

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

December 2016

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

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Weave Together, Such a Beautiful Collective Peace Work

Article By Peaceberry and

images by Pang Eun-mi and Oum Mun-hee

People in solidarity with the Gangjeong struggle take part in many different ways. One such collective action titled 'Stitch of Gangjeong' took place in 2015 and again in December of 2016. Friends from all over the country sent pieces of knitted crochet to Gangjeong and they were woven together to cover the whole mass tent. Recently, Gangjeong supporters learned that the color of the knitted cover on the mass tent had faded. So they launched their collective work again. As soon as the word spread, colorful knit in different sizes and shapes started to arrive in the village. In total about 400 pieces of knit work were gathered in a week. In order to weave them all together, we spread all of them out on the floor of Peace Center. They really look like a

flower garden. When Gangjeong activists wove them together, it was also another beautiful collective work for them. While weaving, they also enjoyed sharing laughs, music, stories and food. Each piece of knit work seems to have a story of the person who made it. Some people did knitting work as either a community or individually. Others sent their works anonymously; some learned knitting or crocheting in order to be a part of the work.

Individuals' hearts toward Gangjeong and solidarity are interwoven like a huge matrix of paths. As a result, we were able to put the dazzling and colorful cover onto the top of the mass tent right before Christmas. This year as well, Christmas was celebrated and the colors of the covering shone in the

stars and the sun and greeted Gangjeong visitors and supporters with blessings.

We are so thankful that we don't know what to say to those who worked so hard for the action, 'Stitch of Gangjeong.' We could imagine how much effort and heart they put in their pieces as they were working on them. Some people say the base has been built completely so the struggle ends. In spite of those discouraging words, others still keep visiting Gangjeong and seek to find their own ways to be a part of the Gangjeong struggle in their own places. With their constant support and engagement, we are able to live each day in Gangjeong and Gangjeong Street Mass has continued welcoming supporters of Gangjeong.

The 1st Anti-THAAD Peace Bus and Lotte

By By Kim Young-Jae,
Solidarity for Peace And
Reunification of Korea

Park Geun-hye, the President of the ROK (Republic of Korea) who has monopolized government affairs, was finally impeached by the National Assembly on Dec. 9, after people's massive protests. However, Hwang Kyo-ahn, the Prime Minister and Acting President, is totally dismissing the people's wish for peace and is attempting to enforce Park's policies on THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Aerial Defense) deployment and the GSOMIA (Global Security Of Military Information Agreement) which would strengthen the ROK-US-Japan military alliance.

The ROK MND (Ministry of National Defense) is pushing Lotte Co. Ltd to speed up THAAD deployment. On Nov. 14, the MND made Lotte sign an MOU for a land swap enabling the deployment of THAAD in Sosung-ri, Seongju, Korea. Even though Lotte looked to accept the demands by the MND at first, it is changing its behavior by tentatively postponing schedules for its board meeting on the land swap, due to constant protests by the residents of Seongju and Gimcheon (the adjacent city to Seongju), daily growing sanctions by China (in retaliation to ROK's THAAD deployment policy), and expansion of public opinion against THAAD. The anti-THAAD struggle met an important turning point with this stage of the MND-Lotte land swap. In Seongju and Gimcheon, the candle rally is continuing daily. The residents' opposition against THAAD is still high. On Dec. 21st, the 1st anti-THAAD Peace Bus mobilized people nationwide bringing them to Seongju and Gimcheon. Around 500 people gathered outside Sosung-ri village association hall, a great encouragement for the local residents. The Peace Bus is expected to be ongoing. We welcome your solidarity for our anti-THAAD struggle.



Image by PSPD (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy). An end of the year party for Gangjeong was held at People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy cafe in central Seoul on Dec 15 with 50 peace supporters and citizens.

Free Hiroji Yamashiro and other anti-base activists in Okinawa!

Borderfree Friends of the Sea in Jeju

In December, Hotpinkdolphins invited two activists from Taiwan and Okinawa to hold an international seminar, called 'Borderfree Friends of the Sea' and for a week of solidarity activities in Seoul and Jeju. Kelly is a cetacean conservation activist from Taiwan, and Masako is a peace activist for the Dugong from Okinawa. We held seminars to understand the situations of endangered marine mammals in East Asia and the threats they're facing. Roughly speaking, they share similar conditions; their habitats are destroyed and diminished by various development projects such as building offshore sea turbines, reclamation, and military-related activities such as base construction and navy exercises at sea. Although the marine animals do not speak human language, they have been screaming for our help. We need to hear them up close, but not too close.

