

Martyr of Blood, Martyr of Sweat

The Letters of Saint Andrew Kim Dae-geon and the Venerable Father Thomas Choe
Yang-eop

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Preface 3

The Beginnings of the Catholic Church in Korea 3

The Life of Saint Andrew Kim Dae-geon 5

The letters 8

The recipients of the letters 9

Notes 11

The Letters 12

Letter 1 12

Letter 2 12

Letter 3 14

Letter 4 17

Letter 5 22

Letter 6 24

Letter 7 27

Letter 8 30

Letter 9 31

Letter 10 40

Letter 11 43

Letter 12 46

Letter 13 49

Letter 14 50

Letter 15. 51

Letter 16 51

Letter 17 55

Letter 18 57

Letter 19 58

Letter 20 60

Letter 21, written in Korean. 65

Kim Dae-Geon's Records of Martyrs 67

Overview of the establishment of the Korean Church 67

The Facts of the 1839 Gihae Persecution 72

Report on the Major Korean Martyrs	77
A brief description of the priests' martyrdom	79
A description of the main punishments	79
The Deeds of Outstanding Martyrs of 1839 in Seoul	82
Extracts from Records of Kim Dae-geon's Interrogations	99
Epilogue	111
The Letters of the Venerable Father Thomas Choe Yang-eop	115
Preface	115
The life of Father Thomas Choe Yang-eop	115
Number of letters and their collection	116
When and where the letters were written	117
The recipients of the letters	118
Historical value and significance	119
Letter 1	120
Letter 2	121
Letter 3	122
Letter 4	124
Letter 5	126
Letter 6	128
Letter 7	131
Letter 8	142
Letter 9, (Extract).	154
Letter 10	155
Letter 11	157
Letter 12	160
Letter 13	164
Letter 14	169
Letter 15	172
Letter 16	174
Letter 17	179
Letter 18	181
Letter 19	185
Letter 20	187
Letter 21	188
Thomas Choe's Latin translation of Bishop Ferréol's Acts of the Martyrs	192
Epilogue	234

Preface

The Beginnings of the Catholic Church in Korea

By the time Kim Dae-geon and Choe Yang-eop were born in 1821, the Catholic faith had been spreading in Korea for nearly forty years, without a single western missionary being able to enter the country. The story of the first beginning of the faith in Korea is well-known. From 1779, a group of aristocratic (*yangban*) scholars had begun to meet in a remote hermitage near a Buddhist monastery, Cheonjinam, to study, especially, books written in Classical Chinese by European Jesuit priests living in Peking in the 17th century. These *yangban* were mostly members of families belonging to the factions excluded from official functions and wealth by the factions in power. Their frustration might have helped fire a desire for new ideas and new social forms, and the books they studied opened their eyes to western philosophy, mechanics, geography, as well as religion.

The Korean kings were obliged to send frequent embassies to Peking and the father of one member of the group studying, Yi Seung-hun, was due to be part of the embassy in 1784. The talented young scholar Yi Byeok, who had become a leading member of the group, urged the son to join his father, make contact with the European priests in Peking, and bring back more books, with information about the western religion, especially. Seeing an opportunity to bring the faith to Korea, which no foreigner could enter, the French priests he met in Peking taught him the basics of the Catholic faith and, before he left Peking, baptized him with the name Peter. On his return to Seoul, he gave the books about Catholic faith to Yi Byeok who, after studying them, declared that this was the truth they had been seeking. As a baptized Catholic, Yi Seung-hun was qualified to baptize others and so the first baptized Catholic community was formed.

Remarkably, from the very beginning, baptism was given not only to the aristocrats of the original group, but also to the people serving in their households. Equally remarkably, from the beginning, women were included, although Korean culture normally made it impossible for men from outside the immediate family to catch even a glimpse of the wives and daughters of their friends. One of the fundamental ideas that the leaders had grasped was that God was the Father of all without distinction of class or gender, and that the Christian community had to be egalitarian.

Yi Seung-hun had seen how the priest in Peking celebrated Mass and they saw from the books that the head of the local church, above the priests, was called a "bishop." At the time of Yi Seung-hun's visit, there was no bishop in Peking, the new bishop was still on his way. Therefore, the leaders of the Seoul-based community chose ten men from among themselves to serve as priests, and began to celebrate some kind of eucharist as well as practicing a form of confession in a kind of "informal hierarchy."

Very soon, as the leaders began to talk about the new religious vision they had discovered, they encountered violent opposition from within their families and from other conservative colleagues. The ruling ideology was a strict Neo-Confucianism which tolerated no deviation from the received interpretation of the Chinese Confucian classics. Both Yi Seung-hun and Yi Byeok were overwhelmed by this opposition from their families and withdrew from the community, Yi Byeok dying soon after. Troubled by some passages in the books, the community sent other envoys to Peking with letters containing questions about the matter. The priests in Peking replied confirming that they must not celebrate the sacraments as they were doing. This did not surprise them and they at once obeyed. More significant, by a letter sent a little later in response to requests that a priest be sent to guide them, the Bishop of Peking stressed that Catholics in China (and therefore also in Korea) were not permitted to engage in the "superstitious" rites of "ancestor worship," offering food before "soul tablets"

for deceased ancestors. Similar rites of offerings made to Confucius and the sages were likewise forbidden.

These rites, which particularly concerned the high-class *yangban* families, were at the very center of the Confucian system for a civilized society; they were at the very heart and held the key to social harmony and order. A considerable number of high-class Christians were appalled by the order forbidding the rites, and withdrew from the community rather than obey, while others accepted the ruling. The consequences became clear already late in 1791, when the first case occurred of Catholics being tried and executed for not conducting the traditional rites after the mother of one died. This first case involved Paul Yun of Jinsan in Jeolla province, whose mother had died, and his maternal cousin James Gwon. Fired by the already-existing hostility to the new religion, the authorities were determined to make an example of them. They were duly tried and executed. Their execution was considered to be a sign that being a Christian was in itself a crime and a number of arrests and executions occurred in the following years, in the first official persecution, the so-called *Shinhae* Persecution, even where no direct rejection of the rites had occurred. Many of those arrested saved their lives by apostizing and the community was badly shaken. From 1795 until 1801, there was a Chinese priest in Seoul, Fr. Zhou Wen-mo, who was obliged to remain so hidden that only a limited number of Christians knew that he was there and had access to the sacraments he alone could administer.

The king at this time was Jeongjo, who had tried to bring members of the excluded factions, mainly the “Namin,” into his administration and was clearly not willing to authorize a massive persecution of Christians, some of whom were close to him. However, late in 1800, he fell ill and died. The new king was still a child and the widow of the previous king became Regent. Her family was strongly hostile to the Namin and the Christians and the Regent authorized a general persecution, the *Shin-yu* Persecution, in which many *yangban* believers were executed. It was only after King Sunjo came of age and took control as ruler that the most active persecution came to an end. Around 1815-16 there were other executions, in the *Eul-hae* Persecution, but they were few in number. After 1801, there remained relatively few high-class believers and many lived in poverty away from Seoul, with catechists serving the local communities.

In 1831, the Pope entrusted the Korean mission to the Paris Foreign Missions Society and early in 1836, after many efforts, Fr. Maubant was able to enter Korea. He was followed by Bishop Imbert and Fr. Chastan. Because of the constant threats, many Christians had had no choice but to leave their homes and take refuge in Christian villages hidden in the mountains and remote areas, living in extreme poverty. The three travelled, disguised as mourners wearing large hats to hide their faces, to visit as many of the villages as possible and their presence brought about a considerable increase in the number of believers across the southern regions of the country. Meanwhile, Fr. Maubant had sent three young Koreans to study in China. One having fallen ill and died, Andrew Kim Dae-geon and Thomas Choe Yang-eop remained in Macao with the priests from France.

It is not easy to explain the violence of the *Gihae* Persecution that broke out in 1839, beyond the accumulated hostility of the conservative factions and the realization among the “satellites” (police agents) of the profits they could make by stealing the property of those they arrested. This hostility was certainly fuelled by rumors of the presence of foreign priests and the growing numbers of Catholics. News of the execution of the three French missionaries in September 1839 only reached the outside world several years later, as Kim Dae-geon was preparing to cross into Korea. His father and both parents of Thomas Choe were among those martyred.

In the autumn of 1845, Kim Dae-geon was able to bring Bishop Ferréol and Fr. Daveluy by ship from Shanghai. The following year, he was caught and executed, sparking

the limited *Byeong-o* Persecution of 1846. It was only in 1851 that Fr. Choe succeeded in entering Korea, followed a few months later by Fr. Maistre, and then other French missionaries, some of them quickly falling ill and dying, until in 1866 they were twelve French missionaries. Fr. Choe was able to serve, traveling constantly, for ten years before he fell ill and died in 1861. The final persecution, that of 1866, the *Byeong-in* Persecution, saw the martyrdom of nine French missionaries, while three were able to escape to China. The 1866 persecution, which lasted for several years, was the most murderous of all and there is no telling how many died since records were not kept; many executions were performed arbitrarily on simple delation without formal trial.

The Life of Saint Andrew Kim Dae-geon

Saint Andrew Kim Dae-geon was born on the 24th day of the 7th lunar month (August 21 by the solar calendar) 1821 in Solmoe 솔뫼 in Chungcheong Province, near the west coast of central Korea. He was the first son of Ignatius Kim Je-jun 金濟俊, his mother is only known as Ursula Go 高. His childhood name was Jae-bok 再福, Dae-geon 大建 was his formal adult name. His father's formal adult name was Je-rin 濟麟.

His family had been Catholic believers from very early on. His older great-uncle Kim Jong-hyeon 金淙鉉 became a believer already in 1784, then he converted Kim Dae-geon's great-grand father, Kim Jin-hu 金震厚 in 1788, as well as his grandfather Kim Taek-hyeon 金澤鉉 and his younger great-uncle Kim Han-hyeon 金漢鉉. Kim Han-hyeon was martyred in prison in Daegu in 1816.

In 1827 the family left Solmoe and after a time near Seoul they settled in Yongin, a little to the south of Seoul, in Gyeonggi province, first in Handeok-dong (now Idong-myeon), and then in Golbaemasil (now Naesa-myeon). In mid-January, 1836, the first French missionary to enter Korea, Fr. Maubant, reached Seoul. He immediately began to look for young Koreans who might be prepared for the priesthood, without waiting for Fr. Chastan and Bishop Imbert to join him. On February 6, Thomas Choe Yang-eop arrived at Fr. Maubant's house, one month later on March 14 he was joined by Francis-Xavier Choe Bang-je. Kim Dae-geon had not yet been baptized. In April Father Maubant baptized him near his home in Yongin and on July 11 Kim Dae-geon became the third candidate to enter Fr. Maubant's house, where all three set about studying the Latin they would need if they were to follow the courses in philosophy and theology required to become priests.

It was clear that such studies could not be undertaken in Korea. Thinking that perhaps something would be possible in Manchuria, Fr. Maubant decided to send them there. On December 2, 1836, the three young men (still only in their sixteenth year) took a vow of purity and obedience and on the following day, helped by Paul Jeong Ha-sang and others, they set off for the frontier, arriving on December 28 in the house in Manchuria where Fr. Chastan was still waiting to be able to enter Korea. There it was decided that they would only be able to study correctly in the relative security of the Portuguese territory of Macao, where the French Foreign Missions Society had its far-eastern headquarters. There is no record of their adventures as they crossed the whole length of China on foot. They arrived in Macao on June 7, 1837.

There could be no question of their studying in the Portuguese-run seminary at Macao. Instead, they lodged and studied in the building housing the Far-Eastern headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions Society. The Procurator was Father Pierre Louis Legrégeois, and they were mainly taught by Fathers Joseph-Marie Callery, Napoléon Libois, and Legrégeois. They constituted a temporary "Seminary for Korea." Later, Father Legrégeois

became the Rector and Father Eugène-Jean-Claude Desflèches also taught them for a while. In later years, it was to fathers Legrégeois and Libois that Kim Dae-geon addressed most of his letters. However, misfortune soon struck and on November 27, 1837, Choe Bang-je died of a fever, leaving only two Korean students. A few Chinese young men also seem to have studied there with them.

In 1839 tensions were rising between China and Britain over the British imports of opium from India. It seemed likely that Macao would be the scene of armed conflict and on April 6, 1839, the Korean students left Macao with Fathers Callery and Desflèches for the Philippines. They arrived in Manila on April 19 and from May 3 they resumed studies at the Lollomboy Farm at the invitation of the head of the Dominican Monastery in Manila, to whom it belonged. Once it was clear that Macao would not be affected by the ongoing war, the priests and students returned there in November. They could not, of course, have any idea that on September 21, 1839, Bishop Imbert had been martyred together with fathers Maubant and Chastan. Bishop Ferréol succeeded Imbert as the third head of the Korean Apostolic Vicariate but the news only became known several years later. The father of Kim Dae-geon and the parents of Thomas Choe were also victims of the 1839 Gihae Persecution.

On January 8, 1840, Fr. Maistre arrived in Macao and helped teach the seminarians. It was soon decided that he too should become a missionary in Korea. Toward the end of 1841 the two students had completed the Philosophy course and were ready to begin the Theology course. It is unclear how much of the study of Theology Kim Dae-geon was in fact able to undertake, for on February 15, 1842, he and Fr. Maistre left Macao on board *l'Érigone*, the French frigate captained by Jean-Baptiste Cécille, since Cécille seemed interested in establishing contact with the Korean government and needed an interpreter (or two, since Kim Dae-geon's French was very limited). They hoped to benefit from his visit to enter Korea. Arriving in Manila, Kim Dae-geon wrote his first letter to Father Legrégeois.

From here the journeys become complex, as Cécille keeps changing his plans. After a detour via Taiwan, they reach the mouth of the Yangtze River. In July Choe Yang-eop and Fr. Maximilien Paul Brulley de la Brunière, a missionary in Manchuria, leave Macao in turn aboard another French warship, *La Favorite*. With Cécille, Kim Dae-geon visits Nanjing on the day of the Treaty Signing Ceremony marking the end of the war but then realizes that there is no longer any hope of reaching Korea with Cécille, who has other plans. In September he is reunited with Fr. de la Brunière, Fr. Maistre and Choe Yang-eop in Shanghai. From here he sends another letter (the 'third,' since a second is lost) to Fr. Legrégeois.

At the start of October, they head north from Shanghai, arriving off the coast of Taizhuanghe on the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula on October 23. Here there is the episode of the conflict solved thanks to Kim Dae-geon's self-confidence as they try to avoid a customs post. On October 26 they reach Baijiadian, near Taizhuanghe. Baijiadian was a Catholic village nearby another Catholic village Chagou that later became the base for missionaries waiting to enter Korea. In December Kim Dae-geon sends letters to both Fr. Legrégeois and Fr. Libois (fourth and fifth letters). Resolving to attempt to enter Korea without waiting for any escort, he heads for the frontier gate at Fenghuang Fortress. There he meets by chance Francis Kim, a secret envoy of the Korean Church, who gives him news of the 1839 Persecution, including the death of his father. On December 29 he ventures into Korea, realizes the dangers, and arrives back at Baijiadian on January 6, 1843.

His sixth letter, to Fr. Legrégeois, is written here, as is his seventh, to Father Libois. In April, he moves to Xiaobajiazi and continues studying theology with Choe Yang-eop. Xiaobajiazi is a Catholic village located to the northwest of Changchun, in Jilin Province. Bishop Verrolles, the first head of the Apostolic Vicariate of Manchuria, had purchased a large tract of land there and built a church in 1841. On December 31, 1843, Father Ferréol,

the third Vicar Apostolic of Korea, is consecrated Bishop in Yangguan near Gaizhou, by Bishop Verrolles. Andrew Kim attends the ceremony and then returns to Xiaobajiazi. In February 1844 Kim Dae-geon is instructed by Bishop Ferréol to set off for Hunchun, far to the East, in search of another way of entering Korea from the North. On March 8 he is able to enter Korea via Hunchun and is briefly united with Korean Catholics at the fair in Gyeongwon. He then returns to Xiaobajiazi to continue studying Theology and on May 17 he sends another letter to Father Libois, from Xiaobajiazi (the eighth letter)

In December 1844 he and Choe Yang-eop receive tonsure and ordination as deacons from Bishop Ferréol. He then sends a letter (the ninth) to Bishop Ferréol from Xiaobajiazi.

At the start of January 1845 Kim Dae-geon heads for the border gate at Fenghuang Fortress, contacts a secret envoy from the Korean church and returns to Korea. By January 15, he is in Seoul, staying in Dolumgol. In February he is quite seriously ill for two weeks, then in March he sends another letter to Father Libois from Seoul (his tenth letter). During this time, he is preparing a Latin version of “A Report on the History of the Korean Martyrs” composed with the help of Charles Hyeon Seok-mun and others in Seoul. Early in April, he writes two letters (the eleventh and twelfth) to Fr. Libois. Then on April 30 he sets sail from Jemulpo with eleven Koreans, including Hyeon Seok-mun, headed for China to bring in more missionaries. There is a fierce storm, the ship nearly breaks apart, but on May 28 they arrive in Wusong in China. After arriving in Shanghai, he sends letters to Father Libois and to Bishop Ferréol (the thirteenth and fourteenth letters). On July 23 he sends a letter to Fr. Libois (sixteenth letter) together with the report about the Korean Martyrs. He then sends another letter to Bishop Ferréol (the seventeenth letter)

On August 17, 1845, Kim Dae-geon is ordained as a priest by Bishop Ferréol at the Jinjiaxiang Church on the coast of Shanghai. He celebrates his first Mass at Hengtang Church, located about 11km from Shanghai on August 24. Then, on August 31, he boards the *Raphael* (the Korean ship on which he had come) and leaves for Korea with Bishop Ferréol and Fr. Daveluy. After losing their way during another rough crossing, on September 28 they come ashore on Jeju island. Finally they arrive at Nabawi in Hwangsanpo, near Ganggyeong, South Chungcheong Province, on October 12.

At the start of his pastoral ministry he visits Seoul and Euni Mass station (*Gongso*) near Yongin. On November 20 he sends a letter to Bishop Ferréol from Seoul (the eighteenth letter). Encouraged by his entry, in January 1846 Fr. Maistre and Deacon Choe Yang-eop try to enter Korea from the North, but fail. On April 13 Kim Dae-geon celebrates Mass at Euni Mass station then sets off for Seoul. The next day, he sets off from Mapo with other Catholics in accordance with Bishop Ferréol’s instructions to find a missionary entry route across the West Sea. On May 25 they arrive at Yeonpyeong Island, on May 27 they reach Deungsanjin on Sunui Island. On May 29 Kim Dae-geon makes contact with Chinese fishing boats on Baengnyeong Island, entrusts to them letters and maps for Father Maistre. On Jun1 they returns to Deungsanjin on Sunui island but suspicions have been raised and on June 5 he is arrested.

On June 10 he is sent to Haeju Provincial Office, and on June 21 he is transferred to the Police Court in Seoul, where he undergoes some forty interrogations. On July 30 he writes a last letter to all his teachers from prison (the nineteenth letter) and on August 26 he writes a last letter to Bishop Ferréol from prison (the twentieth letter)

Around this time, he draws a map of the world and writes an introductory geography book. Near the end of Aug. Kim Dae-geon writes a last letter addressed to the Catholics of Korea (the twenty-first letter). Despite being well-treated with considerable respect, after a French warship arrives off the Korean coast, on September 15 he is sentenced to death for treason and on September 16 he is martyred at Saenamteo, his head to be displayed in public. Finally, on October 26 his remains are buried in Mirinae by Vincent Yi Min-sik etc.

On September 24, 1857, Andrew Kim Dae-geon was declared Venerable in Rome. On May 21, 1901 his remains were exhumed from Mirinae and transferred to Yongsan Sacred Heart of Jesus Seminary. Then on October 17 of the same year his relics were moved to the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Seminary.

On July 5, 1925 the Beatification of 79 Korean Martyrs was celebrated at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. On November 15, 1949, the Venerable Father Andrew Kim Dae-geon was designated as Patron of all Korean clergy. The Vatican designated July 5 as Blessed Andrew Kim Dae-geon's feast day. In 1950, at the start of the Korean War, his remains were moved to the Yongsan Clergy Cemetery and buried there for safety. On September 28, 1950, they were moved to Miryang Church in Gyeongsangnam-do. In 1951, after the recovery of Seoul by South Korean forces, his relics were placed in the chapel of the Minor Seminary in Hyehwa-dong, Seoul. On July 5, 1960, they were transferred to the Major Seminary, also in Hyehwa-dong. On May 6, 1984, Andrew Kim Dae-geon was canonized with 102 other Korean Martyrs by Pope John-Paul II in Yeouido Plaza, Seoul. The year 2021 was celebrated as the 200th anniversary of his birth.

The letters

The first part of this volume contains English translations of the letters written by Saint Andrew Kim Dae-geon, including a report on the martyrs of Korea, compiled and translated into Latin in Seoul in March-April 1845. Fr. Kim Dae-geon's 21 letters include all those that exist and two now lost that can be confirmed through mentions in other letters (the second letter, sent to Fr. Libois from Zhoushan around May 1842, and the fifteenth letter sent to Father Claude Gotteland of the Jesuits after Kim Dae-geon's arrival in Shanghai on June 4, 1845). Therefore, the total number of letters translated is nineteen. Kim Dae-geon wrote most of these letters in Latin, but the ninth letter (a letter sent to Bishop Ferréol from Xiaobajazi on December 15, 1844) is said to have originally been written in Chinese (which seems very unlikely), but only survives in a French translation, and the last, 21st letter (i.e. "the last exhortation sent by Father Kim Dae-geon to the Korean Christians") was written in Korean.

Of these, the original of this final letter does not exist, only a copy transcribed by Father P. Robert in 1885 which is now in the Korean Catholic Martyrs Museum in Jeoldusan (Seoul). Charles Dallet includes a French translation of it in his *Histoire* published in 1874. The ninth and twentieth letters (the latter sent to Bishop Ferréol from prison on August 26, 1846) survive only in French translations. The ninth letter is in the archives of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, (Vol. 1261, f. 63-74), and the twentieth letter is attached to a letter by Bishop J. Ferréol dated November 3, 1846. The Latin text seems to have been lost in subsequent persecutions. In this regard, Bishop Ferréol explains how he received the letter from Father Kim Dae-geon in his letter of November 3.

"I sent Fr. Kim to the coast of Hwanghae-do. Every spring there are a lot of Chinese boats gathered there to fish. Father Kim was supposed to visit these places to deliver letters and consider ways to contact the Chinese to bring the missionaries into the country. His mission had ended safely when he was arrested in an unexpected incident. In the letter below, he tells directly of how he was caught and some of the punishment he had to face before bowing his head under the sword. The original text of his letter was in Latin."

After Father Kim's letter, Bishop Ferréol continues with a short biography of Fr. Kim, an account of his martyrdom, followed by a long account of the other martyrs, including Charles Hyeon Seokmun and Joseph Im Gun-jip, etc. This is known as Bishop Ferréol's

“*Byeongo Ilgi*” (Diary of the *Byeongo* Persecution) included in the same letter dated November 3, 1846.

Meanwhile, Kim Dae-geon’s Report on the history of the Korean martyrs was sent to Fr. N. Libois. This text was composed by Fr. Kim Dae-geon in Dolumulgol in Seoul when he returned to Korea after his ordination as a deacon. It is written in Latin and is based on the data collected by Hyeon Seok-mun and others at the request of Bishop Imbert, before his martyrdom. It was attached to the sixteenth letter (a letter sent to Father Libois from Shanghai on July 23, 1845). The original report is divided into several sections with differing titles, ‘Overview of the Founding of the Church in Korea,’ ‘The Truth of the Gihae Persecution of 1839’ and ‘The Deeds of Several Important of Martyrs of 1839.’ It is essentially divided into two main parts. The first part is a report on the history of the Korean martyrs, outlines the founding of the Korean Church and describes the course of the 1839 Gihae Persecution. The second part is a report on 33 individual Korean martyrs with short biographies, including Bishop L. Imbert and Fathers P. Maubant and J. Chastan, Augustine Yi Gwang-heon, etc. Among them, only Lucia Kim is simply named, and since there is a note “v. p.13” by her name in the original letter, it can be thought that in fact it refers to Lucia Kim, “the daughter of Manmul.” In the report on the deeds of the 33 martyrs, a general description of the martyrdom and a description of the punishments, prison, and trial in Korea are attached after Bishop Imbert’s brief biography. This part of the letter includes interesting illustrations by Kim Dae-geon. At the end of the report, we read “This time, I’ll only tell you this far,” suggesting that he intended to write about other martyrs later. However, he himself was martyred in 1846, so he could not write any more.

While two of the 21 letters have been lost, the 16 letters written in Latin and the “Report on the Martyrs of Korea” were kept in the archives of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (Vols. 577 and 1261). In the old archives, these letters and reports were grouped together with other materials, and all of them were transmitted to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea in 1984. This was when Pope John Paul II approved the canonization of the 103 Saints of the Catholic Church in Korea on September 27, 1983, and celebrated the canonization on May 6 of the following year at Yeouido Plaza in Seoul. Later, these letters and reports were transferred to the “Korean Catholic Martyrs Museum” by the Bishops’ Conference and are now kept there.

The recipients of the letters

Seven people received letters from Kim Dae-geon. Among them, his teacher, Father Napoléon Libois (1805-1872) received twelve letters and the report on the martyrs, Father Pierre Louis Legrégeois (1801-1866) received four letters. Next, Bishop Jean Joseph Ferréol (1808-1853) received four letters, Father Siméon François Berneux (1814-1866), Father Joseph Ambroise Maistre (1808-1857) each received one letter, and the Korean Church members received one letter. However, the nineteenth letter (the letter written in prison on July 20, 1846) is addressed to four recipients (Berneux, Maistre, Libois, and Legrégeois). From this, it can be seen that Kim Dae-geon felt special affection for his teachers. In addition, he manifested a special respect for Bishop Ferréol, who was the superior of the Korean Church and gave him priestly ordination.

Fr. Legrégeois was the Procurator at the Far-Eastern headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions in Macao when Kim Dae-geon first arrived there. He came to Macao in early 1828 and served first as Vice-Procurator, then as Procurator for over 11 years from 1830. At that time, it can be said that it was Father Legrégeois who made the decision to

temporarily establish the Korea Theological Seminary in the headquarters in 1837, and who was responsible for the cost of food, clothing, shelter and education of the seminarians afterwards. At first, the rector of the seminary was Fr. M. Callery (1810-1863), but soon Fr. Légrégeois took over and taught the Korean students Latin, etc.. As Macao was under Portuguese jurisdiction, he suffered considerable difficulties from the Portuguese missionaries. Already in 1841, he was planning to relocate the headquarters to British-occupied Hong Kong, using his own money to prepare a site there. Then, at the end of 1841, he left Macao and became Rector of the Society's seminary in Paris in September 1842.

Fr. Libois was appointed to the Far-Eastern mission in 1837 and arrived in Macao. After that, he taught Latin and Doctrine as vice-rector and professor of the Korea Seminary. Then, at the end of 1841, when Father Légrégeois returned to France, he became Procurator. The following year, the two surviving students, Choe Yang-eop and Kim Dae-geon, were able to embark on French ships and explore the entry routes to Korea. He then proceeded with the relocation of the headquarters planned by Father Légrégeois, and in early 1847 he moved it to Hong Kong. Ten years later he helped establish another headquarters in Singapore, and in 1864 he helped establish the Shanghai headquarters. Then he returned to Paris in 1866, and died while serving as representative of the Society in Rome.

Bishop Ferréol was appointed as a missionary to Korea after arriving in Macao in 1840 as a missionary belonging to the Paris Foreign Missions. After he had already left for Manchuria to seek for a way of entering Korea, he was appointed coadjutor to the Apostolic Vicar of Korea. However, he was unaware of this fact, until in early 1843 he received the decree of Pope Gregory XVI and learned that since Bishop Imbert had been killed on September 21, 1839, he had become the 3rd Apostolic Vicar of Korea. Belatedly, he was consecrated bishop at Yangguan of Gaizhou City, on December 31, 1843, by Bishop Emmanuel-Jean-François Verrolles (1805-1878), the head of the Manchurian Apostolic Vicariate. On the August 17, 1845, Kim Dae-geon's ordination was celebrated by him in Shanghai. Then he entered Korea on October 12, 1845, along with Father Kim Dae-geon and Father Daveluy. He died on February 3, 1853, of overwork.

Fr. Maistre Joseph-Ambroise Maistre (1808-1856) was already a priest when he joined the Paris Foreign Missions Society in 1839. He left for Macao as Sub-Procurator early in 1840 and also taught the seminarians. Wishing to serve in Korea, he persuaded Fr. Libois to let him accompany Kim Dae-geon on his first attempt, which failed. Early in 1846, as he approached the Korean border with Manchuria by land, he was arrested by the Chinese and sent back. He finally entered Korea on August 29, 1852. and after Bishop Ferréol died in 1853, he temporarily headed the Korean Church until Bishop Berneux entered Korea in 1856. In 1854 he established the Association of the Holy Childhood to care for orphaned children. He founded the seminary in Baeron in 1855 and died of exhaustion on December 20, 1857, in a small village nearby.

Fr. (Bishop) Berneux, a member of the Paris Foreign Missions, was appointed a missionary to the Far East in 1840 and arrived in Macao with Fr. Maistre on September 21, There he taught philosophy to the Korean students while waiting for his appointment, and worked in Manchuria for 12 years from 1843. Then, on December 27, 1854, he was appointed the auxiliary bishop of the Apostolic Vicar of Manchuria and after Bishop Ferréol died in 1853, he was appointed as the fourth head of the Korean Vicariate after Father Maistre had acted as Pro-Vicar, and entered the country the following year. His name appears in the letter written by Fr. Kim Dae-geon in prison because they met and got to know each other well in Manchuria. After that, Father Berneux worked for the Korean Church for about 10 years, and was arrested during the Byeongin Persecution and was martyred at Saenamto. In 1984, he was canonized.

Fr. Thomas Choe Yang-eop (1821-1861) should also be mentioned among those who received Fr. Kim Dae-geon's letters although he never received a separate letter. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth letter, from prison, he wrote, "My dear brother Thomas, stay well. We will meet again in heaven. And I ask you to take special care of my mother Ursula." Through these words, we can fully sense his affection for Choe Yang-eop, who was not only his colleague but also a relative. Choe Yang-eop received priestly ordination on April 15, 1849, some years after Fr. Kim Dae-geon's martyrdom, returned to Korea on December 3 in the same year, and died of overwork on June 15, 1861.

Notes

The romanization of Kim Dae-geon's name follows the current revised romanization guidelines: Kim Dae-geon, although older documents use the McCune-Reischauer form: Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn. The Korean Catholic Church seems to want to use the spelling Taegon but we prefer the standard romanization.

All Korean names are written in their modern forms in accordance with the revised Korean romanization system, while Chinese names and geographical names are written in accordance with the modern Chinese standard romanization system (but without diacritics).

The baptismal names of Koreans and Chinese are written using the standard English form. An exception has been made for the Europeans, whose names are given in the original languages.

Most letters are headed J.M.J (Jesus Mary Joseph) which has not been retained in the translations.

We are most grateful to François Guillaumont, Honorary Professor of Letters at the University of Tours (France), the translator of the recently published French edition of these letters, for his careful reading of our translation of both sets of texts and his valuable suggestions for improving the accuracy of our translations.

The Letters

Letter 1

Place where written: Manila
Date when written: February 28, 1842
Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Manila. February 28, 1842

To Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend Father,

I should soon be setting out for Korea, so I take this opportunity to write you a short letter. Many days have already passed since you left us. Around February 16th, Father Libois decided that Father Maistre should go to Korea with me. Since this will be a difficult journey, we are hoping in God, that He will keep us safe. We are to travel on a French warship, which brought Dubois de Jancigny¹ to Macao, the envoy to China of the French King Louis Philip².

After leaving Macao, we sailed smoothly to Manila with God's help, from where we expect to depart around the end of February³ with the necessary supplies for the journey. Father, I pray that you will always be in good health. The priests here enjoy good health, as we do.

Since you left us until today, we have not been studying French. I will be silent about other things, since the priests will be writing to you. Now Thomas alone remains.

As I end this letter, I ask you to remember me in your prayers, as I will do for you too.

Farewell, Father,
Andrew, your unworthy son, Kim-hae-Kim⁴

Letter 2

Kim Dae-geon returned from Manila via Taiwan on the *Érigone* and stayed in Zhoushan 舟山 Island from May 15 to June 21, 1842. He wrote a second letter from there to

¹ Adolphe Philibert Dubois de Jancigny (1795-1860) was an explorer sent on a diplomatic mission to China in 1841, arriving in Macao on December 7 on board Captain Cécille's ship l'Érigone. In 1842 he wished to see France join with England in the First Opium War, while Cécille advocated strict neutrality.

² Louis Philippe (1773-1859) was King of France from 1830 to 1848. He then abdicated and went into exile in England.

³ Cécille fell ill and l'Érigone only left Manila on April 20. He set off for Okinawa and Japan in June, having abandoned any thought of visiting Korea.

⁴ There are many Kim clans, the Kim-hae (Gimhae) clan is the clan to which Kim Dae-geon's family belonged. He usually adds it in various spellings before his family name when signing his letters. He sometimes adds the word "Korean" to his signature. The Gimhae-Kim clan claimed to be descended from King Suro, who was the founder of the Gaya confederacy in the first century A.D., centered on the city of Gimhae to the West of modern Busan.

Father Libois, which was later lost. Zhoushan Island, located off the coast of Hangzhou 杭州, Zhejiang 浙江 Province, China, was occupied by the British army at the time.

Letter 3

Place where written: [Shanghai⁵]

Date when written: [September 1842]

Recipient: To Father Libois, Procurator, Foreign Missions, Macao

Most Reverend Father,

While we were still in Zhoushan, I wrote a short letter to you. Now I am going to send another little letter. Finally, we have set sail from Zhoushan and arrived on the Yangtze River with twenty British ships. Waiting for the day when we are to depart, we have been staying here until today. As the Captain⁶ promised, we were expecting to go to Korea on *l'Érigone*. However, the situation is much changed and now there is little hope of our going to Korea because Captain Cécille has sailed for Manila, and we are now staying at a certain pagan's house⁷ on the banks of the Yangtze River with all our luggage.

In fact, we were going to depart on *l'Érigone* soon. Captain Cécille was still saying that he hoped to go to Korea. But then he said he would change course and go to Manila if contrary winds blew during the planned voyage to Korea. With such ambiguous promises, Father Maistre decided we should not stay on *l'Érigone*. In such a situation, the work was forced to proceed according to the Divine Providence and the arrangements made by the Bishop of Shandong⁸.

Thus, we were only awaiting the return of John Fan⁹, whom Father Brunière¹⁰ had sent to the Bishop in Shanghai¹¹. However, because John Fan did not return, Father Brunière and Thomas went to the pagan's home where we were staying. We were still waiting to leave on *l'Érigone*. But just as we were about to set sail, John Fan returned from Shanghai with a small Christian boat, so Father Maistre immediately changed his plans and went with me to

⁵ This third letter does not indicate where it was written, but from the content, it is clear that it was sent from Shanghai. In addition, the date of receipt noted on the letter is "September 27, 1842", and from the contents of the following fourth letter, it can be seen that it must have been written between September 11 and September 16, 1842. The original of this letter, like the others, was preserved at the Foreign Missions Society's Headquarters in Paris.

⁶ Jean-Baptiste Cécille (1787-1873): a French naval officer, dispatched to China in 1841 during the Opium War, he engaged in military activities in Vietnam and elsewhere. After he returned to France, he entered politics and served as French ambassador to London.

⁷ A little later he specifies that the pagan's name was Huang Shi-xing 黃世興, about whom nothing is to be known.

⁸ Lodovico Maria (dei Conti) Besi (1805-1871): On 1 October 1838, Monsignor Peres, last Bishop of Nanjing, conferred the powers of vicar-general on Father Besi, appointed in 1841 Apostolic Vicar of Shandong and administrator of the diocese of Nanjing. He resigned and left China in 1847-1848.

⁹ John Fan was a Catholic from Sichuan whom Fr. Imbert hoped to send as a missionary to the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa) but when this was not possible he accompanied Bishop Ferréol, and under the bishop's instructions, took on the role of traveling between the Manchurian Apostolic Vicariate and the border with Korea.

¹⁰ Maximilien Paul Brulley de La Brunière, M.E.P. (1816-1846) arrived in China in July 1842, and upon hearing that the French frigate *la Favorite* would visit the coast of Liaodong, he boarded her with Choe Yang-eop, hoping to go to Manchuria, his mission, but plans changed and the journey was aborted. He was appointed Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of Manchuria on May 29 1846 but was killed on July 31 1846 by the locals while on a mission, after he finally arrived on the Liaodong Peninsula.

¹¹ Bishop Besi, who was in Shanghai because he was also the administrator of the Nanjing Diocese. Originally, the Nanjing area was established as Nanjing Apostolic Vicariate in 1660, then became Nanjing Diocese in 1690, but was later integrated into the Jiangnan Apostolic Vicariate in 1856.

the home of the pagan mentioned above, whose name is Huang Shi-xing 黃世興. Captain Cécille departed for Manila.

On September 11th, Fr. Brunière and Thomas, accompanied by John Fan and the Christians, boarded a British warship, where they changed their clothes and disguised themselves to visit the Bishop in Shanghai.

Now we, having lost all human help, are waiting for an opportunity to start looking for a different way into Korea while staying at the house of the pagan Huang Shi-xing.

As you may know, British troops attacked Nanjing¹² after capturing several cities on the right side of the river as well as Shanghai. On the way, a city that was defended with a fortress and natural topography was also occupied¹³, which is called Zhenjiang 鎮江. On the left side of the city, going up the river near the imperial canal, lies the island of Jinshan 金山.²³

When British troops arrived in Nanjing, they wanted to land troops on a mountain north of the city and capture the city. Chinese officials trembled at the sight and sent messengers to the British to ask for peace.

So, the British troops accepted their proposal to deal with the situation in a peaceful manner, and signed the Peace Treaty on August 29¹⁴. The following are the names of the mandarins with whom the British negotiated peace.

The Emperor's uncle, Qiying,

Yilibu, Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Emperor of China. The Tartar General Ti Niu Jian, Vice-ruler of Jiangnan

After that, the emperor issued an edict stating that he would accept the peace and its conditions. The provisions of the treaty¹⁵ are as follows.

1. 21 million dollars.
2. Trade from six Chinese ports.
3. A legation in Peking.

Captain Cécille wanted to reach Nanjing, so he prepared a small Chinese ship, to which he gave the name 不中用 Pu-tsongiong because the ship was old and had a strong, unpleasant smell. In fact, seeing the water seeping in in several spots, he sent Dupré²⁶ and me to Shanghai to find a better boat. We landed near Shanghai and got a fairly large ship with the help of a Chinese mandarin. However, because the soldiers rowed their boats differently, they ran aground several times. On the next day, more soldiers were sent for who pulled the ship free. Once we brought this ship, Captain Cécille and Dupré¹⁶, his aide-de-camp, the envoy of (Louis) Philip (King of France), a geographer and me, and about 20 sailors, sailed

¹² British troops captured the Wusong 吳淞 battery at the entrance of the Yangtze River on June 16, 1842, and advanced to Nanjing a few days later.

¹³ British troops captured Zhenjiang on July 21, 1842.

¹⁴ On August 29, 1842, British representative Sir Henry Pottinger and Qing representatives Qiying, Yilibu, and Niu Jian signed the Treaty of Nanjing, which put an end to the First Opium War.

¹⁵ The main contents of the Nanjing Treaty are the permanent cession to England of Hong Kong, the opening of the five ports Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Xiamen, and Guangzhou, \$12 million in compensation for military expenses, \$6 million in compensation for confiscated opium, \$3 million for the debts of British merchants, and abolishing monopolies held by merchants such as for public transport. Kim Dae-geon mistakenly wrote "six ports".

¹⁶ Marie-Jules Dupré (1813–1881): Cécille's aide-de-camp at the time, later admiral and Governor of Cochinchina.

for some 16 days and arrived in Nanjing the same day the peace treaty was signed. He attended the signing ceremony and met all four mandarins.

The next day, we toured the Nanjing Pagoda and the suburbs, but entering the city center was forbidden to all the British, apart for one.

As I wrote before, it seems that the British army lost 150 soldiers in the occupation of Zhenjiangfu. The entire city was destroyed and full of a foul smell. The city's Great Mandarin is said to have seen the British victorious, returned home to gather his wife and children, set the house on fire, and all perished together.

Father Maistre will also write, so I won't write much. I ask you to remember me in your prayers, and I wish you all the very best.

To your Reverence, from your worthless son,
Andrew Kim-hae Kim.

PS:

It seems from Father Maistre that the Superior in Paris¹⁷ has forbidden us to study French. When it comes to studying French, Father Maistre told me to ask the reverend Procurator (in Macao) what to do, whether I should continue or give up entirely. As you wrote, there seems to be no need for me even to ask whether to give up or continue to study French. This is because the current situation does not allow me to continue studying, in any case, and there is no reason to completely give up what I already know.

¹⁷ Father Maistre later thanked Father Légrégeois and Father Libois for teaching Kim Dae-geon French, indicating that he did not agree with the ban.

Letter 4

Place where written: (Baijiadian) Liaodong¹⁸.

Date when written: December 9, 1842

Recipient: Father Legrégeois, Procurator

Most Reverend Father,

While we were still in Manila, I wrote to you, but I am writing again now to report on the journeys we have made since then.

Eventually we left Manila and enjoyed favorable winds as far as Formosa Island (Taiwan), but from there we encountered storms and headwinds.

As you know, this island is 60 leagues¹⁹ long, has lush vegetation and forests, and the land not only has very good landscapes, it looks very fertile. On the one hand, there are also very high mountains, the summits of which are covered with white snow. The inhabitants of this island seem to speak a distinct idiom. Some of them came to sell us fish. I listened to them, but couldn't understand a word.

We left this island again, and after a few days, we anchored in Zhoushan Island. Zhoushan is surrounded by many small mountainous, dry islands.

I went to downtown Zhoushan several times to visit the city and meet the Lazarist²⁰ priests who had recently arrived, but I could see nothing strange except for the natives whom the Chinese called "black demons" and despised them, scaring them with canes in their hand like kings.

We stayed in Zhoushan for about two months. Then, the English set out for the Nankin expedition, so we followed them and reached the Yangtze River in four days. In the middle of this river, there is a fairly large island called Chongming, which is densely covered with trees, woodland, vegetation with many inhabitants, and a city with the same name as the island.

This is a generally green, pleasant and fertile plain with small streams flowing in all directions. There are two cities on the right side of the river, one called Baoshan and the other Wusong-kou. Actually, this latter name also refers to the Yangtze River as far as the sea. However, these two cities were emptied after all their residents had fled before the British attack and had been destroyed in the war. In the direction of Wusong-kou, two rivers (or rather canals) flow into the Yangtze River, the smaller one is called the Wenzaobang 蕹藻浜 and the larger one is called the Huangpu 黄浦 which passes through downtown Shanghai. Shanghai is a city four leagues from the coast and one of the ports opened to the British.

¹⁸ Liaodong: The Latin letter only says "Liaodong", but to be precise, it means Baijadian 白家店 in Liaodong 遼東. Baijadian is now known as Ronghua shanzhen 龙华 深圳 in Zhuanghe 莊河 City. It was a Catholic village in the neighborhood of Chagou 岔溝, which later became the base for missionaries waiting to enter Korea.

¹⁹ In the Latin text, the measure of distance is written as 'leuca' (league). The league is the unit of distance used by the French. 1 league is about 3.25 km, so 60 leagues is 195 km. 1 league corresponds to the Korean measure of 10 li.

²⁰ The Lazarists are more properly called the "Congregatio Missionis" (the Congregation of the Mission), and in China they were called Qianshihui 遣使會. It was founded in France by Vincent de Paul in 1625. At the time of its creation, its members were called "Lazarists" because its headquarters were on the streets of Saint Lazare in Paris. They entered China in 1699, and when the Jesuits were dissolved in 1773, they took over the missionary activities of the French Jesuits from 1783. In 1790, Father Nicolas-Joseph Raux baptized Paul Yun Yu-il, an envoy of the Korean Church in Beijing.

About 15 days after the British troops advanced to capture Nanjing in late July, they reached Zhenjiang 镇江, a second-class city in China, immediately captured it and deployed troops to the fortress. It is said that more than a hundred British soldiers and 3,000 Tartar (actually Manchurian Eight Banners) soldiers were killed in this battle. The Tartar General was commander in the city during the war, and when he realized that he had no chance of victory, returned and set fire to his home, perishing with his wife and children.

In the meantime, we were having a very boring time in Wusong-kou, waiting for the day of our departure. Finally, Captain Cécille decided that he wanted to see Nanjing, so he rented a Chinese boat, because the *Érigone* was too large to sail up the river. We prepared everything needed and set off with three officers and sailors. I followed as an interpreter, while Father Maistre stayed on the *Érigone*.

About six days after our departure, we arrived at Zhenjiang and walked around for a day to see the city, which had been destroyed in the war then looted by robbers, so that the city was full of ruins emitting foul odors. The city was divided into two districts, one for the Tartar people and one for the Chinese. It is built on the right side of the Yangtze River, and from the opposite side, the Imperial Canal, which the Chinese call “Unliang-ho” flows, and it is said that there are nine main water gates to control the flow of water.

Between Zhenjiang and the Imperial Canal, there is an island that is very famous among the Chinese people, who call it Jinshan 金山, or the Island of Gold. The island, covered with trees and plants, contains the tombs of two emperors, an imperial temple, (it is said that before the war 3,000 monks lived here) and the Imperial Library famous from the ancient times.

From there, we raised anchor again and left to go to Nanjing 南京. The city was intact. The British and Chinese were negotiating a peace treaty. It seems that the Chinese people had been terrified by the news that the British were advancing and sued for peace. The Emperor commissioned four mandarins to negotiate and they signed the treaty after finishing the talks on August 29th. However, there are many Chinese who reckon that this treaty will not last long.

As you may know, Nanjing City has a pagoda that is very famous in China, and the officers went to see it, so I followed them to see the pagoda and the entire city. It is reported that Nanjing has a population of a million. It is very flat and divided by two canals; the city is large and spacious, but not beautiful. There are mountains to the north of the city, where British troops have been camping. In the midst of the temple called Baoensi 報恩寺, there is a pagoda with a height of 200 feet, made of various colored stones, on which statues of various gods are carved.

The exterior of the pagoda is covered with tiles of various colors. Its shape is octagonal, with a hundred and fifty small bells and two gold beads, and 12 prominent lanterns. Thanks to these, the Chinese believe superstitiously that the 33 heavens are illuminated above and the hearts of people below, distinguishing between people's good and bad deeds. At the top of the pagoda, there are two earthenware jars weighing 900 pounds and a plate weighing 450 pounds, called Tianpan, heavenly dish. It is believed that the pagoda illuminates the world with its brilliance. At the base of the tower, there are several layers of round circles, which are said to have a weight of 3,600 pounds.

In addition, the pagoda was decorated with five jewels, called Yemingzhu (illuminating the night), Beishuizhu (keeping off rain), Beihuoizhu (preventing fire), Beifengzhu (keeping away storms and winds), and Beichenzhu (protecting the pagoda from wind and dust). In addition, three books considered sacred by the Chinese are kept there: the

Cangjing (藏經 mystic book), the *Amitufojing* (阿彌陀佛經 prayer book) and the *Jeinfojing* (濟人佛經 book of invitations to worship the Buddha).

The foundations of this temple and pagoda were laid about 2,000 years ago. At first, the name of the pagoda was Ayuwangta, but it is said that an emperor named Chiwu repaired the temple that had fallen into ruin in the third year of his reign and named it Jianchusi 建初寺, that is, the first temple. However, it is also said that the temple, having been destroyed by a man named Soun kao with iron, was rebuilt by Emperor Kien-un of the Qin Dynasty²¹ who called it Xuanzang Temple 玄奘寺.

However, it is said that the Emperor Yongle of the 21st dynasty (Ming), rebuilt it in its former condition after it burned to ashes during the 20th Yuan dynasty. In China, there have been 22 dynasties, including the Qing, which is now in power.

It took 19 years to rebuild the temple, and according to their calculations, it cost almost 4 million Macao patacas to rebuild the pagoda alone. Later, during the time of Emperor Jiaqing, a third of the tower was destroyed by lightning, but it is said to have been repaired recently.

On the way back to Wusong after sightseeing, we met la Favorite, the French warship we were waiting for. From that ship, I felt joy and pain at once when I heard the news that Father Brunière, his two companions, Thomas (Choe Yang-eop) and John Fan, had arrived. It was good to be all of us together, but it was also sad because our situation was in a more difficult state.

In addition, when I arrived on the *Érigone*, the priests were still waiting impatiently for the return of John Fan, whom they had sent to Shanghai, asking the Christians in Shanghai (as mentioned above) to take care of Father Brunière and the luggage destined for Bishop Verrolles²².

In the meantime, Captain Cécille clearly said that he would soon be leaving, but even after waiting for John Fan all day, there was no sign of him and he seemed not likely to return soon. So, the priests agreed that Father Brunière and Thomas would have to disembark with the luggage and wait for the return of John Fan. But in fact, it was easy to say, but much more difficult to implement.

However, thanks to God's compassionate assistance, a pagan living near the shore named Huang Shi-xing, whom we had known well for a long time, came to see us the evening before the departure of the *Érigone*. Thus, since he agreed, Father Brunière and Thomas decided to go to his house with the luggage.

Father Maistre and I still hoped to enter Korea, our mission field, on the *Érigone* as planned, but Captain Cécille hesitated to sail to Korea because there were many sick crew members on the ship and his scheduled travel period was short. When Father Maistre asked whether he would sail for Korea or not, he replied conditionally that if he encountered a headwind anywhere during the voyage to Korea, he would immediately turn toward Manila. In such a situation, Father Maistre did not know what to do, fearing that he might be taken back to Manila.

Finally, when he was about to set sail, John Fan arrived and reported how the respected Bishop Besi, Bishop of the Province of Shandong and administrator of Jiangnan, who was staying near Shanghai at the time, had taken care of the luggage. Upon hearing the

²¹ Presumed to be the Taikangdi 太康帝 of the Western Jin 西晉 Dynasty.

²² Emmanuel-Jean-François Verrolles (1805-1878): a missionary of the Foreign Missions Society. In 1838, he was appointed as the first head of the Apostolic Vicariate of Liaodong (renamed Apostolic Vicariate of Manchuria in 1840). He died in 1878 while still working in Manchuria.

report, the priest decided to play safe and went with me to Huang Shi-xing's house. At that time, Father Brunière took John and Thomas and boarded an English warship anchored nearby, after disguising his clothing, and hurried to visit Bishop Besi.

We stayed at the pagan's house for five days, then boarded the same warship and asked if we could stay on board, and they were very welcoming to us. After one day, we went to the Bishop and, with the bishop's help, we took about fifteen days in a Christian believer's boat to reach the port of Taizhuanghe (now Zhuanghe City 庄河 in Liaoning 辽宁 Province), where we were heading for. During this voyage, there was little adversity except that two or three times a headwind forced us to return to where we had started out.

After John Fan was sent to the Christians to arrange matters, he stayed there and sent to us a certain catechist, called Joseph Du. The priests decided to leave the warship at night, but the circumstances did not allow it. So, during the day, they landed with the catechist's guidance, while the luggage was sent to another ship.

Some pagans saw the priests and affirmed that they were Europeans. When we got close to the customs post, the guide wanted us to go down to the riverside and sneak past the checkpoint in order to avoid a number of annoying questions. It was very muddy shortly after the tide had ebbed, and it was clearly visible from the customs post. Meanwhile, Joseph Du took Thomas with him and went straight to the customs post to take care of everything. We were five: Father Maistre, Father Brunière, two sailors and me, five in all. The pagans saw us struggling on the muddy riverside off the road, and began shouting that the priests were British on the one hand, while about twenty young toughs (from the customs post) came running toward us, yelling on the other. They were in fact guides for visitors, while we were scared thinking they were satellites. Some of them were in fact satellites. I whispered to the sailors, to go closer to the priests, who had got separated from us because of the difficult terrain, they grew pale and could not raise their heads.

The men came up, caught hold of us, and began to ask many questions. The priests did not say anything and kept walking straight ahead. I was very worried about the books we had hidden in our sleeves. As they were still holding and questioning us, I rebuked them in an angry voice, "You are appointed by the government for the sake of law and order, yet you are insulting innocent people," at which they let go and left us alone.

Meanwhile, Joseph and Thomas were troubled, presuming that we were being arrested and would be taken to court. Then we got into a cart and reached Joseph's house in Baijiadian, but all the other Christians besides the Tou family were reluctant to welcome the priests. It was not surprising that they did not welcome us, since they did not even want Bishop Verrolles to stay with them. Therefore, Father Brunière, John and Thomas went to a Christian village (Yangguan) near Gaizhou 盖州 while Father Maistre and I went to a widow's small house and are staying here waiting for the day and opportunity to depart for Korea.

I have not received any certain news about Korea. The contact agent who returned after being sent to the Pien-moun²³ by Bishop Verrolles could report nothing but what he had found out by interrogating pagan merchants. When the contact agent asked the Korean merchants, they told him: "Two foreigners were arrested and executed together with 300 Koreans, and the King's interpreter Augustine Yu (Yu Jin-gil 劉進吉) was beheaded as the leader of this unfortunate incident, and his body was torn into six to become food for birds. His whole family was exterminated."

²³ Originally, this refers to the frontier gate at Uiju. but the gate to which Bishop Verrolles's contact agent was sent seems to refer to the Chinese side, not Uiju.

When the contact agent asked why the foreigners and Koreans were slaughtered, the pagans said the foreigners were fluent in speaking and writing three languages, namely, Korean, Chinese, and European language, and were killed because they corrupted Koreans with bad religion while the Koreans died because they accepted an evil religion and followed those Westerners. The contact agent asked a third question but they would not answer.

In addition, the contact agent reported that the priests were arrested because they were reported by a false Christian²⁴. The false Christian pretended to accept the Christian religion and was baptized by the priest, in order to recognize the faces of the priests.

Amidst all this uncertainty, Father Maistre and I are preparing to depart for Korea on December 20th.

Contact agents and many others affirm that this plan is reckless and extremely dangerous, and they are opposed to our plan, concluding that contact with Korea is impossible unless God performs a great miracle. However, as we are planning this not for our convenience, but only for the glory of God, if there is a possibility to enter, what dangers would we shun? Moreover, Father Maistre's departure has not yet been confirmed. He is hesitant to accompany me so that no greater difficulties are added for me. As you know, it is not without risk, and the circumstances and my incompetence and weakness confirm this danger. However, we hope that God's mercy and the Blessed Virgin Mary will help me survive the dangers.

Everything I need for the journey is already ready, clothes and shoes are tied together as tightly as possible. When we enter, we intend to disguise ourselves as beggars so that the agents of Satan will pay less attention and we can infiltrate more easily.

Everyone is well here, and even though I am weak, I enjoy good health.

At the end of this letter, I ask you to always remember this little son who relies on you before God and the Blessed Virgin. If God allows, I will write a letter to tell you about everything that happened to me after entering Korea.

Most Reverend and kindest Father, goodbye for now.

Father, greetings from this unworthy son, Andrew Kim the Korean.

PS:

I open this letter again to add some more news.

I study theology with Father Maistre every day, and Thomas is with Bishop Ferréol in Manchuria. I have completely given up visiting the French language these days. This is because Father Maistre received a letter from Europe ordering me to give it up entirely. Talking French definitely doesn't benefit me. I know how to do a little because I have been on the *Érigone* for a long time. However, as you know, reading French cannot be considered useless for me. Therefore, it would be advisable not to completely abandon the hard-learned French reading. If I had a dictionary, I would have been able to understand French books by now. When I left Macao, Father Libois gave me French books, some of which I abandoned at the order of Father Maistre.

²⁴ Kim Yeo-sang, who during the Gihae persecution informed on the main believers of the church. He gained office for this, but was later exiled to Sinjido, South Jeolla in 1840. He was released in 1853, but in 1862 he was involved in a conspiracy and was beheaded on the 26th day of the 7th month.

Letter 5

Place where written: [Baijiadian]

Date when written: [December 21, 1842]

Recipient: the Most Reverend Father Libois, Procurator, Foreign Missions.

Most Reverend Father,

We were hoping to get into our mission field aboard l'Érigone as planned. I think you are already informed how, after a series of strange happenings, we were led to the Most Illustrious Florentine Bishop Besi, who is the Vicar Apostolic of Shandong and the Administrator of Jiangnan.

We were very warmly welcomed by the Bishop, and he provided us with a ship belonging to a Christian believer, and it took about fifteen days to reach the port of Taichouang (Taizhuanghe), our intended destination. This voyage went smoothly and we did not suffer any adversity, although the north wind slowed our progress. All but four on the ship were Christians, so they treated us well, and the priests offered the sacrifice of the Mass to God every day.

John Fan was sent to the Liaodong Christians to arrange matters, and he stayed there and instead sent a catechist called Joseph

Du on his behalf. We tried to help the fathers to disembark in the middle of the night as the reverend fathers and we had planned, but the circumstances at that time did not allow that.

So it was only after the day was fully dawned that we transferred our luggage to a small boat belonging to some pagans, and left the ship with the guidance of Joseph Du. Two sailors boarded our ship to help carry our luggage, and laughed when they saw the priests, realizing that they were Europeans.

As we approached the customs office, Joseph the catechist whispered to me to take the priests down to the riverside that was newly uncovered by the tide and very muddy. It was a place directly facing the customs office. He was afraid for the priests. Then he went straight to the customs post with Thomas.

We five, that is, Father Maistre, Father Brunière, two sailors and myself, all climbed down into the mud and walked fast, avoiding the road. Some pagans saw the priests and said they were British. As we were walking along, about thirty people from the customs ran toward us yelling (we thought they were satellites but some of them were guest guides) and started asking many questions. The priests walked on without replying, and after long harassing us with questions, they returned to their place.

We hurried to a Christian village called Baijiadian and entered Joseph Du's house. This village is about six leagues from the sea and is surrounded by mountains, and there are about 200 Christians living there. Apart from the family of Joseph Du, the Christians here were unwilling to welcome the priests, and even plotted to expel them. There is nothing strange about this because they didn't want the Most Illustrious Bishop Verrolles to stay at their house. I have heard that there are many things that are unpleasant to the bishops and priests because the Christians' heart is not stable yet. If I had enough paper, I would like to inform you fully of all such circumstances.

Now the reverend Father Brunière and Thomas are living in a Christian village called Yangguan near Gaizhou, and Father Maistre is staying with me in a small house belonging to a widow.

There is nothing that I can surely tell you regarding news from Korea, but the contact agent dispatched by the Most Illustrious Bishop Verrolles to the Pien-moun heard some news from pagans and in turn transmitted the report to the bishop. He heard that two foreigners who were fluent in Korean, Chinese and European languages were beheaded along with 300 Koreans for their religion. And it was also said that Augustine Yu was killed as the leader responsible for such a heinous crime, his body was cut into six pieces to become food for the birds, and all his family were exterminated. He also heard that the priests were betrayed by a false Christian, that they had baptized after he embraced Christianity with the intention of seeing the priest's face.

In such a situation, we have set the date for our departure for Korea on December 22, according to the plans of Most Illustrious Bishop Verrolles and Father Maistre. Father Maistre planned to enter Korea with me, but as you well know, it is not without risk, so Bishop Verrolles forbade him to accompany me because he feared that the difficulties would increase for me.

If we could speak face-to-face, there is still a lot I want to tell you, but it is difficult to write down all of these circumstances in a letter.

Therefore, I will stop here, asking you, whom I honor and love, to always remember your little son in your prayers.

Most Reverend Father, goodbye.

Your son, Andrew Kim-hae-Kim, bowing down, greets you

PS.

This letter has been opened to add more news.

Letter 6

Place where written: Liaoning [Baijiadian]

Date when written: January 15, 1843

Recipient: Father Legrégeois, Procurator, Foreign Missions

Most Reverend Father,

I left on December 23 as planned, and four days later arrived at the Pien-moun without any obstacles. While passing a place not far from there, I met a group of envoys from the Kingdom of Korea with a very large crowd on the road, who were on their way to Beijing.

With God's help, a Korean messenger named Francis Kim approached me, but I did not know him and he did not recognize me either. Eventually I asked him if he was a Christian, and he replied that he was, and his baptismal name was Francis. So, I told the Chinese guides who had come so far with me to keep at a distance, and I followed Francis, asking for news of the priests in Korea. According to his reply, the priests were killed for religious reasons, and over 200 Christians were also executed, most of whom were leaders.

My brother Thomas (Choe Yang-eop)'s parents were also killed. His father²⁵ was flogged to death, his mother²⁶ was killed by the sword and so they received the crown of martyrdom.

My parents also suffered a lot, my father⁵¹ was beheaded, and my mother went wandering among the Christians in poverty with no one to rely on. There are many other things Francis told me, but it would take too long to write them all here.

The Most Venerable Bishop (Imbert) had already been sought by traitors and satellites agents for a long time and had been hiding in a place called Suwon. When Judas arrived there with the agents of hell, the Bishop knew that he could not easily escape, so he freely surrendered to the satellites and was taken to court.

The bishop heard that the very name of Christian would be wiped out if the two priests did not surrender, so he sent a letter calling the two priests to Seoul to receive the crown of martyrdom together²⁷.

Oh! These people were truly glorious. After fighting valiantly under the banner of Christ and winning the victory, they have surely put on imperial red robes and entered the heavenly sanctuary as triumphant warriors with crowns on their heads.⁵³

But how unfortunate is Korea! After being left alone, deprived of shepherds for so many years, it has now lost at a single blow the priests who finally managed to come in, wretched Korea! It would have been good if at least one had been left behind, Korea is so unfortunate that all of them have been swallowed up. Since the persecution has stopped these days, Christians are enjoying a little stability, but there are no priests, so they are wandering about, sighing like sheep without a shepherd.

²⁵ Choe Gyeong-Hwan (崔京煥 1805-1839): Saint. Head of a Catholic village in Surisan, Gwacheon. Martyred on September 12, 1839.

²⁶ Yi Seong-rye (李聖禮 1801-1840). She was martyred at Dangggogae on January 31, 1840.

²⁷ Fathers Maubant and Chastan surrendered in Hongju on September 6. They were martyred at Saenamteo (Seoul) on September 21.

It is said that Kim Yeo-sang, who became a great traitor after accepting the faith in recent years, has been executed²⁸. There seems to be no other reason for his execution other than that he publicly harmed others as a vicious human being.

One other person, because he had denounced his own wife's father, was strangled according to law. Even the Minister of Justice, who arrested priests and numerous Christians, is said to have been deprived of office and executed after exile for committing unrighteous actions to others²⁹.

I couldn't ask for any other news because the circumstances did not allow it. When I asked if he could go back to the Pien-moun to bring in Father Maistre, he replied that it was impossible without raising the suspicion of the pagans and running the danger of persecution.

He says he has pagan friends, and with their help, he is on the list of envoys and is on the way to China, going to Beijing.

He advised me to be patient. And he promised that he would devote all his power to fully prepare with other Christians for the entry of missionary priests.

I thought that the priests would be able to enter Korea, the mission field assigned to them, only one year later, so I told him that I was ready to make another visit soon with the intention of bringing in a priest around February. And when I asked him if anyone could enter Korea, he stressed that it was very difficult to cross the border, and the only way was that it seemed possible to enter the country in the form of a poor woodcutter.

After listening to this, I took the letters he brought, said goodbye to him, and went back to the gate and spent the night there.

The next day, I got up around 1 am, changed into Korean clothes, and said goodbye to the Chinese guides, then I started walking along the road. As the sun set, I could see the town of Uiju in the distance. My heart seemed to be squeezed with worries about whether I could pass safely. Especially, I had to worry more because I had forgotten the woodcutter's knife and left it at the Pien-moun. But I went on toward the city gate, convinced that none would be rejected who depend on God's mercy and run to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

At the gates, soldiers stood guard and asked everyone passing by to surrender a pass. Just then, I was caught between people driving cattle from the Pien-moun. When it was time for the soldier there to ask me for my pass, he went to the customs officers. I clearly saw the virtue of the great animals. However, this did not end the danger.

Customs officers told the travelers to go one by one to the customs head and make a statement. It was dark, so they were investigating with lights lit. In addition to the head of the customs office, another customs officer stood on a high place, watching to make sure no one slipped past. In the meantime, I didn't know how to behave. On one side, people who had already been investigated began to leave, so I sneaked in behind them. However, a customs officer called out from behind me and accused me of going without surrendering a pass. I replied that I had already given him the pass as he repeatedly called me. Then I believed they were after me and ran away and came out to the outskirts of the castle.

There wasn't a single house there to welcome me, so I walked all night about 10 leagues. At dawn, it was so cold that I went into a small tavern to warm up and there were several people sitting there. They looked at my face and clothes, listened to my words, concluded that I was a foreigner.

²⁸ A false report. Kim Yeo-sang was rewarded for his services and became a military officer, but was exiled to Shinjido in 1840. See below.

²⁹ A false report. The Latin text says 'dux satellitum (chief of satellites)' but it clearly refers to Jo Byeong-hyeon, Minister of Justice during the period of the Gihae Persecution. He was exiled to Jeolla Province in the 7th lunar month 1849, and he was executed soon after.

They looked at my hair to find out who I was and examined the Chinese socks I was wearing. Only one sympathized with me, and all others opposed me, complaining that I would be caught wherever I went. So I replied that I was innocent and a Korean, so no matter what they said, my roots cannot be changed, and even if I am caught, I replied that it is not difficult for a person without sin to defend himself, so his heart is at ease. When they heard this they drove me out.

Since I had said that I was going to Seoul, also called Hanyang, the capital of Korea, they cunningly sent a person to spy on which direction I was going, to see if it was so. However, it was extremely difficult for me to avoid the satellites, and if I was caught, I could have been charged as a thief and executed, if they saw the money I was carrying. All thieves are subject to death under Korean law.

When I saw the spies going back, I began to make a detour in order to go back to China, avoiding that little inn, to let them think that I was really going to Seoul. However, after the sun rose, I did not dare to stay on the road, and hid among the dense trees on the hills. When the sun set and darkness covered the earth, I hurried up and arrived in Uiju around 2 am. There, I headed away from the sea, on the left side of the town, and wandered through a rough place with no road. Even in such a place, roofs were visible everywhere, so I guessed it must be a border guard barracks.

When I arrived at the Yalu River, the sun had already risen and was shining brightly everywhere. I walked through deserted fields between the first and second rivers³⁰. During the daytime, that was the path through which the Korean people entered China and returned to their homeland. On the way, I spent the rest of the day changing into Chinese clothing.

When I got up again and walked about ten leagues, the sun rose. I kept walking, and that evening, I arrived at the Pien-moun where I stayed overnight. After preparing some items, I arrived at Baijiadian in five days⁵⁷ and returned to venerable Father Maistre.

Now we are at peace, waiting for Francis to return in March.

During your prayers, I ask you to commend me with all your heart to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Most Reverend Father, goodbye.

Greeting you Father, your obedient son, Andrew Kim-hae-Kim.

³⁰ In front of Uiju The Yalu River is divided into two by Jungji Island.

Letter 7

Place where written: Liaodong (Baijiadian).

Date when written: February 16, 1843

Recipient: Father Libois, Procurator, Foreign Missions

Most Reverend Father,

Since I have not yet sent the letter I wrote earlier, I am enclosing recent news.⁵⁸

On December 23rd, as Father Maistre had arranged, I took four days to arrive at the Pien-moun without any problem. Francis Kim, a contact agent from Korea, had already arrived at the Pien-moun and had been waiting for the day designated to meet us while staying for several days.

He thought that Chinese guides would not come, and with the courtesy and support of pagan friends, he obtained permission to enter China and be put on the list of people the King of Korea was sending to Beijing.

I met him on the street not far from the Pien-moun by the grace of God, but I did not know him and he did not recognize me either. Because we only met each other once eight years ago.

When I asked him if he was a Christian, he replied, "I am a Christian, my baptismal name is Francis Kim" so I gave him a similar answer.

I asked him not to go to Beijing and go back to the Pien-moun to discuss ways of bringing a missionary priest into Korea, his assigned mission field. He replied that doing so would make his pagan colleagues suspicious, and that he could not do so because there was danger of persecution. At the same time, he replied that he would make all efforts with other Christians in the future. So, I followed him with the Chinese guides, asking first for news of the priests in Korea.

According to his answer, all the priests had been killed for the holy religion of Christ, and more than 200 Christians were killed, many of whom were leaders. My brother Thomas (Choe Yang-eop)'s parents were also killed. His father was flogged to death, his mother killed by the sword, so both of them received the crown of martyrdom. My parents also suffered a lot: my father was beheaded, and my mother was left to wander around the houses of Christians, destitute, with no one to rely on. There are a lot of other things Francis told me, but it would take too long to write here.

Bishop Imbert, whom I respect most, was sought for by traitors and satellites agents for a long time and had been hiding in a place called Suwon. When Judas arrived there with the agents of Hell, the Bishop knew that he could not easily escape, and he presented himself to the satellites and was taken to court. The Bishop heard that if neither of the priests surrendered, it would eradicate even the name "Christian". He sent a letter and called the two priests. Thus all were decorated with the crown of martyrdom together.

Oh, these people are truly glorious. After fighting valiantly under the banner of Christ and winning the victory, they have surely put on imperial red robes and entered the heavenly sanctuary as triumphant warriors with crowns on their heads. But how unfortunate is Korea! After being left alone, deprived of shepherds for so many years, it has now lost at a single blow the priests who finally managed to come in, wretched! It would have been good if at least one had been left behind, so unfortunate that all of them have been swallowed up. Since persecution has stopped these days, Christians are enjoying a little stability, but without priests; so they are wandering, sighing like sheep without a shepherd.

It is said that KimYeo-sang, who became a great traitor after accepting the faith in recent years, was executed. There seems to be no other reason for the death penalty than that

he was a vicious human being and hurt others publicly. Even in history, people like this are likely to be executed and condemned.

Another man reported his wife's parents and had them strangled under national law. The head of the satellites who arrested priests and numerous Christians is said to have been deprived of his office for committing unrighteous actions, exiled and executed. Finally, I asked him why he hadn't delivered any news for many years. He said that, in the first year (1839), he was afraid of the traitors' conspiracies, so did not dare to think about it, and the following year, he sent two agents, one of whom died on the way, while the second reached the Pien-moun, but went back because he was unable to meet any Chinese guides. Francis explained that this time, too, he was planning to go to Beijing because he had not been able to meet any.

However, the circumstances did not allow me to ask for other news. After listening to this, I received the letters Francis brought and said goodbye to him, and then came back to the Pien-moun and spent the day there. I thought that the priests would be able to enter Korea, the mission field in their charge, only one year later, so I prepared for a journey soon with the desire to bring in a priest around February. When I asked Francis if I could enter, he bluntly said that it was very difficult to cross the border, and the only way that anyone could enter was by pretending to be a poor woodcutter.

So the next day, I woke up around the first hour, changed into the Korean clothes that I had prepared in advance, said goodbye to the Chinese guides, and started walking.

As I had been walking for some time, not knowing which way to take, I withdrew under a tree. There, an animal appeared, I realized that I had forgotten the knife intended for gathering wood, having left it at Pien-moun. I went back there, but couldn't find it.

After that, after I had walked some 30 leagues, I could see the town of Uiju in the distance as the sun was setting. My heart seemed to be squeezed in worries about whether I could pass safely. But I approached the city gate, convinced that no one would be rejected who depends on God's mercy and runs to the protection of our Blessed Virgin Mary.

Soldiers stood guard at the gates and demanded that everyone passing by should give up their travel pass. At that time, I got caught between people driving cattle from Pien-moun. When it was the turn of the soldier who was there to ask me for a pass, he went to the customs officials. I was lucky to see the benefits of the large cows.

However, this did not end the danger. Customs officers asked the travelers to go one by one to the customs officers and make a statement. It was dark, so they were investigating with lamps lit.

In addition to the head of the customs office, another customs officer stood on a high place, on the watch for any who might be trying to escape. In the meantime, I didn't know how to behave. On the one hand, people who had already been investigated began to leave, so I sneaked in behind them.

But from behind me, the customs officer called me and ordered me not to go without surrendering a pass, so I pretended to be deaf and didn't respond. He called me back, and I replied, "What are you saying? I have already given you the pass." I believed they were following me, quickly escaped and came to the outskirts of the town.

There wasn't a single house there to welcome me, so I walked about ten leagues all night. At dawn, it was so cold that I entered a small inn to warm up. There were several people sitting in the house, and they looked at my face and clothes, listened to my words, and said they were certain that I was a foreigner.

Eventually, they looked at my hair to determine who I was and examined the Chinese socks I wore. Only one sympathized with me, and all others opposed me, exaggerating that I would be caught wherever I went.

So I replied that since I was innocent and a native of Korea, my roots could not be changed no matter what they might say. Even if caught, I replied that it is not difficult for a person without any guilt to defend himself, so his heart is comfortable. When they heard this they drove me out of the house.

When they heard me, they thought that I was heading to Seoul, the capital of Korea, or Hanyang, and cunningly sent someone to spy on the direction I was going to take. However, it was already extremely difficult for me to avoid the grasp of the satellites, and if I was caught, I feared that I would be accused of being a thief and be executed if they only saw the money I had on me. All thieves are subject to death under national law. When I saw the spies go back, I began to make a detour and head back to China, avoiding that little inn, leaving them with the impression that I was really going to Seoul.

However, after the sun rose, I dared not stay on the road and hid in a mountain with dense trees. When the sun set and darkness covered the earth, I hurried on and arrived in Uiju around the second hour of the night.

From there, I turned to the left of the town on the opposite side to the sea and wandered through a rough place with no road. Even in places like this, roofs were visible everywhere, I considered them to belong to border guards.

When I arrived at the Yalu River, the sun was already rising and shining everywhere. After crossing the first and second rivers, I walked across a deserted field. During the daytime, it was the path through which Koreans entered China and returned to their homeland. On the way, I spent the rest of the day changing into Chinese clothing.

When I got up again and walked about ten leagues, the sun rose. I kept walking on, and after evening, I arrived at the Pien-moun and spent the night, with everyone laughing at me.

Then, under the protection of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, I arrived at Baijiadian in five days and returned to the reverend Father Maistre, which was on January 6th.

Now we are at peace waiting for Francis to return in March. Other circumstances will be known in more detail by looking at the priests' letters. The leaders in Korea sent a letter, and I think it must have been sent on to you. However, it seems to have been sent to Father Mouly³¹.

During your prayers, I ask you to commend me with all your heart to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Venerable Father, your obedient son Andrew Kim.

³¹ Father Joseph-Martial Mouly (1807-1868) was a member of the Lazarist Missionary Order. He was sent to Macao in 1834, and in 1835 became the priest of the Xiwanzi (西灣子) parish. In 1840, he was named the Apostolic Vicar of Mongolia.

Letter 8

Place where written: (Xiaobajiazi³²).

Date when written: May 17, 1844

Recipient: The Most Reverend Father N. F. Libois

Most Reverend Father,

I was very happy to read the letter you sent on May 15th. Last year around the third and ninth months of the lunar calendar³³, I went to the Pien-moun again and received news from Korea at the order of my superior (Fr. Maistre).

It is said that Christians are enjoying peace now, but they have no shepherds and are groaning in the dark. There are rumors that the person responsible for the persecution, the Queen Dowager³⁴, is still alive and that the King is mentally ill and sometimes suffers from delirium.

Our plan now, if God permits, is to move a family of Christians to Uiju so that those who enter Korea can enter and exit the country more easily. We look forward to entering the country every day, relying on God's Mercy, leaving everything to God's Providence.

Now, I am staying in Mongolia with the Most Reverend Bishop Ferréol. I returned there after about two months exploring without major obstacles all the routes for entry into Korea from the North, sent by the Most Illustrious Bishop on February 5.

Hong-si-kai, a town called Hunchun in Manchu, is two hundred leagues away from Xiaobajiazi, where we are staying. You have to cross a desert that stretches 50 leagues between Hunchun and Ningguta 寧古塔. There are no inns in the desert at all, but nomads stay at a certain distance from each other and receive travelers in their huts.

From Hunchun, the cities and houses of Koreans can be seen, but no communication is permitted except during the trading periods³⁵. I stayed for eight days in Hunchun and went to the Korean city (Gyeongwon in Hamgyeong-do) with a guide and met contact agents there. They said they had been there for more than a month waiting for the missionary priest to arrive. I am not telling you everything, as you will see more detail in the priests' letters.

Dear Master, if possible, please send us a Holy Bible, a daily meditation book, spiritual exercises, relics of the True Cross, and holy pictures, especially of our Lady's Immaculate Conception, together with a crucifix, rosaries, and a knife for cutting quill pens.

Thomas sends his greetings because he can't write to you at present.

Dear Father, from your humble and extremely unworthy son, Andrew Kim-hae-Kim.

³² Originally, this letter did not indicate its source, but it can be seen that it was written in the Manchurian village of Xiaobajiazi 小八家子村, an old Catholic village located about 23 miles northwest of Changchun 長春 in Jilin 吉林 Province, where Catholicism began to spread from 1796. After that, in 1838, the Liaodong Apostolic Vicariate was established, and at the same time, the Foreign Missions took charge of it.

³³ In the 3rd month, Kim Dae-geon went out from Baijiadian 白家店 to the Chaekmun and met Francis Kim, the envoy of the Korean church, who then returned to Korea. After that, he moved to Xiaobajiazi in the 4th lunar month and in the 9th lunar month he went back to the Chaekmun and met Francis Kim again, who was then heading to Beijing with the official embassy.

³⁴ Dowager Queen Kim, Queen Sunwon (1789-1857), the queen of King Sunjo (who reigned 1800-1834).

³⁵ This refers to the opening of the Beiguan market (北關開市). This was an international trade market that Korea used to trade publicly with the Qing Dynasty in Hoeryeong and Gyeongwon, Hamgyeong-do in the late Joseon period.

