sent back to prison, and again a message was sent to the King. I was certainly happy in the bottom of my soul, but my physical and moral forces were exhausted, I had difficulty in calming my frightened heart. Returning to the prison, I conversed with some Christians, we comforted each other, and since that time, supported at first by the grace of God and the help of Mary, then helped by my companions in captivity, I pass the days without any new concern. I still don’t know what the outcome will be. Could it be that God was rejecting me? I beg him earnestly, will he deign to listen to me? I can only hope, and I hope, yes I hope.”

From the prison where he was deposited while awaiting the final answer of the King, Paul wrote

several other letters, which the Christians have piously preserved<sup>13</sup>. They deserve to figure in this story with those of his sister Luthgarta. We find there the same accents of lively faith, of firm hope, of heroic humility, of loving resignation to the will of God. The first is addressed to his mother, and collectively to all the members of his family.

“My mother, my sister, my brother, my sister-in-law, my wife: In the thirteen years since I left my father’s house, until the day of my arrest, I was only able to go and greet you twice. This is, on my part, a great lack of piety. For thirty-six years, not a day has passed for me without some more or less serious fault, I have only failed in the duties of filial piety, and today against all odds, by a very special grace, God calls to the bliss of eternal life this being full of sins and wickedness. I am ashamed and I tremble, but could I not submit to his holy will?

“The opportunity is too good to pass up. I am determined to lay down my life for God. But what frightens me is that I have uselessly lost more than thirty years for my salvation. Everything else makes little impression on me. Even on this day, I have neither fervor, nor contrition, nor perfect charity; but my only hope being in the boundless mercy of God and Mary, could they abandon me? Thank God for all his blessings.

“My sister, how are you? In a brother such as I am, you could not really encounter any mark of brotherhood! Behold now that I leave you forever I must never see you again in this world. Ensure therefore, by the practice of virtue, and the acquisition of many merits, that we may rejoice together eternally before God. As for me, I will no longer be able to fulfill my duties as a son towards my mother, any more than those of a brother towards you; at least by the union of our hearts, our prayers and our efforts, let us meet in the joys of eternity.

“Dear brother, what shall I say to you? Good and virtuous as you are, how grieved your heart will be on the occasion of a useless brother! I urge you to think above all about the salvation of your soul. Do not consider as long this time which passes as quickly as the spark leaps from the flint. Take the greatest possible care of my mother during her last years; and if the whole family, mother, brothers and sisters can, reunited in eternity, sing the benefits of our common Father, what glory will it not be? Since God deigns to grant such great favor to a sinner and a wicked person like me, you, my brother, naturally good and upright, if you make the effort, you will not be rejected. Work diligently, then, and strive to merit the grace of a good death. Really I am ashamed, I have never been anything but a cause for concern for you. After my death, my wife and two children no longer have any support, and to whom can I recommend them, if not to you? Having already so many burdens, how can you manage? What misery! my heart aches.

“My older sister-in-law, how are you? You who raised me, and so often carried me in your arms, who until now were always so worried about me, and so touched by my position, when you hear this news, how can your heart not be broken? However, thank God for his blessings. In his boundless goodness, he is willing to grant your wretched brother the grace to follow Jesus from afar on the way to the cross. My martyred brother and sister obtained for me the happiness of following in their footsteps; I repeat to you, give thanks to God. I have a favor to ask of you, please don’t reject my last words. My son doesn’t seem like a child you can’t do anything about. Please embrace him fully, establish him and make him truly a man. All my life is for me a source of regrets; too often I misunderstood your feelings, little listened to your words, and so many other things that I cannot repeat; please forgive me for everything. Of five children that we were, now three are martyrs; before God what greater glory could one desire? For the other saints, for my brother and my sister, the thing is not astonishing; but for a being like me, what extraordinary grace!

“And you, my wife, now forgive, forgive me. There is no husband so bad as I have been, and all that I have to reproach myself about you could not be written. During the thirteen years of our union, I

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<sup>13</sup> Daveluy Archive Volume 5 ff. 213-223.

never entered into your feelings and only caused you afflictions; suddenly I find myself face to face with death. What should I tell you? We will no longer be able to live together in this world; there is therefore no remedy for the past, and regret alone remains with me. Although I have so poorly fulfilled my duties as a spouse, if I obtain to ascend to the Kingdom of Heaven, I will intercede to obtain for you a good life and a good death, and, myself, messenger of the happiness which is yours. destined by our heavenly Father, I will come to meet you, and lead you by the hand to bring you into possession of eternal joys.

“I earnestly recommend to you, be subject in all things to the will of God, regret all things of the past, regard this world as a dream, and consider eternity as your true homeland. Ah! how could I make so much of such a futile world? In a few days, everything will be over for me. Only now do I understand that everything, even the smallest things, depends on the will of God, and the projects of men are nothing but vanity; but even regret comes to nothing.

“Mother, you are still alive, but for how many days? Be happy to see the children you have brought into the world follow, one after another, the path of martyrdom, stir up yourself to true contrition, and make sure to obtain the grace of a good death. The words of my brother and my sister, in their last hour, were full of devotion and filial piety; whatever mine are, please think about them. I won’t forget you either, my older sister-in-law, no, I won’t forget you. Which of my brothers and sisters can I be indifferent to? However, the pains and care you have taken for me are second only to those taken by my mother herself; and it was also in you, after my mother, that I trusted and leaned more. When I went to Ien-p’ong a few years ago, I returned without having been able to see you; I regret it ten thousand times, but what to do now? May our rendezvous be in eternity!

“My son and my daughter, by a blessing from the Lord I have become your father, but the gravity of my sins has prevented me from fulfilling my duties properly, and even before you have clear intelligence, the thread of my days is cut off. Having neither virtues nor wealth to leave you as an inheritance, I leave you only two words in my will. Take care to faithfully follow the will of God, and to exercise towards your mother all the duties of filial piety. Towards all other people, be gracious and full of charity, and if in this world you follow the right path, you will certainly ascend to the kingdom of heaven. I hardly have the right to speak thus, poor sinner that I am, but I am a father, and it is my duty to excite my children to good. I still recommend you to engrave in your hearts this wise proverb of the ancients: Never allow yourself to do evil, however slight it seems; always strive to do good, however great it may seem. I would have many things to say to many other people, but not only do I lack the paper and the brushes, but I have just undergone a violent torture which has deprived me of the use of the lower part of my body. I am loaded with a cangue weighing more than twenty pounds, and my reason is quite disturbed and my arm trembles. So I cannot say more. Above all, above all, try to have a good life and a holy death. I hope a thousand times, ten thousand times.

“*Jeong-hae* year, the 14th of the fifth lunar month.”

“Paul Yi, sinner.”

The next day, Paul wrote a private letter to his wife, this letter is superscripted: To the mother of Jeong-ae, because the politeness of this country demands that women be designated by their title as mother of such and such of their children. Jeong-ae was the name of Paul’s young son.

“Since our marriage, for thirteen years, neither of us has been able to spend a single quiet day, and we have had all kinds of miseries. Suddenly separated, we must never see each other again in this world; God’s will be done! Considering the actions of my whole life, and my many sins, I especially regret all that I have to reproach myself for towards you; forgive me. Though I die, could I forget you? For support here, you are left with Jeong-ae and his sister; raise them well, instruct them and have them follow in my footsteps. For you, if you are submitted in all things to the will of God, if you become a friend of the Lord, will this not be true happiness? Since our separation, how many difficulties you must have encountered! When this thought occurs to me, I am overwhelmed by it; but immediately thinking

of God and Mary, I calm my worries. Above all, try to end your life well. Have you heard from Yeon-pung? Alas! alas! when my mother learns of my condition, what will become of her? If I also come to be a martyr, what glory for her, it is true, but how will nature be able to contain itself? Now I must leave you completely, I have no more paper, and still under the eyes of the jailers, I am obliged to seize on the sly a few moments to address these two words to you; please pass them around the family. And my older brother how is he? And my older sister-in-law, whom I will never be able to see again? My hope is that we will meet and rejoice together in the kingdom of heaven.

“I don’t know if I will die here or in the capital; if I die here, I will obtain the palm in the same place where my sister picked it; what a boon! Angels and Saints of Paradise, Christians from all parts of the earth, deign to give thanks to God for me. Every circumstance reminds me of the memory of the letters of this dear sister martyr, and the only thing that afflicts me is the regret of not having loved God as much as she did during my life. Now I would like to start loving him, but it’s too late and what can I do? My heart is oppressed by it, but if on the one hand my sins are without number, the mercy of God is also without limits, that is my only hope. By my own strength, I could not have held firm even for a moment. No, now more than ever, I recognize that in all things our forces are for nothing, and that the protection of God is everything.

“When the violence of the persecution has calmed down a bit, come and get my things and give them to my son. Do not forget to have my two children rebaptized; surely they were not. I have some debts and orders which I have not been able to fulfill. No word can express what I feel; I only hope that God will forgive me; make every effort to pay for it all.

“I cannot write separately to my mother, copy this letter and send it to her. The years you have left will not be long and eternal happiness is approaching; do not be too sad and let us meet forever near the Lord. The order to summon me is heard; I therefore end here.

“The 15th day of the fifth lunar month.

“Your husband,  
“Paul Yi.”

