North Korean Nuclear Problems and Unification in Korea

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Background of the Forum

On June 12th, 2018, the leaders of the two most hostile countries to one another, the US and North Korea, will meet in a summit in Singapore. Up until last year, the United States was poised to take military action against North Korea for its nuclear tests and rocket/missile launches. However, beginning with the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics earlier this year in South Korea, there was a summit that occurred between South and North Korea in April, and furthermore, the leaders of China and North Korea met as well. Many people in the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia are expecting to see a peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue through the upcoming historic US-North Korea summit, and for the official end to the Korean War through a peace treaty.

There is a need for us to understand the Korean Peninsula's division and war; the nuclear problem's origins and process; and the East Asian political power balance. The Korean Peninsula issue is not only the issue of North and South Korea, but the roles and responsibilities of major powers such as the US, China, Japan, and Russia are equally very important. We believe that through this seminar, international relations experts from South Korea and the Philippines will together have a rich debate regarding the Korean Peninsula and East Asian peace and security issue.
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Introduction

The Korean Peninsula continues to be among the most volatile security flashpoints in the world not only because of the unfinished war between North Korea and South Korea, but also because of North Korea’s development of its nuclear weapons and missiles capabilities. Further, the Korean Peninsula is an area where the interests of major powers – US, China, Japan, and Russia – intersect and thus any development, as well as the interactions among these powers, can have far-reaching implications for the Asia-Pacific region.

The past six months have indeed been very busy and exciting for the Korean Peninsula and also for us Korea watchers. 2017 ended with North Korea’s testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and the escalating rhetoric between the North Korean regime and the US government under President Trump. But 2018 began with a peace overture from Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un which paved the way for North Korea’s participation in the Pyeongchang Olympics, in which we witnessed athletes from the two Koreas even marching under one flag. This was followed by the historic summit meetings between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in on 27 April 2018 and on 26 May 2018, as well as the meetings between Kim and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Also in May 2018, the North Korean government announced that it shut down its only known nuclear test site in Punggye-ri. Finally, on 12 June 2018, the historic US-North Korea Summit took place in Singapore in which Trump and Kim signed a statement on possibly building a lasting peace regime and working toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Analyses and reactions have been mixed – some are skeptical on how long this peace drive will last, while others are more hopeful that these diplomatic breakthroughs can reduce tensions and finally bring peace and stability, and even unification in the Korean Peninsula.

Given all these exciting developments, it is very timely that we are conducting this Forum, which will allow us to listen and exchange views with our guest speakers from Woorihana. Woorihana is a non-governmental organization registered with the Ministry of Unification of South Korea, that caters to the education needs and improvement of human rights of North Korean refugees.

Louie Dane C. Merced  
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Background of the Speakers

Mr. Se-jun Park
President/ Executive Director, Woorihana
Before residing in South Korea, Mr. Park worked as a doctor in North Korea. He graduated from Yonsei University. He currently serves as the President/Executive Director of Woorihana. He has conducted research on North Korean issues. Presently, he is pursuing his doctoral degree in political science at University of North Koren studies.

Ms. Hyun-ju Kim
Ms. Kim escaped from North Korea 7 years ago. She has lived in China for two years before coming to South Korea. She currently studying at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS).

Ms. Ji-na Jeon
Ms. Jeon escaped from North Korea 13 years ago. She has lived in China for 4 years before coming to South Korea. She graduated from Yonsei University.
The North Korean Nuclear Issue and Changes in the Security Environment of East Asia

Se-jun Park

The North Korean nuclear issue has been regarded as the most important and long unresolved issue when it comes to East Asia’s security. After the Korean Peninsula was divided into two, there have been continuous military clashes between the North and the South. The North developed its nuclear weapons. To denuclearize North Korea, the US even considered the military option to deal with North Korean nuclear threats. The Six-Party Talks were formed to try to solve the North Korean nuclear issue, comprised of North and South Korea, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia. However, all these international efforts failed. In late 2017, North Korea was successful in its final nuclear weapons testing. They revised their Constitution to note that they are now a nuclear power state. The US began to initiate and carry out the strongest form of economic sanctions against North Korea, since they felt that North Korea's nuclear weapons posed a direct threat to the US mainland. Even China joined in on the economic sanctions imposed by the US and the United Nations. North Korea then proposed in January of 2018 that there by talks between North and South Korea. The North participated in the Winter Olympic Games in South Korea in February of this year. In addition, the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the US President Trump met in Singapore on June 12th, 2018.

