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Jeju 4/3

(제주 4·3 번역논문)

제주대학교 통역번역대학원

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Jeju 4/3

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Foreword

Seeking the Truth: To You Who Ask About the Events of April 3rd

April came again. Dark blue Halla Mountain and its clusters of oreums (secondary volcanoes) seemed to show their sadness more intensely today. People who have visited Jeju usually speak of the attraction of the beauty of the land. They say Jeju people are so lucky to live on such an island, surrounded by amazingly beautiful scenery. However, the people of Jeju may not agree with them. While Jeju Island becomes decorated with canola flowers in full bloom in April, they represent the bloody and painful history of Jeju.

You ask me why Jeju turns into a sorrowful island every April. I know I will not satisfy you with a brief answer. But how can I tell you all the sad stories of the island's grandfathers and grandmothers who survived such a horrible period? How can I fully describe why the people of the island could not help but take extreme measure during that period in order to survive?

“It wasn't only our village that got wiped out through the mass killings. Ask anyone whose hometown is Jeju Island. They will surely say that one of their family members or relatives died during that confusing era.” (‘Uncle Suni’ written by Hyeon Gi-yeong)

Have you heard about the novel titled 'Uncle Suni'? The passage above is from that novel, which was written by Hyeon Gi-yeong. It is not just a piece of fiction. Though it was released as a novel, it is actually a story of events that really happened on Jeju, the southernmost island of the Korean Peninsula. I also do not know why I cannot help but start with ‘the mass killing’, and whether it is appropriate to begin with stories of slaughter.

Let me tell you why. During the period when the United States and the Soviet Union were in confrontation each other after the Second World War, Jeju Island was labeled a ‘Red Island’. What on earth led Jeju to be branded a ‘Communist Island’?

The reason is that the human dignity of the Jeju people had been violated by foreign powers for a long time; unable to withstand it anymore, the people finally vented their anger.

If they acted sinfully, it was because they just earnestly aspired to see their nation united and fiercely campaigned to achieve that goal.

A gale of mass killing followed the people's struggle, raging across the island. Countless people died without knowing why. No truly human faces could be found at the killing sites. Worse, the slaughter was committed by the national authorities.

The island was a totally isolated land, where no one could come easily and no one wanted to come. Nobody cared that the volcanic island of Jeju was completely secluded. The events in question happened at the end of the 1940s under the US military government, after the liberation of the Korean peninsula. Twenty-five to thirty thousand people lost their lives, which meant one out of every nine islanders died.

It was a terrible series of painful events that was second only to the Korean War, a tragedy on the peninsula. But, oddly, after a matter of days, it became taboo to talk about the event. "Be silent". Nobody could speak about what happened at that time. If somebody talked carelessly about the event, they found themselves in all sorts of trouble with the governmental authorities.

Finally, thirty years after the event, there was a voice that broke the silence. That was the novel 'Uncle Suni'. Do you wonder who Uncle Suni is? The main character of the novel, she is a grandmother who survived the site of a mad slaughter that took place in the sunken field at the town of Bukchon-ri. In Jeju, we call all distance relatives and older neighbors 'uncle' regardless of their gender. In the novel, Uncle Suni ended up dying after a miserable life of suffering from maddening auditory hallucinations and nightmares due to the aftereffects of the events.

Can you imagine how many 'Uncle Sunis' are still living with scars in their hearts on the island of Jeju? There were almost no villages and families that were not victimized at that time.

Even under the gag order, 'Uncle Suni' walked out of the novel to ask sternly what the truth of the April 3rd events is. Why did innocent people have to be killed? Why hadn't the truth been revealed? Do you also wonder what happened to the writer who openly revealed what had occurred? His case was no exception, as he was also taken to Korea's National Security Agency and brutally tortured. After that, the novel was branded a seditious book; people had not been able to read it for long. The price he paid for disclosing the nature of the

events was too cruel.

Grief and Splendor, the Two Faces of Jeju Island

After fifty-five years, the central government finally admitted that the national authorities were to blame for the mass killing and apologized to the people of Jeju in the name of the president. However, the investigation into the truth is still in progress.

Of course, this may be an astonishing fact to you. One can hardly find a place without any trace of slaughter on Jeju Island, embraced with a chilly but beautiful heart. And the truth was buried for half a century, even though a gale of massacre had raged across the entire island.

Many students from other parts of South Korea often ask, “What happened on April 3rd?” The history of this massacre is very unfamiliar to them in terms of the modern history of Korea. The reason is that the truth of the April 3rd events, as a symbol of tragedy, has been hidden for so long, as though hidden in a dark cave.

So you ask what the historical truth is. You already know that everything ends up in a mess if you start off on the wrong foot. Once history is recorded with distortions of the truth, it alters and distorts the following history as well. This is why we should seek the truth of history.

This is also true in the case of the April 3rd events. No matter how hard somebody tries to bury the historical truth, and no matter how hard they try to distort it, the truth will always be able to shine out from the dark. If nobody had the determination to take any risks in order to find the truth, history would have been very far from being recorded in the right way. That is to say, if nobody had sought for the truth. In that sense, the April 3rd events, the truth of which had been forced to be kept silent for so long, will be a very important case in setting the historical record straight.

I believe that you will understand this once you have listened to the whole story. You will learn why we should persist in our search for the truth. And you will come to see how contradictory Jeju Island is, with its two faces of grief and splendor. Actually, I hope you do. How can you disregard this series of events that happened in our generation? The history of today is being made over the scars of the events of the past.

Someone once said, "History is to remember". Jeju is a land of remembrance where events will never be forgotten and where the truth will never be buried. It is a land of people who have lived their lives saying, "If you are alive, then you can live your life," even during life-threatening starvation.

How can we forget these people who were just engaged in farming, who were only to blame for their youth, and whose tears were even seen as sinful? How can we forget the people who had to live constrained lives during that time, and grandmothers who have been waiting for their husbands and sons who will never again return? This is the only thing that we, who are alive now, can do for the people of that time who were killed unjustly.

So how on Earth could this happen? It starts from a background of events entwined like the branches of a thorn bush thicket. You must understand that first. Now let me tell you about the background. Let's return to the Korean peninsula right after liberation.

1. The Island, Root of the People

With a whistle from a boat, the homecoming march began. Some crossed the dark sea to earn money during the forced occupation of Imperial Japan and worked in factories, some went to Japan to study but ended up as student soldiers, and some returned home as a pinch of ashes. Now people came home from China, Russia's Vladivostok, Hokkaido in Japan, and even far-off South Pacific Islands. They were forced to work in coal mines and other places, wandering between life and death. Two of my grandmother's sons came back home in worn-out green uniforms. Meanwhile, people found that the unfamiliar Stars and Stripes were waving in the wind, having replaced the Japanese flags.

First Steps after Liberation

"The US troops under my command in a glorious triumph occupied the Joseon territory south of the 38th parallel."

MacArthur issued the decree 'A Word for the Korean People' on September 9th, 1945. Its purpose was to declare that the Japanese colonial period of thirty-five years was over, while a new era of the US Army Military Government (USAMG) was born at the moment the decree was issued.

The US military landed on Jeju Island on September 28, 1945. Soon after arriving by sea and sky, they conducted operations to take over the bases of the Japanese troops who had been stationed on Jeju.

Not long after that, the 59th Company of the USAMG rushed to Jeju to take charge of the military administration of the region. Though the people of Jeju felt uneasy and confused by the US military army running around the island in military vehicles, they had to content themselves with the feeling of relief of being freed from their mortal enemy.

To the last moment of liberation, the islanders had suffered seemingly never-ending oppression by the Japanese.

Due to the fact that the island is located at the center point of the Korean Peninsula, Japan and China, it has been often harassed by external forces; in particular, at the end of the Pacific War, the island faced a fateful moment. Japan, which had set their sights on Jeju Island for years, was turning Jeju into a strategic base by deploying sixty thousand Japanese troops across the island. They first built tunnels all over the island. Of course, the islanders were forced to dig the tunnels.

Japan planned to wage a decisive battle with the enemy on Jeju Island as Okinawa was occupied by the US Army just prior to Japan's defeat. They intended to use the people of Jeju as human shields on the day that the US troops landed. If Japan's surrender had happened a bit later, Jeju would have been engulfed by a deluge of fire.

Liberation came at this fateful moment. It rescued people from a vortex of death: the draft, conscription, mobilization of labor and forced rice delivery. The island was saved in the nick of time. It came after a long period of suppression, delighting and giving hope to the people.

"Let's build a new nation!" they cried, recharged with vitality. People who had craved independence joined together, hoping to build a new nation on the once lost land. The Korean Establishment Preparation Board was at the center of the work. It was a nationwide organization that was born to establish a self-reliant, independent state. The organization was also formed in Jeju. The Korean Establishment Preparation Board was reorganized into the People's Committee soon after, and the Jeju Branch of the Korean Establishment Preparation Board also changed its title to the Jeju People's Committee.

Under the slogan "We can build a nation!", the Jeju People's Committee garnered extensive support from the people and carried out their work without difficulty. Many of the executive members of the committee had participated in the anti-Japanese movement and spent time in prison during the 36-year forced occupation, so they had gained the confidence of the local people. They did not care about ideology beyond whether they were rightist or leftist. Even those who served as mayors of towns under the Japanese occupation were drawn into the committee. Jeju was characterized by its peculiar sense of community, where the people shared their joys and sorrows together. Owing to this character, they were able to play a leading role in building a new nation, more so than in any other region.

Insisting "We should learn hangeul", the Jeju People's Committee opened night schools for residents who did not get the opportunity to take Korean classes during the Japanese

colonial period, and they voluntarily patrolled the villages with young people. They led campaigns against American cigarettes and snacks. As a self-governing body representing public opinion, it laid a foundation for grass-roots democracy, and rapidly showed its ability to control the island.

At first, the US military government had good relations with the Jeju Branch of the People's Committee. They could not ignore them if they wanted to conduct military affairs smoothly. The US considered them to be an organization tantamount to a government, being the only political party in Jeju Province. In some cases, when a police chief posted a new chief at a police substation, he wrote a letter of introduction to the chairman of the committee asking for cooperation with the new chief.

At the same time, former pro-Japanese police officers were re-employed by the US military government in an extension of the occupation policy. Having escaped punishment for their past atrocities, the formerly pro-Japanese policemen turned into anti-communists, strutting along the streets.

A Poor Harvest: People Suffered a Spring of Starvation

Jeju Island, when the Japanese military left, was filled with about sixty thousand people who had returned from Japan. These people went through much hardship in other countries, but the only thing waiting for them in their homeland was a long, abominable period of poverty. They saw only a gloomy future. The population suddenly multiplied, and people cried out for what little food and necessities of life were available.

The year 1946, following liberation, drove the people of Jeju over the edge. The barley harvest was the worst in history. In this extreme condition, people collected anything edible, even arrowroot and seaweed, to prolong their lives. They thought only of survival, trying to find a way to make a living. Brown seaweed mixed with barley, wheat and pumpkin pudding, and even starch pulp normally used as pig feed, were consumed; the desperate measures absolutely devastated the land.

To make matters worse, in addition to the poor harvest, cholera broke out on the island. Houses where the infection had appeared were indicated by a straw rope hanging in front of the gate. Fearing a spread of the epidemic, young and middle-aged villagers blocked the

streets and stopped people from moving around freely. People were panic-stricken by the outbreak of cholera. Three hundred and sixty-nine people died of the disease. People could do nothing but blame the gods. The wind was also ferocious.

In addition, the US military government, a new occupying force in a recently liberated land, issued orders to collect rice from the people. It was exactly the same as Japan's policy of forcing people to deliver rice to them.

People had not imagined that they would ever again hear the phrase 'delivering rice to the government'. They remembered how cruelly Japan had extorted rice from them until right before their surrender. In those days, when people were starving to death, middle-aged fathers who were unable fulfill the quota were tortured by being made to kneel down on turban shells for 'failing to deliver rice'. There was serious friction between the authorities and the islanders, who had nothing left to give. Officials from the township offices demanding the delivery of rice were occasionally assaulted by villagers.

While people were suffering from starvation, officials of the military government committed illegal acts under the pretext of the delivery of barley and the crackdown on smuggled goods. The food shortages were becoming serious because the supply of rice from the mainland was also stopped.

One major national daily published an article that described the wretchedness of the life of the Jeju people:

300,000 Jeju people have been moaning in great suffering. Most factories have halted operations, and pro-Japanese traitors are running rampant, obstructing the process of the democratization of this land. "As long as the US military government continues to exist, the police will never arrest me." What does that mean? We need rice and freedom! This is a genuine outcry from the people.

- Independence Daily (December 19th, 1946)

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"We need rice and freedom!" cried those whose right to life was threatened by the food shortage; all they could do was heave sighs of pain.

As 1946 came to a close and a new year began, the islanders were still suffering. In some cases, the quality of the rationed wheat flour was not good enough to eat, and some residents

ended up vomiting after eating food containing fertilizer, gasoline and coal dust. Only then was food rationing stopped. The starvation just did not let up, and people could not even find wheat husks to eat. In Jeju, where the people were all but on the verge of death, there was no hope left.

"We can't just wait and sit on our chairs at school." Students put down their pens and ran out of their classrooms. Student resistance began to spread like wildfire. The students of Jeju Agricultural School and O-hyeon Middle School started a movement against the remnants of the Japanese system and the dictatorial form of education. Entering 1947, their resistance heated up.

On February 10th of that year, at the Gwandeokjeong Square, where the US military government building was located, students staged a furious protest, crying, "Let's protect Joseon from colonization by Western cakes." They were middle school students from Jeju City. The student movement that started inside schools developed into a social movement. The US Army estimated the number of participants at three to four hundred students, while the Jeju Daily reported at the time that about a thousand students took part in the protest. As the US military forced students to disperse, their resistance became fiercer. It was predicted that they would finally vent their pent-up anger.

The movement against the importation of Western cakes in 1947 became a nationwide issue. A US military report described it as the first anti-American protest in Jeju.

The people's emotions were heating up. Their restrained rage was boiling over more and more. How long could this have to go on for? A warm air began to rise up above the frozen land, though Jeju society was still grim with tension.

2. Just Before the Storm

Yes, you ask me whose memorial ceremony is held on March 1st. It is my grandmother's son, who died at the age of fifteen. On the morning of March 1st, 1947, this son, who was in the 5th grade at Jeju Buk Elementary School, went out to see a commemorative ceremony in black rubber shoes and black cotton pants. After several hours, he returned as a cold corpse covered with straw bedding. How heart-wrenched grandmother was! "Revive my son!" The only thing my sorrowful grandmother could do was blame her son's fate on the current state of affairs. Her son never enjoyed happiness in a liberated land. Grandmother kept silent about it for her entire life. So what happened at that time?

March 1st: Gunshots at the Gwandeokjeong Square

On March 1st, 1947, the cold air was still bone-chilling, but the sky was clear. It was a Saturday at the height of the spring frost. People were gathering on the grounds of Jeju Buk Elementary School. It was a public assembly to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the March 1st Independence Movement Day. The place was really packed. People could not even hear what the speakers were saying. It was the first time such a large number of people had ever assembled together in one place. Even little children were seen, holding their parents hands.

