

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

June 2016

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

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Sunken Sewol ferry overloaded with iron bars for Jeju naval base

Article by Joyakgol

Image by Screen captures from CNN, CCTV, and KBS News

A shocking fact was officially confirmed about the Sewol ferry by the Special Sewol Investigative Commission. The Sewol was carrying 410 tons of iron bars meant for Jeju naval base construction. 304 people died on April 16, 2014 in the sunken Sewol ferry bound for Jeju. Bereaved family members of the victims have been struggling to find the real truth of the tragedy, because the facts of the sinking have still not been properly revealed. The Korean government has been repeatedly saying cargo overload was the reason of the case, but there remain many questions unsolved.

First of all, what's the real reason the Sewol left port that night? Around 9 pm on Apr. 15, 2014, the Sewol ferry departed Incheon Harbor on its own, while poor weather compelled other ships to remain in port. Following the disclosure of the iron bars that were intended for the Jeju naval base, allegations are being raised that the ship put to sea rashly in order to meet the construction schedule for the base.

Second, suspicions have been raised over the past two years about a "special relationship" between the Sewol and South Korea's National Intelligence Service. Many circumstantial evidence show that the

NIS is the real owner of the ferry. These facts point to the need for an investigation into whether the NIS was connected to the construction of the naval base at Gangjeong village on Jeju Island, which was fiercely opposed by the villagers and peace activists, and whether the NIS gave orders for the ferry to be rashly overloaded in order to keep the base's construction on schedule. Now, it is proven that even the government is not free of responsibility for overloading the Sewol. And the same government should be held accountable for the excessive use of force to unreasonably push forward the naval base construction.

Navy Week on Jeju Island

By Ann Wright

While I was in Gangjeong Village, the South Korean Navy had "Navy Week on Jeju Island," from May 31 to June 2. Navy weeks are designed as a public relations event to get favorable public opinion. Most activists would not have been allowed on the navy base even if they had wanted to go. I wanted to see where the massive amount of concrete poured into the area had gone — so I produced my passport and I and another recent arrival were passed onto the base. We saw Aegis missile destroyer ships, helicopters, landing craft and demonstrations of martial arts.

But the most important thing we saw was what we think is the only remaining part of Gureombi Rock. Behind the first building on the left side of the main road past the entrance gate, is a small lake with one side of what appears to be a very small piece of the Gureombi Rock! The other side of the lake is composed of rock fill, but the northern side seems to be original rock.

The coastline surrounding Gangjeong Village consisted of one contiguous volcanic rock called Gureombi which was a 1.2 kilometer-long rock formed by lava flowing into the sea and rocks rising from the seabed. The estuary informed in this area was Jeju Island's only rocky wetland and acted as home to several endangered species and soft coral habitats.

Editor: The above is an edited excerpt from a much longer article titled, 'After Eight Years of Protest of Construction of Naval Base, Gangjeong Villagers Sued by South Korean Navy.' Please see savejejunow.org for the entire article. Ann Wright is 'a 29 year US Army/Army Reserves veteran' and a former US diplomat who resigned in March, 2003 in opposition to the war on Iraq.'



Image by Ann Wright (above) who took a photo of what she thought as a remaining part of the Gureombi Rock and Tera (below), a Gangjeong peacekeeper, who traced the location of the above through map (red circle). It turns out that the spot is just next to the main part of the Gureombi Rock.

Gwangju and Jeju: A Journalist's Account

In May, I spent four days in Gwangju, where I participated in the city's celebration of the 5·18 Uprising of 1980. I then flew to Jeju, where I visited Gangjeong and the 4·3 Memorial. Here are my thoughts.

First, the democratic movement in Gwangju and the anti-base movement in Gangjeong share a strong bond in their opposition to militarism and authoritarian government. Another commonality: both have confronted a South Korean military closely tied to the United States.

The U.S. shadow behind Gwangju is the Carter administration's decision in 1980 to respond militarily to the rebellion against Chun Doo Hwan's martial law regime. Even today, many Gwangju citizens remain angry that the U.S. command in South Korea approved Chun's deployment of Army troops from the DMZ to put down their civic uprising. In Jeju, that shadow is the direct role played by the U.S. Military Government in crushing the 1948-49 rebellion, leaving tens of thousands dead, including many in the Gangjeong. And in the village today, protesters understand very well that the naval base they fight against is part of a U.S., South Korean and Japanese military alliance built around missile defense and intelligence. But I noticed difference in how these histories are explained. In Gwangju's museums, the emphasis is on the citizens' movement and resistance army against Chun; the U.S. role in putting down the rebellion is not prominent. In contrast, the 4·3 museum acknowledges the U.S. role in the counterinsurgency war clearly and honestly. Displays such as "US Military Government Decides on Tough Crackdown Operations" and dramatic photos of U.S. generals and commanders on the scene in Jeju bring the truth home.

