

PENANCE

by Gim Mal-Bong

Mi-Za phoned me at three in the afternoon as usual. Her voice was always clear.

“To the hot springs? What? Birthday? Whose? Oh, yes! I’ll come, then. I’ll come, I say!”

When I hung up the receiver, I felt myself still smiling. Then another telephone call came.

“Yes!” If anybody had been beside me and looked at me at that moment, he would have seen, I am sure, my eyes go round in surprise, and my face become very wry. The telephone said, “Hello! We shall go to the theatre to-night without fail? I have prepared supper, so that you may eat at home.”

Though I had promised Mi-Za on the telephone a minute ago that I would go to the hot springs, I did not have the courage now to cancel the other promise I had made to my wife, Zông-Hùi to go to see a film, a visit which I had been postponing now for two months. Because I had done wrong in returning home that morning at three o’clock, I had repeated many times to my wife that I would take her to the cinema that night. Moreover, she had been on the point of weeping that morning and had said that she would not sleep well at night, so I made up my mind at last and answered.

“Of course we’ll go to see it! I’m coming home right now. Let’s eat supper slowly together to-night!”

To tell the truth, I had not taken supper at home now for four days. I phoned to Mi-Za.

“I’m sorry, I can’t go to the hot springs. An important guest has come. Don’t be angry, please! I have a guest, really!”

After finishing the phone call, I took my hat. Filled with what was almost the joy of returning home after a long absence, I bought some cake for my children and also some fruit for supper and went home. When I entered the gate, with an entry like that of a victorious general, my wife rushed to me and took from me my parcels and my hat. My child, too, was glad, and clapping his hands, clung onto me. I made a mental apology to the child, and rubbed my cheek against his face. My wife brought a fan and some water in a basin for me. When I had slipped off my jacket and washed my face, my wife brought a water-melon from the well. She must have put honey and wine in it, for it tasted very fresh, sweet, and perfumed. So the three of us, my family, began to eat water-melon, but at once the gate opened.

“Sister!”

It was Mi-Za herself, who had just called on us.

“Come in, please!”, my wife answered her, and wiping her hands, wet with eating water-melon, on her apron, she brought a cushion onto the floor. I was watching to see what effect my wife’s expression might have on Mi-Za, and I said to Mi-Za, who was standing doubtfully,

“What’s been the matter? I haven’t seen you for a long time!”

I tried to smile, but Mi-Za was not bothering about me; showing a bundle of

cloth, which she had carried at her side, she said, Sister, this seam does not fit me. What shall I do?"

She lifted up a Western dress, which she had not been able to finish, with a wry expression.

"Well! I'll fix it for you. Don't worry, and please have some of this water-melon!"

While my wife was busy, with her head bent, putting some watermelon into a bowl, I caught a blue flash in Mi-Za's eyes, which glanced at me. Fanning myself carelessly, I said, "I wonder why the guest hasn't come yet." I pretended to be looking out of the gate for some-one.

"I'll bring some supper for you too. Please eat with us," said my wife, as she went into the kitchen.

"My wife doesn't seem to realize Mi-Za's relations with me," I thought to soothe the uneasiness in my mind. But I was woken up with a shock again by the small but sharp voice of Mi-Za.

"What guest is this? I know all right! I'll show your wife what I am to you!"

Mi-Za, with the cloth bundle in her hand, peeped into the kitchen and said most pleasantly.

"No, no, no, sister! You are very happy as you are, I see. I'll come back later."

"No, you must eat here with us! Why not?"

"Why should I interfere? You two people would have a delicious meal together. I'll come again after supper."

My wife followed her into the garden and said, "I am sorry, but we are going out after supper."

"Oh! Are you?"

Mi-Za seemed to turn her head and glance at me, but I turned -quickly aside to avoid her unwelcome gaze.

"Ho, ho! A very happy couple, indeed! Oh dear! I'd forgotten. Mr. Czoë is waiting for me."

Mi-Za went out of the gate, shaking her head and talking to herself. I thought, "This is terrible!". That mischievous Mi-Za had heard from my wife that we were going out after supper, and judging by the poisonous expression on her face, she might let out our secret to my wife, I could not swallow my food easily, though it had been well and carefully prepared by my wife.

"She said that fellow Czoë was waiting for her. I can't allow that!", I thought.

I placed my spoon and chop-sticks on the dining-table and said to my wife, who was busy making herself up in the room, "What shall I do?"

