

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

June 2015

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

Published by Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea



Gangjeong and Shannon-our common struggle

Image by Choi Hye-Young
Article by Father Pat

Recently I was joined by three people from World Missions Ireland who sought to witness the peace movement in Gangjeong and experience firsthand the Catholic Church's role in resisting the base. While witnessing the role of the church my visitors and I were blown away by the sense of fearlessness and abandon of youth that the 30 or so middle school students displayed in facing down the trucks that day and their willingness not to be swayed by police and security personnel and those in authority who had betrayed their right to expect and demand a peaceful sustainable future, free from the threat of war and preparations for war. What better place than the entrance to the naval base to receive a peace education and be exposed to skills in non violent resistance and just sit back, watch, listen and learn from the young kids on the block here in Gangjeong. What struck Sally McEllistrim was the 'wonderful feeling of

togetherness as we all danced the Peace Dance... I had total respect for the fervor of the protestors, students and religious alike who really put up a valiant struggle-I will do my part here in Ireland and I will always believe that right should NEVER be steamrolled by might.'

It was incredibly reassuring to see and feel the exuberance of youth, many aware no doubt of the wonderful example set by older peace activists in the village who had sacrificed so much over the years. Reflecting on the Irish struggle, I think of Margaretta D'Arcy, an 80 year old artist and anti-war activist who was released from prison in July last year after serving a second prison sentence over her opposition to the US military use of Shannon Airport. Young and old alike, we are all called to expose the lies our governments feed us and partake in nonviolent peaceful resistance against the war machine whether it be in Gangjeong or in Shannon,

where anti-war activists have been resisting the use of the airport as a US military airbase for 15 years now. Recently two opposition members of parliament in Ireland were convicted and given maximum fines of 1,000 euro's each for their attempts to search a US military plane in Shannon Airport. The case exposed what peace activists have been arguing all along, namely the extensive use of Shannon by the US military undermining Ireland's neutrality. The most serious allegation leveled against the Irish Government was how it turned a blind eye to 'CIA rendition flights' (during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars) transporting US prisoners to locations at which they were subjected to torture techniques. Many Irish feel that our country has compromised on justice and human rights in its complicity in the US war machine and all in order to maintain good relations with Washington. Whether it be Gangjeong or Shannon-right should never be steamrolled by might.

Cruise Terminal Briefing Session

By Go Gwon-il
The co-vice mayor of the village

A briefing session about the planned Cruise Terminal was held in the Community Center in Gangjeong on June 19 at 7pm, with Jeju Governor Won Hee-ryong in attendance. The prospect of the Jeju Naval Base being also utilized as a terminal for cruise ships is particularly difficult for villagers to understand. Especially in light of plans presently underway in Tabdong, Jeju City for the construction of a 220,000 ton cruise terminal. For this reason Gangjeong residents find it very difficult to trust these reports. Despite Governor Won's attempts at reassuring the Gangjeong village residents that the Civilian-Military Complex Port is in the government's plan and will be implemented, he sounded far from convincing in his efforts at trying to convince people that plans to construct a new Jeju Cruise terminal at Gangjeong by 2020 will in fact see the light of day. By 2030 it is estimated that cruise liners will dock approximately 200 times a year in Jeju, a plan that has obviously not taken into consideration the fact that cruise liners would not be able to dock at the port 150 days in a year due to inclement weather conditions. What became intensely clear to everyone present was the clear absence of long term alternative measures to ensure residents in the area had a viable economic future going forward. The village general meeting to be held on June 30 was set to make a decision on this issue. However the village code demands that any development project over 5000 square meters conducted within the confines of the village needs the consent of at least 150 village residents, and with only about 40 residents in attendance at the meeting on June 30 it was subsequently cancelled. The poor turnout is a clear indication of the lack of interest in a cruise terminal project and it was indeed disappointing and frustrating for the residents and 10 reporters who took the time to attend on a rainy night that the meeting had to be cancelled.



