

Prison Letter from Park Seung-Ho

By Park Seung-Ho, who has been imprisoned since September 14. He is currently on trial.

I'm doing very well because of many people's support, encouragement and donations. Thanks for the good letters and newspapers and money as well. I have been moved to a private cell. I asked to move because the TV disturbs me too much. The prison accepted my request after I petitioned.

I've finished the National Human Rights Commission investigation about letter censorship by the prison. I cannot guess what the result will be. I have thought to prepare some legal action, but I don't know what I should do, the law has not been important in my life. Give me an idea if you have one.

My private cell is about 4.6 meters squared and does not have sunshine. An hour of exercise time is the only time i can enjoy sunshine. Try to find a good spot to get sunshine and jump rope. Ironic since I used to avoid the sun as much as I could last summer.

I think I am going to be in jail for 6 months. The trial has been postponed. I am not very interested in my trial, but I should definitely pay attention to how the prosecution and the police handle things. I send big solidarity and wish peace for the village of Gangjeong, Take Care!



Image: Carole Rockinger
Everyday, twice a day, Oh Cheul Geun walks “three steps, one bow” around the perimeter of the base site wearing traditional funeral clothes. He is mourning the death of four things: The death of the sovereignty of Korea, the death of human rights, the death of democracy, the killing of Gureombi Rock.

We Want to Arm Gangjeong Village with Literature

A group of 265 novelists, poets, playwrights, and writers nationwide have proposed a plan for a Peace Library Project in Gangjeong village. “Writers Action 1219” held proposal ceremony in front of the Jeju Naval Base project construction gate on November 21. 23 representatives from the group attended and joined the civil disobedience campaign, joined by activists, villagers, and Catholic fathers. They stated that they discuss and decide on the budget and detailed plan by the end of February. Following that, for one month they will make an organizing committee to discuss the actualization of the project. Then they will buckle down and begin the project on April 1. Author Hyun Ki-Young, representing the writers group, said, “We came here to comfort the Gangjeong villagers who are exhausted after 5 years of struggle. Just as our elders had to fight against the Yushin Regime [Dictator/President Park Chung-Hee’s administration] we too are thinking of peace. We hope that new life can blossom in place of the naval base.” At the end of the ceremony they held a performance, passing out books to the police (who refused them) and then had a meeting with the villagers.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- 1. Consider making a donation to support our international outreach and public education efforts. Visit savejejunow.org/donate/ to donate.
- 2. Write letters to Gangjeong's prisoners of conscience (See page 3). Address letters to: Jeju Prison, 161 Ora-2dong, Jeju City, Jeju the Peace Island, Korea
- 3. Stay updated on the resistance by joining the "No Naval Base on Jeju!" and "Save Jeju" Facebook pages. Follow @SaveJejuNow for the most recent developments on Twitter. Also watch #gangjeong and #gangjeung - then re-tweet.
- 4. Call the Korean Embassy in your country and let them know that Jeju does not want a naval base! The militarization of Jeju Island runs contrary to its designation as the "Island of World Peace." 94% of village residents voted no!
- 5. Email Jeju Island Governor Woo Keun-Min and tell him how you feel about the military base being built on the pristine "Island of World Peace." He should ORDER the navy to halt construction (destruction) and use his official power to cancel the Navy's license for reclamation of public water and its adjacent surface along the Gureombi Rock coast! Contact him at: lmw2828@jeju.go.kr or jejumaster@jeju.go.kr
- 6. Pressure the ROK National Assembly to cut the whole budget of the Jeju naval base. Contact english@assembly.go.kr or Moon Jae-In, Permanent Advisor, Democratic United party, Presidential candidate: moonriver365@gmail.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<http://www.savejejunow.org> (English)
<http://www.facebook.com/SaveJeju> (English / Korean)
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/nonavalbase> (English)
<http://twitter.com/SaveJejuNow> (English)
<http://cafe.daum.net/peacekj> (Korean / English / Mandarin)

For Gangjeong related videos, visit savejejunow.org or check these Youtube sites:
[1234y100](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1234y100) / [Dopeheadn](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dopeheadn) / [Sungbong2012](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sungbong2012) / [ShealEum](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShealEum) / [Regis Tremblay](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RegisTremblay)

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Image: Catholic News Now and Here

A crowd of around 900 Catholics packed into the Jeju Central Cathedral to hear Bishop Kang speak and join together in solidarity and prayer for the release of peace prisoners and for the peace of Jeju.

