

GANGJEONG VILLAGE STORY

February
2015

Monthly news on the struggle against
the Jeju Naval base project

Published by Gangjeong Village in Jeju,
South Korea



Gangjeong Will Not Give Up!

Image: by Grace and Park Yong-Sung
Article by Park Yong-Sung

Facing the navy and police's violent crackdown on Jan 31, the Gangjeong villagers and citizens countered it with peaceful and resolute resistance by setting up a makeshift watchtower. Even though the watchtower, the tent, and the village bus were all demolished by the navy, private thugs, and the police that day, the Gangjeong villagers and citizens made a resolution to continue the struggle to stop the military residence project, having a press conference in front of the military housing construction area, in which they "denounced violent crackdown" and declared to "stop the military housing project with the 2nd and 3rd watchtower". Since then, one-man protest has continued daily in front of the residence area from morning to evening. Numerous banners from nationwide to support Gangjeong village and to oppose the military

housing project covered the whole village. People set up another sit-in tent to stop the military housing project just across the military housing construction area. On Feb. 22, the last day of the New Luna Year holiday season, people moved it by surprise to the main gate of the military housing construction area. Despite the fact that any executive demolition should be under the jurisdiction of Seogwipo City (as the tent was installed on a general road), the navy itself in military uniform illegally and violently demolished the tent, with police collusion.

Members of the Gangjeong Village held a press conference in front of the Jeju Island government on Feb. 23, expressing their firm position to stop the military housing project, and to denounce the navy's illegal and violent crackdown, while proposing the

residents' vote on the pros and cons of the military housing project. The villagers proposed the vote to be co-hosted by the Gangjeong Village Association and Jeju Island Government.

Currently, the navy started a military housing construction in earnest since Feb. 28, having launched entry road construction, installing dust-proof layer and fence, and finishing the geological survey. Countering this development, the Gangjeong villagers and peace activists have demanded the navy and ROK Ministry of National Defense for the whole construction to stop.

On a banner hung high in front of the military housing construction area, there is a desperate cry by the villagers: An unresolved grudge on the navy. May you be our foe for a whole lifetime! Navy, You, Liar!

In remembrance of Father Bix

By Shining Lake

Our beloved friend, Father Bix! I still remember a time when you welcomed me into your community house in Tacoma in the fall of 2013. You just got back from a trip to Jeju and were so excited to share about the Gangjeong struggle with your folks. Then you found me visiting friends in Seattle and began to set up a number of presentations so we could share the Gangjeong story together.

It happened very quickly and we did it all in just two weeks. By that time, I already could feel how much you care for Gangjeong and how much Gangjeong people inspire you. Such endeavors you strived for brought about another trip to Jeju eventually.

A little ahead of the second visit, in the early fall of 2014, I heard you failed to come to Jeju to attend the Catholic conference due to your own health issue. At the time, I could tell you must have felt disappointed. On your second visit, I was so delighted to have you for two weeks. Through interactions with you, all Gangjeong people were able to get inspired by your persistent passion for nonviolent actions and gentle and loving spirit towards people.

It was sad, though, that you were not feeling well and couldn't move freely without a wheelchair. The day before you left Gangjeong, we were able to spend some time together. I can't forget the encouraging words you spoke to me, which are "Listen to what your heart is speaking to you and follow it." At the time, I didn't realize they would be the last words that I would receive from you in my life. When I was told that you were dying and surrounded by your friends at the hospital, I felt heartbroken and wished to fly out to the US in order to sit beside you.

A few days later, on the subway, I couldn't stop crying when I just learned of your passing. One friend from the delegation to Jeju last year wrote to me that you talked about Gangjeong even in your very last moments at the hospital. And you said Gangjeong is one of the holiest places on the planet. It is such a gift for Gangjeong people that we could spend a few weeks with you in the last days of your life.

Although you are physically gone, the spirit and heart you shared with us will be alive among us as they keep inspiring and embracing Gangjeong people. Please rest in peace!



Image: by Hosu
Father Bix in front of the construction gate of the naval base in Gangjeong in 2014.

