

# GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

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Monthly news on the struggle against  
the Jeju Naval base project

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South Korea



## The Navy's lawsuit is a war against the people

Image by Oum Mun-Hee

On March 28, the navy filed a civil lawsuit against a total of 116 individual anti-base protestors and 5 groups including the Gangjeong Village Association, demanding that they pay around 3 million USD. Samsung, one of the main construction companies for the Jeju naval base, had previously fined the Korean government for about 23 million USD for compensation in regards to 14 months of construction delays (\*1 USD=1150 KRW). Using this wasted money as an excuse, the navy is threatening to re-victimize Gangjeong which has already been hugely fined for its anti-base activities.

Ex-mayor Kang Dong-Kyun compared the navy's move to the beating of a person until he/she falls down, then beating him/her again on the hospital bed. Needless to say, the navy's recent step

has provoked huge indignation from the people. Not only have the village residents and the several groups who were sued voiced their anger, but also the April 13 general election candidates from both ruling and opposition parties in Seogwipo City, as well as the Green Party, have made clear their opposition to the navy's suit against the people.

MINBYUN (Lawyers for a Democratic Society) stated that the navy's suit is 'an unjustified declaration of war against the people.' It also stated: 'When the reckless development of the state and large construction companies threaten the right of citizens to a peaceful existence, the right of citizens to oppose this must be guaranteed as their natural and constitutional right since sovereignty rests with the people. To condemn this action as illegal is to

delegitimize the foundation of democracy.'

The Island government ordered the navy's illegal construction to stop nine times. These suspension orders along with serious damage caused by typhoons have been the main causes of the construction delays.

In stark contrast to the navy's claims, Kim Jong-Dae, a member of the Justice Party, said the navy should be sued for the loss of around 200 million USD of taxpayers' money for its corruption in defense sales.

Please help us by making calls to the South Korean embassies and consulates in your regions to protest this unjust suit. Please demand that the South Korean government must drop this attack against its people.

## Rise Up, Gureombi!

By Brando

On March 7, the Fourth Annual Gureombi Remembrance Day ceremony was held. Along the route between Samgori and Metppuri, people wrote peace wishes on strips of cloth they tied to barbed-wire fencing, threw salt at the base as a purifying curse, broadcast flower seeds on the earth to embody hope, tossed ashes to protest on-site oil storage, and launched paper airplanes with messages to those occupying the base.

That same day, the US and South Korea continued two annual war drills targeting North Korea. These included computer war drills focusing on "emergency preemptive attacks on North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities in a war strategy far more aggressive than those set up in the past," according to YonhapNews. At least 11,000 US troops and 200,000 ROK troops will participate. New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the UN will also participate.

Gureombi wasn't blasted for abstract ideals like "freedom" or "security". The base exists due to war profiteering by the US and ROK governments, Samsung, Daelim, and other corporations, such as Lockheed Martin, manufacturer of Aegis missile systems.

As the blasting of Gureombi began in March, 2012, two international activists, Benjamin Monnet and Angie Zelter, got an Injunction and an Exit Order, respectively, on March 14 and 15, for their multiple arrests and direct actions. Three American Veterans for Peace, Tarak Kauff, Elliot Adams, and Mike Hastie, were denied entry to Korea on March 14, too. And between March and April, 5 additional internationals were deported back to Japan and Okinawa. But the struggle continues, despite the continued metastasization of the base and a top coat of concrete and asphalt. A number of young families attended Gureombi Remembrance Day. For them and for many others, Gureombi is more than a rock formation. It's a powerful source of vitality. Gureombi isn't gone. Maybe waiting. Maybe crying. But not gone. And not forgotten.



Image by Park Inchun/ On March 15, the Jeju navy base soldiers conducted military training nearby the base pointing guns towards the direction of passengers including olle tourists. Meanwhile the South Korea and United States authorities are in their joint war exercise for around two months since February 27.

## Solidarity with the Next Generation of

By Brenna

### Catholic Workers

On March 14, three Catholic Workers presented about the various types of peace work with which their communities in the US are involved, and how the Catholic Worker movement, around since 1933, is shifting focus with the incoming generation. Melissa shared about the basic values of the Catholic Worker movement: hospitality to the poor, work for peace and justice, and care for creation. Her community of over a dozen people in the city of Tacoma, Washington, focuses specifically on hospitality to the homeless, and working for immigration reform. Melissa spoke of how she thinks of Gangjeong as a Catholic Worker, because of its spirit of welcome, simple living, and activism for peace!

