

From Tragedy Peace will come. 'Franchising' 'Peace Island'

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Abstract

"The price of peace is eternal vigilance" (Thomas Jefferson) is the theme of this paper presented to the August 2017 Jeju World Peace Academy Bultuk and what we can do to achieve this. Gölbekli Tepe (12,000BP) is the oldest megalithic construction being a creation of a Peace Island, established by pre-urban, pre-agricultural nomadic human groups seeking to establish the natural condition of the human species in all times and in all places: peace. The first glimmer of settled urban peace flourished with the peace island civilizations of the Mediterranean. So, people – even "a small group of thoughtful, committed people" (Mead) such as those at the Naval Base protests at Gangjeong village on Jeju Island – can establish their own "Peace Island" on dry land (Gölbekli Tepe) or at sea (ancient Cyprus and Crete). The contemporary "Peace Island" concept that grew out of the "veiled state violence" (McCall) of the 4.3.1948 Tragedy has led to Jeju being declared a "Peace Island"; this concept can be franchised anywhere in the world with symbols and emblems and by any group of "thoughtful, committed people" using the Haenyeo Bultuk consultation methodology.

Keywords:

Gölbekli Tepe, Peace Island, 4.3. Jeju Tragedy, Bultuk consultation methodology, Gangjeong village naval base protest, Veiled state violence

Introduction

Peace is our purpose at this Peace Academy on the “Special Administrative Province (SAP) of Jeju Island, designated in January 2005 by the South Korean Government as “World Peace Island”¹

On the right of the entrance to the USA National Archives is the ringing sentence “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty”.² I would modify that for our purposes here at the Peace Academy to be “Eternal vigilance is the price of peace” as I argue that the natural state of the human being is peace; that conflict and war are unnatural disturbances in the kind of life that all of us seek to pursue. How else can we raise our families and have art and science flourish?

I agree with the founder of peace studies, Prof Johan Galtung, that peace and conflict are aspects of human behaviour; that underlying conflicts, if not remedied, spring back to life to trouble us.³

Signs from the Past

The entire history of the development of our species – homo sapiens – relies on our ancestors in the past and us in the present to live peacefully; to cooperate in common endeavour; to raise the next generation in the best possible way that we can. Without such peaceful cooperation, our human species would have been annihilated millennia ago, in competition with other creatures larger and stronger than our ancestors. Although people commonly speak of “multi-cultural” and “multi-ethnic” societies, in truth all humans on the earth today descend from a few thousand prehistoric pioneers, most likely somewhere in East Africa, from which place those who came before us spread over every land mass and climate, except, as far as we know, Antarctica. This so-called “Toba extinction”, suggests that all humans on the planet today descend from a scant 10,000 to 30,000 creatures about 70,000 years ago.⁴

Humans accomplished this spread on foot and there is evidence of carefully crafted water crossings at various points.⁵ Archaeological research relies on what is left behind; the detritus of human

communities, seemingly on the move in constant search of better lives, either in climate or game.

Until the last decade or so, this story of small groups moving resolutely over the landscape, leaving little behind, their interior life obscured until writing appears. All that changed with the discovery of an elaborate complex of megalithic ceremonial place in southern Turkey, known today as “Göbekli Tepe” owing to the site being just about the only raised point in an otherwise flat landscape.⁶

Göbekli Tepe has been dated to about 12,000BP, when humans lived in small bands and followed the hunt. Göbekli Tepe is well before the first evidence of writing, circa 5000 BP; and also before migrating bands settled into even small settlements, let alone villages. When the complex was discovered first the immediate classification of the site as religious was made: a “temple” or a series of temples.

There are no settlements in evidence anywhere near Göbekli Tepe; no evidence of other constructions; until recently, no evidence of burials. On the contrary, it was a site of celebration, with evidence of feasting on the creatures carved with such care on the gigantic upright pillars, fashioned from stone some distance from the site.

Rather than dwell on how Göbekli Tepe was constructed, I find inspiration in its purpose: why it was built.

I believe that people from the area decided at some point to establish what I wish to call an “island of peace”. Göbekli Tepe is not a literal island, but its construction sets it apart from the surrounding area. It is an area marked out where people gathered in a way that they never had done before. Or, if they did, it took place without surviving constructions. Each building seems to be open to the sky, with “T” shaped uprights carefully located according to some reference of which we do not know. On those pillars and other upright stone surfaces, people have chipped away in relief realistic, but not necessarily to scale, representations of the animals and some plants that were in the area. Were these intended to evoke magical control or, more simply, decorations on a place used to try to keep peace amongst related populations who may or may not have spoken a common language. As hunters – there is

1. “The Jeju Weekly” of 10 April 2011. <http://www.jejuweekly.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=1437>

2. The quotation frequently is attributed to the American politician and early president, Thomas Jefferson, but there are doubts to the actual origin, even if the words remain a strong call to citizen action. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998022905/PP/> Accessed on 26 August 2017.

