

The Early Life of Soon-Ae Hong - Dae Mo Nim

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Sun Myung Moon, Soon-Ae Hong, Hak Ja Han - date unknown

Hong Soon-ae, True Mother's mother, was born on the twenty-second day of the second month of the lunar calendar in 1914. She was the eldest child of deeply faithful Christian parents, Hong Yoo-il of Namyang and Cho Won-mo (1889—1962) of Yongbyon. Her father was a tall, handsome and affectionate man, who was knowledgeable and studied Chinese literature but was open-minded enough (relative to the times) to buy his daughter-in-law high heeled shoes. Her mother ran a sewing machine shop, where they also repaired sewing machines. She had small, pretty features and was active and modern. While carrying five-year old Soon-ae on her back, she was among those who defiantly shouted "Mansei!" as part of the 1919 movement for Korean independence. Cho Won-mo had a strong religious influence on her daughter, whose name was given by the pastor of the church her mother attended. Hong Soon-ae was a practicing Presbyterian until she was nineteen years old.

Cho Won-mo's family was wealthy and well-known in old Jongju. To a proposal from the government for private citizens to improve their communities, one of her ancestors, Mr. Cho Han-joon, had responded by building a huge stone bridge over the Dallae River at his own expense. When the bridge was nearly built, Mr. Cho, thinking he would need new straw shoes to wear to the ceremony marking the completion of the bridge, withheld three coins to buy shoes with from the money he had allocated for the construction of the bridge. A revelation later received explained that but for those three coins a heavenly son would have been sent to a family to whom a princess was sent.

True Mother once said, "We can understand from this story that though Mrs. Cho's ancestors did not know God, they tried to live for the benefit of the nation as good citizens. It was a blessed family that was remembered by Heaven. So, I joke that a prince could have been born to the Cho family, but because of Grandfather Cho Han-joon and his three coins, a princess was born rather late."

When Hong Soon-ae was young, her family moved to the hamlet of Shinui in the village of Anju across the Cheongcheon River from Jongju, both of which are in South Pyong-an Province. There was a big corn field behind the main house, a hillock and a babbling brook. The atmosphere was as warm and cozy as in the bosom of a mother hen. Hong Soon-ae graduated from Anju Common School and also studied at Pyongyang Songdo Institute.

Over the decades of Korea's occupation by Imperialist Japan, policies were enacted—such as that of maintaining an oppressively low wage level and [during the years Japan was at war] of pressing women into service as sex slaves—that served to suppress Korean nationalism with an aim of bringing about Korea's fundamental devastation.

In the 1930s, with the rise of Japanese militarism, forcing Koreans to worship at Shinto shrines also became a matter of policy. The February 1938 Guidelines to Counter Christianity focused directly on churches in Korea; the police force was mobilized to put direct, frontline pressure on individual churches, to disrupt worship services and general meetings and to force Koreans to worship at Shinto shrines.

During this time, there were Christian powers that acquiesced to Imperialist Japanese demands, but there were many patriotic, underground Christians, who kept their religious purity during the time before Korea's independence. Under such oppression, there was rapid revival within Korean Christianity, especially through experiences of spiritual phenomena. Looking back, we can see that as the Adamic nation, their being determined to prepare and their sense of having a special course given by God while under the oppression of a nation being used by Satan was providential.



The time from 1930 until the point where the nation regained its independence from Japan was a flourishing one for God's mighty work; it was a foundation, built of vertical and horizontal indemnity, for the providence of the Second Advent. There were also countless incidents of saintly representatives appearing to spiritualist types at about the same time. Old, New and Completed Testament forces connected to the restoration of Eden all seemed to be surfacing during that time.

Only the Lord at his Second Advent, the Third Adam, has the right to control and decide what constitutes the standard of victory. During the time of the Second Advent, the internal standard is determined based on the external foundation that has been inherited from Christianity. As an outgrowth of the Fall and contrary to what was intended, Eve dominates Adam, so in the course of restoration, women should take responsibility for an internal mission, and men have an external mission. This is done in pursuit of the standard that existed before the Fall.

Looking at the Korean peninsula geographically, we see that the east, where the sun rises, is mountainous; and the west, where the sun sets, is flat, with open fields. The spirituality that descended on Korea spread out from Wonsan, on the east coast and Cheolsan, on the west. It developed over three generations.

The woman representatives of this trend were Mrs. Kim Seong-do of the Holy Lord Church, Mrs. Heo Ho-bin of the Inside Belly Church, and Grandma Bak, who claimed to be the wife of Jehovah. The man representatives were Baek Nam-joo of the New Jesus Church, Rev. Lee Yong-do and Mr. Kim Baek-moon. These two lines, representing the two sexes, harmonized the Adam—Eve relationship; they were connected to the new level of the providence and were a guiding force for the Cain-type groups that had submitted to Japanese demands for Koreans to worship at Shinto shrines.