Finally, a few days before his death, Paul wrote a last letter to the associates of the Myeongdo brotherhood, or brotherhood of Christian instruction, of which he was one of the principal members, perhaps even one of the directors. This pious association, first established in China, had been transported to Korea, as we have seen, by Father Zhou, with the object of preparing and encouraging the confreres for the instruction of Christians and pagans. Here is that letter:

“I, a very great sinner, who for thirty-six years spent my time in vain, and am without any merit, I well deserved to be abandoned by God and the Virgin Mary. Today I am called, by a special and extraordinary favor. It is, I have no doubt, a blessing from Mary conceived without sin, our great patroness who, after having incorporated me into the brotherhood, made this first-rate grace flow to me. How great are the fervor and the meritorious works of all the confreres! For me, ashamed of myself and my unworthiness, reflecting on the magnitude of my sins which heaven and earth cannot contain, I did not believe I could take part in it. “How,” I said to myself, “could I mingle well with this society?” Having been, against all odds, imprisoned for the law, I believe that Mary’s intention is thereby clearly revealed to me. For the other confreres, who are so rich in merit and in virtues, she may well, without putting them through prison, bring them to term; but for a sinner like me, the good Mother saw that there was no other way. O all of you, thank her for me.

“As I was seized quite unexpectedly, you will all have been amazed and in great anxiety. For my part, I cannot express all the feelings by which I am constantly with each of you. I know that you act with great zeal. Let me, however, say a word to you. You know the history of the true religion of Our Lord

Jesus Christ in our country. After efforts continued for many years, they had succeeded, by a special disposition of Providence, in building a very small house, and in bringing together a few inhabitants. Then, the weather not being favourable, a strong wind and rain almost knocked it down; when I think of it, my breath stops, and yet I hope that, by the protection of the good Mother, this house will be able to be preserved; Yes I hope; pray, pray earnestly.

“You will find in my house details of everything I have been able to do during the past month. But when, this month, someone arrives from our days of reunion, my pain redoubles, because now I find myself separated from you forever. Besides, if I survived, I wouldn’t be much use for the brotherhood. Nevertheless, I know well that when you have your meetings, you will feel some sadness and some regret, because of my absence. Instead, unite your hearts and your forces to thank God for such a great blessing. I am thinking of each of you in particular. I even seem to see you. Please, all of you, make your efforts to preserve the small house of which I have just spoken to you, and to arrive without fail at the great House of God, where we will all rejoice together.

“Are the two superiors in good health? Are the superiors of each place equally healthy? I cannot set aside my concern because of the interest I have in you. What trouble you are willing to give yourself! If all is quiet in the capital, please see to the preservation of the little house and its few inhabitants. Work for the Religion to flourish. I have seen more than two hundred Christians here; few have stood firm, almost all have fallen! By the grace of God, some are thinking of resuming the life, and I say to myself: is this still not the effect of the intercession of my confreres?

“Charles, my friend<sup>14</sup>, how is your mother? Certainly our mutual affection was far from being an ordinary friendship. Without you, no one would ever have told me about my faults. Now that I think about it, you really were a treasure to me. Dear friend, listen favorably to my prayer, please take care of my wife and my children. There are many others in whom I could trust, and who would not deceive my trust, but among all of them, you my friend, understand all my thoughts, and you will not forget the word of a dying man. Time flies, already more than a month has passed since my arrest. As for the sufferings, I myself am not capable of supporting them, the body that is too weak cannot overcome them, and if it were not for the grace of God and the help of Mary, how could I hold out even for a moment? I am tormented by the thought of not having been able to pay the debts contracted towards the Christians of the capital and the province, and of not having been able to recognize the benefits that I have received. It only remains for me to invoke God, hoping that he will forgive me.

“I tell you all again, and I dare to hope ten thousand times that you will listen to me: this time is really only a moment, make your efforts, exhaust all means to obtain a good death. The mass of my sins rises to heaven, but since God has showered me with blessings so far, he certainly does not want to abandon me. If I am the first to reach heaven, whoever you are, when you come to our great abode, I will meet you with musical instruments, and we will ascend together before our common Father to praise him and rejoice together. I would still have a thousand things to tell you, but I cannot tell them on paper. Take care to keep body and soul in good condition in this passing world, and in eternity we shall fully discover the sentiments of our hearts.

“*Jeong-hae* year, the 25th of the fifth lunar month.

“Paul Yi.”

It does not appear that Paul had any other interrogations to undergo after those he himself told us about. In prison, he continued to edify everyone by his patience, his fervor and his submission to the will of God. But his body, naturally weak, had been so broken that he could not survive. Exhausted by his wounds, our brave martyr languished for a few more days, and on the 4th of the fifth intercalary lunar

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<sup>14</sup> (Dallet Note 90. Charles Hyeon, martyred in 1846.) (현석문 Hyeon Seok-mun 玄錫文)



month, his beautiful soul flew up to heaven to receive there the prize of his invincible constancy. He was then thirty-six years old.

Thus died this distinguished confessor of the faith, one of the greatest heroes of the Korean Church. Since his arrival in prison, he had unceasingly raised the courage of those who had fallen, strengthened the weak, consoled and supported his companions in captivity, edified and instructed the pagans, won the admiration of his judges themselves. Among the other prisoners, a small number, it is true, had the courage to imitate his example, but all admired and loved him, all mourned his death, and even today, all the faithful have his memory in mind. veneration.

It was time, however, to finally decide the fate of all those Christians whom, for more than two months, they had brought together as if in herds from all parts of the province, and crammed into the dungeons of Jeonju. Most of them, as we have already said, had believed, by a cowardly apostasy, to avoid tortures, and to redeem their life and their freedom at once. In this they were mistaken, and although in the prison they were treated with a little more leniency, they soon saw that the judges were in no mood to pardon them so quickly for the crime of having worshiped Jesus-Christ. Around the middle of the fifth lunar month, the outcome of their trial was prepared. Twenty-four mandarins were summoned to cooperate in their judgment, and sat on the same day in the various parts of the tribunal. Each of them had to question a certain number of the accused, five by five.

They began by administering to each of these unfortunate apostates, thirty strokes of the stick, so that, without any merit for them, their blood flowed, their bodies were bruised and covered with wounds. Then, after a few questions, the cangue was passed around their necks, and they were sent back to prison. Ten days later, each of them was again called, received two or three volleys of sticks, and heard his final sentence. The least compromised, as well as those who had not only denied God, but betrayed and denounced their brethren, were immediately released. The rest were condemned to exile in various remote parts of the kingdom. Then these unfortunates who had not lost their faith, and whose conscience cruelly reproached their fault, each went towards the place assigned to him, only too happy if, as we have reason to hope for the greatest number, they knew how to receive this chastisement of human justice in satisfaction of what they owed to the justice of God.

The fate of the apostates being thus settled, it was necessary to put an end to the eight or ten faithful Christians, who persisted in their generous profession of faith. Seeing the prisons empty around them, they questioned each other with their eyes and said to each other: "We, at least, by a very special blessing from God, will we bear the fruits of salvation?" Shortly after, they were summoned before the district mandarin. They were made to sign their death sentence, then, called to him one by one, they were asked three times if they had no regrets about dying. Everyone replied that they had no regrets. They were handed the cangue, the irons were put back on their feet and they were led back to prison. The next day they appeared before another mandarin, and the same scene as the day before was repeated three more times. Two days later, before the governor, the same triple interrogation was made and the same answer given. Finally, all the formalities having been completed, they left the court definitively sentenced to death. As they passed, the valets shouted a thousand coarse insults; some struck them with their feet, others twirled their cangues, all showered them with marks of contempt and derision.

Back at the prison, they expected to be handed over to the executioner almost immediately. The King's answer was to come in a few days, and they kept consoling and strengthening each other. An altogether divine joy flooded their souls, a holy gaiety animated their actions and their words. "It's for today, it's for tomorrow," they said; and each, trusting in the help of God, was well resolved. A few days passed in this way, then a few months, then whole years, and it was finally understood that the execution had been postponed indefinitely. The sole cause of this delay was the personal will of the king. This prince whom we saw, twenty-five years earlier, intervene while still a child to put an end to the great persecution of 1801, was of a gentle and calm nature. He was instinctively reluctant to shed the blood of his subjects, and in the present case, the ratification of the sentence passed by the tribunal of Jeonju could not be wrested from him.

Let us therefore leave for a time, in the prison of this city, our generous confessors to wear chains for the name of the Savior Jesus, and let us follow the history of the persecution in the other provinces.

Chapter 5: Persecution of 1827: the confessors of Daegu and Danyang. — Martyrdom of Paul Kim Ho-yeon. — Martyrdom of Peter Hwang. - Summary.

For more than two months the persecution, although very violent in the province of Jeolla, had remained, so to speak, concentrated in that province. All other parts of Christendom had been at peace, until the 22nd of the fourth lunar month of this year. At this time, as we have seen, the satellites of Jeonju crossed the barriers of Gyeongsang, and seized Peter Shin<sup>1</sup>, in the district of Sangju. Two days later, other satellites were sent to the same district, to the village of Aengmudang<sup>2</sup>, to arrest other denounced Christians. But already the rumor of the imprisonment of Peter Shin had spread and all the Christians had fled; so that none could be seized that day. We do not know exactly how things happened then in Sangju, but the sequence of events seems to indicate that the civil mandarin and the criminal mandarin of this city, thus officially informed of the existence of Christians in their district, and no doubt excited by the great deeds of their colleagues in the province of Jeolla, also wanted to give themselves the credit of tormenting the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Be that as it may, towards the end of the fourth lunar month, five or six large Christian villages in the district of Sangju were suddenly invaded by their satellites. The most alert or the most skillful of the neophytes found their salvation in flight, while a good number, seized at home or on the roads, were thrown into the prisons of Sangju. Here again we have to deplore numerous apostasies; nevertheless the Religion found some courageous defenders and eloquent apologists.

