

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

November
2014

Monthly news on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base project

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South Korea



No Military Housing! Cut the whole 2015 Jeju Navy Base Budget!

Image: Dokdo

Article by Go Gwon-Il, co-vice mayor of the Gangjeong village.

The number of military personnel which is estimated to be stationed in the currently built Jeju navy base in Gangjeong village would reach around 7,000. Even though the navy is preparing for military residence and barracks close to 1,000 housing units inside the base area, it is also planning to build additional 72 housing units outside the base but within the village.

In absolutely strong opposition and urgency to save the 450 year old village, for more than a month now, the local people here are blocking the construction vehicles from entering the military residence construction site by taking 24 hours sit-in in front of the gate.

On November 13, based on the village's general meeting, the village representatives have discussed with Jeju governor Won Hee-Ryong that the village would

accept his proposal in regards to the truth investigation, even if it is flawed and has many limitation, only if Won can negotiate with the navy to withdraw its military residence project from the village. However, the navy has refused even Won's request. The navy's arrogant attitude shows its heavy-handed rule over the people of this Island.

On November 18, the village and civic groups in the Island and Korea officially demanded that the National Assembly should cut the whole 2015 Jeju naval base budget of about USD 290 million filed by the Government. The Ministry of National Defense has not only enforced construction without villagers' agreements but violated the conditions given by the National Assembly, with the result of enormous environmental damage and human rights problems.

The National Assembly should above all, totally cut the military housing building budget of about USD 9 million. It should also cut the USD 30 million budget for the purchase of military apartment of 185 housing units which the navy plans to build. There should be a total cut of about USD 18 million from the budget for the construction of the base entry road, as well. Furthermore, there should also cut about USD 90 million from the budget for the harbor & bay facility construction and about USD 110 million for the land facility construction. The project promotion budgets should be all cut, as well.

The Jeju naval base is to be used as an outpost for the ROK-US-Japan trilateral military alliance targeting China, only aggravating military confrontation in the Northeast Asia.

Saebyeoldang Shrine Under Threat of Destruction

By Teho

The Saebyeoldang spirit shrine was badly damaged as construction workers destroyed the trees surrounding the shrine to make way for their crane, which was used to remove palm trees on their land that they wished to sell. The Saebyeoldang shrine is located on the side of a road on the edge of the sea, near Gureombi rock. Diving women (haenyeo) and fishermen come to this shrine to pray to the gods for a plentiful catch, their safety, to be granted children and to heal those with diseases. Typically, shamanic spirit shrines are located at places that exude unique natural features, such as old trees or a natural spring. The trees that emanate from this particular shrine are indeed old, and serve both a practical and a spiritual purpose. Spiritually, it can represent a connection between worlds, linking the spirits to our terrestrial dwelling. Practically, the trees protect the altar. The devastation to these surrounding trees leaves the shrine vulnerable to potentially damaging natural forces. Furthermore, the roots of the spirit tree above the altar itself

were damaged as well.

Discussions that surround the controversy of the naval base construction often focus on its economic, political, and military impact. However, rarely does one see discourse that concerns the plight of the local villagers and the environment to which they are historically, culturally, and economically bound. In the name of economic gain for foreign companies (meaning not from Jeju) and military expansion for the government, sites such as this shrine are being demolished with no consideration for the people that depend on these sites throughout their daily livelihoods.

This shrine is also under threat of being completely walled off by an ever-expanding fourteen-foot wall that surrounds the base. Another distinct feature of the Saebyeoldang is that it is said to stand on a piece of rock that extends into the sea, thus creating a physical connection to the sea gods. Villagers argue that shrines have never been sealed or walled off to their natural surroundings, and doing this will cut that spiritual connection the shrine has to the sea.



Image : Sister Roselina

Nov. 7 was Martyr Yang Yong Chan's memorial day who self-immolated for the opposition of the special law on the development of the Jeju island in 1991, leaving testimony that he wanted the Jeju Island "as a nest for life rather than the 2nd Hawaii". His words and action still lighten people's heart in Jeju today.