"Why? What's the matter?"

My wife looked out at me in surprise, with her finger still bent for putting on lip-stick.

"I've only just remembered. I've forgotten the promise I made to a director of X Company the day before yesterday to meet him at the hot springs!"

I did not dare to look at my wife's face, so I searched in my pocket for a won note and put it on the door-step.

"You can go alone, can't you? I'll join you later if I have time." My wife jumped up from the toilet-box, and, stamping on the note and kicking it to the edge of the floor, went into the kitchen. It was the first time I had ever met such fury in my wife since our marriage, so that I was displeased, or rather I got angry myself. I said to myself with a grudge against her, "I'll see what she will do!"

I opened the gate noisily, and went out of the house. I thought that her furious anger at that time made the situation rather simpler. If she had said, "Well, if that's the case, we'll go another time! You shouldn't break a promise to a director.", and dimpled both her cheeks, and shown her neat teeth in a smile, then my shoulders might have felt heavier, and my legs might have trembled as they carried me to Mi-Za. My being attracted by Mi-Za does not prove whether I like my wife or not. My wife is slender, her face rather long, and her skin white. Though she has born two children, she has never looked ugly. Then someone will ask me how I came into this relationship with Mi-Za. The truth is that I was tempted by her. Her inner eyebrows are long, her face pale, and her hair thick.

I met her last autumn, while I was staying somewhere for a month on the company's business, and she was a giseng, or dancing girl, up till then. Anyway, she chased after me, built a house round here, and started living here. She used to joke,

"Let's register and be married legally!"

"And what shall I do with my wife?"

"Get a divorce!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me meet your wife, please!"

"Why? Do you want to do that?"

"Yes, I want to see how pretty she, is."

"All right, then, I'll show you", I answered, as a joke, but I felt quite confident secretly, "But she may be much prettier than you!"

One day, Mi-Za was worried about the organ she played, which had gone wrong. Then I was filled with a cheap vanity and wished to let her know that my wife could play the organ very well and repair it very easily. A few days later, I said to my wife,

"My dear, I have got a sister."

"What sister do you mean?"

"She is the younger sister of a friend of mine. His business has moved him to Ung-gi recently, so he has asked me to take care of her when he leaves for his new post."

"Did he ask you so lightly, as if she were some goods of his?"

"What a dear sister she must be to him to put her under another's protection!"

"No, listen! Please listen! First she was married, but she was deceived, since the husband had a wife already. So -she wanted to come back to her parents' house or to open a small shop around here. Her brother. was anxious about her on the eve of his departure, and so arranged a brother and sister relationship between us in front of some other friends."

"How old is she?"

"One year younger than you, twenty-two! She wanted to come and greet you, but she seems to be shy. I hope you will treat her as your younger sister, my dear. If there happens to be any suitable man, we can arrange a second marriage for her, or we can see that she attends a dress-making school as she wishes".

"Is that so?"

Finding some curiosity in my wife's eyes, I took her to Mi-Za's house without further delay. Mi-Za served us with coffee, my wife fixed her organ, and we returned home. From then on, Mi-Za often dropped into my house, behaving as a younger sister to my wife. As she visited my house every day, and learned from my wife how to make aprons, pillow-cases, table-cloths, lamp-covers, and so on, Mi-Za found out

the weak points of my wife, one by one, such as her love of luxury, taking oops frequently, being untidy, and not having an economical mind. But I knew well the purpose behind her criticisms, so I listened to them with one ear only and let them pass straight out of the other ear. On the other hand, I was surprised to find that my wife took pity on Mi-Za and used to praise her prettiness and cleverness. I had a great respect for my wife, who seemed to be as innocent as an angel.

But Mi-Za was nothing but a physical object to me. The clear and pure love, which resembles the water springing from a deep mountain, was for ever the possession of my wife. Though I may look as if I am floating here and there on the waves of "Mi-Za," I always felt a fresh love towards my wife, so that I could kneel down and repent before her. So I looked upon the time I spent with Mi-Za as a game. Though I was fully confident that I could break off any time I wished, I was tempted every day by Mi-Za. I gave her money for half a year, which she spent in great luxury, but, as I gradually began to feel oppressed by her super-human energy, I found that I was slowly tiring of the game. So I was going to cut off my relationship with Mi-Za. But it was unfortunate for me that there should unexpectedly come on the scene a rival who would try to kill me off by taking Mi-Za from me. So I felt that I would not let her go so easily.

