

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY



Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

Published by Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea



Detained Bodies, Free Souls

By Baek Gayoon

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy

Images : Lee Woo-Ki & Rom

The sign in the middle picture reads,

"The naval base is guilty, we are innocent".

On May, 20 2014, people gathered in front of the Seoul Central District Court to hold a press conference condemning excessive fines given to Gangjeong villagers and peace activists who peacefully protested against the construction of the Jeju naval base project. After this press conference, three peace activists, Choi Jung-Min and Yang Yeo-Ok from World Without War, and Rev. Lim Bora, decided to walk into a prison on their own feet, instead of paying their fines, as a form of peaceful protest.

Since 2007, Jeju naval base has been built without proper consultation with Gangjeong villagers and has caused huge damage to the local marine environment, such as its world-famous soft coral community. While protesting against the naval base construction, human rights violations against peace activists and Gangjeong villagers and excessive use of police force have frequently

occurred.

As of December 2013, 649 people have been arrested, 589 been put on trial and 38 people have been imprisoned for their protests against the naval base construction. It is estimated that a total of more than 300 million KRW (around 3 million USD) in fines will eventually be imposed on peace activists and Gangjeong villagers. Considering civil suits against the peace defenders by the construction companies, the amount of fines will increase exponentially. Instead of punishing the illegitimate construction of the Jeju naval base, the government is silencing dissenting opinions. This is a clear violation of freedom of opinion and expression, and disrupts the fundamental values of democracy.

The three peace defenders who decided to go to prison each had received around 2,000 USD in fines. Two

of them were charged with obstruction of business as they blocked a truck carrying gunpowder to explode the Gureombi Rock in 2012. Another person was charged for only sitting in front of the gate of the naval base construction site for a mere 9 minutes. One night in prison, will reduce their fines by 50 USD per night.

The three activists did not stay their full time in prison and have now been released. However, one more activist, Quaker Oh Cheol-Geun has turned himself in for imprisonment as a peaceful protest. Upon going to prison he stated, "Human beings are supposed to protest against injustice. I am proud that I am going to prison because I fought for injustice." These brave peace activists have said that they will continue to peacefully protest against the naval base construction in the future.

Dreaming of a World without Soldiers and Military: Peace Seminar Held to Mark International Conscientious Objector's Day

By Shining Lake



Gangjeong Peace School, the Gangjeong Village International Team and the sociology dept. students at Jeju University co-hosted a peace seminar to mark International Conscientious Objector's Day. The theme was: "Dreaming of a World without Soldiers and Military". The event took place at Jeju University on May 19th. Several guest speakers, both domestic and international, were invited to speak. It was a good chance to hear from people who have the courage to change the

Image: Kim Dong-Won

On April 3rd, Hakim Young is a Singaporean doctor living in Afghanistan. He is the coordinator of the Afghan Peace Volunteers. During the seminar he shared his experiences.

world and themselves through putting nonviolence and pacifism into practice.

American peace activist Kathy Kelly talked about the aftermath of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, focusing on the stories of suffering innocent civilians. Singaporean doctor and peace activist, Hakim, spoke about the Afghan youths of the Afghan Peace Volunteers, and how they deal with the trauma of war. Gangjeong activists Dongwon and Dongseok talked about how engagement in the Gangjeong struggle led to their consideration on becoming COs instead of following the state's orders to join the military.

A conscientious objector from the mainland, Kyungsoo, who works monitoring the US Military in South Korea, shared about the effect the US military's

presence has on Korean society. A female student from Jeju University shared her woman's perspective on the militarism that dominates Korean society. Between talks, Gangjeong peace activist and singer, Joyakgol sang a song titled, "A World Without Patriots" the lyrics of which are a well known poem by Korean educator Kwon Jeong-Saeng.

Afterwards, a discussion and question and answer time was held. The students had many things to say and ask. That this event was co-hosted by the students of Jeju University was meaningful to the people of Gangjeong. To demilitarize Jeju and bring true peace, we need this kind of solidarity and cooperation with other Jeju Islanders and voluntary efforts to stop the abuse of the island.

Navigating Toward “Borderfree” Peace

By Kathy Kelly
Co-coordinator of Voices
for Creative Nonviolence

Conversations over a delicious meal at the Gangjeong community kitchen were a delightful daily event during my recent visit to Jeju Island. On my first day there, during lunchtime, I met Emily and Dongwon, a young couple, recently married, who met in Gangjeong. Emily, who is Taiwanese, recalled that when her parents came to meet Dongwon for the first time, before the two had wed, they had to visit him in prison. Dongwon, who grew up in a rural area of South Korea, had visited Gangjeong and gotten to know a small community living on the Gureombi Rock. Drawn by their tenacity and commitment, he decided to join them. When a barge crane was dredging the sea in front of Gureombi Rock, Dongwon climbed up its tip and nonviolently defied police who ordered him to come down.

