

# GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

April/  
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Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

Published by Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea



## No to the 1st US Warship after 10 Years of Struggle

Photos by Pang Eunmi and Will Griffin

“We will not stop our fight until we recover the Gureombi Rock coast!” May 18th hit the 10th year of Gangjeong villagers’ struggle against the Jeju navy base project. It was on May 18, 2007 when the Gangeong villagers declared the formation of the anti-naval base committee, faced upon the navy and the then governor’s deceptive plot to build the base in the village, just three weeks before, on April 26. On Aug. 20, 2007, more than 70% of the village gathered in the village hall and passed the resolution against the base project with more than 94% voting no. Still, the South Korean government has never acknowledged the legitimate vote on Aug. 20th and rushed to build the base to the benefit of the military and big corporations like Samsung.

The last 10 years are of people’s memorable fights to such injustice and state violence. the People’s ‘no naval base’ yellow flags have been never been put down despite arrests, imprisonments, fines, lawsuits, and deportations (internationals). Just one day before the base construction completion last year, the village declared itself a ‘Life and Peace and Culture Village’.

March 25th, this year, the 1st United States warship called the USS Stethem visited the Jeju navy base under the purpose of the so called friendly exchange. The USS Stethem had just finished the ROK-US annual Key Resolve war exercise in which the THAAD deployment in the main land of Korea was assumed as a premise for the whole scenario. “All trust is lost in the words spoken during the Jeju navy

base construction that ‘the base would be a pure South Korean base which US military would not use,’ the village stated.

One activist wrote, “There were many police who were protecting the US military from our protests. I wanted to enter under the bus where the US soldiers were sitting so that they couldn't t pass us.” It was 69 years ago that the Islanders saw a US war ship on the Jeju Sea to suppress their uprising against the US Army government and South Korean puppet government then. The new South Korean President who was elected this May, as a culminated result of months of candle light protests, should apologize to Gangjeong for state violence on it. The Jeju navy base should be out!

## The United States should not pressure THAAD deployment!

Excerpt from the Anti-THAAD groups’ Statement.

On April 26, the United States government committed ‘the nail housing of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense),’ by illegally moving the THAAD equipment into the former Lotte golf course in Soseong-ri, Seongju, North Gyungsang province of main land Korea, while thoroughly ignoring the public opinions by the majority of Koreans who claim that ‘it should be the new President who decides the matter on the THAAD deployment.’ It is a very immoral and shameful deed intended to blockade Korean people’s rights to decide on the matter of THAAD deployment at their own free will. Furthermore, even though the new Moon Jae-in government was launched as a result of the May 9th election, the United States is showing a unilateral and arrogant attitude to coerce the THAAD deployment. Asserting that it is the decision by the ROK-US alliance and to demand South Korea pay the deployment costs reaching to 1 billion USD. We sternly denounce the brutal behavior of the United States government who enforce the THAAD deployment to the infringement of our sovereign right. The United States should declare the stop on the illegal THAAD deployment and remove all the THAAD equipment moved in, right now. The United States should declare the stop on the illegal THAAD deployment and remove all the THAAD equipment right now. The Moon Jae-in government should clearly demand that the United States government immediately stop the THAAD deployment, which is the worst-deep rooted evil of the ousted Park Guen-hye government, it is the only way to save our sovereignty and peace.



The next day when the US military rushed to move the THAAD radar and two mobile launchers to the deployment site in Soseong-ri, Seongju on April 26, two Won Buddhism reverends started hunger strike in Seoul in opposition to THAAD and carried out it for 17 days. In solidarity with the two, 16 people in Gangjeong carried out relay hunger strike for 14 days. While people of Gangjeong visit Soseong-ri, a grandmother there holds a solidarity sign for Gangjeong. Photos by Lee Tae-ho, Sung-hee, Curry, and Shin Kyung-joon from Ohmynews.

