

Gwangju Signifies Peace

Women's role in May 18 Democratization Movement and Gwangju Spirit

Lee Youn-Jung

Member of the Commission for
Democratization Movement
Activists' Honor Restoration and
Compensation

Contents

Introduction

- 1 May 18 Democratization Movement and Songbaekhoi
- 2 Women's role in May 18 Democratization Movement
- 3 May Uprising by the women who survived May 18 Democratization Movement

- 4 Culture of peace activities by May Women carrying on the Gwangju Spirit: 'May Women embracing peace'
- 5 Gwangju Spirit found in the women of May 18 Democratization Movement: The archetype of Korean people's life and peace

Conclusion

In the time of revolutionary change in human history, women across the world, facing a social crisis, have persistently stood up against the forces to exterminate democracy built on the foundation of human rights and right to life, taking the initiative in creating a turning point in history. Amid the violence, decimation, and suppression by the state power, women have waged an unrelenting struggle for life, freedom, and peace throughout the world, whether in Palestine, Argentina, Liberia, Bolivia, Ireland, or South America. Furthermore, the great struggle is being conceived in women's bodies and minds to realize universal values of humanity; peace, human rights, and democracy.

In the May 18 Democratization Movement, a watershed moment for democracy in South Korea's modern history, women guarded justice and defended democracy with the invincible spirit of resistance to save the lives of the citizens when the military¹ committed massacre. The brutality was the attempt by the military formed by the national division following the end of the Second World War, the subsequent Korean War, and the geopolitical, military hegemony in the Cold War to seize power. Against this backdrop, women served a pivotal role, linking the groups participating in the Movement and sharing the status of it with them. They created a self-governing community to share meals as well as life and even risked their lives while the military besieged the outskirts of Gwangju. At the center of the May 18 Democratization Movement was 'Songbaekhoi,' a women's group formed in November 1978. Songbaekhoi and its members with a progressive mindset set up a leadership headquarters for the Movement at Gwangju YWCA and fought against the military in an organized and systematic manner. The ten days of the Democratization Movement to realize a united world was adorned with the sacrifice and struggle by unnamed mothers, citizen broadcasters, female workers, female college students, junior high and high school students, and female citizens filled with righteous indignation.

1 The name was given to distinguish it from the military authorities during the Park Chung-hee administration. The military took over the political power through the multi-phased coup, including the military coup on December 12 and the suppression of the May 18 Democratization Movement after the death of President Park Chung-hee in 1979 by military elites who joined Hanahoi primarily made of the 11th and 12th classes of the Korea Military Academy.

However, their struggle came to an end, claiming hundreds of lives by the soldiers' guns and swords, leaving thousands of people imprisoned or injured, and causing massive damage.² It looked as if a defeat, but the defeat that seemed unable to be healed by anything and the experience and memory of the May 18 Democratization Movement served as a driving force for the progress of history in the pitch-dark days since then. On the massacre scene, the defeat and pains and wounds were planted as a seed of Gwangju Spirit and started to shoot out a bud of hope. Through the people's relentless struggle to find facts and remember, the defeat came back to life as May 18 Democratization Movement.

In the Gwangju Spirit and gender justice manifested by women during May 18 Democratization Movement, the archetype of life and peace in Korea's traditional tale is found. Furthermore, it shares its foundation with the peace movement under the Japanese colonial rule for the Korean people's independence and self-determination. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the May 18 Democratization Movement, we are faced with the call of the time to understand the history of women's struggle from a fresh perspective and create values from it. We are witnessing the rise of a global, even universal neo-totalitarian regime as the neo-liberalistic fourth industrial revolution, and the resultant scientific and technological convergence is moving onto a new level. Now is Gwangju's time to actively pursue Gwangju Spirit, which has evolved as a universal value of humanity, to overcome violence and conflicts prevailing throughout the world and enjoy a life where all forms of life are celebrated and live in harmony and how to practice the Spirit.

2 In total 5,807 cases (according to the categorization by the Act on the Honor Restoration of and Compensation to Persons Related to Democratization Movements: 161 deaths, 113 deaths after injury, 78 missing persons, 2,504 injured persons, 1,217 injured while in detention or roundup, 1,610 detained or arrested, others 62 persons, and classified 62 persons).

1. May 18 Democratization Movement and Songbaekhoi

1) The founding of Songbaekhoi and its burgeoning

Songbaekhoi³ is Korea's first women's organization for democracy formed by women in Gwangju Chonnam area in November 1978, the late Yushin⁴ period when the people's demand for the end to dictatorship and for democratization rose exponentially. Founding members were those with a progressive social awareness coming from all walks of life, including family members of those who participated in the June 3 Resistance Movement,⁵ the members of the National League for Democratic Youth Students (Minchunghakryun),⁶ the Educational Indicators incident,⁷ and fired teachers, wives of democracy activists, wives of those who fought against the Yushin regime, teachers, nurses, doctors, youth activists, and other professional groups as well as female workers. They took part in the establishment of Songbaekhoi with the desire for democratization and women's liberation.

