

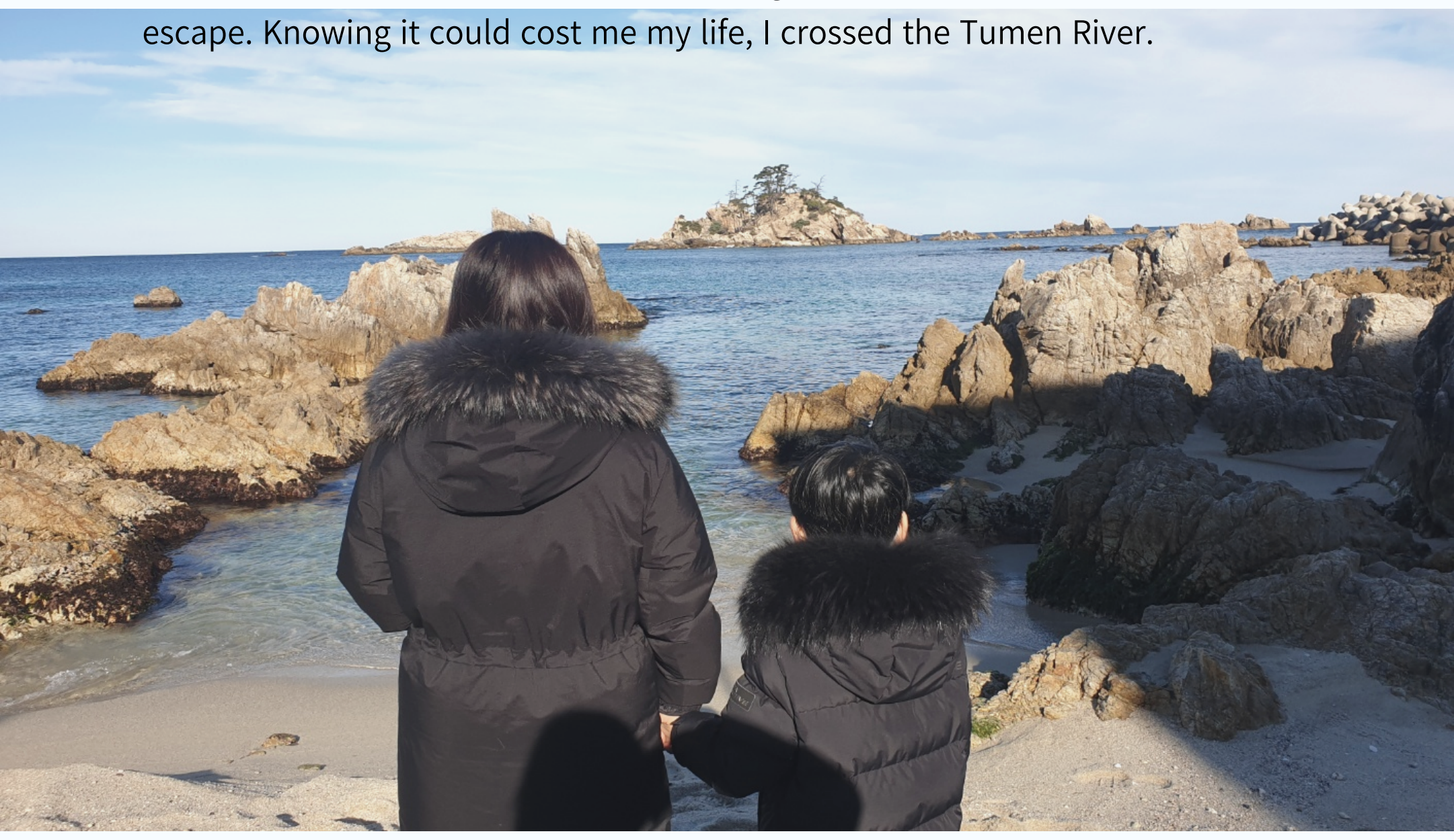
# Alumni Story



**Kyungshim Byun** | 18th Class of Graduates  
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After sending my son off to school and finishing the chores, I finally get a bit of time to myself. These days, I’m taking online classes and going to church, where I read the Bible with others. Sometimes, I still can’t believe this is my life now.

Like many others, I didn’t get much of an education in North Korea. I finished middle school, but was then sent to work in a textile factory. The work was grueling, and we barely had enough to eat. My health started to decline, and I was constantly watched and treated unfairly. Most people stayed quiet, but I couldn’t take it anymore. It didn’t take long until I made the decision to escape. Knowing it could cost me my life, I crossed the Tumen River.



Once in China, I didn’t know the language or my way around. I was eventually sold to a family for 60,000 won. Even after having a child, I held on because I couldn’t allow myself to give up. I lived in constant fear of being sent back to North Korea. I remember thinking, “If I die like this, I won’t even have a grave.” So I made another desperate choice—to escape again, this time with my child. The journey to South Korea was even harder than the first escape. When I was about to give up, I got a phone call from my broker, someone I didn’t even know. They said, “You must hang in there.” I still don’t know who that person was, but their words gave me strength.



I never planned to come all the way to South Korea by passing through North Korea, China, and Thailand. I just kept moving forward, and somehow, I made it here. That’s how I found Heavenly Dream School. Studying was difficult, especially since I hadn’t been in school for so long, but it was the only path I had.

As I grew used to the love and support at school and began to learn more about God’s Word, I met a kind church member who encouraged me to start attending church. Through the Word, I came to realize that I am a sinner, and came to understand the love of my teachers that was once weird.



I am preparing to transform into being a giver from being a receiver. I entered and am in my 4th year of my major of Social Welfare in order to help more North Korean refugees adjust to life in Korea. I know God is pleased through my work of reaching the hearts of those in need through my genuine heart. God took His place in my heart that was once filled with disappointments that came from relying on man. I am filled with an unspeakable joy know that I am walking with Him on the path He has set out for me. 🌈

