

# GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

March  
2015

Monthly news on the struggle against  
the Jeju Naval base project

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South Korea



## Gureombi Remembrance Day

Image: by Lee Wooki  
Article by Shining Lake

An event to mark the 3rd anniversary of the blasting of Gureombi Rock was held on March 7. Villagers, islanders and people from the mainland gathered together to share memories of Gureombi, give testimony and recall the significance of that time when Gureombi was subjected to blasting. The 2 hour long peace march began with a press conference in front of Gangjeong Village Center and made its way to Moetburi Rock via the Peace Center and the main gate of the naval base. Although 3 years have passed, many people gathered to participate in the march with the main standout feature this year being the goddess 'Halmang' (grandmother) who holds a special place in Jeju folklore. With her performances the 'Halmang' of peace took time to comfort the hearts of the villagers as she made her way around the village. A long white cloth was woven around her body like an umbilical cord symbolizing the interconnectedness of all living things—big and small life forms including Gureombi rock, the sea and Hala Mountain. The 5 meter long cloth which draped the heads of many of the participants finally made its way

to Gureombi, now sadly destroyed. These participants while lamenting the destruction that had wreaked havoc in the shape of the barbed wire fence which surrounds the construction site also desired that these destructive forces would give way to life giving ones for the village of Gangjeong. Long live Gangjeong.

The march was also interspersed with people sharing their memories of Gureombi and that fatal day 3 years ago. The following anecdotes are reflective of the general mood of the participants who solemnly joined the peace procession. Some people may question why we keep fighting a losing battle but we recall our dogged determination on that day. We recall the sounds of explosives and the ensuing destruction. The trauma of the Jeju 4.3 massacre is like an open sore that refuses to heal and if only people would come to Gangjeong and witness the absurdity of ideology and its destructive manifestations playing out before our very eyes—they may indeed have their eyes open.

Thousands of police with no connection to Jeju have

conducted countless violent assaults on villagers and peaceful protesters and arrested and detained numerous others. The government has trampled on farmers and students who have been demanded environmental protection, has completely ignored citizens rights and those who have insisted on due democratic process, and have treated as enemies of the state those peace activists who have screamed disarmament and anti-war slogans. Protestors have been unceremoniously dragged through the court system which has imposed unjust sentences and reckless fines in a more sophisticated demonstration of a modern day Jeju 4.3 massacre. People have cried. People have moaned. In the end Gureombi was destroyed— a 1.2km by 150m stretch of unique topography destroyed. A children's playground, an ecosystem for numerous forms of living things, a dwelling place of the gods and place where people gathered and held hands and where people continue to gather today and hold hands. People will always gather here to hold hands and resist—this is just the beginning.

## Permanent War

By Sunny

It's healthy, I think, to momentarily tune out the familiar noises of the present and listen to the voices of the past, and let their utterances help us better understand the future of the struggle in Gangjeong. The roots that deeply penetrate the village can be traced back to post-WWI America, where power elites first learned that "Permanent war is the most effective mechanism used...to stifle reform and muzzle dissent" (Chris Hedges). All ongoing institutional reforms in the turn of the 21st century were replaced by ideological roars of "national interest" and "security". Oppositional voices were deemed "communist," while new cultural formations of mass consumption and nationalism controlled the rest of the crowd.

Now, we're almost reaching the centennial of the political birth of "permanent war". And even after near 100 years, it's still alive in the present, affecting domestic policies of oversea nations like South Korea. The disbanding of the United Progressive Party last December showed us what the ideology is capable of, and the absurd expulsion of the Korean-American author Shin Eun-Mi in January confirmed

that "permanent war" with North Korea is here to stay indefinitely. In that way, the construction of the naval base in Gangjeong is rooted to a century-worth history of political schemes to repress societal progress, maintained by necessary distractions of mass consumerism and nationalistic chants.

How to effectively uproot and replace the foundations of this problem is a long-term goal that deserves some reflection. Otherwise, all institutional crimes toward Gangjeong will continue to be justified for the protection of the nation, while traditional democracy decays as citizens and activists are gradually stripped of their basic rights. I believe that change starts with cultural de-homogenization: returning back to the primacy of distinct regional cultures over common national culture and identity. Doing so would dismantle the façade of national security measures and return the common language of war and consumption to a language of people's struggles. Only then can we officially facilitate the disempowerment of perpetual war culture for the empowerment of democracy and of the people.