Women's organizations with progressive social awareness⁸

Yeo Seong-sook (director of Mokpo Medical Clinic), Cho A-ra (president of YWCA), Lee Ae-shin (manager of YWCA), Kim Kyung-cheon (YWCA program secretary), Hong Hee-yoon (novelist), Lee Yoon-jung (YWCA secretary, youth Activist), Jung Yoo-ah (Soksan High School teacher, YWCA secretary), Lim Young-hee (secretary at the Center for Modern Cultural Studies, theatre company Gwangdae), Kim Eun-kyung (Christian youth activist), Kim Young-sim (nurse), Park Kyung-hee (nurse), Kim Gwi-rye (employee at Kyerim Credit Union), Yoon Young-sook (teacher), Jeong Hwang-hee (teacher), Park In-sook (teacher), Kim Yeo-ok (teacher), Kang Sung-ja (teacher), Park Doo-ri (preschool teacher), Kim Hyun-joo (Yangseo Cooperative secretary), Jeon Sam-soon (Ilshin Textile worker), Hwang Soo-jin (YWCA Credit Union employee), Jeong Hyun-soon (KEPCO), Mokpo Yeondong Church youth group members, youth group members of Naju area, and youth group members of Gangjin area

3 Named by poet Moon Myung-ran. The name means 'women to rise independently with the tenacious spirit like a pine tree.'

4 President Park Chung-hee who had long been in power since 1961 declared an unconstitutional martial law and dissolved the National Assembly, in addition to the emergency measure of suspending the Constitution to secure permanent power. Under such circumstances, the regime held a referendum according to an unconstitutional procedure and suspended the 3rd Administration's Constitution on December 27, 1972. It was a grand blunder by the regime and revealed the dark times in Korea's democracy history.

5 June 3 Resistance was a movement against the Korea-Japan negotiations. The Park Chung-hee administration declared martial law on June 3 and suppressed protests against a summit between Korea and Japan.

Wives of democracy activists and family members of the imprisoned

Kim Young-ae (husband: Professor Song Ki-sook), Kim Sook-ja (husband: poet Moon Byung-ran), Lee Gwi-im (husband: the late Yoon Young-kyu), Kim Seo-woon (husband: Park Haeng-sam), Lee Myung-sook (husband: poet Kim Joon-tae), Lee Kyung-ran (husband: Park Seok-moo), Jeong Geum-ja (husband: Yoon Kwang-jang), Yoon Jung-ae (husband: Lim Choo-seop), Moon Jung-hee (husband: Professor Lim Young-cheon), Na Hye-young (husband: rev. Kang Shin-seok), Kim Geum-an (husband: the late Park Man-chul), Yoon Kyung-ja (husband: Park Hyung-sun), Lee Hyang-ran (husband: Kim Un-gi), the late Yi So-ra (husband: Lee Kang), Lee Jung (Lee Kang's younger sister), Jeong Hyun-ae (husband: Kim Sang-yoon), Seon So-nyeo (husband: Lee Yang-hyun), Kim Jong-hee (husband: Moon Deok-hee), Jeong Hee-ok (husband: Jung Sang-yong), Lee Young-ja (husband: Yoon Kang-ok), Noh Young-sook (elder sister of the late Roh Joon-hyun), eight members of Gangjin-eup Church, and six members of Mokpo Yeondong Church

To become a member of Songbaekhoi back then meant to become a subject of government inspection or even to be put at the risk of detention under the name of Emergency Measure Number Nine⁹ or the Anti-Communism Law.¹⁰ Still, women's aspiration for democratization did not waver.

Songbaekhoi studied and discussed Korea's modern and contemporary history, the history of women's movement, labor issues, rural issues, nuclear issues, environment and pollution issues, parasitic tourism, and other social matters through meetings at each branch, sharing the understanding of the time. They raised funds to run Songbaekhoi through fundraising activities, and ceramic art exhibitions, building a foundation for financial independence. Songbaekhoi had a broad perspective to include social movements

6 For the abolition of the Yushin dictatorship, students activists from Seoul National University and many other universities around the country carried out a protest against the dictatorship on April 3, 1974. The Park Chung-hee military regime, in order to prevent the anti-government struggle from spreading further, falsely accused those related to the National League for Democratic Youth Students (Minchunghakryun), 1,024 persons in total as the followers of communism, attempting to overthrow the government and detained 180 persons of them. Eight involved in the Inhyuk Party incident were executed, and the rest were sentenced to prison.

7 In June 1978, 11 professors of Chonnam National University released a statement demanding democratization of educational institutions, reinstatement of expelled students, and the abolition of the national charter of education and the Yushin Constitution. As a consequence of this 'Our Educational Indicators' incident, professor Sung Nae-woon and professor Lee Hyo-jae were dismissed and put in prison.

8 Refer to Appendix.

from the early days and considered ways to band together, supporting activists wanted by the authorities and prisoners of conscience.

Songbaekhoi formed and maintained close, organic relations with youth and students movement groups leading the social movement, Christian movement groups including progressive catholic priests, pastors, ministers, cultural movement groups, and female activists groups (female farmers, female workers, Christian women). Their influences were growing as their activities were interwoven with organizations and groups such as the Center for Modern Cultural Studies, Deulbul Night School, Baekje Night School, theatre company Gwangdae, Yangseo Cooperative, Nokdoo Bookstore, the Young Laborers' Catholic Association, the Farmers' Catholic Association, NCC, YWCA, and YMCA, and democracy activists, including Hwang Sok-yong, Yoon Han-bong, Jeon Hong-joon who participated in the June 3 Resistance Movement, Kim Nam-ju, and Lee Kang. In particular, to organize YWCA-based labor and agricultural movement in the field, Lee Yoon-jung and Jeong Yoo-ah were dispatched as staff and Hong Hee-yoon, the president of Songbaekhoi, and Lim Young-hee, the secretary, took part in as a director and a member of the Agricultural part, respectively. As seen in those examples, Songbaekhoi evolved and expanded to include more organizations. It developed into a professional social movement group as it dedicated itself to raising awareness of independent and self-reliant life among women and preparing for the democracy struggle against the dictatorship.

