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## Invisible Nation

Some of the most beautiful images ever captured by the crew of the ISS are those taken after dark, when much of the world sparkles and shines like diamonds on velvet. The colors and textures of contrasting land masses, the things that you would see in a daytime image, are replaced by simple points of light. Each point of light is a small part of a larger story waiting to be told.

Wherever you see electric lights, you're seeing people. People driving along well lit streets, people shopping, people enjoying life. Larger clusters of lights typically indicate higher densities of people. But what about those areas with no electric lights? Does no electric light mean no people? Or does this absence of light have a different story to tell?

All of the land you see in the top and left of this ISS image from January, 2014 is China. Clearly visible to the right is another highly developed nation, with a population of over 50 million people and the 12th largest economy in the world -South Korea. And of course above South Korea is... hold on a minute. Sorry, South Korea isn't an island nation is it? Am I crazy or isn't the Korean Peninsula connected to China at the north!?

Seemingly lost to the depths of the Yellow Sea, all that can be seen of North Korea, population about 25 million, is its capital city of Pyongyang. The city appears as a tiny virtual island of light peeking through an invisibility cloak of widespread darkness.

Why do you think North Korea is almost entirely dark at night when so much of the world is lit up like a theater marquee? Can you find examples in other Earth at Night images where the presence or absence of electric lights tells a story?