Visitors from the Pacific North West region

By Melissa

November 10th–20th a team of 10 individual peace and justice activists came to Gangjeong Village from the United States, and mostly from the Pacific North West region. This team was lead and accompanied by Father 'Bix'. Bix had first come to Jeju in the fall of 2013 with Br. Gilberto, he says he experienced such an overwhelming feeling of joy he had to go back.

When writing this article, I asked Bix what was different between his 2013 trip and this trip. "The warmth and care was even more so" he says. He says this regarding his health. The majority of the trip, Father Bix who is 86, was using a wheelchair to get around the village. "I was more conscious of being spoiled and extra cared for, and could feel myself getting weaker." He knew this trip would be hard on him, but that did not stop him. He still experienced the same strong sense of joy amongst the people here in Gangjeong. When thinking back about our trip and what stood out to us the most I can say I was most impressed with daily commitment to prayer and communion the community has. Elizabeth writes "I am especially filled with admiration for the strong bonds of solidarity among the women, and the way they reached out in solidarity and



Image source: Pang

Visitors from the Pacific North West region in front of the base construction gate.

Okinawa election result shines a light on the anti-base movement

By Dongseok

Recently I had the chance to take a one and half month trip to Okinawa, Japan. While I was there I learnt how the people in Okinawa identified more as Okinawan (Uchinanchu) rather than Japanese.

The 12th Okinawan prefecture governor election took place during my time in Okinawa and Onaga Takeshi was elected. This was a very exciting time as Onaga Takeshi had clearly stated his opposition to the base expansion and to the new base construction in Henoko, Nago City, which was the biggest issue in the election. This outcome is said to be one of the reasons that Abe Shinzo Diet dissolved the House of Representatives on November 21 with an ulterior motive to take the public's eye off the wrongdoings of his Government and from the outcome for the Governors' election result.

Meanwhile, in front of the Camp Schwab located in Henoko, Okinawa tents have been set up daily since July this year to facilitate the participants who hold rallies and anti-base protests. These protests and rallies gathered

more than 20 participants and have been carried out very non-violently. Supporting are further anti-base construction protests by sea using canoes and small boats.

Since November 22 the Okinawan Defense Bureau has started investigating how they can reclaim Henoko. The situation of Henoko after the Governor elections has rapidly changed as the sit-in participants in front of the base stand shoulder by shoulder together in protest and against the investigation.

The anti-base and anti-war movements that has succeeded for more than half a century will proudly go on thanks to the solidarity from the Okinawan people from various parts of the Okinawa prefecture and other Japanese and International supporters. Jeju and Okinawa are both proud of their own unique identities that distinguish them from the main land. The possibility of solidarity for peace between these two islands is limitless.

friendship to the women in our delegation, they set an example for women everywhere! and I was most impressed by the determination of the people in Gangjeong Village not to give up their fierce resistance."

Elizabeth also comments about how she "was able to witness firsthand accounts of how callously the authorities have acted towards those who have resisted the naval base." We all noticed that within our 10 day trip, the beautiful tangerine grove was cut down and in its place was military housing. However, we also noticed the community come together to set up a 24 hour watch vigil next to the construction, which showed your perseverance and dedication.

Bix says that international solidarity is very important, "its a global issue, we need to make connections." I learned that United States Militarism is real, and even-though Gangjeong is one village many many miles away from us, it still affects me and we need to be united in the struggle. Larry talks about how the capitalist corporate power is global, and divides all people groups, "recognizing that we are all fighting different arms of the same octopus helps us see that solidarity with struggling people anywhere in the world is a basic necessity." We felt the love and care graciously given to us during our stay. You welcomed us into your daily resistance activities, and we are grateful for that. Elizabeth says that "International solidarity with Gangjeong is important so that they know they have support around the world." And you have a big support team in the U.S! Upon returning home, we have plans to keep spreading the news about Jeju. Talking to our local communities as well as intentionally spreading awareness to youth and colleges.

