

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

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Monthly news on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base project

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5.15 Okinawa Peace March an Inspiration for Gangjeong

Article by Curry
Image by 2016 Okinawa
Peace March team

A large delegation from Korea joined the 5.15 Okinawa Peace March this year, including thirteen participants from Jeju, seven of them from Gangjeong. They visited historical sites, joined rallies and marches, shared about Gangjeong, and had social gatherings with Okinawan activists.

Like Jeju, Okinawa has a traumatic history. The delegation visited a cave where 300 Okinawan middle school students were forced to commit suicide by Japanese troops during the US invasion in 1945. After the Pacific War, Okinawa was fully occupied by the US military until May 15, 1972, when it officially became part of Japan again. But the US military did not leave.

Okinawan people have been struggling against the US bases for 71 years now. The Okinawan

governor, Takeshi Onaga campaigned with a slogan of "All Okinawa." The campaign has three demands: No Osprey, no Futenma, and no new Henoko. The Osprey is a dangerous aircraft currently stationed at Futenma, which is called the world's most dangerous base. Though the construction of a new Osprey base at Henoko is paused for one year, Japan and the US are insisting to continue the plans to landfill the coral and dugong habitat.

Gangjeong's chef, Uncle Jonghwan joined the Okinawa peace march for the third time this year, and plans to go again next year. "My heart aches, Gangjeong's base was completed but there the base construction is suspended. While it is suspended it needs to be kicked out, so the people need to gather their strength," he said. "Everyone together, Okinawan

citizens, Korea, Taiwan, people need to work together to stop it. ... I think we can stop the Okinawa base. Even the governor is against it and the representatives in the diet are all against it. ... 3,000 people gathered together, I was really jealous."

On the other hand, Gang Mun-shin, leader of the Gangjeong Women's Committee fears that Jeju will, like Okinawa, still have the same struggle after 70 years. She worries that in future generations there will not be not less and less bases but more and more. She represented Gangjeong at the final rally of the march and spoke clearly to the crowds (about 2,500 people) that we must protect our land and nature for our children. "Gangjeong's peace is Okinawa's peace," she shouted, and her appeal seemed to resonate well with the audience.

Our daily mass a seed of peace

By Jung Sun-nye

Hello... It is a happy Sunday morning. I am massaging my foot while enjoying the sound of the rain outside. My foot was injured by the truck at the gate of Jeju naval base construction site few months ago. First of all, I would like to send you all my greetings. This is Gangjeong Village where Yeon-woo, Siwa, John's son and daughter, Baram and Ddong-ging (toddlers' names) live. They listened to the loud sound of peace in their mommy's tummy as prenatal music. And there is good news! Another wedding will be held in the beginning of June which make us look forward to the 7th baby.

The daily mass at the gate of Jeju Naval Base construction site that used to be celebrated at 11 am has finally come to an end on May 7th. It was like a mom's tummy that had taken an excellent and successful role to sustain the nonviolent and peace movement. Gangjeong activists had to go through painful moments feeling the change as a pregnant woman does. It seems that it takes time to accept the situation, which threw us out naked before the power of the world. It is a time for us to come to realize that a seed of peace and life that had sown by Gureombi Rock is growing inside each of us. Although the daily mass at the gate of the construction site ended, a mass and rosary is still celebrated and liturgy in the absence of a priest is held at 11 am in the mass tent across the gate. A weekly Sunday mass is held at 10 am at the Francis Peace Center.

The nonviolent peace movement has been growing well with our healthy toddlers. They are the witness of peace that proves that the seeds of peace sown in Gangjeong are growing well with the support from international solidarity from around the world.



Image by Oum Mun-hee/ A people's performance in front of the navy base entry area for the May 24 International Women's Day for Peace And Disarmament. The red cloth signifies life and justice. On the day, we also remembered the UN Security Council resolution NO. 1325 which is on women and peace and security, unanimously adopted in 2000.

Korea. Here's Why'

'Women must be at the peacemaking table, not just because we make up half the world's population, but also because our involvement leads to better outcomes. New research from the Philippines and Colombia, on top of the experience from Liberia and Northern Ireland, shows that when women and men participate equally in the process, prospects for achieving a durable peace agreement are improved. Women's inclusion in peace building was enshrined into international law with the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2001, which called on "all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts." Yet 15 years later, fewer than 10 percent of women are negotiators, and even fewer at the Korean peace table. Ending the Korean War and finding a meaningful path to reunification won't be achieved overnight, but a revitalized process towards peaceful reconciliation on the Korean peninsula can begin with a simple step: Women should have a seat at the peacemaking table. Until then, we'll continue to take our calls for a peaceful resolution to this decades-old conflict to public squares and streets around the world, including the DMZ.