I could have given her up if the rival had been anyone but that mean fellow Mr. Czoë, who had competed with me for the top place in the class and now, jealous of my rank in the company, was trying to pull me down by personal criticism. I would never give way to him.

"Mr. Czoë is waiting for me!", Mi-Za had said, and that surely meant that she was throwing out a challenge to me.

I will not explain now how I managed to chase away that hateful fellow, Czoë, at Mi-Za's that evening, but I will tell you what happened there that night.

I slipped off my jacket and trousers, and changed into a nightgown as Mi-Za requested. Though I drank the wine which Mi-Za served, I could not forget my wife's back as she had turned away from me, disappointed.

"I'm too cruel. I should have taken her to the theatre this evening, at least."

So I repented to myself. Mi-Za tried to change my feelings with all sorts of stratagems, for she must have guessed the reason for my gloomy face. When the clock struck eleven, she prepared the bed and put a blue cover on the lamp. It was just then that we heard, "Are you at home sister?"

Mi-Za and I looked into each other's faces for a minute as if we had received an electric shock, because the voice we had heard from the window onto the street was surely that of my wife, Zông-Hûi. Though she could not know from outside what was going on inside the room, since the window was very high up from the street, when I thought that my wife might have been listening secretly outside the window, the electric light seemed to go round in front of me.

"Sister, please open the door!"

My wife had once visited this house with me a month ago and had never been here since, so why had she come unexpectedly this night?

When I thought that she had surely come to check up on just the place where Mi-Za and I were having such a good time because of her resentment at our theatre trip for the evening being cancelled, I hated her so much that I could have twisted her neck on the spot. But, at the same time, I thought to myself, "I won't be caught so easily; why should I?"

That seemed to be not only my idea, because Mi-Za's mind seemed to be

working overtime, too. She gave a low, muffled laugh. "Psh! Let's see!" Then, "Oh! Is that you, sister? I'm coming!", she answered to the window.

She pulled my shoulder, and, pointing to the small clothes closet, which was set in the wall of the room, she said to me, "Come on! Quickly!"

The closet was about two feet wide, and a little more than one foot deep, with a door with a knob for opening and shutting it. Mi-Za used to throw her chamber-pot and cleaning rags into it. I got in there with my night-gown clasped about me. I could just squeeze in and sit down with great difficulty, but it was so narrow that I had to push my head between my legs. Then I could not even breathe freely. Moreover, when Mi-Za tried to close the door of the closet, some of my gown peeped out, and the door would not close if I tried to put all my clothes inside too.

"Get out, please!", Mi-Za shouted in a small but sharp voice. I came out of the closet. Mi-Za slipped off my gown and pushed me back into the closet again, naked as I was. This time, having learnt my lesson a minute ago, I lay down there. Holding my head on my hands, I knelt down there, in the sort of position the most pious Christian might take up in church when praying.

Mi-Za put away the wine-bottle, folded the blankets and quilts in a corner of the room, put my clothes, which were hanging on the wall, into a wardrobe, and hid my shoes, which were on the door-step, all in a very busy manner.

Meanwhile, the gate of the house had opened, and my wife came in with Mi-Za. As I was almost being suffocated in the closet, I put my nose as near to the door as possible, since there was a tiny crevice there. Of course, I also wanted to see what would be going on in the room.

"Sister, you always sleep alone, don't you?" My wife sat on the cushion where I had been, at Mi-Za's request, and looked up as if she felt sorry for Mi-Za,

"Oh, yes! I sleep alone. I may be sleeping alone all my life, hee, hee, hee!"

"But sister, you had better find the right man and get married." My wife was very sympathetic towards Mi-Za, as if she were advising a younger sister. Her hair had been combed after supper, and being wound up in the Korean style, shone with the reflection of the electric light. I felt a lot easier when I could see no excitement or hatred in her face.

"But to live alone may be, in a sense, comfortable."

My wife sighed quietly. When I reflected that the increase in the number of nights I had been staying out recently might have caused her to sigh like that, I felt my head very heavy in the hands which supported it.

"By the way, you said! you were going out with my brother. Did you have a good time?"

Mi-Za picked out a banana from the fruit-dish, and, as she slipped off the skin, went on,

"Where have you been to? Was it a film? They say that "Cleopatra" is very interesting."

"Yes, it was a movie."

My wife only looked at the floor of the room, as she ate her banana with a fork.