Emily laughs happily as she recalls how muscular she became when she was learning to become a sailor. She wanted practical experience so that she could travel, by boat, between islands affected by militarization, such as

Taiwan, Okinawa, and Jeju Island.

Meanwhile, Dongwon was arranging a conference, at Jeju University, to explore conscientious objection to war. He and his friend Mark do not want to be conscripted into military service, but failure to comply with the Republic of Korea's mandatory service could result in severe punishment. They are well aware that 90 per cent of the people, worldwide, who are incarcerated for conscientious objection to military service are serving time in South Korean prisons.

Encounters with dissenters in Gangjeong who resist militarization led Dongwon, Emily, and Mark to ask what they could do to follow their beliefs. What steps would they be willing to take and how could they encourage other young people to consider living their lives in accord with their deepest beliefs.

It's a privilege and a challenge to confer with new, young friends in places like Jeju Island and Kabul, Afghanistan.

Rage filled desires to punish people who refuse to participate in war frustrate efforts to chart paths toward negotiation and diplomacy. It's far safer and wiser to be guided by young people, like those whom I met in Gangjeong's community kitchen, who hunger for justice and work for peace.



Image : Shining Lake
Peace activist Kathy Kelly joining the daily sit-in Catholic mass in front of the naval base construction site gate in Gangjeong.

A Way to Heal the Wounded Heart

By Yuichi Kamoshita
A Japanese monk peace
activist who visited
Gangjeong in May

People, who naturally help and care about one another and nature, have been brainwashed into believing that only money will save them and that economic development is the most important thing. For this reason, most traditional village communities in the world have been losing their self sufficient ways and noble values and suffering from disharmony. Unless we stop believing in money oriented ways of thinking, humans will repeatedly suffer from the same problems. Quite a large number of people in the world think that we need militaries and weapons for self defense. However, a great teacher, Gandhi believed that we don't need any police forces and rejected violence and the military. I wish that we could also dream as he did. The great sins that my imperialistic

country, Japan, did to other Asian peoples still remains in their minds. Whether we have experienced war in the past as a victim or an offender, the wounds to our spirits have not yet been healed.

Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, called the Peace Constitution, has been helpful medicine for these wounds. But we can still see the scars of Japanese colonization in the Korean peoples' conversations and lives. How long is the impact of experiences of war upon people's spirits! I believe that the effort to spread Article 9, which is wise wisdom acquired in modern times, can be a way to heal the wounded hearts of Asians who have experienced horrible wars.

Gangjeong Visits Okinawa: Fighting with a Bigger Blueprint

By Emily Wang



Image : Emily Wang

People from Gangjeong stand with one of the banners prepared for the May 15 Peace March.

From May 13 to 19, people from Gangjeong visited Okinawa to participate in the annual 5.15 Okinawa Peace March and also to have a Peace Study Tour learning the tragic history and witness the current suffering of Okinawa. The peace march commemorates May 15, 1972 which was day that Okinawa was returned to Japan from the American Military Government. For the Okinawans who have been fighting against the US bases on their land, it is the date to once again bring notice to the systematic discrimination of border islands such as Okinawa. Before 1972, the fight against the US bases had been almost equal with the fight to return to Japan and enjoy its Peace Constitution. However, after returning to Japan, the bases didn't leave. The reality is that Okinawa comprises only 0.6% Japanese territory but has 75% of the US bases in Japan. Okinawa has never been returned to the Peace Constitution but to merely a "Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the US and Japan".

What alarmed me, as a new peace migrant to Gangjeong village, Jeju, was that maybe in the near future, when we commemorate the date of the declaration of Jeju as the Island of World Peace, we may hold the same ironic emotions as the Okinawans today, if the Jeju people accept the model of militarization-driven economic growth as the path of the "Island of World Peace".

In 1875, the Ryukyu Kingdom disappeared into history as it was forcibly combined into Japanese territory. Eventually, The way to become a good Japanese citizen (one loyal to the emperor) was to protect Japan, resulting in the devastating, "Battle of Okinawa". It is a painful lesson to the Okinawans to see the similarities between the American military occupation and the Japanese government, under the path of militarism.

With the US Asia Pivot policy, I wonder where the next, "Battle of Okinawa", the victimization of a border island for the benefit of central power, will occur.

International Solidarity



Image : Lee Kil-Joo

On May 5, Mr. Kim Bok-Chul and Ms. Lee Kil-Joo joined a peace event in Matsushiro, Nagano, Japan. They presented about Gangjeong peace-building and demilitarizing Jeju.

"Don't go to Kkottongnae!"

