

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

Published by Gangjeong Village in Jeju, South Korea

October/
November
2018



The Nightmare of a Fleet Review in Jeju

While mines were being removed in the Korean DMZ to carry out the will of the Sept. 19 inter-Korean Summit meeting, Jeju, the World Peace Island, and its sea suffered from the visits of more than 40 warships which included 19 warships from 13 foreign countries and even the USS Ronald Reagan, the first nuclear aircraft carrier to enter the Jeju navy base.

From Oct. 10 to 14, the South Korean Jeju Navy Base hosted the 2018 International Fleet Review joined by representatives of 40 countries. The fleet review's title, "Jeju, Where Peace Starts," evoked people's fierce protest with anger, frustration and sadness. While the UNESCO-designated sea was suffering from the noise, smoke, leaked oil and strange water coming out of these warships, the

representatives of the village anti-base committee were forcefully stopped by the police on their way to the new luxurious community hall to protest against President Moon Jae-in who was making a deceptive apology for the undemocratic procedures of the Jeju navy base construction.

In their two weeks of protests day and night against the fleet review, the people's legal gathering and picketing were interrupted many times by police, as well as by the navy, who mobilized soldiers and thugs to stop people's legal activities and even illegally collected photos of people while the police overlooked it.

Otherwise, it was not a 150,000 ton cruise but a US nuclear aircraft carrier which became the 1st ship to officially use the cruise terminal, the civilian part

of the so-called Civilian-Military Complex Port for Tour Beauty, another name for the Jeju navy base. The fraudulence of the Civilian-Military Complex Port was clear this time. The US soldiers who made up more than 60% of the total 10,000 international soldiers were especially rude. One of them even called us 'slaves.' During the protest against them, one male villager was arrested then released the next day, while a female villager was carried out by ambulance twice and the finger of a female activist was broken. But we were not alone. 435 internationals including Prof. Noam Chomsky signed our petition against the fleet review, which was more of a declaration of the South Korean Jeju navy base as a de-facto US base. Our task to close the Jeju navy base and to demilitarize Jeju and its seas is more urgent than ever.

Images by Oum Mun Hee, Shin Yu-Ah, Choi Hye Young, Hantol and Yonhap News
Article by Choi Sung-hee

South Korea to have blue-water navy, imperialist ambitions?

Article by Joyakgol

Soon after the international fleet review was over, the South Korean navy officially announced its plan to launch a "blue-water" naval fleet, capable of conducting military operations in the high seas globally. The navy says it will create an Aviation Command along with the Fast Carrier Command which consists of three fast attack squadrons with Aegis battleships, advanced destroyers and 3,000 ton submarines that will use the Jeju naval base as a home port. The Fast Carrier Command, Aviation Command, and Submarine Command will form the 2nd Operation command.

The creation of a new ROK navy expeditionary fleet will most likely contribute to an arms build-up in the region with military spending sharply increasing each year. We already witness intensified militarization and base construction on the islands and seas of Asia.

Japan did not participate in the fleet review because of the controversy in Korea over its navy's use of the imperial Rising Sun Flag. China also decided not to send its Aegis warship to the fleet review in defiance after ROK battleship Munmu the Great's intrusion into the disputed sea territory near the Paracel Islands. The US and China are standing toe to toe with their warships in the sea.

Generally, building a blue-water navy is regarded as an ambition of imperialist countries. Under this new cold war era, we don't want to conduct military operations

it's the normal citizen's job to say no to the desire for military expansionism and to limit the ROK navy's role to defend its coastal waters. We have to make South Korea give up the plan and eventually scrap the unnecessary Jeju naval base.



During the Fleet Review, the Jeju naval base was open to the public, only to be criticized for its insensitive encouragement of children to bear arms with the soldiers. It is a violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. / Photos by Joyakgol

Resisting Empire in the 21st Century

I attended the Council for World Mission international conference on “Resisting Empire And Militarization: Reasserting The Sacredness Of Seas, Lands And Lives” in Seoul from October 20 to October 22. I could not understand why they were still using the word ‘empire,’ because I thought the imperial period had already ended. However, as I listened to the presentations, I came to understand. Peace activists from Kashmir and Manipur said that they repeatedly experienced violence from the Indian government. I thought that the Indian government had learned such violence from their colonizer Great Britain. A Sri Lankan peace activist shared about the massacre of Tamils by the Sinhalese government with the support of Great Britain and the USA. A Thai professor said that the Thai government committed violence against Muslims in the south of Thailand. A Burmese professor shared about ethnic cleansing of Rohingya people by the Myanmar government. I thought that the Thai government and the Myanmar government had also learned such violence from Great Britain. I said that the Jeju Naval Base would be a US naval base. Two professors from Okinawa shared about the Japanese and American militarization of Okinawa. A peace activist from Guam shared about the militarization of Guam by the USA and a peace activist from Papua shared about the colonization of Papua by the Indonesian government. I realized that empire was still alive in the 21st century. It seems that the above-mentioned empires avoid using the word, ‘empire.’ However, they are still empires even though they pretend not to be.

