

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

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Monthly news on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base project

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Concern about 'A Main Military Foothold for the US in the Region'

Photos by Song Dong-hyo, Han Jin-oh, Curry,
Oum Mun-hee, and Pang Eunmi (Clockwise)
Article by Oh Doo-hee, Peace Nomad

A US Aegis destroyer "Dewey" and two Canadian ships "Winnipeg" and "Ottawa" arrived at the Jeju navy base on June 20 and 22. They came for a joint maritime exercise by the three nations of South Korea (ROK), United States and Canada in the Jeju seas from June 23 to 25. It is the second time for a US warship to have made entry to the Jeju navy base following the first visit on March 25.

The pan-island committee against the Jeju navy base expressed concern that the base is becoming the epicenter of military conflict in northeast Asia, saying that "the military ships' entry into the base for the purpose of multi-national combined exercise is making a fait accompli that the base is gradually becoming a main foothold for the United States."

Through this exercise, a change of power in the big triangle of the East China Sea (Sasebo in Japan, Henoko in Okinawa, and Gangjeong in Jeju) with which the United States intends to contain the movement of China, is concretely appearing to shift toward the Jeju navy base, the north tip of the triangle. To acquire legal support for this, Vincent Brooks, commander of the United States Forces of Korea, has strongly demanded the ROK Ministry of National Defense to sign a SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) between South Korea and nine nations under the UN Command including Australia, Canada and United States. Further more, the Canadian military ships' entry into the base, when there is not a SOFA yet with Canada, has brought about legal issues such as the

matters of immigration and environmental pollution, which have been an issue of public concern. Enormous tons of trash including food and human waste, sewage and used oil were also illegally released from the ships.

The people pointed out that "the Jeju navy base has become a trash site for the foreign military ships" and clearly stated their refusal especially to the foreign military ships. Amid heavy rain, there were people's protest activities to save Jeju as the Life and Peace Island, such as picketing, kayaking, rallying, and monitoring, etc. As a result, people could reveal the matters of environmental pollution caused from the foreign military ships, which are being ignored by the authorities of the ROK navy and the Jeju Island government.

Korean citizens surround the US embassy

Park Seok-Jin, Civilian
Military Watch

Late June 2017 the Korea-US summit conference took place in Washington DC for the first time since Moon Jae-In was elected as the Korean president. The official agendas at the conference didn't include the issue of deploying THAAD missile defense (MD) by the US armed forces in Korea. However, at the meeting with the US senators prior to the conference Moon mentioned that the ongoing environmental impact assessment and other procedures related to THAAD are being conducted with no intention to revoke the previous agreement between S. Korea and the US. His attitude seemed directed to accommodating their needs and almost asking for their consent. On the other hand, the progressive civil and social organisations such as National Movement Against THAAD Deployment in Korea called for the instant withdrawal of THAAD by protesting as the date of the Korea-US summit was approaching. In protest they surrounded the US embassy with a human chain, which happened for the first time. On July 4th, however, North Korea fired an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, as South Korea and the US conducted a joint ballistic missile drill to counter the action of North Korea. This has further intensified the military tension in the peninsula and cause a rise in the public consent for the deployment of the THAAD MD. The crisis in the national security caused by the militaristic actions of both parties (N.Korea and S.Korea-US) in fact facilitates the deployment of the weapon. THAAD is a futile defense system in the already heavily militarised Korea but only further threatens the peace of North East Asia, as its deployment meets huge resistance among neighbouring countries such as China and Russia. I strongly insist the withdrawal of the THAAD MD as well as the termination of hostile militaristic actions among North Korea and South Korea-United States.



On June 14, three delegates from the Seongju Women's Committee against THAAD, led by Chairwoman Lee Hye-kyung, visited Gangjeong for the screening of a movie 'The Blue Butterfly Effect (Dir. by Park Moon-Chil, 2017)' on the struggle against THAAD, especially by the women of Seongju. In other events, marathoner Kang Myongku ran a peace marathon from June 6 to 24 from Gangjeong to Seongju that was against THAAD and for making a peace agreement. The people in Gangjeong are joining the anti-THAAD protest nationwide. Photo by Gangjeong Village Story.

My 3 day visit to Jeju Island

I was invited by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to visit South Korea for 2 weeks of intense, interesting times and experiences. Included in the program was a visit to Jeju Island. I went with the Jeju Peace tour team – five students accompanied by representatives of PDP.