Okinawa, Jeju, Taiwan- the Peace Triangle

By Emily Wang

These words have come out frequently during the 1st Inter-island Solidarity Peace Camp in Jeju, after Jeju, Okinawa, and Taiwan activists shared their historical struggle and suffering, followed by the environmental destruction of militarization as well as the current challenges of anti-base movement, in addition to Taiwan's current struggle with nuclear power plants.

Their stories have inspired plans like the 2nd and 3rd Inter-Island Okinawa and Taiwan Peace Camp, to be held on 2015 and 2016 respectively. However, their meeting has also pointed out a gap in the inter-island peace activism: Taiwan doesn't have the same kind of anti-militarization movement like Jeju and Okinawa. In addition, the Peace Camp revealed that many peace activists knew little, if not at all about Taiwan's White Terror incident.

How to bridge the gap and consequently encourage anti-militarization efforts from the Taiwan side appeared to be critical. This prompted Jeju and Okinawan peace activists to visit Taiwan, which in turn led to a larger gathering in Taiwan from Feb 13th to 16th, 2015, hosted by the Inter-island Solidarity for Peace. The organization held public activities including documentary screening regarding Okinawa and Gangjeong anti-base struggle efforts, a press conference supporting the Okinawa and Jeju's peace struggles, and a workshop on Inter-Island Solidarity. In addition to this was a field trip to the historical oil pipes and oil tanks used during the Vietnam War by the US military.

Some of Inter-island solidarity for peace members and I went on this trip to military facilities, historical military sites, all the while meeting locals and NGOs to seek out possible cooperation. In the eastern part of Taiwan where the aborigines are located (particularly populated cities of Hualien and Taitung), we saw air force jets fly very often and produce giant noises. However, we saw that there were no protests to be found, despite the fact that Taiwan, a small island, was heavily militarized with six large military airfields out of a total of eighteen (counting small airfields and those used by commercial airlines and the military).

This trip showed us the limitations of peace activism when challenging the "US" military forces, such as challenging the rationale used by US to militarize Asia (the so-called "China Threat"). And although we could not find an anti-militarism movement to cooperate with in Taiwan, we believe that sharing the struggles of militarization by Jeju and Okinawan residents brought a small glimmer of change toward reflection on justice and the loss through militarization.

And now, we are on the way toward the Peace for Sea and the Peace Triangle. During this visit to Taiwan, we accumulated more friends who have started to consider our military struggles. And our promises to bring more people to the Okinawa peace camp have come to fruition through this trip. This shows us that stories can never be hidden because they permeate through people more and more everyday.

Hotpinkdolphins meets Taiwan pink dolphins

By Joyakgol
(Hotpinkdolphins activist)

Hotpinkdolphins is a marine environmental action group vowing to conserve whales and dolphins and the Jeju naval base construction is obviously destroying their habitat. As a part of inter-island solidarity, we think it's very important to represent the voices of endangered species such as pink dolphins of Taiwan, Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphins of Jeju and dugongs of Okinawa because their existence is being threatened by development projects or military base construction.

Through meeting with Taiwanese activists, we learned that there are quite a few similarities between Jeju dolphins and Taiwan pink dolphins. Both of them live near the coast of the islands; Jeju dolphins swim around the island 1km offshore, Taiwan dolphins 3km. The population number is very low, too. Experts say there are less than 100 pink dolphins left in Taiwan, and there are only an estimated 114 Jeju dolphins left. With their bare eyes people can see them swim in the sea all year round.

They never leave because the Taiwan Strait is too deep and wide for Taiwan pink dolphins to cross, so researchers believe they are endemic to Taiwan. Jeju dolphins have the same case. Isolated from the larger group, they had come to the Jeju sea a long time ago, and haven't had any connections with other dolphin groups ever since, which allowed them to keep endemic features.

The west coast of Taiwan is the only habitat for pink dolphins, but the mud flats and shallow sea are suffering from pollution from petro-chemical factories, over-fishing and greed. Likewise, Jeju dolphins don't come to the Seogwipo area since the naval base project began. Can we see them in the future? If we want to live peacefully with the rare cetaceans and marine mammals on this planet, then we have to stop these detrimental development plans. Once they go extinct, there is no bringing them back.

