

Ki Tribbett

When I was a young girl in Korea, I always did well in school. My family was very poor, but I believed that a good education would enable me to escape our poverty. Often my family could not pay my tuition. Then I would try to sneak into class and hide in the back, hoping that my teacher would not notice me and ask for my tuition. Sometimes my teachers would even pay it themselves. I walked two hours to school because I had no money for the bus. When other students went to lunch, I went for a walk to take my mind off my hunger. Although I kept trying to stay in school, one day I was called into the principal's office and told I would not be allowed to graduate. Although my mother tried to pay as much of my tuition as she could afford, the principal said it was too late. After years of trying to succeed in Korea without an education, I decided to leave and come to the United States. Here I was able to have a successful career, in spite of my lack of education. For many years I was too ashamed to tell anyone that I had never graduated from high school. For me, just seeing my grandchildren graduate from college and knowing that they will never have to feel ashamed of who they are, and will have greater opportunities than I had, would be the fulfillment of my dreams for them.