It was estimated that twenty-five to thirty thousand people gathered together at the authorized assembly. The students and citizens were mostly from Jeju-eup, Aewol-eup and Jocheon-eup.

"Implement the decision of the Moscow Conference immediately!" "Let's achieve united independence with the spirit of the March 1st Movement!" "Let's get rid of the pro-Japanese group!" "Let's kick out the corrupt police forces!" People shouted these slogans at the top of their voices. After the commemorative ceremony, around 2 p.m., they took to the streets. The US military government didn't authorize the rally after the ceremony, but the atmosphere remained quite peaceful.

Meanwhile, in front of the Jeju Police Station at the Gwandeokjeong square, policemen from the mainland and members of the US Army were on watch. It was very obvious that they were on edge, having been rattled by the day's events led by the Jeju Branch of the South Korean Labor Party (Namnodang). A hundred policemen from North and South Chungcheong Provinces, dispatched by the US military government, and three hundred and thirty Jeju policemen were prepared for every eventuality.

Then it happened. A child fell to the ground after being hit by the hoof of a horse that a policeman was mounting. It was around 2:45 in the afternoon, after a group of protestors had just left the square. The mounted policeman tried to leave the area. "Don't let him run away!" Angry crowds ran after him and threw rocks. The disconcerted policeman spurred his horse on towards the police station, pursued by a mob of people.

At just that moment, the sound of gunshots ripped through the air. The shots came from the armed policemen in front of Gwandeokjeong and the watchtower of the station. The startled crowd became agitated.

With the gunshots that seemed to tear up the square, six residents who were watching the rally fell down with a single cry, and six other residents were seriously wounded. They were the first victims of the Jeju April 3rd events.

A twenty-one-year-old young mother who fell down holding her suckling child in her arms was among the victims. A 5th grade boy from Jeju Buk Elementary School, Hoe Du-yong, was the youngest one who died at that time.

The shooters did not use blank cartridges to simply scare people. The shootings crossed the line of merely making a threat. The autopsy report revealed that, except for one victim, the people had been shot in the back. The guns were fired by police who were dispatched by the government, and the victims were not protestors but innocent residents watching the rally.

It was obviously an excessive reaction made by the police. They had misread the intention of the crowd following the mounted policeman, and thinking that they were going to attack the station, they shot them.

It was the March 1st Shooting Incident which lit the fuse of the Jeju April 3rd events. The gunshots fired at the Gwandeokjeong Square were a prelude to tragedy. At this moment, Jeju society became drawn into a vortex of misery.

The police immediately imposed a curfew, from seven in the evening to the next morning. The Chief of the Jeju Police Station called the National Police Headquarters for urgent backup.

The police concluded that this incident was a case of 'people attacking the station', and rather than settling the situation by pacifying the angry people, they took strong measures.

On the day of the incident, a hundred members of the Mokpo Police Department promptly left for Jeju. The next day, the police embarked on a mission to arrest the students and the executives of the committee for the March 1st Independence Movement Ceremony. Disregarding the fact that they had opened fire on the residents, in investigating the case the police only focused on the fact that the Jeju Branch of the Namnodang had organized the ceremony.

The police, taking a hard line in order to resolve the situation, finally arrested twenty-five students in a single day on March 2nd. Rumors spread that all of them were mercilessly tortured and assaulted.

Furthermore, the police made an announcement justifying their actions, claiming "We had no choice but to fire shots because they seemed to be about to attack the station." Public anger was on the verge of exploding. People's voices raised up like waves in the sea, shouting "Discover the truth of the March 1st shooting incident!" and "Punish those responsible for the incident!" The previously cordial relationship between the US military government and the Jeju People's Committee became completely soured as they entered into a new phase of tension with leftist forces after the March 1st shooting incident.

March of that year began like this. The resentment of the public had reached its climax. No one knew of the enormity of the tragedy that was yet to come. It happened ten days later.

General Strike

On March 10th, 1947, the entire island was shut down. A general strike! It was a large-scale strike in which both the public and private sectors participated, which had rarely been seen at home or abroad. Residents stopped fishing and farming. A hundred and fifty-six offices and organizations in Jeju took part in the strike. Work at banks, transportation companies, factories, post offices, schools and food rationing offices was stopped. Even

interpreters for the US military office, incumbent policemen, public officials and small store owners all joined in. Schools also went on strike. The island became paralyzed. How on Earth did it happen, this general strike?

The police did not take any measures to resolve the shooting incident. People were not going to take it lying down. So the islanders, having run out of patience, began to raise their voices, demanding "Investigate the truth of the March 1st police shooting!" and "Punish those responsible for the shooting!" Special commissions were established by each organization. They disclosed the brutalities committed by the US military government and the police, and quickly began raising funds for the victims.

Why didn't the US authorities and the police take any definitive action to resolve the incident? Public officials at the Jeju Provincial Office also called for a March 1st Inquiry Commission to bring the facts of the matter to light. But they were given only a flat refusal. The angry public officials formed the 'March 1st Special Committee of the Jeju Provincial Office' because they could not just ignore the situation, having witnessed the shootings themselves.

The committee began the struggle for justice, bringing six demands to Major Thurman A. Stout, Commander of the 59th US Military Government Company, and Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, Commander of the US military forces in South Korea, which were as follows: 1. Disarm right now and stop torturing people. 2. Immediately punish the policemen who opened fire on citizens, and whoever else was responsible for the shootings. 3. Urge the chiefs and other high-ranking members of the police to step down. 4. Provide compensation for the victims' families and the injured. 5. Stop arresting leading activists involved in the March 1st ceremony. 6. Remove the remaining pro-Japanese police.

Their demands were ignored. The situation was getting worse. It reached the boiling point, and a general strike took place. It was a gesture of strong public opposition to the handling of the shooting incident of March 1st.

The strike was peaceful and appeared to go well. But it presaged the coming of another uncontrollable storm.

The police ruthlessly arrested the leaders of the strike. Young people had to hide wherever they could. It was like a game of cat and mouse. Public hostility to the US military and the

right wing turned into rage. Large and small clashes between citizens and the police occurred in a few places, including U-do, Jungm0un, and Jongdal-ri.

Actually, the USAMGIK had sent a Joint Investigation Team to Jeju on March 8th, 1947, before the general strike. It was unusual to dispatch such a large-scale central investigation team for such a case, which had occurred in a far-off province. The US incumbent colonel was given charge of the case. The team conducted an on-site investigation, interviewing witnesses and questioning the executives of the March 1 Independence Movement Ceremony.

In the midst of the investigation, however, the entire island ended up declaring a general strike. The team then proceeded to carry out another investigation into the cause and leaders of the strike.

The police expressed their regret over the shooting incident only after the US investigation team was dispatched, but they again took a tough stance in panic over the strike which took place soon after.

The US investigation team did not announce their findings at that time. Even after they went back to Seoul, they avoided mentioning the case. Only in a government report did they simply summarize the case, explaining that the people of Jeju exploded in anger after the March 1st shooting incident, and that the Jeju Branch of the Namnodang incited people to rise up. We can get a sense of what they thought of the general strike.

They branded the general strike as a riot that leftists had orchestrated. The US military government concentrated on hunting down the leftists rather than investigating the case.

They believed that the strike had a harmful effect on the Korean people only, not on the US military government. The US military intelligence report also stated something like “It is part of the systematic strategy of the leftists against the South” and “70 percent of Jeju’s population is identified as sympathizers of leftist organizations, and Jeju Island is known as a left-wing base.” In other words, they labeled Jeju a ‘Red Island’, meaning an island of communists.

The day after the investigation team left Jeju in silence, Cho Byeong-ok, Director of the National Police Department, came to Jeju as a problem-solver to call off the strike.

Cho Byeong-ok made a public statement right after his arrival. But there was no expression of regret or explanation at all as head of the police. He just said that he would

take measures to ensure the protection of the lives and property of Jeju's people. He also stated indirectly that the March 1st incident was a riot.

He visited the Jeju provincial government building where the public officials were on strike. Calling on the officials to end the strike, he made fierce remarks such as "The people of Jeju have rebellious ideas" and "We can wipe them out if they hamper the foundation of a nation."

Cho Byeong-ok, furthermore, determined that the March 1st shooting was a case of legitimate self-defense on the part of the police, and insisted that the people acted in cooperation with the North during the events of the March 1st incident, branding Jeju a 'Red Island'.

When Cho Byeong-ok was sent to Jeju, two groups of supporting police, a hundred and twenty-two from South Jeolla Province and a hundred from North Jeolla Province, were stationed on Jeju. Members of the ultra-right Northwest Korean Youth Association (NKYA), composed of anti-communist youth from the North, also came to Jeju. Over four hundred supporting policemen drew a tight cordon across the island, and about two hundred people were apprehended within two days under Cho Byeong-ok's orders to arrest the leaders of the strike.

Cho Byeong-ok returned to Seoul a week later to release a statement. What was it about? In regards to the indiscriminate shooting of onlookers on March 1st, he argued that, considering the circumstances, the shooting at the police station was legitimate self-defense to maintain public order, while speaking vaguely about a second shooting in front of the Jeju Provincial Hospital was careless.

The statement was meant to back up their justification for the March 1st police shooting. It was agreed to in advance by the Committee for the Investigation of the March 1st Shooting Incident launched by Cho Byeong-ok, the governor of Jeju province and the civil administrator. The remarks from the US military and Cho Byeong-ok were warning signs that a catastrophe was about to occur on the island.

The general strike was winding down ten days later, on March 20th. But even though people returned to work, it was not the end. Under the US military government's hard-line policy, the number of people arrested on charges of being involved in the strike amounted to about three hundred in March, and by April 10th it exceeded five hundred. The holding cells

were crowded with those who had been arrested. They were harshly tortured during interrogations, and the leaders of the strike were sentenced to prison and fined.

As the March 1st shooting incident reached its end, the US military government replaced high-ranking officials with extreme rightists. They sent a new US military governor to Jeju and appointed a new governor of Jeju. Lieutenant Colonel Russell D. Barros was named as the successor of Major Thurman A. Stout, and Yu Hae-jin, who had served as the Chief of the Agriculture Division of the Korean Independence Party, was selected as the successor of Jeju governor Bak Gyeong-hun.

In April 1947, newly appointed governor Yu Hae-jin came with seven members of the Northwest Korea Youth Association (NKYA) as his bodyguard. He acted like a tiger looking for prey. The supporting police officers and NKYA members had no hesitation in torturing countless residents in the name of sweeping up the Reds.

The Jeju Chapter of the NKYA was organized in December 1947, and they went to extremes to commit acts of terrorism on the people of Jeju. The residents became critical of the right wing. There were even flyers calling for the assassination of Yu Hae-jin circulating across the island. There were also flyers cursing the rightists, demanding the ousting of the US army and the toppling of the police department.

NKYA members had come down to Jeju after the March 1st shooting incident. Wearing armbands with 'Seobuk' (meaning 'Northwest') written in Chinese characters on them, they even forced the residents to buy the national flag and Syngman Rhee's picture, in the name of fund-raising. From the end of 1947, members of the NKYA increasingly expanded their power into the police stations, administrative bodies and even the educational sector, and they terrorized the citizens of the island under the pretext of a 'Red Hunt'.

Their oppression led to a strong resistance on the part of the people. It also gave armed civilian groups a reason to begin an uprising, which happened soon after.

With the March 1st shooting incident, the general strike and the large-scale arrests, Jeju was indeed in chaos. The people of Jeju Island were overwhelmed with anxiety. The year 1947 was drawing to a close. People had renewed hope for the coming year, but things did not turn out as they had wished. There were rumors that young people arrested in the aftermath of the shooting incident were being severely tortured. The rumors turned out to be true.

Flames of Resistance

In March 1948, three people in their twenties died while being tortured by the police. Kim Yong-cheol, a 2nd grade student at Jocheon Middle School, suddenly died on March 6th, two days after he was taken to the Jocheon Police Substation. He had bruises all over his body. An autopsy revealed that injuries from excruciating torture had caused his death. The case drew the attention of the US military government. The US Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) observed the autopsy firsthand, and a private attorney belonging to the judiciary of the US government was sent to investigate the case.

Students and other Jocheon residents held a funeral for three days, as flames of resistance were kindled in their hearts. The students' fury led to protests. "We want Kim Yong-cheol back!" "We're going to be the next victims!" The protest was becoming ever fiercer. The protestors had already demonstrated and thrown rocks at a police substation in 1947 when their teachers were arrested, one after another.

The people's pent-up anger was about to flare up. Their festering resentment was about to be vented.

To soften the impact on Jeju society, the US government put the policemen involved in committing torture on trial and sentenced them to prison.

Yet another man died after being tortured, this time at the Moseulpo Police Substation. There was also the shocking case of a man who was taken by the NKYA and the police in Geumneung-ri, Hallim and shot to death after being stabbed and clubbed with rocks. Beginning with the March 1st shooting incident, the torture never relented.

In addition, the continuing high-handedness of Governor Yu Hae-jin and the NKYA raised tensions in Jeju society. The resistance of the people also intensified. Finally, the US military government carried out a second special inspection, following the investigation of the March 1st incident. William F. Dean, the US military governor, allowed the inspection team to do whatever they wanted in terms of the placement of inspectors and an on-site investigation.

The special inspection division submitted a report to the US military governor Dean. It included four recommendations, which were as follows: 1. Replace governor Yu Hae-Jin. 2. Conduct an investigation into the Jeju Police Department by the National Police Department.

3. Place an American police advisor in the 59th Company. 4. Investigate the overcrowding of the jails.

It meant that they acknowledged the fact that Governor Yu Hae-Jin's self-righteousness under the right-leaning reinforcement policy, such as concluding that most of Jeju's people were leftist, had driven the people into a corner.

However, the suggestion to dismiss Yu Hae-Jin was not accepted. Dean, the military governor, allowed Mr. Yu to remain in office, even though he had been condemned by both the citizens of Jeju and the US military government deployed in Jeju, over his visceral right-leaning reinforcement policy.

In the meantime, on the Korean Peninsula, the US and the Soviet Union were in serious conflict over the peninsula issue – whether North and South Korea should be united or separated. The US military government decided to conduct the 'May 10th election' only in the South, and for that reason, the political situation was getting extremely tense. Moderate rightists and national leaders Kim Gu and Kim Gyu-sik, along with other such national leaders, also took action to oppose a separate election. But the US chose Syngman Rhee, who advocated the establishment of a separate government in line with the tendencies of the Cold War. Their greatest concern was to hold the separate election successfully. That was why they still needed Yu Hae-Jin. His method of oppressing the leftist forces in Jeju, which was regarded as a leftist base, seemed to be essential to the fulfillment of their goal - the establishment of a separate government.

The left-leaning Jeju Branch of the Namnodang, which was a target of suppression by the US military government, tried to link the Jeju people's resistance to the nationwide opposition against the May 10th election. Public sentiment, with its strong opposition to a separate regime, was one of the contributing factors for them.