2) The role of Songbaekhoi in the May 18 Democratization Movement

The women of Songbaekhoi watched the political situation closely and continued their activities with a belief in democratization and strong affinity under the Yushin regime, which had become even more repressive toward the end of the dictatorship. Songbaekhoi members

9 This refers to a special measure that the President may take in his or her authority as stipulated in Article 53 of the Yushin Constitution as revised in 1972. Then-President of Korea, Park Chung-hee exercised this measure and hence had the authority to temporarily suspend the constitutionally guaranteed freedom and rights of the people. The emergency measure granted the most powerful authority to the President in the history of the Constitution in Korea. In total, nine measures were promulgated since the first measure on January 8, 1974.

10 An unjust, political law enacted by the Park Chung-hee military regime in 1961. Democracy activists were detained, indicted, and executed pursuant to the Anti-Communism Law.

foresaw egregious persecution and suppression of the people with the collapse of the Yushin regime following the assassination of Park Chung-hee, and the military's rise to power and, with each member decisively determined, came May 1980. As an emergency martial¹¹ was declared on May 17, and massive preventive detention was introduced against activists and activist groups, Songbaekhoi members joined in the May 18 Democratization Movement as a vanguard organization against the military.

Songbaekhoi fulfilled several roles during the May 18 Democratization Movement. First, Songbaekhoi set up YWCA resistance leadership. The women of Songbaekhoi mobilized a wide array of movement groups and organizations to engage them in the Democratization Movement as the contact with democracy activists who had been arrested or on the run with the emergency martial declared on May 17, and the military continued to commit massacre while whereabouts of those activists were still unknown. Women produced hand-written posters, statements, Fighters' Circular, and black ribbons and prepared peace communication at the leadership headquarters.

Hong Hee-yoon, Jeong Yoo-ah, Lee Yoon-jeong, Lim Young-hee and Jeong Hyun-ae of Songbaekhoi joined forces with theatre company Gwangdae, Yangseo Cooperative, Deulbul Night School, Baekje Night School, and JOC to establish the YWCA resistance leadership at YWCA and solidified their determination for resistance at any cost along with Yoon Sang-won, Jeong Sang-yong, Jeong Hae-jik, Lee Yang-hyeon, Kim Young-cheol, Yoon Kang-ok, and Park Hyo-sun at the Provincial Hall leadership. The YWCA resistance community was part of an independent, creative, absolute community where Christian clergy groups, cultural movement groups, women's movement groups, youth activists groups, and night school movement groups formed a network centered around Songbaekhoi standing up against the state violence.

11 Chun Doo-hwan, Roh Tae-woo, Hwang Yeo-shi, Choo Young-bok and others of the military who had come to power through the military coup on December 12, 1979, expanded an emergency martial to the entire nation from May 17, 1980, in order to contain the aspiration for democratization among the politicians from the opposition, the labor community, and students. The military, led by Chun Doo-hwan, arrested Kim Dae-jung, Kim Young-sam, and Kim Jong-pil strictly regulated their political activities and even forced them to retire from politics. They went on to define the citizens who participated in the Democratization Movement as rioters and suppressed and killed them mercilessly with guns and swords.

The YWCA resistance leadership carried out their struggle, leading the resistance group as opposed to those who insisted that weapons be returned. In the afternoon of May 26, 1980, the military issued an ultimatum. After the 5th mass rally, the Provincial Hall leadership and YWCA leadership had the final meeting at the YWCA Auditorium, Soshimdang, in order to discuss countermeasures to the ultimatum. They refreshed their determination to fight to the death, saying, 'Let us fight till the end! Let us prove that we are not rioters with our death. Let us defend Gwangju with our lives!' and decided to have Yoon Sang-won, the spokesperson for the Democratization Movement, hold a press conference for the foreign press to impress their determination on history. The last press briefing by Yoon was covered by the foreign press and is available even today thanks to the decision by the Citizens' Army, who resolved to fight to the death.

Second, Songbaekhoi produced hand-written posters,¹² statements, and black ribbons¹³ needed for the citizens' struggle and prepared and distributed Fighters' Circular, planning and organizing peace communication and leading the collective efforts meticulously. From the early days of the Movement, Songbaekhoi gathered together with the key figures of Gwangju's social movements. At 5:30 PM on May 24, Jeong Yoo-ah, Lee Yoon-jung, Jeong Hyun-ae, Yoon Sang-won, Lee Yang-hyun, Jeong Sang-yong, Park Hyo-sun, Park Yong-jun, and Kim Sang-jip were gathered at the YWCA Auditorium, Soshimdang and set up an executive leadership for the citizens' mass rally in order to organize the mass rally effectively. The executive leadership was composed of the planning part (Lee Yang-hyun, Jeong Sang-yong, Yoon Kang-ok), the execution part (Jeong Yoo-ah, Lee Yoon-jung, Jeong Hyun-ae), and the PR & communication part (Park Yong-jun, Yoon Sang-won).

The military spread groundless rumors and flyers that Gwangju's citizens were commies, and the Democratization Movement was a rampage by rioters or infiltration by North Korean spies, creating tensions and inciting divisions among the citizens. Against

12 Large-scale posters put on the poster boards on the street, and building walls for propaganda during the Democratization Movement. Those posters contained arguments made by the citizens, guidelines for security and order, news, and the struggle's direction.

13 Those ribbons were created to commemorate the victims and make the citizens' massacre by the military known to the residents on the outskirts of Gwangju and worn by tens of thousands of citizens.

such repression, Songbaekhoi formulated a rationale for peace communication to promote patriotism and confidence in defending democracy among the citizens as they prepared hand-written posters and statements. On May 25, Lee Yoon-jung made an immediate appeal in the letter to the Choi Kyu-hah interim government in response to the fliers then-President Choi distributed from the air even without having a helicopter land. From the early morning, tens of thousands of citizens gathered around the fountain in front of the Provincial Hall at a mass rally and conducted the burning ceremony of Chun Doo-hwan in resistance to the national security frame used by the military. They brought publishing the Fighters' Circular previously done by Deulbul Night School over to YWCA and changed the name into the Democratic Citizens' Circular and printed the 9th Circular. Approximately 20 persons responsible for printing, obtaining resources and materials, circulation, and writing worked on publishing the Circular and produced the 12th Circular, which was distributed 30,000 to 40,000 copies per day. To the citizens of Gwangju and Chonnam area who were completely isolated from the outside world with no media including newspapers available, the Fighters' Circular and hand-written posters were the only media available.