Brenna showed pictures of the organic, communal farm on which she and her husband live in Iowa, and talked about her own community's focus on caring for creation. They see how war is fueled by the consumerist lifestyle of wealthy nations, and so seek to model an alternate, simple way of life.

She shared how the young people in the movement are energized around activism for the environment, from farming to protesting fracking for oil and gas. She sees a strong connection between the way the US government purposefully destroyed indigenous communities on its own continent, and what it is doing on Jeju Island; unfortunately, warmaking, environmental destruction, and the oppression of indigenous communities often go hand in hand.

Chrissy shared about the St. Louis Catholic Worker's recent important shift in focus to work with "Black Lives Matter," a movement led by African-Americans who are demanding that the military-backed police in the US stop killing them. Chrissy showed images of military tanks and machine guns being used in the streets of her city to target unarmed protesters. Again, this movement is largely led by young people, particularly young women.

### Lee Jeong-mi in her father's hometown

Lee Jeong-mi, a Korean-Japanese singer in her 50s who grew up in Japan, has for years been invited to Jeju for years for the annual cultural festival in remembrance of April 3rd. However, it was only recently that we realized that her father's hometown was Gangjeong, where he lived until he was 8 or 10 years old.

On March 26, she had a surprising visit to Gangjeong and held an impromptu concert in Gangjeong the next day, her first concert in her father's hometown. The villagers were greatly excited to welcome her. The Peace Center was packed. Her peaceful and beautiful voice, as well as humble and friendly manner deeply moved the audience and made people proud of their community.

### Father Mun's visit to the USA

By Ddalgi

Fr. Mun Jeong-hyeon was invited by the Catholic Workers to visit New York from March 1st till 15th. He gave speeches at six different locations to introduce the Gangjeong Struggle. He discussed Korea's democratic struggle, human rights issues and the history of the peace movements that he has been involved in throughout his 40 years of activism as a priest.

He shared with the audience that the naval base being built in Gangjeong village on Jeju island in South Korea will be eventually used as a US base. This discussion was an opportunity for American college students who are in attendance to question what the military of their country is doing all over the world. In addition, he spoke about how much the foreign policies of the USA oppress people of other countries. One student contended that wars are inevitably waged in human history, his logic is the necessity of a just war. In response, Fr. Mun calmly answered: "I have learned from the past 40 years of standing on the road that violence brings out more violence. In order to have peace, we need to find ways to reach peace in nonviolent ways. Although this takes time, we have to have discussions and conversations. Only when we dare to think that we need to sacrifice our lives rather than killing others, then we can get rid of violence and a different world can be possible." However, could peace really be possible in situations where the USA government continues its arms race, having military power over the countries in the Asian region rather than stopping waging wars? This is the question that Fr. Mun asked to his American audience. His answer is that we should stand in solidarity until truth is uncovered as long as we seek peaceful ways peace will be achieved. Tiny seeds of peace have been sown into the American young people. Yet, growing the seeds and making them bear fruits are each our own duty after all.

## Wednesday Waterday

By Chrissy

As the navy began their hasty opening ceremony, I joined a group of kayakers to take to the sea our message of opposition to all the destruction caused by the military. Curry mentioned it was very much like David and Goliath, and it was rather absurd as these warships with the capacity to destroy incalculable human lives had to be protected by over 8 police vessels and numerous large coast guard ships from four of us in plastic kayaks. As we positioned ourselves in the port entrance the words "war making is a tragedy not a celebration" came to mind as cannons exploded and warplanes flew overhead.

Yet I was mesmerized by the sea and thankful for the perspective it provided, the connection to life that unites all creatures and their ancestors. I also gained a great appreciation for the many who have been engaged in this struggle, investing their precious life force into building a village community that truly celebrates life and peace.

Like the ocean beneath us, there was so much clarity on that day. I was clearly aware of which side I was on. I was choosing to invest my life energies into creating that culture of peace where all life is able to flourish. It became evident to me that with our peacemaking, like the sea, there is much going on beneath the surface that we cannot see.

The ripples are far reaching. So despite the voyage at sea being the largest physical challenge I have encountered, I returned to the sea during the next few Wednesdays. Since the Chinese character for Wednesday means water, Ocean Team members have started doing sea protests each Wednesday. The next time, sea kayaking got easier and there was no place I'd rather be.



