While listening to a DVD of our teacher, Eknath Easwaran, the other day, Stephanie heard him refer to some research done at Stanford on “the human image.” We have felt for some time now that the elevation of the human image — our sense of and the “story” we tell ourselves and others about who we are — is not a but the leverage place for bringing about massive changes in the industrial world order, and doing so without undue chaos but rapidly enough to save us from the effects of violence to person and planet that have us reeling.

A new story (or ancient story recovered) of who we are is not a simple material thing like the charkha (spinning wheel) of Gandhi’s constructive programme, but it can be done by everyone (more on that in a moment) and, like charkha, it is non-confrontational but potentially deadly to the established order. Think of it: if you start a sentence with an unspoken assumption that ‘we are all separate, material, etc.’ how are you going to get to ‘therefore we should not torture, kill, exploit, etc.’ without contradicting yourself? So what if we all believed, and wherever possible articulated our belief that:

We are body, mind, and spirit: these three, but the greatest of these is spirit, or consciousness. Spirit is more what we really are, the sages assure us, than these perishable bodies or fluttering minds. We have bodies and minds, but because we are, or at least partly are spirit, some wonderful things follow:

we are not separate from one another or the planet because spirit is by nature one,

we are not dependent on shrinking resources. In fact, we’re not dependent on external resources at all for anything beyond the continuation of physical life, and that requires very little: there is enough in the world for everyone’s need....”

we can be nonviolent! Because we have “soul-force” within us that speaks or rather speaks past the power of guns to reach the common humanity we share, even with our oppressors.

Metta is working on a simple version of this declaration and formats in which to present it, with support from both science and the wisdom traditions, as needed for various audiences. We have dedicated Hope Tank conversations to this project, and would love to hear your ideas about it. Because we believe that if all of us, working on our various projects, would adopt and tell this story wherever and however we can it would shift the foundations of our political, economic, and social discourse and make all our work much easier.

The Stanford report, which makes very interesting reading, came out in 1982. That’s the same year that Metta (and Stephanie) were born. Whatever meaning we may attribute to that synchronicity, including none, we are happy to get this boost for what is in many ways our central contribution to the desperately needed change.
here is a Zen koan which many of us have heard in popular culture: If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

We might ask ourselves a slightly modified version of this koan for the purposes of nonviolence: If a movement is happening, and no one hears about it, can it succeed?

While koans have no easy answers--each attempt at a response is the fruit of a change in consciousness of the practitioner--so it is with nonviolence.

On one hand, we can draw from research pointing to movement after movement and stories that are little known, who nonetheless successfully achieved the goals of their campaign through nonviolence.

However, censorship of movements, downplaying their effect to keep them from gaining global attention is a real tactic used by violent regimes as they resist the will of the people. Many movements have also failed due to this kind of censorship and the lack of the global community’s knowledge about their nonviolent efforts. Syria is a key case in point: a nonviolent movement has been in Syria since well before the devastating events of the Syrian civil war, and yet we have to battle the mass media to get them to mention even the existence of this “third way” between doing nothing and using violence to support the Syrian people.

Of equal interest, and little known (though this is changing for the better), is the nonviolent movement in Jeju, South Korea. The people of this “island paradise” are waging nonviolent struggle to counter the building of another United States military base. This base would mean not only the militarization of this place of pristine beauty; it also guarantees environmental destruction of space considered sacred to the indigenous population of this Korean island, thus the destruction of a part of their personal and spiritual identity. Military bases are also notorious for violations of human rights in their vicinity, including rape and trafficking of women.

In this first issue of Emergence, we look closely at the movement in Jeju in order to answer the questions: what is happening in Jeju; what is the history of the movement and the island in relation to the building of the military base; what are people doing to obstruct the construction of the base; what tips might one learn from the experiences of the people in Jeju; and what else might be able to be done in order to further support this movement?

