

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

News on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base

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The land and ocean 'Two Wheels' teams met at the end of the second day. Photo by Jarita.

Two Wheels for the Peace Island Jeju

by Go Gwon-il, Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base

It was “Two Wheels” since it was a trip along the coast of Jeju Island both by bicycle and motorcycle, but it was also two wheels (two times around) since the four day trip was on both sea and land. It was held Aug. 10-13.

Because of COVID 19, the Jeju Grand March for Life and Peace opposing the Jeju Naval Base and the Jeju 2nd airport was paused for two years. Meanwhile, the central and Jeju governments talked about amnesty and reinstatement of Gangjeong villagers and conflict settlement in the village, which is deceptive. However, what we demand is a state-level truth investigation on the state violence during the navy base construction in Gangjeong village. We also demand that the Jeju Naval Base entry road be immediately halted.

Otherwise, the groups opposing the 2nd Airport turned out to be unable to join the event because of other schedules and planting times. However, it was a miracle that Byeopssi school students could join the event. The number of general participants also increased one by one.

On the 1st day when 30 participants joined by bicycle and motorcycle, minor collisions continuously occurred despite being careful. To my relief, the procession finally arrived safely in Seongsan that evening. People in Seongsan who oppose the 2nd airport provided us meals and accommodation.

From the 2nd day, our procession became confident in distance control and speed allocation. However, we ran into a problem as the ocean team sailboat had damage in the hull. We visited the port where the ocean team anchored and encouraged each other. And the trip continued. We were supported by islanders from all quarters who oppose the reckless development of Jeju and the 2nd Jeju airport, and we learned about other opposition movements throughout Jeju. Our four days' march finished safely. The eldest among the participants was Gangjeong villager Mr. Yoon Sang-hyo, at 87 years old. He did not give up and succeeded in safely finishing the course.

After the event, two Byeopssi school students contributed their essays on joining the event to the local media. Their writings on the learning experience of peace were enough to move the Gangjeong villagers. Peace is what moves. We will continue to move next year and after, also. We will continuously deliver our message of peace to the world.

Peace on Two Wheels

by Ana

My first visit to Gangjeong Village, which also happened to be on two wheels, was exactly 10 years before this alternative march. In August 2012, I stepped off the ferry in Jeju City with my bike, having seen only news reports of the struggle against the Gangjeong Naval Base and as yet no other sites of protest in Korea. I arrived in Gangjeong hot and tired from the two-day ride, but quickly energized by the intensity of the movement. I witnessed village grandmothers, young local and international activists, members of various religious communities, and others resisting with their bodies and spirits against a large police force that came to ensure that the naval base construction went ahead as planned. Though I have come back to Gangjeong several times, ironically this was my first



The land team participants pass by the Jeju Naval Base in Gangjeong village on the 1st day. Photo by Pang Eun-mi

participation in an August peace march. I am sad to have missed the “heyday” of the Grand March, and even more sad that the naval base has covered up Gureombi rock and caused irreparable damage to the ecosystem and the local community. Nevertheless, as a current participant in struggles against redevelopment and forced evictions, I am inspired to see the Gangjeong Village peace movement remain strong and connected, with a new generation of activists continuing to move in and grow within this community. The only way to live within the system of militarism and capitalism is to resist it.

On the Jeju Bike March for Life and Peace

by Seohee Park, Byeopssi School

I joined the Jeju Bike March for Life and Peace for the whole journey of three nights and four days. When we were passing by the main gate of Jeju Naval Base, I was scared, to be honest. The atmosphere felt suffocating and the facial expressions of the soldiers felt



Exposed to hot weather, the ocean team soothed their bodies with ocean water. Photo by Jang Joon-hoo

threatening. Frankly, I was intimidated and afraid. As the march went on, however, I was no longer scared. I am proud of myself for shouting out loud for the peace of Jeju Island. I am constantly thinking about how to reach more people with this message. Thanks to the ‘bike march,’ I lived, learned, experienced and changed my mind and action.

So many people supported us while we were riding our bicycles and it made me think. Why is the government not recognizing the voices of such people? Why does the government keep ignoring us when it’s supposed to listen closely to the voices of the people? I became more serious about the subject. During the four days of biking, I grew more determined to keep Jeju Island from mass destruction as it is our habitat and our nest of life.

Koh Gil-cheon's "Red Gureombi" exhibition

By Park Min-hee, Curator, Red Gureombi

"Red Gureombi," a solo exhibition by Jeju artist Koh Gil-cheon and a record of the Gangjeong struggle against the Jeju navy base construction, was held at Art Space IAa from Aug. 2 to 26. The base was completed in 2016, but the artist poked and pried at the serial work "Red Gureombi" for 10 years since 2013. The collection of works got a great response. Around one thousand people visited the show.