Letter 9

Place where written: Mongolia [Xiaobajiazi]

Date when written: [December 15, 1844]

Recipient: Bishop Ferréol

(This letter is in the form of a “Hunchun Travel Journal,” and it is said (very strangely) to have been originally written in Chinese. However, only this version in French is currently known. The parts quoted in Dallet’s *Histoire* were based on this translation. The English text below is translated from the French)

My lord,

After having received your Excellency’s blessing and having taken leave of you, we³⁶ sat down on our sled, and sliding rapidly over the snow, we arrived in a few hours at Changchun. We spent the night there. Having left the next day, the second day we crossed the palisade³⁷ and entered Manchuria. The countryside, all covered with snow and presenting everywhere only the monotony of a uniform whiteness, nevertheless offered to our eyes an amusing spectacle by the multitude of sledges which crisscrossed it in all directions, going from one house to another, with a speed that is rarely seen in China.

The first city we encountered was Jilin 吉林, metropolis of the province which bears the same name, residence of a Tsiang-kiun 將軍 or army general. It is located on the eastern bank of the Songhua river, whose course was still held firm in the grips of February’s cold. A chain of mountains³⁸ running from west to east, the summits of which vanished in light clouds of vapor, shelters it against the icy north wind.

Like almost all Chinese cities, Jilin is unremarkable, it is an irregular cluster of thatched cottages built of brick or earth, covered with thatch, with only one floor. The smoke from their roofs rose perpendicularly, spread at a low height in the atmosphere, and formed an immense mantle of a bluish color, enveloping the whole city. The Manchu and the Chinese inhabit it jointly; but the latter are much more numerous. Together, I am told, they form a population of 600,000 souls; but as the census is unknown in this country and the first quality of the Chinese narrative is exaggeration, I think that three quarters of it must be subtracted to have the real number of its inhabitants.

As for the southern cities, its streets are very animated; commerce is flourishing there; it is a storehouse of animal furs of a thousand species, of artificial flowers with which women of all classes adorn their heads, of cotton fabrics, silks, and timber drawn from the imperial forests.⁷⁵

The access to these forests is not far from Jilin; we saw them on the horizon raising their bald black heads above the dazzling whiteness of the snow. They lie between the Celestial Empire and Korea as a vast barrier cutting off all communication between the two peoples and maintaining, it seems, this hateful division that has existed since the Koreans were driven back onto the peninsula. They occupy from East to West a land of more than 60 leagues; I do not know what the extent of it is from North to South. If it had been possible for

³⁶ It appears that Kim Dae-geon made the journey together with a Chinese Catholic.

³⁷ This was a barrier between Changchun and Jilin running North-South, installed to mark the boundary between Manchuria and Mongolia. The original name of this barrier was Liutiaobian (柳條邊, the Willow Palisade).

³⁸ The Da Xinganling 大興安嶺 mountains in northern Manchuria.

us to cross them there and drive in a straight line towards Korea, we would have cut our journey in half, but they formed an impenetrable barrier. We had to make a long circuit and go toward Ningguta to find a cleared road.

One thing bothered us: we did not know the way there. Providence came to our aid and gave us as guides two merchants who were returning to this city, their home. We slid in their company for some time more on the ice of the river, going up towards its source. The unevenness of the terrain, the mountains with which it is intersected, the woods which cover it, the lack of a marked route determine travelers to take the path of the rivers. So when we left the Songhua we entrusted ourselves to another river which goes north to mix its waters with that of this river. The Chinese call it Mudan, on the European map, it is marked Hur-Sia; would that be its Tartar name? I do not know.

Inns are spread out along its banks. One day we were pleasantly surprised to meet a Christian: we were received there as brothers; not only was nothing required for our accommodation, we were even forced to accept provisions. It is a justice to be rendered to Chinese Christians: they practice towards foreigners, their brothers, the most generous hospitality.

Sometimes we advanced on the ice of the river, sometimes on one or the other of its banks, depending on which was less rough. To right and left rose high mountains crowned with tall trees and inhabited by tigers, panthers, bears, wolves and other ferocious beasts, which gather to wage war on passers-by. Woe to the imprudent one who would dare to enter alone in the midst of this dreadful solitude! He wouldn't get far before he was devoured. We are told that during the winter nearly 80 men and more than 100 oxen or horses fell prey to these carnivorous animals. So travelers only walk well-armed and in good company. For us, we formed a formidable battalion against our enemies. From time to time we saw some of them come out of their lairs; but our good appearance impressed them; they were careful not to attack us.

If these animals fight against men, men on the other hand wage a war of extermination against them. Every year in the autumn, the Emperor sends an army of hunters to these forests; last year they were five thousand. There are always several of these brave men who pay for their bravery with their lives. Once I came across a group of hunters who were bringing their colleague's dead body to his fathers' tomb, more than a hundred leagues away; he had succumbed on the field of honor; on his bier were displayed with pride the trophies of his victory, the antler of a stag and the skin of a tiger. The leader of the funeral convoy sometimes threw paper money onto the road, which the soul of the deceased was to collect for use in the land beyond the grave. Alas! These poor people were far from thinking that faith and good works are in the other world the only currency of good quality. His Celestial Majesty has reserved for himself the right to hunt in these forests. This does not prevent a host of Chinese and Korean poachers from exploiting them for their profit.

Before encountering the road which crosses the forest to the eastern sea, we crossed a small lake³⁹ 7 to 8 leagues wide, it was as frozen as the river that feeds it. It is famous in the country for the number of pearls that are caught there on behalf of the Emperor. It is called hei hou or tsing tchou men, Black Lake or Precious Pearl Gate. It is named so because pearls are collected from many black shells in the Black Lake. Fishing is done there in summer.

On leaving the Precious Pearl Gate, we entered an inn; the first day of the Chinese New Year was approaching, a day of great feasting, great gala and happy life. Every traveler must stop his journey to celebrate it. The innkeeper asked us where we came from and where we were going. From Changchun, we said to him, and we are going to Hunchun, and we do

³⁹ The Black Lake (黑湖, Heihu). It was so named because there were many black clams in it.

not know the way that leads there. "In that case", he continued, "you must stay with me, the new year is here; in eight days my carts must go to that very place. You will put your luggage and your provisions on them and you will leave together; in the meantime you will be well treated. His offer was accepted with thanks. Our horses were tired; they needed to stop for a few days."

On the New Year's day, the pagans indulge in superstitions. The people of the inn spent the first night awake. Towards the middle of that night, I saw approaching the Khang or stove which served as my bed, a master of ceremonies decked out in some strange habit. I guessed his intention. I pretended to be asleep. He hit me lightly several times on the head to wake me up. So pretending to wake from a deep sleep, I asked: What is it? What is the matter? Get up; the gods are approaching; we must go out and welcome them. The gods are approaching! ... Where do they come from? Who are these gods? Yes, the gods, the great gods will come; get up, we must go and meet them. Hey! my friend, wait a moment, you see I am possessed by the god of sleep; Is there one among those who come who could be as agreeable to me at the present time? Please allow me to enjoy his presence peacefully, I do not know the others you are telling me about. The master of ceremonies went away, muttering I do not know what words; it is to be assumed that he was not greatly edified by my devotion to the gods and that it did not bode well for the success of my trip.

This is how this reception of the gods takes place: When the time comes, that is to say at midnight, men, women and children, old men, all come out into the middle of the courtyard, each dressed in beautiful clothes. There they stand and the father of the family, who presides over the ceremony, looks around towards the different points of the sky. He alone has the privilege of seeing the gods. As soon as they have shown themselves to him, he exclaims: They are coming, let us bow down, there they are on this side. All at once bow down to the point indicated. They also turn the heads of animals, the front of carts, everything in nature must welcome the gods in its own way. It would be unbecoming if as these heavenly guests are arriving, their eyes met the rump of a horse. The gods being thus received, everyone returns to the house and indulges in the joy of a hearty feast in their honor.

We stayed eight days in this place. On the 4th day of the first lunar month, leaving behind our now useless sleigh, we saddled our horses and set off in the company of the innkeeper's wagons. Its people had engaged, for an agreed price, to provide fodder for our horses and to carry our provisions while we crossed the forest, where one finds only wood for heating and for cooking food.

Finally we arrived at Ma-lien-ho near Ningguta where the road began, the other end of which reached the sea at a distance of 60 leagues. Seven to eight years ago, there was no dwelling on the road, no hut which gave shelter to travelers. They gathered in caravans and camped wherever the night surprised them, taking care to keep fires going until morning to keep the tigers away. Today hostels are located at the sides of the road; they are large huts built in the manner of the savages, with branches and tree trunks placed one above the other, and the largest gaps of which are plugged with mud. The architects and masters of these smoky caravanserais are two or three Chinese who are called in the language of the country *Guanggunzi* (光棍子 Meaning 'unmarried'), people without families, come from afar, most of them deserters from the paternal house, people addicted to plunder. It is only during the winter that they are there; When the good weather returns, they leave their cabins and go poaching in the woods or looking for jen-seng (ginseng), this rare root, which in China sells for twice the weight of gold.

The interior of these sheds is even more hideous than the exterior. In the middle, mounted on three stones, rests a large pot, the only dish in these restaurants. Fire is lit below it, the smoke escapes where it can. I leave you to judge the darkness that sticks to the walls.

Their rifles and hunting knives, smoked like the rest, are hung from the trunks which form the walls; the ground is covered with tree bark; it is on this layer of mattress that the traveler must rest his tired limbs and regain the force necessary to continue his journey. We found ourselves sometimes more than a hundred lying there pell-mell, almost on top of each other. The smoke was suffocating; I was almost suffocated by it, that I had to go out from time to time to breathe the outside air and catch my breath. In the morning I expectorated the soot that I had swallowed during the night.

The Guanggunzi offer their guests only roof and water. It is therefore a necessity for them, before entering the woods, to stock up on their provisions, copper money does not have currency; money is almost unknown there. The innkeepers receive in exchange for the hospitality they give, rice, millet, buns steamed or baked in the ashes, meat, corn wine, etc. The animals are housed under the stars; it was necessary to keep watch over them to save them from the voracity of wolves and tigers. Their approach was signaled by the horses neighing or huffing with force from their fear-dilated nostrils. We would then arm ourselves with torches, hit drums, shout, scream, and so put them to flight.

These forests seemed very old to me: the trees are enormous and of a prodigious height. It is only on the edge that the axe cuts them down; inside, old age alone overthrows them. Flocks of birds dwell in their branches. There are some of an inordinate size, which carry off young deer; I do not know them. Pheasants abound there everywhere. We cannot get an idea of their multitude. Eagles and vultures wage a cruel war on them. One day we saw one of these birds of prey swoop down on one of these unfortunate birds. We frightened him, he flew away taking only the head of his prey, the rest served us as a treat.

When we were no longer more than a day from Hunchun, we left the heavy wagons behind and went ahead. Finally, a month after leaving your Excellency, we arrived at the end of our journey: we had not moved fast. Hunchun is located a short distance from the sea, at the mouth of the Mikiang (Tumen River) which separates Korea from Manchuria. It is a small village of a hundred Tartar families. After Foug-pien-men⁴⁰ in the south, it is the only place of contact between China and Korea. A second-class mandarin, originally a Manchu is stationed there, assisted by two or three hundred soldiers or satellites under his orders.

A crowd of Chinese go there from far away to traffic. They deliver dogs, cats, pipes, deer horns, copper, leather, horses, mules and donkeys to the Koreans; they receive in exchange baskets, kitchen utensils, rice, wheat, pigs, oxen, paper, mats, furs and small horses esteemed for their speed. For the common people, this trade takes place only once every two years and lasts only half a day, and it takes place in Gyeongwon, the nearest town to Korea, four leagues away from Hunchun. If at the approach of night, the Chinese have not returned to the border, the Korean soldiers pursue them with swords drawn.

There is a little more freedom for a few mandarins from Mukden, Jilin, Ninguta and Hunchun; they can trade every year and they are given five days to ship their belongings, but they are in custody and have to spend the night outside Korea. Each of them has under him five officers and each of these five principal merchants; which makes a small caravan. Before going deep into the forests, they pitch a tent on the top of a mountain, and sacrifice pigs to the gods of the woods; all must participate. These few hours of trading each year are the only relations the Chinese and Koreans have with each other. At other times, whoever crosses the border on either side is ruthlessly enslaved or massacred.

⁴⁰ Kim Dae-geon's text has 'Foug Pien-men' which seems to derive from Bonghwang-seong 봉황성 鳳凰城 the Phoenix Fortress, which long served as the Chinese frontier post.

There is great hatred between the two nations, especially since the Chinese entered Korea and abducted women and children. I saw one of these young people in an inn, taken from his parents when he was still young. He was then in his twenties. I asked him if he didn't want to go back to his family. I would be careful not to go back, he said, they would take me for a Chinese and cut off my head. I then invited him to speak Korean to me. He excused himself by telling me that he had forgotten his language, and that, moreover, I would not understand it; he was far from suspecting that I was Korean myself.

Hunchun is also famous in the country for a branch of commerce which extends throughout the empire; it is *hai-tshai* (海草 sea weed) that is found in the Sea of Japan a short distance from the shore. The men who collect it get on boats, move away from the coast, then girding their loins with a sort of sack, dive into the water, fill the sack, go up to empty it and dive again until the basket is full. The Chinese are fond of this vegetable; they consume a great deal of it; we met convoys of carts loaded with them on the roads.

When we arrived at the Korean border, eight days remained before the opening of the trade; the time seemed long to me. I looked forward to recognizing the Korean Christians at the agreed signal and talking to them, but I was forced to wait. Alas! I said to myself, these peoples are still in that state of abject barbarism of seeing in a foreigner only an enemy whom one must get rid of and whom one must reject with horror. I understood well for myself that man has no permanent home here and is only a traveler for a few days on earth. I myself was only accepted in China because I was believed to be Chinese and I could only set foot on my homeland for a moment and as a foreigner. Oh! When will the day come when the Common Father of the great human family makes all His children embrace in the kiss of love, acknowledging the fact that His Son Jesus came to communicate to all men?

Before leaving, you recommended me, my lord, to get information on the country I would be traveling through. I have tried to conform to your Excellency's wishes. By observing for myself, by questioning others, by appealing to the memories of my early youth spent in Korean schools, I was able to gather the details which I will submit to you. I will be as brief as possible.

The Manchus of this country, properly speaking, are scattered over a much less extensive area than that assigned to them by the European map that I have in front of me: they hardly go beyond 46° latitude. They are bounded to the West by the palisade and the Songhua which separates them from Mongolia, in the North by the two small states of Oukin and Jüpitatse⁴¹ or Tartars with fish skins, to the East by the Sea of Japan and by Korea to the South.

Since they conquered China, their country has been deserted; immense forests, where the traveler does not meet any human being, cover a part of it, while the rest is occupied by a few military stations, if it is necessary to call by this name a small number of Tartar families grouped together at very considerable distances. These families are maintained at the expense of the Emperor; they are forbidden to cultivate the land. It seems that they are only there to make an act of presence and to tell the peoples of the North, very timid moreover and being scattered in the woods, not to go down as the country is occupied. A few rare Chinese, who fraudulently clear some corners of the country, sell them the grain necessary for their subsistence. They are not allowed to unite with Tartar women; most of them are also without family.

⁴¹ The Hezhe people who live in the Heilong River basin. They were called 'yupidazi (魚皮韃子)' because they wore clothes made of fish skin.

Manchuria appears very fertile, which can be recognized by the luxuriant grass which rises to human height. In cultivated places, it produces corn, millet, buckwheat and wheat, but the latter in small quantities: this is due, I believe, to the humidity of its soil, and to the mists with which it is often covered.

Your Excellency may ask the cause of the solitude that reigns in Manchuria. It was a policy of the chief of the present dynasty of China to transplant his original people into the invaded country during the conquest. When he came down to seize the empire, he took with him all his soldiers and their families, that is to say, all his subjects; he left part of them in the Liaodong and distributed the rest in the main cities of China. He thus secured possession of these cities, by keeping them in duty, by stifling revolts at their birth, and consolidating his power on the imperial throne⁴².

This state of affairs has lasted to the present day. Although the Chinese and the Manchurians have been living for two centuries in the same enclosure of ramparts, speaking the same language, the two nations have not merged; each retains its genealogy. Also when entering a hostel, when approaching a stranger, nothing is more common than this question: Ni che Ming jen, Khi jen? Are you Chinese or Manchu? The former are referred to by the name of the Ming dynasty, and the latter by the name Banner. This is because the Manchu in principle were divided into eight tribes, each rallying under a standard, of which it bears the name⁴³.

The Manchurians have no national literature; all books written in their language are translations of Chinese works, made by a special tribunal established in Beijing. They don't even have their own writing; they borrowed from the Mongols the characters they use. Their language is imperceptibly being lost; there are only a few who speak it; at the end of a hundred years, it will be in the books only a memory of the past. It has considerable affinity with ours: it must be because a few centuries ago Korea extended its limits beyond the country of the Manchurians properly so called, and made of the two states a single kingdom inhabited by the same people. Families can still be found in Manchuria which have preserved their genealogy which attests to their Korean origin; tombs have been found containing Korean weapons, coins, vases, books.

I spoke to you above of the Oukin and the Jüpitatse; I have not been able to gather enough information on their account. The Chinese call the latter so because they wear clothes made of fish skins. Living on the banks of the Songhua and on the banks of rivers, which swell its waters, or wandering in the woods, they engage in fishing and hunting, and sell the furs of the animals they have killed and the fish they have caught to the Chinese. Trade takes place in winter; the fish is frozen. It supplies the markets more than two hundred leagues away. In exchange, they receive cloth, rice and brandy extracted from millet. They have a language of their own, they are independent of the Emperor of China, and do not admit foreigners into their homes. The Chinese say they are disgustingly dirty; This may be; but in order for them to have the right to make such a reproach to them, they themselves would first have to change their clothes a little more often than they do, and destroy the vermin which devours them.

Beyond the country occupied by the Jüpitatse, and as far as the border of Asiatic Russia, it is to be assumed that there are other wandering tribes: but we have no knowledge of them here. To the south of this tribe, and beside the sea, is a country that has been called Ta-

⁴² Nurhaci united several tribes in the southeast of Manchuria and became Khan in 1616. Thereafter, his son Hong Taiji called the nation "Qing" in 1636, and took the throne as the Shunzhi Emperor in 1644, making Beijing his capital.

⁴³ The Eight Banners were the military organization established by the first Qing emperor.

tcho-sou⁴⁴, where not long ago gathered, and still meet every day, a crowd of Chinese and Korean vagabonds pushed there, some by the spirit of independence, others to escape the punishment due to their misdeeds, or the pursuit of their creditors. Accustomed to robbery and crime, they have neither morals nor principles. However, I have been told, they have just chosen a leader to suppress their disorders and give themselves an existence. By mutual agreement, they established that any man guilty of homicide would be buried alive; they made their leader himself subject to this law. Since they don't have wives, they kidnap them wherever they find them. Will this small state, which does not look unlike the beginnings of ancient Rome, have the same developments? This is what the future will reveal.

Not far from the Korean border, in the middle of the forest, soars towards the clouds the Changbai-shan 長白山, the long white mountain (known as Baekdusan in Korean), which became famous in China as the cradle of Han Wang (Nurhaci?), head of the imperial family, currently on the throne. On that of its slopes which looks towards the West, his ancient residence has been preserved with the help of repairs, a place surrounded by the Chinese superstition of a religious cult. There the devout pilgrim comes from far away to bow his forehead in the dust. The authors are divided on the origin of Han Wang. Some say that he was first a leader of thieves, and exploited the surrounding countries, and that seeing himself at the head of a large party, he laid the foundations of a royal power. Others maintain that, in order to save his honor, he was one of those little kinglets, as there are many in Tartary, but that he enlarges the inheritance he had received from his fathers.

Regardless of its origin, it is certain that by the end of the Ming Dynasty it was already powerful enough to make the Emperor of China tremble. The Wanli Emperor (萬曆 reigned 1573-1619), one of the last of this dynasty, to weaken his forces, begged him to send him the elite of his warriors, under the pretext of opposing them to the Mongols, who threatened his states. As soon as he saw them in his power, he destroyed them all, with the exception of one, who knew by his good looks how to interest a mandarin in his favor and was put by him among his servants. He gained his confidence so much that he became the steward of his house.

Sometime later, another mandarin, having come to visit this one, saw this young Tartar, and told his colleague that in saving this outlaw he was running the risk of incurring the indignation of the Emperor. The other replied that he would get rid of him, but that in the meantime they should enjoy a feast. However, the young man hears this remark; fearing for his life, he orders the groom to saddle his master's best horse, saying he has an important commission to do. The horse ready, he climbs on it, and rides at full speed to the White Mountain to announce to Han Wang the Emperor's betrayal and the unfortunate fate of his comrades in arms. Han Wang, indignant, sends the eldest of his ten sons at the head of an army, seizes Mukden, capital of Liaodong, which the Chinese had already taken from the Koreans. The prince, arriving at Mukden was frightened by the number of enemies and returned without firing a shot. His father outraged at his cowardice, killed him with his own hand, then taking his family and all his people, came to present himself before the city, which opened its doors to him. He placed his throne there.

In the meantime, two eunuchs from the imperial palace, one of whom was named Wang and the other Tou, hatched a conspiracy against Chongzhen (崇禎 reigned 1628-1644), successor of Wanli, and elected another emperor in his place. Chongzhen seeing his affairs

⁴⁴ The current Jiandao 間島 area.

desperate hanged himself from a tree on Mount Meishan⁴⁵ and died. This tree has been preserved to this day. The Chinese surround it with great veneration: they say that it was sanctified by the death of the emperor. The one who was put in his place was called Tchouang-wang (Li Zicheng 李自成). He had the imprudence to attract the hatred of a powerful mandarin by kidnapping his wife. Wu Sangui⁴⁶, this mandarin, asked for help from the new king of Mukden to pursue the kidnapper, who had fled in fear to the southern provinces. During this time (1644) the cunning Han-wang sent his second son Shunzhi⁴⁷ who seized Beijing and began the Tartar-Manchu dynasty. Shunzhi was the father of the Kangxi Emperor (康熙帝 reigned 1661-1722) under whose reign there was a moment's hope of seeing all of China convert to the Christian faith⁴⁸. But this hope vanished under the reign of his successors Ioung-tcheng (the Yongzheng Emperor 雍正帝 reigned 1722-1735), Khien-loung (the Qianlong Emperor 乾隆帝 reigned 1735-1796), Kia-khing, (the Jiaqing Emperor 嘉慶帝 reigned 1796-1820), Tao-Kouang (the Daoguang Emperor 道光帝 reigned 1820-1850), who all more or less persecuted religion.

I come back to the story of my journey. On the 20th of the first lunar month, the Korean mandarin from Gyeongwon sent Hunchun the news that business would be opened the next day. As soon as day broke, we hurried, my companion and I, to the market. The approaches to the city were crowded with people. We walked in the middle of the crowd, holding our white handkerchief in our hands, and having attached a small red tea bag to our belts: that was the sign we had agreed upon and by which the Korean couriers were to recognize us. It was up to them to approach us.

We entered the city; we came out again; no one showed up. Several hours passed thus; we were beginning to worry. Might they have missed the meeting, we wondered? Finally, having gone to water our horses at a stream that flows 300 paces from the city, we see someone coming towards us who had seen our description. I speak Chinese to him; he does not understand me. What's your name, I told him in Korean. Han is my name, he replies. Are you a disciple of Jesus? – I am. –Here we are, I said.

He led us to his companions. They had come four together. They had been waiting for our arrival for over a month. We couldn't have a long interview together. The Chinese and Koreans surrounded us on all sides. These poor Christians seemed overwhelmed by sadness. The mysterious air which reigned in the exchange of our words intrigued the pagans. When they seemed less attentive to our speech, we slipped a few words on our religious

⁴⁵ Meishan (煤山 Coal Hill) is one peak among the 5 artificial hills known together as "Jingshan" (景山 Prospect Hill) located facing the Forbidden City's North Gate. Chongzhen brought the Ming Dynasty down by hanging himself on Meishan in 1644 when the peasant army led by Li Zicheng 李自成, who had rebelled in Shaanxi province, invaded Beijing.

⁴⁶ Wu Sangui (吳三桂 1612-1678): a general in charge of the fortress that guards Beijing, Shanhaiguan. He was called by Chongzhen but on the way to Beijing he colluded with the Qing army. After Chongzhen died, he attacked Li Zicheng and defeated him. Prior to this, Li Zicheng had taken Beijing and then abused the family of Wu Sangui.

⁴⁷ The Shunzhi Emperor 順治帝 reigned over China 1644-1661). He was crowned emperor in 1643 at the age of 5, and was assisted by his uncle, 多爾袞 Dorgon.

⁴⁸ The Kangxi Emperor was initially favorable to Catholicism and was very interested in new learning from the West, so he gave preferential treatment to missionaries. However, after the Quarrel of Rites arose, and as the Holy See intervened in the matter, he regarded this as an intervention in the country's internal affairs, and issued an order of expulsion against the missionaries who opposed Confucius and ancestor worship.

affairs, and then immediately returned to bargaining for our animals. How much do you want? 80 strings. It's too expensive, take these 50 strings and give me your beast. Impossible, you won't have it for less. This is how we gave the change to those who observed us.

I learned from these Christians that since the persecution the Korean Church had been fairly quiet, that a large number of the faithful had withdrawn to the southern provinces, where it is less exposed to the blows of the storm; that several families had converted to the faith; that it would be difficult for them to keep a European missionary at home for a long time, but that trusting in divine goodness, they would do whatever depended on them to receive him; that Pien-men would be less dangerous for his introduction, for the reason that entering from the North, besides the difficulty of crossing from one border to another, he would have to cross the whole kingdom.

Our interview being over, we took each other's hands in farewell. They sobbed, great tears flowed from their eyes: For us, we entered the city, and disappeared among the multitude.

The Gyeongwon market presented us with a curious spectacle: the merchants are not allowed to display their goods as soon as they arrive: they must wait for the signal to be given. As soon as the sun has reached the middle of its course, they hoist a flag and they beat a drum; instantly the impetuous, compact crowd rushes into the public square; Koreans, Chinese, Tartars, all are mixed; everyone speaks his language, shouting loudly to be heard; the echoes of the neighboring mountains repeat their discordant clamors. They only have four or five hours to buy and sell. Also the movement that people give themselves, the brawls which take place, the punches which rain, the plunder which is made almost with arms in hand, give Gyeongwon the image, not of a fair, but of a city taken by storm and plundered. In the evening, the signal for foreigners to return is given; all withdraw in the same disorder. The soldiers push the stragglers with their weapons. We had great difficulty in extricating ourselves from this crush.

We were returning to Hunchun, when we saw the Korean Christians coming to us again; they could not bring themselves to leave us; they still wanted to talk to us, to say a last farewell. My companion jumps off his horse to greet them. I signal to him to get back up, lest the satellites surrounding us suspect us of being people who have other interests than those of trade. Then greeting the Angel who presides over the Korean Church and recommending ourselves to the prayers of its Martyrs, we crossed the Mi-kiang and returned to Tartary.

On our return we found the road had much changed. The river on the ice of which we had slid before was by now well on the way to thawing. Streams descending from the tops of the mountains swelled their course, which dragged along pell-mell trunks of old trees and enormous blocks of ice. Travelers with their carts kept arriving and got tangled along its edges. Their cries, the howls of ferocious beasts mingled with the crashing of the waters made this valley a terrible spectacle. No one dared to venture into the midst of danger. Each year, we are told, many people die, buried under the ice. Trusting in the Divine Providence which had led us there, I looked for a fordable place, and crossed to the other bank. My companion was more careful, he took a guide and went a long way round. We only had to regret the loss of one of our horses.

I salute Your Reverend Excellency, Your very obedient and very unworthy son,
Andrew Kim-hae-Kim.

Korean deacon⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Kim Dae-geon received the diaconate before December 10, 1844.

Letter 10

Place where written: Seoul / Hanyang⁵⁰.

Date when written: March 27, 1845

Recipient: Father N. F. Libois, Procurator, Foreign Missions

Most Reverend Father,

As you know, last year, I left Mongolia with Bishop Ferréol, whom I deeply respect, and arrived safely at the Pien-moun.

Christians from Korea had already arrived there. They told the bishop that there were many difficulties in entering the mission field he was charged with. Then, the bishop sent me ahead, so that I could examine the situation and arrange his entry to the country according to the possibilities.

Thus, I was blessed by Bishop Ferréol, followed the Christians in the middle of the night, and came to a place from where I could see the town of Uiju at sunset. When I got there, I agreed with the contact men that they would wait for me at a certain place, and sent them on ahead, while I went to a mountain valley two leagues from Uiju by myself and hid under the dark branches in the dense forest. Surrounded by a wall of snow, the mountain villages were all white and cold, and as I waited for the night to come, I was bored so I prayed the rosary to pass the time. When the sun set and darkness covered everything, I left that place and headed for the town, seeking God's help, and walked on, having taken off my shoes in order not to make a sound. I crossed the river and hurried over a rough place, not even a road. In some places, snow was piled up five or ten feet high.

When I reached the place we had agreed on, there was no sign of the Christians. I was extremely worried, so I went into town twice and looked everywhere, but in vain. Eventually, when I came back to the place agreed on and sat down in the field, desperate thoughts began to avail and I became very upset. I thought they must have been caught, for I could think of no other reason why they had not come. I needed them desperately, for it was extremely dangerous for me to go on to Seoul by myself, or to go back to China without travel expenses and clothes. Moreover, I was worried that the route by which I hoped to bring the missionaries might be cut.

At that time, I was overwhelmed by cold, hunger, fatigue, and anxiety, and lay down next to a pile of manure in order not to be seen by anyone. I couldn't expect any human help at all, I looked only for God's help, I lay exhausted, waiting for day to dawn. Just then, the Christians appeared, looking for me. They had come ahead of me, but when they couldn't see me, they went back and then came a second time. Even though they had waited for some time here, I did not come, so they went away and covered a half league looking for me, but couldn't find me, so they had stayed awake all night in anxiety, desperate and discouraged, until at last they met me. We thanked God with joyful hearts.

Seven Christians had left Seoul with two horses, but while they were coming, four turned back, discouraged because of the difficulty and danger of welcoming the priests, and

⁵⁰ Kim Dae-geon, already a deacon, had arrived in Seoul on January 15, 1845, and was living in Dolwoomulgol (Stone Well Valley) in Seokjeong-dong in Hanyang (as Seoul was commonly called).

only three of them came to as far as the Pien-moun. Charles Hyeon⁵¹, Thomas Yi⁵² and two servants had not come so far.

After the sun rose, the two Christians had things to do, so I left Uiju with only one, leaving them to follow. I managed to walk 3 leagues, dragging my sore leg, until we reached an inn where we spent the night. The next day, we hired two horses and arrived in Pyongyang in five days. There, we met Charles and Thomas who were waiting for us together with two horses. We all set off together and arrived in the capital, Seoul (Hanyang), in seven days, and entered the house prepared by the Christians.

I was concerned about the curiosity and verbosity of the Christians, and the danger (because the government knew that we had gone to Macao and was waiting for our return to kill us,) so I forbade them to inform anyone about my return except for a few Christians who needed to know. I sternly asked them not to inform my mother that I had returned. After a few days of being trapped in the room, various anxieties and worries that I didn't understand bothered me and finally I fell ill. My chest, stomach, and back hurt so much that I couldn't stand it, as if the five inner organs were blocked. Sometimes it hurt badly, then got a little better, I was sick for more than a fortnight. To heal my illness, I asked advice of Christians and pagans and took various medicines they gave me. I am better now, but my body is weak and I cannot write or do anything else I want. For the last twenty days, I have even been suffering from eye disease. Despite being in such a pitiful condition, I am preparing to bring in Bishop Ferréol and the other missionaries, relying on God's help and mercy.

I sent Charles to Chungcheong Province to arrange a house on the coast, but he returned without success. So, I bought a house and a boat in Seoul, and the cost was 146 silver Macao patacas. Now I want to find a way to reach the Chinese province of Jiangnan. However, I have not told the Christians or the sailors where we are going because I feared that they might be scared in advance. Indeed, they have reasons to be afraid. They have never been to the open sea, and they do not know how to navigate a ship, and they are not used to sailing, so I talked until they were convinced that I am the best of sailors by my skill.

Moreover, there are some agreements between China and Korea. In other words, if a Korean ship reaches the coast of China, all the people on the ship are captured by China and sent back to Korea via Beijing. If after investigation they are found guilty of a crime, they are killed. The same applies to Chinese ships here. However, I hope that God, remembering his mercy and kindness toward you, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, will enable us to safely complete our journey to Jiangnan.

Finally, Father, I have a few requests to make. If you think it will be useful for me, a compass, a pencil (with a black lead that can be used to write without ink), a map of the world, especially a detailed map of the Yellow Sea and the coasts of China and Korea, and to protect my eyes, please send me some Chinese-style green glasses. Goodbye.

To my Reverend Master, Your worthless and most unworthy servant Andrew Kim-hae-Kim.

⁵¹ Charles Hyeon Seok-mun (玄錫文 1797-1846) (Saint). A lay leader. After Father Chastan entered the country in 1837, he acted as his clerk. After the 1839 Gihae persecution, he collected the records of the martyrs at the direction of Bishop Imbert. Together with Yi Jae-ui, he compiled the data he and various others had collected into what is known as the "Gihae Diary". In 1845, he sailed to Shanghai with Kim Dae-geon and they returned to Korea with Bishop Ferréol. He was arrested during the Byeongo persecution of 1846 on the arrest of Kim Dae-geon and was martyred at Saenamto on September 19th, 1846.

⁵² Thomas Yi Jae-ui (1785-1868): He was the grandson of Yi Seung-hun and the son of Yi Taek-Gyu. He was the clerk of Bishop Imbert, and he completed the "Gihae Diary" by arranging the records of the martyrs along with HyeonSeok-mun. In 1845, he accompanied Kim Dae-geon to Shanghai and returned with Bishop Ferréol and Father Daveluy. He was arrested and executed outside of Seosomun Gate (Seoul) on May 28, 1868.

PS:

In Korea, a large number of young babies die from a disease that disfigures their faces with spots. Please write telling me clearly how to treat that disease.

Letter 11

Place where written: [Seoul]

Date when written: April 6, 1845

Recipient: Father Libois, Procurator, Foreign Missions

Reverend Father,

I heard from some notable people while I was in China that it was not right that the priests in Korea had surrendered to the satellites⁵³, and they criticized the Christians (omitting the traitors) for having despised and forsaken the priests. However, if they had paid attention to and recognized the circumstances surrounding the priests and Christians, they should surely rather have felt pity and sympathy for their fate. Because at that time the priests were in danger of being arrested, and ethically speaking it was quite impossible for them to escape. The Christians were oppressed by persecution and hunger, and they were in a distressing situation as many of them wandered homeless, were arrested and massacred, so that even pagans and satellites sympathized with them. The priests were all for the Christians, and the Christians, though perhaps not all, were for the priests. The priests eagerly cared for the salvation of the Christians' souls and bodies. Also, the Christians tried hard to protect the priests. They tried to hide the priests as much as possible and were even prepared to give their lives for them.

I do not deny that when the priests voluntarily surrendered to the satellites, the Christians did not hold them back, and some Christians even went out to fetch the satellites. But morally speaking they could not do otherwise.

In this restricted kingdom, the government had ordered the priests to be arrested, and the bishop sent letters to summon the priests. Satellites were scattered everywhere in search of them. The Bishop, driven by inevitable circumstances, commanded his beloved priests to come quickly for the final judgement. The priests obeyed the bishop's orders and could not escape. Of course, the priests could have escaped temporarily, but they set off toward many tribulations and death for the sake of the sheep, whom they had come to save. Therefore, in my judgment, it was not an error but a virtue.

Likewise, the Christians obeyed the priests' orders and went out to find the satellites. The priests followed Christ's example. Christ was handed over by his disciple Judas, and the priests were handed over by a Christian disciple. Christ obeyed His Father and accepted death, the priests obeyed the Bishop and chose death. Christ left after the Last Supper, and the priests left after offering Mass as their Last Supper. Christ freely gave himself to death for His sheep. In this way, the priests abandoned themselves freely to the highest punishment for their sheep. The priests did not ignore the fact that the Christians needed priests, and that their lives were precious. But the priests clearly knew what the future would be after they died, and they foresaw that the sheep without a shepherd would be scattered and that wolves would devour the Lord's flock in future.

The priests prepared to take the path of death. Christians came out and looked at the shepherds in sorrow, begging them not to leave them orphans, not to take the path of death. The priests comforted them by sharing sacred words with the same affection as their mothers, and they told them that they were going to death at a command from their superior. The

⁵³ Fr. Maubant and Fr. Chastan had received letters from Bishop Imbert asking them to surrender, and on September 6, 1839, they surrendered in Hongju, Chungcheong-do and were sent to Seoul.

Christians knew they could not hold back the priests, and they begged with tears to be allowed to follow the priests, but they were not allowed to do so.

Finally, after offering the Mass, the priests said goodbye to their sheep before setting out. The Christians shed tears and wept on thinking that they would no longer see the shepherds. When the priests left, the Christians, even though the bodies could not go with them, were united with the priests, so they shed tears and returned to their homes, waiting for the events to come.

When the satellites saw the priests, they did not follow their usual custom but treated them gently and politely. The Prefects also showed sympathy. They were treated well during the journey, were not monitored and allowed to go anywhere. Even at night, the satellites were so confident in the priests that they withdrew so that they could sleep comfortably. And they provided everything they needed, they rode on horseback and carefully transported.

After the priests had been brought to Seoul they met the Venerable Bishop Imbert and all were imprisoned in the Geumbu, the prison for great men. They were tortured severely, but with God's grace they endured, and despite being subjected to extreme torture, they bravely testified to the Lord Christ.

They were ordered to return to their homeland, but they did not accept it. They were urged to forsake God, but they testified more loudly, and when they were forced to denounce others, they refused. Because of that, they were again subjected to unbearably harsh torture. They overcame all torments, were sentenced to death, and went to heaven shedding their holy blood on September 21, 1839. There they will rule forever.

Even after the priests had died, the Christians were persecuted for another two years⁵⁴. The persecution continued for more than four years. In the meantime, the Christians suffered from misery and poverty and became indescribably wretched, with persecution and countless calamities.

The persecution stopped four years ago, but things are still not calm. There is no active persecution to kill Christians now, but Christians are living more miserably than before. This is because as soon as it is known that a house belongs to Christians, the satellites immediately occupy it. Not only that, but after suffering intense persecution, the majority of the Christians have lost their zeal and have become cold-hearted, and there is no hope of returning to the same zealous state as before.

However, things have begun to move forward again. Christians are gradually growing enthusiastic and their number is increasing. Apostates are repenting and returning to God. No one has preached to pagans, but many have abandoned their errors and accepted the Catholic religion. There are many pagans who want to become Christians, but Christians are afraid of persecution, so they do not dare to voluntarily spread their religion to them.

Almost all the people praise the religion of Christ and confess that it is the true religion, saying that without the persecution, they too would have become Christians. Therefore, they are only afraid of persecution and cannot dare to convert. The satellites chatter with each other as follows.

“If there were no persecution, we would find nobody that does not want to become a Christian unless they were the son of a cow.” “It is truly a wonderful religion, but if we become Christians, we could no longer act as we please. We would have to endure all kinds of insults and be humble all the time and everywhere. We should not retaliate when we are insulted, neglecting ourselves and things.”

⁵⁴ Executions of Christians arrested in 1839 continued until 1841.

“We would have to despise ourselves and the things of the world, and not respond to wrongs with insults; that would be wretched. There would be no point in existing in the world if we are not allowed to live in a worldly manner.”

In general, the pagans know that Christians are honest and sympathize with their misery. And during the time of persecution, they showed kindness to Christians in various ways. When pagans find something good or surprising, they say, “It’s Christian.” Even pagans jokingly say among themselves, if someone does something good, “You must be a Christian, you act so well.”

There was no ruler in Korea who actively persecuted religion, (except for the queen⁵⁵ who killed James Zhou⁵⁶, the Chinese priest). All persecution began with the Byeokpa ministers and the kings were often unwilling, but dared not oppose the will of the Byeokpa faction, and they simply allowed what they wanted.

The same thing happened with Kim Taipi⁵⁷ in 1838, and for some years after. The Queen herself did not dare to oppose the will of the ministers, and while she opposed them in her heart, she allowed the ministers to severely persecute the Christians and kill the priests.

Persecution would not have occurred if Kim Yu-geun (金適根 1785-1840), the brother of Kim Taipi, who was the most powerful minister at that time, had been alive. He knew that there were foreign priests in Korea, yet he did not allow the persecution of Christians. He was a prospective believer and was very close to the catechumen Kim Jeong-ui⁵⁸, a second-grade dignitary of the court, and Augustine Yu, the martyr. Eventually he was criticized by many who said that he had also become a Christian. But, he fell seriously ill, lost consciousness in 1838 and died in 1839.

So, the Beokpa seized their chance and caused the persecution. Goodbye. Dear Father,
Andrew Kim-hae-Kim.

⁵⁵ Queen (Kim) Jeongsun (1745-1805), the widow of King Yeongjo, who became regent in 1801.

⁵⁶ Zhou Wenmo (周文謨 1752-1801). When persecution broke out in 1801 and the Christians suffered, he surrendered on April 23 and was martyred at Saenamto on May 31, 1801.

⁵⁷ The Queen of King Sunjo, Queen Sunwon (1789-1857), the grandmother of King Heonjong.

⁵⁸ Possibly Chusa (秋史) Kim Jeong-hui (金正喜, 1786-1856), the celebrated scholar and calligrapher.

Letter 12

Place where written: [Seoul]

Date when written: April 7, 1845

Recipient: Reverend Father Libois

Most Reverend Father,

There are systems and principles (*pa*, factions) among the ministers and governors of the kingdom of Korea. However, they have no reality; they are only names.

One is called Byeok and the other is called Shi, and they are fighting against each other, system Byeok is against Shi, Shi against Byeok. The fundamental reason these two factions oppose each other is that they hold different opinions. It is said that this partisan fighting was not serious at first, but now it is no small problem. So, envy, accusations, debates, and slaughter arise between the two factions, provoking and accusing each other, back and forth. These factions again form other factions so that there is a distinction between the Noron, (that is, North)⁵⁹ and the Namin (South). Most of the time, Noron is united with Byeok and Namin with Shi. There are differences among them. The Christian religion is tolerated by the Shi faction, but is rejected by the Piek faction, so the members of Piek are against the Christian religion. Queen Kim Taipi, that is, the current king's grandmother, belongs to the Shi faction, and the younger queen, that is, the current king's mother⁶⁰, belongs to Byeok. And most of the ministers are Piek. Thus, when the Byeok wanted to rise above the Shi, they rejected all of their opinions and, above all, took action to eradicate the innocent Christians, and persecution occurred several times and resulted in many martyrs.

The biggest enemy of the Christian religion right now is Jo Man-yeong⁶¹, who is the father of the younger queen. He holds supreme power over the country's policies today, his younger brother Jo In-yeong⁶² is Prime Minister and his son is Minister of War.

Most of the recent persecutions took place with the plans of Jo Man-yeong and Jo In-yeong, and it was they who severely persecuted Christians and ordered the priests to be killed. But after killing the priests, the ministers are afraid that the French will come in warships and take revenge, and all the people cried out that there would be war, that the kingdom would be overwhelmed with evils for having shed a lot of innocent blood, and until now they wish for war.

According to national law, foreigners cannot be killed, but must rather be returned to their home country. Therefore, Chinese, Tartar, and Japanese people are always given what they need and sent back. But if they killed the priests, it was certainly because of religion. The court believes that the priests were sent to Korea by the Pope and the French king. So, after they killed the priests, they couldn't help but be afraid. According to the satellites, the government insulted the French king by killing the priests, because they were told by the British that European kings wage war if their people are murdered. Ministers were vexed

⁵⁹ Kim Dae-geon is mistaken. Noron was a branch of the Western (西人, seoin) faction, separate from Soron, and equally distinct from the Northern faction.

⁶⁰ Queen Shinjeong (1808-1890) the mother of King Heonjong. She was the daughter of Jo Man-yeong, and the widow of Crown Prince Hyo-myeong, the son of King Sunjo. After the accession to the throne of King Heonjong, Prince Hyo-myeong was awarded the posthumous title of King Ikjong, and she became his queen.

⁶¹ Jo Man-yeong (趙萬永 1776-1846). In 1819 his daughter married the Crown Prince. As the leader of the Pungyang Jo clan he competed with the Andong Kim clan.

⁶² Jo In-yeong (趙寅永 1782-1850) was Jo Man-yeong's younger brother. He was the author of the anti-Catholic decree "Cheoksa Yuneum" (斥邪論音) which was promulgated on November 23, 1839.

with similar thoughts and upon receiving a report of several ships passing by⁶³ (they were English), they trembled, thinking that the French had come to retaliate, and the people were also spreading rumors that European ships were attacking.

But now, seeing that the French have not said anything for all these years, they have an unfounded false conviction that the country of France is not a kingdom to be feared as they thought. So now they are casting aside all fear and preparing to kill priests again, and if their representatives have their way, neither the priests nor we Christians will survive. In fact, the king is largely innocent of these things. God help us!

If a French warship comes to Korea and does not say anything about the murder of the priests, the situation of Christians would be even worse. Now, the government is paying close attention with the intention of punishing us with death as soon as we come in. Now I am nearby, but they do not know it as their guard has been insufficient. If the ministers learn that I have returned to Korea, they will immediately search for me everywhere.

After the priests died, Christians were persecuted for two more years. Since four years ago, they have been in a peaceful state, and everyone wants to bring missionary priests in as soon as possible, to restore the spirit of Christians, convert pagans, and complete all. Now, the number of Christians is increasing day by day; it did not decrease until today even after the martyrdom of the priests, but it is likely soon to increase to at least 10,000. There are many pagans who realize the truth of our religion and turn to the True God, and many of them just hear a few words and are converted. There have been not a few people who want to hear the truth of our religion, so if now someone dared to preach, there would be countless people who would accept the religion.

Ten Christians are still in prison, and five are living in exile. The old queen, Kim Taipi, is still alive, but she suffers from various ailments, so she practices Buddhism in search of consolation. Her death will be a great tribulation for the Christians. The king is healthy, but he runs the risk of being deposed from the throne. It is said that the ministers held a meeting one night and conspired to depose the king from the throne and instead make someone else king. The king is young, only nineteen years old, but quite prudent, and although there are obvious signs of illness on his face, it is said that his nose is high and his face not deformed. It seems that after his first wife's death, he took the 15-year-old Hong as his new queen⁶⁴.

After persecuting our Church, Jo Man-yeong and Jo In-yeong are still alive and exercise great power. High-ranking Minister Kim Jeong-hui, a catechumen⁶⁵, has not yet been released from exile.

The Korean people spread rumors of war while enjoying peace and eating well.

The traitor Kim Yeo-sang is said to be still living in exile⁶⁶ with his concubine, but he is also said to have suffered a lot of humiliations. In particular, the satellites and leaders hated him and beat him with all their might, saying, "You, you are worse than Judas. Judas betrayed Jesus, who came to die to save the world. You are not even human because you betrayed and killed the priests, who came to live in Korea."

⁶³ There were reports that in the 12th lunar month 1840, two British ships appeared near Jeju Island and plundered livestock. In the 6th lunar month 1845, the Samarang, commanded by the British Navy's Edward Belcher, surveyed Jeju and Geomundo Islands.

⁶⁴ Queen Hyo-hyun (1828-1843), the first queen of King Heon-jong, was the daughter of Kim Jo-geun, but she died young, aged only 16, in 1843, two years after becoming queen. Then the King chose the daughter of Hong Jae-ryong as his second wife who became Queen Hyo-jeong (1831-1904).

⁶⁵ The calligrapher and scholar Kim Jeong-hui (whom Kim Dae-geon calls Kim Jeong-ui) was a vice-minister. He was involved in a case involving the scholar Yun Sang-do and was exiled to Jeju Island for nine years from 1840 to 1848. He was a deeply engaged Buddhist, despite the claim that he was a Christian catechumen.

⁶⁶ The treacherous Catholic Kim Yeo-sang was exiled to Sinjido in 1840.

I haven't yet recovered from my eye disease, and in the meantime, I was seriously ill, but these days I'm getting a little better so I am able to stop worrying. I have a lot of work to do, but my body is weak. Ah! My mind is eager, but my activity is insignificant. For the present, for the future, for the sake of this place, in order to find a way in by the north, or for leaving for Jiangnan, there are a lot of things I need to prepare, but my body, weakened by illness, does not allow me to do the work. I, who became incompetent while sick, just sit around like this. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

I am now teaching two 14-year-old students, and I have been assigned two other children, but have not yet allowed them to come.

Although I am sick, I am preparing to leave for Jiangnan as soon as possible, and I plan to leave soon. In addition, Christians will be heading North this year to welcome Father Maistre and Thomas (Choe Yang-eop).

I would like to warn you that it is extremely difficult to send anything to Korea on a Chinese or European ship. The court now has military units on guard everywhere. When foreign ships arrive, they are monitored in case any Koreans try to contact them.

I am sending you an envelope containing twenty sheets of paper, a smaller paper envelope, three Korean paintings, an eightleaf folding screen called Pieng-Poung, a brass bowl for night time, three purses, the yellow one holding relics of the priests, a map of Korea⁶⁷, three combs and a device for cleaning them, four brushes to be used by loosening just the tip of the brush when using them, and a mat. Goodbye.

Father, your most obedient and unprofitable, Andrew Kim-hae Kim.

⁶⁷ Later known as "Kim Dae-geon's Map of Korea" (朝鮮全圖, Joseonjeondo).

Letter 13

Place where written: Shanghai

Date when written: June 4, 1845⁶⁸

Recipient: Reverend Father Libois

Last year, I was sent by the Venerable Bishop Ferréol, who is the Apostolic Vicar of Korea, to the bishop's mission field. Now, after finishing preparations in Korea, I have come to Shanghai by boat with eleven Christians. We eagerly await the return of the Bishop⁶⁹.

I am very busy right now and I cannot tell you much. I will write another letter to you and send it later. Goodbye.

To Your Reverence, your Korean student Andrew Kim.

⁶⁸ The day Kim Dae-geon arrived in Shanghai.

⁶⁹ Bishop Ferréol had gone back to Macao.

Letter 14

Place where written: Shanghai

Date when written: (no date, probably June 4, 1845 like the previous letter)

Recipient: Bishop Ferréol, Vicar Apostolic of Korea

Most Reverend Bishop,

After leaving Your Excellency at the Pien-moun, I arrived in Uiju that evening. I sent the envoys ahead, and I was alone in the middle of the night as I crossed the river and passed through the gateway, with some difficulties.

After five days we reached the city named Pyongyang. And after that, the journey to Seoul was completed safely, I was received there by the Christians. However, after that, various exhausting incidents caused me to fall sick several times.

Now, I have reached Shanghai by boat with eleven Christians, and we are waiting for Your Excellency's arrival. I am very busy with various things, so I cannot report much.

This to Your Excellency, from the Korean Andrew Kim.

Letter 15.

This letter is lost, the only reference to it is found in a letter by Father Claude Gotteland, SJ, dated July 8, 1845.

Letter 16

Place where written: [Shanghai]
Date when written: July 23, 1845
Recipient: Father Libois

Most Reverend Father

After all my preparations, I set sail with eleven Christians. Of these, only four were sailors, and the rest had never seen the sea. In addition, because everything had to be done secretly and in a hurry, it was impossible to find any competent sailor and to obtain other useful items. So on the 24th day of the third lunar month (April 30, 1845), we set sail and put to sea.

The Christians were surprised to see the sea and whispered, but they dared not ask me where we were going, because I had forbidden anyone to ask questions about what I was doing.

During the first day, we met a fair wind and sailed safely, but after that, a sudden rain storm continued for three days. It is said that more than 30 ships were lost in the region of Jiangnan (Shanghai) as a result of this storm. As the storm got worse and worse, the ship was struck by the waves and was thrown about terribly, almost sinking (the ship was a small ship that had never been on the open sea). So, I ordered them to cut free the dinghy that was holding us back badly. Still, the danger persisted, so we had to cut down the two masts and throw away provisions finally. The boat got a little lighter, but as the storm continued to rage, it was swept hither and thither by the wind and waves.

The Christians were extremely exhausted because they couldn't eat for three days, and when they felt that there was no hope of surviving, they were desperate and said, "Now it's over, we cannot live." And began to cry. So, I comforted and encouraged them as much as possible with the words, "Don't be afraid, see, the Holy Mother is with us who will help us," showing the picture of Our Lady of Miracles, our only hope after God.

I was also on the verge of falling sick, so I tried to eat food though I didn't want to eat, and I didn't reveal my fears. The person I had hired as the chief sailor was a pagan who was already a catechumen, so I baptized him.

Meanwhile, the ship's tiller was broken, and the ship was driven across the sea. So, to stop the waves, we tied the sails together and hung them behind the ship so that they floated on the water, but that line broke and they floated away. Next, we threw in the pieces of wood that had been laid at the bottom of the boat wrapped in straw sacks, but they were also borne away by the waves.

Now we were in a situation where we could not expect any human salvation, so we lay down to sleep with our hope only in God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. When I awoke suddenly, the rain had stopped and the storm was weakening. After a day, we began to recover. I commanded everyone to eat and to revive in the Lord again.

After this, we tried to prepare to continue sailing, but we had no masts, no sails, no tiller, or no dinghy, and we were at a loss about what to do. However, we deeply entrusted ourselves to the very glorious Virgin Mary, and made a mast and a tiller by using all the

wood left on the ship. After sailing against headwinds for about five days, we reached the coast of Kiang-nan and saw mountains in the distance. However, I despaired of reaching Shanghai because the mast was weak and we didn't have what we needed to sail farther. I wanted to ask the Chinese for help, or at least for directions, but I couldn't get to them because we had no dinghy while the Chinese did not come to us, but rather avoided us.

We couldn't hope for human help, so we only trusted in God's help. In the meantime, a ship from Shandong appeared, and when they saw us, they were afraid, pretended not to understand, and passed by. We called them, waving flags and drumming. They didn't try to approach at first, but eventually they came to us, perhaps feeling sorry for us.

So I boarded the ship, greeted the captain, and asked him to lead us to Shanghai. However, he refused to listen to my explanations or pleas, but rather encouraged us to go to Shandong with him and then go back to Korea via Beijing according to the custom. I replied that I did not want to return to Korea via Beijing, and that I must go to Shanghai to fix the boat. Finally, he only accepted my request when he heard me promise to give him a thousand patacas. So we tied our boat to his, and after meeting headwinds for about eight days, we encountered another storm, but with God's help, we were able to survive. However, the ship of a friend of the ship that was towing us was wrecked, all but one person died.

After the storm, we sailed on again, but this time pirates came rushing at us and yelled at the captain, saying, "Don't tow their ship. We want to plunder them." When I heard this, I instructed the captain to blow them up. Then the pirates left us and sailed away.

We arrived in Wusong-kou after about seven days. The mandarin sent satellites to us to question where we were from, how, and for what purpose we had come. I replied, "We are Koreans, and we have drifted here after a big storm, and we intend to go to Shanghai and repair the ship."

The officers of a British ship came to visit us. I explained to them that we were Koreans, that we had come to find missionary priests, and asked them to protect us from the Chinese and to guide us to the British consulate. They were very kind and not only willing to accept my request, they also gave us wine and meat and invited me to a meal.

We stayed in Wusong for a day and visited the mandarins there. The officials, after asking various questions, said that they would report our situation to the Emperor and send us back to Korea by land. So I answered: "I am not ignorant of the custom between the two countries, but I don't want to go back to Korea by land. I also don't want the Emperor to learn that we're here, so please don't report it. But it doesn't matter much to me, whether you do or not. I will return to Korea after repairing the ship, so don't worry, you just need to know that we have landed on the coast of your country, walked on your ground and drunk your region's water. I only want to have complete freedom, so please write to the mandarin of Shanghai that a Korean ship is going there to be repaired and we do not want him to have the slightest annoyance or worry because of our ship. I just ask you to write asking him to allow us to stay without experiencing any trouble or anxiety."

When the Chinese officials saw me communicating with the British, they said, "This man is a Korean, so how is it that he is a close friend with British people and understands their language?" and were quite amazed.

We left Wusong and entered Shanghai port (June 4). Two Englishmen came and asked me to accompany them. So, I left our ship in the hands of a Chinese pilot, boarded their small boat and entered the city of Shanghai. There I asked the British to find a guide who would take me to the consul. One of them, an Englishman named Arthur John Emson, spoke French, so he wrote a letter to the consul for me. The consul was very welcoming, so I explained all that we needed and asked him to protect us from the Chinese. Bishop Ferréol

had told the consul in advance that we would go and ask him to protect us, so the consul already knew that we would come.

Then, I went to a Chinese Christian's house and stayed there for two days, and Fr. Gotteland⁷⁰ came. I received 580 patacas from him, of which I gave 400 patacas to the Chinese captain who helped us, and about 30 patacas were spent for them.

Meanwhile, the mandarins in Shanghai sent satellites to the Koreans to ask questions and posted a guard to watch it at night. The Taottai⁷¹ himself came with satellites, looked at the boat, went back and sent 20 *modius* (bushels) of rice and 20 pounds of meat.

When I returned to the boat, the Christians were panicking because the Chinese mandarins had interrogated them in various ways and thousands of Chinese people had flocked to see them. Upon hearing that I had returned to the ship, the mandarins sent satellites again to investigate the reason why we were there, the name, age, and place of residence of each person. I answered briefly and then asked the Chinese not to bother us by sending any more people. Then I ordered them to return the rice and meat. I had to visit the mandarins twice to deal with various annoying things.

The Shanghai officials reported all the facts about us to the magistrate in charge of Songjiang 松江. Then he sent a reply saying that he knew me (probably he heard about me when I was with Captain Cécille before and that I could stay in Shanghai as long as I wished. However, because the Chinese crowded so much with curiosity, I had them driven back with a stick. I severely rebuked certain satellites for acting too rudely to me, and they were punished by their superintendent.

The residents of Shanghai regard me as an important person, and the officials are very suspicious, saying that I am Koukouai (*guguai* 古怪 “odd”) after seeing me talking familiarly with the British.

Once, the officials sent a satellite to ask when we would leave. I told them, “I have to stay here longer to fix the ship. Not only that, but I heard that soon the great French mandarin Cécille is coming here, so I want to stay longer to see him.” The Chinese officials were eagerly waiting for us to depart, fearing that they would lose their positions because of us.

I don't think that I need to explain all the circumstances, and I don't have time to do so, so I'm going to stop here. The ship has already been repaired and now a dinghy is being built. We are all well by the grace of the Lord. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Bishop of Korea. The British consul is well and is taking good care of us. The Reverend Bishop Besi has not yet returned; he has fallen ill on the way. A small persecution took place in Nanjing.

I would like you to send me holy pictures and medals for the sailors and those who work hard for the mission. In particular, please send images of Saint Thomas the Doctor, St. Charles, Our Lord's foster father, St. Joseph, St. John the Apostle, and images of the Crucifixion. I brought some Korean items to give to you, but now there is no proper way to send them, so I am hoping that I can send them when the Bishop comes. Please send all the items you can for the Korean mission. When you write to the various priests I know, I hope you also convey my greetings. I should have already written to you, but I couldn't because I was busy with various things and in addition, because Father Gotteland wanted to read this report⁷².

⁷⁰ Fr. Claude Gotteland (1803-1856) was the superior of the Jesuits sent to China when the Jesuits, suppressed in 1773, were restored in 1814.

⁷¹ The head magistrate of a city during the Qing dynasty, the daoyuan (道員).

⁷² The “Report on the Korean martyrs” accompanying this letter.

The items that can be sold⁷³ in Korea are European fabrics of different colors, especially white; silks of many different colors, especially red and green; and Chinese fabrics and similar things.

All the Christians here greet you.

Reverend Father, from your unworthy and unprofitable son Andrew Kim-haeKim.

I have written a short letter to Bishop Ferréol. If the Bishop is not there and has already departed, please read the letter and deal with it as you wish.

⁷³ By selling such items, the mission could earn money more easily.

Letter 17

Place where written: (Shanghai)

Date when written: July 23, 1845

Recipient: Bishop Ferréol, Apostolic Vicar of Korea

Most Reverend Bishop,

I should have already written a letter to Your Excellency but I was busy due to various circumstances and had no time to send a letter. Your letter was transmitted by the British consul. Indeed, it has been a great joy and comfort to us.

After receiving Your Excellency's orders and being sent to Korea, I safely entered by the grace of God and was welcomed by the Christians in Seoul. In that time, I fell sick many times. The Christians are now living comfortably without being persecuted but they groan because they have no shepherds. The number of Christians is increasing day by day, their enthusiasm increases, and apostates are returning to yield better fruit. Pagans are often abandoning the errors passed down from their ancestors and turning to the True God, and public opinion that regards the Christian religion as the best among pagans is spreading.

The number of Christians is estimated to be at least 10,000, and the number of martyrs is said to be 800 from the beginning.

Christians are not really actively persecuted at present, but they are in danger of being imprisoned day by day, and they are truly poor and in terrible tribulation.

I bought a house for you and entrusted it to a believer. And I bought two sailboats to come to Jiangnan, one bigger and the other a small dinghy. The dinghy was lost at sea in a storm. It took almost a month after leaving Korea for us to reach Jiangnan, and we encountered two storms. The parents and wives of the Christians I brought with me when I left Korea do not know their whereabouts yet. We met pirates in the sea near Jiangnan, but we were protected by the Blessed Virgin Mary, so they dared not rob us. When we arrived in Wusong and Shanghai, the British consul and the British were very kind, hospitable and sincere to protect us.

The Chinese mandarins wanted us to go back to Korea by land and to report our arrival to the Emperor according to custom. But I was against it and did all I could to prevent it. Now the same mandarins also pay homage to me and allow me to stay here at will. But they are very amazed to see me get along well with the British and understand what they say. There are also people who see me speaking Chinese well and consider me to be Chinese. The English consul told me to tell you that he had received your letter, and showed me the letter (I didn't understand it well because he told me this without an interpreter).

I am desperate to explain everything clearly and in detail, but I can't tell you everything because there are so many things to do around me and I will meet you soon.

I wrote a little more in the letter to Father Libois. We here are looking forward to your coming every day. There is plenty of space to put things on the boat, so please bring whatever you can when you come. Items worth selling in Korea are Western cotton, linen cloth, silk, and so forth. Korea's silver coins look like this (drawing). They are accepted regardless of shape or size.

The ministers of Korea have been afraid for several years that the French might come to demand compensation after the murder of French priests whom they believe to have been sent by the French king. They believe that they have insulted the French king by killing the people he sent. However, seeing that the French do not come to demand compensation after many years, they have become bold again and will try to kill Christians again.

Bishop Besi fell ill on the way and he has not yet returned. I received five hundred and eighty patacas from Father Gotteland.

The Christians here greet you.

Reverend Bishop, your obedient and worthless son Andrew Kim.

Letter 18

Place where written: Seoul

Date when written: November 20, 1845

Recipient: Father Libois, Foreign Missions Procurator

Most Reverend Father,

We departed from Jiangnan around the month of September⁷⁴. We suffered from several storms at sea, the winds grew ever stronger and the ship's tiller was broken. So, to avoid shipwreck, the mast was cut down and we continued sailing. With a strong headwind, we drifted to the Island of Quelpart (Jeju)⁷⁵.

After that, it took several days to arrive at the port called Ganggyeong⁷⁶ and with God's help, we were welcomed by Christians without any adversity.

The Most Reverend Bishop Ferréol and the Reverend Father Daveluy are well in the Lord and are studying the language. We are preparing a journey to bring in Father Maistre and Thomas the deacon.

The king and ministers who persecuted us are still alive. The Christians are at peace for now, but rumors of another persecution are troubling them.

Around the seventh month of the lunar calendar this year, a British ship came to Jeju Island. At that time, the ministers and the people were trembling, thinking that they had come to retaliate for the blood of the murdered priests. In this way, the frequent visits of Western ships to the shores of Korea have stimulated a hatred of Christians among pagans. They believe that Western forces are approaching because the Christians have invited them and interact with them. Some pagans investigate, doubting that we have been to Jiangnan and speak badly of us.

Because of my lack of expressiveness, I dare not write a lot. The Venerable Bishop Ferréol and Reverend Father Daveluy will write more to you. Also, I have done little but plan and wish, so I do not have much to report. In addition, I sincerely wish all happiness and success to you, most reverend and best father Libois and the Most

Reverend Father,

Most Reverend Father, please remember me in your prayers and at the sacrifice of the Mass.

Father, from your unworthy and useless servant Andrew.

⁷⁴ Kim Dae-geon departed from Shanghai for Korea on August 31, 1845, along with Bishop Ferréol, Father Daveluy, and a crew of 11 Korean Christians. He had been ordained as a priest on August 17.

⁷⁵ They arrived off Yongsu Port in Jeju Island on September 28, 1845.

⁷⁶ They arrived in Ganggyeong on October 12th.

Letter 19

Place where written: [In prison, Seoul]

Date when written: the 8th day of the 6th lunar month, 1846⁷⁷.

Recipients: the Most Reverend Fathers Berneux, Maistre, Libois, Légrégeois.

It seems disrespectful to address a single letter to such venerable priests. However, not only the place and environment in which I am now, but also my devotion and affection for Your Excellencies, compel me to write a letter like this.

Around March of the lunar calendar, I went to Baengnyeong Island⁷⁸ by boat, as His Excellency Bishop Ferréol ordered me to. We delivered Latin and Chinese letters destined for various priests to some Chinese fishing boats there. However, later, all the letters were found⁷⁹ and confiscated by Korean satellites.

On the way back, I was arrested with four Christians⁸⁰; we were bound together, and sent to the capital city. On our way to Seoul, people flocked to see us whenever we spent the night in various towns. I was arrested as a foreigner. In the city, a number of Christians were caught. Charles Hyeon was also arrested along with five female Christians who were working for the mission⁸¹. In addition, items such as money and furnishings from my house were confiscated. Now satellites are being dispatched everywhere to capture Christians, but above all they are trying to arrest Thomas Yi, the clerk of the Venerable Bishop Ferréol. I am concerned that the Bishop and priest will also be arrested⁸². In that case, it is likely that a great persecution will occur. I have been interrogated countless times⁸³ because of the letters, and I encouraged the confined Christians with confession and gave two catechumens the sacrament of baptism. We are some ten people here, and another seven or eight are in another prison.

I have spoken to the judges many times about the greatness and generosity of France. They seemed to believe me, but they say that they have received no retaliation from France after killing the French priests (in 1839). They are afraid to kill me because of the French, but they are no longer afraid for the reasons mentioned above.

Currently, there is no way or method for our Christians to bring in or protect missionary priests without God's help. It would be a great help if the French consul denounced to the Chinese Emperor the killing of the priests, and the Chinese Emperor sent a

⁷⁷ July 30 by the solar calendar.

⁷⁸ Father Kim Dae-geon set out with a group of Christians on May 13, following Bishop Ferréol's instructions to open a route for missionaries across the West Sea. He arrived at Baengnyeongdo Island on May 29, passing by Yeonpyeong Island and Sunui Island.

⁷⁹ Father Kim Dae-geon entrusted letters to the missionaries in China to a Chinese ship, but they were confiscated by the Korean government officials. The letters handed in by Ongjin Mahappo were for Shanghai, with 1 map and 6 Latin letters. The letters handed in by Jangyeon were three, one to Shanghai contained one map, two Chinese letters, and two Latin letters. There were two letters sent to Baijiadian, one containing a map, a Chinese letter, and a Latin letter, and the other two Chinese letters.

⁸⁰ Father Kim Dae-geon was sent to the Provincial Office in Haeju on June 10, and was transferred to the Seoul Police Bureau on June 21. At this time, the believers arrested with him were Im Seong-ryong and Eom Su, Im Chi-baek, the father of Im Seong-ryong, and Kim Jung-su, the father of Kim Seong-seo.

⁸¹ This marks the beginning of the Byeongdo persecution of 1846. On July 15, the satellites entered the house of Agatha Yi Gannan and arrested Wu Sul-im. Before that, Hyeon Seok-mun, Teresa Kim Im-i, Catherine Jeong Cheol-yeom and Yi Gannan with others had been arrested and sent to the police court.

⁸² They were not troubled. Yi Jae-ui was arrested but released after apostasy. Later, Yi Jae-ui was arrested in 1868 and executed on May 28

⁸³ Father Kim Dae-geon was interrogated from June 23 to July 19.

letter telling the king of Korea not to kill the French so readily and to give the Christians freedom. If the Chinese Emperor ordered the king of Korea to do so, he would obey. Even if Korean Christians will not be able to bring in missionaries in the future, please arrange for priests to come on British ships.

I would like to offer my final greetings to Your Excellencies.

Most Venerable Bishop Berneux, goodbye. Most Venerable Father Maistre, goodbye. Most Venerable Father Libois, goodbye.

Most Venerable Father Légrégeois, goodbye.

I hope that we will soon meet again in Heaven, the eternal Father's dwelling. I ask you to greet all the reverend priests on my behalf.

My dear brother Thomas, farewell. We will meet again in heaven. And I ask you to take special care of my mother Ursula.

Bound for the name of Christ, I entrust myself to the power of Christ. May God help me endure all the harsh torments to the end.

Have pity on us, God. Have pity on us.

Look down on our tribulation. If the Lord examines our iniquity, Lord, who can bear it?

Goodbye, most reverend priests.

From your unprofitable and unworthy servant Andrew, Apostolic Missionary to Korea, chained for Christ.

Shandong fishing boats come to Baengnyeong Island in the 3rd month and return in the 5th month.

Letter 20

Place where written: In prison, (Seoul)

Date when written: August 26, 1846

Recipient: Bishop Ferréol

My Lord Bishop⁸⁴,

Your Excellency will know all that has happened in the capital since our separation. The arrangements for our voyage once made, we weighed anchor⁸⁵, and carried by a favorable wind, we arrived safely in the Yeonpyeong Sea, then covered with a multitude of fishing boats. My people bought some fish and went to resell them in the port of Sunui island. Finding no buyer there, they deposited them ashore with a sailor in charge of salting them.

From there continuing our route we passed Sogang and Mahap, Teojinmok⁸⁶, Socheong, Daecheong islands, and we anchored near Baengnyeong Island. I saw a hundred junks from Shandong there engaged in fishing. They were approaching very close to shore, but the crews could not get ashore. On the heights of the coast and on the tops of the mountains were soldiers watching them as sentries.

Curiosity attracted crowds of Koreans from neighboring islands to the Chinese. I went to them myself at night and was able to talk with the owner of a boat. I entrusted him with the letters of Your Excellency; I wrote some addressed to Fathers Berneux, Maistre and Libois and two Christians from China. I enclosed with them two maps of Korea with descriptions of the islands, rocks and other remarkable things of the coast of Yellow Sea⁸⁷. This place seems to me very favorable for the introduction of missionaries and the communication of letters, while using with caution the services of the Chinese. Each year towards the beginning of the third month, they gather there to fish, then they return home at the end of the fifth month.

After having carried out your orders, we left and returned to the port of Sunui. Until then my trip had seemed under happy auspices and I expected a better end. The fish that we had deposited on the shore were not yet dry; which prolonged our stay in the port. My servant Venancio⁸⁸ asked my permission to go ashore to collect some money he had left with a family where the fear of persecution had kept him hidden for seven years. After his departure, an official⁸⁹ escorted by his people came to our boat and asked for it to be used to chase away the Chinese junks. The law in Korea does not allow the use of noble boats for public chores. Among the people I had been made to pass, I do not know how, for a *yangban* (nobleman) of high status, and by ceding my boat to the mandarin, I would lose their respect, which would have harmed our future expeditions. Besides, Venancio had drawn up a rule of conduct for me in such circumstances. I told the mandarin that my boat was for my use and that I could not give it to him.

⁸⁴ This letter was originally written in Latin. Bishop Ferréol translated it into French and sent that to the Rector of the Paris Seminary on November 3, 1846, and it is certain that he intended to keep the original Latin text. However, the original was lost during subsequent persecutions.

⁸⁵ When Father Kim Dae-geon set out, the people who accompanied him were the ship's owner Im Seong-ryong, the servant Yi Ui-chang, boatman Eom Su, Kim Seong-seo, No Eon-ik, An Sun-myeong and Park Seong-cheol, 7 people in all, according to the government records.

⁸⁶ Daejinpo in Seodae-myeon, Jangyeon-gun.

⁸⁷ Six letters and one map were included in the items sent to the court by Kim Jeong-jip, the governor of Hwanghae-do, who confiscated the letters.

⁸⁸ Thought to be Yi Ui-chang who accompanied him.

⁸⁹ The magistrate of Deungsan.

The satellites overwhelmed me with insults and withdrew, taking my boatman. They returned in the evening, and seized a second sailor and led him to the local office. They were asked several questions about me, and their answers cast great suspicion on me. The official knew that the grandmother of one of them was a Christian. The satellites took counsel and said: "We are thirty; if this individual is truly noble, we will not all perish; one or two will be put to death, the others will live; let's arrest him." They came at night, accompanied by several public women, and rushed at me in a rage; they took me by the hair, some of which they tore off, bound me with a rope and charged me with blows with their feet, fists and sticks. During this time and under cover of night, those of the sailors who remained slipped into the dinghy and fled by dint of oars.

When I reached the shore, the satellites stripped me of my clothes, bound me and struck me again with derision and sarcasm, and dragged me to the tribunal, where a crowd of people had gathered. The official asked me: Are you a Christian? Yes, I am, I replied. Why do you practice this religion against the king's orders? Give it up. I practice my religion, because it is true; it teaches me to honor God and leads me to eternal bliss; I don't know the name of apostasy. They put me to the question. Judge: If you do not apostatize, I will make you die under the blows. As you wish, but I will never abandon my God. Do you want to hear the truths of my religion? Listen: the God whom I adore is the Creator of heaven and earth, of men and of all that exists. He punishes crime, he rewards virtue etc. whence it follows that every man must pay him homage. For me, Sir, I thank you for making me suffer torments for His love; may my God reward you for this blessing by raising you to higher dignities. At these words the mandarin began to laugh with the whole assembly.

I was then brought an eight-foot-long cangue. I grabbed it immediately and threw it around my neck. Bursts of laughter erupted from all sides in the audience. I was thrown into prison with the two sailors who had already apostatized. My hands, feet, neck, and waist were tightly bound so that I couldn't walk, sit, or lie down. I was oppressed by the crowd that curiosity had drawn around me. Part of the night was spent preaching religion to them; they listened with interest and assured me that they would embrace it, if it was not prohibited by the king.

The satellites having found objects from China in my bag⁹⁰, believed that I was from that country. The next day the official summoned me to appear before him and asked me if I was Chinese. No, I replied, I am Korean. Not believing my words, he said to me: In which province of China were you born? I grew up in Macao in the province of Canton⁹¹; I am Christian; curiosity and the desire to spread my religion brought me to this area. He took me back to prison.

Five days having passed⁹², a minor officer at the head of a large number of satellites, took me to Haeju, the capital of the province. The governor asked me if I was Chinese; I gave him the same answer as to the official on the island⁹³. He asked me a multitude of questions about religion. I eagerly seized the opportunity and told him about the immortality of the soul, hell, paradise, the existence of God, the need to worship him in order to be happy after death. He and his people answered me: What you are saying is good and reasonable; but the

⁹⁰ One small booklet with words in Hangeul, one silk pocket, two pieces of silk stitched around the circumference (one of which bore the picture of a person and the other with grass), and a piece of navy silk. Among them, one of the paintings on the two pieces of silk was the Virgin Mary and the Baby Jesus, and the other was the Sacred Heart (based on government records).

⁹¹ He is said to be Cantonese in the interrogation record. Father Kim Dae-geon actually said at the beginning of his interrogation that he was called Wu Dae-geon (于大建), a man from Macao in Ganton Province.

⁹² He was arrested on June 5, so on June 10.

⁹³ The Hwanghae governor's interrogation was held on June 13.

King does not allow anyone to be a Christian. They then asked me about many things that could have compromised Christians and the Mission. I took care not to answer them. “If you don’t tell us the truth,” they said irritably, “we will torment you with various tortures.” Do whatever you like. Running towards the instruments of torture, I seized them and threw them at the feet of the governor, saying to him: I am ready, strike, I do not fear your torments. The satellites immediately removed them. The servants of the governor approached me, saying to me: It is the custom that any person brought before the governor should refer to himself as So-in (little man). What are you saying? I am tall, I am noble, I do not know such an expression.

A few days later the governor made me appear again⁹⁴ and overwhelmed me with questions about China; sometimes he spoke to me through an interpreter to find out if I really was Chinese, and he ended up ordering me to apostatize. I shrugged my shoulders and smiled in pity. The two Christians taken with me, overcome by the atrocity of torture, identified the house I lived in in the capital, betrayed Thomas Yi, Your Excellency’s clerk, Matthias his brother⁹⁵ and some others; they confessed that I had communicated with the Chinese junks and that I had given two letters to one of them. Immediately a squadron of satellites was directed towards the junks and brought back the letters⁹⁶ to the governor.

We were guarded with great severity; each placed in a separate prison, four soldiers watching over us day and night. We had chains on our feet and hands and the cangue around our necks. A long rope was tied about our loins and three men held it by the end whenever we needed to meet nature’s demands. I leave you to think what miseries I had to endure. The soldiers, seeing seven scars on my chest left by leeches, which had been applied to me in an illness in Macao, said that it was the stars of the Great Bear and amused themselves with a thousand jokes.

As soon as the king heard of our arrest, he sent satellites to take us to the capital; he had been told that I was Chinese. During the journey we were bound as in prison; moreover, our arms were tied with a red rope, as is the custom for thieves and serious criminals, and our heads covered with a blackish canvas bag. On the way, we had to endure great fatigue; the crowd oppressed us. I passed for a foreigner, they climbed trees and houses to see me pass.

When we arrived in Seoul we were thrown into the thieves’ prison. The people in the courtroom, hearing my language, said, this man is Korean. The next day I appeared before the judges. They asked me who I was. I am Korean, I replied; I was raised in China⁹⁷. Chinese-speaking interpreters were brought in to talk to me.