The Philippines and the Republic of Korea have a very special relationship. A long time ago, when war broke out on the Korean peninsula between North and South Korea, the Philippines helped South Korea and participated in the Korean War. Earlier in June of this year, the President of the Philippines was the first ASEAN leader to visit South Korea. President Duterte promised that he will play a role in bringing peace to the Korean Peninsula.

Today, I would like to talk about the nuclear issue of North Korea and the security situation surrounding East Asia. The North Korean nuclear issue is the most important issue when it comes to East Asia’s security. However, this issue of North Korea’s nuclear ambition, has not been solved for a long time. South and North Korea were once one single nation. After gaining independence from Japan in 1945, the peninsula was divided due to the influences of the former Soviet Union, and the United States. In 1950, the two nations of North and South Korea went to war. After the war, the two nations have competed politically, economically, and militarily. Between the North and South, there has been continuous military clashes, including many incidents that could have exploded into outright war between the two nations. After 1980’s, the USSR and other communist
The Six-Party Talks were formed to try to solve the North Korean nuclear issue, comprised of North and South Korea, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia. However, this model failed because each country had its own understanding and views on how to negotiate and proceed. China feared the increase of American influence in East Asia. Therefore, China continued to help and support North Korea despite the UN and America’s economic sanctions. Russia too, supported the position of North Korea. The North Korea regime claimed that they were pursuing nuclear weapons to counter the threat posed by the US and South Korea attacking the North. As a result, they took the position that they would only halt the pursuit of nuclear weapons only if the US Forces in South Korea left the country, and a peace treaty was signed between the US and North Korea. In 1994, the US and North Korea entered into an agreement to halt the North’s nuclear pursuit, but both nations could not trust each other’s promises and as a result, the agreement failed. The North continued to develop its nuclear weapons, and the US stopped all planned economic aid.

North Korea continued to develop its nuclear weapons and missiles and test them. In late 2017, North Korea was successful in its final nuclear weapons testing. They revised their Constitution to note that they are now a nuclear power state. North Korea also succeeded in developing and testing ICBMs which could target the US with nuclear warheads. After North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons became official, there was the threat of nuclear weapons domino effect in East Asia. There were worries that South Korea, Japan, and even Taiwan, would soon develop nuclear weapons. This nuclear domino effect in East Asia threatened not only the US, but North Korea’s main supporter, China. The US began to initiate and carry out the strongest form of economic sanctions on North Korea, since they felt that North Korea’s nuclear weapons posed a direct threat to the US mainland. Even China joined in on the economic sanctions imposed by the US and the United Nations. The North Korean economy took a nosedive after even China, the North’s biggest supporter participated in the sanctions. President Trump of the US also threatened the North saying that North Korea could be dealt within a military manner.
North Korea the proposed in January of 2018 that there talks between North and South Korea. The North participated in the Winter Olympic Games in South Korea in February of this year. The North Korean artistic performance troupe also came together with the athletes. Through the participation of the North in the Olympic Games, the seed was planted for the summit talk between South and North Korea. President Moon Jae In of South Korea and Kim Jong Un of North Korea met at the border dividing the two nations. The North suggested that if the US guaranteed the security and stability of the North Korean regime, it would get rid of its nuclear weapons. As a result, the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the US President Trump met in Singapore on June 12th. The two nations promised to get rid of the North’s nuclear weapons and to sign a peace treaty. Economic aid to North Korea was also promised.

