

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

News on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base

Published at Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea

April / May / June 2022



The Gangjeong peace movement has been actively opposing the Korean navy's participation in the devastating RIMPAC war exercises (Jun. 29 - Aug. 4 in Hawai'i). See more on page 3. Photo of the May 25 sea protest at the sea entrance of the base by Curry.

Blow, Spring Wind

by Ddalgi

An era of 10 million irregular workers, an era of rampant discrimination and inequality, an era in which the ecological balance has been shaken by the climate crisis, an era where war is practiced more than peace. Anyone can see that we are living in an era of crisis. However, the crisis does not affect everyone equally; its effects are felt first in the weakest places. Seeing that even in this era of crisis, politicians are ignoring reality and thinking only of power, Peace Wind invited people to get out into the streets and visit sites around Korea where people are struggling in the face of these crises. Climate, human rights, labor and peace organizations gathered and shared their wisdom. The Spring Wind 40-day Pilgrimage to Meet Another World commenced with the motto, "Climate Justice Now! End Discrimination, Pursue Equality! Practice Peace Not War! No More Workplace Deaths in a World Without Irregular Work!"

Starting with a press conference in Gangjeong, for the next 40 days we met people in 95 struggle sites across Korea. The pilgrimage team travelled in an 11 passenger van and we weren't lonely because we were always joined in solidarity by fellow travelers. The east side of the Korean Peninsula has been covered by nuclear power plants, transmission towers and new coal power plants, and in the west, the US base in Gunsan and the US bases in Pyeongtaek are expanding their size and functions. The war belt in the west connects to the energy belt in the east, while in the interior, small rural communities are being destroyed by development projects, from the THAAD base in Seongju, to garbage landfills and state industrial parks. For the comfort, safety, and security of many people, many small cities and villages are living with these dangerous burdens. Discrimination, which permeates everywhere like air, is not just an issue for minorities but for the majority. Everywhere, the struggle sites that we visited were helpless in the face of power and capital, but as ever, they have struggled courageously. A heart that doesn't give up: that is what we witnessed as we travelled for 40 days to meet people who are building a new world. On Apr. 30, we gathered in Seoul with different focus issues, from different regions, from distant sites, but we affirmed each other's presence, encouraged one another and determined to persevere together in this era of crisis. We plan to meet once again in Seoul on Sept. 24 for a climate justice march.



Ddalgi emceed the 430 Spring Wind Festival, announcing performers, including the Gangjeong Peace Choir, and speakers who the Spring Wind pilgrims had met during their journey. Photo by Shin Yu-Ah.

Spring Wind Reflections

The encounter becomes resonance and the resonance raises me to my feet

Lee Tae-sook, Spring Wind pilgrimage team

During our pilgrimage we visited residents of Bonghwa, North Gyeongsang Province, who have struggled against transmission towers. The words the mayor spoke to us resonated with me. It seems that the residents opposing the transmission towers have scattered and two couples remain to continue the difficult struggle. When the mayor made a tearful appeal, saying that they were feeling just like wilted flowers but the Spring Wind pilgrims' visit was like being watered, my tears really flowed. Many people all around this world are struggling in places that nobody sees, where nobody hears. Whoever takes the time to hold hands, share their hearts, and listen to the stories of farmers, workers, the people struggling hard to protect Seorak mountain and the residents struggling because of plans for coal power plants, they will find it worthwhile, something to be proud of. For over 30 years I only took interest in the problems of workers, but I came to realize the need to hold hands together in solidarity with others rather than getting mired in my own interests. If I meet others and listen to their thoughts, the encounter becomes resonance and the resonance raises me to my feet.



On April 30, the Spring Wind Pilgrimage culminated in a Street March to Make Another World. The pilgrimage visited people in struggle sites across South Korea, and many of those people converged together in Seoul to march from the War Memorial of Korea in Yongsan into the center of the city. People wore colorful costumes and carried signs and banners from diverse peace, labor, environmental, and anti-discrimination movements. Some played traditional or improvised instruments; others marched with giant sculptures. Photo by Shin Yu-Ah.



"Spring Wind Project - We are Here," a 114 minute compilation of short documentaries by 21 directors (including Grace) brings to life several of the struggle sites which the Spring Wind Pilgrimage visited. A screening was held in Gangjeong on June 16, and screenings in venues large and small are once again connecting diverse social movements across the country. Photo by Grace.

A time to learn sensitivity to our connections to struggle sites

By Min Seon, SARANGBANG Group for Human Rights, 430 Spring Wind organizing committee

When I heard about the pilgrimage, the first thing I felt was relief. After 5 years of Moon Jae-in and the Democratic Party's incompetency and irresponsibility, I expected the election outcome, but when I actually faced the results I was struck with fear. I remembered the era of martyrdom after the election of Park Geun-hye, and feared what time of suffering we would face now. While having these thoughts, I heard about a pilgrimage to struggle sites, to practice solidarity by connecting suffering people and accompanying people experiencing ongoing loneliness, and it was called 'Spring Wind,' such a lovely name. Near the middle of the pilgrimage, I checked in with one of the pilgrims, and they said they were experiencing more than they had in their life so far. These words were very heavy and memorable for me. As I followed the photos and the quotes that the pilgrims shared from their encounters each day, I realized, "There are so many struggles I didn't know about" and "I thought that struggle was over, but there they are, still struggling." It was a time to learn sensitivity to our connections to struggle sites.