Image: JoYakGol, Gangjeong, Jeju and Kim Seok-min, SPARK, in front of the US base in Yongsan, central Seoul. As South Korean government and the US Military try to bring THAAD, the missile defence system aimed at China, activists nationwide hold banners NO THAAD, joined by activists in front of the Jeju naval base construction site, too.



# "Gureombi, The Wind is Blowing" travels the world

The film, carrying the story of the painful struggle has been touring around the world, it is being shown in 16 different places in Japan by director Cho Seong-Bong and also at an academic conference "Grassroots Regionalization and the Frontiers of the Humanities in East Asia: Korea as a Hub" was held at the Australian National University on the 10th of March 2015 in Canberra, Australia.

'In Taiwan: After Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace team left from Taiwan to their own places, I stayed more time in Taiwan to advertise the Inter-Island Solidarity peace camp in Okinawa on this September with the sharing of Gangjeong struggle by screening the documentary "Gureombi, The Wind is Blowing".

The documentary touched many's heart. Actually the way people struggles touched many's heart. No matter Gangjeong or Okinawa. They saw the shadows of themselves in many struggles in Taiwan too. People in Taiwan who watched this documentary pushed me to share in another place of Taiwan (Taiwan Green Party, Miaoli's Keeper Youth Group, Taitung activists Group...) One solidarity trip brings another. Friendship grows. The loving heart leads us in this solidarity trip.' (Emily Wang)

'Gangjeong activists tour US coasts: From March 17th to April 20th, two long time members of the Gangjeong struggle are touring the east and west coasts of the US. Hee Eun "Silver" Park and Paco Michelson, who have lived in Gangjeong for almost 3 years, are travelling across the country with a Cho Sung Bong's new documentary, Gureombi, The Wind is Blowing, the first full length film about the struggle released by a Gangjeong activist.

In addition to the film, Silver and Paco are also giving presentations in some places along the way. The tour is attempting to not only spread the word about Gangjeong but to raise financial support for the legal costs of activists and villagers. So far the response has been overwhelming, with people very supportive of the Gangjeong and empathetic with the struggle. People are loving the film and solidarity with old friends has strengthened and also been created with many new friends.

Paco and Silver have finished the east coast part of the tour, which started in Boston, and are now on the west coast, where they will hit many major areas before ending in the Portland, Oregon area. Peace in Gangjeong!' (Paco Michelson)

## Protecting Democracy or an Occupying Army?

By Elliott Adams (Former President of Veterans for Peace)

Jeju, a shrimp caught between the backs of two fighting whales. The US directed S Korea to build a giant naval base for a future US / China military show down. It seems that American capitalists fear they will be unable to hold their own in a free market so they are resorting to military power to guarantee their business profits. Not only is this naval base destroying the Gureombi rocks and Gangjeong village, it is making a mockery of self-determination and democracy for the people of Jeju. It also constitutes a crime against peace.

I was a US soldier in South Korea, we were told we were protecting the democracy and freedom of the people of Korea, but now I know I was actually part of an occupying army. An occupying army that killed tens of thousands of S Koreans including the 1948 Jeju Massacre. When I heard of the people's valiant nonviolent resistance in Gangjeong I wanted to be part of it. I wanted to support the people not an occupation as I had done - I wanted to support democracy not imperialism.

In 2012 I heard about Gangjeong and the people's resistance to protect the Gureombi rocks and Gangjeong village and culture from US demands for a giant naval base. The nonviolent resistance of the people of Gangjeong is the same kind of resistance that we have used to achieve justice for our people.

I felt a need to join that resistance in Jeju and also a way of paying reparations for my time in the occupation. The struggle in Jeju is an important part of and a model for the continued resistance of militarizing communities against their self-determination.

