

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

September
2014

Monthly news on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base project

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South Korea



"From You shall come forth Peace"

Image: Chung Hyon-Jin
(Catholic News Now and Here)
Article by Sister Roselina

A very significant theological Peace Conference and Festival, hosted by the Catholic Jeju diocese and Jesuit of Korean Province, was held in both Gangjeong village and the Seogwipo Parish from 26 to 28 September 2014. Given the villagers' hard struggle and fragmentation due to the base project for eight years, there has been an urgent need for Catholics and Jesuits to provide villagers and activists a theological light for the whole struggle, especially when arms race in Northeast Asia is increasing. During this conference, high level and in depth discussions were able to be held in the form of focus groups and lectures on topics around the conference theme of "Disarmament in North East Asia Theological Reflection and Analysis".

On Friday 26 September three lectures were given

by Bishop Kang U-II (the Jeju Bishop and Chairman of the Catholic Bishops of Korea), by Michele Naar-Obed (an American activist) who works in Plowshare in the Catholic Workers Movement and Christian Peacemaker Team and by Bishop Tani Daiji (from Japan) who lived in search of peace for Okinawa after his retirement. Responses to these lectures were given by Lee Taeho (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy), Cheong Wooksik (Peace Network) and Oh Hyeran (Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea). The next day focused group discussions were held by domestic and international experts and activists on demilitarization and peace at the Seogwipo Parish. The Peace Festival was also held in Gangjeong village on Saturday 27 September. The day began with 100 morning bows for peace, followed

by Gangjeong history and culture tours, Gangjeong dance performance, Peace Cross-making, and contemplative prayer walk, children's programs, concerts, exhibitions, screenings and ended in an evening of Taize prayers. Many Christians from across the Jeju Diocese took part in a Mass prayer for Peace to remember the pain in Gangjeong and bring hope and support to the people. Colorful banners were prepared that would be soon hung across the village. Recently the people of Gangjeong have felt exhausted in keeping the peace movement going each and every day. It is our hope that after having the opportunity to hold and participate in this Peace Conference, that the people of Gangjeong will feel again that "From You shall come forth Peace (Micah 5,1-4)" and be able to continue their ever important resistance work against the naval base.

Global Day of Listening to mark the International Day of Peace

By Shining Lake

To mark the International Day of Peace on Sunday 21 September, Gangjeong villagers had a skype call with Asma in Palestine, Doug and Sherri in the USA, Jan in Sweden and Lina in the mainland of South Korea. The Skype discussion was included in the participation of the Global Days of Listening organized by a group in the USA, which is actively listening to people around the globe who converse about their paths of action towards a peaceful world. Gangjeong people sang the Korean song 'We are peace' and shouted out the slogan "Palestine El-hurra" (which means "Liberation to Palestine") to our Palestinian friend Asma who also joined the skype call. We wanted to express our care and solidarity for Palestinian people through our voices. While we have never met Asma in person, once her voice echoed through the speakers, we already felt connected to her. Sharing each other's struggle against oppression and war through the phone was so encouraging and inspiring to all who joined the call. While waiting for the call, we made signs, practiced singing, watched a film called '5

broken cameras' about the story of the West Bank and learned about the current situation of the Gaza strip. The host group also invited Lina who currently lives in Korea to hear about the struggle of the elderly people who fight against state violence in order to keep their land and hometown free from huge transmission towers in Miryang. Since the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteer group couldn't join this time due to their trip to India another Skype meeting will be held soon. Jan from Sweden, who works to spread the peace activities of the Afghan youth group through making videos, joined the call to hear from us and record the conversation. He has already made a video of the conversation and posted it online, it can be viewed at <http://www.livestream.com/globaldaysoflistening>.

Through this Skype call the activists in Gangjeong felt that the more we interact with friends across the world, the more we realize how interwoven our struggles are and with one another we share both sadness and joy.



Image : Gon Yang

Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace Korea Committee held a press conference on Sep 25th to announce the collective statement made by the Peace for Sea International Peace Camp participants, and delivered the statement to the Island government.