"Is my brother sleeping at home now?"

"No, he went to a hot spring with the director of some company." In the darkness, I hid my face in my hands.

"I have often wanted to visit you, but I have really had no time."

"Of course, you won't have had any time with taking care of my brother and

Yong-Zu!"

"Your room is very nice, isn't it?"

"Well, it is much improved by your presence. Such a respected guest as my sister visiting it, hee hee hee!"

"Now you're joking, aren't you?" My wife seemed somewhat gloomy.

"Did anyone move into the room opposite?"

"Yes, uncle's family moved in. They will be staying there a month until his house is built."

The conversation in the room stopped for a little while. Some worms in the closet began to crawl slowly up my belly. I could smell something mouldy or filthy under my nose. "Won't she go back soon?", I thought.

I glanced at my wife, but she did not look as she were ready to move.

"May I sleep here to-night?"

"You're joking, aren't you? You have a beautiful room, sister, and a very dear sweetheart!"

"Sweetheart?" My wife seemed to be displeased by the word.

"I mean your bridegroom, your husband. Why! you wouldn't sleep in a lonely spinster's room like this!"

"Then I'll stay with you, sister, and we'll pass this short night away in chatting together.

I lifted my head in surprise. "Now I'm done for!" I cried in my mind. What shall I do in this narrow closet? If I had known this was going to happen, I would never had got in but would rather have braved it out, drinking wine in the room. My elbows were getting sore, and my knees becoming paralyzed, and when I heard what my wife said, I felt my arms almost breaking, and the filthy smell going right into my nostrils.

"Sister! You can't mean it, can you? If you are late, my brother will be angry when he comes back, won't he?"

"No, that doesn't matter! He said he wouldn't be coming back to-night. If it is troubling you, though, I can go back home."

"No, don't worry about me! I always sleep alone like this."

I looked out at Mi-Za from the closet with disgust and hated her for that.

How anxiously did I wait and pray for her to say something like, "Please go back home, sister! I cannot sleep well with someone next to me."

I thought that it must have turned cloudy outside. Not only was there the sultry air and my hard breathing inside the closet, but fleas or bedbugs began to bite my body mercilessly. I gradually became sweaty all over, and could not stand the way they bit my back, legs, and belly so sharply. If I could have stretched out my hand, I could have scratched. I bit my lip like a man undergoing torture, because I was obliged to wait indefinitely, lying down in the position of a pious man praying.

"By the way, has your organ been all right since I fixed it?"

"Oh! Sister, will you play a tune? I don't think it sounds too good!"

"Let me see!"

My wife sat at the organ, and played a piece, pressing on the pedal.

"Why! It's quite alright!"

"I'll play one, then! Will you listen?"

Mi-Za played do-re-mi-fa clumsily, and the sound gradually became fainter.

"Look! Don't press with your foot so often! Press it slowly, like this!"

"Oh, yes, I see!"

Fortunately, I could just manage to turn my hand a little while the organ was

making! its noise and scratch first my itchy thigh and knees. I could barely stretch my hand to my back, but only scratch there a little. And then, as I tried to pull back my hand, it happened to strike the wall and make a noise. I was awfully startled and shook all over.

Something knocked in the closet. Is it a rat?"

My wife looked at the closet so keenly. My nerves were all on edge at the thought that she might open the door at once.

"No, sister, there are no rats at all. You must have mis-heard, I suppose."

"No, there was a noise; I heard it!"

"Well, leave it alone! There's nothing there. The rat will try in vain."

So I was taken for a rat! But I didn't mind that, since my wife, with a wry face, seemed to be about to open the door, so I put my hands together and prayed.

"Please let her not open the door!"

I had rejected superstition and denied God for a long time now, so I had nothing to pray to. I thought I could pray to my dead father, who had loved me so much. I closed my eyes, and called upon him, but when I saw the picture of him, dressed in a gwan, the old fashioned style of apparel, and with his walking-stick, I could say nothing.

"My son, what shame upon you!", I seemed to hear in my ears. I gave up my prayer to my father and prayed in my mind with all my heart to my living wife.

"Please do not open the closet door!"

My prayer seemed to be effective. My wife returned to the organ and sang a part of Boccaccio, "Only love in my heart" and so-on.

She had had some training in music, so her voice took on a sentimental mood and she kept good time.

"The only love in your heart is unfortunately confined in the closet like this!", I replied in my mind and wiped away with my hand the sweat which was flowing on my forehead.