I was especially impressed by the young generation in their 20 to 30s. They were either youths or college students when the Gureombi Rock coast was blasted for base construction in 2012. They glimpsed the news but many of them were not aware of the details. Therefore, they were greatly shocked to learn of the state violence against the people, and alarmed to see human rights brutally trampled down for the sake of a state plan. The show was a chance for them to think of the state, military violence, and the savagery of war, and of the background which we seldom question in our daily lives. That is why Koh Gil-cheon focused on this serial work after overcoming a stroke 9 years ago.

Once one enters the show hall full of 84 drawings and paintings, one realizes the urgency, chagrin, injury, loneliness, and anger of the people through the drawings. Even though many of us have never been to Gureombi, we get indirect experience of the struggle through the exhibition. After the show, the whole collection was donated to the St. Francis Peace Center in Gangjeong, by the will of the artist and agreement of the center. I hope the works will tell new stories to more and various viewers.



The Shinzzakkot band had a celebration concert at the opening of "Red Gureombi" on Aug. 6. Photo by Yang Sang.

Gangjeong Peace Center Opening Celebration

by Pang Eun-mi

When I came to Gangjeong in 2011, so many people had come in solidarity that a tent was set up to hold candle-light vigils, cultural events, and religious services at an empty lot in the center of town. As the struggle continued, many people provided support and the villagers constructed a temporary building: the Gangjeong Peace Center. It was a beautiful, historical place, but in 2019, the land was sold and the peace center disappeared.

However, the aspirations of peace loving people did not disappear. In Aug. 2020 fundraising began to build a new peace center. Thanks to material and moral support from people in Jeju and around the world, in Dec. 2020, by the entrance road to the Jeju Naval Base, the Gangjeong Peace Center was newly established. Due to several practical issues, it is just a simple farm structure, but it has been used by Gangjeong villagers and activists for meetings, classes, exhibitions, for hosting guests, and as a garden.

An opening party was postponed several times due to COVID, until finally it was held on Aug. 20, 2022. The event started with music from the Gangjeong choir, Kim Young-tae and Park Swan, and the Shinzzakkot Band, and speeches by representatives of Gangjeong Peace Network, the pan-island and national anti-base committees, and the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base. People marched to the entrance of the base and returned to the peace center for an abundant and healthy dinner. People wrote wishes for peace on traditional papers and lit them with candles as a prayer ceremony. The night continued with villagers and activists' conversation, song, and dance; it was a time of concord and unity.



People involved throughout Gangjeong's 15 year anti-base struggle gathered to celebrate the opening of the new Gangjeong Peace Center. Photo by Kim Jong-hwan.

Joint discussion on conflict areas in Jeju

by Bomal

Civil Politics Solidarity “Jeju Gachi” held a joint discussion session on conflict areas in Jeju society at 1 pm on Aug. 24 at the Jeju headquarters of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

Each panelist presented on a current issue causing conflict in Jeju civil society, such as Gangjeong village residents opposing the Jeju Naval Base and Seongsan-eup residents who are in conflict over the planned construction of the 2nd Jeju airport. Other panelists discussed Bijarim-ro road expansion, the Seogwipo City bypass road, Woljeong-ri, Jeseong village, Seonheul-ri and Songak mountain. Jeju Gachi inquired into the key issues of the conflicts, current updates and the demands of the protesting parties.

Prof. Youngjin Gang, a conflict resolution researcher, took on the role of chairperson and gave a keynote speech to open up the roundtable session while Prof. Yoon Yeoil of Jeju University facilitated the roundtable inviting panelists and the audience to speak.

During the discussion in the second half of the event, there were analyses about why these conflicts form and suggestions for how to process them. According to Prof. Gang’s analysis, the government’s decision making process of ‘Decide-Announce-Defend’ creates more conflict. Also, there are no devices to mediate the needs for profitable development and for ecological conservation. Other panelists raised concerns about village committees’ just representation on behalf of residents, especially when the patriarchal structure still excludes many unmarried women and youths. On top of that, the village committee can easily be subordinated to the government when it comes to financial compensation as presented in certain cases.

In order to create a better process to solve conflicts, Prof. Gang suggested some principles such as the right to self-determination of parties, building consensus, allowing no harm to the local communities and residents.

Presente!