By Shining Lake

A presentation on the Islands of resistance by Prof. Sasha Davis

Prof. Sasha Davis from Hawaii University visited Gangjeong this November to examine the military base construction and explore the international solidarity that opposes the construction. He researches anti-base movements on different islands across the globe. On his last night, Prof. Sasha gave a presentation to the people of Gangjeong on the successful cases of anti-base movements. He spoke about a couple of examples of active resistance to US military activities such as Okinawa, Vieques of Puerto Rico, Guam and Hawaii. He also emphasized the importance of the global no bases network that exists from islands to islands. This is shown through the example of Vieques, it would have not been as successful as it was without international visitors showing there solidarity, pressuring the USA government and bringing attention from the international society. In addition, he pointed out it is important to learn from the experiences of anti-militarization activism done on other islands by sharing tactics and strategies that worked well. Lastly, he briefly mentioned the links between military bases and tourism. Those islands that are historically and heavily militarized are also known for tourist places as well. According to Prof. Sasha military forces and tourist industries can coexist and have a symbiotic relationship to be able to run smoothly without facing any issues leading to them being moved from the area at a later date. His presentation drew the attention of the Gangjeong people and helped them realize that they are also taking part in the global no bases network so they are not alone in this fight.

International Solidarity



Image : Emily

International woman activists from the USA, South Korea, Taiwan and Lebanon had a talk at Tongmul Library in Gangjeong village. They shared their experiences of peace activism from woman's perspective and their own wisdom to face such confrontations with police/military forces and structure power.

The airborne arsenic dust damages farming

By Grace

In fall, 2011 Gangjeong villagers' committee released a public statement regarding the damage on farm products caused by the airborne arsenic dust, which flew from the naval base construction site. At that time over fifty farmers have declared the damage on their farm products, which varied from disfigured tangerines to dusty lilies.

The villagers held the navy responsible for this, since the construction was launched without the proper evaluation of environmental assessment and asked for not only the individual compensation but also the lasting solution to this problem. However, to their disappointment, the local government took a passive gesture to collaborate with the villagers' committee for

the in-depth investigation on the contamination, and the navy, to no one's surprise, didn't come up with any practical solution to the complaints.

Three years later, the villagers are going through the same nightmare, as the harvest season approaches. Except this time the construction has actually expanded and came much closer to the heart of the village due to the new addition to the construction: the military housing. Yoon Nam Suk, a villager who runs a lily farm near the construction site, said that arsenic dusts on his lilies became much more since the construction at the military housing began.

In 2011 he had to plow over his whole farm because

of the dust problem and subsequently applied for environmental conflict resolution for compensation.

Unfortunately, neither the local government nor the navy brought forward any preventive measure since then and Yoon's 4.8 million lilies might have to be confiscated once again.

He also revealed that since the explosion of Gureombi began, underground water used for drinking and farming became contaminated with dust and oil, which is in fact foreshadowing the imminent issue with water pollution caused by the naval base. However, as Yoon also indicated, the navy is still showing no sign of effort to prevent further pollution.

Two Activists Injured while Blocking Construction

By Sister Roselina

On November 12th I learned that two keepers, Park Yong-Sung and Kim Hak-Gu, standing sentinel to prevent vehicles from passing through to the military housing construction, got injured by workers of the construction crew. I could not go there immediately, so I called brother Park Do-Hyun to care for them and investigate the cause of the accident.

The fact was that the driver, an evil officer of the construction, moved forward to run over Park Yong-Sung's foot on purpose. At the same time, Kim Hak-Gu who grappled the window of the car was dragged to about 10m down the road. Even more, the worker's bad attitude had horrified me as much as the injuries. He drove away, turning away the activist who had been trodden by the wheels of his car who was screaming for help. He then ridiculed the activist who had fallen down, saying, "Don't act like those Hollywood actors," and held up him with force.

When the police came, the offenders not only denied their sinful action with a false statement, but also threatened them by saying, "I will kill you," and bring him to hidden places. On that day, the two peacekeeper were admitted to the hospital and prepared to press charges against those workers. There is a Korean proverb, "Earthworms being stepped on also move and twitch." We in Gangjeong warn those hurting us to treat us no like earthworms, but as human beings, but I had no way to prove it.