Foreign Policy In Focus columnist Christine Ahn was the international coordinator of the 2015 women's DMZ peace walk.'
(For more, check the longer article in Foreign Policy in Focus)

One Person Protest

By Sungku

On February 26th the Navy held a ceremony to commemorate the completion of the base construction. On May 7th, the last Mass on the street was held after 5 years of daily Mass at the gate. We knew the day the base would be completed was coming but we felt it was too soon and the last Mass was an unexpected for all activists.

Joan, who daily wears a bird's mask to the daily mass stated, "Actually, I don't know what to do, suddenly many things have changed. So I am pondering what I can do next, while carrying out a one-woman protest." There is big difference between the actions we all undertook to try to stop the construction and present action in front of actual Navy Base. Now, we are standing in front of military base undertaking a one person protest. From there we can see the warships and guns.

One day a truck full of trees entered the base. One activist shouted to the navy, "You destroyed all the surrounding nature, and now you want to plant trees?" The action of one hundred bows continues every morning at the main entrance to the navy base. It is apparently legal for us to undertake this action but the navy security man is very unreasonable, even taking away the pads to protect our knees during the hundred bows. Activist MangGi said, "the one hundred peace bows is my way of calming myself and feeling better. I will never stop fighting for this struggle." Presently, there is Mass at the tent almost daily, but not in front of the construction gate. The human chain and dance start at noon near the villagers' sit-in tent 'village hall,' across from the new entrance to the base.

Visiting Gangjeong Again

By Andrew

On 23 May my wife Debbie Kim and I visited Gangjeong Village for a few days as part of our holiday in South Korea. It was her first time and my second, having visited in 2012. We both became active in the naval base issue early that year when we saw the staggering oppression of peaceful protest at Gangjeong, and learned about the destruction of the beautiful marine environment for a war base that the villagers overwhelmingly opposed.

Over the past four years we have been daily inspired by the non-violent resistance to construction of the base, and the beautiful, courageous, creative people who have make up this unique peace movement. At Gangjeong Peace Centre we gave a small presentation of our activities in London and other UK cities. We have held protests, film screenings, bike rides, university seminars and fundraising events, aided by many UK based students. We were proud to bring the deported activist Benjamin Monet to London, and to help organise Mayor Kang's tour in the UK. As in Gangjeong, we try to keep a feeling of friendship and fun in our actions.

To visit Gangjeong is to be among friends. We experienced the warmest hospitality - and the best food in the crossroads 'restaurant', now threatened with destruction. We were also kindly taken to the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park with its extensive display on the brutal massacres on Jeju under US military command. To understand this tragic recent history is to understand the difference ongoing resistance to Jeju's militarisation. We promise to stand alongside Gangjeong and other international supporters in that resistance.

War vessels for drills and tours

The Pacific Reach 2016 submarine exercise from May 25 to June 3rd on the sea between Jeju and Jinhae (where the ROK Navy Command is located), was the 1st time that the Jeju navy base was intended to accommodate foreign submarines. This submarine exercise was joined by six countries: South Korea, Japan, United States, Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia, and there were 12 observer countries including China and Russia. Coincidentally, May 25th was also the opening of the three days' Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity organized by the Jeju Island Government and Samsung affiliated media Joonang Ilbo etc. It was ironic that the Jeju Forum which was held only 7min. car distance away from the Jeju navy base ignored the significance of the war drill on the waters of Jeju, the Peace Island. The last day of May was the beginning of the three day Navy Week in Jeju. The navy organized another public military ship tour. The war drill was going on at the same time as the warship tour. A talk on ROK-Japan military cooperation was quietly happening behind the scenes. We also hear that the ROK, US, and Japan will have a missile warning drill in June for the 1st time, just before the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, RIMPAC.



Image by Oum Mun-hee(above) and Gangjeong Village Story(bottom)/ Before their departures, Gangjeong visitors Brando and Omi each had lively presentation nights (May 2nd and 9th, respectively) with music, poetry, dance and a performance of planes spraying poison chemtrails

International Solidarity



Image by Oum Mun-hee/ Debbie and Andrew's presentation in the Peace Center on May 23.