There is now a mood of peace in the Korean peninsula where there once was the risk of the most dangerous war in the world breaking out. I believe that there will be more exchanges and collaboration between the North and South in the coming weeks and months. Furthermore, there are more talks being discussed for political, economic, and social exchanges and collaboration in order to achieve peaceful reunification between the two nations.

However, there are still many problems, that need to be solved in order for the North Korean nuclear issue to be resolved. Experts from the US and many other nations fear that the North Korea can deceive and hide its nuclear weapons and its missiles. This is because North Korea and the US do not trust each other. Much time is required to resolve the issue of North Korea’s nuclear weapons. The North Korean regime also may not trust the next US administration. The United Nations and other international bodies can visit various areas of North Korea to verify its promise of denuclearization. North Korea, which is the most closed-off society in the world, may not allow verification and investigative visits to sensitive sites like military installations and other areas on the country.

The US takes the position of CVID when it comes to North Korean denuclearization; that is, the Complete, Variable, Irreversible Dismantlement. The US fears that the North Korean regime will break its promise and go back to pursuing nuclear weapons. Conversely, North Korea can also fear trusting the US completely and getting rid of its nuclear weapons. There is the risk that because there is lack of trust and credibility between the two nations, any promises or treaties can be broken easily at any time.

North Korea can also demand the US forces based in South Korea leave the country, once a peace treaty is signed and there is an official end to the Korean War. This is because the North has always
claimed that the US forces stationed in South Korea are the greatest threat to North Korea. However, the US counters that the American military stationed in South Korea and Japan is needed to counter the growing threat posed by China in East Asia.

Next, what is going on inside North Korea is important. The one thing that is considered the most important by the regime is its stability and security. For the regime, it is more important to guard the regime against threats from internal factors as opposed to threats posed by the US and other external factors. North Korea is still a socialist state. It is also the most closed-off nation in the world. The North Korean regime explicitly forbids its citizens to access and enjoy foreign media, such as movies and televisions, books, and other outside information. There is no Internet for the masses in North Korea. There is no freedom of religion. The North Korean people do not have freedom to live where they want, nor the freedom of movement, and cannot even travel outside the country without the permission of the government. The North Korean people cannot even criticize the regime and the system, or the leader of the country. This is because the regime fears its people gaining awareness and knowledge through outside information, which then leads to criticism towards the regime.

Many political analysts and experts see the current leader Kim Jong Un as being different from his father and grandfather. Unlike his parents or grandfather, Kim Jong Un tasted and experienced democracy and free market capitalism when he lived abroad in his younger years, having studied as a young man in Switzerland. However, after he became the leader of North Korea, for the sake of regime stability and security, he killed his own brother and his uncle. He fears the growth of a democratic movement very much within North Korean regime feels that the biggest threat to its stability and survival is its own citizens becoming envious of South Korean society and its wealth and criticizing the government. North Korea may gain promises of regime stability and security for giving up its nuclear ambitions, but the economic aid and help it would receive from the US and other countries, and opening itself up to the worlds, may in the end threaten the regime’s stability. This is the dilemma faced by North Korea.

I look forward to the North Korean nuclear issue being solved by the courageous meeting between the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the US leader Donald Trump and the resulting actions taken by them both. Furthermore, the people of the world, and all South Koreans, and all those who love peace, will desire for the divided peninsula to be reunited, through growing collaboration and exchanges between South and North Korea.
South-North Korea Unification Issue

Kim Hyun-Ju

Unification of the two Koreas could bring positive results: avoid war in the Korean peninsula, reunite separated families caused by the division, lessen military spending, and solve North Korean nuclear weapons issues, just to name a few. Historically, there have been models of unification which were carried out by other nations. The first one is the German unification model or the absorption model, the Vietnamese model or the unification through armed forces/military, and lastly, the unification by consensus or the Yemeni unification model. Among the three models of unification, what is the best model for the North Korea and South Korea to adopt?

Background of the Division of the Korean Peninsula

We can describe the cause of the division by talking about the external and internal factors. Regarding the external factors, we can point to the relationship between, and understanding of, the great powers surrounding the Peninsula. That is, it can be said that the start of the division began in World War 2. The Second World War resulted in Germany, and later, the Korean Peninsula, being divided into a free and democratic system, and a communist/socialist system.