In the persecution of 1839, the traitor (Kim Yeo-sang) had declared that three young Koreans had been sent to Macao to study the language of Europeans; I could not therefore remain unknown for long, and moreover one of the Christians taken had also told them that I

⁹⁴ Father Kim Dae-geon underwent four interrogations in Haeju Provincial Office.

⁹⁵ Im Seong-ryong and Eom Su each underwent three interrogations at the Haeju provincial office. At this time, Im Seong-ryong said that Father Kim Dae-geon had delivered letters to a Chinese ship, and denounced Yi of Sogong-dong in Seoul, Nam Gyeong-mun, Kim Sun-yeo and Ku Sun-o. Eom Su accused Im Seong-ryong’s father, Im Gun-jip. Father Kim Dae-geon wrongly saw Thomas Yi Jae-ui and Matthias Yi Singyu as brothers. Yi Jae-ui was Yi Seung-hun’s grandson, and Yi Sin-gyu was Yi Seunghun’s third son. Therefore, Thomas Yi was Matthias Yi’s nephew.

⁹⁶ Military officer Yu Sang-eun, interpreter Kim Yong-nam, officer Hwang Gil-seung, etc. disguised themselves as merchants and skilfully stole Kim Dae-geon’s letters that he had handed over to the Chinese ships. (government records).

⁹⁷ Father Kim Dae-geon said at the beginning of the investigation that he had changed his surname to “Kim” when he came to Korea, although he was initially the Chinese Wu Dae-geon. However, at the sixth hearing of July 19, he said that he was a Korean man born in Yongin, called Kim Jae-bok (金再福, his childhood name). (Government records).

was from the country. I told the judges that I was Andrew Kim, one of these three young people, and I told them all that I had to suffer in order to return to my homeland. At that the judges were heard saying with the spectators: Poor young man! he has had a hard life since childhood!

They ordered me to comply with the king's orders by apostatizing. Above the king, I tell them, is a God who commands me to worship him; to deny Him is a crime that the king's order cannot justify. Summoned to denounce Christians, I opposed to them the duties of charity and the commandment of God to love one's neighbor. Asked about religion, I spoke to them at length about the existence and unity of God, about the creation and immortality of the soul, about hell, the need to worship the Creator and the falsity of pagan religions. When I had finished speaking, the judges answered me: Your religion is good, but ours is also, that is why we practice it. If in your opinion this is so, I replied to them, you must leave us alone and let us live in peace. But far from that, you persecute us, you treat us more cruelly than the basest criminals; you admit that our religion is good, that it is true and yet you pursue it like an abominable doctrine. You are putting yourself at odds with yourselves. They laughed foolishly at my answer.

The letters and maps seized were brought to me. The judges read the two letters which were written in Chinese; they only contained greetings. They gave me the European letters to translate; I interpreted to them whatever could have no consequences for the Mission. They asked me questions about Fathers Berneux, Maistre and Libois; I answered them: They are scholars in China. Finding a difference between the letters of Your Excellency and mine; they asked me who wrote them. I told them that they were all my letters. They presented me with yours and asked me to write similarly. They used cunning, I conquered them by cunning.

These characters, I tell them, were traced with a metal pen; bring me that instrument and I will satisfy you. We don't have a metallic pen. If you don't have one, it is impossible for me to form characters like these. We can give you a quill; the judge said, presenting one to me: Can you not write with this instrument? It is not the same thing, however, I can show you how in European characters the same person can write in different ways. So sharpening the pen very fine, I wrote a few lines in very small letters; then cutting the tip, I formed larger letters. You see, I tell them, these characters are not the same. This satisfied them, and they did not insist any more on the author of the letters. You will understand, Monsignor, that our Korean scholars are not up to the level of European scholars.

The Christians taken with me have not yet suffered any torture in the capital. Charles (Hyeon Seok-mun) remains in another prison with the people who were taken with him. We cannot have any communication between us. We are ten people in this prison; four have apostatized; three of them repent of their weakness.

Matthias Yi⁹⁸, who in 1839 had been a weak neophyte, shows himself today full of courage and wants to die a martyr. He serves as an example to the father⁹⁹ of Seon-sil, my boatman, and to Peter Nam¹⁰⁰ who had previously scandalized the faithful. We do not know

⁹⁸ Yi Sin-gyu (called Yi Ki-won in the record of interrogation) confessed his faith this time. However, shortly thereafter, he apostatized and was released again.

⁹⁹ Joseph Im Chi-baek (林致百 1803-1846): Saint. Born in Seoul, the father of the ship's owner Im Seong-ryong. He was attracted to the faith from an early age, but he did not enter the Church. He met Father Kim Dae-geon at the police prison and received the sacrament on hearing his explanation of the doctrine. He was martyred by hanging at the police prison on September 20, 1846.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Nam Gyeong-mun (南景文 1796-1846): Saint. Born in a middle-class family in Seoul, he married Barbara Heo at the age of 20 and then entered the Church. However, he was arrested in 1839 during the persecution and apostatized, then after being released, he lived a prodigal life. He was re-arrested during the

when we will be led to death. Full of confidence in the Lord's mercy, we hope that He will give us the strength to confess His Holy Name until the last hour.

The government absolutely wants to seize Thomas, Your Excellency's clerk and some other leaders. The satellites seem a little tired and less ardent in the search for Christians, they told us that they had gone to Yesan, Yangji, Euni¹⁰¹ and the provinces of Chungcheong and Jeolla. I beg your Excellency and Father Daveluy to remain hidden until after my death.

The judge told me that three warships¹⁰², which he believed to be French, had anchored near Oeyeon Island. They had come, he told me, by order of the Emperor of France (a suitable expression in these countries) to threaten great misfortune to Korea, and that two left assuring that they would come back next year, that the third is still in the Korean Sea. The government seems terrified; they remember the death of the three French martyrs in 1839. I am asked if I know the reason why they came. I tell them that although I cannot be sure, there is nothing to fear because the French do no harm without reason. I told them about the power of France and the generosity of its government. They seem to believe me; however, they object that although they killed three French people they had received no harm. If French ships really came to Korea, Your Excellency must surely know it.

I have been given an English world map to translate. I made two copies with colors that pleased them; one is destined for the King. At the moment I am busy composing by the order of ministers a small abridgment of geography. They take me for a great scientist! Poor people!

I recommend my mother Ursula to Your Excellency. After an absence of ten years, she was granted to have her son for a few days, who was taken from her almost immediately. Please, I beg you, console her in her pain. Prostrated in spirit at the feet of Your Excellency, I greet for the last time my beloved Father and my Reverend Bishop. I also greet Bishop Besi; my very respectful greetings to Father Daveluy. Goodbye; until we meet in Heaven.

Andrew Kim, priest prisoner of J.C.

PS.

August 29. Today I am certain that French ships have come to Korea. They can easily deliver us; but if they just threaten and then sail away, they will do the mission great harm and expose me to terrible torments before I die¹⁰³.

My God, lead everything to a good end.

Byeongo Persecution in 1846, confessed his faith, and was martyred by hanging with other Christians at the police prison on September 20th.

¹⁰¹ A village in what is now Namgok-ri, Yang-myeon, Cheoin-gu, Yongin-si, Gyeonggi-do. It was a long-established Christian village, near the Golbae Masil village where Father Kim Dae-geon grew up.

¹⁰² On August 9, 1846, Captain Cécille, the commander of the French fleet in China, led three warships, the Cléopâtre, Victorieuse, and Sabine, and appeared near Oeyeon Island in Chungcheong-do. Captain Cécille left again on August 10 after sending a letter protesting to the Korea government against the killing of the three French missionaries in 1839.

¹⁰³ At a state council in front of the king on the 25th day of the 7th lunar month, Prime Minister Kwon Don-in said he thought that it was the Catholics who had brought in the French warships, and therefore insisted that Kim Dae-geon should be tried for treason. As a result, Father Kim Dae-geon was sentenced to military execution, and the next day, September 16 in the solar calendar, he was executed at Saenamteo.

Letter 21, written in Korean.

Place where written: In prison, Seoul
Date when written: late August, 1846
Recipients: the Christians of Korea

Father Kim Dae-geon's last Hoeyu¹⁰⁴

Christians, behold!

Friends! Let us keep on thinking!

God, from the beginning, disposed all things and created us humans in His image: let us consider His aim and intention in setting us in the world.

If we consider life in this world, there are so many pitiful and sad things. Once we are born into this perilous, pitiful world, if we do not know the Master who placed us here; our birth would have no value; our life would be pointless. Having come into the world by God's Grace, and by a still greater grace become part of the Church and the Lord's disciples, by baptism, we bear the most precious name; but if we do not put that into practice, what use is that name? Not only will our entry into the Church be profitless to us, but we shall prove traitors to the Lord and to His Grace, so that if we have merely put on that Grace in order to sin against the Lord it would be better not to have been born.

Consider the farmer who sows the seed, tills his field at the proper time, spreads fertilizer, spares no hard labor in the heat of day, tends the growing seeds, then if at harvest time the grain ripens plentiful, he forgets all his labors and sighs as he dances for joy. But if the grain does not ripen and when he harvests his field, he finds only empty husks and ears, the owner will remember the sweat and labor, and blame the field for the waste of fertilizer and labor. Likewise the Lord considers this world to be His field and we humans to be His growing crop; He provides fertilizer with His Grace; He waters and nourishes it with the saving blood of His Son incarnate and slain for us, telling us to grow and ripen; on the Day of Judgement when we are harvested if we have received Grace and ripened, as the Lord's children we will enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven, but if we have not ripened we will be found His enemies and receive a fit punishment

Beloved dear brothers, mark this.

Our Lord Jesus having come down into this world, suffered pains without number; amidst the sufferings, He established His Holy Church, making it grow amid tribulations. the Church has always continued to grow amidst Her manifold persecutions, but no matter how the world's customs struggled and fought, they could not overcome; and after the Ascension of Jesus, from the time of the Apostles until the present day, the Church has grown enormously amidst poverty and now, fifty or sixty years after the Church came into our

¹⁰⁴ Often referred to as "the last hoeyu" (This is the title written in the Korean manuscript. Since there is no Chinese character in this letter, it is impossible to know exactly the Chinese character represented by "hoeyu 호|유", but it is usually understood as circular letter with the words to encourage the Christians. Normally the term should be 廻諭文, hoeyumun, exhortation). Sent by Father Kim Dae-geon to the Korean Christians, this is the only letter by Father Kim Dae-geon written in Hangeul. The original is lost, and the oldest manuscript is from 1885, now in the Korean Catholic Martyrs Museum in Jeoldusan Martyrs Shrine. This manuscript was discovered in 1885 by Father Gustave Charles Marie Mutel, who was in charge of investigations for beatification process at the time, and was transcribed by Father Achille Paul Robert, responsible for the documentation.

Korea, the faithful have suffered persecutions many times and today, persecution flourishes so that several of the faithful, including myself, have been arrested, and you too suffer tribulation; being of one body with you all, how can I feel anything but pain at our being separated?

Nevertheless, as it is written in the Church's teaching, 'God sees even the hairs on our heads,' and 'He takes care of all, ignoring none,' so how could this hardship not be the Lord's commandment, his reward and punishment? As we obey the Lord's Holy Will, wholeheartedly keeping close beside our Lord Jesus, we will overcome the world and the Devil that have already surrendered.

In these agitated times let us fight and win victory, doing our utmost, to the best of our ability with unfailing hearts, like valiant warriors bearing weapons on the field of battle.

Above all let us never forget brotherly love, and await the day when God will take pity on us and put an end to this hardship. No matter what happens, be on your guard, ever vigilant, ever striving for the Lord's glory. Add over and over again to your vigilance.

The twenty people here are, by the Grace of God, well: do not forget their families if they should be put to death.

I have many more things to say to you, but how can they be communicated in a letter? I will end, then.

As for us we shall soon enter the battlefield. Hold firm with all sincerity, that we may all meet again in Heaven. To you beloved faithful, whom I can never forget, in these troubled times, do not let your hearts grow careless; ask the Lord day and night for help to resist the three enemies¹⁰⁵; bear persecution patiently and strive to let the Glory of the Lord be your souls' main concern.

This time of ordeal is an occasion to accept the Lord's testing; acquire virtue and merit by overcoming the world and the Devil, serve the Lord with victorious hearts not appalled by hardship; do not abandon your salvation but rather, following in the footsteps of earlier saints, add to the glory of the Holy Church, show that you have become true soldiers and righteous children of God. Although you are many, be of one heart; do not forget love but support and care for one another with mercy, and await the time of the Lord's Mercy.

I have much more to say but this place does not allow me to write more. I earnestly hope to meet all of you faithful again in Heaven and to thrive with you there forever. I greet you with a loving kiss, lips pressed to lips.

Andrew Kim, Bugam¹⁰⁶

There is nothing here on earth that is not ordained by God; there is nothing that is not God's reward or punishment; therefore, even this ordeal is permitted by God: so you should bear it patiently, for God; only, you should wait, imploring Him with tears to grant peace to His Church very soon.

How could my death not be felt acutely by your bodies and souls? But before long God will send you shepherds more reliable than I. Do not be sad, but practice love, so that after serving God as a single body, after death we shall meet eternally before God as one in bliss, as I hope a thousand, ten thousand times. Goodbye!

¹⁰⁵ The world, the flesh, and the Devil, the three enemies of the human soul in Catholic doctrine.

¹⁰⁶ Assumed to mean the Assistant to the Apostolic Vicar of Korea.

Kim Dae-Geon's Records of Martyrs

Translated from Korean into Latin by Kim Dae-geon

Kim Dae-geon's Latin translation of Korean records of martyrs of the 1839 persecution was sent to Fr. Libois in Macao together with his Letter 16 from Shanghai, dated July 23, 1845. It is surprising that he was able to produce such a lengthy Latin translation in the short time available. He arrived in Seoul on about January 15, 1845, and on April 30 of that year he set sail for China, taking his translation with him. Moreover, for two weeks in February he was seriously ill. It seems clear that the Korean text he was translating was that which underlies Bishop Ferréol's 'Actes,' which are dated September 22, 1846. Ferréol attributes the Korean record to Charles Hyeon Seok-mun and Thomas Yi Jae-ui. The clearest sign of their common source is the fact that the first 22 martyrs in both texts are in a virtually identical order. Then Kim Dae-geon ends with Yu Dae-cheol and Jeong Guk-bo, who come together much later among the some 40 other martyrs covered by Bishop Ferréol. A cursory comparison suggests that Kim was inclined to shorten the text later translated fully by Ferréol, which is hardly surprising given the little time he had.

In early 1847, Thomas Choe Yang-eop, already a deacon, arrived at the Far Eastern Headquarters of the Foreign Missions Society, which had by then moved from Macao to Hong Kong. There he translated into Latin Bishop Ferréol's French "Acts," adding information about the martyrs of 1846 from a letter written in November 1846 by Bishop Ferréol. Unlike Kim Dae-geon, he had leisure to produce a complete and mostly very accurate translation of Ferréol's text. Further study might be required to establish the sources used by Kim in his opening brief outline of the history of the Korean Church, which is not the same as that found in Bishop Ferréol's text, which owes much to the account of the start of the 1839 persecution written by Bishop Imbert.

Overview of the establishment of the Korean Church

From the beginning, Korea has been preoccupied with various superstitions and ridiculous popular beliefs.

People mainly serve ancestral spirits, the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism, the Buddhism of Sakyamuni, Seongju¹⁰⁷ (the spirit that protects the house), Teoju (the spirit that protects the site of the house), Samsin (creator of mankind), Jeseok¹⁰⁸ (a tutelary god), Gunung¹⁰⁹ (a tutelary god), Malmyeong¹¹⁰ (deity of the ancestors), Seonangdang¹¹¹ (a general tutelary god), Yeongdeung¹¹², Taebaek (the family gods who reward and punishes the good

¹⁰⁷ Seongju 성주: the spirit protecting the structure of a house.

¹⁰⁸ Jeseok 帝釋: one of the spirits of popular religion, who takes care of people's lifespan, grains, clothing, and the well-being of the household.

¹⁰⁹ Guneung 구능(장군): the spirit protecting the cattle in the stable.

¹¹⁰ Malmyeong 말명: the eleventh spirit to be invoked in a shaman's twelve-stage gut, the spirit of the mother of General Kim Yu-shin 金庾信.

¹¹¹ Seonangdang: actually this is the name of the shrine of the Seonangshin, the spirit protecting a village.

¹¹² Yeongdeung 影燈: a spirit related to the wind and rain, especially associated with the second lunar month.

and the wicked), Guan U¹¹³ (the god of war), Jikseong (the 9 stars said to govern people's fortunes according to their age) and Maitreya etc..

The main sects are the various sects of Buddhism, shamanism, Heaven, Kongsihak, Taioukin, and Sooukin¹¹⁴.

From the beginning, amidst these ludicrous errors, some people with an upright conscience recognized the True God in a natural and rational light and served him through their religion. Recently, in Beijing, some Jesuits¹¹⁵ rose to high office and a few men, distinguished by the title of magistrate and scholar, returning from Beijing, spread the idea of the Christian religion in Korea. Christian books were also brought in. At the same time, the philosopher Hong Yu-han¹¹⁶ recognized that there is a God, the Creator of all things, as the reason of natural things, and by studying books about the Catholic religion he understood the truth, and although he was not baptized, he began to honor God like Christians do. However, he had no basic knowledge of the religion yet, and he didn't know the laws of the church, so he just kept the seventh day of each month holy. Of course, to some extent, he simply knew from ancient traditions that the seventh day was more honorable than other days. He ended his life, enjoying the full span of life and praised for his holiness.

Since then, many other philosophers eventually came to recognize God who creates and provides for all things in the universe. Among them, one famous person was Yi Byeok¹¹⁷, who was later baptized with the name of John the Baptist. As a great scholar, he studied much about the doctrine of the true God. At that time, when he heard that Catholicism, a religion serving the Lord of Heaven, was prevalent in Beijing, he was planning to send people there to bring back books about the religion.

At a given moment (in the winter of 1783), a delegation of the regular winter envoys to China was leaving for Beijing. Yi Seung-hun, the son of the third ambassador¹¹⁸ (Seojang-gwan 書狀官), came to visit Yi Byeok and informed him that he was leaving for China. So, Yi Byeok seized a good opportunity. He told Yi Seung-hun that when he arrived in Beijing he should visit the Western people called Jesuits, to meet them and get books on the religion of the Lord of Heaven from them. So, Yi Seung-hun visited the Bishop of Beijing as soon as he arrived in Beijing¹¹⁹. He was warmly welcomed by the Bishop and was baptized¹²⁰. At the time of baptism, he received the name of Peter.

¹¹³ Gwanwoo: Guan Yu 關羽, a Chinese general who died in 219, then became the Korean "god of war."

¹¹⁴ It is unclear what Kongsihak, Taioukin, and Sooukin refer to.

¹¹⁵ Jesuit priests from Europe first entered China in 1582. The most celebrated among those who became imperial scholars was the Italian Matteo Ricci.

¹¹⁶ Hong Yu-han 洪儒漢, or Sa-ryang 士良, (1726-1785), of an honorable family whose members had often filled important offices. Dallet's *Histoire* says that "he lived in Yesan, and in his youth had taken lessons from Yi Ik... In 1770 he encountered Christian books, read them with joy, abandoned all other study, and gave himself up to the practice of religion."

¹¹⁷ Yi Byeok 李蘖 (1754-1785) was the scholar who encouraged Yi Seung-hun to visit the priests in Beijing in 1784. After Yi Seung-hun, having received baptism, returned to Seoul, in the winter of 1784, a ceremony was held at Yi Byeok's house near Supyo Bridge in central Seoul, at which he baptized the members of the initial community, and the Catholic Church of Korea was established. However, he died of the plague in 1785, soon after he he was forced to abandon the faith by his family.

¹¹⁸ There are striking similarities between this narrative and that found at the beginning of Bishop Daveluy's *Notes* (Daveluy Archive Volume 4) which Daveluy attributed to notes made by Jeong Yak-yong. These notes, now lost, must have been kept with the later records of the 1839 martyrs.

¹¹⁹ This is an error, because Bishop A. de Gouvea (1751-1808), the head of the Beijing Diocese, only reached Beijing from Portugal in 1785, so that Yi Seung-hun could not have met him.

¹²⁰ It was not the bishop but Fr. Jean-Joseph de Grammont, a French Jesuit who was serving in the North Church in Beijing at the time.

When he left Beijing, he brought books about the Catholic religion and sacred objects to Korea. Thus, the Christian religion was introduced to Korea in 1784. Many scholars and officials realized the truth of the Catholic religion and became fascinated by it and began to believe in Christ. Regardless of status, many people of all classes began to turn away from the errors inherited from their ancestors and turn to the true God.

At that time, Yi Seung-hun, Kwon Il-sin¹²¹, Yi Jon-chang¹²², Yi Dan-won¹²³, Choe Chang-hyeon¹²⁴, Yu Hang-geom¹²⁵ were very enthusiastic. They elected bishops and priests among themselves and celebrated all the sacraments, including baptism, confirmation, and confession. And many believers gathered and celebrated Mass solemnly.¹²⁶

As the number of believers increased, the bishops and priests made an effort to convert the whole of Korea to their religion. Then, when they accidentally realized their error, they immediately stopped the celebration of Mass and the sacraments, and sent someone¹²⁷ to the Bishop of Beijing to report on their mission and all their actions to date.

After hearing all this, the Bishop of Beijing ordered that the Korean bishop and priests no longer perform the sacraments. They obeyed this command and repented of their mistakes. And later, when persecution broke out, they all gave their lives for the Faith.

The religion was not free for very long. Seven years after it was introduced into Korea, that is, in 1791, the court of the Joseon Dynasty was in uproar because of factional conflict between the Byeokpa and the Shipa. The Shipa was a faction in opposition to the Byeokpa, and the Christian religion was introduced into Korea by the Shipa. So the people in the Byeokpa poured all their resentment against those in the Shipa on the Christians. With the permission of the King they initiated a persecution to annihilate the name of Christian from Korea. The king reluctantly gave permission. It was the first nationwide persecution (the *Sinhae* Persecution¹²⁸).

¹²¹ Kwon Il-sin (權日身 1742-1791): baptismal name Francis Xavier. The younger brother of Kwon Cheol-sin (權哲身 Ambrose). Born in Yanggeun, Gyeonggi-do, he entered the Church at the recommendation of Yi Byeok in 1784, and was baptized in the winter of that year. In 1786, he served as a priest in the “pseudo-hierarchy”. He was sentenced to be enclosed in a hut surrounded by a thorn hedge in Jeju Island during the *Sinhae* persecution of 1791. That was converted to simple exile in Yesan but he died on the way there.

¹²² Yi Jon-chang (李存章 1759-1801): baptismal name Ludovico Gonzaga. He was born in Yeosaul in Yesan, Chungcheong Province. He was baptized by Kwon Il-sin in the winter of 1784 while studying under Kwon Cheol-sin (Kwon’s brother) in Yanggeun, Gyeonggi-do. After that, he was called the “Apostle of Naepo”, working hard to preach the Gospel in Naepo, Chungcheong-do, and was appointed as a priest in the “pseudo-hierarchy”. He was arrested and apostatized in 1791 during the *Sinhae* persecution, but soon repented of his sins and returned to practising his faith. He was arrested again in 1795 and sentenced to imprisonment in Gongju. He was executed on April 10, 1801 in Gongju.

¹²³ This is the same person as Yi Jon-chang.

¹²⁴ Choe Chang-hyeon (崔昌顯 1759-1801): baptismal name John. From a family of official interpreters. After he entered the Church, he took the lead in preaching and copying church books. He was martyred outside the Small West Gate, Seoul, in 1801.

¹²⁵ Yu Hang-geom (柳恒儉 1756-1801): baptismal name Augustine. From Chonam near Jeonju. He learned the Catholic doctrine from Kwon Il-sin and was baptized by Yi Seung-hun. He too was a priest in the “pseudo-hierarchy”. He was arrested during the *Sinyu* Persecution, was convicted of treason in Seoul, and was transferred back to Jeonju, where he was martyred outside the South Gate on October 24, 1801.

¹²⁶ i.e. during the “Improvised Hierarchy” which lasted for several years from 1786.

¹²⁷ Paul Yun Yu-il 尹有一 who went to Beijing at the end of 1789, met Bishop Gouvea, then returned to Seoul; the following year, he travelled to Beijing for a second time. In the first visit he had been ordered by the Bishop to abolish the pseudo-hierarchy, and from the second he brought a promise to send priests and a ban on ancestral rites.

¹²⁸ The *Sinhae* Persecution arose in 1791, when Paul Yun Ji-chung, who lived in Jinsan, Jeolla-do (currently Jinsan-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do), lost his mother and did not perform the traditional offerings. This became known to the government authorities. Eventually, Yun Ji-chung and Kwon Sang-yeon

In this persecution, Paul Yun Ji-chung¹²⁹, an outstanding scholar, fought valiantly for the Faith of Christ, and was martyred, shedding holy blood for his faith in the Catholic religion. He was the first martyr of Korea.

In the following years, relatively calm conditions continued, but in 1795, persecution broke out and many believers were killed¹³⁰. In that same year, the Chinese priest, Father James was dispatched to Korea. For the next seven years, believers enjoyed peace. In the meantime, the number of believers increased a lot. However, when the king who was generous to Christians (Jeongjo) passed away, the country's supreme power returned to Kim Taipi (Queen Jeongsun).

That's why the Byeokpa, also known as Noron, after holding their breath under the power of the members of the Namin faction for many years, now woke up in opposition against the Namin. The members of Byeokpa were hostile to Christians, and the Namin were mostly Shipa and favorable to Christians. Many of the Namin members were Christians. Now, the real power of the country passed from Namin to Noron.

Thus, Queen Jeongsun, who belonged to the Byeokpa of Noron, persecuted mainly Catholics as recommended by the Ministers of Byeokpa Noron, and tried furiously to destroy the name of Christian in Korea. She thus issued an edict¹³¹ ordering that all the servants of Christ should be executed. This was the third persecution that took place eighteen years after the entry of the religion into Korea, namely in 1801.

Through this persecution, countless dignitaries, nobles, even Christian princesses and the king's sister-in-law¹³², were killed. Father James Zhou Wen-mo also received the crown of martyrdom after being betrayed by a demonic believer named Kim Yeo-sam.

However, peace was given to the believers for several years after the death of the persecutor Great Queen Kim. Not long after, however, a great persecution of believers¹³³ raged in 1816. In this fourth persecution, among Korean believers Ambrose Kim Gun-mi¹³⁴ was caught after surrendering voluntarily because of his faith in Christ. According to what is

were martyred in Jeonju on December 8, 1791. Following this, persecution occurred in other provinces, including Francis Xavier Gwon Il-sin 權日身 and Marcellinus Choe Chang-ju 崔昌周 arrested in Gyeonggi-do, Ludovico Gonzaga Yi Jon-chang 李存章 and Peter Won Si-jang in Chungcheong-do, and Peter Yi Seung-hun, Thomas Choe Pil-gong 崔必恭 and Peter Choe Pil-je 崔必悌 in Seoul.

¹²⁹ Paul Yun Ji-Chung (尹持忠, 1759-1791) was the great-grandson of the famous painter Yun Du-seo. He passed the Jinsa exam in 1783, learned catechism from his cousin Jeong Yak-jeon around 1786, and was baptized the following year by Yi Seung-hun. He and his cousin Kwon Sang-yeon were beheaded outside the Pungnammun Gate in Jeonju.

¹³⁰ The Eulmyo Persecution. In 1795, Han Yeong-ik betrayed the arrival of Father Zhou Wen-mo in the country so that it became known to the authorities. Father Zhou escaped, but Paul Yun Yu-il 尹有一, Matthias Choe In-gil 崔仁吉, and Saba Ji Hwang 池璜 were arrested, beaten at the Podocheong 捕盜廳, and martyred on June 28.

¹³¹ On the 10th day of the first lunar month, 1801, the so-called "Cheoksa Yuneum" (斥邪綸音) was promulgated in the name of the Queen Jeongsun.

¹³² Mary Song, wife of Eun Eon-gun Yi In 恩彦君 李裨, King Jeongjo's half-brother, and her daughter-in-law, Mary Shin, were baptized. They were found to have concealed the presence of Father Zhou Wen-mo. They were sent poison to end their lives on April 29, 1801.

¹³³ Persecutions following the Sinyu Persecution include the Eulhae Persecution that took place in Gyeongsang-do in 1815, and the Jeonghae Persecution that took place in Gyeongsang-do, Jeolla-do, and Chungcheong-do in 1827. Among these, 'the persecution of 1816' seems rather to refer to the Jeonghae persecution of 1827.

¹³⁴ Kim Gun-mi (1761-1828) is more correctly known as Kim Sebak 金世博. Born in an interpreters' family in Seoul, he joined the Church shortly after it was established, went down to the provinces, transcribed and sold church books, and devoted himself to missionary work. He surrendered to the magistrate of Andong during the Jeonghae Persecution of 1827, was transferred to the provincial office in Daegu in 1828, and was martyred in prison on December 3.

reported, he died in prison after 46 days, not touching a grain of food or a sip of water under God's instructions. At about the same time, the famous philosopher Alexis Hwang Sa-yeong¹³⁵, who was favored by the king, since the religion of Christ in this land was so oppressed and sorely troubled that he wrote a letter to the Vatican asking for a warship to be sent to gain religious freedom by force. However, this letter was found and confiscated by satellites in Uiju. When they opened this letter, they saw nothing but white paper¹³⁶ but people capable of reading it reported everything to the judge. The persons¹³⁷ who tried to deliver the letter were also caught and sent to the capital city of Seoul.

Since then, the persecution of believers became even more vicious. Alexis was punished more severely not only for religious matters, but also for this letter he had written, and his body was torn into six pieces.

Subsequently, in 1819, 1828, 1833, and 1836, persecutions against the believers¹³⁸ caused many believers to shed much blood for the sake of their faith with insurmountable persistence. In particular, in Chungcheong-do, the second region of Korea, several persecutions took place, killing many Christians.

In this way, Korean believers lived without a shepherd for 33 years¹³⁹. Meanwhile, thanks to God's protection, the number of believers did not decrease, but increased day by day¹⁴⁰. Finally, Merciful God allowed shepherds into Korea. Thus, in 1831¹⁴¹, Father Pacific Liu, a Chinese citizen, came in from China, then returned to China in 1835. In 1834, Fr. Maubant entered the country, in 1835, Fr. Chastan, and in 1836, Bishop Imbert, Apostolic Vicar of Korea, entered the country¹⁴².

It seemed that it would be easy for pagans to convert. The number of believers increased greatly, the zeal for faith increased, and everything began to energize. However, in 1839, the 55th year after the introduction of Christianity into Korea, a new believer named John Kim Yeo-sang was blinded by money and informed on lay believers, as well as the priests. As a result, the fifth persecution occurred in the Korean Church.

The Queen tried to stop such persecution, but could not break the will of the Byeokpa ministers, especially Minister Jo Man-yeong, who began to gain power at the time. In this persecution, Bishop Imbert, Fr. Maubant, Fr. Chastan, and nearly 200 believers were martyred. Now, the total number of martyrs in the Korean Church is 800 or more.

For five years from 1839 to today, believers have been able to enjoy peace. But without a shepherd, they could only cry and sigh. I sincerely hope that God, the

¹³⁵ Alexis Hwang Sa-yeong (黃嗣永 1775-1801) married the daughter of Jeong Yak-hyeon, Jeong Yak-yong's oldest brother, in 1790. He came into contact with Catholicism while staying with the Jeong brothers. When the Sinyu Persecution arose, he fled to Baeron in Jecheon, and wrote a letter on a piece of silk (baekseo 帛書) to inform the Church in Beijing of the news of the persecution and to ask for help. However, the letter was discovered, he was arrested, being executed on December 10, 1801, outside of Seoujl's Small West Gate.

¹³⁶ The false idea that the letter was written using "invisible ink" was added to the story later.

¹³⁷ Thomas Hwang Sim 黃沁 and John Ok Cheon-hui 玉千禧.

¹³⁸ It is difficult to know exactly what kind of persecution occurred in these years, for lack of documentation.

¹³⁹ This refers to the period from the martyrdom of Father Zhou Wen-mo in 1801 until the Chinese priest Pacific Yu (劉方濟, Liu Fangji) entered Korea in January 1834. He returned to China in December 1836 at the direction of Father Maubant after three years of activity.

¹⁴⁰ The number of believers was about 10,000 in 1801, then declined due to the Sinyu persecution, increased to 9,000 at the end of 1838, and then decreased again due to the Gihae Persecution. It was only around 1846 that the number of believers reached 10,000 again.

¹⁴¹ Actually in 1834.

¹⁴² Actually Fr. Maubant entered Korea on January 12, 1836, Fr. Chastan on December 31, 1836, and Bishop Imbert on December 19, 1837.

compassionate and gracious Father, will promptly send shepherds to Korea to gather the scattered sheep and to form one flock under one shepherd.

The Facts of the 1839 Gihae Persecution

What is really sad is the fact that there have been false brothers everywhere and at any time since the early days of the Church. Yet this does not seem surprising to me, since in the time of the Apostles, according to the testimony of Saint Paul, they were not lacking, and in the very cradle of the Church there was Judas who made quite a few disciples everywhere.

Here in Korea, many times persecution occurred because of false believers. Among them, Kim Yeo-sam, in particular, inflicted great harm to the Korean Church in 1801.

Kim Yeo-sang was a believer with the baptismal name of John, and in 1839, imitating Kim Yeo-sam, he brought the greatest disaster to believers. He was born in the noble class, and when he was 20 years old, he joined the Christian religion together with his wife. At first, he faithfully obeyed the laws of Christians. He was severely persecuted by his parents for his faith, but he endured well. Eventually plagued by his entire family, he abandoned everything to serve God and ran away from his father's house. Reaching the age of thirty, he lived in extreme poverty, enduring a very poor life. But he was not respected by believers because of his wicked way of life.

Then, around November 1838, he went to the satellites, received money and betrayed some of the believers and sold them. Then he gave a book with the names of all the believers he knew of to the satellites. Kim Yeong and Gu Sin-hui, judges of the Police court (i.e. Podocheong), ordered the satellites to arrest believers anywhere.

This was suggested to the Queen, and a man named Jo Byeong-hyeon 趙秉鉉 was appointed as the judge of Hyeongjo, the first court. Then he who became the supreme judge went to the second grade court official of the kingdom, Kim Jeong-ui. This Kim Jeong-ui was a catechumen¹⁴³ and is now in exile. Kim Jongui was very close to him, and he assured him that the Christians' troubles would soon end.

Then Kim Jeong-ui, as an official of the court, praised the judge and reassured the Bishop, telling him not to worry. At the same time, he encouraged the Christians to be very cautious and to defend their faith with a strong spirit if any of them were arrested, and not to betray others for fear of punishment. Therefore, it was considered that peace would be granted to the believers in the near future.

But sadly, human hopes are often reversed. Kim Yu-geun 金迪根, the older brother of the Queen, loved the believers, but died from a serious illness. This man was the country's supreme ruler, who really seemed to be turning to God. Thus, the supreme ruling power was transferred to Jo Man-yeong. As soon as he came to power, he opposed the will of the current king's grandmother, and along with Yi Ji-yeon¹⁴⁴, and Jeong Gi-hwa¹⁴⁵, an official fiercely opposed to the Christian religion, and issued a new order that all Christ's disciples should be arrested.

So, Kim Yeong and Gu Sin-hui, mentioned above, were persuaded to torment the believers extremely violently. As a result, the arrested believers were brutally tortured and the

¹⁴³ See previous notes about Kim Jeong-hui.

¹⁴⁴ Yi Ji-yeon (李止淵 1777-1841) became Second Vice-premier in 1837 and Prime-Minister in 1838, but he was left alone in the position of Premier when the first vice-premier resigned. He advocated persecution in 1839. However, he was impeached in 1840 and was exiled to Myeongcheon, Hamgyeong-do, where he died.

¹⁴⁵ On the 20th day of the third lunar month, 1839, Jeong Gi-hwa (鄭琦和 1786-1840) filed an appeal to the King demanding the repression of Catholicism.

believers who escaped began to be pursued harshly. Not only men and women, but even children were slaughtered, and all their property was plundered.

Jo Byeong-hyeon¹⁴⁶ tried hard not to amplify the persecution of believers. Therefore, it was ordered that no satellite should touch the believers' property, and that everything that had already been stolen should be returned. This order did not last long. Many satellites were sentenced to exile for violating this order. The police court judges were severely warned that they would be denounced to the Queen if they did not try to do their job better. Then he abandoned his office because he did not want to put innocent believers to death.

At about the same time, one of the court ministers, Jo In-yeong, ordered the judges of the Police Tribunal to settle the disturbance against believers before the New Year, namely 1839, and to make a decision. However, Gu Sin-hui, an evil judge, understood this in a bad sense and considered it to mean the execution of all believers. Thus, they slaughtered all the prison inmates, even children and attendants. Because of this, Gu Sin-hui was deprived of his office and was ridiculed by the people. Soon, as the persecution grew, the believers began to flee in large numbers.

At that time, the traitor Kim Yeo-sang was authorized to arrest the bishop and priests around the seventh month of the 1839 lunar calendar. He took many satellites and went to the Christian villages. He committed terrible harm as he passed through all the provinces where Christians lived, and he violently persecuted them by plundering all their property and causing all kinds of trouble. He forced Christians into apostasy, inflicting unspeakable insults and extremely vicious punishments. When he realized that his plans to betray the priests by defeating the believers with insults and violence of torture were ineffective, he devised another way.

Thus, he abandoned the barbaric method and disguised himself as the most pious believer, carrying the signs of a believer with his satellites, first going to Surisan¹⁴⁷. When the residents of the Surisan region saw the satellites, they encouraged one another to shed their blood for God with a strong spirit. And nearly sixty people marched to court in procession as if moving house with children on their backs and in their arms. However, many of them were overcome by the violence of torture, forsook God and returned to their homes.

At about the same time, in Seoul, fifty women discussed surrendering to the court and were making clothes to wear, but someone held back their decision.

After that, the traitor went to a place called Hantecol¹⁴⁸ and told many lies, enticed the young people with errors. The devil-like man who brought the satellites said: the Catholic religion was freed, the Queen and ministers of our country had realized the truth of the religion and decided to join Christ, and knowing that the priests are in Korea, they invited them to bring the priests to the palace. They were dispatched, but they didn't know where the priests were, so believers were needed to tell them where they lived.

So, they went to a believer named (Kim) Yeo-sang and tortured him very harshly to tell them where the Bishop was. He couldn't stand the pain, and said that although he didn't know where the Bishop was, a man named Andrew Jeong¹⁴⁹ probably knew.

¹⁴⁶ Minister of Justice Jo Byeong-hyeon (趙秉鉉 1791-1845) was appointed head of the office of the Inspector-General on the 21st day of the fourth lunar month, 1839, and Minister of War on the 11th of the seventh lunar month.

¹⁴⁷ The Catholic village Guitteumi (Now Anyang 3-dong, Anyang-si, Gyeonggi-do). Francis Choe Gyeong-hwan (the father of Thomas Choe Yang-eop) settled there in about 1838 and established the village.

¹⁴⁸ This is presumed to be 'Handeok-dong' (now Muk-ri, Dong-myeon Dong-myeon, Cheoin-gu, Yongin-si). Handeok-dong was the place where Father Kim Dae-Geon's family moved. It is also the place where Choe Yeong-gyeong, the uncle of Father Choe Yangeop, lived.

¹⁴⁹ Saint Andrew Jeong Hwa-gyeong. He was from Jeongsan, Chungcheong-do, and was a devoted believer, and because he helped to prepare a shelter for him, he knew Bishop Imbert's place of residence.

So, the traitor and satellites went to Andrew Jeong with Kim (Yeo Sang). Kim was later arrested and killed¹⁵⁰. The satellites arrested Andrew Jeong and tried to deceive him by making various ridiculous remarks as mentioned above.

Meanwhile, while this was happening, the Most Venerable Bishop Imbert was hiding in Andrew Son's house. And he was always willing to surrender to the persecutors. This had already been discussed with the priests.

At that time, the Bishop sent his clerk named Thomas Yi to the royal capital, Seoul, to bring money and news. In the meantime, Andrew Jeong was deceived and went to the Bishop's home with Judas (Kim Yeo-sang) and the satellites. Andrew Jeong went into the Bishop's house by himself and with a joyful face informed the Venerable Bishop, who greeted him, that all was prepared as he had heard and that the Queen and all the ministers wanted to become Christians.

After hearing this, the Bishop said, "You have been deceived by the Devil." Then he celebrated Mass and voluntarily let himself arrested. When Andrew Son saw this scene, he cried and followed the Bishop.

He asked for permission to go to die together. However, he was not allowed to at that moment, but was later arrested and shed his blood for God and died.

The satellites brought the Venerable Bishop to Seoul in a palanquin. The Bishop arrived in Seoul and Augustine Yu, Paul Jeong, Charles Jo, Ignatius Kim (my father) and many other believers were brought to him. So they gained strength in the presence of their shepherd and went to different prisons.

After that, satellites were dispatched in all directions to arrest the two priests (i.e. Maubant and Chastan). At the same time, the priests heard of the Bishop's arrest and tried to escape by boat. At that time, Thomas Yi and Peter Choe¹⁵¹, were sent to Seoul to bring money from Kounputai¹⁵² to support the work of the priests.

As they travelled one day, Andrew Jeong met them on the road. He cried and described the situation in which the Bishop had been arrested by the satellites through his fault. While they were passing by a certain place, satellites suddenly rushed out of the inn and arrested Andrew Jeong. And they let Thomas and Peter go. This was because they did not know that they were also Christians.

After being released, they spent the night in a Christian's home. So in the middle of the night, the satellites took Andrew, who had been deceived as before, and attacked another Christian's house. It was the house where Thomas and Peter were staying as guests. When they saw the satellites coming, one hid in a bin and the other in a haystack.

Agents and satellites surrounded the house and scoured the house. First, Peter was found hiding in the haystack, and then Thomas was pulled out of the bin and arrested. The satellites peacefully took them to the inn, treated them very kindly, and spoke to them with sweet words such as:

"Christians are really under tremendous persecution, and we think that while the kings and ministers of the past persecuted the believers for no reason and without

¹⁵⁰ The apostate Kim Yeo-sang obtained office after the persecution, but was exiled in 1840, freed in 1853, and executed in 1862.

¹⁵¹ Choe Hyeong (崔炯 1814-1866): Saint. He was the elder brother of Choe Bang-je, who died while studying in Macao where he had been sent with Kim Dae-geon and Choe Yang-eop. He worked as a clerk of Father Maubant, and in 1845 he helped Father Kim Dae-geon to bring Bishop Ferréol, and Father Daveluy into the country. He set up a printing press in Seoul at the order of Bishop Berneux to publish church books. He was arrested during the Byeongin Persecution and martyred on March 9, 1866.

¹⁵² In Dallet's *Histoire* we find mention of 'Gunponae' in Gwacheon (Ch. Dallet, p. 450).

consideration of the circumstances, now Queen Kim and the ministers have studied the religion more deeply and recognize its truth. So now everyone wants to join Christ. At this time, the Queen ordered us to bring the Bishop to her, and when she met him, she was extremely happy and took the Bishop to live in the palace. At the same time, she ordered us to make clothes out of the finest fabrics for the Bishop. The Queen consulted with all the ministers and chiefs and took measures to turn all the Korean people today to the true God. However, since this could not be done effectively without the priests, she sent us to bring the priests to the palace.

If you think more carefully now, you will see that this is the easiest way to recognize Christianity as the truest religion. The way the fathers act is enough to show us the truth of their religion. When they left their homeland, they left their parents, brothers, friends, and relatives forever.

Since they have come to this country for a whole lifetime and are using their money and their goods without asking for anything, would they have come this far away to lie? If the religion they preach is not the true religion, how can they do so without going crazy?

Now that it is reported to us that you are clerks of the priests, you will undoubtedly know where the priests are staying.”

In response, the disciples replied that they had greeted the priests at sea and therefore did not know where they had gone. For other things, they said, it would be more appropriate to force them to betray the priests rather than to deceive them with such cunning words. Then the satellites broke out in anger and brought the implements of torture closer.

At that time, the satellites said, “Ah! No doubt disaster will strike this government. How can this country be sustained in peace while allowing the blood of innocent people to be shed like this?” Thomas asked, “So why do you persecute us?” The satellites said, “We all do it according to orders. So we have no sin. We also have faith and love, but we do not yet have hope.”

Then Thomas was released with Andrew Jeong to go and find the priests. So he came to the priests and told them all that had happened to them. Then Thomas tried to return to the satellites, but the priest banned it.

Meanwhile, the satellites were disappointed while waiting for Thomas to return, and began to torment Peter. Just then, a police official named Son arrived with the Bishop’s letter. The Bishop had written a letter telling the priests to hasten to their deaths since the circumstances around him reached to this miserable state. At the same time, almost all the believers were grieving, and they were all willing to die with the shepherds. So in fact, before and after the deaths of the shepherds, many believers were caught by surrendering to satellites.

At that time, Peter came to Seoul with Son. Then, after receiving a new letter from the Bishop, he left for the priests with Son and the satellites. On the way, however, Peter tricked the satellites, misled them and ran away. So the letter was sent to the priests by a believer, while he himself hid on a cliff in the mountains.

Meanwhile, the satellites noticed Peter’s escape, lamented with tears, and began looking for the priests anew. Meanwhile, believers did everything possible to hide the priests and search for a place to hide them more deeply. However, the priests received the bishop’s letter, read it, and said to the believers, “It’s over now. The Bishop’s order has been issued. We have to go to Seoul in a hurry.”

When the believers heard this, they cried and wept. And, they also wanted to go to death along with the priests, but were rejected. Then the priests sent two believers ahead. One was a man named Alexis Kim, who disguised himself as a merchant, and the other left as a farmer.

The satellites were not far away, so they encountered them. The priests comforted the Christians in front of them with words, and comforted the Christians who were not present with letters, celebrated Mass, and set out to receive the finest punishment. Then the believers formed a sea of weeping.

After the sun went down, the priests stayed in a believer's house near Hongju. Just about the end of dinner, Alexis Kim arrived and announced that the satellites were standing at the door. So, the priests went out to the courtyard and sat down on a mat, and the satellites brought to the place greeted the priests. Next, Son, the leader of the satellites, asked who was Father Maubant and who was Father Chastan. The priests didn't respond in any way, but Son noted and distinguished the two.

Then the chief satellite told the priests, "We came to seek you by order. But what do you priests want to do?" The priests replied to them, "We will go with you." "You don't have to follow us now that midnight is near, there is a lot of dew on the road, so your clothes will be dirty. So, stay quietly here tonight. We will sleep at the inn and come to meet you tomorrow morning."

When the priests heard the satellites, they said, "No. Let's go together now." And the priests went to the inn with the satellites. The satellites set up a bedroom for the priest to sleep in, and they slept outside.

The satellites woke up in the morning and said to Alexis, "We only came for the priests at the order of our superiors. But I don't think harming others is right. So when the magistrate asks you a question, you have to answer as we do. (Satellites had to stop by the local magistrate first.) So, do not tell him that the priests were arrested in a believer's house. We must say that we met the priests on the street."

Then they entered the town of Hongju. The magistrate of Hongju ordered the priests to be brought before him. When the priests were brought, they were made to remove their hats from their heads and kneel, the priests said, "How can we kneel on the ground?" So a straw mat was brought and they sat down.

The governor looked at the priests and said, "These poor people, they are deserving of pity." Then he clothed the priests with straw sacks, putt them in a basket made of rice straw, placed them on a horse, and set off for Seoul. Alexis Kim followed, but the priests opposed and so he returned.

The priests who arrived in Seoul were led to the Bishop. The Bishop had been imprisoned for almost a month, the priests were imprisoned for 10 days, and then the three of them were killed together the same day¹⁵³. Christians were persecuted for more than two years after the deaths of the shepherds. (In 1839, there was an extreme famine all over the country.) Believers went wandering around without a home, begging. So, the charity of the believers cooled and they became spiritually helpless. But these days, gradually, the faith of the believers burns brighter and their fervor grows; apostates confess and repent; and rumors are heard that pagans from all over the country are joining the Church. The Christian religion is now praised and believers are praised as honest people.

Unfortunately, however, there is much to be harvested, but there are few workers, so please ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field. (Matthew 9:38).

¹⁵³ Fathers Maubant and Chastan were interrogated at the Podocheong on September 11, 1839, and on September 14 were transferred to the Euigeombu together with Bishop Imbert. The three were executed at Saenamteo on September 21.

Report on the Major Korean Martyrs¹⁵⁴

The deeds of some of the main martyrs who shed their blood for faith in Christ in 1839 in Seoul, or Hanyang, the capital of Korea.

Laurent Imbert, Titular Bishop of Capsus and Apostolic Vicar of Korea

In 1837 (December 18), Laurent Imbert, Vicar Apostolic of Korea, arrived in Korea, to take charge of the mission. Within two months he had learned enough of the Korean language enough to be able to hear confessions.

He initially stayed in Seoul and then went to other provinces to visit the Christians. He taught believers by word and example, and he was consumed with an incredible passion. He devoted himself to the translation of the catechism and prayer books into Korean. He was often absorbed in prayer and meditation. He lived an extremely strict life; three times a week he afflicted his body by fasting.

When he visited the Christians, he traveled on foot. He accompanied his sheep with the greatest charity and fatherly love, and he endured with great patience and compassion beyond belief the immaturity and ignorance of the believers.

After that, he returned to Seoul. After spending about two years in his duties, persecutions took place in various places and many believers were slaughtered. At that time, the Most Reverend Bishop helped comfort the surviving believers with charity, and buried the murdered believers. However, as the persecutors became more cruel, he fled to the countryside (that is, Songgyo village) and hid in the house of a Christian named Andrew Son. This man was rich and later he was martyred.

Meanwhile, a devil entered the mind of a believer named John Kim Yeo-sang and he decided to betray the Bishop by collusion with the devil and his servants. In order to better fulfill his own proposal, he made up a lot of lies. He wore a rosary, a cross, and a scapula of the Assemblies of Mount Carmel, and more.

He went to the believers who were hiding in the mountains and said, "Be relieved and do not be afraid. Now the Christian religion is free. The Queen and those around her want to understand the truth of religion and become believers. So they have sent us to find the bishop and bring him to the palace. But we do not know where the Bishop is. So please tell us the place where the Bishop is staying."

He showed off his great religious spirit and zeal while talking so much. Before long, a man named Andrew Jeong heard this and was filled with intense joy. He was later martyred. He danced and shouted for joy. He went with the satellites, exclaiming that he knew where the Bishop was. Judas and the satellites, seeing that he was deceived, held onto him with all their might.

When he reached a village not far from the place of the Most Reverend Bishop, Andrew Jeong separated from Judas the traitor and the satellites, went alone to the Bishop and told him everything he had heard and believed. Hearing this, the Bishop said, "You have been deceived."

The Bishop wrote a letter to the priests, celebrated Mass, and then went on to be arrested. At that time, the Bishop's clerk, Thomas (that is, Yi Jae-ui), was sent to Seoul to bring money to the Bishop. Andrew Son, who was with the Bishop, had no power to prevent the disaster, so he wanted to be arrested and killed with the Bishop, but the Reverend Bishop forbade this.

¹⁵⁴ This report was based on materials that were later edited to form the "Gihae Diary", so the order is also the same as that of the Diary.

Judas and the satellites saw the Bishop and bowed down to the ground. At that time, the Bishop presented many of the truths of the Christian religion to them. Pagans who heard this doctrinal explanation applauded the teaching. Then the satellites took the Bishop reverently on a palanquin and brought him to a judge in Seoul.

The officials and satellites treated the Bishop very well in their own way, so they did not bind him, provided food on time, and trusted the Bishop enough not to monitor him. During the persecution, indeed, many satellites were very kind toward the Christians.

The judge ordered Paul Jeong, Augustine Yu and Charles Jo to be brought to the Bishop. The Bishop encouraged them to be martyred and said, "It has already been discovered that there are two priests. But don't let them know where they are." Then the judge bent the Bishop's legs, (See a description of the punishment on page xxx.) ordering him to produce the two priests with the following questions:

"Why did you come to Korea?" They asked, even though they already knew which country the priests were from.

Replied the Bishop. "I came to save people's souls."

Judge, "How many people have you taught?"

Bishop, "Several hundreds."

Judge, "List all the people you have taught."

Bishop, "If I provide their names, you will do harm to them. So I can't do that."

The judge then ordered the Bishop to forsake God.

When the Bishop heard this, shouted. "I will not forsake God." When these questions were over, the Bishop was sent to prison.

After the Bishop reviewed the circumstances, he wrote a letter to the two priests so that they could quickly come to the courthouse (i.e. the police headquarters). The priests obeyed the Bishop's words, appeared before the court, and were arrested and brought to the Bishop.

At that time, the judge interrogated all three people, the Bishop and the two priests, as arrogantly as possible.

"Who do you have as master?" (The Korean word for "having a master" means having a fixed dwelling place in someone's house.)

"Where did you get your money and wealth? Who sent you?

Who invited you?"

The priests answered. "Paul Jeong is the owner. The money was brought from our country. We were sent by the Pope, and the Korean people invited us."

Judge, "Return to your country."

Like this, he tortured the priests for three days with interrogations and whippings. Then he beat them with clubs three times to make them list the believers (see the description of punishment).

The priests answered. "It is impossible for us to harm people." Judge, "Go back to your kingdom."

The priests' reply, "We do not want to go back. We have come to your country to save the souls of people. I intend to die here."

After that, the priests were sent to a prison called Uigeumbu. Uigeumbu is a prison in which only the kingdom's ministers, dignitaries, magistrates, and suspects of the same status are confined. There the priests were given seventy lashes (see description of sentence and punishment).

After that, on September 21, 1839, on the feast of the Apostle Matthew, the Venerable Bishop, with his two priests, triumphed by shedding his blood in a magnificent and glorious way for the Faith of Christ. In 1839, when he was 43 years old, he was killed in a place called Nodeul (another name for Saenamteo) 1 league from Seoul.

A brief description of the priests' martyrdom

When the priests were sentenced to death in the Uigumbu Court, soldiers put them in straw baskets and transported them to Nodeul. At that time, the captain led a batallion of 128 soldiers armed as if going to battle. Upon arriving at Nodeul, the soldiers were deployed as if entering a battle against the enemies. The people gathered in large numbers.

After placing them, they put long sticks under both arms of the priests. They put arrows through their ears, sprinkled quick lime on their faces, and carried them around so that everyone could see them, then they read the reason for the death penalty. Then, executioners armed with swords laid down the priests and killed them.

Then they took the cut-off heads to the captain so that he could see them.

After all that was over, the bodies were buried on the sandy beach by the river; soldiers were ordered to guard the graves and then they left.

Christians who wanted to take the corpses of the martyrs secretly tried all kinds of ways to steal them, but it was impossible. At one time, three believers went disguised as merchants, and one of them, Mr. Oh, approached the grave and touched it a little with his feet. Satellites who saw this approached and asked who was touching the tomb and why. Two of the believers ran away and one Christian answered.

"I was on a journey and I heard from many people that Westerners were buried here. So I got curious to see what their faces look like." Then the satellites bound him and took him to the court. He suffered a lot there, but fortunately he was released. The satellites did not recognize that he was a Christian, and they did not ask. If they had known, they would have killed him.

Another time, eight Christians went there in the middle of the night, prepared to die, and discussed how if satellites approached, they might bind them and dig their grave. The bodies could not be distinguished from each other. There were only bones left, and they couldn't see anything else. Dogs had dug into the grave and carried away most of them.

However, as much as possible, the bones were collected and buried in Nogo-san¹⁵⁵. The grave was relocated after about 7 months. It took almost three years to better prepare and build a grave on Gwanak-san, at the same time interring some scraps of bones that Christians had taken away with them¹⁵⁶.

A description of the main punishments that the priests and other Christians received

I cannot describe here the commonly used forms of torture such as cursing, beating with fists or feet, breaking the teeth with iron hammers, slapping the cheeks, whipping, beating, striking with stones, etc.

I cannot tell you all the records that the martyrs themselves sent out of prison because the Christians burned them to keep them from the persecutors. Therefore, here we can only report some of what the believers have preserved.

¹⁵⁵ The name of a hill in Mapo-gu, Seoul, now part of the campus of Sogang University.

¹⁵⁶ The remains of the missionaries were moved to Samseong-san, one of the ridges of Gwanak-san Mountain, to the south of Seoul, in 1843. On October 21, 1901, they were transferred to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Theological Seminary in Yongsan, and on November 2 that year, they were moved to the crypt of Myeongdong Cathedral.

Punishment : Juri-jil, Chidogon, Jujang-jil, Hakchum, Sammojang, Top-jil, Hyeongjang and so on.

1. There are several types of Juri-jil (leg-bending)
 - 1) Gawijuri (scissors bending) knees and feet are tied together tightly, then two wooden sticks are inserted between the shins and both ends are turned in reverse directions, and the legs will be bent like a bow as shown in the figure.
 - 2) Juljuri (rope bending) After tying the ankles together, a thick piece of wood is inserted between the legs, while the thighs are bound with a thick rope, then the satellites pull with force on both sides.
 - 3) Paljuri (feet bending) The legs are crossed at the ankles then the person kneels, the arms are tied back until the shoulders are in contact, then a piece of wood is placed under the arms and raised up. In the case of an unskilled torturer, the arms or legs are broken at once, but if a trained torturer applies this torture, the arm or leg will only bend like a bow.
2. Chidogon (paddle) is an instrument of torture made of oak. It is 5 feet long, half a foot wide and as thick as 3 fingers together. It strikes the thigh from the back, and will break even the bones.
3. Jujang-jil is a punishment in which the arms and hair of the head are tied tightly crossed at the back, while kneeling on broken pots, and then the satellites beat the legs from both sides.
4. Hakchum is a punishment in which both arms are crossed behind the back, tied together and hung high, and the victim beaten from both sides.
5. Sammojang involves removing the flesh of the leg with a wooden knife or axe.
6. Top-jil (sawing) is a punishment in which a thread made of hair is rolled round the legs, pulled and released from both sides, so that the flesh is torn.
7. Hyeongjang¹⁵⁷ are wooden whipping clubs that hit the shins.

Prison and tribunals

There were two tribunals in Seoul. One was called Pocheong, and the other Hyeongjo.

At the Pocheong, the facts are first investigated, and if the facts are confirmed, the criminals are sent to the Hyeongjo. (This tribunal is superior to the Pocheong. Here, the sentence of death or release is confirmed.

In addition, there is a tribunal called the Sagwancheong, which is inferior to the Podocheong.

Father Pierre Maubant, Pro-vicar apostolic of Korea

The Most Reverend Father Maubant entered the Korean mission field on the 7th day of the 12th month of the lunar calendar in 1834.²⁰⁶ For four years,²⁰⁷ he worked hard in his mission field. I am not going to talk about how much he suffered during these four years. He was incredibly passionate about saving souls. He often abused his flesh by fasting. He collapsed several times, exhausted by thirst and hunger. Very often he walked far over the mountains to visit the Christians at night, and at times he went on a road covered in snow and

¹⁵⁷ Ieng tsang in the original text. It is unclear what this is. However, from the contents of the description, it is assumed that it refers to the small cane used in flogging, 'hyungjang (荆杖)', so it is corrected accordingly.

ice. In such situations he sometimes walked barefoot because he had no shoes. When he visited believers, he never rode a horse but walked all the time. He was so patient and joyful and often used to say, "That's good."

He taught the people by word and example, and carefully nurtured them by the sacraments, while he taught immature believers more often, and explained things that were unclear. He generously distributed money and clothes to the poor.

When the persecution intensified, he tried to hide. So, he went first to Father Chastan. While the two priests were together, the Reverend Bishop sent a message asking them to come immediately to where he was. So the two priests went to the Bishop and they stayed together for two days. Then, the two priests went to a Christian village called Yongdang-ri¹⁵⁸. They wanted to die rather than run away, so they stayed there for a few days hearing confessions.

After several days, they sent the clerk Peter Choe to Seoul to hear the news and come back. And they boarded a boat, intending to escape. In the meantime, the Bishop was arrested and taken to Seoul, and after a while, the two clerks Thomas Yi and Peter Choe were also captured. All the leading believers had already been arrested.

At this time, the Bishop wrote a letter to both priests. "A good shepherd lays down his life for his flock. Come here quickly. But do not allow any believer to follow you." He sent them this same letter twice or three times.

So, the two priests voluntarily went to the satellites and were arrested and brought to Seoul. And they received the crown of martyrdom on the same day as the Bishop. Father Maubant was 35 years old at that time.

Father Chastan, James Jeong

The Venerable Father Chastan was docile by nature, outstanding in love for his neighbors, and in patience. Once he learned the Korean language enough to hear the confessions of Christians, he traveled around the countryside to preach the Gospel. In doing so, he suffered from thirst, hunger, cold, and countless other hardships. Not only that, but his humility, temperance, and other virtues were also admirably displayed.

When he met believers, he treated them with the most mother-like love and taught like a good father. In particular, even though he endured misery, he considered it rather a blessing. When he saw poor and wretched people, he felt sorry for them, comforted them and generously shared whatever he had. Often even his own clothes were given to them.

When persecution broke out, he fled from place to place, comforting and helping the Christians, embracing them with fatherly love, and collecting relief money for those in prison. Day by day he became more involved in God's work. He made even greater efforts for the believers to receive the sacraments and become strong.

When he was finally ordered by the Bishop to come to the tribunal, he was delighted as if he were going to a party. At that time, he was arrested after comforting all the Christians with letters. Father Maubant did the same. The two priests each wrote two letters to all the Christians before being arrested, and at the same time they also wrote one letter²¹⁰ together.

Many Christians decided to go to die with the priests, but they were forbidden. Few believers wished to live through the hardship. So much so that many Christians went to the tribunal and were killed.

Father Chastan was killed at the same time and in the same way as the Bishop. His age was 35.

¹⁵⁸ Now Gasan-ri, Seonjang-myeon, Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do.

A letter sent to all members of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, September 6, 1839.

Most Venerable Fathers!

How much torment you suffered for Christ and the salvation of souls, on land or at sea, at home or on the road, at the side of pagans, at the side of believers, persecutors, and false brothers!

You endured thirst, hunger, nakedness, poverty, various forms of misery, and even cruel torture and death. But how blessed are you now! Among the heavenly armies, you have come in triumph wearing a brilliant crown, and you reign with the angels and all the elect for ever and ever.

Behold with compassionate eyes us wretches, trapped in this valley of tears and attacked by enemies from all sides. With what great love you loved your mission field, ever eager to save all souls!

Now that you have power at the side of God our Father, you can do it now. Please pray for us to our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mary with your prayers and merits. Obtain for us the things we need for salvation. Ask God to repay the blood shed by the martyrs from the beginning to the present.

Have pity and show mercy to us. Those who seek our souls stand before our eyes. We are wounded and fallen. Countless dogs surround us and bark, eager to eat us. Watch us! Do not abandon us! Suddenly the wolves come running and surround the Lord's sheep; the Lord's sheep are greatly wounded and scattered. Ferocious dogs chase the sheep and plunge them into deep pools. The sheep abandoned there are crying out to you to send them a shepherd to pull them out of the pool and gather them into the fold to heal their wounds.

Please consider our sighs and the pain in our souls, and do not forget. Our prayers are unworthy, but we appeal to your merits. May it be done! May it be done!

The Deeds of Outstanding Martyrs of 1839 in Seoul

–According to the order when they were killed

Catechist Augustine Yi: Korean name Chi-mun¹⁵⁹

–His wife Barbara Kwon, his daughter Agatha

Augustine Chi-mun was born into a renowned yangban family. At first, he was a pagan and indulged in gambling and led a bad life. When he was 30, he joined the religion with his wife and brothers. He repented of his past, and began to follow his religious life with extreme enthusiasm. Seeing the change in his life, others admired him.

He lost all of his property during several persecutions, but he took it with a gentle heart. After that, he continued to serve God more and more enthusiastically every day, encouraging cold believers, turning pagans to the true God, and convincing many.

Around the 2nd lunar month of 1839, he was arrested, along with his entire family of ten or more, and taken to the interrogation court. The prefect tortured him harshly and ordered him to abandon God and betray other believers. Wearied by his constancy, they took him to Hyeongjo, the court of judgment.

At first, the judge mildly exhorted Augustine's little children, but ordered them to be tortured when they resisted strongly. Despite countless tortures, they could not break their

¹⁵⁹ Yi Gwang-heon (李光獻 1787-1839): Saint. Here, the name is written as "Tsimougni", but it appears as "Chi-wun" in the "Gihae Diary". On May 24, 1839, he was martyred outside of Seoul's Small West Gate.

perseverance. The defeated judge called them monsters. Because the law does not allow children to be beheaded, the judge failed to sentence them to beheading, and sent them back to the interrogation court.

Then the judge said to Augustine. “If you forsake God, I will release not only you, but also your wife, brothers, and children, and I will give back all your property.”

Augustine replied. “It is impossible to forsake God.”

Then the judge became angry and ordered him to be tortured, then said: “You are not afraid of dying, but how is it you do not try to save your wife and children?”

He turned to the satellites. “Beat him to death.”

The flesh of his body was torn and he was covered in blood. Those around were so horrified that they did not even dare to look.

He was tortured three times, but he endured wi Yi Gwang-heon (李光獻 1787-1839): Saint. Here, the name is written as “Tsimougni”, but it appears as “Chi-wun” in the “Gihae Diary”. On May 24, 1839, he was martyred outside of Seoul’s Small West Gate. He was sentenced to death and received the palm of martyrdom on the 12th day of the 4th lunar calendar, aged 53 years old.

Augustine’s wife Barbara Kwon¹⁶⁰

She was a gentile then turned to God, and then served God with enthusiasm. She suffered several persecutions and lost all her property, but with extreme patience she endured all the difficulties. She set up an oratory in her own house, welcomed the bishop and priests, and served them with great care. And she often urged others to receive the sacraments worthily.

In the middle of the night on the 25th day of the second lunar month, 1839, satellites burst into their house, arrested the family and led them to the interrogation court. There she suffered greatly from her natural affection for her children. After she had overcome all the tortures there, she was taken to the judgment court. After being tortured there three times, she was honored with martyrdom on the 26th day of the 7th lunar month, 1839. She was 46.

Augustine’s daughter Agatha¹⁶¹, who was taken back to the interrogation court, persevered to the end despite cruel torture. Her fragile little body, afflicted by an infectious disease, was struck over 300 times by the torturers and underwent 90 strokes of the Chidogon. Finally, on the 5th day of the 11th lunar month 1839, she was strangled and flew to God. She was 17 years old.

Catechist Damian Nam¹⁶² Korean name Munhwa

–His wife, Mary Yi, Martyr

At the age of 30, Damian, a nobleman, having understood the truth of the Christian religion and turned to God, was baptized by Father Pacificus Liu. He followed the religious life with great devotion and diligently learned the doctrine. He avoided all his pagan friends,

¹⁶⁰ Barbara Kwon Hui (權喜 1794-1839) Saint. She was martyred on September 3, 1839 outside of Seoul’s Small West Gate.

¹⁶¹ Agatha Yi (1823-1840) Saint. She was martyred by hanging at the Podocheong (police tribunal). However, the dates of her martyrdom are recorded differently in each record. In this text, it is December 10, 1839. Bishop Ferréol’s “Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution” says January 13, 1840, while the “Gihae Diary” and Bishop Daveluy’s Record has January 9, 1840. Currently, the canonization documents refer to her martyrdom as on January 9, 1840.

¹⁶² Damian Nam Myeong-hyuk (南明赫 1802-1839) Saint. On May 24, 1839, he was martyred outside of Seoul’s Small West Gate.

keeping well away from them, and he showed great charity to his neighbors. He educated his family well by his example, encouraged his lapsed companions. He was particularly eager to convert pagans and baptize their babies.

He was arrested and taken to court in the middle of the night on the 25th (or 29) of the second lunar month in 1839, along with his entire family. When the satellites treated his wife with disrespect, she fiercely criticized them. On hearing her, Damian encouraged her with charity to endure all things in patience for God, like a sheep to the slaughter, as a Christian should.

Damian was ordered to forsake God, betray other believers, and tell who the ornaments belonged to. Those were the Bishop's items. Then, disregarding the order of the prefect, he was put to torture. He still did not succumb, so he was taken to the court of judgment where after being severely tortured three times, he was commanded to forsake God and betray other believers, but he responded negatively. So, sentenced to death, he wrote a letter to his wife, saying that he would be waiting for her in Heaven. He was martyred at the age of 38.

Damian Nam's wife, Mary Yi ¹⁶³

Mary excelled in her devotion to God and to people. She was arrested in the 1839 Persecution, and she overcame many insults and torture with an indomitable spirit.

In particular, she resisted even more resolutely after hearing many stories about her 12-year-old son who was subjected to inhumane torture in another prison despite illness and was later killed. After she defeated all her tortures with her constancy, she was sent to the judge. She was imprisoned for six months after being tortured extremely severely three times by the judge before she was beheaded on the 26th day of the 7th lunar month, 1839, aged 36 years old.

Peter Kwon Seong-do¹⁶⁴

Peter Kwon Seon-do was born to Christian parents. He was renowned for his faith and great love for his neighbors. He was taken to court with his entire family around the 11th lunar month 1838, where he was severely tortured. On being mocked for following the Christian religion he answered, "God is the Creator and Master of all things. People in this world are blessed with God's innumerable favors. Therefore, it is reasonable to return that favor to God in any way. Therefore, humans born with reason must serve God."

The prefect was angry and ordered him to be tortured countless times so that he would betray those who bore the name of Christ. Seon-do answered. "In our religion, harming people is strictly forbidden. Therefore, I do not dare to kill people with my mouth."

So he was taken to the court of judgment and imprisoned in the Tsenok¹⁶⁵ prison for prisoners condemned to death. Inside the prison, he was whipped so badly by the satellites that twice he was half-dead. The more severe his torture, the greater his faith, bravery, and enthusiasm became.

He was finally beaten so harshly with the sammojang that his whole body was torn and covered in blood, and then he was sentenced to death. When he was taken to the execution ground, he was overflowing with joy, and the smile on his face remained even after his head was cut off. He was martyred at age 35.

¹⁶³ Mary Yi Yeon-hui (李連熙 1804-1839) Saint.

¹⁶⁴ Kwon Deuk-in (權得仁 1805-1839): Saint. In the original text, the name is written as "Sento", but in the "Gihae Diary" it appears as "Seong-do." In the government records he appears as "Deuk-in." He was martyred on May 24, 1839.

¹⁶⁵ The Jeonokseo 典獄署, the prison governed by the Hyeongjo (刑曹 Ministry of Justice).

Agatha Yi: Widow¹⁶⁶

Agatha was born to honest parents. She lost her father and married a man. Upon her husband's death, she embraced the religion, touching the hearts of others with her own zeal and example. She labored with her own hands, feeding her family, and faced difficulties with patience.

She was arrested in 1835 along with her younger brother Ho-yeong who was also an outstanding martyr. She was ordered to forsake God and betray her fellow believers, and she was punished for disregarding that order. So, her whole body was torn. She was harassed with countless insults. They then took off all her clothes, hung her up high, and struck her whole body with whips. Invincible, she testified to the truth of the Christian religion, with indomitable perseverance that even amazed the torturers.

She was in prison for four years in such a painful struggle, and in the 4th lunar month of 1839, she received the crown of martyrdom under the sword and ascended to God, aged 56

Magdalena Kim: Widow¹⁶⁷

As soon as Magdalena Kim learned the basic doctrines of the Christian religion, she decided to take a vow of virginity, even though she was still a young girl. However, her mother forbade this and married her to a Christian.

Not long after that her husband died, so she followed a celibate life living in harmony with her mother, whose character was difficult. She converted many pagans to the True God and baptized her dying neighbors.

She always felt a willingness to shed her blood for God. She was finally taken to the Podocheong Court for religious reasons and explained God's commandments to the prefect. She was subjected to severe torture several times, but she endured it with a consistent perseverance. So she was taken to the Hyeongjo court and sentenced to death.

She was imprisoned for three years and then killed with a sword around the 4th lunar month of the year Gihae (1839, the year of the great persecution, when the Bishop, priests, and other believers were murdered). Her age was 66.

Barbara Han: Widow¹⁶⁸

Barbara Han learned the basic doctrines of religion from childhood, but did not observe them and was married to a pagan. When her husband died, she returned to her mother's house.

At some point, she was encouraged by Magdalena Kim to turn entirely to God. From then on, she practiced her religion earnestly, often disciplining her body by fasting. She began to bring back the lapsed and convert pagans to the True God. She baptized many pagan babies who were gravely sick.

She was eager to shed her blood for God. Then she was arrested along with Kim Magdalena and explained the truth of the Christian religion before the prefect without hesitation.

¹⁶⁶ Agatha Yi Jo-i (李召史 1784-1839): Saint. In the "Gihae Diary" she is called "(Yi) Ho-yeong's younger sister," but her name does not appear. In the government records it appears as "Yi Sosa". She was martyred on May 24, 1839.

¹⁶⁷ Kim Eop-i (金業伊 1774-1839): Saint. In the "Gihae Diary", she is called "(Kim) Bogi's younger sister," but her name does not appear. She was martyred on May 24, 1839.

¹⁶⁸ Han Agi (韓阿只 1792-1839): Saint. She is called "Sun-gil's mother" in the "Gihae Diary", but in the government records she appears as "Agi (阿只, Baby)". She was martyred on May 24, 1839.

She was imprisoned for three years and bravely endured many tortures for God's sake. She was finally sentenced to death and died under the sword around the 4th lunar month of Gihae, aged 48.

Anna Park¹⁶⁹

Anna Park had been diligently following a religious life from an early age. When she was 18, she married into a Christian family. She taught her children the basic doctrines and commandments of the religion. She often shed tears while meditating on the five wounds of Our Lord.

She was taken to the Podocheong with her family around the 2nd lunar month of Gihae (1839). Despite severe torture, she steadfastly proclaimed God. The prefect, defeated by her, tried to intimidate her to betray God in ten thousand ways and also used flattery and punishment. She, however, did not succumb to any of this, and she withstood extremely harsh torture all day long. Her whole body was torn and her flesh fell off, revealing her bones. Nevertheless, she always had joy.

She encouraged her parents, who often visited her hoping that she would apostatize, to adhere more fully to their religion. With regard to her home, her parents, her husband, her children, and property, she cared nothing about them, and she devoted herself only to dying for God.

The prefect, conquered by her perseverance, transferred her to the Hyeongjo court. Her judge looked at her and said. "Your husband and your sons have already been released. If you just say one word, you will live too, is this not the world's happiness?" Anna answered. "This is part of man's free decision. I just want to die for God." The judge, in anger, ordered her to be tortured and sentenced her to death.

She was beheaded in the fourth lunar month of the year Gihae.

Her age was 57.

Agatha Kim: Widow¹⁷⁰

Agatha Kim was very simple by nature, but her faith was strong. Prior to her conversion, she and her husband served demons, or malignant spirits.

One day she heard from her brother that all false superstitions, and she immediately destroyed them and accepted the religion regardless of the warnings of the pagans.

However, because of her lack of intelligence, she could not learn profound mysteries or prayers, but only knew "Jesus Mary". Then she was arrested for religious reasons.

The judge asked her. "Are you a Christian?" She answered. "I only know Jesus Mary."

The judge asked. "You will die while being tortured, so will you abandon Jesus Mary?"

"Indeed. Even if I have to die, I cannot forsake God."

Thus, the judge ordered her to be cruelly tortured. Nevertheless, until the end, she repeatedly said that she could not abandon Jesus Mary. When her judge was defeated, she was taken to the court of Hyeongjo, where she received interrogation and gave the same answer. So her judge sent her to her prison. When the Christians in prison saw Agatha, they rejoiced and baptized her after making her prepare well. Finally, her judge ordered her to be

¹⁶⁹ Park A-gi (朴阿只 1783-1839): Saint. In the "Gihae Diary" she is called "(Tae) Deuk-son's mother", but her name does not appear. She was martyred on May 24, 1839. Her husband and her son apostatized and were released on May 12.

¹⁷⁰ Kim A-gi (金阿只 1790-1839): Saint. Her name is not given in the "Gihae Diary" but in the government records she appears as "Agi (Baby)". She was martyred on May 24, 1839.

tortured again, but when she failed to apostatize, he sentenced her to death. After being imprisoned for four years, she, along with eight other believers, flew to Jesus Mary, receiving a martyr's wreath under the sword. Her age was 50¹⁷¹.

Lucia Park¹⁷²: Virgin, and her older sister Mary

Park Lucia was a Gungnyeo¹⁷³, prudent and diligent in her manner, and her nature was always upright, and was outstanding among virgins.

After her mother died, she was chosen by the royal court as a court maid and she entered the palace. She set an outstanding example for people with a noble life. When she was around 30, she heard about the Christian doctrine and she immediately accepted it. Then, knowing that she would be unable to follow a religious life in the court, she used illness as an excuse, and she was given permission to leave the palace, and she went to a acquaintance's house to live. Because her father was extremely hostile and hated the Christian faith so much, she could not dare move into his house.

She soon turned her family to the True God with her example and persuasion. She thanked God often and cherished Him deep in her heart. She regarded worldly fame and glory as nothing and diligently followed a life of faith. She was often engrossed in prayers and meditations, used crude clothing and poor food, and she struggled to discipline herself. She often recalled her Lord's Passion and shed tears of gratitude. Eventually, when the persecution intensified, her entire family fled to a believer's house¹⁷⁴. The satellites noticed this and attacked the house. At that time, she acknowledged that this was God's Providence, and she comforted and encouraged believers on the one hand, and treated the satellites very kindly on the other.

Following the police official, she was taken to the Sagwancheong, the first court to interrogate criminals. There she confessed the Truth and was taken to the police court.

The judge asked. "Why do you believe in Christianity while you are a court lady?"

Lucia answered. "It is everyone's duty to serve God."