A Community of Hope

By Brian Terrell

For years I heard of the nonviolent struggle against the construction of a naval base on Jeju Island. I was inspired by what I read and by the reports of friends who visited the island. When colleagues with Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Hakim and Kathy Kelly, spoke of their visit in May, I decided to go to Jeju myself. On September 2, with the support of Voices, I met Sherri Maurin in Seoul and we went on to Gangjeong.

The next ten days we experienced extraordinary hospitality and a beautiful culture of resistance in Gangjeong that actively seeks to create inclusive and peaceable ways of living together in the face of the construction of an ecologically devastating and politically destabilizing naval base. The hellish conspiracy that includes Samsung, the US, the Republic of Korea and other corporate and government entities is confounded daily by fervent and peaceful liturgies and exuberant songs and dances.

After five days pickling peppers at my home on the farm in Iowa, I was on the road again, to Nevada to mark the International Day of Peace at the nuclear test site and Creech Air Force Base, center of the military and CIA killer drones. The Nevada desert does not look like tropical Jeju Island, but both are far from the centers of power and the beauty of both are exploited and poisoned by greed for domination and resources. Just as coastland was taken from the people of Gangjeong by stealth and violence, so the sacred land of the indigenous Western Shoshone Nation was stolen and defiled. In both places, communities have formed to restore what has been lost.

Such communities on the world's geographical and political margins are all that bring hope to these perilous times and I cherish opportunities to be part of them.

3rd Year Anniversary of Gangjeong Catholic Mass and Gureombi Fence



Image :Regina Pyon

A mass celebrating in Gangjeong to mark the 3rd year anniversary of the launch of Catholic solidarity for the realization of the Island of Peace, Jeju on Sept. 29. A lot of Catholics from the mainland and Jeju attended the mass at the gate, blocking base construction vehicles for an hour.

Looking back to Jeju from Nanjing

By Emily Wang

A Peace Education Program was held in Nanjing China this August by the North East Asia Regional Peace-building Institute. We, the participants of this peace education program mainly from North East Asia including China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Mongolia, had the chance to visit the "Memorial Hall of Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders" and listen the direct sharing from one of the survivors of Nanjing Massacre in 1937. Also, it was especially meaningful time to share about Jeju's struggle in Nanjing city.

To look back at Jeju from Nanjing in the aspect of history, the dual roles that the island may play as both victim and offender appear to be ironical and clear. Jeju as a colony of Japan was forced to be militarized by Japanese Imperial military and functioned for the invasion to China, and is partly responsible for the attack of Nanjing in 1937, when the Nanjing Massacre happened after the fall of Nanjing.

Again, from the aspect of the present situation, we can see in this year while

the historical conflict between China and Japan becomes more emotional, the China's legislative body has set December 13th as a national memorial day to commemorate the victims of the Nanjing Massacre.

It is incomplete for China and Japan, if the issue of historical conflict is only considered between two "countries" or "governments". Also, it's a big loss for Jeju to fall out of this agenda as the historical base provider. Base building = War Preparation. The construction of bases brings the realization of war crime. If we can learn how worst disaster of the militarization of the island can bring to islanders itself from the lesson of Okinawa battle, we may see from the Nanjing Massacre how terrible suffering militarization of island can bring to other people.

To overcome the fate to function as base is probably the best solidarity and memorial action from Jeju people to the victims of Nanjing and Okinawa battle. It is also creating the way for all of us from repeating the disasters of the past.

A Pastoral Center to be built for Life and Peace

By Oh Doo-Hee, Peace Nomad

'The Gangjeong Life and Peace Pastoral Center' will be constructed in Gangjeong village next June 2015. On 29 September 2014 a celebration of the launch of construction was held with the presence of many Catholics and villagers, including Bishop Kang U-Il of Jeju Catholic diocese and Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyeon of Peace Nomad.

The center will be built through the collective efforts of Jeju diocese, the Catholic Solidarity for the Realization of the Peace Island Jeju and Peace Nomad. Even though the pastoral center will only be a small four story building, it is planned for it to be used as an exhibition space, for peace education, peace prayer and as a research center.

Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyeon first proposed the idea of a pastoral center as he identified the urgent need of space to support the villagers in the long term to be able to live peacefully and value life and peace. Bishop Kang U-Il also stated that "true peace will begin in the world when we open the vision that pursues all human beings' happiness and peace that goes beyond nationality and national borders."

Thank you~

By Lunah

I love you Gangjeong and Jeju deeply. You are all so beautiful that I cannot express it in words. With you I suffer deeply. I am so sad that the people I love are sad. I am so sad that our sacred giving and nurturing precious mother earth is being hurt. But this sadness has given me more strength to fight for this earth that I love.

I promise you I will do everything I can to help. I will tell your story and I will keep you close in my heart. Thank you for being such beautiful people. Thank you for guarding the earth. Thank you for being so kind and generous with me. I'll come back as soon as I can. Love you
Thank you.

Remembering Ryuji Yagi

Ryuji Yagi, a Japanese peace activist passed away from cancer on Sept. 25. He has been denied entry to Korea twice in 2012 for his solidarity with Gangjeong. He will be remembered by people of Gangjeong forever.

International Solidarity



Image : Marcus Page-Collonge

On Sept 23rd, Brian Terrell visited Gangjeong Village in the early of Sept and joined the protest holding the yellow flag 'No Naval Base' from Jeju Island at Creech Air Force Base. Creech is the center for US drone program and the CIA assassinations by remote control.

Why do I join this struggle?

By Fr. Chong Chechon, S.J.,
Society of Jesus, Korea Province

For three years, Jesuit members staying in Gangjeong village joined the villagers' opposition movement against the construction of the naval base.

Why in the first place is the naval base being constructed in Gangjeong? Due to typhoons, seven caissons were broken two years ago and at least three caissons slanted down this year. The weight of a caisson is up to 25,000 tons. The cost of a caisson is told to be around \$ 2.5 million USD. Since the Gureombi Rock coast of Gangjeong is projected out, it is the spot that usually first and most strongly gets damaged by typhoons. It was never thought to be a good place for a port facility.

Beyond geological issues, it was clear for the navy from the beginning that Gangjeong villagers would oppose the construction of the naval base. Therefore the navy secretly called up only 80 villagers who would be in favor of it, from around 1,000 village electorates, and made them hold a general meeting and pass the decision to construct the base. Then the other villagers who realized later such wrongdoing annulled that decision. This was the start of the anti-naval base movement in Gangjeong eight years ago.

The construction that began with such an illegal process resulted in continuous conflict and division

It will be very likely that Jeju Island will become the victim of an international conflict since the naval base will become an outpost for the United States military to keep China in check. The construction of the naval base is being progressed by the collective greed of a powerful country's military interest. South Korean navy's desire for power and civil engineering and building contractors' economic interest runs in opposition to the will of God who loves peace. The construction of the naval base must be urgently stopped.

(Fr. Chong was a translator for Pope Francis during Pope's visit to Korea this August.)

Okinawa Struggle Update

By Orié
Okinawa Activist

In Henoko, a district of Okinawa, a huge base for the Marine Corps will be built in the precious sea. Approximately 5,500 people gathered at the beach of Henoko for a landfill objection meeting. The front gate of Camp Schwab, which is adjacent to the existing base has become the location of the construction opposition movement.

The government workers are located beside a private enterprise security firm who are positioned in the front acting as a shield. The team from the Bureau of Defense Policy are facing the prefectural police and the riot police leaving the peaceful public sequentially located at the back. This makes it very difficult to prevent the entrance of any vehicle loaded with material, but this doesn't stop the more the 100 people performing demonstrations and holding protest meetings day after day.

The government harasses the group by putting up a notched iron plate called the murder iron plate in front of the gate, however our protest continues via canoe in the sea. The violence shown by the patrol boat prevents us from moving, this includes the local fisherman who receive a salary from the Okinawa Bureau of Defense. The coast guards proceed to 'boo' citizens and use unbelievable violence. For example, putting their hands around the citizen's neck and sticking their thumb into their throat, or pulling the hair of the woman. It is difficult for any citizen to approach the gate and check on the construction progress, but the protest still continues day after day.

