

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

Bimonthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project
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Since Seongsan resident Kim Kyung-bae started a second hunger strike against the 2nd Jeju airport project on Dec. 19, Jeju citizens have joined his protest in front of the Jeju Provincial Government Hall and in candle light protests calling for the resignation of Governor Won Hee-ryong. Yoon Kyung-mi, Oum Mun-hee, and Choi Sung-hee also started indefinite hunger strikes and others carried on relay hunger strikes. Photos by Lee Ki Cheol, Lee Jae-hoon, Kim Suo, Ahn Jae-hong, Song Dong-hyo, Choi Sung-hee.

A New Year starts with the struggle against the 2nd Jeju Airport

Article by Choi Sung-hee



If the 2nd Jeju airport is enforced, 22 oreums, 46 spring waters, 42 species of birds, 20 shrines, 11 lava caves and a vast field are threatened. The image by artist GreenC is a rendering of 10 oreums that will be cut. An oreum is a parasitic cone, produced by the volcanic eruption of Jeju Island a long time ago. There are more than 360 oreums in Jeju. Photo by Lee Ki Cheol

But on that very night, those tents were built again and the Youth Committee of the People's Party set up its tent next to them. Now more than one month after Dec. 19th, the street across from the Jeju Island government was transformed into a small village of 10 tents from various civic groups.

The occupation of the entrance to the provincial hall was not pre-planned, but citizens who initiated the occupation did not want to leave the spot when they heard that the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport had begun service works for the basic plan of the 2nd Jeju Airport since Dec. 28th, without public knowledge. Many flaws have been exposed in the feasibility study during the last three months' reexamination. On Jan. 22, the Ministry had a report meeting announcing that launch of service works, without public participation and in the city of Sejong where the Ministry is located. Even though the airport is planned to be built in Jeju, it was obvious for the islanders that Jeju was being shunned again. On Jan. 17th, two women, Yoon Kyung-mi and Oum Mun-hee, started an undefined hunger strike in solidarity with Kim, while youths started a relay fast on Jan 21st. So far, nearly 100 domestic and international citizens including Russell Wray from Veterans for Peace, USA, have joined a solidarity fast. He is fasting one day every week until the end of Yoon and Oum's fast. On Jan. 24, Choi Sung-Hee joined Yoon and Oum's indefinite fast. In fact, many Gangjeong villagers and activists have been active to join the struggle to stop reckless over-development and militarism in Jeju.

The South Korean government announced the 2nd Jeju Airport project in November 10, 2015. Compared to the public poll by Jeju KBS in Dec. 2015 when 71% of islanders were in favor of the project, the latest poll in Dec. 2018 indicates that less than 25% now

Why oppose the 2nd Jeju airport project? The South Korean government plans to build it by 2025 with a budget of more than 4 billion USD. For the residents of five villages of Seongsan, in east Jeju, the project means that they lose their hometowns. But it is more than that. Jeju is already suffering from the illnesses of over-tourism, reckless development, and militarism. It is also quite certain it would be used as an air force base. Jeong Kyeong-doo, currently the Minister of National Defense, was the Air Force chief of staff in 2017, and stated then that the air force is considering to use the 2nd Jeju airport. Jeju already has the navy base in Gangjeong village, which is a South Korean base, but a US nuclear aircraft carrier visited it last year.