Hard-liners in the Jeju Branch of the Namnodang argued that the May 10th election would hinder the process of unification, and it was enough to draw the public's attention. If a separate government were established, it would absolutely threaten the existence of the party. As a matter of defending the party, they had to stop a separate election from being held.

At that time, Kim Dal-sam, in his twenties, was considered to be a representative for the hard-liners in the left wing. A former teacher at Daejeong Middle School, he emerged as the chief of the Daejeong Namnodang when the March 1st incident happened in 1947, and after

armed struggle was decided upon, he came to take responsibility for managing the whole of the group's armed forces. The Jeju Branch of the Namnodang was moving against the authorities.

In early March 1948, members of the Namnodang held a secret meeting at a house in Sinchon-ri, Jocheon-eup. Nineteen representatives of each town gathered at the so-called 'Sinchon Meeting'. They discussed whether to fight against the authorities or wait and see what became of the situation. They were split into groups of hard-liners and moderates, arguing fiercely with each other. They needed to be prudent because the decision they made would end up affecting the fate of the island. The result of the vote was 12 to 7. "Let's fight!" they cried, as it was decided to engage in armed struggle.

At this critical moment, there were no orders from the central party. It was their own decision. And the day was coming.

April came and flowers bloomed, even in this land full of such tension. Jeju Island, supposed to be bustling with the sounds of flowers blooming, however, was overcome by a silent, frosty and grim atmosphere.

3. Into the Storm

You ask me which day it was. History is said to be made overnight. It was the same that day. Just before the storm, most people in Jeju were fast asleep. The skies over Halla Mountain were overcast and grey. How could they know what would happen during the night? How could they predict that storm would rage so soon? It was a pitch-dark night. In spite of an early spring, the chill of dawn was permeating the island. Just then, it happened.

April 3rd, 1948!

At 2 a.m. on April 3rd, 1948, Halla Mountain was lit up. On the peaks of oreums, embraced by the mountain like a child by its mother, fires flared up all at once, as if struggling upwards. After quite some time, they faded away. They must have been up all night waiting for that moment to arrive.

They were beacon fires lit by an armed civilian group based in the mountains of the island. It was a signal to begin the armed uprising led by the Jeju Branch of the Namnodang.

As the signal fires disappeared, the armed civilian group launched their attacks. They were targeting twelve of the twenty-four police substations, and the NKYA and other right-wing organizations' houses and offices.

On the same day, the armed civilian group issued two appeals. The first one was to the people of Jeju.

Compatriots!

Parents, brothers and sisters!

'April 3rd', today, your sons and daughters, brothers and sisters rise up in arms.

To fiercely oppose a separate regime and achieve a united nation and true liberation! To stop the atrocities committed by the puppets and the US military government who bring only hardship and unhappiness to you! To give voice to your deep-seated grudges! To do so, we

rise up in arms. Follow us and rise up, fight for the ultimate victory in order to fulfill the people's wishes.

The other was a warning to the police, government officials, and the Daedong Youth Organization ('Daecheong').

Police officers!

Oppression will be countered by resistance.

Our forces rise up with the people and protect the people.

Conscientious police officers! If you don't want us to resist, stand on the people's side.

Conscientious government officials! Carry out your given duties, protect your workplace from the US army, and fight your vicious colleagues to the end.

Listen! For whom do you fight? As Joseon people, you should defeat foreign invaders.

You should overthrow traitors who betray the country and its people and slaughter patriots.

Police officers! Point the gun at the enemy. Don't point the gun at your parents, your brothers or your sisters.

Conscientious police officers, young men and democrats! Stand on the people's side. Let's rise up together in an anti-American protest to save our nation.

“Oppression will be countered by resistance.” “We fiercely oppose a separate regime.” “Let's rise up together in an anti-American protest.” These were the main points of the appeals.

The appeals were the expression of a strong will to resist against the oppression of the police and the right-wing youth union. They indicated that they were ready for an uprising. Beyond their resistance to tyranny, it implied their ardent hope for a united country and their opposition to a separate election and separate regime, under the slogan of ‘No half-country’. Last, it was a resistance against the new ruler, the US military government. It clearly expressed its political character as an “anti-American protest”.

Their justification for the uprising was to stand against oppression, to oppose the May 10th election and to struggle against a foreign power.

Around three hundred members of the armed civilian group engaged in the attack on that day. Eight residents and four police officers were victimized, while two agents of the armed civilian group died.

The US military government was puzzled by the sudden uprising. A day before the April 3rd uprising, Lieutenant General Hodge, commander of the USAFIK, stressed that the main goal of the US mission was to successfully carry out a separate election. A statement that the US military governor took responsibility for executing and overseeing the election was sent to each commander. Nonetheless, the next day, the armed uprising occurred.

The uprising was another sign pointing to the long period of bloodshed that would soon be triggered in Jeju.

While signal fires occasionally rose up from the peaks of several oreums after April 3rd, the wooden boards on which were written “We oppose a separate election” were taken down in the villages.

Middle schools in Jeju City started to issue a 'Certificate of School Attendance' to students on April 7th. They were concerned that innocent students might be taken by the police on the way to school because most of them were relatively old after the liberation. At that time, students also joined the left-wing and right-wing youth organizations called the Democratic Patriotic Youth League and the Daedong Youth Organization (Daecheong), respectively. They hardly even knew what the left and right were, and what democracy and communism meant, but in order to survive, they had to pick a side nonetheless.

The US military government's major goal was to conclude the May 10th election successfully. That was why they were very intent on dealing with the uprising decisively. The US military enhanced the constabulary force, and dispatched seventeen hundred policemen to Jeju. In addition, five hundred NKYA members were also sent to the island.

However, the outrageous actions of the supporting police incited the public's fury. Their operations caused them more and more to escape to the mountain area. The people's anger was mounting.

In the meantime, the US military government ordered the 9th Regiment of the Korean Constabulary in Moseulpo to take part in the suppressing operation. But they considered it to be a conflict between the citizens of the island and the police force, NKYA and ultra right-

wing organizations. They sought for peaceful measures by which to respond to the armed force under the principle of 'conciliation first, suppression later'.

For the full-scale suppression of the uprising, the US military government carried out excessive search operations twice at the end of April. They also used reconnaissance liaison aircraft to assess the situation and search the Jeju City area. On the other hand, the 9th Regiment of the Korean Constabulary was planning peace negotiations with the leaders of the armed civilian group responsible for the uprising. They seemed to have other ideas about how to resolve the situation, through peaceful means.

‘May Day’

On April 28th, 1948, Commander Kim Ik-yeol of the 9th Regiment and Kim Dal-sam of the armed civilian group were holding tense negotiations at Gueok Elementary School in Daejeong-myeon. The two sides were seeking for a way to settle the uprising peacefully. The negotiations were carried out only after many difficulties, and it was a very important moment of the Jeju April 3rd events. Kim Ik-yeol and Kim Dal-sam, they waged a war of nerves with each other, but after four hours of tense negotiation, they finally reached an agreement to suspend combat.

The conditions were as follows. First, combat must be stopped completely within seventy-two hours. Although sporadic conflicts will not be considered violations if contact has not yet been made, attacks after five days will be regarded as a breach of the conditions. Second, disarmament will be conducted gradually, but if the agreement is broken, battle may be resumed immediately. Third, after disarming and coming down from the mountains, the security of the leaders must be guaranteed.

However, the peace talks turned out to be a failure.

It was the morning of May 1st, three days after the negotiations. Around 9 a.m. in Ora-ri, Jeju-eup, there was a funeral for a woman who was killed by the armed civilian group the day before. Several police officers and about thirty members of the NKYA and Daecheong attended the funeral. After the burial, only a truck carrying the police officers left the area. The members of Daecheong from Ora-ri and other rightist members remained there.

As they returned to their villages, they began to burn twelve houses belonging to five families that were known to be the homes of left-wing activists. It was around 1 p.m. when some rightist youths were slipping through a village. About twenty members of the armed civilian group ran after them with guns and bamboo spears. There were no reported casualties from the chase, though the mother of a policeman from the village was killed. After the armed force left again, around 2 p.m., the police squad showed up and started to shoot villagers. People escaped into the mountains, and a woman was shot dead by the police.

In regards to the 'Ora-ri Arson Incident' which happened within three days of the April 28th peace negotiations, Regiment Commander Kim Ik-yeol reported to the US military government that NKYA and Daecheong rightist members backed up by the police committed the arson. But the report was completely smothered by them. They concluded that the armed civilian group had been involved in the arson incident. What is surprising is the fact that the scene was filmed by a US military cameraman. A Jeju April 3rd archive video called 'Jeju May Day', which is kept by the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), shows the burning Ora-ri village as captured from the sky. In the video, the police squad is seen entering the village.

On May 3rd, people who had surrendered and come down from the mountain were shot by unidentified armed assailants. It was revealed later that they were affiliated with the police, but at that time, the police insisted that it was a sudden attack by the armed civilian group disguised as the police. When the US military ordered the 9th Regiment guard to launch a full-scale attack, the peace agreement was broken. Jeju entered into uncontrollable confusion at that point.

Lee Yun-rak, First Lieutenant of the 9th Regiment, who witnessed the April 28th peace negotiations, testified later that the Ora-ri Arson Incident was the spark that ignited the Jeju massacre.

On May 5th, William F. Dean, the US Army Military Governor, held an emergency meeting in secret with Kim Ik-yeol and Cho Byeong-ok. At the meeting, Kim Ik-yeol pointed out blunders made by the police; Director Cho Byeong-ok of the Police Department accused him of being a communist and engaged him in a fistfight, ruining Commander Kim's efforts to find a peaceful solution. The next day, Commander Kim Ik-yeol was suddenly dismissed.

Lieutenant Colonel Bak Jin-gyeong was appointed to replace him. The 11th Regiment stationed in Suweon was deployed to Jeju as well. According to Kim Ik-yeol's testimony, Park Jin-gyeong remarked in his inaugural address "To suppress the riot, I am ready to victimize three hundred thousand Jeju people." Now merciless oppression was just waiting its turn. The US military government took the drastic measure of replacing the regiment general in order to quickly put down the Jeju uprising ahead of the May 10th separate election. The armed civilian group also consistently maintained a hard-line policy.

Since the April 3rd armed uprising, Halla Mountain had been locked down by humans for a long time, and the island with its long-cherished beauty had suffered every kind of atrocity. Regardless of its will, the island had been drawn into a storm.

On a shining spring day, the fields and the mountain were fresh with the spring air, but were soon repressed with bloody red tears. That April, the island was in imminent danger of being completely trampled.

4. Sleepless Island, Jeju

At the foot of the mountain where plump clouds wind around its side, people are talking in small groups of twos and threes, a woman is holding a child in her arms, a girl is gathering young bracken, and children are romping around. If you saw the painting of Kang Yo-bae, who has depicted the history of Jeju resistance in his artwork, you would say that it looks like a scene of a picnic. At first glance, it looks as if people are having a bustling picnic in a field.

However, if you took a closer look, you would soon realize that there is something peculiar about the people gazing at Halla Mountain. In the picture, people look as though they are uneasy or waiting for something, and there are even people standing sentry in the corner of the painting. If it were not a depiction of that difficult time, it would just be the picnic scene it first appears to be, showing a landscape of a mountain and fields. The painting, titled 'People at the Foot of Halla Mountain', shows the reality of the Jeju April 3rd events.

People in the painting were those who moved up to the mountain area as a group in order to refuse to participate in the May 10th election, which was only held in the southern half of the peninsula. Come to think of it, they seem to be asking 'Who will win?', 'Is a new era coming?'.

Disobeying Halla Mountain

That May, people chose to live for a while as refugees, at the oreums near their villages. They moved to the mountains carrying bundles and bamboo baskets in their hands and babies on their backs; even cows and horses carried things.

The armed civilian group compelled residents to move to the mountain in advance of the election as one method of protesting against it. One person who experienced these events while residing at Bonggae-dong at the time gave the following testimony:

“When the general election was conducted on May 10th, we had already moved up to the mountain area. It was at the end of April when most people fled to the mountain. At that time, groups of people said we should oppose the election. They led us to oppose the election which was being held only in the south. Somehow against our will.... (but) people also didn't want the nation to be split up.... we stayed in the mountain area for five or six days. We were told to go up to the mountain area as the day of the election was coming and to go down to the village days after the election.”

The US military government was getting more restless. When the April 3rd Uprising took place in Jeju to protest against the election and the separate regime, they became convinced that something would happen in Jeju on the election day; Jeju was the only such province they were concerned about. As the leftist's anti-election activities became more aggressive, the measures taken by the US military government and the police became fiercer.

On May 10th, 1948, anti-election activities occurred in seven districts ('eup' and 'myeon') of the thirteen in total in Jeju. The armed civilian group attacked polling stations in Jungmun, Pyoseon, Jocheon and other towns, leaving twenty-one armed civilians, one policeman, and seven rightists dead. Not only did the armed group abduct the public officials in charge of operating the election, they also seized the electoral registers. The numbers of casualties among both the rightist and the anti-election civilian groups were the highest in the nation.

The USAMG, upon seeing the signs of a boycott of the election, realized the severity of the situation and came to intervene. They kept watch over the whole voting process at each voting site, and got involved in checking and transporting ballot boxes as well.

They also threatened the town mayors who were worried and hesitant about delivering ballot boxes to the mid-mountain villages in their jurisdictions, such as Daeheul, Waheul, and Wasan. The US military government, whose focus was only on concluding the May 10th election successfully, devoted all their strength to this end by reinforcing the Constabulary and sending an operational directorate of the US military government to Jeju; even Major General William F. Dean visited Jeju twice. They were very concerned about the situation in Jeju.

Though there were disturbances and bloodshed in most cities throughout the nation when the May 10th election was held to build a government of the south only, somehow there was

a majority turnout of voters; Jeju was the exception. Considering the results of the election in Jeju, the US military government obviously appeared to have failed. It was a severe blow to them. Refusing to participate in the election was a real challenge against the US military government. Police director Cho Byeong-ok strongly condemned Jeju for what happened there.

History recorded Jeju as the only place in the nation where the May 10th election was not conducted. It tells us that the Jeju people truly did not want their recently liberated nation to be split in two.

The US military government became disconcerted and implemented oppressive policies against the people of Jeju. In mid-May, they appointed Colonel Rothwell H. Brown, who had experience with a field army as, a commander of the US forces in Jeju, and entrusted him to lead the Constabulary, Coast Guard, police and the US forces. They had lost face due to the failure in Jeju, and therefore showed that they had a strong intention to resolve the Jeju situation by force and to hold a re-election successfully.

Meanwhile, Jeju governor Yu Hae-jin was eventually dismissed. He, who had been protected by the executives of the US military government, was replaced only after the April 3rd uprising had broken out. However, it was a decisive mistake to remove him so late. His successor was the Jeju-born Im Gwan-ho, who was Director of the General Strike Committee of the Jeju Provincial Office during the March 1st incident. Jeju native Kim Bong-ho was also appointed to replace Choe Cheon as the chief of the Jeju Police.