During the three days we were on Jeju island I met many wonderful and inspiring people. I learnt about the history of continual occupation by foreign forces. I often felt angry inside but was always inspired by the steadfast and determination of the people.

We visited the impressive April 3rd Peace Park where the truth about the history of Jeju Island and Korea is not always truthfully expressed. Every day I spoke at meetings, demonstrations and gave several press interviews. The upside down US flag caused considerable interest!

I was thrilled to meet Sung-Hee (last in Seoul – 2009) who organized a very interesting day on 7 July – visiting Gangjeong village and the Peace Centre where the history of the people's resistance against the construction of the Jeju naval base hangs on panels suspended from the ceiling.

I met the amazing Father Mun and joined in the daily Mass. We took part in the daily demonstrations at the main gate to the now completed and vast Jeju naval base (A ROK base but serves to US military strategy). I met with many of the local residents and students in the wonderful Library. I was inspired by so many people.

Some Impressions

1. The South Korean police are clearly dominated by the US forces and their Agencies – scratch the surface and it becomes obvious.
2. The destruction of a large area of the coast off Gangjeong village is criminal. The people have suffered so much.
3. The amazing protest in Gangjeong village continues.
4. There are many similarities to the situation in the UK. However South Korea is more clearly dominated by the US military and American corporations. And the use and abuse of the National Security Act (1948).
5. The different groups I met share common themes – to rid the country of (US) bases, the reunification with North Korea and much more.
6. Everywhere I went I was greeted by generous and beautiful people. I was privileged and honoured to be with you - thank you. to everyone.

(Lindis Percy is a co-founder of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB), UK)



Lindis Percy, a UK peace activist and a Japanese theater group (led by Sakurai Daizo) who visited the village respectively on July 7 and July 7-9 joined the daily human chain in front of the Jeju navy base. Photo by Kim Jin-soo.



On June 9, Bruce Cumings, author of 'Origins of the Korean War' and distinguished historian visited Gangjeong on his visit to Jeju, Korea as the recipient of the 2nd year April 3rd Peace Award. His first visit to Gangjeong was in 2015. Meeting with people in Gangjeong, he expressed his congratulations to the people of Gangjeong for their persistent 10 years' struggle against the Jeju navy base. Photo by Lee Da-young, Media Jeju.

Song of Sanrizuka's elderly activist

By By Kang Won-bo
Seongsan Committee against the 2nd Jeju Airport project

On the 9th of July, I visited Sanrizuka Village in Chiba Prefecture, Japan to attend a rally against the Narita Airport

The motivation which led me to join, was to learn about the living history of this struggle against unjust state powers for the past 50 years since 1966 and about where the driving force of the struggle comes from.

Koyama, currently in his mid-70's who joined the struggle in his early 20's as a student, came to greet me. He also kindly guided me to look around the sites and I was able to have many conversations with other people.

As I participated in the rally, they and I became one. The fact that what made them begin their struggle is exactly the same as our situation makes me sad.

I feel shameful before them, seeing such things happen in front of my eyes, such as unilateral site selection without prior consultation, instigation to cause conflicts among residents and compensation as bait to maneuver division beyond time and space. I have seen true activist figures in two people, Sto and Hagiwara, who were farming on the airport site under surveillance until now. I could see pride and courage in them and feel hidden hostility behind.

When I asked the question, 'what have you gotten from the long time struggle?' Everyone answered with one voice, that they have protected their rights fighting against unjust state power. The current Narita Airport is an unfinished airport and the oppression on them is getting severe.

As I saw them, a line from a song came to me.

'You are the sons of proud activists. What do you wish for? That it would be enough if I could be buried in this earth!'

The Women's Struggle is Winning!

By Choi Hye-young

International Women's Network Against US Militarism Okinawa Conference 2017

From June 22nd to 26th the International Women's Network Against Militarism held their 9th conference in Okinawa. The women's peace network was founded after three US soldiers raped an elementary school girl in September 1995. As the case was revealed, angry Okinawan women went to the US mainland and toured the whole country telling about the injustice of the US-Japan Security Treaty. The US is in possession of over 1000 military bases in 135 countries around the world, with about 200,000 soldiers dispatched, including 28,500 stationed in Korea and 39,000 stationed in Japan. Along with Okinawa and the US, women from Korea, Hawaii, Guam, the Philippines and Puerto Rico who are suffering from and resisting against US bases have been meeting together for 20 years now. During the conference I shared Gangjeong village activist and movie director Sungeun Kim's film "Memory of the 25th Hour" and introduced the situation of the village and the activists' steadfast resistance. There were ten participants from Korea: from Durebang camp town women's human rights organization, Sunlit Sisters' Center, Gangjeong peace keepers, World Without War, Women Making Peace, etc. We could feel sisterhood and camaraderie, love and encouragement from one another.