The first is Paul Park Gyeong-hwa<sup>3</sup>, also called Do-hang. Descended from a family of the lower nobility of the district of Hongju, he enjoyed a rather fine fortune, and lived surrounded by the esteem of his fellow citizens, when he embraced the Religion, around the year 1792. He was then thirty-three years old. Soon afterwards, still only a catechumen, during the persecution of 1794, he had the weakness to obtain his deliverance by a word of apostasy. But as his heart was truly upright, his fall was only an opportunity for him to redouble his fervor. Touched with repentance, he went back to the practice of his duties with more exactitude, and encountering in his country many obstacles to the service of God, he abandoned his possessions and his relatives, and retired to the mountains. There, hiding his origin, he passed himself off as a man of the middle class, and freed from all the anxieties of the world, thought only of the salvation of his soul. Father Zhou having entered Korea, he had the happiness of receiving baptism from his hand, and from that day was a new man. He sought out secluded places in order to be able to devote himself, at fixed hours, to the exercises of prayer and meditation, and employed the rest of his time either in instructing himself by pious readings, or in explaining to others the religious truths. Everyone said of him: “Here is a man truly stripped of himself;” and many frequented him to hear his words. He took the greatest care of the education of his children, made them regard the exercise of prayer as the most important of all for a Christian, and exhorted them unceasingly to the practice of virtue. His examples added to the effectiveness of his advice.

In 1827, when he saw the persecution raging in the province of Jeolla, he endeavored to console the Christians, to reassure them, to inculcate in them resignation to the will of God. “In the heart,” he said, “each must prepare for martyrdom: but for the body, prudence dictates that one seeks to escape when possible.” He himself thought only of preparing himself for death. Often, being ill, he had said to

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<sup>1</sup> 신태보 Shin Tae-bo 申太甫 (1769?-1839). Peter. Blessed.

<sup>2</sup> 앵무당 Aengmudang (Now 경북 상주시 화남면 평온리 North Gyeongsang Sangju-si Hwanam-myeon Pyeongon-ri)

<sup>3</sup> 박경화 도항 Park Gyeong-hwa Do-hang 朴—(1757-1827) Paul. Blessed.

his son and to the other people of his household, to reassure them and relieve them of all anxiety: “Rest easy, I will not die here in your presence;” but no one knew the meaning of these words. It was only after the event that his family understood them. Paul had just left Gamagi in the mountains of the district of Danyang, where he had lived for nine years, and had settled for only a few weeks with his family, in Meonge-mok, district of Sangju, when on the day of the Ascension, the last day of the fourth lunar month, when his family and the Christians of the neighborhood were making the customary prayers with him, a traitor entered his house at the head of the satellites, who seized almost all those who were present. As they were being driven into the city, Paul repeated, “Let us give thanks to God for the journey we are making today;” and joy shone on his face. By this, the satellites recognized him as one of the chiefs, and in the tortures, this aggravating circumstance was not forgotten.

The criminal judge put the usual questions to Paul, and the latter, being unable, in conscience, to answer most of the questions, was, despite his great age, subjected to terrible tortures. As they were repeated several times, he felt his strength fail, and exclaimed: “I leave my body in the hands of the Mandarin; for my soul, I place it in the hands of God.” He was taken back to the prison, where he immediately began to exhort the Christians and to render them the small services in his power. Cited again, he showed the same constancy in the midst of torture. The executioners were not afraid to slap him, to pull out his beard and to overwhelm him with a thousand insults; but Paul said only: “These sufferings are a blessing, for which I give thanks to God.” After several more fruitless attempts to shake his resolve, the judge sent him to the governor’s court in Daegu. The latter said to him: “These numerous prisoners have been infatuated by you: a more serious punishment is justly due to you.” And at the same time, he inflicted on him a much crueller torture. But Paul, sustained by his love for God, endured everything without complaining. For three consecutive days, he had to undergo extraordinary tortures, after which the governor, despairing of overcoming his constancy, pronounced the sentence of death and had him taken back to prison.

Paul’s son had been taken with him. His name was Andrew (Park) Sa-sim<sup>4</sup>, and his legal name was Sa-eui. Imbued, from childhood, with the principles of the Religion, and formed by the examples of his virtuous father, he gave himself up early to the exercises of piety, and was noticed as he advanced in age, by a faith and an uncommon fervor. Regular in his daily actions, complacent and charitable towards all, he shone above all by an admirable filial piety. When his parents were ill, he never left them, and as he had made it a rule never to eat until after them, they were then obliged to force themselves to swallow some food, so that he himself could take his meal. His father having the habit of drinking a little wine, he never failed to offer it to him, in spite of the poverty of the family; he multiplied his labors and contrived in every way to be able to procure him this little satisfaction. If he needed to go out, he never went beyond the day or the moment marked for his return. Under these circumstances, neither the wind nor the rain stopped him, and he was not even afraid to brave the darkness of the night in order to spare his parents the anxiety which his delay might have caused them. The slightest sign, the slightest desire on their part, were orders for him.

One day, his father having said in a manner of conversation: “Our house is very narrow, and to be able to give hospitality to a few Christians without shelter, if necessary, it would be good if we had two or three more rooms.” These words were an order for Andrew. From that day on, while engaged in his usual work, he did not fail, each time he went out, to bring back one or two beams or joists, and soon he was able to build what his father had seemed to desire. From all sides, Christians flocked to this blessed house, and as Paul, poor as he was, could not rest if he could not treat his guests suitably, Andrew, following his views, found a way cover expenses, even when, for that, he had to refuse himself and his family what was necessary. Several times rich Christians, touched by this admirable devotion of Andrew for his old father, and knowing in what penury he lived himself, sent him some help in money. But Andrew did not want to receive it, and said: “It is right that I pay myself, by my work, the debts that I

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<sup>4</sup> 박사의 Park Sa-ui 朴士儀 (1792-1839) Andrew. Blessed.

contract to support my father and my family.” And when he could not return these gifts, far from appropriating them for his own use, he distributed them in alms to a few Christians poorer than himself. It was thus that this pious neophyte passed his life in the exercise of all the virtues, when he was arrested with his father. Like him, he showed extraordinary patience and courage in the tortures, and the two together were transferred from the tribunal of Sangju to that of Daegu.

According to the law of the kingdom, the question should not be put to the father and the son simultaneously, in the same place. Andrew, seeing the state of weakness and exhaustion to which his father had been reduced by prison and torture, could not bear the thought of leaving him, even for a few moments. He explained his fears to the judge who, touched by his filial piety, said to him: “According to the law, I should not do so, but nevertheless I cannot refuse to enter into your views, because what you are asking is fair and proper.” Also, although the other prisoners were put to the question separately, he always subjected Andrew and his father to it simultaneously; and Andrew, even though after the tortures he could hardly make use of his limbs, approached to support and lighten the cangue with which his father was charged, which all present could not see without strong emotion. Andrew, no less faithful to his God than devoted to his father, endured many tortures fearlessly to the end, and after having deserved to hear his death sentence pronounced, was also sent back to prison until the day of the execution.

The first expedition of the satellites to the village of Aengmudang had, as we have said, completely failed. A second attempt was more successful. Among the Christians seized then and taken to this same prefecture of Sangju, two especially deserve our attention: they are Andrew Kim and Richard An.

Andrew Kim Sa-geon<sup>5</sup> was from the Seosan district. His family had been rich and opulent: but his parents, after their conversion, were obliged to abandon their property, and to emigrate into the mountains, so that he was left with very little. Although he was naturally proud and irascible, his character, under the influence of the religious education given him by his parents, had become gentle, humble and charitable. In 1815, his uncle Simon was martyred for the faith, and his father Thaddeus sent into exile. Andrew, still young, was released, and since then he often said with regret: “What a great opportunity I have lost!” His father being in exile, Andrew devoted his life to good works. He went here and there among the Christians, sent books and religious objects to distant places, preached and exhorted unceasingly, endeavored to open the intelligence to the ignorant, and above all baptized many pagan children in danger of dying. He frequently went to his father’s place of exile, comforting him and strengthening him with all his power. He spent most of his time in prayer, preaching and pious readings, instructing his family with great care, edifying all Christians by his good examples. He still kept in the bottom of his heart the hope that God would give him the opportunity of martyrdom which he had once missed.

When the persecution of 1827 arose, he immediately understood that after having made known the Christian faith, so often and in so many different places, he could not fail to be denounced and seized. Consequently, he multiplied his prayers to prepare himself to respond well to the designs of God. Some time later, he was indeed caught, and taken to the tribunal of Sangju. The judge, after a few preliminary questions, said to him: “Explain to me frankly what your religion is, and what are the rules that you follow.” Andrew immediately set about developing the Christian doctrine on the existence and nature of God, then explaining in detail the Ten Commandments. The judge said to him, “Speaking as well as you do, you certainly have many disciples; make them known in detail.” On his refusal, he ordered to hit him with the big stick, then made him undergo the separation of the bones, and finally ordered his legs to be sawn with a rope. This dreadful torture is sometimes, by a refinement of barbarism, inflicted between the legs, on the natural parts. Andrew, however, seems to have been sawed like this only on the thighs. His

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<sup>5</sup> 김사건 Kim Sa-geong 金思健 (1794-1839) Andrew. Blessed.

flesh was burning, and the bones seemed bare, but he kept repeating: “Should I die, I cannot denounce anyone.” “And why can’t you?” “Because a just man can do nothing that should turn out to the detriment of others.” For three consecutive days he underwent similar tortures without weakening. On the contrary, his wholly spiritual joy increased more and more.