As an honorary citizen of Gwangju, I hope that the full story of the U.S. complicity with the events of 1980 can be eventually excavated and displayed as dramatically as it is in Jeju. Still, I am deeply impressed that citizens in both Gwangju and Jeju have transformed their painful pasts into celebrations of humanity – one as an international center for human rights, the other as an "island of peace." That is their gift to the world.

Tim Shorrock is a Washington-based writer and labor activist. He was invited to Gwangju to celebrate the 36th anniversary of 5·18 with three American journalists who were there at the time of the uprising. Follow his blog at timshorrock.com.

Memory Activism Peace School

By Curry

From June 19 to 22, a small group of peace school students and staff joined Nan-cho in exploring how memory activism can be applied to the Gangjeong struggle. We visited Alddreu Airfield, Netgiriso, Metpuri, and toured Gangjeong port by kayak. We previewed a new film by Grace which examines the role of time in the memory of the Gangjeong struggle. Memory activism is defined by Yifat Gutman as "the commemoration of a contested past in order to influence public debate." We studied the process by which the memory of the Jeju April 3rd uprising and massacre, which was long suppressed and taboo, was raised again to public consciousness. Then we turned again to the context of Gangjeong. We created a temporary exhibition in the Peace Center, titled "Enduring Time, Fleeting Spaces." "Elsewhere, we normally think of time as flowing very quickly while places remain relatively stable. But in Gangjeong... places are fleeting, as sites of memory and sites of resistance have shifted and disappeared. Meanwhile, through daily rituals, Gangjeong activists have created a sense of time as something enduring," explained Nan-cho. Baram Mal reflected, "The history of Gangjeong is a history of taking and expelling. Yet, Gangjeong's anti-navy base activism is not tied to place but is constantly moving and expanding. The roots are in the life of Gureombi. Gureombi was destroyed and the naval base was built, but Gureombi as a foundation and soul for the Peace and Life movement of Gangjeong cannot be taken away."

A visit to Åland Island

By Park Hyun-sung

Byeopssi school is a democratic (alternative) school. We live in Jeju for 1 year during the third grade of middle school. Last year my class earned money doing part time jobs, so we were able to visit Finland for 2 weeks in June for the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC). After the conference, I visited Åland. Åland is between Finland and Sweden in the northern Baltic sea. Since 1832, Åland was militarized by Russia, and occupied by Sweden, Germany and then Finland, but many residents of Åland tried to negotiate with the government in 1920. Finally, they received autonomy from the League of Nations (before the UN) in 1921. They are an officially demilitarized peace island. I talked with a guest house owner about Åland and Gangjeong. "The war can't be forever, the military also can't be forever" she said. Gangjeong is like Åland. Åland is like Gangjeong. The military in Gangjeong also can't be forever.



Image by Curry. Memory Activism Peace School students made an experimental exhibit showing how the rituals of eating together and doing 100 bows have moved from Gureombi Rock to new locations, but have retained their centrality in the Gangjeong struggle.

Zumwalt 12 Arrested at Shipyard

By Bruce Gagnon

On June 18 twelve peace activists (11 from Maine, one from New York) were arrested in Bath, Maine just before the 'christening' ceremony of a new Zumwalt 'stealth' destroyer began. The activists sat in the road in front of a gate into the shipyard. The Navy crew of the new ship had to pass right by the protest.

The new Zumwalt, costing \$4.5 billion, will be home-ported in San Diego and sent to the Asia-Pacific as part of Obama's 'pivot' to encircle China. The ship will be outfitted with electro-magnetic rail guns that can fire a shell the size of a car the distance from New York to Philadelphia.

While about 30 others maintained a three-hour vigil with speakers and music just across the two-lane road in front of the shipyard, the Zumwalt 12 declared they intended to "interrupt the celebration of endless war and corporate profit" that was to take place inside the shipyard. The oldest of those arrested was 83-year old Brown Lethem and the youngest was 42-year old Brando (a frequent visitor to Jeju). They have all been given an August 2 arraignment date in a West Bath district court.

Usually the media ignore protests held at destroyer 'christenings' in Bath but this time due to the arrests there was wide coverage throughout Maine. A solidarity statement from Gangjeong village was read before the non-violent civil resistance action took place.

When the Zumwalt 12 were released after processing by the Bath Police Department, one of the police officers told an activist that, "You all are the conscience of the community."

Bruce Gagnon lives in Bath, Maine and works for the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space.

International Solidarity



Image by Regis Tremblay/ The Zumwalt 12 arrested for non-violent direct action.