Keep THAAD out of South Korea

By Regina Pyon

The possibility of the deployment of the THAAD system to South Korea has been controversial as the deployment is widely seen as part of the US's attempt to involve S. Korea in its missile defense system. Experts say that THAAD deployment to Korea would trigger tensions with China.

The U.S. has shown ambiguous signals as to whether it intends to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to South Korea. However, on February 10, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said at a press briefing that both countries recognize the importance of the capability of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system. "The United States holds 'constant' discussions with South Korea about the deployment of an advanced U.S. missile defense system on the Korean Peninsula."

Meanwhile, South Korea's Defense Minister Han Min-Koo told a parliamentary committee that the country needs to maintain 'strategic ambiguity' in dealing with the THAAD deployment issue. In the meantime, China has repeatedly expressed serious concerns about it. On February 4, Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan delivered China's first official response to ongoing speculation about the prospective deployment of the U.S.-developed THAAD to South Korea, during the bilateral "cooperative" defense ministers meeting.

The Hankyoreh news, one of the leading progressive newspapers, also expressed its concern in a recent editorial titled, 'Obeying the US on THAAD will only hurt national security.' "US intentions were clear in remarks made in Tokyo on Feb. 20 by Anita Friedt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear and Strategic Policy at the U.S. Department of State, when she praised the Trilateral Information-Sharing Arrangement signed by the US, South Korea, and Japan in Dec. 2014. Friedt explicitly linked the arrangement to the development of a regional inter-operative missile defense system between the US, South Korea, and Japan. Friedt's comments imply that the missile defense system that South Korea is developing, known as the Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), will be integrated with the missile defense system operated by the US and Japan... Missile defense also plays an important role in the US policy of "rebalancing Asia", which the administration of US President Barack Obama is currently promoting to counter China.

When the Chinese Defense Minister officially expressed concern about the deployment of THAAD during a visit to South Korea at the beginning of this month, it confirmed once more that the missile defense question is at the heart of the confrontation between the US and Japan on one side and China on the other..." (quote: http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_editorial/679265.html)

Civic groups including SPARK are protesting against the U.S. plan to deploy the advanced missile defense system claiming that it would endanger the bilateral relationship with China and threaten regional peace and stability. "The government should oppose any move by the United States to deploy its latest ballistic missile interception system in South Korea as part of its missile defense (MD) program." They said, "A Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile battery is actually ineffective to neutralize ballistic missiles from North Korea although they say it is its primary purpose. It is ineffective in cost and in the area of operation. THAAD is designed to shoot down missiles at high altitudes, and the North is too close to be affected by such a defense system." SPARK, a nationwide peace organization, held a press conference and relayed one person demonstrations in front of the Blue House presidential office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Seoul throughout February urging that the S. Korean government clearly express opposition to the THAAD deployment and reject the demands of the US.

International Solidarity



Image : By Grace

During the Taiwan trip from Feb. 13 to 16, people from Okinawa, Jeju, and Taiwan visited Ching Xui near Taichung where they could see an obsolete oil pipeline once used by the US military during the Vietnam War.

Choosing jail to resist unfair fines

On the 25th of February, another three people chose imprisonment rather than accept unfair fines imposed upon them for their anti-naval base efforts. Right before stepping into jail in the morning of Feb. 25, they had a press conference which was held in the area near the Seoul Central District Court. The press conference was hosted by the National Network of Korea Civil Society for Opposing to the Naval Base in Jeju Island and NCKK (National Council of Churches in Korea).

Three peace activists including 71-year-old Mr. Lee Young-Wook, Reverend Lim Borah of Sumdol Hanglyn Church, Mr. Cho Ik-Sang, decided to put themselves behind bars in exchange for accepting unfair fines. Mr. Lee and Rev. Lim were charged with the violation of laws

for their rallies and demonstrations on the April 14, 2012 incident regarding the blasting of the Gureombi Rock.

Mr. Lee says, "At the time, fifteen people went over a blocked wall and just shouted out the serious problems of the Gangjeong Naval Base. And as a result, 3,500,000 KRW (about \$ 3,500 USD) fines were given to me!" Rather than agreeing to the unjust fines, Mr. Lee committed himself to jail for two weeks. Rev. Lim, who also opted for jail instead of paying fines for a case last May, settled for a week's imprisonment this time.