Hong Soon-ae, whose life of faith was focused on preparing for the Second Advent of the Lord, was connected to several of these deeply significant spiritual groups, while continuing to attend the Presbyterian Church. She set many conditions, enduring mortification over a long period before and after Korea's liberation from Japanese control. First, she went on a witnessing tour with Evangelist Hwang Gook-joo's group. Beginning in 1933, she wholeheartedly devoted herself to Rev. Lee Yong-do's New Jesus Church for three years. For eight years, she then immersed herself in Mrs. Kim Seong-do's Holy Lord Church and for the following six years, from 1944, she was involved in Mrs. Heo Ho-bin's Inside Belly Church.

Hong Soon-ae received grace from God through a three-day revival led by Rev. Lee Yong-do in 1932. She was with Evangelist Hwang Gook-joo's congregation as they helped spread the fire of revival throughout the nation. She was particularly impressed by Pastor Hwang's younger sister, Eun-ja. With five others, they went on foot from Anju to Shinuijoo, a distance of about 125km (75 mi), preaching, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" Hwang Eun-ja's sermons would attract three or four hundred people. Even Japanese people and police detectives were impressed by her.

Their legs swelled from walking for many miles, day and night; some people had to use a pair of walking sticks to reach Shinuijoo. At that time, they heard of an old woman having spiritual experiences in Cheolsan. [This probably refers to Kim Seong-do who had started the Holy Lord Church, which they would later attend.] It took them a hundred days to reach Ganggye. From there they planned to go on to preach in Majoo, but someone received a revelation instructing them to return home, so they did. Hong Soon-ae was sorry and frustrated but returned.



Strangely, she experienced a strong sense of calm on her return, but when Rev. Lee Yong-do's New Jesus Church was built, she decided to make a fresh start there.

The message that the Methodist evangelist Preacher Lee Yongdo delivered through interreligious revivals at the beginning of the 1930s was one of hope amidst the gloomy Korean reality. If Korean Christianity had united and if Korea had confronted Japan based on a united body of Christian believers, the people could have avoided forced submission to worshipping at Shinto shrines; the nation would have been in a position to advocate for what we now recognize were its Adamic rights. However, other churches persecuted Rev. Lee Yong-do and his followers. Particularly, a Methodist regulating body charged them with heresy and sought to have them expelled from the denomination. Rev. Lee, spitting up blood, fainted during a revival in June 1933. From June 6 to 8, 116 people including Lee Yong-do, Lee Ho-bin and Baek Nam-joo got together in the hamlet of Shinyang within the city limits of Pyongyang to create the Association to Found the New Jesus Church. They were groping for the course they would have to follow as an independent church.

In September of that year, the New Jesus Church Central Mission Headquarters was established in Pyongyang, the Wonsan Theology School was built and publication began of the monthly magazine Jesus. At the time, the Presbyterian Assembly declared the New Jesus Church a heretical group and warning notices were handed out at each of their gatherings. Rev. Lee Yong-do passed away in Wonsan at dawn on October 2. He was only 33, the same age as was Jesus when he died. After a five-day funeral, Rev. Lee Ho-bin was elected the church's spiritual leader.

People gathered at the New Jesus Church, prayed day and night and received the fire of the Holy Spirit. They sang the hymn "Wash White" and jumped and cried with joy. In the winter, it was so cold they would have to grasp the collars of the coats they were wearing in both hands and lift them up to warm the sides of their heads, but they would still come. Hong Soon-ae prayed, crying out every day, thinking she needed cleansing. At that time, an extraordinary revelation was received: "Daughter of Hong Yoo-il rejoice! If you give birth to a son, he will be the king of heaven and if to a daughter, she will be the queen of heaven." With that in mind, she and Mr. Han Seung-woon were married by Pastor Lee Ho-bin on March 5, 1934. Han Seung-woon was twenty-six, and Hong Soon-ae was twenty-one.

Her husband was born on the twentieth day of the first month of the lunar calendar in 1909. He was the eldest son of Han Byeong-geon and Choi Gi-byeong, who had five children. Han Seung-woon was a teacher. At the time of their marriage, he was also one of two men responsible for the Education Department in the New Jesus Church. He died on March 18, 1978. [See Today's World, April issue, pg. 14, for a full-length article on the life of Han Seung-woon]

Hong Soon-ae and her mother anticipated that extraordinary phenomenon would emerge through some other church if they worked hard, but three years passed and all was quiet. Everyone was desperate. The thought of making spiritual progress ignited their hearts, but they could not see a path to follow. Even when they spoke throughout the night, they would be left feeling heavy-hearted and hollow. In the midst of their difficulties, Cho Won-mo experienced grace from God through the Holy Lord Church in Cheolsan and called her daughter to join her there.