# GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

December 2015

Monthly news on the struggle against the Jeju Naval base project

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## Gangjeong Struggle will not stop here

Image by Lee Wooki

Cho Kyung-Chul, the current village mayor was re-elected as mayor for the next two years on the rainy day of December 16. Around 400 of 1,000 village electorates gathered for the vote, which was the 2nd biggest meeting for an election since Aug. 10, 2007 when more than 430 electorates gathered to vote for Kang Dong-Kyun for mayor. Cho, a strawberry farmer and former co-vice mayor, has been the mayor since December 2013, following after Kang Dong-Kyun. On December 16, there were three candidates including Cho. In the first vote no candidate received more than half the votes so a 2nd vote was held between the top two candidates, Cho and a 2nd candidate. The result was only an 18 vote gap between the two with Cho Kyung-Chul being re-elected as the mayor.

After the announcement of his re-election Cho wrote to his village electorate, "I have realized through this election that even though the naval base is close to completion, the three candidates, regardless of whether they are for or against the base, all of us consider the destruction of the Gangjeong sea and Gureombi rock painful and we acknowledge that villagers have made a noble sacrifice to save the village community. Furthermore, we resolutely refuse the navy's attempt to occupy the village. All three candidates expressed their strong opposition to having the navy base in the village with our only differences being how we would problem solve each situation. Even those who are pro-base did not raise opposing opinions to the three candidates' and participated in the vote. In conclusion, one can say that regardless of whether people are pro or anti base, the Gangjeong villagers have a common agreement in resolutely refusing the extension of the naval base or the creation of a designated military restriction zone. I believe the prevention of further development of the naval base is very serious and I will do my best to not allow the navy's attempts to further encroach on the Gangjeong village. Villagers showed yesterday their hope for a village where a young generation can settle and live and for a village environment where future generations can grow and feeling safe. I also hope we will have autonomous village, not a village simply affiliated with the naval base. I will do my best to improve our education environment, to make support the villagers' long cherished projects and to demand projects that will improve our economic stability for the village."

## Facing Nanjing as Our Future

On 13 December we remembered the Nanjing massacres 78th anniversary. Approximately 30 people gathered in the old Alddreu naval air field on Jeju Island which had been built by the Japanese imperialists in the 1930s. The Japanese aerial bombings took off from that air field and were one of the reasons for the massacre of 300,000 citizens in Nanjing over six weeks, starting from December 13, 1937. The event followed last year's and was organized by the "People to Make Jeju the Demilitarized Peace Island," "Inter-Island Solidarity for Peace of Sea," and the"Gangjeong International Team," who were supported by the associated organization "The Frontiers." In the event, Dr. Song Kang-Ho stood in front of a now unused hangar, one of the traces of the old air field now rented to farmers for farming, mentioned that "it seems we are not learning from history. The Alddreu air field, the war base on the day is still being owned by military (ROK Ministry of Defense) and new war bases are being made in Jeju [..]The spirits who were killed in Nanjing are still wandering and moaning in this airfield. We are hearing the same soundless outcry in Gangjeong as we face the completion of the navy base. It is the outcry of children who would be born in future. Nanjing has not gone-away but will be seen again in the near future. Looking straight into such a tragic future, we invite you to search for a way for a future of peace and co-existence to overcome the valley of death." It was remarkable that two journalists from a TV press in Nanjing visited Jeju this year, gave a live broadcast of the whole event and joined our commemoration ceremonies. Some local organizers also joined the event and together we watched the movie, 'Nanjing, Nanjing,' in the evening. Between the ceremony and movie time, free discussions on how to demilitarize Jeju took place.

Image by Lia Ohm. Protesters denounced the arrival of the Aegis destroyer, part of the South Korean Navy's relocation of its 7th Task Flotilla from Busan, which passed directly off the coast of Tiger Island in violation of that area's special designation for environmental protection by UNESCO. After eight years of protests these developments follow the creation on December 1st of a navy squadron to be stationed in Gangjeong.