World War 2 was largely fought in Europe, and in the Pacific. In the European theater of war, President Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Churchill of the United Kingdom sought the help of the Soviet leader Stalin, in order to bring a quick end to the war. Stalin took this opportunity as a chance to increase communist influence in the world. As a result, the US and the USSR divided the Korean Peninsula at the 38th Parallel and occupied both ends of the Peninsula in North and South Korea, and the Korean people ended up experiencing division of their homeland, and the conflict and division deepened as the Cold War heated up between the Americans and the Soviets. Next, the problems arising from the division of the Peninsula will be discussed.

Conflict and Problems between South and North Korea after the division

It has been around 73 years since the peninsula has been divided into South and North Korea. Both countries have suffered a lot and endured many difficulties during this time. After the division,
North Korea has carried out over 2,000 different acts of provocations and attacks against South Korea, and as a result there has been much suffering from these provocations; we can organize into three parts the issues faced by both Koreas as a result of the division. First is the fear of war breaking out again. North Korea’s nuclear arms development and chemical and biological weapons program are ones which can threaten peace in the Korean Peninsula.

Second is the issue of the problem of Divided Families as a result of the division.

Third, the issue of the cost of maintaining the military posture after the division is something South Korea is dealing with. For example, there is the military expenditure associated with maintaining and stationing US military forces in South Korea, which are stationed in the country to keep the peace in the Peninsula and protect the South from threats posed by North Korea.

The need, and the way for reunification

The reason for the need for reunification to happen can be largely divided into two parts. First, as was mentioned earlier, it is for the three issues – the fear of war faced by the Peninsula; the divided families as a result of the division; and the cost of the division (increasing defense costs) – that need to be solved.

Second, due to the frequent nuclear tests and rocket launches by North Korea, these provocations can continue to give secondary harm to the peninsula and surrounding nations. In order to deal with these problems, reunification must happen. Then the question that needs to be addressed is which model of reunification is most favorable? Personally, the method of reunification that is favored is the Yemen-style reunification. I would like to explain this by using examples of countries which were once divided but later on reunified. Before the reason for why the Yemen-style reunification is the most rational, there must be a proper understanding of the concept of reunification. First is the German model of reunification. This is reunification by absorption. West Germany absorbed East Germany. The second model is the Vietnamese model. That is, reunification by force. Through war, the victor monopolizes and takes over the sovereignty and the land of the reunified state. The third model is, reunification through agreement or consensus, and this is route that Yemen took.

First, in order for the German model to be possible, the conditions that are needed is for North Korea’s Kim regime to collapse; through the collapse, as internal strife arises, North Korea gives up its sovereignty to South Korea, and surrenders. North Korea becomes a part of South Korea, and the reunification is centered on the South Korean system of freedom and democracy, and free-
market, capitalist economy. The two main points of this condition are that contingency plans and regime collapse in North Korea must be the most important variables. This is difficult considering the current North Korean system.

The second model – the Vietnamese model – is based on the premise whereby the nuclear threat becomes so existentially dangerous that the US takes military action against North Korea, and as a result the North retaliates against South Korea. There would be very slim chance that North Korea would be victorious in a war in this situation. Also in this model, there would be a South Korea-led reunification, with the variables being China and Russia entering the scene. In a situation where the reunification efforts are taken by the South, China will consider it an unfavorable position to have US forces still in the Korean peninsula, so if the US takes military action against the North, China will get involved. On top of all this, there is the incalculable human toll of death and carnage and damage that will be unimaginable.

Thus, from these three models, which has the highest feasibility? As was previously mentioned, the Yemen-style of reunification is the most rational model. This would entail setting modest goals, and reunifying North and South Korea in a simple manner and respecting the North’s sovereignty and recognizing the North’s system – with these conditions, reunification may not be impossible. With the North Korean regime currently leading the calls for a peace agreement, I believe that this model is possible. What the North Korean regime prefers is reunification through agreement and consent, that is, with their autonomy and sovereignty respected as being the premise for reunification happening. The reason for favoring this, and opposing reunification by absorption, is the cost.