Delivery of Jeju April 3rd Petition to the US embassy

On Oct. 31, South Korean civic groups such as the Association for the April 3 Bereaved Families, the Pan-National Committee for the 70th Anniversary of Jeju April 3 and the Jeju April 3 Memorial Project Committee delivered to the US embassy in Seoul the petition demanding the United States acknowledge responsibility for Jeju April 3rd and was signed by nearly 110,000 people. The group stated that ‘April 3 [1948] was an incident in which over 30,000 Jeju residents lost their lives due to mistaken actions by public authorities at a time when a US military advisory group had control over the South Korean military during the period of US military administration rule [and continuing] after the formation of the South Korean government.’



The kayak team was credited in some news sources with delaying the entry of the USS Ronald Reagan nuclear aircraft carrier into the navy base. Whether that is true or not, the presence of 20 people on 17 kayaks at the start of the Fleet Review kept the coast guard busy towing kayaks away from the navy base, and the small hand-powered boats holding signs representing local endangered species crying out against war and warships raised a large voice for peace in the Gangjeong seas. From practice on Oct. 10 to the departure of the USS Ronald Reagan on the 16th, there were 6 sea-protests during 7 days./Photos by Mooming and hotpinkdolphins.

Korea and the war in Yemen

Korean companies participate in arms sales in Saudi Arabia, UAE and other Middle Eastern countries, and the result is that Hanhwa fragmentation hand grenades, LIG anti-tank guided missiles and other Korean-made weapons are being used in the war in Yemen. World Without War activist Jjuya inquired with the government about the extent of these arms sales, but the reply just said there was “reason to worry that the information could cause noticeable harm to the profits of corporations [and] of the state.” On Nov. 20, Minbyun, Civilian Military Watch, World Without War, and PSPD held a press conference at the National Assembly calling for Korea to stop the dispatch of the Korean “Akh Unit” who have trained UAE forces which have joined Saudi Arabia’s coalition in the war in Yemen. They made the connection that "Since Korea is making a negative impact in the Yemeni civil war through the dispatch of the Akh Unit and through increasing defense industry exports, hundreds of Yemeni refugees have fled their homes on the other side of the world and come to Korea because of the war and bombings.” Meanwhile, 362 out of 481 Yemenis who applied for refugee status in Jeju this year were given “humanitarian stay” permits, which gives them the right to leave Jeju and to stay in Korea on a yearly basis until the end of the war in Yemen. It does not allow their families to join them and does not grant them health care benefits or the right to higher education. 34 applications were denied and 85 are still waiting for results. The refusal to grant refugee status to any one of the Yemenis who came this year to Jeju is clearly political and completely ignores the danger that they would likely face returning home, even after the armed conflict ceases.



The International Fleet Review was tarnished with marine pollution from the warships, such as oil leaks, hundreds of trash bags thrown from the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and the Korean government's indifference towards possible environmental contamination. Photos by Joint Action Against the International Fleet Review

International Solidarity



US and German church members visit Gangjeong

We appreciate the recent solidarity visits by international church members. On Oct. 26, twelve delegates of Ludwigsburg Church, Germany, visited Gangjeong, along with eight Presbyterian pastors of Jeju Love Mission, Korea. During their three days in Seoul and Jeju, they also visited the April 3rd Peace Park. On Nov. 10, eleven people from the 2018 Presbyterian Peacemaking Travel Study Seminar, organized by the Presbyterian Church (USA), visited Gangjeong, listened to stories of the anti-base struggle and joined the daily human chain. It was a part of their 11 day visit to Korea, including the DMZ, the weekly protest for Korean “comfort women,” and the No Gun Ri memorial.