Again Lucia was commanded to forsake God and betray other believers, but she refused. She was tortured, but in view of her bravery, she was taken to the Hyeongjo court and was subjected to severe torture. Her flesh was torn and her bones were exposed. As Lucia endured with constant perseverance, she rejoiced that she could, to some extent, imitate the suffering of Christ. After a few days, all her wounds healed completely and her health was restored. When this fact was confirmed, the satellites said that it was done by magic.

During her punishment, she confused the enemies by explaining much of the Truth of the religion. The judge who had failed to make her apostatize eventually sentenced her to death.

When Lucia was taken to her execution, she was so happy that she did not stop praying to God. Her head was cut off and she flew to her Lord. Her age was 39.

¹⁷¹ She is recorded as 50 years old in the "Gihae Diary" but as 54 years old in Bishop Ferréol's "Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution" and 53 in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record.'

¹⁷² Park Hui-sun (朴喜順 1801-1839): Saint. Her name is not given in the "Gihae Diary" but in the government records she appears as "Hui-sun". She was martyred on May 24, 1839.

¹⁷³ A court maid, virgins chosen by the court to take care of the king.

¹⁷⁴ In the "Gihae Diary" it is called "the house of Agatha Kwon", but in Bishop Ferréol's "Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution" and in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' it is said that they visited "Jeon (Gyeong-hyowop) Agatha".

Lucia's sister, Mary¹⁷⁵

After she accepted the Christian religion, she faithfully obeyed God's commandments. She worked very hard to do good and helped the poor with charity fundraising.

After she was arrested, she endured much torture. However, it is not known how she responded or what kind of punishment she faced. With unwavering bravery, she was imprisoned for five months, and on 26th of the 7th lunar month¹⁷⁶ of *Gihae* year she was awarded the palm of martyrdom under the sword. Her age was 54.

John Yi Gyeong-sam¹⁷⁷

John was a pagan and after turning to the True God, he enthusiastically served God. After he was baptized in Beijing and returned home¹⁷⁸, he followed his religious life with greater devotion. After that, he never tasted meat and lived as a virgin. He always had the will to die for God.

Then he was arrested around the second lunar month of the year of *Gihae* and endured the most terrible torture with courage. After he was imprisoned for six months, the indomitable warrior received a sword along with seven other believers. He was killed on the 10th day of the sixth lunar month in the *Gihae* year (1839), 5 days after the feast of the Assumption. His age was 45¹⁷⁹.

Magdalena Yi, Magdalena Heo, Teresa, and Barbara: Relatives¹⁸⁰

Magdalena Yi was born into an honest family. Under the threat of her father's persecution against Catholicism, Magdalena, along with her mother Magdalena Heo and her older sister Barbara, secretly imitated each other's devotion, serving God and living a compassionate life. However, her father opposed her determination to preserve her virginity and engaged her to a pagan. So she sought every possible way to escape.

One day she came across a great opportunity by chance. Wearing old clothes that had worn out without her parents knowing, she stained some of her own clothes with her own blood, and ran away to her sister's house¹⁸¹ in Seoul. At that time, her parents cried, thinking she had been eaten by a tiger. One day her father went to the house of his eldest daughter in Seoul, where Magdalena was hiding. And he said that his little daughter had been eaten by a

¹⁷⁵ Park Keunagi (朴大阿只 1786-1839): Saint. Her name is not given in the "Gihae Diary" but in the government records she appears as "Big Baby (大阿只, Dae Agi)". She was martyred on September 3, 1839.

¹⁷⁶ Bishop Ferréol's "Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution" says that she was martyred on May 24th (the 12th of the 4th lunar month).

¹⁷⁷ Yi Gwang-Ryeol (李光烈 1795-1839): Saint. He is also referred to as "Gyeongsam" in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' and the "Gihae Diary". In the government records he appears as "Gwangryul". On July 20, 1839 he was martyred.

¹⁷⁸ He was active as an envoy to Beijing for the Korean Church, but the government records only mention the fact that in 1836, together with Jo Sin-cheol, Jeong Hasang and others, he helped bring Father Chastan into Korea.

¹⁷⁹ In Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution' it is said that he was 39 but in the "Gihae Diary" and in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' he is said to have been 45.

¹⁸⁰ They are all saints, Magdalen Heo Gye-im (許季任 1773-1839), her daughters Barbara Yi Jeong-hui (李貞喜 1799-1839) and Magdalen Yi Yeong-hui (1809-1839), and Yi Mae-im (1788-1839), their aunt. The names do not appear in the "Gihae Diary", but appear in the government records. They were martyred outside of Seoul's Small West Gate, Yi Yeon-hui and Yo Mae-im on July 20, 1839, Yi Jeong-hui on September 3, and Heo Gye-im on September 26.

¹⁸¹ Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution' and Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' say "the House of their Aunt (Yi Mae-im) Teresa" and the "Gihae Diary" says "The House of their aunt in Seoul".

tiger. Hearing this, his daughter filled the house with lamentations, as she believed what her father said.

Like this, Magdalena lived a heavenly life without her parents knowing it, and despite being extremely poor, she kept her virginity.

Before long, severe persecution of believers arose in the year Gihae, and she joined her mother, Magdalena Heo, her aunt Teresa, her sister Barbara, and two other believers, Martha Kim and Lucia Kim. With her strong spirit, they decided to die for God.

(When Barbara was forced to marry a pagan by her pagan father, she faked an illness, limping for three years to preserve her virginity, and walked cautiously only when her father wasn't looking. Then, driven by necessity, she married a Christian.)

Thus, the six women voluntarily went to the satellites who were searching for Christians. When they heard that they were gathering in a believer's house, they went there. The whole house was filled with weeping and lamentations. The satellites who saw this asked why. The women answered. "We are Christians."

The satellites were confused and refused to believe, demanding that they show religious signs. At that, Magdalena the Virgin and other women showed their rosaries, and crosses, and sacred medals. With this evidence, the women were arrested and taken to court. At first they were urged to forsake God. However, the women despised the order, and they were tortured severely by the Juri because they were said to be more guilty for have given themselves up.

Five days later, the procurator said to the women who were taken out of prison. "Since you have been tortured so much, do you want to admit your faults and abandon God because of that experience?" he asked.

The women answered with a single voice. "If we wanted to abandon God, why would we have surrendered? We don't know any other way. Please kill us according to our country's laws."

The magistrate was displeased and ordered the women's legs to be twisted and their skin flayed. The women survived the torture with constant bravery and were transferred to Hyeongjo. In the Hyeongjo, the women were sentenced to death after professing God without hesitation and overcoming all torture.

Thus, on the tenth day of the 6th lunar month, the Virgin Magdalena was killed at the age of 31, together with her aunt Teresa aged 52. Magdalena's older sister was imprisoned for six months before she was beheaded on the 26th day of the seventh lunar month of the year Gihae, at the age of 41. Her mother, Widow Magdalena, was imprisoned for 7 months before she received a martyr's crown at the age of 67 on the 19th day of the eighth lunar month.

Martha Kim: also known as Bupyeong Jip¹⁸²

Martha Kim, at the age of 50, gained the palm of martyrdom on the tenth day of the sixth lunar month.

Barbara Yi¹⁸³: (Yi) Magdalena's blood relative

¹⁸² Kim Seong-im (金成任 1790-1839): Saint. Her name does not appear in the "Gihae Diary" but in the government records she appears as "Park Seong-im". However, from the contents of the "Gihae Diary" and the 'Annals of Heonjong, we can see that Park Seong-im is Kim Seong-im. She was martyred outside of Seoul's Small West Gate on July 20, 1839. She is said to have been aged 50 in the "Gihae Diary", 53 in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' and 54 in Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution'.

¹⁸³ Barbara Yi (1825-1839): Saint. Barbara Yi and Magdalena Yi Yeong-hui were niece and aunt. She was martyred at the Podocheong on May 27, 1839 (April 15 lunar). In Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the

At the age of 15, this Barbara died of severe torture, hunger and sickness.

Lucia Kim¹⁸⁴

Rosa Kim, Widow: also known as Gamgol Jip¹⁸⁵

After the death of her husband, Kim Rosa turned to worship the True God. She burned with the love for God, so she devoted herself to prayer and good deeds, working with her own hands to provide the necessities of life for her parents.

Subsequently, when persecution against the believers arose, she was taken to court and professed God without hesitation and was subjected to severe torture, but with constant persistence, she overcame all punishments. When she was urged to apostatize, she said, “The God that we believers serve is the Supreme Lord of all things. God is the One who rewards the good and punishes the wicked.

Those who obey God’s commandments will enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, and those who betray will be punished with eternal punishment in Hell. For this reason, I cannot forsake God, and if I betray other believers, I do harm to them. I can’t do that.”

On hearing these words, her judge became furious and tried to defeat her perseverance with harsh punishments, but failed and sent her to the Hyeongjo. She confessed God during her torture in the Hyeongjo. After being imprisoned for eight months, she went up to God in the sixth lunar month of the year, beheaded at the age of 56.

Mary Won¹⁸⁶: Virgin

Mary Won lost her parents at a young age and grew up in great poverty in the home of her relatives. She earned her food by working with her own hands. Her love for God burned fervently, she vowed virginity. Her extreme devotion and humility were outstanding, and her conduct deserved to be imitated, so she was liked by everyone.

As the persecution continued, satellites rushed in, tied her up and dragged her in front of the judge. Her judge looked at her and said, “Are you a Christian?” Mary said, “Yes, I am.”

The judge said again, “If you deny God, I will immediately release you.” Mary said, “I have already decided to serve God with a firm determination and thereby save my soul. So don’t ask any more. Please kill me.”

The angry judge ordered her to be tortured by leg-bending and beating. Her body was torn and bleeding, but Mary did not yield.

The judge was exhausted, so he sent her to Hyeongjo where the judge did his utmost, but when he was left helpless by Mary’s valor, he gave up and ordered her to be executed. Thus, at the age of 22¹⁸⁷, Mary ascended to God on the 10th day of the 6th lunar month.

1839 Persecution’ it is said, “she was strangled in prison and martyred.” However, in Bishop Daveluy’s records and in “Gihae Diary” she is said to have died in prison.

¹⁸⁴ Lucia Kim (1818-1839): Saint. In the original text of the letter, there is a reference to page 13 (v.p. 13), which refers to ‘Lucia Kim, the daughter of Manmul Jip.’ In the past, she was known as Anna Kim, because she was considered to be the Anna Kim Jang-geum mentioned in the “Gihae Diary”.

¹⁸⁵ Rosa Kim (金老沙 1784-1839): Saint. The name does not appear in the “Gihae Diary” but in the ‘Seungjeongwon Diary’, she appears as “Nosa (老沙)”. She was martyred on July 20, 1839.

¹⁸⁶ Mary Won Gwi-im (元貴任 1818-1839): Saint. Her name does not appear in the “Gihae Diary” but in the government records she appears as “Gwi-im”. She was martyred on July 20, 1839.

¹⁸⁷ The age of Won Gwi-im is given as 21 in Bishop Ferréol’s ‘Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution’, but as 22 in the “Gihae Diary” and Bishop Daveluy’s ‘Record’.

Lucia Kim¹⁸⁸: Also known as the Daughter of Manmul Jip, Virgin

Lucia Kim learned the Catholic discipline at a young age. She was gentle and humble. When she was 14, she made a vow of virginity to God. Greater love for God burned, and she became more preoccupied with good works.

As the persecution intensified, she consulted with Magdalena Yi (Yeong-hui) and others to go to the satellites and surrender. The judge saw Lucia's beauty, and said, "Are you really devoted to the superstition of the Christians, such an elegantly handsome woman?" Lucia replied, "Yes, I am a Christian."

The judge said, "If you just say one word, I will save you." She replied. "Even though I must die, I cannot forsake God." The judge said, "Give the reason why you can't."

Lucia said, "God is the Creator and Protector of all people and all things. He is the best parent who rewards the good and punishes the wicked. So even if I must die ten thousand times, I cannot forsake God."

The judge said, "From whom did you learn? How old are you? How many friends have you? Why aren't you married? What is this soul you are talking about? Are you not afraid of death?" She replied. "I learned from my mother when I was nine years old. In our religion, it is strictly forbidden to harm others. Therefore, I cannot betray others even if I die. I am 20 years old and I am not too old to marry. Moreover, speaking of marriage is contrary to the honesty of girls. The soul is a spiritual being and cannot be seen with the physical eye. I am afraid of dying." He replied, "I am afraid of dying, but since you order me to deny God in order to live, I want more to die."

The judge asked, "Where is the soul?" "The soul is in the whole body," Lucia said.

The judge asked, "Have you ever seen God?" Lucia said, "How do you think that people living far from the palace can believe that the king is there? Do you think they only believe after seeing the king with their own eyes? Likewise, by looking at all created things, we can fully appreciate the existence of the Father of nature."

The judge flattered and threatened her, but when he could not overcome Lucia's valor, he went mad with fury. He ordered that Lucia be tortured with leg-bending and beating. But, Lucia rejoiced during her torture, and she confounded her enemies with her amazing perseverance. They were in great admiration and said, "She must be possessed."

The weary judge sent Lucia to Hyeongjo. The judge made every effort to change Lucia, but when he saw that he couldn't, he had her whipped and eventually sentenced her to death. Thus, at the age of 22, Lucia went to God on the 10th day of the sixth lunar month of 1839, the year of Gihae.

John Park Myeong-gwan¹⁸⁹

As a child, John Park grew up poor and miserable after losing his father. (His father¹⁹⁰ was murdered because of his faith in Christ.) John showed his mother extreme filial piety, and by working with his own hands, he provided life's necessities for his mother.

When he was mature, he diligently learned the religious doctrine and served God with zeal.

¹⁸⁸ Lucia Kim (1818-1839): Saint. In the "Gihae Diary" she is called "Ja Geun-son's Sister," while her name does not appear, but in the government records it appears as "Nam Lucia" (南累時阿). She was martyred on July 20, 1839.

¹⁸⁹ Park Hu-jae (朴厚載 1799-1839): Saint. He appears as "Myeong-gwan" in the "Gihae Diary" and as "Hu-jae" in the 'Seungjeongwon Diary.' On September 3, 1839 he was martyred outside of Seoul's Small West Gate.

¹⁹⁰ Park Hu-jae's father is said to have been martyred during the Sinyu Persecution of 1801, according to the "Gihae Diary" and Bishop Daveluy's 'Record.'

When the persecution intensified, he was taken to the judge. He was ordered to forsake God and betray other believers, but he ignored this order and he was punished by beating and leg-bending. His body was torn to pieces and he fainted, but he survived. Nevertheless, John did not stop preaching God and claiming the truth of religion, day or night.

Finally, he was transferred to the Hyeongjo's judge and, after undergoing much torture, he was imprisoned for five months, then at the age of 41¹⁹¹, was finally sentenced to die on 26th of the 7th lunar month, 1839.

Paul Jeong²⁴⁴

Paul Jeong¹⁹² was originally from a famous family, but he became more famous for his Christian faith. His father and older brother¹⁹³ were arrested during the persecution in 1801, and died in a brave fight for religion.

Paul was arrested with his mother¹⁹⁴ for religion at the age of seven after the death of his father, but after all his property was confiscated he was released.

When he grew up, homeless, he wandered back and forth to his friends' homes for years. Finally he ran away with his mother from all his relatives (they were all pagans), changed his name and lived alone. He grew up in poverty and misery. He endured the many persecutions he received because of his faith, and he never apostatized.

He was persecuted not only by the court, but also by all his acquaintances and relatives. He fled them again and went to the home of the martyr Peter Jo to live. While he was hiding in the house, he endured all kinds of suffering, including poverty, hunger, and nakedness. Sometimes he was forced to leave his mother and sister¹⁹⁵ because of the persecution of his relatives. In the midst of such calamities, he did not rest for a moment, day or night, to devote himself to prayer and good works. He kept his virginity to his death.

He often prayed to God to send a shepherd to convert our people. Even though he himself was a nobleman, he volunteered to serve as a slave and joined the envoys going to Beijing, travelling to Beijing eight or nine times. He pleaded with the Bishop of Beijing to send Father Pacificus Yu.

Upon returning to his home, he took refuge in Seoul with his mother and sister when persecution against the believers intensified. In Seoul, burning with the greatest devotion to God, he was welcomed by everyone. At the time of Lent, he would fast every day in addition to the usual customs of the Korean believers. Even during the year, he abused his flesh often by fasting during the day. He often gave alms to those in need while he was also poor. His strong love for God and people set a good example for others.

After that, he arrived at the Pien-moun, led the priests into our country, brought them to his house, and served them with all his heart. Bishop Imbert selected Paul as a seminary student to receive the priesthood. However, the persecution against the believers intensified day by day, so he followed the Bishop when he fled. He soon returned to his house at the Bishop's command to go back to keep the things he had left in Seoul.

¹⁹¹ The age of Park Hu-jae is given as 40 years old in Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution', but as 41 in the "Gihae Diary" and Bishop Daveluy's 'Record'.

¹⁹² Paul Jeong Ha-sang (丁夏祥 1795-1839): Saint. On September 22, 1839, he was martyred outside of Seoul's Small West Gate.

¹⁹³ Augustine Jeong Yak-jong 丁若鍾 and Charles Jeong Chul-sang 丁哲祥 were martyred in 1801.

¹⁹⁴ Cecilia Yu So-sa (柳召史 1761-1839) saint, martyred in prison at the Podocheong on November 23, 1839.

¹⁹⁵ Elisabeth Jeong Jeong-hye (丁情惠 1797-1839) saint, martyred on December 29, 1839.

There he, with his mother and sister, calmed his mind and awaited God's providence. So on 6th day of the 6th lunar month¹⁹⁶ of *Gihae* year, the satellites attacked Paul, bound him with a rope, dragged him with his mother and sister to the courtroom, questioned him once, and put him in prison.

On the third day, the judge called Paul out of prison for questioning.

"You have despised the beautiful customs of Korea, followed the teachings of other countries, and corrupted the people." Paul said, "If things from other countries are useful, we use them. But why should we reject the best, the Christian religion, simply because it came to us from another kingdom? Surely that's wrong. Everyone should accept Christianity."

The judge said, "You are saying that the superstition of another country is good, and that is to despise the king's orders." At that time Paul offered a booklet¹⁹⁷ to the judge, saying he wished to die only for the sake of religion. That booklet was written about the Christian religion before Paul was arrested. And he argued much about the truth of the religion.

The judge read the booklet and said, "Everything you say is right. But why do you teach people what is forbidden by the government?" He ordered Paul to be bound with chains and to bend his whole body with a Juri. So Paul's arms fell and his broken bones were revealed.

He was again brought out of prison a few days later and subjected to almost all kinds of torture, including leg-bending and beating. The jailers bound Paul tightly with ropes and pulled him back and forth, and his limbs were dislocated. Still, they were not satisfied, so they used a wooden ax called Sammojang to cut all of his shins and peel them off, and tried to rip out the marrow. So, his whole body was torn to pieces, and blood poured down and wet the ground. Nevertheless, with a happy face, Paul endured everything with a consistent perseverance.

Then, a few days later, he was taken out of prison again, and was brutally tortured to betray Father Maubant, Father Chastan and other believers. Like a lamb, Paul endured all punishment and received the martyr's garland with Augustine Yu (Jin-gil) on September 22, 1839 (solar calendar). His age was 45.

Augustine Yu Yong-seon : Official¹⁹⁸

Augustine Yu was born in a noble family to parents who held high rank. At a young age, he studied the classics, was talented, and was praised for his hard work. He soon won honor as a scholar. Even after he received an administrative post, he did not value wealth and honor and continued to devote himself to learning.

In time, he deeply examined the structure of all things in the world and the existence of the universe, and he realized for himself the reason that a Creator of all things in the world must exist. Thus, he spent more than a decade in search for the Creator, reading every book he could find.

One day, when he heard that many people were shedding their blood because of a religion called Christianity, he wished to meet people who believed in that religion, and he started looking for Christians, out of his desire to hear whether their religion was true. Once on a road, he happened to see small pieces of paper. Looking at the note, it was about the

¹⁹⁶ Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution' says July 16 (6th day of the 6th lunar month) and the "Gihae Diary" says July 11 (1st day of the 6th lunar month). Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' says that Cecilia Yu Sosa was arrested on July 19th (9th day of the 6th lunar month).

¹⁹⁷ 上宰相書 Sangjaesangseo, a book written by Jeong Ha-sang.

¹⁹⁸ Yu Jin-gil (劉進吉 1791-1839): Saint. He is called "Yong-Shim" in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record'. Since he was an official interpreter, he was called an "official," and he had reached the position of highest interpreter in the Sayeokwon (司譯院 Interpreters' Bureau). He was martyred on September 22, 1839.

human soul. So he read about the Christian faith by putting together the note that had been torn into pieces. He was burning with a desire to know God, and he began to search for Christians everywhere. Eventually, after finding a Christian believer and hearing about the doctrine for some time, he immediately accepted the faith.

A year later, he took on the duty of interpreter and went to Beijing¹⁹⁹ with the envoys. He washed away his sins in Beijing with the spring of baptism. Then he was sent to Beijing several times by the court. Whenever he went to Beijing, he took great care of the work of our Church.

However, when his wife saw that their wealth was gradually diminishing and her husband was making no effort to obtain honor and high rank, she was very angry and persecuted her husband for many years inside their home, devoting herself to insulting and blaspheming the Christian faith and Christian believers. Augustine was willing to endure all of this for God, often devoting time to meditation and prayer, teaching the truth to those who did not know God. In the Gihae year, when the persecution of Christians intensified, entrusting everything to the providence of God, he purified his mind, and waited for the result. Around the sixth month²⁰⁰ of the lunar calendar, satellites were sent to arrest Augustine. When this news reached the ears of his relatives, his relatives, all pagans, rushed to him and held him with tears and sighs and pleaded with him. They begged him to say just a word of apostasy to save not only Augustine himself, but also his whole family. However, Augustine rejected all their claims and was taken to the judge with a brave spirit.

The judge received him politely and, with all his skill, urged him to abandon God, making pleas and exhortations. But Augustine ignored all this and was taken to punishment.

The judge asked, "From whom did you learn about the superstitions forbidden by the government? To how many people did you teach the religion? Also, how many Christian books do you have?" "I learned the Christian faith from Paul Yi²⁰¹, a martyr from Jeolla-do, and I became a believer. Speaking of preaching the Gospel, I could not even convert my wife. I don't have any books."

The judge said, "You say that you have no books, yet no one has as many books as you have," and ordered him to torture harshly.

Then he tried to find out from Augustine how the Western priests came into Korea. Augustine said, "The purpose of the priests' coming to Korea was to increase the glory of God, to teach people to keep God's commandments and to save souls by serving God, thereby avoiding the eternal punishment of Hell after death and to enjoy infinite happiness in Paradise. Since they preach such a holy teaching, how can they be accused of wickedness?"

(Augustine) "If they are false, how would they dare preach holiness and virtue to people? First, after training themselves with many virtues and purity, they go to other countries to preach holiness to many people. If they did this because of their wish for high honor, riches, or ugly desires, how could Europeans living in areas more famous than any other leave their richer and more attractive homeland and come to a foreign country, nearly 9,000 leagues away, without fear of death?"

¹⁹⁹ Yu Jin-gil traveled to Beijing several times as an interpreter with the Korean envoys, and was baptized at the Beijing Catholic Church in 1824.

²⁰⁰ According to the government records Yu Jin-gil was arrested on July 17, 1839 (the 7th day of the 6th lunar month).

²⁰¹ This seems to be the Blessed Paul Yi Gyeong-eon 李景彦, who was martyred in Jeonju during the Jeonghae Persecution of 1827. This is because he was close to Jeong Ha-sang and Yu Jin-gil, and worked with them to bring the priests into Korea.

“Moreover, they have risen to the dignity of Bishop, so what more honor do they wish for? And since they are using wealth from their own country, how can they be accused of coming to our country for wealth?”

“They, being consecrated to God, have pledged to keep virginity for life, and are men who have kept the purity of the flesh and have risen to a holy dignity. How can they be accused of coveting ugly desires?”

When the judge heard this, he asked, “Who brought them to Korea?” “I led them,” replied Augustine.

After that he was brutally tortured to betray the two priests, but Augustine gave no answer. Having previously received the advice of the Bishop, he only admitted the fact that there were two priests in Korea. (The Bishop instructed him to say that.) However, he did not disclose the place where the two priests were.

Then, he was tortured by Juri, being already covered with scars. Both thighs were bound with a thick rope which was then pulled as if sawing back and forth to tear the flesh. At that time, Augustine seemed to be placed on a burning charcoal fire. The next day, they brutally rubbed his shins with a wooden ax and cut his flesh from the bones. However, Augustine did not change his complexion and overcame all his punishments with a calm spirit.

Finally, the indomitable warrior was transferred to the Euigeumbu prison with the priests. There he was again dragged out two or three times, tortured, and then sentenced to death.

Augustine, at the age of 49, was martyred under the sword with Paul Jeong (Ha Sang). Augustine’s wife, brother, who were pagans, and his second child²⁰², were sentenced to exile.

Charles Jo Myung-cheol²⁰³

Charles Jo was from Gangwon-do and was converted to the worship of the True God by Augustine Yu (Jin-gil) when he turned thirty. After a few months he followed Augustine to Beijing. There he received baptism, and armed with the most holy sacrament of Confirmation and the Eucharist, he returned home. At that time, he served God, burning with supreme love for God, and his humility and patience were also outstanding.

While he was also poor, he often helped those in need. He turned his stubborn wife to God with prayer and exhortation. He influenced many pagans to leave their ancestral superstitions and accept the Christian faith. He was very fond of preaching about God. During his meditations and prayers, he often shed devout tears. He brought many benefits to the Korean church. He was always willing to win martyrdom and suffer much for Jesus Christ.

In 1839, on the way back from a visit to China, he had a dream of Jesus standing on a high mountain with the Apostles Peter and Paul. In his dream, he heard the Lord say to him, “This year I will give you a martyr’s wreath.” Then Charles fell down to the ground and gave thanks. He had this dream twice.

Upon returning home, Charles began to persuade his family with words and encourage them with exhortations to prepare his whole family to be persecuted and martyred for God.

²⁰² Yu Jin-gil’s wife Han So-sa was transferred to Changwon, Gyeongsang-do; his son Geun-cheol to Chilwon, and Yu Jin-gil’s elder brother Un-gil was sent to Seoncheo, Pyeongan-do.

²⁰³ Charles Jo Sin-cheol (趙信喆 1795-1839): Saint. On September 26, 1839, he was martyred outside of Seoul’s Small West Gate.

Around the fifth lunar month of 1839, satellites attacked his house and captured his entire family. He was away at that time, and when he finally returned home, it so happened that the satellites were just leaving the house, after arresting his wife and family. Charles followed them and went to court. He watched his family being taken to punishment in the court, but the agents expelled those standing around from the courthouse. At that time, Charles was also pressed to leave the government office, but he did not step back.

When asked why he wasn't going out, Charles replied, "I am the family head of these people who have been captured now." When the satellites heard this answer, they immediately reported it to the judge, who ordered him to be taken to jail.

Then the judge questioned him, who was taken out of prison and asked "To whom do these things that you have belong?" (They were bought from Beijing for use in the mission.) Charles said, "These are things I bought in Beijing." The judge scolded him severely. And when he saw that Charles confessed Christ constantly and ignored his warnings, he ordered the Juri to be applied, to torment his whole body. But even with this harsh punishment, Charles remained unbowed. He did not obey the evils spoken by the judge, but rather steadfastly declared his faith to the end.

Charles was hung from a very high pole and hit countless times with clubs and whips. He was given 35 strokes of the Juri, his whole body was ripped apart, and he was stripped of flesh with the jujang. His body was covered in wounds, and his bloody, half-dead body was kept in a terrible prison.

A few days later he was brought back and again punished with Juri and a wooden ax. However, Charles did not succumb to any of these punishments and was taken to the Euigeumbu court along with the priests. There he was beaten three times and then sentenced to death.²⁰⁴

As he was in the cart on his way to execution, he said to a soldier, "Now I am going to a place of rest, so please tell my family that I want them to follow me." The soldier agreed to do so and did it in tears. Charles, aged 45²⁰⁵, smiling with a joyful face, offered his neck to the executioner, five days after the feast of St. Matthew in 1839.

Peter Yu Dae-cheol²⁰⁶: son of Augustine, official and martyr

Peter, the son of Augustine, the martyr, was gentle and compassionate in nature from an early age. As a young boy, he did not follow his insincere mother but followed his pious father, accepted the faith, and served God with amazing devotion.

His mother and sister were enemies who hated God's kingdom so much that they used persuasion and threats to bring Peter to their superstitions. Peter resisted with extreme perseverance, and when his words and actions indicated that he would not forsake his true faith, they became angry and persecuted him harshly and tormented him with hard words. However, her filial son respected his persecuting mother with love and respect. In addition, he responded with soft words to the harsh words of his mother and sister, and grieved at the ignorance of his mother and sister with a pitying heart.

Peter, who obeyed God's law, diligently learned the doctrine of the religion and strengthened himself with the sacraments. He burned with a great love for God, and he was willing to shed his blood for Christ and God.

²⁰⁴ Jo Sin-cheol was transferred to the Euigeumbu, then transferred to the Hyeongjo, where he was sentenced to death on September 22.

²⁰⁵ Jo Sin-cheol's age is given as 45 years old in church records, but as 44 years old in the government record.

²⁰⁶ Peter Yu Dae-cheol (劉大喆 1826-1839): Saint. He was martyred by hanging at the Podocheong on October 31, 1839.

When persecution broke out and many believers were arrested and martyred, he was envious of their glory, spoke gasping as if competing, hoping that he would join them as well.

One day, desperately willing to shed blood for God, he strode into the court of judgment. When the judge asked and learned that he was a Christian, he put him in prison. The next day, he was taken out of prison and threatened with words and threats to forsake God and betray other believers. However, when he saw Peter confess God steadfastly, the judge became angry and had him whipped and tortured with various tortures.

He ordered the valiant witness of faith to be flogged and subjected to various tortures, but neither the violence of the torture nor harsh or docile words affected his determination. After beating Peter, tearing his flesh until he was fainting, he sent him back to a prison full of impure and filthy things. Thus, Peter was imprisoned in a dark prison and beaten very harshly and brutally by the satellites. As they ruthlessly beat him, inflicting wound upon wound, they mercilessly urged him to utter a single word of apostasy and so get out of prison.

However, the faithful warrior of Christ endured all these tortures with a strong spirit and cheerful face, defending the truth of religion with invincible words. One of the satellites approached and admonished with sweet words to obey the judge's words and avoid death. Peter asked him, "Why do you offer me this opinion?" Upon hearing this, the satellite said, "You are really telling the truth. Oh, Dae-cheol, I ask you one thing. Let me help you. If you help me for a while, I may be saved." He encouraged his fellow believers in jail despite being subjected to incredibly harsh punishment, and tried to persuade the apostates with devout words to return to God's favor.

Peter was brought out of prison and punished again. After being whipped more than 600 times and beaten by the Chidogon more than 40 times, his body was paralyzed and torn to pieces, but his soul became stronger and burned more fervently, expressing the joy in his heart. After overcoming all these punishments, Peter, at the age of 14²⁰⁷, was strangled and ascended to God on the 25th day of the 9th lunar month, 1839.

Jeong Guk-bo²⁰⁸

Jeong Guk-bo came from a noble family. At the age of thirty, when he was in the prime of life, he realized the Truth of the Christian faith and joined Christ. Two years after he was cleansed by the spring of baptism, he began to be more closely united with God. He carried out many duties of charity to the believers, and he accepted all believers as guests at the order of Father Pacificus. He faced poverty and misery, but he endured with patience for God.

He was arrested for his faith in the seventh lunar month in 1839 and taken to the Podocheong. There, he was severely punished for confessing that God was the Creator. However, with the utmost perseverance he remained true in faith.

When his resolution could not be broken, he was taken to the Hyeongjo court. Sadly, however, he surrendered, forsook God, and was immediately released. Upon returning to his home, he realized his fault and began to lament day and night with remorse. Then he was moved by the advice of a believer and he ran straight back to the Hyeongjo court. When asked why he had come, he confessed his disloyalty to God and asked to die for God.

²⁰⁷ Yu Dae-cheol's age is given as 14 in the 'Gihae Diary.' He is said to be 13 years old in Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution' and "14 years old, 13 years old in the Western style" in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record'.

²⁰⁸ Jeong Guk-bo (1799-1839): Saint. His baptismal name appears as "Protacius" (Protasius) in the 'Gihae Diary.'

But the satellites thought he was crazy and sent him away. He was kicked out twice in the same way. He eventually became ill because he was exhausted from the pain and terrible wounds in his heart, making it impossible for him to walk. So, he had himself taken to court by porters whom he hired for money.

But again, he was thrown out of court, and was lying outside of the court, lamenting. Soon, as the judge came out of the court, he cried out. "I am regretful that I have forsaken God, and I want to die for this sin." The judge ordered him to go away. But when he cried out, he begged him to hear his petition. So the judge was forced to put him in jail.

A few days later he was sent back to the Podocheong. There, he was beaten 25 times with the Chidogon and badly wounded, and in 1839 he died in prison at the age of 41²⁰⁹.

This time, I'll tell you this far.²¹⁰

This I am sending to the Reverend Father Libois, the Procurator in Macao.

²⁰⁹ The date of martyrdom of Jeong Guk-bo is given as May 10 (the 27th day of the 3rd lunar month) in Bishop Ferréol's 'Record of the Martyrs in the 1839 Persecution', the fourth lunar month in the "Gihae Diary", and in Bishop Daveluy's 'Record' it is given as the night between the 20th and 21st of May.

²¹⁰ After his return to Korea as a priest, with the two French missionaries, he was too busy to continue translating the texts. Then in less than a year, he was captured and executed. Others continued the task of improving the information about the martyrs in the following decades.

Extracts from Records of Kim Dae-geon's Interrogations

In 1925, Bishop Mutel published French translations of the government records he had discovered concerning the arrest and interrogation of Kim Dae-geon. More recently, many other records have come to light. We give here only a brief selection, translated from Bishop Mutel's French.

At first, Kim Dae-geon concealed his Korean identity and it took some time for his real name to be discovered.

(June 19, 1846).

The Governor of Hwanghae-do, Kim Jeong-jip, expressly sends a report on the depositions taken from the criminals of perverse doctrine Kim Dae-geon et al.

The Governor of Hwanghae-do, Kim Jeong-jip, states the following: The criminals Kim Dae-geon, Im Seong-ryong and Eom Su having all three been brought in, the magistrate judge of Haeju, Park Hyeon-gyu, and his assistant being duly commissioned to investigate together, the 25-year-old criminal Kim Dae-geon deposed saying that he is from China, Macau prefecture in Kwang-tong province; his name is Woo, and his given name is Dae-geon; he was born and raised in this prefecture; his father is dead, but his mother is still living, and he himself is unmarried. At the age of 15 or 16, he studied the religion of Europe, and at the age of 23, embarking at Songjiang (Shanghai) on a merchant ship, he made a sea voyage of 3,000 lys to land at Liaodong.

On the eleventh Lunar Month of 1844, he came to the barrier of stakes (Bien-mun), and, wishing to see Korea, he took advantage of the fact that the Yalu river was frozen to secretly enter it, and last year on the eighth Lunar Month, he arrived in Seoul. Wishing to visit the mountains and waterways of Hwanghae-do, he went to Mapo to hire a boat, and as the boat of Im was about to leave for Hwanghae-do to trade, on the 18th day of the past 4th Lunar Month, he boarded the boat and came to Yeonpyeong-do island in Haeju district; then, having passed on to Sogang and other places, and having visited them summarily, he returned to the maritime fortress of Deungsan; on that very day, due to the requisition of the boats by the fortress, a dispute arose and his identity was discovered. His book in vulgar characters is a summary of the Heavenly Master's doctrine. The human figures on one of the small pieces of cloth are the image of the Blessed Mother and Jesus; on the other, they are not plants as they say, but the figure of a heart; he wore them as if glued to his body in a spirit of piety and veneration.

In a new deposition, he said he had a passion for tourism; he had visited the mountains and rivers of every country, and had come to Korea because of his taste for landscapes and also for religion. When he came near the Gate of Stakes, he saw the shape of the clothes of the Koreans who had come for the fair, and, as he knew that the law forbids crossing the border, he made himself a sort of Korean hood with his hands to hide the appearance of his cut hair; as for the habit, the shape is more or less the same in both countries, for the vest he cut off the collar and tore off the buttons to put on. Carrying a few dry provisions, as well as 10 ounces of gold and 30 ounces of silver, he set off alone over the ice and, under cover of darkness, crossed the Yalu. At night, he would take refuge in the mountains or enter some inn; several times he was hunted down, so he would pretend to be mute and beg for a living. After several months, he learned to speak Korean and traveled through Pyongan-do, Hamgyong-do and Hwanghae-do.

Last year in the 8th Lunar Month, he arrived in Seoul for the first time; for his clothes and food, he used the gold and silver he brought with him to buy his own, and he has no companion, introducer or householder. During the 9 months he stayed in Seoul, although eager to preach the religion, he found no one willing to study it, because they feared the law forbidding it in the kingdom. Eager to visit the mountains and waterways of Hwanghae-do, he went to Mapo, secured a boat and came here. As for the man named Im, he didn't know him intimately; when he had the book written in vulgar characters and had to procure clothes or food, it's not that he didn't know certain people intimately, but if he indicated who they were, they would certainly have to suffer because of him, so, should he undergo a hundred kinds of awful torture, or be beheaded on the spot, according to the precepts of his law, it's absolutely impossible for him to denounce them. The name Woo is rare in Korea, whereas Kim is common, which is why he called himself Kim.

Boat master Im Seong-ryong testifies that he is a Mapo boatman by trade; wanting to buy whiting, he was preparing to leave for Yeonpyeong in the Hwanghae-do when, on the 17th of the 4th Lunar Month, the man named Yi, who lives in Sogong-dong, and Dae-geon came together to his house, and his father said to him: "Mr. Yi is an ally of our family; with Mr. Kim his friend they wish to visit Hwanghae-do as tourists, they're going there, you'll do well to go with them." And so the next day, the 18th, Dae-geon and the man named Yi arrived; the boatmen Eom Su, Kim Seong-seo, No Eon-ik, An Sunmyeong and Park Seong-cheol, in all 8 people, we boarded the boat with them.

"As Dae-geon made his way down the river from the capital, he drew the mountains and waters as he went, but when he reached the sea in front of Ganghwa, he unfolded his drawings to look at them, and they were blown away by the wind. Beyond Ganghwa he started drawing again; his words and gestures were quite strange. One day, addressing me, he said: "The Heavenly Master's doctrine is very good, you should study it." And that's how I knew he was a proponent of the perverse doctrine.

"On the 1st day of the 5th Lunar Month, we arrived in Yeonpyeong and bought whiting. On the 3rd day we landed at the sea fortress of Deungsan, and, after buying salt to prepare the saltings, wanting to buy firewood, on the 4th day we headed for the Teojinmok gorge in the Jang-yeon district. En route, Dae-geon wanted to visit the Sogang landscape, so he went ashore. After three days, we returned with our boat to the port of Mahap, where we were joined by Dae-geon on a Chinese fishing boat, and then landed at the Deungsan fortress. And it was on this very day that, due to the requisitioning of boats by the maritime sub-prefect, a dispute arose and everything was uncovered. Of those who were with us on the boat, Yi from Gong-dong and boatman No Eon-ik had disembarked before the affair and returned to Seoul; boatmen Kim Syeong-seo, An Sun-myeong and Pak Seong-cheol, seeing that we were arrested, fled.

Boatman Eom Su deposed that he lived in the same village as Im Seong-ryong, and as Seong-ryong bought a boat again in the winter of last year, he became his boatman. On the 17th of the past 4th Lunar Month, Gun-jip, Seong-ryong's father invited him to his home, and showing him Kim Dae-geon said, "This gentleman is a noble friend of mine who lives in the capital, wanting to see the country, he's getting on our boat tomorrow to go to Hwanghae-do." On the 18th, Dae-geon and a man named Yi from Gong-dong, whose first name I don't know, came with a baggage carrier, and, with Seong-ryong and the boatmen Kim Seong-seo and others numbering 8, we boarded. All the way down the river from Seoul, Dae-geon did nothing but draw the mountains and streams that met the crossing.

At his third deposition Kim Dae-geon said he only wanted to see the landscape and preach religion; he had come alone and had no guide or householder. As for the man named Yi from Gong-dong, who went ashore and returned directly, he doesn't know for what reason; although he knows his home and his names, he certainly won't report them. Along the way, drawing the mountains and rivers is a practice of our religion, just like educated people who seek out books to read, and, apart from that, he had not the shadow of another intention. It's true that he boarded the Chinese fishermen's boat for a short while, but they didn't know each other in principle, nor did he have an appointment with them: he simply chatted with them about things.

In a new deposition, Im Seong-ryong says that last year in the XIIth Lunar Month, as the named Yi from Gong-dong is related to his father, he came to their house; it was then that he knew him for the first time, and as he then invited him to come and see him once, a few days later, he went to see him at his house; this house is located behind the palace called Nam-byeol-gung; when we passed the edge of the well it is the second thatched house. Then the man named Yi addressed him, urging him to study the doctrine of the Heavenly Master and saying: "If you succeed in learning it, you and I will ascend to Paradise." A few days later, the man named Yi came to his house again to ask him to buy some salt, so he bought him a bag of salt, and having gone to Yi's house, Dae-geon was sitting with him in the guest room and the man named Yi told him he was a nobleman friend of his, so he believed him without the slightest doubt.

Later, having gone to Yi's house again, the named Yi was absent, but there were five or six people there unknown to him. Each of them told him their first and last names and where they lived: one, who lives in Baek-dong, is a Mr. Yi, but he has forgotten his first name; he may be about 40; another, who lives inside the Great South Gate, is called Nam Gyeong-mun, he may be 44 or 45, and has a thin line of beard; another, who lives in Suchyeol-mak in Seogang, is Sim Sa-min, he may be 37 or 38; another, who lives in Deoksan in Chungcheong-do, is Kim Sun-yeo, he may be 44 or 45; as for the other two, as they were rather old and hadn't told him their names, he didn't ask them.

After a moment, all those who were there were called in succession from inside the house, everyone followed suit, and they withdrew, and as he still hadn't seen the master of the house, he had lingered waiting for him when he was called in from inside. As he entered, he saw that it was Dae-geon, whom he had met earlier, who was inside; he ushered him into the room, and saw hanging on the walls four or five paintings of human figures, all of them Chinese in design, there was also a magnificent specimen of strange stone. Dae-geon said to him, "You live on the outskirts of the river, so if you could buy a boat to trade in, that would be great." He replied that he had no money for it, so Dae-geon giving him a hundred ligatures of sapèques said, "Take this, and use it well to trade." As for the man named Yi, he didn't return until after sunset, so he spent the night in his house. During the night, he asked him what kind of man this Kim was, and the man named Yi told him in secret: "He's a Chinese; eager to see the mountains and streams of our kingdom, he crossed the border and hid his tracks, for he also practices the European religion. As soon as he had crossed the river, he pretended to be mute and headed for the capital; on the way he was stopped by the gendarmes, but under cover of night he escaped and headed for the three southern provinces; at Deoksan he met Kim Sun-yeo and little by little, through him, he came as far as my house." It was then that he knew for the first time that Dae-geon was a man of Chinese nationality.

That year, on the Island Lunar Month, to buy and trade rice, he had gone to the southern provinces, and after his return, having gone to the house of the man named Yi, Dae-

geon and the man named Yi said to him: “During the 4th Lunar Month we must go to the territory of Ongjin, you will trade there, and we will see the country.”

When the fourth Lunar Month had passed, on the 17th, Kim and Yi both came, and it was agreed that they would set sail the next day. So the next day, with a porter loaded with a lacquered crate, a box of provisions and blankets, they arrived. Yi from Baek-dong, whose first name I don't know, and Nam Gyeongmun from inside the Great Southern Gate came together to take their leave, and then they returned. The porter is a certain Kim, whose first name I don't know, who lives at the entrance to the fish market.

On the 4th of the current Lunar Month, having come to the waters of Mahap harbor in Ongjin district, we encountered Chinese boats engaged in fishing. Dae-geon had a moment's conversation with the Chinese, then returned. With a sheet of writing paper, Yi wrote a letter under his dictation, similar in form to the letters of our kingdom, and in the evening, boarding a longboat, he went to the Chinese boats to ask them to send this letter to his country. The next day, he went to the Mok-tong territory in the Jangyeon district, where he met other Chinese boats to whom, as before, he handed a letter to be sent. On the first occasion, he (i.e. Im), Yi, Kim Seong-seo and Eom Su accompanied him; on the second occasion, he, No Eon-ik and Kim Seong-seo accompanied him.

In a new deposition, Eom Su states that this year, in the course of the 1st Lunar Month, Seong-ryong bought a boat for 417 ligatures, and also that having obtained a bill of exchange, he went with him to Gang-gyeong-i in the Eunjin district, and that they bought rice and tobacco there. Then he heard that this money was given by a nobleman named Kim living in the capital; today he thinks that this nobleman Kim seems to be Dae-geon. That Dae-geon met Chinese ships, and twice entrusted them with letters, is really certain, and he himself went there once to accompany him.

In a third deposition Im Seong-ryong declares that, in the naivety of his heart and his foolishness, he lent an ear to their exhortations and deceptions, and that it is true that, several times, he participated in their assemblies, and, 5 or 6 times, studied the doctrine. The 400 ligatures for which he paid the boat and the exchange from Gang-gyeong-i, it was indeed Dae-geon who answered for everything, as Eom Su declared, but the 400 ligatures were delivered by his house; as for the exchange, as Dae-geon had business with Gu Sun-o who lives in Gang-gyeong-i, he wrote a coin allowing 600 ligatures to be drawn and gave it to him, so he went there and withdrew this sum to buy rice and tobacco.

Whether Dae-geon wanted to go to Hwanghae-do, it seems it was with the intention of sending letters back home. When Dae-geon met with the Chinese to entrust them with his letters, although he himself didn't understand what was being said, it seemed to him to be a first meeting. After handing over his letters, Dae-geon gave the Chinese a few pieces of ginseng, and the Chinese gave him 4 or 5 pairs of scissors. As for the rest of the conversation, he couldn't understand anything absolutely, but on his return, he asked Dae-geon: “When handing over the letters, what sort of conversation did you have with the Chinese?” And Dae-geon told him, “I was telling them that if they forwarded these letters to my house in Koang-tong, they would certainly receive a handsome reward.”

In a third deposition, Eom Su declares that, ignorant and poor wretch that he is, he is employed as a boatman by others, and he could do nothing but obey. When Dae-geon was on the boat, he wanted to teach him the perverse doctrine, but he wouldn't consent. As for RI's first name, he didn't know it, nor where he had gone.

In a fourth deposition, Kim Dae-geon declares that as far as his career is concerned, he has already, following the questions put to him, declared what it is; as for harming his country, harming his neighbor, his religion, he says, expressly forbids it, on this subject there is no doubt; making plans of mountains and rivers is for me like a cherished passion; Moreover, since these plans have been blown away by the wind and lost, there is no need to make new requests; as for the letters sent, they are letters to communicate with my family; as for the rest of the questions, since there are people who have made statements, let's leave it at that; why come to question me again? To be born once and to die once is the inevitable condition of every man; that I should die today for the Master of Heaven is rather my desire. To be questioned today, to be questioned tomorrow, that's it and nothing else; to be hit or killed, that's it and nothing else: hit me quickly, kill me quickly!

Violating the frontier and practicing perverse doctrine are the main things forbidden by our country; but the law has fallen into disuse, social relations have been ruined; foreigners hiding their tracks enter our country, abominable disciples willingly become their accomplices, and for years now they have been hiding in the very shadow of the throne; when you think of it, how can you not be seized with dread? In the beginning, the statements he made about his career made it possible to follow the thread, but in the end, by covering up and not revealing his followers, he surely wanted to cut short their center and their lair. By secretly crossing the border, what could his intention really have been? And he claims it's to see the country and preach religion! Surely there are people who have hidden and directed him; and he claims that he has forged the mute and begged? All these circumstances make one seize with immense and painful indignation. It is therefore appropriate to subject him to severe torture in order to draw out the evidence; but as he is a foreigner, it is difficult for me to act immediately in accordance with my feelings. I therefore ask that the Grand Council refer the matter to His Majesty for a decision.

After they were moved to Seoul, further interrogations were reported:

(June 23, 1846).

In his first statement, Dae-geon declared that he was Chinese, originally from Macao prefecture in Gwangdong province; his name is Woo, his first name Dae-geon, he studied the doctrine of the Master of Heaven, and, having become great, having conceived the desire to visit the various kingdoms, their mountains and waterways, he set out from the river Xiang-jiang, went by boat to Liaodong, went ashore and travelled through the country, on the 11th Lunar Month of 1844, he headed for the Gate of the Stakes Barrier, and, donning Korean garments, entered Korea via the region where the Yalu River is frozen; on the 8th Lunar Month of 1845, he entered Seoul, circulating here and there. On the IVth Lunar Month of this year, he went to the river at Mapo, and as Im Seong-ryong had a trading boat and was going to Hwanghae-do, having given him a generous passage price, he boarded his boat to go to Yeonpyeong island in Haeju district.

From there, having gone to Sogang, there were 5 or 6 Chinese boats which had come there, he entrusted them with his letters and returned to land at Deungsan, and as the commander of the maritime fortress wanted to requisition the boat on which he had boarded, there arose a dispute and tumult, so that he was arrested himself. And from the start, when he entered Korea, he had no guide or companion, and when he reached the capital, he had no home.

In his second deposition he stated that as he was told that his name of Woo is a rare name in Korea and that the name Kim is very common there, he changed his name to Kim.

In his third deposition, he stated that, when he came, he hid his tracks and traveled in secret, how would he have had guides? Then, having headed for the capital and knowing no one there, where could he have set up home? It was really thanks to the few ounces of silver he had, that he was able to travel and provide for his subsistence. As for the book in vulgar characters and the pieces of cloth with figures and the image of a heart, he used them to honor and adore the Master of Heaven.

In his fourth deposition, he declared that, subjected to such a terrifying apparatus, how could he dare hide or disguise the truth in any way? Yet, if the audience were to be removed to allow him to testify in peace, he promised to declare in perfect sincerity all the circumstances of what concerned him.

In his fifth deposition, he declared that if, because of his case, there happened to be people involved, if he were given written assurance that they would not be arrested or have their lives endangered, he would say everything frankly.

In his sixth deposition, he declared that he is not a foreigner, but a Korean born in the Yongin district, his name is Kim and his given name (as a child) Jae-bok; because his father knew a little about European religion, the spiritual Father Na, who had come from Europe, wished to make him his disciple and take him in. At the age of 15, the European named Yu and the embassy groom Jo Shin-cheol took him, and with him the son of Choe Yeong-hwan of Gwacheon, named Yang-eop, and the son of Choe of Hongju named (Franciscus) Bang-je; they passed through the Gate of the Gate of the Stakes and entered China; Franciscus fell ill and died there. As for him, he went to Gwangdong in Macau, in the house of a man named Ha he studied there the brilliant religion (景教), he was also taken by a Frenchman named Yi to Little Europe to study, he learned the language until he became an interpreter. But with the memory of his homeland growing more intense by the day, on the 11th Lunar Month of 1842, having changed his clothes, he sneaked as far as Uiju, but there, as he was suspected by everyone, he was forced to return.

On the eleventh Lunar Month of 1843, having again crossed the Yalu in secret, he arrived at Euiju, where he met a man named Yi, who lives in Seoul, at an inn; they went up to the capital together, and as Yi had no house, with the money he had brought with him he bought a house in Seokjeong-dong, where he has been living and providing him with clothes and food for four years.

In his seventh deposition, he stated that, since his return 4 years ago, hiding his steps and living in secret, he has not had the means to go to his house, so that he does not know if his mother is still living or dead; as for the son of the named Choe of Gwacheon with whom he left, they have each lived on their own, so that he does not know where he resides.

In his eighth deposition, he declared that he had been to Macao and that, having lived for years in the house of the man named Ha, he could not fail to have kept a grateful memory of it; he therefore sent him a letter to ask for news of him and the state of his health, and there was nothing else. As for the map of mountains and torrents, as he had learned to draw a little, he did indeed draw what he came across on his travels, as is the custom of followers of the shining religion.

In his ninth deposition, he declared that his religion forbids denouncing one's neighbor; so even if he had followers of his religion, he would not consent to denounce them;

but as he has not preached the doctrine anywhere, how could he have had other Christians? So he has no one to denounce.

In his tenth deposition, he stated that, although he lived with the man named Yi for four years, he never asked him for his first name or details of his career.

In his eleventh deposition, he said that, when he was at the port of Deungsan, the named Yi and the boatman named No had returned to the capital, and, as he was arrested, the named Yi couldn't ignore him and went into hiding. As for Gu Sun-o of Eunjin, as a Christian he knew him well, and as he does a big business and his house is very comfortable, the little money he had, he had entrusted to the named Gu, and he had it withdrawn by Im Seong-ryong to use.

Yi Gi-won in his deposition stated that his father was Yi Seung-hun who was executed in 1801, during the criminal causes of the perverse doctrine; his nephew's first name is Jaeyong (Yi Jae-ui) and his first name Jung-on, he is the son of his elder brother Pal-won; as he comes and goes in the capital and in the provinces, it's already been three years since he last met him; as to whether he has hospitalized or driven away foreigners, he knows absolutely nothing about it. As far as he is concerned, after apostatizing in 1839, he retired to Yeongjung, where he earns his living teaching children. As for the books and other objects that were seized from his home, they are family heirlooms, so he could not resign himself to destroying them, and kept them in his house: how dare he exonerate himself from his propensities for this doctrine? All he has to do is die!

So, Kim Dae-geon began by declaring that he was originally from Gwangdong in China, at the end he confessed that he was born in Yongin in our kingdom, that he followed the Europeans and learned their language; that the desire to see his country again had brought him back and that he returned there alone and on his own initiative. Since he's from Yongin, he's Kim Je-jun's son, and Je-jun was also put to death. Looking at all these adventures, what punishment doesn't his crime deserve? As for Yi Jae-yong, he is of the race of that perverse doctrine leader Seung-hun of 1801, his secret ties linking him to foreigners, one must not for a moment lose interest, and, that he has escaped the net, one cannot help but be troubled and vexed. As Yi Gi-won is Jae-yong's uncle, he must know where his nephew has gone, so he's been pressed for questioning anyway, but he refuses to do anything about it, which is sovereignly deplorable! We will therefore continue to keep him in a strict prison until Jae-yong has been arrested and sentenced in accordance with the law.

A few days later he is shown to be speaking more openly

As for the criminal Kim Dae-geon, we have renewed our investigations and interrogations:

In an initial statement, he declared that, in drawing the maps and the mountains and rivers, he had no special intention; as he has returned to his own country, among his Christian friends there are some who wish to see him again, so he draws the mountains and rivers he meets, and he sends them this drawing with his letter, there's nothing else. Among these Christians, there are those who sometimes say: "Now this Catholic religion, neither in China nor in the other kingdoms is it forbidden any more, only Korea continues to forbid it severely; we should arm two or three boats, load them with books and send them there, we'd

manage to spread the religion. But he objected, saying: “Even if we send these boats, not only will religion not spread, but great damage will result,” and his exhortations kept them back. For him, his desire to return to his homeland was like an arrow that cannot be held back, which is why in the year 1838, at the time of the Barrier Gate Fair, he had written a letter to be given to an interpreter who would pass it on, so that the Christians of Korea would wait for him at the town of Uiju, and in 1842, on his first trip, he did not meet the Christians and had to return to China. In 1843, he met Yi Jae-yong in the town of Uiju and went up to the capital with him. If there had been others to lead him, how dare he not say so frankly?

At his second deposition, he stated that among the recipients of the letters, the venerable Monsieur Yuk of the perfumed pavilion (蘭亭 Nanjeong) is Chinese; the venerable Master Jang (Mgr Berneux) and the venerable Master Yi (M. Libois) are French, Monsieur Mae (probably M. Maistre) is Piedmontese. When he was in China, he was intimately acquainted with all three of them, which is why he entrusted the cards and letters to the Chinese to pass on to them; he simply wanted to check on their health and ask for subsidies, that’s all. As for the characters of these letters, they are indeed the vulgar characters of European writing.

In his third deposition, he stated that, in Gwangdong, there is a man of the Catholic religion called Paem Jean (probably Father, later Bishop Desflèches) who had inquired of him whether any Korean Christians would come; and also at the Gate of the Barrier, there’s the householder whom (Yu) Jin-gil used to frequent, called Han-ga; also in 1843 he went to the house of this Han, he met Yi Jae-yong there with his servant Yi Bak-dol, and they came together. He entrusted part of his belongings to Yi, and the small amount of gold and silver he took care of himself, and there was really no other interpreter or guide.

In his fourth deposition, he stated that, wanting to see some Christians on the 8th Lunar Month of last year, accompanied by Yi Jae-yong and Im Seong-ryong, he went to Gu Sun-o’s house in Eunjin, where he stayed. Im bought a boat and it was on this boat that they returned together, which is why he drew the mountains and rivers of Chungcheong-do during the crossing.

In his fifth deposition, he stated that, as the Catholic religion is severely prohibited in the country, he has never dared to say a word about it, and there are no other Christians known to him, nor has he been anywhere else.

In his sixth deposition, he declared that, although alone and isolated, as after he had gone to China, he made complete studies there, he was made a spiritual Father, and for this he is treated with honor; traveling through the various countries, he learned their language and became an interpreter in these various countries, by which we can see that the Chinese would not dare treat him with haughtiness.

In his seventh deposition, he declared that, what he says about “three boats etc.,” is that there are numerous English and French people living in Gwangdong, they wanted to come and trade in Korea and also bring religion there, that’s why with all his might he turned them away.

In his eighth deposition, he declared that, for all the things that concern him, they are as he declared in his previous depositions, and there is nothing else; he therefore wishes to be put to death without delay.

So, about his treacherous habit of charting mountains and rivers, about his secret attempts to entrust letters to Chinese ships, no matter how many times and in every way we question him, he never tells the truth; what he says about “three ships” that would bring us religion, comes only from the perfidious intention of wanting to attribute merit to himself; and he says he only wants one thing: to die, and that he doesn’t fear torture! For the time being, therefore, he will be kept in strict confinement, until Jee-yong, Sun-o and consorts have been arrested and brought in to resume questioning.

A later set of interrogations were focussed on the letters written by the French missionaries which Kim Dae-geon had entrusted to Chinese fishermen. The Korean authorities had been able to recover them and Kim Dae-geon was obliged to say that he had written them all, in order to prevent the authorities discovering that there were European missionaries in Korea.

(June 30, 1846).

Report from the Left and Right Prefectures of Police on the depositions of criminal Kim Dae-geon.

This Prefecture verbally states that the criminal Kim Dae-geon was interrogated very severely by making him write European letters as a test.

In his first deposition, he declared that, as he knew European writing, he had written the nine letters in his own handwriting; as for the Chinese, as he had left the country when he was still young, his instruction was not complete, which is why for the five letters he borrowed the handwriting of the man named Yi, who was with him on the boat, but it was he who dictated the text, and as for the description, he wrote it himself.

In his third statement, he declared that, originally, he had written these letters with a metal quill, but now that he had to write with a brush, how could the lines not be noticeably thicker?

In his fourth statement, he declared that these letters he had written himself, what difficulty would he have in reading them aloud? But as the sounds of European writing are not the same as ours, how could he make them understood by hearing them?

In his fifth deposition, he stated that, as the Venerable Master Jang was of French nationality, he had written to him separately in both the vernacular script and Chinese, for fear that some letter might be lost. As for the others, the Venerable Mr. Sim, the three gentlemen Im, Baek and Du, Master Yuk and the Venerable Mr. Du, although Catholics, they are all Chinese and do not understand the European language, which is why he sent them letters written in Chinese.

In his sixth deposition, he stated that, when he returned from China, the venerable master Jang promised to help him with subsidies, and when in his letter he says: “The things we take care of etc.” he means the objects he asks for, the meaning being to send them by occasion at the time of this year’s fair, if not to send them in the course of the 3rd Lunar Month, when the Chan-tong fishing boats come to the shores of Baekryeong-do island.

In his seventh deposition, he stated that when he was in China, he was referred to as Kim An-taek (Andreas), so below the year and month, he wrote An-taek, but this is not another character at all.

In his eighth deposition, he stated that, as he had learned a little of the art of drawing, in his sea voyages he draws with his hand the mountains and rivers he discovers, and sends this to his friends and acquaintances, only so as not to send them empty letters.

In his ninth deposition, he stated that, although he could not obtain a metal pen, he would use a brush for the drawing he was asked to provide.

In his tenth deposition, he stated that there are many Frenchmen living in China; they smuggle money and effects to the Spiritual Fathers who are sent to Korea; this is why last year, Yi Jae-yong disguised as a merchant went to the Gate of the Barrier, and brought back money and European fabrics sent by cart by Beom Jean, Wang Son-i and company.

In his eleventh deposition, he stated that the countries of Europe make it their law to spread the Catholic religion far and wide throughout the universe, so, by all means, they assist with their gifts the Spiritual Fathers who are sent to foreign countries. Previously, as those who came to Korea were successively put to death, this time they sent him themselves, without skimping on the expense. When he dies, other spiritual Fathers or Bishops will certainly come again; in these circumstances, he fears that the prohibition will not last forever: how will this be done? Even in Japan, there are spiritual Fathers who have gone into hiding and are secretly spreading religion.

In his twelfth deposition, he stated that the English continually said, "A country as big as China could not resist us, and a small kingdom like Korea continues to prohibit religion: is this possible? We'll take three or four ships and go to Korea." This is why, time and again, by representing to them that their approach would not succeed, he steered them away from it.

In his thirteenth deposition, he declared that the man named Yi, who had come to Hwanghae-do on the same boat as him, had in principle been introduced to him by Yi Jae-yong, who had recommended him; they lived together, this one outside in the guest room, and he in the inner apartments. They arrived at the Deungsan fortress, but before he was arrested, he had gone ashore and left for Seoul, so he was the only one to escape.

In his fourteenth deposition, he stated that, when Catholics are arrested, it is always as a result of indications given by Christians, which is why we don't ask each other for details of career or place of residence, it's enough to know that we're dealing with people who have propensities for the doctrine, so we accept them and stick to them; also, despite having lived together for four years, he knew it was the noble Mr. Yi without asking what kind of man it was; if he went ashore and was sent ahead, it was to oversee the affairs of the house, have clothes prepared and the like.

So Kim Dae-geon's letters and cards, when made to write or draw, what he wrote himself, what he had others write, he admits to himself; as for the difference in strokes, he attributes it to the fact that it's not the same thing to write with a metal nib or with a brush. What he says about the English and French boats stems from the fact that he is at the end of his tether, and is a mendacious reverie. As for the successive and continuous sending of

spiritual Fathers, is it so easy? The more the interrogations are multiplied and pressed, the more he closes his mouth and remains silent; we will therefore continue to keep him strictly imprisoned.

Finally, after the visit by the French ship under Admiral Cecille, Kim Dae-geon's fate was decided.

(September 15, 1846).

Don-in says: Your Majesty returned the letter from the French foreigners' box yesterday, ordering it to be circulated among the high dignitaries; as soon as the contents of this letter are known to all, there will be no further cause for false agitation. But as for the Kim Dae-geon case, turned towards the throne, I have indeed received orders to settle the case promptly, yet no final decision has yet been reached, and I cannot know what Your Majesty's intention is in this matter.

We said: This is precisely what we wanted to talk to you about: how can it be decided so that it's right?

Don-in says: On this subject, there is no shortage of differences of opinion out there. There are those who say: when it comes to enforcing the law, there's no such thing as too early or too late, and since it's very difficult to fathom the intentions of these foreigners, if we waited to see and observe their attitude before enforcing the law, it wouldn't be too late. I don't want to say it's wrong, but if we consider the constitution of our kingdom, a rebel who denies his country, a leader of perverse practices, how can we for a moment show him mercy? Even supposing an unexpected event were to occur, given that this individual is absolutely and wholeheartedly linked with these foreigners, so much so that their relations are obvious and cannot be hidden, keeping and preserving this individual will only serve to create unpleasantness for us later on. That's why, in my opinion, ending the affair by executing the law is really the most appropriate solution. However, I do not think we should rush into this decision. Should Your Majesty not consult the Ministers of the Council and all the high dignitaries who make up the Court before deciding?

We have said: from the moment he leaves for Europe, his crime is such that he must be put to death; if he is kept alive, there will certainly be others who will leave too.

Right Grand Councillor Park Hoi-su said: For Kim Dae-geon's cause, if we consider the constitution of our kingdom and its essential laws, there is no reason to grant a temporary pardon. What we call perverse practices are like an extra charge for him; how can he, a citizen of our country, deny his own kingdom to follow foreigners and come back after ten years! He's a traitor, a rebel against his country; if he isn't put to death in accordance with the law, can we say that our kingdom still has a law? Just looking at the letter from the French, their complicity is obvious and cannot be concealed; the disciples of the perverse doctrine will increase in audacity, and, using this as a pretext, there's no telling what excesses they won't go to. He certainly cannot be pardoned for a moment, and I beg Your Majesty to condemn him without delay.

The acting Minister of Rites, Jo Byeong-hyeon, said: Should Dae-geon be executed or not, the Grand Ministers have already explained their views to Your Majesty, I have nothing to add to them, and I beg Your Majesty to pass sentence without delay. The acting Minister of War, Kim Jo-geun, said: The opinion expressed by the Prime Ministers and high dignitaries is in keeping with the constitution of the kingdom, and I have no other opinion to express.

Heung-geun says: Does the crime committed by Kim Dae-geon deserve capital punishment or not? There is no need to discuss it again; Your Majesty's request concerns this

special point: should he be executed immediately or should the execution of the law be postponed? To grant a temporary pardon to a terrible criminal of this kind is to put the law of punishments greatly in default; therefore, it seems to me that we cannot do otherwise than to proceed without delay to the execution in order to preserve the majesty of the law of the realm.

The Governor of Suwon Fortress, Yi Yak-u, said: To pardon for one moment the crime committed by Kim Dae-geon would be to upset the constitution of the kingdom and its essential laws, so the opinion expressed by the Prime Ministers and senior officials is entirely justified: I therefore hope that Your Majesty will decree the sentence without delay.

The Judge of the Royal Family Court, Yi Heun-geon, said on behalf of all the others: All of us have no other way of seeing.

We said: What sentence is appropriate?

Don-in said: His crime should be described as a great rebel and a pervert, as is clear from the interrogations. There are many examples of this kind of criminal being handed over to the military authorities, and this time it seems appropriate to follow these precedents.

Order to execute the criminal of perverse doctrine Kim Dae-geon with suspension of the head to serve as a lesson to the multitude.

The President of the Grand Council, Gwon Don-in, verbally states the following: To Kim Dae-geon, in view of his crime of being infested with perverse doctrine, as well as being a traitor to his country, he really cannot, even for a moment, be pardoned, and the opinion of the Grand Ministers as well as of the high officials attending the Council, is on this subject unanimous and without dissent. I therefore ask Your Majesty to order that the prisoner Kim Dae-geon be handed over to the military authority, to be executed with suspension of the head in order to serve as a lesson to the people.

His Majesty has consented.

Epilogue

Letter of Bishop Ferréol after the death of Kim Dae-geon to the Rev. Dr. Barran, Director of the Seminary of Foreign Missions in Paris.

English translation from: *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* Vol. 10 1847 Page 373 ff.

Souritsi-Koi, valley of the province of Ishongtseng,
November 3, 1846.

“Reverend Dear Brother,

“There have been again martyrs this year, and illustrious martyrs! Since its foundation the Church of Christ has never ceased presenting to her Divine Spouse generous children who have washed their garment in the blood of the Lamb: this is one of her glorious privileges, which forms the most illustrious distinction between it and the sects that, by separating from its bosom, have lost the traditions of the cross and the love of sacrifices.” We were administering in peace the Christians of Corea, when the enemy came to declare war against us. In the combat there were the conquered and the conquerors; at the head of the latter was Andrew Kim, a native Priest, and the only able man I had under my direction. I had despatched him to the coasts of the province of Hoang-hai, where, each year, in spring time, a great number of Chinese smacks resort for fishing. He was commissioned to visit these localities and ascertain if any means existed of establishing communications with the Chinese for the carriage of letters and the introduction of our brethren. His Mission had succeeded, when an unforeseen accident occasioned his seizure.

(There follows a translation of Kim’s Letter 20 from Prison)

“Andrew Kim was treated as an enemy to the state, and immolated in the same manner as his Lordship, the Right Rev. Dr. Imbert. Upon the 16th of September, a file of soldiers, armed with muskets, marched to the place of execution, situated upon the borders of the river, one league from the capital. An instant afterwards, a discharge of musketry and the sound of the trumpet announced the arrival of a great military mandarin amongst them. During this interval, the prisoner was led forth from his prison. A palanquin had been clumsily prepared: it consisted of two long poles, between which a straw chair had been elevated. Andrew Kim was placed seated upon this chair, his hands being tied behind his back, and surrounded by the throng, he was led to the field of triumph.” The soldiers had fastened in the sand a stake, from the top of which a banner fluttered, and they had ranged themselves in a circle around it. They opened the circle and received the prisoner. The mandarin read his sentence to him; it conveyed that he had been condemned to death for having communicated with strangers. Andrew Kim cried out in a loud voice, “If I have communicated with strangers it is for my religion; it is for God; it is for him that I die. An immortal life is going to commence for me. Become Christians, if you wish to be happy after death, for God reserves eternal chastisements to those who have disowned him.” Having spoken these words, he allowed them to strip off some of his clothing; they pierced both his ears with an arrow, which they left suspended from them; they threw water on his person, and over that a handful of lime. Then, two men passing a stick under his arms, took him on their shoulders and forced him quickly three times round the circle; after which they made him kneel down, tied a rope to his hair, and passing it through a hole bored in the stake, which

served as a gibbet, they pulled the end of it and held up his head in an elevated posture. During these preparations the martyr lost nothing of calm. "Am I, in this posture, placed properly?" he said to his executioners; 'can you strike at your ease?? — No; turn that way.'-' Now, that's right. Strike, I am ready" A dozen of soldiers, armed with their sabres, skirmish round Andrew, and simulating a combat, strike the martyr's neck as they pass by. His head did not fall until the eighth stroke. A satellite places it upon a small table and presents it to the mandarin, who returns to report the execution to the court. According to the laws of the kingdom, the bodies of criminals should remain upon the place of execution during the space of three days; when this term has elapsed, their relatives are allowed to inter them. The remains of Andrew Kim were buried in the same spot where he had been put to death. Satellites are stationed near as sentinels, and I have not as yet been able to have the remains carried off in order to give them a more suitable sepulchre.

"You can easily conceive, dear brother, how cruel the loss of this young native Priest was to me: I loved him as a father loved his children; his happiness alone can console me for his loss. He is the first and the only individual of his nation, who had been raised to the Priesthood. He had imbibed during his clerical education ideas which elevated him far above the level of his fellow-countrymen. A lively faith, frank and sincere piety, and a wonderful facility of elocution, gained him at the outset the respect and love of the Christians. In the exercise of the holy ministry, he had surpassed our hopes, and a few years of practice would have made him a very able Priest: his Corean origin was scarcely perceptible. The transaction of any business might be entrusted to him; his character, his manners, and his information, secured him their successful issue. In the actual state of the Mission, his loss becomes an immense and almost irreparable misfortune. A short biographical notice will suggest more than our regrets and eulogiums.

Andrew Kim was born in the month of August, of the year 1821, in the province of Tshong-tsheng. If we are to credit tradition, his family descended from an ancient king who reigned in the south of Corea, when the country was subdivided into a great number of petty sovereignties. In spite of this illustrious origin, it now enjoys no consideration in the kingdom. This is not astonishing, since the actual dynasty, which reckons scarcely four hundred years of existence, witnesses several of its members sunk down to the level of the lowest classes, viz., to that of slaves. Its disinherited children are not deemed to belong to the regal stock.

"The family of Kim has another merit in the eyes of posterity, that of having given to the Church many martyrs. It formed Andrew to piety from his infancy. Doctor Maubant, at his arrival in Corea, finding him endowed with precocious intelligence, took him in his retinue, and, in 1836, sent him to Macao with two other young men in order to study Latin. Placed then under the care of excellent masters, he made equally rapid strides both in science and virtue. In 1842, and towards the close of the Anglo-Chinese war, Dr. Libois, acquiescing in the desire which admiral Cecile had manifested to visit the coasts of Corea, gave him young Andrew, to serve as interpreter in his relations with China. Whilst placed in this position, his ideas grew enlarged, his character acquired assurance; gradually great intrepidity became developed in his soul, and disposed him to fulfil the future views of Providence in his regard. Henceforward, hazardous expeditions, far from dismaying him, reanimated his courage. The French ship could not sail to Corea that year. Andrew, foiled in his attempt, resolved to penetrate thither by another mode; he embarked on a Chinese junk and sailed towards Leao-tong, in the company of two Missioners. It was at the juncture when the Corean embassy repairs to Peking: he was despatched to Pien-Men to see whether he might be enabled, with the aid of one of the delegates, to re-open the correspondence which had been suspended three years. He arrived too late; the embassy had already entered China; he met it

on the way. After examining for some time whether he could recognise a neophyte among those who composed it, he noticed a young man alone and somewhat insulated from the retinue. He had the hardihood to inquire from him if he were a Christian; he hit exactly upon his man; this young individual was the courier who brought us news. Andrew induced him to retrace his steps and introduced him into Corea. In vain did his acquaintance represent to him, that alone, and without suitable dress, he could not accomplish the journey without being recognised: our young pupil consulting his intrepidity alone, departed contrary to the advice of his fellow-countryman.

“In the desert, which separates the peninsula from the empire, he altered his clothing to match the Korean costume, and presented himself in the disguise of a beggar at the frontier, which he subsequently passed in the train of fifteen persons without being asked for his passport at the custom house. He advanced during the length of a day into the interior of the country; but, at the first inn, his language, his costume, and his hair betrayed him. He was obliged to retrace his steps. During the day he hid himself in the mountains, covered with snow; during the night he walked on at random. Having re-entered the desert, he had been three days there without tasting any food, when, overpowered by fatigue and sleep, he lay down upon the snow and sought a little repose. It was freezing cold, and the night was murky; he scarcely fell asleep when he was awoken by a voice which said to him, ‘Rise and walk. And at the same time he thought he saw a shade which indicated to him the route in the midst of the darkness. When relating this fact to me, he added, ‘I took this voice and this phantom for the effect of my imagination, excited by a fast of three days and by the horror of solitude. However, they were very useful to me, for probably I should have been frozen, and I should have awoken in the other world.’

“On his return to Pien-Men, he incurred fresh dangers; his dress was neither Korean nor Chinese; his frozen feet could not support him; his lips being swollen by the cold, utterly impeded his articulation. He was going to be seized and delivered up to the mandarin; his presence of mind, or rather Providence, saved him.

“At the beginning of 1844, I sent him to the northern frontier of Corea, to endeavour to open this inlet to the Missioners. His journey lasted two months across the vast forests of Mandchourria, and in the midst of ice and snow. Such a perilous journey was not unsuccessful; he met Christians, and arranged with them that guides should repair to Pien Men, at the close of the year, in order to introduce the Apostolic-Vicar. At the epoch fixed upon, I brought him with me to the rendezvous, hoping that we might both together penetrate into the Mission. Out of seven couriers who came to meet us, only three had been able to cross the frontier, and they did so in order to declare how impracticable the introduction of a European was, so imminent was the danger. I forced them to at least bring off Andrew, then a deacon, having enjoined upon him to equip a bark in his country, and repair to Chang-hai, where I should await him. During the night he slipped between two custom-house stations, as he had done two years previously, and he reached the place of rendezvous before the couriers. Supported by a lively faith and great confidence in Mary, he endured all the fatigues of these travels with heroic patience.

“You are aware how, when he arrived at Seoul, the capital of Corea, he procured promptly a bark, collected some Christian labourers, whom he made to act as sailors, and without communicating his design to his crew, he had the boldness to embark upon a frail craft to traverse an unknown sea. God wished to try him again; stress of weather forced him several times to re-enter the port, and when cleared out from land he encountered a violent tempest; the masts were shattered and part of the cargo and provisions thrown into the sea. Providence, from whom alone he expected his salvation, caused him to fall in with a Chinese junk, which consented to tow him as far as Chang-bai. There he was ordained Priest, and two months subsequently, by landing on the shores of Corea two European Missioners, he nobly

accomplished the Mission which he had received from High: God has recompensed him, summoning him to himself by a most glorious death.

The Letters of the Venerable Father Thomas Choe Yang-eop

Preface

The life of Father Thomas Choe Yang-eop

Choi Yang-eop was born on March 1, 1821, in Darakgol, Chungcheong-do (currently Cheongyang-gun, Hwaseong-myeon, Nongam-ri, Darakgol), the son of (St.) Francis Choe Gyeong-hwan 崔京煥 and (the Blessed) Mary Yi Seong-rye 李聖禮. His given name was Yang-eop 良業, his formal name was Jeong-gu 鼎九. Between 1827 and early 1836, his family moved first to Gongdeok-ri, Seoul (currently Gongdeok-dong, Mapo-gu), then to Geumseong, Gangwon-do (currently Gimhwa-eup, Gimhwa-gun), and finally to Bupyeong (currently Bupyeong-gu, Incheon).

On February 6, 1836, he was the first seminary student to arrive at the home of Father Pierre Maubant in Hu-dong, Seoul (now Jugyo-dong, Jung-gu). He was followed there by Francis-Xavier Choe Bang-je and Andrew Kim Dae-geon. On December 2, they took an oath of purity and obedience, before they set out for Macao the following day,

On June 7, 1837, they arrived at the Far Eastern Headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions Society in Macao and began to study at a temporary ‘Korean Seminary’ established for them in the Headquarters. On November 27, Choe Bang-je died of a fever. They left Macao on April 6, 1839, in the confusion of the start of the First Opium War, and lived until mid-November in Lolomboy, Bocaue, Bulacan, near Manila, Philippines.

