

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

FEBRUARY
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Monthly news on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base project

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South Korea



Gangjeong Elder Appeals to Pope Francis

By Yoon Sang-Hyo
Gangjeong Villager
Image : Gangjeong Village Story

Dear Pope Francis,

I sincerely ask for you to visit Gangjeong village on Jeju Island. I am an old man in my 70s. I was born in Gangjeong and have never left my home village. Our village was established about 450 years ago, and is famous for its beautiful nature and fertile land. But one day, we heard shocking news on TV that our village had been selected as the final location of a naval base. The decision making process was non-democratic. It was decided without proper consultation with Gangjeong villagers. The decision was made in just 13 days.

Gureombi Rock is like a mother's arms to us. It has been over 2 years that we could not sleep because of the sound of the sacred rock being blasted, destroyed, and the noises of the base construction everyday, night and day. The state is supposed to keep the life and property of the people, but this government has totally devastated this

hundreds-of--years-old peaceful village. Residents and peace defenders are crying for peace and justice.

Dear Pope Francis! The villagers of Gangjeong do not oppose national security. We oppose the naval base project because we want to preserve our community so that people can live here happily from generation to generation.

There are several reasons why we oppose this naval base project. Not even one hearing about the national project took place. The land was taken away from the residents without agreement. This absurd national project has been implemented violently and non-democratically.

Gangjeong is located at the southern part of Jeju Island and is famous for its high waves and strong tidal current. In 2012, seven caisson structures to be used for building a breakwater of the naval base were destroyed due to typhoon. This is but one example of why Gangjeong is

not an appropriate place to build a naval base.

The construction site, Gureombi Rock and Gangjeong's coastal waters, are designated an "Absolute Preservation Zone" and are home to various endangered species like the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin and red-foot crab. Jeju is designated as a Biosphere Reserve, World Natural Heritage Site, and Global Geo Park by UNESCO.

This base will be an outpost of the U.S. military to target China. With the U.S. Pivot to Asia, Korea will be pulled into conflicts between the U.S. and China.

Holy Father, everyday here has been like a war during the past 7 years. Help this old man see my village peaceful and beautiful again. Please visit Gangjeong and hold the tired hands of the people longing for justice and a humane society.

ROK Navy Sneakily Grabs for More Land, Plans to Destroy Further Natural Monuments

These days, the ROK navy is attempting to sneakily grab more land in Gangjeong Village, in order to build military residential housing and an exclusively military use road. This is all in addition to the land already stolen for the naval base construction. It is obnoxious that they continue in this way as the villagers have clearly opposed these plans for a while now, interrupting and blocking the navy from presenting on them on several occasions.

Event the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration has twice dismissed the navy's proposal to build their road through Gangjeong's officially designated Korean Natural Monument camphor tree habitat. Within this habitat lies the beautiful Netgiriso, Gangjeong's sacred water source, which provides 70% of the

drinking water for the Southern half of Jeju and also another Natural Monument, the massive, nearly thousand-year-old tree, Dampalsu, traditionally considered sacred by residents.

Despite these dismissals, it was recently discovered that the navy had gone ahead and illegally measured and marked up part of the Camphor tree habitat, anyway.

Additionally, the navy has attempted to stealthily carry out land measurements for the road four times at the Samgeori, a disputed area along the Olle Walking Trail where Gangjeong supporters have tended small gardens, and keep the communal Samgeori eating hall. On February 13th, the village emergency sirens rang throughout the village for the first time in a while, as workers from

Korea Cadastral Survey, a governmental organization, were attempting to measure the land at the site. As people protested, they stopped and withdrew, but it is sure they will return.

Finally, regarding the previous reported upon military residential housing, it has recently been discovered that these apartments outside the base will be in addition to space for 984 households already planned for inside the base.

Image : Park YS

A rock marked with a red arrow and paint reads, "road". This and other parts of the precious Camphor tree habitat were carelessly and illegally defaced by the navy.



The Struggle of Memory Against Forgetting

By John Pilger, excerpted from a longer article first appearing in the New Statesman

[...] I have just read *The Korean War: a History* by Bruce Cumings (2010), professor of history at the University of Chicago. I first saw Cumings interviewed in Regis Tremblay's extraordinary film *The Ghosts of Jeju*, which documents the 1948 uprising on the southern Korean island of Jeju and the campaign by the present-day islanders to stop the building of a base with US missiles



Image : Lee Woo-Ki

On Feb. 15, Gangjeong supporters in Seoul for a special new year meeting, to catch up on Gangjeong current events and brainstorm the path for solidarity in 2014.

aimed provocatively at China.

Like most Koreans, the farmers and fishing families protested the senseless division of their nation between North and South in 1945 – a line drawn along the 38th Parallel by an American official. The myth of a “good” Korea (the South) and a “bad” Korea (the North) was invented.