By Shining Lake

"Please bring the truth into our society"

A special visitor gave a touching and heartbreaking speech at the mass and human chain event only a few days ago. She is the mother of a student victim of the Sewol Ferry tragedy, sadly a tragedy that many Korean people have already forgotten. She lost her son, Seongho and has gone through both a sense of loss and the consistent oppression by the state power.

This is why she feels more connected to what's happening in Gangjeong as the situation has a lot of similarities with what she has been experiencing since 16 April, 2014. It was so special and meaningful for Gangjeong people to hear her speech at the gate of the construction site while the police kept removing Catholic sisters, brother and priests who were peacefully sitting and blocking the trucks entering and exiting the construction site. However, disappointingly, the police didn't let her finish speaking as they pushed her out of the gate entrance in order to give a way to trucks. The police stated that the trucks are waiting in a long line and that she must wait until they all go out.

This led to another person responding to the police that this is how all the students lost their lives in the cold ocean, because the adults told them to just wait and the students listened but were then unable to be saved. One of nuns became infuriated with the way the police had treated the mother of the victim and yelled at the police, "I beg you! Please let us listen to her story. Please let her finish if you have any conscience left, even if you can't disobey the absurd order given to you every day from the state forces!" But no policemen or policewomen seemed troubled by the sister's wailing request. Lastly, Seongho's mom desperately appealed to the people at the gate not to forget the Sewol tragedy and to never give up demanding the government to enact the special law. These were her last words, "Otherwise, more tragedies will happen to one of us in near future. It's because of this that demanding the enactment of the special law is not only a matter for the victim's family but also a matter of all of us."



Image :Emily- Except for the fun energy of the Gangjeong poongmool team, some people devote to share the tranquil or creative energy through drawing. A volunteering drawing time was set up (or in another way of view, a new way of communal expressing time is under constructing?). Here is one of the corner of village of Life and Peace, Gangjeong.

Trial Updates

- ▶ On 13 November the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal by three people, Reverend Lim Borah, Mr. Lee Young-Wook and Mr. Park Sung-Don. This meant that the fines of 3,500,000 KRW (\$3,500 USD) against each of them were maintained. Including these three, in total eleven people have been arrested for their direct action as a part of 10,000 people direct action campaign during the blast of Gureombi Rock in April 2012. The charges against these three people are damages to property, violation of rally and protest due to the damaging of a fence with stones and crossing over the police line.
- ▶ On 20 November the Jeju High Court dismissed two appeals in regards to Ms Kim Mi-Ryang, a villager of Gangjeong, one put forward by Ms Kim and the other by her prosecutor. The original court decision was 6 million KRW (about 6,000 USD) fines against Ms Kim. She lay underneath a watering vehicle in protest of the construction companies as they did not observe the National Assembly's conditions of ceasing construction for 70 days while it considered whether to approve the naval base construction budget in January 2013. The prosecutor has demanded a three year imprisonment against her with the charge of obstruction of business.
- ▶ On 21 November the Jeju 1st court handed down the verdict of not guilty to both Mr Kim Jong-II for the cases in 2012-2013 and to Ms Choi Sung-Hee for her case in March 2013. However the court decided to charge Ms Park Young-In with a four month imprisonment suspended with 1 year probation for 10 separate cases, but not guilty for the same cases for Ms Choi. Furthermore, the court decided to award Mr Park Jong-Hoon with a one year, two month imprisonment and 120 hours social service for his 23 cases. All four activists were charged of obstruction of business with Mr Park additionally charged with obstruction of justice. For those found to be not guilty the court referred to a Supreme Court's precedent case early this year where digital proof that is provided but cannot be proven as identical to the original file cannot be taken in as evidence.
- ▶ On 23 November the Supreme Court dismissed the appeals by seven villagers and activists, including an ex-chairman of the village elders' association and an ex-secretary of an environmental organization. The original court decision for the other five involved in the same incident but had not filed an appeal statement within the due date or had never filed also maintained their verdicts. As a result of these Supreme Court dismissals, two activists Mr Kwon Sool-Yong and Mr Lim Ho-Young maintained their original court decisions of six months imprisonment suspended with two years' probation. For all others involved, the original court decisions of four to six months imprisonment suspended for one year were maintained. In June 2011 these seven activists and villagers demanded the withdrawal of a construction barge on the sea, with some of them climbing aboard and demanding that construction stop. During the process Dr. Song Kang-Ho was injured by navy violence. In protest to that violence, tens of people, including ex-mayor Kang Dong-Kyun, ran into the navy base construction committee and had a six hour sit in until mid night.

