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THE TONG HAK.

In conversation with a Japanese friend not long ago, I remarked that the Tong Haks were the occasion of the Chinese Japanese war. He showed a good appreciation of the word by replying. "Yes, the relations of China and Japan had become petroleum, and the Tong Hak was the match." Being then the occasioning cause of this great war, it may not prove uninteresting to make more inquiry concerning its history.

The Tong Hak originated at Kyeng Chu in the province of Kyeng Sang in 1859. Kyeng Chu is a walled town forty five miles north of Fusan. Its founder, Choi Chei Ou, * was a scholar and claims to have had the following experience. Having been for some years a witness of the progress made by the Roman Catholic church, he began to think deeply as to whether it was the true religion. "Since they have come so far and spent so much money in its propagation, it ought to be true; and yet if true why are its followers now being killed by the government as criminals?" As he brooded thus from day to day, he fell sick. Though he used much medicine, he became no better and finally was at the point of death. One morning just as the sun's rays began to peep over the eastern hills, he fell into a kind of trance and there appeared unto him some supernatural being.

He called his name—"Choi Chei Ou-a!"

"Yea."

"Knowest not who speaketh unto thee?"

"Nay, who art thou?"

"I am God; † worship me and thou shalt have power over the people."

Choi then asked him concerning the question nearest his heart—"Is the Roman Catholic the true religion?"

The answer was—"No, the word and the time are the same, but the thought and spirit are different from the true."

I shall not attempt to interpret the above. With this

* 최계우 † 상대

God departed. Choi, seeing a pen close by, grasped it and there came out in circular form upon the paper these words: "Since from aforesaid we have worshipped Thee, Lord of Heaven, according to thy good will, do Thou always bestow upon us to know and not forget all things (concerning Thee); and since thine unspeakable thoughts have come to us, do Thou abundantly for us according to our desire." Choi then picked up the scroll, burnt it, poured the ashes into a bowl of water and drank it. Immediately he arose and his sickness was entirely gone.

Choi felt himself called to found a new religion. He thereupon proceeded to make the Tong Hak Bible, which is called *Sung Kyeng Tai Chun** or "Great Sacred Writings." He took from Confucianism the book of the five relations, from Buddhism the law for heart cleansing, from Taoism the law of cleansing the body from moral as well as from natural filth. So one of the names used for this book is made by combining the names of the three religions *You Poul Sun Sam To*. † The influence of Romanism may be seen in the term for God in the prayer, *Chun Chu* ‡ being the one chosen. Romanism is also, indirectly at least, responsible for the name they called it, Tong Hak or Eastern Learning in contradistinction to So Hak (Romanism) or Western Learning. This taken in connection with the fact of its being a combination of the true Oriental religions easily accounts for the name.

Beginning in the province of Kyeng Sang, the Tong Hak religion spread over into Choung Chong and Chulla. It increased in numbers until 1865 when a persecution broke out against the Roman Catholics. Choi was apprehended, accused of being a Romanist, and was beheaded at Tai Ku, the capital of Kyeng Sang, by order of the Government, and the religion was thus put under ban.

The Tong Haks are monotheists. They reject the Buddhist belief of the transmigration of souls, and do not use images in worship. Their rites are few and simple. When members are to be initiated, a master of ceremonies calls the candidates before him. Two candles are lit, fish, bread and sweet wine are placed before them. Then they repeat twenty

* 성경대전

† 유불선삼도

‡ 린주

four times in concert the Tong Hak prayer, "*Si Chun Chu*" &c. Bowing before the candles completes the ceremony, when they rise and partake of the banquet—the expenses of which are paid by the newly initiated. They claim that they do not sacrifice, making a distinction between the words *Chei Sa** and *Tchi Sung*. † They worship as follows: Cement, red clay and one smooth stone are taken and an altar is made. Upon this a bowl of pure water is placed and at night the worshipper bows before this with forehead on the floor praying the "*Si Chun Chu*" &c. When his prayers are over, he drinks the water, calling it the cup of divine favor.