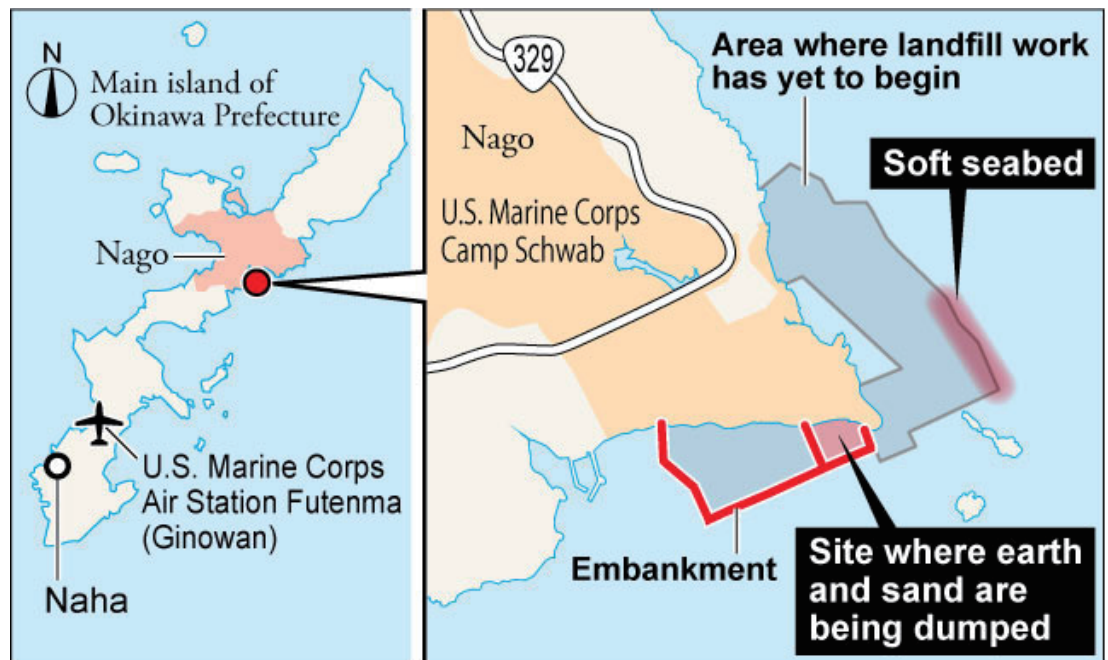
On Dec. 19th 2018, Seongsan resident Kim Kyung-bae initiated an indefinite hunger strike against the 2nd Jeju airport project, setting up a tent across from the provincial government hall. He demanded to stop all the preparations for the 2nd Jeju Airport, pointing out the problems exposed by the review of feasibility study. He also demanded the island governor Won Hee-Ryong to actively work to stop the project. On Jan. 25th he ended 38 days of fasting due to the deterioration in his health. He had already carried out a 1st hunger strike for more than 42 days in the winter of 2017.

On Dec. 19th, he could not even easily set up a small tent as the Jeju government employees repeatedly stopped him. On Jan. 7 the government employees dismantled his tent and the Jeju Green Party tent which had been set up next to Kim's tent 10 days later. It clearly violated human rights, and Kim faced the horrible demolition from inside the tent on the 20th day of his fast. Citizens who had been occupying the stairs at the entrance of the government building since Jan. 3 were also brutally dragged down from the stairs.

Opposition grows against Henoko landfill

By Curry

On Dec. 14 landfill started at Henoko where a new US Marine Corps base is being forcibly built against the will of the Okinawan people. Every day protesters attempt to block the undemocratic and environmentally destructive process on land and sea at both Henoko and at the Ryukyu Cement Pier in Awa where dirt for the landfill is loaded onto boats. Over 200,000 people from around the world signed a petition created by Okinawan-Hawaiian Robert Kajiwarra calling on Trump to stop the landfill work in Okinawa until a democratic referendum



Graphic by the Asahi Shimbun

about the base relocation can be held. In Okinawa, plans to hold a prefecture-wide referendum on Feb. 24 met a setback when five municipalities blocked the voting process in their precincts. On Jan. 15, Ginowan resident Jinshiro Motoyama started a hunger strike calling for the right to vote in all municipalities. Thankfully on Jan. 24 the prefectural assembly made a deal to include a “neither” category and include all municipalities the referendum. Meanwhile, the Japanese Ministry of Defense recognized that the Henoko base plans must be revised due to the soft seabed in Oura Bay which has “an N-value of zero on the penetration resistance scale.” The change in construction plans will lead to a lengthy court battle between the Okinawa Prefecture and the Japanese government and the new plans are expected to cost ten times more than the original estimate. The Japanese government has recklessly proceeded with the landfill despite these concerns and in the face of mounting opposition. Graphic by the Asahi Shimbun.

Seeing Yemen from Jeju, study gatherings by the School of Hope

By Emily

The School of Hope, aimed to create an equal meeting and learning space between Yemeni (or other multi-cultural) and local Jeju friends, held two study gatherings on Dec. 1, 2018 and Jan. 5, 2019.

At our first study gathering, there were two speakers: Wahab working for “Help Syria” based in South Korea and Kathy Kelly working for “Voices for Creative Nonviolence” based in the US.

Wahab has been living in Korea for around 9 years. Since the Arab Spring, he started to support democracy through translating articles which tell what is happening in Syria, and slowly he also started protesting with Korean activists in front of embassies which support the Syria government. He said, “I never imagined to do [activism], but I just started, and it led me naturally step by step.” Now Wahab is active to raise funds to help the Syrian refugees. After the gathering, he continued informal dialogue in Arabic with Yemeni friends until late at night.

