[page 29] **The Temple on a Hill in Seoul**

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These poems were composed over a period of years living at the foot of An-san (Saddle Mountain) and 10 minutes down the road from Bong Won Sa Temple, which serves as an entry to the numerous walking paths there.

The morning and evening temple bells can be heard from my residence. Often, I climb up to the temple to look around at the carp in the pond, at the ancient trees, the old and numerous temple buildings, and listen to the wind chimes, the frequent ceremonies, often funeral songs, and the witness the many temple pageants with their celebrated monk artists: including national human treasures among the dancers, singers, musicians, painters, even photographers.

In late summer the temple court yard is filled with portable lotus ponds, and flowers are blooming in different sizes, colors and fragrances all over. At night, the frogs take over for the monks and do the chanting. Many a quiet and solitary night have I stood there and listened to the frog chorusers.

Many an afternoon have I sat before the Medicine Buddha or the Mountain God, or the Giant Golden Buddha, or stood outside before the white statute of the Bodhisattva of Mercy and put forth a request for a loved one or for an inspiration.

Every spring I watch the azaleas and magnolias blossom again. Every Buddha’s Birthday we come here to wash the Baby Buddha and enjoy the colorful lit lanterns under the night sky.

For so many more occasions do I journey up this hill, and ever do[page 30] I have in my pocket a small notebook and a half pencil for recording the important events of a day. Here are some highlights.

**“Caught” fishing through the hills**

**just behind our house in S(e)oul**

Mist

cold

stone

a

temple’s

gate

[page 31]

Fan

ning

her

self

on

the

tem

ple

gate,

[page 32]

a

blue

tip

but

ter

fly

o

pens

in

[page 33]

Dirty

with

magnolia

petals,

gold

fish

just

poking

around

[page 34]

“Croak

Croak”

lotus

lotus

“Croak

Croak”

chanting

chanting

[page 35]

“Sir

Bee,

dusty

with

powder,

it’s

a

wonder

you’ve

flown

so

far

seeking

our

flowers

[page 36]

As

other

fliers

can

clearly

see,

our

fragrances

rise

not

from

pink

petals

[page 37]

but

off

honied

hairs,

all

about

our

wombs.

[page 38]

From

our

green

uteruses

come

six

pink

seeds

of

life …

All

bear

a

jewel

of

The

Lotus.”

[page 39]

Gray

monks

grip

straw

hats

- the

old

one

sits

down

[page 40]

As

you

nod,

each

bows

(o’

so

graciously)

to

the

Buddha

in

me

[page 41]

Fish

chimes

tinkle

in

a

circle,

from

one

roof

to

another,

with

you

in

the

center

[page 42]

Thru

five

color

lattices,

you

spy

the

gold,

mustachioed

Buddha

[page 43]

Under

the

jade

roof,

curly

Buddha

sits

on

his

lotus

chair

[page 44]

So

alone

in

a

cave,

his

3rd

Eye

gives

off

light

[page 45]

Circling

the

chamber,

old

Hunch

Back

puffs

out

flickering

candle

lights

[page 46]

Nose

Hair

says,

“Kind

children

left

alone

this

night,

you

must

follow

your

own

delights.”

[page 47]

Surrounded

by

Buddhas,

a

big

baby’s

quietly

snoring

[page 48]

Forty-

nine

days,

your

white,

stringy

beard -

sons

&

daughters

(robes

&

dresses)

grand

kiddies,

too

[page 49]

Old

priests

tooting

kazoos

clanging

cymbals

pounding

drums,

chanting

[page 50]

Young

nuns

dancing

through

the

court

yard

&

white

butterflies

over

a

stream,

chasing

[page 51]

One

hundred

years

mourning

of

a

single

day