When the 11th Paratroopers Brigade's excessive use of force and mass shooting resulted in mass bloodshed, they made black ribbons to appease victims' souls and let the citizens living on the outskirts of Gwangju know the deaths of innocent people and distributed to tens of thousands of citizens. Lim Young-hee recited the poem "Dear Democracy!" at a mass rally on the 24th, turning the rally into a sea of tears. At the mass rally on the 25th, Hong Hee-yoon recited 'the letter to the Gwangju citizens on behalf of women, serving the role of a propaganda squad.

Thirdly, they were responsible for securing funds and goods and supplies, fundraising, food supply, making bottle bombs, organizing a kitchen team, identifying the injured, cleaning corpse, and purchasing coffins. From the early days of the struggle, the women

of Songbaekhoi made organized and swift responses. Hong Hee-yoon, the president of Songbaekhoi, provided financial support for the Movement, utilizing funds for resistance set aside from ceramic art exhibitions and her own household budget to be braced for a prolonged struggle. With these funds, Songbaekhoi made black ribbons, purchased cotton to wash corpses and coffins, as well as soybean paste and rice to cook for the Citizens' Army, and prepared the mass rally. The funds were also used to support those on the wanted list and the imprisoned, help the children of the victims and the injured with their livelihood and tuitions.

Last but not least, Songbaekhoi consistently maintained its determination for resistance. The military mobilized all sorts of media to isolate Gwangju from other regions and cause division among the activists, framing the Democratization Movement as a regional incident instigated by 'spies, the rebellious, or North Korea,' citing the need to calm the emergency or the threat to the national security. The military spread canards through the statements by the martial law commander and the President and even fabricated a poisonous needle incident at the Provincial Hall where the resistance leadership was. The military tried to subdue the Movement early by fostering extreme tension, operating the suppression frame based on the national security rationale, and keeping it from spreading throughout the county. The resistance community at YWCA confronted the national security frame used by the military with 'patriotism and democratization' argument. Such a patriotism and democratization frame pursued by the resistance community is found in the phrases used in the flyers, including the official issues of Fighters' Circular and the statements presented in the mass rallies and the slogans captured in the hand-written posters. Such consistent beliefs and determination served as the organizational foundation and rationale for creating the Democratic Citizens and Students' Resistance Committee on May 25 amid the conflict between those who were for resistance and those for settlement. The YWCA resistance community and the Democratic Citizens and Students' Resistance Committee fought against injustice till the end and defended justice with their resistance and struggle even to death.

2. Women's role in May 18 Democratization Movement

1) Unknown mothers in Gwangju who led the efforts to build a united world¹⁴

The ones who played a pivotal role in building the great 'absolute community'¹⁵ were the unknown mothers in Gwangju who guarded the Citizens' Army as if they were their own children. Infuriated by the atrocity committed by the Paratroopers, those mothers encouraged students and offered them bread and drinks, and hid any students on the run without asking even a single question. The merchants and residents alongside roads put a bucket and water basin filled with water outside, picked up stones and gravels, and carried them on handcarts and wooden bowls. That was their way of participating in the protest. As the Citizens' Army took on an armed struggle from May 21, the supporting activities got more organized. With an increasing number of corpses, those mothers made face masks, collected money and rice from each community district, and made jumeok bab, loading it on the trucks of protesters. In the Yangdong market, the Daein market, the Sansoo market, and the Hakdong market, female merchants did not spare any support for the protestors.

In neighboring cities of Hwasun, Muan, Gangjin, and Mokpo, citizens put their hearts together. In Mokpo, where a mass rally started on May 22, female street peddlers on the dockside collected and cooked rice, carried it on the cart to the protestors to encourage them. In Hwasun, Yeongam, Naju, and Haenam, housewives offered meals to the Citizens' Army and supported them with jumeok bob and drinks.

2) Peace communication, pulling at citizens' heartstrings

In the early days of the Democratization Movement, women did street broadcast, proving to be great firebrands and tugging at citizens' heartstrings.¹⁶ In the early morning of the 20th, the body of a schoolgirl was found with her breasts cut off in front of Gwangju Jeil High School, and women got mikes and amplifiers to go out on

14 The world where all the people live in harmony based on the Gwangju Spirit manifested by the citizens during the Democratization Movement.

15 A community that shares blood and meals and transcends life and death in a life-threatening situation.

16 Jeon Choon-sim (detained), Cha Myung-sook (detained).

street broadcast. They moved throughout the city to let people know about the martial troops' atrocity and urge them to take part in the struggle. In the afternoon of the 21st, they went on street broadcast, carrying two bodies at the forefront of vehicle demonstration. In the early morning when the Provincial Hall was retaken, the desperate report¹⁷ that the martial troops were entering the Hall pierced the silence of the night and resonated throughout the city. The broadcast message is still vivid in the memory of Gwangju citizens. Many women witnessed the brutality of the martial troops and, out of rage, got on a broadcasting truck and went around the city to appeal to the citizens. Most of the women who led peace communication were imprisoned and subject to severe physical and emotional torture.