There are several spots in Jeju where you can watch Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins on the land with your bare eyes all year around. We were very lucky to see 10 dolphins when we visited this time. They were there right in the sea which connects to Okinawa and Taiwan. After the amazing encounter with dolphins, we attended the Nanjing Massacre memorial. It was very powerful, because the suffering is not just history, but it is present. We are facing similar situations in East Asia with growing military tensions and conflict. In Gangjeong village, we had a documentary screening and a talk about the three islands' issues. Taiwan, Okinawa and Jeju may seem to be located in the outer edges, but our borderfree solidarity can bring peace in the whole region.

Unforgettable Days In Jeju Island

By Kelly Tseng (Taiwanese Cetacean Society)

Before this trip, Jeju Island was to me just a name of a tourist site in lots of commercial ads on travel websites. In September, Hotpinkdolphins came to Taiwan and we talked about cetacean conservation work both in Jeju and Taiwan. Through their description I started to wonder what the island they had described so much looks like. When Hotpinkdolphins asked me whether I would like to have a tour in Jeju, I said yes without the slightest hesitation. As a result, I'm really glad that I didn't explore Jeju island with the perspective of tourist, instead, I met so many amazing people who have been dedicated to this island and fought for their belief for such a long time. Through these people, I got to know what is really happening here and what really matters to local people. And attending the memorial of Nanjing Massacre was the most unforgettable experience in this trip. We all studied about this history at school. But what we learned was just the criticism between countries and races. This memorial activity really changed my point of view. Though new generations like me were born in a relatively peaceful era, we shouldn't forget or ignore history. Instead, it is important to learn from it. We should look thoroughly at what has happened and think about what kind of country we want to live in. I'm really glad that I got this chance to visit here, to see so many people stand out to fight for their rights and their habitats. The persistence and strong faith inspired me so much. Thank you, Jeju Island!

One year since the ROK-Japan collusion on 'comfort women'

Dec. 28, 2016 marked the 1st anniversary of the ROK-Japan governments' collusion on the issue of 'comfort women,' the forced sexual slavery of the imperial Japanese armed forces from the 1930s to 1945. The collusion was enforced despite people's huge opposition. It was a total denial and betrayal of the victims' demand for a real apology for 25 years. It is further a step to strengthen the military alliance among the ROK, US, and Japan. Since that collusion, some people in Gangjeong have been doing a 'girl statute' performance every Wednesday in solidarity with the victims and all the women who have been victims of war crimes. The girl statue made by an artist couple more than a decade ago is for the remembrance of victims of whom most were in their teens when they were forced to serve the Japanese military. The performance came from the political situation in which the statute is itself at risk of demolition by the collusion. The performance is for the recovery of justice for all the victims of war crimes beyond our national borders, as well. It is told that the numbers of Vietnam civilian victims killed by the South Korean military were more than 8,000 during the Vietnam War. 2016 is the 50th year since the South Korean military massacre in Vietnam. The South Korean government has not yet apologized for the massacre. It has been rather the fellow victims, the former 'comfort women' who have joined in making apologies and supporting the victims of the South Korean military's war crimes in Vietnam.



Image by Grace/ Monodrama: "Zainichi Vital Check", Japanese-Korean theater at Gangjeong Peace Center on Dec. 12



Photo by Oum Mun-hee/ The third annual memorial for the Nanjing Massacre at Alddreu Airfield in Daejeong, Jeju brought together people from Daejeong, Gangjeong, Seongsan, Okinawa, and Taiwan to remember the victims and to call for the prevention of future wars.

