

Dr. Helen Kim's Whan-Kap Chan Chi

Date: February 27, 1959

Place: Tong-Il-Kak

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by Y. S. Yoo

On a sunny and beautiful spring day, February 27, 1959, there was a happy occasion at Tong-Il-Kak in Dr. Kim's down town house. The occasion was Dr. Helen Kim's Whan-Kap Chan Chi, the 60th birthday. Starting with the first two guests at 8:30 in the morning, several hundreds of people gathered by noon, and the house was full of people, men and women, old and young dressed in their best. They all looked gay and happy and even excited. As if to take part in blessing the occasion, birds on the pine trees were singing under the clear blue sky.

The Whan-Kap table, which took several days to prepare by the specialists, was in the center of the room ready for Dr. Kim and it was wonderful to see. The table was very big and high and beautiful. Apples, pears, grapefruit, dates, chestnuts, pine-nuts, walnuts, and various kinds of Korean cakes and cookies were piled up in columns. Scrolls and screens of oriental paintings behind the table made a setting for Dr. Kim.

At noon Dr. Kim appeared in her Whan-Kap dress and crown, before the guests, who were all surprised and happy to see her queenlike appearance. The Whan-Kap dress, which was designed and made by Ewha Home Economics Department professors, was white silk. The long train and belt with hand embroidery added beauty and grace. A most gracious and happy queen sat down before the table.

Immediately following Dr. Kim's appearance, the ceremony was started with a thanksgiving service. Mrs. Grace P. Chang, an Ewha graduate and principal of Kyung Gi Girls' High School, offered the opening prayer. And as special music, Miss Yun Sook Mo read her own poem written for Dr. Kim, and Mrs. Cha Kyung Kim Sim who set it to music sang it most beautifully. The 23rd Psalm was read, and the hymn 'To Higher Ground' was sung, and the Lord's Prayer was offered in union.

The program then turned to stately bows to the day's queen. This bowing is an expression of high respect and hearty congratulation for the sixty years of happy and fruitful life she has lived and sincere wishes for

the coming years. Dr. Kim's relatives, who were formally dressed in Dang E, were the first group to bow. This was followed by the bowing of the guests. They bowed in couples, in family groups, in groups of children and adults. A group of cute boys and girls from Ewha Kindergarten, several girls and boys from Ewha Demonstration Middle and High Schools, and six students representing six colleges from Ewha University, also bowed. Everybody was smiling and happiness and joy overflowed the house.

At about one o'clock, according to Korean custom, Kooksoo (noodles), which symbolizes happy and long life, was served to Dr. Kim and to the guests. With so many guests, the house was kind of small and crowded. But the cheerful guests knew no discomfort because of the spirit of merriment.

An interesting and amusing program took place after the lunch, and the whole day passed very quickly with singing and dancing. As Korean custom at Whan-Kap, old Korean musicians in red formal dress and in black hats played the accompaniment for the singers and dancers. Dr. Kim's relatives, Ewha Kindergarten children, High School girls, and University students also amused Dr. Kim and her guests with their talents.

Lots of birthday gifts were received from near and far and piled up in one corner of the room. Among them was a big scroll of calligraphy on which a poem about Dr. Kim was composed and written by President Syngman Rhee himself. A large crayon drawing by the children of Ewha Primary was also a great delight to Dr. Kim. Opening the gift parcels, Dr. Kim said that as a way of expressing her deep gratitude for these expressions of love by her friends, she plans to build a memorial church with the money gifts and to set up a memorial scholarship fund for Ewha students. Once again her friends were deeply touched and moved by her response, which proved to be another act of thinking of and giving herself to others.

The following day was also spent in joy with many visitors. In two days, several hundred friends visited Dr. Kim. She must have been surprised to see so many. Two friends came as far as from New Milford, Connecticut. They were Misses Josephine Brown and Mildred Owen. Numerous congratulatory cards, letters, and cables were received from far and wide. The Whan-Kap Chan Chi was a splendid occasion affording her to see some fruits of her sixty years of strenuous efforts.

Thanksgiving Service



Mrs. Grace P. Chang offering prayer
(Old Korean musicians in the left-hand side foreground)



Mrs. Cha Kyung Kim Sim singing Whan-Kap Song

The Whan-Kap Table before Dr. Helen Kim



Whan-Kap Chul (bowing)



Student representatives from six colleges of
Ewha Womans University



Ewha Graduates



With Vice-President, Mrs. Maria Pak Lee



With dormitory counselors

Recreation



Ewha Kindergarten children singing



Ewha Demonstration High School student dancing

