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THE WOMAN WHO THOUGHT THE DOCTOR WAS GOD  
By Florence J. Murray

I first met Kang Doka, a tiny bright-eyed Korean woman in her fifties, when I went to open the mission hospital in Hamheung, Korea, closed since the death of Dr. Kate MacMillan the previous year.

Doka, the doctor's helper and close companion for years, now bestowed her love and loyalty on me. Everybody called her Grandmother Doka (Dorcas) and she was truly a grandmother to all.

One evening, feeling ill, I went early to bed in my room in the hospital. A gentle knock sounded on the door and Doka entered.

"Do you feel very bad?" she asked. "I'll massage you and then you'll feel better."

Turning down the covers she began to massage my arms and shoulders, and while doing so told me her story.

"We had four children," she said, "and my husband was kind to me so we were happy till three of the little ones died within two days from some throat disease that was going around among the village children. There were no doctors nor hospitals and many children died. I was frantic with grief and couldn't eat nor sleep for days, till a friend who lost two children herself came to comfort me."

"Come with me to the house of God," she said, "and learn how you can see your children again."

"Don't mock me, I said. They're dead and gone and I can never see them again."

## The Woman Who Thought

"Yes, you can," she told me. 'Come to the house of God with me.'

"Where's the house of God? I asked.

"I'll come and take you on Sunday," she said.

"When'll that be? I wanted to know. That's how ignorant I was. She smiled ruefully.

"Three days later my friend came for me. The house of God was an ordinary house with mud walls, straw thatched roof, paper windows and doors and a heated floor like we all lived in, but there was a strange person there in odd uncomfortable looking clothes of some coarse dark material, a bog nose and feet, green eyes, and yellow hair, like no one I ever heard tell of. This must be God I thought. However could I have been so stupid?

"God said good words and read out of a book in our language, but I didn't hear anything about my children. However, when God invited sick people to come to the house next day for free treatment I decided to go and see what God would do.

"Several people told me they felt much better after taking God's medicine. But if all the sick folk around were to be healed God would surely need some help.

"I brought sick people to be healed, carried water, kept the rooms tidy, and tried to learn all I could. Turn over and let me massage your back.

I turned gratefully.

"When I was a child," she continued, "wasn't a school for girls in All Korea. People thought girls couldn't learn. Women were very ignorant. Can you believe it was almost a year before I realized that Dr. MacMillan wasn't God but a woman like myself?

"What a remarkable person she must have been!" I exclaimed, thinking that no one would make a similar mistake about me. "You're tired and I feel better. Please don't do any more."

"I always did this for Dr. MacMillan when she was weary or sick, and I'll do the same for you," she insisted.

## The Woman Who Thought

"I learned many things from the doctor; how important it is to be clean, how diseases may be spread through ignorance, how babies should be fed after weaning, and how some diseases may be prevented. I learned a better way to care for wounds than by covering them with manure and cabbage leaves. I found that bathing did no harm even when a person is ill. After a while the doctor had me boil the instruments she used in operations, and then I began to help her with surgery. There were no trained nurses and I was her chief helper.

"She taught me that Jesus loved the people of the world so much He came on earth to live with them, cured their diseases, and taught them a better way to live. When I heard how they treated Him I could hardly believe it. I made up my mind that whatever others might do, I would believe and follow His teaching the rest of my life."

"What did your husband think of that?"

"He said if it comforted me for the loss of the children he didn't mind. Our families lived in a village far enough away that they didn't know. So I began to attend worship with the little group of Christians who met in the doctor's house.

"They told me I should learn to read so I could read the Bible for myself. I laughed at that. How could a grown up women learn to read? But they said they would teach me, and they did. When I read about the woman who believed in Jesus and sewed for the poor I wanted to be like her. Do you know how I got the name Doka?"

"No. It doesn't sound like a Korean name."

"It's a Bible name. As a child I wasn't given a name. Lots of girls weren't," she went on. "At home they called me Tuipangie, (born in the back room) and the neighbors knew me as Kang Doo-Sik's second girl child. After I was married I was Lee Sunsaing's Teacher Lee's wife, and when our son was born everyone called me the baby's mother.

"Now that I could read and was working with the doctor I wanted a real name of my own. I chose Doka, the name of the woman