Kathy Kelly, who has always stood in solidarity with the peace movement in Jeju, gave a talk about grassroots efforts in the U.S. to stop the war in Yemen. One impressive action was to display 40 backpacks to remember the forty children killed by a 500-pound Lockheed Martin missile that targeted their school bus on August 9, 2018. Since the missile was bought from the U.S. by Saudi Arabia, the responsibility is especially clear. For me, it directly leads to the question of what we should do in Jeju.

Though some of the Yemen/Jeju friends who participated in this seminar may have been inspired, there wasn’t so much agreement. But it is still so meaningful simply because we try to listen to each other.

At the 2nd gathering, we invited a Korean journalist who has visited Yemen many times to share her experiences and understanding of Yemen as a Korean. We are hopefully expecting what kind of effects can be brought by these study gatherings. What can we learn and get when “Seeing Yemen from Jeju?”

Remembering Nanjing at Alddreu Airfield

By Curry

On December 13, about 40 people joined the annual memorial for the victims of the Nanjing Massacre at Alddreu Airfield, which was used by the Japanese to support the bombing of Nanjing in 1937. First, Oum Mun-hee led a visit to the nearby massacre site at Seotal Oreum, where in 1950, Korean marines massacred 252 Jeju civilians. Joyakgol opened the memorial ceremony with the song “World Without Patriots” and participants laid white chrysanthemums in front of the airplane hangar. A message from Satoko Oka Norimatsu shared the solidarity of Japanese Canadians. “While these people of the victimized island remember the history, the vast majority of people in Japan are oblivious of it, and many, including some key government officials and politicians, even deny that it happened at all... This year, on December 11, my colleagues of Vancouver



Each year the Nanjing massacre memorial at Alddreu Airfield brings together the Seongsan committee opposing the Jeju Second Airport Project, the Daejeong Women Peasant Association, People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island, Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace of the Sea, and others who hope to stop such a massacre from repeating. Photo by Oum Mun Hee.

Save Article 9 and I will host a local event to remember the victims of the Nanjing Massacre, and renew our pledge that we will never allow such history to repeat, for the sake of humanity and justice.” Jo Ahae shared a summary of the People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island’s open forum on Dec.12 which included presentations overviewing 20th century militarism’s effects on Jeju’s peace and connecting the concept of demilitarization with the experience of Jeju islanders, feminism, the militarization of space, and the role of prophets to denounce war. The memorial ended with a joint statement which called on the government to make apologies to the citizens of Nanjing, to return the airfield land to the people of Daejeong, to close the Jeju Navy Base, stop the Jeju Second Airport project and the overdevelopment and militarization of Jeju, to apologize for the massacre of Vietnamese civilians by Korean soldiers, and to guarantee recognition for Yemeni refugees. The statement raised the question, “If we cast aside the responsibility for making history, what kind of help are we to the pain of the next generations?”

Visiting Hong Kong Social Movement Film Festival

By Grace

From November 27-30, I visited Hong Kong with three activists from Gangjeong- Oh Doo Hee, Hyea-yeong and Bandi- for a screening of my film about the Gangjeong struggle “The Memory of the 25th Hour” at Fu Tei Bookstore of Lingnan University. The event was the last part of four screenings that took place during the last two months as part of the 16th Hong Kong Social Movement Film Festival. Thanks to the immense efforts of the festival organizers, we were able to greet a big audience including many social and political activists. Relevant questions were asked during Q&A regarding the lives of activists and the current

situation in Gangjeong. The rest of our trip was packed with eye-opening visits at the sites of urban renewal and eviction and genuine encounters with dedicated activists, including a tour in Sham Shui Po area guided by V-Artivist and a ferry trip to Mui Wo. It was quite shocking to learn about the new government-led-mega-sized landfill project to resolve the issue of house shortage, which would essentially use public funding to cause irreversible environmental destruction. Despite the grim outlook and foreseeable endeavors, it felt great to connect with Hong Kong activists and confirm solidarity among ourselves, which made me look forward to our next meeting.