Despite such efforts, the situation in Jeju showed no sign of settling down. The re-election on June 25th also encountered problems. In the end the election was postponed indefinitely. Regardless of the forceful oppressive measures, the election, which was considered a major achievement for occupying the southern half of the Korean peninsula, ended in failure twice in Jeju. Since the US forces first occupied South Korea, they had not experienced such furious resistance in any other places. Their pride, advocating 'power politics', fell into a bottomless pit. Their failure to complete the separate election in Jeju was a symbol of their failure to carry out their own policies on the Korean peninsula, which the USA had pursued since the Second World War had ended.

Though the azaleas bloomed, dyeing Halla Mountain red, the people living at the foot of the mountain could not even dream of having a grain of hope. At that time, one major

newspaper depicted the situation in Jeju as follows:

We had to enter the villages to meet residents, rarely seen in the fields despite it being the agricultural season. As soon as people on the street noticed us, wearing uniforms and holding weapons borrowed from the army, they ran into their homes. Who did they think we were, soldiers or guerrillas? The faces of simple and honest farmers and villagers were clouded with fear and doubt. They once went up into the mountains. They have since returned to their villages, but have only spent sleepless nights since then.

Joseon Jungang Daily (June 10th, 1948)

Who made these simple and honest people's faces clouded up with fear and doubt, and who made them spend so many sleepless nights?

The US forces, being extremely on edge, enhanced their suppressing operations ever more strongly. Colonel Brown, Commander of the US forces in Jeju, was entrusted to resolve the Jeju situation and to hold the June 25th reelection successfully. He confidently said "I'm not interested in what caused this situation. I only have a mission to suppress the riot." His strategy was to sweep over the entire island as if using a huge broom.

"First, the police are building up security between Halla Mountain and 5km in from the coast. Second, the military forces are carrying out an operation to wipe out the whole island from west to the east."

He unveiled his plan to deal with the Jeju situation at a press conference.

However, the forceful suppression that combed the island from the west coast through Halla Mountain to the east coast resulted in nothing but mass arrests of innocent civilians.

The number of people who were arrested between May 22nd and June 30th exceeded five thousand. Jeju's people trembled with fear, overpowered by the army and the police. Meanwhile, people detained at Jeju Agricultural School were released after being given an 'Identification Card', which was the size of a business card and had the information written in both English and Korean.

Newly appointed Regimental General Bak Jin-gyeong's strategy to put down the rebellion was even worse. Though it was early summer, residents shivered with fear. It incited even

more anxious people to escape to the mountains. He also implemented the cruel and extensive forceful oppression.

His merciless strategy won him a quick promotion to colonel on June 1st. But at dawn on June 18th, a day after his promotion party, he was assassinated by one of his subordinates.

The executive of the USAMG was shocked because it happened while Colonel Brown was leading the Constabulary and the police as supreme commander in Jeju.

In July 1948, the police force in Jeju was increased to about two thousand officers. Moreover, the supporting police, who held the preconceived notion that 'Jeju was a Red island', were dispatched on a large scale, which worsened the situation even further. The atrocities they committed against residents during that time reached a serious level. One correspondent to a major daily newspaper reported on the public sentiment in Jeju as follows:

Forty to fifty people were returning home from compulsory labor such as the restoration of security telephone lines and the construction of walls at the police station. The group of people, lifelessly passing by us, soon realized that one of us was a Jeju Islander from his way of speaking. They surrounded us and burst into tears. One pounded his hoe on a rock, crying out "We can neither live nor die." Another old woman in her sixties, in fear and pent-up anger, thumped her heart and pointed at a doorplate. As the doorplates at each house had disappeared overnight, all villagers were taken to the police station and harshly beaten. Who is guilty, the mob of rioters or the villagers? There is no longer gunfire, but their wrinkled faces still look worried with resentment, which might be vented soon. They replied to our questions of how they feel now by shouting "We aren't afraid of distant guns, we're afraid of those that are nearby."

Joseon Jungang Daily (July 11th, 1948)

The voices of the people of Jeju, crying out "We can neither live nor die", resounded throughout the island. There was nowhere to seek protection for those who were screaming "We aren't afraid of distant guns, we're afraid of those that are nearby."

Coastal Blockade!

On July 15th, 1948, the 11th Regiment was replaced by the 9th Regiment, and Major Song Yo-chan was appointed Commander of the 9th Regiment. The 11th Regiment withdrew to Suweon. It seemed that the situation in Jeju had calmed down to some degree in early August.

Although Jeju Island was covered with blood, the Republic of Korea was finally established on August 15th, 1948. On September 9th of the same year another government was formed in North Korea as well. The nation had ended up divided into two.

Since mid-August, the police in Jeju had been put on full alert. A travel certification system was reintroduced for passengers using the ferry between Jeju and Mokpo. The police blockaded the coastline of Jeju and strengthened the inspection of passengers. Furthermore, through just two separate deployments in August, about eight hundred supporting policemen came to Jeju from the mainland. They were ready to launch a ‘full-scale mopping-up operation by force’. However, no advance notice about the operation was given to the police in Jeju.

The Commander of the 6th Division of the US Forces also ordered subordinate units to support the USAMG company stationed on Jeju Island and other Americans. Kim Bong-ho, Chief of the Jeju Police Department, testified “It was not simply a reinforcement of the supporting police force, but was planned in advance by William F. Dean, the US military governor and others to resolve the Jeju situation in the short term.” This is clear evidence that even after the establishment of the government in the South, the executives of the US military government directly intervened in suppressing the uprising in Jeju.

On August 24th, 1948, after the Korean government was formed, President Syngman Rhee and Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, commander of the US Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK), signed the ‘Temporary Agreement between the ROK and the USA Military Security’.

Two days later, the Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG) of the USAFIK was founded. Brigadier General William L. Roberts was appointed as its leader. The PMAG was given the right to command the Korean Army until June 30th, 1949, when the US Armed Forces in Korea carried out a withdrawal. They were in charge of managing the organization, administration, equipment and training of the Korean Security Force, which consisted of the

Korean Land Forces, the Coast Guard, and the National Police.

It meant that the US military still had command of the Korean Army, even after the foundation of the ROK, and had a detailed knowledge of what was going on in Jeju.

Meanwhile, in early August, six prominent commanders of the armed civilian group, including Kim Dal-sam and Gang Gyu-chan, escaped from Jeju Island under the pretext of attending the ‘Congress for Representatives of the People of South Korea’ being held in Haeju, Hwanghae-do. When Kim Dal-sam left Jeju, Lee Deok-gu was named the top commander of the armed civilian group. He went up into the mountain area when he was a teacher at Jocheon Middle School, and became the key member of the group at the age of 28. The armed civilian group was also preparing for what would likely be a protracted battle.

Song Yo-chan, Regimental General of the 9th Regiment, started the fierce, indiscriminately punitive expedition in early September after unit maintenance, and by the beginning of October the excessive military attacks reached their maximum intensity.

The army and the police, who had temporarily suspended their suppression of the guerrillas while the government was being formed, launched a massive manhunt operation, the so-called ‘chasing of rabbits’, leaving a lot of innocent residents victimized.

Between October 1948 and March of the next year, Jeju turned into a killing field, full of screams of pain.

In particular, the General Security Headquarters newly created the Jeju Security Headquarters and appointed Colonel Kim Sang-gyeong, Commander of the 5th Brigade, as its top commander in order to enhance the punitive expeditions.

On October 17th, 1948, Song Yo-chan, under his own name, issued the following declaration.

In order to mop up the anti-American extremists who are committing horrible, unpardonable crimes from their hideout in Halla Mountain, the army declares it forbidden to pass without permission through any area above 5km in from the coastline and all mountainous areas throughout Jeju, from October 20th, 1948, while our official military operation is on-going. Regardless of the reason, anyone who violates this prohibition will be considered a rebel and will be executed by firing squad.

The restriction of passage through areas above 5km in from the coastline meant that most of the mid-mountain villages were included in the prohibition of movement. Only some seaside villages were excluded from the prohibition, given the geographical features of the island. It meant that there was a strong possibility that people would be shot dead and stigmatized as rebels without any chance to defend themselves, for no reason other than being on the mountain or in any mid-mountain area.

What a horrible operation it was, intending to shoot anybody seen in the mid-mountain areas, fields and even villages. Not allowing people to move freely through their villages meant that they had no right to even live in their own homes. They suffered from an indescribable fear. Furthermore, Song Yo-chan assigned members of the NKYA to a special company that was granted extraordinary powers that no one could touch.

The liaison aircraft operated by the US soldiers were used to catch residents taking refuge in the mid-mountain areas and kill them. During the so-called 'Samjin' (meaning 'three methods') operation of 'Kill All, Burn All, Loot all', they embarked on an orgy of mass slaughter. A Samjin or 'Samkwang' operation had been actually conducted by Japan to root out Chinese people. It was a symbolic word reminding people of previous mass killings. Halla Mountain became a base for the armed civilian group and a shelter for the refugees who had no choice but to leave their homes. In 1987, poet Lee San-ha was sentenced to prison on the charge of violating the national security law after writing a long poem about the April 3rd events, entitled, 'Halla Mountain'. In his poem, Halla Mountain is depicted as follows:

Even illiterate people

Carrying packs of food

Kept going up onto

The mountain

The mountain

Burying their flesh and blood

And their bones

That is the bitterness of Halla Mountain

There was no guarantee for the safety of the lives of any of the people going up onto the mountain, down to the seaside villages or just staying in the mid-mountain villages.

Immediately after Song Yo-chan made the declaration, the coastline of Jeju was blockaded. Before the punitive forces began their operation in earnest, they also arrested every community leader on the island. Jeju was gripped by a deep fear. A chief judge was taken to the police station, and the chief editor of a local newspaper and the principal of Jeju Middle School were shot dead. In early November, a hundred soldiers of the 9th Regiment, who were mostly Jeju natives, were executed without any official martial court proceedings taking place.

In the meantime, something happened which made the US forces and the Korean government extremely nervous. The First Battalion of the 14th Regiment, directed to move to Jeju in order to support the 9th Regiment ahead of the scorched-earth operation, suddenly turned in their guns at Yeosu to protest the order. It was called the October 19th Yeo-Sun Incident (having occurred at Yeosu and Suncheon).

In response to this, the military authority mobilized seven navy vessels to block the sea route between Jeju Island and the mainland. They even issued orders to fishing boats anchoring at every port in Jeju to refrain from going out to sea. Jeju faced a long severance from the mainland.

The government successfully put down the incident in Yeosu and Suncheon within a few days, and ramped up its suppressing operations on Jeju-do. The US military, which directly intervened in the Yeo-Sun Incident, observed Jeju closely and debated how to tackle the situation. The US advisors visited all of the units that had joined in dealing with the Yeo-Sun Incident to devise strategies for Jeju Island. The Korean government just ordered an unconditional suppression of the island. Jeju literally became hell on earth, blasted by a bloody wind.

Meanwhile, Colonel Kim Sang-kyeom, Commander of the Jeju Security Headquarters, was dismissed as a reprimand for the occurrence of the Yeo-Soon Incident among the 14th Regiment that was his subordinate unit. Song Yo-chan was chosen to replace him, and emerged as a top commander; even naval vessels were placed under his command.

Brigadier General Roberts, head of the Provisional Advisory Group of the USFIK, sent a message to Chae Byeong-deok, the Chief of Staff, saying “Despite the strict patrols by the

Coast Guard, the remnants of communist groups have been seen escaping to Jeju Island and other small islands off the southern coast. We must tighten our reconnaissance and patrols in the area to prevent any massive assembly.” It seemed that the situation was becoming quite dire.

Being Young Is a Sin

At this time, it frequently happened that residents of the island were indiscriminately hauled away by the police. From May to October, there had been stories of people who were arrested while laboring in the fields, doing such work as weeding, harvesting barley and cutting fodder for animals.

In late October, the armed civilian group mainly attacked police substations and town offices, and even killed right-wing civilians and family members of the police. Their retaliatory attacks generated other innocent victims.

At this time, Song Yo-chan issued an order to arrest seventeen soldiers of the 9th Regiment on suspicion of being a ‘communist cell’; six of those soldiers were executed. After that, he carried out a second operation near Goseong-ri, Aewol-eup, shooting and killing one hundred and thirty-five residents. The 9th Regiment, in combination with the police and civilians, shot as many as a hundred and thirty-five people dead in a single day at Gyorae-ri, Jocheon-eup. The punitive forces slaughtered residents, branding them ‘rebels’ under the premise that they were certain that people who resided in the mid-mountain area provided food and supplies to the armed civilian group.

Song Yo-chan’s October 17th Declaration - stating that the mid-mountain area above 5km in from the coastline was a nest of communists and that anyone seen in the area would be shot on sight – had been implemented ‘faithfully’. It was an obvious civilian massacre. The number of unexpected deaths kept rising each night.

One day in November 1948, in Nabeup-ri, trembling with fear due to the shootings committed by the soldiers a few days before, the armed civilian group took their turn in attacking villages and killing family members of the police.

At that time, the punitive forces interrogated and tortured young people who were caught in the mid-mountain area, compelling them to disclose the names of people who had gone up

onto the mountain. Those people who were not able to stand the torture gave out any names they could, which led to even more senseless deaths.

One young man was killed just because he said, "That's my elder brother", when the police called his brother's name. Another man was victimized because he misunderstood the question "Have you done 'bit-gae' duty (a sentry watching for the arrival of the punitive force)?" and answered "Yes, I have eaten 'bi-kke' (Jeju dialect for 'shark meat')." At that time, young boys had to stand guard to keep their village safe during these events. When they did duty as 'bit-gae' (sentries), they communicated information through such phrases as "Yellow dogs (soldiers) are coming" and "Black dogs (the police) are coming", or by blowing a horn.

It goes without saying that women, children and the elderly also had to go through terrible ordeals. The executives of women's associations were also tortured during interrogation, and some women were forced to marry soldiers. A lot of women were called to the police station simply because their husbands had disappeared, and had to suffer insults while being tortured.

One recalled of the time, "The most distressing thing was that I had to hear the sound of other people being beaten and tortured, which broke my heart. I always covered my ears so as not to hear the screaming bursting out of the police station. Only when people fell into a swoon and became unconscious did the beatings stop."

The young men, living in hiding in constant fear, could only blame it on themselves for being young. One policeman dragged young men out just because they looked like rebels and assumed that they might be. Whenever the punitive force came, the residents had to hide beneath their floors. Those who were called out by name were dragged to the police station and nearly beaten to death; in the end, they were shot dead. People believed that the battlefields were safer than being suddenly called by the police to be shot dead.

Sometimes the punitive force, being 'out of control', even forced residents to burn down their houses. Their pounding hearts were also burned black. People moved to seaside villages, compelled by the army, but once there they were easily taken and tortured on the grounds that they were from 'rebel villages'. It was indeed a miserable existence they suffered after eviction, having to eat wheat bran pudding due to the lack of food.

Evacuation during war should mean that a concentration of residents or buildings are dispersed or removed in order to reduce the damage and number of casualties from gunfire and air raids, however, in Jeju it meant that, in order to extract the armed civilian force from

the mid-mountain villages, the punitive force burnt down every house in those areas and compelled the residents to move down to the seaside villages.

