

THE MOST HONEST THING IS TO ACT

By Lou (Lou is an international volunteer who joined the Gangjeong struggle)

I crossed many rivers to come to Jeju. I came in solidarity thinking that I would document the resistance to the construction of the navy base in Gangjeong vil-lage. Somehow I though I would be able to put some distance between me and my camera and the people I came across. Oh boy, was I wrong.

Today many people ask me how it was. What was South Korea like? What was Jeju like? What was the movement like? What did they do? And I tell them that there is really something quite unique going on there. People come from different backgrounds. At first it seemed like their agendas were different. Some initially say they participate in direct action to fight for the survival of the bottle nosed dol-phin. Some stand in Solidarity for people in prison. Some talk about the future of their children. Some kayak for peace. Some choose not to take part in the actions, but write about them. People like me. Some people cover their faces because they believe they can be of better use to the movement by not being arrested or de-ported. Some follow their faith down to the gates. Some say, “at least I will be able to say that I fought against the construction of the naval base.”

And somewhere in all of this I got it. If you want to live an honest life you have to live by your own standards. If you talk about disobedience as a moral impera-tive, the most honest thing is to act. And the people down in Gangjeong act.



Image: Winter School for Gangjeong Peace

In January and February, the “Winter School for Gangjeong Peace” has held three week-long sessions. Participants, ranging from teens to adults learn about the Jeju and Gangjeong struggles and study peace in theory and practice, through meeting activists and villagers and joining hands on activities and work.

Gangjeong Village Association nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Some peace-loving Koreans and internationals have gathered a petition of sig-natures from eligible nominators and nominated the Gangjeong Village Associa-tion for the Nobel Peace Prize, of which the deadline was February 1. We are very happy to hear this and we request continued support from internationals friends via letter sending to the Nobel Peace Prize Committee in support of the Gangjeong Village Association. Long live the Peace and Life Village, Gangjeong!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- 1. Make a donation to support our international outreach and public education efforts. Visit savejejunow.org to donate. Alternatively, join Gangjeong Friends to give regular support to activists. Contact gangjeongintl@gmail.com for details.
- 2. Write letters to Gangjeong’s prisoners of conscience (See page 3). Address letters to: Jeju Prison, 161 Ora-2dong, Jeju City, Jeju the Peace Island, Korea
- 3. Stay updated on the resistance by joining the “No Naval Base on Jeju!” and “Save Jeju” Facebook pages. Follow @SaveJejuNow for the most recent developments on Twitter. Also watch #gangjeong and #gangjeung - then re-tweet.
- 4. Call the Korean Embassy in your country and let them know that Jeju does not want a naval base! The militarization of Jeju Island runs contrary to its designation as the “Island of World Peace.” 94% of village residents voted no!
- 5. Email Jeju Island Governor Woo Keun-Min and tell him how you feel about the military base being built on the pristine “Island of World Peace”. He should ORDER the navy to halt construction (destruction) and use his official power to cancel the Navy’s license for reclamation of public water and its adjacent surface along the Gureombi Rock coast! Contact him at: lmw2828@jeju.go.kr or jejumaster@jeju.go.kr
- 6. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, talk, etc...). Publicize it, invite your friends, invite the media, and share about it with us on Facebook and other social media sites.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
http://www.savejejunow.org (English / Mandarin / Japanese)
http://www.facebook.com/SaveJeju (English / Korean)
http://www.facebook.com/groups/nonavalbase (English)
http://twitter.com/SaveJejuNow (English)
http://cafe.daum.net/peacekj (Korean / English / Mandarin / Japanese)

For Gangjeong related videos, visit savejejunow.org or check these Youtube sites:
1234y2100 / Dopeheadz / Sungboong2012 / ShealEam / Regis Tremblay

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Yang Yoon-Mo Imprisoned; On 3rd Hunger-Strike