Soon after, he was sent to the governor’s court in Daegu. There again he was put to the torture, and when summoned to deny Jesus Christ, he replied: “If I had wanted to apostatize, I would have done so before the first tribunal. What’s the point of coming here?” The angry governor said, “You must die;” and after having made him endure extraordinary tortures, being unable to obtain anything from him, he sent him back to prison. The next day Andrew was questioned again. “Have you changed your mind?” asked the judge. “I have no desire to change it,” he replied, and he was put to the torture again. A few days later, he had to go to the court of Jeonju, to answer on certain objects of the Religion, which the Christians imprisoned in this city had declared to have received from him. In spite of the dreadful state of his body, all torn to pieces, he was thrown on a horse, and made this long journey with sufferings which it is easier to imagine than to depict. Then, after undergoing a new interrogation at Jeonju, he returned to his first prison. He had traveled nearly a thousand li (one hundred leagues) in this way. He was finally condemned to death, and placed in prison pending the execution of his sentence.

Richard An Gun-sim<sup>6</sup> was from the district of Boryeong. He was a man of an open face, of a humble and complacent character. After having embraced the Religion in his youth, he left his native country to practice it more freely. People admired above all the care he took for the good education of his children, and his generous charity for his neighbors. Assiduous in prayer and meditation, he never failed in these exercises; he usually fasted three times a week. He spent much of his time copying religious books, to support himself and his family, and he was happy to explain them to Christians and pagans too. Arrested for the first time, we do not know in what year, the mandarin asked him: “Is it true that you practice evil arts?” He answered: “I neither know nor practice evil arts;” and without questioning him further, the Mandarin dismissed him. This expression is sometimes, though seldom, used in speaking of the Religion, but so improperly that we do not know whether one could blame Richard’s answer. Nevertheless, he always regretted not having explained himself more clearly, and having lacked courage.

In 1827, feeling that he would necessarily be compromised because of the many books written by his hand, and reflecting that Our Lord himself had fled several times before his enemies, he hid for some time, while preparing for battle with a redoubling of fervor. Sangju’s satellites eventually found him and took him to this city. The mandarin said to him: “Is it true that you follow the Christian Religion?” “That is true,” he replied. “Explain to me, then, the doctrine of God.” Richard did his best to give a clear and succinct exposition of the Christian Religion. “What you say is fine, but to break the law of the kingdom in this way, is this not disloyalty to the King?” To this question Richard gave the same answer that we have heard almost all our martyrs give, and in the same terms, because it is found verbatim in the abbreviated catechism which almost all knew by heart. He says: “God being the great King of the universe and the father of all men, we honor him above all else. The King, the mandarins and the relatives should only be honored after God.” — “Renounce this God and make known your accomplices.” On his refusal, he was beaten violently, but he remained constant in his profession of faith and was returned to prison. The next day and the following days, the mandarin had the tortures started again but without success, and after some time of useless efforts, had him transferred to Daegu, the residence of the governor. There, he had to undergo new tortures, his body was nothing but a single wound, but the sufferings only increased the ardor of his love for God. In the end he was sentenced to death and returned to prison.

These four confessors were soon joined in the dungeons of Daegu by two others no less intrepid,

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<sup>6</sup> 안군심 An Gun-sim 安— (1774-1835) Richard. Blessed.

Andrew Yi and Ambrose Kim, whom we are now going to introduce.

Andrew Yi Jong-il<sup>7</sup>, a native of the district of Hongju, had a firm, upright and charitable character which made him noticed and esteemed by all. He was not instructed in the Religion until the age of twenty-something, but his conversion was so sincere and complete that, not finding himself in his own country sufficiently free to practice his faith as he desired, he left his family, wealth and loved ones, and retired to the mountains. Forced by circumstances to emigrate successively to various provinces, he had soon spent the little he had taken with him, and had to support his existence by the work of his hands. Andrew's resignation in the midst of poverty and the privations that result from it, his charity towards all, his patience in bearing insults, his reserve in all his words, the care he took for education and the education of his family, and so many other virtues which shone in him, excited the admiration of all. Although he was very busy with the care required by the upkeep of his house, he never wanted to relax his assiduous and incessant application to prayer and pious reading.

When the persecution arose in 1827, he prepared himself for martyrdom by fleeing from worldly society and by redoubled fervor. He encouraged his people by saying, "Each of us must prepare to suffer death, and yet, not knowing the purposes of God, we must seek to escape the persecutors if we can."

He lived in Gomjigi, in the district of Sunheung<sup>8</sup>, where the satellites came to arrest him. He received them with joy and was taken to the tribunal of Andong. The judge asked him, "Is it true that you follow bad doctrine?" — "The God of Heaven," replied Andrew, "is the creator of all things; he is the great king who governs everything, the supreme father who nourishes all men; it is he who rewards good and punishes evil. The duty of every man being to adore him, I adore him and serve him. As for bad doctrine, I know of none." "You answer quite insolently," cried the Mandarin, apostatize at once." And he beat him cruelly. Andrew, with a calm face and a firm tone of voice, then said: "Ten thousand and ten thousand times I cannot renounce my God. Please don't ask me about it anymore." The mandarin, irritated, caused the tortures to continue for several days; but the love of God sustained Andrew to the end. He was then sent to the governor's court, who said to him: "I am assured that you do not want to abjure. We will see." And he made him undergo, three times, atrocious tortures, but in vain. They then tried to win him over with caresses and gentleness, but all means being useless, he was finally condemned to death and consigned to prison with the other confessors.

Ambrose Kim Gun-mi<sup>9</sup>, also called Eon-woo, descended from a family of interpreters in the capital, and was a distant relative of Thomas Kim, confessor of the faith in 1783. As soon as the Religion was introduced in Korea, he embraced it with all the ardor of his soul, and made it known to his wife and children. But these did not listen to him and not content with not imitating him, sought by a thousand vexations to bring him back to idolatry. His wife especially, of a violent and cantankerous character, gave him no rest; she wanted, among other things, to prevent him from observing the fasts and abstinences of the Church, and often said, in a loud voice, many insults against the Religion. Ambrose, tired of so much importunity, made up his mind to leave his house, and bidding farewell to his family, shortly after 1791, went to find the Christians of the province, living sometimes with one and sometimes with the another, instructing all who would listen, and copying books of the Religion, to earn a living. He had the good fortune to see Father Zhou, with whom he even seems to have remained for some time, and strengthened his faith and his virtue there. Having no home, he withdrew from time to time into the mountains, to attend more quietly to his exercises of piety. He especially loved to catechize children, and never ceased to urge everyone to practice the virtues, even more by his examples than by his words. Every night, even

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<sup>7</sup> 이재행 Yi Jae-haeng 李在行 aka 종일 Jong-il (1776-1839) Andrew. Blessed.

<sup>8</sup> 순흥의 곰직이 Sunheung Gomjig-i (Now 경북 봉화군 물야면 오전리 North Gyeongsang Bonghwa-gun Mulya-myeon Ojeon-ri)

<sup>9</sup> 김세박 Kim Se-bak 金世博 aka 군미 Gun-mi or 언우 Eon-woo (1761-1828) Ambrose. Blessed.

in the bitter cold of winter, he got up at midnight to devote himself to prayer. Very sober in his food, he had prescribed himself narrow limits which he never exceeded, whatever the good or bad quality of the dishes presented to him.

Ambrose had escaped the persecutions of 1801 and 1815. In 1827, all the Christians of his acquaintance were on the run, and each day leading to the capture of several of them, the master of the house where he had taken refuge went to hide in a pagan's house. Ambrose, who no longer knew in which direction to direct his steps, and saw no way of escaping the prosecution, took the resolution to give himself up. He therefore went to the city of Andong on the fifth lunar month, left the small package he was carrying with a jailer, and tried to appear before the criminal judge. The porter of the tribunal prevented him from entering, but Ambrose answered: "I am a Christian; go tell the judge I am here." The satellites called him a fool and pushed him away; but he cried aloud, "I am not a fool, but a Christian." So they had to tell the judge, who summoned him and asked him a few questions. Ambrose refused to answer on the place of his residence and on the place where his books were hidden, so he received a volley of blows on the legs and was put in prison. A month later, he was sent to Daegu where were the other confessors, all his intimate friends. In front of the governor, he received violent beatings three times, and was subjected to various tortures, which he endured with unshakeable patience. In the end he was condemned to death, and left in prison awaiting the confirmation of the sentence.