17 Park Young-soon (detained).

3) Activities of female workers

In the late 1970s, female factory workers in manufacturing were active in organizing unions and the labor movement. Many female workers were employed by large business establishments such as Ilshin Textile, Chonnam Textile, and Rocket Batteries, and labor movement capability strengthened in those business sites as well as at small and medium businesses including Chonnam Jesa and Namhae Fishnet through small group study and JOC activities centered around field workers, enhancing solidarity between the labor and schools. On May 18, when the martial law was implemented throughout the country, a training session hosted by YWCA Social Issues part was held on the democratic union for female workers in the middle management and another session on assessing the March struggle for wages at Honam Electricity from 9 AM.

Organized female workers collectively joined the vehicle demonstration by taxi drivers in the evening of the 20th, and on the 22nd afterward, female factory workers participated in the Democratization Movement in great numbers and rode together with the Citizens' Army in the vehicle demonstration in Gangjin, Haenam,

and Muan to receive weapons. Female workers of Ilshin Textile went to Hwasun, Gangjin, and Haenam with the Citizens' Army to support protests in those cities. Women workers in their workwear got on buses and trucks and took to the street, demanding 'the release of Kim Dae Jung and the guarantee of the three basic labor rights.' When there was a shortage of coffins as the mass shooting in front of the Provincial Hall claimed more lives on the 21st, female workers went out to Gwangju's neighboring cities to get coffins. The kitchen team who stayed inside the Provincial Hall till the last day was made of YWCA members. Lee Jung, Choi Jung-im, Kim Soon-ee, and most of other women workers from the Catholic Youth Workers Movement (JOC) left the Provincial Hall in the early morning while the engagement was going on to meet the sorrowful morning in the upper room in the bell tower of Dongmyung Church. The student from the Citizens' Army who covered and led them to the church was shot to death on his way back to the Provincial Hall.

4) Brave junior high and high school girls

The students of Joongang Girls' High School were outraged by the atrocity, and indiscriminate massacre by the martial troops held a protest on the school campus around 11 AM on May 19, and the staff of the student council of Gwansan Girls High School resolved to go on a march in protest against the martial troops. Junior high and high school girls witnessed the martial troops' cruelty during the protest and willingly donated their blood. They volunteered to deliver water and beverages and meals to the Citizens' Army and cook for the Army at the Provincial Hall. They even went on a truck for street demonstration, shouting 'the martial law to be lifted, the dictator to step down.'

5) Female workers of bars and night clubs filled with righteous indignation

From the afternoon of the 19th, when the citizens' protest came in full swing, the female workers working for bars and night clubs prepared soaked towels and toothpaste and distributed them to the citizens who were dropping tears because of the tear gas. As the 7th Special Warfare Brigade was sent to Gwangju on the 18th and suppressed the citizens with clubs and swords, more people got injured, and from the afternoon of May 20, the engagement with the martial troops began, flooding hospitals in Gwangju with the injured. On the 21st, the military randomly opened fire at the citizens confronting the military in front of the Provincial Hall. With more patients with gunshot wounds requiring an emergency operation, hospitals ran out of the blood and could not perform surgery. As the news spread, citizens who wanted to donate their blood formed queues in front of the Red Cross Hospital, Christian Hospital, Chonnam National University Hospital, Chosun University Hospital, and the female entertainment workers in Geum-dong and Hwangguem-dong took the lead. The women working at a bar named Abangung next to the Provincial Hall ran to Sangmugwan¹⁸ where the bodies were placed, washed the bodies, and looked after the bodies and the incense altar. After the Democratization Movement, they were rounded up and investigated by the police for encouraging the protestors.

18 Where the bodies of the victims were placed during the May 18 Democratization Movement. Those women laid the bodies and paid tribute to the victims here.

3. May Uprising by the women who survived May 18 Democratization Movement

1) Letting people know that happened in Gwangju

The military who suppressed the May 18 Democratization Movement distorted the truths about the bloodshed in Gwangju. Many women who joined Movement were taken to the martial law command and interrogated for various allegations. The frustration the Songbaekhoi members felt from the lost Movement was no different from death.

Jeong Yoo-ah, Lee Yoon-jung, and Lim Young-hee verified that each other was alive in the early morning and soon after were put on the wanted list. Cho A-ra, the president of YWCA, Lee Ae-shin, a manager of YWCA, Jeong Hyun-ae, and her younger sister Jeong Hyun-soon, were detained with their four relatives. All were dubbed as rioters. Lee Young-ja (husband: Yoon Kang-ok), Jeong Hee-ok (husband: Jung Sang-yong), and other women whose husbands were put in prison sustained their and their children's livelihood by selling fruits and dried anchovy. The most important task at hand was to identify and help the victims, the injured, the imprisoned, and the wanted. To let people know what really happened in Gwangju was as urgent and critical.

Hong Hee-yoon, the president of Songbaekhoi, took the lead in formulating a plan. Many nameless benefactors extended their helping hands in raising funds or preparing hideouts. The women, who had escaped detention and search, sold socks, underwear, and bug repellent to contribute to fundraising. They actively marketed woodcut prints by Hong Sung-dam and held woodcut exhibitions to comfort the citizens full of despair, and rage, letting people know the truth of May. The funds raised through these efforts were used to buy food for the families of the imprisoned, including Kim Sung-jeon, Jeong Sang-yong, Yoon Young-gyu, and Lee Yang-hyun, and cover school tuitions and educational insurance. Songbaekhoi, led by Kim Young-shim, also supported Kim Young-cheol, who became mentally ill due to the injury and torture until the last day of his life. Lim Young-hee who fled to Seoul, tape-recorded the statement recited at the mass rally in front of the Provincial Hall and the Fighters' Circular

