

# My name is Suni Kwon

同志社高等学校 3年 権 純 希

Hello everyone. Can you read my name in kanji? Please look at your program. It is read as “Suni Kwon”. This is the most important thing in my life. Why is my name a special thing for me? Almost everyone may think that their names are ordinary, so they don’t keep their names in their minds. From now on, I will tell you the reason why my treasure is my name.

I’m proud of my name. I’m not Japanese but Korean. Therefore, my name is not ordinary and probably the only one in Japan. Now, it is pleasant for me that I have something different from others.

When I was a young child, however, I hated my name. It’s because it was strange compared with my friend’s. I asked my mother, “Why is my name unusual? Why isn’t it a Japanese name such as Keiko or Lisa? I want to have the same name as my friend’s, so I want to change it!”

I also disliked my friend’s asking me “You are a foreigner, aren’t you? Where are you from?” I had no choice but to answer this question with “I’m Korean.” Then, they surely said “Korean! Say something in Korean.” I can’t speak Korean because I was born in Japan and I learned to speak Japanese, but no one understood why I had a Korean name. The more I was asked such questions, the more I hated my name.

These days, many Koreans tend to change their names into Japanese. But my mother decided to make me go to school as Suni Kwon. She didn’t change my name into Japanese. This is very rare. In fact, I know that there are many Korean students in my school, but only a few of them use Korean names a part from me. My mother thought, however, that we were Koreans living in Japan, not Japanese, so she couldn’t throw away our Korean names, precious symbols of our national consciousness. She hoped I would remember that our homeland was Korea.

The people around me didn’t understand my identity, so my fight continued until the middle of junior high school. To give an example, most of

my teachers couldn't read my actual name in kanji. They called me "Ms. Gon Junki." Whenever they called me in such a way, I had to nervously teach them how to read it. It time I felt I was not myself. It made me sad because I felt as if the teachers had said to me "You are not the same as others."

Then, I got a chance to change my ideas about my name. Recently, my best friend said "Your name is cute! It is your unique point, so you don't have to hate your name." Thanks to her, I came to admit that I'm a different person from all others, and I feel I would like to stay who I am. Just at that time with the Korean boom in Japan, Japanese people came to feel intimate with Korea. Far from seeing me as a strange little person, they envied that I was Korean. I had confidence in having a different nationality and identity, I was born again, and I was new.

Thanks to my nationality, I can live a life different from common Japanese people. It is a precious life. Moreover, I'm not ordinary and have many points of view which are different from others. Therefore, in my life, my treasure is my name. I surely want to live as one of the Koreans living in Japan with a Korean name, Suni Kwon.