Choi Yong-beom. Photo by Grace

Choi Yong-beom was born in Gangjeong in 1966 and passed away on July 14. He was one of the villagers who fiercely fought against the Jeju navy base, devoting himself as a vice mayor of the village association for years. He was also active in the peasants' movement, working as a vice-chairman and chairman of the Seogwipo Peasants League for years. In 2022, he accepted the position of vice-chairman for the Jeju branch of the Korean Peasants League, joining in the campaign to stop Korea’s participation in CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership), which promotes duty-free and quarantine-free trade and threatens farmers’ lives and people’s right to health. His funeral was hosted by the Jeju Peasants League on July 16.



Jin Kyu-beom. Photo by HSCY

On July 14, Jin Kyu-beom who lived in Hawon, a village next to Gangjeong, and joined in solidarity with Gangjeong, passed away. He was 43 years old. He actively participated in the denuclearization movement, displaced people’s struggles, the struggle against the 2nd Jeju airport, and the dolphin liberation movement. At his cremation in Jeju and funeral in his hometown, Ulsan, many of his friends and colleagues stayed with him, who had silently carried out all his tasks with a laugh that indicated his good nature. I remember his words that “the peace movement is no more important than dish-washing.” (written by e-sang)



Yi Sang-min

Yi Sang-min, a conscientious objector (CO) to military service, supporter of the Gangjeong struggle, and son-in-law to Gangjeong activist Song Kang-ho, passed away in a sudden bicycle accident on August 14. He was 35 years old. He was the first member of a Mennonite church to be imprisoned for conscientious objection in Korea, and received many letters of support from around the world, especially from fellow COs in Colombia. He was a passionate bicyclist, bike mechanic and consultant. He is survived by his wife Shaem and their 3-year-old son. Family and friends from Christian groups and World Without War gathered to process their grief and share support at his funeral.

Making Jeju peaceful for human, cetacean and marine life

by Bomal

You can often see cars and people lined up to see the dolphins along the coastal road of Sindo-ri, Seogwipo, Jeju. There are around 130 wild Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins living near Jeju. Lawyer Woo Young-woo, the main character of the recently popular Netflix K-drama “Extraordinary Attorney Woo” who likes dolphins and whales, made the joyous act of dolphin watching even more popular. Hot Pink Dolphins, a marine environment group that has been campaigning for the protection of dolphins in Jeju for 12 years, advises that the dolphins can be easily observed with bare eyes from the land.

Also, the movement to release the dolphins confined in aquariums, which are often captured illegally, continues. Most recently, it was decided that Bibongi, who was detained at Hoban Group's Pacific Land in Jungmun, Seogwipo, would be released to the ocean of Jeju. Named after being illegally caught near Biyangdo Island, Jeju, Bibongi is now being trained off the coast of Sindo-ri to return to Jeju's wild dolphin pods. It has been reported that groups of wild dolphins regularly visit and communicate with Bibongi near the net cage where Bibongi is staying before release. The research team and activists are working together to observe, record, and prepare for the successful release of Bibongi, who lived in the aquarium for a long time, into the wild.

Despite the heightened interest of citizens and the vigorous efforts of activists, the safety and peaceful lives of Jeju's Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins are under threat. The hazards include reckless development such as the construction of offshore wind power generation, the problem of ocean garbage, and tour boats that violate related laws and approach too close to the dolphins. Dolphins are part of Jeju Island's ecosystem. They do not exist solely for human enjoyment, entertainment and tourism. In order for not only dolphins but also the many living beings that make up Jeju to coexist peacefully, it is necessary to work together by taking action, on top of showing affection.



People watching dolphins on the rocky coast of Sindo-ri. Photo by Hot Pink Dolphins



People calling for Bibongi to be released to the Jeju ocean after 17 years of captivity. Photo by Hot Pink Dolphins

The Power of a Hackberry Tree

In episodes 7-8 of the drama Extraordinary Attorney Woo, the protagonist's law firm represents a village that sues to stop the construction of a highway through their village. They succeed in stopping the construction when the village's hackberry tree is recognized as a natural monument. In real life, Jeju citizens have sued to stop the road expansion at the Bijarim-ro forest, where the fate of a 150 year-old hackberry tree and the surrounding forest remains uncertain, and citizens are hoping that North Jeolla Province's recognition of the 600 year-old hackberry tree in Haje Village as a cultural heritage will help stop the expansion of the US Kunsan Air Base. Can these hackberry trees stop real-life over-development and militarization?