International Solidarity



On June 24 participants in the International Women's Network Against Militarism visited the site of the new base construction at Henoko and joined in solidarity with the sea protest. Photo by Women Making Peace.

Government should drop the SLAPPs!

In South Korea, Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) became serious under the two former conservative governments. It has been normalized as a way for the government to oppress its citizens. Many struggle sites are suffering from this, including Gangjeong village's struggle against the indemnity lawsuit that the government (the navy) has filed demanding around 3 million USD.

In relation to the SLAPP, 29 civic groups held a press conference on June 8th and demanded the new government to drop unjust lawsuits which facilitate

provisional seizures against the people in struggle and protest sites.

The Jeju Island government officially submitted a suggestion letter to the Presidential Blue House demanding the withdrawal of the government lawsuit against Gangjeong village and for absolution and reinstatement. 87 government and civilian groups, regardless of being conservative or progressive, joined to sign on to the letter. President Moon promised the withdrawal of the lawsuit against Gangjeong even before his inauguration.

However, the Gangjeong Village Association, through its statement on June 15th, urged for a truth investigation along with the withdrawal of the lawsuit, pointing out that the Jeju Island government letter missed the following: "Without the concurrent recovery of honor through the efforts of an investigation on the cause, government expression of regret, proper measures and prevention of recurrence, there is no way for the Gangjeong village community to be cured with only withdrawal of the lawsuit, absolution and reinstatement."

Is the 2nd Airport Necessary?

On June 10th, at the Shin-san Village Assembly Hall, The People Making Jeju to be a Demilitarized Peace Island hosted an event titled "Is the 2nd Jeju Airport (Jeju air force base) Necessary?" The event consisted of two sessions; the director of the Jeju Women's Rights Association, Go Myunghee led the first session with two speakers. Prof. Suh Seung gave a talk about the geopolitical situation of North East Asia and Jeju Island. Then the chairperson of the Anti-2nd Airport Committee of Seongsan, Kang Won-bo spoke about the struggle against the 2nd Airport Project.

In the end, the alternative Byeop-ssi School students

performed songs and a donation from Gangjeong activists was handed over to the Anti-2nd Airport Committee of Seongsan. This day happens to mark the 30th year of the June uprising and there was also a silent prayer during the event, which was for the victims who were killed or immolated under the military dictatorship 30 years ago. The lectures were followed by a tour to the house of Mr. Kim Kyung-bae, vice-chairman of the committee, whose house would be put in the middle of a runway if the 2nd Airport is built. I happened to meet a resident of the village during the tour and he feels so resentful to find out that he would lose in one moment the village

which he has been caring for even before electricity and running water came in. He piled up stones to build stone walls and made small paths on his own. After dinner, we had a brief sharing time about the event. We are very grateful to be able to meet people, share one another's stories and think deeply on them through the movement of the The People Making Jeju to be a Demilitarized Peace Island. In addition, we expressed our determination to continue standing in solidarity with the struggle against the 2nd Airport Project in Seong-San.

By Jo Ahae

Lift the Bans

On July 13, Christine Ahn, a Korean-American peace activist and co-founder of Women Cross DMZ was notified of entry prohibition by the South Korean government when she was to fly from the United States. As public criticism of the government increased, the government lifted ban on her entry on July 18. And on July 20, another Korean-American peace activist Juyeon Rhee was also notified that she was banned by the Korean government. The government (especially the National Intelligence Service) should lift the bans- which were mostly imposed by the ousted Park Geun-hye government- against all the international peace activists who are unjustly labeled as threats to 'national security.'