'On March 14, 2012, Elliot Adams was unjustly deported along with Tarak Kaufman and Mark Hastie, another two members of US Veterans for Peace from Korea when they were to visit the village in support of the struggle. The day was also when Benjamin Monnet, a French citizen got injunction Order, followed by Angie Zelter who got Exit Order from the South Korean government the next day. It was the time when the Government enforced the blast of the Gureombi Rock despite many Island people's opposition to it. The Government oppression on international activists and international solidarity reached at high point at the time. At least 21 internationals have been deported so far for their support to the villagers' anti-base struggle.'

## Women Crossing the DMZ Borders

So far, the North Korean government has approved 30 international female peace-seekers under WomenCrossDMZ.org to walk across the demilitarized zone on May 24, 2015 the International Women's Day for Peace & Disarmament. The proposed walk is to signify a call for the reunification of South and North Korea after their division in 1945. Ever since then, the DMZ has become "The most heavily armed border in the world", while receiving its paradoxical name.

70 years later, participants of the symbolic peace walk, including prominent American feminist Gloria Steinem and Nobel laureates Mairead Maguire and Leymah Gbowee, have been waiting for South Korea's Unification Ministry to proffer their side of the event's approval. The final decision is yet to be seen. On the other side of the border, North Korean officials from Overseas Korean committee and Democratic women's Union have cooperated with Christine Ahn, the co-organizer of the event, in holding an international peace symposium in Pyongyang. The organizers of the event hope that the symposium can provide a space where women can "share experiences and ideas of mobilizing women to bring an end to violent conflict," as stated in their website.

Ahn has also involved herself, along with other participants of the walk, in requesting the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon as well as President Obama to bring an end to the Korean War with a peace treaty, which would replace the 1953 armistice. Doing so, they argue, would end the conflict that "gives all governments in the region justification to further militarize and prepare for war, depriving funds for schools, hospitals, and the welfare of the people and the environment."



Image by the Taiwan Green Party. A group photo taken after the screening of "Gureombi, The Wind is Blowing" and the sharing of Gangjeong stories and Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace. An event held by the Taiwan Green Party.

## International Solidarity



Image : By Peter Woodruff

On March 19, Silver and Paco, peace activists from Gangjeong, joined people's vigil in Bath, Maine, where the Bath Iron Works produces Aegis Destroyers. The BIW vigil on the day was organized by Bruce Gagnon in the photo and his friends in Maine. The yellow flag reads 'Absolutely no naval base'.



# Choosing Arrest Rather than Paying Fines

On March 5th, two female peace activists, Park and Lee, entered the Jeju prison, choosing imprisonment rather than paying fines of 2.4 million and 2.35 million KRW respectively for their anti-base activities during the blasting of the Gureombi Rock in 2012. They were released unexpectedly in nine days after an unknown 3rd party benefactor paid their remaining fines without them knowing.

Likewise, on March 26th, Mr. Yoon, a villager in his 40s, was arrested on the road for his unpaid fines from anti-base activity. The police said a police patrol car happened to discover him being in the wanted list for

his unpaid fines of 1.95 million KRW when the police identified his car on the road. Yoon was released on that day as the Village Association quickly paid his fines to save him from such a sudden arrest.

In an emergency statement, the Village Association strongly denounced the navy by saying that "The navy which has taken away our lands and Sea is now to imprison residents." The Gangjeong Village Association, having pointed out the injustice of numerous judicial oppressions in relation to the naval base issue, has declared that the villagers will not volunteer to pay imposed fines but rather will choose to be arrested for

those unpaid fines. At the same time, the Association has also considered selling its building to counter the bomb of fines. It has decided during its general meeting in November last year that it would take responsibility for villagers' fines accrued from their anti-base activities. So far, the fines from the anti-base activities reach near 400 million KRW. The village emphasized, "State violence is not stopping on the land of Jeju where the spirits of April 3rd cannot peacefully rest yet. The Village Association absolutely rejects living with the navy in our village."

## Human Rights: Forever a Fugitive

By Sunny

This was the rough title for the March 13th presentation on universal human rights given by Seogwipo's Christian brother, Yang Woon-Gi.

He gave this title as a way to illustrate how rights are always beyond intellectual captivity: the moment human rights begin to define a particular set of rights, other rights that have been excluded from the narrow definition then enter public discussion (such as labor rights, rights to education, etc.), thereby prompting the boundaries of human rights to be constantly pushed for new inclusions.