UN recommends South Korea to protect freedom of assembly and association

By Baek Gayoon
(Coordinator, People's Solidarity
for Participatory Democracy)

On 17 June 2016, the UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association presented his report on the South Korea at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. This report is a result of his mission to the country in January. During his visit, he met various stakeholders including government officials and civil society organisations as well as victims, especially families of Sewol ferry victims, families of farmer Baek

Nam-gi who was shot by the police's water cannon and remains in coma, and members of Valeo trade union to investigate about the situation of freedom of peaceful assembly and association in the country. To respond to his report, some South Korean civil society organisations went to Geneva and this time, together with Ms. Baek Minjuwha, a daughter of farmer Baek Nam-gi. We held a side event to advocate situation of freedom of assembly and association in South

Korea, delivered oral statement, held street campaign, and had series of lobby meetings. The message from international society to South Korean government was clear. "Suppressing opportunities for this mode of expression only opens up a less desirable avenue, one of violent resistance and eventuality that would undermine everything that the Republic of Korea has achieved to date".



Image by Park Inchun. The tug boats used by the navy produce thick black smoke which indicates that they are not using proper filter equipment. Not only is the smoke dangerous to the sea life, it is also painful to breathe when these boats go out to guard the navy base from our kayaks.

Trial Updates

▶ On June 9, Lee, a peace activist, chose to go to prison in refusal to paying fines of around 2,500 USD, which is from the charge of obstruction of justice during the protest of Jan. 31, 2015 when people resisted to government crackdown on people's sit-in tent in opposition to the building of military residence outside the base. He was released on July 4, just two days before the whole prison term.

▶ On June 23rd, the higher civilian court made a court decision of conciliation between the plaintiff Woochang Inc., the base construction subcontractor company of Samsung and the defendant, the five villagers including ex-mayor Kang Dong-Kyun. The decision means that the plaintiff should withdraw from the suit and should not ask any criminal/ civilian responsibility against the defendant in relation to the same case in the future. It is a nullification of the 1st court decision that the five villagers should pay Woochang Inc. about 72,000 USD of damage compensation allegedly for construction delay caused by their anti-base protests. On the same day, the 1st civilian court also made a court decision of dismissal to the same plaintiff who had also raised a civil lawsuit against one villager and five activists. It had demanded damage compensation of about 90,000 USD, for the same reason. An activist who has closely followed those civil suits stated that the courts considered that Woochang Inc. has already received enough compensation from Samsung.

▶ On June 24, the Seoul central district civilian higher court dismissed an appeal by 22 people including ex-mayor Kang Dong-Kyun against the Government and Won Sei-hoon, the ex-chief of the National Intelligence Service. In September 2012 during the World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Jeju, people urged and campaigned on the need to stop the Jeju navy base project. It was in March 2013 when Jin Sun-mi, a National Assembly woman exposed that Won had stated in the National Intelligence Services extended staff meeting that the so called "pro-north Korea left groups are interrupting government activities in front of the WCC venue." Therefore in June, 2013, 22 people filed a joint civilian lawsuit against him and the government, claiming damages to their reputation due to Won's such remarks and demanding compensation of about 900 USD a person. However, the 1st court decision in November 2014, dismissed the lawsuit, saying there is neither enough evidence nor enough basis to judge that there was damage to their reputation. The Korean judicial system proves again that it protects the government rather than the people.

Villagers continue to fight against the navy lawsuit

On May 31, village representatives joined with a group of activists to visit leaders of the opposition parties in Seoul. The purpose of that visit was to gain support regarding the wrongful navy/government lawsuit against the people of Gangjeong, which must be dropped. Wi Sung-Gon, a representative from Seogwipo City and one of the three Jeju members of the National Assembly, accompanied Gangjeong villagers during the visits. So far, all three National Assembly members from Jeju, who are from the main opposition party, and the Island Council have expressed opposition to the navy lawsuit. Even the Island governor has spoken against the lawsuit, even though he has contributed to the naval base construction and dispossession of the villagers. For the last three months, village representatives have kept a nightly vigil along the street in front of the base in a protest tent set up as a temporary 'Village Hall' in resistance to the lawsuit.

A personal facebook account disappeared?

Mr. Park Inchun, a Gangjeong peace keeper, has been intensely monitoring and recording illegal navy base construction for the last four years. He has rarely left the tent which he set up on the Metpuri, the eastern tip of the village where he faces the base and can see beyond the fence. The photos Mr Park has taken regularly of the base construction are uploaded almost daily to his facebook page and have been used to inform people of wrongful actions by the navy and environmental damage and polluting by the base construction. These photos have also provided critical evidence for people's inquiry against the government. However, on June 14 Mr Park found that his personal facebook account had suddenly disappeared and was not recoverable, despite his continued request to the facebook company. We are all very suspicious of the role the government has played in the blocking of the unrecoverable status of Mr Parks facebook account.

