

## A COMPARISON OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS

**GRADE:** Middle and High School

**AUTHOR:** John Ciferni

**SUBJECT:** World History

**TIME REQUIRED:** Three class periods (50 minutes)

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To understand the role economic, political, social and cultural changes Korea experienced under Japanese occupation between 1910-1945.
2. Students will be able to explore the themes of nationalism and activism and understand how these two concepts can lead to freedom and oppression.
3. Compare and contrast the role of female activist Yu Gwan Sun of the March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919 movement to that of Chai Ling, a student leader during the Tiananmen Square protests.
4. Apply knowledge of student activism in Korea to other areas in the world in determining where activism can both combat and cause oppression.

### **MATERIAL REQUIRED:**

- **Handout 1:** Korea under Japanese Rule
- Four different colored highlighters
- **Handout 2:** March First Movement
- Venn diagram to compare Yu Gwan Sun to Chai Ling
- **Handout 3:** Yu Gwan-Sun Article
- **Handout 4:** Interview with Chai Ling at Tiananmen Square
- **Handout 5:** Chai Ling, former Tiananmen leader, has become a Christian.

### **BACKGROUND or INTRODUCTION:**

A major focal point of many global history courses is the recurring theme of liberty vs. authority. One of the major components of this theme is the concept of activism. How often do your students ask you “Why do we need to know history?” My guess is that this happens all too often. When students learn the relevance of activism and what students have accomplished in order to evoke political and social change, many may become empowered to inspire change in their local communities.

In this lesson students will learn more about Japanese occupation of Korea during the years of 1910-1945. Students will learn about the major changes which occurred in Korean society during the colonial era. Next, students will learn about the March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919 Movement and the role that female student leader Yu Gwan Sun played in trying to liberate Korea from Japanese occupation. Finally, students will compare and contrast the role of prominent student Yu Gwan Sun during of the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement to the student activist Chai Ling of China, who had a distinct role in the Tiananmen Square protests 1989.

## **PROCEDURE:**

1. Introduction activity- What are the primary roles of activists? What are some issues in the United States that activists try to bring to the public's attention? Can you think of any issues that you would be willing to speak out against? If so what issue(s) and why?

2. Students may describe activism as a way in which people speak out and bring awareness to the general public about certain issues. Several examples include opposition efforts to the war in Iraq, supporting humanitarian efforts in war torn nations, support for or against legislation like the Proposition 8 bill in California, issues facing immigration such as the Dream Act and or the recent role of students in the KONY 2012 movement. Students may discuss various issues in which they are willing to advocates for. The teacher might want to remind students that activism is not limited to the national stage. Individuals may choose to be activists on a local community level as well. You may give students a minute or two to discuss ways in which they might impact change on the local level.

3. Introduce the theme of Japanese Occupation during 1910-1945. Prior to this lesson students should have already been introduced to the tensions between Korea, Japan, Russia and China through the Sino-Japanese Wars and the Russo Japanese Wars.

4. Give out **handout 1**. Students will independently read the article.

### Option 1- Struggling and developmental learners

Once students have read the article they should divide up into groups of four. Students should then get out one piece of construction paper and label all twenty-six letters of the alphabet (A-Z) down the left hand column of the piece of paper. Collectively as a group of students, all members should brainstorm a list of adjectives, nouns or phrases starting with each letter of the alphabet which represent a concept in the reading based on the article provided. The goal of this assignment is to have students brainstorm the major ideas and concepts discussed in the article. This activity gives students flexibility to discuss themes without being tied to specific questions. At the end of the activity the teacher will announce each letter such as "What did everyone write down for letter A?" and the groups will then go around and share their responses. This process will continue through the letter Z. As different groups share their findings for each of the letters, the teacher can generate discussion based on the different group's findings.

### Option 2- On level learners

As students read **handout 1**, they should consider the economic, educational/cultural, political and religious inequalities that Koreans faced under Japanese rule. When reading the article, students should highlight using the four different color highlighters. Each category above should be assigned its own color. After students have completed the highlighting, the teacher should generate a list of student responses on the board. Some of the possible answers are recorded below.