We hope that this issue inspires you to help raise the voices of those who are working hard in Jeju for a more nonviolent world; one where nonviolent successes (and losses) are studied so that people who want change can build on what works. A nonviolent victory anywhere is a victory for people everywhere.
Jeju Island is famous for three things: wind, rocks, and women. The wind is constant and pushes me along like my mother when she was in a hurry. As the sun peeks over the sea, I stumble toward the cold steel gates cutting through the heart of Gangjeong Village with the emotionless precision of a practiced surgeon. The police are already lined up and waiting for us like angry bees in their Day-Glo yellow jackets and polished black leather shoes. The villagers no longer try to cross the gates, but twice each day we stand in front offering our prayer in the direction of the sacred rocks punctured and dying at the edge of the shore like a lone beached whale her cries unintelligible to the species within earshot.
Jeju island, South Korea
As the airport bus clunked into Gangjeong Village this past September, I knew I had arrived by the waving yellow flags, high above the sidewalk declaring: No Naval Base! Because the activists are under constant surveillance by the government and many international supporters of their anti-naval base struggle have been denied entry to Korea, I was told not to inform anyone in the village of when I would arrive. As I peered into the Peace Center, I just hoped that someone there would be able to help me when I said I was a volunteer from Peaceworkers planning to stay for six weeks.

A woman named “Silver” showed me around the village that first evening. As we sat in the free restaurant for activists, a strong gust of wind blew through the room, knocking over large pots and pans drying on the counter.

“I hear Jeju Island is famous for wind.” I said to Silver.

“Yes, Jeju Island is famous for three things: wind, rocks and women,” Silver laughs, “Lately when the wind blows, people think it will be a typhoon. We usually get a typhoon every year between July and October but this year we haven’t gotten a typhoon yet so all the people are praying that it will come soon. Last year the typhoon badly damaged the navy base.” Perplexed, I ask: “Aren’t typhoons dangerous? Do you have to evacuate?” Yes, the typhoon is very bad for the tangerine farmers,” Silver replies, “it ruins all their crops and causes a lot of damage... but now, even the farmers pray for a typhoon.”

I would soon learn how much this typhoon prayer symbolized the state of Jeju Island’s demilitarization movement. With more than seven years of struggle against the construction of a US/South Korean naval base in the pristine waters of Gangjeong Village, the activists long for a force powerful enough to stop this destruction. So far it hasn’t been enough that 94% of the residents of Gangjeong Village voted against the naval base; or that Gureombi Rock, the most sacred piece of land for the villagers, is now being exploded with dynamite by the navy; or that the waters are protected by international law because they are within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve; or that fewer than 120 bottlenose dolphins remain in the island and their habitat, as well as that of other endangered species, is threatened by the construction; or that the largest temperate coral forest in the world, off the coast of Gangjeong, has already started to die since construction began in 2011; or that the navy has broken countless environmental laws in building the base; or that thousands have blocked the gates to the base and marched in protest for the past seven years; or that Jeju Island has been declared “the Island of World Peace” by the South Korean government. So far, the naval base construction has persisted.

Many of the religious organizations of Jeju Island have responded to the naval base construction by holding their ceremonies at the gates, blocking the trucks from entering. Every single day for more than two years, Catholic priests have held mass at the gates of the base, under order from the bishop. Every day but Sundays other activists bow 100 times facing the gates, praying for an end to construction and for the larger awakening that all life is interdependent.

These ceremonies are held at the gates for two reasons: the citizens of Gangjeong Village recognize this as a way to peacefully protest every day, but more importantly, the site of the naval base construction cuts off entirely the public access to Gureombi Rock, which is where such ceremonies have been held for hundreds of years. Gureombi Rock is the most sacred space in the village and the people of Gangjeong believe the rock is alive. As currently imprisoned activist, Yang Yoon Mo, said: “This is the only place on the island where rocks are friendly to people.” And Yang Yoon Mo fought for their preservation with his own body, climbing under construction trucks and laying down in their path until the courts sentenced him to 18 months in prison. Risking their lives and their freedom to stop the environmental destruction and encroaching militarism is not a foreign concept for the activists of Gangjeong. Every day they face possible arrest, injury, or even death as they demonstrate at the gates.

In addition to embodying the absolute fearlessness necessary for a successful nonviolent campaign, the activists of Gangjeong also have a profound understanding that life on earth is not made up of individual destinies, but rather one interconnected whole where the wellbeing of one is inextricably bound to the wellbeing of all. During my third week in the village, I watched as Father Mun stayed back at the end of the daily mass and continued to block the gates alone. The police officer directing traffic motioned for the construction trucks to drive into the gate anyway. A lumbering truck with wheels up to my shoulder screeched to a halt just short of crushing Father Mun. A few moments after the incident, I asked him if he ever felt afraid when the trucks drive in. He offered me the most deeply joyous grin and said simply: “No. I am Gureombi Rock. You are Gureombi Rock. If I allow the navy to kill Gureombi Rock, it also kills me, it also kills you.”