Seeing Nanjing from Alddreu

By Curry

December 13, 2016 marked the 79th anniversary of the 1937 Nanjing Massacre. War planes flying from Alddreu Airfield in Daejeong, Jeju played a significant role in bombing Nanjing and enabling the horrific slaughter of civilians by the invading Japanese troops. The massacre was not only horrifying because of the large scale killing of an estimated 300,000 people, mostly civilians, but also because of the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war. This memorial hosted by People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island and Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace of the Sea was the third annual memorial for the Nanjing Massacre to be held at Alddreu Airfield. It is a site to remember both the perpetrators of war and the victims. Jeju land was used to cause suffering in Nanjing, and it could be used again in future wars. This memorial service serves to reveal the terrible potential that is hidden in all the current military fortifications. In 1988, the Korean government proposed to re-open Alddreu Airfield, but the local people rose up in opposition and defeated the proposed base plans. Alddreu is a symbolic location for advocating the demilitarization of Jeju. This year the memorial event was advertised on several Jeju news sites and reported by multiple major national news agencies. About 70 attended the program which included poetry, songs, lighting incense and bowing in respect for the victims, tying ribbons with wishes for peace on a tree, and speeches by representatives from the Daejeong Women Farmers Association and the Seongsan Jeju Second Airport Opposition Committee as well as from Gangjeong. After the memorial service, many of the participants ate dinner together and had a discussion time. Next year will be the 80th anniversary, and the organizers hope that even more people will be able to attend.

International Solidarity



Image by PSPD/ On Dec. 24, civic groups in Seoul made a performance, protested 'Stop bombing Syria,' and called for peace in Syria. They also urged the South Korean government to acknowledge the status of Syrian refugees in Korea.

M and Flags

Since last October, the banners and flags which contain protesting messages against the naval base have been continuously removed from the entry road to the naval base by the security guards. One activist M hangs up the banners and the security guys remove them. And then M hangs them up again repeatedly.

Q. Why do you keep hanging up the banners?

A. In the beginning, I wanted the protesting banners to stay always in that place. However, experiencing

the banners continuously being removed, I think this situation is a microcosm of the whole structure. It has also become a resisting action. The navy removed the banners and set up with concrete a billboard reading "Civilian-Military Complex Tour Beauty Port".

Also, I think to share the symbolism of banners, more people gathering under the banner is better. But naturally, whenever I try to hang the banners, workers from the naval base gather under the banners.

From the beginning, I thought this activity would not

last long. But now, sometimes I feel I am caught, so I started to think whether I should keep doing this or change my activities.

Q. If you choose to stop hanging back the banners, why would it be?

A. If it becomes like that, and the banners are no longer hung up, it means I give up, doesn't it?

I told M in the end of the interview that if the banners are no longer hung up, it is not because he gave up but because the navy keeps removing them.

Grandmother's 800 Dollars

By Peaceberry

Last night, one of my neighbors, a grandmother who is over 70 years old, came over to my house to give an envelope with 800 dollars (1 million won) in it. She attends the daily mass almost every day. She is also one of residents who was fined 1600 dollars for unlawful interference with the police.

One day, she was moved away from the entrance to the construction site during mass as usual. She acted in resistance to a policewomen's harsh action but the court's decision was in favor of the police. Although she didn't beat a policewoman nor act on purpose, she was sentenced with 1600 dollars in fines. The amount of money she handed me is one fifth of her income from harvesting tangerines this year. This year, the harvest wasn't as good as last year but she wanted to do something for helping to pay the fines of other activists. If her family and friends were okay with no worries, she wanted to go to jail rather than pay her fine. The money, 1600 dollars, is the fruition of her tangerine farming and at the same time a symbol of inequality. In Gangjeong life, the more we endure, the more we are oppressed by getting arrested and being fined. But nowadays in Korean society, the powerful- like president Park, the ruling party and the corporations such as Samsung are the real criminals. They bribe, cheat, tell lies and cause harm to the people. They spend millions of dollars like small change in their pocket. But they are treated too generously by the ruling classes. I feel sickened by their audacity. A human being who doesn't feel shame is inhuman. A society that doesn't know how to feel shame is an inhuman society.



Photo by Choi Hye-young / Quaker Grandpa Oh Chul-Geun's continuing "3 steps 1 bow" action reached 888 days on December 16th, 2016. As usual, his clothes have the words "Each step is an expression for Life and Peace."

Two members of Gangjeong community arrested in December

By Grace

Gangjeong community welcomed the last month of 2016, anticipating the usual busy schedules preparing for the end of the year. What they hadn't expected were the consecutive arrests of community members. On December 5, one of the activists, M, was arrested and taken by force to Jeju Eastern Police Station from the naval base gate, while he was preparing for the daily protest. The arrest was on the charges of defying the police summons for investigation, as the police had accused him for the crime of insult over a verbal dispute in March. A well-known villager, Kim Miryang was arrested at her work place on December 13 on the same charges that she hadn't responded to the summons. In November she and the naval base guard quarreled over the issue of installing flags near the naval base, which escalated into a legal dispute. In both cases they weren't let out from jail for 48 hours, as they used the right of silence. These arrests were quite shocking for the community, for one could never get familiar with such a situation, but also because of the severity of the arrests over such minor charges. It was evident once again that the community is still a target for constant abuse by the police authority.