## Resisting THAAD in the United States

The Task Force to Stop THAAD in Korea and Militarism in Asia and the Pacific organized a speaking tour in the US from April 4 to 17 featuring Reverend Sounghey Kim, co-chair of the Seongju Struggle Committee to Stop THAAD Deployment. She spoke about her participation in the daily candlelight protests since July, 2016. Among the speaking tour stops was the Global Network annual conference in Huntsville, Alabama on April 8, which also featured Hyun Lee, a member of the Solidarity Committee for Democracy and Peace in Korea, who presented on the historical context of U.S militarism in the Asia Pacific region and the geopolitical implications for the THAAD deployment.

I was happy to promote the DC tour stops on April 15 and 17, and to accompany members of Dorothy Day Catholic Worker and People's Democracy Party, Korea in paying visits to the Pentagon and White House to raise the issue of the illegal deployment of THAAD in Korea. The efforts by all the members of the 'Task Force' coalition have proven very influential and have helped foster greater solidarity between anti-war/peace movements in the United States and South Korea.

At an international panel entitled 'Global Impact of U.S Militarism' during Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington DC on April 21-24, I gave a talk about the ten year struggle against the naval base and the daily struggle of the residents of Seongju, Gimcheon and So-seong-ri in resisting the illegal deployment of THAAD. I was anxious to lift up the valiant struggle of the Won Buddhism community in their front line efforts to protect their sacred ground in Seongju, and the interfaith solidarity provided by Christian activists in helping to block vehicles from crossing Jinbat Bridge to the deployment site.

## Vietnam Pieta Statue placed in Gangjeong

By Curry

Outside the St. Francis Peace Center in Gangjeong, there is a new statue of a mother holding a baby. "Pieta" usually refers to statues of Mary holding the body of Jesus, but this mother is Vietnamese, and her child is an infant. Sculptors Kim Seo-gyeong and Kim Un-seong were moved to make this memorial when they travelled to Vietnam and learned of the massacres of civilians by Korean soldiers, including many infants who had not even been named. The same couple also created the girl statue that represents the so-called 'comfort women' and their demand for recognition outside the Japanese Embassy in Seoul and other places. Alongside the girl statue in Jeju City on April 24, they shared about the connections between these two pieces of art, and how not only Japan but also Korea must apologize to the victims of their war crimes. On the 25th, Dr. Gu Soo-jeong and journalist Go Gyoung-tae shared about their first visit in 1999 to the Vietnamese villages where Korean troops committed massacres. Since that time, through writings and learning tours, they have led the efforts to gain recognition in Korea for the atrocities committed by Koreans in the Vietnam war. At the Vietnam Pieta statue's unveiling ceremony on April 26, Bishop Peter Kang U-il declared that "the Vietnam Pieta embraces all the precious lives lost through war and sings a lullaby of peace. That alone is far from enough as a message of apology from us, but we shall take the Vietnam Pieta as a start" (trans. Huh Ho-jun). Jino Moon and Ga-young Kim sang "Đoàn Nghĩa's Spring," which is based on a poem by Kim Kyeong-hoon and tells the story of Đoàn Nghĩa, who survived the massacre at Bình Hòa but lost his eyesight. He longs to see his mother who saved his life, but lost her own. Beside the Vietnam Pieta are two poems, by Vietnamese and Korean authors: "Creating a world where the marks of hatred between South Korea and Vietnam disappear / and only love remains / is my task and yours now!" (by Thanh Thao, trans. Huh Ho-jun)

"Remembering my barbarism, remembering / Here / Vietnam's last lullaby meets Korea's lullaby / Oh East Asian sound of waves, the sound of my waves and yours" (by Ko Un, trans. Huh Ho-jun)



Representatives of the Korea Vietnam Peace Foundation, speakers, sculptors, poets and guests posed with the Vietnam Pieta statue after the opening ceremony. Photo by Cho Woohae



After attending a similar event in Seoul, conscientious objector (to reserves service) Lee Sang recruited friends in Gangjeong to bike from the navy base to the local court-house and back to raise awareness for International Conscientious Objectors' Day on May 15. Photo by Jo Ah-hae.