In commemoration of the 77th year of the Nanjing Massacre
The 6th Symposium for the Declaration on The Demilitarized Island of Peace

Seeing Nanjing in China from Aldreu Airfield in Jeju



Session 1 Commemoration Ceremony: Dec 13th(Sat) 2 pm, Aldreu Airfield
- Tribute poem (by Poet, Kim Suyeol), Tribute song (by Singer, Choi Sangdon), Memorial Service

Session 2 Symposium: Dec 13th(Sat) 3 pm, Seminar room at Daejeong NH Bank
- Cho Seongyun (Professor of Jeju University Sociology Department) 'Nanjing in the history of Aldreu'
- Seo Seung (Professor of Ritsumeikan University) 'Nanjing Massacre and Japanese Militarism'
- Emily Wang (International Peace Activist) 'Seeing Nanjing from Gangjeong'
- Park Dhan Sik (Historian/the director of the declaration of April 3rd Peace Foundation) 'Value of Peace in the history of Jeju'




Co Host Group: People for the Demilitarized Jeju Island of Peace, Solidarity for Islands of Peace Korea Committee, Gangjeong Peace School
Support Group: Jeju Federation of Environment movement, Seogwipo Citizen's Alliance, Gangjeong Village Association, Gangjeong Village International Team, The Frontiers, hotpinkdolphins, Wind of Peace, Jeju Peace&Human Rights Center, Martyr Yang Yongchan Memorial Foundation

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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Women Rethink the Asia Pivot

On 25 November, a woman activists' international webinar in relation to anti-militarism was organized by the Rutgers University. This was part of a bigger event titled 'Rethinking the Asia "Pivot": Challenging Everyday Militarisms & Bridging Communities of Women'. Six woman activists joined as panelist: Corazon Fabros (Philippines), Lisalinda Natividad (Guam), Sung-hee Choi (South Korea), Kozue Akibayashi (Okinawa), Suzuyo Takazato (Japan), and Cristina Hardaga Fernandez (Mexico). Each of the speakers presented on their regions' anti-militarism struggle, the effects of militarism's on women and women's resistance to militarism. It was both distressing and inspiring to share and hear the stories in where common issues of women could be found. It was through this sharing that the ground work for further international solidarity was cultivated for the future.

The webinar was one of many events that occur during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, which is a global advocacy campaign coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. This specific event came under the theme "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence against Women." The 16 Day Campaign runs annually from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) through to 10 December (International Human Rights Day), making the link between gender-based violence and human rights. For more information on the campaign see <http://rethinkingasiapivot.com/>



Image : Kim Gayoung

Art Exhibition "Gangjeong, Breath, Green" at Suwon City Museum of Art, Nov. 8- 30. 31 Artists participated. The exhibition is planned to be on tour in Korea.

Henoko-- "Sea of Oppression"

By Emily

On the night of November 1st, "Sea of Oppression," the newest documentary of struggle in Henoko, Okinawa against the new base construction, was presented at the Gangjeong Peace Center by its directors, Ms. Asako Kageyama and Mr. Fujimoto Yukihisa. Although the subtitles were still in Japanese, interpretations and explanations provided by the visiting directors helped those watching in Gangjeong to understand how the situation in Henoko is so similar with Gangjeong. People were surprised to see how many aspects of their struggle were similar to Gangjeong, such as the actions of the police and military, the struggle of the sea kayak team, and the courage of people. During the film, someone said, "We should go to Henoko, or rotate people to go there!"

The film was shown while others were guarding the road overnight to make sure construction of the military housing was not resumed. That night we felt very close to the hearts of the Henoko people. We believe this small film showing will bring together a large community of solidarity and power among those advocating for peace.