No MD, No RIMPAC

On June 28, a Republic of Korea-US-Japan missile warning drill was staged in Hawaii. This drill was also a part of the Rim of the Pacific Exercises joined by 27 countries, the biggest ever, from June 30 to Aug. 4. Coincidentally the June 28 drill also marked the 6 months from the ROK-Japan governments' collusion on the 'comfort women' issue on Dec., 28 last year. The comfort women issue has been an obstacle for the three countries to smoothly establish the trilateral military alliance of which the missile defense system issue takes an important part.



Image by Pang Eunmi/ June 13 marked the 14th remembrance year for the two girls of Shin Hyo-soon and Shim Mi-sun who were on their way to a friend's birthday party but were killed by the U.S. army striker near the Korean DMZ during a war exercise. Their death is especially remembered when the Jeju navy base opened this year.

The endangered Joongdeok Samgeori

By Bokhee

Walking from the villagers' densely populated area then passing through farm roads, one meets the Joongdeok Samgeori (meaning 'three-road junction'). From this crossroad to the Joongdeok Sea, there used to be an Olle Trail which included the Gureombi Rock coast. The watchtower there was originally built for blocking naval base construction vehicles to the coast. When the navy forcefully set up its fence in 2011, people relocated it to its current location. A protest community kitchen was built next to it where activists and visitors shared meals. It has been the closest resistance spot to the naval base since then, and it is also the site of a cluster of container homes where peace activists live as a community. However, Seogwipo city officials have recently sent multiple notices to the Village Association warning of the forcible demolition of those facilities at Samgeori unless village representatives and the residents there are willing to clear them voluntarily. The order is allegedly motivated by plans to build a 4-lane road to the cruise terminal, expected to be built by next year as a part of the so-called Jeju Civilian-Military Complex Port (Jeju Naval Base). In defiance of such pressure, the activists and residents responded by holding a cultural festival where participants were encouraged to share the stories and spirit of a community of peace. Furthermore, the Village Association extended the term after it had a meeting with the Jeju Island governor. After taking all considerations into account, the village representatives expressed their intention to relocate those facilities, including a move of the watchtower to another spot not far from its original place. In coming days, it is therefore less likely that a clash will result from a government crackdown on that site. With the naval base's influx of personnel and capital, the stable basis is gradually disappearing for our longstanding village culture and peace activism. Our activities against the base will nevertheless continue on.



Image by Oum Mun-hee. Nine children from Gangjeong, Jeju, and the mainland joined Gangjeong Children's Ocean Camp from June 8-11, they slept in tents, kayaked down Gangjeong stream, performed a play about freeing captive dolphins, joined the human chain and 100 bows, and brought a youthful energy to the community.

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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Environment around Jeju naval base detereorates

By Joyakgol

The ayu or sweetfish needs crystal-clean fresh water and is rarely seen on Jeju, but Gangjeong river is the only sweetfish habitat here. To celebrate that, Gangjeong villagers have been holding Sweetfish Festival in June since 2002, with the exception of this year. What happened? The Gangjeong Youth Association members complaint that the number of sweetfish found in the river seriously declined this year. In every May, the residents would carry out various activities aimed at helping sweetfish thrive in Gangjeong and prepare for the festival. The villager's underwater team checked out the condition of the sea off the river, and they found massive amount of dirt and leaves accumulated on the waterbed. They suspect that the naval base breakwaters changed the course of the currents which caused the problem. Jeju sweetfish, an index species, is born in the river, goes to the sea to become full grown and comes back to the fresh water in May or June to lay eggs. While Gangjeong villagers ask the Jeju government to do more to preserve the species, an official says sweetfish is not a protected species. Currently the provincial government has no plan to manage the population. In an interview with press, Gangjeong people are saying sweetfish is not just a fish, but it represents the clean ecosystem of Gangjeong, hence 'our pride.' More than 80% of the soft corals in the area die out, and Jeju dolphins don't come near the Gangjeong sea anymore. It is clear that the environment around this so-called green military base is deteriorating, who is responsible for that? And what is needed to be done?

A fundraising event in Seoul

On June 4, a remarkable number of people gathered in a restaurant in Seoul. The purpose of the gathering was to raise funds to financially support legal matters in Gangjeong. It was a successful and it reminded us how important the Gangjeong struggle is to many people.



Image by Evergreen Kim. Mal-um-ma(Youngae) and Tudeori(Kihyun) met in Gangjeong during the time of intense struggle and eventually moved onto the next stage for their life together. Their wedding was held in the yard of their home and a lot of friends gathered to celebrate it.

2016 Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace

Jeju Island, Korea/ July 31 and Aug. 1 to 6

<http://savejejunow.org/join-2016-gangjeong-grand-march-for-life-and-peace/>

2016 Peace for the Sea International Peace Camp

Kaohsiung and Taitung, Taiwan/ Aug. 24 to 28

<http://web.thu.edu.tw/mike/www/peacecampE.html>



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