MD system extension in South Korea

Lately, it was exposed that the South Korean government has been preparing for the introduction of SM 3 (Standard missile 3) without public knowledge for more than a year. SM 3, produced by Raytheon (and some by Mitsubishi also), is sea-based and one of the key elements of the US-led missile defense system which is a de-facto offense system. The government asserts that it is to defend South Korea from North Korean ballistic missiles, but given the short length of the Korean peninsula, its real purpose -despite its suspicious technical

function- will be to protect Japan and the United States. The introduction of SM 3 could be very related to the Jeju navy base as it homeports the three biggest South Korean Aegis destroyers which can load SM 3 after improvements. Otherwise, on Oct. 26, Jeong Kyeong-doo, Minister of National Defense said that THAAD will be officially deployed after the general environmental impact assessment. It made furious the people of Soseong-ri in Seongju, Korea, who continue to demand the withdrawal of THAAD. Not only that, the sale of 64 PAC 3 missiles in South Korea

has been approved. Now with the decision to introduce SM 3, the US-led multilayer missile defense system in South Korea will be extended. In the ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) on Oct. 31, U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis ‘reaffirmed the continued U.S. commitment to provide extended deterrence to the ROK using the full range of military capabilities, including U.S. nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities’ which goes against the Panmunjeom and Pyeongyang declarations, as well as the NK-US Summit meeting in Singapore this June.

By Choi Sung-hee

Bijarim Road and the 2nd Jeju airport project

Bijarim road in the northeast of Jeju has been called one of the most beautiful roads in South Korea, but 915 cedar trees were cut down this August as part of a road expansion plan. Further, it is suspected that the plan is connected to the 2nd Jeju airport (air force base) project planned in Seongsan, farther to the east. Civic groups such as the ‘Citizen Gathering to Protect the Bijarim Road’ have recently exposed that the project is entangled with many economic and political interests under the pretext that it was the related residents’ long-cherished wish. Thanks to people’s protest, the construction was paused for a while. However, Island governor Won Hee-ryong recently stated again his will to open the 2nd Jeju airport in 2025 . And the Island government announced the plan to resume expansion construction starting February, next year. Otherwise, the Seongsan-cup Committee against the 2nd Jeju Airport Project and Islanders’ Campaign against the 2nd Airport Project recently exposed that the government’s past research on the validity of the location has been critically manipulated.

Navy Mobilized to Intervene in Workers' Strike

According to the South Korean weekly magazine ‘Sisa In’ on Oct. 19, the South Korean navy intervened in the Ssangyong automobile workers’ strike in 2009. Testimony has been given that National Security Command and National Intelligence Service members have intervened at the Ssangyong workers’ sit-in site, but it is the first time that the navy’s intervention was exposed in a written document. A National Assembly member from the ruling Democratic Party of Korea secured a document from the Gyeonggi Provincial Police Agency in which Pyeongtaek Police Station listed a navy soldier to be awarded with the Chief’s letter of appreciation for his mobilization in work related to the Ssangyong workers' strike. Certainly, the navy’s job should never be related to such labor disputes.

Trial Updates



▶ On Oct. 17th, the Jeju local court made rulings on twelve people. Most of them had been charged with obstruction of business or obstruction of justice in 2012 when they joined the Catholic mass and were charged for interrupting the passage of base construction vehicles. The judge dismissed most charges of obstruction of business as the digital files provided by the navy could not be acknowledged as evidence since the originals were lost. He also said that construction workers’ statements were not enough to prove the charges. However, court decisions of six months imprisonment suspended with two years probation or a year imprisonment suspended with two years were applied to other charges. Villager Kim Jong-hwan and activist Go Gwang-sung got sentenced with a year imprisonment suspended with two years for the charge of obstruction of justice. They resisted to the demolition of the villagers’ sit-in tent in May 2013. Even when the court ruled people not guilty on the charges of obstruction of justice, the audience in the courtroom later expressed their anger saying that it should have happened six years ago.