In this and many more ways, the activists are also familiar with “the law of suffering”, where one volunteers to endure suffering in order to awaken and transform their opponent.
After the Jeju Island courts unfairly sentenced Kang Bu-Eon, an elderly man with early stages of Alzheimer’s as well as other medical needs, to 8 months in prison, the activist community got creative. In less than two weeks they gathered signatures from 70 villagers who volunteered to serve one month in prison in exchange for the release of the elderly man. Just weeks after the mayor of Gangjeong submitted the petitions, the courts relented and freed Kang Bu-Eon.

During the fourth week of my stay in the village, Hoejangnim, the woman who leads the daily 100 bows, informed me: “the typhoon is coming tomorrow...” she paused, searching for the English words to explain further. I expected she would continue with something like “there will be no activities at the gate tomorrow, stay inside” but instead she continued with a cheerful smile, “we will celebrate the typhoon tonight here with drinks. You will come.”

The activists of Gangjeong Village understand that their fight against the largest naval base project in East Asia is not solely about protecting their island from being dragged into every future Pacific conflict. As they sing at the end of every daily mass: “Gangjeong you are the tiniest of villages/ but peace for all the world will come from you.” While we recognize all their efforts to fight destruction, we must also recognize all their constructive efforts to promote peace. Jeju Island is also famous for the absence of three things: no fences, no beggars, and no crime. During my six weeks in Gangjeong I was absolutely amazed by the culture of peace that thrives within that 1,900 person village. If we allow this navy base to overtake Gangjeong Village, it will not just be 1,900 lives displaced. Everyone on earth will lose this small island of peace, and we cannot afford to let what Gangjeong has to teach us be destroyed. As they pray for the typhoon, let us descend in waves from all corners of the world with our awareness and our action. Let peace live in Gangjeong and the world.
Nuns and activists dance in front of the naval base every morning.
1. How did you prepare for your trip? Any concerns about getting access or worries about being denied entry?
I practiced eating kimchi and rice a lot (laughs). Along with the logistical preparations, I also had to keep my social profile quite low. Many activists in the past, such as members from Veterans for Peace, have been denied entry into South Korea due to their support. So, yes I was quite concerned.

2. Activists are often caught up in trials; fines are imposed, were you subjected to any police harassment?
Yes, I was actually served a fine as well for 600,000 won. I received the fine by monitoring the construction site by kayak to see if any environmental laws were broken.

3. How did you contribute to the movement?
In addition to monitoring the base, I also helped the local villagers maintain their lifestyle through constructive work. The real work, however, is reporting back to the US of what is currently happening there. I’m currently in the process of writing several articles about the movement, its history and my time spent there. Anything to spread the word, really; radio shows, organizing local articles in Santa Rosa, and so on.

4. Do you think the presence of international activists boost the movement? How does it help or how can other activists support the movement?
Yes, definitely. I arrived soon after a major crackdown that occurred on May 10th. The police destroyed the villagers tents and signs. Their morale was quite low. I felt as though my presence helped boost the mood there. Just being there, alone, helps them know that they are not alone. This is the most important thing anyone can do to help the movement.

5. Being part of the movement, do you think it has reached a stalemate? What is the future of the movement?
I think a cohesive, strategic plan needs to be implemented. Such a plan, I think, needs to address questions about the future of the movement as a whole. For example, should the movement focus merely on symbolic protest? Or, should the movement focus on physical obstruction and civil disobedience? How should constructive programme play a role with the obstructive side of things? I tend to have a bias, which is sympathetic of the Metta Center, against mere symbolism. Certain measures, as with any movement, need to be put in place for a common goal. With this done, I don’t see how the movement could fail.

6. What kind of constructive programs are in place in the movement?
Gangjeong village is quite possibly the greatest example of constructive programme I’ve seen in the modern world. Everyone is fed with healthy food for breakfast, lunch and dinner all for free. In addition to food, no one goes without shelter. Such amenities are provided by the Catholic Church and the local government. All of this is a means to help the movement with its basic needs. Additionally, libraries have been set up with a recent import of 40,000 books from mainland Korea. Schools have been organized as a means to show internationals the history of the movement struggle. And farms are organized to maintain costs as well. The movement in Gangjeong is not a temporary thing for them, it’s a way of life. Everything is organized as a means to rebel against the naval base, both constructively and obstructively.