## The Navy's damage lawsuit and the new President Moon

By Joyakgol

It has been just 10 days since Moon Jae-in became the new president, but already it feels like he has been in office for 10 years because he made many political and social reforms that we couldn't achieve during the 10-year conservative Lee-Park regime. The Korean people are cheering on TV screen where ousted President Park Geun-hye stood trial on corruption, bribery and abusab of power charges. Times have changed for sure. But how about Gangjeong village and Jeju Island? On his presidential campaign trail, then candidate Moon visited Jeju and held a press conference where he explained his plan for Jeju and made promises. Many people from Gangjeong including vice mayor Go Kwon-il went there to see how Moon addressed his promises. We knew that his Democratic Party agreed to scrap the Navy's controversial damage lawsuit brought against the villagers and peace activists. But we wanted to make sure he really meant it. It seemed like he actually meant it when he said he knew very well that Gangjeong village is one of the most important social issues that Jeju is facing and he would do everything to wipe out the tear of Jeju people. We all could feel his wholeheartedness.

Now, we understand it is very easy to drop the Navy's damage lawsuit against Gangjeong since it is not a criminal lawsuit brought by the prosecutor's office, but it is a civil suit made by the administration to financially punish dissidents to set precedents. Once the President Moon makes up his mind and gives an order to the Ministry of Defense, it'll be gone. After all, he is the commander in chief. He also has to order a fact-finding investigation on the whole Jeju naval base project from the get-go whether there were any state violence and illegalities. And if so, the administration should give sincere apologies to the people, which will herald a beginning of healing the 10-year-old wound.

## International Solidarity



Father William 'Bix' Bichsel S.J., who passed away on Feb. 28, 2015 was a strong supporter of the Gangjeong struggle. A memorial containing his ashes was placed next to the Vietnam Pieta statue at the St. Francis Peace Center. Photo by an event participant.

## A Murderous History of Korea (Excerpt)

More than four decades ago I went to lunch with a diplomatic historian who, like me, was going through Korea-related documents at the National Archives in Washington. He happened to remark that he sometimes wondered whether the Korean Demilitarised Zone might be ground zero for the end of the world [...] [I]f American commentators and politicians are ignorant of Korea's history, they ought at least to be aware of their own. US involvement in Korea began towards the end of the Second World War, when State Department planners feared that Soviet soldiers, who were entering the northern part of the peninsula, would bring with them as many as thirty

thousand Korean guerrillas who had been fighting the Japanese in north-east China. They began to consider a full military occupation that would assure America had the strongest voice in postwar Korean affairs. It might be a short occupation or, as a briefing paper put it, it might be one of 'considerable duration'; the main point was that no other power should have a role in Korea such that 'the proportionate strength of the US' would be reduced to 'a point where its effectiveness would be weakened'. Congress and the American people knew nothing about this. Several of the planners were Japanophiles who had never challenged Japan's colonial claims in Korea and now hoped to

reconstruct a peaceable and amenable postwar Japan. They worried that a Soviet occupation of Korea would thwart that goal and harm the postwar security of the Pacific. Following this logic, on the day after Nagasaki was obliterated, John J. McCloy of the War Department asked Dean Rusk and a colleague to go into a spare office and think about how to divide Korea. They chose the 38th parallel, and three weeks later 25,000 American combat troops entered southern Korea to establish a military government. [...]

*For the full article, go to London Review of Books, May 18, 2017.*

## Gangjeong Peace Travel Team "Peace, let's go together."

By Bandi

From March 30th to April 2nd, with the theme "Gangjeong is April 3rd," the 1st Peace Travel event was launched. Participants from Korea, Taiwan and HongKong were diverse not only in languages but ages. The first destination of this event was the April 3rd Peace Park. While walking around places in the April 3rd Peace Park, we had time to learn about the historical background of April 3rd, and seeing how 4-3 traces in people's memories. In front of the 'Biseol' sculpture (Mother holding a 2 year-old baby who was chased and killed by military), the day was drawn to an end by reading a poem to remember the victims of 4-3. On the 2nd day, we visited the "Disappeared Village" and "Keunneolgwe cave" where the local villagers hid in and lived during 4-3. We visited one grandmother who had actually hid in the "Keunneolgwe cave" at that time. It was a chance for us to think about the darkness experienced 69 years ago. On the 3rd day, we visited Songlyeong-igol Uigwi village, where the bodies of the armed resistance group who were killed by repression forces were buried. These sacrificed people of the armed resistance group have been regarded as rioters or communists. Thus, their bodies have been neglected and simply buried in 3 holes until now. With the value of the sanctity of life, the Peace Travel Team set up a monument and led a time of comfort. From April 3rd, Gangjeong Village, and Sewol Ferry Disaster, it was a needed travel journey to memorialize the victims by state violence. In order to remember lost times and reconnect, in order to resist forgetting and isolation, Gangjeong Peace Travel Team designed this travel program.