Trial Updates



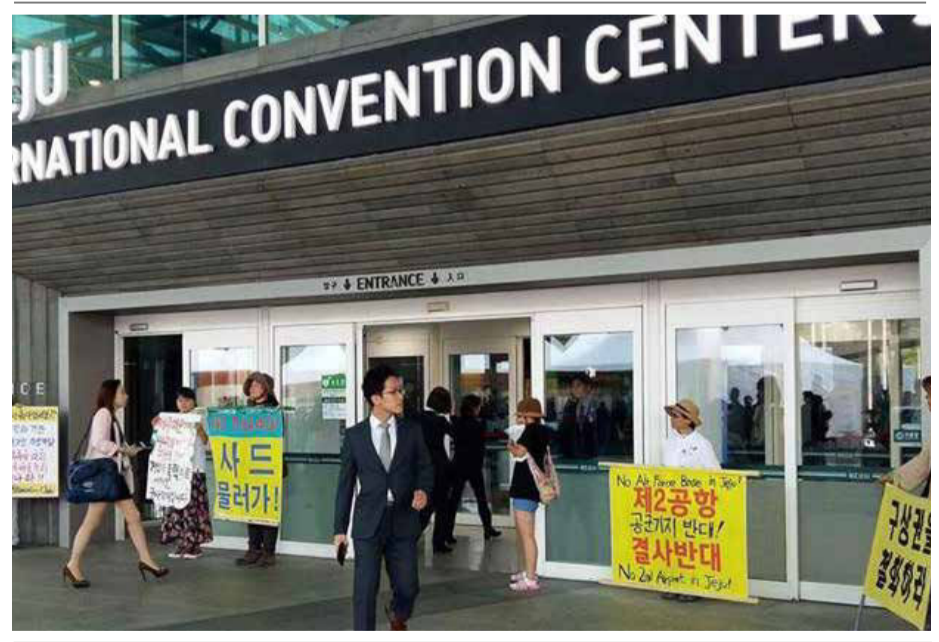
▶ On June 15 and July 11 respectively, the Supreme Court, dismissing prosecutors' appeals, confirmed the lower courts' decisions of 'not-guilty' on some staff of the civic group, 'Solidarity for Peace And Reunification of Korea (SPARK),' including Oh Hye-ran (former secretary of SPARK) and staffs of Incheon and Bucheon branch offices of the SPARK. The National Intelligence Service had attacked the offices of SPARK on February 8, 2012 and prosecutors charged those staffs with 'benefiting & sympathizing with the enemy' and carrying 'enemy-benefiting literatures' under the national security act. At the time, such oppression on SPARK was understood as a part of the oppression on the anti-Jeju navy base struggle as SPARK was one of the leading groups in the struggle. The Supreme Court acknowledged that SPARK has legally stated its claim through its own independent studies and research, far from the prosecutors' assertion that it has pursued the views of North Korea. SPARK "opposes the ROK-US combined war exercises and demands the conclusion of the peace agreement, withdrawal of United States Forces Korea, dismantling of the ROK-US alliance and the deterrence of the ROK-US-Japan trilateral military alliance."

▶ Also, on July 20, the higher court made a decision to fine 5 million KRW against Gangjeong peace activist M for the alleged charges of obstruction of government affairs and violence. The 1st court decision on him for the same charges, in October last year, was 8 month imprisonment suspended with two years. In December 2015, M protested along with other peace keepers against the police and construction company personnel who took a passive response to a traffic accident in which a female activist in her late 50s foot was ran over by a construction vehicle. M and another female peace activist were arrested during their protest. During the arrest, M's finger was fractured and he needed a cast on it for a long time. M and other people claim that the polices' practice on that day was unjust, while M did not wield any violence against the police. Still such claim is ignored by the Court.

Jeju Dolphins in Danger of Offshore Wind Turbine Development

By Hosu, a board member of Hotpinkdophins

As Jeju Special Self-governing Province pushes forward to carry out the offshore wind turbines development plan, civic societies including the environmental organization, Hotpinkdophins demands the Jeju local government and the provincial assembly to cancel the plan immediately. Jeju dolphins (Indo-pacific Bottle Nose Dolphin) have been threatened by the over development on the coast, the construction of Jeju Naval Base and pollution caused by the fish farming industry and excessive tourism. Meanwhile, the local government put an emphasis on their vision, titled 'Carbon Free Island 2030' and the stakeholders including local residents where new wind turbines plan to be installed hang on to the wind power project. The opposition groups express severe concerns about the plan with reasons such as ecological disturbance, insufficient environment impact assessments, and the threat to the habitat of the endangered Jeju Dolphins. The selected place for the new wind power is Young-rak-ri in Dae-jeong County of southeastern of Jeju which is the breeding place of the Jeju Dolphins.