Possible Answers:

**Economic**- Increase agricultural production to grow more rice for Japan, vast drop in economic production from early occupation to late occupation, Industry predominately owned by Japan, interest rates on Koreans 25% higher, drastic reduction in food supply.

**Political**- Treated as conquered people, could not form intellectual or political groups, total assimilation expected.

**Religious**- Mandatory worship at Shinto Shrines, Buddhism and Shamanism repressed.

**Education/Cultural**- Restrictions on publishing newspapers, artist federation prohibited by Japan, Koreans required to adopt Japanese names,

**Option 3- On level and advanced learners**

Students will read **handout 1**. After completing the initial reading, students will construct a response in a three paragraph response defending the following statement:

**Although many atrocities were committed against the Koreans during the years of 1910-1945, the greatest violations of rights were: economic, educational, political, or religious because...**

Students can only select **ONE** of the four violations above to write their essay. Additionally this is not a research based assignment so students should only use information from the article and or class discussions to generate their response.

5. **Handout 2:** Students should read and highlight the article on the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement for homework Background information on the movement is essential for subsequent lesson.

**Day 2**

6. Warm Up: define the term Nationalism. Working with a partner make a list of examples of how and when nationalism is reflected in American society. How as nationalism been reflected through our study of global history?

**Possible Answers:**

Students may describe nationalism as having pride in one's country. Some ways nationalism maybe reflected in America is through celebration of the fourth of July, voting on Election Day or having immense pride in our culture and or traditions. Some examples of nationalism in global history may include the Indian Independence Movement, European colonial rule in Africa and the Tiananmen Square protests.

**7. Students will analyze the following image:**



**Ask students to record their findings. Who might be illustrated in the statue above? What theme is depicted in this piece of art?** (*Students might remark that the statue is of a young girl, others might say the monument is symbolic of nationalism as the young girl is holding a flag*).

*After students have had a few minutes to make observations, explain to the students that this is an image of Yu Gwan Sun who was a famous student famous for her efforts in the March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919 Movement. This monument can be seen in Seoul today. Yu, Kwan-Sun was a student at Ewa Women's University in Seoul. At the University, she witnessed the start of the March 1st Movement. She became angered that the Japanese government closed Korean schools and then became a major student activist against Japanese occupation. Yu Gwan Sun was later taken to Seodaemun Prison with other scholars and student activists and was tortured and killed.*

8. Review **handout 2** that students read for homework the previous evening. Discuss the role of the 33 signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence. Explain and discuss how Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points inspired Korean activists to seek freedom. Teachers may choose to assign the reading of the Korean Declaration of Independence as an alternative reading to the one that was selected in this lesson plan.

9. Handout the following readings to each student:

- a. **Handout 3:** Yu Gwan-Sun, the Indefatigable Independence Fighter
- b. **Handout 4:** Interview at Tiananmen Square with Chai Ling
- c. **Handout 5:** Chai Ling, former Tiananmen leader, has become a Christian
- d. Hand out Venn-Diagram

10. Explain to students that they are going to compare and contrast the similarities and differences of Yu Gwan-Sun to Chai Ling. Both women are considered powerful activists in their respective eras of history. Read documents 3-5 and then complete the Venn-diagram.
  
11. Review answers to the Venn- Diagram: Below are some generated responses but students may brainstorm additional points. Students might also note that Yu Gwan Sun was a Christian and Chai Ling converted to Christianity in recent years.

| Yu Gwan Sun                                  |   | Chai Ling                                       |
|--|---|---|
| Korea  |   | China   |
| Anti Japanese occupation                     |   | Anti Communist regime                           |
| 1919   | Freedom activists   | 1989  |
| Imprisoned, tortured and Killed              | Female University students  | Sought and obtained political asylum in America |
| Leader in the March 1st Movement             | Took major risks  | Helped lead Hunger Strike                       |
| Monument created recognizing her as a martyr | Against ruling government<br>Patriotic leaders of mass demonstrations | China does not regard her as a heroine.         |