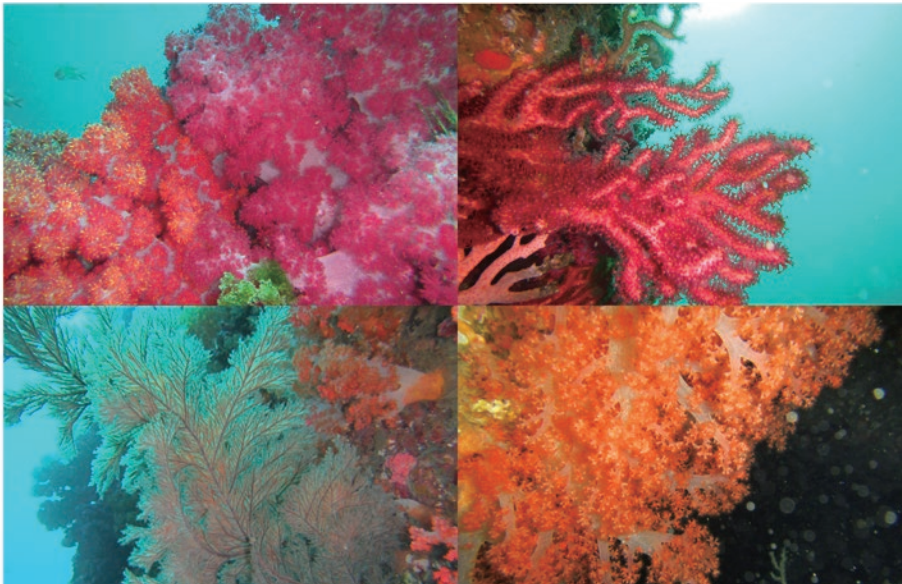
▶ On Nov. 1, the Jeju local court sentenced Fr. Mun Jeong-hyeon with 2 million KRW in fines on charges of obstruction of business and obstruction of justice, etc. He was charged for stopping the passage of base construction vehicles during the period from August 2, 2012 to April 7, 2014.

(Part of this text is based on the Korean language monthly Gangjeong Village Story)

By Lee Kirak, Alternative Military Service Team advocacy

For more than Recognition of Conscientious Objection

On Nov. 1, the South Korean Supreme Court acquitted a conscientious objector for the first time, ruling that disobeying military recruitment for reasons of conscience was justified. This historic ruling followed a June 28 ruling by the Constitutional Court that gives the government until the end of 2019 to introduce alternative service for conscientious objectors. While it is expected that the court’s recognition of conscientious objection as a human right will ultimately end the ongoing imprisonment of young men, around 100 conscientious objectors still remain imprisoned and more than 900 cases are pending in the courts. In the past 68 years nearly 20,000 young men have been sentenced to prison in South Korea for exercising their right to conscientious objection. Recognition of conscientious objection as a legally protected right has been achieved in large part through a decade and a half of dedicated activism by conscientious objectors and peace activists. While the most important step in the short run is to ensure that a non-punitive alternative service that conforms to international human rights standards is introduced by 2020, perhaps the most important question for the peace movement now is how to channel this momentum into a wider movement for demilitarization.



On November 13, the Gangjeong soft coral research team dove to investigate the conditions of the corals in the Gangjeong sea, which are being threatened with plans for dredging a new route into the navy base. They documented the presence of endangered species at the planned dredging site. The world's largest soft coral garden (Korean Natural Monument #442 and a part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve) is under continual threat by the base. Photos by Choi Hye-young

By Curry

Remembering Yang Yong-Chan

This year there were several events to remember the legacy of Martyr Yang Yong-chan (1966~1991) who self-immolated in protest against the destruction to the Jeju environment and democracy which he foresaw as a consequence of the Jeju Special Law. Along with a movie screening, a hike to visit sites of environmental destruction, a concert and a drawing competition, there was a memorial at the grave of Yang Yong-chan. After the ceremony, Yang Yong-chan's childhood friend, Kim Seong-han, and director of the play about him "Love, or How to Love," Pang Eun-mi, lovingly pulled weeds from the grave.

No Bases Conference in Dublin

Close to 300 participants from over thirty-five countries attended the first International Conference against US/NATO Military Bases on November 16-18 in Dublin, Ireland. While opposed to all foreign military bases, the participants called especially for the closure of the nearly 1000 US/ NATO bases around the world, “pillars of global imperialist domination” which are “the main threat to peace and humanity.” These bases take control of host countries’ "energy resources, transport roads, markets and spheres of influence, in clear violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.” Future events include mobilizations against NATO’s 70th anniversary Summit in Washington DC, on April 4, 2019, and the Sixth International Seminar for Peace and the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases, May 4-6, 2019, in Guantanamo, Cuba.

Gangjeong Activists receive the “Red Award”

On Nov. 6 the Culture and Arts Committee of the Korean Labor Party awarded the Gangjeong activists (known as Jikimi, or protectors) their seventh annual “Red Award for the category of “Remarkable Form.” Choi Hye-young, director of Gangjeong Friends, and fellow ‘Jikimi’ Joan attended the ceremony to receive the award, which recognized how the activists “exposed the hypocrisy of the Navy’s International Fleet Review with song and dance, and made visible the state violence that continues even after the change of administrations.”