The island was in panic. Jeju, once an island of exile to which traitors were sent in a condition near death, now faced an even more severe fate. Life in the mid-mountain villages was unpredictable, even in the immediate future. Dark seas churned during the endless catastrophes. It seemed as though a wind of utter madness would soon swirl around Jeju Island. Eventually, even more atrocious hellfire was unleashed on Jeju.

5. Alas! Sad Mid-Mountain

*On this land of yours, where a flag waves on the lonely earth
Canola stained with blood blooms through the dark
Though its petals wither under the bloody evening sunlight
The scent becomes stronger with the bloodstained years*

A time of revolt!

A time of wailing!

Halla Mountain, a southern island that never sleeps!

-From the song "A Southern Island that Never Sleeps",

words and music by An Chi-hwan

Jeju's thatched roof houses, well suited to the beautiful surrounding environment, stood in clusters in the villages. Though their roofs were made of straw, they never budged an inch, regardless of the strength of the storms that hit them. But they were burned to ashes in a moment. People's hearts sank. Even their tears ceased to flow, as they were at a loss for words. With shudders of fear running down their backs, they could not help but watch their hearts get broken, due to the absence of family members who had suddenly vanished. How on Earth could the government, which ought to protect the people, brutally slaughter its own citizens? At this time, a grandmother, whose two sons had escaped to the mountain, had to hide in a bamboo grove at the sound of gunfire, even when it came from far away.

The Scorched Earth Operation Swept Through the Mid-Mountain Villages

Unlike those who obediently moved down to the seaside villages, some people never left their hometowns at all. In some cases, people just escaped to the nearby hills because they

refused to abandon their houses, fields, and the cows and horses that they had put so much effort into rearing. But they were soon caught.

The daytime was the world of the punitive force, while the night was owned by the armed civilian group. Residents were stranded because after the armed civilian group attacked, the punitive forces stormed in, and after the suppressing group came groups of guerrillas. They eagerly awaited the end of the cycle of killing and being killed. Most tragic was when a mother was killed by the punitive force while her son was victimized by the armed civilian group. In some villages, a father was executed by the army, while his son was killed by the armed guerrillas.

The most horrendous slaughters of people took place during the six months between October 1948 and March of the following year. The army turned every mid-mountain village into a sea of fire on the pretext of eliminating every possible source of shelter or supplies for the armed civilian group.

Schoolyards in the towns were used by the punitive force as places to assemble villagers, and were even used as killing fields. Halla Mountain, its valleys and oreums were silent witnesses to the agony of the massacres. There was no distinction between this life and the next. Winter was coming. In November and December 1948, the mid-mountain areas were literally a living hell, with no safe places at all.

Meanwhile, the armed civilian group also launched full-scale attacks using all their forces. They raided some villages, judging that they had turned over to the side of the punitive forces, and indiscriminately killed villagers and looted food supplies.

Sehwa-ri, Seongeup-ri, Namwan-ri, Wimi-ri and other villages were severely attacked by the armed civilian force on the grounds that the villages were serving as enemy camps.

The army and the police kept setting fire to the mid-mountain villages and killing people en masse. In some cases, whole families were exterminated; children had to witness their parents being killed before their eyes, and parents had to watch their young children go up to heaven before they did.

November 13th, 1948 was a day of bloodbath. At Wandong village in Sogil-ri, Aewol-eup, at Gyora-ri, Waheul-ri and Sinheung-ri in Jocheon-eup, and at Sangcheon-ri, Sangchang-ri and Changcheon-ri in Andeok-myeon, the punitive force shot people dead regardless of age or gender, and burnt entire villages to the ground.

The military forces pushed residents who had moved down to the seaside villages following the evacuation order to voluntarily report if they had helped the guerrillas even once in the mid-mountain villages. They threatened people, saying “You’d better turn yourself in to the police if you feel guilty about any tiny thing. We’ve already secured a list of names. Those who voluntarily confess will be fine. If anybody is otherwise found to have been involved, they will not avoid execution.” Terrified people surrendered themselves to the police because they had given in to the demands of the armed guerrillas that controlled their villages, and handed over several bags of barley. But it was a trap.

In Jocheon-eup, two hundred young men in their twenties voluntarily went to Hamdeok Elementary School, being used as a military base, to confess what they had done. About a hundred and fifty of them got on trucks, deceived by the punitive force who had said “Let’s join the suppressing operation!” They were taken to the stream called ‘Baksungnae’ and ended up being executed by firing squad in groups.

People in the mid-mountain area, for no reason other than having lived in villages near Halla Mountain, were easy targets for the punitive force, since they were suspected of having offered food to the guerrillas. These were the scenes of madness that began in October 1948. However, an even greater catastrophe was drawing near.

Martial Law!

On November 17th, 1948, President Syngman Rhee declared martial law on Jeju Island. It added fuel to the fires of madness that had been sweeping through the island. The martial law caused the residents of mid-mountain villages to hold their breath; the villages had already been laid flat. The scorched-earth operation targeting the mid-mountain area led to unimaginable mass killings.

The punitive force harshly cornered people in strong military operations under the name of hunting down ‘the Reds’. Countless villages were burned down, and many people were killed without regard for age or gender. It was literally a ‘scorched-earth operation’. The life of being chased from moment to moment continued, and each moment was a matter of life or death. The suppressing forces did not care how old victims were, whether they were elderly people in their eighties or newborn babies. They eventually drove about twenty thousand

villagers out from the mid-mountain area up onto Halla Mountain.

If one young man disappeared, the military regarded the entire family as rebels and executed them. Family members were killed in place of young men. It was the so-called 'Dae-sal'. It literally means to execute a murderer, but it meant in Jeju at that time that people were killed in place of another.

As a result of the joint operations of the army, navy and air force, most mid-mountain areas were reduced to ashes. Residents went up onto the mountain to avoid the suppression, and the military executed people without even holding trials. People's fear and anger did not subside.

The fear sent a chill over the entire island. Residents planned strategies to survive, such as standing guard as 'bit-gae' (sentries) on the hills. When the sun rose, they went up onto the mountain, and once the sun had set, they went back down to the villages. They took desperate measures to save their lives. It snowed a lot, but people had to ignore the severe cold.

Yeongnam village in Jungmun-myeon was located in the mid-mountain area. Sixteen households with ninety residents had lived in this village, famous for its fertile farmland that produced quality millet and huge sweet potatoes; fifty of those people who had missed their chance to escape became victims.

Seonheul-ri in Jocheon-eup, the most eastern mid-mountain village, became enveloped in flames on November 21st of that year. The soldiers set fire to the empty village and left, and when they returned, an evacuation order was issued to the residents who were in hiding.

People mainly fled to the forest called 'Seonheulgot', but three days later, the military discovered that people were hiding out at Doteulgot Cave, Moksimumul Cave and Baenbaengdi Cave, and a number of people were shot to death on the spot. The soldiers poured gasoline over the corpses and burned them; the rest of the people were taken alive to the place called 'Eongmul' in Bukchon-ri, where they were all slaughtered.

The report written by the US military adviser at that time tells us how dreadful the carnage was, which lasted for ten days, from the 21st to the 30th of November, 1948. Though the 9th Regiment's daily records might contain exaggerations and omissions, based on their records, six hundred and fifteen people were slaughtered at that time. However, only twelve guns and eleven knives were collected from the armed civilian group. Comparing the number of

victims to the number of collected weapons, we learn that six hundred and fifteen people recorded as ‘convicts’ were not part of the guerrillas but rather unarmed civilians.

At the end of December, Pyoseon's sandy beach got dyed blood red. A hundred and fifty-seven residents of Tosan-ri were dragged to the beach by the 9th Regiment and killed all at once.

People were afraid of both the mountain and the police. The only places left for them to hide were dark caves. They went deeper and deeper. Caves protected them from the cold and from the forces for a while. Their lives were not their own. Once the location of a cave was disclosed, they had to run deeper into the mountain, and moreover, when the military forces set fires at the entrances of the caves, people suffocated from the smoke, their bodies entangled together.

Meanwhile, people from Donggwang-ri in Andeok-myeon, composed of a hundred and thirty households, had to run for their lives. About a hundred people were killed at ‘Mudeungiwat’ in Donggwang-ri, and about fifty at ‘Sambat’. A hundred and twenty people holed up in the cave called ‘Keunneolpgwe cave’ in Donggwang-ri for sixty days. Shivering with fear and dread had only a handful of millet gruel once a day to appease their hunger. They were even careful with their breathing in order to save their energy. Many times, they could not even eat porridge made of greens. Hiding here and there, people ate only as much as they needed to keep from starving to death.

In the winter of 1948, it snowed heavily. People who had fled to the mountain to escape the punitive force dug holes in the snow the size of houses to make shelter. They went around hiding like rabbits in the snow. When they ran, they left bloodstains in the snow-covered fields.

The catastrophic slaughters of people during the scorched-earth operation wiped a lot of Jeju's mid-mountain villages off the map. Though poor, the people were full of affection for their motherland, and on this land its people were killed or simply vanished.

What if it was just a nightmare? People who survived the hell alone wished it had just been a nightmare. While trembling with fear and losing consciousness, they were not even able to produce tears. Their lives were like ‘the lives of mice’, with every day spent looking for somewhere to hide and something to eat.

*To save my life
Witnessing a great deal of death
I had to run away like a shadow
Memorizing a secret password
In front of a millstone shed
A sentry stood guard with a bamboo spear
"Who are you? Stop! Password!"
With fear filling my mouth, I wet my pants
As the sound of a cough filled the air
Big guys appeared in the dark
"Damn, it's a child!"
Night sky but no stars
It crushed down upon me*

-Mun, Chung-seong, "April Ceremony 2"

Entering December, the punitive force devoted their all strength to the mop-up operation in the Halla Mountain region. The 9th Regiment mobilized about three thousand residents to search the mountain. They revealed that a hundred and five people were killed in a single day, taking ten Japanese type 99 rifles and one knife from the victims. Their indiscriminate military operation reached its peak. Attacks by the armed civilian groups were inevitably followed by wide scale retaliation by the punitive forces, and the guerrillas never stopped taking revenge against the rightists.

People who were arrested in this process were tried by a court-martial, but it was just a formality. In the court-martial held in December 1948, eight hundred and seventy-one civilians were found guilty.

According to the record, between December 2nd and 6th, and between the 12th and 20th, eleven soldiers died and eight were injured, while six hundred and seventy-seven civilians were killed and categorized as 'enemies'; a hundred and sixty-two people were arrested, and twenty-two rifles and fifty-five knives were collected.

What does this huge imbalance between the number of 'enemies' who the military forces killed or arrested, and the number of weapons collected from them tell us? Didn't they

commit an indiscriminate slaughter of unresisting civilians? If not, were they all 'rebels' as was insisted? All the facts point to the conclusion that the suppressing operation was a crime against humanity.

On the other hand, as the mass killing continued, some never lost their love of humanity. For example, in Gasi-ri, 'Police Officer Kang' dedicated himself to saving the lives of those villagers in danger of being killed, and in Sinheung-ri, as the punitive force questioned a town mayor closely about the past actions of residents and their political leanings, he simply responded without hesitation, "I don't know."

At the end of December 1948, when the scorched-earth operation reached its peak, the 9th Regiment was withdrawn and replaced by the 2nd Regiment, whose commander was Lieutenant Colonel Ham Byeong-seon.

Falling like Camelia Flowers

As the year 1948 ended, entwined and entangled, 1949 began with a piercing wind. The 2nd Regiment seemed to have convinced residents leading lives as refugees to come down from the mountain, but they soon took a tough stance, executing countless civilians immediately, without trial.

In January 1949, following orders given by the punitive forces, the people from the seaside villages and those who had been evacuated from the mid-mountain region were forced to build stone walled fortresses around the villages. There were no young people in the villages, so even children and the elderly were forced to do the labor.

One woman in Jeju-eup spotted her husband's dead body while carrying stones, but had to hold back from making even a tiny sound. Moreover, someone reported "After we finished building the fortress, we found black rubber shoes scattered around the ditches surrounding the fields. They belonged to the dead." Though it broke their hearts, they could not say a word about it.

It was do or die, and residents even had to rotate sentry duty every night after laboring to build the fortresses. Women were no exception.

On a rainy, foggy day, one woman in Aeweol-ri, with no time to mourn her husband's death, had to do sentry duty and leave her newborn baby sleeping at home alone. But, for the

reason that she did not do the job properly, she was dragged to the police station and beaten half to death.

During this winter, the most brutal massacre occurred. The day was January 17th, 1949, and it happened in Bukchon-ri, a seaside village in the eastern half of the island.

The case began with deaths of two soldiers. It happened when a troop from the 3rd Battalion of the 2nd Regiment in Sehwa was ambushed by the armed civilian group while climbing a path near the entrance to the village, on its way to Hamdeok where the battalion headquarters was stationed. The startled elders of the village, after concluding their discussions, carried the corpses to the headquarters. The military shot them all except one, who was a family member of a policeman. Following that incident, troops of as many as two platoons under the control of a commissioned officer raided the village.

Around eleven in the morning, the armed soldiers surrounded the village and stormed from house to house, pointing their guns at people. They compelled about a thousand villagers, including children and feeble seniors, to gather in the yard of Bukchon Elementary School, while they set fire to the whole village.

At the schoolyard, the chief of the Civil Security Union, who had been on sentry duty, was immediately shot, being held responsible for not standing guard properly. The situation at the schoolyard immediately turned insane. They separated out the families of soldiers and policemen, and forced young students to point out the 'communist families'. Then they took groups of dozens of residents to the nearby field and executed them by firing squad. One mother died after being shot in the head, with her newborn baby still sucking her breast, snuggled into her chest. The sunken field in Bukchon-ri was lined with the dead bodies of children.

The orgy of hideous civilian slaughter continued until around five in the afternoon when the battalion commander issued an order to stop. About three hundred people were victimized on that day. The commander directed the rest of the residents to evacuate to Hamdeok, and withdrew the troops. On the next day, people were divided into two groups, those who moved to Hamdeok and those who escaped to the mountain. The people who went to Hamdeok got caught in the operation of tracking down communist families, and about one hundred people were victimized again. After all was said and done, about four hundred Bukchon residents lost their lives in those two days.

There were rumors that the army was killing more people because there were no more houses left after they had burned down the villages, and that they used guns instead of mortars to give each soldier the experience of killing people.

On that day, Halla Mountain appeared to glare in anguish at the people on its land. The black sea of Jeju seemed to strike the sky. After that day, which was the climax of the April 3rd massacre, the village became known as 'Munamchon', meaning 'village without men', and on each year on the night of January 18th by the lunar calendar, the whole village is lit up from the ceremonies which are held to commemorate the lives of those who died there. Many families' entire ancestral line died out due to the Bukchon mass slaughter.

Long Winter, Likely Eternal

An expectant woman in Namweon-ri ran from the punitive forces, crossing hills and valleys, and ended up delivering a baby into the world, but the newborn baby soon died. Later, after becoming a grandmother, she said that she felt guilty whenever she was reminded of the baby who died. Recalling the agony of that time, she wrote a poem.