North Korea can join the OECD if led by South Korea’s military reunification or absorption reunification. In this case, the North can receive OECD assistance in development and recovery in order to restore North Korean society. When we look at West Germany, after reunification by absorption, it was solely up to West Germany to provide the cost for rebuilding and recovery. Likewise, if absorption by reunification happens, South Korea would be solely responsible for all the costs, but if reunification by consensus occurs and North Korea remains a developing country, it can receive funding from OECD member states. So, in the case of reunification by consensus and the two Koreas are reunited, the North will see an increase in outside funding for development from the international community, and South Korea too will receive benefits from this support fund. Through this method, one of the biggest stumbling blocks and opposition to reunification in South Korea – the cost - can be reduced.

In conclusion, gradual reunification by consent, that is, the Yemen model, is the best model.
Additionally, the reason for the North Korean defector community in South Korea favoring this model is because they see the need to deal with and solve the misunderstandings and the cultural differences, and the two different systems of North and South that puts each other’s population in conflict. Thus, much time is needed to try to better understand each other.
North Korea’s political, economic, and social systems and structures and its infringement of freedom and human rights

Ji-Na Jeon

After the Japanese colonial rule, the Korean peninsula was divided into two: North and South. The Soviet troops took over North Korea with a socialist form of government, while the American troops ruled South Korea with liberal democracy as a form of government. In a socialist system, the government should provide everything for the people. Every North Koreans belong to state-controlled organization and are always under heavy surveillance. The downfall of the socialist bloc in 1990 had a grave impact on the North Korean's economy. The country experience extreme poverty and famine where hundreds of thousands of North Koreans starved to death. This event has prompted North Koreans to escape the country and flee to China and South Korea among other countries. However, North Korean refugees in China are vulnerable to human trafficking, prostitution, abuse, etc. To help the economy after the economic crisis, the government has approved the creation of traditional markets where North Koreans can buy and sell commodities. However, this move is not sufficient because their economic problems still persist.

1. What kind of country is North Korea?

In 1945, South Korea gained independence from Japanese colonial rule. After independence, Soviet troops ruled the North of Korea and US troops stationed in the South. After that, a socialist state was established in North Korea and a liberal democracy was established in South Korea. The two systems were influenced by the Soviets and Americans.

North Korea's socialist system was similar to the Soviet Union. This means life was dominated by the communist party and oppressive rule by a dictator. The economy was centralized. Individual ownership of property was extremely restricted. Jointly, the state and society “owned” things. Since 1945 up to today, that’s 73 years, North Korean people have only known government as three generations of family dictators: Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jung-un.

In the 1990s, the socialist system of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe fell apart. This impacted North Korea through economic hardships. Hundreds of thousands of North Koreans starved to death in the famine which resulted. And yet, North Korea’s socialist system survived.
China is embracing a capitalist market economy and achieving major economic growth. However, the North Korean government has made every effort to block a free market economy from developing domestically. Why? So, it can keep its political stability and current system. The North Korean government is afraid of a free market. Why? Because this means the free flow of foreign information. If people get access to external information via the free market, they will learn about the lies of government propaganda, and start a people’s movement against that system of lies.

Critically, the government knows that if a market economy is absolutely suppressed, then the people's disdain for the government could grow. So, North Korea is cautiously allowing a very basic, controlled market economy to develop. As such, the North Korean government can maintain its system and political stability. North Korean people are thus pressed to make every effort to survive from this controlled market economy that is permitted a little bit.

2. The Character of North Korea's Socialist System

Private businesses are not allowed in North Korea. Yet, since the economic crisis of the 1990s, most state-owned enterprises collapsed and are no longer functioning. The state’s system of distributing material to the people, such as food and clothing, also broke down. Remember, in a socialist system the government should provide everything for the people. Instead of depending on the distribution system, North Koreans maintain their economic life through on their own through private businesses!