A photo by the Solidarity for Peace And Reunification of Korea. June 13 was the day commemorating two girls of Shim Hyo-soon and Kim Mi-Sun who were killed by a USFK armored vehicle nearby the Korea DMZ in 2002. On June 13, 2015 when the people tried to install incense altar facing the US embassy in Seoul, the police dissipated it, resulting in people's sit-in against it. (Caption by Park Seok-Boon, SPARK)

Cross-oceanic solidarity

By By Arnie Saiki
Researcher
and coordinator,
Moana Nui Action Alliance

(Excerpt from his longer article)

[...]Across the Pacific there are a number of other developments that are being pushed forward against the consent of residents and cultural rights holders that are impacting or destroying the cultural and ecological biodiversity of sacred spaces for industries that have nothing to do with the communities that they claim they will benefit. For example, in Hawaii, on Mauna Kea, an 18-story, 30-meter telescope is being constructed despite ongoing protests and international support against it. People are flying in from around the world to stand in solidarity with cultural practitioners who know that the lack of consent with which this thirty-meter telescope is being pushed through is a violation of the customary rights that are being advanced within the various fora of international rights-making institutions. [...] A few months ago, I was invited to a cross-oceanic meeting to discuss strategies for building solidarity for West Papua independence against Indonesia's program of genocide and human rights abuse that continues to claim the lives of what may now amount to half-a-million indigenous Papuans in the last fifty years. Indonesia's fraudulent claim stole West Papua's independence and this is on record of having been negotiated by the U.S. who knowingly misled the United Nations. Just as the slaughter of 25,000-30,000 Jeju Islanders were directly under the authority of the U.S., so, it should be noted that yet again, the US has provided support and consent for the violence in West Papua as it had in Jeju prior and during the Korean War. There is state-sponsored systemic violence, but that by itself is not the reason to pursue cross-oceanic solidarity. The reason is that we can dance under the shadow of the boot and under the nose of security forces. Our inexhaustible care to remember our humanity is our call. [...] Being welcomed by villagers on the 2958th day of action in Gangjeong Village was spent in solidarity with Mauna Kea, West Papua, Okinawa and the many actions struggling against a regime that has no imagination, no vision for peace, and no capacity for love.

We want no military

By Dongseok

June 23rd is Okinawa Memorial Day. In June 23, 1945 the battle of Okinawa ended. It was the biggest and the last fight between the US and Japanese military during the Pacific War. This year marks the 70th anniversary. The Abe administration is recognizing the right to collective self-defense and is sending national security bills to the National Diet of Japan, all of which increases the danger of war in Northeast Asia. In this context, Okinawa Memorial Day is significant. The battle of Okinawa started in April 1945 when the US military landed Okinawa. The Japanese drove 'Uchinanchu' (Okinawan people in their native language) to concentration camps and urged them to commit collective suicides in the name of 'people-and-military-living-and-dying-together'. In Jeju, too, people have suffered tremendously from state violence and foreign interference, namely, April 3rd Massacre. After some 60 years, then-president Noh formally apologized to surviving family members and Jeju people in 2003. He went on to declare Jeju as the island of international peace in 2005. But at the same time, his administration wrongfully started the Jeju naval base project in Gangjeong, after Hwasun and Wimi people said no to the project. It contradicts the island of peace, and we can hardly call the Noh administration a 'democratic government'.

Uchinanchu and Jeju islanders know well how evil a military violence and war can get. After all, they are all victims of mainland government's oppression and foreign aggression. I hope for a non militarized Asian Pacific region. And let's chant together "We want no military". I wish rest in peace to all the victims of war and militarism.



Image by Dongseok. The Korean committee for the Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace of Sea held a symposium "Sail on the Sea of Peace" in Busan, which took place from June 18th to 20th. The purpose of the symposium was to acknowledge the importance of peace in East Asia by introducing the activities of Solidarity of The Islands for Peace of Sea. For that there were many presentations and discussions regarding the ideas for demilitarising Jeju as well as destruction of the habitats of endangered species caused by military base and thoughtless development.

Farewell Sermon

By by Frank Cordaro

(Excerpt from his much longer sermon for the mass at Jeju Navy Base entrance, June 27, 2015)

I wish to thank Father Kim for allowing me to talk to you today, as a farewell message after my two month stay with you. I want you to know that your daily presence here at the main entrance of this U.S. /South Korean Navy Base, doing the 100 Bow Prayer at 7 a.m. and the Mass, rosary, singing and dancing at 11 a.m. has been one of the most powerful and spiritual experiences of my entire adult life as a Catholic peace and justice activist. As a U.S. Catholic Christian I must confess the U.S. Catholic Church lives in a great spiritual darkness under the influence of the American Imperial culture and the great wealth and properties the Institutional Church owns and our bishops manage. Proof of this spiritual darkness can be seen in all the immoral, unjust and illegal wars and military interventions the U.S. has inflicted on millions of peoples all over the world, including Korea, in my lifetime, with an almost complete capitulation and cooperation from our bishops and Catholic institutions. [...]