with the help of Jeon Yong-ho and Kim Sun-chool at the house of Hwang Sun-jin, a student activist from Seoul National University and distributed to colleges and workers throughout the country in the early July 1980 while she was on the wanted list. Hong Hee-yoon, the president of Songbaekhoi and Lim Young-hee, alongside Kim Yang-rae and Hwang Bong-il, prepared the list of those in prison and the wounded by area and gathered trial records of those who were detained in Sangmudae. These records and the list were handed over to Cho Bong-hoon and Jeong Yong-hwa by Hong Hee-yoon to be used in writing "Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Times." Jeon Hong-joon, a doctor at Christian Hospital, collected autopsy reports and medical reports from Chonnam National University Hospital, the Red Cross Hospital, and Christian Hospital and delivered them to Lim Young-hee and then to Lee Tae-ho of the Justice & Peace Committee of the Seoul Catholic Diocese, breaking through the surveillance. All these were with a clear awareness of the risk of being detained. Hong Hee-yoon, who took care of a wide range of matters and activities after the Democratization Movement, was named a fundraiser for the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan in the Sinhan Minbo incident as Cho Bong-hoon was incarcerated. This signaled the National Security Service investigation to drag Hong Hee-yoon into the case as Songbaekhoi was viewed as the key organization behind the Democratization Movement.

Those who helped prepare hideouts for the wanted and support the imprisoned after the May 18 Democratization Movement

Heo Byeong-seop (pastor), Baek Young-heum (pastor), Kang Yeon-gyun (artist), Lee Cheol-soon (president of the National Association of Female Workers), Yoon Jung-mo (writer), Hong Jung-kyung (artist), Hong Seung-yeon (TV drama writer), Lee Dong-cheol (congressman), Han Dong-soo (SVP of the Gwangju Tourist Hotel), Roh Myeong-shin, Kim Shin-hong (businessman), Kim Young-hee (director of Nakwon

Preschool), Jeong Seon-ja, Lee Kwang-woong, Jeong In-kyung (teacher), Kim Eun-kyung (pastor), Lee Myung-hye, Ko Jung-hee (poet), Heo Soon-yi (teacher), Kim Ji-sun, Kim Moon-ja, Song Kyung-ran, Sung Chan-sung, Moon Guk-ju, Lim Ki-jun (pastor), Seo Young-ju (pastor), Choi Kwon-haeng (professor), Jeong Chan-dae, Choi Dong-hyun

2) Cultural movements to carry the May Spirit

The theatre company Gwangdae was put in the same situation as Songbaekhoi after the Democratization Movement. Most of the members were on the run, rounded up, or detained, and on the brink of collapse, Kim Jung-hee presented a performance titled *Playing a Tiger* in early 1981. The performance metaphorically showed that although the Movement in Gwangju appeared to be a failure, it did not and will not fail, bringing tears to the whole audience. In the winter of 1980, Lim Young-hee took part in the Madanggeuk performance 'Hangpaduri'¹⁹ inspired by the Resistance of Sambyeolcho²⁰ in Jeju in celebration of the opening of Jeju Sunureum Theatre and continued to disseminate the truth about Gwangju arranged by Hwang Sok-yong. Lim Young-hee met Hwang for the first time in Jeju after the Movement and sought ways to bring about a nationwide change after the dissolution of Gwangdae. To make the Democratization Movement known, Lim created theatre company <Galilee>, a cultural missions team under Yangrim Church in January 1981, evading the military's surveillance. Members of Galilee included former members of Gwangdae; Lim Young-hee, Kim Philip, Kim Young-hee, Choi In-sun, Lim Hee-sook, Kim Jung-hee, and Kim Tae-jong, and new members; Oh Jung-muk, Kim Do-il, Cho Kyung-ja, Kim Han-jooing, Choi Byung-jin, Ahn Eun-kyeong, Eun Woo-keun. Twenty members of the company in total wrote a script with the students of Chosun University, and Chonnam National University and the members of the Presbyterian Church youth group to let people know the truth about the May of Gwangju and carried out the propaganda

19 A historic site in Goseong-ri Aewol-eup Jeju-si Jeju Special Self-governing Province where the Sambyeolcho army, a special troops of the Goryeo military regime fought against the Mongol Empire to death .

20 A military organization of the Goryeo military regime that played a crucial role in the fight against the Mongol Empire. They rebelled against Goryeo's decision to conclude a humiliating peace treaty with the Yuan Dynasty and set up a base in Jeju to continue their resistance against the Mongol Empire.

activities through their national tour covering Seoul YMCA Darakwon campsite, Gurye Catholic Church, Bosung, and Jeju among many other places. A tape-recorded song 'Will spring come to the lost land?' was made in December 1980, sponsored by Eun Woo-keun and distributed by Lim Young-hee. The proceeds from the tape for which the recording was done at one go as if capturing the resentment of the lost lives were deposited in the accounts of the imprisoned for their use in prison.

In 1981, at Namdo Culture & Art Center, a showcase was held for the songs written by Kim Jong-ryul under the title of 'Will spring come to the lost land?' to comfort the souls of the victims, even at the risk of incarceration under the Chun Doo-hwan regime. The showcase was planned by Hong Hee-yoon, Lim Young-hee, and Kim Min-ki, and moderated by Oh Jung-mook. Hong Sung-dam operated the slides, and the theme song of the day was 'I wear a black ribbon today.'

The authorities permitted the showcase because Kim Jong-ryul was a winner of the college song festival as well as a famous singer, and the Gwangju police office did not know that the showcase was to make the truth about the Democratization Movement known. All those who were in the showcase cried buckets of tears. With the production and distribution of Neokpuri²¹ meaning appeasement of souls in 1982, the truth about Gwangju became widely known.

