Solidarity is Not a One-Way Gift

By K.J. and Gangjeong Village

On December 3rd, 2013, the City Council of Berkeley voted to support the Peace and Justice Commission’s Resolution in support of the residents of Jeju Island and to End US support for construction of the Jeju Naval Base. Berkeley had already previously passed a resolution earlier this year, calling for a peaceful resolution to the Jeju base.”

Solidarity is not a one-way gift that outsiders bring to a place like Gangjeong Village. Visions and being touched by the vibrant life is a gift. “All this can break our deepest heart, recreate us, strengthen our ‘faith, and move our hope” (Vanier).

When I first visited I appreciated the rhythms of the daily mass and the 100 bow. A priest was gazing out from inside the broken gate by a wall, mouth agape from checking the presence at the main construction gate by a wall of riot police, but finally, after persistent pacing and prayer, he was allowed to pass and serve the Eucharist on the other side. During my 2nd visit, the police repeatedly carried away the priests, nuns and other congregants from the construction entrance, but they returned again and again, as they do every day. I came with friends from Grace and Peace Montessori Church and St. Vincent de Paul Church, who also attended the Mass there together before the human chain, “where there is love and charity, God is there.”

This was my second visit, but it is, I hope, one of many. I feel connected to the community, rather than trusting fickle, dangerous nuclear weapons.

Two weeks later, I was able to reach Gangjeong again with a group of the Berkeley Fellowship of Universalists, the Peace and Justice Commission, the Ecumenical Peace Institute, and others made passionate, informed pleas for support of the resolution. An activist in a wheel chair broke down in tears as she explained the council to support the cause of peace.

As a result, the Berkeley City Council passed a resolution denouncing the construction of the Jeju Naval Base as a violation of the United Nations’ General Assembly Resolution 1803, the principle of non-intervention, and the principle of the right to self-determination. The resolution was introduced by Assemblywoman Hana Kim, originally from South Korea, and a supporter of the anti-base movement with a sign calling for the resignation of South Korean president Lee Myung-bak.

Berkeley’s solidarity with the villages of Gangjeong in their opposition to the construction of this Naval Base and urges the Obama Administration and Congress to stop construction of the Jeju Naval Base as a first step toward a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula and East Asia. The vote was nearly unanimous with 714 in favor and 16 opposed.

In response to the resolutions, Mayor Kuei issued a statement, “...Gangjeong Village, hearing a greater hope, promises that we will live with more ardor the day when Jeju Island becomes the true Peace Island and Gangjeong becomes the Life and Peace village”.

The 2014 Jeju Naval Base Budget & the Future

The budget for the Jeju naval base was cut by about 50 billion KRW from the originally proposed 368 billion KRW. Members of the opposition party in the National Assembly, the Gangjeong Village Story Association and various civic groups to focus their efforts on small cuts, focusing on the military residential housing and the entry road to the base area, reminding them of their experiences in 2013 when they had hoped to cut the entire budget, but instead it was later passed after being railroaded through by the ruling Saenuri Party. Remembering this, they were pushed to focus on more realistic partial cuts to the future budget.

In 2013, the Gangjeong Villagers have several times managed to interrupt and prevent the navy from presenting construction trucks grew behind the dancing protesters, I laughed with joy to see them off. But it was another demonstration, another call for a peaceful resolution. I’ve been so impressed by the strength and energy that sustains people’s hope and persistence even though it is filled with pain and anguish.

During my first visit, I held Mama Song’s (K-Ji’s wife) hand for the human chain and was impressed how she put away her cane and danced every dance, keeping strong even though her husband was in prison. This time, as the line of construction trucks grew behind the dancing protesters, I laughed with joy to see them off. I hope that other Americans can also learn from these images as they watch the people of Gangjeong stand firm in their opposition to the Jeju naval base project.

Southeastorientation

Assembly Woman, Jeong Sunny, originally from Korea and a strong supporter of the anti-base movement with a sign calling for the resignation of President Park Geun-Hye in light of election scandal.

Pro-Government Agitators Sabotage Demonstrations

By Jean Ok-Hee, Freelance journalist in Berlin

Through the recent Chinese declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), tension of influence in Northeast Asia has expanded to the sky. With the skies over Jeju-do, South Korea, being a training area falling under the declarative Chinese zone, Korea, China, and Japan, the U.S. are simultaneously being pushed back. Amid such a maelstrom, the issue of Jeo-do and overlapping Korean/Chinese economic water areas is reflected. With the ROK including Jeo-do in its own ADIZ, the basis for conflict will only grow bigger, as military planes from China and Japan may on occasion pass through the area that submariners refer to without prior notice.

