

The Life Story of Lee Shin-Buk-sun of the Day Nursery.
~~Principal of Soong Eui Girls School~~, Seoul, Korea.

My father was not a Christian and he deserted my mother and left our home to marry another woman. My mother worked in the home of a missionary, Rev. W.L. Swallen. I had one brother who died at the age of six years. And when I was six years old my dear mother died. Her last words to me were that she wanted her daughter to grow up instructed and guided by Mrs. Swallen. From that time I lived in the home of the Swallens, until my own father came and took me to his house. So I lived with him and my step-mother for two years. But Mrs. Swallen called on me again, and helped me to enter Soong-hyen school. But every day I would go to my relative's house, which was thought to be an obstacle to my education, so Mrs. Swallen sent me to Seoul to live in the Salvation Army orphanage, where I was given a Christian training.

Later Mrs. Swallen again brought me back to PyengYang, and I entered Soong Eui Girls school after having studied at Posyung Girls school in Syen Chun.

I lived in the dormitory of the Soong Eui school. One day as I was leaving the dormitory I met my relative. He told me that my step-mother had sent her daughter to a school that taught dancing and singing, and after graduation they become "ke-sangs", or public entertainers for men, called dancing girls. It was after my father had died. I went to that school and there met my half-sister, and told her not to stay there any longer, so we followed me back to my school. But when the head of her school found out about it, she took my sister back again. I was very sorry about that. I could not bear to see my sister become such a low and evil person, so I cried and prayed to God. After one month I went secretly disguised as an older woman and at night to her school. Climbing over the fence I found my sister and awoke her silently. Thus we escaped from there at about two o'clock in the morning. Again the head of her school came to me demanding my sister to be returned, saying she had been bought from my step-mother and had the signed contract. Once more Mrs. Swallen helped me by providing the money that released my sister from this bad woman.

I graduated from Soong Eui Girls school and found work in Posyung Girls school. After this I became a kindergarden teacher. I married a man who had work, and when we had three children my husband went to Seoul. Later I started with the three boys to go to Seoul, too, on foot and at night. We arrived at Kae-sung, on the border between North and South Korea, and lived for about two weeks at a refugee camp. Then we came to Seoul but we had nothing and it was very difficult to live. In the Spring of 1950 I found that the Voelkels were living in Seoul. Then the awful war broke out on June 25th, and my husband suddenly came from the North, saying that we must all flee at once and go to Pusan. So we carried what we could and started on foot. A new baby had been born soon after we had come to Seoul, so I carried her on my back. When we arrived at Soo-won we found many refugees resting at the railroad station. The train stopped but we could not get on, so we went to a nearby church. Suddenly a bombing plane came and the Soo-won station was bombed. All of the refugees there died at once and everywhere blood ran like a river. But those who had gone to the church were all saved. God kept us safe.

Finally we reached Pusan, but I had been ill with a bad heart condition. I had no hope and was very distressed, and thought I should die. But when I heard the good news that the U.N. forces had advanced to PyengYang, that cheered me so much that I got better. Then we had to move from Pusan to Chey-ju-do, the island south of Pusan. There were many communists in the hills of this island so we could not live in safety, not sleep in comfort at night. We depended only upon God. There another baby son was born to us. We had great difficulty getting enough food to eat. It was really a terrible time. At last in 1953 we came back to Seoul, and I worked in the Holt Orphanage. One day I saw a woman who was the wife of a disabled ex-service man who was working with a child on her back. So I took care of her child for her in my house. I had always been helped by missionaries through all my life from babyhood, so I wanted to help others and try to do something for them. Then I began taking care of three children whose mother was a widow. We lived in the poor refugee district of Haebang-chon, where many very poor people lived who had come from North Korea. I told my friend, Miss Swallen, about such a poor woman who had to work so pitifully hard. She helped me and made it possible to get a house where we could take care of 30 to 50 children whose mothers must work all day. It is called the Sallie Swallen Day Nursery, in memory of Miss Swallen's dear mother who had helped me from childhood. We now care for 60 little pre-school children in this Day Nursery. We also have a Mothers Club on Saturday evening for these women. I think the only way I can repay all the grace and love I received from Mrs. Swallen is to help others always. I have ~~four~~ sons and a daughter. I have a happy home, for we know the love of Jesus Christ and we want to live for Him.