On May 22, National Solidarity for the Elimination of Discrimination against the Disabled, human rights groups united for people with special needs, held a press conference near the Vatican embassy in Seoul urging Pope Francis to cancel the visit to Kkottongnae. Kkottongnae is a Catholic care center for people with special needs. In the statement, the group said, "Kkottongnae is a leading organization in the world of social welfare and a massive private religious facility for people with special needs run on a grand scale... it has a tendency to monopolize the social welfare budgets of local government often shutting out smaller welfare organizations from accessing funding for their activities in the process. The fact that the Pope is scheduled to visit Kkottongnae is disappointing for people who wish to live a more dignified and humane life free from the restrictions imposed on residents living in this very closed institution. Therefore, we would encourage Pope Francis, the spiritual leader of Catholics around the world and deeply respected for his humility, spirit of service and advancement of progressive activities to reconsider his scheduled visit to Kkottongnae."

On May 20, Father Park Seong-gu, Director of the Little Jesus Family, also held a press conference in front of the Vatican embassy in Seoul and was joined by a number of disabled people in wheelchairs. They urged Pope Francis not to visit Kkottongnae, characterizing the home for the sick and disabled as a "Korean version of the Mafia." It's quite rare to see Catholics criticizing religious centers belonging to the same faith tradition or sending open letters to the Pope to reconsider his visit.

Under the circumstances, there are serious doubts about whether Pope Francis needs to go to Kkottongnae. He's only going to be in South Korea for four days. Apart from visiting the Presidential office, his current plans are dominated by attendance at Catholic only events. Most people feel that the people the Pope should really be visiting while in South Korea are the family members of the victims of the Sewol Ferry tragedy or the DMZ to send a powerful and symbolic message of reconciliation between South and North Korea. Meanwhile, the people of Gangjeong are still hoping and praying for an unscheduled stop for him as he did recently in Palestine.



Image : Licky Rooney

Since the Sewol Ferry Tragedy, candlelight vigils and protests have spread all across Korea in support of the families and against the government, coast guard, and ferry company. Here vigilers join a march in Jeju City.

Trial Updates



On May 1, peace activist and playwright Pang Eun-Mi was given a sentence of 1 million KRW (about \$1000 USD) by the lower court for obstruction of business. She was arrested along with 18 Catholic sisters during the rosary prayer in front of the main construction gate on January 2012, although at the time she was merely counting bows done by the sisters. She is appealing the sentence.

On May 20, Rev. Lim Bo-Ra and two peace activists Choi Jung-Min and Yang Yeo-Ok were imprisoned for refusing to pay fines. Rev. Lim was released on May 26, while Choi and Yang were released on May 28. The three had convicted for their protests during the period of the blasting of Gureombi Rock in 2012. On May 26, Mr. Oh Cheol-Geun of the Quaker who did 500 days of "three steps, one bow" in Gangjeong was imprisoned for the refusal to pay fines, as well. He plans to be released on June 24.

On May 26, Dr. Song Kang-Ho was arrested at The Frontiers Community in the mainland for the unpaid fines of 120,000 KRW. He was ordered to count one day in prison as 30,000 KRW and was released after four days. Meanwhile on May 29, the appeals of peace activists Mr. Shin Jung-Hyun (to the appeals court) and Chun In-Bae (to the Supreme Court) were dismissed. Shin had been fined 3 million KRW and Chun, 1 million KRW. Both were charged with damage to public property. In a different case, the appeal of Jeju activist Chun Woo-Hong was also dismissed. He was charged 2 million KRW for obstruction of general traffic while protesting the blast of Gureombi Rock in 2012.

In good news, On May 30, a peace activist Kim Seri successfully won a lawsuit which she had filed, demanding compensation for damages. In July 2012, a policeman from the Jeju Provincial Police Office tweeted (without any basis) that he planned to investigate Kim and that she was charged with embezzlement of public money. This ridiculous false claim was later withdrawn but Kim protested the policeman's vicious behavior. When the police did not respond, Kim filed suit. The court ruled in her favor and she was awarded 2 million KRW (about \$2,000 USD) in damages. She donated the money won in the suit, except for the attorney fees, to the Gangjeong Village Anti-Base Committee. ctivists and villagers fines. On April 30 the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal of peace keeper, Choi Sung-Hee who was imprisoned in 2011. Her sentence of six months imprisonment suspended with two years probation was kept.



Image : Cho Sung-Bong

The ruling (Saenuri) party candidate for Jeju Governor Won Hee-Ryong visited Gangjeong Village but was confronted by angry villagers and was forced to leave. Won was the Saenuri party Secretary General when previous president Lee pushed for the naval base project.