The political system of North Korea is intensely controlled by a single ruling party: the Chosun Labor Party. This system of intense control is possible by the heavy surveillance of powerful public security agencies throughout the country. In North Korea, the voting rate is said to be 100%, because abstention - not voting - is considered a political crime: a hostile act against the regime.

In the North Korea's election, only a single candidate nominated by the North Korean regime is listed! And the Labor Party thoroughly monitors entire voting procedures. The ballot box is installed separately, so it is like a public vote, and abstention or opposition is considered as treason against the country.

The Chosun Labor Party is the only ruling party in North Korea. There are several opposition parties, such as the Democratic Party, but these are mere formalities. They are actually fake parties for external propaganda. The Chosun Labor Party is a higher governing body than the state
organization. This kind of national system is called party-state system. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, these are not allowed in North Korea. All North Koreans are forced to learn, from childhood, Juche ideology created by the regime, and criticism against the government and system is never allowed.

Every North Korean belongs to state-controlled organizations and get surveilled and monitored by these organizations. North Korean society brainwashes people from childhood on, through a group life that forces ideological education. Although North Korea's Constitution claims to allow freedom of movement, freedom of thought, and freedom of protest, these freedoms do not exist in North Korea in practice. People must get government permission to move or live in other regions. Especially, freedom to travel internationally is almost non-existent.

North Koreans cannot freely watch foreign films, dramas, radio, books, newspapers and so on. If someone is found doing so, they will be punished severely by public security agencies. The country monitors the circulation of foreign information. When detected, the level of punishment will vary according to the type of foreign content.

No religion is allowed in North Korea. The father of North Korean people is the Kim family, and no other “god” can exist. Dictators are considered gods, and people cannot believe in other gods. If people are found to be religious, they will be immediately arrested and imprisoned in political prison camps.

In North Korea, people cannot criticize leaders and system at all. If a drunk person criticizes the system, that person and their family can be imprisoned in political prison camps forever. This governance system is maintained by an intense surveillance system. Group life is highly important in North Korean society, so people always monitor each other in these groups. A person who behaves abnormally or speaks abnormally will immediately become a person of special surveillance and will be investigated or arrested by the public security agency.

3. Social Changes and Human Rights

Since the breakdown of the socialist bloc in 1990, North Korea has had an annual average growth rate of -3.8% over the period from 1990 to 1998. Total productivity levels dropped to less than half the level it had at the end of the 80s. This period is called the 'March of Suffering’. At this time, North Korea's industries were at their worst levels. Productivity levels were at the brink of breakdown except for the military industry.
It is estimated that about 300,000 to 3 million people died from lack of food at that time, and many North Koreans escaped to China because of starvation. These people are called “North Korean refugees.” The North Korean refugees were exposed to the risk of abuse and trafficking because they are illegal in China. Many North Korean women are trafficked and sold to Chinese people or to prostitution businesses. Most North Korean refugees are sent back to North Korea by Chinese police. Then they are made to do forced labor in prisons or are imprisoned in political prison camps by the North Korean public security agency. Some of the refugees get to South Korea via Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia and other countries. So far, the number of North Korean defectors who arrived in South Korea is estimated to be more than 30,000. They get to South Korea by different routes. Many die or get caught trying to reach South Korea. Many get sent back to North Korea. If North Koreans are arrested in socialist countries such as China and Vietnam, they may end up in political prison camps for life or get executed. This is because their attempt to enter South Korea is evident and this is regarded as anti-North Korea behavior. People who are arrested while living in China can get imprisoned for a short term of several months to a long term of a few years since they came to China to survive.

A market economy has begun to emerge in North Korea. The marketization phenomenon emerged in North Korea in the mid to late 1980s, when the centralized planned economy collapsed and failed to function. Since the 2000s, North Korean authorities have begun to legalize the black market. Currently, more than 300 traditional markets have been created in North Korea. Every North Korean can buy and sell commodities and food in the marketplace. There are also new rich who made a lot of money in this process. Power-type corruption, in cooperation with state power, is intensifying in North Korea. State-owned enterprises operate as-if in a capitalist market economy.

