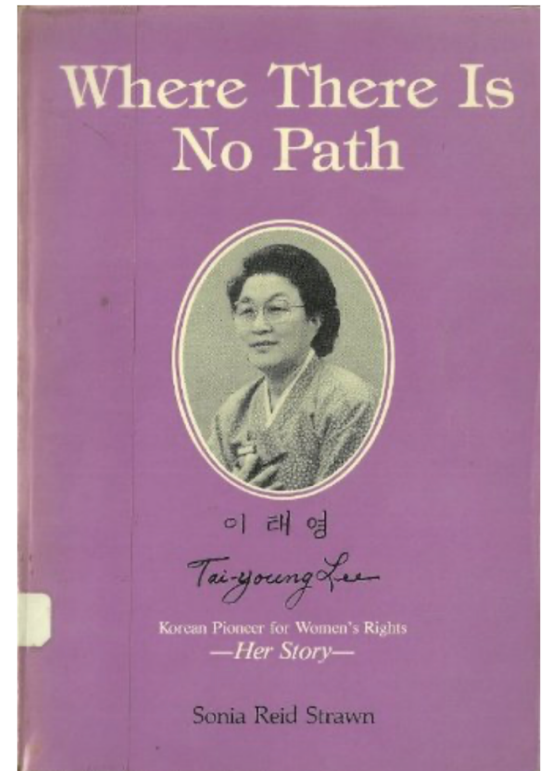


Lee Tai Young on Becoming a Lawyer/Peace Activist
from "Where There is No Path" by Sonia Reid Strawn (pages 77, 80, 89)

At the end of four fascinating and frustrating years, Lee Tai Young became the first woman ever to graduate with a degree in jurisprudence from a university in Korea. In July 1949, her whole family, plus numerous friends, came to express their congratulations and admiration.... The next step of course was to sit for the national bar exam ... The First National Judicial Examination of Korea was administered in January 1950, and Lee Tai Young was one of the candidates. The results were announced in May, and her name was not on the list of those who had passed...Was this, then, to be the end? Not at all, for she refused to forsake her dream.

However, the situation of all Korean people suddenly changed drastically when, at dawn on June 25, 1950, military forces from north Korea crossed the 28th parallel and invaded South Korea. The Korean War which lasted for the next three years would have many consequences for everyone in Korea, including Lee Tai Young and her family. At the very least, it can be said that her goal of becoming a lawyer was again pushed farther away by forces of history which were beyond her control. (p. 77)



... In times of war, human beings first seek survival and safety. Lee Tai Young's family like countless others had to flee from the oncoming soldiers and the only place to go was farther to the south, to the tip of the Korean peninsula at Pusan. Along with thousands of other refugees they arrived in Pusan in 1950 and had to manage to continue their lives in the most cramped conditions... life had to go on in crowded Pusan where entire universities had refueged. Therefore it was not a great surprise when the Second National Judicial Examination was announced for the summer of 1951. Here was a chance for Lee Tai Young to try again...She decided to study harder than before, but now she didn't have any books! She had to employ every means possible, going here and there, delighted to locate a book wherever she could. She searched and found some in second-hand stalls on the street, and others she borrowed from former fellow students. Gradually she had the collection she needed, but then realized she could do no studying with four little children in one small room.

"Where there's a will, there's a way," is a saying the world over and it became so for Lee Tai Young... She moved into a quiet room...and spent the next two months in almost total isolation and concentration on her law books...[she passed]..Reflecting on the responsibility and the mandate which had become hers with the passing of the bar exam, she could not avoid the conviction that her lifetime work in law henceforth ought to be helping bring Korean women, one by one, from darkness to light. (p. 80 , 89)