Gangjeong Life and Peace Service One-Year Anniversary

Every fourth Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Gangjeong Peace Center, a Jeju-wide ecumenical Christian service is held. When they first started, they planted flowers at the Peace Center as a symbolic wish for peace and life to grow. This year, to mark the one-year anniversary of the service, they once again planted flowers to show thier wish for life again. Many Jeju Christians came to celebrate the anniversary including many Gangjeong activists. They prayed together for the restoration of Gangjeong's community.



Image : Park Yong-Sung

Quaker peace activist Kwon Sool-Ryong was released from prison after two weeks, which he chose to serve instead of paying for fines recieved for anti-base protest actions.

**Gangjeong
Prisoners
of
Conscience**

No.

32

Mr. Oh Cheol-Geun
Since May 26, 2014

Please write to Nambu Correctional Service,
P.O. Box No. 165, Geumcheon Post Office, Seoul, Korea

Visit To Yonaguni

By Emily Wang

On Yonaguni Island, Okinawa prefecture's and Japan's westernmost island and the nearest foreign island to Taiwan, located just 150km from the disputed Senkaku Islands, the Japanese government is building a military radar base and plans to station Japanese Self-Defense Force troops. The remotest island from Tokyo, Yonaguni is home to 1500 residents and many unique animal species. Yonaguni even has its own language and alphabet separate from both Japan and Okinawa.

I flew from Okinawa Island to Yonaguni. The flight was more expensive than from Seoul to Okinawa. It was my first time to visit Yonaguni, where the people said that in good weather I can see the mountains of my homeland, Taiwan. It was a beautiful and peaceful island, but sadly I also sensed a similar atmosphere to the DMZ of Korea, an area of natural beauty because of the long military ceasefire. Yonaguni used to have a lot of exchange with Taiwan, but this was cut off by the U.S. Military government after WW2. When I visited, the locals told me that not even one Taiwanese has stayed in recent years.

When I returned to Okinawa, I wore a T-Shirt that was given to me as a present by the local anti-base group in Yonaguni. The shirt said, "Isoba no Kai", but my Okinawan friends didn't understand the letters on the shirt and didn't know the meaning of "Isoba". I was excited to tell them that Isoba was an ancient female leader of Yonaguni who reunited and reconciled the Yonaguni into a people of peace.

The community in Yonaguni was split in two over the base issue. If Isoba was there, I wonder what she would say when the officer from the Japanese Ministry of Defense held the base groundbreaking ceremony on Yonaguni on April 19, 2014? I wonder what she would respond to Barak Obama who reassured the Japanese Prime Minister Abe that Japan's dispute with China over the Sankaku/Diaoyu Islands were covered by the allies' post-war security treaty on April 24, 2014? Would she laugh when she heard that the Sky of Yonaguni was divided by the US government to Taiwan and Japan? I wish that could talk to the Grandmother creator of Jeju and the spirit of Taiwan and create a way for all of us to live in peace.



Image : Joyakgol

A podcast/internet radio show has opened in Gangjeong. Held in the afternoons in front of the construction site, activist Joyakgol and others play music and have discussions on "Dirty Radio".

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

- Created and designed by the Gangjeong International Team, special thanks to Everyday Practice.
- Published by the Gangjeong Village Association, 4417 Gangjeong-dong, the Life and Peace village, Seogwipo-si, Jeju, the Peace Island.
- Special thanks to Gangjeong Friends for financial support.



Image : Moetburi Park

The Gangjeong ocean team continues its regular monitoring of ocean construction. On May 17, thier observations were able to catch a barge working illegally. The barge was forced to temporarily stop.

Gangjeong Shamanic Ritual Sites Tour

By Shining Lake



Image : Shining Lake

Tour participants learn about Bon Hyang Dang, Gangjeong's most important traditional ritual site.

On May 14, Mr. Han Jin-Oh, a Pungmul teacher, led a tour of the five different "Dang" or traditional shamanic ritual sites in Gangjeong village. In Korean tradition, a Dang is considered a significant place for villagers of tribal communities. It is a location where community members hold different rituals, praying for fortunes and protection for themselves and their village. Gangjeong Village community is well known on Jeju for its history of hundreds of years. Before the anti-base struggle, it was common to hear the sound of Pungmul resounding throughout the village. Pungmul is a type of collective prayer (Gut) consisting of Korean traditional collective performance with musical instruments, dance, and song. Village rituals would be held at the Dang sites, wishing for prosperity and protection for the village. Nowadays, there is no trace of the rituals at these Dang sites where the villagers used to converge with gathered hearts and sincerity. The reason is because the village community has been torn apart during the long years of struggle over the naval base construction. Distrust and hostility have disrupted the long traditions of the village. It was sad to see vacant and faded abandoned Dang. Nonetheless, it was a meaningful activity to join this tour and learn about the past and re-evaluate the current problems, finding clues to the solution.

