

At Our Table Always -- A Sign of Heung Jin Nim's Presence in North Africa

Walter Gottesman

March 1984

Republished by FFWPU International Headquarters November 24, 2023



Walter and Maureen Gottesman with their daughter (around 1990)

"Sofra Dayyman," translated literally from Arabic, means "Table Always." It is a wish that hospitality between hosts and guests may always continue in generosity, that they may always be welcome at one another's table and always be with one another. This was the farewell of our brothers and sisters after sharing God's Day meal.

The table had been full. Even an extra chair had been added. Our fellowship had been joyful, filled with determination and hope for the coming year. I had kept from everyone the news of Heung Jin Nim's accident, telling them only of Father's successful eight-city tour in Korea and the participation of professors from our region. I was waiting for more definite news of our True Brother's condition before making any general announcement.

On the second of January, just before 9:00 a.m., I was taking down the God's day sign when I happened to look back at the dining table and noticed that the plate glass covering it was cracked. I stepped down from the chair on which I'd been standing and went over to the table. A crack in the shape of a lower case "h," about four inches long, had appeared in the glass at the corner of the table, right where the extra chair had been the day before.

I touched it to examine the breakage and it felt hot. I called my wife over to look at this unusual phenomenon. She too felt the heat. Nothing hot had been placed on the table. That part of the table hadn't even been used for breakfast. I asked Reverend Zin Moon Kim, who was staying with us, to come and look at this crack. He also felt the heat. He reached under the tabletop (one inch thick hardwood), and found it was hot there too. We thought it might have some spiritual significance since there seemed to be no chemical or physical reason for the crack and the heat at just this one spot on the table.

A few minutes later, at 9:15 a.m., I heard the glass crack again and saw a straight line that had appeared, ten inches long, which, with the first crack and the molding on the edge of the glass table-cover, formed the shape of a dove. At 2:00 a.m. on the morning of the third, Anne-Marie Mylar called us to let us know that Heung Jin Nim had gone to the spiritual world at 1:15 a.m. on January second, and that Father and Mother had aggressively and boldly offered his life as a sacrifice for God's providence so Satan could not claim a victory from this attack.

She asked us to prepare a brother and sister to go to Korea to attend the Seunghwa Ceremony and participate in a VOC campaign. Even though we knew that Satan hadn't claimed a victory, we wept at the loss of Heung Jin Nim. We realized that his death had occurred just before the cracking of the glass and we began to reflect on why this phenomenon had come to our table.

We recalled that three years before, in January 2, 1981 between 1:00 and 2:00 a.m., we had been playing Yute in the Grand Ballroom of the World Mission Center against the True Children's team. My wife was leading the African team and we had been playing through the night. True Parents were happily looking on.

Though the Children finally won, all along Heung Jin Nim had been giving my wife advice on strategy. We were playing against his team but he was encouraging us, trying to help us win. Of all the True Children only he was giving these words of joy in our efforts to beat them. It was Heung Jin Nim who was directly reaching out to us, and through us, we felt, to all of Africa.

Later, when we realized that the crack happened just after the time given by the hospital as Heung Jin Nim's official time of death, we felt somehow that his spirit had visited our table, that he might have been trying to encourage us, that he wants to help Africa and other parts of the world now that he is in the spirit world.

Brothers and sisters in New York told me how Heung Jin Nim used to talk with them, how he tried to do activities they did, how he was concerned with their lives and their work.

He was taken from us too soon. His earthy life was too short, but in some way that we can't completely explain, we feel that he will always be at our table and with us in all the work we do for God.

This testimony was written soon after Heung-jin nim ascended to the spirit world. Walter and Maureen Gottesman worked in North Africa for many years to promote interreligious harmony and peace.