Starting from this 1st Peace Travel event, a seminar and field visiting of an April 3rd sight are planned to be held once a month. From now on, we would like to introduce the Gangjeong Struggle connected with the April 3rd incident in a more systematical way. The Gangjeong Peace Travel Team is formed by Gangjeong peace activists and is intending to tell the stories of Historical Suffering of Jeju and the Gangjeong Struggle for Peace.

## Update on Gangjeong-related movies

"The Memory of the 25th hour (2016)" made by Kim Sungeun, an artist and Gangjeong peace keeper, was selected for the Media Library 2017 | Visions du Réel, Festival international de cinéma Nyon from April 21 to 29. A 7min animated film titled "Blind Film" by Oh Jae-hyung a young artist, is about the people's struggle including Gangjeong struggle. It was chosen for 7 days of screen in the Cannes Film Festival in May. Also, John Pilger's film "The Coming War on China," which includes the story of Gangjeong struggle, was broadcasted on SBS Australia nationwide on April 16.

## Trial Updates



▶ On March 28th, the Jeju higher court made a court decision of 7 million fines to Kang Dong-kyun, ex-Gangjeong village mayor, which was same with the 1st court decision. The prosecutors have accused him for the two charges of violation of the act on collection and use of donations and interruption on general traffic.

▶ During the highest period of struggle from 2011 to 2012, Kang raised the fund for struggle. The prosecutors indicted him saying that he did not follow the regulations of the act. Such prosecutor move was considered by people then as a part of financial oppression on the protestors. And his lawyers filed a suit claiming that the act itself has clauses that violate the Constitution but their claim was not accepted. The court judge acknowledged though that the funds were not used for his personal interest. Otherwise, the prosecutors accused that he was responsible for the order to stop the carrying of gunpowder for the explosion of the Gureombi Rock in the year of 2012.

## Making a Demilitarized Island with No Air Base

By Curry

It has been just 10 days since Moon Jae-in became the new president, but already it feels like he has been in office for 10 years because he made many political and social reforms that we couldn't achieve during the 10-year conservative Lee-Park regime. The Korean people are cheering watching the TV screen where ousted President Park Geun-hye stood trial on corruption, bribery and abuse of power charges. Times have changed for sure. But how about Gangjeong village and Jeju Island? On his presidential campaign trail, then candidate Moon visited Jeju and held a press conference where he explained his plan for Jeju and made promises. Many people from Gangjeong including vice mayor Go Kwon-il went there to see how Moon addressed his promises. We knew that his Democratic Party agreed to scrap the Navy's controversial damage lawsuit brought against the villagers and peace activists. But we wanted to make sure he really meant it. It seemed like he actually meant it when he said he knew very well that Gangjeong village is one of the most important social issues that Jeju is facing and he would do everything to wipe out the tear of Jeju people. We all could feel his wholeheartedness.

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On May 18, about 20 Gangjeong people made a solidarity visit to the Seongsan residents' candle light vigil against the 2nd Jeju airport project. Photo by Oum Mun-hee



Celebrating May 24 International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, the people in Gangjeong danced together, remembered the UN SCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, and made a peace house out of boxes to express our need to convert the war money for human life. Photo by Pang Eunmi.