It is stated that when the founder was miraculously cured, that he wrote a number of mystic signs upon slips of paper, which, when given to any sick Tong Hak, produced instant recovery. I have in my possession a copy of a paper taken from the body of a Tong Hak recently slain in the province of Choung Chong. The signs are utterly unintelligible, looking much like a child's first attempt at drawing spiders. The first reads: "If you carry this, hundreds of devils‡ cannot overcome you." The second makes the body weapon proof. It is said that one of the Tong Haks approached the Korean soldiers flourishing one of these papers. At first they were overcome by his daring and were afraid to fire. Finally a brave, more bold than the rest, ventured a shot, killed the Tong Hak and dispelled the enchantment. The third gave a prosperous journey &c; This superstition is practiced in China; and I am informed that Japanese magicians profess to heal by means of the same mystic characters. The Tong Hak doubtless adopted it from China. We are told by outsiders of other miraculous powers belonging to them. It was the custom of the founder to ride upon a cloud. To jump over a house, or from one hill to another was a common practice. A house so commanded by a Tong Hak suddenly disappeared. If an enemy suddenly appeared in the same room with a Tong Hak, the latter mysteriously vanished. Perhaps there is a modicum of truth in the last statement. This too may be a Chinese custom. An empty purse obeyed the command of the magician and became full. These so-called miracles remind one of the apocryphal gospels and serve in common with other

* 제스 † 치성 ‡ 귀신

earthly systems to show the infinite disparity between the true miracles of our Divine Lord and all the attempts of feeble man.

Confucianism and Taoism have nothing to say about the future life, and as the Tong Hak refuse the degrading doctrine of the Buddhist, their teaching is concerned solely with this present world. They know nothing of the great scripture truth of the immortality of the soul; and hence, in common with all other Koreans when asked—"If a man die shall he live again?" they answer—"Who can know?" which is their strongest expression for—"It cannot be known."

So far I have treated the Tong Hak purely as a religious body, taking some liberty perhaps with the word "religious." Such they were until a few years ago. But there existed along-side, *perhaps antedating it a few years*, a state of oppression of the people by the officials which was becoming more and more intolerable. Every spring for several years there has been the rumbling of revolution in the interior. The people were looking somewhere, *anywhere* for assistance. Some went to the Roman Catholics; the majority, to the Tong Haks. They had a common cause against those in authority. The Tong Hak leader had been beheaded and their religion prohibited. Thus there was a large ingathering of those who were Tong Hak in name only. Had the Tong Hak remained a religious body with principles in harmony with good government, it would have had a right to exist. Every man has a right to his belief, and the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. But the political element soon dominated the religious and they became a body of revolutionists.

In the Spring of '93, fifty Tong Haks came up to Seoul and spread a complaint before the Palace gate, on a table, over which was thrown a red cloth. They asked that their leader, the martyred Choi Chai U, be declared innocent, that he be given a certain rank and that they be allowed to erect a monument in his memory. Further, that the ban be taken off their religion, and that they be allowed equal privileges with the Roman Catholics. If this was not granted they would drive all foreigners from the country. The King replied that he would give the matter serious consideration, and requested that they would cease to obstruct the thoroughfare in front of His Majesty's gate. This was followed by the arrest of a few Tong Haks in the district from

which the fifty came. Their petition was not granted.

In the following Spring the long expected uprising came. At first everything was swept before them. The Korean soldiery were unable to check their forces. Governors, magistrates and other officers were deposed in summary order, many meeting swift justice for past misdeeds. The Tong Hak gained over the people in the following manner. A man clothed as a high official was sent to a village. He carried the royal seal of authority, *pyeng pou*,* a reed given by the King to his messengers. This reed is broken, one half remaining in the Palace and the other being carried by the official. This intimated that there was royalty among the Tong Haks. This officer summoned the villagers before him and asked who were Tong Haks. The unwilling were then politely urged to join until the majority came over. These then were sent against the halting minority. If they failed, the officer summoned the stubborn one before him. He would not so much as see his face but the victim was made to kneel on the ground outside the officer's door and was told to join at once or take the consequences—death.

At first they were all victorious but since the Japanese took the field against them they have gradually been driven into corners and their leaders have been killed.

Coming through the little west gate, on Jan. 22nd., I was shocked to notice the head of "Kim" the leader and wonder-worker among the Tong Haks, with the heads of three other leaders tied together by the hair and hung upon poles in the middle of street, intended doubtless as a warning to other offenders. It is, however, a most barbarous and unjustifiable custom which cannot be too strongly condemned. Let us hope that the head of Kim, the Tong Hak, will be the last sign of a custom that does not serve the purpose for which it was intended but only serves to demoralize the people and accustom them to scenes of blood.

* 병부

William M. Junkin.

THE TONG HAK PRAYER.

侍己天主造化定永世不忒萬事知至意
今至願爲大降

금시이던쥬쵸화덩녕세불망만스지지의
지원위덕강