Korean film critic and prominent opponent of the Jeju naval base project, Yang Yoon-Mo was arrested and directly imprisoned from court on February 1, 2013 the conclusion of his own appeal to a previous probation sentences. It is his fourth imprisonment during the anti-base struggle, making him the most fre-quently imprisoned protester of the struggle. The charges, as usual were obstruc-tion of business among other charges, from a number of dates including April 6, 2011. It is unusual that a court would overrule a previous decision to make a sentence heavier on the defendants own appeal, but this exactly what Judge Oh Hyun-Gyu did when he overruled the two previous suspended sentence/proba-tion rulings, handed down on June 1, 2011 and March 20, 2012, and sentenced Prof. Yang to 18 months imprisonment directly from court. This is the first time for such a thing to happen related to the Gangjeong struggle and Prof. Yang is the first person related to the struggle to get a full prison sentence as a final judge-ment.

What is most shocking about the ruling is the reasoning given by Judge Oh. First he was declared a “flight risk”. Prof. Yang, a Jeju native, one of the struggles longest and fiercest members, a man who has given up his career and previous life to live in Gangjeong, and who has no intention of leaving, is a flight-risk? Even more outrageously, Judge Oh stated that the primary reason for imprison-ment was that he “couldn’t see a will for self-examination” in Prof. Yang. In other words, Prof. Yang, wasn’t sorry for what he had done! A person of great prin-ciples, taking a nonviolent stand against a destructive disastrous project, wasn’t sorry for what he had done! Since when must someone be sorry for fighting something they consider unjust?

Article 19 of the Korean Constitution reads: “All citizens have the freedom of conscience.” In 2005, the Constitution Court of Korea ruled that the meaning of that statement was that citizens have the freedom to follow “a strong and sincere call from the heart that the value of one’s own personal existence will be destroyed if not acting as such, in judging right and wrong. Even though [a court] can legally punish an “action,” it should not force in any case to change one’s faith through the use of direct or indirect forceful methods...”

It seems clear to many observers that such a harsh sentence is political retaliation not only against Prof. Yang but aimed at bringing fear to the whole opposition movement. Prof. Yang’s health is in bad condition as he enters yet another fast, following a more than 74 day hunger-strike in 2011, and a 41 day hunger-strike in 2012.



DEMILITARIZED PEACE ISLAND:



THE STRUGGLE TO RECLAIM JEJU

By Song Kang-Ho, Save Our Seas

January 27, 2013 was the 8th anniver-sary of the Korean government’s dec-laration of Jeju as the “World Peace Is-land.” The peaceful people of Jeju have long been oppressed by the hegemonic military pursuits of others. The Jeju 4.3 Massacre with over 30,000 innocent vic-tims is but one example of this painful history.

At the beginning, the Jeju peace island discussion was based on the demilitar-ization of Jeju. But now, 8 years later, a huge naval base is being constructed and the construction of an air-force

base and expansion of marine facilities are under consideration by the govern-ment.

We, 111 people, who are afraid of the new fortification and re-militarization of Jeju Island and who believe Jeju Island must be an authentic peace is-land through demilitarization and ac-tive peace-making, gathered on January 27, at the historical 4.3 Peace Park, to declare, “Jeju Island is a Demilitarized peace island!”

But we have decided that we will not realize a demilitarized peace island with neither military bases nor forced mili-

tary service with an event, but through the continuous practice of peace. We will meet again on March 1st, to con-firm our decision and realize our will, and to share the movement with more people. March 1st is the memorial day of the declaration of Korean indepen-dence, pursued through nonviolent struggle, against the military violence of Japanese imperialism. And we will hold our meeting in front of the “Kwanduk-jung” where so many innocent Jeju is-landers were killed by the violence of the central government. We will do this to remember their holy sacrifice and to

expel forever the unjust violence of sol-diers and police through the peaceful civil resistance of Jeju Island.

We will also emphasize the issue of the release of Mr. Yang Yoon-Mo, who was arrested in court and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for ob-structing the naval base construction in Gangjeong. Even now he is fight-ing against the re-armament of Jeju through prison hunger strike. We hope that more and more people will join us to remember the victims of peaceful conscientious objection and to prevent further victims of militarism.

IS SAMSUNG ABOVE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY & THE LAW?