CATHOLICS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF FR. LEE SJ

By Regina Pyon

On November 12th, a catholic mass was held in Jeju Central Cathedral to honor Jesuit Priest Fr. Lee Young-Chan SJ and the four peace activists currently doing prison time for their peace activities, putting their bodies in the way of cement trucks or climbing up the caisson floating dock.

Bishop Peter Kang U-Il of the Jeju diocese, chairperson of the Korean Catholic Bishops' Conference, officiated the mass saying, “It is truly heartbreaking for all of us to see them in prison. Police power, which should protect life and serve the people, has trampled on and ignored the will of the people who have been persistently opposing and resisting for this long period of 6 years..Gangjeong is located in the farthest place from the 38th parallel, the South and North Korean border. Is it so necessary to build a naval base in such a place for the sake of national security? We cannot but see that the objective of the Jeju naval base is to build a new strategic base jointly operated with the U.S. to maintain strategic superiority of Northeast Asia to contain China.”

The Bishop finished his homily given to the approximately 900 people gathered saying, “There is no such this as just war. War is the worst choice which makes people lose their humanity and fill its place with violence and hatred...We have to appeal, shout and pray with all our strength for the cessation of the naval base construction which is preparation for war.”

At the end of the mass, a video urging for the release of Fr. Lee SJ was shown and Fr. Lee's letter from prison was read. In the letter, Fr. Lee wrote, “I have read many letters from prison but never imagined that I myself would write letters from inside prison. A year ago, I traveled to Jeju island and came to see Gangjeong Village. The situation there exemplifies the pains of this age, so I began living in Gangjeong with the villagers. This is the reason I'm here in prison...This base is being built in an already volatile region and will only serve to increase military tensions. In solidarity with all other countries, S. Korea must take a leading role in seeking the path of peace, co-existence, disarmament, and the easing of tensions, not in building war bases.”



Front headline images source: Emily Wang. Villagers and activists shave thier heads in protest of the 2013 naval base project budget.
Back image sources: Hwang Hyun-Jin, Cho Sung-Bong, Lee Woo-Ki, Jang Hyun-Woo



CUT THE BUDGET, STOP THE BASE

By Oh Hye-Ran, National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island (Excerpted from a longer article)

In 2011, The National Assembly cut 96% of the Jeju Naval Base Budget. The budget was cut as a reprimand for the slapdash base layout and to encourage the halt of the construction so that a verification of the flawed layout could happen.

A year later, it has been disclosed that there are many more problems in the layout, even for the entry and exit of military vessels, not to mention cruise ships, of this so-called “civilian military complex port”. It has also been

disclosed that the base is in being built following standards demanded by the CNFK (Commander of US Naval Forces of Korea), so that U.S. aircraft carriers can enter the port.

Furthermore, it was disclosed that the government put pressure on the [supposedly independent] Technical Verification Committee for the port and at the National Policy Control meeting (Feb. 19, 2012) when the Government decided to resume construction based on an incorrect base simulation.

Even with just these few exposed facts about the technical verification process

alone, the base construction should be stopped. However, the Lee Myung-Bak administration is enforcing the construction, ignoring the National Assembly's recommendations, and hiding, distorting and manipulating the facts. This is because the biggest support of his government comes from the military, Samsung, civil engineering and building contractors, and military expansionists whose power relies on division and the Korean War.