I come from the belly of the Beast. The U.S. Empire spends on its military almost as much as the total amount of money all other countries in the world spends on a yearly bases. We have over 600 military bases in over 100 countries in the world. In 1968, Martin Luther King said, "The U.S. is the greatest purveyor of violence in the World". Since then, it has only gotten worse. This violent and destructive way of living is built on the legacy of the genocide of our Native American peoples and the enslavement of African Americans. In my lifetime we have destroyed hundreds of "Gureombi Rocks" beginning with the ongoing pollution of our own lands, air and waters. We are the leading force behind a destructive way of living on the planet that is putting all life at risk. We need to be stopped! You can help us heal the paralyzing, dreadful illness that we U.S. Christians suffer by continuing your nonviolent Faithful resistance to this Navy Base and help lead the world in the needed task of disarmament and peace making.

(Frank Cordaro, a Catholic Worker from the state of Iowa, US has stayed along with Jessica Reznicek in the village for two months and joined everyday bow and mass in front of the base construction gate.- To see the whole article, please refer to savejejunow.org)

Poetry Reading Night at Gong-gan

By Shining Lake

In Gangjeong village there is a little special place called 'Gong-gan'. 'Gong-gan' is the gathering place where some of the artists who love and cherish Gangjeong village work together to raise funds to run and maintain this space.

This is a space where anyone can come and read a book, work on handicraft or cook and eat. Gong-gan has become a place where a lot of activists and visitors can go to relax and mingle with other people. In June we held a poetry reading event in Gong-gan. It was held on a Saturday night and people gathered to share food and introduced their favorite poems, novels and songs.

This event was a wonderful time for people, who are so busy keeping up with actions against the naval base and part time work requirements, to come together and enjoy the work from a variety of backgrounds that sparked inspiration and provided great comfort. We already have great expectations for the next event!

International Solidarity

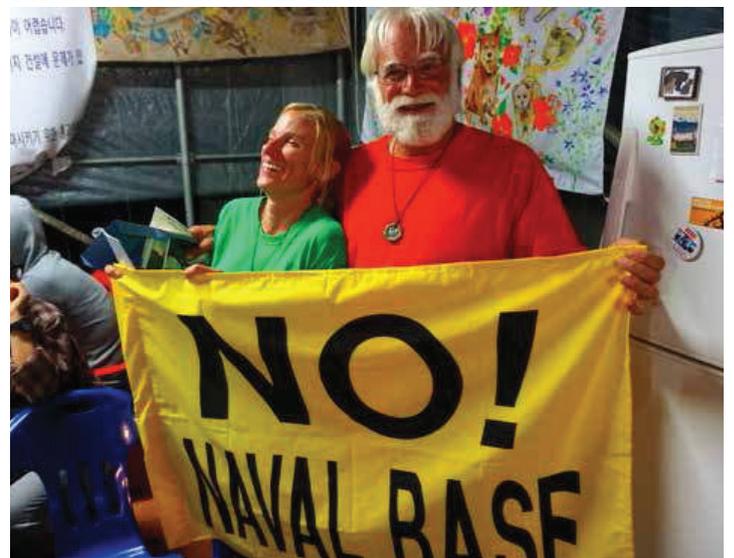


Image by Sunny. Farewell party of Frank Cordaro and Jessica Reznicek on June 26.

For the people's expression of thanks to the two who daily joined 100 peace bows at 7am in the morning and mass at 11am, a joyous farewell party was held in the Samgeori communal restaurant nearby which the two had lived for two months.