“There is nothing we can do since the company said it should carry out the construction.” On Janu-ary 23rd, Kim Kwan-Jin, Minister of National Defense made this excuse regarding Samsung as the reason for the continued construction despite the National Assembly’s decision to cease construc-tion for 70 days. This time was to fulfill the demand for a re-verification of the base design as a civilian/military dual use port with the ability to dock two 150,000 ton cruise ships. The minister made this remark during a meeting with 12 National Assembly members who met with him in protest of the continued construction and the navy’s humiliating of 6 National Assembly members who attempted to visit the construction site on January 22. The navy closed and locked the gate as they attempted to visit the base project offices. On January 10, two National assembly members were also roughed up by the police in front of the illegal construction gate.

Meanwhile, on January 17 and 18, the government supposedly held a hurried, closed room simu-lation of the base layout and then on January 31st, the office of the Prime Minister and the Jeju Island government released a statement saying that according to rushed simulation, there was “no problem” with the entry and exit of 150,000 ton cruise ships. However, a close examination of the official report and the massively flawed base layout reveals that in all likelihood the port will not properly function as a civilian or military port.

On February 5th, Jeju governor, Woo Keun-Min confirmed that he would enforce the so-called “civilian-military complex for tour beauty” according to the wishes of the incoming Park Guen-Hye government. Still his wish for a special cruise zone seems to clash with the Navy’s greed to become a “Ocean Power.” as stated by Naval Chief of Joint Operations, Choi Yoon-Hee, on February 7.

Finally, in the village, in response to the failure to stop for the required 70 days, the villagers and activists have been vowed to do 30,000 bows for peace and life in front of the construction gates. Villagers have also attempted to hold a meeting with the Presidential Transition Committee of the incoming Park Geun-Hye government, but their attempts were rejected. Park’s regime is expected to continue the government’s close affiliation with Samsung, the primary construction company of the naval base and Korea’s largest corporation.

An important new full length documentary from director Regis Tremblay needs your support!

Jeju
in the crosshairs of war.

A 90-minute feature-length documentary, formed from countless hours of rarely seen historical footage, photos and documents; new footage taken in Gangjeong and Jeju by the director and activists; interviews with Pulitzer Prize winner Charles Hanley and leading Korean history scholar Prof. Bruce Cumings; and more. The story of Gangjeong will be viewed close up as well as placed in both a historical context and in the context of current U.S. geo-political domination.

To watch a preview, learn more & donate, please visit:
www.indiegogo.com/savejeju

Words from Gangjeong Reveal Sources of Strength

By Coco (Coco is an international volunteer who joined the Gangjeong struggle)

- 1. “The more joyful, the more powerful.”—Mr. Rhee
- Singing, dancing, painting a world of sea creatures on the construction site gate—all uplift the human spirit. We feel less weary. And it helps the nonviolent movement to attract a diverse community of participants from teenagers to professionals, clergymen to tangerine farmers. When the Save our Seas (SOS) team takes the struggle to the sea in colorful kayaks, they paddle against strong winds and demand their right to be on the water. Coast Guard boats motor nearby, military divers grab their kayaks and kick swimmers underwater, but still the SOS team members laugh as they splash in the Gangjeong Sea. “Always water makes us happy,” said Song Kang Ho.
- 2. “I hope to protect Gangjeong village, so I come here every day, and I hope to block the car just one day, or just an hour, or one second.”—Jane

Each delay of a cement truck to the construction site is significant. During one such delay, a police officer turned and took a long look at one of the anti-base banners tied to the bridge. He seemed to be reading it. I don't know what the police officer was thinking, but the truck stoppage created a space for thinking. Each disruption of work creates these spaces. Peacekeepers returning day after day, being a persistent presence at the gates, make the achievement of small goals, and ultimately a large common one, possible.

- 3. “To honor our descendants, we cannot stop our fighting.”—Mayor Kang Dong-Kyun

The choices made today—whether disturbing the habitat of an endogenous species or slashing the social fabric of a tight-knit community—will impact those who come after us. Our responsibility to be good stewards of the land must inform our decisions. As one banner says, make each flower, each stone precious.