Being a member of the working-group was a precious opportunity to get to know new people and to connect heads and hearts with people with whom I had never worked before. I was as cautious as I was unfamiliar, but we developed teamwork as we planned the 430 (April 30th) parade and festival together. When it was done, I felt an overflowing sense of pride.

With RIMPAC, South Korea Expands Its Military Footprint

By Choi Sung-hee

On June 22, 2022, 20 civic groups held a 'No RIMPAC!' joint press conference in front of the Jeju Naval Base in Gangjeong Village, Jeju Island, South Korea. Beginning with the words 'Aloha 'Āina,' the press conference expressed solidarity with the people and all living beings in and off Hawaii and southern California, and it also demanded 'Peace practice, not war drills,' and 'Shut down the Jeju Naval Base.'

On May 31, three ships: ROKS Marado (14,800 ton), an amphibious assault ship, ROKS Sejong the Great (7,650 ton), an aegis destroyer, and ROKS Munmu the Great (4,400 ton), a destroyer, left the Jeju Naval Base to join RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific exercises), the biggest multinational maritime war drill which is held every two years. This year, it is from June 29 to Aug 4. They were eventually joined by ROKS Shin Dol-seok (1800 ton), an attack submarine, which had headed for Hawaii days earlier.

Regarding this year's RIMPAC, most of South Korea's media has been proud to report that South Korea sent its largest scale flotilla to the overseas drill. The news used the phrase 'for the 1st time' many times regarding the Marado warship's participation in RIMPAC, regarding South Korea's command of an expeditionary strike group formed of 13 warships from 8 nations, a thousand marines from 9 nations, and regarding her nine amphibious assault vehicles and a mobile construction squadron.

It should be noted that the three warships which left Jeju Naval Base on May 31 did not directly head for Hawaii. They joined an ROK-US war game off Okinawa on June 2-4, which was targeted against North Korea. The warships are expected to also join the Pacific Dragon-22, a missile detection and tracking war drill, with Japan, the United States, Australia and Canada off Hawaii from Aug. 1-14.

It is known that a whale can absorb the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by thousands of trees. Those whales would lose their hearing ability due to the sonar used during the war drills, eventually being stranded on the beaches and dying. In this world where climate justice action is urgent, why should we let our governments conduct such ocean-destroying crimes!?

It is important to raise our voices against RIMPAC together with the people who would be directly affected by this war drill of which South Korea is a part. It is important that we share friendship, solidarity, and prayer for peace across the Pacific, this ocean where militarization is rapidly being built-up! In our June 22 press conference, we mentioned the Pacific Peace Network(PPN) which comprises many islands and nations including Jeju. The PPN is now gathering signatures in opposition to RIMPAC (Please check diy.rootsaction.org/petitions/cancel-largest-naval-war-maneuvers-dangerous-rimpac-2022).

A longer version of this article is part of series on the Feminist Response to RIMPAC. See fpif.org.



Civic groups held a 'No RIMPAC!' press conference in front of the Jeju Naval Base on June 22, 2022. Photo by Dasan.



On June 22, 12 kayakers paddled out the Gangjeong River to the sea entrance of the navy base, while others walked out on the breakwater, which is a so-called civilian-military complex tourist site. After encircling the base, they shouted across the water, calling for peace and Aloha. Photo by Oh Yeon-jae.

Recommended on Youtube

"US Military in the Pacific: DSA Anti-War Conference" Speakers from South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai'i talked about history and contemporary resistance against US militarism, occupation, and imperialism on May 18.

"RIMPAC, NATO versus a Peaceful Asia Pacific" Speakers from across Asia and Europe joined this webinar hosted by Asia Europe People's Forum and International Peace Bureau on June 30.

"24 Hour Peace Wave" World Beyond War and the International Peace Bureau hosted a live-streaming global peace rally on Jun. 25-26. The second half of part 8 features South Korean opposition to NATO and Gangjeong's protest against RIMPAC (you can search directly for "Gangjeong Peace Wave: Cancel RIMPAC").

World Peace University invites new energy to the village

by Bomal

“Gangjeong is a village that is likely to host a war. However, ironically, it is a place where we can spread the voice of peace. It is ironic because having the Jeju Naval Base here offers us a lot to learn about peace,” commented Jarita, the program manager of World Peace University(WPU)’s Peacefinders program. Seven Peacefinders (participants of WPU) stayed in a communal residence in Gangjeong for WPU’s first term from April to June this year.

“There have been many educational workshops here but mostly on a short-term basis. I felt that there is no future here without young people coming, in regards to the prolonged struggle for peace.” Brother Song emphasized the necessity for the program. He designed and initiated the WPU program with The Frontiers in 2020, having been involved in the Gangjeong peace movement for more than a decade. WPU reached out to activists and residents in and around Gangjeong Village to either lead a course, give a lecture or be a student. The courses vary in subjects such as activism, philosophy, woodcraft and field trips around Jeju Island. Participants were also encouraged to take part in daily actions such as 100 bows in the morning and the human chain at noon. Upon learning about the anti-militarism issues in Gangjeong, the Peacefinders showed solidarity by standing, witnessing, writing, singing and giving speeches at events such as the International Conscientious Objector’s Day, International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament and the ‘No RIMPAC!’ press conference. Brother Song expects the WPU to reach out even outside the borderlines of nation and ethnicity. “I hope that through this program, the international peace activists in Okinawa, Taiwan and beyond can visit Gangjeong and learn from each other in the future.” The 2nd term of 2022 WPU starts in September and the application period starts in early July.