12. After students have completed their analysis and review of student activists the teacher may choose to display the image below. As students view the illustration, have them speculate about the origin of the building. Ask students about the symbolism of the South Korean flag. Explain to students that *the image below was taken outside Seodaemun Prison. Seodaemun was one of the many prisons created which held democratic activists such as Yu Gwan Sun. The South Korea flag depicts the theme of nationalism. Students should get the sense that despite the prisons dark past, South Korea's fight for liberty and freedom outweighed the oppression once experienced by the Koreans at hands of the Japanese.*



### **EVALUATION:**

Ask the students the following questions: In studying the March First Movement and the Tiananmen Square protests, you will notice that student activists generally have a heightened sense of nationalism. However those fighting for freedom are not the only subjects possessing nationalistic feelings. What are some ways that those with a heightened sense of nationalism can actually become the oppressor? *(Students might reflect on how it was Japanese nationalism which caused them to invade Korea and evoke cultural, economic and political changes. Additionally, students may recall that the Chinese governments possessed so much nationalism that they warded off democracy as a way to retain control giving them more power. It was nationalism which allowed Europe to colonize Africa during the Berlin Conference in 1884. Students might also discuss the role of Nationalism as it pertained to the British rule in India.)*

### **ENRICHMENT:**

Allow students the opportunity to further explore the concept of student activism. Students will now compare and contrast either the March First Independence Movement, or the Tiananmen Square protests with any of the following movements:

- a. Vietnam War student protests,
- b. South African- 1976 Soweto uprising (Apartheid era)
- c. Arab Spring- role of students in this movement
- d. Student sit ins during the Civil Rights Movement
- e. The role of students during the Indian Independence Movement
- f. Tibetan student protests.

### **PROJECT: VISUAL DISPLAY BOARD**

- Students will examine the issue of student protest and develop a two perspective visual representation of the issue. The theme should be set up to illustrate how student resistance movements can help support or hinder movements against oppression.
- In their evaluation, students should place their essential question in the center of the poster paper. An example might be “**Can student activism inspire lasting change?**”
- Students should then divide their poster board into two sections. The right section of the board should illustrate how student resistance has positively impacted economic, social and political policies.
- The left side of the poster board should illustrate how political resistance has hindered economic, social and political changes.
- Both sides of the poster board should contain a visual representation of pictures, political cartoons, and or propaganda.
- Students can select from any of the protest movements above as a reference for their analysis. However, students must contrast one of the above events with either Tiananmen Square or the March First Movement.
- All visual representations portrayed should have text similar to a museum exhibit explaining each illustration. Written accounts should include a summary of the importance of the image showcased.

### **RESOURCES:**

Andrea Matles Savada and William Shaw, editors. *South Korea: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990.

Chai Ling, former Tiananmen leader, has become a Christian. (04, May 2010). Retrieved from <http://www.asianews.it/news-en>

Grossman, Mark. "March First movement." *Encyclopedia of the Interwar Years: From 1919 to 1939*. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2000. Modern World History Online. Facts On File, Inc.

Interview at *Tiananmen Square with Chai ling*. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china\\_1950\\_chailing](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_chailing)

*Yu Gwan-Sun, The indefatigable independence fighter*. (01, March 2012). Retrieved from [http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/program/program\\_koreanstory\\_detail.htm](http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/program/program_koreanstory_detail.htm)



## Handout 1

### Korea Under Japanese Rule

Andrea Matles Savada and William Shaw, editors. *South Korea: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1990.

Korea underwent drastic changes under Japanese rule. Even before the country was formally annexed by Japan in 1910, the Japanese caused the last ruling monarch, King Kojong, to abdicate the throne in 1907 in favor of his feeble son, who was soon married off to a Japanese woman and given a Japanese peerage. Japan then governed Korea under a residency general and subsequently under a governor general directly subordinate to Japanese prime ministers. All of the governor generals were high-ranking Japanese military officers.

In theory the Koreans, as subjects of the Japanese emperor, enjoyed the same status as the Japanese; but in fact the Japanese government treated the Koreans as a conquered people. Until 1921 they were not allowed to publish their own newspapers or to organize political or intellectual groups.

Nationalist sentiments gave rise to a Korean student demonstration in Japan, and on March 1, 1919, to a Proclamation of Independence by a small group of leaders in Seoul. With the consolidation of what became known as the March First Movement, street demonstrations led by Christian and Ch'ondogyo (a movement that evolved from Tonghak) groups erupted throughout the country to protest Japanese rule.