Mr. Cho briefly joined Mr. Lee Woo-Ki, a photographer, who entered jail earlier for the same reason. Both were charged for obstructing business and were sentenced with around \$2,500 USD fines,

regarding the protest on April 16, 2012 when people connected their arms with pipes to stop the delivery of powder keg truck to blast the Gureombi Rock at the time. Both are now all released.

The Fundraising Committee for Gangjeong Legal Aid states that the number of people who have been arrested for their anti-naval base activism are now 673. About 600 people among them were brought into trial. The sum of fines imposed on Gangjeong villagers and peace activists amount to about \$400,000 USD. Compounding this figure with the amount to be paid for the lawsuits filed by construction companies toward the villagers and activists surely increases the whole financial sum.

Deported for Loving Korea

Unjustly denied entry into South Korea on Feb. 17 was Patrick Kuentzmann, the Secretary General of Association d'Amitié Franco-Coréenne (AAFC). Having been invited by a Korean pastors' group, he was scheduled to visit South Korea for four days during the New Luna Year holiday season. According to him, the Immigration Office of Incheon airport could not explain to him any reason for his denial, except for that it is a decision by the South Korean Government. Kuentzmann also came to realize that the same government had already blacklisted him in 2013.

Since 2005, he has visited both South and North Korea a total of 10 times. It is his 3rd visit to South Korea. And for the 1st time for him, his entry to the nation was denied. He stated right after the incident, "If there is my only 'crime,' it is that I am one of the responsible personnel of the French association to make progress on the relationship between all Koreas and France."

The Peace and Unification committee of the Korea Pastors' Peace Association (which invited him to Korea) was asked to promote various events by inviting international personnel such as Kuentzmann, who concerns over the democracy and peace of Korea. The group deplored that the Park Geun-Hye Government's oppression is very much reminiscent of the Yushin dictatorship.

Kuentzmann emphasized the importance of 'talk.' He could not attend the weekly rallies by the Korean comfort women in front of the Japanese embassy. Still he left a message for them: "the Cold War of Korea would continue unless the matter of the comfort women settles 70 years after the end of WW II." The recent news on Kuentzmann reminds other unjust deportations against internationals under the Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-Hye administrations. Such recent deportation against a peace-loving international only exposes the recent government's hideous purpose to strengthen hostile ROK-US-Japan alliance.

Interview with a Jeju Activist

By Dongseok

An interview with Mr. Lee Young-Ung, the Executive Secretary of the Korea Federation for Environmental Movement of Jeju.

Q: What do you see as the primary environmental concerns that Jeju Island is faced with?

A: The influx of overseas investment capital in recent times as a means to promote large scale development projects has greatly aggravated the deterioration of Jeju's natural environment and surrounding areas. Central Government/Jeju Provincial Government development policies have proven highly controversial as they have taken precedence over any consideration towards environmental conservation and protection. The approval processes for various development projects has been dogged by suspicions re favoritism and the dearth of transparency surrounding those processes. A lack of due democratic process contributes to deep concerns within society around environmental issues.

Q: What are the main issues that the Jeju Federation for Environmental Movement is engaged in? What shape does your activism take?

A: The organizing principal of the Jeju Federation for Environmental Movement is one of collaboration on life and peace issues as well as conservation of ecosystems. Our organization participates in the campaign opposed to the construction of the Jeju Naval Base and provides a secretariat role within civil society in Jeju with regard to organizing solidarity events. We also work towards the preservation of traditional Jeju values and community life in the face of growing large scale capital investment projects. We seek to protect public ownership of natural resources and also run environment education programs as well as mitigating the deleterious effects of climate change.



Image: by JoYakGol



Image: Park Yong-Sung

On a New Lunar Year holiday, people bow to each other in praying for their good fortune and health, in a daily mass tent of the village.