On June 16, people from Gangjeong picketed in front of the Jeju International Convention Center, where President Moon Jae-in dropped by for an international event. On one of the signs, people demanded Moon not to designate Song Young-Moo as the Minister of National Defense. Song, an ex-naval chief of operations (Nov. 2006 to March 2008) was most responsible for the Jeju naval base project in the earlier period of the base construction in Gangjeong. Song, a strong advocate for the defense industry, has been investigated by the National Assembly before his designation for suspicious charges of defense sale corruption during and after his term as the chief of naval operations. Still Moon designated him as the Minister of National Defense on July 11th. According to conservative media, his so called defense reform means modernizing the military system, which includes a focus on the Kill Chain for preemptive strikes. Photo by Jang Young-sik

Living Citizens School

By Curry

Gangjeong Peace School and the Saint Francis Peace Center co-hosted a weekly Monday evening workshop from May 15 to June 26 exploring the topics of communication, democratic decision-making processes, and conflict transformation. Ddalgi and Hosu led a variety of interactive activities for about 15 participants from in and out of Gangjeong, each bringing different experiences in peace education and resisting militarism.

Over the course of eight weeks, the participants practiced sharing with and learning from one another. As a non-native speaker of Korean, I appreciated playing many games that used non-verbal communication and having opportunities to review and reflect on each of the activities. We developed comfort and trust for working together and could practice role plays of conflict situations. Playing the part of the navy in two different role plays made me think about what it would take to convince them to join our side!

“Unending Story” Peace Concert Remembering the Korean War

By Curry

South Korea marks the beginning of the Korean War as June 25, 1950, but though 67 years have passed, the war has not yet ended because a treaty was never signed. Gangjeong Peace School and St. Francis Peace Center hosted a peace concert in Seogwipo City on June 24 to remember the victims and the continued effects of the war. There were musical performances by Seon-gyeong, Cho Sung-II, and a joint performance of the song “What is Peace?” by the Gangjeong Choir and Joyakgol. Byeopssi School performed a skit about war refugees fleeing to Busan. Ddalgi interviewed Shin Jong-won about his role as the leader of the Daechuri village after the farming community was uprooted and forcibly evicted to make way for the expansion of US Camp Humphries in Pyeongtaek. Curry read a selection of four historical documents by American and international women which showed the different ways that they were involved in and affected by the war. From the script of “April of Flowers” author Han Jin-oh read the story of his mother’s life as it was affected by the Jeju 4.3 Uprising and its repression. In 1948 when she was 5 years old, her uncle joined the uprising on the mountain. Her younger siblings died of disease and starvation as displaced people on the coast. Throughout her life, she has continued to endure difficulties that all stem from the ongoing effects of 4.3. Before the Korean War, the division of the peninsula had already led to brutal violence, and after the ceasefire, the division continues to be the excuse for an unending story of oppression, but remembering this past is one way that we refuse to let the story continue un-interrupted.

10 year struggle remembrance

On June 13, in remembrance of the two girls, Shim Hyo-soon and Shin Mi-seon, who were killed by a US armored vehicle in 2002 and the 10 year Gangjeong struggle against the Jeju navy base, people gathered in Jeju city for a candle light vigil organized by Gangjeong Friends. Other remembrance activities included a July 13 talk concert in Samgori community kitchen joined by Fr. Mun Jeong-hyeon and a feature article by the Korean media Hankyoreh.

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 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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For the promotion of 2017 Grand March for Life and Peace, which starts on July 31st, four peace activists volunteered to have a pre march from July 17-25. The four walked the whole Island in a counter-clockwise direction starting in Gangjeong amid the cheers of friends. Hot sunlight and blisters in their soles did not stop them from their audacious march. Photo by Pang Eunmi.

Christian Forum for Reconciliation in Northeast Asia

By Memil

From May 29 to June 3, the yearly Christian Forum for Reconciliation in Northeast Asia took place in Jeju. People from across Asia and other countries came together to discuss how to create peace and reconciliation together. As leaders in the Christian church they also held fellowship and communion together. They visited Gangjeong and the April 3rd Peace Park to learn about the history of oppression and peace movements in Jeju. Bishop Peter Kang U-II shared his story of working in Jeju and his hope for a peaceful future in not only Jeju but all over Asia.



It is for the 1st time that the Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace is changed to “Jeju Grand March for Life and Peace,” reflecting the island people’s current struggle against the remilitarization of Jeju, which goes beyond the completion of the navy base last year. For contact: Jejumarch@daum.net, gangjeongintl@gmail.com. Also, the 4th Peace for the Sea Camp is being held in Ishigaki Island, Okinawa which is threatened by the building of military bases. The camp organizers say that in order to create a Demilitarized Peace Zone in East Asia, we need to strengthen international peace and cultural exchanges.’ For contact: peaceforthesea2017ishigaki@gmail.com