In the wake of the protest, Japan granted considerable latitude to Korea. As historians have noted, the ensuing intellectual and social ferment of the 1920s marked a seminal period in modern Korean history. Many developments of the period, including the organization of labor unions and other social and economic movements, had continuing influence into the postliberation period. In the 1930s, however, the ascendancy of the military in Japanese politics reversed the change. Particularly after 1937, when Japan launched the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) against China, the colonial government decided on a policy of mobilizing the entire country for the cause of the war. Not only was the economy reorganized onto a war footing, but the Koreans were to be totally assimilated as Japanese. The government also began to enlist Korean youths in the Japanese army as volunteers in 1938, and as conscripts in 1943. Worship at Shinto shrines became mandatory, and every attempt at preserving Korean identity was discouraged.

The Korean economy also underwent significant change. Japan's initial colonial policy was to increase agricultural production in Korea to meet Japan's growing need for rice. Japan had also begun to build large-scale industries in Korea in the 1930s as part of the empire-wide program of economic self-sufficiency and war preparation. Between 1939 and 1941, the manufacturing sector represented 29 percent of Korea's total economic production. The primary industries--agriculture, fishing, and forestry--occupied only 49.6 percent of total economic production during that period, in contrast to having provided 84.6 percent of

total production between 1910 and 1912.

The economic development taking place under Japanese rule, however, brought little benefit to the Koreans. Virtually all industries were owned either by Japan-based corporations or by Japanese corporations in Korea. As of 1942, Korean capital constituted only 1.5 percent of the total capital invested in Korean industries. Korean entrepreneurs were charged interest rates 25 percent higher than their Japanese counterparts, so it was difficult for Korean enterprises to emerge. More and more farmland was taken over by the Japanese, and an increasing proportion of Korean farmers either became sharecroppers or migrated to Japan or Manchuria. As greater quantities of Korean rice were exported to Japan, per capita consumption of rice among the Koreans declined; between 1932 and 1936, per capita consumption of rice declined to half the level consumed between 1912 and 1916. Although the government imported coarse grains from Manchuria to augment the Korean food supply, per capita consumption of food grains in 1944 was 35 percent below that of 1912 to 1916.

Under Japanese rule, intellectual influences different from traditional Buddhist, Confucianist, and shamanistic beliefs flooded the country. Western-style painting was introduced, and literary trends, even among writers who emphasized themes of social protest and national independence, tended to follow Japanese and European models, particularly those developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The works of Russian, German, French, British, American, and Japanese authors were read by the more educated Koreans, and Korean writers increasingly adopted Western ideas and literary forms. Social and political themes were prominent. *Tears of Blood*, the first of the "new novels," published by Yi In-jik in serial form in a magazine in 1906, stressed the need for social reform and cultural enlightenment, following Western and Japanese models. Yi Kwang-su's *The Heartless*, published in 1917, stressed the need for mass education, Western science, and the repudiation of the old family and social system. Ch'ae Man-sik's *Ready Made Life*, published in 1934, protested the injustices of colonial society.

In the 1920s and 1930s, socialist ideas began to influence the development of literature. In 1925 left-wing artists, rejecting the romanticism of many contemporary writers, established the Korean Proletarian Artists' Federation, which continued until it was suppressed by Japanese authorities in 1935. One of the best representatives of this group was Yi Ki-yong, whose 1936 novel *Home* tells of the misery of villagers under Japanese rule and the efforts of the protagonist, a student, to organize them. Poets during the colonial period included Yi Sang-hwa, Kim So-wol, and Han Yong-un. But the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War marked a period of unprecedented repression in the cultural sphere by Japanese authorities, which continued until Korea's liberation in 1945.