At the end of this year, the 2013 budget of the Jeju Naval Base project was the hottest issue at the National Assembly. The ruling Saenuri Party sought to ap-

prove the entire 201 billion won budget and the opposition Democratic United Party wanted to cut it entirely. However, on Nov. 28, the majority Saenuri party railroaded the budget through the preparatory review, despite great protests from the people.

To cut the entire budget of the base would be a huge step towards stopping construction. The National Assembly examination on the budget will conclude right after the Presidential election on Dec. 19th. It may well be an important watershed moment for the struggle, deciding the future of the resistance against the base project.

ANTI-BASE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT SPREADS

Since Professor Shin Yong-In began a new public civil disobedience movement on November 11, “for the peaceful settlement of the conflict of the Jeju naval base project and for realization of just law”, the movement has spread widely. The idea and action of the campaign is not really different from the already ongoing nonviolent struggle against the base, but its new name and clear approach are bringing fresh life to the Gangjeong peace movement. Shortly after the initiation of the campaign, the Gangjeong villagers also released a statement saying they were in agreement with the new campaign and would be joining as well.

Those that formally join in the civil disobedience campaign, based on the actions of Gandhian Satyagraha and the ideas of Henry Thoreau, choose to reject all forms of violence, choose to not hate the perpetrators of unjust power (ie. police officers and navy personnel), and choose to suffer whatever unjust punishments are dealt out for their civil disobedience actions.

The movement also makes the following demands: The government should respect the constitution which protects people's basic rights. The Jeju naval base project should be revoked since it is enforced through lies, betrayal, illegality, law-evasiveness, and violence. The 200.9 billion won 2013 base budget should be cut. The government, navy, and police should immediately stop their violence. All political prisoners of conscience should be freed. Those people related to the problems exposed with the base construction during the National Assembly inspections should be charged.

Hopefully, the movement will continue to grow with the urgent appeal of Professor Shin, “I appeal to all Jeju island people and citizens to have courage and join the civil-disobedience movement. I urgently ask you to join us until this Jeju naval base project conflict is peaceful settled and just law stands.”



Image: Park Young-In

Polluted water from the construction site runs off into the formerly pristine Gangjeong Stream, also the new home of the (poorly relocated) endangered fresh water Jeju Shrimp who lived in Gureombi.

Chomsky: Fate of Jeju important in the ROK Election

By Noam Chomsky, sent to Gangjeong regarding the ROK presidential election.

There is no doubt that the December 19 election will be an event of great importance for South Korea and the region, with broader implications as well. The people of South Korea have an opportunity to go forward on a path of peace and reconciliation, despite all the barriers on the way. Or to choose confrontation, militarism, and serious threats reaching as far as possible destruction. One very important consideration should be the fate of Jeju Island, where the population has been struggling courageously for years against military projects that are undermining their hopes that Jeju will truly be an “Island of World Peace.” These projects not on have highly destructive effects on the environment and on the lives of the people of the island, but also sow the seeds of dangerous conflict, even potential superpower conflict. I hope and trust that voters will have such matters foremost in their minds when they cast their ballots.



Rev. Jeong Yeong-Gil and Park Suk-Jin released from prison

On December 12, Rev. Jeong Yeon-Gil and Mr. Park Suk-Jin, were released on bail from Jeju Prison after 98 days of confinement. On the opening day of the World Conservation Congress, September 6, they and three others climbed up and occupied a caisson floating dock in Hwasoon port. Samsung, one of main sponsors of the WCC makes the 8,800 ton caissons in Hwasoon and brings them to Gangjeong for the base construction.

It is common for the police and prosecutors to charge the non-violent protesters of Gangjeong with charges of violence. The judicial system of Korea is tainted by the influence of the Government, military, and large corporations. On Dec. 11, The National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island has filed again an appeal letter to the UN on the human rights situation in Gangjeong.