"Sister, how pretty your voice is!"

"What? I have been kept at home, and even my voice has gone rusty, I think!"

My wife shut the lid of the organ and returned to the cushion on the floor. Again the bedbugs or mosquitoes sucked at and stung my back and bit my belly round the navel, but as the sounds had stopped again, I did not dare to stretch out my hands and scratch them. I could only try to swing my body, or move my belly by deep breathing, but it was not effective. The biting creatures became more ambitious, and I bit my lips, almost mad with bearing the pain.

"Oh, I think that my brother must be very happy to listen to such a beautiful voice always."

"No, he has a far better voice than mine."

"Is that true, sister?"

"Yes. We often sing a duet, and I, being a woman, am always enchanted by his voice."

"Sister, you are very proud of your husband."

"No, I am only telling the truth. There is no man with such a variety of talents as his!"

Mi-Za had no reply to make.

"Though I sometimes annoy him by my carelessness, he always "Well, sister, listen to me! Has he never been late at night?" My wife seemed to be quite at a loss as how to answer this, as

if she had been struck deep in the heart by an arrow. I concentrated hard to hear her answer, even forgetting the pains on my back.

"Why not? He often has some party, for business purposes. He always warns me beforehand and brings some present when he returns. So I rather like his late returns, he-he-he!"

"What sort of presents?"

"Some cloth for a skirt for me or for a suit our child can wear when he goes visiting, or sometimes handbags, and"

"Well, what would you do, sister, if brother visited a brothel?"

"Visit a brothel? He wouldn't do that! He always says that, when he sees a pretty girl filling a cup of wine or singing, he takes her for nothing but a toy, and though he may sometimes make promises to girls, he forgets them soon, te-he-he!"

I looked at Mi-Za's face through the crack in the door. I now feared that Mi-Za, who was looking towards the closet with utter disgust, a field blighted by frost-bite, would suddenly open the door wide, and I hid my face in my hands.

"O God!"

I felt pretty miserable at that moment. I thought that there could be no more miserable and unfortunate person than I in the world, and I sighed deeply, just like Emperor Nero, who set fire to the castle of Rome and recited some sad tunes.

What was more, I had not been to the toilet since I had left the office. I had eaten the big bowl of watermelon served by my wife at home, and I had drunk two bottles of beer given by Mi-Za, so I felt a new pain attacking me. My knees went dead and felt like stones.

I looked through the crack in the door, expecting that my wife would be going home by this time.

"Sister, let me have a pillow!" My wife pushed up the cushion, put it under her shoulder, and suddenly lay down on her side. Mi-Za stretched her hand over the quilt, and, picking up a pillow, supported my wife's head with it. The pillow had been decorated with lace at the edge, as my wife had taught Mi-Za to do. But how is my wife to know that whenever I pass the night at Mi-Za's, I use that pillow? The clock struck one o'clock.

"Oh, by the way, you brought some clothes to me this evening. Where was the patch which doesn't go well?"

"Sister, you must be tired! You had better go back earlier, and go to bed, please! We'll do it tomorrow."

"No, I'm not sleepy. If you are, you may go to bed before me.

Bring me some cloth to sew! I'm quite lonely."

"Well, sister, do you really mean that you are going to sleep here to-night? You must be joking, aren't you?"

Mi-Za laughed, and looked at my wife in disgust, pretending to be an innocent child.

"That's what I said, isn't it?" "Are you sure? I'm glad!"

Mi-Za was glad against her will. To tell the truth, my wife seemed to be really angry to-night. I supposed that it might be her slight revenge on me, not to be in her room when I might get back at two or three o'clock in the morning, and find out how I might feel about it. But anyway, why am I playing the fool, and suffering so much as this? What's a woman to me? I would be brave and come out! A man might visit a brothel; what's wrong with that? What about the way Napoleon lived in his palace, the man who conquered the world? Moreover, King Si of the Chin dynasty of Chima

had three thousand court women, and did not Solomon have one thousand court ladies? What use is a man who is not bold and frank like this?

I put my hand to the door, to rush out at once. But wait a minute!

I'll listen just once more to what they have to say.

"By the way, sister, have you never found my brother to be fickle since your marriage? Tell me the truth, te-he-he!"

"No, never! That is the sort of man he is, I tell you. He is a real puritan!"

"What's a puritan?"