7. How did the movement influence you as an individual, as an activist?
It opened my eyes to the harm of indigenous people by the US military. Nobody wants their home taken away from them. Nobody wants their culture and lifestyle destroyed. Yet, it’s still happening on a daily basis. Check out the website www.savejejunow.com

**Peaceworkers is a San Francisco NGO who mission is to support, strengthen and promote nonviolent movements for peace and justice and nonviolent peacemaking efforts in the US and around the world, helps identify suitable volunteers who wish to go to Jeju and help tell the world the story of this courageous and determined struggle. Peaceworkers has helped send 10 volunteers from four different countries over the last 14 months. If you think you would like to go to Jeju Island and provide witness and solidarity - as well as to help spread the story - please write to Jan Passion <janpassion1@gmail.com> To learn more about Peaceworkers, please visit www.peaceworkersus.org/ To view some of the blogs, articles, videos, and other resources on Jeju island, go to:**
http://tinyurl.com/VolunteerJeju
Welcome to the Educator’s Corner! In this regular column, we’ll explore ways that we can integrate nonviolence into our teaching and learning environments, regardless of subject area or setting, through ideas, lesson plans, and other resources. This week I’d like to start with the basics - an idea that is so simple it is perhaps almost implied by the very nature of this column, but is so important that it bears repeating and emphasizing: the key to integrating nonviolence in the classroom (and life, for that matter) is to learn about nonviolence.

In my personal experience in a variety of educational settings, my own studies and understanding of nonviolence have been the most important factor in my ability to integrate nonviolence in the classroom. When you study nonviolence in-depth, you are able to tap into a well of knowledge and experience left to us by the great practitioners such as Gandhi, King, and many others. In the sustainability class I taught last semester at San Diego City College, it was helpful to be able to reference Gandhi in our class discussions, and to refer to stories that I knew about Gandhi, King, and others who gave us embodied examples of nonviolence through their lives and work. While on certain days we did focus on some specific aspects of nonviolence (constructive and obstructive program, Metta’s Roadmap tool, for example), I found it to be most effective to bring nonviolence all the time, and spontaneously. Rather than have nonviolence be something we study on certain days or at certain times, nonviolence was a thread running through everything we did and talked about, from our classroom culture to the concepts we studied. By the end of the semester, students were quoting Gandhi and King in their final papers and journals, which were about their relationship with the environment. Hearing them articulate nonviolent solutions to our environmental crisis gives me hope for the world!
As your study of nonviolence deepens, it becomes less about something that you teach or integrate, and is rather a part of everything that you do in the classroom, from relationships to grading to developing curriculum. Depending on your setting, you might find tension between nonviolence and the system or structures that you work in (for example, how grades or discipline are conducted may be violent). Seeing this tension will hopefully guide you to find opportunities for change (such as through alternative assessment and restorative justice programs, for example). When nonviolence becomes your way of life, “integrating” it in the classroom becomes seamless.

To begin integrating nonviolence in your classroom, start by learning everything that you can about nonviolence. A great place to start is with Michael Nagler’s book, Search for a Nonviolent Future, as well as Eknath Easwaran’s book, Gandhi the Man. These two books will give you a solid foundation in nonviolence and will also help you to better understand Gandhi. They will also hopefully pique your interest to learn more!

The Metta website is also a vast trove of information on nonviolence. However, if you feel overwhelmed to chart your own path, don’t worry - we can help you! Please contact education@mettacenter.org if you would like to enroll in a course of study through the Metta Center’s year-long Certificate in Nonviolence Studies or if you would like us to help develop a customized learning plan.

Another key resource and source of inspiration for educators is Michael Nagler’s talk on the Five Pillars of Education. This podcast (and associated transcript, if you would prefer to read it) provides a foundation for any educator to contemplate how they might integrate nonviolence into their setting using five broad principles. These pillars will be making recurring appearances in this column, so it’s great to familiarize yourself with them!

Additionally, if you are already using nonviolence in your classroom and would like to share your story with the Metta community, or if you are aware of resources for nonviolence educators that we should let others know about, please let us know! Email education@mettacenter.org with any stories or suggestions.

Stay tuned for the next edition in which we will explore using media to teach about nonviolence.

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