Yang notes that these human rights are central rather than peripheral to the Gangjeong activists for one simple reason: human rights are historically born from wars, and Jeju's naval base is a future war base.

This means that human rights will gradually increase its relevance in Gangjeong through time, if it hasn't already. If this future is set in stone, then it's imperative of us to constantly challenge the finite boundaries of human rights, which can then better inform and protect the oppressed and the disenfranchised.

## Interview with Gangjeong Women's Association leader Jeong Young-sim

By Shining Lake

On March 8th there was a special gathering to celebrate International Women's Day. It was organized as a way to treat Gangjeong female residents and activists with food, music and a laughter workshop. The women of Jeju Island have traditionally always been busy doing housework, feeding their families and working on their farms. In addition, Gangjeong Village women have been particularly busy participating in numerous rallies and events for the past 8 years in their struggle against the naval base construction project. Therefore, they have rarely had the chance to be served by someone. For this reason, the organizing team wanted Gangjeong women to feel relaxed and enjoy what was prepared for them. One of active hosts is the leader of the Gangjeong Village Women's Association. This interview with her was conducted just a few days after the event.

**Q:** Was this the first occasion in which Gangjeong women only got together? If so, could you tell us how it was for you overall?

**A:** This was the first time such an event has been held for International Women's Day. As it was so new to me, I really didn't know what to expect. As the event progressed, we were able to release our stress and overcome our fatigue by laughing, dancing and singing. I hope this kind of event can take place next year as well.

**Q:** Was this event particularly different or meaningful to you in comparison to other events in any way?

**A:** The thing that was different was to feel that our position has somehow improved as women. Women are mostly kept at the back, hidden by men as we work in the kitchen. However, unlike other typical events, this time, women were served food and had fun activities prepared for us, so it was a memorable time.

**Q:** Did you hear any feedback from Gangjeong female residents afterwards?

**A:** Everyone said they were very satisfied and many of us had not heard of International Women's Day before. And we all felt grateful to those who helped to make the event happen.

**Q:** What do you think Gangjeong female residents need having gone through this 8-year-long struggle?

**A:** Well... This question shouldn't be reserved for Gangjeong women only. I sincerely wish that all villagers could live in a peaceful and serene farming and fishing village as we used to 8 or 9 years ago. I don't even want to waste one more day waiting for it to happen.

**Q:** What do you think needs to be done in order for Gangjeong village to move towards becoming a village of Peace and Life, restore the broken relationships and also achieve reconciliation?

**A:** The journey towards the restoration of our village... Though I myself think the things that have not been resolved yet should be settled as soon as possible, I don't know what to do.



Image: By SPARK, Peace Organization (Solidarity for Peace And Reunification of Korea)  
Peace action by SPARK against US-S.Korea joint military exercise in Pohang on March 30

## Crosscurrents

By Kathy Kelly (An excerpt from her longer letter from the prison, this March)

This past year United States people watched stunned as water was cut off, household by household [...] Faced with such news, it is perhaps odd that I think of Professor Yang Yoon Mo, a South Korean activist I have met who, far from any area of drought, has fought instead, and with beautiful and irrepressible courage, to save a small lush rocky outcropping ringed by ocean, and with it both the shoreline, and the hopes for a peaceful future, of [the Gangjeong] village. [...] Over the coming years he would be imprisoned four times, for a total of 555 days. He almost has died. Along with his imprisonments Professor Yang, who is nearly sixty, has endured three prison fasts ranging in length from fifty to seventy-two days, refusing solid foods as a sign of his longing, his hunger, to protect the environment near his home. [...] Bruce Gagnon writes: "From the point of view of corporate capital we are all expendable. [...] There is a direct connection between the massive \$1 trillion a year Pentagon budget [ ] and the destruction of social progress. There is a direct connection between the military's huge carbon footprint and climate change." The swim to our neighbor islands will tend to be part of saving our own. [...] What we do to the environment, we're doing to each other. What we let our state impose on those walled beyond our borders we will tend to inflict on more and more people walled up within them [...] if we seek our security in treating other people fairly, we may find our way to decent lives, along the way toward "decent human survival."