Only adding to the wave of tension will be the Jeju naval base, which, if completed, will bring the ROK navy and its patrols of the area, as well as the US. navy and its patrols. Further calls for an Air Force base on Jeju will soon emerge if tension continues to increase. In other words, there is a great possibility that Jeju, the Peace Island, will descend into the “military island” as the security of east, west, south, and north grows in a vicious cycle. An alternative that should be considered is a joint management of the water area by the ROK and China. All diplomatic spots must be tried before resorting to military measures such as extending the KADIZ or creating an ADIZ naval fleet.

Pre-Government Agitators Sabotage Demonstrations

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MILYANG IS ANOTHER GEJEONGS

By Gu Dong-II, Co-vice mayor of Gangjeong village

Gangjeong and Milyang are similar: the government promotes a project with the villagers' agreement under the national policy, the project is charged with mitigation of environmental damages, and the opposition of villagers through the mobilization of state power.

When I visited Milyang with Mayor Kang Dong-Kyu via the Hope Solality Bus from 30th Dec. 1, Miling was on the top hill. The police were blocking all roads from the village to the mountain when the villagers were doing their strikes. They couldn't even leave to give water to their small farms, or to prepare meals. I heard that the villagers had no longer to show up in the police station if they couldn't help but to be remined of the Seogwipo Police come to Gangjeong who re-fused even to give permission even to the picket to hold the pickets.

A grandmother told me, “Because we are powerless, 23 transmission towers to be dappled with sunlight, the chatty play of the neighbourhood children, and the wafts of floral scents are the only remnants to think that the peace of Jeju can be promoted by a U.S. /South Korea naval base?” Naïve, to think that the peace of Jeju can be promoted by a U.S. /South Korea naval base? “We are so naive that we think the peace of Jeju can be promoted by a U.S. /South Korea naval base?”

The Catholic Church Must Follow its Mission in Korea

By Joan K. Kim Song Hae

At the end of November, a mass was held at Sungdong-Catholic Church in Gumi. This mass was held in regards to the current state of affairs in Korea, and at the mass, the bishops of the three eparchies presented the Catholic Church's position on the legal issues related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it.

The Church near the gates, the city, the fields, the mountains, the lakes, the trees, and the flowers are every morning a wakening scene of “human.” No one with eyes to see such a view would believe that the hell of wars has been occupying this land. My friends, I imagine you walking the simple yet unpaved pathways of Gangjeong village, and, should you take a moment’s rest, being cananced and cared for by the tree shadows dappled with sunlight, the chaty play of the neighbourhood children, and the wafts of floral scents dancing by. I cannot believe that, you any more than the villagers I lived among in Bulleyan-si, would want to lose such a beautiful and sky-kissed ariary home to the ravages of gun and violence.

Love letter from Dr. Hakim & the Afghan Peace Volunteers

Essentual from a letter to Dr. Hakim with the Afghan Peace volunteers...

For seven years I lived in a gorgeous agricultural village in Afghanistan’s Bamyan Province and like yourself on Jeju Island. I looked every morning to a window scene of “human.” No one with eyes to see such a view would believe that the hell of wars has been occupying this land. My friends, I imagine you walking the simple yet unpaved pathways of Gangjeong village, and, should you take a moment’s rest, being cananced and cared for by the tree shadows dappled with sunlight, the chaty play of the neighbourhood children, and the wafts of floral scents dancing by. I cannot believe that, you any more than the villagers I lived among in Bulleyan-si, would want to lose such a beautiful and sky-kissed ariary home to the ravages of gun and violence.

On Dec. 10th, the daily Catholic mass was being held in usual in front of the gates to the base construction site, it has as far to last. Three Catholic fathers, including Fr. Jeong Jeong Hyun, and several nuns were seated in front of ones of the gates. From 11 am. for about 3 hours, the priests and nuns would pray and then about every ten minutes the police would come and forcefully them them. Then they were dragged out through the gates. After the mass, the daily Catholic police would release the sisters and priests and they would go back and pray again.

