

**Title: Fighting!**

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Imagine yourself, standing tall at the bow of a ship. You are sailing into Dokdo as the wind lashes through your hair, parting the mist surrounding the islands as the gods smile on you, allowing you access into the area. You drop anchor, astounded by the beauty of the islands and the ingenuity of your ship's captain for getting you there. You hear birds sing and caw around you as the waves beat steadily on the sides of the ship, a drum like accompaniment to the chaos of the ship.

You step down on the shore, your eyes drinking in the view. Countless years of volcanology, lithification and weathering have gone into the creation of these islands, and every second of it necessary to create the beautiful biosphere of nature and geology that you see today. As you step out onto the rocky shore you are greeted by Kim Sung-do and Kim Shin-yeol, the only permanent residents on the island. You walk around the island, amazed by the vast biodiversity in spite of the size of the island as you search for the rare and endangered *Orobanche coerulescens* Stephan.

After a half hour of exploration and discovery you are called back onto the boat. "The waves are rising!" shouts the captain in distress. You run back to the boat, waving to your new friends from the island, finally realising why Korea and Japan fought so hard for ownership of the island. As you drive back to the mainland you contemplate the lives of those on Dokdo, of Kim Sung-do and Kim Shin-yeol's courage and hard work to live on an island which is seemingly so harsh and unforgiving—yet home to such beauty.

Your itinerary is as follows:

**Day 1:** Arrive in Pohang and hail a taxi to the Pohang ferry terminal. Here you will catch the 10AM Ferry to Ulleungdo Island. Soak in the view as you sail across the sea, listening to the waves that surround you.

When you arrive, check in at the Ulleung Marina Tourist Hotel. Explore the area and it's beauty before trying some honghap bap for dinner.

**Day 2:** Rise early and stroll around the island. As you wait for your ferry at Dodong port, climb up the stairs to the lighthouse so you can see your destination—the sparsely inhabited, wild and tempting Dokdo Island.

Board the ferry to commence your tour—if you are lucky and the weather is benign you will be able to walk around Dokdo for a small time, but if not you will be able to view beautiful Dokdo from the ferry.

Arrive back at Ulleungdo. Visit the Dokdo museum before trying another local culinary delight; perhaps some sanchae bibimbap tonight?

**Day 3:** Wake early again. Explore Yaksu national park and take the cable car around the island before boarding a ferry back to Pohang.

South Korea is a nation known for its hardworking attitude, resourcefulness and “fighting” attitude. As the nation grows in power and international importance, countries across the world take note of the unity of economic growth and environmental care. The South Korean transition to a green-based economy is an example to nations across the world; it is worth the short term financial hardship in order for environmental improvements to be

seen. In spite of the hardships the nation has endured, South Korea has always shown perseverance and kept fighting; to be better than its issues and conquer the demons of its past and future, earning a place for Korea in the history books as a nation that never gave up.

The music of the nation reflects this “fighting” attitude, in history and in present. The traditional drums bond the nation together in a symbol of strength and unity-- reminding the nation of their victory over everything they have suffered. The rhythmic heart of Korea has been maintained in today’s “KPop”, which has spread not only throughout Asia but worldwide as well. With bands like Big Bang, Girls Generation (SNSD) and Super Junior making appearances in the iPods, YouTube videos and dance covers of youths worldwide, KPop has become a global phenomenon.

Korea’s music culture is what I would most like to experience- in both the traditional and modern sense. The traditional culture and theatre fascinates me in its separation and similarities with western culture, and the means by which it expresses the spirit of the times and captures the struggles, victories and battles of a nation. As someone with over 14 years training in classical violin, music has a tendency to capture me, and I can think of nothing more beautiful than to be swept up in the past and present musical culture of a growing nation like South Korea.