From November 5 to 16, Oum Mun Hee's photography exhibit "The Two" was on display at Story WABAN cultural space in Seogwipo City. She chose photos that illustrate the daily life of the Gangjeong struggle since the opening of the base in 2016. Just barely visible in the photo above, the door painted on the base construction fence inspired Oum Mun Hee to consider how our actions can be a door to open the Gangjeong struggle to the world.

The Closure of Peace Book Café

If you have ever visited Gangjeong, you could see a small beautiful Peace Book Café across from the Peace Center. In 2013, Korean writers nationwide initiated a book village project in solidarity with the Gangjeong struggle. The center of the project was the Peace Book Café, but the space will not be available any more, so it will close this year. On Nov. 24, villagers, peace activists, supporters, and writers had a closing event there, remembering all the people and events of the last five years. Even though the Book Café is closed, other spaces related to the project will be maintained.

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>

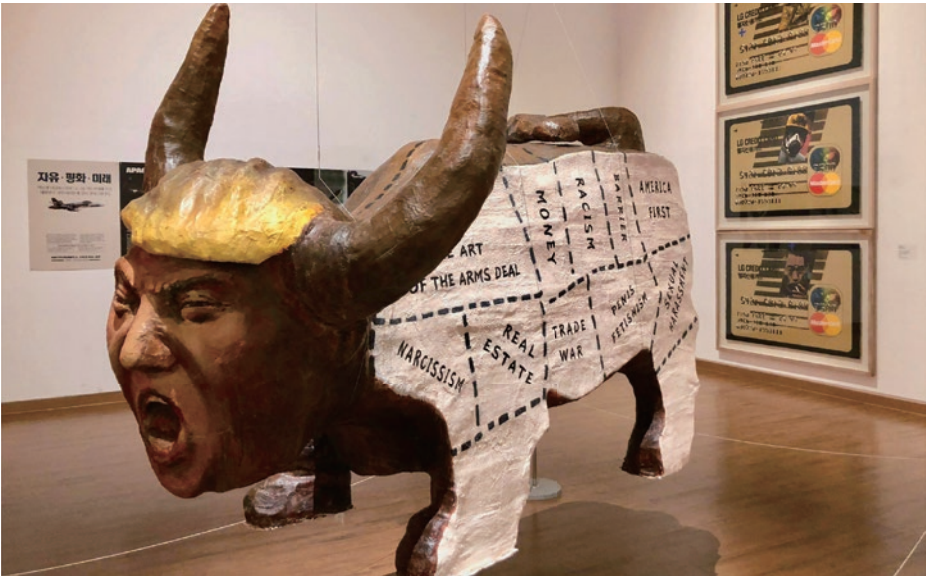
For Gangjeong related videos, visit savejejunow.org or check these Vimeo/Youtube users :

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.
- Published by the Association of Gangjeong Villagers Against the Jeju Navy Base, 596 leodo-ro, Gangjeong-dong, the Life and Peace village, Seogwipo-si, Jeju, the Peace Island, Korea 63563
Email: gjengnews@gmail.com
- Special thanks to Gangjeong Friends for financial support.



Gangjeong activist and photographer Yang Sang had a photo exhibition titled “Sorrowfully Beautiful” in the Peace Center from Sept. 4 to Oct. 31. He expressed the pain of witnessing the destruction of Jeju’s nature by reckless development such as that of Bijarim-ro. A talk with the artist was held on Oct. 31. Photo by Andy.



In the Jeju Museum of Contemporary Art from Nov. 7, 2018 to Jan. 13, 2019, Jeju-born artist Koh Gilchun's solo show titled, ‘Seeing,’ features more than 60 of his works from the last 28 years, including those before and after his cerebral hemorrhage in 2013. The subjects are April 3rd, Gangjeong, politics and ecology. Inspired by the “Charging Bull” sculpture on Wall Street, the work, “Trump Beefs,” made this year, summarizes ten concepts which he thinks could describe Trump. Photo by Kim Man



The opening ceremony of Jeju Dolphin Center, headquarters of Hot Pink Dolphins' marine environmental movement, was held on Oct. 28 with a hundred participants. Photo by Yang Sang

- In memory of **Cho Hyun-chul** (1987.6.24 - 2018.11.13) whose dedicated service in Soseong-ri in the fight against THAAD was abruptly cut short by cardiac arrest.
- In memory of **Kim Pan-tae** (1965.3.24- 2018.10.14), Gunsan SPARK representative whose dedicated service in the struggle against THAAD and the Jeju navy base was also cut short by cancer.