From the late 1930s until 1945, the colonial government pursued a policy of assimilation whose primary goal was to force the Koreans to speak Japanese and to consider themselves Japanese subjects. In 1937 the Japanese governor general ordered that all instruction in Korean schools be in Japanese and that students not be allowed to speak Korean either inside or outside of school. In 1939 another decree "encouraged" Koreans to adopt Japanese names, and by the following year it was reported that 84 percent of all Korean

families had done so. During the war years Korean-language newspapers and magazines were shut down. Belief in the divinity of the Japanese emperor was encouraged, and Shinto shrines were built throughout the country. Had Japanese rule not ended in 1945, the fate of indigenous Korean language, culture, and religious practices would have been extremely uncertain.

Japanese rule was harsh, particularly after the Japanese militarists began their expansionist drive in the 1930s. Internal Korean resistance, however, virtually ceased in the 1930s as the police and the military gendarmes imposed strict surveillance over all people suspected of subversive inclinations and meted out severe punishment against recalcitrants. Most Koreans opted to pay lip service to the colonial government. Others actively collaborated with the Japanese. The treatment of collaborators became a sensitive and sometimes violent issue during the years immediately following liberation.

## Handout 2

### **March First Movement**

Grossman, Mark. "March First movement." Encyclopedia of the Interwar Years: From 1919 to 1939. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2000. Modern World History Online. Facts On File, Inc.

Social movement, particularly during March–April 1919, in which the people of Korea, under the yoke of Japanese colonialism, sought to gain independence. From 1910, Korea had been a colony of Japan. By early 1919 the combination of colonial oppression, Korean student protests at universities across the peninsula, the effects of the "Koreanization" movement to educate and enlighten the people about national pride and heritage, and calls by U.S. President [Woodrow Wilson](#) for the right of self-determination for colonial powers made the area a powder keg liable to explode.

Several inspired Korean dissidents, including Kwon Tong-jun, O Se-Chang, and Choe Rin, planned a peaceful protest timed during the funeral of the former Emperor Kojong, who had died of a stroke on January 22, 1919. They believed in the concept of *Ajiasugi* ("Asianism"), a pride in their national culture. These events gave rise to the drafting of the so-called Korean Declaration of Independence. On March 1, 1919, the 33 signers of this document appeared before a crowd of supporters in Pagoda Park in Seoul, the capital, and read from the declaration. They waited for the Japanese police to arrest them, but instead the Japanese panicked at the sight of the large crowd and fired into the throng, killing an untold number of protesters.

This event, called the March First Movement, gave rise to the Korean independence movement. For several weeks, demonstrations broke out throughout Korea demanding independence from Tokyo. The Japanese crackdown led to more than fifty thousand arrests, six thousand deaths, and the torture and execution of many of the 33 signatories of the declaration. The movement had sprung from the hope that Wilson would fight for the theory of colonial independence. Little did the two million marchers who participated that March day realize that their fate had already been sealed: Wilson had agreed in advance with the Japanese delegation to [Versailles](#) that Korea would remain under Japanese occupation and domination.

The Japanese crackdown also led to external pressures: on April 8, 1919, the Korean Provisional Government was established in the Chinese city of Shanghai. Syngman Rhee, a Korean nationalist, was named president, Yi Tong Whi as defense minister, and Kim Kyu Sik as foreign minister. The following month, Korean nationalist Kim Wong Bom, alias Kim Yak San, organized the *Uiyoldan* ("Practice Justice Bravely Society"), a secret

terrorist cell which carried out some three hundred terrorist acts against Japanese targets until 1924, including the bombing of Governor-General Baron Makoko Saito's office in Seoul on September 4, 1919, the attempted assassinations of General Gi-ichi Tanaka on March 28, 1922, and of Emperor Yoshihito on January 4, 1924, and the bombing of Takushoku University in Tokyo of December 28, 1926. On September 3, 1923, anti-Korean riots took place in Tokyo, resulting in the deaths of some eight hundred Korean students in Japan and the expulsion of more than a hundred thousand Koreans from that nation. Other Koreans, on both the right and left of the political spectrum, formed the Korean Independence Army as part of the Chinese army effort to fight Japanese troops in China. In the 1930s, Japanese destruction of Korean culture continued unabated. In 1937 the Japanese ordered that the Korean language be extinguished, to be replaced by Japanese, and that Japanese names be substituted for Korean ones. During World War II thousands of Koreans were taken by Japan and used as slave labor.