# Veterans for Peace Solidarity Trip to Jeju and Okinawa

13 members of the Veterans for Peace made a solidarity visit to Jeju and Okinawa between the 2nd and the 16th of December. Veterans for Peace was founded in the United States in 1985 and is today 'among the leading and most respected organizations working for peace, justice and human rights.' 'Now an international organization, VFP is made up of over 3000 military veterans, family members, and allies in more than 120 chapters in the United States and around the world.' Here are two reflections from the December visit by two VFP members (Source: Bruce Gagnon). For more information, visit veteransforpeace.org

"I was extremely grateful for the opportunity to travel to Jeju and to Okinawa to stand in solidarity with the victims of American imperialism on the "frontline." The consequences of our vast military empire has long been an abiding issue of mine. I don't think we can avoid bearing some responsibility, as citizens of the empire, for what is being done in our names---and the more we know, the more it becomes incumbent to take some action in response. Standing with the victims of this most drastic manifestation of imperialism and subsequently bearing witness may be of little consequence, but there's always the "ripple effect" and "changing one mind at a time." So, being "at the gates" was the most memorable aspect of the entire experience. [..]"(By Dud Hendrick, Deer Isle, Maine, US Naval Academy Graduate. Vietnam War Veteran)

"The VFP delegation to Jeju Island, South Korea and Okinawa, Japan was a huge eye-opener, as an American but more so as a US military veteran. The trip has personally changed my life and I've learned that achieving the goal of global peace is more necessary than ever before. Until our trip to Asia, I've only had the chance to research these issues. Now, I've had the chance to personally witness the detriment the US military is bringing upon other nations and people. War, and the preparation for war, must stop now! After receiving such great support from the people of Jeju and the people of Okinawa, I now feel stronger than ever to face this struggle of global peace. I am now 100% a global citizen. Their struggle is our struggle." (By William Griffin, San Diego, CA, US Army Paratrooper, Iraq & Afghanistan Wars Veteran)

Image provided by Ellen Davidson/ 13 Veterans for Peace members expressed their solidarity with Gangjeong holding a banner in front of the currently being built Jeju naval base. VFP members joined local people's protest in front of the construction site daily during their visit.

# Miryang Commemorates 10 Years

By Nan-ch'o

On Dec 26th, the 10-year commemoration event for the Miryang struggle was inspiring and energizing with about 500 people in attendance. Among Korean activists, "Miryang" is shorthand for a civic movement that sparked a broad-based alliance between rural and urban residents, in opposition to the risks of poorly regulated nuclear reactors and in active resistance to the installation of highpower transmission towers in an agrarian area against the will of local residents. The commemoration event was a combination of rally, festival, oral history, and musical performances. Solidarity with Gangjeong was warmly mentioned a number of times throughout the program. At an awards ceremony toward the beginning of the event, the hand-carved wooden plaque sent by Father Moon was featured with special attention and given to one of the honored Miryang women activists. During the introduction to the main musical performance, the lead singer spoke about the unity shared by Miryang and a number of other social movements in Korea, concluding with the statement "Whether Miryang or Gangjeong, we are all one." Also, the progressive emcee Duckjin Kim informed the audience about the memorable MCSKY-Sewol solidarity gathering held in August, when activists from Miryang, Chungdo, Ssangyong Cars, Yongsan, and the Sewol bereaved families all visited Gangjeong for 3 days and 2 nights. When speaking about this, he reminded everyone of the dedication of Gangjeong activists faithfully protesting each and every day despite the cold weather.

# Farewell Reflections

By Toni Flynn

*December 26, 2015 Toni Flynn's Farewell Reflections for Fr. Kim Sung-Hwan's Mass at the naval base gate in Gangjeong Village.*

After visiting for only three weeks, I have fallen in love with everyone I have met in this amazing Village! I am in firm solidarity with you as you continue with what is now a very long time of peaceful yet passionate struggle against the construction and opening of this unnecessary navy base. I am so sorry that I was not able to see and touch your beloved Gureombi Rock, since it was destroyed before my arrival. However, I feel your grief as though it were my own. As a United States citizen and an American Catholic Worker member, it breaks my heart to have learned how the U.S. government policies and U.S. military powers have done harm to Korea's desire for peace and unity. I am haunted by the truths of the April 3rd massacre after WW II and shocked to realize that South Korea is still controlled by the U.S. military.

