



### ***Our South Korean Sister: Jeju and the Dol Hareubang Statues***

Across the street from Santa Rosa City Hall, on Sonoma Avenue, are two large, stone statues right before the entrance of Rae Park. They resemble older men, with their slight grins, bulging eyes, mushroom-shaped hats and hands on their bellies. These statues are called Dol Hareubang, which were gifts from Jeju, a South Korean island and the sister city of Santa Rosa. Dol Hareubang translates to “grandfather made of stone” – Dol meaning “stone” in the Korean language and Hareubang referring to “grandfather” in Jeju dialect. These statues are thought to provide fertility, protection and seen as the guardians of the island. These cultural sculptures were given to Santa Rosa in 2003 and symbolize the relationship and cultural exchange program that has allowed these two cities to create deeper connections and participate in special projects.

Jeju and Santa Rosa have been sister cities since 1996. This connection between the two cities was created to engage in international dialogue, enhance the co-production of knowledge, promote benevolence and contribute to a better world to thrive in. As part of this cultural exchange program, many youth have participated in various projects, including art, sports, and educational, economical, municipal and professional opportunities. The best way for Santa Rosa and Jeju residents to acquire knowledge about one another’s culture has been to immerse themselves into that community and learn about what’s important and meaningful in their cultural dynamic.

Although these two cities have a kinship, there is a dark history that lingers and adds complexity to the sister-bond. In 1948, thousands of Jeju citizens were killed by the anti-communist South Korean regime, making this event commonly known as the Jeju Massacre, Jeju Uprising or the 4.3 Incident. Many Jeju residents were detained, tortured and killed by the South Korean military, who often broke into homes and forced people out. Before the massacre, the United States had governance over South Korea and seemed to have had a long-lasting and profound influence on the way the South Korean government responded and acted against their citizens. The ultimate plan was to subdue any uprisings that supported communism and social equality. For many years, Jeju citizens were not allowed to speak on the incident and were forced to harbor immense feelings of trauma, desolation and heart-wrenching memories that will never go away. It is believed that the United States had more involvement that is spoken about in these killings of innocent residents. From the United States having authoritative control over South Korea and then barely showing any outrage by these horrendous acts, subtly shows there was a shared responsibility for what occurred in Jeju.

Feelings of resentment and apprehension to fully trust America is completely valid for the people of Jeju. Jeju will always have to live with traumatizing memories and history that the



United States had some part in. However, both cities are moving forward and taking the necessary steps to learn about one another's culture and develop deeper relationships. The commitment to fostering a better, more compassionate community and striving to understand the global community, shows that now and even the future generations will be able to come together and share their voices as those who will inherit and work towards changing the world.

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