In the end the March First Movement failed to dislodge the Japanese from the Korean Peninsula; nonetheless, it is among Asia's first independence movements, setting precedence for the nationalist movements following World War II.

## **Handout 3**

### **Koreans in History**

#### **Yu Gwan-sun, the Indefatigable Independence Fighter**

**[http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/program/program\\_koreanstory\\_detail.htm?No=37522](http://world.kbs.co.kr/english/program/program_koreanstory_detail.htm?No=37522)**

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#### **March 1st Independence Day Heroine Yu Gwan-sun**

On March 1st, 1919, a group of 33 patriotic leaders read the Declaration of Korean Independence, proclaiming to the world that Korea is a free and independent nation. With the historic declaration, Korean people under the Japanese colonial rule shouted “Long live Korean independence” nationwide, from Mt. Baekdu to Mt. Halla, from Seoul to remote mountain villages. Their shouts resounded throughout the Korean Peninsula and the flames of freedom blazed fiercely.

There were 1,542 mass demonstrations at the time, in which a total of over 2 million people participated. Among countless independence fighters who cried out for national independence 93 years ago, it is female student activist Yu Gwan-sun who is remembered in the minds of Korean people first.

#### **» Born in a Family with Lofty National Spirit**

Yu Gwan-sun was born in Cheonan, South Chungcheong Province on November 17th, 1902. She was able to develop a deep devotion to God and the proud national spirit from childhood, thanks to her father Yu Jung-gwon, who was a reform-minded Methodist and enlightenment thinker.

Yu was such an intelligent child that she could memorize Bible passages upon hearing them just once. She was admitted to Ewha Girls’ School in 1918 as a scholarship student. Witnessing the brutal Japanese military rule, the tall, energetic and broad-minded girl was determined to become a great woman who would save her nation like the French heroine

Joan of Arc.

King Go-jong died in 1919 amidst rumors that he had been poisoned by the Japanese. Many people flocked to Seoul ahead of the king's funeral, and mass demonstrations were staged on March 1st to declare independence from Japan. Yu and her six classmates organized a band to take part in the rally at Tapgol Park that day. On March 5th, Yu and her band participated in a student demonstration in front of Namdaemun(South Gate) and were arrested by police. But they were later released at the request of foreign missionaries at Ewha Girls' School.

The Japanese Government General of Korea temporarily closed middle schools and higher learning institutes on March 10th and Yu returned to her hometown. But the closing of the school prompted Yu to devote herself to the independence movement.

### » Shouts of Independence Resound through Aunae Market

Yu came home with her cousin Yu Ye-do on March 13th, 1919, secretly bringing the document of the Declaration of Independence with her. She traveled from village to village to inform local residents of the March 1st movement in Seoul and encouraged them to join in the drive. She also visited church schools and Confucian scholars in adjacent areas to urge them to participate in the planned demonstration on March 1st by the lunar calendar, which happened to fall on April 1st.

From early in the morning on April 1st, more than 3,000 people swarmed to the Aunae(아우내) market in Cheonan. Yu gave them the national flag of Taegeukgi, which she had made herself, and addressed the crowd before shouting Korea's independence. They began to stage rallies, waving the national flags.

The Japanese military police wielded guns and swords to suppress the demonstrators, killing 19 people, including Yu's parents, and injuring 30 innocent residents. Yu was arrested.

### » Indomitable Spirit against Injustice

Yu lost her parents before her very eyes and was severely tortured by the Japanese police. But she thundered at the police, claiming that she led the rallies from beginning to end and asking the police to release other innocent people.

At two rounds of trial, Yu was sentenced to five years and three years in prison, respectively, before being transferred to Seodaemun prison in Seoul. There, she shouted Korea's independence day and night and prepared a massive demonstration with her fellow inmates to mark the first anniversary of the independence movement on March 1st, 1920.

She was taken to an underground prison and died of harsh torture there on September 28th, 1920, at the young age of 18. During her short life, she never hesitated to act on what she believed was right. Yu is forever remembered as a dedicated woman with unflinching resolve in the minds of Korean people.