On a field trip to a nearby Oreum(volcanic cone). Photo by Meonji.



Taking a break during welding class. Photo by Dasan.



During the daily Gangjeong human chain. Photo by Jarita.



"Creating cultures of peace" class. Photo by Jarita.

Walking, living, questioning the peace, staying in Gangjeong

by Morae

While staying 3 months in Gangjeong Village, I got to listen to many stories. Stories from activists and protesters, about Jeju Island’s struggle with militarism and environmental destruction in the name of “development.” Currently there are ongoing discussions to build a second airport in Jeju, which is linked to the destruction of the Bijarim-ro forest. These are stories I wouldn’t have known nor paid attention to if I hadn’t come to Gangjeong. I could easily spot the construction sites in Gangjeong Village as well. There is an ongoing “renovation” of the local stream near Saebangbat (the communal residence for the Peacefinders). Another road is being built near Gureombi Plaza, where the human chain takes place every day. The new road construction affects the water quality of Gangjeong River where I go to swim. The ideology of “growth economy,” expecting more tourists through “development,” is all over Jeju island. Without knowing the stories, I idealized Jeju only as a happy, care-free travel venue. Upon realizing this, I reflected on my dream to travel around freely. But the stories about problematic development in Jeju made me rethink about objectifying the place which I find attractive as a traveller and the people who live there. I started to wonder if my traveling there would accelerate the development and militarization. My world has changed upon learning a framework to analyze the world and my life in relation to militarism. The world might not have changed, but my understanding of it has expanded. Meeting new friends has helped me as well as learning new ways of seeing. I got to meet people who lived in a way I never imagined. They give me inspiration and courage. I am deeply grateful for my time in Gangjeong.

Letters from Treasure Island School

Students from Treasure Island Alternative School in Jeju City have often visited Gangjeong, but their visit on May 26 had special meaning because their school playground has been threatened by the Odeungbong mountain development project.

“To Gangjeong: When the navy base was built, I was too young (age 4), so I couldn’t help, but now (age 14) I can get involved. Before COVID, I joined the Peace March several times. We learned about the navy base in school, how dangerous it is, how it has destroyed precious memories. Recently, because of the Odeungbong development project, our school grounds and memories are in danger, so we can really identify with Gangjeong. We can’t help that the navy base is already built, but we can raise our voices for the base to be removed and for no more US bases to be made. Stay healthy, Gangjeong! —From Joon-myung”

“Hey Gangjeong! Until now I was just interested in struggling to protect Odeungbong from getting developed, but now I will struggle with you. Before the navy base was built on your land, it was almost built in Hwasun where my grandparents live. It seems like you got the base because we opposed it, so I am sorry. At first you were alone, but now we will help so that someday the whole world will struggle for you. So, Gangjeong! Don’t give up! If you keep fighting, we will fight with you, and if you give up, we will support you so that you can rise up again. Got it? —From Se-hyun”

The 20th remembrance year for Hyo-soon and Mi-sun

Jun. 13 was the 20th anniversary of the death of two girls: Shim Hyo-soon and Shin Mi-sun. They were hit and killed by a US armored vehicle on their way to a friend’s birthday party in Yangju, near the DMZ, in 2002. The armored vehicle was heading to a war exercise. After the incident, the US military court in South Korea ruled the assailants not guilty, and they returned back to the United States without any punishment. The two girls’ deaths caused masses of people to join candlelight protests and demand the revision of the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement). This year, around 5000 people gathered in Seoul demanding the improvement of the unequal ROK-US relationship and a halt to the exclusive alliance, as well as total revision of the SOFA. A memorial ceremony was held at the Hyosoon Misun Peace Park next to the site where the disastrous event happened 20 years ago. In Gangjeong, people remembered the two girls during the daily human chain.



April 16 was the 8th anniversary of the Sewol ferry tragedy. The Sewol sank on its way to Jeju in 2014. 304 people lost their lives but the truth investigation was not carried out yet. It is known that around 410 tons of iron bars for Jeju Naval Base construction were loaded on the Sewol ferry at the time. A memory performance, ‘To My Kid’ was held in Jeju in April. In Gangjeong, a public reading was held on May 28. Photo by Choi Hyea-yeong.



Songryeongigol is the site of a mass grave where April 3rd Uprising resistance fighters killed in 1949 were buried and long neglected. In recent years memorial ceremonies have been held at the gravesite each year on Apr. 3. The perpetrators of state violence are included in many memorials across Jeju, but it is still rare to find memorials remembering the resistance. Photo by Choi Hyea-young.



Small trees grew up where large swaths of the Bijarim-ro forest had been cut down in 2018 in order to expand the Bijarim-ro road into a large highway connecting Jeju City to the proposed site of the Jeju 2nd Airport. On May 17, construction restarted, and many small trees were cut to make way for a fence lining the construction site. Forest protectors collected discarded red flags and used them to attach a message to the fence, "Stop the airport." They also hung a banner beside the road, which read, "We <3 forest." Photo by GreenC.

