URGE, once again, that Professor Yang be immediately released, and free to continue his just and courageous protests against the base on Jeju Island, designated a "Peace Island." 

Free Yang Yoon-Mo Says Noam Chomsky!

I understand that Professor Yang Yoon-Mo is still imprisoned for maintaining his opposition to the construction of the Jeju naval base, and is now at the 44th day of his hunger strike in protest against the base and his sentencing. I would like to urge, once again, that Professor Yang be immediately released, and free to move to his just and courageous protests against the base on Jeju Island, designated an "island of peace." 

Free Yang Yoon-Mo says Noam Chomsky!

"I came to Gangjeong in part because of the allure of its simplicity. I would come to Gangjeong because I sensed somehow that the beauty of simple answers is often the path to truth. And in Gangjeong I am home to work for peace, live plainly yet fully to what is right. For example, the banner that says 'YOU CANNOT THINK LOVE (& PEACE) WHEN HOLDING WEAPONS' is a clear and straightforward message. What could be more simple yet so true?"

Your Peace Performance in front of the naval base gate.

BUT approx. $280,000 USD (1 USD = 1,000 KRW) GVS, Feb. 2013, the 'damage compensation fee' is NOT approx. $30,000 USD. *CORRECTION: In last month’s article, ‘Severe Judicial Oppression’ page 3, By Violin, Hawaii (one of the members of the July 2011 protest movement), she wrote: ‘You Cannot Think Love When Holding Weapons’ (A Peace Performance in front of the naval base gate). 

Gangjeong Village Story

ONE YEAR AFTER

You Cannot Think Love When Holding Weapons

By Violin, Hawaii

I came to Gangjeong in part because of the allure of its simplicity. I would come to Gangjeong because I sensed somehow that the beauty of simple answers is often the path to truth. And in Gangjeong I am home to work for peace, live plainly yet fully to what is right. For example, the banner that says ‘YOU CANNOT THINK LOVE (& PEACE) WHEN HOLDING WEAPONS’ is a clear and straightforward message. What could be more simple yet so true?"

The oppression on international activists started in earnest around this time.

Seoul Tent Protest Village Fire

By Regina Pyun

The tented protest village set up at Dachadang, near City Hall in Seoul was burned to the ground in the early hours of March 3. This was a symbolic place for the labor movement in Korea in recent times and was home to SKY (Sungkyok, Gyeonggi, Yongin, Guri), a social movement. It held a special place in the memory of Sungkyok workers in particular who had a beautiful memorial shrine erected in honor of their 24 comrades who died in the course of the struggle for justice and whose memory and families and fellow workers were determined to keep alive and whose inspiration drove them on in the struggle for justice for the nearly 30000 members who were the victims of mass layoffs. This special place and the innumerable memories and tears it represents was raised to the ground in a fire and according to the suspect who was apprehended and is currently undergoing investigation he happened to be looking at it and seeing how ‘ligh’ the tented village looked he decided to set it on fire. It has ‘arson’ written all over it as far as we are concerned but we await the results of the official investigation with interest.

The blast period was fully called as the 2nd 4.3 as huge numbers of the main land members of the ruling party as the Government was carrying out serious political fraud to conduct the blast. For 2 months, the navy blasted about 10% of Gureombi Rock, a designated preservation area as part of the Jeju naval base construction. The blast period was fully called as the 2nd 4.3 as huge numbers of the main land police were mobilized to mercilessly suppress the Island people’s struggle and it is obvious that the United States is behind the project.

Numerous human rights violations occurred. Just in the first 28 days alone, the number of arrests were 90 while 20 people were injured and carried to the hospital due to arrests. Without which peace has no meaning. Thank you for letting me dance and play music with you. In Gangjeong I learned to think with my heart. Thank you.

In Solidarity, Violin

"CORRECTION: In last months article, ‘Severe Judicial Oppression’ page 3, GVS, Feb. 2013, the ‘damage compensation fee’ is NOT approx. $30,000 USD BUT approx. $280,000 USD (1 USD = 1,000 KRW)"
Those days in Gangjeong, just a year ago, were so intense. It seemed as if the whole village was our prison, supported by many others from Jeju and the mainland — hundreds of people protesting around this side. Every moment filled with meetings, demonstrations, constant blockades, songs, dances, inter-views, political lobbying and the thousands of police matching with their repressive batons and shields, people being beaten and arrested. And too few hours of sleep until I caught up in the police cells!