# Remembering the Sewol ferry tragedy and Gwangju uprising

April 16th hits the 3rd remembrance year of the Sewol ferry tragedy in which 304 people, mostly young high school students, were sacrificed. The ferry heading to Jeju port sunk in the sea just hours before its destination, with strangely no active rescue work by the ex-Park Geun-hye government. The 3rd remembrance year culture events in Jeju were held in the Topdong beach park in Jeju City, with hundreds of people joining it with yellow flowers in remembrance of the victims. It was only March 23rd, of this year, that the sunken ferry finally showed its appearance on the surface of the sea water. After a long, difficult, and problematic salvage works due to 'unreliable state system, chronic cozy relations between politics and business, and contaminated social practice' in the words of Jeju Bishop Kang U-il. It had already been exposed last year that there were around 400 ton iron bars heading to the Jeju navy base construction site, which could have contributed to the overweight of the ferry. The ship was finally moved alongside of the port on March 31st and then moved onto the land on April 9th for the investigation of the ship body and search for the nine missing people. To be co-incident, March 31st was the day when ex-President Park Geun-hye got an arrest warrant from the court for 18 charges including the charge of bribery from Samsung Inc. etc. Also, May 18th, hit the 37th remembrance year of the Gwangju uprising in which about 2,000 citizens in Gwangju were massacred by the US-backed military government. The tragedy of the Sewol ferry stands on the extension of a painful Korean modern history of 37 years, in the sense that both events occurred as state violence against people. The bereaved family members of the Sewol ferry victims and their supporters have been fighting for true examination of the incident despite brutal government oppression and manipulation of information. The new Moon Jae-in government is tasked to hold high, a beacon of justice, the gift from the people's massive candle light protests for months garnered largely from the Sewol ferry tragedy.



On May 4, our dear friend Mr. Kwon Sool-Yong (1940-2017) passed away from cancer. He helped his group 'Life and Peace Fellowship' to be one of the first groups to stay in Gangjeong to join the protest against the Jeju naval base project. Kwon is also one of the three main financial contributors for Peace Center building in the Gangjeong village. We miss him dearly, his kind and disarming smile, his love of planting seeds around the base, and his swimming in the cold sea water, shouting, 'no naval base.' Mr. Kwon Sool-Yong, presenté (Photo by Cho Sung-bong)

## How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to close the Jeju base 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](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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"Stations of the Cross" is one of the annual Holy Week events hosted by the Catholics in Gangjeong. On Good Friday, participants walked from the village hall tent to the Metpuri coast, to Samgeori kitchen, to the port, to the St. Francis Peace Center, recounting Jesus' journey to the cross as well as the history of the Gangjeong struggle against the navy base. Photo by Pang Eunmi.



Each year Mr. Oh Cheol-Geun spends the cooler months in Gangjeong faithfully praying for peace as he does "Three Steps and One Bow" up and down the road in front of the navy base each morning. He completed 1000 days in Gangjeong before heading back to the mainland, but that includes Sundays when he rested and did not bow. He promised to come back again next year to complete 1000 days of "Three Steps and One Bow." Photo by aRiverDrop.

## Opening Ceremony for Gangjeong Gallery & Archive, Salon De Moon

By Hosu

In Gangjeong, there are many meaningful and memorable places. Recently we could add one more new place to the list. It is the Gangjeong Gallery & Archive called Salon De Moon or Gallery Moon. Gangjeong activist(also resident), Moonhee just opened it in the center of the village. In order to celebrate it, we, villagers and her friends got together on sunny day in the late afternoon of April 23rd. The celebration was held in collaboration with the 10th Gangjeong Poetry Night. The director, Moonhee said she would like to hold various exhibitions and events at her gallery throughout the year. And she is especially interested in bringing the memories of Jeju April 3rd Massacre, Gangjeong struggle and those incidents committed by the state into her new gallery. Those incidents also influenced her to decide to live in Gangjeong Village. She also expressed her hope that Gallery Moon can be an archive of memories of those who want to remember rather than forgetting. On celebration day, the gallery was full of people. They brought food, gifts, excitement and blessings. Friends who have special connections with Moonhee performed music and read poems related to the theme of Gangjeong Poetry Night which was a door or the moon. We hope Gallery Moon can be a door to peace for the moon to shine on people who work for peace like its name means in Korean. Please come to Gangjeong to visit Gallery Moon!

**The 2017 Jeju March for Life and Peace will take place from July 31 to August 5. Come and join us!**