Trial Updates

▶ On the 4th of February, the High Court of Jeju dismissed respective appeals by Mr. Kim Sung-Hoon, Rev. Lee Jung-Hoon, and Mr. Lim Ho-Young. Therefore the original court decision of two year imprisonment suspended with three years, as well as three years of so called supervised protection, against each of the three, is maintained. In June 2012 when three of them saw a group of men, who looked like they were from the navy, take illegal surveillance on protesting civilians hiding in a building, the three stormed inside the building along with other people and protested against this suspicious group. They were later charged of violence and illegal trespass.

▶ On the 16th of February, the Jeju first court made a decision of 500,000 KRW fines on a female activist Park Young-In. The charge against her is ridiculous, that she used abusive languages against several policemen during the daily human chain in 2014.

Seeking justice from the chimney top

By Father Patrick

On February 2, I joined a Catholic solidarity group on a trip to the Ssangyong Motor plant in Pyeongtaek to offer support and prayers for two workers and their comrades who were on their 52nd day (now 78days) of protest atop a 70m high chimney stack. There was a renewed feeling of hope now that fresh negotiations had begun that laid off workers Lee Chang-geun and Kim Jeong-wook would soon be reunited with their families for the lunar New Year holidays and that their demands for reinstatement of all 187 comrades would be realized. The earlier High Court ruling in their favor later annulled by the Supreme Court's ruling on November 13, 2014 declaring the validity of the mass lay off was greeted with huge dismay to all concerned and drove the two workers to the 70m high chimney top in the hope their voices would be heard. The reinstatement of all 187 workers as well as company support for the bereaved families of 26 workers who died from either suicide or illness after their dismissal were now on the talks agenda as well as a request seeking assurances that the company would withdraw a 10 billion won compensation claim for damages against laid off workers who staged a three month sit in protest at the plant in 2009. Sadly the two workers still await a positive outcome atop the chimney stack and although unable to join their families for the holidays are bravely keeping hope alive for their fellow comrades, families and loved ones. We salute you...



Image by Father Partick



Image : By Gangjeong Village Story- Gangjeong Peace School in solidarity with Palestine on the 6th of February

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 :

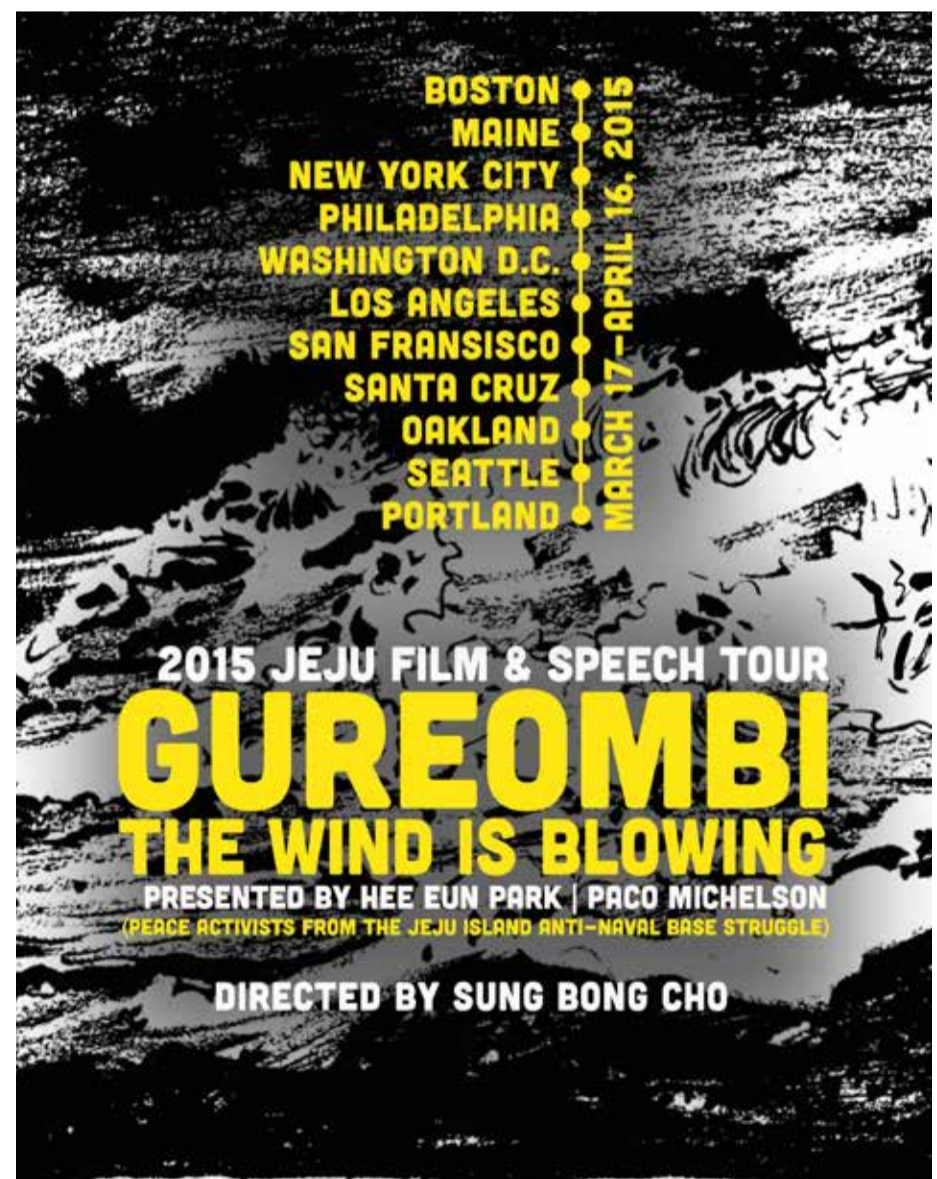
Vimeo : cho sung bong / DH Song / Regis Tremblay
Youtube : Gang-Jeong Il-Gi / Shalomsea / 1234yz100 / Sungbong2012