We will have a State Governor election this November. Those running for election include the incumbent Mr. Nakaima for the Liberal Democratic Party, the Mayor of Naha city who advocated for Henoko to object is affiliated with the Liberal Democratic Party but received a recommendation from the Liberal Democratic Party and the reformists of the political party. The outcome of this November election will be very important for the Henoko district of Okinawa.

The State Power's Unnecessary and Excessive Measure

By Dongseok
Gangjeong Activist

During the daily morning mass in front of the Naval Base Construction gate on August 7, vehicles including construction trucks were passing by our left side under the guard of the police who regularly carry people and objects from the left of the gate to the right side.

On this day an accident occurred when the police began to move other irrelevant objects to allow the construction vehicles to drive through the right side of the gate. Along with other peace keepers I protested to the police about the movement of these objects by resisting and holding one wooden board inscribed with the letters of 'St. Francisco's prayer for peace,' with my two arms.

About five police were then mobilized to carry me and the board off. I resisted with all my strength not to be taken away with the board and while swinging my arms several times to shake off their hands it seems that my hand accidentally just touched the face of one policeman around me. As he was located behind another policeman I could not even recognize that he was wearing glasses. The policeman asserted that I assaulted him and threatened me with the words of arrest, bringing other people's strong protest for me.

After the protest at around 5 pm that same day I was approached by a policeman who appeared from a vehicle on an alley of the village. The police called me to come for an inquiry into the incident with an official letter. I was surprised and doubted whether they had been following me, but I had no way to prove it.

The next day, I presented to the police station. I was ready to willingly explain to them the situation that had occurred the day before. Until now, I have not heard in detail to what degree the policeman with glasses was injured, however when I inquired to the police station via phone on September 22, I was only informed that the case is still under investigation.

Gangjeong joins hunger strike in solidarity with Sewol families

By Fr. Kim Seong-Hwan S.J.

On the 25th August 2014 in Gangjeong eleven villagers and peace activists started a hunger prayer and strike in order to bring awareness for the enactment of a Special Law for the Sewol Ferry tragedy. Every day participants who attended the hunger prayer and hunger strike bowed one hundred times in front of the naval base gate for peace in Gangjeong. Participants also attended the daily Catholic Mass, the rosary prayer, the human chain and dances. Some participants did one-day fast, others did a two-day fast or a four-day fast.

My first reason to participate in the hunger strike was that my prayer could be accepted by God as purified as I was fasting. My second reason was that I wanted to join in solidarity with the suffering of the Sewol Ferry families and Kim Yeong-oh who was fasting for more than 40 days. My third reason was that if more people could join the movement then the voices fighting to enact a Special Law for Sewol Ferry could be heard.

Even though our hunger prayer and strike only lasted a short period it had a strong meaning as we were in solidarity with the Sewol Ferry families and all those that also support the families around the world.

Trial Updates



On August 28 the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal of peace activist Choi Sung-Hee who was charged with collective trespass into the Naval Base Project Committee Building Complex along with others in June 2012. The Supreme Court decided to uphold the decision of the first court ruling of a 4 month imprisonment suspended for 1 year. Choi Sung-Hee and others entered the site in protest of the Committee security guards' unreasonable physical obstruction of people building a wooden stage for an evening cultural event in a site in front of the complex gate. At the time, the police detained people inside the complex late at night with no legal basis.

On September 2, the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal by peace activist Park Seok-Jin who has been charged with 19 cases. As a result of the Supreme Court dismissal, the original court decision of 1 year imprisonment suspended with 3 years against him was maintained. He had been one of the five who protested on the top of a huge caisson dock, hanging a banner of 'no naval base,' on September 6, 2012, the opening day of 2012 World Conservation Congress in Jeju. Another case included an incident in August 2012 when Park Seok-Jin protested against the police's destruction of Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyon's Eucharist. The numerous charges charged against him, 19 cases, included collective trespass, obstruction of justice, special obstruction of justice, obstruction of business, property damage, injury etc. As in other trials involving the Jeju naval base project, the Court ignored the truth that he, not the police, was the victim of police violence.