I remember well that beautiful moonlit night paddling out with 3 other kayaks. The sea calm and beautiful, being with friends, trying to reconcile this loveliness with the horrors of the monstrous naval base slowly appearing in front of us. 3 of 50’s tiny lights pooke in front of the blanket of darkness. We arrived at 5:30 a.m. 5 hours before we entered the morning, waving our flags to be visible. Soon others, from the other action group, joined us. 14 of us were near the blaring area but not close enough and it was harrowing-being unable to stop the explosions. Most of us were crying. It was a terrible moment to hear the blast and see the pollution rising into the air. We swam back to the port late in the afternoon, tired and cold, and went to join the blockade and share the grief.

Over the following days the protest continued and I joined in the next stages of the struggle – serious physical de-construction protest work – breaking down fences, climbing trees, disabling machinery, cutting cables.

These necessary acts of civil resistance will continue and the struggle will never end until this war base and all war bases around the world are pulled down and transformed into natural reserves.

A Quest for Harmony

By Benjamin Minner

Too many decision makers ignore that human culture must harmoniously embrace Nature to sustain itself in the long term. In South-Korea, beset by the pressures and immorality of corporate power, we are not fighting the base on the Jeju Island natives. Blinded by greed or anger, warmongers do not observe the threat brought by wars. Weakened by fear, some ‘infiltrators’ refuse to walk for sustainable harmony on Earth. By launching “Gangjeong Village International Team,” we worked to alert International Press and “Greenpeace” movement.

While living and rescuing with villagers, I was deceived to death and beaten several times, by police or troops. But no chance was given to me to carry our justice in court…Thus after 9 months, I was secretly and illegally deported. They didn’t let me make a phonecall to my companion, or even bring my dog, clothes, computer and money…At the airport, 11 agents surrounded me. It took 6 hours to convince a flight company to offer a seat, while I was locked underground in a barred van. I landed in France dressed with clothes given in jail. To reach my hometown, I had no other choice than to pay for food, cash and warm clothes with flash. They warned me not to ever come Korea anymore. An activist said I was banned for 5 years, but I was never given any official notice. What to think about this?…Adding that my partner is Korean and currently works there. Therefore, I’d like to offer his humanity in our struggles “silly.” This is to offer these struggles in a most respectable manner, may we rely on ourselves, with our thoughts to lighten our thoughts and to sharpen our weapons within the public sanctuary of ACTION.

In order to stop the wars that are being waged and paved over all the planet,

LET’S ACT NOW!!

By the way, do you quest for Harmony too?

Gangjeong Winter School for Peace

By Gangjeong Village Story

In order to reach out and involve more outside people, Gangjeong opened 3 different weekly sessions for peace school in January and February. Although the main purpose was to raise awareness about the suffering people of Gangjeong at the hands of the nation, the Winter School for Peace also aimed to encourage participations to realize the preciseness of peace and take a stand as peace builders.

The 1st day of school started at the 4.5 Peace Park, several historical sites of the 4.5 massacre and futuro formations such as Aldikru Arfield. The 2nd day began with the Gangjeong struggle, meeting with villagers and touring sites. The 3rd day, partici-pants joined the SOS Team to experience ocean protest and monitoring. The 4th day focused on more peace building methods: community organizing and environmental protection in farm labor. The 5th day, participants learned more about Gangjeong protest activi-ties and engaged in direct action. The final day, hike up Halla Mountain to reflect on the 4.5 massacre when the people of Jeju were forced to hide in the mountains. Halla is also one of Korea’s symbolic mountains for peace and reconciliation.

Over the 3 sessions, participants ranged from young teenagers to older adults in their 70’s. I was impressed by the small group, though the immense setting to understand more deeply. Participant feedback was positive because they broadened their perspectives and realized that building peace is not something only for special people but that there are many ways, even small, that anyone can contribute to peace.

A Bit of Magic and Some Loss

By AT, a peace activist from the U.S. who visited Gangjeong Village recently

I arrive in Gangjeong on a bright, sunny winter afternoon. Hallasan is clearly outlined against the sky, the tarangetine grooves in full orange bloom, the villagers are selling fresh fish on the street. Just like any Jeju coastal village, if it weren’t for the yellow flags waving tall on bamboo sticks. If it wasn’t for the wound slowly opening and seeping out into the water. A wound of barbed wire, high wall, concertina, coasters, barbed wires. The bright pink flowers grow in straight proud defiance on the other side of the wall. You can see it all if you walk Offa 7. Talk to the villagers, the activists behind the yellow flags. What you can’t see is the encouraged cannibalistic community.