At this same period there happened to be in the vicinity of Daegu, a (Buddhist) bonze very famous in the province, who had even cut off four fingers of his hand out of devotion. The judge had the idea of ordering Paul Park to discuss with this monk the truth or falsity of their respective doctrines. At this news, all the Christian prisoners were very worried. Paul said to them, "Without studies as I am, how could I stand up to him in my own strength? But if I rely solely on the help of God and his holy Mother, what is there to fear, and why worry? Pray only for me." Arriving at the court, when the discussion was about to begin, the praetorians seeing that the forces of Paul were exhausted, offered him a cup of wine which he accepted with gratitude. After drinking it, he began to reason with the monk. They had barely got into the subject when the latter, losing the thread of his speech, remained speechless and was obliged to admit defeat, and, covered with shame, wanted to flee. In vain the mandarins, the praetorians, the satellites, all humiliated and furious, tried to revive their champion; they could not persuade him to utter a single word, and ended by dismissing him ignominiously. Paul gave thanks to God for the victory which He had granted him, and while he returned to his prison, the satellites praised him, exalted him, congratulated him greatly, and said among themselves: "The Religion of the God of Heaven is certainly a true doctrine. As for the bonze followers of Fô, if only two or three are seized and they are subjected to the torments that are inflicted on Christians, there will not remain, under the sky, even a small seed, to propagate henceforth the doctrine of Fô."

It does not seem that new arrests of Christians took place after the fifth lunar month. Had the zeal of the persecutors slackened of its own accord, or had secret orders from the court intervened? We do not know. At that time, the only thought was to get rid of the prisoners. All were interrogated again; some were released; others were sent into exile. The grandchildren of Paul Park were, because of their youth, set free. On leaving them Paul said to them, "Go and keep your souls clean from all sin, and if you should be so unfortunate as to offend God, repent sincerely. Always faithfully practice our Holy Religion. Ten years from now, Christians in Korea will have a great cause for joy." He meant the entry of priests into the country.

After a few days, there remained in the prisons of Daegu only the six confessors of whom we have spoken. Unshakeable in their resolution and, seeing that the execution of their sentence was dragging on, they established themselves in the dungeons as if to spend their lives there. Each of them, to support his existence, made straw shoes, or exercised some other small trade. A new governor, having replaced the preceding one, summoned them to his bar and, after a short interrogation, caused them to be



beaten very violently. Paul Park, exhausted by age and by the various tortures he had endured, could not survive these new tortures. Returning to prison, he languished for a few more days, then, feeling that his end was approaching, he called his son Andrew and the other prisoners condemned to death to his side, exhorting them to constancy and fidelity in the service of God. “Consider this prison, he said to them, as a stay of happiness do not allow your hearts to be divided by an excessive and disordered affection for the parents or children you have outside, and follow my steps. It is a very happy thing to die for Jesus Christ.” After which, he gave up his soul to God in admirable calm and peace, on the 27th day of the ninth lunar month of the year *jeong-hae* (1827), at the age of seventy-one. He had been in prison for five months. Thus died this worthy confessor of the faith, whose memory has remained in great veneration throughout the country. His extraordinary goodness, his unalterable gentleness, the hospitality which he exercised so generously towards all, his zeal to spread the Christian Religion, and the other virtues of which he always gave such fine examples during his long career, attracted the blessing of God on him and on his family. Not only did his son Andrew, whom we will find later, not degenerate, but even today his descendants show themselves worthy of him, by their faith and their fervor.

Ambrose Kim Se-bak 金世博 also died in prison, a little later. During his life he had always regretted being a burden to those who gave him asylum. Hearing that prisoners like himself who had no resources were fed by means of a tax imposed by the governor on houses in the neighborhood, he was singularly disturbed by the thought that he was a burden to the people of the neighborhood. This is no doubt what determined him to deprive himself almost entirely of food. Many Christians, on the contrary, have attributed this strange resolution to divine inspiration. He therefore began an almost absolute fast. Having seen this, the other prisoners said to him: “Master, since you are no longer eating, we must all do as you do.” He rebuked them strongly, saying: “Even though I must act in this way, without being able to explain to you the reason, for you such behavior would be suicide.” Some say that he spent several days in this way, after which he passed away peacefully. According to other testimonies he may, in order not to be a cause of scandal to anyone, have resumed eating after his long fast, and survived for some time. He died at the age of sixty-eight, on the 27th day of the tenth lunar month of the year *mu-ja* (1828).

Finally, to complete the history of this persecution of 1827, let us say a few words about the arrest of some Christians in the eastern extremity of the province of Chungcheong.

Lawrence Yu Sun-ji<sup>10</sup> had come at the beginning of this year to live in Gipeungol (deep valley), in the district of Danyang. When the persecution arose in Gyeongsang, a certain number of Christians of that province, his relatives or friends, took refuge with him to protect themselves from prosecution. In the meantime, one of Lawrence’s pagan friends denounced him to the praetorians of Danyang, urging them to seize him for a ransom, which he promised himself to share with them. They had no difficulty in complying with an invitation so in keeping with their tastes, and in the course of the fifth lunar month came to arrest Lawrence, and with him about twenty people then assembled in his house. Taken to the tribunal of Danyang, all hastened to apostatize, except Lawrence, whom violent tortures could not shake. The mandarin then said: “I would very much like to release you all, but that rascal is one of your leaders, and if he does not apostatize, I will not set anyone free.” Immediately all the prisoners burst into murmurs against Lawrence, making a thousand entreaties to him, molesting and scolding him in such a way that in the end, unable to bear it any longer, he uttered, like them, a formula of apostasy.

They were immediately released and they walked out together. Lawrence sent them away, each to his own home, recommending that they flee as quickly as possible. Left alone, he waited to give them time to get to safety, then returned to the Mandarin, retracted himself, and again showed himself

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<sup>10</sup> 유성태 Yu Seong-tae 劉性泰 aka 순지 Sun-ji (1789/1794-1828) Lawrence. Martyr.

determined to die. Torments were not wanting: but he endured them without weakening, and they ended by sending him to the criminal judge of Chungju.

As he always showed the same firmness, the judge imposed a death sentence on him, which was then, for some reason, changed to a sentence of exile. Lawrence complained in full court saying that, according to the law, he must die, but they did not listen to him, and they sent him to Musan, at the northern end of the province of Hamgyeong. Sending him, the judge said to the satellites: "This individual could well, during the journey, infatuate some men of the people with his doctrine. Be on your guard and watch him." Lawrence answered: "On the road I only want to convert ten thousand people." Arriving at the place of his exile, he began to practice his Religion openly, and to preach it to all those who approached him, satellites or common people, which greatly irritated the Mandarin and his people. So Lawrence was, some time later, locked up in a house with no going out; then finally not giving him any more food. A few days passed, and, no longer able to bear the hunger and thirst which devoured him, he earnestly asked for something to be brought to him. They then soaked rice flour with an equal quantity of salt, and formed cakes which were offered to him. His stomach, already ruined by a long fast, could not bear this horrible dish, and before having taken half of it, the confessor expired, as his executioners had foreseen. It was about the twelfth lunar month of that year, or, according to others, the third lunar month of the year *mu-ja* (1828). Lawrence was then between thirty-five and forty years old.

Such is the version of the Chungcheong Province affair which seemed to us the most reliable. We did not think it necessary to pass over these facts in silence, although the lack of sufficiently precise testimonies does not allow us to affirm their complete authenticity.

Thus passed, like a violent storm, this persecution of 1827. All the Christian communities of the province of Jeolla were ravaged; but except for a few districts of Gyeongsang, and a village of Chungcheong, we do not see that the faithful of the other provinces were disturbed. This persecution differs from the preceding ones in several points which it is worth noting. It was comparatively quite short. The first arrests took place towards the end of the second lunar month; three months later they had ceased. It also seems obvious that the central government had nothing to do with the prosecution. The greed of the mandarins and their satellites, popular resentment, individual denunciations were the cause of all the evil. Another difference was that the government, far from pouring out the blood of Christians as before, did not permit the execution of any of the death sentences passed by the provincial courts, and had the condemned left in prison for an indefinite time. This relative indulgence very probably proceeded, as we have already remarked, from the personal opposition of the King to the rigorous measures proposed by his ministers and his mandarins. Finally, what distinguishes in a very sad way the persecution of 1827 from all those which had preceded or which will follow, is the great number of apostates. There had been nearly five hundred arrests, there were hardly any faithful confessors except those whose names we have cited and told the story of. It is a very distressing spectacle, no doubt, but when we remember that of the five hundred Christians arrested, almost half were only catechumens, that four or five of them at the most had seen the priest and received once or twice the sacraments, we are only surprised at one thing, that is that not all of them have apostatized, and that among these neglected neophytes, Jesus Christ has found confessors and martyrs. Moreover, this time as always, almost all those who had had the weakness to give in to the tortures, did not discontinue their religious practices, and, as soon as they returned home, repented of their fault and worked to repair it.

The persecution was succeeded by a period of great tranquility for the Christians of Korea, and we find in the next four or five years very few interesting facts to report.

The then reigning King was Sunjo<sup>11</sup>, a prince beloved and esteemed by his people. Although only about forty years old, he no longer felt the strength or the desire to lead anything by himself. His mental faculties seemed to be weakening day by day, he longed for peace and quiet, and wanted at all costs to relieve himself of the cares of government. For this purpose he had for some time associated his son Ik-jong (Prince Munjo) with the conduct of affairs, and had had a palace prepared for his retirement in the town of Suwon, sixty li (six leagues) south of the capital. The time when he was to retire there definitively was not far off, when in 1830 the young king was attacked by a serious illness which soon caused fear for his life. All the science of the court physicians being useless, it was decided to call to the patient some of the most famous doctors in the kingdom. One of them was John Jeong Yak-Yong, whom we have seen condemned to exile towards the end of 1801. He had, it is true, been recalled in 1818, but the pardon granted was not complete; he had not been reinstated in his dignities, and led the life of a private individual. Now, according to custom, the door of the palace cannot be opened to such persons, and a fortiori, the King cannot receive them in his presence. As the danger pressed, a royal edict immediately restored John Jeong to full honors and dignities, and returned his family to their hereditary titles of nobility. But it was too late for the young prince, and John's skill could not save his life. He died a few days later and, as he had been in charge of the administration of the kingdom, he was given a pompous funeral, as for a king, and not only as the heir presumptive to the crown. The ceremonies were disturbed by an accident which all regarded as a sinister omen. A fire broke out in the apartment where the funeral was taking place, and the coffin was half burned, along with all the ornaments that decorated it.