Their bodies are covered in bruises but they still smile

By Carole R. (Carole spent a month in Gangjeong, taking pictures to document the daily struggles)

“Take the bus 600 and get off in Gangjeong. If you don’t hear the announce-ment just look out for the yellow flags adorning most houses” was my instruction before getting to Jeju. I arrived right on time for the daily 11 o’clock catholic mass and could witness immediately a police crackdown, and the violence used against the peaceful protesters. Day after day, for my 4 weeks of stay I witnessed hour upon hour the same courageous blockade of the entrance to the construction site, and the disproportionate police reaction to it.

Standing by, just taking pictures and documenting the struggle was hard at times. Witnessing the hourly violence committed against the protesters made me feel very helpless and sad. During my last week a direct action took place where three peace activists got arrested. Hearing one protester chained underneath the car screaming in pain when the police tried to pull him out will stay with me forever.

I am profoundly marked by the courage of the villagers and peace activists, and deeply admire their willpower to get up after every police raid and just do it all over again. The November wind was cold, and it was raining often, but a group of people sleep in the cold every night to work against what they believe is a deep injustice. Their bodies are covered in bruises, but they still smile and always come up with new creative ways to block the gate. No one is talking about giving up or resigning to the situation.

The seemingly endless line of cement trucks entering every hour, are a very sad sight. With every truck entering, the hope that construction will be halted is dwindling a little more. I often thought, how convenient. Private companies are making huge profits from this construction, and they get free protection by tax-paid police presence. I am very happy though that there are still people, like the villagers and peace-activists in Gangjeong, who fight with all their energy to halt environmental destruction, violence and corporate greed.



The SKY Act Daehanmoon Protest Village in Seoul. Even in freezing weather, people from Gangjeong, Ssangyong, and Yongsan have been camping across from Seoul City Hall since the end of the Grand March.

RECKLESS BASE CONSTRUCTION CAUSING ACCIDENTS

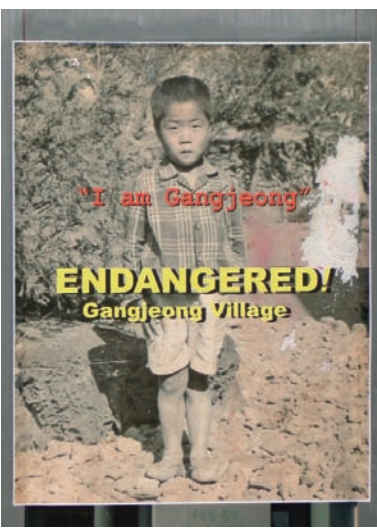
The hurried and badly done construction of the base is again taking its toll. During strong wind and waves, in the dark of the early morning of November 26, a 45 ton Samsung C&T tugboat, which had around 10,000 liters of gasoline onboard, struck a broken caisson about 100 meters from the Gureombi coast.

The broken caisson in question was one of the 7 caisson which were destroyed during Typhoon Bolaven last August. Despite the Navy’s plan to use over 100 caissons in the construction of the breakwater piers, it is well known that the topography of the south Jeju Sea makes caisson use in construction a terrible and unsafe choice.

Although the exact amount is not known, the crash caused gasoline of a large volume to leak into the once pure Gangjeong sea. Later, crews were seen dumping oil spill containment chemicals into the water. Mysteriously, the Coast Guard was not contacted until 7 hours after the accident. Fortunately all seven of the crew were rescued. The Captain has been charged with several violations including environmental contamination.

Unfortunately, a worse tragedy struck just a few days later, on November 28, with the accidental death of Chief Mate Kim, 43, of a different tugboat, the 216 ton Jungseungho. As the boat was pulling a barge returning from Gangjeong to Hwasoon, a heavy rope suddenly snapped striking Mr. Kim in the head. He was knocked into the water then promptly rescued, but died a few hours later in Seog-wipo Medical Center.

Amazingly, the Navy says they do not have any plan to remove the destroyed caissons soon, saying it’s not urgent and does not bring any environmental damage.