I can never make full amends for my country's grave wrong doings. How can I even offer a mere apology in the face of such human suffering and death and loss of land? I can only join you by sitting with you at the naval base gate in protest, by praying the Mass with you, by adding my voice in saying "NO! to the militarization of your beautiful Island. I am transformed by listening to your stories and I will carry them home to share with other American citizens who need to hear the truth.

I will always remember the taste of your tangerines, the scent of your lilies, the soft cheeks of your babies, the energy of the open fish market, the meals served at the community kitchen, the hospitality at St. Francis Center, and the Jesuit house, and the kindness of so many good people who have opened their door and extended friendship during this visit. Mostly I will remember your faces and your and your tremendous courage. Please know that you are not alone!

Image by Gangjeong Village Story/ Martha Hennessy, granddaughter of Dorothy Day and New York Catholic Worker, carries out a direct action to stop a navy bus on Dec. 22 when the 7th task flotilla entered the village. She came to Jeju Island with Toni Flynn who is a member of the LA Catholic Worker.

## International Solidarity

Image provided by Merci Llarinas Angeles, Philippines/ After a forum conducted in Southern Christian College, Midsayap, North Cotabato in the Philippines to discuss in solidarity the struggle of Gangjeong Villagers to the naval base, on Nov. 26, 2015. Angeles joined the 2015 Gangjeong Grand March for Life and Peace in summer. In addition, on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, she also presented the Resistance of Gangjeong Villagers to 50 indigenous women from several communities in Maguindanao, Philippines.

# Deteriorating human rights condition in South Korea

By Joyakgol

Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December but not in Gangjeong village. Our constitutional right to engage in religious practice was denied on the very day as the police kept interrupting the daily Catholic Mass. Apparently, neither the navy nor the police care about human rights when they move peace-praying citizens away to the roadside as if the people are wrapped in package boxes. It is nothing new, it happens every day, but still every time you see it, you get angry. We are quietly sitting here at the gate, praying for the common good, and yet we are treated as threat to national security.

This situation is taking place everywhere in South Korea. If you oppose the Park regime's right wing policies, and participate in a rally, then you are considered a rioter and your freedom of association is taken away from you. This is actually happening to tens of thousands people including Jeju islanders and Gangjeong villagers who took to the streets of downtown Seoul in protest of the government's repression on Nov 14 and Dec 5. If you criticize the President as brutal dictator, you may have to face eight months of prison time. This is what happened to Dunguri, now a national iconic and a pro-democracy activist who used to live in the village for two years.

The enemy is ready to attack us from all sides, so South Korea, the already world's biggest weapons importer needs more military bases even on the island of peace. That's what the regime wants us to believe. But Gangjeong refuses to live in fear, rather we choose to live in peace. So we continue to dare to say no to navy base even during this dictatorship.

Image by the Gobal News/ Dunguri was released on Dec 22 from Daegu prison on probation after serving 8 months in jail for defamation of President Park Geun-hye.

## Free the Witness for the Holy Innocents' Day!

On Dec. 27, four Catholic Workers from the United States were arrested for a peace action on the grounds of an arms corporation, Northrop Grumman nearby the Strategic Command, Bellevue, NE, USA. Three of them, including Jessica Reznicek, currently the only one in jail , have visited Gangjeong. We pray for the prompt release of Reznicek who intended to inform the public about Northrop Grumman, the 35 year arms contractor for the United States Strategic Command.