Kim Jong-ryul, who had taught at Baekje Night School sponsored by Songbaekhoi, worked on 'I wear a black ribbon today' with Kim Min-ki, Lee Hoon-woo, Oh Jung-mook, and Lim Young-hee with whom he had had close relations. March for the Beloved, the song known to be the eternal anthem for democracy in and outside Korea, was written for a spirit wedding of Yoon Sang-won and Park Gi-soon and put in the Neokpuri tape. The starting point for Neokpuri was Hwang Sok-yong's invitation of Jeon Yong-ho into the house in Unam-dong (154-5 Unam-dong Buk-gu Gwangju) that he recently moved in to plan ways to make the Democratization Movement known in order to deal with the situation where the Movement was denounced as a

21 A musical to comfort the victims' souls, which was written in preparation for the 2nd anniversary of the May 18 Democratization Movement in 1982. March for the Beloved is the ending song among the songs of Neokpuri.

riot. In the home of Hwang Sok-yong and Hong Hee-yoon gathered Lim Young-hee, Yoon Man-sik, Lee Hoon-woo, Kim Ok-ki, Kim Eun-kyeong, Lim Hee-sook, Kim Jong-ryul, Cheon Yong-ho, and Kim Sun-chul. Taking the risk of being arrested by the intelligence agency, they spent three days and nights recording the tape in the house, covering the window with a blanket so that neighbors would not hear or see them.

The artists of Gwangju exposed the truth and endured the oppression with their poems, songs, novels, and paintings. The Uprising in Gwangju in May 1980 did not finish in defeat and despair. It started anew and continued with the May cultural movement,²² and finally returned to life as the May 18 Democratization Movement through the people's continuous struggle to find facts about the massacre and remember the tragedy.

In 2003, Hong Hee-dam, the president of Songbaekhoi, wrote her novel, the Flag, putting on record the truth and spirit of the May in Gwangju and digging into the historical experience of the Uprising and the source of pains the people who have such experience suffer.

Those who helped Songbaekhoi and the cultural movement

Hwang Sok-yong (novelist), Hong Sung-dam (artist), Kim Min-ki (singer), Im Jin-taek (pansori singer), Chae Hee-hwan (dancer), Kim Young-dong (composer), Mu Se-jung (Bong-san Mask Dance), Kim Bong-joon (artist), Yoon Ki-hyun (children's book writer), Kim Nam-ju (poet), Moon Byung-ran (poet), Park Mong-gu (poet), Lim Chul-woo (poet), Park Hyo-sun (playwright), Kim Tae-jong, Yoon Man-sik (Korean traditional performance), Lim Young-hee, Kim Sun-chul, Kim Yoon-ki, Im Hee-sook, Kim Jung-hee, Choi In-sun, Lee Hyun-joo, Kim Philip, Cho Kyung-ja, Ahn Eun-kyung, Moon Young-sook (planning), Eun Woo-geun, Jeon Yong-ho, Kim Jong-ryul

22 The movement for minjung and democratization carried out by artists, after the Democratization Movement, across various artistic genres such as theatre, art, music, and madanggeuk performance in the May Uprising in resistance to the military for the fact-finding about the May 18 Democratization Movement and the punishment of those responsible. For instance, banner paintings were co-produced by artists collectives and used at protests, rallies, and memorial ceremonies.

3) The Gwangju Uprising still underway, and the flames of the May Uprising

The military that suppressed the May 18 Democratization Movement took over the government and oppressed the citizens' rights and freedom. The truth about Gwangju of May 1980 was distorted and stifled. Nevertheless, the mothers and families who lost their wives, husbands, and children lighted a flame of the May Uprising to make the truth about the massacre in Gwangju known.

The May Uprising was formed by the bereaved families, the injured, and the imprisoned to seek fact-finding about the Democratization Movement, bring justice to those who committed the massacre, restore the honor, win collective damages, and carry out a commemorative project. Jeong Hyun-ae, who had been incarcerated and gone through hardship, set up a council for the imprisoned with Ahn Sung-rye, Roh Young-sook, Lee Myung-ja, and other family members of those in prison after her release, leading the campaign for their release. Lee Yoon-jung, who had been on the nationwide wanted list and got released with the suspension of sentence, served as an executive vice president when the Association of the May 18 Democratization Movement comrades was established and was later made the 3rd president of the Association. Lim Young-hee was made the head of the Women's Department when the Association was inaugurated and became an executive member of the Association of May Supporters and a founding member of the May 18 Memorial Foundation. Cho A-ra, Lee Ae-shin, Jeong Hyun-ae, Jeong Yoo-ah, Lee Yoon-jung, Lim Young-hee and others who survived the Democratization Movement opened a new horizon through reunification movement, teachers' movement, women's movement, carrying the spirit of the May Uprising and responding to various calls of the time.

4. Culture of peace activities by May Women carrying on the Gwangju Spirit: ‘May Women embracing peace’

May Women embracing peace is the agenda as well as a vision for the future for those at home and abroad who experienced the Democratization Movement and the next generation of women who want to carry the May Spirit. The society of the future envisioned by May Women²³ despite the risk of death and bloodshed is where the division of the nation and the Cold War regime are torn down, and the peace on the Korean peninsula and the harmony and peace in the world is realized.

23 The women who survived the May 18 Democratization Movement

To that end, May Women have carried out the culture of peace activities in solidarity with the conflict zones throughout the world, realizing the Gwangju Spirit to create the global web of peace and life.