On September 4, the Supreme Court dismissed an appeal by Yun Byung-Hee, a Korean missionary with US citizenship who was charged with carrying a tool and damaging property. He participated in breaking the naval base fence along with other people on April 3, 2012, during the period that Gureombi Rock was blasted. As a result, the lower court decision of 8 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years, including a 100,000 KRW fine (about \$100 USD) against him was maintained. The final decision by the Immigration Office on the matter of deportation against him has not yet been reviewed. His colleagues have submitted appeals on his behalf.

Gangjeong Prisoners

0 Prisoners!

"For the first time in the history of the Gangjeong Village Story, there are no Gangjeong prisoners!"



Image : Kim Soo-oh

Gangjeong people gathered together for their beloved friends, Paco (Ex-editor of this newsletter) and Silver's good bye party. Their passionate and dedicated activism for promoting peace and justice will continue to inspire many people in Gangjeong even after they leave. Sending them big hugs and love.

No THAAD! No Missile Defense system!

The USFK (United States Forces of Korea) deployment of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) in South Korea will very likely be a top issue in the coming annual ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM). This will be followed by a meeting of the two countries' foreign and defense chiefs, in mid-October. Opposing its deployment, the Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea stated on September 16 that the THAAD would occupy a central position in the establishment and operation of the US-led ROK-US-Japan MD system across Northeast Asia. If South Korea introduces the THAAD system then South Korea will be an outpost for the intelligence and operation (interception) of the US MD system, whether the system is to be operated by the USFK or ROK military. The deployment of the THAAD in South Korea would be very ineffective in intercepting missiles from North Korea additionally it would only intensify ROK's conflict with China and could result in bringing burden hard to bear for South Korean national security and economy. So far, the South Korean government has implied that it has no objections to a move like this from the USFK. With the upcoming Keep Space for Peace Week events (October 4 to 11) which opposes weaponization and militarization of space in the world, now is the time for Koreans to raise their voice against the deployment of THAAD in Korea and beyond.

The Ghosts of Jeju screening tour goes nationwide

By Joyakgol

The official Korean version of the documentary film 'The Ghosts of Jeju' is now showing on an organized nationwide tour. In September large cities such as Seoul, Incheon, Busan and Daegu showed the film which is about the Jeju April 3rd uprising and the Gangjeong peace movement against the construction of the naval base. Alternative cafes, community-based media centers and spaces run by social organizations were interested in screening the film. In each event, when the 80-minute film ended, we had time for discussions where people expressed how they liked the film and eventually they wanted to understand the recent situation of the Jeju naval base construction and Gangjeong villagers' reception of it. So I shared what goes on in the village with the participants, which I found to be a good way to reach out to people around the country. The mainstream media does not cover the Gangjeong story anymore unless there's a shocking incident and thus, in one way, it feels like Gangjeong is forgotten, but as a matter of fact, it is not. People still want to get in touch with Gangjeong and keep updated with the peace news. So, it is our job to travel around to deliver the message of hope and peace. The film will also be shown at the Jeju Fringe Festival, the Incheon Environment Festival, the Catholic Film Festival and the Gwangju Human Rights Film Festival in the coming months. Please contact Joyakgol if you are interested in holding a screening in your area. Let's never stop amplifying the voices of Gangjeong, Jeju!



Image : Silver

The Korean traditional sewing team in Gangjeong has been holding an ongoing exhibition from Aug. 28 to Sept. 29 at Cafe Mal.

How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to stop the Jeju base project and to the US government to stop the support for it.
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...)
5. Then share about it on social media.
6. Visit Gangjeong!
7. 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.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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Screening of “Gureombi- The Wind is Blowing”

By Ddalgi

On 14th of September a screening of “Gureombi- The Wind is Blowing” a film made by director Cho Sung Bong was held in Shindoku in Hotkaido, Japan. The event was made possible by two Japanese directors, Asako Kakeyama and Fujimoto Yukihisa, who directed the film “Love Okinawa” which deals with the American military base issues in Okinawa. The film received a lot of attention and was the most sought-out film at the festival. Despite the long running time and the additional briefing on the Gangjeong struggle many audience members remained until the end of the event. We received endless comments full of support and encouragements addressed to the villagers' brave fight. Even with language barrier and geographical distance it was a great opportunity for all the participants to share a sense of empathy and solidarity.