Don’t worry, it’s all just a big misunderstanding. You’ve been a community for 450 years, but we know what’s best for you and our country. What I saw of Gangjeong was extreme kindness, friendship, love, the Master’s office, the nighttime vigi by a fire at the main gate, the bows, singing and holding hands during daily mass, caring in the communal kitchen, declaration of the Peace Island and how we will make it happen. Then after our yellow flags marched across the city, Professor Yang took us into the sacred water, the Shamanist trees, the places that cannot be touched. “We must be true to our ancestors,” he said, “After we are set over the ports, I set as the edge of Marupal Tiger Island in the distance, water raging. I need to meditate, block out what I know to be right there to my right, behind the man. I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t block it out a few days later, back on the mainland, when I learned that they had taken Professor Yang directly to prison and he had started his third hunger strike. The way he had casually ignored the workers as the guest. Another point is the going on private. It’s a long time for waiting for opening. The naval base construction is the deep wound that divides, depresses, slowly kills Gangjeong. Like other business and military developments around the world, it leads us over the edge of the cliff they call progress. We do not repent.

“ There’s a bit of magic in everything and then some loss to even things out”

-Yang Moom

Trial Updates

The Judicial team of the Jeju Part Island Community to Stop the Military Base and for the Realization of Peace Island reports on March 8 reports that:

1.The total amount of fines for 123 people indicted for the struggles against the Jeju naval base is about 207,000 USD in trial proceedings (including those of the 1st and higher grades) processed in the beginning of 2013.

2. While many people have received the 1st court decisions, most higher court trials will be held from mid-March. Two people including imprisoned Prof. Yang have already been released.

3. The absurd trend is that the prosecution has been inducing activists focusing on the time around the Cardinal Mao, 11 am to 12 pm, especially during last week, when there had been an informational agreement with the police that entry/exit of construction vehicles would be stopped during the man.

4. As the people’s trials are increasing, the heavy burden to a few available lawyer is also reaching a difficult moment.

Another remarkable point is people’s teaching and cooperative efforts to raise funds for fines. Oh Young-Ae, mother of a young activist, Kim Gami, proudly outlined against the sky, the tangerine groves are in full orange bloom, the villagers are selling fresh fish on the street. Just like any Jeju coastal village, if it weren’t for the yellow flags waving tall on bamboo sticks. If it wasn’t for the wound slowly opening and seeping out into the water. A wound of barbed wire, high wall, concertina, coasters, barbed wires. The bright pink flowers grow in straight proud defiance on the other side of the wall. You can see it all if you walk Offa 7. Talk to the villagers, the activists behind the yellow flags. What you can’t see is the encouraged cannibalistic community.

Don’t worry, it’s all just a big misunderstanding. You’ve been a community for 450 years, but we know what’s best for you and our country. What I saw of Gangjeong was extreme kindness, friendship, love, the Master’s office, the nighttime vigi by a fire at the main gate, the bows, singing and holding hands during daily mass, caring in the communal kitchen, declaration of the Peace Island and how we will make it happen. Then after our yellow flags marched across the city, Professor Yang took us into the sacred water, the Shamanist trees, the places that cannot be touched. “We must be true to our ancestors,” he said, “After we are set over the ports, I set as the edge of Marupal Tiger Island in the distance, water raging. I need to meditate, block out what I know to be right there to my right, behind the man. I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t block it out a few days later, back on the mainland, when I learned that they had taken Professor Yang directly to prison and he had started his third hunger strike. The way he had casually ignored the workers as the guest. Another point is the going on private. It’s a long time for waiting for opening. The naval base construction is the deep wound that divides, depresses, slowly kills Gangjeong. Like other business and military developments around the world, it leads us over the edge of the cliff they call progress. We do not repent.

“ There’s a bit of magic in everything and then some loss to even things out”

-Yang Moom

Trial Updates

The Judicial team of the Jeju Part Island Community to Stop the Military Base and for the Realization of Peace Island reports on March 8 reports that:

1.The total amount of fines for 123 people indicted for the struggles against the Jeju naval base is about 207,000 USD in trial proceedings (including those of the 1st and higher grades) processed in the beginning of 2013.

2. While many people have received the 1st court decisions, most higher court trials will be held from mid-March. Two people including imprisoned Prof. Yang have already been released.

3. The absurd trend is that the prosecution has been inducing activists focusing on the time around the Cardinal Mao, 11 am to 12 pm, especially during last week, when there had been an informational agreement with the police that entry/exit of construction vehicles would be stopped during the man.

4. As the people’s trials are increasing, the heavy burden to a few available lawyer is also reaching a difficult moment.

Another remarkable point is people’s teaching and cooperative efforts to raise funds for fines. Oh Young-Ae, mother of a young activist, Kim Gami, proudly reported that she has collected 14,000 USD for young activists, as of mid-Feb, by her fundraising effort with a ‘healing’ snack vendor.