Since his return from exile, John Jeong had resumed all his religious exercises with more fervor than before. Touched by a sincere repentance for the crime which he had committed in 1801, by denying by mouth the faith of Jesus Christ, he lived separated from the world, almost always locked up in his room, where he received only a small number of friends. He frequently gave himself up to fasting and other exercises of penance, and never left the iron chains of which he had made a very painful belt. His meditations were long and frequent. He left in writing a part of his reflections, as well as various other works, composed to refute the superstitions of the pagans, or to instruct neophytes. Many of his writings, often hidden underground in times of persecution, have been eaten away by worms or by rot; many are kept in his family. After his complete reinstatement, John made no change in his mode of retired life, and his ever-increasing fervor rejoiced and edified all the Christians whom his fall had formerly scandalized. He died in 1835, after Fr. Pacific<sup>12</sup> entered Korea, and received the last rites from his hand.

Let us immediately add, to complete the story of John Jeong, that his son Jeong Yu-san<sup>13</sup>, a man very remarkable for his talents and his knowledge, after having long shown a great estrangement from the Christian Religion, which he accused of all the misfortunes of his family, ended up converting, and received baptism a few years before his death. A sister of John was the daughter-in-law of the minister Chae, of whom we spoke on the occasion of the persecution of 1801. Widowed at the age of sixteen, she spent a sad and solitary life in the completely pagan family of her husband. She finally had the happiness, in her old age, of embracing the faith, and when she died in 1851, the native priest Thomas Choe found a way to sneak in to administer the sacraments.

While John Jeong was resuming his rank in the high nobility of the kingdom, another Christian noble, exiled like him during the great persecution, died at Musan, at the end of the northern province,

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<sup>11</sup> Dallet calls him 'Sioun-tsong' (Sunjong) but his temple name was changed to Sunjo at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>12</sup> Fr. Pacific (Pacificus) Yu 劉方濟 (Liu Fang-ji) was a Chinese priest trained and sent to Korea by the Propaganda in Rome (not the Bishop of Beijing) who entered Korea in 1833, although the mission had by then been entrusted to the Foreign Missions Society. He tried to keep out the French missionaries and as soon as Fr. Maubant reached Seoul in 1836 he was found to have been living in a scandalous manner, financially and morally. Fr. Maubant exercised his authority to oblige him to leave Korea at the end of 1836.

<sup>13</sup> 정유산 Jeong Yu-san 丁酉山

after thirty years of deprivation and hardship and suffering. It was Justin Jo Dong-seom<sup>14</sup>, already well known to our readers. Captured at Yanggeun, at the end of 1800, and taken to the capital, he was condemned to exile, although very probably he had never given the slightest sign of apostasy. He always continued to practice the Religion, and bore with heroic calm the departure of his son, who was taken away from him, to condemn him to torture and death. In 1819, the arrest of Peter Jo Suk<sup>15</sup>, one of his relatives, caused him to be interrogated again. The mandarin asked him if he still practiced his religion; Justin replied, "If I didn't practice it anymore, would I be in this position?" "If you persist in resisting the King's order, we will put you to death and with you the one of your family who has just been taken." "I'm not afraid of any of that," replied Justin, "do what you want." From that moment, the mandarin gave orders not to allow anyone to communicate with him. Many of those who used to frequent him obeyed this injunction of the mandarin, but a large number of pupils whom he instructed in Chinese letters, and who were very attached to him, paid no heed to the instruction. Under the eyes of the guards, they scaled the walls and the hedges to go to his lessons, and they were so numerous and so resolute that the Mandarin thought it wiser to close his eyes to their conduct.

During thirty years of exile, Justin bore with admirable patience and resignation the miseries and trials of his position. He was happy to suffer for Jesus Christ, and the Savior, accepting his sacrifice, granted him the grace of a holy death, on the 14th day of the sixth lunar month of the year *gyeong-in* (August 2, 1830). Justin Jo was then ninety-two years old. In the years that followed, some of his disciples came several times from 1,500 or 1,600 li (150 or 160 leagues) away, into countries unknown to them, seeking to get in touch with the faithful, to complete the religious education which they had received from Justin, and to enter into the bosom of the Church. Unfortunately, the fear of compromising themselves prevented those to whom they addressed themselves from declaring themselves Christians, and these poor people were obliged to return to their homes, without having received baptism. They have not been heard from since, because the Christians have no connection with this remote province. However, we cannot believe that these brave men, who took such extraordinary steps to find salvation, have been completely abandoned. It is God who said: "He who asks obtains, he who seeks finds, to him who knocks it is opened;" and our God is faithful to his promises.

In that same year, 1830, in the north of the province of Gyeongsang, the grace of God worked wonders in the person of a young man named Kim Ho-yeon<sup>16</sup>. Descended from a family in the district of Andong, famous for the rare virtue of one of his ancestors, he was himself of a good, gentle, simple and thoughtful character. From childhood, he spoke little and did not mix much with the games and amusements of his companions. Some thought at first that it was idiocy with him, but they were soon undeceived. Before the age of twenty, Ho-yeon had acquired an exact knowledge of most of the sacred books of the country; he was versed in all kinds of sciences, in morals, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, the magical arts, the most abstruse doctrines of Fô and Lao-tse. The world, however, had no attraction for him, and he valued fame and reputation so little, that he would not trouble himself to compete in public examinations. Still in a corner, modestly seated, immersed in some meditation, he barely spoke to his friends, and did not respond to their jokes. So he was reported throughout the country as a sage, and his reputation for knowledge and virtue spreading far and wide, many people came to see him and ask him for the solution of the most difficult problems.

Bored with this crowd, he left his home in secret and retired to the foot of the mountain Taebaek-san, in the district of Sunheung<sup>17</sup>, to enjoy solitude there, and to continue his work. This is where grace

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<sup>14</sup> 조동섬 Jo Dong-seom 趙東暹 (1738-1830) Justin.

<sup>15</sup> 조숙 Jo Suk 趙淑 (1787-1819) Peter. Martyr.

<sup>16</sup> 김호연 Kim Ho-yeon (1796-1831). Martyr.

<sup>17</sup> 순흥 Sunheung 順興 is a township in North Gyeongsang.

awaited him. No sooner had he arrived than he made the acquaintance of an educated and capable Christian who lived in those same mountains. Their conversations always turning on the sciences, he had soon conceived a high esteem for this Christian, whom the light of truth enabled to treat and resolve questions unknown to the pagans. The more he consulted him, the more his admiration increased. The Christian was gradually led to talk about his religion, and no sooner had he explained its first principles than Ho-yeon, quivering with joy, said to him: "This is what I was looking for. All my life I had presumed that man must have a worthy end, but finding nothing about it in our sacred books, I had been left with doubts; today I encountered the true doctrine."

Without wasting time, he began to study a few books of the Religion, instantly broke with all pagan superstitions, and detesting all the errors of which his soul had hitherto been the victim, thought only of obtaining the knowledge and the grace of God. Engrossed in this preparation, he took no rest. He then spent twenty days in the exercises of penance to purify his soul, and invited the Christian to go for a walk with him. They were chatting together, when, having arrived at the banks of a small stream, Ho-yeon, who had calculated everything in advance, knelt down, asked for baptism, and made such pressing entreaties that the Christian could not resist; he administered to him the sacrament of regeneration. Ho-yeon took the name Paul. All that day, abundant tears flowed from his eyes, and in the excess of his happiness, he said: "To thank God for his incomparable benefits, there is no other way than to suffer martyrdom."

His fervor increased from then on in a prodigious manner. He was only concerned with his exercises of piety and the fulfillment of his duties. Soon he returned to his father's house, instructed his brother, and soon afterwards showed his father books of the Religion. He at first surrendered and recognized the truth of Christianity, but having then studied more attentively the consequences of its dogmas, he entered into a great anger, and pronounced these words which well summarize Korean idolatry, and the principal superstitions which, in this country, are an obstacle to the Gospel: "If we follow this new religion, the temples of the protective genius of the kingdom, the temples of the King's ancestors, the temples of Confucius and of the great men, the tablets of the ancestors and all the sacrifices become useless and must disappear. I understand now how right the King was to forbid it severely, and to punish its followers." Then he reprimanded his son very strongly, ordered him to break with the Christians immediately and to burn all his books, and never ceased to mistreat him to prevent him from practicing his faith. Paul's brother, a violent and brutal man, got angry several times until he hit him with a stick. But our courageous neophyte, strengthened by the grace he had received on the day of his baptism, put up an inflexible resistance.