## Handout 4

### *Interview at Tiananmen Square with Chai ling.*

I think these may be my last words. My name is Chai Ling. I am twenty-three years old. My home is in Shandong Province. I entered Beijing University in 1983 and majored in psychology. I began my graduate studies at Beijing Normal University in 1987. By coincidence, my birthday is April 15, the day Hu Yaobang died.

The situation has become so dangerous. The students asked me what we were going to do next. I wanted to tell them that we were expecting bloodshed, that it would take a massacre, which would spill blood like a river through Tiananmen Square, to awaken the people. But how could I tell them this? How could I tell them that their lives would have to be sacrificed in order to win?

If we withdraw from the square, the government will kill us anyway and purge those who supported us. If we let them win, thousands would perish, and seventy years of achievement would be wasted. Who knows how long it would be before the movement could rise again? The government has so many means of repression — execution, isolation. They can wear you down and that's exactly what they did to Wei Jingsheng.

I love those kids out there so much. But I feel so helpless. How can I change the world? I am only one person. I never wanted any power. But my conscience will not permit me to surrender my power to traitors and schemers. I want to scream at Chinese people everywhere that we are so miserable! We should not kill each other anymore! Our chances are too slim as it is.

I was extremely sad because, once again, I saw all kinds of people trying to betray us and put an end to this movement. At the start of the hunger strike there were about a thousand students participating, ruining their health. It infuriates me to think that there are people who want to ruin what these 1,000 — and later several thousand — students are risking their lives for.



Within the intellectual circle, however, two supportive friends suggested that we call things off and take on another duty, like writing a book to be entitled *Let the Whole World Know*. They also said that if this book were circulated, the world would be told exactly what was going on. Then we could be satisfied at the sight of our execution.

I had a conversation with a plainclothes cop on April 25. I asked him what the sentence was for counter-revolutionary activities. He said that it used to be three to five years, but now it is seventeen. I'd be forty after seventeen years in prison. I'm really not willing to do that.

Yesterday I told my husband that I was no longer willing to stay in China. I realize that many students won't understand why I'm withdrawing from this movement and I will probably be criticized for this. But I hope that while I can no longer continue with this work there will be others who can. Democracy isn't the result of just one person's efforts. During the hunger strike I had said that we were not fighting so that we could die but so that we could live. I was fighting for life, because democracy cannot be accomplished by a single generation. Now I'm even more convinced of this. If I don't die, I vow to teach my child, from the day he is born, to grow up to be an honest, kind, fair, and independent Chinese.

We were striving for rights, and I felt like telling everyone, including undercover police and soldiers, that the rights that the students were risking their lives for were also for them. I would be ashamed to enjoy the benefits of these rights we are struggling for if I had never participated in this movement.

I have felt depressed many times. Some of the students have such a poor understanding of democracy. On the day that I suggested the hunger strike, I knew in the back of my mind that it would be futile. There are certain people and certain events in history that are destined to fail. In spite of all this, I have always tried to come across as a strong role model for the students and let them know that some day we will win.

I believe that democracy is a natural desire. It should guarantee human rights and independence, and foster self-respect — all of which people are entitled to.

Unfortunately, the basic human instinct for independence has been greatly inhibited and degraded among the Chinese. Some out-of-town students even came to us, asking for food, lodging, and instructions for what to do next. I thought, they have hands, eyes, their own minds; they can take care of themselves. They are supporting a very good cause but, honestly, many of these students are irresponsible; they are accustomed to living in a feudal society in which they do not have to make decisions for themselves.

The square is our last stand. If we lose it, China will retreat into another dark age, the people will once again turn against one other, with no real feelings or communication between them. If a nation's own people don't stay and help it to grow and develop, who will? But I will not be there to protect the square because I'm different from the others: my name is on the blacklist. I don't want to die.

Before this movement, I dreamt about going abroad — to study psychology — but friends warned me not to think of America as a paradise. They said that there are a lot of overseas Chinese there and that their competitive instincts were overwhelming. I want to say to all those Chinese outside of China, those who already have freedom and democracy, and who have never had their lives endangered, to stand up and unite, to put an end to the fighting among us. There are so many kids here risking their own lives for what you have. Do what you can, break down the barriers and don't be selfish anymore. Think about our race. One billion people can't just fade away.