On September 12, 1839, Thomas’s father Francis Choe Gyeong-hwan was martyred at the Left Podo Office in Seoul (currently Myo-dong, Jongno-gu) during the Gihae Persecution. On January 31, 1840, his mother Mary Yi Seong-rye was martyred at Dangggogae, Seoul (currently Shingye-dong, Yongsan-gu), but news of this only reached him several years later.

On July 17, 1842 Fr. Maxime de la Brunière and he set off from Macao with the seminary student John Fan, searching for a route into Korea. On August 23, he was reunited with Fr. Joseph Maistre on board *L’Erigone* in Wusong Port at the mouth of the Yangtze River. On September 11, he arrived at the home of Bishop Lodovico Maria Besi, Administrator of Jiangnan diocese. On the September 17, Fr. Maistre and his colleague Kim Dae-geon arrived there. On October 12, Fr. Brunière, Fr. Maistre, Kim Dae-geon, John Fan, and others departed by ship from Chongming Island in Shanghai and headed north. On October 22, they arrived on the coast near Dazhuanghe (now Zhuanghe, Liaoning Province) at the southern tip of Liaodong and landed the next day. On October 25, Thomas Choe arrived at Baijiadian, a Christian Village now part of Zhuanghe. In November, he arrived at Bajiazi near Changchun, where the 3rd Apostolic Vicar of Korea, Jean Ferréol, was serving in Xiaobajiazi Church.

In March, 1843, Kim Dae-geon who had briefly ventured into Korea as far as near Uiju, arrived at Bajiazi with news of the Gihae Persecution. Around December 10, 1844, he and Kim Dae-geon received from Bishop Ferréol the minor orders from tonsure to the diaconate. At the end of January, 1846, he departed for Hunchun (now in Jilin Province) with Father Maistre in a second search for a route into Korea. Returning to Bajiazi in February, he began teaching Chinese seminary students. At the end of December, he set off for the Bianmen with Father Maistre to explore the entry route for the third time.

In early 1847, he arrived back at the Far Eastern Headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, which had moved from Macao to Hong Kong, where he translated into Latin Bishop Ferréol's "The Acts of the Martyrs of the Gihae and Byungo Persecutions." On July 30, 1847, he set off for Korea with Father Maistre on a pair of French warships, *La Gloire* and *La Victoire* in a fourth search for an entry route. On August 10, both French ships were shipwrecked near Gogunsan Islands and on the 12th everyone landed on Shinchido (currently Sinsidori, Okdo-myeon, Gunsan-si). On September 12, all left for Shanghai aboard a British ship that had come to rescue them.

On April 15, 1849, Thomas Choe was ordained a priest at a Shanghai church. In May, he went as far as Baengnyeong Island off the coast of Korea with Father Maistre, in a fifth unsuccessful search for an entry route into Korea, then returned to Shanghai. In May, he started pastoral ministry as the assistant of Father Siméon-François Berneux at Liaodong's Chagou Church, currently Zhuanghe City, Liaoning Province. At the end of December, under orders from Bishop Ferréol, he departed for the Bian-men with Father Maistre in a sixth search for an entry route. At the end of December, he finally succeeded in entering Korea alone after leaving Father Maistre in China, returning home after 13 years.

Early in 1850, he gave the sacrament of the sick to Father Antoine Daveluy and then went to Chungcheong-do to meet with Bishop Ferréol, before beginning a visitation of Christian villages scattered in five provinces across the country. In the summer of 1853 he was appointed head of the Korean Apostolic Vicariate's Seminary in Baeti (currently Yangbaek-ri, Baekgok-myeon, Jincheon-gun). In March, 1854, he sent three Baeti seminarians to the seminary in Penang, Malaysia. In September, 1860, he hid in a village he called Jungnim during the Gyeongsin Persecution. Finally, on June 15, 1861, on his way to Seoul to report on his pastoral work, he fell ill from overwork and contracted typhoid fever. He died at Jincheon, Chungcheong-do. In early November, his remains were moved to Baeron (currently Guhak-ri, Bongyang-eup, Jecheon-si).

On March 7, 2002, he was approved as a candidate for beatification. On January 31, 2004, the decree 'No obstacle' was approved by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. On April 26, 2016 His Holiness Pope Francis proclaimed Father Choe Yang-eop "Venerable."

Number of letters and their collection

This volume contains English translations of the twenty-one letters written by the Venerable Thomas Choe Yangeop (1821-1861) between April 26, 1842, when he was still a seminary student, and September 3, 1860, just before his death; nineteen of them were addressed to the French priests who had been his teachers, and two to Bishop E.J.F. Verrolles, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Manchuria. All 21 letters exist in Latin. It is said that Father Choe's Latin skills were so outstanding that the priests who were his teachers admired him. Early in 1847, when he was a deacon, the 3rd Apostolic Vicar of Korea, Jean Ferréol, while they were sojourning in Hong Kong, asked him to translate from French into Latin "The Acts of the Korean Martyrs", listing those who were martyred during the Gihae and Byeongo Persecutions.

Of the 21 letters included in this collection, 20 letters, except for the letter dated October 23, 1853 (the ninth letter), were all in the archives of the Paris Foreign Missions (La Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris). Among them, the fourteen letters in Volume 577 were original letters addressed to Father Pierre Louis Legrégeois or Father Napoléon Libois, while the four letters in Volume 579 are manuscript copies of letters addressed to Father Libois. It is thought that the latter four letters are probably the result of the recipient, Father

Libois, the Procurator of the Hong Kong headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, keeping the originals and sending copies to the headquarters of the Society in Paris. These letters are generally in good condition, but some are very difficult to read, such as the letter dated October 15, 1851.

The Paris Foreign Missions Society donated all of the above letters to the Korean Catholic Church on June 23, 1997. As a result, those letters were delivered to Korea on July 1st 1997 and are stored at the Korean Catholic Martyrs Museum in Jeoldusan, Seoul.

It is presumed that Father Thomas Choe sent the letter of October 23, 1853 (the ninth letter) to Father Libois, his teacher in Macao; the original has not been preserved. However, some of the contents are included in Latin in a letter dated August 25, 1854, sent by John Bowring, who was serving as British Consul to China and Governor-General of Hong Kong, to the British Foreign Minister, Lord Clarendon. That extract is included in this volume. However, the letter of November 3, 1854 to Father Légrégeois mentioned in Father Choe's letter of November 4, 1854, and the letter to Father Légrégeois of September 1854 mentioned in the letter dated September 13, 1856 cannot now be found. Also, the letters that Father Choe sent to the Korean seminarians who were studying at the Paris Foreign Missions Society seminary in Penang, Malaysia after 1854 have not yet been found.

Meanwhile, two additional letters discovered in 2013 in the archives of the Paris Foreign Missions Society are letters that Father Choe sent to Bishop E.J.F. Verrolles. Their dates are October 20, 1857 (written at Soriut, the fifteenth letter) and October 13, 1859 (written in Angok, the twentieth letter), respectively. These letters, first translated and published in August 201 (*Church and History*, vol. 459, pp. 22~37), are also included in this collection.

When and where the letters were written

The period when Father Choe wrote the letters can largely be divided into the period before his return to Korea and that after his return. Of the six letters written before his return, the first, written on April 26, 1842, was written at the Seminary in Macao and sent to his teacher Fr. Légrégeois, who had returned to France, while he was waiting to board a French ship. The other five were written between 1844 and 1849 in Bajiazi, Shenyang, Hong Kong, and Shanghai (two letters). The letter written on May 12, 1849, is the first letter written after his ordination as a priest.

Of the letters written after his return to Korea at the end of December 1849, 15 letters are included in this collection. Among them, the place where the letter of October 23, 1853 was written is unknown. The remaining 14 letters were written in Doanggol, Jeolgol, Donggol, Baeron, Soriut (2), Bulmugol (2), Odujae (2), Angok (3), and Jukrim. These were important Christian communities, where he could stay relatively safely at times of persecution. Also, given that the time of writing is between September and November, it is believed that Father Choe wrote these letters while he was visiting the region under his care throughout the year after taking a summer break. It should be remembered that the time when church emissaries going to deliver letters to the church in Beijing left Korea was mainly in December. Afterwards, the letters were transmitted to France through Beijing and the Macao headquarters or, after 1847, the Hong Kong headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions Society.

Among the places where letters were written in Korea, Doang-gol and Bulmugol are identified as Catholic villages in what is now Geumji-ri, Naesan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do, and Heungrim-ri, Pangyo-myeon, Seocheon-gun. Jeolgol and Donggol were pastoral centers of Father Choe, and are presumed to be near Baeti (currently

Yangbaek-ri, Baekgok-myeon, Jincheon-gun, Chungbuk) where the first seminary was located. Baeron (currently Guhak-ri, Bongyang-eup, Jecheon-si, Chungcheongbuk-do) was a Catholic village where a seminary was established at the end of 1854 or early the following year. It is almost certain that Odujae was a Catholic village in Daeheung-ri, Soyang-myeon, Wanju-gun, Jeollabuk-do, and Soriut is also presumed to be a village not far from there. In addition, Jukrim is presumed to be a village located in Deungeok Alps-ri, Sangbuk-myeon, Ulju-gun, Ulsan-si, and Angok is Angok-ri, Mueul-myeon, Gumi-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do. According to the letter dated October 12, 1859, Angok was a Catholic village within the pastoral jurisdiction of Father Stanislas Féron.

The recipients of the letters

Of the 21 letters included in this collection, 14 are addressed to his teacher, Fr. Legrégeois, 4 to his teacher Fr. Libois, one is jointly addressed to both priests, and the two recently discovered letters were addressed to Bishop Verrolles. In particular, Father Choe wrote to Fr. Legrégeois almost every year after returning to Korea, not only about the results of his pastoral activities, but also about the events he experienced during his visits to the Christian villages, the acts of his parents and other martyrs, and the political situation in Korea, as well as various events happening around him, explaining them. Then he waited eagerly for his reply; he always found it very comforting to receive a reply.

In this way, it can be seen that his affection for Fr. Legrégeois was very special. In fact, he even confessed, “I have passed not even a few hours, let alone one whole day, without thinking of you.” Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the letters to Fr. Legrégeois began with obedience and affection and ended with obedience and affection. On the other hand, the letters sent to Fr. Libois have rather the character of official letters sent to him as the Procurator in charge of the Hong Kong headquarters and caring for the Korean Apostolic Vicariate.

Father Legrégeois arrived in Macao in early 1828 and became Deputy Procurator of the Far Eastern headquarters of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, then served as Procurator for about 12 years from 1830. At that time, the priest in charge of the Macao headquarters also had the authority to set the assignments of the Far Eastern missionaries dispatched from Paris. In 1837, it was Fr. Legrégeois who made the decision to establish the Korean Seminary within the Macao headquarters, taking charge of the food, clothing and shelter and education of the seminarians. From then on, the seminary principals were Fathers J. M. Callery and E. J. Desflèches, and from 1840, Father Legrégeois, who showed special affection for Korea and actively helped the missionaries going there. The French priests in Macao suffered a lot from the Portuguese because the church in Macao was under Portugal’s protection (the Padroado).

In 1841, the French began to prepare to move their headquarters to the new British territory of Hong Kong. Father Legrégeois bought the land with his own money. However, at the end of the same year, he was appointed Rector of the Paris Foreign Missions Society Seminary in Paris and had to leave Macao the following year.

Father Libois arrived in Macao in 1837 to teach the Korean seminarians, and the following year became Deputy Procurator of the headquarters there. Then, at the end of 1841, after Father Legrégeois was chosen as the Rector of the Paris seminary, he assumed the role of Procurator. In addition, he continued to promote the relocation of the headquarters that Fr. Legrégeois had planned, and finally moved it to Hong Kong in early 1847. Ten years later, he helped establish the Singapore headquarters and in 1864 the Shanghai headquarters. Then, in 1866, he was transferred to be rector of the Paris seminary of the Paris Foreign Missions Society. The authority to decide missionary assignments, which had been given to the Hong

Kong headquarters up to this point, was abolished at the same time as Father Libois was transferred.

Historical value and significance

Father Choe Yang-eop's letters are, first of all, most important for understanding his own religious life, devotion and spirituality. Next, they are of great help in understanding the process of searching for the route into Korea, the fruits of pastoral activities and evangelization after returning to Korea, and the life of Catholics and the Christian villages at the time of persecution. In addition, the various domestic and foreign situations contained in the letters, the political reality of Korea, things that Father Choe Yang-eop saw or felt with his own eyes, and the accounts of martyrdom collected directly from the Catholics can be considered primary sources.

Father Charles Dallet quoted many parts of Father Choe Yang-eop's letters while writing "The History of the Catholic Church in Korea" that was published in 1874. However, since there are many more unquoted letters than actually cited ones, this collection of letters can be used to supplement not only a few parts of his book, but also will be of great help for the overall study of the history of the Catholic Church in Korea. In addition to this, the activities of Father J. Maistre, who tried hard to enter Korea with Father Choe, and Father Féron, a close colleague, and other missionaries who worked in Korea, can be supplemented through the letters of Father Choe Yang-eop.

This collection of letters has been an invaluable resource in the process of promoting Father Choe Yang-eop's beatification, which is currently underway, and will continue to be used as the primary source in the future. In particular, in this regard, believers should be encouraged to access this collection of letters, in order to understand and emulate the exemplary faith and life of Father Choe Yang-eop, and to participate in private prayers and veneration, which are essential in the process of beatification. This is the main reason for publishing this English version of the letters.

Notes

All Korean names are written in their modern forms in accordance with the revised Korean romanization system, while Chinese names and geographical names are written in accordance with the modern Chinese standard romanization system (but without diacritics).

The baptismal names of Koreans and Chinese are written using the standard English form. An exception has been made for the Europeans, whose names are given in the original languages.

Most letters are headed J.M.J (Jesus Mary Joseph) which has not been retained in the translations.

We are most grateful to François Guillaumont, Honorary Professor of Letters at the University of Tours (France), the translator of the recently published French edition of these letters, for his careful reading of our translation of both sets of letters and his valuable suggestions for improving the accuracy of our translations.

Letter 1

Place where written: Macao

Date when written: April 26, 1842

Recipient: Father Legrégeois¹

The distress with which I have been worrying about your journey will be clear enough to you if you remember the anguish with which we said goodbye to one another. I am not afraid to confess that I have passed not even a few hours, let alone one whole day, without thinking of you. But we suffer all this bitterness for God's sake: let him therefore be our comfort, our hope, and even our will, in whom we shall live and die. May God guide you, my most beloved Father, by his angel so that you may prosper and may He preserve you in His best peace.

Through you, I express my greatest reverence and loyalty to our Holy Father².

Regarding what has happened here and around us, I will leave out the rest and tell you just one thing. Everyone has left me and I am finally separated from my only colleague, Andrew (Kim Daegeon), and I am living alone in a small room, but I want to be alone with God.

After you left, there was no news from our country. Andrew left for Korea³ on a French ship⁴ with Father Maistre⁵. However, I heard that after the ship made a visit to Manila it had not yet departed for its destination. I am supposed to go to my homeland with M. de Jancigny⁶ on another ship called *La Favorite*⁷, and I look forward to it day by day.

Oh, when will my fellow-citizens at last, converted into a holy Sion, praise God our Creator and Redeemer? Although we are unworthy, at least at the prayers and supplications of his most beloved Church, may Jesus Christ our Savior look down upon us wretched creatures, remembering the blood he poured out for all.

If I am to ask you for anything, I will only ask that you always remember me, your little son. You took special care of me and allowed me to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. And one more thing: I wish you would send me a relic of the True Cross or relics of saints.

My dearest and most respected Father, always stay very well.

Memories of you will never leave me as long as I live.

¹ Pierre Louis Legrégeois (1801-1866) came to China at an early age as a missionary for the Foreign Missions Society, and became the Procurator of the Macau Far Eastern Headquarters in 1830. Then, in 1837, he established a temporary Korean seminary in the Headquarters, accepting and teaching the three Korean seminarians. He had a particularly strong influence on Father Choe Yang-eop.

² Pope Gregory XVI (Pope 1831-1846). On September 9, 1831, he had established the Apostolic Vicariate of Korea.

³ Andrew Kim Dae-geon left Macau on the L'Erigone on February 15, 1842, and arrived in Wusong, Shanghai, in early July, via Manila and Taiwan.

⁴ L'Erigone was under the French Naval Captain Jean-Baptiste Cécille.

⁵ Joseph A. Maistre (1808-1857): After arriving in Macau in 1840 as a missionary for the Foreign Missions Society, he taught the Korean seminarians. In 1842 he was appointed as a missionary in the Apostolic Vicariate of Korea. Afterwards, he lived with Father Choe Yang-eop for a long time and instructed him until he received ordination. In 1852, he entered Korea and ministered there until he died.

⁶ Adolphe Philibert Dubois de Jancigny (1795-1860): a French diplomat on a mission to China.

⁷ La Favorite was a French ship commanded by Captain T. F. Page.

Letter 2

Place where written: Bajiazi⁸

Date when written: May 19, 1844

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

It has been three years since I was deprived of the pleasure of your company. Although I am far from you in body, in my heart and mind I have never left you for a moment. My writing is very clumsy and awkward; previously I sent you a letter written in a rough way with all my utmost sincerity, but I do not know if you have received it.

Not long after you left us, I was dispatched to my homeland, but, contrary to my expectations, I only arrived in Liaodong⁹. Here, I am now with the Bishop of Belline¹⁰, Father Maistre, and my brother Andrew (Kim Dae-geon). I stay here day by day, hoping that one day the Dear Lord will allow me to meet my compatriots.

When I think of the pitiful circumstances of my compatriots, I cannot help but shed tears and sigh. I will not tell you about the news from Korea, which is truly sad, but in some ways thrilling, because I believe that you must have already heard about it more fully and clearly through the letters of my superiors. That being said, my condition is really pitiful, for because I did not deserve to follow my fathers, my brothers and so did not participate in the splendid battle of Christ's warriors. I am truly ashamed! For despite having such compatriots, indeed such parents, I am still very weak and struggling with my imperfections.

May the Father of Mercies hear the cry of the blood of His servants, crying out like the blood of Abel. May he have pity on us, and show us overflowing mercy and the strength of His arm. When will I be worthy of the great labors of the priests and the sufferings of my brothers and able to make up what was lacking in the Passion of Christ?

If my lowly position and lack of ability had not hindered me, I would certainly have written many letters and made this known not only to the superiors and heads of our Society, but also to all our fellow believers around the world, to whom we owe and give thanks. Whence my wish is that you would deign to explain many things to them on our behalf.

Lastly, I beg you, most loving Master, to whom I am firmly bound by a special bond, in the heart of Jesus Christ, do not forget your little son.

In my previous letter, I asked for a piece of the wood from the Most Holy Cross of our Savior Jesus. If possible, be sure to send it to me.

Your most obedient, most unworthy and very weak son Thomas Choe of Korea bows down and greets you.

⁸ Bajiazi (Pakiatze in Latin text) : now known as Xiaobajiazi, Helong Town, Changchun City, Jilin Province. Bishop Verrolles built a church in this Catholic village early on and made it a base for missions to the north.

⁹ Choe Yang-eop, who departed from Macau on the French frigate *la Favorite* on July 17, 1842, passed through Shanghai and arrived at Dazhuanghe in Liaodong (now Zhuanghe, Liaoning Province) on October 22. Then after passing through the Christian villages of Baijiadian (currently Ronghuashan Town, Zhuanghe City, Liaoning Province) and Yangguan (currently Luodiancun, Gaizhou City, Liaoning Province), he arrived at Bajiazi in November.

¹⁰ Bishop Jean Joseph Ferréol (1808-1853), a missionary of the Foreign Missions Society. On August 14, 1838, he was appointed Vice-Apostolic Vicar of Korea, became the third Apostolic Vicar on September 21 of the following year, and on December 31, 1843, he was ordained a bishop at Yangguan in Liaodong. He entered Korea on October 12, 1845, and was active until he died of overwork in 1853 and was buried in Mirinae. 'Belline' is the name of an ancient diocese in Syria, assigned to Bishop Ferréol as his nominal diocese.

Letter 3

J. M. J.

Place where written: Shenyang¹¹

Date when written: 12 December 22, 1846¹²

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend and Beloved Father

I have been waiting for your reply with great hope for a long time. However, I have not been considering the delay in the letters as being in any way worrisome because I am always so grateful to receive a letter from you, for I did not think myself worthy of the care and kindness with which you behaved toward me, and I know that you are always busy with very many things. Finally, on December 21st, I was overjoyed to receive your letter and the holy relics.

Still now, I am wandering outside our mission field, so I am very frustrated and you must be suffering too. I am still only on my way to my compatriots. May our loving Heavenly Father allow me soon to greet and embrace the priests and my brothers and sisters in Korea.

If I am able to tell you that we have safely entered the country, it will give me as much joy as it will bring joy to you, who will surely be happy to hear that news. At that time, with joy and courage, I will write you a letter more freely and in more detail.

Now my steps are running lightly, but my face is heavily contorted. Because I am under the weight of sin and suffer from extreme poverty and infirmity. But with hope in God's abundant mercy, I completely entrust myself to the providence of God, the most gracious Father.

I remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "When people hand you over, don't worry about what you will say. What you should say then will be given to you" (Mt 10:19). I understand that 'say' here means not only the gift of speaking, but everything necessary. Therefore, conscious of my poverty and infirmity, I am very frightened and terrified, but steadfastly hoping in God I will not be confounded.

I pray that the great power of the Cross will grow in me so that I will not know anything other than Jesus Crucified. I ask you to confirm and complete this vow of mine with your prayers.

Through you, to whom I am ever most grateful, I express my deepest greetings, thanks and obedience to all the priests of the seminary and especially to Father Barran¹³.

¹¹ Shenyang: the capital of Liaoning Province, China. The Manchu name was Mukden, and the old name was Fengtian. In 1846, it was under the pastoral jurisdiction of the Manchurian Diocese.

¹² This letter was written after Deacon Choe Yang-eop had returned to Bajiazi in early 1846, after completing a search for a route into Korea in the northeast with Father Maistre through Hunchun and Gyeongwon in Korea. He wrote this while he was on his way to the Fenghuang Fortress Gate 鳳凰城 to explore a return route in the northwest again.

¹³ Jean Barran (1797-1855): Member of the Foreign Missions Society. He was ordained a priest in 1821, appointed as the director of the Society's seminary in 1825, and elected as its Rector in 1851.

Dear Master, your very lowly, feeble and obedient child, bows down in respectful greeting.

Thomas Choe

Letter 4

Place where written: Hong Kong¹⁴

Date when written: 15 April 20, 1847

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend Father,

On the way to Korea in December last year, I received not only your letter, that I had been waiting for in Shenyang, but also the holy relics. Then I wrote a short letter to you.

I finally went to the Bianmen gate¹⁵ with great joy and courage,

hoping that I would be freed from the long and boring captivity and be welcomed by my compatriots. However, when I arrived at the gate, this hope was shattered. I was astonished by the tragic news and mourned beyond comfort for the pitiful situation of myself and the whole country.

I thought that I would not have another chance to write a letter to you until there was good news to tell you after I entered Korea, but I still have no choice but to write another letter to you from this vale of tears, where I am living in exile. By sharing my worries with you in this way, I am trying to relieve the pain and lighten my heart.

In particular, the death of Father Andrew (Kim Dae-geon), my dearest colleague, must be heartbreaking news for you as well. In the midst of this, reading the Records of the Martyrs written in French by the respected Bishop Ferréol¹⁶ is a great comfort to me. Since I knew that the Bishop himself desired it, and at the suggestion of Father Maistre, I translated them into Latin.

I, who do not understand everything and who am only a beginner in Latin, have dared to set out to translate these texts. They are intended to send a little consolation to the Church of Rome, our benevolent Mother, who continues to suffer so much at our dreadful plight.

However, this translation of mine was written during my travels, without a dictionary, and my ability is so weak that the sentences are poor and there are many places where the grammar is cumbersome. Therefore, if you think this is all right, after looking it over, please correct the mistakes and send it to the noble Church of Rome¹⁷. And for me and my poor country, please send many greetings, expressions of obedience, and prayers to Rome.

The last part, about the nine martyrs who were martyred in 1846, was translated by Father Maistre.

¹⁴ Hong Kong: the Far Eastern Headquarters of the Foreign Missions Society had been transferred to Hong Kong from Macau early in 1847.

¹⁵ Bianmen (邊門 Byeonmun in Korean): a border village at Fenghuangcheng, currently Bianmen Town 边门镇等, Fengcheng City 凤城市, Liaoning 辽宁 province. During the Joseon Dynasty, this was the only official entry point between China and Korea. In China, it was also known as Shanmen (柵門 Palisade Gate) or Gaolimen (高麗門 Korea Gate).

¹⁶ Bishop Ferréol had sent to the Hong Kong headquarters twice in September and November 1846, "The Acts of the Martyrs of the Gihae and Byeongo Persecutions." Among the 82 deeds recorded there, "The Acts of the 73 Martyrs of the Gihae Persecution in 1839" is the original text, collected and arranged by Choe Young-su (Philip), Hyeon Seok-mun (Charles), and Yi Jae-ui (Thomas). It is based on the "Gihae Diary."

¹⁷ The Latin version translated by Deacon Choe Yang-eop and Father Maistre was submitted to the Holy See on October 15, 1847, through the Foreign Missions Society. The 83 martyrs listed were declared Venerable on September 23, 1857.

Now, after a long and tedious journey, I have returned to Hong Kong with Father Maistre, and here I am waiting for a French ship¹⁸ day by day. We will board the ship and try to find a way to land again in Korea, as commanded by the respected Bishop Ferréol. If God permits, we hope that this time we will be successful and that we will be able to reach our mission field, which is very poor.

In any case, all our hopes depend on God's mercy, and it is our hope that God's holy will may be done. The only other thing (if I have a wish) is to die and be buried in the life of Jesus Christ.

Now, as I end this letter, I entrust my fragile and unhappy homeland to the fervent prayers of you, Father, and all who will hear this news.

To you, Father, in the heart of Jesus Christ, your son Thomas Choe, Deacon of the Korean mission.

¹⁸ La Gloire, commanded by Naval Captain Lapierre, and La Victorieuse commanded by Naval Major C. Rigault de Genouilly.

Letter 5

Place where written: Shanghai

Date when written: September 20, 1847

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend and Dearest Father,

As I was about to sail from Hong Kong to Korea, I sent a short letter to you. At that time, I hoped that I would not have the opportunity to write to you again until I had some good news to tell you. But once again, that hope has been thwarted, and I have no choice but to unintentionally give you added pain and worry.

We, who departed from Huangpu¹⁹ in July, fortunately sailed without accident safely until we found the first island off the coast of Korea. However, there the ship was swept away by the waves and stranded on the sand due to strong winds as it was approaching land from the sea and was soon wrecked. We all escaped to some island. So the captain, without delay, sent the dinghy to Shanghai to ask other European ships for help.

We lived in tents for over a month on the island where we took refuge²⁰. Meanwhile, a high official visited from the royal capital. The local officials were very kind and generous toward us. They also provided us with plenty of supplies, ships and food and all other necessities to enable us to return to China.

However, the ministers of Korea did not reply to the letter of Captain Cecille²¹. I think if Captain Lapierre had written to them explicitly about this, they would have answered. Captain Lapierre sent a letter to the Governor of Jeolla Province²², the region where we were staying, only requesting food and boats, and did not actively mention the request for a reply from the ministers of Korea. The Governor provided all that Captain Lapierre asked for, although he did not reply to his letter.

Although we stayed on the coast of Korea for so long, not a single Korean Christian appeared. I wandered around and inquired every day, hoping to find out some news about the Christians. It was very comforting to see and listen to my compatriots. Eventually, when I had the opportunity to speak with them, I was overjoyed. In the evenings, I anxiously looked around, hoping and praying that a Christian ship might come to us.

One day I went to the officials of the nearest town and negotiated with them about something. And on the way back that night in a little boat with some Koreans, I cautiously

¹⁹ Huangpu 黃浦區 in Guangzhou 廣州, Guangdong 廣東 Province, i.e. Huangpu Island in the southern reaches of the Pearl River (珠江 Zhujiang). According to the voyage report by Captain Augustin de Lapierre, the French ship carrying Father Choe Yang-up and Father Maistre left Boca Tigris on July 30. Boca Tigris was the western name for Homun, the entrance to the Jougang River south of Hwangpu.

²⁰ Shipwrecked off the Gogunsan Islands (currently Okdo-myeon, Gunsan-si, Jeollabuk-do) they are presumed to have landed on Sinchido (now known as Sinsido).

²¹ On June 18, 1846, Rear-Admiral Cécille, commander of the French Navy, during an expedition to Korea, sent to the Korean government from Oeyeon Island (now Oeyeon-dori, Ocheon-myeon, Boryeong-si, Chungcheongnam-do) a letter dated the 8th day of the 5th lunar month (June 1), “protesting the beheading of three French missionaries during the Gihae Persecution” (Heonjong Sillok, Vol. 13, 12th year, 3rd day of the 7th lunar month).

²² The letter sent by Captain Lapierre to the Jeolla Governor on August 13 (3rd day of the 7th lunar month) is included in the Heonjong Sillok Vol. 14, 13th year, 11th day of the 8th lunar month.

asked them about their religion. I didn't speak in Korean, in case my true colors might be exposed, so I wrote Chinese characters on the palm of my hand while having a conversation.

One of them came up to me and asked, "Do you know Jesus and Mary?" "Of course I know! I know them well. Do you know them? Do you honor them?" I asked impatiently as I answered him. He admitted that he did, but soon stopped talking, being anxious not to get caught by the pagans around us.

I secretly seized the opportunity, gently grabbed his hand so that no one else could see it, pulled him close, and wrote in Chinese, saying, "Are all of your family members Christians? Where do Christians live? Do the Christians have any ships?" I asked. He replied that his whole family are believers, and he lives in a place called Daegongso²³, which is about ten leagues away from Gogunsan Islands, where we were. And he told me that a small boat of Christians would come here the day after tomorrow, that is, the day before our ship departed.

I kept asking several different questions, but he took his hand away and didn't want to answer any further.

So, full of greater hope and impatience, I began to wait for the Christians, but in the end no one appeared. At night, Korean barges lit torches everywhere and guarded us, and during the day no one was allowed to approach us.

I took one official aside and asked, "Are there any Christians in Korea? Does the King still persecute Christians?" I asked quietly. He replied that the King had punished Christians harshly, had killed many, and was still killing them.

When the captain sent a letter to the ministers, he also sent a copy of the decree of the Daoguang Emperor of China expressing his favor toward Christianity²⁴. Then they waited until the next year for other ships to arrive.

I asked many times to stay on Gogunsan Islands, but the captain would not agree. So with many tears I had to abandon our mission field, so much longed for with many vows and a lot of hard work, that had come within my reach, and was obliged to return to Shanghai.

But we still do not lose hope, we are still not discouraged, we still hope for God's mercy and are fully dependent on God's almighty and most good Providence. I too will always and forever hope in God, and I will always believe in Him, having put myself entirely in His hands to work for His glory.

Lord, behold. Behold our affliction and remember your mercy. Turn your face from our iniquities and turn your eyes to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, and hear the prayers of the saints who cry to you.

Dear Father, the Korean Thomas Choe, very weak, bows down and greets you.

²³ Now Daeso Mission Station at Seokpori, Byeongsanmyeon, Buan-gun, North Jeolla Province.

²⁴ The contents of the Huangpu Treaty concluded between France and the Qing Dynasty in October 1844 (Daoguang 24) included an article lifting the ordinance prohibiting Christianity and ensuring the protection of missions, namely, 'permission to build churches and regulations on the duty to protect the church by the Qing Dynasty'.

Letter 6

Place where written: Shanghai,
Date when written: May 12, 1849
Recipient: Father Legrégeois

“I in them and you Father in me, that they may be completely one” (John 17:23).

Most Reverend and Dearest Father in Christ,

Once again I am writing a letter to you from this place where I am living in exile. Our vows and hopes are still not fulfilled. I am always saddened to deliver only disappointing news, and your heart must be heavy on hearing this news. But what else can we seek and obtain besides what is pleasing to God? So, although our plans did not succeed, that does not mean that we have failed. For we are working only for God, not for mortal things or for ourselves, God who sees into our hearts and does not need our help, for God has ordained that we too, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Beloved Son, our Savior and Head, should bear fruit only after humbly enduring great sufferings.

It is still only a little that we have endured in our expectation, our perseverance is still short in obtaining the divine mercy.

How many saints have offered to God fervent prayers, great sacrifices, laborious and tedious self-denial and reparation for ten, twenty, thirty, forty or longer years for the repentance of a single sinner or for some special grace! Indeed, I cannot tell with what spirit I am inspired by the contemplation of these examples.

Perhaps it is because I have neglected to plead for help from heaven, depended too much on human hopes, and have committed countless sins, that God does not hear your prayers and that I am an obstacle to God’s mercy.

Most Gracious God, my Lord, if I am the cause of your wrath, throw me into the depths of the sea and have pity on the plight of your servants. Look upon the work of your hands! In myself, I am nothing; I have no value, except to be humiliated and trampled on. It is only in you that I can pretend to be doing what is pleasing to you. May your Most Holy Will be done on me, in me, through me, by me.

We have just attempted our second expedition to sea²⁵. For the past year, we have been able to do nothing. Yet it seems that my cousin brought a ship to Gogunsan Island, where we were shipwrecked last year, and waited for us all summer. When Captain Lapierre wrote a letter to the Korean government, he reaffirmed repeatedly and firmly that other ships would surely come there within that year. After hearing the news, our priests and believers thoroughly prepared even the smallest things to meet us. How many terrible dangers and hardships they must have suffered? Had we been more attentive and wiser, we must have noticed it and could and should have been able to prepare ahead of time.

We knew that Captain Lapierre had written such a letter. In other words, it would have been quite easy to foresee that our priests would be fully prepared for us to enter at that opportunity according to such information. And some ship could have taken us there from Shanghai. However, we were not able to contact each other beforehand, so we didn’t really think about this at all. In any case, praised be to the name of God. This year, both sides made an appointment in advance, and we boarded a vessel from Macao and headed to Baengnyeong Island. This is the place where Father Andrew Kim, who was our dear and

²⁵ Father Choe Yang-eop went to Baengnyeong Island with Father Maistre to explore a return route.

proud comrade, who has now become our faithful heavenly guardian before our Heavenly Father, was arrested²⁶. It was pretty bad weather, so it couldn't be without risk and hard work. The chains were broken, the anchors were lost, and the captain was afraid that the entire ship would be wrecked. After much effort, we arrived at the port we had been longing for. But how bitter our hearts were when we could not set one foot on land and were soon obliged to retreat!

Our captain sailed using a chart drawn up by the English²⁷. We tried to find the island on the chart, but the chart was inaccurate and drawn incorrectly. One of the first islands that appeared before us was marked 'Gyodo' on the chart. We went to the island and asked the inhabitants the name and location of the island, and we found out that it was completely different. We didn't know if this was really another island or if the islanders lied to us to get rid of us quickly. However, when I went to another island, marked as Baengnyeong on the chart, there were no ships from China or Korea. According to the report of Father Andrew Kim²⁸, we should have found a large fleet of Shandong fishermen around this island, so we had agreed to meet there.

However, now we were in an extreme predicament. It was an unfamiliar and extremely dangerous place. We couldn't drop anchor; we couldn't call a guide. This was because it is strictly forbidden for any Korean to contact foreigners or to run errands for them. Our captain was anxious from moment to moment, fearing that he might face the same fate as Captain Lapierre.

We took no action. Human help could no longer be expected at all. We all prayed with one accord to Almighty God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints for help. All we could do was entrust ourselves to the merciful providence of God. While we were thus preoccupied, the ship began to drift away from this ominous area. Now, I am back in exile in Shanghai. Perhaps those poor believers who came to welcome us were caught by the police? Perhaps our entire missionary field has once again been brutally torn apart by a brutal frenzy of persecutors?

There is another cause of great concern. The Korean government may be outraged at the Christians because French ships have appeared again. Until this time, fear of the French meant that they did not dare to vent their wrath on the believers. However, no warships have appeared in Korea during the past two years²⁹ despite such strong promises made with many words, and the French government has not given any explanation for this delay. And even after such a long time, the wreckage of the shipwrecked ships was left to rot in the water.

In view of this, the Korean government is probably saying: "These French are nothing. Vainly, they pretend to be strong and boastful, but in reality, they are people who can't keep their promises. They only shout loudly with their mouths, but in reality they don't do anything. They will never come again and won't do anything to us in the future. Well, the time has come. Let's completely eradicate the name of Christian. They are the ones who brought French warships to our country. Remove them from among us, and we will not receive any retaliation from France."

²⁶ Father Kim Dae-geon was arrested on June 5, 1846, at Deungsanjin on Sunwido Island, which lies between Baengnyeong Island and Yeonpyeong Island, off the west coast of Korea.

²⁷ This is presumed to be a chart of the West Sea prepared by the crews of the ships under Captain M. Maxwell, of the British warship *Alcest*, and Captain Basil Hall of the *Lyra* when they surveyed a portion of the west coast of Korea in 1816.

²⁸ This is thought to be the Letter dated August 26, 1846 that Father Kim Dae-geon sent to Bishop Ferréol from prison.

²⁹ The two years after August 1847, when the French ships *La Gloire* and *La Victorieuse* were wrecked on the Gogunsan Islands.

May France, a truly Christian country, see our plight and continue the good it has already begun. If our final doom comes upon us, it is certainly against their intentions³⁰, but in reality they are the cause. Merciful Lord, our only Hope, remove calamity from us and disgrace from the glorious French nation.

This year, if God permits, we will once again seek another route by land. In a few days, as Bishop Ferréol instructed, I will leave for Liaodong, and in the coming winter I will go to the Bianmen. If I had disregarded my holy obedience and followed my own inclinations, I would already be in Korea, our mission field, or else would be with our priests in the other world. But I don't want that to happen, I just want what God wants and what my superiors command me to do.

In finishing, I promise once again that the next letter will be sent to you only after I have entered Korea. To all the priests of the seminary, especially to Father Barran, our procurator, through you, I extend my greetings and obedience in the Most Holy Heart of our Head, Jesus Christ.

Here, I want to tell you about the extremely loving care of Bishop Maresca³¹ and the reverend Jesuit fathers, with whom we enjoyed a very long hospitality, so that my very dear fathers can present to them the thanks they deserve, for which I cannot suffice on my own, due to my poverty.

On the Sunday after Easter (Dominica in Albis, April 15th), I was ordained a priest by the most venerable Bishop Maresca³². May I always be worthy of such a noble dignity. Considering my lowliness and weakness, I have been charged with a heavy burden that is too large and unbearable.

However, it is a great comfort to me that, by the mercy of the most gracious God, I, most incompetent and poor though I am, have been granted the power to daily offer the sacrifice of the Mass that is pleasing to the Most High God and to pay the invaluable price of the whole world to God the Father every day.

So now, according to what I have received, during Mass, I will try to remember more often and more earnestly all the priests and my companions before God. I believe that the priests are doing and will do the same for me and our poor missionaries.

To you, dear Father, the humblest servant of Christ, your unworthy son, and a useless Korean priest, Thomas Choe

³⁰ It was only through the Treaty between Korea and France that was signed in 1886 that protection for missions was granted.

³¹ Francesco Saverio Maresca (1806-1855): An Italian Franciscan missionary who arrived in China in 1840, and served as Coadjutor Bishop of the Jiangnan Diocese (renamed Nanjing Diocese in 1922) at Jinjiaxiang Church in 1847. At the end of the same year, after Bishop Lodovico Maria Bési (1805-1871) returned to Europe, he succeeded him as the Bishop of Jiangnan.

³² The location of the ordination of Father Choe Yang-eop is unknown. It is presumed that it was held in either the Zhangjialou Church, the Jinjiaxiang Church, or the St. Ignatius Seminary, at some time around 1849.

Letter 7

Place where written: Doanggol³³

Date when written: October 1, 1850

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Dearest Father,

The long-awaited time has finally come. The moment has finally arrived when I can write from my poor country to the dear priests about my brothers, whom I had so longed to see.

Last year, when I wrote a letter to you from Shanghai, I told you that I was writing my last letter from China. I also said that I would make another attempt to enter Korea in the coming winter.

This last attempt was tedious and long compared to the previous journeys. I felt deeply that the things I needed were even more lacking. Hope seemed much less, but the more it seemed so, the greater the faith within me. The more the weak things within us are revealed, the stronger we are in God.

I left Shanghai by ship in May and came back to Liaodong³⁴. I stayed there for seven months and visited the sick according to the orders of the Acting Apostolic Vicar, Fr. Berneux³⁵. On Sundays and holidays, I gave short sermons to the faithful and taught the doctrine to children, and on major holidays I heard confessions and distributed the Eucharist³⁶. As Bishop Ferréol ordered, I prepared to enter Korea through Bianmen in December.

Father Maistre also wanted to go to the Bianmen with me. Although there was little hope of success, he did not want to miss any opportunity.

Arriving here, I found messengers sent by Bishop Ferréol, and I tried to persuade them to let Father Maistre be brought in with me. But prudence had the last word, and I was sadly compelled to leave Father Maistre desolate in China. At last I commenced my journey alone to break through the firmly barred gate of Korea. I couldn't see any possibility of passing the perimeter of the gate's guard post undetected. All expectations and hopes were placed solely upon the almighty power of merciful God.

Relying on God's help and prepared to be arrested, I approached the gate's guard post in the middle of the night. There were guards on the banks of the Yalu River, and watchmen on the walls and at the gates of the town. But it was pitch-black that night, and the

³³ Doanggol: (Toouang in the Latin) Now Geumji 1-ri, Naesan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do. Formerly known as Hongsan Doanggol. During the Byeongin Persecution of 1866, Luke Kim and others were arrested here and martyred in Gongju.

³⁴ To be more precise, the Chagou district of Liaodong (currently Ronghuashan Town, Zhuanghe City, Liaoning Province). On the other side of the stream (Chagou) that flows in front of the Baijiadian Christian village, where the seminary student Choe Yang-eop lived before going to Bajiazi in 1842, in the early 1840s, there was a 'Church of Our Lady of the Snows' built by Bishop Verrolles, the first bishop of Manchuria.

³⁵ Siméon F. Berneux, (1814-1866): The 4th Apostolic Vicar of Korea and one of Korea's 103 Saints. He was dispatched to Tonkin (now North Vietnam) in 1841 as a missionary of the Foreign Missions Society. After moving to Manchuria in 1843, he was active in Yangguan, Chagou, Shaling, etc., was appointed Apostolic Vicar on August 5, 1854, was consecrated bishop on December 27 of the same year. He entered Korea in 1856 and was martyred during the Byeongin Persecution in 1866.

³⁶ After arriving at Chagou Church in May 1849, Father Choe Yang-eop served as an assistant to Father Berneux until December.

wind was blowing so fiercely that, stiff with cold, the guards seemed to have shut themselves up in their house; so we passed through the middle of the guard-post, and no one took any notice of us. After escaping danger in this way, we reached Seoul without much difficulty.

After staying for a day in Seoul, I was intending to continue on the road to see the Bishop, who was staying in Chungcheong Province at that time. But before that, I had to go to Father Daveluy³⁷, who was seriously ill, and give him the last rites. Then I went to the bishop and found that the bishop also had a fever.

After talking with the bishop for a day, I could not take a break even for a moment and immediately started touring the mission, beginning with Jeolla Province³⁸. safely for six months.

I have only run some risks in two places. In one place, in a small village, there were only three Christian women, who were living in the houses of pagans with their parents and husbands, who were pagans. To visit them, I went to a very shabby house in the evening with a catechist, and a bag of the things needed for Mass, and stayed there. When the villagers saw me entering the house, they suspected that I was a European, and immediately ran to the village chief and reported it. The village chief announced that he was convening all the elders in the village to discuss arresting and killing me that night. We were in their grasp, and we couldn't escape. The whole village was watching us, so if we escaped, it would only result in a frenzy of the villagers, not only about us but also about the house we were in.

So we sheltered under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and surrendered everything completely to the will of God. I pretended not to care at all for the shouting of the pagans, prepared all night long for them to come in, and stayed there without moving. But they disagreed among themselves and let us leave the town in the morning. For this reason, we could not go to see the three women, and we left them in their loneliness, sorrowing because of this.

Another place had nearly two hundred Christians. On the third day after I started ministering to them, the village chief found out that I was there. The chief told the villagers that there was a European in his village, and ran to the house where I was celebrating the Sacrament of Confession at the time.

From noon to midnight, he swore, cursed, threatened and blackmailed me. He yelled at me that I was a very bad European, a Frenchman. He said, "You are a big thief. Have you come from France to steal from us? Imposters from Europe, French seditionists. What good is it to you to make such a fuss and deceive us? Let's see where you can stand. Tomorrow you will be bound by a red cord and taken to the thieves' prison." So he kept screaming loudly, until finally he got tired and went to sleep.

I took the counsel of the local leaders, got up in the middle of the night and escaped from there before dawn. Those who had received the sacrament of Confession the day before and prepared for Holy Communion were eagerly looking forward to the Mass, but I couldn't even celebrate it and ran away. Some of those who had not received the Sacrament followed me the next day and came to another Christian village to receive the sacrament, despite the 100 li long rough road. Others who could not get out of the village were left alone, sighing in disappointment.

³⁷ Antoine N. Daveluy, 1818-1866) 5th Apostolic Vicar of Korea and one of Korea's 103 saints. He entered Korea in 1845 as a missionary for the Foreign Missions Society and was consecrated to serve as coadjutor in 1857. After the martyrdom of Bishop Berneux on March 7, 1866, he succeeded him as Apostolic Vicar of Korea but was then martyred 23 days later, on March 30th, at Galmaemot in Boryeong (now Ocheon-myeon, Boryeong-si, Chungcheongnam-do).

³⁸ The five provinces which Father Choe Yang-eop visited during his pastoral tours were Gyeonggi-do, Chungcheong-do, Jeolla-do, Gyeongsang-do and Gangwon-do.

While traveling around, I often witness the miserable and needy plight of those who are stricken by extreme poverty. Whenever that happens, my heart aches infinitely when I see my poor state, I who have no ability to help them. They are afflicted with all kinds of hardship under the tyrannical government. Even though they are entangled in a miserable predicament from which they can't get out, they don't even have the freedom to move a single finger: persecuted by compatriots, by parents, by spouses, also by relatives and neighbors, they think that if they can take everything, go into a rugged mountain, build an indescribably shabby hut, and live in peace, even for two or three years, that alone will make them happy.

Let me give you one or two examples of such suffering.

A young woman from a certain noble family heard about the Christian teaching when she was fifteen. The maiden desperately wanted to believe, so she ran away from home because she could not practice the religion in her own father's house. While on her way to find other believers, she was kidnapped by a pagan on the road, and she was forced to become his wife. She lived in the house of her kidnapper for twelve years, but she could not tell her parents or any of her companions.

She was always contemplating escaping again, but she did not know where to run to find refuge, and she was also in danger of falling into the hands of a second kidnapper if she ever ran away.

By chance, a Christian overheard a pagan friend talking about this woman. So, masquerading as her relative, he went to find her, brought her various gifts, and gave her some books so that she could learn Christian doctrine and prayers. But there is no way for the woman to receive the sacraments.

I also saw another woman named Anna³⁹, who came from a noble family. She had been confined to a house of strict pagans for 19 years, where she had no contact with believers, and she thus remained without the sacraments. Finally, this year the woman was able to pass her news on to a believer who was her relative. This Christian had the opportunity to listen to her and speak to her, and he came to me when I was in a Christian village 50 li from Anna's house. He told me how eagerly Anna was longing to see me, how fervent she was, and how miserable in the totally pagan house. In a place where the whole village venerates all kinds of superstitions, she had never neglected the duties of a believer for all those years. She constantly longed to receive the sacraments, at every moment, and she prayed and begged God to send her a priest. Anna tried to comfort herself in her loneliness, and as she sometimes picked up a small piece of cloth produced in Europe and looked at it, she would think of Europe and the missionary priests. She comforted herself as she said, "As these goods have been transported from Europe, missionary priests will come from Europe someday."

When I heard this, I was so moved that I couldn't stand it. Although there seemed to be no possibility of getting close to this faithful sister and giving her the sacraments, I completely relied on God's mercy and trusted Anna's sincerity. I hoped that our Dear Lord and the Virgin Mary would at last have pity on Anna's so desperate pleading, that they would

³⁹ Anna: It can be assumed that she is the sister of the 1801 martyr Jeong Yak-jong (Augustine), the daughter-in-law of the Minister Chae Je-gong, who appears in the records of Bishop Daveluy but it is difficult to be certain as there are many differences in the records of Father Choe Yang-eop. According to the previous record, she became a widow at the age of 16, and having entered the Catholic Church afterwards, she died after receiving the sacrament from Father Choe Yang-eop around 1851.

show me how to administer Confession and Holy Communion to their maidservant who was so faithful.

So I took the believer who told me Anna's story, together with the Eucharist, our only Consolation in this world, and rushed to the village where Anna lived. The whole village was pagan, and all her family were also pagans. In other words, there was no suitable place to use as a confessional, and there was nowhere to enshrine the Eucharist. I sat in the shade of a tree by the river and waited, as if I was tired from walking on the road and was taking a short break to rest and escape the scorching sun. Meanwhile, I sent the believer who had accompanied me to see if he could find a place where I could meet her. When the believer entered Anna's house, all the men had gone out to the fields, and there were no adults in the house, Anna was alone with her daughter and several younger children. The believer brought me her written examination of conscience. I read it where I was and immediately went into Anna's house, summoned her to the outer living room, quickly absolved her and she received the Sacrament, and then I immediately went away. I came out with a joyful heart and gave thanks to God.

As you can see, we have no freedom to practice our holy religion. Everywhere there is poverty, everywhere there is struggle. We are always terrified, as if we are committing an exceedingly great crime, and people openly hate us and despise us as vicious criminals. If anyone accepts the faith, immediately the whole family, their relatives and neighbors, rise up like bees and attack them, and they curse them as the most immoral among humans. They torture them in all sorts of ways. In the end, they drive them far away and never allow them to set foot among their people again.

In particular, the nobles persecute people more fiercely when someone accepts the faith, for if it be publicly known that any one of a family is a Christian, the whole family is marked by the infamy of it, as well as losing the nobility in which they place all their glory and hope. This has become a great stumbling block for many believers. For when the opportunity comes, they prefer to enjoy their vain titles rather than to seek their glory in the Cross and reproaches of Christ. In particular, when people reach a certain rank, the scandal becomes harder to bear.

A neophyte was recently promoted to a fifth-ranking official position by the influence of his friends, although he had never worked hard for this promotion. (and it often happens that honors are obtained by kinsmen and friends without proper merits, but if they are conferred in any way, they must always be accepted. If you decline, you may be thoroughly humiliated or even risk being killed.) Now this neophyte is in great danger of losing his faith. Before long, that person will be appointed a magistrate in some province or large city. But if he accepts the position, he will not be able to fulfill it without frequent participation in superstitious rituals. And he will be condemned as a traitor if he does not accept the office. In doing so, he himself is in danger of dying and his entire family is in danger of being embroiled in the greatest tribulation.

The plight of noble women is even worse. Women can't even step outside the door of their home. Women should not be seen by anyone except their very close relatives. Showing their face to a man they don't know, even just once, is a great crime. Upon becoming a widow, they must remain unmarried, whether they wish it or not, even if they lose their husband only one day after marriage. If one tries to remarry, she will be dishonored, and not only herself, but also the whole family because of her disgrace. That is why women always come at night to receive the sacraments. And what misery there is in such expeditions!

On one occasion, two women left their house to go to a place where there would be a mission visit. They didn't know the way, and coincidentally, it was a pitch-black night. Shortly after they left the house, they lost their way and wandered all night in rough places

off the road. While they were thus wandering in the dark, heavy rain fell, they were soaked and started to shiver with the cold. They were exhausted and couldn't even walk any longer. Then the two women, a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law, sat down and kept warm by embracing each other. They finally managed to find their way to the place at dawn, it was only a league from their home.

So long as they can receive the sacraments despite these hardships, they feel fortunate. But many, controlled by pagan parents or husbands, usually have no way of coming to receive the sacraments. That is why they always burn with a longing for the sacraments. When will it be possible to sate the souls so hungry for heavenly food? It is a great grace for them to see the priest's face even once. They often walk for two or three days in order to receive such a grace more often. We always have to be very strict in order to prevent the faithful from rushing in large groups⁴⁰ to see the priest or to take part in the Holy Mass. No matter how much we threaten to punish believers for violating this command, they are not afraid of punishment. In this regard, believers are not very obedient. When we arrive at a village, adults and children, regardless of gender, all change into new clothes and come all together to greet the priest. And if the priest delays even the slightest in receiving their greetings, they are impatient and send the catechist to ask to be allowed to receive the priest's blessing.

When we leave, from the moment we change into our travelling clothes, the entire place becomes a sea of tears, full of sighs. Some grab my sleeves as if to hold me back, others wet the hem of my robe with tears or try to leave a mark of their affection on my collar. They follow me and won't go back and watch me until I'm far away and out of sight. Sometimes they climb up the hillside to see me leaving for a longer period of time.

Once I had to go from one Christian village to another. Believers who lived near the road I was to take came and begged me to stop by their village for a while. I was moved by their pleas and promised to grant their wishes. When we arrived at their village, we saw that all the believers living in the vicinity had gathered together and were rejoicing exceedingly. One of them had come from one and a half leagues away. When that man heard that I was passing by, he left his house, took his wife and a son of about 10 years old, and came to see me, passing over the rough mountains with no roads.

Oh! If another Saint Francis Xavier or Saint Bernard appeared here, with what enthusiasm would they be welcomed by those in need!

There's another problem that really breaks my heart. There are many women who, with ardent zeal, wish to remain as virgins, wanting to serve God more purely and more fervently. But the laws and customs of this country offer no refuge or defense for the virtue of such angelic chastity. The Korean people denounce virginity as impiety. They spurn chastity as purely deceptive hypocrisy. Christians are regarded as rebels, anyone can persecute them at will, and even the lowliest people persecute them.

Whence it is evident that there is a danger to such persons. For if they do not have husbands, they may be kidnapped by the pagans, with great danger for their salvation; so it happens that the preachers of virginity, on the other hand, become the advisors and teachers of marriage.

Let me tell you a story that might better explain what I have just said.

There was a maiden named Barbara, the youngest daughter with eight older brothers. All of her other brothers died, leaving only her two older brothers. At the age of seven she learned how to read, and from then on she determined to keep her virginity. One day her

⁴⁰ In the 'Leaders' Rules' promulgated during the persecution period, there is a stipulation that no matter how large and excellent a Christian village is, more than 40 people should not gather in a day.

sister-in-law was making a dress and said to her. "I am preparing this dress for you to wear on your wedding day." When Barbara heard this, she went to a more private place and weeping bitterly, refused to be comforted except after her mother had promised that she would never marry.

But when she was in her eleventh year, she left a message written on a wall, and taking two books and some rice, together with one of her comrades of her age, went by night secretly up into the mountains. In the morning, when her parents could not find their daughter, they read on the wall the long message written by Barbara's hand. "My dearest parents, she had written, do not consider me as your offspring, but consider me as a daughter of the Blessed Virgin: the life of this world is short, vanity of vanities and all. We can do nothing by ourselves, but we can do all things through God; God will never abandon those who trust in him. Do not search where I have gone, or what I will do." After searching everywhere, on the third day they found Barbara in a cave: the place was nearly inaccessible, merely the haunt of wild animals. Barbara, a child of ten, was peacefully reading her books in that cave, while entreating and teaching her companion, exhorting her to be of firm mind. She went out from time to time to dig up some roots for food. She enjoyed every pleasure in that desert.

When her brother, the disturber of such peace, approached, she was more terrified than if she had seen a tiger. She did everything she could to be left in her desired paradise. She urged, she prayed, she threatened, she used all the strength of her body to repel the abductor. At length she was conquered, conquered by strength, not in spirit, and escorted to her father's house. "What is this," cried her mother: "How are you so infatuated? You are plainly deceived by the devil. You are a little child, so how are you not afraid of tigers, or of suffering hunger?" "Don't be troubled, Mother," Barbara replied: "The Lord will not abandon those who trust in him."

After that she fasted regularly twice a week, and abstained altogether from meat, fish, and the like; she took only one meal every day during Lent. The spirit of prayer never left her; Whether she was working at home, or laboring in the fields, she was always in prayer. She memorized the whole manual of Christians, which in Korea is not short, and the catechism⁴¹, a compendium of Christian doctrine, with the lives of Saint Barbara, SS. Peter and Paul, as well as the lives of many of the Korean martyrs, and other things written by Koreans in the Korean script in an elegant and pious language.

No one ever saw or heard Barbara get angry or impatient. And exclamations such as, "Oh, it's hot, it's cold, or what wind, or what rain!" never emerged from her lips. As for her parents, it was never necessary for them to command, advise, or direct her to do anything, be it religious or secular.

Her mother kept trying to curb Barbara's excessive zeal and her excessive physical exertions, but then she would say, "Time is short. Therefore, I should work while I still have time. This body will soon become food for worms. What's the point of sparing the body? It has to work to the full as long as it lives." Even when she was ill, she changed nothing in her practices of piety and mortification. Even when she was ill with tertian fever, she never took to her bed. When her mother rebuked her for abusing her body so much, she would reply, "We cannot do anything on our own, but with God we can do everything."

⁴¹ The old catechism was in Q&A form. Handwritten, Baptism, Holy Communion, Confession, and Confirmation were the basic elements. A version in Chinese characters was first used. Then, in 1864, the first official catechism of the Korean church, 'Seonggyo Catechism,' was published in woodcut. Prior to this, Father Choe Yang-eop participated in the translation and compilation.

No one could understand how she could go on living while constantly mortifying and exhausting her body with such hardship, and yet she grew all the more corpulent and more beautiful.

She was admitted to her first Confession when she was fourteen because she had never had a chance to meet a confessor before that. Then she told the confessor her resolve to keep her virginity. The confessor, explaining the dangers of such a position, discouraged the plan and even ordered her to change her resolution and marry.

The following year, she made another confession to the same confessor and told him that she still had the same resolve, then the priest explained again why she needed to change her resolve, giving her the choice: if she wanted to receive the Sacraments, she should change her resolve; otherwise, she should abstain from receiving the Sacraments.

Barbara received the Sacraments without fully respecting the conditions set forth by the priest and it was only after later reflecting on the options offered by the confessor that she understood and wept bitterly.

When Barbara was sixteen, a pagan sought her in marriage. After using all legal means the pagan finally decided to take her by force. Barbara's parents and older brothers were humiliated by all sorts of slander and torment. In this extreme anguish they attacked the maiden's purpose in every way, saying that the divine will was manifestly that she should marry; they urged her to agree to enter into a marriage with a young Christian neighbor: but to no avail. Rather, Barbara denounced her father and brothers for being so timid. "If you, my brothers, are unable or unwilling to protect me from the insults of those pagans, leave me alone. I will go where I like and God will be with me." One day, when pagans came to kidnap her, Barbara fled into the mountains and hid in the bushes. When the kidnapers could not find her, they began to vent their anger against her father and brothers. An older brother who could not stand their abusive language and behavior, set out to find Barbara. The older brother called out to Barbara loudly all night long. Barbara knew very well that it was her brother's voice, but did not dare answer from her hiding place because she was afraid that her brother would betray her. The next morning, the brother called Barbara again and went out to find her. Barbara came out of hiding and comforted her brother. He had been worried all night that she might have been caught and eaten by a tiger, but when Barbara appeared in front of him, her brother wept over her for joy. Barbara, drenched in dew, was led by her brother before her troubled mother. She said cheerfully with a bright expression, "Why are you worried about me, Mother? I will be protected by God's goodness, and everything will be all right."

After that, Barbara sought safety by going further into the mountains. Eventually she abandoned everything and moved to another region with her parents and brothers.

After all these persecutions, she had to go through more terrifying trials, but it only strengthened her resolve.

She was deprived of the sacraments three times, then for the fourth time. The bishop called her several times. He counseled, and threatened, and finally imposed a sacramental prohibition on her parents.

Despite all these obstacles, Barbara did not waver. Day by day she became more ardent and more penitent, shedding tears over her pitiful condition, sobbed and wept bitterly, multiplying her mortifications from day to day. She would leave the house alone in the evenings, not afraid to meet tigers, and would go to a secluded stream and spend the night in prayer alone.

I was passing by there after visiting some of the Christians and I was going to rest for a while before beginning my mission again at my catechist Leo's house, which was only a mile or so from where Barbara lived. As soon as she heard that I had arrived, she immediately rushed to see me with joy. Then she stayed at Leo's house to attend to me. But

after seeing me, she thought of nothing other than how to receive the Sacrament. But morally speaking, it was impossible. I was outside my missionary area there, so did not have jurisdiction over her. Moreover, she was under the Bishop's ban.

Barbara (who heard my explanation) stayed awake all night, unable to sleep. She examined her conscience and showed her companions her text, asking, "How can I obtain forgiveness for my sins?" and lamented. She also envied a friend who was ill, saying, "If I were like you, the priest would surely give me the sacrament!"

Then she stayed up all night in prayer and weeping. As the day dawned, she suddenly began to moan. She who, the previous day, had been running around and doing hard work, today lay in bed in unbearable pain. So I had no choice but to administer the sacrament of Confession to her on that day, and give her Communion the next day.

Barbara continued to call on the names of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Virgin Mary, incessantly in the midst of great suffering. The people around her considered her death imminent and encouraged her to receive the last rites. But she replied that she was not in a hurry yet, and asked to be taken home.

A day later, I sent a catechist to see her and to urge her to receive the last sacraments. Again she postponed it. Finally, that night, she asked her companions to call me. However, as they were setting forth, they reckoned that it was not yet time to bring the priest, it was not urgent, she was not on the point of dying, and would surely survive until daybreak. She said, "I know full well that it will be very troublesome for the Father if he has to walk along such a rough road on such a dark night to reach me, I am very sorry to cause him so much inconvenience. However, I urgently need to see him, so don't delay any further but for the love of God go and summon him."

I went, administered the sacraments of Penance, Extreme Unction, and said a Mass of the Blessed Virgin for the dying. In face of death, she asked to be washed, changed into new clothes, and taken to the oratory, where she received the Sacred Viaticum kneeling. Barbara labored all that day, but her mind was not at all clouded. She affirmed that she had prayed to God that He would keep her mind clear that day so that she might better prepare for death.

God had indeed granted her a much greater clarity of understanding. She was always in prayer, whether sitting or lying down. She said that the only problem was that she was still not grateful enough for the special graces that God and the Blessed Virgin had bestowed upon her.

To those who asked her what she wanted to do first if her health was restored, she replied, "The only way I desire to be freed from this illness is that I should go to the Father so that I may give him the thanks I owe to him." As a last farewell, I said, "After your death I will offer Masses for the repose of your soul; in return please also remember me before our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin." She promised to do so with an expression that was calm and serene.

As her breath was failing, and the doctors were applying moxibustion and acupuncture, Barbara said, "I'm about to die, so what's the use of all this fuss?" Those who were around urged her to be patient, that all this was for the holy wounds of Jesus Christ. She replied that she would gladly endure this suffering if it was for Jesus Christ. Then she kept her eyes fixed on the crucifix, and endured quietly all the acupuncture and moxibustion that before she had not accepted.

She comforted her grieving parents with many words useful for salvation and recited the Hail Mary. Then she went near the door and after staying with her arms resting on the threshold for a while, fell to the ground and died at about 6:00 p.m. on September 23, 1850. She was eighteen years old.

Even after Barbara's death, I still recall her face and will never forget her beauty and devotion. She died four days after falling ill. Now it is ten days since Barbara died, and still the tears have not dried on our faces, neither have our praises left our mouths. Over many years, I have never felt such a sense of sadness and of divine love as I feel from Barbara's death. "She was taken, lest wickedness mar her intellect, or lies change her sense; what she accomplished in a short time would have sufficed for a longer time (Wisdom 4:11,13)." No matter what she did, she was loved by everyone, she inspired everyone with piety and Christian doctrine. Behold how distressed we are, when we are compelled to turn such pure souls from such a pleasant and laudable purpose, even through the denial of the sacraments!

I haven't been able to rest since I came to Korea. I only stayed in the same house for one month, in July. I am always travelling. I have walked nearly 5000 li since January so far, not including the journey from China to Seoul. In these journeys and hard work, by the grace of God, I have always been in good health.

I have visited 3,815 Christians, for 2,401 of whom I celebrated the Sacrament of Confession and 1,764 received Communion. 181 adults were baptized, and 94 babies, and ceremonies regularizing baptisms by lay people were held for 316 people. 278 people were admitted as catechumens, and 455 dying pagan babies on the point of death were baptized.

Almost all of the believers live far away from the pagans in rugged mountains that pagans cannot cultivate. Almost all of them are well versed in doctrine and live by diligently obeying Christian laws. However, others remain at home in the plains, and those who live among acquaintances and pagans are generally ignorant and tepid. So, more zealous believers give up everything, cut off all ties with the flesh and the world, go into the mountains, and live by planting tobacco and millet. But even in the mountains, they cannot stay long without becoming known to the pagans, and suffer persecution.

There are many people who are ready to embrace the Christian religion, but they are prevented on account of the resulting extreme hardship.

In particular, there are many women who are ready to accept the faith, but are unable to find a way to do so. If they stay in their own home with their family, they cannot practice the Christian religion, and if they leave home, they have no refuge and run the risk of being captured by pagans. So, during the persecution and famine of 1839, many fled their homes and wandered begging, only to become the concubines or servants of pagans.

Ah! What grief when I hear the stories of so many poor women. After the persecution in 1839, one of our religion's most hostile enemies wrote a mass of falsehoods against the Christians, published them in the name of the government⁴², and distributed them to every part of Korea to incite everyone's fury against Christians, and to arouse indignation and hostility toward the French. But no one dared to contradict such falsehoods, no one will refute so many calumnies for fear of the persecutors. If anyone published such a contradiction, people would immediately try to find out who wrote it and Christians will wrongly be slaughtered as rebels.

When the French warship was shipwrecked at Gogunsan Islands, they promised that they would definitely come back the next year, but three years have passed and there is still no news. For this reason, the Koreans regard the French as mere bluffers with nothing to fear.

The Korean government is now increasingly wretched as it is growing ever weaker day by day, shaken by numerous factions. The former king died at the young age of 23 years

⁴² This seems to be referring to the way that Kim Jeong-won, who was a government official in the year following the Gihae Persecution of 1839, published a Cheoksaso (a proposal to the king) that rejected Catholicism.

old, due to unrestrained drinking and self-indulgence. The new king⁴³ is a man who lived in exile in Ganghwa Island before he ascended to the throne⁴⁴. The new king's grandmother and great-great-grandmother were killed as Christian martyrs⁴⁵. The new king's father was not a believer, but was killed for following the Christian religion while his older brother was denounced and killed as a rebel and according to what people say, one chosen by the grandmother of the deceased king⁴⁶ now reigns, but is no true king, and is in great danger of losing the kingdom, or of losing his life prematurely, on account of the enmity which incessantly tears apart the ministers of the kingdom, against whom the royal authority cannot prevail. These men constantly deceive one another, and inflict death upon the king by their deceit and cunning devices.

At present in Korea there is no means of preventing such crimes and settling such disorders. In a pitiful manner, the people are being forced to pay various tributes and taxes: magistrates, courtiers, satellites, and nobles spare nothing: the poor are laboring all year long, and that is scarcely enough to cover everything.

But while I narrate these things, I myself am not sufficient: so here I will end, therefore, and seek some remedy to relieve these miseries; I will omit the things which I do not hope to solve; but I am looking for one remedy, a way to purify insalubrious water. Perhaps the wise French will be able to provide it. There are many flat and hilly places which are good for people to inhabit, but their inhabitants are afflicted by many diseases such as delirium, vomiting of blood, chronic diseases, and other ailments. If there is any remedy for insalubrious water, I ask for a clear indication.

I also have another request: which is the greatest consolation for my wretched Christians: they are very eager for sacred objects, and would easily give whatever they have, and would even sell all their belongings, for pictures, crucifixes, and medals. I could, without great difficulty, collect money from them for the purchase of such objects, but the difficulty lies in transmitting it: if it were silver, it would be easy enough, but silver is unfamiliar in Korea.

Therefore, Father, please obtain some crucifixes, both large and small, medals, and images of the Blessed Virgin, Our Lord Jesus Christ, of Saints Joseph, John the Baptist, the Apostles, Doctors, and of other Saints who are named in the Litany of Saints. But these objects should be well and solidly made. I will be able to send the price in future when there is an opportunity: so please tell me the cost so that I can pay the value.

Father Daveluy is still able to do nothing. The Bishop and I alone visit the Christians. So far we've been pretty much left in peace. There is no general persecution, although partial persecutions never cease.

⁴³ Cheoljong (1831-1863) ascended the throne in 1849 at the age of 18.

⁴⁴ King Cheoljong (aka the Ganghwa boy) was exiled to Ganghwa Island due to the death of his half-brother Prince Hoepyeong in 1844. While living there, he worked as a farmer or woodcutter.

⁴⁵ Cheoljong's grandfather, Prince Euneon Yi In, his wife Mary Song, and daughter-in-law Mary were executed during the Sinyu Persecution in 1801. Therefore, in the above content, 'grandmother and great-grandmother of King Cheoljong' should be changed to 'the aunt (Mary Shin) and grandmother (Mary Song)' of King Cheoljong, and 'the father of King Cheoljong' should be changed to 'grandfather of King Cheoljong (Prince Euneon Yi In)'. The person in this family who was murdered (1786) as a traitor was Prince Sanggye Yi Dam, the uncle of Cheoljong, the son of Yi In and husband of Mary Shin. Father Choe Yang-eop corrected and recorded correctly the genealogy of the royal family in the Letter of October 15, 1851 found below.

⁴⁶ Queen Dowager Sunwon, Sunjo's Queen, the grandmother of King Heonjong, from the Andong Kim clan. After Cheoljong's accession to the throne in 1849, she acted as Queen Mother and Regent until 1852.

May the Dear Lord grant that at length these persecutors of his holy name may come to the knowledge of the truth, and that, united in Christ's fold, we may serve the Lord our God with a willing and joyful spirit.

Finally, I send many thanks and greetings to all the most beloved and most reverend Fathers in Christ, and I ask that you often recall the memory of all us poor wretches.

Your very weak servant Thomas Choe

Letter 8

Place where written: Jeolgol⁴⁷

Date when written: October 15, 1851

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend Father Legrégeois

This is the second letter I write to you from Korea. In February, I was very happy to receive your letter dated May 10, 1850 which gave me great consolation. I hope that you have received my letter? If only the couriers would bring us news about the fathers every month! Are all the beloved fathers safe and are they all dwelling in peace? Of course I'm eager to know. Our poor Korean mission is doing well in its own way by the mercy of God, who is good, enjoying relative peace and not disturbed by a general persecution.

This year I shall be very dull and brief; I can find nothing worth writing about. But rather than remain completely silent, I will write something. This year, I started my annual visitation tour earlier than last year; I began in October and completed the tour of my entire jurisdiction within eight months. Shortly after setting out on the mission, I almost came to the end of my tour. There was a woman at a certain inn who had quarreled with her husband; wishing to get rid of her odious husband, she reported that he had welcomed a dozen Europeans. Immediately the woman and her husband were arrested and imprisoned.

Thus, a rumor spread that secret emissaries had been sent everywhere to arrest the supposed Europeans and there was general alarm that a severe persecution would arise, so the Most Illustrious Bishop was forced to stop his visitation and withdraw to a safer place.

But the vain rumors subsided after a while, and the great fear was dissipated, so that I was able to complete my visitation in peace with the excellent protection of God, nor did those Satans meet me, who in the previous year so disturbed me that I was unable to visit two Christian villages.

Father Daveluy is still unwell, and he cannot visit many Christian villages. So I am carrying too heavy a burden on my weak shoulders. Therefore, I have been too busy to carry out my regular duties, with no time to preach sermons and instruct the believers, nourishing them. My Christians in the five provinces are scattered all over the famous Korean Alps across horrible mountains, in almost inaccessible valleys, miles apart. Sometimes, after three or four days walking along very rough roads I find only forty or fifty Christians.

There are 127 such Christian villages, and the total number of those with the name of Christian is 5,936. Even if there are forty to fifty confessions in a single place, they must all be heard within one day. On the other hand, even in a place where there are only two or three confessions, I have to stay overnight because Mass must be celebrated the next day so that they can receive Communion.

Sometimes, however, I have to arrive at a village at night and after everything has been done, I have to get away before daylight. In one place there were only two houses, in one of which a part of the family were Christian, and in the other all were pagans; there were just three believers, one man and two women. The man was able to leave the house and go to receive the sacraments. However, it had been many years since the two women received the

⁴⁷ Jeolgol (Tselcol in Latin). This is presumed to be the place known as Jeolgol in Yongdeok-ri, Baekgok-myeon, Jincheon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do.

sacraments because they were not allowed to go outside of the house, as they were nobles. So I had to go to them, but it wasn't easy.

However, they devised a scheme to make it happen. A plausible business proposal was sent to the head of the pagan household and once he was away, they sent, asking me to come. When I arrived, they asked the women of another pagan house to rent them the house for just one day, in order to receive a guest. Once the pagans had all left, they arranged the house as a temporary oratory, and in the middle of the night, while all the pagans were asleep, they gathered and were restored by the sacraments.

Thus, when we arrange our affairs, we tell the unbelievers many lies, not out of malice, but out of necessity. Otherwise we would have to give up the Christian religion at once or all be led to martyrdom immediately.

That is why believers live completely incognito. If they are recognized, they are immediately taken to prison. Therefore, it is very difficult to evangelize non-believers. They almost never hear about Christian doctrine through preaching by Christians, even less by priests, but usually through some rumor, or they are persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion by some deed, after which they approach the faithful and seek to be instructed and admitted to their society.

Thus a very high-ranking nobleman named Jo was converted this year. He had heard something about the Christian religion, but thought it was very wicked and rebellious. However, not far from his village, Christians were living in a mountain valley called Menghemok⁴⁸. The nobleman wanted to live in the valley near the Christians, so he came to build a house to cultivate the mountain.

At that time, it so happened that the entire village burned down. Mr. Jo immediately went to comfort them for such a calamity, but seeing them not at all saddened, he was amazed at the way they remained cheerful after such a misfortune, and very much wanted to know the cause. They said all kinds of things, but none convinced him, so that they were at length compelled to tell the truth, that it was because they were Christians, and they believed that every kind of favorable or distressing event occurred through the will of God, so that they always depended on the goodness of God and adored His most wise Providence.

He was greatly delighted on hearing this and wanted with all his heart to embrace such a religion; he learned the prayers and the catechism, and began to practice the Christian laws. However, he faced many obstacles. He had the tablets of his ancestors, and he had many relatives and acquaintances. He had to leave all this, which might have very negative consequences. Nevertheless, he did not waver, determined as he was to despise everything and serve God alone. He began with the most important task. He sent away his whole family to various places using various excuses, so that he was left alone in the house built in the valley. And in the middle of the night, taking some Christians, he burned the house entirely, things sacred and profane, giving orders that the pagans should believe that the fire was accidental. Then, as though he had become mad because of that, he renounced all civil society, and declared that in future he would be civilly dead, and therefore all ought to regard him as dead.

When I went to that Christian village I baptized Mr. Jo and gave him the name Paul, telling him that just as the blessed apostle Paul persecuted the Church at first, but became an apostle and an outstanding teacher of the Gentiles, so he, too, should teach the Christian doctrine to his whole family and as many other people as possible.

⁴⁸ Meonge-mok: Now, Gubyeong-ri, Naesokri-myeon, Boeun-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do, a Christian village where martyrs from 1866 such as Choe Yong-eun (Ambrose) and Yeo Do-seop (John) lived.

Paul had a younger brother, a scholar who was highly regarded by the world and had great hopes of ascending to a high position. He wanted to make his brother a first participant in the faith, so he brought him to the Christians so that they could teach him Christian truth. But the younger brother reckoned himself wise with human wisdom and was not willing to listen to and understand true wisdom. He refused to embrace the known truth, but endeavored to pervert it by his own fallacious and evasive arguments; instead, he devoted himself solely to turning Paul away from the faith but

since Paul was the eldest son, whom he was obliged to venerate in the place of his father by the law of birthright, he could not act violently against him; he therefore employed a force that was stronger because it was secret. He took to his bed, declaring that he would eat nothing, and would drink nothing, unless his brother swore that he would no longer profess the Christian sect; and thus he fasted for eight days until he was at death's door.

In this extreme situation, Paul approached and asked why he was doing such a foolish thing? Don't you want me to go to Meonge-mok? Then I won't go there. Stay calm and take the necessary food, so that you may be restored to life.

The impious brother recovered, but when he realized that he had gained nothing by his former method, he turned against the Christians through whom Paul had embraced the faith and threatened them with extreme evils, saying that he would call the satellites to arrest them and take them to prison. As a result, the farm which they had begun was destroyed, and once the oratory had been destroyed, those Christians fled to other places, and were brought into great misery.

Thus trivial causes lead to great upset and every day we have greater anguish, for the pagans daily hear about Christianity more clearly, and more easily suspect Christians; they hear only defamatory things and calumnies from evil men, but they never hear the truth: ordinarily the stories told among the pagans are of the capture, imprisonment, punishment, death, and destruction of Christians, about their very poor manner of living, always hiding in the mountains, in uninhabited valleys, in secret; their alienation from all public society, their abandonment of civil sacrifices and household rituals, their abandonment and forgetfulness of parents, brothers, relations etc. etc.

Exchanging such words, every day they conceive greater hatred and contempt. And if, unfortunately, some Christians become known to them, they set about harassing them in all sorts of ways and think that it is impious and unworthy to leave them free from their atrocities.