Women conscientious objectors' movement keeps on

by Neulbo

On May 15, an International Conscientious Objector's Day event gathered people at St. Francis Peace Center. Following women conscientious objectors' declarations in 2018 and 2019, four more women made statements this year, which got published through an online newspaper. All of the objectors, some based in Gangjeong, supported each other as they prepared statements and events together. Even though only male citizens that meet certain qualifications get conscripted in South Korea, the women objectors resist the militarized system that affects all in various ways. Here are some quotes from this year's published statements:

"I object to the division of people according to categories of draftable and non-draftable, because it confers power to some and disempowers others. I object not only to conscription but to any act that sustains the military. I believe that we must withdraw support from the whole military system in order to bring about radical change, to build a society which is not based on violence and domination but on dignity, justice, and cooperation." - Kaia "Curry" Vereide

"Women's conscious objection is a movement against all kinds of systemic oppression and violence present in our everyday lives. It is especially critical about militarism and patriarchal culture that encourages war as a means for peace. It is questioning what is war and what is violence." - Oum Munhee

"I want to think beyond certain 'qualifications' that conscription requires. I dream of a society that is concerned about making systemic changes to respect our differences such as disability, sex, gender, race and so on. I dream of a society that values diversity instead of hierarchy and rules. I wish that no more habitats of living beings will be abused for a military base to be built. I pray for the ecosystem to recover. I want to be friends with all beings if possible." - Nongeo



May 15 International Conscientious Objector's Day gathering with women conscientious objectors. Photo by Oh Yeon-jae

International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament

By Choi Sung-hee

"No more being silent to militarism which always pushes women to the periphery, I reveal my name." (Jiseul)

"I hope my daughter can live in a world where peace is the default. A world without militaries, beyond disarmament." (Euing)

"I raise a question on the dichotomy of gender classification. Will there be other ways? Or how about no classification?" (Jina)

From May 17-24, Gangjeong remembered the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament (May 24). During the daily human chain, two or more people shared their thoughts on 'women,' 'peace,' and 'disarmament,' through speeches, songs, dance, and performance. Participants included not only women, but also men. Many Peacefinders joined the event. Participants said that it was a chance to meditate on issues which they had seldom thought about. Diverse subjects were shared, such as women and militarism, women's conscientious objection, women and ecological movements, and oppression of women and women's uprisings throughout Korean history (Jeju April 3rd and Gwangju), as well as in the history of Honduras and India, etc.



Gangjeong people remembering the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament on May 24. Photo by Lee Seo-ro.

In 1981, amid a growing worldwide anti-nuclear movement, 49 women from eleven European nations designated May 24 the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament. In Korea, the day was first remembered in 1997 by Women Making Peace. Gangjeong has remembered the day since 2015 when Women Cross DMZ visited Gangjeong. This year, women's groups initiated a joint statement, signed by 64 Korean peace groups, saying they want "a sustainable peace, the end of the Korean War and the conclusion of a peace agreement" and demanding the Yoon Suk-yeol government to "fulfill its constitutional obligation for peaceful unification."

The Local Election and Jeju 2nd Airport project

By Choi Sung-hee

On June 1st, there was a local election with a turnout of 50.9%, the 2nd lowest ever in the local area elections. It is a result which reflected people's frustration on the big bipartisan-centered politics. Above all, people's disappointment in the Moon Jae-in government (Democratic Party) which had been elected thanks to the people's candle revolution led to the overall victory of the conservative right-wing (People Power Party) in the local election following the Presidential election in May, too.

In Jeju which marked 53% turnout, the issue of the Jeju 2nd airport was important. Even though minority progressive parties and groups such as the Justice Party, Green Party, Progressive Party, and Jeju Gachi got the low rates of votes earned all together, the Jeju islanders made clear of their will against the 2nd airport by choosing the candidates of DP over the PPP, respectively as the Jeju island governor and a National Assemblyman who said that they would respect Islanders' decision right, regardless of their propensities. It is important given that Yoon Suk-yeol, the President and Won Hee-ryong, the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport(MOLIT), and former Jeju Governor-both belong to the PPP-openly talk their will to enforce the 2nd airport, despite the fact that opposition opinions prevailed over the favorite opinions regarding the 2nd airport project in the Islanders' official opinion poll, last year. However, Oh Young-hoon, the new Jeju governor has not clarified his opinion on the opposition to the 2nd airport. He can submit to the central government's pressure any time. On June 30th, the MOLIT said that the Strategic Environment Impact Assessment on the 2nd airport which Ministry of Environment had returned back to the MOLIT last year, could be compensated, making clear again its will on the project. On the same day, the MOLIT, also announced the Basic Plan on the Saemangeum International Airport Development Project, in Gunsan, mainland of Korea. Like the Jeju 2nd airport which will be highly likely to be an air force base, the Saemangeum airport next to the US air force base must be used by the US military. The struggles over the many airport projects are growing nationwide.