In fact, Korea, North and South, has a remarkable people's history of resistance to feudalism and foreign occupation...On Jeju, as many as 60,000 people were massacred by militias supported, directed and, in some cases, commanded by US officers.

This and other unreported atrocities were a “forgotten” prelude to the Korean war (1950-53)...Cumings gives an astonishing tally of the degree of destruction of the cities of the North: Pyongyang 75 per cent, Sariwon 95 per cent, Sinanju 100 per cent. Great dams in the North were bombed in order to unleash internal tsunamis. “Anti-personnel” weapons, such as napalm, were tested on civilians. Cumings's superb investigation helps us understand why today's North Korea seems so strange...“The unhindered machinery of incendiary bombing was visited on the North for three

years,” he writes, “yielding a wasteland and a surviving mole people...”

[...] Kim Il-sung had begun fighting the Japanese militarists in 1932. Every characteristic attached to the regime he founded...derives from...resistance: first to Japan, then the United States...Cumings exposes as propaganda the notion that Kim...leader of the “bad” Korea, was a stooge of Moscow. In contrast, the regime that Washington invented in the South, the “good” Korea, was run largely by those who had collaborated with Japan and America.

[...] The base being built on Jeju Island will face the Chinese metropolis of Shanghai, less than 300 miles away, and the industrial heartland of the only country whose economic power is likely to surpass that of the US. “China,” says President Obama in a leaked briefing paper, “is our fast-emerging strategic threat.” By 2020, almost two-thirds of all US naval forces in the world will be transferred to the Asia-Pacific region. In an arc extending from Australia to Japan and beyond, China will be ringed by US missiles and nuclear-weapons-armed aircraft. Will this threat to all of us be “forgotten”, too?

Mutual Understanding & Int'l Solidarity Needed

By Yoshio Nakamura
AWC-Japan

Recently, I was able to visit Gangjeong again, after a nearly two years-long entry-banning issued against me by the South Korean government. During my short staying, I reconfirmed that Gangjeong is a really beautiful place. I was encouraged by the creative and unyielding struggle of the villagers and peace activists. At the same time, I had a feeling of pain in my heart because of the ongoing construction of the naval base, which will serve the US forces.

Okinawa, Iwakuni and Kanagawa are the main target areas of the realignment and consolidation of US bases and facilities in Japan. In addition, with the Japanese government's political and financial support, the US is planning to build a new X-band radar base, as an important part of the US missile defense system, in Kyotango-city, Kyoto. These plans in Okinawa and the

'mainland' of Japan are deeply related to the construction of the naval base in Gangjeong and the destruction of beautiful coastline there. These are all being promoted in the context of the recent 'US pivot to Asia-Pacific'.

In my younger days in social movements, I learned these words: 'your struggle is our struggle, our struggle is your struggle'. These very simple words have a very deep meaning.

There are no borders for the US forces. They move anywhere freely as they need, bringing suffering to people. Therefore, people of the Asia-Pacific and the rest of the world need to fight back hand in hand. We need to learn from our respective experiences, develop mutual understanding, and create internationally coordinated campaigns. After that, we will finally find a world without military bases.

Gangjeong Life and Peace Worship Service Works for Restoration

By Rev. Kim Yoo-Seung



Image : Gangjeong Village Story

On February 27th, the monthly Christian service took place at the Gangjeong Peace Center. Here, participants are seen praying for the peace and life of Gangjeong as the service gets underway.

Every last Thursday of each month at the Gangjeong Peace Center, the “Gangjeong Life and Peace Worship Service” is held, bringing together various groups of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, Mennonites. This service started in May of 2013 out of local Christians' desire for Gangjeong's suffering hearts to be healed and for life and peace to spread from Gangjeong, across Jeju, and around the world. Prior to this meeting there was a semi-regular protestant prayer service in front of the naval base construction gate. Growing from that meeting into a regular united Christian service which hopes to bring new energy to the Gangjeong movement and become a center for Christian unity and fellowship.

From 2014, the worship style has been reframed to include Taize songs, Anglican liturgy and spirited prayer, all with the hope to help people meet God more deeply in existential restoration and eventually be the starting point for a peace and life worship movement to develop in other small towns around Jeju.

Worship is a space where heaven and earth meet. Just as Jesus was incarnated in flesh and didn't ignore his body's reality, Christians should also step firmly in this earthly reality, yet keep our arms outstretched to the sky. We expect more will join us to dream together of the kingdom of the God of justice coming to earth, and our worship service can be a motivator of true social change.

International Solidarity



Image : Kip Kania/Ahn Hye-Kyoung

Jeju and international artists participated in the first international 4.3 Incident art exhibition at the Santa Rosa County Museum in California. Entitled "Camellia Has Fallen" it will run from March 7th to May 4th. Related films and documentaries such as "Jiseul", "Jeju Prayer", and "The Ghosts of Jeju" will also be screened in connection with the exhibition.