## Trial Updates

› On Dec. 7, Rev. Kim Hong-Sool chose to go to prison as he refused to pay about 2,600 USD of fines. He was fined for the violation of the Rally and Demonstration Act during a prayer meeting in Gangjeong years ago. He was released 15 days later after his friends paid a portion of the fines on behalf of him. Rev. Kim operates a shelter for the homeless in Busan for 25 years and has carried out solidarity fasts for Yang Yoon-Mo when he was in prison in 2013 and for the victims of the Sewol ferry incident in 2014 when he fasted for 42 days.

› On Dec. 10, the Seoul Central District Court made a court decision that 'the Government should pay compensation of about 430 USD to each of seven plaintiffs' respectively in relation to the civilian suit filed by eight Gangjeong villagers and peace activists who demanded a total of around 8,500 USD all together for compensation of damages caused on the 28th of June 2012. On June 28, 2012, the navy, mobilizing security guards, interrupted people's candle-light vigil in front of the Jeju naval base project committee building complex. When people entered into the complex in protest to it the police, who were called on by the navy, refused to talk or negotiate with the people. The police surrounded some of them and detained them for more than two hours without communicating any information. The court on Dec. 10, 2015 acknowledged that on the 28th of June 2012, 'the police infringed the freedom of the plaintiffs' bodies.' The plaintiffs welcoming the court decision in their statement, described that ' during the trials, the Seogwipo police station who detained people at the time denied any of its detention conduct against the group and consistently lied saying that the plaintiffs had not made any demands for release. However, through this court case, the police's excessive execution of its state power and illegal behavior against people was finally exposed.

## The Saddest Day of the year, 2015

By Ddalgi

On 2nd of December during the usual daily Mass in front the naval base construction site a cement truck coming from the construction site hit Jung Sun-Nye (Jeanne d'Arc), the president of the Gangjeong Catholic Mission Center. The accident shocked all of us. Jeanne d'Arc had severely injured her foot as the cement truck had crushed her toes. This accident occurred even though both Jeanne d'Arc and the truck driver were following police instruction. Once the accident occurred the police only focused on ensuring the truck was directed and did not care for the obviously injured. All those in attendance were very angry as the police only cared for the construction work continuity and not our injured activist. We demanded an apology and as the police became increasingly angry and violent, two people were arrested, including the mother of a young girl. The treatment from the police was unacceptable and as no apology was provided, activists maintained an indefinite protest in terrible weather, protesting through the 1st night and the entire day on day 2 and 3. Through our persistence those arrested were released on day 4 but with no sign of apology from the police for their role in causing the accident, how they treated the wounded after, or for the arrests that were carried out that day.

## Justice to the Comfort Women! No War alliance!

2015 marked the 70th anniversary of Korea's independence from Japan. The ROK-Japan governments recently hastened settlement of the comfort women issue. Comfort women were horrifyingly drafted for military sexual slavery by Japan during WW II. This collusion intended to silence people with a 1 billion yen reparation. None of the affected women were consulted, let alone other Korean people. Such an unjust agreement is suspected to facilitate the building of an ROK-US-Japan trilateral domination alliance in which Jeju would also be affected. The Japanese government should make a direct apology and reparation to those comfort women legally and responsibly. The Park Geun-Hye and Abe governments should revoke the recent collusion which ignores both historical justice and the human rights of the victims. (For more information, please visit justiceforcomfortwomen.org)

Photo by JoYakGol/Jung Sun-Nye (Jeanne d'Arc is her Catholic baptized name), chairwoman of the Gangjeong Catholic Mission Center, was hospitalized since a base construction vehicle ran over her foot on Dec. 2. After a month in hospital, she chose to go home instead of staying at the hospital for continuous care for her foot. The letters drawn by her friends on her cast read 'no naval base.'

# A Christmas Message of Solidarity and Consolation

By Nan-ch'o

A gathering of Protestant Christian residents and other supporters of Gangjeong Village celebrated Christmas together with an interdenominational worship service at the Gangjeong Peace Center on December 25th. The service was led by liturgist Rev. Song Yeongseop, and the sermon was given by Rev. Yu In-sik.