Woljeong-ri and Jeseong village

Including many haenyeo (sea-diving women), the residents in Woljeong-ri, Gujwa-eup, in the northeast of Jeju, have been fighting for years in opposition to the constant enlargement of the sewage treatment plant which began operation there in 2007. Because of the plant, the sea ecology of Woljeong-ri was greatly destroyed while residents' occupations such as fishing and seafood-collecting are in crisis. Further, Yongcheon cave, a world natural heritage is near the plant, and the residents claim that the plant should be demolished and the downstream part of the cave which was missed from the world natural heritage record should be recorded as well. Otherwise, Jeju City, without asking the villagers' opinion, recently cut the twelve cherry blossom trees in Jeseong village near the Jeju airport in order to expand the road. Jeseong village was built by former Sasu-dong (Molaemul) residents who were expelled three times from their hometown due to the construction of Jeju airport and Dodu sewage treatment plant. The residents named their new village Jeseong and planted fourteen cherry trees in commemoration of their new hometown. Now with the trees gone, the residents planted branches of cut trees in pots to console their pain. Artists and other islanders organized a gathering titled, 'Nangsingregage 2' following the 'Nangsingregage' which was organized in response to the government's cutting of trees in the Bijarim-ro two years ago. Nangsingregage means 'let's go to plant the trees,' in Jeju dialect.

Illegal Dolphin Transfer from Jeju to Geoje Accused

by Neulbo

Hot Pink Dolphins, a marine environment non-profit organization, and Jeju Green Party accused Hoban Pacific Resom on May 4 for illegal transfer of two dolphins to Geoje Sea World after a Jeju MBC news report with footage of the transfer. The dolphins Taeji and Arang are protected marine creatures that require government permission in advance to transfer. However, it was revealed that Pacific Resom shipped the bottlenose dolphins to Geoje Sea World on April 24.

Both the dolphins and the remaining Bibongi, an Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphin captured illegally in Jeju, are endangered species according to the CITES (the Convention on International

Trade in Endangered Species) and dolphins are put under enormous stress if transported on land. Hot Pink Dolphins and the Jeju Green Party urge government agencies to take actions such as releasing wild dolphins from aquariums and setting up sea shelters, along with pressing for strong criminal punishment against abusers of marine life.



Holding a press conference in front of Jeju Provincial Police Agency. Photo by Hot Pink Dolphins

Celebration and Concerns in the CNMI

by Curry

At Gangjeong's daily human chain on April 7, we celebrated the good news that the US military had decided to no longer use the pristine Pagan Island for bombing practice, and to cancel plans on Tinian Island for a live-fire training heavy artillery range which threatened Tinian's aquifer and to cancel plans for landing ramps at the historic and beautiful Chulu Beach. We shouted, "Biba!" to congratulate the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) who had worked hard to oppose the 2015 Commonwealth Joint Military Training plans which would have significantly escalated the militarization of their islands. Groups such as Our Common Wealth 670 collected 27,000 comments in which people expressed opposition to the Joint Military Training plans. The Northern Islands (including Pagan) and Tinian mayors and the CNMI governor held a series of meetings with military officials, and Gov. Torres announced on Mar. 31 that the military had submitted an amended proposal which eliminated all training on Pagan and significantly reduced the intensity and scale of training on Tinian. Representing the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Major General Mark Hashimoto verbally confirmed the governor's announcement, but the military did not release any written documents, causing concern that it will be difficult to hold the military accountable.

Unfortunately, military trainings and construction of new military facilities continue in the CNMI. The Joint Forces Field Training Exercise 2022 held Jun. 5-13 involved large trucks carrying mock missiles driving in civilian areas on Saipan. Reportedly a communications exercise to identify enemy forces, the presence of military vehicles on the streets was also apparently viewed as an 'educational opportunity.' Also, the biennial Valiant Shield exercise was held Jun. 5-17 in the CNMI as well as Guam and Palau. For the first time, Palau hosted a Patriot missile live-fire exercise. Unlike Guam and the CNMI, it is not a colony of the US, but recently there has been discussion of building joint-use military facilities for the US on Palau.

While reduction of US military trainings is something to celebrate, we must also pay attention to the impact of the military's new strategies. Gen. Mark Hashimoto said that the amended plans are "not necessarily a downscaling, but a shift." He said the US military was planning "smaller, distributed, harder to target units" (kuam.com). Construction is underway on Tinian to build a 'divert' airfield, fuel tanks and related infrastructure. This type of base construction fits with US plans to create many facilities on small islands so that it is harder for an enemy to find actual deployment locations. It also makes these small islands targets, and it means that there is a long road ahead to stop the militarization of islands in the Pacific.

Connecting Past and Present in Okinawa

by Curry

May 15 marked 50 years since Okinawa reverted from US military control to Japanese control. On the 13th, the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly unanimously approved a resolution that calls for the dangerous Futenma Air Station to be closed, for US military facilities to be reduced, for revision of the Status of Forces Agreement, and for new industries to be developed in place of the bases. On the 14th, 1000 participants joined a peace march (limited to members of affiliated organizations due to COVID). Organizer Hiroji Yamashiro declared, "We will oppose any kind of war. Let's join forces so Okinawa won't be a battlefield again."

A ceremony at Okinawa's Cornerstone of Peace memorial park marked 77 years since the Battle of Okinawa with a reading of all 240,000+ names which are engraved there, representing all those who died, regardless of their affiliation or nationality. 1,500 people participated in the reading from Jun. 12-23. From Jun. 1-23, Peace Walk East Asia journeyed from Cape Hedo at the north tip of Okinawa to the Cornerstone of Peace in the south. Organizer Yuichi Kamoshita shared, "It was a good opportunity to communicate with local people about the meaning of this 50th year." The Peace Walk will continue July 17-30 in Miyako and Ishigaki islands where there are new Japanese missile bases.