Image : Gangjeong Village Story

On February 21, Peace school participants, Gangjeong villagers and activists, and visiting guests held a small fun parade, the Gangjeong Peace Parade, from 2-6 in the afternoon. From the construction site gates in Gangjeong, to the next town of Beophwan, they marched, danced, and sang. Students from a music high school especially livened things up with many great songs and lots of energy. The dress code for the march was red and many people painted their faces with red lipstick. Although the parade was only a small event attended mostly by village residents, everyone agreed that it was a wonderful occasion and the atmosphere was very joyful.

Gangjeong General Assembly Held

At 7:30pm on the 28th of February, the regular general assembly of Gangjeong village took place in the village ceremonial hall. During the meeting, the settlement of last year's accounts was shared as well as a draft budget for 2014. Additionally, the newly elected village representatives were ratified. The Gangjeong Village Association once again confirmed their stance against the naval base and expressed their firm determination to continue their uncompromising protests, despite a change in association members. It was the last meeting run by former village mayor, Kang Dong-Kyun, determined leader of village association and the anti-base protests since the beginning of the controversy in 2007.



Image : Gangjeong Village Story

Gangjeong peace defender Bokhee holds a sign which reads, "Naval base annulment: I haven't forgotten, hahaha" in front of the base construction site. Gangjeong activists have begun holding a variety of creative one person protests every afternoon.

Trial Updates

- On February 5th, peace defenders Song Eul-Chae and Kang Dong-Seok's appeals to the Supreme Court were dismissed. Song's original sentence for Obstruction of Justice was 6 months imprisonment suspended for two years with 80 hours community service and supervised protection. Kang's was six months imprisonment suspended, with two years' probation.
- On February 6th, peace defender, Mr. Lee Jong-Hwa was sentenced to 1 year imprisonment suspended with two years' probation and 100,000 KRW (about \$100 USD) fine for Obstruction of Justice. Rev. Song Young-Seob's appeal of a charge of trespassing was dismissed.
- In good news, on February 23rd, Oh Hye-Ran, former secretary of SPARK (Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea), who was on trial along with eight other SPARK members, absurdly accused of violating the National Security Law, were found not guilty in the first court's decision. SPARK is one of the main organizers of the "National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island". In 2012, in an attempt to suppress dissent against the naval base project, the Lee Myung-Bak government's National Intelligence Service raided the SPARK office and confiscated their materials, charging the members with violating the National Security Law. SPARK has never been attacked in such a way in its 20 years of existence. The 1st court in Incheon ruled them not guilty, stating that the activities of SPARK, such as opposition to the ROK-US war exercises, seeking the withdrawal of the US Forces from Korea, and the abolishment of the ROK-US alliance, cannot be defined as presenting a clear danger to the safety of South Korea nor of supporting North Korea.
- Finally, on March 2nd, Fr. Mun Kyoo-Hyun, brother of Mun Jeong-Hyun and co-representative of SPARK was found guilty by the Supreme Court for his activities trying to stop the blasting of Gureombi Rock in 2012. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment, suspended with one year probation, and a 100,000 KRW (about \$100 USD) fine.



Jeju Prison 301 Yang Yoon-Mo

Brother Yoon-Mo, What was Gangjeong like?
One day, you vanished and went back to your home, Jeju Island.
There, you found Gureombi Rock. How beautiful was that rock,
so mesmerizing that it captured you at once?
You were a writer for your entire life. Who made you scream, cry, and
crawl beneath that truck?

I wonder what you talked about with that land during those three years
on Gureombi. You were drunk off the rock's vitality
and the traces of millions of years engraved upon it, right?
What was it like to taste mugwort, surviving in the ocean wind?
What about those soft plants growing under the spring sun?
In summer, how was the night sky, looking up from the cold water
spring where you laid your body?

You once said it was your calling as a critic:
to discover, spread, and protect beauty.
Willingly, you became a part of the Gangjeong sea and Gureombi Rock,
fighting for them in their stead, as if you were possessed by those silent lives.
You struggled so hard to protect that place, even through 4 imprisonments
and more than 70-days of hunger strike.
In the end, we couldn't stop the destruction, but we haven't given up the fight.
Because of the true critique your life has written,
the name "Gureombi" will stay with us for a long time.

You've been 368 days in prison.
Your second birthday inside has just passed by.
Happy birthday.
Happy New Year.

강정

※ Current status of oppression in Gangjeong village



202,620
Police officers from
08.2011 - 08.2013



649
People arrested
since 04. 2007



About 600
People put on trial



About 500
million KRW
Fines levied



38
Imprisonments
since 04. 2007

Gangjeong
Prisoners
of
Conscience

No.