Oh, if in addition to these persecutions a widespread famine were to strike, how would we be able to behold the sufferings of these my poor brethren? So many died of hunger and cold during the persecution of 1839. Although 10 years have passed since then, traces of that disaster still remain. When I hear stories of what they went through at that time, my heart breaks with compassion. In Korea, whatever laws, customs and morals there are seem to be composed solely to prevent the observance of Christian law. However, there are two things that miraculously favor us in our current circumstances: the manner of dressing themselves and the different circumstances of those who are in mourning, and the Korean alphabet. For three years after the loss of a parent, they act as the greatest penitents: they may not be involved in any public event or festival, except for those which pertain to the funeral and offerings; they may not indulge in any pleasures, they wear hats that cover the whole head to the shoulders, and carry a veil supported by sticks by which they obscure the mouth, even the nose and the eyes. This custom almost seems invented as a means allowing us to bring in the European fathers. Without it, it would be impossible for them to stay in Korea.

The letters of the alphabet, consisting of fourteen consonants and ten vowels, are very easy, usually mastered by children under the age of ten. These letters make up for the

lack of preachers and pastors, for by this means even in uncultivated parts the faithful receive Christian doctrine and the admonitions of salvation⁴⁹.

At present, the government is completely silent about Christians, having no time to think about anything else, being so taken up with internal affairs. They are constantly sending embassies to China. The last embassy was to obtain from the Emperor a document clearing the present King's family of accusations of being Christian and rebels⁵⁰. For the king who is now reigning, aged nineteen⁵¹, is of royal lineage, but from a very infamous line.

In the first general persecution of the year 1801, the enemies of the Christian religion, in order to more easily destroy some Christians, who, being wiser and more acceptable to the king than themselves, and were daily becoming more powerful, spread an utterly false calumny that the Christians wanted to expel the legitimate king and to establish another, by the name of Yi In.

This was the brother of the king then reigning (Sunjo) and grandfather of the king now occupying the throne (Cheoljong): he was by no means a Christian, only his wife (Mary Song) and daughter-in-law (Mary Shin) professed the faith. Then Yi In was put to death, together with his wife and daughter-in-law, as heads of the Christians and the rebels, while the rest of the family was sent into exile on the island of Ganghwa. After that, the family was always treated badly, torn apart by the vilest calumnies: some sons were sentenced to death, and others reduced to extreme misery. The present king was called hunter, and served his relatives, went to the markets, performed the duties of the vilest slave, and almost daily received blows from his hard master, but then, when the king died, the military came to make him king. Since the foundation of the Kingdom of Korea, no similar case can be found in history. It was necessary, moreover, to clear the royal family from such infamous accusations; therefore they sent to the emperor of China to entreat him that he would eradicate these scandals by imperial authority, and bestow upon him honor and dignity.

In this supplication they accused the Christian religion of being most false, most depraved, of overturning all reason, rectitude, and honesty. The new monarch of China replied that he knew nothing about the family, but as demanded, by his supreme authority, declared that it was free of all infamy and disgrace.

Behold, Father, how these sages of the East play!

This year, for me, there were 3,620 annual confessions and 2,753 communions, 235 repeated confessions; 220 communions;

197 adults were baptized; 229 catechumens admitted, 54 infants were baptized; with 293 supplemental baptismal ceremonies for infants, and 28 for adults; 255 infants of unbelievers were baptized at the point of death.

Oh, if even that little freedom was given to us that they have in China, how many we could baptize daily! How many miserable souls are now groaning over their pitiful destiny, knowing the truth, but finding no way of following it.

Here is one example: there was a man named Oh in the city of Eonyang in the province of Gyeongsang, a powerful enough official: his brother was converted and became a Christian, and he was called Andrew. When Oh learned that his brother had become a

⁴⁹ It is thought that if (and it is most uncertain) Father Choe Yang-eop wrote and widely disseminated the "Cheonju Gasa" which can be considered a catechism in Korean lyric form, it would have been because he was well aware of the usefulness of Hangeul.

⁵⁰ An envoy (Park Hoesu) was dispatched to the Qing court in July 1849 to request the posthumous name and the recognition of the succession.

⁵¹ In 1851 the King was 20.

Christian, he was inflamed with extreme indignation, he drew a sword, seized Andrew and, threatening to kill him at that very moment, he ordered him to deny the Christian sect.

Andrew, by no means terrified, held out his neck for his head to be struck off. Frightened by such constancy, the ungodly brother withdrew, while the cruel man's wife was convinced of the truth of Christian doctrine, which gave such magnanimity, and wished with all her heart to embrace it. But alas, she has no means of observing it! In her house it is altogether impossible, nor can she leave it; whence she only languishes in her desires.

Moreover, there are innumerable persons of this kind; if they were given just a little freedom, they would enter the fold of Christ with a willing and joyful spirit.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, and pour out the rains of your mercies upon us, and water our dry and thirsty lands with your wholesome waters.

Here also I want to refer you to the letter which the Korean government sent to Captain Lapierre⁵² as a response to the letter from Captain Cécille; I don't know if it's entirely the same. But this is what the government made public:

One year ago (in 1846), a man from the island of Oeyeondo, which is under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Korea, brought us a letter⁵³ saying it was sent by a foreign ship: we were exceedingly surprised, and upon opening the letter, we learned that it was a letter which a lord of your kingdom (Cécille) had written to our ministers.

It contained the following:

‘Three very grave men of our kingdom, Imbert⁵⁴, Chastan⁵⁵, and Maubant⁵⁶, were unhappily slain by you: whence we come to inquire of you why you have slain them. You will say, perhaps, that by your law it is forbidden to foreigners to enter your lands; whence those three were condemned on account of their transgression of this law. This may be so, but if ever anyone from China, Manchuria or Japan enters Korea, you simply send them back to their own land, you would not venture to kill them; Why, then, did you treat those three men in that way, and not as if they were Chinese, Manchurian, or Japanese?’

‘Supposing that they had been arrested for murder, arson, or other similar crimes in your land, it would have been just for them to deserve such a punishment, and the matter would be passed over in silence, but since altogether innocent people have been unjustly condemned, you have inflicted the gravest injury upon our country of France.’

⁵² The response of the Korean government to Captain Lapierre is included in the 6th volume of the Heonjong jogisa (Record of the reign of Heonjong) preserved in the Gyujanggak archive, in the text for the 8th month of Jeongmi (the 13th year of King Heonjong, 1847).

⁵³ Captain Cécille's letter dated May 8, 1846 is described above (see Father Choe Yang-eop's letter dated September 30, 1847).

⁵⁴ Laurent M. J. Imbert (1796-1839): one of the 103 saints of Korea, Bishop. Second head of the Korean Apostolic Vicariate. After working in China as a missionary of the Foreign Missions Society, he was appointed Apostolic Vicar of Korea. He was consecrated bishop in China on May 14, 1837 and entered Korea on December 18, 1837. After serving for about 1 year and 10 months he was martyred during the 1839 Gihae persecution.

⁵⁵ Jacques H. Chastan (1803-1839): one of the 103 saints of Korea. He entered Korea on December 31, 1836 as a missionary of the Foreign Missions Society, and served for about two years and nine months before being martyred during the 1839 Gihae Persecution.

⁵⁶ Pierre P. Maubant (1803-1839): one of the 103 saints of Korea. A priest of the Foreign Missions Society, he was the first French missionary to enter Korea, on January 13, 1836. He served for about 3 years and 8 months before being martyred during the 1839 Gihae Persecution.

To these charges we will answer clearly: In the year of Gihae (1839) there were strangers, we do not know when they were introduced among us, clothed according to our customs, and speaking our language, who walked by night and slept by day, concealing their faces, hiding their steps, together with most impious rebels, united in a word with the most wicked people. At length they were captured and put to the question, and on being interrogated, one answered that he was called Peter Lo, and the other James Jeong. Are they the people of whom your letter speaks? Under questioning they did not declare that they were French; but even if they had confessed that they were from your kingdom, since we only now hear of your nation, so how could we know what sort of people you are and not apply our law which prohibits clandestine entry? And indeed, since the manner of their behavior in changing their clothing and names shows their bad will in entering our land, they should not be compared with those who by chance land here through shipwreck.

Our kingdom is surrounded by the sea; therefore foreigners are often cast onto our shores by the winds, but even if they are unknown, when in need we raise them up, we clothe and feed them; if, therefore, your people had been shipwrecked here, why would we have treated them differently than those from China, Manchuria, or Japan?

Then when you say that we have slain your countrymen without legitimate cause, and have inflicted a grievous injury upon you, we are all the more surprised: we do not know how many thousands of leagues Europe and Korea are distant from one another; we communicate neither by writing nor by transport; what, then, can be the cause or reason, whether gratitude or enmity, that we might wish to inflict injury upon you?

Only consider: if perchance any one of us, entering your country secretly in changed clothing, committed unjust acts, would you leave such a person in peace and silence? And if the Chinese, the Manchurians, or the Japanese, like your people, acted against our laws, should we not punish them according to our law? Once upon a time, when a certain Chinese man⁵⁷ secretly entered our kingdom, we condemned him according to our law, and we heard no complaints from China, for they themselves know our laws well.

Only think: even if we had clearly known them to be your people, since their deeds were worse than murder and arson, we certainly could not have spared them. We were not completely ignorant that you might come this year demanding answers, but last year your letters were delivered without any courtesy (without what formality requires), so you have no right to a reply, nor is it the job of the government of this province. But moreover, since our kingdom is under China, we consult China regarding everything pertaining to other kingdoms; so how could you expect to obtain answers without consultation by us with the Government of China? Certainly that cannot be done; but even if our ministers answer you, there will be no other words than these: so report these words to your commander, and do not be surprised, since we are obliged to write in this way in order to expose the truth.'

In 1847 a small book⁵⁸ was sent by Bishop Ferréol relating certain stories about the Korean martyrs of 1839. The Bishop of Belline had written it using various manuscripts received from the faithful, especially from Charles Hyeon⁵⁹, to whom Bishop Imbert the

⁵⁷ The Chinese priest Father Zhou Wenmo (James), who entered Korea in December 1794 and was martyred during the Sinyu Persecution of 1801.

⁵⁸ 'The Acts of the Martyrs of the Gihae and Byeongo Persecutions (see Father Choe Yang-eop's letter dated April 20, 1847), which was described earlier.

⁵⁹ Hyeon Seok-mun (玄錫文 1797-1846): One of the 103 saints of Korea. Church leader. The younger brother of Saint Hyeon Gyeong-ryeon (玄敬連 Benedicta). He acted as assistant to Father Chastan and after the 1839 persecution, he collected and organized records of the actions of the martyrs to complete the original 'Gihae Diary.' After that, he worked as a church leader and was martyred during the Byeongo persecution in 1846.

martyr had specially entrusted the task of collecting them, and who afterward died as a martyr himself, together with other oral narratives.

They had generally not been eyewitnesses, but when heard, they seemed to them more plausible, so they were included. By the end of that book many acts had been briefly related, while some had even been omitted altogether, the story of which would be no less enjoyable and conveyed a more complete history for the edification of the faithful.

I have not yet applied my mind sufficiently to examine and learn about everything with more precision. But but since, finally heard by the mercy of God, I arrived in the country of my brothers, I could not help paying more attention to the martyrdom of my parents and investigating it more carefully, especially since in the common record nothing was explained clearly about my father and no mention at all was made about my mother.

I had already determined, when I first read in China the manuscript of Bishop Ferréol, to write a more exact report on them to you after I had returned to my homeland. As soon as I entered Korea, I studied to acquire clear ideas but since I was always busy in the sacred ministry, without any period of rest, I could not write anything about this to the fathers; but this year, by God's grace, I finished my yearly visitation earlier, and I have been given some rest.

I will not, therefore, lose the opportunity given to me, and will endeavor to describe as best I can in the most exact way from the exact words heard from the witnesses who lived together with them and were fellows with them in captivity and torture, as well as a few things which pertain to their life before martyrdom, as they had been witnesses, as reported by my brothers, relatives, and neighbors, in order to recount faithfully.

My father was called Francis Choe⁶⁰ and my mother Mary Yi. Francis was born of respectable and wealthy Christian parents. The father of Francis suffered much in the first persecution, before being released to freedom. Conspicuous for his simplicity and piety, with singular provision, he came to the aid of his kinsmen and poor neighbors: he did not allow his slaves to call them and their family lord or mistress, but ordered them to call them by the name of father and mother. On his deathbed he gave three final commands to his sons; to give freely to each other, never to provide guarantees, nor to be matchmakers, always to be inoffensive towards their neighbors.

After the persecution of 1801 and the death of Father James Zhou, there were few members of the Choe family who observed the Christian religion, due to ignorance, wealth, and their pagan frequentations. From his birth Francis was a follower of truth, a lover of uprightness and simplicity, and of a strong character, from his youth he despised the pleasures of the world and he delighted only in hearing and reading the words of Christian doctrine.

Once he was a grown man, he grieved much at the state of his family, and constantly exhorted his parents and brothers to abandon their country and wealth, and to consider their own salvation; seeing that he could make no progress with words, he tried to use stronger methods. He had a mother, three brothers and four sisters, as well as a wife and two sons. Saying nothing to them, after handing a long letter to one boy of the family, to be opened in the house after six days, he secretly fled, in order to find more learned Christians.

When he did not appear again, the brothers of Francis read the letter which was presented by the boy: when it was read, the whole house was filled with tears and groans. Then all the brothers of Francis went out to search for their fugitive brother, whom they

⁶⁰ Choe Gyeong-hwan (1804-1839) was born in Daraegol, Hongju (now Darakgol in Nongam-ri, Hwajeong-myeon, Cheongyang-gun, Chungcheongnam-do) as the third son of Choe In-ju and his wife of the Gyeongju Yi clan. He married Yi Seong-rye (1801-1840) when he was fifteen.

found, and returning home, having formed a family council, they unanimously renounced their country, family, and wealth; and all twenty-five souls emigrated to the capital city.⁶¹

When, after three years, they were recognized by their neighbors as Christians on account of the excessive frequency of visits by Christians, they were in danger of being imprisoned. Then some of their high-ranking friends wished to rescue them from the machinations of the pagans by severely punishing their chief, but they strongly rejected such counsel, since that would mean rendering to their persecutors evil for evil which would be but little conform to Christ; instead, they gladly fled to the mountains⁶², and began to cultivate the land, migrating from mountain to mountain, working the arid land with their bare hands, contented with the hope that, while they had been rich, by voluntarily embracing these privations and difficulties for Christ's sake, they could be seen to be closer to the example of Jesus Christ and the saints.

Francis, therefore, having obtained his wish, was daily more fervent, and although he was nearly illiterate in Chinese characters, by continual meditations and pious readings, he gained so much insight into the divine mysteries, and conversed with such eloquence and outpouring of Christian truth, that even the most educated and learned among the Christians came to hear him, and many most difficult unbelievers were convinced by him.

Whether he labored in the fields, or at home, or was travelling with others on the roads, he always spoke of matters of religion and piety with such simplicity, so much fervor, and with such vigor that all were astonished; not thinking at all about bodily care, not at all about worldly considerations and the concerns of the world, he was an object of mockery for worldly people. When he went to the market, he would purchase whatever was cheaper and more defective than the rest, and to those who criticized him for buying such things, he replied that someone had to buy them, otherwise how would the sellers live?

Just as the crops were ready for harvest, very great rains fell, floods ravaged everything, and when all were groaning in despair at such calamity; Francis, on the other hand, as if noticing nothing, was yet merrier than before; Everyone was astonished. But he said to them: It is truly wonderful; why are you so afflicted, and so cast down? Are not all events sent by God? Do you not believe that all things depend on the providence of God? If, therefore, we lose the harvest by God's ordering, and not by our negligence and fault, why is it that we bear that with difficulty?

At times of famine he relieved the needs of his neighbors by all means available: when he harvested the crops, he selected the best parts, and distributed them to his neighbors. He lived with his brothers in admirable harmony, showed a singular piety toward his mother, and vigilant attention to his servants. Every day, under a constant rule, even on very busy days, he performed pious readings, and recited prayers in common.

He had been appointed catechist in a Christian village, and at the time of the persecution in 1839, when many martyrs died in Seoul, many of the Christians who lived in Seoul were scattered and starving because of the persecution and were unable to collect and bury the bodies of the dead. Francis encouraged the faithful of his village, which was five leagues distant from Seoul, collected alms, went up to Seoul, and buried the bodies of the martyrs. Returning from thence to his house, he devoted himself to preparing himself and his

⁶¹ Choe Gyeong-hwan and his siblings left their hometown of Daraegol in Hongju around 1827 and moved to Nak-dong, Seoul (now a district near Hoehyeon-dong, Jung-gu).

⁶² After leaving Nakdong, Seoul, Choe Gyeong-hwan and his family moved to Gimseong, in Gangwon Province (now Gimhwa-eup, Gimhwa-gun, Gangwon-do, also known as Geumseong) and then to Bupyeong, Gyeonggi-do, before moving to Surisan in Anyang (Duitteumi in Anyang 9-dong, Anyang-si, Gyeonggi-do, now known as Dambae Village).

dependents for martyrdom. He daily gathered together the Christians of his village, and exhorted them with fervent words, encouraging them to undergo martyrdom.

One day, before daylight, satellites were standing at the door, asking for the master of the house, and Francis came out. Where have you come from? He asked and they answered him: We have come from Seoul. But, continued Francis, why are you so slow? We have been waiting a long time for you; we have longed impatiently for this moment: behold, we are all ready; don't worry. But since daylight has not yet come, rest for a moment, then take some food, and we will all set off in an orderly manner.

When they heard this, the guards were amazed, and said: He is truly a Christian, real Christians are truly such! And not fearing that they might escape, they let him go free and, retiring into one room, fell into a deep sleep.

Meanwhile the Christians prepared themselves to be taken to prison. Francis was busy encouraging and exhorting them all, while Mary prepared food for the satellites. Once they awoke from sleep, and after they had refreshed themselves with food, Francis brought out all his clothes and gave them to the guards; then forty Christians of both sexes, from the greatest to the least, gathered together, and proceeded without being bound, the men with the older children and the women with the infants.

Now it was the month of July, the temperature was very great, and owing to the heat of the sun and the fatigue of the journey, the infants were crying, the old men and the young lads proceeding very slowly. Francis was at the head, with the whole company following him, and the satellites followed the procession; it was such a remarkable sight: the whole way was partly filled with the curses and imprecations of the spectators, partly by their groans; and greater still was the voice of Francis, exhorting his brothers: Do not be despondent, my brothers, he cried out. Do not consider this journey hard: behold, the angel of the Lord is measuring your paces with a golden measure. Consider the Lord Jesus with the cross, hastening for us to the mountain of Calvary, and in this manner, all the time turning to face those following him, spoke fervent words.

When they came close to the city, the guards tied them together in groups of five with ropes, and each group of five went through the streets of the city to prison. While they were thus proceeding, bound with cords, with babies in their arms, babes at the breast, on every side they were attacked by the pagans with curses, stones, and sticks. Being especially indignant at the sight of women hastening to death carrying children, they cried out: Oh wicked women, oh impious women! How can you seek death with those tender children?

Francis was accompanied by his wife Mary and five sons⁶³, the eldest of whom, James, was aged fourteen⁶⁴ while the youngest was only two years old.

They were taken to prison, and thrown into the robbers' cell. The following day, having been brought to the tribunal, Francis was the first to be subject to torture. To the judge, who called on him to apostatize, he answered: It is even a crime to be unfaithful to a man, how much more to be an unbeliever to the supreme Lord God! I cannot apostatize. He underwent a hundred and ten strokes on his arms and legs, and, covered with his own blood, his flesh completely torn to pieces, he was carried into prison unconscious or motionless; in like manner all forty, even the children, were also subjected to torture, but not all persevered to the end.

Several, deprived of understanding and sense in the extreme agony of torture, were urged by the torturers who stood by to utter just one word of denial, saying that they would

⁶³ The five sons were Choe Hee-jeong (James), Sun-jeong (Andrew), Woo-jeong (Basil), Shin-jeong (Delesinporo), and the youngest one/two year-old Stephen.

⁶⁴ Choe Hee-jeong was born in 1827 and therefore in 1839 he was only 12 years old (13 years old by the lunar calendar's way of counting).

not profess the Christian religion. Thus they spurred them on by this maneuver. But they were not immediately set free. Even James did not open his mouth until the third stroke, and after the third he was completely lifeless and in no way aware of having apostatized; but after the torturers gave him medicine to awaken him from death, they set him free.

After the first questioning, the satellites and guards, having gathered in the tribunal, brought Francis out of the prison, and handing him a certain Christian book, they said, "Here's the book of your religion: We are gathered here led by a desire to hear your reading, so read this book to us."

The confessor joyfully consented to their request, as if invited to a great banquet, and read with such enthusiasm and cheerfulness that those pagan listeners rose to celebrate and praise the Christian religion, which could give so much joy and freedom even in such a place of misery and horror. After Francis had finished reading, they invited Mary to read but she refused, saying that she did not know how to read, at which they said: How can it be possible that the wife of so great a catechist does not know how to read?

For more than forty days, then, Francis endured innumerable torments, and most terrible punishments with an immutable constancy; so that the torturers named him Rock, by which name two men were distinguished in that persecution, namely, Francis and Charles Jo⁶⁵, and having predicted the hour of his death to his fellow prisoners, on September 12, 1839, finishing his glorious martyrdom, he breathed his last in the 36th year of his age.

Mary Yi originated from a distinguished family in Korea that had produced many famous people, notably Yi Jon-chang⁶⁶, who was the first missionary to preach the Gospel in the provinces of Korea and served in the role of a priest⁶⁷.

In the year 1784⁶⁸ a certain man named Yi Seung-hun⁶⁹ was commissioned by Yi Byeok⁷⁰, who by the study of some Chinese books had understood the basic principles of the Christian religion. On going with the embassy to Beijing, he went to the Bishop of Beijing⁷¹, who received him joyfully, baptized him after instructing him in the principal truths, and gave him many Christian books, entrusting him with the office of an apostle in Korea.

Returning to his homeland, he established the Christian Church with fervor, but poorly, on account of his ignorance: he authorized himself and others, among whom Yi Jon-chang, to act as priests, but afterward, having recognized his wrongful conduct, he died penitent in a glorious martyrdom. Thus the Yi family was first deprived of a false priesthood,

⁶⁵ Charles Jo Shin-cheol (趙信喆 1795-1839): Saint. Husband of Saint Choe Yeong-i (崔榮伊 Barbara). After entering the Church, he became a church envoy and participated in the campaigns to bring in priests. He was captured and martyred during the 1839 Gihae persecution.

⁶⁶ Yi Jon-chang (李存昌 1752-1801): Apostle of Naepo. Born in Yeosaul, Chungcheong Province (now Sinjong-ri, Sinam-myeon, Yesan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do). He was martyred during the 1801 Shinyu persecution.

⁶⁷ During the founding period of the church some laymen acted as priests under the 'pseudo-hierarchy' system, which was established in the spring of 1786 and abolished in 1787.

⁶⁸ Actually, in the autumn of 1783.

⁶⁹ Yi Seung-hun (李承薰 1756-1801): the first Korean to be baptized. In the spring of 1784, after being baptized in the North Church in Beijing he returned to Korea and founded the Korean Catholic Church together with his colleagues in the winter of that year. After that, he was beheaded during the 1801 Shinyu persecution.

⁷⁰ Yi Byeok (李蘖 1754-1785): One of the founders of the Korean Catholic Church. In the winter of 1784, he was baptized by Yi Seung-hun at the first baptismal ceremony held at his home near Supyo Bridge in Seoul. Soon after he fell sick and died after harsh persecution by his family.

⁷¹ A. de Gouvea (1782-1808): Bishop. A Portuguese secular priest, member of the Franciscan Third Order, he was appointed bishop of Beijing on December 15, 1782. The following year, he was consecrated in Goa, India, and held office in Beijing from early 1785 until his death. When Yi Seung-hun went to Beijing, Bishop Gouvea had not yet been appointed. The person who taught him the fundamental doctrines and baptized him was the Jesuit Father J. J. de Grammont.

but then was decorated with true priesthood for it was the origin of two priests by daughters, by his daughter Melania, the grandmother of Father Andrew, and by Mary Yi, who was the niece of Jon-chang's cousin Melania.

Mary was the youngest among four brothers and six sisters. Gifted with a keen intellect and manly courage, she married Francis at the age of eighteen, and she managed the family business wisely and without complaint. Having abandoned her home and wealth for Christ's sake, she joyfully endured extreme want and long journeys through steep mountains. When her young children were exhausted in the journeys they undertook to distant places, she exhorted them to practice patience and long suffering by the example of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary fleeing into Egypt, and by the example of Christ ascending Mount Calvary.

Although her husband was younger in age, she always honored him with great veneration and diligent service, and lived with him in great concord and unanimity; she often said that she feared nothing else in this world but that she might outlive her husband.

When the satellites invaded the house, she was by no means troubled, but collected together whatever best things were left and with great cheerfulness and diligence, prepared food for the satellites, then while the others were departing, she and a little boy remained behind, being somewhat slow in getting under way; at which a certain satellite came in and in a barbarous manner said: The others have already left, why are you alone still here? Don't you want to go? To whom Mary, indignant at such inappropriate conduct toward a woman, said in a serious voice, "Who are you? You are the worst kind of person. What concern is it of yours, if I go or not? It is in my power to go if I wish, and if I do not go, what has that to do with you? But how should I not go with my husband and my sons? As for you, go away and continue your journey." Then after he had left, Mary took the infant in her arms, and followed the troops.

Arriving in Seoul, she was separated from her husband and older children and was cast into the women's cell with her infant child. The following day she stood with the others at the tribunal. While her legs were twisted, her arms bruised and torn by sticks, she bravely professed Christ. Besides the torment of torture, she had the greatest affliction on account of the baby, who was dying daily before his mother's eyes because of a lack of milk and the horrors of prison. However, during the lifetime of Francis she remained constant. But once her husband died, overcome by the tortures, and exhausted by horrible miseries of prison, she began to be moved by false pity for her still tender children, and shamefully defeated by flesh and blood, wished by one fictitious word to provide both temporal and spiritual salvation for her poor children.

But God, in his mercy, wished immediately to lift up again the servant who was slipping because of weakness. After her apostasy, when she was already set free, the affair was made known of Mary's eldest son, who had been sent by Father Maubant to Macao, to study the Latin language. For this reason Mary was transferred to a higher tribunal; there, the confessors of Christ exhorted her that she should retract her apostasy before the judge and suffer glorious martyrdom. Moved by these words, Mary sincerely mourned her defection, and bravely retracted her infidelity before the judge, and from that time she constantly overcame all temptations, and made herself stronger, rejecting all the suggestions of maternal affection.

In this tribunal she saw her infant child die before her eyes of hunger and wretchedness; but she was delighted to have borne two sons for Christ, who, converted by Mary's example and saving words, had learned from her the teachings and prayers of the Christian religion. For more than a month, James continued to live in prison, ministering to his mother and other captives of Christ and was the witness of all until the day of her death.

After the customary threefold torture, sentence was passed, and when the day of her death was drawing near, she called James, and gave him a tranquil last message, that he should carefully observe God's commandments, and that concord and love should reign among the brothers. And as the butchers were making crosses, the whole prison was full of the noise of their instruments.

When Mary had finished praying, she ordered James to leave after saying farewell to the confessors, lest he should try to accompany her as she was going to the place of execution. For at that moment her maternal feelings were aroused, and she was afraid lest at the sight of her son, not yet an adult, with the three little children left orphans without assistance, without guardians, she might be disturbed, and would be found less prepared for the final battle.

Thus, as she was departing for eternity, James bade her farewell and commended his mother to the men in the prison who were required to be present at the execution of the martyrs, asking them to take care of and watch carefully over her until the last moment. Then Mary, with six others⁷², ascended the triumphant cross and, calmly led to the execution ground, died by the executioner's glorious sword, on 31 January 1840, at the age of 39.

But I must stop here: therefore, finally, I send the most humble and most affectionate greetings to all my most beloved Fathers, and I beg them that they may deign to always be mindful of me, poor wretch that I am.

Thomas Choe, a frail member of the apostolic vicariate⁷³ of Korea.

⁷² Martyred on January 31, 1840 at Danggogae, Seoul (now Danghyeon, Singye-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul): the saints Park Jong-won (Augustine), Hong Byeong-ju (Peter), Yi In-deok (Mary), Gwon Jin-i (Agatha), Son So-byeok (Magdalena), Yi Gyeong-i (Agatha).

⁷³ Apostolic Vicariate: The official name for a diocese in an area where a formal hierarchical system has not been established.

Letter 9, (Extract).

(Extract of a Letter written by Thomas Tshoey, a Corean Priest, dated October 23rd, 1853)

The whole kingdom lies sadly bruised by all kinds of calamities. The poor, the rich, the Christian, the pagan, the noble, the ignoble, the great, and the small have no security. The small are devoured by the great; big and small bite one another. Meanwhile the courtiers are always proclaiming: Peace, peace, while they consume themselves and the people in continuous games, drunkenness, and infamous spectacles. The king is king in name only, nothing more. Officials are sent to the provinces to bring the ministers more money; this they use in order to pay their debts, contracted to obtain positions, and enrich their families, and to give to their benefactors, the poor are completely set aside. Oh how unworthy is the image of our state!

Note: This extract from a letter was included in a letter dated 25 August, 1854, from John Bowring (1792-1872), the British Consul to China and Governor-General of Hong Kong, to the British Foreign Minister, Lord Clarendon, as an excerpt from a letter of Father Choe Yang-eop dated 23 October, 1853. The letter is presumed to have been addressed to Father Libois.

Letter 10

Place where written: Donggol⁷⁴

Date when written: November 4, 1854

Recipient: Father Libois⁷⁵

Most Reverend Father (Libois),

I will not repeat here what concerns the very sad death of our good missionary Father R. Jansou and the rest, since you can read the letter that I wrote to Father Legrégeois.

On the arrival of Father Jansou⁷⁶ I received your letter written on August 12, 1853. What great joy and comfort there should have been for us, desolate and mourning the death of our illustrious Bishop Ferréol as we were, when I was allowed to see a new missionary coming to us and read your letters and hear the stories of our dear fathers and their affairs. However, at the sight of the sickly aspect of that pitiful missionary, caused by the journey, we were struck only with panic and the greatest pain. How unhappy our mission is! Brought in with so much toil and care over so many years, we have lost him, without being refreshed for a single day by joyful things!

In Korea, the government and the whole people especially accuse the missionaries and our holy religion, because missionaries come in secret, teach by stealth, and practice in secret; from this it appears that the Christian religion is hateful and infamous, and that it is of no value even in Europe. Therefore, whatever we preach and is explained in our books, seems to be the invention of certain sly practices to deceive men. They say, "if what they are saying is true, why do their leaders, who are all called Christians, send very many ships to China, Japan, and often to us for very small matters, yet do nothing for religion, which certainly ought to be the greatest matter of all?"

I am persuaded that if the missionaries arrived publicly in a boat, commended to our government with sufficient proof by the government of France, they would not oppose any obstacle to their ministry, as they had established absolutely that the French government wanted to make public the Christian religion in Korea, and they would certainly grant us everything.

Last spring three students⁷⁷ were sent by boat from Jiangnan to Shanghai; have they reached the seminary⁷⁸? And are they well? The director of the college certainly must already

⁷⁴ Donggol (Tongcol in the Latin): Probably a Christian village in what is now Jincheon-gun, North Chungcheong Province.

⁷⁵ Napoléon Libois (1805-1872): A missionary of the Foreign Missions Society, the teacher of Father Choe Yang-eop. He arrived at the Far East headquarters of the Society in Macau, China in 1837, and in 1838 was appointed Deputy Procurator. At the end of 1841 he became Procurator. He returned to Paris in 1866 and died while serving as the representative of the Society in Rome. During his time in Macau, he taught Latin, French, and doctrine to the students of the newly-established Korean Seminary.

⁷⁶ François S. Jansou (1826-1854): A missionary of the Korean diocese belonging to the Foreign Missions Society. He arrived in China in 1851 and entered Korea in March 1854. However, he contracted encephalitis and died on June 18, 1854, three months after entering Korea.

⁷⁷ This refers to the fact that Father Choe Yang-eop sent three students to Shanghai, Paulino Lee, John the Apostle Kim, and Vincent Lim, using the ship that Father Jansou had come on in March 1854. Father Choe succeeded Father Daveluy, and from the summer of 1853 was in charge of teaching at the Minor Seminary in Baeti (established in 1850). It was after this that he sent the three students abroad.

⁷⁸ The seminary in question was in Penang, an island off the west coast of Malaysia. The Foreign Missions Society moved their Pondicherry Seminary in India, which had been closed in 1782, to this island in 1808. The official name at the time was 'Collège Général des Missions'.

know the character of each one, but I would like to make it clear to him that, according to me, one of them, who is called John Kim⁷⁹, has a quite extravagant nature and a doubtful disposition; and if he is not formed promptly in the correct sense, it is very much to be feared lest he should be lost. The director should direct them all so that they may well grasp the Christian humility which they are unable to understand in Korea, not having an idea of true humanity, and not knowing how to estimate an individual person at his just value, but placing the whole dignity and value of man's glory in inventions of temporal and external glory.

The status of our mission is pitiful because of the hostility and divisions among the Christians and the divisions between classes. Every day the Christian faith and brotherly charity fail, they are dissolved and consumed by continual debate, animosity and malevolence. What cure can there be for this evil? If it is allowed to grow, then what will our mission achieve? In your letter you promised to send me sacred images, crosses and medals, etc. through Fr. Jansou. I have seen none of these, but I am waiting for the next occasion.

Pray often for me and my wretched Koreans, that we become sons of divine mercy and not vessels of wrath, and that at length we may meet in heaven, for I despair of ever seeing you again in this world; at least may we not be parted forever.

Your weakest servant Thomas Choe

⁷⁹ John Kim (1835-1868): grandson of Kim Ui-ho, who was martyred in Seoul in 1801, and the third son of Kim Baek-sim (Ambrose), who was martyred in Seoul in 1866. He entered Penang Seminary in June 1855, and after returning home in 1863 he returned to life as a layman, but was arrested in 1868 and martyred in Seoul.

Letter 11

Place where written: Baeron⁸⁰
Date when written: October 8, 1855
Recipient: Father Legrégeois
Most Reverend Father,

This year we have received no letters from any of the Fathers. I do not know how it came about that our envoys⁸¹ were unable to find any boat bringing information from Shanghai. We waited impatiently, just before the end of spring, for the boat with which couriers were being sent as far as Shanghai to fetch our new most illustrious Bishop Berneux, and also to bring joyful news from the Fathers, together with new missionaries to be our co-workers. But that boat, on meeting a certain Christian in a boat from Jiangnan, and hearing from him that there was no other ship bringing the Fathers or their letters, transferred the couriers to that ship, and returned without receiving any tidings either from China or from Europe.

May the merciful God grant that all of my most reverend and dear fathers may prosper, that everything they undertake will be successful, and that our couriers will happily arrive as far as Jiangnan, and will soon and happily introduce our new bishop and other missionaries into our mission field. By God's grace we are all still in good health and tranquility; moreover, this very fruitful year has brought great relief to our poor Christians; but also, to our overflowing joy, God has added to us many new brothers, of whom I alone have baptized 240 adults. But alas! Among those, some, who are said to be noble among us, and who in the beginning seemed more fervent and stronger than others, withered away more easily, being choked by sprouting thorns.

For the men of that class ordinarily live idle lives, and while the poorest have nothing with which to sustain themselves and their families, they are not willing to labor at all, but through injustice, fraud and exactions, seek an unjust livelihood with gaming, drunkenness, and perverse encounters; so these, once subjugated to the yoke of Christ, and constrained by divine law, are compelled to abandon their former way of life, and as on the other hand they do not know any profession that allows them to live and do not deign to learn one, since they now have nothing to eat, and being driven by hunger, they rather prefer to return to their former state, and often become worse than ever.

At present our government is ignoring us Christians; for it has many other things to take care of. Now their concern is to move the eight tombs of our king's ancestors⁸², for (as our wise experts of the nature of the ground say) those corpses are not buried in a good place, and therefore they cannot look after their posterity well; so more propitious places were sought, and those wisest men found that the best place was the site of a city, from which the entire population had to give place, and be relocated elsewhere.

⁸⁰ Baeron (Pairon in the Latin): more precisely, the 'St. Joseph Theological Seminary' in Baeron (now Guhak-ri, Bongyangyum, Jecheon-si, North Jeolla Province). It was established as a preparatory seminary in 1854, and in 1856 it was promoted to a minor seminary, and Father Jean A. C. Pourthié was appointed as the first principal.

⁸¹ In February 1855, the future (1866) martyr Thomas Hong Bong-ju (洪鳳周) and his companions traveled to and from Shanghai to bring the fourth Apostolic Vicar, Bishop Berneux, into Korea.

⁸² This refers to the relocation of the grave of Prince Jeon Gye, the father of King Cheoljong, Inreung, the grave of Sunjo, Sureung, the grave of Ikjong, Hwigyeongwon, the grave of Sunjo's mother, and others.

A few months ago they were discussing raising the great-grandfather⁸³ of the king now reigning, already dead for many years (slain while his father was alive by a conspiracy of ministers of one party⁸⁴, the other party opposing) to posthumous royal dignity and titles. The first person who had proposed this idea was sent into exile⁸⁵, and the remaining 1,000 who agreed and supported it were deprived of their positions because the descendants of those ministers⁸⁶ who were the instigators of that prince's death were opposed to their ancestors' being convicted of the unjust murder of an innocent prince.

Our ministers are constantly engaged in discussing matters of this kind, or of devouring one another, or of enacting new laws that are meaningless. A few months ago a law was issued, prohibiting men from being carried in litters: some transgressors were executed, others were sent into exile, yet for several months now everyone is free to ride in a litter. You can see from this example what our government is like and what the life of this poor people must be like. In the last letter I received, you ask me to give clearer information about the circumstances of the death of the martyrs Francis Choe and Mary Yi, my parents. I searched for witnesses who could relate with greater precision and more exactly all the circumstances of their detection, imprisonment, torture, investigations, and pertaining to their death. I found two, but I could not hear any clearer or more exact information than that which I sent.

When Francis died, there was no believer in prison except for one prisoner who lives up to now and can testify about him. Therefore, after he had for the last time undergone horrible tortures with equanimity, brought back into prison half-dead, as his spirit gradually returned, he uttered nothing else in his hearing than laments and words expressive of the greatest sorrow of the soul, concerning the apostates who had been arrested, and had been overcome by torture; and then, on the third day, after the last day of torture, he said to his fellow prisoner: "Today I must die, and I suffer severe thirst; ask them to give me something to drink," and when he had drunk what was offered, after some words of compassion regarding those apostates, he quietly gave up his spirit.

As for Mary, however, I could find no first-hand witness of her last moments and the final execution, when she was beheaded; for she had sent away her son, James, who remains the only witness for those last moments, when she was about to be bound to a cross erected on a cart and be taken to her last punishment, lest her mind might be disturbed by the sight of him. Only a prison servant, who had been taught Christian doctrine by Mary, although he had not yet become a Christian by baptism, believed in God and told James that he himself had watched until they cut off her head, and that she was always calm and cheerful until the last moment, so that he was wonderfully moved and edified by what he saw.

Both bodies were obtained and buried by their son and kinsmen; but the body of Mary was buried by night for fear of the pagans, together with all the others martyred at the same time, among the graves of non-Christians while Francis was clearly buried among the Christian graves⁸⁷.

⁸³ Crown Prince Jangheon, son of King Yeongjo and father of King Jeongjo, also known as Crown Prince Sado.

⁸⁴ Crown Prince Sado was killed when his father, King Yeongjo, had him enclosed in a rice chest for bad conduct.

⁸⁵ In April 1855, Yu Chi-myeong raised the issue of the succession of Crown Prince Jangheon (Prince Sado) and was exiled, while the officials concerned were demoted. Crown Prince Jangheon was finally honored posthumously as King Jangjo only in 1899 (the 3rd year of the Daehan Empire).

⁸⁶ Ministers belonging to the Noron faction who argued that Crown Prince Sado's death was justified.

⁸⁷ Choe Gyeong-hwan's body was collected by his brother Choe Young-gyeom and his son Choe Hee-jeong, and was buried on Nogusan (currently Nogosan-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul) with a bowl with his name written on it. On May 6, 1930, the remains were excavated and moved to the crypt of Myeongdong Cathedral.

You also wrote asking about other martyrs, or any deeds worthy of note. Some things of this kind are to be found, whether in writing or transmitted orally, but in the absence of sufficient proofs I cannot report them to you. Afterward, if I can find anything more about such things, I will not fail to send that to you.

For now I have nothing more to tell you: we are anxiously awaiting our new bishop, and by him hope to hear much happy news about you. I ask nothing of your munificence at this time, for I have not yet received what I asked for before. After they arrive, I will send other requests. One thing I will not omit, that you will never forget me and my poor Koreans; and through you I send many greetings to all the Fathers and our most revered Procurator.

Your very weak servant Thomas Choe

Letter 12

Place where written: Soriut⁸⁸

Date when written: September 13, 1856

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend Father,

The more rarely I write, the more fruitful and abundant I ought to be when I do write; but I really do not know whence it comes that whenever I take up the pen, all thought escapes me. However, I cannot help but express my heartfelt joy at the arrival of our good and dear Pastor, M. Berneux, Bishop of Capsus⁸⁹, whom God's mercy has at length brought to us⁹⁰, longed for as he was by great vows in the past, then despaired of; and now, moreover, adding grace to grace, he has brought with him two other missionaries⁹¹ to be our fellow laborers. May we not be deemed unworthy in God's sight of such great mercy.

I told you in my letter of September 1854⁹² that I had received your letters and the sacred gifts. This year, having received no letters by your charity on the arrival of our most illustrious Bishop, I was not able to still the anguish of my heart, not knowing whether my letter had not been able to reach you, or if it was for some other reason.

I also felt very severe grief on hearing of the death of our excellent Procurator, Father Barran; for whom, indeed, I will not fail to make very unworthy memory in the sight of God; I hope that he is free from the cares and anxieties of life, and will be no less a Procurator of our poor mission than before. This year, by the mercy of God, I have completed my apostolic circuit quite calmly, and quite a number have entered the Lord's catch of fish. One hundred and eighty or more adults, having been washed in the sacred fountain, have joined the fold of Christ. There have not been wanting trouble-makers sent by Satan, who have attempted and endeavored to hinder the ways of the Lord.

I was summoned to a village named Jinbatdeul⁹³ in the province of Jeolla, where almost the entire population, newly converted, was already prepared for baptism and impatiently waiting for a missionary. In the evening, having heard the confessions of a few penitents, and having performed the baptism of some infants and regularized other emergency baptisms, I rose at cockcrow after a short sleep and prepared to confer baptism on fifteen adults before celebrating the Mass, when suddenly a hundred or more of the devil's satellites, armed with clubs, surrounded the hut in which I was performing the divine mysteries; they made a violent attack, intending to lay their hands on me and the sacred objects; but the Christians who had assembled there in some numbers, although few compared to them, confronted them, and massed themselves at the door, and while they were attempting to enter with all violence, the Christians kept them off with all their strength, so

⁸⁸ Soriut (Soriout in Latin) : This is presumed to be a village in the southern part of Chungcheong-do, northern Jeolla-do, or Gyeongsang-do.

⁸⁹ Capsus: Bishop Berneux, like Bishop Bruguière before him, was titular bishop of Capsus (the standard English form, in French it is "Capse"). Apostolic vicars are bishops for places which have not yet been given formal diocesan status. They are consecrated as titular bishops of dioceses that no longer exist in reality, usually in Islamic lands. Capsus is now called Cafsa, an oasis city in the present-day Republic of Tunisia in northern Africa.

⁹⁰ Bishop Berneux left Shanghai on January 17, 1856 and arrived in Seoul on March 27, 1856.

⁹¹ Fr. Pourthié and Fr. Michel A. Petitnicolas entered the country with Bishop Berneux.

⁹² This letter has been lost.

⁹³ Jinbatdeul (in the Latin Tsinpattel): Now Duji-ri, Jinsan-myeon, Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do.

that a terrible struggle arose: meanwhile, in the inner room with some of the faithful I gathered together the sacred ornaments as promptly as possible, and fled to the mountains through the back window, thanks to the darkness and woods. While I was wandering hither and thither without shoes among rocks and briars with my companions, after many on either side had been wounded in the fight, at length the satellites took to their heels; but they, having been unable to obtain anything by violence, reported the matter to the local magistrate and the five principal men were arrested and imprisoned.

One of these, by the name of Paul Ny (Yi), having become a fervent Christian seven or eight years before, and highly commended by other Christian virtues, was designated to be the village catechist. A second was named Augustine Ha, who only three years before had been a member of the guard, the first person in rank after the magistrate in the city. After he had become a Christian, he converted many others to the faith, and was arrested as a leader and disseminator of the Christian religion.

The remaining three were catechumens who had been converted less than one year before, and were due to be baptized at the moment when the pagans attacked us. The first of these was descended from a family of the highest Korean nobility, and, having understood the truth of the Christian religion, since he could not practice it among his own people on account of the many obstacles, had left his home and emigrated to the mountains to live among the Christians. But the other two were relatives of the apostate, who, imitating that first apostate, Judas Iscariot, brought those guards to capture me. Initially, they had been converted by him, but after he became apostate, traitor and persecutor, they had suffered many harassments from him, as he hoped to make apostates of them, too, but they ever endured and remained faithful.

All these, being led to the governor, boldly confessed God, when they were commanded to curse the Lord of Heaven, and answered: "Since it is a crime to curse even a temporal prince, what great impiety it would be to curse the Lord of Heaven, the eternal God! We can't commit such a crime."

After the first investigation they are obliged to live in prison at their own expense; and since their families are very poor, they can support them only with difficulty. If I had anything, I could help the needs of those who suffer for Christ's sake, but I can do nothing but sigh for them.

Since you asked in your letter that I should write some reports of our martyrs, which would be helpful to edify Christ's faithful in Europe, I have not neglected to collect information of this kind; but since mostly the necessary witnesses are lacking, I was not able to obtain many proofs.

I will report one case, a man who was martyred in the year 1839 in the last general persecution of the Korean Church; but because little was known about what happened in the provinces to the Christians of the capital city, when the reports of the martyrs of that year were collected, he was omitted from the general record. I have found a written account and since his father, wife, son and close friends are still alive, I could have sufficient proofs.

Our martyr, named John Choe⁹⁴, was born in the southern province of Chungcheong of Christian parents. From early childhood he was greatly commended for his docility of disposition, his piety toward his parents, and charity toward others. His grandfather went into exile during the first persecution, and his entire family followed him into exile. John grew up there in that town, but when he saw that he and his family were not able to observe Christian law in the midst of pagans, he emigrated to the mountains, and there, having established a

⁹⁴ Choe Hae-seong (1811-1839): aka 'Yangbak' . The relative of Choe Gyeong-hwan. Born in Daraegol, Hongju. During the Gihae Persecution, he was arrested in Wonju Seoji (currently Songok 2-ri, Buron-myeon, Wonju-si, Gangwon-do) and martyred by beheading in Wonju.

small Christian village, he himself was a model of good Christian teaching and example to all. In him shone forth most of all his unwavering patience in enduring all the miseries of extreme poverty, in the midst of which, however, he did not fail to fulfill the duty of charity to the extent that his poverty permitted him to give alms, as well as a singular fervor in fulfilling all the duties of Christian piety and encouraging his brothers; especially when the missionary arrived in his village and he had the opportunity to receive the sacraments, he was inflamed with unspeakable zeal, and was filled with remarkable joy. Moved by these virtues, the missionary appointed him a catechist in that village. After the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, he showed evident signs of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and from day to day he had a growing desire to offer himself as a sacrifice to God through a living martyrdom.

In the year 1839, when persecution broke out, and soon became violent, John led his parents and some other family members to a safer place, and as he was returning to collect his religious books, satellites met him, who, knowing him to be a Christian, tortured him in vain to make him betray his own people and neighbors, then brought him to the governor.

He was so twisted by the satellites that he was covered with wounds and could barely move, but he cast the eyes of his mind upon Jesus Christ bearing the cross and ascending Calvary, and immediately felt himself utterly vigorous and eager to follow him. When he was brought before the governor, he said, "Is it not true that you profess an evil sect?" To whom John replied: "I do not profess any evil sect, but worship the religion of the Lord of Heaven."

Then, after the torturers had tortured him, he was brought back to the judge, who asked: "Tell me how many and who your religious leaders are and where they live." "I cannot," says John, "betray my brothers; for our holy religion forbids us to in any way harm our neighbors."

After which he was taken back to prison by the satellites and a multitude of people, who inflicted innumerable injuries and tortures on him. After some days, being recalled for another interrogation, he was thus questioned by the governor: "If you deny the Lord of Heaven, you will be a good subject of the kingdom, and all your goods will be returned to you with more added."

John answered: "Even if you give me the whole town, I would not deny the Lord of Heaven." Then he was again cast into jail, after receiving more than a hundred blows with rods.

Then the judge called him back and said, "Surely you would love to die?" To whom John replied: "Since I am a man like others, I naturally love life and fear death, but I am not unwilling to die for justice." Angry, he ordered him to be tortured fearfully, saying: "If it is true that he would rather die than forsake his religion, beat him to death." The body of John, indeed, was torn and bloody, but his soul, kindled by divine love, rejoiced greatly.

He underwent twenty investigations as a whole, and was tortured to such an extent that, his skin and flesh were falling off, his intestines were visible, and broken bones fell in pieces. In addition to the tortures inflicted during the investigations, he suffered innumerable torments of every kind from the satellites and criminals.

At length the death sentence was passed, on the 29th day of the 7th month⁹⁵, 1839, and in his 29th year his martyrdom was completed by his being beheaded. When the day

⁹⁵ Choe Hae-seong's martyrdom is given two dates, either the 29th day of the 7th lunar month (September 6th in the solar calendar) or the 29th day of the 8th lunar month (October 6th in the solar calendar) 1839. However, since the date of his death sentence was on the 26th day of the 7th month of the lunar calendar (Seungjeongwon

dawned, on which he was about to descend to the place of triumph, he prepared a small feast for himself and his torturers as a sign of joy; and while the glorious man was being led to the place of the final punishment, the satellites and the rest of the people, who had pursued him with curses and tortures, followed him with tears in a last farewell.

About others there are very many accounts, but I do not have enough proofs; when I have better notes I will write to you in due time, God permitting. Some days later I am going to set off for a new Christian village⁹⁶, 700 li distant, which was established by one newly-converted Christian in exile who then sent a man to invite a missionary. After I visit there, I will report on the next occasion, if there is anything worthy of notice.

But as to your other command, namely, that I should ask for whatever I need, I reply now, as before, that I need so many things that I do not know what I ought to ask, and whatever your beneficent charity deigns to send, will be most pleasing and useful to me, but above all else I need and we need the divine Mercy, for which I again commend myself and my poor Koreans to your prayers and those of your loved ones.

Your very weak servant Thomas Choe

Diary, Daoguang 9th year 26th day of the 7th month), the date of his martyrdom is thought to be probably the 29th day of the seventh lunar month.

⁹⁶ The new village was in Hwanghae-do (Letter of November 21, 1857 from Bishop Daveluy to Father Albrand, Foreign Missions Society's Old Documents Volume 6, page 236).

Letter 13

Place where written: Bulmugol⁹⁷

Date when written: September 14, 1857

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend Father,

Every year I assemble joyful messages to write to you about the bounty of the divine Mercy: last year I announced the arrival of the most illustrious Bishop Berneux and two new missionaries; this year comes the wonderful and truly miraculous arrival of Father Féron⁹⁸, which you had already twice foretold in your letters, and now I am happy to announce the elevation of Father Daveluy to be the Coadjutor⁹⁹ of our mission. What thanks should we give to the merciful Father for such special blessings on our poor children? I invite you and all the reverend fathers and dear brothers in Christ to whom my voice may come to congratulate us and give thanks to God for us.

Through Father Féron, I have received two letters from you, which I had long been awaiting with an impatient and desolate mind, and from him I heard much more about you, face to face. I stayed with him twice for several days, tasting the friendship already announced by you and savored by me in advance, as we rejoiced in the Lord. But how perilously, and with how great a loss he came to us on a pagan ship under the guidance of the divine hand, he will tell you better than we can.

Last year I promised that I would find and send you reliable reports of our martyrs. I have collected quite a few, but I have sent them to the Most Illustrious Bishop Daveluy, who is writing a general history¹⁰⁰ of all the martyrs. He will certainly pass it on for you to read, since he is our Bishop, and I think it unnecessary on my part to report it to you separately.

I wrote a previous letter as I was about to set out for a new Christian village and I said that when I returned from it, if there were any things worthy of memory, that I would report them in my next letter.

That Christian village, as I said, was founded by one exiled woman and a certain Christian family. In the last general persecution of 1839 she had withdrawn there in order to avoid persecution in the capital city and had become the servant of a wealthy family. Gradually, the mistress of that family recognized the truth of the Christian religion through her servant, and her fervent practice of Christianity was noticed by her husband. He, beating her furiously, endeavored to turn away his wife from her holy profession, and when he could avail nothing, he dragged her one day through the middle of the city, threatening to have her executed by the governor, unless she abjured the Christian religion.

That faithful servant of Christ, by no means terrified, but prepared to die for God, was being led to the judgment seat; but at length her fierce husband, overcome by the

⁹⁷ Bulmugol (Poulmoucol in Latin): Probably now Hongrim-ri, Pangyo-myeon, Seocheongun, Chungcheongnam-do.

⁹⁸ Stanislas Féron: A missionary belonging to the Foreign Missions Society. He entered Korea in March 1857 and maintained a close relationship with Father Choe Yangeop. He fled to China during the Byeongin Persecution of 1866 and returned to France, from where he was dispatched to Pondicherry, India.

⁹⁹ The consecration of Father Daveluy as a bishop was held in Seoul on March 25, 1857, presided by Bishop Berneux.

¹⁰⁰ Bishop Daveluy started compiling details of the Korean martyrs in 1856 on the orders of Bishop Berneux. He completed and sent to Paris the 'Notices des Principaux martyrs de Corée' in 1858-1859, and the 'Notes pour l'Histoire des Martyrs de Corée' in 1859-1860.

constancy of his wife, turned back halfway and took her back home, and nothing else happened, except that a rumor spread far and wide that there were Christians in the city.

On hearing this rumor, the family of that exiled woman, who lived in another neighboring city, and had for many years been isolated from the society of Christians, sunk in great ignorance, lamented her wretched state, and sought to see some Christians from whom she could be better educated about the necessary truths and united with whom could observe the Christian laws. Having finally found what she was looking for, she emigrated to the same city, and by uniting herself with that woman, encouraging each other, the two became firmer in their faith and more fervent in their religious practice, and thus by mutual effort they associated more persons to themselves. Among them one woman, a strong athlete of Christ, was the wife of the local governor; she, criticized by her husband in many ways, opposed an invincible firmness to the threats, beatings, and every kind of persecutions of her husband.

It is incredible with what great avidity, pricked by the signs of a fervent spirit, when I arrived, those poor souls received my words and sacraments, whose sighs had been uninterrupted: “When shall I see with my own eyes the priest of God, and perceive with my ears the divine words from his mouth! Once that is granted, I shall die in peace.”

But alas, the pitiful fate of this Christian village is to be lamented! A certain old woman, after having admitted to the oratory with other Christians, had participated in the divine word and the sacraments, and, exceedingly contented, went to her friend, whom she had not been able to evangelize before, to bring her to embrace the Christian faith, hoping to change her mind by showing her all the wondrous things of which she herself had been a partaker, and abounded with unspeakable joy.

But that mad woman reported everything to her husband, who, having called together all the husbands of those women, who secretly worshiped God, without the knowledge or permission of their husbands and parents, he revealed all the secrets to them. He incited them to expel the family of that exiled woman who had emigrated from a neighboring town into that town, and who, being utterly Christian, had been able to prepare an oratory.

Scarcely had I come out of that city, and the young head of that family who accompanied me had not yet returned home, when a throng of citizens, forcing their way into the oratory, robbed that family of all their belongings, driving them out of the house and out of the city. I do not know how in future they will be able to receive missionaries: for now that that family has been driven out of the town there is no house in which a chapel can be prepared. For all such women secretly worship God, without the knowledge of their husbands and parents, because of whom they cannot leave the city. May God be merciful to those poor folk and reward their good will.

In another Christian village, in which I arrived after a three-day journey from the previous village, there were five very poor families who had recently emigrated from another place on account of the difficulties of observing the Christian religion. The village called Mansan¹⁰¹ is situated high up on dreadful mountains, better called the Alps.

In the vicinity there was another Christian village at a distance of 110 li. There also some poor families who had recently emigrated had not yet built huts, and, therefore, being unable to prepare an oratory, they were all obliged to come to Mansan to receive the sacraments. From that village nearly twenty persons came in two groups. The first group set out while the others stayed behind to guard their huts. The second group was composed of two men, one sixteen-year-old girl, two thirteen-year-old and eleven-year-old maidens, and a nine-year-old boy.

¹⁰¹ Mansan: now known as Guwon-ri, Sangseo-myeon, Hwacheon-gun, Gangwon-do.

This fragile group had to complete the 110-li journey in one day. Therefore, having set out early in the morning, more than half the journey had been already completed when, on arriving at a certain village, more than twenty men came out with sticks and clubs, and endeavored to kidnap that little girl and the maidens, dragging them away, and while they resisted, a certain man of a venerable age, coming forth from the village, rebuked the impudence of those unbridled men, and set the captives free; finally those Christians, worn out by fatigue, hunger, and terrors, but rejoicing to be free, at length arrived at the oratory in the evening.

At their arrival, you can imagine, Father, with what joy I and the whole village rejoiced, and with what pity we were moved for them, and with what haste we turned to give due thanks to God!

In another village, in which some Christians live in the midst of the pagans, when I arrived in the evenings, the pagan villagers suspected the presence of a missionary and all the following day watched the house where I was, desiring to rush in to capture me; but a certain catechumen, who was regarded by the pagans as their close friend, dissuaded them from making any such attempt by all means, explaining to them the great danger in it for them, saying that if ever they failed to find the missionary, after roughly entering another person's home, the magistrate would impose the ultimate punishments for their presumption. Being thus restrained, they did not dare to enter the house, but only staying on guard outside every entrance, preventing me from leaving the house and hoping to catch me. Therefore, early in the morning while it was still dark, leaving those poor faithful desolate, deprived of the longed-for sacraments, although they had been bereft of the sacraments for almost two years and had been waiting impatiently for me, I escaped from the hands of those pagans through a gap at the back of the house.

Oh how painful it was to leave those wretched, hungry families on account of such wicked men, and to leave them immersed in their desolation, and without any means for them to be set free, at least for now! But let us leave this sadness, and pass over to happier things. A young man, hearing a report of a religion different from the rest in the village of Ganweol¹⁰², several days' journey from his home, and desiring to learn more, came to the catechist of that village demanding to be taught the good doctrine. But he, being unsure of his sincerity, would not tell him the truth; and giving his ignorance as a reason, sent him away empty-handed. But the young man, once again approaching the catechist, endeavored in every way to prove his sincerity, but nevertheless was no more successful, and was again repulsed, so he returned a third time. Finally, the catechist, overpowered by his importunity and convinced of his sincerity, explained to him the elements of the Christian religion, and gave him a book of fundamental truths, as well as a form of prayer and a catechism. Acknowledging the truth he had so long desired, he transcribed the necessary books in his own hand, and having obtained this inestimable treasure, on returning to his home, made his entire family and his close friends and kinsmen share in the same truth. Immediately, he and his family left to live near Ganweol, on account of many obstacles to Christian practice, and on his last visit, brought to the oratory six men, all very well-equipped to receive baptism, and promised that in the following year all his family would be ready for baptism, and that there would be an oratory in his village.

In this manner a whole village of five families was converted entirely by report, evangelized by rumor.

There is another family I would like to tell you about: there was a certain family possessed by a demon for several generations; men, women, or children and infants of this

¹⁰² Ganweol (Kanouel in Latin): now Deungeok-ri, Sangbuk-myeon, Ulju-gun, Ulsan City.

family were possessed by spirits, who appeared as their father or grandfather and, day and night, often overpowered them with a very heavy weight upon their shoulders or on their backs; so that those poor wretches labored under the greatest pain and anguish, feeling that they were fit for nothing, and they were not permitted to dwell in the same place for a longer time; those spirits kept compelling them to migrate elsewhere; and they could not carry them with them any domestic furnishings; if they tried to take anything with them, contrary to the prohibition, they were compelled to send it back, so that family was lamenting about their unfortunate condition, miserable and poor, without any remedy. A certain neophyte, learning of that state of things, was persuaded that if they embraced the Christian faith, they would be delivered from the devil's possession by the grace of Christ, so he evangelized them and brought them into a village of Christians.

There the family began to fare better, and while they studied prayers and the catechism with great fervor they suffered no harm; but if they grew a little slothful and studied the Christian doctrine with less energy, or poured out their prayers less warmly, the former disease began to return; it even seemed that the spirit was urging them on to greater fervor. Then once the whole family was baptized, it was completely freed, and was said to enjoy the best health and vigorously cultivated the land.

But if I tried to relate each of these stories one by one, it would take too long.

During the year I have heard 2,867 confessions, I baptized 171 adults, I have regularized baptismal ceremonies for 17 adults, I have added 181 members to the *Sodalitas propagandae fidei*¹⁰³, the total number of Christians in my district is 4,075, with 108 catechumens.

Those apostates, who in the past year came with the satellites to arrest me in the village in which I was performing the sacraments, but were attacked and repulsed by the neophytes, have sought many other means to trouble the Christians, threatening to eradicate the name of Christian from Korea; but as they availed nothing, they approached some great men, hoping to obtain authority from them to exterminate the Christians, making many accusations against our holy religion; but, after being repulsed again by the same men in a disgraceful manner, they seemed to lie broken, at least physically if not mentally. The neophytes, who on that occasion were taken and imprisoned, were set free. But a certain village, on account of their disturbance, was wholly converted and became Christian. Father Féron brought with him many pious objects, by which you declared that I would be rich; but unhappily he lost them in a pagan boat: whence he and I have become poor, and we cannot appease the cries of our Christians who demand those things, cries which I bring to you, hoping that you will hear them.

If you wish, please send me sacred images well printed and well adapted to the eyes of these people, as far as possible printed on paper, without colors, and quite large: nearly all the B.V. Mary, but a few of saints Joseph, Peter and Paul, John, James, Francis, Anna, Agatha, Magdalena, Barbara, Lucy, Cecilia, Anastasia, for one hundred francs; and small crosses and medals, but not rosaries, for the Koreans make them well, and a solidly made alarm clock, light in weight, so that it can be easily carried on the roads, for another hundred francs, the whole for two hundred francs and charge that to the Most Illustrious Bishop Berneux, and I will immediately pay him this sum.

¹⁰³ *Sodalitas propagandae fidei*: A religious organization founded in France in 1822. Its purpose was to support missionary activities through prayer and fundraising.

Finally, I commend again to your pious prayers myself and my poor Koreans.

Your very feeble but most devoted son Thomas Choe.

PS:

Please send me a loaf of Spanish wax, which I need in order to seal reliquaries.

Letter 14

Place where written: Bulmugol

Date when written: September 15, 1857

Recipient: Father Libois

Most Reverend Father,

Since I have also written to Father Légrégeois, I find almost nothing to tell you, because the same things that I tell him will also reach you. Therefore, excuse me, and treat the letters which I send to him as letters also sent to you.

I received your letter in August 1856; if at any time you stopped writing to me, I do not know how I would comfort my desolation. We are all healthy enough; only our Most Illustrious Bishop Berneux is very weak from illness; I am much afraid lest he, being affected by a more serious illness, should be taken from us; he is working hard, and is very concerned about his pastoral work.

Oh, if we lost such a Shepherd, deprived of such goodness, how unhappy we would be! The souls of our faithful are renewed by him and all love him tenderly and faithfully. I am convinced that, if God preserves him for a long time, innumerable good things will befall us. The most illustrious Father Daveluy is devoting himself entirely to composing the history of the Korean Church, especially our martyrs; Father Pourthié¹⁰⁴ is the superior of the seminary; Father Féron is still entirely taken up in learning the language; Fathers Maistre, Petitnicolas¹⁰⁵ and I alone, together with Bishop Berneux, are committed to the care of Christ's faithful.

I shall be perceived to be exceeding my authority and to be writing to you impertinently, accused of speaking slanderous and rash things; but I am persuaded by the friendship, and trust which I have in you, a sincere heart prompting me to speak, convinced that this will be very expedient for you to hear, and will to some degree be useful for some others.

Under the predecessor of the Most Illustrious Bishop Berneux, the Most Illustrious Bishop Ferréol, there were many complaints among the Christians against the Bishop himself, especially on account of his assistants, who were in many respects very reprehensible, excessively puffed up by their nobility, hated by all, and only loved by Most Illustrious Bishop Ferréol, and they alone were his confidential assistants. And yet I saw that they were very hurtful both to the Bishop himself and to everyone else, so that I asked the Bishop several times, by letter and face to face, to dismiss them; but I was able to gain

¹⁰⁴ Jean Antoine Pourthié, Martyr, was a missionary belonging to the Foreign Missions Society. He was born on December 20, 1830 in the 'Valence en Albigeois' region of Albi, France, and was ordained a priest on June 11, 1854. He immediately joined the Foreign Missions Society and was sent as a missionary to Guizhou, China in 1855. He entered Korea and worked to train Korean seminarians as the principal of the St. Joseph Theological Seminary in Baeron, Chungcheong Province. He was at Father Thomas Choe's side when he died in 1861. During the Byeongin Persecution in 1866, he was arrested along with Father Petincolas, and the seminary director, Joseph Jang Ju-gi. Immediately after his martyrdom, his body was buried in Waegogae by Christians, then moved to Yongsan Sacred Heart Seminary in 1899, and to Myeongdong Cathedral in 1900.

¹⁰⁵ Michel-Alexandre Petitnicolas, born August 21, 1828 in Coinches (Vosges), was ordained priest in 1852. After going as a missionary to Pondichery (India) in 1853, he found the climate impossible and from 1855 until 1857 lived in Hong Kong, learning Chinese. Entering Korea in March 1858, he served for a time in the Seminary in Baeron, Chungcheong Province. Arrested early in 1866, he and Father Pourthie were beheaded together on March 12, 1866.

nothing, only his great indignation and their enmity against me. After the death of Bishop Ferréol again, despite the supplication of the Christians that they should be disbanded, they were retained for some time by Father Maistre, but after an event which caused a public scandal, they were finally sent away. But day by day they are even greater scandal to the faithful, and now they are no longer considered Christians.

Moreover, the aforesaid bishop greatly favored the party which is called noble in Korea, whose arrogance, pride, tyranny, and immorality, as the source of all evils and the cause of all miseries, the pagans themselves, and the nobles of a saner mind, admit and therefore detest them. He seemed to raise even higher the nobles, already too high, and further oppress the common people, already too unhappy and oppressed; thus there was daily major discord among the Christians, and indignation and despair among the destitute; and the fervor of the Christians decreased daily, and the evils seemed to be advancing at an ever greater pace.

I am writing these things to you, because I think that you, having previously fully recognized the nature of the mind of the Korean people, will not in vain warn all the missionaries who are to be sent to Korea, that they should not be too easily influenced by their assistants and ensnared by false prejudices, for otherwise they will do much harm to themselves and to others.

I do not, indeed, trust my own opinion too highly, and I reckon that each person should be allowed to hold his own opinion regarding many things; for there are some who judge the social customs of the Korean people to be good, according to which all the rights which the nobles claim should be granted to them; and as for the common people, that the commoners must be compelled to directly hand over all that the nobles demand, and thus the proud should always be favored for being proud, and the wretched must always be compelled to be even humbler. But in this way there will never be brotherly charity, and natural human dignity will be taken away from us, when noble birth alone is valued, and if a man does not have that, he is oppressed like something utterly worthless. Moreover, the spirit of Christ is then degraded, who always sides with the poor and the abject in words and deeds, but shows himself more severe to the proud and the powerful. Human nature, indeed, is always most prone to flatter the rich and powerful, and shrinks from the poor and humble.

Moreover, the Koreans are not composed completely irrationally, like the Brahmans and castes of India; they easily acquiesce to reason, and comprehend well the rectitude of reason and justice; if the same doctrine is unanimously preached to them, they will easily agree, as I myself have experienced. Many noble pagans themselves admit that the pretensions of the nobles are altogether unjust and that while this continues, Korea will never be happy. This stubborn division, however, will very easily be removed, and of itself will disappear without any effort or constraint, if worthier men were chosen for official positions without taking into account their birth.

As for me, even now I am quite healthy in body, but as to my soul I am sick with weaker health daily, I seem to be losing the vitality of my youth, and I am never able to forget those days which I spent living with you and Father de la Brunière¹⁰⁶ of blessed memory. Oh, if it were possible for me to enjoy life of that sort every year at least for a few weeks, how much better it would be for me! I commit myself over and over again to your prayers, for you know me and all my needs, and when that is done, I commend myself to you at the feet of the Crucified Lord Christ, before the most sacred throne where he is hidden under the appearances of the Eucharist, with his sweet mother Mary.

¹⁰⁶ Maxime de la Brunière (1816-1846): A missionary to China belonging to the Foreign Missions Society. When Choe Yang-eop left Macau in 1842, they were together for a time on a French ship. He was serving in Manchuria, where he was assigned, when he was murdered on July 7, 1846.

Your weakest servant Thomas Choe

Every year I send an extremely brief letter¹⁰⁷ to our Korean students in Penang; I do not know whence it comes that they have never received any; did the superior of the college confiscate them and not distribute them? It is very grievous to me that they, having so much difficulty, have received no consolation from me for many years. They themselves complained to me much about this in their last letters.

I forgot to make one request. I know that you do not have many rosaries for our Koreans; I do not know what the tool is called that serves to manufacture a solidly crafted rosary, but if you can procure one or more, you will make our Koreans the greatest gift of rosaries for the B.V. Mary and if you can send a quantity of copper wire, that will be very useful; for our Koreans only know how to make copper wire from red copper.

¹⁰⁷ No letters from Father Choe Yang-eop to the students in Penang have yet been found.

Letter 15

Place where written: Soriut¹⁰⁸

Date when written: October 20, 1857

Recipient: Bishop Verrolles¹⁰⁹

Most Illustrious Bishop,

In my previous letter to you I reported how anxiously and impatiently we were awaiting our most illustrious Bishop Berneux. Now that for more than a year we have rejoiced to have welcomed him in peace with two new missionaries¹¹⁰, although I do not doubt that you have been informed of that already, I cannot, for my part, be silent about such a singular blessing of God; for this grace I will not omit to give thanks also to you, who have willingly endured so many sacrifices for us, and especially that you have not refused to send to us your dear and so revered brother Coadjutor as our Pastor¹¹¹. I owe you many thanks for your letter, which you were pleased to write to me on December 12, 1856.

Adding to our joy this year, in a very strange way, contrary to our expectations, a new brother Father Féron¹¹² arrived in a pagan boat and Father Daveluy was raised to be Coadjutor Bishop of Acona¹¹³. How many thanks must we give to our dear God for so much compassion shown to us poor little ones! I ask you to thank Him for us.

As for other things, I can't say much. We are all getting along quite well, and the missionaries are all enjoying peace at the moment. Last year, some of the rioters who armed themselves and broke into the village where I was celebrating the divine mysteries in order to capture me were beaten by the clubs of our neophytes, some were punished by the magistrate, and others, panic-stricken, are lying helpless if not broken in spirit. The five Christian believers who were arrested and imprisoned on that occasion were released after several months in prison. Because of such violence, some false believers abandoned the faith, but on

¹⁰⁸ Soriut's position is unknown; it might have been a Christian village in Jeolla-do, Songol in Yongin, Bulmugol (Chungcheong-do), or near Odujae (Jeolla-do), etc.

¹⁰⁹ Bishop Emmanuel-Jean-François Verrolles (1805-1878) was a missionary of the Foreign Missions Society. In 1828, he received ordination and joined the Foreign Missions Society in 1830. After working as a priest in China from 1831, he was appointed as the first Vicar Apostolic of the Liaodong Vicariate (renamed the Manchurian Vicariate in 1840) in 1838, and was active until his death in 1878. After Choe Yang-eop left Macau in 1842, he tried to enter Korea while staying mainly at Bajiazi in Manchuria, and he attended the consecration of Bishop Ferréol by Bishop Verrolles in December 1843. After being ordained a priest in April 1849, he spent several months at Chagou Church in Liaodong, as an assistant to Father Berneux.

¹¹⁰ Fathers Pourthié and Petitnicolas, who entered the country with Bishop Berneux in March 1856.

¹¹¹ Originally, Bishop Berneux had been appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Manchuria by Bishop Verrolles before he was appointed as the head of the Korean Apostolic Vicariate. However, as of August 5, 1854, the Vatican appointed Bishop Berneux as the 4th Bishop of Korea, and so he became the head of the Vicariate of Korea rather than of Manchuria.

¹¹² Father Féron arrived in Seoul on March 31, 1857. Born in 1827, Stanislas Féron was ordained on December 21, 1850. Joining the Foreign Missions Society, he left France for Korea in January 1856. He (like fathers Adolphe Calais and Félix Ridel) avoided being arrested and killed with the nine other French missionaries in 1866 and escaped to China. He then, in the summer of 1868, accompanied the German adventurer Ernst Oppert on his notorious expedition to Korea that culminated in a failed attempt to steal the body of the father of the Regent. He never returned to Korea but served as a missionary in India from 1870 and died in 1903 in Iroudeiapally (India).

¹¹³ The consecration of Bishop Daveluy was celebrated in Seoul on March 25, 1857.

the other hand, by divine providence, during the same period, an entire village was completely converted and all became believers.

From day to day everywhere in Korea, almost all the pagans expect French ships to arrive. I do not know whence that general feeling comes, that through the French Korea will be transformed to a better state; but it is very hard for us to wait for them, as we have already been reduced to despair. It is true, indeed, that it is sufficiently clear that there is a necessity that they should arrive quickly; for unless the end of the world is at hand, it is incredible that under the supreme providence of God, such a thing could last such a long time; for there is so great a tyranny, and so great an oppression by the nobles and magistrates of the poor, and so complete a general disorder, that the end may seem altogether near at hand, and from within the nation itself there appears to be no remedy at all. But may the will of God always be done, and His kingdom come quickly, in which His holy name will be blessed.

Finally, I commend myself and my poor Koreans to your holy prayers.

Your very feeble servant Thomas Choe

Letter 16

Place where written: Odujae¹¹⁴

Date when written: October 3, 1858

Recipient: Father Legrégeois

Most Reverend Father,

In the last two years, God had given me joyful news to tell you, but this year, on the other hand, the same best and wise God, to whose providence in all things we must always submit, has given me very sad messages to write. For in this way God is wont sometimes to refresh sweetly his servants who are afflicted and sometimes to submit them to sadness wisely, to be tested.

Mourning for the deaths of Bishop Ferréol and Father Jangsou, perhaps we had set grief aside too quickly with the arrival of Bishop Berneux and the other new missionaries; and now we mourn again a year later the loss of Father Maistre, who, after so much hardship, and so long patience, at length by God's permission had been so wonderfully introduced into Korea, we had hoped that he would live longer than the others.

How great, Father, do you think my pain must be, and that of all the Christians, who knew very well all the labors and hardship which he endured so patiently for our sakes, and who held him most dear for his patience and meekness? In addition to sadness at his death, we are filled with the greatest fear concerning the infirmities of the other missionaries, especially Bishop Berneux, who dies every day from excessive anxiety and toil, and if we lose him, who will be able to console us? May God grant that, mindful of his infinite mercy and being merciful to our innumerable transgressions, he will preserve for us as long as possible our best and most vigilant Bishop. If he remembers our sins, may He send to us all kinds of calamities; only may He not take our Pastor from us.

Besides, a great famine has ravaged our poor people. One bushel of rice was previously bought for 20 or 25 cash, but now 80 or 90, and in some other places it is sold for 120 and more. Moreover, on account of the appearance of a comet¹¹⁵, the whole of Korea is filled with the greatest fear, for generally they think that the Korean government will soon be overthrown by the European ships; but most people impatiently wait for them to arrive, saying that Koreans could no longer remain in their own state, and that it was necessary that the ships should arrive quickly, and completely transform Korea into a better state. Now over the past few years there have been many wizards who have predicted the times and the number of arriving ships. I don't know whence comes that general sensation and secret disturbance of the mind. There are also not a few who are convinced that the whole of Korea will soon be Christian. Is this a kind of divine inspiration, or a divinely inspired presentiment?

But the government, until now, seems quite favorable toward our holy religion, and the minister, who has the supreme authority, is of the Kim clan, which has in general never shown itself too hostile to Christians; he is said to be well aware that missionaries are present, but pretends to know nothing about it.

¹¹⁴ Odujae (Otoutsai in Latin): This is presumed to be either a village below Odojae pass in Daehong-ri, Soyang-myeon, Wanju-gun, Jeollabuk-do, or a village below Odojae pass in Subong-ri, Modong-myeon, Sangju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do.

¹¹⁵ On August 7, the 9th year of King Cheoljong (1858), a comet appeared, and the public was terrified. The comet disappeared on September 23.

Accordingly, a violent general persecution has not arisen; nevertheless there is no greater freedom in practicing or embracing the Christian religion; for since there is a law¹¹⁶ prohibiting Christianity, every one, according to his own pleasure, harasses and disturbs Christians; nay, most of them are more hindered from obeying the divine call, breaking all the bonds of the world, and surrendering themselves immediately to Christ. For these, having understood the truth of the Christian religion, feel the necessity of embracing it on one hand, divine grace prompting them well; but, on the other hand, being deterred by the very great difficulty and dangers which confront them now, they prefer to wait until liberty is achieved, which is foretold by many to come soon, and in which they think that their safety should come without great loss.

There are, however, people who, despite such perils, and, overcoming all hardships, show themselves courageous in responding to the divine vocation: here is an example of one of them.