Image by Park Inchun/ A weekly sea protest in front of the Jeju navy base where war vessels have been almost daily mooring since last September.

### International Solidarity



Image by Ddalgi/ Fr. Mun Jeong-hyeon's visit was realized by Martha Hennessy, a Catholic Worker and granddaughter to Dorothy Day.

# Remembering Korea's Role in the Vietnam War

In the evening of March 24, Dr. Ku Su Jeong shared about the vastly different ways that the Korean role in the Vietnam War is remembered in Vietnam and in Korea. Her presentation at the Peace Center was jointly hosted by the International Team and Gangjeong Peace School. Korea contributed more soldiers to the American war in Vietnam than any other country but the USA itself, a total of about 320,000 troops, and in 1972 there were more Korean than American soldiers in Vietnam. Japan sent no troops to Vietnam, yet over 2 million Japanese protested against the war. Korea, however, had no such protests. In Vietnam, memorials commemorate the

innocent women and children massacred by Korean troops. In fact, there were more massacres by Korean soldiers than by American soldiers. The survivors of the massacre at Binh Hoa built a memorial before they even rebuilt their houses. On the other hand, across Korea there are over 200 memorials to praise the Korean soldiers who 'served' in Vietnam. In this context of distorted memory, Korean veterans may feel sorry, but Korean society is not ready to hear it.

Also joining the lecture were the makers of the girl statue which is a symbol of the struggle of the Korean "comfort women" who were sexual slaves of the Japanese military. They agreed that it is important for

Koreans to not only ask Japan to acknowledge its war crimes but also to expose Korean war crimes as well. We don't want the Gangjeong navy base to become like the American airbases in Okinawa which were used to bomb Vietnam, and we also don't want it to be another Aldereu Airfield from which Japanese planes took off from Jeju to attack Nanjing, China. Dr. Ku Su Jeong emphasized that we must not disregard the pain of the other. It is only through the solidarity of suffering and suffering that we can overcome militarism.

## Residents' complaints about the construction of the base entry road

By Kim Jae-hoon

There are civilians being affected by the construction of the navy base entry road as it is extended along the outside of the base. Even the residents living next to Gangjeong village who have never been involved in the opposition movement against the base are raising complaints claiming their property rights are being taken away due to the construction of this road. The residents who are facing land expropriation are raising complaints stating "we have raised civilian complaints to the Seogwipo City administrative authority, but it is meaningless since the navy is in charge of the road construction."

Kim Book-Shim who lives in Seogwipo claimed that "the Ministry of National Defense (MND) intervened in the work of widening the road of the Seogwipo City. The administration allowed the MND to appropriate my husband's land." The navy is stating it appropriated the land via 'legal procedure.' She and her husband are preparing for a suit against the city government officer as 'administrative procedures are clear and the city government officers have improperly carried out their administrative tasks.'

There are still residents who face land expropriation since they live just north of Gangjeong and the road construction will be extended into the base from their village. There residents are also raising complaints stating that their land will be excessively infringed upon because of the additional installation of the wayside slopes on the road.

The City of Seogwipo has not given individual notice to landowners, they only issued a public notice on the approval on the project implementation. This has led to extreme anger from those who are affected and only discovering the loss of their land via an internet homepage message. Seogwipo City personnel are stating that as there is no legal necessity to notify individuals of this change, they have done nothing wrong. However the city authorities are ignoring the people's right to know the changes impacting the land that they own.

## Trial Updates



On March 8, the Jeju 1st court handed down the decision of 1 year and 6 months imprisonment suspended sentence for three years on Mr. Bang Jong-Woon, leader of the Cort/Cortec guitar workers' struggle on the mainland. The charge laid against him was Special Obstruction of Justice. Bang flew to Jeju to show his solidarity with the villagers on Jan. 31, 2015 when there was the government crack-down on the people's sit-in tent against the building of military residence outside the base. At the time, he was arrested along with other 23 people and was thought to be imprisoned but was later released after a few days. Bang carried out a 45 days fast in the mainland last year in protest to the ruling conservative party representative's insulting remark on his union and workers' struggle.