301

Mr. Yang Yoon-Mo
Since Feb. 1, 2013

Please write to Jeju Prison, 161,
Ora-2 dong, Jeju-si, Jeju-do, Korea

This first appeared in the Korean Hankyoreh newspaper on February 1.

Ssangyong Workers: Truth Will Win in the End

By Lee Chang-Geun
laid-off Ssangyong
Motors worker



Image : Gangjeong Village Story

Following their successful win in court, Ssangyong workers visited Gangjeong in solidarity and to share their stories. Ssangyong and Gangjeong have a long history of solidarity as members of the SKY Act between Ssangyong, Gangjeong, and Yongsan.

February 7, 2014 is very special day for Ssangyong Motors' laid-off workers. That was the day we finally received the judgement from the court that what we have asserted about our improper layoffs was right. Unfortunately it took 1723 days to reach this door of truth, and we lost the lives of 24 people from among our colleagues and families. The 76-page court statement show the last 5 years of our struggle spent on the street in tents, in snow and rain. The Supreme Court decision will come next. What a painful journey we will face again!

This time, the courts ruled that Ssangyong Motors purposely miscounted their accounts so as to force a false redundancy. By doing so, it appeared that their financial solvency was seriously at risk, and people believed them to be a poor corporation. Because of this, their debt ratio rocketed, and it seemed only natural that they would have massive layoffs of workers. The courts have agreed with us that this was not actually the case, but it is still a sad judgement, as 3000 workers were laid off, and our dead companions cannot come back to hear this news. We have faced these snares of illegality and violence and our lives have become broken. The time needed for restoration seems to be much more than the time needed for destruction. For this reason, we are not excited.

We really hope that the Ssangyong Motors' struggle can be a strong opportunity to put the brakes on the mass layoffs of workers that happen repeatedly and thoughtlessly throughout Korean society. Because of this, we will run again and not stop. The judge told us, "I hope your time of pain will not be so long". The Ssangyong Motors' workers struggle will overcome our painful past and win for sure.

How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to Pope Francis asking him to visit Jeju.
2. Write letters to Gangjeong's prisoners of conscience.
3. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
4. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...) then share about it on social media.
5. Visit Gangjeong!
6. For other ways to help and more visit us on the web.

For More Information

<http://www.SaveJejuNow.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/NoNavalBase>
<http://www.facebook.com/SaveJeju>
<http://www.pope2jeju.org>
<http://www.twitter.com/SaveJejuNow>

For Gangjeong related videos, visit savejejunow.org or check these Vimeo/Youtube users :

Vimeo : cho sung bong / DH Song / Regis Tremblay
Youtube : Gang-Jeong Il-Gi / Shalomsea / 1234yz100 / Sungbong2012

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Stop the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle US/ROK War Exercises

Once again, the annual US-ROK Key Resolve/Foal Eagle war exercises will be held from February 24th to April 18th. About 10,000 ROK and 5,200 US military personnel will be mobilized for Key Resolve and about 200,000 ROK and 7,500 US personnel will be mobilized for Foal Eagle.

According to a statement made by 40 Korean peace groups opposing the war exercises, the newly minted "tailored deterrence strategy" for which Kill Chain and missile defense systems are being established and arms purchases, such as the Northrop Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk (an unmanned surveillance aircraft drone), are imminent, classifies the North Korean nuclear situation into various crisis stages of nuclear threat, imminent nuclear-use, nuclear-use, and so on. It is a strategy of preemptive strike targeting North Korea and is a very aggressive strategy that only heightens the dangers of nuclear war rather than deterrence. Such a local provocation plan is a dangerous scheme which prepares both sides for total war. In other words, to hold the Key Resolve/Foal Eagle exercises at this time is to do nothing more than provoke the crisis further, rather than seeking to resolve it.

The exercises are paradoxically being held at the same moment when South/North Korea high level meetings are being opened and while family meeting re-unions are taking place between families separated by the arbitrary national border. This is an unstable and perilous stage of dialogue. These war exercise unsubtly violate international law and the South Korean Constitution and should be stopped immediately!



Image : Choi Hye-Young

The 13th Gangjeong Peace School was held from February 16-22. Here participants are seen protesting at Hwasoon Harbor where the giant caisson structures that come to Gangjeong are built. Behind them is the large floating dock used to transport them to Gangjeong.



Image : Choi Hye-Young

Every Tuesday, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in front of Jeju City City Hall, Gangjeong Friends holds a public Gangjeong info sharing event. Spreading newspapers, brochures, films, books, art, crafts and more, Gangjeong Friends and their friends hope to remind the people of Jeju City that Gangjeong hasn't given up. Gangjeong Friends is a support group of the Gangjeong struggle. Contact us to join them today!