

The lives of North Korean defector's in South Korea

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Yuna was born in North Korea, defected to the South and became well known by appearing on South Korean television shows. I was her coach for an English language speech contest. She created this speech for the contest. I can't remember whether she won or not, but if she didn't I think she should have. I think she has a very good perspective on unification of North and South.

Koreans are the main characters!!!

Hi everyone, my name is Yuna.

Today I want to talk about the lives of North Korean defector's in South Korea.

More than (3.2 million) 35, 000 North Korean defectors live in South Korea. And they are always complaining about discrimination from South Koreans.

So I have thought to myself about what makes South Koreans think that North Koreans are different.

I found out it might be because of the media. The media is always talking about North Korea in very political ways and how North Koreans praise their Supreme Leader Kim Jung Un. They're not talking about what is a North Korean's normal life. That kind of information would make South Koreans think we are not the same Koreans. Here's the thing; not all North Korean people voted for him willingly and spontaneously. And the new generation, most of them don't have any loyalty for Kim and the regime anymore. Because they have not received support from the government. And they know it's because of ICBMs, the missiles which can reach overseas and were under development during Kim Jong Il's time, and which Kim Jung Un completed.

What is your first thought of North Korea?

Perhaps, it might be Kim Jung Un, ICBM or dictatorship. And South Koreans are the same. They think these three things so quickly.

These thoughts make them think differently about North Koreans and mistreat them.

They think North Koreans are dangerous, rough, violent, harsh and uneducated.

That kind of perception makes them think North Koreans are not the same nation and also to think we are not sharing the same culture.

Then where do those kinds of perceptions come from?

I believe South Koreans inherited this from the old generation.

They took over the old mindset from the previous generation.

It is not the new generation's fault but it is a problem. And in the future, it will be more of a problem than now. We need to think about what will make the next generation change their mindset for the better. We need to make a new narrative for our future. We need to focus on North Koreans. Not Kim Jong Un or ICBM missiles. Our thoughts could change our future. In the past, the previous generation didn't have many chances to learn and hear about the different sides of North Korea.

They only heard what their parents and the media said. That old mindset makes them have a lack of empathetic ability towards North Koreans.

We were the same Koreans and we still are. However, not many South Koreans think like that nowadays. They think that North Koreans are people who only need to get help and be rescued. Those kind of thoughts make them think badly about if we become one again; it makes them become Anti-Unification. Because they think we will only use their money and will cause economic crisis, without giving any return.

I want to show them that the 3.2 million defectors are living here very well, even though they are new settlers.

Everything is new and unfamiliar to them including the language differences.

We work so hard to make our life great and many of them already made it happen. So then, think about what would happen if unification suddenly occurred. Our new Korean peninsula will become a very excited country for the next two or three decades.

The North Korean defectors will become a connecting bridge between the North and South because we are the only people who will have lived on both sides.

I think we need to make this mindset stop immediately, before it is inherited to the next generation. We need to make them think differently.

That old perception makes them have defectors.

One day I met a South Korean friend.

I was very sad when he was surprised that I told him that the North Koreans eat kimchi in their daily lives.

Especially, people in their 20s don't know about North Korea; They don't have any interest and don't care.

Then who can make them think differently?

Us!!! The North Korean defectors.

We have only blamed South Koreans so far but we shouldn't be anymore. We need to approach them first.

We need to give them opportunities to meet North Koreans and change their mindset. playing soccer together, singing together, and talking together so, finally we can understand each other.

We need to change their perception of us away from the mindset that we are terrorists, dangerous, or savages.

And we, too, need to do volunteer work for the vulnerable classes to give them good impressions.

We need to show them that North Koreans are also putting effort to make our country great. Starting small things could bring big changes in the future.

We need to be proud of ourselves and say that we did something for our country and new generation.

We will also become the old generation one day. For that day, we need to try our best to bring a bright future for our peninsula and the new generation.

We can make our peninsula one again! Thank you for listening.