Letter to Biden from Okinawa

"Dear Mr. President,

We learned [...] that our islands are again threatened by war. US and Japanese government officials had made it known [...] that in the event of a "Taiwan incident," the "southwestern islands" (meaning mainly Okinawa) will become attack bases aimed at China.

[...] In this struggle between two states, men, women, children and elders [...] will be killed and wounded indiscriminately. [...] In the Battle of Okinawa, called a Hell on Earth, everything was destroyed, Okinawan non-combatants could not escape, and one in four lost their lives. This experience led to our resolve that this must never be repeated. However, when the war ended we were placed under US military occupation, our land was confiscated by force, and Okinawa became a land of military bases. [...]

In Okinawa we have the expression, "Nuchi du Takara" ("Life is a Treasure"). [...] We believe this valuation of life, and of the peace that protects it, is shared by Taiwanese, Chinese, Americans and Japanese. The Taiwan Issue must not become the justification for launching a world-scale disastrous war. Settle it by peaceful negotiations. [...]

-No More Battle of Okinawa: Nuchi du Takara Association" (Jun. 27)

(Essentially the same letter was sent to Xi Jinping, Tsai Ing-wen, and Kishida Fumio.) (See the full letter and list of signatories at worldbeyondwar.org/letter-to-joe-biden-from-okinawa/)

The ROK-US-Japan alliance, NATO, and Global Alliance

by Choi Sung-hee

The South Korean warships which left Jeju Naval Base to join RIMPAC joined an ROK-US war drill which targeted North Korea on Jun. 2-4 off Okinawa on their way to Hawaii. For the first time in 5 years, a US nuclear aircraft carrier was mobilized for an ROK-US war drill. In response, North Korea launched eight short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea (Sea of Japan) on Jun. 5. In response, the ROK-US fired eight surface to surface missiles into the East Sea on Jun. 6 while the US and Japan conducted a Bilateral Ballistic Missile Defense Exercise on the same day.

Such serial events reflect the dangerous strengthening of the US-led ROK-US-Japan alliance, as predicted from the ROK-US summit and US-Japan summit, May 21-24. The bigger issue is that the operations of the ROK-US-Japan alliance would not be limited to Northeast Asia. The alliance is a key for the United States to establish a US-led global alliance aimed at Russia, China, and North Korea. The NATO summit in Madrid on Jun. 29-30 (just as RIMPAC started) clearly showed it.



On Jun. 22, Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea (SPARK) and People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) had a joint press conference in opposition to NATO in front of the Presidential Office in Yongsan, Seoul. It was a part of the 24 Hour Peace Wave global peace action. Photo by SPARK.

South Korea's new president, Yoon Suk-yeol, became the first South Korean president to join a NATO summit meeting. South Korea, already a NATO partner country, had become the first Asian country to join the NATO cyber defense group on May 5, under the Moon Jae-in government, four days before Moon left office. Pres. Yoon, who had not denied the possibility of an ROK-US-Japan military alliance during his election campaign, followed the 'Pro-Japan and anti-China' line in earnest and had an ROK-US-Japan summit during the NATO summit. However, 'the ROK-Japan military alliance makes possible the United States-led Asia Pacific military alliances, as well as the US-led global alliance combining the Asia Pacific military alliances and NATO, which completes the global new cold war frame' (Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea).

This year, NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept which defined Russia as the greatest 'threat' and mentioned China as the 'challenge' to NATO. It also opened the possibility of use of nuclear weapons. While the world is already dangerous enough because of the US-NATO vs. Russia conflict in Ukraine, South Korea's willingness to strengthen the ROK-US-Japan alliance and deeper involvement in NATO puts the peace of the world in a deeper crisis.

With the Nuri Rocket, South Korea heads for Space Imperialism

By Choi Sung-hee

On Jun. 21, 2022, South Korea succeeded in launching her first homemade rocket named Nuri. A performance verification satellite was delivered to orbit 700 km from the earth. South Korea became the 7th nation in the world to secure the ability to deliver a 1,500 kg satellite to low orbit. Four days later, the news reported the South Korean military's high expectation to launch micro military satellites of around 100 kg, using the same technology. Such micro-satellites would fill the 'surveillance gaps' of the 425 project which the military is working on to secure its own surveillance ability against North Korea. The project plans to introduce five military satellites (each 800 kg) and to launch them consecutively by 2025, loaded on a Space X rocket. Now, the military expects that they can also use the Nuri rocket along with the solid propelled space vehicle.

It is known that around 300 corporations joined the development of Nuri, whose launch success is considered to be a landmark for South Korea's space development. The term "New Space" has been used to indicate the direction of South Korea's space development from the government-led to the civilian-led. The revision of the Space Development Promotion Law institutionalizes this direction. The revised bill which was decided in the National Assembly plenary session on May 29 will be enforced from this December.

According to the press release by the South Korean Ministry of Science and ICT on Jun. 7, titled, 'Arrangement for the Institutional Foothold to Secure the Competitiveness of the Space Industry in the Age of New Space,' the revised bill is to "foster the space industry more structurally and to expand the participation of civilian corporations." It says that the bill "introduced the contract method for corporations to appropriate profits."

