



THE GAMES ARE BACK

The Arirang mass games were stopped in 2013.

Today the north korean government announced that they will return in 2018 to celebrate the 9th of September that marks the DPRK's 70th Anniversary.

This incredible spectacle of gymnastics, acrobatics, dance and propaganda featured some 100,000 participants, and drew spectators from all over the world, including USA, for what was the biggest and most elaborate human performance on Earth.



All year long, in Pyongyang's giant town square, performers train under the command of one megaphone-wielding woman in preparation for the Arirang.



Over 100,000 performers prepare the show. The youngest participants join the others after school.



The gigantic May Day stadium in Pyongyang (the "North Korean Maracana" as the North Koreans affectionately call it) is home to these mass games.



After years of serving their country, some soldiers are rewarded with access to the spectacle.



Outside of the stadium, two girls are late and are seen rushing to perform. They were already dressed in their gymnastics uniforms.



The fake sailors continue to train in the parking lot up until the last minute before the show. They strive for nothing less than perfection.



Entering the stadium, spectators are struck by the colorful stage, which contrasts sharply with the rest of Pyongyang.



Everything, including the lights, is operated by humans. No high tech here.



20,000 young Koreans sit in the stands facing the spectators. They flip colored cards at high speeds, forming mosaics of nationalist imagery.



Each time the teens flip their cards, they cry out. 2000 teens are needed to make this soldier



One of North Korea's legends is recounted in this fresco. It represents the pistols reportedly used by Kim Il Sung, when he founded the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. When the guns appear, the audience erupts in applause.



The North Korean flag.



The combination of the sensual and political make the Arirang one of the most unique shows in the world!



The house that Kim Jong Il was born (according to propaganda) in near Mount Paektu at the chinese border..



As I wanted to be in the bottom seats to take up-close pictures of the show, I asked to go to the bottom row. The guide explained me that the seats were reserved for the soldiers. I then had to buy a 300 euro VIP seat and exchange it with a soldier.



The Party's people logo during the Arirang. Politics are part of the show which remains a giant propaganda tool.



The symbol of North and South Korea reunited..



The Arirang is a good opportunity to show the world North Korea's friendship with China. The spectacle ends with the waving of the two countries' flags.

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Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Kim Jong Il ceased to attend the shows for security reasons when he was alive, but the guides informed me that it was due to the large workload he had.



The children sang in unison "We are the happiest children in the world", one of the famous propaganda songs in North Korea.



Any people selected for the Arirang brings honor to his or her family. Being selected for this event is very difficult.



The show lasted for a little over an hour. Thereafter, the thousands of people present vanished into the dark and silent streets of Pyongyang, contrasting the flood of lights and music seen in the stadium.



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