

Introduction to the 2019 APMF Peace Prize

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Jeju is a beautiful and peaceful island, and as some of you know a UNESCO Heritage site. Jeju island calls itself a land of the "Three Nots,": there are no thieves, no beggars, and no gates. Jeju residents have lived in a simple, friendly and cooperative way as farmers, fishermen and diving women for centuries.

But an ill wind, blew to the Island in 1948 at the end of World War II. The wind came due to the division of the Korea peninsular and the start of the cold war. This ill wind led to the sacrifice of 30,000 people on the island-, a [tenth](#) of the population of Jeju at that time.

How did this happen? When Japan was defeated at the end of World War II it ended 35 years of bitter Japanese Colonialism in Korea and gave Korea its independence. But like Germany, Korea was divided for post-war administration by Soviet Russia and the U.S.

As the Allied Forces prepared to return Korea to its people, two conflicting groups emerged. Some Koreans supported the election of a government by Koreans living in the south only and the others supported a national election for the whole country which had just been liberated from Japanese. Jeju residents belonged to the latter group. But Syngman Rhee, backed by the U.S. Military, was afraid he might not be elected if the presidential election were country wide, so he pushed to restrict it only to the area south of the 38th parallel-the half that the US controlled. When the Jeju citizens protested and refused to take part in the southern election, they were labeled communist and mercilessly suppressed by the South Korean armed forces and U.S. armed anti-communist militia from the mainland. The result was a fearful massacre resulting in over 30,000 deaths- mainly Jeju civilians. Any news about these events or the Korean Government's role in it were suppressed by the Rhee Government and subsequent military governments for over 40 years. Although this tragedy affected every family on Jeju Island, Koreans who didn't live on Jeju were kept totally in the dark. News outlets, media, schoolbooks were not

allowed to mention it until recently. But the man who had the most important role in bringing this horrific event to public light is here today to receive the APMF Peace Prize.

Since 1988, **Jo-hoon Yang** has devoted his life to investigating and bringing to light the actual facts of the 4.3/April 3rd events by publishing hundreds of articles and lecturing. After three decades his persistent and courageous efforts finally brought about an official apology and acknowledgement of wrongdoing from the Korean Government. On the recent 70th anniversary of "Sasam" or 4.3/April 3rd Event at the 4.3 Peace Park, President Moon Jae-In apologized to the residents of Jeju Island in front of the 15 thousand of people there. He promised reparations and actions of reconciliation for the great harm that had taken place under the eyes of the Korean government. So, we want to honor Yang Jo-hoon today for playing a leading role to resolve ideological conflicts and setting the stage to transform the tragic events of history to one of peace and reconciliation.

Our second prize award is given posthumously to **Hyung-soon Moon**, the chief of the Seongsanpo Police Station at that time. He is sometimes referred to as the Korean Schindler, because he courageously, rejected the order of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarter to execute all suspected rebels on Jeju when the Korean War broke out in 1950. His brave action saved 200 innocent Jeju residents. Since he passed away with no relatives in 1966, his award is being given posthumously to his former police station.

Now, I ask Dale Bagshaw, President of the Asia Pacific Mediation Forum to join me to present the 9th APMF Peace Prize to Mr. Yang Jo-hoon and Moon Hyung-soon jointly.

We will give the prize to Moon Hyung-soon, first. The statue of Moon Hyung-soon is installed at Jeju Police Agency. So Mr. Moon Bong-Gyun, Senior Superintendent of Jeju Police Agency will receive the prize on behalf of Moon Hyung-soon. Senior Superintendent Moon Bong-Gyun, please come forward. / Please give your short prize message.