Rev. Yu's sermon interpreted the Biblical passage describing the Massacre of the Innocents, when King Herod ordered the slaughter of all infant children in the surrounding area to avoid losing his throne to the newly born King of the Jews as predicted by the Magi. This has often been interpreted as fulfilling a prophecy by Jeremiah in an Old Testament passage, which describes a mother weeping inconsolably over the death of her children. But Rev. Yu preached how, contained in the birth of Christ were actually the source of otherwise-impossible consolation and the hope for restoration for all things. While affirming the challenge to live in a way that does not cause misery or pain to others, his message also expressed solidarity with present-day Palestinians who have suffered under state oppression in Israel.

In attendance at the service were a number of long-time local residents, as well as returning visitors and newcomers. The altar was decorated with handmade candles, Christmas holly, and fresh flowers, as prepared by Gangjeong activist and artist-in-residence Wildflower. The service was followed by a fellowship hour at the St. Francis Peace Center, where congregants shared holiday cheer and treats, including cake made from organic ingredients and the tangerines that are now so abundant during the harvest season on Jeju.

Image by Dolgorae/ On Dec. 27, Gangjeong peace keepers/residents worked together on making Kimjang which means making a big amount of kimchi in preparation for a long and cold winter. Now with the finishing of Kimjang, the Gangjeong community is well prepared for winter life.

## How You Can Help

1. Write a letter to the South Korean government to stop the Jeju base project and to the US government to stop the support for it.
2. Write letters to Gangjeong's prisoners of conscience.
3. Stay updated by joining our Facebook groups and following us on twitter.
4. Organize a solidarity event (concert, movie screening, protest, etc...)
5. Then share about it on social media.
6. Visit Gangjeong!
7. 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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# A Village Art Concert

By Choi Sungku

On the 15th of December, an art concert was held at the Peace Center, Gangjeong Village. The title of the concert was "DongHaeng (Beautiful Companion)." Kim Sung-Kyu and Lee One-Kyu two poets both performed in the concert. Six other people performed songs and a play. Kim Sung-Kyu is also a tangerine farmer who loves to read and write poetry. He has lived in Gangjeong Village his whole life. The concert went for almost 2 hours and Kim Sung-kyu read his poems while wonderful music was playing. Unfortunately a lot of villagers were busy and couldn't join the concert but the good thing was that the Peace Center was full of visitors from outside the village. Kim Sung-Kyu said "It is hard to remember something that we don't want to remember anymore. I just try not to forget." He wrote his poem when we lost Gureombi Rock and he lost his land for the Navy base. He must have complicated feelings when reading his poem. For those of us who attended, the concert was very healing.

# Lively Year-End Seoul Gathering

By Lia Ohm

About 70 activists and other Gangjeong supporters joined a year-end gathering in Seoul on December 12th to exchange news, reconnect with friends, and enjoy cultural performances, while expressing their concern for and solidarity with Gangjeong as well as Okinawa. The event was upbeat and well attended, and artists and musicians from Gangjeong and Seoul performed their original works, including The Flower Band playing their popular song, "Crazy Government." Attendees also signed large banners with messages of thanks and encouragement for those working for peace in Gangjeong and Okinawa. With the theme, "Kudos [on Your Work] This Year Also," the event was organized by the National Network of Korean Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island.

Image by Lee Wooki/ Welcoming 2016, the Peace Nomad and Culture Solidarity organized an event from Dec. 29 to 30 called, 'Making Jangseung with Fr. Mun Jeong-Hyeon to Save Gangjeong Life and Peace village,' inviting three artists from the mainland of Korea who worked with Fr. Mun. People in Gangjeong had joy to join Fr. Mun and three artists to work on three Jangseungs. Jangseung is a Korean traditional totem.

Image by Licky Rooney/Members of Veterans for Peace participated in a candle light vigil organized by the Gangjeong Village Association and the Gangjeong Friends. The vigil was held in Jeju city on Dec 8 to oppose Jeju naval base.