

## Testimony of Futoshi Kobayashi – Buddha is a liar

I was born in Japan in 1967. Because of the instability of my father's job, my family moved a number of times when I was young.

When I was growing up, I was the child who expressed my opinions and thoughts freely and openly. In every Japanese organization, those who express their own ideas against the majority are disliked by others because it breaks the feelings of both solidarity and fellowship, according to the sixth-century old Japanese constitution. Because I expressed my own opinion, I had a hard time making friends, so I built walls around myself as a protection.

Buddhism was the religion that was taught to me from the time I was young, so I immersed myself in the study of Buddhism. I came to the conclusion through study that I had committed horrible sins in my "past life" and so in this life I was suffering for those sins. If someone sinned against others in their past life, they must suffer from the same sins. In contrast, if someone did good deeds they can get something good in this life. This is called "karma." Since I had bad karma, I had to do everything I could to cancel out what had been done in my past life. I began to devote myself to praying earnestly to Buddha every night, not lying, but being kind and sincere to everyone, being obedient to my parents and enduring all suffering.

I had many questions, and I was searching for the answers, so I read many books on Buddhism. The four main concepts I embraced were: *To live is to suffer*. As long as we live, we must suffer something. Second, *both earthly desires and attachments cause suffering for human beings*. Third, *human beings can receive ideal peace in their hearts to put out the cause of suffering*; and fourth, *human beings must not indulge in extreme pleasure nor strict discipline, but should have minimum essentials, desires and necessities*.

After graduation from high school, my life seemed to be going well, and I thought for sure I had cancelled out the bad karma. But there was still an emptiness in my life that I could not explain.

I went to college, but dropped out after the first semester. I secured an evening job, so during the day I would read books to see if there was something that would bring me peace. I read books on philosophy, religions, atheism, Hinduism, Islam and humanism. I practiced every kind of fortune telling: astrology, palm reading, date of birth, good names and bad names.

In 1989 I returned to Bangkok, Thailand, where I spent part of my childhood, to see if I could find peace there. However, Bangkok had changed drastically. Everything that was familiar to me was gone. I went back to my hotel room disillusioned and flung myself on the bed. Questions flooded my mind. "Who am I? Where do I fit in? I don't believe Buddhism anymore, I can't believe atheism, I can't believe humanism. I am meaningless and purposeless." At that moment, my hand touched the Gideon Bible on the nightstand by my bed. Even though in my search I had read other Christian books, this was the first time for me to read the Bible. I started reading from the New Testament. I was astonished at what I read. The Lord's prayer was perfect, and better than any other prayer I had said from rote in my life. I kept reading and found Matthew 11:28. I felt these verses were actually talking to me. When I read John chapter nine, I was amazed. Jesus and his disciples met a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him who sinned, that he was born blind? And Jesus said that he was born blind that God may be glorified. I never heard such an answer!

I did not accept Jesus at that time, but the seed was planted. After I came home, I changed my daily prayer from the Buddhist liturgical prayer to the Lord's prayer. I continued to read many books and practiced fortune telling, but I kept thinking about Jesus.

I started reading the Bible every day, but I found several verses hard to understand. I began attending a church near my home and attended every Sunday and Bible study every Friday, but no one could give me the answers I could understand.

I continued reading the Bible on my own. One day I came across Jeremiah 29:11-14, and I understood that God has a special plan for everyone, not to harm, but to prosper, to give them a hope and a future. Then I found Isaiah 65:17-25. God gave us the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. We will never hear the sound of weeping or crying. From the book of Revelation I understood that Jesus will come back again and make a new heaven and a new earth. There will be no more pain, crying, or suffering, and everything we cannot understand now will become clear then. I realized God does not want me to understand everything that happens to me, but to trust and believe in Him.

In July of 1990 I accepted the Lord Jesus into my heart as my personal Lord and Saviour.

This is my testimony. May it be used only for revealing His power, majesty, and glory!

Futoshi Kobayashi