- Created and designed by the Gangjeong International Team, special thanks to Everyday Practice.
- Published by the Gangjeong Village Association, 4417 Gangjeong-dong, the Life and Peace village, Seogwipo-si, Jeju, the Peace Island. Email: gjengnews@gmail.com
- Special thanks to Gangjeong Friends for financial support.

“To Exist is to Resist” Gangjeong Peace School

By Shining Lake

Gangjeong Peace School held an event for the day of solidarity with the Palestinian people on February 6th at the Peace Center. Following the screening of the movie, Five Broken Cameras, there were presentations by three activists from the organization Palestine Peace & Solidarity in Korea. Jeju Island and Palestine, these two places seem to have nothing in common, but on the contrary, these two have a lot of similarities in their modern history. Occupation, persecution, suffering and exploitation... even hearing these words sounds awful. Moreover, they have been manifested as being relived repeatedly rather than disappearing in the modern history of Jeju and Palestine. The audience was invited to the event with the opportunity of standing in a position where they could approach the grief and suffering of the Palestinian people through empathy and imagination. Five Broken Cameras, nominated for the best documentary at Academy Awards in 2013, is a film following a Palestinian farmer's chronicle of his nonviolent resistance to the oppression by the Israeli army. Once Grace, a Gangjeong peace activist and film director watched it, she strongly felt led to introduce this film to Gangjeong people and subsequently contacted the co-director of the film to get permission for the community screening and Korean subtitles. Domestically it was the first screening since it was screened at Busan Film Festival back in 2012. On the day, there was quite a big crowd and even some of the audience flew down to Jeju from the mainland to attend the event. Many of them expressed their interests in this issue by throwing out several questions. Additionally, they commented later that they have learned a lot of things they did not know before and found out many things in common between Gangjeong of Jeju Island and Bil'in of Palestine. After the screening were presentations by three activists who visited Palestine last November. In order to exist and resist, we should not stop making efforts to stand in solidarity with the people who struggle for true freedom, justice and peace in the world.



NATIONAL TOUR SPONSORS:

WWW.SAVEJUNOW.ORG | [@SAVEJUNOW](https://twitter.com/SAVEJUNOW) | [FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/NOONAVALBASE](https://facebook.com/groups/NOONAVALBASE)



JOIN
GANGJEONG
FRIENDS!

[HTTP://CAFE.DAUM.NET/GANGJEONG79S/POK7/1](http://cafe.daum.net/gangjeong79s/pok7/1)