Baby

The uneven ridge of an oreum raised me up

I ran for my life, barefoot, holding you inside

I ran, restraining your breath, thinking you'd burst out too soon

As I approached the deep valley of the rough oreum

You ended up coming out into the world

I laid you down on the ground, soaked with blood

Baby, I then had to run again as on fire

Into an awful bloody valley in a persimmon-dyed undershirt and baggy pants

You flowed out steadily

I couldn't do anything for you

I couldn't help but run

At that time, my body was like hot lava, darker than dark red

My body wasn't mine, baby

(omitted)

What is this pounding heart, my baby?

It seems as if it's your breath, which didn't even have a name

Bright yellow Solomon's Seal in the rough valley wailing in the middle of night

I think of you, who died somewhere along with the wind

Whenever I bend my back to pick up curved bracken

-Heo Yeong-seon, 'Song for a Dead Baby – Old Lady Kim of Namwon-eup'

On January 24th, 1949, the police would not stop shooting the residents of Gaesu-dong in Hagwi-ri, Aeweol-eup. In the evening, a woman named Kim San-chun went out with her two-year-old baby on her back after being summoned by the Oedo police substation, but on the way there she was shot with her baby at the entrance to Oedo village. There were sixty-three victims in a village of fifty-six households. Most of the policemen in the Oedo police substation were members of the ultra-right Northwest Korean Youth Association. Their cruelty was recorded as the first accusation regarding the Jeju massacre when the National Assembly conducted its truth-finding investigation into the civilian slaughter, after the April 19th Revolution in 1960.

January 4th, 1949 was a day of nightmares, shaking Yonggang-ri in Jeju-eup hard. At dawn, soldiers suddenly came into houses, and people began escaping from them. But they could not avoid the indiscriminate shooting. Seniors and women were shot down. A total of one hundred and five people were victimized on that day.

The power of the armed civilian group had been quickly weakened by the scorched-earth operation. Meanwhile, residents were trying to escape from both the armed civilian groups attacking the villages to obtain food and the punishment from the punitive forces arresting people on the charge of supplying the rebels with food. They could not go to either the mountain or the coast, so they just scouted around for places to hide, but ended up being caught and killed by the punitive forces. Others were slaughtered by the armed civilian groups as well.

However, the world could not be allowed to know about this cruel massacre taking place on Jeju. During this period, the central government gagged the press, prohibiting the reporting of any related news. They forced the press not to report on the mass killings that

had been committed by the military and the police. The Ministry of Public Information also prevented the broadcasting companies from commenting on any actions of the armed civilian group and from using any sympathetic expressions in relation to the indiscriminate mass killings of innocent civilians.

Despite the gag orders on the press, news of the mass slaughter reached Jeju natives living in Japan. Those people, shivering at the horror of the tragedy sweeping through their homeland across the sea, held a memorial service for the Jeju civilians slaughtered, in 1949.

During the long, seemingly eternal winter, the bright yellow Adonis flowers that used to bloom throughout the frozen land, on every foot of Halla Mountain, were holding their breath in fear.

The Syngman Rhee government, which took its initiative from the scorched-earth operation, established the Jeju Command Post and gathered all their strength in the final stages of the suppressing operation. Commander Yu Jae-heung maintained combat operations against the armed guerrillas while stopping the indiscriminate killing, and tried to induce refugees to come out of hiding. Beginning in early March, leaflets urging refugees to come out of hiding were scattered around Halla Mountain. Agents of the military went around the fields and mountains, announcing “If you come down from the mountain, you will live.”

Women, children, old people and other refugees living in fear of their lives on the mountain descended in groups waving white flags. During this operation, the number of people who were killed, came down from the mountain voluntarily, or were captured, totaled about ten thousand.

Residents who came down from the mountain were detained in a factory. Some of them were released, but most of them were sent to a court-martial. The military authorities ignored their own principles. Without being told the nature of their crimes or the length of their sentences, numbers of people were transferred to mainland prisons after the formality of the court-martial.

The Command Post was planning to eliminate the armed civilian group completely before mid-April. The plan was to carry out a so-called ‘combing operation’. Their plan was for military troops and the Civil Security Union to traverse Halla Mountain and drive the armed civilian group to the police stationed on the opposite side. At this time, the number of

guerrillas is estimated to have decreased to about two hundred and fifty.

The US military report of April 1st, 1949 recorded “The 9th Regiment adopted the plan to massacre the mid-mountain residents, and during the year 1948 about fifteen thousand people were victimized. 80 percent of them were executed by the punitive forces.”

Eighty percent were slaughtered by the punitive forces. So how many people were killed by the armed civilian groups? During the early stages of the April 3rd uprising, they killed police, members of rightist unions such as the NKYA and the Daedong Youth Organization, and some rightists who were cooperating with the military and the police, as well as their family members. Those were retaliatory killings. The number of people victimized by the armed civilian groups is equal to one-tenth of the total death toll.

Of course, their killing of children and the elderly was an unpardonable crime. The powerless, starved guerrillas sometime killed villagers standing sentry in order to gain access to the villages in order to get food supplies.

The armed civilian group finally dispersed, so that their numbers could no longer even be counted. Taking advantage of this situation, President Syngman Rhee came to Jeju on April 9th, 1949, and on May 10th a re-election was conducted to select members of the National Assembly. The Jeju Command Post was dissolved on May 15th.

On June 8th, 1949, the Gwandeokjeong Square was crowded with people. The punitive force hung up the corpse of the commander of the armed civilian group who had been executed the previous day, saying “Look at what became of Lee Deok-gu.” His corpse was tied to a cross. His head was leaning to one side, he was a short man, and a spoon was sticking out of the pocket of his shirt. It was the dead body of Lee Deok-gu, commander of the armed civilian group. The square was bustling with people who wanted to see his corpse. His death meant that the resistance of the armed civilian group was almost at an end.

At the end of January 1953, the Rainbow Troop, which was specially trained in fighting against guerrillas, was deployed to carry out an operation on Halla Mountain. Suppressing operations were carried out seven times in three months, after which the armed civilian group was completely dissipated. The island's residents no longer needed to stand sentry at their village fortresses.

On May 21st, 1954, Halla Mountain, a mountain with spiritual significance for the nation, which had had to latch its doors, finally opened its heart again. The Jeju Police Station

declared the mountain once again open, lifting the prohibition on travel across the mountain. For six years and six months after the outbreak of the April 3rd uprising, Halla Mountain had watched all these events in silence, with only its black ridges heaving as if in tears.

6. Testimonies of the Massacre

Do you understand? During such a bloodthirsty period, it was a matter of only one short step to go from life to death. The islanders, with no promise of tomorrow, had to wander through cold grey fields at the center of the terror.

In 1948 and 1949, Halla Mountain was filled with the cries of spirits haunting this world. The winter had so much snow that people had to crawl on their hands and knees like animals, and only the starlight shining on the white, snowy fields of Halla Mountain looked after the refugees each night. In the winter of that year, stories piled up like snow; stories of people who saw countless corpses frozen to death on the mountain scattered all over the area, stories of people being taken by the police without being charged of a crime and being tortured, the story of the mother who fell down dead while holding her baby in her arms, and the baby which kept sucking at her bloody breast, and stories of all those mothers who saved one of their sons while giving their own lives.

How can I tell the whole story of these slaughters that took place in the middle of such devastation? I will just tell what I can about people at the foot of Halla Mountain who suffered so horribly from starvation and the biting cold. Those ghastly stories that were too scary to be repeated can only be heard through the voices of the people who survived the hell of the massacre. The following stories are just fragments of some examples.

Stolen Time

It happened around 5 a.m. on November 13th, 1948, at Gyorae-ri, Jocheon-eup. Bursts of gunfire came into this mid-mountain village, consisting of about a hundred households with a seven hundred-year history. The villagers who had just woken up were gunned down while running out of their houses in confusion.

Soldiers set fire to each and every house and committed an indiscriminate killing of the residents. Most of the dead bodies were burned up. One dead body of a fourteen-year old girl was stabbed by a sword. The victims were mainly children and the elderly. Yang Bok-

cheon, a grandmother who witnessed the killing by the punitive forces, was thirty years old at that time. Below is her testimony.

“Soldiers pushed me and then fired a shot at me. As I fell down with my three-year old daughter on my back, my nine-year old son ran to me, shouting ‘Mother!’ Then they shot him as well. I can still clearly remember their voices, saying ‘You bastard, you’re still alive’ after shooting him. The bullet went through his chest and his heart was exposed. They were monsters. My daughter’s leg was even penetrated by a bullet that left a palm-sized hole.”

It also happened on November 13th, 1948, at Sogil-ri, Aewol-eup. This remote mid-mountain village called Weondong consisted of only fifteen families. Soldiers who had already slaughtered villagers indiscriminately at Haga-ri rushed into Weondong village after they obtained intelligence that some members of the armed civilian group were gathering there. On that day, about fifty innocent residents, including thirty-four people from Weondong, were gunned down. After that, Weondong village disappeared from the map forever. One survivor, Go Nam-bo, who was seventeen years old at the time, remembered everything.

“Soldiers were carrying torches to assemble people, so it might have been around five o’clock in the morning, while it was still dark. They tied people’s hands behind their backs and then connected them together with a rope, like tying strings of yellow corvina together. Once we had made a circuit of the town all tied up, every resident had been tied to the group. Soldiers told us to point out where the armed guerrillas were, but how could we know? Beginning at dawn, we were marched throughout the town without any food, until we returned to the inn at around five o’clock in the afternoon. I don’t think they meant to kill us at first. At one point, they even untied our hands. They just spent time saying things like ‘if we shoot a line of people, we can kill up to nine people at once’, and ‘adults die without any sound, but kids cry when they are killed.’ We were tied up again, but they tied my hands in front of me this time. One soldier radioed somebody and then told us ‘all of you will be shot within ten minutes.’ It was probably some order from the regimental headquarters. Soon an army vehicle came from Aeweol-ri. I untied my hands quickly and waited, and when they

saluted each other, I dashed off into the forest. After a while, I could hear the brawling sound of gunfire. Soldiers covered the dead bodies with blankets and foodstuffs, and they left after setting it all on fire.”

It was early in the morning on November 15th, 1948 at Gasi-ri, Pyoseon-myeon. Suppressing forces shot at anybody they saw, with the excuse that mid-mountain villages were serving as bases for the armed civilian group. About thirty people died on that day, most of whom were children and the elderly. People in their sixties and older were victimized just because their sons or daughters were not there. Moreover, they issued an eviction order to the people who survived. But the soldiers assembled the residents, who had moved to the seaside villages of Pyoseon-ri to comply with the order, at Pyoseon Elementary School on December 2nd, 1948, and checked their family registers one by one. If there was a missing member of their family, they regarded them as belonging to a rebel family. Then they killed seventy-six people. This is the testimony of Oh Tae-gyeong, who was twenty-three years old when the events took place.

“When soldiers executed people by firing squad near some warehouse in Tosan-ri, people were forced to watch it. They even forced residents to clap their hands when they shot the people. When a baby crawled up, they shot it too.”

On November 18th, 1948, the day before Weollang village in Jeju-eup was burned down, Gang Gweon’s father-in-law was shot dead while he was working on the farm, and her husband hid himself somewhere. The remaining family members were forced to evacuate to Iho village, but as her mother-in-law said "it’s better to die in our hometown", they returned to the burnt-out village and ended up confronting the suppressing forces. Gang Gweon, who was twenty-nine years old at the time, was hiding in a nearby village and was unable to escape further away because she was almost due. She testified about running away with her newborn baby, who was delivered on the mountain.

“When the punitive forces came to the village again, my mother-in-law escaped with my son (Mun Yong-ho, 8) and second daughter (Mun Yeong-ja, 4) so as to save my only son, and I ran away with my six-year-old daughter and the newborn baby who I had just delivered on

the mountain. I survived even though I thought I would probably die, while my mother-in-law and my son and daughter were killed.”

In the early morning on December 10th, 1948 at Gaesu-dong, Hagwi-ri, Aewol-eup, the police and the Daedong Youth Organization suddenly raided the village and assembled its residents on the so-called ‘Bihak Hill’. There was no place for residents to hide anymore. It was horrible. The memories of the nine-year-old boy who was able to survive by being covered by his mother’s bloody body since he was so small were truly miserable. That son, Ahn In-haeng, recalled the painful memory of his mother’s death.

“As the sound of gunfire started, my mother, who was tied up next to me, quickly swooped down on me, and then we were covered in blood. The police then stabbed people one by one with a sword in case the gunshot hadn’t killed them, but I was still able to survive because I was covered by the corpse of my mother. So my three brothers and I were orphaned in an instant, but my seven-year-old brother died from measles and the young little baby died from starvation because he couldn’t get any breast milk.”

On the night of December 15th, 1948, in Tosan-ri, Pyoseon-myeon, the moon cast a bright light. Soldiers sorted out men aged from eighteen to forty among the village residents. Then they forced women to look at the moon. They picked out young and pretty women. Soldiers confined them at Pyoseon Elementary School for a while and then they executed them all by firing squad over two days, on the 18th and 19th of December. They were killed just because they were young. Their pleas to be spared were ignored. Tosan-ri had been called a village of lost youth since then. A hundred and fifty-seven residents of this village, composed of two hundred households, were killed. This is the testimony of Kim Yang-hak, who was eight years old at the time.

“The people who were taken at that time were so naive that they complied with the order to assemble and obediently left the village to go to the seaside. If they were being screened under the pretext of looking for ‘political offenders’, would it make sense that only those between the age of eighteen and forty would be ‘thought criminals’? Also, in the case of the women, they just looked at them under the moonlight and picked them out without any

evidence. Does that mean that only young and pretty women could harbor rebellious thoughts?"

It happened on January 16th, 1948, at Billemot Cave in Aewol-eup. The wind was blowing from the west. The cave, in which mainly women, children and the elderly were hiding, was eventually found. The cave was so long and complicated like a maze that people said that a dog once entered the cave and came out at a seaside village. The suppressing group induced about thirty people hiding in the cave to come out and then shot them all. The heartbreaking stories of children victimized on that day were disclosed by Yang Tae-byeong, who was twenty-five years old at the time. He was able to be the only survivor because he did not come out of the cave, not being deceived by the suppressing forces. It was a terribly sorrowful and miserable scene, according to his testimony.

"Gang Gyu-nam's son and Song Si-yeong's son were only about three or four years old, and they were such smart and lovely kids that they were popular in the town. One member of the punitive forces killed them by grabbing their legs and throwing them down onto the rocks. A human can't do this. Because of these evils deeds, the slaughterers must not be allowed to die a good death. Meanwhile, the wife of Gang Gyu-nam ran away carrying her two-year old daughter on her back, but she went deep into the woods, whereas I was hiding near the town. Since she couldn't come out of the forest, they eventually died of hunger."