Magaji containers

By Curry

In July Magaji Housing Cooperative made four container houses and two other tiny houses with the help of volunteers, but was unable to find land for them near Gangjeong for almost five months. Thankfully, through connections in the Catholic Farmers Movement, Magaji was able to move the new houses to a new place on the mountain above Gangjeong on Dec. 15. Another container house was also moved from Gangjeong and a new bathroom was constructed, and thus a new village appeared on the mountainside within a few days. These new houses are a short driving distance from Gangjeong and will be used for housing activists and visiting groups as rent prices in Gangjeong are increasing and affordable housing is decreasing due to the navy base.

Stop SLAPPs!

Dec. 10 was the International Human Rights Day. During the last 10 years, the situation of human rights in South Korea has been greatly deteriorated under two corporate-friendly conservative governments. The Amnesty International 2015/2016 report on human rights in South Korea points out 'the authorities' continuous restriction on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.'

On Dec. 15, there was a talk meeting in the National Assembly. The title of discussion was 'What are the problems of the government damage lawsuits against citizens?'. It was a meeting organized by three members of the legislative judicial committee of the National Assembly and civic groups including the Gangjeong Village Association who have been targeted by such lawsuits. It was discussed that, for the last 10 years, the damage costs demanded by the government against citizens who exercised the rights to rally and protest guaranteed by the Constitution have reached near 6 million USD including 3 million for Gangjeong protestors against the Jeju navy base. In the discussion, one of the major points was the problem of the SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) exercised by governments with the purpose of blocking citizens' voices in advance. The participants of the meeting agreed together on the necessity of legislation to prevent such government exercise against citizens. From Gangjeong, three representatives including ex-mayor Kang Dong-kyun joined the meeting.



Photo by Hansalim Jeju/ On December 16, 2016 Gangjeong people prepared a community celebration with love messages sent from the whole country and even overseas for our Grandpa- Fr. Mun's 50th ordination anniversary.



Image by Curry/ From Monday to Saturday, 6 days a week a small group gathers in front of the navy base at 7 AM to do 100 Bows for Life and Peace. In the winter, they start in the darkness and pray for peace as the sun rises each morning.



Image by Grace/ Kimchi making at Samgeori community cafeteria on Dec. 11.

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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We commend the long endurance and commitment to peace of the American Indians and Water Protectors and celebrate the victory at Standing Rock against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under Lake Oahe.

**No more killings in Syria.
Peace for Syria.**

Byeopssi School Graduation

By Park Hyun-sung

Byeopssi school is a democratic school. Students from the 1st year of elementary school to the 2nd year of middle school go to school in Gwangmyeong, Gyeonggi-do, and in the 3rd and final year of middle school they live in Jeju for 1 year. In Jeju, we cooked and earned money through part time jobs ourselves.

Along with other friends I stayed an extra year in Jeju, and lived together with the next year of younger students. In 2016 we built houses, performed plays, did farming... and we met many people.

On December 17, the middle school 3rd year Byeopssi school students had a graduation ceremony in Jeju. But this ceremony was different from other public school graduation ceremonies. We gave thanks to the people who support our life in Jeju and presented about our individual growth. We performed a play, telling our story beginning when we arrived in Jeju. We acted out how we got to know Jeju through learning about the 4.3 incident and the story of Gangjeong. We visited Gangjeong many times in 2016, so several Gangjeong activists attended the graduation.

After graduation, Byeopssi students were invited by our friend Naomi to visit Hawaii and to meet anti-base activists there, too. After having a graduation in Gwangmyeong, the students will all go different ways, to live again in Jeju, to go to school in Seoul, etc. But in 2017, Byeopssi school will start again with new students in Jeju.



Image by Grace/ On December 7 the screening of the film "The Memory of the 25th Hour" took place at the Peace Center. The director, Sungeun Kim, (aka. Grace) has lived and documented the everyday of the activists and villagers in Gangjeong since 2013. The film recounts the 10 year long history of the anti-naval base movement evolving around the memories of the day when the protestors faced the massive police crackdown at the new military housing construction site in 2015.