WCD members threatened for deportation

On June 3, Abigail Disney, one of the Women Cross the DMZ delegation members, wrote a response letter to the editor of the New York Times on the characterization of WCD members. A part of her letter mentioned Korean Immigration Service's letter, which some of the members had previously received. 'While South Korea's government may be somewhat more open than the North's, our party was searched just as thoroughly for media and printed material upon crossing into the South as we had been when we landed in Pyongyang. What is more, five members of our group were given letters threatening them with deportation should their behavior fail to be sufficiently docile.' According to Ann

Wright – one of the delegation members – the letter read: "Foreigners staying in Korea should abide by the Constitution as well as all laws and regulations of the Republic of Korea. In particular, they are prohibited from engaging in political activities pursuant to paragraph two of article 17 of the Immigration Act of Korea, unless otherwise specified by other laws and regulations. In this regard, foreigners staying in Korea are advised to refrain from engaging in any activity undermining the values pursued by the Constitution or violating the laws and regulations of the Republic of Korea. They are also advised to abstain from any activity for the purpose of intervention in or giving any kind of influence to the

matters that shall be determined through the exercise of independent sovereignty by the Republic of Korea including the unification policies, foreign relations, etc. Please be well aware that in the case where foreigners fail to fulfill the aforementioned obligations, they may be subject to deportation from the Republic of Korea under article 46 of the Immigration Act. Chief, Incheon International Airport Immigration office" Just by looking at the photo of the KIS letter, it looks questionable as it does not seem to have proper elements that are supposed to be in its official letter form. Yet, its content clearly shows how the South Korean government is obsessed with the control of free speech, to the violation of human rights. (For WCD, please see May 2015 issue)

What virus is more dangerous to the people than the MERS?

By Sunny

Recently, many smaller media outlets have responded to the South Korean mainstream media reports on the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus) as 'overhyped.' They also found it 'unnecessary' for the mainstream news to incite panic in the public by associating the MERS a case of national pandemic emergency.

Their more sensible response to the situation raises two important following questions: 1) Why have these reports become overhyped and 2) What are the effects of overhyped an issue like the MERS?

If we look at Noam Chomsky's statements on the role of mainstream media, the two inquiries become interlinked. He argues, "The real mass media are basically trying to divert people" from noticing and participating in "serious stuff." This means internal policy decisions and foreign policy directives, responsibilities designated for the "big guys" in the government. Accepting this premise presents a persuasive answer to the two previous questions as public diversion-related. And South Korea alone has plenty of relevant examples.

Take the recent issue of U.S. shipment of anthrax to Osan military base. Mainstream media like MBC have done some coverage on the issue, though downplaying and underhyped the shipment as merely "accidental." What these news agencies have forgotten to mention is that since June 2013, U.S. army has been running experiments in three U.S. bases in South Korea to "counter biological weapon attack by North Korea" (Hankyoreh).

Moreover, they left out crucial information that U.S. might have brought Botulinum toxin – the deadliest toxin on the planet, far more inimical than anthrax – to South Korea for biological experimentation without notifying the South Korean government.

What all of these revelations mean in a broader political context of South Korean democracy, national security, and national sovereignty have yet to be properly discussed. Instead, such discussion has fallen off the public radar by the weeks-long, 24-hour mainstream news on the MERS, lasting longer than the virus itself.

These announcements have infected the public in their own way, much like the Ebola scare that had frightened the American people to the level of senseless hysteria.

How to combat and cure this particular kind of disease charts the next point of inquiry. One solution is to read and participate in local news dedicated to expressing the voices and concerns of the people. In this way, the community of Gangjeong is indirectly involved; the more the mainstream media directs public attention away from the "serious stuff", further will be the public concern for the Gangjeong village.

Therefore, our local news is tasked with the implicit responsibility of maintaining interest and relevancy of the struggle here for the broader audience in South Korea and beyond.



Image by Kim K. H. . On June 15th, the bail request for Sung-Soo Park (aka Dungeree) was dismissed. Unfortunately, it's most likely that he will remain in custody until his first trial. Currently he is staying at Daegu Correctional Service. Postal address: Sung-Soo Park (#1084), PO box #48, Soo-Sung Postoffice, Soo-Sung Dong, Daegu City, South Korea, 706-600

For more on his imprisonment, see March and April newsletter.