Hatred and hostility towards Gangjeong

South Korea is surely a very nationalistic and militarized country. And this brutal system of militarism makes many young people blind. When the marines showed up in the village with their guns on April 28, I happened to be there. So were Mayor Cho and several other villagers. To our eyes, seeing Navy soldiers with guns parade in a Jeju village was like history repeating itself where the state killed people in Jeju on April 3, 1948 and in Gwangju on May 18, 1980. Surprised, scared and outraged, we scolded the

soldiers not to come to town ever again. I filmed it and put it online on the same day for it was breaking news. People needed to see what was going on in Gangjeong unedited after the naval base was built up. Obviously, the military was trying to take over the town, especially after the damage lawsuit was filed.

But then, thousands of hateful messages and hostile responses stormed in. We didn't expect everyone to sympathize with peace movement, but the online backlash from nationalists, chauvinists

and militarists was just too much. They thought the marines were insulted by the villagers and they couldn't stand it. At the Youtube video I posted had several thousands of name-calling comments. Facebook page and Gangjeong website suffered similar attacks from far-right groups. They went on so far as to sue the village mayor and 3 others for defamation and other charges. Now the police are summoning us, but we will not back down. We will show how strong peace really is.



Image (left) by Gangjeong Village Story/ This sign reads "Guilty of Refusing to Kill, 5.15 Conscientious Military Service Objection Day." In Korea, conscientious objectors are jailed as criminals for refusing the obligatory draft.

Image (right) by Joan/ "On May 18, 1980, soldiers shot the citizens of Gwangju," Peace activists holding signs in front of the Jeju navy base upon the 36th remembrance year of Gwangju in which at least 2000 people were killed by the U.S. backed ROK military.

Trial Updates

▶ On May 3rd, the Jeju local court partly acknowledged the responsibility of the state in relation to a previous accident where a villager's fishing ship was damaged by the navy's maritime structure being installed during the construction of the Jeju naval base. A ship owner, Mr. Kim had an accident when he sailed from Gangjeong fishing port out to the sea around 2 am, December 28, 2014. After this accident Kim had to spend around \$ 7,200 USD to repair his ship. He filed against the state, claiming that the accident was caused from a 50 m length breakwater which the navy had installed between submerged rocks and there was still a limited ability to see even with a night-vision device. While acknowledging the lack of this device, the court limited the amount of the state's compensation to Kim to around \$2,800 USD, stating that the plaintiff had responsibilities for his own safety also.

▶ On May 27, the Supreme Court, dismissing the appeal by prosecutors, handed down the decision of not guilty on the four organizers of the month long march in 2012 from Gangjeong village, Jeju to Seoul, mainland of Korea. The march was a SKY joint act by three movements of S (Ssangyong), K (Gangjeong), and Y (Yongsan). At the time, the prosecutors took a summary indictment against Mr. Kim Duk-Jin (Catholic Human Rights Committee), Mr. Bu Jang-Won (Pan-Island committee against military base), Mr. Park Rae-Goon (human rights group in Seoul), and Mr. Kim Deuk-Joong (Ssangyong automobile worker) for the alleged charges of violations on the law of rally and demonstration and of interruption of general traffic, demanding fines of about \$ 870 to 1,300 USD respectively against them. The prosecutors asserted that the marchers walked away from a scope of the reported rally by walking on a road for 30 minutes on the last day of the march in Seoul. In April 2014, the four accused filed for a formal trial, disobeying the prosecutors. In May, 2015, the Seoul west regional court handed down a decision of not guilty for all four, disagreeing with the prosecutors' assertion against them. The court even said that it was more publically safe to use the 1st lane of the road close to the sidewalk in that specific section of the traffic.

International Conscientious Objector Day

By Words of Wind
(Ba-ram-mal)

On May 17th, a seminar took place at Jeju University to mark the international Conscientious Objector day. The co-host groups were the Jeju Legal Clinic Center, Seong-san Global Village Peace University (GVPU) and the Gangjeong Peace School. For the first session, the newly elected congressperson of the Justice Party, Kim Jong-dae talked about 'Military Tension and National Security in East Asia'. The second session topic was about refusing reserve forces training by a student of GVPU, Lee Sang who recently declared to be a Conscientious Objector after long consideration. Approximately 80 people participated in the seminar from the alternative school called 'Rice Seed' in Seon-heul County, including students from Jeju Law School and some from Jeju City.

Mr. Kim spoke about militaristic culture and national security that are still dominantly obvious in Korean Society. He said, "The subject of national security in a democratic state is not the military but the citizens and the soldiers, police and firefighters are mere representatives who substitute their people to keep national security". He discussed the fact that the arms race in East Asia Region has been gradually proliferating and at the same time the militaristic tension between the USA and China has come to draw parallel. Mr Kim also discussed how the USA persuades the countries in East Asia, including South Korea to join in with them in keeping China in check. The next session was followed by Lee Sang. He shared what his motivation was to refuse reserve forces training, mentioning his personal story. He said that even though the path he has chosen seems rough, he has already become a person who opposes the military so this is only the choice.