Despite the Outer Space Treaty which declares that space is "for peaceful purposes," and "for the benefit of all peoples," South Korea is shamelessly heading to space for corporate profit and military superiority. The results would be used for US domination and imperial destruction and exploitation. The only hope to stop the apocalypse of the Earth is people who are awakened.

A longer version of this writing with the same title appears in the Global Network (GN) newsletter #42. See space4peace.org

Urging for anti-discrimination/equality law enactment

by Neulbo

On Apr. 11, Solidarity for Anti-Discrimination Law Enactment set up protest tents in front of the National Assembly. Human rights activists Miryu and Jong-geol started a hunger strike. There have been actions such as 100,000 petitions, street protests, press conferences, a public roundtable, online vigils and a 30 day march from Busan to Seoul, all in 2021. Those desperate requests, however, were unanswered. Jeju Solidarity for Anti-Discrimination Law Enactment, a network which includes Gangjeong Friends, held a press conference on May 17, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and released a statement that urges immediate enactment. The solidarity will continue with joint actions to fight for a world without hate politics and normalized discrimination. We will stand in solidarity until this bare minimum for a just and peaceful society is achieved at last.

The time of non-citizens locked in ‘Foreigner Shelters’

There was a presentation titled, “The time of non-citizens locked in ‘Foreigner Shelters’ and the problems of the Immigration Office management system” in Gangjeong on May 13. Shim A-Jung, an independent researcher and a member of International Waters 31 to Abolish Foreigner Shelters shared her experience meeting a victim of torture in the ‘shelter,’ struggling to free him with her colleagues, and seeing him become an actor in the struggle himself. She also shared about the problems of migration detention and the Immigration Office management system, as well as the situation that sexual violence victims during wartime are not acknowledged as refugees. Shim has been concerned with keywords such as animals, refugees, women, and the nature of perpetrators.

CPTPP and Jeju

by Haneul

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is one of the world’s largest free-trade areas. The combined economies of the eleven signatories (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam) represent 13.4% of global GDP. The Korean government announced its plans for membership in the CPTPP, and the agricultural and fishery industries are concerned about imports from agricultural powerhouses such as Australia and New Zealand. Grain imports for domestic consumption are at 80% while the overall food self-sufficiency rate is at 46%, raising concerns over food security and over-dependence on international conditions. Jeju would be one of the most damaged areas if Korea joins the CPTPP. The tangerine and fishery industries have propped up the Jeju economy, but they’d very likely get destroyed by cheap imports. In addition, Korea has banned all seafood imports from Japan’s Fukushima regions since 2013 due to concerns over radiation levels, but Taiwan had to accept Fukushima seafood and agricultural products in order to get Japan’s support for Taiwan’s bid to join the CPTPP. The Korean government must minimize damage to farmers before joining CPTPP. Food security is the foundation of survival and directly linked to the health and safety of the people.

In Soseong-ri, police are mobilized five times a week

By Kim Young-Jae, Soseong-ri, Seongju

To complete the deployment of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense), a strategic US weapon against China, in Soseong-ri, Seongju, on the mainland of Korea, the ROK and US authorities have continuously conducted operations to secure a land route (supply line) to the THAAD base, employing a large scale police force, while ignoring the residents’ opposition voice for the last six years. Their attempts to secure a supply line started last May, and increased from twice to three times a week, and then to five times a week -every day excluding the weekend- since this June. As of July 5, it was the 139th police action.

The ROK and US authorities will bring the front line of the new cold war into the Korean Peninsula to strengthen the ROK-US alliance, while their violence is completely destroying the daily lives of residents. The current government is sacrificing the peace of the

Korean Peninsula for the sake of the ROK-US alliance, leading the way in accommodating the US demands. Thus, without mentioning that the EIA was a powerless expedient from the start, the Yoon Seok-yeol government is talking about normalizing the THAAD base, openly saying that it would force through an environmental impact assessment. However, we know very well that it is merely a formality to cover the illegal THAAD deployment with the deceptive outward appearance of so-called legality. However, the residents who have fought against THAAD during three presidencies now realize that no government would step up to remove the dangerous war weapon THAAD. They deeply feel that it would be their work.

In these hard circumstances, we, consoling and encouraging one another, pledge again and again not to let go of the reins of the struggle to demolish THAAD. If we don’t give up, our struggle to remove THAAD will not end. Accordingly, the THAAD deployment will never be completed.



Soseong-ri residents and supporters protested for the demolition of THAAD in front of the Presidential Office in Yongsan, Seoul, on Jun. 23. Photo by the No THAAD Situation Office

My Gangjeong Village Story

by Dasan

12 pm, it is a very hot and humid day. With a mic and a speaker in a blue bag I walk to the roundabout. Some people have arrived earlier and are waiting, sitting on the concrete edge of the asphalt street. In their hands they hold yellow flags, a rainbow flag, and colorful banners. We say hello to each other with a bright smile on our faces. I give the mic and speaker to Curry and she announces, "We will now begin the human chain cultural festival which we have been doing since January 2013."

We do a parade and sing and dance every day. This is one of the core activities I do in Gangjeong while I have lived here as a volunteer with The Frontiers peace community for five months.