Climate action is not terrorism

Aug. 11 marked one year since Catholic Worker, water protector, and Gangjeong supporter Jessica Reznicek was imprisoned for direct action against the Dakota Access Pipeline in the US. A “terrorism enhancement” harshly increased her sentence to 8 years imprisonment, and in June the appeals court upheld the sentence, claiming that the terrorism enhancement was a “harmless error,” rather than acknowledging that it is a dangerous precedent. Learn more at supportjessicareznicek.com

Trial Update

On Aug. 11, the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal by 8 people who had either climbed up on the canopy of the Jeju provincial hall to hold a press conference or held signs on the steps of the hall in opposition to the Jeju 2nd airport project, in 2019. The higher court had sentenced them to fines with one year's probation in Nov. 2021.

Facing off with gendered militarism

by Curry

World Without War hosted a peace camp titled, "Facing off with gendered militarism" from Aug. 12-15 in Pyeongtaek. The camp started with a tour of the neighborhood outside the gates of Camp Humphries, the largest overseas US military base and the headquarters of the US Forces Korea (USFK). After the Korean War, the Korean government promoted prostitution as a patriotic industry, but the women who contracted STDs were imprisoned. The peace camp visited the "Gijichon Women's Peace Museum" and learned about elderly Korean camp town women who faced discrimination and neglect, but chose to document their histories so future generations could learn from them. We also learned about the work of Durebang (My Sister's Place) which provides counseling for women in camp towns, many of whom now come to Korea from the Philippines on entertainment visas in a system that lends itself to exploitation.

The peace camp was hosted at Pyeongtaek Peace Center in the new Daechu-ri village. Daechu-ri residents had struggled to protect their village and stop the expansion of Camp Humphries from 2004-2006. The new village has a museum chronicling the history of the struggle and a Peace Center for education, and for monitoring and response to problems caused by the military.

In forums, small group discussions, and group activities, we investigated the overlap of militarism and patriarchy using feminist and peace perspectives. Discussion topics included comparing what promotes and threatens individual security versus national security, and strategies to remove each 'pillar' that enables sexual exploitation in camp towns. The camp was a good opportunity for women who made conscientious objection statements to hear feedback about how to promote understanding of and how to expand their campaign.



World Without War peace camp participants visited the camp town outside the entrance of Camp Humphries in Pyeongtaek, where about 10% of the city is made up of US soldiers, base staff and their families. Photo by Curry.



On Aug. 13, thousands of South Koreans rallied and called for war drills to be stopped. Photo by Yonhap News

South Koreans say, "No to War drills!"

By Choi Sung-hee

Next year is the 70th anniversary of the Korean armistice. Instead of a Peace Agreement, there are endless war exercises which block the peaceful reunification of Korea and peace in the region. From Aug. 22 to Sept. 1, Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG), an ROK-US war drill targeting North Korea, followed an all-out war concept and included an array of contingency drills, like concurrent field maneuvers. The aggressive drill bore the risk of nuclear war. The extended deterrence strategy means the US destroying DPRK nuclear missiles when DPRK nuclear use is deemed imminent. Despite the agreements to end hostilities and for phased disarmament in the inter-Korea summit meetings and for denuclearization and building a Korean peninsula peace regime in the DPRK-US summit meeting in 2018, the Moon Jae-in government highly increased the military budget. The current Yoon Seok-yeol government thoroughly adheres to the ROK-US alliance while the Biden government drives for a global alliance through NATO's expansion to the Asia Pacific and the ROK-US-Japan trilateral alliance. Beyond UFG, there have been an endless list of small and big war drills this summer. On Aug. 13, the promotion committee for the August 15 Self-Reliance, Peace, and Unification Rally upon the 77th Anniversary of Korea's Liberation from Japan summed South Koreans' demands which were not well reported in the western media: Stop the ROK-US combined war drill, and resume talks promptly! Implement the ROK-DPRK and US-DPRK joint statements! End the 70 year war and conclude a peace agreement! Stop making the Korean peninsula a war front! Stop the humiliating diplomacy with Japan and realize historical justice with Japan! Oppose the revision of the Japanese Peace Constitution and stop the ROK-US-Japan military cooperation(alliance)!

RIMPAC and what followed

by Curry

Soldiers from 26 countries converged in Hawaii for RIMPAC, the world's largest maritime war exercises, from June 29 to Aug. 4. The South Korean navy sent its largest yet contingent to participate in the biannual war games. Commanded by a Korean admiral, international warships deployed amphibious tanks which practiced invading Bellows Beach. At this very beach, Hawaiian green sea turtles (honu) had been found nesting when RIMPAC war games were limited due to COVID in 2020.