On March 15, Kim Guk Nam, a Jeju activist was released from the prison. On Jan. 27, he chose to be imprisoned for refusing to pay a 5 million won fine (approximately \$5000USD). He completed the required 49 day jail term to cover the required days for such a fine. However on the same day of March 15, a female activist Lee Jae-in also chose a prison sentence due to her refusal to pay fines totaling 1.5million won. She was released on March 29, after fulfilling her required time of two weeks. The number of people who have been imprisoned including those who have chosen jail due to their refusal to pay fines has reached 58 to date.

## No Nukes. Yes, Peace and Life!

By Hwang Hyun-jin, Hotpinkdolphins

On February 26, the environment group Hotpinkdolphins held a talk show called "The Story of Crossing the Black Seawater." The show featured mother and daughter Masako and Mayuko, who migrated from Japan to Taiwan to escape radiation contamination after the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident. According to them, the Japanese government and media deceived citizens by saying that "zones more than 30km from the location of the accident are safe." However, it is said that those who remained in Fukushima Prefecture have either died of cancer or have been suffering for the past five years. In the fifth year since the Fukushima incident, we must remain concerned with the dangers of nuclear power which threatens life and peace. And we must make efforts to ensure that such a tragedy doesn't happen again.



Image by an event participant. On March 1st, the independence day, Jeju citizens gather at the statue of a young girl symbolizing the comfort women to denounce the agreement between Japan and South Korea on the comfort women issue. Gangjeong people joined the event with their face covered with the mask of a girl of the statue.



Images by Joan, Pang Eunmi and Dolgorae/ Women in Gangjeong marching, picketing and performing on March 8 and JoYakGol carrying out a special workshop for women on March 12.

# New Daily Evening Bells Prayer Service

By Curry

On weekday evenings from 5:30 to 6:00, Protestants have started a new daily prayer meeting in Gangjeong. The prayer time begins with the ringing of the new brass bell hanging in the tree across from the mass tent. On Wednesdays, Mr. Oh Cheol Geun leads Quaker-style silent prayer. Often, the prayer service has readings and songs led by pastors from around Jeju, and other times Dr. Song Kang-ho leads participants in praying aloud while walking through the construction gates as far as possible up the inner gates of the navy base. At the end of the work day, this prayer time gives a chance to reflect on the day's activities and to express prayers for the recovery of Gureombi and the transformation of the navy base into a center for peace training.

# International Peace Film Festival in Gangjeong

By Grace

The 1st International Peace Film Festival in Gangjeong (IPFFIG) will be held on April 23rd through April 26th in Gangjeong village hall, Peace Centre and Seogwipo Art Centre, Seogwipo City. In the wake of the completion of the Jeju naval base, we are holding an international peace film festival here in Gangjeong village. The idea of the film festival is to surround the navy base with the power of culture. Military tension is increasing in the region as the countries are driven by an arms race. However, we believe culture is mightier than the sword.

There will be screenings of 34 films from 10 different countries, which include films dealing with issues of war bases in Gangjeong and Okinawa. The festival theme is "Everyone Together for Peace". The central values of the festival are peace, environment, life, human rights, and feminism. In order to remain independent while embracing these values, IPFFIG is a non-competitive and non-commercial festival open to participation by all.

The Sections of the film festival are named after endangered species that represent the nature of Gangjeong: 1. Lives on the verge (Clithon retropictus) 2. The meaning of war for women (Rosa wichuraiana Crep.) 3. Lives, resisting (Cladium chinense Nees) 4. Islands, connecting peace (Soft coral communities) 5. April, rising from the sadness (Gureombi).

The International Peace Film Festival in Gangjeong invited films that explore in-depth and progressive interpretations of peace, environment, human rights, feminism, life, workers' movement, immigration, and queer. Our vision is to create a vital space for lively communication with forward-thinking contemporary filmmakers. Also, a series of special programs - the Peace Film School and three sessions of the Peace Forum - will occur throughout the festival, contributing to our vision for fostering the next generation of socially engaged filmmakers.

You can check more about the film festival here:

[www.ipffig.org](http://www.ipffig.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/ipffig>

## 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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Image by Oum Mun-hee. On March 16, 2016, Grandma Youngdeung's memorial parade held in Gangjeong village to pray for peace and reconciliation.



Image by Pang Eunmi. As one of the Catholic holy week activities, footbath ceremony was done with the flowing water from the Gangjeong river.

**In Remembrance of  
Fukushima 11 March 2011  
No More Nuclear Power  
Plants!  
No More Nuclear Wastes!  
No More Nuclear Weapons!  
No More Global Nuclear  
Industry Chain!**



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