However, the internal reform of the North Korean economy is progressing gradually and very cautiously. A more aggressive opening of the North Korean economy is necessary.

The biggest problem of North Korean society and economy is the economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the United Nations as a result of North Korea's development of nuclear weapons. In order for North Korea to achieve economic development, economic sanctions must be resolved, and active reform and opening should be promoted.
Hello, I am Se Jun Park, the CEO of Woorihana. I was a doctor in North Korea and came out to the wider world in search of freedom. Due to the lack of medicine and medical supplies in North Korea, I found myself in a desperate situation in North Korea and there was nothing I can do to help my sick patients. For this reason, I left North Korea. I found freedom and realized the truth. Creating a better North Korean society is my dream.

I chose the path of an educator who nurtures future talents. Many North Korean defectors who came to South Korea seeking freedom are still living in underprivileged conditions. If one cannot escape poverty due to the lack of education, this is not true freedom. Therefore, not only do I want to give them fish to eat, but I would like to teach them how to catch fish. As a result, I established a school to support their dreams. We need your support for the 'Dream School' to support North Korean defector students' bright future.

We will do our best to make a better education environment. Thank you.

"We are making a better world."

Se Jun Park
CEO, Woorihana
Seoul, South Korea
About us
Established in 2013, WooriHana is an educational organization where North Korean defectors, South Koreans, and international youths gather and learn together. We have become one for a better world.

Why are we doing this?
For a unified future Korea, North Korean defectors' role has significant importance because of their experiences in both Koreas. To empower refugee students who could not have an opportunity to learn in North Korea, Woorihana provides differentiated education to help them realize their fullest potential to succeed and become future leaders. Through better education, we help young North Korean refugees to grow into talented leaders who contribute to make a better world.

What do we believe?
Teaching is important work and sometimes miraculously it changes someone's life. We believe in the power of education.

Cultivating people
We help young North Korean defectors gain self confidence and self awareness so that they can live honorably and develop into becoming exemplary young leaders.
Programs

1) English program
Through our English program, we aim to teach North Korean refugee youth who experience difficulties with English learning. The program is led by English-speaking volunteers who are interested to educate and support North Korean refugees. The program can be considered as a reciprocal education for volunteers and North Korean students to understand each other, North Korea, South Korea, and the world. The English classes include debates, English reading, writing, speaking and listening exercises.

2) Overseas leadership trip (USA and the Philippines)
Through this program, we aim to encourage students to experience a bigger world, learn various things, meet people from different cultures, spread news of peace in the Korean peninsula, and prepare students to become unification leaders equipped with a global skill set. WooriHana, together with prestigious universities in the United States of America (e.g. Harvard University, Columbia University) and the Republic of the Philippines (e.g. University of the Philippines Diliman, Ateneo De Manila University), has held forums, seminars and lectures educating the international student community about North Korean society and North Korean people’s mindset.
On April 27th 2016, the University of the Philippines launched the Korea Research Center, with the support of the Korean Studies Promotion Service (KSPS) in the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS), aiming to provide Filipino scholars and researchers with opportunities to widen their interest in Korean studies. UP KRC provides a venue for Filipino scholars and professionals to produce meaningful comparative researches and also link Korean academic institutions and Korean community organizations in the Philippines in order to promote collaborative partnerships.

UP KRC serves as a university-wide hub that will help promote and develop Korean Studies in the University and the country. It sponsors interdisciplinary and inter-college research and education activities on Korean studies, as well as facilitates the training of the next generation of Koreanists in the country.

UP KRC plays a leading role in developing teaching materials and courses through its research activities. By sponsoring public lectures, conferences, and workshops on Korea-related topics, UP KRC hopes to advance academic knowledge and a greater public awareness of Korea in the UP System. UP KRC also serves as a key link between Korean Studies in UP and the Korean academic world through its active partnerships with universities and institutions in South Korea and in other Korea Studies hubs in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.
Ang Bahay ng Alumni, Lower Ground floor, Magsaysay Ave.,
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