His name is Peter Kim, a descendant of a very distinguished family, of whom a certain man was once sent by the king with Korean forces to China to bring aid to the emperor against some rebels. On account of that campaign, that was fought bravely and with some remarkable achievements, he was appointed Prince of Liaodong, while his descendants were honored from generation to generation with great offices and brilliant dignities; a younger descendant lived with great wealth in the Korean capital city. He had three brothers: the eldest, enjoying high dignity, lived separately in one house; Peter the second, with his two younger brothers and mother, was living in the other house.

He lived until he was about twenty-four in all the vices which tend to flourish among the sons of similar status, indeed he was much superior to his contemporaries in this respect: he traveled through many provinces for the sake of curiosity and debauchery; he had four official concubines. Having first professed the sect of Fo, he tried all the other sects that exist in Korea, but was contented with none, and finding no truth in them, he began to seek for the Christian doctrine, which seemed to him, if not altogether true, at least of great importance, from the fact that many would gladly seek death on account of it; but he had no means of finding Christians to teach him the Christian doctrine itself.

At length he heard by a rumor that a certain man among his friends, who was living in a province quite remote from him, had left home, and had hidden himself in a deep valley, almost inaccessible to men, and he suspected that he had become a Christian. Accordingly, he went off to inquire of him, and after several days Peter arrived in the small village in which some Christians were living with that friend. At first, the horrid appearance of the village and its inhabitants, on the one hand, left Peter stunned, but on the other, by showing him what he had suspected, it very much consoled the visitor's hungry soul.

There he discovered that his friend had truly become a Christian, but at first the friend doubted his sincerity and was reluctant to reveal the truth, until he forced him to reveal exactly what he was looking for; then, being on the same day convinced of the truth of the Christian religion by his friend and other Christians of the village, he immediately determined to embrace it, and proclaimed that determination before all. On the following day, after he had memorized the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Decalogue, and the Acts of faith, hope, and charity, he took leave of the village and resumed his journey. While he was returning to his home, on the way he found many of his friends and some of his mistresses; but struggling with the greatest violence during the whole journey, that he might not consort with them as

¹¹⁶ The law forbidding Christianity, Choksa Yuneum was promulgated during the Gihae Persecution on the 18th day of the 10th month, 1839 (December 16 in the solar calendar).

before, got the better of himself, and arrived home, where he was to gain a yet greater victory.

He had a mother, brothers, concubines (his wife being already deceased), male and female slaves, an opulent family with ancestral tablets, and a great number of friends and kinsmen, and agricultural land. He had to fight with all these, and so long as any one of these enemies was not defeated, his victory was in danger. The first attack came from his mother: he explained to her the choice that he was determined to make, at the same time explaining the first truths of the Christian religion and exhorting her to profess it with him. But she wished to hear nothing, but rather endeavored with fury, tears, and threats to divert him from such a resolution; and on seeing that she was making no progress, she said that she would denounce him to her elder son and command him to kill him.

But our friend Peter, instead of being terrified, replied that he would willingly die at the hands of his mother and brother; but if they would neither kill him nor desire to become a Christian with him, he would forever say farewell to them and to the whole family, and take refuge in a remote region in order to cultivate the Christian religion. At length his mother, having been subdued, made peace with her son, and promised that she would acquiesce to all that seemed good to him. Therefore, Peter destroyed the tablets of the ancestors and left them all, rising up in the night, taking with him his mother and younger brothers, fled from his house and city, and came to the village in which he had been evangelized. and thus suddenly, for Christ's sake, from being rich, he became poor, from being a proud nobleman, he became a wretched mountain dweller.

If I am not tiring you, there is still one more story. A certain magistrate had with him as a concubine one of the public women of a certain province (for in each province there exists a custom established by long practice, in which young women are brought up until a certain age for the service of the magistrates; and with no lawful marriage, they are prepared to satisfy the lust of the magistrates and their officials, before they are taken as concubines by some official or any man, with a fixed sum of money being paid). This woman had a secret relationship with one of the servants of the magistrate. (There is another group¹¹⁷ in which young men are chosen to be servants of magistrates. They are ordinarily the sons of officials, they are taken for this role before they marry, and it is only from among their number that officials are chosen.) When the magistrate learned of this, he sent her back to her own city, but because of her love for that young man she secretly returned to him, and thus while they were living together, they embraced the Christian religion. Having been expelled for that reason from the father's house, they fled to one mountain village, freeing a slave-girl, adopting her as their daughter; and they who had formerly known only luxury and pleasure, now lived most miserably, cultivating dreadful mountains with their own hands, and were so patient and pious that they edified all the Christians most wonderfully.

A certain woman, who for many years had desired to become a Christian, had a fierce husband forbidding it, and since she lacked Christian friends, by whom she could at least secretly learn Christian doctrine, she could not embrace the Christian religion. After several years of prayer, she was finally baptized. When her husband learned of this, becoming mad, he wanted to compel her to practice superstition; and when the faithful servant of Christ was unwilling to perform it, he prepared to kill her. After she had been sorely wounded, the woman secretly fled from the man's house, now lives begging among the Christians, and contented with Christ, willingly remains deprived of her husband, children, and family.

¹¹⁷ The Tongin: also known as Ji-in. The sons of local officials (Hyang-ri) were mainly appointed to these positions, running small errands under the local chief.

In my previous letter I spoke of a young man who, upon hearing rumors, had visited a catechist in order to learn Christian doctrine, and after being repeatedly repulsed, finally was instructed and converted several families. He had promised to prepare all those families for baptism the following year and to have an oratory in his home. This year I was with them in the new oratory, but what a spectacle! As soon as they had greeted me as I entered their cottage, before I could say anything to them, (being moved by some kind of spirit), they filled the whole valley with their tears and cries, and began to soak with tears not only their faces, but even their clothes; they made such a noise that I, for my part, began to shout with all my might to restrain them from making so much noise, but above all, I could not sufficiently admire with how much fervor and enthusiasm they had learned the prayers and catechism. Little boys eight, nine and ten years old had fully mastered the whole catechism, which is very long with many formulas of prayer; but among many, especially old women, I was as much astonished by their ardor as by their stupidity; for they were of little wit and fleeting memory, and, after learning it all day long, they still could not retain one phrase.

In their neighborhood, one village of 12 families has been converted entirely. In this village a very numerous family, after having heard of the Christian religion, on account of their fear of the pagans, did not dare to decide to become Christians; finally, one 13-year-old boy from this family, being enraged with the cowardice of his parents and older brothers, seized all the vessels and instruments of superstition and broke them, saying, "Is it because of these impious things that you do not wish us to worship God our Lord and save our souls?" At that the whole family determined to embrace the Christian religion.

So this year I had plenty enough catechumens, over 400, but I baptized only a few of them, for the Bishop demands that they should not be baptized until after they have learned the whole catechism perfectly, but few were ready; many are so dull-witted that they will not be able to learn the whole for very many years, and there are also those who throughout their lives can never manage it.

At the beginning of my letter I forgot to thank you for your letter and the general circular letter that you deigned to send me on 26 July 1858, and from which I was able to learn more than what I had heard from my colleagues.

Last year I asked for many things from you with the permission of the most illustrious bishop. If you have not yet sent them, please procure them sooner and send them at the first occasion.

At this time I have yet to ask one thing, namely one solidly composed musical box for European music with a variety of well-sounding tunes, costing about 30 francs with several keys; I will pay the price to the Bishop. But above all I beg and entreat you to pour out the best prayers for me and my friends, and send as many as possible of the best missionaries. In addition, I ask you, my Father (although I think you were already asked separately by our bishop) that you give one copy of the Sichuan Synod¹¹⁸ to each of the missionaries who are destined for Korea to read with attention, especially chapter ten and the Appendix from articles 14 to the end, indeed I would have liked some to have read this carefully first.

¹¹⁸ Record of the decisions (Guidebook) of the Synod (Clergy Conference) held in the Apostolic Vicariate of Sichuan, China. Chapter 10 of this guide provides 'guidelines for missionaries' behavior toward believers' and 'guidelines for missionaries' behavior toward women' in the appendix. According to the 'Guidelines for the Korean Church' issued after the first synod, held in Seoul on March 25, 1857, all of the Sichuan guidelines were to be followed except for particular matters.

I forgot to say anything about Father Féron, of whom I have more to say; but I think it superfluous to say anything more, let it suffice if I tell you that we are close friends, that he is well, and is loved by the Christians.

Your most devoted son, Thomas Choe. Missionary in Korea.

* To the Reverend Father Légrégeois, Director of the Paris Foreign Missions Seminary.

Letter 17

Place where written: Odujae
Date when written: October 4, 1858
Recipient: Father Libois

Most Reverend Father,

Last year I sent a letter to you, as well as those which I wrote to Father Legrégois and our students in Penang, I do not know if you received them; but I have heard nothing except for a little from a man from the island of Quelpart¹¹⁹ who was shipwrecked. He was sent by the Chinese mandarins from Shanghai to Beijing, and from there reached Korea safely bringing letters and the indications necessary to find Christians, delivered by Paulino¹²⁰. After the greatest difficulty but with God's permission he successfully arrived in a village of Christians¹²¹ where Father Féron and I met him.

When we saw him and heard his account, we marveled at the immense goodness of God, by which He provided for his salvation so wonderfully, and perhaps for that of many others on that island. From his sayings and the fidelity with which he acted when seeking out Christians, we have set aside every doubt that he was confirmed in the true faith, and will be a good Christian; indeed, he has given us great hope that he will be a good apostle in his island, into which until now no Christian seed had fallen. He bade farewell to us, promising that he would return to his own home, the first to inform people there of our holy religion, and would return to me soon. But I do not know why until now nothing has been heard of him. I am much afraid lest he perished in crossing to the island, or if, desiring to convert his own people, he was captured and killed.

That island of Quelpart, known by Koreans as Jeju, was formerly independent, but it was conquered by Korea and is quite large and fertile: the island is divided into three¹²² principal prefectures; the inhabitants number about forty thousand men, as I reckon; they are said to be very ferocious. No one is permitted to enter that island except officials sent by the government or merchants who have permission from the magistrates; likewise, the islanders are not permitted to go across to the mainland, the women never, but only men authorized by the authorities; hence, if there should be some Christians, at least for now, I do not know what approach would be open to the missionaries; but God, once he has converted those islanders, will also open ways for them.

¹¹⁹ Kim Gi-ryang (Felix Peter, 1816-1866), a martyr from Jeju. In 1857, after being shipwrecked he visited the Far East delegation of the Foreign Missions Society in Hong Kong, where he met Paulino, a student on leave of absence from Penang Seminary, learned the doctrine, and was baptized. After that, he tried to evangelize Jeju while traveling to and from the mainland, but was martyred in Tongyeong during the Byeongin Persecution.

¹²⁰ Paulino Yi: Arrived at Penang Seminary in June 1855, but left the school due to health problems in October of the following year, and continued his studies while recuperating at the Foreign Missions Headquarters in Hong Kong. Then he returned to Korea in April 1861 and entered the Baeron Seminary, where he received the tonsure in 1864.

¹²¹ Kim Gi-ryang, right after returning to Korea, during Lent 1858 went to the Baeti Christian village (currently, Songjeon-ri, Mokcheon-eup, Cheonan-si) to meet the lay leader Simon Jang whom Paulino Yi had introduced him to, but he could not meet him. In another Christian village some 4 leagues away from there, either Sohakgol (currently Napan-ri, Buk-myeon, Cheonan-si, Chungcheongnam-do) or Seodeulgol in Mokchon (currently Songjeon-ri, Mokcheon-eup, Cheonan-si), he met Father Féron and Father Choe Yang-eop.

¹²² At this time Jeju Island was divided into three counties: Jeju-mok, Daejeong-hyeon and Jeongui-hyeon.

Of the others I have nothing to write to you except those things which I already wrote to Father Legrégeois; and I pray you will never forget me, who never forget you.

Your most devoted son, Thomas Choe

Letter 18

Place where written: Angok¹²³

Date when written: October 11, 1859

Recipient: Father Legrégois

My most reverend and dearest Father

I have received your letter dated 22 July 1858, for which I give you many thanks. And I think that you have received the letter I sent a year ago.

We truly hoped once spring had passed to welcome new missionaries and to receive news of the fathers; but by some chance our ship, which our illustrious bishop had sent to meet the fathers, after waiting for several days in the agreed place¹²⁴, could not find the boat from Jiangnan, by which the new brothers¹²⁵ were expected to come. Whence, seized with great anguish and fear, we prayed fervently, lest the fathers should have fallen victim to pirates or the waves of the sea; and we hoped that they would come by some ship landing upon our shores; but until now our expectation appears vain, and our fear increases daily.

More important than this sorrow, I am filled with the greatest consolation, being informed by you that the martyrs have already been recognized by the Vicar of Christ our common Father and were proclaimed Venerable¹²⁶ before the face of our Mother Church. Oh how joyful and glorious it will be for us to see them someday canonized¹²⁷ and named in public worship as saints of the whole Church! May the dear Lord grant that even in those barbarian countries His glory may be magnified, by showing the power of His most generous hands through the intercession of His servants so that, just as he was once honored by them through their fidelity, so he will be glorified by all through public worship .

Until now no miracle, at least publicly, has been performed by the intercession of our martyrs; perchance, because we did not know how to invoke them, nor did we endeavor to inculcate the idea among our faithful; some miraculous events are related about the former martyrs, but now it is difficult to obtain any clear and reliable knowledge of them on account of the lack of witnesses. In future, according to your orders, I will be more concerned to instill in my Christians a fervor for invoking the martyrs, indicating that through their intercession some God-given miracles are possible.

This year, by the mercy of God, all Christians in exile, except two, were released together with other prisoners on the occasion of the birth of the king's son¹²⁸, who, being the first-born, brought great joy to the kingdom and to the prisoners freedom; but besides that, he

¹²³ Angok (Ancock in Latin): This is generally assumed to be either today's Angok-ri, Mueulmyeon, Gumi-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, or Geumcheon-ri, Modong-myeon, Sangju-si. From the following letter of October 12, 1859, it can be seen that it was a Christian village within the pastoral jurisdiction of Father Féron.

¹²⁴ Near Baengnyeong Island in Hwanghae Province.

¹²⁵ In his Letter of 11 November 1857 to the Foreign Missions Society, Bishop Berneux requested to send two missionaries, and the Society despatched the missionaries on March 21 of the following year. Jean M.P.E. Landre and Pierre M. Joanno were sent to Korea. The two priests left Jiangnan, China in 1859 and tried to enter Korea, but failed and returned to Shanghai. They finally entered Korea on April 7, 1861.

¹²⁶ As explained above, all 82 martyrs listed in 'The Acts of the Martyrs of the Gihae and Byeongo Persecutions' were declared Venerable on September 23, 1857 (refer to the letter dated April 20, 1847)

¹²⁷ Of the 82 Venerable martyrs, 79 were beatified on July 5, 1925, and canonized on May 6, 1984, together with 24 others.

¹²⁸ The fact that prisoners were released on the birth of the prince is mentioned in The Annals of King Cheoljong Vol. 10, year 9 (1858) on the 18th and 19th days of the 10th month.

did and will do nothing more; for he died¹²⁹ shortly after. Would that he could have obtained eternal joy and freedom for himself!

The persecution incited by a very wicked woman, has ceased altogether; one Christian village was, by means of that woman, almost entirely made prisoner, but shortly all were restored to their former freedom. Throughout my whole apostolic career I have been almost always pursued by disturbances and persecutions caused by certain evil men, who, having joined the Christians as brothers, afterward became ravening wolves, and pursued them aggressively as enemies.

At one time especially I was in great danger. I had set out to visit a certain Christian village that was a two-day journey distant, but I was delayed because of very heavy snow. I was eager to continue toward that village but after two days, not being able to reach my destination, I diverted to a certain city, intending to spend the night there; but an innkeeper, with some troublemakers, denounced me to the magistrate of the town as someone suspicious. At that, the whole town was stirred up hastily, all my companions were dragged to the tribunal, laden with insults and curses, leaving me alone with the sacred objects in the inn.

The magistrate, who was of the Kim clan¹³⁰, who in general never show themselves to be hostile to the Christians, refused to examine us more closely, and after releasing my companions from prison ordered that we should immediately be expelled that very night from the city and that we should depart from its borders. Then the satellites, with people from almost the whole city, bringing back my men, rushed into the inn, with lanterns and torches lit, shouting and filling the house with excitement, and drove us out of that city with our clothes torn, our hats and shoes taken, and covered with wounds.

So we were driven from that refuge to which we had fled from the cold, into the stormy night, bruised by whippings, stripped of some of our clothing, through bitter cold and deep snow, and covered with the deepest darkness, and we advanced, indeed, wearied by injuries and pains, but rejoicing in our freedom. But the troop of satellites, following in our footsteps, again rushed upon us, and attempted to lay their hands on the sacred objects. But God did not permit this and the Blessed Virgin protected us. I threatened that I would return to the city magistrate, and open my baggage before him, but otherwise I would not permit them to touch my baggage. Then they did not venture any further to attack us, and at length let us go free. But in other places, because I was unwilling to grant the sacraments to them on account of the lack of the necessary disposition, some people grew angry and attempted to arrest me, but again, by the grace of God, I escaped safely from their own hands.

But while I am telling you these things, you will think that I am always afflicted by persecutions and tribulations, and that all our Koreans are very evil, treacherous, robbers, cruel, and troublemakers. But despite these hardships my consolation is on the other side is far greater; in fact, there is actually great comfort in those very labors and tribulations themselves, for this is our apostolic life, and this is the crown of our lot.

Therefore I will now try to share with you my other consolations and the various kinds of blessings of the divine Mercy. Although many are treacherous and our enemies, yet many more are good friends and faithful towards the divine grace, allies and comrades against those hosts of the devil; they have become soldiers for Christ with us; nay, by the gift of God in his goodness, they even lead our enemies themselves to come over to our side.

¹²⁹ Cheoljong's son died in the 4th month of 1859, six months after he was born, and there were no more children born thereafter.

¹³⁰ During the reign of King Cheoljong while the Andong Kim clan was dominant, the persecution against Catholics was relatively quiet.

In a certain village of twelve families all but three families were converted in the last two years. Not only did those three not become converted, but they became enemies, endeavored to turn away the converts from the start of their Christian profession, and endeavored to incite various persecutions against them. The neophytes themselves, however, responded to their enemies with nothing but patience, meekness, and friendly exhortations, urging that they too should embrace such a holy religion. And at last the neophytes overcame them, and they all collaborated in the same fold of Christ, built a new oratory, and presented themselves to me after learning almost all the prayers and catechisms the first time I came to them; and thus in this one oratory 32 adults and 10 infants were baptized and 17 were numbered as catechumens.

A man, recently converted, was already prepared for baptism, but on account of the infirmity from which he had been suffering for a long time, he was unable to leave his own room, let alone come to the oratory, which was two days' journey from his home, to receive the holy bath. He therefore called his friends, who had been converted with him, pouring out prayers before God, and refusing to ride in a litter, considering it too comfortable and grand for a sinful man, he ordered that they should carry him on a jige, which is a kind of frame for carrying loads upon the back. Thus he made the journey for the first day. On the following day he rejected the jige, and attempted to complete the rest of his journey on foot, although he could find no rest in his own house, not even when lying down in bed; across terrible mountains, through more than two feet of snow, without difficulty. He arrived leaping at the oratory, where, while waiting for me for more than ten days, he felt no pain. After baptism he still felt no inconvenience, and with a very fervent mind was filled with heavenly jubilation, and boasted that he had been healed in two ways, in mind and in body.

Another relative of the same man, after having been evangelized by a neophyte, returning to his own house, and wishing to clear his house of all objects of superstition, took first a certain vessel dedicated to the devil, and cast it to the ground with all his might; but without any damage it began to roll around on the ground intact; then after defending himself with the sign of the cross, he picked up the vessel again, and broke it in minutes without difficulty.

Then, when this new soldier of Christ had anathematized all superstitions, suddenly his horse, which was otherwise meek, became very ferocious, and bit people. The good neophyte, being exceedingly angry with the devil, by whom he believed the animal possessed, slew his horse. After that, all the harmful activity of the devil ceased; and the neophyte, with a firmer faith and more fervent zeal, prepared himself for baptism.

Another, having been converted in one city a few years before, persevered with great constancy in the faith, notwithstanding the daily persecutions of his mother and wife. But one day, his mother following him with the loudest shouts and curses, more than at other times, the good neophyte fled to the fields, and labored fasting all day long; At length the woman, moved by pity, procured some food, and brought it to her son, who was exhausted by hunger and toil; but while she was bringing it to him, she fell heavily, completely flat, and the vessels in which she was carrying the food were thrown to the ground; but neither the vessels nor the food suffered any harm. Seeing that, the woman reflected and said, "I have certainly done wrong; my son is much more just than me, and I have persecuted him in vain. It's a divine punishment that I have fallen so severely, I have been so severely wounded, while the food by which my son ought to be refreshed has suffered nothing." And at once she promised that she would also become a Christian. In the said Christian village of Ganwol many Christians dwell, but all these poor people had only a miserable oratory. A certain pagan on a visit was enraged that the house dedicated to divine worship was so pitiful and of his own accord offered to build a better oratory; which last year, constructed at last at the expense of the

pagan, and enriched by magnificent candlesticks, shines most magnificently, the best in the whole of my district, perhaps in the whole of Korea.

This year my illustrious Coadjutor visited one part of my mission district, which is exceedingly large, and demanding very long journeys between oratories, and full of ferocious and treacherous men in order to help¹³¹ me; in my annual administration, apart from those the Bishop visited, there were 2,124 annual confessions, 844 repetitions, 201 adult baptisms, and 361 catechumens.

For the Sainte Enfance¹³² we can do almost nothing in Korea, for the people do not usually expose their offspring. Some poor men, who are widowed and have no means of raising children, willingly entrust children that have lost their mothers to be nursed by strangers, but not for ever. It is very difficult to baptize dying infants. According to the custom of the Koreans, men are never admitted into the houses, but only into a separate area, where women and children almost never go; and unless the women are of the very lowest class, they never go among strangers. Hence, the most difficult task is to baptize infants at the point of death; only on rare occasions can something be done.

So far all our activities can only be done in secret, seizing opportunities, fearful as to whether they are right or wrong, furtively and in secret; nothing can be done in a firm, permanent and regular way. A village today safely inhabited by Christians can be unexpectedly driven out tomorrow. There is nowhere we can gather or leave any object, promising ourselves one month's security. So our Christians always live like pilgrims, they conceal with the greatest care not only all objects of religion, but also money and other things which they may have, lest they should be robbed by the pagans, the nobles and satellites; in fact, even many quite wealthy pagans live in a very poor manner, eating and wearing clothes most miserably, lest, if they appear rich, they may be robbed by the nobles.

Oh, how pained and compassionate we feel on seeing Christians everywhere and pagans treated unworthily by thieving nobles and their satellites! But if I begin to speak of the miseries of our wretched people I will never end; so, stopping here, I beg you and all my revered and dear Fathers, not to forget us and not to cease to implore the divine mercy.

The things which I asked for a couple of years ago, and which you told me in your last letter had already been procured for me, I have not yet received; as for what I requested a year ago, though it costs a little more, I ask you to procure a fairly good one.

Your most humble and obedient son, Thomas Choe

¹³¹ It is thought that at this time, Father Choe Yang-eop was working hard on the translation and compilation of his Breviary and Catechism while staying in a quiet place, and Bishop Daveluy visited some of the Christian villages in Gyeongsang-do to supplement the martyrdom materials.

¹³² Saint Enfance: A relief organization founded in 1843 in Paris, France. Its purpose was to give baptism to small children at the point of dying, and to succor and care for children suffering from hunger. It was introduced to Korea by Father Maistre in 1852.

Letter 19

Place where written: Angok¹³³

Date when written: October 12, 1859

Recipient: Father Libois

My dearest Father

I received your letter begun on May 28, and ended on August 29, 1858, through couriers sent to the Bianmen, and from it I learned that your health was greatly weakened, and I was seized with extreme anxiety and concern, fearing lest you, my very dear Father, should make me outlive you, as all my dear ones are wont to do. Likewise I fear for our Most Illustrious Bishop Berneux, who is always in ill health. If we were a little freer, we might be more easily able to provide for the health of him and the other fathers, but we are still so distressed and embarrassed that we are, as it were, laden with perpetual bonds. As for the other missionaries, they are well enough for now, although some have been severely weakened during the summer. But I always used to be very strong, although I am too weak to make long journeys. I can barely cover 40 li in just one day; so I always use a horse in my visitations, which are very long because of all the remote places I visit. The distance that I cover each year is ordinarily more than 7000 li or 700 leagues. Although my district is large, comprising five provinces and more than one hundred stations, no place is found safe enough for me to withdraw to during the summer, when, on account of the rain, temperatures, and agriculture, we are unable to make visits and are permitted to rest for several months. So this summer I took refuge in the district of Father Féron, and I set up my summer residence in the said village of Angok.

But probably I will also soon be driven out of this village. For in its vicinity there is a shrine that had been deserted for many years, and was falling into ruin. But a certain nobleman, who has grown rich by robberies and violent assaults, proposes to rebuild that shrine, so that he may be able to victimize the commoners from it. Therefore, if this plan is realized, the Christians who live in the neighborhood will be forced to contribute money and work. For this reason the inhabitants of this village of Ancok, which is close to this sanctuary and the noble plunderer, will not be able to stay and will be forced to transplant to other more remote places..

Our shipwrecked friend¹³⁴ from Quelpart, after coming up to Seoul to receive the annual sacraments, has returned home, but could do nothing until now for the conversion of his family and the islanders. Some are indeed persuaded of the truth of Christianity, but they say that for them it is not now possible to practice the Christian law, and promise that they will become Christians when there is freedom for our holy religion. There are indeed in that island, as in all Korea, many good but feeble souls: they wish indeed to worship the true God and thus to save their souls; yet, on account of the fear of the cruelty of the Korean laws, they have not enough courage and resolve to profess the Christian faith.

Oh how many souls, especially women under the rule of men or their parents, groan daily when so encumbered, and pine away with sighs! Oh, if the Christian princes knew a little about the situation of such souls, how quickly they would come to their rescue! To them how easy it would be to procure the salvation of so many men; as for France, it would suffice

¹³³ Angok: currently Oesan-myeon, Buyeo-gun, South Chungcheong Province.

¹³⁴ Kim Gi-ryang went to the mainland in the spring of 1859 to meet Father Féron, then went up to Seoul to meet Bishop Berneux, received the sacrament, and returned to Jeju.

that it should once declare publicly to our government that it demands absolutely that it give to its subjects the freedom to embrace the Christian religion; at least it would not dare to speak out against it. But may the almighty and dear God of Mercies have mercy on us, on whom the hearts of all depend, and to whom it belongs to guide all bravely and gently to the salvation of those who are to be saved. To this end may you direct your wishes and prayers, whose zeal and sincere benevolence toward us poor Koreans I know well; I beg you never to forget your best friend and son, whose infirmity you know, while I never omit to remember you every day when I celebrate Mass.

Please read the letter I am sending to Father Legrégeois then send it on to him.

To you Father, your very humble and obedient son, Thomas Choe.

Letter 20

Place where written: Angok
Date when written: October 13, 1859
Recipient: Bishop Verrolles

Most Illustrious Prelate,

I have received your letter of 21 December 1858 through couriers from the Bianmen, and I cannot express in writing how much comfort and joy it has brought me. It has reminded me of all the reverend fathers, your fellow missionaries, and at the same time all the faithful with whom I lived so many years ago. Through them I am moved to congratulate you on the successful feats of the French forces in your mission, and indeed in the whole of China; but I have also been moved to hope that soon even in our wretched Korea we will see at length the desired freedom. But at least for this year our hopes seem vain, for nothing is said about French arms which, it is said, produce great goods everywhere. Among us, however, especially after the shipwreck of Gogunsan Islands, they are considered either very cowardly or liars, for they said that they would return again to recover what was left after the shipwreck¹³⁵ and to repay the Korean government which afforded assistance when they were in that extreme necessity but not a single word has been heard from them for several years. And yet, on account of their fear, because they are not unaware thanks to the messages from Beijing that the French are dominant in China, our ministers dare not, as it seems, publicly pursue us Christians, and missionaries, whose presence is at least known to them.

Some magistrates arrest Christians according to the law; but ordinarily, when the ministers do not approve, they release them again; but since there still exists a law proscribing our holy religion, it is lawful for anyone to harass us with every kind of indignity and disbelief, so we are, as it were, always undergoing persecution. Because of this, many, although understanding well the Christian truth, defer their conversion until a future time of freedom, which they think will come soon. But still not a few, not fearing the loss of their goods, all the reproaches, and miseries of all kinds, obey the divine call, and present themselves as faithful to the law of the Gospel, so in this year in my mission district alone the number of catechumens reached 500, among whom more than 200 were baptized.

Besides them there are very many who, having understood the truth of the Christian religion, wish to give themselves to Christ, but, not having sufficient courage and daring, defer their conversion until the coming of the freedom for which they are impatiently waiting. Therefore, that this happy day may soon shine upon us, may your Reverence deign to earnestly invoke the divine clemency, and I beseech you to remember us more often in the presence of our most loving Lord Jesus Christ, and our most blessed Virgin Mother.

Your Reverence's very humble and most obedient son, Thomas Choe.

¹³⁵ The shipwreck of the French ships La Gloire and La Victorieuse at Gogunsan Islands in August 1847.

Letter 21

Place where written: Jungnim¹³⁶

Date when written: September 3, 1860

Recipients: Fathers Libois and Legrégeois

Most Reverend and Dear Fathers¹³⁷,

First, I ask pardon that I am writing a shared letter to you both. But I am in such a difficult situation that I can scarcely send this little note to both my dear fathers. Driven to this remote part of Korea by a storm of persecution¹³⁸, I have had no communication with the Christians, and now for several months I have heard no news from the bishop and other missionaries. I do not know whether they are still alive. I doubt even whether this letter can be carried to China. I do not yet know how this persecution began, and the end is not yet apparent: not many Christians have been arrested, almost no women; the satellites are sent out everywhere to follow the footsteps of the missionaries.

In my district at least 17, as I have been told, were taken, 14 men and 3 women; but the rest, almost all the faithful, especially in this province, have been driven out of their villages, and deprived of their houses, lands, and all their goods, and wander most miserably hither and thither without any relief or refuge.

In the villages where Christians were arrested and led away to prison, all were handed over to the exactions and fury of the satellites. Many pagans who had received among themselves Christian kinsmen or friends seeking refuge experienced similar misfortunes. Therefore, lest they suffer any harm on account of their dwelling together with Christians, by one accord all the inhabitants of every place drive them out, so that the faithful of Christ cannot stay anywhere.

Christians are generally thought to be very many, hence the government considers that it is unable to arrest them all, confine them in prison, and judge each one of them, so it does not intend, at least as it appears, to capture each one, but by sending satellites here and there, it displaces all the Christians and arms all the pagans against them. This method of persecuting is much crueler and more dangerous to us.

Among the 17 captives 3 were released, I do not know how, but probably by apostasy; two were taken to the capital; one was imprisoned in the city of Daegu, the capital of that province, but a rumor reports that he has been released in recent days. One most fervent Christian old woman, who in that city had established a fairly numerous Christian village by her preaching, and supported by her doctrine and piety the whole village, confessed Christ vigorously in the first questioning, and was so tortured that by her wounds she achieved martyrdom.

Ten, however, in the city of Gyeongju are said to be in prison; they have undergone three interrogations, and have been strong in every confession of Christ, and to this day they

¹³⁶ Jungnim (Bamboo forest): It is presumed to be a Christian Village in Icheon-ri, Sangbukmyeon, Ulju-gun, Ulsan, or Jukjeon [Daebat], a cave covered by a bamboo forest in the middle of Ganwol Mountain.

¹³⁷ This is the last letter written by Father Choe Yang-eop before his death (June 15, 1861).

¹³⁸ The Gyeongsin Persecution: Persecution continued from the end of 1859 to the summer of 1860 (Gyeongsin year). It was caused by Shin Myeong-sun, head of the Right Police Bureau, and Im Tae-yeong, the head of the Left Police Bureau, who had a strong dislike for Catholicism. Many of the believers living in Christian villages were arrested. However, in the process, looting by satellites became a problem, the persecution stopped, and in the 4th and 5th months of 1860, the two leaders were changed. Due to this persecution, Father Petitnicolas of Baeti in Jincheon suffered particularly.

remain constant amidst all the horrors of prison, starving, and most miserably afflicted with diseases. Among them one boy, 16 years of age, presented himself to the judges to unite himself to his father in the confession of Christ; he, above everyone else, was admired by all brave men, even the pagans. And a certain virgin, about 24 years old, honored for practicing all the Christian virtues with fervor, and very desirous of martyrdom, longed to be carried away to jail. So, while her father and other Christians were being arrested, as the satellites were rushing around she did not want to leave the place. At last, compelled by her father and other Christians, she went to a nearby house and waited there with two girls, one 17 years old and another 18 years old of whom she was the teacher and preceptor; and when the satellites arrived, she surrendered to them so that they might lead her off into prison with her father and brother, because she worshiped the same religion as they; then the other girls also imitated her, and surrendered themselves.

The satellites therefore led away these three girls with their thumbs tied; but since they had not received any orders about seizing women, they led them off, not to present them to the magistrate, but to abuse them or to sell them; when this design came to light, those girls began to beseech the satellites that they should be set free, which they obtained, God softening the minds of those beasts.

Agatha, for that was the name of the eldest, having been set free with her companions, while her father and brother were led away to jail, went wandering hither and thither through innumerable perils without any relief or refuge. At length, after finding refuge with me, having contracted an illness from fatigue, a little after, having piously received all the sacraments, in the very moment in which we spoke the last syllable of prayer of commendation, breathed her last breath to the edification of all those who stood by.

Before this persecution we had been filled with much comfort and raised in great hope, seeing that there was a great movement among disbelievers, who wanted to understand and embrace the Christian religion. In my mission district alone, the number of baptized and catechumens could easily have reached a thousand. Some entire villages were learning Christian prayers and catechisms with eagerness and zeal. But this persecution turned all the pagans against the religion, driving out faithful followers of Christ, so that this positive movement is entirely closed off, and many, driven by despair and not yet rooted in faith, appear at least outwardly to have turned away; even those who seem to be constant up to this time daily undergo the same danger. Younger widows and girls especially are at greater risk. A certain Christian widow was seized by the pagans; one young woman, whose husband had been taken captive and cast into prison, and another girl had been similarly captured; but, by the grace of God, they were happily liberated untouched. A number of maidens living among the pagans are now destitute of all hope.

Thus there is a constant danger of being captured and raped for persons of this sort, so that I thought that I should permit Agatha, mentioned above, to live in some cave, committing herself entirely to the divine providence, although it was evident that she would be consumed by hunger without a miracle. She earnestly sought this permission before she fell into a mortal sickness, fearing lest she should be driven out of that refuge even, and be compelled to wander, separated from me, without any other safe refuge.

A certain family named Jo, very distinguished in studies and fortune, had lately been converted together with several other members of his family; having sold all his property, he went to live among the Christians some ten days before and was then robbed of all his goods by the satellites; their house was set on fire, so that sixteen persons were left almost naked. They sought refuge in a certain empty house deserted by its Christian inhabitants, for fear of the satellites, and having obtained alms from some friend, they were able to procure the necessary food for some time; but then, again driven out of that house, and despoiled, they

fled to another place, and wretchedly subsisted by begging from their friends, that family which had formerly lived in luxury.

However, those good neophytes are not grieving much over the misfortune and disgrace; Their only pain is that they could not be baptized on account of the persecution; fourteen persons in that one family, fully prepared to be baptized, daily await to welcome a missionary in their home.

The Korean government, along with the whole people, is always suspicious that Christians and missionaries are plotting some evil against the kingdom; and thus they reason:

“If their religion is good, as it appears outwardly, and contains no evil under the appearance of good, why do they practice it in private; and especially, why do the preachers creep stealthily into another nation and secretly spread their doctrine, especially when their nation is said to be very powerful, and to have nothing to fear from us, and with their princes worshipers of the same religion, supporting their efforts in propagating the same, which according to their doctrine is absolutely necessary for the salvation of all; therefore, while receiving the protection of the monarchs, who are believers, they should be pushing for the expansion of that religion by the Korean people; why then do they not act legally, why do they not come in public, and act in a friendly and legal manner with the government? Why do they all thus stealthily enter in secret as these wretches do, and act so furtively? Certainly we cannot understand the way they behave: there must necessarily be some kind of bad intention. etc.”

Following this kind of reasoning, the Koreans have begun to conceive great contempt and hatred towards the Christians and the European ships, which keep visiting for no reason and which they know are all Christians. Once upon a time they feared them much, and reckoned there to be something great about them; but having already expected them for several years, but seeing nothing, talking among themselves they think that they must be pirates. “Certainly these great ships must be pirates, or vehicles of some evildoers; for if they belonged to any nation established under legitimate authority, how could they thus keep coming to other nations without any cause, saying nothing, good or evil, to the authorities of the state? For who enters another's house without any reason, without saying anything to the master of the house, neither good nor bad? Of necessity they must be altogether barbarians, or pirates seeking opportunity for piracy.”

These and similar arguments stimulate a great animosity against Christians, so that everyone, even simple rural people persecute them; and they threaten that if within two years nothing comes from the ships, all the Christians must be exterminated to the very last one.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; do not forget your tender mercies, you on whom the eyes of us all are fixed, our only hope; We have sinned indeed, and we have done exceeding wrong; but if you heed our iniquities, who can endure it? Spare us therefore, and remember your ancient mercies, graciously hear our prayers and the prayers of all your saints, and deliver us from this distress; for exceedingly great tribulations have come upon us, and your enemies have rushed upon us, and desire to destroy your inheritance, which you have redeemed with your precious blood. Unless we receive help from on high, we will not be able to stand against them.

Therefore, I ask this help, my dear Fathers, through your pious prayers, that you may obtain this for us from Almighty God and his Holy Mother.

These little lines are like a last farewell; for I do not hope that I will be able to escape from the hands of the emissaries wherever they pursue me, I commend our poor mission to your incessant solicitude and your untiring love, again and again.

In my administration during the first half of this year I heard 1,622 confessions; administered 203 adult baptisms; 13 adults were baptized by believers at the moment of death; 398 became catechumens.

Your most humble and most obedient servant Thomas Choe, Priest of the Korean mission.

Thomas Choe's Latin translation of Bishop Ferréol's Acts of the Martyrs

In early 1847, Thomas Choe Yang-eop, already a deacon, arrived at the Far Eastern Headquarters of the Foreign Missions Society, which had by then moved from Macao to Hong Kong. There he translated into Latin Bishop Ferréol's French "Acts," adding information about the martyrs of 1846 from a letter written in November 1846 by Bishop Ferréol. Unlike Kim Dae-geon, he had leisure to produce a complete and mostly very accurate translation of Ferréol's text.

The French version (translated from the Korean by Bishop Ferréol) is found in MEP Archives Volume 577 ff. 831-960

English translation by Brother Anthony

(The final section, for 1846, is not part of Bishop Ferréol's original text)

The Latin translation of the French made by Thomas Choe Yang-eop is in MEP Archives Volume 579 ff. 150-1-150-43

In this text, the English is a translation of the French text which Choe Yang-eop translated into Latin. The explanatory notes are by Bishop Ferréol. Names in the English are given using the modern romanization system, together with the Korean (Hangeul).

Go: I send you as lambs among wolves (Luke 10: 3)

If the world hates you, know that I hated me first (John 15: 18)

In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!

(John 16: 33)

Acts of some Korean martyrs during the persecution of 1839, collected by Charles Hyeon¹³⁹ and Thomas Yi¹⁴⁰. (Bishop Ferréol: September 22, 1846)

After the persecution of 1801, the church in Korea remained in a state of great weakness for several years. The only pastor it had had disappeared, the principal Christians had been put to death or sent into exile, and all communication with the church in Peking had been interrupted. However, the faithful, who were distinguished by their piety, did not cease to call for the moment when they would see in their midst new priests to lead them in the way of salvation. God answered them by opening the way that had been closed until then.

The government interpreter, Augustine Yu [유진길 Yu Jin-gil] and his second-in-command Charles Jo [조신철 Jo Sin-cheol] embraced the faith. As they followed the embassy to Peking every year, it was easy for them to deal with our religious affairs and to renew our correspondence with the bishop who then took care of us. They asked him for

¹³⁹ Charles Hyeon [현석문 Hyeon Seok-mun] is Korea's leading catechist. It is to him and some others that the bishop before dying left the care of Christianity. He was caught in this persecution of 1846 and he is still in prison. Undoubtedly he will follow to the place of triumph those whose deeds he has collected. (He had his head cut off on September 19.)

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Yi or Ly [이재의 Yi Jae-ui], following the Chinese pronunciation, is the grandson of Mandarin Ly (이승훈 Yi Seung-hun) who introduced religion to Korea. The king actively seeks him out.

evangelical workers; the prelate promised them some. This promise raised our courage. In 1833 Fr. Pacific Yu [余恒德 Chinese pronunciation: Yu Heng-de, Korean 여항덕 Yeo Hang-deok] entered this kingdom first; he stayed only three years and then withdrew. In 1835 Fr. Maubant, after long journeys, was able to reach the border and cross it. The following year he was followed by Fr. Chastan, and in 1837 we were able to see our first pastor, Bishop Imbert, in our midst. A great light then spread over our eastern land and dispelled the darkness. The weak in faith were strengthened, the lukewarm became fervent, many pagans heard the good news and the baptismal water flowed over their foreheads.

But alas! the enemy of good brought us new misfortunes. He threw into the heart of a false brother greed, which once lost the traitor Judas. Kim Yeo-sam [김여삼 Kim Yeo-sam] was the name of this false brother. He went to the chief of the satellites and received from him the price of his treachery and denounced to him the leaders among us.

This was in December 1838: from then on the persecution was declared. For some years now, famine had afflicted the country. The satellites, urged on by the thirst for plunder, threw themselves on the denounced houses, devastated them, chained up the inhabitants and crammed them into prisons. The first judge of the court of crimes informed the court of the affairs of the Christians. Those who had apostatized were set free and their property was returned to them. The storm calmed down for a moment, but soon, on the basis of new accusations brought by one of the prime ministers, the horizon of our unfortunate homeland became darker than ever. The apostates were once again targeted: the twelve meeting places we had in the capital were stormed and ruined. The crosier, the mitre and the other episcopal ornaments fell into the hands of our enemies. They amused themselves by parodying our holy ceremonies. The seizure of religious objects made the searches more severe and increased the torture: they wanted to know where they came from. The Christians were beaten and did not utter a word that could compromise the bishop and his confreres. At that time the minister Yi [이지연 Yi Ji-yeon] warned the court; a terrible edict against the Christians was made and sent to all places. However, the governors of the provinces did not press its execution too much. Soon afterwards the minister Yi was changed, and Jo [조인영 Jo In-yeong] our most bitter enemy took his place. The persecution only became more ardent. He had all the Christians in the prisons of the capital strangled, with the exception of three on whose fate he made no ruling.

Bishop Imbert was in Seoul¹⁴¹, and he left to go to fathers Maubant and Chastan, who were administering the Christians in the southern provinces. Their presence in the kingdom was still a mystery. They spent three days together deliberating on what to do in such bad times. Unable to leave the kingdom, because all escape was closed to them, they concluded that they should take the prudent measures required by the circumstances, and await with resignation the events which providence was preparing for them.

However, the traitor Kim Yeo-sam [김여삼] was looking for the opportunity to hand over the bishop and his collaborators, whom they had just denounced. The simplicity of a Christian offered it to him. Taking some satellites with him, he went to him and said, “The good news I have to tell you! Do you know that the king and his ministers have been converted? They want to learn religion thoroughly and receive baptism from the bishop. They

¹⁴¹ Seoul, or capital, of Korea. It is in Korea the name of the city where the court resides.

are sending these people to introduce him to the court. You know his retreat, teach it to me and let's go together to his house." The Christian fell into the trap, transported with joy, he left with this wretch; he left the satellites three leagues away and the traitor only a little distance away; he entered the bishop's house and told him things as he had just heard them: "You are simple enough to believe such stories! You have been deceived," replied the bishop. Judging escape impossible, fatal even to his flock, Bishop Imbert celebrated mass, took a modest meal, and surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies.

The government, seeing in its power the leader of the Christians, wanted at all costs to seize the two other priests. It directed its emissaries on all sides, the prisons were filled with faithful. The two Europeans could not remain hidden for long without being caught, so the bishop wrote them these few words: "A good shepherd gives his life for his sheep: in the extreme situation in which we find ourselves, please go to the capital immediately upon receiving this note. Do not allow any of your servants to follow you." A minor mandarin escorted by some soldiers carried the letter. The two priests received it with great joy, immediately made their final arrangements for the good care of the Christians after their death, and went gladly to the palm that awaited them. The same prison brought together the bishop and his collaborators; the same day saw them ascend to heaven and take possession of the crown of the martyrs.

About two hundred people from Seoul were taken; about fifty of them had their heads cut off; in the prison more than sixty people were strangled or died as a result of torture and disease. Those among them who had apostatized recanted before death and retracted their apostasy. Seeing the signs of their sorrow, the prison guards said: "Their mouths only have renounced their religion, their hearts have remained the same." Truly, added the other apostates as they left prison, there is no need to fear for their salvation: no more can be demanded for their contrition, even the children died with delightful contentment." The other prisoners were set free.

In the province of Jeolla, nine people had their heads cut off, five of whom had been in prison for thirteen years. A dozen expired under the blows or died in prison. In the province of Gyeongsang three had their heads cut off. In that of Gangwon one had the head cut off, two died in prison, two were sent into exile.

In the province of Chungcheong, seven were taken and sent to Seoul; some had their heads cut off, the others died in prison.

In the province of Gyeonggi and outside the capital nine died in prison.

Two years after this great persecution, the Christians were again sought in Seoul: God protected us; only seven people were taken and martyred.

The traitor Kim Yeo-sam believed that he had great merit and expected a great reward; he became the object of public abhorrence. The following year, having associated himself with another bad wretch, he again wanted to provoke a persecution against the Christians, he was caught, beaten and sent into perpetual exile.

Minister Yi fell into disgrace and was sent into exile, where he died almost on arrival.

Minister Jo¹⁴² died at the table, in the midst of his glory. Thus prosper those who wish to rise against the Most High.

The torments

¹⁴² Jo was the king's maternal uncle. The latter, fearing his power, ordered him to drink the poisoned cup; he expired almost immediately. This happened in the month of December 1845, ten days before my entry into the capital.

In order not to repeat the description of the torments for each martyrdom, we will give it here once and for all. There are nine kinds:

1. The plank: it is a plank of very hard oak, one and a half inches thick, three quarters of a foot wide, four feet long, and finished with a handle at one end. The patient was made to lie on the ground with his stomach against the ground, and a strong man took hold of the instrument and struck the soft parts of the leg with violence above the hock. After a few blows the blood gushes out, the flesh falls off and flies into shreds. At the tenth blow, the board has reached the bones and only a horrible sound can be heard. There were Christians who received more than sixty of these blows at one time. The patient, the executioner and the ground around him are covered with blood and pieces of flesh.

2. The rod: these are three large rods intertwined in the form of a rope. The patient is beaten with them all over his naked body.

3. The long sticks: there are four of them; they are the height of a man and the size of an arm. Four men surrounding the patient all strike at the same time with the point in the hips and thighs.

4. Bending of the legs: the two big toes of the feet are tied together and the two legs are tied together above the knee, two sticks are passed between them and they are spread little by little until the bones take the shape of an arc; after which they are released insensitively. Or after binding the two big toes of the feet together, a piece of wood is put between the legs, and two men, each pulling a rope attached to each knee, bring them together little by little until they touch.

5. The dislocation of the arms: they are tied behind the back strongly one against the other up to the top of the elbow and with two sticks they are separated with violence, then by means of two ropes attached to each arm the shoulders are brought closer together; then untying the whole, a man takes the hands of the patient, presses a foot on his chest and pulls the arms towards him to put the bones back in their place.

6. Rubbing the legs: this torture consists of rubbing with a triangular stick on the front of the legs. Soon the skin is removed and the stick grates on the bones.

7. The saw-rope: a rope is wrapped around the leg and two men each take it by one end and pull and release it in the manner of two sawyers, until it reaches the bone, after which it is carried to another place.

8. Suspension: the patient is stripped of his clothes, his hands are tied behind his back and he is suspended in the air by his arms; then four men strike him with a stick each in turn. Soon the tongue and foam come out of his mouth; a purple color covers his face; they take him down before he expires then begin the same torture again.

9. The ruler: this is a small board two inches wide, three feet long and a few lines thick. When the Christian did not deny his faith at the first tribunal, he was transferred to the second. There he undergoes three interrogations and each time he receives thirty blows with the ruler on the front of his leg. The wood is prepared in such a way that it breaks at the first blow, so that thirty are needed for each interrogation. If, after the third question, he is still firm, his sentence is pronounced. The sentence is that he is condemned to death for following an evil doctrine. The laws of the kingdom require that the condemned criminal before undergoing his sentence, sign it with his own hand. The martyrs all refused to do so. "Our religion is true, is the only true one," they replied; "we cannot attest that it is false." Each one's hand was taken and forcibly made to sign.

It is understandable that after such torture, the patient had no use of his limbs. After the interrogation two executioners picked him up on two sticks and carried him into his dungeon with his arms and legs hanging down.

The prisons

It is a vast enclosure surrounded by high walls; in the interior are arranged huts made of planks: a very small door allows entrance; there are no windows, and the daylight penetrates only weakly. In winter it is cold¹⁴³ and in summer it is intolerably hot. The floor of these huts is covered with mats made of coarse straw. The Christians were so crammed together that they could not stretch their legs. They all confessed that the torments described above were nothing compared to what they had to suffer in that awful place. The blood and pus that came out of their wounds soon rotted the mats and spread an unbearable infection everywhere.

But hunger, hunger especially, was their main torment; a certain number who had endured the other torments could not stand up to it. They were given something to eat twice a day, each time a small bowl of millet the size of a fist. They were reduced to devouring even the rotten straw on which they were lying. Lice, fleas and bugs abounded so much in their prisons that they took them by the handful, and what is horrifying, they did not disdain to make them their food. A pestilential disease set in among them and took many of them away. In the midst of so much suffering, these generous athletes of J.C. had only one fear, that of dying before they could put their heads under the axe of the executioner, and they took medicines to prolong their existence.

(*Found in the French after Mary Hieng*) This is the way in which the execution of Christians was carried out: it did not differ from that of criminals condemned to death by capital punishment. On the day of the execution, a cart was brought to the prison and a cross was placed in the middle of it, higher than a man's height. When everything was prepared, the executioner took the condemned man on his shoulders and tied him to the cross by his arms and hair, putting a log under his feet to relieve him, and giving the sign of departure. When the convoy reached the western gate of the city, which overlooked a steep slope, the executioner removed the block from under the patient's feet and the driver spurred the oxen, which rushed downhill. The path is rough, full of stones; the cart makes terrible jolts; the body of the martyr, who is supported only by his arms and head, receives jerky movements to the right and left, which make him suffer horribly. At the end of the descent is the place of torture. The executioner untied the Christian, stripped him of his clothes, and leaning his head on a piece of wood, cut it off.

In Korea, in the judgment of criminals, great secrecy is kept. Almost all the confessors wrote letters; it is a pity that they were lost, as they could have given us some interesting details. We will give here the few that we have been able to obtain: we certify their authenticity.

Laurent Imbert, bishop

Laurent Imbert was French. God blessed him at birth with a happy disposition to virtue and science. He had a generous and compassionate heart. Still young, when he was barely seven years old, his father used to read edifying letters to him: his heart was deeply moved when he learned that there were so many pagan nations on earth that were being lost for lack of priests who would teach them the truth. He said to his father, "One day I will go to these distant countries to preach religion and save these souls who are falling into hell." This generous resolution grew with age. He did his studies with distinction, received the priesthood and left for the missions. He arrived happily in China, where he spent about fifteen years. He made rapid progress in the study of the language. His bishop entrusted him

¹⁴³ This past winter, the thermometer dropped in Seoul to 20° Réaumur.

with the college where young men were preparing for the priesthood. The perfume of his virtues spread far and wide. Appointed bishop of Capsus and vicar apostolic of Korea and the Ryukyu Islands, he immediately set out to take up his assigned post. He counted the fatigue and the countless dangers that he had to face as nothing. His journey lasted several months. He entered Seoul, the capital of Korea, on the first day of the 12th lunar month of the year Jeong-yu (丁酉 정유) (December 28, 1837). He began to study the language ardently; after a few months he knew it well enough to hear confessions and administer the sacraments. He had our prayer books translated from Chinese into Korean. From then on, everyone, learned and ignorant, young and old, understood them¹⁴⁴. His assiduity in prayer, his zeal for the preaching of the divine word, his diligence in work were worthy of admiration. Everything in him was regulated; not the slightest action was not done in its determined time. He fasted three times a week; his zeal often made him forget to take his sleep and his meals. If he treated himself harshly, he was very gentle with others. Everyone had the same access to him that children have to their father.

His stay in the capital city lasted a year, and he left it to go to the provinces; he always went through the cities and towns on foot. This good example touched the Christians very much: sinners were confused and returned to better feelings. His visit was short; after a few months he returned to Seoul. Shortly afterwards persecution broke out. The Christians were chained up and perished by the sword. Those who remained in prison were in a deplorable state. Like a good shepherd, the bishop had the dead buried and lavished the most touching care on the prisoners: he sent them money and rice; he even stripped himself of his clothes to clothe them. His stay in the capital was not without danger; he went into hiding in the provinces; it is impossible to say how much misery and privation he had to suffer. His desire for martyrdom grew day by day. The prospect of it before him consoled him in the midst of his sorrows and made them sweet and pleasant. Alas, the heart of man is an impenetrable abyss: its depth cannot be known.

A pagan became a Christian; his name was Kim Yeo-sam: John was the name he received at baptism. Expelled from his father's house because of his religion, he found himself in great difficulty. The bishop came to his aid and showered him with blessings. He became even more ungrateful. In the presence of the Christians he showed the outward appearance of piety; in secret he discussed with the satellites the means of seizing the missionaries. We have already mentioned how he managed to hand over Bishop Imbert.

When the bishop arrived near the satellites, he found a large number of pagans who had gathered together out of curiosity to see a European; he preached religion to them and was listened to with respectful attention. The satellites made him sit on a sedan chair and took him to the capital. On the way they served as his escort; when they arrived at the gates of Seoul, they put the red rope¹⁴⁵ around his arms, and deposited him in the *Podocheong* [捕盜廳 포도청], a prison for thieves.

The judge confronted him with Paul Jeong¹⁴⁶ [정하상 Jeong Ha-sang], Augustine Yu [유진길 Yu Jin-gil] and Charles Jo [조신철 Jo Sin-cheol]. The bishop said to them, “Since it is known that there are three Europeans in the kingdom, there is no need to make a mystery of it; only let us not point out the retreat of the other two: let us put our trust in help from above; let us endure the blows and be silent.”

¹⁴⁴ Until then the Christians of Korea had recited their prayers in the Chinese language. They were only understood by those few who knew the characters.

¹⁴⁵ The rope with which criminals are arrested.

¹⁴⁶ Disciple of the bishop.

The judge brought him before his tribunal and said to him: speak, where are the other two Europeans? - It is not known what the bishop answered. They twisted his legs. - Why did you enter this kingdom? - To rescue souls from the power of the devil and to put them on the way to salvation. - How many people have you instructed in your religion? - A few hundred. - Where are they? - They are innocent, you want to put them to death, I cannot denounce them. - Renounce your God! - Me, renounce my God! No, never," replied the bishop in a tone of voice that was both emotional and strong. He was taken back to prison.

A few days passed; the searches were very severe; the Christians were chained up. The bishop, judging that the presence of the pastor was detrimental to the flock, wrote to fathers Maubant and Chastan to surrender. A few days later, they shared his chains. The judge deployed a great device to intimidate the prisoners. He made all three of them appear before him: - Who is the head of the family in which you live? - Bishop Paul Ting is his name; you have him in your hands. - Where does the money for your maintenance come from? - We brought it from our country. - You did not have enough to live at home, so you came here to get your food. - If you knew our country, you would not speak like this. - Who sent you to this kingdom? - The Pope, head of our religion. - Who invited you to come, who facilitated your entry? - The Christians called us to the rescue of their souls; Jeong, Yu and Jo did the rest. - The judge, in an ironic tone: go back to your country. - By leaving our country, we made the sacrifice of our life; before leaving, we knew to what danger we were exposing it: the salvation of the souls was more precious to us. We will die here, and our God will crown us with immortal glory. - Indicate the places where those of your sect are found. - By denouncing them to you we are committing a crime, because we are exposing them to death.

The confessors receive the torture of the board; three blows each. At the first blow, Fr. Maubant stood up with an instantaneous movement, crying out, "The Koreans are very cruel." They were sent back to their prison. A multitude of mandarins gathered in this praetorium and overwhelmed them with questions for three days. The questions and answers are unknown. Later the prisoners were transferred to the *Geumbu* (禁府), the royal court¹⁴⁷. In this prison, a bell was rung day and night in the ears of the prisoners, so that they could not hear each other. The judge, when he wanted to question them, sent a bailiff to bring his questions: the bailiff spoke in the ear of the criminal and received his answers; only the two of them understood each other. The confessors underwent three interrogations in court, and each received 70 blows with the ruler on the front of the leg. They were condemned to death.

Pierre Maubant, priest

Pierre Maubant was French. He had an upright character, a majestic bearing, serious and grave, affable, humble and modest. During the crossing from Europe to Asia, he had to suffer a lot; his life was in danger. He first arrived in China, where he met the first bishop of Korea, Bishop Bruguière, and agreed with him that he would follow him in his vicariate. The bishop died on the way, and the priest found himself in charge of his powers. He entered Korea on the 7th of the 12th moon of the year Eul-mi (乙未 을미 December 26, 1835). His first task was to put in order many things that were not going well.

He chose three students and sent them to Macao for the future needs of the mission. He stayed in the capital for a few months, during which time he learned a little of the language; then he went to the provinces. Always walking on foot, he had to endure a lot of

¹⁴⁷ It is the court of the king which interrogates in person the great culprits by having them questioned by his first ministers.

fatigue¹⁴⁸, and often hunger and thirst to the point of fainting on the way. His food was a little rice and a few herbs cooked in water; his clothes were made of a coarse cloth. In winter everything was covered with ice and snow; as a precautionary measure he always left at night; his shoes¹⁴⁹ were ruined on the way, and his stockings were soon pierced, so he walked barefoot, saying that in order to save souls it was worthwhile to suffer something. He taught the ignorant and the foolish with great patience. The care of souls was not the only object of his zeal; it would be difficult in those times of famine to enumerate the number of poor who received food and clothing from him. When he received the order from the bishop to surrender, he immediately gave the news to Fr. Chastan.

Jacques Chastan, priest

Jacques Chastan was French. He had great mercy and great virtue. He spread the good odor of Jesus Christ far and wide. Counting dangers for nothing, he conceived the project of going to preach the Gospel to the pagan nations; he embarked, crossed the sea and landed in Siam where he exercised his zeal for a few years; then he went to China to come to the aid of the Koreans. He entered the capital on the 9th of the 12th month of the Byeong-sin year (丙申 병신 December 17, 1836). He stayed there for a few months; he learned the language and began the administration. He travelled through many regions and crossed high mountains. One could not tell or write what he had to suffer. Very diligent, he taught day and night; he was very affable; always calm and even-tempered, one never heard a word from him that indicated the least impatience. One could not approach him without feeling warmed by the love of a father and the tenderness of a mother. When he saw any in rags, he would strip off his clothes to cover them. He would give to the needy every last penny of his purse. Even then he still found ways to help the miserable. His charity extended to both pagans and Christians; there was not one to whom he refused alms. So he always returned to the capital empty-handed. In the space of three years he traveled three times through four or five provinces.

He was on his way to the capital city of Seoul when persecution broke out. Many Christians were caught and were imprisoned in great hardship. He felt great sorrow for this, and since he had nothing left, he sent for collections to be passed on to the prisoners. When he received Fr. Maubant's letter, he went to see him quickly. On the way, he said to the Christians who accompanied him: "I am doing this journey with as much joy as if I were going to a delicious feast."

When they reached his confrere, they wrote a letter together in which they gave the faithful their final advice. After which they left to go and find the satellites. They were first led to the first prefecture, where the cangue was put around their necks, to which one of their hands was attached, a large veil was thrown over their heads, they were made to mount a horse and in this outfit they were led to the Capital.

The three prisoners being foreigners, the law had no fixed punishment for them. They were treated as enemies of the state. The kind of execution which one employed towards them was different from that which one employed towards the ordinary criminals. On the 14th of the 8th lunar month of the year Gi-hae (己亥 기해 September 21, 1839). A great military mandarin went to the prison followed by 127 soldiers. Three sedan chairs had

¹⁴⁸ In Korea there are only mountains and valleys; no paths; the art of laying out roads is still unknown here: one meets there only rough, difficult paths, and often across the side of the mountain, which rises steeply; one false step can send you to the bottom of the valley. Five hours of walking were enough to harass a European.

¹⁴⁹ Korean shoes are rice-straw sandals; when you walk on foot, you need about a pair a day.

been roughly prepared; they were two long sticks in the middle of which a straw seat had been woven. The missionaries were made to sit on them, with their hands tied behind their backs, and in the midst of the soldiers who were escorting them and a huge crowd, they were led a league from the city to the banks of the river. The three Europeans had only their pants and shirts on. A pike was planted in the sand; at the top floated a banner bearing the cause for which they were condemned. The soldiers lined up in a circle. The prisoners are stripped of their shirts, water is thrown on their faces and a few handfuls of lime are thrown on top. Then ten men took them astride a bar and walked them three times around the circle. After this cruel and grotesque farce, they made them kneel down, put two arrows through their ears, tied a rope to their hair¹⁵⁰ and held their heads up. A dozen soldiers, armed with their swords and simulating a fight, leaped around and struck the martyrs' necks as they passed. At the first blow, which Fr. Chastan received, the weapon grazed his shoulder; he rose to his feet and immediately fell back to his knees. When the heads were cut off, a soldier carried them to a table and presented them to the mandarin, who returned to inform the court of the execution.

According to the laws of the kingdom, the bodies of criminals must remain in place for three days. After this period, their relatives are free to remove them. The remains of the three martyrs thus lay on the sand. Some Christians from the capital wanted to collect them, but they could not do so immediately, because disguised satellites were keeping watch on all sides. Twenty days later eight of them, braving death, went by night to the place of their martyrdom. Half a foot of earth had been thrown over their bodies. They dug them up and found only bones, some of which had been half eaten away by animals. They collected them and buried them some distance from Seoul. Every day, a crowd of people of all distinctions went to pray at their tomb; this devotion could have had fatal consequences. The catechists had them transported to a high mountain isolated from any habitation. The bones are mixed up; only the head of the bishop can be recognized. One of the three heads was lost.

Augustine Yi, a catechist, his wife Barbara and their daughter Agatha

[이광헌 Yi Gwang-heon, 권희 Gwon Hui]

Yi was descended from a distinguished family. Before his conversion to Christianity, he was a man who loved societies and entertainments. At the age of thirty he heard of religion and embraced it. From then on his life became exemplary. Having lost his fortune in the persecutions, he endured poverty with great patience. To instruct the ignorant, to exhort sinners, to teach the infidels the truths of the faith were works to which he devoted himself in concert with his wife, who was as pious as he. A great number of pagans were converted at his preaching.

He was taken with his whole family in March 1839 and thrown into the prison of *Podocheong* [捕盜廳 포도청]. He was brought before the judge and ordered by him to renounce his religion and to denounce the other Christians. He was roughly beaten and transferred to the *Hyeongjo* [刑曹 형조]; the judge of this court seeing in his family children still in infancy, was touched with compassion and employed promises and threats to shake him, all was useless. He became furious; he had him cruelly beaten, he sent back to the other prison his children whom the law did not permit to be beheaded, and he said to Augustine; Say only one word, and you will set yourself, your wife, your brother and your children free, and you will recover your property. - What I hold most dear in the world," replied Augustine,

¹⁵⁰ Koreans let their hair grow, collect it and stop it with a knot on the top of the head.

“is my religion; I would rather lose everything than give it up. They rubbed his legs with the triangular stick. The judge said to him: Even if you count your life for nothing, have you no compassion for your wife and children? - I love my wife and children, and that is why I do not give them the example of weakness.” “Let him die by the blows,” said the judge angrily. Augustine's flesh fell to shreds; his face, his clothes, his whole body was drenched with his blood. The frightened spectators looked away in horror. His sentence was passed and he was executed on May 24, 1839. Augustine was beheaded at the age of 53.

As for Barbara, one can easily imagine what her mother's heart had to suffer at the sight of her tortured children; she offered the sacrifice to God; she remained six months in prison and was unshaken in the torments. She was beheaded on September 3, 1839, in the 46th year of her age.

Their daughter Agatha was sent back to the *Podocheong*, and she suffered even more. During ten months of captivity in this dreadful prison, she had to endure hunger, cold, diseases and the horrors of the dungeon; she received more than three hundred strokes of the stick and 90 strokes of the board; her constancy was unshakeable. She was strangled in the prison on January 13, 1840. She was 15 years old.

Damian Nam and his wife Mary

[남명혁 Nam Myeong-hyeok, 이연희 Yi Yeon-hui]

Nam had many mandarins among his ancestors. He knew religion at the age of thirty and became a Christian. His zeal for the sanctification of himself and others attracted the attention of the bishop who appointed him as a catechist. His house served as an oratory for the faithful: the missionaries often stayed there. During the persecution he gave shelter to many people, who said to him laughing: “What will posterity say about you?” “My only desire,” he answered, “is that one day it will be said that Damian Nam was a martyr of Jesus Christ.”

He was taken in the night with all his family. The episcopal ornaments which he had in his house fell into the hands of the satellites. The prisoners were thrown into the *Podocheong*. From the apartment he occupied, Damian heard his wife chiding the jailers who were disrespecting him; he shouted to her in a loud voice: “We are the captives of Our Lord; we must be here like lambs destined for death. Let us be his imitators and not lose such a beautiful opportunity to suffer for the glory of his name.” Mary heard these words and henceforth received the torments and insults without uttering the least complaint. When it was daylight, the judge had Damian brought before his court: “Speak to me frankly and without detour; to whom does this great cap belong, (he was speaking of the mitre which he had before him) and these sacrificial garments, and from where do they come? - Our priest Zhou¹⁵¹ (周文謨 주문모 Ju Mun-mo, Chinese pronunciation Zhou Wen-mo) used them formerly, he had brought them from China. - You are lying; these traces of sweat still fresh do not indicate such a remote time, and besides this cap still appears new. Damian answered nothing. - Renounce this foreign religion, and save your life, that of your wife and children. - My religion, which you call foreign, is of all times and places; I have known it and practiced it for eight years, and I will never give it up. - You know the Christians, point out the houses they live in. - In the commandments of our God, there is one that forbids harming our neighbor; I cannot denounce them.

¹⁵¹ Chinese priest martyred in 1801.

He was interrogated several days in a row and at each interrogation he endured cruel torments. Transferred to the *Hyeongjo*, the judge of this court asked him the same questions. Damian answered: "Make me expire in torments, if you want, I have only one word to say to you, I am a Christian, I will be one until death; for other words you will not have any." The judge made them apply three different times 90 blows of the ruler on the bones of the legs, and sentenced him to death. A few days before the execution, Damian wrote to his wife: "This earth is only a place of pilgrimage, our homeland is in heaven. We suffer for the Lord; a few more hours of suffering and we shall be seen again eternally in the abode of glory." He went joyfully to the place of torture and did not stop praying until the moments when his head fell under the executioner's sword on May 24, 1839. He was 38 years old.

His wife Mary was of a more than ordinary intelligence and courage. Pious and zealous, she prepared in her husband's house the persons of her sex to receive the sacraments with dignity. To her own torments were added those of her 12-year-old child. They came to tell her almost every day that he had been beaten with rods, that he was dying of hunger, that the fevers of those vile places were consuming him. Her heart was pierced with pain, but it remained unshaken. She received the question many times and had her head cut off on September 3, 1839, in the 36th year of her age.

Peter Gwon [권득인 바오로]

Peter was born of Christian parents. His family although belonging to the second class of citizens¹⁵², was extremely poor. He earned his living by doing a small trade. As he was of a very obliging character, the Christians of the provinces who came to the capital to buy their goods had recourse to him; he served them with the greatest punctuality. But what is more glorious for him, he was very faithful to all his religious duties.

He was caught in the month of December-January 1839, and cruelly tortured. His constancy never wavered. The judge said to him: "Why do you practice the religion of the master of heaven? - God created the sky and the earth; he is the father of all men; he fills them with so many benefits that no matter what they do, they could not give him back the ten thousandth part. To acknowledge some of his benefits, I honor him, and whether you want it or not, I will always honor him. The judge in anger, ordered the executioners to strike him; he then said to him; denounce those of your sect. - My religion forbids me to harm my neighbor; how could I let escape from my lips a word that would pierce their hearts like a sword?" He was later transferred to the *Hyeongjo*. The judge of this court had some good qualities: he only condemned Christians to death with the greatest repugnance. He used all sorts of caresses to get a word of apostasy out of them and send them home.

He would say to them: "Really, you Christians are strange people, you should beg me to let you live; as other criminals do, on the contrary, it is I who beg you to keep your lives. Say a word, and it's over, and you can go home." The humanity of this judge was no less cruel to the faithful; for to force them to apostasy, he prolonged their lives and redoubled their torments. This is how he treated Peter. He handed him over to the discretion of the prisoners to torture him. They fulfilled his intention admirably. They beat him and left him for dead twice. Peter was interrogated three times and each time he was tortured with the triangular stick. His flesh fell from his bones and covered the ground. He lost none of his tranquility; a serenity and a supernatural joy covered his face. The satellites as they led him from the court to the prison said to him by order of the judge: "You have only to utter one

¹⁵² Four classes of citizens are distinguished in Korea; the nobles alone have the right to great dignities; the middle class, it can aspire to the lower magistracies; the lower class, and the slaves.

word, either true or false, it does not matter; just say that you are not a Christian and you will be sent away; then you will practice your religion as you wish.” “My religion,” answered Peter, “is the dearest thing in the world to me; to abandon it is worse to me than death.” He was condemned to have his head cut off. He went to the place of execution with a redoubling of joy. His head, separated from his body, still had an air of laughter. He was martyred on May 24, 1839, in the 35th year of his life.

Agatha Yi, widow
[이소사 Yi So-sa]

Agatha lost her father early. Her mother greatly neglected her religious instruction and married her to a pagan¹⁵³, who left her a widow after three years and without posterity. She returned to her father's house, learned religion, and practiced it in an exemplary manner. After the death of the head of the family, their fortune gradually disappeared and was eventually exhausted. She had to suffer a lot from poverty and endured it without murmuring.

She was taken at the beginning of 1839. She was asked to apostatize and to denounce the Christians, but she remained firm. The judge abandoned her to the executioners, who stripped her of her clothes, hung her up by the arms and beat her with rods. Her whole body was torn apart. Unable to bend her, he sentenced her to death. Agatha remained in prison for four years, suffering the hardships and privations of prison, without showing the slightest weakness. Finally, the end of her sentence came. She was beheaded on May 24, 1839, in the 56th year of her age.

Magdalen Kim, widow
[김업이 Kim Eop-i]

Magdalen was born of poor parents. Her father left this world early. She lived under the guardianship of her mother, a cantankerous and wicked woman. In spite of the bad examples she received, she did not fail to practice virtue from her childhood. She wanted to remain a virgin, but her mother forced her to marry. In a few years, having lost her husband and children, she returned to her mother. It is not possible to tell how much she had to endure from her bad temper. However, she was always submissive to her and never allowed herself to fail in the duties of filial piety. She was patient and gentle and suffered without complaint. To test her and make her more perfect, God allowed her mother to live to a very old age. She knew her religion well and preached it to the pagans; she converted many of them, and conferring baptism on dying children was also the particular object of her zeal.

She had an ardent desire to shed her blood for the glory of Jesus Christ. Caught in 1836, and brought before the judge, she did not fear to explain to him the mysteries of our faith. Her courage made her triumph over the torments and the executioners. Condemned to have her head cut off, she remained in prison for another three years, where she had to endure a long and more glorious martyrdom. Finally she consummated it on May 24, 1839, at the age of 66.

Han Barbara, widow
[한아기 Han A-gi]

¹⁵³ Before the arrival of the missionaries, Koreans, both children and adults, received baptism only at the point of death.

Barbara's parents were Christians and brought her up in religion from her childhood. But she benefited little from their lessons. She spent her youth in indifference and dissipation and married a pagan. One day her mother went to see her and met Magdalen Kim, the one we just mentioned, at the door. They both came in and urged her to change her ways. It was the moment of grace for Barbara: she converted and gave the example of all Christian virtues. God wanted to test her and took away her husband and all her children, one after the other. She was still only thirty years old; she returned to her mother's house and lived with her in the practice of the virtues. She fasted very often; animated by zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, she preached to the pagans and baptized their dying children, and exhorted sinners to penance. She longed for martyrdom.

She was taken with the previous one and suffered with her the tortures of the executioners and the torments of the prison, and was beheaded the same day: she was 48 years old.

Anne Park

[박아기 Park Agi]

A small hamlet, located on the bank of the river that bathes the walls of the capital, was the birthplace of Anne. Her parents were Christians. Of a slow and tardy mind, she could learn the truths of religion only with great difficulty. She consoled herself by saying: since I cannot know my God as I would like to, I will at least try to love him with all my heart. Married to a Christian at the age of eighteen, she raised her children in religious sentiments. She had a particular devotion to meditate on the passion of Our Lord. The sight of his five wounds drew abundant tears from her eyes. When she heard talk of persecution, far from turning pale, her face became animated. She was taken with her husband and her elder son.

They had many friends in the Praetorium who did everything they could to make them apostatize; they succeeded in winning them over and setting them free. Anne remained steadfast. A hundred times the judge, sometimes by torture and sometimes by gentleness, tried to shake her, but to no avail. His efforts were in vain. Very often she received the question; her flesh fell in shreds. Her bones were exposed. Every day her husband and her son came to conjure her to say a word and get out of prison: they put before her eyes the desolation of her family, her old mother, who was dying, her children who were calling her with their cries. Her courage above flesh and blood was able to resist this temptation, more terrible than the tortures. She reproached them for their cowardice: "What! she said to them, for a few days of life, you expose yourselves to an eternal death? Far from soliciting me to defect, you should exhort me to constancy. Come back, come back rather to your God, and envy my happiness." The judge said to her, "Your husband and your son have come out of prison and returned to their families; with a single word you can do the same; they beseech you, and you remain inflexible: you have a heart of brass: you are without mercy. Is life, then, something bad? Anne answered: "It is their affair that my husband and my son have apostatized. As for me, I am resolved to preserve my religion and to die for it." The judge, after having her beaten with the rule, sentenced her to death. Anne spent three months in prison and was martyred on May 24, 1839. She was 57 years old.

Agatha Kim, widow

[김아기 Kim A-gi]

It is the ordinary conduct of God to choose the vilest and weakest in the world to confound the greatest and strongest. This conduct shines in the following story. Agatha Kim was born of pagan and very poor parents. She was excessively narrow-minded. One of her sisters, who was a Christian, wanted to attract her to Christianity and made every effort to teach her the essential truths of the faith: she could not succeed. Agatha only retained the names of Jesus and Mary from her daily instructions. Her zealous pagan husband was devoted to a multitude of superstitions; Agatha, knowing religion only in a vague way, followed his example. Her sister came to see her one day and showed her the vanity of her idols and the folly of those who put their hope in them. Agatha immediately threw them into the fire without worrying about what her husband might say to her.

Since she could not learn the necessary doctrine and prayers, she could not receive baptism. She was caught in 1836 and brought before the court of the *Podocheong*. The judge said to her: "Are you foolish enough to believe that the doctrine of the Christians is true?" Agatha answered: "I, poor wretch, only know Jesus and Mary; beyond that I know nothing. - They are going to beat you, to make you die under the rods, won't you renounce Jesus and Mary? - Even if I were to die, I would never renounce Jesus and Mary. In the interrogations and torments. She had only the names of Our Savior and his holy Mother in her mouth. Her faith, though not very enlightened, remained unshaken; and her courage aroused the admiration of everyone. The judge was unable to defeat her and sent her to the *Hyeongjo*. When she entered the prison, the Christians said to her in jest: Ah, ah, here is Agatha who only knows Jesus and Mary, and nothing more. They praised her fearlessness, taught her the essential truths and baptized her. Having drawn new strength from the sacrament of regeneration, she underwent three interrogations before the *Hyeongjo* tribunal with the same courage and the same response as above. The judge condemned her to have her head cut off. Her sentence was not carried out until May 24, 1839. She went to the torture, in the company of eight other martyrs, with the same firmness that she had shown before the judge. She was 54 years old.

Lucy Park, lady of honor of the queen

[박희순 Park Hui-sun]

Lucy was born to a wealthy family. Distinguished by her beauty and wit, she was introduced to the court and made one of the queen's ladies of honor. Her skill, prudence, and gentleness raised her above her companions and earned her the first rank. Although a pagan, she kept herself pure and chaste in the midst of license. At the age of thirty she heard about religion and conceived a great desire to embrace it and practice it. At court, this was impossible; she used the excuse of an illness and returned to her family. Her mother was no longer there; her father did not want to hear about religion, so she left her father's house and retired to the home of one of her nephews. A few months later the whole family was Christian. Lucy was overjoyed at the treasure she had found in the faith and never stopped thanking the Lord for it. She sacrificed the vain pomp of the world for Him and devoted herself to the practice of Christian humility. She found a particular pleasure in meditating at the foot of a crucifix. The sight of the five wounds of Jesus made her tears flow. Her words and actions were a sacrifice of praise that she offered to God every day. By her mortification and fervor she was a model for others.