During one of these sessions, the elderly Fr. Mun was carried away and locked in a truck rather than for help reached out grabbed her veil pulling it off. The nun burst into tears and seeing this sight, Father Mun was shocked, and passed out, falling to the ground. The emergency center was called and the police were blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked. Finally she managed to escape the circle of police, but was blocked.

Gangjeong Prisoners

Prisoners are addressed in the following part.

Jeuju Court Declares Imposing Fines on Destruction-Monitoring Activity Illegal

Since April 12, 2012, the Seogwipo Court Guard has defined the naval base construction site in the Gangjeong Community as Leisure Water Sports “Protection Zone.”

Following the court’s decision, on December 26, the Gangjeong Human Rights Committee released a statement demanding that the Seogwipo Court Guard promulgate an appeal announcement and officially apologize for the illegal arrests and imprisonments of Dr. Song Kang-Ho and Br. Park Do-Hyun on July 1, 2013.

The No.22 letter also illuminates more clearly the infringements of human rights in previous rulings by numerous Jeju judge Hong Kyung-Ho. In July of 2013, he dismissed a claim to review the arrests of Dr. Song and Br. Park, even rejecting to examine critical evidence video which clearly illustrates the Court Guard’s delination of duty and illegal arrests. He then imprisoned the two under the false charge of obstruction of business for their attempts to monitor the illegal construction (desmation).

TREATIAL UPDATES

On Nov. 28, 2013, the Jeju local court ruled that five villagers including Mayor Kang Dong-Kyu and anti-base chairman Go Gwon-Il (the mayor for the term of 2014-2015) should pay damage compensation of 264 million (about $264,000 USD) to Roschko Chg, one of the naval base construction companies. On the same day, there were many appeals by Gangjeong peace keepers, most of whom were dismissed. A male activist in Jeju Island, "Park Dong-Soo," who was sentenced to life term (32 years) for killing someone at a rally, also began his final appeal on January 9th, 2014. Also on that day, many other Gangjeong people had trials. Many of the trials were related to the Vernissage of December 26, 2011 when 10 people, including 1 male activist, Min Kang-Ho, were arrested on charges of obstruction of business. On the appeal they are demanding 535 million (around 535,000 USD) for 2 million KRW. Otherwise two other appeals were dismissed, and a female activist who was only counting the daily 100 hours received a 1 million KRW fine.

In the case of April 16, 2012, when more than 10 peacekeepers were arrested for connecting themselves with lock-on pipes in order to stop the truck moving explosives to the construction site, all fines were reduced from the original 8 million KRW (around 8,000 USD) per person to 2.5 million KRW (around 2,500 USD) each. One person was found not guilty. Meanwhile, Dr. Song Kang-Ho and Br. Park Do-Hyun and several others were on trial for setting up a tent on Gomnick Rock in 2013. On Christmas Day, it was reported that Ki Seo-Hun, the infamous Seogwipo Police Security Director was found not guilty in the case against him. Various Gangjeong people had filed for the police’s excessive violence against Gangjeong villagers. Since 2013, when the government moved over a maps lodge by a policeman, causing serious injury and an extended hospital stay.

On December 26, there were many appeals trials, most of which were dismissed as usual. Therefore the original court decisions would. Among them were such decisions as 1 year imprisonment with a suspended sentence; 2 years imprisonment and 100,000 (100 USD) fine for 10 people including Rev. Song Young-Soep and Rev. Lim Bo-Rah charged with property destruction; 2 years imprisonment and 100,000 (100 USD) fine for the director of the anti-base community, Kang Hae-Jeong, who kept his fine of 7 million KRW (around 7,000 USD), Film Director Shin Do-Yong, Cho Sung-Bong, Village Mr. Jung Kyung-Bu, and villager Mr. Kim Young-Woo who still fined 6 million KRW (around 6,000 USD), and Dr. Song Kang-Ho, who still kept his sentence of 6 months imprisonment, suspended with 1 year probation. All were charged with obstruction of business. Also dismissed was the appeal of Mr. Kim Min-Soo and 3 others who were charged with violation of the Public Water Act. They face fines ranging from 700,000 KRW (around 700 USD) to 4 million KRW (around 4,000 USD). Finally, the appeal of three people fined 700,000 KRW each for trespassing at the UN-ROK disarmament conference in 2011, was also rejected.

Fr. Mun Passes Out as Police Tear Off Nun’s Veil

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