However, as he was of a naturally very delicate constitution, he feared to succumb to these repeated mistreatments. That is why he left his home secretly, and went into hiding with poor Christians, where he spent some months in absolute destitution, and in the midst of privations difficult to describe. He had chosen a place that he never left. There, seated on his heels, he gave himself up to prayer, to reading, to meditation, thus passing the whole day and part of the night, and, at the crow of the cock, pretended to take some rest. Moreover, he fasted regularly on Fridays and Saturdays; so that the Christians said among themselves that Paul was like a man without a body. During the great heat of summer he made no change in this practice, and he was never seen to leave his room to take the air. Despite this, he was very well, and there was no trace of fatigue on his face, which everyone attributed to a miracle of Providence.

Paul's father seeing that he did not return after several months, suspected that he was somewhere with Christians, and prepared to accuse some of them before the mandarin, in order to find his son. This case could have had serious consequences. They informed Paul, who decided to return home. He entrusted to the Christians a book which he had composed on the Religion, and the various religious objects which he possessed, and bade them farewell, saying: "Let us meet again in the true fatherland. When he presented himself at his father's house, his father received him at first with an affable air, but a few days later he said to him: "While you were not here, many people came from all over looking for you; your reputation in all kinds of science is already spread far and wide; when they come to consult

you again, if you persist in this religion, how will you be able to answer the questions that will be addressed to you? Why stay so stubborn? I know how to cure you of this madness,” and beat him cruelly. The same scene was repeated the following days. Paul bore it all with patience, without ceasing his pious exercises; but after a few weeks he fell seriously ill. His strength was exhausted, and he had become frighteningly thin.

About two months passed in this way, without the anger of this denatured father abating, and without the fervor and resignation of Paul having in any way diminished. He was almost dying when his father came to him with a knife in his hand and said, “Obviously you must die soon; if you die after having apostatized, I will recognize you for my son; but if you refuse to apostatize, I will kill you now with this knife, then, with the same knife, I will kill myself.” Paul replied, “To obey a father, one cannot transgress the orders of the King; with all the more reason, God being the sovereign king of the whole universe and the father of all men, rewarding good and punishing evil, we must obey him in spite of everything. You want to force me to deny it, is that a father’s duty?” He had not finished when his father, exasperated, rushed up and wanted to pierce him with his knife; but Paul’s mother and brothers rushed at him and held him back. Unable to get rid of them and reach his son, he tried to cut his throat. That was also prevented. However, Paul said with great gentleness: “Father, although you go to these excesses, I cannot, to follow your orders, break the commandments of our heavenly father.”

The next day, early in the morning, Paul devoted himself according to his custom to prayer and meditation. During the morning he frequently asked if it was noon, and when that time arrived he devoutly recited the Angelus; then, soon, raising his eyes to heaven, he knelt down and gave up his soul to God, so quietly that those who were near him did not notice his last sigh. It was in the eighth lunar month of the *sin-myo* year (September 1831). Scarcely a year had passed since Paul’s conversion, and he was only thirty-six years old. It is reported that after his death, his parents having wanted to make the usual sacrifices, the altar erected for this purpose collapsed by itself.

The Christians of Korea count Paul among their most glorious martyrs, and God will no doubt have ratified their judgment. Paul’s conduct was admirable, especially for a Korean. Let us not forget that several times already we have seen confessors, after defying the mandarins and overcoming the tortures, succumbing miserably to the onslaught of natural tenderness for parents. This feeling of filial piety, so holy in itself, is all-powerful in this country, to the point of often making even Christians forget that the law of God takes precedence over all other laws, and that his love must take precedence over all another love. Honor therefore to Paul for having, in such circumstances, kept his faith with so much heroism!

In 1832, God wanted once again to chastise the pride of this Korean nation which continued to reject the gospel truths, so eloquently preached by the voice of the martyrs before its tribunals, and by their blood in the public squares. He allowed continual rains and, consequently, extraordinary floods to ravage the country, and to destroy in advance almost all hope of a harvest. Now, it has always been customary in Korea that in the midst of great public calamities, the King spreads his favors widely, by pardoning the guilty and pardoning the condemned, in order to attract by these acts of clemency the benevolent gaze of heaven. The pardon then granted by the King appears to have been most extensive. The numerous Christians exiled during the previous persecutions were almost all released, and returned to take their place in the various Christian communities.

Unfortunately the royal favor was not free. The custom usually observed in such cases is to set the offender free only after he has again detested his crime, and consequently, in the case of Christians, after a new apostasy from their faith. It is only too probable that all the exiles, then recalled, bought their deliverance at this shameful price. Some, however, refused. Thus, Protais Hong, who had escaped death in 1801 by apostasy, and whom we will see walk to death in 1839, did not want to free himself by a second cowardice, and remained in exile. The generous confessors who had been imprisoned and condemned to death at Jeonju in 1827, and who had languished in prison since that time, likewise had

the courage to refuse an abjuration, at the price of which they were promised life and freedom. So we will see them later obtain the most beautiful reward that God can give in this world to those who love him, the crown of martyrdom.

During the summer of that same year, the British flag showed itself on the coasts of Korea. A merchant ship, probably dispatched by some agents of the Bible societies, landed near the island called Wonsan-do, almost at the entrance to the bay formed by the west coast of the province of Chungcheong. The astonishment was general, and the Christians especially were in great turmoil, because this ship bore writing on its flag, in large Chinese characters: Religion of Jesus Christ. Some Christians, thinking of meeting brothers, hastened to go on board, without worrying about the trouble they could attract from the government; but they were much surprised when, on their arrival, a Protestant minister greeted them with these words which are sacramental among pagans: "May the spirit of the earth bless you!" At these words the neophytes, seeing that they had been mistaken, and guessing that a snare had been set for their good faith, withdrew in haste, without even responding to the salutation, and did not reappear.<sup>18</sup>

This ship remained at anchor for more than a month, watched day and night by the Koreans. For want of anything better, the ministers had several boxes of religious books deposited at various points on the shore. It is also claimed that they sent the King some gifts, along with books in Chinese and English. The King, we are assured, refused to receive them, and immediately had them returned to the foreigners, without even allowing them to be opened. This rudeness cooled the zeal of the Bible peddlers who, all things considered, thought it best not to venture inland. They were right, for they would have found there something other than what they were looking for, and they must no doubt have congratulated themselves on their prudence when they learned, a few years later, of the massacre of the Catholic missionaries who, in 1839, gave themselves up to save their flock.

The general amnesty granted to Christian exiles seemed to indicate a certain spirit of tolerance in the government, which reassured the faithful. But each of the pages of this story has already shown us how precarious is the peace that the disciples of Jesus Christ can enjoy in Korea.

When least expected, on the 10th day of the ninth lunar month of this year 1832, the satellites of the capital rushed in the middle of the night on the house of Andrew Hwang, a fervent and devoted Christian, whom his various trips to Peking and other generous labors in favor of his brethren had long since brought into prominence. It does not appear, however, that this affair was prompted by the higher authority; it was either the desire for pillage among the satellites, or some motive of spiteful greed on the part of a subordinate mandarin, which was the sole cause. Andrew, not being at home at the time, could not be arrested; but his uncle Peter Hwang was seized with the other people in the house, and some Christians who lived near there. In all ten prisoners were taken. Of this number, nine, yielding to torture, were soon either released or exiled. Peter alone generously confessed his faith.

Peter Hwang Sa-Yun<sup>19</sup>, descended from a noble provincial family, lived in his native village of Saemgol, district of Suwon. He was a man of grave and austere character, respected by all his relatives and neighbors, and before whom no one would have dared to allow himself light or improper words. At the age of forty, he was instructed in the Religion, converted with all his family, and from then on practiced the Christian law with persevering fervor, despite all obstacles. "Before my conversion," he often said, "I only saw in the desire for martyrdom manifested by some Christians an illusion of

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<sup>18</sup> (Dallet Note 91. Gutzlaff and Lindsay, the preachers referred to here, have published the account of their visit. Among other venturesome assertions, they claim that at the time of their stay near the coast, there was not a trace of Christianity left in Korea.) C. Gutzlaff, *Journal of three Voyages along the Coast of China, in 1831, 1832, 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands*. London, 1834.

<sup>19</sup> 황사윤 Hwang Sa-yun 黃斯允

enthusiasm and the delirium of a heated imagination, but I am clearly undeceived.” He applied himself to subduing his too severe and too imperious character, and to correcting his other faults. Having taken the resolution not to drink any more wine, of which he had formerly used too much, he never again approached a drop of it to his lips. He successively lost his four children, then his wife; but in the midst of these ordeals he showed no exaggerated pain, let no complaint unworthy of a Christian escape his lips. On the contrary, he thanked God for having called them all to him, while they were in good condition to die. After his family had been thus extinguished, and his small fortune dissipated, he was only the more assiduous in prayer; he sought and found in the practice of virtue the only real consolation. The equanimity, the calm and frank resignation with which he bore his misfortunes, were the admiration of all.

He had retired to the capital for some time, staying with his nephew Andrew, when he was arrested unexpectedly in his house, as we have said. The criminal judge, after having heard his confession of faith, touched perhaps with pity for his gray hair, promised him life, provided he uttered a word of apostasy. The confessor loudly refused. “Who are you, then,” continued the judge, “to want to break the King’s prohibitions in this way?” And at the same time he had him questioned, but in vain. Peter stood firm and was sent to prison, where he suffered greatly from the insolence and cruelty of the jailers. He had been taken without any religious object being found in his possession, which made his release easier; but, desiring death more than he feared it, and wishing to extricate as much as possible from embarrassment the Christians arrested with him, he suggested that they designate him as the owner of all the objects which had been seized. We have often seen, in fact, in such circumstances, the best Christians thus take upon themselves the responsibility for the objects of religion belonging to others, either to avoid the compromising denunciations that the possession of these objects provokes on the part of the weak, or to lessen, at their own risk, the burden of their fellow captives. They were certainly ignorant that lying is absolutely forbidden by the law of God, in this case as in all others, and their good faith as well as their charity will have been their excuse.