May Women are building the web of peace and life that interweaves peoples and regions with the Gwangju Spirit through cultural activities across different genres, including novels, ceramic art, theatre, Korean traditional paper art, and handicraft with wildflowers. In July 2017, Lee Dang-geum and Jeong Soon-im presented a street dance performance on the square of the Henoko base in Okinawa to oppose the expansion of the strategic military base and express the pains and agony of the sex slaves of the Japanese soldiers, touching the hearts of hundreds of Okinawa citizens and conveying the message of solidarity. To the future generations, the May 18 Democratization Movement would sound a fairy tale. That is why these women carry the Spirit of the Movement through cultural activities and experiences. May Women who started from grassroots have come to meet with the global citizens, creating the face of peace with Korean traditional paper, making jumeok bab with clay, and sharing and learning the memory and experience of May. The handicraft community expresses the spirits of those who fought for the national independence from the Japanese colonial rule, among whom 30% wandered abroad and the spirits of the victims buried in secret or those who are still missing in the embroidery of the wildflowers that cover the whole country of Korea. May Women remember the

Jeju Uprising, the Yeosu-Suncheon incident, and civilians' massacre in Nogun-ri and join hands with the victims. They are against the expansion of the Military-Industrial Complex in strategic military posts in Northeast Asia, as seen in the THADD deployment in Seongju and Okinawa. The Korean peninsula is put under the risk of the Third World War as the anti-peace regime, which has continued over the last 75 years, is being replaced with the New Cold War regime led by the American hegemony. That is why May Women have worked to form links with the conflict zones such as the Palestine, Myanmar, and Vietnam, and learn from the Scandinavian neutral countries on how they have contributed to the peace of humanity in order to find a vision alongside the global peace citizens for the peace movement where the whole humanity can live in true harmony.

5. Gwangju Spirit found in the women of May 18 Democratization Movement: The archetype of Korean people's life and peace

The gender justice expressed in the Democratization Movement traces its origin to the human history of harmony and peace. Such a spirit finds its archetype for life and peace in the folk story of the Korean people about how their history began. The aura of Granny Mago expressed in the Nogodan of Jirisan Mountain is felt in the Movement. Such aura was the foundation of the harmonious lives of the Korean people. Such a religious spirit continued as the taste for arts during the era of the Three States through the tradition of shamans and carried over to the Later Three Kingdoms, especially to Later Baekje as the vision for resistant Maitreya utopia and then to the Goryeo Dynasty as a resistance against the invasion by the Mongol Empire.

The May 18 Democratization Movement is rooted in the peace movement for national independence and self-determination in resistance to the Japanese colonial rule. The sacrifice made by the women of the Honam area revealed the gender violence committed under the modern colonialism, sparking the women's movement for life and peace and ultimately lighting a torch for the national liberation throughout the world. The May 18 Democratization Movement where women set the example of saving the lives of Gwangju citizens with all their hearts and minds was the expression of the united world where all live together in harmony, the absolute justice²⁴ that does not waver in the face of injustice and the peace spirit by the absolute community that shares blood and meals.

24 This phrase implies that life is given again through death, meaning the death of an individual gives life back to the spiritual values of justice and defending democracy pursued by the community in history. The military defined the Citizens' Army as rioters in the Democratization Movement and killed them regardless of their genders or ages. Many people resolved to defend democracy and justice with their own lives in resistance to the ultimatum issued by the military before it suppressed Gwangju and remained in the scene of the protest till the end. Many of them were killed during the military's operation to retake Gwangju in the early morning of May 27, 1980.

Even today, after the reassessment of the May 18 Democratization Movement as a turning point for democracy in Korea, the activities and sacrifice by women who participated in the Movement remain relatively unknown in the male-dominated interpretation of history. Furthermore, facts have not been found yet regarding the collective sexual assaults and human rights violation against women by the martial troops during the Democratization Movement, let alone by the state violence during the Japanese colonial rule, and the Cold War regime led by the United States even forty years later.

History has kept the record of people's uprising and the records of generals and commanders since ancient times. A fresh interpretation of history from women's perspective and the realization of gender justice is the zeitgeist that should be held onto in this time of history. There are three aspects of the Gwangju Spirit expressed by women during the May 18 Democratization Movement. First, the spirit of resistance against injustice to the end; second, the formation of the autonomy and absolute community and the manifestation of the high morality in the liberation space, and; third, struggle for defending beyond the death for the sake of justice and the spirit of peace.

Such a spirit of struggle was the expression of the spirit of peace the women of Gwangju had as they saved the lives of the citizens with their hearts and souls and created a united world by sharing their lives in resistance to the life-destroying military.

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Democratization Movement, Gwangju moves beyond the national boundary to reach Argentina, Germany, and Taiwan with the Gwangju Spirit.

We are living in an era where the humanity is under the threat of COVID-19, the trade war, class conflict, conflicts between genders, peoples, ethnic groups, and cultures, ecological and biological conflict induced by scientific and technological advances and industrialization, and the geopolitical conflict and violence between and among modern states. How can we overcome these conflicts and violence?

Peace is the way to overcome conflicts and violence. Peace is an act of culture to save lives. The way to restore an order to ensure that all lives live in harmony on earth is to dream peace together, for the global peace citizens to take the culture of peace actions to create a united world, the archetype of life and peace in the folk story of the Korean people and to save lives together.

The world history of peace is adorned with the legacy left by women; the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo who fought against the Argentine military regime in the 1970s, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who has led the efforts to promote the status and rights of women as well as the democratization of Liberia, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkol Karman who made such a remarkable achievement, and Mairead Corrigan-Maquire and Betty Williams who created the Community for Peace People in 1976 to bring peace and healing to the political conflicts and pocalypse in Ireland. These are the inspiring culture of peace actions that we need to reach out to and join hands with for the sake of peace and healing. It is critical for us to build an international alliance for the peace movement and the global peace web. The greatest value of all for humanity is to save and revive the web of life and all the lives. The web of life breeds the world of harmony and preserves the web of life at homes and communities. Women are the epiphany of physical and emotional care for life. The critical task before the global community in the 21st century is to build a sustainable global community. This requires us to have an action of culture that opened a new horizon of peace and harmony on the Korean peninsula, the peace in East Asia, and the world peace. I would like to plead for the action on the part of the global female citizens in the journey of peace to save a life.