3. Since the 1950s, Johan Galtung has been publishing on this theme, most recently (since 2008) through the Transcend University Press <https://www.transcend.org/tup/index.php>. In 2010, he published another iteration of his approach, *A theory of conflict*. Granzach-Whylen, Transcend University Press.

4. One of the articles cited for this theory is Hawks J, Hunley K, Lee SH, Wolpoff M (January 2000). “Population bottlenecks and Pleistocene human evolution”. *Molecular Biology and Evolution*. 17 (1): 2–22, quoted in a Wikipedia article (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_bottleneck). Accessed on 28 August 2017.

5. A summary of research on this topic appears in the 29 February 2012 issue of the “New Scientist”. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21328544-800-neanderthals-were-ancient-mariners/>

6. I proposed Göbekli Tepe as an ancient place of peace in an earlier essay: Grant McCall, 2016. “I-20 and nissology”. *World Environment and Island Studies* 6 (No 2, 30 June 2016): p 112.

no evidence, I repeat, of agriculture in the vicinity – they might have had occasional confrontations over game commonly pursued or other matters. Perhaps, as with modern hunters and gatherers, each group however defined, imagining a range or an estate over which they reckoned they had control. There would not have been writing or other surviving evidence of such claims.

Constant conflict is not the human condition, I have proposed, so how to keep the desirable peace sought by people? Göbekli Tepe may have been preceded by other islands of peace, marked by less substantial constructions that long since have returned to the soil. At some point, these groups must have hit on the idea of having a spectacular and regular meeting place; a peace island where conflict would not be permitted by common and self-interested agreement. The more spectacular and the more elaborate the meeting place, the more likely such solidity ensured the respect for peace.

My proposal that the earliest solid human construction – Göbekli Tepe – was a peace island no group could dominate another. Similar technology, similar numbers and similar economic basis. And let us not forget that Göbekli Tepe was not so long ago that people then were so different from us today: they sought leisure even amusement that would account for the imaginative carvings. This is the principle outlined by Johan Huizinga, in his influential essay on human play and its role in civilizing culture.⁷

I do not think it is coincidental that Huizinga referred to how play involved always a “magic circle” within which play was distinguished from non-play, later interpreted by Émile Durkheim⁸ as the distinction between “sacred” and “profane”. Göbekli Tepe was the first “magic circle” where people could gather to secure peace and feed its success, even repair its breach. The fundamental structure of Göbekli Tepe was the circle, with a narrow passage leading in from the outside. Insofar as Durkheim defined “religion” as a group worshipping itself, Göbekli Tepe was religious in that sense of group consciousness directed to a common cause: peace. The site pre-dates the development of agriculture and cities anywhere and demonstrates how fundamental to human well-being is peace: it was one of the first actions taken by a forward-thinking human group, before even elaborate structures of food and shelter.

Perhaps we need to re-define what are the basic needs of the human being, peace being paramount so that all else can proceed to develop.

Actual Peace Islands

Not many centuries after Göbekli Tepe, elaborate and openly peaceful civilizations began to evolve on the islands of the Mediterranean. Mark Patton provides us with a unique study of how these islands of peace were able to flourish, even developing to impressive megalithic cities and other structures devoted, mainly, to peaceful female diets.⁹

The spectacular peaceful nature of these Mediterranean islands I discussed in a previous essay, so there is no need to do other than briefly mention these places and how they prospered under peace.

Malta and the Ggantia phase: 5600 to 5000 BP was the earliest of the peaceful megalithic island cultures, developing its own style of religion and architecture before other continental powers, though it eventually was conquered by its less peaceful neighbours.

Similarly, one cannot fail to be impressed by ancient Knossos, 4200 – 3700 BP on the Mediterranean island of Crete, serenely presiding over its extensive and peaceful trading partners, with no evidence that this prosperity and flowering of the arts and sciences was achieved by warfare.

Other places, perhaps not so grand or wide-spread, such as Minorca Taulas 3700 BP and Sardinia and Corsica: Nuraghe of Tacono-Borore 3570 BP continued their peaceful development, until continental powers overwhelmed them in conquest.

Franchising peace amongst groups

Peace Island and the Franchise anyone, anywhere can do, comes with a flag and a hand signal. Every group needs its symbols. I suggest that those interested in franchising peace can greet one another with a hand signal for peace, one that is widely in use already and, so, is familiar world-wide. Unlike other hand signals, this one is unambiguous and clear; it is not militaristic; it is friendship and happiness, not the sadness and problems of those who toil under war and conflict. This is one image of the hand symbol for peace:

7. Johan Huizinga, 1949, *Homo Ludens. A study of the play element in culture*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. Johan Huizinga. 1938. *Homo Ludens: Proeve Ener Bepaling Van Het Spelelement Der Cultuur*. Groningen, Wolters-Noordhoff cop. 1985; *Homo Ludens. A study of the play-element in culture*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul. The essay first was published in 1938 in Dutch, with the 1949 English translation coming from a German language edition, published in Switzerland in 1944, as war raged in Europe and the rest of the world. http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/1474/homo_ludens_johan_huizinga_routledge_1949_.pdf Accessed on 28 August 2017.