— Chai Ling (b. 1966)

## HANDOUT 5

*Chai Ling, former Tiananmen leader, has become a Christian . (04 , May 2010).*

Retrieved from <http://www.asianews.it/news-en>

Boston (AsiaNews) - Chai Ling, the only woman leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, was baptized on April 4 . She had asked to become a Christian in December 2009.

On the day of her baptism she explained the reasons that brought her to the Christian faith: her inability to change China and the pain of seeing so much violence in her country, not only in the field of human rights and democracy, but above for the forced abortions caused by the one child law, which she defines as "a daily Tiananmen massacre, a hundred times over and done in broad daylight."

Chai Ling was born during the Cultural Revolution, the daughter of soldiers in the Army for the liberation of the People, at a military base in northeast of China.

During the demonstrations in Tiananmen in May-June 1989, Chai Ling, was a 23 year old student of psychology at Beijing Normal University (Beishida). She was the only female group leader, who predicted with great sadness the tragic end of the democratic movement ("There will be a bloodbath," she said in an interview days before the fateful June 4). Along with 11 other students she had sworn an oath to shed her blood for her country, modeled on the Chinese heroic martyrs of the past who committed suicide in order to re-awaken their people.

After the massacre, Chai Ling became one of the 21 most wanted by Chinese police. With the help of a group of Buddhists and Hong Kong organizations, after a period in hiding, she managed to flee to France and then the United States.

Settled in Boston, she graduated from Harvard in economics and together with her husband, Robert Maggin Jr, created a software company that employs nearly 300 people. She never forgot her oath and has always used part of their profits to help orphanages and organizations for human rights in China.

The discovery of being controlled by the Chinese secret services, their threats and the difficulties of the democratic movement abroad have made her hopeless. "Despite all the battles and successes - she says - I understood how small I was when compared to the strength of an entire system. How could I, an humble individual go against an entire system with enormous resources and a widespread network? "

In November 2009, in Washington she heard the testimony of Wujian, a Chinese woman forced to abort because she was pregnant without permission from the office responsible for population control.

"That moment - she says - brought back all the memories of helplessness and pain we experienced on the night of the June 4 massacre in 1989. That night was so brutal, yet we had no strength to stop it, and the rest of the world could not stop it, either. Wujian's story is just one of the 10,000 cases that occurred in that single county in China in 2005. In the past three decades, an estimated 400 million lives have been brutally taken by abortion in China; many were in this form of cruel and inhumane operations, which not only ended the babies' lives, but also deeply traumatized and endangered the surviving mothers.... No one could ever forget the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre even though it has now been over twenty years. Yet very few of us realized that the three words "One Child Policy" would be a marching order for brutality hundreds times more to the Tiananmen Massacre to happen in the day light, to be repeated each and every day".

It should be noted that Chai Ling had no religious education: "[In China] – she recalls - we were not allowed to believe in God. "God" was deemed by the leaders as the evil things that the capitalists use to brainwash the people. It was a word that was forbidden in our society. As a result, God's love was scare too. The society was filled with hatred, distrust and fear. "

Aided by her husband, a Protestant Christian, and some friends who work as volunteers against abortion, Chai Ling asked to become a Christian on December 4, 2009. On April 4 she received baptism. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus now makes her feel safer and more certain "of God's victory" in the midst of many tribulations.

In her testimony, Chai Ling has words of compassion for the Chinese leaders responsible for the massacre and the current policies: "God's forgiveness is so complete, even one of the two criminals, who was crucified with Him, when he repentant for his sins, Christ promise to bring him to heaven. If only, the leaders of China could have heard, no matter what they have done and have committed, if only they repentant, they can receive the same kind of love and forgiveness we all receive. What a great gift they will receive? Freedom for themselves and for China, at last!"

The conversion of Chai Ling is the latest in a series by different Tiananmen leaders. After struggling for ideas of equality and democracy, thanks to their relationship with the West or with missionaries in China, they have discovered that their commitment to human rights is reasonable only if grounded on a Christian basis. "- When we thought we were starting a democracy movement- says Chai Ling - we shouted out all man are born equal. Now I know I can say it with confidence because God had created us all equal in his image and likeness