Thank you, my teachers.



Images: Armed Forces of the Philippines
The USS Guardian, shortly after crashing into the Tubbataha reef.



Image: Save Our Seas
Construction workers dump unwashed rocks over the side of a barge, without a silt protector curtain or a fall pipe, completely ignoring environmental regulations, including their own mentioned in the Navy's EIA.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION DISREGARD CONTINUES

On Wednesday, January 23rd, two members from the SOS (Save Our Seas) ocean activism and environmental monitoring team took a kayak and went out to monitor the construction in the sea and also check the silt protectors surrounding the construction site. Although they were not blocked by the coast guard, the scene was quite comedic as the whole time they were surrounded on all sides by 8 coast guard motorboats. As the coast guard boats surrounded them and recorded their every action, they stupidly, completely ignored the massive amount of environmental regulation violations going on right next to them.

As usual, the silt protectors, chronically mis-installed and/or damaged, were unsurprisingly damaged and mis-installed. This despite the words of Samsung-contracted Gun Young Engineering's construction supervisor Mr. Yoon Hyeon-Tak who, on Nov. 29, 2012, said under oath in court that silt protectors are “visually inspected almost everyday”.

Further, according to the Navy's own (deeply flawed) pre-construction environmental impact assessment, when stones and rubble are dropped into the sea they will use the “fall pipe method”. The rocks are also supposed to undergo a special washing process before being placed on the sea floor by the fall pipes. Mr. Yoon says they began installing them in October 2012. Fall pipes are a system of belts and long pipes used to contain sediment and dust pollution during construction, by placing the rocks near the ocean floor rather than just tossing them over the side of a boat. Wow, started in October, then they should be done by now, right? But actually using fall pipes would be time consuming and expensive, not to mention somewhat environmentally responsible and legal. As would washing the rocks. Thus are untreated rocks simply dumped over the side of barges. Today and everyday. And the pattern of environmental disregard continues on.

Severe Judicial Oppression Fought with Healing Hands

After the presidential elections, the fines against villagers and activists have been soaring. From January to mid-February alone, around 100 people have been on trial with combined total fines of approximately \$90,000 USD. Many people have more than 2 trial cases concurrently and the average fines against activists has been about \$3000-4000 USD. On January 31st alone, the combined total of fines against 18 villagers and activists was approx. \$30,000 USD. On that day, Mr. Go Gwon-Il, Chairman of the Villagers' Committee to Stop the Naval Base and Dr. Song Kang-Ho were given sentences of 6 months imprisonment suspended, and 1 year probation for their protest of illegal barge construction in June of 2011. Gangjeong Mayor, Kang Dong-Kyun was given an approx. \$7000 USD fine, while others involved got approx. \$4000, \$2000, \$1000, or \$700.

Since the start of the struggle in 2007 until February of 2013, the total amount of fines for anti-base protest is approximately \$450,000 USD in addition to damage compensation fee of approx. \$30,000 USD. A total of around 700 arrests have been made with 500 indictments and 22 people imprisoned.

Not only excessive fines but lengthy sentences have been handed out. On February 6, Kim Bok-Chul, released on bail on January 3 after 202-days imprisonment, was given 10 months imprisonment with a suspended sentence and 3 years probation. On February 15, five protestant pastors were sentenced to 1 year imprisonment with a suspended sentence and two years probation for protests against the blasting of Gureombi last spring.

In good news, Paco, the first international to stand trial for the struggle, was given a suspended sentence and probation on February 8. He was charged with obstruction of business. It is a shame that the South Korean government oppresses even internationals with nonsense charges.

Otherwise, it was proven that the construction companies demolition attempt of tents and other facilities on May 19, 2011 was illegal, hopefully this will be remembered by the navy and the construction companies as a warning. Still the court ruled on the appeal that Choi Sung-Hee was still guilty but made a small reduction to her sentence.