In the evening on the same day, Mr. Kim gave another talk in Gangjeong Village on corruption within the defense industry. He explained how the South Korea navy is one of the most corrupt military organizations and that this corruption had become widely known to the public. This was of great interest to Gangjeong villagers. The evening event was also a part of program to mark the international Conscientious Objectors Day.



Image by Nah Hyun-Phil/ 'No Jeju Navy Base' A protest at the Jeju Forum for Peace and Disarmament, May 25 to 27, sponsored by the Government and Samsung-affiliated press company, Joongang ilbo and others.

Fundraising concert in Seoul

That the navy filed a \$3 million lawsuit against Gangjeong villagers and peace activists was big news for musicians in Seoul. Most of all, the amount of money was beyond imagination for independent musicians in Korea. It was a natural thing for them to reach an agreement to do something that they can do best for the village in danger. And it was giving a concert.

Several punk rock band members started the idea of having benefit show at an underground live music house in the outskirts of Seoul, and then developed it into mixing Gangjeong's peace movement with punk rock and protest music. It was an exciting plan. Date was set on May 21. 9 teams and individuals including Yamagata Tweakster, Find The Spot, Park Jun and Cosmos Superstar appeared on the show.

The music was not much popular, so we knew that this solidarity concert would not attract many people, but some die-hard 70 people showed up and filled the venue. All the people proved that Gangjeong is not forgotten. To raise fund was not the goal, but we managed to raise some \$400 worth of nickels, dimes and 1,000 won bills, all of which was delivered to Mayor Cho Kyeongchul.

Fr. Mun Kyu-Hyun awarded in Gwangju

On May 28th, the association for the remembrance of Deulbul martyrs awarded Fr. Mun Kyu-Hyun, as the 11th year Deulbul awardee, in Gwangju 5.18 national cemetery. Fr. Mun is the younger brother of Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyun and member of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice. The award is a recognition of his dedication for human rights in various struggles including Gangjeong village's fight for no military base. The Deulbul (meaning 'wild fire') prize was established to remember the spirit of the seven martyrs of Gwangju. The seven martyrs ran the Deulbul night school for workers in 1970s and led the 5.18 uprising in 1980.



Image by Curry. At a local Children's Day festival, children learned about Gangjeong through cartoon pictures, made bookmarks featuring our endangered wildlife, and tried out one of our sea protest kayaks.

How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to close the Jeju base project and to the US government to stop the support for it.
2. Write letters to the South Korean government to drop the lawsuit of USD 3 million against the people of Gangjeong.
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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A memorial site to be preserved

There is a small memorial site for the remembrance of 12 Gangjeong ancestors who were all born in 1900. The memorial is just next to the main construction gate of the Jeju navy base. In 1999, when the 12 ancestors' birth year met its centennial, their descendants built this memorial site around their ancestors' own memorial stone. Every May 8th, which is Parents' Day in Korea, the descendants hold an ancestral rite in the site.

However, the memorial site has been threatened with relocation since the start of the naval base project in 2007. The descendants have struggled hard for nine years to preserve the site, refusing to receive any money or compensation from the Government for expropriation of the land. The navy recently found it difficult to manage the relocation process. Three trees of 80- 100 years old are located there too. As a result, the Ministry of National Defense incorporated the site into the park nearby the base, which means the descendants are able to preserve the site although the name of the land has been transferred to the Ministry of National Defense in 2010. The descendants are determined to recover the name of the site even though it may take many years.

Samgeori faces crackdown

The Samgeori area will face demolition soon. The Government is to demolish the protest community kitchen, the watch tower, and the 10 containers where people live. The reason of the demolition is to build a four lane entry road to the cruise terminal which is planned to be constructed at the western tip of the base by next year. Since Samgeori, the entrance to the Gureombi Rock, was fenced off in 2011, the tent kitchen and the watch tower were built in Samgeori by the villagers.

The community kitchen has provided free meals to activists and visitors both domestic and internationals alike. It is a spiritual pillar of our struggle, since it has been a place of gathering and sharing meals through our continuing struggle. The containers also help to keep the space from the navy's occupation. How to preserve Samgeori and its spirit? Is what we are currently struggling with.

2016 Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace · 江汀生命平和大行進

평화야
고향이라

2016
강정생명평화대행진
8.1 Mon ~ 8.6 Sat

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 Okinawa and the world

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