"It may mean 'a man of virtue'. How many there are, among my friends who are always suffering from the fickleness of their husbands! For example, what about your first husband? I can tell you I am quite happy on that score."

"Is that true, sister?"

"What? Why should I tell a lie?"

I pulled back the hand with which I was just about to open the door.

I had introduced Mi-Za to my wife like that, as my sister. Should I come out? Well, I would do so, if I had not said that she was my sister. What a plight I was in!

My wife took the cloth from Mi-Za, and cut it with the scissors, and sewed it up. So she believes in me as a puritan! When I go back home after staying out all night and my wife questions me suspiciously, I swear and try to prove my innocence. When I think of her face, as she smiles at me, believing in me like a child, I dare not open the door and go out. Am I mad? Yes, indeed, I have been mad! Why did I bring my wife to this house before?

'Be patient! One day's patience means a hundred days peace!' it is said. Could Socrates have become a sage if he had not forgiven his wife when she poured dirty water over him? Jesus Christ kept patient even on the cross when they gave him a crown of thorns to wear! How could the Buddha save the people without his penance of seven years on the snowy mountain? Other men, when they are fickle, beat and strike their wives, but I introduced Mi-Za to my wife as my sister to let my wife be at ease. It was really my good heart expressing itself. But how could I have known that good heart of mine would bring upon me such penance as I am undergoing to-night? But to-night will make me great! Oh, what a miserable and fateful night it is! I tried to remember the name of the saint who became a Buddha at the moment when he dosed his eyes and offered himself to a hungry bear, but in the end I could not recollect it. During these minutes, short as they were, I found a peace in my mind which made me feel easier. Oh, how great is the power of religion and (Philosophy!

Conversation stopped in the room, and all was quiet. The two women had folded up the cloth and were lying side by side. Oh, how I envied their good fortune, and it was only just striking two o'clock! My bladder seemed almost about to burst. Inside the closet it was as hot and full of steam as a jar-steamer. I was breathing very hard. It must have been the lack of air. I carefully opened the door just a little with my elbow. It went about a third open with a squeak. It had opened more than I had intended, and I was afraid, and so stretched out my hand to close it back. If my wife had been lying right in front of the door, she would probably have realized at once what was inside the closet, but she was lying behind it. When she saw the door opening, she said,

"Something's in there; does a rat do that?"

My wife suddenly got up. I closed my eyes, thinking that all was finished. My wife took the ruler, and gave the door one push with it. Now it was shut more tightly

than before. Mi-Za, who was pretending to be asleep, said in a sleepy voice, "Why did you do that, sister? Leave it alone, please, I say! What will a rat do, if there is nothing to eat?"

My wife pillowed her head and lay down again. She turned over, this way and that, as if various thoughts were passing through her mind. Not only was there the pain in the bottom of my belly, which continually threatening me, and the sharp torture of the bed-bugs or fleas, but I was now in the one-way street which led to death. I had lost even the tiny crevice, the width of a thread, and the terrible death of suffocation awaited me. So finally I made up my mind to open the door of the closet and get out of it. Even philosophy and religion exist only when one is alive. Well, then, am I to go out smiling or angry? An idea flashed through my mind. "Yes! As a robber!"

First I would hide my face with my hands. Then what should I do about my body, naked, without a stitch on it? I did not forget etiquette even in such a critical moment as when I became a robber. Then I should have to hide my face with one hand, and cover the lower part of my body with the other. But would one hand be sufficient cover for my face? If my wife were to recognize my face, then all would be finished! Yes, I would hide my face with both my hands and push out my hip first. If the women opened their eyes, they would die! I would threaten them in a loud voice. But how about my voice? My voice is usually 'alto', so shall I try 'bass or' tenor'? 'Bass' will be good. It is majestic and dignified!

Now everything is ready. I hid my face in both my hands, and lifted my hip.

"Listen! Did the cock crow? I'm going back. Look, sister, I'm going home. Lock the gate please!" My wife got up.

"Then you are going back, sister, and not spending the night here?"

"Yes, Yong-Zu may cry."

My wife and Mi-Za went out of the room. I opened the closet door and pushed the upper half of my body out into the room.

My wife was at that moment a saviour who had kept me from turning robber. Within ten minutes of my wife's leaving, I went back home. Yong-Zu, who was being carried on my wife's back, was sobbing a lot and seemed to be sleepy.

I embraced my wife and my son and I wept tears for a long, long time.

(July, 1935.)