Other environmentally destructive war exercises at RIMPAC included live-fire training, the use of sonar, and the blowing up of multiple decommissioned ships. The US military is given exemptions from wildlife protection laws, though their use of sonar and under-water detonations cause extensive harm to marine life. Pollution of the environment, destruction of cultural sites, and denial of Hawaiian sovereignty are disguised by what Joy Enomoto called 'culturally and ecologically destructive military marketing' (Prism Reports).

RIMPAC exacerbates the impact of militarism in Hawaii. Though comprehensive data on gender-based violence committed by the military has not yet been collected in Hawai'i, the sense of entitlement and normalization of violence by the military has been linked to sexual exploitation. Kim Compoc and Joy Enomoto wrote that "If the bombing of Pu'uoloa (Pearl Harbor) taught us anything, it's when the United States takes your land, you inherit all of America's enemies. From our perspective, islanders are protecting the United States, not the other way around" (Foreign Policy in Focus).

Recently, contamination of the drinking water by leaks at Pearl Harbor's Red Hill fuel tanks has caused distress even among military families. After a massive fuel leak in November last year, Hawaiians responded by building a Ko'a, or shrine, at the entrance of the U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters to hold the navy accountable. Just as RIMPAC started, the shrine was vandalized, but it was rebuilt and people gathered for 'Anahulu at the Ko'a: ten days of ceremonial resistance, including distribution of donated water, art and music, presentations and forums on topics such as "Reclaiming Militarized Hawaiian lands" and "Red Hill and the Myth of National Security." Hawaiian opposition to RIMPAC continued with sign-waving protests, educational events, and street theatre performance (see "Cancel RIMPAC Street Theater" on Kim Compoc's Youtube channel).

Around the Pacific, people shared solidarity through protests, art, and online gatherings. For example, the Gangjeong human chain included protests against RIMPAC during each day of the war games. Youngsolwara Pacific hosted a "Cancel RIMPAC" online exhibition featuring videos, poetry and visual art to "imagine a world that is filled with genuine security, that protects our oceans, our islands and our peoples." During the "Voices of the Pacific: Cancel RIMPAC Solidarity Webinar" hosted by Pacific Peace Network, Tina Grandinetti shared that "We know what a world without RIMPAC could look like... not just because we imagine it, but because we create pockets of it."

RIMPAC was followed by more war games. This year Canada and Australia joined the US, ROK and Japan in the Pacific Dragon missile defense exercise from Aug. 5-15. They practiced using the SM-3 missile to intercept a ballistic missile off Kauai Is., Hawaii. Then from Aug. 21-29, the same countries joined Pacific Vanguard, which included more live-fire missile exercises off of Guam. Unfortunately, the South Korean press celebrated the increasing international activities of the Korean navy. Across the Pacific, pockets of resistance document the effects and highlight the dangers of ever-expanding war preparations. Too often, it takes tragedies like the fuel leaks at Red Hill to catch public attention.



In remembrance of the 77th year since the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, people in Gangjeong demanded that Korea stop all war exercises and join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons. Photo by Pang Eun-mi

Danuri and Space Development

Danuri, South Korea's first Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter was launched at Cape Canaveral, US, in early August. It is one of the first spaceships in the first stage of the US-led Artemis Project, which aims to land the first woman and first person of color on the moon by 2025. Then, NASA plans to build an outpost on the moon for the exploration of deep space. It is no secret that the moon is rich in Helium 3. Article II of the UN Outer Space Treaty reads that, "Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means," and the Moon Treaty prohibits the ownership of moon resources. However, the United States legally acknowledges private corporations' ownership of resources in space and many countries are crazily diving into space development! What should we do?

From Armistice to Peace

July 27 was the 69th anniversary of the armistice that was never followed by a peace treaty to end the Korean War. About a thousand people from all over Korea joined a peace festival hosted by the Korea Peace Appeal Campaign at the DMZ at Imjingak. On July 27, the campaign held a press conference calling on Pres. Yoon Suk-yeol to "Stop the ROK-US combined military exercises that increase tensions on the Korean Peninsula" and "Make efforts to resume dialogues, not prepare for war!" The campaign also sent a letter to



A festival titled, "Gather at the DMZ! From Armistice to Peace!" on July 23 at Imjingak. Photo by the Korea Peace Appeal Campaign.

UN Secretary António Guterres, asking him to facilitate the resumption of talks among the parties to the Korean War, to sign the Korea Peace Appeal, and to investigate and alleviate the effects of UN sanctions on humanitarian aid efforts and on the lives of civilians in the DPRK.

How You Can Join

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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