ART OF PEACE
ART ACTIVISM IN GANGJEONG

Many artists have joined the opposition movement against the Jeju naval base construction in Gangjeong. It's not only Jeju artists but artists from across the nation. Countless artists have been visiting the village and Gureombi Rock over the last 5 years. From September 6-15, during the World Conservation Congress, Many art activists living in Gangjeong spread their art work around the area on the theme of “life”. From Gangjeong to the WCC venue, the International Convention Center in Jungmun, They made and put on murals, performances, paintings, installations, posters, graffiti, T-Shirts, and concerts. In the naval base construction site in the village, they countered navy and police oppression with art. At the WCC site, they courageously staged performances despite pressure and interruption from the Korean Government. It moved many IUCN members lately. The opposition movement against the base grew greatly through this Movement for Life.

- Jeju artist, Kob Gil-Chun



Image: Association for Cherishing the Memory of Martyr, Yang Yong-Chan
Tragically self-immolated in 1991, martyr Yang Yong-Chan words were amazingly prescient, “Since I aspire for Jeju to be a place for our lives and a nest for our livelihood rather than a 2nd Hawaii, a global tour site that exploits our flesh & bones and makes us play-things, I walk this way crying for the end of the Jeju Special Law, abolition of the 2nd overall development plan, and the smashing of the Minjadang [Democratic Freedom Party, ruling conservative right-wing party from 1990 to 1995].”

Yonaguni: Dilemmas of a Frontier Island in the East China Sea

By Gavan McCormack, emeritus professor, Australian National University. Excerpted from a longer article appearing in The Asia-Pacific Journal

[...] Yonaguni is the island farthest from Japan “proper”...closer to Taiwan’s capital of Taipei...than it is to the Okinawan prefectural capital of Naha, much less the national capital. On a clear day, Taiwan’s mountains can be seen from its shore.

It is...a small island, with a perimeter of 27.5 kilometres. The island nevertheless boasts a rich culture and its own language, dunan munui, which is in fact not a “dialect” of Japanese but a distinctive language...However, Yonaguni pays a price for location at the farthest periphery and on this frontier. It has long suffered fiscal, demographic, social, and economic crises, complicated now by military and strategic pressure.

The heavy US military presence on...Okinawa...already...challenges China, but as of now there are no military installations in the 500 to 600 kilometre stretch of sea that extends from there to the southwest. Undefined, they were peaceful and secure throughout the Cold War [Yonaguni had just two police officers]. The new US and Japanese plans call for a fundamental change to turn these islands into a hostile barrier. [...]

[...] Yonaguni has striven to find a formula that would allow it to maintain island autonomy but in cooperation with neighbour states in some form of relatively “open-border,” regional cooperation frame, eschewing confrontation and militarization. [However the Japanese central government has not been interested in this, instead forcing (politically and economically) the islanders toward militarization] [...] Yonaguni Island may be tiny, with a population of just 1,500, but it and its adjacent Yacayama island group find themselves facing pressures for which history has no precedent and the rest of Japan little understanding. What Yonaguni residents really want is not a detachment of soldiers but a High School, which would help slow the outflow of the island’s 15-year olds, and a freeing of controls to allow regular commercial, tourism and educational exchanges with Taiwan and East China. Neither Japan’s national planners nor its Washington allies have any sympathy for such aspirations. Instead regional defense plans on which both agree call for steady increase in military presence and confrontation with China throughout the frontier sea zone. Yonaguni...joins...Okinawa, on the frontier of a struggle that grows in intensity and has implications for the whole of Japan and the surrounding region.

GANGJEONG PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Please write letters of support to

Since June 14

No. 598

Mr. Kim Bok-Chul

Since Sept. 6

No. 187

Rev. Jeong Yeon-Gil

Since Sept. 6

No. 188

Mr. Park Suk-Jin

Since Sept. 14

No. 290

Mr. Park Seung-Ho

Since Oct. 24

No. 407

Fr. Lee Young-Chan

Jeju Prison, 161, Ora-2 dong, Jeju City, Jeju the Peace Island, Korea