8. Émile Durkheim. 1912. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*. Paris, Presses universitaires de France.

9. Mark Patton. 1996. *Islands in time. Island sociogeography and Mediterranean prehistory*. London, Routledge.



⟨Source: Google Images⟩

Flags play an important role in symbolizing group cohesion and in the last century, inspired by his experience of the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan painter Pablo Picasso came up with a viable symbol for peace that people do exhibit and that is the blue flag with a white dove in the centre. The white dove as a peace symbol is Semitic and is in the story of Noah's Ark in the Christian Old Testament; devout Muslims and believing Jews also honour these ancient writings. After Noah, on orders from his god, built an Ark and assembled two of each of the animals of the earth¹⁰. Noah sent a dove out from his ark to find dry land and after a couple of attempts, the bird returned, with an olive leaf in its beak, showing Noah and his family that there was dry land and peace.

So, in that Middle Eastern world, a dove (shown as white) with an olive branch became a symbol of well-being and peace, that Picasso used on his flag, first shown in 1952 as a sketch, signed by the famous artist:



⟨Source: Google Images⟩

“A small group of thoughtful, committed people”

All of this may seem grand, but I am reminded of the words of the famous physicist and peace activist Albert Einstein, whose very family name represents the apogee of the human ability to think through complex problems¹¹ and come up with novel and challenging solutions.

It is clear, people must act for peace, as Einstein expressed it: “The world is a dangerous place, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it”¹²

Although the quotation is disputed in its precise origins, the American Anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”¹³

So it is with the people of Gangjeong village, just exactly Mead's “small group of thoughtful, committed people” who are opposing a naval base on land, adjacent to their quiet coastal village. The courageous Jesuit Father Bartholomew Mun Jung-hyun has dedicated his life to this combat of David and Goliath, along with his congregation and other leaders on Jeju Island in the district of Seogwipo. Seemingly their task is impossible, opposing the power of the massive Samsung construction firm, backed by the Government of South Korea with, perhaps, the urging of the even more overwhelming force of the United States of America seeking a place to stop its China encircling war ships.

Some skeptics, such as journalist Donald Kirk,

10. Donald Kirk. 2013. *Okinawa and Jeju: Bases of discontent*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

11. “Einstein” brand milk is sold in shops on Jeju Island < <https://alanonjeju.wordpress.com/2015/03/06/a-generation-of-einsteins/> The story, by Alan Nesbit, is dated 6 March 2015. Accessed on 28 August 2017.

12. Attributed to Albert Einstein, as his having said it in Germany as that country was preparing for war. https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein, accessed on 26 August 2017.

13. Cited in a discussion of this quotation on https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Margaret_Mead, accessed on 26 August 2017.

14.

think the protest has past its time. Kirk declares that the protest “by now seems a little tiresome”. He cites general sources that the protesters may not be from Gangjeong, but elsewhere.

Such words do not deter those “thoughtful and committed” villagers, seeking to franchise peace in their own way, with a local focus on a construction that even the negative Kirk writes: “There’s no denying , though, that the clouds of war on distant horizons might someday turn into a regional conflagration in which the warnings and prayers, unheeded, would not be forgotten”.

Kirk’s pessimism about the Gangjeong is at variance with his spirited essay comparing protests against military bases on Jeju Island and Okinawa.¹⁴

We meeting in this Peace Academy only can wish the peace franchisers of Gangjeong village success in this endeavour to secure peace in Asia and, therefore, the rest of the world. The people of Gangjeong village remember the tragic events of 3 April 1948 and they resolutely believe “never again” although that phrase is associated with the Holocaust¹⁵, it refers to all acts of state violence, hidden or otherwise, against its people.



Father Bartholomew Mun Jung-hyun was knocked to the ground in 2012 by police whilst conducting his daily Mass outside the gates of the naval base being constructed at Gangjeong village < <http://www.ucanews.com/news/riot-police-break-up-protesters-mass/57872>>

Conclusion

Franchising for peace is a movement very appropriate to come from Jeju Island, a place of peace that grew out of tragedy, the 50,000 or so people brutally murdered by their own state occupied by American military forces after the Second World War.

¹⁶The full story runs in the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis 5–7

15.Meir Kahane, 1971. Never again. A program for survival. New York, BN Publishing.

16.Julia Gretskey, Juliane Haelm & Lee Clare. 2017. “Modified human crania from Göbekli Tepe provide evidence for a new form of Neolithic skull cult”. Science Advances 3(28 June 2017), 1–10. <http://advances.sciencemag.org/> on July 1, 2017.