Every morning we do 100 Bows in front of the main gate of the naval base. We remind both ourselves and the military personnel of our ideas of peace as we listen to the one hundred pledges and statements. I wonder what these soldiers are thinking as they listen behind those iron bars. When they finish their service and return to their homes, I think something might have changed within their subconscious.

Every day after the human chain we eat at Sangeori community kitchen. Uncle Jonghwan has been cooking for everybody for over ten years and we are always thankful. On one side you can see photos of activists who have become a part of the history of the movement. When you look at these smiling faces you can feel their liveliness and their zeal. The exact same feeling I see in the ones who are eating together and talking to each other right now. Asking how each other is doing, making plans to hang out. Warmth and Love.

Discussion on a Nuclear-free Korea and Jeju

On April 27, Cheong Wooksik, director of Peace Network and of the Hankyoreh Institute of Peace, was invited to Gangjeong to make a speech on 'The essence and solution of the Korean peninsula nuclear issue: discourse on the Korean peninsula nuclear-free zone.' The speech was followed by participants' discussion on 'how to make Jeju a nuclear-free peace island.' The event was hosted by the World Peace University, a peace education community in Gangjeong formed by The Frontiers. The ROK's Jeju Naval Base is a strategic base for the United States, and a US nuclear submarine and nuclear aircraft carrier already visited in 2017 and 2018, respectively. What would be the way for Jeju to be free from nuclear power, especially under the pro-nuclear right-wing Yoon Suk-yeol government?



The Paschal Triduum (Holy Three Days) events such as Stations of the Cross and mass were held in Gangjeong from April 14 to 16. Photo by Pang Eunmi.

Animal liberation and the peace movement

by Toran

"(While watching the omnibus musical documentary film 'Planet A,') I wept a lot. The tears never stopped running. I felt so much guilt for not recognizing the pain of other beings. I couldn't imagine what they're going through. I cried and cried. [...] The day was full of dynamic energy coming from outside of Gangjeong Village. Nonetheless, that energy is all connected to what's happening in Gangjeong. The root cause is the same. We all want peace, dignity, liberty. Gangjeong people, Gureombi, Koreans or non-Koreans and nonhumans. None of them deserve to be caged, to be killed. We must stand together in solidarity with all beings." - quote from journal on May 13.

"It is our job to listen. Sae-byuk (a 'rescue' pig who now lives in a sanctuary also featured in 'Planet A') has never stopped talking." - quote from Only the Stolen Pig Has Survived by Hyang-gi, Seomnari, and Eunyoung. On the cusp of the beautiful summer season in Jeju, a few visitors brought quite some sensations to Gangjeong. Animal rights activists were here to screen and promote their recent works, music, films, and books, with so much enthusiasm. After screening the film 'Planet A' at Space Bisugi, together with director Haru, Eunyoung and Seomnari joined the talk with the audience. They are co-authors of the book Only the Stolen Pig has Survived, a thorough report about the reality of factory farming of animals.

Many in the audience were deeply moved and expressed sympathy, lament, guilt and awakening. I believe the foundation of the peace movement is to respect all lives in both attitude and actions. However, the non-human right to pursue peace is often erased and not recognized. The peace movement can expand by a constant process of facing and crossing boundaries with polyphonic world views, values and orientations. How can we advocate "peace" without the recognition that our lives are somehow connected to non-humans and are contributing to their abuse? I hope to open a conversation instead of judgement and blame. I want to talk to Gangjeong activists about veganism and the animal rights movement. By doing so, I want to widen and deepen the meaning of peace.

Presente!

On June 9, we got the news that Grandpa Bongjeong, 89 years old, the eldest in Soseong-ri village, Seongju, mainland of Korea, passed away. He always stood in the front of the struggle in opposition to THAAD, a US missile defense (offense) system forcefully installed in Soseong-ri despite residents' strong opposition. We remember him in solidarity with the people of Soseong-ri. As he used to shout, we shout: "Go away, THAAD! Come, Peace!"



Cultural space Gonggan () (it reads "Gonggan Parenthesis") has opened in Gangjeong. It will offer cultural events, drinks, snacks, a vintage shop and a room to stay. Photo by Inhye.



Performance artist Black Jaguar opened a solo exhibition, "Uninvited," at Space Bisugi from June 6-26. The exhibited work contains footage from Metburi near the Jeju Naval Base fence where the artist exposes herself and the deceptiveness of violence. Photo from Black Jaguar.



Koh Gilchun, a Jeju artist, will have a personal exhibition of his serial works on the history of the Gangjeong struggle against the Jeju Naval Base, titled, "The Red Gureombi," at Art Space IAa, Jeju City, from Aug 2-26, 2022. Photo by Choi Sung-hee.

Stop the War in Ukraine!

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

Created and designed by the Gangjeong International Team, special thanks to Everyday Practice.

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Oh Doo-hee holds up a Korea Peace Appeal sign that says, "Let's End the War," at the Spring Wind march on Apr. 30. Learn more about the campaign at endthekoreanwar.net. You can find a statement released at the time of Biden and Yoon's May 21 summit, calling on the two presidents to ease military tensions and pursue diplomacy with North Korea, to create "a truly free and peaceful world order instead of a new Cold War, starting from the Korean peninsula." Photo by Shin Yu-Ah.



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