Photo by the Solidarity for Peace And Reunification of Korea. On June 22, the Korean civic society committee to denounce the USFK's illegal bringing into and experimenting of anthrax in Korea filed a suit in the names of 8,703 Koreans, against Curtis Scaparrotti, Commander of the USFK, Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, Commander of the 7th Air Force, Pacific Air Forces, Osan Air Base, South Korea and an unnamed person in charge of the Joint USFK Portal and Integrated Threat Recognition (JUPITR) program. The committee charged the personnel under the charges of violations on the law of prohibition on chemical and biological weapons and regulation on the manufacture/import & export of specific chemical material / biological origin agent; and on the law of prevention and management on infectious disease. (caption provided by Park Seok-Boon, SPARK)

Trial Updates

One more imprisonment for fine refusal: On 1 July, while preparing for this newsletter, we've received news that a young female activist Kim M. K. was imprisoned for her refusal to pay a fine of 1 million KRW (about \$1,000 USD). Kim was charged with obstruction of business and is expected to be imprisoned for 20 days for her refusal to pay. She is the one who has made a daily lantern drawn of each Sewol ferry victims' faces since this April in remembrance of them. The lantern has shined mass tent every night. As she is now in prison, her friends are continuing her lantern work on behalf of her. For more on her lantern, see April newsletter. The total number of imprisonments, including those imprisoned for refusing to pay fines, has now reached around 45 in the struggle opposing the Jeju naval base.

Gangjeong keepers go on a spring picnic

By Shining Lake

There are people called 'a new resident' who are living in Gangjeong. They are those who are still not used to being called 'an activist'. Instead, their friends have named them 'a keeper'. Most of the keepers came to join the Gangjeong struggle before and after the blasting of Gureombi Rock. And they are mostly from the mainland, many living in Gangjeong village for 3 or 4 years. At the moment, they continue their actions of resistance against the naval base construction as a resident. On June 6th, Gangjeong keepers went on a picnic together. Having gone through the long and tiring struggle, they have not had any relaxing and resting time for themselves due to the intense situation and tight schedules. So it was a special time for them to gather together and go outside of the Gangjeong village. Also, some Gangjeong supporters funded our picnic so that we could prepare delicious lunch box and yummy snacks. Right after the human chain event ended, keepers went to the stream named 'Ak-geun-cheon' flowing next to Gangjeong River. It was literally the first time for him to go out for a picnic with the keepers since he moved into the village. The spring picnic was a big step for the well-being of keepers who are taking important roles in the struggle on the long journey ahead.



Image by Grace. The village sceneries are rapidly changing. This is the entrance of the military housing construction site.



Image by Lee Wooki . On June 27 Gangjeong activists with the support from villagers and friends successfully finished this year's rice planting despite the rainy weather. It was the first time in 30 years that rice farming is done in Gangjeong. Gangjeong rice used to be quite famous in the region but most farmers turned to tangerine farming in 1980's.

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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Good lessons in safer sailing

By Kim Jae-hoon

(Excerpt from his longer article)

On the first day of sailing training the weather was cloudy but the sailing went smoothly. We trained in a small yacht, there was sufficient wind and no waves. We were able to maneuver the boat closely around Tiger Island, off the coast of Gangjeong, and ended up finished our training early. On the second day the wind was quite strong, and even sailing out of the Gangjeong Port itself was not easy. We barely escaped from the port, but where then on our way to Mara Island.

[..] There is no port at Mara Island, which resulted in us taking a considerable amount of time to anchor our yacht. The next morning, we left Mara Island and sailed to Gangjeong Village. At some point, the helm of yacht broke, so we made an unplanned stop at the Hwasoon Port and anchored our yacht to fix the helm.

Our plan was to leave the port once our helm is fixed, but due to very poor timing the water was too shallow to anchor the yacht and actually lead to irreparable damage while we were attempting to fix it! [..]

[..] Although we lost our yacht, it may have been the best type of training to learn about safety issues and will force us to ensure high quality safety and not ignore it.

(The writer is a participant of the sailing training organized by Peace For the Sea Team from 22-24 June 2015.

The team plans to sail around Jeju Island during the Gangjeong Grand March for Peace and Life at the end of July)

Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace

27 Jul (Mon) - 1 Aug (Sat)

People will march in two groups, east and west, to circle Jeju Island, meeting in Gangjeong village

- 27 Jul, at gam meeting in front of Jeju city hall, 10am press conference, 11am start!
- 1 Aug, cultural event to commemorate 3,000 days of struggle against the Jeju Naval Base

Registration : <http://bit.ly/2015gjmarch>
Bank Account : KFCC 9002-1718-8573-7 (Jo geongchul)

Participation Info

1 Day : 10,000 KRW (All Days : 60,000 KRW)
* International participants' fee can be paid on site (cash only)

Contact

02-723-4250 / jejumarch@daum.net
For more info www.savejejunow.org



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