

THE ARIRANG MASS GAMES IN NORTH KOREA

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The spectacle takes place in the fall at the May Day Stadium in Pyongyang. I attended in 2010 and 2012. It has to be seen to be believed. You're looking at 10,000 dancers, acrobats and performers on the stadium floor. The background screen of a rising sun and Korean letters is a "card stunt," 30,000 students holding colored cards composing it.

The number "65" is for the 65th anniversary of the surrender of Imperial Japan in World War II (August 15, 1945 – I took this photo in 2010), their Liberation Day (our V-J Day). The snowy mountain depicted below the 65 is Mount Paekdu, where all North Koreans are taught their country's founder Kim Il-sung defeated the Japanese and won the war (he was actually at a Soviet army camp near Khabarovsk, Siberia at the time).

They are never taught a word about the events a few days prior to their Liberation Day (i.e. Hiroshima and Nagasaki), nor to whom the Japanese surrendered. Hands down, North Korea is the world's most bizarre country. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World* #88 Photo ©Jack Wheeler)

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