*Kathy Kelly, co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, has visited Gangjeong last year and is currently serving a three month sentence in federal prison in Lexington, Kentucky for participating in an anti-drone protest last year.*



Image: Lee Wooki  
At the ceremonial hall, Gangjeong female residents and activists gathered together to celebrate the international Women's Day on March 8th.



# Welcoming Grandma Youngdeung

By Bockhee

According to Jeju mythology, Youngdeung was a young woman who saved poor fishermen from horrible one-eyed giants who wanted to eat them. Discovering that Youngdeung was saving human beings without their knowledge, the giants were greatly infuriated. Youngdeung suddenly became an old grandmother while being interrogated by those giants. The giants finally killed her, tearing off her arms and legs, and threw her body parts into the sea.

The story of Grandma Youngdeung is remembered especially during the Youngdeung wind season which usually starts in Jeju on Feb 1 on the lunar calendar and lasts for about 15 days. During this time, Island people hold the Youngdeung Gut, a Jeju traditional shaman performance in which they pray to Grandma Youngdeung for peace and prosperity of their farming and fishing.

This year, the 15-day Youngdeung event started on March 20 on the solar calendar. By coincidence, the event will end on April 3rd, the remembrance day of the historic April 3rd Incident of decades ago.

This year marks the first time that the Youngdeung Gut has been transformed into a public parade. Grandma Youngdeung has already traveled throughout 12 villages in the form of a magnificent doll torn into a head, body and two arms, but gathered of those in the process. The parade symbolizes the resurrection and healing of Grandma Youngdeung with her torn body parts being reunited.

It was on March 28 that the parade team entered Gangjeong with the doll of Grandma Youngdeung in front. People from all ages welcomed her; girls and children masquerading as red-footed crabs danced, men held up her giant face and hands, elders and disabled persons carefully held her cloth arms and walked together with others. People had made the red-footed crab dolls themselves. The red-footed crab is one of the endangered creatures that have lost their habitat by the destructive naval base construction work. An improvisational play using the dolls was performed before the parade. It was a memorable event in which everyone from all walks of life could enjoy the community spirit together. If the torn dead body of Grandma Youngdeung represents this desperate current age, her resurrection and healing embodies our urgent efforts to restore hope to it.



Image by Space Art

## 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](http://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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# Visit to the US Congress for Jeju 4·3 Solution

By Dr. Heo Sangsu  
(Director of Jeju 4.3 Social Healing Center)

In order for a full solution and reconciliation of Jeju 4.3, it is emphatically required to have recognition, responsibility, reparation and reconstruction of the community by the US government as well as Korean government. It is a social healing process through justice. So far, facts of the massacre have been found, the honor of the victims retrieved in Korea, but it's not enough. We need to hold those who gave orders to kill responsible, and to seek reparation.

To achieve that, a team of Jeju representatives including 4.3 victims families and Bishop Peter Kang U-il of Jeju diocese visited the US Congress for three days from March 24, a first visit for this matter. The English translation of the official report of Jeju 4.3 incident was delivered to the congressmen. This work was done to reveal the serious human rights violations, crime against humanity, massacre of civilians during peaceful time of 1947-1949 under the US Military rule.

At first, we wanted to explain the genesis and current situation of the petition for a joint South Korea and United States Jeju 4.3 incident task force. However, we ended up just delivering the official report. We will continue to gather signatures for the petition and submit it to the US Congress in April 2016.

**No More Nuclear Power Plants!  
No More Nuclear Wastes!  
No More Nuclear Weapons!**

**In Remembrance of:  
Three Mile Island 28 March 1979  
Chernobyl 26 April 1986  
Fukushima 11 March 2011**



Image by Hyori

On March 22, about 13 artist teams gathered in the village and held a concert under the title of 'A Letter to A Singer, Ancor in Gangjeong.' The concert to remember an ingenious singer Kim Gwang-Seok who passed away 19 years ago is also to console the villagers after the government crackdown this January and revive people's concern with the anti-naval base struggle.



**JOIN  
GANGJEONG  
FRIENDS!**

[HTTP://CAFE.DAUM.NET/GANGJEONG79S/POK7/1](http://cafe.daum.net/gangjeong79s/pok7/1)