At the Seogwipo Jeongbang Waterfall, the water falls directly into the sea. In January 1947, about twenty Donggwang-ri residents were executed en masse near the waterfall. The area turned into a sea of blood, full of the crushed dead bodies. A woman who searched for her husband's dead body at Jeongbang Waterfall eventually went blind. Now her young granddaughter acts as her eyes when they go out. This is the testimony of her neighbor Baek Mun-su.

"The authorities allowed the immediate family or relatives of the dead to move the corpses several months after the people were victimized. The wife of Song Gun-ok also started searching for her husband's body near the waterfall. But it was summer so the corpses were

already decomposed, and it wasn't easy to identify family members among the large number of dead bodies. While crying and screaming, she touched each of the corpses that had been heated up by the sun, and then touched her eyes with those hands. Due to some infection gotten from the decomposed corpses, she eventually went blind. Since then, she has spent forty years living without eye sight.

Torture Trampled on People Lives

Torture left people with indelible scars. Torture is a cruel act that one human commits against another, and is representative of the tyranny of governmental authority and the infringement of human rights. It is the most uncivilized act that tramples human dignity.

In fact, the amount of torture that was committed during the April 3rd events is incalculable. Even after the passage of time, it is impossible for someone who has been tortured to erase the memory from his or her mind and body.

The following cases are extracted from a book called "Prisoners of the April 3rd Events Who Returned Alive from the Graves", compiled by the Jeju April 3rd Institute.

Gang Seo-su's hometown is Bukchon-ri, a village that is symbolic of the April 3rd events. An incident occurred in which Bukchon-ri residents badly beat up a policeman who had fired a shot at villagers in 1947. In addition, in June of the next year, some young people were involved in killing a policeman who had escaped to Bukchon Harbor. All of the young people of the village ended up having to run away. Gang Seo-su, with nine people including his brothers and friends, hid in a cave near his house in Bukchon-ri, but they all got caught by American soldiers and Korean police. Nothing but relentless torture was waiting for them. Being a long-term prisoner who had not yet been convicted, he had to wait until he was transferred to Gwangju prison from Jeju Police Station to face trial. During that period, he was forced to suffer absolutely every kind of torture.

For him, life meant just eating well and living well. The authorities denounced such people as 'Reds' and put them on trial, even though they did not even know how to read. Both his elder and younger brothers, who were in prison together with him, went missing.

When he returned home after serving his term in prison, he discovered that his father had already been killed in the Bukchon massacre, and his mother and sister who had managed to survive through good luck also ended up dying because they did not have enough to eat. With those memories, he volunteered for military service, but got to return home after being shot in the Korean War. What ruined the life of the twenty-two year old man, who knew nothing but farming all his life, was torture.

“The police mixed water with chili pepper in a kettle and then shoved the spout into my nose and poured the water in. Then came the so-called turban shell torture. They spread finely crushed turban shells on the floor. They made me kneel down on them and trampled on my knees. The bits of shell got lodged in my knees; the pain was so intense. After these kinds of torture, they kicked me into a cell and continued on with other forms of torture. They prepared a bucket filled with water and hung me upside down. Then they covered my mouth and shoved in the spout of a kettle filled with water. When my stomach became full of water, they dropped me onto the floor and just trampled over me. As for the electricity torture, they first asked me if I was married or not, and then,,,”

On a fine sunny day in May 1948, Yang Gyu-seok, whose hometown was Hwasun-ri in Andeok-myeon, was twisting pieces of straw into a rope with his father in order to thatch the roof of their house. He was absurdly accused of setting fire to the house of a policeman. His life, after returning home from doing labor in Osaka three days before liberation, became a walk down a path of thorns. He suffered every kind of torture, including torture with water and with electricity. He was sentenced at Gwangju District Court to ten years' imprisonment on the charge of violating Decree No. 2, and was sent to Daegu prison. When the Korean War broke out, he witnessed the scene of a carnage of prisoners. After hovering between life and death, he returned home in 1957, with two years left on his prison term. His family thought that he had died, so they had already held the first and second annual memorial ceremonies of his death. Below is his testimony. He was twenty-seven years old at the time.

“It's an unspeakable memory. I was tortured from the time I was detained at the police station. When they did the water torture, they grabbed my head and just put it into a big

bucket full of water. They took my clothes off and covered my body with a straw bag, and then they poured water on me and beat me with a club. They also put firewood behind my knees and made me kneel down, and then they trampled on my thighs. After a week, I was sent to Seogwipo police station, and I got tortured again and stayed about a month there. They tied two fingers of each my hands with electrical cords, and then sent electricity through my body, burning my skin black.”

7. After April 3rd

You may think that we have reached the end of the story. But in fact, the gale of the April 3rd events had not dissipated yet. In 1950, the Korean War broke out. The Syngman Rhee government then implemented a program of preventive arrests and custody on a nationwide scale in the name of capturing potential sympathizers with North Korea's People's Army.

Jeju Island, which had fallen out of favor with the government since the April 3rd uprising broke out, was drawn into a maelstrom again. The government carried out the preventive arrests, targeting people who were arrested in relation to the April 3rd events but had since been freed after being admonished or released from prison.

They were resentful of having suddenly being taken to prison in the past while doing nothing but fishing and farming, and now they had to go through all that hardship again; as the police made them come and go, they were reminded of their worst nightmares again.

Return to the Maelstrom

Many of those who were suddenly arrested during the preventive custody operation could not return home again. From the end of July to August in 1950, there had been extensive mass killings carried out by the military authorities. The arrested people were executed at Jeongtteureu airfield (presently Jeju International Airport) and Altteureu airfield or buried at sea. Family members hurried to try to find the dead bodies, but they were unable to do so.

A grandmother named Kim Man-su, residing in Naedo-dong in Jeju-si, lost her husband at that time and raised four daughters alone, after which she spent fifty years by herself. Since then, she has had heart problems, in which her heart starts to beat suddenly for no reason and she cannot walk well due to the pain. Here is her story.

"I still don't know what crime he was accused of and why he had to be killed. Neighbors said people who were taken at that time were mainly buried at sea or sent to prisons on the mainland, but I firmly believe that he was buried on Jeju Island, even though I never found

his body. Three months after he was captured by the military authorities, he appeared in a dream. I asked him 'I heard you were sent to the mainland; how did you come here?' He replied 'It's not the mainland, it's a ditch near the airfield'."

Three hundred and forty-four people were caught in the jurisdiction of the Moseulpo Police Station during the preventive custody operation, and two hundred and fifty-two of them were executed by the army. On August 20th, 1950, at two o'clock in the morning, people who had been confined in the warehouse of the Hallim Fishermen's Union were executed by firing squad, and at five o'clock in the morning on the same day people who had been imprisoned in the Moseulpo sweet potato storage warehouse were also shot dead. The killing site was Seotal oreum in Sangmo-ri, Daejeong-myeon, which was used as an ammunition dump by the Japanese army during the Japanese occupation. Because of the tight security by the military and the police, the bereaved families could not even collect the corpses of their parents and brothers and sisters, their husbands and wives, lying right in front of them. Six years after the slaughter happened, the bereaved families of the Hallim area collected the corpses in secret, and then buried them at the so-called Manbengdui Graveyard.

Meanwhile, the bereaved families in Moseulpo also collected a hundred and thirty-two of the corpses at last. However, they could not figure out who was who because the corpses had already decomposed. So they laid all of the corpses together to rest in the same place in Sangmo-ri, Daejeong-myeon and named the place 'One Descendant of a Hundred Forebears'. In the official documents from that time, it was recorded that as of August 4th, 1950, of those who were on the blacklist in Jeju, eight hundred and twenty people were taken into preventive custody. Some of them were war veterans.

By 1954, thousands of people had stood trial and been sentenced to prison. People who received a sentence of imprisonment were dispersed into prisons in all parts of the country. They were confined without knowing what they had done wrong and how long they would be behind bars.

People who returned alive from the prisons were considered lucky. Those who were court-martialed were sent to the prisons in Seodaemun, Mapo, Daejeon, Daegu, Mokpo, Incheon and Jeonju, but very few of them were set free at the expiration of their term, while a

considerable number of prisoners went missing after the outbreak of the Korean War.

Of those who were charged with crimes related to the April 3rd events and were transferred from Jeju to the mainland, about two hundred had a civilian trial, while about two thousand three hundred and fifty faced a martial court; most of those approximately two thousand three hundred and fifty people would never again be allowed to step foot on their native island again. Their families reported them as missing victims to ‘the National Committee for the Investigation of the Jeju April 3rd Events and Recovery of the Honor of Victims’ (the April 3rd Committee).

There is no way to find out when, where or how they died, but most of them were executed by firing squad by the South Korean soldiers right before the occupation of the North Korean army. One man who visited the prison to see his son also collected the corpse of his neighbor who died at the prison so it could be buried in his hometown after the funeral. One woman who became a widow in her twenties went to Mokpo prison carrying a coffin to collect her husband’s dead body.

Never-ending April 3rd: the Aftermath

A road is blocked whithersoever you go

Nowhere even to breathe

A cruel feudal punishment annihilating one's entire family and three generations of relatives

The years just flow on helplessly, slowly

-Kim Kyeong-hun, "System of Implication"

Were the events of April 3rd finally over? I would hope so too. However, there was something else waiting for the survivors and the bereaved families who lived through the bloody gale of the April 3rd events. It was the net cast by the ‘system of implication’, whereby one’s ideology was called into question. It brought more emotional suffering to people who had lived with nails driven into their hearts after the April 3rd events.

The labels ‘person on the blacklist’ or ‘target of security inspection’ always followed people who by good luck had returned home to their families after spending time in prison, during which they were not told the nature of their crimes. It was as though the targets of

suspicion were being openly hunted down. The targets of suspicion could not join in the work of their towns' senior associations because of the secret investigations carried out by the police, who were quietly asking the targets' friends and acquaintances about them. They could do nothing but go about their farming and fishing in silence.

Background checks! There had been talk of people getting caught in the process of being subjected to background checks. The stigma of having been spent time in prison, and of having been given 'the red label', was passed down to the next generation. Because of this, some people were not able to become public officials, some lost their chance to enter the military academy or become a military officer, and some could not even get a passport, barring them from being able to take trips overseas. Background checks were emerging as an overt social custom of filtering out people who were suspected of having 'the wrong ideas'. It was worse than asking about the medical history of a family, as it caused greater distress to the people directly involved in the checks.

In 1960, members of the National Assembly's Truth-Finding Investigation into the Civilian Slaughter visited Jeju on a fact-finding mission. One of the bereaved families disclosed in public for the first time facts about the damage done by the system of implication. "I was a student soldier and received an honorable discharge in 1951. To obtain a teacher's license, I went to the police station to prove my identity, but on my identification document was written 'child of leftism'. Such things were even written down on family registers. So I failed to obtain a license."

In 1981, the system of implication was officially eliminated, but many people believe that they are still living under its constraints.

The insane period, above all else, left scars on people's bodies and their minds. The April 3rd events had tremendous aftereffects on the people who had survived the killing sites and their families. Indeed the entire society was affected, regardless of whether people had experienced the events directly or indirectly, not to mention all those who died. Such trauma left people fighting against the memories that remained, which gnawed at their bones up until their deaths; it distressed them even in their dreams. Among the one hundred and seventy-six survivors who were reported by April 2005 to have physical and mental disorders resulting from the trauma, the majority are living handicapped lives continually dependent on medicine due to complications arising from the trauma; it stays this way until

the day they die. The following case shows us how a traumatic history continues into the present.

In the fall of 2004, many people learned of an old woman who had lived her life covering her chin with a cotton cloth; a certain picture of her moved many to tears. Jin A-young had been called 'the cotton cloth woman' since she lost her chin, which was penetrated by a bullet shot by a policeman. The old woman was in constant need of intravenous injections and lived her life as though she had aphasia.

For those still suffering from severe disorders caused by the trauma, the April 3rd events have never really ended. It is truly a tragedy of modern history.

8. What Did America Mean to Us?

Why? How could this happen? Surely, you have had many questions about the April 3rd events while you have been reading. It was a disastrous atrocity in which everything on Jeju was reduced to ashes in 1948, when life and death were worth less than a branch of camellia flowers. Why did such horrible things happen, why did the slaughter of fellow human beings continue on this island for such a long time? When the innocent people were being killed, where in the world was the nation that was obligated to protect its people? Where does the responsibility lie? The truth has not nearly been fully uncovered, but we can say now what we think and what we have learned from the facts that have come to light.

The Americans Behind the Syngman Rhee Government

In light of the facts, the Syngman Rhee government and the US military government at that time should be blamed for the scorched-earth policy adopted by the suppressing forces for the four months between November 1948 and March 1949.

Responsibility should be primarily placed upon the Rhee government and the on-site commanders of the suppressing operation. Syngman Rhee, as president, was the supreme commander of the armed forces. The ultra-right Northwest Korean Youth Association (NKYA) was given the most power to deal with the situation in Jeju, with the support of Rhee's government. The government did not try to deal with the situation in a rational manner. Not addressing the fundamental causes of the problem, they just took a hard line.

Secondly, the responsibility of the Americans cannot be overlooked. The April 3rd events began while South Korea was under the control of the US military government. We cannot but ask what, during the main events of the time, was America to us. Did they have the right to commit such uncivilized brutality?

Up until the time that the police opened fire and killed several people who had gathered in Jeju-eup to join the left-leaning March 1st ceremony on March 1st, 1947, the disturbances

incited by the communists on Jeju Island had been controlled in a relatively loose way by the US army occupying the island. After this incident, residents immediately retaliated against the police, and about one year later the bloodshed began.

The above is from a report by the US Armed Forces in Korea (USAFIK), which comprehensively analyzed the situation in Jeju in April 1949. It shows the US military government's attitude towards the March 1st incident. It also tells us that they understood that the March 1st shooting incident was the beginning of the April 3rd events, and how they regarded the shooting incident.

However, they concluded that the regular citizens who joined the assembly simply to commemorate the March 1st Independence Movement Day were 'leftists', the targets of the suppressing forces. They branded people as having 'Red ideas' or being 'the Reds' even though those people did not even know what 'ideology' meant, and were ignorant of the concept. Rather than making some effort to investigate the cause of the outbreak of April 3rd uprising and to deal with the situation in a peaceful manner, they engaged instead in a brutal crackdown. That is to say, they did not even care about their role in bringing about the indiscriminate mass slaughter.

After liberation, Jeju Island was like a microcosm of the Korean Peninsula. The autonomous activities of some people, and the suffering from the terrors and oppression of the pro-Japanese police and the ultra rightist youth union experienced in Jeju were similar to other regions in South Korea. But in Jeju's case, things were more serious. It was probably because of its historical background that the island was more severely harassed by oppression and exploitation. For this reason, resistance and rebellions were more pronounced than in other places.

America understood the background and the developmental process of the April 3rd events in their own way, but they did not take into account the mindset of the people of Jeju.

In addition, the US military still had operational command after the Republic of Korea was established on August 15th, 1948 and the US military government had been withdrawn. The provisional military advisory group of the USAFIK commanded and gained control over the Korean military. The Korean army had to follow the US advisors' directions in terms of military operations as well as in the organization, training and arming of its soldiers.