Peter was therefore made to pass, according to his request, as the owner of the seized objects, which attracted to him longer interrogations, and more multiplied tortures. Subsequently, the judge, suspecting some fraud, said that these objects really did not belong to Peter, but the latter protested strongly and maintained his first assertion. After several interrogations in the court of thieves, Peter, still unshakeable, was transferred to the court of crimes. There again, he energetically refused to redeem his life at the cost of his faith, and had to undergo new tortures. While he was being cruelly tortured, he exclaimed: “What! I will soon die of old age; For thirty years I have been observing the commandments of the Lord Creator of heaven and earth, and you would have me, by an infamous word, lose in an instant the love of my God! Who would not remember the words of the disciple of Saint John in such circumstances: “I have served Christ for ninety years and he has never hurt me, how can I curse him?” The feelings are similar, because the same Spirit of God inspired the two martyrs.

After a glorious confession, Peter had the happiness of hearing himself condemned to death. He joyfully signed his sentence, after which, laden with a heavy cangue, he was sent to a separate prison. On his arrival the pagan prisoners, among them a bachelor named Kim, were all amazed at the look of holy joy which appeared in the countenance and on the face of the Christian. “Everyone has his faults to pay for,” they said, “but why does this old man, far from fearing death, seem so happy to suffer it? Master, why do you seem so happy?” “Because,” answered Peter, “the God I serve is the great King of heaven and earth, the father of all creatures, and rather than deny him, I would rather die ten thousand times for him.” “If that is so,” replied the prisoners, “let us know this doctrine.” Peter did not need to be asked twice and, from that day forward, frequently expounded to them the truths of the Religion and the commandments of God. He spent nearly eight months in this way, always worried that God seemed unwilling to accept his sacrifice, and constantly commending himself to the Blessed Virgin. Suddenly he



fell ill and, in a few days, peacefully gave up his soul to God, at the beginning of the fifth<sup>20</sup> lunar month of the year *gye-sa* (June 1833). He was almost seventy years old, and had suffered the question five times like the greatest criminals, without counting the other tortures.

His family members were told of his death, and when they came to claim the body, the pagan bachelor Kim said to them, “At the time of Peter Hwang’s death, a bright light appeared throughout the prison. All of us, his companions in captivity, came out to see what it was. A fire was burning in his room, we entered it and saw a dove which circled above him and, a few minutes later, he expired.” This is how God is pleased, even here below, to glorify those who die for his glory.

These few isolated cases of persecution had not disturbed the general peace which Christendom had enjoyed since 1827. Also our intrepid couriers Paul Jeong, Augustine Yu and their companions continued to make the journey to Peking almost every year to ask for priests. Always deceived in their hopes, they always came back, and, while waiting for the day of God, they tightened the links between the two Churches of China and Korea, established useful relations, multiplied information, and laid milestones for the future.

The moment was approaching when this admirable perseverance would at last be rewarded with success. The thirty years of widowhood of the Korean Church, predicted by Father Zhou when he was going to execution, had passed. Since 1828, the Holy See had resolved to detach Korea from the diocese of Peking; and finally, in 1831, this kingdom was definitively established as an apostolic vicariate and Bishop Bruguière, of the Foreign Missions society, bishop of Capse, coadjutor of the apostolic vicar of Siam, was called to this post, as glorious as it was difficult. With this new era which, at the word of the Sovereign Pontiff, opens for the Korean mission, begins the second part of our history.

Let us now summarize the facts of this first period.

Fifty years have passed since the day the first Korean neophyte was baptized in Peking, until the happy news of the approaching arrival of the missionaries, spreading among Christians, begins to revive their faith and to uplift their bravery. During this time, the Religion of Jesus Christ was established, maintained, spread in this country, in spite of continual persecution, by the direct action of the Holy Spirit and one can say, without priest, without sacrifice, without sacraments, because the only priest who was sent to the nascent Church remained there only five years, hidden from all eyes, almost inaccessible to the Christians themselves. In this half-century-long miracle, we can distinguish three eras, each with a very different character.

The first extends from 1784 to 1801; this is the time of creation and development. The persecution begins with the propagation of the Gospel, for it had not been a year since Peter Ni had returned from Peking, when the king’s ministers were already demanding the proscription of the new sect; but this persecution, although bloody, was somewhat restrained by the personal moderation of the King and by the presence in power of the party of the Nam-in, to which most of the first proselytes belonged. In principle, it was above all nobles, scholars and scholars who became Christians. Many perhaps saw in the Gospel at first only a school of high philosophy; but no sooner has the water of baptism touched their foreheads than the true Christian spirit manifests itself in them; they spread, they preach everywhere and to everyone, they gather around them the little ones and the ignorant. Finally, the presence of the priest helps to regularize their efforts, to organize this nascent Christianity, to strengthen it for the next trials.

The second epoch is the great persecution of the year 1801. At the death of the King, religious

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<sup>20</sup> Actually in the 11<sup>th</sup> month or even later.

hatred, envenomed by political hatred, broke out with unprecedented fury, and the new Church was, so to speak, drowned in blood. Almost all these nobles, all these doctors, so numerous among the neophytes in the first times, disappear, some by dying gloriously for the faith and leaving imperishable examples of courage and charity, others, who loved the glory of men more than the glory of God, by scandalizing their brethren with cowardly apostasy. The persecution over, the party that is the enemy of the Christians remains in possession of power; Christendom, now composed of the weak, the poor, the little, the ignorant, remains bruised, disorganized, and henceforth without human support.

The third epoch extends from 1801 up to the time we have arrived at. The persecution is still going on, like an often dozing monster that wakes up from time to time in fits of rage. The government leaves the Christians in peace, because it despises their weakness, and there are no longer any personages among them whose influence or wealth can excite its jealousy, but it does not tolerate them, and proscriptive laws are still in effect. This Church, however, is reforming itself, extending itself, and making continual attempts to obtain pastors, which the sad state of Christianity in China and the repercussions of the revolutions in Europe render useless for a long time.

Such is, in a few words, the history of the Gospel in this country during these fifty years; a story that is both sad and consoling, painful and glorious, and from which emerge the most magnificent lessons for the faith of a Christian.

We see it, with on one side God always performing the same wonders. His almighty word, which is spirit and life, completely changes the hearts that receive it. Of these beings so timid, she makes heroes; of these poor idolaters she makes saints; from these slaves downtrodden in a nameless servitude, it makes men who—something unheard of in the Far East—dare to say No to their judges and even to their kings; of these ignoramuses, it makes scholars who know the true God and the true destiny of man, that is to say, all that it is important for man to know. It kills in its germ that innate contempt that everywhere and always, in pagan societies, the rich, the powerful, the lettered, feel for the poor, the disinherited, the wretched; it brings together the extreme classes of society, and teaches everyone that they must love each other as brothers, because they are children of the same Father who is in heaven. It causes chastity to be practiced amidst the mire of paganism; it changes the courts of the persecutors into so many pulpits where the Gospel is publicly preached; it peoples heaven with confessors and martyrs.

On the other hand, we see the devil and his henchmen always employing the same weapons, putting the same passions into play, propagating the same calumnies, using the same tricks, committing the same crimes, having the same thirst for innocent blood. To hear the questions of the mandarins during the interrogations, these threats, these promises, these insinuations, these accusations of revolt, of mysterious crimes; to see this flagrant injustice which leaves free sects and impious doctrines to persecute only the disciples of Jesus Christ, does one not believe oneself in the Roman courtrooms of the first three centuries?

And, indeed, they are always the same adversaries, the God made man and Satan; it is always the same struggle, with similar adventures, ending sooner or later in the same victory. The story of this poor Korean mission, lost at the end of the world, is only one episode in the history of the Catholic Church and, in Korea, as elsewhere, this story proves that the Church, though her enemies still believe her to be in agony, emerges brighter and stronger from all assaults. At the time when Pope Gregory XVI gave a bishop to this desolate Christendom, in what state was it, humanly speaking? Here and there a few confessors whom the government disdained to kill and whom it had left to rot in the prisons; from time to time a few honest and fervent believers who hoped against all hope and fought with all their might against the general relaxation; and around them, discouraged neophytes, the immense majority of whom were lukewarm, timid, failing, and seemed ready to apostatize at the first breath of persecution. That's all the human eye could see. In fact, however, there was the living Church, having many intercessors in heaven and fearless witnesses to the truth on earth. These few prisoners were the seed from which a new

flowering of saints and martyrs was soon to arise; these few faithful were the leaven which would soon bring about the fermentation of the mass; and on this land of Korea, which had drunk streams of Christian blood, the priests of Jesus Christ were soon going, in spite of death, and in spite of Hell, to establish and extend the reign of the living God, of him who is the death of death, and the conqueror of hell. *O mors, ero mors tua, morsus tuus ero, inferne.* (Hosea, 13: 14. O death, I will be thy death, thy destruction I will be, Hell.)