Finally, in the face of mountains of fines for those in the Gangjeong struggle, supporters have been volunteering to raise money to cover the fines. Oh Young-Ae, the mother of young activists Kim Gami, has opened a traveling “healing” snack stall, with profits going to the fines. The activists themselves are also making tangerine jam to sell for support. Although these efforts are small, people's support for each other is a candle of hope, helping to break through our common difficulties of the struggle.



Image: Mooning
Volunteers promoting membership with “Gangjeong Friends” to raise financial support for the enormous fines of suffering Gangjeong activists. Contact gangjeongintl@gmail.com if you would like to be a Gangjeong Friend!

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Please write letters of support to

Since Sept. 14

No. 200

Mr. Park Seung-Ho

Since Feb. 1

No. 301

Mr. Yang Yoon-Mo

Jeju Prison, 161, Ora-2 dong, Jeju City, Jeju, Korea



Image: Gangjeong Village Story
A Japanese Catholic delegation, including 7 bishops and 3 priests, visited Gangjeong and joined the mass at the construction gates. Here they meet Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyeon and other Gangjeong Catholics and friends.

Park Seung-Ho Released From Prison after 144 days

By Kang Dong-Seok

Park Seung-Ho, originally from Busan, but now living in Gangjeong, was released from prison on February 5th. He was arrested at the Joongdeok three way-intersection on September 14, 2012 for continuously ignoring police inquiries for investigations into accusations against him. Although his trial is still ongoing, he was in prison pre-conviction for a total of 144 days. On February 8th he visited Prof. Yang Yoon-Mo along with recently released, former Gangjeong political prisoners, Kim Bok-Chul and Park Suk-Jin.

INTERVIEW WITH RELEASED PRISONER, KIM BOK-CHUL

Q: You were recently in prison for more than 200 days. Tell us about prisoner's rights and what things were most difficult for you there?

I was imprisoned for a long time, 202 days, on false charges. During that time I didn't get any payment as I was put on a 6 month leave of absence without pay from work. During the second month of imprisonment I requested bail but it was dismissed, saying I was a flight risk and also might seek revenge. I needed medical care for asthma and pulmonary emphysema but I couldn't get the proper treatment in prison. My oldest son entered mandatory military service in September of 2012, but I could see him. My daughter needed my help to enter college. My youngest child, 7 years old, also needs a father's care but I couldn't do anything for 202 days.

There are about 250 prisoners on trial in Jeju Prison. Each of us is given only one set of clothes so we can't really wash them often. According to regulations, two sets of clothes should be provided but I was told that I would get two sets later, only after appealing and petitioning. Twice a week, prisoners can purchase goods but there are not many options and most are made in China. Jeju Prison is an old building with no heating system in the rooms of prisoners on trial, so it is very cold in the winter. According to regulations, the prison should provide hot water for bathing more than once a week but they only gave us hot water once a week, so even healthy people easily get worse health the longer they stay there. The Judiciary makes people's self-defense weak by first putting them in prison during their trial, rather than helping people prepare for their trials without detention. I hope that the facilities and environment for prisoners can improve so that they can at least have a minimally human life. I appealed and petitioned to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, the Ministry of Justice, and the Board of Audits and Inspections. I checked the Administrative Procedures Guide Board of Corrections, but not many guidelines were kept. In the future I will do my best to petition and appeal for the improvement of prisoners' rights.

Q: Please tell us about your trial schedule, if you have any future plans, and anything else you'd like to say.

I have two different on going trials regarding the Gangjeong naval base struggle. One has been submitted for final appeal and one just finished the first sentencing and the appeal process is starting. I'm thinking about making the police and prosecution take legal responsibility to end illegal arrests and long imprisonment periods during trials. Especially, regarding my arrest for Obstruction of Business on June 14, 2012, I'm going to make Goo Seul-Hwan, Chief of Security of the Seogwipo police, who ordered my arrest, take legal responsibility through a civil and criminal suit. I desperately oppose the building of a war base on Jeju, the Peace Island. I will keep fighting until the naval base construction plan goes back to square one. I love very much the defenders of Gangjeong who have been together with me to save Gureombi. I feel honored that I was with them during this struggle. We love Gureombi! No Naval Base!