They assisted in the scorched-earth operation, provided weapons to the punitive forces including the police, and just stood by and observed the massacre that had been committed by the same people. Furthermore, they recorded the killings in details in their daily reports. Nevertheless, they just kept silent about the events that were taking place.

Every operational order of the Korean military was supposed to go through a consultation process with the US advisor ahead of its announcement.

In spite of that, the US advisors said they did not know anything about the decree announced in October 1948 by Song Yo-chan, commander of the 9th Regiment, declaring the mid-mountain villages to be hostile areas. This is an example of what their attitude was towards the slaughter at that time.

On February 20th, 1949, four members of the military advisory group of the USAFIK witnessed the execution of seventy-six suspected members of the armed civilian group, who were being stabbed to death with bamboo spears by the Civilian Security Union near Dodu-ri, Jeju-eup. The execution was being supervised by the army and the police. When they arrived at the spot, half of the suspects were already dead, and the killing of the remaining thirty-eight took place as the advisory group watched on. The US military report for that day mentions that the slaughtered included five women and a number of middle school-aged boys. So, were the young teenagers ‘suspected members of the armed civilian group’? There was no evidence that they stopped the execution. There are no accounts of them trying to save those young lives.

The US military forces that had seized control over the Korean military recorded that they just watched the mass killing, without intervening in the slaughter. This is clear evidence that the US military forces were not free from responsibility for the mass civilian slaughter.

Moreover, President Rhee commented at a cabinet meeting, “We will only receive aid from an America that recognizes the importance of the Republic of Korea once the Jeju April 3rd uprising has been completely suppressed, even if we need to take a heavy-handed approach.” It implies that the brutal crackdown was carried out in conjunction with the US military forces.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9th 1948, defines genocide as a crime by international law that is contrary to the spirit and purpose of the UN, and that its perpetrators

must be brought to justice by the civilized world.

The scorched-earth operation during the April 3rd events was an uncivilized and inhumane act of brutality. It was unacceptable by both the standards of international law and domestic law. But what does it mean that tens of thousands of innocent people were slaughtered on Jeju Island? The Jeju massacre was a blatant breach of the convention.

While so many people without any particular ideology were suffering in a hellish nightmare, what did America mean to us, standing behind Syngman Rhee?

Afterward

Entering into a Century of Peace and Human Rights

Finally, you have come out of the darkness of a long cave. You are probably heaving a long sigh of relief now. It was also very sad and painful for me to pass through this darkness. With these incredible atrocities buried underground, history flowed calmly by as if nothing had happened. However, as mentioned at the beginning, the truth of history must come into the light someday.

On the last day of October in 2003, the government finally bowed its head in acknowledgement of the souls lost during the April 3rd events.

“As president, responsible for governmental administration, I sincerely express my apologies and offer my condolences to the bereaved families and people of Jeju for the errors made by the power of the state in the past.”

President Roh admitted that the large-scale sacrifices of human life were carried out by the governmental authorities during the April 3rd events, and then made a public apology to the people of Jeju. It was the first presidential apology acknowledging past mistakes made after liberation.

This is recorded as an event that liberated the Jeju people from the ‘bridle of ideology’ which had bound them for fifty-five years, and added a new page to the history of bringing to light the dark past of modern Korean history. The apology made by the president was significant in paving the way to reveal the facts of state violence in the past, such as the slaughter of civilians in incidents before and after the Korean War, and in rectifying distorted history.

It was certainly not achieved by the power of the people of Jeju alone. Seeking truth. That is a fundamental virtue that humankind has eagerly longed for, and it is a great voyage to restore human dignity and regain peace.

It started during the April 19th Revolution in 1960 when people who had been moaning in

distress after the Korean War and were suffering under the anti-communist dictatorial regime of the Rhee government finally expressed their resentment. At that time, the April 3rd events were gradually being revealed, but it was a sign of the tough journey ahead. On-site research in Jeju, conducted by the National Assembly's Truth-Finding Investigation into the Civilian Slaughter, was concluded in a single day. In particular, when the May 16th military coup took place next year, the Jeju April 3rd events once again became a taboo topic.

The military regime, by enforcing the National Security Law and the system of implication, shackled the people of Jeju in the name of anti-communism, and distorted the history of the April 3rd events, calling them a riot instigated by the Namnodang to hinder the establishment of the Republic of Korea, and put that version of events in school textbooks.

However, the aspiration for truth and human rights never dwindled, but rather lit up like a beacon, leading to the June Pro-Democracy Movement in 1987. It became an important turning point in bringing the Jeju April 3rd events to the attention of politicians, and supported the Jeju people's earnest desire to learn the truth of the events. Since then, 'issues related to the Jeju April 3rd events' have often surfaced in election pledges and have become material for novels, poems, plays, songs and paintings.

People who experienced the April 3rd events directly and other bereaved families watching the public hearing regarding the May 18th Gwangju Democratization Movement in 1988 probably felt the same agony as the people of Gwangju; they shared similar painful memories, which had been like thorns stuck in their throats, and began to willingly show their injured bodies in order to restore their damaged reputations.

With this momentum, a memorial ceremony was held on the 41st anniversary of the April 3rd events in 1989 with civic groups playing a lead role, and at this time the Jeju April 3rd Events Research Institute was established, which has carried out much research, marking a milestone in the fact-finding movement. In addition, local newspapers and broadcasters called on the government with one voice to come face to face with the truth of the events. Entering the 1990s, the truth-seeking movement gained momentum. The Jeju Provincial Assembly set up a 'Special Committee on the April 3rd Events' and released its 'Report on the Jeju April 3rd Events', which was composed of testimonies by victims. A 'Nationwide Committee for the Investigation of the Jeju April 3rd Events and Recovery of the Honor of Victims' was also founded to carry out a fact-finding movement in Seoul.

During this process, of course, activists experienced obstacles such as the distortion of what happened during the April 3rd events and a disregard for the truth, which they needed to overcome to be successful. As previously stated, the people of Jeju had already had the power to resist for a very long time, and they finally regained their footing, even in the face of such frustrations. Yes, they really did. The desire of the Jeju people to discover the truth was never suppressed, not even by a military dictatorial regime imbued with anti-communist ideology.

Remember this date: December 16th, 1999. Coming near the end of the twentieth century, it proved to be a historical turning point. A bill entitled 'The Special Act for the Investigation of the Jeju April 3rd Events and Recovery of the Honor of Victims' (commonly called the 4.3 Special Act) was passed, rewriting the modern history of Korea.

I will never forget the tears shed on that day, the tears of people who cried out, saying "At last, I can cry freely." Those people who lived through the central years of that gale of events have experienced pounding hearts every time they heard a banging noise, and elderly women have had to live in shame due to the fact that their husbands died on the mountain. They were the ones who never even tried to talk about the outrageous wounds that they had suffered. They were the ones could not even scream out in mortal fright. It is said that the Korean-Japanese who had left Jeju during the April 3rd events were jubilant.

In October 2003, four years after the bill had passed, the 'Investigative Report on the April 3rd Events' was published, propelled by the 'Committee for the Investigation of the Jeju April 3rd Events and Recovery of the Honor of Victims (Chaired by the Prime Minister)'. The report, which revealed in detail the reality of the past infringement of human rights in accordance with the aim of the Special Act, was the fruition of the enormous efforts of the committee over the previous four years to reveal the truth, and was regarded in addition as a monumental step in setting the story straight. This story is also based on that report.

On Another Spring Day

During those atrocious years, sad camelia flowers bloomed and fell off, only to bloom and fall off again. The lives that were lost were like those flowers. The living now sing songs of requiem for those poor people. And they pray that those sad souls will be revived through

armfuls of wildflowers and have their tears dried up during spring days.

Now, please come here

Please feel free to come here

People remaining alive, unable to die

Adjust our collars

People, unable to be alive

Falling down with a puff of dirt

They've left to go far away

Please stop over like the wind

Even tears were sinful for years

Even words created blood

And blood begot blood during those fierce years

(omitted)

Stranded between this world and the next

Flowing souls together

Please come here altogether

Leaving sighs on the mountain

Throwing tears into the sea

Like armfuls of wildflowers, please come here

-Kim Su-yal, "Like Armfuls of Wildflowers"

Yes. Jeju was the direct target of persecution in modern Korean history. Riding over the high waves of foreign powers, the islanders inherited an ability to adapt to nature and a spirit of resistance to foreign pressure. In this way, they were able to maintain a noble community on their stunning island. Gathering strength from each other and being self-reliant as a community were their means of survival on the island, and also served as the motive power that helped them quickly overcome whatever troubles they encountered on the island.

The state of affairs on the island, which had been achieved in such a way, however, was destroyed by the gale of the April 3rd events. If the islanders had surrendered to the intensive

oppression at the beginning, their resistance on April 3rd, 1948 would not have happened. If they had gone along with the election that was only held in the south, even though it meant that the country would be divided into two nations, that bloody wind would never had swept over them.

Isn't it the power of the people to stand up like trampled wild grass when they fall down? The uprising on April 3rd led to bloodshed, but we should not forget that it began as the manifestation of a resistance which sought to maintain basic values that ought to be enjoyed by all human beings. How could they just stand by and watch while their self-respect was being completely trampled upon?

Jiri Mountain was called the 'disobedient mountain' or 'treasonous mountain' in legends because it was the only one of the five major mountains that did not respond when Lee Sung-gae, the first king of the Joseon Dynasty, ascended the throne. In the same way, Halla Mountain was disobedient after liberation. Standing up against the authorities at that time was a representation of the refusal to accept national division, and the longing for an ethical society. It had been realized that a divided nation could lead to the tragedy of fratricidal war.

We are now opening up a new era in the drive towards unification. It is believed that the spirit of resistance of the April 3rd events will serve as a foundation for the unification of the only divided nation in today's world, helping to overcome the scars of the past that shimmer like a spring haze. As a part of the people's self-directed movement towards unification, the day will come when Jeju will demand that somebody take historical responsibility, being in a middle position between North and South Korea.

To repeat, the April 3rd events are a part of the history of a living people. It is not past history but a continuing history, of which the greater part is yet to be unearthed, and it is also a sad task that needs to be tackled by the living, namely, us. Furthermore, America must be brought to account for those events that it is still keeping silent about.

Baby-faced young men, even those who were not yet twenty years old, were only told the nature of their crimes and the length of their sentences after they had been taken to prison. Those people who went missing at that time, where did they go? It was obviously unlawful and an act of murder, the torturing and killing of prisoners without trial, which should never be accepted in a democratic state.

Where was the justice in the midst of this massacre? We would question ourselves if there

were nothing but barbaric humans during that time. It should be known that in the middle of this tragedy, some people managed to retain their humanity, and that some people listen to their consciences with warm human love while the fratricidal killing was being carried out during the April 3rd events, just as Oskar Schindler saved many lives from the Holocaust. Some righteous policemen and soldiers struggled to save people on the verge of death.

Mun Hyeong-sun, Chief of the Moseulpo-Seongsanpo Police Department, saved a number of people's lives by refusing to follow the orders given to firing squads in the middle of the mass killings, and Regimental General Kim Ik-yal attempted to negotiate peace in order to prevent further bloodshed, as did minister Jo Nam-su. Some survivors still remember the names of the policemen who saved their lives, though these names are unknown to the public.

By this point, we have come to know that humans are indeed our hope, even as we battle demons that seem to signal the end of the world, by discovering a seed of hope connecting the past to the present.

It was the fate of Jeju Island to be continually harassed and used as a stepping-stone by the march of foreigners as they crossed continents and oceans, but now its fate has changed with the passage of time. Thanks to its location, the island has gained new meaning in becoming the base of a peace movement. While suffering through a stifling half century of mass slaughter rare even in world history, the words 'peace' and 'human rights' sounded like things one would only ever be able to hear in faraway countries. The more oppressed a people are, the stronger their craving for justice. For that reason, the desire for peace and human rights among the people of Jeju has become strong, even overflowing.

What Jeju Island confronted during that time, with a foreign power occupying the peninsula in order to protect 'us', is a symbol of the fierce spirit of the age. This is the reason why the spirit of the April 3rd events should be revived, not just as a remembrance of the past, and why we need to continue to seek out the truth of past events which still lie buried underground.

How can we find our identity without knowing our past? How can we hope for our society to brighten when we neglect the darkness of the past? The April 3rd events, even today, awaken the memories of people who have maintained silence for so long.

We saw the fate of the people who lived through those times in the remains found at Billemot Cave in 1989 of the mother and her baby that must have suckled at an empty breast

in vain, through the remains of eleven people found at Darangshui Cave after 44 years lying undiscovered, and through the rice bowls, brass spoons, black rubber shoes, pots and small relics like buttons, which were found scattered inside Kunneupgue Cave in Donggwang-ri. They serve as reminders of the people who so tragically disappeared at that time. Do you know how many people still keep their mouths shut about these events, and how many remains are waiting to be found in the darkness of caves yet to be drilled into and opened up?

Were there any flowers that were not turned blood red, any *Eisholtzia splendens*, *Stellera chamaejasme*, *Wideword parnassia*, that were left untainted, scattered across the fields next to Jeju's oreums? Even the wretched beauty of a bunch of pure white flowers falling all at once from a snowbell tree is a reminder of the mass killings of those days.

It is a sad story, of people being chased between basalt stone walls on the island, blocked in on all sides by the sea. Although the people of Jeju wanted to stop struggling against the painful memories, they were unable to. Can the living forget about the deaths of the disappeared, those who vanished behind them as they walked together? People who experienced the events blame the state of affairs for their deaths yet also think that they were able to live better lives thanks to them.

In the twenty-first century, when we are able to get any information we desire with the click of a button, following the barbaric days of the twentieth century, terrible wars are still occurring all over the world. The time is now ripe for the words 'slaughter' and 'barbarism' to disappear.

A grandmother, who passed away after suffering a lifetime of heartbreak with her two sons buried in her heart, said some time ago "We have lived like this because we were born at the wrong time. It should not happen again, not to our children's generation. They should live happily."

The April 3rd events speak to us. The truth of history can never be locked away, even if there are those who attempt to do so, and history is for the future. The history of humanity continues and their lives also go on. I believe that is the case. Wounds suffered should be uncovered, and those wounds should be exposed to the sun to be disinfected. Then they can heal completely.

Jeju Island greets spring again. These are real spring days when yellow and pink flowers

are in full bloom. Green spring grasses are now sprouting up beside small stone graves in the sunken field of Buckchon-ri where young children were buried, and provide comfort to the bloodstained earth. Do you understand now? Since that time, the feeling on Jeju has not been the same. While countless corpses were floating in the sea and so much heavy snow was swirling around Halla Mountain that people could not see an inch ahead of them, there was nowhere to be found that was free of footprints left by people running helter-skelter to try and survive, with nowhere safe to go anywhere on the island.

Now it is time to rewrite the history of peace and human rights through the power of the unhappy past. Truly, the time has come to end the songs of sadness and begin ones that sing of radiant April days. You, who are young, are on the road. Yes, in the end you will realize that spring days on Jeju Island are not just the spring days they appear to be.