Group photo taken after the film screening of “The Memory of the 25th Hour” at Fu Tei Bookstore of Lingnan University in Hong Kong. / Photo sent by Choi Hyea-yeong

Toxic US Bases

By Curry

On December 20, Green Korea released study results showing soil and groundwater pollution above the standard limits around 24 of the 53 US bases in Korea. For example, underground water systems around Yongsan in central Seoul have high levels of petroleum pollution. In November, Korean courts ordered the Ministry of the Environment to release contamination survey results from Camp Market in Bupyeong, Incheon. In 2017, tests found dioxins at ten times threshold levels at the Bupyeong base, which, like Yongsan, is expected to be returned to Korean control while the US shirks responsibility for clean-up. Meanwhile, there has been increased attention in the US and Okinawa as well as Korea to the dangers of PFOS & PFOA, cancer-causing chemicals used by the US military for firefighting, and to the danger caused worldwide by the US military disposing weapons and explosives by burning them in open burn pits. Women within the military are speaking out about how they and their children have been harmed, and communities near the bases are pushing for the US government to stop these dangerous practices.



Early this year, it was found that a navy sergeant intentionally threw garbage near the Gangjeong stream. According to Park Inchun who filmed this scene, the navy does this so they can pretend to pick up the trash later. The navy's pretentious image propaganda makes us speechless. Image captured by Joyakgol from the video by Park Inchun.



For 426 days from Nov. 12, 2017 until Jan. 11, 2019, Hong Gi-tak and Park Jun-ho held a sit-in 75 meters high in the air, at the top of an unused smokestack. The leaders of the FineTek chapter of the Korean Metal Workers' Union were protesting the failure of the management to honor the promise that workers would not be fired when the company was acquired by Starflex in 2010. Previously in 2014-2015, fellow union leader Cha Gwang-ho carried out a sit-in atop the tower for 408 days, but the company management did not keep their side of the bargain. This time Cha represented the workers in the negotiation of a new agreement guaranteeing the workers' employment. On Nov. 24, friends from Gangjeong hosted a picnic and concert under the smokestack and made big heart shapes that Hong Gi-tak and Park Jun-ho could see from above. Photos by Kim Bong-gyu (Hankyoreh) and Choi Hyea-yeong.



▶ On Dec. 27, 2018, the Supreme Court ruled six Gangjeong villagers not-guilty, including former mayor Cho Kyung-chul. They tried to take kayaks on the sea to support the anti-base activists on Gureombi Rock on February 27, 2012. It was 10 days before the blasting of Gureombi Rock. The police blockaded them and others in the Gangjeong port, treating them violently with a high hand. During the process, a female villager's neck was pressured down by a police boot, and an international activist fainted. However, the police rather indicted the villagers with the charge of Special Obstruction of Government Affairs and injury, etc. The Supreme Court explained on Dec. 27 that the police blockade of the port in 2012 was 'not a lawful execution of their duties,' and therefore the charges against the villagers are not valid.

▶ On Jan. 15, the Civil Affairs Department of Seoul Central District Court made a decision of Reconciliation and Recommendation regarding the lawsuit which the Park Geun-hye ex-government and navy filed against 116 individuals and five civic groups in March 2016 demanding around 3 million USD for indemnity. After the launch of the Moon Jae-in government, in Dec. 2017, the court sent the government a compulsive mediation plan which reads that 'regarding the cases which occurred during the construction of Jeju Civilian Military Complex Port for Tour Beauty (Jeju Navy Base), no more mutual civilian and criminal claims should be raised.' The Government accepted it. At the time, seven people's cases were not mediated. However, by the court decision this January, all 116 people and five groups were saved from the lawsuit. Therefore the 2016 navy indemnity lawsuit against anti-base protestors was concluded.

Jeju Islanders oppose for-profit hospital

Jeju Island Governor Won Hee-Ryong approved a for-profit hospital in Dec. 2018. It is the first for-profit hospital to be approved in South Korea. In the deliberate poll in October 2018 more than 60% of the islanders opposed the for-profit hospital. And now, infuriated by Won's Dec. announcement, islanders are increasing their voice against the for-profit hospital. Yang Yeon-jun, director of Jeju Islanders' Campaign to Stop the Privatization of Medical Treatment and to Make Won Hee-ryong Resign explained as follows: Firstly, the introduction of for-profit hospitals will be followed by skyrocketing prices of hospital cost. It will be hard for ordinary people to go to the hospital. Secondly, islanders are very annoyed because Won had stated that he would respect the result of the deliberate poll regarding the hospital. Thirdly, many suspicions have been raised about the Nokji International Hospital because its creation process has been filled with deception and lies. There are already other issues enough to demand the resignation of Won.

UN-ROK Joint Conference? By whom and for whom?

By Choi Sung-hee

The 17th UN-ROK Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues was held in Jungmun, Jeju from Dec. 5 -6, 2018. The subject of the conference was 'Disarmament to Save Humanity – towards a World Free from Nuclear Weapons.'