When the persecution broke out, she withdrew to the home of one of her friends, Agatha Jeon, and the two families became one. One day, they were talking together about how to avoid being caught, when suddenly the satellites appeared. "It is God's will, they said, and we will suffer for his sake." Far from being disturbed, Lucy went to meet them, brought them into the house and had food and drink prepared for them. When she was brought before

the court, the judge said to her: “You are not a common person, how is it that you practice such a contemptible religion?” “There is nothing despicable about our religion,” Lucy replied. God created heaven and earth and everything in them; all men owe him life and consequently praise and adoration. - Renounce your religion, denounce your accomplices. - God is my creator and my father, I cannot deny him; he forbids me to harm my brothers, I cannot denounce them...”

The judge had her hands tied behind her back and taken to the *Hyeongjo*. In front of this court, Lucia was cruelly beaten several times; her legs were tortured; there was almost nothing left but the bones. In the midst of the beatings, a supernatural serenity was spread over her face. Now I am beginning,” she said, “to understand a little of the sufferings of Our Lord and his Holy Mother. Up to this time I had not had a proper idea of them.” After two or three days, her legs were perfectly healed and seemed firmer than before. This extraordinary healing surprised everyone; the blinded judge attributed it to magic. During the interrogation she explained the religion so clearly that the astonished mandarin did not know what to say and remained silent. He sentenced her to death. Lucy remained in prison for two months, where she wrote a letter to the Christians in which she exhorted them to be patient in their tribulations and to be firm in their faith; she spoke in such a touching way of the Lord's blessings that the readers shed tears. It is unfortunate that this letter was lost. During the time of her captivity she acted as an apostle, encouraging Christians by her example and words, consoling the afflicted and supporting the weak. She went to the place of torture praying; her head was cut off at the age of 39, on May 24, 1839.

Mary Hieng

[박큰아기 Park Keun-agi]

Mary had a gentle spirit character and a compassionate heart. She lived in perfect harmony with her sister and in the practice of the duties of Christianity. Her love for God, and her charity for her neighbor made her find in her indigence the means to assist the poor. She was taken with her sister. Taken to prison, she underwent the torments with firmness. After five months of captivity and suffering, she was beheaded on May 24, 1839, in her 54th year.

In 1839, on July 20, outside the Small Western Gate (西小門 Seo-so-mun, more correctly 소의문 So-ui-mun 昭義門) the following eight martyrs were beheaded.

John-Baptist Yi

[이광렬 Yi Gwng-ryeol]

John-Baptist was the younger brother of Augustine whose martyrdom we saw above. He embraced Christianity with his elder brother; he was 28 years old. His fervor attracted the attention of the catechists, who sent him to Peking with the embassy to manage the affairs of the religion. He made this journey twice. The priests of the capital were charmed by his piety and conferred baptism and other sacraments on him. Back in his country, John Baptist abstained from meat all his life and resolved to remain celibate. His exterior was that of a man absorbed in God, which made Christians say that he had drawn from the sacraments the fullness of the Holy Spirit. He had a great desire to shed his blood for JC. Then with his brother, he suffered the same torments and showed the same constancy as him. After his sentence he remained in prison for another six months, where he increased his crown. He

received the palm of martyrdom at the age of 39. (Choe adds July 20, 1839, as the execution date)

Magdalen Yi, her mother Magdalen Heo, her aunt Teresa, her sister Barbara, and her niece Barbara¹⁵⁴

[이영희 Yi Yeong-hui, 허계임 Heo Gye-im, 이매임 Yi Mae-im, 이정희 Yi Jeong-hui]

Magdalen Yi belonged to a noble, but not very wealthy family. Her father was a pagan and abhorred the Christian religion. This forced Magdalen, her mother, her aunt and her sister to practice their duties in secret. Having reached the nubile age, her father wanted to marry her to a pagan. In this extremity, Magdalen resolved to keep her virginity and to escape from her father's house. She had a young Christian slave girl as her servant. Here is the expedient she devised: one evening, after having put her maid in the secret, she said to her: "From here to the capital it is three leagues, I don't know the way. Tomorrow my father must go there; you will follow him from afar without losing sight of him: I will follow you in the same way." During the night she made her preparations, stripped off her clothes, put on old, worn ones, took those she had just left and went out secretly. Her house was situated in the middle of the mountains, not far from a forest. Magdalen went into the wood, dyed her dress with her blood, tore it to pieces and scattered its shreds here and there. Her father leaves early in the morning for the city, the slave follows him and Magdalen follows the slave. Arriving at the capital, she went to her aunt Teresa. "O my God! she exclaimed, in what a state you are! what misfortune do you announce to me?" Magdalen was covered in rags and in all her bloody clothes. Peace! Peace!" she answered, "you will know everything, don't say anything." And she told her everything as it had just happened. She had not finished speaking when her father was announced at the door; she fled in haste into a secluded room.

However, back at Magdalen's house, they were surprised not to see her appear. They called her and there was no answer. They open the door of her room, they find nobody there. They look for her everywhere: one can easily imagine the anxiety of her mother. Her uncle goes out and enters the wood; he turns pale on seeing traces of blood; he follows them and arrives at the bloody rags. He runs at once to the city and enters all out of breath in the house where his brother was still speaking with Teresa. "Woe, woe," he cries, "the tiger has devoured your daughter." "My daughter!" said the father, and he fell down fainting. He is made to recover; there is weeping, there are loud cries. Teresa alone was in the secret; in order not to betray her, she cried like the others. The two brothers hurried back to their family and informed the mandarin of the accident that had just happened. The mandarin sends hunters to kill the homicidal tiger. The forest was searched from all sides; no tiger was seen. Three months passed for Magdalen's parents in tears and weeping. However, her mother learned of the secret, and from that moment she seemed less distressed. Her husband noticed this, and suspected that his daughter was not dead. He said to his wife, "You seem less sad than before; tell me the truth, our daughter is still alive. Tell me everything, I promise not to frustrate her wishes in the future." His wife tells him the story. This father, all joyful, runs to the house where his daughter was staying, hugs her tenderly and says to her: "It is enough for me to find you still alive; from now on, follow your inclination; I am no longer opposed to your not getting married." That is how Magdalen preserved her chastity from peril. Her father even allowed her to stay with her aunt and to practice her religion in complete freedom.

¹⁵⁴ Korean Christians have, for some unknown reason, an extraordinary devotion to St Barbara. If we allowed them, they would almost all bear the name of this Saint.

Barbara, her elder sister, had found herself in much the same danger¹⁵⁵. She had been betrothed to a pagan and the time of the wedding was approaching. Her virtue abhorred a marriage contrary to the laws of the church. She pretended to have a leg disease and stayed sitting for three years. Her fiancé sought his fortune elsewhere. A Christian, who knew the cause of her illness, asked her father for her; she was granted. He left her a widow after two years. Since Barbara could not practice her religion as she wished in her husband's family, she went to her sister and her aunt and lived with them. They spent a few years together in the practice of virtues and in extreme poverty. In March 1839, their mother came to the city for confession; persecution was then in full force; she entered Teresa's house, and saw two other Christians Magdalen and Lucy Kim gathered there. The conversation revolved around the happiness of shedding one's blood for Jesus. These six courageous women resolved to face martyrdom. In the meantime, they were told that the house of Damian Nam had been invaded and that the satellites were devastating it. They went out at once and presented themselves to them. "You are after the Christians," they said, "here are six of them; chain us up and take us to prison." The astonished satellites did not want to believe them. "We are Christians; don't doubt it, here is the proof," they said, holding up their rosaries. The satellites tied their hands behind their backs and took them to prison.

The judge brought them before his tribunal and said to them: Do you believe that the doctrine of the Christians is true? - Certainly, if we had any doubt about it, we would not be standing before you at this hour. - Renounce this religion and give me the books that speak of it. - I would rather die than deny our God. Four times their legs were bent; they were unshakeable. Five days later the judge brought them before him again: "Have not the torments you have endured and the horrors of prison awakened you from your slumber?" - You are wasting your time exhorting us to apostasy. It is to bear witness to Jesus Christ that we have given ourselves into your hands, and you want us to deny him: no, no, you are mistaken, a true Christian lives and dies for his God. If the laws of the kingdom condemn us to death, we will die; but never to renounce our religion. They underwent the same torture once each. When they were sent back to the second court, the judge said to them: do you still believe that the religion of the Christians is true? - We believe it to be true, we honor God, and we are ready to shed our blood for him." The angry judge ordered them to be beaten more than the others, because they had given themselves up, and being unable to bend them, he condemned them to death.

On July 20 Magdalen Yi, aged 31, and her aunt Teresa, aged 52, had their heads cut off. Her sister Barbara, aged 41, was executed on September 3. Their mother Magdalen, aged 67, was executed on September 26. We will see below the story of Martha and Lucy Kim.

Barbara Yi, from the same family as the previous ones, was orphaned from childhood. She had to endure the privations of poverty, and distinguished herself by her virtue from children of her age. She was taken in March and brought to the *Podocheong* where she endured the torments with great firmness. The judge was unable to make her apostatize and sent her to the Hyeongjo. The judge of this second court tried several times to win her over by gentleness, but he could not shake her. Surprised by so much constancy in a young girl, she was 14 years old, and touched by her youth, he sent her back to the *Podocheong* where she was subjected to new torments, hunger, cold, beatings, and illnesses. She was finally strangled in the prison.

¹⁵⁵ In these countries of barbarism and slavery, parents betroth, marry their children without consulting their tastes; these must lower their heads under the yoke without saying a word: therefore there are few well-matched marriages, and much domestic dissension.

Martha Kim

[김성임 Kim Seong-im]

Martha was born in a village not far from Seoul. Her parents were pagans. Not agreeing with her husband, she secretly left him and came to the capital where she lived with an old blind man, a sorcerer by profession. In this new family, she heard about the religion and conceived the idea of embracing it. She left the house of the sorcerer where she lived in ease and became poor for the love of Jesus Christ. She was one of the six women who gave themselves up to the satellites. She received five times the torture of the legs and other torments and after five months of prison she had her head cut off on July 20, at the age of 54.

Lucy Kim

[김 루시아 Kim Lucia]

Lucy was born in a hamlet on the banks of the river¹⁵⁶ that flows at the foot of the capital's walls. Her father was a pagan and left this world in the prime of his life. Her mother, a fervent Christian, taught her from childhood about the law of God. Lucy had a distinguished beauty, a great gentleness, much intelligence and a courage above her sex. Little touched by the advantages of nature, she vowed her virginity to Jesus Christ. At the death of her mother, she was obliged with her sister to sell their small patrimony to pay for her funeral. Having no resources left, she asked for hospitality from Christian families and passed from one to the other so as not to be always a burden to the same one. She was often urged to make a choice, but she remained faithful to her resolution. We have seen above how she gave herself up to the hands of the satellites.

She was brought before the court with her hands tied behind her back. The judge said to her: "How is it that, being thus advantaged by nature, you practice the religion of the Christians? - I believe it to be true, that is why I practice it. - Now you are going to renounce it and keep your life. - I cannot. - If they hit you, if they tear your body apart, will you not renounce it? - Even if I were to die from the blows, I adore God, I cannot deny Him. - Tell me the reason why you cannot deny him. - God created heaven and earth, spirits and men, he governs them by his providence; he is the king and father of the human race, he rewards the good, he punishes the wicked: this is the reason why I cannot deny him. - Who taught you about your religion? How long have you been practicing it? - From childhood my mother spoke to me about God and taught me to love him. - You know Christians, since they have received you in their homes, denounce their homes. - I cannot harm my benefactors; my religion forbids me to kill. - Why don't you take a husband? - I am only twenty years old, there is still time; and then it is not for you to talk about marriage to a young girl. - You are right; in your books there is often talk of the soul, what is this soul? - It is a spiritual substance which the material eyes cannot perceive. - Where is it located? - The soul is throughout the body and makes it move; it is the principle of its life; the soul withdrawing, the body remains immobile. - Do you not fear death? - I fear death, I love life, but for my God I give up this one, I devote myself to that one. - Have you ever seen God? - I see his works and I believe in his existence; this vast universe and the order that reigns in it indicate to me enough that he is its author. The people of the provinces have not seen the king, but they believe that he exists.

¹⁵⁶ (The Han River)

The judge, touched by her youth and beauty, wanted to save her from death by making her apostatize; he used flattery and threats, he came to torture, everything was useless; Lucy confounded him by her answers. She was condemned to death and was sentenced on July 20. In prison she wrote her interrogation and sent it to the Christians.

Anne Kim, widow

[김장금 Kim Jang-geum]

Anne Kim was born in the capital city to Christian and poor parents. From her childhood she practiced virtue. She became a widow at an early age. After the death of her husband, she lived with her old mother and joyfully endured the hardships of poverty. Living in a house next to that of Augustine and John-Baptist Yi, she was taken with their family and suffered the same torments as they did. She remained in prison for five months and was beheaded in her 51st year.

Rose Kim, widow

[김노사 Kim Rosa]

Rose was a pagan. Among her relatives were Christians, which provided her with an opportunity to hear about the religion. She embraced it after the death of her husband. Happy with the treasure she had found in the faith, she wanted to share it with others, and showed great zeal for the propagation of the gospel. The people of her family were the main object of her zeal. In December 1838, the satellites unexpectedly entered her home and seized her. Rose invoked the holy names of Jesus and Mary and walked cheerfully to the prison. The judge had the instruments of torture laid out before her and said to her: "Before they bend your legs and tear your body to pieces, renounce the master of heaven and denounce your accomplices. - I cannot deny my God, I cannot denounce the Christians. - Why not? - God is the creator and father of all men; he loves virtue, he punishes vice; he reserves eternal rewards for the virtuous man, and endless torments for the wicked; to deny him is a crime, I must refrain from it; to harm my neighbor is an evil, I must not do it. Do not press me any further, it is useless; I am ready to seal with my blood these truths, which I announce to you. - The king forbids this religion. - I belong to my God before I belong to the king. The judge entered into a great anger and had her tortured; Rose is invincible. She is condemned to have her head cut off. After seven months of harsh captivity, her sentence was carried out. She was 56 years old. (Choe adds July 24, 1839, as the date of execution)

Mary Won

[원귀임 Won Gui-im]

Mary's parents lived in the provinces. They left her an orphan in childhood. She decided to live in the capital with one of her relatives and lived there by the work of her hands; she was an embroiderer. Although young, she showed in her actions the prudence of a mature age; with an upright, humble, gentle and conciliatory heart, she was by her virtues a subject of admiration for the people around her. She consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ. In March, the satellites suddenly entered the house in the middle of the night. Mary had time to escape through a hidden door. While she was wandering around the city looking for a place to stay, she was caught. Although she was confused at first, she soon came to her senses and walked with a firm step to the prison. Her hands were tied behind her back and she was brought before the court. The judge said to her: Are you a Christian? - You said it, I am a

Christian. - Abandon your religion and you will live. - I adore God, I want to save my soul, my resolution is firm; if I have to die, I'll die; but the salvation of my soul comes first, by abandoning my religion I lose it. They twisted her legs, they struck her with the long stick. She underwent the question several times, all her bones were dislocated; her blood flooded over the ground. Her constancy remained unshaken. Transferred to the Hyeongjo, the judge tried in vain to win her over with gentleness. After three interrogations and the usual tortures, he condemned her to death. Mary went to martyrdom at the age of 21. (Choe adds July 20, 1839, as the date of execution)

On September 3, six martyrs were beheaded

.John Park

[박후재 Park Hu-jae]

John did not have for himself the nobility of birth; he had something better: the blood of a martyr ran through his veins. His mother was a water carrier and made him straw shoes. He had a good reputation in his trade, and was praised for the solidity of his work. This simple and pious man was caught with his wife. The judge said to him, "What is your name? - My name is Park Myeong-Gwang. - What is your profession? - I am a Christian, and my profession is to make shoes. - Do you still have relatives? - My mother died a few years ago, and my father had his head cut off in 1801 for the same reason that I am here. - The king does not allow this religion, you break his orders. - God is my creator, he commands me to love him; I owe him obedience rather than the king. - You know the accomplices of your disobedience, denounce them. - I am not allowed to harm my neighbor. - Renounce your religion if you want to live. - My religion is dearer to me than life, I prefer to die than to abandon it.

He receives forty blows from the board; his flesh is torn to shreds, his blood floods the earth; the wood striking the bones makes a terrible sound. The confessor remains unshaken; they bend his legs. He is sent to the second tribunal where his torments are renewed. His sentence was pronounced and was executed five months later. John was 40 years old. (Choe adds September 3, 1839, as the date of execution)

The other five martyrs were Mary, wife of Damian Nam, Barbara, wife of Augustine Y, Barbara, sister of Magdalen Yi, Mary Park, who was as steadfast in her torments as her sister Lucy, the queen's daughter of honor. She was 54 years old. Agnes Kim, whose story we will see with her sister Columba.

On September 22 were beheaded the following two:

Paul Jeong

[정하상 Jeong Ha-sang]

The Jeong family belonged to the first nobility of the country. The great dignities of the kingdom had passed from generation to generation in this family until Augustine who first embraced Christianity. In 1801 the first persecution occurred. He was taken with his wife, Cecily and his children, Charles Paul and Elisabeth. Augustine was martyred with his eldest son Charles. His wife and other children were set free. The crown was reserved for them later. Finding themselves without resources, they asked for hospitality from their numerous relatives in the capital. These were pagan, and refused to let them into their homes.

This forced them to take refuge in the province. Paul, then seven years old, lived under the eyes of his mother in the practice of virtue. Having grown up, he lamented with tears the state in which the church of his country was, without a pastor, without priests, without sacraments, and asking God unceasingly to send evangelical workers.

For the love of Jesus Christ and for the benefit of his brothers, he did not disdain the duties of a slave. He placed himself at the service of the government as an interpreter and was able to go to China eight or nine times. He urged the bishop of Peking, who then governed the church in Korea, to send priests. Circumstances did not permit this at first and the prelate could only pity their fate. Later he was able to find a Chinese priest and sent him with powers to Korea, but this priest died before he reached the border. In spite of this setback, Paul did not lose heart, and he made new requests, even writing to the Supreme Pontiff with other catechists to have a pastor. A few years later, a bishop and two priests were among them. The bishop saw in Paul ability, zeal and virtue, and had him study Latin and then theology, and he was thinking of ordaining him when the persecution broke out.

Paul expected to be caught; he had too much renown to remain unknown. He composed an apology of religion to present to the judge when he was in court. The traitor had denounced him; on July 6, the satellites entered his house and chained him up with Cecily, his mother and his sister Elisabeth. The judge said to him: you are breaking the laws of the kingdom by practicing a foreign religion and teaching it to others. - God is the creator of all men he is mine; he orders me to worship him, I must obey him. All peoples, coming from the same principle, which is God, form but one family of which he is the father; his religion, which is the set of duties they owe him, is no more foreign in Korea than in any other place. - It follows from your answer that the king and the mandarins are mistaken in prohibiting it; what do you say? - If you press me like this, I have only one word to say: I am a Christian, I will die a Christian. Paul presented his apology to the judge who, after having read it attentively, said to him: you are right in your writing; but the king prohibits this religion, it is a duty for you to renounce it. - I told you, I am a Christian, I will be one until death¹⁵⁷.

(*French footnote is longer. Latin note:* Paul replied thus, wishing to avoid the question. He could not deny it, but to affirm it would be a crime of *lèse-majesté* and he would then be accused, not of being a Christian but of being a traitor.)

The executioners bind his hands behind his back and tie his arms tightly together, then passing two sticks between them, they pull them apart with violence. The patient's bones are dislocated. He was taken back to prison. At the second interrogation his legs were twisted. At the third interrogation he was taken to the same court where the bishop was. He received the torture of the long sticks, the bending of the legs, the torture of the triangular stick, the torture of the saw-rope. Surprisingly, in the middle of these terrible tortures, he had a calm face. The judge wanted to know from him the hiding-place of the two missionaries, he could not extract a word from him. He handed him over to the discretion of the satellites, who refined their barbarity, but without further success. When the two missionaries arrived at the prison, Paul was transferred with them to the *Geumbu*, where after further torments he was

¹⁵⁷ I asked whoever was explaining these words to me why Paul did not answer the question directly, and what harm there was in saying that the king and the mandarins were in error, when the thing was as plain as day. "To say that the king and the mandarins are wrong, he replied, with an air of astonishment, is a crime of *lèse-majesté*. If he had only said that, the one who committed it, besides the ordinary tortures, would have his arms, legs and head cut off, his father and his mother would be put to death, and his other relatives sent into exile." "You live under an admirable regime," I replied.

condemned to death. Tied to the cross above the cart, he went joyfully to the place of torture; his sufferings would end, his happiness would begin and last forever. He was 45 years old.

Augustine Yu

[유진길 Yu Jin-gil]

Augustine was born in the capital of a family distinguished by the offices they held. From his childhood he had a pronounced taste for study. Before the age of twenty he had acquired the knowledge that others hardly acquire in the course of their lives. His family was well-to-do; many of his relatives were in dignities¹⁵⁸. Little touched by men, he rather sought learning. This world was for him an enigma, he wanted to have the key. He looked for it in the religion of Lao-Tzu, in that of Fo (Buddha), he leafed through their books day and night for 12 years: he did not find it. There remained in his heart an emptiness which worried him; he questioned the other scholars; they could not resolve his doubts. He remembered that in his childhood, he had seen Christians driven to death for their doctrine; he was inflamed by the desire to know them and to talk to them; he looked for them and did not find them. One day in his room, while fortuitously throwing the people on a piece of furniture all covered with glued paper, he saw the top of a sheet that was detached, he pulled it toward him and read these words: Truth of the Master of Heaven. This is for me, he said, this is what I am looking for. He peeled off all the leaves and fitted them together; the scattered leaves did not make complete sense to him; he read enough, however, to redouble his desire to find Christians. He searched with more activity, he finally met one who gave him books. He had no difficulty in recognizing the truth, and he became a Christian.

Later he was elevated to the dignity of government interpreter. He often went to Peking, communicated with the bishop and received baptism. Pious, zealous and well-informed, he supported the faithful with his example and good advice. It was he who, with a few others, handled the religious affairs of the mission. This predestined man had to endure terrible assaults from those close to him, especially from his daughters and his wife who remained pagan. One of his sons was the imitator of his faith and virtues. This 13-year-old child conceived such a great desire to shed his blood for Jesus that he gave himself up.

Later he was seen fighting against the torments with a courage that made the admiration of his judges. Augustine was taken in the month of July; he walked cheerfully to the prison where his son had preceded him by a day. As soon as his brother and his other relatives saw him in the hands of the satellites, they came in droves to beg him to have pity on his family, to save his life and to spare them the loss of their dignities. "I am deeply distressed," he said to them, "by what you are going to suffer on my account, I pity your fate, but I cannot, after having known God, deny him. The salvation of my soul must come before any consideration of flesh and blood. Imitate my example, make yourselves Christians; you will then despise what you now fear to lose." A few days later he appeared before the court. The judge took him up to the high place where he was sitting and spoke to him in a friendly manner. He strongly urged him to abandon his religion; he put before his eyes the precipice opened under the feet of his family. His words were like the waves of the sea that come crashing madly against the rock, they break there without shaking it. The judge took him down to the court and, not being able to understand why the Europeans had left their country,

¹⁵⁸ His conviction led to the dismissal of twenty-six mandarins, his relatives, and the exile of his elder brother. They were all pagans but according to the barbaric laws of the kingdom, when one of the family members commits a crime, all the others are, according to the seriousness of the crimes, put to death, or sent into exile, or stripped of their dignities .

their relatives and their friends, he told him that they had come to Korea in search of honors, riches and pleasures.

Augustine replied to the judge: “The Western teachers have come to us to spread the glory of the Master of Heaven, to make him known to men and to teach them to observe his laws. Our God wants to be served by despising riches and honors, and by mortifying passions. At the end of time, He must resurrect all men, assemble them before His tribunal, judge them and render to each one according to his works. Heaven and its ineffable joys will be the prize of his servants; hell and its infinite pains will be the share of those who will have ignored him. This is what our teachers have taught us. Can they, while giving these precepts to others, transgress them themselves and do the opposite of what they say? What weight would their words have then? Can they, by being evil themselves, make others good? Certainly not. Also from their childhood they practiced virtue; to be freer and free from all hindrances, they renounced even permitted pleasures and vowed not to marry. After a sufficiently long period of trial in science and good morals, they are given a high dignity and sent to preach religion in foreign countries. If the love of pleasure, honor, and wealth were their motive, would they have abandoned their homeland where these things abound? They have crossed a sea of 9000 leagues with countless dangers and fatigues; when they arrive here, they live in all kinds of privations; they are pursued like evil beings, and exposed every day to expire in the midst of terrible torments. Before leaving, they did not know what awaited them in those distant lands.” - Who brought them into the kingdom? - I did. - The other two Europeans, where are they? How many people have you imbued with your doctrine? Denounce them. - Augustine answered nothing; he was tortured. He was taken to the prison where Bishop Imbert was. He was questioned twelve times and endured all the torments. His constancy accompanied him to the end. He was 49 years old when his head fell under the sword. His property was confiscated, his wife, his daughters, his nine-year-old son and his brother were sent into exile. (Choe adds September 22, 1839, as the date of execution)

On September 26, outside the Small Western Gate, the following nine martyrs were beheaded.

Charles Jo

[조신철 Jo Sin-cheol]

Charles was born in Hoiyang 회양 in the province of Gangwon. His parents were pagans and left him an orphan at the age of five. The little fortune his family had was soon dissipated. To earn a living, he cut his hair and became a monk¹⁵⁹; but this life soon bored him, so he returned to the world and entered the service of Augustine Liou, the government interpreter, whom he accompanied every year to Peking. Augustine saw in him a more than ordinary uprightness for a pagan, and ventured to speak to him about religion. At first he resisted, but later he persuaded him so much that he made him a fervent neophyte. Tchoa was baptized in Peking; on his return he worked for the conversion of his family and had the good fortune to win them over to Jesus Christ. His zeal for the propagation of the faith also extended to the outside world, and some fifteen pagans were converted by him. Charles was one of those who introduced the missionaries into the kingdom.

¹⁵⁹ In Korea, as in China, the bonzes follow the doctrine of Fo (Buddha), and believe in metempsychosis. There are very few among them who are in good faith. Reviled by the people, human respect and other passions keep them in the vile state they have embraced: about fifty have become Christians.

At the beginning of 1839, when he was returning from Peking, he had a dream in which it seemed to him that he saw Jesus Christ with St. Peter and St. Paul by his side, and that he heard these words from his mouth: "This very year I will give you the grace to shed your blood for the glory of my name." Charles bowed deeply to him and thanked him. When he woke up, he was very surprised at what he had heard. When he had left for China, the persecution had not yet begun, and at that time he was unaware that Christians were being persecuted. He took this dream to be a vain imagination, but having had it a second time with the same circumstances, he no longer doubted its reality, especially when he returned to Korea and saw the state of things. He redoubled his fervor and prepared himself for martyrdom; he hid, however, to avoid being caught; he left his house and went to stay elsewhere.

One day, returning home, he saw a crowd of people gathered in front of his door. The satellites were inside and were chaining his family. Charles let them do it when they came out, he mingled in the crowd and followed them to the prison; he entered with them inside the courtyard; many people entered too. The satellites made them withdraw, Charles remained in place; one of them taking him by the shoulders pushed him out, he resisted. They asked him his name: Jesus, he said, the head of this family. They immediately laid their hands on him. Charles, who brought in the objects of the mission every year, still had many in his house when his house was looted. The judge said to him: "To whom do these objects belong? Who asked you to bring them into the kingdom? - I make the trip to Peking every year, I bought them in China. - They are not yours, they belong to someone else, you are going to name the owner and the people of your sect. - God in his commandments forbids us to harm our neighbor, I cannot denounce you my co-religionists. - What! In order to observe the commandments of your God, you show yourself rebellious to the will of the king and the mandarins? - God is above the king and the mandarins; his will must come before theirs."

His legs are bent, his arms are dislocated, not a word is obtained. The patient is suspended in the air by the arms and hit from all sides. He received thirty-five blows from the board. These torments were repeated four times. His whole body was a wound. The torments, far from putting him down, increased his fervor. After the capture of the bishop, he was confronted with him. He was subjected to new questions in order to extract from him the secret of the hiding-place of the two missionaries; his arms and legs were twisted, his flesh was sawn with a rope, and he was whipped on his bones with a triangular stick, and this four times in the same interrogation. He was taken with the Europeans to the royal court, where he was tortured three more times with the ruler, and then his sentence was pronounced. In all he underwent eleven interrogations; in his torments he showed such great firmness (not a word of complaint, not a sigh) and even such astonishing insensitivity that the judges and satellites said, "This man has not a body of flesh, but of wood and stone." When he was about to be tied to the cart, he said to the jailer: "My friend, I am going to heaven; please announce to my family that I am going ahead of them and that they should have the courage to follow me." The jailer fulfilled his commission with tears in his eyes. Charles on his side left for the place of the torture: a celestial joy inundated his face. When they had untied him from the cross, he saw in the crowd some of his pagan relatives and plunged in a deep sadness, he gave them the last salute with a graceful smile; he lowered his head; it fell under the sword. His soul flew away to the eternal fatherland. Charles was 45 years old¹⁶⁰. (Choe adds September 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Sebastian Nam

¹⁶⁰ Aren't these martyrs of whom Rome and Lyon would be proud?

[남이관 Nam I-gwan]

Nam belonged to a family distinguished by its nobility. In the persecution of 1801 his father was taken and sent into exile where he died almost immediately. He was also caught and sentenced to the same punishment as his father. He was not baptized and knew nothing of religion except the Sunday prayer and the angelic salutation which he recited every day: his conduct, moreover, was entirely pagan. Seeing himself at death's door, he called a Christian, was instructed and received baptism. He returned to health. From that time on his life was exemplary. He was recalled from exile, was one of those who went to the frontier to introduce the missionaries and received them in his home.

During the persecution, a Christian denounced him; he was taken with his wife and imprisoned. The judge ordered him to denounce the other Christians, to hand over the books of religion and to deny his God. In spite of his great age, Sebastian proved to be firm in the torments; sent back to the *Hyeongjo* and *Geumbu*, he had to endure the question before each court: then he was condemned to death. Before climbing onto the fatal cart, which for the martyrs was a triumphal chariot, he said to the jailer of the women's prison: "I had ardently desired to die the same day as my wife, but our God disposed of it differently: tell her that I am waiting for her in the abode of happiness." He went to his death with extraordinary joy. He was 60 years old. (Choe adds September 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Ignatius Kim

[김제준 Kim Je-jun]

The family of Ignatius is famous in the Korean church for the number of martyrs it provided. It lived in the province: in the first persecution his father left his home and fled to the mountains where he practiced virtue from childhood. Ignatius was distinguished by his physical strength; he had the strength of five or six men. His son-in-law denounced him; he was caught and taken to prison. Besides the crime of his religion, he had another in the eyes of the law, that of having sent his son to Macao to study European languages¹⁶¹. So he was tormented more cruelly than the others. His courage failed him in the torments and he apostatized. He was not released for that. Transferred to the second tribunal, the confessors said to him: "Do not hope to be released; a certain condemnation awaits you; return to yourself, confess your weakness before the judge and die a martyr. Ignatius returned to himself; he wept for his crime, retracted before the judge, endured his three interrogations with firmness and collected the palm that he had let slip from his hands. He was 44 years old. His son Andrew is today a priest and imprisoned for the faith; most likely he will have the glory of following his ancestors to the place of triumph (Choe adds: Andrew Kim had his head cut off on September 26, 1846).

Julietta Kim

[김 율리에타]

Julietta was born in the province. Her parents were Christians, but coarse-grained Christians. Before the persecution of 1801 they came to settle in the capital. When she reached marriageable age, they wanted to marry her, but Julietta had resolved to remain a

¹⁶¹ The Korean government has such an absurd horror of foreigners that it condemns to death anyone who communicates with them.

virgin; seeing herself pressed every day and on the verge of being forced, she pulled out her own hair and made her hair as short as her hand. It is well for the moment, said her kinsmen, your hair will grow back and then we will see.

In the meantime, the persecution of 1801 broke out and they returned to their homeland. Julietta fled secretly and asked to be received in one of the royal palaces¹⁶². Seeing that it was difficult for her to practice her religion in this place of disorder, she left and received hospitality in the home of a Christian. Working hard, she made a little money and bought a small house, where she lived alone with the fervor of a nun. Of a rigid character, of an inflexible will, she had an outspokenness which made her feared by others. So they watched their words when they appeared in her presence. She did not let anything escape her. It was said of her: Julietta would rather be killed than let a word slip. She was betrayed and taken to prison. The judge said to her: “Deny your God, denounce the Christians, indicate the places where the books of religion are hidden. - She answered: I love my God, I cannot deny him; if I denounce the Christians to you, you will put them to death; if I indicate to you the places where the books of our religion are hidden, you will burn them; rather die than commit such crimes. Before the two courts all torments were exhausted, all means of seduction were tried; she remained unshaken. Her sentence was pronounced [pronounced]. Julietta was 56 years old. (Choe adds July 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Agatha Jeon, lady of honor of the queen
[전경협 Jeon Gyeong-hyeop]

Agatha received at birth advantages of body and mind; still young she was introduced to the court. There she heard about religion and embraced it. From that moment on she sought to leave this environment where she could not be a Christian. She left her precious clothes and went out of the palace. Her family was pagan; she could not return to her home without exposing her faith to a host of perils. She made herself poor with J.C., whom she had just met, and asked for hospitality from Christians. She applied herself to the practice of virtues with great fervor and her example was presented to others as a model.

God tested her with continuous illnesses; she bore them with patience. Pious and zealous, she worked successfully to convert the pagans. Agatha was with Lucy Park, her companion, when unexpectedly the satellites entered the house. She received them politely, had food prepared for them, packed her small bundle of the most necessary linen, and followed them to the prison.

When she was brought before the court, the judge said to her: “How is it that a person of your rank has embraced this perverse religion? - God is the creator of the universe; he gives men being and life, and preserves it for them; he rewards virtue, he punishes vice; paying him homage is not a crime worthy of punishment.” The judge tried several times to make her apostatize; not being able to succeed, he sent her to the second court. The mandarin said to her: “You have been brought up and fed in the king's palace and you are transgressing his orders, renounce your religion and go home. - I would rather die than do what you tell me. Five times she received the torture of the legs; her bones were broken.

¹⁶² These royal palaces are only miserable houses that the smallest bourgeois of Europe would not want to live in. In addition to those where the king makes his home, there are others intended to preserve the tablets of his ancestors. The superstition was in Korea to treat the dead as if they were alive, to greet them, to offer them food etc. By order of the king are gathered in these palaces eunuchs and women for the service of his ancestors. These girls cannot marry and must maintain continence: if they fail to do so, they are punished by death or exile. Once they have entered these sanctuaries, they cannot leave them unless they are seriously ill. We refrain from recounting here the crimes that are committed in these places where the devil reigns supreme.

In the torments she maintained a calmness that threw the people around her into admiration. Her brother was a pagan and had an honorable position in the world; if his sister was condemned to death, he would lose honor and reputation. He made every effort to make her apostatize: unable to succeed, he thought that if she died in prison, her death would not have any effect, and would preserve his honor and the place he had in the government. He conceived the dreadful plan of poisoning her and sent her a dish prepared with poison; but Agatha returned it immediately after taking it. This denatured brother seeing his failed blow, goes to find the chief of the satellites and begs him to make her expire under the rods. Agatha had to support awful torments, but without dying. She knew the plan of her brother and feared that he would obtain that they simply let her die in prison. She had already been told this. Lucy, her companion, was in possession of the palm of martyrdom; she saw before her a future that frightened her by its length. She prayed to the Lord with tears not to deprive her of the crown; her prayers were answered; after six months of captivity, she had her head cut off, at the age of 50. (Choe adds September 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Magdalen Park

[박 봉손 Park Bong-son]

Magdalen was born of pagan parents. After the death of her husband, she returned to her family and lived with her father's wife, a fervent Christian. She learned religion from her and embraced it. She fulfilled her duties with exemplary fidelity; she always took care of the most difficult tasks in the household and left the easiest ones to others; this won her the hearts of everyone. In the house she lived in, three or four Christian families lived together, which every day caused a great tumult and the influx of many people; she was never seen to be angry; she only feared one thing and that was to fail in any of her duties.

When the persecution arose, everyone fled, she remained alone in the house to guard it. Some time later, her mother-in-law's brother returned, and when they least expected it, the satellites came in, chained them both up and took them to prison. When she was brought before the court, the judge said to her: "Deny your God, tell where the people of the house have gone, denounce the Christians. - If you do not obey, you will be beaten. - I cannot deny my God; the people of the house have fled, I do not know where they have gone; I do not know any Christians. They could torture her legs if they wished. In your house a crowd of people came and went, and you don't know any? - I was not concerned with the comers and goers, I do not know any." She endured the question several times and stood firm in torment. Transferred to the Hyeongjo, the judge said to her: "There is still time, renounce religion and you will regain your freedom. - If I had to renounce my religion, I would not have come here, I would have apostatized at the first court; do not press me any further, it is useless; I came here to shed my blood for my God, put the laws of the kingdom into effect." After the torture of the rule renewed three times, she was sentenced to death. Her sentence was not carried out until seven months later. She was 44 years old. (Choe adds September 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Perpetua Hong, widow [홍금주 페르페투아, 과부]

Perpetua Hong was born in the outskirts of the capital. Her parents left her an orphan at an early age. Her grandmother took her in and raised her. She was married to a pagan. After the death of her husband, she heard about the religion and embraced it. She left her family's home where her faith was in danger and sought the hospitality of Christians. She lived with them in the practice of virtues. During the persecution she was caught and thrown into prison. The judge used promises, threats, and torments against her, but all was useless;

he left her to the discretion of the satellites, who suspended her and beat her. In addition to the torments, she had to endure the diseases of the prison for six months. She was thirty-six years old. (Choe adds September 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Columba Kim and her sister Agnes

[김효임 Kim Hyo-im, 김효주 Kim Hyo-ju]

Columba was born in a village not far from the capital. Her family was pagan and favored with fortune. Her father, having had an argument with his neighbor, hanged himself in despair¹⁶³. Her mother embraced religion with her six children, and a few years later she died the death of the just. Columba and her sister Agnes vowed their virginity to Jesus Christ and lived with their brother's family. Columba was naturally shy, more shy than the ordinary person of her sex. Whenever she heard that such a Christian had been taken, she would turn pale and almost fall into a faint. Nevertheless, in court, she showed a courage that impressed her judges. In the month of May the satellites suddenly entered her house and chained her to Agnes.

The judge said to Columba: "Do you believe that the religion of the master of Heaven is true? - I believe it to be true, and it is for the same reason that I practice it. - Why do you not take a husband? - Our God loves purity of body and spirit; I honor Him by consecrating both to Him. - You fail in the duties of society, you break the orders of the king, renounce religion, denounce the Christians, indicate the place where the books of your sect are hidden and where your brother went? - I will never abandon my God; I do not know where my brother has hidden; you put Christians to death, you burn our books, it is a crime to deliver them into your hands." They twisted her legs and hit her with the long stick. - You don't want to obey, I'm going to make you die by the blows. -As you please, but I will do nothing of what you order me."

She was taken back to prison. Some time later, the satellites without the judge's order entered her prison, stripped her of her clothes as well as her sister Agnes, hung them up, mocking them and armed with sticks covered them with wounds; then making an iron redden in the fire, they pierced the body of Columba in twelve places. During the torments she kept a calm face and her constancy wearied her executioners. The judge ordered her to be stripped again and thrown naked into the dungeon of the thieves. The thieves were sixteen in number; they rushed at her to do violence to her, but the God of the martyrs gave her at that moment a supernatural strength which made her victorious over these brutal men. Five days after her torture, Columba found herself as strong as before; no trace of her wounds remained on her body. The judge attributed this marvelous effect to the operation of the demon with which he believed her to be possessed, and had her exorcised by a sorcerer, who took a large needle and pierced her body in several places to give passage to the possessing spirit.

"What have we done?" said Colomba, "what is so bad about our religion that you torment us so cruelly? - You do not honor the ancestors," replied the judge, "by not offering them the food ordained by the rites¹⁶⁴. - Your rites are vain observances: the soul separated

¹⁶³ People in Korea hang and drown themselves with strange ease: a little displeasure, a little word of contempt, a trifle often leads them to this criminal delirium.

¹⁶⁴ Almost all the religious practices of the Koreans are reduced to offering food in front of the tablet or on the tomb of their ancestors, and to greeting them by bringing the forehead to the ground. They also believe that they have a soul, that there is a divine power in heaven, rather than heaven itself being a divinity; but what is this divinity? they know nothing and they don't care if they are told of their last end. They answer like a certain class of people in Europe: What is beyond the grave? We don't know, and no one has come back to tell us. Let's eat and drink; tomorrow we will die.

from the body no longer needs food. She was sent with her sister to the second court. The judge said to her: “Apart from your religion, can one not be holy? - No,” Columba answered, “there is no way. - And Confucius and Mencius knew God and worshipped him, they are holy; if they did not, they are reprobate.”

The judge asked her several other questions that have not come to our knowledge. At the end of the interrogations, Columba said: “The mandarins are the fathers of the people, they welcome the prayers which one makes to them; would it not be allowed to address a question to the judge? - Speak. - If the laws of the kingdom condemn Christians to death, I am ready to die; but why do I receive punishments that are not determined by law? In the other court I was stripped of my clothes, hung up, and in the midst of indecent mockery I was pierced with a red-hot iron. Does the law permit such an outrage to modesty? - This girl is a pearl,” answered the judge, in anger, “who wanted to tarnish her?” and he immediately sent the order to beat the culprits; two of the principal ones were exiled. Afterwards, women were spared these disgusting torments. Agnes after 4 months of great suffering had her head cut off on September 3, at the age of 29. The torments of Columba were joined by the pains of illness. After five months in prison, she was beheaded at the age of 26. (Choe adds September 26, 1839, as the date of execution)

Magdalen mother of Magdalen Yi. We have seen her story in this article.

On December 29, the following seven martyrs had their heads cut off.

Peter Choe

[최창흡 Choe Chang-heup]

Peter belonged to an honorable family in Seoul. His ancestors had held positions in the government. In the persecution of 1801, he lost his older brother who was martyred for the faith. At the age of thirteen and without any support, he was left to his own devices and his religious education was greatly neglected; therefore his conduct was no different from that of the pagans. In 1820 a plague¹⁶⁵ as terrible as it was extraordinary ravaged Korea, claiming a multitude of victims every day. Peter returned to himself, was instructed and received baptism. From then on his conduct was irreproachable, his gentle and peaceful character brought him into agreement with everyone. Full of regret and repentance for his past conduct he would often say with a groan, “Alas! martyrdom alone can atone for my many errors, my God, do not deprive me of this grace.”

When he saw the persecution coming, his desire for martyrdom became stronger, and he prepared himself for it by a redoubling of fervor. At the end of June, the satellites invaded his house, chained up his family and took them to prison. The mandarin had Peter brought in and said to him, “Are you following the evil doctrine of the Christians? - There is nothing wrong with the doctrine of the Christians; I adore God and serve him. - Renounce this God and you will live. - I cannot deny my creator. - How long have you known him? - My parents were Christians; they told me about him from childhood. - Here is a learned doctor,” said the people of the Praetorium, laughing at him.

Seven times he was questioned, seven times his legs were twisted, seven times four men at once struck him with the tip of the long stick: in all he received one hundred and fifty

¹⁶⁵ According to the description I have been given, it is, without a doubt, cholera. He passed from Japan to Korea, and beyond to China; twelve years later he was at the gates of Paris.

blows from the board. His constancy was invincible. Transferred to the *Hyeongjo*, he underwent three ordinary interrogations with the torments that accompanied them. His sentence was carried out ten months later. When he was about to be taken to the place of execution, he said to the jailer: "I am going to death; warn my wife and daughter that they should not mourn me, but rather praise and thank the Lord; I hope that in a few days they will follow me to the place of triumph." Peter received the palm of martyrdom at the age of 53. (Choe adds December 29, 1839, as the date of execution)

Barbara Tso, wife of Sebastian Nam

[조증이 Jo Jeung-i, wife of 남이관 Nam I-gwan]

Barbara's family was distinguished by its nobility and piety. At the age of sixteen she was married to Sebastian Nam whose martyrdom we have seen above. The only child they had from their union died a few months after its birth. In 1801, her father was martyred, her father-in-law and her husband were sent into exile. Barbara, having no other support in his family than a younger brother, retired to her home. Several years later, her husband was recalled from exile, and together they went to live in the capital. Barbara was one of the people who did most to introduce evangelical workers into Korea. They were received in her house and served by her as envoys from heaven. With a great desire to shed her blood for Jesus Christ, she prepared herself for martyrdom by practicing fervent piety.

She was taken in June and brought before the tribunal. The judge said to her: "You have only two choices left to make, either to die or to renounce your religion and denounce the other Christians; think before you answer. - My reflections are done, replied Barbara, rather a thousand deaths than to commit a crime that my conscience repels." Five times she suffered the question before the court: ten times the executioners subjected her to the tortures: she received one hundred and eighty strokes of the stick. Her body was all in tatters, there was not a single healthy part left. The judge, tired of tormenting her, pronounced his sentence. During her six-month stay in the prison, Barbara had won a singular affection from her fellow captives. When her day came, they told her the news early in the morning and surrounded her with tears. She consoled them, and as the execution was slow in coming, she asked them to withdraw, stretched out on her mat and slept peacefully until the moment when it was time to board the cart. She went cheerfully to her death. She was 58 years old. (Choe adds December 29, 1839, as the date of execution)

Magdalen Han, widow, her daughter Agatha, and Agatha Yi

[한영이 Han Yeong-i, 권진이 Gwon Jin-i, 이경이 Yi Gyeong-i]

Magdalen was born in the provinces of noble and not very wealthy parents. Her family was pagan; she converted to Christianity a few years before the persecution. Her daughter Agatha received from nature advantages which became harmful to her; she gave scandals to the religion, but she repaired them by repentance. Agatha Y was also born in the provinces of Christian parents. These three women were living together in the capital when they were taken. Through the intervention of some satellites, the two Agatha escaped from their prison; their escape caused the dismissal of the judge, the death of a jailer, the exile of two others and the capture of several Christians. Seized again, they courageously suffered the torments with Magdalen. Magdalen was beheaded at the age of 56, on December 29, 1839; Agatha, her daughter, aged 21, on January 31, 1840; Agatha Y, aged 27, on January 31, 1840.

Benedicta Hyeon, widow

[현경련 Hyeon Gyeong-ryeon]

The Hyeon family held one of the first ranks in the middle class, and the secondary dignities of the state passed from father to son. Benedicta's father was martyred in 1801. Her pious Christian mother raised her with great care. The young girl knew how to make the most of her mother's lessons and made great strides in the practice of the virtues; she was one of the people who were quoted with praise. After three years of marriage, she lost her husband¹⁶⁶. Persecution having robbed her family of its possessions several times, she found herself destitute and was obliged to seek the support of her life in the work of her hands. She became a seamstress, and when the missionaries arrived, she began making their clothes. The traitor denounced her for having frequent relations with the Europeans and for being the sister of Charles, the catechist of one of them.

She was caught and had to suffer horribly. More than twenty times the satellites tormented her in order to force her to indicate her brother's hiding place. Eleven times she was questioned before the court: besides the torture of her legs, she received more than three hundred blows with a stick. The judge was unable to defeat her and condemned her to death. Benedicta waited peacefully for seven months in the prison, amidst privations of every kind and the sufferings of disease, until the moment when the axe of the executioner cut off her head and put her in possession of her martyr's crown. She was 46 years old. (Choe adds December 21, 1839, as the date of execution)

Elisabeth, sister of Paul Jeong

[정정혜 Jeong Jeong-hye, sister of 정하상 Jeong Ha-sang]

We have seen that Elisabeth was incarcerated for the faith in 1801 with her entire family. She was then four years old. Carefully brought up she proved to be a worthy emulater of the piety of her parents. From a young age she vowed her virginity to Jesus Christ. She was taken with her mother and her brother. The judge, informed of her condition, said to her: "Why did you not take a husband? - My family having been degraded¹⁶⁷ and having fallen from its rank, nobody would have wanted me. - Do you practice the religion of the master of heaven? - Yes, I do. - Who has imbued you with the teachings of this sect? -From childhood my mother made me know God, and spoke to me of the chastisements reserved for those who do not know Him. - Renounce your religion and you will live. - To renounce my creator is a crime, I cannot do it. - Your brother is foolish enough to want to die; you, be wiser, say a word and you will get out of prison, you and your mother. -If I can only live by denying my God, I prefer death."

The judge tried promises, tried threats; all his efforts came to nothing against Elisabeth's constancy. She received seven times the question and three hundred and fifty strokes of the stick. In the midst of the torments she kept a calm face, she said: "By a special grace, I did not die under the blows, and I understand a little how much immense pain my Savior had to suffer. Transferred to the second tribunal, she endured the three interrogations with the same firmness. Her sentence was set. During the six months that she remained in prison, praying, meditating, consoling the afflicted, exhorting the weak, suffering with

¹⁶⁶ In Korea, among people of good standing, it would be infamous for a widow, however young she was, to remarry. Absurd custom, source of a thousand disorders.

¹⁶⁷ When the head of the family is punished with capital punishment, the other members are degraded forever. Elisabeth's father was martyred in 1801.

patience the illnesses were her daily works. She climbed cheerfully onto the cart that took her to the place of torture. She was 43 years old. (Choe adds December 29, 1839, as the date of execution)

Her mother Cecily generously confessed Jesus Christ before the judge, and showed in her torments a courage above her age, she received 230 strokes of the cane, and expired in the prison on November 23, 1839, aged 79 years.

Barbara Go

[고순이 Go Sun-i]

Barbara was born in the capital to an honest family. Her father was martyred in 1801; her mother raised her in the fear of God and the practice of Christian works. She was married to Augustine Park, whose martyrdom we will see below. Before entering the battlefield, she was very afraid of the torments, but once she was launched on the battlefield, she valiantly endured the Lord's battles. She was filled with gratitude and admiration for God's grace and said: "I never knew that it was so sweet to suffer for Jesus Christ. In addition to the torture of her legs and arms, which were dislocated, her body was torn with rods; her flesh fell to shreds and her bones were exposed. After three months of imprisonment and suffering she had her head cut off at the age of 41. (Choe adds December 29, 1839, as the date of execution)

Magdalen Yi and Mary, her sister

[이영덕 Yi Yeong-deok, Yi In-deok]

These two girls were born in the capital of pagan and very poor parents. Their maternal relative, who was a Christian, finding herself without support, came to take refuge in their family. They heard her speak of religion and embraced it with their mother Barbara. It is impossible to tell how much vexation and insults they had to endure from their father, a violent man infatuated with his superstitions. They were able to leave the house secretly and receive baptism.

Magdalen had resolved to remain a virgin. When she reached the age of 19, her father wanted to marry her off to a pagan; she excused herself, claiming to be ill. Her father did not want to believe her; Magdalen then drew blood from her finger¹⁶⁸, wrote on a piece of paper her resolution not to marry, and showed it to him, begging him not to insist further. The father tore up the paper and told her in an irritated tone that she had no other choice but to comply with his wishes. Magdalen, seeing herself on the point of being forced, formed with her mother and sister the project of escaping. They carried it out and came to warn the bishop. The bishop ordered them to return to their families and to be faithful to their religion. "My husband," said Barbara, "is so hot-tempered that if we return home, our lives will be at stake." "In that case, do as you please," the bishop told them, and gave them some help. They bought a house and were henceforth able to give themselves freely to the zeal of their devotion. However, when the pagan did not see them return, he imagined that they had thrown themselves into the river in despair. He called some fishermen and had them sound the water: their nets brought back three bodies of women. He took them for his wife and daughters and buried them, but he still did not know their story and was still convinced that they had

¹⁶⁸ Means used by Koreans to energetically express their will.

Barbara and her daughters, seeing the persecution coming, prepared for martyrdom. They lived with two other Christians. Magdalen Tso and her daughter of the same name as her; the satellites suddenly entered their house, chained them up and threw all five of them into prison. They bravely suffered the torments. Barbara, Magdalen Tso and her daughter after a few months of suffering died in the dungeon of a pestilential fever. Magdalen Yi and her sister Mary had their heads cut off, the first on December 29, at the age of 28, the second on January 31, 1840, at the age of 27.

After the execution of the martyrs, the satellites kept their bodies lying on the shore for three days. When this term was over, beggars took the bodies, tied a rope under their arms and dragged them in front of the houses. The frightened inhabitants gave them money to remove from before their eyes a spectacle odious for them. Later they asked the mandarin to move the place where the Christians were tortured to another place.

On January 31, 1840, six martyrs had their heads cut off outside the city walls in a place called Dangogae.

Augustine Park, catechist

[박종원 Park Jong-won]

Augustine was from the capital. He deserved by his virtue and intelligence to be raised to the rank of catechist. He was caught a day before his wife Barbara Go, underwent the same interrogations and torments, he showed the same firmness as she did. He was 48 years old.

Peter Hong and Paul, his brother

[홍병주 Hong Byeong-ju, 홍영주 Hong Yeong-ju]

These two brothers were distinguished among Christians for their nobility and piety. Their ancestor who was the first in their family to embrace the faith, was martyred in 1801. They were seized. The great judge, being their relative, did not want to interfere in their cause. He left it to the two lower judges, recommending that they apostatize and be sent home. They and the executioners wanted to make themselves worthy of the first judge, by preserving the lives of two of his relatives; they refined their barbarity towards them; but all their efforts only resulted in making their martyrdom more glorious. They had their heads cut off Peter on January 31, at the age of 42, and Paul the following day, at the age of 39.

A few months earlier, their father's brother and his children had been martyred in the province of Jeolla, after 20 years in prison. In them their family died out on this earth to go and shine in the abode of glory.

Magdalen Son, wife of Peter Choe

[손소벽 Son So-byeok, wife of 최창흡 Choe Chang-heup]

Magdalen was born in Seoul to an honest family. In 1801 her father was exiled for the faith; her mother died early; and her education was much neglected. In 1820, at the time of the cholera, she converted with her husband, received baptism and began to practice the duties of Christianity.

She was caught in June and taken to prison with her two-year-old daughter. When she was brought before the court, the judge said to her: "Who taught you about the Christian religion? How long have you been practicing it? -From childhood my aunt spoke to me of

God, of the reward which he destines for the virtuous men, and of the punishments which he prepares for the impious. - Who are the people who frequent your house? - You want to put them to death; I cannot denounce them to you. - These objects¹⁶⁹ that were found in your house, to whom do they belong? - I don't interfere in such matters, I don't know the owner. - Renounce your God. - Never, God is my creator, I honor him. - Have pity on your child, preserve yourself at least for her, say a word and you will regain your freedom; if you persist in your obstinacy, you will not be able to avoid the torments and the last torment. - God is the arbiter of life and death; my life belongs to Him, I cannot preserve it at the expense of the obedience I owe Him; when I am no more, it is He who will take care of my child.”

Four times her legs were violently twisted; she received 360 strokes of the stick. Her whole body was torn apart, her blood flowed in great streams. Fearing that her child would become an occasion of temptation and fall, she separated from it and entrusted it to a Christian. She suffered the privations of prison for another eight months, after which her immortal life began. She was 39 years old. (Choe adds January 31, 1840, as the date of execution)

The other three persons who suffered martyrdom on the same day are: Agatha Yi [이경이 Yi Gyeong-i], Agatha Gwon [권진이 Gwon Jin-i] whom we saw in the article about Magdalen Han [한영이 Han Yeong-i]. Mary Yi [이인덕 Yi In-deok], who was seen with her sister Magdalen [이영덕 Yi Yeong-deok].

On February 1, 1840 had their heads cut off three martyrs. Paul Hong [홍병주 Byeong-ju] - we have seen his story.

John Yi

[이문우 Yi Mun-woo]

John was descended from a noble family of the province. Left an orphan in his childhood, he was adopted by a Christian from the capital. Later he entered the service of the Europeans who asked him to manage the affairs of the mission. Having been caught, he was taken to court. The judge, seeing in him youth and a figure above the ordinary, conceived affection for him; he said to him in a tone of benevolence: you are still young, you have education, you can aspire to dignities, a beautiful future is open to you, how is it that you have embraced this sect, and that you show yourself to be rebellious to the orders of the king? An ignominious death awaits you; renounce your religion, unknown to our ancestors, say a word and you will be free. - John replied: “To love life and to reject death is a natural human feeling, I know that, mandarin. I also know the advantages that you offer me, but they have little attraction for me: this life is short and the dignities that one possesses in it pass like a shadow. It is only sensible to prefer an immortal glory, a joy which does not finish to a pleasure of one moment. Through the tribulations of this world and beyond the grave, my religion shows me an eternal happiness, that is why I practice it. The king, it is true, forbids this religion, but above the king is a God, creator and father of all men, who orders me to adore him, can I without crime refuse to obey him? Judge for yourself. If in this kingdom the king ordered one thing and a mandarin ordered another contrary to it, whom should I obey? Know that in the hands of God, kings are mandarins whom he uses to govern this world. The

¹⁶⁹ Belonging to the mission.

judge, as a sign of friendship and to win him over, offered him a little glass of wine to drink. He tried several means of seduction, but seeing that they were useless, he resorted to torture. He ordered that he be laid on the ground and that twenty blows be applied to him with the board. The blood gushed out violently; John was exhausted.

The judge saw that he was about to expire and that he was unable to endure any more torments, so he had him transferred to prison. The confessor was then transferred to the second tribunal where he endured his three interrogations with the same constancy. He was sentenced to death. His sentence was carried out three months later. He was 30 years old. (Choe adds February 1, 1840, as the date of execution)

Choe Barbara

[최영이 Choe Yeong-i]

Barbara was taken along with her father Peter Choe and her mother Magdalen Son. She was a very devout Christian. When her parents talked to her about marriage, she replied, "In the choice you have to make of a husband do not consider age, rank, or wealth; that he is a good Christian is enough for me, he will suit me." Their choice fell on Charles Jo, older than their daughter by 24 years.

Presented before the court, the judge told her: "Renounce your religion, denounce the Christians, indicate the owner of the objects that were in your husband's house. - Even if I die, I will never renounce my God; I do not know many Christians, and besides since you will put them to death, I cannot denounce them to you; I do not know who placed these objects in my house." The judge made them twist her legs. Like her mother, Barbara was nursing a young child; so that his presence would not arouse in her maternal heart an affection that would become fatal to her, she had him handed over to a Christian and asked him to take care of him. She was questioned seven times and received more than three hundred strokes of the stick. For eight months she had to endure the sufferings of the prison. Her father, her mother, her husband had preceded her to the place of happiness: she sighed for the moment of being reunited with them. She was beheaded at the age of 21. (Choe adds February 1, 1840, as the date of execution)

Paul Heo

[허임 Heo Im]

Paul was a soldier. In the first interrogations he was firm; he received 70 blows from the board. Later the anguish of the prison made him apostatize. The same day he came to him senses and bitterly cried for his crime. He went to the mandarin and confessed his weakness. "I have sinned, I repent of it; my mouth has apostatized, my heart was a Christian: it still is; here I am ready to endure torments again. - The satellites said to him, "That's good, but we don't know if you're telling the truth; you're going to give us a sign of your repentance. There was a large vase nearby, intended to receive the filth of the prisoners. "If you really repent, here is a bowl; draw from it and drink." Paul without hesitation fills the bowl and in one gulp swallows the awful beverage. He wants to draw again. "Enough, enough for that. Here is a crucifix, prostrate yourself before it." Paul prostrates himself and kisses it with respect. The judge, irritated by his return, made him expire under the blows of the board. Paul was 45 years old.

[이호영 Yi Ho-yeong]

Peter was born in the province of a noble and not very wealthy family. When his father died, his mother came to live in the capital with her children. Peter was fulfilling his duties as a good Christian, when in 1834 he was taken with his sister. He stood up before the court and was tortured on arms and legs and beaten with sticks with great courage. The judge, not being able to obtain a word of apostasy from him, wrote a large letter on a piece of paper, presented it to him and said: "It is difficult for your mouth to pronounce apostasy, spit on this letter and it will be a sign that you are not a Christian anymore. - It is the same thing," Peter replied, "I cannot do it. - I will have you beaten, and if you utter a cry, I shall know that you are abandoning your religion." He beat him cruelly; his arms and legs were broken. Peter remained motionless and mute

His sentence was pronounced; it stated that he was condemned to death for following an evil doctrine. The judge presented it to him, "Put your signature to it. - My religion is holy, the doctrine it teaches is true, I cannot attest that it is false." The judge ordered a satellite to take his hand and make him sign it by force. Peter remained in prison for four years, during which time he observed a rigorous fast. Feeling his end approaching, he said, "I longed for my head to fall under the sword, but God has disposed otherwise, his holy will be done." Saying these words, he fell asleep with the sleep of the just, in the month of June of the year 1838, at the age of 36. His sister was martyred the following year.

Joseph Jang

[장성집 Jang Seong-jip]

Joseph was what is vulgarly called a fine man. He was born in Seoul in the lowest class. He was very poor and started a small retail business to earn a living. He then gave it up because it was an opportunity for him to lie every day. His family said to him: "We have nothing left, hunger is consuming us; continue your trade, which was sustaining us." Joseph replied, "By my trade I have been able to earn the clothes that cover you and me; but it is an occasion of ruin to me; I would rather lose my life than keep it at the expense of my conscience."

During the persecution he was inflamed with such a violent desire to shed his blood for his God that he was on the point of surrendering himself to the mandarin. He waited, however, until the satellites came to lay hands on him. He fell ill, "Alas," he said, "I cannot be a martyr." The satellites came in, he was overjoyed, and was carried to the prison and thrown into a corner. Several days passed and no one paid any attention to him. "I am a Christian," he cried, "why am I left out, why am I not questioned, why am I not beaten? - He is in delirium, said the people of the court. - I am not in delirium, I am in my right mind. I am a Christian, I tell you, I came here to suffer and die. The judge granted him what he so passionately desired; he had him beaten with 25 strokes of the board. Joseph died almost immediately, on June 5, 1839 he was 54 years old.

Protase Jeong

[정국보 Jeon Guk-bo]

Protase belonged to a family of mandarins. He embraced Christianity when he was already old, and practiced its duties with great fervor. He was so humble that leaving aside his nobility, he prostrated himself before all the nobles he met. He was brought before the first tribunal and there he endured the torture with firmness. Transferred to the second, the judge won him over with his gentleness, made him apostatize and sent him home. When he returned to his house, Protase was so deeply remorseful for his crime that he could not eat or

sleep for several days. He returned to the Praetorium; “Ah here you are again, said the satellites to him, and what subject brings you here? - I have come to make reparation for the crime I have committed; I have apostatized, I repent of it, I have come to announce it to the mandarin; and saying these words, he entered the praetorium. - Bah,” the satellites said to him, pushing him away, “what you have said is said; it is over now; go back to your place.” Protais returned to the charge three days in a row. The door was constantly closed to him. He went out to the road and waited for the judge to come out. Seeing him arrive, he prostrates himself before him, shedding tears; “I have sinned,” he tells him, “my mouth has uttered a word that my heart denied; I repent, I am a Christian, I want to be one.” “I don't believe you,” the judge replies, and he continues on his way. Protais follows him, shouting: “What a race of people,” the judge resumes with annoyance, “you can't get rid of them. He had him seized and taken back to the first court. There he got what he wanted; he received 25 strokes of the board and expired the next night, in the month of May (the 10th) 1839 at the age of 41 years. (Choe says in June)

Peter Yu

[유대철 Yu Dae-cheol]

Peter was the son of Augustine, a government interpreter. He shows himself the faithful imitator of his father's virtues. - It is incredible what he had to endure from the bad treatment of his mother, and his sisters, declared enemies of the Christian name. This child, convinced that he could not escape the search for satellites, went himself to court.

He was questioned eight times before the judge and given more than six hundred strokes of the cane. Fourteen times the satellites tormented him in every way, hurting him with insults and insults. He received 40 blows from the board. In his torture he showed such a great firmness, such a calm air, that he threw his tormentors into admiration. He took the shreds of flesh that were no longer attached to the rest of his body except by a weak skin and threw them laughing before the judges. In prison he acted as an apostle. He encouraged the weak, he exhorted the apostates to repentance. “You are a catechist and a man,” he said to one of them. “I am only a child; it is you who should encourage me to suffer courageously; hence the role is changed: go back to yourself and die for Jesus Christ.” Peter was strangled in the prison on October 31, at the age of 13.

The following martyrs presenting in their interrogations the same questions and the same answers as the preceding ones, we were forced to cut out a part of them, in order not to fall into boring repetitions.

Agatha Jeong

[정 아가다 Jeong Agatha]

Agatha was born on the bank of the river¹⁷⁰ that flows near the capital. She embraced Christianity in the middle of her years. After the death of her husband, having no one to feed her, she went from door to door asking for her bread. In her extreme poverty she was very faithful to her duties.

Brought before the court, the judge, in order to frighten her, displayed the instruments of torture in front of her, threatening to make her die under the blows, if she did

¹⁷⁰ The Han River.

not apostatize. “It is not at my age,” she said, “that one abandons one's religion: I am on the point of appearing before the judge of the living and the dead: I have only one breath of life left, hasten to snatch it from me; if you do not do so promptly, death will prevent you.” She was transferred to the prison of the *Hyeongjo*, where she died in the midst of the torments of hunger, pronouncing the sweet names of Jesus and Mary. She was 79 years old.

Barbara Kim

[김 바르바라 Kim Barbara]

Barbara was born in the provinces of pagan parents. While still young she went into the service of a Christian family in the capital. She showed herself firm in the torments and died of hunger and disease, in the month of June, at the age of 36 years.

Lucy the Hunchback

[루시아 곱사등이 Lucia Gopsa-deungi]

Lucia's parents were poor country folk. She came into the world with a hump on her back and had no other name than Lucy the Hunchback. All her life she kept a childlike simplicity. Although she was very narrow-minded, she converted many pagans by her reasonings. She was a servant of a family in the capital and was exact in all her duties. She confessed J.C. before the tribunal with great freedom. “Do not press me further, she said; I am a Christian; send me to death, I go willingly.” She died of hunger in the prison at the age of 71.

Anne Han, and her sister-in-law Barbara Kim, a widow

[한 안나 Han Anna, 김 바르바라 Kim Barbara]

These two women were poor. They generally confessed Jesus Christ and endured the torments with courage. The first received 390 strokes of the cane; the second 340; they died in prison as a result of their torments, Anne at the age of 55, on August 29, Barbara at the age of 49, on August 23, 1839.

Catherine Yi, widow, and her daughter Magdalen Jo

[이 가타리나 Yi Catharina, 조 막달레나 Jo Magdalena]

After a generous confession they died in prison as a result of their torments; Catherine at the age of 57, Magdalen at the age of 33. Out of love for virginity, despite her mother's solicitations, Magdalen never wanted to marry.

Francis Choe

[최경환 Choe Gyeong-hwan]

Francis was born near the capital. He was one of the most fervent Christians. With great courage he suffered horrible torments. Tortured on arms and legs in two interrogations he received 110 blows from the board; he expired almost immediately, on August 25, 1839 at the age of 35. His son Thomas (Choe Yang-eop) was sent to Macao to study Latin; he is now a deacon.

Andrew Jeong

[정화경 Jeong Hwa-gyeong]

He was a wealthy Christian from the province. He had been given the simplicity of the dove, but he did not have the prudence of the serpent. It was to him that the traitor turned to learn of the bishop's retreat. Andrew was caught later and endured the torments with courage - torture of legs and arms, beatings with rods - 100 strokes of the board. He was strangled in the prison on January 24, 1840, at the age of 33 years.

Teresa Kim

[김 데레사 Kim Teresa]

Teresa was a pious person from the province. She was in the house of Paul Jeong, where she was performing the duties of a servant, when she was caught. She received six times the question and 280 strokes of the stick. After 7 months of captivity, she was strangled on December 10, 1839, at the age of 44.

Stephen Min

[민극가 Min Geuk-ga]

Stephen embraced Christianity a few years before the persecution. He was a nobleman by birth. His education, intelligence and piety wanted him the title of catechist. In court, he answered the judge with great courage and freedom. "Not only will I not abandon my religion," he said, "but if you release me, I will preach it to the pagans." The judge in fury had him beaten with the utmost cruelty. "He is worthy of death," he cried, "let him die under the blows." Stephen received 40 blows from the board at once. Thrown into prison, he exhorted the apostates and made them return to themselves. He was strangled in the prison on December 31, 1839, in the 53rd year of his age.

Antony Kim

[김성우 Kim Seong-woo]

Antony was a plowman. He embraced the faith in his manhood; zealous and fervent, he converted most of the people of his village. He went to settle in the capital and made his house a meeting place for the faithful. Having been taken, he endured the torments with courage. He answered the judge: "I have only one word to say to all your interrogations and exhortations: I am a Christian, I want to die a Christian." He received 90 blows from the board and was strangled in prison, in the month of March, of 1841. He was 47 years old.

The Persecution of 1846

What follows was added to Bishop Ferréol's text by Thomas Choe Yang-eop, using part of the letter from Bishop Ferréol to Fr. Barran (MEP Archives Volume 577 ff.966-971

and published in *Annales* Volume 19 1847 pp 433-460). Thomas Choe shortened and adapted the text about Andrew Kim since he knew his story well. For the others, he only slightly adapted Bishop Ferréol's text. The English for Andrew Kim is a translation of the Latin, for the others it follows Bishop Ferréol's letter.

Andrew Kim, Priest

Andrew Kim was born in August of the year 1821, in the province of Chungcheong. According to tradition, the family was descended from an ancient king who reigned in southern Korea, when the country was divided into various small states. Despite this illustrious origin, she is nonetheless without consideration in the kingdom. The Kim family has another merit in the eyes of posterity, that of having given the church many martyrs. André was trained in piety from childhood (and received baptism at the age of 14). Sacred Studies Scarcely five years had passed, when they were about to be sent home, a French ship landed at Macao, intending to sail for the Korean shores, and Andrew was sent with a certain missionary. The war between English and Chinese being then urgent, the ship postponed its departure for Korea and remained at Kiangnan all summer.

In the meantime, André was an interpreter between the French and the Chinese, and he was somewhat useful in recommending the power and generosity of the French in these regions. As autumn approached, when the voyage had already become dangerous, the captain of the French decided to take the ship back to the Philippines: so Andrew, exposed, boarded a boat for Kiangnan and successfully arrived at Leaotong. Then, on the advice of the Apostolic Vicar of Manchuria, he was sent to Pienmen, on the borders of Korea, to inquire if there was not a way open to this mission which had remained silent for three years.

He arrived too late, but then he met the Korean ambassadors who were on their way to Peking, and, standing watching them pass, he saw a young man somewhat separated from the others: to whom he was addressing himself, he recognized him as a Christian. who brought the saddest and longed-for news. Unable to go back, he advised Andreas not to go any further. Nevertheless, Andrew attempted to enter his country. He put on the clothes he had previously prepared and passed the first post mingling with the others, but at the next inn he aroused general surprise, his speech, clothes and hair denoting a foreigner, and therefore he was forced to retreat and could only return to Leaotong with great danger and great difficulty.

The following year he was sent to northern Korea, where the Christians had gathered, and he proved that this path was easy. At the end of the same year, the Apostolic Vicar accompanied him to Pienmen, and as they dared not bring the Bishop for fear, they brought with them Andrew, who, having procured a boat, and having also met some Christian farmers, overcame countless obstacles with the same determination and finally arrived in Kiangnan under the protection of God.

There, ordained a priest, he brought with him the Vicar Apostolic and another missionary to his country, and fearlessly accepting new dangers for the benefit of the mission and the divine glory, he was arrested by satellites and courageously endured many punishments. On September 16, 1846, he emigrated to the heavenly country with a glorious martyrdom.

Chalres Hyeon, Catechist

Charles Hien was born in the capital of an honorable family. His father was martyred in the persecution of 1801, and in that of 1839 his wife, son and sister died. Charles was for many years at the head of the affairs of the mission. He went to look for Mgr Imbert at the Chinese border, and always accompanied M. Chastan in the administration of the Christians. His age, his virtue had made him dear and venerable to all the faithful. Before his death, the martyr bishop charged him to collect the deeds of those who would shed their blood for Jesus Christ and to take care of the mission during his widowhood.

For three years sought by the satellites, he was forced to disguise himself and seek refuge in the poorest cottages and in the dens of the mountains. During the absence of the priests he encouraged the Christians and helped them to reconstitute themselves; he sent couriers several times to China to renew communication and he was part of the Chang-hai expedition. Back in Korea, he was continually occupied with the service of Religion, and when the persecution broke out, finding himself alone in the capital, he had to put all affairs in order. He had just emigrated from one house to another and transported there part of the money and objects of the mission, when suddenly the satellites entered his house, seized him with four other people, and threw him in prison. . He had no torments to bear and he was well treated until declared an enemy of the state and secondary leader of Christianity, he crowned his laborious career with the triumph of martyrdom. His death made an impression on the faithful, who regretted it; many owed their conversion to him.

Peter Nam

Pierre Nam was born in the capital of a poor family. He was a soldier. In the persecution of 1839 he was caught and released without apostasy through his pagan brothers. Since then he gave the faithful scandals which he repaired by repentance. He was 53 years old; before being strangled he received thirty blows from the plank.

Lawrence Han

Laurent Han was a catechist at Ogni. He was a devout Christian and had a strong desire for martyrdom. The satellites seized him as the leader, they beat him cruelly and he died under the blows. He was 48 years old.

Joseph Im

Joseph Im was born in a hamlet located on the banks of the river which flows near the capital. He was pagan; his wife and children were Christians. To protect them, he became a satellite in 1839. He was taken because of his son, pilot of Mr. André Kim's boat; his son having refused by his apostasy the grace of martyrdom, God transferred it to the father. As soon as he saw himself in prison, he was inflamed with the desire to die for J.C., whom he knew very little about.

Before the court, the judge who knew he was a pagan said to him: "Do you know the commandments of God? - No, I don't know them. – If you do not know them, you are not a Christian. – Among the children of a family, there are big ones and small ones, there are some who have intelligence, there are some who do not have any, there are even some who are still at home. breast: the big ones know their mother more, the little ones know her less, all however love her: I am in religion like a little child, I am barely born: although I know little about God, I know that he is my father , that's why I love him and want to die for him. Mathias Yi here has a lot of intelligence, he is educated, he knows God much better than I do, he is in our Christian family like a child who has reached maturity. In the prison, hearing the

jailers curse religion, he said to them in a tone full of indignation: “As for me, I cannot answer you, because I am ignorant; my heart feels pain. Matthias, you who can answer, how is it that you say nothing? »

He was instructed and baptized by Fr. Kim in the prison. He wanted to have his head cut off; he said to the judge, “How is it that you do not conform to the laws of the kingdom? They want every criminal worthy of death to be beheaded, and you beat us, beat us to death, strangle us. The irritated judge had him struck fifty strokes with the plank. On the moment of being strangled, he cried out in a loud voice: “O Jesus, my master, I give you what I have, my soul and my body.” He was 55 years old.

Teresa Kim

Teresa was a virgin from the capital; she received a double crown at age 36.

Agatha et Susan Yi

Agatha and her servant Susan Yi, both widows, lived in Seoul as devout Christians. Arrested with Charles Hyeon, they received blows from the plank and were strangled.

Catherine Toki

Catherine Toki was born of a family of slaves. Her master, wanting to obtain from her superstitious acts, and experiencing a refusal, beat her cruelly and left her for dead. Her mother took her in and cured her of her wounds; she was taken with the preceding ones and received the crown of martyrdom in the thirtieth year of her age.

Let the Jews demand signs and the Greeks desire wisdom, but let us seek Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, the true power and wisdom of God. Let others receive the glory that comes from one another, but for me all the glory is in the reproaches of the Lord's cross. Therefore, infuse into my heart the wisdom and power of this cross, hidden from the world, O Lord, my King of Martyrs, so that following in your footsteps I may be made a fellow of your holy cross in this life and united in the next, through your most sacred side, and the sweetest heart of your Blessed Mother, and the merits of your martyrs. Amen.

Epilogue

After the death of Thomas Choe, in a letter from Fr. Féron to Fr. Legrégeois (original text in MEP Archive Vol. 579 ff. 565-567b)

Korea, July 26, 1861

Sir and very venerable Brother,

I am writing to you this year very distressed: we have just lost the most precious of all our missionaries, the good Father Thomas whom you loved so much and so rightly. His administration finished, he was going to visit the Bishop, when on the way, he was taken by typhus which took him away in a few days. Fortunately he had been able to reach a small Christian community a dozen leagues from the college, so that Fr. Pourthié, being warned, was able to arrive in time to give him a final absolution and extreme unction, but was not able to confess him. Although he already lacked consciousness almost entirely, he retained enough to demonstrate his great piety by sweet and tender invocations of the holy names of Jesus and Mary, which he did not stop pronouncing until the last moment. This death has caused public mourning throughout the mission and puts us in a difficult situation from which we will only emerge with the proclamation of freedom, because the districts which he visited in the depths of the south have until now been inaccessible to the Europeans. Moreover his knowledge of Chinese characters and his quality as a Korean made him more suitable than any other for a type of work which is very necessary to us, the translation of books; he had already worked a lot in this regard, and Bishop Daveluy, the only one among us who has enough language to take care of this work, has lost his right arm in him.

What shall I tell you about myself? The good Father Thomas was for me more than a colleague: from my arrival, we had become closely linked together, and he had as much affection for me as I had for him esteem and respect. As he was my closest neighbor we never spent the year without visiting each other as often as possible, we usually went on our retreats together. So I know that I am losing a very worthy and pious friend in him. So see how the good Lord treats, I would almost say harshly, this poor Korea. As soon as some new missionary enters, he removes one of our columns. When I arrived it was Fr. Maistre. This year, it's one even more precious. Do we not sow in tears?

August 9 – the servant of Father Thomas has just arrived at my house and gives me details of his illness: he succumbed to nothing other than fatigue. In fact, the troubles of last year had made his administration so difficult, that he had to travel 8 or 10 leagues during the day, hear confessions at night, and leave before daylight, so that the rest he could take did not amount to 4 nights in a month. It's excessive, you will say, but if you only knew the difficulties, and how the work pushes the sword into our loins! I will, by all appearances, be in charge of his district. Pray for me.