It is told to be a part of the 'Jeju Process.' However, it was Jeju islanders- Gangjeong villagers, the people directly concerned- who were excluded from this conference from the beginning. It was not for the 1st time.

It was a very closed conference even without media reporters. Some women from 'People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island' went to the conference venue but were refused entry to the meeting room because we were from 'Gangjeong.' But we could finally show our signs

and explain to the international participants why we were there. A public servant of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs even told that he would consider to reflect on the islanders' opinions for the next conference. We will see.

As a whole, we ask whether the oligarchy blocks urgent debates on disarmament and non-proliferation while destroying people's right to self-determination.



Protest at the 17th UN-ROK Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, Jeju, Dec. 5-6, 2018. Photos by Lee Ki Cheol

Japan to resume commercial whaling

By Joyakgol

Military tension between South Korea and Japan is increasing amid friction over Japanese patrol planes flying too low above Korean navy vessels in the East Sea and East China Sea. Japanese military planes started approaching South Korean warships at a low altitude since December of 2018 and the two countries have been exchanging harsh words, provocations and even threats.

Located at the center of the military tension is Ieodo, a submerged rock near Jeju Island. The vast and open sea around the rock is international waters. To make matters worse, Japan officially announced that it will resume commercial whaling in July 2019 after withdrawing from the International Whaling Commission, a global agreement which put a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga said in a press conference on Dec. 26 that it will hunt whales in its territorial sea and the waters of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The Japanese EEZ overlaps the disputed Ieodo maritime area which is a safe haven for many cetacean species.

It is known that Japan's whale hunt will mainly focus on minke whales that migrate from the East China Sea to the Korean and Japanese waters. The whales don't know the borders but Japan's commercial whaling project may trigger even more complex disputes in the sea that Taiwan, Okinawa and Jeju should peacefully share.



One Village's Story: Phong Nhi, Phong Nhat," a photo exhibition by Hankyoreh journalist Koh Kyoung Tae, documents atrocities committed by South Korean soldiers in Vietnam in 1968. Koh met the survivors to learn the background behind photos of the massacre which were documented by the US military. It is on display from Dec. 12, 2018 to March 24, 2019 at the St. Francis Peace Center in Gangjeong, where the "Last Lullaby" Pieta statue also commemorates the Vietnamese civilians massacred by Korean soldiers. Photos by Korea Vietnam Peace Foundation.

Update on Koh Gilchun's solo exhibition

Jeju artist Koh Gilchun has been having a solo show titled, "Seeing 1990-2018" in the Jeju Museum of Contemporary Art from Nov. 11, 2018 to Jan. 31, 2019. He fell down and suffered brain damage during the Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace in 2013, but succeeded to return again to his artwork. The focus of his art ranges from 4.3, ecology, politics, and Gangjeong. During the solo show, he held two talk events. Kim Daljin Art Research and Consulting chose his solo show as one of the top five solo shows in Korea in 2018.



The 13th Gangjeong Poetry Night was held on December 30, 2018. The theme was 'Songs of Winter' and took place at the Gangjeong peace center. This event has continued since 2015. Photo by Yangsang.



On Jan. 27th, People Making Jeju a Demilitarized Peace Island remembered the 6th anniversary of the group's creation. The remembrance happened both on the steps of the island government hall where since Jan. 3 people have been holding a sit-in against the 2nd Jeju airport (air force base) project (Photo by Lee Ki-cheol) and in Gangjeong where people have a daily human chain against the Jeju navy base. Photos by Pang Eun-mi (above) and by and by Lee Ki Cheol (below).

USA Hands Off Venezuela!

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 use of it.
2. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
3. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...)
4. Then share about it on social media.
5. Visit Gangjeong!
6. 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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December events in the Peace Center

By Choi Hyea-yeong

On Dec. 15, the third exhibition opened at 'Space Sanho' (Coral Space), a small gallery in the Peace Center. This photo exhibition by Hong Jin Hwon is titled "ch. 256," and is curated by Choi Hyea-yeong. It draws the viewers' attention to things that could be easily overlooked at the Revolutionary Square in Vladivostok. The exhibit will continue until Feb 17.

On Dec. 19, Gangjeong Friends hosted a question and answer time with Seo Won about Bingo Community Bank. 'Breaking free of the state-supported exchange of taxes for social services and the monopolization of capital one can choose a method of autonomy and sharing. That is the aim of a commune or commons, and the aim of Bingo Community Bank.'



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